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Contents

Dawn –	5
COP30: promise to performance	5
NFC and the 27th amendment	7
Sudan atrocities	8
A contentious amendment	10
Learning from floods	12
Another genocide	13
Taking back education	15
Turkish mediation	17
Renewables option	19
Slide into authoritarianism	20
Killing the Constitution	22
Fearing the spectre of Godot.....	24
Glimpse of our export quality.....	26
Fragile future	27
Going nowhere	28
Misplaced priorities.....	30
Crime and punishment.....	31
Gaza mission.....	32
Challenges to states.....	34
State and its pillars	35
Sheikh Hasina verdict	36
GB’s rare earth potential	38
Gaza resolution.....	39
Ecosystem of change	41
An economy on the move	43
Provincial autonomy.....	44
Governance failure	45
Afghanistan dilemma.....	47

Power and crisis.....	48
Short joyride	50
Hindutva revisionism.....	51
The tyranny of geography.....	53
Rural realities.....	54
The Nation –	57
Restoring Institutional Coherence	57
Re-kindling Pakistan-India Trade?.....	59
Strategic Trade.....	60
Democracy and Pakistan.....	61
Kabul’s Silence	63
The Express Tribune –	65
Afghanistan's military geography, power centres and our policy morass.....	65
Ruling without rules: Pakistan's core problem	66
The link between violence and governance failures	68
Pakistan's gateway dilemma.....	69
Strategy demands uninterrupted diplomacy.....	70
Afghan dead end.....	72
China's impact on the global economy	74
Viewing Middle East through four lenses.....	75
The IMF's superficial assessment of corruption	77
Iran's 'blank cheque'	78
Islamabad, Kabul on collision course.....	80
Arab News Pakistan –	82
Middle East’s growing visibility in global climate debate	82
The Pakistan-Saudi strategic defense agreement in an evolving region	84
Pakistan-Afghanistan tensions: Diplomacy, not military action, offers a way out.....	86
A reading of Saudi-American bilateral relations.....	87

Dawn –

COP30: PROMISE TO PERFORMANCE

Author: Aisha Khan

Summary:

The article traces the winding journey of global climate diplomacy, showing how lofty ambitions often fall flat when national interests take centre stage. It explains how the early optimism of Kyoto faded as major emitters dodged responsibility and developing nations struggled to secure fairness in burden-sharing. The writer argues that this divide has haunted every COP since, with developed countries resisting liability for loss and damage while vulnerable states like Pakistan shoulder the harshest consequences of floods, droughts and melting glaciers. She notes that pledges on climate finance remain far below need, emission targets still fall short of the 1.5°C threshold and the world is heading toward a dangerous 2.7°C of warming. Over the years, COPs have slowly morphed into crowded global exhibitions where announcements multiply but tangible progress lags behind. Real breakthroughs now occur outside the formal process through regional coalitions, public-private partnerships and targeted finance initiatives that bypass the slow grind of consensus politics.

Against this backdrop of stagnation and spectacle, the writer calls on Pakistan to rethink its presence at COP from routine attendance to strategic engagement. As a climate front-line state, Pakistan can speak with moral force on justice, equity and resilience and push for stronger recognition of loss and damage. She urges Pakistan to lead regional climate cooperation across the Third Pole, strengthen scientific capacity, amplify its stories of survival and forge partnerships with global think tanks and innovators. By turning data, diplomacy and lived experience into powerful advocacy, Pakistan can help shape the climate narrative rather than drift along with it. The article closes with a stark reminder that the path from Kyoto to Paris and onward to COP30 reveals a world that talks about climate change with urgency yet acts with hesitation. For Pakistan, this moment demands leadership rooted in justice and solidarity, not passive participation.

Overview:

This article gives a clear assessment of how global climate negotiations have moved from optimism to frustration, marked by unmet finance promises, widening ambition gaps and political divisions between the Global North and South. It urges Pakistan to shift gears and become a proactive, justice-driven voice at COP, using data, regional diplomacy and strategic alliances to secure its long-term survival in an increasingly unstable climate world.

NOTES:

The article traces the long arc of global climate diplomacy, showing how the COP process has swung between ambition and paralysis as nations struggle to balance collective responsibility with national interests. It highlights the early optimism of the Kyoto Protocol, which set the first binding emission targets, and the deep fractures exposed at Copenhagen when debates over fairness and finance overshadowed unity. The writer underscores the persistent North-South divide, noting how countries that contributed least to climate change, like Pakistan, suffer its harshest impacts while major emitters resist firm commitments on loss and Damage. The author explains how finance pledges remain unfulfilled, Nationally Determined Contributions fall short of the 1.5°C goal, and global warming is on track to hit around 2.7°C by century's end. The article stresses that COP conferences have increasingly turned into "climate fairs" filled with corporate displays and political theatrics rather than decisive action, pushing real progress into smaller coalitions and private-sector alliances. Against this backdrop, Pakistan must shift from passive attendance to strategic influence by championing climate justice, leading regional cooperation across the Third Pole, strengthening adaptation finance, and turning its lived vulnerability into global advocacy. The writer argues that

COP30 is not just another summit but a moment for Pakistan to reshape its climate diplomacy, assert leadership among developing nations, and push the global system toward a more equitable and resilient climate order.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- International Relations: Global climate governance and multilateral diplomacy
- Current Affairs: Climate negotiations, finance debates and COP30 developments
- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan's climate vulnerability and its foreign policy response
- Environmental Science: Climate change impacts, adaptation needs and emission trajectories

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that climate change is a global problem that no country can fix alone. Early agreements like the Kyoto Protocol tried to make powerful countries cut emissions, but many did not participate, and developing countries were left behind. Today the world still struggles to agree on who should pay for climate damage and how much each nation should reduce emissions. For example, Pakistan faces floods and heatwaves even though it produces very little pollution, while richer countries delay fulfilling their finance promises. The writer says Pakistan must use its role at COP30 more wisely by demanding fair funding, working with neighbouring countries on glacier and water issues and telling the world how climate change affects people here. This will help Pakistan push for stronger global action while protecting its own long-term needs.

Facts and Figures:

- The Kyoto Protocol (1997) was the first legally binding climate treaty.
- The Copenhagen Summit (2009) revealed major divisions on finance and fairness.
- Global warming is projected to reach about 2.7°C if current trends continue.
- Pakistan is among the world's most climate-vulnerable countries and suffers repeated floods, droughts and glacial melt.
- The Paris Agreement (2015) shifted climate action toward voluntary national pledges.

To sum up, The article reminds that climate diplomacy stands at a critical point. While the world speaks loudly about climate urgency, meaningful action still falls short. For Pakistan, this moment offers a chance not only to defend its own interests but to lead with conviction on justice and adaptation. By stepping beyond symbolic participation and using data, diplomacy and regional solidarity, Pakistan can help steer global climate efforts toward fairness and resilience.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Ambition – level of effort toward climate goals; Synonym: aspiration, Antonym: reluctance
- Consensus – general agreement among parties; Synonym: accord, Antonym: disagreement
- Mitigation – efforts to reduce emissions; Synonym: reduction, Antonym: intensification
- Equity – fairness in responsibility-sharing; Synonym: justice, Antonym: inequality
- Trajectory – path or trend over time; Synonym: course, Antonym: deviation
- Capitalisation – funding or financing; Synonym: investment, Antonym: depletion
- Resilience – ability to withstand shocks; Synonym: endurance, Antonym: fragility
- Decarbonisation – reduction of carbon emissions; Synonym: emission-cutting, Antonym: carbon-intensive
- Diplomacy – negotiation between states; Synonym: statecraft, Antonym: confrontation
- Adaptation – adjustment to climate impacts; Synonym: adjustment, Antonym: resistance

NFC AND THE 27TH AMENDMENT

Author: Khurram Husain

Summary:

The article NFC and the 27th Amendment unpacks the mounting pressure on provincial governments to surrender part of their NFC transfers in order to fund the federal government's defence obligations and ease its debt-servicing burden. The writer notes that while provinces cannot reasonably be asked to shoulder debt costs they never approved, the centre is pushing hard for their contribution to defence spending by arguing that all provinces benefit from national security. With the centre signalling that it may amend the Constitution if provincial assent is not given, the provinces find themselves backed into a corner. The demand stands at roughly Rs500 billion annually, and provinces must now determine both how this burden will be divided and what mechanism will allow the funds to flow directly from the NFC stream toward defence needs without technically reducing the provinces' constitutional share.

The writer explains that the provinces may use the existing NFC formula to divide this burden, which would hit Punjab the hardest. He points out that mechanisms already exist for paying the army when called in aid of civil administration, and these could be expanded to create an automatic stream within NFC transfers. While this approach avoids constitutional amendments, it will slash provincial fiscal space, especially for Punjab, whose government is already spending heavily to cultivate political support. The article warns that provinces will also worry about the slippery slope of agreeing to Rs500 billion today only to face rising demands in later years. The writer suggests that locking the amount into the NFC award itself could cap it, providing some protection. In closing, he argues that although other aspects of the 27th Amendment remain contentious, the NFC-related changes may be pushed through without altering the Constitution—if provinces concede their share of defence spending.

Overview:

This article provides a clear, grounded explanation of the political and economic stakes tied to the 27th Amendment and the NFC award. It highlights the tug-of-war between federal needs and provincial autonomy, showing how financial strain, constitutional pressure and political ambition converge in the debate over defence funding. It also shows how fiscal reforms, once triggered can reshape federal-provincial relations for years to come.

NOTES:

The article explains that the federal government is pressing provincial governments to release roughly Rs500 billion from their NFC transfers to cover defence expenses, while avoiding the constitutional complication of reducing the provinces' guaranteed share. Provinces cannot reasonably be asked to share debt-servicing costs unless they approve future borrowing, but the centre argues that defence spending benefits all provinces and therefore warrants provincial contribution. The writer notes that an existing NFC formula could be used to divide the financial burden, placing the heaviest load on Punjab, followed by Sindh, KP and Balochistan. He highlights that mechanisms already exist for provinces to pay the army when deployed for civil duties, and these could be expanded to create an automatic deduction system within NFC transfers without amending Article 160(3A). Although this approach preserves constitutional protections, it will constrict provincial fiscal space and hit Punjab's development spending hardest. The article also warns that provinces fear a slippery slope where Rs500 billion today could become a larger demand tomorrow, and suggests that writing the amount directly into the NFC award might cap future increases. Overall, the writer argues that the NFC-related part of the 27th Amendment may be avoided if provinces voluntarily agree to shoulder a fixed share of national defence costs.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs: NFC award, fiscal federalism, 27th Amendment, centre-province relations
- Current Affairs: Defence financing, federal fiscal crisis, constitutional debate

- Governance and Public Policy: Resource distribution mechanisms, institutional constraints
- Political Science: Federalism, provincial autonomy, constitutional limits

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan's federal government needs more money for defence and debt payments, so it is asking provinces to give up part of the money they receive from the NFC award. Provinces cannot be forced to pay debt they never approved, but they may be compelled to contribute to defence because all provinces benefit from national security. For example, if provinces agree, around Rs500 billion per year would be redirected from their share to the army's budget through a new mechanism. Punjab would pay the largest amount because it gets the biggest share of the NFC pool. The article also warns that provinces fear the amount might keep increasing in later years, so they may try to set a fixed limit in the NFC award. This debate shows how financial pressures shape power relations between the centre and provinces.

Facts and Figures:

- Rs500 billion is the annual amount the centre is asking from provinces.
- Punjab would pay around half, Sindh one quarter, KP 16 percent and Balochistan around 10 percent.
- The NFC meeting is tentatively scheduled for November 27.
- Article 160(3A) protects provincial shares in the NFC award.
- Mechanisms already exist for provinces to pay for army deployment within their territory.

In essence, the article captures a pivotal moment in Pakistan's fiscal politics, where economic stress and constitutional pressure collide. It shows how the centre's urgent need for defence financing may reshape provincial budgets and political agendas, especially in Punjab. The writer's analysis underscores that while a constitutional amendment may be avoided, the political cost of provincial assent will echo far beyond this year's NFC meeting.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Assent – official approval; Synonym: consent, Antonym: refusal
- Burden-sharing – dividing responsibility among parties; Synonym: allocation, Antonym: avoidance
- Mechanism – structured process for action; Synonym: system, Antonym: disorder
- Divisible pool – the federal revenue shared with provinces; Synonym: shared fund, Antonym: exclusive pool
- Deployment – positioning forces for duty; Synonym: dispatch, Antonym: withdrawal
- Modify – change or alter; Synonym: adjust, Antonym: preserve
- Obligation – duty or responsibility; Synonym: commitment, Antonym: exemption
- Consensus – general agreement; Synonym: unity, Antonym: discord
- Coffer – treasury or financial reserve; Synonym: fund, Antonym: deficit
- Slippery slope – situation that may worsen over time; Synonym: risk path, Antonym: stability

SUDAN ATROCITIES

Summary:

The article shares the brutal tragedy unfolding in Sudan, where a vicious civil war has raged since April 2023 while the world largely looks the other way. The Rapid Support Forces, heirs to the notorious Janjaweed militia, captured El-Fasher after an eighteen-month siege that left the town drenched in horror. Eyewitnesses describe bodies strewn across streets, mass executions, rape and torture, while famine tightens its grip on already starving communities. The International Criminal Court now suggests that the atrocities may constitute crimes against humanity. What makes the conflict even more deadly is the dangerous involvement of foreign states that have turned Sudan into a

battleground for their proxy interests, backing either the military junta or the RSF. Meanwhile, international organisations appear paralysed, unable to halt the bloodshed or restrain the actors fueling it.

The editorial argues that this conflict has spiralled because Sudan has been reduced to a pawn in wider geopolitical games. It calls for an immediate ceasefire, a halt to arms shipments to the RSF, and credible investigations into war crimes. Once the guns fall silent, the writer insists that Sudan must be guided toward a roadmap rooted in reconciliation, justice and democratic restoration. The article reminds that silence is an accomplice to tyranny, and the world's moral compass must not waver when human dignity hangs by a thread.

Overview:

This article gives a preview of Sudan's civil war and the catastrophic human suffering caused by the RSF's siege of El-Fasher. It highlights the international actors pulling strings behind the scenes, the failure of multilateral bodies to intervene meaningfully, and the urgency of stopping a conflict that has crossed every threshold of human cruelty. It also underscores the moral and political responsibility of global powers to press for accountability and democratic revival.

NOTES:

The article highlights the horrifying scale of violence in Sudan's ongoing civil war, drawing attention to the Rapid Support Forces' capture of El-Fasher after an eighteen-month siege marked by mass killings, rape, torture and famine. It stresses that the RSF, rooted in the infamous Janjaweed Militia has turned the town into a scene of devastation while foreign powers fuel the conflict by backing different sides for their own interests. The article underscores the paralysis of global organisations such as the UN, African Union and Arab League, which have failed to halt the atrocities despite warnings from the International Criminal Court that the acts may amount to crimes against humanity. It calls for an immediate ceasefire, a halt to arms shipments to the RSF, and credible war-crimes investigations, followed by a roadmap anchored in justice, national reconciliation and democracy. The editorial ultimately warns that Sudan has become a casualty of geopolitical manipulation and that the world must reclaim its moral responsibility before the human tragedy deepens beyond repair.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Current Affairs: African conflicts, humanitarian crises, global inaction
- International Relations: Proxy warfare, role of UN and ICC, conflict mediation
- Political Science: State failure, civil war dynamics, legitimacy
- International Law: War crimes, crimes against humanity and accountability mechanisms

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Sudan has been stuck in a terrible civil war since 2023, and things became even worse when the RSF militia captured a major town after blocking it for more than a year. People were killed, tortured and starved, and entire neighbourhoods turned into war zones. Foreign countries have been secretly helping different sides which has made the conflict even more destructive. For example, some countries support the Sudanese army while others back the RSF, turning the country into a proxy battleground. The article stresses that international organisations have failed to stop the violence, so the world must demand a ceasefire, stop supplying weapons and push for justice. Once the fighting stops, Sudan will need a plan to restore peace and rebuild its democracy.

Facts and Figures:

- The civil war has continued since April 2023
- El-Fasher suffered an eighteen-month siege before falling to the RSF
- Famine has been confirmed in parts of the conflict-hit area
- The ICC has warned that RSF actions may qualify as crimes against humanity

To sum up, the article suggests that human suffering grows when global conscience retreats. Sudan's tragedy shows how silence, indifference and geopolitical games can deepen wounds that may take generations to heal. The editorial

that changes to the NFC framework could undermine provincial financial protections, stirring political backlash among federating units. The writer stresses that even cabinet members appear uninformed about the draft, suggesting that the amendment is being shaped by actors outside parliament. He warns that with the ruling coalition holding a two-thirds majority, the amendment may be pushed through like the controversial 26th Amendment, deepening fears of authoritarian drift. At its core, the article argues that bypassing public debate and parliamentary transparency threatens the independence of state institutions and risks eroding the democratic foundations of the country.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs: Constitutional amendments, NFC award, federal-provincial relations
- Current Affairs: Judicial restructuring, centre-province disputes, governance challenges
- Political Science: Separation of powers, institutional independence, constitutional design
- Governance and Public Policy: Accountability, rule of law, legislative processes

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that the government is planning big changes to the Constitution but is doing it quietly without public debate. These changes could weaken the judiciary, affect how judges are appointed and transferred and reduce the financial protections provinces currently enjoy under the NFC. For example, a new constitutional court could take away much of the Supreme Court's authority and the government might gain more power to move high court judges around, which could pressure them to follow the executive's wishes. The writer also warns that provinces may resist any attempt to change their NFC share since it protects their financial rights. Overall, the article states that such major changes must be openly discussed because altering the Constitution without transparency can damage democracy and centralise too much power in the hands of a few.

Facts and Figures:

- The amendment proposes changing Article 243 related to military chiefs
- The 26th Amendment was passed last year amid controversy
- The ruling coalition currently holds more than a two-thirds majority in both Houses
- The NFC award is protected under Article 160(3A) of the Constitution
- Cabinet members reportedly have limited knowledge of the draft amendment

To sum up, The article reminds that democratic systems unravel when constitutional change happens behind closed doors and without public scrutiny. The proposed 27th Amendment sits at the crossroads of judicial independence, provincial autonomy and executive authority, making transparency not optional but essential. If parliament allows another amendment to pass without debate, Pakistan may find itself drifting toward a political order where institutions lose their autonomy, the Constitution loses its sanctity and democracy loses its soul.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Curtail meaning reduce or limit, Synonym restrict, Antonym expand
- Surreptitious meaning secretive, Synonym covert, Antonym open
- Hybrid rule meaning power shared between elected and unelected actors, Synonym mixed governance, Antonym democratic rule
- Mutilate meaning damage severely, Synonym distort, Antonym preserve
- Subservient meaning obedient or controlled, Synonym compliant, Antonym independent
- Jurisprudence meaning the theory of law, Synonym legal doctrine, Antonym lawlessness
- Culpable meaning deserving blame, Synonym responsible, Antonym innocent
- Consensus meaning general agreement, Synonym accord, Antonym disagreement

LEARNING FROM FLOODS

Author: Naseer Memon

Summary:

The article reflects on the devastating floods that struck Gilgit Baltistan, KP and Punjab, which reminds us that while the waters have retreated, the lessons they leave behind must not be washed away. The writer notes that early speculation about water weaponisation faded once it became clear that both sides of the border suffered unprecedented rains and overflowing dams. The article stresses that Pakistan must sharpen its vigilance over shared river catchments, especially after India's unilateral suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty crippled communication. A large number of deaths in GB and KP, many involving tourists who ignored weather advisories, exposed glaring administrative lapses. Even more troubling were the widespread encroachments on riverbeds and floodplains which trapped and diverted flows, displacing thousands in Sindh despite water staying within bank limits. Illegal bunds, obstructive structures, poor municipal oversight and the absence of land use planning combined to turn predictable natural events into large scale avoidable disasters.

In this detailed analysis, the writer argues that Pakistan's development model lies at the heart of its repeated tragedies. Infrastructure is routinely built without climate considerations, urban colonies spread into low lying zones, and roads lack adequate drainage. The breaches on the M5 motorway and the failures of embankments in south Punjab exposed serious design flaws, while narrow bridge spans continue to choke natural waterways and intensify backflow. Karachi's Malir river swelled overnight and wiped out parts of Shahrah i Bhutto where construction violated basic hydrological logic. The article calls for strict legal action against encroachments, satellite based mapping of waterways, long term removal plans, reforestation in degraded catchments and climate filters for all development schemes. When a country builds on floodplains and ignores the wisdom of its rivers, misfortune is not an accident but the inevitable consequence of its own choices.

Overview:

This article presents a pointed analysis of how predictable natural events turn catastrophic when governance falters and planning collapses. It links administrative negligence, encroachments, poor engineering and the absence of climate informed development to the immense human and economic losses caused by the recent floods. It urges a fundamental shift from reactive crisis management to proactive, science based resilience building.

NOTES:

The article highlights that the recent floods in Gilgit Baltistan, KP and Punjab exposed deep systemic failures rather than unavoidable natural misfortune. It shows that both Pakistan and India faced severe rains and overflowing dams, making earlier claims of water weaponisation irrelevant. The writer stresses that Pakistan must strengthen monitoring of shared river catchments, especially after India suspended communication under the Indus Waters Treaty. A significant number of deaths in GB and KP resulted from ignored weather warnings and inadequate administrative control, while widespread encroachments on riverbeds and floodplains diverted flows into populated areas and displaced thousands in Sindh despite the rivers staying within their banks. The piece criticises the country's flawed development practices, where infrastructure is built without climate considerations, drainage channels are blocked by unregulated construction and urban colonies sprawl into low lying flood zones. Serious engineering lapses, such as breaches along the M5 motorway, narrow bridge spans that choked waterways and construction on natural floodpaths like Karachi's Malir riverbed, exposed how poor planning magnified the disaster. The article calls for strict removal of encroachments, satellite mapping of waterways, watershed restoration and climate based scrutiny of all development schemes, arguing that until Pakistan respects natural river systems and stops building on floodplains, future monsoons will continue to turn predictable events into national tragedies.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Environmental Science: Climate change impacts, watershed management, adaptation strategies
- Pakistan Affairs: Disaster governance, river systems, encroachments and planning failures
- Public Administration: Institutional capacity, regulatory enforcement, municipal governance
- Current Affairs: Monsoon behaviour, cross border water issues, infrastructure vulnerability

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that recent floods caused massive damage because human mistakes made the situation worse. People built houses, roads and shops on riverbeds and floodplains, so when the rivers swelled, the water had nowhere to go. This diverted flows into villages and towns, causing displacement even when the flood stayed within normal limits. Many tourists ignored weather warnings and lost their lives, and authorities failed to restrict access during dangerous conditions. Roads, including parts of the M5 motorway were not built with proper drainage, so the water piled up and broke embankments. Karachi also flooded badly because buildings were allowed on natural waterways like the Malir river. The writer argues that Pakistan should map its rivers and drains using satellite data, remove illegal structures and apply climate based planning to avoid repeating such disasters.

Facts and Figures:

- More than 200,000 people were displaced in Sindh's riverine areas
- The flood damage intensified in GB and KP where many deaths occurred
- The M5 motorway required emergency blockage of culverts to control water flow
- Illegal bunds by landowners proliferated on the Ravi, Chenab and Sutlej riverbeds

To put it simply, Pakistan's floods turn deadly not because nature is ruthless but because planning is careless. It urges the country to stop treating rivers as dead spaces and start respecting their ancient routes. Until encroachments are removed, climate filters applied and science based planning embraced, each monsoon will repeat the same painful story. The writer's call for introspection suggests that resilience begins not with slogans but with the courage to correct long standing structural faults.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Virulence meaning destructive force, Synonym severity, Antonym mildness
- Encroachment meaning unlawful occupation of land, Synonym intrusion, Antonym retreat
- Ominous meaning signalling danger, Synonym foreboding, Antonym reassuring
- Moratorium meaning temporary ban, Synonym suspension, Antonym continuation
- Watershed meaning land area draining into a river system, Synonym catchment, Antonym divide
- Deflection meaning diversion from course, Synonym deviation, Antonym alignment
- Capricious meaning unpredictable, Synonym erratic, Antonym consistent
- Marooned meaning left trapped or stranded, Synonym isolated, Antonym rescued
- Reforestation meaning planting trees in cleared areas, Synonym afforestation, Antonym deforestation
- Adequacy meaning sufficiency, Synonym appropriateness, Antonym inadequacy

ANOTHER GENOCIDE

Author: Mahir Ali

Summary:

The article explores the unending nightmare unfolding in Sudan, where the recent massacres in El Fasher have forced the world to glance at a conflict it had long brushed aside. The writer argues that the RSF's brutal onslaught carried out after a year-long siege has reopened the world's eyes yet stirred no meaningful action. He creates contrast between global indifference and Donald Trump's performative outrage over Nigeria, pointing out how

selective compassion exposes the narrowness of global politics. Sudan has been carved up by violence since independence, but the scale of bloodshed after the 2023 fallout between the RSF and SAF has pushed the country to the brink. Both sides have trampled human rights, yet the RSF stands out for its deep foreign entanglements especially with the UAE whose weapons, mercenaries and economic interests have kept the militia flush with resources. Sudan's agony is not simply a civil war but the ugly face of a global power contest playing out in African soil.

The writer shows how the RSF and SAF have turned Sudan into a battleground for regional rivalries, drawing in states like Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt and Turkiye. He argues that the so-called international community has repeatedly looked the other way, unable or unwilling to halt atrocities in Sudan just as it failed in Gaza. Even if the UAE is pressured to withdraw support from Hemedti, he warns that Sudan's misery will not vanish overnight because too many actors now have their hands in the conflict. He concludes with a sobering reflection that Africa's 21st century has witnessed a fresh scramble for influence, resources and strategic dominance, while the people caught in the crossfire continue to pay the ultimate price. Sudan's wounds, he writes, may heal only when the world stops treating African lives as expendable and begins to challenge the forces feeding the chaos.

Overview:

This article shows Sudan's deepening tragedy and the foreign forces that keep stoking its flames. It reveals how regional power struggles, global indifference and the ambitions of rival militias have locked Sudan in a cycle of violence. It also exposes the hypocrisy of selective global outrage and underscores the need for genuine international pressure to curb the flow of weapons, money and political cover sustaining the conflict.

NOTES:

The article underlines that Sudan's conflict has spiralled into a full-scale humanitarian catastrophe, with the RSF's brutal takeover of El Fasher after a year-long siege serving as the latest reminder of the country's deepening collapse. It highlights that both the RSF and SAF have committed grave abuses, yet the RSF's atrocities stand out because of its powerful foreign backers, particularly the UAE, which supplies weapons, mercenaries and financial incentives tied to Sudan's gold mines, fertile lands and key ports. The writer stresses that Sudan is no longer just a civil war but a theatre for regional rivalries involving Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt and Turkiye, all of whom fuel the conflict by backing different sides. The writer criticises the so-called international community for turning a blind eye, echoing its failures in Gaza, and argues that genocide persists because powerful states prefer geopolitical gains over human lives. The article concludes that Sudan's suffering will not end unless the world reins in the foreign actors sustaining the violence and abandons the notion that African lives are expendable in the global quest for influence.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- International Relations: Proxy conflicts, regional alliances, global power politics
- Current Affairs: African conflicts, humanitarian crises, global inaction
- Political Science: State failure, militarised governance, legitimacy and sovereignty

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Sudan has been suffering from a horrific civil war made worse by the involvement of foreign countries. The RSF militia attacked El Fasher after blocking it for almost a year, leading to killings, torture and widespread destruction. The Sudanese army is also involved in violence, and both groups get weapons and money from other countries that want influence in the region. For example, the UAE has supplied the RSF with weapons and even foreign fighters because it wants access to Sudan's gold, agricultural land and ports. Other countries support the Sudanese army, which makes the war even more complicated. The writer says the world talks about stopping genocide but rarely acts, just as in Gaza. He argues that Sudan's people will continue to suffer unless powerful countries stop supporting the militias and start caring about human life rather than power.

Facts and Figures:

- El Fasher faced a year-long siege before falling to the RSF
- Sudan has faced recurring conflict since independence in 1956
- The RSF previously aided the Saudi-Emirati war effort in Yemen
- Weapons supplied to the RSF reportedly include stock from the UK and China
- Regional players involved include the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt and Turkiye

To sum up, The article reveals how Sudan's agony is tied not only to internal rivalries but also to a global contest for power, wealth and strategic control. The writer urges the world to wake up to the cost of its indifference and recognise that genuine peace requires dismantling the networks that arm, finance and protect those who commit mass violence. The call is clear: unless the world stops playing favourites and starts valuing human lives, Sudan's suffering will only deepen.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Massacre meaning large scale killing, Synonym slaughter, Antonym rescue
- Siege meaning a prolonged military blockade, Synonym encirclement, Antonym withdrawal
- Mendacity meaning deliberate untruthfulness, Synonym deceit, Antonym honesty
- Warlord meaning an armed leader with private military power, Synonym militia chief, Antonym civilian leader
- Protagonist meaning a main actor in a conflict, Synonym leading figure, Antonym bystander
- Patronage meaning active support or sponsorship, Synonym backing, Antonym opposition
- Panacea meaning a supposed cure for all problems, Synonym remedy, Antonym crisis
- Hegemony meaning dominance by one power, Synonym supremacy, Antonym subordination
- Conduit meaning a channel through which something flows, Synonym pathway, Antonym barrier
- Neocolonial meaning modern forms of foreign control, Synonym indirect domination, Antonym independence

TAKING BACK EDUCATION

Author: Faisal Bari

Summary:

The article shows the confusion surrounding the 27th Amendment, which may attempt to pull education back under federal control, though no clear draft has surfaced. The writer argues that if this move means centralising teacher recruitment, training, transfers or school administration, it would fly in the face of logic since these responsibilities demand local knowledge and hands-on oversight. Provinces already struggle to manage such vast systems from their own capitals so expecting the federation to run them is like trying to steer a ship from a distant shore. However, the real battleground lies in curriculum control. For decades, federal authorities have tried to shape young minds through a tightly wrapped national and religious identity, often sidelining the rich tapestry of local languages and cultures. Even after curriculum authority shifted to the provinces under the 18th Amendment, the federation struck back with the Single National Curriculum, turning a complex educational challenge into a political contest for narrative dominance.

The writer argues that efforts to impose uniformity on a diverse nation are misplaced and ultimately counterproductive. The writer stresses that no province has ever disagreed on mathematics or science, and the disputes always circle back to culture, identity and language. The writer notes that years of loading Islamiyat and Pakistan Studies with ideological content have not produced the desired transformation, which should have been a wake-up call for policymakers. He insists that true belonging grows from local roots, not from a curriculum designed

to iron out difference. Children learn best when they begin in their mother tongue, and societies grow strongest when linguistic and cultural plurality is embraced, not feared. The writer warns that centralising education yet again will neither elevate quality nor foster unity. It will only repeat old mistakes by placing power far from the communities that education is meant to serve.

Overview:

This article examines attempts to re-centralise education in Pakistan, questioning the logic, feasibility and intent behind such a move. It highlights the recurring tension between federal control and provincial autonomy, especially around curriculum design, language policy and identity formation. It calls for deeper decentralisation and a shift toward education that strengthens cognitive development, respects diversity and addresses real learning needs rather than political anxieties.

NOTES:

The article highlights that the debate around the 27th Amendment remains clouded by ambiguity, yet one issue stands out clearly: the federation's intention to reclaim control over education raises serious concerns. The writer explains that administrative tasks such as teacher recruitment, transfers, training, school management and textbook publishing have long been provincial responsibilities that require local insight and hands-on oversight, making centralisation impractical and counterproductive. He argues that the real struggle is over the curriculum, a long standing point of contention for federal authorities seeking to shape national and religious identity through uniform narratives, often at the cost of local languages and cultures. The article notes how the Single National Curriculum revived this centralising impulse despite provincial reluctance and warns that repeated attempts to impose ideological content have failed to deliver their intended results. The writer emphasises that children learn best through their mother tongue, that diversity strengthens national identity and that meaningful reform requires devolved decision making rather than a return to top down control.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs: 18th Amendment, federal provincial dynamics, curriculum debates
- Public Administration: Decentralisation, governance of education systems
- Current Affairs: Policy reforms, identity politics in education
- Sociology: Language, culture and socialisation through curriculum

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that the government is considering changes that might give the federation more control over education, but this idea raises many concerns. Teaching jobs, school management and exams are already handled by provinces because these tasks need local knowledge. It would be impossible for the federal government to manage hundreds of thousands of teachers across Pakistan. The writer says the real issue is the curriculum because the centre wants to influence what children learn about identity, religion and culture. For example, the Single National Curriculum tried to make one curriculum for the whole country, but many provinces resisted because it ignored local languages and traditions. He argues that children learn better when early education happens in their mother tongue, just as a Sindhi speaking child understands concepts more naturally in Sindhi. He warns that making everything uniform will not fix the problems in the education system and may even weaken students' learning.

Facts and Figures:

- Punjab has around four hundred thousand teachers
- Teacher management is currently a provincial responsibility
- Curriculum control shifted to the provinces after the 18th Amendment
- Provinces continued using the old federal curriculum for years due to limited capacity
- The Single National Curriculum was implemented nationwide despite resistance

To wrap up, the article suggests that education cannot flourish under a one size fits all approach. It calls for deeper devolution, stronger respect for linguistic and cultural diversity and a shift from political control toward real learning. If Pakistan wants an educated and confident generation, it must stop trying to shape identity through centralised curriculum control and start empowering the communities that understand their children's needs best.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Devolved meaning transferred to a lower level, Synonym delegated, Antonym centralised
- Domain meaning an area of control, Synonym jurisdiction, Antonym exclusion
- Persuaded meaning convinced through pressure, Synonym influenced, Antonym resisted
- Dissipative meaning causing loss of unity or cohesion, Synonym dispersive, Antonym cohesive
- Overwhelming meaning excessively dominating, Synonym overpowering, Antonym minimal
- Reluctant meaning unwilling or hesitant, Synonym resistant, Antonym eager
- Impose meaning force something upon others, Synonym enforce, Antonym withdraw
- Cognitive meaning related to mental processes, Synonym intellectual, Antonym non rational
- Stellar meaning outstanding or excellent, Synonym exceptional, Antonym poor
- Narrative meaning a controlled story or message, Synonym discourse, Antonym silence

TURKISH MEDIATION

Summary:

The article captures the diplomatic scramble unfolding around the Pak-Afghan deadlock, where the collapse of the recent Istanbul talks has pushed regional players to step in before tensions spiral out of control. The writer notes that Turkish President Erdogan has taken the lead by dispatching his top ministers and intelligence chief to Islamabad, signalling a serious attempt to steady the situation and secure a lasting ceasefire. Turkiye and Qatar already instrumental in brokering last month's truce are once again trying to breathe life into a fragile peace. Iran has also offered its channels of mediation, while regional states warn that the dispute must not be allowed to metastasise into a wider conflict. The editorial argues that the ball is now firmly in Kabul's court, as Pakistan cannot manage internal security when groups like the TTP roam freely across the border. Without firm Afghan guarantees, every diplomatic effort risks collapsing like a house built on sand.

In its broader reflection, the article stresses that Pakistan must widen the circle of engagement by bringing China and Russia into the process, since both have economic stakes in Afghanistan and influence with the Taliban. China has consistently reminded Kabul of its pledges to combat transnational terrorism and eliminate safe havens. The writer suggests that a coordinated push involving Turkiye, Qatar, China and Russia may finally force the Taliban to make verifiable commitments rather than vague verbal assurances. The article warns that the region stands at a dangerous crossroads. Without collective pressure and clear guarantees, the peace process will remain a revolving door leading nowhere, and Afghanistan's instability will continue to spill across borders like a fire allowed to rage unchecked.

Overview:

This article gives comprehensive analysis of renewed regional diplomacy aimed at preventing another breakdown in the Pak-Afghan relationship. It explains how Turkiye, Qatar, Iran, China and Russia are stepping in to push Kabul toward credible counterterrorism commitments. It also highlights the strategic risks Pakistan faces when border security depends on Afghan restraint rather than enforceable guarantees.

NOTES:

The article underlines how the collapse of the Istanbul talks has pushed regional states to intensify their diplomatic efforts to stabilise Pak-Afghan relations. It highlights Turkiye's decisive role with President Erdogan sending his

foreign minister, defence minister and intelligence chief to Pakistan to keep the fragile ceasefire alive. Qatar and Iran have also stepped forward, signalling a shared regional desire to prevent renewed hostilities. The writer stresses that Pakistan's internal security challenges cannot be managed when Afghan soil continues to host groups like the TTP, making firm and verifiable guarantees from Kabul indispensable. The article explains that Pakistan must widen its diplomatic outreach by involving China and Russia, both of which possess leverage due to their economic interests in Afghanistan. China's repeated reminders to the Taliban about eliminating safe havens are cited as important pressure points. The article concludes that peace hinges on coordinated regional pressure, credible Afghan commitments and a collective resolve to stop the conflict from escalating into something far more dangerous.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Current Affairs: Pak-Afghan relations, regional mediation, counterterrorism policy
- International Relations: Multilateral diplomacy, regional alliances, conflict resolution
- Pakistan Affairs: Border security, terrorism spillover, strategic partnerships

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that peace talks between Pakistan and Afghanistan recently broke down, so countries like Turkiye, Qatar and Iran are now trying to help both sides avoid another conflict. Turkiye is taking the lead by sending its foreign minister, defence minister and intelligence chief to Pakistan. The main issue is that militant groups like the TTP operate from inside Afghanistan and attack Pakistan, while Afghan authorities do little to stop them. Pakistan wants Afghanistan to give firm guarantees that these groups will not be allowed to cross the border. The writer says that Pakistan should also involve China and Russia because they have influence in Afghanistan and want stability for economic reasons. For example, China reminded the Taliban in previous meetings that they must fight terrorism and stop extremists from using Afghan territory. The article argues that unless the Taliban give clear, provable guarantees, peace efforts will keep failing.

Facts and Figures:

- The third round of Pak-Afghan peace talks failed in Istanbul
- Turkish President Erdogan is sending senior ministers and intelligence officials to Islamabad
- Iran has offered mediation through its foreign minister
- China, Pakistan and Afghanistan hold a trilateral foreign ministers' dialogue
- Last month's ceasefire was arranged by Turkiye and Qatar

To sum up, the article warns that Pakistan and Afghanistan stand at a critical moment where hesitation or vague promises could plunge the region back into conflict. It argues that only coordinated pressure from Turkiye, Qatar, China, Russia and Iran can convince the Taliban to honour their commitments. Peace cannot survive on good intentions alone. It requires guarantees that hold up under scrutiny, partnerships that do not waver and a regional effort strong enough to steer both countries away from another cycle of violence.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Metastazise: spread into a larger and more dangerous form, Synonym escalate, Antonym stabilise
- Deadlock: A complete standstill in negotiations, Synonym stalemate, Antonym breakthrough
- Ironclad: firm and unbreakable, Synonym rigid, Antonym uncertain
- Havoc: widespread destruction, Synonym chaos, Antonym order
- Dialogue: structured discussion between parties, Synonym consultation, Antonym silence

RENEWABLES OPTION

Summary:

The article points out a clear and compelling case for why Pakistan must overhaul its outdated power grid if it hopes to unlock its vast renewable energy potential. It explains that solar and wind resources could help the country move away from expensive and polluting fossil fuels, yet this promise remains out of reach because the national transmission system cannot reliably absorb large-scale clean energy. The UN-ESCAP report cited in the editorial stresses that modernising the grid is not a luxury but a necessity, as Pakistan's energy transition will fall apart unless the system is strengthened, expanded and stabilised. The writer underscores that a successful shift away from coal demands technology, investment, consistent policies and a just transition that protects workers and vulnerable communities. Without clear direction and inclusive decision making, the transition risks turning into another stalled ambition.

In its broader reflection, the article argues that renewable energy remains Pakistan's strongest path toward affordability, climate resilience and long-term energy security. Yet this path is continuously blocked by policy reversals, bureaucratic hurdles and chronic grid instability that prevents wind power from Sindh from reaching consumers. The writer highlights that solar and wind are cheaper than local coal and have already become mainstream across the Asia-Pacific region, where countries have surged ahead despite debt burdens and climate stress. Pakistan, however, finds itself trapped in power sector politics and investor mistrust. The article concludes that only stable policies, institutional reform and serious investment in grid resilience can turn Pakistan's natural advantages into dependable national power. If regional states can lead the global renewable surge, Pakistan has no excuse to lag behind.

Overview:

This article examines Pakistan's energy infrastructure and highlights the urgency of modernising the national grid to integrate large-scale renewable energy. It places Pakistan's challenges within a regional context and argues that clean energy adoption requires stable policy direction, institutional coordination, strong transmission networks and investor confidence. The editorial positions renewable energy as the most viable solution to Pakistan's affordability crisis, climate vulnerability and dependence on volatile fossil fuel markets.

NOTES:

The article highlights Pakistan's urgent need to modernise its power grid because the current transmission system cannot support large-scale renewable energy, even though the country has vast solar and wind potential. It highlights how outdated infrastructure, policy inconsistency and grid instability prevent renewable resources, especially wind power from Sindh, from reaching consumers. The UN report stresses that Pakistan's shift away from fossil fuels will collapse without strong investment, reliable planning and a just transition that protects workers and communities. The writer points out that renewable technologies are already cheaper than domestic coal, yet investor confidence remains low due to payment delays, bureaucratic hurdles and frequent policy reversals. The article also notes that the wider Asia-Pacific region continues to lead global renewable adoption despite similar challenges, proving that Pakistan's lag is not due to lack of potential but lack of coordinated reforms and long-term grid resilience.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Environmental Science – Renewable energy, climate mitigation, energy transition
- Current Affairs – Power sector reforms, energy security, policy stability
- Pakistan Affairs – Governance of electricity, institutional challenges, economic impact of energy crises
- Economics – Investment barriers, cost of energy, infrastructure gaps

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan has plenty of sunlight and strong wind that could help produce clean and cheap electricity. However, the country's power grid is too old and weak to carry this renewable energy. For example, wind farms in Sindh often produce electricity that cannot reach the rest of the country because the transmission lines are unstable. The writer says that renewable energy is cheaper than coal and better for the environment, but Pakistan keeps falling behind because of changing policies, slow approvals and investor mistrust. The UN report mentioned in the article says Pakistan needs a fair energy transition that protects workers who depend on coal-related jobs. The article also notes that other Asian countries even those with financial problems are moving ahead with renewable energy. Pakistan can do the same if it strengthens the grid and creates stable long-term policies that attract investment.

Facts and Figures:

- Pakistan has significant untapped solar and wind potential
- Wind power generated in Sindh often cannot be fully transmitted due to grid limitations
- Renewable energy is cheaper than locally produced coal
- ESCAP's 2025 Review highlights the need for a just transition and strong policy consistency
- The Asia-Pacific region remains a global leader in renewable adoption

To make it straightforwardly, Pakistan cannot secure a cleaner and more affordable energy future unless it fixes the foundations of its power system. Strengthening the grid, stabilising policies and creating trust for investors are essential steps toward a modern energy landscape. Pakistan has the natural resources and regional examples to guide its transition, but only bold reform and sustained commitment can turn potential into progress.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Derail meaning cause failure or disruption, Synonym obstruct, Antonym advance
- Just transition meaning a fair shift to clean energy, Synonym equitable shift, Antonym unequal change
- Hampered meaning held back or obstructed, Synonym restricted, Antonym supported
- Volatile meaning unpredictable and unstable, Synonym uncertain, Antonym steady
- Resilience meaning strength to withstand pressure, Synonym durability, Antonym fragility
- Compelling meaning convincing or forceful, Synonym persuasive, Antonym unconvincing
- Burdens meaning difficult responsibilities or stresses, Synonym pressures, Antonym relief
- Inclusive meaning involving all stakeholders, Synonym participatory, Antonym exclusive
- Incentive meaning something that motivates action, Synonym encouragement, Antonym deterrent
- Duplicate meaning repeat unnecessarily, Synonym replicate, Antonym simplify

SLIDE INTO AUTHORITARIANISM

Author: Maleeha Lodhi

Summary:

The article highlights Pakistan's drift toward authoritarian rule, a slide that has gathered pace over the past three years and now stands on the brink of deepening through the proposed 27th Constitutional Amendment. The writer argues that the amendment mirrors the shadows of the previous one, which pushed through parliament in secrecy and stripped judicial independence by placing the courts under executive sway. She warns that the new amendment follows the same playbook, concealed from the public until exposed by political actors and immediately criticised as an assault on the separation of powers. By outlining a constitutional court designed to be executive friendly, the forced rotation of judges to suppress independence and changes to Article 243 expanding military power, the article shows how these reforms hollow out democracy from within. The writer describes this as a systematic attempt to

weaken judicial autonomy and cement a command structure where civilian authority is overshadowed by military influence.

The article situates the amendment in a troubling continuum of democratic backsliding, marked by muzzled dissent, a rubber stamp parliament, silenced opposition, censored media and an ever tightening grip of establishment power. Unlike past civilian overreach, the present erosion is deeper because the establishment now shapes political outcomes directly, from controlling protests to policing digital space. The writer argues that today's climate of repression goes far beyond earlier autocratic phases, even during civilian rule. She concludes that the amendment is not a path to stability but a symptom of a fragile government seeking refuge in coercion. Power seized through manipulation and intimidation neither brings security nor endurance. It merely exposes how far a state has drifted from democratic confidence and how urgently it needs to return to constitutional integrity.

Overview:

This article highlights Pakistan's accelerating authoritarian drift and examines how the proposed 27th Constitutional Amendment threatens judicial independence, democratic norms and the civil military balance. It explains how constitutional restructuring, expanded military authority, executive control over courts and suppressed political freedoms combine to form a broader pattern of democratic regression. The article highlights the stark contrast between past cycles of repression and the current phase, marked by direct establishment involvement, systematic silencing of dissent and manipulation of institutional checks.

NOTES:

The article highlights Pakistan's accelerating drift toward authoritarianism and argues that the proposed 27th Constitutional Amendment deepens this regression by undermining judicial independence and expanding executive and military dominance. It recalls how the previous amendment passed in secrecy and eroded the courts' autonomy, and warns that the new proposal follows the same pattern through the creation of a government compliant constitutional court, the forced rotation of judges to dilute independence and changes to Article 243 that widen military authority and grant lifetime privileges to top ranks. The writer stresses that these reforms weaken the Supreme Court's constitutional jurisdiction and enable the sidelining of judges who do not align with the executive's preferences. She also notes that earlier attempts to roll back financial protections for provinces under the NFC Award signal a broader assault on the spirit of the 18th Amendment. In tracing the wider political climate, the article points to shrinking civic space, the suppression of protests, raids on opposition leaders, restrictions on digital platforms and the tightening grip of the establishment over parliament, media and judiciary. It argues that this phase of democratic erosion is more intense than previous periods because the establishment now plays a direct role in shaping political outcomes. The writer concludes that such concentration of power never ensures stability, as history repeatedly shows that governments relying on coercion and legal manipulation ultimately expose their own weakness rather than their strength.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs: Constitutional amendments, civil military relations, democratic evolution
- Political Science: Authoritarianism, separation of powers, institutional capture
- Current Affairs: Judicial restructuring, political repression, democratic indicators
- Constitutional Law: Role of courts, constitutional safeguards, amendments and power distribution

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan is moving toward a more authoritarian system because the government and establishment are gaining more control over courts, politics and freedoms. The writer says the new 27th Amendment is alarming because it aims to create a new constitutional court filled with judges chosen by the government, which would weaken the Supreme Court's power. It also allows judges to be transferred without consent, giving the executive a way to sideline independent judges. The amendment extends military privileges by creating a powerful

new defence chief and granting lifetime immunity to top military ranks. The writer adds that political protests are restricted, opposition leaders face raids and detentions and the media is tightly controlled. For example, bans on rallies were once rare but are now frequent. The article argues that all of this shows Pakistan is drifting away from democracy and that history proves such power grabs do not make governments secure.

Facts and Figures:

- The 26th Amendment passed in secrecy without lawmakers seeing the final text
- The proposed 27th Amendment includes a federal constitutional court and judge transfers
- Article 243 reforms expand military authority and recognise top ranks with lifelong immunity
- Past three years show sharp decline in freedom of assembly, judiciary independence and media space
- Hybrid governance expanded establishment influence since the 2018 and 2022 political shifts

To sum up, the article warns that Pakistan stands at a critical juncture where constitutional manipulation and unchecked authority threaten to suffocate democratic life. It argues that amendments crafted to tighten control may offer short term comfort to those in power but ultimately expose institutional fragility. No nation safeguards its future by hollowing out its own democracy. True stability rests on strong constitutional norms, accountable institutions and a political system confident enough to let law, not force, lead the way.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Regression meaning a return to a worse state, Synonym decline, Antonym progress
- Coercion meaning pressure applied to force compliance, Synonym compulsion, Antonym consent
- Denude meaning strip away power or authority, Synonym deprive, Antonym empower
- Erode meaning weaken over time, Synonym diminish, Antonym reinforce
- Aggrandisement meaning expansion of power, Synonym elevation, Antonym restraint
- Subservient meaning excessively obedient, Synonym compliant, Antonym independent
- Legitimacy meaning rightful authority, Synonym credibility, Antonym unlawfulness
- Immunity meaning legal protection from consequences, Synonym exemption, Antonym accountability
- Repression meaning control through force, Synonym suppression, Antonym freedom
- Manipulation meaning deliberate control for advantage, Synonym exploitation, Antonym fairness

KILLING THE CONSTITUTION

Author - Zahid Hussain

Summary:

The article shows how Pakistan's constitutional structure has been hollowed out from within, not by overt military coups but by a parliament acting as a willing accomplice. The writer argues that while past dictators tore through the Constitution with brute force, the current political order has done something far more corrosive by mutating the document under the guise of legality. He describes the 27th Amendment as the final blow that turns constitutional decay into constitutional death. Pushed through by a legislature with a shaky mandate, rushed without consultation, engineered through defections and passed in the absence of opposition, the amendment dismantles what little judicial independence survived the previous reform. By granting lifetime immunity to top military ranks, elevating the army chief to field marshal status and extending his term with built in provisions for further extensions, it hands unchecked power to an unelected centre while stripping civilian institutions of authority and credibility.

In its broader reflection, the article warns that Pakistan has entered a phase of democratic erosion unprecedented even by its turbulent past. Earlier governments imposed repression, but they often acted on their own. What distinguishes the present moment is the direct and overt role of the establishment in shaping outcomes, policing dissent, engineering trials, managing legislatures and controlling the media landscape. The writer describes

parliament as a puppet stage where lawmakers praise democracy while voting for measures that suffocate it. The PPP, once a symbol of resistance, is cast as complicit in undoing the very Constitution it claims as its legacy. The article concludes with a sobering reminder that constitutions do not die only when suspended. They die when lawmakers themselves legitimise their dismemberment. It is a moment when Pakistan risks losing not only its democratic architecture but also the unity of the federation and the credibility of the rule of law.

Overview:

This article highlights how the 27th Amendment threatens judicial independence, civilian supremacy and the democratic framework. It situates the current developments within a pattern of political manipulation, institutional capture and growing military dominance, illustrating how constitutional amendments can be weaponised to formalise authoritarian power.

NOTES:

The article highlights how the 27th Constitutional Amendment has pushed Pakistan into one of the darkest chapters of its constitutional history by dismantling judicial independence, empowering the establishment and reducing parliament to a ceremonial chamber. It explains that while past dictators suspended the Constitution through force, the present leadership has hollowed it out through a legislature acting as a rubber stamp, rushing amendments without debate, coercing votes and sidelining opposition through disqualifications and engineered trials. The writer stresses that the amendment grants sweeping and unprecedented powers to the army chief, elevates him to field marshal, extends his tenure and grants lifetime immunity to top military ranks and even the president, which undermines the rule of law. He describes how lawmakers defended changes they barely understood, how secrecy surrounded the drafting process and how the PPP, despite its democratic legacy, enabled constitutional dismantling under the pretext of the Charter of Democracy. The article also warns that the judiciary's remaining autonomy has been crippled, civilian authority further diminished and federal unity weakened, as the state drifts deeper into a praetorian system where constitutional principles are sacrificed to secure political survival.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs: Constitutional evolution, democratic decline, civil military relations
- Political Science: Authoritarianism, institutional capture, democratic backsliding
- Current Affairs: Judicial independence, legislative manipulation, governance crises

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan's Constitution is being weakened because recent amendments are passed secretly and without proper debate. The writer says many lawmakers voted without reading the document, and some were pressured into supporting it. The new amendment gives the army chief more power than ever before, including the rank of field marshal, a five year term and lifetime immunity, which means he cannot be held accountable for any actions. The president and top military officers also receive the same immunity. Judges can now be transferred without their consent, which allows the government to push aside those who act independently. The article says opposition lawmakers have been disqualified through questionable trials, parliament is controlled and media is restricted. For example, the amendment passed even though most opposition parties boycotted the vote. The writer argues that Pakistan is moving toward a system where the Constitution exists in name but not in practice.

Facts and Figures:

- Gen Zia declared the Constitution a piece of paper he could tear anytime
- Gen Musharraf suspended the Constitution in 1999 and again in 2007
- The 26th Amendment weakened judicial independence
- The 27th Amendment grants lifetime immunity to the president and five star military ranks
- The army chief is elevated to field marshal with an extended term and possible extension
- Opposition lawmakers were disqualified in antiterrorism courts before the vote

To wrap up, Pakistan is at a critical point where constitutional integrity hangs by a thread. It argues that amendments pushed through secrecy and coercion reveal a state losing faith in democratic principles and leaning heavily on unelected centres of authority. A Constitution survives only when its spirit is protected. When leaders hollow it out for political convenience, the country risks sliding into a system where law becomes an ornament and power becomes the only governing force.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Abrogate meaning formally end something, Synonym abolish, Antonym uphold
- Mutilate meaning severely damage, Synonym deform, Antonym preserve
- Praetorian meaning dominated by the military, Synonym militarised, Antonym civilian
- Semblance meaning outward appearance, Synonym impression, Antonym reality
- Hypocrisy meaning false appearance of virtue, Synonym insincerity, Antonym honesty
- Mandate meaning authority given by voters, Synonym approval, Antonym rejection
- Subservient meaning controlled by another, Synonym compliant, Antonym independent
- Dubious meaning doubtful or questionable, Synonym suspect, Antonym credible
- Erode meaning reduce gradually, Synonym weaken, Antonym strengthen
- Impunity meaning exemption from punishment, Synonym immunity, Antonym accountability

FEARING THE SPECTRE OF GODOT

Author - Jawed Naqvi

Summary:

The article traces the rise of Zohran Mamdani through a sweeping historical lens, showing how his ascent unsettles entrenched right-wing forces that spent decades fighting the phantom of Marxist revolution. The writer places Mamdani in a lineage of left-leaning politics shaped not by rigid ideology but by lived realities, comparing his democratic socialism to earlier experiments like Kerala's 1957 communist government. He argues that Mamdani is not the spectre of classical communism that haunted Europe in 1848, nor the threat that pushed leaders from Churchill to Zia to crush even imagined currents of egalitarianism. Instead, Mamdani emerges as a figure shaped by a fractured political moment in America, where the right's own excesses and the public's disillusionment with Zionist influence created an unexpected opening for a candidate who speaks to poverty, justice and equality. His victory, the writer suggests, unfolded against the backdrop of internal ruptures within MAGA circles, especially after Charlie Kirk's assassination weakened Zionist lobbies and helped carve out a new political middle ground.

The article widens its frame to argue that Mamdani's significance lies not merely in his identity but in what he represents for a world caught between exhausted ideologies and the search for new political meaning. The writer compares Frankenstein's monster with Beckett's Godot to show how political forces often create outcomes they cannot control. Mamdani's success is portrayed as a convergence of global discontent, shifting loyalties and the enduring appeal of leaders who challenge entrenched power structures. Born in the year the Soviet Union collapsed, Mamdani embodies a generation that inherited a world rebranded as "free market democracy," a system that tried to bury ideological debate under consumerism and strategic narratives. Yet this moment reveals that the old scripts no longer hold. Mamdani stands as a symbol of renewed political imagination, undefined yet full of promise, a modern Godot whose arrival signals that hope sometimes emerges where the world least expects it.

Overview:

This article blends political analysis with historical reflection to explain why Zohran Mamdani's rise in New York politics resonates far beyond the city he will govern. It examines the global history of anti-communist backlash, the American right's internal fractures, the weakening of Zionist influence and the shifting ideological mood that

enabled a democratic socialist to gain ground. It positions Mamdani not as an ideological outlier but as a product of political realignments shaped by discontent, generational change and a search for new narratives.

NOTES:

The article highlights how Zohran Mamdani's rise unsettles long entrenched right-wing narratives that once mobilised global political forces against the imagined threat of communism. It explains how the bourgeoisie historically engineered religious, cultural and political structures to counter left-leaning movements, producing figures like Hitler, Zia, Pinochet and McCarthy, yet these strategies often backfired and created new forms of extremism, including leaders like Trump. The writer connects Mamdani's political moment to the wider turmoil within the American right after Charlie Kirk's assassination, which weakened Zionist influence and fractured MAGA cohesion, creating space for Mamdani's message of democratic socialism. The article also recalls global turning points such as the Soviet collapse, the Kerala communist experiment and shifts within US propaganda culture to show how ideological landscapes evolve. Mamdani is portrayed as a symbol shaped by discontent, generational change and the collapse of old political certainties, much like Beckett's Godot who embodies hope, ambiguity and the possibility of a new political imagination.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Political Science: Ideological movements, democratic socialism, populism
- International Relations: Impact of global ideological shifts on domestic politics
- Current Affairs: American political fragmentation, influence of Zionist and right-wing lobbies
- Sociology: Class politics, social movements, identity shaping political behaviour

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Zohran Mamdani, a newly elected mayor in New York is called a communist by critics like Donald Trump, but the writer says this is not accurate. Mamdani describes himself as a democratic socialist, someone who focuses on helping poor and working-class people. The article traces how, throughout history, powerful groups fought against communism by supporting far-right leaders and movements. These efforts sometimes backfired and created leaders like Trump. The writer says Mamdani's rise became possible partly because the American right and pro-Israel groups weakened after Charlie Kirk, a major conservative figure, was assassinated. This event created a political shift that benefited Mamdani. The writer also connects Mamdani's rise to past global moments such as communist governments in Kerala or Soviet influence during the Cold War, showing how political ideas evolve. Mamdani is described as a modern symbol of hope much like the mysterious character Godot in the famous play, because people see in him a possibility for fairness and change.

Facts and Figures:

- Zohran Mamdani identifies as a democratic socialist
- Charlie Kirk was assassinated before turning thirty two
- Kirk's death weakened American right-wing Zionist alliances
- The writer references the 1957 Kerala communist government
- Mamdani was born in 1991, the year the Soviet Union collapsed

In essence, the article closes with the argument that Mamdani's rise reflects a deeper global search for alternatives as old ideological boundaries lose their force. It shows how political figures become symbols of hope when societies grow tired of manipulation and polarisation. At moments of confusion and collapse, new leaders often emerge not as the return of old ideologies but as mirrors of public longing for justice, dignity and direction.

GLIMPSE OF OUR EXPORT QUALITY

Author: Riaz Riazuddin

Summary:

The article examines the gap between Pakistan's natural strengths and the low value of its manufactured exports. The writer describes how a simple bottle of Himalayan salt found in a US store captures the long story of missed opportunities. The salt itself is world class, yet the packaging and value addition come from France, which shows how Pakistan still struggles to move beyond raw extraction. Despite having massive reserves and decades of independence, Pakistan ranks far below its potential in global salt production because mining practices remain outdated and quality enhancement has not kept pace with global standards. The writer notes that similar patterns appear in textiles and garments where competitors from Bangladesh, Vietnam, India, and Indonesia have captured market space that Pakistan once dominated.

The article argues that Pakistan's weakness lies not in raw materials but in economic policies that have undermined manufacturing and export competitiveness. Studies from the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics show that low innovation and poor quality control keep Pakistan's products out of higher end markets. Even simple items like shirts, trousers, and towels struggle to reach major international stores. The writer warns that the current enthusiasm around rare earth minerals could create new risks if policymakers repeat old mistakes. If earnings from minerals strengthen an overvalued currency, Pakistan may face a deeper form of Dutch disease that weakens its manufacturing even further. The article urges the state to correct policy failures before new export opportunities fall through the cracks once again.

Overview:

The article explores why Pakistan fails to convert natural resources into high quality export products. It explains how weak policies, outdated production methods, and limited innovation prevent Pakistan from competing with regional exporters. It warns that reliance on raw mineral exports cannot replace the need for strong manufacturing.

NOTES:

The article explains that Pakistan continues to lag in export performance because its policies fail to support quality manufacturing and value addition. Although the country has world class natural resources, such as Himalayan salt, its mining and processing methods remain outdated, which keeps export quality low and limits market reach. Competing countries in South Asia have captured global shelf space with higher quality garments, while Pakistan struggles to place even simple shirts and trousers in major stores. Research by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics shows that weak innovation, low product quality, and poor policy coordination erode Pakistan's competitiveness and restrict its ability to climb the value chain. The writer also warns that the recent focus on rare earth minerals may create new risks if policymakers repeat old mistakes, because a surge in mineral earnings can strengthen the currency and trigger Dutch disease, which would weaken manufacturing further. Without innovation, consistent industrial support, and modern production practices, Pakistan will remain stuck in low value exports despite its natural advantages.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Industrial policy, export competitiveness, resource management
- Economics: Value addition, trade performance, structural weaknesses
- Current Affairs: Regional competition, global markets
- International Relations: Trade patterns, economic diplomacy

Notes for beginners:

The article shows how Pakistan has strong natural resources but earns very little from them because most products are sold in raw form. For example, Himalayan salt is famous worldwide, yet the grinding and packaging that add

value are done abroad. This means foreign companies make most of the profit. In many US stores, Pakistani goods appear in small categories like car cleaning cloths while other countries fill shelves with shirts and jeans. Pakistan ranks seventeenth in global salt production despite having some of the world's largest reserves. Experts say the main reason is outdated mining and weak industrial policies. Without innovation and better manufacturing, Pakistan cannot compete with Bangladesh, Vietnam, or India in textiles and other products.

Facts and figures:

- Pakistan's salt reserves stand near ten billion tons
- Pakistan ranks seventeenth in global salt production despite massive reserves
- Salt miners still use drilling and blasting followed by manual excavation
- Pakistan's exports to the United States include basic textiles but lose ground in higher value garments
- Rare earth mineral exports have begun but carry risk of Dutch disease
- Competing countries like Bangladesh and Vietnam hold stronger positions in garment exports

To sum up, The article reminds that Pakistan's export challenges do not stem from lack of resources but from weak policy choices and slow industrial progress. Until Pakistan raises product quality, upgrades mining and manufacturing, and promotes innovation, it will keep exporting raw goods while other countries capture the real value. The message is straightforward. Pakistan must move from extraction to transformation if it wants long term economic strength.

Difficult words and meanings:

- Discern. To recognise or identify something clearly. Synonym detect. Antonym overlook
- Primitive. Very basic or undeveloped. Synonym rudimentary. Antonym advanced
- Innovation. Introduction of new ideas and methods. Synonym improvement. Antonym stagnation
- Competitiveness. Ability to perform well in comparison to rivals. Synonym capability. Antonym weakness
- Harbinger. A sign of what is to come. Synonym signal. Antonym surprise
- Extraction. Removal of a natural resource. Synonym removal. Antonym insertion
- Overvalued. Priced higher than true worth. Synonym inflated. Antonym undervalued

FRAGILE FUTURE

Summary:

The article warns that Pakistan is edging toward a dangerous climate tipping point as unchecked population growth, rapid environmental degradation and dwindling natural resources stretch the country's resilience to its limits. The World Bank's Climate and Country Development Report predicts a steep 20 to 30 percent decline in GDP by 2050 if current trends stay in place, a forecast that already feels real as floods, droughts and pollution strike harder each year. These shocks do more than damage crops. They hurt public health, strain food security and widen inequalities which can fuel unrest in regions already on edge.

The IMF stresses that climate resilience now depends on meaningful reform. Pakistan's Resilience and Sustainability Facility will link future development spending with climate screening to reduce waste and guide smarter investments. Yet the article warns that this push for reform comes at a moment when promised global support moves at a snail's pace. The Loss and Damage Fund has not released a single dollar and the World Bank's pledged Country Partnership Framework still waits for firm delivery. Without predictable, long term financing and policy continuity beyond political cycles, Pakistan's climate response risks falling apart. The country's smog, water scarcity and destructive monsoons are no longer warnings. They mark a new normal that demands urgent and sustained action.

Overview:

The article explains how Pakistan faces severe climate vulnerabilities that threaten its economy, society and environment. It shows how global lenders are pushing for climate aligned reforms, while delays in international support make the task even harder. It emphasises the need for climate centred planning at every level of government.

NOTES:

The article highlights Pakistan's rising exposure to climate shocks and the economic fallout that accompanies them. It explains the World Bank's projection of a significant GDP decline by 2050 if current conditions persist. It notes how recurring floods, droughts and pollution erode livelihoods and stretch public health systems. The IMF's stance links climate resilience to structural reform and stresses the importance of climate based screening in public spending. The article also warns that delays in global climate financing weaken Pakistan's capacity to adapt. It calls for planning that aligns federal and provincial actions with long term climate goals and insists that climate policy must continue across political transitions. The message is that Pakistan's future stability now depends on climate informed governance.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Climate policy, national resilience, environmental governance
- Current Affairs: Climate financing, global institutions, sustainable development
- International Relations: Climate diplomacy, global climate funds, IMF and World Bank frameworks
- Environmental Science: Climate change impacts and adaptation

Notes for beginners:

The article shows that Pakistan is facing stronger floods, hotter summers, heavier smog and more droughts. These problems are becoming worse because the population keeps rising and natural resources like water are being overused. The World Bank says Pakistan could lose up to one third of its GDP by 2050 if it does not fix these issues. The IMF is helping Pakistan create plans that check if every major project supports the climate rather than harms it. The problem is that rich countries promised money for climate support but have not delivered it yet. Pakistan needs long term planning, clean energy, water conservation and better city management if it wants to protect its people and economy.

Facts and figures:

- Projected GDP decline by 2050. Twenty to thirty percent
- Pakistan's climate exposure described as alarmingly high by the World Bank
- Loss and Damage Fund has not released any financial support
- World Bank's Country Partnership Framework promises twenty billion dollars but awaits full implementation
- Pakistan's population and pollution levels continue to rise while water scarcity tightens

To sum up, The article reminds that climate change is no longer a distant threat for Pakistan. It is a daily reality that shapes the economy, public health and national stability. The country needs reforms that place climate resilience at the heart of development and global partners must honour their commitments. Without steady planning and reliable support, Pakistan risks being overwhelmed by a crisis that grows deeper each year.

GOING NOWHERE

Summary:

The article explains how Pakistan's attempts to resolve its security issues with Afghanistan's Taliban regime remain stuck in the same old loop. Despite sending senior negotiators to Istanbul, Pakistan came home with nothing more than an extension of a fragile ceasefire. The Taliban continue to deny responsibility for cross border attacks by the TTP and refuse to accept even basic demands aimed at preventing militants from operating on Afghan soil. Their

shifting positions, from outright denial of militant presence to claiming that Pakistan's security issues are its own burden to carry, leave the talks adrift with no sign of genuine cooperation.

The writer stresses that the situation cannot continue as it is. Evidence of TTP activity inside Afghanistan is strong, and the ideological bond between the Afghan Taliban and the TTP is widely known. If Kabul seeks international legitimacy, it must restrain the groups that operate freely under its watch. The article argues that Pakistan may need to work with regional partners to impose real costs on the Taliban if they remain unmoved. It also warns Islamabad to stay alert to India's sudden warmth toward the Taliban, which aims to create fresh trouble on Pakistan's western flank.

Overview:

The article examines the deadlock in Pakistan Afghanistan talks, highlighting the Taliban's refusal to curb the TTP and Pakistan's growing frustration. It outlines the political, security and diplomatic stakes tied to this persistent standoff and stresses the need for a decisive strategy.

NOTES:

The article outlines the ongoing failure of talks between Pakistan and the Afghan Taliban due to Kabul's unwillingness to restrain the TTP. It highlights how repeated rounds of dialogue end without meaningful progress because of the Taliban's refusal to provide written guarantees or take responsibility for militants operating from their territory. The article notes that Pakistan has presented realistic demands grounded in international norms, while Kabul keeps shifting between denial and deflection. It emphasises that the Taliban's ideological closeness to the TTP complicates any cooperation. The article calls for a coordinated regional approach if the Taliban remain unwilling to act and warns that India's diplomatic outreach to Kabul could deepen the security challenge for Pakistan. It argues that unresolved issues on the border risk inflaming instability and undermining Pakistan's security planning.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Security challenges, Pakistan Afghanistan relations, border policy
- Current Affairs: Regional diplomacy, counterterrorism engagements
- International Relations: Non state actors, cross border militancy, regional alliances
- Political Science: Conflict resolution, negotiation breakdowns

Notes for beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan and the Afghan Taliban keep meeting to solve the problem of TTP attacks, but nothing changes because the Taliban will not stop these militants from using Afghan territory. Pakistan wants written guarantees that attacks will end, yet the Taliban refuse. Evidence shows the TTP lives and operates inside Afghanistan, and both groups share similar beliefs, which makes the Taliban even less willing to act. If this continues, Pakistan may need help from other regional countries to pressure the Taliban. The article also warns that India is trying to build ties with the Taliban to create more trouble for Pakistan.

Facts and figures:

- Three rounds of Pakistan Afghanistan talks held this year
- A temporary ceasefire agreed in Doha carries no long term guarantees
- Evidence of TTP presence documented through intelligence and attacks inside Pakistan
- India has increased diplomatic contact with the Taliban since their return to power

To sum up, Pakistan cannot let talks drift in circles while militants cross the border at will. The Taliban must choose between global acceptance and sheltering armed groups. If they refuse to act, Pakistan will need stronger regional coordination and firmer policies to protect its security. The country cannot afford open ended negotiations that lead nowhere.

MISPLACED PRIORITIES

Author: Maleeha Lodhi

Summary:

Our leaders keep looking outward while the country burns at home. Foreign trips and diplomatic fanfare have become convenient substitutes for hard work on education, health and the economy. When floods swept Punjab this year the prime minister spent more time abroad than on the ground with victims. A video linked cabinet meeting from Baku to approve the 27th Amendment underlines the point. Foreign engagements must deliver concrete gains for citizens not just headlines for ministers.

This habit of external overreach and internal underreach has deep roots. Cold War alignments and successive geopolitical bargains rewarded ruling elites with aid and strategic rents. Those inflows dulled the urgency for reform and allowed dependence to calcify into a political culture. Today China, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf fill the role once played by the West yet loans and rollovers mask structural failure. If we continue to chase external cushions while neglecting human development the country will pay a heavy price in poverty, illiteracy and stalled growth.

Overview:

The article traces Pakistan's chronic tilt toward foreign pursuits at the expense of domestic reform. It argues that repeated reliance on external support produced perverse incentives that stalled education, health and fiscal reform. The article warns that foreign visits and diplomatic activity mean little if they fail to translate into measurable improvement for the majority.

NOTES:

The article discusses how Pakistan's ruling elites have repeatedly prioritised external engagements over urgent domestic responsibilities, allowing diplomatic activity to overshadow the need for reform in education, health and economic governance. It points out that foreign visits often coincide with national crises, illustrating a pattern where leaders seek visibility abroad instead of addressing problems at home. The writer explains that this behaviour has historical roots in Pakistan's Cold War alignments, which nurtured a dependency on external assistance and weakened incentives for structural reform. As reliance shifted from Western patrons to China, Saudi Arabia and Gulf states, the pattern persisted, with loans and rollovers replacing serious efforts to build a resilient economy. The article stresses that this outward focus has drained state capacity, eroded human development and kept the country locked in cycles of poverty and stagnation. It argue that real progress will only begin when decision makers channel energy into fixing internal weaknesses rather than relying on foreign partners to compensate for them.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Foreign policy, governance and development
- Economics: External financing, debt dependence, fiscal reforms
- Current Affairs: Regional alliances, China Pakistan Economic Corridor and Gulf support
- Public Administration: Policy priorities, state capacity and reform incentives

Notes for beginners:

The article says leaders often prefer diplomatic glory to hard work at home. For example the prime minister chaired a major constitutional decision by video while on a foreign trip instead of convening colleagues in person. Foreign loans and assistance can help in a crisis yet they should not replace reforms that increase tax revenues or improve schools. A country that borrows repeatedly to meet short term needs risks repeating the same problems. The writer urges policy that ties foreign policy to domestic outcomes so citizens benefit directly from international engagement.

Facts and figures:

- The article cites recent floods that hit Punjab and mentions a cabinet meeting chaired from Baku to approve the 27th Amendment

- It notes the historical decade long involvement in the Afghanistan conflict and the shift from Western patrons to China, Saudi Arabia and Gulf support
- Frequent rollovers of loans and emergency assistance remain a recurring feature of Pakistan's external financing

To wrap up, Diplomatic activity without domestic reform amounts to window dressing. Pakistan must make its people the centrepiece of policy decisions. If leaders choose foreign spectacle over schooling, hospitals and sustainable finance the country will trade fleeting prestige for long term decline. The remedy is obvious and hard. Fix the basics first and let foreign policy amplify genuine progress rather than mask failure.

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

Author: Zahid Hussain

Summary:

The article recounts the dramatic fall of Sheikh Hasina Wajed, once the most powerful leader in Bangladesh, whose long authoritarian rule collapsed under the weight of popular resistance. For fifteen years she tightened her grip on state institutions, silenced dissent and manipulated elections, but the state's coercive power eventually failed to contain a nationwide uprising. Her government's brutal crackdown during the 2024 protests left more than a thousand people dead according to UN findings, yet even overwhelming repression could not save her from being driven out of the country. Tried in absentia by the very tribunal she once used against her rivals, Hasina now stands convicted of crimes against humanity and sentenced to death, though implementation remains unlikely.

The writer notes that her downfall exposes the inherent fragility of authoritarian rule and reflects the way history turns against those who wield power without restraint. He highlights the irony that economic gains under her tenure, which earned Bangladesh global praise, emboldened her to centralise authority and build a personality cult around her father. However, suppressed political discontent resurfaced through student-led protests, culminating in a mass movement that toppled her government. The conviction has reshaped Bangladesh's internal politics and altered regional dynamics, unsettling India which had relied heavily on Hasina. The article ends by warning that attempts to destabilise the new government would provoke wider geopolitical consequences.

Overview:

The article highlights Sheikh Hasina's rise, consolidation of power and eventual downfall. It links her authoritarian tendencies to institutional decay, excessive reliance on coercion and the failure to heed political grievances. It also explains how her removal disrupted regional alignments, particularly India's influence, and opened new diplomatic avenues for Bangladesh.

NOTES:

The article highlights the dangers inherent in personalised rule, explaining how the suppression of political opposition, manipulation of elections and use of coercive state power eventually provoke collective resistance. It stresses that economic progress cannot justify authoritarian consolidation or substitute for political legitimacy. The writer traces how Hasina's creation of a one party environment, mass disappearances and weaponised tribunals deepened resentment that eventually exploded into a nationwide uprising. He also notes the role of student protest in fuelling political transformation and shows how popular mobilisation can overturn entrenched regimes. The conviction of a former prime minister, delivered by an international crimes tribunal, illustrates the growing global focus on individual accountability for state repression. The article further points to shifting regional dynamics as Bangladesh's new administration rebuilds ties with Pakistan, complicating India's strategic calculus.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Regional politics, South Asian power dynamics
- Current Affairs: Democratic backsliding, human rights, authoritarianism

- International Relations.: Geopolitical alignments, India Bangladesh relations.
- Political Science: Regime change, state repression, legitimacy crises

Notes for beginners:

The article explains that Sheikh Hasina ruled Bangladesh with complete control for many years and used police, courts and security forces to silence her opponents. When students and citizens protested against unfair policies, the government used force, leading to many deaths. Even though Bangladesh's economy improved during her rule, people grew angry because political rights were taken away. In 2024 these protests grew into a mass movement that pushed her out of the country. Later the courts convicted her for allowing violence against protesters. The article shows that no leader, no matter how powerful, can ignore public anger forever.

Facts and figures:

- Up to 1,400 people were killed in Bangladesh's 2024 protests according to a UN report
- Sheikh Hasina ruled Bangladesh for 15 consecutive years in her second stretch in power
- Several political leaders were executed under her tribunal before her own conviction
- Her fifth term came after a heavily disputed election boycotted by the opposition
- The student protests in July 2024 sparked the movement that toppled her government

To sum up, The article reminds that unchecked power carries its own seeds of collapse. Even leaders who command the state's machinery cannot outlast public rejection. The article signals a broader lesson for South Asia, where political authority often rests on force rather than consent. Durable stability comes not from coercion but from legitimacy, accountability and respect for citizens' rights.

GAZA MISSION

Summary:

The article highlights Donald Trump's Gaza plan, arguing that its lofty promises have dissolved into a far more sobering reality. The writer notes that while the ceasefire has momentarily slowed Israel's assault, Tel Aviv continues to kill Palestinians in both Gaza and the West Bank, undermining the claim that the plan ushered in peace. The real fault line lies in the deployment of the so-called international stabilisation force. States that initially appeared willing to send troops now hesitate, demanding that any UN resolution must openly reaffirm the Palestinian right to statehood. Russia and China insist on UN oversight, while Muslim countries including Pakistan refuse to become instruments of a mission that risks extending American and Israeli influence under the guise of peacekeeping. Without a clear UN mandate, the plan appears less like a humanitarian effort and more like a political sleight of hand.

The article warns that the mission's core proposals carry dangerous consequences. Trump's plan calls for the disarming of Hamas, placing Muslim troops in the impossible position of succeeding where Israel failed after months of devastation. The writer questions the vague promise that the force will "oversee security", asking whether that means security for Israel alone or genuine protection for Gaza's civilians who continue to face Israeli fire even under a so-called truce. With at least 240 Palestinians killed since the ceasefire, the article argues that no state should participate without ironclad guarantees that the mission will protect Palestinians, rebuild Gaza and commit to a two-state solution. Anything less would serve as a mirage designed to legitimise Israeli objectives rather than deliver justice and freedom to an occupied people.

Overview:

The article critiques Trump's Gaza mission as a plan that promises peace but risks entrenching Israeli and American control unless placed firmly under UN oversight. It highlights the hesitation of Muslim and Arab states, the demands

for explicit recognition of Palestinian statehood and the danger of using foreign troops to disarm Hamas. It stresses that any stabilisation force must protect Palestinians, not act as a shield for occupation.

NOTES:

The article stresses that Trump's Gaza plan, once hailed as a decisive breakthrough, now stands on shaky ground as Muslim and Arab states express deep reservations over participating in an international stabilisation force without a clear UN mandate. It highlights that these states, along with Russia and China, insist that any resolution must reaffirm the Palestinian right to statehood and place the mission under UN supervision to prevent it from becoming a tool for American or Israeli dominance. The writer warns that the plan's call to disarm Hamas is dangerous, as it risks pushing Muslim troops into a conflict where Israel itself failed to achieve its objectives. He questions the ambiguity surrounding the mission's promise to "oversee security", pointing out that Israeli attacks have continued even after the ceasefire, killing at least 240 Palestinians. The article argues that joining such a force without guarantees of civilian protection, reconstruction of Gaza and a concrete roadmap to Palestinian liberation would only serve Israeli aims rather than deliver genuine peace.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- International Relations: Peacekeeping mandates, Middle East politics, great power involvement
- Current Affairs: Gaza conflict, US foreign policy, Pakistan's stance on international missions
- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan's role in the Muslim world, foreign policy decisions on conflict zones
- Political Science: Sovereignty, occupation, legitimacy of international interventions

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Trump announced a plan for Gaza that many said would bring peace, but the situation remains dangerous. Israel still kills Palestinians even after the ceasefire. The plan includes sending troops from Muslim and Arab countries to Gaza as a stabilisation force, but many states are uncomfortable because the plan does not clearly protect Palestinian rights. For example, Pakistan and Arab countries want the UN to supervise the mission and include the right to Palestinian statehood, since this is essential for long term peace. The plan also demands that Muslim troops disarm Hamas, something Israel could not achieve despite months of attacks. The article warns that this puts Muslim countries in a risky position. It asks whether the foreign troops will protect Palestinians or only secure Israel's interests. Since at least 240 Palestinians have been killed after the so-called truce, the writer argues that states should only join if the mission guarantees protection for Palestinians and a path to their freedom.

Facts and Figures:

- Israel has killed at least two hundred forty Palestinians since the truce
- Muslim countries demand UN oversight before sending troops
- Russia and China insist on placing the force under UN control
- Pakistan, along with Arab states, seeks reaffirmation of Palestinian statehood

To wrap up, It argues that the Gaza mission must be rooted in justice, not convenience. Without UN supervision, clear protection for Palestinians and a credible path to statehood, the plan becomes an illusion crafted to secure political interests rather than human dignity. The message is unmistakable. True peace in Gaza will take shape only when the world stops treating Palestinian rights as negotiable and begins to build a settlement grounded in fairness, accountability and international law.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Sobering meaning creating a serious or thoughtful mood, Synonym unsettling, Antonym reassuring
- Envisage meaning foresee or plan, Synonym imagine, Antonym disregard
- Genocidal meaning involving large scale killing, Synonym exterminatory, Antonym protective
- Mandate meaning official authorisation, Synonym approval, Antonym prohibition

CHALLENGES TO STATES

Author: Mohammad Ali Babakhel

Summary:

The article explains how modern states confront a crowded landscape of threats that no longer fit traditional definitions of war or conflict. Globalisation and technology have shrunk distances, increased interdependence and limited state control over finance, information and borders. Climate change has emerged as a force that uproots communities and erodes state capacity, while post 9/11 security environments exposed states to cross border militancy, trafficking networks and violent non state actors who operate in physical and digital spaces alike. Weak governance, low media literacy and fragile cyber laws make societies vulnerable to misinformation, online radicalisation and narrative warfare where battles are fought not on territorial frontiers but inside public opinion.

The writer argues that these complex pressures demand a full spectrum response that includes community engagement, improved governance, stronger policing and credible justice mechanisms. He points to models like Colombia's Patriota plan that blend security operations with development and institutional reform to reclaim ungoverned spaces. Pakistan's own transition in the former tribal areas, along with cross border cooperation, cyber capacity building and transparent communication, offer examples of how states can respond. He concludes that non traditional threats require states to strengthen institutions, build digital resilience and foster public trust because sovereignty today depends as much on narratives and networks as on armies and borders.

Overview:

The article maps the evolution of modern security challenges, showing how climate shocks, weak governance, cyber vulnerabilities and VNSAs have complicated the work of states. It stresses that traditional military approaches cannot solve multidimensional threats rooted in social divides, misinformation, technology and transnational crime. The article places particular emphasis on strengthening institutions, building public awareness and investing in cyber capacity as part of national security.

NOTES:

The article highlights how modern states confront a widening spectrum of challenges that no longer conform to traditional notions of security. Globalisation and technology have reduced state control over information, finance and borders, while climate change has displaced communities and weakened state capacity with Pakistan among the most affected countries. Post 9/11 dynamics have intensified cross border terrorism, trafficking networks and the rise of violent non state actors who operate in both physical and digital spheres. Weak governance, low media literacy and fragile cyber laws expose societies to misinformation, online radicalisation and narrative warfare that targets public trust rather than territorial boundaries. The writer stresses that ungoverned spaces now include cyberspace and maritime zones where cybercrime, espionage and digital propaganda undermine sovereignty. He argues that states need integrated responses that combine community engagement, stronger policing, institutional reform and cross border cooperation. Examples such as Finland's real time fact checking system and Colombia's Patriota plan illustrate how coordinated governance, development and security efforts help reclaim vulnerable spaces. Pakistan's own reforms, including the FATA merger and investment in cyber capacity, show how states can build resilience, though success ultimately depends on public trust, transparent governance and the ability to counter misinformation and extremism across digital and physical fronts.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics:

- International Relations: Non traditional security, VNSAs, cyber warfare
- Current Affairs: Climate change, digital misinformation, transnational crime
- Pakistan Affairs: Governance reforms, FATA merger, counter extremism
- Public Administration: Institutional capacity, state service delivery, crisis management

Notes for beginners:

The article says that countries today face threats that are not always military. For example the floods in Pakistan showed how climate change can overwhelm state institutions. Online misinformation spreads quickly because many people cannot verify news, which creates confusion and weakens public trust. Criminal groups can use social media, the dark web and encrypted platforms to recruit or plan attacks. In some remote areas violent groups prevent vaccination teams from working which harms public welfare. The writer explains that solutions require more than force. Local leaders, community groups and government agencies must work together to improve education, strengthen policing and build trust between citizens and the state.

Facts and figures:

- Before WWII there were about 70 sovereign states, today there are roughly 195
- Extreme weather caused losses of \$4.2 trillion globally between 1993 and 2022
- Pakistan, Belize and Italy were listed in 2022 among the most climate affected countries
- States face challenges such as cybercrime, online radicalisation and transnational organised crime
- Finland has created a fact checking task force to counter fake news in real time

In a nutshell, the world has entered an age where threats cross borders, screens and identities with ease. States cannot rely on old tools when the battlefield has shifted to the digital sphere, the environment and the public mind. Only strong institutions, informed citizens and resilient governance can protect national sovereignty in this changing world.

STATE AND ITS PILLARS

Author: Arifa Noor

Summary:

The article explores how Pakistan's three constitutional pillars have weakened to the point where none stands firm on its own. The passage of the 27th Amendment triggered loud mourning over the judiciary's loss of independence, yet the legislature's collapse began long before. Parliament now moves on command, passing constitutional amendments in days and voting as instructed, regardless of which side of the aisle its members occupy. The executive fares no better. Its authority is exercised behind closed doors where no one knows who truly makes decisions. What remains is a hollowed structure in which constitutional roles exist only on paper while real power flows elsewhere.

This erosion deepens with the amendment's sweeping changes to the armed forces. The abolition of the joint chiefs post, the creation of the new CDF slot under the army chief and the extension of service tenures centralise authority more than ever before. Lifetime immunity for the top military office sets a precedent that weakens accountability and disturbs the balance among the three services. Fears now revolve around decision making, morale, resource allocation and the future of collegial command. With no transparent debate and rising political competition for key posts, the changes risk fuelling greater centralisation of power at a time when institutions are already strained. The article warns that in a state already fragmenting, reforms that tilt power further in one direction should worry anyone who wishes to preserve institutional integrity.

Overview:

The article examines how the 27th Amendment alters civil military power dynamics and exposes the collapse of Pakistan's institutional balance. It argues that the judiciary, legislature and executive have all lost independent authority and that new military structures further upset the equilibrium. The amendment raises questions about accountability, inter services coordination and political manipulation of key appointments.

NOTES:

The article highlights the progressive weakening of Pakistan's constitutional pillars. The judiciary's autonomy is compromised through structural changes, parliament has long surrendered decision making to party leadership and extra constitutional actors and the executive no longer directs national policy with clarity. The amendment's military reforms introduce lifetime immunity for the top position, extend service tenures and centralise authority under the new CDF post. This creates risks for inter services parity, resource decisions and strategic planning. The absence of public debate and the potential for lobbying around powerful appointments show how institutional decay feeds political opportunism. The article underlines how institutional imbalance undermines governance, rule of law and national cohesion.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Civil military relations, constitutional amendments, institutional balance
- Current Affairs: Governance crisis, accountability, power structures
- Political Science: Separation of powers, institutional erosion
- Public Administration: Executive authority, legislative functioning

Notes for beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan's government is built on three main pillars: parliament, the judiciary and the executive. All three should work independently. Instead, parliament now votes as instructed by powerful actors, the judiciary is weakened through amendments and the executive does not appear to exercise real authority. The 27th Amendment also brings major changes to the military. For example, the top military office now has lifetime immunity and longer tenures. This raises questions because when too much authority sits in one place, other institutions become weaker and decision making becomes unbalanced. The article warns that when institutions do not share power fairly, political competition increases and governance suffers.

Facts and figures:

- The 27th Amendment alters military command structure and grants lifetime immunity to the top position
- Tenures of all service chiefs increase from three to five years
- Joint chiefs post abolished and replaced with a new CDF role

To sum up, this article reflects how far Pakistan has drifted from the constitutional balance that sustains functional states. It shows that when institutions lose independence and authority becomes concentrated, both governance and public trust erode. The message is that without transparency, accountability and an equal distribution of power among state organs, no reform can strengthen the country. The health of the state depends on the strength of its pillars, and Pakistan can no longer afford to ignore how fragile they have become.

SHEIKH HASINA VERDICT

Summary:

The editorial argues that Sheikh Hasina's dramatic fall from absolute authority to a death sentence marks a powerful reversal of fortune and a cautionary tale for rulers who mistake unchecked power for permanence. For fifteen years she governed Bangladesh with an iron hand, crushed dissent, manipulated elections and used the International Crimes Tribunal to eliminate political opponents. The irony is stark. The very court she created to target her rivals has sentenced her in absentia for crimes against humanity during the 2024 uprising, a revolt fuelled by years of repression, patronage and a personality cult that drowned democratic norms. Her government's heavy-handed response to mass protests, which left hundreds dead, triggered her downfall and flight to India, a long-time ally that now finds itself sheltering a disgraced leader.

The editorial notes that while the trial's fairness is open to debate, the political decay that set the stage for her ouster cannot be denied. Bangladesh, despite strong economic progress under Hasina, paid a steep price for eroded institutions and rigged elections. The path ahead demands restraint and reconciliation rather than vengeance. With new elections scheduled, the interim government must restore democratic competition, allow the Awami League to contest and ensure credible justice rather than politically charged punishment. The future stability of Bangladesh hinges on the ability of leaders to balance accountability with national healing and avoid repeating the cycle of authoritarianism followed by upheaval.

Overview:

The article focuses on the rise and fall of Sheikh Hasina, describing how authoritarian rule, manipulated trials and repressive governance led to her eventual ouster and conviction. It stresses that Bangladesh's future depends on restoring democratic legitimacy, ensuring fair elections and preventing revenge-driven justice that deepens instability.

NOTES:

The article shows how Sheikh Hasina's long rule deteriorated into open authoritarianism marked by manipulated elections, political victimisation and the use of the International Crimes Tribunal to punish opponents, a body that ultimately turned against her after her fall from power. It highlights the violent repression of the 2024 protests, which left hundreds dead and fuelled the mass uprising that forced her into exile. The editorial pays attention to the irony of her conviction by the same judicial structure she once weaponised and questions the fairness and speed of the proceedings while acknowledging the undeniable excesses of her government. It stresses that Bangladesh's stability now depends on credible elections, the restoration of democratic competition and a justice process free of revenge, especially since the previous polls were boycotted and widely seen as illegitimate. The article also warns that extreme punishments such as the death penalty can inflame political tensions and argues that mature states must balance justice with reconciliation to prevent further unrest in an already fragile political landscape.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Regional geopolitics, Bangladesh's political evolution
- International Relations: Authoritarianism, regime change, transitional justice
- Current Affairs: South Asian politics, democratic crises, human rights
- Political Science: Rule of law, separation of powers, legitimacy and authoritarian breakdown

Notes for beginners:

The editorial explains that Sheikh Hasina ruled Bangladesh for many years but slowly became more controlling. Her government jailed opponents and held elections that many people did not trust. In 2024 large protests broke out. Security forces used force and many people were killed which angered the public even more. Hasina left the country and is staying in India. A court later sentenced her to death, but many say the trial itself may not have been fair. The writer says that if Bangladesh wants peace, it must hold fair elections next year and allow all political parties including Hasina's to participate. Justice is important, but punishments should not be based on revenge.

Facts and figures:

- Sheikh Hasina ruled for nearly 15 years in her second long tenure
- UN report estimated up to 1,400 deaths during the 2024 protests
- The Awami League won the 2024 elections after opposition boycotts
- Hasina fled Bangladesh in August 2024 and has lived in India since

To sum up, this editorial works as a reflection on the collapse of unchecked power. It reminds readers that authoritarian stability is always brittle and that institutions, once bent for political ends, eventually turn against those who distort them. Bangladesh now stands at a turning point. Its leaders must choose between deepening the

cycle of punishment or rebuilding democratic legitimacy through fairness and inclusion. No leader is larger than the law, and no state can find its footing without justice tempered by wisdom.

GB'S RARE EARTH POTENTIAL

Author: Afzal Ali Shigri

Summary:

The article presents Gilgit Baltistan as a region with the power to reshape Pakistan's economic and technological future, yet held back by a legal framework frozen in a colonial past. Beneath the mountains lie rare earth elements and strategic minerals that the world is scrambling to secure for high tech industries. The region has a new airport, road connectivity with China, hydropower potential and a young educated population, but none of this can attract serious investment because GB remains governed through an executive order that centralises all authority in the office of the prime minister. Investors avoid a place where rights are undefined, courts lack independence and laws can be rewritten at one person's whim. The writer argues that the 2018 Governance Order dismantled even the limited autonomy granted earlier, leaving GB with advisory institutions, a powerless judiciary and no constitutional safeguards.

He stresses that this legal vacuum sabotages Pakistan's strategic interest. Rare earth development demands long term certainty, enforceable contracts and predictable jurisdiction, all of which the current order fails to provide. The Supreme Court foresaw this and approved the 2019 Governance Reforms Order, a draft built on fundamental rights, independent courts and clear oversight mechanisms that protect both citizens and investors. It does not affect the Kashmir dispute but corrects a governance structure that undermines Pakistan's credibility. The writer warns that if the political leadership continues to cling to a model designed for control rather than development, the region will once again see extraction without benefit. GB's resources can carry Pakistan into a high tech future, yet the opportunity will evaporate unless the outdated legal order is buried and replaced with the reforms already endorsed by the Supreme Court. The choice, he concludes, is stark. Either grant GB dignity and rule based governance or let its promise slip away.

Overview:

The article argues that despite GB's immense mineral wealth and strategic advantage, opaque and centralised governance has crippled its investment potential. It highlights how the 2018 Order concentrates power in Islamabad, strips GB's institutions of authority and exposes investors to legal uncertainty. The writer presents the Supreme Court approved 2019 draft as a practical solution that strengthens rights, local governance and judicial oversight, allowing GB to harness its rare earth reserves responsibly.

NOTES:

The article highlights that Gilgit Baltistan holds rare earth minerals with the potential to transform Pakistan's technological and economic outlook, yet the region remains trapped under a colonial style governance system that deters investment and sidelines its own people. The 2018 Governance Order centralises authority in the office of the prime minister who controls legislation, mineral policy and judicial appointments, leaving GB with no constitutional protection, no independent courts and no certainty for long term investors. The writer points out that this framework allows laws to be changed at will, undermines contracts and strips local communities of enforceable rights over land, employment and compensation. He stresses that the Supreme Court has already approved the 2019 Governance Reforms Order, which introduces fundamental rights, judicial oversight, predictable legislation and a clearer definition of GB citizenship, giving stability for investors and dignity for residents. The article warns that rare earth development requires legal permanence, transparent governance and credible institutions, and without these Pakistan risks losing billions in potential investment while GB once again suffers extraction without benefit.

The writer urges political leaders to abandon the outdated 2018 model and adopt the court approved reforms before the region's natural promise is squandered.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: GB's constitutional status, centre-region relations, federal governance
- Public Administration: Governance models, institutional reform, bureaucratic control
- Economics: Resource development, investor protection, mineral economics
- International Relations: Strategic minerals, China linkages, global supply chains

Notes for beginners:

The writer explains that countries cannot develop valuable minerals unless laws are clear and fair. Investors avoid places where courts have no power or where the government can change rules overnight. In GB the prime minister can override the regional assembly, replace judges and rewrite laws without debate. For example, an investor who signs a mining contract today can lose it tomorrow because the legal order gives no protection. The 2019 draft fixes these problems by giving citizens basic rights, creating independent courts and ensuring that no major change can occur without judicial review. This allows both locals and investors to plan for the long term.

Facts and figures:

- GB sits on rare earth elements vital for electronics, defence technology and renewable energy
- Extreme weather losses globally crossed \$4.2 trillion between 1993 and 2022, stressing the need for resilient economies
- The Supreme Court's judgement in January 2019 directed adoption of the Reforms Order
- The 2018 Order gives the PM exclusive power over minerals, investment and judicial appointments
- GB's new international airport, CPEC links and hydropower potential position it as a strategic hub

In a nutshell, GB holds minerals that could lift Pakistan out of economic dependence, yet the region remains stuck under laws that deny both rights and investment. The writer leaves no doubt that Pakistan stands at a critical point. Either it embraces rule based governance that unlocks opportunity or it allows an outdated system to bury the promise of a region that has waited far too long for justice and inclusion.

GAZA RESOLUTION

Summary:

The article examines the UN Security Council's endorsement of the US-drafted Gaza plan and argues that the resolution, weighed down by ambiguities and political contradictions, is unlikely to chart a path toward lasting peace. The writer points out that the plan carries Washington's imprint far more than the UN's as the proposed international stabilisation force will operate in consultation with Israel and Egypt rather than function as a neutral peacekeeping mission. The promise of movement toward Palestinian statehood reads more like a rhetorical flourish than a binding commitment, especially when Israel's leadership openly rejects any such outcome. With Hamas rejecting the resolution and Russia and China refusing their support, the article warns that the gap between stated aims and underlying realities is too wide to bridge through vague assurances.

The analysis deepens when the article addresses the core mission of the stabilisation force. Demilitarising Gaza effectively means deploying foreign troops to confront and disarm Hamas, a task that would entangle Muslim countries in a conflict framed by Palestinians as resistance to occupation. Pakistan's envoy insists that disarmament must occur through political negotiation, yet the current framework offers little clarity and no parliamentary debate at home. The article warns that without guarantees of genuine civilian protection, reconstruction and progress toward sovereignty, the mission risks becoming a smokescreen that reinforces Israeli occupation with international

approval. Unless the force protects Palestinians rather than policing them, the plan could mark another chapter in a long history where lofty diplomatic language masks the hard reality of continued dispossession.

Overview:

The article examines the US-drafted Gaza resolution for its vague promises, political contradictions and lack of UN ownership. It stresses that the stabilisation force appears designed to serve geopolitical interests instead of functioning as a neutral protector of Palestinian civilians. The writer argues that without clear guarantees, transparent mandates and commitment to statehood, the mission risks enabling occupation rather than ending it.

NOTES:

The article underscores that the UN Security Council's endorsement of the US-drafted Gaza plan raises more questions than answers as the stabilisation force outlined in the resolution is designed to operate in consultation with Israel and Egypt rather than under full UN command. It highlights that the plan's language on Palestinian statehood is vague and provides no binding roadmap, especially when Israel's leadership openly vows to block any sovereign Palestinian state. The article stresses that the force's mandate to demilitarise Gaza effectively tasks foreign troops with confronting Hamas, a move that risks entangling Muslim states in a conflict Palestinians view as resistance to occupation. Pakistan's envoy insists that disarmament must happen through political negotiations, yet no clarity exists on how the mission will protect civilians, prevent Israeli overreach or ensure impartiality. The writer warns that without transparency, parliamentary debate and firm guarantees that the mission will focus on reconstruction and shielding Palestinians from ongoing assaults, the operation may become a smokescreen that reinforces occupation under international cover rather than a genuine step toward justice or peace.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- International Relations: UN resolutions, peacekeeping mandates, global power politics
- Current Affairs: Middle East conflict, Gaza peace plan, Pakistan's foreign policy
- Political Science: Occupation, legitimacy, statehood debates
- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan's diplomatic posture on Palestine

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that the UN approved a plan for Gaza that was mostly written by the United States and strongly supports its interests. The plan says that an international force will go into Gaza, but it will not operate like a normal UN peacekeeping force. Instead, it will work with Israel and Egypt. Many Palestinians oppose the plan because it does not clearly promise a Palestinian state, and Israel's leaders openly say they will not allow one. The plan also asks foreign troops to disarm Hamas, which means Muslim countries could end up fighting Palestinians rather than protecting them. Pakistan's ambassador says this should only happen through political talks and not through force. The writer argues that Pakistan and other countries should only send troops if the mission genuinely protects Palestinians, helps rebuild Gaza and does not strengthen Israeli control. For example, Israel continues killing Palestinians even during the ceasefire which shows that without strict protections, the force may not stop the violence.

Facts and Figures:

- The resolution is drafted by the United States then approved by the UN Security Council
- China and Russia abstained during the vote
- Pakistan voted in favour of the resolution
- The stabilisation force will consult Israel and
- Egypt instead of operating under full UN control
- Israel's prime minister publicly rejects a Palestinian state
- Hamas has criticised the resolution and questioned the force's neutrality

To sum up, The article argues that genuine stability in Gaza requires clarity, transparency and commitment to Palestinian rights. Without a mandate rooted in justice, any international mission risks becoming an instrument that masks occupation instead of ending it. Durable peace demands more than signatures on resolutions; it requires unwavering political courage, moral clarity and a willingness to confront the realities on the ground.

ECOSYSTEM OF CHANGE

Author: Ali Tauqeer Sheikh

Summary:

The article shares the global climate landscape with a clear message that the world has already stepped into an era of transformation far deeper than skeptics are willing to admit. It argues that annual climate conferences are not ceremonial gatherings but the engine room of a structural shift that has rewired global development. COP backed by the scientific rigour of the IPCC has embedded climate science, economic logic and legal accountability into policymaking. This has pushed governments toward higher ambition through NDCs and reshaped entire sectors, from energy and transport to finance and technology. The writer stresses that the world has already avoided nearly one degree of future warming and has witnessed solar power outcompete fossil fuels, electric vehicles move into the mainstream and financial markets treat climate risk as real economic risk. These shifts show that climate action is no longer an abstract aspiration; it is the scaffolding of the global economy.

Yet the article gets the reader back to the hard truth that progress and peril now run side by side. The world still falls short of the 1.5 degree threshold. Adaptation remains dangerously underfunded while global losses already exceed a trillion dollars each year. Those who contributed least continue to suffer most. The article turns toward Pakistan to show how national contradictions mirror global tensions. Pakistan's rooftop solar boom coexists with outdated coal planning. Cities remain disconnected from global climate networks. Reforms move when lenders insist, not when national vision demands. With adaptation needs up to eighteen times higher than available funding, Pakistan risks pinning its future on finance that may never come. The writer closes with a stark reminder. COP can set ambition and momentum but cannot substitute domestic action. Countries must build their own ecosystems of change before the window of opportunity snaps shut.

Overview:

This article examines how the UNFCCC and COP processes have transformed global development by embedding climate science into economic policy and driving technological shifts across key sectors. It highlights the breakthroughs in mitigation, the persistent gaps in adaptation and the widening imbalance between responsibility and vulnerability. It also reflects on Pakistan's fragmented climate response and stresses that global momentum will mean little without a coherent national agenda.

NOTES:

The article highlights that climate conferences have sparked an irreversible global shift by embedding scientific evidence, economic logic and legal accountability into policymaking, turning climate action from rhetoric into economic reality. It explains how COP backed by decades of IPCC research has pushed countries toward higher ambition through NDC cycles and reshaped development priorities by making climate finance, renewable energy, electric mobility and net zero pathways central to global planning. The writer notes that despite progress in lowering projected warming and mainstreaming clean technologies, the world still struggles with a stark imbalance between mitigation and adaptation, as vulnerable countries face rising climate losses without adequate funding. Pakistan's own contradictions mirror this global asymmetry, with rooftop solar expanding while coal projects persist and reforms moving only when external pressure forces them. The article stresses that Pakistan's adaptation needs outstrip available resources, creating a dangerous reliance on climate finance that may never materialise. It

concludes that while COP sets direction, real transformation depends on whether national institutions can act with coherence and urgency to build their own ecosystem of change.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Environmental Science: Climate governance, UNFCCC, mitigation and adaptation
- Current Affairs: Global climate negotiations, climate finance, energy transition
- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan's climate vulnerabilities, adaptation gaps, energy policy
- International Relations: Global environmental conventions, multilateral diplomacy

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that climate conferences may look like long meetings, but they have changed how the whole world works. Scientists proved that human activities cause global warming, and their reports guide countries to cut emissions. Because of this process, solar power has become cheap, electric cars are common and companies now treat climate risk as a financial risk. The world still faces danger because it has not kept warming below one point five degrees, but it has already avoided worse outcomes through collective action. The writer says the biggest problem now is that poor countries like Pakistan cannot get enough money to protect themselves from floods, heatwaves and other climate disasters. For example, Pakistan needs ten to eighteen times more for adaptation than it receives. The country has made progress with rooftop solar but still plans coal projects that the world no longer wants to finance. The message is that global climate momentum exists, but Pakistan must act on its own instead of waiting for outside help.

Facts and Figures:

- IPCC's first report in 1990 confirmed human driven global warming
- Future warming projections dropped from three point eight degrees to between two point five and two point nine
- One in five cars sold worldwide is electric
- Green investment assets exceed one hundred thirty trillion dollars
- Developing countries need one point three trillion dollars annually for climate impacts
- Global losses from warming already reach one point four trillion dollars each year
- Pakistan's adaptation needs are ten to eighteen times larger than its current funding

To sum up, the world has built the machinery for climate transformation and placed direction, science and economic logic on the table. What remains uncertain is whether national leaders will rise to the moment. The ecosystem of change exists, but its promise depends on whether countries act with vision, discipline and urgency. Climate ambition cannot be borrowed. It must be owned, delivered and woven into national reform before the clock runs out.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Paradigm meaning a dominant model or approach. Synonym framework. Antonym disorder
- Consensus meaning general agreement. Synonym harmony. Antonym disagreement
- Catalyse meaning trigger or accelerate change. Synonym activate. Antonym delay
- Ambition meaning strong desire to achieve a goal. Synonym aspiration. Antonym apathy
- Imperative meaning something essential or urgent. Synonym necessity. Antonym option
- Peril meaning danger or risk. Synonym threat. Antonym safety
- Asymmetry meaning imbalance between two sides. Synonym disproportion. Antonym equality
- Resilience meaning ability to withstand shocks. Synonym strength. Antonym fragility
- Trajectory meaning a path of development. Synonym direction. Antonym stagnation
- Stranded meaning stuck without progress. Synonym trapped. Antonym mobile

AN ECONOMY ON THE MOVE

Author: Faisal Bari

Summary:

The article contrasts Pakistan's stagnant human development with Cambodia's steady rise, describing a society that has rebuilt itself with remarkable resolve after one of the most brutal genocides of the twentieth century. The writer notes that Cambodia's literacy rate is far higher than Pakistan's and women participate in the labour force in numbers Pakistan can only envy. Even a brief stay in Phnom Penh reveals a country where women move freely, work confidently and form an equal part of public life. Tourism thrives because service standards are high and people take their work seriously. Foreign investment is flowing in, infrastructure is expanding and the city carries the energy of a place determined to advance. Cambodia has moved from agriculture into industry while sustaining years of six to eight percent GDP growth, all despite civil conflict, global recessions and the pandemic.

The writer reminds the reader of Cambodia's violent past to underline how exceptional this progress is. A country that lost nearly two million people between 1975 and 1979 including most of its educated class has rebuilt schools, improved literacy and narrowed gender gaps in education. Institutions still struggle with issues familiar to Pakistan, but the national mood is different. Young Cambodians carry hope rather than despair. They see opportunity in their own economy rather than an escape route abroad. Policy reforms have encouraged this spirit and created a sense of direction. By contrast, Pakistan appears stuck in reverse, its youth discouraged and its governance directionless. The writer leaves the reader with a stark comparison. Cambodia once shattered has found its feet. Pakistan, despite greater resources, continues to drift.

Overview: The article uses Cambodia as a case study in post conflict recovery and human development, showing how sustained investment in education, tourism, infrastructure and female participation can move an economy forward. It contrasts this with Pakistan's declining social indicators and the growing hopelessness among its youth, arguing that national progress depends on policy clarity, institutional stability and public confidence.

NOTES:

The article highlights Cambodia's striking progress in literacy, female labour participation and overall economic momentum, presenting Phnom Penh as a city where women share public space confidently, service quality is high and tourism thrives due to a strong work ethic. It notes that Cambodia is attracting growing foreign investment, expanding infrastructure and moving steadily from agriculture into industry after sustaining years of robust GDP growth. The writer underscores the country's remarkable recovery from the devastating genocide of the 1970s by rebuilding schools, improving enrolment and narrowing gender gaps, even though higher education still needs attention. While acknowledging Cambodia's ongoing challenges with institutional stability and corruption, the article stresses that its national mood is hopeful, its youth see opportunity at home and policy reforms have created a sense of direction. In sharp contrast, Pakistan suffers from lower literacy, minimal female participation, weak service culture and a pervasive sense of despair, revealing a society that appears to be moving against the tide of progress rather than with it.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Human development, education, gender issues
- Economics: Labour force, investment, growth models
- International Relations: Regional development patterns, Southeast Asia
- Current Affairs: Governance, public policy, comparative development
- Sociology: Gender norms, social attitudes, demographic recovery

Notes for beginners:

The writer explains that Cambodia has improved its literacy rate and created jobs for women in almost every field. For example women drive scooters and run shops without fear of harassment, something that remains rare in Pakistan. The country rebuilt schools after the genocide wiped out most teachers. Tourism became a major source of income because the service quality is high and the private sector values customer care. In contrast Pakistan's low literacy and low female participation limit its growth prospects and weaken the economy. Cambodia shows how steady reforms and investment in education can change a society's direction.

Facts and figures:

- Cambodia's literacy rate is about 88 percent
- Pakistan's literacy rate is below 70 percent
- Female labour force participation in Cambodia is around 74 percent
- In Pakistan it is near 25 percent
- Cambodia has recorded years of six to eight percent GDP growth
- The Khmer Rouge genocide killed nearly two million people

To wrap up, The article shows how a country shattered by war and genocide can rise through education, confidence and steady policy while a country with far greater resources continues to stall. Progress does not follow wealth, it follows resolve, clarity of purpose and the courage to put people first.

PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY

Author: Ahmed Bilal Mehboob

Summary:

The article traces Pakistan's long and troubled history with provincial autonomy and shows how political practice continues to betray the federal spirit enshrined in the Constitution. The writer reminds the reader that Pakistan's breakup in 1971 stemmed from the state's failure to respect the legitimate demands of its eastern province and from constitutional arrangements that looked sound on paper yet collapsed in implementation. Even after the consensus behind the 1973 Constitution and the strengthening of federalism under the Eighteenth Amendment, political parties still run their internal systems like personal estates. Decisions that should rest with provincial bodies are made in central offices. Chief ministers are handpicked by party heads who may not belong to the province and provincial assemblies are left to rubber stamp these choices because constitutional rules bind them to the party line.

The article builds a compelling case that this centralised political culture weakens democracy from within. It cites examples of chief ministers installed precisely because they were weak enough to take instructions from Islamabad, and of provincial leaders who could not make basic decisions without approval from a party head sitting in prison. The result is a hollow form of autonomy where the constitutional structure promises power but political parties pull it back to the centre. The writer argues that unless party leadership allows real devolution within its own ranks and respects the autonomy of provincial institutions, Pakistan will continue to undermine the very federal system that was crafted to keep the country together.

Overview:

The article examines the gap between Pakistan's constitutional commitment to provincial autonomy and the political reality where parties centralise power and treat provinces as extensions of the party chief's authority. It shows that this behaviour contradicts the federal vision of the Constitution and undermines democratic development by preventing strong provincial leadership from emerging.

NOTES:

The article highlights that although Pakistan has a strong constitutional foundation for federalism through the 1973 Constitution and the Eighteenth Amendment, provincial autonomy remains compromised because political parties

continue to centralise authority in the hands of their top leadership. The writer stresses that parties treat provinces as extensions of the central command where chief ministers are selected not by provincial representatives but by party heads who often have no connection with the province. This leaves provincial assemblies performing ceremonial roles under strict party direction, creating a system where even key governance decisions in the province depend on approval from the central leader, sometimes delivered from prison. The article highlights several examples where weak chief ministers were intentionally installed to ensure compliance with Islamabad's preferences, demonstrating how party structures suffocate independent provincial leadership and block genuine devolution of power. The writer concludes that despite constitutional guarantees, provincial autonomy remains hollow because the political culture favours obedience over empowerment and central dominance over constitutional spirit, leaving federalism weakened and democracy under strain.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Federalism, provincial autonomy, political history
- Political Science: Party structure, devolution of power, constitutional practice
- Governance and Public Policy: Institutional development, power distribution
- Current Affairs: Contemporary political behaviour, party centralisation

Notes for beginners:

The writer explains that Pakistan's Constitution gives provinces the right to make their own decisions, but political parties do not allow this to happen. For example a chief minister is supposed to be chosen by the provincial assembly, yet the final decision usually comes from the party leader in Islamabad. In 2018 the PTI appointed Usman Buzdar as Punjab's chief minister even though most provincial lawmakers did not know him and had no role in selecting him. A similar situation occurred in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa after the 2024 election when the chief minister could not pass the budget without instructions from the party head, who was in jail. These examples show how parties centralise authority and prevent provinces from exercising the autonomy guaranteed by the Constitution.

Facts and figures:

- Pakistan adopted the 1973 Constitution with near unanimity
- The Eighteenth Amendment was passed thirty seven years later with broad consensus
- Chief ministers are constitutionally elected by provincial assemblies but chosen in practice by central party leaders
- Provincial assemblies are bound by party direction under constitutional provisions
- Examples include Punjab in 1990, Punjab in 2018 and KP in 2024

To sum up, The article suggests that constitutional promises mean little if political behaviour refuses to change. Pakistan has a federal structure on paper but not in practice. Parties that should nurture provincial leadership often shrink it to maintain central control. Until political leaders allow real power to flow downward and respect the autonomy they publicly defend, provincial rights will remain ceremonial and democracy will remain fragile.

GOVERNANCE FAILURE

Summary:

The article reveals Pakistan's governance failure as exposed by the IMF's Governance and Corruption Diagnostic Assessment. The report links Pakistan's stalled economic performance to deep structural weaknesses across state institutions where opacity, preferential treatment and political interference have become routine. It points to an archaic tax system, poorly run state owned enterprises, weak contract enforcement, outdated judicial procedures and loose financial discretion that benefits powerful groups. The IMF also questions the lack of transparency in the Special Investment Facilitation Council and the unusual immunity granted to its officials which explains why the

government delayed making the report public. At its core, the assessment argues that Pakistan's economy falters not because of a lack of potential but because governance is built on discretion rather than rules, secrecy rather than transparency and privilege rather than performance.

The editorial explains that the IMF has paired its diagnosis with a fifteen point reform plan that demands greater openness in decision making, tighter oversight of financial powers and clear limits on the influence of vested interests. The reforms aim to revive investor confidence, bring structure to public procurement through e governance, strengthen anti corruption bodies and reduce the unchecked authority of public sector institutions that distort markets. The writer warns that Pakistan's elite appear reluctant to abandon a system that secures their privileges even as it suffocates national growth. The country faces a defining moment. Either it embraces serious governance reform or it continues down a path where economic stagnation becomes permanent.

Overview:

The article examines the IMF's detailed analysis of Pakistan's governance model and shows how corruption, arbitrary decision making and institutional decay directly undermine economic stability. It highlights the urgent reforms demanded by the IMF and stresses that without transparency, accountability and modernisation of state institutions, Pakistan cannot escape its cycle of low growth and repeated bailouts.

NOTES:

The article underlines how the IMF's Governance and Corruption Diagnostic Assessment exposes Pakistan's deep institutional weaknesses and shows that corruption, opacity and political interference remain embedded in state structures. It highlights the IMF's critique of an outdated tax system, loss making state owned enterprises, slow and ineffective judicial processes and a governance style shaped by unchecked discretion rather than predictable rules. The report places particular focus on the lack of transparency surrounding the Special Investment Facilitation Council and the immunity granted to its officials, which signals how elite privilege distorts policy and erodes public trust. The editorial explains that the IMF has tied the next loan tranche to a set of reforms designed to strengthen accountability, enforce transparency, limit financial discretion, modernise procurement and restructure anti corruption bodies. It stresses that Pakistan's economic stagnation is directly linked to these habits of secrecy and patronage, and warns that the country's political and business elites appear unwilling to dismantle a system that protects their interests even though it undermines national growth.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Governance, corruption, public sector reform
- Economics: Growth constraints, IMF programmes, institutional economics
- Public Administration: Accountability, regulatory weaknesses, e governance
- Current Affairs: Structural reforms, state capacity, investor confidence
- Political Science: Power structures, political patronage, elite capture

Notes for beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan's economy struggles because government institutions do not work in a clear and fair manner. For example some businesses receive special favours while others face long delays and confusing procedures. Government companies often lose money because they are not managed properly. The court system takes too long to settle disputes which scares investors. The IMF says Pakistan must make its decisions open to the public, stop giving special treatment and follow fixed rules. For instance government purchases should be made through online systems so everyone can see how money is spent. Without such changes Pakistan will keep facing economic problems.

Facts and figures:

- The IMF report was a requirement for the release of a one point two billion dollar loan tranche
- The IMF sets a five to six and a half percent growth target for Pakistan if reforms are implemented

- The reform agenda includes fifteen major recommendations for governance overhaul
- The GCDA highlights corruption risks across tax administration, state enterprises and the judiciary

To sum up, The article suggests that Pakistan's economic crisis is not just about numbers but about the way the state works. The only real path forward lies in abandoning opaque practices and embracing a rules based system that puts public interest above personal gain. Pakistan can either reform its institutions or continue to drift as its economy weakens and opportunities slip away.

AFGHANISTAN DILEMMA

Author: Touqir Hussain

Summary:

The article explores Pakistan's increasingly difficult relationship with the Afghan Taliban and argues that Islamabad must confront the reality that the group cannot and will not offer the firm guarantees Pakistan demands on stopping the TTP. The writer traces the roots of today's crisis to decades of mutual interference, beginning with Kabul's early Pakhtunistan claims and later Pakistan's deep involvement in Afghanistan's internal politics. This created a social and political spillover that allowed the Taliban to embed themselves in former Fata and Balochistan, turning these regions into logistical spaces for their war across the border. Now the same networks have spawned radicalisation and militant factions that threaten Pakistan's security. The writer stresses that the Taliban's own fragmentation, their failing economy and their reliance on jihadist allies leave them unwilling and unable to confront the TTP, which they view as a strategic buffer and leverage against rivals and external pressure.

The article argues that Pakistan must navigate a complicated landscape in which it must protect the Taliban regime to avoid instability while also protecting itself from the very groups the Taliban host. A heavy handed approach would only push the Taliban closer to the TTP, while an uncontrolled crisis in Afghanistan would create an unmanageable security threat for Pakistan. The writer calls for a strategy built on patience, pressure, negotiations and calibrated measures linked to border control, refugees and trade. Pakistan must weaken militant groups on its own soil to reduce their utility for Kabul and persuade the Taliban that their survival lies in stable ties with Pakistan. The writer concludes that Afghanistan is fundamentally a political challenge with a military dimension, not a military problem to be solved by force, and that both states must find a path that prevents further confrontation while containing shared threats.

Overview:

The article examines Pakistan's dilemma in dealing with the Afghan Taliban and explains why the group neither intends nor is able to act decisively against the TTP. It traces the long history of intertwined politics between the two countries and argues that Pakistan's security challenges require a balanced strategy that avoids destabilising Afghanistan while protecting national interests at home.

NOTES:

The article highlights Pakistan's dilemma in dealing with the Afghan Taliban, explaining that Islamabad cannot expect firm guarantees against TTP attacks because the Taliban never offered such assurances even to the United States under the Doha Agreement. It traces the roots of today's insecurity to decades of cross border interference, which allowed Afghan militant groups to embed themselves in former Fata and Balochistan and create networks that now threaten Pakistan. The writer emphasises that the Taliban remain fragmented, face a collapsing economy and depend on jihadist allies for internal security and external leverage, which makes them unwilling to act against the TTP. He argues that Pakistan must avoid destabilising the Taliban, as a threatened regime will cling to the TTP even more tightly, while a destabilised Afghanistan would create an uncontrollable crisis. The article calls for a careful strategy combining negotiations, targeted pressure, improved border management and efforts to weaken militant outfits inside Pakistan so that Kabul sees them as less useful. The writer concludes that Pakistan is tied to

the Taliban whether it likes it or not, and that the Afghan challenge must be treated as a political problem with military elements rather than a purely military conflict.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Pak Afghan relations, TTP threat, border conflict
- International Relations: Regional security, non state actors, foreign policy constraints
- Current Affairs: Taliban policy, militancy, cross border terrorism
- Political Science: State capacity, political fragility, insurgency dynamics

Notes for beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan wants the Afghan Taliban to stop the TTP from attacking across the border, but the Taliban will not make firm promises. For example, the Taliban see the TTP as an ally that helps them guard against threats like IS K or any attempt to remove their government, so they refuse to crack down on them. The writer says both countries have shaped each other's politics for decades. Pakistan once supported Afghan groups during the Soviet era, and many Taliban leaders grew up or studied in Pakistan. This created strong links that now make the problem harder to solve because militants move between both sides of the border. The writer says Pakistan cannot rely on force alone because that would push the Taliban closer to the TTP. Instead, Pakistan must pressure the Taliban through border controls and trade while also weakening the TTP inside Pakistan so that Kabul has fewer reasons to protect them.

Facts and figures:

- The Taliban did not provide firm guarantees to the US in the Doha Agreement
- TTP factions operate from Afghan territory with Taliban tolerance
- Afghanistan faces economic collapse and a worsening humanitarian crisis
- Kabul's ties with multiple militant groups create ungoverned spaces
- Pakistan's defence ministry warns that peaceful ties require an end to TTP support

To wrap up, Pakistan's relationship with the Taliban cannot be shaped by wishful thinking or sudden pressure. Both countries live within a shared geography and a shared history, and neither can escape the consequences. Pakistan must craft a steady and intelligent policy that recognises Afghanistan's limits, manages its own vulnerabilities and uses political strategy rather than brute force to contain a dangerous situation. This is a long game, and only patience, clarity and well judged pressure can steer it toward stability.

POWER AND CRISIS

Author: Zahid Hussain

Summary:

The article argues that Pakistan's political order has drifted into a crisis of legitimacy after by elections in Punjab and KP exposed the hollow nature of the hybrid system. The ruling party secured victories in contests that were barely contested because PTI had been forced out of the race through disqualifications and the removal of reserved seats. This consolidation of parliamentary numbers does little to change the real balance of power, which remains firmly in the hands of unelected actors whose influence has grown through recent constitutional amendments. The writer warns that talk of a new twenty eighth amendment, aimed at reshaping the federation, could further fracture the union at a time when internal security threats are mounting. While the state tightens its grip, violence in KP and Balochistan rises, the writ of the government shrinks and militant groups regain operational space.

The writer explains that the country's security crisis has deepened because political confrontation has crippled law enforcement, especially in KP where civil authority has eroded. Balochistan faces an even more severe insurgency driven by long standing grievances and the denial of democratic rights. As tensions on the western frontier escalate,

instability spreads across both provinces. The article also points to the IMF governance review, which highlights corruption, weak regulation and political capture as obstacles that are choking economic progress. The writer concludes that the ruling system is more focused on gathering power than governing, and warns that continued centralisation will alienate citizens and further weaken the federation. If the state does not restore democratic space, improve governance and confront militancy with unity rather than coercion, the crisis will deepen beyond repair.

Overview:

The article examines Pakistan's manipulated political landscape, the erosion of parliamentary authority and the rising security crisis in KP and Balochistan. It shows how political engineering, constitutional overreach and intensified central control have deepened instability at a moment when the country needs stronger governance, unity and institutional legitimacy.

NOTES:

The article highlights how the recent by elections in Punjab and KP exposed the emptiness of Pakistan's hybrid political structure, where victories secured through boycotts and disqualifications do little to enhance the credibility of parliament. Despite securing a two thirds majority through electoral engineering and constitutional amendments, the ruling coalition remains overshadowed by unelected centres of power. The writer stresses that talk of a new twenty eighth amendment threatens to further distort the federal balance at a moment when internal security is deteriorating. KP faces escalating militant attacks, including a deadly strike on the FC headquarters in Peshawar, while law enforcement suffers from political confrontation between the provincial and federal governments. Balochistan is caught in a worsening insurgency fuelled by political exclusion and economic neglect. The article also cites the IMF's governance assessment, which links corruption, opaque regulations and political capture to the country's economic stagnation. Together these developments reveal a state more focused on accumulating authority than resolving the deep political, security and governance crises unfolding across the country.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Federal structure, KP and Balochistan unrest, constitutional amendments
- Political Science: Authoritarian drift, legitimacy crisis, governance failure
- Current Affairs: Hybrid governance, security threats, political engineering
- International Relations: Regional instability, Afghanistan spillover, state capacity
- Public Administration: Institutional collapse, corruption, law enforcement gaps

Notes for beginners:

The article explains that the recent by elections were almost meaningless because the main opposition party was not allowed to take part. When one party is removed from the race, the results cannot reflect the public's true choice. The writer also says that real power does not lie in parliament because unelected actors make most key decisions. At the same time, violence in KP and Balochistan has increased sharply. For example, militants attacked the FC headquarters in Peshawar, even though it lies in a high security area. Balochistan faces a growing insurgency because many locals feel excluded from political and economic rights. The writer argues that fights between the federal and provincial governments weaken policing and give militants more space. He also notes that the IMF has criticised Pakistan for corruption and weak systems that slow economic growth. The article warns that unless the government focuses on fixing the economy, improving security and respecting democratic rights, the situation will become even more dangerous.

Facts and figures:

- By elections were held on six National Assembly seats
- The ruling alliance maintains a two thirds majority in parliament
- The year is described as the deadliest in a decade for security forces
- A suicide attack struck the FC headquarters in Peshawar's high security zone

- IMF governance review highlights political capture and corruption as major obstacles

To wrap up, A state that centralises power while losing control on the ground invites more instability, not less. Manipulated elections, weakened institutions and rising militancy cannot coexist with claims of political success. Real authority comes from public confidence, strong governance and a federation that feels respected rather than sidelined. Unless Pakistan steps back from political engineering and focuses on restoring democratic space, improving security and rebuilding trust, the crisis will harden and the centre will continue to lose ground where it matters most.

SHORT JOYRIDE

Author: Arifa Noor

Summary:

The article takes aim at the government's self congratulatory mood and shows how the year's apparent victories mask a deeper disconnect from public reality. The writer notes that Pakistan's leadership seems convinced it can do no wrong, buoyed by military successes, praise from Washington and a charm offensive across the Middle East. The air combat episode with India, the unusual warmth from the United States and the defence pact with Saudi Arabia have fuelled a sense of triumph. At the same time, the government has tightened its grip at home through legislation that decimated the judiciary, sidelined the opposition and muted the press. The leadership presents this as stability, yet its confidence rests on optics rather than substance.

The writer argues that these foreign policy theatrics and constitutional maneuvers have done little to improve life for ordinary Pakistanis, who remain weighed down by inflation, weak purchasing power and a security climate defined by attacks close to home. The state's elite waits for foreign aid that never arrives, while citizens watch their bills rise and their patience shrink. The government's belief that global praise can substitute for domestic performance is compared to a fleeting joyride, impressive in the moment but destined to end abruptly. The article closes with a warning that unless the government strengthens the economy and reins in militancy, its victories abroad will lose value, its narrative will collapse and its window for real decisions will close faster than it realises.

Overview:

The article examines the government's reliance on spectacle driven foreign policy and heavy handed domestic control. It highlights the widening gap between official triumphalism and the lived reality of citizens, pointing out that international praise means little if economic hardship and internal insecurity continue to deepen.

NOTES:

The article highlights how the government has wrapped itself in a sense of triumph, fuelled by military successes against India, unexpected warmth from the United States and renewed attention from Middle Eastern states, yet this confidence has been built more on image than on substance. It shows that the leadership used constitutional amendments to weaken the judiciary, silence the opposition and restrict the press, creating an atmosphere of enforced consensus rather than genuine stability. Despite high profile foreign engagements, meetings at the White House and praise from global leaders, none of this has translated into economic relief for citizens who struggle with rising prices, shrinking purchasing power and persistent security threats at home. The writer stresses that the elite waits for financial windfalls that never follow these diplomatic displays, while ordinary people feel burdened by taxes, inflation and everyday anxieties. She argues that the state remains distracted by optics, ignoring the agricultural crisis, corruption whispers, media suppression and the growing frustration of a public that sees no improvement in its quality of life. The article warns that unless the government focuses on economic improvement and curbing militancy, its victories abroad and political domination at home will lose meaning and its carefully crafted narrative will unravel.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Civil military relations, constitutional amendments, governance
- Political Science: Authoritarian trends, executive power, democratic checks
- Current Affairs: Foreign policy projection, economic stress, regional tensions
- International Relations: Soft power, strategic signalling, diplomatic optics
- Public Administration: State capacity, institutional weakening, policy legitimacy

Notes for beginners:

The article explains that the government believes it is having an excellent year because it received praise from powerful countries and won some high profile diplomatic moments. For example, leaders met the US president twice and received strong public praise. Pakistan also improved relations with Middle Eastern states and passed major constitutional amendments that weakened the judiciary and sidelined its political opponents. However, the writer says these victories have not helped ordinary people who still face rising grocery bills, taxes and security fears. A citizen dealing with inflation does not gain much from hearing about foreign trips or aircraft victories. The government celebrates these moments, but the public feels the pressure of everyday life. The article warns that unless real problems such as the economy and militancy are handled, these short lived achievements will not matter.

Facts and figures:

- Pakistan passed the twenty sixth and twenty seventh constitutional amendments
- Hamas rejected the UN Gaza plan in the same political climate the writer references
- The death toll from nearby attacks remains a concern for citizens despite foreign policy wins
- The government secured high level meetings with the US president twice in one year
- Domestic pressures include inflation, rising taxes and limits on press freedom

To sum up, The article reminds that no amount of foreign praise can substitute for sound governance at home. The government may revel in diplomatic attention and political control, but its success will ring hollow if citizens continue to bear the weight of economic strain and insecurity. A joyride built on illusion may feel smooth for a while, yet it always ends when reality catches up. Only genuine reforms and a commitment to improve the lives of ordinary people can turn fleeting triumphs into something that lasts.

HINDUTVA REVISIONISM

Summary:

The article pushes back against the rising tide of Hindutva revisionism by calling out the reckless rhetoric of Indian leaders who stoke historical fantasies at the expense of regional stability. It centres its critique on Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's claim that Sindh remains "civilisationally" part of India and may one day return, a statement that tears open old wounds and inflames an already poisoned political climate. The writer argues that such remarks do not spring from isolated impulses but reflect the deeper ideological imagination of the Sangh Parivar, which has elevated the myth of Akhand Bharat into a political narrative. Instead of grappling with the realities of a diverse region shaped by hard borders and sovereign identities, India's ruling elite chooses to conjure an imagined past to justify provocative present-day ambitions. The article warns that feeding such fantasies only pushes South Asia further into confrontation.

The second half turns to the strong backlash within Pakistan, where both the Foreign Office and the Sindh and National Assemblies rejected the remarks as delusional and dangerous. The writer stresses that Sindh's identity is anchored in millennia of history and played a decisive role during the Pakistan Movement, making any claim of irredentism unacceptable and deeply insulting. He argues that celebrating cultural commonalities between the two countries is meaningful only when grounded in mutual respect rather than expansionist dreams. The article

concludes that South Asia needs sobriety, not spectacle, and urges leaders to stop using incendiary language that deepens mistrust. True progress rests on accepting historical reality, respecting sovereign borders and working towards uplift rather than allowing militant ideology to dictate the region's fate.

Overview:

This article examines India's escalating Hindutva-driven rhetoric and its attempt to reframe regional history through the lens of Akhand Bharat. It highlights Rajnath Singh's provocative claim over Sindh, Pakistan's firm institutional response and the broader ideological undercurrent shaping Indian political discourse. It argues that revisionist statements aggravate tensions and undermine any hope of regional cooperation.

NOTES:

The article stresses that India's Defence Minister Rajnath Singh ignited fresh tensions by claiming Sindh remains "civilisationally" part of India and could one day return, a remark rooted in the wider Hindutva vision of Akhand Bharat rather than any historical or political reality. It highlights how such provocative statements deepen the toxic atmosphere in South Asia and distort shared history through ideological revisionism. Pakistan reacted firmly, with the Foreign Office calling the remarks delusional and both the Sindh Assembly and National Assembly passing resolutions affirming Sindh's place in Pakistan. The writer underscores Sindh's ancient heritage, its central role in the Pakistan Movement and its cultural diversity, arguing that no political leader has the right to undermine its identity through expansionist fantasies. The article concludes that India must stop fuelling hostility with incendiary claims and instead adopt a responsible approach that respects sovereignty, acknowledges history as it is and prioritises stability and the well-being of South Asia's people.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

International Relations: Regional tensions, nationalism, ideological politics

Pakistan Affairs: India-Pakistan relations, Hindutva ideology, sovereignty issues

Current Affairs: South Asian security, political rhetoric, regional diplomacy

Political Science: Nationalism, irredentism, political ideology

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that an Indian minister claimed Sindh is still part of India in a cultural sense and may one day return. This statement deeply upset Pakistan because Sindh is a long-established part of Pakistan with its own history, culture and political identity. The writer says such remarks come from Hindutva ideology, which imagines a united ancient India stretching across many modern countries. Pakistan's government, the Sindh Assembly and the National Assembly strongly rejected the comments and called them baseless. The article argues that leaders should avoid statements that create anger in an already tense region. For example, both countries already struggle with mistrust, and comments like these only worsen the situation. The writer says India and Pakistan can share cultural heritage, but only if they respect each other's borders and sovereignty.

Facts and Figures:

- Rajnath Singh made the remarks during an event in Delhi
- Sindh Assembly passed a joint resolution rejecting the claim
- Pakistan's Foreign Office labelled the comments delusional
- Akhand Bharat refers to a mythical undivided India spanning Afghanistan to Myanmar

To sum up, this article argues that South Asia cannot afford leaders who treat history as a playground for political theatrics. Real progress depends on recognising present-day realities, rejecting incendiary rhetoric and committing to peace rather than provocation. The message stands firm. No nation can rewrite borders through fantasy, and no region can move forward until its leaders choose restraint over bravado and reality over illusion.

THE TYRANNY OF GEOGRAPHY

Author: Maleeha Lodhi

Summary:

The article explains how Pakistan's security landscape has entered its most dangerous phase in decades as the country now confronts three active fronts at the same time. The writer traces this crisis to the tyranny of geography that has shaped Pakistan's strategy since independence. For most of its history, Islamabad tried to keep one border calm so it would never have to deal with simultaneous threats from India in the east and Afghanistan in the west. That approach held through several turbulent periods, from the Afghan jihad to the post 9/11 decade, when the United States played a stabilising role by easing India Pakistan tensions. Today that buffer has disappeared. India continues to issue open threats after the May conflict and maintains a posture of military pressure near the border. The western front has turned volatile as Pakistan and the Taliban exchange strikes following Kabul's refusal to rein in the TTP. Meanwhile, an escalating wave of attacks at home has turned internal security into a third front that bleeds the country of stability.

The writer argues that this three front reality is unprecedented and unsustainable. With the border closed, talks stalled and Kabul unwilling to give a written pledge on TTP activities, Islamabad has shifted from diplomacy to coercive pressure, hoping targeted strikes and a tougher stance will push the Taliban toward responsibility. Yet this shift comes with costs. Pakistan's western focus risks stretching its military and limiting its ability to manage India's growing belligerence, especially when Delhi hints at revising borders and revives provocative rhetoric on Sindh. The article concludes that the only front Pakistan can realistically control in the short term is the internal one. That requires a stronger counterterrorism strategy, clean border management, coordinated governance in KP and Balochistan and political and economic measures that address grievances rather than inflaming them. Without defeating militancy within, Pakistan cannot hope to withstand the pressure of two hostile borders and a fragile domestic environment all at once.

Overview:

The article explores how Pakistan's traditional strategy of avoiding simultaneous conflict on two borders has collapsed, leaving the state exposed to India's aggressive posture, Afghanistan's permissive attitude toward the TTP and a rising tide of domestic militancy. It stresses that geography has cornered Pakistan into a three front challenge and that internal stability is the only domain where decisive action lies within its control.

NOTES:

The article outlines how Pakistan now faces an unprecedented three front security crisis shaped by long standing geographic pressures. India maintains an openly hostile posture after the May conflict while the western border has deteriorated into direct clashes with the Taliban, who refuse to curb TTP attacks despite repeated talks and mediation. Pakistan launched air strikes in response to rising casualties, and the Taliban retaliated by hitting border posts, leading to a temporary ceasefire that later collapsed when Kabul declined to give a written pledge against militancy. The border remains closed with trade suspended, costing Pakistan over a billion dollars in exports and drawing military attention westward even as India issues fresh threats and provocative statements on territorial change. At home, a surge in militant attacks has turned internal security into a third front, making 2025 one of the deadliest years in a decade. The writer stresses that Pakistan must improve counterterrorism, strengthen border controls, curb corruption, address political and economic grievances in KP and Balochistan and secure community support if it hopes to withstand pressure on all sides.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Security doctrine, Pak India relations, Pak Afghanistan policy
- International Relations: Border disputes, coercive diplomacy, regional security

- Current Affairs: TTP attacks, border closures, India's belligerence, Taliban policy
- Political Science: State capacity, internal conflict, decision making under pressure

Notes for beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan is facing serious pressure from three sides at once. India is threatening military action, Afghanistan is allowing the TTP to attack Pakistan from across the border and militants at home are carrying out more attacks than in any recent year. For example, Pakistan and Afghanistan exchanged air strikes after Taliban forces attacked border posts in October, and talks later collapsed because the Taliban refused to give a written guarantee that they would stop TTP attacks. The writer says this situation makes life difficult for Pakistan because it cannot fight on two borders and also deal with terrorism inside the country at the same time. She argues that while Pakistan cannot fully control what India or Afghanistan do, it can reduce the internal threat by improving policing, strengthening border controls, ending corruption and addressing public grievances in Balochistan and KP so that militants have less support.

Facts and figures:

- Over three thousand nine hundred Pakistanis killed in militant attacks since the Taliban's 2021 return
- Pakistani exports to Afghanistan exceed one billion dollars annually and are now stalled
- Deadly border clashes erupted in October before a ceasefire mediated by Qatar and Turkiye
- India's defence minister publicly suggested that borders can change and Sindh could return to India
- Rising fatalities in 2025 make the year among the deadliest for terrorism in a decade

To wrap up, the article captures a moment when geography, politics and security pressures converge to create a situation Pakistan can no longer sidestep. It makes clear that India's hostility, Afghanistan's permissiveness and domestic militancy have produced a three front strain that no country can endure for long. Pakistan must hold its ground on external fronts, yet its real strength depends on restoring order within. Stability will not arrive through force alone but through political will, competent governance and a long term effort to break the patterns that militants exploit.

RURAL REALITIES

Author: Naweena A. Mangi

Summary:

The article explains that rural Sindh suffers not only from poverty but from a deep shortage of trained and confident human capital. The writer argues that while money can build clinics, schools and offices, no amount of funding can replace the years it takes to develop skilled, motivated and professionally mature people. Most development organisations avoid this challenge by basing their staff in cities and using rural communities only as sites of implementation. She chose the opposite path and built an organisation staffed mainly by local villagers. This decision exposed layers of social attitudes shaped by decades of patronage and weak governance. Government jobs are treated as ideal because they offer security without accountability, while private sector roles are viewed as low status. Education loses purpose when employment depends more on influence than competence. As a result, rural youth reject manual labour yet struggle to adapt to workplace expectations.

Despite high turnover and recurring issues tied to ego, hierarchy and emotional decision making, the writer found that hiring locally created something priceless. Over time a strong management tier emerged from people who began as farmers, drivers and labourers but embraced responsibility and learned to take ownership. She taught basic office tasks, yet the real strength came from the intuitive intelligence that only local people possess. They understand village dynamics, informal networks and unspoken norms that outsiders cannot grasp even after years of training. This on the ground insight has shaped decisions, prevented missteps and allowed programmes to succeed. The

writer concludes that durable rural development cannot rely on infrastructure alone. It requires long term investment in human capital and a willingness to accept slow, sometimes frustrating progress. Talent exists in rural Sindh, but only patience and commitment can unlock it.

Overview:

The article argues that rural development in Sindh is hindered less by resources and more by the lack of trained human capital. It highlights long standing social attitudes that favour government jobs, discourage private employment and weaken work ethic and accountability. Through firsthand experience, the writer shows that local hiring brings challenges but also produces committed managers whose cultural insight is indispensable. She stresses that real development takes root only when rural youth are trained, trusted and given space to grow.

NOTES:

The article highlights the central challenge of rural Sindh, which is not merely a shortage of money or infrastructure but a deep deficit of trained and confident human capital. The writer explains that rural communities are usually treated as implementation sites rather than places where institutions are built, largely because skilled and professionally mature people are scarce. She describes how government jobs are prized for their security and lack of accountability while private sector work is viewed as low status, causing education to lose value and leaving many educated youth jobless and reluctant to take up manual work. Her experience of hiring villagers exposes recurring issues such as weak work ethic, ego driven decisions, discomfort with hierarchy and a tendency to view employment as transactional rather than purposeful. Yet she also shows how, over time, local recruits with no formal experience developed into a strong management tier whose deep knowledge of community dynamics proved far more valuable than technical training alone. She emphasises that building rural human capital requires patience, consistency and the willingness to accept short term inefficiencies for long term transformation because infrastructure cannot function without people who know how to run and sustain it.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Rural development, governance challenges, social structures
- Current Affairs: Human capital gaps, labour market dynamics, community based development
- Public Administration: Capacity building, local governance, accountability issues
- Sociology: Social norms, hierarchy, rural class behaviour, community dynamics
- Economics: Human capital investment, labour productivity, informal sector realities

Notes for beginners:

The article explains that many rural communities in Sindh struggle not because they lack buildings or equipment but because they lack trained people who know how to manage and run things. For example, the writer hired local villagers and had to teach them basic office skills such as using a stapler or organising documents. She also found that many young people prefer government jobs because they believe such jobs require little work and offer security. Some employees quit simply because they felt offended when reminded to arrive on time. Yet over the years the organisation developed strong managers from villagers who had never worked in an office before. They learned leadership and responsibility and offered an understanding of local culture that outsiders could never match. The writer says this shows that real development takes time and patience and that rural youth can succeed if they are trained and supported.

Facts and figures:

- The organisation maintained a staff of about thirty five but hired around two hundred over time
- Local employees included former farmers, drivers, labourers and shop assistants
- Basic training covered office tasks while complex training involved community understanding
- Rural Sindh faces a large pool of educated but unemployed youth due to weak job incentives
- Public sector hiring is widely viewed as dependent on connections or money



In essence, rural development cannot be built on concrete alone. It depends on people who grow into their roles, learn to take responsibility and anchor institutions inside the communities they serve. The writer reminds us that the most valuable resource in any village is not land or infrastructure but human potential waiting to be cultivated with patience, guidance and trust.

CSS PLATFORM

RESTORING INSTITUTIONAL COHERENCE

Author: Malik Muhammad Ashraf

Summary:

The article explores the sweeping case for why Pakistan needs to reclaim institutional coherence through the 27th Constitutional Amendment. It argues that decades of fragmented reforms have left the state sluggish, disjointed and unable to meet the demands of a complex century. The writer maintains that the proposed changes are not power grabs but attempts to fix long standing dysfunctions across key pillars of governance. He explains that a constitutional court would separate routine litigation from constitutional interpretation, allowing quicker justice and a clearer focus on fundamental rights. Judicial rotation could break entrenched local networks and balance uneven workloads, while restoring executive magistracy would unclog courts by redirecting petty offences and administrative matters to local authorities. The amendment also aims to depoliticise the Election Commission, revive a coherent federal role in education, correct fiscal distortions created by the NFC Award and reintroduce central oversight on population policy to tackle one of Pakistan's most pressing demographic threats.

In the writer's view, the most consequential reform concerns national security. He argues that modern warfare has evolved into a multi domain contest where intelligence, technology, perception and coordinated decision making matter as much as physical force. Pakistan's institutions, however, remain siloed, relying on ad hoc synergy that works only when strong personalities hold the reins. The amendment seeks to turn charisma driven coordination into permanent structures that ensure unity of purpose across diplomatic, military and informational domains. He concludes that the 27th Amendment is not an assault on provincial autonomy but an overdue adjustment to restore balance where fragmentation has eroded effectiveness. The reform package gives a path toward a smarter, stronger and more coherent state capable of delivering justice, stability and national direction.

Overview:

This article provides a comprehensive analysis of the 27th Constitutional Amendment as a structural reform designed to repair institutional fragmentation and enhance state efficiency. It explains how specialised courts, judicial rotation, executive magistracy, a standardised election process, a coherent education framework, fiscal recalibration and integrated security mechanisms can collectively rebuild capacity. The writer situates these reforms within broader global trends and argues that Pakistan must modernise its constitutional design to navigate the complexity of contemporary governance.

NOTES:

The article highlights that the 27th Amendment seeks to repair long standing structural weaknesses by introducing reforms meant to streamline justice, governance and national coordination. It explains that creating a constitutional court would separate constitutional matters from routine litigation, reducing the enormous backlog and allowing the Supreme Court to focus on interpreting the law. Judicial rotation is presented as a way to disrupt local biases, prevent entrenched influence and balance uneven workloads across districts. The amendment also proposes restoring executive magistracy so minor disputes and administrative violations no longer clog regular courts. A depoliticised Election Commission is emphasised as essential for fair elections and stable democratic transitions. The writer stresses that a stronger federal role in education could resolve duplication, uneven standards and the absence of a shared national framework. The writer also notes that the NFC Award has restricted federal fiscal capacity and requires recalibration to address distortions. Population policy, fragmented across provinces since the 18th Amendment, needs unified oversight to manage rapid national growth. Finally, the article highlights that

modern warfare demands integrated decision making and institutional synergy, and the amendment aims to transform Pakistan's ad hoc coordination into a permanent and coherent national security framework.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs: Constitutional amendments, state structure, judicial reforms
- Current Affairs: Governance challenges, institutional performance, demographic policy
- Political Science: Separation of powers, federal design, electoral systems
- Public Administration: Administrative efficiency, decentralisation, institutional coordination
- Strategic Studies: National security architecture, multi domain operations, integrated defence planning

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan's institutions have become slow and disconnected because different reforms over the years pushed them in separate directions. The proposed 27th Amendment tries to fix these problems by redesigning important parts of the system. For example, a separate constitutional court would handle big constitutional issues while regular courts focus on routine cases, which would speed up justice. Rotating judges across districts could stop favoritism and better distribute workload. Bringing back executive magistrates would take minor issues like traffic and administrative disputes out of the formal courts, making the system more efficient. The amendment also wants a more neutral Election Commission so elections are organised fairly, a federal role in education to ensure consistent standards and a better balance of financial responsibilities between provinces and the centre. It even suggests a national plan to manage population growth because it affects economic development. Finally, it argues that the military, diplomatic and information systems must work together in a coordinated way because modern conflicts require fast and united decision making.

Facts and Figures:

- Pakistan's courts face around 2.2 million pending cases
- Under the current NFC Award, fifty seven percent of federal revenues go to provinces
- Population growth is around two point five percent
- Before 2001, executive magistrates handled petty offences and local disputes
- Several countries including Germany, South Korea and South Africa use constitutional courts

To sum up, the article argues that Pakistan cannot move forward with institutions that pull in different directions and stumble under their own weight. It presents the 27th Amendment as a roadmap toward a more coherent state that acts with purpose rather than confusion. If Pakistan wants stability, efficiency and credible governance, it must replace fragmented systems with structures designed for the realities of the modern world.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Coherence meaning internal consistency and unity, Synonym harmony, Antonym discord
- Fragmented meaning broken into disjointed parts, Synonym divided, Antonym unified
- Jurisdiction meaning legal authority over a certain area, Synonym authority, Antonym powerlessness
- Entrenched meaning firmly established, Synonym rooted, Antonym weak
- Depoliticise meaning remove political influence, Synonym neutralise, Antonym politicise
- Distortion meaning an imbalance that harms accuracy or fairness, Synonym misalignment, Antonym correction
- Synchronisation meaning coordinated action, Synonym alignment, Antonym disarray
- Demographic meaning related to population characteristics, Synonym population based, Antonym non population
- Siloed meaning isolated from other units, Synonym compartmentalised, Antonym integrated
- Recalibrate meaning adjust or redesign, Synonym readjust, Antonym misalign

RE-KINDLING PAKISTAN-INDIA TRADE?

Author: Dr Kamal Monnoo

Summary:

The article argues that Pakistan should reconsider its hesitation toward trade with India. Political concerns remain serious, especially Kashmir and India's hostile posture, yet the writer stresses that long term economic sense points toward engagement under strict terms. Global experience shows that regional trade fuels growth, and the example of the United States and China proves that even rivals can maintain profitable links. Their cooperation in technology and investment keeps both economies strong despite mistrust. Pakistan and India, if guided by similar discipline, could unlock regional prosperity that isolation has kept out of reach.

The writer explains that fears of India's larger scale or stronger industry overlook how expanding markets create space for many players. The rise of American and Chinese tech giants at the same time shows this pattern clearly. When markets connect, investors follow, and innovation accelerates. The writer believes that this logic applies to South Asia as well. Once initial suspicion softens, public demand can drive trade forward and reshape the economic landscape. Productive contact can outperform rivalry if both sides commit to fair rules and steady monitoring.

Overview:

The article studies Pakistan India trade through the lens of global economic patterns. It shows how rivalry does not always block mutually beneficial exchange and argues that controlled engagement could help both countries tap into wider regional growth.

NOTES:

The article explains the long running debate on whether Pakistan should trade with India. Political concerns such as Kashmir and India's hostile actions still carry weight, yet economic logic suggests that regional trade drives growth faster than isolation. The writer compares Pakistan India tensions to the United States and China, two rivals who still form the world's most important economic pairing. Together they make over 40 percent of global GDP and continue to trade, invest, and compete side by side. The article stresses that complete separation in modern supply chains is unlikely, even among great powers, because technology markets reward cooperation as much as competition. Applied to Pakistan and India, this logic suggests that both could grow if they negotiated clear terms, protected sensitive sectors, and monitored compliance. The writer adds that large markets expand rather than suffocate opportunities. Investors on both sides tend to follow rising demand, which fuels innovation and strengthens industries. If Pakistan and India manage to move past their initial barriers, trade could become a major force for stability and regional progress.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs. Regional trade, economic policy, Pakistan India relations
- Current Affairs. South Asian economics, patterns of cooperation and rivalry
- International Relations. Comparative models of major power competition and economic interdependence

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that even countries with serious political disputes can still benefit from controlled trade. For example, the United States and China compete in technology, yet their trade helps both economies grow. Pakistan and India are neighbours with large populations, yet they trade very little compared to other regions. South Asia is one of the least connected markets in the world. The writer argues that if both countries set rules, protect sensitive industries, and monitor trade, they can grow together instead of drifting apart. Bigger markets attract investors, raise demand, and push companies to innovate, which improves living standards over time.

Facts and Figures:

- The United States and China together make more than 40 percent of world GDP

- Nvidia's rise did not stop Chinese tech firms from gaining value at the same time
- Rare earth elements remain a bargaining tool, yet China has not restricted them
- Pakistan India trade remains far below potential compared to other regional blocs

In essence, the article argues that controlled engagement can support growth, ease tensions, and create opportunities that isolation has kept out of reach. If Pakistan aims for long term development rather than short term caution, it must explore structured trade that protects national interests while opening doors to wider regional progress.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Tangible. Something real or concrete. Synonym solid. Antonym vague
- Rivalry. Competition between two sides. Synonym contest. Antonym harmony
- Inhibitions. Hesitations or internal barriers. Synonym restraint. Antonym confidence
- Prudent. Wise and careful. Synonym judicious. Antonym reckless
- Valuation. Assessment of financial worth. Synonym appraisal. Antonym miscalculation

STRATEGIC TRADE

Summary:

The article highlights Pakistan's effort to deepen its economic engagement with the European Union through the GSP Plus scheme and frames this initiative as a meaningful shift in the country's economic diplomacy. The writer explains that Pakistan finally recognises the need to move beyond its familiar markets and use duty free access to Europe as a bridge toward export driven growth. This access offers a much needed opening at a time when Pakistan's trade deficit, shrinking reserves and fragile industries demand fresh opportunities. The scheme promises jobs across sectors such as textiles, garments and leather while pulling local industries toward better standards, stronger regulation and modern production practices. For the EU, Pakistan offers cost effective manufacturing, a diversified supply chain and a foothold in a strategically important region.

The article argues that the opportunity will slip through Pakistan's fingers if diplomacy is not backed by institutional readiness. Export procedures require reform, quality checks need tightening and labour standards must meet international expectations if Pakistan wants to use GSP Plus as a platform for long term competitiveness rather than a temporary relief valve. The writer stresses that trade access alone does not guarantee success. Only a resilient system that enables exporters, reduces friction at borders and aligns with global standards can turn this opening into real economic progress. If pursued with discipline, Pakistan's current push can widen its economic space and support livelihoods across the country. The moment demands focus, clarity and a willingness to reform.

Overview:

The article evaluates Pakistan's strategic use of the GSP Plus trade scheme with the European Union and explains how this partnership can support export growth, industrial upgrading and job creation. It also underlines that Pakistan's success depends on domestic reforms in regulation, process efficiency and labour standards to fully capitalise on the opportunity.

NOTES:

The article explains that Pakistan's renewed engagement with the European Union through the GSP Plus scheme marks a deliberate shift toward broader economic diplomacy aimed at export led growth. It highlights that duty free access to Europe's large market can ease pressure on Pakistan's weak foreign exchange position while creating jobs in textiles, garments, leather and related sectors. The writer stresses that stronger ties with the EU can also promote technology transfer, higher product standards and greater regulatory alignment, all of which raise Pakistan's competitiveness. At the same time, the article warns that improved market access will only translate into sustainable gains if Pakistan reforms its export procedures, strengthens quality control, upgrades labour standards and builds a

more efficient trade facilitation system. The article concludes that GSP Plus is a promising opportunity, but its benefits depend on Pakistan's ability to deliver on reforms and build industries capable of meeting European expectations.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Trade relations, export structure, economic challenges
- International Relations: Pakistan EU cooperation, global trade frameworks
- Economics: Trade deficits, export led growth, preferential market access
- Current Affairs: GSP Plus, regulatory reforms, foreign market integration
- Public Administration: Trade facilitation, institutional capacity, compliance standards

Notes for beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan now has duty free access to the European Union's large market through the GSP Plus programme. For example, a textile factory in Faisalabad can export garments to Europe without paying heavy import taxes, which makes its products cheaper for European buyers and boosts sales. This can create more jobs in stitching, dyeing and packaging. However, Pakistan must meet European standards on product quality and labour rights. If a factory does not follow safety rules or produces low quality goods, the EU can block its shipments. So Pakistan needs better inspection systems, easier export paperwork and stronger worker protections. The article says that if Pakistan fixes these issues, it can earn more foreign exchange and support industries across the country.

Facts and figures:

- The GSP Plus scheme provides Pakistan duty free access to the EU market
- Major beneficiary sectors include textiles, garments and leather
- Pakistan continues to face persistent trade deficits and low foreign exchange reserves
- EU cooperation offers opportunities for technology transfer and higher production standards

To sum up, the article presents GSP Plus as a real chance for Pakistan to shift from fragile growth to steady export driven progress, but only if the government backs diplomacy with competence and reform. It reminds the reader that market access means little without the readiness to use it. Pakistan now stands before an opening that can strengthen industries and support households across the country if the state shows focus, discipline and the will to modernise its trading system.

DEMOCRACY AND PAKISTAN

Author: Najm us Saqib

Summary:

The article argues that democracy in Pakistan exists more as an aspiration than a lived political reality, a system repeatedly invoked yet rarely practiced in its true form. Pakistan's citizens carry a deep unease shaped by decades of military rule, unstable civilian governments and cycles of political engineering that hollow out democratic institutions. Whenever an elected government comes under criticism, democracy itself is framed as endangered, even though the country has never experienced a sustained period in which constitutionalism, rule of law, transparent elections and genuine public representation functioned together. The writer contrasts this ideal system with Pakistan's history of rigging, elite manipulation and dynastic politics, where family succession replaces merit and entrenched power blocs shape outcomes long before voters reach the polling booth. He reminds readers that true democracy demands more than ballots, party symbols and periodic elections; it requires a political culture anchored in justice, accountability and equal opportunity, none of which Pakistan has fully secured.

The article widens the lens to show that even established democracies fall short of their ideals. From constitutional monarchies in Europe to selective international standards applied by Western powers, the global landscape reveals

democracies that tolerate hereditary privilege, economic influence and foreign policy hypocrisy. Yet democracy endures because, despite its flaws, it contains mechanisms for correction that authoritarian systems lack: dissent, free press, elections and judicial scrutiny. The writer argues that Pakistan's tragedy is not that democracy is imperfect but that its imperfections have been normalised. The task, therefore, is not to abandon the democratic dream but to breathe substance into it by strengthening institutions, cultivating civic responsibility and replacing political theatrics with genuine public service. Without these reforms, elections will remain spectacles dominated by power elites while true democracy continues to recede beyond the horizon. The dream may be battered, but it still deserves to endure.

Overview:

The article explores the gulf between the ideal of democracy and its practice in Pakistan. It highlights the country's longstanding pattern of weak institutions, manipulated elections, dynastic politics and cycles of intervention that undermine democratic growth. By comparing global democracies with Pakistan's own struggles, the writer shows how democracy often becomes a slogan rather than a substantive system. He concludes that Pakistan must shift from symbolic democracy toward genuine institutional reform and civic responsibility.

NOTES:

The article highlights that democracy in Pakistan has rarely operated in its true form because the country's political landscape remains shaped by military interventions, engineered elections and entrenched elites who weaken institutional integrity. It underscores that citizens live with constant anxiety about democratic collapse since every criticism of an elected government is framed as a threat to democracy, even though Pakistan has never experienced a fully functioning democratic system grounded in rule of law, accountability and genuine representation. The writer stresses that practices like rigging, coercion, dynastic succession and the influence of powerful domestic and foreign actors undermine democratic credibility. He broadens the view by pointing out that even established democracies fall short of their ideals, with constitutional monarchies, political hypocrisy and selective application of democratic standards visible across the world. Yet he argues that democracy's flaws are also its strength, since it alone contains mechanisms for correction such as free press, independent courts and elections. He concludes that the real challenge for Pakistan is to shift from celebrating the form of democracy to building its substance through stronger institutions, civic responsibility and a political culture that values accountability over power games.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Democratic evolution, civil military relations, electoral reforms
- Political Science: Democratic theory, legitimacy, political culture
- Current Affairs: Governance challenges, institutional performance, power structures
- Public Administration: Rule of law, accountability, state capacity
- International Relations: Comparative political systems and global democratic norms

Notes for beginners:

The article explains that democracy in Pakistan is weak because the system has never worked the way it should. For example, elections are often influenced by powerful groups, and many politicians come from the same families, which prevents ordinary people from getting a fair chance. In a true democracy laws apply equally to everyone, but in Pakistan powerful individuals often escape accountability. The writer also mentions that even countries like the United Kingdom and Japan have systems where kings or queens still exist, so no country is perfectly democratic. The difference is that strong democracies allow people to criticise the government, vote freely and expect institutions like courts and media to hold leaders accountable. He says Pakistan must strengthen its institutions and improve how politicians and citizens behave so democracy becomes real instead of just a word.

Facts and figures:

- Pakistan has experienced seventy eight years without uninterrupted democratic continuity

- Many democracies worldwide retain monarchies or elite structures despite being labelled democratic
- Churchill famously called democracy the worst form of government except for all the others
- Elections in Pakistan are often marred by rigging and political engineering
- General elections are widely perceived as contests among entrenched elites rather than true public choice

To sum up, the article suggests that democracy cannot survive on ceremonies, slogans or empty rituals. It thrives only when citizens defend its principles and institutions embody its spirit. Pakistan's democratic journey has been weighed down by power struggles, institutional weakness and political complacency, yet the path forward lies not in rejecting democracy but in strengthening it. The writer reminds readers that democracy's imperfections are not a reason to abandon it but an invitation to improve it, because no other system offers the same ability to correct itself and protect individual freedoms.

KABUL'S SILENCE

Author: Atif Mehmood

Summary:

The article explains that Pakistan entered a ceasefire with the Afghan Taliban in the hope of creating room for stability, yet the reality on the ground has crushed those expectations. Pakistan paused operations and pursued dialogue in good faith, but Kabul failed to restrain militant groups that operate freely from Afghan territory. Recent attacks in Peshawar and Hangu show that these networks train, regroup and strike from safe havens across the border, contradicting Kabul's repeated denials. The writer argues that this is not an administrative lapse but a political choice rooted in deep ideological ties between the Afghan Taliban and TTP. Pakistan attempted diplomatic engagement and exercised restraint, yet received only apologies while militants gained confidence and operational space. Meanwhile, Pakistan's forces remain overstretched and its civilians face renewed fear as everyday life in border districts becomes shadowed by uncertainty.

The article argues that Pakistan can no longer rely on verbal commitments that never translate into action. Kabul's inaction has forced Islamabad to rethink its strategy and adopt a firmer posture built on conditional engagement, reinforced borders, better intelligence and regional coordination. Diplomacy remains possible, but only when supported by pressure that compels serious response. The writer stresses that Pakistan must guard against internal divisions because national cohesion is essential in the fight against terrorism. He concludes that the ceasefire failed because only one side honoured it. Pakistan sought peace while the Afghan Taliban failed to prevent militants from expanding. The coming moments will decide whether violence continues or whether Pakistan finally applies the resolve needed to push Kabul toward responsibility.

Overview:

The article examines the collapse of the ceasefire between Pakistan and the Afghan Taliban and explains how Kabul's refusal to act against TTP has intensified cross border violence. It highlights the ideological link between the Taliban and militant outfits, the growing burden on Pakistan's security forces and the rising fear among civilians. The writer argues that Pakistan must adopt a tougher, verifiable and measurable approach to ensure its security and stability.

NOTES:

The article highlights that the ceasefire with the Afghan Taliban collapsed because Kabul failed to act against TTP networks that operate from Afghan soil. Pakistan's claims about militant sanctuaries have been repeatedly denied by the Taliban despite a rising wave of attacks launched from across the border. Recent assaults in Peshawar and Hangu confirm that these groups train, rebuild and reenter Pakistan with ease. The writer explains that this inaction is not due to weak administration but a conscious political choice shaped by deep ideological ties between the Taliban and TTP. Pakistan has shown restraint, paused operations and pursued dialogue, yet received nothing but

assurances that never translated into enforcement. Meanwhile, Pakistan's security forces remain overstretched as they guard vast border terrain while civilians in nearby districts live under growing fear. The article stresses that Pakistan must adopt a tougher, measurable approach in future engagements by reinforcing borders, improving intelligence and pushing Kabul through regional pressure. It also warns that Pakistan cannot allow militants to exploit its internal divisions, as national cohesion remains vital for counterterrorism efforts.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Pak Afghanistan relations, border security, counterterrorism
- Current Affairs: Regional instability, militant sanctuaries, foreign policy choices
- International Relations: Regional diplomacy, cross border conflict, security cooperation
- Political Science: State responsibility, ideological alliances, governance under threat

Notes for beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan agreed to a ceasefire with the Afghan Taliban expecting that both sides would stop violence, yet attacks grew instead of declining. For example, militants carried out deadly strikes in Peshawar and Hangu soon after the agreement, which showed that they still train and operate from Afghan territory. Pakistan keeps saying that TTP camps exist in Afghanistan, but Kabul denies it even though the attacks prove otherwise. The writer says this is not a mistake but a deliberate choice because the Taliban and TTP share the same beliefs and history. Pakistan has been patient, avoided escalation and tried dialogue, but nothing changed. Now Pakistan needs stronger borders, better intelligence and clear conditions for any future talks. He adds that people living near the border suffer the most since markets, schools and roads no longer feel safe.

Facts and figures:

- Three officers killed in the Peshawar suicide attack
- Three police officials killed in the Hangu check post attack
- Multiple cross border infiltrations traced back to Afghan territory
- Pakistan halted all operations as part of the ceasefire while Kabul offered no enforcement
- Security forces stretched across long and exposed border terrain

To sum up, The article shows that Kabul's silence and inaction have created conditions where militant violence can thrive while Pakistan pays the price in lives, stability and national confidence. The writer argues that Pakistan must abandon one sided restraint and pursue a tougher, more disciplined strategy backed by national unity and regional support. Peace cannot be built on empty promises and delayed action. It demands resolve, clarity and protection of citizens above all.

Difficult words and meanings:

- Ceasefire. A temporary halt in fighting. Meaning truce
- Sanctuary. A place that offers protection. Meaning refuge
- Complicity. Involvement in wrongdoing. Meaning participation
- Restraint. Controlled or limited use of force. Meaning moderation
- Camaraderie. Mutual trust within a group. Meaning fellowship

The Express Tribune –

AFGHANISTAN'S MILITARY GEOGRAPHY, POWER CENTRES AND OUR POLICY MORASS

Author: Inam Ul Haque

Summary:

The article explains how Pakistan's Afghan policy has reached a point where patience no longer pays. Despite years of support and political cover extended to the Afghan Taliban, Pakistan now faces their open hostility, their refusal to rein in the TTP and their dismissal of Pakistan's minimum demands. Recent attacks, including a suicide blast in Islamabad, underscore how the TTP continues to operate freely from Afghan soil. The writer argues that Pakistan has exhausted every diplomatic and strategic lever, yet Afghan leaders remain unmoved. The collapse of the third round of talks in Istanbul shows how deeply the Taliban's intransigence has hardened, even as Pakistan tries to avoid a direct confrontation.

The writer highlights the wider picture by examining Afghanistan's military geography and the power centres that shape decision making within the Taliban. The Pashtun south, the Haqqani network in Loya Paktia, the non Pashtun north and a smaller Iranian influenced belt in the west form a fractured but manageable landscape. He argues that Pakistan still holds greater understanding and influence in Afghanistan than any Western power, yet must reassess its approach. The myth of Taliban victories over superpowers is debunked as those successes were made possible through Pakistan's vital support. The article concludes that a more inclusive Afghan political structure, supported by Pakistan's diplomatic pressure and military preparedness, is the only path that can stabilise the border and bring Afghanistan toward a workable future.

Overview:

The article explores why Pakistan's Afghan policy is stuck and how Afghanistan's geography, ethnic fault lines and internal power centres shape decisions in Kabul. It highlights the limits of Pakistan's long standing strategy and makes the case for a tougher, more realistic approach that blends pressure with a push for inclusive politics inside Afghanistan.

NOTES:

The writer explains that the Afghan Taliban's refusal to restrain the TTP lies at the centre of Pakistan's current crisis with Kabul. He details how Pakistan's strategic patience has failed to produce behavioural change and why recent attacks prove that the TTP continues to operate under Taliban protection. The article highlights Afghanistan's military geography, noting how the Hindu Kush divides the country into powerful ethnic blocs that affect Kabul's decisions. It breaks down the four major power centres in Afghanistan and explains why Pakistan originally backed the Taliban leadership based in Qandahar and Loya Paktia. It challenges the claim that the Taliban defeated global powers on their own by showing that Pakistan's logistic, diplomatic and military support was essential. The article argues that older criticisms of Pakistan's Afghan policy ignore how Pakistan has already tested every option. It stresses that Afghan resentment, revived Pashtun nationalism and Taliban obstinacy have created a deadlock. As a way forward, Pakistan should maintain military leverage, strengthen defensive positions and support a political mix between Pashtun and non Pashtun groups to bring stability.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan Afghanistan relations, border security, policy debates
- International Relations: Regional security, non state actors, great power involvement

- Current Affairs: Terrorism, diplomacy, regional strategic challenges
- Political Science: State behaviour, ethnic politics, conflict dynamics

Notes for beginners:

The article says Pakistan and the Afghan Taliban are stuck because the Taliban will not stop the TTP from using Afghanistan to attack Pakistan. Pakistan has tried talks, pressure and diplomacy, but the Taliban refuse to cooperate. The writer explains that Afghanistan is divided by geography and ethnicity, which creates many power centres. The Taliban claim they defeated the Soviet Union and the United States, yet the article says they succeeded because Pakistan gave them support for many years. Now that the Taliban refuse to help Pakistan in return, Pakistan may need to apply stronger pressure and work with other Afghan groups to bring balance. This is important because Afghanistan's instability spills into Pakistan through terrorism and border tensions.

Facts and figures:

- Pakistan shares a 2,670 kilometre border with Afghanistan
- TTP attacks continue despite repeated rounds of talks
- Jamaat ul Ahrar claimed a suicide attack in Islamabad on November 11
- Afghanistan's major power centres include Qandahar, Loya Paktia, the northern non Pashtun region and Herat in the west
- Afghan Taliban victories against global powers were enabled by Pakistan's logistic and political support

To sum up, the article explains that Pakistan cannot carry on with a policy that delivers no security and no cooperation. The Taliban's unwillingness to restrain the TTP has pushed the relationship to a breaking point. Pakistan must rethink its approach, strengthen its defensive posture and support a broader political balance in Afghanistan. Only a stable and inclusive Afghanistan can offer Pakistan the peace it has long sought on its western border.

Difficult words and meanings:

- Recalcitrance. Refusal to cooperate. Synonym defiance. Antonym compliance
- Obstinate. Unwilling to change. Synonym stubborn. Antonym agreeable
- Ingress. Ability to enter or influence. Synonym access. Antonym exclusion
- Predicament. Difficult situation. Synonym dilemma. Antonym solution
- Laurels. Earned credit or praise. Synonym honour. Antonym disgrace
- Pluralistic. Involving diverse groups. Synonym inclusive. Antonym exclusive

RULING WITHOUT RULES: PAKISTAN'S CORE PROBLEM

Author: M Zeb Khan

Summary:

The article argues that Pakistan has slipped into a disturbing phase where national decisions depend more on moods than on laws. Authority rests with actors who operate outside constitutional boundaries, while legal provisions are applied with precision against opponents and quietly ignored for allies. This selective treatment has hollowed out the rule of law, weakened investor confidence and driven capital and talent away. The writer stresses that a country does not need full democracy to prosper, but no country can sustain growth without predictable rules that secure property rights and honour contracts. Pakistan's recurring pattern of short lived economic spurts followed by collapse traces back to this same structural failure.

The writer notes that selective enforcement erodes public trust and creates a climate where people rely on personal connections instead of institutions. Investors can tolerate high taxes or complex procedures, yet no one tolerates arbitrariness, which destroys the ability to plan. The article closes by arguing that Pakistan cannot wait for a perfect

political environment to begin reform. Even small, consistent steps such as commercial courts with binding deadlines, autonomous regulators and secure digital land records can create pockets of impartiality that expand over time. Without such steps, Pakistan risks remaining trapped in a cycle where laws serve convenience, institutions retain their shells and the Constitution loses its force.

Overview:

The article examines how Pakistan's governance has drifted away from rule based decision making and how this shift fuels economic decline, weak institutional trust and chronic instability. It highlights why predictable rules form the backbone of modern states and why Pakistan must rebuild institutional credibility if it wishes to break free from its recurring crises.

NOTES:

The article explains that Pakistan's core crisis stems from the erosion of rule of law and the rise of selective enforcement. It shows how decisions increasingly occur outside constitutional channels and how this undermines legitimacy, investor confidence and national cohesion. The writer highlights that even non democratic economies succeeded because they maintained predictable legal frameworks, something Pakistan has repeatedly failed to do. The article notes that capital flight and brain drain are direct consequences of institutional disorder. It stresses that Pakistan cannot escape this cycle unless it strengthens rule based governance through targeted reforms such as binding commercial courts, autonomous regulators and tamper proof land records. These steps help create trust in institutions, which in turn encourages investment and restores public confidence.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics:

- Pakistan Affairs. Governance, institutional decay, constitutional principles
- Political Science: Rule of law, state legitimacy, decision making
- Economics: Investment climate, capital flight, institutional stability
- Current Affairs: Governance failures, policy reforms

Notes for beginners:

The article suggests that Pakistan's biggest problem is that decisions are no longer made by rules. Some people face strict laws while others escape accountability because they have connections. When laws do not apply to everyone equally, investors take their money abroad and skilled people leave the country. The writer explains that even countries without full democracy grow when they protect contracts and property rights through clear rules. Pakistan can fix its situation by building strong systems, such as courts that solve business disputes quickly, regulators that work independently and land records that cannot be changed by influential people. These changes help people trust the state again.

Facts and figures:

- Pakistan faces ongoing capital flight as investors move funds abroad
- Brain drain continues as skilled professionals migrate for stability
- Commercial courts and autonomous regulators are proposed reforms to improve predictability
- Authoritarian economies like Singapore grew through clear and consistent legal frameworks

To put it simply, no country can thrive when its laws shift with political winds. Pakistan must rebuild rule based governance if it wants lasting stability and growth. Only institutions that apply rules fairly, protect rights and survive political changes can restore trust and lift the country out of its recurring crises.

Difficult words and meanings:

- Ornamental. Decorative rather than useful. Synonym superficial. Antonym functional
- Impartial. Free of bias. Synonym fair. Antonym biased
- Arbitrariness. Decisions made without rule based reasoning. Synonym unpredictability. Antonym consistency

- Legitimacy. Lawful authority. Synonym validity. Antonym illegitimacy
- Equilibrium. A stable state. Synonym balance. Antonym imbalance
- Entrenched. Firmly established. Synonym rooted. Antonym fragile

THE LINK BETWEEN VIOLENCE AND GOVERNANCE FAILURES

Author: Dr Syed Akhtar Ali Shah

Summary:

The article argues that Pakistan cannot understand terrorism without recognising its political and ideological roots. The writer explains that terrorism aims to create fear and force governments or societies to bend under pressure, a reality acknowledged by scholars, global institutions and courts alike. He notes that every credible definition places political intent at the centre of terrorism and rejects the notion that such acts are random crimes. This framework exposes the deeper problem facing Pakistan. Violence thrives where governance falters, where justice remains selective and where state institutions fail to respond to grievances before they harden into rebellion. The rise of extremism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan reflects these fractures.

The article expands on this by linking weak governance to recurring insecurity. Political instability, corruption, inequality, civil military imbalance and ideological confusion weaken the state's ability to enforce law and deliver basic rights. Pakistan's structural weaknesses, highlighted by scholars such as Maleeha Lodhi and Hussain Haqqani, include reliance on patronage, elite capture, ideological divides and an overemphasis on security at the cost of development. These weaknesses give space to militant networks that exploit frustration, deprivation and exclusion. The writer argues that Pakistan must rebuild governance from the ground up, strengthen constitutionalism, ensure accountability, reform policing, revive the economy and restore the state's monopoly over force. Only then can the country break the cycle that allows terrorism to flourish.

Overview:

The article explains how terrorism in Pakistan is rooted in political motives and governance failures rather than isolated acts of violence. It highlights how weak institutions, inequality and state fragility fuel extremism and argues that sustainable security requires deep reforms across governance, justice and economic management.

NOTES:

The article stresses that terrorism is driven by political objectives and is defined globally as violence meant to intimidate societies and compel governments to act. It underlines that Pakistan's persistent instability cannot be separated from governance deficiencies such as corruption, weak institutions and inequality. The writer draws on global scholarship to show how fragile states become safe havens for extremist groups. He points to Pakistan's long standing structural weaknesses, including imbalance between civil and military authority, feudal patronage, tax evasion by elites and political use of ideology, all of which weaken state capacity. The article calls for constitutional governance, accountable institutions, professional policing, economic reform and a shift from a security first worldview to a development oriented one.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Governance issues, political instability, extremism
- Current Affairs: Terrorism, institutional reform, state fragility
- International Relations: Definitions of terrorism, global security frameworks
- Political Science: Rule of law, state capacity, institutional development
- Public Administration: Governance models, accountability, service delivery

Notes for beginners:

The article says terrorism is not random. It happens when groups want to pressure the government or society to accept their demands. Many experts say terrorism always has political aims. The writer adds that Pakistan faces terrorism because its system of governance is weak. When people feel they do not receive justice or fair treatment, they grow angry and some groups turn violent. Problems like corruption, unfair distribution of resources, poor policing and political conflict make extremists stronger. To reduce terrorism, Pakistan must improve its institutions, strengthen the justice system, support education, create economic opportunities and ensure that laws apply to everyone.

Facts and figures:

- Terrorism definitions cited from United Nations, FBI and global scholars
- Key features identified by Bruce Hoffman include political goals, fear, violence and organised groups
- Maleeha Lodhi identifies five major governance weaknesses in Pakistan
- State fragility after 9/11 globally linked with rising terrorism in weak states

To wrap up, the article suggests that no country can defeat terrorism without fixing its governance. Force may contain militants for a time, yet lasting peace requires justice, competence, opportunity and inclusion. Pakistan must rebuild its institutions, restore trust and shift from reaction to reform if it wishes to break free from its cycle of violence and uncertainty.

PAKISTAN'S GATEWAY DILEMMA

Author: Dr Muhammad Ali Ehsan

Summary:

The article explains that Pakistan's geography places it at the crossroads of global power politics, where the strategic ambitions of Heartland states and maritime states intersect. Drawing on Mackinder's Heartland Theory, the writer argues that Pakistan lies on the edge of this pivotal Eurasian zone and serves as a natural bridge between land powers such as China and Russia, and sea powers such as the United States, Britain and India. This position gives Pakistan unmatched relevance, yet also exposes it to competing agendas. China seeks Pakistan's ports to bypass maritime chokepoints, Russia hopes to secure southern access to warm waters and the United States aims to prevent Heartland expansion to the Arabian Sea. Pakistan therefore becomes the hinge on which two opposing grand strategies turn.

The writer notes that Pakistan's choices carry long term consequences. How Islamabad positions itself between Heartland integration and Rimland containment will determine whether its geography becomes an asset or a liability. India stands firmly with the United States as part of the Indo Pacific framework, while China and Russia advance their continental ambitions. Afghanistan's instability complicates the picture since it functions as the continental corridor linking Pakistan to the Heartland. The writer concludes that Pakistan must weigh its alliances carefully and decide whether to align with the Heartland vision or the maritime containment strategy. With the Margalla Dialogue approaching, he stresses that Pakistan's strategic orientation is a question the state can no longer postpone.

Overview:

The article analyses Pakistan's geopolitical position through Mackinder's Heartland Theory and explains how Pakistan's location makes it central to the rivalry between continental and maritime powers. It highlights the strategic choices Pakistan faces and how Afghanistan's stability, regional alignments and great power competition shape these decisions.

NOTES:

The article highlights the continued relevance of Mackinder's Heartland Theory by placing Pakistan within the global struggle between Eurasian land powers and maritime powers. It explains that Pakistan's geography connects Central Asia, South Asia and the Middle East, making it vital for both Heartland outreach and maritime containment.

The writer notes that China relies on Pakistan to bypass the Strait of Malacca and secure access to the Arabian Sea, while Russia seeks energy routes through Pakistan. At the same time, the United States and India aim to prevent Heartland influence from reaching the Rimland. The article stresses that Pakistan must balance ideals with geography and decide whether it stands with continental integration or maritime containment. It notes that Afghanistan's instability directly affects Pakistan's security and connectivity since Afghanistan functions as the land bridge to the Heartland. The article underlines that Pakistan's future foreign policy must reflect a clear and deliberate strategic choice.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics:

- International Relations: Geopolitics, great power competition, Heartland and Rimland theories
- Pakistan Affairs: Regional strategy, foreign policy, Pakistan's geographic constraints
- Current Affairs: Pakistan China relations, Pakistan US relations, Eurasian politics
- Political Geography: Location based strategic advantage and vulnerability

Notes for beginners:

The article says Pakistan sits in a very important location where big powers compete for influence. China and Russia want access to the Arabian Sea, and Pakistan helps them reach it. The United States and India do not want this to happen because it increases China and Russia's power. This creates pressure on Pakistan to choose sides. Pakistan's ports, borders and links to Afghanistan make it important for trade and strategy. Afghanistan's situation matters because it connects Pakistan to Central Asia. The writer says Pakistan must think carefully about which direction to take, because its geography gives it opportunities but also risks.

Facts and figures:

- Pakistan lies at the junction of three major regions: South Asia, Central Asia and the Middle East
- The Heartland spans Central Asia, Russia and parts of Eastern Europe
- The Strait of Malacca remains the most critical maritime chokepoint for China
- Pakistan provides China a direct route to the Arabian Sea through Gwadar
- Russia seeks energy corridors that link Central Asia to Pakistan's ports

To wrap up, the article reminds Pakistan that geography is permanent and strategy must match it. Pakistan's location gives it influence, yet also places it in the crossfire of global competition. The country needs a clear, steady policy anchored in long term interests rather than shifting pressures. Only a deliberate choice, grounded in national priorities and regional realities, can turn Pakistan's gateway dilemma into a strategic advantage.

STRATEGY DEMANDS UNINTERRUPTED DIPLOMACY

Author: Imtiaz Gul

Summary:

The article looks at Pakistan's approach to the current Pak-Afghan standoff, arguing that hardline measures have boxed the country into a corner without yielding any real progress against terrorism. The writer notes that Islamabad tightened the screws only after talks in Doha and Istanbul hit a dead end, yet the decision to clamp down on trade, mobility and visas has done little more than fray tempers and harden positions on both sides. Toxic rhetoric from ministers, accusations of India's shadowy hand and fluctuating statements have pushed diplomacy to the margins, leaving farmers, traders and patients to pay the price for a crisis they never created. The article warns that such tactics erode goodwill in border communities whose cooperation is indispensable for long-term peace and whose hardships now risk turning simmering frustration into outright hostility.

The writer widens the lens to argue that Pakistan's strategy cannot survive on coercion Alone particularly when Kabul leans on its ties with India and retains every sovereign right to diversify its partnerships. The article shows

how securitising trade and visas might offer the illusion of control yet produces ripple effects that undermine Pakistan's own economic stability and strategic depth. With thousands of containers stranded and perishable goods rotting at crossings, both sides are bleeding financially while mistrust deepens. The writer insists that true statesmanship lies in stepping back from tit-for-tat gestures, engaging border communities, adopting a geo-economic lens and recognising that peace cannot be enforced by throttling livelihoods. Pakistan, already squeezed by unfriendly borders east and west, risks compounding its vulnerabilities unless it reframes its approach to Afghanistan with patience, clarity and regional foresight.

Overview:

The article analyses Pakistan's punitive turn in its dealings with Afghanistan after stalled negotiations, highlighting how border closures, trade restrictions and harsh rhetoric have backfired by damaging economic ties and alienating border communities. It stresses the need to abandon narrow security thinking, adopt a geo-economic outlook and balance counterterror imperatives with humanitarian considerations. The writer argues that sustainable peace requires diplomacy, empathy and regional economic connectivity rather than coercive tools that harm ordinary people on both sides.

NOTES:

The article emphasises that Pakistan's hardline response to the Afghan standoff has intensified tensions without curbing terrorism, as border closures, trade suspensions and restrictive visa policies have inflicted deep economic and humanitarian costs on both sides. It highlights that Islamabad adopted punitive measures only after extensive negotiations in Doha and Istanbul failed, yet these steps have eroded goodwill among border communities whose cooperation is essential for long-term peace. The writer points out that thousands of containers remain stranded, perishable goods have spoiled and farmers, traders and labourers continue to suffer losses that deepen resentment. He warns that securitising trade offers little strategic payoff because it punishes ordinary Afghans and Pakistanis while doing nothing to dismantle militant networks. The article stresses that Afghanistan's outreach to India complicates matters further, making it imperative for Pakistan to adopt a geo-economic approach, revive diplomacy, engage border communities and recognise that durable peace cannot emerge from a tit-for-tat posture that throttles livelihoods and weakens regional stability.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs: Pak-Afghan relations, border management, security policy
- Current Affairs: Regional connectivity, counterterrorism diplomacy, trade disruptions
- International Relations: Geo-economics, cross-border cooperation, foreign policy strategy
- Political Science: State behaviour, coercive diplomacy, public policy impacts

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan and Afghanistan recently faced a serious dispute that made both sides close borders and stop trade. Pakistan did this because it believes Afghan soil is being used by the TTP, a militant group targeting Pakistan. However, these closures caused huge problems for ordinary people such as traders, patients and daily workers who rely on cross-border movement. For example, thousands of containers carrying fruits and vegetables were stuck for weeks and many goods spoiled. The writer suggests this approach hurts people but does not stop terrorism. He argues that Pakistan should use long-term diplomacy and consider economic cooperation instead of only using pressure. He also says Afghanistan may grow closer to India to protect its own interests, so Pakistan needs a wiser strategy that avoids harming its own citizens and border communities.

Facts and Figures:

- Talks in Doha and Istanbul failed to produce results
- Nearly twelve thousand containers were stranded at major border crossings
- Hundreds of containers with perishable goods spoiled, causing heavy losses

- Two thirds of Afghans live at or below the poverty line
- Border closures this year occurred at least four times
- Losses affected traders, farmers, labourers and transporters on both sides

To sum up, the article concludes that Pakistan cannot afford to treat economic pressure as a cure-all for security problems. It argues that coercive steps may offer short-term leverage but ultimately damage Pakistan's own stability and goodwill across the border. Durable peace demands steady diplomacy, compassion for affected communities and a shift from punitive reflexes to long-term regional thinking rooted in economic cooperation and mutual trust.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Belligerence meaning aggressive or hostile behaviour, Synonym hostility, Antonym calm
- Exhaust meaning use up completely, Synonym deplete, Antonym conserve
- Strain meaning pressure caused by stress, Synonym tension, Antonym ease
- Curtail meaning reduce or limit, Synonym restrict, Antonym expand
- Erode meaning gradually weaken, Synonym diminish, Antonym strengthen
- Sovereign meaning independent authority of a state, Synonym autonomous, Antonym subordinate
- Sabre-rattling meaning aggressive or threatening behaviour, Synonym warmongering, Antonym restraint
- Coercive meaning using force or pressure, Synonym forceful, Antonym voluntary
- Paradigm meaning a model or framework, Synonym pattern, Antonym disorder
- Stranded meaning stuck without movement or support, Synonym marooned, Antonym mobile

AFGHAN DEAD END

Author Zamir Akram

Summary:

The article argues that Pak Afghan relations have reached a breaking point after the Taliban refused to give a written commitment to end support for TTP and BLA networks operating from Afghan territory. With the collapse of the Istanbul talks, Pakistan is no longer bound by the October ceasefire and now reserves the right to respond to cross border attacks with force. The writer explains that Pakistan's long standing effort to maintain friendly ties with Kabul was driven by the need to avoid simultaneous confrontation with Afghanistan and India, as well as the desire to secure regional connectivity with Central Asia. Yet successive Afghan governments including the current Taliban regime have exploited this strategic necessity, strengthened ties with India and allowed militants to use Afghan soil as a launchpad against Pakistan. The Taliban's growing political confidence and their refusal to recognise the Durand Line have deepened mistrust, especially as UN reports confirm their cooperation with terrorist outfits and their access to American weapons left behind after the US withdrawal.

The writer argues that Pakistan now faces a stark choice between taking military action against Afghan based terrorists or continuing to absorb attacks that weaken national security. He stresses that Afghanistan's hostility cannot be overlooked simply to avoid dual confrontation because a nuclear state cannot compromise on its survival. Instead he calls for a long term strategy that uses calibrated military pressure, targeted strikes based on solid intelligence and strengthened border defences. At the same time, Pakistan must wage a diplomatic campaign that exposes Taliban and Indian collaboration in sponsoring terrorism, while engaging friendly states such as China, Russia, Turkey and Qatar to support Pakistan's case. Domestically, the writer urges political unity and meaningful development in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan to ensure that terrorist movements lose social space. He concludes that the deadlock cannot be resolved overnight, yet Pakistan must pursue a balanced mix of force, diplomacy and internal reform to secure its interests and stabilise relations with Kabul.

Overview:

The article examines Pakistan's deteriorating relationship with the Afghan Taliban and explains how Kabul's refusal to act against TTP and BLA networks has created a severe security crisis. It outlines Pakistan's historical engagement with Afghanistan, the shifting strategic environment after the Doha agreement and the Taliban's renewed alignment with India. The writer presents a comprehensive plan for Pakistan built on military readiness, diplomatic pressure and domestic consensus.

NOTES:

The article lays out how Pakistan has reached a critical juncture with the Afghan Taliban after the collapse of the Istanbul talks exposed Kabul's refusal to provide a written pledge to end support for TTP and BLA militants operating from Afghan soil. It highlights how Pakistan's decades long effort to maintain cordial ties with Kabul, driven by fears of a two front challenge involving India and the need for Central Asian connectivity, has repeatedly been exploited by successive Afghan regimes. The writer notes that UN reports now confirm active Taliban support for anti Pakistan groups, including access to American weapons, while their expanding engagement with India has emboldened them to ignore the Durand Line, obstruct border fencing and endorse Indian positions on Kashmir. He explains that Pakistan's earlier support for the Mujahideen, its sheltering of millions of Afghan refugees and its role in facilitating the Doha Agreement were based on the hope that the Taliban would eventually curb cross border militancy, yet the opposite occurred once the Taliban consolidated power. The resulting surge in attacks by TTP and BLA factions has left Pakistan with a difficult choice between military action inside Afghanistan and the risk of simultaneous tensions with India. The writer emphasises that national security cannot be compromised, especially for a nuclear state, and argues for a sustained strategy involving targeted strikes on terrorist bases, strengthened border management, a diplomatic effort to expose Taliban Indian coordination and continued but cautious engagement with Kabul. He concludes that Pakistan must also build internal cohesion in KP and Balochistan through political reconciliation and development because long term stability requires public support alongside military and diplomatic measures.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Pak Afghan relations, national security, border policy
- International Relations: Regional geopolitics, proxy warfare, great power influence
- Current Affairs: Terrorism, TTP resurgence, Taliban policy, diplomatic strategy
- Political Science: State security, foreign policy decision making, conflict dynamics

Notes for beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan wants the Taliban to stop groups like the TTP and BLA from attacking Pakistan from inside Afghanistan. For example, UN reports confirm that these groups receive funding, shelter and weapons from Taliban controlled areas. Pakistan tried negotiating in the Istanbul talks but the Taliban refused to give any written guarantee. The writer says this leaves Pakistan with two choices. It can either take action against these groups inside Afghanistan or avoid escalation and risk further attacks. He explains that Pakistan helped Afghanistan for decades, supported refugees and even backed the Mujahideen and Taliban during earlier conflicts, but today the Taliban work closely with India and openly deny responsibility for cross border terrorism. The writer suggests that Pakistan should secure its borders, strike terrorist bases when necessary, expose international links behind these attacks and build unity at home so that militants have less room to operate.

Facts and figures:

- Pakistan hosted almost four million Afghan refugees after the Soviet invasion
- The Taliban refused written guarantees during Istanbul talks
- UN reports confirm TTP and BLA bases inside Afghanistan
- Border fencing and posts have been attacked repeatedly since 2021
- Pakistan facilitated the 2020 Doha Agreement expecting the Taliban to close terrorist sanctuaries

To wrap up, Pakistan cannot allow its security to be dictated by Kabul's reluctance to confront militant groups that attack its territory. The writer argues that Pakistan must combine strength with strategy, diplomacy with pressure and internal unity with regional engagement. Afghanistan's behaviour may have created a dead end, yet Pakistan's response must open a path forward that preserves national security without stumbling into unnecessary conflict.

CHINA'S IMPACT ON THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

Author: Shahid Javed Burki

Summary:

The article examines China's accelerating clash with the West and explains how Xi Jinping's drive to reshape his country has pushed global politics into a new phase. The writer describes how Xi consolidated his authority at home after navigating the harsh zero Covid strategy and its economic costs. Once the health crisis eased, China redirected its energy toward technological dominance, fuelled by its near monopoly over rare earth minerals that power electric vehicles, aircraft and advanced electronics. This structural advantage now allows Beijing to pressure Europe and the United States, especially as Western states scramble to rearm in the face of Russian aggression and American unpredictability. China's assertive presence at the thirtieth global climate summit, where its delegation arrived in a fleet of electric vehicles, symbolised a broader shift. The country has outpaced the United States in several high tech sectors and invested heavily in military expansion, widening anxieties in Washington.

The writer then shifts to China's deepening influence in Pakistan. He recalls how early Chinese outreach, combined with Pakistan's strategic interest in linking its territory to China's western provinces, eventually produced the Belt and Road Initiative and its flagship corridor, CPEC. The second phase now aims to connect Pakistan with Afghanistan and the Central Asian states, creating a trade route that could link China to Europe by land. This emerging network places Pakistan at the centre of a global power contest, drawing renewed American interest as Washington watches China's economic and strategic reach extend westward. The writer concludes that Pakistan must recognise how these global shifts shape its options. As tensions between China and the West intensify, Islamabad stands at a pivotal crossroads that demands clarity, caution and a long view of national interest.

Overview:

The article explores China's rise under Xi Jinping, its growing technological power and the impact of its rare earth monopoly on global supply chains. It also traces the origins and future trajectory of CPEC within the broader Belt and Road vision, explaining how China's strategic expansion creates new pressures and opportunities for Pakistan. The writer shows how Beijing's assertiveness and the West's response are reshaping global alliances and economic routes.

NOTES:

The article highlights how China's growing clash with the West is reshaping global power dynamics and outlines Xi Jinping's tightening control at home after navigating the zero Covid crisis, which strained China's economy but eventually allowed Beijing to refocus on technological expansion. It explains how China's near monopoly over rare earth minerals has become a strategic tool, enabling Beijing to exert pressure on Europe and the United States at a time when both seek to rearm and diversify supply chains. The writer shows how China's rapid advances in high tech sectors, its assertive diplomatic posture and its military expansion have intensified Washington's concerns. The article then turns to China's long standing engagement with Pakistan, describing how early Chinese outreach evolved into the Belt and Road Initiative and later CPEC, which now aims to extend into Afghanistan and Central Asia. This expansion would give China direct land access to Europe, placing Pakistan at the crossroads of a major geopolitical contest and drawing renewed American attention as global rivalries deepen.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics:

- International Relations: US China rivalry, global power shifts, strategic competition

- Current Affairs: CPEC, BRI, rare earth supply chains, global trade tensions
- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan China relations, regional connectivity, economic corridors
- Political Science: Leadership consolidation, domestic authority, global influence.
- Economics: Resource monopolies, trade politics, technological advancement

Notes for beginners:

The article explains that China has become very powerful because it controls rare earth minerals, which are needed to build electric cars, aircraft, computers and many modern technologies. For example, when Europe tried to strengthen its military, China made it difficult by tightening control over these minerals. The writer also shows how China handled Covid with strict lockdowns, then focused on expanding its economy through technology. Over time, China became advanced enough to compete directly with the United States. He then explains how China approached Pakistan many years ago to create routes to the Arabian Sea. That idea grew into the huge CPEC project and is now expanding toward Afghanistan and Central Asia. Because of this, Pakistan now sits in an important position between China and the West. The United States has returned with interest because China's trade routes through Pakistan could connect all the way to Europe.

Facts and figures:

- Xi Jinping is now serving his third term in all major leadership positions
- China used strict lockdowns to control Covid, causing major economic losses in Shanghai
- Rare earth minerals power key technologies including electric vehicles and aircraft
- China overtook the US in several technological sectors by 2025
- CPEC is part of the multi trillion dollar Belt and Road Initiative connecting China to global markets

To sum up, The article suggests that China's rise is reshaping the global economy and altering the balance of power. Its control over key resources, advances in technology and expanding connectivity projects place countries like Pakistan at the centre of a changing world order. As the rivalry between China and the West intensifies, Pakistan must understand the stakes, weigh its choices carefully and build a strategy that protects its long term interests while navigating a rapidly shifting global landscape.

VIEWING MIDDLE EAST THROUGH FOUR LENSES

Author: Muhammad Ali Ehsan

Summary:

The article traces the Middle East through four interlinked lenses and argues that the region's present turmoil and future direction can be understood only by acknowledging the pain of the Palestinian people, the far reaching imprint of Donald Trump's policies, the legacy of two turbulent decades, and the forces now shaping what lies ahead. The writer explains that Gaza's war has carved deep wounds into Palestinian life as families search for answers among ruins of homes, mosques and communities. Their anger, sharpened by Israel's actions and America's unbroken bias, fuels distrust of the Abraham Accords and the ideology built around them. Trump's decisions to recognise Jerusalem as Israel's capital, legitimise the annexation of the Golan Heights and offer Palestinians a fifty billion dollar deal they never wanted are presented as milestones that set the stage for the destructive conflicts that followed, including the twelve day clash between Israel and Iran. The undoing of the US Iran nuclear deal, which once held a promise of easing proxy wars, accelerated suspicion, insecurity and escalation.

The writer argues that the region's political landscape has remained trapped in a cycle created by American patronage of authoritarian rulers, police states and dynastic successions that silenced dissent and crushed political space. When the Arab Spring erupted in 2011, millions risked everything to reclaim dignity, identity and agency, yet the eventual collapse of those revolutions showed that Islamist alternatives were no cure for failed governance.

Since then, Washington has continued to rely on strongmen to secure its interests, even calling Egypt's Sisi a "favourite dictator". The grievances that fuelled past uprisings have not only survived but deepened. With broken institutions, jobless youth, unchecked arms flows and regimes ready to suppress opposition, the writer warns that the region stands on the brink of recurring unrest and inevitable conflict. He concludes that the Middle East remains locked in a cycle of foreign meddling, internal repression and public frustration that leaves its future predictable in only one sense. Without justice, accountability and political reform, the next wave of turmoil is only a matter of time.

Overview:

The article presents a sweeping evaluation of Middle Eastern politics shaped by decades of conflict, external interference and authoritarian rule. It argues that Palestinian suffering, Trump era decisions, the failures of the Arab Spring and the persistence of unaccountable regimes continue to define the region's instability. The writer concludes that without genuine political reform and reduced foreign manipulation, the Middle East remains primed for renewed upheaval.

NOTES:

The article highlights four key perspectives that shape the contemporary Middle East. It stresses the shattered emotional and social landscape of the Palestinian people who continue to grieve the devastation in Gaza, distrust the Abraham Accords and reject the American imposed ideology surrounding them. Their disillusionment deepened after Trump recognised Jerusalem as Israel's capital, endorsed Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights and attempted to lure them with a fifty billion dollar offer in the "deal of the century", all of which signalled a one sided approach. The writer explains how the US withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal reignited proxy tensions and contributed to later confrontations, including a twelve day clash between Israel and Iran. He then turns to the broader regional history, showing how two decades of American support for authoritarian rulers created police states, nurtured dynasties and repressed political expression, even as the Arab Spring briefly revived hopes of dignity and democratic renewal. The eventual collapse of those uprisings revealed that Islamist rule could be as flawed as military or monarchical governance, leaving the region trapped between failing states, entrenched dictatorships and restless populations. The writer warns that grievances underlying the Arab Spring persist, intensified by joblessness, corruption, militarised regimes and foreign meddling, making the region prone to renewed upheaval. He concludes that without justice, accountability and genuine political reform, the Middle East remains on a predictable path toward further instability and conflict.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Regional security and geopolitics
- International Relations: Middle East politics, US policy, proxy wars
- Current Affairs: Palestine, Arab Spring, authoritarian governance
- Political Science: Authoritarianism, revolutions, legitimacy crises

Notes for beginners:

The article explains that Palestinians are suffering through the destruction in Gaza and feel abandoned by world powers. For example, they watched their neighbourhoods, mosques and schools reduced to rubble while leaders who promised resistance failed to deliver justice. The writer says their anger grew after Trump recognised Jerusalem as Israel's capital and promoted a peace plan without consulting them. He also describes how many Middle Eastern countries are ruled by powerful leaders who stay in power through force. When people protested during the Arab Spring in 2011, they hoped for freedom and better lives, but those revolutions failed and some countries slipped into deeper chaos. Today, problems like joblessness, corruption and foreign interference continue, which means the region could face more conflict because ordinary people still feel unheard, unsafe and frustrated.

Facts and figures

- Trump offered a fifty billion dollar investment proposal in his “deal of the century”
- Iran resumed uranium enrichment after Washington abandoned the JCPOA
- Sixty percent of the Middle Eastern population in 2011 was under thirty
- Revolutions toppled rulers in Tunisia, Yemen, Egypt and Libya
- Israel and Iran fought a twelve day confrontation in the current decade

To sum up, The article reminds that the Middle East stands on a fault line shaped by injustice, external dominance and simmering public anger. It argues that neither repression nor foreign design can hold the region steady for long. Unless its people gain real political voice and institutions capable of delivering justice, the cycle of conflict will continue to return with greater force. The Middle East’s future is predictable only because the causes of its turmoil remain unaddressed, and the next storm gathers quietly in the very grievances that the world has long chosen to ignore.

THE IMF'S SUPERFICIAL ASSESSMENT OF CORRUPTION

Author: Syed Mohammad Ali

Summary:

The article argues that the IMF’s latest corruption and governance diagnostic for Pakistan presents only a surface level understanding of the problem because it focuses narrowly on domestic failures while ignoring the structural role the IMF itself has played in shaping the country’s economic landscape. The writer notes that the assessment highlights weaknesses in fiscal governance, procurement systems, regulatory institutions, state owned enterprises and the judiciary, and even claims Pakistan could lift its GDP significantly if it followed the IMF’s recommended reforms. Yet this diagnosis avoids acknowledging how decades of IMF driven austerity, privatisation and market liberalisation weakened Pakistan’s public institutions, eroded state capacity and pushed the poor into deeper vulnerability. By promoting a reduced role for the state in service delivery while empowering market mechanisms, the IMF helped create an environment where elite groups could entrench themselves further, use patronage networks to preserve influence and prevent the emergence of a genuinely responsive political system.

The article further argues that corruption in Pakistan cannot be understood without recognising its historical and geopolitical foundations. Drawing on Akhil Gupta’s work on India, the writer explains that corruption often becomes a coping mechanism for underfunded bureaucracies that lack resources and adequate compensation. The IMF ignores this everyday reality and overlooks how Pakistan’s civil and military elites inherited colonial systems designed for extraction and then reshaped them to consolidate wealth and power. These structures were reinforced by decades of transactional American support during the Cold War and the post 9/11 era, ensuring that elites remained insulated from accountability. By bypassing these deeper truths, the IMF’s reform agenda risks becoming another exercise in selective compliance aimed at securing debt repayment rather than empowering citizens. The writer concludes that unless these underlying power dynamics are confronted, external prescriptions will do little to ease the burden on millions already struggling under unsustainable debt and chronic institutional decay.

Overview:

The article examines the IMF’s corruption assessment for Pakistan and argues that its analysis is incomplete because it ignores how IMF policies themselves contributed to institutional erosion, elite capture and economic fragility. It emphasises that corruption persists not only due to administrative weaknesses but due to colonial legacies, geopolitical alliances and systemic underfunding, making technical fixes insufficient.

NOTES:

The article highlights that the IMF’s 2025 corruption diagnostic paints an incomplete picture because it blames Pakistan’s internal governance alone while ignoring how decades of IMF driven reforms weakened state institutions,

shrank public capacity and enabled elite capture. It stresses that the Fund's calls for better fiscal governance, procurement reforms and digitised tax systems overlook deeper political and historical forces such as colonial administrative legacies, unequal power structures and Cold War era patronage that strengthened Pakistan's civil and military elites. The writer explains that corruption often becomes a coping mechanism within an under resourced state where low level officials rely on informal payments due to inadequate capacity and compensation. He points out that neoliberal reforms encouraged by the IMF hollowed out welfare structures, intensified inequality and reinforced the dominance of powerful groups who used patronage networks to maintain influence. He argues that the IMF's growth projections and technical recommendations remain superficial because they fail to confront how global political economy, postcolonial hierarchies and decades of transactional Western support have entrenched corruption structurally in Pakistan, leaving ordinary citizens to bear the cost of high debt and weakened institutions.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Governance issues, elite capture, institutional decline
- Economics: Structural adjustment, austerity, state capacity, IMF policy impact
- Current Affairs: Corruption diagnostics, global financial institutions, development debates
- Political Science: Power structures, patronage networks, postcolonial bureaucracy
- Public Administration: Bureaucratic incentives, administrative reform, state capability

Notes for beginners:

The article explains that the IMF says corruption in Pakistan happens because government departments are weak and officials misuse their power. For example, the Fund claims that better procurement systems and digitised tax collection will solve the problem. The writer says this is only part of the truth. Pakistan's public institutions became weak partly because the IMF asked the government for decades to cut spending, privatise services and rely on markets. When offices lack funds and officials are paid poorly, corruption becomes a way for the system to function. The writer also explains that powerful families, military leaders and large landowners became strong because they inherited colonial systems and later gained more support from global powers like the United States. Because of these advantages, reforms suggested by the IMF may not bring real change unless this larger power structure is addressed.

Facts and figures:

- IMF claims reforms could raise Pakistan's GDP by 5 to 6.5 per cent in five years
- Pakistan has followed IMF adjustment programmes for several decades
- Pakistan's elite influence was reinforced by Cold War and post 9/11 funding

To sum up, The article reminds that corruption in Pakistan is not a technical flaw that can be fixed with new procedures. It is the outcome of a long history shaped by colonial design, global politics, elite privilege and decades of externally imposed economic reform. The writer argues that unless these deeper forces are understood and confronted, the IMF's prescriptions will remain cosmetic while ordinary people continue to bear the heaviest burden.

IRAN'S 'BLANK CHEQUE'

Summary:

The article explains that Iran has offered Pakistan an unusual diplomatic opportunity by extending what it calls a blank cheque of unconditional support at a moment when Islamabad faces growing pressure on both its western and eastern borders. With the Taliban refusing to restrain hostile groups operating from Afghan territory and India maintaining a rigid stance, Tehran stepped forward through Ali Larijani, a key aide to Ayatollah Khamenei, who assured Pakistan that it could count on Iran in times of adversity. Larijani's meetings in Islamabad signalled a

willingness to remove obstacles in bilateral ties and deepen cooperation across security, economic and political spheres. His visit was also framed as a gesture of gratitude for Pakistan's support during Iran's twelve day war with Israel, which created a fresh wave of goodwill between the two neighbours.

The editorial argues that Iran's overture arrives at a critical moment for Pakistan as militant networks along the Afghan border expand and non state actors extend their reach into Balochistan. Iran's promise of cooperation offers Islamabad valuable help in stabilising its western frontier while opening the door for joint development of border markets and trading zones that could stimulate local economies and reduce the space for hostile groups. The writer notes that major projects in energy and logistics still await a secure environment and that Iran's willingness to back Pakistan without conditions could create the stability required for these ventures to take off. The editorial concludes that if managed wisely, this diplomatic opening has the potential to strengthen Pakistan's security landscape and support long term economic growth.

Overview:

The article highlights Iran's unexpected offer of unconditional support to Pakistan at a time of heightened border insecurity. It explains how this gesture, driven by strategic calculus and gratitude for Pakistan's backing during Iran's conflict with Israel, creates new possibilities for cooperation in defence, regional security, border markets and major economic projects.

NOTES:

The article highlights Iran's unexpected decision to extend what it calls a blank cheque of unconditional support to Pakistan at a time when Islamabad faces rising pressure on both the Afghan and Indian fronts. It explains how Ali Larijani, a senior Iranian official close to the Supreme Leader, used his visit to Islamabad to assure Pakistan that Iran would stand by it in moments of adversity and was ready to remove obstacles in security, economic and diplomatic cooperation. His gesture followed Pakistan's support during Iran's recent conflict with Israel and opened a new window of goodwill between the two states. The editorial notes that Iran's offer comes as Pakistan grapples with non state actors along the western border and expanding militant activity in Balochistan, making Tehran's readiness to coordinate on border security especially valuable. It also stresses that border markets, trading zones and major energy and logistics projects require political stability, and Iran's pledge of partnership could help create the conditions needed for these ventures to move forward.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Border management, Pak Iran relations, regional security
- International Relations: Middle East politics, regional alliances, conflict diplomacy
- Current Affairs: Non state militancy, Iran Pakistan cooperation, shifting partnerships
- Political Science: Bilateralism, diplomatic strategy, state stability

Notes for beginners:

The article explains that Iran has offered Pakistan complete support at a time when Pakistan is struggling with threats from Afghanistan and pressure from India. For example, the Taliban allow hostile groups to operate near the border, and this creates attacks inside Pakistan. Iran's leader Ali Larijani visited Islamabad and said Iran would help Pakistan with security, trade and major economic projects. The writer says this is important because border markets and trading zones along the Iran Pakistan frontier can bring jobs and reduce the influence of armed groups. He also mentions that big energy projects connecting both countries need a peaceful environment. Iran's support could help Pakistan manage the difficult situation on its western border while improving cooperation in areas that can strengthen the economy.

Facts and figures:

- Iran offered Pakistan a blank cheque of unconditional support
- Larijani visited Pakistan after the twelve day Iran Israel war

- Iran pledged unlimited cooperation in economic and security matters
- Non state actors operate along Pakistan's borders with Afghanistan and Iran
- Border markets and joint economic zones require government support to function

To wrap up, Iran's unexpected generosity has created a rare opening for Pakistan at a time when border tensions and militant threats continue to grow. The gesture offers not only diplomatic reassurance but also a chance to unlock economic potential along a long neglected frontier. The writer suggests that if Pakistan uses this moment with care and strategic vision, it can strengthen its security, deepen regional ties and create economic space that pushes hostile forces to the margins.

ISLAMABAD, KABUL ON COLLISION COURSE

Author: Kamran Yousaf

Summary:

The article argues that Islamabad and Kabul are drifting toward a collision as diplomatic channels fail to produce even the faintest sign of progress. At the centre of the crisis is the Afghan Taliban's refusal to act against TTP and other anti Pakistan groups entrenched on Afghan soil despite repeated warnings and detailed evidence. Since the Taliban's return in 2021, Pakistan has endured a staggering rise in cross border attacks, with more than three thousand nine hundred people killed, a number that lays bare the scale of the threat. When Pakistan publicly declared it had run out of patience, it signalled a decisive shift. Islamabad shut the border for more than six weeks, drawing a clear line that trade and security can no longer be treated as separate questions. The Taliban misread Pakistan's intent and began exploring alternatives, even encouraging Afghan traders to bypass Pakistan altogether, while courting India in a dramatic departure from past positions.

The writer explains that India's outreach to the Taliban and Kabul's willingness to embrace it deepened Pakistan's sense of betrayal. New Delhi, which once dismissed the Taliban as a Pakistani proxy, now views them as a tactical asset, especially as Pakistan refuses to tolerate unchecked militancy. Kabul's ministers travelled openly to India to discuss trade routes through Chabahar, although Afghan traders acknowledge that no substitute offers the access or ease that Pakistan provides. Kabul must choose between harbouring anti Pakistan militants and securing the shared advantages that flow from cooperation. Meanwhile, recent incidents tied to Afghan soil, including a drone strike killing Chinese workers in Tajikistan and a shooting in Washington involving an Afghan national, have further darkened the atmosphere. The writer concludes that the space for diplomacy is shrinking fast and that unless Kabul recalibrates, both sides may find themselves trapped in a crisis neither can easily contain.

Overview:

The article examines the collapse of diplomatic momentum between Pakistan and the Afghan Taliban. It highlights the surge in terrorist attacks from Afghan soil, Pakistan's decision to link trade with security, the Taliban's growing ties with India and the shrinking possibility of a negotiated breakthrough. The writer argues that Kabul's choices threaten its own long term interests and leave the region facing a dangerous impasse.

NOTES:

The article highlights that Pakistan's relationship with the Afghan Taliban has reached a critical point as Kabul refuses to act against TTP and other anti Pakistan groups using Afghan territory for cross border attacks. Since 2021, Pakistan has witnessed an alarming rise in terrorism with more than three thousand nine hundred casualties, reinforcing Islamabad's insistence that security and trade cannot be separated. The government shut the border for over six weeks to signal its seriousness, while the Taliban deepened ties with India and encouraged Afghan traders to explore alternatives such as Chabahar despite the impracticality of bypassing Pakistan. The article notes that Kabul's willingness to prioritise militant alliances over regional cooperation has pushed diplomacy toward collapse, particularly as new incidents involving Afghan soil, including a drone strike that killed Chinese workers and a

shooting in Washington, further erode trust. Islamabad's stance is that the Taliban must choose between supporting hostile groups and maintaining the strategic and economic advantages of a stable partnership with Pakistan.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Pak Afghan policy, TTP threat, border politics
- International Relations: Regional alliances, India Afghanistan relations, strategic competition
- Current Affairs: Cross border terrorism, trade corridors, diplomatic breakdown
- Political Science: State behaviour under security pressure, conflict escalation

Notes for beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan and the Taliban government are facing serious tension because the Taliban refuse to stop groups like the TTP from attacking Pakistan. For example, official data shows that more than three thousand nine hundred Pakistanis have been killed since 2021 in attacks traced back to Afghan soil. Pakistan tried diplomacy and trade pressure, even keeping the border closed for weeks, but the Taliban still did not act. The article also says the Taliban have become closer to India. Afghan ministers travelled to New Delhi and discussed using the Chabahar Port for trade, although Afghan traders admit this cannot replace Pakistan's easy road access. Pakistan argues that Afghanistan must choose between supporting militants or maintaining stable ties. Recent attacks involving Afghan soil, including one that killed Chinese workers in Tajikistan, make the situation even more complicated.

Facts and figures:

- More than 3,900 Pakistanis killed in terrorist attacks since August 2021
- Border with Afghanistan closed for more than six weeks
- At least two senior Taliban ministers visited India in recent weeks
- Chabahar discussions revived as Kabul seeks alternatives to Pakistan
- Drone strike from Afghan soil killed three Chinese nationals in Tajikistan

In a nutshell, Pakistan insists that security must take precedence, while the Taliban gamble with alliances that weaken their own strategic footing. India seizes the moment to expand influence, and militants exploit the uncertainty. The writer suggests that unless Kabul reconsiders its choices, the region may slide into a confrontation driven by mistrust and miscalculation. Diplomatic windows do not remain open forever, and this one is closing fast.

MIDDLE EAST’S GROWING VISIBILITY IN GLOBAL CLIMATE DEBATE

Author: Andrew Hammond

Summary:

The article traces how the Middle East has stepped out of the margins of climate diplomacy and planted itself firmly in the global spotlight. The writer explains that with COP28 in Dubai and COP27 in Egypt, the region signalled that it no longer watches climate negotiations from the sidelines but shapes them with ambition and clarity. As COP30 in Brazil shifts the world from endless bargaining to the hard grind of implementation, Middle Eastern states stand out with their net zero commitments stretching from 2030 to 2060 and a rapidly expanding body of climate laws that reflect a genuine pivot toward sustainability. The article underscores the dramatic rise in global climate legislation, from a few dozen laws in the late nineties to more than five thousand today, over one hundred of which have come from Middle Eastern governments. This swelling tide of policy action shows that the region is not merely adopting the climate vocabulary of the world but rewriting parts of its script.

The writer then widens the lens to show how the next big shift may be the emergence of a global carbon trading market, one that could reset economic and political incentives across continents. The Middle East features prominently in this unfolding landscape. Saudi Arabia has built a regional voluntary carbon market, while the UAE has pledged hundreds of millions of dollars to African carbon credits, signalling a push to build supply, credibility and influence in global carbon finance. The article situates these developments alongside China’s enormous emissions trading system, the steady rise of markets in Vietnam and South Korea and the potential linking of Asia Pacific and European carbon markets. Together, these moves hint at a future in which continents could plug into a single carbon hub. In a moment when despair often clouds the climate debate, the article argues that the rise of carbon markets offers a rare glimmer of forward momentum and speaks to Brazil’s ambition to turn climate diplomacy from promises into action.

Overview:

The article examines the Middle East’s growing influence in global climate politics as COP30 ushers in a phase centred on implementation rather than negotiation. It highlights the region’s expanding climate commitments, its surge in sustainability legislation and its swift entry into global carbon markets. It also outlines the emerging possibility of a worldwide carbon trading system linking Asia, Europe, the Middle East, Africa and the Americas.

NOTES:

The article highlights how the Middle East has moved to the centre of global climate discussions, demonstrated by the scale and visibility of COP28 in Dubai and COP27 in Egypt. It notes that COP30 marks a shift from negotiations to implementation, placing pressure on countries to act on their existing climate commitments. The writer emphasises the rapid growth of climate legislation worldwide, rising from just over fifty laws in 1997 to more than five thousand in 2025, including over one hundred passed by Middle Eastern nations. These laws will now be scrutinised to assess how quickly countries can deliver on their promises. The article also underscores the rising momentum behind global carbon trading, with Middle Eastern countries building early market structures such as Saudi Arabia’s voluntary carbon market and the UAE’s large-scale investment in African carbon credits. Alongside developments in China, Vietnam and South Korea, these efforts point toward a future in which regional carbon markets could link across continents, potentially forming the world’s first integrated global carbon trading system.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Environmental Science: Climate governance, climate legislation, carbon markets
- International Relations: Multilateral climate diplomacy, global climate agreements

- Current Affairs: Middle Eastern climate policy, COP30 developments, global carbon finance
- Pakistan Affairs: Global climate trends and their policy implications

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that the Middle East now plays a major role in global climate action. For example, countries like Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Oman have promised to reach net zero emissions in the coming decades. The number of climate laws in the world has grown from a few dozen in the late nineties to more than five thousand today, with over one hundred coming from the Middle East. The article also shows that many countries are creating carbon markets where companies buy and sell credits to reduce emissions. Saudi Arabia has already set up such a market and the UAE is investing millions in African carbon credits to support climate projects. China now runs the world's biggest carbon market, and other countries like South Korea and Vietnam are joining in. The writer suggests that all these markets might eventually connect into one global system, helping countries cut emissions in a cheaper and more organised way.

Facts and Figures:

- COP28 in Dubai hosted about eighty four thousand participants
- COP30 in Brazil has about twelve thousand registered participants
- Global climate laws rose from fifty in 1997 to more than five thousand in 2025
- Middle Eastern states have passed over one hundred climate laws
- Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Oman, Qatar, Iraq and Bahrain have net zero commitments from 2030 to 2060
- China's emissions trading system covers about eight billion tonnes of carbon dioxide
- The UAE Carbon Alliance plans to buy African carbon credits worth several hundred million dollars by 2030

To sum up, the article concludes that even though climate politics often feels weighed down by frustration and slow progress, the world is quietly building the tools that could reshape the fight against global warming. The Middle East once a bystander now stands as a visible player helping push the world toward a more structured and economically driven climate system. The future of climate action will depend not on speeches at annual summits but on the choices nations make throughout the year as they convert ambition into lasting, real-world change

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Manifestation meaning a clear sign of something. Synonym indication. Antonym concealment
- Scrutinize meaning examine closely. Synonym inspect. Antonym ignore
- Embryonic meaning in an early stage of development. Synonym nascent. Antonym mature
- Pessimism meaning belief that bad outcomes are likely. Synonym gloom. Antonym optimism
- Ambition meaning determination to achieve something important. Synonym aspiration. Antonym indifference
- Catalyst meaning something that speeds up change. Synonym spark. Antonym barrier
- Trajectory meaning a projected path of development. Synonym direction. Antonym standstill
- Commitment meaning a promise to take action. Synonym pledge. Antonym refusal
- Efficient meaning achieving results with minimal waste. Synonym effective. Antonym wasteful
- Landscape meaning the overall pattern or situation. Synonym outlook. Antonym confusion

THE PAKISTAN-SAUDI STRATEGIC DEFENSE AGREEMENT IN AN EVOLVING REGION

Author: Umar Karim

Summary:

The article explores how Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have elevated their long-standing security ties by signing the Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement, a pact that treats an attack on either state as an attack on both. The writer explains that while the two countries have shared a deep security relationship for almost seven decades, they have often stopped short of formal commitments or direct military involvement. This agreement marks a turning point, one that signals a willingness to move past old restraints and enter a phase where coordinated planning, joint responses and structured defense cooperation may become the norm. The article makes clear that this partnership did not emerge in a vacuum. It rests on years of political alignment, shared regional concerns and moments where Pakistan helped safeguard Saudi security, even as both sides occasionally diverged on wider geopolitical questions. The second half of the article widens the frame to show how the pact reshapes regional security dynamics. The writer argues that the recent constitutional restructuring in Pakistan, especially the centralisation of strategic decision making under the Chief of the Defence Forces, creates institutional clarity that strengthens the ability to coordinate with Riyadh. He notes that Saudi Arabia still sits firmly within a US-led security framework and relies heavily on American weapons, so the agreement with Pakistan does not replace Washington's role but complements it. The article warns that if American guarantees fail to meet Saudi expectations, Pakistan's strategic leverage could rise sharply. In that scenario, the SMDA may become not only the backbone of bilateral defense cooperation but a force that influences the broader balance of power in the Middle East and draws Pakistan more deeply into regional affairs.

Overview:

This article examines the significance of the Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia and its potential impact on regional geopolitics. It reviews the historical context of the partnership, the constraints that previously shaped military cooperation and the institutional reforms in Pakistan that now make deeper coordination possible. It also highlights how the pact fits within Saudi Arabia's wider security environment and how shifting global alignments may elevate Pakistan's strategic value.

NOTES:

The article highlights that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have formalised their long-standing defense partnership through the Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement, which declares that any attack on one country will be treated as aggression against both. It underscores how this agreement marks an extraordinary shift after decades of cooperation that never extended to formal joint military commitments. The writer emphasises that the pact arrives with renewed momentum after follow-up meetings signalled progress in joint defense projects. He notes that historical constraints often held Pakistan back from fully committing troops to Saudi-led conflicts, yet the recent constitutional restructuring in Pakistan, which centralised defense decision making under the Chief of the Defence Forces and unified strategic command structures, now lays the groundwork for deeper coordination. The article stresses that Saudi Arabia remains anchored in a US-led security system, so the agreement with Pakistan complements rather than replaces American guarantees. However, if US commitments fall short, Pakistan's strategic value to Riyadh will rise significantly. The writer concludes that this pact could become a cornerstone of regional security, shaping Pakistan's future role in Middle Eastern dynamics and signalling a new phase in bilateral relations marked by clarity, alignment and enhanced strategic cooperation.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- International Relations: Alliance politics, regional security frameworks, Middle Eastern geopolitics
- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan–Saudi relations, national security institutions, constitutional reforms
- Current Affairs: Defense cooperation, shifting regional alliances, US–Saudi strategic dynamics
- Political Science: Concepts of deterrence, security cooperation agreements, state behaviour

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have signed a new agreement saying they will defend each other if either one is attacked. This is a big change because although both countries have been close partners for many years, Pakistan never formally agreed to such a commitment before. The writer says this agreement could influence how both countries make decisions about security in the region. Pakistan has also changed its military structure, giving more authority to the Chief of the Defence Forces, which makes it easier for Pakistan and Saudi Arabia to plan and coordinate together. Saudi Arabia still depends mainly on the United States for weapons and security, but if the US ever reduces its support, Pakistan could become even more important to Saudi Arabia. The article shows that this pact could affect not only the two countries but also the wider Middle East.

Facts and Figures:

- The defense partnership spans almost seventy years
- The SMDA was signed in Riyadh in September
- Saudi Arabia has its main defense arsenal from the United States
- This is the first agreement of its kind between Saudi Arabia and a regional country
- Strategic command structures were unified under the national strategic command

To wrap up, The article concludes that the Pakistan–Saudi defense pact marks a moment of strategic clarity and signals a deeper alignment in an increasingly volatile region. It argues that while the agreement strengthens bilateral ties, its real weight lies in how it may reshape future regional calculations and elevate Pakistan’s role if global alliances continue to shift. Strategic partnerships thrive on clarity, capability and commitment, and this agreement pushes both countries into a new chapter where shared security interests could define their regional influence for years to come.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Modalities meaning the practical arrangements of a plan. Synonym mechanisms. Antonym vagueness
- Restraints meaning limits on action. Synonym constraints. Antonym freedoms
- Elusive meaning difficult to define. Synonym unclear. Antonym obvious
- Cornerstone meaning a fundamental element. Synonym foundation. Antonym weakness
- Indispensable meaning absolutely necessary. Synonym essential. Antonym optional
- Transpire meaning become known. Synonym emerge. Antonym conceal
- Stakeholder meaning a party with interest in a matter. Synonym participant. Antonym outsider
- Affirm meaning declare support. Synonym confirm. Antonym deny
- Embedded meaning firmly rooted. Synonym fixed. Antonym detached
- Evolve meaning develop over time. Synonym progress. Antonym regress

PAKISTAN-AFGHANISTAN TENSIONS: DIPLOMACY, NOT MILITARY ACTION, OFFERS A WAY OUT

Author: Naila Mahsud

Summary:

The article examines the sharp rise in tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan after a series of deadly attacks and retaliatory strikes, arguing that both states now stand at a perilous crossroads. Pakistan accuses Kabul of allowing the TTP to operate freely on Afghan soil and responded with airstrikes in Kabul and Qandahar after an attack in Islamabad. Kabul, eager to project strength and unwilling to appear submissive, met Pakistan's actions with force of its own. The writer explains that the Afghan Taliban, once seen as Pakistan's closest ally, now seek to assert themselves as an independent regional actor. This shift is made more complex by India's recent outreach to Afghanistan and by suspicions in Islamabad that Delhi and Kabul may be coordinating behind the scenes. The writer notes that these perceptions mirror how India views Pakistan, producing an unbroken chain of mistrust in the region. The article warns that further military action could destabilise Afghanistan's already fractured power structure, making it even harder for Islamabad to secure its demands. With more than twenty militant groups operating inside Afghanistan and splinter factions that do not follow Taliban central authority, the situation presents a strategic trap for Pakistan. India's new assertiveness in Kabul adds another layer of rivalry as both Delhi and Islamabad appear willing to escalate tensions to appeal to domestic audiences. The writer concludes that Pakistan must avoid simultaneous diplomacy and force, arguing that preventive dialogue with Kabul is the only realistic path. The prospects of meaningful talks with India remain remote. Pakistan must therefore sequence its options and recognise that regional firestorms cannot be extinguished with airstrikes alone.

Overview:

The article analyses the escalation between Pakistan and Afghanistan following cross border violence and explores the shifting strategic landscape shaped by the TTP threat, India's expanding diplomatic footprint in Kabul and the Afghan Taliban's desire to assert autonomy. It argues that military solutions will deepen instability and highlights diplomacy as Pakistan's only viable way forward.

NOTES:

The article highlights the rapid deterioration in Pakistan Afghanistan relations following a deadly attack in Islamabad that Pakistan attributes to the TTP, which it says operates from Afghan territory with Kabul's tacit support. Pakistan responded with airstrikes in Kabul and Qandahar while the Afghan Taliban countered with force to avoid appearing weak, signalling that they now see themselves as independent regional actors rather than Pakistan's long standing protégés. India's deepening engagement with Kabul has added fuel to Islamabad's suspicions especially after a major blast in Delhi that India linked to external sponsors. The writer notes that Afghanistan's militant landscape is highly fragmented, with more than twenty groups active, making it unrealistic for Pakistan to expect the Taliban to curb all of them. Further military action risks splintering the Afghan government and pushing the region toward greater instability. The article argues that Pakistan must avoid the contradiction of pursuing dialogue while escalating force and should instead rely on preventive diplomacy since meaningful engagement with India is unlikely at this stage.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Pak Afghanistan relations, regional tensions, counter terrorism
- International Relations: Foreign policy strategy, regional alliances, conflict escalation
- Current Affairs: Cross border militancy, India Afghanistan relations, crisis diplomacy
- Strategic Studies: Asymmetric threats, security dilemmas, military restraint
- Political Science: State behaviour, perceptions, regional geopolitics

Notes for beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan and Afghanistan are facing serious tension because Pakistan says Afghan territory is being used by the TTP to attack Pakistan. After militants killed many people in Islamabad, Pakistan launched airstrikes inside Afghanistan. Afghanistan reacted strongly because it does not want to appear weak. India then entered the scene by deepening its contacts with Kabul, which increased Pakistan's suspicion. The writer says that Afghanistan has more than twenty militant groups inside its borders and the Taliban cannot control them all. This makes Pakistan's demands hard to meet through military pressure. The article argues that Pakistan should focus on talks instead of more force, because more attacks could break Afghanistan's government into smaller factions and make the situation worse for everyone.

Facts and figures:

- The Taliban took control of Kabul in August 2021
- A recent attack in Islamabad killed dozens and wounded many
- United Nations reporting indicates more than twenty militant groups operate in Afghanistan
- Cross border strikes occurred in Kabul and Qandahar
- Ceasefire talks were held in Istanbul and Doha

To sum up, The article suggests that the region sits on a tinderbox where suspicion, rivalry and miscalculation can ignite a wider crisis. Pakistan faces a difficult challenge in confronting the TTP while avoiding steps that fracture Afghanistan further. India's new activism complicates the landscape, but the writer argues that Pakistan cannot afford to fight on multiple fronts at once. Diplomacy, steady engagement and strategic patience offer the only escape from a cycle of violence that promises no winners.

A READING OF SAUDI-AMERICAN BILATERAL RELATIONS

Author: Faisal Trad

Summary:

The article traces the long arc of Saudi American relations from their origins under King Abdulaziz to the current moment under King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. The writer explains that the founding king recognised early on that the United States would shape the emerging global order and used this foresight to build a relationship based on equality and shared benefit. Successive Saudi rulers strengthened this partnership even during difficult episodes such as the 1973 oil embargo and the post September 11 climate. The account of Saudi Arabia's deadlock with Washington during its World Trade Organization accession illustrates both the friction that can arise and the diplomatic weight Riyadh has gradually acquired. The writer recalls how a direct message from Crown Prince Abdullah persuaded President George W Bush to clear the final hurdle, highlighting the balance of interests that underpins the partnership.

The article argues that the relationship has now reached a new level as Saudi Arabia emerges as a regional centre of political, economic and cultural power. Under the crown prince's leadership, the Kingdom has become a destination for world leaders and a hub of major summits, investments and reforms. The writer highlights Saudi efforts on Palestine which helped shape a landmark UN Security Council resolution demanding steps toward a Palestinian state. The crown prince's recent visit to Washington is portrayed as a diplomatic triumph that elevated Saudi Arabia to the status of a major non NATO ally, produced extensive cooperation agreements including in artificial intelligence and secured investment commitments worth three hundred billion dollars. The writer concludes that Saudi Arabia's growing influence is anchored in confidence, strategic vision and a consistent commitment to Arab and Islamic causes.

Overview:

The article provides a concise historical reading of Saudi American relations, showing how the partnership evolved from early oil concessions to an expansive strategic alliance. It highlights Saudi Arabia's growing global stature under King Salman and the crown prince and shows how diplomatic agility, economic reform and regional leadership have reshaped the Kingdom's role in international affairs.

NOTES:

The article explores the evolution of Saudi American relations from King Abdulaziz's strategic decision to partner with the United States through oil concessions to the present era, where Saudi Arabia under King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has become a major regional and global player. It highlights how successive Saudi rulers preserved the relationship even through difficult periods such as the 1973 oil embargo and the post September 11 climate, and recounts the WTO accession standoff where a direct message from Crown Prince Abdullah broke a deadlock with Washington. The writer emphasises how Vision 2030 has transformed the Kingdom into a political, economic and cultural hub, attracting world leaders and hosting major summits. He points to Saudi diplomatic efforts on Palestine that shaped a significant UN Security Council resolution and notes that the crown prince's recent visit to Washington elevated Saudi Arabia to a major non NATO ally while producing extensive agreements including artificial intelligence cooperation and investment deals worth three hundred billion dollars. The article concludes that Saudi Arabia now stands as a confident regional power rooted in its Arab and Islamic identity while expanding its influence on the world stage.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics:

- International Relations: Middle East geopolitics, US Gulf relations, strategic partnerships
- Current Affairs: Vision 2030, Middle East diplomacy, Palestine question
- Political Science: Bilateral relations, foreign policy tools, negotiation dynamics
- International Law: UN Security Council diplomacy, state recognition issues

Notes for beginners:

The article explains that Saudi Arabia and the United States have worked together for many decades and that their relationship began when King Abdulaziz gave American companies permission to explore for oil. Even when disagreements occurred, such as after September 11 or during trade talks, the two countries managed to solve their problems through communication at the highest levels. The writer gives the example of Saudi Arabia joining the World Trade Organization. The United States initially refused to support Saudi membership, but when Crown Prince Abdullah explained why the American conditions were unfair, the issue was resolved. The article then describes how Saudi Arabia has grown stronger under Vision 2030 and now plays a major role in world politics. The crown prince's recent visit to Washington led to new agreements, major investments and recognition of Saudi Arabia as a key strategic partner.

Facts and figures:

- Saudi Arabia secured oil exploration agreements with the US during the early twentieth century
- The WTO deadlock ended in 2005 after direct intervention by Crown Prince Abdullah
- Saudi Arabia now hosts frequent global, Islamic and regional summits in Riyadh
- UN Security Council Resolution 2803 is described as the most important for Palestine since 1967
- The crown prince's Washington visit produced investment agreements worth about three hundred billion dollars

To sum up, the article presents a confident portrait of a partnership shaped by history, shared interests and careful diplomacy. It shows how Saudi Arabia has steadily expanded its influence while staying anchored in its regional identity. The Kingdom's rise is rooted in strategic clarity and its ability to build balanced, purposeful relations with global powers while championing causes central to the Arab and Islamic world.

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