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CSS PLATFORM

Dawn –

REVIVING SAARC?

Author: Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry

Summary:

The article argues that Saarc's continued stagnation after four decades stems largely from India's persistent suspicion of its smaller neighbours and its reluctance to allow genuine regional cooperation. From the outset, India has viewed Saarc less as a platform for shared progress and more as a potential forum where neighbouring states might collectively challenge its dominance. This mindset has repeatedly undermined the organisation. India's boycott of the 2016 Islamabad summit and its pressure on other members to follow suit marked a decisive blow, after which Saarc was effectively paralysed. New regional initiatives launched without Pakistan have also failed to deliver meaningful integration, exposing the limits of exclusionary arrangements. The writer stresses that fears of bilateral disputes hijacking Saarc are exaggerated, since the Saarc Charter explicitly bars contentious political issues and has been respected by all members.

The article recalls that Saarc made tangible progress only during periods of improved India Pakistan relations, particularly in 2007 when regional cooperation flourished under political goodwill. That momentum vanished once bilateral tensions resurfaced. Today, as global politics drift toward regionalism and economic blocs, the case for reviving Saarc has grown stronger. South Asia, home to over two billion people, cannot afford fragmentation when other regions deepen connectivity and trade. The writer argues that India must decide whether to lead South Asia toward collective prosperity or consign Saarc to irrelevance. He welcomes renewed interest from Bangladesh and Pakistan and urges sustained efforts to revive an inclusive regional framework. In an increasingly uncertain world, Saarc remains a viable and necessary platform, provided political mistrust gives way to responsible leadership.

Overview:

The article examines why Saarc has failed to achieve its founding vision and identifies India's strategic anxieties and unresolved regional tensions as the main obstacles. It contrasts Saarc's unrealised potential with successful regional groupings elsewhere and argues that South Asia's development depends on reviving inclusive cooperation under the Saarc framework.

NOTE:

The article underscores that Saarc has failed to achieve relevance because political mistrust, particularly India's suspicion of its smaller neighbours, has consistently obstructed genuine regional cooperation. This mindset culminated in India's boycott of the 2016 Islamabad summit, after which Saarc became largely inactive, while alternative regional groupings formed without Pakistan also failed to deliver meaningful integration. Although the Saarc Charter prevents the discussion of bilateral disputes, exaggerated fears of politicisation continue to paralyse the forum. The article notes that Saarc showed real promise only during periods of improved India Pakistan relations, especially in 2007 when significant initiatives on food security, education, transport connectivity and visa facilitation were launched. In a global environment increasingly defined by regional economic blocs, the writer argues that South Asia cannot afford continued fragmentation and that Saarc still holds the potential to unlock shared prosperity for a region of over two billion people if political mistrust gives way to inclusive and responsible leadership.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Regional cooperation, Pakistan India relations, South Asian politics
- International Relations: Regional organisations, regionalism versus globalism
- Current Affairs: Saarc revival debate, South Asian connectivity

- Political Science: Regional governance, power asymmetry
- Economics: Regional trade and economic integration

Notes for beginners:

The article explains that Saarc has not worked well because its biggest member, India, fears that smaller countries might unite against it. For example, India boycotted the 2016 Saarc summit in Islamabad and convinced others to stay away, which stopped the organisation from functioning. The writer says Saarc worked best in 2007 when India and Pakistan were talking peacefully and agreed on projects like a regional food bank and easier travel for students. When tensions returned, cooperation stopped. He also explains that regions like Europe and Southeast Asia succeeded because powerful countries chose cooperation instead of dominance. South Asia could also benefit if countries focus on trade, transport and shared growth rather than mistrust.

Facts and figures:

- Saarc was established in December 1985
- The last Saarc summit was held in 2014 in Nepal
- Over two billion people live in Saarc member states
- Afghanistan became a Saarc member in 2007
- Observer status was granted to China, the EU, Japan, South Korea and the US

To wrap up, The article suggests that regional cooperation cannot survive without political maturity and inclusive leadership. Saarc's failure is not rooted in lack of potential but in mistrust and missed opportunities. The writer argues that South Asia stands at a critical point where cooperation is no longer a luxury but a necessity. Reviving Saarc requires courage from its largest member and persistence from smaller states. If that resolve emerges, Saarc can still transform a divided region into a shared community of growth and stability.

AN UNSETTLED WORLD IN 2026

Author: Maleeha Lodhi

Summary:

The article highlights world entering 2026 in a state of deep uncertainty, marked by intensifying geopolitical rivalries, persistent conflicts and the steady erosion of the rules based international order. The writer argues that President Trump's renewed America First approach will accelerate global instability by weakening multilateral institutions and encouraging unilateral and transactional behaviour. Western dominance will continue to decline, even though the US led bloc will still wield influence, while China's global power and economic weight will expand. The international system is fragmenting into a volatile and unpredictable landscape where alliances shift quickly, norms lose authority and power is increasingly dispersed. This transition toward a multipolar world is creating space for middle powers to act more assertively, reshaping diplomacy and regional politics.

The article identifies six key trends that will shape global affairs in 2026. These include eroding global rules, the growing use of hard power instead of diplomacy, heightened US China rivalry, unresolved conflicts in Gaza and Ukraine, the rising influence of middle powers and the rapid advance of artificial intelligence with serious economic and security risks. The writer explains that military force and economic coercion have become preferred tools of statecraft, as seen in conflicts involving Gaza, Ukraine, Iran and South Asia. Meanwhile, the future of peace efforts in the Middle East and Ukraine remains uncertain. She concludes that the coming year will be defined by instability, competing spheres of influence and strategic unpredictability, making 2026 one of the most unsettled periods in global politics since the end of the Cold War.

Overview:

The article analyses the global outlook for 2026 and argues that the international system is entering a phase of heightened disorder. It highlights declining multilateralism, intensifying great power rivalry, expanding use of force, unresolved conflicts and the rise of middle powers. The writer stresses that uncertainty, volatility and fragmentation will dominate global politics in the year ahead.

NOTES:

The article highlights that the global order in 2026 is entering a phase of pronounced instability driven by weakening international rules, declining multilateralism and intensifying great power rivalry. It underscores how President Trump's America First unilateralism is accelerating the erosion of the rules based system and pushing global politics toward a more transactional and interest driven model. The growing use of hard power over diplomacy is identified as a defining feature, reflected in ongoing wars in Gaza and Ukraine and coercive actions by major states. The article stresses that US China relations remain the most consequential strategic dynamic, with trade tensions, temporary truces and unresolved disputes shaping global uncertainty. It also notes China's expanding economic influence and its ability to counter pressure through control of critical resources. Alongside this, middle powers are gaining greater diplomatic space due to power diffusion, while rapid advances in artificial intelligence are transforming economies and security but also creating new risks. Overall, the article presents a world marked by fragmentation, competing spheres of influence and heightened unpredictability.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics:

- International Relations: Global power transition, multipolarity, US China rivalry
- Current Affairs: Global conflicts, Middle East crisis, Ukraine war
- Political Science: Decline of global norms, state behaviour in anarchic systems
- Science and Technology: Artificial intelligence and security implications

Notes for beginners:

The article explains that the world in 2026 will be less stable and more dangerous because powerful countries are ignoring rules and using force more often. For example, wars in Gaza and Ukraine continue while big countries pressure others through sanctions or military threats instead of talks. The United States and China remain rivals, with trade disputes and strategic competition shaping global politics. China uses its economic strength, such as control over rare earth minerals, to respond to pressure. Smaller but influential countries also gain importance as they navigate between major powers. The writer also warns that artificial intelligence, while useful, can threaten jobs and security if misused.

Facts and figures:

- The world is described as the most unsettled since the Cold War
- China is expected to emerge as the world's largest economy in 2026
- China is the largest trading partner of around seventy countries
- Major conflicts include Gaza and Ukraine entering another year
- AI use is expanding rapidly across military, economic and social sectors

To sum up, The article presents a clear warning that the global system is drifting toward disorder at a moment when cooperation is most needed. With rules eroding, power fragmenting and conflicts unresolved, the coming year will test the resilience of states and institutions alike. The writer suggests that adaptability, diplomatic skill and strategic foresight will be essential in navigating a world where certainty has become a luxury and instability the new normal.

SUPERPOWER CHINA?

Author: Dr Niaz Murtaza

Summary:

The article examines whether China is truly ready to challenge America's status as the world's sole superpower and answers the question with careful restraint rather than chest thumping. It argues that superpower status is not built on military parades alone but rests on a complex mix of economic strength, financial dominance, scientific capacity, political influence and soft power. While China has surged ahead in industrial production and now accounts for a larger share of global manufacturing than the United States, the balance tilts sharply when finance and high end services enter the picture. The US dollar still anchors global trade and reserves, and America's dominance in finance and information services allows it to shape industries and global rules alike. China's state controlled financial system struggles with innovation, and any serious push into white collar service sectors could strain its rigid political order. The article suggests that China faces a strategic dilemma. It cannot easily dominate both industry and finance without running into internal contradictions and external resistance.

The analysis then moves beyond economics to science, military power, politics and soft influence. China is catching up fast in science and may soon rival the US, yet militarily it remains cautious, regionally focused and largely untested compared to America's global reach and alliance network. Politically, Washington still runs global institutions while China has made only limited diplomatic forays. In soft power, America's media and universities give it an edge, even as its wars erode moral authority, while China's economic rise earns respect but its autocracy dims its appeal. The writer concludes that China appears content to rise within the existing US led order rather than overturn it or create a bipolar world. Even if it tried, the internal and external costs would be immense. The article closes on a reflective note, warning that replacing one hegemon with another would not heal the world. What humanity needs is not a new king but a more democratic global order.

Overview:

This article provides a balanced assessment of China's rise and questions whether it is ready or willing to become a global superpower. It compares China and the United States across economic, financial, military, political and soft power dimensions and highlights the structural constraints China faces. It ultimately argues that global democracy matters more than a simple transfer of power from one dominant state to another.

NOTES:

The article highlights that China's rise does not automatically translate into readiness for superpower leadership. It suggests that true superpower status rests on multiple pillars, not merely industrial strength or military display. China has overtaken the United States in global manufacturing output, yet it lags far behind in finance and high end services, where the US still sets the rules through the dominance of the dollar and control over global financial flows. The article stresses that China's tightly state controlled financial system limits innovation and that expanding white collar service sectors could strain its authoritarian political structure. It further notes the inherent tension between being an industrial powerhouse and a financial superpower, as currency strength benefits finance but undermines exports. Beyond economics, the article points out that China is advancing rapidly in science but remains cautious and regionally confined in military terms, unlike the US with its global alliances and combat experience. Politically and in soft power, America continues to shape global institutions and narratives, while China's economic success earns respect but its lack of political openness curtails wider appeal. The article concludes that China appears content to grow within the existing US led global system rather than overturn it, and warns that replacing one hegemon with another would not solve global problems, making global democracy a more desirable alternative to any new superpower dominance.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics and subjects:

- International Relations: Great power politics, US China rivalry, global order
- Current Affairs: Shifting balance of power, superpower debate
- Political Science: Power, hegemony, global governance

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that being a superpower is not only about having factories or soldiers. China produces more goods than the US, but America still controls global finance because the dollar is used almost everywhere. For example, more than half of world trade uses the dollar while China's currency plays a very small role. China is strong in science and industry, but its tight political control makes it harder to grow creative service sectors like finance and media. Militarily, the US has bases and allies across the world while China mainly focuses on its region. The writer also explains that China does not seem eager to run the world order because doing so would bring conflict and pressure. The message is that replacing the US with China would not automatically make the world fairer.

Facts and Figures:

- China produces about twenty seven percent of global industrial output
- The US produces about seventeen percent of global industrial output
- The US dollar dominates over fifty percent of global trade and reserves
- China's yuan accounts for less than five percent
- China's emissions trading and industrial expansion continue to grow
- The US has global military alliances while China has none of similar scale

To wrap up, China's rise is real and impressive, yet power comes with burdens that Beijing appears reluctant to shoulder. The deeper lesson is not about which country rules next but about whether the world can move beyond rule by any single power. Trading one hegemon for another would only repeat history. A more democratic and balanced global order remains the only path that promises stability without domination.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Superpower meaning a state with dominant global influence. Synonym hegemon. Antonym minor power
- Hegemony meaning dominance over others. Synonym supremacy. Antonym parity
- Autocracy meaning rule by concentrated authority. Synonym dictatorship. Antonym democracy
- Bipolar meaning divided between two powers. Synonym dual. Antonym unipolar
- Residual meaning remaining or leftover. Synonym remaining. Antonym initial
- Headwinds meaning forces that slow progress. Synonym obstacles. Antonym support
- Deterrence meaning prevention through fear of retaliation. Synonym restraint. Antonym provocation
- Benign meaning harmless or kind. Synonym gentle. Antonym hostile
- Trajectory meaning path of development. Synonym course. Antonym stagnation
- Corrupts meaning damages moral integrity. Synonym degrades. Antonym uplifts

HOPE DEMANDS WORK

Author: Rabiya Javeri Agha

Summary:

This article reflects on Human Rights Day by shifting attention from abstract ideals to the quiet and painful realities that unfold inside homes and communities across Pakistan. It acknowledges that for many women and children, rights are not lofty principles but urgent choices shaped by poverty, fear, patriarchy and silence. The writer notes that 2025 marks a meaningful turning point, as Pakistan has passed long awaited laws that confront deeply rooted harms. These include banning child marriage in Balochistan and Islamabad and adopting a federal law that

recognises domestic violence as a public crime rather than a private matter. Through these measures, the state has finally affirmed what survivors have long known that a child is not ready for marriage and that abuse does not need bruises to be real. The article presents these reforms as an overdue recognition of lived suffering rather than sudden generosity from the state.

At the same time, the writer warns against mistaking legislation for transformation. She argues that the distance between law and lived experience remains wide because the forces that sustain abuse are structural and cultural. Weak birth registration enables age manipulation. Poverty pushes families toward early marriage. Social norms normalise control inside homes. Survivors fear police indifference and community backlash while shelters and counselling services remain scarce. Even marriage contracts often erase women's rights before a marriage begins. The article insists that hope must be earned through action. Without serious investment in enforcement, training, social services, data collection and public education, these laws risk becoming symbolic gestures. The writer concludes that Pakistan stands at a crossroads where promise exists but progress will depend on whether institutions and society walk the hard path from recognition to protection.

Overview:

The article examines Pakistan's recent human rights legislation on child marriage and domestic violence and places it against the everyday realities faced by women and children. It highlights the importance of these legal reforms while stressing that implementation, institutional capacity and social change will determine whether the laws bring real protection or remain symbolic.

NOTES:

The article highlights that Human Rights Day in Pakistan must be measured against lived realities rather than legal promises. It points out that while 2025 marks a significant moment with laws banning child marriage in Balochistan and Islamabad and recognising domestic violence as a public crime, these reforms merely acknowledge harms that women and children have endured for decades. The writer stresses that early marriage, domestic abuse and silence are sustained by poverty, weak birth registration, entrenched patriarchy and social norms that normalise control within families. She notes that fear of police inaction, community backlash and the scarcity of shelters, counselling services and clear referral systems continue to deter survivors from seeking help. Even marriage contracts often erase women's rights before harm begins. The article emphasises that legislation alone cannot dismantle these structures and that without serious investment in enforcement, training, data collection, public awareness and social services, the new laws risk remaining symbolic. The central argument is that Pakistan stands at a fragile turning point where recognition has arrived, but real protection will depend on whether institutions and society commit to sustained implementation and accountability.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics and subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs: Human rights legislation, women and child protection
- Current Affairs: Domestic violence laws, child marriage reforms
- Political Science: Law implementation, state capacity, social norms
- Gender Studies: Women's rights, patriarchy, legal empowerment

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that many girls in Pakistan are married too early and many women suffer abuse but remain silent due to fear and lack of support. In 2025, Pakistan passed important laws that ban child marriage in some regions and officially recognise domestic violence as a crime. This means the state now accepts that abuse inside the home is not a private issue. However, the writer says laws alone cannot change lives. For example, if a girl's birth is not registered, families can lie about her age. If police are untrained, survivors may not get help. If shelters are few, women have nowhere to go. The article teaches that real change happens only when laws are enforced and communities support victims.

Facts and Figures:

- Balochistan set the minimum age of marriage at eighteen
- Islamabad passed a child marriage restraint law in 2025
- Pakistan adopted the Domestic Violence Prevention and Protection Bill in 2025
- Nearly ninety percent of nikahnama forms leave key rights sections blank
- Birth under registration remains widespread
- Shelters and counselling services are limited across the country

To sum up, The article argues that Pakistan has finally opened doors that were long shut, yet walking through them requires courage, resources and sustained attention. Laws can light the path but they cannot walk it alone. The true test of progress will be whether girls stay in school, survivors seek help without fear and dignity becomes an expectation rather than an exception. Hope is not a feeling. It is work.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Patriarchy meaning a system where men hold dominant power. Synonym male dominance. Antonym gender equality
- Under registration meaning failure to officially record events. Synonym omission. Antonym documentation
- Structural meaning rooted in systems not individuals. Synonym systemic. Antonym superficial
- Intervention meaning action to prevent harm. Synonym involvement. Antonym neglect
- Erosion meaning gradual weakening. Synonym decline. Antonym strengthening
- Mandate meaning official authority. Synonym authorization. Antonym denial
- Symbolic meaning having appearance without substance. Synonym token. Antonym substantive
- Accountability meaning responsibility for actions. Synonym answerability. Antonym impunity
- Autonomy meaning independence in decision making. Synonym self rule. Antonym dependence
- Momentum meaning forward movement. Synonym drive. Antonym stagnation

WEATHER & TERRORISM

Author: Mohammad Ali Babakhel

Summary:

The article explores the often-overlooked link between weather patterns and terrorism, arguing that climate and seasonal conditions significantly influence militant behaviour, tactics, and operational choices. Drawing on examples from Pakistan and global conflict zones, the writer explains how favourable weather enhances mobility, visibility, and logistics for militant groups, leading to a rise in attacks during dry and warmer periods. In regions such as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, and former Fata, melting snow and clear terrain enable regrouping, infiltration, and coordinated assaults, while fog and dust storms can be exploited to evade surveillance. Conversely, harsh winter conditions tend to limit militant movement in mountainous areas, pushing them toward urban centres where they rely more on extortion, kidnapping, and criminal collaboration. Therefore weather shapes the timing and intensity of violence, even though it does not alter the ideological goals of militant groups.

The article further argues that climate change, natural disasters, and extreme weather events indirectly fuel extremism by deepening poverty, displacement, and governance gaps. Floods, droughts and storms disrupt livelihoods and strain state capacity, creating openings for militant groups to provide relief, gain trust and spread extremist narratives, particularly among displaced youth. Seasonal migration and humanitarian crises increase recruitment vulnerabilities, while weakened surveillance and damaged infrastructure complicate counterterrorism efforts. The writer stresses that effective counterterrorism must integrate climate awareness, disaster preparedness, and inter-agency coordination. By using climate data to anticipate periods of heightened risk, strengthening

governance during crises, and preventing militants from exploiting humanitarian gaps, states can reduce the security fallout of weather-driven instability.

Overview:

The article examines how weather and climate conditions influence terrorism and counterterrorism operations. It highlights seasonal shifts in militant activity, the exploitation of natural disasters by extremist groups, and the need to integrate climate adaptation into security planning to address emerging and non-traditional drivers of radicalisation.

NOTES:

The article highlights that weather and climate conditions play a decisive role in shaping militant behaviour and counterterrorism outcomes. It highlights how dry and warm seasons enhance militant mobility, visibility, and logistical coordination, leading to a surge in attacks in regions such as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, and former Fata, while winter conditions restrict movement in mountainous terrain and push militants toward urban crime-based activities. Fog, dust storms, and poor visibility are shown to aid evasion from surveillance whereas floods and droughts weaken state capacity and disrupt livelihoods, creating space for extremist groups to exploit humanitarian crises for recruitment and influence. The article also points out that climate-induced displacement, seasonal migration, and economic stress increase youth vulnerability to radical narratives. It stresses that militancy thrives not only on ideology but also on governance gaps aggravated by extreme weather. Effective counterterrorism, therefore, requires integrating climate awareness into security planning, improving disaster preparedness, strengthening inter-agency coordination, sealing infiltration routes during vulnerable seasons, and preventing militants from filling relief and governance vacuums created by environmental shocks.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Terrorism, internal security challenges, KP and former tribal areas
- International Relations: Non-traditional security threats, climate security
- Current Affairs: Terrorism trends, climate change impacts
- Political Science: State capacity, governance under stress

Notes for beginners:

The article explains that militants mostly plan attacks when weather conditions help them move easily and avoid detection. For example, in summer, clear terrain and longer nights allow militants in KP to regroup and carry out attacks, while in winter they may shift toward cities and rely on crimes such as extortion. Floods and droughts also worsen poverty and displacement, which militants exploit by offering food, money, or protection to desperate communities. The writer suggests that security forces should prepare for these patterns by improving disaster response, protecting vulnerable areas, and coordinating better during emergencies so that militants cannot take advantage of crises.

Facts and figures:

- Militant movement increases in KP and Balochistan during dry and warm seasons
- Former Fata areas become more accessible after snowmelt
- Floods and droughts contribute to displacement and economic stress
- Groups like Boko Haram and IS have exploited weather conditions globally
- Natural disasters often weaken surveillance and law enforcement capacity

To sum up, The article reminds that terrorism does not operate in a vacuum but adapts to environmental and climatic realities. By linking weather, climate change, and militancy, the writer broadens the understanding of security beyond guns and ideology. Effective counterterrorism requires foresight, governance, and climate-aware planning as much as force. Without integrating environmental factors into security strategies, states risk fighting yesterday's battles while new vulnerabilities continue to emerge.

Difficult words and meanings:

- Radicalisation: the process through which individuals adopt extreme ideological views
- Infiltration: secret or gradual entry for hostile purposes
- Sanctuary: a safe area providing protection from pursuit
- Deradicalisation: efforts aimed at reversing extremist beliefs
- Resilience: the ability to withstand or recover from stress or adversity

REIMAGINING SOUTH ASIA

Author: Aisha Khan

Summary:

The writer argues that South Asia is already living the reality of the climate crisis and that this threat now outweighs traditional security concerns rooted in rivalry and conflict. With nearly two billion people exposed to rising temperatures, melting glaciers and extreme weather, the region faces dangers that ignore borders and punish division. From vanishing glaciers in the Third Pole to drought driven migration in Afghanistan and rising seas in Bangladesh, climate change is no longer a future risk but a present force reshaping lives and economies. Despite this, South Asian politics remains trapped in old disputes and zero sum thinking, even though no border or military posture can shield the region from ecological collapse.

The article further contends that climate change has transformed shared rivers, monsoons and mountains into potential flashpoints where water insecurity could fuel conflict rather than cooperation. The unpredictability of rivers like the Indus, Ganges and Brahmaputra has increased tensions as states turn to dams and diversions, even though no country can secure water or food alone. The article stresses that climate impacts could cut regional GDP by up to ten percent by mid century while agriculture, health systems and cities buckle under stress. I conclude that South Asia stands before two futures. One clings to rivalry and slides into deeper poverty and instability. The other embraces collective climate action as a core security goal and opens the door to peace, resilience and shared survival.

Overview:

This article examines climate change as the central existential threat facing South Asia and challenges the region's fixation on geopolitical rivalry. It argues that ecological fragility, shared natural systems and rising human costs demand a regional approach where cooperation replaces competition and survival becomes the primary political objective.

NOTES:

The article highlights that climate change has become the most serious and immediate threat to South Asia, surpassing traditional security challenges rooted in political rivalry and conflict. It emphasises that nearly two billion people in the region are already living with the consequences of rising temperatures, melting glaciers and extreme weather events that disregard borders and deepen human suffering. The rapid retreat of glaciers in the Third Pole threatens water security in Pakistan and India, drought driven migration is reshaping Afghanistan's social fabric, and rising sea levels endanger large parts of Bangladesh. The article stresses that shared natural systems such as rivers, monsoons and mountain ecosystems have turned into sources of vulnerability, where unpredictable water flows in the Indus, Ganges and Brahmaputra basins risk fuelling geopolitical tensions through dams and diversions. It underlines that no country can ensure water, food or economic security in isolation due to the region's interconnected hydrology. The writer also pays attention to the economic and social costs of inaction, noting that climate impacts could reduce regional GDP by up to ten percent by mid century while agriculture, urban centres and health systems come under severe strain. The message is that South Asia stands at a crossroads where persisting with zero sum rivalries will deepen instability, whereas collective climate action offers the only viable path toward peace, resilience and shared survival.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Current Affairs: Climate crisis regional instability South Asia
- International Relations: Non traditional security climate diplomacy regional cooperation
- Pakistan Affairs: Water security climate vulnerability regional tensions
- Environmental Studies: Climate change impacts adaptation and resilience
- Political Science: Human security governance beyond militarised security

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that climate change affects South Asia more severely than many other regions. For example melting glaciers threaten water supplies in Pakistan and India while rising seas could submerge large parts of Bangladesh. Farmers suffer from heat and irregular rain which damages crops and incomes. Cities face smog water shortages and health crises. The writer shows that fighting over borders will not solve these problems because rivers and climate systems are shared. If one country builds dams or pollutes rivers the effects spread across borders. The lesson is that cooperation on climate is necessary for survival not a matter of choice.

Facts and Figures:

- South Asia is home to nearly two billion people
- The region is warming faster than the global average
- The World Bank estimates climate impacts could cut up to ten percent of regional GDP by mid century
- Agriculture employs nearly half of South Asia's population
- Bangladesh could lose about one fifth of its land due to sea level rise

To sum up, the article suggests that South Asia's future will not be decided by armies or borders but by how it responds to climate change. Old rivalries have become a dangerous distraction while nature redraws the map of risk and survival. Either the region clings to conflict and courts collapse or it builds a shared horizon based on cooperation resilience and human well being. Climate peace is no longer idealism. It is the price of survival.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Fragility meaning weakness or lack of resilience. Synonym vulnerability. Antonym strength
- Riparian meaning related to river sharing. Synonym river based. Antonym landlocked
- Adaptation meaning adjustment to new conditions. Synonym adjustment. Antonym rigidity
- Flashpoint meaning area of sudden conflict. Synonym hotspot. Antonym calm
- Existential meaning relating to survival. Synonym fundamental. Antonym trivial
- Resilience meaning ability to recover. Synonym endurance. Antonym fragility
- Distributive meaning zero sum allocation. Synonym divisive. Antonym integrative
- Imperative meaning urgent necessity. Synonym obligation. Antonym option

AUTHORITATIVE ADVISORY OPINION

Author: Ali Tauqeer Sheikh

Summary:

The article suggests that the International Court of Justice's July 2025 advisory opinion on climate change marks a decisive turning point in global climate governance, even though it received little attention in Pakistan. The ruling firmly establishes the 1.5 degrees Celsius limit as a binding legal benchmark rather than a political aspiration. It clarifies that states carry a concrete obligation to pursue the highest possible ambition in climate action by aligning their laws, policies, and Nationally Determined Contributions with scientific evidence. The court goes beyond surface level commitments by extending responsibility across the entire fossil fuel value chain, from extraction and licensing to subsidies and downstream emissions. By recognising IPCC assessments as the best available science,

the opinion strips away excuses rooted in uncertainty and exposes fossil fuel expansion and subsidies as potentially unlawful when they undermine temperature limits.

It suggests that the opinion reshapes climate change as a matter of legal duty, human rights, and intergenerational justice rather than voluntary cooperation. Through principles such as precaution, prevention of transboundary harm, common but differentiated responsibilities, equity between generations and mandatory cooperation, the court closes long standing loopholes used by developed states to evade accountability. The article highlights how Pakistan's superior judiciary anticipated many of these principles decades earlier through landmark cases that embedded precaution, environmental protection, and climate justice within constitutional law. While acknowledging Pakistan's economic and institutional constraints, I conclude that the country occupies a unique position as both highly climate vulnerable and jurisprudentially advanced. By drawing upon its judicial legacy and the ICJ's guidance, Pakistan can credibly argue that climate ambition aligned with the 1.5 degrees threshold is not only morally necessary but legally unavoidable.

Overview:

The article examines the International Court of Justice's 2025 advisory opinion on climate change and explains how it transforms climate action into a binding legal obligation grounded in international law, human rights, and scientific authority. It also highlights Pakistan's judicial precedents to show that climate responsible governance is constitutionally feasible and legally defensible, even for developing and climate vulnerable states.

NOTES:

The article highlights that the International Court of Justice's July 2025 advisory opinion fundamentally redefines climate change as a binding legal obligation rather than a matter of voluntary pledges. It underscores that the 1.5 degrees Celsius temperature limit is now established as a legally authoritative benchmark, requiring states to demonstrate the highest possible ambition in their climate policies, laws, and Nationally Determined Contributions. A key point is the court's expansion of state responsibility across the entire fossil fuel lifecycle, including extraction, licensing, subsidies, and downstream emissions, which exposes continued fossil fuel expansion as legally questionable when it undermines climate targets. The article explains that scientific uncertainty can no longer justify inaction, as IPCC assessments are recognised as the best available science. It also emphasises core legal principles affirmed by the court such as the precautionary principle, the duty to prevent transboundary harm, common but differentiated responsibilities, intergenerational equity, and the binding duty of international cooperation. The writer further notes that Pakistan's superior judiciary anticipated many of these principles through landmark judgments that embedded climate protection, environmental rights, and future generations' interests into constitutional law. Despite Pakistan's economic and institutional constraints, the article stresses that its legal precedents place it in a unique position to demonstrate that climate governance aligned with the 1.5 degrees threshold is both legally feasible and constitutionally required.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics or Subjects:

- Current Affairs: Climate change global governance international legal developments
- International Relations: International law climate diplomacy North South divide
- Environmental Studies: Climate mitigation adaptation climate justice
- Pakistan Affairs: Role of judiciary environmental governance climate vulnerability
- Political Science: State responsibility human rights and public policy

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that climate change is no longer treated as a choice or charity but as a legal duty. For example if a country continues to approve coal or oil projects despite knowing they worsen global warming it may be violating international law. The court's opinion shows that governments must act even when science is complex because waiting causes harm to people who are already suffering from floods heatwaves and droughts. In Pakistan

this idea is not new. Courts have already stopped harmful industrial activity and ordered climate action to protect future generations. This shows that protecting the environment also protects people's basic rights such as health life and dignity.

Facts and Figures:

- The ICJ advisory opinion was issued in July 2025 by all 15 judges
- The 1.5 degrees Celsius limit is recognised as the binding global benchmark
- Global warming has already reached about 1.2 degrees Celsius
- Pakistan is among the most climate vulnerable countries despite low historical emissions
- Major Pakistani climate cases include Shehla Zia 1994 Asghar Leghari 2015 and D G Khan Cement 2021
- A third of ICJ judges are due to retire in 2027

To sum up, this article presents climate change as the defining legal and moral challenge of our time. It makes clear that the era of vague promises and selective responsibility is coming to an end. By linking international law scientific authority and constitutional principles the writer shows that climate justice is no longer optional rhetoric but enforceable duty. For Pakistan the message is both sobering and empowering. The country's courts have already shown the way. The task ahead is to translate legal wisdom into political will so that frontline communities are protected and future generations inherit a planet worth living on.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Watershed: a decisive turning point. Synonym milestone. Antonym insignificance
- Overshoot: exceeding a set limit. Synonym excess. Antonym restraint
- Due diligence: reasonable care and responsibility. Synonym prudence. Antonym negligence
- Intergenerational: relating to multiple generations. Synonym cross generational. Antonym short term
- Lifecycle: full process from beginning to end. Synonym continuum. Antonym fragment
- Precedent: an earlier example guiding later action. Synonym model. Antonym anomaly
- Accountability: obligation to answer for actions. Synonym responsibility. Antonym impunity
- Vulnerable: exposed to harm. Synonym fragile. Antonym resilient

HEALTH GOVERNANCE & IMF REPORT

Author: Zafar Mirza

Summary:

The article argues that weak health governance in Pakistan cannot be understood or fixed in isolation because it is rooted in a much deeper crisis of overall governance and systemic corruption. Drawing on the IMF's Governance and Corruption Diagnostic Assessment, the article shows that corruption drains between five and six point five percent of Pakistan's GDP each year, an amount that dwarfs total national health expenditure. This leakage is not abstract or statistical. It translates into lost hospitals, understaffed clinics, substandard medicines, and a fragile public health system that struggles to serve citizens. The author uses striking comparisons to show that the money lost to corruption is several times higher than what Pakistan spends on health, exports, or even remittances, making it clear that governance failure is the single biggest barrier to improving health outcomes.

The writer suggests that corruption thrives because of elite capture, weak checks on bureaucracy, political patronage, and compromised oversight institutions, all of which erode public trust and investor confidence. The IMF's recommendations expose how poor procurement practices, opaque regulation, judicial delays and lack of accountability directly weaken service delivery, including healthcare. The article stresses that public sector hospitals suffer from corrupt procurement, low quality medicines, and commission driven decisions, while poor coordination between federal and provincial authorities further paralyzes health governance. The writer emphasizes that without

fixing the macro governance structure, no sector such as health, can be sustainably reformed. Understanding the political economy of corruption is therefore not optional but essential for meaningful change.

Overview:

The article analyses Pakistan's health governance crisis through the lens of a broader governance failure highlighted by the IMF. It explains how corruption, elite capture and weak institutions drain national resources and undermine public services. By linking macro level governance flaws with micro level dysfunction in the health sector, the article shows why isolated reforms fail and why systemic change is unavoidable.

NOTES:

The article highlights that Pakistan's health governance crisis is inseparable from the country's wider failure of governance and entrenched corruption as exposed by the IMF's Governance and Corruption Diagnostic Assessment. It points out that corruption drains between five and six point five percent of GDP annually, an amount far exceeding total national health expenditure, which explains why public hospitals remain underfunded, understaffed, and poorly equipped. The author stresses that this loss is not theoretical but translates into low quality medicines, compromised procurement, and weakened service delivery across the health sector. The article further explains that corruption is sustained through elite capture, political patronage, weak checks on bureaucracy, and compromised oversight institutions, which collectively erode public trust and investor confidence. IMF recommendations reveal how opaque regulations, flawed public procurement, judicial delays, and lack of accountability obstruct both private sector growth and effective public services. It also underlines structural problems within health governance, including poor coordination between federal and provincial authorities, limited managerial capacity, and the mismatch between technical expertise and administrative decision making. The central point remains that no sector can be repaired in isolation and that without systemic governance reform at the macro level, meaningful and lasting improvement in health outcomes is impossible.

CSS Syllabus Topics or Subjects:

- Current Affairs: Governance crisis corruption economic impact
- Pakistan Affairs: Health sector challenges public administration governance reforms
- Public Administration: Institutional capacity accountability public procurement
- Economics: Impact of corruption on GDP growth and public spending
- International Relations: Role of IMF governance diagnostics and conditionalities

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that corruption affects daily life even if people do not see it directly. For example, when money meant for hospitals is lost through corrupt contracts, patients receive low quality medicines or no treatment at all. The IMF report shows that Pakistan loses enough money each year to multiply health spending several times over. Yet this money disappears because powerful groups influence policies for personal gain. The article teaches that improving hospitals alone will not work unless the entire system of governance becomes transparent, accountable and fair.

Facts and Figures:

- Pakistan loses five to six point five percent of GDP annually due to corruption
- This equals twenty to twenty six billion dollars each year
- Total national health expenditure is around eleven billion dollars
- Government health spending is roughly one percent of GDP
- Corruption losses equal about thirty percent of the annual federal budget
- IMF issued fifteen major governance reform recommendations

To put it simply, the writer reveals anecessary truth about Pakistan's governance crisis. In this article, he shows that health sector failures are not causes but symptoms of a much deeper institutional disease. By grounding its argument

in hard data and lived realities, the writer makes a compelling case that sustainable reform begins with fixing governance at the top. Until corruption is confronted systemically, no amount of sector specific tinkering will heal the nation's most vital services.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Extractive meaning taking value without giving benefit. Synonym exploitative. Antonym productive
- Patronage meaning support given for loyalty or favour. Synonym favoritism. Antonym impartiality
- Interdependent meaning mutually reliant. Synonym interconnected. Antonym independent
- Oversight meaning supervision and accountability. Synonym monitoring. Antonym neglect
- Rationalising meaning making more efficient and logical. Synonym streamlining. Antonym complicating
- Transparency meaning openness in processes. Synonym clarity. Antonym opacity
- Elite capture meaning control of resources by powerful groups. Synonym monopolisation. Antonym inclusion
- Subterranean meaning hidden below the surface. Synonym concealed. Antonym visible

VANISHING WATER

Author: Naseer Memon

Summary:

The article argues that the world is sleepwalking into a freshwater emergency as stocks of usable water shrink while demand rises without restraint. Drawing on the World Bank's warning, I show how global freshwater reserves have fallen by three percent of annual supply and by ten percent in dry regions, creating a dangerous imbalance that threatens livelihoods and food security. Consumption has surged by a quarter in less than two decades, driven by population pressure and careless use, while agriculture remains the chief culprit through inefficient practices and water hungry crops. It underlines that water is increasingly diverted from local needs to export markets through virtual water trade, where water intensive goods silently drain scarce resources. This global pattern frames the crisis with stark clarity and exposes how economic choices now shape ecological survival.

The article focuses on Pakistan to show how this global malaise becomes a national emergency. Pakistan ranks among the most water insecure states, with retreating glaciers, erratic rainfall, ageing canals and massive losses that bleed the system dry. Only a fraction of canal water reaches crops and four major crops consume most water while contributing little to GDP. The textile sector deepens the strain by exporting water embedded in fabric at extremely low returns per cubic metre. I maintain that chasing grand dams or new canals misses the point. The real solution lies in raising water productivity, reforming cropping patterns and halting reckless groundwater extraction before scarcity turns into collapse.

Overview:

The article explains freshwater depletion at the global level and narrows the lens to Pakistan to show how inefficiency, climate stress and policy choices combine to intensify water insecurity. It highlights agriculture and virtual water trade as central drivers and calls for productivity based reforms instead of supply driven expansion.

NOTES:

The article brings into sharp focus the accelerating depletion of global freshwater reserves and presents it as a silent emergency unfolding alongside rising and largely unrestrained demand. It highlights World Bank findings that show a significant decline in usable freshwater, especially in dry regions, and stresses that this loss is compounded by a sharp increase in consumption over the past two decades. Agriculture emerges as the dominant driver of wastage due to inefficient irrigation, outdated infrastructure and cultivation of water intensive crops. The article also explains the concept of virtual water trade, where scarce water is embedded in export commodities and diverted away from

domestic needs, deepening stress in already fragile regions. Shifting to Pakistan, it underlines how climate change, retreating glaciers, erratic rainfall and decaying canals have pushed the country into severe water insecurity. Massive conveyance losses mean that only a small portion of available water is productively used, while a narrow crop base consumes the bulk of supplies despite contributing little to national income. The textile sector further drains water resources by exporting low value fabric that carries huge hidden water costs. The author concludes that expanding supply through new dams or canals is a misguided response and argues instead for improving water productivity, reforming crop choices and curbing uncontrolled groundwater extraction.

CSS syllabus or subjects relevance:

- Pakistan Affairs: the issues of water security, agricultural structure, irrigation system inefficiencies, climate vulnerability, federal and provincial water management and debates over large scale projects versus reforms.
- Current Affairs: contemporary challenges of climate change, resource depletion, food security and economic sustainability, especially as Pakistan ranks among the most water insecure countries globally.
- Economics: connects with the themes of resource allocation, opportunity cost, productivity, returns on inputs and export led growth, particularly in the critique of low economic returns per unit of water in agriculture and textiles.
- International Relations: it is relevant through the concept of virtual water trade, global inequality in resource use and the transboundary nature of climate induced water stress, which shapes economic and diplomatic relations among states.

Notes for beginners:

Freshwater is the water we use for drinking and farming and it is limited. When more water is taken than nature replaces, scarcity occurs. For example global freshwater losses equal the yearly needs of 280 million people. In Pakistan most canal water is lost before reaching fields and crops like rice and sugarcane use a lot of water but give low economic returns. Textile dyeing uses huge volumes of water yet earns very little per unit compared to other countries. These examples show why efficiency matters more than expansion.

Facts and figures:

- Global freshwater loss stands at 324 billion cubic metres annually.
- Water consumption rose by 25 percent between 2000 and 2019.
- Agriculture uses 98 percent of human water use globally.
- Pakistan loses about 60 percent of water through conveyance and farm wastage.
- Pakistan earns only 1.4 dollars per cubic metre of water against over 50 dollars in some countries.

To wrap up, The article reminds that water scarcity is not a distant threat but a present reality shaped by human choices. It urges Pakistan and the world to abandon wasteful habits and pursue smarter use of water before the taps of nature run dry.

Difficult words and meanings:

- Depletion meaning exhaustion or reduction. Synonym decline. Antonym replenishment.
- Disequilibrium meaning imbalance. Synonym instability. Antonym equilibrium.
- Archaic meaning outdated. Synonym obsolete. Antonym modern.
- Guzzles meaning consumes excessively. Synonym devours. Antonym conserves.
- Precarious meaning risky or unstable. Synonym fragile. Antonym secure.

FALSE NOTES IN A VEXED SONG

Author: Jawed Naqvi

Summary:

The article exposes how a cultural symbol is deliberately pulled out of its historical and literary context and turned into a political weapon. Using the debate around Vande Mataram, the writer shows how Prime Minister Modi revived a nineteenth century song in parliament not to enrich public understanding but to inflame sentiment and score electoral points. The discussion reveals how national songs are often imposed from above and fail to reflect linguistic and cultural diversity. By comparing India with Pakistan, South Africa and New Zealand, the writer highlights that inclusive anthems can unite people while exclusionary symbols deepen social fault lines. What should have remained a poetic tribute to land and beauty becomes a battleground of identity where meaning is lost and noise takes its place.

The article demonstrates that the real controversy does not lie in the song itself but in the communal narrative embedded in Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's novel Anandmath. The article traces how a historical revolt rooted in famine and economic exploitation was recast as a religious struggle that erased Muslim participation and glorified a singular Hindu nationalism. This selective memory mirrors present day politics where slogans and symbols are used to intimidate minorities and distract attention from urgent crises such as pollution and climate stress. I maintain that the revival of this debate serves as a cynical electoral tool rather than a cultural necessity. The article ultimately warns that when culture is bent to serve power, harmony gives way to discord and history is made to sing false notes.

Overview:

The article examines how national symbols like anthems and songs can either reflect pluralism or become instruments of exclusion. It focuses on the Vande Mataram controversy in India to show how history, literature and culture are reshaped for political mobilisation, often at the cost of social cohesion and democratic priorities.

NOTES:

The article highlights how Vande Mataram has been deliberately wrenched from its literary and historical setting and repurposed as a political instrument in contemporary India. It underscores that the parliamentary debate staged by Prime Minister Modi was less about cultural reflection and more about symbolic provocation, consuming public resources while yielding little intellectual value. The writer explains that national anthems and songs, when imposed from above, often fail to represent linguistic and cultural diversity, unlike inclusive examples from South Africa and New Zealand that consciously embrace plurality. A key point of the article is that the song itself is largely benign and poetic, but its association with Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's novel Anandmath injects controversy, as the novel recasts a famine driven and economically rooted rebellion into a communal narrative that erases Muslim participation. This selective retelling of history mirrors present day majoritarian politics where cultural symbols and slogans are used to intimidate minorities and inflame passions. The article further stresses that reviving such debates serves electoral calculations rather than national cohesion, while urgent issues like environmental degradation and air pollution remain ignored. Overall, it shows how culture, when bent to serve power, loses its unifying essence and becomes a source of division and distortion.

CSS syllabus or subjects relevance:

- Pakistan Affairs: covers comparative perspectives on national identity and symbolism by contrasting Pakistan and India.
- Current Affairs: addresses Indian domestic politics, communal polarisation and electoral strategies.
- International Relations: touches soft power, nationalism and identity politics in South Asia.
- Political Science: relates to nationalism, majoritarianism and state ideology.

- Sociology: links culture, religion and social cohesion within diverse societies.

Notes for beginners:

A national song is meant to unite people but problems arise when its language or message excludes many citizens. For example many Indians cannot understand the Sanskrit words of Vande Mataram yet it is used as a test of loyalty. Similarly slogans like Jai Shri Ram become frightening when forced upon minorities. The article shows that history based revolts like the Bengal uprising were driven by famine and exploitation but were later retold as religious wars. This teaches that stories from the past can change meaning when politics intervenes.

Facts and figures:

- The Indian parliament spent about Rs250000 per minute during a ten hour debate on the song.
- Vande Mataram originated in the nineteenth century novel Anandmath.
- South Africa's national anthem uses five languages to reflect diversity.
- New Zealand's anthem is sung in Maori and English to acknowledge bicultural heritage.

To wrap up, The article emphasizes that culture should heal rather than harm. It warns that when songs, slogans and history are twisted for short term political gain, societies drift away from dialogue and truth. By exposing the false notes in this vexed song, the writer urges readers to defend plurality and resist the misuse of culture as a tool of division.

Difficult words and meanings:

- Vexed meaning troubled or contentious. Synonym disputed. Antonym settled.
- Invective meaning abusive or harsh language. Synonym insult. Antonym praise.
- Clarion meaning loud and clear. Synonym ringing. Antonym muted.
- Polarising meaning causing division. Synonym divisive. Antonym unifying.
- Vitriol meaning bitter hostility. Synonym malice. Antonym goodwill.

AFGHANISTAN & REGIONAL PARADOX

Author: Khurram Abbas

The article examines Pakistan's strategic approach to Afghanistan within the context of regional security and diplomacy, emphasizing the Tehran Format as a pivotal, yet imperfect, multilateral platform. Pakistan has consistently engaged in regional consultations to safeguard its national interests, particularly given its extensive exposure to Afghan instability, porous borders and the cross-border threat posed by terrorist groups such as the TTP and BLA. The article highlights Islamabad's objectives in these forums: asserting its stake in Afghan security, seeking international validation for its threat perceptions, and exerting strategic pressure on the Taliban to curb their support for terrorist networks. Despite these intentions, structural challenges persist, including the Taliban's preference for bilateral engagement, divergent regional approaches towards coercion versus engagement, and the lack of enforceable mechanisms within multilateral platforms which collectively hinder the formation of a cohesive regional strategy.

The discussion further underscores the broader implications of Pakistan's regional diplomacy, stressing the need for coordinated and sustained engagement to ensure stability in Afghanistan. The Tehran Format, complemented by the revival of the SCO-Afghanistan Contact Group, offers potential for tangible outcomes, including enhanced counterterrorism cooperation and monitoring of militant movement. The article makes it clear that building regional consensus is a gradual process, demanding patience and strategic foresight, yet it remains more sustainable than relying on unilateral or short-term fixes. By critically assessing Pakistan's proactive stance alongside the limitations of regional multilateral forums, the piece illustrates the complexities of balancing national security, diplomacy, and regional stability in a turbulent South Asian landscape.

Overview:

The article provides an in-depth analysis of Pakistan's engagement with Afghanistan through regional multilateral platforms, focusing on the Tehran Format. It examines Pakistan's strategic goals, the structural and political hurdles that impede consensus, and the broader regional implications of Taliban diplomacy. The discussion reveals the delicate interplay between national security, international legitimacy, and the challenges of forging collective action in a fragmented geopolitical environment.

NOTES:

The article highlights Pakistan's strategic engagement with Afghanistan through regional multilateral platforms, with a particular focus on the Tehran Format. It underlines Pakistan's active participation to safeguard national security, given its long porous border, the presence of millions of Afghan refugees, and the cross-border threat posed by groups such as the TTP and BLA. Islamabad's objectives in these forums include asserting its stake in Afghan security, gaining international validation for its threat perceptions, and applying strategic pressure on the Taliban to curb support for terrorist networks. The article points out the structural challenges Pakistan faces, including the Taliban's preference for bilateral engagements, the differing approaches of regional states toward coercion versus limited engagement, and the absence of enforceable mechanisms within multilateral forums, all of which hinder a cohesive regional strategy. It also emphasizes the broader implications of Pakistan's diplomacy, stressing the need for coordinated and sustained engagement through the Tehran Format and revival of the SCO-Afghanistan Contact Group to enhance counterterrorism cooperation and monitor militant movements, illustrating that patience and strategic foresight are essential for lasting regional stability.

CSS syllabus or subjects relevance:

- Pakistan Affairs: covers Pakistan's foreign policy, engagement with Afghanistan, and regional security strategy.
- Current Affairs: addresses ongoing Afghan security issues, Taliban diplomacy, and regional consultations.
- International Relations: examines multilateral diplomacy, consensus building, and counterterrorism coordination.
- Political Science: relates to state strategy, national security policymaking, and geopolitical calculations.
- Sociology: touches on cross-border impacts of conflict, refugee crises, and regional stability.

Notes for beginners:

Regional forums like the Tehran Format bring multiple countries together to discuss shared security concerns. Pakistan participates to protect its borders and prevent terrorist infiltration. For example, Pakistan highlighted threats from groups like the TTP operating from Afghan territory. Bilateral engagement means dealing with one country at a time, while multilateral forums involve many countries simultaneously. Despite agreements, enforcement is weak, so commitments often remain unfulfilled. Coordinating multiple countries is slow but ensures a more stable approach than quick unilateral actions.

Facts and figures:

- Since 2014, ten multilateral platforms have been established to coordinate on Afghanistan.
- The Taliban maintain diplomatic representation in 39 capitals, while only Russia formally recognises them.
- Pakistan shares one of the longest porous borders with Afghanistan and hosts millions of Afghan refugees.

To sum up, the article emphasizes that sustainable regional stability requires patient, coordinated engagement rather than unilateral actions or short-term solutions. It illustrates the delicate balance Pakistan must maintain between national security imperatives and regional diplomacy, highlighting both the potential and limitations of multilateral forums in addressing Afghanistan's complex security landscape.

IN DECLINE

Author: S. Akbar Zaidi

Summary:

Pakistan is facing a sharp and undeniable decline across economic, social and human development indicators. Over the past four decades, GDP growth has fallen from highs of six percent to barely three percent, and in some years it has turned negative. Population growth continues at a rapid pace, compounding the challenge, and projections indicate that Pakistan will become the third most populous country within 25 years. Human development has deteriorated as reflected in Pakistan's falling Human Development Index ranking, currently at 168th. Gender inequality remains acute, with Pakistan ranked last globally in the Global Gender Gap Report, highlighting low female labor participation and restricted access to finance. Education and human capital development lag decades behind peers like South Korea, leaving the country ill-prepared for the technological and information age. Rising unemployment, especially among youth, declining real wages, and historically low investment ratios intensify the economic malaise, undermining any claim that the crisis is over.

Relative to regional peers, Pakistan is falling further behind. Per capita income has been overtaken by countries like Bangladesh and India, which have grown significantly faster in recent decades. The gap in economic performance and human capital continues to widen, creating structural challenges that cannot be resolved through short-term policy adjustments. The article stresses that political consolidation and centralization have exacerbated these trends, while governance failures hinder reform and long-term development. The current trajectory shows stagnation in economic growth, deterioration in social and human development, and a demographic challenge that, if left unaddressed, will further weaken Pakistan's global and regional standing. Urgent and well-coordinated policy measures focusing on education, female empowerment, investment, and employment are essential to reverse this downward spiral.

Overview:

The article examines Pakistan's deepening economic and social crisis, highlighting the decline in GDP growth, human development, gender equality, education and employment. It presents a critical analysis of structural challenges, including demographic pressures, low investment, governance inefficiencies, and regional underperformance compared to peers. The discussion underscores the urgent need for long-term, strategic policy interventions to restore Pakistan's competitiveness and improve living standards, warning that superficial optimism or short-term measures cannot reverse the entrenched decline.

NOTES:

The article presents in-depth analysis of Pakistan's multidimensional decline. It reveals persistent deterioration in economic, social and human development indicators over the past four decades. GDP growth has fallen from highs of six percent to around three percent, with negative growth recorded in some years, while rapid population expansion adds pressure on resources and employment. Human development has slipped to 168th on the UN HDI and Pakistan ranks last globally on the Global Gender Gap Report, reflecting severe gender inequality, low female labor participation, and restricted financial access. Education and human capital lag decades behind peers like South Korea, leaving the nation ill-prepared for the technological era. Rising youth unemployment, declining real wages, and historically low investment ratios exacerbate the crisis. Compared to regional neighbors such as Bangladesh and India, Pakistan is falling further behind, with political centralization, governance inefficiencies, and structural challenges deepening the malaise. The article emphasizes that reversing this entrenched decline demands coordinated long-term policies focusing on human capital, gender empowerment, investment and employment. It warns that without decisive action, stagnation and regional underperformance will continue.

CSS Syllabus or Subjects Relevance:

- Pakistan Affairs: covers economic growth, human development, and gender inequality in Pakistan.
- Current Affairs: addresses unemployment, population trends, and social development indicators.
- Political Science: relates to governance, policy formulation, and institutional capacity.
- Economics: examines macroeconomic performance, investment, and labor market dynamics.
- Sociology: touches on social inequality, education, and gender-related challenges.

Notes for Beginners:

GDP growth shows how fast an economy is growing. Pakistan's growth has been slow and sometimes negative, meaning people are generally worse off. Population growth is adding pressure because more people need jobs and resources. Gender gap is very large, with few women working or having financial freedom. Education is far behind other countries, so young people may not have the skills needed for modern jobs. Short-term promises or speeches about economic recovery do not change these underlying problems.

Facts and Figures:

- GDP growth has fallen from above six percent to around three percent, with negative growth in 2019-20 and 2022-23.
- Pakistan's population grows by 2.6 percent per year, projected to become the third largest in 25 years.
- Human Development Index ranking fell to 168th.
- Global Gender Gap ranking is 148th out of 148 countries.
- Youth unemployment affects 3.5 million young people annually.
- Real wages have dropped nearly 20 percent over three years.
- Investment-GDP ratio is 13 percent, lowest since 1973.

To sum up, The article shows Pakistan's multidimensional decline. It emphasizes that meaningful recovery requires well-coordinated long-term policies, investment in human capital, and gender-inclusive strategies. Without addressing structural flaws and governance inefficiencies, the country risks further stagnation and regional underperformance.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Secular meaning long-term or continuous. Synonym sustained. Antonym intermittent.
- Malaise meaning a general state of discomfort or unease. Synonym affliction. Antonym wellness.
- Demographic meaning related to population. Synonym population-based. Antonym unrelated.
- Consolidation meaning unification or strengthening. Synonym centralization. Antonym fragmentation.
- Entrenched meaning firmly established. Synonym ingrained. Antonym superficial.

AN 'AMERICA FIRST' STRATEGY

Author: Maleeha Lodhi

The article examines the National Security Strategy introduced under President Donald Trump, portraying it as a decisive shift in American foreign policy toward an "America First" approach. The strategy prioritizes core national interests, economic nationalism, and trade supremacy while signaling a departure from the traditional aspiration of global dominance. It acknowledges a multipolar world, accepts limits to U.S. leverage, and emphasizes selective engagement with other powers. The NSS envisages a balance-of-power approach, cooperating with allies to prevent adversaries from attaining regional dominance without overextending American resources. It signals a pragmatic stance toward China and Russia, recognizing their influence without framing them as adversaries, while portraying Europe as economically and socially vulnerable due to migration and institutional weaknesses. The strategy elevates the Indo-Pacific, particularly India, as a counterweight to China and underlines U.S. economic and strategic

objectives there, including arms sales to Taiwan to deter potential conflict. The Middle East is no longer central, although energy security and preventing regional domination remain priorities, while the document highlights a selective application of influence consistent with Trump's transactional worldview.

The article further argues that the NSS reflects a radical reorientation from open-ended interventionism toward focused, transactional engagement, driven by economic and security imperatives. It emphasizes that the document's effectiveness depends on actual implementation, noting the unpredictable nature of U.S. leadership under Trump. While the strategy promises selective global engagement, it also contains contradictions, such as supporting right-wing populists in Europe while claiming non-interventionist intent. Although Pakistan is not explicitly mentioned, the strategy carries significant implications for Islamabad, requiring careful interpretation of U.S. priorities in South Asia and beyond. The article highlights the broader consequences of redefining U.S. foreign policy in a multipolar world, illustrating how economic nationalism, regional security considerations, and transactional diplomacy now shape American global engagement.

Overview:

The article analyzes the Trump administration's National Security Strategy, emphasizing its focus on core national interests, economic nationalism, and selective global engagement. It explores the shift from global dominance to a multipolar, transactional approach and examines regional priorities, including the Indo-Pacific, Europe, and the Middle East. The discussion highlights the implications for U.S. allies and rivals, the limits of American influence, and the potential consequences for Pakistan and South Asia.

NOTES:

The article analyzes the Trump administration's National Security Strategy. It emphasizes a shift toward an "America First" approach that prioritizes core national interests, economic nationalism, and trade supremacy while moving away from global dominance. It acknowledges a multipolar world, limits U.S. leverage and advocates selective engagement with other powers, adopting a balance-of-power approach to prevent adversaries from achieving regional ascendancy without overextending resources. The strategy takes a pragmatic stance toward China and Russia, elevates the Indo-Pacific and India as a counterweight to China, and signals \$11 billion in arms sales to Taiwan to deter conflict. Europe is portrayed as economically and socially vulnerable due to migration and weak institutions, while the Middle East is downgraded, though energy security remains important. The article highlights that the NSS reflects transactional diplomacy focused on practical gains, contains contradictions between non-intervention and political influence abroad, and carries indirect implications for Pakistan, illustrating that its real impact depends on policy execution rather than rhetoric.

CSS Syllabus or Subjects Relevance:

- International Relations: covers U.S. foreign policy, multipolarity, and strategic balancing.
- Current Affairs: addresses geopolitical priorities, U.S.-China relations, and Indo-Pacific strategy.
- Political Science: relates to policy formulation, global governance, and strategic decision-making.
- Economics: examines economic nationalism, trade priorities, and the intersection of commerce and security.

Notes for Beginners:

The NSS outlines America First policy, which means the U.S. prioritizes its own interests above global obligations. Multipolarity indicates that power is distributed among several nations, not dominated by one. Transactional diplomacy focuses on practical gains, such as trade deals or strategic agreements, rather than moral or ideological goals. The Indo-Pacific strategy highlights the region where the U.S. seeks to maintain influence, balancing China's rise through partnerships with countries like India. Europe's decline shows how migration and weak institutions can affect economic and strategic strength.

Facts and Figures:

- The NSS signals \$11 billion arms sales to Taiwan.

- Europe is described as facing economic decline and social challenges due to migration.
- India is highlighted as a strategic partner in the Indo-Pacific.
- China is classified as a near-peer competitor rather than an adversary.
- The Middle East is downgraded in priority, but energy security remains essential.

To sum up, the article demonstrates that the Trump-era National Security Strategy redefines U.S. engagement with the world, emphasizing economic nationalism, selective intervention, and a balance-of-power approach. It reveals both the potential and limitations of transactional diplomacy in a multipolar world and stresses that the real impact will be determined by actual policy execution rather than rhetoric.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Transactional meaning focused on practical exchange or deal-making. Synonym pragmatic. Antonym idealistic.
- Ascendancy meaning dominance or controlling influence. Synonym supremacy. Antonym subordination.
- Multipolar meaning having multiple centers of power. Synonym polycentric. Antonym unipolar.
- Pragmatic meaning practical and focused on results. Synonym realistic. Antonym theoretical.
- Contradiction meaning inconsistency or conflict between statements or actions. Synonym discrepancy. Antonym harmony.

COMPLIANCE DIVIDENDS

Author: Ahmer Bilal Soofi

Summary:

The article suggests that sovereignty is not a rigid shield that insulates Pakistan from international obligations but a living responsibility created by treaties the state has willingly ratified. Through the lens of the EU GSP Plus regime and its requirement to implement twenty seven international conventions, the article shows that these commitments already bind Pakistan across its entire territory. Far from being external impositions, these conventions demand protection of human dignity, labour rights, women and children, environmental preservation, wildlife conservation, freedom of expression and the rule of law. Compliance also extends to combating narcotics, corruption and discrimination, proving that international law now penetrates the fabric of domestic governance rather than hovering outside it.

It further expresses that treaty compliance has delivered tangible dividends for Pakistan. International conventions have driven reforms where domestic laws once faltered, from curbing human smuggling under UNTOC to enforcing labour protections through ILO standards and preserving heritage sites under Unesco obligations. Financial discipline imposed through FATF compliance has strengthened law enforcement and safeguarded Pakistan's place in the global financial system. These efforts have enhanced Pakistan's diplomatic credibility and widened its global engagement while challenges such as bureaucratic inertia and political resistance persist. An effective compliance strengthens sovereignty rather than eroding it and transforms legal obligation into strategic advantage.

Overview:

The article explains how Pakistan's adherence to international law has reshaped governance, strengthened institutions and enhanced its global standing. It challenges the notion of absolute sovereignty and demonstrates how treaty obligations under regimes such as GSP Plus, UN conventions and FATF have produced concrete legal, social and economic reforms while positioning Pakistan as a responsible international actor.

NOTES:

The article highlights that Pakistan's sovereignty is shaped by its voluntary treaty commitments rather than undermined by them, with the EU GSP Plus regime serving as a central example that requires implementation of

twenty seven international conventions across all provinces and territories. These conventions obligate the state to protect human dignity, fundamental rights, labour welfare, women and children, freedom of expression, environmental sustainability and wildlife conservation while also enforcing action against narcotics, corruption and discrimination. The article stresses that international law has moved from the margins into the core of domestic governance, compelling reforms where national laws were weak or poorly enforced. Concrete gains are illustrated through stronger action against human smuggling under UNTOC, improved labour standards through ILO conventions, preservation of cultural heritage under Unesco obligations and financial discipline enforced through FATF compliance to secure Pakistan's position in the global financial system. While acknowledging challenges such as bureaucratic inertia and political resistance, the article underscores that treaty compliance has enhanced institutional capacity, strengthened law enforcement and elevated Pakistan's diplomatic credibility, ultimately showing that effective adherence to international law reinforces sovereignty and converts legal obligation into strategic advantage.

Relevant CSS Syllabus or Subjects:

- International Relations: focus on international law and sovereignty
- Current Affairs: Pakistan's global obligations and diplomacy
- Political Science: federalism and policy implementation
- Governance and Public Administration: dealing with institutional reform

Notes for Beginners:

International treaties are binding agreements that Pakistan must follow once ratified even if local laws are weak. For example UNTOC forced Pakistan to act against human smuggling where enforcement was previously lax. ILO conventions improved factory conditions in cities like Faisalabad and Sialkot. Unesco treaties ensured protection of sites such as Taxila and the Lahore Fort. FATF compliance pushed Pakistan to reform financial laws to avoid global isolation. These examples show how international rules directly improve daily governance.

Facts and Figures:

- Pakistan must implement twenty seven conventions to retain GSP Plus beyond 2027
- GSP Plus applies across all provinces including Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Kashmir
- FATF compliance required nationwide anti money laundering reforms
- Multiple heritage sites are protected under Unesco conventions
- Pakistan's treaty count exceeds its number of domestic statutes

To sum up, The article suggests that international law is not a burden imposed from outside but a framework Pakistan has chosen to operate within. Compliance has strengthened institutions, protected citizens and elevated Pakistan's global standing. While challenges remain, the path forward is not retreat but deeper commitment. Sovereignty in the modern world is not weakened by responsibility; it is defined by it.

COMPLIANCE DIVIDENDS

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The article suggests that sovereignty is not a rigid shield that insulates Pakistan from international obligations but a living responsibility created by treaties the state has willingly ratified. Through the lens of the EU GSP Plus regime and its requirement to implement twenty seven international conventions, the article shows that these commitments already bind Pakistan across its entire territory. Far from being external impositions, these conventions demand protection of human dignity, labour rights, women and children, environmental preservation, wildlife conservation, freedom of expression and the rule of law. Compliance also extends to combating narcotics, corruption and

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The article highlights that Pakistan's sovereignty is shaped by its voluntary treaty commitments rather than undermined by them, with the EU GSP Plus regime serving as a central example that requires implementation of twenty seven international conventions across all provinces and territories. These conventions obligate the state to protect human dignity, fundamental rights, labour welfare, women and children, freedom of expression, environmental sustainability and wildlife conservation while also enforcing action against narcotics, corruption and discrimination. The article stresses that international law has moved from the margins into the core of domestic governance, compelling reforms where national laws were weak or poorly enforced. Concrete gains are illustrated through stronger action against human smuggling under UNTOC, improved labour standards through ILO conventions, preservation of cultural heritage under Unesco obligations and financial discipline enforced through FATF compliance to secure Pakistan's position in the global financial system. While acknowledging challenges such as bureaucratic inertia and political resistance, the article underscores that treaty compliance has enhanced institutional capacity, strengthened law enforcement and elevated Pakistan's diplomatic credibility, ultimately showing that effective adherence to international law reinforces sovereignty and converts legal obligation into strategic advantage.

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MUTATING CANCER CELLS OF HATRED

Author: Jawed Naqvi

Summary:

The article argues that the Bondi Beach killings expose the grotesque paradox at the heart of contemporary hatred. While two Muslim attackers targeted Jews in an act of blind violence, a Muslim man risked his life to save Jewish victims, restoring faith in humanism at a moment of despair. This single act of courage shattered lazy binaries of faith and identity and reminded the world that morality does not flow from religion or ethnicity but from individual choice. The article uses this moment to challenge narratives that weaponise tragedy for political ends, particularly when leaders exploit fear to legitimise prejudice, repression, or geopolitical agendas. Hatred, like a disease, mutates across societies and histories, wearing different masks while feeding on the same poison of dehumanisation.

This article suggests that the politics of hatred thrives when history is selectively remembered and power shields itself behind victimhood. From medieval Christian antisemitism and Nazi atrocities to Islamophobia and Hindutva extremism, the article traces a continuous thread of bigotry that transcends time and geography. It criticises contemporary leaders who inflame divisions, nurture sectarian proxies, and recycle violent ideologies for strategic gain, even while claiming moral authority. The metaphor of cancer cells captures this danger precisely: hatred spreads silently, adapts quickly, and destroys indiscriminately. The central warning is stark and necessary. When humanism retreats and political opportunism advances, societies edge closer to moral collapse, regardless of who claims righteousness.

Overview:

The article reflects on a terrorist attack in Australia to examine the global ecology of religious hatred, political hypocrisy, and moral courage. It contrasts an act of selfless humanity with the cynical exploitation of violence by powerful leaders and situates contemporary Islamophobia and antisemitism within a long historical continuum. Through cultural, political, and historical references, the piece argues that hatred is neither new nor exclusive to any one community and that selective outrage only accelerates its spread.

NOTES:

The article highlights how the Bondi Beach attack lays bare the disturbing contradictions of modern hatred, where an act of terror carried out in the name of religion is morally overturned by an act of courage from within the same faith. It underscores that violence cannot be reduced to religious or ethnic identities, as a Muslim man's selfless intervention to save Jewish lives reaffirmed the primacy of humanism over sectarian labels. The article traces hatred as a historical constant that mutates rather than disappears, linking medieval Christian antisemitism, Nazi brutality, Islamophobia, Hindutva extremism, and white supremacist movements such as the Ku Klux Klan into a single continuum of dehumanisation. It exposes how political leaders exploit tragedy to inflame fear, silence dissent, and legitimise repression while shielding themselves behind selective victimhood. By invoking examples from history, culture, and contemporary geopolitics, the article warns that when power manipulates outrage and societies accept collective blame, hatred spreads like a disease, adapting to new contexts while retaining its destructive core. The central message is that moral collapse begins when humanism retreats and political opportunism takes its place, and that only individual courage and ethical clarity can interrupt this cycle of mutating bigotry.

Relevant CSS Syllabus or Subjects:

- Current Affairs: focusing on terrorism, extremism, and global politics
- International Relations: dealing with political hypocrisy and moral narratives
- Political Science: addressing identity politics and populism
- Sociology: covering prejudice, racism, and social conflict
- Pakistan Affairs: comparative perspective on sectarianism and intolerance

Notes for Beginners:

The article shows that violence should not be blamed on entire communities. For example a Muslim man saved Jewish lives during the Bondi attack, proving that humanity overrides identity. It explains that hatred against Jews and Muslims has appeared in different forms throughout history, from medieval Europe to modern politics. Leaders often misuse such events to gain support or silence critics, which makes social divisions worse instead of safer.

Facts and Figures:

- Fifteen people were killed in the Bondi Beach attack
- The incident occurred during Hanukkah celebrations
- Historical antisemitism dates back centuries including Martin Luther's writings
- The Ku Klux Klan targeted Jews and Black Americans in the twentieth century
- Modern political movements continue to recycle sectarian narratives

To sum up, the article is a powerful indictment of selective morality and manufactured outrage. It reminds readers that hatred is not born in a vacuum but is cultivated by fear, ignorance, and political convenience. Against this darkness stands individual courage, which alone keeps the idea of shared humanity alive. If societies fail to confront the mutating forms of bigotry honestly, the cancer will spread unchecked. Humanism is not a slogan. It is a daily act of resistance.

GAZA COMMITMENTS

Summary:

The article argues that the debate over Pakistan's possible participation in an International Stabilisation Force in Gaza exposes the hollowness of grand diplomatic schemes that promise order yet conceal moral and political traps. Reports suggesting American pressure on Pakistan are rightly met with caution by the Foreign Office, which has denied both a formal request and any settled decision. The proposed force framed in vague language about dismantling terrorist infrastructure is in reality an attempt to outsource Israel's unfinished war to Muslim states. Such a move would drag them into direct confrontation with Palestinian resistance groups and force them to perform tasks Israel itself failed to accomplish. This vision is not only ill defined but deeply destabilising, as it risks turning supposed peacekeepers into active participants in occupation politics.

Just as the state resisted pressure to join the Yemen conflict and chose neutrality through parliamentary wisdom, it must now avoid entanglement in Gaza. Israel's continued presence in occupied territory, its hostility toward a viable Palestinian state, and the uncertainty surrounding the ceasefire make any troop deployment reckless. Muslim and Arab states have largely refused to participate for these reasons and Pakistan should not fracture this consensus. Without a credible roadmap to Palestinian statehood, calls for stabilisation amount to little more than a moral fig leaf for prolonged occupation.

Overview: The article examines renewed speculation about Pakistan's role in a proposed Gaza stabilisation force and critiques the political logic behind the plan. It highlights official denials, recalls past foreign policy choices, and warns against schemes that pressure Muslim states to confront Palestinian groups. The central argument stresses prudence, principle, and the dangers of legitimising occupation through military participation.

NOTES:

The article highlights serious concerns surrounding Pakistan's possible involvement in an International Stabilisation Force in Gaza and firmly cautions against such a move. It underscores that despite media speculation about American pressure, Pakistan's Foreign Office has denied receiving any formal request and has avoided committing to a decision in the absence of clear terms of reference. The proposed force is criticised for its vague language about dismantling terrorist infrastructure which in practice implies disarming Hamas, a task that would place Muslim states in direct confrontation with Palestinian resistance groups and effectively make them enforcers of Israel's unfinished war. The article stresses that this scheme is poorly conceived, morally fraught, and strategically dangerous, as it risks legitimising occupation rather than stabilising Gaza. It recalls Pakistan's past refusal to join the Yemen conflict under Saudi pressure as a precedent rooted in parliamentary wisdom and principled neutrality. The article further notes that many Arab and Muslim states have already declined participation, recognising Israel's lack of commitment to a viable Palestinian state and its intention to retain control over occupied territory. In this context, deploying troops without a credible roadmap to Palestinian statehood is portrayed as reckless and contrary to Pakistan's stated principles, turning stabilisation into a hollow pretext for prolonging occupation.

Relevant CSS Syllabus or Subjects:

- Current Affairs: with focus on Middle East politics and conflict
- International Relations: dealing with foreign policy choices and great power influence
- Pakistan Affairs: examining diplomatic principles and precedent
- Political Science: addressing interventionism and sovereignty

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that not every peace plan genuinely promotes peace. For example asking Muslim countries to disarm Palestinian groups would place them against people they publicly support. It also shows how Pakistan once refused to join the Yemen war despite pressure which later proved to be a wise choice. These examples teach that saying no can sometimes protect national interests and moral standing.

Facts and Figures:

- Pakistan has officially stated that it has not been asked to send troops to Gaza
- Several Arab states including Egypt and Jordan have declined participation
- Pakistan previously refused to deploy forces in the Yemen conflict
- Israel has indicated it will retain control over parts of Gaza

To wrap up, The article reminds that foreign policy must be guided by clarity rather than coercion. It rejects seductive rhetoric and exposes the dangers hidden within half formed plans. By urging restraint and consistency, it defends both moral responsibility and strategic sense. In conflicts as fraught as Gaza, wisdom often lies in knowing when not to march.

REFLECTIONS ON 2025

Author: Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry

Summary:

The writer describes 2025 as a pivotal year for Pakistan, marked by both external assertion and internal challenges. The year began with a terrorist incident in Indian-occupied Kashmir, followed by India's predictable attempt to blame Pakistan. However, this time the global community did not endorse India's narrative. Pakistan's call for impartial investigations was ignored, and India escalated tensions with military strikes. Pakistan responded with integrated multi-domain operations, downing several Indian aircraft and showcasing strategic resilience. The

episode not only restored national confidence but also undermined India's credibility as a regional power, disproving long-standing claims linking Pakistan to terrorism.

The year also reshaped Pakistan's diplomatic and strategic landscape. India's setbacks pushed it into an uneasy balancing act among major powers, while Pakistan strengthened deterrence through a defence pact with Saudi Arabia and renewed engagement with the United States. China deepened trust in Pakistan's defence capabilities, regional ties warmed, and Pakistan gained diplomatic space on key global issues, including Gaza. Domestically, economic stabilisation showed promise with falling inflation and rising reserves, yet challenges such as youth unemployment, climate shocks, governance gaps, and security threats persisted. The article argues that in a fractured world order, Pakistan's true test lies not just in surviving crises but in demonstrating political will to implement reforms that ensure long-term resilience and stability.

Overview:

The article gives a comprehensive review of Pakistan's domestic and foreign policy trajectory in 2025. It weaves together military confrontations, diplomatic manoeuvres, regional power shifts, economic trends and internal governance challenges into a coherent narrative. The central theme underlines confidence regained through external resistance while highlighting the unfinished task of translating that confidence into sustainable political and economic stability.

NOTES:

The article highlights 2025 as a transformative year for Pakistan, defined by both external confrontations and internal developments. It begins with a terrorist attack in Indian-occupied Kashmir and India's immediate attempt to blame Pakistan, which the global community did not accept. Pakistan sought impartial investigations, but India escalated tensions through military strikes. Pakistan responded decisively with integrated multi-domain operations, downing several Indian aircraft and demonstrating strategic resilience. This episode restored national confidence, challenged India's regional credibility, and countered longstanding claims linking Pakistan to terrorism. Diplomatically, Pakistan strengthened its position through a defence pact with Saudi Arabia, renewed engagement with the United States, and gained international recognition of its capabilities, while China expressed deeper trust in Pakistan's defence technology. Regionally, ties improved with neighbouring countries, and Pakistan gained leverage on key international issues such as Gaza. Domestically, the economy showed signs of stabilisation with falling inflation and rising reserves, yet challenges such as youth unemployment, climate shocks, governance gaps and security threats persisted. The article underscores that Pakistan's long-term test lies in turning these achievements into sustained resilience through political will, reforms and strategic foresight.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: National security, defence policy, economic stability
- Current Affairs: South Asian geopolitics, global power dynamics
- International Relations: Strategic alliances, regional diplomacy, deterrence
- Political Science: State resilience, governance under pressure, policy reform

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan's military and diplomatic actions in 2025 strengthened its position internationally. For instance, when India carried out strikes on Pakistan, the response was effective, restoring national confidence and credibility. Economically, improvements like falling inflation and rising reserves show progress, but challenges like unemployment and governance gaps remain. The article teaches that strong foreign policy must be paired with internal reforms to secure long-term stability.

Facts and Figures:

- Indian strikes on nine targets in Pakistan occurred in May 2025
- Seven Indian aircraft were reportedly downed during the confrontation

- Pakistan signed a mutual defence agreement with Saudi Arabia in 2025
- Inflation declined and foreign reserves improved despite security pressures
- CPEC's second phase was launched, enhancing regional economic ties

To sum up, the article presents 2025 as a year of both achievement and caution for Pakistan. External challenges were met with resilience and strategic acumen, yet internal reforms remain incomplete. Success in international affairs must be matched by domestic political and economic consolidation. Pakistan's future depends on converting short-term victories into enduring national strength and stability in a volatile regional and global environment.

IWT VIOLATION

Summary:

India's repeated manipulation of the Chenab river in 2025 is a reminder of the strategic vulnerabilities Pakistan faces regarding water security. Following the Pahalgam attacks, India used its upstream position to alter river flows, suspending the long-standing Indus Waters Treaty and bypassing established protocols. The sudden drawdown and refilling of the Baglihar dam, combined with unannounced reductions in river flows, disrupted irrigation at a critical stage of the wheat season, leaving millions of acres in Punjab with reduced or no water and threatening crop yields. This demonstrates how water, a vital lifeline, can be weaponised through deliberate unpredictability. Pakistan's inability to access timely data complicated disaster management and planning, while India's disregard for international water conventions highlighted the fragility of bilateral treaties in the face of political agendas. International bodies including the World Bank, the UN and the Permanent Court of Arbitration have supported Pakistan's position, yet India remains unmoved, exposing the urgent need for global pressure and robust domestic preparedness.

The editorial highlights that the Chenab episode is part of a broader pattern of strategic coercion by India, turning natural resources into instruments of geopolitical leverage. It warns that continued violations of the Indus Waters Treaty threaten not only Pakistan's economy and food security but also regional stability and international water-sharing norms. The article stresses that Pakistan must remain vigilant, enhance its water management and monitoring systems, and seek stronger diplomatic and multilateral engagement to safeguard its rights. It is a call for resilience, caution, and proactive strategy in a complex and often adversarial regional environment where unilateral actions by powerful neighbors can have far-reaching consequences.

Overview:

The article examines India's unilateral actions affecting the Chenab river, emphasizing the strategic implications of water manipulation for Pakistan. It highlights violations of the Indus Waters Treaty, economic and agricultural impacts, and the necessity for Pakistan to strengthen domestic management and diplomatic engagement.

NOTES:

The article highlights India's repeated manipulation of the Chenab river in 2025 as a deliberate strategy to exert pressure on Pakistan by exploiting its upstream position. Following the Pahalgam attacks, India suspended aspects of the Indus Waters Treaty and bypassed established protocols including the Permanent Indus Commission to alter river flows without notice. Sudden drawdowns and refilling of the Baglihar dam disrupted irrigation at a critical stage of the wheat season, leaving millions of acres in Punjab with reduced or no water and threatening crop yields. This unpredictability demonstrates how water can be weaponised as a tool of strategic coercion. Pakistan's inability to access timely data complicated planning and disaster management, while India's disregard for international water conventions exposed the vulnerability of bilateral treaties when political agendas prevail. International organizations including the World Bank, the UN and the Permanent Court of Arbitration have supported Pakistan's position, yet India remains unyielding, emphasizing the need for global pressure and enhanced domestic preparedness. The episode reflects a broader pattern of resource-based coercion and underlines the importance of

vigilance, strategic planning, and diplomatic engagement to safeguard Pakistan's water security and regional stability.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Water security, agricultural impact, national infrastructure
- Current Affairs: South Asian geopolitics, environmental security
- International Relations: Bilateral treaties, transboundary resource disputes, international arbitration
- Political Science: State strategy, resource management, policy resilience

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that India has disrupted river flows to pressure Pakistan. For example, sudden releases from the Baglihar dam left farmers in Punjab without water at a critical time for wheat cultivation, showing how control over natural resources can become a strategic weapon. It also shows that Pakistan must rely on international support, monitoring systems, and diplomatic efforts to protect its water rights.

Facts and Figures:

- Chenab river flows were abruptly reduced in 2025 without prior notice
- Millions of acres of farmland in Punjab faced reduced or zero irrigation water
- Baglihar dam operations were altered unilaterally by India
- International bodies including the World Bank, UN, and Permanent Court of Arbitration support Pakistan's stance

To sum up, the article highlights the urgent need for Pakistan to safeguard its water resources against unilateral manipulation. It presents water as a critical dimension of national security and calls for vigilance, strategic planning, and international advocacy. In a region where natural resources can be weaponised, resilience and foresight are essential to protecting both economic stability and national sovereignty.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Obdurate – stubbornly refusing to change; Synonym: unyielding; Antonym: flexible
- Riparian – relating to the banks of a river; Synonym: riverside; Antonym: inland
- Bypassing – avoiding or circumventing; Synonym: evading; Antonym: adhering
- Coercion – use of force or threats to achieve compliance; Synonym: pressure; Antonym: persuasion
- Unilateral – done by one party without agreement of others; Synonym: independent; Antonym: mutual
- Volatility – tendency to change rapidly and unpredictably; Synonym: instability; Antonym: stability
- Protocol – official procedure or system of rules; Synonym: code; Antonym: disorder

PIA'S PRIVATISATION

Summary:

The article presents PIA's privatisation as a moment that is historic in symbolism but uneasy in substance. The sale of the national flag carrier marks the first major privatisation in nearly two decades and breaks a long spell of missed deadlines, failed attempts, and political hesitation. Yet this breakthrough exposes the hard limits of Pakistan's economy, where investor confidence remains fragile and reform is resisted by bureaucracy, litigation, and public distrust. The government could only proceed after cleansing PIA's balance sheet by shifting decades of debt, pension liabilities, and accumulated losses onto the state. What emerged was not a lean airline shaped by market forces, but a carefully repackaged asset made attractive through tax concessions, write offs, and deferred obligations.

The transaction itself raises difficult questions. A consortium secured 75 percent of PIA's operating assets through a Rs135 billion bid, though only Rs10 billion enters the state treasury as an upfront price while the rest comes as promised investment over five years. Authorities defend the deal as a relief from endless fiscal bleeding, yet

taxpayers remain saddled with legacy losses for years to come. The absence of foreign bidders and the winning group's search for institutional backing underline lingering fears about policy unpredictability. Rather than restoring confidence, the deal reflects an economy where privatisation succeeds only when the state absorbs most of the risk, leaving open doubts about whether future SOE sales will fare any better.

Overview:

The article critically reviews PIA's privatisation as a landmark reform weighed down by structural weaknesses. It highlights the political sensitivity of selling state owned enterprises, the heavy fiscal costs borne by the government to make the sale possible, and the persistent lack of broad investor interest. The central argument is that while privatisation has finally moved forward, it exposes deeper economic constraints rather than signalling a decisive turnaround.

NOTES:

The article highlights PIA's privatisation as a long delayed and politically sensitive reform that is historic in appearance but constrained in practice. It suggests that the sale became possible only after the government absorbed decades of accumulated debt, pension liabilities, and financial losses by transferring them to a holding structure and offering tax concessions and incentives. Despite this extensive cleanup, investor appetite remained weak, with no foreign airlines participating and only a local consortium stepping forward. The winning bid of Rs135 billion for 75 percent of PIA's operating assets included a modest upfront payment and a larger promise of future investment, raising questions about valuation and immediate fiscal benefit. While the government views the deal as a way to halt continuous losses and ease future budgetary pressure, the article stresses that taxpayers will continue to shoulder legacy obligations. It further notes that the structure of the transaction reflects persistent concerns over policy instability, judicial intervention, and bureaucratic resistance, suggesting that privatisation in Pakistan advances only when the state carries most of the risk.

CSS Syllabus Related Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: economic reforms, SOEs, fiscal deficits, and governance challenges.
- Current Affairs: privatisation policy, investor confidence, and economic stabilisation.
- Political Science: state market relations and reform politics.
- Public Administration: public sector management and institutional resistance to reform.

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that PIA was losing billions every year and could not survive without state support. Before selling it, the government paid off or transferred most old debts so buyers would not inherit them. For example, although the deal is worth Rs135 billion, only a small amount goes directly to the government while most is future investment by the buyer. This shows how weak companies often need heavy state support even when sold.

Facts and Figures:

- The winning bid for 75 percent of PIA's operating assets stood at Rs135 billion.
- Only Rs10 billion is the direct sale price while Rs125 billion is committed investment over five years.
- The government's remaining stake is valued at around Rs45 billion.
- PIA carries nearly four million passengers annually.
- Legacy losses and pension liabilities remain with the state.

To wrap up, The article shows PIA's privatisation as a necessary but imperfect escape from a long running fiscal drain. It closes one chapter of state mismanagement but opens another debate about fairness, transparency and reform credibility. Unless future privatisations attract genuine competition without heavy state cushioning, this deal may stand less as a model of reform and more as a reminder of how costly delayed decisions can become.

SAARC AT 40

Summary:

The article presents the Saarc at forty as a story of promise deferred and opportunity squandered. Conceived as a vehicle for regional cooperation and shared prosperity, the organisation has failed to rise above the weight of political rivalry, with Pakistan India tensions casting a long shadow over its evolution. Despite the Saarc Charter's clear exclusion of bilateral disputes, mistrust and power politics have repeatedly hijacked the agenda, leaving the forum paralysed. The indefinite postponement of the 2016 Islamabad summit and the absence of any leaders' meeting since 2014 stand as stark symbols of an institution frozen in time. What should have matured into a platform resembling the EU or Asean has instead drifted into irrelevance, unable to deliver meaningful economic integration or collective welfare.

The article argues that abandoning Saarc would amount to surrendering the very idea of South Asian cooperation. While alternative groupings such as SCO or BRICS may offer partial relief, they cannot substitute a regional framework grounded in geography and shared destinies. With intra regional trade languishing near five percent, the cost of disunity is borne by ordinary citizens. The editorial contends that Saarc remains salvageable if member states recommit to multilateralism, respect sovereignty, and prioritise trade and people to people links. For this to happen, India must shed hegemonic impulses and allow space for genuine cooperation. The dream of regional harmony may be bruised, but it is not beyond repair.

Overview:

The article reflects on Saarc's four decade journey, highlighting its failure to achieve regional integration due to enduring political rivalries, especially between Pakistan and India. It examines the paralysis of multilateralism in South Asia, questions whether Saarc should be abandoned, and ultimately argues for its revival as a necessary platform for regional trade, peace, and collective development.

NOTES:

The article highlights Saarc's forty year journey as one marked by unrealised potential rather than tangible success. It stresses that despite lofty objectives of regional welfare and cooperation, Saarc has remained largely paralysed due to persistent political rivalries, particularly between Pakistan and India. Although the Saarc Charter explicitly excludes bilateral disputes, power politics and mistrust have repeatedly overridden this principle, rendering the organisation ineffective. The indefinite postponement of the 2016 Islamabad summit and the absence of any leaders' meeting since 2014 are cited as clear evidence of institutional stagnation. Indian efforts to isolate Pakistan and assert regional dominance are identified as major factors behind Saarc's dysfunction, reinforcing the argument that multilateralism in South Asia remains under strain. The article warns against abandoning Saarc altogether, noting that alternative forums cannot replace a regionally rooted framework. With intra regional trade stuck at around five percent, the continued paralysis of Saarc carries real economic and social costs. The article concludes that Saarc still holds relevance if member states recommit to sovereignty, trade cooperation, and people to people ties, with genuine progress contingent on India abandoning hegemonic behaviour and embracing cooperative regionalism.

CSS Syllabus Related Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: regional cooperation and Pakistan India relations.
- Current Affairs: South Asian geopolitics and regional trade integration.
- International Relations: multilateralism, regional organisations, and power asymmetry.
- Political Science: regionalism and institutional failure.

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Saarc was created so South Asian countries could trade more and solve shared problems together. However, conflicts between Pakistan and India stopped meetings and blocked cooperation. For example,

when India boycotted the 2016 summit, Saarc effectively stopped working. The article suggests that without regional trade and cooperation, nearby countries struggle to grow and improve living standards.

Facts and Figures:

- Saarc was established in 1985 and completed forty years in 2025.
- The last Saarc summit was held in Kathmandu in 2014.
- Intra regional trade in South Asia is around five percent of total trade.
- The 2016 Islamabad summit was indefinitely postponed due to political tensions.

To sum up, the article portrays Saarc as a wounded institution rather than a dead one. Its failures reflect political choices, not structural impossibility. Reviving Saarc demands political courage, restraint from hegemonic behaviour, and a renewed belief that regional cooperation serves people better than perpetual rivalry. In a region bound by geography and history, the cost of disunity is simply too high to ignore.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Hegemony means dominance of one state over others; synonym dominance; antonym equality.
- Paralysis means inability to function; synonym stagnation; antonym mobility.
- Multilateralism means cooperation among several states; synonym collective diplomacy; antonym unilateralism.
- Requiem means a final end or death; synonym closure; antonym revival.
- Animosity means deep hostility; synonym enmity; antonym goodwill.

A MADCAP APPROACH TO MIDEAST PEACE

Summary:

The article argues that the current discourse on Middle East peace reflects a deeply flawed and almost reckless mindset, one that treats symptoms as causes and shields power from accountability. The demand to expel Hamas from Gaza before deploying an international force reveals a narrow focus on the weak while deliberately ignoring the historical and structural realities of the conflict. Israel's overwhelming military dominance, prolonged occupation, and the systematic dispossession of Palestinians are quietly pushed aside, even as credible international bodies and human rights organisations accuse Israel of grave crimes, including genocide. This selective blindness exposes a moral imbalance where responsibility is unevenly assigned and justice is filtered through power.

What troubles me more is the hypocrisy embedded in the Western narrative that presents itself as the guardian of civilisation, democracy, and the rule of law. Instead of restraining destruction, these powers actively shield and enable it, transforming suffering into collateral damage of geopolitics. Drawing on Orwell's insights into power, the article exposes how Western civilisation condemns authoritarianism elsewhere while excusing its own imperial conduct. Gaza emerges as the starkest symbol of this double standard where the oppressed are lectured on restraint and the powerful enjoy impunity. Any genuine path to peace must confront occupation, asymmetry of force, and historical injustice, otherwise international intervention risks becoming yet another mask for domination rather than a step towards dignity and justice.

Overview:

The article analyzes Western-led approaches to peace in Gaza and the wider Middle East by exposing double standards, power asymmetry, and selective accountability. It challenges the focus on Hamas while ignoring Israel's occupation, military dominance, and alleged human rights violations, arguing that true peace requires addressing root causes rather than suppressing resistance.

NOTES:

The article highlights how contemporary peace proposals for Gaza rest on a distorted logic that targets the weaker party while insulating the powerful from scrutiny. It underlines that the insistence on expelling Hamas before any international intervention reduces a complex historical conflict to a single actor, while systematically ignoring Israel's overwhelming military superiority, prolonged occupation, and the entrenched dispossession of Palestinians. The author stresses that credible allegations by UN bodies, human rights organisations, and legal experts against Israel are sidelined, revealing a pattern of selective accountability shaped by power politics. Western states, despite their rhetoric of democracy and rule of law, are shown to actively shield Israeli actions, thereby normalising mass suffering under the guise of civilisation and security. By invoking Orwell and contrasting him with thinkers like Fanon, Said, and Chomsky, the article exposes how Western discourse critiques oppression abroad while excusing imperial practices at home. Gaza is presented as the clearest example of this double standard, where occupation and asymmetry of force remain untouched, and international intervention risks becoming another form of domination unless justice, accountability, and historical realities are genuinely addressed.

CSS Syllabus Related Topics:

- International Relations: Middle East politics, power asymmetry, foreign intervention, and international law.
- Current Affairs: Gaza conflict, US foreign policy, and human rights debates.
- Political Science: theories of power, imperialism, and hegemony.
- Islamic Studies: relation of justice, oppression, and moral responsibility in global affairs.

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that peace efforts in Gaza often blame Hamas while ignoring the larger issue of Israeli occupation. For example, focusing only on removing Hamas is like treating pain without addressing the disease. Israel's stronger military and international backing give it protection, while Palestinians face destruction with little justice. The article also shows how powerful countries speak about democracy but support actions that harm civilians.

Facts and Figures:

- Israel possesses one of the strongest militaries in the Middle East with advanced air and missile capabilities.
- Gaza has been under blockade for over fifteen years, restricting movement, food, and medical supplies.
- Multiple UN bodies and international organisations have raised allegations of war crimes in Gaza.
- The United States remains Israel's largest military and diplomatic supporter.

To wrap up, The article shows Gaza not as a security problem but as a moral test for the global order. It reminds us that peace imposed without justice is fragile and false. Until power is held to account and the voices of the oppressed are taken seriously, every new plan for peace will merely recycle injustice under a different name.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Hegemony means dominance exercised by one state or system over others; synonym dominance; antonym equality.
- Impunity means freedom from punishment or accountability; synonym exemption; antonym accountability.
- Dispossession means the act of depriving people of land or rights; synonym deprivation; antonym restitution.
- Hypocrisy means pretending to hold moral standards not reflected in actions; synonym duplicity; antonym sincerity.
- Asymmetry means imbalance in power or capacity; synonym inequality; antonym symmetry.

AFGHAN ISOLATION

Summary:

Taliban's search for international recognition is deeply undermined by their own contradictory conduct. While they claim to want an end to Afghanistan's isolation, their decision to stay away from a regional forum in Tehran reveals an unwillingness to face the hardest questions. Neighbouring states, including Pakistan and Iran, signalled readiness to engage constructively, yet Kabul chose silence over dialogue. This absence spoke louder than any statement, suggesting discomfort over the issue that haunts Afghanistan's relations with the world: militancy operating from its soil. Trust cannot grow in a vacuum, and trust remains the currency the Taliban lack most.

The deeper problem lies in denial rather than diplomacy. Terrorist groups continue to find space in Afghanistan, and some maintain cordial relations with the Taliban. This reality has consequences beyond Pakistan, as recent attacks linked to Afghan soil have targeted Chinese interests in Central Asia as well. The article argues that no state can expect normal ties while sheltering violent actors. Regional countries are willing to assist Afghanistan with counterterrorism and economic recovery, but only if the Taliban confront reality instead of evading it. Kabul now stands at a critical spot where it must choose engagement and responsibility over old alliances that keep it isolated.

Overview:

The article examines Afghanistan's continued isolation under the Taliban regime and highlights how refusal to engage with neighbouring countries and failure to address terrorism obstruct any path toward regional trust, economic recovery, and international legitimacy.

NOTES:

The article highlights Afghanistan's ongoing isolation under the Taliban, showing a sharp contradiction between their declared desire for international recognition and actions that hinder it. While the Taliban claim to seek engagement, they boycotted a regional forum in Tehran, avoiding difficult questions about terrorist groups operating on their soil. Neighbouring states such as Pakistan and Iran signalled readiness to assist, yet Kabul's refusal to cooperate underscores its reluctance to confront security challenges. Terrorist networks, including TTP and Al Qaeda, continue to operate with Taliban tolerance, posing threats beyond Afghanistan, as illustrated by recent attacks on Chinese workers in Central Asia. The article emphasises that regional support and international legitimacy depend on responsible governance, engagement, and action against militancy. Afghan isolation is therefore self-inflicted, and the Taliban must choose dialogue, accountability, and cooperation over old alliances if they wish to gain recognition, rebuild trust, and integrate regionally.

CSS Syllabus Related Topics:

- International Relations: Afghanistan affairs, regional security, terrorism, and diplomacy.
- Current Affairs: Taliban governance, Pakistan Afghanistan relations, and regional counterterrorism.
- Pakistan Affairs: cross border militancy and security challenges.
- Political Science: state legitimacy and foreign policy behaviour.

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Afghanistan wants recognition but avoids meetings with neighbouring countries. This is similar to a student asking for trust while refusing to answer basic questions. Countries like Pakistan and Iran say they can help Afghanistan, but they want the Taliban to stop militant groups from operating there. When attacks happen from Afghan soil, neighbours feel threatened and pull away instead of moving closer.

Facts and Figures:

- The Taliban returned to power in Afghanistan in August 2021.
- Several militant groups including TTP and Al Qaeda are reported to operate from Afghan territory.
- Recent attacks linked to Afghanistan targeted Chinese workers in Central Asia.

- Afghanistan remains unrecognised by most of the international community.

In a nutshell, the article presents Afghan isolation as a self-inflicted wound rather than an imposed fate. Recognition and cooperation cannot be demanded while security concerns are ignored. If the Taliban want a seat at the regional table, they must first clear the shadows that surround their rule. Dialogue backed by responsibility is the only road that leads out of isolation.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Isolation means separation from others; synonym seclusion; antonym integration.
- Militancy means use of violence for political aims; synonym extremism; antonym moderation.
- Legitimacy means lawful acceptance of authority; synonym validity; antonym illegitimacy.
- Paradox means a contradictory situation; synonym contradiction; antonym consistency.
- Engagement means active involvement; synonym interaction; antonym withdrawal.

A CLEAR INDICTMENT

The article explores Afghanistan under the Taliban, portraying it as a safe haven for some of the world's most dangerous terrorist organisations. According to the UN Security Council report, over twenty transnational groups operate freely from Afghan soil, including IS-K, Al Qaeda, TTP, and ETIM. Most of these organisations enjoy cordial relations with the Taliban, undermining Kabul's claims of denying sanctuary to militants. Pakistan bears the brunt of this permissive environment, with the TTP alone carrying out more than 600 attacks in the past year. Key leaders of anti-Pakistan groups reside in Kabul, while militant madrassahs near the border continue to nurture extremist ideologies. The report underlines that the Taliban regime may lack either the will or capacity to rein in these actors, leaving the region exposed to persistent threats. This harsh reality shatters any notion that Afghanistan is neutral or safe for its neighbours and highlights a broader challenge for regional security and stability.

The editorial argues that direct conflict or unilateral action will not resolve this predicament, and traditional talks with Kabul have yielded little progress. Instead, the pragmatic approach lies in engaging moderate elements within the Taliban, pressing them to take responsibility for curbing terrorist activities that imperil neighbouring states. The article warns that Afghanistan's current trajectory reinforces regional vulnerability and stresses that neglecting the Taliban's role in harbouring militancy risks perpetuating cycles of violence. Any meaningful resolution depends on accountability, dialogue, and the Taliban's willingness to prioritize security over alliances with extremist actors. Without such measures, the country remains a destabilising force, and regional peace will continue to hang by a thread.

Overview:

The article critically examines Afghanistan as a hub for transnational terrorism under the Taliban. It highlights the risks posed to Pakistan and neighbouring states, the credibility gap between Taliban claims and ground realities, and the limited effectiveness of diplomatic engagement so far. It emphasises that the presence of multiple militant groups complicates regional security and that only proactive engagement with moderate Taliban factions could offer a viable path forward.

NOTES:

The article highlights Afghanistan under the Taliban, presenting it as a safe haven for over twenty transnational terrorist groups, including IS-K, Al Qaeda, TTP, and ETIM, most of which maintain cordial relations with the Taliban, undermining Kabul's claims of denying sanctuary to militants. Pakistan bears the heaviest burden, with the TTP alone conducting more than 600 attacks in the past year, while key leaders of anti-Pakistan groups reside in Kabul and militant madrassahs near the border continue to foster extremist ideologies. The UN report highlights that the Taliban may lack the will or capacity to rein in these groups, leaving the region exposed to persistent threats and shattering any notion that Afghanistan is neutral or safe for its neighbours. The editorial stresses that direct

conflict or unilateral action will not resolve the issue and traditional talks with Kabul have yielded little progress. A pragmatic approach involves engaging moderate Taliban elements, pressing them to assume responsibility for curbing terrorist activities, as failure to do so risks perpetuating cycles of violence. The article warns that Afghanistan's current trajectory reinforces regional vulnerability and that any meaningful resolution depends on accountability, dialogue, and the Taliban prioritising security over alliances with extremist actors, without which the country remains a destabilising force, and regional peace hangs by a thread.

CSS Syllabus Related Topics:

- International Relations: Afghanistan affairs, terrorism, counterterrorism strategies, and state legitimacy.
- Current Affairs: Taliban governance, Pakistan-Afghanistan relations, and regional security threats.
- Pakistan Affairs: cross-border militancy, security challenges, and the TTP threat.
- Political Science: addresses state behaviour, sovereignty, and foreign policy dilemmas.

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Afghanistan under the Taliban has become home to many terrorist groups. Pakistan has been attacked repeatedly by TTP militants based in Afghanistan. Most of these groups are friendly with the Taliban, so Kabul does not stop them. Engaging moderate Taliban leaders could help reduce attacks and improve regional safety. Without action, the Taliban's inaction continues to threaten neighbouring countries.

Facts and Figures:

- Over twenty terrorist organisations operate in Afghanistan.
- TTP conducted more than 600 attacks against Pakistan in the past year.
- Key militants such as Noor Wali Mehsud and Gul Bahadur reside in Kabul.
- Militant madrassahs near the Pakistan border continue to train extremists.
- Taliban returned to power in August 2021 and remain largely unrecognised internationally.

To sum up, the article portrays Afghan security as dangerously compromised by Taliban tolerance of militancy. Regional peace hinges on accountability and engagement with moderate factions willing to curb terrorism. Without such measures, Afghanistan remains a source of instability, and the risks to neighbouring states persist unabated.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Permissive means allowing undesirable actions; synonym tolerant; antonym restrictive.
- Echelons means levels of authority; synonym tiers; antonym base.
- Safe haven means a place offering protection from pursuit; synonym refuge; antonym danger zone.
- Trajectory means the course of development; synonym path; antonym stagnation.
- Moderate means not extreme or radical; synonym temperate; antonym extremist

ERA OF NONPOLARITY

Autho: Malik Muhammad Danish

Summary:

The article looks into the evolution of the global order from the rigid bipolarity of the Cold War to a unipolar world dominated by the United States, followed by the rise of multipolarity with emerging powers asserting influence across Asia and Europe. Today, the world is entering an era of nonpolarity where power is diffused and allegiance is fragmented. Using the metaphor of nonpolar molecules, the author explains that countries, like electrons, shift positions to seek stability without fully aligning with any single power. The rise of non-state actors, the weakening of American global dominance, regional power diffusion, and the transformative impact of digital technology and artificial intelligence have further blurred the traditional contours of state power. In this landscape, the old metrics of influence no longer translate seamlessly into control, and the global system lacks clear poles to anchor stability.

Historical precedents, such as Europe after the Peace of Westphalia, illustrate that nonpolarity is not entirely novel but is now magnified by technology and the complexity of international interdependence.

Nonpolarity differs fundamentally from multipolarity, as states can simultaneously align with different and even opposing poles, leveraging one for security, another for trade, and a third for technology. This strategic flexibility, or promiscuity, allows nations to navigate uncertainty but requires economic agility, military readiness, and technological independence. Only self-reliant states can hope to maintain influence and security in an era where allegiance is fluid and global power is dispersed. Nonpolarity, by its nature, generates instability, demanding constant recalibration of foreign policy and strategic thinking. The article underscores that states must adapt to shifting alliances and diffuse power structures, embracing resilience and versatility as their primary tools. Survival and success in this environment hinge not on rigid blocs or static partnerships but on the capacity to manoeuvre within a complex and unpredictable international landscape.

Overview:

The article explains the transition of global politics from bipolarity and unipolarity to multipolarity and now to a nonpolar order where power is diffuse, allegiance is fragmented and influence is dispersed among states and non-state actors. It highlights the impact of technology, economic interdependence, and artificial intelligence on international relations, emphasizing the strategic flexibility required for survival in this environment.

NOTES:

The article traces the evolution of global power from the bipolarity of the Cold War, marked by the US-Soviet rivalry, to a unipolar world dominated by the United States, followed by the rise of multipolarity as Asian and European powers asserted influence. Today, the world is entering an era of nonpolarity where power is widely dispersed, allegiance is fragmented and influence is diffused among states and non-state actors. The weakening of American dominance, the rise of non-state actors and the transformative impact of technology and artificial intelligence have blurred traditional measures of influence. Nonpolarity differs from multipolarity in that states can align with multiple, even opposing, powers to secure economic, military, or technological advantages. This strategic flexibility demands economic agility, military readiness, and technological independence. Historical examples such as post-1648 Europe illustrate that nonpolarity is not entirely novel, but today it is magnified by globalization and technological complexity. Survival and influence in this fluid system require resilience, adaptability, and the ability to navigate a world without fixed poles, emphasizing versatility over rigid alliances.

CSS Syllabus Related Topics:

- International Relations: global order, power dynamics, multipolarity, nonpolarity, foreign policy strategy, and the role of non-state actors.
- Current Affairs: global geopolitics, technological impact on international relations, and emerging power shifts.
- Political Science: theories of power, sovereignty, and state behaviour in a changing international system.

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that global power is no longer concentrated in one or few states. Countries now shift alliances to gain security, trade, and technology advantages. Non-state actors and technology make traditional measures of influence less effective. Nations must be self-reliant and adaptable to survive in this unpredictable system. For example, a small country may trade with one major power while seeking military support from another.

Facts and Figures:

- The US dominated the unipolar world of the 1990s.
- The rise of Asian and European powers has led to multipolarity in the early 21st century.
- Nonpolarity was first coined by Richard Haass in 2008.

- Historical example includes post-1648 Europe after the Peace of Westphalia, where power was dispersed and mercantile companies held quasi-sovereign authority.

To sum up, the article highlights that the modern international system is entering uncharted territory where power is fragmented, allegiance is fluid and states must embrace agility and resilience. Survival and influence depend on adaptability, self-reliance, and the ability to navigate a world without fixed poles of authority. Nonpolarity challenges traditional concepts of alliances and dominance, demanding a new strategic mindset.

DHAKA-DELHI RUPTURE

Summary:

The article highlights the growing tension between Bangladesh and India, tracing the deterioration of ties to recent violent incidents and political upheavals. The murder of prominent Bangladeshi student leader Sharif Osman Hadi has inflamed passions on both sides, with accusations that India played a role and subsequent attacks on Bangladeshi diplomatic missions in Indian cities. Extremist groups such as the VHP have exploited communal incidents including the lynching of a Bangladeshi Hindu in Mymensingh to fuel anti-Bangladesh sentiment and target Dhaka's presence in India. The editorial notes that while Dhaka and Delhi maintained close alignment during Sheikh Hasina Wajed's rule, anti-India sentiment surged after her government was toppled and she fled to India, amplifying perceptions of Indian interference in Bangladesh's internal affairs. The article stresses that India's patronising attitude toward its smaller neighbour and failure to respect sovereignty are central to the breakdown of peace and trust in South Asia.

The article further details that for regional harmony to prevail, every state must respect the sovereignty of its neighbours and refrain from acting as a hegemon. The Dhaka-Delhi rupture illustrates how historical alliances, domestic political shifts, and communal tensions can rapidly strain bilateral relations. Extremist mobilisation, reciprocal diplomatic pressure and unaddressed grievances have created a climate of mistrust, showing that conventional diplomacy alone may not suffice to restore stability. The article highlights the need for cooperation, accountability and a careful calibration of foreign policy to prevent minor disputes from escalating into enduring conflicts. Sustainable peace in South Asia depends on mutual respect, non-interference, and the prioritisation of dialogue over unilateral actions that inflame historical animosities.

Overview:

The article examines the deterioration of Bangladesh-India relations following political upheaval and violent incidents, highlighting the role of extremist mobilisation, reciprocal diplomatic actions, and perceptions of interference. It highlights the importance of sovereignty, cooperation, and restraint in preventing escalation of bilateral tensions.

NOTES:

The article details the escalating tensions between Bangladesh and India, attributing the deterioration of bilateral relations to recent violent events and political shifts. The assassination of prominent Bangladeshi student leader Sharif Osman Hadi triggered widespread anger, with allegations implicating India, while extremist groups such as the VHP exploited communal incidents, including the lynching of a Bangladeshi Hindu in Mymensingh, to attack Bangladeshi diplomatic missions in India. Reciprocal diplomatic measures including summoning of envoys, illustrate the tit-for-tat nature of the dispute. Anti-India sentiment intensified after Sheikh Hasina Wajed's government was toppled and she fled to India, reinforcing perceptions of Indian interference in Bangladesh's internal affairs. The article highlights that India's patronising approach and disregard for Bangladesh's sovereignty have been central to the erosion of trust. It further emphasizes that historical alliances, domestic political changes, and communal tensions amplify the risk of bilateral conflict, while extremist mobilisation and unaddressed grievances create a climate of mistrust.

CSS Syllabus Related Topics:

- International Relations: South Asian bilateral relations, regional diplomacy, and conflict resolution.
- Current Affairs: Bangladesh-India relations, regional security, and communal tensions.
- Pakistan Affairs connects indirectly through South Asian regional stability, cross-border diplomacy, and lessons for neighbours.
- Political Science: sovereignty, state behaviour, foreign policy dilemmas, and conflict management.

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Bangladesh and India are facing serious tension due to violent events, political changes, and perceptions of interference. Extremist groups have worsened the situation, and both countries have responded by summoning each other's diplomats. Peace requires that each country respect the sovereignty of the other and avoid acting as a bully. For example, India should assist Bangladesh in investigating crimes without interfering in internal politics.

Facts and Figures:

- Prominent Bangladeshi student leader Sharif Osman Hadi was murdered, sparking tensions.
- Attacks on Bangladeshi diplomatic missions have occurred in multiple Indian cities.
- Sheikh Hasina Wajed fled to India after her government was toppled last year.
- Extremist groups like the VHP exploited communal incidents to attack Bangladesh's presence in India.

To wrap up, the article shows the Bangladesh-India rupture that how domestic politics, extremist mobilisation, and perceived interference can destabilise bilateral relations. Sustainable peace requires respect for sovereignty, restraint in action, and the prioritisation of dialogue and cooperation to prevent historical grievances from escalating into enduring regional conflict.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Patronising means treating others with an apparent kindness that betrays a feeling of superiority; synonym condescending; antonym respectful.
- Uprising means an act of rebellion or revolt; synonym insurrection; antonym submission.
- Hegemon means a dominant state or leader in a region; synonym overlord; antonym subordinate.
- Amity means peaceful harmony; synonym friendliness; antonym hostility.
- Calibration means careful adjustment of strategy or policy; synonym fine-tuning; antonym negligence.

MENA PARTNERSHIPS

Autho: Muhammad Amir Rana

Summary:

The article examines Pakistan's expanding engagement with the Middle East and North Africa, highlighting a strategic recalibration that balances relationships with both conflict-ridden states and stable Gulf monarchies. Pakistan's defence diplomacy has grown increasingly pragmatic, reflecting a careful alignment with regional power structures. Engagements with Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Libya and Egypt demonstrate Islamabad's capacity to navigate competing interests, often aligning with one side in Sudan while siding differently in Libya. High-level visits including that of UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and Pakistani Field Marshal Asim Munir highlight the political and military symbolism of these partnerships, while deals such as the \$4 billion military supply agreement with the Libyan National Army signal Pakistan's growing geostrategic and economic influence. The article also highlights the long-term challenge of sustaining these gains, given the fragility of MENA politics and structural similarities between Pakistan and politically unstable Middle Eastern states.

The article emphasizes that Pakistan's role in the region is not merely transactional but shaped by careful statecraft, drawing lessons from both stability and conflict. The analysis references Fawaz Gerges' work on the Middle East, stressing how overemphasis on security institutions and authoritarian approaches can exacerbate societal divisions, which eventually surface as instability. Pakistan's diplomatic posture reflects a pragmatic realpolitik, seeking economic and strategic gains while maintaining official support for peace initiatives. The article suggests that sustainable influence depends on balancing alliances, observing regional dynamics, and calibrating policy without undermining domestic stability. This approach positions Pakistan as a flexible, accommodating actor in the MENA region, capable of leveraging religious, military and economic connections to strengthen its international standing.

Overview:

The article explores Pakistan's evolving diplomacy in the Middle East and North Africa, emphasizing strategic recalibration, defence cooperation, and pragmatic engagement with diverse regional actors. It demonstrates how Pakistan navigates conflicting alliances and leverages military and economic partnerships while maintaining an official commitment to regional stability.

NOTES:

The article highlights Pakistan's growing engagement with the Middle East and North Africa, focusing on a strategic recalibration that balances relations with conflict-prone states and stable Gulf monarchies. Pakistan has pursued pragmatic defence diplomacy, carefully aligning with regional power structures and navigating competing interests in Sudan, Libya, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Egypt. High-level visits suggest the political and military significance of these partnerships, while deals like the \$4 billion military supply agreement with the Libyan National Army demonstrate Pakistan's expanding geostrategic and economic influence. The article emphasizes that Pakistan's diplomacy is guided by careful statecraft and realpolitik, learning from both stable and unstable regional models, and calibrating policy to balance alliances without undermining domestic stability. It also notes the challenges of sustaining influence given the fragility of MENA politics and structural similarities between Pakistan and politically volatile states, highlighting that sustainable engagement requires flexibility, pragmatic decision-making and leveraging religious, military, and economic ties to strengthen Pakistan's international standing.

CSS Syllabus Related Topics:

- International Relations: Middle East diplomacy, regional security, conflict management, strategic alliances.
- Current Affairs: Pakistan-MENA relations, defence cooperation, geopolitical strategy.
- Political Science: Statecraft, foreign policy formulation, balance of power, regional influence.

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains how Pakistan is increasing its engagement with the Middle East and North Africa to strengthen defence and economic ties. Pakistan aligns differently in various conflicts, showing flexibility in foreign policy. High-level visits and military deals illustrate growing influence, but sustaining this requires careful balancing and understanding of regional politics. For example, Pakistan sides with the Sudanese army while supporting different actors in Libya, reflecting pragmatic strategy.

Facts and Figures:

- Pakistan signed a defence cooperation agreement with Saudi Arabia in September 2025.
- UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed visited Pakistan officially.
- Pakistan agreed to a \$4 billion military supply deal with the Libyan National Army.
- Pakistan's Foreign Minister and Field Marshal Asim Munir conducted visits to Libya and Egypt to strengthen military cooperation.

To sum up, The article shows Pakistan's MENA policy as a pragmatic and strategic pursuit of influence, balancing alliances, economic interests and regional conflicts. Success depends on careful diplomacy, adaptability and

learning from regional political structures. Pakistan's approach reflects a nuanced understanding of realpolitik which emphasizes flexibility, strategic depth and sustainable engagement in a complex and dynamic geopolitical landscape.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Recalibration: careful adjustment of strategy; synonym fine-tuning; antonym negligence.
- Pragmatic: practical and focused on results; synonym realistic; antonym idealistic.
- Fragility: weakness or instability; synonym vulnerability; antonym stability.
- Realpolitik: politics based on practical and material factors rather than ideology; synonym power politics; antonym idealism.
- Doctrinal: relating to principles or policy; synonym dogmatic; antonym flexible.

PRIVATISATION PUSH

Summary:

Pakistan's privatisation drive marked by the recent sale of PIA signals a critical step in addressing the chronic inefficiencies of state-owned enterprises. While the transaction has drawn praise and hopes of reviving investor confidence, it also suggests that one successful deal cannot compensate for decades of fiscal mismanagement and structural weaknesses. The article argues that privatisation is now an economic necessity rather than a matter of ideology, as loss-making SOEs drain hundreds of billions from the national budget every year, limiting funds for essential services like hospitals and schools. The writer points out that foreign investors remain wary due to policy unpredictability, high operational costs and weak regulatory frameworks, while local investors proceed cautiously, seeking institutional protection against potential policy reversals. Without decisive structural reforms including stronger regulatory oversight, continuity of policy, lower costs of doing business, and broader tax coverage, isolated privatisation efforts will fail to instil long-term confidence.

The editorial further stresses that meaningful economic recovery depends on systemic reforms rather than piecemeal transactions. Pakistan must seize this opportunity to strengthen governance, enforce the rule of law, and implement measures that make investment attractive while reducing fiscal strain. The article gives critical insights into public sector management, economic policy, and structural reform, highlighting the delicate balance between fiscal prudence and investor confidence. The article concludes that Pakistan's economic revival depends not just on individual deals but on sustained reforms, credible governance, and a conducive environment for both domestic and foreign investment.

Overview:

The article examines Pakistan's privatisation strategy, focusing on PIA's sale as a catalyst for broader economic reform. It highlights the structural weaknesses of state-owned enterprises, investor hesitancy, and the need for systemic reforms to stabilise the budget and create long-term economic growth.

NOTES:

The article critically analyses Pakistan's reliance on inefficient state-owned enterprises, whose massive losses drain resources and crowd out funding for development. Privatisation exemplified by PIA's sale is portrayed as essential to relieve fiscal pressure and revive investor confidence. Foreign investors have largely avoided Pakistan due to unstable policies, high costs, and weak enforcement of regulations, while local investors participate cautiously with institutional backing. The article emphasises that only through comprehensive reforms such as strengthening regulators, ensuring policy continuity, expanding the tax base, reducing the cost of doing business and enforcing the rule of law, can privatisation efforts translate into sustainable economic progress. Without such measures, isolated transactions will fail to restore confidence or attract meaningful investment.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Economic reforms, privatisation, fiscal management, state-owned enterprises
- Current Affairs: Investor confidence, economic policy, business environment
- Political Science: Governance, structural reform, regulatory institutions

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan spends a lot of money running inefficient government-owned companies, leaving little for schools, hospitals, or infrastructure. Selling these companies, like PIA, can help reduce losses and attract investment. For example, local investors who bought PIA teamed up with Fauji Fertiliser to protect against future policy changes. The article stresses that lasting improvement requires stronger rules, better governance and fair treatment of businesses. If Pakistan follows this path, it can boost the economy and attract both local and foreign investors.

Facts and Figures:

- PIA sale was the first major privatisation in over two decades
- State-owned enterprises lose hundreds of billions annually
- Local investors partnered with Fauji Fertiliser to secure investment during PIA auction
- Foreign investors largely stayed away due to economic and policy uncertainties

To sum up, The article highlights that economic revival depends not on one-off transactions but on comprehensive reforms, credible governance, and creating an environment that fosters investment. Without sustained structural change, the privatisation agenda will stall, and Pakistan risks continuing fiscal strain while missing opportunities for long-term development.

WHY PAKISTAN SHOULD STAY OUT

Author: Maleeha Lodhi

Summary:

Pakistan's potential participation in the International Stabilisation Force under the Trump Gaza peace plan raises serious strategic and ethical concerns. The article argues that joining a multinational force with an ill-defined mandate, particularly one not accepted by Hamas, would expose Pakistani troops to direct confrontation with Palestinian resistance groups and risk domestic backlash. The editorial highlights that the second phase of the plan is covering governance arrangements, Israeli troop withdrawals, disarmament of Hamas and deployment of ISF, remains stalled amid lack of clarity, disagreements between the US and Israel, and daily violations of the ceasefire in Gaza. The article stresses that the ISF is neither a UN-led peacekeeping force nor fully neutral, with operational responsibilities tied closely to Israel, whose track record of compliance with agreements is unreliable. Sending troops under these circumstances would not only compromise Pakistan's long-standing stance on Palestinian sovereignty but could also be perceived as implicit recognition of Israel which remains politically sensitive.

The article argues that Pakistan must prioritise national interests and avoid entanglement in a high-risk mission that lacks legitimacy and consensus. This article provides lens into Pakistan's foreign policy decision-making, the dynamics of international peace enforcement, and the strategic calculation involved in multilateral engagements. The article concludes that Pakistan should avoid committing forces to an undefined mission that could compromise both the safety of its personnel and the country's principled stance on the Palestinian issue.

Overview: he article examines Pakistan's deliberations over joining the International Stabilisation Force under the Trump peace plan, highlighting the risks of deploying troops to an operation with an ambiguous mandate and lacking Hamas's consent. It underscores the broader implications for Pakistan's foreign policy, national interests, and regional credibility.

NOTES:

The article analyses the high-stakes considerations surrounding Pakistan's possible involvement in ISF. It emphasizes that participation without a clear mandate could drag the country into direct conflict with Palestinian groups. Gaza's unstable ceasefire, ongoing Israeli military operations, and the stalled governance arrangements illustrate the volatility of the situation. The ISF is operationally linked to Israel, making neutrality impossible and placing Pakistani forces in a precarious position. The writer stresses that Pakistan's soldiers could be caught in crossfire or be perceived as siding with Israel, contradicting long-standing foreign policy. Strategic patience, clarity of mandate, and respect for national interests are vital before any commitment. The article warns that engaging prematurely could create a political quagmire and undermine Pakistan's credibility on the global stage.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Foreign policy, national security, Middle East relations
- Current Affairs: Gaza conflict, peace enforcement operations, multilateral diplomacy
- International Relations: Peacekeeping vs. peace enforcement, regional conflicts, sovereignty issues

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan should think twice before sending troops to Gaza under an international force. The peace plan is confusing, the rules are unclear, and Hamas does not agree with the mission. For example, the ISF is linked closely with Israel, which does not follow agreements consistently. Sending troops could put them in danger and make Pakistan look like it supports Israel instead of Palestinians. The article advises waiting until the mission is clearly defined and safe before getting involved.

Facts and Figures:

- Since the ceasefire in October, over 400 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli airstrikes
- No Muslim country has formally committed troops to ISF due to lack of clarity
- US and Israel discussions over Gaza governance and ISF mandate remain inconclusive
- Hamas insists that any international force must operate under UN supervision and only at borders

To sum up, the article emphasizes that Pakistan's national interests, soldier safety, and principled foreign policy should guide any decision regarding ISF participation. Entering a poorly defined mission risks operational failure, domestic backlash and compromise of Pakistan's stance on Palestinian sovereignty, making restraint the wisest course of action.

ACCOUNTABLE POLICE FORCES

Author Afzal Ali Shigri

Summary:

The article argues that the crisis of policing in Pakistan cannot be understood without tracing its historical roots. Modern policing emerged in nineteenth century England with Sir Robert Peel's vision that police authority rests on public consent rather than brute force. Accountability, restraint, proportionality, and obedience to law were meant to shield society from abuse of power. This philosophy marked a shift from coercion to legitimacy and from command to accountability. However, when the British transplanted policing to colonial India, especially after the revolt of 1857, the model was deliberately reshaped into a centralised force designed for control rather than service. Order took precedence over rights, and obedience replaced consent as the foundation of authority. Pakistan inherited this colonial structure at independence and largely preserved it. Political and military rulers stepped into the role once played by colonial masters, while nearly thirty reform reports gathered dust without effect. The Police Order of 2002 promised a turning point by aiming to transform the police into a service oriented institution and by recognising the dangers of unchecked power within an oversized force. Yet political pressure

hollowed out its core principles. Instead of structural reform, governments multiplied loosely regulated specialised units that blurred accountability and weakened the criminal justice system. The article concludes that genuine reform demands smaller and more manageable police forces within each province, strong civilian oversight, protected tenures for commanders, and a professional provincial directorate. Without confronting these realities, policing will remain trapped between law and power, serving neither democracy nor public trust.

Overview:

The article examines the evolution of policing from its democratic origins to its colonial distortion and continued misuse in Pakistan. It analyses why past reform efforts failed, critiques the unchecked growth of police forces and specialised units, and proposes structural reorganisation through multiple provincial police forces supported by a strong oversight mechanism.

NOTES:

The article offers a critical understanding of civil military relations, governance failure, and institutional reform in Pakistan. It highlights how colonial legacies shape modern state institutions and why accountability mechanisms collapse under political interference. It focuses on the linkage between police reform, rule of law, democratic consolidation, and effective governance. The discussion is particularly useful for answers on internal security, administrative reform, and state capacity.

CSS Syllabus Topics or Subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs: focus on governance and institutional reform.
- Current Affairs: relating to internal security and law enforcement challenges.
- Public Administration: covering accountability, decentralisation, and management of large organisations.
- Political Science: addressing state power, legitimacy, and civil oversight.

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that policing works best when people trust the police. For example in countries where officers are accountable and restrained, citizens cooperate willingly which reduces crime. In Pakistan, very large police forces are controlled by a single provincial command which makes supervision difficult. Another example is the creation of specialised units that operate outside normal rules. While they are meant to fight crime quickly, they often escape accountability and harm public trust.

Facts and Figures:

- Punjab police has approximately 224,000 personnel.
- Sindh police has around 160,000 personnel.
- Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police numbers about 125,000.
- Balochistan police strength is close to 48,000 personnel.
- The article proposes that no single police force should exceed 50,000 personnel for effective management.

To wrap up, The article shows that policing cannot be fixed through slogans or temporary units but only through structural reform rooted in accountability and public consent. Until Pakistan abandons the colonial mindset of control and embraces democratic policing in letter and spirit, the thin line between law and power will continue to fray.

WPS AGENDA

Author: Mohammad Ali Babakhel

Summary:

UNSCR 1325 stands as a landmark recognition that peace and security cannot be achieved while sidelining half the population. The article explains that conflict affects women and men differently and that women possess unique

capacities as peacebuilders, mediators, and community connectors. It argues that translating this global commitment into reality requires localisation through National Action Plans built on prevention, participation, protection and relief and recovery. While over one hundred states have adopted such plans, effective localisation depends on political will, inclusive policymaking, clear indicators, proper budgeting, and strong accountability mechanisms. Women's involvement enhances operational effectiveness, strengthens social cohesion, and bridges gaps that traditional security approaches fail to address.

The article also exposes the obstacles that continue to stall meaningful implementation, particularly in Pakistan. Structural weaknesses, cultural resistance, limited institutional capacity, and weak coordination between federal and provincial governments have reduced progress to fragmented efforts led largely by civil society. Despite constitutional devolution after the 18th Amendment, women's development remains uneven across provinces. A security mindset dominated by force marginalises women's roles in peacebuilding, while limited data and funding restrict long term planning. Although some progress is visible in local governance and justice institutions, women's representation remains low across policing, prosecution and the judiciary. The article concludes that genuine progress demands moving beyond symbolic inclusion toward sustained commitment where gender perspectives shape security policy and decision making at every level.

Overview:

The article examines the implementation and localisation of UNSCR 1325 with a focus on Pakistan. It outlines the principles of the Women Peace and Security agenda, highlights the role of National Action Plans, and analyses institutional, cultural, and political barriers. It also presents data on women's representation in security and justice sectors, analyzing the gap between commitments and outcomes.

NOTES:

The article provides a comprehensive analysis of the Women Peace and Security framework and its relevance to national security and governance. It highlights the importance of gender inclusive policymaking, decentralisation challenges after the 18th Amendment and the limitations of a purely kinetic security approach. The article notes the linkage between UNSCR 1325, national security policy, governance reforms, and international obligations as well as the role of UN agencies in capacity building.

CSS Syllabus Topics or Subjects:

- Gender Studies: emphasis on women and peacebuilding.
- International Relations: focusing on UN resolutions and global governance.
- Pakistan Affairs: relating to devolution, national security policy, and institutional capacity.
- Governance and Public Policy: covering policy implementation and coordination.

Notes for Beginners:

The article shows that peace is not only about armies and weapons. For example women working in local councils can resolve disputes before they turn violent. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa female representatives trained through development programs improved participation in decision making. Another example is policing, where increasing women officers helps victims of violence access justice more comfortably.

Facts and Figures:

- Out of 3,142 judges in Pakistan, 572 are women which is 18 percent.
- Women make up 17 percent of lawyers and 15 percent of prosecutors.
- Female police officers constitute only 3.2 percent of the total police force.
- Reserved seats for women in local governments stand at 14 percent in Punjab, 22 percent in Sindh, and 33 percent in KP and Balochistan.

To sum up, The article suggests that peace and security cannot be sustained without women's meaningful participation. Laws and policies alone are insufficient unless matched by political resolve, resources and cultural



change. UNSCR 1325 offers a powerful framework, but its promise will remain unfulfilled until commitment translates into action and action delivers real impact.

CSS PLATFORM

SAUDI–PAKISTAN SECURITY PACT: ECHOES OF A CHANGING GLOBAL ORDER

Author Huma Baqai

Summary:

The defence pact between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia marks a significant shift in regional and global geopolitics. Beyond mere military cooperation, it signals a recalibration of power in both South Asia and the Middle East. The pact, which asserts that any aggression against either country will be considered an attack on both, reflects decades of trust and collaboration, from Pakistan's historical deployment in Saudi Arabia to Riyadh's discreet backing of Pakistan's nuclear program. Analysts are discussing the emergence of a potential "Islamic NATO" or "NATO of the East," highlighting Pakistan's rising role as a security provider in the region. This development also reflects Saudi Arabia's desire to diversify its security partnerships beyond the United States particularly amid tensions involving Israel, Iran, and the vulnerability of Gulf security infrastructure. Pakistan's strategic importance, underscored by its nuclear capability, military agility, counterterrorism expertise, and historical solidarity with Riyadh, positions it as an indispensable partner in this evolving landscape.

The implications of this pact extend beyond bilateral ties, influencing the broader balance of power in the Middle East and South Asia. For Saudi Arabia, the alliance represents strategic hedging in a turbulent global order. For Pakistan, it is a moment of diplomatic recognition and an opportunity to enhance economic and regional influence. India once a favored partner in the Middle East faces a recalibration of its strategic positioning as the pact signals Pakistan's renewed relevance. Furthermore, the alignment hints at deeper connections with China, emphasizing Pakistan's centrality in regional security architectures. While it is not the start of a Pakistan-led bloc, the pact demonstrates that future security arrangements will increasingly reflect the agency of the Global South rather than the unilateral influence of traditional Western powers. This development highlights the emergence of multipolarity and a new era where strategic influence is shared among rising powers and regional players.

Overview:

The article explores the strategic and geopolitical significance of the Saudi–Pakistan defence pact. It emphasizes the long-standing historical ties between the two countries and analyzes how this alliance may reshape regional security, power dynamics, and economic opportunities. The piece highlights Pakistan's rising strategic relevance, Saudi Arabia's diversification of security alliances, and the broader implications for India, China, and the Global South. The article also situates the pact within the context of shifting US influence and the fragility of traditional security arrangements in the Middle East.

NOTES:

The article demonstrates Pakistan's strategic centrality and regional diplomacy, highlighting its nuclear and conventional military capabilities, historical alliances, and role in balancing Middle Eastern power structures. It examines Saudi Arabia's evolving security strategy, including engagement with Iran, cautious normalization with Israel, and partnership with Pakistan. The article also touches on multipolarity in global politics, US influence waning in the region, and India's recalibrated position.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Strategic partnerships, Pakistan-Saudi relations, nuclear policy, defense diplomacy.
- International Relations: Middle Eastern geopolitics, US influence, regional security arrangements, multipolarity.

- Current Affairs: Global South initiatives, strategic pacts, evolving alliances, China-Pakistan relations.

Notes for Beginners:

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have a long history of defense cooperation. The new pact strengthens their military ties and signals that any attack on one is an attack on both. Pakistan's strong army, nuclear capability, and historical solidarity make it a key regional player. Saudi Arabia, wary of relying solely on the US, seeks diverse security partnerships. The pact could enhance defense exports, training missions, and economic opportunities for Pakistan. For India, this alliance is an attention call about changing power dynamics.

Facts and Figures:

The "100-hour war" exemplifies Pakistan's military agility.

The defense pact emphasizes mutual security, nuclear symbolism, and regional cooperation.

Historical military support from Pakistan to Saudi Arabia dates back to the 1960s.

Recent regional attacks, including drone strikes on Aramco and the Al Udeid base, illustrate the vulnerabilities driving Saudi strategic diversification.

In a nutshell, The Saudi-Pakistan defense pact symbolizes a shift in global order, reflecting the erosion of traditional security guarantees and the rise of multipolarity. It reinforces Pakistan's diplomatic relevance, Saudi Arabia's strategic recalibration, and the declining unilateral influence of the United States. While not creating a Pakistan-led bloc, it highlights the increasing influence of the Global South in determining regional security and sets the stage for a new era of strategic realignments.

Difficult Words and Meaning:

- Reverberates – echoes, resonates; synonyms: resounds, ricochets; antonyms: silences, muffles.
- Recalibrated – adjusted, reoriented; synonyms: realigned, revamped; antonyms: unchanged, stagnant.
- Indispensable – essential, crucial; synonyms: vital, necessary; antonyms: dispensable, optional.
- Hedging – securing against loss; synonyms: safeguarding, buffering; antonyms: risking, endangering.
- Multipolarity – having multiple centers of power; synonyms: polycentric, distributed power; antonyms: unipolarity, singular dominance.

FROM GAZA TO DOHA: ISRAEL'S WAR AND SHATTERED ILLUSIONS OF PEACE

Author Huma Baqai

Summary:

Israel's strike on Doha on September 9, 2025, has stripped away long held assumptions about security and stability in West Asia. The attack exposed the vulnerability of Gulf states that had long relied on American protection as an iron shield. Wealth, military bases, and strategic alignment with Washington failed to prevent Israeli aggression, sending a stark message that no Arab capital lies beyond Israel's operational reach. More damaging than the physical strike was the political aftershock, as the credibility of the United States suffered a serious blow. Its inability or unwillingness to restrain Israel has shaken the confidence of allies and turned security guarantees into hollow assurances. In a region accustomed to broken promises, American reassurances now ring like echoes in an empty hall.

The assault has also buried the illusion of peace created by the Abraham Accords and pushed the Palestine issue back to the center of regional politics. Israeli actions in Gaza and beyond have inflamed public anger across the Arab world and narrowed the space for normalization. The staggering human cost of the war, with tens of thousands killed and many more injured, now shadows every diplomatic forum. The United Nations has become a battleground of words where condemnation flows freely but accountability remains elusive. While a rare global consensus

emerged through the UN General Assembly's backing of a two state solution, the gap between international will and political reality continues to widen. The Doha strike stands as a symbol of a fractured global order where power overrides principle and where peace appears more distant than ever.

Overview:

The article analyzes Israel's attack on Doha as a turning point in Middle Eastern geopolitics. It highlights the erosion of US credibility, the collapse of normalization efforts and the deepening humanitarian crisis in Palestine. The article also examines the paralysis of global governance institutions and the growing disconnect between international consensus and ground realities.

NOTES:

The article highlights how Israel's strike on Doha marked a decisive rupture in Middle Eastern security assumptions by exposing the fragility of Gulf states that rely on American military protection. It notes that wealth, hosting US bases, and strategic alignment with Washington no longer guarantee safety as both Iran and Israel targeted the same Qatari base within months. The article stresses the political damage suffered by the United States, whose inability to restrain Israel has eroded trust among allies and turned security assurances into empty words. It emphasizes the collapse of the Abraham Accords and shows how the Palestine issue has reemerged as the central axis of regional politics, driven by intense public anger over Israeli actions in Gaza. The article also documents the staggering human cost of the war, noting tens of thousands of Palestinian deaths, which has constrained Arab governments and made normalization politically untenable. It further examines the role of the United Nations, portraying it as a forum heavy with condemnation but light on enforcement, revealing a deeper crisis of multilateralism. Finally, it points to the symbolic importance of the UN General Assembly's support for a two state solution, while acknowledging the widening gap between global consensus and realities shaped by power politics, leaving the international order exposed and deeply unsettled.

CSS Syllabus Topics or Subjects:

- International Relations: focus on Middle East politics and great power influence.
- Current Affairs: Israel Palestine conflict and Gulf security.
- Pakistan Affairs: In the context of Pakistan's diplomatic stance at the United Nations.

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that even powerful Gulf countries like Qatar are not fully protected despite hosting US military bases. For example the Al Udeid base was struck first by Iran and later by Israel which shows how fragile security arrangements have become. It also explains why peace deals like the Abraham Accords failed since public opinion in Arab societies strongly supports Palestinians. When civilian deaths rise into the tens of thousands governments find it impossible to justify cooperation with Israel.

Facts and Figures:

- Over 60,000 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza since October 2023 with more than 161,000 injured.
- A Guardian report suggests the real death toll may be 40 percent higher than official figures.
- The UN General Assembly resolution supporting a two state solution passed with 142 votes in favor and only 10 against.

To put it simply, the attack on Doha has shattered comforting myths about security umbrellas, peace accords and global governance. It has revealed a world where power often trumps law and where institutions struggle to enforce their own principles. The international order is being tested, and so far it appears dangerously unprepared to meet that challenge.

PAKISTAN IN A RAPIDLY CHANGING WORLD

Author: Shahid Javed Burki

Summary:

The article examines Pakistan's place in a rapidly changing regional and global landscape by focusing on its four immediate neighbours Afghanistan Iran India and China. The writer argues that geography has placed Pakistan at the crossroads of competing political systems ideologies and power trajectories. Afghanistan under the Taliban and Iran under clerical rule represent religiously driven states where power is concentrated and women face severe restrictions. India once celebrated for its democratic pluralism is portrayed as moving toward majoritarian governance under Hindutva which has marginalised its Muslim population and altered the country's political character. These developments have direct consequences for Pakistan's internal and external security. The rise of the Taliban in Kabul has emboldened militant groups such as the TTP inside Pakistan while regional religious nationalism has intensified instability rather than reduced it.

Against this difficult backdrop China emerges as Pakistan's most reliable strategic partner. The writer traces the roots of Pakistan China relations to the 1960s and argues that this partnership has matured into a cornerstone of Pakistan's economic and geopolitical outlook. China's Belt and Road Initiative and the China Pakistan Economic Corridor are presented as transformative projects that can integrate Pakistan into regional trade and connect it to Central Asia. The author dismisses concerns about alienating the West and maintains that aligning with China is both economically sound and strategically necessary in a world where Beijing's influence continues to expand. He concludes that Pakistan must navigate ideological pressures from some neighbours while anchoring its future in long term economic connectivity and strategic realism.

Overview:

The article analyses Pakistan's regional environment by assessing how the political systems and strategic choices of Afghanistan Iran India and China shape Pakistan's security and economic prospects. It highlights ideological governance regional militancy and shifting global power balances while arguing that Pakistan's strongest opportunity lies in deepening economic and strategic cooperation with China.

NOTES:

The article highlights how Pakistan's geography places it at the intersection of powerful and often conflicting regional forces shaped by ideology security and shifting global power. Afghanistan under Taliban rule and Iran under clerical dominance are presented as religious states where authority is concentrated and social freedoms especially for women are restricted. These systems have direct spillover effects for Pakistan as militancy inspired and sheltered across borders has strengthened groups like the TTP and intensified internal security challenges. India's transformation from a pluralistic democracy toward majoritarian governance under Hindutva is portrayed as another destabilising factor that has marginalised minorities and hardened regional tensions. In contrast China stands out as Pakistan's most dependable strategic partner. The article traces the evolution of Pakistan China relations and emphasises the Belt and Road Initiative and CPEC as pillars of Pakistan's economic future. The central argument is that while ideological pressures from neighbouring states create persistent security risks Pakistan's long term stability and growth depend on strategic realism regional connectivity and sustained economic alignment with China.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan China relations regional security challenges
- International Relations: South Asian geopolitics rising China

- Current Affairs: Regional instability ideological governance
- Economics: Regional connectivity development projects

Notes for beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan faces challenges because its neighbours follow very different systems. For example Afghanistan is ruled by the Taliban who restrict women and support militant groups that attack Pakistan. India has moved away from equal treatment of religions and now favours Hindu nationalism which has created tension for Muslims. On the positive side China helps Pakistan by building roads ports and railways through projects like CPEC. These projects can help Pakistan trade with other countries and grow its economy. The writer believes Pakistan should focus on economic cooperation with China while managing security threats from other neighbours.

Facts and figures:

- Pakistan has four immediate neighbours Afghanistan China India and Iran
- Taliban took control of Afghanistan in August 2023
- India's Muslim population is around two hundred million
- CPEC is the first major project of China's Belt and Road Initiative
- China plans infrastructure investment across Asia Africa and Europe

To sum up, the article presents a realistic and unsentimental assessment of Pakistan's regional environment. It shows how ideology politics and power shifts in neighbouring states shape Pakistan's security challenges while also outlining a clear path forward through economic integration with China. The writer argues that Pakistan's future depends less on nostalgia or fear and more on pragmatic alliances and regional connectivity. In a turbulent neighbourhood and an uncertain world Pakistan's survival and progress lie in strategic clarity and economic foresight.

INDIA'S COMMITMENT TRAP

Author: Zamir Akram

Summary:

The article argues that India's declaration of a so called New Normal after the May 2025 crisis has trapped New Delhi in a self imposed commitment it cannot consistently honour. By announcing that any future terrorist incident would automatically trigger military action against Pakistan without evidence, Prime Minister Modi created a rigid posture that removed diplomatic flexibility. Yet India's muted response to the deadly New Delhi blast in November and the subsequent Srinagar incident exposed the hollowness of this doctrine. Despite earlier threats India avoided accusing Pakistan and refrained from military escalation. This restraint stands in sharp contrast to the belligerent rhetoric that accompanied Operation Sindoor and suggests that Indian leaders have realised the dangers of acting on impulsive commitments that could spiral into uncontrollable conflict.

The writer contends that this restraint does not signal responsible behaviour or lasting stability. Instead it reflects India's recognition of Pakistan's credible deterrence which blocked escalation and punctured the myth of Indian military dominance. Pakistan's Full Spectrum Deterrence neutralised Cold Start and forced a ceasefire in May despite Indian pressure. However India's shift toward hybrid warfare sub conventional tactics and covert support to militant proxies indicates that confrontation has merely changed shape. The article warns that India's commitment trap combined with its hegemonic ambitions and strategic partnership with the United States makes future crises likely. Pakistan must therefore prepare across strategic conventional and sub conventional domains to preserve stability and counter evolving threats rather than assuming restraint will endure.

Overview:

The article examines India's post crisis security posture and explains how Modi's New Normal doctrine has backfired by limiting India's options while failing to deliver strategic stability. It highlights Pakistan's deterrence as the key factor preventing escalation and warns that India's reliance on hybrid warfare and rigid commitments keeps the region vulnerable to renewed crises.

NOTES:

The article underlines that Pakistan's strategic predicament flows directly from its geography, which places it amid neighbours driven by sharply different ideologies and power ambitions. Afghanistan under the Taliban and Iran under clerical dominance are depicted as religious states where authority is centralised and social freedoms particularly for women are severely restricted, with destabilising spillover effects for Pakistan. The Taliban's return to power has emboldened militant groups such as the TTP, intensifying Pakistan's internal security pressures. India's evolution from a pluralistic democracy toward majoritarian governance under Hindutva is presented as another source of regional strain, marginalising minorities and hardening political attitudes that complicate Pakistan's external environment. Against these ideological and security challenges, China emerges as Pakistan's most dependable partner. The article traces the deepening of Pakistan China relations since the 1960s and highlights the Belt and Road Initiative and CPEC as transformative avenues for economic integration, regional connectivity and access to Central Asia. The core message is that while Pakistan must manage persistent ideological and security pressures from its neighbours, its long term stability and growth rest on strategic realism, economic connectivity and sustained partnership with China.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Pak India relations nuclear deterrence strategic stability
- International Relations: Deterrence theory crisis escalation security dilemmas
- Current Affairs: South Asian security crises terrorism and regional instability
- Political Science: Decision making under strategic constraints

Notes for beginners:

The article explains that India promised to attack Pakistan after any terror incident but failed to do so when a bomb blast killed civilians in New Delhi. This shows how political statements can create problems if leaders cannot act on them. Pakistan's strong defence capability stopped India from escalating in May 2025 even though India had made threats. Instead of open war India now relies more on indirect methods like cyber attacks drones and support to militant groups. The writer says Pakistan must stay prepared not just with weapons but also by stopping terrorism at home and countering accusations through diplomacy.

Facts and figures:

- The May 2025 Pakistan India crisis ended in a ceasefire after Indian Operation Sindoor
- Thirteen people were killed in the New Delhi blast of November 2025
- Pakistan's Full Spectrum Deterrence blocked India's Cold Start doctrine
- India adopted Cold Start in 2004 after nuclear parity emerged in 1998
- India shifted toward Dynamic Response involving hybrid and stand off attacks

To sum up, The article suggests that loud doctrines and rigid commitments do not guarantee security. India's New Normal collapsed because reality exposed its risks and contradictions. The writer argues that peace in South Asia rests not on bravado but on credible deterrence careful crisis management and strategic maturity. Pakistan's task is not to celebrate temporary restraint but to remain vigilant prepared and cohesive in the face of a neighbour trapped by its own promises and ambitions.

FORTRESS UNDER INVISIBLE ASSAULT

Author: Imtiaz Gul/Engineer Arshad H Abbasi

Summary:

This article argues that Pakistan is under an invisible yet relentless assault where economic warfare has replaced conventional conflict as the weapon of choice. I write that while military strength and technological modernisation remain important, the country's real vulnerability lies within its own socio economic erosion. Decades of political hostility with India have shifted into a quieter strategy that aims to destabilise Pakistan internally through economic sabotage rather than open confrontation. This shadow war exploits Pakistan's weak governance, policy failures and institutional fragility. The authors suggest that disinformation, psychological pressure, proxy violence and disruption of key economic hubs are designed to keep Pakistan consumed by internal crises while its rival maintains diplomatic calm. The damage is subtle but cumulative, much like termites hollowing out a fortress from within.

At the same time, I emphasise that external manipulation alone cannot explain the crisis. Pakistan's own short sighted decisions have created fault lines that outsiders could easily exploit. Misguided climate narratives weakened the cotton sector, pushing farmers toward water intensive sugarcane and turning an export strength into an import burden worth over two billion dollars annually. Energy mismanagement deepened dependence on costly LNG, inflating circular debt to nearly forty billion dollars and draining foreign reserves by another fifty billion. Regulatory capture within key institutions quietly shaped disastrous policies, while internal political divisions and unresolved grievances widened the cracks. I conclude that Pakistan's survival battle is not only against hostile designs but against its own inertia. Unless economic sabotage is confronted through reform, accountability and strategic clarity, military strength alone will not shield the state from decline.

Overview:

The article examines how Pakistan's economic weaknesses are being exploited through covert economic warfare while also highlighting how internal policy failures, governance gaps and institutional capture have magnified the damage. It presents economic stability as a core pillar of national security.

NOTES:

The article highlights that Pakistan is confronting a form of warfare that operates without gunfire yet inflicts deep and lasting damage through economic sabotage and internal destabilisation. It explains that decades of hostility with India have evolved into a strategy focused on weakening Pakistan from within by exploiting its socio economic vulnerabilities rather than through direct military confrontation. The authors underline that this covert assault relies on disinformation, psychological pressure, proxy violence and targeted disruption of financial centres, energy systems and strategic infrastructure to generate institutional chaos. At the same time, the article stresses that these external pressures succeed largely because Pakistan's own governance failures have created fertile ground for exploitation. Poor energy planning has trapped the country in costly LNG dependence and massive circular debt, while flawed climate narratives and policy misdirection have crippled the cotton sector and increased import dependence. Regulatory capture within key institutions, short term decision making and unresolved internal grievances have quietly magnified the damage. The central argument is that Pakistan's greatest threat is not military weakness but internal economic decay, and unless these structural flaws are addressed through reform and accountability, the state will remain vulnerable despite its defensive strength.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Current Affairs: Hybrid warfare and economic security
- Pakistan Affairs: Energy crisis agriculture decline water disputes
- International Relations: India Pakistan strategic competition non conventional conflict
- Political Science: State capacity institutional capture governance failure

- Environmental Studies: Climate narratives and policy misdirection

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that countries can be weakened without bombs or invasions. For example, if a country makes poor decisions about energy or farming, it becomes dependent on imports and loses money. Pakistan once produced enough cotton for its textile industry but now spends billions importing it. Similarly, relying on imported gas instead of local hydropower increased electricity costs and debt. When institutions fail to act independently, small policy decisions slowly cause big damage. The article teaches that national security is not only about soldiers and weapons but also about smart economic choices and strong institutions.

Facts and Figures:

- Pakistan imports over two billion dollars worth of cotton annually
- Energy sector circular debt stands near forty billion dollars
- LNG imports have cost around fifty billion dollars
- Pakistan has power generation capacity of about forty six thousand megawatts
- Average electricity usage remains around fifteen thousand megawatts
- Hydropower plans from the 1990s were not fully implemented

To sum up, The article warns that Pakistan's fortress cannot stand if its foundations continue to crumble. External threats gain strength only when internal weaknesses invite them in. Economic stability, policy discipline and institutional reform are no longer optional but essential for survival. The authors remind us that the most decisive battle Pakistan faces today is not at the border but within its own economic and governance structures.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Espionage: secret intelligence activity. Synonym spying. Antonym transparency
- Sabotage: deliberate damage. Synonym subversion. Antonym protection
- Erosion: gradual weakening. Synonym deterioration. Antonym reinforcement
- Regulatory: capture meaning control of regulators by vested interests. Synonym manipulation. Antonym independence
- Disinformation: false information spread deliberately. Synonym propaganda. Antonym truth
- Vulnerability meaning exposure to harm. Synonym weakness. Antonym resilience
- Protracted: extended over time. Synonym prolonged. Antonym brief
- Institutional meaning related to systems and organisations. Synonym structural. Antonym individual

COP30: HIGH HOPES, LIMITED PROGRESS IN BELÉM

Author: Mirza Mujtaba Baig

Summary:

The article argues that COP30 held in Belém, Brazil ended with high hopes but ultimately delivered limited progress. It exposes the constraints of global climate governance. Despite strong expectations, the summit failed to commit to a phase-out of fossil fuels, even though scientific reports from UNEP, WMO, IPCC, and Climate Action Tracker repeatedly warned that current policies are grossly insufficient to limit global warming. The article emphasises that the primary driver of climate change is fossil fuel consumption, and meaningful mitigation requires a decisive, orderly transition to renewable energy. While COP30 did include positive elements such as tripling climate finance, establishing forest-protection funds, and recognising indigenous rights, these commitments remain voluntary and lack enforceable mechanisms. The failure to address fossil fuels reflects the influence of major powers over UNFCCC decisions and demonstrates the limitations of consensus-based global climate diplomacy.

Furthermore, the article explores the gap between scientific urgency and political will creates a stark risk for the planet, as greenhouse gas emissions continue to accelerate, threatening irreversible damage. The article highlights that temporary achievements at COP30 cannot substitute for binding measures, noting that near-term targets, including halving global emissions by 2030 and reaching net zero by 2050, remain largely unattainable under voluntary pledges. It stresses that climate change does not discriminate between countries, making urgent, coordinated and enforceable action indispensable. The writer concludes that the world must move beyond symbolic gestures, prioritising legally binding commitments, technological transition and financial support, while holding major emitters accountable. Finally, the article reminds that the window to avert catastrophic climate impacts is rapidly closing and demands bold leadership and global solidarity.

Overview:

This article critically evaluates the outcomes of COP30 and highlights the divergence between scientific evidence and political action. It demonstrates how the summit exposed the weaknesses of global climate governance, the voluntary nature of most commitments, and the continuing reliance on fossil fuels. By examining the interplay between science, policy, and geopolitics, the article illustrates the urgent need for enforceable global climate measures and stronger accountability mechanisms.

NOTES:

The article highlights that COP30 in Belém, Brazil, concluded with high expectations but fell short of delivering meaningful progress on climate action. Despite repeated warnings from major scientific reports by UNEP, WMO, IPCC, and Climate Action Tracker, the summit failed to commit to phasing out fossil fuels which remain the primary driver of global warming. While the conference included positive measures such as tripling climate finance, creating forest-protection funds, and recognising indigenous rights and gender considerations, these initiatives are largely voluntary and lack enforceable mechanisms. The failure to address fossil fuel dependency underscores the influence of major powers over UNFCCC decisions and reveals the limitations of consensus-based global climate governance. The article also stresses the widening gap between scientific urgency and political will, noting that voluntary pledges leave near-term targets, such as halving global emissions by 2030 and achieving net zero by 2050, largely unattainable. It shows that climate change does not discriminate between countries, making urgent, coordinated, and enforceable action essential, and calls for legally binding commitments, technological transition, financial support and accountability for major emitters to avert catastrophic environmental impacts.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics or Subjects:

- Current Affairs: Global climate governance COP negotiations climate finance
- International Relations: International environmental law North South divide climate diplomacy
- Environmental Studies: Climate mitigation adaptation renewable energy forest protection
- Political Science: Global governance state responsibility climate policy and enforcement
- Pakistan Affairs: Vulnerability to climate change policy response and adaptation

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that COP30 failed to take bold action on climate change because of the influence of powerful nations and their reliance on fossil fuels. Scientific reports clearly show that current commitments are not enough to stop dangerous warming, yet the summit focused on voluntary pledges rather than binding measures. For example, even though the world agreed in principle at COP28 to reduce fossil fuel dependence, COP30 omitted any concrete plan for phasing them out. The article shows that climate change affects everyone equally, making enforceable global cooperation crucial for survival.

Facts and Figures:

- COP30 held in Belém, Brazil, December 2025

- Four major reports released before COP30 by UNEP, WMO, IPCC, and Climate Action Tracker
- Global warming temporarily exceeded 1.5 degrees Celsius last year
- Near-term climate goals include halving global greenhouse emissions by 2030 and achieving net zero by 2050
- Host nation is among top ten oil producers and member of G20 and BRICS

To sum up, this article warns that symbolic climate commitments cannot substitute for decisive action. It stresses the urgency of legally binding agreements, global cooperation, and accountability for major emitters. COP30 illustrates both the promise and limits of international diplomacy, highlighting that bold, enforceable measures are essential to protect the planet and secure a sustainable future for all generations.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Phase-out meaning gradual elimination. Synonym discontinuation. Antonym continuation
- Panacea meaning universal solution. Synonym cure-all. Antonym problem
- Gruelling meaning extremely demanding. Synonym exhausting. Antonym easy
- Sobering meaning causing serious thought. Synonym thought-provoking. Antonym trivial
- Indispensable meaning absolutely necessary. Synonym essential. Antonym optional
- Accountable meaning responsible for actions. Synonym answerable. Antonym unaccountable
- Mitigation meaning reduction of harm. Synonym alleviation. Antonym aggravation
- Consensus meaning general agreement. Synonym accord. Antonym disagreement

FAULT LINES IN PAHALGAM INVESTIGATION

Author Durdana Najam

Summary:

India's submission of a 1,597 page charge sheet on the Pahalgam incident, after an unexplained delay of eight months, exposes serious weaknesses rather than providing clarity. The document reflects a familiar pattern in which incidents in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir are swiftly attributed to Pakistan without credible proof. Despite its volume, the charge sheet relies heavily on assumptions instead of independently verifiable evidence. The naming of six individuals fails to establish a concrete link either to the incident itself or to Pakistan. More troubling is the reliance on alleged confessions by vulnerable Kashmiri civilians, reportedly extracted under pressure, which undermines the legal credibility of the investigation under international standards.

Actions by Indian forces during related operations, including the killing of civilians later presented as Pakistani nationals through false claims, further erode trust in the investigation.

Placed in a broader historical and legal context, the Pahalgam case highlights India's long standing strategy of externalising blame to mask the root causes of unrest in Kashmir. The article argues that repression, political disenfranchisement, demographic engineering, and human rights violations since August 2019 have intensified instability in the region. India's rejection of Pakistan's offer for a neutral investigation and its resistance to international scrutiny reveal a lack of confidence in its own narrative. Rather than strengthening India's position, the charge sheet exposes the fragility of its claims and reinforces the unresolved nature of the Kashmir dispute, which remains anchored in international law and United Nations resolutions.

Overview:

The article critically examines the credibility of India's investigation into the Pahalgam incident. It questions the evidentiary basis of the charge sheet, highlights procedural flaws, and situates the case within the wider Kashmir conflict. The article highlights how legal inconsistencies, media trials, and coercive tactics weaken India's claims while drawing attention to the broader political and human rights context of the region.

NOTES:

The article is significant for understanding India's narrative building on Kashmir and the use of security incidents to externalise responsibility. It illustrates flaws in investigative processes, misuse of confessions, and the role of media in shaping public opinion. It also reinforces key arguments related to self determination, international law, UNSC resolution and the legal status of Jammu and Kashmir.

CSS Syllabus Topics or Subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs: focus on the Kashmir dispute.
- International Relations: emphasis on South Asia and conflict narratives.
- International Law: covers self determination, occupation, and Geneva Conventions.
- Current Affairs: India Pakistan relations and regional security.

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that long investigations do not always mean strong cases. For example, despite eight months of inquiry and thousands of pages, the Pahalgam charge sheet lacks solid proof. It also shows why confessions taken under pressure are unreliable, as international law treats such statements with suspicion. Another example is the false claim about Pakistani voter cards, which can be easily disproved since Pakistan does not issue such documents.

Facts and Figures:

- The charge sheet runs to 1,597 pages and was filed after an eight month delay.
- Six individuals were named without independently verifiable evidence.
- Article 370 was abrogated on August 5, 2019, leading to major political and demographic changes in the region.
- Jammu and Kashmir remains one of the oldest unresolved disputes on the UNSC agenda.

To put it simply, the article makes it clear that the Pahalgam charge sheet weakens rather than strengthens India's position. By relying on weak evidence and coercive narratives, New Delhi fails to address the underlying political and human rights issues driving unrest in Kashmir. The article ultimately reinforces that without justice, transparency, and respect for international law, such investigations will continue to deepen mistrust rather than bring accountability.

CHINA'S IMPACT ON THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

Author Shahid Javed Burki

Summary:

This article warns that China's economic rise is no longer a quiet ascent but a carefully calibrated exercise of power. Under Xi Jinping's long and consolidating rule, China has reshaped its domestic authority and its global posture, first through rigid internal control during the Covid crisis and later through economic and technological leverage. The use of rare earth export controls shows how Beijing has learned to turn industrial dominance into diplomatic pressure, especially against Europe and the United States. While the West debates tariffs and supply chains, China tightens the screws with tools that are precise and effective, proving that economic strength now speaks louder than rhetoric.

The article then widens its lens to show how China projects influence through infrastructure diplomacy and green technology. From electric vehicles showcased at a global climate summit to the deep strategic roots of the Belt and Road Initiative, Beijing signals confidence and ambition. Pakistan emerges as a pivotal partner in this story through CPEC and its planned extensions into Central Asia and beyond. These corridors are not mere roads and rails but arteries of geopolitical relevance. The article ends with a quiet reminder that as China redraws trade routes and

power equations, the United States is being pulled back into the region, and Pakistan must read these shifting winds with care.

Overview:

The article examines China's growing impact on the global economy by linking political consolidation under Xi Jinping with trade power, technological dominance, and strategic infrastructure outreach. It explains how rare earth minerals have become tools of economic statecraft and how initiatives like BRI and CPEC reshape regional and global alignments.

NOTES:

The article highlights how China's rise in the global economy has moved beyond rapid growth into a phase of deliberate power projection under Xi Jinping's consolidated leadership. It explains that Beijing first tightened domestic control during the Covid crisis through harsh containment measures that stabilised the state but disrupted both national and global economies. After regaining internal stability, China shifted its focus toward technological dominance especially through its near monopoly over rare earth minerals that are vital for modern industries such as electric vehicles, defence systems, and advanced electronics. China has converted industrial strength into diplomatic leverage by restricting exports of these minerals, during trade and tariff negotiations with Europe and the United States. The article further shows how infrastructure diplomacy under the Belt and Road Initiative has become a central pillar of China's strategy, with projects like CPEC positioning Pakistan as a critical corridor linking China to the Arabian Sea, Central Asia, and ultimately Europe. It also points to China's growing confidence on the global stage, visible in its leadership role at climate summits and its export of green technologies such as electric vehicles. Finally, the article underlines that these developments are reshaping global trade routes and power balances, drawing the United States back into regional competition and placing countries like Pakistan at the crossroads of evolving economic and strategic alignments.

CSS Syllabus Topics or Subjects:

- International Relations: emphasis on great power competition.
- Current Affairs: focusing on China West economic rivalry.
- Pakistan Affairs: In the context of CPEC and regional connectivity.
- Economics: covering global trade, supply chains, and strategic resources.

Notes for Beginners:

Rare earth minerals are special metals used in electric cars and electronics. China controls most of their supply which allows it to pressure other countries. For example Europe needs these minerals for military and green technology but faces restrictions from China. Another example is CPEC which allows China access to the Arabian Sea while giving Pakistan infrastructure investment.

Facts and Figures:

- China holds a near monopoly over rare earth mining and processing.
- Rare earths are essential for electric vehicles aircraft and computers.
- CPEC is the flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative.
- China showcased electric vehicles at a global climate summit in Brazil.
- The United States and Europe face supply chain pressure due to export controls.

To sum up, this article shows that economic power has become the sharpest instrument of global influence. China understands this reality and uses it with discipline and patience. For Pakistan the message is clear. Geography and partnership offer opportunity but only wise strategy can turn it into lasting advantage.

PAKISTAN'S TWO-FRONT WAR

Author Saira Samo

Summary:

The article reminds that Pakistan is not facing a single visible adversary but a complex two front challenge that combines external pressure with internal fragility. India's strategy relies less on open confrontation and more on sustained diplomatic pressure, narrative dominance, and the projection of regional supremacy. By repeatedly portraying Pakistan as a source of instability, India narrows Islamabad's diplomatic space and weakens prospects for cooperation. The writer argues that a purely emotional or reactive response would be self defeating. Military strength remains essential, yet force alone cannot counter a rival that draws confidence from economic growth, global credibility, and institutional strength.

The article shows a grand national strategy that blends deterrence with economic revival, narrative building, and internal reform. Pakistan's long term security depends on economic empowerment, political stability, and the elimination of extremism that damages both internal cohesion and external image. In a world where influence is shaped by ideas, markets, and credibility, Pakistan must learn to fight battles beyond the battlefield. Kashmir remains central due to its moral, strategic, and water security dimensions, yet the ultimate objective is not dominance but survival with dignity. Strength, the article concludes, lies in becoming a resilient state that defines its own identity rather than allowing rivals to shape it.

Overview:

The article analyses Pakistan's strategic dilemma in dealing with India's growing regional influence. It stresses that neither military aggression nor diplomacy alone can secure national interests. Instead, it advocates a comprehensive approach that integrates defence preparedness, economic strength, political stability, narrative control, and internal reform to counter external pressure effectively.

NOTES:

The article highlights that Pakistan faces a complex two front challenge, where external pressure from India intersects with internal fragility which creates a situation that cannot be addressed through narrow or reactive measures. India's strategy relies on narrative dominance, diplomatic pressure, and projecting regional supremacy, which undermines Pakistan's international space, while its growing economic strength and global credibility bolster its confidence. The writer argues that military preparedness is necessary for deterrence but insufficient on its own; Pakistan must adopt a comprehensive grand strategy integrating defence readiness, economic revival, political stability, and internal reform. Economic empowerment, policy continuity, and the elimination of extremism are important to strengthen national resilience and global image. In an era where influence is shaped by ideas as much as weapons, Pakistan must compete in the battle of narratives, safeguard core interests such as Kashmir for its strategic and water security dimensions, and build enduring strength by defining its own identity rather than reacting to external pressures.

CSS Syllabus Topics or Subjects:

- International Relations: focus on South Asia and India Pakistan relations
- Pakistan Affairs: emphasis on national security and internal challenges
- Current Affairs: cover regional geopolitics and narrative warfare

Notes for Beginners:

A two front challenge means facing pressure from outside and problems within at the same time. For example Pakistan faces India's diplomatic pressure while also struggling with economic instability and extremism at home. Economic power matters because strong economies support strong defence. India's large GDP allows it to invest in

technology and diplomacy. Narrative power refers to shaping global opinion. For instance if a country is seen as unstable it finds it harder to attract investment and support.

Facts and Figures:

- India's GDP is around 3.9 trillion dollars making it one of the world's largest economies
- India ranks as the fifth largest economy globally
- Economic strength supports military confidence and global influence
- Kashmir is linked to major water resources vital for Pakistan

To sum up, The article emphasizes that national strength is built quietly and patiently from within. Pakistan cannot afford reactive policies shaped by anger or fear. Its real defence lies in economic resilience, social stability, and strategic clarity. Only a confident and credible Pakistan can withstand external pressure and secure its place in a competitive world.

AI GOVERNANCE BEGINS?

Author: Naveed R Khan

Summary:

Pakistan's introduction of AI-driven e-Challan systems in Lahore and Karachi has ignited widespread debate, revealing the country's unpreparedness for automated governance. The article explains that while AI has the potential to eradicate discretion, reduce corruption, expand enforcement and create digital evidence, its implementation exposes glaring flaws in transparency and accountability. Citizens face fines issued by algorithms with little recourse to challenge errors, generating mistrust and public frustration. Unlike countries such as the UAE, Singapore, and Malaysia, Pakistan lacks a coherent framework to ensure AI decisions are explainable, fair, and correctable. The system's dependency on precise data, functioning cameras, and accurate registries means even minor errors can cascade into widespread injustices, highlighting the fragility of the country's governance infrastructure.

The writer argues that Pakistan stands at a critical juncture. The rollout of AI enforcement is not merely about traffic fines but represents a litmus test for the nation's capacity to govern technology responsibly. Without establishing audit mechanisms, a data protection law, public dashboards for transparency, and integration into a broader smart mobility plan, the system risks alienating citizens and undermining trust in public institutions. At the end, the article gives suggestion that Pakistan's future readiness for AI in taxation, judiciary, welfare and public service delivery depends on decisive structural reforms today.

Overview:

The article evaluates Pakistan's AI-powered e-Challan system, noting that while it offers efficiency and reduces human error, it exposes the country's governance shortcomings. It highlights the importance of transparency, accountability, and oversight in implementing AI-driven public systems, emphasizing that technological innovation cannot succeed without robust institutional frameworks.

NOTES:

The article critically examines Pakistan's first practical experience with AI governance, focusing on the e-Challan system. It identifies three core benefits of AI implementation: elimination of discretion, wider enforcement reach, and creation of digital evidence. However, it reveals significant weaknesses, such as lack of transparency, absence of accountability laws, and no structured oversight or auditing. The writer stresses that public confidence hinges on mechanisms for error detection, citizen appeals, and data accuracy. The article recommends the establishment of a National AI Audit and Accountability Framework, a Data Protection and AI Rights Law, public dashboards to track enforcement accuracy, and integration into a National Smart Mobility Plan.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Governance reforms, technological policy, institutional development
- Current Affairs: Emerging technologies, AI regulation, public administration
- Political Science: Bureaucracy, accountability mechanisms, state-citizen relations

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan has started using AI to automatically issue traffic fines through cameras. The system can reduce bribery and catch violations that humans might miss, but mistakes in data or camera readings can lead to wrongful fines. Citizens cannot easily challenge these errors, which causes frustration. For example, someone might receive multiple fines for the same violation because of a camera or registry error. The article recommends creating clear laws, audit systems, and public reporting so that AI can work fairly and citizens can trust it.

Facts and Figures:

- AI-driven e-Challan systems deployed in Lahore and Karachi
- System uses Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology
- Social media reports indicate multiple wrongful fines and public confusion
- Advanced AI governance frameworks in UAE, China, Singapore, and Malaysia serve as examples
- Lack of legal and institutional mechanisms in Pakistan undermines system reliability

To sum up, The article suggests that AI can improve efficiency and reduce corruption, but only responsible governance can build trust. Pakistan's e-Challan system works as an important test case which demonstrates that without transparency, accountability, and oversight, technological solutions risk creating confusion, public anger, and institutional distrust. The nation must act decisively to establish legal frameworks, auditing protocols, and citizen-friendly mechanisms to ensure AI governance strengthens rather than undermines public trust.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Automation – use of machines or software to perform tasks without human intervention; Synonym: mechanization; Antonym: manual operation
- Accountability – responsibility for actions or decisions; Synonym: liability; Antonym: impunity
- Transparency – openness in decision-making and processes; Synonym: clarity; Antonym: opacity
- Oversight – supervision or monitoring to ensure proper functioning; Synonym: surveillance; Antonym: neglect
- Recourse – the right to seek remedy or solution; Synonym: appeal; Antonym: helplessness

ONE NATION & TWO STATES

Author: Saleem Qamar Butt

Summary:

The article suggests that the breakup of United Pakistan in 1971 did not negate the two nation theory nor did it sever the bond of Islamic brotherhood. Rather it exposed a deeper and recurring national failure rooted in denial of history and selective acceptance of reality. Pakistan's ruling elites have repeatedly ignored the founding vision of Quaid e Azam, concealed political crimes and distorted historical truths, thereby allowing power struggles, sham democracy, and institutional manipulation to flourish. From unresolved political assassinations to abrupt political engineering, the state has remained trapped in a vicious cycle where tragedy returns in new disguises. The writer analyzes both past national crises and the present moment and warns that history does not merely repeat itself but exacts a higher price each time.

It further contends that the current political polarisation, media toxicity, and narrative warfare mirror the conditions that preceded earlier national disasters, particularly 1971. While Pakistan has achieved progress in defence and infrastructure and has shown resolve against external aggression, internal reconciliation remains the most urgent national necessity. The article stresses that political confrontation must give way to indispensable reconciliation and institutional restraint. Reflecting on Bangladesh's journey, the writer notes both its suffering under authoritarian rule and its eventual progress despite external interference. He ends on a hopeful note that shared faith, culture, and public sentiment still bind Pakistan and Bangladesh, keeping alive the idea of One Nation with Two States as a moral and spiritual possibility rather than a political slogan.

Overview:

This article examines Pakistan's recurring political crises through the lens of historical denial and elite driven power struggles. It revisits the 1971 tragedy to argue that unresolved lessons continue to haunt the present and that national survival depends on reconciliation, institutional integrity, and honest engagement with history rather than manufactured narratives.

NOTES:

The article highlights that the 1971 breakup of United Pakistan was not a rejection of the two nation theory nor a collapse of Islamic brotherhood but the outcome of prolonged denial, elite manipulation and refusal to learn from history. It emphasises that successive rulers ignored the constitutional and moral vision of Quaid e Azam, concealed political crimes, and allowed unresolved assassinations, engineered politics, and selective accountability to become routine. The writer points out that this culture of denial produced sham democracy, institutional misuse, and recurring power tussles that destabilised the state. The article marks comparison between past crises and the present, noting that intense political polarisation, toxic media narratives, and hate driven discourse resemble the pre 1971 environment. While acknowledging Pakistan's progress in defence and infrastructure and its firm response to external threats, the article stresses that internal reconciliation remains the most critical unfinished task. It also reflects on Bangladesh's post independence journey, marked by authoritarian excesses, coups and eventual progress, to suggest that recovery is possible when truth and accountability prevail. The article concludes by underlining that reconciliation, institutional restraint and honest engagement with history are essential to prevent repetition of national tragedies and to preserve the enduring moral bond between Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Political history of Pakistan post independence civil military relations causes of political instability 1971 separation

- Current Affairs: Political polarisation governance crisis institutional conflict
- Political Science: State legitimacy elite theory crisis of democracy
- International Relations: South Asian politics Pakistan Bangladesh relations

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan's major problems did not begin suddenly but grew over time because leaders failed to learn from past mistakes. For example political rivalry in 1970 between major parties escalated into a national breakup because institutions were dragged into politics. Today similar rivalries are again paralysing governance. The writer also explains how constant hate speech on media confuses society and creates anger rather than solutions. By comparing Pakistan and Bangladesh, the article teaches that nations can recover after tragedy but only when accountability and reform replace denial.

Facts and Figures:

- Pakistan was created in 1947 and lost East Pakistan in 1971
- Bangladesh emerged after a civil war and external intervention
- Pakistan has faced major political crises in 1958, 1971, 1977, 1999, and post 2022
- Bangladesh has experienced multiple coups yet achieved economic and social progress
- Germany reunified after 45 years of division in 1990

To wrap up, the article warns that nations which refuse to confront their past remain prisoners of it, and it pleads for reconciliation before another self inflicted disaster unfolds. By revisiting 1971 with honesty and humility, the writer urges Pakistan to choose unity over vendetta and reform over denial. The bond between Pakistan and Bangladesh, rooted in faith and shared history, still breathes beneath the scars of separation. Remembering that bond may yet save the future from repeating the past.

ABRAHAM ACCORDS DEBATE

Summary:

The article highlights the proposal urging Saudi Arabia to join the Abraham Accords cannot be viewed as a routine diplomatic initiative detached from history and moral responsibility. From a Muslim standpoint, normalisation with Israel remains inseparable from the prolonged suffering of the Palestinian people, whose land carries deep religious, emotional and historical meaning for the entire Ummah. While the proposal is framed as a pathway to peace and regional stability. Many Muslims approach it with caution because peace without justice is seen as hollow. Saudi Arabia's role as the custodian of Islam's two holiest sites gives its foreign policy choices exceptional symbolic weight, making any such decision resonate far beyond political calculations and into the moral conscience of the Muslim world.

The article suggests that economic incentives and strategic advantages cannot override the ethical obligation to stand with an oppressed people. True reconciliation demands the protection of Palestinian rights, respect for sacred lands and an end to occupation and injustice. Muslim states are reminded that diplomacy must reflect Islamic principles of justice, dignity and solidarity. Any agreement that sidelines Palestinian voices risks deepening mistrust and weakening the moral credibility of those who endorse it. Therefore, lasting peace can only emerge when justice forms its foundation rather than being treated as a negotiable afterthought.

Overview:

The article discusses the debate surrounding the call for Saudi Arabia to join the Abraham Accords and presents a Muslim perspective that prioritises justice for Palestine over political or economic gains. It highlights the symbolic

responsibility of Saudi Arabia and stresses that genuine peace requires moral accountability and protection of Palestinian rights.

NOTES:

The article highlights the proposal for Saudi Arabia to join the Abraham Accords cannot be treated as a purely strategic or economic decision because it is deeply tied to moral, religious and historical responsibilities. It shows that normalisation with Israel remains inseparable from the unresolved Palestinian issue, which carries profound significance for Muslims worldwide. The author stresses that Saudi Arabia's status as the custodian of Islam's two holiest sites amplifies the symbolic impact of its foreign policy choices, making them a matter of collective concern for the Ummah. The article argues that promises of economic or geopolitical gains cannot compensate for the absence of justice, dignity, and protection of Palestinian rights. It warns that sidelining Palestinian voices risks undermining trust and moral legitimacy, while reinforcing the belief that peace without justice is superficial and unsustainable. The central point remains that any lasting regional peace must rest on ethical accountability, solidarity with the oppressed, and adherence to principles of justice rather than expedient diplomacy.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics:

- International Relations with focus on Middle East politics and peace initiatives
- Pakistan Affairs in the context of Muslim world diplomacy
- Islamic Studies: r+Regarding justice, solidarity, and Ummah
- Current Affairs: Related to Palestine, Israel, and regional alliances
- Political Science: focusing on legitimacy, ethics, and foreign policy decision making

Notes for beginners:

The article explains that some peace agreements may look attractive on paper but fail to address the real pain of affected people. For example, even if economic benefits are promised to Muslim countries, many believe that recognising Israel without resolving the Palestinian issue ignores decades of suffering. Saudi Arabia's position matters more than that of other states because its actions influence Muslim opinion worldwide. This shows how foreign policy is shaped not only by power and profit but also by beliefs and public sentiment.

Facts and figures:

- The Abraham Accords were first signed in 2020 between Israel and several Arab states
- Palestine remains a central political and religious issue for Muslims globally
- Saudi Arabia hosts Islam's two holiest sites which amplifies its diplomatic influence
- Palestinian displacement and occupation have persisted for decades

In a nutshell, the peace initiatives lose their meaning when justice is absent. By grounding diplomacy in moral responsibility and collective conscience, the writer challenges the idea that stability can be purchased through agreements alone. The message is clear that without addressing Palestinian suffering, any claim of lasting peace in the region remains incomplete and fragile.

WATER WARFARE

Summary:

The article reveals India's manipulation of the Chenab River represents a dangerous shift from routine diplomatic friction to outright water warfare, with severe consequences for Pakistan's agriculture and food security. Abrupt and unannounced variations in water flow have disrupted farming cycles in Punjab which cause tangible economic losses and deepening rural vulnerability. These actions constitute a material breach of the Indus Waters Treaty, which guarantees Pakistan unrestricted access to the Chenab and is protected under international law. By exploiting

upstream barrages to hold and release water erratically for power generation, India has turned a life sustaining resource into a strategic lever, transforming a technical dispute into a calculated act of pressure during peacetime. Now, this issue has transcended bilateral boundaries and acquired a clear international dimension. Findings by UN experts and special rapporteurs confirm that India's conduct infringes fundamental human rights, including the rights to life, livelihood, food, water and a clean and sustainable environment. Suspending or undermining a treaty backed by multilateral guarantees threatens regional stability and raises the risk of escalation between two nuclear armed neighbours. Pakistan's leadership has conveyed an unequivocal message that any attempt to choke the waters sustaining its population will invite a decisive response. The article ultimately warns that water once politicised as a weapon can ignite conflicts far more destructive than conventional disputes.

Overview:

This article examines India's manipulation of transboundary river flows as a form of ecological and strategic aggression against Pakistan. It highlights how violations of the Indus Waters Treaty undermine food security, regional stability, and international legal norms. By linking water security with human rights and geopolitics, the article frames water warfare as one of the gravest emerging threats in South Asia.

NOTES:

The article underscores that India's recent manipulation of the Chenab River marks a serious escalation from routine diplomatic tension to deliberate water warfare, with direct and damaging effects on Pakistan's agriculture and food security. Abrupt and unannounced fluctuations in river flow have disrupted sowing and harvesting cycles in Punjab, inflicting economic losses on farmers and increasing rural vulnerability. Such actions constitute a material violation of the Indus Waters Treaty, which guarantees Pakistan unrestricted access to the Chenab under international legal protection. By using upstream barrages to retain and release water in erratic patterns for power generation, India has converted a shared natural resource into a strategic pressure tool during peacetime. The article further highlights that this conduct has drawn international scrutiny, with UN experts and special rapporteurs concluding that India's actions infringe fundamental human rights, including access to water, food, livelihood, and a healthy environment. It warns that undermining a treaty backed by multilateral guarantees threatens regional stability and heightens the risk of escalation between two nuclear armed states, while Pakistan's leadership has clearly signalled that any attempt to choke lifeline waters will provoke a decisive response.

CSS Syllabus Topics or Subjects:

- Current Affairs: South Asian security water disputes regional instability
- International Relations: Transboundary water conflicts international treaties human rights
- International Law: Indus Waters Treaty treaty obligations violation and enforcement
- Pakistan Affairs: National security food security foreign policy challenges

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that water can be used as a weapon when a country controls rivers flowing into another state. Pakistan depends heavily on the Chenab River for irrigation and food production. When India releases or withholds water without warning, crops are damaged and farmers suffer losses. For example sudden water releases can flood fields while prolonged withholding can dry them out. International agreements like the Indus Waters Treaty exist to prevent such harm, but when these agreements are violated, the effects extend beyond politics to everyday survival. The article shows that water security is directly linked to food security and peace.

Facts and Figures:

- Chenab River is one of the three western rivers allocated to Pakistan under the Indus Waters Treaty
- Punjab is Pakistan's main agricultural province and heavily dependent on Chenab irrigation
- UN special rapporteurs confirmed violations of rights to water food livelihood and environment
- Indus Waters Treaty is guaranteed by international law and multilateral mechanisms

- India uses upstream barrages to regulate water flow for power generation

To wrap up, The writer in this article warns that turning water into a weapon endangers not only crops and livelihoods but also regional peace. It underlines that treaties cannot be suspended at convenience and that ecological aggression is as destabilising as military confrontation. By framing water security as a matter of human survival and international law, the article calls for vigilance, diplomatic resolve and global attention before a silent crisis spills into open conflict.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Weaponisation meaning use of a resource as a tool of coercion. Synonym militarisation. Antonym neutralisation
- Abeyance meaning temporary suspension. Synonym dormancy. Antonym enforcement
- Erratic meaning unpredictable. Synonym irregular. Antonym consistent
- Heinous meaning extremely evil. Synonym atrocious. Antonym benign
- Infringement meaning violation of rights. Synonym breach. Antonym compliance
- Provocation meaning action intended to incite reaction. Synonym instigation. Antonym appeasement
- Underwritten meaning formally guaranteed. Synonym backed. Antonym unsupported
- Confrontation meaning direct conflict. Synonym clash. Antonym reconciliation

CSS PLATFORM NEXUS

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