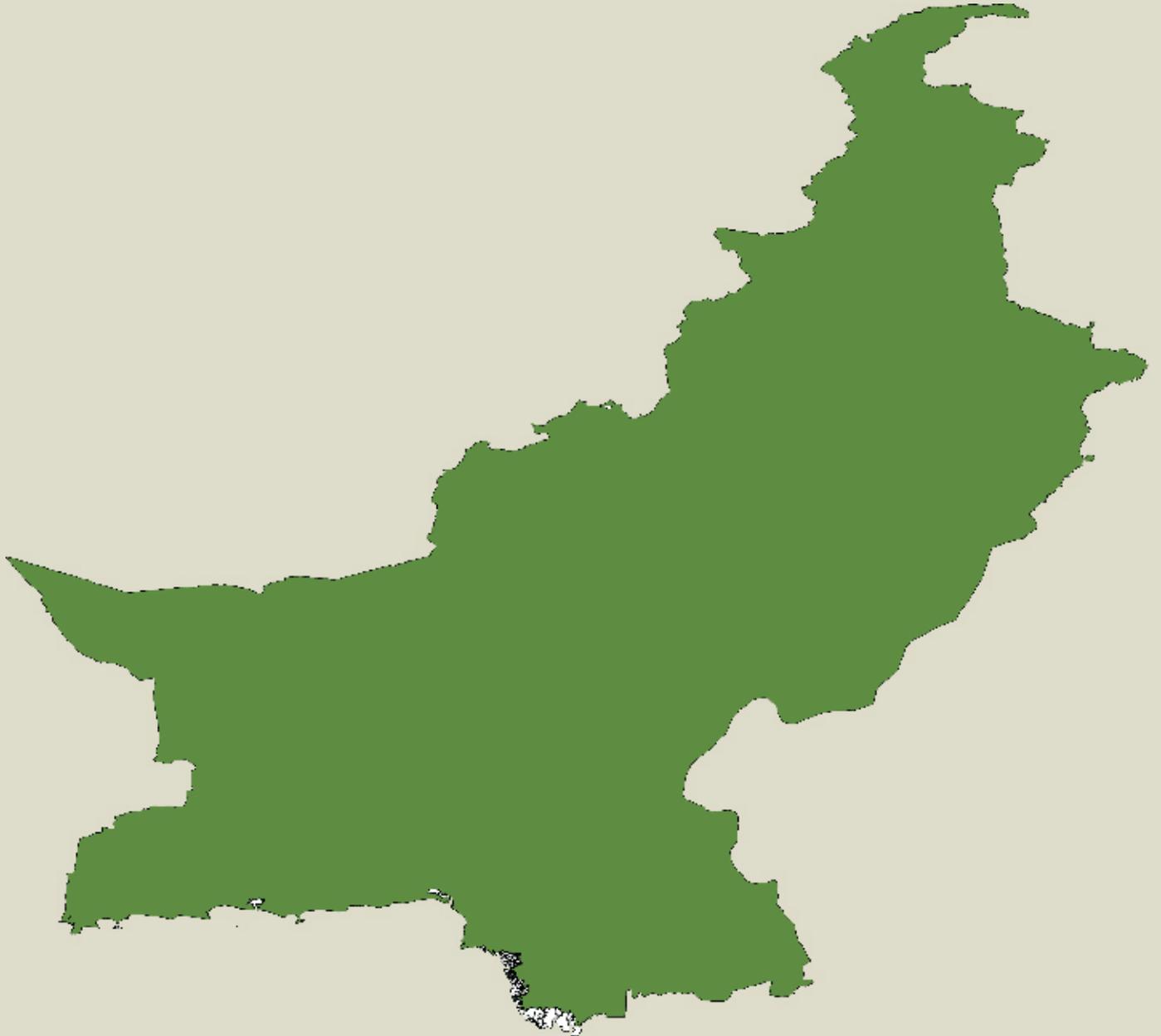


December 2015

PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST

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



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

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रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

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PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST, DECEMBER 2015

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ABBREVIATIONS

ANP: Awami National Party
APC: All Parties Conference
ATC: Anti-Terrorism Court
CPEC: China- Pakistan Economic Corridor
ECP: Election Commission of Pakistan
IHC: Islamabad High Court
ISI: Inter-Services Intelligence
ISPR: Inter Services Public Relations
JI: Jamaat-i-Islami
JuD: Jamat-ul- Dawa
JUI-F Jamiat-Ulema-e-Islam (Fazal)
KP: Khyber Pakhthunkhwa
LHC: Lahore High Court
MQM: Muttahida Qaumi Movement
NAP: National Action Plan
PAT: Pakistan Awami Tehreek
PML-N: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz
PPP: Pakistan People's Party
PTI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf
QWP: Qaumi Watan Party
TTP: Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan
WAPDA: Water and Power Development Authority

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

NATIONAL POLITICS

Import of equipment may disturb the balance, *The Dawn*, December 3¹

President Mamnoon Hussain said on Wednesday (December 2) that an aggressive military doctrine in the region had led to increased import of high-tech military equipment, which might disturb the existing balance of power. Therefore, he said, ***Pakistan needed to improve its economy and strengthen its defence capabilities as it would help the country address the internal and external challenges it's facing.*** The president was speaking at the inaugural session of a two-day seminar on Public-Private Partnership in Defence Production and Export organised by the Defence Export Promotion Organisation.

Zardari calls for adoption of law against torture, *The Dawn*, December 10²

PPP Co-Chairman and former president Asif Ali Zardari has called for tolerance, respect for human rights, diversity and pluralism. In a message from Dubai on the Universal Human Rights Day being observed on Dec 10 worldwide, he said: "On this occasion, the party demands that reports on the implementation of the international human rights conventions pertaining to ending torture and ensuring civil and political rights of citizens which were signed during the previous PPP government should be submitted regularly and also made public. I also call for the adoption of the Bill Against Torture that has already been passed unanimously by the Senate early this year," he said in the statement issued by the party's media office on Wednesday (December 9).

Govt. spends Rs9bn annually on Sindh Rangers, *The Dawn*, December 15³

Federal Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan on Monday (December 14) claimed that the federal government is spending about Rs9 billion annually on Rangers in Sindh. In an apparent reply to his critics, Nisar said that some forces in the Sindh government are trying to give impression that the federal government is not spending a single penny on Karachi operation. ***"I must clarify that aside from spending a huge amount on intelligence agencies in the province, the federal government is spending about Rs9 billion annually on Rangers in Sindh," said Nisar*** in a statement issued on Monday.

¹ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1223907/rising-import-of-military-equipment-may-disturb-balance-of-power-president>

² <http://www.dawn.com/news/1225410/zardari-calls-for-adoption-of-law-against-torture>

³ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1226324/federal-govt-spends-rs9bn-annually-on-sindh-rangers-asserts-nisar>

Senate demands judicial probe into tragedy, *The Nation*, December 17⁴

The Senate yesterday demanded a judicially probe into the incident of December 16 terrorist attack on Army Public School (APS) in Peshawar besides criticising the government over the allegedly 'poor' implementation on major points of the National Action Plan (NAP) on Counter Terrorism. [...] Later, the opposition benches also staged a protest walkout against the government over the 'poor' implementation on the 20-point NAP. Later, the Upper House held a lengthy debate to memorise the worst experiences of day of December 16 - the day of APS terrorist attack and 'Fall of Dhaka', while suspending the other business. [...] The resolution moved by the government says that the Senate of Pakistan expresses its deep sense of appreciation and support over valiant armed forces of Pakistan who in the aftermath of the dastardly attack launched the military action against terrorists, which has resulted in the elimination of a large number of terrorists and their hideouts. The resolution also says, "The house expresses its sense of great satisfaction and pride, at the national unity that has been demonstrated by the people of Pakistan, and resolves to combat and destroy all forms of terrorism". The house also through the resolution recommended the government to declare December 16 as Pakistan Children's Day and prayers be offered on that day in memory of the martyrs and for the security and prosperity of Pakistan.

PROVINCIAL POLITICS

PkMAP to back PML-N if deal falters, *The Express Tribune*, December 15⁵

The National Party-led coalition government in Balochistan seems to have lost one of its allies, as the Pashtoonkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) has struck a deal with the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), *The Express Tribune* learnt on Monday (November 30). A day earlier, PML-N Balochistan chief Sardar Sanaullah Zehri had enlisted support of eight legislators of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl, fearing that Chief Minister Dr Abdul Malik's NP and Mehmood Khan Achakzai-led PkMAP might renege on the power-sharing deal made between the three parties in Murree.

Govt, PPP breathe fire as spat scales new heights, *The Dawn*, December 15⁶

The standoff between the centre and the Sindh government intensified on Monday (December 14), with Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan firing a fresh salvo and accusing the PPP of using politics as a shield to justify its 'wrongdoing'. ***"When some institution holds them accountable they term***

⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/>

⁵ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1001366/balochistan-setup-pkmap-to-back-pml-n-if-murree-deal-falters/>

⁶ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1226429/govt-ppp-breathe-fire-as-spat-scales-new-heights>

it an attack on Karachi. Sindh is not under attack by the centre or any institution, but those in hold of land, resources and wealth in the province for years and eating them up like moths," the minister said in a statement. What prompted the firestorm was severe criticism by PPP leaders of his statement that the federal government had legal options to keep the Karachi operation going if the Sindh government failed to extend Rangers' stay in the province. The PPP hit back furiously, with the Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly, Khursheed Ahmed Shah, accusing the interior minister of deliberately weakening the federation with his untoward remarks against the Sindh government. Mr Shah said the PPP was avoiding a confrontation with the federal government in the best interest of democracy; otherwise everybody knew about the level of lawlessness and corruption in Punjab. Had the PPP ever demanded deployment of Rangers in Lahore?

'Opposition sabotaged ratification of Rangers stay', *The Dawn*, December 15⁷
Lawmakers of opposition parties — the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, PML-Functional and Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf — sabotaged the resolution for the ratification of Rangers' stay in Sindh by creating disturbances in the house, said Senior Minister for Education and Literacy Nisar Ahmad Khuhro on Monday (December 14). "What service the opposition has rendered to the people by creating disturbances and blocking the house from carrying out the business according to the agenda?" he said, while addressing a press conference in his chamber in the assembly on Monday afternoon.

PPP uses assembly to render Rangers toothless, *The Nation*, December 17⁸
Taking advantage of its majority in the house the PPP-led Sindh government yesterday used the provincial assembly to take the sting out of the paramilitary rangers, despite a fierce reaction and walkout of the opposition parties. **Sindh Assembly ratified Rangers policing powers given to them on July 16, 2015 for a period of 12 months but strictly restricted their role to only four areas of crime: target killings, extortion, kidnapping for ransom and sectarian killings.** The resolution presented out of order in the assembly by Home Minister Sohail Anwer Siyal barred the paramilitary force from detaining anyone suspected of financing terrorism or raid any government office without prior approval from CM or chief secretary. [...]The resolution ratifying Rangers policing powers said:

1)- That the paramilitary force will have powers in respect of the following only: a) Target Killings, b) Extortion/Bhatta, c) Kidnapping for Ransom, d) Sectarian Killings;

⁷ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1226356/opposition-parties-sabotaged-ratification-of-rangers-stay>

⁸ <http://nation.com.pk/national/17-Dec-2015/ppp-uses-assembly-to-render-rangers-toothless>

2)- That any person, who is not directly involved in terrorism and is only suspected of aiding and abetting terrorists or by way of terror financing or financing terrorists shall not be placed under preventive detention under any law without prior written approval of the government of Sindh i.e. chief minister. It is clarified that in case a person is suspected of the above, cogent reasons with complete evidence justifying such preventive detention shall be provided to government of Sindh, which will, based on the available evidence, approve or reject such proposal of preventive detention.

3- That Rangers shall not raid any office of government of Sindh or any other government authority without prior written approval of the chief secretary.

4-That Rangers shall not assist any other institution/organisation apart from Sindh Police in carrying out its actions as stated in Clause 1 above.

5-That it is further resolved that the government of Sindh whilst granting any powers to Rangers and Sindh Police shall take into account all of the above conditions.

Qadri demands army deployment in Punjab, *The Nation*, December 23⁹

Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT) chief Dr Tahirul Qadri yesterday demanded deployment of army and Rangers to ensure law and order in Punjab. Talking to media on his arrival at Lahore airport from Canada, he said the families of the martyrs of Model Town were awaiting Rangers in the province. He said corruption brigade in Sindh wanted to fail law enforcers in restoration of peace in Karachi and same was happening in Punjab.

PM decides to follow legal course on Rangers, *The Nation*, December 23¹⁰

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif after consultation with senior party leaders and legal aides decided to follow the legal and constitutional course on Rangers' powers in Sindh and avoid any sort of confrontation with the provincial government led by Pakistan People's Party.

Sindh prepares new draft on Rangers' powers, *The News*, December 23¹¹

Sindh government has prepared draft of a letter -- to be sent to the federal government -- after the interior ministry rejected summary of provincial government and gave a free hand to the Sindh Rangers in Karachi to continue their policing job under the Anti-Terrorism Act 1997. [...]A meeting has been convened to finalize the draft and sign it. ***The province would move to court if***

⁹ <http://nation.com.pk/national/23-Dec-2015/qadri-demands-army-deployment-in-punjab>

¹⁰ <http://nation.com.pk/national/23-Dec-2015/pm-decides-to-follow-legal-course-on-rangers>

¹¹ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/83832-Sindh-prepares-new-draft-on-Rangers-powers>

the federal government refused to accept the draft letter, sources added. [...]PPP Co-Chairman Asif Zardari's spokesman Senator Farhatullah Babar said that by rejecting the constitutional right of Sindh to limit the scope of the Rangers' powers, the federal government had acted in sheer violation of the Constitution.

EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS

Rangers controversy, Editorial, *Daily Times*, December 16¹²

The controversy surrounding the extension of the Ranger's mandate to continue the Karachi operation after it expired on December 6 has the polity in its grip. [...]In essence, this conflict is being played out on multiple levels and each actor has a different point of view. [...] **When agreeing to the deployment of Rangers initially, the Sindh government had set out terms and the jurisdiction of the operation to tackle terrorism and militancy in the city, but over time the Rangers and other federal forces like the FIA expanded the purview of their operations considerably.** This led to frequent complaints by leaders of both PPP and MQM about the 'politicised' nature of the Karachi operation in recent months when its party offices and stalwart members were being seemingly specifically targeted, and a fissure became apparent between the federal and provincial government.

State And Religion, Editorial, *The Nation*, December 17¹³

The National Assembly yesterday accepted an amendment to include recitation of 'Naat' after the recitation of Holy Quran at the beginning of the proceedings of the house. [...]Was there no other issue of importance to legislate on? While no one denies the good intention behind this amendment, we must understand that it is precisely this mindset, of mixing religion with the running of the state, which has led to the disintegration of both. [...] **Instead of passing amendments on naat khwani should the MNA's not be passing legislation to promote religious freedom and protection to those who dare to belong from a different belief than what the state imposes on them?** [...] **The parliamentarians are doing a disservice to Pakistan's religious minorities when laws and acts pertaining to the majority are so readily adopted, and those relating to minorities become controversial landmines.**

The month of December, S. Tariq, December 17¹⁴

[...] **I firmly believe that the men in uniform have no business to run the country, but then a monstrous question stares me in the face – should the men in uniform, who have taken an oath to defend the internal and external**

¹² <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/16-Dec-2015/rangers-controversy>

¹³ <http://nation.com.pk/editorials/17-Dec-2015/state-and-religion>

¹⁴ <http://nation.com.pk/columns/17-Dec-2015/the-month-of-december>

integrity of the country idly standby and watch self-serving politicians steer the state towards anarchy and civil war? We sowed the seeds of hatred in what was once East Pakistan, presenting a window for our enemy to undo us. We callously continue playing into the hands of those, who are hostile to us by mindlessly endorsing their propaganda threads. [...] And so we have gone on and on in our corrupt ways, without an iota of real regret at what happened to us, paying lip service to the memory of the 1971 tragedy. What we have become was amply evident from the resolution adopted on Wednesday by the Sindh Assembly, which restricted Rangers from arresting any Government functionary found to be involved in terror financing.

Apologising to Bangladesh, Babar Ayaz, *The News*, December 17¹⁵

[...] For East Pakistan, it was thus a liberation movement that was supported by the Indian government because we provided them an opportunity to prove that the Two-Nation Theory was fragile. [...] **It was because of the loss of this colony that Pakistan had to devalue its currency by 135 percent in 1972 and its textile and consumer industry had a great fall.** [...] The Germans have museums to tell the future generation what the Germans did wrong. Will we be able to apologise for the wrongs done to East Pakistan and move on instead of living in our cocoon believing that it was all an Indian conspiracy?

FOREIGN POLICY

Pakistan lodges protest with BD, *The Dawn*, December 1¹⁶

The acting high commissioner of Bangladesh was summoned to the Foreign Office here on Monday (November 30) and a protest was lodged over his government's recent statements. **The Foreign Office said the acting high commissioner, summoned by the Director General (SA & Saarc), was informed that the government rejected the baseless and unfounded assertions of the Bangladesh government made in its note of Nov 23.** He said Pakistan also rejected insinuation of "complicity in committing crimes or war atrocities". "It is regrettable that attempts have been made by the government of Bangladesh to malign Pakistan, despite our ardent desire to develop brotherly relations with Bangladesh."

Kabul must request Islamabad for talks: Lodhi, *Daily Times*, December 4¹⁷

Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations Dr Maleeha Lodhi said Thursday (December 3) that Pakistan was ready to host another

¹⁵ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/print/82318-Apologising-to-Bangladesh>

¹⁶ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1223488/pakistan-lodges-protest-with-bd>

¹⁷ <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/04-Dec-2015/kabul-must-formally-request-islamabad-for-second-round-of-peace-talks-pakistan>

round of Afghan peace talks. **"But we would like to see the anti-Pakistan rhetoric coming from Kabul to cease," she told reporters**, and added that for the second round of peace talks, Afghan government should formally request Pakistan. Maleeha said there was also a need to create an atmosphere to build a greater trust between the two countries. [...]Maleeha said Pakistan desired to see peace in the neighbourhood, which was reiterated by Nawaz Sharif to Ashraf Ghani in their meeting.

Afghanistan confirms Mullah Mansour injured, *Daily Times*, December 4¹⁸

The Afghan government confirmed on Thursday (December 3) Taliban chief Mullah Akhtar Mansour had been injured in a firing incident in Pakistan. **"The government confirms the incident in which Mullah Mansour was wounded on the other side of the border, but we do not have any confirmed reports about his death," said a statement** in Pashto and Dari languages on the official account of Afghan Chief Executive Dr Abdullah Abdullah. [...]Kabul reiterated the allegation that the Taliban insurgency was directed from across the border. The incident, statement said, once again exposed the nature of war imposed by terrorist groups and proves their "organisation and centres are located outside Afghan borders." However, Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid strongly refuted the allegation.

Taliban attack airport in Kandahar, *The Dawn*, December 9¹⁹

Taliban stormed the airport complex in Afghanistan's southern Kandahar city on Tuesday, triggering gunfights and explosions. The attack came on the eve of the Heart of Asia Conference in Islamabad, which aims to revive peace talks with the militants. There were no immediate reports of casualties from the attack, the second major assault in a span of 24 hours in the city recognised as the birthplace of the Taliban, although several passengers were trapped in an airport terminal. Taliban targeted residential blocks housing government employees and the joint Afghan-Nato military base at the airport. "Several insurgents managed to breach the first gate of the complex," he said, as the battles raged.

Afghanistan, IS to figure in Pakistan-US talks, *The Dawn*, December 15²⁰

The current situation in Afghanistan and the presence of elements of the militant Islamic State group in South Asia are the two big issues that US and Pakistani defence experts may focus on when they meet here (Washington) this week, officials said. A Pakistani delegation reached Washington on

¹⁸ <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/04-Dec-2015/afghanistan-confirms-mullah-mansour-injured-taliban-deny>

¹⁹ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1225197/taliban-attack-airport-in-kandahar>

²⁰ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1226438/afghanistan-is-to-figure-in-pakistan-us-talks>

Monday (December 14) to attend the 24th meeting of the US-Pakistan Defence Consultative Group (DCG). Defence Secretary retired Lt Gen Muhammad Alam Khattak is leading the delegation. Although the two-day meeting begins on Wednesday (December 16), the delegation will also hold a series of consultations with US officials and lawmakers before and after the DCG.

Islamic alliance formed to fight terrorism, *Daily Times*, December 16²¹

Saudi Arabia has announced the formation of a 34-state Islamic military coalition, including Pakistan, to combat terrorism, according to a joint statement published on state news agency SPA. ***“The countries here mentioned have decided on the formation of a military alliance led by Saudi Arabia to fight terrorism, with a joint operations centre based in Riyadh to coordinate and support military operations,” the statement said.*** [...]The announcement cited “a duty to protect the Islamic nation from the evils of all terrorist groups and organisations whatever their sect and name which wreak death and corruption on earth and aim to terrorise the innocent.” Iran, which is Saudi Arabia’s archrival for influence in the Arab world, was absent from the states named as participants, as proxy conflicts between the two regional powers rage from Syria to Yemen.

Pakistan’s inclusion sparks confusion, *The Express Tribune*, December 16²²

Saudi Arabia’s inclusion of Pakistan in a 34-nation military alliance against terrorism sparked much confusion on Tuesday (December 15) after officials in Islamabad said they were unaware of any such development. [...]When contacted, a senior official of Pakistan’s Foreign Office said they were gathering details about the newly formed alliance. “We came to know about it (the alliance) through news reports. We have asked our ambassador in Saudi Arabia to get details on it,” he said, suggesting that Pakistan has been caught off guard by the Saudi announcement.

No decision to contribute troops: Aziz, *The Express Tribune*, December 22²³

The Pakistan government defended on Monday (December 21) its decision to join a new counterterrorism front but pointed out that the issue of contributing troops to the 34-nation military alliance cobbled together by Saudi Arabia was as yet undecided. [...]Adviser to Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz told lawmakers in the upper house of parliament on

²¹ <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/16-Dec-2015/34-nation-islamic-alliance-formed-to-fight-terrorism>

²² <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1010757/pakistans-inclusion-in-saudi-alliance-sparks-confusion/>

²³ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1014202/saudi-led-anti-terror-coalition-no-decision-yet-on-contributing-troops-says-aziz/>

Monday (December 21) that Islamabad has yet not decided to commit troops for the Saudi-led coalition.

Afghan peace talks may restart, *The Express Tribune*, December 22²⁴

Pakistan-brokered peace talks between Afghanistan and Taliban insurgents could restart in early January after weeks of pressure from partners including the United States and China, officials in Islamabad and Kabul said. Army chief General Raheel Sharif is expected in Afghanistan this week in the latest in a series of high-level contacts between Islamabad and Kabul to restart the peace process which was broken off in July. [...] **A senior Pakistani official told Reuters the resumption of talks should take "not longer than two weeks ... I would say the first week of January we will see the process restart again".** [...] According to a Taliban official in the movement's office in Qatar, Pakistan had also asked deputy Taliban leader Sirajuddin Haqqani, head of a Taliban-affiliated network blamed for a spate of recent suicide attacks in Kabul, to join the talks.

EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS

Need to revisit Afghan policy, Talat Masood, *The Express Tribune*, December 1²⁵

Motivated by self-interest, Pakistan made genuine efforts to promote official level talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban. It was not an easy task and required serious coaxing of both sides. **The military pressured the Taliban leadership, and President Ashraf Ghani, putting on stake his reputation, took a bold step in investing his energy and political capital in engaging with the group and improving ties with Pakistan.** [...] The more central question is whether the positions of the Taliban and the Afghan government are reconcilable. As of now, there is a wide gap in their goals and objectives. Moreover, within the Taliban there are two factions and the splinter group refuses to accept the leadership of Mullah Mansoor so any decisions taken by him, in all likelihood, will be opposed. [...] The Afghan government itself is a victim of paralysis due to internal power struggles between President Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah. In this political scenario, a breakthrough will take considerable time and patience. Pakistan, primarily, will remain a scapegoat and blamed for any failures.

Seeking closure, Ayesha Siddiqa, *The Express Tribune*, December 2²⁶

²⁴ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1013962/pakistan-backed-afghan-peace-talks-may-restart-within-weeks/>

²⁵ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1001929/need-for-revisiting-afghan-policy/>

²⁶ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1002702/seeking-closure/>

[...]Growing up in Pakistan, I am reminded of the history texts I grew up with, which were utterly silent on the debacle except presenting it as a tragedy caused by infiltration of Hindus in the education system. Forget about stories of oppression, there was never any mention of the skewed resource distribution between the two wings. [...]How was it that the majority of Pakistan's population, which is what Bengalis represented at that time, walked out on the idea of Pakistan? It was indeed a big blow that jolted the state. From then on, every act and voice of dissent vis-a-vis an authoritarian state by provinces other than Punjab was seen from the lens of the separation of East Pakistan. ***In some ways, the Baloch and the Sindhis paid the price for the dissent of the Bengalis.*** [...]Is the anger in Islamabad really a concern for someone perceived as innocent being hanged?

Asia's fragile heart, Sherry Rehman, *The Dawn*, December 14²⁷

The Heart of Asia conference brought the only good news in months to a Pakistan hunkering down to critical fights, yet still faced with a soft power deficit at home and abroad. ***The turnaround in public messaging from New Delhi to Islamabad almost hijacked the core issue of the conference, principally focused on securing a stable future for an alarmingly fragile Afghanistan.*** Strategic worry by the international community about the advance of global terrorism played a pivotal role in spurring India-Pakistan sobriety all round, especially given Chinese and American stakes in peace. [...] ***The resumption of a comprehensive bilateral dialogue tactically frees the neuralgic relationship from dangerous stalemate. The bad news is that New Delhi wants to kick-start the process from scratch, not from where the last round of composite negotiations left off.***

Lessons to apply, Moeed Yusuf, *The Dawn*, December 15²⁸

THE Heart of Asia conference has produced some promising results. Perhaps of most immediate value is the Afghan and Pakistani leadership's agreement to revive constructive engagement on Afghanistan's peace process. Quite a diplomatic victory, this is. The back-channel had worked overtime for months — led primarily by the US and UK — to get Kabul and Islamabad to engage again. [...]Pakistan must recognise that President Ashraf Ghani's primary interest is not in talking to the Afghan Taliban. He needs a reduction in insurgent-led violence in his country to sustain his engagement with Pakistan. [...]On the Afghan side, the direct link between Pakistan's concern about TTP sanctuaries on Afghan territory and its approach to Afghanistan must not be overlooked. Acquiring Afghan help in tackling TTP sanctuaries is probably the single-most potent incentive for Pakistan to work the

²⁷ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1226172/asias-fragile-heart>

²⁸ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1226410/lessons-to-apply>

reconciliation peace with Kabul. Meanwhile, Afghanistan must demonstrate sincerity on its part — of the kind it did immediately after the December 2014 Army Public School attack in Peshawar.

Fall of Dhaka, what next?, Wajid Shamsul Hasan, *Daily Times*, December 16²⁹
December 16 will always be tragically associated with the breakup of Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah's Pakistan. Being a horrendous process that led to creation of Bangladesh (December 16, 1971), the day would hardly be remembered even for learning a lesson in history.[...] **The much more populated East Pakistan having played lead role in the creation of the country and its "golden fibre" (jute) that had remained the main source of our bread and butter as well as foreign exchange, was reduced to be an underdog and step-motherly treated in development and job employment-especially the armed forces and other government services.** [...] Disregarding the bloody trauma of break up in 1971 by sidelining our own colossal guilt in it undermining the treacherous role played by General Yahya and his junta—the buck was passed onto Mujib, ZAB and of course India as the sole villain of the piece as per the recent confessions of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. I remember in 1962 one of the founding fathers of Pakistan- Husseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy- imprisoned by Ayub for his defiance to him for democracy and save Pakistan—wrote a letter to the Field Marshal from his Karachi Central Jail Cell warning him that **"I am the last bridge between East and West Pakistan holding the country together."** Indeed, after him was the deluge.

Coalition of The Uncertain, Editorial, *The Nation*, December 23³⁰

The government's blushes at being included in 'coalition' against terrorism without its knowledge by Saudi Arabia deepened when Adviser to Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz was grilled on the floor of the senate on the government's decision. **He admitted to the Senate that Pakistan was still unaware of the full details of the Saudi-led coalition against terrorism and cautioned parliament against "complicating" the process by "prematurely" discussing it.** The irony that the government assented to the coalition – a much more weighty and permanent action than discussion – before knowing the full details is lost on the minister. To be fair to Sartaj Aziz, Pakistan is not the only country blindsided by Saudi Arabia, both Indonesia and Malaysia had to give diplomatic statements giving support to the coalition's objectives. [...] **Furthermore the minister revealed that Saudi Arabia had been given a secret commitment regarding joining the alliance, about which the Foreign Office was not aware. Who gave this commitment? It was given in exchange of what? And why was the parliament kept in the dark?** The senate was correct in pointing out that any action which requires

²⁹ <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/16-Dec-2015/fall-of-dhaka-what-next>

³⁰ <http://nation.com.pk/editorials/23-Dec-2015/coalition-of-the-uncertain>

the commitment of Pakistani forces abroad requires national assent, and hence a 'secret commitment' is highly improper.

MILITARY AFFAIRS

Environment demands vigilant PAF role: Air Chief, *The Dawn*, December 13³¹

In the face of security challenges, the Pakistan Air Force's preparedness and response has to be precise and expeditious, said PAF's Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Sohail Aman. He was speaking at the closing ceremony of the Inter Squadron Armament Competition on Monday (November 30) held at an Operational Air Base, where No. 11 Multirole Squadron won the competition. "Our regional environment demands an ever vigilant role for the PAF," he said, adding that it was through rigorous training imparted by such competitions that they maintained the cutting edge of the air force.

Army to consolidate operation Zarb-e-Azb gains, *Daily Times*, December 16³²

Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Raheel Sharif said on Tuesday (December 15) the army will consolidate operation Zarb-e-Azb gains. He said that those killed and injured in the Army Public School (APS) attack have rendered great sacrifices for the country, which will be remembered forever. Speaking at the Corps Commanders Conference at the General Head Quarters (GHQ), the army chief said security forces will continue to consolidate their gains to make them sustainable, which he said will be a befitting tribute to all those killed and wounded in the APS attack.

Karachi operation will continue: Bilal, *The Express Tribune*, December 22³³

The head of the paramilitary Rangers in Sindh has assured businessmen that the operation against criminals in Karachi will continue until all objectives are achieved. **"The Karachi operation will continue till its logical end," said Rangers Sindh Director-General Maj Gen Bilal Akbar on Monday (December 21).** He was speaking to a seven-member delegation of the All Karachi Tajir Ittehad. The AKTI delegation led by its chairman Atiq Mir had called on the Rangers DG at the Rangers Sindh headquarters on Monday. The businessmen voiced their concerns about the law and order situation in the coming days in

³¹ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1223481/regional-environment-demands-vigilant-paf-role-air-chief>

³² <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/16-Dec-2015/army-to-consolidate-operation-zarb-e-azb-gains-coas>

³³ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1014173/karachi-operations-would-continue-major-general-bilal/>

view of the ongoing tussle between the Sindh and federal governments. [...] ***The traders' body has sided with the Rangers, particularly after the Sindh government passed a resolution giving only conditional powers to the paramilitary force in the province.*** The businessmen have lauded the Rangers performance during the operation, which has brought back stability to the metropolis.

Troops striving to secure borders: Official, *The Express Tribune*, December 22³⁴

The Inspector General of the Frontier Corps (IGFC) in Balochistan, Major General Sher Afgun, said the paramilitary force has been striving to secure the province's porous borders. ***"We are prepared to confront all kind of enemies," IGFC said*** in a meeting with the civil administration, tribal elders and general public during his visit to the Makran division on Saturday (December 19).

Security forces foil major terror bid in Balochistan, *The Dawn*, December 22³⁵

Security forces on Monday (December 21) foiled a major terror bid in the province and seized a vehicle transporting weaponry in Balochistan's Dalbandin area. One suspected militant was also killed during an exchange of fire with security forces. "An intelligence agency and Frontier Corps (FC) seized a weapons-laden vehicle in the Yek Much area of Dalbandin," said a security official requesting anonymity.

Centre restores Rangers' special powers for 60 days, *The Nation*, December 23³⁶

The infighting between the federal and Sindh governments yesterday further deepened when the former revived all the special powers of Rangers in Sindh, setting aside the conditions placed on its functioning by the latter. ***The Ministry of Interior, after thorough deliberations, formally approved summary of the Sindh government, giving a 60-day extension in powers of Rangers in Sindh, but revived its original policing powers, rejecting the conditions proposed in the summary to curtail the paramilitary force's powers.*** [...] The decision was taken at a meeting chaired by the interior minister. The federal government, while rejecting the resolution of the Sindh

³⁴ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1013083/safeguarding-balochistan-top-fc-official-says-troops-striving-to-secure-borders/>

³⁵ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1227852/security-forces-foil-major-terror-bid-in-balochistan>

³⁶ <http://nation.com.pk/national/23-Dec-2015/centre-restores-rangers-special-powers-for-60-days>

Assembly, said Rangers were deployed in Singh and Karachi under Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) and Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC). The government said as ATA was a federal law it could not be changed through a resolution of any provincial assembly. The provincial assembly does not have the authority to amend the federal laws, the officer said, adding this reason was pointed out in the letter written to the Sindh government.

Forces kill 3 militants in Turbat, *The Nation*, December 23³⁷

Three suspected militants were killed during an exchange of fire with the security forces in Balochistan's Turbat area on Tuesday (December 22). The security forces conducted a search operation in Darchako area of Turbat and killed three miscreants, the Frontier Corps (FC) spokesman said. A cache of weapons and explosives was also recovered during the operation, he added. The spokesman said that the suspected militants belonged to a banned militant organisation operating in the area.

ECONOMIC ISSUES

CPEC a milestone in regional development: Sadiq, *Daily Times*, December 4³⁸
National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Thursday (December 3) said Pakistani and Chinese political leadership were determined to further consolidate the all-weather and time-tested Pak-China friendship. ***The speaker said that CPEC would provide a solid foundation for the socio-economic development of Pakistan and would prove to be a milestone in the development and prosperity of the region.*** He expressed these views while talking to a Chinese delegation led by Wang Sanyun, Secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) of Gansu Province who called on Speaker in Parliament House. The Speaker said that the political leadership of Pakistan places considerable importance on the maintenance of an extremely close and cordial relationship between China and Pakistan.

Chinese firm to build settlement for displaced, *Daily Times*, December 16³⁹
Pakistan Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) on Tuesday (December 15) signed a contract worth Rs 571.95 million with China Railway First Group (CRFG) for the construction of resettlement sites and Shatial Museum - the components of Dasu Hydropower Project. ***The contract includes construction of three sites for resettlement of the project victims of***

³⁷ <http://nation.com.pk/national/23-Dec-2015/forces-kill-3-militants-in-turbat>

³⁸ <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/04-Dec-2015/cpec-to-be-a-milestone-in-regional-development-sadiq>

³⁹ <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/16-Dec-2015/chinese-firm-to-build-settlement-for-dasu-project-displaced>

Choochang village and develop an open-air museum at archaeological site of Shatial to conserve pre-historic rock carvings. The contract is scheduled to be completed in a year and half. Dasu Hydropower Project General Manager (WAPDA) Haji Muhammad Farooq Ahmed and CRFG Deputy Director Zhang Yong signed the agreement on behalf of their organisations in a ceremony held at WAPDA House. [...] **The government is implementing Dasu Hydropower Project in two stages i.e. Stage-I and II. World Bank is financing Stage-I of the Project with an IDA Credit of \$588.4 million and an IDA PCG of \$460 million.** The 2,160MW-Stage-I is scheduled to be completed in five years and will contribute more than 12 billion units of cheap, affordable and environment-friendly electricity to the national grid every year.

Pakistan, China to timely implement projects, Daily Times, December 16⁴⁰

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his Chinese counterpart, Li Keqiang, on Tuesday (December 15) agreed to further strengthen the two countries' relations in diverse fields, particularly in economy and energy sectors. [...] **Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif expressed satisfaction with the progress on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Project and said Pakistan wanted that all the projects under the CPEC to be implemented in a timely and efficient manner.** [...] Nawaz Sharif said Pakistan would like Chinese side to allow Pakistan to open a trade cum visa office in Urumqi to facilitate the CPEC projects implementation and people to people exchanges. He said the progress achieved by handing-taking over of Gwadar Port Free Zone is a good beginning for initiating the process for building the economic zone.

Chinese bank to provide Rs162bn loan for Metro, The Dawn, December 22⁴¹

An agreement was signed between the federal government and Exim Bank of China on Monday (December 21) for provision of funds for the Orange Line Metro Train project. Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif was chief guest at the ceremony. Under the agreement, Exim Bank would provide Rs162 billion as soft loan for the metro train. Federal Economic Affairs Secretary Tariq Bajwa and Exim Bank Vice President Sun Ping signed the documents. [...] Shahbaz said: "Today is a historic day towards provision of a most modern transport system in Pakistan. This project is a milestone in Pak-China friendship."

⁴⁰ <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/16-Dec-2015/pakistan-china-agree-on-timely-implementation-of-cpec-projects>

⁴¹ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1228044/chinese-bank-to-provide-rs162bn-loan-for-orange-line>

SECURITY SITUATION

TERRORISM

Four APS militants hanged in Kohat, *The Express Tribune*, December 2⁴²

Four militants involved in the Army Public School attack in December last year, were hanged on Wednesday (December 2) in Kohat. The hanging comes two days after Army chief General Raheel Sharif signed black warrants of Maulvi Abdus Salam, Hazrat Ali, Mujeebur Rehman and Sabeel alias Yahya nearly a year after the horrific massacre.

Two held for degrading Ahmedis, *The Express Tribune*, December 14⁴³

Gulberg police arrested two traders on Sunday (December 13) for putting up notices containing degrading remarks for Ahmediyya community at the entrance of their shops at Hafeez Centre, said a handout issued by Operations DIG Haider Ashraf. The traders identified as Abid Hashmi and Nauman were presented before a judicial magistrate who sent them on a two-week judicial remand. The police sought custody of the suspects to interrogate them. The counsel for the suspect, however, submitted that there was no need for it and requested the court to send his clients on judicial remand. He told the court that his clients had been implicated in a false case.

Protest outside Lal Masjid disrupted by police, *The Nation*, December 17⁴⁴

The law-enforcing agencies yesterday briefly held six persons in front of Lal Masjid (mosque) as soon as they reached there to stage a protest against, what they believed, the mosque's chief cleric's role in fanning intolerance in the society, leading to the incidents like Peshawar school massacre last year. Around a dozen protestors were holding placards inscribing with the slogans against terrorism. They were also holding photographs of the slain Punjab Governor Salman Taseer and martyrs of APS. Human rights activist Farzana Bari was also among the protestors. They also chanted slogans against Lal Masjid chief cleric Maulana Abdul Aziz for his alleged support to the extremists.

NBWs issued to MQM leaders, *The Dawn*, December 22⁴⁵

An Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) here (Karachi) issued non-bailable warrants for the arrest of 25 senior leaders of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) in a case registered against them for facilitating Altaf Hussain's July 12

⁴² <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1002288/four-aps-militants-hanged-in-kohat/>

⁴³ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1009503/two-arrested-for-putting-up-anti-ahmadi-posters/>

⁴⁴ <http://nation.com.pk/national/17-Dec-2015/protest-outside-lal-masjid-disrupted-by-police>

⁴⁵ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1228053/non-bailable-arrest-warrants-issued-for-25-senior-mqm-leaders>

speech critical of the military establishment. The MQM leaders were named in different FIRs by private complainants who alleged that the named persons had attended a public gathering and listened to Altaf Hussain's outburst against the security agencies on July 12 this year. In his speech, Hussain had accused the paramilitary forces of torturing and killing his party workers.

KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA AND FATA

Charsadda DSP injured in attack, *The Express Tribune*, December 14⁴⁶

A deputy superintendent from Charsadda was injured in an attack while a man was shot dead near MPA Hostel in separate incidents in the city on Saturday (December 12). A murderer of a polio worker and a suspected suicide bomber were also arrested the same day in separate operations. A DSP from the counter-terrorism department (CTD) Charsadda, Janzada Khan, was critically injured in a targeted attack in Qazi Kalay, within the jurisdiction of Faqirabad police station early Saturday morning. Police said Janzada was on his way to a dairy shop around 7am when a man carrying a handgun opened fire at him. [...] However, banned group Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan central spokesperson Muhammad Khurasani claimed the responsibility for the attack via email. **"Our men targeted the CTD Charsadda in charge," he said**, while claiming responsibility for other targeted attacks in the country on Saturday.

Air strikes kill eight 'terrorists' in Khyber, *Daily Times*, December 16⁴⁷

At least eight terrorists were killed in military air strikes in the Rajgal and Sparee areas of Khyber Agency's Tirah Valley close to the Pak-Afghan border on Tuesday (December 15). "Pakistan Air Force (PAF) jets struck hideouts of the militants in Tirah valley," said a security source. Eight other terrorists were injured in the air strikes, the source added. [...] The tribal area is off-limits to journalists, making it difficult to verify the identity and the number of dead. These areas have also been considered home to extremist organisations including al Qaeda and the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

Soldier among 3 killed in Mohmand blasts, *The Dawn*, December 22⁴⁸

Three people, among them a security man, were killed and three personnel injured when two roadside improvised explosive devices went off in Baizai, some 25km west of Ghalanai area of Mohmand tribal region, on Monday (December 21). Local officials said that Naib Subedar Naseer Khan and a taxi driver lost their lives in the first explosion while the second blast left a civilian

⁴⁶ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1009021/shots-fired-charsadda-dsp-injured-in-attack/>

⁴⁷ <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/16-Dec-2015/air-strikes-kill-eight-terrorists-in-khyber-agency>

⁴⁸ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1227950/soldier-among-3-killed-in-mohmand-blasts>

dead and three security personnel injured. The injured, one of them identified as Lt Col Taimur, were airlifted to hospital in Peshawar.

BALUCHISTAN

One killed, six injured in gun attack, *The Dawn*, December 22⁴⁹

At least one passenger was killed and six others were injured when unidentified men opened fire at a passenger van in Balochistan's Loralai district on Tuesday (December 22). Levies sources told Dawn News that armed men opened fire on a van in Nana Sahib area of Dukki Tehsil in Loralai district. Seven passengers including a woman were injured in the attack. However, one passenger succumbed to his injuries on way to the hospital.

PUNJAB

AD&SJ injured in attack on official vehicle, *The Dawn*, December 15⁵⁰

Two motorcyclists on Monday (December 14) shot at and injured the Daska additional district and sessions judge near BRB Canal Bridge. Reports said AD&SJ Shahbaz Iqbal Tarar along with his police guard was on his way home after performing duties in Daska court. Near BRB Canal Bridge, two unidentified motorcyclists fired on his vehicle, injuring him seriously. The assailants managed their escape.

Five TTP militants killed in D.G Khan, *The News*, December 23⁵¹

At least five terrorists affiliated to banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) were killed in an action carried out by Counter Terrorism Department. Police spokesman said CTD Multan, on a tip-off, carried out action in Wador area of D.G Khan where exchange of fire took place between terrorists and the security forces. As a result, five militants were killed. The terrorists killed in the action were affiliated to TTP, however, police have yet to disclose their identity.

EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS

A year of grief and pain, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, December 15⁵²

[...]The APS attack was the trigger for the formulation of the National Action Plan (NAP), a hastily conceived reworking of an existing document that had never been actioned, dusted off and given a shot of adrenaline. It was in large

⁴⁹ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1228049/one-killed-six-injured-in-gun-attack-on-passenger-van-in-baluchistans-loralai>

⁵⁰ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1226446/adsj-injured-in-attack-on-official-vehicle>

⁵¹ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/83831-Five-TTP-militants-killed-in-DG-Khan-police-shootout>

⁵² <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1010477/a-year-of-grief-and-pain/>

part poorly thought through — and still is — and almost a year since its genesis is progressing piecemeal rather than in a unified and determined manner. [...] ***The elephant in the dining room of the NAP is a failure to formulate and roll out a national counter-narrative to that offered by extremism, and with a nascent Islamic State (IS) waiting to take the stage, that is a dangerous oversight.*** Terrorist cells have been broken up, key players killed — some in circumstances that do not bear close scrutiny and may be regarded as ‘extra-judicial’ — but the ideology that underpins terrorism is largely intact, completely untouched and seemingly untouchable as evidenced by the continued stream of bile emanating from Lal Masjid in Islamabad.

Terrorism — a family business Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, December 22⁵³

[...]The role of women within the IS is mistakenly taken to be insignificant, but in the last week in Pakistan, is revealed to be pivotal. The women’s wing of IS in Karachi has been a significant fund-raiser and assorted police and security agencies have been aware of this for an indeterminate period of time. ***Women who are either the wives or close relatives of at least some of those currently in custody for their alleged role in the Safoora bus massacre built a financing network. This was revealed with the arrest of three women on December 19, one of them the wife of a key suspect in the Safoora killings.*** The women used their contacts among middle class and wealthy women to solicit funds, which were then passed to their male relatives to finance terrorist activity. If it can be done in Karachi, it can be done anywhere else in the country and it must not be assumed that this is an isolated instance. Seemingly, the police held back on arrests “because they were women” — which is poppycock. Terrorism is terrorism whether committed by a man or woman, and the police and security agencies cannot tip-toe around the gender issue.

From normalcy to terror, Mosharruf Zaidi, *The News*, December 23⁵⁴

A number of arrests have recently been made in the Safoora Goth terrorist attack investigation. The social and economic stature of those being arrested represents a nightmare that should give the strategic community in Pakistan many sleepless nights. We can (and should) lament the catastrophic implications of the erosion of the gap between overtly conservative Muslims and covertly terrorist Muslims. However, some effort should also be invested in thinking about the magnitude of complexity that now so obviously confronts Pakistani state and society. [...] ***The challenges posed by multi-ethnic, highly educated, reasonably well-to-do terrorists cannot be dealt with***

⁵³ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1014026/terrorism-a-family-business/>

⁵⁴ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/print/83641-Disrupting-the-journey-from-normalcy-to-terror>

by invitations for government to be less dysfunctional alone. The kind of terrorist allegedly behind attacks like the May 2015 Safoora carnage in Karachi, the San Bernadino massacre in California earlier this month and the Daniel Pearl beheading in 2002 defies the lazy stereotype of the cave-dwelling rogue lashing out at modernity. Instead of sustaining these lazy narratives, we should be challenging our own biases.

RELATIONS WITH INDIA

Sharif meets Modi, *The Dawn*, December 1⁵⁵

WHILE some officials called it just a 'chance meeting', to others the brief talks between Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi on the sidelines of a climate summit in Paris helped to ease the tense atmospherics of bilateral relations. **Mr Sharif himself said the talks "were good"**. [...]Spokesman for the Indian Ministry of External Affairs Vikas Swarup was quoted by Indian media as having said that there was only "exchange of courtesies". But, according to TV channel reports, Prime Minister Sharif said that "talks with PM Narendra Modi were good. Doors of dialogue should open". The meeting appeared to be an impromptu encounter in the VIP lounge outside the main plenary hall.

Imran lashes out at Nawaz, Modi, *Daily Times*, December 4⁵⁶

Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan on Thursday (December 3) lashed out at premier Nawaz Sharif and his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi for holding a 'secret meeting' in Kathmandu last year, and called both leaders 'cowards'. **"Leaders do not need to hold meetings in secret. They do not need to lie; in fact they must be credible," said the PTI chief**, addressing a leaders' conference in Lahore. A book called 'This Unquiet Land — Stories from India's Fault Lines,' by veteran TV journalist Barkha Dutt, alleges Nawaz and Modi vanished for an hour to hold a quiet meeting? which was so secret that it was deniable ?on the sidelines of a regional summit hosted by Nepal last year. But both the Pakistan and Indian governments via official statements rubbished reports of such a meeting, terming news reports on the matter "baseless".

Pakistan offers India 'result-oriented' dialogue, *Daily Times*, December 4⁵⁷

⁵⁵ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1223472/sharif-meets-modi-exchange-of-courtesies-or-good-talks>

⁵⁶ <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/04-Dec-2015/imran-lashes-out-at-nawaz-modi-over-secret-meeting>

⁵⁷ <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/04-Dec-2015/pakistan-again-offers-india-result-oriented-dialogue>

Pakistan on Thursday (December 3) reiterated that it wants 'result-oriented' dialogue with India to resolve all outstanding issues, including Kashmir, and promote bilateral relations. Foreign Office spokesperson Qazi Khalilullah told a weekly briefing that there has been no response from New Delhi so far about the participation of Indian Foreign minister in the Heart of Asia Conference being held in Pakistan next week. "Pakistan has not received any response from India regarding participation of its Foreign minister in the Heart of Asia Conference," he said.

India will only discuss PoK: Envoy, *The Dawn*, December 14⁵⁸

India's representative to Pakistan said on Monday (December 14) that his country was only prepared to discuss the part of Kashmir controlled by Islamabad in upcoming peace talks, presenting a potential stumbling block days after the dialogue was announced. High commissioner T.C.A. Raghavan made the remarks about the disputed territory during a lecture in the Pakistani capital, after a breakthrough visit by India's foreign minister at which the resumption of ministerial talks was announced.

Uninterrupted talks with Pakistan needed: Swaraj, *The Dawn*, December 15⁵⁹

Indian Foreign Minister ***Sushma Swaraj told parliament here (New Delhi) on Monday (December 14) that an uninterrupted dialogue was needed with Pakistan*** despite provocation by saboteurs and denied opposition charges that her government had staged a "clumsy climb-down" from its hard-line position that stalled progress. [...]The description of uninterrupted dialogue appeared to fall short of 'irreversible', a phrase agreed by the Manmohan Singh government. ***Ms Swaraj, while briefing parliament on her recent visit to Pakistan, justified the decision to have a 'Comprehensive Dialogue', saying there was a "need for bridging the gulf" with Islamabad for peace and stability in the region.***

No secrecy about talks, only precaution: Sharif, *The Dawn*, December 15⁶⁰

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has denied that the recent resumption of talks with India was deliberately kept secret and said it was only a precautionary measure to keep the process low key before it matured for public announcement, *The Hindu* reported on Monday (December 14). Speaking to the paper on the sidelines of the ground-breaking ceremony for the Tapi gas pipeline project in Turkmenistan, Mr Sharif said the process needed "time and patience". ***"I don't think there is any secrecy around the process. If we***

⁵⁸ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1226326>

⁵⁹ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1226426/uninterrupted-talks-with-pakistan-needed-says-swaraj>

⁶⁰ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1226441/no-secrecy-about-talks-only-precaution-sharif>

didn't announce anything in advance, it was by way of precaution," he said, in his first comments on the talks since he and Mr Modi met in Paris on Nov 30.

War with Pakistan not an option: Sushma, *The Nation*, December 17⁶¹

Declaring that "war is not an option", India on Wednesday (December 16) said it had decided to hold dialogue with Pakistan as it is the only way to remove "the shadow of terrorism". Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj said in Lok Sabha that India and Pakistan decided to hold talks on terror when Prime Ministers Narendra Modi and Nawaz Sharif met in Ufa (Russia) in July and then in Paris recently. "We said we can talk so that terrorism comes to an end. So talks between NSAs took place in Bangkok where we discussed about terrorism. But one meeting will not bring a solution to all the problems. So we will continue the dialogue," she said. When BJP member Ganesh Singh asked whether India was exploring options like the US did to hunt down Osama Bin Laden, Swaraj said India is talking to Pakistan on the terrorist camps existing in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) as "war is not an option".

Army helped revive talks with India, *The Express Tribune*, December 26⁶²

Pakistan Army paved the way for reviving a stalled dialogue with India this year, officials said, a thaw leading to the first visit to Pakistan by an Indian premier in almost 12 years. [...] ***Officials say "ownership" of peace talks by the military and the appointment of a recently retired general as the national security adviser have given Pakistan renewed confidence to restart dialogue with India, including speaking about the thorny issue of terrorism. "This round is different because there is backing from the top where it matters ... the army chief is himself on board," a top diplomat said before the visit.*** [...] A senior Indian official in New Delhi also said military backing for peace talks marked a major change, with Janjua's involvement as national security advisor a key sign that General Raheel supports resuming the dialogue.

Modi sees Pakistan as bridge to Afghanistan, *The Dawn*, December 27⁶³

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday (December 25) that he saw Pakistan as a potential bridge between South Asia and Afghanistan. Addressing Afghan deputies in the new parliament building he inaugurated in Kabul before an announced meeting with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in

⁶¹ <http://nation.com.pk/national/17-Dec-2015/war-with-pakistan-not-an-option-sushma>

⁶² <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1016704/pakistan-army-helped-revive-talks-with-india/>

⁶³ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1228916>

Lahore, he said: ***"We know that Afghanistan's success will require the cooperation and support of each of its neighbours. And all of us in the region — India, Pakistan, Iran and others — must unite, in trust and cooperation, behind this common purpose and in recognition of our common destiny."*** [...]The Press Trust of India quoted Mr Modi as saying efforts were under way to improve Afghanistan's connectivity by land and sea, including through Chahbahar in Iran. "That is why I hope that Pakistan will become a bridge between South Asia and Afghanistan and beyond," he said.

MODI'S LAHORE VISIT

Modi returns to India after surprise Pakistan visit, *The Dawn*, December 26⁶⁴
Indian premier Narendra Modi returned to New Delhi after a surprise visit to Lahore where he was received by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, Punjab Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif and other Pakistani officials. Modi and Nawaz also held a brief meeting at the latter's Raiwind residence. This was the first time an Indian premier visited Pakistan in more than a decade. [...] ***Foreign secretary Aizaz Chaudhry while briefing media about Indian PM's visit said that Mr Modi telephoned PM Nawaz and expressed his desire to visit Pakistan on his way back from Kabul. "It was a goodwill visit and the two sides decided to understand each other's reservations and restart the comprehensive dialogue in a positive manner," said Chaudhry.*** The foreign secretary revealed that during the brief meeting, the two PMs decided that as a part of the comprehensive dialogue, the foreign secretaries of the two countries will meet in mid-January.

India welcomes Modi's Pakistan visit, *The Express Tribune*, December 26⁶⁵
Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagrantly broke with diplomatic protocol to pay a surprise birthday visit to Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, betting his personal brand on his ability to revive a troubled relationship, Indian media and analysts said on Saturday (December 26). Spurning official talks in the Islamabad, India's leader chose to make an intimate trip to the premier's ancestral residence near Lahore on Friday (December 25), where he was celebrating his birthday and the wedding of his granddaughter. [...] ***A source present in the meeting said the leaders of the nuclear-armed arch-rival nations "chatted like old friends" as they ate vegetarian food, with the Indian premier telling Sharif, "Your sincerity is beyond doubt".*** Modi's stunning decision to drop in for talks with Pakistan's leader – something ex-premier Manmohan Singh failed to achieve in ten years of power – was

⁶⁴ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1228735>

⁶⁵ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1016482/india-welcomes-rule-breaker-modis-surprise-pakistan-visit/>

roundly welcomed in India where it was seen as a highly calculated personal gamble.

China welcomed Modi's visit, *The Express Tribune*, December 26⁶⁶

China appreciated Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Lahore and a meeting with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, terming it a welcome move. "As the common neighbour and friend of Pakistan and India, China is happy to see [the two sides meet] and will, as always, support Pakistan and India enhance mutual trust and achieve common development through continuous dialogue," said Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Lu Kang.

11 from Modi's team had visas, *The Express Tribune*, December 29⁶⁷

Adviser to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz on Tuesday (December 29) said the journalists and dignitaries part of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's entourage on his recent surprise visit to Pakistan were not allowed outside the Lahore airport. Responding to criticism from certain sections of media regarding violation of immigration protocol during Modi's Lahore visit, Aziz said only the **Indian PM and 11 of his personal staff members were given a 72-hour visa, and the full immigration process was followed in this regard**. Giving a policy statement in Senate on the Nawaz-Modi Jati Umra meeting, the adviser clarified that no 'foreigner' was allowed to go outside the airport without valid visa, contrary to what had been reported in certain sections of the media.

Modi's visit, Editorial, *The Dawn*, December 27⁶⁸

[...]Much as Pakistan-India relations have the ability to disappoint and confound, they can occasionally spring a welcome surprise. Twelve years was 12 years too many for an Indian prime minister to have stayed away from Pakistan. [...]Yet, there are many questions that Mr Modi's short trip to Lahore has not answered. Diplomacy — meaningful, result-oriented diplomacy — is serious business. It is not at all clear at this moment if what transpired in Lahore was part of a coherent, well-thought-out diplomatic strategy on the part of the Indian and Pakistani governments or just a glorified photo-op. [...] **Raising public expectations — and putting hostile lobbies on alert in both countries — while keeping the details to a minimum can be a dangerous approach in the subcontinent**. The Comprehensive Bilateral Dialogue may be fleshed out in an anticipated meeting between the foreign secretaries next month — a deadline that should be adhered to.

⁶⁶ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1016602/china-terms-modis-visit-to-pakistan-a-welcome-move/>

⁶⁷ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1229419>

⁶⁸ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1228842>

EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS

Farooq Abdullah's view, Editorial, *The Dawn*, December 1⁶⁹

ONE of India-held Kashmir's former chief ministers had the courage to acknowledge the reality when he said the entire Indian army would not be able to defend "us against terrorists and militants" — his description for those struggling to liberate the occupied territory from India. Sections of the Indian media went after Farooq Abdullah's skin, especially for his view that "Pakistan-occupied Kashmir" — the Indian nomenclature for Azad Kashmir — would remain with Pakistan while the territory under New Delhi's control would stay that way. Even though the latter opinion is contrary to Pakistan's Kashmir policy, Mr Abdullah received a lot of flak for what appeared to critics as his endorsement of Islamabad's position on the disputed territory. [...] India's refusal to talk to Pakistan merely points to a head that is buried deep in the sand. While Pakistan's position on the dispute is grounded in reality, Islamabad has still shown a remarkable degree of flexibility and floated a number of ideas to resolve the issue peacefully.

Pakistan's re-emergence, Yaqoob Bangash, *The Express Tribune*, December 11⁷⁰

[...] The first week of December ended with a surprise meeting of the National Security Advisers (NSA) of Pakistan and India in Bangkok. This took everyone by surprise, even the people who are usually 'in the know'. This event showed that the two countries — despite their rhetoric — realise that they have to talk to each other; there is simply no other option. [...] Further, both the NSA talks and the joint statement on starting the newly christened Comprehensive Bilateral Dialogue reiterate that Pakistan and India have several issues to talk about, not just Kashmir or terrorism. [...] On the Pakistani side, Islamabad has achieved a small victory by including Kashmir as a matter of dispute. ***The recognition by the BJP-led government that Kashmir is an international dispute is a success for Pakistan.*** [...] Finally, the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process conference in Pakistan has again re-centred the discussion of Afghanistan in its proper context. The talks between Afghan President Ghani and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif have been significant and show the willingness and resolve to help Afghanistan become a secure, stable and prosperous nation. Here again is a chance for Pakistan and India to work together in Afghanistan for its peace and stability.

Buying peace at the grocery, Jawed Naqvi, *The Dawn*, December 15⁷¹

⁶⁹ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1223397/farooq-abdullahs-view>

⁷⁰ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1008383/pakistans-re-emergence/>

⁷¹ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1226412/buying-peace-at-the-grocery>

[...]If we can't let people visit each other freely, don't blame poor trade or cricket or, as is often the case, the Kashmir dispute. In any case, none should hold the people hostage to this or that tycoon's greed. **Yes, Indian and Pakistani chambers of commerce must strive to do more business with each other. Such clubs, however, are about seeking profits. Peace and democracy is hardly their forte.** [...]The idea that trade constitutes a mandatory prelude to Indians and Pakistanis going to a music concert together seems a devious alibi for bad politics. It is true that the ground-breaking ceremony was held for the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India gas pipeline in concert with politicians of India and Pakistan who did an unexplained about-turn in favour of peace talks, which is good. However, none should blame the hitherto absence of Tapi or a stalled pipeline from Iran for the fact that Pakistan cannot play a match in Mumbai. [...]Why must people on both sides huddle like beggars at the visa counters while fat cat business captains are feted in the ante-rooms of power? And only when they give a sated burp, will it convey the signal of normalised relations?

Long overdue project, Editorial, *Daily Times*, December 15⁷²

Almost 25 years after its inception, finally physical work has been started on the \$ 10 billion Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) Pipeline Project. [...] **Upon completion, it would inject a total of 1.3 billion cubic feet per day gas into the national gas grid of Pakistan.** The project offers enormous economic benefits for all stakeholders. However, the task also involves some critical challenges that already delayed the project for so long. Unrest in Afghanistan is blamed for the two and a half decades long delay in launching the construction work. Although conditions in that country are still not secure, yet the ambitious project has been taken up with some hope but not without trepidation. [...]It is a long overdue project that can establish a link between energy-rich Central Asia and energy-starved South Asia. Turkmenistan has mind-boggling reserves of natural gas and it needs to export this precious commodity.

Spanner in the works, Editorial, *Daily Times*, December 16⁷³

Indian High Commissioner T C A Raghavan's remarks about the disputed territory during a lecture in Islamabad have cast doubts on any dialogue process even before its resumption between India and Pakistan. [...]The statement shows a contradiction with what has been conveyed earlier by Indian Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj during her visit to Pakistan. She has said that all issues would be discussed. The latest policy statement by the Indian envoy has some background reasons. **The Indian government has once**

⁷² <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/15-Dec-2015/long-overdue-project>

⁷³ <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/16-Dec-2015/spanner-in-the-works>

again stuck to its rhetoric on the Kashmir issue due to the pressure built by the opposition and inherent flaws in the thinking of the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP). [...] In this situation, Pakistan needs to demonstrate maturity and patience. There is no need to get provoked by the saboteurs, who want to stall the dialogue process. Pakistan need not restart a war of words and its leadership should avoid giving a harsh response. It should understand the limitations of BJP and give it more time to settle the dust for getting engaged in the peace process.

EXCERPTS FROM URDU MEDIA & SELECT JIHADI LITERATURE

AFGHANISTAN AND TALIBAN

Audio Message of Akhtar Mansoor is fake, Daily Jasarat, December 7.⁷⁴

Some senior Afghan Taliban members believe that the audio message that has been released is fake. **They believe that Mullah Akhtar Mansoor succumbed to his injuries and died.** By releasing this audio message they want to keep Taliban united and buy time so that they can choose another *Ameer*.

The message seems original: Yousufzai, Daily Ummat, December 7.⁷⁵

The senior analyst, Rahimullah Yousufzai has said that the audio message of Akhtar Mansoor seems original but releasing this after 5 days surely raises some questions. He said it should have been released immediately after the news of his injury spread.

Talks with Taliban may start, Daily Jang, December 21.⁷⁶

The backchannel meetings seem to be going in the right direction as talks between Afghan government and Taliban might begin either in the last week of December or in the first week of January. There are positive responses from both sides. **Doubts and suspicions would be cleared once the representatives of four countries – Pakistan, Afghanistan, America and China – sit together in Islamabad or at any other suitable place to chart out the strategy for the upcoming talks.** According to sources from Pakistan side the newly appointed National Security Advisor, Nasir Khan Janjoa, will participate, Afghanistan would be represented by National Security Advisor, Mohammad Hanif. China and America would be represented by Fort Carding Xe and Richard Olson respectively.

⁷⁴<http://jasarat.com/news.php?date=07-12-2015&news=15&category=nation>

⁷⁵ <http://ummat.net/2015/12/07/news.php?p=news-24.gif>

⁷⁶ <http://e.jang.com.pk/12-21-2015/lahore/pic.asp?picname=617.gif>

Negotiations between two factions of Taliban, Daily Ummat, December 21.⁷⁷

The two factions of Taliban started negotiations and may possibly unite. **To make peace talks successful Mullah Akhtar Mansoor has reached out to Mullah Mohammad Rasool and have started homework for upcoming peace talks.** Taliban want to join the peace talks as a strong contender and have decided that they would together participate in the peace talks. According to sources talks might begin in the first week of January.

INDIA AND PAKISTAN

Visit of Indian EAM: A new opportunity, Editorial, Daily Jang, December 10.⁷⁸

[...]In any dialogue with India, Islamabad would always want to resolve the dispute of Jammu and Kashmir and that support for terrorists in several parts of Pakistan should immediately end. After Narendra Modi became Prime Minister it seemed that he was not interested in any dialogue process with Pakistan but after Sushma Swaraj's visit, **both the countries need to pick it up where it was left by Nawaz Sharif and Vajpayee.**

Ye Kaisay Aadab-e-Maezbani?, Naveed Masood Hashmi, December 15.⁷⁹

Sartaj Aziz is 86 years old but he still behaves like a boy. Holding hands of Sushma Swaraj in his hands he was dancing as if he was really the hero of Swaraj. **She is an extremist Hindu and you are not only a Muslim but foreign advisor of a Muslim nation as well.**

NSAs of India & Pakistan meet, Editorial, Daily Dunya, December 8.⁸⁰

[...]Now India should show some seriousness with regard to dialogue process so that it can become result oriented. It is a fact that if India had responded positively in past some of the issues would have been resolved by now. **Anyways better late than never but if these talks are only meant to release the international and domestic pressure then it will have serious negative consequences but the way talks have begun there seem to have some objectives which they want to achieve.**

Statements of EAM & HC contradictory, Editorial, Daily Ausaf, December 16.⁸¹

⁷⁷ <http://ummat.net/2015/12/21/news.php?p=news-10.gif>

⁷⁸ http://e.jang.com.pk/12-10-2015/karachi/pic.asp?picname=06_01.gif

⁷⁹ <http://www.dailyausaf.com/story/82664>

⁸⁰ http://e.dunya.com.pk/detail.php?date=2015-12-08&edition=LHR&id=2033300_33702886

⁸¹ <http://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/Lahore/2015-12-16/page-14/detail-6>

The statements made by Sushma Swaraj were still fresh that Indian High Commissioner in Pakistan made a new issue. Whether this is his personal view or is shared by Indian government will be known later. **But if the same was shared by government in New Delhi then what will one make out of the statement of Sushma Swaraj. India should clear this confusion at the earliest otherwise Pakistan will be right in saying that India made this drama of talks to evade the international pressure and when they get a bit of relief they show their back to the dialogue table.**

Indian sincerity needs to be tested, Editorial, *Daily Nawai Waqt*, December 17.⁸²

The Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi said in his speech at combined commanders' conference that he wanted to work together with Pakistan to change the course of history. **Narendra Modi wants better relations with Pakistan after he became familiar with ground realities.** After the short meeting in Paris and Sushma Swaraj's visit to Pakistan the intensity of hatred has lessened. **It is late but after all Narendra Modi has realized that both the countries should stop blaming each other and try to resolve all issues peacefully. Our agencies need to observe the developments carefully because if any party in India has the potential to resolve the Kashmir issue that is BJP.** Modi wants to bring peace and normalcy and peace to the region for that the leaders need to hold dialogue openly instead through back door channels. **The Kashmiri leadership should be involved in the dialogue process.** Narendra Modi said that sincerity is must to fight against terrorism and Pakistan will also look for sincerity from Indian side in dialogue process as without this history can't be changed.

India Pakistan Relations; New Possibilities, *Daily Ummat*, December 28.⁸³

After Indian Prime Minister Modi held meeting with Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif at his residence, it raised the hopes with regard to India-Pakistan bilateral relations. As a result, Foreign Secretaries of both countries are scheduled to meet in Islamabad on 15th of January 2016. Although no Agenda has been fixed as yet, but there is a possibility that all the disputes including Kashmir problem would be set on the Agenda. **Again during Heart of Asia Conference, Foreign Minister Ms. Sushma Swaraj reiterated former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's statement that Pakistan remains to be India's neighbor and we can change our friends but not our neighbors.** Now with the coming of new Prime Minister Narendra Modi the same statement is being repeated. Now apparently Indian leadership is very keen on maintaining cordial relations with Pakistan.

⁸² <http://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/Lahore/2015-12-17/page-14/detail-8>

⁸³ <http://e.jang.com.pk/12-28=2015/Lahore/plc-asp?picname=08-02.gif>

Indian Prime Minister is patron of Qadiyanis, *Daily Ummat*, December 28.⁸⁴

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has now become Chief Patron of Qadiyani community. On occasion of the celebrations of Khilafat in Qadiyan town of Gurdaspur district, B.J.P. has procured all the facilities to this community by giving them most preferential treatment. Apart from this, Mr. Modi has also sent one congratulatory message to Mirza Mansoor, leader of Qadiyan community- wherein he prayed for the success of the Qadiyani mission and he also assured him of all possible help and full cooperation in the fulfilment of their mission. ***According to Indian Muslim community Modii has been deliberately trying to keep secret his forthright support to Ahmadiya community. The main spokesperson of Home Ministry revealed that after his taking over as the prime minister, Modi took special interest in the activities of Ahmadiya community.***

India donned the cloak of friendship, *Daily Ummat*, December 27.⁸⁵

The visit of Indian Prime Minister, who until recently used to spit venom against Pakistan, is seen as an breakthrough in India-Pakistan relations ***but sources reveal that he donned the cloak of friendship only to hide the crimes they have committed in FATA, Balochistan and Karachi.*** The intelligence agencies have already handed over their findings to government where Indian involvement in terrorist activities was clear and the issue has been raised at international forums as well. This is the reason why India wants friendship with Pakistan.

Dourah aek Dum nahi hota, Editorial, *Daily Ummat*, December 27.⁸⁶

The unofficial visit of Narendra Modi to Lahore surprised everyone. Nobody was aware about this and even Sartaj Aziz had no information till the last moment. He could not say whether military leadership was aware about this or not. [...] ***After Sushma Swaraj's visit to Pakistan it became clear that India wanted a trade route via Pakistan to Afghanistan and other Central Asian Republics.*** America supports India for this. The lack of land route to these countries force India to have better relations with Pakistan. This connectivity can make it easy for India to play a significant role in Afghanistan which America wants to ensure before leaving. Narendra Modi had arrived in Afghanistan to inaugurate the new parliament building and India wants to benefit from the iron reserves of Afghanistan. ***If they can convince Pakistan then steal from Afghanistan can be brought to south-western states of India at much cheaper rates.*** [...] Although the visit was termed unofficial but some

⁸⁴ <http://ummat.net/2015/12/28/news.php?p=storyr.gif>

⁸⁵ <http://ummat.net/2015/12/27/news.php?p=news-06.gif>

⁸⁶ <http://ummat.net/2015/12/27/news.php?p=idr1.gif>

were skeptical after seeing Sajan Jindal in Lahore. The Indian journalist has revealed in her book that Nawaz Sharif and Sajan Jindal have trade relations with each other for last two years and his arrival in Lahore on the same date certainly raised some eyebrows.

Nawaz-Modi goodwill meeting, Editorial, *Daily Jang*, December 27.⁸⁷

The surprise visit to Lahore by Narendra Modi, his meeting with Nawaz Sharif in peaceful environment and the willingness to initiate a dialogue process to resolve all the issues reflects progress in India-Pakistan relations. **On Friday evening after Narendra Modi left for Delhi, the foreign Secretary of Pakistan Aizaz Choudhary told media persons that in meeting both pledged to take forward the peace process and improve bilateral relations.** Meanwhile it was also decided that foreign Secretaries of both the countries will meet in January. **Pakistan always wanted better relations with India but they have been continuously rejecting this wish of Pakistan which plunged both the countries into the arms race...**The sudden change in Indian attitude is certainly because of changing regional and international environment. **The peace in Afghanistan is no doubt in the interests of Pakistan but India also cooperates with government in Kabul because TAPI is equally significant for both India as well as Pakistan.** In addition to this India also wants to secure a trade route to Central Asia through Pakistan.

INTERNAL SECURITY

TAPI: game changer for the region, Editorial, *Daily Jang*, December 15.⁸⁸

The leaders of Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkministan and India on Sunday (December 13) formally inaugurated the TAPI gas project in Marri city of Turkministan. According to Nawaz Sharif the project will upgrade the economic status and will change the destiny of whole region. **This 1735 Km long gas pipeline from world's second largest gas field of Turkministan will pass through Kandahar and Herat of Afghanistan and enter into Pakistan's Queta. From Pakistan it will enter into India through Fazalka.** The project will be completed by 2019 with the investment of 10 billion dollars. Pakistan will get 1325 million cubic feet natural gas every day from this pipeline. Nawaz Sharif has said that this project is the product of vision of the leaders of four countries.

Hideouts are still in Pakistan: Afghan Minister, *Daily Jasarat*, December 7.⁸⁹

The Home Minister of Afghanistan, Noor-ul-Haq Alvi said that the terrorists fighting in Afghanistan come from Pakistan. He was speaking at a function

⁸⁷ http://jang.com.pk/12-27-2015/lahore/pic.asp?picname=08_01.gif

⁸⁸ http://e.jang.com.pk/12-15-2015/lahore/pic.asp?picname=08_01.gif

⁸⁹ <http://jasarat.com/news.php?date=07-12-2015&news=04&category=nation>

organized to felicitate 470 policemen who returned from Turkey after completing their training. **He said that the enemies of Afghanistan are using brands like Daesh and Al-Qaeda to destabilize and divide us.**

American committee questioned proposed deal, Daily Jasarat, December 7.⁹⁰
The republican member from Texas, Ted poe, has severely criticized American policy towards Pakistan and raised questions over American funds to Pakistan. **He further said that any deal between America and Pakistan needs to be scrutinized because Pakistan's relationship with terrorist groups can't be ruled out.**

Allegations and counter allegations, Daily Jang, December 14.⁹¹
In Sindh Assembly there were allegations and counter allegations between Federal Interior Minister and Sindh Assembly members on the issue of extension powers of Rangers in the province of Sindh. After the heated arguments the interior Minister Chaudhary Nisar addressed a press conference in Islamabad and said that federal government won't tolerate any insulting statements against Rangers who made supreme sacrifices. [...]In response to Chaudhary Nisar, Information Secretary to chief Minister of Sindh Maulana Haq Chandeo addressed a press conference in Karachi wherein he cautioned federal Interior Minister not to threaten like that and that he should not scare with the dire consequences. Whatever video report he had should be made public. **Maulana Chandeo added that some leaders are not happy with the present democratic system. The Information Secretary has in very clear terms assured that its party and Sindh government were always in favor of 'operation' but any extension of authority of Rangers should have the seal of approval of Sindh Assembly.**

Malaysia will buy JF-17 thunder from Pakistan, Daily Ummat, December 17.⁹²
Malaysia has announced to buy JF-17 thunder from Pakistan. The Malaysian High Commissioner in Pakistan Dr. Hasrul Mujtabar has said that agreement would be signed soon. The relationship between Pakistan and Malaysia in defence field is friendly and Pakistan-Malaysia defence joint committee is playing an important role in this regard.

Pak should deal with Haqani Net. and Taliban, Daily Ausaf, December 22.⁹³

⁹⁰<http://jasarat.com/news.php?date=07-12-2015&news=08&category=nation>

⁹¹http://e.jang.com.pk/12-14-2015/lahore/pic.asp?picname=09_01=gif

⁹²<http://ummat.net/2015/12/17/news.php?p=news-32.gif>

⁹³http://www.ausaf.pk/wp-content/uploads/2015-12-22/news/detail_29.php

The US special envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Richard Olson has said that Pakistan has accepted that to defeat Taliban within Pakistan they need to fight with Afghan Taliban as well.

Do't make situation difficult for Pak, Editorial, *Daily Jang*, December 23.⁹⁴
[...]The demands of American foreign affairs committee are contradictory. On one hand it asks Pakistan to facilitate talks between Afghan government and Taliban and on the other demand same actions against Taliban. Pakistan has taken against Pakistani Taliban. Obviously the two tasks can't proceed simultaneously. ***If Pakistan has to play any role in Taliban peace talks then there is no place for such demands.*** However the operation against Pakistani Taliban has affected Afghan Taliban as well. Any war with Taliban will not only create problems for Pakistan but the whole region will be engulfed and the prospects of peace will be clouded for long time. Instead of these illogical demands America should focus on Afghan peace process where Pakistan is ready to play its part.

BALUCHISTAN

435 terrorists have been killed in last five years, *Daily Tawar*, December 15.
In last five years more prisoners have been hanged to death in Sind when compared to other provinces and autonomous regions. According to the figures released by interior ministry 106 prisoners have been hanged in Sind and 64 in Punjab till November 2015. One prisoner was hanged respectively in Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad. Again the number of prisoners to be hanged are more in number than other provinces. The prisoners waiting to be hanged in Sind are 98, 81 in Punjab, 25 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, one each in Balochistan and Islamabad. The number of terrorists killed by security forces in various provinces has been mentioned as well. ***The FATA region has seen more deaths where 2530 have been killed, followed by 435 in Balochistan, 351 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 342 in Sind, 90 in Punjab, 7 in Islamabad, 3 in PAK and one in Gilgit Baltistan.***

Balochistan situation should not be exposed, *Daily Tawar*, December 8.
The governor of Balochistan, Mohammad Khan Achakzai said that Balochistan became province of Pakistan very late which is the reason why the people of this region remained backward as compared to other regions. He said that China and Russia have interest in Pakistan and for that peace in Balochistan is very vital. ***He suggested that when talking about Balochistan we should not use a terminology which would give an impression that there is any kind of dispute in Balochistan.***

⁹⁴ http://e.jang.com.pk/12-23-2015/lahore/pic.asp?picname=08_02.gif

Without Independent Balochistan the region is insecure, *Daily Tawar*, December 21.

Kareema Baloch, Chairperson of Baloch Students Organization (BSO) has said in an interview that Baloch have been carrying on their struggle against forcible occupation but the provincial media community as well as judiciary, which are supposedly to be pillars of the State machinery, have always been patronizing the state policy. Pakistan media is deliberately reporting against the national movement. Kareema Baloch said that she has come to Canada so that she could clearly highlight war crimes, gross violations of human rights and to apprise the world leaders about the prevailing situation. ***She further disclosed that she herself was witness to the kidnaping of Chairman Zahid Baloch who was forcibly taken by ISI and F.C. despite our continuous protests.*** Ironically ISI is now denying having kidnapped him.

Balochistan on path of democracy, Majeed Asgar, *Daily Jang*, December 30.⁹⁵

It is not easy to give up power after having it but Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch stood by his word and resigned. According to Muree agreement he was Chief Minister of Balochistan for two and half years. ***The Nawab Sanaullah Zehri received chief ministership without any trial. [...]Sanaullah Zehri deserves praise for patiently working with Abdul Malik Baloch otherwise for a powerful Baloch like him, who had won the mandate to rule, sitting away from the seat is unusual thing to happen. However in the last days of Dr. Malik's term Sanaullah Zehri showed some restlessness because Nawaz Sharif and the establishment seemed to be satisfied with Dr. Malik indicating that he might continue for the next term.*** During the term of Dr. Malik a number of *Ferraris* had surrendered their arms and come into national mainstream. The terrorist incidents and target killings have gone down by 90 per cent.

⁹⁵ http://e.jang.com.pk/12-30-2015/lahore/pic.asp?picname=09_08.gif

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

Place	Date	Description	Killed	Injured
Balochistan				
Loralai ⁹⁶	22/12/2015	One killed, six injured	1	6
Quetta ⁹⁷	22/12/2015	One suspected militant killed	1	0
Turbat ⁹⁸	23/12/2015	Forces kill three militants	3	0
FATA				
Baizai ⁹⁹	22/12/2015	Three killed	3	3
Punjab				
Sialkot ¹⁰⁰	15/12/2015	Session Judge injured	0	1
D.G. Khan ¹⁰¹	23/12/2015	Five TTP militants killed	5	0
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa				

⁹⁶ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1228049/one-killed-six-injured-in-gun-attack-on-passenger-van-in-balochistans-loralai>

⁹⁷ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1227852/security-forces-foil-major-terror-bid-in-balochistan>

⁹⁸ <http://nation.com.pk/national/23-Dec-2015/forces-kill-3-militants-in-turbat>

⁹⁹ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1227950/soldier-among-3-killed-in-mohmand-blasts>

¹⁰⁰ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1226446/adsj-injured-in-attack-on-official-vehicle>

¹⁰¹ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/83831-Five-TTP-militants-killed-in-DG-Khan-police-shootout>

Charsadda ¹⁰²	14/12/2015	DSP injured	0	1
Khyber ¹⁰³	16/12/201	Eight terrorists killed	8	8
Sindh				

¹⁰² <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1009021/shots-fired-charsadda-dsp-injured-in-attack/>

¹⁰³ <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/16-Dec-2015/air-strikes-kill-eight-terrorists-in-khyber-agency>