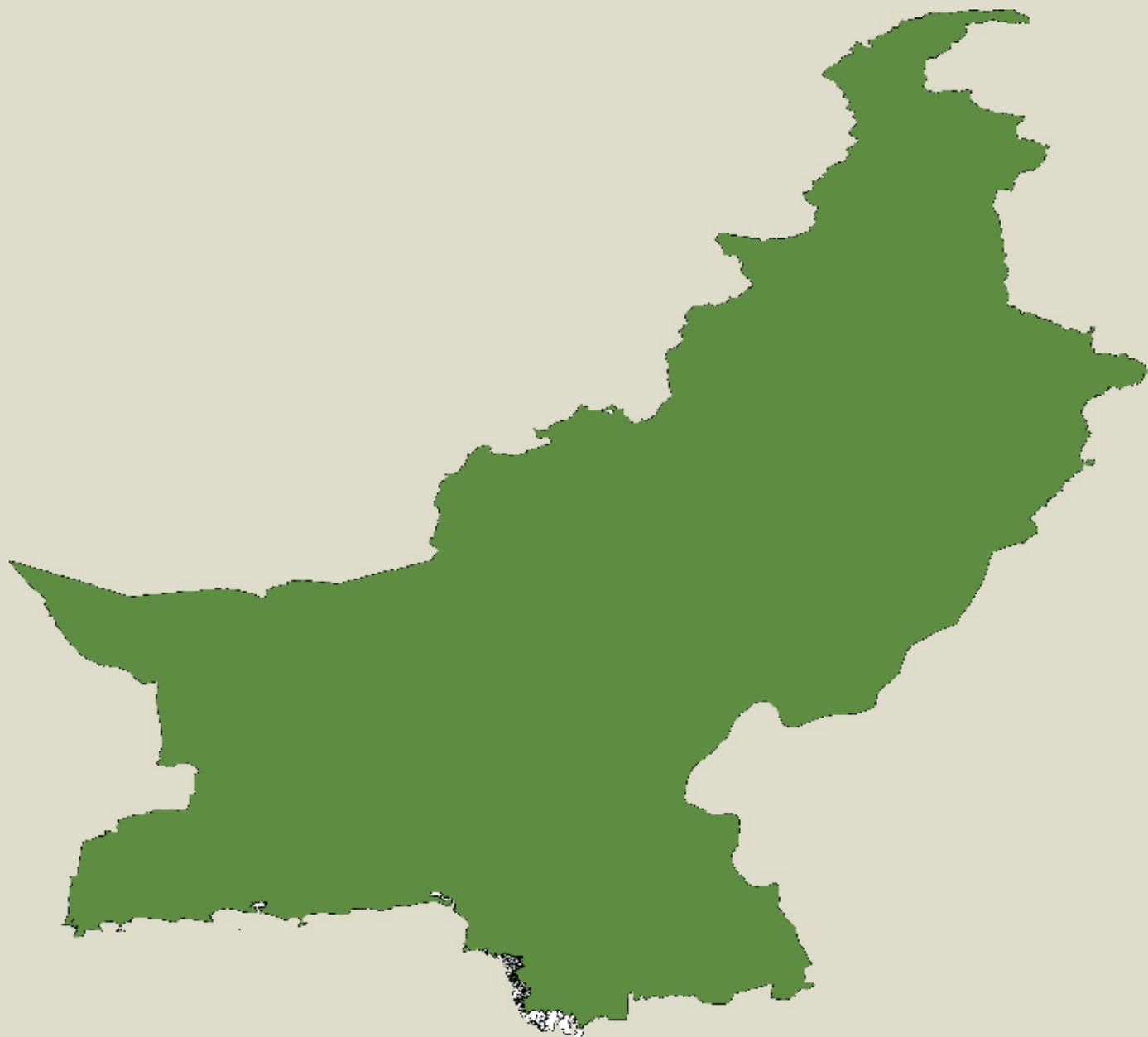


March 2015

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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रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

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ABBREVATIONS

ANP: Awami National Party
APC: All Parties Conference
ATC: Anti-Terrorism Court
BIT: Bilateral Investment Treaty
BNP: Baluchistan National Party
CPEC: China- Pakistan Economic Corridor
CTD: Counter Terrorism Department
ECP: Election Commission of Pakistan
EIA: Environmental Impact Assessment
EMC: Environment Management Consultants
IAEA: International Atomic Energy Agency
ICRP: International Commission on Radiological Protection
IMF: International Monetary Fund
ISI: Inter-Services Intelligence
ISPR: Inter Services Public Relations
IWT: Indus Water Treaty
JI: Jamaat-i-Islami
JuD: Jamat-ul- Dawa
JUI-S: Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Islam-Sami
KKH: Karakoram Highway
KP: Khyber Pakhthunkhwa
KSA: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
KSE: Karachi Stock Exchange
LEAS: Law Enforcement Agencies
MQM: Muttahida Qaumi Movement
MSA: Maritime Security Agency
Nacta: National Anti-Terrorism Act
NADRA- National Database and Registration Authority
NAP: National Action Plan
NCMPR: National Centre for Maritime Policy Research
PAEC: Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission
PML-N: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz
PML-Q: Pakistan Muslim League Quaid
PPP: Pakistan People's Party
PTI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf
SEPA: Sindh Environmental Protection Agency
TTP: Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan
USNRC: United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission
WAPDA: Water and Power Development Authority

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

PROVINCIAL POLITICS

No chance of Governor Rule in Sindh, says Sharjeel, *The News*, March 2¹

Information Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon has ruled out Governor Rule in Sindh, saying that democracy is flourishing. Talking to media on the occasion of old vehicles' exhibition at Frere Hall in Karachi on 1 March, Memon said government appreciates such activities in the province as these show common men's hatred for terrorism and love for peace. Sharjeel says, "*Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) is currently sitting on opposition benches in Sindh Assembly. Formal talks with it to join provincial government will be held after Senate Election.*" Ruling out Governor Rule in the province, the minister said, there is no chance of it.

PPP, ANP, JUI-F on same page over Senate election, *The News*, March 2²

Former president and PPP Co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari has said that his party had accepted election results with reservations and they will release white paper on it very soon. Zardari was talking to journalists following meeting with JUI-F leader Maulana Fazlur Rehman at latter's residence on 1 March. Zardari said everyone is aware how elections were held. Mr. Zardari said PPP has opposed 22nd Constitutional amendment, adding that his party had always supported the democracy.The former president further said Maulana Fazl, PPP and ANP are on the same page over Senate Election issue and also making efforts to bring Aftab Sherpao on one platform.

PTI's Sarwar campaigns for PPP in Punjab, *The Express Tribune*, March 4³

PPP is using former Punjab governor Chaudhry Muhammad Sarwar to persuade PML-N members in the Punjab Assembly to vote for the PPP Senate candidate from the province, Nadeem Afzal Chan. According to sources, Chaudhry Sarwar, who recently joined PTI, is focusing primarily on the MPAs from Faisalabad division, which is also his native town. Sarwar first approached those MPAs who had received the PML-N ticket in the May 2013 general elections through his good offices. During the 2013 polls, Sarwar had assisted the PML-N chief Nawaz Sharif in awarding party tickets to candidates, particularly from Faisalabad division. All Faisalabad and Gujranwala lawmakers and women MPAs have been placed in the panels

¹<http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-176790-No-chance-of-Governor-rule-in-Sindh,-says-Sharjeel->

²<http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-176780-PPP,-ANP,-JUI-F-on-same-page-over-Senate-election:-Zardari>

³<http://tribune.com.pk/story/847407/unexpected-moves-ptis-sarwar-campaigns-for-ppp-man-in-punjab/>

reserved to vote for the PML-N's two candidates from Karachi – Nihal Hashmi and Saleem Zia. The MPAs said they were astonished when they received a call from Sarwar and when he asked them to vote for the PPP's candidate. Sarwar urged the MPAs that being Punjabi, they should support a Punjabi (Chan) even if he belonged to another political party.

PTI expels dissenter, seeks disqualification, *The Express Tribune*, March 4⁴

Javed Nasim, the dissident PTI lawmaker in the K-P Assembly, has been expelled from the party and a request has been sent to the speaker to strip him of his seat. According to sources within the Assembly Secretariat, PTI sent a request to the office for Nasim's disqualification on Tuesday and it will be forwarded to the ECP on March 4..... Nasim had been issued a show-cause notice on Sunday to explain why he seconded the nomination papers of independent candidates Waqar Ahmed Khan and Fauzia Fakhruz Zaman.

Baloch CM threatens to halt oil exploration, *The Express Tribune*, March 7⁵

Balochistan Chief Minister Dr Abdul Malik Baloch on March 6 threatened to *pull the plug on oil exploration work if his province is not handed its due shares, as guaranteed by the 18th amendment of the Constitution. "Under the 18th Amendment [of constitution], 50 per cent share should be given to Balochistan from OGDCL, PPL and all other companies,"* the chief minister said on the floor of the Balochistan Assembly. Dr Abdul Malik's warning came during a debate on a resolution advanced by PML-N MPA Samina Khan to shift the head office of Sui Southern Gas from Karachi to Quetta. Dr Baloch said the failure to follow the 18th Amendment is tantamount to rejection of the Constitution. While presenting the resolution, Samina Khan said large reservoirs of gas have been discovered in Balochistan and this gas was being delivered to every corner of the country from the western province, yet the administrative set-up of the company, including its head office, is in Karachi. Speaking on the resolution, Dr Baloch lamented that the conduct of gas companies, including OGDCL and PPL, does not even match the behaviour adopted by Britain's East India Company towards the Asian subcontinent. *"I have explicitly told the gas companies that they are [mainly] responsible for the political fire that flares up in Balochistan,"* he said, adding that the same companies involved Nawab Akbar Bugti in unnecessary disputes.

⁴<http://tribune.com.pk/story/847205/violating-discipline-pti-expels-dissenter-seeks-his-disqualification-from-k-p-assembly/>

⁵ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/849190/broken-promises-dr-malik-threatens-to-halt-exploration/>

Khattak: 'Raise voice for K-P', *The Express Tribune*, March 7⁶

Horse-trading and internal bickering within PTI's ranks caused sleepless nights for the ruling party in K-P ahead of Senate polls, but its leadership—and the governing coalition—breathed a sigh of relief as their candidates easily won all seven seats they contested in the Upper House. There were fears that PTI's troubles would rock the boat, but Mohsin Aziz, Liaqat Tarakai, Shibli Faraz won their general seats, while Nauman Wazir won a technocrat berth and Samina Abid easily secured a women's seat in the Upper House. *Crucially, JI chief Sirajul Haq, a coalition ally in the K-P government, managed to find his way to the Senate for the first time in his political career.* Liaqat is the father of Shahram Tarakai, health minister and leader of Awami Jamhoori Ittehad Pakistan. At a press conference at the JI headquarters in the provincial capital on Friday, Haq said, *"For the first time, affluent candidates with a penchant for reaching the Senate through unfair means have failed in their tricks."*

Sindh: Unity in the face of Governor's Rule reports, *Dawn*, March 13⁷

Political parties in Sindh closed ranks as reports of Governor's Rule that had started to do the rounds after the last apex committee meeting in Karachi began to circulate again *following the pre-dawn raid by the Rangers on the MQM headquarters, it emerged on March 12.* The resentment and anger expressed by the army chief, Gen Raheel Sharif, in the apex committee meeting held on Feb 16 over the state of affairs in Sindh *had fuelled speculation about imposition of Governor's Rule.*

Baloch CM Malik to hold talks in London on Reko-Diq, *Dawn*, March 15⁸

A delegation of federal and provincial ministers and officials concerned, headed by Balochistan Chief Minister Dr Malik Baloch, left for London on 15 March to hold talks with Tethyan Copper Company on the Reko-Diq copper-cum gold project. According to official sources, the delegation includes Minister for Petroleum and Natural Resources Khaqan Abbasi, Balochistan's Senior Minister Sardar Sanaullah Zehri, Chief Secretary Saifullah Chhattah, federal and provincial mineral departments' secretaries, the attorney general and other officials. *The negotiations will be held in view of Supreme Court order asking the Balochistan government and the firm to settle their dispute out of court.* The Tethyan Copper Company, previously involved in exploring gold and copper deposits in Reko-Diq area, had decided to seek damages for what it

⁶<http://tribune.com.pk/story/849119/khattaks-masterstroke-a-new-day-for-senators-to-raise-voice-for-k-p/>

⁷ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1169200/political-unity-in-the-face-of-governors-rule-reports>

⁸ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1169855/malik-to-hold-talks-in-london-on-reko-diq>

saw as breach of contract allegedly committed by the federal and provincial governments.

PPP decides to invite MQM to join Sindh govt, Dawn, March 18⁹

PPP has finally decided to include MQM in the Sindh government and has given the task to Chief Minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah to hold talks with the MQM leadership for the purpose. PPP Co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari made a telephone call to MQM chief Altaf Hussain in London and informed him about the PPP's decision taken on March 17 at the Bilawal House meeting of PPP Sindh Parliamentary Party. The two leaders exchanged views on the overall political situation, the PPP-MQM working relationship and matters of mutual interest...

PTI will form govt in Sindh: Chaudhry Sarwar, The News, March 23¹⁰

Former Punjab governor Chaudhry Sarwar on March 23 claimed that the PTI will form its government in Sindh province in the next elections. Addressing a press conference, Sarwar, flanked by other PTI leaders, said his decision to join Imran Khan-led party was a well-thought-out one and that PTI would hold a public rally on March 25 in Muzaffarabad. *He warned that if the central or Azad Kashmir governments tried to postpone the general elections then the public rally would take the shape of a protest.* "No institution can work with impartiality until the political hirings and promotions in police and other departments are stopped", the PTI leader said. *He urged the Karachiites to support the LEAs and make the provincial capital of Sindh a peaceful city. He also stressed upon the elimination of the 'armed wings' of political parties.*

Sabzwari stripped of MQM membership, The Nation, March 31¹¹

MQM Rabita Committee has suspended the party membership of MPA Faisal Sabzwari, issuing him notice to also resign from the provincial assembly seat. The decision was taken at Rabita Committee meeting held at Nine-Zero on March 31. Altaf Hussain, who expressed his deep resentment over non-participation of senior party workers, also addressed the in-camera session. Altaf also expressed his resentment over the non-serious attitude of the MQM Rabita Committee in the wake of the Rangers' raid on its headquarters Nine-Zero.

⁹ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1170299/ppp-decides-to-invite-mqm-to-join-sindh-govt>

¹⁰ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-179042-Next-elections-will-see-PTI-govt-in-Sindh:-Chaudhry-Sarwar>

¹¹ <http://nation.com.pk/national/30-Mar-2015/sabzwari-stripped-of-mqm-membership>

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

PTI facing internal pressure to return to parliament, Dawn, March 2¹²

In the wake of the apparent thaw between the ruling PML-N and PTI following their convergence on the issue of horse-trading in the Senate elections, PTI Chairman Imran Khan appears to be at a crossroads, wondering whether to carry on with his anti-government stance or fall in line with the rest of his party, who want to go back to the National Assembly....[Some] party leaders in their interaction with the government have reportedly expressed a readiness to return to the National Assembly if the government brings about the 22nd amendment to hold Senate elections through open balloting. There are also indications the government might constitute a judicial inquiry commission to look into allegations of rigging in the May 2013 general elections, paving the way for PTI's return to the National Assembly.

All eyes on Zardari as Senate elections loom, Dawn, March 2¹³

Despite his party being in opposition, PPP Co-Chairperson Asif Ali Zardari has once again emerged as a central player in the politicking taking place around the upcoming Senate elections....On 1 March Mr Zardari met JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman for the second time in two days and also spoke to Jamaat-i-Islami chief Sirajul Haq. The topic of discussion was Senate elections, scheduled to be held on 5 March. Given the bitter rivalry between the PPP and the PTI in recent months, political observers are viewing the telephonic conversation between Mr Zardari and Imran Khan as a "*significant political development*".

MQM, Rangers trade reproaches over Karachi operation, Dawn, March 3¹⁴

On March 2, MQM criticised law enforcement agencies for raiding party workers' homes instead of taking action against banned militant groups, drawing a strong reaction from the Pakistan Rangers which called the allegation an attempt to '*damage the ongoing operation for national security*'. Senior MQM leaders, speaking at a press conference at the party headquarters Nine Zero, condemned the recent killing of a party worker in Malir and counted a number of activists who were killed by '*banned militant groups*'. "*As if this was not enough, the law enforcement agencies too raid homes of our workers almost daily,*" said senior MQM leader Haider Abbass Rizvi. "*Why is only Karachi chosen for killings on sectarian grounds? It appears that militants are free*

¹² <http://www.dawn.com/news/1166841/pti-facing-internal-pressure-to-return-to-parliament>

¹³ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1166842/all-eyes-on-zardari-as-senate-elections-loom>

¹⁴ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1166944/mqm-rangers-trade-reproaches-over-karachi-operation>

and enjoy the licence to kill. On the one hand our workers are being killed on sectarian grounds by banned outfits and on the other our workers are being arrested in the name of the operation."

PTI was ready to support 22nd amendment in NA, *The News*, March 5¹⁵

Imran Khan said on March 4 that the PTI was ready to vote in favour of the 22nd Constitutional amendment in the National Assembly to prevent horse-trading in the Senate polls but the government did not table the bill. Earlier, Khan had praised Nawaz Sharif for his efforts to curb horse-trading in the Senate election but categorically said PTI MNAs would not go back to the lower house of Parliament. *It appears from Khan's statement that he still considers his MNAs, who tendered resignations during last year's sit-in, as members of the legislature.* It may be mentioned that National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has not accepted resignations of the PTI MNAs.

Altaf, Zardari discuss Senate elections, *The News*, March 9¹⁶

MQM chief Altaf Hussain and Asif Ali Zardari spoke over telephone on March 8 to discuss the recently concluded Senate elections and the political situation in the country. According to a press release from the MQM, both leaders discussed in detail the upcoming election of the chairman and deputy chairman of the Senate, as well as Pakistan's political situation and other matters of mutual interest.

Raza Rabbani opposition's consensus candidate for Chairman, *The News*, March 10¹⁷

Opposition parties in the Senate decided to field PPP's stalwart Raza Rabbani as candidate for the slot of chairman of the upper house of the Parliament. The Awami National Party, the MQM and the Pakistan Muslim League-PML-Q agreed to support the PPP candidate during a meeting held at the Zardari House. Sources said that Maulana Fazlur Rehman also attended the meeting of the opposition parties. Talking to media the maulana said PPP's stance over Chairman and Deputy Chairman seems apparently correct. He said the JUI-F would make its final decision after a meeting to be held Tuesday evening.

Timing of Karachi raid questioned, *Dawn*, March 12¹⁸

Opposition senators on March 11 lashed out at Rangers officials for carrying out a raid on the MQM's headquarters in Karachi and raised questions over

¹⁵<http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-177134-PTI-was-ready-to-support-22nd-amendment-in-NA:-Imran>

¹⁶<http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-177624-Altaf,-Zardari-discuss-Senate-polls>

¹⁷<http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-177720-Raza-Rabbani-emerges-oppositions-consensus-candidate-for-Senate-Chairman>

¹⁸<http://www.dawn.com/news/1169074/timing-of-karachi-raid-questioned>

the timing of the action. After delivering fiery speeches on the last day of the outgoing Senate, MQM senators staged a walkout from the house, alleging that the raid might have been carried out to punish the party for not supporting the government's candidate for the office of the Senate chairman. Members of the PPP also condemned the Rangers' action and joined the MQM senators in their walkout. Leader of the House Raja Zafarul Haq rejected the MQM's allegations regarding the involvement of the ruling PML-N in the raid on the party's headquarters. *"I strongly reject the allegation. This is absolutely false,"* Mr Haq said, wondering how this was possible when Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had personally endorsed Mr Rabbani's nomination as Senate chairman and even visited Zardari House.

PPP spent Rs125b to win votes. It failed, *The Express Tribune*, March 14¹⁹

Through a review of government documents and background interviews, the scribe has found the scale of the PPP's attempts to win the affections of voters, and the monumental futility of its efforts. *The Rs125 billion spent by PPP and their coalition partners ostensibly on development projects during their five years in office is nearly four times larger than the Rs33.8 billion spent by all lawmakers in the preceding 23 years (1985-2008) combined. And yet, six out of the 10 most profligate spenders for the PPP were voted out of office. A look at the record suggests that there was, at best, massive impropriety and negligence in record-keeping with these development funds, if not outright embezzlement. A total of 5,212 projects were initiated at the behest of lawmakers in their constituencies, and were authorised by prime ministers Yousaf Raza Gilani and his successor Raja Pervez Ashraf, between 2008 and 2013, worth a collective Rs125 billion. Of these, there is absolutely no financial or other record for 1,930 projects, worth Rs20 billion. In a majority of cases, government rules on awarding contracts were not followed, leading to allegations of corruption. Of the projects commissioned, 1,823 (35%) were never completed, with some having a progress rate of less than 9%. And the Public Works Department as well as the Auditor General of Pakistan conducted special audits on only 330 projects, and even that on orders from the Supreme Court of Pakistan. The government's top financial watchdog failed to conduct any audits on 1,930 (37%) projects.*

Terrorists now trying to persecute easy targets: Nisar, *The News*, March 16²⁰

On March 16, Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan, while condemning the suicide bomb attacks on Lahore churches a day earlier said that terrorists were trying to persecute easy targets. Twin blasts targeted the Roman

¹⁹<http://tribune.com.pk/story/852168/buying-loyalty-ppp-spent-rs125b-in-unprecedented-spending-bonanza-to-curry-favours-and-win-votes-it-failed/>

²⁰<http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-178307-Terrorists-now-trying-to-persecute-easy-targets,-says-Chaudhry-Nisar>

Catholic Church and Christ Church during Sunday mass in Youhanabad area of the provincial capital, killing at least 15 people including two policemen and injuring at least 70 others. *The interior minister went on to say that terrorists are trying to divide the nation and those that are taking the law into their own hands are the ones facilitating the terrorists' agenda*, adding that terrorists belong to no religion. Nisar further said that several incidents were attempted to be investigated but it came to knowledge that no records exist about the cases with the interior ministry.

Religious minorities feel insecure in the country, NA told, Dawn, March 17²¹

Members of opposition and treasury benches in the National Assembly on March 16 said religious minorities were feeling insecure in the country due to the deteriorating law and order situation. Commenting in the National Assembly regarding the terrorist attacks on churches in Lahore, PPP MNA Syed Naveed Qamar said on March 16, "*Government has failed to control terrorism as militants are able to strike at any place*". *The terrorists carried out suicide attack on churches to defame Pakistan, he added*. MQM lawmaker Syed Asif Hasnain said *the terrorist attacks on minorities are damaging the image of the country...* JUI-F legislator Asiya Ansar said *it was the responsibility of intelligence agencies to counter such heinous plans as people have been facing terrorism for over a decade now*. She said minorities are feeling insecure in their own country. "*People believe they will fail to get justice that's why they are taking law in their own hands,*" the JUI-F MNA said.

CCI may restore magistracy system, Dawn, March 18²²

The Council of Common Interests, which is to meet on March 18, is expected to restore the *Executive Magistracy System in the country*, abolished during military rule of retired General Pervez Musharraf, through an amendment in the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898. *The federal government has been advocating restoration of the magistracy system to control the prices of essential commodities* and almost all provincial governments have agreed during consultative meetings to support the proposal.

Hindu MNA wants security plan for places of worship, Dawn, March 18²³

A leader of Hindu community has called upon the government to devise a security plan for minorities' places of worship. Talking to reporters outside Parliament House, Patron-in-Chief of the Pakistan Hindu Council and a member of the National Assembly, Dr Ramesh Kumar Vankwani, also *called*

²¹<http://www.dawn.com/news/1169957/religious-minorities-feel-insecure-in-the-country-na-told>

²²<http://www.dawn.com/news/1170285/cci-may-restore-magistracy-system>

²³<http://www.dawn.com/news/1170281/mna-wants-security-plan-for-minorities-places-of-worship>

for implementation of the June 19, 2014 decision of the Supreme Court about protection of rights of minority communities. Condemning Sunday's suicide attacks on two churches in Lahore, he said the aim of terrorists behind such bloody attacks was to tarnish the image of the country in international community. He termed *the reaction of violent mob to burn two suspects to death as "unjustified murder"* and called for stern action against the culprits.

Saulat Mirza's statement to reopen murder case, *The News*, March 20²⁴

The government has decided to re-open murder case of former KSC Managing Director Shahid Hamid, a day after Saulat Mirza hurled serious allegations at MQM, hours before his hanging on March 19. Saulat Mirza's execution was postponed shortly after his statement from a prison cell appeared on electronic media in which the convict accused Altaf Hussain of issuing orders for the killing of Shahid Hamid. Besides accusing the MQM chief, the convicted murderer leveled grave allegations against other senior members of the MQM....Sources in the Interior Ministry said the government would re-open the murder case on a formal request of the Sindh government. The sources also said that Mirza's hanging is expected to be postponed for further 30 days.

Provide security to people or step down: JI chief tells govt, *Dawn*, March 20²⁵

Jamaat-i-Islami chief Siraj-ul-Haq has pledged to raise the issues of Karachiites in the Senate, adding that *those who aim to divide Sindh and Balochistan on the lines of language are not the friends of the nation*. The JI chief was addressing an 'awami jirga' organised by the party's Karachi chapter on March 19 at Machhar Colony near Sohrab Goth, where residents shared their grievances with party officials. Referring to the conspiracies being hatched to destabilise the country by igniting violence and terrorism on the basis of language, sect and religion, the JI chief said: "*The government which is not able to provide security to the people has no right to rule the country.*"

Opposition leader worries over Uzair's allegations, *Dawn*, March 23²⁶

PPP appeared to have a sense of foreboding about hitherto undisclosed allegations apparently made by banned Peoples Amn Committee chief Uzair Jan Baloch in custody in the United Arab Emirates as Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Syed Khurshid Shah said on March 22 that the Lyari gangster was taking his revenge on the PPP for the action against him. Uzair Baloch, who is in the custody of the United Arab Emirates

²⁴<http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-178680-Govt-decides-to-re-open-murder-case-after-Saulat-Mirzas-statement>

²⁵<http://www.dawn.com/news/1170644/provide-security-to-people-or-step-down-ji-chief-tells-govt>

²⁶ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1171094/opposition-leader-worries-over-uzairs-allegations>

authorities and the law enforcement agencies are trying hard to bring him back here, had fled abroad after a targeted operation was launched in Karachi against criminals. *After his arrest, there are widespread reports that Uzair Baloch — who is allegedly leading one of the two major gangs in Lyari — reportedly disclosed that certain senior leaders of the PPP were his partners in crime.*

Rifts among Pindi leaders to divide PML-N in LG polls, Dawn, March 23²⁷

The ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz is rolling up its sleeves to enter the fray for the upcoming local bodies election in cantonment areas, but there is confusion among party workers over who will lead the party's local chapter in the polls. The selection of candidates for the LG polls, insiders say, will settle the question of who controls the party in Rawalpindi; Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan or the newly-elected Senator Chaudhry Tanveer. In the past, Mr Khan has looked after party affairs at the local level, but following Chaudhry Tanveer's elevation to the Senate, he managed to get the attention of a sizeable number of workers at the local level. *"After facing defeat in the two main constituencies, NA-55 and NA-56, which also consist of two large cantonment areas, in 2013 elections and leaders' non-cooperation with local workers, Chaudhry Nisar lost a great deal of influence among party workers at the local level. Now, the same people are pinning their hopes on Chaudhry Tanveer,"* a senior party leader told Dawn.

No option but to confront existential threat: PM, The News, March 23²⁸

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on March 23 said that anti-state elements were threatening the very fabric of the nation, but Pakistanis have irrevocably stood up to the challenge and resolved never to give in. *"Pakistan is resolved to redeem its pledge given to its founding fathers that it will protect the homeland. We are also committed to preserve and ensure freedom equality and social justice as core values of our polity as desired by our enlightened forbears,"* said the prime minister in his message to the nation on Pakistan Day. He said that, three quarters of a century after the passage of the historic Lahore Resolution in 1940, Quaid's Pakistan was groping to overcome unprecedented threats and challenges. *"The peace-loving people of Pakistan are unwittingly exposed to threats posed by extremism and terrorism and Pakistan had been subjected to an existential threat that it has no option but to confront,"* said the premier. *"I am confident that with the valued assistance of our valiant armed forces unconditionally supported by the entire array of political opinion, we will surely overpower threatening forces,"* he observed.

²⁷<http://www.dawn.com/news/1171185/rifts-among-pindi-leaders-may-divide-pml-n-campaign-for-lg-polls>

²⁸<http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-178995-Pakistan-has-no-option-but-to-confront-existential-threat:-PM>

Assemblies to go, if fraud is established, *The Express Tribune*, March 23²⁹

PML-N and the PTI have agreed to empower the proposed judicial commission to form 'special investigation teams' comprising ISI and the MI officials to help investigate rigging claims in the 2013 general elections. They have also agreed that if the proposed commission established systematic and organised rigging, the National Assembly and all provincial legislatures would be dissolved and a fresh election would be called. "...the [judicial] commission shall have the power to form one or more special investigation teams consisting of officers from the relevant executive authorities, including but not limited to, the FIA, NADRA, the Directorate for ISI, the Directorate for MI and the IB for the purpose of assisting it with its inquiry," reads the proposed ordinance to be promulgated for setting up the judicial commission. *The inclusion of intelligence officials in investigations had been one of the sticking points as the government was reluctant to accept PTI's proposal.*

PTI may return to the assemblies, *The Express Tribune*, March 23³⁰

PTI has deferred the decision over returning to the national and provincial assemblies till a notification for a judicial commission to investigate alleged rigging in the 2013 general elections is issued. "Our demand for the formation of a judicial commission has been met, and the party would take a decision on whether to return to the assemblies after a notification of the judicial commission is issued," PTI vice chairman Shah Mehmood Qureshi said while addressing the media. ...Qureshi said the PTI reached an agreement with the government on December 27, 2014, over the commission but there was a stalemate over ToRs, which have been agreed upon now. Responding to a question, Qureshi said they hope the commission completes its work in 45 days "but they are free and can take as much time as needed for the job."

Quaid's Aug 11 speech to be in school curriculum, *Dawn*, March 24³¹

The Sindh government on March 23 decided to include Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah's speech of Aug 11, 1947 in the curriculum of classes VIII to X. The decision to include the speech made by the Father of the Nation in his address to the first Constituent Assembly of Pakistan on Aug 11, 1947 was taken by the provincial senior minister for education and literacy on the direction of former president of Pakistan and PPP co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari. *The speech in which the Quaid explicitly spoke of giving equal rights and freedom to the religious minorities of Pakistan will be made a part of the curriculum in its entirety.* It was

²⁹ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/857552/rigging-allegations-assemblies-will-be-dissolved-if-vote-fraud-established/>

³⁰ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/857350/pti-will-consider-returning-to-assemblies-after-formation-of-judicial-commission-qureshi/>

³¹ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1171436/quaid-aug-11-speech-to-be-included-in-school-curriculum>

said that the textbooks with the addition would be distributed among schoolchildren free of cost next year.

Move to bring back Altaf from UK, says Nisar, Dawn, March 25³²

Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan revealed on March 24 that the government was examining legal possibilities of getting MQM chief Altaf Hussain extradited...He was answering a question on whether the government was in touch with Interpol over the possibility of bringing Altaf Hussain back to Pakistan. The minister confirmed that he had discussed the FIR registered against Mr Hussain over threats to Rangers personnel, allegedly hurled during an interview with a private TV channel, with *British High Commissioner Philip Barton, adding that this was not a secret*. He told reporters that he had asked the high commissioner what British law said about threats made by individuals residing in British territory, but denied handing over any documents to Mr Barton, who is currently in the UK. *The minister said that the MQM should continue as a political entity, since it had a large number of patriotic voters*. Asked to comment on the complicated nature of the government's relationship with the Muttahida, he said that *the operation in Karachi had nothing to do with that party and that the action aimed to end crime in the city*.

Imran furious as internal party differences made public, Dawn, march 25³³

Differences within the PTI that had been simmering for some time now became public on March 24. Pulled to pieces by the media over the cracks within its ranks, PTI Chairman Imran Khan issued a 'gag order' warning all party leaders — regardless of their position within the party — against providing information to the media about what he called "*PTI's internal issues*". In a curtly-worded press statement, Mr Khan said: "*The party will not tolerate any internal matter or document being discussed or released to the media by anyone, no matter how senior a position he/she holds.*" The party election tribunal, led by a former judge, Justice Wajihuddin Ahmad, which had earlier sent a report raising serious questions over the fairness of the PTI's intra-party elections, is said to be unhappy with the role of Secretary General Jahangir Tareen. Justice Ahmad reportedly issued a show-cause notice to Mr Tareen, seeking clarification on why he didn't offer his services to the tribunal and assist it in discharging its duty.

³²<http://www.dawn.com/news/1171735/move-to-bring-back-altaf-from-uk-under-study-says-nisar>

³³<http://www.dawn.com/news/1171760/ptis-chief-furious-as-internal-party-differences-made-public>

Operation to continue: PM, *The News*, March 24³⁴

Nawaz Sharif arrived in Karachi on a one day visit on March 24 and addressed the business community at the KSE. He emphasised that *the ongoing operation in the city was not against any particular party but rather it was aimed at criminals*. Sharif also said the operation in the city had been successful in curtailing crime and *was initiated after consultation with all stakeholders*. ...According to the prime minister the security situation in Karachi had drastically improved, stating that extortion, kidnapping for ransom and other crimes were decreasing. Mr. Sharif also praised the Sindh government of extending its full support to the Centre.

FOREIGN POLICY

Pak Envoy summoned over diplomat's arrest', *The Express Tribune*, March 1³⁵

Afghanistan on March 1 summoned Pakistan's ambassador to the Foreign Ministry over the 'arrest and harassment' of four Afghan diplomats in Peshawar by the Pakistani police on 26 February. "*Pakistan's Ambassador to Kabul Sayed Abrar Hussain was called to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Afghanistan in connection with the arrest and harassment of four of the Afghan Consulate General diplomats in Peshawar by the Pakistani police,*" the Afghan Foreign Ministry said. *The protest came amid efforts by Pakistan to encourage the Afghan Taliban to join the intra-Afghan peace talks*. Terming the arrest of Afghan diplomats in Peshawar a 'blatant violation of the principle of diplomatic relations', Afghan Deputy Foreign Minister Hekmat Khalil Karzai lodged strong protest with Pakistani envoy, said a statement issued by the Afghan foreign ministry.

Nawaz Sharif leaves for Saudi Arabia, *Dawn*, March 4³⁶

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif left for Saudi Arabia on March 4 *at the invitation of King Salman Bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud*. In his pre-departure statement, he said that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are brotherly countries which are tied in bonds of shared faith and values. He added that the relationship between the two countries has grown stronger with the passage of time. *This is the premier's first official visit to the Kingdom since King Salman bin Abdul Aziz assumed the throne. During his three-day visit, PM Nawaz will also perform Umrah in addition to meeting members of the Pakistani community in Saudi Arabia*. The premier will be accompanied by a high-level delegation which includes Finance Minister Ishaq Dar, Chief Minister Punjab Mr. Shahbaz Sharif, Special

³⁴<http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-179209-Operation-to-continue-till-elimination-of-last-terrorist:-PM>

³⁵<http://tribune.com.pk/story/846170/afghanistan-summons-pakistani-envoy-over-diplomats-arrest/>

³⁶ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1167300/pm-nawaz-sharif-leaves-for-saudi-arabia>

Assistant to the Prime Minister on National Affairs Irfan Siddiqui and Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Syed Tariq Fatemi.

President Xi may not attend March 23 parade, *The Express Tribune*, March 6³⁷

Advisor to Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs and National Security Sartaj Aziz on March 6 revealed that Chinese President Xi Jinping *is currently not scheduled to attend the Pakistan Day parade on March 23*. He said that while the Chinese president may not visit on March 23, he will be visiting Pakistan soon. Earlier, there were some reports that President Xi may visit Pakistan in March to attend the joint military parade on Pakistan Day. During his recent visit to Pakistan, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on February 12, 2015, confirmed that President Xi would be making his first state visit to Pakistan within the 'next few months.'...The Chinese president was initially supposed to visit Pakistan in August last year but the visit was postponed due to security reasons.

Modi to visit Pakistan in 2016, Xi's visit being scheduled, *Dawn*, March 9³⁸

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to visit Pakistan next year to attend the SAARC summit, whereas dates for Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit are being worked out. Talking to reporters after attending a two-day conference at the 6th Think Tank Forum of Islamic Countries that concluded on March 8, Sartaj Aziz, said: *"Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will certainly visit Pakistan next year."* Pakistan will host the Saarc summit in 2016....About Pak-India relations, Mr Aziz said that the recent foreign secretaries' meeting had paved the way for formal talks between the two sides, adding: *"All matters of common interest will be included in the talks, whenever they are started."*

We want good relations but not under Pakistan's thumb: Karzai, *The Express Tribune*, March 10³⁹

As security cooperation between Afghanistan and Pakistan increases, former Afghan president Hamid Karzai said the country wants to maintain 'friendly' relations with Pakistan but should not succumb to pressure from it. *"We want a friendly relationship but not to be under Pakistan's thumb,"* Karzai said, in an interview with *The Guardian*, warning Afghanistan's historic struggles against British imperialism and Soviet invasion will go in vain if the country succumbs to pressure from Pakistan. Karzai's statements come at a time when Afghan president Ashraf Ghani has taken a new step towards improving

³⁷ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/849090/chinese-president-may-not-attend-pakistan-day-parade-sartaj-aziz/>

³⁸ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1168352/modi-due-in-2016-xis-visit-being-scheduled>

³⁹ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/850792/we-want-a-friendly-relationship-but-not-to-be-under-pakistans-thumb-karzai/>

relations between the two neighbouring countries, putting aside years of hostility. Even before assuming power, Ghani upheld good relations with Pakistan are key to ending instability in his conflict-torn nation and he now looks for help for Pakistan to broker a peace deal with the Taliban.

US diplomat nominated ambassador to Pakistan, *The News*, March 11⁴⁰

US President Barack Obama on March 10 nominated veteran *diplomat David Hale as the country's new ambassador to Pakistan*. Hale, currently ambassador to Lebanon has previously served as the top US diplomat in Jordan and was special envoy for Middle East peace under Obama. Hale will have to be confirmed by lawmakers of the US Senate before taking up his post. He would replace outgoing ambassador Richard Olson, who has held the post since 2012.

Pakistan doesn't want to upgrade PSM, powerhouses: Russian envoy, *The News*, March 13⁴¹

Russian Ambassador Alexey Yurivich Dedov has called for strengthening Pak-Russian bilateral relations because Russia has been a great admirer of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Faiz Ahmad Faiz. Addressing the Multan Chamber of Commerce and Industry executive committee members here on March 12, he offered arranging trade meetings between Pakistani and Russian businessmen to boost the trade. He said that the Pakistani businessmen should explore untapped Russian market for their products. He said that the two countries should take sector specific measures to enhance mutual trade that did not reflect the existing potential. He said that Russia had a lot to offer to the Pakistani businessmen. He said that Pakistani and Russian businessmen could enter into joint ventures to benefit each other in their respective businesses and take the level of bilateral trade to new heights with a little sector-specific effort. To a question, the ambassador said that Muzaffargarh and Jamshoro thermal power stations were generating 30 per cent electricity. He said: "*We are ready to modernise the units besides modernising the Pakistan Steel Mills but the government is not ready to increase efficiencies of the units because it is going towards the privatisation.*"

⁴⁰<http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-177812-Veteran-US-diplomat-nominated-ambassador-to-Pakistan>

⁴¹<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-2-306634-Pakistan-doesnt-want-to-upgrade-PSM-powerhouses-Russian-envoy>

Pakistan for non-interference policy in Afghanistan: Sartaj Aziz, Dawn, March 19⁴²

Adviser to Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on National Security and Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz said on March 18 that Pakistan is pursuing a policy of non-interference in Afghanistan and expects the same from other countries in the region. Talking to reporters in Islamabad today, Aziz said that there are prospects of dialogue between the Afghan government and different groups in the coming days and Pakistan desires an early start of talks for peace and stability. The Adviser to Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs said Pakistan is only playing the role of facilitator in the reconciliation process and persuading the groups it has contacts with to start the dialogue process. He said Pakistan is pursuing a policy of non-interference in Afghanistan and hoped it will be followed by other regional countries. Aziz said Afghanistan needs help for economic development but has to resolve the political issues on its own. He said Pakistan wants strong trade and economic relations with Afghanistan as part of its policy of peaceful neighborhood and that a series of steps have been taken to remove trade impediments and enhance trade volume with Afghanistan.

Chinese president likely to visit in April, Dawn, March 23⁴³

Chinese President Xi Jinping is expected to arrive in the country in April, sources privy to the development told the scribe. The sources said that during the visit, the Chinese head of the state will address the parliament and unveil China's plans for the future of the Pakistan-China friendship. The exact dates of the Chinese president's visit to Pakistan are yet to be confirmed, but the government sources indicate that he is due to arrive in the first week of April. Foreign Office spokesperson Tasnim Aslam did not deny that the Chinese president's visit is imminent, saying: "*We will announce the visit when appropriate*".

Emir of Qatar arrives in Islamabad on two-day visit, The News, March 23⁴⁴

Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani arrived in Islamabad on a two-day visit to Pakistan at the invitation of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, Radio Pakistan reported on March 23. It is his first official visit to Pakistan as the Emir of Qatar. He had visited Pakistan as Crown Prince in 2010. The Qatari Emir is accompanied by a high-level delegation, including Cabinet Ministers, Chairman of Qatar Airways and senior government officials.

⁴²<http://www.dawn.com/news/1170600/pakistan-for-non-interference-policy-in-afghanistan-sartaj-aziz>

⁴³ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1171306/chinese-president-likely-to-visit-in-april>

⁴⁴<http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-179022-Emir-of-Qatar-arrives-in-Islamabad-on-two-day-visit>

During the visit, the Emir will hold talks with President Mamnoon Hussain and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. The two sides will discuss ways to further enhance bilateral cooperation in various fields, including energy, investment, trade, defence and manpower. Regional and global issues of bilateral importance will also be discussed. Agreements to be signed during the visit will further deepen mutually beneficial cooperation existing between the two countries in various fields.

Pakistan examining Saudi request to join operation in Yemen: FO, Dawn, March 26⁴⁵

Pakistan said on March 26 it was examining Saudi Arabia's request to join the Gulf-led operation against Shia Houthi rebels in Yemen. Adviser to Prime Minister on National Security and Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz confirmed that top Saudi officials had contacted the Pakistani leadership requesting it to join the Yemen operation. A decision has not yet been taken, Aziz said. He further said that Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has summoned a high-level meeting this evening to consult his close aides over the matter. Aziz added that a decision on whether to comply with the Saudi request will be announced at the conclusion of the meeting. Earlier during the day, Foreign Office spokesperson Tasneem Aslam told reporters at the weekly media briefing in Islamabad that Saudi Arabia had contacted Pakistan on an emergency basis and extended the invitation to join the operation against Houthi rebels in Yemen.

Pakistan will respond to any threats posed to Saudi Arabia's security, The News, March 27⁴⁶

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said on March 26 that Pakistan will respond to any threats posed to Saudi Arabia's security. The decision was taken during a high level meeting chaired by the PM in Islamabad. The meeting participants included, Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif, Air Chief Marshal Sohail Aman, Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif, and Advisor to the Prime Minister on National Security and Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz. The developing situation in Yemen and surrounding areas in the Middle East were reviewed and discussed during the meeting. It was also decided that a top civil-military delegation will be dispatched to Saudi Arabia on March 27. The delegation will include Khawaja Asif, Sartaj Aziz and other top military figures. Sharif told the meeting that "*Pakistan enjoys close and brotherly relations with Saudi*

⁴⁵<http://www.dawn.com/news/1172016/pakistan-examining-saudi-request-to-join-operation-in-yemen-fo>

⁴⁶ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-179401-Pakistan-will-respond-to-any-threats-posed-to-Saudi-Arabias-security>

Arabia and other GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) countries and attaches great importance to their security."

Pakistan will not participate in conflict that divides Muslim Ummah: Khawaja Asif, Dawn, March 27⁴⁷

Federal Defence Minister Khawaja Asif in the National Assembly elucidated Pakistan's role in the Yemen conflict, saying that no decision to participate has been taken and that Pakistan has only pledged to safeguard the territorial integrity of the KSA. He stressed on Pakistan's role as 'facilitator' to end the conflicts in the Muslim world. *"Instead of aggravating the situation by participating in it, Pakistan should do what it can to prevent it – for the alliance and unity of the Muslim world,"* the defence minister said. *"Pakistan is ready to adopt whatever role is needed in order to facilitate the termination of conflicts in the Islamic world."* We will not take part in any conflict that could result in differences in the Muslim world, causing fault-lines present in Pakistan to be disturbed, the aggravation of which will have to be borne by Pakistan," he asserted.

Pakistan rejects rumours of sending troops to Yemen, The News, March 30⁴⁸

Pakistan's Foreign Office has rejected rumours of sending Pakistani troops to join a Saudi-backed coalition forces fighting Houthi rebels in war-stricken Yemen. *"These are several reports in the media which are completely baseless,"* Foreign Secretary Aizaz Chaudhary told a press briefing on March 28 night. A Pakistani delegation will leave for Riyadh in the next 24 to 48 hours, he said, but rejected reports that Pakistan would join the Saudi-led coalition bombing targets in Yemen, calling them "speculations". *"The reality is that our leadership is in contact with their (Saudi) leadership, and we have proposed that our delegation will visit and assess the situation, after which we will make decisions,"* he said. *"If you go by assumptions and what others may have said, I do not think it will do justice to the situation,"* he said. The foreign secretary said that Pakistan has seven defence training pacts with Saudi Arabia. *"We have defence agreements with Saudi Arabia: they come here to get training and we go there to give them training,"* he said. He reiterated that Pakistan had not sent any additional soldiers to Saudi Arabia.

Decision to send Pak troops on hold, The Nation, March 31⁴⁹

Pakistan on March 30 held a top-level civil-military meeting to discuss the escalating Yemen crisis, vowing to fully support Saudi Arabia in every eventuality but once again stopping short of a decision to send its troops to

⁴⁷<http://www.dawn.com/news/1172229/pakistan-will-not-participate-in-conflict-that-divides-muslim-ummah-khawaja-asif>

⁴⁸<http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-179677-Pakistan-rejects-rumours-of-sending-troops-to-Yemen>

⁴⁹ <http://nation.com.pk/national/31-Mar-2015/decision-to-send-pak-troops-on-hold>

join the coalition against rebel fighters. Reports quoted officials as saying that Pakistan would announce a final decision on whether to send troops after its defence delegation's visit to Saudi Arabia. Reiterating Pakistan's commitment to safeguard the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Saudi Arabia, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif called upon the United Nations, the OIC (Organisation of Islamic Conference) and the international community to play a constructive role in finding a political solution to the Yemen crisis. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif called the high-level meeting of political and military top brass to undertake a comprehensive review of the fast-deteriorating situation in Yemen and draw Islamabad's future course of action in mitigating the soaring tensions in the Middle East. The meeting was attended by Finance Minister Ishaq Dar, Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Adviser to PM on National Security Sartaj Aziz, Army Chief General Raheel Sharif, Air Chief Sohail Aman and Foreign Affairs secretary among other senior officials.

MILITARY AFFAIRS

Army chief chairs Corps Commanders Conference in Rawalpindi, *The Express Tribune*, March 3⁵⁰

Army Chief General Raheel Sharif is heading a Corps Commander meeting in Rawalpindi to address the security situation in the country on March 3 following the implementation of the National Action Plan across the country; several security operations are underway to eradicate terrorism from the country. A comprehensive review of internal and external security situation will also be carried out in the meeting. All other security issues including the progress made in Operation *Zarb-e-Azb* and Operation Khyber are said to be discussed in the meeting.

Operations to continue until militancy is eliminated, *Dawn*, March 7⁵¹

Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif visited the Corps Headquarters in Peshawar on March 7 where he was briefed on progress made in the ongoing *Zarb-i-Azb* and Khyber-1 operations, DG. ISPR Asim Bajwa said on his Twitter account. The army chief was also briefed on the security situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Fata. General Raheel said the operations would continue until militancy in the country is brought to an end. He also appreciated the progress made through intelligence-based operations. He added that the

⁵⁰<http://tribune.com.pk/story/846981/general-raheel-sharif-chairs-corps-commanders-conference-in-rawalpindi/>

⁵¹<http://www.dawn.com/news/1168008/operations-to-continue-until-militancy-is-eliminated-gen-raheel>

process of returning Temporarily Displaced Persons (TDPs) to their homes would begin by the middle of March.

Pakistan successfully tests Shaheen-III missile, *The News*, March 9⁵²

Pakistan on March 9 conducted a successful test launch of Shaheen-III Surface to Surface Ballistic Missile, capable of carrying nuclear and conventional warheads to a range of 2,750 KMs. The test launch was aimed at validating various design and technical parameters of the weapon system at maximum range. According to an ISPR press release, the successful launch with its impact point in the Arabian Sea was witnessed by senior officers from Strategic Plans Division, strategic forces, scientists and engineers of strategic organizations. Director General Strategic Plans Division, Lieutenant General Zubair Mahmood Hayat, while congratulating the scientists and engineers on achieving yet another milestone of historic significance, termed it a major step towards strengthening Pakistan's deterrence capability.

Raheel, air chief visit North Waziristan, *Dawn*, March 13⁵³

Army Chief Gen Raheel Sharif and Air Chief Marshal Tahir Rafique Butt visited North Waziristan on March 12 and reviewed the operational plan in the tribal area. ISPR Director General Maj Gen Asim Saleem Bajwa said in a tweet message that the army and air chiefs were briefed on the progress of current and future operational plans in the conflict-stricken tribal region. They also met troops. The army chief was briefed on the progress of the Zarb-i-Azb military operation launched in June last year. He praised the efficacy with which the troops chased militants. Terrorists would be chased and hit and they would not find any place to hide, Maj Gen Bajwa said. Gen Raheel reiterated the army's commitment to eliminating all terrorists, ridding the country of all types of terrorism and taking the operation to its logical conclusion.

Pakistan develops armed drone, test-fires laser-guided missile, *The News*, March 14⁵⁴

Pakistan on March 13 successfully tested its indigenously-built armed drone 'Burraq' and test-fired laser-guided missile 'Barq'. COAS General Raheel Sharif witnessed the tests on static and moving targets with an impressive pinpoint accuracy. The all-weather drone and laser-guided missile have multiplied the capability against terrorists, said an ISPR press release. Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Army Chief General Raheel Sharif

⁵² <http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-177662-Pakistan-successfully-tests-Shaheen-III--missile->

⁵³ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1169245/raheel-air-chief-visit-north-waziristan>

⁵⁴ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-36395-Pakistan-develops-armed-drone-test-fires-laser-guided-missile>

congratulated the nation on the successful test-firing of the drone and laser-guided missile. In a message, Nawaz appreciated the armed forces as well as the scientists and engineers who contributed towards the indigenous development of state-of-the-art drone and missile. He said attaining the milestone of drone capability would add a new dimension to the country's defence.

Rangers file case against MQM Chief Altaf Hussain, *Dawn*, March 18⁵⁵

Rangers officials on March 17 filed a case against MQM Chief Altaf Hussain for threatening the paramilitary force, DIG South Abdul Khaliq Sheikh said. The case has been registered under Section 7 of the Anti-Terrorism Act and 506 of the Pakistan Penal Code at the Civil Lines police station in the metropolis on the request of the paramilitary force, a copy of which is available with Dawn.com. Ranger's spokesperson Col. Tahir Mehmood has filed the case against the political party. The Rangers official maintained that following the raid on MQM Headquarters, Altaf – in an interview on Geo News – threatened members of the paramilitary force who were involved in the operation.

Sohail Aman takes over command as PAF chief, *The News*, March 19⁵⁶

The new Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshal Sohail Aman took over command of Pakistan Air Force (PAF) at a ceremony held here at the Air Headquarters on March 18. Outgoing Air Chief Marshal Tahir Rafique Butt formally handed over the PAF's Sword of Command to Air Marshal Sohail Aman. Both the outgoing and incoming air chiefs were presented guard of honour to formally mark change of the command. Born in 1959 Air Marshal Sohail Aman was commissioned in the GD (P) Branch of Pakistan Air Force in November 1980. Sohail Aman, an accomplished Fighter Pilot is a graduate of Combat Commanders School Air War College and Royal College of Defence Studies (UK).

COAS calls on Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, *The News*, March 19⁵⁷

Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif called on Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on March 19 at the prime minister house. The meeting was also attended by Federal Finance Minister Ishaq Dar. During the meeting the prime minister and the Army chief discussed the ongoing operation Zarb-e-Azb as well as the overall security situation in the country.

⁵⁵ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1170171/rangers-file-case-against-mqm-chief-altaf-hussain>

⁵⁶ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-178643-Sohail-Aman-takes-over-command-as-PAF-chief>

⁵⁷ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-178656-COAS-calls-on-Prime-Minister-Nawaz-Sharif>

General Carter calls on COAS at GHQ, *The News*, March 20⁵⁸

Chief of General Staff of United Kingdom, General Sir Nicholas Carter, called on COAS General Raheel Sharif on March 19. During the meeting, matters of mutual interest including regional security situation and measures to further enhance defence cooperation between both the countries were discussed. He was also given a detailed briefing on operational and training aspects of Pakistan Army. Earlier, upon his arrival at the Army General Headquarters, a smartly turned out contingent of the Pakistan Army presented Guard of Honour to the dignitary. General Sir Nicholas Patrick Carter also laid a floral wreath at Yadgar-e-Shuhada.

Will take Operation Zarb-e-Azb to its logical conclusion: Gen Raheel, *The Express Tribune*, March 23⁵⁹

Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif reaffirmed on March 23 the determination of the army to take Operation *Zarb-e-Azb* to its logical conclusion. During a meeting held at the Core Headquarters in Peshawar, the army chief said the terrorists who are squeezed in isolated pockets would be targeted with precision, according to Director General Inter Services Public Relations Major General Asim Bajwa. General Raheel Sharif said the army would continue to fight against terrorists from urban and remote areas at all costs to bring peace & prosperity in the country. The army chief was briefed on the security situation in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Federally Administered Tribal Areas, Operation *Zarb-e-Azb* and other ongoing operations being carried out in Khyber Agency.

US, Pakistan to conduct joint military drills in October, *The News*, March 24⁶⁰

The US Central Command has said that the United States and Pakistan will conduct a range of joint military exercises starting in autumn this year. According to policy documents, the two countries have more than 100 engagements and exercises planned. The joint drills are expected to begin in October. It will focus on a broad spectrum of military components, including air, land, sea and special operations. The planned engagements between the two countries' militaries include seminars and other forums covering a range of topics that includes counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, civil-military cooperation, intelligence. Earlier this month, Pakistani and US military representatives gathered at the Macdill Air Force Base in Florida for the 24th

⁵⁸ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-178653-General-Carter-calls-on-COAS-at-GHQ>

⁵⁹ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/857293/will-take-operation-zarb-e-azb-to-its-logical-conclusion-gen-raheel/>

⁶⁰ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-179194-US,-Pakistan-to-conduct-joint-military-drills-in-October>

US-Pakistan Military Consultative Committee, an annual forum for reviewing military-to-military engagements and exercises between the two countries.

Pakistan facing internal, external challenges: PAF chief, *The News*, March 26⁶¹

Air Chief Marshal Sohail Aman on March 26 said that Pakistan currently faces internal and external challenges. Operation *Zarb-e-Azb* has broken the backs of the terrorists, he said while speaking to cadets at a passing-out ceremony at the Raisalpur academy, where he was invited as the chief guest. 133 GD pilots, 78 students of engineering and 13 graduating in A&SD courses took part in the parade.

Pak-Saudi military exercise due soon, *The Nation*, March 31⁶²

A pre-scheduled Pak-Saudi joint military exercise "Samsam-5" has been continuing in Taif since 19th of this month. ISPR has clarified that it is not an operational deployment. Two hundred and ninety-two Pakistani troops are participating in the exercise. Joint exercise Samsam is held every year. Last year it was held near Jhelum in Pakistan.

EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS

Minorities' dilemma, Editorial, *Dawn*, March 3⁶³

Amonges the predicament of minorities in Pakistan is the fact that youngsters belonging to faiths other than Islam either have to study the religion of the majority, or learn about Islamic themes that are included in the textbooks of unrelated subjects. As some scholars have pointed out, forcibly teaching non-Muslim students Islam — either because of the lack of alternatives or through inducement — violates their constitutional rights. In this regard, it is welcome that the KP Textbook Board has begun developing ethics books for the province's minority students. [...]Moreover, minorities must be consulted so that their respective religious beliefs are taught to youngsters instead of ethics should they so choose. Then there is the issue of including Islamic topics in subjects as varied as general knowledge, social studies and English. Of course, this infusion of religious material across the academic spectrum is mostly the work of Ziaul Haq's 'Islamisation' project. It must be realised that Islamiat is a compulsory subject in Pakistan, hence there is little reason to include religious teachings in other subjects. Doing so poses two major problems: it forces non-Muslim students to study Islam and where Muslim pupils are concerned, this

⁶¹<http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-179348-Pakistan-facing-internal,-external-challenges:-PAF-chief->

⁶²<http://nation.com.pk/national/31-Mar-2015/pak-saudi-military-exercise-pre-scheduled>

⁶³<http://www.dawn.com/news/1166955/minorities-dilemma>

approach can result in diluting the focus of the lesson. Both the issues of non-Muslim students and the inclusion of religious topics in unrelated subjects must be considered in future curriculum reform efforts.

A high-stakes game, Zahid Hussain, *Dawn*, March 4⁶⁴

The Senate elections have once again generated intense political debate in the country on how to make the electoral process more transparent and prevent horse-trading. Though belated, the PML-N's move to end the secret balloting failed to garner consensus among the political parties. For sure there is a need to revisit the entire Senate election process to make it more credible and representative. But merely replacing secret voting with a show of hands does not present an answer to the broader questions about the indirect system of the Senate election itself. Apart from the allegations of horse-trading a major issue that has contributed to making the system less credible is that the Senate is not truly representative of the people of this country. It has been noted that indirect elections make it easier for people with financial resources to get into the upper house that represents the federation. Where the issue of representation is concerned, there have been instances where several members of one family have been in the Senate as well as the National Assembly. [...]The PPP is now banking on the votes of disgruntled PML-N provincial legislators from southern Punjab. A similar revolt in the party ranks may cause the party to lose in KP and Balochistan as well. It is true that the majority of legislators would still go along with their party nominees, but the loss of even a few votes matters a lot in the Senate elections. Trading votes for money is not unusual in Senate elections. But the allegation of horse trading is much more intense this time. In an article published in a national newspaper, it was estimated that billions of rupees may change hands in the run-up to the elections. That makes the legitimacy of the Senate elections highly questionable. What can one expect from future representatives who buy their seats at such an exorbitant price? Is it just for the sake of prestige or are there greater stakes involved? The Gulzar Khan family may have set a record for getting such large representation in parliament. But there are several other examples of members of the same family being elected to the Senate from the platforms of different political parties, thus reducing democracy to a means of perpetuating the political power of an elite club. Whatever the outcome of the Senate elections, it is not going to change the country's current power matrix. The ongoing political wheeling and dealing and selling and buying of votes may result in an even more divided house leaving the contest for chairman of the Senate wide open. We may see intense horse-trading for that coveted post. Politics is a high-stakes game in this country that only few can afford to play. It is imperative to reform the entire

⁶⁴ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1167226/a-high-stakes-game>

electoral system to restore the public's faith in democracy, but more importantly it is for the political parties to end corrupt practices within their ranks.

The 'new' militants, Farhan Zahid, *Dawn*, March 4⁶⁵

The Peshawar school massacre points to the surfacing of a new generation of Islamist militants in Pakistan. The country, in the last 13 years, has suffered more than 13,721 terrorist incidents (as per the National Counter Terrorism Authority) which left 56,156 dead and more than 200,000 critically wounded. Yet by far, the Peshawar school bloodbath left the deepest scar on the hearts of Pakistanis. The gloves are now off. Pakistan's plethora of Islamist terrorist groups can broadly be classified under two broad categories: the 'old' groups; and the new and nascent outfits. The old groups were established during the Afghan war (1979-89). Almost all of them are the products of Operation Cyclone — the biggest-ever covert operation in the history of the American CIA — and remained involved against the Soviet forces in Afghanistan. The Punjab-based Afghan Mujahideen-turned-Kashmiri Islamist groups such as HuM), and (HuJI), as well as sectarian outfits such as LJ, known for its anti-Shia activities, can be placed under this category. Other groups like JeM and Harkatul Mujahideen al-Alami broke off from HuM, the 313 Brigade came out of HuJI, and Al Qanun and Al Mansur came out of the largely anti-India and hitherto 'peaceful' Lashkar-e-Taiba after the commencement of the 'global war on terror'. [...]The looming danger for Pakistan becomes more worrisome when this new generation is found heading straight into the willing embrace of the self-styled Islamic State. Recently, TTP (Fazlullah) spokesperson Shahidullah Shahid pledged allegiance to IS 'caliph' Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi. He was followed by Hafiz Quran Dolat, the TTP chief in Kurram Agency; Gul Zaman, the TTP chief in Khyber Agency; Mufti Hassan, the TTP chief in Peshawar; and Khalid Mansoor, the TTP head in Hangu. The emir of IS's Pakistan chapter, Hafiz Saeed Khan (formerly TTP commander for Orakzai Agency) also belongs to this newer generation of militants. Saeed is known for his hard-line views in the jihadi circles of Pakistan. The icing on the cake came when Al Qaeda's emir Ayman Al Zawahiri appointed Asim Umar as emir of Al Qaeda in the Indian subcontinent. An accomplished jihadi known for his eccentric messianic beliefs, Umar has authored four books about the coming of the messiah and Dajjal. Considering the already dilapidated state of affairs, the surfacing of this younger generation of terrorists in Pakistan is a matter of serious concern. This merciless group of fighters is capable of creating such havoc that it will make the acts of violence committed by their 'seniors' pale by comparison. The Peshawar attack was only a bitter foretaste of things to come. Security policymakers in Pakistan must wake up to this

⁶⁵ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1167235/the-new-militants>

danger and devise a concrete counterterrorism strategy to combat this new generation of Islamist fighters.

Caution Required, A.H. NAYYAR, Dawn, March 10⁶⁶

THE Sindh High Court has ordered the PAEC to submit a new EIA report for the two large nuclear reactors planned for Karachi. The court order, issued in December 2014 after a public interest petition by concerned citizens, also requires the Sepa to abide by the Sindh Environmental Protection Act and invite public comments on this EIA before approving the project. Given the potentially devastating consequences of a nuclear accident for Karachi's 20 million citizens, the EIA for the proposed nuclear reactors should be as detailed and complete as possible, and meet international best practice. It is to Sepa's credit that in considering the previous EIA for the planned Karachi reactors, it had required the project to follow "All regulations of USNRC, IAEA and ICRP ... in design and operation phase". This principle should also be applied to the preparation, content, review, approval and monitoring of the new court-ordered EIA. [...]The PAEC has hired EMC, a private company, to prepare the EIA for the planned Karachi reactors. EMC is not known to be a specialist in preparing a nuclear EIA. This is one more reason for Karachi's citizens to be watchful about this project. Sepa is required to review and approve the EIA of the Karachi nuclear reactors before the project can proceed. But review and evaluation of the EIA of the Karachi nuclear power plants is a very specialised task, for which Sepa may not have in-house capacity (especially for validation of the computer models and results), nor have access to independent local experts able to do so. Sepa can, however, seek international help in reviewing this EIA. As a member of the IAEA, Pakistan is eligible for assistance from the IAEA Site & External Events Design Review Service. This service "*provides member states with an independent review of the adherence to the IAEA environmental assessment requirement*". These IAEA activities are supported by leading nuclear energy agencies from around the world, and Pakistan has received IAEA help before with its nuclear reactors. In the public interest, Sepa should ask for an IAEA review of the EIA for the Karachi reactors and include its results as part of its decision-making process. This IAEA review should also be made public to assist the legally required process of eliciting public comment and holding a public hearing of the Karachi reactors' EIA. The people of Karachi should know the risks they are being asked to take with these nuclear reactors.

⁶⁶ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1168488/caution-required>

Calming Karachi, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, March 12⁶⁷

The pulled-down shop shutters in Karachi, the closed gates of schools and the protests on the streets are, sadly, all too familiar to the people of the city. These scenes have been witnessed again following the raid by Rangers on Nine Zero, the headquarters of the MQM, early on March 11. Violence, which has predictably spread out from the Liaquatabad area, threatens to sweep across the Sindh capital and reach into other urban centres of the province. There has already been one death in Karachi, from where reports are pouring in of vehicles being torched and other disruptive activity being engaged in. This is not comforting. A flurry of statements from political leaders has come in, many of them accusatory in tone. The Sindh chief minister has called for a full report on the raid. Right now, it is crucial that all parties recognise the need to maintain peace in Karachi and prevent the flames already lit from reaching any higher. The lives and welfare of the people depend on this. Karachi has bled too often in the past as a result of similar violence. It cannot afford to lose more blood. [...] There are many elements involved in it. All these elements and each of the powerful forces which back them need to be acted against and no single party should be singled out. Only when this happens can we hope to see an end to crime and the resulting violence, which has already brought Karachi to its knees. Everyone needs to play a part in helping Karachi stand up again and preventing the current anger and unrest from assuming more dangerous proportions as the cauldron continues to bubble. We hope it will simmer down before long and before any serious loss in any form.

The weaving of peace, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, March 12⁶⁸

As the days and weeks pass it is ever clearer that there really is a change in the nature of the relationship that exists between Pakistan and Afghanistan — which may give pause for reflection on how much more may have been achieved and sooner were it not for the obstructions of the Karzai years. It appears that the Afghan government and the Afghan Taliban are to hold face-to-face talks in the coming days, in part at the urging of Pakistan, among other players. There have been indirect contacts for some time, and there seems to be consensus that this is a positive move. The Americans are not going to be directly involved but their representative in the form of Daniel F Feldman travelled to Pakistan on March 10 — and has given his nod of approval. [...] It is impossible to ignore Mr Karzai, who still has his supporters, and as the Ghani government moves towards rapprochement the 'mafias' are gravitating in the direction of the man who was their protector for so many years — Hamid Karzai. Despite the protestations to the contrary, Mr

⁶⁷ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/851588/calming-karachi/>

⁶⁸ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/851585/the-weaving-of-peace/>

Karzai and those around him have a developing capacity to throw several spanners in the works of any future peace deals with the Afghan Taliban. Whilst we are to a degree in uncharted waters with Afghanistan in these precarious times, and there are undoubtedly emerging relationships, the viability and durability of which are untested by time or circumstance; the weaving of a durable peace must continue — and Mr Karzai needs to keep his meddling fingers to him

Trying times for MQM, ABBAS NASIR, *Dawn*, March 14⁶⁹

Going by the optics of the raid at MQM's famed HQ Nine Zero and its aftermath the exercise was as much about enforcing the law as it was to demonstrate who is now calling the shots in Karachi. And Round One goes to the army-led Sindh Rangers. Simply so because the raid not only yielded some men wanted, others convicted, in serious criminal cases including murder, but it also left the party which is known to combine popular politics with a vice-like physical grip over the city in discomfort and disarray. This disarray was evident in different explanations emerging for the presence of the wanted men in and around Nine Zero as well as different leaders offering conflicting accounts of the recovered weapons — from 'planted' by Rangers to legitimate licensed arms to address security concerns. But most of all that the MQM was finding itself on a tricky wicket could be gauged from the absence of any aggression in the tone and tenor of the usually bellicose leadership. From the top down, many leaders, most notably Altaf Hussain, appeared surprisingly subdued and reflective. [...] Will the MQM be able to recover from the humiliation heaped on it? Is this the beginning of the end? Notwithstanding the fact that the party has sometimes been allegedly run as a criminal enterprise, with violence used to keep both dissidents and external opponents in check, its popular appeal paradoxically in urban Sindh is a reality. [...] The contending centres of power within and the reported ill-health of the leader can weigh against it as it goes forward. When the local bodies' elections are held in Sindh this September the extent of the damage to the party will become apparent.

Way ahead for MQM, Editorial, *Dawn*, March 18⁷⁰

The ripples from the raid last week on Nine Zero, the MQM's headquarter in Karachi, continue to course through the city and wider afield. Considering it is the fourth largest political party in Pakistan and one that has reigned virtually unchallenged in the country's financial jugular — some would say had a chokehold on the city of 20 million — this is scarcely surprising. Let alone the citizens of Karachi, the party itself appears to have been caught

⁶⁹ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1169406/trying-times-for-mqm>

⁷⁰ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1170189/way-ahead-for-mqm>

completely off guard by the no-holds-barred, Rangers-led raid on its formidable redoubt. The party's response to the offensive, perhaps the harshest action against it since the army-backed operations of the 1990s, has ranged from plaintive claims of victimisation to belligerent denials of culpability. [...] Usually, fear has been the not-so-secret weapon it has wielded to that end, both when it wanted to bring Karachi to a standstill at a moment's notice — thereby demonstrating its relevance in the national political landscape — and also when it wanted to chastise its own leaders for perceived crimes of omission or commission. Those who could have comprised the second tier of the MQM leadership and taken politically sound decisions are instead perpetually engaged in a struggle to keep their heads above water. Some of them have mysteriously either met a nasty fate or voluntarily removed themselves from the political arena. As a result, there is a crisis of leadership in the party, with a yawning vacuum below the man in London. After the recent turn of events, there is only one possible way ahead for Mr Hussain. And that is to purge the MQM of the militant elements within — whether they have taken “shelter” within it, or been actively cultivated by it. For a party that has been sending its representatives to the assemblies since 1984, electoral politics is not a strange country. It is high time this is the only kind of politics it engages in.

MQM Woes, Editorial, *The News*, March 19⁷¹

The contours of a serious confrontation between the military establishment and the MQM are now clearly visible. The Rangers have lodged a formal FIR against MQM chief Altaf Hussain accusing him of threatening army officials. The MQM leader had spoken about those who had raided the Nine-Zero complex in the past tense, as if they used to be alive and are, or will be, no more. Rangers have issued details of the confessional statements of some of those detained in the Nine-Zero raid and the statements are bone chilling. One hit-man claimed to have killed 120 targets. Names of the Baldia Town factory inferno accused where 250 innocent workers burnt to death were also given. Even electoral rigging by an MQM MNA was admitted. [...] General Raheel Sharif has vowed that this operation will continue despite all hurdles. The battle lines are thus getting clear but it must be ensured, nay guaranteed, that both the Rangers and law-enforcement agencies as well as the MQM stay within the confines of the law and proceed to prosecute or defend their respective cases. The Karachi operation in which the MQM has now come under fire, must remain depoliticised and not become a witch hunt against one political party, no matter how aggressive their talk and language. The perception that the Rangers were only targeting the MQM must not be allowed to get weight. Action against other criminals, in other political

⁷¹ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-8-307717-MQM-woes>

parties, should also be visible with the same intensity and grit as against the MQM as soon as possible. The bottom line is that now that the long awaited course correction against terrorism, violence, target killings and mafia rule in Karachi has begun, it should not be allowed to derail because of unfounded accusations, revengeful actions or street violence. Actions must proceed forcefully, but within the ambit of the law.

Insecurities and ghettoization, Muhammad Amir Rana, *Dawn*, March 23⁷²

The continuing trend of people being killed in Pakistan by infuriated mobs reveals that there is some serious problem with our society and social behaviour. Lynching can neither be allowed nor justified irrespective of who does it. The killing of two citizens by a protesting mob on the suspicion of the former's link to the terrorist attacks on two churches in Lahore was a symptom of stress disorder. The horrific act carried out by non-Muslim protesters surprised many and annoyed certain segments of the Muslim majority — particularly those who deal in the hate business. People are hardly able to show restraint when they feel their sense of individual or collective identity is being threatened. Such situations can turn mobs violent. The prevailing environment of insecurity and violence is exposing the fault lines that exist in the country. Sectarian and communal violence, which manifests itself in the form of faith-based discrimination and violence against individuals, worship places and religious symbols of other sects and faiths, is among the foremost critical challenges affecting Pakistan's security, stability and social harmony. The challenges that non-Muslims face in Pakistan are by no means identical either in nature or intensity. However, while some religious minorities are more vulnerable than others and the threats are greater in some parts of the country compared to others, the overall situation of religious minorities has worsened across the country in general in recent years. Apart from sectarian and faith-based attacks and targeted killings by violent sectarian and militant groups, sectarian and faith-based discrimination is also increasingly penetrating individuals' attitudes and behaviour in Pakistan. [...] In many cases, such elements triggered communal tensions to pressurise the non-Muslims in order to grab their lands. This highlights the state's failure in providing housing to the common man, which has resulted in grave sociopolitical consequences. The lack of urbanisation policies and regulation of slums and ghettos is another issue which the state is guilty of. Ironically, it does not realise the impact of its poor urban policies. Ghettoisation of different kinds has become one of the major hurdles in the way of social cohesion and harmony in the country. This has a trickle-down effect in times of increasing insecurity in society.

⁷² <http://www.dawn.com/news/1171103/insecurities-and-ghettoisation>

Sharif, Sharif and us — again, Fahd Husain, *The Express Tribune*, March 23⁷³

The MQM is at the receiving end. But who's yanking the chain? The Rangers report to the interior ministry, which takes orders from the prime minister. But the director general Rangers is a serving general of the Pakistan Army, and thus also reports to the COAS. The COAS in turn — technically — reports to the prime minister. So who really decided it was time to crack the whip, and go after the criminal elements within political parties? We can hazard a guess. It's one thing to support a policy, it's a completely different issue to initiate, motivate and lead it. If there is a singular theme that is defining the emerging civil-military equation now, it is this: Sharif the commander is in the driving seat, while Sharif the civilian sits alongside for the ride. The signs are unmistakable. Sharif the civilian did not want an operation against the Taliban, and dithered Hamlet-like. Sharif the commander went along respectfully, and then took the decision to barrel ahead. The civilian had no choice but to support it. Sharif the civilian yet again emerged as the reluctant warrior in the aftermath of the horrendous APS attack, mouthing hollow nothings while the nation mourned. He was cracking jokes at the meeting in the Peshawar Governor House while Sharif the commander was jetting to Kabul to initiate the counter-offensive against the perpetrators of the massacre. [...]The present demands clarity, conviction and courage. Who among these men has the courage to crush militancy breeding within political parties? Who has the courage to go after Uzair Baloch and his supporters within the PPP? Who has the courage to shake down the militants inside the ANP in Sindh? Who has the courage to nail the land-grabbers and extortionists who carry membership cards of these political parties? Who has the courage to liquidate sectarian elements thriving in Punjab under semi-official patronage and protection? Who has the courage to disband jihadi groups of all shades and hues? And who indeed has the courage to call this war a war, and not one agenda item on a long list of tasks to be performed by the rulers? Pakistan will never change if militancy of all types is not crushed once and for all. Can Sharif the civilian do it? Can Zardari, Imran, Fazlur Rahman and Altaf Hussain do it? The real, true, honest answer will in fact not come as a surprise. But can Sharif the commander do it? His institution made this mess in the first place. Can he actually clean it up, from Karachi to Khyber, and beyond? If he too becomes a prisoner of institutional limitations, then we are in some very serious existential trouble.

The Madressah problem, Editorial, *Dawn*, March 24⁷⁴

IT was always going to be a difficult task — reforming the madressah sector and purging elements within who promote extremism, militancy and

⁷³ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/857000/sharif-sharif-and-us-again/>

⁷⁴ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1171431/the-madressah-problem>

terrorism. But as a report in this newspaper yesterday indicates, the government appears to have all but given up already. Three months on from the articulation of the National Action Plan, the federal government does not appear to have even decided which ministry should take the lead in dealing with the various madressah networks in the country. [...]The problem, as ever, appears to be less about the difficulties in drafting a meaningful plan and implementing it with purpose, and more about the state — both the political and military arms — not really considering it a priority. Perhaps the PML-N finds it easier to do nothing: taking on the religious right with its street power and other means to put pressure on the state is hardly something any elected government would relish doing. Perhaps the army-led military establishment is preoccupied with fighting militants and extremists, or maybe it does not consider dealing with extremism its responsibility. Whatever the reasons for the state sinking back into inaction against the nurseries of hate, intolerance and extremism in the country, the effect is predictable: the gains in the short term, via military operations, against militancy and terrorism will likely be squandered in the long term. For there is little possibility of the state winning the fight against militancy if it does not also seek to address the root causes. Why are so many Pakistanis taught distorted religious ideas in centres funded by foreigners? It must also not be forgotten that the madressahs are only one part of a much bigger mosque-madressah-social welfare network that is collectively used to spread distorted beliefs and, sometimes, preach violence and hate. Just yesterday, the JUD perhaps the most well-known of the so-called welfare networks, held a public event in Karachi to commemorate March 23 — this just a month after intense speculation about whether the group is to be banned or not. How serious, then, is the state in its promise to end militancy and terrorism of every stripe?

Battling the militants, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, March 25⁷⁵

The war that is being fought between the Pakistan Army and the forces allied to the TTP is relentless and ferocious. As winter fades from the mountains of Waziristan there is a report that in a single battle more than 80 militants have been killed and 100 injured in Khyber Agency. The army followed up on air strikes close to the Afghan border in Tirah Valley, the scene of much fighting already. The figures are difficult to verify as there is no independent reporting coming out of the conflict zone. A consequence of that is that rumours — always as ready to fly as bombs and bullets in warfare — abound. [...]As was demonstrated in Afghanistan at the fall of the Taliban in 2001, the Taliban fighters were not militarily defeated; they simply melted away to regroup, rearm and continue the war which continues to this day. This is something we must remain wary of. The ongoing action is pushing TTP affiliates further

⁷⁵ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/858388/battling-the-militants-2/>

into Afghanistan, and Afghan President Ashraf Ghani is on record having voiced his concern about the consequences of this for his country. We would welcome a little more critical assessment, because crude figures do not tell the whole story.

Cultivating ties with Qatar, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, March 26⁷⁶

Qatar may only be a small country geographically, but based on per capita income it is the richest country in the world. It is also one of the few countries where the indigenous population is outnumbered by expatriates. It will be hosting the 2022 football World Cup becoming the first Arab country to host the event. It sits on considerable natural resources in the form of the world's third largest natural gas reserves and oil reserves in excess of 25 billion barrels. In short, a country well worth fostering the very best of relations with, and it is no surprise that the visit to Pakistan of the Qatari emir, Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad al Thani, was warmly welcomed by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who also expressed interest in developing mutual links in respect of energy, trade and investment, defence and manpower. [...]The problem that Pakistan faces in developing external markets and inwards investment is the poor security environment that affects the whole country and the endless crisis in the energy sector. Agreements were signed in the 'soft' sectors — culture, youth and sports along with higher education and scientific research; none of which are significant revenue earners. That aside we warmly welcome this development and hope for more to come of it in the future.

ECONOMIC ISSUES

FISCAL ISSUES

ADB cancelled 103 loans for Pakistan during 2002-12, *The News*, March 3⁷⁷

The Asian Development Bank has cancelled 103 loans for Pakistan during 2002-2012, resulting into payment of millions of dollars as commitment charges by Islamabad's struggling economy. According to evaluation report of the ADB, stating that in the 5 years prior to the 2007 spring-cleaning undertaken by the ADB, there had been on average five loan cancellations per

⁷⁶ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/858747/cultivating-ties-with-qatar/>

⁷⁷ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-2-304756-ADB-cancelled-103-loans-for-Pakistan-during-2002-12>

year, involving on average \$90 million per year. This changed to an average of 13 loan cancellations per year from 2007 to 2011, involving on average \$257 million per year, which demonstrates the extensive and prolonged effort to streamline Pakistan's portfolio after the start of the spring-cleaning in 2007. Annual loan closures jumped from a low of 3 in 2006 to 23 in 2007, 15 in 2008, to 31 in 2009, which witnessed peak in that year. This was unprecedented; prior to spring-cleaning such closures never exceeded 8 in a single year. The majority of the cancellations made during the spring-cleaning exercise in 2007 concerned finance and education sector operations. Later they were made also in other types of operations.

TRADE

Focus on private sector: Washington rules out trade agreement with Islamabad. *The Express Tribune*, March 11⁷⁸

US Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker finally admitted publicly that the Obama administration no longer has the ability to get legislative approval for any trade agreements with Pakistan, and hence is focusing on getting more US businesses to invest in Pakistan. Pritzker urged Pakistan to fix its bureaucracy and address what she described as an "*inconsistent and unfair*" tax regime, cautioning that if the government did not remove such impediments to American businesses, US companies may move to other places. Placing the private sector at the heart of US-Pakistan relationship, Pritzker admitted that the Obama administration was no longer in a position to get a US-Pakistan trade agreement approved by the United States Congress, so their entire focus will remain on "*business to business connections*". She was speaking at the third US-Pak Business Opportunities Conference and later on talked to a group of journalists at the US Embassy. "*No issue is as frustrating to a US business as inconsistent and unfair taxation,*" said Pritzker. She said Pakistan's tax regime was unreliable and the lax commitment to fair and consistent tax collection was creating problems for the foreign investors. Pritzker also pointed to the energy crisis as a severe challenge for foreign investors.

⁷⁸<http://tribune.com.pk/story/851245/focus-on-private-sector-washington-rules-out-trade-agreement-with-islamabad/>

ENERGY

Disapproval: China objects to shelving of coal-fired power projects, *The Express Tribune*, March 5⁷⁹

The abandoning of many coal-fired power projects including the Gadani Power Park has not gone down well with the Chinese government, which has strongly protested against the dwindling interest of Pakistan in such energy schemes. The Chinese objection comes in the backdrop of putting the massive Gadani Power Park costing an estimated \$14 billion on the back burner. Some planned coal-based power plants in Punjab have also been shelved because of coal transportation constraints and the government's focus has turned to the LNG plants from the coal plants. According to officials, participants of a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Energy, held on February 12, told Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif that the Chinese ambassador had aired concern over reports that the government had decided to abandon coal-fired power projects. They said the ambassador argued that Beijing had done a lot of work on these projects and was expecting progress from the Pakistan side.

Kuwaiti firm to explore oil, gas in Paharpur, *Dawn*, March 14⁸⁰

The government signed a memorandum of understanding with the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation and the Kirthar Pakistan BV on 13 for exploration of oil and gas in Paharpur block. The block is located in Dera Ismail Khan and Tank districts of KP with a small part of it falling in Bhakkar district of Punjab. The exploration licence and petroleum concession agreements were signed by Sheikh Nawaf Saud Nasir Al-Sabah, the CEO of Kuwait Foreign Petroleum Exploration Company, Secretary of Petroleum and Natural Resources Arshad Mirza and Saeedullah Shah, Director-General Petroleum Concessions. The ceremony was witnessed by Minister for Petroleum and Natural Resources Shahid Khaqan Abbasi. The petroleum concession agreements and exploration licence have been executed over block no. 3170-5 (Paharpur) with Kirthar Pakistan BV. The total area of the block is 2,260.79 sq km and minimum firm work commitment is \$9.5 million, including drilling of two exploratory wells.

China offers to export 4,000MW to Pakistan, *Dawn*, March 24⁸¹

China has offered to export 4,000MW of electricity to Pakistan for which a memorandum of understanding will be signed in a couple of days. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif gave a go-ahead to his economic team last week for

⁷⁹<http://tribune.com.pk/story/847938/disapproval-china-objects-to-shelving-of-coal-fired-power-projects/>

⁸⁰ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1169407/kuwaiti-firm-to-explore-oil-gas-in-paharpur>

⁸¹ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1171514/china-offers-to-export-4000mw-to-pakistan>

early finalisation of the accord. *"We have received a draft MoU from China,"* an official of the ministry for water and power told Dawn. An official delegation had gone to Beijing to discuss the draft with officials of the State Grid China, he said. The legal team of the Private Power and Infrastructure Board and the National Transmission and Despatch Company had proposed some changes in the draft, the official said, adding that the 4th meeting of Pakistan-China Joint Cooperation Commission to be held in Beijing on March 25 would review the proposed changes.

IMF

Pakistan's economy improving: IMF, *The News*, March 12⁸²

The International Monetary Fund has cited Pakistan's prudent monetary and fiscal policies along with other measures as reasons for an improvement in the country's economy, reported *The Wall Street Journal*. Director IMF Middle East and Central Asia Department, Masood Ahmed following his visit to Pakistan said: *"The authorities have made progress with consolidating macroeconomic stability, strengthening public finances and rebuilding foreign-exchange buffers."* The director also called on the Pakistani government to broaden the tax base which would increase revenue and reduce debt.

INVESTMENT

Pakistan refuses to accept US model on investment treaty, *The News*, March 13⁸³

Federal Minister for Commerce Khurram Dastgir Khan said that Pakistan had refused to accept US model on BIT after detailed review undertaken under Minister for Finance Ishaq Dar and decided to prepare Pakistan's own template on BIT agreement. *"We have rejected US model on BIT because it possessed certain dangerous clauses related to Pakistan's trade and investment trust,"* he added. He expressed these views while addressing a news conference along with secretary commerce here on March 12. The minister said that Pakistan decided to file writ petition first time in last 36 years under GSP to include more items into the list with the objective to boost exports of Pak made ups as there were indication that US Congress would authorise renewal of GSP status in coming summer seasons. *"The US related GSP is not Pakistan specific as 127 countries will be getting benefits after re-authorisation of Congress,"* said the minister.

⁸² <http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-177926-Pakistans-economy-improving:-IMF->

⁸³ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-2-306628-Pakistan-refuses-to-accept-US-model-on-investment-treaty>

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

Sovereign ratings: Pak-China economic corridor a 'credit positive', says Moody's, *The Express Tribune*, March 3⁸⁴

Even though the project had not yet got off the ground, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, Moody's Investor Services – one of the three largest credit rating agencies in the world – has described the project as a 'credit positive' for the country, implying that the economic growth generated will eventually help the government's finances. *"The government's support for the implementation of the so-called CPEC is credit positive for Pakistan because it will spur investment activity, boost bilateral trade flows and help ease the country's growing energy shortages,"* Moody's said in a note issued to clients on Monday, according to a report in the International Business Times. The \$46-billion project would create a 2,000-kilometre road and rail link from China's western hinterlands to the Gwadar Port, creating a network of infrastructure in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan to match the one originally built by the British (and expanded by successive Pakistani governments) in Punjab and Sindh.

Call to resolve issues hindering Gwadar Port's completion as full-fledged facility, *Dawn*, March 23⁸⁵

Serious bottlenecks exist in the completion of Gwadar Port as a full-fledged commercial facility and the government needs to take up such issues on priority basis. Experts expressed these views at a discussion held here on Friday at the NCMPR of Bahria University. They said road connectivity and security were major problems facing the project and unless these were solved the high expectations attached to the port would remain only a dream. Serious bottlenecks exist in the completion of Gwadar Port as a full-fledged commercial facility and the government needs to take up such issues on priority basis. Experts expressed these views at a discussion held here on Friday at the NCMPR of Bahria University. They said road connectivity and security were major problems facing the project and unless these were solved the high expectations attached to the port would remain only a dream.

⁸⁴<http://tribune.com.pk/story/846730/sovereign-ratings-pak-china-economic-corridor-a-credit-positive-says-moodys/>

⁸⁵<http://www.dawn.com/news/1170980/call-to-resolve-issues-hindering-gwadar-ports-completion-as-full-fledged-facility>

Whole Sindh not against Kalabagh Dam, Salman Abduhu, *The Nation*, March 23⁸⁶

Although the Sindh is considered to have always been opposing the construction of Kalabagh Dam yet the Pakistan Engineering Council Chairman Engr. Syed Abdul Qadir Shah, the brother of Sindhi leader Syed Khurshid Shah, favoured the Kalabagh Dam, saying the huge floods damages could have been averted if large dams, including KBD, were constructed. "The country suffered a loss of \$ 15 billion as a result of 2014, 2010 and 2011 floods, shattering households, damaging infrastructure and standing crops, which all have been averted if the country had constructed mega dams like Kalabagh Dam during the last three decades to preserve floodwater. It is high time that the construction of Dasu, Diamer Bhasha, Kalabagh and such other dams is under taken without wasting any more time. Engr. Syed Abdul Qadir Shah, Chairman of Pakistan Engineering Council, said while addressing a ceremony held on Sunday to mark the World Water Day, 2015, organized by Pakistan Engineering Congress Lahore. Engr. Abdul Qadir Shah, who belongs to Sindh and brother of opposition leader Syed Khurshid Shah, recommended in his presentation that there is no substitute to the construction of mega dams, including KBD for conservation of water especially the water from abnormal rains and floods, dispelling the impression that the whole Sindh is not against Kalabagh Dam.

EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS

Charter of economy, Dr Muhammad Yaqub, *The News*, March 3⁸⁷

The finance minister has been advocating that all the major political parties should sign a 'charter of economy' on the pattern of the charter of democracy concluded some years back by the PML-N and the PPP. The charter of democracy was easy to adopt because its main purpose was ouster of a dictator – a third party – and it involved a political agreement on principles and practices for political activities to be adhered to by the two parties so that a future adventure by an army general to overthrow them could be blocked. We are not sure what the finance minister has in mind about the purpose and scope of the proposed charter of economy to be signed by the major political parties. On the one extreme, he may just be interested in getting his current economic policies endorsed by other political parties. If so, that would amount to an attempt to entrench the existing chaotic and directionless framework of policies that is taking the economy nowhere. On the other

⁸⁶ <http://nation.com.pk/business/23-Mar-2015/whole-sindh-not-against-kalabagh-dam>

⁸⁷ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-9-304708-Charter-of-economy>

extreme, the minister may have made a reappraisal of the current economic situation and concluded that a major overhaul of policies is in order to put the economy on a path of sustained economic development, price stability and balance of payments viability – and that it would require the support of other political parties for its implementation. [...]In short, what is needed is not an effort to sell the existing policies meant to maintain the status quo for the enrichment of the ruling elite but rather to evolve a new macroeconomic policy framework intended to promote all-inclusive economic growth on a sustained basis, which contributes to the economic welfare of the majority of the people.

Dam important, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, March 4⁸⁸

Considering the current government came to power on the back of promises to solve the power crisis that has gripped the country for the last many years, it has been laggardly in getting the Diamer-Bhasha Dam project to the starting line. The project has been dogged by innumerable difficulties from the outset, and although the federal government on March 2 finally approved Rs101 billion for land acquisition, we remain many years away from any watts coming down the wires. This will be the largest infrastructure project that Pakistan has undertaken since the construction of Tarbela Dam in 1974. This vast sum of money will be used — among other things — to relocate the 32 villages with a collective population of 25,000 people who have been demanding high rates of compensation for this unwanted intrusion into their lives. The money was approved on the application of the Water and Power Ministry to the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council — which had termed the sum “exorbitant” last October. [...]Both the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank have declined funding, in part because the dam is sited on disputed territory and foreign investors are wary. Irregularities, mistakes and poor management aside, we wish this project well and hope that it now proceeds with all speed. It will be at least eight years before the 4,500-MW project begins to impact on our lives and the national economy. Wind and solar powered projects are forging ahead in Sindh and Punjab, but hydroelectric power is the cheapest way of generating electricity overall. Let us hope that our futures are better illuminated.

Who sets priorities? Dr Pervez Tahir, *The Express Tribune*, March 14⁸⁹

The non-leap year February has been short in terms of days but long on the number of priority preachers. In the first week, Ishaq Dar, the Debt Lover, surprised all and sundry by announcing that his government did have a set of priorities. These are a slick four Es — education, economy, elimination of

⁸⁸ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/847133/dam-important/>

⁸⁹ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/848378/who-sets-priorities/>

extremism and energy. About education, the first in order of priorities, the less said the better. It managed to receive only 5.3 per cent of the total fund released until the end of February. Next comes the economy. The main driver here is investment. A mere 0.43 per cent of the GDP was released for public investment in six months. The private sector, the main driver, is still sitting on the fence. Just as the PML-N government was slow in recognising extremism as a major priority, its budget-makers are taking their time in releasing money for the consensus-based National Action Plan. Energy is not only the last, but also the least, of the priorities. This story of incompetence starts with condemnation of oil fired and rental power plants, eulogisation of coal and its abandonment, now the stop-go LNG policy and back to utilisation of oil fired capacity and, you bet, rental power. Of the Rs178.8 billion released for the Public Sector Development Programme until the end of February, the Wapda received only Rs272.8 million compared with Rs12.7 billion for the National Highway Authority (NHA). Additional releases for nuclear power takes the total for power to around Rs15 billion, including foreign loans, Wapda still lags behind the NHA, as the former gets Rs21.1 billion and the latter receives Rs28.6 billion. [...]On February 22, the Inter-Services Public Relations informed of a visit by the Chinese ambassador at the General Headquarters to discuss "matters of mutual interest". It is no secret that the Chinese president will be here to deliberate on energy, the economic corridor and, of course, extremism. Lest we forget there is also the IMF and others and their larger-than-life role in our priorities. Their polite words of guarded opening statements send our finance minister dancing on the idiot box. Their priorities for our extractive and rentier state continue to be tax reform and deficit reduction. Friend Hafiz Pasha says the government collected 38 per cent less than it needed in the past two years. Need we say more on priorities?

Money matters, Editorial, *The News*, March 18⁹⁰

It is entirely correct that money makes the world go round, and this is as true for governments as it is for individuals. Pakistan, facing multiple problems, requires funds to resolve them – and this was made clear by Finance Minister Ishaq Dar during a meeting with the German ambassador. Dar said that \$1.5 billion was required to carry on the operation against terrorism begun by the Pakistan military and also to repatriate the persons displaced by the conflict. [...]Resources are required to meet many needs, with burdens contributed by the conflict against militants adding to this. The have also increased with the return of the IDPs from South Waziristan beginning from Dera Ismail Khan. Around 29,000 persons are to return by April 4. Each family is to receive Rs10,000 to re-build shattered lives and more returns will follow. The government should also take on the task of restoring damaged infrastructure and housing,

⁹⁰ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-8-307521-Money-matters>

so that these people can return to a viable living situation. As the finance minister stated, it will require a joint effort from the international community to make this happen – and for other problems to be addressed. It is important for Islamabad to put its case effectively and strongly before the world. We have all witnessed the concern that exists globally over instability in the country. We have also been affected extremely adversely by travel restrictions, trade cut-offs etc. It is time now for the world to support and aid Pakistan. Dar has drawn attention to this need and to the scale of the problems Pakistan faces. It is important at the present moment for the world to respond and for Islamabad to keep up its efforts to persuade it to do so given our own need for economic growth and reduced financial strains.

FDI decrease, Editorial, *Dawn*, March 20⁹¹

DIRECT foreign investment inflows into the country have slowed by a large amount in the latest State Bank report, raising concerns regarding the country's balance of payments, as well as the larger investment environment at a time when declining oil prices were supposed to help in providing some support to a weak external position. This is a worrying development and the State Bank should address it in the monetary policy announcement scheduled for tomorrow. In the last announcement, the bank had specifically pointed out the low level of foreign investment (1.8pc of GDP at that time), and said that "*lack of private inflows could pose risks in achieving a sustainable BoP position*". [...] There is no reason for alarm since reserves remain high, but concerns are growing about the exchange rate and the balance of payments, and we are owed some clarity on these from the central bank. Clarity is also needed on the fiscal situation, especially since the government has been trying in vain to raise Rs150bn for payments connected to military operations and IDP repatriation, and this amount is not budgeted. The government has raised the matter with the IMF, to little avail, and most recently the finance minister was reported to have raised it with a visiting diplomatic delegation as well. With the revenue target already revised downward, and the deficit target untouched, the State Bank's announcement should include a pointer or two on how they are seeing the fiscal situation shaping up as budget season looms before us again.

Holding IMF accountable, SAKIB SHERANI, *Dawn*, March 20⁹²

THE IMF has recently issued yet another congratulatory review of Pakistan's "*performance*" under the current Fund programme, the country's twelfth since 1988. The statement issued after the sixth review informs us inter alia that "*economic activity and the external position continue to improve*", "the authorities'

⁹¹ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1170691/fdi-decrease>

⁹² <http://www.dawn.com/news/1170696/holding-imf-accountable>

reform programme remains on track”, and that “fiscal performance has been generally good”. The reality on the ground with regard to Pakistan’s economic situation, its business environment and the government’s performance can be gauged by the following facts: Pakistan’s official foreign exchange reserves have increased from around \$5 billion at the start of the current IMF programme in September 2013, to slightly over \$11bn as of end February 2015. However, 72pc of this accumulation in Fx reserves has been via new loans and borrowing (including the Saudi ‘freebie’). Even the lowered fiscal targets are being met by withholding tax refunds due to industry, or by increasing tax rates of existing payers, rather than through any meaningful measures to broaden the tax base. According to industry estimates, FBR is withholding income as well as sales tax refunds nationwide of close to Rs100bn to artificially boost its revenue collection performance. This is putting undue financial stress on formal businesses in the country. [...]As the case of Pakistan has repeatedly shown, the incentives of the IMF — and the World Bank and others — are not necessarily aligned with the best long-term interests of a borrowing country’s citizens. As with most programmes, the IMF seeks to stabilise the immediate situation, draw in money from other creditors, and safely pull out its resources. This short-term approach may work for the IMF’s shareholders, but it increases — rather than reduces — the vulnerability of borrowing countries. Hence, it is imperative that there is an independent evaluation of the IMF programme for Pakistan, and that some form of accountability for officials in the Fund and other multilateral organisations, as well as senior officials of borrowing governments, is introduced.

Pak economy: The right perspective, Ejaz Wasti, *The Nation*, March 23⁹³

[...]First and foremost all the economic indicators are moving in the right direction, which clearly indicate economy is on the path of recovery. The fact that after a lapse of 3 years Pakistan has qualified for availing IBRD funding facility clearly reflects our efforts to improve the reserves position and the economy in general. No denying the fact that CPI has been contained to single digit at 8.6 per cent during FY14 despite adjustments. Current fiscal year started with single digit inflation and this trend is continued. All inflation indicators are on downward trajectory. During February 2015 inflation reached to 15 years low at 3.2 per cent on account of effective monetary policy, prudent expenditure management, vigilant monitoring and smooth supply of commodities both at federal and provincial level coupled with the global decline in oil and commodity prices. It is worth mentioning that compared with peer economies, the benefit of reduced international oil prices was passed on to consumers in Pakistan to a far greater extent. Other

⁹³ <http://nation.com.pk/business/22-Mar-2015/pak-economy-the-right-perspective>

indicators are also showing constant improvement. WPI is negative which indicates that inflation will be further contained. On the basis of these positive developments, international financial institutions have also scaled down its projections for inflation. This continuous decline in inflationary pressures proved author's claim baseless that IMF measures led to unbearable levels of inflation. Regarding broadening of tax base, several initiatives have been taken and some are in pipeline. [...]The government is also pursuing demand side management. To promote efficient usage of power and implementation of energy efficiency codes, Pakistan Energy Efficiency and Conservation Act has been presented to the Cabinet for approval. [...]

State Bank's optimism, Editorial, *Dawn*, March 24⁹⁴

The latest monetary policy announcement by the State Bank of Pakistan provides an optimistic assessment of the economy, bordering on the unrealistic. It begins by telling us that every economic variable is moving in a "favourable" direction, and goes on to say that those which aren't, such as growth in the large-scale manufacturing sector, will also be doing so soon. Further on, most of the statement dwells on falling inflation and attributes movement in many other variables to it. At best, this analysis is too optimistic, and at worst, it is disingenuous. [...]The drop in the current account deficit is attributable in some measure to higher CSF payments and other "multilateral inflows", hardly a sustainable basis on which to build external sector health. Fiscal affairs are only touched on in passing to say that the deficit appears to be "on track" despite major revisions in revenue targets and large expenditures looming in the third quarter. The State Bank appears to be going to some lengths to avoid giving critical comments on the state of the economy, a trend that has been visible for some time now, but the latest monetary policy goes much more out of its way than most others have. Given the powers vested in the bank to exercise autonomous decision-making, there is no reason for it to be so shy of pointing out the areas in the economy that need improvement. The assessments given by the bank are meant to provide the National Assembly with an objective and realistic view of the economy. By giving out assessments of the sort contained in the monetary policy statement, the State Bank lets down the National Assembly, and those who look to it for a grounded, independent analysis of the economy. It would be better if future pronouncements by the bank did not read like a press release from the finance ministry.

⁹⁴ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1171430/state-banks-optimism>

Home-grown solutions for our economic woes, *The Express Tribune*, March 25⁹⁵

It seems illogical to expect that one can import policy prescriptions from abroad and expect them to work locally. However, this has been the history of economic policy in this country. There are two broad ways of economic thinking and our policymakers have aligned themselves repeatedly to one or the other. What we need to realise is that neither is a good description of our local reality, and what we really need are home-grown solutions. The two broad ways of thinking about economic issues in developed countries can be classified as the neo-liberal approach and the Keynesian approach and neither is a good description of challenges that a developing country like Pakistan faces. [...]How can we increase our potential output? By developing tailor-made solutions to our problems and implementing those solutions. To take just one example, our small-scale manufacturing sector suffers from lack of skilled labour. Small businesses cannot afford to pay for necessary labour training, so we are stuck in a low-production equilibrium. The government can step in here and shoulder some of the training costs. Trained labour is an asset that clearly expands the potential output in small-scale manufacturing. Such targeted training programmes may lead to a rapid expansion in the small-scale manufacturing sector, and is an example of government spending aimed at improving the potential output. Another example is from the financial sector. Majority of the financing takes place through the banking sector, and because of the nature of the debt contract, such funding is largely for the operational needs of large businesses. There are people who have the required skills and motivation to start a successful small business. However, traditional banks would never lend to them as they cannot provide collateral. And micro-financing is just too small for their needs. That is, there is a 'missing middle'. The government may step in here, perhaps with profit-sharing contracts, which can make money available to the 'missing middle' in a sustainable way. Of course, free trade, macroeconomic stability and competitive markets are worthy goals, however, it is important to realise that no matter how much we achieve along the three dimensions, the problems of lack of skilled labour and lack of financing for entrepreneurship will not go away on their own. Lack of skilled labour and financing for entrepreneurship are just two examples. Good policymakers should be able to add to this list easily. We need targeted government spending to solve problems like these. That way, we can achieve the aggressive expansion in potential output that we so desperately need and desire.

⁹⁵ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/858348/home-grown-solutions-for-our-economic-woes/>

Is the economy recovering? Editorial, *The News*, March 31⁹⁶

International credit rating agency, Moody's, has given Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Finance Minister Ishaq Dar something to cheer about. It has upped its outlook on the credit rating of the government's foreign currency bonds from stable to positive. The credit ratings firm has said the slight upgrade came on the back of improving macroeconomic indicators in the economy. The rating is around \$3 billion worth of eurobonds the country issued last year. Moody's has pointed to strengthening foreign exchange reserves, falling petrol prices and compliance with the IMF's structural reform agenda as the main reasons behind the upgrade. [...] Simply put, there is a lot to fear before buying a Pakistani government bond. Perhaps, this is why there is no surprise that the stock market appears to not buy the mantra as it lost 0.72 percent of its value late last week and the KSE-100 index lost more than 1000 points on Monday. Moody's is quick to point out that the stable liquidity position has more to do with the last tranche of IMF funds the country has received – not to an increase in direct investment flows. This means that, while the probability of default may have decreased, Pakistan remains a highly unstable economy and, in Moody's words, 'highly susceptible to event risk'. Moreover, the benefits of \$46 billion, 2000-kilometre CPEC are not going to materialise before, at minimum, the year 2017. It may be worth their while for the elder Sharif and Ishaq Dar to hold back on their congratulations and read the stark warnings that the Moody's statement contains.

SECURITY SITUATION

TERRORISM

Islamabad police foil terror attack planned for Pakistan Day, *Dawn*, March 29⁹⁷

Police in the federal capital on Sunday foiled a terrorist attack that aimed to strike Pakistan Day parade on 23 March. Police sources said that two suspected terrorists were arrested during recent raids and confessed to planning an attack. They said the men were arrested from Ghouri Town in connection with the attack on the Qasar-e-Sakina Imambargah which

⁹⁶ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-8-309858-Is-the-economy-recovering>

⁹⁷ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1166681/islamabad-police-foil-terror-attack-planned-for-pakistan-day>

occurred on February 19. Sources said the arrested men confessed to planning an attack during their interrogation. A large cache of weapons was also seized from their possession. Earlier in February, it was announced that a joint military parade of Pakistan's armed forces would take place on Pakistan Day after a gap of seven years. The decision to resume the military parade appeared to be a manifestation of the military's show of strength in the wake of the shocking attack on the Army Public School (APS) in Peshawar last year, which left 150 people dead, including 132 schoolchildren.

Conglomerate vows to resist action against seminaries, *Dawn*, March 2⁹⁸

The Ittehadul Tanzeemat-i-Madaris, an umbrella organisation of the five Wifaqs (federations) of religious schools, has decided to strongly resist the government measures against madressahs and reject all "unconstitutional" steps of the rulers who, it alleged, are pursuing the agenda of the imperial powers. The decision was taken at a meeting held at Mansoor, Jamaat-i-Islami's headquarters on 1 March. The body sought an urgent meeting with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif to remove the misgivings regarding madressahs and religious scholars on this score. They also called for stopping the arrests of ulema and immediate release of those already in custody. The decisions were announced by the heads of the five Wifaqs at a joint press conference after their meeting. They said Pakistan was an Islamic state and the Constitution did not allow any anti-Islam activity. But, they alleged, the government was bent upon advancing the designs of the US and the West against Islam.

Haqqani ban still under consideration: Pakistan's ambassador to US, *The Express Tribune*, March 4⁹⁹

A formal announcement on outlawing the Haqqani militant network is still under consideration, Pakistan's ambassador to the United States said on March 4. Pakistani officials said in January that Islamabad had decided to outlaw the militant group and that a formal announcement would come "within weeks". "These are the kind of issues that are in the works, I would say," Jalil Abbas Jilani said at a Washington media roundtable organised by the Christian Science Monitor newspaper, when asked on a timeline for a formal announcement on the subject. US Secretary of State John Kerry had urged Pakistan in January to fight groups that threaten Afghan, Indian and US interests. US officials have blamed high-profile attacks in Afghanistan on the Haqqani network, which allegedly operates from Pakistan's border areas.

⁹⁸<http://www.dawn.com/news/1166848/conglomerate-vows-to-resist-action-against-seminaries>

⁹⁹<http://tribune.com.pk/story/847397/haqqani-ban-still-under-consideration-pakistans-ambassador-to-us/>

Jilani referred to remarks in November by US Lieutenant General Joseph Anderson, then commander of international forces in Afghanistan, that Pakistani military action in the North Waziristan region had disrupted the group's efforts. Jilani said the operations had succeeded in clearing almost 90 per cent of the militant infested North Waziristan and Pakistan was confident of clearing the remaining area.

Lashkar-i-Islam merges into TTP, *Dawn*, March 13¹⁰⁰

The outlawed Lashkar-i-Islam led by Mangal Bagh has merged itself into the TTP under a reorganisation planned by militants. According to a statement issued by Jamatul Ahrar spokesman Ehsanullah Ehsan on March 12 the reorganised TTP would consist of members of his group, LI and the remaining of the TTP. The head of the new set-up was yet to be named, he added. The TTP disintegrated last year after a group led by Omar Khalid Khurasani based in Mohmand Agency revolted against Mulla Fazlullah and formed his own faction with the name of Jamatul Ahrar. Khurasani had accused Fazlullah of siding with people whom he held responsible for killing top leaders of the group. Before him, South Waziristan-based militant leader Khan Said alias Sajna abandoned the TTP which had been set up by Baitullah Mehsud in December 2007. Ehsanullah Ehsan congratulated what he called "*Mujahideen of Pakistan*" on the unification of militant groups. He said the decision was taken at a meeting attended by Mulla Fazlullah, Omar Khalid Khurasani and Mangal Bagh.

TTP-JA's key commander killed in Afghanistan, *The Express Tribune*, March 13¹⁰¹

Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan splinter group Jamaat-ul-Ahrar confirmed on March 12 that a key commander had been killed in Afghanistan, BBC Urdu reported. In a statement released on Thursday, the group's spokesperson said that Maulana Shakeel Ahmed Haqqani, alias Qari Shakeel, and Dr Tariq Ali, alias Abu Obaidah al-Islamabadi, had been killed. Blaming the ISI arm of the military for their deaths, he warned that the group will exact revenge. However, there was no official confirmation of their deaths from Pakistan. BBC Urdu further reported that the two had been killed in the Afghan province of Nangarhar along with two other men. Maulana Haqqani was a key commander of Jamaat-al-Ahrar who the authorities blamed for high-profile attacks in Mohmand agency.

¹⁰⁰ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1169243/lashkar-i-islam-merges-into-ttp>

¹⁰¹ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/852549/ttp-jas-qari-shakeel-dr-tariq-killed-in-afghanistan/>

Twelve convicts executed in various jails across Pakistan, Dawn, March 17¹⁰²

At least twelve death row prisoners have been hanged in various cities across Pakistan, on March 17 mornings, while the hanging of one condemned prisoners has been halted in Multan. With the latest hangings, the toll of executions to have taken place in Pakistan since the resumption on Dec 17, 2014 has reached 39. Pakistan lifted its moratorium on the death penalty in all capital cases on March 10. Initially executions were resumed for terrorism offences only in the wake of a Taliban massacre at an army-run school in Peshawar which had claimed the lives of more than 150 persons, mostly schoolchildren, on December 16, 2014. The United Nations, the European Union, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have called on Pakistan to re-impose its moratorium on the death penalty.

Taliban deny reports of Mullah Fazlullah's death, The News, March 23¹⁰³

As unconfirmed reports of the TTP chief Mullah Fazlullah's death circulated in the media early March 23 spokesmen for different Taliban groups denied that Pakistan's most wanted terrorist was killed in an operation by the military. TTP spokesman Mohammad Khorasani claimed that reports regarding Fazlullah's death were "*absolutely baseless rumors*". A spokesman for Taliban splinter group Jamaat-ul-Ahrar also denied the report. Military and independent sources also declined to confirm reports of the TTP supremo's death in an offensive in Khyber agency's Tirah valley.

Punjab launches deradicalisation programme, The Nation, March 30¹⁰⁴

A nine moth de-radicalisation programme has been launched in Punjab to bring the militants of banned TTP and other organisations into mainstream life. Sources in Punjab Apex Committee told this correspondent on March 29 that the de-radicalisation programme, on the pattern of an earlier programme run in Swat, has been started by involving 350 militants in the first phase in an effort to bring them back to normal life. They said it has been launched with the assistance of psychologists, psychiatrists and other experts of military services and their intelligence agencies who ran the Swat de-radicalisation programme, following the military operation to clear the area of hard-core TTP militants. They said the major chunk of the 350 militants belongs to southern Punjab, followed by those from northern Punjab and central Punjab areas. Punjab Home Minister Colonel (r) Shuja Khanzada, when contacted, informed: In pursuance of NAP goals, we are adopting

¹⁰²<http://www.dawn.com/news/1170131/twelve-convicts-executed-in-various-jails-across-pakistan>

¹⁰³<http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-178974-Taliban-deny-reports-of-Mullah-Fazlullahs-death->

¹⁰⁴ <http://nation.com.pk/national/30-Mar-2015/punjab-launches-deradicalisation-programme>

several measures of which the de-radicalisation is the most important step. He informed that Punjab CTD with the assistance of Provincial Strategic Council and Board, and experts of Swat de-radicalisation programme are executing this plan. There are as many as 1132 extremists placed under 4th Schedule who have been selected for the programme. Of them 350 militants have been put in the first phase and include hard-core operatives of the banned TTP and aiders, abettors and other facilitators of the militants. Hard-core militants do not mean only those extremists who are involved in high crimes, he said. He informed that all these 1132 detainees have been thoroughly screened out by the intelligence agencies and those not taken in the first phase, will be involved in similar exercise in second and third phases.

Terror war killed 80,000 during 2005-13: report, *Dawn*, March 31¹⁰⁵

As many as 80,000 Pakistanis have been killed in the war against terror between 2005 and 2013, says a joint report by several anti-war groups. This figure includes civilians, troops and militants killed as a consequence of the war. The statistics were collected by the South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP), which is associated with the Institute for Conflict Management in New Delhi. SATP reports that 26,862 terrorists and 5,498 security forces personnel were killed by the end of 2013. These and other figures are included in a joint report by the Physicians for Social Responsibility, Physicians for Global Survival and the Nobel Prize-winning International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War. Another study by the Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS) and included in the joint report says that 34,242 civilians were killed between 2005 and 2010. In 2011, an additional 6,550 civilians were killed. And 4,711 were killed in 2012. For 2013, SATP calculated 3,001 civilian deaths in Pakistan. This leads a probable total of 48,504 civilian casualties up until the end of 2013. The Bureau of Investigative Journalism in London estimates that 416 to 951 Pakistanis were killed by US drones. Between 2005 and 2013, 45 journalists also were killed in Pakistan.

¹⁰⁵ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1172931/terror-war-killed-80000-during-2005-13-report>

KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA AND FATA

Five Rangers injured in attack on check post, Dawn, March 16¹⁰⁶

Five personnel of Pakistan Rangers were injured in an attack on their checkpost in the Basha area at the KKH near the disputed boundary between Diامر district in Gilgit-Baltistan and Kohistan district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on the night between 14 and 15 March. Police suspect that the attack was in reaction to a search operation being carried out in the area for the arrest of two high-profile terrorists who had escaped from the Gilgit jail on March 1. One of them is allegedly involved in the Nanga Parbat incident in which 10 foreign tourists were gunned down in 2013 and the other in the assassination of SSP Hilal Khan and two army officers in Diامر. SP Diامر Rauf Kaiserani told Dawn that at about 1.30am the attackers taking benefit of darkness came close to the checkpost and opened fire on it. The personnel returned fire. An exchange of fire continued for some time after which the attackers fled. Total 13 personnel were inside the checkpost at the time of the attack.

Security forces regain strategic heights in Tirah, Dawn, March 23¹⁰⁷

Security forces have regained strategic heights in the Tirah Valley of Khyber Agency after fierce clashes with militants. According to a separate report filed by Dawn correspondent in Landi Kotal, 24 militants were killed and several others injured when helicopter gunships pounded suspected militant hideouts in the valley. The main targets of the air attacks were areas considered to be strongholds of the banned Lashkar-i-Islam militant group. The areas included Sadana, Maza Thal and Khyber Sungar. At least five militant hideouts were destroyed. Sources said that in Tirah Valley clashes, one officer and six soldiers were killed and 30 troops were injured. The clashes broke out after militants recaptured Khyber Sungar Post near the border with Afghanistan. The bodies of the troops who died in the clashes and the injured soldiers were taken to the Combined Military Hospital in Peshawar. The deceased officer has been identified as Major Gulfam who hailed from Kurram Agency. The sources said security forces later regained all positions, including Khyber Sungar Post.

SINDH

ATC indicts three in Karachi airport attack case, Dawn, March 7¹⁰⁸

An anti-terrorism court in Karachi indicted three suspects on March 7 over involvement in a TTP-claimed attack on Karachi's Jinnah International

¹⁰⁶ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1169815/five-rangers-injured-in-attack-on-checkpost>

¹⁰⁷ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1171294/security-forces-regain-strategic-heights-in-tirah>

¹⁰⁸ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1167988/atc-indicts-three-in-karachi-airport-attack-case>

Airport in June 2014. The three suspects — Sarmad Siddiqui, Asif Zaheer and Nadeem alias Burger (also alias Mullah) — were produced in court amid tight security. All three pleaded not guilty to the charges against them. The court has now summoned all witnesses in the case for the next hearing scheduled for March 14. An ATC in 2014 had remanded Siddiqui, Zaheer and Nadeem for allegedly providing logistical support, funds and weapons to the militants that attacked the Karachi airport.

Rangers raid 'Nine-Zero' headquarters in Karachi, *The News*, March 11¹⁰⁹

In a targeted operation early March 11 morning, Rangers forces carried out a raid at Nine-Zero, the headquarters of the MQM in Karachi, with the party claiming that several leaders had been arrested. A Rangers spokesman said a large cache of illegal weapons had been recovered in the “*information-based operation*” and that several “*criminals*” had also been arrested. MQM leaders claimed Rangers forces had conducted a “*siege and search operation*” at the party's headquarters, ransacked its offices and had arrested several leaders of the political party.

Killed KESC chief on Altaf Hussain's orders, Saulat Mirza claims, *Dawn*, March 19¹¹⁰

Saulat Mirza, in a video statement aired on Geo News, hurled startling allegations on MQM and its top leadership, just a few hours before his execution was scheduled to take place on March 18 at 5:30AM. Mirza's execution has now been postponed for 72 hours. Mirza said he was an MQM worker and received direct orders from MQM leader Babar Ghauri to assassinate KESC chief Shahid Hamid. “*I was summoned at Babar Ghauri's house where I took Altaf Hussain's orders via telephone. Altaf Hussain would usually pass on instructions through Babar Ghauri,*” alleged Saulat Mirza.

RELATIONS WITH INDIA

Whenever talks resume, agenda will be Kashmir: Aziz, *The News*, March 1¹¹¹

The civilian and military governments are on the same page when it comes to foreign policy and the security policy said Advisor to the prime minister on foreign affairs Sartaj Aziz on 1 March. Addressing a ceremony in Lahore, Aziz said, the era of blame games with Afghanistan has come to an end, now the

¹⁰⁹<http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-177822-Rangers-raid-MQMs-Nine-Zero-headquarters-in-Karachi->

¹¹⁰<http://www.dawn.com/news/1170392/killed-kesc-chief-on-altaf-hussains-orders-saulat-mirza-claims>

¹¹¹<http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-176777-Whenever-talks-resume,-agenda-will-be-Kashmir:-Aziz>

relationship is one of mutual cooperation. On Pakistan's relationship with India the advisor said, that whenever discussions resume, the agenda will be Kashmir. He said, Pakistan wishes to hold composite dialogue with India and does not wish to engage in an arms race with its neighbor. Sartaz Aziz made it clear that for Pakistan there is no difference between good and bad Taliban, adding that Pakistan and Afghanistan will not allow their respective territories to be used to against the other country.

Indian FS meets his counterpart during visit, Dawn, March 3¹¹²

Indian Foreign Secretary S. Jaishankar met Pakistan's Foreign Secretary Aizaz Chaudhry in Islamabad on March 3 following his arrival in Pakistan for a two-day official visit. Credible sources told that Secretary Chaudhry greeted his Indian counterpart warmly at the Foreign Office. Senior officials from both sides are assisting in the talks which are the first since New Delhi called them off last year. During the meeting, both foreign secretaries realised that peaceful dialogue is the only way forward to resolve all outstanding issues, sources told Dawn. Sources added that Chaudhry drew the Indian secretary's attention to the recent tensions at the LoC and Working Boundary. Jaishankar said that he was happy to be visiting Pakistan and that he looks forward to having substantial and meaningful negotiations with Pakistani officials. The primary agenda for the secretaries' meeting was about promoting regional connectivity and trade even though both sides have an understanding about discussing bilateral matters.

Pak-India dialogue: A step forward or stalemate? Dawn, March 5¹¹³

Mixed statements have emerged from the government's defence and foreign office divisions in the aftermath of the closely watched meeting of Pakistan and India's foreign secretaries this week. A day after the meeting between foreign secretaries Aizaz Chaudhry and S Jaishankar, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif told BBC in an interview that in his assessment, it was India's intention to create border tensions to divert Pakistan's attention from its efforts in combating militants in the north-western parts of the country. "We want to live in peace with India," he said. "Instead of blaming each other, we should find the perpetrators and then draw conclusions." He added that Pakistan desires an immediate end to cross-border violence and is hopeful in that regard after the meeting of the foreign secretaries. The Foreign Office, however, toed a more diplomatic and subdued line, with spokesperson Tasneem Aslam on February 5 saying the talks between the high-level officials earlier this week were "positive". Responding to a question on the talks between the two

¹¹²<http://www.dawn.com/news/1167079/indian-foreign-secretary-meets-his-pakistani-counterpart-during-two-day-visit>

¹¹³ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1167541/pak-india-dialogue-a-step-forward-or-stalemate>

countries' foreign secretaries, Aslam said: "*I would not like to characterise the foreign secretaries' meeting as a failure. India characterised it as a visit in the context of Saarc. We view the meeting as an icebreaker taking place in lieu of the August visit,*" she said.

US says meeting of Indo-Pak FS's encouraging, Dawn, March 7¹¹⁴

The United States says it welcomed the meeting between the foreign secretaries of India and Pakistan and the decision to resume dialogue was encouraging, given the tension in Kashmir region during the past six months.

Addressing a news conference, State Department spokesperson Marie Harf said that the United States "*believes that both India and Pakistan stand to benefit from practical cooperation and an improved relationship*". Harf said improved ties between the two countries "would be good for regional peace and stability in South Asia". The statement comes days after Indian Foreign Secretary S Jaishankar had made an official two-day visit to Islamabad, during which he held separate meetings with his Pakistani counterpart and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

Pakistan arrests 45 Indian fishermen, The Express Tribune, March 7¹¹⁵

Some three weeks after Pakistan had released 172 Indian fishermen as a goodwill gesture, officials at the MSA have arrested 45 more Indian fishermen for entering the country's territorial waters in the Arabian Sea. One fisherman having Bangladeshi nationality, who was accompanying them, was also arrested. The agency's officials detained the fishermen on Saturday after they strayed into Pakistani waters along with eight boats. The fishermen were handed over to the Docks police. "*The MSA has handed these fishermen over to us for further legal proceedings,*" confirmed Docks police station SHO Zawwar Hussain Shah while talking to The Express Tribune. "*One of them is a Bangladeshi national.*" The police have registered FIR No. 127/15 under Foreign Act and Fisheries Act on behalf of the state, said the officer. He added that the police will present the fishermen before a magistrate, who will send them to jail on March 8 for entering the territorial waters of the country illegally. Nearly 349 Indian fishermen are already imprisoned in Karachi.

Pakistan Rangers delegation to visit India this month, The News, March 9¹¹⁶

A high-level delegation of officers of the Pakistan Rangers will visit India later this month for talks with their Indian counterpart BSF, Indian media reported on March 8. The Rangers delegation, led by Maj Gen Bilal Akbar (DG Rangers

¹¹⁴<http://www.dawn.com/news/1168004/us-says-meeting-of-indo-pak-foreign-secretaries-encouraging>

¹¹⁵ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/849178/pakistan-arrests-45-indian-fishermen/>

¹¹⁶<http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-177629-Pakistan-Rangers-delegation-to-visit-India-this-month>

Sindh) and Maj Gen Khan Tahir Javed Khan (DG Rangers Punjab), is expected to travel to India via the Wagah-Attari border on March 25 and will hold talks for five days with their Indian counterparts at the BSF headquarters in New Delhi. "The Pakistan Rangers are arriving in India for the annual DG-level talks for five days from March 25 to March 29. The last time the two sides met was in December 2013 when the BSF travelled to Lahore," the Press Trust of India quoted a top Indian Home Ministry official as saying. The Indian side will be led by BSF Director General D K Pathak. The annual DG-level talks have been pending for over a year after a spate of ceasefire violations and a spell of strained ties between the neighboring countries. The two sides are expected to take up the matter of ceasefire violations during the DG-level talks.

Indian secy's visit icebreaker: FO, *The Nation*, March 9¹¹⁷

Rejecting the notion that the Indian foreign secretary's recent visit to Pakistan was a failure, Foreign Office Spokesperson Tasneem Aslam March 5 described it as an icebreaker between the neighbouring countries. "*We said that it is an icebreaker, taking place in lieu of the August tour. It is a process. The meeting was held in a constructive and positive atmosphere,*" Tasneem Aslam told the weekly press briefing. Answering a question, she said New Delhi's blaming Pakistan for every terrorist attack on others was baseless, adding terrorism had affected all, particularly this region. "*We have our concerns and India has its own. Hence, this issue needs to be addressed in a cooperative manner,*" Tasneem Aslam asserted. She called for greater cooperation amongst the international community to weed out the scourge of terrorism, adding Pakistan had suffered the most because of terrorism. "*It is not a good approach to blame every terrorist attack on others. We expect that first of all investigations should be conducted; only then we can talk about it. We have done more than any other country to counter terrorism. We expect a similar approach from other countries,*" the spokesperson said.

India should honour Indus Water Treaty: Khawaja Asif, *Dawn*, March 9¹¹⁸

Federal Minister for Water and Power Khawaja Asif on March 9 said that India should honour the IWT and warned that Pakistan will face a severe water shortage in the next few years. He said Pakistan wants to resolve water issues with its eastern neighbour and added that, "*We will contest our case at an appropriate forum if India encroaches upon our water rights.*" Addressing a function in the provincial capital city of Punjab, the federal minister said the government would resolve the issue of electricity loadshedding faced by the

¹¹⁷ <http://nation.com.pk/editors-picks/06-Mar-2015/indian-secy-s-visit-icebreaker-fo>

¹¹⁸ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1168406/india-should-honour-indus-water-treaty-khawaja-asif>

country within three years but at the moment Pakistan was heading towards a serious water shortage. Asif said that the issues of electricity loadshedding and water scarcity were a result of mismanagement by previous governments.

Lakhvi's case should not affect talks between Pakistan, India: Aziz, *The Express Tribune*, March 16¹¹⁹

Terming India's reaction to IHC's ruling over Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi detention 'irrational', Adviser on National Security and Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz on 15 March said he hopes the case will not have any effect on the proposed talks between Islamabad and New Delhi. India accuses Lakhvi, a senior figure of the banned Lashkar-e-Taiba, of being involved in planning, financing and executing the Mumbai attacks in 2008, which killed over 160 people. Responding to Indian allegations that Pakistan is not doing enough to ensure Lakhvi remains behind the bars, Aziz said Pakistan's judiciary is free and works independently. *"Pakistan is waiting for an invitation from the Indian side so our foreign secretary can visit India to formally resume the dialogue process,"* he added. On the water dispute between Pakistan and India, the adviser said there is a mechanism under the Indus-Water Treaty to settle the water dispute between the two countries. *"Pakistan has asked India for details regarding construction of new dams to determine if the treaty was violated; in case of any dispute, Pakistan could take up the matter to arbitrator or to the international courts,"* he explained.

Pak envoy Basit on meeting Hurriyat leaders, *The Express Tribune*, 23¹²⁰

Pakistan High Commissioner to India Abdul Basit claimed on March 23 the Indian government does not object to his meetings with Hurriyat leaders. *"I don't think the government of India is objecting to our meeting with Hurriyat leaders,"* Abdul Basit said, according to the *Times of India*. Down playing his meetings with Hurriyat leaders which have earlier been the cause for India cancelling foreign secretary-level talks, Basit said, *"Don't try to make an issue out of non-issue." "Pakistan has been serious and sincere about resolving issues with India through peaceful dialogue,"* the envoy added. *"The need of the hour is that India and Pakistan engage in a peaceful bilateral dialogue,"* Basit said. He reiterated the two neighbouring countries and nuclear-armed rivals cannot resolve or settle our problems by use of force. *"The agenda of the Indian and Pakistani PM is common. This is a golden opportunity,"* he said, while speaking to reporters on Pakistan Day. According to reports, Pakistan has also invited

¹¹⁹<http://tribune.com.pk/story/853999/lakhvis-case-should-not-affect-talks-between-pakistan-india-aziz/>

¹²⁰<http://tribune.com.pk/story/857659/dont-think-indian-govt-objects-to-us-hurriyat-leaders-abdul-basit/>

recently released Hurriyat leader Masarat Alam to attend national day celebrations. But Masarat did not attend the function.

Pakistan needs short-range nukes for deterrence, *Dawn*, March 24¹²¹

Pakistan needs short-range "tactical" nuclear weapons to deter India, a top adviser to its government, retired Lt Gen Khalid Kidwai, said on March 23, dismissing concerns it could increase the risk of a nuclear war. Mr Kidwai also rejected concerns over the security of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal, insisting that adequate safeguards are in place to protect what analysts have described as the world's fastest-growing atomic arsenal. Pakistan's development of smaller warheads built for use on battlefields, in addition to longer-range weapons, has increased international concerns that they could get into rogue hands because of the pervasive threat of Islamic militants in the country. For 15 years, Mr Kidwai led the administration of Pakistan's nuclear and missile weapons program. He now serves as an adviser to the National Command Authority, a committee of the top civilian and military leaders that sets the country's nuclear weapons policy.

Pakistan envoy on Indian show of might, *The News*, March 23¹²²

Pakistan High Commissioner to India Abdul Basit on March 23 said that the primary objective at present is to achieve peace between India and Pakistan and resolve issues. Abdul Basit went on to say that no issues can be solved with show of might. He further said the Indian Foreign Secretary was in Pakistan earlier this month and Pakistan looks forward to resumption of an engagement process. Basit also said that Pakistan hopes the engagement will continue which started with Jaishankar's visit. Pakistan High Commissioner added that Pakistan looks forward to more meetings between the two countries because the objective is to achieve peace. He also said that he didn't think that the Indian government objected to Pakistan meeting with Hurriyat leaders.

EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS

Re-engaging rekindles hope, Talat Masood, *The Express Tribune*, March 4¹²³

It has been one of the great tragedies of Partition that successive leaders of India and Pakistan have not raised to the challenge of shedding the burden of history. South Asia has mostly remained in a time warp. Meanwhile, the world has moved on and regional integration is now an established global

¹²¹<http://www.dawn.com/news/1171574/pakistan-needs-short-range-nukes-for-deterrence-against-india-govt-adviser>

¹²²<http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-179009-Pakistan-High-Commissioner-to-India-reiterates-no-issues-can-be-resolved-with-show-of-might>

¹²³ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/847137/pakistan-and-india-re-engaging-rekindles-hope/>

trend. There was hope that the present post-Partition leaders, Nawaz Sharif and Narendra Modi, with comfortable electoral mandates will reverse the trend and build borders with bridges. Realising there are clear potential benefits for both countries, Nawaz Sharif made some bold moves in that direction, but stands frustrated by Modi's response that he can pursue his economic and strategic goals independent of India's relations with Islamabad. [...]Modi perhaps has the best credentials to make a breakthrough with Pakistan if ever he decides to do so. He represents the right-wing Hindu nationalists' thinking and enjoys an unchallenged position in his party. But Modi's knowledge and interest in foreign affairs is limited and he is on a learning curve. On the other hand, India is diverse, huge and both urban and rural with enormous domestic and foreign challenges. There is a national consensus among Pakistan's political parties to have good relations with India. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has repeatedly stressed cooperation and a constructive relationship but it could give way to frustration if the LoC remains volatile and relations fail to improve. Sustained volatility on the LoC and on the Working Boundary is incomprehensible and is clearly not in Pakistan's or even in India's interest. Firing on the LoC at this time distracts and dilutes Pakistan's efforts and resources away from the western border and from its internal fight against terrorism. The question is what does India gain by distracting Pakistan from its primary mission? Contrast this behaviour with China's in which there are lessons for India. It had short wars and lingering border disputes with Russia, Vietnam and India but all these borders have remained peaceful and trade and commerce with China is flourishing. India has nearly \$70 billion trade with China and it is growing. We have to be mindful that strong lobbies of investors and business magnates are forces that modulate strategic rivalry. Besides, it does not make India look good when a country much smaller in size and national power is standing up to its belligerence and giving a befitting reply. If we were to achieve peace and tranquillity on the LoC and on the Working Boundary, enhance opportunities for trade and commerce and liberalise the visa regime with India, it would create an environment for addressing the hard issues. Once there is progress on issues, the final long-term goal to move towards connectivity between South Asia and Central and West Asia can be realised. It is only then that the centrality and importance of Pakistan as a regional hub would emerge. But to achieve this goal we need a different mindset that requires shedding the historical baggage of animosity. Regrettably, both countries are moving in just the opposite direction and we only hope that this visit will reverse the trend.

Talks about talks, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, March 5¹²⁴

A former foreign minister of the country observed on March 3 that the meeting between the foreign secretaries of India and Pakistan was nothing more than “talks about talks” — but perhaps that is as much as may be expected. That nothing substantial emerged from the meeting, and that the broadcast press conference given by Aizaz Ahmed Chaudhry was anodyne in the extreme — should not surprise us. International diplomacy is a game of mostly tiny increments rather than seismic shifts, and if there is a seismic shift it usually means trouble. Given the complexity of the relationship between Pakistan and India anything other than tiny steps is likely to lead into a minefield. [...] Indian Foreign Secretary Subrahmanyam Jaishankar was in Pakistan as a part of the round he is making of the Saarc nations. It is of note that Pakistan is to chair the next Saarc summit in 2016 and a way-paving visit for this event was necessary. At the same time, it was also opportune in terms of repairing relations between the neighbours. India and Pakistan agreed to maintain “peace and tranquillity” along the Line of Control and the Working Boundary and there does seem to have been at least a flagging of issues on both sides without addressing any of them in such a way as might be construed as moving towards a resolution. The press statement that was released by Mr Chaudhry was as anodyne as the press conference but it at least got the bullet-points out in the public domain, indicating that issues that are rarely spoken of got an airing. In broad terms we welcome this latest diplomatic move but it cannot be a stand-alone event. It needs to be displayed that this visit by the Indian foreign secretary was really a precursor to a linear process of peace-building and reconciliation. The problem of relations between India and Pakistan is long acknowledged as one of the reasons why Saarc as an organisation has failed to meet expectations. Let us use the time between now and the next Saarc moot to move beyond talks about talks and into something more substantial. But for now — this is better than nothing

Policy towards India, Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, *Dawn*, March 10¹²⁵

MY previous article was about the importance of India in the context of our obligations towards our own people. This offers brief comments and perspectives on specific concerns. For so-called ‘leaders’ they will be water off a duck’s back! They are, accordingly, addressed to fellow Pakistanis concerned about our country’s future. The Indian foreign secretary has come and gone. Pakistan will host the Saarc summit in 2016. Modi may attend or even visit before it. That could provide an opportunity for a joint statement of intent to progressively resolve core issues and draw up a road map for better and more substantive relations. Intense joint preparations will be crucial. This

¹²⁴ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/847874/talks-about-talks-2/>

¹²⁵ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1168485/policy-towards-india>

will not be easy. There is zero mutual trust and even less political will. India does not feel the need to accommodate Pakistan. There is no domestic constituency for it. India sees itself as too strong for a weak and isolated Pakistan to do it any real harm. This perceived Indian 'arrogance and inflexibility' undermines the 'liberal' argument in Pakistan that it needs to develop a stable relationship with India in its own interest. [...] Conclusion: India's actions and policies, however provocative, should not lead us into irrational, irresponsible and inefficient responses. That might satisfy vested interests and raw emotion. But Pakistan loses every time. The record shows it. Even nuclear weapons cannot compensate for immature, stupid and self-serving leadership.

Need to review India policy, Raza Rumi, The Express Tribune, March 12¹²⁶

The Indian foreign secretary's visit to Islamabad last week generated much interest but the outcome was the usual bureaucratic statements amounting to nothing. The stalemate, however, was broken and the US — a keen supporter of the 'dialogue' — welcomed the meeting between the top diplomats of India and Pakistan. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif also met with the foreign secretary from New Delhi. The talks, as we know, were about further talks. It is a pity that since August 2014, diplomatic channels of communication were stalled. The Indian prime minister's decision to call off the earlier round in 2014 was unwise and even some Indian commentators had criticised it. Perhaps, domestic dictates, especially of the elections in Indian-occupied Jammu & Kashmir (J&K), necessitated a hardline by Narendra Modi. Now that the elections are over and the BJP has forged a coalition government with a soft-separatist party, the domestic calculus may have changed. Despite the Hindu nationalist credentials of Mr Modi, striving for normalisation is a course that he is likely to adopt. Even more so, as India's economic transformation appears to be his priority, and without a stable region, that goal is hard to realise. [...] On the Indian side, with a lack of a cohesive Pakistan policy (knee-jerk populism is difficult to brand as 'policy'), cutting off ties is often seen as a form of punishment. This is supported by conservative sections of Delhi and is cheered by media talking heads without realising that this leads to nothing except a vindication of prophecies made by anti-India quarters within Pakistan. Nawaz Sharif's snubbing in August 2014 cost him a lot. His keenness to promote trade was lampooned on national TV and we were back to square one. If anything, India has had to backtrack on its conditions imposed for talks with Pakistan. The most recent case was in Thimpu in 2010 where despite the post-Mumbai hysteria, the 'no-talks' policy instrument had to be majorly reversed. This was done because realism prevailed and that is what works when two states with an acrimonious past

¹²⁶ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/851646/the-need-to-review-our-india-policy/>

and misgivings interact. It is almost quixotic to suggest that in this day and age, there can be no regular parleys on border management, nuclear installations, drugs, hapless fishermen caught in the web of fragile nationalisms and professional diplomatic engagement. Taking this a little further, it is also unwise to view separatist sentiments in J&K solely as Pakistan-sponsored. That whitewashes the mis-governance and all the mistakes that India has committed. Kashmiris have no love lost for Pakistan either — if the corpus of opinion polls held there is carefully analysed. Support from Pakistan is tactical and used as a leverage at best. It is a separate matter that many in Pakistan are certain that Kashmiris are dying to join Pakistan if given a chance. But these are issues that Indian policymakers will have to deliberate. [...]

EXCERPTS FROM URDU MEDIA & SELECT JIHADI LITERATURE

Kashmir problem should top the bilateral agenda, Editorial, *Nawa-i-Waqt*, March 3, 2015.

Foreign Secretary of Bharat, Shri S. Jaishankar came to Pakistan to revive talks with his counterpart in Islamabad. Earlier, this process was suddenly cancelled by India on the flimsy pretext of Pakistan High Commissioner's meeting with Kashmiri Hurriyat delegation. ***But now it appears the things have changed and there has been constant pressure from the international community as well as U.S. President Obama to restart talks. Thus, India wants to please its new friend (Uncle Sam) and wants to enter into dialogue with Pakistan.***

On this occasion, our Foreign Secretary and Defence Minister have ***placed their cards on the table and explained Pakistan's stand before Indian Foreign Secretary.*** It has been conveyed to Jaishankar that India-Pak talks will end in fiasco as on earlier occasions and would be ***sheer waste of time if Kashmir is not placed on the top of the bilateral agenda.***

The manner in which the Modi government used un-called for language against Pakistan and threatened to dismember Pakistan, and the way the Bharati forces have been on a bombing spree on our borders, it is the responsibility of our government to ***place all bilateral disputes on the table and raise our voice to confront Modi***, who has threatened to dismember our country in the past.

Further, ***Pakistan should come out of the illusion of the so-called friendship with India and rather than strengthening trade and commercial linkages, we***

should stake proper stock of the ground reality and adopt result-oriented measures to make the talks meaningful. ...Kashmir problem should be on the top of the agenda.

Meeting of Pakistan-Bharat foreign secretaries, Editorial, *Rozana Dunya*, 5 March 2015¹²⁷

Foreign Secretary of Bharat, S. Jaishankar, had a meeting with his Pakistani counterpart Aizaz Ahmed Choudhary, wherein they discussed bilateral issues.As anticipated ...Bharat..made it clear that there would not be much headway in this initial meeting between the two secretaries. Nevertheless, ...this meeting would pave the way for composite dialogue in future. Moreover, **this meeting could be seen as a major breakthrough in the on-going deadlock between the two countries for the last eight months.** Although Bharat's stand on issue of Mumbai massacre remains unchanged, this bilateral contact prompts us to conclude that **Bharat is getting back on the track after eight months. Let us not forget that Bharat never exhibited such reconciliatory posture in the past.** It had always been aggressive and domineering in the process of dialogue.

Bharat has now **once again taken a U-turn and has not only accepted Kashmir as a 'disputed issue' but also agreed to resolve this problem through dialogue.**

There are two visible changes that could be seen in this Meeting. *Earlier..our diplomats never talked so openly with the Indian authorities.* Even during Nawaz Sharif's visit to India (Narendra Modi's swearing in ceremony) it was only Modi's voice that dominated the meeting. But, now there is a feeling in the government that our silence would encourage Bharat to malign us in the eyes of the rest of the world. Therefore, **it was for the first time that Pakistan showed the temerity of placing all issues on the table with Bharat e.g. (i) interference in Balochistan & FATA; (ii) increased involvement in Afghanistan; (iii) Siachin & Sir Creek; (iv) core issue of Kashmir; (v) Bharat's barbarity in distribution of river waters; and (vi) incessant unprovoked firing along the LoC and the [working] boundary.** The issue of Balochistan has already been brought to the notice of Bharat ...by former Pakistan P.M. Gillani at Sharm el Shaikh. But this time round Bharati authorities were emphatically reminded about this issue and clearly told that such interference would not be tolerated.

¹²⁷ http://edunya.com.pk/detail.php?date=2015-023005&edition=LHR&d=1579377_29157646

Secondly if we dispassionately ponder over this issue, we would observe that it was not as if Bharat suddenly felt the need of winning the confidence of SAARC nations and dispatched its Foreign Secretary on this tour (Yatra)! **The fact of the matter is that Bharat has been under heavy pressure from outside world to resume dialogue with Pakistan.** Before this, Pakistan...had emphasizing result-oriented talks to resolve all the outstanding problems. Further, let us not forget that international community has been persistently backing Pakistan's demand, asking Bharat to come to the table for dialogue. During the visit of President Obama to India, he must have asked Narendra Modi to start dialogue with Pakistan as well.

Another reason could be victory of Aam Admi Party over BJP in Delhi Elections. BJP's complete rout in Delhi gave a severe jolt to Modi's popularity and credibility. **It must have made him realise his shrinking popularity (woh kitne paani mein hai).**

Moreover, **Mufti Mohd Saeed of PDP might have also advised Modi to resume talks with Pakistan. The most vital role could have been played by India's capitalist and industrial sector.** No doubt they played an important role in the victory of Modi in the last General Elections. India's corporate sector is of the view that economic progress of the country could not be possible without peace and stability in the region. So it won't be out of the place to argue that all the above factors must have played their roles to convince Bharat to resume talks with Pakistan.

Now it is our responsibility to see that **(a) Bharat does not recoil from its present position and (b) we should convince the world community to continue its pressure on Bharat** so that decades-long unresolved issues between the two countries are solved through result-oriented dialogue. And it should be ensured further that there would be no danger of imminent nuclear war in the region and both countries embark on the road to peace and progress! Ameen.

Tightening the noose, Daily Ummat , 19 March 2015¹²⁸

.....After militants' attack on Army School in Peshawar and Zarb-e-Azb operation undertaken by Pakistan army in North Waziristan, the military leadership has made it clear to the political leadership that **if the country is to be purged of terrorism, then there should be no attempt by politicians to have dialogue with militants.**

¹²⁸ <http://ummat.net/2015/03/19/news.php?p=idrl.gif>

There is no doubt that with the present speedy disposal of cases by military courts there is a visible sense of fear and horror in the minds of the terrorists. This has led to substantial reduction in incidents of violence. Various legal experts and psychologists have come to the conclusion that ***the fear of death sentence by military courts has had a visible impact on the morale of the terrorists***....If the courts maintain their pace in taking their decisions on various terror related cases the crime index will definitely come down.

Sino-Pakistan Nuclear Cooperation– A matter of concern for Bharat and the USA, *Daily Ummat*, 19 March 2015.¹²⁹

On 26th September 1986, Pakistan and China signed a 'Civilian Nuclear Technology' Agreement in Beijing which was called "Comprehensive Nuclear Cooperation Agreement". By virtue of this Agreement, China agreed to construct four atomic reactors at Chashma which were scheduled to be completed by 2011. There were some other aspects to this Agreement, whereby construction of four atomic reactors at Chashma did not fall under IAEA. ***The most important and legal justification for the establishment of these reactors was that China had agreed to the reactors in the year 1986, while China had signed Additional Protocol for observing IAEA safeguards in 1998 and March 2002.*** In this context, China fulfilled its obligations as a signatory to the Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) as this agreement was signed before the signing of the additional protocols. Therefore, it was not incumbent upon China to comply with the IAEA provisions or sought its prior permission.

America has been applying double standards with regard to provisions of NPT. Despite America's hypocritical approach to non-proliferation, there has been proliferation all over the world. We cannot get a better example of its duplicity than the civilian nuclear agreement it has signed with India. The US has refused to enter into a similar agreement with Pakistan! ***By such agreement with Bharat, Uncle Sam has lost its right to advise or stop others from proliferating nuclear weapons.***

In June-2010, during Strategic Dialogue between Delhi and Washington, Bharat had explained to the US that agreement on establishment of Chinese reactors in Pakistan a matter of great concern for India. The US was also of the same opinion. ***Bravo to our long-time friend– Peoples Republic of China, who despite pressures from all quarters, did not budge from its commitments and with all its might stood by our side and supplied all the four reactors to us.*** The spokesman of Chinese Foreign Office Qin Gang clarified the issue in a

¹²⁹ <http://ummat.net/2015/03/19/news.php?p=idr5.gif>

statement which said that nuclear agreements between China and Pakistan were basically aimed at maintaining peace in the region, and China was quite conscious about its obligations as a signatory to the NPT.

Karachi Operation is a test for all parties, *Rozana Dunya*, 26 March 2015¹³⁰

On 21 March, Nawaz Sharif, while addressing public meetings in Sialkot explained in unequivocal terms that Karachi operation had been undertaken against hard-core criminal elements only and it was not aimed against any political party. He disclosed that the operation had yielded encouraging results and hoped that it would bring significant change in the security situation in the port city. ***In a very loud voice, Nawaz Sharif clarified that Karachi operation would continue till the last terrorist is eliminated from the land of Pakistan.....***

Let us not forget that Karachi is nobody's private property. It is the jugular vein of our economy. No one would like to see it destroyed due to petty feuds. MQM is basically committed to the welfare of the down-trodden and middle class. So they should be happy to see Karachi on the path of progress and development rather than get bogged down in trivial issues.

Civil-military relations in Pakistan, by Dr. Habra Aiwan, *Rozana Dunya*, 23 March 2015¹³¹

There has been a constant tug of war between civilian and military forces in Pakistan. When there are earthquakes, floods and other calamities in the country, when the police force miserably fails in places like Youhanabad, civilian forces cry for help from the Rangers (military).....The government even asked for imposition of Article 245 to bring in the military on several occasions. When there were target killings in Balochistan, government called for the Frontier Corps and the Levies. Now in Zarb-e-Azb operation, and also in Karachi, where there is a 3000-plus strong police force, the Rangers are called upon to be in the forefront of the operations. Even for conducting "Census" the government asks the military to be present to facilitate the process. The so called democratic forces in Pakistan are embroiled in shady deals and corruption.

In this connection, several think tanks have arrived at following three conclusions:

¹³⁰ http://e.dunya.com.pk/detail.php?date=2015-03-23&edition=LHR&ID=1600267_89996883

¹³¹ http://e.dunya.com.pk/detail.php?date=2015-03-23&edition=LHR&id=1609273_55316841

- (1) ***The military plays an important role in the smooth functioning of democracy in Pakistan. It would be improper to condemn the military for its action, when it has been dragged in to serve us in times of emergency.*** Therefore, it is important to ask— who will control the military?
- (2) ***The military is the only strong institution in the country.*** Many of its soldiers/officers have been dragged to the Courts which is degrading and disgusting. Some of them have been put in the death cells also.
- (3) From defence issue to strategic agreements, from local issues to world politics ***the status of Pakistan's democratic forces is like that of a "demonstrative muscle-man,*** who instead of applying oil for massage, applies cold cream on his body. Instead of fighting on the 'stage' he wants to take rest under the shade.

.....Let us not forget that 'nuclear' Pakistan has to survive in this world wherein the conditions are fast changing. ***So these changed environs do not permit any one to run parallel governments in a nuclear state.***

The Case of Asiya Anderabi, by Habibullah Sulfi, *Daily Bang-e-Sahar*, 26 March 2015¹³²

Ms. Syeda Asiya Anderabi, Chief of Dukhtaran-e-Millat of (occupied) Kashmir has been arrested for unfurling the Pakistan flag on 23 March, on the occasion of Pakistan Day. A big gathering was organized in Kashmir (in Srinagar) on Pakistan Day, and thousands of women participated in it. Several speeches were made by various participants to express their solidarity with Pakistan. At the end of the function, the participants also sang Pakistan's national song (Tarana). Later, a video of the whole function was circulated on the internet. On seeing this video, there was lot of furore in the Indian media. And they started their usual campaigns against the Hurriyat Conference and Pakistan.

History is witness to the fact that ***it has been a routine affair for Indian authorities to register cases against pro-Hurriyat elements and arrest them.*** It has often been seen that several students, who celebrate Pakistan's victory in cricket, are arrested and tortured. Sometimes cases of treason are registered against those unfurling Pakistani flag on their roofs. Neither the traders and businessmen moving from Kashmir to India are safe and secure nor the students in the universities are able to complete studies. The people in Kashmir are scared of the military and police force.

¹³² <http://www.bangesahar.net/popup.php?r=date-03-26-2015&img=03-26-2015page2-5>

According to United Nations Resolutions, Kashmir is a disputed territory. It was India who had taken the issue to the United Nations and promised a 'plebiscite'. **Till date, Bharat has violated the UN Resolutions on Kashmir and flouted international norms. Instead, it has stationed 800,000 soldiers in all the streets and lanes of occupied Kashmir. More than 150,000 Kashmiris have been killed by the Bharati military.** Thousands of mothers, sisters and daughters have been raped and molested. At the moment, more than thousands of students have been forcibly removed from their colleges and their whereabouts are not known.

One often finds unnamed graves in different towns in Kashmir. **Bharati forces have been using banned weapons and ammunitions against the Kashmiris.** As a result, many people have lost their vision; some of them have contracted incurable diseases. Bharat government has turned a deaf ear to protests and warnings from the international community. Some Kashmiris who were accorded life sentence are languishing in jails on the plea that life sentence means the prisoner should be in jail for whole life. Thus the life in Kashmir has become a virtual hell.

It is an irony that military and police officials involved in fake counters have been awarded by the Indian government. Those who raise their voice against their excesses are put into prison. Dr. Mohammad Qasim, husband of Syeda Asiya Anderabi has been languishing in jail despite the fact that he has already served his sentence. Despite such tyranny perpetrated on innocent Kashmiris, it is laudable that Hurriyat elements have bravely endured these ordeals and stuck to their position.

Syeda Asiya Anderabi, after graduating from Kashmir University in year-1962, did not pursue higher studies. The plight of Kashmiri women led her to embark upon a path of protest. She established an organization 'Dukhtaran-e-millat' (daughters of the nation) and became its chairperson. Needless to say that Asiya's family (her husband Dr. Mohammad Qasim) is passionately attached to the movement for independence (azadi) of Kashmir. She is not connected with any Taliban like *tanzeem*, **yet she fervently advocates establishment of Sharia in Pakistan and Kashmir.**

Sometime back, the Indian Intelligence Agencies sent one spy in the garb of a 'journalist' to her. During the interview, he asked her if she was a member of the Taliban and intimately connected with their activities. Rebutting such claim she said that she was not connected with Taliban. She supported 'jihad' but held bombing and shooting of Muslim brethren unjustified according to Sharia laws. **She also said that she would not be part of any intrigue hatched**

by the Taliban which would weaken her country (read both Kashmir and Pakistan). Upset and angry with journalist, she asked him to leave the place immediately.

Now when Bharat and Pakistan have decided to resume dialogue, **under the prevailing conditions Pakistan should, in clear terms, explain to India that:**

- (a) It should close all fake cases against Ms Anderabi and her husband (who is languishing in jail and suffering from multiple health problems).
- (b) It should not feel upset over trivial issues like Pak High Commissioner's meeting with Hurriyat leaders on the Pakistan Day.
- (c) The Kashmir issue cannot be resolved without implementing United Nations Security Council Resolutions and the Kashmiris cannot be sidelined in this process, and this long-standing problem can only be resolved through their participation which would bring lasting peace to Kashmiri people and security in the SA region.

America's malafide intentions in Afghanistan, Editorial, *Jasarat*, 26 March 2015¹³³

Who does not know about America's forcible intrusion into an independent and sovereign country like Afghanistan and its occupation for 13 long years? **Despite its repeated announcements that it would leave Afghanistan, there is, as yet, no visible sign of its complete withdrawal.** This has given rise to so many apprehensions in the minds of Afghan people. Political pundits and analysts on Afghan affairs, who are well-acquainted with the treacherous designs of Uncle Sam have predicted that in America would not exit from Afghanistan so soon.

During the first visit of Afghan President Ashraf Ghani to Washington, President Obama said openly that **America would not leave Afghanistan entirely and continue to station its forces till 2017.** It may be recalled that because of international pressures, United States had, before long, announced complete withdrawal of its troops from Afghanistan by end of 2014. But it has not happened so far.

When President Obama came to power, he promised that he would substantially reduce American forces in Afghanistan. But, contrary to this announcement, he increased the number of US forces. The Afghan leadership,

¹³³ Jasarat.com/news.php?date=26-0302015/news=02&category=editorial.

which was solely dependent on the US, also did not want withdrawal of US forces. **There were strong apprehensions that after the exit of US forces, the Afghan leadership would have to face the onslaught of Taliban**, who were vehemently struggling for the freedom (Azadi) of their own country from foreign forces.

Leave aside Afghan leadership, **even in Pakistan, the lackeys of Uncle Sam, for their selfish motives, did not want the US forces to leave Afghanistan. General Musharraf, who had handed over Pakistan to United States, is now pleading that US should not leave Afghanistan.** Within the Pakistani establishment, there are some officers, who subscribe to this view and hold that US drone attacks are a blessing for Pakistan. God forbid, if any foreign power had occupied Pakistan or any neighbour would have taken over our country what would have been our fate? **Let us not forget those days when the English came and established their colonial rule here. Even then, there were many who were happy to serve the colonial masters and were so sad to see them leave.** This was because their English masters had given them large fiefdoms and thus made them comfortable. Such lackeys still thrive in our country. It is an irony that those people do not know the value of Azadi. How should we deal with such enemies? Meanwhile, Obama has gifted us a lollypop of \$600 million. But at home, the US government is facing lot of criticism for its policies towards the region since the 9/11 attack.

Pakistan purged of terrorism, Rozana Dunya, 30 March 2015¹³⁴

Yesterday Pakistan Army Chief Raheel Sharif, while attending the convocation ceremony of Civil Military Hospital and Medical College, said **that the army had caught hold of the ghost of terrorism and it would very soon purge the whole country of this menace.....**

The army chief held that **the negative fallout of US attack on Afghanistan in year-2001 was that the extremists, instead of confronting the enemy, started fighting against Pakistan.** In this war, the common man had to bear the brunt. Our government took all possible measures to resolve the problem by peaceful means but the block-headed extremists did not cooperate. As a lost resort, we had to resort to military operation.

Zarb-e-Azb operation started in June-2014 and by now it is almost complete. Our forces have managed to clear the country of terrorist elements. Analysts in the country appreciate the skills with which our forces conducted this

¹³⁴ http://e.dunya.com.pk/detail.php?date=2015-03-30&edition=LHR&id=1620318_66982043

operation. **Let us not forget that the primary duty of military is to defend the country against external invasion. But our military has had to fight such internal wars which are result of the wrong policies adopted by previous governments.**

Gen Sharif acknowledged that in its fight against terrorism, **the army received full support from the society, moral support of the intelligentsia and all out support from our Government and other political parties.** But some vested interests did have their reservations and wanted to protect their men, which affected the pace of the operation to some extent. **There is no place for professional criminals and tanzeems if we want to have better way of life and economic progress in country....**General Raheel reasserted that our military had undertaken an operation to root out 'cancer'. But now there was the need of the follow-up treatment of chemotherapy.

India's despotic attitude towards Kashmiris and aggressive stance on river waters, by Muhyauddin bin Ahmeddin

It is strange that not once or twice, Bharat has resumed talks with Pakistan and Kashmiris about 150 times, but always without any results.

Residents of Jammu and Kashmir have been facing unprecedented barbarity and terrorism. In one breath Bharat talks about 'dialogue' and in the very next breath it says that "Kashmir is an integral part of India". So **it would be better if before resumption of dialogue India acknowledges that Kashmir is a disputed issue and immediately withdraws its forces from the State. It should also abolish the 'black laws' it has imposed upon innocent Kashmiris.**

During British rule, there was one dreaded incident— "Jalianawala Bagh", but now in Jammu and Kashmir thousands of such incidents have taken place and there is no record of these barbaric acts.

India talks about having dialogue with Pakistan, but simultaneously, it lays claims on Jammu and Kashmir State as its integral part.....We all know that "Kashmir" is the root cause of tension between India and Pakistan. **Pakistan has always been serious about resolving the Kashmir issue. Now the time has come when both the leaders of India and Pakistan should move forward.** To resolve this intricate problem, there is an urgent need to adopt an expedient political approach.

The basic demand of Hurriyat Conference has been that all the three parties to the conflict, i.e. India, Pakistan and the Kashmiris should sit together to resolve the problem.Solution to this thorny issue can be possible only

through dialogue. **For economic progress, which is the main objective of both the Prime Ministers, 'peace and security' are very essential. People of Kashmir are the original party to the Kashmir dispute and without their participation no dialogue will be successful.** By deferring the process, India is surely drifting from the path of peace.

Past history shows that during Nehru's time, Kashmiris were subjugated by the might of armed forces in the Kashmir State. Nehru rushed to UN Security Council and accepted that the Kashmiris, Pakistan and Bharat were to be parties to the dispute. **He also agreed to give right of self-determination to all Kashmiris. Now Prime Minister Modi does not want to talk to the Kashmiris.** Pakistan has been told to keep away "Hurriyat Conference" before talks resume. **What would be the fate of dialogue if the original aggrieved party, i.e. Kashmiris or Hurriyat Conference, is excluded from the process?**

The second dispute is sharing of river waters. There are five rivers flowing into Pakistan from India. **The quantity of water flowing into Pakistan is too meagre. The decision which was taken by the World Bank years ago is cruel and unjustified. Bharat has no moral or political right to stop the flow of water into Pakistan. However, it has practically stopped flow of water by constructing dams on rivers in Kashmir.**

India has always adopted a negative approach to this issue. There is a genuine feeling amongst Pakistanis that India is bent on destroying our agricultural and economic base. India is also blocking construction of dams in Pakistan. India should stop blocking flow of river waters which has had a devastating impact on our agricultural and economic life.

Journey from Jihad to militancy, Bang-e-Sahar, 31 March 2015¹³⁵.

Everyone knows that Pakistan is burning like hell today. But unfortunately, the foundation of such suffering was laid by former dictator Zia ul Haq in consort with Uncle Sam. Actually, through this alliance America wanted to fight the communists in Afghanistan. In this campaign Pakistan brought Muslims from all over the world to fight the Russian forces. All local Muslims were also brain-washed, imparted military training and dispatched to Afghanistan.

When Noor Mohammad Taraki established a socialist regime in Afghanistan, the sole motive of Uncle Sam was to stop spread of communism and thwart Russian influence in South Asia. **Gen Zia ul Haq hand-picked few madrasas**

¹³⁵ www.bangesahar.net/popup.php?r_date=03-31-2015&img=03-31-2015page-2-3

wherein students were not only receiving Islamic training but also military training to take on the infidels. America took full advantage of this situation.

Uncle Sam showered dollars upon religious groups. Needless to say, with the flow of dollars, Pakistan started dancing to the master's tune. Thousands of students were dispatched to Afghanistan to fight the Kafirs or infidels. **On one side Pakistani military generals and religious jamats made huge fortunes while on the other side they forced gullible Pakistani citizens into the cauldron of Islamic fire.**

After defeating the Soviet forces in Afghanistan, the mujahideen were in high spirits and felt that they had rendered yeoman service to their faith. However, in reality, they left their Afghani brethren in a deplorable condition for decades to come. **Several mujahideen settled down in Afghanistan and in tribal areas of Pakistan. They were used as strategic assets against India especially in Kashmir.** While fighting against India, this segment of mujahideen also fought against self-styled autocrats in the tribal region. This mujahideen were regarded as important assets of Pakistan.

During the days of recruiting students as mujahideen to fight against socialist forces, one leader G.M.Sadiq of Sindh had warned that today you are using mujahideen against Russia, but time will come when these mujahideen would devour you and your children. These mujahideen have indeed become a liability for Pakistan today. For last 14 long years, Uncle Sam with Pakistani help has been fighting war against terrorism. Despite being equipped with sophisticated weapons, America is now facing defeat.

Now Pak govt has identified two types of Taliban— (i) those who fight against India, Afghanistan and target minorities in Pakistan are good Taliban; and (ii) those who attack military, police and govt. installations are bad Taliban. **Needless to say, Pakistan has lost its control over Taliban and the prophecy made by GM Sadiq has come true.**

One more thing worth mentioning here is that the Pak govt has succeeded in destroying the Pakhtun culture and its progressive orientation. Badshah Khan's slogan is no longer heard amongst the Pakhtuns. It is an irony that students seeking Islamic teachings are being tagged as militants. They are being insulted throughout the country and Islam has earned a bad name in the world.

In this journey from jihad to Taliban militancy our hard working and sincere Pakistani public has rendered enormous sacrifices. The condition of the people dwelling in Pak-controlled Kashmir is very much affected by atrocities

perpetrated by Taliban. **Under Gen. Zia-ul-Haq, there was conspiracy to segregate Shia Muslims in Gilgit Baltistan and Jalalabad and several lives were lost in 1988.**

Even now, the impoverished condition of residents of Gilgit and Baltistan has direct connection with Pakistan administration. If there is no peace and stability in Pakistan, the dream of these people could never be realized. These people should understand that State is favouring and protecting only elite classes. **So the working class should abandon their militant psyche and adopt progressive attitude.** Otherwise they would be tagged as terrorists while their local leaders would be busy in looting wealth of the country!

Bright future awaiting Balochistan, Editorial, *Ummat*, 2 April 2015¹³⁶

In the most turbulent, chaotic and terror-stricken province of Balochistan, a grand sports festival was organized recently wherein several Balochi youth exhibited their skills, valour and sportsman spirit.

Lt. Gen. Naser Khan Janjoi of Southern Command was overwhelmed by the performance of the youth and during his concluding address he was in a very enthusiastic mood and said that "crimson sun of peace, glory and prosperity has dawned upon the horizon of Balochistan and that the phantom of aggression, terrorism and ignorance has met its natural death. Lt. Gen. Janjoi said in a pensive mood that **even if nature had endowed Baloch land with valuable minerals and gas this province remained the most backward province of Pakistan.** Sardars, landlords and Jagirdars had grabbed large chunks of land in lieu of services rendered to Britishers. They mercilessly extorted royalty over 'gas' and lived a luxurious life while the poor wallowed in poverty and ignorance and were bereft of basic amenities. **Due to internal conspiracies hatched by our leaders, Bharat and some foreign countries are inciting dissent in Balochistan resulting in chaotic conditions and instability in the country.** He said, "The Baloch should understand that this country belongs to them and they have to safeguard it. They should beware of conspiracies and intrigues hatched by our enemies and know that a bright future is awaiting them.

Bharat is ready to resume dialogue, *Rozana Ausaf*, 6 April 2015

Indian Foreign Minister Mrs. Sushma Swaraj has expressed her willingness to discuss with Pakistan all outstanding issues including Kashmir. She said that

¹³⁶ <http://ummat.net/2015/04/02/news.php?p=idrl.gif>

next round of Foreign Secretary's talks were scheduled to be held in New Delhi.

As we know the last round of talks at FS-level were held in Islamabad. For the next round of talks, convenient dates are being worked out and announcement will be made later. We are neither worried about resuming dialogue nor want to deviate from the talks. ***But, before the resumption of talks it was necessary that our neighbor should understand our security concerns.*** If we hear sounds of gun-fire on table, then certainly no problem can be resolved.....***If Bharat is serious about holding talks, then due care should be taken that no untoward incident talks place on LoC and also there is no violation of ceasefire agreement.***

It has been observed that with regard to Jammu and Kashmir, all important issues like devastations caused by floods, unemployment of Kashmiri youth, illiteracy, and underdevelopment are always kept on the back burner by Bharati authorities. Furthermore, ***all efforts are being made by Indian authorities to reduce Muslims, now in majority in Kashmir, to a minority.*** There is an attempt to destroy Kashmiri identity. ...Notwithstanding all these impediments, Pakistan has always remained patient, tenacious and perseverant.

If Bharat has decided to resume talks on all bilateral issues including Kashmir, then why should meeting of Kashmiri leaders with Pak embassy officials become unpalatable for New Delhi?...***How come any durable decision be arrived at without participation of the Kashmiris in the dialogue?*** Bharat govt. should recognize the rights of Kashmiris and support their participation in the talks. If this is allowed, there is no reason why some kind of mutually acceptable solution would not come out of the discussions.

JIHADI MEDIA

Call for Support and Defence of Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, by Ustad Osama Mehmud, *Nawa-i-Afghan Jihad*, March 2015

All Praise for Allah the Merciful!

United States attacked Afghanistan with the latest technology and the most modern and lethal weapons. Fourteen years ago the US, along with 40 other countries attacked us with the sole objective of destroying the Islamic Emirate, wiping out jihad and jihadi elements and establishing a regime of infidels in our country! This infidel attack was matched by our united effort led by Amir ul Momeenin (Mullah Umar), who was backed by Pakistani and

some Arab mujahideen who stood for establishment of Sharia in our country. In this war, the Afghan nation set a splendid example of supreme sacrifices. With strong determination the mujahideen conducted their jihad valiantly for 14 long years! In the end, Allah the Great bestowed His mercy upon us and we showed to the whole world that America with all its might and sophisticated gadgets had to face sheer defeat. Its allies, out of frustration, deserted Uncle Sam, who is the lone helpless warrior in the Afghan battlefield and thus wants to flee from there. **United States is like a vanquished soldier... and now it wants to achieve its objectives with the help of Pakistan.**

The US leadership is highly appreciating Pakistan's cooperation and has reiterated that Pakistan is now extending its full cooperation in achieving their aim. The following facts attest to Pakistani moves to oblige the US:

1. Military operation in North Waziristan with effect from June 2014 is in reality an American one. This operation is being conducted with American dollars under American supervision. It is a war against those refugees, who fought against the US army in defense of Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.
2. Pakistan is cooperating with the US with regard to drone attacks, wherein many Islamic leaders have been martyred.
3. **Before US withdrawal, Pakistani authorities intensified their campaign to kill and arrest Islamic Emirate leaders** Ustad Yasser, Mulla Ubaidullah Akhund, Dr. Naseeruddin Haqqani, Maulana Abdullah Zakri are only few out of dozens of these leaders killed by United States in various operations.
4. With US withdrawal, there is **a conspicuous increase in the mutual cooperation between Nawaz government and Ashraf Ghani govt.** This cooperation has resulted in a joint cooperation to wipe out mujahideen.
5. Frequent visits of Afghani and American commanders to Pakistan Military Headquarters and exchange of intelligence among them.

Let us not forget that **such cooperation by Pakistan army would negate all the supreme sacrifices made by our mujahideen and deter establishment of Islamic emirate in Afghanistan.** It would rather defend the regime of infidels, and dash the hopes and aspirations of devout Muslims looking for establishment of Shariah law in Afghanistan. Thus, it would nullify sacrifices of thousands of mujahideen. The responsibility for failure of the mujahideen

lies on Pakistan alone. And we cannot and will not remain silent spectators enjoying this spectacle (tamasha!).

In view of the position mentioned above, we sincerely appeal to all the Pakistani intelligentsia and religious leaders that now, they should extend their support to the Islamic Emirate to be established in Afghanistan...On the one hand, there is an urgent need to make Afghan people aware of the importance of Islamic Emirate while on the other hand, **there is a religious and moral obligations upon every one of us to stop Pakistani fauj and government from hatching malicious intrigues and plans to disturb our jihad!** On the one hand, the purpose of Pakistani jihadi groups is to oust an infidel government and establish a Shariat regime, while on the other hand, there has been full-fledged popular support for Sharia regime in Afghanistan, and its stability and security!

It is now our earnest appeal to Islamic intelligentsia to:

- (i) to invoke love and respect in the minds of Pakistani public for Sharia and cultivate hatred against the present government, highlight its vices.
- (ii) to impress upon one's inner self the love for Nabi (Prophet) and also one's pious duty towards Islam.
- (iii) to emphasise the need for participating in jihad and implementation of Sharia.
- (iv) to publicise the role and status of Amir ul Momin Mullah Umar amongst Pakistani Muslims so that Sharia rule in Afghanistan is acceptable to them.

We are all aware of this fact that Allah the Great will ensure that his religion would triumph in the end. **The dream of having an Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan is deeply rooted in the hearts of the Afghan people.** It is a country where countless Muslims have offered supreme sacrifices, innumerable women have become widows and so many children have become orphans. We are confident that all these sacrifices will go waste. **All those who are using their energies and resources to establish Islamic rule in Afghanistan should consider themselves "lucky" to be part of this holy crusade for which Allah the great has chosen them.** Very soon, a new era will dawn upon us and we will find ourselves in the kingdom of Allah where Azan will be ringing from all sides, and the intrigues hatched by the *firangis* will be dashed to the ground.

The Road to Jihad, by Shaikh Yusuf al Ameer, *Nawai Afghan Jihad*, March 2015

Though there no authentic hadith on waging of Jihad, it is supported by Quranic verses. Considering this, Imam Bukhari has devoted one chapter in his compilation to this issue. It is the wish of Allah that: "*those who prepare themselves to tread on the path of Allah, even if they die on the way, they are entitled to highest reward from Allah*".

The road to jihad passes through many routes. It runs through Afghanistan, whose frontiers are adjacent to Pakistan, Iran, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and China. Another route runs through Chechnya, which shares borders with Georgia, Daghestan and Russia. There is yet another through Palestine, which borders Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. Then there is Indonesia, which is surrounded by sea from all sides. Similarly, there is Eretria, surrounded by Sudan and Ethiopia. Apart from this, there are many other grounds for jihad— Iraq, Somalia, United Arab Emirates....If you are adopting any of these routes, Allah's grace, you will reach your destination.

Out of crores of Muslims, if only one crore, nay one lakh Muslims decide to embark on this path, this number would be quite sufficient for jihad, but it appears that the whole Muslim *ummah* has turned its attention away from jihad and everyone says that all paths to jihad are closed. But we should not look for lame excuses to avoid jihad. If we tread the path of jihad and win Allah, the Merciful, will favour us with his rewards.

BJP and Kashmir, by Dr. Rashid Ahmed Khan, *Dunya*, 12 March 2015¹³⁷

Bharati Prime Minister Narendra Modi hoped hat he would sweep all the way in Jammu and Kashmir Assembly polls, as he had done in the General Elections 2014. But his hopes were dashed to the ground. ... PDP got 28 seats, while BJP got only 25 seats from Jammu, Kathua, and Udhampur districts. Modi, before forming a coalition govt, promised to remove AFSPA from Kashmir. He had to listen to so many unpleasant statements made by Mufti Saeed, who congratulated Hurriyat and Pakistan for peaceful elections.....It was like pouring acid upon his wounds....In the meanwhile Mufti Sahib threw one more bomb shell, by releasing Masharat Alam, leader of Kashmir Muslim League, who was languishing in Jammu jail for more than four years. Further, Mufti govt took a decision to release all political prisoners. All these developments have created an atmosphere of uncertainty.....

Nevertheless this coalition between PDP and BJP has proved to be a positive gesture towards the Kashmiris and after a long wait, they are hoping to have

¹³⁷ <http://e.dunya.com.pk/detail.php?date=2015-03-12&edition=LHR&id=1591346-74136826>

better living conditions. There has been an acute problem of unemployment in the state; travel and tourism have been affected by volatile conditions due to war between mujahideen and the security forces. The peaceful conditions may give impetus to cross-border trade and as PDP leader Mehbooba Mufti stated, **a secure and stable govt. in Jammu and Kashmir would serve as a "bridge" between India and Pakistan....**

God forbid, no martial law again, by Lt. Col (R) Adil Akhtar.

These days one could hear in hush hush tone in official circles about the promulgation of "martial law" in our country. God forbid this should not be so! If we look around, we find that 'martial law' has never been seen with favour or respect throughout the world. *Further, in a theocratic country, martial law has never been promulgated.* It has to be borne in mind that martial law cannot provide the panacea for all the evils. It cannot be an antidote to bad governance. Rather, it creates further problems which cannot be resolved. **Pakistan has witnessed imposition of martial law four times during last 67 years. There is no justification for it because it could not redress our problems during all these years.** Rather it worsened our condition.... Majority of our army men are used to a life of luxury in cities and they are prone to corruption. Prolonged military rule has eaten up the fabric of civilian government like a termite.As a result the nation goes to dogs.

Na khuda hi mila na visal-e-sanam, *Nawai Afghan Jihad*, March 2015

(Neither could I find God nor unite with my lover), by Tariq Hassan, *Nawai Afghan Jihad*, March, 2015,

After 13 years' honeymoon with Pakistan army, US President Barack Obama left for Bharat, where he was accorded hearty welcome by the treacherous Hindu Brahman. When the Indian government– with Ram's name on its lips and dagger in their knapsack – were giving the Obamas hearty welcome, there was death and destruction in the homes of infidels, which is still continuing.

Needless to say that President Obama is keen to have India as an ally. That is why on reaching Bharat, Obama came out with a statement – "Two great powers of the world join together to make this world safer". In different places he came out with different statements. He said that Bharat had an important role to play in maintaining world peace.

America's role in Afghanistan has now come to an end. *America and Bharat pose themselves as two reliable partners of Afghanistan. Both would increase their resources to thwart armed terrorism in this region.* Terrorism has become a major

challenge to world peace and therefore, it was the need of time to work together to tackle this threat...

Incidentally, when Uncle Sam was extending his hand of cooperation towards Bharat, Pakistan military chief Gen. Raheel Sharif went to China for arms and ammunition to ward off the fear of war from the infidels. During his trip, General Raheel apprised the Chinese authorities of 'Zarb-e- Azb' and requested China to help Pakistan meet the Indian threat.

In response, the Chinese authorities (Vice Commander of Central Military Commission) ***emphasized upon General Raheel Sharif the need to further increase his army's campaign against militants associated with East Turkmenistan Movement.*** To speed up their campaign, China promised to provide three Z-10 helicopters to Pakistan.

It would be relevant to mention here that China has imposed so many restrictions upon the Muslims residing in Xinjiang or Eastern Turkestan that their life has become hell. They are not being able to perform their religious duties as Muslims, i.e., they cannot (i) keep Roza (fasting), (ii) grow beard and (iii) take children to mosques or madrassas. Apart from this, these Muslims have been subjected to several hardships and forced to learn dancing. ***The Chinese authorities are busy killing and suppressing these Muslims.***

As we see, the rulers of Pakistan have betrayed their Muslim brethren and deployed 175,000 soldiers in tribal areas to safeguard the interests of the infidels (the reference here is to the Western forces and also China) for the last 13 long years. Thousands of Pakistani brethren have lost their lives and properties and offered supreme sacrifices. Adding insult to injury, Uncle Sam has reduced its aid to 'coalition support fund' by 10 per cent. ***After using Pakistan for 13 years, Uncle Sam has thrown it off like a used 'tissue paper'.*** Finding no other alternative, Pakistani authorities rushed to China to befool gullible Pakistani public. ***All the agreements signed during this trip by Gen. Raheel Sharif are highlighted as a rare achievement, but actually they are only fraud and deception.***

Basics of Pakistan Army, by Naila Tablam, *Nawa-i-Afghan Jihad*. March, 2015.

One often asks as to what are the salient features of Pakistan military? Could we call it Muslim force? Does it have same religious, moral and professional acumen which our military exhibited in the days of Prophet Mohammed? Does it have the traits of the army during the Mughal period of Indian history? ***Or is it the progeny of the British Indian army from which it emerged on 14 August, 1947?***

The fact is that in August 1947, the Pakistani military formed out of the British Indian army. The British Indian military force consisted of three services—Army, Navy and Air Force. Pakistan military also has three services but it is dominated by the Pakistan army, so much so that when we say 'military rule' in Pakistan, it is mainly rule by the Pakistan Army.

The basic features of this army are same as that of its predecessor, the British Indian Army. There were no Islamic principles guiding the British Indian forces. Rather they were secular in outlook and professional in approach. Needless to say that the British army commanders had vast experience and skill in raising soldiers in different countries. They had unique leadership qualities and capability in raising battalions of armies in different countries which they had visited and conquered. They knew that that one could not raise armies in foreign lands based on different religious principles. That would be like opening Pandora's Box...They never interfered in religious affairs. Rather they created such conditions, which provided full freedom to the different communities to observe their respective religious obligations, traditions and customs and thus there was no conflict on that issue.....**Now we should remember that in August 1947, when Pakistan came into being, the outlook of the military was 'non-religious'.** Despite both the communities—Hindus and Muslims— being poles apart on religious issues one did not find even one instance of communal fight in the British Indian Army. So is the case with the militaries of India and Pakistan. **Rather, it is often heard that at the time of partition, if any segment of society was devastated over partition and did not wish for it— it was the British Indian Army. It is learnt that at the time of bifurcation of the British Indian army, there were tears in the eyes of the soldiers, instead of animosity or hatred against each other on basis of religion.**

In brief, the British officers trained British Indian soldiers on secular lines. These officers never allowed any kind of bias— religious or political— to dominate the psyche during service and training. No doubt, even now this impression of sheer professionalism could be amply seen in both the armies. **Therefore, given these inherited traits, the Pakistan army can never be an Islamic army which will ever safeguard the interests of Islam.**

STATISTICS

BOMBINGS, SHOOTINGS AND DISAPPEARANCES

(Select incidents culled out from the Pakistan media)

Place	Date	Description	Killed	Injured
Balochistan				
Naushki ¹³⁸	10/3/2015	Balochistan unrest: Two policemen shot dead in Naushki.	3	0
Dera Bugti ¹³⁹	12/3/2015	Six suspected militants killed during raid in Dera Bugti.	6	0
Mastung ¹⁴⁰	30/3/2015	FC kill 5 suspected militants in Mastung search operation.	5	6
FATA				
North Waziristan ¹⁴¹	1/7/2013	Security convoy attacked with IED, killing four security officials	4	16
Punjab				
Lahore ¹⁴²	15/3/2015	15 killed, 70 injured as blasts target Lahore churches.	15	70
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa				
Peshawar ¹⁴³	18/3/2015	PML-N leader shot dead in Peshawar.	1	0
Peshawar ¹⁴⁴	18/3/2015	Polio worker killed in attack on team in Bajaur.	1	1
Khyber Agency ¹⁴⁵	19/3/2015	11 security officials injured in IED blast in Khyber Agency.	0	11
Peshawar ¹⁴⁶	30/3/2015	Army colonel shot dead in Peshawar.	1	0
Tank ¹⁴⁷	31/5/2015	Peace committee leader killed in Tank.	1	2

¹³⁸<http://tribune.com.pk/story/850592/balochistan-unrest-two-policemen-shot-dead-in-naushki/>

¹³⁹<http://www.dawn.com/news/1169102/six-suspected-militants-killed-during-raid-in-dera-bugti>

¹⁴⁰<http://tribune.com.pk/story/860787/fc-kill-5-suspected-militants-in-mastung-search-operation/>

¹⁴¹<http://tribune.com.pk/story/570699/north-waziristan-four-soldiers-killed-in-miramshah-blast/>

¹⁴²<http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-178233-Two-blasts-at-Lahore-churches-claim-15-lives->

¹⁴³<http://tribune.com.pk/story/855056/pml-n-leader-shot-dead-in-peshawar/>

¹⁴⁴<http://www.dawn.com/news/1170353/polio-worker-killed-in-attack-on-team-in-bajaur>

¹⁴⁵<http://www.dawn.com/news/1170607/11-security-officials-injured-in-ied-blast-in-khyber-agency>

¹⁴⁶<http://nation.com.pk/national/30-Mar-2015/army-colonel-shot-dead-in-peshawar>

¹⁴⁷<http://www.dawn.com/news/1173022/peace-committee-leader-killed-in-tank>

Sindh				
Karachi ¹⁴⁸	4/3/2015	Senior lawyer shot dead in Karachi.	1	0
Karachi ¹⁴⁹	10/3/2015	Four TTP terrorists killed in shootout with Rangers in Karachi.	4	0
Karachi ¹⁵⁰	11/3/2015	Four cops gunned down in Karachi.	4	2
Orangi Town ¹⁵¹	15/3/2015	Karachi blast leaves one dead.	1	8
Karachi ¹⁵²	20/3/2015	Bohra community mosque attacked in Karachi, 2 dead.	2	4
Karachi ¹⁵³	23/3/2015	Karachi police kill militant commander in encounter.	3	0
Karachi ¹⁵⁴	27/3/2015	Bomb targeting police bus kills 2, injures 14 others in Karachi.	2	14

¹⁴⁸ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1167294/senior-lawyer-shot-dead-in-karachi>

¹⁴⁹ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-177721-Four-TTP-terrorists-killed-in-shootout-with-Rangers-in-Karachi>

¹⁵⁰ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-177807-Four-cops-gunned-down-in-Karachi>

¹⁵¹ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1169668/karachi-blast-leaves-one-dead>

¹⁵² <http://www.dawn.com/news/1170828/bohra-community-mosque-attacked-in-karachi-2-dead>

¹⁵³ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/857317/karachi-police-kill-militant-commander-in-encounter/>

¹⁵⁴ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1172210/bomb-targeting-police-bus-kills-2-injures-14-others-in-karachi>