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A NATION LOOKS AWAY.

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Dawn –

THREE-FRONT CHALLENGE

Author: Maleeha Lodhi

Summary:

Pakistan's geographical position has always been both a strategic advantage and a source of enduring insecurity. In this article, Maleeha Lodhi argues that the country's traditional two-front security dilemma has evolved into a far more dangerous three-front challenge. Alongside the persistent military threat from India and instability on the Afghan border, Pakistan now faces an expanding internal security crisis driven by terrorism, militancy and political unrest. The author contends that militant violence has spread beyond isolated regions into wider areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan and even Karachi, while political unrest in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) has added another dimension to the country's internal instability. Together, these developments have widened Pakistan's security vulnerabilities and placed unprecedented pressure on the state.

The author further suggests that many of Pakistan's security challenges are rooted in political failures rather than purely military threats. In Balochistan, decades of political exclusion, weak governance and excessive reliance on force have deepened alienation and strengthened insurgent movements. In KP, mistrust between local communities and security institutions, coupled with tensions between the federal and provincial governments, has weakened counterterrorism efforts. Meanwhile, unrest in AJK threatens Pakistan's broader Kashmir narrative. Externally, India's military modernisation, suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty and reported deployment of operational nuclear warheads have heightened strategic instability, while deteriorating relations with Afghanistan continue to fuel cross-border terrorism. The author concludes that Pakistan's widening security challenges continue to divert national attention from economic development, democratic governance and long-term stability.

Overview

The article examines Pakistan's evolving security environment and argues that the country now faces simultaneous threats from India, Afghanistan and growing internal instability. It explains how political grievances, governance failures and regional tensions have expanded Pakistan's security challenges beyond conventional military concerns. The author stresses that lasting stability requires political solutions alongside effective security policies.

NOTES:

The article argues that Pakistan's security landscape has fundamentally changed from a two-front to a three-front challenge. Internal militancy in KP and Balochistan has intensified while political unrest has spread to AJK. The author maintains that Balochistan's crisis is primarily political, driven by exclusion, poor governance and the absence of meaningful political participation. In KP, disagreements between the federal and provincial governments, combined with weak public trust, have undermined counterterrorism efforts. The article also highlights growing strategic threats from India through military modernisation, suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty and changes in its nuclear posture. Relations with Afghanistan remain strained because of border tensions and the continued presence of the TTP. The central argument is that Pakistan cannot ensure long-term security through military responses alone; political reconciliation, institutional trust and effective governance are equally essential.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects and Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Internal security challenges, Balochistan issue, Kashmir issue, Pakistan-Afghanistan relations
- International Relations: South Asian security, India-Pakistan strategic rivalry, nuclear deterrence, regional stability
- Political Science: State security, governance, insurgency and counter-insurgency

- Current Affairs: Terrorism, internal political unrest, Indus Waters Treaty, regional geopolitics

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan's security problems are no longer limited to threats from neighbouring countries. The country now faces serious internal challenges as well. Militant attacks have increased in KP and Balochistan, while political protests in AJK have created additional instability. The author argues that many of these problems stem from governance failures and political dissatisfaction rather than military weakness alone. She also warns that India's growing military capabilities and worsening relations with Afghanistan have increased external risks. The article concludes that Pakistan needs political reforms, stronger public trust and better governance alongside military preparedness to achieve lasting peace and stability.

Facts and Figures:

- Pakistan experienced over 200 terrorist attacks in KP during the first six months of 2026.
- Around 300 people were killed in militant attacks in KP during the same period.
- More than 100 attacks occurred in Balochistan in the first half of 2026.
- India suspended the Indus Waters Treaty in 2025.
- According to SIPRI, India has operationally deployed 12 nuclear warheads mated to missiles.
- Pakistan and Afghanistan have kept their border closed and trade suspended since October 2025.

In a nutshell, Pakistan's security challenges have evolved beyond conventional border threats into a complex mix of external rivalry, internal militancy and political unrest. Military strength alone cannot resolve these interconnected crises. Lasting national stability depends upon political inclusion, effective governance, public trust and balanced regional diplomacy alongside a credible security strategy.

RETHINKING TRADE POLICY

Author: Ishrat Husain

Summary:

Pakistan's Strategic Trade Policy (STP) 2026–31 should focus less on setting ambitious export targets and more on correcting the structural weaknesses that have repeatedly undermined previous trade policies. Ishrat Husain argues that Pakistan's export challenge stems not from the absence of sound strategies but from weak governance, poor implementation and inconsistent policymaking. Reviewing earlier trade policies, he notes that STP 2015–20 targeted exports of \$35 billion but achieved only \$20.5bn, while STP 2021–26 aimed for \$57bn but reached only around \$32bn. These failures highlight unrealistic target setting, weak industrial capacity, high energy costs, excessive taxation, cumbersome regulations and poor institutional coordination. Although external shocks such as Covid-19, devastating floods, the Ukraine war and Middle East tensions disrupted global trade, domestic policy mistakes, particularly an overvalued exchange rate and declining export competitiveness, played an equally significant role. Without governance reforms that improve productivity, competitiveness and market efficiency, future trade policies are unlikely to produce different results.

The author contends that Pakistan has made little progress in diversifying either its export products or export destinations. Traditional sectors such as textiles, food products and leather continue to dominate exports, while the European Union, the United States, China and the UAE remain the country's principal markets. Despite benefiting from GSP-Plus status since 2014, Pakistan has failed to expand into higher-value industries such as synthetic fibres, technical textiles, electronics, engineering goods, pharmaceuticals and medical equipment. To strengthen long-term export performance, the author recommends deeper integration into global value chains, particularly through industrial cooperation with China, alongside lower tariffs on industrial inputs, investment in petrochemical industries and carefully designed industrial policies. He also advocates realistic export projections, closer

coordination between fiscal, monetary and industrial policies, stronger trade diplomacy, expanded export financing, policy stability, wider use of the Pakistan Single Window and continuous consultation with exporters. The article concludes that Pakistan's export constraints are already well understood; the real challenge now lies in credible implementation, institutional coordination and consistent policy execution rather than announcing increasingly ambitious export targets.

Overview:

The article explores that Pakistan's export sector suffers less from poor policy design than from weak governance and ineffective implementation. It reviews the failures of previous Strategic Trade Policies, highlights the lack of export diversification, and proposes reforms aimed at improving competitiveness, expanding global market access and strengthening institutional capacity. The author concludes that future trade policy should prioritise realistic planning, policy consistency and measurable implementation rather than ambitious export targets.

NOTES:

The article emphasises that governance reforms are the foundation of successful trade policy. Previous Strategic Trade Policies repeatedly failed because implementation remained weak despite ambitious export targets. Pakistan continues to depend heavily on traditional exports such as textiles, food products and leather, while export destinations remain concentrated in a few major markets. The author notes that Pakistan has underutilised the opportunities provided by the EU's GSP-Plus status by failing to diversify into higher-value manufactured goods. Integration into global value chains, particularly through industrial cooperation with China, offers significant export potential. Lower tariffs on industrial raw materials, investment in petrochemical industries, improved logistics, digitalisation, skills development and stronger female labour force participation are identified as essential reforms. The article also stresses the importance of trade diplomacy, export financing, regulatory simplification and long-term policy stability.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects and Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan's export sector and economic development
- Current Affairs: Pakistan's Strategic Trade Policy and export competitiveness
- Economics: International trade, export diversification and industrial policy
- International Relations: Trade agreements, GSP-Plus and regional economic integration

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains why Pakistan's exports have remained below expectations despite preparing several export policies. According to the author, the real problem is weak implementation rather than poor planning. For example, Pakistan repeatedly set ambitious export targets but failed to achieve them because industries faced high production costs, expensive energy, excessive taxation and weak governance. The author also explains that Pakistan depends too heavily on textile exports instead of producing higher-value goods such as electronics, engineering products and pharmaceuticals. Countries that diversify their exports generally achieve faster economic growth and higher incomes. The article recommends improving governance, strengthening trade institutions, supporting exporters, reducing business costs and maintaining stable economic policies. These reforms would allow Pakistan to become more competitive in international markets.

Facts and Figures:

- STP 2015–20 targeted \$35 billion in exports but achieved only \$20.5 billion.
- STP 2021–26 set an export target of \$57 billion, while actual exports reached approximately \$32 billion.
- Pakistan's exports as a share of GDP declined from 13.1% in 2005 to 7.9% by 2025.
- Textiles, food products and leather account for more than four-fifths of Pakistan's exports.
- The United States, European Union, China and the UAE together receive over 60% of Pakistan's exports.

- Pakistan obtained GSP-Plus status in 2014, providing preferential access to around two-thirds of EU tariff lines.
- The author recommends expanding trade agreements with ASEAN, GCC, Japan, South Korea, the UK, the US, Central Asia and Russia.

To sum up, Pakistan's export challenge no longer lies in identifying its weaknesses but in acting upon them. Sustainable export growth requires strong governance, realistic policymaking, diversified industries and consistent implementation rather than ambitious numerical targets. Only when institutions deliver predictable policies, competitive industries and effective trade diplomacy can Pakistan transform its export potential into lasting economic growth.

ETERNAL QUEST FOR PRIVILEGES

Author: Ahmed Bilal Mehboob

Summary:

The passage of the Powers, Immunities and Privileges Act, 2026 by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly raises serious concerns about transparency, democratic accountability and the growing tendency of legislators to seek exceptional privileges. In this article, Ahmed Bilal Mehboob argues that the law extends powers and benefits that go far beyond what is necessary for elected representatives to perform their constitutional duties. The delayed publication of the Act itself reflects a lack of openness and suggests an awareness of the public backlash it could provoke. While some provisions were retained from the repealed 1988 law, the new legislation significantly broadens the privileges enjoyed by Members of the Provincial Assembly (MPAs). These include exemptions from court appearances during assembly sessions, temporary release from detention to attend legislative meetings, authority to summon district officials, state-funded security details, free accommodation in government rest houses, multiple arms licences, exemption from toll taxes and unrestricted access to public institutions. According to the author, these provisions impose unnecessary financial costs on the state while blurring the constitutional boundaries between the legislature and the executive.

The article further argues that several provisions threaten judicial independence and media freedom. The Act empowers the Speaker to prohibit publication of assembly proceedings and allows penalties against media organisations for reporting considered unfair or defamatory. It also grants the assembly and its judicial committee authority to try offences relating to breaches of privilege and impose punishments, a responsibility traditionally reserved for the judiciary. The prescribed penalties include imprisonment and heavy fines for reporting or conduct deemed to violate legislative privilege. Another controversial provision grants lifetime official blue passports to legislators and their spouses, despite such passports being intended exclusively for official government travel. Although the provincial government has announced a review of the legislation following widespread criticism, the author contends that the Act reflects a broader political culture in which lawmakers continue to expand personal privileges instead of strengthening democratic institutions, transparency and public accountability.

Overview:

The article examines the Powers, Immunities and Privileges Act, 2026 passed by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly and argues that it grants excessive privileges to legislators while weakening transparency, institutional balance and democratic accountability. It highlights concerns regarding judicial independence, media freedom, financial burden and the separation of powers. The author concludes that public office should remain a public trust rather than a source of lifelong privileges and legal immunity.

NOTES:

The article criticises the KP Assembly's Powers, Immunities and Privileges Act, 2026 for granting lawmakers broad legal protections and personal benefits beyond what is necessary for legislative functions. It argues that exemptions

from court proceedings, special security arrangements, free government facilities, toll tax exemptions and lifetime official passports create inequality before the law. The legislation also allows legislators to summon government officials and inspect public institutions, thereby weakening the constitutional separation between the executive and legislature. The author expresses particular concern over provisions that restrict media reporting of assembly proceedings and empower the assembly itself to punish alleged breaches of privilege, potentially undermining judicial independence. Although the government later agreed to reconsider the law following public criticism, the article argues that the legislation reflects a continuing pursuit of political privilege rather than democratic accountability.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects and Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Provincial governance and constitutional institutions
- Current Affairs: Legislative accountability and democratic reforms in Pakistan
- Political Science: Separation of powers, legislative privileges and constitutionalism
- Constitutional Law: Rule of law, judicial independence and freedom of the press

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains why excessive privileges for lawmakers can weaken democracy. Legislators require certain protections to perform their duties independently, but these protections should not place them above ordinary citizens or other state institutions. The author argues that the new KP law grants lawmakers legal exemptions, financial benefits and special treatment that are difficult to justify in a democratic system. Some provisions also allow the assembly to restrict media reporting and exercise powers that normally belong to the judiciary. Such measures may reduce transparency, weaken public trust and disturb the balance between different branches of government. The article concludes that democratic institutions become stronger when elected representatives remain accountable under the same legal framework that applies to everyone else.

Facts and Figures:

- The Powers, Immunities and Privileges Act, 2026 was passed by the KP Assembly on April 30, 2026.
- The Governor assented to the Act on May 6, 2026.
- The Act grants lawmakers at least 21 privileges.
- Each MPA is entitled to Category B security, consisting of one head constable and two constables, with the possibility of upgrading to Category A security.
- Members may receive up to eight non-prohibited bore arms licences.
- The law prescribes punishment for 27 categories of breaches of privilege.
- Some offences carry imprisonment of up to six months or fines of up to Rs1 million.
- The Act grants lifetime official blue passports to legislators and their spouses.

To wrap up, democracy flourishes when public representatives remain accountable to the law rather than insulated by extraordinary privileges. Excessive legal protections and personal benefits weaken institutional balance, erode public confidence and blur the separation of powers. Lasting democratic strength depends not on expanding privileges for lawmakers but on strengthening transparency, equality before the law and responsible governance.

MAKING ONE'S WAY

Author: Faisal Bari

Summary:

The transition from university to the job market often creates uncertainty among graduates, particularly those from the humanities and social sciences, who fear that their academic background may not match employers' expectations. In this article, Faisal Bari shows that employability depends far less on the subject studied than on the

quality of learning acquired during undergraduate education. He illustrates this through the example of an English literature graduate who, despite lacking specialised technical skills, possessed strong communication, analytical and reflective abilities that enabled her to secure a professional position within weeks. While certain professions require specialised degrees, most corporate and development-sector jobs remain open to graduates from diverse academic backgrounds. Employers increasingly value individuals who can think critically, communicate effectively and adapt to unfamiliar situations rather than those who possess only narrow subject-specific knowledge. The author therefore contends that undergraduate education should focus on cultivating transferable intellectual skills instead of producing graduates trained merely for immediate technical tasks.

The article further highlights that rapid technological change and the growing influence of artificial intelligence make human judgement, critical thinking and adaptability more valuable than ever. Strong language skills, analytical reasoning, numerical literacy and digital competence have become essential across almost every profession. However, many undergraduate programmes continue to rely on rote learning and repetitive instruction, limiting students' ability to analyse problems independently or respond creatively to new challenges. Well-designed degree programmes should expose students to mathematics, statistics, computing and interdisciplinary learning regardless of their major, enabling them to become confident lifelong learners. Ultimately, the author concludes that graduates who develop communication skills, intellectual curiosity, analytical thinking and the ability to learn independently will remain competitive in an evolving job market, whereas reliance on memorisation and narrow specialisation will increasingly limit career opportunities.

Overview:

The article examines that success in today's job market depends more on the quality of learning than on the academic discipline studied. It emphasizes that employers increasingly seek graduates with communication, critical thinking, analytical reasoning and digital skills rather than narrow subject-specific knowledge. The author concludes that universities should prioritise intellectual development and lifelong learning over rote memorisation to prepare students for an evolving employment landscape.

NOTES:

The article highlights that many graduates mistakenly believe their career prospects depend entirely on their undergraduate major. The author argues that transferable skills such as communication, analytical reasoning, critical thinking and adaptability matter far more in most professions. A degree in humanities or social sciences does not prevent graduates from succeeding in corporate or development sectors if they possess these abilities. The article also stresses that artificial intelligence is transforming the labour market by automating routine work while increasing the value of human judgement and problem-solving. Universities therefore need to move beyond rote learning and provide interdisciplinary education that includes quantitative reasoning, digital literacy and reflective learning. The central message is that students who become independent learners with strong intellectual foundations will remain employable despite changing economic conditions.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects and Topics:

- Current Affairs: Youth employment and future workforce challenges
- Economics: Human capital and labour market competitiveness
- Pakistan Affairs: Higher education reforms and employment in Pakistan

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that choosing the "right" university subject is not the only factor that determines career success. Most employers look for graduates who can communicate clearly, think critically, solve problems and adapt to changing work environments. For example, an English literature graduate may work successfully in business, development or management if these skills are well developed. The author also explains that artificial intelligence is changing the nature of work by replacing routine tasks while increasing demand for human judgement and

creativity. Therefore, students should focus on improving language skills, analytical thinking, computer literacy and numerical understanding during university rather than relying only on memorisation. These abilities prepare graduates for a wide variety of careers and future learning opportunities.

Facts and Figures:

- Most corporate sector jobs do not require a specific undergraduate major.
- The author cites the example of an English literature graduate who secured a professional job within weeks because of strong analytical and communication skills.
- AI is rapidly transforming labour markets by automating routine tasks while increasing demand for human judgement.
- Strong undergraduate programmes expose students to mathematics, statistics and computing regardless of their major.

To sum up, a university degree opens doors, but lasting career success depends on the abilities developed during the learning process rather than the title of the qualification. Graduates who communicate effectively, think critically, embrace technology and continue learning throughout their lives will remain valuable in any profession. The future belongs not to those who memorise the most, but to those who learn, adapt and reason the best.

PAKISTAN'S GROUND ZERO

Author: Ali Tauqeer Sheikh

Summary:

Gilgit-Baltistan has become the new epicentre of Pakistan's climate crisis as the country's most serious climate threats now originate in the Upper Indus Basin rather than the downstream floodplains. The author suggests that climate change has fundamentally altered the geography of disaster risk. Rising temperatures are accelerating glacier and snowfield melt, expanding existing glacial lakes and creating new ones at an alarming pace. Although many Karakoram glaciers appear stable from satellite observations, meltwater is carving hidden tunnels beneath the ice, weakening glaciers from within and increasing the likelihood of glacial lake outburst floods (Glofs). Pakistan now has 3,044 glacial lakes, of which 36 are officially classified as hazardous, threatening more than 7.1 million people. At the same time, changing precipitation patterns are causing more rainfall instead of snowfall in high-altitude regions, while the monsoon is extending further north. As a result, glacier melt and monsoon rains increasingly overlap, producing simultaneous disasters rather than the sequential flood cycles on which Pakistan's disaster planning has traditionally relied.

The author explains that these climate-driven hazards extend beyond physical destruction to threaten ecosystems, livelihoods and cultural heritage. Flash floods carrying boulders and glacial debris permanently damage farmland and settlements, while displacement accelerates the loss of endangered languages and centuries-old cultural traditions in Gilgit-Baltistan. Historic archaeological sites, including thousands of Silk Route petroglyphs, have already suffered irreversible damage. Drawing lessons from Nepal's 2021 Melamchi disaster, the article argues that Pakistan must abandon isolated approaches to hazard management and instead adopt integrated models capable of analysing overlapping and cascading risks such as heatwaves, Glofs, landslides and monsoon floods. Existing early warning systems and protective infrastructure were designed for single hazards and are increasingly inadequate. The author concludes that Pakistan must modernise hazard modelling, strengthen climate adaptation and treat Gilgit-Baltistan as the frontline of its climate response before increasingly complex disasters overwhelm existing institutions.

Overview:

The article examines that Gilgit-Baltistan has become Pakistan's primary climate hotspot as rising temperatures, glacial instability and changing monsoon patterns combine to create increasingly complex disasters. It explains how

overlapping climate hazards threaten both human settlements and cultural heritage while calling for integrated disaster planning, improved hazard modelling and stronger climate adaptation policies.

NOTES:

The article highlights that climate change has shifted Pakistan's disaster epicentre from downstream floodplains to the Upper Indus Basin in Gilgit-Baltistan. Accelerated glacier melting is expanding glacial lakes and increasing the risk of GLOFs despite the apparent stability of many Karakoram glaciers. Rising temperatures and changing precipitation patterns are causing more rainfall at higher elevations, resulting in simultaneous glacier melt and monsoon flooding. The author stresses that these compound and cascading hazards require new approaches to disaster management rather than treating each threat separately. Climate disasters are also causing irreversible ecological damage, displacement of communities, erosion of endangered languages and destruction of archaeological heritage. The article recommends integrated hazard modelling, climate adaptation, upgraded early warning systems and stronger institutional coordination to prepare for increasingly complex climate risks.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects and Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Climate change and environmental challenges in Pakistan
- Current Affairs: Glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs) and climate adaptation
- Environmental Science: Glacier melting, disaster management and climate resilience

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains why Gilgit-Baltistan has become the most vulnerable region to climate change in Pakistan. Rising temperatures are melting glaciers more rapidly and increasing the number of dangerous glacial lakes. At the same time, heavier rainfall in mountain regions is causing floods to occur alongside glacier melt, making disasters more severe than before. These floods destroy roads, farmland, homes and cultural heritage while forcing people to migrate from their communities. The author argues that Pakistan's existing disaster management system was designed for isolated disasters and is no longer sufficient. He recommends using advanced hazard modelling, stronger early warning systems and better climate adaptation strategies to prepare for overlapping climate threats.

Facts and Figures:

- Pakistan currently has 3,044 glacial lakes, of which 36 are classified as hazardous.
- More than 7.1 million people are exposed to potential glacial lake outburst floods.
- The Shishper Glacier GLOF in August 2025 caused the largest flood event since 2018, damaging the Karakoram Highway.
- More than 50 languages and dialects are spoken in Gilgit-Baltistan, several of which are critically endangered.
- The region contains over 50,000 petroglyphs, some dating back to 5000 BC.
- Since 2017, Pakistan has installed 250 engineering structures and 284 early warning systems across Gilgit-Baltistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
- Nepal's Melamchi glacial disaster (2021) demonstrated the importance of integrated hazard modelling for managing compound climate risks.

To put it simply, climate change has transformed Gilgit-Baltistan into Pakistan's climate frontline, where glacier instability, changing monsoon patterns and cascading disasters now converge. Protecting lives, ecosystems and cultural heritage requires integrated climate planning, modern hazard modelling and stronger adaptation strategies. Without these reforms, increasingly complex climate risks will continue to outpace Pakistan's disaster response capacity.

THE WOUND IN BALOCHISTAN

Author: Arifa Noor

Summary:

Balochistan's security crisis is no longer an isolated law-and-order problem but a deep political wound that has remained unhealed for decades. The author notes that repeated terrorist attacks merely expose a conflict that has long been ignored by the rest of the country. The real tragedy lies not only in the violence but also in the state's persistent failure to respond with political wisdom, empathy and meaningful reform. While governments continue to rely on force, arrests and official condemnations, they have neglected the deeper causes of unrest, including political alienation, weak democratic representation, enforced disappearances and the absence of genuine dialogue. As a result, violence continues while public trust steadily erodes.

The author suggests that recent attacks reveal both the worsening security situation and the growing disconnect between the state and the people. Research shows that militant attacks have risen sharply in Balochistan even as they declined elsewhere, reflecting the province's unique security challenges. The confirmed presence of groups such as the TTP alongside Baloch militants has further complicated the conflict, while local anger has intensified over poor security preparedness, unanswered calls for assistance and the treatment of security personnel and affected communities. The absence of transparent communication has also allowed conspiracy theories and public mistrust to flourish, repeating mistakes witnessed during earlier conflicts in former Fata. The author concludes that military operations alone cannot resolve the crisis. Lasting peace requires political dialogue, credible governance, public confidence and a strategy that addresses both security threats and the underlying grievances driving instability.

Overview:

The article critiques that Balochistan's conflict is fundamentally political rather than purely military. It examines the state's continued reliance on security measures despite rising violence, growing public alienation and weakening trust in institutions. The author concludes that sustainable peace depends upon political reconciliation, transparent governance and a strategy that combines effective security operations with meaningful political engagement.

NOTES:

The article suggests that Balochistan's long-running conflict cannot be resolved through military action alone. Political alienation, weak democratic representation, enforced disappearances and the absence of dialogue have deepened public distrust. Recent attacks demonstrate that militant violence continues to expand despite existing security strategies. Research indicates that attacks in Balochistan have increased significantly while declining in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, highlighting the province's worsening security environment. The confirmed presence of the TTP alongside local militant groups has added another layer of complexity. The author also stresses that inadequate official communication has allowed misinformation and conspiracy theories to spread, further damaging public confidence. The central message is that political reconciliation, transparent governance and public trust remain essential for restoring stability.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects and Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Balochistan conflict and centre-province relations
- Current Affairs: Internal security and counterterrorism
- International Relations: Counterinsurgency and internal security challenges

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Balochistan's security crisis has deeper political roots than terrorism alone. The author argues that people become frustrated when they feel excluded from political decision-making and lose confidence in state institutions. Although security operations remain necessary, they cannot succeed without political dialogue and public trust. The article also points out that attacks have increased despite repeated official promises, while

many residents believe the government has failed to protect both civilians and security personnel. The author warns that ignoring public concerns allows misinformation and conspiracy theories to spread. The overall lesson is that lasting peace requires both effective security measures and genuine political solutions.

Facts and Figures:

- Research by the Institute of Regional Studies reported that militant attacks in Balochistan increased by 84% during the first quarter of 2026.
- The same report found that attacks in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa declined by 57% during the same period.
- Recent attacks occurred in Quetta, Ziarat and Lasbela, highlighting the deteriorating security situation.
- The article notes that the conflict in Balochistan has persisted for more than two decades.
- The presence of the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in parts of Balochistan has now been publicly acknowledged by state authorities.

To wrap up, Balochistan's crisis reflects the failure to address a political conflict through political means. Military operations may contain violence, but they cannot eliminate the grievances that sustain it. Durable peace requires dialogue, representative governance, institutional credibility and public trust alongside effective security measures. Only by healing the political wounds can the state hope to restore lasting stability in the province.

THOUSAND-DAY WAR

Author: Maleeha Lodhi

Summary:

Israel's war on Gaza has continued for more than a thousand days, leaving behind unprecedented human suffering while diplomatic efforts remain paralysed. The author shows that despite a US-brokered ceasefire and an ambitious peace plan, the humanitarian catastrophe has only deepened. Tens of thousands of Palestinians have been killed, much of Gaza has been destroyed, and Israeli military operations continue alongside the expansion of territorial control. Meanwhile, global attention has shifted towards the US-Iran confrontation, pushing Gaza to the margins of international diplomacy. As a result, the ceasefire has failed to evolve into a sustainable political settlement, while humanitarian relief and reconstruction remain stalled.

The author highlights that Hamas's decision to relinquish governance in Gaza to a committee of Palestinian technocrats represents an attempt to revive the stalled peace process and remove Israel's justification for continuing military operations. However, Israel's refusal to allow the transitional administration into Gaza, its continued territorial expansion and its insistence on Hamas's disarmament before political transition have blocked implementation of the second phase of the peace plan. At the same time, the Trump administration's growing focus on Iran has reduced pressure on Israel to fulfil its commitments, including troop withdrawal and humanitarian access. The author concludes that without sustained international engagement, balanced diplomacy and compliance with agreed commitments, the promise of peace will remain elusive, leaving Palestinians trapped in a cycle of war, displacement and humanitarian devastation.

Overview:

The article examines the prolonged Gaza conflict and the failure of international diplomacy to translate a ceasefire into lasting peace. It explores the humanitarian consequences of continued Israeli military operations, the political deadlock surrounding the Gaza peace plan and the impact of shifting international priorities. The author concludes that meaningful progress requires renewed diplomatic engagement, implementation of agreed commitments and greater international pressure to end the conflict.

NOTES:

The article argues that Gaza's humanitarian crisis continues despite the announcement of a ceasefire because political commitments remain unimplemented. Israel has expanded its military control while delaying withdrawal

and restricting humanitarian relief. Hamas has sought to facilitate political transition by offering to transfer governance to a Palestinian technocratic committee, but Israel has rejected the proposal and continues to demand disarmament before political change. The growing US-Iran confrontation has diverted international attention away from Gaza, weakening diplomatic momentum. The author also criticises the limited pressure placed on Israel to honour its obligations under the peace plan. The central argument is that sustainable peace depends on balanced implementation of political agreements rather than military coercion alone.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects and Topics:

- Current Affairs: Gaza conflict and Middle East peace process
- International Relations: Conflict resolution, diplomacy and international humanitarian law
- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan's diplomatic position on the Palestine issue

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains why the Gaza conflict continues despite international peace efforts. The author argues that a ceasefire alone cannot end a war unless all parties implement the agreed political steps. Hamas has offered to hand over civilian administration to an independent Palestinian committee, but Israel continues military operations and opposes the transition. At the same time, international attention has shifted towards tensions between the United States and Iran, reducing diplomatic efforts to resolve the Gaza crisis. The article also highlights that humanitarian conditions continue to deteriorate because reconstruction, aid delivery and political negotiations have largely stalled. The overall lesson is that peace requires political commitment, international cooperation and equal enforcement of negotiated agreements.

Facts and Figures:

- The Gaza war has continued for more than 1,000 days.
- More than 73,000 Palestinians have been killed, including over 21,000 children.
- Approximately 80% of Gaza has been devastated by the conflict.
- More than 200 journalists have reportedly been killed during the war.
- Israel currently controls around 60% of Gaza, with plans to expand its control further.
- The proposed National Committee for the Administration of Gaza (NCAG) consists of 13 Palestinian technocrats.

To wrap up, the prolonged Gaza war shows how humanitarian crises deepen when political agreements remain unimplemented and international attention shifts elsewhere. Durable peace requires more than ceasefires; it demands genuine political transition, respect for humanitarian law, balanced international diplomacy and full implementation of negotiated commitments. Without these conditions, Gaza will remain trapped in a cycle of destruction, displacement and unfulfilled promises of peace.

UNLOCKING HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Author: Zeba Sathar

Summary:

Pakistan has finally placed population management at the centre of national policymaking with the establishment of the National Population Council (NPC). The writer argues that this step comes after decades of neglect despite the heavy social and economic costs of rapid population growth. Population should not be treated merely as a demographic issue or controlled through coercive policies. Instead, it must be addressed through investments in human development, especially quality education, women's empowerment, accessible healthcare, and voluntary family planning. Pakistan's regional neighbours, including Bangladesh, Nepal, Indonesia, and India, have already demonstrated that sustained investment in these sectors lowers fertility rates while raising incomes and improving

living standards. Pakistan, however, continues to fall behind because weak governance and inadequate investment have left millions without access to basic services.

The article argues that Pakistan's population crisis reflects institutional failure rather than public resistance. Families aspire to educate their children and improve their lives, yet poor access to schools, healthcare, employment, and reproductive services prevents them from achieving these goals. The writer proposes that the NPC should bridge this gap through coordinated federal and provincial policies, targeted public spending, stronger accountability, and equal opportunities for women and men. A Population Stabilisation Fund, improved healthcare, expanded education, greater female employment, judicial protection of women's rights, responsible media campaigns, and private sector participation together can transform Pakistan's demographic pressure into a demographic dividend. Unless the country invests in its people today, it will continue to sacrifice economic growth, political stability, and social progress tomorrow.

Overview:

The article examines Pakistan's population challenge through the lens of governance and human development. It argues that sustainable population stabilisation depends on stronger public institutions, better education, women's empowerment, quality healthcare, and voluntary family planning rather than coercive state policies.

NOTES:

The article analyses Pakistan's rapidly growing population as a consequence of weak governance and chronic underinvestment in human development. It welcomes the creation of the National Population Council as an important institutional reform but stresses that meaningful progress requires practical action rather than symbolic announcements. The writer explains that countries such as Bangladesh, Nepal, Indonesia, and India successfully reduced fertility rates by expanding female education, improving healthcare, creating employment opportunities for women, and providing voluntary family planning services. Pakistan, in contrast, continues to struggle with poor human development indicators, high infant mortality, and weak female enrolment because millions remain deprived of essential services. Research cited in the article reveals that nearly half of the country's annual pregnancies are unplanned, while millions of children remain out of school. The writer recommends coordinated federal and provincial policies, increased investment in education and healthcare, creation of a Population Stabilisation Fund, enforcement of women's rights, and active participation by the judiciary, media, and private sector. Human development, the article concludes, is the only sustainable path towards population stabilisation and long-term national prosperity.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects and Topics:

Pakistan Affairs: Population growth, human development, governance challenges

Current Affairs: National Population Policy, education reforms, healthcare, women's empowerment

Gender Studies: Women's rights, female labour force participation, gender equality

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that rapid population growth becomes a burden when education, healthcare, and employment fail to expand at the same pace. It argues that reducing population growth does not mean forcing families to have fewer children. Instead, governments should provide quality education, healthcare, and family planning services so people can make informed choices. For example, Bangladesh invested heavily in female education and reproductive healthcare, which reduced fertility rates and improved living standards. Pakistan can achieve similar outcomes by investing in people rather than merely controlling population numbers.

Facts and Figures:

- The National Population Council has been established under the Prime Minister.
- Pakistan records nearly 12 million pregnancies every year.
- More than 3 million pregnancies end in induced abortions annually.

- Almost half of all yearly pregnancies are unplanned.
- The 2023 Population Census reports nearly 25 million out-of-school children.
- Most out-of-school children belong to poor households in remote areas.
- Countries such as Bangladesh, Nepal, Indonesia, and India have significantly reduced fertility rates through sustained investment in education, healthcare, and women's empowerment.

In essence, the article presents population management as a question of governance rather than numbers alone. It argues that no nation can unlock its economic potential while neglecting education, healthcare, and women's empowerment. Pakistan now has an opportunity to convert demographic pressure into demographic strength, but success will depend on political commitment, institutional coordination, and sustained investment in human capital. Without these reforms, the country's development ambitions will remain out of reach.

SYSTEMIC FAILURE

Author: Zahid Hussain

Summary:

Pakistan continues to chase foreign investment through high profile international conferences while ignoring the structural weaknesses that discourage investors at home. Diplomatic visibility and repeated promises of massive foreign investment have produced little tangible progress because economic fundamentals remain fragile. Foreign direct investment has fallen sharply from its peak despite official claims about vast mineral wealth, strategic partnerships and multibillion dollar investment opportunities. The writer maintains that investors seek predictable policies, efficient institutions and administrative competence rather than ceremonial appearances or optimistic projections. Chaotic governance, policy reversals, high taxation, bureaucratic delays, weak digital infrastructure and political uncertainty have steadily eroded investor confidence.

The article stresses that sustainable foreign investment cannot flourish where domestic investment itself remains stagnant. Pakistan's savings rate has declined, private investment has weakened and the overall investment to GDP ratio has fallen to one of the lowest levels in the region. Although the Special Investment Facilitation Council has secured sizeable investment pledges, facilitation alone cannot replace genuine structural reform. Investor confidence depends upon political stability, judicial credibility, institutional efficiency and a secure business climate. Pakistan should therefore shift its attention from temporary international recognition towards resolving long standing governance failures. Strong domestic foundations will attract lasting investment far more effectively than diplomatic prominence alone.

Overview:

The article highlights Pakistan's persistent investment crisis and identifies weak governance rather than poor international marketing as its principal cause. It concludes that credible reforms, institutional stability and policy consistency remain the only durable path towards attracting domestic and foreign investment.

NOTES:

The article presents Pakistan's weak investment climate as the outcome of deep rooted structural failures rather than limited international outreach. Despite frequent participation in global investment forums, foreign direct investment continues to decline because investors prioritise stable institutions over political publicity. The writer points to inconsistent policies, excessive taxation, bureaucratic hurdles, judicial delays and unreliable digital infrastructure as major deterrents. Domestic investment has also weakened, which further discourages foreign capital. The Special Investment Facilitation Council may accelerate approvals, yet it cannot substitute comprehensive reforms. Political instability, militant violence and governance failures continue to damage investor confidence. Pakistan can attract meaningful long term investment only after strengthening economic fundamentals, ensuring policy continuity and restoring institutional credibility.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects and Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Economic challenges, governance crisis, investment climate
- Current Affairs: Foreign direct investment, economic reforms, regional competitiveness
- International Relations: Economic diplomacy, geoeconomics, foreign investment

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that foreign investment depends far more on a country's internal stability than on international publicity. Investors first examine whether government policies remain consistent, laws are enforced fairly, taxes are predictable, and institutions function efficiently. For example, if tax rates or business regulations change every few months, companies hesitate to invest because future costs become uncertain. Domestic investment also serves as a signal of economic confidence. When local businesses expand and invest, foreign companies view the market as reliable and profitable. Likewise, investment conferences can introduce opportunities, but they cannot compensate for weak governance or poor infrastructure. Frequent internet disruptions, bureaucratic delays, political instability, and security concerns raise the cost of doing business and discourage long term investment. Vietnam, for instance, attracts far greater foreign investment because it offers policy continuity, administrative efficiency, and a stable business environment. The central lesson is simple. Sustainable investment follows strong institutions, sound governance, and economic stability rather than diplomatic visibility or ambitious promises.

Facts and Figures:

- Foreign direct investment reached about 5 to 6 billion dollars during 2007 and 2008.
- At certain periods FDI declined to nearly 0.5 billion dollars.
- Vietnam attracts roughly 15 to 20 billion dollars in FDI each year.
- Pakistan's total investment fell from around 17 percent of GDP in 2018 to nearly 13 to 14 percent during 2023 and 2024.
- The government established the Special Investment Facilitation Council in June 2023.
- The SIFC claims investment pledges worth approximately 27 billion dollars.
- Pakistan records one of the lowest savings rates in South Asia.

To sum up, the article reminds that economic strength grows from sound institutions rather than diplomatic spectacle. Investors follow certainty, credibility and consistent governance instead of ambitious promises. Pakistan possesses strategic advantages and considerable potential, yet these assets will remain underused until structural weaknesses receive serious attention. Durable prosperity demands reforms at home because genuine confidence cannot be imported from abroad.

BALUCHISTAN SECURITY CRISIS

Author: Muhammad Amir Rana

Summary:

Baluchistan's worsening security crisis reveals deeper structural failures than isolated terrorist attacks. The recent surge in violence prompted Pakistan's political and military leadership to renew its commitment to eliminate terrorism. Yet, events on the ground exposed a different reality. While senior officials met in Quetta to review the National Action Plan, local elders successfully negotiated the release of abducted citizens without visible state involvement. This contrast illustrates the widening trust deficit between the state and local communities. The province now faces a complex web of threats where Baluch insurgent groups, the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan and the Islamic State operate alongside criminal networks. Despite repeated declarations of success during periods of relative calm, the state has largely maintained the same security approach. Violence subsides temporarily, then

returns with greater intensity because militant organisations constantly adapt their tactics and retain operational flexibility.

The evolving insurgency now extends beyond its traditional strongholds and increasingly targets Pakistan's economy and infrastructure. The Balochistan Liberation Army has expanded into districts once dominated by the TTP and has struck energy facilities, highways, commercial assets and public utilities. Such attacks seek to raise the economic cost of state presence while discouraging investment and weakening public confidence. Afghanistan remains an important external factor because cross border militant sanctuaries continue to fuel insecurity. Yet external involvement alone cannot explain persistent instability. The author concludes that Pakistan must reassess its security strategy, strengthen civilian engagement and bridge the growing divide between the state and society. Without policy reform, military resolve alone will remain insufficient to restore lasting peace in Balochistan.

Overview:

The article assesses the deteriorating security situation in Balochistan and questions the effectiveness of Pakistan's existing counterterrorism strategy. It highlights the growing disconnect between the state and local communities, the evolving tactics of insurgent groups and the expanding economic targets of militant violence. The author concludes that lasting stability demands a comprehensive review of security policies rather than reliance on military responses alone.

NOTES:

The article highlights that renewed political and military commitments have not translated into meaningful improvements in Balochistan's security environment. A widening trust deficit between the state and local communities has complicated counterterrorism efforts. Local jirgas sometimes resolve hostage crises where formal institutions remain absent. Militant organisations continue to display strategic patience by reducing attacks temporarily before launching coordinated offensives. The Balochistan Liberation Army has expanded its operational reach into new districts and increasingly attacks infrastructure, energy facilities, highways and commercial assets to impose economic costs on the state. Such operations discourage investment and weaken public confidence in governance. Although Afghanistan provides sanctuaries for militant groups and contributes to cross border instability, the author believes external factors cannot substitute for an honest assessment of Pakistan's internal security failures. Sustainable peace therefore requires revised policies, stronger civilian engagement and greater public trust.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects and Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Terrorism in Balochistan, National Action Plan, Internal security challenges
- International Relations: Pakistan Afghanistan relations, Cross border terrorism, Regional security
- Political Science: Counterterrorism policy, State capacity, Civil military coordination
- Current Affairs: Balochistan insurgency, Internal security reforms, Extremism in Pakistan

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains why violence in Balochistan continues despite repeated security operations. Terrorist groups have become more organised and frequently alter their tactics to avoid defeat. They target roads, bridges, electricity networks and businesses because such attacks weaken the economy and reduce public confidence in the government. The article also shows that local tribal elders sometimes solve security problems through negotiation when state institutions fail to respond effectively. Afghanistan remains part of the security challenge because some militant groups operate across the border. However, the writer stresses that Pakistan must also review its own security policies and rebuild trust with local communities. Long term peace depends upon effective governance, public cooperation and policies that address both security and political grievances.

Facts and Figures:

- Pakistan's political and military leadership reaffirmed a unified commitment to eliminate terrorism during the Quetta apex committee meeting.
- Seventeen militant incidents were reported across thirteen districts within a few weeks.
- The Balochistan Liberation Army carried out attacks in nine districts during June.
- The BLA expanded operations into Qilla Abdullah and Pishin, areas previously associated with TTP activity.
- Militants targeted a 220 kilovolt electricity transmission line in Dera Murad Jamali.
- Pakistan issued diplomatic demarches after Afghan nationals were linked to the June 27 attack on a Pakistan Rangers camp in Karachi.

In a nutshell, Balochistan's security crisis cannot be resolved through military action alone. Militant groups continue to adapt while public trust steadily erodes. External threats remain important, yet ineffective policies deepen the challenge. Pakistan's path to lasting peace lies in strategic reform, stronger institutions and meaningful engagement with its own citizens.

SOUTH ASIA'S GEN Z MOMENT

Author: Zahid Hussain

Summary:

The article portrays South Asia's youth as a decisive political force that increasingly challenges authoritarian governance and institutional failure. The writer begins with India's recent student led protests that erupted after allegations of leaked examination papers. Public frustration soon expanded beyond educational injustice and evolved into a broader movement demanding employment, democratic freedoms and accountable governance. The emergence of the Cockroach Janta Party reflected growing youth dissatisfaction with the political establishment. Social media became the principal platform for mobilisation because mainstream media largely failed to represent public grievances. Although the demonstrations subsided, the movement exposed deep political fault lines and weakened the government's image.

The writer broadens the discussion through comparisons with Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka where youth movements transformed national politics. In Bangladesh, opposition to discriminatory job quotas developed into a nationwide uprising that ended Sheikh Hasina's rule. Nepal witnessed mass protests after restrictions on social media intensified public anger over corruption and unemployment. Sri Lanka's Aragalaya emerged from prolonged economic collapse and eventually forced political change. The article warns that Pakistan faces similar structural challenges because nearly 70 million citizens belong to Generation Z. Rising unemployment, shrinking democratic space, economic dependence and political repression have created fertile ground for unrest. The writer concludes that democratic reform, protection of civil liberties and meaningful opportunities for young people remain essential to prevent instability from escalating into a wider national crisis.

Overview:

The article highlights the growing political influence of Generation Z across South Asia. Youth movements have challenged authoritarian governments through demands for justice, employment and democratic freedoms. The writer cautions that Pakistan must address similar grievances through democratic reform before demographic potential transforms into political instability.

NOTES:

The article presents Generation Z as a powerful driver of political transformation throughout South Asia. Student protests in India expanded into a wider campaign for democratic rights and employment. Similar youth led movements in Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka removed or weakened entrenched governments. Social media

emerged as the primary instrument for political mobilisation because traditional media often remained restricted or controlled. Pakistan possesses one of the region's largest youth populations, yet unemployment, economic hardship and declining civil liberties threaten social stability. The article emphasizes that demographic strength becomes an asset only when governments protect democratic institutions, create economic opportunities and respond to public demands through constitutional means.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects and Topics:

- Current Affairs: Youth movements in South Asia
- Pakistan Affairs: Democratic governance and political stability
- International Relations: Regional political developments in South Asia

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that young people can become a powerful force for political change when governments fail to address their concerns. Student protests often begin with one issue but later expand into broader demands for justice and accountability. For example examination paper leaks triggered demonstrations across India before unemployment and democratic rights became central demands. Bangladesh experienced a similar transformation when protests against job quotas developed into a nationwide movement. Sri Lanka's economic crisis also encouraged youth participation that ultimately changed the political leadership. These examples show that unemployment, corruption and restrictions on civil liberties often unite young citizens across different societies.

Facts and Figures:

- India's protests began after allegations of leaked examination papers.
- The movement forced India's federal education minister to resign.
- The Pew generation known as Generation Z includes people born between 1997 and 2012.
- Pakistan's Generation Z population is estimated at nearly 70 million.
- Bangladesh's uprising ended with Sheikh Hasina leaving the country.
- Nepal's protests followed restrictions on social media platforms.
- Sri Lanka's Aragalaya movement emerged during the economic crisis of 2022.
- Pakistan continues to face rising unemployment, economic dependence and restrictions on free expression according to the article.

To sum up, South Asia's young generation has become a defining political force that demands justice, opportunity and accountable governance. Governments that ignore these aspirations risk deeper instability and declining legitimacy. Pakistan still possesses the opportunity to transform its demographic strength into national progress, yet meaningful democratic reform and economic inclusion must arrive before public frustration reaches a breaking point.

INNOVATIVE POLICING

Author: Mohammad Ali Babakhel

Summary:

The article presents innovative policing as an urgent necessity for Pakistan's law enforcement agencies. The writer believes criminals and militant groups constantly adopt advanced technology while police institutions remain trapped in outdated structures, colonial laws and conventional thinking. Innovation therefore extends far beyond modern gadgets. It combines technology, community participation, evidence based policing and institutional reform. Such an approach strengthens public trust, improves crime prevention and transforms policing from a force driven model into a citizen centred public service. The author maintains that effective policing must reflect local realities because uniform solutions often waste resources and fail to address community needs.

The article further states that genuine reform demands legal changes, professional training, transparency and cooperation with society. Financial shortages, limited technical expertise, internet disruptions, corruption and weak privacy laws continue to obstruct innovation. Technology alone cannot deliver better policing unless institutions also change. The writer highlights successful initiatives introduced by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police, including the Police Sahulat Markaz Global App, online FIR services, SOS alerts and specialised complaint portals for women, children and transgender citizens. International examples from Japan, Singapore, Estonia, Scotland, Canada and the United Kingdom demonstrate that community engagement, digital policing and interagency cooperation reduce crime and strengthen public confidence. The article concludes that Pakistan should adapt these successful models to its own social and legal environment instead of merely importing technology.

Overview:

The article emphasizes that innovative policing requires institutional reform alongside technological advancement. It presents community partnership, evidence based decision making, transparency and digital transformation as essential pillars of modern law enforcement. The writer concludes that public trust remains the strongest foundation of an effective police service.

NOTES:

The article stresses that militants often outpace law enforcement through innovative use of drones, artificial intelligence, cyberspace and digital warfare. Modern policing therefore requires a combination of technology, community participation and evidence based practices. Police departments should cooperate with schools, local governments, health professionals and civil society to prevent crime instead of responding after violence occurs. Legal reforms, independent oversight and professional accountability remain essential for lasting success. The article praises several public friendly initiatives launched by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police, including digital complaint systems and integrated public services. International experiences demonstrate that neighbourhood policing, paperless administration, artificial intelligence and victim centred approaches strengthen security while increasing public confidence. Sustainable innovation depends upon institutional change rather than technological investment alone.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects and Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Police reforms and governance in Pakistan
- Current Affairs: Internal security and law enforcement modernization

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that modern policing depends upon public cooperation as much as law enforcement. Technology improves police performance only when supported by strong institutions and public trust. For example drones, GPS patrol systems and mobile applications help officers monitor crime more efficiently. Online FIR registration reduces unnecessary visits to police stations and increases accessibility. Japan's Koban policing system places officers inside neighbourhoods where they build lasting relationships with residents. Scotland treats violence as a public health issue through cooperation between police, education and health departments. These examples show that successful policing focuses upon prevention, partnership and accountability rather than force alone.

Facts and Figures:

- The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police introduced the Nadra integrated Police Sahulat Markaz Global App.
- The application provides online FIR complaints and police character certificates.
- The system includes SOS alerts and complaint portals for women, children and transgender citizens.
- Japan's Koban policing operates through neighbourhood police stations.
- Singapore employs facial recognition, artificial intelligence enabled CCTV and smart patrol vehicles.
- Estonia has established paperless electronic policing and online crime reporting.
- Scotland's Violence Reduction Unit treats violence as a public health challenge.

- Body worn cameras have improved transparency and reduced misconduct in several countries.

In essence, effective policing grows from public trust rather than coercive authority. Technology serves as a powerful instrument, yet institutional reform remains its backbone. Pakistan can build a safer society by modernising laws, strengthening accountability and embracing community centred policing. Innovation succeeds when people stand at the heart of every reform.

WHY COERCION DOESN'T WORK

Author: Maleeha Lodhi

Summary:

The article contends that coercion has repeatedly failed to resolve Pakistan's political and security crises because force cannot substitute legitimacy. The writer portrays a country where terrorism, political unrest and institutional decay have deepened while the ruling elite remains preoccupied with foreign engagements. Balochistan continues to face militant violence, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa struggles with persistent terrorist attacks and unrest lingers in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Political polarization has intensified through confrontation between the government and the opposition. Lawyers have challenged constitutional amendments that allegedly weakened judicial independence, while economic hardships and prolonged power shortages have further inflamed public dissatisfaction. Instead of addressing these structural problems, the state has relied upon censorship, political repression and coercive governance to suppress dissent.

The author distinguishes a competent state from an authoritarian one by stressing that authority grows from legitimacy, trust and public consent rather than fear. Repression may silence voices temporarily, yet it cannot extinguish grievances or restore stability. The continued popularity of the opposition despite arrests, the persistence of unrest in Balochistan despite military operations and the rise of social media despite restrictions illustrate the limits of coercion. Sustainable peace demands political inclusion, accountable governance and meaningful reforms. The article concludes that Pakistan's future depends upon democratic legitimacy, responsive institutions and public confidence because enduring stability rests upon consent rather than compulsion.

Overview:

The article assesses Pakistan's growing dependence on coercive governance to manage political opposition and security challenges. It explains why authoritarian practices weaken legitimacy instead of strengthening the state. The writer advocates democratic accountability, institutional competence and political dialogue as the only durable foundations of national stability.

NOTES:

The article maintains that coercive governance has failed to strengthen Pakistan's political order or improve national security. Militant violence continues across Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa despite an increasingly force based approach. The government has restricted political opposition, constrained media freedom and curtailed judicial independence through controversial constitutional amendments. The writer distinguishes authority from raw power by asserting that legitimacy emerges through public trust and lawful governance. A competent state secures order through effective institutions rather than intimidation. The prolonged unrest in Balochistan demonstrates that military measures alone cannot resolve conflicts rooted in alienation, historical grievances and weak governance. The article urges policymakers to replace authoritarian instincts with democratic participation, institutional reform and genuine political reconciliation.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects and Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Civil military relations and democratic governance
- Current Affairs: Political polarization and constitutional amendments
- International Relations: State capacity and governance models

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that governments cannot preserve stability through force alone. People support the state when institutions remain fair and accountable. For example, arrests and restrictions have weakened political freedoms, yet opposition parties continue to enjoy public support. Military operations have reduced some security threats, but unrest in Balochistan persists because deeper political and economic grievances remain unresolved. The writer therefore distinguishes a strong state from a competent state. A strong state relies upon power, whereas a competent state earns public trust through justice, effective governance and democratic legitimacy. Lasting peace emerges when governments solve problems instead of merely suppressing them.

Facts and Figures:

- The article was published in Dawn on July 27, 2026
- The PTI announced nationwide protests for August 5, 2026
- Lawyers launched a movement against the 26th and 27th Constitutional Amendments
- Militant violence continues across Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
- The article identifies social media as a major platform for public dissent despite restrictions

To sum up, power may compel obedience for a moment, yet legitimacy secures allegiance for generations. A state earns authority through justice, competence and public confidence rather than intimidation. Pakistan's enduring stability therefore depends upon democratic governance, institutional integrity and political reconciliation instead of coercive control.

OUTSOURCING SECURITY

Author: Muhammad Amir Rana

Summary:

The article questions the recurring state policy of encouraging local militias to confront militant groups in conflict zones. Muhammad Amir Rana places Maulana Fazlur Rehman's recent criticism within a broader historical context and asks why governments repeatedly rely on civilian armed groups despite their poor record. From East Pakistan to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, successive administrations have sponsored peace committees, lashkars and other community defence forces. During the height of counterterrorism operations between 2007 and 2015, thousands of anti Taliban volunteers received weapons, funding and official support. Initially these groups supplied valuable intelligence and protected vulnerable communities. Yet the strategy soon revealed serious flaws. Some militias abused their authority, public confidence eroded and the state gradually withdrew support after security forces regained control of contested areas.

The article explains that abandonment became the policy's gravest failure. Former militia members, tribal elders and allied political workers turned into priority targets for militant organisations and hundreds lost their lives through assassinations, roadside bombs and grenade attacks. Deep grievances remain across former tribal districts because displaced communities, underfunded policing and unmet development promises reinforced a sense of betrayal. Similar anxieties now surround reports of renewed militia recruitment in Balochistan and alleged plans involving former Afghan security operatives. The author warns that outsourcing security weakens institutional authority, empowers criminal networks and widens mistrust between the state and society. Sustainable peace, he concludes, requires capable police institutions, political engagement and accountable governance rather than another cycle of armed proxies.

Overview:

The article assesses Pakistan's long standing reliance on state backed local militias for counterterrorism. It traces the policy from colonial era practices to modern security operations and shows why the model lost public legitimacy.

Through evidence from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, the author contends that durable security depends upon professional policing, political trust and institutional governance rather than outsourced coercion.

NOTES:

The article identifies state sponsored militias as a recurring but flawed counterterrorism instrument in Pakistan. During operations against the TTP, thousands of lashkar members received arms, funding and institutional backing. These groups initially strengthened local intelligence and resistance against militants. However, abuses of power, weak oversight and eventual state withdrawal destroyed public trust. Former militia members became prime targets for terrorist reprisals and suffered heavy casualties. The author stresses that unresolved issues after the Fata merger, displacement, inadequate policing and delayed development deepened local resentment. Reports of similar arrangements in Balochistan have revived fears that criminal elements and foreign actors may gain influence. The central lesson is that security cannot be sustainably outsourced to irregular armed groups; it must rest upon accountable institutions and political reconciliation.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects and Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Counterterrorism policy and the Fata merger
- International Relations: Irregular armed groups and internal security
- Political Science: State capacity and monopoly over legitimate force
- Current Affairs: Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa security challenges

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains why governments sometimes arm local communities against terrorists. During Pakistan's anti Taliban operations, tribal lashkars helped security forces identify militant hideouts and protect villages. For example many volunteers joined peace committees in former Fata with official support. After military operations succeeded, however, state protection diminished and militants began targeting former militia members and their families. The article argues that this abandonment created long term mistrust. A stronger alternative would be professional police forces, reliable intelligence systems, development projects and political dialogue with affected communities.

Facts and Figures:

- Pakistan reactivated large scale anti Taliban lashkars during 2007–2015
- Terrorists carried out 220 attacks against militia members between 2006 and 2015 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
- These attacks killed 507 militia members and injured 416
- Balochistan recorded 77 attacks on private militia members
- Those attacks killed 66 militia members in the province
- Terrorists launched 2,007 attacks against political workers during the same period
- These attacks killed 4,068 political workers and leaders
- The strategy drew inspiration from the US backed Sunni Awakening model in Iraq

To sum up, a state weakens itself when it substitutes institutions with armed intermediaries. Pakistan's experience with lashkars shows that short term tactical gains can produce long term insecurity and public distrust. Enduring peace requires professional policing, political reconciliation and accountable governance. Security must remain a sovereign institutional responsibility rather than a burden transferred to vulnerable communities.

COCKROACH MOVEMENT AND SECURITISATION IN INDIA

Author: Dr Muhammad Ali Ehsan

Summary:

The article discusses India's youth led Cockroach Janta Party movement through the theoretical lens of securitisation. The movement emerged after repeated examination paper leaks and demanded accountability from the government, particularly the resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. Large demonstrations gathered at Jantar Mantar before protesters attempted to march towards Parliament. The government's response included police barricades, tear gas, baton charges, internet shutdowns and arrests of opposition leaders. The writer questions whether the Bharatiya Janata Party transformed an educational grievance into a national security issue in order to justify extraordinary state action. Drawing upon the Copenhagen School of International Relations, the article explains that securitisation occurs when political leaders portray ordinary political disputes as existential threats that require emergency measures beyond normal democratic procedures.

The writer further contends that this approach reflects a broader political pattern under Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Previous responses to the Citizenship Amendment Act protests, farmers' demonstrations and developments after the abrogation of Article 370 followed a similar trajectory. The article warns that repeated reliance upon emergency narratives gradually weakens democratic institutions and expands executive authority. Historical experiences from the United States after the September 11 attacks, Turkey after the 2016 coup attempt and Egypt after 2013 demonstrate how temporary emergency powers often become permanent instruments of governance. Through the Frankenstein analogy and David Runciman's analysis of democratic erosion, the writer concludes that the greatest danger lies not in public protest but in the normalisation of securitisation, which steadily transforms exceptional powers into ordinary politics.

Overview:

The article evaluates the Indian government's response to the Cockroach Janta Party protests through the concept of securitisation. It warns that democratic systems weaken when governments redefine political dissent as a national security threat. The writer concludes that democratic resilience depends upon protecting civil liberties while resolving political disputes through constitutional means.

NOTES:

The article explains the theory of securitisation developed by the Copenhagen School of International Relations. Governments sometimes portray political disagreements as existential threats in order to justify extraordinary powers. The writer believes India's response to the Cockroach Janta Party reflects this pattern. Similar approaches appeared during protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act, the farmers' movement and developments in Kashmir after Article 370. The article maintains that emergency measures such as internet shutdowns, preventive detention and expanded surveillance gradually weaken democratic institutions. Historical examples from the United States, Turkey and Egypt demonstrate that temporary emergency powers often become permanent features of governance. The core argument is that democratic systems survive when political opposition remains within the framework of normal constitutional politics.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects and Topics:

- International Relations: Copenhagen School and securitisation theory
- Current Affairs: Political protests in India

Notes for Beginners: The article explains that democratic governments should resolve political disagreements through dialogue and constitutional institutions. Securitisation begins when authorities portray ordinary political

protests as threats to national security. This allows governments to justify stronger police action and emergency powers. For example the article cites India's response to the Cockroach Janta Party demonstrations after examination paper leaks. It also refers to the United States after the September 11 attacks where emergency powers expanded significantly. Turkey after the 2016 coup attempt and Egypt after 2013 experienced similar developments. These examples illustrate that temporary emergency measures may gradually become permanent parts of governance unless democratic institutions maintain effective checks and balances.

Facts and Figures:

- The Cockroach Janta Party emerged after repeated examination paper leaks.
- The movement demanded the resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.
- Major demonstrations took place at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi.
- The government responded through tear gas, baton charges and internet shutdowns.
- The article refers to the Citizenship Amendment Act protests and the abrogation of Article 370.
- The United States expanded emergency powers after the September 11 attacks.
- Turkey introduced extensive emergency measures after the 2016 coup attempt.
- Egypt strengthened executive authority after political developments in 2013.

To wrap up, democracies face their greatest test when governments respond to dissent. Extraordinary powers may appear necessary during moments of crisis, yet history shows that such measures often outlive the emergencies that created them. Democratic institutions preserve their legitimacy when political disagreements remain within constitutional boundaries rather than becoming subjects of permanent security politics.

THE GLOBAL SYSTEM IS UNDER GREAT STRESS

Author: Shahid Javed Burki

Summary:

For nearly eight decades, the international political and economic order maintained relative stability through institutions established after the Second World War. Instead of creating an empire, the United States helped build a cooperative system anchored by the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. That framework reflected the lessons of the First World War when punitive policies against defeated nations nurtured extremism and ultimately led to another global conflict. The present international environment has departed from that tradition. President Donald Trump's foreign policy, shaped by the slogan of Make America Great Again, seeks to restore American dominance rather than preserve collective leadership. His partnership with Israel and the decision to launch military action against Iran have placed severe pressure upon the existing global order.

The economic consequences have already spread across the world. Disruption in the Strait of Hormuz has unsettled energy markets, increased commodity prices and slowed global growth. According to the IMF, inflation has risen while economic expansion has weakened across major economies, including India, China and Pakistan. The writer believes these developments stem largely from strategic miscalculations that underestimated Iran's political resilience. Several foreign policy experts have criticised the absence of informed decision making within the American administration. Although diplomatic efforts continue through indirect negotiations, uncertainty still clouds the international landscape. The article concludes that the Iran conflict threatens far more than one presidency. It places the stability of the global political and economic system itself at risk.

Overview:

The article reviews the evolution of the post Second World War international order and explains how recent geopolitical developments have weakened that framework. It links the Iran conflict to rising global economic uncertainty and maintains that strategic misjudgments may produce lasting consequences for international stability.

NOTES:

The article traces the origins of the modern international system to the institutions established after the Second World War under American leadership and the intellectual influence of John Maynard Keynes. Those institutions promoted shared responsibility instead of concentrated power and helped maintain global stability for decades. The writer contends that President Donald Trump's foreign policy has departed from this tradition by pursuing unilateral dominance through the MAGA doctrine. Military action against Iran disrupted the Strait of Hormuz, increased energy prices and weakened global economic growth. The IMF forecasts slower global output alongside higher inflation because of commodity price shocks and continuing uncertainty. Major economies, including India and China, are expected to experience slower growth, while Pakistan also faces economic pressures despite Chinese investment. Foreign policy analysts further maintain that the American administration underestimated Iran's internal resilience and neglected professional strategic advice. The article concludes that restoring international stability requires prudent diplomacy rather than impulsive military intervention.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects and Topics:

- International Relations: Post Second World War international order
- Current Affairs: Iran conflict and global geopolitical tensions
- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan's economy in the changing global environment

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains how the international system created after the Second World War helped maintain global peace and economic cooperation for many decades. Institutions such as the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank promoted cooperation among nations instead of domination by one country. The writer believes recent American policy towards Iran has weakened this system. The conflict disrupted oil shipments through the Strait of Hormuz and caused higher energy prices across the world. Rising fuel costs have increased inflation and slowed economic growth in many countries. Experts also believe American policymakers underestimated Iran's political strength. The article suggests that international peace depends upon cooperation, careful diplomacy and informed leadership rather than military confrontation.

Facts and Figures:

- The post Second World War international order has functioned for nearly eighty years
- Global economic growth is projected to decline from 3.5 percent in 2025 to 3 percent in 2026
- Global inflation is expected to rise from 4.1 percent in 2025 to 4.7 percent in 2026
- India's projected growth declines from 7.7 percent in 2025 to 6.4 percent in 2026
- China's projected growth declines from 5 percent in 2025 to 4.6 percent in 2026
- The United Nations, International Monetary Fund and World Bank emerged after the Second World War

To wrap up, the postwar international order thrived because nations valued cooperation over domination. Strategic misjudgments and prolonged conflict now threaten that legacy. Global stability demands wise leadership, responsible diplomacy and renewed commitment to institutions that have preserved peace and economic progress for generations.

IN THE DEFENCE OF DEFENDERS

Author: Inam Ul Haque

Summary:

The article presents a defence of Pakistan's military against persistent political criticism and public distrust. The writer begins with Maulana Fazal ur Rehman's remarks about military sacrifices and local militias, describing them as unfair, politically motivated, and detached from the security realities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan.

He notes that while public security remains the state's responsibility, citizens also carry a moral and historical duty to defend their homeland against militancy. The article states that anti military narratives often flourish through political opportunism, misinformation, deep fakes, and social media campaigns that shape public opinion without historical understanding. According to the writer, many grievances against the armed forces stem from selective reading of history rather than objective analysis. He therefore urges readers to assess events within their political and institutional context before reaching sweeping conclusions.

The article then revisits Pakistan's three military takeovers and attributes them to prolonged political instability, governance failures, and constitutional crises rather than military ambition alone. It acknowledges that some military rulers overstayed in power but credits certain periods with economic growth, industrial expansion, and strategic stability. The writer further rejects the allegation that the military alone undermines democracy. Instead, he points towards elite capture, corruption, political dynasties, weak party structures, and vested interest groups that dominate elected institutions. He concludes that the military continues to safeguard national interests because civilian governance has repeatedly fallen short of public expectations. In his view, any balanced assessment of Pakistan's political evolution demands historical perspective, institutional honesty, and a realistic understanding of national security challenges.

Overview:

The article provides a defence of Pakistan's military by placing civil military relations within their historical and political context. It attributes repeated institutional crises to weak governance, political instability, and elite capture rather than assigning exclusive blame to the armed forces. The writer calls for balanced judgement based on history instead of emotion, selective narratives, or political rhetoric.

NOTES:

The article explores Pakistan's civil military debate through the lens of political history and national security. It states that criticism of the military often ignores the circumstances that preceded military interventions. The writer traces the three military takeovers to constitutional breakdowns, electoral disputes, and administrative failures rather than institutional ambition alone. He recognises that prolonged military rule remained controversial but maintains that some administrations delivered economic progress and strategic stability. The article also highlights the influence of corruption, political dynasties, pressure groups, and elite capture within democratic institutions. Social media misinformation and deep fakes further distort public perception and widen mistrust. The writer concludes that meaningful democratic consolidation requires accountable political leadership, informed public discourse, and an objective reading of Pakistan's constitutional history.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects and Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Civil military relations and political development
- Current Affairs: National security and political stability
- International Relations: Security studies and strategic affairs

Notes for Beginners:

The article discusses why Pakistan's military often becomes the centre of political debate. It explains that the writer believes military interventions followed political crises rather than creating them independently. For example, the coups of 1958, 1977, and 1999 are linked with instability and governance failures. The article also explains that corruption, elite influence, and weak democratic institutions continue to challenge Pakistan's political system.

Facts and Figures:

- Pakistan witnessed military takeovers in 1958, 1977, and 1999.
- JUI F holds 10 National Assembly seats.
- JUI F is the largest opposition party in the KP Assembly with 18 seats.
- The party also holds 12 seats in the Balochistan Assembly.

In essence, the article calls for a balanced assessment of Pakistan's civil military relationship rather than emotional or politically driven judgement. It suggests that democratic weaknesses, institutional failures, and elite interests have shaped the country's political trajectory as much as military interventions. A sound understanding of history, constitutional development, and governance remains essential for any meaningful debate on Pakistan's future.

BULLDOZER JUSTICE

Author: Dr Muhammad Ali Ehsan

Summary:

Education has always stood as the strongest pillar of liberal societies because it nurtures knowledge, strengthens democracy and expands opportunity. In this article, Dr Muhammad Ali Ehsan reflects upon the proposed demolition of Muhammad Ali Johar University in Uttar Pradesh and questions whether legal enforcement can justify disrupting the education of thousands of students. Authorities claim that most university buildings violate land acquisition regulations, while the university maintains that the relevant administrative authority did not exist when construction began. The writer believes these conflicting claims require impartial judicial scrutiny rather than immediate executive action. He also questions why regulatory concerns remained dormant for years before suddenly becoming an urgent matter.

The author suggests the controversy through legal, political and social perspectives. He observes that critics view the demolition as selective enforcement directed against a Muslim institution during the rise of Hindu nationalist politics in India. The university serves thousands of students and supports countless families through education and employment. Destroying such an institution would therefore carry consequences far beyond bricks and mortar. The writer concludes that constitutional democracies must uphold equal treatment before the law, protect due process and ensure that enforcement remains proportionate. Universities must also comply with legal requirements, yet governments should never sacrifice education at the altar of political expediency.

Overview:

The article discusses the proposed demolition of Muhammad Ali Johar University through legal, political and social lenses. It emphasizes that the rule of law requires impartial enforcement, judicial oversight and proportional action while safeguarding educational institutions and protecting the rights of students.

NOTES:

The article stresses that universities are centres of knowledge rather than ordinary physical structures. The proposed demolition of Muhammad Ali Johar University raises questions about legality, proportionality and equal application of the law. The writer maintains that unresolved legal disputes should receive judicial examination before irreversible administrative action takes place. He also highlights concerns that selective enforcement may reinforce perceptions of discrimination against India's Muslim minority. The article recalls several demolition drives involving Muslim properties in recent years, which critics describe as bulldozer justice. It emphasizes that constitutional governance demands transparency, equal legal standards and due process. The governments must enforce regulations without undermining education, minority rights or public confidence in democratic institutions.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects and Topics:

- International Relations: Minority rights and democratic governance in South Asia
- Current Affairs: Religious minorities and state policies in India

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains why education plays a vital role in building democratic and prosperous societies. Muhammad Ali Johar University in Uttar Pradesh faces demolition because authorities claim its buildings violate planning regulations. The university disputes these allegations and seeks judicial review. The writer believes courts should determine the legality before irreversible action occurs. He also explains that many critics view the demolition as

discriminatory because similar actions have rarely targeted other institutions. Thousands of students, many from the Muslim community, may lose access to higher education if the university closes. The article therefore highlights the importance of equal treatment before the law and protection of educational opportunities.

Facts and Figures:

- Authorities claim that 38 out of 40 university buildings violate land acquisition regulations
- Around 3000 students study at the university and many belong to the Muslim community
- Azam Khan established the Muhammad Ali Johar Trust in 2003
- The BJP has governed Uttar Pradesh since 2017
- Azam Khan received bail from the Supreme Court in 2022 after spending about two years in prison

To wrap up, the article demonstrates that justice loses credibility when it appears selective rather than impartial. Educational institutions deserve legal protection because they shape future generations and strengthen democratic societies. Governments must uphold the rule of law through fairness, transparency and proportionality instead of actions that deepen social divisions and weaken public trust.

PAKISTAN'S WATER CRISIS ALSO LIES UNDERGROUND

Author: Syed Mohammad Ali

Summary:

Pakistan's water crisis extends far beyond the uncertainty surrounding the Indus Waters Treaty. Syed Mohammad Ali argues that the country's greatest freshwater challenge now lies beneath its soil where groundwater reserves are steadily shrinking. While public debate revolves around river flows and cross border water disputes, excessive dependence on tube wells has pushed aquifers towards dangerous depletion. Since groundwater receives little legal protection under the Indus Waters Treaty, Pakistan cannot rely solely on external agreements to secure its future. The writer stresses that national water security depends as much on responsible domestic management as it does on diplomatic engagement with neighbouring states.

The author strengthens his case through regional comparison and practical policy recommendations. Bangladesh serves as a cautionary example where excessive groundwater extraction damaged agriculture despite abundant rainfall. Pakistan already possesses one of the world's largest artificial groundwater recharge systems through seepage from the Indus Basin Irrigation System. Yet extraction continues to outpace replenishment. The writer therefore calls for groundwater recharge projects, crop diversification, stricter regulation of commercial farming and effective governance of irrigation technologies. His central message is clear. Sustainable water management begins at home. Unless underground reserves are protected, food security, economic stability and rural livelihoods will steadily slip through the nation's fingers.

Overview:

The article shifts attention from transboundary water disputes to Pakistan's neglected groundwater crisis. It explains that long term water security depends upon sustainable groundwater management, agricultural reform and effective regulation rather than exclusive reliance on international water treaties.

NOTES:

The article highlights groundwater depletion as Pakistan's most pressing water challenge. Millions of farmers increasingly depend upon tube wells because canal supplies have become unreliable. Excessive extraction has lowered groundwater levels across Punjab and Balochistan. The writer points out that the Indus Waters Treaty regulates surface water but provides no framework for groundwater management. Bangladesh illustrates how groundwater depletion can occur even in water abundant countries. Pakistan already benefits from natural and artificial groundwater recharge through the Indus Basin Irrigation System, yet withdrawals continue to exceed replenishment. The article recommends restoring village ponds, constructing check dams, expanding recharge

basins and encouraging less water intensive crops. It also warns that technologies such as solar powered tube wells require strict regulation to prevent further over extraction. The core lesson is that sound domestic governance remains the cornerstone of long term water security.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects and Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Water resources and the Indus Basin
- Current Affairs: Pakistan's groundwater crisis and water security
- International Relations: Indus Waters Treaty and transboundary water governance

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan's water problem is not limited to rivers flowing from India. A large share of irrigation now depends upon groundwater stored beneath the earth. Farmers pump this water through tube wells to irrigate crops. When groundwater is removed faster than nature replaces it, water levels decline and farming becomes more expensive. The writer cites Bangladesh as an example where excessive groundwater use damaged agriculture despite heavy rainfall. He recommends restoring ponds, building check dams and promoting crops that consume less water. These measures would protect underground reserves and strengthen Pakistan's long term food and water security.

Facts and Figures:

- The Indus Waters Treaty regulates only surface water and excludes groundwater
- Millions of Pakistani farmers depend upon tube wells for irrigation
- Punjab and Balochistan face serious groundwater depletion
- Pakistan possesses one of the world's largest artificial groundwater recharge systems through the Indus Basin Irrigation System
- Bangladesh experienced severe groundwater depletion in the Barind region despite receiving much higher rainfall than Pakistan

To wrap up, Pakistan's future water security cannot rest upon international treaties alone. Rivers matter but underground reserves matter even more. Sustainable agriculture, effective groundwater governance and responsible resource management will determine whether future generations inherit abundance or scarcity.

POWER AND YOUTH

Author: Muhammad Amir Rana

Summary:

Pakistan's youth have begun to push back against an outdated power structure that no longer reflects their aspirations. Muhammad Amir Rana contends that the ruling elite continues to read society through an old lens while a new generation seeks fairness, dignity and equal opportunity. To illustrate this shift, he recounts the peaceful protest in Khuzdar where students transformed streets into an open air classroom after authorities shut down their public library. Their silent determination eventually paid off when the provincial government reopened the facility. The episode reveals that young citizens can stand their ground through peaceful civic action rather than confrontation. The writer also draws parallels with youth movements in India and Azad Jammu and Kashmir to show that frustration among young people has become a regional reality rooted in demands for justice rather than political spectacle.

The author broadens the discussion by exposing the deeper structural crisis facing Pakistan. He believes the existing political and bureaucratic order has failed to keep up with the expectations of a generation that values merit, opportunity and accountable governance. Political dynasties continue to pass power through closed circles while bureaucracy remains trapped in a colonial mindset that treats citizens as subjects instead of partners. Economic

hardship, shrinking employment prospects and declining trust in institutions have further widened the gulf between rulers and the ruled. The writer concludes that suppressing aspirations will only deepen alienation. Lasting stability depends upon a political order that embraces citizenship, rewards merit and opens the door to meaningful participation before public frustration reaches a tipping point.

Overview:

The article highlights the widening disconnect between Pakistan's youth and its traditional power structure. Through the example of the Khuzdar library protest and similar regional movements, the writer shows that young people now seek fairness, opportunity and genuine participation instead of symbolic concessions. He examines that political legitimacy and national stability require institutional reform, accountable governance and respect for citizens' rights.

NOTES:

The article emphasizes that Pakistan's youth have adopted peaceful and creative methods to demand their rights. The reopening of the Khuzdar public library demonstrates how disciplined civic action can influence public authorities. The writer criticizes bureaucratic and political institutions for preserving outdated structures that limit opportunity and suppress merit. He maintains that the younger generation possesses greater political awareness and refuses to accept inherited systems of privilege. The article also warns that political dynasties and authoritarian governance have weakened democratic values and widened public distrust. Economic stagnation, unemployment and declining institutional credibility have intensified youth frustration. The central lesson is that sustainable governance requires equal opportunity, responsive institutions and recognition of young citizens as active stakeholders rather than passive subjects.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects and Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Youth participation and democratic governance
- Current Affairs: Political legitimacy and public protests in Pakistan

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains why young people across Pakistan increasingly demand fairness instead of temporary incentives. In Khuzdar students peacefully protested after their public library was closed. Rather than clashing with authorities they continued studying outdoors until the government reopened the library. This example shows that peaceful civic action can produce meaningful results. The writer also explains that many young Pakistanis struggle because jobs are limited and political influence often outweighs merit. He believes governments should strengthen education, create equal opportunities and treat citizens with respect. When institutions respond to legitimate demands, public trust grows and democratic stability becomes stronger.

Facts and Figures:

- The Khuzdar youth protest led to the reopening of a public library
- The library served students preparing for competitive civil service examinations

In a nutshell, the article portrays Pakistan's youth as the strongest force for peaceful democratic change. Their demands revolve around opportunity, merit and dignity rather than confrontation. The writer reminds policymakers that power can endure only when it earns public trust. A state that listens to its youth builds resilience. A state that ignores them risks losing both legitimacy and the future.

RESET OR ANOTHER POLITICAL PLOY?

Author: Imtiaz Gul

Summary:

Pakistan's hybrid political system appears to have reached a crossroads where even its leading architects now admit that the existing governance model has fallen short. In this article, Imtiaz Gul assesses Mohsin Naqvi's call for a national "reset" and questions whether it reflects genuine political introspection or another calculated attempt to preserve the status quo. Naqvi acknowledged that governance has become ineffective because political legitimacy has steadily faded. He warned that youth frustration could boil over in the same manner witnessed in India, where student protests unsettled the political establishment. His remarks also reopened debate on revisiting the 18th Constitutional Amendment and creating new provinces. Yet the writer believes such proposals merely skim the surface if the deeper imbalance of power remains untouched.

The author broadens the discussion by examining Pakistan's enduring civil military equation and the absence of institutional independence. He suggests that a meaningful reset cannot take shape unless the real centres of authority embrace political reconciliation, restore judicial credibility and accept dialogue with all political stakeholders, including Imran Khan and PTI. The article questions whether Naqvi's speech signals a sincere change of direction or simply rolls out another carefully managed political project before a renewed opposition campaign. The writer concludes that Pakistan cannot keep going around in circles while presenting continuity as reform. Lasting stability demands courageous institutional change rather than cosmetic political adjustments.

Overview:

The article evaluates Mohsin Naqvi's proposal for a national reset against Pakistan's broader political realities. It argues that governance cannot improve through administrative reforms alone because the country's fundamental challenge lies in weak political legitimacy, civil military imbalance and declining institutional independence. The writer suggests that genuine democratic reconciliation rather than managed politics provides the only sustainable path toward stability.

NOTES:

The article highlights the growing crisis of legitimacy within Pakistan's hybrid political system. Mohsin Naqvi publicly described the existing governance model as ineffective and called for a national reset supported by all political forces. The writer questions whether this admission represents genuine reform or another political strategy designed to preserve the prevailing power structure. The discussion stresses that administrative reforms such as revisiting the 18th Constitutional Amendment or creating new provinces cannot succeed without institutional balance and democratic legitimacy. It also underlines the importance of judicial independence, inclusive political dialogue and reconciliation with major opposition forces. The central lesson is that durable political stability emerges through constitutional governance and public trust rather than elite driven political management.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects and Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Civil military relations and democratic evolution in Pakistan
- Current Affairs: National reconciliation and political stability in Pakistan, Judicial independence and constitutional governance

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that political legitimacy is the foundation of stable governance. When governments lose public trust, reforms become difficult to implement. A hybrid political system refers to an arrangement where elected institutions function alongside unelected centres of influence. The writer believes that constitutional reforms alone cannot solve political crises unless all major stakeholders participate in decision making. For example, the article

argues that dialogue with opposition parties and restoration of judicial independence would strengthen democratic institutions. It also explains that creating new provinces or changing administrative structures cannot produce lasting stability without genuine political consensus. The comparison shows that institutional reforms succeed only when supported by public confidence and constitutional principles.

Facts and Figures:

- Mohsin Naqvi described the present governance model as a total flop.
- The article links youth dissatisfaction with the rise of the Cockroach Party movement in India.
- The writer refers to the 18th Constitutional Amendment and the debate over creating new provinces.
- The article states that the 26th Constitutional Amendment reduced judicial independence in politically sensitive matters.
- It mentions the planned PTI mobilisation campaign scheduled for August 5, the anniversary of Imran Khan's arrest.

To wrap up, no political reset can succeed unless it reaches the roots of Pakistan's governance crisis rather than trimming its branches. Institutions flourish when legitimacy, dialogue and constitutional balance guide the political process. They falter when cosmetic reforms replace genuine transformation. Pakistan's future therefore depends less on new slogans and more on the willingness of its power centres to embrace democratic reconciliation and institutional accountability.

SKIN COLOUR IN GLOBAL POLITICS

Author: Shahid Javed Burki

Summary:

The article reflects upon the historical and political influence of skin colour in international affairs. The writer traces the evolution of global power through four broad racial groups namely White, Brown, Black and Yellow. European colonial expansion carried white populations across North America and Australia where indigenous communities lost political authority. The transatlantic slave trade brought millions of Africans into forced labour, which later produced deep social and political conflict in the United States. Although slavery ended after the American Civil War, racial inequality continued for generations. The article also notes that decolonisation transformed Africa into a continent of independent states while South Asia emerged as the principal homeland of brown populations. China and East Asia meanwhile developed into major economic centres that increasingly influence world affairs.

The writer then shifts towards contemporary geopolitics where race intersects with national power. A recent Pew Research Center survey indicates that China now enjoys a more favourable global image than the United States across most surveyed countries. The article attributes this shift to China's investment driven diplomacy and the declining appeal of American foreign policy under President Donald Trump. Yet the writer concludes that skin colour alone never determines political behaviour. Religion, national interests, history and domestic discrimination often shape relations more profoundly than race. Pakistan's partition from Bangladesh, India's caste hierarchy and the continuing discrimination against African Americans illustrate that conflicts frequently emerge within societies that share similar racial identities. The article concludes that skin colour influences politics but never serves as its sole driving force.

Overview:

The article discusses the relationship between race and global politics through historical and contemporary examples. It highlights colonialism, slavery, decolonisation and changing global perceptions of major powers. The writer concludes that race remains an important political factor, yet religion, national interests, economic strength and historical experiences often exercise greater influence over international and domestic affairs.

NOTES:

The article traces the political consequences of colonial expansion and racial hierarchy across several centuries. European colonial powers reshaped global politics through conquest, migration and slavery. Decolonisation later produced dozens of independent African states. China has strengthened its international standing through economic engagement while the United States has experienced declining global favourability according to recent public opinion surveys. The article emphasizes that race alone cannot explain global conflicts because religion, ideology and strategic interests frequently outweigh racial identity. Pakistan's separation from Bangladesh and India's caste system demonstrate that discrimination may exist even among people with similar ethnic origins.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects and Topics:

- Current Affairs: United States China strategic competition
- International Relations: Soft power and global public opinion
- Pakistan Affairs: Separation of East Pakistan and national integration
- Sociology: Race ethnicity and social stratification

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that race has shaped history, politics and society for centuries. European colonial powers expanded across several continents and established political control over indigenous populations. The slave trade brought millions of Africans to the Americas where racial discrimination continued long after slavery ended. In modern politics, public opinion depends increasingly upon foreign policy and economic cooperation rather than racial identity. For example China's investment projects have improved its image in many countries. Another example appears in South Asia where religion played a greater role than race during the partition of British India. These examples show that identity consists of several interconnected factors instead of skin colour alone.

Facts and Figures:

- The Pew Research Center surveyed public opinion in 36 countries.
- China received more favourable ratings than the United States in 25 of those countries.
- The survey was conducted between March and May 2026.
- The United States median favourability rating declined from 48 percent in 2025 to 36 percent in 2026.
- A median of 74 percent of respondents disapproved of President Donald Trump's handling of the Iran war and the Gaza conflict.
- Bangladesh emerged as an independent state in 1971 after the breakup of Pakistan.

To sum up, race continues to influence political behaviour and historical development, yet it never acts alone. National interest, religion, economic strength and historical experience often carry greater weight in shaping domestic and international relations. A deeper understanding of global politics therefore requires a broader perspective that moves beyond colour while recognising its enduring impact.

Arab News Pakistan –

NATO MUST STRENGTHEN ITS TIES WITH THE GULF

Author: Luke Coffey

Summary:

The article contends that NATO's recent summit in Ankara marked more than a debate over defence spending. It also revived attention toward the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative as the alliance's principal framework for engagement with Gulf partners. Although the initiative has existed since 2004, its practical achievements have remained modest, limited largely to training exchanges and a regional centre in Kuwait. The writer maintains that changing geopolitical realities, especially the war involving Iran and continued instability across the Middle East, have elevated the Gulf's strategic value for Euro Atlantic security. NATO therefore cannot afford to treat the region as a secondary theatre while it remains preoccupied with Ukraine. A stronger partnership with Gulf states would reinforce collective security and extend NATO's strategic reach beyond Europe.

The article lays out three practical measures to transform the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative into a meaningful security platform. It recommends deeper cooperation on modern air defence by drawing upon Ukraine's battlefield expertise against unmanned systems and establishing a NATO certified Centre of Excellence for air defence. The writer also proposes appointing a senior special envoy to sustain diplomatic engagement with Gulf capitals and prevent the initiative from losing momentum. Finally, he calls for institutionalising annual ministerial meetings, expanded military training, maritime security cooperation, cyber defence, infrastructure protection, and counter drone coordination. The article concludes that Europe's energy security, maritime trade, and regional stability remain closely intertwined with developments in the Gulf. NATO's long term adaptability therefore depends upon stronger and more consistent engagement with its Gulf partners.

Overview:

The article portrays the Gulf region as an indispensable pillar of NATO's future security strategy. It calls for revitalising the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative through structured defence cooperation, sustained diplomatic engagement, and practical security collaboration. A durable NATO Gulf partnership would strengthen regional stability and reinforce the alliance's capacity to confront emerging global threats.

NOTES:

The article traces the evolution of the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative since its establishment in 2004 and assesses its limited progress over the past two decades. It identifies the Ankara Summit as an opportunity to breathe fresh life into NATO's engagement with Gulf states. The writer considers modern air defence a shared strategic necessity because drone warfare now shapes contemporary conflicts from Eastern Europe to the Middle East. Ukraine's operational experience offers valuable lessons that Gulf partners and NATO can collectively utilise. The article further advocates the appointment of a special envoy to strengthen diplomatic coordination and preserve continuity between summits. Regular ministerial consultations, cybersecurity cooperation, maritime security initiatives, infrastructure protection, and counter drone capabilities would transform the initiative from a symbolic dialogue into a practical security mechanism. The writer ultimately portrays Gulf security as inseparable from European stability and transatlantic interests.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects and Topics:

- International Relations: NATO and collective security
- Current Affairs: Middle East security and Gulf geopolitics

Notes for Beginners: The article explains why NATO seeks closer relations with Gulf countries. NATO created the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative in 2004 to strengthen security cooperation with Gulf partners. Today, Kuwait, Qatar,

Bahrain, and the UAE participate in this framework. The writer believes that modern security threats such as drone attacks, cyber warfare, and maritime risks require closer coordination. For example, Ukraine's experience against unmanned aerial systems could help Gulf states strengthen their own air defence. Regular meetings and practical cooperation would make this partnership more effective.

Facts and Figures:

- The Istanbul Cooperation Initiative was established in 2004.
- Four Gulf states currently participate in the initiative.
- The initiative includes Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, and the UAE.
- The recent NATO Summit took place in Ankara, Turkiye.
- Saudi Arabia and Oman have not yet joined the initiative.

To sum up, the article presents a compelling case for repositioning the Gulf at the heart of NATO's broader strategic outlook. Security challenges no longer remain confined to geographical boundaries, and regional instability now carries global consequences. If NATO seeks to remain resilient in an increasingly volatile world, sustained engagement with its Gulf partners must become a strategic imperative rather than a diplomatic afterthought.

GOVERNMENTS SHOULD GOVERN AI, NOT OWN IT

Author: Gabriela Ramos and Emilija Stojmenova Duh

Summary:

The article argues that governments must reclaim their proper role in shaping the artificial intelligence industry through independent regulation rather than passive observation or corporate ownership. The writers contend that AI poses risks comparable to previous technological revolutions, where timely state intervention protected public welfare. They reject the claim that regulation suppresses innovation and instead draw upon successful examples from food safety and pharmaceutical oversight, where independent institutions ensured public trust without weakening scientific advancement. The article warns that delaying regulatory action until markets fail could expose societies to unprecedented threats. Frontier AI systems already possess capabilities that could endanger cybersecurity, financial systems, national infrastructure and democratic institutions if deployed irresponsibly. Governments therefore carry a duty to establish safety standards, liability mechanisms and rigorous assessments before these technologies become deeply embedded in everyday life.

The writers also warn against proposals that would make governments shareholders in private AI companies. Such ownership, they contend, would blur the line between regulator and investor, create conflicts of interest and undermine confidence in impartial oversight. Public interest cannot flourish when governments seek financial returns from the industries they supervise. The article cites proposals surrounding OpenAI and the US government as examples of a misguided path that could compromise privacy, institutional independence and democratic accountability. Instead, policymakers should strengthen independent regulatory bodies, cultivate public sector expertise, enforce fair taxation and hold technology firms accountable for harm. The future of AI depends less on government ownership than on responsible governance that protects innovation while safeguarding human dignity, public trust and democratic values.

Overview:

The article frames artificial intelligence as a transformative technology that demands effective public oversight rather than government ownership. It calls for independent regulation, institutional integrity and transparent accountability so innovation serves society instead of placing democracy, privacy and security at risk.

NOTES:

The article presents artificial intelligence as a technological revolution that requires proactive governance before irreversible harm emerges. It recalls earlier public interventions in areas such as pharmaceuticals, food safety and

environmental protection where governments acted despite scientific uncertainty. The writers reject the belief that regulation inevitably weakens innovation and instead portray independent oversight as the foundation of public confidence. They warn that frontier AI systems possess capabilities capable of threatening cybersecurity, financial stability and national security if left unchecked. The proposal for governments to acquire ownership stakes in AI companies receives sharp criticism because it creates institutional conflicts between regulation and financial interests. The article instead recommends independent regulators, enforceable safety standards, clear liability laws, fair taxation of multinational technology firms and stronger public sector expertise. Responsible governance rather than state ownership remains the safest path for balancing innovation with democratic accountability.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects and Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Digital governance and public institutions
- Current Affairs: Artificial intelligence governance and emerging technologies
- International Relations: Global technology competition and AI regulation

Notes for Beginners:

Artificial intelligence can improve healthcare, education and business, but it also creates serious risks if left without proper supervision. The article explains that governments should regulate AI in the same way they supervise medicines and food products. Their responsibility is to protect the public rather than own technology companies. For example, the US Food and Drug Administration approves medicines before public use because safety comes first. Likewise, governments should establish AI safety rules before advanced systems become widely available. Strong regulation encourages innovation while protecting privacy, national security and public confidence.

Facts and Figures:

- The Istanbul article is unrelated. From this article the key factual points include:
- The AI industry remains dominated by the United States.
- China develops only a small share of frontier AI models compared with the US.
- The US administration reportedly considered acquiring equity in AI companies.
- OpenAI reportedly proposed a 5 percent government stake.
- Anthropic's Mythos testing revealed advanced capabilities to exploit vulnerabilities across major operating systems and web browsers.
- The US Federal Drug Administration, European Medicines Agency and European Food Safety Authority are presented as successful models of independent regulation.

To sum up, The article shows that technological advancement must never outpace public responsibility. Artificial intelligence can transform societies for the better, but unchecked power invites unintended consequences. Governments should remain impartial guardians of the public interest instead of becoming corporate stakeholders. Independent regulation, institutional integrity and democratic accountability will determine whether AI becomes a force for human progress or a source of enduring public distrust.

THE GULF'S AI ECONOMY WON'T WAIT FOR PAKISTAN

Author: Mehreen Durrani

Summary:

The article portrays Pakistan's record freelance earnings as a mixed blessing rather than an unqualified success. While digital exports reached an unprecedented level, the writer contends that much of Pakistan's workforce remains trapped at the lowest end of the global technology value chain. Freelancers largely execute projects conceived elsewhere instead of designing products, developing frontier technologies or generating intellectual property. Since artificial intelligence is expected to automate routine digital work first, Pakistan risks celebrating an

economic model that may soon lose relevance. This concern gains further weight from the country's declining Global Innovation Index ranking, weak investment in research, limited institutional capacity and insufficient human capital development. The article warns that exporting digital services without strengthening domestic innovation leaves Pakistan vulnerable in an increasingly knowledge driven global economy.

The writer then shifts attention to the Gulf, where a sweeping AI transformation has already begun. Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait and Oman are investing billions in artificial intelligence infrastructure, sovereign cloud systems and advanced language models. The Gulf possesses abundant capital but faces a shortage of highly specialised AI professionals, while Pakistan has a vast digital workforce that lacks institutional direction. This convergence presents a rare strategic opening, yet the window may close quickly as regional talent ecosystems take shape. Rather than expanding conventional labour exports, Pakistan should establish structured capability partnerships with Gulf states through recognised certifications, joint research institutes, AI laboratories and digital mobility agreements. Financial remittances may sustain households, but cognitive remittances build industries. Pakistan's long term prosperity therefore depends on exporting expertise instead of inexpensive labour and becoming a partner in the Gulf's intelligence economy before the opportunity slips away.

Overview:

The article reframes Pakistan's digital success through the lens of artificial intelligence and innovation. It urges policymakers to shift from a freelancer based economy toward research, advanced skills and institutional collaboration with Gulf states, where the next wave of technological transformation is already underway.

NOTES:

The article highlights the limitations of Pakistan's present digital economy despite record freelance earnings. It argues that routine outsourcing work offers diminishing returns because artificial intelligence will automate much of it in the coming years. Pakistan continues to perform well in software exports but remains weak in research, innovation and institutional capacity. Meanwhile, Gulf countries have embarked on ambitious AI programmes that require highly skilled engineers rather than large pools of low cost labour. The writer identifies this convergence as a strategic opportunity for Pakistan to reposition its workforce. A GCC Pakistan Digital Talent Compact, mutual recognition of professional certifications, joint AI laboratories and coordinated research partnerships could elevate Pakistan from a supplier of outsourced services to a contributor of technological innovation. Lasting economic strength will emerge through knowledge creation rather than labour exports alone.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects and Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Digital economy and human capital development
- Current Affairs: Artificial intelligence and Gulf economic transformation
- International Relations: Pakistan GCC strategic cooperation
- Public Administration: Skills development and institutional reform

Notes for Beginners:

Pakistan earns billions through freelance digital services, but much of this work involves completing tasks designed by foreign companies. The article explains that artificial intelligence may replace many routine digital jobs in the near future. Gulf countries are investing heavily in AI infrastructure and now require specialists in machine learning, cybersecurity and cloud computing. For example, Saudi Arabia and the UAE are developing national AI platforms instead of relying solely on imported technology. Pakistan can benefit by training advanced professionals and creating research partnerships with Gulf countries. Knowledge and innovation create stronger economies than low cost labour alone.

Facts and Figures:

- Pakistan's freelancers earned a record 1.76 billion dollars.
- Freelance earnings increased by 78 percent within one year.

- Digital export earnings grew more than fourfold over five years.
- Pakistan ranked 99th among 139 economies in the 2025 Global Innovation Index.
- The country stood at 87th position in 2022.
- Pakistan ranked 75th in innovation outputs but 124th in innovation inputs.
- Research expenditure remains below 0.2 percent of GDP.
- Pakistan has nearly three million freelancers, the fourth largest freelance workforce globally.
- PwC estimates AI could contribute more than 320 billion dollars to the Middle East economy by 2030.
- Regional data centre capacity is expected to triple within five years.

To wrap up, the article warns that Pakistan cannot secure its digital future through outsourcing alone. The age of artificial intelligence rewards innovation, research and specialised expertise rather than routine execution. The Gulf's technology revolution has already gathered momentum, and nations that supply advanced talent today will shape the region's economy for decades. Pakistan must therefore replace short term complacency with strategic vision. The choice is straightforward. Continue exporting labour at the lower end of the value chain or cultivate the knowledge, institutions and partnerships that define tomorrow's intelligence economy.

THE CEASEFIRE COLLAPSED. SO DID PAKISTAN'S ECONOMIC WINDOW

Author: Dr. Vaqar Ahmed

Summary:

The article contends that Pakistan's diplomatic achievement in facilitating the United States Iran ceasefire created a brief opportunity to strengthen its fragile economy. A stable Gulf promised lower oil prices, secure shipping routes, stronger investor confidence and greater fiscal space for economic reform. That opportunity, however, faded after the ceasefire collapsed because of renewed tensions in the Strait of Hormuz. Military exchanges between the United States and Iran restored uncertainty and weakened the economic benefits that Pakistan had hoped to secure. The writer maintains that the peace dividend remained a realistic possibility, yet its success always depended upon sustained regional stability rather than temporary pauses in conflict.

The article further demonstrates that Pakistan's economic recovery remains vulnerable despite encouraging macroeconomic indicators. Higher growth, lower inflation and improved foreign exchange reserves conceal structural weaknesses such as low investment, limited tax collection and heavy public debt. Energy dependence continues to expose the economy to external shocks while reforms in the oil and gas sector have yet to produce measurable results. The FY27 budget assumed continued regional calm, yet renewed conflict now threatens inflation, fiscal stability and industrial growth through rising energy costs. The writer concludes that diplomatic success alone cannot secure economic resilience. Pakistan must accelerate energy diversification, strengthen fiscal reforms and develop strategic reserves if it seeks protection from future geopolitical crises.

Overview:

The article assesses the economic consequences of the renewed United States Iran conflict for Pakistan. It emphasizes that regional peace offered valuable economic opportunities, yet those gains disappeared after the ceasefire collapsed. The writer concludes that long term economic resilience requires structural reform rather than dependence upon favourable geopolitical circumstances.

NOTES:

The article highlights the close relationship between regional security and Pakistan's economic stability. Temporary peace in the Gulf improved market confidence, reduced inflationary pressure and created favourable conditions for economic recovery. Renewed conflict reversed many of those advantages through higher oil prices and uncertainty

in global trade routes. Pakistan's economy still struggles with low investment, weak tax mobilisation and substantial public debt despite encouraging headline indicators. Energy reforms remain incomplete while dependence upon imported fuel continues to expose the country to external shocks. The article emphasizes that diplomacy must complement domestic economic reform because sustainable growth depends upon resilient institutions rather than temporary geopolitical opportunities.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects and Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan's economic challenges and fiscal reforms
- Current Affairs: United States Iran conflict and regional security
- International Relations: Economic diplomacy and peace dividends

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that international peace often produces direct economic benefits for neighbouring countries. Stable oil prices reduce import costs and support lower inflation. For example the June ceasefire temporarily improved Pakistan's economic outlook because shipping routes remained secure and investor confidence increased. After hostilities resumed, energy prices became uncertain once again and economic risks returned. The article also explains that strong economies require structural reforms such as better tax collection, energy diversification and sustainable public finances. Diplomatic achievements create opportunities, yet domestic policy determines whether those opportunities produce lasting national progress.

Facts and Figures:

- The Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding provided 60 days for permanent peace negotiations.
- The ceasefire collapsed on July 8 after a dispute in the Strait of Hormuz.
- Pakistan could save between 170 million and 340 million dollars annually through cheaper Iranian energy imports.
- The current account shifted from surplus to deficit after renewed regional instability.
- The FY27 budget targeted continued economic growth and lower inflation.
- Pakistan's policy response focused upon fiscal discipline, energy reform and reserve accumulation.
- The central bank maintained its policy interest rate despite growing uncertainty.

To put it simply, peace provides economic opportunities that conflict quickly destroys. Pakistan demonstrated diplomatic credibility through regional mediation, yet diplomacy alone cannot shield the economy from external shocks. Lasting stability demands stronger institutions, diversified energy sources and disciplined fiscal management. Without these reforms, every crisis in the Gulf will continue to threaten Pakistan's economic future.

COULD CHINA SUCCEED WHERE THE US AND ISRAEL HAVE FAILED?

Author: Asif Durrani

Summary:

Military victories can shift the balance of power, yet they rarely settle political disputes. In this article, Asif Durrani reflects upon the renewed confrontation between Iran and the United States and contends that repeated wars have deepened regional instability rather than produced durable peace. Economic disruption, insecurity in maritime trade and volatility in global energy markets reveal the limits of coercive diplomacy. Against this backdrop, the writer presents China as a credible diplomatic actor whose approach rests upon dialogue, sovereignty and political settlement instead of military alliances. President Xi Jinping's Global Security Initiative offers principles that encourage inclusive security rather than confrontation. According to the author, lasting peace demands arrangements that respect the interests of every regional stakeholder.

The discussion broadens to China's growing influence across the Middle East. Beijing has cultivated balanced relations with Iran, the Gulf Cooperation Council states and the United States while avoiding direct military involvement. Its successful mediation between Iran and Saudi Arabia strengthened its diplomatic standing and demonstrated the value of impartial facilitation. The author believes that regional stability now depends upon comprehensive Gulf security dialogue supported by confidence building measures and international cooperation. Pakistan can also contribute through its balanced relations with competing regional actors. The article concludes that peace cannot emerge from force alone. Trust, dialogue and shared security remain the strongest foundations for a stable Middle East.

Overview:

The article evaluates China's potential contribution to Middle Eastern peace after the latest Iran United States conflict. It highlights the shortcomings of military solutions and presents the Global Security Initiative as a diplomatic framework rooted in sovereignty, dialogue and cooperative security. The author concludes that lasting regional stability depends upon inclusive political engagement rather than armed confrontation.

NOTES:

The article argues that military campaigns rarely eliminate the political roots of conflict. Repeated wars have intensified insecurity across the Middle East while disrupting energy markets and global trade. China has strengthened its regional credibility through balanced diplomacy with Iran, Gulf states and other major powers. The Global Security Initiative emphasizes sovereignty, peaceful dispute resolution and shared security instead of alliance politics. The initiative rejects the belief that one state's security should come at another's expense. China's mediation between Iran and Saudi Arabia demonstrated the value of neutral diplomacy. The author proposes a comprehensive Gulf security dialogue that includes Iran, GCC states, Iraq and other regional actors. Pakistan's balanced diplomatic relations position it to support confidence building and regional stability. Durable peace requires cooperation, political dialogue and regional ownership rather than military dominance.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects and Topics:

- International Relations: China's growing role in Middle Eastern diplomacy
- Current Affairs: Iran United States conflict and Gulf security
- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan's diplomatic role in regional peace

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains why wars often fail to establish lasting peace. Military success may weaken an opponent, yet political disputes usually remain unresolved. China follows a different strategy that emphasizes diplomacy, economic cooperation and respect for national sovereignty. Its mediation between Iran and Saudi Arabia strengthened confidence in its neutral role. The Global Security Initiative promotes dialogue instead of confrontation and encourages every regional country to participate in security arrangements. The author believes Pakistan can also support regional peace because it maintains constructive relations with China, Iran and several Arab countries.

Facts and Figures:

- China successfully mediated the restoration of diplomatic relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia in 2023
- The Global Security Initiative was introduced by President Xi Jinping in 2022
- China remains one of the world's largest importers of Middle Eastern oil and gas
- The Strait of Hormuz is one of the world's most important maritime energy routes
- The article proposes a Gulf security dialogue involving Iran, GCC states, Iraq and other regional stakeholders

To wrap up, Peace cannot be secured through missiles alone. Military victories may alter strategic realities, yet they seldom heal political divisions. The future of the Middle East depends upon dialogue, mutual respect and inclusive security arrangements. China offers one possible framework for that objective. Whether regional actors embrace that opportunity will determine if the region escapes the cycle of recurring conflict or remains trapped within it.

CSS PLATFORM

International Crisis Group –

PAKISTAN: A NEW PLAYER IN THE QUEST FOR A U.S.-IRAN BREAKTHROUGH

Summary:

Pakistan emerged as an unexpected mediator after the United States and Israel launched military strikes against Iran in February 2026. This article portrays Islamabad's diplomatic initiative as a response to pressing national interests rather than international prestige. A prolonged conflict threatened Pakistan's security, economy and regional partnerships. The country maintained neutrality while preserving communication with Washington, Tehran, Riyadh and Beijing. Its quiet diplomacy helped secure the 8 April ceasefire and facilitated the highest level US Iran negotiations since the 1979 Iranian Revolution. Pakistan coordinated closely with Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Türkiye and China to sustain dialogue despite persistent disagreements over Iran's nuclear programme and the Strait of Hormuz. The mediation enhanced Pakistan's international stature and highlighted its capacity to bridge bitter rivals through discreet diplomacy.

The article further explains that mediation carried considerable strategic risks. Sectarian unrest, Baloch militancy, rising fuel prices and supply disruptions exposed Pakistan's internal vulnerabilities. Simultaneously Islamabad had to preserve cordial relations with Saudi Arabia, the United States, Iran and the Gulf states without alienating any side. Although negotiations failed to produce a final settlement, diplomatic channels remained open and the ceasefire endured. Pakistan continued to transmit proposals between both adversaries while balancing regional obligations and domestic stability. The author concludes that Pakistan lacks sufficient leverage to impose peace, yet sustained engagement remains essential because renewed war would inflict severe consequences upon Pakistan, the Middle East and the wider international order.

Overview:

The article evaluates Pakistan's unexpected diplomatic role in mediating between the United States and Iran during the 2026 Middle East conflict. It illustrates how strategic neutrality, regional partnerships and quiet diplomacy elevated Pakistan's global profile. At the same time it highlights the security, economic and political challenges that accompanied Islamabad's peacemaking efforts.

NOTES:

The article portrays Pakistan as an emerging diplomatic intermediary during the US Iran conflict. Islamabad pursued neutrality while maintaining close communication with Washington, Tehran, Beijing, Riyadh, Cairo and Ankara. Its mediation contributed to the 8 April ceasefire and facilitated direct negotiations between American and Iranian delegations in Islamabad. The article also highlights Pakistan's domestic concerns, including sectarian unrest, Baloch insurgency, fuel shortages and inflation caused by disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz. Diplomatic balancing remained essential because Pakistan depended upon Saudi Arabia for financial assistance, the United States for strategic cooperation and Iran for border stability. Although negotiations produced no comprehensive agreement, they prevented the collapse of dialogue. The article concludes that Pakistan's mediation strengthened its diplomatic credibility, yet long term success depends upon preserving neutrality, sustaining regional partnerships and preventing another regional war.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects and Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan's foreign policy and regional diplomacy
- International Relations: Conflict resolution and third party mediation
- Current Affairs: US Iran conflict and Middle East geopolitics

- Political Science: Neutrality and balance of power in international politics

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains how mediation can prevent wars from becoming larger conflicts. Pakistan acted as a neutral bridge between the United States and Iran after fighting erupted in February 2026. For example Pakistan hosted direct peace talks in Islamabad after helping secure a temporary ceasefire. The country also coordinated with China, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Türkiye to preserve communication between both sides. At home Pakistan faced higher fuel prices because the Strait of Hormuz remained blocked. Security concerns also increased due to sectarian tensions and Baloch militancy near the Iranian border. The article demonstrates that successful diplomacy requires balanced relations with competing powers while protecting national interests and regional stability.

Facts and Figures:

- The US Israel military campaign against Iran began on 28 February 2026
- Pakistan helped facilitate the ceasefire announced on 8 April 2026
- Islamabad hosted US Iran negotiations on 11 and 12 April 2026
- The talks marked the highest level direct engagement since the 1979 Iranian Revolution
- Pakistan's Shia community constitutes about 20 percent of its population of 240 million
- More than 85 percent of Pakistan's oil and gas imports originate from the Middle East
- The International Monetary Fund released a further 1.3 billion dollars to Pakistan in May 2026
- Saudi Arabia pledged an additional 3 billion dollars and extended an existing 5 billion dollar financial facility

To wrap up, Pakistan transformed a regional crisis into a diplomatic opportunity through prudent neutrality and persistent engagement. Its mediation neither ended the conflict nor resolved every dispute. Yet it preserved dialogue when confrontation seemed inevitable. Lasting success will depend upon balanced diplomacy, internal resilience and the ability to safeguard national interests without sacrificing regional peace.

ISRAEL AND THE COST PARADOX OF THE IRAN WAR

Author: Abdulla Banndar Al Etaibi

Summary:

The article argues that the greatest paradox of the current Iran Israel war lies in the unequal distribution of its costs and rewards. Although Israel initiated the conflict, it has avoided much of the direct damage while securing major strategic gains. The author explains that Iran's long standing security doctrine relied upon proxy groups such as Hezbollah, the Houthis and armed Iraqi factions to keep conflict away from Iranian territory. That network now stands badly weakened. Hezbollah has suffered severe military and political setbacks in Lebanon. Iraqi militias face growing American pressure and possible disarmament. The Houthis have redirected much of their military effort towards Saudi Arabia instead of Israel. Consequently Iran now shoulders the burden of confrontation with declining regional support. According to the writer, this transformation has dismantled the deterrence architecture that Tehran spent four decades constructing.

The author further notes that Israel has gained remarkable economic and strategic advantages despite wartime expenses. Iranian retaliation has largely targeted Gulf energy facilities and civilian infrastructure rather than Israel itself. American military operations continue to degrade Iranian missile capabilities, which indirectly strengthens Israeli security. At the same time Israel's economy remains resilient. The Bank of Israel still projects economic growth despite the conflict. Defence exports continue to rise because battlefield performance increases global demand for Israeli weapons. Energy production from the Leviathan and Tamar gas fields remains strong while Mediterranean ports continue normal operations. The article concludes that modern wars are measured by the balance between costs and gains rather than battlefield victories alone. Israel has transferred much of the war's burden to Iran, the Gulf states and the United States. Whether this imbalance shapes a lasting regional order remains the central strategic question.

Overview:

The article examines the strategic, economic and geopolitical consequences of the Iran Israel war. It argues that Israel has achieved substantial military and economic advantages while transferring much of the conflict's burden to Iran, the Gulf states and the United States. The author concludes that the true measure of war lies in the balance between costs and strategic gains rather than territorial conquest alone.

NOTES:

The article highlights the collapse of Iran's long established proxy based security doctrine. Hezbollah, Iraqi militias and the Houthis have all suffered military or political setbacks that reduced Tehran's regional influence. Israel has largely avoided sustained attacks on its own territory because Iranian strikes have focused upon Gulf infrastructure and civilian targets. The United States continues to weaken Iranian military capabilities through direct intervention. Meanwhile Israel's economy has remained resilient despite wartime mobilisation. Defence exports have reached record levels while foreign investment continues to enter the country. Gas production and maritime trade have also remained stable. The article argues that the greatest Israeli success has emerged from reshaping the regional balance of power rather than securing decisive battlefield victories. The conflict demonstrates that economic resilience, diplomatic alliances and strategic positioning often determine the outcome of modern wars.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects and Topics:

- Current Affairs: Iran Israel conflict and Middle East geopolitics
- International Relations: Proxy warfare and regional balance of power
- Political Science: National security doctrine and strategic deterrence

- Pakistan Affairs: Strategic implications of instability in the Middle East

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that wars involve economic and political competition as much as military conflict. A country may gain strategic advantages even without occupying territory. Iran relied upon allied armed groups in Lebanon, Iraq and Yemen to strengthen its regional influence. Those groups have weakened during the present conflict. Israel meanwhile has maintained economic stability despite the war. For example Israeli defence exports increased because successful military technology attracted international buyers. Another example appears in the energy sector where Israeli gas exports continued despite regional instability. The article teaches that strong alliances, economic resilience and effective strategy often shape the outcome of modern conflicts more than battlefield success alone.

Facts and Figures:

- The war began on February 28 according to the article.
- The Bank of Israel projects 4 percent economic growth during 2026.
- Economic growth is expected to reach 5.5 percent in 2027.
- The shekel appreciated by nearly 20 percent against the US dollar.
- Google acquired Israeli cybersecurity company Wiz for 32 billion dollars.
- Israeli defence exports reached 19.2 billion dollars during 2025.
- Defence exports increased by almost 30 percent for the fifth consecutive record year.
- Israeli gas production is expected to exceed three billion cubic feet per day.

To put it simply, the article argues that success in modern warfare depends less upon battlefield destruction and more upon strategic advantage. Israel has weakened Iran's regional influence while limiting its own costs and preserving economic strength. The conflict illustrates how military power, economic resilience and diplomatic alliances together shape geopolitical outcomes. Whether this unequal balance becomes the foundation of a new Middle Eastern order remains an open question.

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