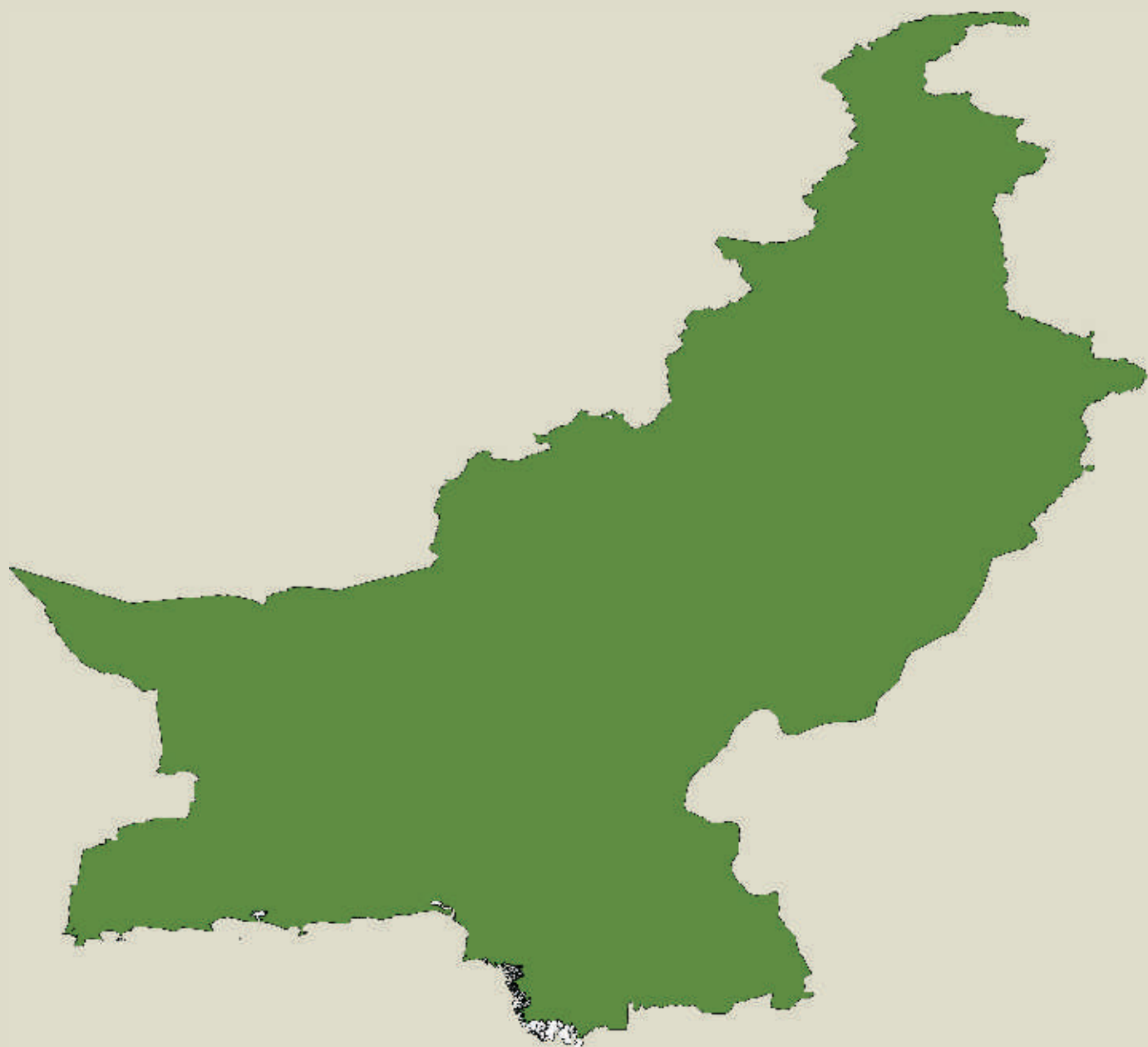


March 2016

PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST

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



*Prepared by
Dr Ashish Shukla &
Manzoor Ahmed Bhat
(Research Assistants, Pakistan Project, IDSA)*

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INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE
STUDIES & ANALYSES
रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

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INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES

1-Development Enclave, Near USI
Delhi Cantonment, New Delhi-110010

PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST, MARCH 2016

CONTENTS

.....	0
ABBREVIATIONS	2
EDITOR'S NOTE	3
POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS	6
NATIONAL POLITICS.....	6
PROVINCIAL POLITICS.....	8
EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS.....	10
FOREIGN POLICY	11
EDITORIALS AND OPINION.....	14
MILITARY AFFAIRS	16
EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS.....	17
ECONOMIC ISSUES	18
CHINA-PAKISTAN ECONOMIC CORRIDOR	18
EDITORIALS AND OPINION.....	19
SECURITY SITUATION	19
TERRORISM	19
KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA AND FATA.....	20
BALOCHISTAN	21
PUNJAB	22
SINDH.....	23
EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS.....	23
RELATIONS WITH INDIA	25
THE "SPY ARREST" ROW.....	27
EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS.....	30
EXCERPTS FROM URDU MEDIA & SELECT JIHADI LITERATURE	32
STATISTICS	36
BOMBINGS, SHOOTINGS AND DISAPPEARANCES.....	36

ABBREVIATIONS

ADB: Asian Development Bank
ANP: Awami National Party
APC: All Parties Conference
ATC: Anti-Terrorism Court
CPEC: China- Pakistan Economic Corridor
CTD: Counter Terrorism Department
ECP: Election Commission of Pakistan
FIA: Federal Investigating Agency
IHC: Islamabad High Court
IMF: International Monetary Fund
ISI: Inter-Services Intelligence
ISPR: Inter Services Public Relations
JI: Jamaat-i-Islami
JuD: Jamat-ul- Dawa
JUI-F Jamiat-Ulema-e-Islam (Fazal)
KP: Khyber Pakhthunkhwa
LHC: Lahore High Court
MQM: Muttahida Qaumi Movement
NAB: National Accountability Bureau
NADRA- National Database and Registration Authority
NAP: National Action Plan
NCA: National Command Authority
PAT: Pakistan Awami Tehreek
PML-N: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz
PPP: Pakistan People's Party
PTI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf
QWP: Qaumi Watan Party
TTP: Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan

EDITOR'S NOTE

The March issue of *Pakistan News Digest* (PND) covers important socio-political, security and economic developments in Pakistan. Developments within Pakistan are important because of its direct/indirect bearing on the regional security situation and peace and stability of the region.

Accusation of spying is not a new phenomenon. In both the countries, people holding a view that contradicts the official narrative are sometimes labelled as the agent of either country's intelligence agency. Pakistan for a very long time have accused India of stroking trouble in Balochistan, Karachi and FATA. Externalising Pakistan's internal problems are as old as the state itself. Recently Pakistan claimed to have captured a former Indian Navy officer Kulbhushan Jadhav in suspicious circumstances and produced him before the press as a proof of direct Indian involvement. It needs to be mentioned that Kulbhushan Yadav has legitimate business in Iran and had visa for that country. India admitted that Mr Yadav is an Indian national and stated that he has left Navy and no longer associated with the Government of India. India is not yet given consular access and accused that the confessional video that was show in Pakistani media was doctored. A section of Pakistani media also focussed on the possibility of Iranian hand in helping Indian agencies create trouble in Pakistan. However, civilian dispensation has urged media to refrain from blaming Iran.

Pakistan's Joint Investigation Team (JIT) visited Pathankot airbase to gather evidence regarding the Pathankot attack and the possibility of a Pakistani link. The JIT team met officers of NIA in Delhi. Members of the team along with Indian investigation agencies flew to Pathankot and conducted investigation there, despite strong protest by opposition political parties in India. Earlier, Pakistan had shared intelligence regarding some 10 terrorists crossing over to India. The sharing of intelligence and the JIT's visit to India appears to be a good starting point in bilateral relations.

In a surprising development, Sindh Rangers approached Supreme Court of Pakistan for getting permission to open its own police stations. This demand came up at a time when the provincial government has been complaining about the misuse of power by the rangers. Although Supreme Court rejected this demand saying that it had no jurisdiction, but the paramilitary force's attempt to get the prosecuting rights is a serious issue altogether which should be taken care of.

Religious right in Pakistan undoubtedly enjoys street power and can bring several thousands in the street even on a short notice. But the kind of gathering

on the funeral of Mumtaz Qadri, who was hanged for murdering former Punjab governor Salman Taseer, has been rare in the recent past. Millions of Pakistanis had assembled in Liaquat Bagh for Namaz-e-Janaja. This huge spontaneous gathering sent a shock wave to the liberal sections of the society and also to the outside observers. The active participation of members and leaders of the Barelvi sect, to which the Qadri belonged, explains the new reality in Pakistan. Like Sunni sectarian organisations, Barelvis too are trying to capture the available ideological space in the country. It clearly belies the myth of a liberal Pakistan with a handful of extremists creating havoc. There are doubts over religious parties' ability to translate this show of strength into votes. However, the attempts are being made to put up a joint front, like the MMA, against the mainstream political parties. A number of religious leaders recently gathered at the home of Fazlur Rahman, the chief of Jamiat-i-Ulema-i-Islam (Fazl) home to discuss the future course of action. They agreed in principle to revive MMA or to come up with a new alliance of religious parties so that "sensitive issues" could be tackled effectively.

Pakistan has long denied the presence of Islamic State (IS) in the country. However, increasingly it is becoming clear that the IS has somehow successfully lured some of indigenous militant outfits to its fold. These outfits, earlier used to take pride in their association with al-Qaeda. The decline of al-Qaeda's strength, in the wake of US led War on Terrorism in the region, and the emergence of the IS as a strong alternative has put Pakistan in a difficult situation. There are reports of concerted efforts by IS to recruit highly trained professionals from Pakistan.

Pakistan army's claim of breaking the backbone of the terrorists blew on its face on March 27 when a splinter group of TTP attacked Gulshan-e-Iqbal park in Lahore that killed close to 100 innocent people including many children and women. The attack on Easter Sunday was one of the most deadly attack on the Christian minorities of Pakistan. The attack of this magnitude underlines the fact that the infrastructure of terror, contrary to the claims by political and security establishment, is intact. However, the terror outfits have changed their strategy. Instead of taking on the hard military targets, they are going for soft targets. The attack in Lahore park is also important for civil-military equation in Pakistan. Soon after the attack, Raheel Sharif gave the permission for operation in Punjab without consulting the elected representatives. The two brothers Nawaz Sharif and Shahbaz Sharif had not been in favour of operations in Punjab. The main opposition party in the National Assembly—Pakistan People's Party (PPP)—has welcomed the military's decision and termed it as "good omen."

The violence and sectarian faultiness in Pakistan were visible in the month of March. It is important to see how the stakeholders deal with the emerging situation in the future.

Ashish Shukla

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

NATIONAL POLITICS

Will not let Pakistan become secular: Rehman, *The Express Tribune*, March 1¹
Expressing his reservations on the recently passed Punjab Protection of Women Against Violence Bill, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman has said that he would not let the country become secular. ***“We are with all those who want to end violence against women but by this law the country is going from one extreme position to another,”*** he remarked while addressing a news conference on Tuesday (March 1).

Musharraf formed NAB to victimise Sharif, *The Dawn*, March 7²
Information Minister Pervaiz Rashid said on Sunday (March 6) that former president retired ***Gen Pervez Musharraf had set up the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) to use it against PML-N chief Nawaz Sharif.*** Talking to reporters, the minister also accused Benazir Bhutto of politically victimising the PML-N. “Our accountability is being done for the last 20 years. First, it was done by the PPP government led by Ms Benazir Bhutto and then by former president Gen Pervez Musharraf,” he said.

Bill seeking changes in NCA Act dropped, *The Express Tribune*, March 8³
A bill seeking amendments in the laws dealing with Pakistan’s nuclear programme was withdrawn in the upper house of parliament at the last minute on Monday (March 7) after the proposer cited ‘reservations of the stakeholders’. ***Senator Farhatullah Babar, withdrew his private member bill seeking modifications in the National Command Authority (NCA) Act, saying he had been going through an “extraordinary situation ever since he submitted the bill”.*** Without elaborating any further, the PPP lawmaker said the stakeholders had expressed reservations and he wished to withdraw the bill for broader consultations and discussions.

Religious parties all set to revive MMA, *The Nation*, March 10⁴
Religious political parties are all set to revive Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal (MMA) or come up with an alliance with a new nomenclature and broader spectrum to deal with the ever-changing challenges facing the people of Pakistan particularly due to ultra-liberal position adopted by the rulers.

¹ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1057133/will-not-let-pakistan-become-secular-says-fazlur-rehman/>

² <http://www.dawn.com/news/1244061/musharraf-formed-nab-to-victimise-sharif-says-minister>

³ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1061296/nuclear-programme-bill-seeking-changes-in-nca-act-dropped/>

⁴ <http://nation.com.pk/national/10-Mar-2016/religious-parties-all-set-to-revive-mma>

Sources aware of the developments taking place on this front informed The Nation yesterday that in the meeting of religious parties held at the residence of Jamiat-i-Ulema-i-Islam (Fazl) group chief Moulana Fazlur Rehman in Federal Capital, it was principally agreed to revive MMA or come up with some new alliance of religious parties to tackle with the sensitive issues like the recently passed act to grant protection to women against domestic violence.

PM reaffirms resolve to root out terrorism, *The News*, March 28⁵

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has reaffirmed the commitment to root out terrorism, which has become a global challenge, from the country's soil. Addressing the nation after deadly Lahore attack, in which more than 70 people including women and children were martyred, Prime Minister said, ***"Operation Zarb-e-Azb will continue till menace of terrorism is rooted out." The Premier strongly condemned the coward Lahore attack, saying "We will not allow terrorists to play with the lives and properties of the innocent people."***

Operation in Punjab good omen: PPP, *Daily Times*, March 30⁶

National Assembly (NA) opposition leader Khursheed Shah on Tuesday (March 29) welcomed the launch of operation against terrorists in Punjab as a good omen. ***"I have been saying since a considerable time that terrorist nurseries are existing in Punjab and operation should be launched against them forthwith. But no one paid attention to my voice. It is the consequence of this negligence that we have not got rid of menace of terrorism so far."*** He said the initiation of operation by forces in Punjab bears testimony that the network of terrorists is operating in the province. "The dream for weeding out terrorism cannot be realised unless the rulers think over it by coming out of the politics of left and right," Shah said in a statement issued on Tuesday (March 29).

Protesters to end sit-in after 'successful' talks, *Daily Times*, March 30⁷

Four days into their protest outside at D-Chowk, the protestors have agreed to call off their sit-in and disperse following a 'successful' round of negotiations with the government. ***Several thousand protesters had marched in Islamabad on Sunday (March 27), clashing with security forces before setting up camp outside key government buildings along the capital's main Constitution Avenue.*** Earlier during the day, protesters said they would not end their days-

⁵ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/108605-PM-reaffirms-resolve-to-root-out-terrorism-after-deadly-Lahore-attack>

⁶ <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/30-Mar-2016/operation-against-terrorists-in-punjab-good-omen-ppp>

⁷ <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/30-Mar-2016/d-chowk-protesters-to-end-sit-in-after-successful-talks-with-govt>

long sit-in and were "willing to die", as armed security forces readied to clear the camp.

PROVINCIAL POLITICS

KP Bill in contradiction with Shariah: CII Chief, *The Dawn*, March 3⁸

The chairman of Council of Islamic Ideology (CII), Maulana Muhammad Khan Sheerani, said that some clauses of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Domestic Violence Bill are in contradiction with Shariah and the country's Constitution.

'Article 6 applicable against Punjab Assembly', *The Dawn*, March 3⁹

The Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) on Wednesday (March 2) said that Article 6 of the Constitution, which deals with treason, could be applied against the Punjab Assembly for approving a bill without the council's consent. "Pakistan was established on the basis of the two nation theory and Islam is the religion of the country, and the council is a constitutional body to ensure that all the laws are formulated in accordance [with] Shariah," Maulana Mohammad Khan Sherani, the council chairperson, told the media after the first of a two-day CII meeting.

Mustafa Kamal launches political party, *The Express Tribune*, March 3¹⁰

Former Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) leader and a once beloved 'son' of party supremo Altaf Hussain, ***Mustafa Kamal has announced to establish his own yet-to-be named party*** after blowing the whistle on Karachi's most powerful political leader in a dramatic two-hour-long press conference. In an unprecedented tirade against Altaf 'Sahib' (a notable departure from 'Bhai'), Kamal accused him of working against the State and deceiving the people of Pakistan. ***"Today we are launching a new political party," a weeping Kamal said at a news conference. "Children have been slain and generations have been destroyed by Altaf Husain. This is my challenge."***

Govt committed to peace in Balochistan: Zehri, *The Dawn*, March 10¹¹

Chief Minister Nawab Sanaullah Zehri has said that the atmosphere of fear prevailing in Balochistan for years has been brought to an end and people are now taking part in activities aimed at its development and progress. He warned that no individual or group would be allowed to impose their ideology upon

⁸ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1243092/few-clauses-of-kp-domestic-violence-bill-in-contradiction-with-shariah-cii-chief>

⁹ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1243241/article-6-applicable-against-punjab-assembly>

¹⁰ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1058617/mqm-leaders-mustafa-kamal-anees-qaimkhani-arrive-in-karachi/>

¹¹ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1244712/govt-committed-to-restoring-peace-in-balochistan-zehri>

people. Nawab Zehri said this while addressing the concluding ceremony of the Kech Sports Festival in Turbat on Tuesday (March 8) night.

MQM leaders leave country amid confusion, *The Express Tribune*, March 14¹²
Several leaders of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) have left the country amid growing confusion in the ranks following dissociation of prominent leaders from the party. Former MQM leaders Waeem Aftab, Anis Qaimkhani, Dr Sagheer Ahmed and Raza Haroon joined Mustafa Kamal following his announcement to launch a new political party. MQM MPA Faisal Subzwari, whose name had been doing the rounds for being the next in line to join Kamal's fold, left the country for the US early Monday (March 14) morning.

Ready to amend sections of Women Bill: Sanaullah, *Daily Times*, March 14¹³
Punjab Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Rana Sanaullah on Monday (March 14) said that provincial government was ready to bring amendments in disputed sections of Women Protection Bill 2016. [...] **He said the assembly would discuss and change the sections if Islamic Ideological Council (IIC) presented any suggestions with arguments and proofs.**

Those sitting abroad further foreign agenda, *The Express Tribune*, March 15¹⁴
The top commander of the paramilitary Frontier Corps (FC) said on Monday (March 14) that peace has been restored in Panjgur, which was once wracked by militant violence. This, IGFC Maj Gen Sher Afgun said, would not have been possible without cooperation of the people of Balochistan. **"Those living abroad are not well-wishers of the nation. They are furthering a foreign agenda," he said** at the inauguration of an FC Public School campus in Panjgur. Though he didn't name anyone, he was understood to be referring to self-exiled Baloch insurgency leaders. **"However, we welcome all those who want to become a part of the mainstream society."**

It took us 30 years to recognize the 'devil': Kamal, *The News*, March 31¹⁵
Former Karachi mayor and leader of Pak Sarzameen Party (PSP), Mustafa Kamal Thursday (March 31) said it took him and others like him 30 years to recognize the 'devil'. Addressing his supporters here, Mustafa Kamal said 'this man' has no brother, sister or any close relative in Pakistan. **"The people of**

¹² <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1065518/several-mqm-leaders-go-missing-amid-rising-confusion-in-party-ranks/>

¹³ <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/14-Mar-2016/govt-ready-to-amend-controversial-sections-of-women-bill-sanaullah>

¹⁴ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1065809/balochistan-unrest-those-sitting-abroad-further-foreign-agenda-says-maj-gen-sher-afgun-back-page/>

¹⁵ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/109351-It-took-us-30-years-to-recognize-the-devil-Mustafa-Kamal>

Sindh must not listen to this man who would only incite hatred among you," he added.

EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS

The exploitation of religion, Editorial, *Daily Times*, March 6¹⁶

[...]Faith is the thread that connects disparate viewpoints, enlightening minds to respect all other faiths, even those in direct opposition to an individual's own faith, but in Pakistan it is used to create an environment of fear, paranoia, hatred and violence. ***Religious groups wield a great deal of power in their agenda of influencing gullible minds to view the world in a regimented "us against them," thus manufacturing a tinder box ready to explode at the slightest provocation.*** Instead of using their influence to impart a message of unity, brotherhood, kindness, empathy, compassion, and forgiveness, there is unfortunately, a great deal of emphasis on inciting hatred and violence. The voices and messages of enlightened religious scholars is overwhelmed by the cacophony created by all those self-avowed vigilantes of religion who believe destruction of property, life, unity and peace is the most effective way to register a protest.

Pakistan: a victim of Pakistan, Editorial, *The Nation*, March 10¹⁷

[...]The reactions after Qadri's arrest, and later on being death-sentenced, became representative of the resurrection of zealous, radicalised, blinkered youth of Pakistan, which was created in the name of religion but where religion has been exploited for anything but formation of harmony between its diverse communities. [...]Strategic depth; strategic assets; weak and corrupt civilian governments; self-serving rulers; autocratic dictators; shoddy, shortsighted policies; hegemonic, overreaching posturing... Pakistan suffered, suffers and will go on suffering a macabre reality where life does not amount to much, where human beings are disposable, interchangeable. [...] ***The hydra of militia created and empowered to keep the borders safe lost its utility, and now it runs amok. Pakistan today is a victim of its own Frankenstein's monster, and the body count keeps growing.***

Cleansing MQM of criminals?, Shahzad Raza, *Daily Times*, March 15¹⁸

After creating ripples in the murky pond of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), the party's renegade Mustafa Kamal is going after big names. [...] ***Sources said the powerful establishment had made a solemn decision to cleanse the MQM of criminal elements and their patrons, once and for all.***

¹⁶ <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/06-Mar-2016/the-exploitation-of-religion>

¹⁷ <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/10-Mar-2016/pakistan-a-victim-of-pakistan>

¹⁸ <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/15-Mar-2016/has-establishment-decided-to-cleanse-mqm-of-criminals>

Several warnings were given to the party high command, but all of them were ignored. The establishment had reportedly approached the top leadership of the national political parties to build a political consensus against Altaf Hussain. [...] ***Kamal and his backers would try to convince more MQM leaders to leave Altaf Hussain. Whatever their past actions were, once they join Kamal, they would not come to haunt them. At a later stage, Afaq Ahmed, the leader of the MQM-Haqiqi, may also be advised to join Kamal's group.***

FOREIGN POLICY

Pakistan pledges to work for easing tension, *The Dawn*, March 3¹⁹

Pakistan remains committed to lessening the risk of an armed conflict in South Asia, says a joint statement issued after the US-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue. The document also underlines Washington's recognition of Kashmir as a dispute that needs to be resolved peacefully. ***"Pakistan affirmed that it remains committed to pursuing measures aimed at building confidence and lessening the risk of armed conflict," said the statement issued on Tuesday evening (March 1), a day after the talks concluded.***

TTP chief Fazlullah living in Afghan region : Envoy, *The Dawn*, March 3²⁰

Chief of the outlawed Tehreek-i-Tali-ban Pakistan (TTP), Mullah Fazlullah, resides in an area of Afghanistan where the Afghan government has no control, said Afghan Ambassador to Pakistan Dr Omar Zakhilwal. [...] Talking to media at the Afghan consulate in Peshawar on Thursday (March 3), Zakhilwal said that the current environment is conducive for talks between the Afghan government and the Afghan Taliban. The talks would take place "soon", he said, but did not mention a specific date. [...] He thanked Pakistan for hosting millions of Afghan refugees for decades but also criticised the alleged harassment of refugees at the hands of Pakistani authorities. ***"We can tolerate everything, but the insult of refugees is not acceptable... they cannot be kept in jails before the Pakistani government registers them."***

Afghan Taliban leadership is in Pakistan: Aziz, *The Express Tribune*, March 3²¹

Prime Minister's senior aide Sartaj Aziz has said for the first time publicly that the Afghan Taliban's leadership enjoys a safe haven inside Pakistan, which Islamabad uses as a "lever" to pressure the group into talks with Kabul.

The admission by Sartaj Aziz comes after years of official denials by Islamabad that it offers shelter or exerts any influence over the Taliban, whose 14-year-

¹⁹ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1243256/pakistan-pledges-to-work-for-easing-tension-in-south-asia>

²⁰ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1243285/ttp-chief-fazlullah-living-in-afghan-region-where-govt-has-no-control-afghan-envoy>

²¹ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1058595/afghan-taliban-leadership-is-in-pakistan-admits-aziz/>

insurgency against Afghan and NATO forces has claimed tens of thousands of civilian and military lives.

Pick between peace and war: Ghani to Taliban, *Daily Times*, March 5²²

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani renewed his dialogue offer to the Taliban on Sunday (March 6) and said the ***'Taliban is facing a major test - to choose whether they want peace or war'. "Peace is in the interests of both us and the Taliban," Ghani said*** while addressing the opening of parliament after the winter break. "Real peace cannot come from behind closed doors," he said, according to Tolo TV. His comments come a day after the Taliban refused to hold direct peace talks with the Afghan government, dealing a blow to international efforts to revive long-stalled negotiations aimed at ending the deadly 14-year insurgency.

US notifies sale of eight F-16, *Daily Times*, March 7²³

The United States has formally notified the intended sale of eight F-16 fighter jets to Pakistan, officials said Sunday (March 6). Foreign Office spokesperson Nafees Zakaria said that the notification is part of internal process of the US government, Radio Pakistan reported. He said the process entails Congress response in 30 days. ***The spokesperson said F-16s are meant for enhancing Pakistan's precision strike capability in fight against terrorism.***

Aid curbs on Pakistan to hurt US interests: Pentagon, *The Nation*, March 11²⁴
Restricting or conditioning of military aid to Pakistan will be detrimental to US interests as it may "reduce" the country's willingness to continue its counterterrorism operations, top Pentagon commanders have warned American lawmakers. "The risks of ineffective and unclear signals and conditioning may risk us losing our access and frank dialogue with Pakistan in areas critical to US interests," General Joseph L. Votel, nominee of the Commander of US Central Command told members of Senate Armed Services Committee during a confirmation hearing.

'Thunder' in Saudi desert as huge military drill ends, *The Nation*, March 11²⁵
Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif along with leaders of other countries, observed the world's biggest military exercises "North Thunder" at Hafarul Batin city of Saudi Arabia yesterday. The

²² <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/07-Mar-2016/pick-between-peace-and-war-ghani-tells-taliban>

²³ <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/07-Mar-2016/us-notifies-sale-of-eight-f-16-fighter-aircraft-to-pakistan>

²⁴ <http://nation.com.pk/national/11-Mar-2016/aid-curbs-on-pakistan-to-hurt-us-interests-pentagon>

²⁵ <http://nation.com.pk/national/11-Mar-2016/thunder-in-saudi-desert-as-huge-mily-drill-ends>

leaders of many countries attended the closing ceremony along with Khadim al Harmain al Sharifain King Salman bin Abdul Aziz al Saud. [...] Pakistani troops were part of the show in the closing ceremony, which performed air drops and air assault. Warplanes roared overhead, tanks rumbled across the desert and smoke filled the sky during the final stage of what Saudi Arabia called as the region's biggest-ever military exercises. **About 20 nations from Middle East, Africa and Asia took part in the last day of the "North Thunder" manoeuvres in the desert north of the kingdom, which began 12 days ago.**

Taliban rejected Pakistan pressure, *Daily Times*, March 15²⁶

[...] **After the secret meetings with Pakistani officials about two weeks ago, the Taliban's Supreme Council met at an undisclosed location and voted to reject the talks scheduled for early March with the Afghan government, according to a council member.** Instead, the insurgents are now pouring back into Afghanistan for what they say will be a fierce spring offensive to be launched soon. Pakistan's influence over the insurgents is the lynchpin to the peace plan developed over last few months by Afghanistan, Pakistan, the United States and China to bring an end to the 15-year-old war in Afghanistan. A Pakistani official in Islamabad said that the Taliban's recent success on the battlefield inside Afghanistan had changed the equation. **"They no longer need their Pakistan bases in the same way, so if Pakistan threatens to expel them, it does not have the same effect," said the official, a retired military officer close to the talks.**

Pakistan seeks arrest of Yadav's accomplice in Iran, *The News*, March 31²⁷

Pakistan has written a letter to Iran and sought Tehran's assistance to help investigate the activities of Indian spy Kulbhushan Yadav, detained by Pakistani authorities from Balochistan. According to the letter written by Pakistan's interior ministry, Islamabad requested the Iranian government to help them investigate other RAW network operating in the region.

Iran criticises 'undignified' remarks, *The News*, March 31²⁸

Iran on Thursday (March 31) criticized elements in Pakistan for spreading undignified and offensive remarks attributed to President Hassan Rouhani regarding arrest of RAW agent. Abbas Badrifar, a spokesman for Iran's Embassy in Islamabad, said spreading of such remarks and news items were product of thinking which does not like further expansion of ties between the

²⁶ <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/15-Mar-2016/in-secret-meetings-taliban-rejected-pakistan-pressure-on-peace-process>

²⁷ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/109331-Pakistan-writes-letter-to-Iran-seeks-arrest-of-Yadavs-accomplice>

²⁸ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/109339-Iran-criticises-undignified-remarks-on-arrest-of-RAW-agent>

two countries. "Elements unhappy over promotion of ties between the two Islamic countries of Iran and Pakistan are trying in various ways, including the spreading of undignified and sometimes offensive contents, to fade out the significant achievements during the visit of President Rouhani to Pakistan," he said.

Pakistan's enemy is Britain's enemy: Cameron, *The News*, March 31²⁹

British Prime Minister David Cameron while expressing grief over terrorism in Lahore, said Pakistan's enemy is also Britain's enemy. Cameron said this in a meeting with Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs, Tariq Fatemi on the sidelines of Nuclear Security Summit here (Washington). Cameron also lauded the sacrifices rendered by Pakistan in the war on terror. "Britain will continue cooperation with Pakistan in security and integrity of the country," he added.

EDITORIALS AND OPINION

Sartaj's admission, Editorial, *Daily Times*, March 5³⁰

[...]For years Pakistan has either denied or refused to acknowledge or comment on the fact that the Taliban enjoy a safe haven in Pakistan, so in this sense the outright confirmation by Aziz is certainly a momentous shift in official policy. However, in effect this 'revelation' changes little as ever since the first round of talks were held in Murree last July it has been evident what Pakistan's role was in this 'quadrilateral' has been: to use its influence over the Taliban and nudge them towards the negotiating table. [...] **While it may seem as if a divided Taliban is good news for the nation states currently at war with terrorist groups, the difficulty to bring all the splinter groups under one roof is enormous.** It also casts an ominous shadow on the peace talks even if they transpire, as groups not party to the negotiations will pursue their own agendas regardless of what is agreed in Islamabad.

Afghan peace obstacles, Editorial, *The Dawn*, March 7³¹

THE road to a peace settlement in Afghanistan is likely to be a rough one and the Afghan Taliban have provided yet another example of why. Ostensibly rejecting what were believed to be imminent talks with the Afghan government, the Mansour Akhtar faction of the Taliban have returned to familiar preconditions: withdrawal of all foreign troops; removing Taliban leaders from international blacklists, which impeded travel; and the release of Taliban prisoners. **The familiarity of those demands suggest that the likelihood**

²⁹ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/109587-Pakistans-enemy-is-Britains-enemy-says-Cameron>

³⁰ <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/05-Mar-2016/sartaj-s-admission>

³¹ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1243963/afghan-peace-obstacles>

of talks has not evaporated, but that the Taliban are trying to win some concessions that would give them a political and military advantage while they pursue their strategy of fighting and talking. The relatively restrained reaction of the Afghan government appears to indicate that talks will restart soon — President Ashraf Ghani addressed the opening of parliament yesterday and saved his strongest words for elements of the militant Islamic State group in Afghanistan.

Taliban's refusal, Editorial, *Daily Times*, March 7³²

In efforts to revive the negotiation process the Afghan Taliban and the Afghan government have suffered a possibly decisive blow as the main faction of the group denied that it had any plans to join the process. Moreover, the statement also dubbed the entire process "futile". The statement read: "We unequivocally state that the leader of Islamic Emirate (Afghan Taliban's name for itself) has not authorised anyone to participate in this meeting." [...]Whatever the Afghan Taliban's true intentions behind this statement maybe, in the near future there appears to be no chance that the talks scheduled for early March will take place. Even more than that it is now abundantly clear that **Pakistan does not hold the much advertised 'leverage' over the Afghan Taliban that they believe they have.** Perhaps, now is the time that Pakistan actually uses the tool of expulsion to force the Afghan Taliban's hand into joining the negotiations.

Who calls the shots in Afghanistan?, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, March 7³³

The fighting season in Afghanistan is gearing up and it is at least possible that the Taliban are going to complete their takeover of the province of Helmand. There was little let-up in the fighting over the winter months and the Taliban remain active across much of the country.

India-Afghanistan trade, Rustom Shah, *The Express Tribune*, March 14³⁴

[...]Despite Pakistan's many overtures and deep contacts with Kabul, the bilateral Afghan-India relations have continued to grow. India has made an investment worth \$2 billion in Afghanistan, becoming the 4th biggest donor to its rehabilitation. More importantly, India is viewed by most Afghans as a friend and ally. [...] **Denying the use of the land route for trade between Afghanistan and India has been an inexplicably bad preposition. It has caused immense and deep resentment, not only in the ruling circles but also amongst the population of Afghanistan — a resentment that borders on hostility.** As a matter of fact, allowing the use of the land route for transit goods between India

³² <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/07-Mar-2016/taliban-s-refusal>

³³ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1061229/taliban-call-the-shots/>

³⁴ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1065060/india-afghanistan-trade-through-pakistan/>

and Afghanistan would have been a tremendous and, perhaps, decisive factor that could have opened possibilities for more extensive contacts in other areas.

MILITARY AFFAIRS

Rangers want own 'police stations', *The Express Tribune*, March 8³⁵

Sindh Rangers Director General Maj Gen Bilal Akbar urged the Supreme Court on Monday (March 7) to allow the paramilitary force to set up its own 'police stations' as he took a swipe at the police for its poor investigation. "If this is done, obviously after registering FIR and conducting investigation, challans shall be filed in normal courts or anti-terrorism courts established under the judicial system of Pakistan," Maj Gen Akbar told the apex court's five-member bench.

UK foreign secretary lauds Pak Army, *Daily Times*, March 9³⁶

British Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond on Tuesday (March 8) visited General Headquarters (GHQ) and called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Raheel Sharif. During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, including security situation in the region, were discussed. **The British foreign secretary acknowledged and appreciated Pakistan Army's sincere efforts and sacrifices in the war against terrorism and for stability in the region.**

Facilitator of PAF base attackers held, *The Nation*, March 11³⁷

Counter-terrorism police arrested an alleged facilitator of PAF base attackers in Badhaber on Thursday (March 10). The alleged facilitator was identified Zarzadgai alias Parveen who confessed that she provided containers for chemicals and explosives which were used in the attack of Badhaber airbase. She is identified wife of Meewa Khan, resident of Tela Band Badhabera Police registered FIR against Parveen under various section of CRPC.

SC rejects Rangers plea for prosecution powers, *The Nation*, March 11³⁸

The Supreme Court yesterday rejected the Sindh Rangers plea seeking powers to prosecute suspects and register First Information Reports (FIRs) against them. A five-member Supreme Court bench, headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Anwar Zaheer Jamali, said that it could not pass an order granting the paramilitary force these powers because it was not in its jurisdiction to do so.

³⁵ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1061330/sindh-rangers-want-own-police-stations-in-karachi/>

³⁶ <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/09-Mar-2016/uk-foreign-secretary-lauds-pak-army>

³⁷ <http://nation.com.pk/national/11-Mar-2016/facilitator-of-paf-base-attackers-held>

³⁸ <http://nation.com.pk/national/11-Mar-2016/sc-rejects-rangers-plea-for-prosecution-powers>

SHC orders registration of FIR against Rangers, *The Dawn*, March 14³⁹
Sindh High Court (SHC) on Monday (March 14) directed the police to register a First Information Report (FIR) against unknown Rangers personnel in case related to a missing Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) worker. The petitioner, Nighat Waseem, maintains that her husband, Waseem, was picked up by Rangers personnel on September 1, 2015 and is missing since then as no arrest was shown.

Paramilitary crackdown after Lahore bombing, *Daily Times*, March 28⁴⁰
Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif chaired a high-level security meeting on Monday (March 28) to review the progress of a paramilitary operation in Punjab province launched to hunt down terrorists behind the deadly suicide bombing in Lahore which claimed over 70 lives. [...] **Sources confirmed that the anti-terror crackdown has been launched on the orders of Army Chief General Raheel Sharif and will commence with operations in southern Punjab, long believed to be a hotbed of religious extremism and militancy.** The sources said that troops from the army and Rangers will take part in the crackdown, and that the military's corps commander in Lahore will be regularly apprised of the progress of the operation.

CTD arrests RAW agent, weapons seized, *Daily Times*, March 30⁴¹
Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) has arrested an Indian agent Safdar Don from Karachi on Tuesday (March 29) and has recovered latest weapon from different areas of the city while Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) CTD said that the arrested terrorist belongs to a political party. CTD has arrested an Indian agent Safdar Don from the area of Liaquatabad.

EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS

Rangers' demand, Editorial, *Daily Times*, March 9⁴²

The Director General (DG) of Sindh Rangers, Major General Bilal Akbar, has made the extraordinary demand to the Supreme Court (SC) of Pakistan to let the paramilitary force set up its own 'police stations' in the province of Sindh. [...] **The demands made by DG Akbar include setting up of police stations with powers of registration of FIR, investigation and submission of challans.** The Rangers criticised the constitutionally derived power of the Sindh government

³⁹ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1245600/shc-orders-registration-of-fir-against-rangers-over-missing-mqm-worker>

⁴⁰ <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/28-Mar-2016/paramilitary-crackdown-launched-in-punjab-after-deadly-lahore-bombing>

⁴¹ <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/30-Mar-2016/ctd-arrests-raw-agent-weapons-seized>

⁴² <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/09-Mar-2016/rangers-demand>

to set term limits for the paramilitary force and demanded that their powers under the Anti-Terrorist Act should be extended, at least, on a yearly basis rather than for the periods of only 60, 90 or 120 day. ***This demand, which was succinctly characterised by the SC judges as “a charge-sheet against the provincial government”, continues the trend of federal agencies encroaching on constitutionally mandated spaces of the provincial government.***

ECONOMIC ISSUES

Pakistan an emerging market: Korean envoy, *The Express Tribune*, March 4⁴³

Pakistan is an emerging market with a strategic location, access to deep sea, natural resources, good irrigation system and talented youth that comprises 60% of the population, Ambassador of Republic of Korea Dr Song Jong-Hwan said on Thursday (March 3). He said that Korea had fewer resources but was now considered as one of the top economies of the world and that was because of extraordinary sacrifice of the people and their work ethics. He said that he was convinced that Pakistan would achieve its own economic miracle: Miracle of Indus River.

Pakistan achieved irreversible stability: Nawaz, *The News*, March 31⁴⁴

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif Thursday (March 31) said ***Pakistan had achieved irreversible economic stability and doubled the developmental budget in past three years.*** He was speaking during his visit to the Planning Commission where he was briefed by Minister for Planning Development and Reform Ahsan Iqbal on the progress of various development projects in the country.

CHINA-PAKISTAN ECONOMIC CORRIDOR

The CPEC: a clash of interests, Saleem Safi, *The News*, March 5⁴⁵

The CPEC is not 'controversial'. [...] ***The only problem with this project is that one specific party, involved in the decision-making process, wishes to complete this project on its own terms. For China, the only priority is to speed up the process. They do not want any delay or controversy. [...] The ruling family has attached personal interests with this national project, and is not ready to share the fruits in any other way. They fabricated the details of the CPEC; and all benefits lead to one family and their friends.*** [...] It is really just for maximum personal and family interests. But unfortunately, other provinces and nationalistic parties see it as yet another move by Punjab to negate the rights of the smaller provinces. The CPEC could spell hope for Sindh, Balochistan, Gilgit-Baltistan, Fata and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Instead, the way

⁴³ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1058994/pakistan-an-emerging-market-korean-envoy/>

⁴⁴ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/109336-Pakistan-has-achieved-irreversible-economic-stability-PM-Nawaz>

⁴⁵ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/print/102951-The-CPEC-a-clash-of-interests>

the project is being dealt with by the governing family is resulting in further obscurity.

CPEC to usher in era of prosperity: CM, *The Express Tribune*, March 15⁴⁶
Completion of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects will usher in an era of prosperity in the country, Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif said on Monday (March 14). He was talking to Communist Party of China International Section Assistant Minister Li Jun. **"The CPEC is a precious gift of the Chinese government and people for Pakistan. The investment of \$46 billion represents the Chinese leadership's confidence in Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif," he said.** He said that the 'one belt, one road' vision represented the economic future of the region. "The CPEC will not only benefit Pakistan, but the whole region. It is a game-changer for Pakistan. The growing contacts between the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and the Communist Party of China are bringing the people of the two countries closer," he said.

EDITORIALS AND OPINION

A widening gap, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, March 15⁴⁷
Pakistan's trade deficit — gap between exports and imports — widened to \$15.1 billion in the July-February period of the ongoing fiscal year, worsening from \$14.49 billion in the comparative period of the previous year, signaling that the country's deteriorating trade performance has outpaced the benefit it has received in the shape of falling oil prices. [...]Pakistan's exports have been falling for some time and a poor business environment is one of the reasons. High costs of production — due to high rates of taxes and power tariffs — and energy woes are reasons that just scratch the surface of the issue. Overdependence on the textile sector to help rally exports and lack of focus on manufacturing finished goods have made matters worse for a country that is saved by workers' remittances and lenders' largesse. The trade policy, which was meant to provide a road map for improving the trade deficit, has been pending for a while.

SECURITY SITUATION

TERRORISM

IS recruiting trained professionals from Pakistan, *The Dawn*, March 3⁴⁸
Trying to lure him into the militant Islamic State (IS) group, the would-be recruiter told journalist Hasan Abdullah, "Brother, you could be such an asset to the Ummah"— the Islamic community. Abdullah replied that he was

⁴⁶ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1065630/bilateral-ties-cpec-to-usher-in-era-of-prosperity-says-cm/>

⁴⁷ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1065548/a-widening-gap/>

⁴⁸ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1243094/is-recruiting-trained-professionals-from-pakistan>

enjoying life and had no plans to join the militants. "The enjoyment of this life is short-lived. You should work for the Akhira" — the afterlife, the recruiter pressed. IS had its eye on Abdullah not because he adheres to any extremist ideology but because, as a journalist, the group believed he could be a boon to its propaganda machine, Abdullah told The Associated Press, recounting his meeting with the recruiter. His encounter was a sign of how the IS is looking for sophisticated skills as it builds its foothold in new territory: Pakistan. Sindh Counter-Terrorism Department head Raja Umer Khattab warns that IS has great potential to grow in Pakistan.

Lawyers' alliance defiant on Qadri's execution, *The Express Tribune*, March 8⁴⁹
A little-known alliance of hundreds of lawyers in Pakistan is behind the rise in prosecutions for blasphemy, a crime punishable by death that goes to the heart of an ideological clash between reformers and religious conservatives. The group, whose name translates as The Movement for the Finality of the Prophethood, offers free legal advice to complainants and has packed courtrooms with representatives, a tactic critics say is designed to help it gain convictions.

NAP brings down incidence of heinous offences, *The Dawn*, March 14⁵⁰
The National Action Plan (NAP) has brought about a little bit relief to the nation as the country has witnessed overall decline in heinous offences, particularly the crime against persons, last year as compared to 2014. [...] ***The first comparative study of its kind that was prepared by a law-enforcement agency states that Punjab and Sindh have taken lead on two other provinces in bringing the total heinous crime down under the NAP.*** The data was obtained from the provinces to analyse the countrywide crime status one year after the implementation of NAP. It showed that three and two per cent decline was witnessed from 2014 to 2015 in the total crime that had taken place in Sindh and Punjab, respectively. [...] ***The KP, however, remained the best competitor of other provinces in the one category of heinous crime – kidnap for ransom – as it had reduced these incidents by 52pc last year as compared to 2014.***

KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA AND FATA

Suicide bomber kills 8 at Charsadda court, *The Pashtun Times*, March 7⁵¹
At least eight people were killed in an explosion in the premises of a local court in Charsadda's Shabqadar area on Monday (March 7), police said. The Jamatul Ahrar, a splinter group of the outlawed Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP),

⁴⁹ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1060789/lawyers-group-behind-spike-in-blasphemy-cases-in-pakistan/>

⁵⁰ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1245550/nap-brings-down-incidence-of-heinous-offences>

⁵¹ <http://thepashtuntimes.com/suicide-bomber-kills-8-at-charsadda-court-ttp-jamatul-ahrar-claims-responsibility/>

claimed responsibility for the attack in an email sent to journalists, saying the attack was carried out to avenge the hanging of Mumtaz Qadri, killer of former Punjab Governor Salman Taseer. The blast left 14 people injured, while two police personnel and a woman were among the dead. District Police Officer Sohail Khalid told Dawn News that the attack was carried out by a suicide bomber.

Gunmen kidnap nine govt officers in SWA, *The Nation*, March 11⁵²

Unidentified gunmen on Thursday (March 10) kidnapped nine government employees in South Waziristan Agency while they were heading to inspect an under-construction dam. The incident took place in Toi Khula area of the South Waziristan tribal district along the Afghan border where unidentified gunmen intercepted their vehicle and took them to an unknown location. ***Zafrul Islam, the top government official in South Waziristan, said project director of Chao Tangi small dam, two geologists and other technical staff of the dam were among those kidnapped at gunpoint. "Gunmen kidnapped these eight government employees when they were heading to the dam site," Islam told AFP.***

Five dead in Lakki Marwat explosion, *The News*, March 31⁵³

At least five people were killed and several others injured in an explosion in Kot Kashmir area on Thursday (March 31). According to initial reports, the blast took place in a car. Police have cordoned off the area while rescue officials were shifting the dead and injured to nearby hospitals.

BALUCHISTAN

7 suspected militants killed, *The Dawn*, March 3⁵⁴

The security forces in Balochistan claimed to have killed seven suspected militants during operations carried out in Kech and Kohlu districts of the province on Wednesday (March 2). Four suspected militants were killed during an exchange of fire in Kohlu district in the evening, while three suspects, including a key commander of the outlawed Baloch Republican Army (BRA), were killed in Kech district earlier in the day.

BLA commander among eight killed in Sibi, *The Nation*, March 10⁵⁵

Banned Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) commander Aslam Achou alias Merick Baloch among eight militants was killed in an exchange of fire with security forces in the Sangan area of Sibi district. Two security men also embraced

⁵² <http://nation.com.pk/national/11-Mar-2016/gunmen-kidnap-nine-govt-officers-in-swa>

⁵³ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/109343-Five-dead-in-Lakki-Marwat-explosion>

⁵⁴ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1243081/7-suspected-militants-including-bra-commander-killed-in-balochistan-says-fc>

⁵⁵ <http://nation.com.pk/national/10-Mar-2016/bla-commander-among-eight-killed-in-sibi>

martyrdom during the gun battle. Addressing a news conference here at the Chief Minister's Secretariat yesterday night, spokesman for the Balochistan government, Anwar-ul-Haque Kakar, confirmed the killing of the militants, including the BLA commander. ***"The exchange of fire between the security forces and the militants continued for several hours, resulting in the killing of eight militants, including their commander," he said.***

14 Afghan Taliban arrested in Balochistan, *The Nation*, March 11⁵⁶

At least 14 Afghan Taliban were arrested during a joint operation by security forces yesterday. On a tip-off, security forces and Levies personnel conducted an operation in Chaman alongside Pak-Afghan border and rounded up 14 Afghans Taliban. The detainees were shifted to undisclosed locations and further investigations were underway. The detainees' identity was not disclosed immediately.

FC kills five suspected militants, *The Dawn*, March 14⁵⁷

The security forces in Balochistan claimed on Sunday (March 13) to have killed five suspected militants in Balochistan's troubled Dera Bugti district, Dawn News reported. A suspected militant was also arrested during the security operation carried out by Frontier Corps personnel in Dera Bugti. The spokesperson for FC, Khan Wasey, said forces launched an operation against suspects allegedly involved in carrying attacks at security forces and important national installations in the area. Wasey claimed "the security forces also destroyed the sanctuary of miscreants during the targeted operation".

PUNJAB

Suicide blast in Lahore's park kills 63, injures 100, *Daily Times*, March 27⁵⁸

At least 63 people, most of them women and children, were killed and over 150 other injured when a suicide blast took place near one of the gates of the Gulshan Iqbal Park of the Iqbal Town here (Lahore) in the provincial capital, police and rescue officials confirmed on Sunday (March 27). Reportedly, the attack was claimed by the Jamaatul Ahrar, affiliated with the Tehreek-i-Taliban. Iqbal Town Superintendent Police Dr Muhammad Iqbal informed journalists that this was a suicide attack and suspected bomber blew himself up in the parking space of the recreational park where a large number of people were present due to weekly holiday and Easter.

⁵⁶ <http://nation.com.pk/national/11-Mar-2016/14-afghan-taliban-arrested-in-balochistan>

⁵⁷ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1245432/fc-kills-five-suspected-militants-in-dera-bugti>

⁵⁸ <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/27-Mar-2016/suicide-blast-at-lahore-s-iqbal-park-kills-10-injures-30>

Five terrorists killed in Lahore shootout, *The News*, March 30⁵⁹

At least five alleged terrorists were killed in a joint action by Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) and Police in Raiwand early on Wednesday (March 30). According to details, police raided a house where militants resorted to fire. In retaliation, five terrorists were killed. Three of five militants have been identified as Khan Waheed, Nasir Iqbal and Junaid Zahoor and they hail from Peshawar, Sharqpur and Abbottbad respectively.

SINDH

Police claim killing four suspected militants, *The Dawn*, March 6⁶⁰

Police on Saturday (March 5) claimed to have killed four suspected militants belonging to banned outfits during an “encounter” in the outskirts of the metropolis. Malir SSP Rao Anwar said that suspects were allegedly involved in the killing of security personnel and members of Shia community. **The senior police official claimed that the deceased were members of banned outfits — Al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent and Lashkar-i-Jhangvi.**

EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS

Of heroes and villains, Ayesha Siddiqa, *The Express Tribune*, March 2⁶¹

[...] **After having disposed off Malik Ishaq and now hanging Qadri, the government has demonstrated its resolve to fight all kinds of extremist violence. Notwithstanding scepticism of many regarding Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif’s ability to take such a decision, the fact is that he has ownership of implementing the decision.** [...] One of the reasons for patting Nawaz Sharif’s back is that his government alone is held responsible by millions for taking the decision. The military and the civilian leadership were certainly on the same page. However, while no one will dare direct their ire at the military, the anger will be directed at the government and its functionaries, as we saw in the treatment of Information Minister Pervaiz Rashid. [...] **For many, there is now a new martyr and a shrine that will now be the centre for political agitation.** It may also become one of the hubs for expressing the resolve of those who believe they have to fight the project of bringing Western liberalism to Pakistan and the threat of secularising the state. **The divide between the liberal elite and the conservative or even radical and more localised elite will widen even more.**

⁵⁹ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/109084-Five-terrorists-killed-in-Lahore-shootout>

⁶⁰ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1243777/karachi-police-claim-killing-four-suspected-militants-in-encounter>

⁶¹ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1058130/of-heroes-and-villains/>

Burying the assassin, Khurram Husain, *The Dawn*, March 3⁶²

Try and remember the last time you saw a crowd in Liaquat Bagh as large as the one we just saw on Tuesday (March 1). ***That ill-fated park, which has seen two prime ministers assassinated, has hosted political gatherings since the earliest days of Pakistan, but you will have to travel more than two decades back in time to find a gathering as large as this one. And even that one was not spontaneous, but organised by the party machinery.*** [...] Having executed Qadri, the government has taken a step from which there is no turning back. Now it is crucial that the memory of Qadri does not morph into a legend to inspire future generations. That will only happen if Islamabad can find its voice and loudly proclaim what kind of Pakistan it is committed to building. And Rawalpindi visibly buries its history of using religious militancy as a tool in foreign adventures.

Charsadda bombing, Editorial, *Daily Times*, March 9⁶³

[...] Military success against militants in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas is doubtlessly a major feather in the cap of the state, and ever since the Operation Zarb-e-Azb started we have witnessed a significant downturn in militant activity. However, this should not be taken to mean that the 'back of the terrorists' has been broken because they are simply down rather than being out. [...] So while militants have learned to pool resources, the various arms of the state are still streamlined when it comes to combating terrorism. Provincial police forces, the military and civilian intelligence agencies, military and other federal and local law enforcement agencies need to pool their resources and intel about different terrorist networks and operatives together to ensure that no gaps of knowledge are left of which terrorists can take advantage of.

In search of relevance, Amir Rana, *The Dawn*, March 14⁶⁴

WHAT led the religious forces to keep their reaction to Mumtaz Qadri's hanging within bounds? [...] ***Apart from the role of a few religious scholars in defusing tensions, the religious forces still see an opportunity in the hanging to exploit religious sentiments for political purposes.*** [...] Leaders of religious political parties were in search of an opportunity to revive their relevance and they found one in the hanging. [...] Organisations subscribing to the Barelvi school of thought are more sentimental in the context of the Qadri execution. They claim to be the custodians of Qadri's legacy. They see this as an opportunity for the revival of Barelvi politics, which had been stumbling for decades. Barelvis do not have organised structures and networks. The pirs and

⁶² <http://www.dawn.com/news/1243156/burying-the-assassin>

⁶³ <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/09-Mar-2016/charsadda-bombing>

⁶⁴ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1245259/in-search-of-relevance>

influential religious scholars constitute local power centres and seek strength from the followers of their respective shrines.

The many anxieties of terror, Khurram Husain, *The Dawn*, March 31⁶⁵

MORE than half this war is already won, but it's the half that's left which really counts. They can kill our children and attack our schools and playgrounds, but for all the stomach-churning wretchedness of this fight, none of these acts threatens the integrity of the state or the cohesion of society. [...] ***The fight has changed since 2014, when the TTP splintered. This is no longer a fight against militias seeking to control territory. It is now a fight against armed extremists doing whatever is left in their power to pursue narrow ends.*** Much has to change to manage this fight. The political leadership needs to find its courage. But equally importantly, the endless campaign of vilifying civilian institutions must end. To take this fight to its logical end, and truly establish the writ of the state across the country, the rules of the game by which the state operates must be taken more seriously than they have been since 2008.

RELATIONS WITH INDIA

Pakistan dismisses Indian allegations, *The Express Tribune*, March 4⁶⁶

Pakistan termed on Thursday (March 3) India's latest allegations against Pakistan over the Pathankot airbase attack as 'unfortunate and unhelpful'. ***"Pakistan strongly condemned the Pathankot terrorist attack and Prime Minister Nawaz called and assured his Indian counterpart of all-out cooperation soon after the incident," Foreign Office spokesperson Nafees Zakaria told reporters*** at his weekly news briefing. "Pakistan took all necessary measures on the basis of preliminary information provided by India regarding the attack," he said, adding that a joint investigation team (JIT) had been formed and modalities were being worked out for its visit to India.

Basit stresses on need for 'uninterrupted talks', *The Dawn*, March 7⁶⁷

Pakistan's High Commissioner to India Abdul Basit stressed the need for uninterrupted talks between Pakistan and India for peace and regional stability, Radio Pakistan reported. Basit, while addressing a function in Jaipur, said dialogue is the only way to improve ties between Pakistan and India. Citing Kashmir as the root cause of all issues between the two countries, he said an environment of cooperation must persist for resolution of disputes.

⁶⁵ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1249012/the-many-anxieties-of-terror>

⁶⁶ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1059070/pathankot-attack-pakistan-dismisses-indian-allegations-as-unhelpful/>

⁶⁷ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1243912/abdul-basit-stresses-on-need-for-uninterrupted-talks-between-india-pakistan>

Pakistan summons Indian witnesses in 26/11, Daily Times, March 7⁶⁸

[...]“**The Foreign Office has written to the Indian government asking it to send all 24 witnesses to Pakistan for recording statements in the trial court in the Mumbai attack case,**” the Press Trust of India (PTI) quoted **Chief Prosecutor Chaudhry Azhar as saying on Sunday (March 6)**. The prosecution chief said the ATC has already completed recording the statements of all Pakistani witnesses in the case. “Now the ball is in India’s court. The Indian government should send all Indian witnesses of the Mumbai case to Pakistan to record their statements so that the trial could further move ahead,” Azhar, who is also a special prosecutor of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), said.

FO confirms Aziz will meet Sushma, The Express Tribune, March 15⁶⁹

The Foreign Office confirmed on Monday (March 14) that Prime Minister’s Adviser on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz will meet Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj, as well as the foreign ministers of other South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) member states, in Nepal later this week. Top diplomats of the region will be gathering in the picturesque city of Pokhara in Nepal on March 17 for the Saarc Council of Foreign Ministers’ meeting.

India grants visa to JIT, The Express Tribune, March 25⁷⁰

The Indian government has granted visas to five members of a Pakistan-based Joint Investigation Team (JIT) which is scheduled to arrive in New Delhi this week to probe a terror attack on Indian Air Force base in Pathankot earlier this year.

India ‘reluctant’ to cooperate on Pathankot probe, Daily Times, March 29⁷¹

Indian authorities have shown signs of reluctance with regard to cooperation with the Pakistani investigation team, which is collecting evidence related to the terrorist attack on the Pathankot airbase, the local media reported on Monday (March 28). According to the reports, the Pakistani investigation team asked for the recordings of the telephone calls of SP Salwinder Singh, his wife and other individuals along with the IMEI numbers of their cell phones and copies of the three FIRs that were registered after the incident, but the authorities did not provide these. [...]A day after the five-member Pakistani Joint Investigation Team (JIT) arrived in New Delhi to look into the terror attack

⁶⁸ <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/07-Mar-2016/pakistan-summons-indian-witnesses-in-mumbai-attack-to-appear-before-atc>

⁶⁹ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1065808/nepal-rendezvous-fo-confirms-aziz-will-meet-sushma/>

⁷⁰ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1072603/new-delhi-grants-visa-to-pakistan-based-jit-for-pathankot-attack-probe/>

⁷¹ <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/29-Mar-2016/india-reluctant-to-cooperate-with-pakistan-on-pathankot-attack-probe>

on the Pathankot base of the Indian Air Force, Indian Defence Ministry said the attack area was under the control of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) and it was up to the agency to decide whether to facilitate the visiting team or not.

Pakistan JIT inspects Pathankot airbase, *Daily Times*, March 30⁷²

Pakistan's Joint Investigation Team (JIT) completed its investigation into the Pathankot airbase amid protests by Indian political parties and Hindu extremist groups, Indian media reported on Tuesday (March 29). [...]The JIT members — Punjab Counter Terrorism Department chief Tahir Rai, Azeem Rashid, Lieutenant Colonel Tanveer, Lieutenant Colonel Irfan Mirza and inspector Shahid Mirza — were brought to the base in bulletproof SUVs from Amritsar.

THE "SPY ARREST" ROW

'RAW officer' arrested in Balochistan, *The Dawn*, March 25⁷³

Security forces in Balochistan on Thursday (March 24) claimed the arrest of a man who is 'a serving officer in the Indian Navy and deputed to the Indian intelligence agency Research and Analysis Wing (RAW).' [...]Balochistan Home Minister Mir Sarfaraz Bugti confirmed the arrest of an Indian spy from the southern part of the province. ***"The arrest has proved Indian involvement in Balochistan", Bugti said. Bugti added that the Indian spy was sponsoring terrorist and subversive activities in Balochistan.***

Indian envoy Summoned over "Spy arrest", *The Express Tribune*, March 25⁷⁴

Pakistan lodged a protest with India on Friday (March 25) over the country's "spying activities" in Balochistan and Karachi, Express News reported. Foreign Secretary Aizaz Chaudhry summoned the Indian High Commissioner to the Foreign Office to lodge a formal complaint. The move comes a day after the arrest of an Indian naval intelligence officer in Balochistan.

India accepts 'spy' as former navy officer, *Daily Times*, March 26⁷⁵

While admitting the alleged RAW agent arrested by Pakistani security forces to be its citizen, Indian Foreign Office on Friday (March 25) claimed that the suspect had already taken early retirement from Indian Navy. A statement issued by New Delhi denied any links with the arrested individual and said

⁷² <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/30-Mar-2016/amid-protests-pakistan-jit-inspects-pathankot-airbase>

⁷³ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1247665>

⁷⁴ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1072557/pakistan-summons-indian-envoy-over-raw-officer-nabbed-in-balochistan/>

⁷⁵ <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/26-Mar-2016/india-accepts-spy-as-former-navy-officer-but-denies-links>

"he was no longer a serving official of the Indian armed forces". "The arrested man is a former Indian Navy officer," the Indian Foreign Office was quoted as saying.

Raheel discusses RAW's involvement with Rouhani, *The Dawn*, March 26⁷⁶
Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Raheel Sharif on Saturday (March 26) discussed the issue of Research and Analysis Wing's (RAW) involvement in Pakistan's internal affairs with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, who is here on a two-day visit, said a statement issued by the military's media wing. The army chief called on President Rouhani to discuss matters relating to regional security and Pakistan-Iran relations, said an Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) statement.

RAW Again?, Editorial, *The Nation*, March 26⁷⁷

Security forces in Balochistan have claimed the arrest of a serving Indian navy officer who had links to the Indian intelligence agency Research and Analysis Wing (RAW). While a situation like this might be unheard of in Punjab or Sindh, Balochistan is another ballgame. [...] ***If we allege time and time again that external factors are responsible for the violence in Balochistan then we are not looking hard enough within its perimeter. Weak governance, deep-rooted anti state sentiment and decades of mistrust are all causes of the dismal situation of Balochistan.*** The government must make this province a top priority and do what it takes to resolve the decades long crisis if it hopes to witness a prosperous era that relies heavily on the CPEC and ultimately the situation in Balochistan.

RAW officer's arrest, Editorial, *Daily Times*, March 26⁷⁸

[...] ***Kul Bhoshan Yaduv is reportedly a commander in the Indian Navy and has confessed to plotting the separation of Balochistan and Karachi from Pakistan.*** He has been transferred to Islamabad for further questioning. [...] The presence of a serving defence officer of India in Pakistan is a serious matter and must be investigated accordingly. India needs to realise that destabilising a neighbouring state will not bring any good; rather, such activities will only deepen the rift and dampen relations between the two states.

'RAW agent' trained separatists to target ports, *The Dawn*, March 27⁷⁹

Interrogation of the arrested Indian intelligence operative Kulbhusan Yadav revealed he had been imparting Naval fighting training to Baloch separatists in

⁷⁶ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1248064>

⁷⁷ <http://nation.com.pk/editorials/26-Mar-2016/raw-again>

⁷⁸ <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/26-Mar-2016/raw-officer-s-arrest>

⁷⁹ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1248254>

an attempt to target Pakistani ports, a security official who declined to be named said on Sunday (March 27). [...]Yadav was also transporting 'anti-state elements' from Pakistan to New Delhi for training by RAW, he said.

13 more cohorts of nabbed RAW agent arrested, *Daily Times*, March 28⁸⁰

The intelligence agencies have arrested 13 more accomplices of detained Research and Analysis Wings (RAW) agent Kulbhushan Yadav. Sources said that the nabbed suspects are involved in terrorism, sectarian clashes and target killing; therefore, their arrest is being kept confidential. During investigation, it was revealed that as many as 500 Indian trained terrorists, posing as Muslims, have entered Pakistan. In coming days, more arrests are likely to be made, added sources.

Detained Indian spy confesses RAW's involvement, *Daily Times*, March 29⁸¹

Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Pervez Rashid and Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Director General Lt-Gen Asim Saleem Bajwa addressed a joint press conference in Islamabad on Tuesday (March 29). The ISPR director general kicked off the joint presser by playing a 6-minute video of a RAW agent, who had been detained last week by law enforcement agencies in Balochistan. ***The video contained a confessional statement of Indian spy, Kul Bhushan Yadav, who is a serving Indian naval officer.***

RAW agent spills the beans, Farooq Awan, *The Dawn*, March 30⁸²

It is for the first time that Pakistan has arrested a serving officer of the Indian security forces working for RAW inside its territory. In past, Pakistan did arrest many an operative of RAW but never ever a serving officer of the rank of a lieutenant colonel has been nabbed. Areas of Gwadar, Pasni, Jevani and other places in Balochistan were the target of the agent who wanted to sabotage future projects under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) through subversive activities.

The spy affair, Editorial, *The Dawn*, March 31⁸³

[...]While questions remain about the exact nature of Mr Jadhav's activities in Balochistan and the circumstances of his arrest, it is obvious that India has a great deal to answer for. Moreover, the weak and confused denials of Indian officials so far has added to a sense that the Pakistani version of events

⁸⁰ <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/28-Mar-2016/13-more-cohorts-of-nabbed-raw-agent-arrested>

⁸¹ <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/29-Mar-2016/detained-indian-spy-confess-raw-s-involvement-in-balochistan>

⁸² <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/islamabad/30-Mar-2016/govt-must-take-all-possible-steps-to-take-up-capture-at-international-forums-ispr-raw-agent>

⁸³ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1248999/the-spy-affair>

surrounding Mr Jadhav is far closer to the truth than the Indian version. [...] In Pakistan allowing the investigators to go to India and the latter receiving them and permitting them to work as planned, both states have shown that the Jadhav affair is not going to overrule and cancel all other crucial issues.

Required-Courage!, S. Tariq, *The Nation*, March 31⁸⁴

[...] A few days ago, Pakistan's military intelligence successfully snared one of their biggest catches, in the shape of a senior RAW operative, who also happened to be a serving Indian Navy Commander. [...] **What could circumstantially be viewed as a reprisal was launched in the shape of a bomb attack in an amusement park that killed seventy five innocent people and injured more than a hundred.** This was 'ironically' followed by a telephone call from New Delhi to our PM expressing sorrow at the loss of lives or perhaps (in not so many words) to underline retribution. The same timid approach has now given license for any group to challenge government writ at the very gates of Parliament and get away with it. [...] It is even now, not too late for national leadership to understand that we are passing through a phase in our history, which demands speedy and courageous decision making.

EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS

Prisoners of the past, Talat Masood, *The Express Tribune*, March 1⁸⁵

Pakistan-India relations received a major setback after the Pathankot incident for which India blamed the Jaish-e-Mohammad to be the prime suspect for the attack. Narendra Modi, in a recent interview, remarked that talks between the two countries would remain suspended until there is progress from Pakistan on taking action against those responsible for the terrorist attack. No incendiary rhetoric followed the episode and India showed maturity to that extent. Pakistan, by registering the FIR against unknown persons, demonstrated its commitment to investigate and cooperate with Indian authorities.

An unhelpful development, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, March 3⁸⁶

After the weeks since the attack on the Pathankot base of the Indian air force on January 2, the governments on both sides have displayed commendable restraint. The traditional finger-pointing and name-calling has been largely eschewed for a more measured, indeed more statesmanlike, approach by both the leaders and the administrations of each state. [...] Now a spanner of an entirely different kind has been thrown into the works in the form of some distinctly unhelpful comments by the Indian Defence Minister — and senior cabinet member — Manohar Parrikar. It was he who informed the Indian

⁸⁴ <http://nation.com.pk/columns/31-Mar-2016/required-courage>

⁸⁵ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1057322/india-and-pakistan-prisoners-of-the-past/>

⁸⁶ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1058121/an-unhelpful-development/>

Upper House, the Rajya Sabha, that militants could not have carried out the attack on the Pathankot air base without the support of the Islamabad government. This is a very serious accusation to make without anything by way of supporting evidence, at least not in the public domain. [...]Unwise words cannot be unsaid, and we urge restraint and yes, some judiciously applied statesmanship.

Indian allegations, Editorial, *The Dawn*, March 3⁸⁷

Is Indian Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar veering off script or reading from notes that his government has given him? The question put to Mr Parrikar in parliament by a Shiv Sena member of the upper house, Sanjay Raut, was clearly meant to bait the government into giving a hard-hitting response. A sensible response by Mr Parrikar would have been to state that investigations were ongoing. A more expansive response to Mr Raut's question would have had the Indian defence minister acknowledging the role of non-state actors in the attack on the Pathankot air force base, but avoiding speculation about the link to the Pakistani state. ***Instead, Mr Parrikar, who has earned a reputation for bellicose remarks off the cuff, went so far as to link all non-state actors, ie militants and terrorists, on Pakistani soil to the Pakistani state. "Any non-state actors there, they cannot function smoothly without full state support," Mr Parrikar told the Rajya Sabha.*** [...]The Indian defence minister's loose remarks underscore the challenges that bilateral dialogue has to contend with: when dialogue is stalled, hawkish elements in both countries can and do casually undermine the environment for talks and make it that much more difficult to resume them.

Intelligence sharing, Editorial, *Daily Times*, March 8⁸⁸

The capital of India, New Delhi, and its western state of Gujrat are on a high security alert since March 6, 2016. [...] ***The news sources claim that the intelligence shared by NSA Janjua reveals that a group of eight-ten operatives of the LeT and the Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM) had infiltrated the border and were planning a militant attack.*** [...]It is important, however, to mention that no Pakistani source has independently verified the sharing of this intelligence report, but if true it should be highly welcomed.[...] With Janjua sharing this intelligence, it is evident that Pakistan is sincere in combating cross-border infiltrations that always derail the crucial peace process between the two neighbours. This kind of cooperation and sharing of intelligence is going to be extremely critical in the fight to root militancy, and it is hoped that this progress is built upon and trust is restored so that tensions can begin to subside.

⁸⁷ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1243152/indian-allegations>

⁸⁸ <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/08-Mar-2016/intelligence-sharing>

Peace saboteurs, Editorial, *The Nation*, March 10⁸⁹

There is no dearth of non-state actors in this part of the world, who are always ready to derail any peace process as well as pose a serious threat to the stability of the state. Pakistan is a state where we can find innumerable miscreants who try to impose their misplaced agenda. [...] There is a need to launch a non-discriminatory crackdown on terrorists, and the facilitators of extremists as well as those providing them financial assistance. Along with announcing measures to curb militancy, government should issue a list of banned outfits and their leaders, so that people could be aware of the terror-mongers. There is a need to dismantle networks of terrorists across the country.

EXCERPTS FROM URDU MEDIA & SELECT JIHADI LITERATURE

INDIA-PAKISTAN

India is the biggest threat to Pakistan not terrorism, *Daily Jang*, March 3.⁹⁰

Prime Minister's advisor on foreign affairs, Sartaj Aziz has said that terrorism is not the main challenge to the security of Pakistan but the strategic and defence imbalance with India in the region is the biggest challenge that we need to tackle. Addressing a gathering in America he said that terrorism is our internal matter and this terrorism which comes from Afghanistan is the second challenge which we hope will be controlled in coming years. Talking to media persons in Washington he said Haqqani Network in North Waziristan has weakened but they are very active in Afghanistan. **Talking about non state actors in Pakistan he said India has main role in violence in Balochistan, FATA and Karachi.**

Ill Informed Pakistan informs India, Editorial, *Daily Jasarat*, March 8.⁹¹

India-Pakistan relations are sour for decades and the severity keeps on changing but for the first time Pakistan has informed India that 10 suicide bombers have entered Indian Territory after which many cities were placed on high alert. **It looks very funny that Pakistan's National Security Advisor, Nasir Khan Janjua has shared information of possible attack with India. According to Indian media government officials have confirmed that some have arrived in Delhi.** If this information was false then it will smear the image of Pakistan. If the information turned out to be true then there are two questions. One, **were these people allowed by Pakistan to cross the border and on the other side informed Indian NSA about this seeking to earn Indian good will and warning the terrorist outfit as well.** Every Pakistani has a right to ask

⁸⁹ <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/10-Mar-2016/peace-saboteurs>

⁹⁰ <http://e.jang.com.pk/03-03-2016/lahore/pic.asp?picname=138.gif>

⁹¹ <http://jasarat.com/news.php?date=08-03-2016&news=01&category=editorial>

why Pakistan's National Security Agency is more concerned about Indian Security and that they are given prior information about the moment of terrorists but they have no information about terrorists who struck in Shabqadr.

Interview of Gen. Mirza Aslam Beg, Daily Ummat, March 22.⁹²

When asked whether Pakistani people are scared of India, Gen Aslam Beg said yes and it is being done as per the script. There are always some people with slave mentality. In past their masters were Britishers and after that they came under the influence of America and joined CENTO and SEATO. We fought alongside Americans against USSR and later against our own brothers in Afghanistan [...] **Now America wants Indian dominance in the region and some of our own people are ready to accept it. But I want to remind them that Muslims did not accept their dominance when they lived in the same country.** [...] America started projecting India as a dominant power in the region after they invaded Afghanistan in 2001. Afghanistan, which otherwise is part of Central Asia, was made part of SAARC, so that the task to be a regional hegemon becomes easy. [...] The main objective of strategic partnership between India and America is to contain China and allow to claim the top position.

Proof of Indian interference in Pakistan, Editorial, Daily Jang, March 26.⁹³

The arrest of Indian spy in Pakistan is not something new. India has been doing it since partition to destabilise Pakistan. In the beginning they attacked Jammu and Kashmir and used force to merge other Muslim majority states. In 1971 it dismembered Pakistan and created Bangladesh which Narendra Modi himself accepted. **Now they are supporting separatist movement in Balochistan by investing money and supplying weapons. The arrest of RAW agent has further proved it. [...] He was regularly travelling from Afghanistan to Balochistan via Kndahar and was under security radar for last 18 months.** He has himself accepted that he was in touch with Baloch separatist leaders and other separatist outfits.

Indian intervention in Pakistan, Nadiya Khan Baloch, Daily Ausaf, March 30.⁹⁴

[...] This time our enemy chose a different target. They chose a place where there is no security. The enemy targeted a famous park called *Gulshan-e-Iqbal* park. In this attack 72 people including 7 women and 29 children lost their lives and more than 300 were injured. **Our enemy played Holi in Lahore but our security establishment are holding someone from Muzafargarh responsible for this gruesome attack. It did not occur to anyone that this attack could be**

⁹² <http://ummat.net/2016/03/22/news.php?p=story3.gif>

⁹³ http://e.jang.com.pk/03-26-2016/lahore/pic.asp?picname=08_01.gif

⁹⁴ http://www.ausaf.pk/wp-content/uploads/2016-04-01/news/detail15_05.php

reaction to the arrest of Indian spy. Many RAW agents were being arrested in Pakistan but India mobilised its people and managed this attack.

AFGHANISTAN AND TALIBAN

Taliban leadership is in Pakistan: Sartaj Aziz, *Daily Ausaf*, March 3.⁹⁵

Prime Minister's advisor on foreign affairs, Sartaj Aziz has accepted that Taliban leadership is staying in Pakistan and that they are under their influence. **Sartaj Aziz said that Pakistan is able to maintain some control over Taliban leadership because their families are in Pakistan and all facilities including medical facilities are available to them.** He further said that they can force Taliban to join talks but they won't be able to begin dialogue process on behalf of Afghan government because Pakistan is not in a position to offer them anything. Sartaj Aziz expressed these views in his speech at Council on Foreign Affairs in Washington. [...] **When asked how Pakistan pressurized Taliban to join talks, he replied that we limited their movement in Pakistan and also curtailed their medical and other facilities.** We told Taliban leadership that we have served you enough for last 35 years and it is very difficult to continue it because your presence in Pakistan is hurting our interests internationally.

Hikmatyar willing to participate in talks, Editorial, *Daily Ausaf*, March 15.⁹⁶

According to Afghan media, Hizb-e-Islami has issued a statement showing willingness to take part in talks with Afghan government. On the other hand Afghan Taliban have maintained that they want to talk about their demands first. The statement of Hizb-e-Islami also criticized America for putting their two members – Abdullah Naubahar and Abdul Sabour – in the terrorist list.

Mullah Rasool Akhun arrested in Pakistan, *Daily Intekhab*, March 22.⁹⁷

The chief of the Taliban splinter group, Mullah Rasool was arrested in Pakistan. **He was fighting in Zabul against the supporters of Mullah Akhtar Mansoor. After fighting, he fled to Pakistan and got arrested by Pakistani forces.**

BALUCHISTAN

Killing of innocent people is a serious issue, *Daily Tawar*, March 23.

The Baloch Human Rights Organisation has expressed anguish over the killing of innocent people of Balochistan including women and children. It said that the forces do not exercise restraint. **The spokesperson said that in last couple of days in areas like Baled, Tump, Aawaran and Koblu two dozen people including children and women have been killed and hundreds arrested. This is sheer violation of Human Rights which has become a norm in Balochistan.**

⁹⁵ <http://www.dailyausaf.com/story/96680>

⁹⁶ http://www.ausaf.pk/wp-content/uploads/2016-03-15/news/detail14_03.php

⁹⁷ <http://www.dailyintekhab.com.pk/karachi/today/p1/story.php?param=mala.jpg>

[...]The arrest of people without any warrants and then killing them in custody without any trial is a serious concern. [...]The spokesperson of BHRO said ***that the people close to establishment are present within media houses and other agencies who are hiding the reality and rather highlight the rosy picture of the province that is why the international organisations find it difficult to fathom the reality.***

STATISTICS**BOMBINGS, SHOOTINGS AND DISAPPEARANCES***(Select incidents culled out from the Pakistan media)*

Place	Date	Description	Killed	Injured
Balochistan				
Quetta ⁹⁸	3/3/2016	7 militants shot dead	7	2
Kech and Kolhu ⁹⁹	10/3/2016	Eight militants killed	10	0
Dera Bugti ¹⁰⁰	14/3/2016	FC kills five militants	5	0
FATA				
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Punjab				
Lahore ¹⁰¹	27/3/2016	Sucide Blast in Lahore Park	63	100
Lahore ¹⁰²	30/3/2016	Five terrorists killed	5	0
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa				
Shabqadar ¹⁰³	7/3/2016	Eight killed	8	14
Lakki-Marwat ¹⁰⁴	31/3/2016	Five killed	5	--
Sindh				
Malir ¹⁰⁵	6/3/2016	Police kills 4 suspects	4	0

⁹⁸ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1243081/7-suspected-militants-including-bra-commander-killed-in-balochistan-says-fc>

⁹⁹ <http://nation.com.pk/national/10-Mar-2016/bra-commander-among-eight-killed-in-sibi>

¹⁰⁰ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1245432/fc-kills-five-suspected-militants-in-dera-bugti>

¹⁰¹ <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/27-Mar-2016/suicide-blast-at-lahore-s-iqbal-park-kills-10-injures-30>

¹⁰² <http://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/109084-Five-terrorists-killed-in-Lahore-shootout>

¹⁰³ <http://thepashtuntimes.com/suicide-bomber-kills-8-at-charsadda-court-ttp-jamatul-ahrar-claims-responsibility/>

¹⁰⁴ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/109343-Five-dead-in-Lakki-Marwat-explosion>

¹⁰⁵ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1243777/karachi-police-claim-killing-four-suspected-militants-in-encounter>