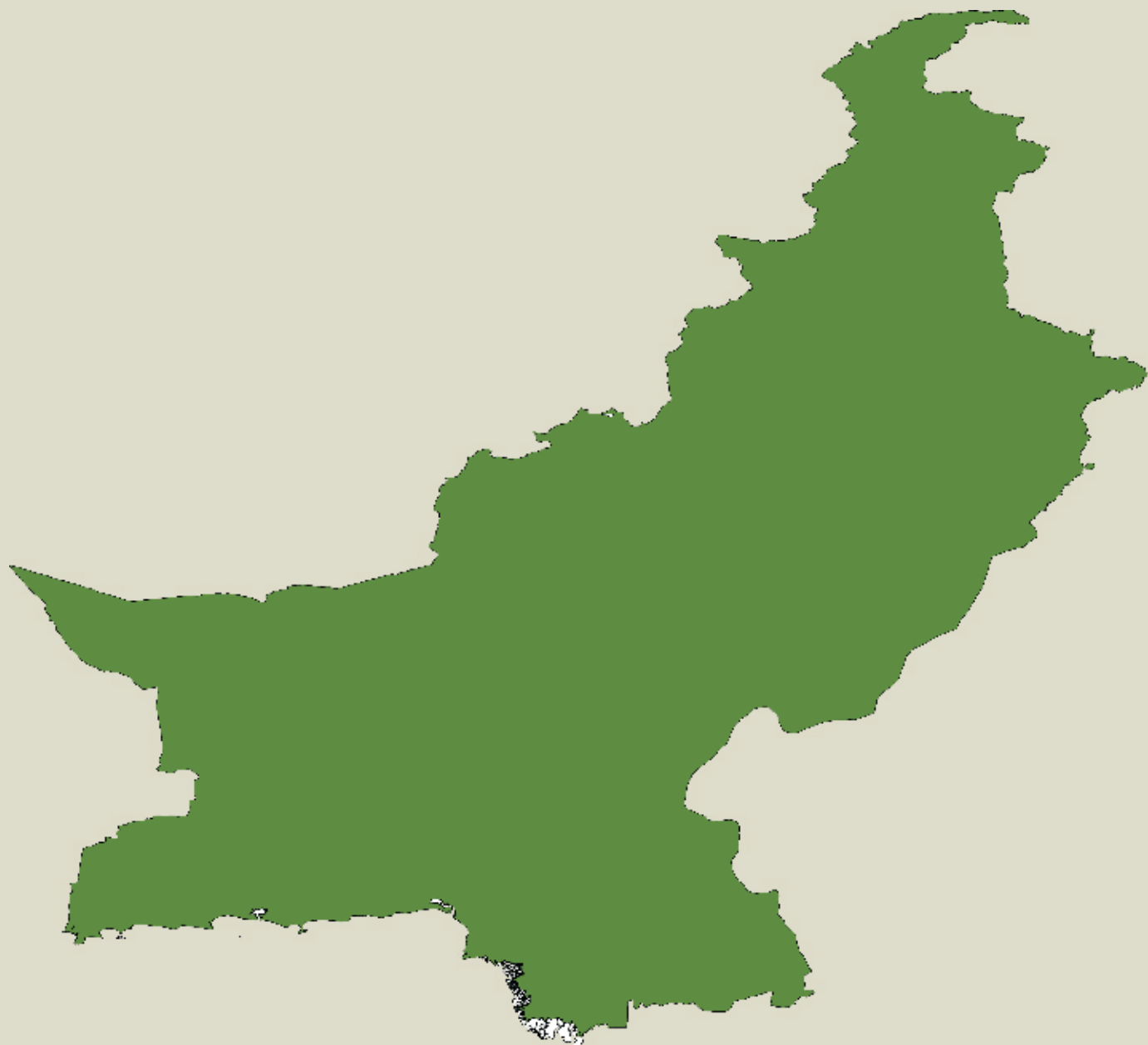


MAY 2017

PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST

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



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

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INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE
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रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

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PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST, May 2017

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SUMMARY

The DG ISPR's public rejection of the notification issued by the civil government over the Dawn leaks case on 29 April was a big jolt to civil-military relations, which had shown some signs of repair after the new army chief had stepped in. For an already crisis-ridden Pakistan, such an overt spark in civil-military tensions gave rise to many speculations, leaving the people concerned about the future of democratic rule. The military was unhappy with the notification because it did not act against some persons held responsible for the leak in the Dawn Leaks investigation report.

Although the interior ministry went on a damage control mode by vowing to re-issue a new notification, many commentators in the Pakistani media criticised the move by the military as a hurried response and termed the government's notification as a manifestation of internal contradictions within Nawaz Sharif's '*Kitchen cabinet*'.

The blasphemy related vigilantism continued unabated. In the latest incident, a 10-year boy was killed and five others wounded in a mob attack on a police station in Balochistan in an attempt to lynch a minority Hindu man charged with blasphemy. It was the third such attack in less than a month, as law-enforcement agencies struggled to deal with blasphemy-related issues. Most of the articles in the 'English liberal-press' argued that this endless tryst with blasphemy-related allegations is happening under the nurturing shadow of the state and the political elite indirectly encouraging such attacks through their inaction. They underlined that blasphemy had been "elevated as one of the highest offences in the land".

On the political front, Pakistan's relationship with its neighbours continued to decline. Its relationship with Iran deteriorated with Tehran claiming that it would look into cross-border strikes within Pakistani territory if Islamabad would not be able to clamp down on the activities of the Jaishul-Adl terrorist group, which is held responsible by Iran for deadly clashes with its security forces as well as for violent unrest in its Sistan-Balochistan province bordering Pakistan.

Trump's singling out India as a victim of terrorism while failing even to mention Pakistan at the Islamic-Summit hosted by Saudi Arabia was strongly criticised by both English and vernacular media. The English dailies cautioned it as a signal to Islamabad as to where the 'US stands on current South Asia power imbalances' and advised Pakistan to take the hint.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif attended the One Belt, One Road initiative (OBOR) Summit in China and termed it as "*an economic undertaking open to all countries in the region*", which "*must not be politicised*". In what can be termed as a boost to Pakistan's energy sector, Islamabad and Beijing signed an exclusive

memorandum of understanding (MoU) at the Summit to develop North Indus River Cascade with an estimated cost of US\$ 50 billion that has the potential of generating approximately 40,000mw of hydroelectric power. This investment is in addition to the \$57 billion already promised under CPEC.

The civilian leadership was caught on the wrong foot by opposition and civilians over the closed-door meeting between Nawaz and Indian steel magnate Sajjan Jindal in Murree. With India taking the case of Jadhav to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the latter's directive to Pakistan to stay the execution of Jadhav sent shock waves all over Pakistan. Some commentators suggested that Jindal's back door diplomacy had influenced the PM and hence the Pakistani case was not presented with the required emphasis in the ICJ.

Towards the end of the month, Pakistan Finance Minister released the Budget for the Fiscal year 2017-18. It was strongly argued in the newspapers that the budget was based on an outdated population census (last official census was held in 1998). The Economic Survey of Pakistan pointed out that "the current account deficit [was] rising at a rapid pace. In the first 10 months of the fiscal year, the deficit had risen to \$7.2bn, more than triple the figure for the same period last year".

Zainab Akhter

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Stop RAW enforcing Islam, Kunwar Khuldune Shahid, *The Nation*, 2 May¹

... [N]ow the lid has been lifted, it is now up to us to explain the designs of these agents for those who might still be unaware of the plot that many of us have been falling prey to. *These RAW-funded jihadists have been tasked with global destruction through the one weapon that the Muslim World has always been vulnerable to: enforcement of Islam.* They unite us under the Shariah banner, and use our brainwashed minds to justify their brutalities, which gives credence to their actions and garners popular support for them. As Mr Ehsan so decisively disentangled, it is Taliban's Islam that forms almost the entirety of their arsenal. ... *Most pertinently, Taliban's Islam says people should be killed for blasphemy, adultery, apostasy, homosexuality, etc. But here's the clincher: so does the Islam of many of us. Therefore, anyone who interprets Islam according to the aforementioned beliefs is, in fact, a RAW agent as well.* Now according to multiple surveys a comfortable majority in the Muslim world, and even more Pakistani Muslims, would espouse at least some of those beliefs given above. That's how deeply entrenched RAW is. ... Let's see what we have in common with the Taliban and eliminate the RAW agent inside all of us. That's when our state will cease to be a RAW agent as well.

Parliament, where are you? Wajid Shamsul Hasan, *Daily Times*, 03 May²

Indeed, the PML-N government's approach towards the Parliament seems to be a manifestation of a suicidal mindset. Despite the fact that it was the Parliament that saved the government time and again standing up like a rock to thwart pressure built by the PTI dharnas that almost dislodged the government in 2014 *instead of strengthening it as the source and arbiter of all power, the government adopted a policy of yielding more space to the extra-constitutional forces and their Trojan horses who end up taking advantage of it...*The PM's lack of interest in the Parliament is manifested in the gross disrespect shown to the institution by his ministers. The latter's pathological abhorrence to attending the Parliament's proceedings is like re-arranging the deck chairs for a musical when Titanic is about to sink.

Bottlenecks for a grand port, Shahzeb Jillani, *The Friday Times*, 05 May³

Abbas Waara is one of Gwadar's oldest boat builders he says, "I fear that at some point we will be asked to move out of here to make room for the new roads and construction. But where will they go? Will there be relocation and

¹ <http://nation.com.pk/columns/02-May-2017/stop-raw-enforcing-islam>

² <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/03-May-17/parliament-where-are-you>

³ <http://www.thefridaytimes.com/tft/bottlenecks-for-a-grand-port/>

rehabilitation for them? No one knows, he says with a shrug. This kind of uncertainty and lack of transparency about the government's plans is breeding political anxiety. Baloch nationalists have remained resentful of the Pakistani army's control of the province. Leaders such as Akhtar Mengal fear that the influx of outsiders is turning the Baloch into a minority in their own land....In the short to medium terms, water is likely to remain the single biggest challenge, putting a question mark over the government's capacity to project Gwadar as Pakistan's third biggest port city.

Mob attacks police to punish an alleged blasphemer; one killed, *Daily Times*, 05 May⁴

A 10-year boy was killed and five others were wounded Thursday when a mob attacked a police station in an attempt to lynch a Hindu man charged with blasphemy in southwest Pakistan. It was the third major vigilante attack linked to accusations of blasphemy in less than a month, as law enforcement agencies struggle to deal with a surge in violence. The latest incident occurred in the town of Hub in Balochistan province following the arrest of Prakash Kumar, a 34-year-old member of the Hindu religious minority. Kumar, a crockery shop owner, was detained on Tuesday for allegedly posting an incendiary image on social media. A First Information Report was registered against Kumar on the complaint of various community members under Sections 295-A and 295-C of Pakistan's blasphemy law. "When news of his arrest was published in local newspapers on Thursday, a crowd of some 500 people including traders, clerics and politicians surrounded the town's police station to demand he be handed over," police official Abdul Sattar told AFP.

Unusual police report against PM, Mohammad Asghar, *Dawn*, 05 May⁵

In an unusual development, police have registered a report against Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif for provoking people against the Pakistan Army and creating hatred against the armed forces. It is worth noting that the report registered by the police is not a First Information Report or FIR. It is a report registered in the police diary, known in local parlance as *roznamcha*. The one-page report was lodged by Advocate Ishtiaq Ahmed Mirza, chairman of the I.M. Pakistan, a political party which he claimed was registered with the Election Commission of Pakistan.

Pakistan, Japan sign \$24m accord for energy project, Amin Ahmed, *Dawn*, 05 May⁶

⁴ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/05-May-17/mob-attacks-police-to-punish-an-alleged-blasphemer-one-killed>

⁵ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1331186/unusual-police-report-against-pm>

⁶ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1331202/pakistan-japan-sign-24m-accord-for-energy-project>

Pakistan and Japan signed here on Thursday a loan agreement amounting to \$24 million for the implementation of the second phase of 'Islamabad-Burhan Transmission Line Reinforcement' project. The project will improve reliability of the national grid and meet the growing demand for electricity transmission through reinforcement of transmission lines necessary for power supply to the Islamabad capital territory and surrounding areas, thereby contributing to the improvement of economic infrastructure of Pakistan... The objective of the loan is to reinforce existing 220kV transmission lines between the Tarbela hydropower plant and the Burhan substation, which will enable it to supply more than three times electricity as compared to its existing capacity.

Diplomacy with Iran, Editorial, Daily Times, 06 May⁷

In the past, Pakistan never sided with the West in the latter's standoff with Tehran over its nuclear programme. Pakistan enjoys deep cultural, religious and friendly relations with Iran. **Despite international sanctions, Islamabad did not leave Tehran diplomatically isolated. Energy starved Pakistan needs to expand economic cooperation with Iran.** Islamabad should seize the opportunity because Pak-Iran trade relations have enormous potential. Besides energy and gas projects, there are numerous opportunities to increase bilateral ties by establishing road and rail infrastructure in the border areas of both countries. Pakistan also needs to satisfy Iranian concerns regarding the poorly policed border areas in the context of militant attacks inside Iran as well as Pakistan's role in the Saudi-led Islamic Military Alliance.

Our darkest moments, Umair Javed, Dawn, 08 May⁸

Material motivations are often couched in the language of purity, and status-seeking mullahs seek to further their own credentials by taking up these causes with great public fanfare. In the recent incident in Hub, reports say members of two religious groups travelled all the way from Karachi to participate in the organisation of a lynch mob.....This shameful, endless tryst with blasphemy-related allegations is happening under the nurturing shadow of the state and the political elite....**However, the state does not have a solution to blasphemy-related vigilantism.** This is because it has both legally — through the constitution and the penal code — and rhetorically through frequent speeches against blasphemous content - elevated blasphemy as one of the highest offences in the land. Unlike anti-state terrorism, which is an identifiable political project, blasphemy violence is now a social project. It does not seek to alter the state any more, it seeks to alter or set societal limits.

Another angry neighbour, Farooq Awan, Daily Times, 10 May⁹

⁷ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/06-May-17/diplomacy-with-iran>

⁸ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1331652/our-darkest-moments>

⁹ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/10-May-17/another-angry-neighbour>

A war of words between Pakistan and Iran escalated after Islamabad cautioned Tehran that a warning issued by the Iranian army chief a day earlier was against the 'spirit of brotherly relations' between two countries. And in Tehran, another senior military official warned that his country reserved the right to destroy the 'lair of terrorists in Pakistan' following a recent terrorist crime against Iranian border guards serving on the country's southeastern frontier. Foreign Office in Islamabad on Tuesday summoned Iranian Ambassador Mehdi Honardoost and expressed serious concerns over a warning issued by Maj Gen Mohammad Baqeri that Tehran would hit 'militant safe havens inside Pakistan if the government did not confront militants who carried out cross-border attacks last month'. Deepening the rift between the two neighbours, the Iranian police, in a statement carried by Iranian state media, said 'the Pakistani government bears the ultimate responsibility of the attack'.

Calming borders tension, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, 11 May¹⁰

Fissures caused by a recent attack on Iranian guards by Jaish-e-Adl members along the Pakistan-Iran border had threatened to chip away at the cordiality with which Islamabad and Tehran deal with each other bilaterally and multilaterally. ... After some delay, the Foreign Office summoned the Iranian envoy and conveyed its deep concern over the tone and tenor used by the Iranian general against Pakistan. *The language of threats is best avoided among neighbours. The two sides could fall back on a host of recommended measures to tackle border irritants and the like. Perhaps the recently-constituted Pakistan-Iran border commission — which is to hold its maiden meeting this month — could help de-escalate the tensions.* The first task of the commission is to devise a workable border management plan that will curb illegal cross-border movement and combat drug trafficking. A tall order maybe but needed all the same.

Don't test the people of Sindh, Khuhro tells Nawaz, *The Express Tribune*, 12 May¹¹

... A large number of supporters (of Pakistan Peoples Party's [PPP]) gathered at MA Jinnah Road, condemning the alleged atrocities of the PML-N, resulting in shortage of water and gas in Sindh and excessive power cuts. *Supporters and workers shouted the slogan 'Go Nawaz Go'. "Mian sahab [Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif], don't test the people of Sindh," shouted provincial minister Nisar Khuhro, PPP Sindh chapter's president, as he spoke the crowd sitting under a tent. "They [know] very well how to confront the injustices of [PML-N] governments." The PPP leader held the*

¹⁰ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1406468/calming-border-tensions/>

¹¹ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1407426/dont-test-people-sindh-khuhro-tells-nawaz/>

PML-N-led government responsible for the load-shedding and water and gas shortages. He said the federal government has failed to live up to its promise of reducing the power cuts. ...

In troubled waters, Editorial, Daily Times, 12 May¹²

Pakistan's troubles do not end at the Durand Line. Relations with Iran are deeply troubled too, with Tehran claiming that it will look into cross-border strikes within Pakistani territory if Islamabad cannot clamp down on the activities of the Jaishul-Adl terrorist group. Tehran holds such groups responsible for deadly clashes with security forces in its own territory, and for violent unrest in its Sistan-Balochistan province bordering Pakistan. Pakistan, meanwhile, has implied Iranian collusion with espionage and destabilisation activities within its territory, especially regarding the Kulbhushan Yadhav episode. Both Pakistan and Iran essentially accuse each other of much the same sort of thing — much like Pakistan and Afghanistan.

More power to the PM, Uzair Younus, The Friday Times, 12 May¹³

The political opposition will soon recognize that the soft underbelly of the Nawaz government is load shedding. Panama Papers, civil-military tensions, and other issues are a mere sideshow compared to the profound failure of this government to exorcise rolling blackouts. With elections nearing, it is too late to implement the tough reforms that are needed in the power sector. That leaves the ruling party no choice but to kick the can down the road by clearing the debt through further issuance of bonds before the end of its term in 2018. This is the only arrow in the government's quiver.

Pak-centric foreign policy, please, M. Ziauddin, Daily Times, 12 May¹⁴

Pakistan, by joining the alliance, seems to have virtually abandoned the façade of neutrality that it had maintained between Tehran and Riyadh since independence. This is a dangerous development in view of our own sectarian demography and also because of the possibility that we would thus be virtually surrounded by three hostile neighbours capable of joining hands to undermine our sovereignty.... here is another equally dangerous angle to the developing situation. The US appears all set to use the anti-Shiite militant groups in Pakistan to fund an insurgency in the Iranian Balochistan. Pakistan would be hard put to say no to the US which it has been trying to woo back from India since the two had entered into a mutually beneficial strategic alliance relegating Pakistan in the process from its position of Non-NATO ally of the US to almost nobody. But the socio-economic and political cost of allowing the US and Saudi Arabia to use Balochistan for their own petty games

¹² <http://dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/12-May-17/in-troubled-waters>

¹³ <http://www.thefridaytimes.com/tft/more-power-to-the-pm/>

¹⁴ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/12-May-17/pak-centric-foreign-policy-please>

against Iran no matter what the amount of dollars on offer would be too enormous for Pakistan, even perhaps undermining its very sovereignty.....*Looking back one would have wished Pakistan to have remained out of the Saudi sponsored military alliance, wished as well that General Sharif had not accepted the job offer* and that Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had declined the invitation to attend the Trump summit in Riyadh.

Game of shadows, M.A Niazi, *The Nation*, 12 May¹⁵

For the cognoscenti, Dawn Leaks was going to be more damaging than the Panama Leaks, because it was seen by the armed forces as involving them directly, while the latter was seen more as an issue in which the Pakistan Tehrik Insaf (PTI) was more invested. Though the PTI is seen as the military's surrogate by its opponents, the Panamagate issue was merely a stick with which the military could use to hit Mian Nawaz over the head with, as corruption is not seen as its particular issue. ... *There was some back-and-forth about whether the notification by the PM should have been made, or whether it should have been made by the Interior Ministry, but this ducked the question of the real target, which was the Prime Minister's daughter, Maryam Nawaz Sharif.* ... At one level, it does not matter whether Mian Nawaz was behind the Dawn Leaks or not. ... But more relevant is whether the COAS wants to use it as a casus belli. ... If the COAS thinks that the time is ripe for a takeover, then Dawn Leaks will provide a justification, just as much as the hijack allegation provided Gen Pervez Musharraf an opportunity to take over in 1999. If he does not think so, he will paper them over even if the Prime Minister was behind them. ...

China and new world order, Editorial, *The Frontier Post*, 16 May¹⁶

There is an old Chinese saying: "If you want to grow rich, first build a road." China knows a thing or two about building roads, and ports, and bridges, and airports, and power stations, and other infrastructure. ... *Now China is aiming to take it one step further with an ambitious initiative to marshal up to \$1 trillion for infrastructure spending across Asia, the Middle East and Africa, all bundled into a program newly renamed as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). It is a compelling vision backed by a state with substantial cash firepower. It is particularly compelling if you are a cash-poor, underdeveloped state — much like China was in the early 1980s — and a large, rich foreign power offers to pay for ports, bridges and roads without too many strings attached.* Consider Pakistan. China will spend potentially up to \$60 billion on ports, roads, special economic zones and other infrastructure of connectivity in a move that would benefit both nations, linking China's more underdeveloped

¹⁵ <http://nation.com.pk/columns/12-May-2017/game-of-shadows>

¹⁶ <http://thefrontierpost.com/articleprint/84814/china-and-new-world-order>

western provinces with the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean by water, and with South Asia and the Middle East by land. ... The BRI is about as good an example as any, and contributes in a large way to a new world order as the post-World War II global financial architecture needs support. ... In terms of scope and sheer size, the BRI dwarfs the Marshall Plan, which helped rebuild Europe. Even if only a quarter of its goals are met, the effects could be transformational on a global economy in dire need of jolts of electricity.

A blind eye, Editorial, *The Nation*, 18 May¹⁷

It turns out that the massive Defence Housing Authority Lahore scam that has implicated former COAS, Ashfaq Kayani's brother – Kamran Kayani – has not been acted on at all. The National Accountability Bureau has already requested for the Interior Ministry to issue a red warrant in Kamran Kayani's name, the main accused, but this request has yet to be responded to. ... There is still hope for the Interior Ministry to fix its mistakes. ... *There is no link between former COAS Ashfaq Kayani and the crimes of his brother. The government should not equate the two together in any case.* A year and a half of inaction can be rectified if the government makes a move, but only if it finally gets going on the inevitably slow process to bring an absconder back to the country.

Let's work to correct our flaws, Naveed Hussain, *The Express Tribune*, 19 May¹⁸

Strategic encirclement, or a 'pincer' attack involving India and Afghanistan, has always been a nightmarish scenario for Pakistani policymakers. This fear has been instrumental in shaping our Afghan policy since the '50s. But our worst fear is coming true. Or so it appears. Earlier this month a deadly border clash fired up smouldering tensions between the two countries. A verbal duel followed. A diplomatic spat made it nastier. ... It wasn't just fear of strategic encirclement; the quest for 'strategic depth' has also hugely influenced our Afghan policy. ... *This unspoken desire was manifested in our Afghan policy. But military ruler Gen Ziaul Haq was honest enough to say it loud and clear in the 1980s: "We [Pakistan] have earned the right to have a friendly government in Kabul. We won't permit it to be like it was before, with Indian and Soviet influence there and claims to our territory," he said when Afghanistan was on the cusp of a civil war.* ... We sought to dictate what was good for Afghanistan. Let's be honest. Let's admit that winning hearts and minds in Afghanistan was never a priority for us. ...

Rising external deficit, Editorial, *Dawn*, 19 May¹⁹

The latest data for the country's external account shows that the current account deficit is rising at a rapid pace. In the first 10 months of the fiscal year,

¹⁷ <http://nation.com.pk/editorials/18-May-2017/a-blind-eye>

¹⁸ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1413339/lets-work-correct-flaws/>

¹⁹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1333972/rising-external-deficit>

the deficit has risen to \$7.2bn, more than triple the figure for the same period last year. Even month on month, between March and April of this year, there was a sharp spike of almost 100pc in the size of the deficit. *For many months now, we have been hearing the government's spin on the growing deficit: it argues that this is a temporary state of affairs and is due to machinery imports.* Once the machinery is installed and running, it says, the deficit will be reversed. This is the same argument that the Musharraf regime made in its last few years. But, instead of reversing, the deficit took us back to the doorstep of the IMF... *Speeding up growth at the expense of the country's fiscal and external accounts is tantamount to taking drugs to experience a temporary high. There is always the inevitable hangover once the 'good times' end. What is more worrying is in this case we are building up these large vulnerabilities precisely as the outflows from the CPEC projects are set to commence.*

Pak-Iran precipice, Adnan Randhawa, Daily Times, 19 May²⁰

...But on Iran, a fog of disinformation, propaganda and media blackout largely because *that now involves Balochistan has dimmed the lines between reality and falsehood.* Iranian Army Chief's threat might have come as a surprise for those who rely only upon local media. For quite some time now, Western media has been abuzz with reports, pieces and opinion articles pointing to sharp deterioration in Pak-Iran relations, mainly because of our recent policy shifts heavily tilting towards Saudi Arabia... *While we conveniently downplay the killing of around 10 Iranian border guards by militants from our side, Iran's ire and impatience are understandable.* How can our policy of opening a third front on our borders for no reason at all be defended? Why are we so fond of importing foreign conflicts in our own territory — Saudi-Iran conflict in this case?... *As I have pointed out several times earlier, our policy making on foreign and security realms is in wrong hands.* And that brings us to the real problem at hand that needs immediate corrective measures... *Our foreign office is in shackles. Partly, its complacency is its undoing. But larger part can be attributed to the civil-military imbalance that plagued our polity from the very beginning..*

Minority census, Editorial, Daily Times, 22 May²¹

The census is believed to be good news for Pakistan's beleaguered minorities. Conventional wisdom dictates that being recorded and being fed into a national database will lead to greater political representation and, subsequently, increased rights. *This is because to date - just as the country has been winging it when it comes to total population figures - it has paid even scantier attention to its minorities.* Current estimates for Pakistan's Christian

²⁰ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/19-May-17/pak-iran-precipice>

²¹ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/22-May-17/minority-census>

community ranges anywhere from 2-10 million; similarly, the Hindu community finds itself put at anything from 2.5-4.5 million. But this being Pakistan - where minorities are routinely targeted with false allegations of blasphemy that can see them lynched to death, or else burned alive – the risks, for many, that come with being 'outed' far outweigh the dream of greater parliamentary representation, or even just knowing community strength in terms of absolute figures for purposes of possible mobilisation.

Pakistan census source of fear and hope for minorities, *Daily Times*, 22 May²²

Marginalised, attacked and frequently hit by blasphemy charges, Pakistan's religious minorities are hoping the country's first census since 1998 will be a step towards greater political representation and rights. Estimates are approximate and disputed, ranging from two to 10 million for Christians, and 2.5 to 4.5 million for Hindus. The process is not without complications – and not all religious minorities are eager to make themselves known. Pakistan's Ahmadis, a minority sect declared non-Muslims by law, number an estimated 500,000, are victims of persecution and violence. *Banned from even calling themselves Muslim, they find themselves in a dangerous position when census officials arrive asking them to declare their religion. When a Balochistan resident identified himself as Ahmadi to Pakistani census officials, they chased him out of the mosque where they had gathered families to be counted, Saleemuddin, a spokesman for the community, told AFP, without identifying the man for safety reasons.*

Weapons to the Middle East, Editorial, *The Nation*, 22 May²³

The US announced a huge arms deal with Saudi Arabia on Saturday as President Donald Trump visited Riyadh on his maiden foreign tour. The deal is worth around \$110 billion, in ships, planes weapons and other military equipment, and is expected to swell to around \$380 billion over the next ten years according to Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir. ... *While the arms deal underlines the military ambitions of Saudi Arabia and gives the coalition it leads a little more credibility, the more immediate effect of the move is on Yemen. ... The deal also emboldens the Saudis against other regional rivals, and this massive influx of arms will be seen as a provocation.* An arms race seems to be in the offing if countries like Iran decide to match the aggressive manoeuvrings of Saudi Arabia. With the Trump presidency exercising lax control over the sale of weapons, and even laxer over the regional ambitions of its allies, the Middle East may become more tense than it already is.

²² <http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/22-May-17/pakistan-census-source-of-fear-and-hope-for-minorities>

²³ <http://nation.com.pk/editorials/22-May-2017/weapons-to-the-middle-east>

The Riyadh Snub, Editorial, *The Nation*, 23 May²⁴

In navigating the Saudi–Iran divide, Pakistan has tried to get the best of both worlds – as it should – however, in reality it is not getting much of either. ... *It is a shame that Pakistan did not get to push its narrative despite being a major contributor to Saudi Arabia's military capacity and only member of the coalition with extensive anti-terrorism experience.* What is the benefit of pandering to wishes of the kingdom, if Pakistan's narrative is so easily dismissed, especially at the cost of damaged relations with our much more immediate neighbour? ... The Prime Minister has suffered through the optics of attending a blatantly anti-Iran summit; will he be bold enough to suffer the consequences of making a personal trip to Tehran?

Trump's bluster, Editorial, *Dawn*, 23 May²⁵

While the cold war has continued for over three decades, today, the Saudis and Iranians have come dangerously close to a full-blown confrontation. Unfortunately, by not extending an invitation to Tehran to participate in the summit and by giving space to the American leader to criticise Iran, the kingdom has only worsened matters. A summit that features numerous Muslim states can be an excellent forum for discussing differences. At this summit, there was only bluster. The fallout of the Riyadh conference, which our prime minister attended, raises questions about the Saudi-led military coalition that this country's former army chief leads. Considering the anti-Iran bombast, will the coalition focus on the militant Islamic State group and similar organisations, or will it target Iran and its regional proxies such as Hezbollah and the Houthis?

Free speech in danger, Editorial, *Dawn*, 23 May²⁶

A new front against lawful free speech had been opened under the guise of cracking down on unlawful conduct. The state appears to have developed a taste for intimidation that society ought to be deeply concerned about. Closing in on 70 years of independence, the ability of the citizenry to choose its own government and criticise the state have been hard-won gains that cannot be given up. *That an elected government is cracking down on legitimate dissent by the public against the state is doubly shameful... there are the rumours of allegation and intimidation by state officials against social-media activists and other dissidents.* Is the state working under the cover of supposedly legal actions by the FIA to clamp down on free and political speech far beyond the parameters of the allegedly narrow lists of suspects?

²⁴ <http://nation.com.pk/editorials/23-May-2017/the-riyadh-snub>

²⁵ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1334763/trumps-bluster>

²⁶ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1334762/free-speech-in-danger>

PM's summit snub, Editorial, *Daily Times*, 24 May²⁷

Trump's singling out India as a victim of terrorism while failing to mention Pakistan at all was not a case of simple veering from the script by an exhausted president. *It was a signal to Islamabad of where the US stands on current South Asia power imbalances.* Thus Pakistan should take the hint. Yes we are a frontline ally in the war on terror. *Yet for most of the world we hold the dubious honour of being both a victim and state-sponsor of terrorism.* Yes our former COAS is the man leading the Islamic Alliance into battle yet we are ranked fourth on the Global Terrorism Index. These contradictions matter.

A dangerous coalition, Zahid Hussain, *Dawn*, 24 May²⁸

It was so obvious from the outset that the alliance would not work when its formation was announced unilaterally by the Saudi crown prince in the midst of the kingdom's military intervention in Yemen. *It was a major mistake to commit ourselves to the coalition without having a clear idea about its objectives. Even worse was allowing retired Gen Raheel Sharif to head a phantom Islamic army.* With a former army chief in the top position, we cannot pretend that Pakistan is not an active partner in the military alliance. The government's decision was in complete violation of the parliament's resolution to not get involved in the Middle East civil war. It is also a failure of our foreign policy as we have been unable to clarify our position on the anti-Iran stance at the Riyadh summit. *Indeed, it will now be much more difficult for us to extricate ourselves from what is rightly described as a 'Sunni' coalition without further antagonising Riyadh. But staying in an alliance which gets us involved in an intra-sectarian conflict will be extremely dangerous for the country.*

A shut up call to citizens, Rabia Mehmood, *Daily Times*, 25 May²⁹

The Interior minister has admitted to surveillance of Pakistani social media community, on the instructions of the Prime Minister and insists that he wants to keep doing that. *High-handedness is masquerading as policy and Pakistan Electronic Crime Act is enabling the authorities to surveil, intimidate and censor citizens.* More worrying and absurd is the use of the word organised by the state. If it weren't so malicious in intent, using the term organised in this context would have been comical. The adjective of organised for smear campaigns or hate attacks on social media, has been accurately used by the human rights defenders, activists and progressive journalists who have been

²⁷ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/24-May-17/pms-summit-snub>

²⁸ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1334998/a-dangerous-coalition>

²⁹ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/25-May-17/a-shut-up-call-to-citizens>

on the receiving end of the state-supporting-blasphemy law-loving vicious trolls — a hostile online situation set into motion years back.

An ad hoc country? Farhan Bokhari, *Dawn*, 25 May³⁰

The prospects for the future appear hardly promising in spite of frequent official claims of 'sub achha' (all is well). *As Pakistan witnesses the build up to next year's elections, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his coterie of ministers are all too busy seeking to convince Pakistanis that their country is heading for better times.* The downside risk to this is indeed that of further complacency kicking in to an already weak commitment to undertaking robust reforms. *With the number of income tax payers remaining a distinct minority in Pakistan, there appears to be no end in sight to the ruling structure relying on a narrow band of taxpayers to run the revenue system.* With the strings surrounding the national purse remaining tight, it is hard to imagine the inflow of resources for undertaking costly and imaginative new ideas for ensuring stability. Consequently, as widely reported, Sharif and his government appear determined to rely primarily on adding to the national debt by borrowing money for their pursuit of development rather than finding affluent new individuals to help fill the gap.

Rescuing Pak-US relations, Editorial, *Daily Times*, 26 May³¹

For Pakistan, the new administration has proposed \$344 million in financial assistance, including \$100 million in foreign military finances, which is a reduction of \$190 million as compared to the year 2016. The United States is re-shaping the way it grants military assistance to foreign nations. Traditionally, the US appropriated funds as loans or grants to enable partner countries to buy American military equipment. The Trump administration wants to convert the majority of grants to loans so that countries would repay at a later date. For Pakistan, it means more tough choices. In 2016, Islamabad refused to contribute matching national funds for the purchase of eight F-16s owing to its financial difficulties. This pattern is likely to repeat itself. *Pakistan would have to be highly selective in buying US military equipment given the state of its own national resources. A large-scale military expenditure would put a strain on the limited financial resources during an election year, when the sitting government's priority is development spending.*

Quetta kidnapping, Editorial, *Dawn*, 26 May³²

When a high-profile kidnapping takes place in broad daylight in one of the most heavily policed urban centres in the country, questions are bound to be

³⁰ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1335190/an-ad-hoc-country>

³¹ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/26-May-17/rescuing-pak-us-relations>

³² <https://www.dawn.com/news/1335396/quetta-kidnapping>

raised. *The incident underscores the precarious security situation in insurgency-wracked Balochistan as well as the murky transnational interests that complicate matters there. Balochistan today is a confoundedly complex problem, a powder keg of competing interests, the outcome of a decades-long failure of state policy marked by a refusal to honestly address the political grievances — some of them very legitimate of the Baloch; that omission is being exploited by subversive foreign elements with some success.* Arguably, the inception of CPEC has made the situation even more fraught, with security for Chinese nationals acquiring particular urgency. The abduction two days ago is evidence that law-enforcement authorities in the province have yet to get their act together. It is pertinent to ask how, in a city with an overwhelming security footprint, did the perpetrators get away with such a brazen crime?

Anticlimax for a summit, Ayesha Siddiqi, *The Friday Times*, 26 May³³

There are many Pakistanis who cannot shut their eyes to the high cost of the Pakistan-Saudi linkage, especially the apprehension of its impact on sectarian conflict in the country. *One wonders if there was a wild expectation that the prime minister would make a speech in which he would have apprised the Arab-American leadership of building ties in the Muslim world.* But what was the possibility of anyone listening? The people gathered in Riyadh, as mentioned earlier, were there to fix a Middle East-West hemisphere problem. Pakistan was never given a choice from the onset of selecting an alternative route which can be attributed to the traditional lack of maneuverability in the bilateral relationship. This is due to an inherent structural flaw in Pakistan's overall foreign policymaking caused by the 'India factor'.

This is why China wants our farmland, Safiya Aftab, *The Friday Times*, 26 May³⁴

There is no denying that Pakistan's agriculture sector is in crisis, and needs a heavy dose of investment. *At the same time, the sudden corporatization of a highly labour intensive sector, which is serviced by the most vulnerable segments of our population, can have devastating socioeconomic consequences.* If anything, the Chinese should be sympathetic, having built a revolution on the back of peasant farmers. But we need to tread very carefully here. Firstly, the government should make the details of the plans public, and be very clear about the safeguard policies that will be implemented. One cannot expect a foreign country to prioritize the interests of one's vulnerable population. That is for our government and our society to do.

Can Gwadar be like Shenzhen? Naveed Iftikhar, *Daily Times*, 27 May³⁵

³³ <http://www.thefridaytimes.com/tft/anticlimax-for-a-summit/>

³⁴ <http://www.thefridaytimes.com/tft/this-is-why-china-wants-our-farmland/>

³⁵ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/27-May-17/can-gwadar-be-like-shenzhen>

Pakistan has proven incapable of managing its cities as engines of growth. Pakistan is one of the fastest urbanising countries with numerous mega cities, yet these cities are still being governed in a colonial fashion. Federal and provincial governments continue to poorly manage the cities through a top-down approach. Both service delivery and commercial activities are marginalised due to a lack of governance capacity. Furthermore, even megapolises like Karachi, Lahore, Faisalabad, and Islamabad lack city-based economic development bureaus. *If Gwadar is also going to function under the prevailing administrative arrangements, then we should not expect it to look like Shenzhen.* It would not make sense to appoint as executive head of Gwadar city's government some earlier serving in Lasbela or Loralai. The governance style and challenges in Gwadar city will be different. Whenever it comes to city design, our planners assume that it is all about the demarcation of residential, commercial and industrial areas along with construction of a few bridges, roads and an airport. What is least thought about is who will reside in the city? What will the residents do? What will be the future concentration of industries and firms? How will the societal fabric of the city evolve? Or, what would be the approach for developing public spaces?

Excess power capacity, Editorial, Dawn, 29 May³⁶

There is a growing risk that the government is now on a buying spree for more power- generation capacity than the country can handle. Sometime in the middle of last year, the government placed a cap on contracting further power-generation projects that rely on imported fuel. This was in line with projections of the burden these would place on foreign exchange reserves, which would be beyond what the economy could manage. There was also a cap on further power projects that have capacity payment charges built into their terms, since the additional power capacity that is currently in the pipeline is already going to leave the government with a massive bill.

Trump's Riyadh speech and implications for Muslim world, Shahid Javed Burki, The Express Tribune, 29 May³⁷

... The Trump White House showed extraordinary lack of sensitivity to the growing and negative Muslim sentiment about the new presidency by entrusting to Miller the task of preparing the draft of the Riyadh speech. ... In the address, Trump pivoted away from his assessment in numerous campaign speeches in which the candidate spoke of Islam as a religion of hatred. ... *The approach Trump is adopting towards the Muslim world will have consequences for years to come. The American president abandoned the United States' earlier efforts to encourage the Muslim youth to adopt*

³⁶ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1335972/excess-power-capacity>

³⁷ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1421756/trumps-riyadh-speech-implications-muslim-world/>

Western liberalism as their guiding ideology. ... Most observers of political development in the Muslim world have recognised that the well-educated youth who with access to social media were also well-connected with the world outside their own region. They wanted serious political change. ... They did not like to be excluded as was done by the authoritarian regimes that dominated the western part of the Islamic world. ... Placing the Muslim world in the hands of strong leaders who care only about their own survival and their economic well-being means inviting more trouble in the already volatile Muslim world.

Democracy and dissent, Editorial, Daily Times, 30 May³⁸

Pakistan's Interior minister ought to be watching India closely. If he does, he could learn a thing or two about how democracy is supposed to work when debating the policies and actions of the Army. *India, despite the polarisation under a hypernationalist government, is upholding the key values vital for a democratic polity. For across the border the political parties are not willing to assign the media or the people the role as custodians of the Army's honour.* The armed forces are there to defend the citizenry not the other way around, as is happening in Pakistan. Here, our men in khaki are deemed so delicate that they need government directives to crush dissenting voices and muzzle debate on key issues. The government should avoid policing the social media and mainstream news outlets and encourage open debate. Of course, this does not imply a free-for-all slander spree, but due space and the right to dissent.

CIVIL MILITARY TENSIONS

Civil-military tensions, Editorial, Dawn, 01 May³⁹

...whatever the deficiencies in the government's handling of the inquiry committee's recommendations, the startling tweet by DG ISPR Maj-Gen Asif Ghafoor was a line that should not have been crossed for the sake of the system. It is inconceivable that the army chief could not have urgently and privately reached out to the prime minister to have the military's reservations addressed quickly and publicly by the government. It is also unlikely that the military leadership did not anticipate that the DG ISPR's tweet would be interpreted nationally and internationally as a shot across the bow of democracy. Shamefully, the political opposition in the country has leapt into the fray in a way that has put it on the wrong side of the democratic project...

Back to the nineties, Editorial, Daily Times, 01 May⁴⁰

Currently the civil-military relations in Pakistan are strained and uncertain in the context of recent developments such as the visit of Indian business tycoon,

³⁸ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/30-May-17/democracy-dissent>

³⁹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1330290/civil-military-tensions>

⁴⁰ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/01-May-17/back-to-the-nineties>

Sajjan Jindal, to Pakistan and his “off the record” meeting with prime minister Sharif in Murree. Moreover, the visit to Pentagon of Ishaq Dar has also raised eyebrows. *To add insult to injury, the Dawn Leaks report and the subsequent notification issued by prime minister’s office aggravated the already tense situation to the effect that the military spokesperson rejected the government’s letter through a tweet.* To this end, the Interior minister tried to control the damage by vowing to re-issue a new notification. Such a hurried response on the part of the minister points.

Lessons of Dawnleaks, Najam Sethi, *The Friday Times*, 05 May ⁴¹

Clearly, power in Pakistan flows from the barrel of a gun and not from elections and parliament and constitution. The irony is that the objectionable “national security” leak in question was, essentially, the loudest whisper about whether the civilians or the military call the shots on critical issues of “national interest”..... It is also interesting, isn’t it, that the COAS who made an optimistically “soft” statement vis a vis border tensions with India on the day he became army chief has now returned from a trip to the border areas during which he postured in an unusually aggressive headline-making manner.

Pakistan between crisis and coup, Ejaz Hussain, *Daily Times*, 05 May ⁴²

Nerveless, the government’s approach of establishing civilian control of the military is, in my opinion, flawed and has instead caused a crisis in civil-military relations where the possibility of a coup cannot be ruled out given the military agency. However, a coup is always illegal and unconstitutional with political and economic cost. Will the military afford that? If so, will Pakistan afford that given plethora of problems the country is struggling with?... if Pakistan’s interest as a state and society is compromised on account of any institutional interest, it is the state institutions, the society and overall the country that will suffer from within and outside as ours is a divided society with a weak state, struggling to establish its writ in a hostile regional and international environment. Lingering of the crisis or imposition of coup will put Pakistan in the past, not the future, and our neighbours (especially India) will surpass us economically and geostrategically.

Dawnleak blown out of proportion: Nisar, *The Frontier Post*, 11 May ⁴³

A day after the government announced that the controversial Dawn Leaks issue was settled, Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan said on Thursday the matter had been blown out of proportion. *“The way the initial Prime Minister’s House statement was propagated created a misunderstanding,”* Nisar said while addressing a news conference in Islamabad. *“If the government had intended to bury the issue, it wouldn’t have constituted two*

⁴¹ <http://www.thefridaytimes.com/tft/lessons-of-dawnleaks/>

⁴² <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/05-May-17/pakistan-between-crisis-and-coup>

⁴³ <https://thefrontierpost.com/article/84271/dawn-leaks-matter-had-been-blown-out-proportion-nisar>

committees comprising credible and senior people.” Taking a veiled jibe at Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), the interior minister said, “If someone wants to play cricket or hockey over the issue, they should find some other forum.” He also warned against making a mockery out of civil-military ties, terming it a sensitive issue. ...

The tweet retreat, Imtiaz Gul, *Daily Times*, 11 May⁴⁴

The tweet retreat and a notification on the Dawn leaks on Wednesday were both mind-boggling as well as frustrating for the simple reason that both the General Headquarters and the Prime Minister’s Office had ominously taken the issue to brink before backing down. While this “settlement” augurs well for an already embattled and crisis-ridden Pakistan as a whole, it also has kicked up many questions and left many of us baffled....But the real question remains unanswered; who “leaked the story” to Dawn and when, if at all, the enquiry report will be published to clear the mist surrounding this affair. Only then will we find out the real truth and possibly the extent of the claims that army officials had made about the “real culprits”. *No doubt though, that however dubious, the “settlement” does create space for both the military and the civilian government to focus on much more urgent political and economic challenges facing the country.*

All is not well, Najam Sethi, *The Friday Times*, 12 May⁴⁵

For a variety of historical reasons, *the military remains the most powerful entity in the realm and jealously guards its domains whence spring its fountains of power deeply embedded notions of “national security and ideology of Pakistan”*, quite apart from a pervasive contempt for civilian rule which is perceived to be corrupt and inept. The threat of martial law has been successfully used to keep the civilians in line when they are in office. But this threat has progressively lost its potency as the country has become increasingly difficult to govern in a sea of internal and external storms that have progressively diminished the military’s desire to seize power and rule directly. The civilians are now learning how to leverage this fact to empower themselves in office....*For the last three decades, this officers’ corps has manufactured Islamist non-state actors for asymmetric warfare across the eastern and western borders of Pakistan and in the last decade fought a bloody war with some of its own proteges as a result of the blowback from such policies.*

Balancing civil-military relations, Hasan A Rizvi, *The Express Tribune*, 13 May⁴⁶

⁴⁴ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/11-May-17/the-tweet-retreat>

⁴⁵ <http://www.thefridaytimes.com/tft/all-not-well/>

⁴⁶ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1408371/balancing-civil-military-relations/>

... The ruling PMLN's in-house deliberation during April 30-May 9 led them to conclude that the army top command did not have much options available to them to force the federal government to change its decision. It, therefore, decided to stick to its earlier decision of punitive action against three officials. ... *The army high command could persist in its opposition but that would have created more uncertainty in the political system at a time when Pakistan was faced with a difficult internal security situation and a troubled relationship with three neighbouring countries. ...*

Civil-military relations post-Dawn Leaks, Ejaz Hussain, Daily Times, May 20⁴⁷

The military, as the green books suggest, carries and inculcates in its men as well as the society, the notion that it is responsible for the territorial and ideological borders of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. From this logic, since the prime minister was violating and compromising national security, it was but natural on the part of the security establishment to take due notice of the wrong doings. Hence, Mr Sharif was put on trial both publically, courtesy our unbridled (social) media, and legally....*Taking the tweet back does not mean tactical retreat or defeat of the military.* It indeed marks its victory and superiority over the civil side of the equation. Moreover, the strategic posture of the DG-ISPR, from the institutional perspective, was required to stay clear socially and politically.

ECONOMIC ISSUES

CPEC & OBOR

CPEC: Sculpting a common destiny, Yasir Masood, The Express Tribune, 3 May⁴⁸

... In the face of such global unrest, China's "One Belt, One Road" network under the realm of a community of shared destiny is destined to integrate people round the world without posing any threats to their security and existence. *This quintessential initiative is also promoting the cause of "South-South Cooperation" which brings budding opportunities to the developing states to seek economic independence and rid themselves of the perennial ruling hands of the US, the World Bank, the IMF and the likes. ...* Unquestionably, CPEC will be yielding multi-folded benefits not only to Pakistan but to the entire region, yet it is constantly challenged by the emerging geo-strategic and geo-political swings at regional and global levels. ... *India is bent upon its hegemonic posture and not waking up to the reality: consider its acrimonious actions against CPEC and attempting to sow*

⁴⁷ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/20-May-17/civil-military-relations-post-dawn-leaks>

⁴⁸ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1399407/cpec-sculpting-common-destiny/>

internal discord inside Pakistan's territorial boundaries would only exacerbate the lingering hostilities with its neighbours and may throw the whole region into disarray. Despite the tantalising regional and global impediments, it is an opportune time for both China and Pakistan to push harder for accomplishing all CPEC-related goals and ensuring the creation of a community of common destiny.

Moody's warns Pakistan against growing govt debt, Daily Times, 09 May⁴⁹

Moody's Investors Service has predicted that Pakistan's external debt will grow to \$79 billion by June this year, higher than initial estimates suggested, and the country's weak fiscal strength will weigh in on its ability to afford the ever growing debt burden. In its latest report, Moody's Investor Service – the international credit rating agency - said that Pakistan's challenges include a relatively high general government debt burden, weak physical and social infrastructure, a fragile external payments position and high political risk. By the end of fiscal year 2016-17, Pakistan's external debt will increase to \$79 billion out of which the public sector component will be \$77.7 billion, according to Moody's. The forecast for the outgoing fiscal year is much higher than what was earlier assessed on the basis of data released by the State Bank of Pakistan.

China to invest \$50bn for mega dams, Farooq Awan, Daily Times, 14 May⁵⁰

In a first-of-its-kind investment in Pakistan's troubled energy sector, Islamabad and Beijing signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to develop North Indus River Cascade with an estimated cost of US\$ 50 billion that has the potential of generating approximately 40,000mw of hydroelectric power. Under the initiative, initially five huge dams will be built in a region that starts from Skardu in Gilgit-Baltistan and runs through Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa as far as Tarbela, in the first-ever private sector investment in Pakistan's mega hydel projects as only Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) would undertake such projects in the past. With the inking of the MoU - signed by Water and Power Secretary Yousuf Naseem Khokhar and Chinese Ambassador in Pakistan Sun Weidong and witnessed by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif - *China has emerged as the biggest financier of infrastructure projects in Pakistan. This \$50 billion investment is in addition to the \$57 billion projects being executed by Beijing in power and road infrastructure sectors in Pakistan under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).*

⁴⁹<http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/09-May-17/moodys-warns-pakistan-against-growing-govt-debt>

⁵⁰<http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/14-May-17/china-to-invest-50bn-for-mega-dams-in-pakistan>

CPEC an antidote to terrorism, Daily Times, 15 May⁵¹

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif during the OBOR Summit in China said that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) under the One Belt, One Road (OBOR) initiative, was open to all countries in the region and that the project 'must not be politicized'. *"Let me make it very clear that CPEC is an economic undertaking open to all countries in the region. It has no geographical boundaries. It must not be politicised,"* the prime minister said in his address to the plenary session of High-level Dialogue on Belt and Road Forum (BRF), themed 'Cooperation for Common Prosperity', being held in Beijing. The prime minister said OBOR could be regarded as a 'powerful tool for overcoming terrorism and extremism', and called for building a peaceful, connected and caring neighbourhood by shunning mutual differences. "It is time we transcend our differences, resolve conflicts through dialogue and diplomacy, and leave a legacy of peace for future generations," he said at the BRF platform, with 29 heads of states and governments and 1,500 delegates in attendance.

Protecting the CPEC workforce, Editorial, The Express Tribune, 16 May⁵²

It may seem a tad premature to blame last week's back-to-back terror attacks in Balochistan's Gwadar and Mastung districts on India in view of that country's open hostility to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and its refusal to be part of it, despite the goodwill shown by Beijing. ... Whether these groups are linked to India or not, we must first satisfactorily determine who executed the 10 ethnic Sindhi labourers in Gwadar as well as the suicide attack earlier on a convoy of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl in Mastung that targeted the deputy chairman of the Senate. And if the investigations and evidence prove the defence minister's suspicions right, Islamabad would be well within its rights to point the finger at New Delhi and take up the case at international forums. ... It is critical for Pakistan to be seen as a credible and responsible state that would only make claims about its hostile neighbours if the same were verifiable. ...

CPEC transparency, Editorial, Dawn, 16 May⁵³

The larger issue here remains one of greater transparency in the execution of CPEC. If there are reservations on the part of China to widen the debate on the project, then it becomes the government's job to explain to their Chinese counterparts that our political traditions demand greater transparency. All economic documents that contain plans for the medium term are public documents in this country... There are no reasons to fear CPEC, nor there be an automatic aversion to greater Chinese entry into our economy. But any

⁵¹ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/15-May-17/cpec-an-antidote-to-terrorism>

⁵² <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1410477/protecting-cpec-workforce/>

⁵³ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1333384/cpec-transparency>

anxieties on that count can only be alleviated through greater disclosure of the terms on which the project is being negotiated. *Keeping matters secret, then issuing indignant denials that will clearly not survive scrutiny, only fans anxiety.*

OBOR connectivity shunned, Editorial, Dawn, 17 May⁵⁴

Even the objection to CPEC because of the claim that the Gilgit-Baltistan region is integral to the Kashmir issue is self-defeating; CPEC is only a part of OBOR, which has already drawn in virtually all of India's neighbours. It is as if India believes that by ignoring OBOR, it can thwart its vast effects on the region. *In reality, even the most cautious cooperative approach by India could yield significant benefits for both India and the region.* From a Pakistan-centric approach too, the Indian approach makes little sense. As the relationship between China and India itself has shown, trade and economic cooperation can reduce political tensions and create enough incentives for long-term disputes to not turn into open conflict. If OBOR succeeds even to a small extent, it could draw the wider region into a virtuous cycle of trade and prosperity that could cause the spectre of conflict among the region's three major military powers to recede. *Perhaps India sees itself as a global power to rival China eventually, but that does not mean it should spurn sensible opportunities in the interim. India should reconsider its stance on OBOR.*

China's new world order, Zahid Hussain, Dawn, 17 May⁵⁵

The OBOR summit conference was the clearest expression yet of China breaking out of its old foreign policy mould that had restrained it from attempting a global role...China's push to take the world leadership has come at a time when a strong anti-globalisation wave is sweeping the Western world that is showing a growing tendency of returning to more protectionist regimes. The United States under the Trump administration with its inward-looking approach has virtually abandoned the mantle of globalisation thus ceding greater space to Beijing's assertion...It is evident that OBOR is not just about infrastructure development; one of the major objectives of the initiative is to turn Eurasia into an economic and trading centre, breaking the domination of the American-led transatlantic regime. It is also a manifestation of the changing geopolitics and the realignment of forces, reflecting a move to shift the centre of gravity of trade to the East and establish China's predominance in global politics...*CPEC represents an international extension of China's effort to deliver security through economic development*

Have we done our homework on CPEC?, Safiya Aftab, Daily Times, 18 May⁵⁶

⁵⁴ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1333573/obor-connectivity-shunned>

⁵⁵ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1333603/chinas-new-world-order>

⁵⁶ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/18-May-17/have-we-done-our-homework-on-cpec>

What is interesting is that the minister was displeased about how the report stokes fears and spreads misinformation about CPEC, and raises doubts in people's minds about what will possibly be the biggest development push in the country's history since the British laid down the irrigation canal network. But what makes him think that the report promotes a negative view of CPEC?...Firstly, there is the revelation that China is mainly interested in investing in Pakistan's agriculture sector, with a view to develop products for export markets. Secondly, there is the implication that China's interest in developing our textile sector is mainly to feed its own textile industry with raw material. Thirdly, it seems that China is not as enthusiastic about the Gwadar Port as we may have thought earlier. And fourthly, there is the news that the CPEC's western corridor will mainly service extraction of mineral resources, with little or no development of industry or agriculture along the route...Notwithstanding, the oft-repeated refrains that China wants to use the Gwadar Port, we know that China has access to well established trade routes, both land and sea. So how much of a priority Gwadar Port can be anyway? And as for Balochistan, why should a foreign power be interested in broad-based development over there?

Who are you calling a colony?, Imtiaz Gul, *The Friday Times*, 19 May⁵⁷

Most Indians and their current leadership pretends not to bother about Pakistan. But if we look at the course of events, particularly of the last one year or so, they are almost aimed at "isolating and teaching a lesson to Pakistan". The entire Indian opposition to CPEC is primarily rooted in its relations with Pakistan, and hence rejection of everything involving its westerly neighbour...*The Indian conversation on and around CPEC suggests that recent events in China have seemingly had a lasting – and irritating – impression on New Delhi.* Rather than acknowledging a diplomatic blunder that the Modi government might have committed, policy makers and media influencers in India are running an active smear campaign against China, CPEC, and Pakistan.

CPEC to boost agriculture, M. Ziauddin, *The Express Tribune*, 20 May⁵⁸

... Our border trade with our immediate neighbours – India, Afghanistan and Iran – has been held hostage since the very day Pakistan came into being to our self-destructive geostrategic compulsions. ... Now let us take a closer look at our comparative advantages: 1) We are an agricultural country; 2) We are a market of about 200 million people; 3) Pakistan is located at the crossings of trade routes from Casablanca in Africa to Kashgar in west China's Xinjiang Uighur autonomous region and from Thailand in Southeast Asia to Turkey

⁵⁷ <http://www.thefridaytimes.com/tft/who-are-you-calling-a-colony/>

⁵⁸ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1414256/cpec-boost-agriculture/>

beyond the Middle East. *These advantages can be exploited to the maximum if we really turn our attention to agriculture and develop its down and upstream production chain not only for local consumption but also for export to four corners of the world and the region from the Hub. ...*

CPEC's lesser known impacts, Zahoor Khan, Daily Times, 23 May⁵⁹

Mere desire or wish to achieve something is not enough. Rather, preparedness with required potential and proper planning based on rational and feasible pre-assessments is needed to achieve something in a productive way. The same logic applies to CPEC. *We have developed an emotional attachment with CPEC ignoring preparedness and materialisation and optimisation dimensions in the meanwhile....* Under CPEC, China will get easy access to Central Asian and Gulf countries. After getting access to some Pakistan export markets i.e. UAE and Afghanistan, China may become international competitor for Pakistan especially in cotton and leather manufacturing sector. *The demand for Chinese products in international market is already higher because of varieties of goods and low prices. Consequently, it may result in further marginalisation of Pakistani products...* In a nutshell, it can be concluded that we did not put enough energy to assess costs associated with CPEC on neutral and scientific grounds. Rather, we went ahead with the project on the basis of its hypothesised benefits only.

BUDGET

Another budget, another deficit, Editorial, Daily Times, 24 May⁶⁰

Despite recent initiatives to improve debt situation, Pakistan's present tax to GDP ratio stands at a dispiriting 12.4 percent one of the lowest in the world. This amounts to over 60 percent increase in nominal terms since 2013. Unless all major sectors of the economy pay off their genuine tax liabilities, the tax to GDP ratio will remain under pressure. Recurrent budget deficits have been a common theme. Pakistan's average budget deficit over the last ten years has been 6.4 percent more than the average 4.7 percent from 1990 to 2007. Fiscal consolidation therefore has been a monumental task for successive democratic regimes. *As the incumbent government runs dry of sufficient revenue streams to fund its social development programmes, Pakistan's education and health sectors will remain major casualties.*

Pakistan suffers \$123 billion in losses in war against terrorism, Khurshid Ahmed, Daily Times, 26 May⁶¹

⁵⁹ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/23-May-17/cpecs-lesser-known-impacts>

⁶⁰ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/24-May-17/another-budget-another-deficit>

⁶¹ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/26-May-17/pakistan-suffers-123-billion-in-losses-in-war-against-terrorism>

The war against terrorism continues to financially bleed Pakistan as the country had to spend \$123.13 billion, equivalent to Rs 10.373 trillion, in direct and indirect cost due to incidents of terrorism in last 16 years, says the latest issued Economic Survey of Pakistan 2016-17. However, due to improved security situation, the losses are gradually declining. During the fiscal year 2015-16, the expenditures declined by 29.8% while during July-March 2016-17, it declined by 40.2% which reflects the effectiveness of the efforts to eliminate terrorism and extremism from the country, the survey revealed. In fiscal year 2010-11, the country had to suffer highest ever losses of \$ 23.77 billion which gradually declined to \$3.88 billion in the current fiscal year till March 2017, according to the report.

The budget blues, M. Ziauddin, Daily Times, 26 May⁶²

It is budget day today. But alas any budget based on a population census as out-dated as the one that we have been using since 2003, the year the 1998 census had expired, can hardly be worth the bother of a serious debate either inside the elected Houses or outside. At best, the successive annual budgets passed since have been no more than fictional balance sheets and, therefore, they naturally ended up adding to the national woes rather than alleviating them. *A state which does not fulfil its very basic obligations towards its citizens like providing them, especially the indigent millions, affordable food, potable water, electricity, affordable education, affordable health cover, affordable transport, travel and telecommunication facilities, affordable housing, affordable justice, adequate protection of their lives and property, even affordable bank loan facilities, can hardly qualify to be called a legitimate state demanding loyalty from its citizens.*

Economic survey 2016-17, Editorial, Daily Times, 27 May⁶³

The first economic survey post-IMF bailout package paints a mixed picture. *Not much has changed in terms of economic targets, as most of them have been missed. The good news is that the economy has a growth rate of 5.28 percent, its highest in almost a decade as compared to the expected 5.7 percent.* Yet other economic indicators portray a dismal outlook. Inflation is up; forex reserves although relatively stable have declined to \$21 billion, while remittances and foreign direct investment (FDI) stand at \$15.6 billion and \$1.17 billion, respectively... *Moreover, the mincing of numbers to manufacture healthy economic outlook has continued this year as well. Last year, the reported 4.8 percent GDP growth rate was revised down to 4.5 percent after necessary adjustments. Similarly, the current survey doesn't mention a number of tax exemptions granted in the outgoing fiscal year....* Exports have remained

⁶² <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/26-May-17/the-budget-blues>

⁶³ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/27-May-17/economic-survey-2016-17>

under stress as the country's current account deficit crossed the \$8-billion-mark due to the government's rigid financial policies. Furthermore, despite the positive reviews from credit rating agencies and financial journals, investment rates have remained subdued... *But the main problem in the current survey has been the rise in tax exemptions in various sectors given under Statutory Regulatory Orders (SROs).* The exemptions have risen to Rs415.8 billion following two successive years of reductions. The free trade agreements, mainly with China, have also added to the total cost of these... Now with FY18 being an election year, an expected government-spending spree threatens additional complications.

Ritualistic budgets and fruitless debates, Ikramul Haq, Daily Times, 28 May⁶⁴

Budget 2017-18, based on market-driven economic model and lacking redistributive fiscal policies, is bound to widen already terrifying rich-poor divide in Pakistan. Obviously, our budget-makers have never bothered to study the economic models of the countries that deplore the very idea of seeing people mired in poverty. Our budgets are ritualistic ones, lacking any welfare programmes to help those lagging behind, enabling them to move up economically and socially. Budgets of welfare states ensure redistribution of wealth and income so that everyone gets the fundamental needs. On the contrary, our successive governments through their pro-rich tax policies and elitist structure of economy have been giving unprecedented opportunities to the rich to amass more wealth, and this year budget is no exception. Budget is not just a book-keeping exercise. It is an exposure of socio-politico-economic policies of a government. Since coming into power for the third time in 2013, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his economic team, led by a close relative, has paid no attention whatsoever for structural reforms for overhauling dysfunctional judicial and administrative apparatuses, and dismantling elitist structures.

Chinese footprint on the Pakistani budget, Nasir Jamal, Dawn, 29 May⁶⁵

The Nawaz Sharif government's last budget is more or less an extension of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor initiative. It is an effort by the government to complete the energy and road development projects before going into the 2018 elections to give something to the voters in an election-year. *A detailed study of the budget documents clearly indicates that the energy and road development projects, directly or indirectly linked with the regional connectivity initiative, will consume a better part of the cash allocated for the PSDP.* The highest priority has been given to the transport and communication sector with an allocation of Rs411bn, including Rs320bn for highways. The

⁶⁴<http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/28-May-17/ritualistic-budgets-and-fruitless-debates>

⁶⁵<https://www.dawn.com/news/1336106/chinese-footprint-on-the-pakistani-budget>

energy sector has been assigned the next priority with an allocation of Rs401bn, including an investment of Rs317bn to be undertaken by Wapda/Pepco/NTDC. Beijing will provide loans of Rs168.3bn, including Rs1.3bn as grants for the international airport and a vocational training centre in the port city of Gwadar, to Islamabad next year. Over 55pc of the Chinese loan, or Rs93.4bn, is meant for the controversial orange line metro train project in Lahore.

Supplementary budgets, Editorial, Dawn, 30 May⁶⁶

Supplementary budgets, known previously as ‘mini budgets’ were a normal part of fiscal management in Pakistan until the IMF put an end to the practice to some extent in any case. *Now they show up mostly towards the end of the fiscal year, and the size of the supplemental request is a proxy indicator of how sound fiscal management has been. In this case, we can see an upward trajectory in the amount being asked for year after year.* For the next fiscal year, all indications point towards an even bigger spike. This shows that budgets are now being made on increasingly optimistic assumptions, and the government is struggling to keep pace. What adds to the irony is the fact that many of the heads that recorded expenditure overruns sound frivolous.

SECURITY SITUATION

TERRORISM

Deradicalising the youth, Editorial, Dawn, 03 May⁶⁷

Better late than never, goes the saying. But for deradicalisation purposes, it is best to catch militants when they have just embarked on a journey that can, if unchecked, lead to extremely grave consequences both for them and others. To that end, the Sindh police’s Counter-Terrorism Department is launching a deradicalisation programme in Karachi that focuses on young men suspected of extremist leanings who are in custody for having engaged in ‘minor’ activities of a militant nature. Although they had received training in Afghanistan, they had been persuaded by their families to abandon that path. In fact, it was the families themselves who approached the law-enforcement agency to help counter the youths’ radical tendencies. Unlike the Sabaoon deradicalisation facility in Swat which mandates a two-year stay at the centre, the CTD’s programme will allow these potential militants-in-the-making to live at home.

⁶⁶ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1336245/supplementary-budgets>

⁶⁷ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1330704/deradicalising-the-youth>

Missing link in countering extremism, Mohammad Ali Babakhel, *Daily Times*, 10 May⁶⁸

We can kill terrorists by employing force but how can we defeat their ideology? Analysis of push and pull factors of extremism has shown that it is primarily a consequence of blind ideological faith. In Pakistan, we have not yet fully appreciated the potential role of the family institution in preventing and countering violent extremism. A public debate is inevitable to shed light on ways in which the poisonous agenda of extremists has penetrated the family institution...In the post 9/11 scenario, many instances have been reported where families, including parents, were unaware of their children indulging in extremist literature....The present scenario warrants the designing of a comprehensive preventive educational programme exclusively meant for parents. An awareness raising campaign may be designed in different languages spoken in the country for prevention of violent extremism.

Islamic State, a threat Pak cannot ignore, Raza Rumi, *Daily Times*, 13 May⁶⁹

The issue here is not that Daesh is going to take over Pakistan. *But the regional instability and the ideological nexus of Daesh with religious fundamentalism grafted by the state during the past three decades, will enable Daesh attacks to continue.* The risk here is that terrorism will continue to undermine Pakistan's prospects of stability for ensuring public safety and internal security thereby affecting long-term economic growth and stability...With a weaker Al Qaeda in South Asia, factions of sectarian militants and Taliban movement are looking towards the Daesh.... *Daesh is also an attractive home for individuals and groups charged by sectarian ideology thanks to the Saudi success in nurturing such groups with Pakistan's support....* It is time to accept that Pakistan's policy of allowing violent sectarian groups such as Lashkar e Jhangvi to operate in Balochistan is detrimental to country's overall security. Splinter sectarian groups are useful for Daesh to use as launching pads. Secondly, instead of the much touted "counter narrative", *we need to think of cleaning up the seminaries that directly or indirectly support Daesh agenda against non-Muslims, Shias and all those who are seen as stooges of the West.* Sufi

Pakistan's imploding fault lines, Raof Hasan, *Daily Times*, 14 May⁷⁰

At the heart of it all is *Pakistan's espousal of the cause of jihad necessitating the adoption of a discriminatory policy in countering militant organisations, some of which have been created as part of its flawed security paradigm.* Of special mention is its refusal to ask the Afghan Taliban to stop using its soil as

⁶⁸ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/10-May-17/missing-link-in-countering-extremism>

⁶⁹ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/13-May-17/islamic-state-a-threat-pakistan-can-no-longer-ignore>

⁷⁰ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/14-May-17/pakistans-imploding-fault-lines>

sanctuary as they continue fighting the state of Afghanistan. *We tell the world that this is the reason why we have influence over the Taliban, but when we are asked to use it to bring them to the negotiating table, we flounder pitifully.* The contrasting policies become even more conspicuous in the wake of a potent and effective operation that we launched to dismantle the Tehrik-e-Taliban, Pakistan (TTP). It makes little sense that while we look upon the TTP as an enemy of the state worthy of annihilation, we continue to have a soft spot for the Afghan Taliban who are engaged in waging a deadly and relentless war against the state of Afghanistan....Internally, Pakistan is the proverbial victim of conflicting mindsets: *the military mindset which is excessively security-driven and the political mindset which is intellectually-starved, inefficient and non-transparent.* There is a level of deviousness that defines the relationship, or lack of it, between these two key organs of the state shrouding it in a sequence of melodramatic uncertainties.

The Lynching games, Ziad Zafar, Daily Times, 20 May⁷¹

Last week millions of Pakistanis received a text message from their country's telecom regulator asking them to report incidents of blasphemy. This was less than a month after we witnessed a public lynching and the spectacle of several crazed mobs around the country baying for human blood. It has gotten off to a good start. Over 3000 complaints received in the first week alone. If all these are true it means there have been more instances of blasphemy in the last week than have been documented in 70 years of the country's existence...*In sending out this mass message, the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority has effectively put out a public tender for witch burnings.* An act so grossly irresponsible, so callously deliberate it is tantamount to throwing a match into a fireworks factory....Let us be clear, it is an invitation to lynch: one of a series of recently taken steps which will result in the institutionalisation of blood lust, encouraging thousands to set out gleefully on a macabre treasure hunt for blasphemers....*Inviting the entire population to report blasphemy is like placing land mines across the country that could go off at any time.*

Uzair Baloch and his confessions , Rashed Rahman, Dawn, 22 May⁷²

It has been revealed that Uzair Baloch is in the custody of the army and is going to be tried by a military tribunal on charges of espionage, according to a tweet by Major General Asif Ghafoor, director-general of the Inter-Services Public Relations, written on April 11, 2017. *This development is seen as connected with the death penalty awarded to Kulbhushan Jadhav. He reportedly found refuge in Chabahar where Jadhav is alleged to have set up an intelligence network.* The matter of Jadhav and the death penalty awarded to him for espionage has raised the temperature of our already fraught ties with India. Within Pakistan,

⁷¹ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/20-May-17/the-lynching-games>

⁷² <http://herald.dawn.com/news/1153754/uzair-baloch-and-his-mysterious-confessions>

however, there is no dearth of sceptics who question the veracity of the story around Baloch and his claimed 'confession', not to mention the 'convenient' conflation of his past to link it with Jadhav's alleged activities. *Jadhav may be an Indian agent but Baloch was a Lyari gang leader supported by Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), until their falling out.* How he made the transition from that avatar to a Jadhav operative is neither known nor believable in the absence of any information/evidence.

Banned outfits operate openly on Facebook, Jahanzaib Haque & Omer Bashir, Dawn, 30 May⁷³

They exist in plain sight, just one search and one click away from any of Pakistan's 25 million Facebook users. An investigation carried out by Dawn across the month of April 2017 has revealed that 41 of Pakistan's 64 banned outfits are present on Facebook in the form of hundreds of pages, groups and individual user profiles. Their network, both interconnected and public, is a mix of Sunni and Shia sectarian or terror outfits, global terror organisations operating in Pakistan, and separatists in Balochistan and Sindh. *The biggest outfits on the social network, in order of size, are Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat (ASWJ) with 200 pages and groups, Jeay Sindh Muttahida Mahaz (JSMM) with 160, Sipah-i-Sahaba (SSP) with 148, Balochistan Students Organisation Azad (BSO-A) with 54 and Sipah-e-Muhammad with 45. In general, the Facebook updates are in Urdu or Roman Urdu rather than English, suggesting the content is primarily for local consumption.* A very small number are in Sindhi or Balochi, also indicating a niche target audience.

PROVINCES & REGIONS

AFGHANISTAN

Afghan president 'turns down' invitation to visit Pakistan, Tahir Khan, Daily Times, 04 May⁷⁴

Afghan officials have shared details with the media of the meeting between the ISI Chief Lt Gen Naveed Mukhtar and President Ashraf Ghani and a presidential spokesman has said President Ghani has "rejected invitation to visit Pakistan.".... The BBC quoted deputy presidential spokesman Dawa Khan Menapal as saying that "President Ghani would not travel to Islamabad

⁷³ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1335561/banned-outfits-in-pakistan-operate-openly-on-facebook>

⁷⁴ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/04-May-17/afghan-president-turns-down-invitation-to-visit-pakistan>

until Pakistan hands over those responsible for attacks in Mazar-e-Sharif, American university in Kabul and the governor house in Kandahar."..... An unnamed official told Radio Azadi that the president had stated that "relations will not become normal unless Pakistan takes steps on the demands made by the Afghan government."... The President has told the Pakistani intelligence chief that visits would be meaningful if violence is reduced in Afghanistan in a month and Pakistan honours its commitments with the Afghan government," a credible source told the BBC Pashto service.

Af-Pak border disputes, Editorial, Daily Times, 07 May⁷⁵

Pakistan's ties with Afghanistan are under immense strain after a surge in violence in Afghanistan. The continued resentment against Pakistan from the Afghan side is due to the perception that Pakistan's historic fascination with "strategic depth" means it harbours certain groups of militants that it sees as being conducive to its foreign policy agenda, whilst simultaneously fighting other, less favoured extremist groups. *The problems that originate in Afghanistan have a spill-over effect in Pakistan due to porous borders....A fresh wave of terrorism has prompted Afghan President Ashraf Ghani to revisit his government's policy towards Pakistan.*

Fresh dent on Pak-Afghan ties, Tahir Khan, Daily Times, 06 May⁷⁶

Afghan forces' firing that claimed the lives of nine Pakistani civilians and injured nearly 40 others on Friday could badly hurt Islamabad's fresh efforts to bridge the trust deficit. *This was one of the highest civilian casualty figures in Pakistan caused by Afghan forces in recent years that would have negative impact on the already tense relationship.* The visits of three high powered visits of the Pakistani military, intelligence and senior parliamentarians to Kabul in just a week had raised high hopes for both the uneasy neighbours to bury the hatchet. Pakistanis were expecting Afghan leaders' visit to reciprocate the goodwill gesture by Pakistani political and military leaders. Pakistani leaders would be upset at reports pouring in from Kabul that President Ashraf Ghani had rejected the invitation to visit Islamabad.

GILGIT-BALTISTAN (GB)

Economic murder of Gilgit-Baltistan, Munir Ahmed, Daily Times, 09 May⁷⁷

Despite the deployment of heavy contingent in Gilgit-Baltistan spearheaded by a Corp Commander, I believe the agencies could not impede and arrest the culprits involved in unfair practices. So, they are suspicious about every activity in the northern parts, and discourage every foreigner coming to Pakistan. In many cases, the locals are also monitored minutely by the army

⁷⁵ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/07-May-17/af-pak-border-disputes>

⁷⁶ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/06-May-17/fresh-dent-on-pak-afghan-ties>

⁷⁷ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/09-May-17/economic-murder-of-gilgit-baltistan>

while they go for trekking...The dearest federal interior minister shall know that those who want to spy on any part of Pakistan need not to visit these places. They have the best spying tools to monitor every inch of our country. So, please get out of the 'slavery era' practices. These do nothing but harm the life and livelihood of the locals, and the sanctity of their homeland. Please don't punish Gilgit-Baltistan for their ancestors' decision to unify with Pakistan.

Absence of G-B Chief Minister in OBOR Forum triggers strong reaction, Pamir Times, 13 May⁷⁸

The absence of Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan, Hafiz Hafeezur Rehman in the Pakistan delegation that went to attend OBOR events in China has drawn strong reaction in the region. University students, lawyers and other professionals, have equated his absence in the delegation as a continuation of Pakistan's neglect of the strategic region that connects Pakistan with China, and through which the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor passes. Hundreds of memes, short write-ups, and statements posted on social media websites, like Facebook, are being used to protest the absence of Gilgit-Baltistan's elected Chief Minister in the delegation. *A national daily, Pakistan Today, has reported that for 'unknown reasons' the name of Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan was allegedly dropped from the list of Pakistan's official delegation on the last minute.*

G-B's prisoner of conscience, Ammar Rashid, Daily Times, 16 May⁷⁹

On the 25th of May, the Supreme Court of Gilgit-Baltistan will hear Baba Jan's review petition against his sentencing, his final opportunity for justice after nearly six years of imprisonment for a non-existent crime. There are few cases, *which illustrate this hypocritical standard of justice in Pakistan better than that of Baba Jan, Gilgit-Baltistan's famed prisoner of conscience.* For the better part of six years, Baba Jan, a founding member and activist of the left-wing Awami Workers Party, has been behind bars on a life sentence for 'terrorism' charges. *His crime? Demanding rights for Hunza's poor and displaced....* Why has Baba Jan been targeted so ruthlessly — worse than many actual terrorists — by the Pakistani state simply for his political activism... Baba Jan is from Gilgit-Baltistan, *a region where resistance politics has long been policed and criminalized.* As the Pakistani state sees GB as part of the disputed region of Kashmir, it refrains from constitutionally recognising the territory as part of the country the result being *that GB's residents have for decades been governed without parliamentary representation, largely through neo-colonial bureaucratic diktat from Islamabad.* In the strategic calculus of Islamabad's

⁷⁸<http://pamirtimes.net/2017/05/13/absence-of-gilgit-baltistan-chief-minister-in-obor-forum-triggers-strong-reaction/>

⁷⁹<http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/16-May-17/gilgit-baltistans-prisoner-of-conscience>

policymakers, a popular and vocal activist from GB who had consistently spoken for the rights and autonomy of the region's people was much more convenient behind bars....How is it that hardened killers who have openly admitted to the massacre of thousands can be deemed 'reformed' on the basis of a few strategically-useful confessions, yet peaceful and widely-loved activists who have never picked up a weapon in their lives can be imprisoned for life under terrorism laws?

Alienating Gilgit-Baltistan, Ammar Firdous, Pamir Times, 15 May⁸⁰

The recent wave of anger that struck the people of Gilgit-Baltistan was over the absence of Chief Minister-GB, Hafiz Hafeez-ur-Rehman as an official delegate during the "One belt one Road Forum" held in Beijing...Gilgit Baltistan holds a very strategic and significant position in this mega project, being its entry point. It would not be unfair to say that without Gilgit Baltistan, CPEC cannot be implemented, or materialized....The history of Gilgit Baltistan is full of such occasion when it was utterly kept out of the decision making process. After almost 69 years of Pakistan's independence, still the constitutional limbo of Gilgit-Baltistan is unresolved. The history of exploitation can be traced back to the very unpopular, "Karachi agreement", signed in 1949 which between the Government of Pakistan and the Government of Azad Kashmir, which has nothing to do with Gilgit-Baltistan....The people of Gilgit-Baltistan still lack the basic constitutional and political rights. They have no representative in the National Assembly or Senate to voice their concerns. The local people do not even have the access to the Supreme Court of Pakistan for justice. This leaves the Gilgit Baltistan in a very grave situation.

AJK, G-B claim share under NFC in federal tax pool, Voice of Vienna, 20 May⁸¹

Heads of two autonomous regions in the country lodged a protest over 'injustice' being meted out to them by the four federating units, saying "for the sake of Pakistan they submerged their villages to build dams while the federating units are not ready to construct the Kalabagh dam". In a meeting of the National Economic Council, AJK Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider spoke about the problems that his special region was facing due to lack of financial resources and cold shoulder given by the federating units. "Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Hafiz Hafeezur Rahman also endorses Raja Farooq's views," said sources privy to the NEC deliberations. The two heads also complained about having no share in the National Finance Commission, unlike the four federating units. The issue of the Kalabagh Dam remains controversial because Sindh and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa oppose its construction on the apprehensions

⁸⁰ <http://pamirtimes.net/2017/05/15/alienating-gilgit-baltistan/>

⁸¹ <http://voiceofvienna.org/2017/05/20/kashmir-ajk-g-b-claim-share-under-nfc-in-federal-tax-pool/>

that their cities will submerge and there will be no water left for cultivation due to the building of the reservoir upstream.

FATA

Delayed FATA reforms, Editorial, Dawn, 09 May⁸²

The announcement itself was long delayed and now it appears the implementation is being put off too. The culprit does appear to be politics once again. It has long been known that the JUI-F is not keen on Fata reforms and that Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif is perhaps not keen on upsetting the JUI-F. Moreover, Mr Sharif and his PML-N government have had a series of political crises to contend with in recent weeks: from the Panama Papers judgement to load-shedding to convulsions on the civil-military front. Meanwhile, Mr Sharif has been under attack for his determination to forge a path to dialogue with India, while the Pak-Afghan relationship has seen a number of highly concerning developments recently.

Mainstreaming FATA women, Irshad Ahmad, Daily Times, 23 May⁸³

Unfortunately, FATA's women are conspicuous by their absence in all areas of governance. An examination of the formation, structure, working and findings of the FATA Reforms Committee 2016 as well as of details pertaining to commissions, committees, action plans formed for the purpose previously shows that women's representation has never been an item on reforms' agenda. According to Pakistan bureau of statistics report, women comprise around 48 percent of FATA's population, but they have had no opportunity to include their charter of demands in proposed reforms. No woman has yet been elected to the National Assembly as a representative of FATA, and, before Badam Zari, no woman had ever contested elections on a general seat from this tribal region. *Forget about rights protected by international human rights law, FATA's women are even deprived of rights available to women in other parts of the country.*

Shameful retreat on FATA, Editorial, Daily Times, 24 May⁸⁴

While the country has been gripped by the Panama case, Dawn Leaks and spy-wars with India, a momentous opportunity to uplift the federally administered tribal areas (FATA) has been squandered. Since the nineteenth century, FATA's status has been little more than a colony — first for the Brits who wanted a buffer zone between India and Afghanistan and later by the Pakistan's praetorian state. It is a matter of intense shame that a large number of Pakistani citizens do not enjoy basic fundamental rights, access to courts and other modern institutions of governance. There is many an advocate for keeping the

⁸² <https://www.dawn.com/news/1331897/delayed-fata-reforms>

⁸³ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/23-May-17/mainstreaming-fata-women>

⁸⁴ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/24-May-17/shameful-retreat-on-fata>

status quo. Some of them can be found within the civil-military bureaucracy that finds the ignominious Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR) a century old law convenient for a host of reasons well known to all and sundry. The people of FATA have suffered over the decades and more so since the war on terror that has destroyed their lives and livelihoods. Escaping the militants, drones and Pakistani air bombardments, hundreds of thousands are internally displaced... *FATA also happens to be the poorest of regions in the country, lorded over by a corrupt tribal administration.* A posting in FATA is considered 'lucrative' for there is no accountability of its mini-lords. It shares low education and health indices with Balochistan, another misgoverned part of Pakistan.

FATA on the back burner, Zahid Hussain, Dawn, 31 May⁸⁵

There is certainly something sinister about the Sharif government's decision to put the long-awaited Fata reforms on the back burner. *With the federal budget already announced, there is no hope of the process of the merger with KP being initiated at least for another year, if it is not deferred indefinitely. This apparent backtracking on the critical reforms aimed at bringing the tribal regions into the national mainstream and ending their ambiguous semi-autonomous status undermines the success of the military operation in driving out militants from Fata.* By denying the region its democratic and civil rights, the state is further alienating Pakistani tribesmen. The government seems to be using its junior partners to delay the reforms. It is quite intriguing that the prime minister was ready to listen to two political leaders, Fazlur Rehman and Mahmood Khan Achakzai, and not his own party or the major opposition parties who want to expedite the mainstreaming of Fata. Most importantly, the cabinet has also approved the Fata commission's recommendations.

BALUCHISTAN

Resolving the Waziristan crisis, Akbar Ahmed, Daily Times, 06 May⁸⁶

The lives of the people of Waziristan attacked one day by the Pakistan Army, the next by militant groups, and the next by US drones became a living hell. The chaos in Waziristan has created a vacuum that has been filled by militant groups like the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). The militant groups targeted all three pillars of authority.... While these groups claimed to speak for Islam, in fact they were representing a mutated view of the tribal code of honour, particularly the code of revenge, which they used to justify many of their actions. *The Peshawar school massacre, for example, was, according to the TTP, carried out in revenge for Pakistan military operations in North*

⁸⁵ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1336406/fata-on-the-back-burner>

⁸⁶ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/06-May-17/resolving-the-waziristan-crisis>

Waziristan.... There is a lack of a long-term policy and objective when it comes to Waziristan and FATA. Our policies thus far have been short term and focused on military operations. The people of the area are rarely if ever consulted. .. Only through the method of rebuilding Waziristan and respecting its culture will terrorism be contained. A military solution has been attempted for the past decade and a half in the region and has not yielded results.

KASHMIR

Erdogan's Kashmir initiative, Editorial, *The Nation*, 2 May⁸⁷

On the eve of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's visit to India he talked extensively about Kashmir in an interview, calling for a dialogue to discuss the Kashmir issue, saying Pakistan and India must settle the dispute "once and for all". The timing of the statements – a few hours before his meeting with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi – is crucial, as is the content of this statement. However, the question remains, will India change its policy of complete non-cooperation over a persistent crisis that shows no signs of abating anytime soon? It is clear that unrest in Kashmir is not going away.

We owe it to Kashmir, Jalees Hazir, *The Nation*, 4 May⁸⁸

... Clearly, Kashmir is very important for us and not only for idealistic, historical and emotional reasons. *Even when seen through the prism of cold-blooded pragmatism, its importance for our national security and regional stability is obvious.* At a time when we should be devising a proactive strategy to support the growing movement for azadi in Kashmir, Nawaz Sharif would rather follow the imperial script like a good boy and not rock India's boat too hard. Despite the upheaval in Kashmir, his government has come up with little more than hollow rhetoric and routine rounds of patchy diplomacy without clear goals or direction. ... *We must act with clarity about who our partners are and in close coordination with them, not only in the realm of diplomacy but on the ground as well. This is not only about principles. Winning the war for Pakistan is inextricably linked to the liberation of Afghanistan and Kashmir.* The good news is that the geopolitical wheel is turning rapidly to favour us.

Situation in Kashmir never scarier: RAW'S former chief, *Dawn*, 04 May⁸⁹

Asked in an interview by the paper if the ongoing unarmed uprising was going from bad to worse under the current government, former Research and Analysis Wing chief A.S. Dulat said yes.... *"Yes, the situation is turning worse. Is it worse than in 1990? My answer is yes and no. It is worse in terms of*

⁸⁷ <http://nation.com.pk/editorials/02-May-2017/erdogan-s-kashmir-initiative>

⁸⁸ <http://nation.com.pk/columns/04-May-2017/we-owe-it-to-kashmir>

⁸⁹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1330963/situation-in-kashmir-never-scarier-raws-former-chief>

atmospherics. Because of alienation and the anger of youth, young Kashmiri minds have gone out of control.... "There is a sense of hopelessness. They aren't afraid to die. Villagers, students and even girls are coming out on the streets. This has never happened in the past," he said....Mr Dulat said the armed militancy and the intensity of violence witnessed in 1990 was not there now. "There were more guns then... Actual militancy was more then but today the situation is scarier. When stone-pelting is done by youths, and girls, it's abnormal... *Today, they are proud of being stone-pelters. They are no longer hiding. Schoolgirls and women are coming out to throw stones. The Kashmir situation has never been so bad,*" Mr Dulat said.

Politics: Can Modi Muzzle Kashmir? Dr. Moonis Ahmer, Dawn, 08 May⁹⁰

While the India-held valley of Kashmir is in a deep state of violence for the last several years, the current crisis in Kashmir signifies a democratic impasse. This has been brought on by the Narendra Modi regime attempting to end the special status given to India-held Kashmir (IHK) as envisaged in Article 370 of the Indian constitution and fully absorb it into the Indian Union....*History has proven that India has failed to honour its commitment made to the people of IHK seven decades ago and tried to entrench its control over that territory by military means.* Repealing Article 370 is, however, an uphill task because the Indian parliament would have to pass a bill to amend the constitution, containing a provision for the repeal of the article.

RELATIONSHIP WITH INDIA

Televised myth of a Modi wave, Jawed Naqvi, Dawn, 02 May⁹¹

Veteran BJP leader L.K. Advani had described the spine of the Indian media aptly. "Indira Gandhi had asked them to bend, but they chose to crawl.".... Let's assume that Hindutva's prior wins were a rebuke to the corrupt Manmohan Singh government, as TV channels now believe one or both of his terms to have been. In which case why could the BJP not extend its anti-corruption popularity to the Delhi state assembly, the bigger political arena? The last 10 years of its municipal rule coincided with Dr Singh as prime minister. Why was Modi's party stuck in not repairing more than sewage lines at the head of the MCD? Across the road, the Congress party's former chief minister Sheila Dikshit won her three straight assembly victories between 1998 and 2013 while the BJP was confined to the MCD.

⁹⁰ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1331219/politics-can-modi-muzzle-kashmir>

⁹¹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1330487/televised-myth-of-a-modi-wave>

India's proposal for bilateral dialogue on Kashmir lacks credibility: Pakistan, Daily Times, 03 May⁹²

Adviser to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz on Tuesday dismissed India's proposal to resolve the Kashmir dispute bilaterally with Pakistan, saying New Delhi had 'scuttled all opportunities for meaningful dialogue' over the past two decades....Aziz's statement comes on the back of New Delhi's rejection of an offer extended by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan for multilateral resolution of the Kashmir dispute. India refused the proposition, insisting the matter must be resolved bilaterally through talks between Islamabad and New Delhi....The adviser said Erdogan's move to 'strengthen the dialogue process among the stakeholders for resolving the Kashmir issue, and his call for a multilateral approach to settle the Jammu and Kashmir dispute... must be welcomed'. He asserted that Pakistan welcomes statements and endeavours aimed at addressing human rights issues in India-held Kashmir (IHK) and resolution of the Kashmir dispute.

Triangular dilemma in South Asia, Zafar Khan, The Express Tribune, 5 May⁹³

... Strategic dilemma exists between India and Pakistan as Islamabad specifies that its nuclear weapons are only India-centric while for many in India, Indian centricity even gets larger and at times more ambiguous as it includes China as well into its strategic calculus because of its short border clash in 1962 two years before China tested its nuclear weapons capability. ... *Therefore, for India, if not exclusively and entirely for China and Pakistan, the strategic trilemma exists where India would factor into many of its deterrent forces against both China and Pakistan.* ... Perhaps, as India strategically and economically rises up, it could compete with China making China realise that most of its advanced conventional and nuclear forces are against China as well. This is to bring China into its strategic pressure build-up strategy. This could be India's grand nuclear strategy to strategically compete China on a number of deterrent force level which in turn could put pressure on Pakistan as Pakistan is gradually dragged into a vicious cycle of arms race. ... Pakistan will need to have selective deterrence force posture to plug the deterrence gaps where absolutely necessary in order to sustain deterrence stability in South Asia.

How not to talk with India, Sherry Rehman, The Express Tribune, 6 May⁹⁴

Talking to India is just as important as how not to talk. Starting from the premise that constructive dialogue is the first step towards untangling a

⁹²<http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/03-May-17/indias-proposal-for-bilateral-dialogue-on-kashmir-lacks-credibility-pakistan>

⁹³ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1401406/strategic-triangular-dilemma-south-asia/>

⁹⁴ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1402320/not-talk-india/>

history of vexed relations between two nuclear neighbours, every government that has made any headway on this track has done so by first working the base at home, its politics and its message. ... The recent furore in parliament about the Jindal-Sharif meeting is a case in point of poor tactics, or how not to talk. First, this case will bog down the public conversation in issues that help no government in its search for rational space between Delhi and Islamabad. Second, with due apologies to all involved, it ignores the legitimacy of the messenger. ... Both Pakistan and India have used back-channel interlocutors in the past, but both have been institutionally appointed savants, such as Satish Lambah and Shehryar Khan, with long years of Foreign Office experience behind them, and the trust of their policy establishments. ... In an optimal climate, such dialogues even become invaluable in creating important constituencies for peace. ...

Jindal visit termed part of backchannel diplomacy, Dawn, 12 May⁹⁵

The civilian leadership of the country has informed senior military officials that *a recent meeting between Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Indian steel magnate Sajjan Jindal a close friend of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was part of backchannel diplomacy* between the governments of Pakistan and India, BBC Urdu said in a report. According to these sources, Mr Sharif told the military leadership that Mr Jindal had been sent by Indian authorities and that the meeting was an initiative to reduce tension between the two countries. The report said *the military leadership had also taken its senior officers into confidence about the prime minister's meeting with Mr Jindal.* It said that Gen Bajwa had informed army's senior officers that the meeting was part of backchannel diplomacy between the two countries.

ICJ didn't order to grant Jadhav's consular access but stated opinion, Aziz, The Frontier Post, 18 May⁹⁶

Advisor to the Prime Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sartaj Aziz has said on Thursday that International Court of Justice (ICJ) has not ordered Pakistan to provide India with consular access to Kulbhushan Jadhav but has remarked an opinion. *In his reaction to ICJ's order to stay Jadhav's execution, Aziz branded it a routine matter saying that majority of such appeals are entertained by the courts. He said that the decision to provide consular access to Jadhav is yet to be made.* The point to be reviewed is that whether Pakistan's security is compromised or not if Vienna Convention permits consular access to India. Aziz further said that details in the issue would be provided by the lawyers and the Attorney General of Pakistan.

⁹⁵ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1332606/jindal-visit-termed-part-of-backchannel-diplomacy>

⁹⁶ <https://thefrontierpost.com/article/85114/icj-didnt-order-grant-jadhavs-consular-access-stated-opinion-sartaj>

Pakistan made a mistake': Criticism over ICJ decision, Dawn, 19 May⁹⁷

The International Court of Justice has issued an order staying the execution of Indian spy Kulbhushan Jadhav by Pakistan, a decision which has caused shock and disappointment in Pakistan. *Although Pakistani analysts were earlier confident that the ICJ does not have jurisdiction to stay Jadhav's execution, today observers have said the jurisdiction argument was "weak" and "damaging".....* Justice (r) Shaiq Usmani said the decision is alarming because "ICJ does not have jurisdiction". "It's Pakistan's mistake to have appeared there. They shouldn't have attended. They have shot themselves in the foot." The retired justice said the judicial process will continue in Pakistan. "Until the ICJ gives its verdict, the judicial process will go on in Pakistan. However, he cannot be executed until the stay order is there."

Opposition criticises govt for 'mishandling' Jadhav case, Iftikhar Khan, Dawn, 19 May⁹⁸

Describing the world court's verdict staying the execution of the convicted Indian spy Kulbhushan Jadhav as a setback for Pakistan, the opposition *lambasted the government for what it called mishandling the case, with many alleging that it was result of a covert deal and linking it with the recent visit of Indian steel tycoon Sajjan Jindal's visit to Pakistan.* PTI's Information Secretary Shafqat Mehmood has demanded the PM disclose all details of his covert meetings with Indian businessmen Jindal. In a statement, he raised seven critical questions on the matter and sought explanation from the prime minister. He asked the PM *to come to the National Assembly and explain why Pakistan did not appoint an ad hoc judge because it had a right to do so and why the Foreign Office did not take legal advice before initiating correspondence on the issue.*

No rooms for miscalculations, Editorial, The Express Tribune, 20 May⁹⁹

... When India took the unusual step of taking Jadhav's case to the ICJ, it sought consular access to the convicted spy, not a ruling against his conviction by a military court. The whole thrust of its case was built on Article 36 [1] of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relation 1963 (VCCR) which is related to jurisdiction stemming from multilateral treaties. Instead of constructing Pakistan's response on the same article's first clause we somewhat imprudently chose to focus on the second clause (Article 36 [2]). *... There were other miscalculations, too. Our side invoked and referred time and again to Article VI of an agreement signed with India in May 2008 – incidentally this is not registered under Article 102 of the UN Charter and as*

⁹⁷ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1333924/pakistan-made-a-mistake-criticism-at-home-over-icj-decision>

⁹⁸ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1334017/opposition-criticises-govt-for-mishandling-jadhav-case>

⁹⁹ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1414241/no-room-miscalculations/>

such cannot be invoked before any organ of the United Nations. ... Pakistan will have to play its cards delicately and wisely from here onwards, especially when it comes to the appointment of an adhoc judge to the ICJ, strengthening its legal team and preparing water-tight arguments related to the merits of the case. The battle is far from over.

Bombs and bullets, Editorial, *The Nation*, 26 May¹⁰⁰

There have been no signs of improvement in the rapidly deteriorating Pakistan-India relations, and the situation looks as if one misstep from either side could lead to things spiralling out of control. ... The attack on Pakistani check posts was qualified as a pre-emptive strike against 'terrorists' looking to infiltrate, but there is absolutely no evidence to support this. *With the aggressive rhetoric pouring in from India, it is clear that calling Pakistan a terrorist state has redefined terrorism for the country – all Pakistanis are seemingly fair game.* The fact that the Indian side is now openly admitting that it initiates firing on Pakistan means that it no longer fears any censure from the international community – primarily because world powers choose silence over speaking out for what's right. *The reasons for India looking to blame Pakistan are clear – Kashmiris continue to fight Indian rule, and as a means to deflect, India continues to blame us while it gives out commendations to soldiers that deliberately abuse human rights in the restive region.* ...

FROM URDU & ELECTRONIC MEDIA

URDU MEDIA

Courageous position by Turkish President, Editorial, *Mahasib*, May 3¹⁰¹

Before reaching India, President Erdogan offered mediation on Kashmir issue saying that the Kashmir issue should not be left for resolution by the next generation. This issue should be solved at multilateral level and Turkey was ready to mediate.Recep Tayyip Erdogan is a well-known leader of the Muslim world and his advice to India not to kill Kashmiris is important. Indian projection of Kashmir as an integral part of India is not accepted by the world. The whole world considers Kashmir as disputed territory and this is a moral victory for the Kashmiri people and Pakistan's position.

¹⁰⁰ <http://nation.com.pk/editorials/26-May-2017/bombs-and-bullets>

¹⁰¹ <http://mahasib.com.pk/epaper/page.php?id=4&edition=muzzaffarabad&dt=03-05-2017>

Ghani should shun India's influence..., Editorial, *Nawa-i-Waqt*, May 9¹⁰²

... Unfortunately, right from the creation of Pakistan, Afghanistan has never been constructive in its approach to Pakistan. The Kabul administration has always been busy endangering the security of Pakistan. ... President Hamid Karzai used to speak the language of India and was regularly threatening Pakistan of severe consequences. *Though President Ghani started on a positive note with Pakistan, he too fell prey to the Indian trap very soon and started speaking the language of India. ... It implies that the Kabul administration is badly caught up in the Indian trap and is participating willfully in the Indian design of endangering the national security of Pakistan.* This has been proved by the statements issued by Kulbhushan Jadhav and Ehsanullah Ehsan. ... *Any tension between the two neighbouring countries will endanger regional peace and security. However, if our neighbour is challenging our sovereignty and security continuously, we must teach it a lesson, particularly, in the context that it is helping the agenda of our arch rival India. ...*

China rejects India's protest: CPEC will be completed, Editorial, *Nawa-i-Waqt*, May 12¹⁰³

China has rejected Indian reservations regarding CPEC and said that the work on the project is going on smoothly. ... Since the time CPEC was launched, we saw India growing restless. It has tried everything to stop the project, but failed. ... *India has, in the past, invested in people who would support the Indian position in case of Kalabagh Dam. It has encouraged baseless propaganda to mislead people. ... India has now created a special desk in R&AW to sabotage the CPEC. Billions of rupees are allocated for that.* ... Recently, there was this news that the Chinese ambassador to India while speaking at the United Service Institution of India (USI) proposed that the name of CPEC can be changed to China, Pakistan, India corridor to address the Indian reservations. But after Pakistan protested, that part of the ambassador speech was removed from the website of the Chinese embassy in India.

Sartaj rejects bilateral talks on Kashmir, Editorial, *Nawa-i-Waqt*, May 4¹⁰⁴

Sartaj Aziz has rejected India's offer of holding bilateral talks to resolve Kashmir. He said that this proposal is no more reliable as India has always foiled such efforts in the past. Indian offer came only when the Turkish President asked India to talk to Pakistan at multilateral level to resolve Kashmir. ... India cannot deny the fact that after the 9 April by-election in Kashmir in which only 7 percent voting took place, the world has lost trust in the Indian democracy. ... *India's deceitfulness, cunningness and hypocrisy*

¹⁰²<http://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/Lahore/2017-05-09/page-14/detail-0>

¹⁰³<http://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/Lahore/2017-05-12/page-14/detail-2>

¹⁰⁴<http://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/Lahore/2017-05-04/page-14/detail-5>

(Baharat ki ayaari, makaari aur munafiqat) is well-known. On the one hand, it talks about bilateral dialogue; on the other, it calls Kashmir its integral part. It claims "Azad" Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan as well. ... India came to the bilateral talks many a times and then withdrew suddenly. ...

Kashmiris disappointed with Pakistan, Editorial, Ummat, May 17¹⁰⁵

The head of the United Jihad Council (UJC) and the supreme commander of Hizbul-Mujahiddin (HM), *Syed Salahuddin has said that the Indian brutalities and fruitless negotiations are forcing the Kashmiris towards armed struggle. He has said that if the rulers of Pakistan help and support the Kashmiris, India will be brought to its knees.* He said that negotiations and resolutions are not going to resolve the Kashmir issue. *Hafiz Saeed was arrested to both under pressure from International community and India. .* From the statements of Salahuddin and his interview with *Ummat* it appears that *the Kashmiri youth, who are fighting for their freedom, have become disappointed with Pakistan. They are surprised that they are not getting the required moral, diplomatic and practical support from Pakistan. ...*

Is this U-turn of China on Kashmir? Editorial, Jasarat, May 17¹⁰⁶

China's foreign office said in its briefing that CPEC has nothing to do with Kashmir and its stand on Kashmir is that it is a historical conflict between India and Pakistan and should be resolved through dialogue and engagement. Earlier, China used to say that China's stand on Kashmir is same as that of Pakistan, then why there is change in its stand?

By going to ICJ, India has paved the way to solve the Kashmir issue, Editorial, Daily Ausaf, May 22¹⁰⁷

India has provided Pakistan with the opportunity to bring several other pending issues to the international level, like Kashmir, unprovoked firing along Pakistani borders, water terrorism and India's open intervention in Pakistan to destabilize it. ... In our opinion-- which has also been acknowledged by former Indian Supreme court Judge Markandey Katju-- Modi government has committed a historical mistake by sending the case to the ICJ. Government of Pakistan should exploit the situation. *We will call upon prime minister to expose the war crimes of India in Kashmir with full preparedness and accelerate the effort to convene emergency meeting of UNSC on Kashmir issue with the help of friendly members of UNSC.* We should also ask Chinese and Russian leadership to play active role in resolving the Kashmir issue.

¹⁰⁵<http://ummat.net/2017/05/17/news.php?p=idr1.gif>

¹⁰⁶ <http://epaper.jasarat.com/2017/05/17/karachi/co-402>

¹⁰⁷ <http://epaper.dailyausaf.com/popup.php?newsrc=issues/2017-05-22/15570/1001.gif>

To defame freedom movement in Kashmir India is creating a false Daesh, Report, Wajeeh Ahmad Siddiqi, Ummat, May 27¹⁰⁸

India has invented 'Daesh' in Kashmir so that it can label Kashmir freedom movement as terrorism. It is supported by Israel in this conspiracy. The meeting between the Home Minister of India, Rajnath Singh and the head of Mossad Yossi Cohen was part of this plan..... Ummat asked HM chief and the head of the United Jihad Council Syed Salahuddin whether Daesh was there in Kashmir and whether it was a threat to HM. Salahuddin said that "the situation is presented incorrectly. Zakir Musa is a local commander of HM. He had given statement that the people who are fighting a secular and liberal jihad in Kashmir are our enemies. He was scolded and told that he was not authorized to give statements. Whether Kashmir will have an Islamic or any other system is yet to be decided. First goal is to achieve independence from Indian occupation (pehle, Kashmir Baharat ki qaeed se azaad ho jaye). To say that our commander is a member of Daesh is wrong".

Sajjan, whose sajan (sweet-heart)?, Shiraz Chaudhry, Ummat, May 5

Sajjan Jindal is now the certified *sajjan* (sweet heart) of our prime minister. His daughter has said that Jindal is an old friend of Nawaz Sharif. ... *The big contract in Afghanistan that landed up in Jindal's lap implies that he does not do business only. He serves the government in Delhi as well. He was given the contract in Afghanistan because it is the base for anti-Pakistan activities. Neither the prime minister nor Jindal has said anything about the talks that were going on between them while they were walking the lawns of Nawaz's residence in Murree. According to the Indian media, Jindal had a message from Narendra Modi to deliver regarding Kulbhushan Jadhav.* ... People ask if the prime minister had to contact his Indian counterpart, why through Sajjan Jindal? Nawaz Sharif could have sent his *sajjan* to India and Narendra Modi would have hosted him in Shimla or in Goa.

The cabinet was kept unaware about the meeting. Surprisingly, interior minister Chaudhry Nisar Khan spoke about it. Nisar said that there is no wrong in meeting an Indian. It seems the PM has changed his *sajjan*. ... *Pakistan's true sajan is Recep Erdogan who spoke about the Indian atrocities in "occupied" Kashmir from the Indian soil....* Erdogan proved again that he is true *sajjan* of the Muslims.

Kulbhushan case: Death of justice in ICJ, Editorial, Daily Ausaf, May 19¹⁰⁹

International Court of Justice has issued stay order on the death sentence of Indian spy Kulbhushahn Jhadav. ... *There is strange coincidence that within a*

¹⁰⁸<http://ummat.net/2017/05/27/news.php?p=story1.gif>

¹⁰⁹<http://epaper.dailyausaf.com/popup.php?newsrc=issues/2017-05-19/15267/p1001.gif>

short period of time after meeting between Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Indian Steel tycoon Jindal, India went to ICJ over the issue. The case was heard in haste and the decision was given favouring India. It is a murder of justice. ...The presence of the Indian origin judge in the panel made the court to issue the stay order. ... Despite this decision, Pakistan should execute Kulbhushan at the earliest.

Return of Hekmatyar and prospect for peace, Editorial, Ummat, May 1¹¹⁰

Gulbuddin Hekmatyar has said that no government can rule Afghanistan without the consent of its people. Political approach needs to be adopted for that. ... President Ghani had done a pact with the *Hizb-i-Islami* last September. Many had criticised this peace agreement. Hekmatyar has said that instead of talking to Europe, Taliban should talk to local leaders and the Afghan government. ... The reality is that till the foreign forces remain in Afghanistan, peace and stability is unlikely. ... *Whatever the past of the Afghan warriors, Hekmatyar wants to forget all that and wants to engage everyone for bringing the war-torn country on the track of peace and development. ... He said that killing people in masques is not Islam.* ... Instead of repeating and criticizing Hekmatyar's past, his efforts need to be appreciated. Only that can help in stabilizing Afghanistan.

Afghanistan should handover the people wanted in Pak, Editorial, Nawwa-i-Waqt, May 5¹¹¹

... The Afghan rulers' behaviour vis-s-vis Pakistan has always been disapproving. They are now cosyng up with India, which is perpetrating terrorism against Pakistan by using Afghan government. The Afghan accuse Pakistan for everything. When the current Afghan president first visited Pakistan, he was constructive. As soon as he went to India, he changed his line and started accusing Pakistan. Ghani's condition for coming to Pakistan is like *chor machaye shor* (thief accusing the policeman of committing the theft). Taliban is in your country, you better control them. Pakistan has expelled Taliban from its territory. They are sheltered in Afghanistan.

Make the borders safe, Farooq Awan Advocate, Daily Ausaf, May 17¹¹²

Unfortunately, Pakistan's borders are unsafe on three sides. Kulbhushan's network operating from Iran, arrival of terrorists through Kabul and Quetta and repeated ceasefire violation and firing from Indian borders have become quite common today. *There is a pressing need to revisit the policy of making borders safe, rather than focusing all efforts blindly on implementation of the*

¹¹⁰<http://ummat.net/2017/05/01/news.php?p=idr1.gif>

¹¹¹<http://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/Lahore/2017-05-05/page-14/detail-2>

¹¹² <http://epaper.dailyausaf.com/popup.php?newsrc=issues/2017-05-17/15079/p1008.gif>

CPEC. Pakistan is facing a critical moment when it comes to safety and security of its borders. In the 1965 and 1971 wars, the borders were 100% safe except on the east. Iran and China were playing their role to defend Pakistan. Prime Minister should not disappoint the people and take necessary measures to make borders of this “sacred land” safe taking Parliament and nation into confidence.

Afghan rulers sitting in the lap of Hindus,

Mohammad Abdullah, *Daily Ausaf*, May 17¹¹³

When Afghanistan was attacked in the 1980s, Pakistan embraced it and fought with Russia for dignity and freedom of Afghanistan. After 9/11, India is investing millions of dollars and almost 5,000 Afghan students are now receiving education in India on scholarship offered by India. On the one hand, India is inspiring the confidence of the Afghan government through such investments and on the other hand it is brainwashing the Afghan students against Pakistan. It is a worrisome trend. Afghans are famous for their bravery, and loyalty to their benefactors. But the attraction of dollars and the lust to rule have blinded the Afghan rulers and they are now sitting in the lap of Hindus. ***National Directorate of Security (NDS) and the Afghan army are being de facto run by RAW, which creates headache for Pakistan.*** The revelation by TTP’s ex-spokesperson has given the lead to us on several complex issues. Afghanistan should read the writing on the wall and hold the extended hand of friendship from Pakistan, keeping in view Pakistan’s loyalty and sacrifice, rather than acting as the weapon of the *Hindu Baniya*.

CPEC, a conspiracy against Islam, but religious scholars are silent spectators,
Kardagar Baloch, *Daily Tawar*, May 30¹¹⁴

The Pakistani occupation of Balochistan is illegal, un-Islamic, inhuman and condemnable in every respect. Therefore, the policies adopted by Pakistan to control Balochistan are also illegal, un-Islamic, inhuman and condemnable.

As Muslims and upholders of human rights we should condemn the 40 year long CPEC agreement between China and Pakistan. We should know as Muslims that this plan is grounded on atheism and only prolong the occupation of the Baloch land, and the Baloch people, who are Muslims by faith. If we take a closer look, it appears that the Baloch land has been colonized by the Punjabi-Qaedani and non-believing Chinese triumvirate. This is not only dangerous for the Baloch nation but it is also posing a critical challenge to Islam as well. There are many reasons for this and I have mentioned those in

¹¹³ http://epaper.dailyausaf.com/page?station_id=1&date=2017-05-17&page_id=15082

¹¹⁴ <http://www.dailytawar.net/mazamin.php>

my book "Qadiyani conspiracies in Balochistan" in detail, which will be in market in few months. I will briefly deal with these reasons here.

ak issue. The progress is slow, however. Punjab Chief Minister Shabaz Sharif is playing a key role in this. According to the source, *after a tough time, Sharif has been able to meet some important personalities in the last few days. It is expected that in coming days the deadlock will break and the real recommendations of the Dawn Leak Committee will be made public. Shabaz found it difficult because the powerful institution (muqtadaridara) was demanding that what was decided in the Dawn Leak case should be implemented. ... Though the interior minister Chaudhry Nisar Khan was given responsibility for carrying out the investigations, it was the finance minister Ishaq Dar who kept talking to the army, a source said.* Chaudhry Nisar was not kept in loop and he was not happy about that. *He expressed his anger by rejecting the notification issued by the government and by criticising the army for the ISPR tweet.* Later, he was convinced and his friend Shabaz Sharif told him to go easy with the army.

ELECTRONIC MEDIA

From the frontline, Talk show hosted by Kamran Shahid on *Dunya News*, May 18¹¹⁵

The show discussed the staying order of the ICJ on the execution of Kulbhushan Jadhav..... Sheikh Rasheed, head of the Awami Muslim League (AML), said that *when our own country is collaborating with the enemy and the leadership is cowardly, national shame, like in case of Kulbhushan, becomes inevitable. Sajjan Jindal came here and after meeting the prime minister, India approached ICJ. It is our own doing. We have Mir Jaffar and Mir Sadiq present in our country. Sheikh Rasheed said that it was a jolt for the army which has been reduced to nothing.*

Responding to a question on ICJ's judgment in favour of India, Mr. Kamran Ismail of PTI says that the prime minister did not raise the issue of Kulbhushan at the UN General Assembly meeting despite many commentators urging him to do so. *Then Sajjan Jindal comes to Pakistan, meets the prime minister and immediately after that India takes the case to the ICJ. And Pakistan gives its consent to it.* Maiza Hameed of the PML (N) said that the judgment of the ICJ has not made India winner and Pakistan a loser. *It is an interim stay on the execution.* It is disappointing that the opposition is reacting the way it did.

¹¹⁵<https://pkpolitics.com/2017/05/18/on-the-front-with-kamran-shahid-18-may-2017-dunya-news/>

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

Place	Date	Description	Killed	Injured
Rahim Yar Khan ¹¹⁶	05/05/2017	Another day, another Ahmadi killed	1	0
Karachi ¹¹⁷	21/05/2017	SHO among six policemen martyred in Kohat, Karachi	6	6
Islamabad				
Wah Cantt. ¹¹⁸	02/05/17	Plot to target Ch Nisar foiled	2	0
ISPR ¹¹⁹	03/05/2017	Four 'hardcore terrorists' tried by military courts hanged: ISPR	4	0
ISPR ¹²⁰	05/05/2017	Executed: 3 'hardcore' terrorists hanged	3	0
ISPR ¹²¹	25/05/2017	Another two TTP terrorists hanged	2	0
FATA				

¹¹⁶ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/05-May-17/another-day-another-ahmadi-killed>

¹¹⁷ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1334419/sho-among-six-policemen-martyred-in-kohat-karachi>

¹¹⁸ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/02-May-17/plot-to-target-ch-nisar-foiled>

¹¹⁹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1330796/four-hardcore-terrorists-tried-by-military-courts-hanged-ispr>

¹²⁰ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/05-May-17/executed-3-hardcore-terrorists-hanged>

¹²¹ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/25-May-17/another-two-ttp-terrorists-hanged>

Kurram Agency	01/05/17	Security personnel martyred in exchange of fire with terrorists	1	2
Tirah valley ¹²²	22/05/2017	Five killed in bomb blast in Khyber Agency's Tirah valley	5	0
Chaman ¹²³	06/05/2017	Seven civilians killed as Afghan forces open fire on border villages in Chaman	7	22
Mastung ¹²⁴	13/05/2017	At least 25 people were killed and many others injured as Islamic State strikes again.	25	42
Quetta ¹²⁵	14/05/2017	10 labourers killed in Gwadar as unidentified assailants open fire at construction site	10	0
Quetta ¹²⁶	20/05/2017	Three more labourers gunned down in Turbat	3	0

¹²² <https://www.dawn.com/news/1334698/five-killed-in-bomb-blast-in-khyber-agencys-tirah-valley>

¹²³ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/06-May-17/seven-civilians-killed-as-afghan-forces-open-fire-on-border-villages-in-chaman>

¹²⁴ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/13-May-17/islamic-state-strikes-again>

¹²⁵ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1332896>

¹²⁶ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/balochistan/20-May-17/three-more-labourers-gunned-down-in-turbat>