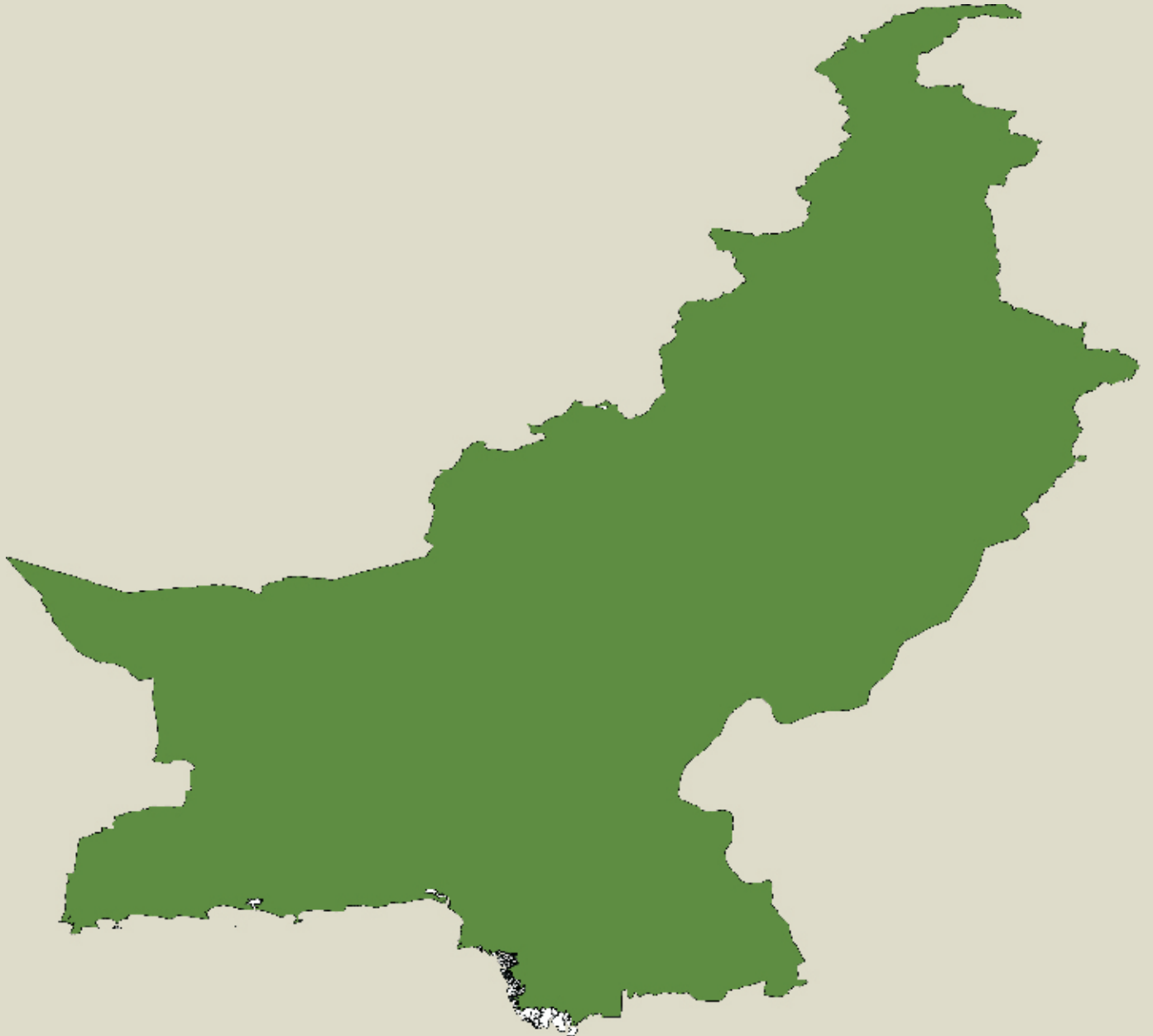


March 2017

PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST

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



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PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST, March 2017

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EDITORIAL

With increase in domestic political crises, Pakistan has been facing multiple existential challenges that may require years for it to overcome. Since challenges like terrorism, which it used for strategic purposes, seem to have gone out of its control, the military and the civilian leaderships are looking for excuses and scapegoats to divert popular attention from their inability to deal with such issues. The over-emphasis on a column by Husain Haqqani in the *Washington Post* throughout the month of March (2017) is one such example.

After launching the operation "Radd-ul-Fasaad", it was argued that the civilian courts were unable to deliver justice. Thus, the military courts were granted two more years' extension. Though the terror attacks of February 2017 apparently brought the civilian and the military leaderships together, questions were raised about the immediate successes of the "Radd-ul-Fasaad"-- how come the military and other security agencies unearth terror networks so fast and nab the terrorists and their supporters so promptly? Were they already aware about these networks!

One major development was the acceptance of the role of the masjids and madrasas in fuelling terrorism by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. In his maiden attempt to reach out to the Ulema for help, Sharif asked them to use their influence to preach against terror. He urged them to disseminate narrative of peace and reject preaching of hatred and distorted concepts of jihad. This move may also have been prompted by US president Donald Trump's tough stand on the countries which are supporting terrorism according to US sources.

As far as India is concerned, the rise of the BJP in UP generated special interest in both English and vernacular media. Most of the articles interpreted the win as an indication of the rise of Hindutva forces in India and thus underlined the threats to the Muslim minority. The choice of a "yogi" to head a state prone to sectarian strife was taken by many in Pakistan with shock and anguish. It was argued that it had exposed the real face of "so-called" democratic and secular India. Pakistan was projected as emerging as a "secular" and "tolerant" nation after the Hindu marriage Law was passed and the prime Minister assured the minorities that they were safe in Pakistan in his Holi speech.

Amid security fears and concerns, the national population census kick-started after a hiatus of nineteen years. The census has come at an important juncture, a year before the parliamentary elections and therefore could alter political boundaries, seat allocations and may have a bearing on the issue of federal

funding of elections. It remains to be seen how the increased number of religious minorities and inclusion of third gender in the census will impact the political calculus in a Muslim majority country like Pakistan. However, the exercise has generated some controversies, like in Balochistan the “Baloch nationalists” have their reservations about the way census is being carried out. Even the chief minister of Sindh accused the census officials of wrong counting.

The Pakistan government approved the merger of the Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA) with Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province in an attempt to bring the region at par with the rest of the country. However, this move was opposed by the tribesmen of FATA blaming the government for imposing one-sided decision without consulting the stakeholders. In yet another decision to mainstream the northern regions, the government contemplated declaring Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) as the fifth province; however, this step is looked upon by many as a hasty and unnecessary decision, which has more with CPEC rather than the people of GB. It was also mentioned in the media that China is rapidly increasing its sphere of influence in Pakistan, both through CPEC and other means. The fact that China sent its military for participation in the parade on the occasion of the Pakistan Day was widely hailed as an instance of Chinese assurance to stand by Pakistan in case it faced any military threat from outside.

Zainab Akhter

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Locating the Enemy, Anjum Altaf, *Dawn*, March 7¹

... What puzzles me is how the terrorists who have been eliminated (after the February attacks in Pakistan) were identified and located so quickly. Did we always know where they were but were letting them be for some reason? ... It seems to me that the frenzy of maniacal activity is just intended to convey an impression of steely determination and purposeful action in order to placate the public and buy time. ... I fail to understand how spending hundreds of thousands of dollars to bribe a handful of foreigners to play a game in a nuclear bunker can be convincing proof that the country is back to normal. ...

Pakistan, Qatar vow to boost defence relations, *Daily Times*, 07 March²

Pakistan and Qatar have vowed to further enhance bilateral defence cooperation. Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa, who is on an official visit to Qatar, called on Qatar's Minister of Defence Affairs Dr Khalid Bin Mohammed Al-Attiyah on Monday. The minister appreciated the professional standing and performance of the Pakistan Army and expressed desire for increased Pakistan-Qatar defence collaboration. The COAS also met Lt Gen Ghanim Bin Shaheen Al Ghanim, the chief of staff of the Qatar Armed Forces.

Pakistani accused of spying for Iran faces German court, *Daily Times*, 09 March³

A Pakistani man accused of spying for Iran went on trial in Germany on Wednesday for allegedly searching out potential attack targets for the Revolutionary Guards. Investigators found detailed dossiers on the men and their daily routines, with hundreds of photos and video clips, the Berlin court was told. ... He is accused of espionage "against Germany and another NATO member", France, for the Quds Force, the foreign operations wing of the elite Revolutionary Guards. Prosecutors charged he had compiled dossiers on possible attack targets. ...

¹<https://www.dawn.com/news/1318873/locating-the-enemy>

²<http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/07-Mar-17/pakistan-qatar-vow-to-boost-defence-relations>

³<http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/09-Mar-17/pakistani-accused-of-spying-for-iran-faces-german-court>

Pak, Iran on verge of establishing strong economic ties, Dawn, 09 March⁴

A major parliamentary push is being planned to compel Islamabad and Tehran to overcome the internal resistance in their countries to greater bilateral economic engagement and revitalising of relations. This was disclosed by Chairman of the National Assembly's Foreign Affairs Committee Awais Leghari. ... Mr Leghari was of the view that Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline was one project whose implementation could change the complexion of the relationship. He said the project was being delayed not just because of paucity of funds, but there were other issues involved in it. ...

Chinese firm awarded Dasu dam contracts, Khaleeq Kiani, Dawn, 09 March⁵

When complete in 2021, the project is expected to generate over 2,100 megawatts of electricity. The government on March 08, awarded Rs180 billion worth of two contracts to a Chinese firm for carrying out main civil works in the first stage of the Dasu hydropower project. The two contracts for the main dam, appurtenant structures and hydraulic steel structures (MW-01) worth Rs.115 billion and construction of underground power complex, tunnels and hydraulic structures (MW-02) worth Rs64bn were formally awarded to China Gezhouba Group Company (CGGC).

Senate body condemns US lawmaker's anti-Pakistan bill, Daily Times, 14 March⁶

The Senate's Standing Committee on Interior on March 13, passed a resolution to condemn US Congressman Ted Poe for his anti-Pakistan bill. The body urged the Foreign Office to take up the issue with the US Embassy. The resolution was presented by Committee Chairman Rehman Malik. Malik said Pakistan's sacrifices in war against terrorism were more than any country, yet elements like Ted Poe were undermining Pakistan's role. *The resolution stated, "The Committee strongly condemns the US Congressman Ted Poe biased affiliation with Indian and his recent Anti-Pakistan Bill to undermine the stance of Pakistan on war against terror, as Pakistan has been an ally in war against terror and has sacrificed more than any other country in the world.*

⁴<https://www.dawn.com/news/1319360/pakistan-iran-on-verge-of-establishing-strong-economic-ties>

⁵ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1319342/chinese-firm-awarded-dasu-dam-contracts>

⁶<http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/14-Mar-17/senate-body-condemns-us-lawmakers-anti-pakistan-bill>

Army inducts Chinese-built air defence system to its arsenal, Dawn, 12 March⁷

Pakistan Army on Sunday inducted Chinese-built Low to Medium Altitude Air Defence System (LOMADS) LY-80 in its air defence system, read a statement issued by the military's media wing. Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa was the chief guest at the induction ceremony held at Army Auditorium, the Inter-Services Public Relations said. LY-80 is a Chinese mobile air defence system capable of tracking and destroying variety of aerial targets at longer ranges flying at low and medium altitude, the ISPR statement read. The army chief said, "LY-80 LOMADS increases our response capability to current and emerging air defence threats."

Govt. to try Imran under cybercrime, defamation laws, Syed Irfan Raza, Dawn 14 March⁸

The government has decided to take action against Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan under cybercrime and defamation laws for what its representatives describe as trying to influence the Supreme Court's judgement in the Panama Papers case and besmirch the reputation of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif through electronic, print and social media.... "We will definitely take action against the PTI leadership," the minister said, adding that it should not be called political victimisation because the PTI's campaign against the prime minister fell within the purview of cybercrime laws...

Allama Raja Nasir Abbas congratulates the nation on the induction of modern LY 80 anti-missile system in the Army arsenal, Majlis Wahdat Muslimeen Pakistan, 14 March⁹

He said that our country is emerging an invincible power in the world. No one can dare to look at our country with evil intentions. At this time, we are confronting with challenges including terrorism. Despite these internal and external problems, Pakistan armed forces are is not oblivion of the defense of the country. Anti-Pakistan international powers including India are enemies of our survival. We have to be aware of enemies under the garb of friends. Making of latest military weapons are our religious duty and is the requirement for national security.

⁷ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1320053/army-inducts-chinese-built-air-defence-system-to-its-arsenal>

⁸ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1320343/govt-to-try-imran-under-cybercrime-defamation-laws>

⁹ <http://english.mwmpak.org/index.php/explore/central-news/item/2730-allama-raja-nasir-abbas-congratulates-the-nation-on-the-induction-of-modern-ly-80-anti-missile-system-in-the-army-arsenal>

Pakistan railway not to send official to Trans-Asia connectivity meet, Avishek G. Dastidar, *The Indian Express*, 15 March¹⁰

Pakistan has not sent anyone from its Ministry of Communications or Railways to represent the country at the two-day multi-nation meeting to discuss trans-Asia rail connectivity, citing schedule-related constraints. Counsellor (Political) at the Pakistan High Commission in Delhi, Abdul Hameed, will attend the meeting on behalf of his country's rail sector. The conference, "Strengthening Railway Transport Connectivity in South and South-West Asia", is being organised by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in coordination with the Organisation for Cooperation between Railways (OSJD) and Indian Railways.

Shutting down the seminaries, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, March 20¹¹

Sindh ... has taken the lead in closing down 2,300 seminaries, while carrying out the process of geo-mapping these institutions across the province. ... Geo-mapping of seminaries was part of the National Action Plan (NAP) constituted in 2014 following the attack on the Army Public School in Peshawar. (Only few cases being pursued in Punjab, while 75 and 60 percent Geo-mapping in KP and Balochistan was done respectively) ... By these statistics, it at once appears that Sindh is most serious in tackling extremism. Perhaps it is, but only to the extent of following up on NAP's instructions.

Chinese Honour Guards join Pakistan Day rehearsals, *Dawn*, 20 March¹²

The People's Liberation Army (PLA) Honour Guards have joined rehearsals for the upcoming Pakistan Day parade, *China Daily* reported on Monday. *The guards will participate in the parade for the first time after China's military leadership received an invitation from Chief of Army Staff Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa.* China has sent a 90-strong contingent, of which 72 members will participate in the parade, the Chinese publication added.

Fighting on three fronts, Touqir Hussain, *The Express Tribune*, March 21¹³

... We have let others make choices for us. *Yes, the relations with China enjoy a national consensus and remain a success story but largely because the Chinese laid down the terms of engagement and drew up its broad parameters.* And they did it so shrewdly it gave Pakistan an illusion of being an equal partner. ... *But Pakistan's fixed and unchanging position on India and*

¹⁰ <http://indianexpress.com/article/cities/delhi/pakistan-railway-not-to-send-official-at-trans-asia-connectivity-meet-4569320/>

¹¹ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1360026/shutting-down-seminaries/>

¹² <https://www.dawn.com/news/1321732>

¹³ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1360865/fighting-three-fronts/>

Afghanistan, and its inability or reluctance to deal with what threatens these countries, like non state actors and the Afghan Taliban, has come to calcify Pakistan's foreign policy. ... Pakistan is thus ending up having to fight on three fronts- grappling with serious internal security challenges and meeting the historical two front external threat. You cannot handle serious domestic and external problems simultaneously. ...

Pakistan for all? Editorial, *Daily Times*, 21 March¹⁴

Months after the country has seen the passing of progressive bills that protect (some of) Pakistan's minorities — it is more than disheartening to see that the national census has rendered many of them invisible, as if they are irrelevant... When it comes to the census' treatment of Hindus and Christians — these groups face one of two options, identifying themselves as “marginalised” or as “other”. Sikhs are not alone in being left out of this numbers game. The same fate has been dealt to the Parsee and Baha'i communities... Even more worrying reports have emerged where census teams have been asking people to declare their sect...

Reforming the madrassas, Editorial, *Daily Times*, 22 March¹⁵

Pakistan's growing radicalization is largely linked to the seminaries, widespread acceptance of their views due to state patronage in the past (for multiple jihad projects in the region) and the public schools textbooks that emphasise the supremacy of Muslims over non-Muslims and legitimizing of violent means of jihad, otherwise a lofty term for self-improvement... *The state is yet to begin the process of regulating madrassas including a framework to check their finances...* A consensus is needed for this to start. *And it also requires giving up the patronage of selected groups to fight in Afghanistan or Kashmir.* Pakistan's battle against terrorism will be meaningless if this key issue is not addressed... *Before that is done, a handful of madrassas, known for their role in supporting and nurturing terrorism need to be closed down.*

Extremists in Politics, Editorial, *Dawn*, 22 March¹⁶

For many years now, electoral politics have been a vehicle for extremist elements in Pakistan to insinuate themselves into the democratic framework, even as they work to corrode the principles upon which it is based... Pakistan has been fairly prolific in outlawing extremist organisations, particularly after a slew of them were banned in the aftermath of 9/11. *But it has been a self-defeating exercise. With the leaders of these groups under no ban themselves,*

¹⁴ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/21-Mar-17/pakistan-for-all>

¹⁵ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/22-Mar-17/reforming-the-madrassas>

¹⁶ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1321982/extremists-in-politics>

they continued to peddle their noxious rhetoric, while their organisations re-emerged with new names.

Relative security? Editorial, *The Nation*, March 23¹⁷

There was a 45 percent decline in violence related incidents in 2016, according to the reports. ... The report, however, points out several significant aspects of the overall security situation within the country. ... While FATA, KP, Gilgit-Baltistan, Azad Kashmir, Islamabad and Sindh have witnessed a decline in militancy; there was a marginal increase of 10 percent in militancy in Balochistan and Punjab. This shows that militants have new targets now. ... *The number of fatalities might have decreased, but incidents of sectarian violence are increasing day by day. There were 35 attacks last year that resulted in the death of 137 people. ...* This results in the infiltration of extremism within society. ... It is high time that the implementation of the National Action Plan (NAP) is ensured to reform madrassahs and end funding to radical seminaries.

The Optics of Blasphemy, Editorial, *The Nation*, March 24¹⁸

The Islamabad High Court's heavy handed attack on the government for "allowing" social media to be used for posting of blasphemous content has kicked off a flurry of activity in the government ranks. ... The IHC should be well and truly pleased now. (After the interior ministry took many steps against the "secular bloggers".) *Objectively, there is nothing wrong with such a step; back home it caters to the vote bank that appreciates Pakistan displaying "leadership in the Ummah", and an open discussion on the matter may streamline views on the issue. ... Blasphemy on social media is one of the least problematic issues the nation faces- it is only bothering a few ultra-religious groups. The government's time and diplomatic efforts should be reserved for the issues that matter the most, and there are plenty to choose from.* The government must reorient its priorities – especially the Interior Ministry.

Documents reveals Gillani authorised Haqqani to issue visas to Americans, *Dawn*, 24 March ¹⁹

....a document reveals the authorisation originated from the office of then Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gillani... "The prime minister has been pleased to decide that the Ambassador in Washington will be empowered, with immediate effect, to issue visas valid up to one year without Embassy having

¹⁷<http://nation.com.pk/editorials/23-Mar-2017/relative-security>

¹⁸<http://nation.com.pk/editorials/24-Mar-2017/the-optics-of-blasphemy>

¹⁹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1322483/document-reveals-gillani-authorized-haqqani-to-issue-visas-to-americans>

to refer each aforementioned visa applications to the concerned authorities in Pakistan. The Pakistan embassy in US would issue these visas under intimation to the Prime Minister's office in Islamabad,".

The biggest spy center in this region working against the interests of Pakistan is American embassy, Islamabad, Allama Raja Nasir Abbas, *Majlis Wahdat Muslimeen*, 26 March ²⁰

... Facilitators of Daesh are working freely in the society. *International forces are shifting their agents from Iraq and Syria to Afghanistan. In Afghanistan, Daesh is being patronized by America and India.* This is the tyrant group which left behind Taliban and Al-Qaida in its tyranny. America, Israel, and Imperial forces should be told that we will not accept agents like Daesh in this region. Until we will not burry the Jihadi policy which was adopted during Afghan war, Pakistan cannot be peaceful.

The Alliance, S. Tariq, *The Nation*, March 30²¹

...The most dangerous being, the possibility of the alliance being used to further individual state interests (particularly against one another) instead of the collective one. This 'collective thinking' will require a massive change in national psyches of member countries, many of whom have autocratic forms of governance. ... All said and done, the need to unite the Muslim World will and should override all other considerations. ... *Let us not ignore the fact that what we are being offered is an opportunity to assume a leadership role in the coalition.* Missing this window of opportunity will leave nothing, but lasting regret.

MILITARY COURT

Military courts needed, Malik Muhammad Ashraf, *The Nation*, March 3²²

... *What they (The people who oppose the military courts) however forget to appreciate is that the enjoyment of fundamental rights by the citizens of a state is linked to an unqualified allegiance to the state and those who raise arms against the state lose the constitutional protection to their fundamental rights. The number of the convicted and executed for their crimes by the military courts may have been small and their existence may not have led to the elimination of terrorism from the country altogether but there is no denying the fact that they have led to substantial decrease in the terrorist attacks in the past two years.*

²⁰ <http://english.mwmpak.org/index.php/explore/central-news/item/2744-the-biggest-spy-center-in-this-region-working-against-the-interests-of-pakistan-is-american-embassy,-islamabad-allama-raja-nasir-abbas>

²¹<http://nation.com.pk/columns/30-Mar-2017/the-alliance>

²²<http://nation.com.pk/columns/03-Mar-2017/military-courts-needed>

On Military Courts, Babar Mirza, *Daily Times*, 12 march ²³

Presently defunct military courts, though hailed as part of an existential war for Pakistan, were an oxymoronic appendage to the constitutional framework of the Pakistani state and were never justified or sustainable under any recognized principle of constitutional governance. In a way, military courts established under the 21st Amendment in January 2015 were just another set of special courts created to deal with a special set of offenders, that is, members of terrorist groups “using the name of religion or a sect”

CENSUS

A political census, Zahid Hussain, *Dawn*, 22 March ²⁴

.... But the census will also raise questions about the shift in population ratios across the provinces. Does Punjab still enjoy a 54pc share in the country’s overall population? Similar questions arise in the case of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which has witnessed the biggest migration of population forced by militant violence and successive military operations. *The other highly sensitive issue is the likely change in the ethnic balance within the provinces particularly in the case of Sindh and Balochistan with the presence of significant migrant populations...* While the census may help in providing a more realistic socioeconomic picture of the country, it can also open a new political Pandora’s Box.

Census 2017, Safiya Aftab, *Daily Times*, March 23²⁵

The population census has finally begun in Pakistan, nine years overdue, and nineteen years after the last census. As is always the case, it is a highly contentious exercise, with the country’s ethnic, religious and sectarian minorities expressing fears about under-representation, and marginalized groups such as people with disabilities and transgender persons once again in fear of being left out altogether, or being counted at par with the majority population. In a country as riven by multiple orders of exclusion as this one is, these fears are not unfounded....

²³ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/12-Mar-17/on-military-courts>

²⁴ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1322010/a-political-census>

²⁵ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/23-Mar-17/census-2017>

ECONOMIC ISSUES

CPEC

Senate panel wants Pakistan's interests fully protected under CPEC, Dawn, 01 March, ²⁶

The Senate's Standing Committee on Planning and Development expressed fears on Tuesday that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) could build or ruin Pakistan and its future if the country's interests were not safeguarded and watched. The committee urged the government to have everything in black and white with Chinese to avoid any misunderstanding between the two brotherly countries in future and form a panel of international and local experts to handle all aspects of the CPEC in a professional manner. It observed that the government had so far failed to determine what benefits Pakistan would get when business and trade activities started on the CPEC.

Trade bodies want Indian conspiracies against CPEC foiled, Daily Times, 02 March ²⁷

*Industrialist and representatives of prime export sectors of the country have expressed their concern over conspiracies apparently being hatched to sabotage the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project through extremism, violence and cross-border terrorism in Pakistan, by countries like India that have economic and political rivalries with Pakistan.*They said that with such a huge foreign investment coming into Pakistan, it was essential to beef up security for enabling robust growth in trade and commerce. "The CPEC will also create fresh opportunities to build new industrial sites in deprived and remote areas that are connected to this vast network of roads and railways."

CPEC claims and doubts, Editorial, Dawn, 02 March ²⁸

What was originally presented as a 'game changer' for Pakistan is now being touted as a 'game changer' for a region consisting of 10 countries. In the official version, it appears there is no limit to how much change and benefit CPEC promises, while the costs and pitfalls in such a large undertaking are dismissed as the musings of sceptics and pessimists....The government has surmounted much of the route-related controversy that erupted in the early days of the CPEC initiative, but these concerns regarding financial costs and economic benefits continue to bedevil the project.

²⁶<https://www.dawn.com/news/1317736/senate-panel-wants-pakistans-interests-fully-protected-under-cpec>

²⁷<http://dailytimes.com.pk/business/02-Mar-17/trade-bodies-want-indian-conspiracies-against-cpec-foiled>

²⁸ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1317784/cpec-claims-and-doubts>

Ineluctability of Gilgit-Baltistan in CPEC, Babar Ali Bhatti, *Daily Times*, 06 March

The International community can question the Chinese corporations that they are building multi-billion economic corridors on the place which does not even have any constitutional framework. Surrounded by Afghanistan and three nuclear power countries China, India and Pakistan, Gilgit-Baltistan's strategic value does not need to be implied anymore. GB must be given its due share as it has been generously participating in the mega project. Its due share is yet to be calculated, which must be made by bringing GB on the CPEC table. A.... Instead of militarising the entire region, local police should be given more incentive and facilities so that they could work with absolute devotion. Police may work more effectively than any other institution at the domestic level. Pakistan must raise the constitutional status of GB for it would reinforce the belief of completion of CPEC.

CPEC: Proceed with Caution, Editorial, *Daily Times*, 09 March²⁹

Few voices have compared China's interests across the region to the East India Company that eventually took over South Asia under the garb of trade. CPEC has also been termed a Chinese Marshall Plan for Pakistan since the project financing comprises a combination of loans and investments. Nevertheless, the projects devised under CPEC need to be scrutinized as independent experts and some opposition politicians have suggested. Chinese companies are allegedly receiving preferential treatment and several institutions such as Pakistan Stock Exchange have already had a bulk of their shares sold to the Chinese investors. China Mobile has expressed interest in acquiring PTCL.

CPEC enclaves, Khurram Hussain, *Dawn*, 09 March³⁰

In the event of difficulties in making repayment, one possibility is that Pakistan could be asked to grant land for Chinese investments and residential colonies, and delegate law enforcement and governance over these enclaves to federal or perhaps even Chinese authorities. In some measure, enclaves look like they are already planned if it is true that the Special Economic Zones, for which energy and water supplies will have to be supplied from Pakistani resources, will be open only to Chinese investors. So what's going on? Will the CPEC security force be patrolling inside the zones, or will they only guard the perimeter, leaving patrolling and other routine policing functions to the provincial police forces?

Gilgit-Baltistan & CPEC, Editorial, *Daily Times*, March 20³¹

On paper, this looks like a smart move. China is both a regional player and a strong supporter of Pakistan. *But like any country, it acts in its national interests. And one of the most significant features of the Beijing Doctrine has*

²⁹ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/09-Mar-17/cpec-proceed-with-caution>

³⁰ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1319301/cpec-enclaves>

³¹ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/20-Mar-17/gilgit-baltistan-cpec>

been the delinking of human rights from its investment packages. ...CPEC is not about Pakistan. It is about consolidating Chinese power in Central Asia. Pakistan has been courted due to the accident of its geo-strategic birth.... Islamabad cannot ignore the concerns of its own populations that will be hardest hit by the development projects. Resentment is already there in Balochistan...

Positive Development on CPEC and Pak-China defense ties are causing diarrhea to India: Allama Raja Nasir Abbas, *Majlis Wahdat Muslimeen*, 20 March³²

Positive development on CPEC and Pak-China defense ties are causing diarrhea to India. *India is in misconception and is not aware of the fact that defense of the country is in the strong hands of. We are invincible power. Pakistan cannot be suppressed by using such dirty tactics. He said that Pakistan should respond to the Indian's violation of its border.* International forces and human rights organizations should take notice of this situation. World Nations should understand that tension between two atomic powers is dangerous for the peace of the region. Pakistan should warn India on the diplomatic front and advice it to refrain from aggressive action. Bombing on the land of the beloved homeland will not be tolerated at all.

SECURITY SITUATION

TERRORISM

Radd-ul-Fasaad aims at curbing chaos, *Daily Times*, 01 March³³

The Pakistan Army has said that the recently launched Operation Radd-ul-Fasaad is aimed at countering the 'mischievous' elements whether they exist within or outside the country. "All the previous military operations - including Operation Zarb-e-Azb - had succeeded in achieving their objectives," Major General Asif Ghafoor, director general, ISPR said. "The previous operations were primarily aimed at restoring the state's writ in different areas and eliminating terrorists' hideouts, but Operation Radd-ul-Fasaad aims at consolidating gains of the previous operations," he said.

³² <http://english.mwmpak.org/index.php/explore/central-news/item/2741-positive-development-0n-cpec-and-pak-china-defense-ties-are-causing-diarhea-t0-india-allama-raja-nasir-abbas>

³³ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/01-Mar-17/radd-ul-fasaad-aims-at-curbing-chaos>

Militaristic Response, Zahid Hussain, *Dawn*, 01 March ³⁴

...While the latest wave of terrorist attacks has provoked an intense militaristic response from the state, there are questions about the limitations of the use of kinetic force alone in dealing with the threat. Hours after the Sehwan shrine attack, security forces claimed to have killed dozens of suspected terrorists in a countrywide sweep. ... But the mere use of force is hardly effective unless accompanied by non-kinetic measures. The threat from violent extremism cannot be successfully challenged militarily. There is a difference between fighting insurgency and combating terrorism. ...

Pakistan's war: Grapple with terrorism, Muhammad Waleed, *Daily Times*, 02 March ³⁵

... Religiously motivated terrorists are a major threat to Pakistan. The roots of them could be traced back to Khawarijs; who grew to prominence during the arbitration between Hazrat Amir Maviya (R.A) and Hazrat Ali (R.A), to decide the succession to the caliphate, following the battle of Siffin. Their extreme doctrine separated them from mainstream Muslims and adopted a radical approach to Takfir (declaring a Muslim as a non-Muslim).

PM seeks clerics help in war against terror, *Daily Times*, 12 March ³⁶

Nawaz says religious scholars must disseminate 'real narrative' of peace through seminaries and reject preaching of hate and 'distorted' concept of jihad. ... "Religious scholars in the past disagreed with each other, but they never incited hatred in their followers' hearts regarding other sects," Sharif added. ... "The Ulema have the mosque's pulpit as their forum, from where they can be heard all over Pakistan." "It is still the most effective way of reaching out to the people of the country. You can spread the message of unity from here and shut the doors of terrorism in the country," he pleaded.

Willing Executioners, Sobhya Agha, *Dawn*, 16 March ³⁷

An outright rejection of sectarian religious education, and advocating for policies and laws that create a more unprejudiced and equal society, can serve as an antidote to terrorism. The syllabi taught in madressahs must be regulated. Civil society, progressive writers, academics, activists, and print and electronic media must be given support and protection to counter prevailing narratives that inspire extremism through education and awareness campaigns that promote tolerance... Social validation comes from terrorist groups' ability to exist, nurture and thrive in society. Our government and society seem to

³⁴ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1317587/militaristic-response>

³⁵ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/blog/02-Mar-17/pakistans-war-a-grapple-with-terrorism>

³⁶ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/12-Mar-17/pm-seeks-clerics-help-in-war-against-terror->

³⁷ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1320672/willing-executioners>

tolerate their existence and recruitment efforts, and legitimise their proclamations of hate and religious purity. ...

20 Baloch insurgents surrender; confess to receiving RAW funding, Daily Times, 22 March ³⁸

Operation Radd-ul-Fasaad is successfully continuing across the country as at least 20 insurgents including a Ferrari commander surrendered to Pakistan Rangers Punjab on Tuesday, Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a statement... Apologising for their past which was awash with terror activities in Balochistan, the surrendering insurgents said they were kept misinformed and fed with negative narrative over the decades, the ISPR statement added....The former insurgents also expressed their intentions to now live a normal and peaceful life and contribute to the prosperity of Pakistan, appealing to other militants to surrender as well...

Counter-Terrorism (CT) made easy, Asad Durrani, *Dawn*, 30 March ³⁹

... We may criticise America, Israel and India for using massive force against population centres that produce ever more militants, but when bombing our tribal areas, even the mention of 'collateral damage' was taboo. Does it really matter that unlike the above-mentioned villains, we were shelling our own people; and does anyone have any idea how many of them lost their kith and kin, and indeed whatever property they had? Just because we did not have the time and patience to follow the first principle of counter-insurgency: employ force only to facilitate use of non-military means.

AFGHAN SECURITY SITUATION

US Plan against IS Includes Pak-Afghan region, Anwar Iqbal, *Dawn*, 01 March ⁴⁰

As Pentagon officials said that the plan went beyond Iraq and Syria, the commander of the US forces in Afghanistan warned that the IS had a significant presence in the Pak-Afghan region as well... As the Trump administration expanded its plans for defeating terrorists, Gen John Nicholson, Commander of US and Nato forces in Afghanistan, told a military publication that "alliances of convenience" among terrorist networks in Afghanistan and Pakistan was a big concern for the United States. Although the Obama administration was strongly against inducting more troops into battles against the IS, President Trump's officials have indicated that the new plan would

³⁸ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/22-Mar-17/20-baloch-insurgents-surrender-confess-to-receiving-raw-funding>

³⁹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1323674/ct-made-easy>

⁴⁰ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1317730/us-plan-against-is-includes-pak-afghan-region>

involve US soldiers moving closer to the front lines while still avoiding ground combat.

Afghanistan urges Pak to open border crossings, *Daily Times*, 02 March ⁴¹

Mutual terrorism allegations have lately prevented the two neighbours from engaging in official talks to ease tensions. Islamabad, which hosted Wednesday's summit of the 10-nation Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO), sealed all border crossings two weeks ago, saying militants planned and executed recent terrorist attacks across the country from Afghan soil...Kabul rejects charges that anti-Pakistan militants are using Afghan soil for staging attacks in the neighbouring country. The Afghan government in turn has reiterated its long running allegations that Islamabad harbours sanctuaries and leaders of the Taliban waging a deadly insurgency in Afghanistan; charges Islamabad denies as baseless.

Afghans will not recognize Durand line, Karzai, *The Frontier Post*, March ³⁴²

The former Afghan President Hamid Karzai has said Afghanistan will not recognize Durand Line as a formal border between Afghanistan and Pakistan as he reacted towards Pakistan's move to close the transit and travel routes between the two countries. *"The Govt of Pakistan has no legal authority to dictate terms on the Durand Line, while we wish freedom for the people of FATA from FCR and other repressive measures, we remind the Govt of Pakistan that Afghanistan hasn't and will not recognize the Durand line."* Karzai said in a Twitter post. ...

Tensions Rise between Afghanistan and Pakistan, Michael Kugelman, *The Frontier Post*, March ⁵⁴³

... Pakistan has long accused Kabul of refusing to act against Pakistani militants on Afghan soil. It's an ironic allegation, given that Pakistan has itself long provided sanctuary to Afghan militants that stage attacks in Afghanistan. ... Pakistan has little incentive to crack down on the Afghan Taliban and its ally, the Haqqani network, because these groups help keep India at bay in Afghanistan. ... In short, Afghanistan and Pakistan are in a dangerous stalemate, with no resolution in sight. Fortunately, all-out war is unlikely. Afghanistan's army is in no position to take on its superior Pakistani counterpart; Afghan analysts have admitted that their military lacks sufficient long-range weaponry. ... *The crisis in Afghanistan-Pakistan relations raises*

⁴¹<http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/02-Mar-17/afghanistan-urges-pakistan-to-open-border-crossings>

⁴²<https://www.thefrontierpost.com/article/187463/afghanistan-will-not-recognize-durand-line-karzai>

⁴³<http://thefrontierpost.com/articleprint/187191/tensions-rise-between-afghanistan-and-pakistan>

uncomfortable questions for the administration of US President Donald Trump. If Pakistani shelling resumes and intensifies, Kabul may invoke the bilateral security agreement that governs the US military presence in Afghanistan and call on American forces to help defend against Pakistani strikes. ... Additionally, Kabul may call on India, a friend to both Afghanistan and the United States, to scale up military support. ... Stepped-up India-Afghanistan security cooperation—or mere perceptions of it—could prompt a piqued Pakistan to intensify its shelling in Afghanistan. ...

Sealing borders, Sikander Ahmed Shah & Abid Rizvi, *Dawn*, 14 March⁴⁴

Domestic terrorism is now, unfortunately, deep rooted and a function of structural problems and socioeconomic disparity caused by a weak state relying on decades of bad policy. Individuals who carry out terrorist acts are indeed criminals, but they are — at the same time — pawns and agents of a machine that thrives on the socioeconomic disenfranchisement of the people at the hands of political elites. There is a whole institutional network of terrorist organisations thriving in Pakistan and the use of lethal force against them might very well be justified. But socioeconomic and political reform aimed at achieving distributive justice would, in the long run, yield far more permanent results. The border closures as a tactic of reprisal or coercion would impact the lives of ordinary Pakistanis and Afghans, leading to greater human suffering, and only serve to radicalise hitherto peaceful elements of society.

Afghanistan will be used as Substrate to shift terrorism into Russia, Karzai, *The Frontier Post*, March 19⁴⁵

The former President of Afghanistan Hamid Karzai said US wants to use Afghanistan as substrate to shift terrorism into Russia. He said, “US wants to expand terrorism into Russia by using Afghanistan as substrate.” Further he said that ... “National Unity Government (NUG) should hold clear stance against USA and have United States government to fulfill its commitments specially the exceed of Pakistan, help Afghanistan with reality, or else United States of America should sit aside, and leave us alone so that we could stabilize Afghanistan with the regional countries, Russia, China cooperation.” ...

Pakistan hosts Afghan Taliban leaders to peace talks, *Dawn*, 24 March⁴⁶

Pakistani officials have hosted seven Taliban leaders in Islamabad to try and press them into peace talks ahead of a multination meeting in April in Moscow, according to two Taliban officials... The Two Taliban officials who

⁴⁴ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1320326/sealing-borders>

⁴⁵ <https://thefrontierpost.com/article/189587/afghanistan-would-be-used-substrate-shift-terrorism-russia-karzai>

⁴⁶ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1322487/pakistan-hosts-afghan-taliban-leaders-to-peace-talks>

talked to AP said the militant leaders used the Islamabad gathering, which took place last week, to press their own demands, including that Pakistan free Taliban figures from its jails...

Why border fencing may not work, Marvi Sirmed, *Daily Times*, 27 March⁴⁷

... *The unilateral fencing of the border might not yield favorable results in terms of stalling terrorist activity and their two-way infiltration unless similar management measures are adopted on the other side also.* Over last two years, Pakistan has unilaterally closed the border openings a number of times but it has done nothing except complicating things for civilians of both countries as well as negatively affecting trade and business.

PROVINCES & REGIONS

KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA AND FATA

Cabinet approves steps for Fata's merger with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Syed Irfan Raza, *Dawn*, 03 March⁴⁸

The government on Thursday approved a set of steps to be taken for proposed merger of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (Fata) with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and a 10-year reform package to bring the tribal region on a par with other developing areas of the country. ... Prime Minister's Adviser on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz, head of the reform committee, said at a press conference after the cabinet meeting that merger of Fata with KP would be completed in five years. *"We had four options for mainstreaming of Fata — to keep the status quo, to form a council on the pattern of Gilgit-Baltistan, to form a separate province or to merge it with KP — and we opted for the last one,"* he added.

Iron-fisted heritage, Editorial, *Daily Times*, 10 March⁴⁹

It is for this sole purpose that the federal government's recent bid to mainstream the tribal belt with a myriad of administrative, political, legal and social reforms still deserves much praise despite its long delay...The most controversial of these measures is the Rewaj Act — the provision of a parallel judicial system, which is being largely condemned as a draconian reminiscent of the old tribal system. Hailed as an attempt to preserve tribal customs, the proposed move would retain the old jirga system for civil and criminal cases in addition to calling for an appointment of a council of elders by the court to adjudicate disputes in

⁴⁷ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/27-Mar-17/why-border-fencing-may-not-work>

⁴⁸ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1318095/cabinet-approves-steps-for-fatas-merger-with-khyber-pakhtunkhwa>

⁴⁹ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/10-Mar-17/iron-fisted-heritage>

accordance with the local traditions. Given the track record of jirgas on the issues of women's rights, in particular, political parties and civil society groups have strongly denounced the new system, fearing the havoc its decrees would unleash upon vulnerable sections in FATA.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa belongs to Afghans: Achakzai, *The Frontier Post*, March 19⁵⁰

A Pashtun leader *Mahamood Khan Achakzai* has said that he would not allow anyone to harass Afghan refugees in their "own land". He directly said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province belongs to Afghans and they can live there without fear and irritation. "If Afghans are harassed in other parts of Pakistan, they should come here to the Pakhtunkhwa province, where no one can ask them for refugee cards, because it also belongs to them," Achakzai who leads the Pakhtunkhwa Millie Awami Party said. "Kabul and Islamabad should exercise extreme caution to resolve Torkham crossing conflict. Otherwise, they should leave the issue to the US and China, and they would resolve it within two weeks," he told Radio Ashna. ...

Phantom Fata folks, Amina Khan, *The Friday Times*, 24 March⁵¹

The irony of ironies is that mere days after the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (Fata) were merged with Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, a large chunk of its population is likely to be left out of the census.... This is happening because *the census takers are not marking down people who have been internally displaced.* ... Over time, many families (displaced because of the military operations) did return home—but their numbers are disputed.

In a first, Russian military delegation shown around North Waziristan, *The Frontier Post*, March 31⁵²

In an unprecedented development, Pakistan Army on Thursday (30 March 2017) took a Russian military delegation headed by Deputy Chief of General Staff, Colonel General Israkov Sergi Yuryevich to North Waziristan Agency to give them firsthand account of the country's anti-terror gains. *This was the first time any Russian military delegation was taken to the region once considered a hotbed of local and foreign militant outfits. The development suggests ever increasing ties between the two countries, which for years remained bitter cold-war rivals.* An Inter-Services Public Relations handout said the delegation was briefed about Pakistan Army's efforts to clear FATA from terrorists of all hue and colour.... Relations between Pakistan and Russia have seen significant

⁵⁰<https://thefrontierpost.com/article/189588/khyber-pakhtunkhwa-belongs-afghans-achakzai>

⁵¹ <http://www.thefridaytimes.com/tft/phantom-fata-folks/>

⁵²<https://thefrontierpost.com/article/191103/first-russian-military-delegation-shown-around-north-waziristan>

improvement over the past few years with both countries looking to bury their animosities of the cold war era.... Despite being in opposite camps in the 1980s, both Islamabad and Moscow are now cooperating and working closely to find a political solution of the long-running conflict.

GILGIT-BALTISTAN (GB)

HRCP demands end to rights abuse in Gilgit Baltistan, *The Dardistan Times*, 06 March ⁵³

Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) reported that hundreds of young political workers and rights activists are behind bars under Anti-Terrorist Act, which was enacted in Pakistan primarily to eliminate dangerous terrorist activities. Any voice for Rights in Gilgit-Baltistan is suppressed by law enforcement agencies, the report elaborated. ... In the absence of a constitutional framework, the indigenous people will eventually be at the mercy of special economic zone laws, band-aid ad hoc ordinances and out-of-control Chinese corporate rules and policies. The GB legislative assembly without any constitutional authority will remain a factory where unanimous resolutions are passed, day in and day out.

Tribal elders challenge govt's plan to merge FATA with KP, *Daily Times*, 11 March ⁵⁴

Petition in SC questions PM's authority to make fundamental decisions on future of FATA. Terms recommendations of reforms committee 'illegal and unconstitutional'. The petitioners claimed that a majority of the people in tribal areas are against the merger with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa...The government's claim that a majority of tribal people support the idea of Fata's merger with KP is absolutely false, added the petition. It said that the consultations held by the FATA reforms committee to seek the opinion of FATA residents regarding the merger are mere "eyewash", as Article 247 (6) requires the government to hold a tribal jirga to solicit the opinion of tribal people.

Gilgit-Baltistan as Pak province unacceptable: Resistance leaders, Editorial, *Voice of Vienna*, 18 March ⁵⁵

Declaring Pakistan as a prime party to Kashmir issue, *the Kashmiri leadership said that people in J&K have always regarded and accepted the role of Pakistan as a party to the issue. "But any step which may hamper the disputed status of Kashmir is unacceptable," the statement said. "We hail the role of*

⁵³ <http://www.dardistantimes.com/news/gilgit-baltistan/1730/hrcp-demands-end-rights-abuse-gilgit-baltistan>

⁵⁴ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/islamabad/11-Mar-17/tribal-elders-challenge-govts-plan-to-merge-fata-with-kp>

⁵⁵ <http://voiceofvienna.org/2017/03/18/gilgit-baltistan-as-pak-province-unacceptable-resistance-leaders/>

Pakistan for raising the issue at the international forums. But any deviation in its stance about Kashmir and its geographical entity is improper and will prove detrimental for Kashmir cause.”

Kashmir: AJK has consented to granting G-B province status, Editorial, *Voice of Vienna*, 20 March ⁵⁶

In what appears to be a push to get over the final hurdle, Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) Chief Minister Hafeezur Rehman claimed on Sunday that leadership of Azad Jammu and Kashmir had consented to the idea of granting constitutional status to G-B. *He said G-B would be able to extract maximum benefit from the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), adding that nefarious designs of the region's enemies would be foiled.* The chief minister further disclosed that a file containing recommendations from Sartaj Aziz's committee for the change of G-B's status had also been presented to Nawaz, who is expected to announce the change in the constitutional status soon.

Protest: Printing of more than a dozen newspapers in Gilgit-Baltistan suspended by owners, *Pamir Times*, 21 March ⁵⁷

It is pertinent to note that all the printed newspapers in Gilgit-Baltistan depend on government advertisements to generate their revenues... The Gilgit-Baltistan Newspapers Society (GBNS), a forum of the owners and editors of various newspapers, has indefinitely suspended printing of over a dozen dailies. Starting today, 21st of March, the newspapers will not be printed until the society's demands for payment of government advertisement dues is met. The newspaper society, in a press release, has said that various government departments owe the publications and media houses over 80 million rupees...

Gilgit-Baltistan delegation led by CM Hafeez visiting Xinjiang, *Pamir Times*, 22 March⁵⁸

A fourteen-member delegation of the Gilgit-Baltistan Government, led by the Chief Minister Hafiz Hafeezur Rehman, is visiting Urumqi from 22-27th of March....The Chinese delegation had visited all districts and held meetings with local elected leaders, civil society representatives and administration officials...

⁵⁶ <http://voiceofvienna.org/2017/03/20/kashmir-ajk-has-consented-to-granting-g-b-province-status/>

⁵⁷ <http://pamirtimes.net/2017/03/21/protest-printing-of-more-than-a-dozen-newspapers-in-gilgit-baltistan-suspended-by-owners/>

⁵⁸ <http://pamirtimes.net/2017/03/22/gilgit-baltistan-delegation-led-by-cm-hafeez-visiting-xinjiang-china/>

Protest: Journalists accuse GB govt of oppressing press, protest against closure of newspapers, *Pamir Times*, 28 March ⁵⁹

Journalists staged a protest demonstration in Gilgit today to condemn the government for not paying pending bills to newspapers. *They said that due to financial difficulties the newspapers are not being published, and the locals are deprived of information.* The protest was jointly organized by Gilgit Press Club, GB Newspaper Society, Gilgit Union of Journalists and Committee for Protection of Journalists.

Gilgit-Baltistan athletes shine at Special Olympics 2017, Akhtar Jamil Shiskin, *Pamir Times*, 27 March ⁶⁰

... However, the Government of Pakistan and GB have not played a positive role to support any kind of sports across GB. In this arena of global competition, they should pull their socks to support the youth by establishing training institutions and providing proper facilities for better preparation to compete at any level. Our athletes proved that their potential is not less than the others, however, the need of the time is to realized their needs through proper provision of training and facilities. *Only arranging receptions or photo sessions is not enough, rather government should invest in its youth to train and make them better citizens.*

Chinese Red Cross to set-up 50-bed hospital in Gilgit, *Pamir Times*, 29 March⁶¹

The Red Cross Society of China and the Pakistan Red Crescent Society are closely collaborating to establish a 10-bed hospital in Gawadar, and a 50-bed hospital in Gilgit, said a Press Release. The Gwadar Port Authority has allocated land for the hospital that will be completed within a month and inaugurated on May 6, 2017 by the President of China Red Cross Society, the release added....The two Societies will also set up more health centers along the route of China Pakistan Economic Corridor...

Kalash activists approach Peshawar High Court to include their religion in official identity documents, *Pamir Times*, 29 March ⁶²

Kalash activists today submitted an application in the Peshawar High Court to get judicial ruling over inclusion of their religion in official identity

⁵⁹ <http://pamirtimes.net/2017/03/28/protest-journalists-accuse-gb-govt-of-oppressing-press-protest-against-closure-of-newspapers/>

⁶⁰ <http://pamirtimes.net/2017/03/27/gilgit-baltistan-athletes-shine-at-special-olympics-2017/>

⁶¹ <http://pamirtimes.net/2017/03/29/chinese-red-cross-to-set-up-50-bed-hospital-in-gilgit/>

⁶² <http://pamirtimes.net/2017/03/29/kalash-activists-approach-peshawar-high-court-to-include-their-religion-in-official-identity-documents/>

documents....in their application prayed to the court to instruct the government authorities to include Kalasha religion in the NADRA database, CNIC, Passport and other official documents....*The distinct identity of Kalash religion, language and race have also not been recognized during the on-going census survey.* The Kalasha people have been complaining for long about the identity crisis they face due to exclusion of their religion and caste from the NADRA database.

Religion or Sect? Ismat Abbas, *Pamir Times*, 29 March⁶³

....there is a stark compartmentalization among communities belonging to different sects. *Even certain areas which are inhabited by a greater proportion of people belonging to one sect are 'no go areas' for others.* People have strictly devised their social interactions on the basis of their sectarian affiliations. The common religious rituals have grown their own separate identities, with mosques ostensibly representing a particular sect. Similarly, inter-sectarian marriages are considered to be a bombshell that would explode in to children who would be born infidels...

BALUCHISTAN

CM Sindh alleges Census Commission of wrong counting, *The Frontier Post*, March 17⁶⁴

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has said that he had some reports that high-rise buildings in which several apartments are houses are being counted as single house. "If it is true it is wrong and against the assurances given to him by Census Commission," CM Sindh said while talking to media. He said that he had written a letter to Federal Minister Ishaq Dar and had requested him to take necessary measures to make the census credible.

Will the real Baluchistan please stand up? Malik Achakzai, *The Friday Times*, 24 March ⁶⁵

For an exercise that seeks to unify a population statistically, the census has been rather divisive. In Baluchistan there are three camps: those who feel the government should forge ahead and those who feel that logistical concerns should be tackled first. Then there are the folks who just want to boycott it....At the heart of the debate are three issues. The biggest is the presence of Afghan refugees. Then people are worried that Baluch people displaced by internal

⁶³ <http://pamirtimes.net/2017/03/29/religion-or-sect/>

⁶⁴ <https://thefrontierpost.com/articleprint/189177/cm-sindh-alleges-census-commission-wrong-counting>

⁶⁵ <http://www.thefridaytimes.com/tft/will-the-real-baluchistan-please-stand-up/>

conflict won't get counted properly. And third, there are questions over how the census teams will manage to count such a low-density population spread out over such a large area in difficult to reach, remote villages.

Problems with census in Balochistan, Shezad Baloch, *The Express Tribune*,
March 31

... Nationalists have opposed a population census in the province for years, fearing that untrained officials would count the millions of illegal Afghan immigrants living in the province after fleeing war in their home country. According to a rough estimate, over three million Afghan nationals have entered Balochistan since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979.... Amidst growing fears that a census might lead to Pashtun claims of equal or majority population in Balochistan, a gathering of Baloch political parties... raised serious concerns about the census, and in particular about its ramifications for the province. *Three demands emerged from this gathering: that the census not be held until the repatriation of Afghan refugees; that it be delayed in areas where the Baloch had been internally displaced as a result of Baloch militancy; and that tribal elders be involved in conducting the census....* ... The influx of Afghan refugees and the internally displaced Baloch population, would definitely have a major impact on the credibility of the census, making it potentially unacceptable to even those nationalists who believe in the Federation of Pakistan. ... In a land where people are already suffering, more refugees and economic migrants could easily trigger a civil war.

KASHMIR

Falling on Deaf Ears, Editorial, *The Nation*, March 20⁶⁶

... The demand for talks on Kashmir (by Abdul Basit) first had fallen on deaf ears during the entirety of the current Indian regime, which has utilised a policy of hawkish nationalism to stall talks on all issues. Recent developments in India ensure that the High Commissioner's remarks could not have come at a worse time as far as their reception in India is concerned. ... *The recently appointed Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh- India's most populous state- Yogi Adityanath has been a vocal supporter of the more extreme tenets of this divisive Hindu nationalist ideology, advocating religious conversions and a cultural reclamation of "Hindu lands".* ... With the BJP securing this victory, the chance of a more reasonable faction in Indian politics coming to the fore has all but disappeared.

⁶⁶<http://nation.com.pk/editorials/20-Mar-2017/falling-on-deaf-ears>

HR violation in IOK: OCI body shows grave concerns, *The Frontier Post*,
March 30⁶⁷

Organisation of Islamic Countries' (OIC) Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC) delegation expressed serious concern over the reports of grave human rights violations in Indian-Occupied Kashmir. They regretted that India did not respond to the request for a fact-finding mission to visit held Kashmir to assess on ground human rights situation. A high-level delegation of the OIC, IPHRC led by Med S K Kaggwa from Uganda called on Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Raja Farooq Haider Khan here on Wednesday. ...

HAQQANI-AFFAIR

A dead Issue, Editorial, *The Nation*, March 17⁶⁸

... The Abbottabad raid, Memogate, and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) are words that may exist in the back of the government's head, but have disappeared from the daily vernacular and debate. *On Wednesday however, in response to a column by former ambassador to the United States Husain Haqqani ... the government has called for a commission to investigate these "serious claims" and one government minister has even petitioned the Supreme Court to charge the trio for treason.* It seems like we are back in 2011. True concern and outrage at the revelations is only a small part of these actions- *after all they are not revelations at all....* Why the entire ruckus then? *The answer lies closer at home. The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) is far from the steadfast government ally of the Dharna days and is fast positioning itself as an opposition to contend with. The pot shots its leaders have taken against the government have not gone unnoticed, nor have its diametrically opposed positions on issues such as Panama and the military courts. With the Supreme Court verdict on Panama expected any day, anyone and everyone is fair game, and the government has come out swinging. It is unfortunate that it has resorted to exhuming long buried skeletons to do this job....*

The Haqqani Investigation, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, March 18⁶⁹

... There can be no doubt that the allegations made by Mr Haqqani require the closest of scrutiny, and that in the daylight rather than in the crepuscular gloom of some political basement. *Also needing to be dragged into the daylight, and in parallel with any inquiry into the doings of Mr Haqqani, as*

⁶⁷<https://thefrontierpost.com/articleprint/191071/hr-violations-iok-oci-body-shows-grave-concern>

⁶⁸<http://nation.com.pk/editorials/17-Mar-2017/a-dead-issue>

⁶⁹<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1359188/the-haqqani-investigation/>

well as his political masters, is the completed and final version of the Abbottabad report into the killing of Osama bin Laden. This has been suppressed by the government ...

Pairing a release of the Abbottabad report with an inquiry into the deployment of CIA operatives in-country may be excruciatingly difficult for the government, but if it is to hold on to a shred of credibility then nettles have to be grasped. ... *It would appear that Mr Haqqani was operating within the law if perhaps not strictly within ethical frameworks, yet he was not acting independently but following the orders of an elected government which in turn appears to have been working with, if not actually at the behest of, the Americans.* ... [A] mechanism must be found by which clear and unequivocal conclusions may be reached on the actions of all those involved (in the crime). The nation deserves and expects nothing less.

Haqqani's disclosure confirms state institutions' concern: ISPR, Kamran

Yousaf, *The Express Tribune*, March 29⁷⁰

Hussain Haqqani's disclosure ... has vindicated the stance of the country's institutions, the military said on Wednesday in its first formal reaction to the former envoy's article in *The Washington Post*. "Views of Hussain Haqqani published in a mainstream US newspaper, especially his account on issuance of visas, vindicate the stance of Pakistan's state institutions," Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) chief Lt-Gen Asif Ghafoor said in a post on Twitter. "The veracity of concerns about his role in the entire issue also stands confirmed," the military's chief spokesman added in another tweet. ... Security forces have maintained all along that the ex-envoy could not have worked alone, without keeping the civilian government in the loop. ... PPP, however, fiercely defended the move.

RELATIONSHIP WITH INDIA

Zardari flays PM for not speaking against Indian terrorism, *Daily Times*, 01 March⁷¹

Former president Asif Zardari on Tuesday said India is involved in sabotaging peace in Pakistan. *"Everyone knows that India is involved in anti-Pakistan*

⁷⁰<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1368777/state-institutions-concerns-regarding-hussain-haqqani-stand-vindicated-ispr/>

⁷¹ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/01-Mar-17/zardari-flays-pm-for-not-speaking-against-indian-terrorism>

activities in Afghanistan, but the government has no realization of this issue. We do not understand foreign policy of Mian Sahib. Government which cannot appoint foreign minister for four years how can it would be successful to present and get accepted Pakistan's point of view before world powers. He expressed these views while talking to reporters after condoling over the murder of Levies Risaldar Bashir Bizenjo. "Mian Sahib must know India has established its consulates in our neighbour [Afghanistan] for what purpose and what India was doing there."

On grand strategy, Javid Husain, *The Dawn*, March 3⁷²

... [G]rand strategy aims to bring into a coherent whole a country's political, economic, security and diplomatic policies to serve its best interests. ... *Economic stagnation or a slower growth rate than that of an opponent would put a country at a growing disadvantage with the passage of time and, thus, pose a long-term security threat. This is precisely Pakistan's current position; its growth rate has generally been slower than India's for the last decade and a half.* The greatest error in grand strategy is strategic overstretch. ... It leads to a state of strategic exhaustion and national demoralisation. ... The absence of the institutional framework to perform this role in Pakistan is perhaps the greatest obstacle to the formulation of a viable grand strategy. *The linchpin of Pakistan's grand strategy ... should be to make the goal of rapid economic growth our top priority, and subordinate everything else in the pursuit of this supreme national objective. ... It is imperative, therefore, to have peace in our neighbourhood and avoid major armed conflict to allow us to allocate the lion's share of our resources to economic development while maintaining a credible security deterrent at the lowest level of forces and armaments.*

The pursuit of a low-risk and non-adventurist foreign policy is a must for this purpose. This conclusion has direct relevance to our India and Afghanistan policies. Foreign policy objectives that are overly ambitious must be avoided as we can't let ourselves fall into the trap of the strategic overstretch and exhaustion in which we seem to be caught at the moment.

Won't hand over Kulbhushan Yadav to India, Senate assured, Ijaz Kakakhel, *Daily Times*, 04 March ⁷³

Ruling out the possibility of handing over Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) agent Kulbhushan Yadav to India, Adviser to Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz on Friday told the Senate that process had been initiated to prosecute the Indian spy in Pakistani courts. *The adviser said a list of questioners had also been handed over to India to seek more information from*

⁷²<https://www.dawn.com/news/1318007/on-grand-strategy>

⁷³ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/islamabad/04-Mar-17/wont-hand-over-kulbhushan-yadav-to-india-senate-assured>

them in the light of the statements of Kulbhushan Yadav. He said the purpose of sharing dossiers with the United Nations was to prove the direct and indirect Indian intervention in Pakistan.

Case for Indian spy's prosecution being prepared, Amir Wasim, *Dawn*, 04 March ⁷⁴

Adviser to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz has said the government is preparing a case against Indian spy Kulbhushan Jadhav for his prosecution, dismissing the possibility of him being handed over to India. Kulbhushan Jadhav, a serving Indian navy officer and an alleged operative of the country's intelligence agency Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), had been caught by security forces in March last year. *His capture was flaunted by the military as "a proof of Indian interference and state-sponsored terrorism".*

India to attend Indus Waters Commission meeting in Pakistan, Khalid Hasnain, *Dawn*, 04 March ⁷⁵

India has agreed to participate in an annual meeting of the permanent Indus Waters Commission scheduled to be held in Pakistan this month. "The last regular meeting of the commission was held two years ago and it wasn't held last year...India has finally arrived at the decision that the treaty remains intact and cannot be suspended or ignored at any level," the former commissioner added. Mr Shah said India would try to bring up issues pertaining to the Ratle and Kishanganga dams at the meeting, but Pakistan would not want this to happen as it had already approached the World Bank and asked it to resolve those issues.

Uri attacks: India releases AJK suspected facilitators, *The Express Tribune*, March ⁹⁷⁶

India's National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Wednesday said it had released two teenagers from Azad Jammu and Kashmir arrested last year in connection with the attack on a military installation in Uri, Occupied Kashmir. According to IANS, the agency said it had handed over Faisal Hussain Awan and his friend Ahsan Khursheed to Indian military authorities so that they could be sent back to their homes. In a report last month, NIA investigators admitted they could find no evidence to link the two youths to the September 18, 2016 attack, which left 18 Indian soldiers dead. "Hussain and Khursheed have been released and handed over to the Army's 16 Corps

⁷⁴ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1318337/case-for-indian-spys-prosecution-being-prepared>

⁷⁵ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1318334/india-to-attend-indus-waters-commission-meeting-in-pakistan>

⁷⁶ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1350206/uri-attack-india-releases-ajk-suspected-facilitators/>

headquarters today (Wednesday) for sending them back to Pakistani authorities," IANS quoted an NIA official as saying.

India's massive build-up of arms major concern for Pakistan, *Daily Times*, 10 March⁷⁷

"India's massive arms buying spree, making it one of the top arms importers in the world, was driven by its desire for regional hegemony and global power status. Pakistan, on the other hand, had been compelled to acquire and maintain a deterrent capability to ensure its national security." During the weekly press briefing, Foreign Office Spokesman Nafees Zakaria said Pakistan would maintain minimum deterrence capability to safeguard its national security. He also said that the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) considering membership of India should keep this in mind that it had become one of the largest buyers of weapons. He claimed that Pakistan never wanted to engage in any kind of arms race, nuclear or conventional. "

More hostility, Editorial, *The Nation*, March 13⁷⁸

... During the recent state election campaign, Modi received a lot of popular support for the fake surgical strikes across the Line of Control (LoC), which means that more skirmishes and fire will be received by Kashmiris and Pakistanis across the Indian border. ... *With official engagement between India and Pakistan already on hold, we cannot be optimistic that the Indian state will reach out to Pakistan. If attacking Pakistan is getting BJP the popular vote, then the issue of Kashmir and the decision to review and renege on the Indus Water Treaty will never be on the table for resolution, and Pakistan can only expect to be further antagonised. ...*

The method in India is madness, Awais Bin Wasi, *The Nation*, March 14⁷⁹

On March 8, 2017 India's National Investigation Agency (NIA) released two Pakistani youths whom it had arrested in connection with the last year's attack on a military base in Uri, Jammu and Kashmir that had killed 19 soldiers. ... *This is not an isolated example where Pakistan was initially blamed for carrying out an attack but later on absolved the accused of any involvement in it.* The investigations carried out by Indian courts of a number of terrorist incidents occurred in India blatantly belie Indian's claim of external involvement—a thinly veiled reference to Pakistan. Rather, it brings to fore the Hindutva-Military nexus. Following incidents substantiate my proposition (like in Malegaon Blast. Makkah Masjid, Samjuta Express, among others.)

⁷⁷ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/10-Mar-17/indias-massive-build-up-of-arms-major-concern-for-pakistan-fo>

⁷⁸<http://nation.com.pk/editorials/13-Mar-2017/more-hostility>

⁷⁹<http://nation.com.pk/columns/14-Mar-2017/the-method-in-india-s-madness>

So this phenomenon of unfounded accusation against Pakistan needs to be seen in Shakespearean words “method in madness”. *Seeing the Indian track record of taking military actions in the aftermath of such incidents without carrying out proper investigation, the*

Modi real, the wave unreal, Jawed Naqvi, *Dawn* 14 March⁸⁰

Ambedkar told us that Hindu-Muslim riots create a transient Hindu identity and in peacetime everyone goes back to their caste jostling. We should add here without demur that a communal riot might not be necessary today if the media can be harnessed to poison the minds ‘peacefully’. *Mr Modi is a gifted orator, the media his force multiplier*. The caste reality also extends to Muslims even if the fact is seldom acknowledged. So why did many Muslims vote for the BJP, as the results suggest, even though Hindutva leaders mocked and abused them? We have no evidence to go by Ms Mayawati’s claims that the electronic voter machines were rigged.

India’s Saffron King, Daily Times, 15 March⁸¹

Despite Modi’s impromptu visit to Pakistan in 2015 – which saw our prime minister breach all protocol and go personally to the airport to receive him – *India, under his stewardship, has engaged in what may be described as an overall more aggressive foreign policy towards Pakistan*. Most notable has been the way the Indian premier is relentlessly seeking to recapture the narrative on Kashmir. Deflecting widespread and documented evidence of human rights abuses in Indian-held Kashmir, he has opted to ‘internationalise’ the Balochistan issue with his framing of the Baloch separatist groups as freedom fighters

The fear of Hindu Rashtra: Should India’s Muslims keep away from electoral Politics? Ajaz Ashraf, *Dawn* 15 March⁸²

Indeed, those with historical perspective think Uttar Pradesh of 2017 mirrors the political ambience that existed there between 1938 and 1946 – a seemingly unbridgeable Hindu-Muslim divide, a horrifyingly communalised public discourse, and a contest for power based on mobilisation along religious lines. But what irks Hindus even more is that Muslims constitute nearly one-third of all members in panchayats and local urban bodies. ... It is not that Hindu panchayat members are less corrupt. But every third panchayat member being Muslim has given credibility to the narrative that Muslims are being favoured.”

⁸⁰ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1320325/modi-real-the-wave-unreal>

⁸¹ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/15-Mar-17/indias-saffron-king>

⁸² <https://www.dawn.com/news/1320457/the-fear-of-hindu-rashtra-should-indias-muslims-keep-away-from-electoral-politics>

India reluctant to send 24 witnesses to Pakistan in Mumbai case, *Daily Times*, 16 March ⁸³

The Indian government is reluctant to send its 24 witnesses to Pakistan to record their statements in the Mumbai terror attack case, the prosecution told an anti-terrorism court conducting the trial. In a reply to Pakistan's letter regarding sending 24 Indian witnesses to record their statements in the Mumbai attack case, New Delhi has asked Islamabad to re-investigate the case and also demanded trial of Jammāt-ud-Dawā (JuD) chief Saeed and Lashkar-e-Taiba operation commander Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi in the light of evidence it (India) had provided to it.

Pak blames India for imperiling region's peace, *Dawn*, 17 March ⁸⁴

...He hit out at the BJP government for using "Pakistan card" in their domestic politics, saying it was "unfortunate and regrettable"... Foreign Office Spokesman Nafees Zakaria said at the weekly media briefing on Thursday. Mr Zakaria said India's belligerent posture, irrational defence build-up — being the largest importer of defence equipment in the region — and its hegemonic designs were endangering peace and security in the region and beyond. "India has to learn to live in peace with all its neighbours, including Pakistan".

For Modi, the only way is UP, Najmuddin A. Shaikh, *The Friday Times*, 17 March ⁸⁵

... One must accept that Modi will determine the course India will take without any checks on his power... The odds are that the victory in the UP Assembly elections will ensure that in the 2019 national elections Modi will emerge with an *even larger* majority or at the very least continue to maintain the comfortable majority in the Lok Sabha that he currently enjoys. *What is noteworthy, however, is that unlike the Jan Sangh of 1977 or the BJP of Vajpayee, Amit Shah chose not to field even a single Muslim candidate. And yet the BJP did garner votes in these constituencies and win seats for which Muslim candidates should have been seen as winning contenders. ... But on the face of it, there is a case to be made for the assertion that Modi was able to create his own rainbow coalition ignoring the communal divide.*

⁸³ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/16-Mar-17/india-reluctant-to-send-24-witnesses-to-pakistan-in-mumbai-case-prosecution>

⁸⁴ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1320973/islamabad-blames-new-delhi-for-imperiling-regions-peace>

⁸⁵ <http://www.thefridaytimes.com/tft/for-modi-the-only-way-is-up/>

Thank you, Modi, for proving that partition saved the Subcontinent's Muslims from extinction, Shakir Lakhani, *The Express Tribune*, March 18⁸⁶

Dear Mr Narendra Modi,

I was not at all surprised that your party, Bharatiya Janata Party (the BJP), swept the recent Uttar Pradesh (UP) elections. ... *It was in your state of Gujarat (when you were the chief minister) that the genocide of over 2,000 Muslims took place. ... But why should you have done anything to stop the killings, Mr Modi? The Hindu vote was important for your party and the destruction of the Babri Mosque helped your party become popular. Your men destroyed five hundred mosques and shrines of Muslim saints while the slaughter of Muslim men, women and children was being carried out in your state in 2002.* And you cannot deny that it was your blatant anti-Muslim agenda that helped your party win the national elections in 2014.

... *Mr Jinnah wanted a separate country for India's Muslims, because he knew that in a united India, Muslims would have practically no rights. He knew that they would have been in danger of being massacred, which has repeatedly been proved by Gujarat's Muslims and those that are being killed in hundreds of communal riots in India.* So, Mr Modi thank you for proving that Partition saved the subcontinent's Muslims from extinction!

Modi picks anti Muslim firebrand to lead UP, *Daily Times*, 19 March⁸⁷

The rise of the Hindu priest-turned-politician in Uttar Pradesh, a state prone to sectarian strife, surprised many after Modi made his development agenda the focus of his campaign in the region, which is traditionally fractured along caste and religious lines. A five-time MP from the BJP, Adityanath is a popular leader known for his fiery Hindu rhetoric who has stirred controversies over his polarising and inflammatory speeches against Muslims - who form nearly 20 percent of the state's population. Most recently, he lauded US President Trump's travel ban that aimed to halt immigrants from a handful of Muslim-majority countries from entering America, saying India needed similar action to check terrorism.

⁸⁶<http://blogs.tribune.com.pk/story/47804/thank-you-modi-for-proving-that-partition-saved-the-subcontinents-muslims-from-extinction/>

⁸⁷ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/world/19-Mar-17/modi-picks-anti-muslim-firebrand-to-lead-up>

Don't provide India opportunity to harm our movement: Shabir Shah asks Pakistan, Editorial, *Voice of Vienna*, 19 March⁸⁸

Chairman Democratic Freedom Party (DFP) Shabir Ahmad Shah on Saturday said *Pakistan's move to declare Gilgit-Baltistan as its fifth province will prove detrimental to the disputed nature of Jammu Kashmir...Pakistan should realise the sensitivity of the whole situation and not provide India any opportunity to exploit the freedom movement of Kashmiris,*" he said. The DFP chairman said the people of Gilgit-Baltistan are free to decide their political future but being part of the union of Jammu and Kashmir, they should wait until the UN resolutions are implemented in all regions of the State. Terming Pakistan as a "sincere advocate" of Kashmiris, Shah asked the country to "plead our case in the best possible way".

Hindutva Personified, Michael Kugelman, *Daily Times*, 20 March⁸⁹

The appointment of Adityanath may signal the BJP's decision to move its social agenda to center stage. It also underscores how the BJP's political strategy has evolved over the nearly three years it has held power at the center. From a purely political perspective, appointing Adityanath is a stroke of genius. He is a highly successful politician-as evidenced by the five elections he's won as an MP. For Modi and the BJP, elevating one of Uttar Pradesh's most popular politicians to the top spot is a move that will play well among constituents. *And yet, Adityanath's ascension to power in India's largest state raises troubling questions about the country's future political trajectory-not to mention legitimate concerns about the well-being of its many million non-Hindus.*

Ex-Minister slams PM on 'India Friendship', *The Express Tribune*, March 21⁹⁰

Former federal minister *Muhammad Ali Durrani said Pakistan was created in the name of Allah and He is the one who will protect our country from evil eyes. No ruler can change the basic nature of an Islamic Pakistan. Challenging Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, he demanded that a referendum should be held on premier's assumption, asking the nation if they wanted friendship with India or freedom of Kashmir.* Nawaz will lose if he runs for the next elections on the basis of his recent claims regarding the maintenance of friendship with India, he added. ... Our friendship depended on the resolution of Kashmir issue. Any illusion of friendship with Modi, devoid of Kashmir, was sheer deviation from the Ideology of Pakistan, he said.

⁸⁸ <http://voiceofvienna.org/2017/03/19/dont-provide-india-opportunity-to-harm-our-movement-shabir-shah-asks-pakistan/>

⁸⁹ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/world/20-Mar-17/hindutva-personified>

⁹⁰<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1361049/ex-minister-slams-pm-india-friendship/>

Pak-India dialogue, Editorial, *Dawn*, 21 March⁹¹

Almost a year and a half later, with Pakistan having taken a few steps against India-centric militant groups and large-scale counterterrorism operations under way across the country, the dialogue process can be restarted in a more conducive environment... *Having established his party as the dominant political force in India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has an opportunity to pivot and return to the path of dialogue with Pakistan.* Mr Modi also now has the benefit of greater experience — the unexpected return to dialogue and the unveiling of the so-called comprehensive dialogue process with additional baskets in late 2015 was a commendable effort, but was not adequately militancy-proofed...

Indian sufi clerics blame Pakistani newspaper for their troubles, *Dawn*, 21 March⁹²

A little-known Urdu newspaper in Pakistan had accused two Indian Sufi clerics of being RAW agents thus getting them into trouble with intelligence sleuths who wanted to know the truth, the men said in Delhi on Monday. Syed Asif Nizami and Nazim Nizami, who went missing in Lahore, returned to New Delhi on Monday... According to *The Hindu*, the clerics blamed a Pakistani newspaper for the whole episode without going into details. *The newspaper had apparently reported that the clerics worked for the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) and the Muttahida Qaumi Movement, following which they were questioned by a Pakistan law enforcement agency*, *The Hindu* said.

Hindutva India, Secular Pakistan? Kunwar Khuldune Shahid, *The Nation*, March 21⁹³

“...so drag these (Muslims’) mothers and sisters out of the graves, and rape the corpses.” ... says Yogi Adityanath in a video. ... As the BJP was summoning a proponent of the Hindutva version of Two Nation Theory into the UP CM office, the Prime Minister of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif was presenting its historic negation while addressing Karachi’s Hindu community at a Holi event: *“Pakistan was not made so one religion can dominate over others. Its creation itself was a struggle against religious oppression.” ...A progressive reform of the ‘ideology of Pakistan’, should look to the follies of the Congress leadership and the British imperialistic forces for the inevitability of Pakistan, more so than underscoring the rhetoric used by the League to delineate the differences between Hindus and Muslims.* ... On Sunday, President Mamnoon also passed

⁹¹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1321524/pak-india-dialogue>

⁹² <https://www.dawn.com/news/1321834/indian-sufi-clerics-blame-pakistani-newspaper-for-their-troubles>

⁹³<http://nation.com.pk/columns/21-Mar-2017/hindutva-india-secular-pakistan>

the Hindu Marriage Bill into law. ... the law would now protect Hindu marriages and families. ... *Meanwhile, the BJP at its strongest hour chose Adityanath- who has incited torching of mosques- as the populist face of the party, to maintain stranglehold over the Hindu vote for 2019 and beyond. ...*

India jeopardizing stability in region, *Daily Times*, 24 March ⁹⁴

Addressing the Pakistan Day parade at the Shakarparian Parade Ground, the president said Pakistan wanted peaceful and friendly relations with its neighbours. *However, he regretted the irresponsible attitude of India and its continuous violations at the Line of Control as well as the Working Boundary had put the region's peace and stability at risk.* Mamnoon termed Kashmir an 'unfinished agenda of the sub-continent's partition' and said Pakistan would continue to extend moral, political and diplomatic support to its Kashmiri brethren. He urged upon the international community to fulfill its obligation in this regard so as to realize the dream of regional stability and sustainable peace.

Modi-Yogi duo will inspire their counterparts in Pakistan, Mohammad Shehzad, *Daily Times*, 27 March ⁹⁵

....Yogi's counterparts in Pakistan — the self-proclaimed protectors of the two-nation theory who have also deployed themselves on the borders of Islam — are in a state of shock. With the decisive victory of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the UP, they look at Indian democracy and secularism as 'endangered species'. They are cranking out columns, press releases, statements and social media updates to inform the world about the evils that Yogi-Modi duo would inflict on India that would ultimately lead it to the brink of destruction. In 2013, their bête noir was Narendra Modi. In 2016, the bugbear was Donald Trump and now it is Yogi Adityanath. Our hardliners are always looking for a pet peeve to keep their followers united just like states that need permanent enemies to keep nations united.

Pakistan arrests 100 Indian fishermen, *Daily Times*, 27 March ⁹⁶

Pakistan has arrested at least 100 Indian fishermen for illegally fishing in its waters, officials said on Sunday. The Maritime Security Agency (MSA) made the arrests Saturday night, and also impounded 19 wooden boats, a security official told AFP on condition of anonymity because he is not authorised to speak to the media...

⁹⁴ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/24-Mar-17/india-jeopardising-stability-in-region>

⁹⁵ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/27-Mar-17/modi-yogi-duo-will-inspire-their-counterparts-in-pakistan>

⁹⁶ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/27-Mar-17/pakistan-arrests-100-indian-fishermen>

India's doctrinal duplicity, Beenish Altaf, *The Nation*, March 29⁹⁷

... Vipin Narang, a nuclear strategist from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, managed to grab the attention (of the March 2017 Carnegie International Nuclear Policy) conference attendees by inkling that: *“there is increasing evidence that India will not allow Pakistan to go first” (to use its nuclear weapons). ...It is impossible to completely disarm a nuclear weapons state. If a nuclear weapon state is on the other side, one has to face not only massive retaliation but a nuclear counter attack, in response. ... [T]here is another way of looking into Vipin's above quoted comments; there is a direct indication of Indian inclination towards the doctrinal duplicity. Meaning, thereby, varying in case of Pakistan and China. On one hand, Indian nuclear strategists are on their verge of launching preemptive nuclear strike on Pakistan by flushing off its No-First-Use (NFU) policy and on the other hand they're keeping the same doctrine for China. It is a clear double standard of its nuclear doctrinal policy of NFU. ...*

FROM URDU & ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Name of Kulbhushan Yadav is enough, Editorial, *Ummat*, March 5⁹⁸

Majority of the governments in Pakistan are known for their handing over foreign agents to their origin countries. They themselves are unable to bring traitors like Altaf Hussain back. ... Everyone is familiar of the fact that because of his business interests and personal and family relations with Narendra Modi, Nawaz Sharif wants to have better relations with India. If Nawaz Sharif is not taking name of Kulbhushan Yadav, it is because he does not want Modi to be angry. Still if Sartaj Aziz say that Nawaz Sharif will take the name at the right time, he should be asked when that right time is going to come!

“General Durrani keeps going”, Mohammad Aslam Khan, *Nawa-i-Waqt*, March 9⁹⁹

Speaking to the reporters on the sides of a conference on “Combating Terrorism” organised by the Institute for Defence studies and Analysis (IDSA), New Delhi, Durrani said that the terrorists who had attacked Mumbai in 2008 had come from Pakistan. It was a classic cross border attack. He said that I do

⁹⁷<http://nation.com.pk/blogs/29-Mar-2017/india-s-doctrinal-duplicity-no-first-use-nuclear-policy-for-china-but-not-for-pakistan>

⁹⁸<http://ummat.net/2017/03/05/news.php?p=idr1.gif>

⁹⁹<http://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/Lahore/2017-03-09/page-14/detail-8>

not like to accept it but its true. The defence experts of South Asian know the open secret that IDSA is a RAW institute.

General Durrani continued and said that he was removed for saying same thing in 2008. Is not that enough for you? ... *The timing of the re-creating the issue is significant. Durrani's statement has hurt the Pakistanis. It's meant to deflate the increasing pressure building on India about Kulbhushan Yadav and weaken case against him. It appears that the Indian lobby has played the card at the right time. It has hit the hearts and souls of the people and the Pakistani Army. ...*

Victory of Modi a message for Pakistan, Mohammad Aslam Khan, *Nawa-Waqt*, March 15¹⁰⁰

The assembly elections in the five states of India has a strong message for Pakistan. ... *The hate-monger (Nafrat ka saudagar) Modi had said in Punjab that he would use the water of the Sind River to irrigate the infertile land of Punjab. This was an open announcement of war against Pakistan. ... Modi's foreign policy, however, has been aggressive vis-à-vis Pakistan. It's likely that he would continue it for winning the 2019 general elections.* It's expected given this background that firing along the LoC, threats about stopping water, interference in the internal affairs and creating difficulties at the international level is going to continue.

India's new conspiracy against Pakistan, Sikander K. Baloch, *Nawa-i-Waqt*, March 17¹⁰¹

... *Under the leadership of Modi, the Indian ministers and the MPs take pride in criticising Pakistan. One policy that is being used against Pakistan is directed at "Azad Jammu Kashmir" (AJK) and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB). Modi's agenda which he had spoken about in his speech on 15 August 2016, is being implement now.* One of the MPs of the ruling extremist party (*inteha pasand jamaat*) Nishikant Dubey has proposed a bill in the Indian parliament demanding 5 seats to be reserved for AJK and GB. ... *There has been a visible change in the India's behavior since it came close to US. The change is unfortunately directed against Pakistan. India has increased its defence budget by 10 per cent which is now \$53.5 billion.* It is keen to be able to manufacture weapons itself. ... Despite its differences with China, India would not dare to go to war as the 1962 defeat still haunts it. For Pakistan, situation remains volatile.

ECO conference successful: views of Pakistan's isolation false, Editorial, *Nawa-i-Waqt*, March 2¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰<http://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/Lahore/2017-03-15/page-14/detail-8>

¹⁰¹<http://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/Lahore/2017-03-17/page-14/detail-10>

¹⁰²<http://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/Lahore/2017-03-02/page-14/detail-7>

The 13th summit of the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO), formed in 1985 by Pakistan and Turkey and expanded in 1992, was successfully held in Islamabad. The summit was held in Pakistan after 22 years in a peaceful environment. ... *If any country is worried about the success of the ECO summit in Islamabad, it is India. India did not allow the SAARC conference to happen in November 2016. Narendra Modi, for the purpose of isolating Pakistan, built pressure on Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and Maldives to boycott the conference. ...*

Terrorism is not completely eliminated from Pakistan. We have a cunning and shrewd enemy like India (*Bharat jaisa makaar aur ayaar dushman*). ... The perception created by India that Pakistan was isolated was negated when 36 countries participated in the naval military exercises few days back. ... *Many countries outside the region have expressed their wish to join the project. India was claiming Iran to be its friend. But Iran's wish to join the CPEC is a blow on the India.*

"Pakistan ke khelaf makhloot jang", (Hybrid-War against Pakistan), Editorial, *Jang*, March 5¹⁰³, 2017

A hybrid war has been imposed on Pakistan by the US and India. The current terrorist incidents in Pakistan are part of this hybrid war, argues Russian journalist and analyst *Andrew Korybko*. Mr. Korybko says that US and India are fighting a hybrid war against Pakistan and using terrorist groups present in Afghanistan, particularly the ISIS. Due to these reasons Pakistan is in a defensive position in this war. ... *India and the US are using terrorists in Afghanistan to weaken Pakistan. They feel that growing terror attacks will make Pakistan less attractive for the international investors and stakeholders.* ... Along with terrorism, they are also indulging in information warfare and negative propaganda about Pakistan. ... According to Andrew, *India is taking revenge on Pakistan by conducting terror activities and trying to create a gulf between political and military leadership.* As per the Andrew's analysis, Pakistan has to come out of its defensive position to counter this hybrid war. ... He has also said that the prevailing situation in the region and the world at large, is suitable for Pakistan.

The debate to make Gilgit-Baltistan a province (Gilgit-Baltistan ko subah banana ka bahas), Editorial, *Mahasib*, 18 March ¹⁰⁴

India is trying to spoil the CPEC project and is claiming that GB is a part of a disputed territory and no other country can undertake such a major project in this land (referring to China). By India's claim, GB is part of Jammu and

¹⁰³<http://e.jang.com.pk/03-05-2017/karachi/pic.asp?picname=277388>

¹⁰⁴ <http://mahasib.com.pk/epaper/page.php?id=4&edition=gilgit&dt=18-03-2017>

Kashmir and hence a de facto integral part of India. India has tried to create a propaganda within Balochistan and says that Pakistan has forcefully kept the land as its part and now it is trying to suggest the same thing for GB... Pakistan along with China is on the verge of exploiting resources in the region....

Afgan-Senators ask for cancelling Afghan-America Strategic Pact, Report Mohammad Qasim, *Ummat*, March 21¹⁰⁵

Afghanistan Senators have asked for dissolving the Strategic-partnership agreement with America. The senators said that there was possibility of more bloodshed if the agreement was continued. ... According to a source, *the presence of the American troops in Afghanistan has been fueling insurgency and instability. American troops kill civilians which boosts the morale and local support of the Taliban.* The source said that two years back it was thought when Ashraf Ghani had signed the agreement that it would help in bringing stability and peace in Afghanistan but it has increased instability. ...

Foundation of Pakistan, Amjid Chaudhry, *Ummat*, March 24¹⁰⁶

Islamabad High Court judge, *Justice Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui put it rightly by saying that geographical boundaries of the country could not save it if its ideological boundary falls apart....* The 23 March 1940 Resolution became the foundation of Pakistan. The base of the resolution was religion. ... *The struggle began with only and only religion as its base along with the slogan "what does Pakistan stand for.... la ilah illallah". Otherwise, we did not differ much from the Hindus and Sikhs other than religion. ... We should know our foundation and strengthen it. The media and all those instruments that are being used by our enemy against us need to be closed.* A state can be strong only when it would have a strong ideology as its base. The remarks of Justice Shaukat Aziz need to be given a serious thought.

Islam, military alliance and reservations! Asrar Bukhari, *Nawa-i-Waqt*, March 30¹⁰⁷

... The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) had given some hope of the unity of the Muslim world but it could not progress. Now a military alliance of the Muslim countries is being forged. Only in Pakistan the idea is being rendered controversial. ... On the other hand, *it is being said that Iran sees that alliance directed against it. In that case Iran should retrospect why 41 Muslim countries have come together against it. ... Iran has right to flag its apprehensions. So has Pakistan. Is not Iran aware of the fact that India is an enemy of the very existence of Pakistan? Despite that Iran did a defence*

¹⁰⁵<http://ummat.net/2017/03/21/news.php?p=story6.gif>

¹⁰⁶<http://ummat.net/2017/03/24/news.php?p=idr2.gif>

¹⁰⁷<http://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/Lahore/2017-03-30/page-15/detail-11>

agreement with India in 2002. It allowed the Chabahar port to be built against the Gwadar Port in Pakistan. ...

ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Khara Sach, *Zem TV*, 10 March

Mubashir Lucman in the Programme “*Khara Sach*” interviews Former President Gen (R) Pervez Musharraf and asks him about the Pakistan army’s new counter terrorism operation Radd-ul-Fasaad. He emphasizes and asks, what are the reasons the army started this new operation as there is already an operation Zarb-e-Azb to fight terrorism? To which Musharraf replies that it has happened because *Pakistan does not have a holistic and unified plan to fight terrorism*. Zarb-e-Azb was concentrated more in the North Waziristan and was later extended to Karachi but it was not allowed to take off in the Punjab region. Now that the new operation has started in Punjab under the umbrella of Radd-ul-Fasaad. He underlines and says that, “I have been reiterating from the beginning that there should be a holistic way to defeat terrorism and for that a proper nation action plan should be brought out”. ... *Bringing in the India factor in the Afghanistan-Pakistan relations, Mubashir comments that Afghanistan Government has given shelter to all those terrorists who are under Pakistan’s watch list and wanted in Pakistan*. To this Musharraf agrees and adds, Afghan government is doing all these on the instructions from India. He expresses his sadness over US playing a blind eye in recognizing India’s interference in Afghanistan and says the India factor in Afghanistan has a direct implication and impact on Pakistan. He accepts that there is a failure of foreign policy of Pakistan in Afghanistan and that India has succeeded in making enroutes into the Afghan soil.

For details, see: <http://www.zemtv.com/2017/03/09/khara-sach-with-mubashir-lucman-9th-march-2017/>

Har Feraz, *Zem TV*, 10 March

In the current news analysis Programme, “*Har Feraz*”, Host Jamil Farooqi and guest analyst Orya Maqbool Jan take stock of the recent elections in UP in context to BJP’s landslide victory. *Jamil bringing in the India-Pakistan factor emphasizes, it has to be seen after winning the elections in UP, what will be Modi’s approach towards Muslims in India and what will be India’s policy towards Pakistan?*

To this Mr. Maqbool replies that the any sort of change in the internal politics in India will definitely have a huge impact on Pakistan. Modi has emerged as the strict and staunch face of the BJP and now that when we think of senior

leaders like Atal Bihari Vajpayee and L.K. Advani, they appear to be soft hearted leaders compared to Modi. He adds that this time BJP succeeded in unifying the 60% Hindu population in UP by creating a fear of a possibility of Muslims ruling over them, if they do not vote. The 5% Muslims know that their votes are not the deciding factor but if they vote their life will be much easier without any curtailment to their freedom to work and move.

For details, see: <http://www.zemtv.com/2017/03/14/harferaz-13th-march-2017/>

STATISTICS

BOMBINGS, SHOOTINGS AND DISAPPEARANCES

(Select incidents culled out from the Pakistan media)

Place	Date	Description	Killed	Injured
Islamabad				
Swabi ¹⁰⁸	08/03/2017	Five 'terrorists' killed in army operation in Swabi. Two soldiers of the army also lost their lives in the operation.	7	0
FATA				
Bannu ¹⁰⁹	03/03/2017	Two Pak Army troops martyred in Bannu gunfight, four terrorists killed.	6	1
Punjab				
Sahiwal ¹¹⁰	15/03/17	Three militants hanged in Sahiwal prison, says ISPR	3	0
Gujrat ¹¹¹	31/03/2017	Five terrorists gunned down in Gujrat operation	5	0

¹⁰⁸<http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/08-Mar-17/five-terrorists-killed-in-army-operation-in-swabi>

¹⁰⁹ <https://www.geo.tv/latest/133070-Two-Pak-Army-troops-martyred-in-Bannu-gunfight-four-terrorists-killed>

¹¹⁰ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1320636/three-militants-hanged-in-sahiwal-prison-says-ispr>

¹¹¹

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa				
Peshawar ¹¹²	07/03/2017	Five soldiers killed in cross-border attack. Over 10 terrorists were reported killed.	15	0
Peshawar ¹¹³	09/03/2017	Army kills 10 'militants' in Swabi; hangs another five.	17	0
Khyber ¹¹⁴		Two FC men, six attackers killed during cross-border assault in Khyber Agency	8	0
Parachinar ¹¹⁵	31/03/2017	22 Killed in explosions outside imambargah in Parachinar market	22	57
Sindh				
Multan ¹¹⁶	05/03/2017	Body found with 'Daesh Al-Bakistan' written on victim's dress	1	0

¹¹² <http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/07-Mar-17/five-soldiers-martyred-in-cross-border-attack>

¹¹³ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/09-Mar-17/army-kills-10-militants-in-swabi-hangs-another-five>

¹¹⁴ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1321049/two-fc-men-six-attackers-killed-during-cross-border-assault-in-khyber-agency>

¹¹⁵ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1323973/22-killed-in-explosion-outside-imambargah-in-parachinar-market>

¹¹⁶ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1318545/body-found-with-daesh-al-bakistan-written-on-victims-dress>