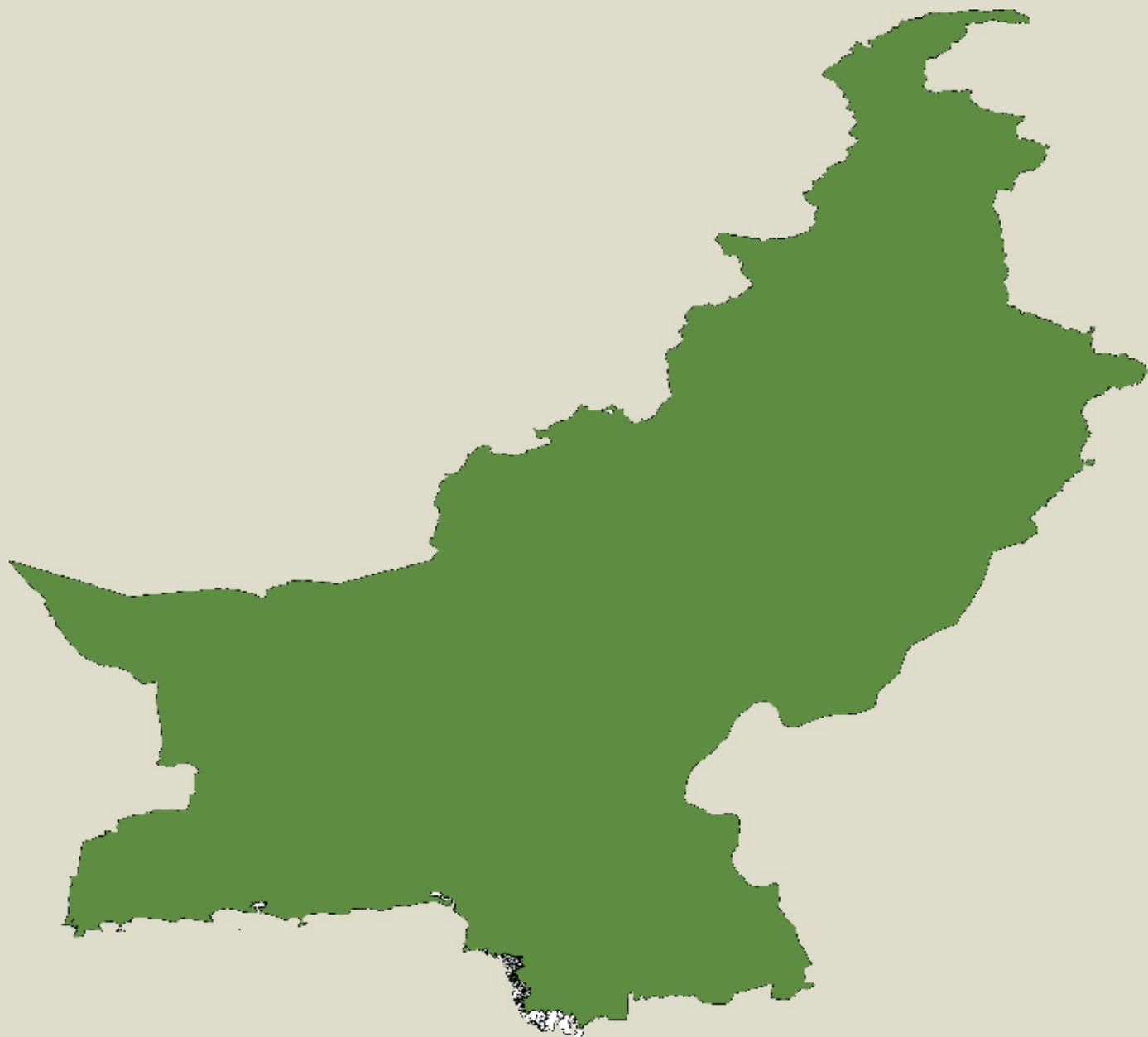


February 2015

PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST

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



*Prepared by
YaqoobulHassan
and Shreyas Deshmukh
(Interns, Pakistan Project, IDSA)*

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INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE
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PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST, FEBRUARY 2015

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ABBREVATIONS

AFZ: Ajman's Free Zone
ALCM: Air Launched Cruise Missile
ANP: Awami National Party
APC: All Parties Conference
APS: Army Public School
ATC: Anti-Terrorism Court
ATF: Anti-Terrorism Force
BNP: Baluchistan National Party
CPEC: China- Pakistan Economic Corridor
ECP: Election Commission of Pakistan
GB: Gilgit-Baltistan
GDP: Gross Domestic Product
GPA: Gwadar Port Authority
HLSCC: High Level Strategic Cooperation Council
IDPs: Internally Displaced Persons
IMF: International Monetary Fund
IMU: Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
ISGC: Inter State Gas System
ISI: Inter-Services Intelligence
ISPR: Inter Services Public Relations
JI: Jamaat-i-Islaami
JuD: Jamat-ul- Dawa
JUI-S: Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Islam-Sami
KP: Khyber Pakhthunkhwa
LEAS: Law Enforcement Agencies
MQM: Muttahida Qaumi Movement
Nacta: National Anti-Terrorism Act
NADRA- National Database and Registration Authority
NAP: National Action Plan
NEPRA: National Electric Power Regulatory Authority
NFC- National finance Commission
PATTTA: Pakistan-Afghanistan-Tajikistan Trilateral Transit Trade Agreement
PMA: Pakistan Military Academy
PML-N: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz
PML-Q: Pakistan Muslim League Quaid
PPAF: Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund
PPP: Pakistan People's Party
PTI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf
SNGPL: Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited
TTP: Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan
WAPDA: Water and Power Development Authority

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

PROVINCIAL POLITICS

MQM dismisses its Rabita Committee heads in Pakistan, London, *The Express Tribune*, February 3¹

The Muttahida Qaumi Movement's policy-making body (Rabita committee) witnessed a pivotal change on February 3 when the heads of the committee in both Pakistan and London were dismissed. Party sources said Rabita Committee in-charge in Pakistan Qamar Mansoor was removed after workers complained about his attitude numerous times. "He had slapped a few workers, and often used abusive language with parliamentarians," said a leader requesting anonymity. Meanwhile, Irshad Hussain, who was heading the Rabita Committee in London, has also been removed. The dismissed party officials were appointed in December 2014, when Altaf Hussain had suspended the entire Rabita Committee over their 'unacceptable' reaction to the killing of party leader, Bao Mohammad Anwar in Sialkot.

Senate Elections: MQM contacts Musharraf, Pagara, *The News*, February 6²

A delegation of MQM representatives held separate meetings with former president Gen. (retd) Pervaiz Musharraf and PML-F leader Pir Pagara in Karachi. The 7-member delegation, led by Dr Farooq Sattar exchanged views on the future strategy pertaining to Senate Elections. Sources said that in the meetings with Musharraf and Pagara, MQM delegations also discussed prevailing political situation, particularly in Sindh. Talking to media, MQM leader Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui said his party was in contact with all the opposition parties in the province. The discussions, including on Senate polls, with these parties would be held keeping in view the interest of Sindh, he added.

KP Assembly to resist change in Gwadar route, *The News*, February 7³

All political parties in the KP Assembly vehemently opposed any changes to the route of the Pakistan-China Economic Corridor and threatened resistance if the federal government chose the eastern route instead of the western one. *The ANP warned any change in the route could jeopardise the integrity of Pakistan*

¹<http://tribune.com.pk/story/831579/mqm-dismisses-rabita-committee-heads-in-pakistan-london/>

²<http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-174162-Senate-Elections:-MQM-contacts-Musharraf,-Pagara->

³<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-35746-KP-Assembly-threatens-to-resist-any-change-in-route>

for which the present rulers would be held responsible. A joint resolution passed unanimously by the assembly called upon the federal government to initiate work on the western route of the corridor without making any changes to it. "The economic corridor route is planned to connect Gwadar with China's Kashgar through Karakorum Highway, Abbottabad, Dera Ismail Khan, Mianwali and Zhob," the resolution read out by the parliamentary leaders said. "This project will have positive effects on the economy of KP, Fata and underdeveloped areas of Balochistan and Punjab," it said. Aligning the economic corridor, it noted, through another route via Punjab would be great injustice with the people of the less developed KP, Fata and Balochistan.

Balochistan in dire straits: Dr Malik, *The News*, February 7⁴

Balochistan Chief Minister Dr Abdul Malik Baloch said on 6 February that his province was in dire straits and the central government should extend Rs500 billion bailout package for the cash-starved province. Dr Malik said the provincial government had achieved some targets as the law and order situation had improved, *work on the highways and Gwadar Port was in progress, transmission lines were near completion and the provincial government was also making steady development in education and health sectors*. He said that the financial constraints could only be tackled if the central government provided a bailout package. He said that subsidies given on various sectors ate up the budgetary allocations.

MQM, PPP reach accord on Senate polls, govt in Sindh, *Dawn*, February 10⁵

MQM and PPP have reached an agreement over the formation of a coalition government in Sindh and seat adjustment in the upcoming Senate polls, according to a statement issued on the MQM's official website. The accord was the outcome of a three-hour-long meeting between senior PPP leader Rehman Malik and MQM supremo Altaf Hussain in London. Under the seat adjustment formula agreed upon by both parties, *MQM and PPP would get four and seven seats in the Senate respectively*. The parties agreed on a 40-60 power sharing formula in all aspects and the MQM would soon join the treasury benches in the provincial assembly under a written agreement with the PPP.

Imran accuses Altaf of terrorising Karachi, *Dawn*, February 10⁶

Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan hit out at MQM chief Altaf Hussain on 9 February and accused him of having let loose a "reign of terror" in Karachi. In the same breath, the PTI chief asked the military leadership to

⁴ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-35755-Balochistan-in-dire-straits-Dr-Malik>

⁵ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1162679/mqm-ppp-reach-accord-on-senate-polls-coalition-govt-in-sindh>

⁶ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1162614/imran-accuses-altaf-of-terrorising-karachi>

clarify its position on the MQM's accusation that the ISI was hostile to the party. Accompanied by PTI Vice Chairman Shah Mehmood Qureshi, Imran Khan exuded his usual hostile streak at an explosive press conference. *"I am absolutely clear that the MQM is responsible for bringing Karachi to a stage where nobody is safe at the hands of the party's armed wing. Now with the revelation of the JIT report in which Mr Hussain's party has been held responsible for the killing of over 250 Baldia Town factory workers, the responsibility now lies with the federal government to take action against the perpetrators of the tragic incident,"* he said.

KP govt makes provincial uplift strategy, *The Nation*, February 16⁷

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has completed the preliminary draft of integrated development strategy for the province identifying mining, tourism, hydel power generation, construction industry, education and health as key sectors. The proposed draft of this medium-term development strategy prepared on the directives of PTI leadership was discussed threadbare at a meeting attended by PTI Chairman Imran Khan along with top PTI leadership. The meeting was also attended by Chief Minister Pervez Khattak and Administrative Secretaries of provincial nation building departments. The economic experts present on the occasion described the proposed economic growth strategy as an engine of job creation, poverty alleviation, improvement in health care facilities, transparency and accountability. Highlighting the salient features of the document *"Reclaiming Prosperity in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa"*, Zafar Ali Shah, Secretary Planning and Development Government, informed that *every fourth Pakistani abroad is from KP, who are sending remittances worth 2.25 billion dollars, which can be invested in various profitable sectors.*

Bilawal's differences with Zardari or image-building exercise?, *The Nation*, February 17⁸

Irrespective of whether the stories about the alleged serious differences between Asif Ali Zardari and his son Bilawal are true or false, one thing is sure that *all this gossip is really contributing a lot to the image building of Bilawal who is getting the projection, though indirectly, of being a leader quite different from his father whose tainted image over the years might affect the political career of his son.* That he does not like too much interference of his aunt, *Faryal Talpur*, in the PPP matters is also something which is being appreciated by those party men who are also against her dominant role in the party affairs. Old PPP guards have the feeling that Bhutto's party has been hijacked by the Zardari family which is putting on much effort to make a new team comprising

⁷ <http://nation.com.pk/national/16-Feb-2015/kp-govt-makes-provincial-uplift-strategy>

⁸ <http://nation.com.pk/national/17-Feb-2015/serious-differences-or-bilawal-s-image-building-exercise>

Zardari loyalists. This makes Bilawal the darling of the party cadres that have undergone in slumber for being ignored by his father.

Mad rush for 4 Fata Senate seats, *The Nation*, February 17⁹

Four Fata seats in Senate have attracted 43 aspirants from the volatile tribal areas, much bigger number of candidates than those nominated by four provinces that each will elect at least 11 new senators on March 5. According to ECP data, the four vacant seats for Fata in the upper house have triggered maximum participation of aspirants in the polls. Balochistan emerges to be the second in terms of filing of maximum number of nomination papers where 42 aspirants are vying for the 12 vacant seats followed by KP where 39 candidates have filed their nomination papers. In Punjab, the biggest province, a total of 23 nominations have been filed for the 11 seats. In Sindh, 28 candidates are contesting while nine candidates are vying for the two vacant seats from Federal Area of Islamabad.

PM Nawaz chairs Balochistan Apex Committee meeting, *The Express Tribune*, February 18¹⁰

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif arrived on February 18 in Quetta to review the implementation of the National Action Plan. The premier is expected to chair a provincial apex committee meeting at the Governor House to discuss the law and order situation and handling insurgents in Balochistan. General Raheel, Chief Minister Dr Abdul Malik Baloch, Governor Muhammad Khan Achakzai, former prime minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, Minister for Water and Power Khawaja Asif and Railways Minister Khawaja Saad Rafique will be in attendance. *Both PM Nawaz and COAS received a guard of honour on their arrival at the Governor House.* The premier will also be holding a meeting with office bearers of PML-N Balochistan chapter. Just a day ago, PM Nawaz also held a meeting with General Raheel at the Corps headquarters in Karachi.

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

Nation must win war on terror: PM, *Dawn*, February 21¹¹

PM Nawaz Sharif has said the nation will have to win the war against terrorism for the survival of future generations. Addressing the passing out parade of the first batch of Counter-Terrorism Force (CTF) at the Elite Police Training School, Bedian, he said: *"It is our responsibility to rid the nation of terrorism. We have to win the war against terrorism at any cost for the survival of our economy and future generations."* Army chief Gen Raheel Sharif, Punjab

⁹ <http://nation.com.pk/national/17-Feb-2015/mad-rush-for-4-fata-senate-seats>

¹⁰ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/840222/coas-arrives-in-quetta-to-review-implementation-of-nap/>

¹¹ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1160814/nation-must-win-war-on-terror-pm>

Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif, Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan, Lahore Corps Commander Lt Gen Naveed Zaman, Punjab acting Governor Rana Iqbal, IGP Mushtaq Sukhera and diplomats attended the ceremony. *"This war is the war of the whole nation. We have to rid of the menace of terrorism. By sacrificing their lives the Peshawar schoolchildren have strengthened our re-solve to eliminate terrorism from our soil. We will not rest till the last terrorist is eliminated,"* the premier said.

Sarwar plans to take part in active politics, Dawn, February²¹²

Punjab's former governor Chaudhry Mohammad Sarwar has said he will neither re-apply for the British citizenship nor join Imran Khan's PTI *"I am not buying one-way ticket to London. I will return and take part in active politics and work for the people of Pakistan in an independent capacity,"* Sarwar resigned last week because of what he said his failure to achieve the goals he had set for himself while assuming the office on Aug 5, 2013. He *complained about rising crime graph, helplessness of victims before oppressors and the power of land mafia which he said were as "more influential than the governor"*. He said that rumours about his joining the PTI were baseless. *"I did not even join the PML-N. I have good relations with leaders of all political parties."* He described the rumour that his resignation had anything to do with the so-called 'London plan' (of Imran Khan and Dr Tahirul Qadri) as rubbish.

PTI chief strikes a conciliatory tone, The Express Tribune, February³¹³

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf adopted a more conciliatory tone on February 2 when he called again for a judicial commission investigation to confirm whether or not the 2013 general elections were rigged, raising at the same time the possibility that his party had acted on *"a misunderstanding"*. *"It should be clear whether there was rigging in general elections or was it our misunderstanding,"* Imran said after a meeting Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sardar Raza, an ex-judge. *"Our struggle is for the future of democracy as we want to rectify the electoral system in the country,"* said Imran. The PTI chief also signalled his willingness to accept the probe results even if PML-N might emerge victorious again. However, Imran pointed out that the government is saying that the findings of the election tribunals should not come before the judicial commission — a clear sign that it wants to avoid setting up a commission.

¹² <http://www.dawn.com/news/1160998/sarwar-plans-to-take-part-in-active-politics>

¹³ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/831920/reaching-out-pti-chief-strikes-a-conciliatory-tone/>

Dar emphasises OIC's role for resolution of Kashmir issue, *The News*, February 7¹⁴

Finance Minister Ishaq Dar has said the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation as a body of 57 states with the world's one fifth population and several trillion dollars GDP, can effectively urge India to fulfil its obligations under the UN resolutions for resolving the Kashmir issue. Addressing a seminar organised by the Pakistan Consulate in Dubai in connection with Kashmir Solidarity Day, Ishaq Dar said the Muslim World's representative body has been consistently supportive of the Kashmiris' movement for self-determination and constantly expressed concerns over the human rights violations through numerous resolutions.

Sarwar puts 'condition' to join PTI, *Nation*, February 9¹⁵

Former Punjab governor Chaudhry Muhammad Sarwar on February 8 called on Imran Khan at his house in Bani Gala. Imran on the occasion formally invited the former governor to join the PTI. PTI leader Jehangir Tareen was also present during the meeting. According to sources, the former governor said that *he would only join the party if Imran forms a shadow cabinet*. Sarwar spoke to Imran about his resignation as Punjab governor during the meeting. The PTI chief appreciated his principled stand for resigning from his post.

PM Nawaz hails strong China-Pak relations, *Dawn*, February 13¹⁶

PM Nawaz Sharif while talking to Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on February 13, said that strong relations with China is the cornerstone of Pakistan's foreign policy, said a report published on Radio Pakistan. Speaking to Wang Yi in Islamabad, PM Nawaz expressed his resolve to further deepen and diversify relations with China. Adviser to PM on National Security and Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz was also present. *The PM said implementation of the Pak-China Economic Corridor project will lead to a new era of progress and development not only in Pakistan but the entire region.*

PPP calls for appointing foreign minister, *The Nation*, February 16¹⁷

Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly and senior leader of PPP Syed Khurshid Shah has expressed his dissatisfaction over the existing foreign policy besides *demanding the government to appoint a Foreign Minister and call APC to chalk out foreign policy in accordance with the needs of the prevailing situation*. Addressing a Press conference on February 15, Syed

¹⁴<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-35748-Dar-emphasises-OICs-role-for-resolution-of-Kashmir-issue>

¹⁵ <http://nation.com.pk/national/09-Feb-2015/sarwar-puts-condition-to-join-pti>

¹⁶ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1163361/pm-nawaz-hails-strong-china-pak-relations>

¹⁷ <http://nation.com.pk/national/16-Feb-2015/ppp-calls-for-appointing-foreign-minister>

Khurshid Shah said that *it was a matter of concern that the government has not succeeded to find a suitable person to appoint as Foreign Minister*. He said that PPP hasn't supported the government or PML-N but supported democracy and democratic system. The PPP leader said that his party wishes the sitting government to complete its five year tenure.

184 candidates submit papers for Senate elections, Dawn, February 16¹⁸

One hundred and eighty four candidates have submitted their nomination papers for the upcoming Senate elections, a statement by the Election Commission of Pakistan on February 15 said. According to the election commission, 23 candidates from Punjab, 28 candidates from Sindh, 39 candidates from KP and 42 from Balochistan submitted their nomination papers. Furthermore, nine candidates submitted their nomination papers for one seat in the federal capital and 43 candidates for four seats in the FATA. Scrutiny of nomination papers will take place on Feb 19 and 20 and elections for the Senate will take place on March 5.

Failure not an option in war against terror, The Express Tribune, February 17¹⁹

PM Nawaz Sharif said on Feb 16 that the people of Pakistan are hopeful of a positive outcome of the National Action Plan (NAP). "I believe people are looking forward to seeing the results. The NAP has to now deliver. Failure is not an option," he said. The PM while chairing the Provincial Apex Committee meeting at Governor House on February 17, said that *it was a must to unite and win the war on terror and that failure was not an option*. He went on to say that terrorism must be completely eliminated for good from the country at all costs. ..Sharif said that, *whether the terrorists seek refuge in Fata or other pockets of the country, the "government and the state intends to simply eliminate them"*.

PML-N, PPP reach out for a backdoor deal, The Express Tribune, February 18²⁰

As the Senate election draws closer, both the PPP and PML-N are not shying away from contacting each other, according to confirmed reports. Both of them appear to be on the lookout for broader settlements in the quest for building consensus over the prized posts of chairman and deputy chairman of the upper house. For the moment, however, there is little sign of any agreement between the two sides. Neither party appears willing to give up on the chairman's seat. PPP co-chairperson Asif Ali Zardari has had two meetings with the PML-N, one with Railways Minister Khawaja Saad Rafique, and the second with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

¹⁸<http://www.dawn.com/news/1163970/184-candidates-submit-nomination-papers-for-senate-elections-ecp>

¹⁹ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-175280-Failure-not-an-option-for-war-against-terror:-PM>

²⁰ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/840114/pml-n-ppp-reach-out-for-a-backdoor-deal/>

Need to work overtime to end sectarian attacks: Nisar, Dawn, February 19²¹

Pakistan will have to work overtime to address the sectarian issue, said Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan as three people were killed in yet another sectarian attack in Rawalpindi on 18 February. As the minister spoke at the US Institute of Peace (USIP) in Washington, *protesters bombarded the social media with demands for more concrete action to curb sectarian attacks.* Mr Khan said the government was already utilising all its resources to combat the militants, who were the product of the Afghan jihad. *"They live among us, speak the language we speak, wear the same dress, and eat the same fruit. That's why it's difficult to trace them,"* he said. *"It is also difficult to pick up their communications because they use word of mouth."* The minister promised that over the next few weeks the country will see an improvement in the fight against sectarian outfits. Mr Khan said the IS militant group had no existence in South Asia as it had its roots in the Middle East and North Africa. *"I can say with a lot of confidence, ISIS is totally a Middle Eastern phenomenon and has no presence in Pakistan and Afghanistan. It is only a media hype,"* he said. *"The space occupied by the Taliban and TTP will not be made available to ISIS. They have their own agenda and they are not going to share it with ISIS".*

Govt warned against rigging polls in Gilgit-Baltistan, Dawn, February 19²²

PPP has termed the government's decision to appoint a federal minister as the governor of GB an instance of pre-poll rigging and warned PML-N against *"its plan to rig the upcoming elections in the territory"*. Talking to reporters at his Parliament House chamber on February 18, senior PPP legislator and Leader of Opposition in the National Assembly Syed Khursheed Ahmed Shah said he had written a letter to PM Nawaz Sharif to lodge a complaint about *"pre-poll rigging"* in the elections of the GB Council. The prime minister, he said, had not given any response. Mr Shah said he was surprised at the *"government's move to rig"* Gilgit-Baltistan polls despite the fact that it had still not come clean about allegations of rigging in the 2013 general elections.

Corruption money being transferred abroad: Imran, The News, February 20²³

Imran Khan on 19 February said the ruling and wealthy class is engaged in the business of *investing outside Pakistan their wealth 'amassed through corruption and tax evasion'*. In a statement, Imran Khan said after coming to power the PTI would bring the looted money back from other countries. He regretted that on the one hand *the common man is being burdened through steady rise in indirect taxes and price hike* and on the other hand *the ruling and rich class is*

²¹ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1164542/need-to-work-overtime-to-end-sectarian-attacks-nisar>

²² <http://www.dawn.com/news/1164530/ppp-warns-govt-against-plan-to-rig-polls>

²³ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-175684-Corruption-money-being-transferred-abroad:-Imran>

investing outside Pakistan the money saved through evading direct taxes. Imran said the PTI would make it mandatory for all to declare their assets kept both in Pakistan and outside.

Cabinet meets on energy, economic corridor, Dawn, February 23²⁴

PM Nawaz Sharif on 23 February presided over a meeting of the federal cabinet which was called *to discuss a 17-point agenda, mostly dominated by the country's economic and energy related matters. An ex-facto approval will be taken from the cabinet on the Pak-China economic corridor as proceedings for the project have already commenced without approval. This meeting is the first time the cabinet is being briefed on the Pak-China economic corridor.* During the meeting, a minute of silence was observed in light of Justice (retired) Rana Bhagwandas' demise. The cabinet was also scheduled to be briefed on the country's energy situation. *It is expected to give approvals on an agreement for a discounted loan from China for the Karachi Nuclear Power Projects I and II as well as okay loans from Japan in order to carry out energy reforms. The approval for commencing talks with Afghanistan for an agreement to hold preferential trade* was also scheduled to be discussed in the meeting.

Govt drafts 'anti-horse trading' amendment, Dawn, February 26²⁵

The government has drafted an amendment bill to bring crucial changes to the Constitution in a bid to hold the upcoming elections to 52 Senate seats in a manner that will end the *"undemocratic practice of horse-trading"*. Three new amendments are being considered to allow changes in existing procedures and rules for conducting election for senate seats. *The proposed act will be called the Constitution (22nd Amendment) Act, 2015.* To hold elections through open balloting, an amendment has been proposed in Article 226 of the Constitution by inserting the word 'Senate'.

Darul Uloom Haqqania students involved in killing of Benazir, Dawn, February 27²⁶

An ATC in Rawalpindi was informed on 26 Feb that *students of Darul Uloom Haqqania, Akora Khattak, were involved in the murder of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, however, the seminary administration denied having any connection with the suspects.* The hearing of the Benazir murder case — headed by Justice Pervez Ismail— was held at the *ATC special court established inside Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi.* FIA Peshawar Inspector Naseer Ahmed and Sub-Inspector Adnan appeared before the court and informed about the

²⁴ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1165399/cabinet-meets-on-economy-energy>

²⁵ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1165988/govt-drafts-anti-horse-trading-amendment>

²⁶ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1166084/darul-uloom-haqqania-students-involved-in-killing-of-benazir>

involvement of Darul Uloom Haqqania's students in the killing of Benazir Bhutto. Both the state witnesses also presented related evidence to support their statements. *During the hearing, Darul Uloom Haqqania's director education Wisal Ahmed admitted that the suspected suicide bomber Abdullah alias Saddam Nadir alias Qari Ismail and arrested suspects Rasheed alias Turabi and Faiz Muhammad had received education from the seminary but rejected the claim that Darul Uloom Haqqania holds any association with the above mentioned suspects.*

FOREIGN POLICY

Fresh start: Afghan envoy foresees 'new chapter' in Pak-Afghan ties, *The Express Tribune*, February 3²⁷

Afghan Ambassador to Pakistan Janan Mosazai has said that a new chapter in the relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan is likely to begin within the coming months. *"The national unity government in Afghanistan has worked to boost cooperation with Pakistan against terrorism, extremism and organised crimes and for the promotion of peace and stability in both countries,"* Mosazai told in an exclusive interview to the scribe. The Afghan government has taken steps to implement all decisions taken during President Ghani's visit to Pakistan as both countries are determined that such decisions must not remain on paper only. *"The implementation of decisions related to security, economic or political issues will increase the environment of trust between the two countries,"* Ambassador Mosazai said. *"This will promote people-to-people contact and practically benefit people in both countries."*

First group of six Afghan army cadets arrives for training at PMA, *The Express Tribune*, February 6²⁸

Six Afghan National Army cadets arrived in Islamabad on February 5 to receive training at the PMA in Abbottabad, the Afghan embassy said. The move comes after Army Chief General Raheel Sharif had offered training to Afghan forces during his visit to Kabul late last year. The cadets *will take part in an 18-month long course.* This is the first ever group of Afghan National Army cadets to attend a course at the PMA. Afghan Ambassador Janan Mosazai, while welcoming the cadets at the embassy in Islamabad, said that the move represents growth in Pakistan and Afghan ties. *"These six young cadets, selected from among the best in Afghan National Army,"* Mosazai said, adding that they "represent the steady and solid quantitative as well as qualitative growth and

²⁷<http://tribune.com.pk/story/831992/fresh-start-afghan-envoy-foresees-new-chapter-in-pak-afghan-ties/>

²⁸<http://tribune.com.pk/story/833500/first-group-of-afghan-army-cadets-arrives-for-training-at-pma/>

development of Afghanistan's national security and defence forces over the past decade." ..The arrival of the cadets *coincides with a six-day visit to Pakistan by a five-member Afghan military delegation led by Afghan National Army Director General of Training, Education and Doctrine Maj Gen Nematullah Khushiwal.*

About Chinese president's Pakistan trip, Dawn, February 6²⁹

In a first indication that China was positive about invitation for President Xi Jinping to attend the Pakistan Day parade, the Chinese foreign ministry expressed its "willingness" for continuing the momentum in ties. *"We are willing to keep this momentum with the Pakistan side,"* Chinese foreign ministry's spokesperson Hong Lei said at the daily media briefing in Beijing while responding to a question about the invitation for President Xi. Underscoring the importance of high-level visits between the two countries, Mr Lei said: *"China and Pakistan are all-weather strategic partners of cooperation, and the two sides maintain frequent high-level exchanges which serve as inexhaustible driving force for China-Pakistan relations."*

US to work with Pakistan for regional stability, The News, February 7³⁰

President Barack Obama on 6 February vowed to work with Pakistan for achievement of strategic stability in South Asia and viable peace in Afghanistan, as the United States underlined its strong and vital relationship with the country. *"We will continue to work with both India and Pakistan to promote strategic stability, combat terrorism, and advance regional economic integration in South and Central Asia,"* Obama vowed in his administration's second National Security Strategy delivered to Congress on 6 February.At the State Department, spokesperson Marie Harf emphasized: *"We have a relationship with India, with Pakistan, they are both strong, they are both vital to our strategic interests and they stand on their own,"* Harf explained in response to a question vis-à-vis the US relations with the two South Asian neighbours.

Obama should visit Pakistan: Congressman, The News, February 8³¹

"Before he ends his presidency, it is important that Honorable Barack Obama visits Pakistan, the foremost ally of USA in the war against terrorism." These were the words of social and entrepreneur figure of Texas Pakistani community Tahir Javed of Beaumont, at the special fundraising event arranged for Honorable Congressman (Democratic) Alexander AL Green, at the newly started Taj Restaurant in Houston.....Nomi Husain welcomed the Guests while Dr.

²⁹<http://www.dawn.com/news/1161754/positive-indication-about-chinese-presidents-pakistan-trip>

³⁰<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-35744-Obama-pledges-to-work-with-Pakistan-for-regional-stability>

³¹<http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-174447-Obama-should-visit-Pakistan-before-end-of-his-term:-Congressman->

Yakoob Sheikh introduced the Congressman & Eminent CPA Haroon Shaikh informed that more than \$20,000 has been raised for the Election Campaign of Congressman AL Green.

Saudi Arabia denies funding 'extremist mindset' in Pakistan, Dawn, February 9³²

Saudi Arabia on 9 February denied funding of what it called the extremist mindset through its financial support of religious seminaries in Pakistan. "A section of the media has been propagating a false impression that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is funding the extremist mindset in Pakistan through its financial support for religious seminaries," a press statement issued by the Saudi embassy said. "Whenever any seminary, mosque or charity organisations request the kingdom for financial assistance, the embassy refers the matter to the Government of Pakistan through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for examining suitability of the applicant," the statement added. It went on to say that only "when the ministry of foreign affairs informs the embassy in writing that the financial assistance is in the interest of public welfare, the assistance is provided to the applicant ... The assistance has always been beyond any sectarian considerations". The Saudi embassy's statement comes weeks after Federal Minister for IPC Riaz Hussain Pirzada accused the Saudi government of creating instability across the Muslim world by distributing money in order to promote religious extremism.

China ready to support Kabul-Taliban reconciliation, Dawn, February 13³³

Beijing is ready to support the Afghan government in reconciling with the Taliban, the Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi said, further indicating China's desire to expand its role in its war-torn neighbour country. "We will support the Afghan government in realising reconciliation with various political factions including Taliban," Wang told a news conference in Islamabad on Feb 12 speaking through an interpreter. "The international community needs to give support and encouragement. China is ready to play a constructive role and will provide necessary facilitation any time if it is required by various parties in Afghanistan." Wang Yi said that Afghanistan's long-term stability depended on a "broad-based and inclusive national reconciliation", which needed international support. The Chinese foreign minister said that with Nato's combat mission in Afghanistan having finished in December, it was time to end the country's decades of turmoil and poverty. Last month the Taliban, still resilient despite Nato's 13-year war against them, said they had sent a delegation to China, in an English-language statement posted on their website. The militants insisted the visit was not for the purposes of mediation. Afghan President

³²<http://www.dawn.com/news/1162507/saudi-arabia-denies-funding-extremist-mindset-in-pakistan>

³³ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1163118/china-ready-to-support-kabul-taliban-reconciliation>

Ashraf Ghani visited Beijing in October, soon after taking office, and China promised \$245 million in "free assistance", having already secured major oil and copper-mining concessions in the country.

Nawaz pushes Obama on NSG membership for Pakistan, *The Express Tribune*, February 13³⁴

PM Nawaz Sharif once again took up Pakistan's case for membership to the Nuclear Supplier Group (NSG) with the US after President Obama called the Pakistani premier late on February 12. According to the PM House, the two leaders spoke for almost half an hour via telephone. *President Obama updated Nawaz about his recent visit to India, while Nawaz briefed the latter about Operation Zarb-e-Azb.* While appreciating Pakistan's growing cordial relations with Afghanistan, the US president also lauded Pakistan's effort to counter terrorism and successfully launching a military operation in North Waziristan. *Opposing the idea of India getting a permanent seat at the UNSC, Nawaz argued that India should not add to the P-5 since it has been violating UN resolutions on Kashmir.*

Turkish PM arrives in Islamabad, *The Express Tribune*, February 17³⁵

The Prime Minister of Turkey, Ahmet Davutoglu arrived on 17 February on a two-day visit. He is accompanied by a high-level delegation including several Cabinet Ministers and senior government officials. This is Prime Minister Davutoglu's first visit to Pakistan since assuming office as PM in August 2014. Earlier, he had visited Pakistan in his capacity as Foreign Minister. During the visit, the 4th meeting of the Pakistan Turkey High Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC) would be held. Nawaz and Ahmet Davutoglu will co-chair the HLSCC session. A number of MoUs agreements are expected to be signed. The two Prime Ministers would also attend the Pakistan Turkey Business Forum 2015.

Afghan Taliban says they have talks with US lined up, US denies, *Dawn*, February 19³⁶

Senior Pakistani army and diplomatic officials said on February 19 that *the Afghan Taliban have signaled through the Pakistani military that they are willing to open peace talks, which could be held later in the day.* Sources within the Afghan Taliban said *their negotiators would hold the first round of peace talks with US officials in Qatar later on February 19,* although no comment was immediately available from US or Qatari officials. *Previous efforts to negotiate*

³⁴ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/837494/nawaz-pushes-obama-on-nsg-membership-for-pakistan/>

³⁵ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-175362-Turkish-PM-Ahmet-Davutoglu-arrives-in-Islamabad->

³⁶ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1164618/afghan-taliban-signal-readiness-for-peace-talks-pakistani-officials>

an end to a war that began in late 2001 have proved fruitless, but the latest signals raised hopes of a much-needed boost for new Afghan President Ashraf Ghani. "The first session will take place today in Qatar and then there would be another session on Friday. Let us see what happens as talks before did not yield any results," a senior member of the Afghan Taliban said by telephone from Qatar. [However, the US denied this the same day later. *"The United States currently has no meetings with the Taliban scheduled in Doha,"* Bernadette Meehan, a spokeswoman for the White House's National Security Council, said on February 19.].

Kerry acclaims Pak efforts against terrorism, *The News*, February 20³⁷

US Secretary of State John Kerry has praised Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in their efforts against terrorism. John Kerry and Interior Minister Chaurhdry Nisar Ali Khan held a meeting on the sidelines of the White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism at the State Department in Washington. Addressing a joint press conference after the meeting, Kerry said *"Pakistan and US are partners for peace and stability in the region."* Chaudhry Nisar said, *"Both US and Pakistan face common challenges."* He asserted that there was some positive development against terrorism over the past few weeks. Both the leaders expressed resolve to work jointly to counter terrorism and strengthen democracy.

Af-Pak ties 'never better', Nisar tells Kerry, *Dawn*, February 20³⁸

Relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan have never been better, Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan said on February 19, adding there had also been *"a quantum leap in trust"* between Islamabad and Washington. *"Relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan have never been better, and that is a very, very positive development"*, Nisar said. Pakistan's army chief General Raheel Sharif held talks in Kabul on 17 February with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani on boosting security and continuing operations against Taliban militants, the Pakistani military said.

Pak, Sri Lanka to ink civil nuclear deal next month, *The News*, February 21³⁹

Sri Lanka will ink civilian nuclear cooperation deal with Pakistan in March as the new president Maithripala Sirisena will visit Pakistan in the last week of March. The details would be worked out in due process before the visit takes place. Highly-placed diplomatic sources told the scribe that Islamabad had received the schedule proposed by Colombo for the visit of their president to

³⁷<http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-175701-Kerry-acclaims-PM-Nawaz-Gen.-Raheel-efforts-against-terrorism->

³⁸ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1164837/afghan-pakistan-ties-never-better-nisar-tells-kerry>

³⁹<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-36006-Pakistan-Sri-Lanka-to-ink-civil-nuclear-deal-next-month>

Pakistan and President Sirisena could be here on 31st of March. *The Sri Lankan president also plans to proceed to China soon after visiting Pakistan* as he has already visited New Delhi where he signed an agreement with the Indian government for civil nuclear cooperation.

US cooperating with Pakistan to end terrorism: Kerry, Dawn, February 25⁴⁰

US Secretary of State John Kerry says Pakistan is determined to end terrorism following Peshawar tragedy while Washington is also cooperating with Islamabad in its efforts against militancy. He told Congress Committee on Foreign Affairs on February 23 that *Washington was assisting Pakistan in different sectors including development, energy, health and education. He said US intends to provide 3.40 billion dollar aid to Afghanistan and Pakistan.*

Pakistan has stake in Afghan peace talks: US, Dawn, February 25⁴¹

As Afghanistan moved closer to holding direct peace talks with the Taliban, the US State Department acknowledged that Pakistan too has a stake in the outcome. *"In terms of the role of Pakistan, we have long encouraged Pakistan to support (Afghan) President (Ashraf) Ghani's reconciliation efforts,"* said the department's spokesperson Jen Psaki when asked to define Islamabad's role in these talks. *"We, of course, remain in support and in contact with President Ghani on these matters as well as certainly countries like Pakistan who have a stake in the outcome,"* she said. Afghanistan's chief executive Abdullah Abdullah told reporters in Kabul that peace talks with the Taliban would begin in the *"near future"*.

Pakistan's support to LeT an irritant: US, Dawn, February 26⁴²

Pakistan's continued provision of a safe haven to the banned LeT will probably continue to be a key irritant in Indo-Pak relations, Director of US National Intelligence James Clapper claimed in his testimony on *"World Threat Assessment of the US Intelligence Community"* which he presented on 26 February in a hearing of the United States Senate Armed Services Committee. India recognises the proscribed militant group LeT as a major threat to regional security and has accused its chief Hafiz Saeed of masterminding the 2008 attacks in Mumbai. Saeed, who now leads the banned organisation JUD, has denied any links to terrorist activities or having any association with LeT. During his testimony, American spy chief Clapper, commenting on the progress made by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's government in addressing local issues, said that PM Nawaz's pledges to tackle energy, economic and

⁴⁰<http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-176255-US-cooperating-with-Pakistan-to-end-terrorism:-Kerry->

⁴¹ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1165749/pakistan-has-stake-in-afghan-peace-talks-us>

⁴²<http://www.dawn.com/news/1166275/pakistans-support-to-let-will-likely-be-an-irritant-us-intelligence-director>

security issues in the country "fell short of high public expectations". Clapper further said that the premier's standing weakened when he reportedly sought the Pakistani Army's assistance to handle the protracted opposition protests in the second half of 2014.

Kerry refuses to withhold aid for Pakistan, Dawn, February 27⁴³

US Secretary of State John Kerry has refused to use aid as a weapon to persuade Pakistan to release Dr Shakil Afridi. Secretary Kerry appeared before the House Foreign Affairs Committee on Wednesday afternoon to formally present the administration's budget request for fiscal 2016. *The US State Department's budget proposal includes about \$900 million for Pakistan, out of which \$500 million is for countering terrorism.* Congress must approve the budget before it is spent. *Dana Rohrabacher, a lawmaker from California who was a strong supporter of Pakistan during the Afghan war raised the issue of Dr Afridi's continued incarceration in Pakistan during the budget debate.* He noted that the man who helped America find Osama bin Laden was still in jail in Pakistan.

MILITARY AFFAIRS

Pakistan test-fires new cruise missile Ra'ad, The Express Tribune, February 3⁴⁴

Pakistan on February 2 conducted a successful flight test of the indigenously developed ALCM Ra'ad, ISPR reported. With a range of 350 kilometres, the Ra'ad missile enables Pakistan to achieve strategic standoff capability both on land and at sea. The state of the art Ra'ad cruise missile was built with "Cruise Technology" which has been developed by only a few countries in the world and gives the missile stealth capabilities. The low altitude missile has high maneuverability capabilities and can deliver nuclear and conventional warheads with pin-point accuracy. Director General Strategic Plans Division, Lieutenant General Zubair Mahmood Hayat congratulated the scientists and engineers on this achievement *and termed the milestone as a major step towards strengthening Pakistan's full spectrum credible minimum deterrence capability.*

Raheel discusses border coordination with US, The News, February 3⁴⁵

Pakistan's Army Chief, General Raheel Sharif on February 2 discussed coordination along Pak-Afghan border and regional security among other matters of mutual interest with the top US commander in Afghanistan. A statement issued by the ISPR said General John F. Campbell, Commander Resolute Support Mission and United States Forces in Afghanistan called on

⁴³ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1166196/kerry-refuses-to-withhold-aid-for-pakistan>

⁴⁴ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/831544/pakistan-test-fires-new-cruise-missile-raad/>

⁴⁵ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-173826-Army-Chief-discusses-Afghan-border-coordination-with-US-commander>

COAS General Raheel Sharif at the GHQ. *“During the meeting, matters of mutual interest and regional security with particular emphasis on coordination along Pak-Afghan border were discussed,”* the statement added.

Commanders resolve to defeat terror, sectarianism, *The News*, February 4⁴⁶

The 176th Corps Commanders Conference, presided over by the army chief Gen Raheel Sharif, on February 3 expressed the resolve to defeat terrorism, extremism and sectarianism. *It also approved the mechanism for the working of military courts. It reviewed the ways for most effective implementation of the NAP in concert with federal and provincial governments.* The plan aims to eliminate terrorism, extremism and sectarianism without any discrimination. Apart from discussing matters of professional interest, the participants undertook a comprehensive review of internal and external security situation of the country, the ISPR said.

28 brigadiers promoted to major generals, *The News*, February 5⁴⁷

The Chief of the Army Staff, General Raheel Sharif, has promoted 28 brigadiers to the rank of major general on February 4. Seven doctors from the Army Medical Corps are among those who were promoted as major generals. According to an ISPR press release, a meeting of the Promotion Board was held in the GHQ which was presided over by COAS General Raheel Sharif. The meeting approved the promotion of 28 brigadiers to the rank of major general. Commanding Brigadier of Infantry Brigade of Sialkot Saira Shamshad Mirza was also promoted as a major general. The Brigadiers, who were promoted to major general rank by the COAS are: Nadeem Zaki, Shaheen Mazhar, Muhammad Amir, Shahid Pervaiz, Nadir Khan, Manzoor Ahmed, Arshad Mehmood, Muhammad Amir, Hafeezur Rehman, Waseem Ashraf, Muhammad Kalim, Sardar Tariq, Tahir Masood, Azhar Abbas, Charagh Haider, Anis Akbar, Muhammad Kalim, Basit Raza, Muhammad Adnan, Waseem Ashraf, Nauman Masood, Faiz Hamid, Zahid Hamid, Naeem Naqi and Zafar Iqbal.

PM, COAS decide to step up National Action Plan, *The News*, February 7⁴⁸

PM Nawaz Sharif and General Raheel Sharif on 6 February decided to expedite the implementation of the NAP against terrorists. The decision was taken during COAS General Raheel Sharif's meeting with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif held at the PM House on February 6...General Sharif also

⁴⁶<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-35674-Commanders-resolve-to-defeat-terrorism-sectarianism>

⁴⁷<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-35702-28-brigadiers-promoted-to-major-generals>

⁴⁸<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-35741-PM-COAS-decide-to-step-up-National-Action-Plan>

briefed the prime minister about the roadmap for the establishment of speedy military courts in various parts of the country. It is likely that the courts would be established within this month in the light of the amendments made in the Army Act of 1952 and 21st Constitutional Amendment adopted by the two houses of parliament last month. Accordingly, cases would be referred to the courts for trial.

Army will go to any extent for Karachi peace, Dawn, February 17⁴⁹

Army Chief Gen Raheel Sharif praised Sindh Rangers for their operation against terrorists in Karachi and said the army will take whatever action is needed to achieve a sustainable peace in the city. A couple of tweets by ISPR Director General Maj Gen Asim Saleem Bajwa on the army chief's Karachi visit said Gen Sharif had been updated by Rangers DG Maj Gen Bilal Akbar on targeted operations. "The COAS appreciated gains of operation by the Rangers, police and intelligence agencies," said one of the tweets, adding that the army would go to any extent to support the operation to ensure peace in Karachi. *The army chief said the Karachi operation would continue, without any discrimination, against all criminals irrespective of their ethnic, political, religious and sectarian affiliation.* Speaking at a meeting of the Sindh Apex Committee in Karachi, he said the operation should be carried out with transparency and sincerity of purpose.

Enemies of Afghanistan are enemies of Pak: COAS, The News, February 17⁵⁰

Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif and Afghan President Ashraf Ghani on February 17 *pledged to continue operations to eliminate terrorists on both sides of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border.* The army chief was visiting Kabul to hold talks with the Afghan leadership on boosting security and continuing operations against Taliban militants. Gen Sharif was flanked by a high-level military delegation which included DG ISI Lt-Gen Rizwan Akhtar. The COAS and the Afghan president appreciated improving relations between the two countries, DG ISPR Maj Gen Asim Bajwa said in messages posted on Twitter. *Both leaders also agreed not to allow the use of one country's soil against the other neighbouring country, he said.*

US Senator Jack reed calls on General Sharif, The News, February 18⁵¹

A US congressional delegation led by Senator Jack Reed, Ranking member senate Armed Services committee called on COAS General Raheel Sharif on 18 February. According to the ISPR, matters of mutual interest including

⁴⁹ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1164071/army-will-go-to-any-extent-for-karachi-peace-coas>

⁵⁰ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-175436-Enemies-of-Afghanistan-are-enemies-of-Pakistan:-COAS>

⁵¹ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-175493-US-Senator-Jack-reed-calls-on-General-Raheel-Sharif>

Operation Zarb-e-Azab and the situation in Afghanistan came under discussion during the meeting. *The senator also appreciated Pakistan's role in counter terrorism efforts.* A day earlier, the COAS visited Kabul to hold talks with the Afghan leadership on boosting security and continuing operations against Taliban militants. He was flanked by a high-level military delegation which included DG ISI Lt-Gen Rizwan Akhtar.

Terrorist attacks attempt to divide nation: DG ISPR, *The News*, February 19⁵²

DG ISPR Major General Asim Bajwa tweeted on February 18 : "*The recent spate of terrorist attacks are highly condemnable. Our heart goes out to aggrieved brothers and sisters, we stand with them at time of grief,*" His messages came hours after a suicide bomber attacked the Qasr-e-Sakina Imambargah in Islamabad, killing three people and wounding two others.

PM, COAS attend passing-out parade of ATF in Quetta, *Dawn*, February 19⁵³

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and COAS Gen Raheel Sharif on 19 Feb attended the *passing-out parade of the first batch of the Anti-Terrorism Force (ATF) in Quetta.* Governor Balochistan Muhammad Khan Achakzai, Chief Minister Dr Abdul Malik Baloch and Commander of Southern Command Lt General Nasir Khan Janjua were also present. PM Nawaz distributed awards and certificates to the best trainees. PM said, "*I am honoured to attend the passing-out parade of the anti-terrorism force.Your presence should provide a sense of security to the citizens. No miscreant should escape your hands.*" The ATF trainees were given a one-month long training by personnel of the Pakistan Army.

Pak Army welcomes Afghan reconciliation efforts, *The News*, February 20⁵⁴

The Pakistani military has welcomed reconciliation efforts between the Afghan government and the Afghan Taliban but also warned of "*detractors of peace*". ...A senior Pakistani military official said *COAS General Raheel Sharif told Afghan President Ashraf Ghani during a visit this week that the Taliban were willing to begin negotiations as early as March. "They have expressed their willingness and there will be progress in March. But these things are not so quick and easy,"* the official, who is close to the army chief and sought anonymity, was quoted as saying by Reuters.

⁵²<http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-175559-Recent-terrorist-attacks-attempt-to-divide-nation:-DG-ISPR>

⁵³ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1164615/pm-coas-attend-passing-out-parade-of-atf-in-quetta>

⁵⁴<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-35986-Pak-Army-welcomes-reconciliation-efforts-in-Afghanistan>

IB going through massive reformation, *The News*, February 20 ⁵⁵

The Intelligence Bureau is presently going through massive upgradation and reformation to become a modern and effective spy agency, it is learnt. *After the ISI, that is said to have been overhauled and upgraded during the last decade or so to become one of the most well-equipped spy agencies in the world. The IB had already set up its modern tracking systems in Karachi, Sindh, the KP, Islamabad and Lahore and in a few months the same technology would be fully implemented in Quetta.* The sources claim that because of the ongoing up-gradation process, the IB has already started producing remarkable results in Karachi in areas of terrorism, kidnapping for ransom and extortions. *It is said Rs 2-3 billion has been spent on this technological up-gradation.*

PM meets COAS to review NAP, Zarb-e-Azab, *The News*, February 24 ⁵⁶

PM Nawaz met COAS General Sharif on 24 February to discuss amongst other issues, the implementation of the NAP. The two also reviewed the progress of Operation Zarb-e-Azab and its outcome on the security situation in the country. During the meeting, the settlement of the IDPs from war-ravaged North Waziristan was also discussed in detail.

DG ISI arrives in US for official visit, *The Express Tribune*, February 25 ⁵⁷

The Director General ISI Lieutenant General Rizwan Akhtar on 25 February left for an official visit to the US. *"During the visit he will meet his counterparts and discuss issues related to intelligence,"* said the ISPR. *This is the first visit by Pakistan's spy chief to the US since he became the head of ISI last year.* During his visit, he will be discussing the security situation in the country as well as the counter-terrorism efforts and operations taking place in the country.

Khyber-2 operation against militants to start in March, *Dawn*, February 25 ⁵⁸

The Commandant of the Khyber Rifles, Col Tariq Hafeez, has said that *Khyber-Two military operation against Taliban and other terrorist groups hiding in different parts of the Tirah valley would begin next month.* Speaking to journalists at an army camp in Landi Kotal on 24 Feb, he pledged *"We will not spare anyone and will go after them no matter where they are hiding and will smash their operational structure to reduce their striking capability"*. Col Hafeez said that with the arrest of 25 hardcore terrorists, security forces had achieved much of the objectives of the Khyber-One operation.

⁵⁵<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-35989-IB-going-through-massive-upgradation-reformation>

⁵⁶<http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-176167-PM-Nawaz-meets-COAS-to-review-NAP,-Operation-Zarb-e-Azab>

⁵⁷ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/843882/dg-isi-arrives-in-united-states-for-official-visit/>

⁵⁸<http://www.dawn.com/news/1165781/khyber-2-operation-against-militants-to-start-in-march>

COAS warns India on border provocation, *The Express Tribune*, February 27⁵⁹

COAS General Raheel Sharif has warned in his statement during his visit to the areas affected by Indian firing along the working boundary near Sialkot, "Let there be no doubt that any provocation along the LoC and Working Boundary will meet a befitting response," according to DG ISPR Major General Asim Bajwa. He said repeated *Indian ceasefire violations on the LoC and Working Boundary in recent past was an attempt to distract Pakistan's campaign against terrorists, and had negative impact on regional stability.*

EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS

Our fleeting resolve, Babar Sattar, *Dawn*, February 9⁶⁰

"It's easier to convince people of something, but hard to keep them convinced ... the crowd is won over by appearances and final results ... and the world is a crowd," Machiavelli had counselled. Let's not hold our breath for final results because if appearances after Shikarpur are anything to go by, *our post-Peshawar moment of hope and resolve has dissipated.* It is becoming evident that our civil-military elite hasn't given up its *policy of prevarication* on terror...*incidents like Shikarpur, are acceptable and others, like Peshawar, are not.* The cruel and inhuman nature of the Peshawar attack made it shocking and revolting....*But what about the children who died in Shikarpur or the Hazara kids who keep dying in Quetta? Is terror less heinous if innocent kids die alongside innocent parents? Is violence less loathsome if motivated by biases of faith or when victims are identified as the 'other' on grounds of faith? Whatever the reason, the shameful fact is that dead Shias don't bother us all that much. [...]*Justice Khawaja Sharif, Qadri's defence counsel (and a friend of my deceased father), who is very close to the Sharif brothers and was appointed advocate general and then judge by the Sharif government in 1998, *explained while arguing Qadri's appeal that those who killed Charlie Hebdo's employees are our heroes. Having retired as chief justice of Lahore High Court, justice Sharif certainly doesn't belong to the deprived part of our society.* Likewise, Ghulam Ahmad Bilour, former federal minister and member KP Assembly, is as financially and politically privileged as one gets in Pakistan. *This follower of Bacha Khan and member of the liberal left-wing ANP has announced a reward of \$200,000 for anyone who kills Charlie Hebdo's owner. And who hasn't seen Gen Hameed Gul and Hafiz Saeed pontificating on Pakistan's India policy in the same talk show?...Why label JuD and ASWJ as proscribed organisations if no consequences whatsoever flow from such declaration? [We should] acquire the ability to connect the dots and understand that TTP, LeT/JuD, LJ/ASWJ, Kouachi brothers and Mumtaz Qadri all drink from the same fountain of faith-inspired intolerance. Our well-fed nurturers of extremism...are*

⁵⁹ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/844649/army-chief-warns-india-on-provocation-along-border/>

⁶⁰ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1162370/our-fleeting-resolve>

crawling out of the woodwork again. *We might not have good and bad Taliban anymore. But good and bad terrorists are another story.*

Madrassas and militancy, Mumtaz Ahmad, *The Express Tribune*, February 16⁶¹

The tragedy of Peshawar that resulted in the death of students of the Army Public School has once again brought *the issue of madrassa reforms into sharp focus*. The National Action Plan, announced by the prime minister to combat extremism and terrorism in the country, *makes two points about madrassas: to register and regulate them and to introduce curriculum reform*. While very few people will disagree with the first point— *the imperative need for the registration of madrassas and transparency of their funding sources*— we are not quite sure about the *causal relationships between madrassa curriculum on the one hand and extremism and terrorism*, on the other. ...Most critics of madrassa education contended that madrassa curriculum was outdated, narrowly focused on issues of fiqh and its most literalist interpretations, and based on religio-intellectual formulations and controversies that are no longer relevant....It is precisely this question that needs to be raised with regard to the role of madrassas and their curriculum in radical politics and militancy.....*It was in [some historical] context that a politically pacifist and religiously conservative madrassa curriculum was pressed into the service of radical political goals*... it was brought into madrassas by extraneous forces, especially the Afghan Jihad of the 1980s. It is true that the exclusivist religious discourse in madrassa education draws clear boundaries between what is the truth and what is falsehood. *But in 'ordinary' times, this exclusivist orientation remains quiescent and is invoked only in scholarly disputations. However, given the 'right' configuration of political circumstances, this exclusivist orientation may lead to sectarian violence and hostility towards the followers of other faiths*.....It is also important to note that madrassas belonging to different schools of thought inhabit the same theological-legal space as defined by the Dars-e-Nizami curriculum, and yet *madrassas belonging to one particular school of thought have rarely, if ever, been involved in extremist politics*.....If it is the curriculum and pedagogy of the madrassas alone that produce religio-political extremism, militancy and anti-Western attitudes, then the 'exceptionalism' of madrassas belonging to this particular school of thought becomes problematic.

Extremism in Sindh, Huma Yusuf, *Dawn*, February 16⁶²

Here's the problem with a National Action Plan: once launched, it must be implemented. *A state with a plan is a proactive, can-do, busy state*. Never mind that policies remain muddled, ideological confusion persists, and capacity to carry out the plan is lacking. A plan gives meaning to the smallest gesture —

⁶¹ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/838890/madrassas-and-militancy-2/>

⁶² <http://www.dawn.com/news/1163851/extremism-in-sindh>

whether effective or not — because at the very least it is ‘part of the plan’. *This must be why the security establishment made a grand announcement last week that the militant group that carried out the sectarian attack in Shikarpur had been identified. The attack was pinned on a group with links to the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan based along the Sindh-Balochistan border. Arrests were made and inter-provincial committee meetings convened. This was the plan in action. The flurry of state activity in the wake of the Shikarpur attack implies that it was unprecedented.The rise of militant groups has begun to ravage the fabric of Sindhi society. By some estimates, sectarian groups have enlisted approximately 25,000 members across the province outside Karachi. The northern districts of Shikarpur, Khairpur and Ghotki, which are closest to the sectarian groups’ original bases in Punjab, are at the highest risk. Clashes between members of different sects in these districts erupt with growing frequency in markets and during religious festivals. [...]*But history has already taught us that a securitised response will not be enough. *Violent extremist groups are succeeding in a province long celebrated for its pluralism, tolerance and cultural vibrancy because they are filling a vacuum. Sindh’s feudal and tribal structures are collapsing, but the civilian government and judiciary have not effectively filled the gaps in service delivery and dispute resolution mechanisms. Young people are migrating to cities at a higher rate than elsewhere in the country, only to find that their lack of education and skills leave them without hope. Ghost schools persist despite Supreme Court scrutiny, and madressahs run by violent extremist groups often seem to be the only alternative. If Sindh is to be saved from a further decline into extremism, the provincial government will have to do more...The plan will have to work.*

Karachi: a hard city, Zahid Hussain, *Dawn*, February 18 ⁶³

[...] Blood comes cheap in the city and any resistance to intruders could cost people their lives. Don’t argue or display bravado, is the common advice one gets when you arrive in the city. They may be right, *with law-enforcement reaching the point of complete collapse in the country’s biggest metropolis. Going to the police may get you into bigger trouble. So, how does one survive in this lawless environment? The increasing number of burglaries and muggings are manifestations of a city fast descending into chaos....*The reason is simple: the PPP government does not want to lose political control of the country’s wealthiest city. *A city with a population of around 20 million, larger than many European countries, is being run by bureaucrats who hardly have any understanding of the city and its problems. With few funds available to the city that provides a large chunk of the federation’s revenues and supports almost 90pc of the provincial budget, there are not many proper municipal services available in Karachi.An unmanageable influx of migrants has turned a large part of the city into a big slum with not even basic civic facilities. There is no mass transit system in this mega city.....*It is alleged

⁶³ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1164286/karachi-a-hard-city>

that a major reason behind the PPP's refusal to hold city government elections is to plunder the vast and lucrative real estates. *How the situation has deteriorated during the previous and present tenures of the PPP-led government is incredible.* The rapid rise of slums in the peripheries is going on side by side with the building of high-rise malls and apartment buildings along the seafront. Surely the arrival on the scene of real estate tycoon Malik Riaz has given a huge impetus to this construction boom, but the grapevine leads to former president Asif Zardari's doorsteps. A large number of houses in the periphery of the Bilawal House fortress have reportedly been bought up at market prices. *Meanwhile, a new Bahria city is coming up in the outskirts of the city. What makes the city tick despite all these problems? The answer probably lies in its resilience and dynamism. The cultural scene remains vibrant....*the Karachi Literary Festival this year attracted an audience of at least 120,000....But that resilience also makes it difficult to force a change. "One wishes the city was not that resilient," remarks, Arif Hassan, a leading city planner and architect.

The blowback, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, February 18⁶⁴

Just a day after Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif were in Karachi saying they would fight terrorism to the end — *the terrorists delivered their riposte in Lahore.* At least eight were killed and an unknown number injured in an explosion that took place near the Police Lines in Lahore on the afternoon of February 17. There could be no clearer indicator of just how far this government is from winning the war against terrorism than a terrorist strike at the very heart of Punjab. *The blast took place near the main gate of the Police Lines in the Qila Gujjar Singh area.* Reports as to the nature of the blast were conflicting with some saying it was vehicle-borne, others saying it was a suicide bomber. [...] *Punjab has escaped relatively lightly from the attentions of the terrorists in recent years; but with the gloves now off it may be expected that whatever restraint they showed in the past, they are not going to be inclined to continue to show it.* As has been noted in these pages recently, this is going to be a very long war. The statements of the army chief and the prime minister in Karachi indicated that both the civilian and military leaderships are on the same page for now when it comes to fighting terror. *One hopes that this translates into genuine action that can prevent such atrocities from taking place.*

Shedding client mentality, Talat Masood, *The Express Tribune*, February 18⁶⁵

When the government issues *licences for hunting a rare migratory bird, the Houbara bustard, to princes from the Gulf States, despite this being banned, this betrays the acute sense of servility that our leaders possess.* This character trait is not new and in its different manifestations has been a part of the national

⁶⁴ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/839856/the-blowback/>

⁶⁵ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/839888/shedding-the-client-mentality/>

psyche of our privileged lot since Pakistan's early years. *One could attribute it to the feudal mindset and the deeply ingrained colonial mentality of our ruling elite. Unlike the leaders of the Indian National Congress, very few of our leaders participated in the freedom struggle, which also could have been a contributory factor. The irony is that we are not even fully conscious of the price the nation has paid for this client-patron behaviour and the corrosive impact it has on our national pride and dignity. [...] The Gulf countries have been using sectarian groups to wage their proxy wars and this is the price that the country is paying for the monetary assistance that is occasionally provided by them. We are unnecessarily dragged into the unending rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran. A more neutral and dignified stance towards these countries would contribute towards our internal stabilisation. And this in turn will provide a more favourable environment for economic betterment and self-reliance. One of the compelling factors for Pakistan's chronic external dependence has been its inability to mobilise national resources through taxation and undertake structural reforms....If it were not for IMF assistance, Pakistan would be in dire financial straits. In any normal democratic country, the opposition would have applied political pressure and sought answers in parliament for this lapse. But for the opposition, economic sovereignty has also never been a priority. To Imran Khan's credit, he has been the lone voice in demanding a more self-reliant economy but having abandoned parliament, his message hardly resonates. The military and strategic community has been ever so aware of the country's geostrategic and geopolitical importance but it is rare that these have been exploited to the country's advantage. In fact, this has mostly worked against it by creating internal instability and foreign policy dilemmas. If Pakistan has to shed the mentality of looking for patrons, it should harness the potential of its people and its land and even when it seeks external assistance, this should be with the aim to develop its national capacity. For this, the nation has to focus on education, economy, infrastructure and good governance.*

Pak-China Corridor of controversy, Editorial, Dawn, February 19⁶⁶

The furore has been raging for weeks now and we are still no closer to getting a clear picture on what is happening with the *China Pakistan Economic Corridor project*. The multiparty conference convened by the ANP stoked the fires a little more, and yet again *dire warnings were sounded that the project could become another Kalabagh dam if the government refused to clarify what it was doing with the route*. The declaration issued at the end of the conference makes clear that the *project is as political as it is technical*.It is surprising to see the government's lack of effort to get its own message out regarding the CPEC project. *This is either because they completely underestimate the seriousness of the challenge that is developing, or take their own position for granted*. Either way, it is not only folly

⁶⁶ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1164458/corridor-of-controversy>

on their part to continue to ignore the growing protests around the project, it is also highly irresponsible. *The project is an important one and deserves proper stewardship, in both the technical and political spheres. Bland assurances that the route remains unchanged are clearly not enough.* The government needs to release further details about the many projects that are being advanced under the umbrella of CPEC, and collect them all in one place for ease of access. If it has a case to make, it should step up and make it. *But if it has no case in the face of such a serious challenge to such an important venture, then it is inevitable that people will ask whether the government can be trusted at all with its stewardship.*

(Pak-US) A fresher playbook, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, February 27⁶⁷

There is a sense that there really has been an *improvement in relations between Pakistan and the US*— and that the improvement is producing results to the satisfaction of both parties. The head of Pakistan's leading intelligence agency is in America for talks with his counterpart in the CIA along with other US officials in the intelligence community. *They are unlikely to be discussing the price of eggs.* It is also unlikely that the wider world will ever be privy to the details of their conversations, *but the routine vanilla press briefing by "a security official" spoke of intelligence cooperation and "the current regional security situation with particular reference to Afghanistan".* With on-again, off-again talks with the Taliban being pursued by the Afghan premier in the last week, *there is a complex geopolitical dynamic to be stage-managed.....*What has yet to develop is the *civilian counter-terrorism narrative to run in parallel with military operations*, and that is a deficit that will grow with time and be exacerbated if there is continuing military success. *A refreshing of the playbook used by regional and international actors was long overdue, and the happy accident of a new Afghan president with his own refreshing of the script means that all these developments are contributing to a dialling back of old tensions. Pakistan and America are unwilling bedfellows in a marriage of convenience but divorce is not an option.* The relationship will endure, the playbook refreshed.

ECONOMIC ISSUES

TRADE

Transit trade agreement with Turkmenistan, *The News*, February 4⁶⁸

Pakistan has proposed to Turkmenistan *to sign the transit trade agreement to establish trade linkages with the Central Asian countries*, which may be extended further to Russia. The Ministry of Commerce will forward the draft of the

⁶⁷ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/844763/a-fresher-playbook/>

⁶⁸ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-35685-Pakistan-proposes-transit-trade-agreement-to-Turkmenistan>

proposed transit trade agreement to the Turkmen officials within the next few days for further deliberations. This was discussed in a meeting by the Federal Minister for Commerce Engr. *Khurram Dastagir Khan* with the Ambassador of Turkmenistan in Pakistan *Aladjan Movlamov*, who called on the minister in Islamabad on February 3. *The transit trade agreement with Turkmenistan will establish another trade corridor into the Central Asian states where goods will be traded with greater ease and in larger quantity.* In the beginning of January, the first meeting of Pakistan-Afghanistan-Tajikistan Trilateral Transit Trade Agreement (PATTTTA) was held which proved fruitful. The three sides will meet again in February in Dushanbe with the first draft of the trilateral transit trade agreement and the final draft of agreement will be brought on table in March in Kabul where PATTTTA is expected to be signed. *The two transit trade agreements will be the harbinger of a new era of trade cooperation between the two regions of South Asia and Central Asia.*

EU trade deal boosts Pakistan exports by \$1bn: minister, Dawn, February 8⁶⁹

Pakistani exports to the European Union *increased by more than a billion dollars after a landmark trade deal last year which made its products more competitive*, the commerce minister told AFP. *The EU signed a law in late 2013 granting Pakistan so-called "GSP-plus" status, which means firms pay no tax on certain categories of goods exported to the 27-nation bloc for 10 years.* The EU makes GSP-plus conditional on implementing international conventions on human and labour rights, and there have been fears *Pakistan's decision to end a moratorium on executions could affect the deal.* Pakistan's key textile industry in particular welcomed the agreement, *which came into force in January 2014*, and in an interview with AFP commerce minister Khurram Dastgir Khan hailed its impact. *"As a result of GSP-plus, Pakistan's exports to the EU have increased by \$1.08 billion during the period January to October 2014 as compared to the same period in 2013,"* Khan said. Exports to the EU in January-October 2014 totalled \$6.38 billion, up by just over 20 per cent from the \$5.3 billion recorded in the corresponding period in 2013. Before GSP-plus, textile exports faced customs tariffs of between 6.4 and 12 per cent and leather goods and footwear up to six per cent, he said.

Pakistan, Turkey vow to boost trade upto \$3 billion, The News, February 18⁷⁰

Pakistan and Turkey on February 17 *agreed to work towards a FTA to enhance bilateral trade to \$3 billion in two years.* Addressing a joint press conference in Islamabad, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his Turkish counterpart Ahmet Davutoglu also *vowed to boost bilateral trade to \$10 billion dollars in the next few*

⁶⁹<http://www.dawn.com/news/1162303/eu-trade-deal-boosts-pakistan-exports-by-1bn-minister>

⁷⁰[http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-175408-Pakistan,-Turkey-vow-to-boost-trade-upto-\\$3-billion](http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-175408-Pakistan,-Turkey-vow-to-boost-trade-upto-$3-billion)

years....During the Turkish PM's visit, the two countries also signed 11 documents of mutual cooperation and Memoranda of Understanding in the field of oil and gas, commerce, communications and scientific cooperation. The Turkish Prime Minister announced an additional support of \$20 million for internally displaced persons and the flood affected people of Pakistan.

ENERGY

Qatar to meet Pak gas requirements, *The Nation*, February 16⁷¹

Punjab CM Shahbaz Sharif met Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani in Doha and both agreed to promote Pak-Qatar relations and cooperation in economic and trade sectors. *Sheikh Tamim assured Shahbaz of investment by Qatar in various sectors of national development in Pakistan as well as extend all out cooperation in coping with energy crisis*, according to a hand-out issued on February 15. *The Emir of Qatar said that Pakistan was a friendly country and its development and prosperity was very dear to Qatar that fully realised Pakistan's problems and would play its role to overcome these problems.* Besides meeting gas requirements of Pakistan, he said, *Qatar would also continue its cooperation in agriculture, power generation and manpower sector*, adding, that Qatar fully appreciated recent efforts of Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif for strengthening of Pak-Qatar friendship and the positive impact of cooperation in economic and trade sectors.

Pakistan to secure deal with Qatar over LNG supply, *Dawn*, February 18⁷²

A top Pakistani energy official has revealed that Islamabad is expected to soon secure an extensive deal with Qatar for the import of liquefied natural gas to help alleviate the country's energy crisis by fuelling its currently dormant power stations, a report published in *The Wall Street Journal* said. Pakistani officials said an agreement regarding the deal, which is estimated to be worth a whopping US \$22.5 billion, is anticipated by early March. *"We are negotiating with Qatar and a few other sources," Petroleum Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi told The Wall Street Journal. "The deal will be very competitive and very beneficial for Pakistan." The current government has failed to overcome the issue of power shortage although it has repeatedly pledged to end load-shedding before the end of its tenure in 2018.* Pakistan is aiming to import up to three million tonnes of LNG per year, most of which is expected to come from Qatar once the deal is finalised. The deal with Qatar will supply LNG to Pakistan's energy sector for 15 years, according to officials.

⁷¹ <http://nation.com.pk/national/16-Feb-2015/qatar-to-meet-pak-gas-requirements>

⁷² <http://www.dawn.com/news/1164411/pakistan-about-to-secure-deal-with-qatar-over-lng-supply>

Govt to implement \$51mn on Tarbela, *The Express Tribune*, February 20⁷³

In order to fulfil Prime Minister's plan to add 1,410 MW of electricity in the system before the next elections, the government has decided to implement a \$51-million plan for executing the Tarbela fourth extension project seven months ahead of its planned completion. The \$51-million is over and above the existing estimated cost of the project – a spending that the Wapda claims would help generate \$300 million worth electricity by speeding up the plan of completion. Under the new schedule, the project should be completed by June 2017, ahead of the high water flow season, said Wapda official. The additional funds will be either given by the federal government or arranged by Wapda.

Load-shedding won't end by 2020: Nepra, *Dawn*, February 23⁷⁴

Load-shedding across the country is unlikely to end by year 2020, the State of Industry report released by the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) revealed on 23 February. According to the report, the country will face a shortfall of 1200 megawatts in 2020, an estimate that has come in spite of repeated claims by the government of successfully countering the power shortage by the end of the decade. The report held that load shedding remained a major issue despite the government's payment of Rs 480 billion to independent power producers, generation companies and fuel suppliers to pay off circular debt. K-Electric will face a power shortage of 1132 megawatts in 2016, the report adds. It further discloses that Nepra has advised against burdening consumers with a hefty Rs136 bn to pay off loans.

No change in fiscal deficit target: IMF, *Dawn*, February 6⁷⁵

The IMF has not approved any relaxation in the fiscal deficit target, says Jeffrey Franks, outgoing mission chief for Pakistan. "The target remains at 4.9 per cent for this fiscal year." The government has been gearing up for a relaxation of this target, with Finance Minister Ishaq Dar arguing that the NAP and rehabilitation of IDPs are going to put a severe strain on the budget. In January he was quoted as saying the fiscal requirements under NAP and IDPs could be as high as Rs100 billion, which would make it necessary to revise the deficit target to 5.3 per cent. In remarks to the press just before joining the negotiations in Dubai, he reiterated that the fiscal deficit target as it stands will need to be revised upwards due to expenditures connected with implementation of the NAP. "We have had discussions about the NAP," says Franks, confirming that the matter of expenditure increases was indeed raised by the Pakistan delegation.

⁷³<http://tribune.com.pk/story/841111/ahead-in-time-govt-to-implement-51m-plan-for-tarbela-project/>

⁷⁴ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1165404/loadshedding-wont-end-by-2020-nepra>

⁷⁵ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1161753/no-change-in-fiscal-deficit-target-imf>

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

Gwadar port operational by mid-April, *The Express Tribune*, February 16⁷⁶

Commercial activities at the Gwadar deep seaport will start from mid-April as the authorities *have acquired possession of 2,231 acres of land from Pakistan Navy and Pakistan Coast Guard for establishing free-trade zones. "Our target is to make the port fully operational by mid-April and by that time the first commercial ship will dock at the port and a new ship lane will be operational thereafter,"* the managing director of the GPA, Dostain Khan Jamaldini, told in an interview. He said infrastructure development at the port was in final stages while work was in full swing to establish free-trade zones, where a large number of national and international companies have started establishing display and business centres....Jamaldini said *Chinese authorities were almost done with their planning exercise and have shared their master plan with the port authorities.*

2,000 local firms operating in AFZ, *Dawn*, February 19⁷⁷

Around 2,000 Pakistani companies are operating in Ajman Free Zone (AFZ) in UAE, and they are increasing by 20 per cent annually. Out of total registered companies in AFZ, *over 20pc belong to Pakistanis*, making it the second largest investor group by country in the zone, Ali Hussain Fahmi, Head of Customer Service, AFZ, said while responding to Dawn queries. *He said Pakistan, India, Russia, China and Europe were five major investors in the zone. After going through the website of AFZ, it was revealed that the number of new companies stood at 925 in 2010, 789 in 2011 and 948 in 2012. He said some 2,850 new companies arrived in 2013 followed by 3,370 in 2014. "We are building the Phase 4 of our smart warehouse which will be suitable for manufacturing and storing and Pakistani investors are always in touch with Ajman zone. We are a good hub for Pakistani investors to export their products all over the world,"* Fahmi said.

Zarb-e-Azb cost \$1.3b, US legislator told, *The Express Tribune*, February 19⁷⁸

The cost of the ongoing military offensive against the Taliban and other militant groups, as well as taking care of the affected IDPs has already reached \$400 million (Rs 40 billion) and *could go as high as \$1.3 billion (Rs 130 billion)*, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar told a visiting US legislator on 18 February. The finance minister was speaking to *Senator Jack Reed, Democrat on the US Senate Armed Services Committee*, who was accompanied by US Ambassador Richard Olson. *Dar....sought Washington's help in defraying some of*

⁷⁶<http://tribune.com.pk/story/839044/new-avenues-gwadar-port-to-be-operational-by-mid-april/>

⁷⁷ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1164510/2000-local-firms-operating-in-afz?preview>

⁷⁸<http://tribune.com.pk/story/840678/seeking-assistance-zarb-e-azb-to-cost-1-3b-dar-tells-us-legislator/>

the costs. However, he did not provide a breakdown of the costs, and a recent statement of *Fiscal Operations released by the finance ministry shows defence spending at Rs 330 billion during the first six months of fiscal 2015, which is in line with spending patterns of previous years.*

Absence of bank account stalls Dasu, *The Express Tribune*, February 24⁷⁹

The \$4.3 billion project to build the Dasu dam, which upon completion will be able to produce 2,160 megawatts of hydroelectric power, had been stuck in limbo for eight months for a peculiar reason: the bureaucrats in charge of the project had been unable to open a bank account to manage the funds already allocated towards construction. In June 2014, PM Nawaz performed the ground breaking ceremony for the first phase of the project, for which the World Bank has already approved a \$588 million loan. WAPDA approved the formalities needed for the project to open a bank account late last year, yet the bank account to manage the funds was opened only earlier this month. According to a Wapda official, the delay can be attributed to bureaucrats sending the file for the project's bank account from one minister to another without taking any action and without regard for the delays they were causing.

KP seeks early payment of Rs 300bn hydel profits, *Dawn*, February 25⁸⁰

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on 25 February asked the Centre to pay at the earliest Rs 300 billion— allegedly stuck up for more than six years on account of net hydro-power profits on account of Tarbela dam, speedily clear its development projects and accept its constitutional right over oil and gas reserves. The federal government team led by Finance Minister Ishaq Dar promised to extend all possible support to the provincial government for its economic uplift schemes and resolve the issue of net hydro power profits through a high-level committee early next month. KP Chief Minister Pervez Khattak had a meeting on 24 February with the federal ministers for finance, petroleum and water and power. An official of the provincial government told Dawn that at the time of finalisation of 7th NFC award in 2009, the centre had promised to uncap provincial share in hydro power profit over Tarbela dam from Rs 6bn per annum and increase it to Rs 10bn immediately and then set mechanism for increasing it to Rs 28bn the following year along with some arrears.

EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS

Confusion after IMF review, *Dawn*, February 8⁸¹

The sixth review of Pakistan's IMF programme has concluded successfully. The latter remains on track with all targets met and no waivers being sought.

⁷⁹ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/843224/dasu-dam-absence-of-bank-account-stalls-project/>

⁸⁰ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1165725/kp-seeks-early-payment-of-rs300bn-hydro-profits>

⁸¹ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1162189/confusion-after-imf-review>

But confusion has arisen in the wake of an announcement that *the revenue target envisaged in the programme has been revised downward while the fiscal deficit target remains the same*, therefore implying that expenditure cuts will become necessary. *The downward revision in the revenue target is actually Rs 65bn going by IMF figures, or Rs 119bn according to Finance Minister Ishaq Dar.* The revenue target envisaged in the IMF programme is Rs 2,756bn as of the last review, whereas *the government budgeted revenue collection is Rs 2,810bn.* The new revenue target following the sixth review is now Rs 2,691bn. The matter becomes important because *since January the government has been searching for ways to accommodate expenditures arising from implementation of the National Action Plan, and rehabilitation of the IDPs.* These expenditures, which were not budgeted, are expected to soar in the second half of the fiscal year. *In early January, the government expected to raise \$380m from the third donors' conference held in Islamabad, but was disappointed when the United States failed to commit an expected \$250m for the rehabilitation of the IDPs.....Another way could be through a hike in the deficit target and greater borrowing, steps not allowed under the fiscal terms agreed during the sixth review talks. ...But without these steps, there is a question mark hanging over the fiscal terms agreed during the just concluded sixth review negotiations.*

The right economic corridor, editorial, *The Express Tribune*, February 8⁸²

When it comes to a project as big as the \$45 billion Pakistan-China Economic Corridor, reasonable people can disagree over what is the most prudent course of action. Yet, the uproar that took place in parliament recently, and a subsequent press conference by Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal, *devolved rather quickly into name-calling and threats of secession.* We understand passions run high when it comes to *what may well be the largest infrastructure project in the country's history since the completion of the Sukkur Barrage.* But this sort of behaviour — *where the government is accusing the opposition of treason, and the opposition is accusing the government of ethnic bias and threatening to launch separatist movements—* is unbecoming of elected representatives. *At the heart of the disagreement is what route the corridor should take. We believe that the senators from Balochistan and K-P are correct in insisting that the corridor should be used to rectify one of Pakistan's greatest economic inequalities: the fact that the bulk of the transportation infrastructure is concentrated almost entirely in Sindh and Punjab.* The corridor affords the country the opportunity to create a similar level of infrastructure in Balochistan and K-P.....*The need to appease the Chinese is reasonable, but Pakistan's national interest is served by ensuring that the two provinces don't feel like being ignored and get the infrastructure they need to prosper.* They have waited too long for this opportunity.

⁸² <http://tribune.com.pk/story/834577/the-right-economic-corridor/>

The genie of inflation, Dr Muhammad Yaqub, *The News*, February 17⁸³

The country has faced a high rate of inflation in the last ten years or so, which has affected the poor, lower and middle income classesSome among them...may have succeeded in reducing their economic hardships...*The governments have been creators and not curers of inflation in Pakistan.* Still worse, every government has followed a standard operating procedure in explaining price developments. Leaving aside the attempt to create an illusion of low inflation through manipulation of official price statistics, *every government has attributed inflation to anything and everything other than their own unsound economic policies.....*The problem does not stop there. *Government expenditure is way above tax revenue and the gap is being filled by excessive money creation.....[which] translates into higher prices.* Every government since the 1980s adopted this easy route in place of taxation as a means to finance fiscal deficit. That has generated a high rate of demand-pull inflation for a long time and *entrenched inflationary expectations in economic decision-making by consumers, distributors, produces and importers.* Learning from the past history of the country, legislative reforms were undertaken during 1993-97 to make the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) autonomous so that it could control excessive money creation. *But recent governments placed compliant and timid governors and deputy governors [who have] obliged the government by allowing monetary expansion beyond the safe limits* regardless of the statutory provisions of the revised SBP Act. This is evident from the fact that *money supply increased at 3-4 times the rate of increase in supply of goods and services in the last decade or so and has been the dominant factor for inflation in Pakistan.* The finance minister and the SBP governor should realise that *the genie of inflation cannot be put back in its bottle on a durable basis without the pursuit of prudent fiscal and monetary policies.*

Developing Gwadar, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, February 18⁸⁴

On December 8, 1958, Pakistan purchased Gwadar from Oman and since that day, the government has been talking about making Gwadar into a world class port city. We are glad that, after nearly six decades, Pakistan is finally able to begin full-scale commercial operations at Gwadar Port. *There is an economic divide between the two halves of Pakistan. Sindh and Punjab have a large and better developed transportation infrastructure that includes roads and railways leading from Punjab all the way down to Karachi Port. In Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, however, there is nothing similar.* Are we then surprised that there is very little economic activity in these provinces? For far too long, Balochistan has been a backwater and *it is high time Islamabad took action to rectify the problem.....*It is natural to understand and incorporate national security strategy into the port's development, and to an extent we would even

⁸³ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-9-302173-The-genie-of-inflation>

⁸⁴ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/839855/developing-gwadar/>

describe that as responsible behaviour. However, Islamabad must resist the urge to view Gwadar purely from a military-strategic prism. *Gwadar should be a port city for Pakistan's economic benefit.* Priority in land allocation should be for the port. *It is high time the government started viewing economic development with the same urgency it views national security.*

SECURITY SITUATION

TERRORISM

'Stop executions if you want children to remain safe', *The News*, February 4⁸⁵

Terrorists have warned parents that if they want life of their children secure, executions of their associates should be stopped. *The warning came following an attack on a private school of the metropolis on February 3.* A cracker attack outside a private school in Block 7 of Gulshan-e-Iqbal early in the morning struck fear into children, parents and school managements throughout the city. Most of the schools in the vicinity were closed and heavy contingents of the police and Rangers personnel, along with senior officers, rushed to the spot. *The explosion was heard in many parts of Gulshan-e-Iqbal, along the Abul Hassan Isphahani Road and in some parts of Gulistan-e-Jauhar.* Parents decided against sending their children to schools while some of the educational institutions in the area were closed, awaiting official word from the LEAs. *The attackers also left behind some leaflets printed in English and Urdu, saying the explosion was carried out to warn the LEAs against executing their associates, adding that more attacks would follow if the hangings did not stop.*

'Military courts to start by end-February', *The Express Tribune*, February 9⁸⁶

Military courts will start functioning by the end of February, Home Minister Col (retd) Shuja Khanzada said on 8 February. Talking to reporters the minister said that law enforcement agencies were making *all out efforts to implement the National Action Plan against terrorism.* He said cases against those directly or indirectly involved in terrorist activities would be sent to the military courts. The minister said *"The war against terrorism has become Pakistan's own war. The Pakistan Army and law enforcement agencies know how to deal with them".*

⁸⁵<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-35683-Stop-executions-if-you-want-schoolchildren-to-remain-safe>

⁸⁶ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/835260/fighting-terror-military-courts-to-start-functioning-by-end-of-feb/>

Crackdown begins in South Punjab, Sindh, *The Express Tribune*, February 9⁸⁷

Security agencies have launched a targeted *operation against the 'supporters and abettors' of terror outfits in southern Punjab and interior of Sindh* as part of the new counter-terrorism strategy. A security official told media that *both civilian and military intelligence outfits have identified individuals as well as groups that have been supporting militants.....In southern Punjab, both material and manpower support comes mainly from Rahim Yar Khan, Jhang, Chiniot, Dera Ghazi Khan and Bahawalpur districts, whereas in Sindh, Khairpur, Hyderabad, Shikarpur, Nawabshah and Larkana are the districts from where militant outfits draw much of their support.*

US man admits to role in attack on ISI office, *Dawn*, February 15⁸⁸

A Pakistani-American has *pleaded guilty to financing the 2009 terrorist attack on the ISI office in Lahore*, US officials said. Reaz Qadir Khan, 51, has admitted to "providing advice and financial assistance" to those who carried out the attack, the US Attorney's Office in Portland, Oregon, announced on 13 February. The bombing had killed approximately 30 people, mostly ISI employees, and injured 300 more. *Khan's main contact, Maldivian Abu Jaleel, was also killed in the suicide bombing.* Khan is a naturalised US citizen who lived in Portland and worked at a water treatment facility. He is an NED (Nadirshaw Eduljee Dinshaw) University graduate and also has a *master's degree in engineering from a US university.* According to court documents, Khan sent money to *Ali Jaleel, a citizen of the Maldives Islands, and two others who rammed a large, bomb-laden truck into ISI's Lahore office on May 27, 2009.*

Afghan forces closing in on TTP chief, *The Express Tribune*, February 18⁸⁹

Afghan security forces are said to be closing in on Pakistan's most wanted terrorist Mullah Fazlullah in a move which suggests growing security cooperation between the two neighbours. Army chief General Sharif, who travelled to Kabul on February 17 along with ISI chief Lt Gen Rizwan Akhtar, was informed by Afghan authorities that "*they are tightening the noose around Fazlullah*", a source told. This was Gen Raheel's second visit to Kabul in two months and appears to indicate that a significant development may be expected about the fugitive chief of the outlawed TTP. Islamabad has presented compelling evidence of Fazlullah's involvement in the December 16, 2014 massacre at the APS in Peshawar. Pakistan has since been pushing the Afghan authorities to eliminate terrorist sanctuaries as well as kill or capture Fazlullah.

⁸⁷<http://tribune.com.pk/story/835370/abettors-of-terror-crackdown-begins-in-south-punjab-interior-sindh/>

⁸⁸ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1163726/us-man-admits-to-role-in-attack-on-isi-office>

⁸⁹ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/840099/whirlwind-trip-afghan-forces-closing-in-on-ttp-chief/>

IS serious threat to Pakistan: Foreign Secretary, *The News*, February 24⁹⁰

The Foreign Office broke its silence regarding the Islamic State's (IS) activities in Pakistan, admitting that the radical Islamist group posed a "serious threat" to the country. Speaking to the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee at the Parliament House on 23 February, Foreign Secretary Azaz Ahmed Chaudhry acknowledged the IS was indeed a real concern, while simultaneously assuring those present that the government would take all steps necessary to counter the threat. "*Under the UN resolutions, Pakistan is firmly against extremist organisations like ISIL [IS] and is taking all actions to counter them,*" Azaz told. He disclosed that after Operation Zarb-e-Azb was launched, some extremist elements tried to emerge together on the IS platform, but their efforts were countered.

US stops consular services in Peshawar, issues travel warning, *The Express Tribune*, February 25⁹¹

In fresh travel advisories issued on 24 February, the US government said that *two of its four missions in Pakistan were currently closed for consular services including Peshawar and in Lahore*. According to the travel warning, the consulate in Lahore remains 'temporarily closed' for public services, six months after the mission had been closed for 'renovations' and its staff withdrawn due to terror threats. *As the Department of State warns US citizens to defer all non-essential travel to Pakistan*, it also replaced its Travel Warning dated August 8, 2014 and reminds US citizens of ongoing security concerns in Pakistan. *The warning added that the consulate in Peshawar will no longer offer consular services*.

Punjab to reform syllabus, map seminaries, says CM, *Dawn*, February 26⁹²

Stepping up its efforts against terrorism, *the Punjab government has decided to reform syllabi of seminaries and schools/colleges*, a much-needed but hitherto ignored measure, *map seminaries and Afghan refugees and introduce a 'safe city' project*. The decisions were announced by Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif at a press conference on 25 February. The province has already *introduced laws against hate -- particularly takfiri -- speech, wall chalking and misuse of loudspeakers in mosques, and booked thousands of prayer leaders*. Articles on religious tolerance and restraint would be made part of the syllabi of schools and seminaries; Mr Sharif said and added that most of the groundwork had been completed in this regard. He said writing of plays and songs promoting harmony and tolerance would be encouraged as part of efforts to change the mindset of the society.

⁹⁰<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-2-303500-Islamic-State-serious-threat-to-Pakistan-admits-foreign-secretary>

⁹¹ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/843822/us-stops-consular-services-at-peshawar-mission/>

⁹² <http://www.dawn.com/news/1165991/punjab-to-reform-syllabus-map-seminaries-says-cm>

LeJ involved in sectarian attacks to pressure govt to halt executions: interior ministry, *The Express Tribune*, February 26⁹³

The government on 25 February said that the *banned LeJ is involved in the latest wave of sectarian attacks in the country in a bid to pressurise the government to halt executions of their members*, BBC Urdu reported on 25 February. In a letter addressed to provincial authorities, the interior ministry has said that *the LeJ had sought support from al Qaeda in executing reprisal attacks over the execution of its members and crackdown by security forces*, but the militant group refused. *That prompted the LeJ to turn to Taliban chief Mullah Fazlullah who provided financial support with the promise of further assistance*. The ministry's letter warned that *the group may resort to kidnapping citizens and trade them for their incarcerated comrades*. According to the interior ministry, the group has also tasked a man, *Abdul Rehman from Kabirwala in Punjab, for carrying out attacks in the province*.

G-B jailbreak: One prisoner involved in Nanga Parbat attack killed, *The Express Tribune*, February 27⁹⁴

At least one of the two prisoners involved in the Nanga Parbat attack that killed 10 foreign tourists was shot dead, while the other was injured as police foiled an attempted jailbreak in Gilgit-Balistan early morning on 27 February. *On June 23, 2013, gunmen dressed as paramilitary forces stormed into the Nanga Parbat base camp, killing Chinese and Ukrainian climbers in an unprecedented attack in the Himalaya Mountains of G-B region*. Home Secretary Sibtain Ahmed confirmed that the person killed was one of the assailants who had stormed the camp. Two other inmates – one of them also believed to be involved in the Nanga Parbat attack – however, managed to escape from district jail, Gilgit, where the incident occurred at 2.45am.

KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA AND FATA

KP to expel nearly 300 Afghan clerics, *Dawn*, February 25⁹⁵

The Home and Tribal Affairs Department of KP on 25 February ordered all commissioners and DIGs *to expel Afghan clerics from the province and submit a report over the implementation within seven days*. A home department source told *Dawn* that there were 294 Afghan peshimams (prayer leaders) in the province and their documentation had been sent to relevant commissioners as part of the National Action Plan. *The KP government is taking a tough stand against*

⁹³<http://tribune.com.pk/story/844343/lej-involved-in-sectarian-attacks-to-pressure-govt-against-executing-its-members-report/>

⁹⁴<http://tribune.com.pk/story/845069/g-b-jailbreak-prisoner-involved-in-nanga-parbat-attack-killed/>

⁹⁵<http://www.dawn.com/news/1165838/khyber-pakhtunkhwa-to-expel-nearly-300-afghan-clerics>

registered and unregistered Afghans after the killing of 150 people, including 134 children, in the December 16 terrorist attack on Army Public School in Peshawar.

BALUCHISTAN

Gas supply to textile sector hit by pipeline blast, Dawn, February 2⁹⁶

The SNGPL drastically reduced supplies to the textile sector in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa after terrorists blew up a 24-inch diameter gas pipeline in Balochistan's Dera Bugti before dawn on February 2. The action was taken when the system suddenly lost 25 million cubic feet of gas. A massive fire caused by the blast led to suspension of supply to the compressor of the gas purification plant. The shortage of gas affected Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and some other parts of the country. "Look, the incident has caused a reduction of 25 million cubic feet of gas in our system. Although gas supply to domestic consumers has remained unaffected, the blast caused shortage for the textile sector. So we have reduced gas supplies to the sector from six to four hours," SNGPL Managing Director Arif Hameed told media.

Shrine set on fire in Mach, Dawn, February 6⁹⁷

Unknown armed men set a shrine in Mach on fire on February 3 night. According to police, two rooms of the shrine were destroyed and all religious books turned to ashes. The ceiling of one of the rooms caved in. The shrine was built in 1948 in memory of Pir Tahir Al Gilani Al Baghdadi, who migrated from Baghdad and settled in Mach, 50km southeast of Quetta. Although police have raided a number of places to catch the suspects, no arrests have been made so far. According to the custodian of the *Ghausia Alia shrine*, when the armed men entered the shrine a man, whom he identified as Din Mohammad, resisted them, but they beat him up and caused grievous injuries. After receiving information about the incident, followers of Pir Tahir rushed to the shrine. After an effort of two hours, they put out the fire and saved the shrine from complete destruction.

No electricity in Quetta, transmission line blown up, The News, February 15⁹⁸

Two towers of the main transmission line between Guddu and Quetta were blown up by insurgents at Tottal in Naseerabad. According to Levies sources power supply to more than twenty districts of Baluchistan including Quetta had been suspended due to the incident. Sources revealed that Quetta's electricity was restored through the Khuzdar transmission line however several districts are still without electricity. Two days ago two towers of the electricity transmission

⁹⁶ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1160999/gas-supply-to-textile-sector-hit-by-pipeline-blast>

⁹⁷ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1161802/shrine-set-on-fire-in-mach>

⁹⁸ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-175171-No-electricity-in-Quetta-after-transmission-line-blown-up>

line between Uch and Quetta were also damaged after an explosion and are yet to be completely repaired.

24-inch diameter pipeline blown up in Dera Bugti, *The News*, February 17⁹⁹

A 24-inch diameter gas pipeline, running from Pirkoh Gas Field to Sui was blown up by unknown miscreants late on Feb 16. Levies sources said the gas pipeline was blown up at Peshbogi area. Fire engulfed the pipeline after the explosion. Sources said security personnel and gas officials have arrived at the site following the incident.

SINDH

Sindh to refer 64 cases to military courts, *Daily Times*, February 10¹⁰⁰

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah has approved 64 cases to be referred to military courts for trial. The approval was accorded by the chief minister at a special meeting held on February 9. The cases including attack on convoy of Justice Maqbool Baqar on June 26, 2013, Airport attack case of June 8, 2014 and murder of Advocate Mubarak Raza Kazmi on July 23, 2014 were found fit for trial by military courts. Briefing the chief minister about cases, the IGP Sindh said that 85 cases were referred to the legal committee for opinion. The committee, after going through these cases, approved 64 of them for trial by military courts. The chief minister directed the IGP to complete all formalities for sending these cases to military courts.

ASWJ local leader killed in Rawalpindi, central leader attacked in Karachi, *Dawn*, February 15¹⁰¹

Maulana Mazhar Siddiqui, the spokesperson of the ASWJ's Rawalpindi chapter was targeted on February 15 morning near Pirwadhai More within the precincts of the Rawalpindi's Golra police station. In another incident, ASWJ's central president, Aurangzeb Farooqi, was targeted by unknown gunmen near Quaidabad bridge area in Karachi on 14 February night. The ASWJ leader escaped unhurt in the attack while three of his bodyguard sustained injuries, according to a party spokesperson. A large number of police and Rangers personnel reached the spot and cordoned off the area as a probe into the incident went underway.

⁹⁹<http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-175349-24-inch-diameter-gas-pipeline-blown-up-in-Dera-Bugti>

¹⁰⁰<http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/10-Feb-2015/sindh-to-refer-64-cases-to-military-courts>

¹⁰¹ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1163772/aswj-local-leader-killed-in-rawalpindi-central-leader-attacked-in-karachi>

Nawaz, Army chief appreciate action against militants in Sindh, *The Express Tribune*, February 16¹⁰²

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif visited Corps headquarters in Karachi on February 16 and held meeting with Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif. DG ISI and Corps Commander were also present on the occasion. *The prime minister was given briefing on implementation of National Action Plan to eliminate terrorism from the country.* Nawaz was also apprised about action taken in the wake of Operation Zarb-e-Azb. *The premier appreciated intelligence-based action in Sindh, including Karachi.* Director General ISPR Asim Bajwa took to his Twitter account to describe the nature of the meetings.

Gas pipeline blown up in Kandhkot, *The News*, February 17¹⁰³

Unknown miscreants blew up 16-inch diameter gas pipeline in Kandhkot late on February 16 night. Police have confirmed the incident and said that it occurred in Ghora Ghat of Kacha area. The adjacent areas of Kandhkot were deprived of gas after the pipeline was blown up.

RELATIONS WITH INDIA

India has obsession about Kashmir: FO, *The News*, February 7¹⁰⁴

Pakistan blamed India for being obsessed with "*its illusions of grandeurs*" and its obsession "with aggrandisement" by writing a mythical history about Kashmir and appears to have forgotten the acknowledgement and commitments by its first prime minister on Jammu and Kashmir dispute, who spoke about the "*disputed territory*" of Kashmir to be decided in accordance with the wishes of the people. New Delhi, on February 5, had in an unusual manner criticised Pakistan for commemorating the Kashmir Solidarity Day on February 5 by saying that "*Pakistan should stop coveting what is not theirs and never will be*". One day later on February 6, Friday, the spokesperson at the Foreign Office reminded New Delhi of several remarks made by its first prime minister, Jawahrlal Nehru, who in a message to the prime ministers of Pakistan and the UK on October 27, 1947 said, "*I should like to make it clear that the question of aiding Kashmir in this emergency is not designed in any way to influence the State to accede to India. Our view which we have repeatedly made public is that the question of accession in any disputed territory or state must be decided in accordance with the wishes of the people and we adhere to the view.*"

¹⁰²<http://tribune.com.pk/story/839155/coas-extends-full-support-for-karachi-operations-to-uphold-peace/>

¹⁰³ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-175347-Gas-pipeline-blown-up-in-Kandhkot>

¹⁰⁴ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-35752-India-has-obsession-about-Kashmir-FO>

Modi might use military option against Pakistan: Blackwill, *The News*, February 7¹⁰⁵

Indian Prime Minister *Narendra Modi is likely to use the military option if the next terrorist attack in India is traced back to Pakistan*, a former top US diplomat has warned while hoping that the *Pakistanis would understand that their past behaviour is unlikely to be tolerated now*. "Every Indian prime minister since the attack on parliament in Delhi now heading on 15 years ago has looked seriously at a military response when these incidents occur and has stepped back. *But I believe that sentiment inside India has changed substantially and I think this prime minister is unlikely to step back*," former US ambassador to India Robert Blackwill reportedly said. "If there is a major terrorist attack whose breadcrumbs lead to Pakistan and the Pakistan military and ISI, I think that this prime minister is likely to use military force against Pakistan territory. It's not a certainty," Blackwill told reporters during a conference call organised by the Council on Foreign Relations, a top American think-tank.

India, Pakistan suspend trade on Kashmir border, *The Express Tribune*, February 8¹⁰⁶

India and Pakistan *have suspended trade across their de facto border in the disputed territory of Kashmir after Indian authorities detained a truck driver accused of drug trafficking*, Pakistani officials said on February 8.....Barter trade across the *de facto* border began in 2008 as part of peace efforts, but it is frequently disrupted over disputes. "We were informed by the Indian authorities on February 6 evening that they have stopped 22 Pakistani trucks which crossed the LOC earlier that day," Basharat Iqbal, trade facilitation officer on the Pakistani side of the border, told AFP. "They told us that they had discovered 12 kilogrammes of opium from a truck carrying oranges and were taking an action against the driver. After the incident, we also held 50 Indian trucks in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), because traffic crosses the border simultaneously," said Iqbal. Imtiaz Wayen, director-general of AJK's trade and travel authority, said India was not entitled to stop Pakistani drivers on grounds of smuggling.

Pakistan raises Kashmir issue in Washington, *Dawn*, February 8¹⁰⁷

Pakistan raised the Kashmir issue in the US capital this weekend, urging India to work with it for resolving the long-standing dispute. At a seminar at the Pakistan Embassy in Washington, *speakers warned India against changing the special constitutional status of the disputed territory and attempts to alter its*

¹⁰⁵<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-35757-Modi-might-use-military-option-against-Pakistan-Blackwill>

¹⁰⁶<http://tribune.com.pk/story/835032/india-pakistan-suspend-trade-on-kashmir-border-officials/>

¹⁰⁷ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1162279/pakistan-raises-kashmir-issue-in-washington>

demographics could have dangerous consequences. The seminar was the first Kashmir Solidarity Day event organised at the embassy in many years. *"The UN Security Council resolutions have the legitimacy of the international contract, accepted by both India and Pakistan before the international community,"* said Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States Jalil Abbas Jilani. He said that *denying the people of Kashmir what had been pledged to them by the United Nations would be a violation of this international contract.* Azad Jammu and Kashmir Minister for Electricity Raja Faisal Rathore asked the international community to alleviate the plight of the Kashmiri people suffering at the hands of Indian occupation forces.

Indian foreign secretary would like to visit Pakistan, Modi tells PM Nawaz, *The Express Tribune*, February 13¹⁰⁸

Indian PM Narendra Modi informed PM Nawaz Sharif that his new foreign secretary will soon visit all SAARC countries and would also like to visit Pakistan. According to the PM House, Modi called PM Nawaz to discuss regional issues. *The conversation between the two leaders lasted for 10 minutes.* PM Nawaz, recalling his meeting with Modi in May last year, welcomed the foreign secretary to Pakistan. *The phone call from the Indian premier came after a telephonic conversation between US President Barack Obama and PM Nawaz.* Obama had informed the premier about his recent visit to India and inquired about the ongoing military operation Zarb-e-Azb. *It's pertinent to mention that PM Nawaz – during his talk with Obama – expressed Pakistan's desire of becoming a member of the Nuclear Supplier Group.* PM also said that India does not deserve a permanent seat in UN Security Council.

DG ISPR alludes to Indian support for terrorism, *The News*, February 13¹⁰⁹

Pakistan's military spokesman on February 13 *alluded to India's support of terrorism in Balochistan and FATA.* Speaking at a press conference, Director General ISPR Major General Asim Bajwa said that Pakistan was not currently in a condition to *"heat up things"* along the LoC, its eastern borders with neighbouring India. He said that India was *"playing a dangerous game"* by increasing tensions along the LoC at a time when Pakistan was conducting an all-out operation against terrorism. *"They are doing this with a design. We have condemned this several times through our Foreign Office previously and have protested through several channels. We have tried to explain to them that this is a dangerous game they are playing,"* he said. *"[India] is supporting terrorism in Balochistan and Fata. We have warned them at every level – political leadership, diplomacy, military...even the common man is clear about the dangerous game they*

¹⁰⁸ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/837727/modi-phones-pm-nawaz/>

¹⁰⁹ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-174886-DG-ISPR-alludes-to-Indian-support-of-terrorism-in-Pakistan>

are playing," he said. "This is an attempt to distract Pakistan because Pakistan is heading towards eliminating terrorism," he said.

Consequences if India keeps playing with fire, *The News*, February 13¹¹⁰

Director General ISPR Asim Saleem Bajwa on Feb 12 said that India had been playing a dangerous game by resorting to unprovoked firing across the LoC and the consequences of these violations 'would not entail any goodness'. He said that India was funding the TTP in the Fata and Balochistan. Speaking at a news conference at the ISPR, he said that India was following a planned propaganda and violation of agreement regarding LoC was a part of that. He said that the Operation Zarb-e-Azb was continuing with success and most of the North Waziristan had been cleared. The DG ISPR said that the cooperation between Pakistan and Afghanistan for the elimination of terrorism was going strong. Giving details of the group involved in the attack on the APS, Peshawar, he said it was a 27-member group of which 12 were arrested, 9 terrorists were killed in the encounter while the rest were still at large. "The security forces were hot on the trail of the remaining six terrorists," he said.

Pakistan suffering heavy losses from Indian mills emissions', *Dawn*, February 15¹¹¹

Apart from damaging public health and crop cultivation, heavy fog mainly created by hazardous emissions from the coal-based Indian steel mills are causing a loss of \$2 billion annually to Pakistan's aviation industry. The Sindh coast doesn't face the threat of complete drowning from the intruding sea by 2060 as was recently reported in the press, but there are all indications that Pakistan would be seriously impacted by changes in weather conditions, which would become more intense in the coming years. Building dams could help Pakistan prevent flooding. These were some important points highlighted by deputy director general of the meteorological department Dr Ghulam Rasool at a press briefing held on Saturday. It was arranged by Green Media Initiative in collaboration with the Karachi Press Club. Speaking to journalists, Dr Rasool said that though Pakistan's case was briefly discussed in last year's report of the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change, scientists in the country had detailed information on climate change that would impact the country in the coming years.

¹¹⁰<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-35856-Consequences-if-India-keeps-playing-with-fire-at-LoC>

¹¹¹<http://www.dawn.com/news/1163622/pakistan-suffering-heavy-losses-from-indian-mills-emissions>

India's interference in Pakistan, Kashmir to be raised with Indian foreign secretary: Aziz, *The Express Tribune*, February 16¹¹²

After Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi hinted that he may resume dialogue with Pakistan by sending his new Indian Foreign Secretary to Pakistan soon, a senior government official said on February 15 that all issues, including *India's interference in Pakistan and the Kashmir dispute, will be discussed, Radio Pakistan reported*. Adviser to Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs and National Security Sartaj Aziz in a television interview on Sunday stressed the *need for meaningful and serious dialogue between Pakistan and India* to resolve all outstanding issues....Aziz said that while progress has been made on issues such as Sir Creek and Siachen, Pakistan will raise India's interference inside Pakistan and the Kashmir dispute in the upcoming talks in which all issues are expected to be discussed.

Boat incident tears off India's veil of being peaceful: defence minister, *The Express Tribune*, February 19¹¹³

Defence Minister Khawaja Asif took notice on February 18 of reports that India's DIG Coast Guard admitted he ordered a Pakistani boat to be blown up, saying that the incident and said, "*Pakistan's desire for peace and coexistence in the region must not be seen as our weakness. International community must also take notice of the incident which is tearing off India's veil of being a peaceful country of the region*". Earlier in the day, Indian media quoted DIG Coast Guard BK Loshali's saying, "*We blew off that Pakistani boat. We have blown them off....I was at Gandhinagar and I told at night, blow the boat off*".

Pakistani boat controversy was a drama: FO, *Dawn*, February 20¹¹⁴

Foreign Office spokeswoman Tasneem Aslam said on February 20, that Pakistan had had made it clear that none of its boats went missing as claimed by Indian officials. "*It has been proven from the contradictory statements issued by top Indian officials that the boat issue was a drama that has now been exposed,*" said Aslam. Earlier on February 18, India's Deputy Inspector General of the Coast Guard denied reports which said that he had admitted ordering for a Pakistani boat to be blown up in the Arabian Sea on New Year's Eve. *The claim was in sharp contrast to New Delhi's official position which had been adamant that the boat had 'suspected terror links' and that the crew had committed suicide by setting the vessel on fire...*

¹¹²<http://tribune.com.pk/story/838969/indias-interference-in-pakistan-kashmir-to-be-raised-with-indian-foreign-secretary-aziz/>

¹¹³<http://tribune.com.pk/story/840301/boat-incident-tears-off-indias-veil-of-being-peaceful-defence-minister/>

¹¹⁴ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1164842/pakistani-boat-controversy-was-a-drama-fo>

Indian foreign secretary to visit Pakistan on March 3, *The Express Tribune*, February 25¹¹⁵

Indian Foreign Secretary S Jaishankar will visit Pakistan on March 3 for talks with his Pakistani counterpart, according to an official announcement by the foreign office on 25 February. *"Pursuant to the Prime Minister's India call to the Prime Minister on 13 February, 2015, the Indian Foreign Secretary S Jaishankar would visit Pakistan on 3-4 March, 2015. During his visit, Jaishankar would hold meeting with Foreign Secretary Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry,"* the statement said. The visit of the Indian foreign secretary is likely to help resume the stalled peace process between the two countries.

EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS

Crazy talk, Cyril Almeida, *Dawn*, February 8¹¹⁶

THEY call it a sequential approach. Let the good crazies run around and do the things they like while the boys go after the bad crazies first. Then, once all the bad crazies have been dispatched, it'll be time to figure out what to do with the good crazies. Sounds crazy, right? Think of it as a statist version of leaving for tomorrow what can be done today. Hence all those K-Day protests.Essentially, the sequential approach is the polite way of telling the world what it wants to hear while merrily getting on with business as usual.We do know that at least three things have changed: *Fata is on fire and 200,000 troops are fire-fighting; militancy across the Durand Line has become bi-directional; and the extremist mosque-madrasah-social welfare network has exploded across Pakistan. Much of that is clearly bad, whatever the strategy.And, in the case of the extremist mosque-madrasah-social welfare network, could that in fact be a necessary tool in a winning strategy, an inflammable substance to be handled with care rather than a toxic one to be buried deep underground?.....Start with India. If there's one thing India doesn't have an answer to it's Pakistan-based, anti-India militancy. Nukes they can design. Missiles they can build. Planes they can buy. Submarines, guns and soldiers too. But they don't quite know what to do about militancy.....Because there's not much anyone can do against the jihad complex that Pakistan has built. India tried the war route in the early 2000s. That ended in a stalemate on the border. Then it tried the international diplomatic route in the late 2000s. They're still at it, but so are Hafiz Saeed and Masood Azhar and the Harkat. No prizes for guessing who's ahead. Whether it's the Pakistan-loving Manmohan or the Pakistan-baiting Modi, the NSA dove Menon or the NSA hawk Doval, whether India gallops away economically or the gap grows more slowly, no matter what the hell India does, it can't shake off the jihad leverage.The Kashmir policy has been a disaster. We're no closer to a settlement.*

¹¹⁵ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/843886/indian-foreign-secretary-to-visit-pakistan-on-march-3/>

¹¹⁶ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1162192/crazy-talk>

We've failed to internationalise the dispute. Nobody likes us, everyone thinks we're trouble. It's not just unwise it's self-defeating. *Not really. In a certain world, from a certain perspective, it makes total sense.* Don't think about it being just about Kashmir. *The anti-India jihad complex is leverage in the broader Pak-India relationship. It is the one instrument that Pakistan has that drives Indians crazy, keeps them up at night and to which they have no response.* No response that Pakistan can't absorb and is unwilling to absorb. *Why the hell would you give that up against Enemy No 1? Why the hell would you change a winning strategy?....*

Long way to peace, Editorial, *Dawn*, February 15¹¹⁷

.....The up-and-down nature of mere expectations that India and Pakistan will begin to approach the idea of talks again *indicates just how far from the path to normalisation the two countries have strayed....* Even now, the imminent visit of Mr Jaishankar is being cast by the Indian government as a so-called SAARC yatra — indicating that India is not keen on doing anything more than the bare minimum. If it is true that US President Barack Obama nudged Prime Minister Modi to reach out to Pakistan, it seems Mr Modi is sending a message that *he is neither very keen on it nor very hopeful.Two big issues stand out: failure to get anywhere near a closure on the Mumbai-related trials here and shelving the Non-Discriminatory Market Access deal with the previous Congress government.* Surely, for all of India's sullenness and petulance, *it is Pakistan's inability to approach the Pak-India equation in a cooperative manner that is undermining the prospects of a return to dialogue.* India has legitimate security concerns regarding Pakistan, as does Pakistan with India, *but it is unreasonable on the part of the Pakistani state to not even do the basic things that could help pave the way for a meaningful resumption of dialogue.*

Bats, balls and diplomacy, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, February 16¹¹⁸

...Ping-pong diplomacy between China and the US in the early 1970s contributed directly to a thaw in relations between the two powers. Today, *there is a possibility of the peace process between India and Pakistan getting rebooted with cricket as the diplomatic metaphor* employed both by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. *The process has been stuck since the Mumbai attacks, and nothing seemingly was able to unstick it with neither side playing their best game.* Mr Modi has called Nawaz Sharif and told him that the Indian foreign secretary is shortly to visit Islamabad as part of a round of visits he is to make of the Saarc countries.....The move comes hard on the heels of the meeting between our new High Commissioner in India Abdul Basit and Indian Foreign Secretary S Jaishankar, who discussed the possibility of resumption of bilateral talks. Assuming there are no bumps in the road

¹¹⁷ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1163647/long-way-to-peace>

¹¹⁸ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/838886/bats-balls-and-diplomacy/>

before the Jaishankar visit, this will represent a return to the point at which the talks last fell over.....Play is likely to be resumed around a date still to be fixed in March and we are happy that it will. *Mr Modi has joked with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif about him playing in a warm-up match in 1987, and the latter reportedly responded that he wished those days could come back. A carefully tended pitch awaits the resumption of one of the most important games in the world.*

FROM URDU MEDIA

Jihad-e-Afghanistan, its impact on the world, Mohammad Khurasani, *Nawa-i-Afghan Jihad*, February 2015, pp. 41-43.

....Recently, some vested interests have raised their doubts about the war in Afghanistan from religious and political perspectives. But by the grace of Allah, these doubts have evaporated into thin air like dew drops from the blades of grass.After 9/11 attack, Western powers came here with pomp and show. *With their Satanic propaganda, they started throwing muck on the face of Islam. They tried all their tricks, but without any success.* Later on, out of sheer frustration, they started abusing Quran and Allah. However, this resulted in *Quran becoming a best-seller in Europe. The persons visiting website of Quran was doubled and number of persons accepting Islam also considerably increased.*

Needless to say that *it is very much ingrained in the minds of the Muslims in both Muslim-majority states and Western countries that the only solution to the problems faced by our community (Ummat) is "armed jihad"*. There could be alternate ways of writing the history of Islam, but the fact remains that Jihad is the panacea for all the evils. *Let us remember that jihad in Afghanistan is the focus of the Islamic world.* We have fought with Uncle Sam against Taliban on many fronts. Now there is a sense of fatigue haunting the Western forces and they realise that they cannot confront the mujahideen on all fronts. *History shows that democratic institutions have failed in Islamic countries. These countries witness lot of popular protests and demonstrations. From Pakistan to Yemen, there is now an overt sympathy for Sharia-based nizam (system of governance), which is the off-spring of Afghan jihad.*

Leadership in Muslim countries exposed.

Afghan jihad has exposed the myth and reality of existing leadership in the Muslim countries. *We find that Muslim leadership is has adopted secular ethos. By not following Sharia, they have lost their credibility and respect in the eyes of Muslims.....The all-merciful Allah knew all the tricks (of the Kafirs), and if He was there with the mujahideen, there was no cause to worry.* As per the invitation (*dawah*) of the mujahideen, more and more people are now learning the

lessons of Quran and are in a position to stay away from falsehood and intrigues woven by the infidels.

Shortcomings in US strategy

If we see Jihade-e-Afghanistan from the US perspective, then ***it has been the costliest war in history***. The US has spent about 4 trillion dollars in the Afghan war so far. Each American family has contributed nearly 60,000 dollars for this war. For the Americans, this amount may have been like peanuts. However, according to one report published by Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, it has cost the US a lot. The US had to hike the pay and emoluments of its soldiers. There was rise in suicide rates amongst them. For those disabled, US had to pay 56 per cent more as their wages. From a Muslim point of view this ever-increasing losses incurred to Uncle Sam has been a source of solace and satisfaction. *The US may boast about its victories and accomplishments in Afghanistan, but every Muslim in Afghanistan knows the facts on the ground. In short, the US has lost its (Thanedari) much-vaunted ability to protect others in the world.....*

Impact on neighbouring countries

Jihad-e-Afghanistan has had great impact in the neighbourhood. *Talking about Iran and China, truly Islamic (Sunnat) fighters have now intensified their activities and taken on the tyrannical pasdarans of Rafzi (Shi'ite) Iran with all their might.For the first time, it is also becoming quite evident that Islamic zealots from Afghanistan have posed a threat to China through their jihadi activities.....*

Did US succeed in this war?

Those who are well-informed know pretty well that the US has miserably failed to achieve its objectives. We could gauge its failure from the incident in France wherein the fidayeen attacked the enemies of Islam and whole Europe is now feeling insecure after all these years of war. The US could not gain anything in Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan. Now the lions of Algeria and Yemen are ready to pounce on Uncle Sam.

What has America gained and lost in the Afghan war? *Nawa-i-Afghan Jihad*, February 2015, pp. 38-40.

After 13 long years, the US along with its allies are perhaps celebrating the success of their 'mission' at some unknown location due to the fear of possible Taliban attack upon them. Now, the main question is not what made America spend 13 years instead of 6 months as per their initial announcement, but whether it has succeeded in its mission or not? The basic objective of American attack was to put an end to the Islamic government and replace it with a democratic set-up. The US seemed to succeed in the beginning, because the Taliban mujahideen of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan purposely retreated so that Afghan people do not

become victims of US bombing. It was a calculated move. Let us now focus on the goals the US set for itself when they captured Kabul and deal with these objectives one by one.

Destroy al Qaeda.

After the welcome attacks (*mubarak humlon*) of September 11, the US demanded the custody of Osama bin Laden, which was refused by Mulla Umar. Following this, the US started targeting all al Qaeda leaders in Afghanistan with missiles and bombs.*With the failure of search and target operations with jet bombers, the US forces shifted to drone attacks, wherein several important al Qaeda leaders were killed: Shaikh Mustafa, Abu Yazid, Abu Anas Al Libi, Abu Yahya Al Libi and Atiyatullah Al Libi. Shaikh Osama bin Laden was killed in 2011 in a targeted operation in Abbottabad.*

No doubt the US made grand celebrations over death of Shaikh Osama, but it failed miserably to terminate al Qaeda in Afghanistan. We should understand that every drop of blood of a Muslim martyr would feed the tree of Islam and give rise to many more fidayeen to destroy the infidels. After 13 years of continuous war, America feels indignant over the presence of al Qaeda in Afghanistan. Today, al Qaeda is wide-spread in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Egypt, Libya, Nigeria, Algeria, Male and Sudan. Uncle Sam has rather become helpless. By Allah's grace, al Qaeda's activities have led to the defeat of all the lackeys of the infidels, and their hopes have dashed to the ground.

End of terrorism

Despite initial American announcement that al Qaeda would be destroyed within six months, this tanzeem is alive and kicking today. The conditions have deteriorated to such an extent that the US soldiers do not find themselves secure even in the Afghan capital, Kabul. The Taliban's well-planned attacks have compelled the Afghan police chief to resign and the Taliban have gradually gained control over several provinces like Helmand, Kapisa and Kunduz. These provinces were earlier controlled by the allied forces. Now NATO forces, out of frustration, have decided to withdraw.

Apart from conducting their usual activities, the Taliban have maintained administrative control and Shariat Courts in areas under their control, where people get cheap and immediate justice. To counter American ideals of liberalism and obscenity, the Taliban have extended Tabligh and also imparting computer training to students. In short, the Taliban have not only become stronger but also started recapturing areas where they had established Shariat rule in the past. Days are not far off when after the exit of US-Nato forces, the Taliban would establish full control over all these areas and establish Shariah.

Establishment of Democracy.

After defeating the Taliban, the US tried to introduce a bogus democratic set-up in Afghanistan and installed a puppet President, Dr. Hamid Karzai. In 2003, they convened the Loya Jirga. *The puppet government of Hamid Karzai ruled for two terms from 2004 to 2014. Karzai government was infamous for heavy corruption and zero accountability and transparency.....*

.....The credibility of the new Afghan government is known to the whole world. While Karzai's was the most corrupt government in the world, the present government of Ashraf Ghani is not at all democratic in the eyes of Afghans and their supporters. As a matter of fact, only a dictatorial regime is suitable for Afghanistan and that role is now being played by Uncle Sam.

Training of Afghan military & police to confront Taliban.

At the time of landing in Afghanistan, one of the top priorities for the US was to establish a strong military/police force to contain the onslaught of Taliban. *....the result has been quite disappointing. These forces have not been able to contain the onslaught of Taliban. In 2014 alone, 4,600 police and military personnel were killed by the Taliban militants. All those areas handed over by American/Nato forces to the Afghan forces have been more or less captured by the Taliban.....[Moreover], Afghan officials have not been friendly towards the US soldiers. The sense of insecurity is such that no Afghan soldier is allowed to carry any weapon in the presence of US/Nato personnel.*

Purge the world of terrorists

Sorry to say that the American dream of purging the whole world of terrorist elements remains unfulfilled. The US could not stop terrorist activities. According to the database of University of Maryland, the terrorist activities have increased four-fold during 2001-2011. In 2002, there were 982 incidents, while the number increased to 4564 in 2011. *Recently in Paris, two Taliban brave-hearts conducted a successful attack on Charlie Hebdo. The infidel Christians do not feel secure even in Europe.*

The US had to pay a heavy price for carrying out a fractious campaign. On military and development projects, the US has spent 719,000 billion dollars. It had to spend several millions on internal security as well. Heavy losses incurred due to Taliban attacks are not included in these figures. All these operations have brought in a heavy burden upon US economy and it has had to face a serious economic crisis. Apart from economic and financial losses, there was also heavy loss of human life. *Figures suggest that in all 5,300 Western soldiers including 2,200 Americans were killed.* The number of wounded is even larger. Further, these are very conservative figures.

US defeat in Afghanistan is known to the whole world now. One peculiar conclusion has now emerged that it was not one Super Power, but the whole community of infidels was united in its war to eliminate the jihadi instinct smouldering in the minds of Muslims. However, our brave-hearts in Afghanistan, by dint of their united efforts, coupled with Allah's blessings, defeated the comity of infidels. An insignificant Muslim nation bravely confronted a mighty power like the US and turned Afghanistan into a graveyard for it.

Leaving Afghanistan: American Style, Muawiya Hussain Bukhari, *Nawa-i-Afghan Jihad*, February 2015, pp. 84-85.

....Everyone is well aware of the failures and defeat sustained by the US in Afghanistan. Has Uncle Sam been able to achieve his aims and objectives in this war? Meanwhile, the question arises as to *whether Afghanistan would be able to maintain its security and stability after the exit of NATO forces, or the US spending of billions of dollars and loss of thousands of lives were of no avail.***American journalists as well as some think tanks have been publishing their reports on Afghanistan.** Surprisingly, none of these reports published so far paints an encouraging picture. In all the reports, Afghan military has been projected as too incapable to contain the onslaught of Taliban forces.

Further, it has been noticed that *Afghan forces are not able to maintain proper control over areas handed over to them by NATO forces. Taliban have tried to recover these areas forces by conducting sudden raids. Notably, these areas were under Taliban control earlier and after recapture, Taliban are imposing Shariah nizam (Islamic law) there. Now, Afghan forces have to enter into a settlement with Taliban to enter into these areas. Taliban have also appointed their Governors and established their Shariat courts, which have been willingly accepted by the local residents.* The statistics reveal that there have been heavy casualties as far as Afghan forces are concerned. *There prevails a sense of insecurity amongst the new recruits, who abandon it during training, due to the fear of being called upon to wage war with the Taliban. Uptill now, more than 60,000 personnel have deserted the armed forces.*

In order to stop Taliban's re-entry into Afghanistan, the *US has been continuously appealing to neighbouring countries for help and cooperation. In this regard, Iran has been quite forthcoming to extend its cooperation. In this connection, the US and Iran have entered into agreement to conduct joint military operations.....*In US campaign against terrorism (read Taliban), Pakistan, no doubt, played the *role of a front-line ally to dislodge Taliban.....*Now after the withdrawal of NATO forces, *the US is wholly dependent on Pakistan.* However, at present, Pakistan is in no mood to interfere in the Afghan imbroglio. Pakistan is itself involved in military operation in the 'independent qabayali region' in North Waziristan. *Moreover, by cooperating with the US in the arrest of Taliban leaders, Pakistan does not qualify for any kind of dialogue with the Taliban.*

Leave aside fulfilling its obligations as a frontline ally in Afghan affairs, now the mere thought of US withdrawal has signalled a death blow for Pakistan. This is the main reason why Pakistan has resisted the idea of total withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan right from the start.

For safe and secure withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan, and safe its face, *Uncle Sam is left with no other alternative except to resume dialogue with Taliban.* The US has been trying frantically to bring Taliban on the table. *The old US dictum– ‘we do not negotiate with terrorists’ has become redundant.* America’s super-power hangover is now over. Rather, the US has proposed to hand over some portfolios to Taliban. But Taliban have point-blank refused to hold any talks. They have stuck to their old stand that they would continue their fight till the last infidel is pushed out of the Afghan soil.

President Obama’s historic visit to India, Shamsad Ahmad, *Daily Dunya*, 28 Jan 2015.

President Obama made a two-day visit to Delhi on occasion of India’s Republic day celebration (26th January). He had earlier visited India in 2010. He is the first US president to visit India on its Republic Day. After formation of new government in New Delhi, this was the first meeting between the two leaders in India. Earlier, Obama had met him in Washington DC, at the G-20 meet in Australia, in Myanmar at the South East Asia Conference in 2014, and also during Modi’s visit to US in 2014, after his name was removed from the black list [due to Gujarat riots in 2002].

On his arrival, Obama got unprecedented reception in New Delhi. Both leaders met each other like good old friends and this warmth paved the way for a decisive partnership in the 21st century....In their bilateral talks, they covered (1) defence cooperation (2) bilateral trade (3) climatic change and (4) civilian nuclear cooperation. The agreement on civilian nuclear cooperation could not be operationalized since 2005 because of differences over the issue of nuclear liability. *But evidently, in the “special chai pe charcha”, with the special cup of tea from Modi, President Obama finally agreed to accommodate India’s concerns about nuclear liability.*

They also signed a New Defence Strategic Framework, which includes Defence Trade Technological Initiative under which there would be joint collaboration in manufacturing aircraft carriers, transfer of jet engine technology, and joint military and naval exercises. Both countries now expect to start nuclear trade worth millions of dollars. *There is hardly any doubt that the US seeks to intensify its cooperation with Bharat. At the international level, this is the start of a new strategic partnership, which would have its impact throughout the*

world. Clearly, this new partnership has its own priorities— to keep Chinese expansion in check.

Under this strategy, any future course action would be taken with mutual consultation and agreement. This, in a way, may be the start of another cold war, with the only difference that Bharat would play second fiddle to the US in this evolving global security architecture. *Let us not forget that the impact of Indo-US nuclear cooperation would not be limited to South Asia and it would have its impact at the global level. It has to be remembered that as far as the problem of security in South Asia is concerned, it revolves around the nature of relationship between India and Pakistan, and the bone of contention here is the unresolved Kashmir Dispute.*

The lessons for the US from the strife-torn region are that it should focus its policies on furthering peace instead of entering into nuclear cooperation with Bharat.*A civil nuclear agreement with India should not have been effected at the cost of regional security. It is the responsibility of international community to refrain from pursuing policies which encourage tension and bitterness between countries. The world should know that solution to the Kashmir dispute lies in implementation of UNSC resolutions, which have been accepted by both Bharat and Pakistan.*

Uncle Sam's showers extraordinary gifts upon Bharat, Editorial, *Daily Dunya*, 27 January 2015¹¹⁹

President Obama's recent visit to India is at such a delicate juncture when Pakistan and the Islamic world are passing through tumultuous times. Pakistan is fighting its greatest war against terrorism. On the eastern front, our neighbour (India) has started unprovoked firing.....On his arrival in New Delhi, President Obama was given a historic welcome, while, the Kashmiris observed 26 January as a "Black Day". Bharat government took all precautions to make sure no untoward incident happens during Obama's visit. *President was so excited by the warm welcome given to him that like a "Santa Claus" he showered many gifts in India's bag*, which Indian may not have even expected. Bharat was made a faithful partner in Afghanistan, even though it does not share any cultural, religious and linguistic linkage with that country. Now some reports suggest that Bharat has delivered money and military assistance to militants operating in Pakistan. Everyone knows why it is doing so.

¹¹⁹ <http://e.dunya.com.pk/detail.php?date=2015-01-27&edition=LHR&id=1515495-29703304>

....It was hoped that Modi government would be persuaded to honour UNSC Resolutions pertaining to Jammu and Kashmir. But alas, that did not happen. Our hopes were belied. *The fact is that these two countries project themselves as great democracies, but neither of them is respecting basic principles of democracy. If the US wants to develop very close and friendly relationship with Bharat, how can one object to it and why? But here, one fact is crystal clear that extra kindnesses showered upon India would obviously encourage its malicious activities.*

Pakistan's concerns over Obama's India visit, Editorial, *Daily Dunya*, 29, January 2015.¹²⁰

Pakistan Prime Minister's special envoy Sartaj Aziz has strongly reacted to President Obama's assurance for permanent seat for India in UN Security Council and (2) civil nuclear agreement. He emphasized that several Member countries including Pakistan are in favour of having further reforms in the UN organization, however, he pointed out that India has flagrantly violated UN Resolutions and therefore the US should not encourage India as a permanent member of the Security Council. *He conveyed it very clearly that Pakistan was concerned about the Indo-US nuclear agreement, because it would have a deleterious impact on the SA region. He meant that Pakistan would continue to oppose policies that are discriminatory.*

.....*The aggressive policies adopted by India have proved dangerous for the security in the South Asian region. Indian security forces have been repeatedly violating Line of Control and working boundary causing death of hundreds of innocent lives, loss of livestock and also destruction of properties. We also have strong evidence of India's role in Balochistan. Despite our repeated requests, India has refused to restart dialogue with us. India has had problems with other neighbours too. Nepal, Bhutan have their own problems about India's continuous interference. Bangladesh has water dispute with India. India had in the past encouraged separatist Elam Tigers in Sri Lanka.....Why should the US support such a country and help it to get permanent seat in UN Security Council? If at all permanent seat is awarded to Bharat, then there would never be peace in the region. Our special Advisor has given this warning to the US and the international community.*

Obama's visit to India and General Raheel's visit to China, *Daily Jang*, 8 February 2015¹²¹

It is a strange coincidence that when President Obama came to India as Chief Guest on the Republic Day celebration and was busy sorting out all impediments to finalise the Civil Nuclear Agreement and also gave away \$4

¹²⁰ <http://e.dunya.com.pk/detail.php?date=2015-01-29&editionLHR&id=1519417-74410878>

¹²¹ <http://jang.com.pk/jang/jan2015-daily29-01-2015/col.8.htm>

billion as aid. During this time Gen Raheel Sharif visited China and was given a tumultuous welcome. He conveyed to the world that due to India-US business partnership, Pakistan would, in no circumstances be left in the lurch. During his visit, Obama also pledged his support for permanent membership of UNSC. *In this connection, Pakistan has failed to convince Uncle Sam and the international community that India has flouted UN Resolutions with regard to Kashmir.* During 1948-1955, UN Security Council passed several resolutions but these Resolutions were not implemented by India.....

At another level, it reflects the futility of our foreign policy. It is an irony that our Foreign Secretary instead of accepting the failure of our diplomacy has stated that Obama's visit would contribute to regional stability. In fact, there is lot of confusion in our foreign policy. Different leaders are coming out with different statements on different occasions. *In reality, we do not have a foreign minister and we never had any foreign policy.....*At present our foreign office is like rudderless ship. We are in a way riding a horse with no bridle in our hands and no stirrup to place our feet on. So it is imperative that we sit down quietly and make some introspection. *We should now shift our allegiance to our long-time friend China.* Needless to say, we need a responsible, intelligent and sagacious political leader with an experienced team to steer us through the hurricane of world politics. *We have to understand that Obama had his own priorities during his visit to India. The US now makes common cause with Japan in north and Bharat in south to contain China militarily in South China Sea. India is also partner with US in Afghanistan.*

Pakistani nation pledges solidarity with Kashmiri people, Editorial, *Daily Dunya*, 06 February 2015.¹²²

The whole Pakistani nation has, on this solidarity day, taken pledge to continue its earnest support to the Kashmiri people. On this occasion, Pak National Assembly and Senate members have also expressed their solidarity with Kashmiris and passed resolutions to this effect.....Several demonstrations, rallies, were brought out on this day in support of the right to self-determination of the Kashmiri people. *This proves that despite India's repeated denials and refusal to implement UN Resolutions and its usual delaying tactics to refrain from dialogue with Pakistan, we have not budged even an inch from our position of extending unconditional support to the cause of the Kashmiris.*

The only other solution to this long running problem is that the leadership of Bharat should resume dialogue with Pakistan so that we could arrive at some plausible solution with the help of Kashmiri leaders through tripartite talks.....*Analysts are of the opinion that if this sensitive problem is not resolved, it*

¹²² <http://e.dunya.com.pk/detail.php?date=2015-02-06&edition=LHR&id=1533775-41603756>

might have grave consequences and may lead to nuclear exchange between the two neighbours....

Kashmir valley, when will the slavery end?, Hafiz Saeed, *Daily Ummat*, 11 February 2015

.....Without solution of the Kashmir problem, our own problems have multiplied. India got an opportunity to intrude into Afghanistan and made its presence felt. Anti-Pak propaganda by India at the international level gained momentum.....In this context, *our expression of solidarity with Kashmiri people for one day does not make any sense. It brings no solace to the aggrieved people of Kashmir. Kashmiris expect us to make sincere efforts to resolve this long-standing knotty issue.* It is therefore necessary that whole nation as well as its leaders get united on one platform. *Mian Nawaz Sharif has settled down in Raiwind, but it seems he has forgotten his original country, i.e. occupied Kashmir. Indian military has failed to shake the perseverance and firm determination of the Kashmiris. They very well know that darkness of the night leads finally to the light of the dawn.*

Nawz Sharif's resolve, Irfan Hussain, *Daily Dunya*, 11 Feb 2015¹²³

.....*The US wants to contain China's expansionist policy in the region. In this game, India, by joining hands with Uncle Sam has relinquished its decades old policy of non-alignment which was formulated by its first Prime Minister Nehru.* During that time, India was very close to the Soviet Union. By the passage of time and with the dismemberment of USSR, non-alignment movement died its natural death and along with it India also bid farewell to its non-alignment policy.....

America Civil Nuclear Agreement with India is not new. India has now been assured by President Obama that his country would help India secure permanent seat in the UN Security Council. Needless to say, Pakistan is not happy with these developments. These would have their impact on India-Pakistan relations. *Pak Foreign Office has, for so many years, been emphasizing that foreign powers while entering into any agreement with India should make sure that balance of power in the region was maintained. This agreement has certainly upset the balance in the region. In a way foundation stone of our foreign policy is shaken....* On the other hand, *the day China feels that it has been actually encircled by rival countries it would obviously go to its big brother, Russia, for support. Russia is now finding itself quite forlorn in the international community. In this way, both these great countries may have a natural inclination to come together to form a power-block to contain American influence in the south Asian region. In case the US fails to reconcile with Iran, the latter could also join the Russia-China block. All these are hypothetical propositions but quite possible.*

¹²³ <http://dunya.com/pkdetail.php?date=201502-09&edition=LHR&id=1538811-53270386>

At the moment, however, *the fact remains that America is the sole 'super power' in terms of its military strength having no rival in the whole world. Though in gross economic terms China could be compared to the US, majority of Chinese population is living in poverty and its (China's) military is not capable of striking outside its own territory. In the field of technology, it cannot match Uncle Sam.*

America doesn't want to leave Afghanistan, Editorial, Daily Ummat, 23 February 2015¹²⁴

...After taking over charge of Defence Deptt, this was Carter's first foreign visit, which was an unannounced and unplanned one. On the Afghan side, President Ashraf Ghani favoured the idea of prolonged stay of US forces in Afghanistan. He has said that the talks with Taliban are moving in a positive direction, but nothing could be foretold at this stage. The unscheduled visit of US Defence Secretary and his statement makes us believe that he wants to have a permanent troops' presence in Afghanistan. *It escapes ones reasoning while one seeks to analyse the US decision— when they have not achieved much [with a large force structure] during the last 14 years of their stay in Afghanistan. What could they achieve with mere 10,000 forces now?.....*This sudden and unscheduled visit of US Defense Secretary Ashton Carter to Afghanistan makes us believe that Uncle Sam is not prepared to leave this place so soon. *America's intrinsic motive to continue its stay in Afghanistan is not only to strengthen the democratic set-up in Afghanistan but also to make sure that no future dispensation drifts towards Islamic rule. In addition, the US is keen to perpetuate its stay so that it could annihilate Pakistan's atomic assets or at least considerably weaken those assets. This apart, the US is also keen to harness the natural resources of the countries in the region. With all these lofty aims (rather nefarious designs), Uncle Sam wants Bharat to play a pivotal role in the region.*

In this context, there are few questions that need to be answered. If Abdul Ghani has allowed the stay of a few thousands more US soldiers on Afghan soil to which the Taliban are dead opposed, then how is it possible that his government is heading in a positive direction in its talks with the Taliban? Even if he arrives at some agreement with the Taliban, will his Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah endorse it?

Terrorism & involvement of our neighbour, Editorial, Daily Dunya, 23 February 2015¹²⁵

While Pakistan is making serious efforts and investing all its energies to combat terrorism, parallel efforts are being made to encourage terrorism and

¹²⁴ <http://ummat.net/2015/02/23/news.php?p=idrl.gif>

¹²⁵ http://e.dunya.com.pk./date-2015-02-23_LHR_&ie=51556255-5d3081540

patronize terrorists. *Pakistan has been engaged in its efforts to purge terrorism from the region, while our neighbour Bharat is engaged in creating instability and chaos in Pakistan.* It is surprising to note that America is helping Bharat in such activities. In recent years, the US has signed agreements with Bharat which have negatively impacted Pakistan's war against terrorism.

The US has spent billions of dollars and lost thousands of lives in its campaign against terrorism in Afghanistan. *But India's role in this venture seems to be contrary to that of the US during that last 13 years' international campaign against terror in the region.* If Pakistan fails in its efforts against terrorism, it would obviously have adverse impact on the whole region.....*United States suddenly wants to align itself with the thieves and dacoits and support their acts. If Uncle Sam is hell bent on following this kind of policy, it would not only multiply Pakistan's problems but also increase manifold problems for Afghanistan.* As a result of this immature policy, the international community would not be able to heave a sigh of relief for a long time.

.....Since the time of partition, India has always adopted an antagonistic attitude towards Pakistan. *India has invariably been involved in anti-Pak activities e.g. sectarian wars, blowing of Rly tracks by separatist elements, destruction of gas pipelines, bombing of Imam bargahs and mosques and violent incidents inside Pakistan.* It has also been observed that since Pakistan military has tightened its noose around the terrorists, there has been a visible spurt in India's extending all-out support to militants and anti-national elements. It now appears that India is reeling under the impact of Pakistan military's success in Zarb-e-Azb operations. In any way, Uncle Sam and the world community should be well-aware that Pakistan's victory in its war against terrorism would bring an end to world-wide terrorism and would usher a new era for our coming generations.

It is high time we should give a fitting reply to Bharat, Editorial, *Nawa-i-Waqt*, 5 March 2015.¹²⁶

Yesterday, Pakistan Army Chief General Raheel Sharif paid a visit to the Sialkot working boundary and met military officers. He also met local residents. General Sharif had high praises for them. *He said that the Pakistani nation and its military were united on the issue of maintenance of 'ceasefire'.* But, as usual, Bharat has always been violating ceasefire and threatening stability and peace in the region. *The ulterior motive of unprovoked firing by Bharat is to divert Pakistan's attention from its campaign against terrorism. But, Sharif made it clear that no one should have an iota of doubt about the ability of Pakistan army to give fitting reply to Bharat's unprovoked firing and ceasefire violations....*He also visited

¹²⁶ <http://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/Lahore/2015-02-28/page-14/detail-5>

Sialkot military cantonment and villages near the border affected by Bharat's unprovoked firing.

It is an irony that after all these sufferings by our brethren whose young children (flowers) were smothered with AK-47, the decisions made by Defense Courts are lying in abeyance due to usual lethargy and inefficiency of Pakistani officials. As a result, there has been a delay in the vigorous implementation of National Action Plan. This postponing of court proceedings has boosted the morale of the militants and as a result there has been a rise in the incidence of terrorist activities again.

To combat the menace of terrorism, we have to tighten the noose around those running nurseries of terror (training camps) and their abettors and wipe out their safe havens. For this, the Government should be determined to take necessary steps to foil the plots hatched inside Pakistan and also take stringent measures to deal with enemy. *Pakistan is very much concerned about terrorist safe havens which are rampant on both sides of the border. These terrorists have also been getting huge amount of assistance from foreign countries. So Pakistan military has to fight on both fronts— within its own territory and also our enemy on the Eastern side, which is providing all possible help to the militants.*

Pakistan has, time and again, been quite certain about India's malafide intentions and its frantic efforts to sabotage our Zarb-e-Azb campaign and destabilize Pakistan. Thus, there is a paramount need to preserve and protect our integrity and sovereignty. It is therefore the prime responsibility of Pakistan military to make all out efforts to tighten the noose around militants supported by India, and give fitting reply to Bharat for its involvement in the nefarious activities against Pakistan

STATISTICS

BOMBINGS, SHOOTINGS AND DISAPPEARANCES

(Select incidents culled out from the Pakistan media)

Place	Date	Description	Killed	Injured
Balochistan				
Dera Murad Jamali ¹²⁷	2/2/2015	FC officer dies in landmine explosion.	1	2
Quetta ¹²⁸	15/2/2015	Top LeJ commander killed in	1	0

¹²⁷ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1160995/fc-officer-dies-in-landmine-explosion>

¹²⁸ <http://nation.com.pk/national/16-Feb-2015/top-lej-commander-killed-in-quetta-op>

Quetta ¹²⁹	16/2/2015	Quetta op. Two killed as gunmen storm Quetta hotel.	2	2
Chaman ¹³⁰	23/2/2015	Chaman attack: Blast in market injures 12 pedestrians	0	12
FATA				
Khuram Agency ¹³¹	3/2/2015	Four soldiers killed in Kurram blast.	4	0
Khot ¹³²	4/2/2015	Four officials gunned down in Kohat.	4	0
North Waziristan ¹³³	21/2/2015	Army major, five militants killed in NWA clash		
Punjab				
Lahore ¹³⁴	17/2/2015	Eight dead in attack on Lahore's Police Lines, TTP claims responsibility.	8	12
Islamabad ¹³⁵	19/2/2015	Three killed in attack on Islamabad Imambargah.	3	3
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa				
Charsadda ¹³⁶	6/2/2015	Firing on school van injures girl in Charsadda.	0	1
Peshawar ¹³⁷	13/2/2015	13 killed, 56 injured in blast near Peshawar imambargah.	13	56
Sindh				
Ghotki ¹³⁸	16/2/2015	School teacher shot dead in Ghotki	1	0

¹²⁹ <http://nation.com.pk/national/16-Feb-2015/two-killed-as-gunmen-storm-quetta-hotel>

¹³⁰ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/842649/chaman-attack-blast-in-market-injures-12-pedestrians/>

¹³¹ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1161246/four-soldiers-killed-in-kurram-blast>

¹³² <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-35688-Four-officials-gunned-down-in-Kohat>

¹³³ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-35999-Army-major-five-militants-killed-in-NWA-clash>

¹³⁴ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1164184/eight-dead-in-attack-on-lahores-police-lines-ttp-claims-responsibility>

¹³⁵ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-175528-Three-killed-in-attack-on-Islamabad-Imambargah>

¹³⁶ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1161867/firing-on-school-van-injures-girl-in-charsadda>

¹³⁷ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1163374/three-killed-several-injured-in-blast-near-peshawar-imambargah>

¹³⁸ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/839134/school-teacher-shot-dead-in-ghotki/>