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For Collaboration contact us at email:

[admin@cssplatformbytha.com](mailto:admin@cssplatformbytha.com)

#### **PATRON-IN-CHIEF**

**Talib Hussain**

#### **EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**

**Talib Hussain**

#### **EDITOR**

**Kashaf Malik**

#### **ASSOCIATE EDITOR**

**Sana Behain**

#### **RESEARCH TEAM**

**Abdul Muheed** Ashk

**Muhammad Sami**

**Adv.Sharyar** Ashk

**Hamna Zafar**

**Kashaf Malik**

**Noman Khan**

**Abdu Basit**

**DR.Areeba Arif**

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## CAN BOP DELIVER GAZA PEACE?

Author: Abbas Nasir

### Summary:

The article examines the proposed Board of Peace as a new mechanism championed by Donald Trump to manage Gaza's reconstruction, deploy an International Stabilisation Force, and address the contentious question of Hamas disarmament. While the plan claims legitimacy through anticipated UN approval, sceptics suspect it aims to sideline the United Nations in favour of a structure more pliable to Washington. Gaza's rebuilding will demand tens of billions of dollars, yet the source of such funding remains uncertain. Gulf states may shoulder much of the burden, though private investors might seek profit in what critics describe as a commercialised vision of a rebuilt coastal enclave. The glaring absence of Palestinian representation on the apex body raises grave concerns about whose interests will truly shape the future of the Strip.

The feasibility of the entire initiative hinges on Hamas's voluntary decommissioning of arms. No Muslim state appears willing to join a force tasked with coercive disarmament, especially after the Israeli Occupation Forces failed to eliminate Hamas despite two years of overwhelming firepower. Indonesia alone has pledged troops, while others such as Pakistan await clarity that the mission will remain peacekeeping rather than enforcement. Israeli domestic politics further complicate the equation, as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu faces pressure from far-right coalition partners who resist concessions and whose survival depends on hardline positions. Although the ceasefire has reduced the pace of killings since October 2025, violence persists and devastation endures. The article concludes that the Board of Peace will earn credibility only if it alleviates suffering, prevents displacement, and lays credible groundwork for Palestinian statehood.

### Overview:

The article questions whether the Board of Peace can genuinely deliver relief and stability in Gaza, given funding ambiguities, political fragmentation, Israeli intransigence, and the unresolved issue of Hamas disarmament.

### NOTES:

The proposed Board of Peace seeks to supervise Gaza's reconstruction, deploy an international stabilisation force, and secure Hamas's voluntary disarmament under a framework associated with Donald Trump and projected UN endorsement. Massive financial requirements, estimated in the tens of billions of dollars, cast doubt on funding sources, with Gulf states and private investors expected to bear much of the burden. The structure excludes meaningful Palestinian representation which raises concerns about legitimacy and ownership of the process. The mission's viability rests on whether Hamas relinquishes arms without coercion, since most Muslim-majority states resist participation in an enforcement operation. Indonesia has pledged troops, while others remain cautious pending clarity on the mandate. Israeli domestic politics further obstruct compromise, as Benjamin Netanyahu faces pressure from hardline coalition partners who oppose concessions. Although a ceasefire since October 2025 has reduced large-scale violence, destruction persists and political settlement remains elusive. The initiative will be judged by its capacity to ease humanitarian distress, prevent displacement, and establish credible foundations for Palestinian statehood rather than by diplomatic rhetoric alone.

### Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects and Topics:

- International Relations: Peacebuilding, multilateral institutions, conflict resolution, ceasefire dynamics
- Current Affairs: Gaza conflict, Middle East geopolitics, US foreign policy
- International Law: UN legitimacy, occupation, self-determination
- Political Science: Coalition politics, leadership survival, state legitimacy

### Notes for Beginners:

Rebuilding a war-torn territory demands vast resources and political agreement. Gaza's infrastructure has suffered immense destruction since October 2023. Hospitals, schools, and housing blocks require complete reconstruction. Estimates suggest tens of billions of dollars will be necessary over years. If armed groups refuse disarmament, peacekeepers may face confrontation. That could destabilise troop-contributing nations. Indonesia pledged eight thousand personnel, while others hesitate. Israeli coalition politics further constrain compromise. When leaders fear prison or political collapse, policy hardens. Sustainable peace therefore depends not only on funds but on trust, consent, and inclusive governance.

### Facts and Figures:

- Reconstruction may require tens of billions of dollars
- Indonesia pledged 8,000 troops for the stabilisation force
- Two years of conflict failed to eliminate Hamas
- Ceasefire since October 2025 reduced but did not end killings
- Palestinian representation remains minimal within the Board of Peace

To sum up, the article shows the Board of Peace as a test of sincerity rather than rhetoric. Grand announcements cannot substitute for justice. Without inclusive representation, credible funding, and voluntary disarmament, the initiative risks collapse. If it delivers genuine relief and safeguards Palestinian dignity, it may mark a turning point. If not, it will stand as another diplomatic façade over unhealed wounds.

### Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Stabilisation
  - Meaning: restoration of order after conflict
  - Synonyms: pacification, consolidation
  - Antonyms: destabilisation, upheaval
- Legitimacy
  - Meaning: recognised lawful authority
  - Synonyms: validity, credibility
  - Antonyms: illegitimacy, unlawfulness
- Decommissioning
  - Meaning: formal surrender of weapons
  - Synonyms: disarmament, demobilisation
  - Antonyms: rearmament, mobilisation
- Edifice
  - Meaning: complex structure or system
  - Synonyms: framework, construct
  - Antonyms: ruin, collapse
- Equilibrium
  - Meaning: state of balance
  - Synonyms: stability, parity
  - Antonyms: imbalance, disorder
- Hubris
  - Meaning: excessive arrogance
  - Synonyms: pride, conceit
  - Antonyms: humility, modesty

## CLIMATE & POLICING

Author: Mohammad Ali Babakhel

### Summary:

The article argues that climate change has ceased to be a distant environmental debate and has become a frontline public safety challenge. Pakistan loses over two billion dollars annually due to climate disasters, according to the Asian Development Bank, which places the country among the most climate vulnerable in the region. Policing roles have expanded far beyond crime control. Law enforcement agencies now manage evacuations, rescue missions, relief security, infrastructure protection, and conflict mediation during climate shocks. Heatwaves provoke unrest. Power failures and water scarcity trigger public anger. Floods and earthquakes damage roads and bridges, which impairs patrol mobility and strains operational capacity. Climate driven migration intensifies urban pressure and fuels disputes over resources, land, and services.

The article maintains that climate stress reshapes crime patterns and institutional responsibilities. Water theft, illegal mining, timber smuggling, wildlife trafficking, and fraud in aid distribution rise after disasters. Militant groups may exploit relief gaps to gain sympathisers. Police therefore must integrate climate risk into planning, training, and operations. Dedicated climate security units, drone surveillance, solar powered stations, and climate resilient infrastructure are essential. Coordination with NDMA, PDMAs, forest departments, irrigation authorities, and local governments must become routine. Community policing can mobilise volunteers for early warning and evacuation support. Unless climate resilience becomes embedded within policing strategy, vulnerable communities will remain exposed as risks escalate.

### Overview:

The article contends that climate change has transformed policing from a conventional law enforcement function into a multidimensional public safety mandate that demands structural reform, technological adaptation, interagency coordination, and community engagement.

### NOTES:

Pakistan loses over two billion dollars annually due to climate disasters. Climate vulnerability reshapes internal security dynamics. Police roles now include disaster management, evacuation, relief protection, and infrastructure defence. Extreme weather alters crime patterns such as water theft and illegal resource trade. Climate migration intensifies urban conflict. Militant groups may exploit disaster relief vacuums. Institutional reform requires climate integrated SOPs, specialised units, drone use, and solar backed infrastructure. Interagency collaboration with NDMA and provincial bodies is important. Community policing strengthens early warning and dispute resolution.

### Relevant CSS Syllabus topics and Subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs: Climate vulnerability and governance challenges
- Environmental Science: Climate change impacts and disaster risk reduction
- Public Administration: Institutional reform and interagency coordination
- Criminology: Environmental crime and shifting crime patterns
- International Relations: Climate security and non traditional threats

### Notes for Beginners:

Climate change affects security, not only weather. When floods destroy crops and livestock, theft and disputes increase. In Swat last June, surging rivers killed stranded tourists. Police must ensure tourist safety during glacier melt. Heatwaves can provoke unrest in cities. Power outages disrupt supply chains and inflame tempers. Rural families often migrate to cities after crop loss. This migration burdens police with new disputes. Timber smuggling and wildlife crime rise when forest cover weakens. Aid distribution may attract corruption and fraud. Solar backed

police stations and drone surveillance can strengthen disaster response. Climate related data systems can predict seasonal crime spikes.

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

- Pakistan loses over two billion dollars annually due to climate related disasters, according to the Asian Development Bank.
- The country is ranked among the most climate vulnerable states in the region.
- Surging rivers in Swat last June caused fatalities among stranded tourists.
- Floods and earthquakes frequently damage roads and bridges, which restrict police mobility.
- Emergency calls increase sharply during climate disasters.
- Crop destruction and livestock deaths in rural areas trigger migration to urban centres.
- Timber smuggling, wildlife trafficking, and illegal resource extraction rise after climate shocks.

In a nutshell, Climate change no longer lurks at the margins of policy. It stands at the gates of public safety. Policing must evolve or risk irrelevance. Preparedness, coordination, and resilience form the new grammar of security. If climate resilience is woven into law enforcement, communities will withstand the storm. If ignored, disorder will follow in its wake.

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

- **Vulnerable**
  - Meaning exposed to harm
  - Synonyms susceptible fragile at risk
  - Antonyms secure protected resilient
- **Encroachment**
  - Meaning unlawful intrusion on land
  - Synonyms trespass intrusion occupation
  - Antonyms withdrawal retreat compliance
- **Ubiquitous**
  - Meaning present everywhere
  - Synonyms pervasive widespread omnipresent
  - Antonyms rare limited scarce
- **Resilient**
  - Meaning able to recover quickly
  - Synonyms robust adaptable strong
  - Antonyms fragile weak inflexible

## **AGE OF STRATEGIC ADJUSTMENT**

Author: Maleeha Lodhi

#### **Summary:**

According to the author, the global order is undergoing profound transformation. Countries are no longer content with rigid alignments. Instead, they are recalibrating their foreign and economic policies. The speech of Canada's Prime Minister at Davos captures this shift clearly. Middle powers must cooperate to resist economic pressure from dominant states. Without unity, they risk marginalisation. The world is moving toward multipolarity. Power is dispersing beyond traditional Western centres. Trade patterns are changing rapidly. The European Union has expanded commerce with China. China has diversified its export markets. South South trade has grown significantly. It now forms nearly one quarter of global trade. Much of this expansion accelerated after tariff

conflicts. Middle powers are asserting influence through organisations such as BRICS, GCC, and SCO. They pursue multi alignment strategies to maximise leverage in a competitive environment. Even regional actors like Turkiye are gaining prominence through this approach. The United States China rivalry has opened space for manoeuvre. Countries are using it to strengthen autonomy and bargaining power.

The article further suggests that Europe has been compelled to adjust due to strained transatlantic relations. Trust between Washington and European capitals has eroded. Public opinion in Europe now questions American reliability. This shift is pushing policymakers toward strategic independence. Meanwhile, the Middle East is also recalibrating. Saudi Arabia seeks deeper ties with China. It is expanding regional reconciliation efforts. Its defence cooperation with Pakistan reflects diversification of security partnerships. Across regions, structural change is evident. Middle powers are no longer passive actors. They are shaping outcomes and demanding a seat at the table. The era of unilateral dominance is fading. Countries must act collectively to safeguard interests in an unpredictable environment. Strategic adjustment is therefore not optional. It is essential for survival and influence in a fragmented world.

#### **Overview:**

The article explains how global power is shifting toward multipolarity, urging middle powers to adapt through diversification, cooperation, and strategic alignment in order to secure influence amid geopolitical rivalry and declining dominance of traditional superpowers.

#### **NOTES:**

Multipolar world order is replacing unilateral dominance. Middle powers are gaining strategic leverage. Trade diversification strengthens economic resilience. South South cooperation is expanding rapidly. US China rivalry shapes global alignments. Europe is reconsidering reliance on transatlantic security guarantees. Multi alignment has become a key foreign policy tool. Regional blocs such as BRICS, GCC, and SCO are increasing collective influence. Strategic adjustment is central to contemporary diplomacy. Economic coercion influences global trade decisions.

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

- International Relations: Multipolarity, great power politics, alliance shifts, diplomatic strategy
- Current Affairs: US China competition, global trade realignment, European security debate
- Pakistan Affairs: Foreign policy diversification, regional partnerships, strategic balancing
- Political Science: Power transition theory, state behaviour, international order
- Economics: Trade diversification, global supply chains, tariff impacts

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

The article explains that global politics is changing. Earlier, one superpower dominated decisions. Now several centres of power influence outcomes. This situation is called multipolarity. Countries like China and the European Union trade heavily with each other. China became the EU's largest trading partner in 2020. South South trade has more than doubled between 2007 and 2023. Many states now join multiple alliances. This strategy is known as multi alignment. For example, countries maintain relations with both Washington and Beijing. Such balance increases options. It reduces dependency risks.

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

- South South trade accounts for nearly one quarter of global trade.
- South South trade more than doubled between 2007 and 2023.
- Around 40 to 45 percent of its recent growth is linked to tariff disruptions since 2018.
- China overtook the United States as the European Union's largest trading partner in 2020.
- China has achieved a record trade surplus of about one trillion dollars.

To sum up, The global landscape is evolving fast. Middle powers must respond with unity and foresight. Strategic adjustment is no longer optional. It is a necessity shaped by structural change. Those who diversify and cooperate will thrive. Those who cling to old patterns may fall behind.

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

- Multipolar
  - Meaning system with multiple power centres
  - Synonyms multi centred diverse distributed
  - Antonyms unipolar centralised singular
- Coercion
  - Meaning use of pressure or threats
  - Synonyms compulsion intimidation force
  - Antonyms persuasion consent agreement
- Recalibration
  - Meaning adjustment of strategy
  - Synonyms realignment modification reform
  - Antonyms stagnation rigidity persistence
- Leverage
  - Meaning advantage for influence
  - Synonyms advantage power edge
  - Antonyms weakness disadvantage loss

## **PAST FOLLIES**

### **Summary:**

The article reflects on the brutal bombing of an Islamabad imambargah and the renewed debate on how to confront terrorism. Lawmakers have engaged in heated exchanges, yet the core issue demands seriousness rather than partisan theatrics. The Defence Minister linked the current wave of violence to historical misjudgments, particularly decisions taken during the eras of Generals Zia and Musharraf. He described today's militancy as a blowback from earlier policies in Afghanistan. Parliamentarians also questioned how militants of the TTP managed to re enter the country. The discussion has reopened long standing wounds. It has exposed unresolved tensions within the state apparatus.

The article discusses that responsibility cannot be confined to a single institution or era. Successive governments share accountability for nurturing or failing to restrain armed groups. During the Afghan conflict, alliances with non state actors created dangerous precedents. Some factions were later banned, but many turned against the state. Sectarian networks also expanded under past regimes and remain difficult to eliminate. The Islamabad tragedy is a grim reminder of these policy failures. What is required now is honest reflection, not political scoring. Blame games between parties dilute national focus. An inclusive review of history should guide corrective action. The goal must be unified counterterrorism strategy. Only collective resolve can dismantle extremist structures and restore stability.

### **Overview:**

The editorial examines the roots of terrorism in Pakistan, traces historical policy errors, and calls for national unity and introspection instead of partisan blame in order to strengthen counterterrorism efforts.

### **NOTES:**

This editorial highlights that the recent bombing in Islamabad has revived serious debate on terrorism and exposed deep political divisions. It stresses that the problem cannot be reduced to party politics or short term blame games.

The writer links today's militancy to historical policy errors, particularly during the eras of Generals Zia and Musharraf, when engagement with non state actors created long lasting consequences. The return of TTP militants has further intensified concern. Responsibility is presented as collective, not confined to one government or institution. The article underscores how alliances with armed groups, expansion of sectarian networks, and failure to regulate militant outfits contributed to the present crisis. It calls for honest reflection on past decisions, institutional accountability, and a unified counterterrorism approach. Political rivalry is described as counterproductive, while national consensus is portrayed as essential for dismantling extremist structures and restoring stability.

### **CSS Syllabus and Relevant Subjects:**

- Pakistan Affairs: Evolution of militancy, Afghan policy impact, internal security
- International Relations: Blowback, proxy warfare, regional conflicts
- Current Affairs: Counterterrorism debate, parliamentary discourse
- Political Science: State institutions, civil military relations, governance

### **Notes for Beginners:**

The article explains that terrorism often has historical roots. Policies during the Afghan war era shaped later militancy. When states cooperate with armed groups, those groups may gain strength. Later, control becomes difficult. For example, some factions once supported by the state eventually targeted it. Sectarian violence also expanded during earlier decades. Parliament is now debating how militants re entered the country. Such discussions show that security problems require long term planning. Political rivalry reduces effectiveness. National unity improves response. Without coordination, counterterrorism efforts lose direction.

### **Facts and Figures:**

- The editorial refers to a bombing at an Islamabad imambargah.
- The issue was discussed in both houses of Parliament.
- Generals Zia and Musharraf are linked to past Afghan policy decisions.
- Several militant groups were banned after the September 11 attacks.
- Elements associated with the TTP have re entered the country.

To sum up, History cannot be ignored. Past errors continue to shape present insecurity. Yet assigning blame alone will not end violence. What matters is institutional learning and collective resolve. If political actors replace rivalry with cooperation, progress becomes possible. National security demands unity, discipline, and strategic clarity.

## **A MAD, MAD WORLD**

Author: Dr Niaz Murtaza

### **Summary:**

The article examines that the contemporary world resembles a paradox of immense capability and immense chaos. Humanity possesses advanced science, vast wealth, and powerful institutions, but these assets are often misused. Major powers shape global affairs through force rather than law. The United States, Israel, and Russia are presented as central actors in recurring instability. Among them, the United States stands out due to its unmatched economic, military, and technological reach. Instead of resolving global crises, it frequently deepens them through unilateral decisions, sanctions, tariffs, and military interventions. The author highlights stark inequality, where the richest minority controls half of global wealth while billions remain impoverished. Climate change, pandemics, and nuclear risks intensify the danger. Realpolitik dominates while the rule of law weakens.

The article then turns to American politics, especially the rise of Trumpism and its influence on global order. Trump's leadership style reflects isolationist rhetoric and aggressive nationalism. Although his term may end, the

ideology behind it could persist within a radicalised political base. Economic grievances among industrial workers were used to promote protectionist policies, yet structural corporate decisions were largely ignored. Artificial intelligence now threatens further displacement of workers, particularly in the service sector. Proposed solutions such as universal income or restrictions on automation face resistance within free market doctrine. Meanwhile, China has not fully converted economic growth into global leadership, and other regions remain fragmented. The world is deeply interconnected, yet global governance lags behind. Without a stronger rules based framework, humanity risks prolonged instability. Only collective action can prevent a future defined by conflict rather than cooperation.

**Overview:**

The article presents a sharp critique of global power politics, argues that major states undermine international law, and warns that rising inequality, technological disruption, and weak governance may push the world toward deeper conflict unless a robust rules based order is established.

**NOTES :**

The author argues that humanity commands immense scientific progress, wealth and institutional capacity, but these resources are often deployed for narrow strategic interests rather than collective welfare. Major powers particularly the United States, Israel and Russia, shape world affairs through force and coercion instead of strengthening international law. The United States receives special scrutiny because of its unmatched military, financial and technological dominance, which enables it to influence climate policy, economic systems and geopolitical conflicts on a global scale. Instead of stabilising the system, it frequently deepens turbulence through unilateral actions, sanctions and power politics. The article underscores staggering inequality, noting that the richest one per cent control about half of global wealth while the poorest half possess barely one per cent. Simultaneously, climate change, pandemics and the spectre of nuclear confrontation intensify global vulnerability. The rise of Trumpism reflects a broader populist wave rooted in economic grievances of displaced industrial workers, though corporate decisions and wealth concentration remain central causes. Artificial intelligence now threatens further disruption in the service sector, which employs nearly eighty per cent of salaried Americans. Proposals such as guaranteed income or restrictions on automation clash with entrenched free market ideology. Meanwhile, China has not fully translated economic growth into decisive geopolitical counterweight, and other regions remain divided. The world grows more interconnected economically and socially, but global governance weakens as realpolitik eclipses a rules based framework, leaving the international system fragile and uncertain.

**Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics and Subjects:**

- International Relations: Global order, power politics, multilateralism, US foreign policy
- Current Affairs: US domestic politics, AI impact, global inequality
- Political Science: Populism, governance models, institutional legitimacy
- International Political Economy: Trade, tariffs, wealth distribution, global finance

**Notes for Beginners:**

The article explains that global problems require global cooperation. For example, climate change cannot be solved by one country alone. Wealth inequality shows that the top one per cent own about half of global wealth. This imbalance creates social tension. Artificial intelligence may replace many jobs in the service sector. Nearly eighty per cent of salaried Americans work in services. If automation expands without safeguards, unemployment may rise. The author suggests that strong international rules are necessary. After the two world wars, global institutions were strengthened. A similar reform may become necessary if current tensions continue.

**Facts and Figures:**

- The top one per cent own about fifty per cent of global wealth. The bottom fifty per cent own about one per cent of global wealth.

- Nearly eighty per cent of salaried Americans work in the service sector.
- Artificial intelligence threatens lower end service jobs.
- The United States retains dominant global military and financial influence.
- Climate change, pandemics, and nuclear risk remain major global threats.

In a nutshell, Power without responsibility weakens the world. Inequality widens the divide between privilege and poverty. Technology advances rapidly, yet governance lags behind. If nations fail to build stronger cooperative frameworks, instability may intensify. The message is that humanity must choose rules over rivalry and partnership over power games.

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

- Unparalleled
  - Meaning unmatched in scale
  - Synonyms incomparable, exceptional
  - Antonyms ordinary, common
- Realpolitik
  - Meaning practical politics based on power
  - Synonyms pragmatism, power politics
  - Antonyms idealism, moralism
- Turmoil
  - Meaning state of great disturbance
  - Synonyms chaos, instability
  - Antonyms order, calm

## **CONFLICTS OF THE FUTURE**

Author: Umair Javed

#### **Summary:**

In this article, Umair Javed argues that fears about AI replacing education are overstated, while the real turbulence is likely to unfold in the labour market. He suggests that learning is not the passive consumption of information but an active intellectual process that institutions cultivate through structured engagement and social interaction. Schools and universities therefore retain their relevance even in an age of large language models. The deeper uncertainty lies in how AI will reshape employment. The mainstream view holds that AI enhances productivity by improving task efficiency, which in turn fuels economic growth, much like previous technological shifts that eventually absorbed displaced workers. The author questions this optimism. Productivity gains do not automatically translate into broad based growth, especially in an economy already grappling with overcapacity. If automation displaces workers in concentrated sectors such as business process outsourcing and IT exports, the adjustment period could prove socially and politically destabilising.

The article further analyzes the techno futurist vision in which AI and robotics render human labour redundant and channel income exclusively to owners of capital. Such a configuration would sever the link between work and wages, undermine purchasing power, and expose a structural contradiction within market capitalism. If wealth flows only to those who control technology, the majority may lack the means to consume, which in turn threatens the logic of markets themselves. While the author does not predict an inevitable dystopia, he anticipates intense political conflict over the distribution of AI driven gains. The core message is that technological transformation will compel societies to reconsider the centrality of markets and private ownership in organising economic life.

**Overview:**

The article explores the future of education and labour in the age of artificial intelligence. It argues that institutional learning will endure, but the labour market may face severe disruption. It challenges the assumption that productivity gains automatically ensure economic growth and warns that unchecked automation could intensify inequality and political conflict.

**NOTES :**

The article critically examines the impact of AI on education and employment, asserting that while chatbots cannot replace the cognitive depth fostered by schools and universities, the labour market faces profound uncertainty. It explains that modern market based exchange is historically contingent rather than inevitable, and that societies differ in how deeply markets shape lives and livelihoods. The mainstream belief that AI will enhance productivity and generate growth is questioned on two grounds: the disruptive adjustment period for displaced workers and the unclear link between efficiency gains and aggregate economic expansion. The author highlights the risk to countries reliant on service exports such as business process outsourcing and IT. He also challenges the extreme techno capitalist vision in which AI eliminates human labour and concentrates income in the hands of capital owners, thereby weakening purchasing power and destabilising markets. The article concludes that any realisation of AI driven productivity will likely spark political struggles over distribution and force a rethinking of private ownership and market dominance.

**Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:**

- Political Science: Capitalism, ownership structures, political conflict
- International Political Economy: Automation, productivity, income distribution
- Sociology: Socialisation, inequality, youth disillusionment
- Current Affairs: Artificial intelligence and labour market transformation

**Notes for Beginners:**

The article explains that AI can make tasks such as coding or document processing faster, but faster work does not always mean more jobs or higher national income. For example, if companies use AI to reduce labour costs, profits may increase without expanding total production. Countries that depend heavily on service exports like IT may face higher unemployment if automation spreads rapidly. Education, however, remains important because it teaches critical thinking and social interaction, which machines cannot fully replicate. The key lesson is that technology changes how economies function, and societies must adapt policies to ensure fair distribution of benefits.

**Facts and Figures:**

- Service sectors dominate modern economies and employ the majority of salaried workers
- Business process outsourcing and IT exports are highly exposed to automation risks
- Mainstream economists now acknowledge global overcapacity concerns
- AI is projected to enhance productivity across multiple task based occupations

In essence, the article serves as a sober reflection on the crossroads between technology and political economy. It cautions that efficiency without equity may breed instability, and that the future of AI will depend less on algorithms and more on how societies choose to distribute power, profit, and opportunity.

**Difficult Words and Meanings:**

1. Abrogation – repeal or cancellation of rights; Synonym: revocation; Antonym: enforcement
2. Contingent – dependent on specific conditions; Synonym: conditional; Antonym: inevitable
3. Redundant – no longer needed; Synonym: obsolete; Antonym: essential

## FROZEN RELATIONSHIP

Author: Maleeha Lodhi

### Summary:

Maleeha Lodhi examines the deep freeze in Pakistan Afghanistan relations after a series of escalating security crises. The immediate trigger was a deadly terrorist attack on an imambargah in Islamabad claimed by IS K, whose fighters are based in Afghanistan. Pakistani authorities alleged that the mastermind had trained across the border and accused the Taliban regime of providing sanctuary to militant groups including the Tehreek i Taliban Pakistan. Kabul condemned the attack yet denied harbouring militants, which did little to ease tensions. Relations deteriorated sharply after a major TTP assault in Kurram killed several Pakistani soldiers and prompted cross border air strikes by Pakistan followed by Afghan retaliation. Although Qatar and Turkiye mediated a ceasefire, subsequent talks collapsed over Islamabad's demand for concrete action against TTP. Verbal assurances from Kabul failed to satisfy Pakistan as TTP attacks surged, with around 600 incidents recorded last year and more than 3500 deaths in Pakistan since 2021.

The article argues that Islamabad has now shifted from dialogue to sustained pressure. Border crossings remain closed, trade has been suspended and cross border strikes continue against militant bases. This strategy seeks to raise the economic and political costs for the Taliban regime, which reportedly loses around 400 million dollars annually from halted trade while Afghan exports to Pakistan previously ranged between 880 million and 566 million dollars. The United Nations has reported that Afghan authorities provide a permissive environment for TTP and warned that escalating tensions pose a serious threat to the Taliban's stability. Islamabad hopes that economic attrition will widen internal divisions within the Taliban, as some factions view TTP as a liability. The coming months will determine whether this pressure compels Kabul to alter its course or entrenches the stalemate further.

### Overview:

The article analyses the breakdown in Pakistan Afghanistan relations, the surge in cross border militancy, and Islamabad's strategy of economic and military pressure to force action against TTP. It highlights the security, diplomatic and economic dimensions of a relationship now defined by mistrust and confrontation.

### NOTES :

The article critically traces the downward spiral in bilateral ties following intensified TTP attacks from Afghan soil and the Islamabad imambargah bombing claimed by IS K. It underscores Pakistan's allegation that the Taliban regime has failed to dismantle militant sanctuaries despite repeated assurances. Diplomatic engagement stalled after October 2025 when border clashes escalated into air strikes and retaliatory attacks. Mediation efforts produced only a temporary ceasefire, while substantive talks ended in deadlock over Pakistan's non negotiable demand that TTP be disarmed. The United Nations monitoring reports noted a permissive environment for TTP in Afghanistan and described rising hostilities as a threat to Taliban stability. Islamabad's response combines kinetic strikes with economic leverage through border closure and suspension of trade, aiming to impose financial strain and exploit internal Taliban divisions. The strategy rests on attrition rather than accommodation and seeks measurable action instead of verbal commitments.

### Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Internal security challenges and border management
- International Relations: Bilateral diplomacy, cross border terrorism, conflict escalation
- Current Affairs: Pakistan Afghanistan tensions and regional security
- Strategic Studies: Counterterrorism policy and coercive diplomacy

### Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan accuses Afghanistan of allowing TTP fighters to operate from its territory. When attacks inside Pakistan increased, Islamabad responded with air strikes and closed border crossings. Trade suspension affects both sides but imposes heavier costs on Afghanistan. For example, the Taliban regime may lose about 400 million dollars annually from halted trade and transit revenues. Around 600 TTP attacks were recorded last year, and more than 3500 people have been killed in Pakistan since 2021 due to TTP violence. The core issue is security. Pakistan demands concrete action against militants, while the Taliban deny formal support. Until this dispute is resolved, relations are likely to remain strained.

### Facts and Figures:

- IS K estimated strength around 2000 fighters
- TTP fighters in Afghanistan estimated at about 6000
- Around 600 TTP attacks recorded last year
- Over 3500 people killed in Pakistan since 2021 in TTP attacks
- Estimated 400 million dollars annual revenue loss for Taliban due to trade suspension
- Afghan exports to Pakistan ranged between 880 million and 566 million dollars in recent years

To sum up, the article portrays a relationship locked in suspicion and sustained pressure. Dialogue has given way to coercion, and economic levers have replaced diplomatic overtures. Whether attrition compels compliance or deepens hostility will shape the future of security along the Pakistan Afghanistan frontier.

### Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Sanctuary – safe haven for militants; Synonym: refuge; Antonym: exposure
- Collusion – secret cooperation for deceitful purpose; Synonym: conspiracy; Antonym: opposition
- Deadlock – complete standstill; Synonym: stalemate; Antonym: breakthrough
- Permissive – allowing something to happen; Synonym: tolerant; Antonym: restrictive

## GOOD PARLIAMENT, BAD PARLIAMENT

Author: Jawed Naqvi

### Summary:

Parliaments wear many masks. They defend democracy, while they can just as easily deform it. The author argues that legislative houses do not operate in a moral vacuum; their character depends on who commands procedure and power. In the United States, Congress publicly undercut President Barack Obama by applauding Benjamin Netanyahu in defiance of the White House. In Russia, the Duma was shelled by forces loyal to Boris Yeltsin after it sought to impeach him, while Western capitals applauded the assault. In Nazi Germany, Hermann Göring manipulated the Reichstag to secure the Enabling Act, allowing Adolf Hitler to seize unrestrained authority after delaying President Paul von Hindenburg's dissolution order. These episodes show how the Speaker's chair can become either the custodian of debate or the executioner of dissent.

The article then turns to contemporary India, where the Lok Sabha under Speaker Om Birla stands accused by the opposition of throttling debate on issues ranging from a controversial trade deal with the United States to a disputed book by former army chief M.M. Naravane. The government's swift dismissal of references to Narendra Modi in the Jeffrey Epstein files and the filing of an FIR over a so called non-existent book reveal a shrinking space for scrutiny. History offers sharper contrasts. Richard Nixon resigned after impeachment, while Bill Clinton and Donald Trump survived theirs. P.V. Narasimha Rao clung to office through bribery during a trust vote, and Atal Bihari Vajpayee avoided parliamentary debate on the Kargil conflict. Earlier generations allowed figures such as Feroze

Gandhi to expose scandals without gag orders. Parliament can illuminate truth or bury it. Its fate rests on courage, not architecture.

**Overview:**

The article examines the dual character of parliaments across democracies and authoritarian systems. It explores how legislative institutions can either uphold accountability or enable executive overreach, with special focus on the power of the Speaker and the erosion of debate in contemporary India.

**NOTES :**

The article argues that parliaments are not inherently democratic; their function depends on political integrity and institutional courage. It highlights how the United States Congress embarrassed President Barack Obama during Benjamin Netanyahu's visit, how Russia's Duma was attacked under Boris Yeltsin despite impeachment efforts, and how Hermann Göring engineered the passage of the Enabling Act in Nazi Germany to consolidate Adolf Hitler's dictatorship. The role of the Speaker emerges as decisive in shaping outcomes. In India, the opposition accuses Speaker Om Birla of suppressing debate, particularly on a US trade deal and a controversial book by M.M. Naravane. The government's response to the Jeffrey Epstein files and the filing of an FIR over the disputed book illustrate growing intolerance for scrutiny. Historical precedents such as Richard Nixon's resignation, the impeachments of Bill Clinton and Donald Trump, P.V. Narasimha Rao's bribery scandal, and Atal Bihari Vajpayee's avoidance of debate over Kargil demonstrate how parliamentary ethics shape democratic credibility. The legacy of Feroze Gandhi's exposure of financial scandals and the suppression of Debajyoti Burman's Mystery of Birla House underscore the tension between power and accountability.

**Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:**

- Pakistan Affairs: Parliamentary democracy and institutional integrity
- Political Science: Separation of powers, legislative oversight, democratic backsliding
- International Relations: Comparative political systems and executive dominance

**Notes for Beginners:**

A parliament is meant to represent the people and hold the government accountable. However, history shows that it can either defend democracy or damage it. In Germany in 1933, the Enabling Act allowed Adolf Hitler to make laws without parliamentary approval, which ended democratic governance. In Russia in 1993, the president used military force against the parliament after a constitutional dispute. In the United States, impeachment requires a majority vote in the House of Representatives and a two thirds majority in the Senate for removal from office. In India, a government must retain the confidence of the Lok Sabha, and losing a trust vote by even one vote can bring it down. These examples show that institutions are only as strong as the leaders who respect their limits.

**Facts and Figures:**

- 1933 Enabling Act granted Adolf Hitler sweeping legislative powers
- 1993 Russian constitutional crisis led to military assault on the Duma under Boris Yeltsin
- Richard Nixon resigned in 1974 following impeachment proceedings
- Bill Clinton was impeached in 1998 and acquitted by the Senate
- Donald Trump was impeached twice in 2019 and 2021 and acquitted both times
- Atal Bihari Vajpayee's government fell in 1999 after losing a trust vote by one vote

To wrap up, The article reminds that parliaments do not fail in a single dramatic stroke. They erode when debate is stifled, when procedure becomes a weapon, and when courage retreats before power. Democracy survives not by ritual alone but by vigilance within the chamber itself.

## PAKISTAN'S US TEST

Author: Muhammad Amir Rana

### Summary:

Pakistan's engagement with the United States continues to rest on hard headed pragmatism rather than any illusion of enduring alliance. The article suggests that the relationship revolves around two core pillars: access to Pakistan's critical mineral resources and sustained counterterrorism cooperation. Recent remarks by Assistant Secretary of State Paul Kapur before Congress confirm that Washington views Pakistan through a strategic lens shaped by competition with China and partnership with India. Within this design, Pakistan retains value because of its geostrategic location, its ability to balance India, and its relevance in South and Central Asia. The US seeks to combine seed financing with private sector expertise to tap Pakistan's mineral wealth while strengthening Islamabad's capacity to manage internal security and transnational threats.

At the same time, Afghanistan and Balochistan complicate this equation. Afghanistan remains the principal obstacle to regional connectivity and effective counterterrorism coordination, while Balochistan sits at the intersection of mineral extraction and insurgent violence. The United States appears reluctant to re enter Afghanistan militarily, though it may extend limited diplomatic and equipment support to Pakistan to maintain pressure on the Taliban regime. I suggest that Pakistan cannot rely solely on either Washington or Beijing. Instead, it needs an independent approach towards Afghanistan and a peaceful political vision for Balochistan to ensure stability and long term regional cooperation. Strategic alignment without internal reform will only deepen vulnerabilities rather than resolve them.

### Overview:

The article analyses the evolving contours of Pakistan United States relations, highlighting how geoeconomic interests, counterterrorism priorities, and great power competition shape bilateral engagement. It also underlines the strategic significance of Afghanistan and Balochistan in determining the success or failure of this relationship.

### NOTES :

The article contends that Pakistan United States relations are driven by strategic necessity rather than shared values. It identifies two primary pillars of engagement: cooperation in critical minerals and counterterrorism. Assistant Secretary of State Paul Kapur's congressional briefing emphasised economic collaboration through seed financing and private sector investment alongside strengthening Pakistan's security capacity. The broader US framework in South Asia prioritises containing China, supporting India's strategic autonomy, and maintaining a balance by engaging Pakistan. Financial assistance through international institutions and targeted economic cooperation aim to prevent Pakistan's deeper tilt towards China. Afghanistan remains the key constraint in regional connectivity and counterterrorism design, while Balochistan presents overlapping challenges of insurgency and mineral exploitation. The United Nations Security Council's extension of the Monitoring Team supporting the 1988 Afghanistan Sanctions Committee signals continued international scrutiny of the Taliban. The writer proposes that Pakistan adopt an independent Afghanistan policy and pursue peaceful stabilisation in Balochistan to secure sustainable regional cooperation.

### Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Foreign policy of Pakistan, internal security, Balochistan issue
- International Relations: US China rivalry, South Asian geopolitics, regional connectivity
- Current Affairs: Counterterrorism cooperation, Afghanistan crisis, mineral diplomacy
- Political Science: Balance of power and strategic alliances

### Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan and the United States cooperate mainly for practical reasons, not because they are close allies. The US is interested in Pakistan's rare earth and mineral resources and also wants help in fighting terrorism. At the same time, America supports India to counter China's growing influence in Asia. Pakistan's location makes it important for access to Central Asia and for managing threats from Afghanistan. However, instability in Afghanistan and insurgency in Balochistan create serious obstacles. For example, the United Nations recently extended the mandate of the team monitoring sanctions on the Afghan Taliban for another year, showing that the international community is still cautious about Afghanistan's future. The article suggests that Pakistan should develop its own independent policy towards Afghanistan and resolve internal conflicts peacefully to achieve long term stability.

### Facts and Figures:

- US engagement with Pakistan currently centres on two pillars: critical minerals and counterterrorism cooperation
- Assistant Secretary of State Paul Kapur highlighted mineral cooperation and security assistance before the House Foreign Affairs Committee
- United Nations Security Council extended the mandate of the Monitoring Team supporting the 1988 Afghanistan Sanctions Committee by one year
- Pakistan holds significant untapped rare earth and critical mineral reserves, particularly in Balochistan
- Balochistan remains a hotspot of insurgent violence intersecting with mineral and security interests

To wrap up, the article presents Pakistan's relationship with the United States as a strategic test. Engagement offers economic and security opportunities, but it also exposes Pakistan to the crosswinds of great power rivalry. Without an independent regional vision and internal stability, external partnerships will remain transactional and fragile rather than transformative

### Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Pragmatism – practical approach focused on realistic outcomes; Synonym: realism; Antonym: idealism
- Geostrategic – relating to strategic importance of geography; Synonym: geopolitical; Antonym: nonstrategic
- Hegemonic – dominant over others; Synonym: controlling; Antonym: subordinate
- Insurgency – organised rebellion against authority; Synonym: rebellion; Antonym: stability

## A PEEK INTO TRUMP'S IRAN MINDSET

Author: Abbas Nasir

### Summary:

The article probes the strategic calculations shaping the posture of Donald Trump toward Iran amid rising speculation of an imminent strike. It argues that the scale of US military mobilisation in the Gulf, described as an armada, suggests preparation rather than mere coercive diplomacy. The central question remains whether overwhelming American firepower can secure swift, decisive results without dragging Washington into a prolonged conflict that its electorate resists. With midterm elections looming, domestic political stakes weigh heavily on the White House. Tehran, fully aware it cannot defeat the United States in a conventional war, seeks instead to impose steep costs through asymmetric retaliation, regional escalation, and disruption of global energy routes.

The writer underlines the global ramifications of any confrontation. Around 20 percent of the world's oil supply transits the Strait of Hormuz, and sustained disruption could propel prices to 150 dollars per barrel, jolting fragile economies such as Pakistan and unsettling even major consumers like China. Iran's missile capabilities, naval

assets, and fortified launch sites complicate assumptions of an easy campaign, especially after last year's 12 day missile exchanges that pierced Israeli defence shields. Reports of Tehran's shift to China's BeiDou satellite system further hint at reduced Western leverage in electronic warfare. Meanwhile, Russian and Chinese naval manoeuvres in the same waters inject strategic ambiguity into Washington's timing. The article concludes that although Iran cannot secure outright victory, it can ensure that aggression carries a punishing economic and geopolitical price.

#### **Overview:**

The article analyses the military, political, and economic variables shaping a possible US strike on Iran. It explores deterrence logic, energy security, electoral calculations, and great power rivalry to assess whether escalation would serve American interests or unleash wider instability.

#### **NOTES :**

The article examines escalating tensions between the United States and Iran and questions whether American military superiority guarantees a quick victory. It highlights the unprecedented US naval buildup in the Gulf and the political pressure on President Trump from Israeli lobbies and domestic electoral considerations. Iran's strategy is portrayed as cost imposition rather than outright victory, with emphasis on its capacity to block or disrupt the Strait of Hormuz through naval mines, missile boats, and shore based batteries, including assets linked to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. The writer recalls last year's 12 day conflict in which Iranian missile barrages penetrated Israeli defence systems, forcing a ceasefire request. He notes that Iran may have transitioned to China's BeiDou Navigation Satellite System, enhancing targeting resilience against Western jamming. The presence of Russian and Chinese naval exercises in the conflict zone adds uncertainty to any US decision, as collateral damage could widen the theatre of confrontation.

#### **Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:**

- International Relations: US foreign policy, Middle East geopolitics, deterrence theory
- Current Affairs: Energy security, Gulf tensions, great power competition
- Pakistan Affairs: Economic vulnerability to oil shocks, regional security implications

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

The article explains that even a superpower must calculate risks before war. Although the United States has superior weapons and can reportedly conduct 800 air sorties a day, Iran can still hurt global interests by targeting oil routes and regional bases. For example, if the Strait of Hormuz were blocked, oil prices could surge to 150 dollars per barrel, raising fuel costs worldwide and straining Pakistan's fragile economy. The article also shows how modern warfare relies on technology such as satellite navigation systems like BeiDou, which are harder to jam. In simple terms, the message is clear. Winning battles does not always mean avoiding losses. Sometimes the economic shock proves more damaging than the missiles themselves.

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

- 20 percent of global oil supply passes daily through the Strait of Hormuz
- Oil prices could rise to 150 dollars per barrel in a prolonged conflict
- China receives about 15 percent of its oil from discounted Iranian imports
- The US military claims capacity for 800 air sorties per day in a conflict scenario
- Midterm Congressional elections scheduled for November 3

In essence, this article reminds that a war in the Gulf would not remain confined to one battlefield. It would ripple across energy markets, electoral politics, and global alliances. The true contest lies not in who strikes first, but in who can endure the consequences that follow.

## AFGHAN STRIKES

### Summary:

The article addresss Pakistan's cross border strikes against militant hideouts inside Afghanistan after a surge in terrorist assaults at home. These attacks, traced largely to Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan and Islamic State Khorasan Province, left the state with little room for restraint. Camps in Nangarhar and Paktika were targeted, and security sources claim that over 80 militants were eliminated. Islamabad maintains that its security is non negotiable. Kabul, under the Taliban regime, has vowed an appropriate response and alleges civilian casualties, a charge Pakistan rejects. The strikes follow repeated warnings that continued violence would invite direct action.

The article argues that while dialogue remains preferable, patience has limits when blood is shed repeatedly. The United Nations has documented the presence of IS K along the border, and the TTP share ideological affinity with the Kabul authorities. Despite public denials, no credible state accepts that Afghan soil is free of transnational militants. The onus rests on Kabul to curb groups that attack neighbours. Escalation benefits neither side, but failure to act against armed networks would invite deeper regional turmoil. Diplomacy must return, but it cannot replace accountability.

### Overview:

The editorial evaluates Pakistan's decision to strike militant camps inside Afghanistan after major terrorist incidents. It weighs the legitimacy of self defence against the risks of escalation and stresses Kabul's responsibility to prevent cross border militancy.

### NOTES:

Key themes include state sovereignty, right of self defence under international law, cross border terrorism, and regional security dynamics. The strikes reflect Pakistan's shift from strategic patience to calibrated retaliation. The article underscores the ideological nexus between the Afghan Taliban and the TTP. It highlights the documented presence of IS K along the frontier and the diplomatic costs of inaction. Aspirants should connect this case to debates on non state actors, border management, and the limits of deterrence in fragile regions.

### Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Cross border terrorism, Pak Afghan relations, internal security challenges, state response to militancy
- International Relations: State sovereignty, right of self defence, regional security complexes, non state actors in global politics
- Current Affairs: Contemporary militancy trends, IS K presence in the Af Pak region, evolving security policy of Pakistan
- Political Science: Role of the state in maintaining monopoly of force, crisis management, decision making under security threats

### Notes for Beginners:

Pakistan faced several major attacks this month. An imambargah in Islamabad was bombed. Assaults in Bajaur and Bannu martyred security personnel. Authorities linked these incidents to IS K and the TTP. In response, Pakistan struck seven camps across the border and claims that more than 80 militants were killed. The United Nations has reported that IS K maintains sanctuaries near the frontier. The issue is simple in principle. If a state fails to prevent armed groups from using its territory against a neighbour, that neighbour may resort to self defence. However, unchecked retaliation can widen conflict. Thus security and diplomacy must move in tandem.

### Facts and Figures:

- Over 80 militants reportedly killed in cross border strikes
- Seven militant camps targeted inside Afghanistan

- Strikes conducted in Nangarhar and Paktika provinces
- Multiple major terrorist attacks occurred within the same month in Pakistan
- Bombing of an imambargah in Islamabad traced to IS K
- Attacks in Bajaur and Bannu martyred several security personnel
- United Nations reports confirm IS K presence along the Pakistan Afghanistan border
- Final Words

To sum up, The article suggests that sovereignty carries responsibility. A state cannot preach non interference while tolerating armed networks on its soil. Pakistan has drawn a red line. Kabul must now decide whether it stands with regional stability or with forces that thrive on chaos. Peace remains possible, but it demands action rather than mere words.

## ADDRESSING TRUMP'S CURIOSITY

Author: Jawed Naqvi

### Summary:

The author explores President Donald Trump's puzzlement over Iran's refusal to capitulate despite mounting military threats. His envoy has framed Tehran's stance as curious defiance. The article argues that such resolve cannot be grasped through the prism of power politics alone. History shows that nations often choose dignity over submission. From Patrick Henry's cry for liberty to the rebellion of 1857, resistance has shaped political destiny. The same spirit animates Iran. Military might may intimidate, yet it does not always subdue. The belief in invincibility has faltered before in Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq. Each episode looks as a cautionary tale against hubris.

The article traces the ideological roots of Iran's endurance. The 1979 revolution did not begin as a purely clerical uprising. Secular radicals and shifting alliances shaped its birth. Western powers have long toggled between secular and religious autocrats to secure interests. From the 1953 coup against Mosaddegh to modern interventions, expediency trumped principle. Above all, the memory of Karbala fuels Iran's political psyche. Martyrdom forms its moral vocabulary. The tale of Hossein Fahmideh, who sacrificed himself during the Iran Iraq war, reflects that ethos. A nation that venerates sacrifice cannot be cowed by threats alone. That is the riddle Washington must confront.

### Overview:

The article examines why Iran resists American coercion despite looming military escalation. It situates present tensions within a wider historical and ideological framework and questions the assumption that force guarantees compliance.

### NOTES:

The article argues that Iran's refusal to yield to American pressure cannot be explained through military calculus alone. It highlights President Donald Trump's frustration at Tehran's defiance and challenges the assumption that overwhelming force guarantees submission. Historical precedents such as Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq demonstrate that superior power often falters against determined resistance. The article stresses that the 1979 Iranian Revolution was not solely clerical in origin but shaped by secular radicals and shifting alliances. It recalls the 1953 coup against Prime Minister Mosaddegh as a defining episode that entrenched distrust of Western intentions. A central emphasis falls on the symbolism of Karbala, which shapes Shia political consciousness and glorifies sacrifice over surrender. The story of Hossein Fahmideh during the Iran Iraq war serves as an example of how martyrdom informs national resolve. The core argument maintains that ideology, historical memory, and a culture of sacrifice fortify Iran's stance, making coercion alone an inadequate strategy.

### Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- International Relations: Power politics and coercive diplomacy, US foreign policy in the Middle East, Ideology and state behaviour
- Pakistan Affairs: Regional security environment, Impact of US Iran tensions on South Asia
- Current Affairs: Contemporary US Iran standoff, Middle East strategic dynamics
- Political Science: Revolutionary movements and legitimacy, Role of political ideology in governance
- History: Iranian Revolution of 1979, Cold War era interventions

### Notes for beginners:

The article argues that strong nations do not always surrender to threats. For example, the United States faced setbacks in Vietnam and Afghanistan despite superior arms. Iran's 1979 revolution reshaped its politics and removed the Shah. In 1953, a CIA backed coup removed Prime Minister Mosaddegh. These events built distrust toward Western powers. The story of Karbala in 680 AD inspires Shia Muslims to value sacrifice over defeat. During the Iran Iraq war, a young boy named Hossein Fahmideh reportedly destroyed an Iraqi tank at the cost of his life. Such narratives shape national identity. When ideology and history merge, pressure alone rarely works.

### Facts and Figures:

- 1979 Iranian Revolution that overthrew the Shah
- 1953 coup against Prime Minister Mosaddegh backed by the CIA
- Battle of Karbala in 680 AD as a foundational event in Shia history
- Iran Iraq War from 1980 to 1988
- Reference to US military involvement in Vietnam from 1955 to 1975
- US war in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2021
- US invasion of Iraq in 2003

To sum up, this article contends that geopolitics cannot be read through force alone. Nations carry memory as armour. Iran's resistance springs from a blend of revolution, grievance, and sacred history. Washington may wield unmatched weapons, yet resolve forged in faith proves stubborn. Power can coerce, but it cannot erase conviction. Any strategy that ignores this truth will chase shadows instead of solutions.

## POVERTY AND PRIVILEGE

Author: Zahid Hussain

### Summary:

The article reflects a stark contradiction that defines Pakistan's social order. A recent Household Integrated Economic Survey shows poverty has reached a record high. But Punjab government has reportedly purchased a costly luxury jet for VVIP travel. This contrast reveals the moral failure of an elite dominated system. Around twenty nine percent of citizens live below the poverty line. Millions struggle to survive on less than Rs8,484 each month. At the same time, those in power enjoy extravagant privileges funded by taxpayers. The economy remains fragile despite an IMF bailout. Public debt rises and unemployment grows. The ruling class still appears detached from the misery of ordinary people.

The article further examines how inequality deepens across provinces and regions. Wealth remains concentrated in the hands of a tiny minority. The top ten percent controls nearly sixty percent of national wealth. Poverty spreads sharply in rural districts and backward regions. In Balochistan and parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa basic services remain scarce. Many families lack sanitation, safe water, and education facilities. The promised development funds for former Fata districts were never fully released. Economic neglect has fueled alienation and unrest. The author

argues that poverty and militancy often share a strong connection. When democratic space shrinks and economic rights vanish, frustration breeds instability. The luxury jet scandal therefore symbolises a wider crisis of governance and justice.

#### **Overview:**

The article explores the widening gulf between privilege and poverty in Pakistan. It criticises elite dominated governance and highlights regional disparities in development. The writer argues that neglect of deprived regions fuels unrest and threatens national stability.

#### **NOTES:**

The article highlights a stark contradiction in Pakistan's socio-economic structure where widespread poverty exists alongside extravagant privileges enjoyed by the ruling elite. A significant portion of the population lives below the poverty line and millions struggle to survive on extremely limited monthly incomes, yet state resources are often directed toward luxury expenditures, symbolised by the reported purchase of a costly VVIP jet for official travel. Despite an IMF-supported economic framework, the national economy remains fragile with rising public debt and increasing unemployment placing further strain on ordinary citizens. Wealth remains heavily concentrated in the hands of a small elite, reflecting an entrenched system of elite domination in politics and the economy. At the same time, deep regional disparities persist, particularly in underdeveloped areas such as Balochistan and parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where many communities still lack essential services like sanitation, safe drinking water, education, and proper housing. The failure to release promised development funds to former Fata districts further illustrates continuing state neglect. According to the article, such prolonged economic deprivation and marginalisation generate alienation among local populations and may contribute to instability and militancy. The luxury jet controversy therefore symbolises a broader governance crisis in which public resources are misallocated, inequality widens, and the gap between privileged rulers and struggling citizens continues to deepen.

#### **Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:**

- Pakistan Affairs: Socioeconomic inequality in Pakistan, Provincial disparities and resource distribution, Development challenges in Balochistan and former Fata
- Current Affairs: Poverty trends in Pakistan, Governance crisis and elite capture, Regional instability and militancy
- Political Science: Elite domination in political systems, State legitimacy and social contract
- Economics: Income inequality and wealth concentration, Poverty measurement and, development indicators

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

The article explains the contrast between wealth and poverty in Pakistan. Many citizens struggle to meet daily needs. According to the Household Integrated Economic Survey, about seventy million people live below the poverty line. The poverty threshold stands near Rs8,484 per month. At the same time, government spending sometimes reflects elite comfort rather than public need. For example, the Punjab government reportedly spent billions on a luxury aircraft for official travel. In rural districts of Balochistan, many homes remain temporary shelters. Around fifty percent of households lack proper toilet facilities. Forty percent have no reliable water supply. Such conditions show how development remains uneven across the country.

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

- Around 29 percent of Pakistan's population lives below the poverty line
- Nearly 70 million citizens survive on less than Rs8,484 per month
- Poverty in Punjab increased from 16.5 percent to 23.3 percent in seven years
- National unemployment exceeds 7 percent which is the highest in 21 years
- About 39.5 percent of the population faces multidimensional poverty

- The richest 10 percent own nearly 60 percent of national wealth
- Around 36 percent of children aged five to sixteen remain out of school
- Poverty rates stand near 35 percent in KP and 47 percent in Balochistan
- More than 65 percent of people in vulnerable Balochistan districts live in temporary housing
- Half of rural women in Pakistan have never attended school

### **Final Words**

The article exposes a harsh truth about Pakistan's social structure. Poverty grows while privilege expands. Regional inequality deepens and frustration spreads. Development remains uneven and governance appears detached from public suffering. Unless resources reach neglected regions and institutions ensure accountability, instability will persist. A society cannot progress when privilege towers above deprivation. Real reform demands justice, inclusion, and responsible leadership.

## **SMOKE AND MIRRORS**

Author: Maleeha Lodhi

### **Summary:**

In this article, the author scrutinises the much publicised inaugural meeting of Donald Trump's Board of Peace and argues that the initiative resembles more a spectacle than a credible diplomatic effort. The meeting unfolded amid grand declarations about peace in Gaza, but the absence of Palestinian representation exposed a glaring imbalance at the heart of the initiative. While Israel sat comfortably at the table, the very people whose future stood at stake were denied a voice. Trump's speech carried threats against Hamas and Iran and even declared the Gaza war finished despite continuing Israeli military strikes that have claimed hundreds of Palestinian lives since the ceasefire of October. Such contradictions reveal a peace effort wrapped in rhetoric but hollow at its core. The author contends that a peace process without the participation of one party to the conflict resembles a stage performance rather than genuine diplomacy.

The article also examines the structural weaknesses of the proposed plan. The meeting produced pledges of financial support and promises of an international stabilisation force but left critical issues unresolved. Questions regarding the mandate of the force, the disarmament of Hamas, and the withdrawal of Israeli troops remained unanswered. Meanwhile Israel continues to expand control in the occupied West Bank through land expropriation that has drawn condemnation from dozens of countries and the United Nations. By ignoring developments in the West Bank and focusing narrowly on Gaza the initiative risks burying any prospect of a viable Palestinian state. In the eyes of many Palestinians the Board of Peace appears less a path toward justice and more a mechanism that may entrench the existing occupation. The author therefore concludes that the meeting lacked credibility and seriousness and offered little hope of resolving the long suffering Palestinian question.

### **Overview:**

The article evaluates the credibility of the United States sponsored Board of Peace initiative for Gaza. It argues that the process lacks legitimacy because Palestinians were excluded from decision making and crucial political realities remain ignored. The writer maintains that without fairness, clarity, and commitment to a comprehensive settlement the initiative cannot deliver sustainable peace.

### **NOTES**

The article highlights the imbalance in international peace initiatives when one party to a conflict is excluded from negotiations. It emphasises the continuing Israeli military operations in Gaza despite the declared ceasefire and the political implications of US support for Israeli policies. The discussion also focuses on the absence of clarity regarding the mandate of the proposed International Stabilisation Force and the unresolved question of Hamas

disarmament. Another key point concerns Israel's expansion in the occupied West Bank through land expropriation which undermines prospects for a two state solution. The article stresses that peace efforts that ignore the broader Palestinian question and concentrate only on Gaza risk reinforcing occupation rather than ending conflict.

#### **Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:**

- International Relations: Middle East conflict and diplomacy, Peacekeeping and international stabilisation forces, US foreign policy in the Middle East
- Current Affairs: Gaza conflict and ceasefire violations, Global diplomatic responses to Israeli policies
- International efforts for conflict resolution
- International Law: Occupation and annexation under international law, Rights of self determination
- Political Science: Conflict resolution and legitimacy in peace processes, Role of international institutions in peacebuilding

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

The article explains that a peace initiative for Gaza was launched by the United States through a body called the Board of Peace. However Palestinians were not included in the meeting which raised serious concerns about fairness. Israel continued military attacks even after the ceasefire that began in October and more than six hundred Palestinians have reportedly died since then. The United States announced ten billion dollars in support for Gaza relief while several Muslim countries pledged about seven billion dollars. The proposed International Stabilisation Force is expected to include about twenty thousand troops with participation from countries such as Indonesia Morocco Albania Kosovo and Kazakhstan. At the same time Israel has planned to convert large areas of the occupied West Bank into state property which many countries consider illegal under international law. Eighty five countries at the United Nations condemned this move. These developments show that peace efforts remain fragile and deeply contested.

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

- More than 600 Palestinians have been killed since the October ceasefire in Gaza
- The United States pledged 10 billion dollars to the Board of Peace initiative
- Nine Muslim countries pledged about 7 billion dollars for Gaza relief
- The planned International Stabilisation Force is expected to consist of about 20,000 troops
- Five countries including Indonesia Morocco Albania Kosovo and Kazakhstan agreed to contribute troops
- Eighty five countries at the United Nations condemned Israel's West Bank land expropriation
- Israel issued a 60 day ultimatum to Hamas to disarm

To wrap up, the article portrays the Board of Peace initiative as a diplomatic performance that lacks substance and fairness. Peace cannot flourish when the principal victims of a conflict remain excluded from decisions about their future. Without clear commitments, balanced representation, and respect for international law the initiative risks becoming little more than smoke and mirrors. A durable settlement of the Palestinian issue demands genuine dialogue, credible guarantees, and recognition of Palestinian rights rather than symbolic gestures staged on the global stage.

## **KEYNES' MASTERPIECE AT 90**

Author: Shahid Mehmood

#### **Summary:**

This article revisits the enduring legacy of John Maynard Keynes and his seminal book *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*, published in 1936. The writer reflects on how this work reshaped modern economic thinking and influenced policymaking across the world. Keynes had earlier gained prominence through

works such as *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* where he warned that the punitive terms of the Treaty of Versailles would sow the seeds of another global conflict. His intellectual journey continued through important writings on monetary reform and the functioning of financial systems. The article notes that what economists today call Keynesian economics often represents later interpretations of Keynes' ideas rather than his exact formulations. For instance, the widely known IS LM model emerged from the work of John Hicks rather than Keynes himself. The central contribution of Keynes lay in his challenge to the orthodox belief that markets automatically restore equilibrium. During the crisis of the Great Depression, he demonstrated that economies could remain trapped in prolonged recession due to weak demand. Keynes rejected the classical doctrine associated with Jean Baptiste Say which asserted that supply creates its own demand. Instead, he argued that insufficient demand leads to unemployment and economic stagnation. To counter such downturns, he proposed fiscal intervention and demand management through public spending. Keynesian economics dominated policy debates from the 1930s until the 1970s. Later, inflation and unemployment during the 1970s weakened its dominance, while the ideas of Milton Friedman and monetarism gained influence. Yet Keynes' ideas returned to prominence during the global financial crisis of 2007 and the Covid pandemic when governments relied on large fiscal interventions to stabilise economies.

**Overview:**

The article examines the intellectual and practical significance of Keynes' economic philosophy. It highlights how his ideas transformed the understanding of recessions, unemployment, and government intervention in economic affairs. The writer emphasises that Keynes did not advocate unlimited state control but supported a balanced approach between free markets and public responsibility.

**NOTES:**

The article highlights the enduring intellectual legacy of John Maynard Keynes and his groundbreaking book *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*, which transformed modern economic thought. Keynes had already gained recognition through earlier writings such as *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, where he predicted instability after the Treaty of Versailles. His work challenged dominant economic doctrines and rejected the classical belief that markets automatically restore equilibrium. During the crisis of the Great Depression, Keynes demonstrated that economies could remain trapped in prolonged recession due to weak demand. He overturned the principle associated with Jean Baptiste Say that supply creates its own demand, arguing instead that insufficient demand produces unemployment and economic stagnation. Keynes proposed that governments should intervene through fiscal spending and demand management to revive economic activity. His ideas brought together concepts such as effective demand and the multiplier to explain fluctuations in economic performance. Keynesian economics dominated academic debate and policy formulation from the 1930s until the 1970s. Its dominance weakened when stagflation emerged after the 1973 oil crisis and alternative theories such as the monetarist ideas of Milton Friedman gained prominence. Despite this shift, Keynesian principles resurfaced during major crises such as the global financial crisis of 2007 and the Covid pandemic, when governments once again relied on fiscal intervention to stabilise economic systems.

**Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics and subjects:**

- Economics: Macroeconomic theory and fiscal policy, Economic crises and government intervention
- History of economic thought
- International Relations: Impact of global economic crises on policy frameworks
- Political Economy: Role of the state in economic management, Debate between free markets and public sector intervention

**Notes for Beginners:**

The article explains that Keynes challenged traditional economic beliefs during the economic turmoil of the twentieth century. Classical economists believed markets corrected themselves naturally. Keynes rejected this idea.

He argued that low demand could keep economies trapped in recession for years. For example, during the Great Depression millions lost jobs while businesses collapsed across the United States and Europe. Keynes proposed government spending to stimulate demand and revive economic activity. His ideas influenced policies such as the New Deal introduced under Franklin D. Roosevelt. Decades later, governments again used similar measures during the global financial crisis of 2007 and the Covid pandemic. Today almost every modern economy combines market forces with state intervention through welfare programmes and fiscal policy.

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

- The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money was published in 1936.
- Keynesian economics dominated economic policy roughly from the mid 1930s to the mid 1970s.
- The Great Depression began in 1929 and caused severe global unemployment.
- Keynes predicted future conflict after the Treaty of Versailles in 1919.
- The 1973 oil crisis contributed to stagflation which challenged Keynesian theory.
- Keynesian policies returned during the global financial crisis of 2007 and the Covid pandemic.

In a nutshell, The article pays tribute to the intellectual brilliance of John Maynard Keynes and his revolutionary economic visions. His ideas shattered rigid orthodoxy and opened new paths in economic reasoning. Even critics acknowledge his profound influence on modern policymaking. Economic doctrines rise and fall with time, but Keynes' vision still echoes through contemporary debates on growth, crisis management, and the role of the state. His legacy stands as a reminder that bold thinking can alter the course of economic history.

## **RETURN TO DEMOCRACY**

Author: Zahid Hussain

#### **Summary:**

The author in the article examines the political transition in Bangladesh after a decisive electoral victory by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party. The vote ended a period of uncertainty that followed the 2024 student led uprising which removed the long ruling government of Sheikh Hasina. Voters turned out in large numbers and signalled their desire for democratic restoration. Constitutional reforms were approved with broad support. These include term limits for prime ministers, a bicameral legislature, and stronger representation for women. The defeat of the Islamist alliance reflected rejection of religion based politics. The new leadership now inherits a state shaped by dynastic rivalry, institutional strain, and social expectations

The new prime minister, Tarique Rahman assumes office at a critical moment. He returned from exile after years of political turmoil and now leads with a reform agenda. Bangladesh must address governance gaps, restore institutional neutrality, and stabilise the economy. Growth has slowed in recent years. Inflation has risen. Youth unemployment has expanded. The vital garment sector faces pressure. But the country retains strong foundations in development indicators compared to many neighbours. Foreign policy recalibration is also required. Relations with India remain tense due to extradition disputes and water sharing issues. At the same time, ties with China have deepened through trade and infrastructure cooperation. Engagement with Pakistan has improved. The government has expressed interest in regional cooperation and revival of regional platforms. A stable democratic Bangladesh could contribute positively to South Asian balance and dialogue.

#### **Overview:**

The article analyses Bangladesh's electoral shift and its implications for democracy, governance, economy, and foreign relations. It highlights the end of authoritarian dominance and the emergence of a reform oriented leadership. The writer stresses that economic revival, institutional integrity, and balanced diplomacy will define the country's next phase.

## NOTES:

This article highlights Bangladesh's decisive electoral transition after the end of long authoritarian rule. The Bangladesh Nationalist Party secured a strong mandate following the 2024 uprising that removed Sheikh Hasina's government. Voters endorsed constitutional reforms including term limits for prime ministers, a bicameral parliament, and enhanced representation for women. The result signalled rejection of extremism and support for democratic consolidation. Tarique Rahman assumed leadership after returning from exile and now faces the responsibility of institutional reform. The country must improve governance standards, ensure neutrality of state institutions, and restore public trust. Economic slowdown, rising inflation, and youth unemployment demand urgent attention. The garment sector requires revival to sustain exports. Foreign relations also need recalibration. Ties with India remain strained due to extradition and water disputes. Cooperation with China has expanded through trade and infrastructure. Engagement with Pakistan has improved. A balanced regional approach and commitment to stability are essential for lasting progress.

### Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics and Subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs: South Asian political developments, Regional diplomacy and neighbourhood policy
- Current Affairs: Democratic transitions in South Asia, Bangladesh political change, India Bangladesh relations
- Political Science: Democratization and regime change, Constitutional reforms and institutional design, Party politics and dynastic leadership
- International Relations: Regional cooperation in South Asia, Balance of power in South Asia, Role of China and India in regional politics

### Notes for Beginners:

Bangladesh held a major election after the removal of a long ruling government in 2024. The opposition party won a large majority. Voter turnout was high, which showed public interest in democratic restoration. The former prime minister now lives in exile. The new leadership has pledged reforms such as term limits and stronger representation for women. Economically, Bangladesh once transformed from a low income state into one of the fastest growing economies in the region. However, recent years saw slower growth and rising inflation. The garment industry remains central to exports. Youth unemployment is a major concern due to demographic pressure. Foreign policy adjustments are expected, especially regarding India and China. Regional cooperation platforms may regain importance under stable governance.

### Facts and Figures:

- Bangladesh experienced 15 years of rule by the previous government before its removal in 2024.
- The new constitution includes a two term limit for prime ministers.
- Voters approved creation of a bicameral parliament.
- Bangladesh has recorded significant youth unemployment in recent years.
- The garment sector remains a key contributor to exports.
- The country improved social indicators compared to many South Asian states.
- Relations with India have faced tension over extradition and water disputes.

To sum up, the article presents Bangladesh at a turning point. Democracy has returned with renewed public confidence. But governance reform and economic revival remain urgent tasks. Institutional credibility must be strengthened. Regional diplomacy requires careful calibration. If stability is preserved, Bangladesh can translate electoral legitimacy into long term progress. The coming years will determine whether reform becomes reality or remains promise.

## WILL THE BOP ASSERT ITSELF?

Author: Ahmer Bilal Soofi

### Summary:

The article highlights the legal and political implications of Israel's decision to register large portions of the West Bank as state property on the eve of the Board of Peace meeting. It argues that this move challenges the core principles of international law, particularly those embedded in the UN Charter of 1945 and the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. These instruments clearly state that territory cannot be acquired through force and that occupation must remain temporary. An occupying power is bound by strict duties and restrictions. Israel ratified the Convention after internal deliberation, yet its long occupation has been criticised for repeated violations. The latest land registration effort risks undermining the credibility of the Board of Peace and the wider framework established under recent Security Council resolutions.

The article further analyses how the Board of Peace derives its authority from Chapter VIII of the UN Charter and from UNSC Resolution 2803, which outlines a pathway toward Palestinian self determination and reconstruction of Gaza. The resolution prohibits annexation of Gaza and supports the creation of an international security force. At the same time, the article affirms that Palestinians retain a recognised right to resist unlawful occupation under international law. This right cannot be removed by political arrangements. The International Court of Justice has declared that Israeli settlement policies in the West Bank violate international norms. No state recognises Israeli sovereignty over the territory. The author concludes that the Board's credibility will depend on whether it asserts the rule of law and prevents further unilateral land transfers. Its response will shape the future of the peace initiative.

### Overview:

The article evaluates Israel's land registration decision in the West Bank and its impact on the legitimacy of the Board of Peace. It emphasises the supremacy of international law, the temporary nature of occupation, and the legal obligations of states under global treaties. The writer stresses that institutional credibility depends on adherence to established norms.

### NOTES:

This article emphasises that the registration of large areas of the West Bank as state property challenges established principles of international law. It highlights the authority of the UN Charter of 1945 and the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, both of which prohibit acquisition of territory through force and affirm that occupation is temporary in nature. The writer notes that an occupying power is bound by strict legal duties and cannot alter the status quo or claim sovereignty over occupied land. Israel ratified the Convention after formal deliberation, yet continued settlement activity and land appropriation have drawn criticism for violating its provisions. The article also explains that the Board of Peace derives its mandate from Chapter VIII of the UN Charter and from UNSC Resolution 2803, which sets out a pathway toward Palestinian self determination and restricts annexation. It underlines that Palestinians retain a recognised right to resist unlawful occupation under international law, a right that cannot be removed by political arrangements. The International Court of Justice has declared West Bank settlement policies inconsistent with legal norms, and no state recognises Israeli sovereignty over the territory. The credibility of the Board will depend on its ability to enforce the rule of law, prevent unilateral land transfers, and uphold the framework established by international resolutions, as these factors will determine the future direction of the peace process.

### Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- International Relations: United Nations system and collective security, International humanitarian law, Middle East politics, Conflict resolution and peacebuilding

- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan's diplomatic role in multilateral forums, Relations with Muslim countries in global conflicts
- Current Affairs: Gaza conflict developments, Board of Peace initiative, UN Security Council resolutions
- Political Science: Global governance structures, Legitimacy of international institutions

### Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that international law does not permit acquisition of land through force. The UN Charter was adopted in 1945. The Fourth Geneva Convention followed in 1949. Together they establish that occupations must remain temporary. For example, settlement expansion in occupied territories is widely viewed as inconsistent with these rules. The International Court of Justice has stated that policies of land appropriation violate international norms. Security Council resolutions can authorise international forces to support peace efforts. However, such initiatives must respect existing legal rights. The Board of Peace was created under UNSC Resolution 2803 to support Gaza reconstruction and self determination. Its authority and effectiveness depend on adherence to these legal foundations.

### Facts and Figures:

- The UN Charter was adopted in 1945.
- The Fourth Geneva Convention was adopted in 1949.
- Israel signed the Convention on 8 December 1949.
- Ratification occurred on 6 July 1951.
- The Convention contains 159 articles governing conduct during occupation.
- UNSC Resolution 2803 was adopted a few months before the BoP meeting.
- Para 16 of the resolution states that Israel will not annex Gaza.
- The International Court of Justice has declared West Bank settlement policies incompatible with international law.

To wrap up, the article suggests that peace initiatives must rest on firm legal ground. The credibility of the Board of Peace will depend on its willingness to uphold international law. Territorial claims cannot override global norms. If institutions fail to act, their authority will weaken. Consistent enforcement of established rules remains the cornerstone of lasting stability.

## TAX TRUTHS

Author: Ehsan Malik

### Summary:

The article argues that Pakistan's tax debate has been reduced to a single obsession with raising the tax to GDP ratio. That approach misses the larger picture. Revenue matters, but the design of taxation matters even more. Taxes shape behaviour. They influence investment, documentation, and job creation. When policy focuses only on extraction, the economy begins to lose steam. Growth slows down. The formal sector shrinks. Capital looks for the exit door. The article stresses that the real question is not how much is collected but how intelligently the system is structured. A sound regime must widen the base, encourage compliance, and reward productivity. Otherwise, the state may win numbers on paper while the economy quietly weakens in practice.

The article classifies taxes into three broad categories. Good taxes are broad, predictable, and neutral. They expand compliance and reduce evasion. Bad taxes are narrow, high, and distortionary. They burden the compliant and push activity into the shadows. Ugly taxes are punitive and confidence shaking. It also examines four troubling examples. The taxation of salaried individuals has become excessively steep. Effective rates climb to levels comparable with

advanced economies, yet public services remain limited. The super tax, once presented as temporary, has become routine. It signals punishment for success and discourages reinvestment. The capital value tax on foreign assets has triggered capital flight and weakened trust. Section 7E taxation on deemed income creates stress for asset holders without cash flow. Alongside these measures, an 18 percent GST further strains the formal sector. Informal competitors often escape its reach. As a result, documentation stalls and investment retreats. The author suggests that Pakistan does not need fewer taxes, but it needs better ones. Predictability, fairness, and expansion of the base will strengthen growth. If policy continues to punish enterprise, the economy will contract instead of expanding.

#### **Overview:**

The article examines the structure of Pakistan's tax system and argues that quality of taxation outweighs mere revenue targets. It stresses that predictable, broad based, and growth friendly taxes support investment and employment. The writer highlights distortive measures that undermine confidence and calls for reform grounded in stability and fairness.

#### **NOTES:**

This article argues that Pakistan's tax debate has been reduced to a fixation on raising the tax to GDP ratio, while the deeper issue lies in the design of the system itself. It highlights that taxation does not merely collect revenue but also shapes investment decisions, employment trends, and the pace of formalisation. When policy focuses on extraction without regard to growth, the economy loses momentum and the formal sector shrinks. The article classifies taxes into good, bad and ugly categories. Good taxes are broad, stable and neutral. Bad taxes are narrow and distortionary. Ugly taxes are punitive and damage confidence. The author also examines four troubling measures including steep taxation of salaried individuals, the continuing super tax, the capital value tax on foreign assets, and Section 7E on deemed income. An 18 percent GST further strains compliant businesses while informal actors often escape its reach. The combined effect discourages reinvestment, fuels capital flight, and slows documentation. The core message is that Pakistan does not require fewer taxes, but it requires better structured and predictable taxes that widen the base and support sustainable growth.

#### **Relevant CSS Syllabus subjects and Topics:**

- Economics: Public finance and taxation theory, Fiscal policy and revenue generation, Economic growth and development strategies
- Current Affairs: Economic reforms in Pakistan, Investment climate and capital flight, Macroeconomic stability
- Pakistan Affairs: Structural challenges in the economy, Tax administration and governance

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

The article explains that taxation is not only about collecting money. It also guides economic behaviour. For example, high and sudden tax changes discourage investors. A broad tax base means many people pay moderate rates. This reduces evasion. An 18 percent GST is applied on goods and services. When many businesses remain informal, formal firms suffer unfair competition. The super tax was introduced as a temporary measure but later continued. Section 7E taxes assumed income from property. Such rules can create pressure for people who own assets but lack cash flow. The goal of reform is to widen the base and lower distortions. This encourages growth and job creation.

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

- Personal income tax rates for some groups reach up to 38 percent with surcharges
- Non salaried top rate can reach 49 percent
- General Sales Tax stands at 18 percent
- Super tax applies as an additional corporate levy
- Section 7E taxes deemed income on immovable property

To wrap up, tax reform must move beyond slogans and focus on structure. Revenue alone cannot rescue an economy. A fair and stable system builds trust. Predictable rules invite investment. Excessive burdens push activity away. If Pakistan wants growth and employment, it must design taxes that support enterprise rather than suppress it. Sustainable prosperity begins with smart taxation, not with heavier pressure.

## ABSORBING POPULATION GROWTH

Author: Zeba Sathar

### Summary:

In this article, the author argues that Pakistan can no longer afford denial on population growth. The evidence is overwhelming and the verdict is clear. Rapid demographic expansion has slowed economic progress and deepened poverty. It has also reduced per capita income and strained public services. While neighbours such as Bangladesh acted decisively, Pakistan remained complacent. The cost has been heavy in economic loss and human suffering. Large households save less and invest less in education. Nutrition and health outcomes also decline. The promise of a demographic dividend has not materialised. Youth unemployment has risen instead of falling. Each year millions enter the labour market. Jobs do not keep pace. Even the finance minister has acknowledged this mismatch. Urbanisation was expected to drive growth. Yet migration is pushed by rural distress rather than pulled by opportunity. Structural reform remains limited. However, awareness is improving. Media initiatives, religious endorsements, and parliamentary dialogue have built momentum. Still, consensus without execution is meaningless. The article contends that the solution demands urgent and coordinated action. Population policy cannot remain scattered across statements and symbolic gestures. The federal government must lead with clarity and resources. Provinces require support, especially those with limited capacity. Financial backing should target districts facing acute deprivation. Existing social protection programmes can be leveraged to address unmet family planning needs. A dedicated population fund under the finance ministry should be activated and aligned with performance indicators. Grants must reward tangible improvements in health and access. Women's education and employment stand at the centre of this strategy. Empowered women shape smaller families and stronger households. Safe mobility and skills development will unlock economic potential. The public conversation has shifted in the right direction. Now policy must catch up. Without decisive measures, demographic pressure will continue to weigh down growth and widen inequality.

### Overview:

The article examines Pakistan's population challenge and argues that unchecked growth undermines development. It stresses the need for coordinated policy, fiscal commitment, and institutional reform. The writer highlights women's empowerment, education, and family planning as central pillars for sustainable progress.

### NOTES:

Pakistan's rapid population growth has emerged as a major obstacle to economic progress and social welfare. Large households struggle to save or invest in education and nutrition. The anticipated demographic dividend has failed to appear because the economy cannot generate sufficient employment for the millions of young people who enter the labour force every year. Urban migration also reflects rural distress rather than genuine economic opportunity. Recent discussions among policymakers, media institutions, and religious scholars have created wider acceptance of family planning and birth spacing. However, awareness alone will not solve the crisis. The federal government must assume a leading role and coordinate with provinces through stronger policy direction and financial support. Targeted funding should focus on vulnerable districts where access to education, healthcare, and family planning services remains limited. Social protection programmes such as income support initiatives can also address unmet reproductive health needs among poorer households. The article emphasises that women's education, safe

employment, and economic participation are the most effective instruments for stabilising population growth and strengthening household welfare.

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

- Pakistan Affairs: Population growth challenges in Pakistan, Socioeconomic development, Women empowerment and education
- Current Affairs: Demographic trends, Youth unemployment, Public policy reforms
- Economics: Demographic dividend, Labour market dynamics, Human capital formation, Poverty and inequality
- Public Administration: Policy coordination, Fiscal federalism, Programme implementation and governance
- Sociology: Family structure and fertility patterns, Urbanisation and social change

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

The article explains that rapid population growth can slow economic progress. When families have many dependents, savings decline. Education spending per child also falls. As a result, human capital weakens. The demographic dividend means a larger share of working age people can boost growth. However, this benefit appears only if jobs are available. In Pakistan, youth enter the labour force every year in large numbers. Employment creation has not matched this rise. Urban migration often happens because rural income is insufficient. Structural reforms are needed to create new sectors and productive jobs. Women's education and paid work increase household income and improve child health. Media campaigns and religious endorsements now support family planning and birth spacing.

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

- Rapid population growth has continued since 2000.
- Youth unemployment has risen due to limited job creation.
- Large households tend to save less and invest less in education.
- Millions enter the labour force each year.
- Provinces require supplemental federal support for population programmes.
- Women's education and paid employment are identified as key solutions.

In a nutshell, Population pressure cannot be ignored any longer. Economic growth will remain constrained without demographic balance. Awareness has increased across institutions and communities. That progress must now translate into action. Coordinated policy, targeted funding, and women centred reform can change the trajectory. If leadership steps up with resolve, the demographic challenge can become an opportunity. If it is left unattended, it will continue to drag the nation backward. The choice is clear and the time is now.

## **A PEEK INTO TRUMP'S IRAN MINDSET**

Author: Abbas Nasir

#### **Summary:**

In this article, the author explores the strategic thinking behind the possibility of a United States attack on Iran under President Donald Trump and the complex calculations that shape such a decision. Growing military mobilisation in the Persian Gulf and the formation of a large naval force suggest that Washington may be preparing for more than simple intimidation. The pressure exerted by Israel and influential pro-Israel circles in the United States adds another layer to this unfolding crisis, but the decision to launch a strike involves serious risks. The United States enjoys overwhelming military superiority. However Iran has the capacity to retaliate in ways that could prolong conflict and impose heavy costs. The American leadership must weigh domestic political realities, especially the approaching midterm elections, against the unpredictable consequences of war.

The article also examines Iran's potential response and the broader regional implications of conflict. Iranian planners recognise they cannot defeat the United States in direct confrontation. They therefore focus on raising the economic and strategic cost of aggression. Disruption of the Strait of Hormuz could paralyse global oil flows and push prices to extreme levels. Such an outcome would shake economies around the world, including fragile states such as Pakistan. The geopolitical environment further complicates the scenario. Russia and China maintain cautious positions while safeguarding their own strategic interests. The possibility of escalation, unintended confrontation, and regional destabilisation looms large. The decision before Washington therefore carries consequences far beyond the battlefield.

#### **Overview:**

The article examines the geopolitical tensions surrounding a possible United States strike on Iran. It focuses on military calculations, domestic political pressures, and the potential economic shock that conflict could unleash. The writer argues that Iran may not win a war but can impose severe costs through asymmetric retaliation and disruption of global energy routes.

#### **NOTES:**

The article highlights the mounting tension between the United States and Iran and explains the strategic calculations behind a possible American strike. Military mobilisation in the Persian Gulf signals that the situation extends beyond symbolic pressure. Washington possesses overwhelming military power. But Iran retains the ability to retaliate and impose serious costs. Iranian strategy centres on asymmetric response rather than direct confrontation. A key element lies in the potential disruption of the Strait of Hormuz which carries a large share of the world's oil supply. Any obstruction of this route could send global oil prices soaring and trigger economic shock across many regions. Domestic political considerations also shape the thinking of Donald Trump since electoral consequences remain a constant concern in Washington. The geopolitical environment further complicates the crisis. China and Russia maintain a cautious stance while protecting their strategic interests in the region. Their naval activities in the Gulf add another layer of uncertainty. The conflict therefore carries implications that stretch far beyond the battlefield. Regional stability, global energy markets, and the economic security of states such as Pakistan could all face serious disruption if tensions escalate into open war.

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

- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan's energy vulnerability, Regional security environment
- Current Affairs: Middle East conflicts, US foreign policy, Energy security and oil markets
- International Relations: Balance of power in the Middle East, Great power rivalry, Strategic chokepoints and maritime security
- Political Science: Foreign policy decision making, Domestic political influence on international actions

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

The article explains how international conflicts affect the global economy and regional stability. The Persian Gulf contains vital shipping routes for energy trade. Nearly one fifth of the world's oil supply moves through the Strait of Hormuz each day. If conflict blocks this passage, oil prices could rise dramatically. Experts suggest that prices may climb near 150 dollars per barrel during prolonged disruption. Such a surge would damage energy dependent economies. Countries like Pakistan rely heavily on imported fuel and would face inflation and financial strain. Iran's strategy focuses on raising these costs rather than defeating the United States militarily.

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

- Around 20 percent of global oil passes daily through the Strait of Hormuz
- Oil prices could reach 150 dollars per barrel during prolonged disruption
- United States military planners claim capacity for hundreds of air sorties daily
- China imports a significant portion of its oil from Iran at discounted rates

- Recent regional conflicts have already tested missile defence systems

To sum up the article highlights the modern geopolitical rivalry. Military strength alone cannot guarantee a quick or clean victory. Strategic chokepoints, economic interdependence, and regional alliances transform local conflicts into global crises. Any confrontation between the United States and Iran would ripple across the world economy and destabilise an already volatile region. Prudence, therefore, may prove more valuable than power in determining the final decision.

## AI IN THE CLASSROOM

Author: Ayesha Razzaque

### Summary:

The article reflects on the rapidly expanding role of artificial intelligence in higher education and the debate surrounding how far universities should integrate these technologies into teaching and administration. The discussion draws on insights shared during the Machines Can Think 2026 conference in Abu Dhabi where academic leaders from institutions such as Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence, Khalifa University, and New York University Abu Dhabi examined different strategies for adopting AI in education. Some institutions have already begun deploying AI tutoring agents capable of delivering personalised instruction to students around the clock. Advocates believe such systems can relieve faculty from repetitive teaching tasks and free time for research. The writer remains cautious about the idea of replacing professors with machines and argues that past technological promises in education often exaggerated their transformative potential. Earlier innovations such as distance learning platforms, recorded lectures, and massive open online courses also claimed to revolutionise education but ultimately complemented rather than replaced traditional classrooms.

The article further argues that the real question facing universities is not whether artificial intelligence will reshape education but how and where it should do so. Some institutions favour a top down policy that mandates AI adoption while others encourage a bottom up approach that allows faculty to experiment freely. AI tools show promise in areas such as grading assistance, admissions processing, predictive analytics to identify disengaged students, and campus management systems that optimise timetables and facilities. However universities remain cautious about ethical concerns, particularly in high stakes assessments. The writer concludes that the temptation to use AI merely for efficiency and cost reduction must be resisted. Institutions that place the learner at the centre and employ AI to enhance rather than replace human interaction will likely achieve the most meaningful transformation in education.

### Overview:

The article examines the growing influence of artificial intelligence in higher education and evaluates competing institutional strategies for adopting AI technologies. It highlights both the opportunities and the limitations of AI tools while stressing the importance of preserving the human dimension of learning.

### NOTES:

The article discusses the debate surrounding artificial intelligence in higher education and highlights how universities are experimenting with different approaches to its integration. Discussions at the Machines Can Think 2026 conference reveal that institutions in Abu Dhabi are adopting varied strategies despite operating in the same policy environment. Some universities have begun using AI driven tutoring agents capable of delivering personalised instruction and round the clock support for students. Supporters believe these systems can reduce repetitive teaching tasks and allow faculty members to focus more on research. The writer however warns against the assumption that AI can replace professors and reminds readers that earlier technological innovations such as online learning platforms and massive open online courses were also expected to transform universities but eventually served only as supplementary tools. The article further suggests that institutions differ in their approach to implementation. Some enforce structured policies from the top while others allow faculty members to experiment

freely with AI applications. Universities are particularly interested in using AI to assist with grading, admissions processing, predictive analysis of student engagement, scheduling of facilities, and administrative efficiency. Nevertheless ethical concerns remain central, especially regarding fairness and academic integrity in student evaluation. The writer concludes that universities should avoid reducing artificial intelligence to a simple cost cutting instrument and instead use it to enrich the learning experience while preserving the social and intellectual environment of the classroom.

### **Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:**

- Pakistan Affairs: Education policy and development of human capital
- Current Affairs: Artificial intelligence and technological transformation
- International Relations: Global knowledge economy and technological competition
- Education: Digital learning and higher education reforms

### **Notes for Beginners:**

The article explains how artificial intelligence is gradually entering universities and influencing the way education is delivered. Some universities now use AI tutors that help students understand lessons and answer questions at any time of the day. For example AI systems can assist teachers by checking assignments, analysing student progress, and identifying learners who are losing interest in their studies. AI can also organise university timetables, manage classroom bookings, and reduce administrative workload. However the writer argues that technology should not replace teachers because education is not only about delivering information but also about discussion, mentorship, and social learning inside the classroom. Universities therefore need to strike a balance by using AI to support learning while keeping the human element at the centre of education.

### **Facts and Figures:**

- Machines Can Think 2026 conference hosted in Abu Dhabi
- AI tutoring agents are being developed for personalised teaching
- AI tools are being tested for grading, admissions, and administrative work
- Predictive analytics can identify disengaged students to improve retention
- AI can optimise timetables, campus facilities usage, and energy management systems

To sum up, The article reflects the future of higher education in an age shaped by artificial intelligence. Technology promises efficiency and innovation, still education cannot be reduced to algorithms and automated systems. Universities that harness AI wisely while protecting the human essence of teaching and learning will shape a more balanced and meaningful academic future.

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

1. Adoption – acceptance or use of a new idea or technology; Synonym: acceptance; Antonym: rejection
2. Euphoria – intense excitement or enthusiasm; Synonym: elation; Antonym: disappointment
3. Predictive – relating to forecasting future outcomes; Synonym: anticipatory; Antonym: reactive
4. Invasive – excessively intrusive or violating privacy; Synonym: intrusive; Antonym: respectful

## **LESSONS FROM THE TALIBAN**

Author: Muhammad Amir Rana

### **Summary:**

Pakistan has reached a critical juncture in its approach toward religious extremism and its relationship with Afghanistan. The recent confrontation with the Taliban offers both a cautionary tale and an opportunity. On one hand, the loss of life and disruption along the western border underscores the persistent dangers of militancy and weak state control. On the other hand, Pakistan appears to have steered away from institutionalized radicalism

before it could take deeper root. For decades, religious radicalism served as a tool for power elites to consolidate authority, create proxies, and foster national cohesion. However the strategy failed to achieve its intended goals, leaving ethnic unrest, subnational movements, and social fragmentation in its wake. The Taliban's rise and their short-sighted governance offered Pakistan a stark lesson: ideological alignments and proxy exploitation may carry long-term costs that far outweigh short-term gains.

The author argues that the state must now adopt a pragmatic, enforcement-oriented approach. Operations such as Ghazab lil-Haq signal a shift toward addressing security threats directly while maintaining strategic autonomy from the Taliban. Pakistan needs to dismantle terrorist networks operating from Afghan soil, regulate religious institutions to confine them to scholarly roles, and curtail the misuse of laws like blasphemy statutes, which extremist groups exploit. While some radical figures have moderated, their economic and social influence persists, highlighting the importance of institutional oversight. If the state strengthens constitutional governance, promotes trust in democratic norms, and avoids reliance on proxies, Pakistan can secure its internal stability, prevent ideological spillover, and reposition itself as a responsible regional actor capable of pragmatic engagement with Afghanistan.

#### **Overview:**

The article examines Pakistan's evolving stance toward religious radicalism and the Taliban in Afghanistan. It underlines the failure of past elite-driven strategies to use extremism for national cohesion and highlights the country's current move toward pragmatic security measures. The article emphasizes dismantling terrorist networks, regulating religious institutions, and asserting state authority to prevent ideological infiltration and ensure political stability.

#### **NOTES:**

The article presents a clear turning point in Pakistan's approach to extremism and its regional policy. It argues that the long standing reliance on religious radicalism as a strategic instrument failed to deliver cohesion or lasting security. Instead, it deepened ethnic divides and weakened institutional integrity. The recent confrontation with the Taliban signaled a decisive departure from ideological illusions toward a more pragmatic and enforcement based strategy. Operations such as Ghazab lil-Haq reflect this new direction, as the state moves to dismantle terrorist networks operating from Afghan soil and to curb cross border militancy. The author also highlights the need to regulate religious institutions, end the misuse of blasphemy laws, and reduce political patronage of radical actors. By strengthening constitutional governance and distancing itself from proxy driven policies, Pakistan can protect its sovereignty, limit ideological spillover and rebuild internal stability on firmer ground.

#### **Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:**

- Pakistan Affairs: Security policy, counterterrorism, civil-military relations, extremist movements
- Current Affairs: Pakistan-Afghanistan relations, regional stability, proxy dynamics
- International Relations: Strategic engagement, ideological conflicts, border security

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

The article explains that Pakistan's past reliance on religious extremism as a tool for national strategy failed to produce unity or security. Extremist groups were used as proxies to influence Afghanistan and counter rivals, but this strategy created divisions at home. Today, the state is taking direct action, such as military operations against Taliban incursions, regulating religious schools to focus on education, and curbing misuse of laws. For example, madressahs that once nurtured extremist thinking are now being confined to scholarly roles. If Pakistan continues this path, it can strengthen internal security and improve relations with Afghanistan without ideological interference.

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

- 65 percent of Pakistan's population belongs to low-income groups vulnerable to ideological influence
- Ghazab lil-Haq operation launched in response to Taliban attacks inside Pakistan
- Multiple madressahs and religious institutions previously used for proxy purposes are being regulated

- Misuse of blasphemy laws has been a major form of institutionalized radicalism

To sum up, the article highlights a turning point in Pakistan's approach to extremism and its regional engagement. By prioritizing enforcement over ideology and regulating the instruments of radicalization, the country can protect its sovereignty, reduce internal fragmentation, and foster pragmatic cooperation with Afghanistan. The lesson is that reliance on proxies and ideological manipulation carries long-term risks, while state-driven governance and strategic restraint pave the way for stability and national cohesion.

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

- Institutionalized – established as a structured system; Synonym: formalized; Antonym: informal
- Pragmatic – practical and focused on results; Synonym: realistic; Antonym: idealistic
- Proxy – a substitute used to exert influence indirectly; Synonym: agent; Antonym: principal
- Spillover – unintended consequence extending beyond original boundaries; Synonym: overflow; Antonym: containment

## **BOARD OF PEACE**

Author: Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry

#### **Summary:**

The United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 2803 in November 2025 to create a transitional mechanism for Gaza. The body was meant to coordinate reconstruction funds and oversee governance until reforms were completed by the Palestinian Authority. It also authorised a temporary International Stabilisation Force to support stability. The first formal meeting took place in Washington in February 2026. Although delegates from many states attended, membership remains limited. Several major powers stayed away due to uncertainty about the mandate. Confusion deepened after suggestions that the body's scope could expand beyond Gaza. This ambiguity weakened confidence in its long term purpose.

The meeting failed to meet three core expectations. First, it did not ensure full compliance with the ceasefire that ended the two year war in Gaza. The truce has been repeatedly violated, and casualties have continued. Second, humanitarian relief has entered Gaza but remains insufficient. Access is restricted and suffering persists. Third, no meaningful progress has been made toward Palestinian self determination. Reconstruction funds were pledged, but Israel has linked rebuilding to disarmament conditions. The proposed stabilisation force also faces uncertainty, as troop contributors may confront operational dilemmas. Pakistan adopted a cautious stance. It supported Palestinian rights and refrained from committing troops until clear political conditions emerge. In my view, lasting peace requires genuine statehood prospects, credible implementation of agreements, and balanced international leadership rather than symbolic declarations.

#### **Overview:**

The article evaluates the creation and early activity of the Board of Peace for Gaza. It highlights structural ambiguity, limited membership, incomplete ceasefire enforcement, restricted humanitarian access, and stalled progress toward Palestinian statehood. The writer emphasises the need for clarity, neutrality, and adherence to international legitimacy.

#### **NOTES:**

The article highlights the early performance of the Board of Peace and stresses the importance of clarity, credibility, and genuine implementation. It explains that the body was created under United Nations Security Council Resolution 2803 in November 2025 to oversee Gaza's transitional governance and coordinate reconstruction until reforms are completed. Although the first meeting was held in Washington in February 2026, membership remains limited and uncertainty surrounds its mandate. The lack of clear scope has reduced confidence in its long term role. The meeting also failed to ensure full ceasefire compliance, as violations continued despite the agreement that ended

the two year war. Humanitarian assistance has entered Gaza, yet access remains restricted and suffering persists. Reconstruction pledges have been made, but progress is hindered by political conditions attached to disarmament demands. The proposed stabilisation force faces operational ambiguity. Meanwhile, no concrete steps have been taken toward Palestinian self determination. Pakistan adopted a cautious and principled stance. It supported Palestinian rights while avoiding troop commitments until a clear political framework and Israeli withdrawal are secured. The core message is that lasting peace depends on effective enforcement, balanced leadership, and a credible path toward statehood rather than symbolic gestures.

### **Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:**

- International Relations: United Nations system, conflict resolution, peacekeeping operations, state sovereignty
- Current Affairs: Middle East conflict, Gaza crisis, humanitarian law
- Pakistan Affairs: Foreign policy balance, multilateral diplomacy

### **Notes for Beginners:**

The article explains that the Board of Peace was formed to support Gaza after a ceasefire. It was designed to manage funding and help create conditions for Palestinian governance. However, progress has been limited. The ceasefire is not fully respected. Humanitarian aid reaches Gaza but remains insufficient. For example, aid enters slowly and many displaced families still lack basic services. Reconstruction funds were announced by international actors. But political conditions remain unresolved. Pakistan chose not to send troops to the proposed force until Israeli withdrawal and a Palestinian administration are in place. This shows a careful diplomatic approach.

### **Facts and Figures:**

- UN Security Council Resolution 2803 adopted in November 2025
- Board of Peace first meeting held in February 2026
- Over 72,000 people reported killed during the two year conflict
- About 80 percent of Gaza buildings destroyed
- Around 2.1 million people displaced
- More than 600 aid workers killed
- US pledged \$10 billion for reconstruction
- Nine countries pledged approximately \$7 billion

To sum up, the article underlines that institutions alone cannot guarantee stability without political clarity and genuine commitment to rights and security. The Board of Peace must evolve beyond symbolism and demonstrate effectiveness. Durable peace requires adherence to ceasefire terms, unrestricted humanitarian access, and a credible pathway toward statehood. Without these pillars, the architecture of peace will remain fragile and incomplete.

## **BUDGET 2026-27 AS A BRIDGE**

Author: Ishrat Husain

### **Summary:**

The author argues that the federal budget for 2026 to 2027 must serve as a decisive bridge between macroeconomic stabilisation and sustainable growth. With the IMF programme nearing its end in 2027, this budget carries strategic weight rather than routine significance. The author acknowledges the progress achieved in restoring stability. Inflation has eased, the exchange rate has steadied, fiscal discipline has improved, and key structural reforms have advanced. Yet the article stresses that stability alone is not victory. The real test lies in shifting from survival mode to upward momentum. Continued reforms in taxation, trade policy, deregulation, energy, and privatisation must remain on track. At the same time, the global environment is becoming more restrictive, with rising protectionism

and fragmented supply chains. Export strategy must therefore adapt to new realities and prepare for life beyond the IMF framework.

The article suggests that sustainable growth demands institutional coherence, internal security, and policy consistency. Terrorism has weakened investor confidence and must be addressed decisively. Economic progress cannot flourish in an insecure climate. Coordination failures between ministries and provinces must also be corrected through stronger use of constitutional forums such as the National Economic Council and the Council of Common Interests. Performance based governance should replace procedural inertia. Ministries must operate under measurable targets linked to budget allocations. Moreover, industrial revival requires productivity gains, technology adoption, export competitiveness, and integration into global value chains. Regulatory simplification is essential to improve the ease of doing business. If the 2026 to 2027 budget establishes these foundations, exiting the IMF programme will become a genuine transformation rather than a symbolic milestone.

**Overview:**

The article examines how the upcoming budget can transition Pakistan from macroeconomic stabilisation to durable growth. It highlights reform continuity, global headwinds, security challenges, institutional coordination, industrial revival, and regulatory reform as pillars of a post IMF strategy. The writer presents the budget as a structural turning point rather than a routine fiscal document.

**NOTES:**

The article highlights that the federal budget for 2026 to 2027 must act as a transition from stability to sustained growth as the IMF programme approaches its conclusion in 2027. It stresses that macroeconomic gains such as lower inflation, stable exchange rate, improved fiscal discipline, and ongoing structural reforms should be preserved and strengthened. However, stability alone is insufficient. The budget must lay the groundwork for a post IMF economic strategy centred on export expansion, productivity growth, trade competitiveness, and integration into global value chains. In a world marked by rising protectionism and supply chain fragmentation, Pakistan must adjust its export policy to new realities and avoid reliance on past advantages. Institutional coordination between federal and provincial governments should be reinforced through effective use of constitutional forums. Performance based governance must replace administrative inertia, with clear targets linked to budget allocations. Security remains essential for investment confidence, as economic progress cannot thrive amid instability. Industrial revival, regulatory simplification, digitalisation, privatisation, and alignment of tax and tariff policies with productivity goals are necessary to reverse deindustrialisation. If these foundations are secured in the 2026 to 2027 budget, the exit from the IMF programme will represent a meaningful transformation rather than a ceremonial milestone.

**Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:**

- Pakistan Affairs: Fiscal policy, economic reforms, industrial development, governance challenges
- Current Affairs: IMF programme, global trade environment, protectionism, geopolitical fragmentation
- International Relations: Economic diplomacy, trade agreements, regional competitiveness, global value chains
- Economics: Macroeconomic stability, structural adjustment, productivity, competitiveness, public finance

**Notes for beginners:**

The article explains that the 2026 to 2027 budget is important because it may be the last one before Pakistan completes its IMF programme. The country has achieved stability, but growth must follow. For example, reforms in tax systems, energy pricing, trade policy, and privatisation should continue. The global environment is changing, with countries raising trade barriers. Pakistan must therefore strengthen exports and improve competitiveness. Security is also vital because investors avoid unstable regions. The article suggests that ministries should work together with clear performance targets. Industrial development and technology investment should increase productivity. Simplifying regulations will help businesses start and expand more easily.

**Facts and Figures:**

- IMF programme expected to conclude in 2027
- Budget 2026 to 2027 described as bridge budget
- Ongoing reforms include tariff policy, FBR digitisation, and privatisation initiatives
- Global trend shows rising protectionism and fragmented supply chains
- Focus required on export growth and productivity enhancement

To sum up, this article presents the budget as a strategic opportunity rather than a fiscal formality. It calls for continuity of reform, stronger institutions, improved governance, and renewed industrial focus. Stability has been achieved, but growth must now take centre stage. If policymakers align ambition with discipline, Pakistan can move beyond dependence on external programmes. A clear roadmap today will determine whether tomorrow brings sustainable prosperity or renewed uncertainty.

CSS PLATFORM

# The Express Tribune –

## CEASEFIRE DYNAMICS

### Summary:

The article argues the insurgency in Baloch areas of Balochistan without romanticism or selective amnesia. The unrest remains largely confined to the former Kalat State, though militant activity has begun to seep into central districts and Quetta. The article rejects the habitual lament about grievances as a complete explanation. Sardars such as Sardar Akhtar Mengal and Sardar Attaullah Mengal have not resolved the crisis; they have entrenched it. The present insurgency no longer revolves around tribal chiefs. It draws strength from radicalised youth, some educated in mainstream universities and others influenced by ideological teachers in newly established institutions. The objective is secession, fuelled by fantasies of mineral wealth and corridor riches. Foreign intelligence agencies provide training, finance, and sanctuary. India, Israel, Afghanistan, and at times Iran appear in this shadow theatre. Dialogue under current terms offers no viable path because the demand itself strikes at the state's integrity.

This article suggests that Pakistan must prepare for a protracted counterinsurgency campaign executed with clarity and resolve. The disease has spread and requires decisive treatment. A comprehensive surge must occur across military, intelligence, administrative, and narrative domains. Southern Command requires enhanced resources. Technology, stand off weapons, and targeted operations should dismantle militant sanctuaries. Smaller Terrorist Free Zones can expand outward to sanitise affected belts. Intelligence coordination, including cooperation with Iran, must deepen. Civil administration should follow immediately after clearance, staffed by competent officers and insulated from tribal patronage. Development funds must reach ordinary citizens rather than reinforce entrenched elites. Media and social platforms should project a fact based narrative to dismantle militant myths. Only synchronised action can restore the writ of the state and prevent this localised insurgency from metastasising.

### Overview:

The article contends that the insurgency in Baloch areas is localised yet dangerous, driven by radicalised youth and external backing, and can only be contained through a fully resourced, multidimensional counterinsurgency strategy rather than misplaced political appeasement.

### NOTES:

The insurgency remains geographically concentrated but shows expansion potential. Tribal elites have historically failed to deliver stability. Youth radicalisation has replaced traditional tribal leadership in militancy. Secessionist aims underpin the movement. External intelligence agencies supply financial and logistical support. Dialogue without preconditions is impractical where territorial integrity is contested. Counterinsurgency requires military surge, intelligence integration, administrative consolidation, and narrative management. Development funds must bypass corrupt intermediaries. State writ must be visible and permanent in reclaimed areas.

### Relevant CSS Syllabus topics and Subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs: Federalism, centre province relations, Balochistan issue
- International Relations: Foreign interference, proxy conflicts, regional geopolitics
- Political Science: State legitimacy, insurgency theory, governance failures
- Governance and Public Administration: Civil military coordination, administrative reform

### Notes for Beginners:

An insurgency differs from sporadic unrest. It aims to challenge state authority over territory. In this case, militant activity concentrates in Kalat, Jhalawan, and Sarawan. Quetta has also faced coordinated attacks. Foreign support often transforms local grievances into organised rebellion. External funding supplies weapons and propaganda tools. The state response in similar areas such as Waziristan and Tirah offers precedent. Terrorist Free

Zones can isolate hostile elements. After military clearance, civil officers must restore schools, courts, and markets. Development funds require strict monitoring to prevent diversion. Public confidence rises when security and services return together.

### **Facts and Figures:**

- The insurgency is primarily concentrated in the former Kalat State region, with spillover into Quetta and parts of central Balochistan.
- Two dozen coordinated attacks recently targeted security forces across Quetta and adjoining districts.
- Universities in Panjgur, Khuzdar, and Turbat are identified as hubs of ideological radicalisation among youth.
- Sardars have dominated provincial politics since 1947, yet stability has not been achieved.
- Southern Command is assigned as the lead formation for a proposed full spectrum counterinsurgency response.

To sum up, The article shows this conflict as serious as well as containable. It is not an existential collapse, but complacency would invite that fate. The state must act with unity of purpose. Half measures have failed before. Decisive, synchronised, and sustained action can reverse the tide. Without it, a local blaze may ignite a wider conflagration.

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

- Insurgency
  - Meaning armed rebellion against authority
  - Synonyms revolt uprising rebellion
  - Antonyms peace order stability
- Secession
  - Meaning withdrawal from a state
  - Synonyms separation breakaway independence
  - Antonyms union integration unity
- Kinetic
  - Meaning involving direct force
  - Synonyms forceful military combative
  - Antonyms peaceful diplomatic nonviolent
- Writ
  - Meaning authority of the state
  - Synonyms mandate authority jurisdiction
  - Antonyms lawlessness defiance anarchy
- Protracted
  - Meaning extended in duration
  - Synonyms prolonged lengthy enduring
  - Antonyms brief short fleeting

# MODI'S GEO-ECONOMIC PIVOT: IMPLICATIONS FOR PAKISTAN

Author: Syed Mohammad Ali

## Summary:

The article highlights Europe's growing partnership with India which marks a decisive shift in global power politics. The European Union is anchoring India within emerging connectivity corridors that link South Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. This step reflects a broader strategy of supply chain realignment and economic derisking from China. India gains not only market access but also strategic recognition as a central node in future infrastructure and standards networks. The United States has also eased tariffs on Indian exports. Together, these moves indicate Western recalibration toward New Delhi. For Prime Minister Narendra Modi, this alignment offers political relief. Domestic pressures had weakened his position. Inflation and coalition politics reduced his room for manoeuvre. The new trade openings allow him to project global ascent despite internal challenges. Yet India's majoritarian politics and treatment of minorities remain intact. Economic stature, however, appears to overshadow these concerns in Western calculations.

For Pakistan, this evolving landscape demands serious reflection. Relations with India remain stalled over Kashmir. Tensions over water sharing add further strain. Meanwhile, Islamabad has not secured equivalent economic dividends from Washington. India is positioning itself as a manufacturing hub and a logistics bridge across regions. Pakistan has pursued geo economic ambitions as well, particularly through CPEC. While infrastructure has expanded, debt concerns have grown. Integration into global value chains remains limited. The future of Gwadar depends on resolving local grievances in Balochistan. Investor confidence requires stability and transparency. The article concludes that Pakistan must expand connectivity beyond existing corridors. It must link Central Asia, the Gulf, and maritime routes. Export growth and productivity gains are essential. Inclusive development is not merely economic policy. It is also a security necessity. Without structural adjustment, strategic balance in South Asia may tilt further.

**Overview :** The article examines Europe's strategic embrace of India and its implications for Pakistan, highlighting shifting global supply chains, Western recalibration, and the urgent need for Pakistan to strengthen trade integration and economic resilience.

## NOTES:

Western powers are recalibrating alliances in a multipolar environment. Supply chain politics now shape diplomacy. India is being positioned as a strategic manufacturing hub. Tariff adjustments reflect economic statecraft. Geo economics influences foreign policy decisions. Pakistan must diversify trade corridors. Connectivity projects require regional integration. Debt sustainability affects long term development. Inclusive growth supports national security. Export expansion strengthens strategic standing.

## CSS Syllabus and Relevant Subjects:

- International Relations: Geoeconomics, alliance shifts, supply chain diplomacy
- Current Affairs: EU India partnership, US tariff policy, South Asia dynamics
- Pakistan Affairs: CPEC performance, Kashmir dispute, regional connectivity
- Economics: Trade diversification, export strategy, industrial integration
- Political Science: Power transitions, domestic politics and foreign policy

## Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that global trade is shifting. Countries now secure supply chains through trusted partners. Europe is building corridors with India. This links infrastructure, standards, and commerce. It strengthens manufacturing networks. India benefits from tariff easing by the United States. Such policies improve export prospects. Pakistan must respond with similar strategic planning. For example, CPEC can be extended toward

Central Asia and the Gulf. Gwadar's success depends on local stability. If investor confidence declines, projects slow down. Export growth is essential for economic balance. Without integration into global value chains, development remains incomplete.

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

- The European Union is strengthening connectivity with India through emerging corridors.
- The United States has eased tariffs on certain Indian exports.
- India aims to position itself as a manufacturing platform and logistical bridge.
- Pakistan's CPEC has expanded infrastructure but increased debt burden.
- The Indus Waters Treaty remains a source of tension between Pakistan and India.

In a nutshell, Global power is being rearranged through trade and infrastructure. India is capitalising on this transition. Pakistan must not remain a bystander. Strategic adjustment is essential. Economic integration, export expansion, and regional connectivity must guide policy. Only then can Pakistan secure stability in a rapidly evolving world.

## **IRAN — MEANS AND END DEBATE**

Author: Dr Muhammad Ali Ehsan

#### **Summary:**

In this article, the author examines the stalled US Iran negotiations and the growing tension shaped by external pressures. The Geneva talks ended without agreement. Iran agreed to submit a written proposal, while the United States announced further diplomatic engagement with Israel. The author argues that Israel's uncompromising stance heavily influences American policy. No US president can ignore this factor. The discussion recalls past diplomacy and sudden military moves. A reference is made to earlier nuclear talks in Oman that were disrupted by a surprise strike on Iranian facilities. This history raises doubts about Washington's commitment to sustained negotiation. The US has issued deadlines, but the core question remains why urgency dominates a dispute that has lasted for decades. Iran is an NPT signatory and retains the right to peaceful enrichment. It has shown readiness for inspections under the JCPOA framework. Therefore, the article questions the logic of coercion over diplomacy.

Furthermore, the writer suggests that military action would lack regional consensus. Except for Israel, no Middle Eastern state supports war with Iran. Russia and China favour diplomacy. China depends on Iranian oil imports which would suffer in case of conflict. Joint naval exercises among Russia, China, and Iran signal strategic alignment. US naval deployments are interpreted as coercive signals aimed at extracting concessions. Historical precedents in Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq show the limits of overconfidence. The article contrasts two approaches to the Iranian nuclear issue. President Obama relied on negotiation through the JCPOA and multilateral inspections. In contrast, a confrontational posture risks escalation. The author concludes that pragmatic realism, sanctions relief, and reciprocal commitments offer a more stable path. Diplomacy remains the most credible instrument to reduce nuclear risk and enhance regional security.

#### **Overview:**

The article analyses the current US Iran nuclear standoff and stresses that diplomacy is preferable to military escalation. It highlights geopolitical alignments, regional opposition to war, and the influence of Israel on US policy. The writer compares negotiation based strategies with coercive approaches and calls for pragmatic engagement.

#### **NOTES:**

This article covers nuclear diplomacy, power politics, regional security, and alliance dynamics. It highlights the role of multilateral frameworks such as the NPT and JCPOA. It also shows US foreign policy trends, strategic signalling, and sanctions as tools of statecraft. For CSS Exam, the concept should be connected to international

negotiations, deterrence theory, balance of power, and conflict prevention, because the text is useful for understanding how great power rivalry affects Middle Eastern stability and global energy security.

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

- International Relations: Nuclear non proliferation and arms control, Power politics and coercive diplomacy, US foreign policy in the Middle East, Regional security architecture
- Current Affairs: US Iran tensions, Global energy security, Great power competition
- International Law: Treaty obligations under the NPT, Role of international inspections
- Political Science: State behaviour and foreign: policy decision making, Realism and multilateralism

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

The article explains that the US and Iran failed to reach a deal in Geneva. Iran promised to submit a proposal. The US later planned to brief Israel. Earlier negotiations in Oman were disrupted by a sudden strike in June 2025. Iran is a member of the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty and allows inspections under international agreements. The JCPOA allowed monitoring of enrichment levels. The US has deployed naval forces as a pressure signal. China imports about 1.4 million barrels of oil daily from Iran. A war could disrupt regional trade and energy flows. History shows that military dominance does not always guarantee political success.

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

- The US Iran negotiations in Geneva ended without a formal agreement.
- A sixth round of nuclear talks between the United States and Iran had been scheduled in Muscat, Oman.
- In June 2025 the United States carried out a surprise strike on Iranian nuclear facilities.
- The American president set a timeline of about 10 to 15 days for Iran to reach a deal.
- Iran is a signatory to the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty which permits peaceful nuclear enrichment.
- The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action established international inspections through the IAEA.
- China imports about 1.4 million barrels of oil per day from Iran.
- Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has warned since the early 1990s that Iran was close to obtaining nuclear capability.
- Over three decades have passed since those warnings and Iran has not produced a nuclear bomb.
- Russia and China have conducted joint naval exercises with Iran in the Strait of Hormuz.

To sum up, this article presents diplomacy as the wiser path in the Iran dispute. It challenges assumptions based on power alone. Regional consensus for war is absent. Strategic restraint would protect global stability. Negotiation, reciprocity, and verified commitments give a sustainable solution. Prudence must guide policy, not pride.

## **NEUROROYALISM AND THE MAKING OF PUBLIC POLICY**

Author: Shahid Javed Burki

#### **Summary:**

Neuroroyalism focuses on making public policy that does not necessarily aim to bring about national gain. In this article, Shahid Javed Burki introduces the concept of neuroroyalism to explain a troubling pattern in modern governance. This notion refers to a style of policymaking driven by personal gain rather than national welfare. The discussion draws upon the work of scholars such as Abraham L. Newman and Stacie E. Goddard who examined the transformation of foreign policy under Donald Trump. According to their argument, state policy may serve private interests when leaders channel resources toward their inner circle. In such circumstances political loyalty becomes more valuable than competence. Economic vitality then weakens. Innovation loses ground. Public institutions also suffer erosion when authority rests in narrow networks of privilege.

The author expands this argument by reflecting upon governance patterns within Pakistan. Personalised policymaking has often shaped political choices, which undermines broad development. To illuminate the issue the writer recounts a revealing conversation with Ayub Khan. Ayub once described his reliance on foreign experts from Harvard University who advised the Planning Commission. Their guidance helped Pakistan achieve notable economic progress during the 1960s. Then another lesson emerged from comparison with India where Jawaharlal Nehru prioritized technological institutions modeled after Massachusetts Institute of Technology. That strategic decision shaped India's later technological leadership. Through this reflection the author argues that rational policy rooted in expertise rather than personal ambition remains essential for national advancement.

### **Overview**

The article explores the concept of neuroroyalism which describes policymaking guided by personal advantage rather than national benefit. It examines how such governance distorts economic progress and institutional development. Through historical reflection and contemporary examples, the author emphasizes that sustainable national growth requires expertise driven policy rather than leadership dominated by private interests.

### **NOTES:**

The article highlights the emergence of neuroroyalism in modern governance where political leaders prioritize personal networks over national interest. Scholars argue that foreign policy and economic decisions sometimes serve the ruler's inner circle rather than the state. Such practices weaken economic competitiveness and reduce productivity. Research recognized by the Nobel Prize in Economics demonstrates that concentration of power and resources in a narrow elite obstructs development. The article also recalls the economic progress achieved in Pakistan during the government of Ayub Khan when expert advice shaped policy planning. Cooperation with economists from Harvard University strengthened Pakistan's planning institutions. A contrasting case appears in India where Jawaharlal Nehru invested in advanced scientific institutions such as MIT style institutes. That early investment later transformed India into a technological leader. The central lesson stresses that policy guided by expertise produces national progress whereas personalised governance undermines growth.

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

- Pakistan Affairs: Economic planning during the Ayub Khan era
- International Relations: United States influence on developing economies
- Political Science: Elite capture and personalised governance
- Current Affairs: Institutional development and economic policy in South Asia

### **Notes for Beginners:**

The article explains how public policy shapes a nation's future. When leaders design policies for personal benefit the whole system weakens. Economic progress slows because talented individuals lose opportunity. For example scholars argue that favoritism during the administration of Donald Trump influenced economic and foreign policy decisions in the United States. The article also recalls Pakistan's development during the 1960s when economic experts from Harvard assisted the government's Planning Commission. Their technical knowledge improved national planning. Another example emerges from India where Nehru established technology institutions inspired by MIT. Those institutions produced engineers and scientists who later strengthened India's digital and technological industries. The comparison shows that thoughtful planning and expert guidance often determine long term national progress.

### **Facts and Figures:**

- Ayub Khan governed Pakistan for eleven years
- Economists from Harvard University advised Pakistan's Planning Commission during the 1960s
- Jawaharlal Nehru initiated technological institutions modeled after Massachusetts Institute of Technology

- Research recognized by the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences demonstrated that elite concentration hinders development
- Scholars Abraham L. Newman and Stacie E. Goddard analyzed personalized foreign policy during the presidency of Donald Trump

In a nutshell, Nations rise when policy rests upon expertise and long term vision. They falter when leaders treat state power as private property. Neuroroyalism exposes this peril with striking clarity. Pakistan's future therefore depends upon institutions that value knowledge over loyalty and national progress over personal gain. Wise policy remains the true architect of enduring prosperity.

## **AFGHANISTAN'S ETHNIC FAULT-LINES: FRACTURE BENEATH THE FLAG**

Author: Durdana Najam

### **Summary:**

Afghanistan's deepest struggle is not foreign invasion, but building an inclusive state across ethnic fault lines. In this article, Durdana Najam peels back the surface of Afghanistan's long turmoil and argues that the country's deepest struggle lies not merely in foreign invasions but in the unresolved puzzle of ethnicity and power. For decades the narrative of Afghanistan has revolved around wars and occupations. But beneath these storms runs a quieter current that has shaped the state since its birth. The foundations were laid in the eighteenth century by Ahmad Shah Abdali who united Pashtun tribes and carved out a political entity in a volatile region. That achievement set the stage for a state where Pashtun leadership often stood at the centre of power. Over time the concentration of authority nurtured a perception among Tajiks, Hazaras and Uzbeks that the state machinery tilted toward one ethnic group. This imbalance did not erupt overnight. It crept forward slowly and hardened with time like cracks beneath a painted wall.

The article then walks through the twists and turns of Afghan history where ethnic balance often hung by a thread. The civil war of the 1990s drew sharp ethnic lines across the battlefield and the rise of the Taliban reinforced those divisions. After 2001 an internationally backed order attempted to stitch together a democratic structure through elections and power sharing. The arrangement kept the ship afloat yet never quite calmed the waters. When the republic collapsed in 2021 old questions returned with force. The author argues that redrawing borders along ethnic lines would open a Pandora's box of new conflicts. A wiser course would expand inclusion through decentralisation and fair representation. A state that mirrors its diversity can weather storms. A state that excludes communities stands on shaky ground.

### **Overview:**

The article examines the ethnic structure of Afghanistan and its deep influence on state formation and political stability. It explains how Pashtun dominance historically shaped national power while other communities often felt marginalised. The writer stresses that Afghanistan's long term stability depends on inclusive governance rather than ethnic fragmentation.

### **NOTES:**

Afghanistan's political instability stems largely from unresolved ethnic power dynamics rather than only foreign intervention. The state emerged in the eighteenth century under Ahmad Shah Abdali with Pashtun leadership at its core. Afghanistan contains several ethnic communities including Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras and Uzbeks. Political authority historically remained concentrated in Kabul while peripheral regions relied on local power holders. This

arrangement produced a fragile political balance. During the civil war of the 1990s ethnic identities became closely linked with military alliances. The Taliban's leadership mainly represented Pashtun areas while northern opposition groups drew support from Tajiks, Uzbeks and Hazaras. After 2001 democratic governance attempted to distribute power across ethnic groups through elections and administrative appointments. Despite these efforts ethnic calculations continued to shape political decisions. The article concludes that long term stability requires decentralised governance and constitutional protection for minority communities.

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

- International Relations: Regional stability and geopolitics of Afghanistan
- Political Science: Ethnic politics and state formation
- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan Afghanistan relations and Pashtun border dynamics
- Current Affairs: Post 2021 governance challenges in Afghanistan

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

Afghanistan is home to several ethnic communities that live in different regions. Pashtuns mainly occupy the south and east. Tajiks dominate parts of the northeast and cities. Hazaras inhabit central highlands while Uzbeks reside in the north. These identities shape political alliances and local authority. During the civil war of the 1990s commanders from different ethnic backgrounds fought for influence. When the Taliban first took power their leadership mainly came from Pashtun regions. After 2001 the new Afghan government tried to include different communities in cabinet posts and security institutions. For example ministries often balanced representation between Tajiks, Pashtuns and Hazaras. This arrangement aimed to reduce ethnic rivalry. However the collapse of the republic in 2021 revived fears that exclusion could deepen tensions. The article shows that stable governance requires representation of all groups rather than dominance of one community.

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

- Ahmad Shah Abdali established the foundations of Afghanistan in the eighteenth century
- Pashtuns form the largest ethnic group in Afghanistan
- Major ethnic communities include Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras and Uzbeks
- The Afghan civil war of the 1990s divided the country along ethnic lines
- The collapse of the Afghan republic occurred in 2021 with the return of the Taliban

To sum up, the article sheds light on a truth often overlooked in discussions about Afghanistan. Foreign invasions shook the country but ethnic imbalance gnawed at its foundations from within. A nation stitched together from diverse communities cannot survive on exclusion. Stability demands a political structure that gives every group a stake in the system. Only then can the Afghan flag stand above its divisions rather than conceal them.

## **PAKISTAN'S NEW AFGHAN DOCTRINE**

Author: Kamran Yousaf

#### **Summary:**

The author explains that Pakistan has shifted from strategic restraint to a more assertive Afghan policy after a sharp rise in terrorist attacks inside the country. For years, Islamabad relied on diplomacy, intelligence coordination, and border fencing to contain the threat from the TTP. That approach failed to deliver results. The group regrouped after the Taliban takeover in Kabul and intensified cross border attacks. Recent assaults on military posts pushed Pakistan to respond with large scale air strikes deep inside Afghan territory. Targets included areas such as Kabul, Kandahar, Nangarhar, and Khost. This marked an unprecedented expansion in scope and depth. The strikes were not symbolic. They were designed to dismantle infrastructure that enables militancy. Pakistan aims to disrupt command networks, destroy training hubs, and raise the cost of sanctuary for the TTP. The language has also hardened. Officials

described the Taliban as a proxy force, which reflects a clear break from past diplomatic tone. International reaction has been limited, and major powers have largely acknowledged Pakistan's right to self defence. This silence has given Islamabad diplomatic space. The new doctrine signals punitive deterrence and may reshape the balance of power if pressure continues.

The article argues that the risks are real. Escalation can widen instability across the border. However, inaction also carries heavy consequences for national security. Reconciliation appears unlikely due to deep mistrust and repeated violence. Pakistan now expects Kabul to act decisively against the TTP. If it does not, Islamabad will respond with force. The broader strategic aim may extend beyond counterterrorism. Sustained pressure could weaken militant sanctuaries and alter internal dynamics inside Afghanistan. The coming period will test whether this approach forces behavioural change or ushers in a more volatile phase in bilateral relations.

#### **Overview:**

The article analyses Pakistan's doctrinal shift from restraint to active military deterrence against cross border militancy. It highlights the failure of negotiations, the escalation of air strikes inside Afghanistan, the hardened diplomatic language, and the limited global reaction. It also reflects on the strategic risks and long term implications for regional stability.

#### **NOTES:**

The article highlights a decisive shift in Pakistan's Afghanistan policy from restraint to active deterrence after a surge in terrorist attacks inside the country. It underlines the failure of negotiations and intelligence based cooperation to curb the TTP threat, which regrouped after developments in Kabul and intensified cross border operations. In response, Pakistan launched large scale air strikes deep inside Afghan territory, targeting areas linked to militant infrastructure. The action reflects a strategy aimed at disrupting command networks, dismantling training facilities, and increasing the cost of providing sanctuary to hostile groups. The tone adopted by officials has also changed, with stronger language describing the Taliban as a proxy actor. Limited international reaction has created diplomatic space for Islamabad, while major powers have acknowledged the principle of self defence. The article stresses that this approach signals punitive deterrence and a recalibration of strategy. At the same time, it notes that escalation carries risks of wider instability. But continued inaction could further endanger national security. The evolving doctrine seeks to compel behavioural change in Kabul, weaken militant safe havens, and redefine the security balance along the border.

#### **Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:**

- Pakistan Affairs: National security policy, counterterrorism strategy, civil military relations
- Current Affairs: Pakistan Afghanistan relations, regional instability, border conflicts
- International Relations: Deterrence theory, state sovereignty, diplomatic recognition, power politics
- International Law: Self defence under international norms, cross border operations

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

The article explains that Pakistan previously tried talks and intelligence cooperation with the Afghan authorities. Those efforts did not stop attacks by the TTP. After repeated incidents, including strikes on army checkpoints, Pakistan launched large air operations inside Afghanistan. The goal was to destroy militant bases and reduce their ability to plan attacks. This approach is called punitive deterrence. It means responding strongly to discourage future aggression. The international reaction was limited, and some major powers recognised Pakistan's right to self defence. The article suggests that continued pressure may change behaviour in Kabul. However, it also warns that escalation can increase regional tension.

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

- Large scale air strikes conducted inside Afghanistan
- Targets included Kabul, Kandahar, Nangarhar, and Khost

- Strikes described as the first of such depth and scale
- Operations followed a surge in cross border attacks
- Ceasefire and reconciliation attempts had already collapsed

To sum up, the article reflects a shift from patience to pressure and from defence to deterrence. The strategy seeks to dismantle militant sanctuaries and compel behavioural change in Kabul. But power must be balanced with prudence. Sustainable peace will depend on clear objectives, diplomatic engagement, and regional stability. The coming months will reveal whether force alone can deliver security or whether dialogue must eventually return to the table.

CSS PLATFORM

## Al Jazeera –

# AFGHANISTAN BOMBING: WHAT'S PAKISTAN'S STRATEGY AS INDIA-TALIBAN TIES GROW?

Author: Abid Hussain

### Summary:

The article examines Pakistan's decision to conduct air raids inside Afghanistan following a series of deadly attacks on its territory, which Islamabad attributes to the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). A suicide bombing at a mosque in Islamabad, attacks on security forces in Bajaur and Bannu, and the killing of soldiers intensified pressure on the Pakistani government to respond forcefully. Pakistan claims that militants responsible for these attacks operate from sanctuaries in Afghanistan and launched air strikes targeting their hideouts in Nangarhar and Paktika provinces. However, the Afghan Taliban government rejected these allegations and stated that the strikes killed civilians, including women and children. The operation also shattered a fragile ceasefire negotiated earlier through diplomatic efforts by Qatar and Turkiye.

The article further explores the strategic complications Pakistan faces as its relations with Afghanistan deteriorate while India expands diplomatic engagement with the Taliban government. India condemned Pakistan's air strikes and reaffirmed support for Afghan sovereignty, which Islamabad interprets as part of a growing India-Taliban alignment. Experts argue that Pakistan now finds itself trapped between difficult options: responding militarily to cross-border attacks while risking deeper hostility from Kabul and pushing Afghanistan closer to India. With rising domestic terrorism, strained relations on both eastern and western borders, and growing regional tensions such as the potential US-Iran confrontation, Pakistan's strategic space appears increasingly narrow.

### Overview:

The article analyses Pakistan's cross-border air strikes in Afghanistan and the broader geopolitical dilemma created by militant violence, fragile diplomacy with the Taliban government, and India's expanding engagement with Kabul. It highlights the complex security environment confronting Pakistan and the strategic risks involved in managing simultaneous regional pressures.

### NOTES:

The article highlights Pakistan's growing security dilemma caused by a surge in militant attacks allegedly linked to the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan operating from Afghan territory. Islamabad launched air strikes targeting suspected militant camps in Nangarhar and Paktika after a series of suicide attacks killed dozens of civilians and security personnel. The Taliban government rejected Pakistan's claims and accused it of killing civilians, thereby intensifying diplomatic tensions and breaking a fragile ceasefire brokered earlier by Qatar and Turkiye. Analysts argue that military retaliation alone may not solve the problem because repeated strikes could strengthen ties between the Afghan Taliban and the TTP while increasing anti-Pakistan sentiment within Afghanistan. At the same time, Pakistan must manage its rivalry with India, which has expanded diplomatic engagement with Kabul and criticised Islamabad's actions. The article therefore portrays Pakistan as facing a strategic dilemma where responding to terrorism risks worsening regional relations, especially when tensions with India remain high and regional instability is increasing.

### Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan-Afghanistan relations, internal security challenges, regional security environment
- Current Affairs: Cross-border terrorism, India-Afghanistan relations, regional diplomacy

- International Relations: State sovereignty, security dilemmas, regional power politics

### Notes for Beginners:

The article explains the security tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Pakistan believes that the militant group TTP carries out attacks inside Pakistan while operating from bases in Afghanistan. After several suicide attacks that killed civilians and soldiers, Pakistan launched air strikes across the border targeting what it called militant camps. However, Afghanistan's Taliban government denied hosting these militants and accused Pakistan of killing civilians. At the same time, India has increased its diplomatic engagement with Afghanistan and criticised Pakistan's actions, which makes the situation more complicated. Pakistan therefore faces a difficult challenge: it must stop militant attacks inside the country while avoiding a larger regional conflict with Afghanistan and India.

### Facts and Figures:

- 699 militant attacks were recorded in Pakistan last year, a 34 percent increase from the previous year
- 1,034 people were killed in terrorism-related violence in 2025
- 1,366 people were injured in militant attacks during the same year
- Pakistan claimed its recent air raids targeted seven militant camps along the Afghanistan border
- A similar cross-border strike in December 2024 reportedly killed at least 46 people

In essence, the article reveals the complex security predicament confronting Pakistan. While military action may signal strength against militant groups, it also risks deepening tensions with Afghanistan and complicating regional diplomacy. Without a balanced strategy combining security measures, diplomacy, and regional cooperation, Pakistan may remain trapped between escalating militancy at home and growing geopolitical pressures abroad.

### Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Demarche – an official diplomatic protest; Synonym: objection; Antonym: approval
- Retaliation – response to an attack with counter action; Synonym: revenge; Antonym: forgiveness
- Sovereignty – authority of a state over its territory; Synonym: independence; Antonym: subordination
- Escalation – increase in intensity of conflict; Synonym: intensification; Antonym: de-escalation

## EXPANDING US-PAKISTAN RELATIONS THROUGH MINING PROJECTS

Author: Daniel Runde

### Summary:

The article explores how the global scramble for critical minerals has reshaped geopolitics, especially with the rapid rise of electric vehicles and battery-powered military technologies. Demand for minerals such as lithium, cobalt, copper, and nickel is expected to skyrocket in the coming decades, turning these resources into the lifeblood of modern industry and defense systems. The writer argues that China currently holds the driver's seat in this race, dominating the mining, refining, and battery production chains worldwide. This overwhelming control poses strategic risks for the United States, prompting policymakers to search for alternative partners. In this context, Pakistan emerges as a potential game changer. With vast copper and gold reserves, particularly at the Reko Diq mine in Balochistan, Pakistan could become a major supplier in the global mineral market. If properly developed, the country could transform into what the writer metaphorically calls the "Saudi Arabia of copper," offering the United States a strategic opportunity to diversify mineral supply chains and reduce dependence on China.

The article further argues that mining cooperation could breathe new life into US-Pakistan relations, which for decades have revolved mainly around counterterrorism and security concerns. Strategic investment in Pakistan's mineral sector could simultaneously advance American economic and geopolitical interests while helping Pakistan tackle its economic crisis. However, several hurdles stand in the way, including weak infrastructure, water scarcity,

energy shortages, and limited technical capacity. The writer suggests that the United States and its allies should step up their engagement by supporting mining infrastructure, expanding development assistance, and strengthening financial mechanisms to help Western companies compete with Chinese firms. If pursued wisely, mineral cooperation could not only strengthen global supply chains but also help Pakistan revive its struggling economy and reposition itself on the world stage.

#### **Overview:**

The article analyzes the growing importance of critical minerals in global geopolitics and highlights how strategic mining partnerships between the United States and Pakistan could reshape economic relations, reduce China's dominance in mineral supply chains, and stimulate Pakistan's economic development.

#### **NOTES :**

The article discusses the strategic importance of critical minerals such as copper, lithium, cobalt, and nickel in the modern technological and defense landscape. With the global shift toward electric vehicles, renewable energy systems, and battery-powered military technologies, demand for these minerals is projected to quadruple by 2040. China currently dominates the global supply chain, controlling large portions of mining, refining, and battery manufacturing. This dominance has raised national security concerns in the United States, pushing policymakers to search for alternative sources of minerals. The writer argues that Pakistan, with its vast copper reserves and major deposits like the Reko Diq mine in Balochistan, could play a crucial role in diversifying supply chains. Developing these resources could simultaneously strengthen US-Pakistan relations and help Pakistan overcome its economic stagnation. However, the article also highlights serious challenges, including water scarcity, poor infrastructure, lack of skilled labor, and political instability. The author recommends greater US diplomatic engagement, financial incentives for Western mining companies, and partnerships with allies to develop mineral projects in Pakistan. Such cooperation could create jobs, stimulate economic growth, and reduce China's strategic grip on the global mineral market.

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

- Pakistan Affairs: Economic development, natural resources, Balochistan's strategic importance
- Current Affairs: Global competition for critical minerals, China-US rivalry
- International Relations: Strategic partnerships, geopolitics of resources, economic diplomacy

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

The article explains why minerals like copper, lithium, and cobalt are becoming extremely important in today's world. These minerals are used to produce batteries for electric cars, mobile devices, and even military equipment such as drones and robots. Because of this rising demand countries are competing to control mineral resources. China currently controls most of the global supply chain, which worries the United States. However Pakistan has huge mineral reserves, especially at the Reko Diq mine in Balochistan, which contains large deposits of copper and gold. If Pakistan develops these resources with help from the United States and other Western countries, it could create jobs, improve the economy, and reduce dependence on China's supply chains. For example, Pakistan's copper reserves are among the largest in the world, which means they could significantly contribute to global mineral production in the future.

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

- Global demand for critical minerals is expected to quadruple by 2040
- China refines about 68 percent of nickel, 40 percent of copper, 59 percent of lithium, and 73 percent of cobalt globally
- Pakistan possesses the fifth-largest copper reserves in the world
- The Reko Diq mine contains an estimated mineral wealth worth over 1 trillion dollars
- Pakistan's total debt exceeded 250 billion dollars by the end of 2023, equal to about 74 percent of its GDP

In essence, the article paints a picture of opportunity wrapped in challenge. It suggests that Pakistan's untapped mineral wealth could become a bridge for renewed US-Pakistan cooperation while helping the country climb out of its economic rut. Yet the road ahead is not paved with gold; it requires strategic planning, investment in infrastructure, and responsible governance. If Pakistan manages to seize this moment, its mineral resources could turn from buried treasure into a cornerstone of economic revival and geopolitical relevance.

CSS PLATFORM

## STRATEGIC DIVERSIFICATION

### Summary:

The article shows that the recent visit of Uzbekistan's president marks more than ceremonial diplomacy. It signals a deliberate attempt to deepen economic cooperation and elevate bilateral trade to two billion dollars within five years. Both states have pledged a joint working group and a structured roadmap to translate intent into outcomes. Uzbekistan's offer of ten year tax exemptions for Pakistani businesses reveals strategic seriousness rather than symbolic warmth. Cooperation spans agriculture, information technology, and industrial collaboration. For Tashkent, Pakistan serves as a gateway to South Asia and the Middle East. For Islamabad, Central Asia offers a path to reduce excessive reliance on a narrow circle of partners. Connectivity through direct flights and prospective rail corridors reflects recognition that geography can be transformed into leverage through political resolve.

The article suggests that such diversification constitutes strategic insurance in a turbulent global economy. Protectionist currents, geopolitical strain, and supply chain realignments demand broader partnerships. Anchoring growth to a limited set of allies exposes structural fragility. Balanced and diversified ties enhance resilience and bargaining capacity. Strengthened engagement with Uzbekistan demonstrates pragmatic recalibration in foreign economic policy. It reflects an understanding that sustainable prosperity requires outreach beyond habitual alignments. In an uncertain world, economic agility safeguards national interest.

### Overview:

The article underlines the strategic importance of diversifying Pakistan's economic partnerships through strengthened ties with Uzbekistan, aiming to expand trade, enhance connectivity, and build resilience against global volatility.

### NOTES:

Bilateral trade target set at two billion dollars within five years. Establishment of a joint working group and five year roadmap. Ten year tax exemptions offered to Pakistani investors in Uzbekistan. Focus sectors include agriculture and information technology. Uzbekistan views Pakistan as gateway to South Asia and the Middle East. Pakistan seeks access to Central Asian markets to reduce over reliance on limited partners. Connectivity projects such as direct flights and rail links carry strategic value. Diversification functions as economic security amid protectionism and geopolitical tension.

### Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics and Subjects:

- International Relations: Regional connectivity and economic diplomacy
- Pakistan Affairs: Trade diversification and foreign policy evolution
- Economics: Export markets, investment incentives, trade resilience, Supply chain shifts and protectionist trends
- Current Affairs: Central Asia Pakistan relations

### Notes for Beginners:

Trade diversification reduces dependency risk. If one partner faces recession, exports decline. Expanding markets cushions shock. The trade target stands at two billion dollars within five years. Tax exemptions for ten years attract investors. Agriculture cooperation can boost food exports. Information technology links can generate service revenue. Direct flights lower transaction costs. Rail corridors shorten supply routes. Global supply chains now shift due to political tension. Countries that adapt secure advantage. Those that hesitate lose ground.

### Facts and Figures:

- Bilateral trade target set at two billion dollars within five years.
- A five year actionable roadmap has been agreed upon.
- A joint working group has been established to implement cooperation plans.
- Uzbekistan has offered ten year tax exemptions to Pakistani businesses.
- Cooperation covers sectors including agriculture and information technology.
- Direct flights are proposed to strengthen connectivity between the two countries.
- Regional rail links are envisioned to enhance economic access to Central Asia.

To wrap up, Strategic diversification is not diplomatic ornament. It is economic survival. Nations that broaden horizons command stability. Those confined to narrow alliances court vulnerability. Engagement with Uzbekistan provides opportunity and leverage. If pursued with discipline, it can fortify Pakistan's economic architecture in a volatile era.

### Difficult Words and Meanings:

#### Diversification

- Meaning expansion into varied areas
- Synonyms expansion variation broadening
- Antonyms concentration narrowing limitation

#### Reorientation

- Meaning change of direction
- Synonyms shift adjustment realignment
- Antonyms stagnation fixation rigidity

#### Resilience

- Meaning capacity to recover from shock
- Synonyms adaptability endurance strength
- Antonyms fragility weakness vulnerability

#### Protectionist

- Meaning policy restricting imports
- Synonyms restrictive defensive isolationist
- Antonyms liberal open free trade

#### Corridor

- Meaning route linking regions
- Synonyms passage channel pathway
- Antonyms barrier blockade obstruction

## ATTRACTING INVESTMENT

### Summary:

Pakistan appears to be regaining investor attention across diverse sectors. Recent data from the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan shows that 79 new foreign companies have launched operations over three years, injecting Rs40 billion into energy, logistics, information technology, agriculture, mining, and digital infrastructure. Equity markets have also recorded heightened foreign participation. Partnerships and joint ventures dominate this inflow, which suggests that international firms prefer collaboration with local entities rather than isolated ventures. Large Middle Eastern conglomerates have deepened their footprint. The UAE's DP World has expanded in logistics,

while Saudi Arabia's Wafi Energy has acquired Shell Pakistan's operations. These moves reflect diplomatic outreach and a deliberate attempt to position Pakistan as a credible investment destination.

This encouraging pattern, however, rests on fragile ground. Structural obstacles remain entrenched. Complex taxation, volatile energy tariffs, infrastructure shortfalls, and bureaucratic inertia continue to weigh on investor sentiment. The editorial argues that isolated spurts of capital will not suffice. Durable inflows require policy coherence and institutional reliability. Barriers to entry must fall. Regulatory procedures must become transparent. Energy pricing must stabilise. Without these reforms, Pakistan risks turning opportunity into a fleeting headline rather than sustained economic transformation. Momentum exists, yet its survival depends on disciplined governance rather than optimism alone.

#### **Overview:**

The editorial evaluates recent foreign investment trends in Pakistan. It highlights rising foreign company registrations and sectoral diversification while stressing the necessity of structural reforms to convert episodic interest into stable long term capital inflows.

#### **NOTES:**

The article underlines Pakistan's renewed foreign direct investment momentum across strategic sectors. It emphasises Middle Eastern capital inflows and joint ventures as instruments of economic diplomacy. It also exposes structural weaknesses such as tax complexity, energy instability, and regulatory bottlenecks. Aspirants should note the linkage between investor confidence and institutional reform. The piece reflects themes of economic governance, policy consistency, and market accessibility. It also signals the importance of regional diplomacy in shaping investment patterns.

#### **Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:**

- Pakistan Affairs: covers economic development and foreign investment
- Current Affairs: focuses on foreign direct investment trends
- International Relations: examines economic diplomacy with the Middle East
- Economics: covers capital formation, market reforms, and investment climate
- Public Administration: addresses regulatory reform and bureaucratic efficiency

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

Foreign direct investment means money that companies from other countries invest in local businesses or projects. According to official data, 79 foreign firms began operations in Pakistan within three years and invested Rs40 billion. Major sectors include energy and information technology. For instance, Saudi Wafi Energy acquired Shell Pakistan's operations. The UAE's DP World expanded its logistics presence. These examples show confidence in Pakistan's market potential. But investors face hurdles. High energy tariffs increase production costs. Complicated tax systems delay returns. Weak infrastructure raises operational risks. If these barriers decline, investment can expand further. Stable rules attract capital. Inconsistent policies repel it.

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

- 79 new foreign companies launched operations in three years
- Rs40 billion invested across key sectors during this period
- Sectors attracting capital include energy, logistics, IT, agriculture, mining, and digital infrastructure
- Middle Eastern firms such as DP World and Wafi Energy expanded operations in Pakistan
- Equity markets recorded increased foreign participation

To sum up, Capital has knocked on Pakistan's door. Diplomacy has opened a few windows. Still confidence demands more than announcements. Investors seek clarity, stability, and trust. Reform must replace empty promises. If policy consistency takes root, Pakistan can transform episodic inflows into enduring partnerships. If hesitation prevails, the present surge will fade like footprints in shifting sand.

# HORMUZ AND THE INDO-PACIFIC

Author: M A Hossain

## Summary:

The danger lies in mistaking a tactical success for a strategic solution. The author argues that a coordinated strike killing Iran's top leadership may appear decisive at first glance, but it risks repeating familiar strategic errors. The belief that precision force can reshape political realities has surfaced time and again in American policy debates. History shows that regime decapitation does not automatically produce stability. Instead, it often unleashes power struggles, militancy, and prolonged instability. Iraq, Libya, and Syria stand as sobering reminders that military triumph can quickly unravel into chaos. Removing central authority rarely produces democratic harmony. More often, it opens the door to militias and regional proxies. Iran, with its large population and entrenched institutions, would not collapse quietly. Any vacuum could trigger retaliation and regional escalation. Such outcomes would stretch far beyond one theatre of war.

The strategic risks extend to global energy and the Indo-Pacific balance. The Strait of Hormuz carries a significant share of world oil trade. Disruption there would send shockwaves through energy markets and burden households worldwide. Inflation and instability would follow. Iran's networked regional influence could activate proxy responses across several countries. Missile exchanges and asymmetric operations would likely intensify. Meanwhile, a prolonged confrontation would divert American resources from its stated pivot toward the Indo-Pacific. Attention, intelligence assets, and military capacity would be absorbed in the Gulf. This distraction could benefit strategic rivals without direct confrontation. Tactical success must not be mistaken for long term strategy. Prudence demands alignment between objectives and means. Power is real, but limits are equally real. States that ignore this balance invite costly consequences.

## Overview:

The article evaluates the consequences of a possible US and Israeli strike against Iran. It cautions against assuming that leadership elimination will produce stability. It highlights risks to regional order, global energy security, and Indo-Pacific strategy. The writer stresses strategic discipline over impulse and warns that overreach may damage long term interests.

## NOTES:

The article argues that a strike eliminating Iran's top leadership may appear decisive, yet it could trigger instability rather than order. History shows that regime removal often creates power vacuums that invite militias, proxy conflict, and prolonged turmoil, as seen in Iraq, Libya, and Syria. Iran's population size, institutional depth, and regional networks make collapse unlikely and retaliation highly probable. Any escalation could disrupt the Strait of Hormuz, a vital corridor for global oil trade, and send shockwaves through energy markets. Inflation and economic strain would follow across continents. A sustained confrontation would also divert American attention and resources from its Indo Pacific strategy aimed at balancing China. The central warning is that tactical victories must not be mistaken for strategic solutions. Prudence demands alignment between ambition and capability, for power without restraint can undermine long term stability.

## Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects and Topics:

- International Relations: Deterrence theory and power politics, Balance of power and strategic stability, US foreign policy and Indo-Pacific strategy, Middle East geopolitics
- Current Affairs: Iran conflict dynamics, Global energy security, Strait of Hormuz and trade routes
- Political Science: Grand strategy and state craft, Regime change and political transitions

## Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that military strikes may look powerful but can create instability. For example, past interventions in Iraq and Libya led to long conflicts instead of stable governments. If a leader is removed, different groups may fight for control. This can weaken state authority. The Strait of Hormuz is a key oil passage. About one fifth of global oil trade passes through it. If it is blocked, oil prices can rise quickly. Higher prices can increase inflation worldwide. The United States also aims to focus on the Indo Pacific region to balance China. A long war in the Middle East could distract from that goal. The article suggests that strategic planning must consider long term consequences, not only immediate results.

**Facts and Figures:**

- Strait of Hormuz carries roughly one fifth of global traded oil
- Iran has a population of over 90 million
- Past interventions in Iraq, Libya, and Syria led to prolonged instability
- US Indo Pacific strategy identifies China as primary peer competitor

To sum up, the article warns against strategic impatience. It reminds readers that military victories can become strategic burdens. Sustainable security requires foresight and balance. Power without prudence invites unintended consequences. The message is not against action but against illusion. True leadership aligns ambition with realism. Only then can short term success translate into durable stability.

## Arab News Pakistan –

# FROM REMITTANCES TO RESULTS: SAUDI ARABIA'S NEW ECONOMIC PLAY IN PAKISTAN

Author: Mehreen Durrani

### Summary:

The article argues that the economic relationship between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia is entering a decisive transformation. For decades the partnership revolved around financial assistance, remittances from migrant workers, and emergency economic support during Pakistan's balance of payments crises. Millions of Pakistanis working in Saudi Arabia send more than nine billion dollars annually which forms a major portion of Pakistan's foreign inflows. Religious travel for Hajj and Umrah also strengthens social and cultural bonds between the two nations. However these inflows largely sustained consumption rather than stimulating long term structural development. The writer contends that Saudi Arabia now intends to move beyond episodic financial support and establish a deeper economic partnership that focuses on investment and industrial growth.

The article explains that Saudi Arabia's evolving approach aligns with the goals of Saudi Vision 2030 which emphasizes diversification and knowledge driven development. The turning point emerged during the 2019 visit of Mohammed bin Salman to Pakistan when agreements worth twenty billion dollars were signed in sectors such as mining, infrastructure and energy. Saudi interest now extends to Pakistan's information technology sector, minerals, and industrial production. Pakistan's IT exports exceed three billion dollars annually and the Kingdom sees the sector as a partner in its digital transformation agenda. At the same time Saudi investment in Pakistan's mineral reserves aims to support extraction as well as refining and value added manufacturing. The writer concludes that the opportunity is historic but Pakistan must ensure regulatory clarity, technical capacity and policy consistency to transform foreign investment into long term economic capacity.

### Overview:

The article examines the transformation of Pakistan's economic relationship with Saudi Arabia from a model of financial assistance to a partnership centered on investment, industrial cooperation and technological collaboration.

### NOTES:

The article highlights a major shift in Pakistan's economic engagement with Saudi Arabia. Historically the relationship depended on remittances, financial deposits and deferred oil facilities that supported Pakistan during economic crises. The new framework focuses on investment driven cooperation in technology, minerals, energy and infrastructure. Saudi Arabia now views Pakistan as a strategic investment destination particularly within the framework of its economic diversification strategy. Pakistan's information technology sector generates more than three billion dollars annually and has potential to expand through collaboration in artificial intelligence, fintech, cybersecurity and digital government services. Saudi interest also extends to Pakistan's mineral resources such as copper, gold, lithium and rare earth elements which are essential for modern industries and clean energy technologies. The article stresses that these investments will only succeed if Pakistan establishes regulatory certainty, transparent mining laws, reliable contracts and strong intellectual property protection. Long term partnerships must also produce skilled professionals such as engineers, AI experts and industrial technologists capable of operating complex economic value chains.

### Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan's economic diplomacy and foreign investment strategy
- International Relations: Pakistan Saudi Arabia bilateral relations

- Economics: Foreign direct investment and economic development
- Current Affairs: Middle East economic transformation and regional partnerships

### Notes for Beginners:

The article explains how Pakistan's economic relationship with Saudi Arabia is evolving from financial assistance to investment partnership. For many years Pakistan relied on remittances from workers in Saudi Arabia and financial help during economic crises. Now Saudi Arabia wants to invest in Pakistan's productive sectors such as information technology, minerals and infrastructure. For example Pakistan exports software and digital services worth more than three billion dollars each year. Saudi companies see opportunities to cooperate with Pakistani firms in artificial intelligence, fintech and cybersecurity projects. Saudi Arabia is also interested in Pakistan's mineral resources including copper, gold and lithium which are important for electronics and renewable energy technologies. If these investments succeed they can create jobs, expand industrial production and strengthen Pakistan's export capacity. However success requires clear policies, transparent regulations and skilled professionals who can manage advanced technologies and large scale industrial projects.

### Facts and Figures:

- Pakistani workers in Saudi Arabia send over 9 billion dollars annually in remittances
- Remittances from Saudi Arabia represent nearly one quarter of Pakistan's total remittance inflow
- Agreements worth around 20 billion dollars were signed during the 2019 visit of Mohammed bin Salman
- Pakistan's IT and IT enabled services exports exceed 3 billion dollars annually
- Pakistan hosts major reserves of copper, gold, lithium and rare earth minerals
- The Economic Cooperation Framework 2024 formalized long term economic collaboration

To sum up, the article portrays a strategic transition in Pakistan Saudi Arabia relations. Financial support once sustained Pakistan during crises yet it rarely altered the structure of the economy. The new investment driven model holds the promise of industrial growth, technological collaboration and resource development. However success depends on Pakistan's institutional capacity. Sound regulations, skilled human capital and consistent economic policies will determine whether this historic opportunity yields tangible progress or fades into another unrealized promise.

## PAKISTAN CANNOT AFFORD A US-IRAN CONFLICT BUT MUST PREPARE

Author: Umar Karim

### Summary:

The author examines the precarious position of Pakistan amid rising tensions between United States and Iran. Pakistan already occupies a volatile geopolitical space. Persistent hostility with India on the eastern frontier and unstable relations with western neighbors complicate its strategic calculations. Cross border militancy from Afghanistan has strained ties and led to repeated border closures. Meanwhile Pakistan's relationship with Iran has remained uneasy due to security disputes along the border. The tensions escalated in early 2024 when both states carried out limited strikes against militant hideouts across each other's territory. Although relations later stabilized, renewed friction between Washington and Tehran following domestic protests inside Iran has once again produced uncertainty for Pakistan's policymakers.

Moreover, the article argues that a military confrontation between the United States and Iran would trigger serious security and political repercussions for Pakistan. If Iranian state authority weakens as a result of conflict, peripheral regions such as Sistan and Balochistan could descend into instability. Such a vacuum would embolden separatist militants operating along the frontier and make cross border insurgency more intense. Pakistan would lose a

cooperative partner for managing border security which may lead to greater militant infiltration and rising violence in Balochistan. The author stresses that Islamabad must support diplomatic efforts that prevent conflict, yet prudence also demands preparation. Strategic planning, security coordination and policy readiness remain essential if regional war becomes unavoidable.

#### **Overview:**

The article analyzes how a potential conflict between the United States and Iran could destabilize Pakistan's security environment. It highlights historical tensions between Pakistan and Iran, regional insurgencies, and the strategic risks that a breakdown of Iranian state authority could create for Pakistan's border security and domestic stability.

#### **NOTES:**

The article outlines the geopolitical complexities surrounding Pakistan's western frontier. Pakistan's relations with Iran deteriorated after the Iranian Revolution when both countries adopted contrasting ideological and strategic orientations. Sectarian tensions within Pakistan further complicated bilateral relations. Another persistent challenge is the insurgency along the Baloch frontier where both sides have accused each other of sheltering militant groups. The Syrian civil war introduced another dimension when Iran recruited fighters from Pakistan for militias operating in Syria. Despite these difficulties, security and political channels between Islamabad and Tehran have remained open in order to manage tensions. A potential United States strike against Iran would create a dangerous vacuum along the border. Militants could exploit this instability which would intensify insurgent activity in Pakistan's Balochistan region. The article emphasizes that Pakistan must prioritize diplomatic solutions to prevent war while simultaneously preparing contingency strategies to manage border insecurity, sectarian polarization and domestic political pressure.

#### **Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:**

- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan's border security challenges and regional stability
- International Relations: United States Iran relations and Middle East geopolitics
- Current Affairs: Security dynamics of the Iran Pakistan border
- Political Science: State security and foreign policy decision making

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

The article explains how conflicts between major powers can affect neighboring states. Pakistan shares a long border with Iran which requires cooperation for security and trade. If war erupts between the United States and Iran, Iran's border regions may experience instability. This instability could create opportunities for militant groups to expand their activities. For example insurgent groups operating in Balochistan could exploit weak border control and intensify attacks. Internal tensions within Pakistan may also rise because sectarian divisions often react strongly to events involving Iran. Policymakers must therefore balance diplomatic neutrality with domestic stability. Careful preparation helps governments manage unexpected consequences of international conflicts.

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

- Pakistan shares a border of about 900 kilometers with Iran
- Cross border tensions escalated in early 2024 when both states carried out limited strikes against militant hideouts
- The border region between Pakistan and Iran includes the insurgency affected province of Balochistan
- Peripheral Iranian province Sistan and Balochistan hosts several ethnic minority communities
- Militancy along the Pakistan Iran frontier has remained a recurring security challenge for both states

To sum up, the article reminds that regional conflicts rarely remain confined to their original battleground. Pakistan stands at the critical level of multiple geopolitical tensions where even distant confrontations can produce immediate domestic consequences. Diplomatic prudence therefore becomes indispensable. Preventing war between the United States and Iran serves Pakistan's interests, but strategic foresight demands preparation for the worst. Stability along



the western frontier will depend not only on diplomacy but also on Pakistan's capacity to anticipate and manage the cascading effects of regional turmoil.

CSS PLATFORM

# CSS PLATFORM NEXUS

## CSS - PMS EXAM EXCELLENCE:

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