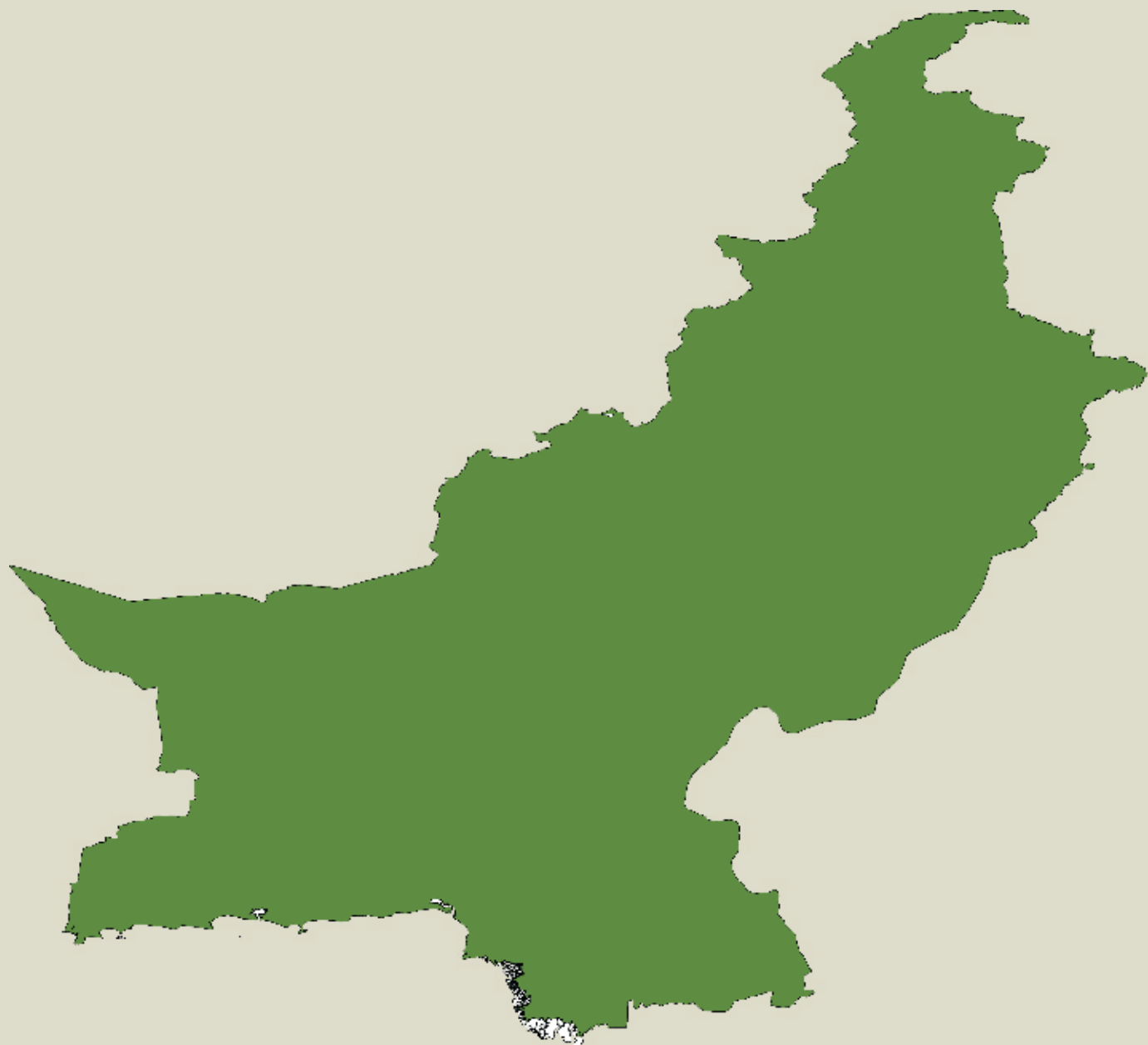


JUNE 2017

PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST

*A Selected Summary of News, Views and Trends
from Pakistani Media*



Prepared by
Ahmad Nazir Mir
Dr Zainab Akhter
Dr Mohammad Eisa
Dr Ashok Behuria

idsa
INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE
STUDIES & ANALYSES
रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

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INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES

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Editorial

The whole JIT process in Pakistan snowballed into a political wrangling between the government and the opposition. There were speculations that the JIT would find the Sharif family guilty of money-laundering and force the prime minister to resign. He could then either chose a successor from the family or call for early elections.

Pakistan was finally, upgraded from its observer status in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) to a permanent member of the organisation along with India. This formal induction was hailed by the government as well media as a success of the country's foreign policy. Some experts also believe that China pushed for the membership of both Pakistan and India at the same time keeping an eye of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). There was a view that regular India-Pakistan interaction through the SCO will favour successful implementation of China's one belt, one road (OBOR) initiative in Asia.

The FATA-KP merger plan was put on the backburner by the government just before the announcement of the Budget for the Fiscal year 2017-18. Although the government cited non-availability of funds to carry forward this process, analysts held that it was a political gimmick to keep the ruling government's alliance with Jamiat Ulema Islam-Fazlur (JUI-F) going. JUI-F and Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PKMAP) were opposed to the government's merger plans.

According to analysts, both these parties put their self-interest ahead of national interest and blackmailed the PML-N leadership to delay the merger. The bill was to be adopted in the national assembly (NA) but there was no mention of the bill during the NA session. The opposition led by PTI staged a walkout from the Senate to register their protest over the delaying tactics of the government in introducing reforms in the tribal areas.

Target killing of religious minorities by extremist groups has reached a dangerously high level in the country. The killing of Shias, once again in Parachinar, indicates the hardening of religious views and shrinking space for minorities in the country. Lashkar-e-Jhangvi that vows to "rid Pakistan of Shias" claimed responsibility for the Parachinar bombing. Even after it came out openly with its vow to make the country free from the Shia's, the army came out with its statements urging people not to give the incident sectarian and ethnic colour. The English press made an effort to bring out the issue of target killings and raised its concerns about the callous attitude of the military towards the issue: "when the perpetrator proudly accepts responsibility for

an attack it is the height of impoliteness to pretend you don't know why that aggression happened".

The Bahawalpur oil tanker explosion which burned 150 people to death and injured more than 100 featured prominently in all the newspapers. This incident was used to highlight the urban-rural divide in the developmental sector. The newspapers highlighted incidence of acute poverty, illiteracy, lack of modern facilities and shortage of fuel in the rural areas as reasons for people rushing to collect fuel spilling out from the over-turned tanker, with full awareness of the risks involved in the act. It was alleged that the provincial government was spending more in urban areas at the expense of the rural ones.

PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST, June 2017

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POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Gwadar's water woes, Editorial, Daily Times, 01 June ¹

Balochistan is suffering once more from the water shortages, pushing residents on to the streets to protest the government's failure in tackling the crisis. Where the civvies failed the big boys of the Pakistan Navy were on hand to save the day, supplying some 1,200 tonnes of drinking water. Gwadar is a port city. *By definition it is surrounded by sea. Yet in today's Pakistan the poorest of all the country's provinces has been robbed of self-determination to such an extent that it is dependent on having water being trucked in from other areas. Sadly, this is nothing new.* The Pakistani state, over the years, has done little to address Gwadar's water crisis. Indeed, it has provided only a single desalination plant for the populations of the city and adjoining areas. This goes to show that the state apparatus is not serious about investing in Balochistan, despite all the tall claims of massive development in the city under the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). If it were, it wouldn't leave women and children with no option but to travel for miles in the scorching heat, armed with buckets in the hope of collecting a few drops of water.

Load-shedding returns, Khurram Hussain. Dawn, 01 June²

This is beginning to look like a rerun of the previous government's last year in power. *Rampant load-shedding, riots and attacks on power-sector installations, soaring circular debt, allegations of fudging of demand and supply data, high-level meetings being repeatedly convened to get an assessment of the situation, and repeated promises that load-shedding will end by the close of the year due to new projects that are about to be commissioned.* We've been here before and, four years after a government comes to power on the promise of breaking out of this cycle, we are here again. In its present form, the power sector cannot deliver. It is too large, too centralised, and the exact wrong mix of public- and private-sector ownership to bring down costs, deflect the intrusion of vested interests, operate at higher efficiency, or attract investment in areas where it is sorely needed, like transmission and distribution

¹<http://dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/31-May-17/gwadars-water-woes>

²<https://www.dawn.com/news/1336612/load-shedding-returns>

CPEC: calling the shots, Yasir Masood, *The Express Tribune*, 2 June³

Since 2013 when the idea of a China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) was first conceived till date, naysayers have directed quite a bit of criticism at this mammoth set of landmark projects. *By the time Beijing hosted the 'Belt and Road Forum' much of that criticism began to implode, leaving behind a trail of far-fetched fears. Calling CPEC a 'debt-trap', the detractors continued to inject toxic trepidations into people's minds. These adverse views – which are lapped up by our antagonistic neighbour – threaten to disrupt Pakistan's economic leapfrog.* ... To begin with, the critics must admit, the internationally well-established economic truism, that an underdeveloped and middle-income country must attract foreign direct investment (FDI) to strengthen its ability of producing both exportable merchandise and import substitution products. ... Pakistan is on the deciding juncture to encourage and promote small and medium size entrepreneurship to flourish under the banner of CPEC. This economic boom will bolster work opportunities for all segments of human resource in Pakistan. ...

Bringing Army under civilians' control is not difficult, Mohammad Shehzad, *Daily Times*, 05 June⁴

In Pakistan, the practice has been that Opposition leaders keep attending the Army chief's 'court' secretly, begging him to impose martial law. And whenever a chief obliged such politicians, the public welcomed the coup overwhelmingly by performing bhangras and distributing sweets. Politicians' wrongs can't make the army's wrong right. Yes, military is always subservient to the civilians but only in democracy. The politicians must establish the rules of democracy first instead of nurturing dictatorship under the façade of democracy. They can't establish their supremacy over the army by teaching democracy to the generals or reminding them what Jinnah had said i.e. army is servant of the people; policymaking is not its business; it is bound to follow the orders of the civilians. Before resorting to such rhetoric, they will have to have an unblemished reputation and character besides a modicum of the leadership and statesmanship that Jinnah demonstrated. David Cameron resigned after the Brits rejected his appeal to remain EU citizens. He was not facing any charges of corruption. It was morally wrong for him to lead a nation that paid no heed to his pleas. Can our politicians be moral like him?

³<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1425075/cpec-calling-shots/>

⁴<http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/05-Jun-17/bringing-army-under-civilians-control-is-not-difficult>

Deciphering Pakistan's perception problem, Durdana Najam, Daily Times, 07 June⁵

The negative perception persists. The US Congress keeps pointing the finger at Pakistan for watering the seeds of terrorism in the region. Surprisingly, whenever Pakistan is accused of providing a haven to the Haqqani network, Afghanistan rocks with blasts and bombshells. Not that there is any nexus, but the recent attack serves as a reminder that unrest in Afghanistan has only increased over the years, and that Pakistan, according to the Afghan government and intelligence agencies, is contributing to increasing it further....internally, the country has been consumed by governments that worked only on consolidating their power and enriching themselves. When political parties are mentioned, it is rarely their work that is discussed. Instead, it is usually the influence of their leaders that is talked about. Each party has become so powerful on the back of their business stakes that the Supreme Court judges, in the recent judgment in the Panama Papers case, could not help but mention the word Mafia.

More load-shedding, Editorial, Dawn, 08 June⁶

The government is celebrating the fact that power generation in the country crossed a peak of 19,000MW a few days ago, while the people are left to wonder where all this power is going. *Already the government's desperation has been sensed by the independent power producers that are using the moment to demand larger releases of their outstanding payments, a move that has reportedly been dubbed as "blackmail" by the water and power ministry.* However, the fact that the cash constraints of the IPPs are indeed beginning to bite has not been disputed, and even as the turbines rev at top speed, hectic efforts are afoot to arrange the funds to at least minimally satisfy the IPPs and forestall plant closures.

Power rackets continued, Khurram Husain, Dawn, 08 June⁷

For almost two months now, word has been circulating in power-sector circles that the large power-sector expansion plan being put in place by the government is at risk of commissioning too much generation capacity, saddling us with a steep payment bill for power plants that will basically sit idle for much of the year. *Until recently, this was talk one was hearing, although persistent and accompanied by all the signs that the talk was true. The prime minister himself, while chairing a meeting of the Cabinet*

⁵<http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/07-Jun-17/deciphering-pakistans-perception-problem>

⁶<https://www.dawn.com/news/1338203/more-load-shedding>

⁷<https://www.dawn.com/news/1338214/power-rackets-continued>

Committee on Energy (CCoE), signed off on two more power plants that had been dropped from the expansion plan following a cap on new generation capacity placed on imported fuels last year. The two are a coal-based power plant in Rahim Yar Khan and another in Muzaffargarh, both of which are to be converted to run on imported LNG. Both were pushed by the Punjab government.

Shooting the Messenger, Editorial, *The Nation*, 11 June⁸

The National Assembly (NA) secretariat has taken action against the recording of parliamentary proceedings and denied permission. ... *This is not the first time that the NA has issued warning to the journalists. However, this time around, Speaker Ayaz Sadiq has announced a complete ban on covering all proceedings.* The notice is the result of a brawl between two journalists over the live telecast of the opposition leader, Khurshid Shah, during the budget proceedings, which has played right into the hands of dissenters. NA proceedings used to be broadcast, until the NA found too many brawls were being recorded. ... *Legislators need to be reminded that television is the dominant medium through which the public receives information, and also that they are subservient to the public, not the other way around.* In UK House of Commons proceedings are constantly televised as a right to the public, and in the US the testimony of former FBI chief James Comey was broadcasted live recently without any protest from the White House or Congress.

Mob 'justice', Editorial, *Dawn*, 18 June⁹

There is ample evidence that the country is being sucked down a vortex where the violence is steadily escalating. There have been many cases where citizens have suffered viciousness and even death at the hands of an enraged mob. Now it would appear that society does not even draw the crucial distinction between private citizens and state representatives responsible for maintaining order. *However, the root causes of such behavior are a societal problem that requires course-correction. Mobs take the law into their own hands when there is little faith in the justice system.* The answer lies, on the one hand, in bringing to book all those who flout the law, especially at the top tiers of society, so that a strong signal is sent out about the sanctity of the law; on the other hand, renewed efforts to reduce weaponry on the streets must be pursued. An armed and alienated population is fast becoming a frightening reality.

⁸<http://nation.com.pk/editorials/11-Jun-2017/shooting-the-messenger>

⁹<https://www.dawn.com/news/1340224>

Land reforms: rightly back in the spotlight, Editorial, Daily Times, 20 June¹⁰

Reforms may be warranted also in view of the highly skewed pattern of land ownership in the country. The latest agricultural census of Pakistan in 2010 showed that 40 percent of farms in the country were reportedly owned by just four percent of farmers. In contrast, an overwhelming 90 percent of farmers owned less than 44 percent of farms. *Calls for land reforms had once been a regular feature of Pakistani political discourse spearheaded by a motley group of left-of-centre student groups, political parties, peasants and trade union bodies.* But lately, socio-economic concerns of the vast majority of the Pakistani population that is connected to the agricultural sector of the economy seem to have disappeared amid power plays among various state institutions in federal and provincial capitals. Debate on land reforms from within Islamic jurisprudential tradition is still possible, and in fact some scholars have referred to the need for recognising land as a trust, rather than as a commodity to be owned privately. Seen this way, use of land for agricultural purposes could be dictated by public rather than private interests.

Double, double toil and trouble, Najam Sethi, The Friday Times, 30 June¹¹

The political parties are also at serious odds with the judiciary. If Nawaz Sharif is obstructing the judicial investigation into the money trail of his personal wealth, Imran Khan is obstructing the Election Commission of Pakistan from inquiring into the money trail of his personal and party funds. In this background, the deteriorating external environment is cause for concern. *The porous border with Afghanistan is a continuing cause of terrorism in both countries. Anti-Pakistan Taliban holed out in Afghanistan and anti-Afghan Taliban holed out in Pakistan are shedding blood in both countries* the recent terrorist attacks that devastated Parachinar and Quetta no less than the one earlier in Kabul can all be attributed to state policies pursued by the intelligence agencies of both countries. American facilitation to resolve Pak-Afghan issues has failed, prompting the Chinese to step into the fray because of their huge investments planned in the region. But the political leaderships of both countries are paralysed by their internal problems and the chances of any quick successful outcome are slim. Pakistan's relations with India are hostage to the usual actors and factors. But PM Narendra Modi and his national security adviser A K Doval are in a belligerent anti-Pakistan mood while the Pakistan military establishment is not inclined to give the government any leeway in conducting any unconditional dialogue with New

¹⁰<http://dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/20-Jun-17/land-reforms-rightly-back-in-the-spotlight>

¹¹ <http://www.thefridaytimes.com/tft/double-double-toil-and-trouble/>

Delhi. So we may expect the border to remain hot, with attendant proxy warring by both sides.

ECONOMIC ISSUES

Finance minister fail, Huzaima Bukhari & Dr. Ikramul Haq, *The Friday Times*, 02 June¹²

The main fault of budget 2017-18 is its failure to provide Pakistan a roadmap to become self-reliant, which would mean collecting taxes according to the country's real tax potential and achieving an economic growth rate of over 7% for a decade. Instead, we found it strange that the government did not include a single measure in Finance Bill 2017 to counter the illegal flight of capital and to bring back untaxed money stashed abroad. *After the Panama Papers, the finance minister should have cracked the whip on the informal economy to show that he meant business. If he dreams of us becoming a member of G20 by 2030, as he said, he will have to wake up to the reality that this isn't going to happen as long as we don't have the resources and are staggering under ballooning debt.* Finance Bill 2017 confirms that the rich and mighty will continue to swim in their colossal incomes and wealth—in fact they will get richer without paying taxes. They are more than content to remain non-filers by paying the meagre withholding tax and happily avoiding the tax that is due on their real incomes. Sadly, the corporate sector is being further penalised through a 10% taxation on undistributed profits and a rise in the rate of turnover tax from 1% to 1.25%.

Sindh Budget, Editorial, *Dawn*, 07 June¹³

Fact of the matter is, the Sindh government has announced a very non-serious budget in its last year. It is laden with handouts, and contains no new revenue measures to help pay for them. Contrary to how provincial governments are supposed to operate, it is a deficit budget. The minister is right to complain that the federal government unjustly withholds the province's share from the NFC award, but according to his own budget documents, in the current fiscal year, 97pc of budgeted federal transfers on revenue assignment were received by the province, meaning the shortfall he is complaining about is not so large as to be a headline item in his budget speech.

CPEC: pitfalls ahead, Imtiaz Gul, *Daily Times*, 13 June¹⁴

Three recent events underscore the geopolitical as well as socioeconomic roadblocks to the success of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC); *one involved two Chinese abducted from Quetta and eventually murdered*

¹²<http://www.thefridaytimes.com/tft/finance-minister-fail/>

¹³ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1337915/sindh-budget>

¹⁴<http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/13-Jun-17/china-pakistan-economic-corridor-pitfalls-ahead>

purportedly by the IS/Daesh, the second was about a dozen Chinese detected in Quetta immediately after the kidnapping of the two. There were quietly handed over to Chinese officials for an apparent deportation to China. The other related to a financial dispute between Pakistani and Chinese business partners, resulting in physical thrashing of a Chinese national in Islamabad. Beside the geopolitical roadblocks, they face continuing social challenges too; the human propensity to swindle and dodge others for financial gains. Grand undertakings such as those under-construction CPEC projects only amplify such propensity, even in the face of fear of getting caught and punished.

The price of CPEC, Dr. Ahmad Rashid Malik, *The Nation*, 14 June¹⁵

The CPEC is precious whether it amounts US\$ 46 or US\$ 62 billion. It is the largest project between Pakistan and China and the biggest ever taken in human history between two sovereign States and these sovereign countries are Pakistan and China. *The sacrifices of Chinese nationals in Pakistan are not a new phenomenon. In building the world's eighth wonder, the Karakoram Highway (KKH), many brave Chinese workers laid down their lives. ... The price of the CPEC is much more compared to the KKH and both sides are committed. They have finances and sturdy will. ...* The first causality on the CPEC has taken place. It is highly unfortunate that two Chinese teachers engaged in the teaching of Mandarin language and themselves learning Urdu language in Quetta have been abducted on 24 May and on 6 June news broke out that they were killed by IS affiliates. ... *Indian and Afghan intelligence agencies are mainly engaged in these activities as IS has gained strength in Afghanistan to gain a foot-print for its terrorist acts. India has its increased presence in Afghanistan. In this region, their target is the CPEC and Xinjiang separation from China. ...* Prior to this abduction, a number of incidents took place involving RAW and NIDS.

Deficits and reserves, Khurram Husain, *Dawn*, 15 June¹⁶

This week, *the trade deficit crossed \$30 billion, probably the most meaningful milestone crossed recently.* Certainly more so than any 'historic high' hit by the stock market of the foreign exchange reserves. *For now, the government is in denial mode over this development, thinking that a few incentive packages should be enough to turn the tide, and given that this is an election year, the room for it to awaken to the dangers that this development poses is limited.* Adding to the complication on the trade front is the growing gap between import data as reported by the State Bank and the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). Reserves have declined by \$3bn since last July, a decline of 13pc, with almost all of that decline coming from State Bank reserves (as

¹⁵<http://nation.com.pk/columns/14-Jun-2017/the-price-of-cpec>

¹⁶<https://www.dawn.com/news/1339586/deficits-and-reserves>

opposed to reserves held by commercial banks). As debt servicing is set to mount in the years ahead, this decline could accelerate. The government has budgeted external borrowing of almost \$8bn for next year, with the bulk of that coming from China, followed by the Islamic Development Bank, the World Bank and a billion dollars each from Sukuk bonds and commercial bank borrowing.

Budgeting for an election year, Amna Memon, *The Friday Times*, 16 June¹⁷

Economic Survey 2016-2017 reveals that the government failed to achieve multiple economic targets, such as manufacturing, electricity generation, and agriculture. *Even the high economic growth rate fell short of its target of 5.7%*. Circular debt also remains an issue, crossing the Rs400 billion mark once again. The government has presented what appears to be an effective election year federal budget for 2017-2018, with a new ambitious GDP growth target of 6% coupled with an allocation to the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) almost 40% higher than last year's estimates. The total size of this federal budget, the fifth budget revealed during the current PML-N government, has been estimated at Rs4.753 trillion, about 8% higher than the previous budget of about Rs4.4 trillion. The government is hopeful that FBR revenues will aid in meeting the expenditures set by the budget. The ambitious targets set by the budget are unsurprising, given that the next General Election is expected to take place within this fiscal year.

Uncomfortable truths, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, 18 June¹⁸

An editorial in this newspaper on 17th June pointed out the way in which the national financial managers manipulated the numbers to present a picture more positive than was the reality. *Now the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has picked up on the same inconsistencies and delivered something of a rebuke. Whilst the IMF acknowledges that there have been macroeconomic gains over the last four years, these are now at risk and are beginning to erode. The IMF has released a note which has a gloomier picture than the upbeat one presented by Finance Minister Ishaq Dar. Government debt has now risen to 66.6 per cent of GDP, not the 59.3 per cent figure currently quoted by the government to the National Assembly in the last week.* ... The bottom line is that this is a failure of politics and politicians rather than deficient number-crunching by the financial gurus. ... It is time both for the state and the IMF to grasp any number of nettles if this corrosive circularity is ever to end. There are undeniable gains and improvements, life for millions is better, but they are fragile, vulnerable, and

¹⁷ <http://www.thefridaytimes.com/tft/budgeting-for-an-election-year/>

¹⁸ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1438177/uncomfortable-truths/>

as the IMF is highlighting already being eaten away by political expediency rather than bolstered by political courage. We can, and must, do better than this.

Pakistan's entry into SCO, Athar Z. Abbasi, *The Nation*, 19 June¹⁹

On 9 June, 2017, Pakistan was granted membership to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Pakistan had been its observer since 2005. The organisation decided to grant Pakistan status of a full member its 2015 Summit held in Ufa Russia. SCO is a powerful Eurasian body. ... *This is an ideal and opportune time for the countries of South Asia. India should also realise that we need to have a way for a secure and prosperous future for coming generations. It should stop its tirades against Pakistan. It should also stop sowing hostility in the region.* ... SCO is an economic bloc representing half of humanity as the total population of its member countries is half of the world population. The total GDP of the organisation accounts for one quarter of the world GDP. Shanghai Cooperation Organisation is a big opportunity and Pakistan has joined it at a right time. Pakistan is expanding its influence in the region and inviting other countries to join the march of development. We hope that at some time in future, countries of South Asia also realise the importance of regional connectivity and economic prosperity.

Campaign against CPEC, Javid Husain, *The Nation*, 20 June²⁰

There is little doubt that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a landmark event in the history of Pakistan-China friendship rooted in the convergence of the strategic interests of the two countries. ... *But it may lead to a much higher level of Chinese investment in Pakistan in the longer time frame work according to the proposals being considered by the two countries. CPEC besides providing the much needed resources for accelerating Pakistan's economic growth would also provide to north-western China a shorter and much more economical route for maritime trade with the rest of the world than what has been available so far.* Above all, it would strengthen Pakistan-China strategic partnership which serves the best interests of the two countries. *The importance of this partnership for Pakistan's security can hardly be over-emphasised considering the enduring threat posed to it by India. As for China, its trade route to Gwadar through Pakistan would enable it to bypass attempts by the US and India to block the expansion of China's influence and power in South Asia and the Indian Ocean region.* It would not be surprising, therefore, for India and the US to use all the resources at their disposal to launch a concerted propaganda campaign to

¹⁹<http://nation.com.pk/columns/19-Jun-2017/pakistan-s-entry-into-sco>

²⁰<http://nation.com.pk/columns/20-Jun-2017/campaign-against-cpec>

discredit CPEC in the eyes of the people of Pakistan and among its influential circles. This is precisely what is happening right now. ...

State of economy, Parvez Hasan, Dawn, 20 June²¹

Pakistan's economic growth was over 6pc per annum over the 30 years, 1960-90, which enabled its GDP to grow six-fold and per capita income to grow by 3pc per annum. Since 1990, the GDP growth has declined considerably and has averaged less than 4pc per annum over 2007-17, with per capita income growing less than 2pc per annum. *In contrast, the Indian growth rate has averaged nearly 7pc per annum since 1990 and Bangladesh has enjoyed a growth rate of close to 6pc per annum during the last decade.* More importantly, per capita incomes have been growing close to 5pc and nearly 4pc per annum in India and Bangladesh respectively in recent years. Unless Pakistan is able to revive its annual growth to a sustained 6pc to 7pc per annum, it will not be able to generate jobs needed for its large young population, and, equally important, it could fall even further behind India.

A red flag, Uzair M. Younus, Dawn, 29 June²²

Chinese interests in CPEC, however, are not benign and are a critical part of China's emerging grand strategy. These interests are fuelled by China's imminent need to secure its global energy and food supplies. *CPEC and Gwadar are key to this as they will enable the flow of vital energy and food supplies into China through an alternative route while allowing China to have a military and naval presence close to American military assets located in the Gulf.* Recent reports suggesting that China may soon establish a naval base in Gwadar indicate that this strategy is in full motion. A more visible and expanded role by Chinese diplomats in Afghanistan is also part of this strategy as a stable Afghanistan will not only reduce American military presence in the region, but also unlock energy and mineral assets in the land-locked country. It is true that the pro-China view within both elite and non-elite circles in Pakistan make this a truly unique relationship. Having said that, Pakistanis have historically not responded well to the development of foreign bases in their country and a Chinese military presence in the country could lead to a decline in China's standing in Pakistan. Pakistan's elites have historically cast aside the opinions and views of their citizens in their bid to punch above their weight in the international arena, leading to negative repercussions in the future.

²¹<https://www.dawn.com/news/1340544/state-of-economy>

²² <https://www.dawn.com/news/1342036/a-red-flag>

Joint Investigation Team(JIT)

Panamagate: Sharifs in thick soup, Farooq Awan, *Daily Times*, 13 June²³

The Sharif family looks to be in the soup after a joint investigation team (JIT) appointed by the Supreme Court of Pakistan to investigate their business dealings abroad has 'charged' the PML-N-led government with tampering relevant records in a bid to save the skin of their masters. Days after a 'character assassination campaign' by the Sharif family and some of their die-hard loyalists against some members of the JIT, the investigation panel has told the apex court that not only have some government departments shown reluctance in handing over relevant records but some of the records are even being forged with, a 'charge-sheet' that, according to the top court, may have 'far-reaching consequences' for the political landscape of the country.

More controversy, Editorial, *Dawn*, 15 June²⁴

In a sensational confidential report submitted to the Supreme Court a report that was quickly leaked to the media, creating yet another issue that will have to be resolved the JIT appears to have both taken aim at the government and provided ammunition against itself. First, there are the JIT's allegations of interference by state agencies presumably acting on behalf of the PML-N government. *The complaints are serious and too specific to be simply waved away. Prima facie, government officials or agencies that are under the control of the government are either trying to prevent the JIT from completing its inquiry within the time frame that the Supreme Court has set or, more insidiously, to block altogether the JIT's attempt to access evidence that could be relevant to the inquiry.* Unhappily, the JIT seems to be lurching from one self-made crisis to another. From its very composition to allegations of harsh and unnecessary conduct early on, the JIT appears to have a grander view of itself than what the law or norms of inquiry demand.

PM faces the JIT, Editorial, *Dawn*, 16 June²⁵

Perhaps Prime Minister Sharif's appearance before the JIT will help reset the mood around the investigation and the court proceedings that will follow. The JIT has been mired in far too much controversy, a great deal of it avoidable, for anyone interested in the strengthening of democratic institutions to be comfortable. A process with implications as grave as the potential disqualification of a legitimately elected prime minister ought to be conducted very differently to what has been the case so far. *But the Sharif family and the PML-N government must also bear some responsibility for the*

²³<http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/13-Jun-17/panamagate-sharifs-in-thick-soup>

²⁴<https://www.dawn.com/news/1339582/more-controversy>

²⁵<https://www.dawn.com/news/1339780/pm-faces-the-jit>

multiple controversies. At its core, as the prime minister's prepared comments yesterday again suggested, the PML-N appears to believe it is the victim of a vast conspiracy against the Sharifs personally and the government generally.

Time for PM to come clean, Editorial, Daily Times, 18 June²⁶

Amidst all this lurks the risk of the Panama Papers probe becoming what it should not: another exercise in muscle flexing by state institutions with their actions guided by realpolitik rather than the principle of the rule of law. For the latter to be upheld, the JIT needs to restrict itself to its mandate provided by the SC judgement of April 20. If an institution does not cooperate, the team is well within its rights to raise the issue with the SC bench overseeing the hearing, as it did earlier last week. Use of extra-legal means, like phone tapping, however, fall into the realm of what is unacceptable. Yet this possibility cannot be ruled out since all law enforcement and intelligence agencies have access to the latest surveillance technology. *The troublesome aspect is that some agencies represented in the JIT may have acquired technology well beyond the legal and regulatory framework operative in the country. This has been claimed in a comprehensive report launched earlier in the year by London-based advocacy group Privacy International.* The onus of ensuring rule of law rests equally with the other party to this probe. After appearing before the JIT last week, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Punjab Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif used the opportunity to remind their detractors that their family was respectful of the rule of law. But the premier and his younger brother may do well to ensure that their actions match their statements. That is, the state institutions under their command should not be misused to secure their private interests.

JIT and the 2018 elections, Umair Javed, Dawn, 19 June²⁷

The prime minister's statement to the press after his three-hour-long appearance before the Panama Papers JIT was meant purely for his party's voters. It wasn't meant to change anyone else's mind. It wasn't meant to showcase his or his party's belief in due process. It was a message of reassurance, probably triggered by diffused reports that their voters and some mid-level brokers in Punjab were feeling just a little queasy. This is precisely why the prime minister made several references to next year's general election as the real JIT. *This is also why he chose to reinforce the image that they were still in pole position to win that election. With the ongoing saga*

²⁶<http://dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/18-Jun-17/time-for-pm-to-come-clean-on-wealth-and-assets>

²⁷<https://www.dawn.com/news/1340373/jit-and-the-2018-elections>

still some way away from a firm conclusion, it's hard to say how its outcome will impact the electoral process. For PML-N, the ideal scenario would be an inconclusive outcome that sees everything winding down without a conviction. On the other hand, the investigation, and the Panama Papers scandal, is not only an ideological concern for the PTI, it is also the fuel that's keeping the party in the race.

The good, the bad, and the ugly of the Panama Leaks, Babar Ayaz , Daily Times, 22 June²⁸

The first good thing about this whole JIT exercise is that the rulers are in the accountability dock for their financial omissions and commissions. The second good thing about it is that there is a struggle between the democratic institutions for more space, which is normal in all the democratic societies. *The judiciary is trying to establish that it is more than independent. How I wish they would have exercised independence when the establishment took over the power unconstitutionally not once but thrice.* The civil and military bureaucracy and the judiciary are developed institutions of the capitalist society. On the other hand, the political parties are still quasi-feudal in character. As far as the issue of politician's corruption is concerned, all these institutions are equally corrupt. Similarly it is also true that we are equally corrupt when compared to the level of corruption in other countries which are at the same stage of economic and political development. So the good thing is that for the first time a sitting prime minister has been indicted by the judiciary.

Day after nuclear option is exercised, Murtaza Solangi, Daily Times, 26 June²⁹

The Panama Papers verdict has been out for quite some time. The manner in which the case has since proceeded gives an impression that the judiciary has indicted and punished itself. The on-going Joint Investigation Team (JIT) probe under the authority of the Supreme Court of Pakistan bench may end up polarising the country even further than the levels witnessed before the SC admitted for hearing petitions by a political opposition that could smell blood the moment the leaks were reported. The judges should have avoided getting involved in a case of such political undertones. Only the people - the real political sovereigns - should have the mandate to send a government packing. Change of government by any other means has always backfired in this country's history.

²⁸<http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/22-Jun-17/the-good-the-bad-and-the-ugly-of-the-panama-leaks>

²⁹<http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/26-Jun-17/day-after-the-nuclear-option-is-exercised>

FOREIGN POLICY

Saudi Arabia vs Iran, Editorial, Daily Times, 02 June³⁰

A realistic appraisal suggests that Saudi Arabia is driving the policy agenda of the coalition of Sunni Muslim nations. The recent tensions with Qatar show that individual member states don't have enough space to pursue independent foreign policy towards Iran. *How can Pakistan whose former Army Chief heads the coalition defy the patently anti-Iran stance of the coalition and stand up to the Saudi bosses? Pakistan's decision-makers have landed the country into a deep quagmire.* Annoying Saudi Arabia is not an option given our close ties and the state of our economy where remittances take care of millions of households. On the other hand, Iran is vital to our regional security interests. Given the unfolding of the Afghan endgame, Iran will be a crucial player in the years to come. If we are seen as a partisan in Saudi-Iran battle for the Middle East, we will create another hostile neighbour. Sadly, this was avoidable had our policy makers remained steadfast after the parliament vetoed our support to Saudi war on Yemen.

Qatar's diplomatic isolation, Editorial, The Nation, 6 June³¹

Qatar's diplomatic isolation by six states on Monday proves that the Islamic world is not as united as it hopes to be, nor are all members of the alliance on the same page. Following Bahrain and Saudi Arabia's lead, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Yemen and Libya also severed all diplomatic relations with Qatar and asked its diplomats to leave the country. *While Qatar has come at odds with Saudi in the past, relations have not soured to this level in recent times – the only real reason for this right now can be the criticism being meted out against Saudi Arabia on state-sponsored news channel, Al-Jazeera in recent times and support for the Muslim Brotherhood.* But the most problematic thing about this diplomatic isolation are the grounds it is based on. *Accusing Qatar for supporting and funding groups such as the Islamic State and Al-Qaeda backed Al-Nusra front is like the pot calling the kettle black – Saudi Arabia has been accused of funding both the IS and a plethora of other terrorist groups in the region for years. ...* If the problem of terrorism really is to be tackled in its entirety, it cannot be accomplished with Saudi Arabia – a supporter of terrorism as long as it furthers its goals – at the head of this coalition. ...

³⁰ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/02-Jun-17/saudi-arabia-vs-iran>

³¹ <http://nation.com.pk/editorials/06-Jun-2017/qatar-s-diplomatic-isolation>

The Wayward General, Editorial, *The Nation*, 23 June³²

... Pakistan is decidedly part of the military alliance dubbed the “Muslim NATO” out of confusion over its role as much as for effect. *Our top civilian and military leaders have attended the war games carried out by this group and our soldiers are stationed in Saudi Arabia.* The Prime Minister was part of Donald Trump’s audience on his recent visit and he accompanied the Chief of Army Staff back to the Kingdom a few days later. *Perhaps most importantly, General Raheel Sharif, the last COAS, still hugely popular among the country and considered the face of the military’s resurgence heads this military alliance as commander. ... While he may choose to refuse, the government does have the right to recall him, as Gen Raheel Sharif is effectively a de facto ambassador for Pakistan at the head of this alliance – it is ridiculous to suggest the government has no control. ...* Either divest Gen Raheel Sharif from all authority as a Pakistani representative, or own up to the fact that he is there on your behalf. The same goes for our military and economic environments – one way or another, the government needs to explain to the public what being part of the “Muslim NATO” means.

Kazakhstan summit, Editorial, *Dawn*, 10 June³³

Originally, a security pact in which there have been some halting steps in recent times towards broader economic cooperation, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation could offer Pakistan some advantages in the years ahead if Pakistan uses its membership effectively. *Theoretically, SCO membership offers Pakistan several opportunities to improve ties in the regional context. The two pivotal actors in the SCO, Russia and China, are both countries that Pakistan is already seeking deeper relations with China is on the path to becoming Pakistan’s pre-eminent global ally.* The SCO’s original focus is Central Asia, a region Pakistan has long sought more access to and deeper ties with. The platform could help in the efforts to stabilise Afghanistan, while its emphasis on counterterrorism cooperation and intelligence sharing over the last decade could be useful in the regional fight against militancy. Pakistan, then, has an opportunity to enhance security cooperation with a region where stability could unlock the enormous potential of trade and connectivity. Yet, there should be no illusions about the long and difficult road ahead. To begin with, Pakistan and India must resist the impulse to turn multilateral forums into little more than arenas for venting bilateral concerns. Already, in Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s hawkish speech in the summit, there is evidence that India may want to turn the SCO into another SAARC.

³²<http://nation.com.pk/editorials/23-Jun-2017/the-wayward-general>

³³<https://www.dawn.com/news/1338530/kazakhstan-summit>

A neutral role for Pakistan, Editorial, Dawn, 13 June³⁴

There may be many strands to the latest crisis engulfing the Middle East, but there is only one conclusion for Pakistan: this country cannot afford to get embroiled in conflict in the Middle East. *With Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and army chief Gen Qamar Bajwa in Saudi Arabia, the urgent, high-level diplomacy by Pakistan should have a dual focus ie help defuse tensions among the various state protagonists, each of which Pakistan has friendly relations with, and withdraw from the Saudi-led Islamic Military Alliance.* While Pakistan's leverage may be limited and its diplomatic heft in the Middle East far from obvious, it occupies a unique and potentially useful position as it has friendly ties with all the Middle Eastern and Gulf countries embroiled in the current crisis. From Saudi Arabia to Qatar and from Egypt to Iran, Pakistan has genuinely friendly and stable ties with all sides precisely the kind of committed and relatively neutral stakeholder that can act as an interlocutor to help rescue a region from a greater crisis. But if a crisis-fighting role is not something Pakistan can realistically take on, there must be an emphatic signal sent to all sides: Pakistan values its relations with all countries and the Pakistani national interest requires it to stay neutral in the current crisis.

Impact of Pakistan's SCO entry, S M Hali, Daily Times, 17 June³⁵

The focal point of SCO is its member nations' security-related concerns, focusing on terrorism, extremism and separatism. *Pakistan, as a frontline state in combating terrorism, has gained valuable understanding of the scourge of the three challenges and it would be privileged to share that experience with the SCO states, some of whom have also faced the bane of all three evils.* Pakistan military has established state-of-the-art anti-terrorism schools, where training is imparted to combat terrorism in realistic scenarios. The new Silk World Order envisaged by China and ably supported by Russia, which also incorporates Chinese President Xi Jinping's One Belt One Road (OBOR) Project, goes beyond Eurasia, which includes everything from a transcontinental mega railroad network connecting the Iberian Peninsula to the South China Sea and a vast array of terrestrial and maritime infrastructure linking China, the rest of Asia, Europe and East Africa...Under the SCO framework, Pakistan will have the confidence and support of other members besides China to complete the CPEC successfully and expeditiously make it a win-win situation for all and help achieve the fruition of the dreams of

³⁴<https://www.dawn.com/news/1339178/a-neutral-role-for-pakistan>

³⁵<http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/17-Jun-17/impact-of-pakistans-sco-entry>

economic development of the underdeveloped countries in the region who will be benefitting from the mega project.

Iranian drone incident, Editorial, Dawn, 23 June³⁶

From a Pakistani perspective, suspicions of Iranian motives are not unreasonable. *Iran has positioned Chabahar as a rival to Gwadar, and India has hyped the seaport as the answer to landlocked Afghanistan's search for a reliable, uninterrupted trade route.* With India's hostility to CPEC well known, and Iran perhaps worried about a greater Chinese presence in Balochistan, it is possible that Iran and India are working together along the Pak-Iran border to spy on Pak-China activities in the region. Yet, Pakistan has consistently maintained that it seeks stable ties with Iran, so it should be possible for the latter to raise diplomatically with Pakistan whatever concerns it has.

Human rights 'propaganda', Munir Ahmed, Daily Times, 30 June³⁷

About two weeks have elapsed since the EU parliament debated and passed a resolution against human rights violations in Pakistan. Yet, there is no word on this from the Pakistan government. It seems Pakistan has not taken this matter seriously. Pakistan's deep silence is not ironic, but is in fact meaningful support to the Indian stance. Despite criticism from every nook and corner, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif never uttered a word at any international platform or global forum on Kulbhushan Jadhav and his terrorist activities in Pakistan. Many believed that Nawaz Sharif's silence over the matter was meaningful support to India. *The question is if the Prime Minister and his government are not on the same page with the Pakistan Army even on this matter of national security or if this is a complete failure of diplomacy on another front the human rights situation in Pakistan?*

SECURITY SITUATION

Guidelines to curb terror financing, Editorial, Dawn, 11 June³⁸

The State Bank has just updated its rules for banks so they can be more diligent about handling funds that could be connected with persons or entities designated by the UN as terrorists. The move is obviously linked to the upcoming review of Pakistan's compliance with global money laundering and anti-terror financing regulations that is due in July. It will be conducted by the Financial Action Task Force, the UN body tasked with developing the

³⁶ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1341222/iranian-drone-incident>

³⁷ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/30-Jun-17/human-rights-propaganda>

³⁸ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1338773>

regulatory architecture to prevent the use of the banking system by terrorists and criminals. *The costs of failing such a review can potentially be high and lead to the disconnection of the country's financial system from the global financial system, making it impossible for the economy to transact with the outside world.* There is little chance that Pakistan will land up there in the near future, but it is a slippery slope; one wrong step can have very damaging consequences which could mean a terrible hit for our external trade and remittances.

Threats to journalists, Editorial, Dawn, 13 June³⁹

Pakistan has long been among the most dangerous countries in the world for journalists. Nearly 60 media persons, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists, have lost their lives in this country since 2000 for reasons ascertained as being related to their work either in direct reprisal, during the course of an assignment, or in crossfire while covering combat situations. *The almost complete impunity with which such crimes are carried out exacerbates the peril. Recent events have served as a reminder of the mortal dangers that journalists in Pakistan face.* On Sunday morning in Haripur, Bakhshish Ilahi, the bureau chief of an Urdu newspaper, was gunned down while on his way to work. Meanwhile in Lahore, Rana Tanveer, a reporter for an English daily who often writes about the persecution of religious minorities in Pakistan, has seen his house vandalised and a death threat painted on the gate. A few days ago, in an incident that may have had a sinister motive, he was left with injuries requiring an operation after a speeding car struck him.

Time to pull plug on Islamic Alliance, Editorial, Daily Times, 15 June⁴⁰

The Prime Minister's visit to Saudi Arabia has us all wondering if the purpose was to assure the King of support in so-called Gulf Crisis or whether we are going to play mediator. PM Nawaz is said to have been categorical in his response to King Abdullah. Pakistan will in no way be choosing between Saudi Arabia and Qatar. If this is true, we welcome the development. *Pakistan's Parliament had barred the government from taking sides in the Middle East conflict largely due to the consequences we have had to face when fighting someone else's war. For Pakistan, becoming a part of any such alliance will threaten the peace at home. We are already engaged in a war against militants and the nation needs unity.* Pakistan becoming a part of a sectarian alliance in the region might cause a divide within the country since our population comprises both Shia and Sunni Muslims. Therefore, we should not let our territory be exploited by those who are playing power games. Peace and security at home should be our first priority. It is about time

³⁹<https://www.dawn.com/news/1339176/threats-to-journalists>

⁴⁰<http://dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/15-Jun-17/time-to-pull-plug-on-islamic-alliance>

Pakistan pull out of the Islamic Military alliance 'against terrorism' and Gen Raheel return home. We now know that it is a 'Sunni alliance' established to isolate Iran under the garb of countering terror. So what is he waiting for?

Hangu strike: Haqqanis still protected? Editorial, *Daily Times*, 16 June⁴¹

There has always been an ambiguity surrounding the Haqqani Network as the Pakistani leadership has often issued contradictory statements, which confuse the country's stance. *The military says that the action against terrorists will not have a division of 'good and bad militants' (which has long been Pakistan's unofficial policy vis-à-vis terrorism), and yet some ministers have issued statements suggesting Pakistan still plans on 'keeping' Haqqani network-type groups because they are not launching attacks in Pakistan.* PM's Adviser on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz is on record asking why Pakistan should take action against groups that are not directly attacking the country. He had also admitted that some Haqqani Network leaders live in Pakistan. After the recent attacks in Afghanistan however, when the Afghan leadership accused Pakistan of backing the anti-Afghan groups, our political leadership reiterated that anti-Afghan groups have no presence in Pakistan. But the killing of the Haqqani Network members in a settled area of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province suggests otherwise.

Role of agencies, Editorial, *Dawn*, 22 June⁴²

In an era in which Pakistan's state and society face unprecedented threats from militancy, terrorism and extremism, the civil and military sides of the state have been unable to shed old habits. *The people need and deserve a state and intelligence apparatus that is focused on fighting internal and external threats to peace and stability, and not a system that is far too distracted fighting old, bitter political battles.* While the Supreme Court has rightly chastised the Intelligence Bureau for its unwelcome, arguably intimidatory surveillance of the JIT, the role of the military intelligence agencies has escaped meaningful censure so far. That is unfortunate because, for decades, the intrusive, unchecked, unmonitored actions of intelligence agencies on both sides of the civil-military divide have done much to destabilise the political landscape an undermining of the democratic order that the Supreme Court and parliament have a chance to help correct. From Mehrangate to the JIT, the military-led intelligence agencies have engaged in conduct that has ranged from the questionable to the downright anti-democratic.

⁴¹<http://dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/16-Jun-17/hangu-drone-strike-haqqanis-still-protected>

⁴² <https://www.dawn.com/news/1340978/role-of-agencies>

TERRORISM

Pakistan and terrorism, Shaihd Javed Burki, *The Express Tribune*, 12 June⁴³

If one follows the press in the West, it becomes apparent that in Europe and the United States, Pakistan is regarded as one of the fountains from which flows a great deal of terrorism affecting these countries. *This impression has been created not only in the minds of the people who follow the mainstream news media but has also begun to form in the thinking of those making public policy in some of the more important Western capitals.* This is important since Pakistan has a number of large diasporas across the world. How they are viewed and how they are treated is significant for the country's overall economic and political progress. ... *There is, of course, good reason why Pakistan has begun to be identified as one of the sources of international terrorism. A number of high-profile terrorist attacks have been committed by men — and in one case a woman as well — of Pakistani origin.* ... These are important issues for Pakistan and were taken up by the country's political leadership when they signed on to what was titled the National Action Plan. The aim of NAP was to develop a well-rounded strategy for combating terrorism. That document did not address the issue of terrorist activities undertaken by members of the Pakistani expatriate communities. That needs to be done.

The rise and rise of radicalism, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, 14 June⁴⁴

Pakistan has been steered into radicalism over many years. *There has never developed or been allowed to develop a counter-narrative, and a radical mindset now colours the national paradigm creating a tolerance of extremism — the step beyond radicalism.* But Pakistan is not alone in seeing radicalism grow and flourish and it is not a phenomenon confined either to Muslim-majority states or the developing world generally. ... Pakistan is not alone in having failed to develop a counter to radicalism — no other state has successfully and sustainably done so either. There have been initiatives by governments — 'Prevent' in the UK perhaps being the best known — but they are mostly poorly thought through and fail over time as has 'Prevent'. So long as populations have the freedom to choose then individuals within them are going to choose radical or extreme paths. This is the time of the iconoclast, of radicals and extremists. And for those that are neither it is going to get a lot worse before it gets any better.

⁴³<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1433044/pakistan-and-terrorism/>

⁴⁴<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1434738/rise-rise-radicalism/>

PROVINCES & REGIONS

AFGHANISTAN

Af-Pak terror problem, Rafiullah, *Daily Times*, 02 June⁴⁵

Afghanistan believes Islamabad's Afghan policy is the major hurdle in the way of a joint approach to fight terrorism. *While Kabul does have a knack of displacing blame to Islamabad for every internal failure, the bitter truth is we have used Islamic militancy as a tool of our regional policy. In reality, a stable and peaceful Afghanistan, however, was desired only if it would be subservient to Pakistan.* Islamabad had taken umbrage to New Delhi's increasing economic, diplomatic and political influence in Kabul. This concern combined with the US' 'light footprint' approach in Afghanistan discouraged Islamabad from ceasing patronage of Taliban even though as it remained a front-line ally in the war on terror. The two main strategic goals of our policy countering Indian influence and ensuring a friendly regime in Kabul — are the farthest from realisation. Instead, we have pushed Afghanistan even closer to India. Today, Afghans look at us with suspicion and regard our policies as domineering and overbearing. Our imaginary 'Pashtun resentment' card empowered Taliban whom our military establishment viewed as representatives of Pashtuns.

Pakistan better beware of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's return, Editorial, *Daily Times*, 09 June⁴⁶

What Pakistan should perhaps be wary of is that Kabul has a bigger, better and badder reformed asset in the shape of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. For the one-time prime minister, better known as one of Afghanistan's most brutal warlords is back, having signed off on peace deal between his Hezb-e-Islami group and the country's state apparatus, against which he had previously been waging war. Some quarters in Pakistan may be worried that Hekmatyar might fully spill the beans of this country's support to him during the fight against the Soviets. *Yet that is not likely to daunt the security establishment, given that this is, as they say, old hat. What Pakistan needs to pay attention to is the fact that the US-backed Ghani has welcomed with open arms and, reportedly, the promise of an honorary government post, a man known as the Butcher of Kabul.* A man who has been accused of human rights violations and war crimes during his warlord-ing glory days. A man whose return

⁴⁵<http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/02-Jun-17/af-pak-terror-problem>

⁴⁶<http://dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/09-Jun-17/pakistan-better-be-ware-of-gulbuddin-hekmatyars-return>

Human Rights Watch has rightly described as “an affront to victims of grave abuses”. And yet this is the man whom the Afghan regime, with its international supporters, are recasting as the poster boy who can give peace its first real chance in 40 years.

Let the ballot decide about the Taliban, Durdana Najan, *The Nation*, 12 June⁴⁷

It is almost confirmed that there is no let up to the anarchy in Afghanistan. One war leads to the other. The US-installed government of Hamid Karzai failed to normalise the situation. The so-called elections that brought Ashraf Ghani into power failed to give Afghanistan its share of peace. The longest US stay backed with highly technological military hardware, and war strategies failed too. The relentless rounds of peace conferences could not help either. *Even Pakistan's stance that it wants Afghan-owned and Afghan-led peace process betrayed the ground realities. And lately, the mothers of all bombs dropped to annihilate the hideouts of the ISIS made no difference with the terrorists' intentions.* Nothing worked. *Let the ballot box and not speculations reject or accept the Taliban. Any government formed from this arrangement would have the approval of the people and the multiple Afghan political groups. In case the Taliban wins then ISIS could also be easily routed.* ... Wars have never achieved peace. Eventually, an inclusive political arrangement will have to be worked out. Let it be now to end the vicious circle of one war leading to the other in Afghanistan.

Declining exports to Afghanistan, Editorial, *Dawn*, 19 June⁴⁸

The collapse in exports to Afghanistan is an unnecessary and self-inflicted wound. The news that Pakistani exports in the current financial year may be in the region of \$1bn, a drop of nearly a third, and down from a high of \$2.4bn in 2011, is unsurprising. Pakistani exports have been declining for several years. But the reasons for this trend of fewer exports to Afghanistan are unique a near collapse in ties with Afghanistan and several border closures. *The closures were particularly ill-advised as the decline in the export of perishable goods hurt growers and small businesses in this country as well as in Afghanistan.* A disruption in the trade of perishable goods such as fruit and vegetables causes immediate harm and the losses cannot easily be made up by growers and traders. A decline in trade has more pernicious effects than simply hurting local economies. It loosens the ties that are vital to sustaining a close relationship that regional countries, and none more so than Afghanistan and Pakistan, should have.

⁴⁷<http://nation.com.pk/columns/12-Jun-2017/let-the-ballot-decide-about-taliban>

⁴⁸ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1340369/declining-exports-to-afghanistan>

Exports to Afghanistan drop by over a quarter in a year, Mubarak Zeb Khan, Dawn, 18 June⁴⁹

Pakistan's exports to Afghanistan fell by a significant 27 per cent over the past one year, thanks to growing mistrust between the two countries as well as downgrade of NATO presence in the war-ravaged nation. For the first time, the commerce ministry of Pakistan admitted that frequent closures of the Pak-Afghan border had also contributed to the steady decline in exports to the neighbouring country. Another reason was the diversion of Afghan trade to Iran. Pakistan's exports to Afghanistan had reached an all-time high of \$2.4bn in 2010-11. *It remained over \$2bn annually in the subsequent two years — 2011-12 and 2012-13. Since then, exports started to dwindle and hit \$1.43bn in 2015-16. In the first quarter of the current fiscal, exports were recorded at \$362.5 million.* It clearly reflects that the annual exports to Afghanistan will now be around \$1bn when the figure for the 2016-17 was finalised. Contrary to this, imports from Afghanistan have witnessed a growth of 26pc as it reached \$409m in 2015-16 against \$323m in the previous year.

What do we want in Afghanistan?-II, Marvi Sirmed, Daily Times, 22 June⁵⁰

Keeping FATA insulated from the rest of the country just to support our strategic choices is no more possible. The fault line that we created in Balochistan in pursuance of precisely these ill-conceived strategic objectives is costing us dearly. Howsoever we may find a hundred more Kulbhushan Jadhavs, the fact remains that it's us who brought the Baloch nationalists to this brink. When we tell the world that we have now washed our country of all kinds of terrorists' sanctuaries, the world laughs it away. *Social media is inundated with evidence that fund raising campaign for 'Jihad in Afghanistan' is in full swing in FATA, Chaman and several other areas of Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.* No COAS and DG ISPR have ever clearly said that Haqqanis and Afghan Taliban have been pushed out. Whenever asked specifically by journalists, the usual response conveniently generalised the action as 'across the board' instead of naming these groups. We don't want to burn our bridges with those who could assume power in the neighborhood when Americans would evaporate from this region.

⁴⁹<https://www.dawn.com/news/1340270>

⁵⁰<http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/22-Jun-17/what-do-we-want-in-afghanistan-ii>

GILGIT-BALTISTAN (GB)

GB presents Rs. 54.4 bn budget for FY02017-18, Ghulam Abbas, *Pakistan Today*, 14 June⁵¹

The Gilgit-Baltistan government has presented Rs 54.40 billion provincial budget for the fiscal year 2017-18 which included Rs 28.2 billion for non-development and Rs 18.30 billion for development expenditures. Apparently to show the big budget outlay, the provincial government has also included Rs 3.03 billion worth federal annual development program in the area and Rs 7.84 billion as wheat subsidy given by the center, in the next budget, ballooning it to Rs 54.40 billion as compared to Rs 37 billion of the previous financial year. *During the session Senior Minister Haji Muhammad Akbar Taban presented the budget claiming that it was second historic budget of his government in GB. He informed that the new fiscal budget includes Rs 28.2 billion of non-development expenditures and Rs 18.3 billion of Annual Development Program while allocation for food subsidies is 7.84 billion.* Out of the non-development budget Rs 19.30 billion were fixed for disbursement of salaries while Rs 3.21 billion were allocated for handling office work. The other no development expenditures included grants of Rs 4.74 billion, Rs 78.4 million for Governor Secretariat, Rs 85.6 million for chief minister secretariat, Rs 4.40 billion for internal security and prisons, Rs 5.66 billion for education department, Rs 4.6 billion for health Rs 5.12 billion for finance sectors and others.

FATA

FATA a victim of Faustian bargains, Imtiaz Gul, *Daily Times*, 07 June⁵²

A recent Faustian bargain between Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and two of his allies – Maulana Fazlur Rehman and Mahmood Khan Achakzai – once again stonewalled, at least for the time being, the long-awaited emancipation of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Both leaders disagree with the FATA reforms and have instead “forced” the federal government into introducing the Rewaj Act as a transitory mechanism. One could easily discern the craving for an end to the FCR and the special status of FATA through extension of the state writ to the entire region. All Pashtoon leaders and those demanding drastic reforms in FATA await the final word from Nawaz Sharif and the president. One should not be surprised if all of them

⁵¹<https://profit.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/06/14/gb-presents-rs-54-4bn-budget-for-fy-2017-18/>

⁵²<http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/07-Jun-17/fata-a-victim-of-faustian-bargains>

close ranks against the ruling party in support of “humanising and democratising” FATA. When people with power grow insensitive to popular sentiment they risk undermining their own future. Such apathy cannot stop mass action by those who have suffered because of the civilian-military elites in KP as well as in Balochistan. Brute, self-serving Faustian bargains and procrastination only discredit the elites and prolong the agony of those craving for treatment as equal citizens of this republic.

Who will police FATA? Mohammad Ali Babakhel, *Daily Times*, 07 June⁵³

Indisputably success of reforms will primarily be dependent on two important factors. One: drafting and execution of a well thought out transition programme. Secondly, how to integrate the existing law enforcement apparatus? Such initiative requires legislative, administrative, capacity building and operational interventions. FATA reforms and its merger in KP gave birth to number of questions needs to be addressed. Since KP Police is a more trained force but on the contrary levies are less trained tribal forces so how to bring levies at par with police? In first phase how to integrate Khasadar force and Levies and in second phase how to transform these amalgamated forces as a modern police service? Apart from training, recruitment criteria and basic required standards are also different so how to bring those at par? Since on-going militancy badly affected the educational development in FATA therefore for recruitment what concessions may be granted? Reporting of crime in FATA is not a norm therefore the reformers are to formulate a strategy how to encourage crime reporting and improve the response system? Since population density in FATA is very low therefore police response may be much delayed. If police are entrusted with maintenance of law and order function but response is delayed that will obviously compromise police image and public trust.

Merge FATA with KP, Editorial, *Daily Times*, 17 June⁵⁴

Jamiat Ulema Islam (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazl ur Rehman and Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PKMAP) leader Mahmood Khan Achakzai did their best to delay the implementation of the proposal of merger of Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) by saying the government did not fulfil the promises made with them in this regard - and they succeeded. The National Assembly session last month in which the reforms package was introduced had to be adjourned without any progress on the package. One of the MNAs representing FATA was not even allowed by the speaker to speak on the reforms. The JUI-F and PKMAP are clearly

⁵³ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/07-Jun-17/who-will-police-fata>

⁵⁴ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/17-Jun-17/merge-fata-with-kp>

trying to protect their own interest while ignoring the interest of FATA's people and the PML-N is being blackmailed by them. The electoral policies of the politicians of KP have always hindered development in FATA. *Under the package, the government-proposed 'Rewaj Act' will replace the draconian Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR) that has been in place for over hundred years and granted unusual authority to the political agents who misuse the powers and embezzle the development funds in the tribal region.* The law was enforced during the British rule to counter opposition of the Pakhtun community to the British rule and it is about time this black law is abolished.

Restructuring quotas for FATA, Naimat Ullah Khan, Daily Times, 21 June⁵⁵

The quota is available to FATA domicile holders residing all over the country, not just in FATA territory. Thus, a domicile holder of FATA who does not reside in the tribal regions but is instead settled somewhere else in the country can still benefit from the quota for FATA domicile holders. *This is where the essence of the problem with our quota system lies. In most cases, the quota system benefits domicile holders who have not lived in FATA and cannot even speak their respective tribal Pashtu accent or dialect.* These domicile holders also have access to educational institutions which are far superior to institutions in FATA, thus giving a natural edge to domicile holders who chose to move out of FATA. The actual residents of FATA lose out in this system since they now have to compete with individuals who not only have access to the quota system, but also benefit from access to better resources available in Pakistan's settled areas.

Parachinar and state absence, Editorial, Daily Times, 29 June⁵⁶

No government official has yet contacted the protesters who are demanding something as basic as the right to live. The ISPR statement that was released later on asserted that sectarian and ethnic colour was being given to the spate of incidents in Parachinar. This statement dangerously furthers the narrative that extremist groups come up with following every terror attack targeting religious minorities. *The "don't say Shias were killed, say Muslims were killed" mantra enables the hands of the perpetrator.* Lashkar-e-Jhangvi that vows to "rid Pakistan of Shias" claimed responsibility for the Parachinar bombing. When the perpetrator proudly accepts responsibility for an attack it is the height of impoliteness to pretend you don't know why that aggression happened.

⁵⁵<http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/21-Jun-17/restructuring-quotas-for-fata>

⁵⁶<http://dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/29-Jun-17/parachinar-and-state-absence>

BALUCHISTAN

Black hole in Rising Sun? Shezad Baloch and Shahzad Raza, *The Friday Times*, 02 June⁵⁷

The sectarian violence in Balochistan has nosedived from 239 deaths in 2013 to 60 in 2016. Five months into 2017, it is just six—although even this is unacceptable. Primarily, the sectarian violence was perpetrated by the anti-Shia Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) that lured Baloch militants into alliances. That created two deadly outfits: Jaish-ul-Islam and the Khalid bin Walid Force. The LeJ has claimed responsibility for almost all the attacks on Hazara Shias in Balochistan. Government spokesman Kakar attributes the decline in sectarian violence since 2014 to the killing in raids of key commanders such as LeJ Balochistan chief Usman Saifullah Kurd and Nasir Mehmood Rind. The collusion of sectarian outfits with sub-nationalists gave birth to several smaller but lethal outfits. One of them was later identified as the Pehlwan Group. Last year, the security forces managed to kill its key operatives, including Haq Nawaz, Zahid Rehman, Amanullah and Abid. The tide might be turning. In Kakar's opinion in many areas of Balochistan the killing of people suspected of being government informers has led to a deep hatred of the separatists.

Balochistan's unending violence, Mashaal Gauhar, *Daily Times*, 13 June⁵⁸

The recent three-day army operation to root out ISIS militants from the restive province of Balochistan underscores the severity of a conflict which has claimed countless innocent lives. In the wake of the operation, the Pakistan Army stated that ISIS infrastructure had been effectively dismantled in Balochistan. *Sadly, endemic violence continues unabated. Balochistan's problems are manifold: its geostrategic location has made it a victim of a confluence of competing international interests. Viewed with a measure of disquiet by other regional players, the much-needed development of the Gwadar port has unfortunately further compounded instability in Balochistan.* Crucially, social and economic developments have been systematically neglected in Pakistan's largest and most deprived province. Balochistan represents a powerhouse of natural resources with its abundance of gold, oil and gas. In spite of this, widespread poverty, inadequate infrastructure and a lack of access to education and health services have been a heartbreaking legacy of successive governments with regard to Balochistan.

⁵⁷<http://www.thefridaytimes.com/tft/black-hole-in-rising-sun/>

⁵⁸<http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/13-Jun-17/balochistans-unending-violence>

The simmering conflict in Balochistan, Hafeez Jamali, Dawn, 13 June⁵⁹

Balochistan appears to be boiling over again. At the political level, tough pronouncements were interspersed with carefully choreographed displays of former Baloch guerilla commanders and their followers surrendering their arms in front of authorities under the 'Pur-aman Balochistan' initiative. *This combination of tough talk, state-sanctioned violence, and political theatre was meant to allay the collective Pakistani anxiety about the situation in Balochistan and give the international community an impression that the security situation in the province had finally been brought under control.* The recent spate of violence has put paid to these claims. In the absence of a broader political vision for peace, a framework for addressing the genuine grievances of the Baloch people and securing their socio-economic rights, and the security establishment's reluctance to let go of its stranglehold on the province. Furthermore, the silence of Pakistani media and civil society over human rights abuses in the province has enabled the security forces to operate at will against Baloch insurgents, regardless of the terrible consequences of this strategy for the civilian population. In hindsight, the security establishment seems to have overplayed its hand. It mistook internal discord among insurgent factions and the decline in popular support for armed resistance in Balochistan as a sign of the movement's imminent demise and appears to have gone in for the kill. This strategy has backfired. Baloch nationalist insurgents have regrouped and security forces' scorched-earth tactics seem to have pushed more Baloch youth to join these groups and take up arms against the state.

Political failure in Balochistan and FATA, Editorial, Daily Times, 25 June⁶⁰

The militant outfit has in the past expressed spiritual support for the Islamic State and its former spokesperson, now a reformed asset, has told tales of Indian funding aimed at destabilising Balochistan. All of which works in favour of the Pakistani state apparatus. From the security establishment's rehearsed perspective it explains somewhat the lack of substantial gains on the counter-terrorism front, while carefully circumventing that most awkward of questions on our own state's record on sponsoring home grown militants. *It is time for Pakistan's military establishment to stop hiding behind this rhetoric. Meaning that the political set-up must redress its systematic neglect of Balochistan and FATA. The state remains the primary arbiter of the social contract with the citizenry.* And the nexus between failure to invest in the people of these vast areas and the radicalisation of local

⁵⁹<http://herald.dawn.com/news/1153776/the-simmering-conflict-in-balochistan>

⁶⁰ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/25-Jun-17/political-failure-in-balochistan-and-fata>

populations there cannot be underestimated. Repeated changes to financial formulations of the National Finance Award Commission (NFC) as well as delays in economic distribution have not helped. Nor have the failings of the Council of Common Interest (CII) the dispute resolution body for federation-provincial power sharing. Then, too, there is the now protracted deliberation of the Tribal Area Rewaj Bill, 2017, that may or may not end up repealing the draconian Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR).

SINDH

Extremism In Sindh, Editorial, *The Nation*, 16 June⁶¹

The province of Sindh has become the hub of the banned extremist outfit, Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat (ASWJ). *As on previous occasions, the organisation was found to be operating under the guise of other bodies. The federal government has already expressed its concerns to the home ministry of Sindh; this time around it is the Sunni Raabta Committee that is overseeing the activities and providing a platform to expand the network and its agendas.* This is not the first time that the outfit has used this tactic and it is certainly not the case that the authorities are unaware of it; this leave a huge question mark on their loyalty to the state and its security. ... *While it is the responsibility of the provincial government to resolve such matters, a case like that of ASWJ cannot be resolved unless and until the government in its entirety takes action against them and gets rid of the apologists within. ... People like Maulana Ludhianvi have no restriction on contesting in the elections. This is a huge failure of the National Action Plan (NAP), and a sign of our misplaced priorities.* But what should one expect when there are people in government and the bureaucracy who want to bring these terrorists into mainstream politics and refuse to accept the danger of housing these outfits.

Forced conversions in Sindh, Editorial, *Daily Times*, 17 June⁶²

Forced conversion is among the many issues religious minorities in Pakistan face. The alleged abduction and conversion of a minor Hindu girl in Thar has enraged the Hindu community of the area. Men from the influential Syed community allegedly forced the girl to convert after abducting her on June 6. *The girl was reportedly married off to one of the members of the Syed community. Although she has stated she consented to the conversion and marriage, the family's allegations cannot be ignored because such cases of forced conversions have been witnessed in the past.* The rate of forced

⁶¹<http://nation.com.pk/editorials/16-Jun-2017/extremism-in-sindh>

⁶²<http://dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/17-Jun-17/forced-conversions-in-sindh>

conversions is higher in Sindh, and any effort to criminalise the practice is met with strong opposition from the religious quarters, that reign supreme in the country. Not too long ago, Pakistan People's Party (PPP) was claiming credit for introducing the forced conversion bill, officially titled 'Criminal Law (protection of minorities)' in the Sindh Assembly. But the bill seems to have been brushed under the carpet after religious parties termed it a 'conspiracy of enemies of Islam to destabilise the country'. Reportedly, PPP Co-Chairman Asif Zardai had personally assured Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) chief that the bill would not be passed after the latter threatened to launch a protest movement against the proposed legislation. It is ironic how parties that have no representation in the provincial assembly are dictating the government. Sources say the Sindh government is now going to amend the bill to address the concerns of the religious groups. As always, the PPP surrendered to the non-state elements.

Raid at Karachi Prison, Editorial, Dawn, 21 June⁶³

A state that cannot effectively restrain its most dangerous outlaws behind bars is a state woefully unprepared for a battle against terrorism, or to discharge its duty to protect law-abiding citizens. *It has long been known that some inmates, especially those affiliated with terrorist organisations or those in the top echelons of political parties' militant wings, continue their criminal activities from behind prison walls by giving directions to accomplices outside.* Witnesses have been murdered before they could give evidence against these individuals in court and police personnel considered responsible for their incarceration targeted in reprisal killings.

KASHMIR

A Criminal Indian Army, Editorial, The Nation, 1 June⁶⁴

The videos and news stories from Kashmir had been revealing an unusually cruel occupation that had exceeded even the strongest prohibitions in the laws of warfare – before the internet was blocked from the valley and all access denied. However, it was always assumed that those actions – from the using of a Kashmiri youth as human shield by tying him to the hood of a jeep to the use of pellet guns to blind protestors – were the actions of individual soldiers and commanders caught in the heat of battle. ... *Comments by the Indian army chief General Bipin Rawat however, indicate that these actions are directed from the top. It is a shameful day for the armed forces of the "biggest democracy in the world"; political differences aside, the Indian armed forces were always perceived to be an honourable institution. Not*

⁶³ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1340787/raid-at-karachi-prison>

⁶⁴ <http://nation.com.pk/editorials/01-Jun-2017/a-criminal-indian-army>

anymore. ... While the Modi led government cannot be expected to say anything, international human rights groups are speaking up. The executive director of Human Rights Watch, Kenneth Roth has called Gen Rawat's defence of human shields as "criminal leadership" and Amnesty International has called on the Indian government to stop using pellet guns as they "offend global standards of policing". Despite this unilateral condemnation of its actions, the Indian army is being told by its leadership to continue breaking international law in Kashmir.

Unshackling Kashmir, Imran Malik, *The Nation*, 6 June⁶⁵

Kashmir, the most probable of all global nuclear flashpoints, continues to fester as a bleeding wound on the comatose conscience of the world. *The inhuman and criminal Indian Army crackdown against the ongoing indigenous "intifada" in Indian Held Kashmir (IHK) and the blistering volatility astride the LoC/Working Boundary (WB) portend critical instability and conflict in the region and beyond.* The paradox is alarming; although the Kashmir issue threatens a possible nuclear winter in one of the world's most populous and sensitive regions, the international community seems callously oblivious to and deliberately incognisant of the inherent dangers and their global ramifications. It needs to wake up and take note! *The international community appears to be dealing with the Kashmir issue in the same manner as it did with the Palestine issue – a deliberate diminution of a global problem down to the level of an inert non-issue.* ... The UNSC/P5+1 led international community must make that a reality by helping resolve Kashmir and all other issues between Pakistan and India. ... A just resolution of the Kashmir issue is inevitable. It will unshackle the destinies of all peoples of the subcontinent. A nervous world however continues to view this issue and the indigenous "intifada" in IHK with an ominous sense of anticipation and foreboding.

In search of bilateral solution, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, 7 June⁶⁶

Only time will tell whether Pakistan can take the issue of Kashmir to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and seek a settlement of this long-festering dispute between Islamabad and New Delhi. *But for now India's External Affairs Minister has dismissed the possibility altogether, arguing that the fate of the Himalayan territory could only be decided bilaterally, as determined by the Simla Accord and Lahore Declaration.* ... *Swaraj, however, insists that the Kashmir conundrum can be solved only through direct talks between India and Pakistan – a window that has been shut by Delhi itself for the last many years. What has made the dispute more*

⁶⁵<http://nation.com.pk/columns/08-Jun-2017/unshackling-kashmir>

⁶⁶<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1428983/search-bilateral-solution/>

intractable is India's continued refusal to accept third-party mediation. ... Swaraj is unfortunately not ready to accept that Delhi is responsible for the collapse of the dialogue process while claiming credit for initiating negotiations with Islamabad. In the same breath, she blamed Pakistan for the Pathankot attack and vitiating the environment for talks by describing a slain Kashmiri youth leader as a freedom fighter. If India is really serious about resolving the conflict bilaterally, it will have to show more commitment to the negotiations.

Kashmir: questionable US action, Editorial, Dawn, 30 June⁶⁷

For Pakistan, the challenge remains the same: mobilising world opinion against the violent Indian agenda in IHK. *Whether it is the dysfunction in civil-military relations, the intransigence of the security establishment or the reluctance of the PML-N government, Pakistan has been unable to adapt its approach to India in the Modi era.* Perhaps this country's own fraught history with militancy has made the outside world more skeptical of Pakistan's claims when it comes to IHK, but the gross human rights abuses in the held territory are not a figment of Pakistani imagination. Right-minded and sensible sections of Indian society, too, are horrified by the treatment that has been catalogued in countless video recordings and testimonies to have trickled out of IHK.

RELATIONSHIP WITH INDIA

Pakistan-India Defence Spending: A Comparison, Muhammad Mujeeb Afzal, Hilal Magazine, June, Edition 06; Vol 54⁶⁸

In 2016, the world spent U.S. \$1686 billion that was around 2.3 per cent of global gross domestic product (GDP). India plans to spend \$ 55.7 billion in 2017 which is 2.25 percent of its GDP; in comparison Pakistan's defense budget is \$9 billion which is 3.4 percent of its total economy. Thus, Pakistan trails far behind India in defense spending; its financial provision is almost 7 times short of India's defense resources. It has to defend its autonomy and meaningfulness in the South Asian state system within these limited resources. India considered it essential to modernize its armed forces through establishment of defense industry and transfer of technology. Its 362 million people almost 29.5 percent of its population live in abject poverty. Ignoring them totally, it has spent huge amount of its finances to accumulate weapons' systems and develop defense-related industry. India accounted for 14 percent

⁶⁷<https://www.dawn.com/news/1342237/ihk-questionable-us-action>

⁶⁸<http://hilal.gov.pk/index.php/layouts/item/2797-pakistan-india-defense-spending-a-comparison>

of global arms imports from 2011-2015, a 90 percent increase over the previous five years. Due to this Indian arms manufacturers are among the top 100 companies worldwide, with billions of earnings. Now United States has also jumped into the business; in 2014-15, it sold over 1.4 billion dollars' worth of weapons to India. In order to support the economy the defense spending in Pakistan was further brought down to 4.1 percent; in 2007-8, the defense spending was frozen. By the end of the decade, Pakistan's economy started to show signs of improvement. The defense spending was around 3.1 percent of the GDP; in terms of dollars, it was \$ 7,641 million. But these figures are in sharp contrast to Indian GDP of two trillion dollars with the defense spending of 55.7 billion dollars, a fact that can never be lost to Pakistani decision-makers and people.

The legend of Bhindranwale, Adeela Naureen, *The Nation*, 3 June⁶⁹

June 6, 1984, is historic from the view of the Khalistan movement when one of its leading figures was martyred by Indian security forces in the battle for Akal Takht. *Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale's legend has not only lived on but has now become a source of strength for Sikh community across the globe, including India. Bhindranwale was a flamboyant leader who dedicated his life for Sikh freedom.* ... Launching the Dharam Yudh Morcha in August 1982, Bhindranwale aimed at the fulfillment of a list of demands based on the Anandpur Sahib Resolution. Thousands of people joined the movement in the hopes of acquiring a larger share of irrigation water and the return of Chandigarh to Punjab. ... From grandeur of Sikh rule in the subcontinent to bitter memories of Operation Blue Star and desecration of Akal Takht in 1984 (which resulted into a mutiny in Indian Military), Khalistan has remained a dream for the Sikhs of India as well as their strong Diaspora around the entire globe. ...

Indian army chief's claim, Editorial, *Dawn*, 20 June⁷⁰

Indian army chief Gen Bipin Rawat has been quoted in the Indian media as saying that the army respects human rights and cares about the lives of the people. *It is a measure of how far the Indian army has slid down the scale of acceptable conduct and public standing that the army chief has to try and convince the people of IHK that it cares about their lives. What the people of IHK need is a real, verifiable and manifestly obvious adherence to the law and human dignity, and not just the words of an army chief.* However, Gen Rawat's full comments suggest that the Indian army only intends to pay lip service to human rights while continuing with its oppressive tactics. He did

⁶⁹<http://nation.com.pk/columns/03-Jun-2017/the-legend-of-bhindranwale>

⁷⁰ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1340540/indian-army-chiefs-claim>

not rule out further instances of Indian soldiers using human shields in IHK. He claimed that the Indian army is doing a good job in the region. Indeed, the Indian army seems to consider every man in parts of IHK as a potential fighter and every woman and child as a collaborator. Gen Rawat's words are utterly unconvincing.

Afghanistan-India Air Corridor opens with first cargo flight, Dawn, 20 June⁷¹

An aircraft packed with 60 tons of Afghan plants with medicinal uses marked the opening of the first air cargo corridor between Afghanistan and India. The cargo, worth about \$5 million dollars, was the first in what officials from the two countries hope will be many flights allowing Afghan and Indian companies to bypass Pakistan, which strictly limits the shipment of goods by land between India and Afghanistan and is often involved in border disputes with them. The cargo service aims to improve landlocked Afghanistan's links to markets abroad and boost the growth prospects of its agricultural and carpet industries while it battles a deadly Taliban insurgency, Indian officials have said.

The ICJ in focus: road ahead, Syed Ali Zafar, The Express Tribune, 22 June

Kulbhushan Jadhav was caught in Pakistan and tried for espionage, found guilty and sentenced to death in accordance with Pakistan's laws. ... India has ... challenged Pakistan's sovereignty and invoked the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) as a result of which implementation of the sentence has been halted. *Pakistan was clearly taken by surprise, looked unprepared and indecisive, but since the real legal battle is still to come, one would have expected that by today it would have developed its own narrative: ready to defend its national sovereignty and security.* This has unfortunately not happened. ... India's case is that under Article 36(1) of ICJ Statute, the Hague-based court can decide whether or not there is any violation of VCCR even if Pakistan has not specifically consented to the ICJ's jurisdiction. Pakistan, of course, has a number of formidable legal objections to this. ... In the end, it must be made clear that the case before ICJ does not pertain to Jadhav's guilt or innocence as ICJ is not a criminal appellate court and as such cannot order his release, despite what India may have appealed for in its application.

⁷¹<https://www.dawn.com/news/1340490/afghanistan-india-air-corridor-opens-with-first-cargo-flight>

Unpacking regional non-cooperation, Shahid Ilyas, *The Express Tribune*, 23 June⁷²

Tariff and non-tariff barriers are said to be partially responsible for the dysfunctional working of Saarc. ... Moreover, *when states lack political will, they find sufficient excuses to be uncooperative. Non-tariff barriers are one such tool in the hands of member states. ... The geography of South Asia is partially to blame for lax trade relations among member countries. India constitutes 60 per cent of the total South Asian landmass, population, GDP, foreign exchange, gold reserves and armed forces. This 'unequal geography' is not helpful for the success of Saarc as its smaller members are wary of domination by India.* Unsurprisingly, all these countries have unresolved disputes with Delhi. ... Simple mathematics will tell us that Saarc should be boasting of having held 31 summits so far. But that is not the case. Only 18 have been held. Most were postponed because one minor neighbour of India or another refused to participate due to their bilateral issues with India. ... *For Saarc to achieve its aims, India should take measure to reassure its smaller neighbours that it does not aim to dominate them. Political disputes between Delhi and Islamabad, and between India and the other members of Saarc, must be resolved.* ... Upon these conditions, Saarc may emerge as a successful tool for regional integration in South Asia.

Trump's agreement with India, Editorial, *Daily Times*, 26 June⁷³

The US decision to sell 22 Guardian drones to India the first such American transaction with a non-NATO ally reinforces the strong defence ties that the two nations have established over the last decade. *The deal, however, comes at a time when India's relationship with the US is not at its warmest. Since Donald Trump took office, he has made overtures to China over reigning in North Korea; an act which has irked some quarters in India and led to fears that Donald Trump might not consider India a priority.* Modi and Trump will likely find common ground in castigating Pakistan for its alleged role in supporting jihadist movements throughout the region, especially considering how speculation is rife over Trump adopting a tougher stance on Pakistan. The decision to sell the drones also overrides Pakistan's concerns that these drones will escalate instability in the region, further depicting how the US is drifting increasingly away from Pakistan. All signs therefore portend a deepening of the schism between the US and Pakistan – and that is never a good omen for peace in Afghanistan and in South Asia.

⁷²<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1440620/unpacking-regional-non-cooperation/>

⁷³<http://dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/26-Jun-17/trumps-agreement-with-india>

US recognises India as key partner against terrorism, Anwar Iqbal, Dawn, 29 June⁷⁴

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi returned home after his first White House meeting with US President Donald Trump earlier this week with two solid achievements: a joint warning to Pakistan to stop alleged cross-border terrorist attacks and the recognition of India's role in Afghanistan. *During Mr Modi's two-day (June 24-26) stay in Washington, the Trump administration approved a \$2 billion sale of naval surveillance drones to India and a \$366 million C-17 transport plane. Both governments hope that the two sales will lead to greater cooperation between their militaries.* President Trump also hailed a massive naval exercise they are holding in the Bay of Bengal next month with Japan as the third participant. This annual display known as Exercise Malabar aims to curtail China's growing influence in the Indian Ocean.

STATISTICS

BOMBINGS, SHOOTINGS AND DISAPPEARANCES

(Select incidents culled out from the Pakistan media)

Place	Date	Description	Killed	Injured
Punjab				
Bahawalpur ⁷⁵	25/06/2017	Death toll from Bahawalpur oil tanker fire climbs to 153	153	100
Islamabad				
Mastung ⁷⁶	04/06/2017	Top IS leadership targeted in Mastung operation	09	07
FATA				
Parachinar ⁷⁷	24/06/2017	Multiple attacks on Eid	41	100

⁷⁴ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1342018/us-recognises-india-as-key-partner-against-terrorism>

⁷⁵<https://www.dawn.com/news/1341713>

⁷⁶<https://www.dawn.com/news/1337339>

⁷⁷<https://www.dawn.com/news/1341425>

		shoppers, cops stunned		
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa				
Rajgal ⁷⁸	05/06/2017	Terrorists killed in air strikes	07	05
Haripur ⁷⁹	12/06/2017	Journalist gunned down in Haripur	01	0
Hangu ⁸⁰	14/06/2017	Drone kills Haqqani commander in Hangu	03	0
Balochistan				
Quetta ⁸¹	12/06/17	IS affiliate kills three policemen in Quetta	03	0
Quetta ⁸²	12/06/17	FC kills two BLA terrorists in Quetta IBO	02	0
Gwadar ⁸³	20/06/17	2 Navy sailors gunned down in Gwadar shooting	02	05
Quetta ⁸⁴	23/06/17	13 killed in suicide attack on Quetta's Gulistan road	13	19
Peshawar				
Chamkani ⁸⁵	16/06/2017	Three policemen killed in Peshawar van attack	04	0

⁷⁸<http://dailytimes.com.pk/khyber-pakhtunkhwa/05-Jun-17/terrorists-killed-in-air-strikes>

⁷⁹<http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/12-Jun-17/journalist-gunned-down-in-haripur>

⁸⁰<http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/14-Jun-17/drone-kills-haqqani-commander-in-hangu>

⁸¹<http://dailytimes.com.pk/balochistan/12-Jun-17/is-affiliate-kills-three-policemen-in-quetta>

⁸²<http://dailytimes.com.pk/features/12-Jun-17/fc-kills-two-bla-terrorists-in-quetta-ibo>

⁸³<https://www.dawn.com/news/1340491/2-navy-sailors-gunned-down-in-gwadar-shooting>

⁸⁴<https://www.dawn.com/news/1341271/13-killed-in-suicide-attack-on-quettas-gulistan-road>

⁸⁵<http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/16-Jun-17/three-policemen-killed-in-peshawar-van-attack>

Rawalpindi				
Dera Ghazi Khan ⁸⁶	16/06/2017	2 terrorists planning to attack Youm-e-Ali procession killed: ISPR	02	0

⁸⁶<http://nation.com.pk/national/16-Jun-2017/2-terrorists-planning-to-attack-youm-e-ali-procession-killed-ispr>