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ICEP's CSS Weekly

CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE

Issue 22
Full Edition

Coverage:
October 11 – October 17, 2026

7 National Articles | **7** International Articles | **14** CSS Domains | Two Extended Model Answers | 100 MCQs

Precis & English Corner | Essay Corner | Constitution Quick Reference

Pakistan at a Critical Juncture

From Constitutional Uncertainty to Global Shocks — Navigating Risks and Opportunities

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Parliament, Courts and the Future of Federalism

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FO REJECTS INDIA'S 'BIGGER STRIKE' WARNING



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NORTH KOREA'S AI TORPEDO TEST
(Zam-2.0)

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Editor's Note

Welcome to ICEP's CSS Weekly, Issue 22, the Full Edition. It covers 11 to 17 October 2026 in 14 lead articles, 7 National and 7 International, each in a different CSS domain, and carries forward the legacy of Issue 21 in a dedicated section.

The week's defining national story is constitutional: the Centre proclaimed an emergency and governor's rule in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on 11 October, Parliament endorsed it by 15 October, and the Peshawar High Court hears the challenge on 20 October (N1). Internationally, the Gulf war dominates: Hormuz remains mostly shut (I1), Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia intensify (I2), and the UN Secretary-General race is deadlocked by P5 vetoes (I3).

What is inside: Week at a Glance, Economy Dashboard, Syllabus Map, Calendar Ahead, 14 articles with the same seven-part structure as earlier issues, two Extended Model Answers, a constitution quick reference, an Islamic Studies corner, an Essay corner with subjective bank and study plan, a Precis and English corner, a Legacy of Issue 21 table, confusables, an FPSC-pattern essay outline, 100 MCQs, consolidated vocabulary and an organisations index.

Method and limits: every story was searched this week and the sources are cited in each article. Where a detail rests on a single outlet, unnamed sources, state media or a headline only, the article says so and carries a red Flag line. Summaries run about 330-480 words (below the 450-550 target for some), and Past Paper Echo lines say 'No verified direct past-paper precedent checked' because past papers could not be searched. This is a text edition; the cover and infographics can be added once supplied.

Infographics: each article is preceded by a full-page infographic. Where an infographic differs from the sourced article text, the article page carries a red 'Infographic cross-check' line stating the difference; the article text governs.

Week at a Glance (11-20 Oct)

11 Oct	President proclaims emergency and governor's rule in K-P (N1).
12 Oct	IMF-World Bank annual meetings open in Bangkok (to 18 Oct) (N2). Another Houthi attack on Riyadh's King Khalid airport (I2). Iran reviews US reply to its seven conditions (I1).
13 Oct	IMF releases the October WEO: 3.1% global growth in 2026 (I6).
14 Oct	NA and Senate endorse the K-P emergency; PTI files a petition in the PHC (N1). GB Assembly passes the amended Local Government Act (N5). Colombia opens an embassy in Jerusalem (I4).
15 Oct	Joint sitting endorses the emergency, 214-57 (N1). SBP reserves reported at $21.47bn (N6). Zelenskyy ends Ukraine's energy-strike pause (I5). Rajnath Singh's conclave remarks (N7). Global Hunger Index: Pakistan 25.5 (N3). North Korea's Zam-2.0 test (I7).
16 Oct	Pakistan named chair of the IMF and World Bank boards for 2027 (N2). Sixth UNSC straw poll (I3). FO rejects Singh's remarks (N7) and rules out unconditional talks with Afghanistan (N4). 18-19 states condemn Colombia's embassy (I4). Trump waives Russia sanctions (I5).
17 Oct	Kurram border clashes (N4). Dawn editorial 'Diplomatic options' on the Gulf war (I1). KCNA announces the torpedo test (I7).
18-20 Oct	Annual meetings close 18 Oct; Lavrov in Tehran and Grynspan meets Costa Rica's president 19 Oct; PHC hears the K-P petitions 20 Oct.

Economy Dashboard

Indicator	Value	Source
Hunger: GHI 2026 score / rank	25.5 (serious) / 106 of 122	GHI via ProPakistani, Daily Times
Child stunting / wasting	33.6% / 9.8%	GHI via Geo (IANS)
People in crisis / emergency food insecurity	9.3m / 1.7m	GRFC 2026 via Dawn
SBP reserves, 9 Oct	$21.470bn (+$15.8m)	SBP, 15 Oct
Total liquid reserves	$26.863bn (+$65.9m)	SBP, 15 Oct
Import cover (SBP reserves)	3.04 months	SBP via ProPakistani
IMF global growth 2026 / 2027	3.1% / 3.4%	IMF WEO, 13 Oct
IMF global inflation 2026	4.7%	IMF briefing
IMF assumption: Hormuz reopens	March 2027	CNBC, 12 Oct
Pakistan chair of IMF/WB boards	2027 (first since 1953)	Ministry of Economic Affairs via Dawn
IMF EFF / RSF	$7bn / $1.4bn	Daily Sun, 16 Oct
Ship crossings of Hormuz, daily	~8 now vs ~85 pre-crisis	NIAC analysis of AIS data
UNSG race: Grynspan, 6th poll	9 / 5 / 1 (encourage/discourage/no opinion)	PassBlue via Rio Times
Joint sitting vote on K-P emergency	214-57	Aaj English, 15 Oct
Brent crude (headline)	near $106	Express Tribune headline

Calendar Ahead

18 Oct	IMF-World Bank annual meetings in Bangkok close.
19 Oct	Lavrov scheduled in Tehran; Grynspan to meet Costa Rica's President Laura Fernandez.
20 Oct	Peshawar High Court preliminary hearing on petitions against the K-P emergency.
26 Oct	SBP Monetary Policy Committee meeting (from Issue 20 and 21 calendars).
3 Nov	US midterm elections; October CPI release (PBS).
9-20 Nov	COP31, Antalya, Turkiye; leaders' summit 11-12 Nov.
5 Dec	Reported date of Gilgit-Baltistan municipal corporation polls (Dawn headline).
10 Dec	Nobel Peace Prize ceremony, Oslo (2026 laureate Navi Pillay).
31 Dec	End of Guterres' term; Council recommendation expected before then.
4-9 Oct 2027	IMF-World Bank annual meetings in Washington, chaired by Pakistan (Dawn Business).

Syllabus Map

Article	CSS / PMS subjects it feeds
N1 K-P emergency and governor's rule	Constitutional Law; Pakistan Affairs; Political Science; Current Affairs
N2 Pakistan to chair IMF/WB boards	Economics; International Relations; Current Affairs
N3 Global Hunger Index 2026	Sociology; Economics; Current Affairs; General Science
N4 Kurram clashes; talks with Kabul	International Relations; Pakistan Affairs; Criminology
N5 GB Local Government Act 2026	Public Administration; Pakistan Affairs; Political Science
N6 Reserves and oil prices	Economics; Statistics; Current Affairs
N7 India: FO vs Rajnath Singh	International Relations; Strategic Studies; Pakistan Affairs
I1 Hormuz stalemate	International Relations; Economics; Current Affairs
I2 Houthi attacks; Pakistan's commitment	Islamiat; International Relations; Current Affairs
I3 UNSG sixth straw poll	International Law; International Relations; Current Affairs
I4 Colombia's Jerusalem embassy	International Law; Muslim World; Current Affairs
I5 Ukraine energy ceasefire; sanctions	International Relations; European Studies; Economics
I6 IMF October outlook	Economics; Current Affairs; Statistics
I7 North Korea's AI torpedo	General Science; Computer Science; Strategic Studies

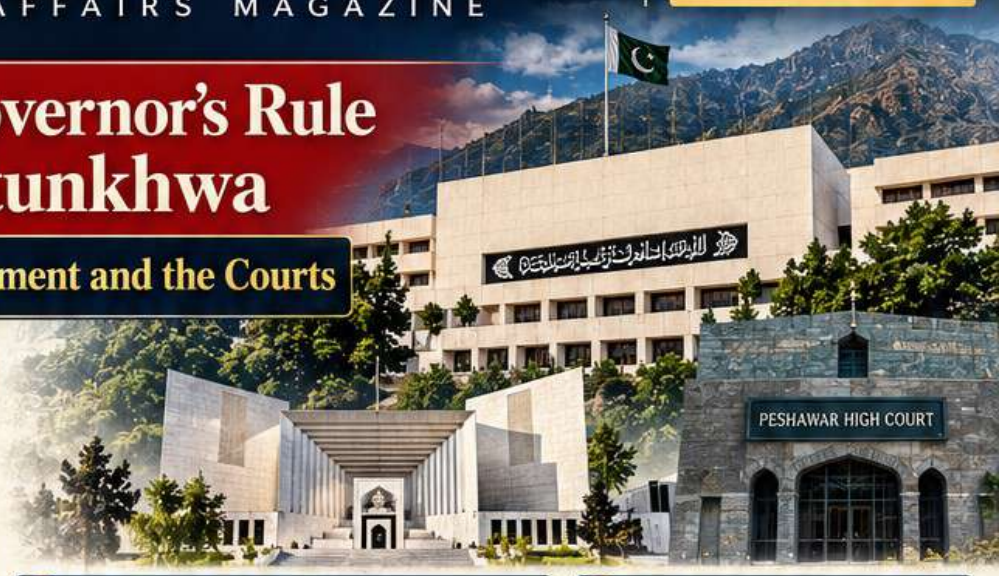
Important Days, October-November 2026

20 Oct	World Statistics Day (every five years: 2025 observed; background)
24 Oct	United Nations Day
27 Oct	Kashmir Black Day (observed by Pakistan; 1947 Indian landing in Srinagar)
31 Oct	World Cities Day
1 Nov	Gilgit-Baltistan Independence Day (observed in Pakistan; 1947 liberation, background)
9 Nov	Iqbal Day (birth anniversary of Allama Muhammad Iqbal)
10 Nov	World Science Day for Peace and Development
14 Nov	World Diabetes Day
16 Nov	International Day for Tolerance
20 Nov	World Children's Day

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National Article – 01 (N1)

Emergency and Governor's Rule in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Articles 232 and 234 Meet Parliament and the Courts



1 What Happened?

- **11 Oct 2026** – President proclaimed emergency and imposed governor's rule in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (K-P).
- **14 Oct 2026** – National Assembly and Senate endorsed the proclamation.
- **15 Oct 2026** – Parliament's approval completed the constitutional requirement.
- **20 Oct 2026** – Peshawar High Court scheduled to hear the challenge to the proclamation.

2 Constitutional Provisions

Article 232

- President can proclaim emergency if the security of Pakistan or any part thereof is threatened by war, external aggression or internal disturbance.
- Must be approved by both Houses of Parliament.

Article 234

- Allows the President to assume to himself the functions of a province during a proclamation of emergency.
- Enables imposition of governor's rule in the province.

3 Stated Rationale

- Deteriorating law and order situation in K-P.
- Rise in militant violence and security threats.
- Breakdown of provincial governance and administrative paralysis.
- Need for coordinated action by the federal government.

4 Key Features of the Proclamation

- Provincial government dissolved and governor's rule imposed.
- Federal government assumes provincial functions.
- Security and administrative control placed under federal authorities.
- Initial period subject to parliamentary approval and periodic review.

5 Provincial Response

- PTI files a petition in the Peshawar High Court, challenging the proclamation as unconstitutional.
- PTI and other political voices call it a politically motivated move and a federal overreach.

6 Legal and Political Debate

- Is the situation in K-P an "internal disturbance" under Article 232?
- Does the proclamation meet the tests of necessity, proportionality and good faith?
- Balance between national security, provincial autonomy and democratic federalism

7 Institutional Process

President proclaims emergency (Art. 232) → Approval by National Assembly and Senate (within constitutional timeframe) → Imposition of governor's rule in K-P (Art. 234) → Judicial review in Peshawar High Court (hearing on 20 Oct 2026)

8 Significance

- Tests the limits of emergency powers under the Constitution.
- Raises questions about federalism and provincial autonomy.
- Has major implications for security, politics and governance in K-P.
- May set an important precedent for future use of Articles 232 and 234.

9 Way Forward

- Fair and timely hearing by the Peshawar High Court.
- Ensuring constitutional compliance and respect for democratic norms.
- Addressing the genuine law and order challenges in K-P.
- Political dialogue to restore stability and democratic governance.

10 Key Takeaways for CSS

1. Constitutional framework: scope and safeguards of Articles 232 and 234.
2. Legal debate on internal disturbance, federalism and judicial review.
3. Political and security implications for K-P and Pakistan's democratic setup.
4. Relevance for CSS domains: Constitutional Law, Pakistan Affairs, Political Science and Current Affairs.



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NATIONAL AFFAIRS

N1 | Constitutional Law & Federalism | Priority: **HIGH**

Emergency and Governor's Rule in K-P: Arts. 232 and 234 Meet Parliament and the Courts

Continuity: Follows Issue 21's N2 (reported 12-district emergency plan): the plan became a province-wide emergency and governor's rule on 11 October.

Past Paper Echo: No verified direct past-paper precedent checked. Syllabus anchors: Arts. 232-234, 245, 18th Amendment, judicial review of emergencies.

Essay Topic: Emergency powers and provincial autonomy: can the Centre displace an elected provincial government?

Flag: Whether Afridi was detained is not confirmed; the removal details come from Nukta and a President House statement relayed by secondary outlets.

Infographic cross-check: The image is broadly consistent with the article but simplifies Art. 234 and says the provincial government was 'dissolved'; the sources report that the Chief Minister, ministers, advisers and the Advocate General were removed. It omits the 14 Oct NA and Senate endorsements by separate resolutions and the 214-57 joint-sitting vote on 15 Oct, and the 'rationale' panel (rise in militant violence, administrative paralysis) is paraphrase of the Centre's 'deliberate disengagement' ground. The article text governs.

A. Executive Summary

On Sunday 11 October President Asif Ali Zardari proclaimed an emergency and governor's rule in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa after an emergency federal cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, invoking Articles 232 and 234 of the Constitution, according to a President House statement reported by several outlets. Dawn reported that the Centre cited the provincial government's 'deliberate disengagement' from the fight against terrorism. Nukta reported that the proclamation followed a report by Governor Faisal Karim Kundi that constitutional machinery had broken down, and that Chief Minister Sohail Afridi, the provincial ministers, advisers and the Advocate General were removed from office; Dawn described Afridi's role as 'now non-functional'. One report, quoting Information Minister Shafi Jan, said Afridi had been taken into custody; other accounts do not confirm this, so it is treated as unverified.

Parliament moved quickly. On Wednesday 14 October the National Assembly adopted a resolution approving the proclamation of emergency 'under the second proviso of clause (1) of Article 232', after more than four hours of debate and amid sloganeering, and the Senate adopted a similar resolution while opposition members walked out. Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar told the Senate that a proclamation under Article 232 must be laid before both Houses within 10 days and that Rules 132 and 133 on private members' resolutions, including the seven-day notice, did not apply to a resolution moved under a constitutional requirement. A joint sitting chaired by Speaker Ayaz Sadiq on Thursday 15 October approved a resolution endorsing the emergency and governor's rule by 214 votes to 57 (Aaj English). Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi told the Senate that talks with the PTI had nearly produced an agreement before consultations involving Afridi and Murad Saeed derailed them; PTI chairman Gohar Ali Khan said a draft of five clauses had been discussed and that government representatives withdrew when the fourth clause was reached; Senate Chairman Yousuf Raza Gilani said the prime minister had assured Maulana Fazlur Rehman that demands would be accepted but the government backed out.

The courts are next. On 14 October Gohar filed a petition under Article 199 in the Peshawar High Court seeking to have the emergency and governor's rule declared unconstitutional; the court fixed 20 October for a preliminary hearing, and the Tehreek-i-Tahafuz-Ayin-i-Pakistan (TTAP) filed a separate petition. The petitions argue that governor's rule was not imposed in Balochistan despite terrorist violence, that the PTI won a two-thirds majority in 2024, that Article 234 requires strict compliance with its conditions, and that the federation should be restrained from legislating on K-P matters in Parliament. For CSS candidates the episode tests three questions: what counts as failure of constitutional machinery, how far parliamentary endorsement cures a contested proclamation, and whether courts will review the grounds.

B. Key Arguments / Developments

- President Zardari proclaimed emergency and governor's rule in K-P on 11 Oct 2026 under Arts. 232 and 234, after cabinet advice (President House statement, via Organiser and Nukta).
- Dawn: the Centre cited the provincial government's 'deliberate disengagement' from the fight against terrorism (Dawn, 14 Oct).
- Nukta: the proclamation removed CM Sohail Afridi, provincial ministers, advisers, special assistants and the Advocate General.
- One report quoting Information Minister Shafi Jan said Afridi had been taken into custody; not confirmed elsewhere. [Flag: unverified]

- NA approved the emergency by majority on 14 Oct 'under the second proviso of clause (1) of Article 232' after over four hours of debate (The News; Daily Pakistan).
- The Senate approved a similar resolution on 14 Oct as opposition senators walked out (Express Tribune; The News).
- Law Minister Tarar: an Art. 232 proclamation must be laid before both Houses within 10 days; Rules 132-133 do not apply (Express Tribune).
- Joint sitting on 15 Oct under Speaker Ayaz Sadiq approved the resolution 214 to 57 (Aaj English).
- Naqvi told the Senate talks with the PTI had nearly produced an agreement before Afridi and Murad Saeed derailed them (24NewsHD, 14 Oct).
- Gohar Ali Khan: the draft had five clauses and the government withdrew when the fourth clause came up (Pakistan Observer).
- Gilani said the PM had assured Maulana Fazlur Rehman that demands would be accepted but the government backed out (The Nation, 15 Oct).
- Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari called the emergency a 'difficult decision'; PPP offered to approach the PM on ending it if the PTI agrees to dialogue (Dawn; Express Tribune headline).
- PHC fixed 20 Oct for preliminary hearing of Gohar's Art. 199 petition, filed 14 Oct; TTAP filed a separate petition (Dawn, 16 Oct).
- Petition grounds: Art. 234 compliance, PTI's 2024 two-thirds majority, no such rule in Balochistan, request to restrain Parliament from K-P legislation (Dawn; Pakistan Observer).

C. Analytical Categories

Constitutional

- Art. 232 covers emergency on war or internal disturbance; Art. 234 covers failure of constitutional machinery in a province (background).
- Parliamentary approval within 10 days is the stated safeguard, applied here within 3 days.

Federalism

- The 18th Amendment strengthened provincial autonomy; displacing an elected provincial government is the sharpest federal tool.
- Petitioners argue discrimination: no such rule for Balochistan despite violence.

Judicial

- PHC will hear Art. 199 petitions on 20 Oct.
- Courts may examine whether the grounds meet the constitutional test.

Political

- Fazl-brokered talks and PPP's offer show room for settlement.
- The PTI faces loss of its provincial base.

D. Stakeholder Positions & Way Forward

- **Federal government (PM Shehbaz Sharif, Mohsin Naqvi, Azam Nazeer Tarar):** Terrorism and 'deliberate disengagement' justify emergency; parliamentary procedure followed.
- **PTI (Gohar Ali Khan):** Unconstitutional; terrorism a pretext; talks failed when the government withdrew at clause four.
- **PPP (Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari):** A difficult decision; would approach the PM on ending it if PTI engages in dialogue.
- **Maulana Fazlur Rehman / JUI-F:** Brokered a deal between Centre and opposition that did not hold (per Gilani).
- **Mahmood Khan Achakzai (Opposition Leader):** Demanded immediate withdrawal of both decisions (Daily Times).

Challenges Ahead

- Defining 'failure of constitutional machinery' against an elected two-thirds government.
- Equal treatment across provinces.
- Rebuilding trust after two failed negotiations.
- Security operations under a contested administration.

Way Forward (analytical suggestions, not reported positions)

- Let the PHC rule quickly on grounds and procedure (analytical suggestion).
- Revive the five-clause draft through a neutral mediator.

- Set a fixed review period and report to Parliament.
- Create a joint federal-provincial counter-terrorism mechanism.

E. Statistical Digest

11 Oct proclamation date	**Arts. 232, 234** provisions invoked
14 Oct NA and Senate endorse	**214-57** joint sitting vote, 15 Oct (Aaj English)
10 days period to lay a proclamation before both Houses (Tarar)	**4+ hours** NA debate on the resolution
14 Oct PTI petition filed in PHC	**20 Oct** PHC preliminary hearing
5 clauses in the disputed draft (Gohar)	**2/3** PTI's 2024 majority claimed in the petition

F. Quotes & Essay-Relevant Vocabulary

- **NA resolution (via The News):** The National Assembly approves the Proclamation of Emergency issued by the President on the 11th October, 2026 in the Province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa under the second proviso of clause (1) of Article 232.
- **PTI petition (via Pakistan Observer):** The petitions describe the emergency and governor's rule as unconstitutional, illegal and driven by mala fide intentions.
- **Gohar Ali Khan (via Daily Times):** Terrorism was being used as a pretext.

Vocabulary: Proclamation | Failure of constitutional machinery | Governor's rule | Joint sitting | Writ petition | Judicial review | Pro forma respondent | Mala fide | Provincial autonomy | Emergency | Endorsement

G. Further In-Depth Study (sources used)

https://www.dawn.com/news/2037086/national-assembly-passes-resolution-endorsing-centres-imposition-of-emergency-in-kp | https://english.aaj.tv/news/330476632/parliaments-joint-sitting-endorses-emergency-in-kp | https://www.dawn.com/news/2037576 | https://tribune.com.pk/story/2634779/govt-tables-resolution-in-na-seeking-endorsement-of-k-p-emergency | https://dailytimes.com.pk/1568484/phc-to-hear-ptis-plea-against-kp-emergency-on-oct-20/

Extended Model Answer I - Linked article: N1

Question: 'Parliamentary endorsement within days cannot cure an emergency and governor's rule that fails the constitutional test.' Discuss with reference to the K-P proclamation of 11 October 2026. (20 marks)

1. Introduction and thesis

On 11 October 2026 President Zardari proclaimed an emergency and governor's rule in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa under Articles 232 and 234 on the Prime Minister's advice, citing the provincial government's 'deliberate disengagement' from the fight against terrorism (Dawn). The National Assembly and Senate approved the proclamation on 14 October and a joint sitting endorsed it by 214 votes to 57 on 15 October (Aaj English). This answer argues that parliamentary endorsement satisfies a procedural requirement but does not answer the substantive question of whether the constitutional conditions were met, which is for the Peshawar High Court, hearing petitions from 20 October, to examine.

2. Constitutional framework

Article 232 allows an emergency where the security of Pakistan, or a part of it, is threatened by war, external aggression or internal disturbance beyond a provincial government's power to control; a proclamation must be laid before both Houses within a stated period (Law Minister Tarar put it at 10 days). Article 234 deals with failure of constitutional machinery in a province, where the government cannot be carried on in accordance with the Constitution. The 18th Amendment strengthened provincial autonomy. The structure suggests that intervention is an exceptional remedy tied to a factual finding and subject to legislative approval, and that courts may examine whether a factual basis exists (background).

3. The reported facts

Dawn reported the Centre's ground as deliberate disengagement from counter-terrorism; Nukta reported a governor's report of constitutional breakdown and the removal of the Chief Minister, ministers, advisers and Advocate General. Parliament acted quickly: the NA debated for over four hours and the Senate saw an opposition walkout. Interior Minister Naqvi said talks with the PTI had nearly succeeded before consultations derailed them; PTI chairman Gohar said a five-clause draft collapsed at the fourth clause; Senate Chairman Gilani said the PM had assured Maulana Fazlur Rehman. Whether the Chief Minister was detained is unconfirmed.

4. The case for the proclamation

Supporters argue that terrorism in K-P is real and escalating, that the Constitution entrusts the Centre with national security, and that the procedure was followed: cabinet advice, presidential proclamation, and approval by both Houses and a joint sitting within days. They add that negotiations were tried for weeks and that the provincial government's alleged disengagement left no alternative. Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari called it a 'difficult decision' and the PPP offered to approach the Prime Minister on lifting it if the PTI engages in dialogue.

5. The case against

Critics respond that the grounds are thin and unevenly applied. The petitions argue that governor's rule was never imposed in Balochistan despite violence, that the PTI holds a two-thirds majority from 2024, and that Article 234 requires strict compliance with its conditions. They question whether 'disengagement' from counter-terrorism is a failure of constitutional machinery, and note that talks collapsed over a clause on joint counter-terrorism policy, a political disagreement. A government that removes an elected provincial cabinet during a political confrontation invites the inference that security is a pretext, although the sources reviewed do not establish motive. Opposition Leader Achakzai demanded immediate withdrawal.

6. Critical evaluation

Parliamentary endorsement has weight: it is the safeguard the Constitution prescribes and the vote of 214 to 57 shows a clear majority. But a majority resolution answers the political question of support, not the legal question of validity; if endorsement could cure any defect, judicial review would be pointless. The courts have the task of testing the factual basis, the proportionality and the duration. The real tension is that both sides are partly right: the Centre may have a legitimate security concern, but the means chosen, displacing an elected government, is the most severe instrument available, so the burden of justification is high.

7. Synthesis

A workable path would combine judicial scrutiny with political settlement: the PHC can examine the grounds on 20 October and onward; the Centre can publish the report on which the proclamation rests; and the parties can revive the five-clause draft through a neutral mediator such as Maulana Fazlur Rehman. A time limit and a review by Parliament would protect the principle that emergency measures are temporary. Joint counter-terrorism machinery with the provincial government would address the stated concern without displacing elected representatives.

8. Conclusion

The proposition is largely correct. Endorsement by Parliament meets a necessary condition but not a sufficient one; the Constitution's design leaves the substance to judicial review and to the political process. How the PHC treats the petitions will show how far Article 234 remains a real limit. Until then, the K-P proclamation is better described as constitutionally contested than constitutionally settled.

Why this is examiner-oriented: it applies Arts. 232 and 234 to a live event, separates procedure from substance, uses sourced facts from both sides and ends with a concrete judicial-political settlement.

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National Article – 02 (N2)

Pakistan to Chair the IMF and World Bank Boards of Governors in 2027

A Major Diplomatic and Economic Opportunity



1 Key Development

2027

Pakistan will chair the Boards of Governors of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank in 2027, marking the **first time since 1963.**

2 What are the Boards of Governors?

IMF
Board of Governors

- Highest decision-making body of the IMF.
- One governor from each of the 191 member countries (usually Finance Minister or Central Bank Governor).
- Meets annually to review the global economy, approve major policies and decisions, and admit new members.

World Bank
Board of Governors

- Highest decision-making body of the World Bank Group.
- One governor from each of the 189 member countries (usually Finance Minister or key official).
- Meets annually to discuss development policies, approve financial statements and admit new members.

3 Significance for Pakistan

- Enhanced **global profile** and diplomatic visibility.
- Opportunity to shape global economic and development agenda.
- Platform to highlight Pakistan's development priorities and challenges.
- Stronger engagement with member countries, donors and international partners.

4 Context and Background

1947	Pakistan became a founding member of the IMF and the World Bank.
1963	Last time Pakistan chaired the Boards of Governors (jointly, in 1963).
2027	Next chairmanship scheduled for 2027 (after a gap of 64 years).

5 Regional and Global Context



- Comes at a time of global economic uncertainty, slowing growth and rising debt vulnerabilities.
- Provides an opportunity to highlight issues of the Global South, climate finance and development needs.
- Can help Pakistan strengthen its case for concessional financing, debt sustainability and development support.

6 Potential Benefits for Pakistan

- Greater influence on global economic policies.
- Opportunity to advance Pakistan's financing and development priorities.
- Stronger role in representing the interests of developing and Muslim countries.
- Learning and capacity-building for Pakistani officials.

7 Challenges and Considerations

- High expectations from member countries.
- Need for a coherent and credible domestic economic agenda.
- Managing geopolitical sensitivities and diverse member interests.

8 Implications for CSS Domains

Pakistan Affairs	Pakistan's foreign economic relations and global role.
Economics	Global financial architecture and development finance.
International Relations	South-South cooperation and multilateralism.
Public Administration	Role of international institutions in development governance.

9 Way Forward

- Use the platform to promote Pakistan's economic reforms and development agenda.
- Build consensus with member countries, especially the Global South.
- Advance issues of climate finance, debt relief and inclusive growth.
- Strengthen domestic economic stability to enhance credibility.

Key Takeaways for CSS

- Understand the structure and functions of the IMF and World Bank.
- Analyse the significance of Pakistan's 2027 chairmanship.
- Discuss opportunities and challenges for Pakistan.
- Link with broader themes: global governance, economic development and Pakistan's foreign policy.



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N2 | International Financial Institutions & Economic Diplomacy | Priority: **HIGH**

Pakistan to Chair the IMF and World Bank Boards of Governors in 2027

Continuity: Follows Issue 21's N1 and N7 (IMF staff-level agreement and reserves): the same institutions now give Pakistan a ceremonial role.

Past Paper Echo: No verified direct past-paper precedent checked. Syllabus anchors: Bretton Woods institutions, IMF governance, Pakistan's multilateral diplomacy.

Essay Topic: Pakistan and the Bretton Woods institutions: borrower, board member and chair.

Infographic cross-check: The image says Pakistan last chaired the boards in 1963 (a 64-year gap) and that Pakistan was a founding member of the IMF and World Bank in 1947. The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Dawn say the last time was 1953; the 1947 founding-member claim is not in the sources. It lists 191 IMF and 189 World Bank members, unsourced here. Its 'greater influence' and 'financing' benefits conflict with Dawn's explainer that the chair gives no extra voting rights, financing access or authority over lending. The article text governs.

A. Executive Summary

On Friday 16 October Pakistan's Ministry of Economic Affairs announced that Pakistan had been named incoming chair of the Boards of Governors of the IMF and the World Bank Group for 2027, the first time since 1953. The announcement was made during the plenary session of the 2026 annual meetings in Bangkok, which run from 12 to 18 October and have brought together more than 15,000 participants from 191 countries. Economic Affairs Minister Ahad Khan Cheema, who is Pakistan's Governor to the World Bank, was nominated to lead both boards for the year; the ministry called it a 'historic milestone'. Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, who is in Bangkok, also met World Bank Group President Ajay Banga on the sidelines.

Dawn's explainer is careful about what the role means. The chair carries mainly procedural and diplomatic responsibilities: under Section 5(d) of the World Bank's bylaws the chair, jointly with the bank's president, arranges the Board of Governors' meetings and may brief the press with the president and the IMF managing director. It does not confer executive authority, additional voting rights, preferential access to financing or power to approve IMF programmes and World Bank loans. Pakistan is represented on the IMF Board of Governors by the State Bank governor, while Cheema is the World Bank governor, which made him eligible. Pakistan will preside over the 2027 annual meetings, scheduled for 4 to 9 October in Washington.

The timing is notable: Pakistan remains engaged with the IMF under a $7 billion Extended Fund Facility and a $1.4 billion Resilience and Sustainability Facility, and an IMF staff-level agreement reached on 7 October still awaits Executive Board approval (Issue 21, N1). For CSS candidates the story is a useful corrective to over-reading symbolism: a borrower chairing the lenders' governing board enhances visibility and diplomatic standing, but not leverage. Essays on multilateral diplomacy can pair it with the debate on reform of voting shares in the Bretton Woods institutions.

B. Key Arguments / Developments

- Pakistan named incoming chair of the IMF and World Bank Group Boards of Governors for 2027, first time since 1953 (Ministry of Economic Affairs, via Dawn, 16 Oct).
- Announced at the plenary of the 2026 WBG-IMF Annual Meetings in Bangkok (Express Tribune; Daily Times).
- Ahad Khan Cheema, Economic Affairs Minister and Pakistan's World Bank governor, to lead both boards (Dawn; Daily Times).
- The annual meetings run 12-18 Oct with over 15,000 participants from 191 countries (Dawn).
- Cheema received a briefing from the WBG Corporate Secretariat on the chairmanship's responsibilities (Daily Times).
- Finance Minister Aurangzeb met World Bank Group President Ajay Banga at a dinner hosted by Thailand's PM (Dawn, citing PTV).
- Dawn explainer: the chair carries mainly procedural and diplomatic responsibilities (Dawn Business).
- No additional voting rights, preferential financing or authority to approve IMF programmes or World Bank loans (Dawn Business).
- Under Sec. 5(d) of the World Bank bylaws the chair, with the president, arranges Board of Governors meetings (Dawn Business).
- Pakistan is represented on the IMF Board of Governors by the State Bank governor (Dawn Business).
- Pakistan will preside over the 2027 annual meetings, 4-9 Oct 2027, in Washington (Dawn Business).
- Pakistan remains engaged under a $7bn EFF and a $1.4bn RSF (Daily Sun, 16 Oct).
- The meetings mark the Bretton Woods institutions' return to Bangkok 35 years after 1991 (Xinhua, 16 Oct).

C. Analytical Categories

Institutional

- The Board of Governors is the highest decision-making body of both institutions (background).
- Chair role is ceremonial and organisational.

Diplomatic

- Gives Pakistan visibility in global economic deliberations.
- Rotation among member constituencies explains the 1953 gap (background).

Economic

- Pakistan remains an IMF borrower under two facilities.
- Chairmanship does not ease programme conditionality.

Domestic

- Government presents it as recognition of reform.
- Critics may stress that borrowing status is unchanged.

D. Stakeholder Positions & Way Forward

- **Ahad Khan Cheema (Economic Affairs Minister):** Will work with WBG, IMF and members for a more responsive multilateral system.
- **Muhammad Aurangzeb (Finance Minister):** Engaging lenders, investors and partners in Bangkok.
- **Ministry of Economic Affairs:** Calls it a 'historic milestone'.
- **Dawn Business explainer:** Chair gives no extra voting power or financing access.

Challenges Ahead

- Balancing a chair's neutrality with Pakistan's borrower interests.
- Delivering the Board approval of the $1.2bn tranche.
- Avoiding over-claiming the diplomatic gain.
- Using the platform for debt and climate-finance reform.

Way Forward (analytical suggestions, not reported positions)

- Use the chair to advance debt-restructuring and climate-finance debates (analytical suggestion).
- Prepare the 2027 Washington meeting with a published agenda.
- Keep programme delivery on track.
- Brief the public on what the role does and does not entail.

E. Statistical Digest

1953 last time Pakistan held the chair	**2027** chair year
15,000+ participants in Bangkok	**191** member countries
12-18 Oct meeting dates	**4-9 Oct 2027** Washington meetings Pakistan will preside over
$7bn / $1.4bn EFF / RSF	**35 years** since Bangkok last hosted (1991)

F. Quotes & Essay-Relevant Vocabulary

- **Ministry of Economic Affairs (via Dawn):** The chairmanship is a historic milestone, the first since 1953.
- **Dawn Business:** The chairmanship does not give Pakistan additional authority over lending decisions.

Vocabulary: Board of Governors | Bretton Woods | Chairmanship | Voting share | Procedural role | Extended Fund Facility | Resilience and Sustainability Facility | Plenary | Multilateralism | Governor (IMF/WB)

G. Further In-Depth Study (sources used)

https://www.dawn.com/news/2037553 | https://www.dawn.com/news/2037623 |
https://tribune.com.pk/story/2635184/pakistan-to-chair-imf-world-bank-boards-in-2027-for-first-time-since-1953 |
https://dailytimes.com.pk/1568423/pakistan-to-assume-imf-wb-boards-chairmanship-for-first-time-since-1953/

ICEP's CSS Weekly
CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE
Issue 22
October 11 – 17, 2026
National Article – 03 (N3)

Global Hunger Index 2026
Pakistan Scores 25.5, 'Serious' and Ranks 106th of 122

Persistent Food Insecurity Amid Economic and Climate Challenges



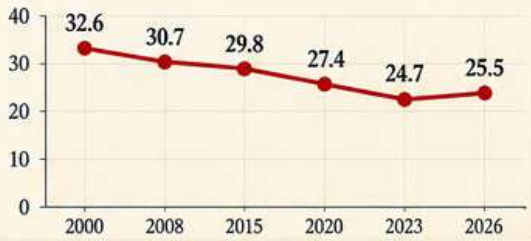
1 Key Findings for Pakistan

GHI Score (2026)
25.5
'Serious'
level of hunger

Global Rank
106th
out of 122 countries

Worsened from **24.7 in 2023** to **25.5** in 2026

2 Pakistan's Performance Over Time



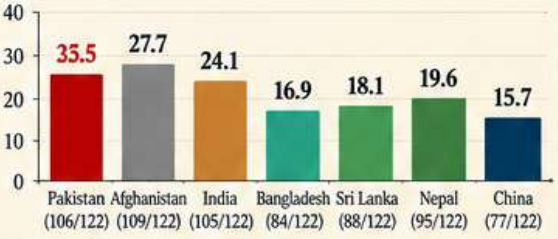
After years of gradual improvement, Pakistan's score has worsened again in 2026, reversing the downward trend seen since 2000.

3 GHI Classification (2026)

≤ 9.9	Low
10.0 – 19.9	Moderate
20.0 – 34.9	Serious
35.0 – 49.9	Alarming
≥ 50.0	Extremely alarming

Pakistan's score of 25.5 places it in the **'Serious' category (20.0 – 34.9).**

4 Pakistan in Regional Comparison (GHI 2026)



Pakistan performs worse than India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal and China, and is only slightly better than Afghanistan.

5 Key Drivers of Hunger in Pakistan

Economic instability
High inflation, food price shocks and low household incomes.

Climate-related shocks
Floods, droughts and declining agricultural productivity.

Agricultural challenges
Low yields, water scarcity and limited investment in agriculture.

Poverty and inequality
Large population of people unable to afford a healthy diet.

6 GHI Indicators for Pakistan (2026)

Child stunting
33.6%
(of children under 5)

Child wasting
9.8%
(of children under 5)

Child mortality
7.7%
(under 5 years)

Undernourishment
9.3%
(of total population)

7 Global Situation (2026)

673 million
people worldwide are undernourished (about 8.2% of the global population).

43 countries
are in the alarming or extremely alarming category, mostly in Sub-Saharan Africa and parts of Asia.

8 Implications for Pakistan

Public health risks
Stunting, wasting and higher child mortality.

Human capital loss
Lower educational attainment and productivity.

Pressure on social sector
Higher demand for food, health and welfare programmes.

Threat to economic growth
A hungry and malnourished population cannot unlock its potential.

9 Way Forward

1. Stabilise the economy and control food inflation.
2. Invest in climate-resilient agriculture and water management.
3. Expand social protection and targeted nutrition programmes.
4. Improve maternal and child health services.
5. Ensure coordinated federal and provincial policies on food security.

10 Relevance for CSS

Pakistan Affairs
Food security, poverty and governance.

Economics
Agriculture, inflation and human development.

International Relations
Global food security and SDGs.

General Science
Nutrition, public health and climate change.

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N3 | Food Security, Nutrition & Human Development | Priority: **HIGH**

Global Hunger Index 2026: Pakistan Scores 25.5, 'Serious', and Ranks 106th of 122

Continuity: Complements Issue 21's N3 (World Bank poverty report): hunger and poverty data point the same way.

Past Paper Echo: No verified direct past-paper precedent checked. Syllabus anchors: food security, malnutrition, SDG 2, Pakistan's human development.

Essay Topic: Food security and nutrition in Pakistan: stability without welfare?

Flag: The GHI report itself was not retrieved; figures come from outlets reporting it. Dawn's editorial wording differs from the index ranking.

Infographic cross-check: The image's charts conflict with the sources. The trend line (32.6 in 2000, 24.7 in 2023) differs from the reported 36.2 in 2000 and 24.0 in 2018. The regional bar chart labels Pakistan 35.5 (the score is 25.5), gives Afghanistan 27.7 and rank 109 (reported 28.6) and lists India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal and China values not in the sources; it also says Pakistan is only slightly better than Afghanistan and worse than India, which the sources do not support. Indicator values differ: child mortality 7.7% (source 5.6%) and undernourishment 9.3% (source 16.1%). The global figures (673 million; 43 countries) are not in the sources. Do not use the chart numbers. The article text governs.

A. Executive Summary

The 2026 Global Hunger Index (GHI), released in mid-October under the theme 'No Security Without Food Security', gives Pakistan a score of 25.5, which the index classifies as a 'serious' level of hunger. Pakistan ranks 106th of 122 countries with sufficient data and has the second-highest hunger score in South Asia after Afghanistan, which scores 28.6. The regional score for South Asia is 23.5, second only to sub-Saharan Africa at 27.5, and the global score has risen to 18.1 from 17.6 in 2018, reversing part of the progress made since 2000, when it stood at 28.2. The report attributes the global deterioration to overlapping conflicts, climate extremes, economic shocks and disruptions to food and agricultural supply chains. Its 2026 findings use data for 2021-2025.

Pakistan's own trend is mixed. Its score has fallen from 36.2 in 2000 to 25.5 in 2026, but it rose from 24.0 in 2018, making Pakistan one of only two South Asian countries, with Afghanistan, where hunger has worsened since 2018. The index is built from four indicators, and the Pakistan values reported are: 16.1 per cent of the population undernourished, 33.6 per cent of children under five stunted, 9.8 per cent of children wasted, and 5.6 per cent of children dying before age five. Separately, the 2026 Global Report on Food Crises, cited by Dawn, named Pakistan among ten primary centres of acute hunger, with 9.3 million people in 'crisis' conditions and 1.7 million in 'emergency', the most acute categories short of famine; heavy rains and floods that damaged crops were noted as a continuing cause.

A reporting discrepancy matters for essays. Dawn's editorial of 16 October, 'Hunger in Pakistan', described Pakistan as the country most affected by hunger in South Asia, while the index data and most reports place it second after Afghanistan; Minute Mirror's headline captures the tension by saying Pakistan 'tops' South Asia but is 'officially second'. Candidates should quote the score (25.5), the rank (106 of 122) and the comparison with Afghanistan (28.6) rather than the editorial's phrase. The Media Line reports that 218 million people across South Asia were undernourished between 2023 and 2025, roughly one-third of the global total, though its regional definition includes Iran.

B. Key Arguments / Developments

- GHI 2026: Pakistan scores 25.5, a 'serious' level of hunger (GHI website, via Daily Times; Geo via IANS).
- Ranked 106th of 122 countries with sufficient data (Minute Mirror; Asian Mirror).
- Afghanistan scores 28.6, the only South Asian country above Pakistan (Daily Times).
- South Asia's regional score is 23.5, second to sub-Saharan Africa's 27.5; the global score is 18.1 (ProPakistani).
- Global score rose from 17.6 in 2018 to 18.1 in 2026; it was 28.2 in 2000 (ProPakistani).
- Pakistan's score fell from 36.2 in 2000 to 25.5 in 2026 but rose from 24.0 in 2018 (ProPakistani).
- Pakistan and Afghanistan are the only South Asian countries where hunger has worsened since 2018 (ProPakistani).
- Undernourishment 16.1%; child stunting 33.6%; child wasting 9.8%; under-five mortality 5.6% (Geo via IANS; ProPakistani).
- Report theme: 'No Security Without Food Security' (Minute Mirror).
- The index uses four indicators: undernourishment, stunting, wasting and child mortality; data cover 2021-2025 (ProPakistani).
- 2026 Global Report on Food Crises named Pakistan among ten primary centres of acute hunger (Dawn, via IANS).
- 9.3 million people in 'crisis' and 1.7 million in 'emergency' conditions in Pakistan (Dawn, via SocialNews.XYZ).
- Extreme weather, including heavy rains and floods that damaged crops, was a continuing cause (Dawn, via SocialNews.XYZ).
- Dawn editorial 16 Oct 'Hunger in Pakistan' called Pakistan 'the country most affected by hunger in South Asia' (Dawn). [Differs from index ranking]

C. Analytical Categories

Statistical

- The index composite combines four indicators, so ranks are sensitive to child nutrition data.
- Dawn's 'most affected' phrase conflicts with the second-after-Afghanistan result.

Social

- One in three children under five is stunted.
- Hunger worsened since 2018 despite long-run gains.

Environmental

- Floods and heavy rain damage crops.
- Climate extremes feed food insecurity.

Policy

- Targeted social protection and nutrition programmes are central.
- Links to the IMF social-spending debate (Issue 21, N1).

D. Stakeholder Positions & Way Forward

- **Global Hunger Index report:** Classifies Pakistan's hunger as serious; hunger worsened since 2018.
- **Dawn editorial board:** Argues an economy battered by shocks explains the result.
- **Global Report on Food Crises 2026:** Names Pakistan among ten primary hunger centres.

Challenges Ahead

- High stunting and wasting.
- Climate-related crop losses.
- Fiscal limits on nutrition spending.
- Data gaps between rankings and national surveys.

Way Forward (analytical suggestions, not reported positions)

- Protect nutrition spending inside programme targets (analytical suggestion).
- Scale school feeding and maternal nutrition programmes.
- Invest in climate-resilient agriculture.
- Publish annual national nutrition data.

E. Statistical Digest

25.5 Pakistan's GHI 2026 score	**106 / 122** Pakistan's rank
28.6 Afghanistan's score	**23.5** South Asia regional score
18.1 global score	**36.2** Pakistan's score in 2000
24.0 Pakistan's score in 2018	**16.1%** undernourished
33.6% children stunted	**9.8%** children wasted
5.6% under-five mortality	**9.3m / 1.7m** people in crisis / emergency (GRFC via Dawn)

F. Quotes & Essay-Relevant Vocabulary

- **GHI 2026 (via Daily Times):** With a 2026 Global Hunger Index score of 25.5, Pakistan has a serious level of hunger.
- **Dawn editorial, 16 Oct:** Pakistan's position as the country most affected by hunger in South Asia is not surprising.

Vocabulary: Global Hunger Index | Undernourishment | Stunting | Wasting | Child mortality | Food insecurity | Acute food insecurity | Fragile states | Nutrition | SDG 2

G. Further In-Depth Study (sources used)

https://propakistani.pk/2026/10/16/pakistan-2nd-worst-hungry-country/ | https://dailytimes.com.pk/1568004/alarming-hunger-levels-place-pakistan-second-in-south-asia/ | https://www.socialnews.xyz/2026/10/15/pakistan-second-worst-in-south-asia-on-hunger-index-report/ | https://minutemirror.com.pk/pakistan-tops-south-asia-in-2026-global-hunger-index-amid-economic-challenges-but-officially-second-after-afghanistan-644966/

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National Article – 04 (N4)

Kurram Border Clashes and Pakistan's Refusal of 'Unconditional' Talks with Kabul



Escalating Tensions, Humanitarian Impact and Diplomatic Options

1 What Happened?

- **11–17 Oct 2026** — Fresh clashes reported in Kurram between Pakistani security forces and TTP-linked militants.
- **Multiple incidents** — Use of heavy and light weapons; casualties reported on both sides.
- **Security response** — Pakistani forces conducted intelligence-based operations in the area.
- **Humanitarian impact** — Intermittent closure of the Kurram road, causing shortages of food, medicine and essential supplies.

2 Where is Kurram?



3 Who is Involved?

- **Pakistan** — Security forces conducting operations against militants in Kurram.
- **Afghan Taliban (Kabul)** — Pakistan accuses Kabul of providing sanctuary to TTP militants; denies involvement.
- **TTP / Militants** — Carrying out cross-border attacks; using Kurram's rugged terrain.
- **Local Population** — Facing insecurity, displacement and shortages due to road closures and ongoing clashes.

4 Pakistan's Position

- Rejects 'unconditional' talks with Kabul in the current environment.
- Demands verifiable and irreversible action against TTP and its networks on Afghan soil.
- Calls for effective border management to prevent cross-border infiltration.
- Open to a structured and conditional dialogue focused on counter-terrorism and border security.

5 Kabul's Position

- Denies providing safe haven to TTP militants.
- Urges dialogue and de-escalation between the two countries.
- Calls for addressing humanitarian concerns of the local population.
- Accuses Pakistan of violating Afghan sovereignty (as reported by Afghan media).

6 Humanitarian Impact

- Kurram road closures disrupt supply of food, medicine and essential goods.
- Civilians, including women and children, face hardships.
- Movement of goods and people remains uncertain due to security concerns.
- Risk of displacement in affected areas.

7 Why Kurram Matters?

- **Strategic Location** — Sits on a key Pak-Afghan border corridor.
- **Security Linkages** — Used by TTP for infiltration and cross-border attacks.
- **Sectarian Sensitivity** — Diverse ethnic and sectarian composition adds complexity.
- **Regional Stability** — Continued instability affects Pakistan-Afghanistan relations and wider regional security.

8 Key Challenges

- Persistent militant presence and safe havens.
- Porous border and difficult terrain.
- Humanitarian crisis and local grievances.
- Lack of trust between Pakistan and Afghan Taliban.
- Complex security and diplomatic trade-offs.

9 Way Forward

1. Strengthen border management and surveillance.
2. Demand verifiable action against TTP from Kabul.
3. Explore conditional and structured dialogue mechanisms.
4. Ensure humanitarian access and safe movement in Kurram.
5. Address local grievances through political and socio-economic measures.
6. Coordinate with regional and international partners for stability.

10 Relevance for CSS

- **Pakistan Affairs** — Internal security, Pak-Afghan relations, tribal areas and national cohesion.
- **International Relations** — Neighbourhood policy, counter-terrorism and regional stability.
- **Political Science** — State response to non-state actors and civil-military dynamics.
- **Current Affairs** — Contemporary security challenges and foreign policy options.

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N4 | Internal Security & Afghan Policy | Priority: **HIGH**

Kurram Border Clashes and Pakistan's Refusal of 'Unconditional' Talks with Kabul

Continuity: Follows Issue 21's N2 (K-P security): the border front flared on 16-17 October as the Centre took over K-P.

Past Paper Echo: No verified direct past-paper precedent checked. Syllabus anchors: Durand Line, TTP, Pak-Afghan relations, border management.

Essay Topic: Pakistan's Afghan policy: engagement, coercion and the TTP problem.

Flag: All casualty and damage claims are Pakistani state-media or security-source accounts; no Afghan statement was found.

Infographic cross-check: The image describes clashes between Pakistani forces and 'TTP-linked militants' on 11-17 October, casualties on both sides, closures of the Kurram road and shortages of food and medicine, and a Kabul position that denies safe haven and accuses Pakistan of violating sovereignty. The sources report Afghan Taliban firing in the Taida sector, Upper Kurram and Ghuzgarhi on 17 October, Pakistani retaliation on the Topsar post and Shipola base camp, and unverified casualty claims from Pakistani state media only; no Afghan statement and no road-closure or humanitarian details were found. The article text governs.

A. Executive Summary

Pakistani security forces responded on 17 October to what state media called unprovoked firing by Afghan Taliban forces along the border in the Kurram sector of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. PTV News and the state news agency APP, citing security sources, said the Afghan side opened fire to 'facilitate terrorists' and that the army used heavy weapons and artillery on the Topsar post and the Shipola base camp in Upper Kurram, near Taida and Ghuzgarhi, destroying several posts and, according to the sources, completely destroying the Shipola camp. APP quoted sources saying several Afghan Taliban personnel were 'reportedly killed' in the Ghuzgarhi area; one outlet put the number at at least four. Security sources also said forces had foiled an attempt by terrorists to cross the border the night before. These accounts come only from Pakistani state media and security sources; no Afghan statement was found in the sources reviewed, and the casualty claims are unverified.

The clash followed a Foreign Office briefing on 16 October in which spokesperson Sajjad Haider Khan said Pakistan rejects unconditional talks with Afghanistan and demands a verifiable mechanism to end terrorist attacks from Afghan soil; Dawn's report said no formal Russian mediation initiative was under discussion and that the failure to secure a joint communique at a recent meeting highlighted the central obstacle, Pakistan's demand for action against the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and other groups it says use Afghan territory. Khan said attacks in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa originate from Afghan soil and that Indian proxies are involved, a claim that is Pakistan's position and was not independently verified here. Pakistan would welcome sincere efforts by friendly states to resolve security issues, he added. Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, according to the spokesperson, called on Afghan authorities to take 'concrete, verifiable and irreversible action' against groups operating from Afghan soil.

For CSS candidates the story shows the pattern of Pakistan's Afghan policy in October 2026: military responses along the border, diplomacy conditioned on verifiable action against the TTP, and a preference for friendly-state mediation over a formal bilateral track. It should be read with Issue 20 and Issue 21 coverage of the Kohat attack and the September-October strikes, and with the K-P emergency (N1), since the federal government cites terrorism as the reason for taking over the province.

B. Key Arguments / Developments

- 17 Oct: security forces responded to 'unprovoked firing' by Afghan Taliban forces in Kurram (PTV News via Dawn).
- APP and PTV: Afghan forces fired to 'facilitate terrorists'; the army used heavy weapons and destroyed several posts (Dawn, 17 Oct).
- Targets named: Topsar post and Shipola base camp in Upper Kurram; Shipola 'completely destroyed' (APP sources via Dawn).
- Firing reported in the Taida sector, Upper Kurram and Ghuzgarhi (Aaj English, 17 Oct).
- Several Afghan Taliban personnel 'reportedly killed' in Ghuzgarhi (APP sources); one outlet says at least four (Pakistan Observer). [Unverified]
- Security sources: an attempt by terrorists to cross into Pakistan was foiled the previous night (Dawn).
- No Afghan government statement found in the sources reviewed. [Gap]
- FO, 16 Oct: Pakistan rules out unconditional talks with Afghanistan; demands a verifiable mechanism to end attacks from Afghan soil (Dawn).
- FO: no formal Russian mediation initiative under discussion (Dawn).
- Failure to get a joint communique highlighted Pakistan's demand for action against the TTP and other groups (Dawn).
- Spokesperson: terrorist attacks in Balochistan and K-P originate from Afghan soil; Indian proxies involved (Pakistan's claim) (Express Tribune; The Nation).
- Dar urged Afghan authorities to take 'concrete, verifiable and irreversible action' (FO, via Express Tribune).

- Pakistan would welcome sincere efforts by friendly states (Dawn, via ua.news).

C. Analytical Categories

Security

- Border exchanges continue alongside diplomacy.
- Cross-border infiltration is the stated trigger.

Diplomatic

- Pakistan conditions talks on verifiable action against the TTP.
- Mediation by friendly states preferred; Russian role denied.

Legal

- Use of force across a border requires self-defence justification under the UN Charter (background).
- Casualty claims lack independent verification.

Political

- The terrorism case underlies the K-P emergency (N1).
- Pakistan links attacks to India (claim).

D. Stakeholder Positions & Way Forward

- **Foreign Office (Sajjad Haider Khan):** No unconditional talks; verifiable mechanism required; Afghan soil used for attacks.
- **Ishaq Dar:** Demands concrete, verifiable and irreversible action by Afghan authorities.
- **Pakistani security sources / PTV / APP:** Afghan firing facilitated infiltration; posts destroyed.
- **Afghan Taliban:** No statement found in the sources reviewed.

Challenges Ahead

- Verification of claims on both sides.
- Repeated border flare-ups.
- No agreed monitoring mechanism.
- Competing narratives on proxies.

Way Forward (analytical suggestions, not reported positions)

- Agree a joint verification mechanism with mediators (analytical suggestion).
- Open a hotline for border incidents.
- Publish verified casualty data.
- Pair military responses with a standing diplomatic channel.

E. Statistical Digest

16 Oct FO briefing on Afghanistan	**17 Oct** Kurram exchange of fire
3 locations named: Taida, Upper Kurram, Ghuzgarhi	**2** targets named: Topsar post, Shipola base camp
4+ Afghan personnel reportedly killed (one outlet; unverified)	**0** Russian mediation initiatives under discussion (FO)

F. Quotes & Essay-Relevant Vocabulary

- **Dar (via FO spokesperson):** Afghan authorities should take concrete, verifiable and irreversible action against groups operating from Afghan soil.
- **PTV News / APP (via Dawn):** The Afghan Taliban forces opened fire to facilitate terrorists.

Vocabulary: Cross-border firing | Verifiable mechanism | Durand Line | Infiltration | Sanctuary | TTP | Mediation | Retaliatory fire | Unprovoked | Border management

G. Further In-Depth Study (sources used)

https://www.dawn.com/news/2037853/security-forces-respond-to-unprovoked-firing-by-afghan-taliban-along-kurram-border-state-media | https://www.dawn.com/news/2037780 | https://english.aaj.tv/news/330476929/afghan-taliban-posts-razed-after-unprovoked-firing | https://nation.com.pk/17-Oct-2026/pakistan-rejects-indian-minister-s-remarks-warns-misadventure

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National Article – 05 (N5)

Gilgit-Baltistan Passes Its Amended Local Government Act 2026

Clearing the Way for First Local Polls in Over Two Decades



1 Key Development

The Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly passed the amended Local Government (Amendment) Act 2026, paving the way for the **first local government elections in over two decades.**

2 Background

- The previous local government system in GB had remained non-functional for more than two decades.
- The delay was due to legal, constitutional and political disputes over the status and powers of local bodies.

3 Key Features of the Amended Act 2026

- Provides a legal framework for elected district and tehsil/town local governments.
- Defines structure, powers and functions of local bodies.
- Includes provisions for financial resources and transfer of functions.
- Aims to improve service delivery, transparency and local representation.

4 Significance

- Brings people closer to decision-making.
- Expected to improve local governance and service delivery.
- Enhances political inclusion and public participation.
- May help reduce centre-periphery grievances in GB.

5 Map of Gilgit-Baltistan



6 Challenges Ahead

- Limited financial autonomy and resource constraints.
- Overlap of powers between different tiers of government.
- Difficult terrain and administrative capacity issues.
- Ensuring free, fair and inclusive elections.
- Managing local political rivalries and maintaining stability.

7 Political and Constitutional Context

Constitutional Status
GB is not a province; its governance is regulated through a special legal and administrative framework.

Ongoing Reforms
Part of broader efforts to strengthen democratic institutions and local governance in GB.

Representation
Local polls may enhance people's representatiin and address long-standing demands for greater devolution.

8 Implications for Pakistan

- Ctronger local governance and stability in GB.
- Better service delivery and socio-economic development.
- May help reduce extremist influence through grassroots inclusion.
- Enhances Pakistan's governance footprint in a strategic region.

9 Way Forward

1. Conduct timely, transparent and inclusive local government elections.
2. Ensure adequate financial resources and administrative support.
3. Build capacity of local institutions and elected representatives.
4. Address the legal and constitutional ambiguities regarding GB's status.
5. Promote public participation and accountability at the local level.

10 Relevance for CSS

Pakistan Affairs
Governance in GB, centre-periphery relations and constitutional developments.

Political Science
Local governance, decentralization and democratic institutions.

Public Administration
Service delivery, institutional design and local government reforms.

Current Affairs
Governance reforms, regional stability and strategic importance of GB.



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N5 | Local Government & Public Administration | Priority: **MEDIUM**

Gilgit-Baltistan Passes Its Amended Local Government Act 2026, Clearing the Way for First Local Polls in Over Two Decades

Continuity: New this issue; connects to Issue 21's N5 (Balochistan governance reforms).

Past Paper Echo: No verified direct past-paper precedent checked. Syllabus anchors: Art. 140A (background), local government, devolution.

Essay Topic: Local government in Pakistan's peripheries: why do grassroots elections keep slipping?

Flag: The 5 December poll date is from a Dawn headline and the governor's assent was still pending; the chief minister's identity is not named because sources differ.

Infographic cross-check: The image says the act provides for 'district and tehsil/town' local governments. The sources describe four tiers (district councils, union councils, municipal committees, municipal corporations) and omit 'tehsil'. It omits the governor's pending assent, the 17% women's quota and the reported 5 December polls. The 'key features' and 'challenges' panels are general and not from the sources. The article text governs.

A. Executive Summary

On Wednesday 14 October the Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) Assembly passed the amended GB Local Government Act 2026 by majority vote, clearing the way for the region's first local bodies elections in more than two decades, Dawn reported on 15 October. The session was chaired by Deputy Speaker Malik Kifayatur Rehman, and Local Bodies Minister Zulfiqar Ali Murad introduced the amended draft. The Assembly had earlier passed the act, but GB Governor Syed Mehdi Shah returned the bill for reconsideration after raising objections to several points; the provincial cabinet approved revisions to address them. Opposition members asked for more time to study the bill but it passed over their dissent. The assembly also unanimously approved a bill to establish a Gilgit-Baltistan Information Technology Board, intended to address problems in telecommunications and internet connectivity.

Under the act, municipal corporations are established in Chilas, Gilgit and Skardu, where elected members choose mayors and deputy mayors; union councils and district councils are established across all districts; and 17 per cent of seats in all local bodies are reserved for women. An election commission official said the previous system had seven categories of local bodies and the amended law simplifies it into four: district councils, union councils, municipal committees and municipal corporations. Dawn reported separately that elections for the municipal corporation seats in Chilas, Skardu and Gilgit are to be held on 5 December. The polls, announced last year after a gap of over two decades, were originally set for 14 February 2026 and were postponed repeatedly because of weather and amendments to the law.

The delay reflected an administrative deadlock: the chief minister wanted elections under the new 2026 act while the election commissioner intended to use the 2014 act, and a poll date of 2 August was announced without consulting the chief minister. Official sources said a new date would be announced once the governor signs the amended bill into law. For CSS candidates the story illustrates why local government is often the weakest tier in Pakistan's federal structure: it depends on provincial legislation, executive willingness and election commission timing, even though Article 140A of the Constitution requires provinces to establish local government systems (background, applicable to the provinces, not to GB). A balanced answer should note the quota for women and the simplification of tiers as design choices to be tested in practice.

B. Key Arguments / Developments

- GB Assembly passed the amended Local Government Act 2026 by majority on 14 Oct (Dawn, 15 Oct).
- Cleared the way for the first local bodies elections in over two decades (Dawn; The Standard).
- Local Bodies Minister Zulfiqar Ali Murad introduced the amended draft (Dawn).
- Governor Syed Mehdi Shah had returned an earlier version for reconsideration over several points (Dawn).
- Municipal corporations established in Chilas, Gilgit and Skardu; mayors and deputy mayors chosen by elected members (Dawn).
- Union councils and district councils to be established across all districts; 17% quota for women in all local bodies (The Standard; Minute Mirror).
- Previous system: seven categories of local bodies; amended law: four (district councils, union councils, municipal committees, municipal corporations) (Dawn).
- Election date to be announced after the governor signs the bill (Dawn).
- Municipal corporation polls in Chilas, Skardu and Gilgit to be held on 5 Dec (Dawn headline).
- Polls were originally set for 14 Feb 2026 and postponed repeatedly (Dawn).
- Deadlock: the chief minister preferred the 2026 act; the election commissioner intended to use the 2014 act (Dawn).
- Assembly unanimously approved a bill creating a GB Information Technology Board (Dawn; Minute Mirror).
- Opposition lawmakers sought more time to study the bill (The Standard).

C. Analytical Categories

Legal

- Act replaces the 2014 framework and simplifies tiers.
- Governor's assent is still required.

Administrative

- Municipal corporations in three cities; mayors chosen by members.
- Election commission and elected government disagreed on the legal basis.

Social

- 17% quota for women across all bodies.
- First local polls in over 20 years.

Political

- PPP claims credit for the law (election official quoted by Dawn).
- Opposition objected to the pace.

D. Stakeholder Positions & Way Forward

- **GB Local Bodies Minister Zulfiqar Ali Murad:** Introduced the amended draft addressing the governor's concerns.
- **Governor Syed Mehdi Shah:** Returned the earlier bill; assent pending.
- **Election commission official:** Says polls follow once the law is enacted; credits the PPP government.
- **Opposition lawmakers:** Asked for more time to study the bill.

Challenges Ahead

- Securing the governor's assent.
- Avoiding further postponements.
- Funding municipal corporations.
- Building capacity for new tiers.

Way Forward (analytical suggestions, not reported positions)

- Assent and notify the act promptly (analytical suggestion).
- Hold the 5 Dec polls on schedule.
- Publish a local-government finance formula.
- Train new councillors, especially women members.

E. Statistical Digest

14 Oct date the amended act passed	**20+ years** gap since last local polls
3 municipal corporations: Chilas, Gilgit, Skardu	**17%** women's quota
7 to 4 categories of local bodies, old to new	**14 Feb 2026** original poll date
5 Dec reported date for municipal corporation polls	**2 Aug** date announced earlier by the election commissioner

F. Quotes & Essay-Relevant Vocabulary

- **Dawn (15 Oct):** The assembly cleared the way for the region's first local bodies elections in over two decades.
- **Election official (via Dawn):** The GB Local Government Act 2026 was introduced by the PPP government, and the credit for holding elections under the same law also goes to the party.

Vocabulary: Local government | Municipal corporation | Union council | District council | Mayor | Women's quota | Governor's assent | Devolution | Local bodies elections | Election commission

G. Further In-Depth Study (sources used)

https://www.dawn.com/news/2037236/gilgit-baltistan-assembly-passes-amended-local-govt-act-2026 | https://www.dawn.com/news/2037363/gb-lg-polls-elections-for-municipal-corporation-seats-in-chilas-skardu-gilgit-to-be-held-on-dec-5 | https://thestandard.com.pk/gilgit-baltistan-assembly-sets-sights-on-local-body-elections/

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CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE

Issue 22
October 11 – 17, 2026
National Article – 06 (N6)

Reserves Edge Up to $21.47bn and Total Liquid Reserves to $26.86bn as Oil Stays Near $106



External Stability Amid High Oil Prices and Global Uncertainty

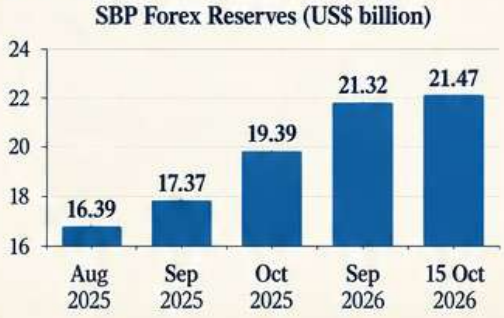
1 Key Figures

SBP Reserves
$21.47bn
(as of 15 October 2026)
↑ +$15.8m
(increase from previous week)

Total Liquid Reserves
$26.86bn
(as of 15 October 2026)
↑ +$65.9m
(increase from previous week)

Brent Crude Oil
~$106
per barrel
(hovering near $106) during the week)

2 Trend in Reserves (SBP)



Reserves have shown a steady increase over the past year, reaching **$21.47bn** in October 2026.

3 Components of Total Liquid Reserves

SBP Reserves
$21.47bn
(15 Oct 2026)

+

Commercial Banks Reserves
$5.39bn
(estimated)

=

Total Liquid Reserves
$26.86bn
(15 Oct 2026)

4 Factors Behind the Increase

- Continued IMF programme inflows
- Improvement in exports and remittances
- Increased foreign loans and deposits
- Better external financing and deposit inflows

5 High Oil Prices: Implications for Pakistan

Brent crude oil remained near **$106 per barrel** during the week.

High oil prices increase Pakistan's import bill, widen the current account deficit and put pressure on external reserves.

6 Broader Economic Context

- Import cover remains around 3.04 months (SBP).
- Economic stability supported by IMF programme and external inflows.
- Global uncertainty, including the Gulf situation, keeps oil prices elevated.
- Need for sustained structural reforms to build external resilience.

7 Challenges Ahead

- Persistent high global oil prices and supply risks.
- External sector vulnerabilities and dependence on external financing.
- Risk of exchange rate pressure and wider current account deficit.
- Need for export diversification and reduction in import dependence.

8 Way Forward

- Enhance export competitiveness and value addition.
- Reduce energy import bill through renewable energy and efficiency measures.
- Ensure timely inflows from multilateral and bilateral partners.
- Maintain macro-economic stability and continue structural reforms under the IMF programme.

9 Key Takeaways for CSS

1. Reserves improved to $21.47bn; total liquid reserves $26.86bn.
2. High oil prices near $106 remain a major risk for external stability.
3. IMF programme and external inflows support reserve accumulation.
4. Pakistan's import cover is around 3.04 months.
5. Need for export growth, energy security and structural reforms.

10 Relevance for CSS Domains

Economics
External sector, BOP, energy prices and macroeconomic stability.

Current Affairs
Global oil market, IMF programme and regional developments.

Pakistan Affairs
Economic challenges and policy responses in Pakistan.

International Relations
Gulf region stability, energy security and global economic trends.

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N6 | External Sector & Energy Prices | Priority: **MEDIUM**

Reserves Edge Up to $21.47bn and Total Liquid Reserves to $26.86bn as Oil Stays Near $106

Continuity: Follows Issue 21's N7 (reserves at $21.45bn): a second weekly rise, still small.

Past Paper Echo: No verified direct past-paper precedent checked. Syllabus anchors: foreign exchange reserves, import cover, oil price shocks.

Essay Topic: Foreign exchange reserves and external vulnerability in a war-driven oil shock.

Flag: The Brent price is a headline-level item; its article body was not reviewed.

Infographic cross-check: The image's bar chart (16.39 in Aug 2025, 17.37, 19.39, 21.32 in Sep 2026) is not in the sources; the sources give $21.470bn for the week ended 9 October (announced 15 October) and $21.439bn the previous week. It labels the figures 'as of 15 October', which is the announcement date, and lists causes (IMF inflows, better exports and remittances, loans and deposits) that the SBP did not state. The Brent figure is a headline-level item. The article text governs.

A. Executive Summary

The State Bank of Pakistan said on Thursday 15 October that its foreign exchange reserves rose by $15.8 million to $21.470 billion in the week ended 9 October 2026, from $21.454 billion a week earlier. Reserves held by commercial banks rose by $50.1 million to $5.394 billion, and total liquid foreign reserves rose by $65.9 million to $26.863 billion. Dollar reserves cover imports for 3.04 months. The SBP did not disclose the reasons for the weekly increase, according to Bloom Pakistan. The latest gain follows a $39 million rise the previous week to $21.439 billion and an $11 million rise before that.

The weekly changes are small against the larger movements of the year. Pakistan Observer notes a $3.06 billion jump earlier, supported by Pakistan's Eurobond issuance, a $1.21 billion increase in early September from government commercial loan inflows, a $229 million fall in late July amid external debt repayments, and a $611 million rise in June to $16.53 billion on multilateral financing. The Express Tribune also carried a headline that Brent crude held near $106 a barrel as the United States considered easing some sanctions, which matters for Pakistan's import bill; the body of that story was not reviewed. The IMF's October outlook (I6) assumes that the Strait of Hormuz will reopen in March 2027, which implies elevated energy prices for months.

For CSS candidates the story is a reminder to read reserves in context. SBP reserves and total liquid reserves measure different things because commercial-bank holdings are not under the central bank's control; import cover rather than the dollar headline is the standard buffer metric; and weekly accumulations of tens of millions of dollars are minor against an import bill measured in billions. The larger drivers are programme disbursements, commercial borrowing and the oil price, which explains why the war in the Gulf (I1) and the IMF's pending Executive Board decision (Issue 21, N1) matter more than the weekly data.

B. Key Arguments / Developments

- SBP reserves rose $15.8m to $21.470bn in the week ended 9 Oct (SBP, 15 Oct; ProPakistani).
- Net reserves of commercial banks rose $50.1m to $5.394bn (SBP; Pakistan Observer).
- Total liquid reserves reached $26.863bn, up $65.9m (SBP).
- Reserves cover 3.04 months of imports (SBP data via ProPakistani).
- Previous week: SBP reserves +$39m to $21.439bn (week to 25 Sep) and +$11m before that (Pakistan Observer).
- SBP did not disclose reasons for the weekly increase (Bloom Pakistan).
- Earlier: $3.06bn jump supported by Eurobond proceeds (Pakistan Observer).
- Early September: +$1.21bn from government commercial loan inflows; late July: -$229m on external debt repayments (Pakistan Observer).
- June: reserves +$611m to $16.53bn on multilateral financing (Pakistan Observer).
- Express Tribune headline: Brent holds near $106 as US mulls easing sanctions (Oct 2026). [Body not reviewed]
- IMF WEO (13 Oct) assumes the Strait of Hormuz reopens in March 2027 (CNBC, 12 Oct; see I6).
- SBP's weekly reserves figure for the week to 2 Oct was $21.454bn and total $26.797bn (Business Recorder, Issue 21).

C. Analytical Categories

External sector

- Total liquid reserves include commercial-bank holdings.
- Import cover is the key buffer metric.

Energy

- Oil near $106 raises the import bill (headline).
- IMF assumes Hormuz reopens only in March 2027.

Financing

- Reserves depend on loans, Eurobonds and programme inflows.
- Weekly rises are small.

Policy

- Board approval of the IMF tranche is pending.
- Debt repayments cause dips.

D. Stakeholder Positions & Way Forward

- **State Bank of Pakistan:** Publishes weekly reserves; did not give reasons for the latest rise.
- **IMF:** Wants reserves to rise (Issue 21).
- **Pakistan Observer:** Places weekly moves within larger Eurobond and loan flows.

Challenges Ahead

- Small accumulation against a large import bill.
- Elevated oil prices.
- Debt repayment schedule.
- Dependence on external financing.

Way Forward (analytical suggestions, not reported positions)

- Lift exports and remittances rather than borrowing alone (analytical suggestion).
- Publish a reserve target in months of import cover.
- Hedge energy-import exposure.
- Complete IMF Board approval.

E. Statistical Digest

$21.470bn SBP reserves, 9 Oct	**$5.394bn** commercial-bank reserves
$26.863bn total liquid reserves	**3.04 months** import cover
+$15.8m weekly change in SBP reserves	**+$65.9m** weekly change in total reserves
$3.06bn earlier jump (Eurobond)	**$1.21bn** September commercial-loan inflow
~$106 Brent price (Tribune headline)	**Mar 2027** IMF assumption for Hormuz reopening

F. Quotes & Essay-Relevant Vocabulary

- **SBP (via Tradechronicle):** During the week ended 9-Oct-2026, SBP's FX reserves increased by US$16 million to US$21,469.5 million.
- **Pakistan Observer:** Foreign exchange reserves have fluctuated in recent months due to external financing inflows and debt repayments.

Vocabulary: Import cover | Liquid reserves | Net reserves | Eurobond | Commercial loan | External buffer | Brent crude | Debt repayment | Current account | Reserve accumulation

G. Further In-Depth Study (sources used)

https://propakistani.pk/2026/10/15/total-reserves-near-27-billion/ | https://tribune.com.pk/story/2635090/sbps-forex-reserves-rise-16m-to-2147b | https://pakobserver.net/sbp-reserves-continue-upward-trend-reach-21-47-billion/ | https://tradechronicle.com/sbps-fx-reserves-increased-by-us-16-million-3/

ICEP's CSS Weekly
CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE
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October 11 – 17, 2026
National Article – 07 (N7)

FO Rejects Rajnath Singh's 'Bigger Strike' Warning, Recalling May 2025

Pakistan Reaffirms Deterrence, Restraint and Commitment to Peace



1 What Happened?

16 Oct 2026

Pakistan's Foreign Office (FO) strongly rejected Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's warning of a "bigger strike" against Pakistan, saying such rhetoric is irresponsible and detrimental to regional peace.

2 Rajnath Singh's Statement



"If there is a terrorist attack on India, a bigger strike will be delivered, and the world will see the result.

Rajnath Singh
Indian Defence Minister
(16 October 2026)

3 Pakistan's Response

"Such irresponsible statements are rejected. Pakistan remains fully prepared to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity. We believe in peace, but we will not hesitate to give a befitting response to any aggression."

Foreign Office
Government of Pakistan
(16 October 2026)

4 Reference to May 2025



- Pakistan recalled India's military strikes in May 2025, which were met with a strong and effective response.
- The FO said that recent rhetoric appears to be a continuation of the same hostile mindset.
- Pakistan reiterated that it has the capability and resolve to defend itself against any future misadventure.

5 Key Themes in Pakistan's Stance

- Rejection of threats and irresponsible rhetoric
- Commitment to regional peace and stability
- Full preparedness to defend sovereignty and territorial integrity
- Call for responsible dialogue and restraint

6 Broader Context

- Part of an ongoing pattern of hostile statements from Indian leadership.
- Linked to India's consistent attempts to shift focus from human rights violations in IIOJK and domestic challenges.
- Such statements increase regional tensions and risk miscalculation between two nuclear-armed states.
- The international community has repeatedly called for restraint and peaceful dispute resolution.

7 Implications for Pakistan

- Need to maintain credible deterrence and defence preparedness.
- Importance of effective diplomatic communication to counter hostile narratives.
- Continued focus on exposing India's actions in IIOJK at global forums.
- Reinforces Pakistan's image as a responsible state committed to peace and regional stability.

8 Way Forward

- Sustain diplomatic engagement and highlight India's irresponsible rhetoric.
- Maintain strong defence readiness and credible deterrence.
- Engage with international partners to promote restraint and conflict prevention.
- Continue raising the issue of IIOJK and push for a peaceful and just resolution.

9 Key Takeaways for CSS

1. India's threat of a "bigger strike" reflects continued hostile rhetoric.
2. Pakistan rejects such statements and reaffirms its defence capability.
3. May 2025 strikes remain a key reference point in the current context.
4. The issue is linked to IIOJK and India's domestic political narratives.
5. The need for regional peace, restraint and effective diplomacy remains critical.

10 Relevance for CSS Domains

- **Pakistan Affairs** — India-Pakistan relations, IIOJK, national security.
- **International Relations** — Regional stability, nuclear deterrence, conflict management.
- **Political Science** — State behaviour, security policies and strategic studies.
- **Current Affairs** — Contemporary regional developments and diplomacy.

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N7 | Strategic Studies & Indo-Pak Relations | Priority: **HIGH**

FO Rejects Rajnath Singh's 'Bigger Strike' Warning, Recalling May 2025

Continuity: Follows Issue 21's I6 (border killings and the Indus Waters Treaty): rhetoric between Delhi and Islamabad sharpened this week.

Past Paper Echo: No verified direct past-paper precedent checked. Syllabus anchors: Pakistan-India relations, deterrence, Operation Sindoor (May 2025).

Essay Topic: Deterrence and crisis stability in South Asia after the May 2025 conflict.

Flag: India's remarks are reported through Pakistani outlets and Indian media quoted by The Nation; no Indian primary source was reviewed.

Infographic cross-check: The image dates Singh's remarks to 16 October and gives a direct quotation ('a bigger strike will be delivered, and the world will see the result'); the sources date his speech at the National Defence Conclave to 15 October and give only Indian-media paraphrase through The Nation. The Foreign Office quotation shown is a paraphrase of its statement, not verbatim. The 'IIOJK' linkage is not in the sources. The portrait is a generated illustration. The article text governs.

A. Executive Summary

On Friday 16 October Foreign Office spokesperson Sajjad Haider Khan 'rejected and condemned' what he called provocative remarks by India's Defence Minister Rajnath Singh 'entailing a threat of Indian aggression against Pakistan', Dawn, The Nation and Express Tribune reported. The reaction came a day after Singh, speaking at the National Defence Conclave 2026 in Delhi, recalled Operation Sindoor, India's May 2025 military operation, called it a decisive response to terrorism and, according to Indian media quoted by The Nation, warned that any fresh terrorist activity from across the border would invite a strike even bigger than the last time. The spokesperson reminded India of the consequences of its 'military aggression in May last year', when Pakistan, he said, 'demonstrated both its capability and resolve' and 'gave a fitting reply', and said any future aggression would meet an even stronger response.

Khan said Pakistan 'remains fully prepared to safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity against any ill-advised aggression' and urged New Delhi to abandon its belligerent posture and dangerous rhetoric. He also repeated Pakistan's position that terrorist attacks in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa originate from Afghan soil and involve Indian proxies; this is an allegation by Pakistan and the sources reviewed contain no independent confirmation or Indian response. Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, according to the spokesperson, reaffirmed Pakistan's resolve to combat terrorism in all its forms.

For CSS candidates the exchange shows the logic of deterrence by threat on both sides. India's doctrine, as stated by Singh, is that a terrorist attack will trigger military retaliation; Pakistan's, as stated by the Foreign Office, is that retaliation will be answered with a stronger response. The risks are well known: a short chain from a terrorist incident to military action, limited communication channels and the nuclear overhang. The week's other India-Pakistan strands, the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance since April 2025 and the border killings in the Bedian sector (Issue 21, I6), mean the rhetorical climate is poor. A balanced answer should attribute each claim to the speaker, note that Indian reporting of the remarks was secondary, and avoid treating either side's description of May 2025 as settled fact.

B. Key Arguments / Developments

- FO spokesperson Sajjad Haider Khan rejected and condemned Rajnath Singh's 'provocative remarks' on 16 Oct (Dawn; Express Tribune; The Nation).
- Singh spoke at the National Defence Conclave 2026 in Delhi on 15 Oct and recalled Operation Sindoor (Dawn).
- Indian media, quoted by The Nation: any fresh terrorist activity would invite a strike even bigger than last time.
- FO reminded India of the consequences of its military aggression in May last year (Dawn).
- FO: Pakistan 'demonstrated both its capability and resolve' and 'gave a fitting reply' (Dawn).
- FO: any future aggression will be met with an even stronger response (Dawn).
- Pakistan 'remains fully prepared to safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity' (Express Tribune).
- FO urged New Delhi to abandon its 'belligerent posture and dangerous rhetoric' (Express Tribune).
- Spokesperson: attacks in Balochistan and K-P originate from Afghan soil with Indian proxies involved (Pakistan's claim) (The Nation).
- Dar reaffirmed Pakistan's resolve to combat terrorism in all its forms (FO, via Express Tribune).
- Background: India announced the Indus Waters Treaty abeyance on 23 Apr 2025 after the Pahalgam attack (Issue 21, I6).

C. Analytical Categories

Strategic

- Both sides state retaliation doctrines.

- Rhetoric raises miscalculation risk.

Diplomatic

- No joint channel was cited.
- Pakistan links India to terrorism in Balochistan and K-P (claim).

Legal

- Use of force requires UN Charter justification (background).
- Attribution of attacks is contested.

Regional

- Afghan front and Indian front are framed together by Pakistan.
- Water and border issues add friction.

D. Stakeholder Positions & Way Forward

- **Foreign Office (Sajjad Haider Khan):** Condemns Singh's remarks; warns of an even stronger response.
- **Rajnath Singh (India):** Recalled Operation Sindoor; warned of a bigger strike after any new attack (per Indian media).
- **Ishaq Dar:** Reaffirms resolve against terrorism.

Challenges Ahead

- Rhetorical escalation.
- Attribution disputes.
- Limited crisis communication.
- Overlap of water, border and terror issues.

Way Forward (analytical suggestions, not reported positions)

- Revive military hotlines and crisis communication (analytical suggestion).
- Separate terrorism accountability from public threats.
- Agree restraint in rhetoric.
- Involve neutral facilitators if tensions rise.

E. Statistical Digest

15 Oct Singh's remarks at the conclave (per Dawn)	**16 Oct** FO condemnation
May 2025 Operation Sindoor / Pakistan's response	**2** Pakistani claims: Afghan soil and Indian proxies
23 Apr 2025 IWT abeyance announced	

F. Quotes & Essay-Relevant Vocabulary

- **FO spokesperson (Dawn):** We reject and condemn the Indian Defence Minister's provocative remarks entailing a threat of Indian aggression against Pakistan.
- **FO spokesperson (Express Tribune):** Pakistan remains fully prepared to safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity against any ill-advised aggression.

Vocabulary: Deterrence | Operation Sindoor | Belligerent posture | Crisis stability | Sovereignty | Territorial integrity | Proxies | Provocative | Retaliation | Escalation

G. Further In-Depth Study (sources used)

https://www.dawn.com/news/2037780 |
https://tribune.com.pk/story/2635193/pakistan-condemns-indian-defence-ministers-remarks-threatening-military-aggression |
https://nation.com.pk/17-Oct-2026/pakistan-rejects-indian-minister-s-remarks-warns-misadventure

ICEP's CSS Weekly
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International Article – 01 (I1)

Hormuz Stalemate: Iran's Seven Conditions, a US Blockade and Eight Ships a Day

Rising Tensions, Disrupted Trade and Global Economic Risk



1 What's Happening?

11–17 Oct 2026	Tensions in the Strait of Hormuz remain high with limited shipping movement.
Iran's Position	Iran's sets seven conditions for normalising shipping in the Strait.
US Blockade	The United States maintains a maritime blockade and increased military presence in the region.
Shipping Flows	Only about eight ships per day are reported to be passing through the Strait, far below normal levels.

2 The Strait of Hormuz: Key Facts



- **~20%** of global oil consumption passes through
- **~20–25** million barrels of oil per day (before crisis)
- LNG trade also passes through the Strait
- Key for energy security of Asia and global markets

3 Iran's Seven Conditions

1. Lifting of the US maritime blockade.
2. End to violations of Iran's sovereignty.
3. Guarantees for safe and free passage of Iranian oil exports.
4. Removal of sanctions related to maritime trade.
5. International recognition of Iran's security concerns in the Gulf.
6. Non-interference in Iran's regional relations.
7. A broader security arrangement involving regional states.

4 US Measures and Regional Dynamics

- US maintains a maritime blockade and enhanced naval deployments in the region.
- Increased military presence and monitoring of shipping in the Strait.
- Coordination with regional partners, including Gulf states.
- Rise in military activity and risk of miscalculation.

5 Impact on Global Trade and Economy

Higher energy prices
Brent crude remained elevated (near $106 per barrel during the week).

Disrupted supply chains
Reduced shipping increases costs and delivery times.

Global economic uncertainty
Risk to global growth, inflation and energy security.

Pressure on import-dependent countries
Particularly in Asia, including China, India, Japan and Pakistan.

6 Regional and International Reactions

Iran
Stresses its seven conditions and warns of continued restrictions.

United States
Maintains blockade and calls for freedom of navigation.

Gulf States
Express concern over regional security and energy supply.

China
Calls for de-escalation and stability in energy markets.

United Nations
Urges restraint, dialogue and protection of global trade routes.

7 Key Challenges

- Prolonged closure or partial disruption of the Strait.
- Volatility in global oil and gas prices.
- Impact on global trade and economic growth.
- Risk of military escalation and wider regional conflict.
- Security of commercial shipping and energy infrastructure.

8 Way Forward

1. Diplomatic engagement between Iran, the US and regional states.
2. Gradual de-escalation and confidence-building measures.
3. International mechanisms to ensure freedom of navigation.
4. Diversification of energy supply routes and strategic reserves.
5. Regional security dialogue to address broader Gulf tensions.

9 Key Takeaways for CSS

1. The Strait of Hormuz is critical for global energy security.
2. Iran has set seven conditions for normalising shipping.
3. The US maintains a maritime blockade and increased military presence.
4. Only about eight ships per day are currently passing through.
5. The crisis risks higher energy prices, global economic uncertainty and potential regional escalation.

10 Relevance for CSS Domains

International Relations
Great power politics, Gulf security and regional conflict dynamics.

Economics
Global oil markets, energy security and economic impact.

Current Affairs
Contemporary global issues and strategic developments in the Gulf.

Pakistan Affairs
Pakistan's energy security, foreign policy and regional stability.

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INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

I1 | Energy Security & Middle East Diplomacy | Priority: **HIGH**

Hormuz Stalemate: Iran's Seven Conditions, a US Blockade and Eight Ships a Day

Continuity: Follows Issue 21's I3 (US-Iran deadlock): talks continue indirectly, shipping remains a fraction of normal and Russia is emerging as a facilitator.

Past Paper Echo: No verified direct past-paper precedent checked. Syllabus anchors: Strait of Hormuz, Pakistan's mediation, energy security, sanctions.

Essay Topic: Chokepoints and coercion: the Strait of Hormuz in the 2026 war.

Flag: Shipping counts come from one analytic source; Iranian and US statements are as reported by the outlets cited.

Infographic cross-check: The image lists Iran's seven conditions one by one, and says about 20% of global oil consumption and 20-25 million barrels a day pass through the strait. The sources say Iran has seven conditions but do not enumerate them, and give one-fifth of global oil and LNG trade. The 'reactions' panel (China, Gulf States, United Nations) and the statement that a US blockade is accompanied by 'increased military presence' are not in the sources. The article text governs.

A. Executive Summary

Iran and the United States continued indirect exchanges this week while the Strait of Hormuz stayed mostly shut. On 12 October Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei confirmed that Tehran was reviewing Washington's response to Iran's seven conditions for reopening the strait; Iranian security official Mohsen Rezaei said the US had accepted some conditions but that its reply was 'inadequate' (The New Arab). On 16 October an Iranian Army spokesperson explicitly linked reopening to the withdrawal of American forces from the region, according to an NIAC analysis. The same analysis, using AIS ship-tracking data, found an average of about eight commercial crossings a day over the preceding week against roughly 85 before the crisis, with only six recorded on 15 October. Washington maintains its naval blockade and, the analysis says, is considering additional military options; Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov is due in Tehran on 19 October as a possible facilitator.

A senior Saudi diplomat, Abdulaziz Krimly, told Al Arabiya that Saudi Arabia supports mediation efforts led by Pakistan and Qatar and named two obstacles: securing safe passage for commercial shipping in exchange for Washington lifting its blockade, and clarifying the scope of future nuclear negotiations. He said Tehran was prolonging talks without sufficient concessions and that internal disagreements on the Iranian side complicated progress; on 16 October Iran International reported that Iranian lawmakers were discussing impeaching Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi over his negotiating line. Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said Iran would not yield to US pressure, and Trump ruled out nuclear weapons and ground troops against Iran, Gulf News reported. Trump's earlier pledge of no strikes before the 3 November midterms still stands, according to the tracker maintained by GlobalSecurity. The foreign ministers of Egypt and Türkiye urged renewed US-Iran talks, and Dawn's editorial of 17 October, 'Diplomatic options', argued that the alternative to talks, 'a fully fledged war on both fronts', would bring immeasurable destruction to the Gulf and the Red Sea.

Before the war the strait carried about a fifth of global trade in oil and liquefied natural gas. The IMF's October outlook (I6) assumes the strait reopens in March 2027 and normality returns by October 2027. For CSS candidates the story ties the narrow geography of a chokepoint to prices, inflation and mediation: Pakistan, named by the Saudi diplomat as a mediator, also faces a direct cost through fuel prices (N6) and has defence commitments to Riyadh (I2). A good answer should separate Iran's demands (reopening linked to US withdrawal) from the US position (blockade until safe passage and nuclear clarity) and note that the shipping numbers rest on one analytic source.

B. Key Arguments / Developments

- 12 Oct: Baqaei said Tehran was reviewing the US response to Iran's seven conditions for reopening Hormuz (NIAC; The New Arab).
- Rezaei: the US accepted some conditions but its reply was 'inadequate' (The New Arab, 12 Oct).
- 16 Oct: Iranian Army spokesperson Mohammad Akraminia linked reopening to withdrawal of American forces (NIAC).
- AIS data: about 8 commercial crossings a day in the preceding week vs about 85 pre-crisis; 6 on 15 Oct (NIAC, 16 Oct).
- The US maintains a naval blockade and considers further military options (NIAC).
- Lavrov is scheduled to visit Tehran on 19 Oct as a potential facilitator (NIAC).
- Saudi diplomat Krimly: Saudi Arabia supports mediation led by Pakistan and Qatar (Al Arabiya, 16 Oct).
- Two obstacles: safe passage for shipping vs lifting the blockade; scope of nuclear talks (Al Arabiya).
- Iran International (16 Oct): lawmakers discuss impeaching FM Araghchi over his negotiations.
- Pezeshkian: Iran will not yield to US pressure; Trump ruled out nuclear weapons and ground troops (Gulf News, 16 Oct).
- Trump's pledge of no strikes before 3 Nov stands (GlobalSecurity tracker, 16 Oct).
- Egypt and Türkiye FMs urged renewed US-Iran talks as ship attacks intensified (Iran International live blog).
- Two tankers attacked northeast of Al Jubayl, Saudi Arabia, on Friday (UKMTO, via Iran International).

- Before the war Hormuz carried about one-fifth of global trade in oil and LNG (The New Arab).
- Dawn editorial 17 Oct 'Diplomatic options' warns of war on both fronts (Dawn).

C. Analytical Categories

Energy

- A fifth of global oil and LNG trade passes the strait in peacetime.
- Traffic at about 8% of pre-crisis levels (one analytic source).

Diplomatic

- Mediators include Pakistan, Qatar, Oman; Russia may join.
- Egypt and Türkiye call for talks.

Strategic

- Iran ties reopening to US withdrawal; the US keeps the blockade.
- Internal Iranian friction over negotiations.

Pakistan-relevant

- Named by a Saudi diplomat as a mediator.
- Fuel-price exposure and defence ties to Riyadh complicate neutrality.

D. Stakeholder Positions & Way Forward

- **Iran (Baqaei, Rezaei, Pezeshkian):** Seven conditions; US reply inadequate; will not yield.
- **United States (Trump):** Blockade continues; no nuclear weapons or ground troops; no strikes before 3 Nov.
- **Saudi Arabia (Krimly):** Supports Pakistan-Qatar mediation; says Tehran prolongs talks.
- **Russia (Lavrov):** To visit Tehran on 19 Oct.
- **Egypt and Türkiye:** Urge renewed US-Iran talks.

Challenges Ahead

- Linkage of reopening to US withdrawal.
- Attacks on shipping.
- Competing mediation tracks.
- Internal politics in Tehran and Washington.

Way Forward (analytical suggestions, not reported positions)

- Sequence safe passage and blockade relief (analytical suggestion).
- Separate nuclear talks from shipping.
- Coordinate mediators (Pakistan, Qatar, Oman, Russia).
- Agree insurance and escort arrangements.

E. Statistical Digest

7 Iranian conditions for reopening	**~8 / ~85** daily crossings, last week vs pre-crisis (NIAC)
6 crossings on 15 Oct	**1/5** share of global oil and LNG trade through Hormuz pre-war
19 Oct Lavrov's scheduled Tehran visit	**3 Nov** US midterms
Mar 2027 IMF assumption for reopening	**2** tankers attacked northeast of Al Jubayl

F. Quotes & Essay-Relevant Vocabulary

- **Mohsen Rezaei (via The New Arab):** The US response was still inadequate.
- **Dawn editorial, 17 Oct:** The alternative to talks, a fully fledged war on both fronts, will bring immeasurable destruction to the Gulf, the Red Sea and the surrounding areas.

Vocabulary: Strait of Hormuz | Naval blockade | AIS tracking | Chokepoint | Mediation | Facilitator | Impeachment motion | LNG | Escort | Reopening conditions

G. Further In-Depth Study (sources used)

https://insights.niacouncil.org/p/iran-and-us-pursue-diplomacy-as-hormuz |
https://www.newarab.com/news/iran-dismisses-us-reply-hormuz-proposal-saudi-airports-hit |
https://english.alarabiya.net/News/saudi-arabia/2026/10/16/iran-backing-encouraging-escalated-houthi-attacks-on-saudi-arabia-senior-diplomat |
https://www.iranintl.com/en/liveblog/202610105959

Extended Model Answer II - Linked article: I1

Question: 'Pakistan can be both a mediator between the United States and Iran and a defence partner of Saudi Arabia.' Discuss in the light of the October 2026 Gulf developments. (20 marks)

1. Introduction and thesis

In mid-October 2026 the Strait of Hormuz remains largely shut, with about eight commercial crossings a day against roughly 85 before the crisis (NIAC analysis of AIS data), while Houthi attacks on Saudi airports intensify. A senior Saudi diplomat named Pakistan and Qatar as mediators (Al Arabiya), and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif condemned the Houthi attacks and Pakistan reaffirmed its defence commitment to Saudi Arabia (Dawn; The Nation). This answer argues that the two roles can coexist only if Pakistan keeps its defence role explicitly defensive, its mediation role procedurally neutral and its public language disciplined.

2. The situation

Iran has set seven conditions for reopening the strait and says the US reply was inadequate; an Iranian Army spokesperson linked reopening to the withdrawal of US forces. Washington keeps a naval blockade and, according to the Saudi diplomat, the obstacles are safe passage for shipping in exchange for lifting the blockade and the scope of nuclear talks. Lavrov is due in Tehran on 19 October. On the Saudi front, the Houthis attacked Riyadh's King Khalid airport on 12 October, killing at least one, and Egypt, Turkiye, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia condemned the attacks.

3. Pakistan's mediator credentials

Pakistan hosted the Islamabad talks and is credited by CFR with mediating the June memorandum that briefly reopened Hormuz (Issue 21, I3). The DG ISPR said Pakistan is committed to a negotiated outcome. Its 1 October sanctions language, 'all applicable sanctions regimes', balanced exposure to US pressure with its Iran relationship (Issue 20, I4). The Saudi diplomat's endorsement shows that Riyadh values Pakistan's role, which suggests the roles are not seen as contradictory by at least one party.

4. The defence partnership

Under the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement of 7 August, an armed attack on any of the three states, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkiye, is treated as an attack on all; on 9 October the three agreed on measures for readiness, military integration and rapid deployment in Saudi Arabia in accordance with national laws (Issue 21, I2). Pakistan's stated line, reported by a Tribune headline, is that ground forces will not cross Yemen to attack the Houthis but will defend Saudi Arabia. The Prime Minister thanked Saudi leaders for long-standing economic and financial support, which shows the weight of the relationship.

5. Tensions between the roles

Three tensions stand out. First, perception: Iran may read forces deployed in Saudi Arabia as hostile, and the Saudi diplomat accuses Tehran of backing the Houthis while Iran denies it and offers to bridge. Second, entanglement: attacks on airports and tankers raise the risk of escalation that could trigger the pact's collective-defence clause. Third, exposure: Pakistan depends on Gulf remittances and on oil, with petrol and diesel prices rising by 40 per cent or more since the conflict began (World Bank via Express Tribune), so it has a direct stake in reopening the strait and in avoiding a wider war, as Dawn's editorial on a 'fully fledged war on both fronts' warns.

6. Critical evaluation

The dual role is workable if three conditions hold. The defence role must remain defensive, with deployment tied to the defence of Saudi territory and holy sites; the mediation role must be procedurally neutral, including by working with other mediators such as Qatar, Oman and possibly Russia; and public messaging must avoid implying alignment against Iran. If the Houthi front escalates or the pact's clause is triggered by an attack that Riyadh attributes to Iran, Pakistan's neutrality will be tested sharply. Claims about Iranian involvement come from Saudi and US-linked sources and are denied by Tehran, so Pakistan's caution in attribution is itself a stabilising choice.

7. Synthesis

A balanced policy would (a) publish the legal basis and limits of deployment under the pact; (b) maintain a regular channel with Tehran at the foreign-minister level; (c) support a Saudi-Houthi dialogue through Oman and the UN; (d) reduce energy vulnerability through diversification and strategic reserves; and (e) continue to coordinate with Qatar and others on the Hormuz track. These steps make the two roles complementary: the pact deters, the mediation de-escalates.

8. Conclusion

The proposition is defensible but conditional. Pakistan has credibility as a mediator and a treaty-based duty to Saudi Arabia, and the Saudi side itself appears to welcome both. The roles will remain compatible only while Pakistan's language, deployments and diplomacy stay disciplined; the margin for error narrows with every attack on shipping or airports, and the outcome depends on the course of the US-Iran talks, which were stalled as of 17 October.

Why this is examiner-oriented: it weighs two competing foreign-policy roles with sourced facts, names the three tensions, sets conditions for compatibility and ends with a five-point policy synthesis.

ICEP's CSS Weekly
CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE
Issue 22
October 11 – 17, 2026
International Article – 02 (I2)

Houthi Attacks on Saudi Arabia Intensify: Pakistan Reaffirms its Defence Commitment

Escalating Regional Tensions, Energy Security Risks and Renewed Focus on Collective Defence



1 What Happened?

11–17 Oct 2026
- Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia intensified during the week, targeting multiple locations including Riyadh's King Khalid International Airport.

Types of Attacks
- Use of drones and ballistic missiles. Several intercepts reported by Saudi air defences.

Impact
- Temporary suspension and disruptions to flights at Riyadh airport. No major casualties reported in the sources.

2 Where are the Houthis?



3 Why are Attacks Intensifying?

- Continuation of the Gaza war and regional spillovers.
- Houthi strategy to expand pressure on Saudi Arabia.
- Domestic legitimacy and regional influence for the Houthis.
- Support from Iran (weapons, training and political backing) as reported in multiple sources.
- Part of a wider pattern of escalation in the Red Sea and the Gulf region.

4 Key Incidents Reported This Week

12 Oct	Drone attack on Riyadh's King Khalid International Airport (intercepts reported).
14 Oct	Missile and drone attacks on multiple targets in Saudi Arabia.
16 Oct	Saudi air defences intercept several incoming projectiles.
17 Oct	Further drone attacks reported; flights temporarily disrupted at Riyadh airport.

5 Saudi Arabia's Response

- Intercepted most incoming drones and missiles using air defence systems.
- Temporary suspension and diversion of flights at Riyadh airport.
- Heightened security and monitoring of critical infrastructure.
- Reaffirmed commitment to defend its territory and regional stability.

6 Pakistan's Position

- Pakistan strongly condemned the Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia.
- Reaffirmed its defence commitment to Saudi Arabia under the existing bilateral arrangements.
- Expressed solidarity with Saudi Arabia and support for its security and territorial integrity.
- Called for de-escalation, restraint and a peaceful resolution of regional disputes.

7 Regional and International Reactions

Saudi Arabia	Condemned the attacks and vowed to protect its territory.
Iran	Continued political and moral support to the Houthis (as reported in international media).
United States	Expressed concern over escalation and the threat to regional stability.
United Nations	Called for restraint and a ceasefire in the region.

8 Implications

Energy Security
Risk to global oil supplies and energy prices due to continued regional instability.

Red Sea and Trade
Attacks add to existing disruptions to maritime trade and supply chains in the wider region.

Regional Stability
Increases the risk of a broader regional conflict involving multiple actors.

Pakistan's Interests
Stability in Saudi Arabia is important for regional security, energy markets and Pakistan's strategic and economic interests.

9 Way Forward

1. De-escalation of the conflict in Yemen and the wider region.
2. Strengthening of regional security cooperation.
3. Protection of critical infrastructure and maritime routes.
4. Renewed diplomatic engagement involving regional and international stakeholders.
5. Resolution of the Gaza war to reduce wider regional tensions.

10 Relevance for CSS Domains

International Relations
Middle East politics, regional security and great power involvement.

Current Affairs
Ongoing conflicts, energy security and geopolitical developments.

Pakistan Affairs
Pakistan's foreign policy, relations with Saudi Arabia and its role in the Muslim world

Economics
Global oil market, energy prices and trade disruptions in the Red Sea.

Strategic Studies
Asymmetric warfare, drone and missile threats, regional deterrence.

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I2 | Islamic Studies, Muslim World & Gulf Security | Priority: **HIGH**

Houthi Attacks on Saudi Arabia Intensify: Pakistan Reaffirms its Defence Commitment

Continuity: Follows Issue 21's I2 (Makkah Joint Defence Agreement and the airport strikes): attacks continued and Pakistan restated its commitment.

Past Paper Echo: No verified direct past-paper precedent checked. Syllabus anchors: Haramain, Muslim world security, Yemen war, collective defence.

Essay Topic: Pakistan and Saudi security: obligation, mediation and the limits of alliance.

Flag: Several items are headline-level (Aaj, Gulf News); Iranian involvement is claimed by Saudi and US-linked sources and denied by Tehran.

Infographic cross-check: The image gives an incident timeline (12, 14, 16, 17 October) and says flights at Riyadh airport were suspended and no major casualties were reported. The sources report only the 12 October attack on King Khalid airport, which killed at least one and wounded over ten; the other dates and the flight suspension were not found. 'Continuation of the Gaza war' as a cause is not sourced. The article text governs.

A. Executive Summary

The war in Yemen spilled further into Saudi Arabia this week. On 12 October the New Arab reported another attack on King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh by the Iran-aligned Houthis, killing at least one person and wounding more than ten. Iran International described the Houthi attacks inside Saudi Arabia as 'increasingly deadly' and, on 11 October, reported that the US was weighing strikes on the Houthis and Iran after the deadly airport attack. Two tankers were attacked northeast of Al Jubayl on Friday, according to the UK Maritime Trade Operations centre. Australia issued an advisory on 16 October warning of flight disruption and Houthi threats to Saudi airports.

Regional and Islamic reactions were swift. Aaj English headlined that Türkiye, Pakistan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia condemned the Houthi attacks on Riyadh airport. Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi said Egypt was prepared to take any measures necessary to defend Saudi Arabia and called its security 'inconceivable' to allow to be harmed, while seeking parliamentary approval. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif strongly condemned the Houthi attacks against Saudi Arabia and thanked the Saudi leadership for its longstanding economic and financial support to Pakistan (Dawn, 16 October). The Nation reported that Pakistan condemned the attack on Riyadh Airport and reaffirmed its defence commitment to Saudi Arabia; this restates the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement explained in Issue 21. Trump, Gulf News reported, urged Saudi Arabia to accept Israeli help against the Houthis, a proposal whose implications for Muslim-world politics are significant but whose details were not reviewed. Iran's foreign ministry denied any role in Houthi operations and offered to act as a bridge between the Houthis and Riyadh, while the Saudi diplomat Krimly said Iran was backing and encouraging the escalation and pointed to Russian and Chinese capabilities and intelligence; the Wall Street Journal, Iran International reported, cited intelligence briefings saying Iran had provided training and guidance. These attributions are contested.

For CSS candidates the story links Islamic Studies themes, the sanctity of the Two Holy Mosques and protection of pilgrims and civilians, with international relations: collective defence versus collective security, the risk of entanglement in a proxy war, and Pakistan's balancing between Riyadh and Tehran (I1). Dawn's editorial warning of a war 'on both fronts' is a useful framing for the dilemma. A strong answer should state clearly that Pakistan's public language is condemnation and commitment, that operational details of deployment were not disclosed in the sources reviewed, and that claims about Iranian involvement come from Saudi and US-linked sources and are denied by Tehran.

B. Key Arguments / Developments

- 12 Oct: another Houthi attack on King Khalid International Airport killed at least one and wounded over ten (The New Arab).
- Iran International: Houthi attacks inside Saudi Arabia are 'increasingly deadly' (11 Oct); the US was weighing strikes on the Houthis and Iran.
- Two tankers attacked northeast of Al Jubayl on Friday, per UKMTO (Iran International live blog).
- Australia's 16 Oct advisory warned of flight disruption and Houthi threats to Saudi airports (Gulf News).
- Aaj English headline: Türkiye, Pakistan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia condemn Houthi attacks on Riyadh airport.
- Sisi: Egypt is prepared to take any measures necessary to defend Saudi Arabia; seeks parliament's approval (Iran International live blog).
- PM Shehbaz strongly condemned the Houthi attacks and thanked the Saudi leadership for economic and financial support (Dawn, 16 Oct).
- The Nation (17 Oct): Pakistan condemned the Riyadh airport attack and reaffirmed its defence commitment to Saudi Arabia.
- Trump urged Saudi Arabia to accept Israeli help against the Houthis (Gulf News headline, 16 Oct). [Body not reviewed]
- Iran denied any role in Houthi operations and offered to bridge between the Houthis and Riyadh (Baqaei, 16 Oct).

- Saudi diplomat Krimly: Iran is backing and encouraging escalated Houthi attacks; Russia and China provide capabilities and intelligence (Al Arabiya).
- WSJ, as cited by Iran International: Iran provided training, intelligence and tactical guidance to Houthi attacks.
- New Saudi ambassador Dr Rajeh Tami Albugamy assumed duties in Islamabad and vowed to enhance bilateral ties (Dawn, 17 Oct).

C. Analytical Categories

Religious / Islamic

- Protection of the Haramain, pilgrims and civilians.
- Qur'an 49:10 on the brotherhood of believers (background).

Strategic

- Airports and tankers are the main targets.
- Alliances: Pakistan, Egypt, Türkiye voice support for Riyadh.

Diplomatic

- Iran offers a bridge while denying involvement.
- Saudi Arabia says it supports mediation led by Pakistan and Qatar.

Legal

- Attacks on civilian airports breach humanitarian law (general principle).
- Attribution claims are contested.

D. Stakeholder Positions & Way Forward

- **PM Shehbaz Sharif / Pakistan Foreign Office:** Strong condemnation; defence commitment to Saudi Arabia reaffirmed.
- **Egypt (Sisi):** Ready to defend Saudi Arabia; seeks parliamentary approval.
- **Saudi Arabia (Krimly):** Iran backs the Houthis; supports Pakistan-Qatar mediation.
- **Iran (Baqaei):** Denies involvement; offers to bridge.
- **United States (Trump):** Weighs strikes; urges Saudi Arabia to accept Israeli help.

Challenges Ahead

- Protecting airports and shipping.
- Avoiding entanglement in the Yemen war.
- Contested attribution to Iran.
- Preserving Pakistan's mediator role.

Way Forward (analytical suggestions, not reported positions)

- Support Saudi-Houthi talks encouraged by Oman and others (analytical suggestion).
- Clarify publicly what Pakistan's commitment covers.
- Protect civil aviation through an air-safety framework.
- Keep channels with Tehran open.

E. Statistical Digest

12 Oct latest King Khalid airport attack	**1+ / 10+** killed / wounded in that attack (The New Arab)
2 tankers attacked near Al Jubayl	**4** states condemning, per Aaj headline: Türkiye, Pakistan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia
16 Oct Australian advisory; PM Shehbaz's condemnation	

F. Quotes & Essay-Relevant Vocabulary

- **Sisi (via Iran International):** It is inconceivable that we would allow Saudi Arabia, its security or stability to be harmed.
- **Baqaei (via Gulf News):** The Islamic Republic of Iran rejects any claim that Iran has played a role in Yemeni operations.

Vocabulary: Collective defence | Haramain | Ummah | Proxy conflict | Air-safety advisory | Maritime Trade Operations | Escalation | Attribution | Mediation | Sanctity

G. Further In-Depth Study (sources used)

https://www.newarab.com/news/iran-dismisses-us-reply-hormuz-proposal-saudi-airports-hit | https://www.iranintl.com/en/202610113518 | https://english.alarabiya.net/News/saudi-arabia/2026/10/16/iran-backing-encouraging-escalated-houthi-attacks-on-saudi-arabia-senior-diplomat | https://nation.com.pk/17-Oct-2026/pakistan-rejects-indian-minister-s-remarks-warns-misadventure | https://gulfnews.com/world/mena/middle-east-conflict-houthis-strike-yemens-presidential-palace-us-issues-new-iran-sanctions-1.500712575

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International Article – 03 (I3)

UN Secretary-General Race: The Sixth Straw Poll Uses Colour-Coded Ballots and Exposes P5 Vetoes

A Divided UN, a Contested Race and the Limits of the P5



1 What Happened?

6th Straw Poll

Held during the UN General Assembly (2026).

- The sixth straw poll for the next UN Secretary-General was held with colour-coded ballots.
- The contest remains deadlocked, with no candidate securing the required support.
- The P5 (US, UK, France, Russia and China) continue to use their veto power to block consensus.

2 The Finalists

António Guterres (Portugal)	Rafael Grossi (Argentina)	Helena Nyerere (Tanzania)	Khaled Khiari (Tunisia)
Incumbent (Continuing campaign).	Supported by Latin American and European states.	Backed by the African Group.	Supported by the Arab Group.

3 The P5 Vetoes

US	Backed its preferred candidate and blocked others.
UK	Aligned with US position.
France	Used its veto, citing concerns over reform and process.
Russia	Blocked candidates it opposed.
China	Maintained its strategic position, withholding consensus.

4 Key Developments

- Colour-coded ballots introduced for greater transparency and clarity.
- No candidate secured a majority in the sixth straw poll.
- **P5 vetoes** prevented progress towards a final decision.
- The race remains open, with further consultations expected.

5 Why It Matters

- The UN SG is the chief administrator of the UN.
- Influences global peace, security and development agenda.
- Reflects the balance of power among major nations.
- Affects the UN's credibility and ability to respond to global crises.

6 Regional and Global Reactions

European Union	African Union	Developing Nations	Civil Society	UN Secretariat
Called for a transparent and inclusive process.	Backed the African candidate and greater representation.	Demanded a fairer and more representative process.	Urged reform of the P5 veto system.	Continued to facilitate dialogue among member states.

7 Key Challenges

- P5 vetoes and geopolitical rivalries.
- Lack of consensus among major powers.
- Calls for UN reform vs. resistance from the P5.
- Risk of prolonged leadership vacuum and institutional uncertainty.

8 Way Forward

- Intensified diplomatic engagement among member states.
- Reform of the Security Council and veto system (at least in debate).
- Support for an inclusive and representative process.
- Maintaining the UN's relevance in addressing global challenges.

9 CSS Relevance

- International Relations
- Political Science
- Public Administration
- Current Affairs

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Flags in red mark single-source, headline-level or unnamed-source items.

I3 | International Organisations & Law | Priority: **HIGH**

UN Secretary-General Race: The Sixth Straw Poll Uses Colour-Coded Ballots and Exposes P5 Vetoes

Continuity: Follows Issue 21's legacy table (fifth straw poll, 7 Oct): the sixth poll adds colour-coded ballots and shows vetoes against the top three.

Past Paper Echo: No verified direct past-paper precedent checked. Syllabus anchors: UN Charter Arts. 27(3) and 97, Security Council, selection reform.

Essay Topic: Choosing the Secretary-General: the veto, transparency and regional rotation.

Flag: Straw-poll results are secret; figures come from PassBlue and outlets citing leaked results, so counts differ slightly between outlets.

Infographic cross-check: The image names the finalists as Antonio Guterres (Portugal, 'incumbent'), Rafael Grossi, Helena Nyerere (Tanzania) and Khaled Khiari (Tunisia). That is wrong: Guterres' term ends on 31 December and he is not a candidate. The sources show Rebeca Grynspan (9 encourage), Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett, Rafael Grossi and Olara Otunnu among seven candidates. The image also describes P5 members as having 'used their veto'; a straw poll is informal, and the colour-coded ballots show P5 'discourage' votes (two each for the top three), not vetoes. Its footer carries a stray note. The article text governs.

A. Executive Summary

On Friday 16 October the Security Council held its sixth secret straw poll for the next Secretary-General, the first to use colour-coded ballots, with red ballots for the five permanent members and white for the ten elected members, PassBlue and Security Council Report said. Costa Rica's Rebeca Grynspan led with nine 'encourage', five 'discourage' and one 'no opinion', but two of the discourage votes came from permanent members. IANS, citing results leaked to PassBlue and 1for8Billion, reported that the top three candidates, Grynspan, former Guyana foreign minister Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett and IAEA Director-General Rafael Grossi, each received two negative votes from permanent members, leaving the contest deadlocked with only 76 days before Antonio Guterres' term ends on 31 December. A diplomat told reporters that none of the seven candidates had the support of all five permanent members; Uganda's Olara Otunnu received four 'encourage', 10 'discourage' and one 'no opinion', with three permanent members opposed. Seven candidates remain and none withdrew; China and the US were tellers.

The colour code matters. A discourage vote from a permanent member in a straw poll is not a veto, since straw polls are informal, but it signals one: Article 97 of the Charter says the General Assembly appoints the Secretary-General on the Council's recommendation, and under Article 27(3) a substantive recommendation needs nine affirmative votes including the concurring votes of the permanent members. By showing how the five voted, the new system lets candidates and diplomats see where a veto would fall. Grynspan told Reuters she remains in the race and expects new names could enter; she planned to meet Costa Rican President Laura Fernández on 19 October, and no date was set for the next poll. Minh-Thu Pham, a former adviser to Kofi Annan, said the gap between the three leaders had narrowed and there was no common position among the permanent members.

For CSS candidates the story is a live case study in the mechanics and politics of the selection. It also shows a procedural innovation, colour-coded ballots, introduced in 2026 in response to criticism of opacity, and echoes history: Otunnu, as Ugandan ambassador and Council president in 1981, helped introduce the straw-poll mechanism. The sources are specialist and secondary because the Council does not publish straw-poll results, so figures should be attributed to PassBlue and the outlets reporting it.

B. Key Arguments / Developments

- Sixth straw poll held Fri 16 Oct; first with colour-coded ballots separating P5 from elected members (PassBlue via Rio Times; Security Council Report).
- Grynspan: 9 encourage, 5 discourage, 1 no opinion; two discourage votes from permanent members (Rio Times; The National).
- Top three (Grynspan, Rodrigues-Birkett, Grossi) each drew two negative votes from permanent members (IANS).
- Only 76 days left before Guterres' term ends (IANS, 17 Oct).
- Otunnu: 4 encourage, 10 discourage, 1 no opinion; three permanent members opposed (Chimp Reports, citing PassBlue).
- Seven candidates remain; none withdrew since the fifth poll on 7 Oct (Rio Times).
- China and the US served as tellers (Security Council Report, via Rio Times).
- Diplomat: none of the seven has the support of all five permanent members (Newscord, citing wire reports).
- Grynspan said she stays in the race and new names could enter (Reuters, via The National).
- Grynspan to meet Costa Rican President Laura Fernández on 19 Oct; next poll date not set (Rio Times).
- Otunnu helped introduce the straw-poll mechanism in 1981 (Chimp Reports).
- Art. 97: the General Assembly appoints on the Security Council's recommendation (UN Charter, background).

- Art. 27(3): a substantive recommendation needs nine votes including concurring votes of the permanent members (background).

C. Analytical Categories

Procedural

- Colour-coded ballots reveal where vetoes would fall.
- Straw polls remain informal and non-binding.

Political

- Two permanent members discourage each of the top three.
- Deadlock invites new candidates.

Institutional

- Guterres' term ends on 31 Dec.
- Transparency and regional rotation debates continue.

Historical

- Straw polls date from 1981 (Otunnu's role).
- Colour-coding is new in 2026.

D. Stakeholder Positions & Way Forward

- **Rebeca Grynspan (Costa Rica):** Leads with nine encourage votes; two P5 discourage votes; stays in the race.
- **Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett and Rafael Grossi:** Also face two P5 negatives each (IANS).
- **Olara Otunnu (Uganda):** Three P5 opposed; 10 discourage.
- **Security Council members:** No P5 consensus on any candidate.

Challenges Ahead

- P5 vetoes against all leaders.
- Short time before 31 Dec.
- Opacity of results.
- Geopolitical polarisation.

Way Forward (analytical suggestions, not reported positions)

- Publish colour-coded results to inform candidates (analytical suggestion).
- Hold General Assembly hearings with the finalists.
- Encourage new nominations if deadlock persists.
- Agree an early date for the next poll.

E. Statistical Digest

16 Oct sixth straw poll	**9 / 5 / 1** Grynspan encourage / discourage / no opinion
2 P5 negatives for each of the top three	**4 / 10 / 1** Otunnu encourage / discourage / no opinion
7 candidates remaining	**76** days left in Guterres' term (IANS, 17 Oct)
9 votes needed (Art. 27(3))	**1981** year straw polls were introduced (Otunnu's account)

F. Quotes & Essay-Relevant Vocabulary

- **PassBlue (via Rio Times):** It was the first poll with colour-coded ballots, separating the five permanent members from the ten elected ones.
- **IANS:** The election is deadlocked, with the top three candidates getting two negative votes each from permanent members.

Vocabulary: Straw poll | Colour-coded ballot | Encourage vote | Discourage vote | P5 | Veto signal | Teller | Recommendation | General Assembly appointment | Deadlock

G. Further In-Depth Study (sources used)

https://www.riotimesonline.com/un-secretary-general-selection-veto-explained-2026/ |
https://www.riotimesonline.com/costa-rica-grynspan-stays-in-un-race-after-veto-2026/ |
https://hiindia.com/unsc-deadlocked-over-election-of-next-secretary-general/ |
https://chimpreports.com/otunnu-faces-veto-threat-as-three-un-powers-oppose-his-sg-bid

ICEP's CSS Weekly
CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE
Issue 22
October 11 – 17, 2026
International Article – 04 (I4)

Colombia Opens an Embassy in Jerusalem; Pakistan and 18 Others Call It 'Null and Void'

A Contested Move, Widespread Criticism and Renewed Debate on the Status of Jerusalem



1 What Happened?

16 Oct 2026

- Colombia inaugurated its embassy in Jerusalem, becoming the latest country to move its mission from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.
- President Gustavo Petro led the inauguration, calling it a step consistent with Colombia's foreign policy and support for the Palestinian cause.

2 Colombia's Stated Position



Gustavo Petro
President of Colombia

> "Opening an embassy in Jerusalem is a step in line with Colombia's commitment to the Palestinian people and the pursuit of a just and lasting peace.

3 International Reactions

Pakistan (and 18 others)
Declared the move "null and void" and a violation of international law.

Palestine
Welcomed Colombia's decision as a supportive and principled step.

Israel
Praised Colombia's decision and called it an important development.

United States
Generally supports moves to recognise Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

4 18 Countries Issuing Joint Statement

Pakistan, Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Jordan, Egypt, Indonesia, Nigeria, Qatar, Kuwait, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, The Gambia, Thad

The 18 countries declared Colombia's decision "null and void" and reaffirmed their support for the two-state solution, with East Jerusalem as the capital of a future Palestinian state.

5 Why Jerusalem Matters



- Holy city for Muslims, Christians and Jews.
- Status of Jerusalem is one of the most contentious issues in the Israel-Palestine conflict.
- Under international law and UN resolutions, East Jerusalem is considered occupied territory.
- Most countries do not recognise Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem.

6 Legal and Diplomatic Context

- UN Security Council Resolution 478 (1980) declared Israel's "Basic Law" on Jerusalem null and void and called on states not to establish diplomatic missions there.
- The move violates widely accepted international law and relevant UN resolutions, according to Pakistan and the 18 countries.
- Seen as part of a broader debate over recognition, sovereignty and the two-state solution.
- Contrary to the consensus of the international community, which does not recognise Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

7 Broader Implications

- Setback for the two-state solution
- May encourage similar moves by other countries
- Increased diplomatic tensions
- Further polarisation in the Muslim world and beyond

8 Way Forward

1. Renew international efforts for a credible two-state solution.
2. Uphold UN resolutions on Jerusalem.
3. Avoid actions that prejudge the final status of the city.
4. Strengthen diplomatic engagement with like-minded countries.
5. Reaffirm support for a just, lasting and comprehensoix peace process.

9 Key Takeaways for CSS

1. Colombia opened its embassy in Jerusalem on 16 October 2026.
2. Pakistan and 18 countries called the move "null and void".
3. The issue highlights the legal, political and religious sensitivity of Jerusalem.
4. It reflects deep divisions in the international community.
5. The two-state solution remains the widely supported framework for a lasting peace.

10 Relevance for CSS Domains

International Relations
Middle East politics, UN role and global diplomacy.

Pakistan Affairs
OIC, Muslim world and Pakistan's foreign policy.

Political Science
International law, sovereignty and state recognition.

Current Affairs
Recent diplomatic developments and global responses.

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I4 | International Law & the Palestine Question | Priority: **HIGH**

Colombia Opens an Embassy in Jerusalem; Pakistan and 18 Others Call It 'Null and Void'

Continuity: New this issue; links to Issue 21's I1 (international law) through UN Security Council resolutions and the ICJ's role.

Past Paper Echo: No verified direct past-paper precedent checked. Syllabus anchors: Jerusalem's status, UNSC Res. 476 and 478, two-state solution, Pakistan's Palestine policy.

Essay Topic: The status of Jerusalem in international law and the politics of embassy relocation.

Flag: Reports differ on whether 18 or 19 states signed; the Reuters opening report and Colombia's own statement were not retrieved directly.

Infographic cross-check: The image dates the opening to 16 October (it was 14 October; 16 October is the joint statement) and says President Gustavo Petro led it and gives him a quotation. The sources say President Abelardo de la Espriella reversed Colombia's earlier policy and Foreign Minister Omar Bula opened the embassy; the quotation is not in the sources. The image's list of 18 states (including Iran, Nigeria, Maldives, Mauritania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, The Gambia and Chad) differs from the Dawn and Express Tribune list (Algeria, Djibouti, Egypt, Indonesia, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Syria, Sudan and Turkiye, plus Pakistan). It says Palestine 'welcomed' Colombia's decision, which contradicts Palestine's signature on the condemnation. The article text governs.

A. Executive Summary

Colombia inaugurated its embassy in Jerusalem on Wednesday 14 October, becoming the 10th country to establish a diplomatic mission in the city, Reuters reported, as its new President Abelardo de la Espriella reversed his predecessor's break with Israel and restored a free trade agreement between the two countries. A photo caption identifies Colombian Foreign Minister Omar Bula cutting the ribbon with Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar. Two days later, on 16 October, the foreign ministers of Pakistan and 17 or 18 other Arab and Muslim-majority countries issued a joint statement, circulated by Pakistan's Foreign Office as press release No. 290/2026, saying they 'strongly condemn and express their unequivocal rejection' of the move.

The statement said any measure to alter the legal or historical status of occupied Jerusalem, or to recognise it as Israel's capital, is 'null and void' and has no legal effect, citing UN Security Council Resolutions 476 and 478, adopted in 1980, which reject attempts to change Jerusalem's character or status and call on states to withdraw diplomatic missions from the city. It called on Colombia to 'reconsider and reverse' its decision, uphold its obligations under international law and refrain from measures that prejudice Palestinian rights, and reaffirmed support for an independent and sovereign Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital under a two-state solution. Reports differ on the number of signatories: Dawn and Express Tribune list 18 foreign ministers (Pakistan, Algeria, Djibouti, Egypt, Indonesia, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Syria, Sudan and Türkiye), while Aaj English and Daily Times count 19 by adding Yemen. In May 2026 Pakistan and 13 other countries condemned the 'so-called Somaliland' opening of a 'purported' embassy in Jerusalem, and Dawn carried a separate headline that the US and Israel signed an agreement to build a permanent US embassy in Jerusalem.

For CSS candidates the story is a ready-made example for essays on Palestine and international law. The legal core is Security Council Resolution 478, which declared Israel's 1980 Basic Law on Jerusalem null and void, while the political context is that most states keep their embassies in Tel Aviv, awaiting a final-status settlement. A balanced answer should note Colombia's perspective is that of a sovereign government changing foreign policy, that the joint statement is a political declaration rather than a binding legal act, and that the counts of signatories vary by outlet.

B. Key Arguments / Developments

- Colombia opened its embassy in Jerusalem on 14 Oct 2026, the 10th country to do so (Reuters, via Tribune and Aaj English).
- President Abelardo de la Espriella reversed the predecessor's break with Israel and restored a free trade agreement (Aaj English).
- Colombian FM Omar Bula and Israeli FM Gideon Saar at the opening (Reuters photo caption, via Tribune).
- 16 Oct: joint statement of foreign ministers, circulated by FO as PR No. 290/2026, strongly condemns the move (Tribune; Dawn).
- Statement: measures altering Jerusalem's status or recognising it as Israel's capital are 'null and void' (Tribune; The Nation).
- Cites UNSC Resolutions 476 and 478 (1980), which reject changes to Jerusalem's character and call for withdrawal of missions (The Nation; Aaj English).
- Calls on Colombia to 'reconsider and reverse' the decision and uphold international law (Tribune).
- Reaffirms an independent, sovereign Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital (Tribune; Daily Times).
- Signatories listed by Dawn and Express Tribune: 18 states; Aaj English and Daily Times add Yemen for 19. [Counts differ]
- May 2026: Pakistan and 13 other countries condemned the 'so-called Somaliland' purported embassy in Jerusalem (Dawn).

- Dawn headline: US and Israel sign agreement to build a permanent American embassy in Jerusalem. [Body not reviewed]
- Most countries keep embassies in Tel Aviv pending a final-status settlement (Daily Business News).

C. Analytical Categories

Legal

- UNSC Res. 478 declared the 1980 Jerusalem law null and void (background).
- A joint statement is political, not a binding legal act.

Political

- Colombia's policy shift follows a change of government.
- Muslim-majority states act collectively.

Pakistan-relevant

- Pakistan consistently joins such statements.
- Links to its two-state position and OIC diplomacy.

Diplomatic

- Ten states now host embassies in Jerusalem.
- Trade ties are part of the Colombia-Israel reset.

D. Stakeholder Positions & Way Forward

- **Pakistan Foreign Office / foreign ministers' group:** Reject the move as null and void; urge Colombia to reverse it.
- **Colombia (President de la Espriella):** Opened the embassy and restored the free trade agreement.
- **Israel (Gideon Saar):** Welcomed the opening (photo caption).
- **Palestine:** Signatory to the condemnation.

Challenges Ahead

- Erosion of the consensus on Jerusalem's status.
- Limited enforcement of Security Council resolutions.
- Diplomatic and trade pressure on states.
- Differences in signatory counts and reporting.

Way Forward (analytical suggestions, not reported positions)

- Use UN and OIC forums to restate Res. 476 and 478 (analytical suggestion).
- Engage Colombia diplomatically.
- Seek an advisory opinion on Jerusalem if appropriate.
- Keep the two-state framework central.

E. Statistical Digest

14 Oct embassy opening	**10th** country to host an embassy in Jerusalem
16 Oct joint statement date	**18 / 19** signatories (differs by outlet)
476 / 478 UNSC resolutions cited (1980)	**PR No. 290/2026** FO press release
14 countries in May 2026 Somaliland statement (Pakistan plus 13)	

F. Quotes & Essay-Relevant Vocabulary

- **Joint statement (via Tribune):** Strongly condemn and express their unequivocal rejection of the inauguration by the Republic of Colombia of its embassy in Jerusalem.
- **Joint statement (via The Nation):** Any attempt to alter the legal or historical status of occupied Jerusalem or recognise it as Israel's capital is null and void and has no legal effect.

Vocabulary: Jerusalem | Null and void | Embassy relocation | Security Council resolution | Two-state solution | East Jerusalem | Final-status settlement | Basic Law | Occupied territory | Recognition

G. Further In-Depth Study (sources used)

https://www.dawn.com/news/2037582 |
https://tribune.com.pk/story/2635190/pakistan-18-countries-reject-colombias-jerusalem-embassy-says-move-has-no-legal-effect |
https://english.aaj.tv/news/330476772/pakistan-18-other-muslim-countries-condemn-colombias-embassy-inauguration-in-jerusalem |
https://www.nation.com.pk/17-Oct-2026/18-muslim-states-condemn-colombia-s-embassy-opening-jerusalem

ICEP's CSS Weekly
CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE
Issue 22
October 11 – 17, 2026
International Article – 05 (I5)

Trump's 'Energy Ceasefire' Collapses and Sanctions on Russia Are Waived

A Reversal of Policy, Rising Oil Risks and Uncertain Peace Prospects



1 What Happened?

- **Early Oct 2026** – US President Donald Trump proposed an "energy ceasefire" to end the Russia-Ukraine war.
- **Mid Oct 2026** – The proposal failed to gain traction as both sides maintained their positions.
- **After collapse** – The US waived or eased some sanctions on Russia, according to media reports, despite continued fighting in Ukraine.

2 What was the 'Energy Ceasefire'?

- Pause on attacks targeting energy infrastructure (e.g., oil and gas facilities).
- Ensure stable global energy supplies and prevent further disruption in energy markets.
- Create a basis for ang[illegible] could lur[illegible].
- Supported by some international actors but rejected or viewed sceptically by others.

3 Why Did It Collapse?

- Continued military operations and mutual distrust.
- Lack of agreement on scope and verification.
- Conflicting demands and preconditions.
- Geopolitical rivalries and diverging interests of major powers and European states.
- Ongoing attacks on energy infrastructure on both sides.

4 US Waiver of Sanctions: Key Points

- Reports indicate that the US waived or eased some sanctions on Russia after the collapse of the proposal.
- The move is seen as a shift from previous pressure-based policy.
- Details of the specific sanctions waived were not fully disclosed in the sources.
- The decision has raised questions about the consistency and future direction of US policy.

5 Reactions of Key Actors

United States	Trump promoted the proposal but faced criticism over the sanctions waiver.
Russia	Welcomed the easing of sanctions and continued its military operations.
Ukraine	Remained sceptical, stressing the need for a complete and verifiable ceasefire.
European Union	Reportedly concerned about the impact on its sanctions regime and support for Ukraine.
NATO	Reiterated support for Ukraine and called for sustained pressure on Russia.

6 Impact on Global Energy Markets

- **Oil and Gas Prices** – Renewed uncertainty has increased volatility in global oil and gas prices.
- **Energy Supplies** – Continued risks to energy infrastructure threaten supply chains.
- **Global Economy** – Higher energy prices may slow global growth and raise inflation.
- **Energy Security** – European states remain focused on diversifying energy sources and reducing dependence on Russian supplies.

7 Broader Implications

- **Prolonged War** – The failure of the proposal suggests a longer conflict in Ukraine.
- **Geopolitical Realignments** – May affect US–Russia relations and trans-Atlantic unity.
- **Global Economic Risks** – Sustained energy volatility and higher inflation risks.
- **Energy Transition** – May accelerate efforts towards renewable energy and reduced dependence on fossil fuels.

8 Way Forward

1. Renew diplomatic efforts for a comprehensive and verifiable ceasefire.
2. Maintain a consistent and transparent sanctions policy.
3. Strengthen protection of energy infrastructure.
4. Enhance energy diversification and invest in renewable energy.
5. Engage major powers and regional actors to reduce escalation risks.

9 Key Takeaways for CSS

- The article highlights the link between the Russia-Ukraine war, energy security and global economy.
- It shows the limits of unilateral initiatives in complex international conflicts.
- It underscores the importance of consistent foreign policy and alliance management.
- It is relevant for International Relations, Current Affairs, Economics and Strategic Studies.

10 Relevance for CSS Domains

- **International Relations** – Great power politics, conflict resolution, sanctions and diplomacy.
- **Economics** – Global energy markets, inflation and economic stability.
- **Current Affairs** – Recent developments in the Russia-Ukraine war and global energy security.
- **Strategic Studies** – Energy security, geopolitical rivalries and international security dynamics.

I5 | Russia-Ukraine War & Sanctions Policy | Priority: **MEDIUM**

Trump's 'Energy Ceasefire' Collapses and Sanctions on Russia Are Waived

Continuity: Follows Issue 21's I4 (Ukraine peace push stalls): the US push now centres on an energy ceasefire and a sanctions waiver.

Past Paper Echo: No verified direct past-paper precedent checked. Syllabus anchors: Russia-Ukraine war, sanctions, energy infrastructure, US foreign policy.

Essay Topic: Energy as a battlefield: ceasefire diplomacy and sanctions in the Russia-Ukraine war.

Flag: Battlefield and compliance claims are as reported by the outlets cited; Putin's territorial claim is unverified.

Infographic cross-check: The image dates the proposal to 'early October'; Trump announced the energy ceasefire on 11 October, Ukraine ended its pause on 15 October and Trump waived sanctions on 16 October under the Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act. Its reactions panel (Russia welcomed, EU concerned, NATO) is not in the sources, and it omits the Ryazan refinery strike, the diesel deal and Zelenskyy's 'wrong' remark. The article text governs.

A. Executive Summary

President Donald Trump announced an immediate 'energy ceasefire' on 11 October, calling on both sides to stop attacking energy infrastructure; Al Jazeera noted the announcement was unilateral and not publicly confirmed by Moscow, which continued striking Ukrainian energy sites. Ukraine said it suspended attacks on Russian energy sites for several days, but on 15 October President Volodymyr Zelenskyy declared an end to the pause, saying Kyiv was 'done' with the energy ceasefire and accusing Moscow of violating it. Ukrainian drones struck an oil refinery in Russia's Ryazan region, about 180 kilometres southeast of Moscow, early that day, according to Russian reports and AP; Russian aerial attacks hit 15 Ukrainian regions, Zelenskyy said.

Relations between Washington and Kyiv soured. Trump called the renewed refinery attacks 'a disgrace', said he was 'not a big fan' of Zelenskyy and found him 'more difficult to deal with than Putin'; Zelenskyy told Piers Morgan he felt betrayed and alleged restrictions on Ukraine's access to SpaceX satellite internet; NPR reported that the administration had warned Ukraine it could cut off intelligence sharing. NPR also noted that Trump made a deal with Putin to import Russian diesel, which Zelenskyy criticised. On 16 October Trump issued a broad waiver of sanctions under the Lindsey Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act, and on 17 October Zelenskyy called that 'wrong', hoping Trump would do 'everything possible' to stop the war. Putin, on a visit to a Joint Force command post on 16 October, claimed Russian forces had captured more than 1,300 square kilometres in Donbas and Novorossiya in September, according to TASS; this is a Russian claim not verified here. Trump said he wants the war ended.

For CSS candidates the story illustrates how ceasefire diplomacy can fail when it is announced without agreement from both parties, how energy infrastructure became the main target set of the war, now in its fifth year, and how sanctions are used and relaxed as bargaining tools. A careful essay should separate US announcements from verified compliance, attribute battlefield claims to their sources, and note that the reported sanctions waiver and diesel deal carry implications for the broader sanctions regime, including pressure on Iran under the same Act.

B. Key Arguments / Developments

- Trump announced an immediate energy ceasefire on 11 Oct; Moscow did not publicly confirm (Al Jazeera, 15 Oct; Webindia123).
- Russia continued attacking Ukrainian energy infrastructure (Al Jazeera; NPR).
- Ukraine paused strikes on Russian energy sites for several days, then ended the pause on 15 Oct (Al Jazeera; Webindia123).
- Ukrainian drones hit a refinery in Ryazan, about 180km southeast of Moscow, on 15 Oct (Al Jazeera; NPR).
- Zelenskyy: Russian attacks hit 15 Ukrainian regions (NPR).
- Trump called the renewed attacks 'a disgrace' and said Zelenskyy is 'more difficult to deal with than Putin' (Al Jazeera, Newsmax remarks).
- Zelenskyy told Piers Morgan he felt betrayed and alleged restricted Starlink access (Al Jazeera).
- NPR: the administration warned Ukraine it could cut off intelligence, Zelenskyy said.
- NPR: Trump made a deal with Putin to import Russian diesel; Zelenskyy criticised it.
- 16 Oct: Trump issued a broad waiver of sanctions under the Lindsey Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act (Kyiv Independent).
- 17 Oct: Zelenskyy called the waiver 'wrong' and hoped Trump would do everything possible to stop the war (Kyiv Independent).
- Putin claimed over 1,300 sq km captured in Donbas and Novorossiya in September (TASS via Webindia123, 16 Oct). [Russian claim]
- Trump: 'I want that war to end' (Webindia123, 17 Oct).
- The war began more than 4.5 years ago (NPR).

C. Analytical Categories

Diplomatic

- A unilateral ceasefire announcement lacked mutual confirmation.
- US-Ukraine friction over intelligence and satellite access.

Military

- Refineries and energy networks are primary targets.
- Both sides claim gains or successes.

Economic

- Sanctions waiver and diesel deal change incentives.
- Energy attacks affect global oil prices (background).

Legal

- Targeting energy infrastructure raises humanitarian-law questions.
- Waiver authority under US sanctions law.

D. Stakeholder Positions & Way Forward

- **Donald Trump (US):** Wants the war ended; waived sanctions; criticised Zelenskyy.
- **Volodymyr Zelenskyy (Ukraine):** Ended the pause; calls the waiver wrong; feels betrayed.
- **Vladimir Putin (Russia):** Claims 1,300 sq km gained in September.
- **Kyiv Independent / NPR / Al Jazeera:** Source outlets for the sequence of events.

Challenges Ahead

- No agreed verification of an energy ceasefire.
- US-Ukraine trust deficit.
- Sanctions policy shifts.
- Continued strikes on civilians and infrastructure.

Way Forward (analytical suggestions, not reported positions)

- Agree a mutually confirmed, monitored energy ceasefire (analytical suggestion).
- Coordinate sanctions with allies.
- Clarify intelligence-sharing assurances to Ukraine.
- Resume technical-level talks.

E. Statistical Digest

11 Oct Trump announces energy ceasefire	**15 Oct** Zelenskyy ends the pause; Ryazan refinery hit
~180km Ryazan refinery distance from Moscow	**15** Ukrainian regions hit by Russian strikes
16 Oct sanctions waiver	**1,300+ sq km** Putin's claim for September (unverified)
4.5+ years war duration (NPR)	

F. Quotes & Essay-Relevant Vocabulary

- **Zelenskyy (via Al Jazeera):** It's painful when President Trump chooses one side, not our side.
- **Trump (via Webindia123):** I want that war to end.

Vocabulary: Energy ceasefire | Sanctions waiver | Refinery | Energy infrastructure | Intelligence sharing | Unilateral announcement | Front line | Donbas | Escalation | Compliance

G. Further In-Depth Study (sources used)

https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/10/15/russia-says-ukraine-resumes-attacks-on-oil-refineries |
https://www.npr.org/2026/10/15/g-s1-148194/russia-ukraine-war |
https://kyivindependent.com/putin-feels-joy-zelensky-calls-trumps-waiving-of-key-russia-sanctions-wrong/ |
https://news.webindia123.com/news/Articles/World/20261017/4511931.html

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International Article – 06 (16)

IMF Outlook in Bangkok: 3.1% Growth, 'Resilience Under Strain' and a Hormuz Reopening Assumed for March 2027

Cautious Global Projections, Persistent Risks and a Conditional Recovery Path



1 What Happened?

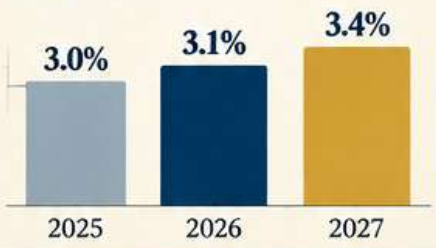
13 Oct 2026
- IMF released its latest World Economic Outlook (WEO) at the annual meetings in Bangkok.
- Global growth for 2026 projected at 3.1% and 3.4% for 2027.
- Outlook described as 'resilience under strain' due to persistent downside risks.

15 Oct 2026
- IMF assumed a reopening of the Strait of Hormuz in March 2027 in its baseline scenario.

17 Oct 2026
- The outlook highlighted ongoing geopolitical tensions, trade policy uncertainty and fragile financial conditions.

2 Global Growth Projections

Global economy shows resilience but faces persistent downside risks.



3.1% Global growth in 2026

3.4% Global growth in 2027

3 Key Assumptions in the Outlook

- Reopening of the Strait of Hormuz assumed in March 2027 (baseline scenario).
- Oil prices to remain elevated in the near term, with gradual moderation in 2027.
- Global inflation to decline slowly but remain above pre-pandemic levels.
- Monetary policy to remain tight in many economies.
- Continued geopolitical tensions and trade policy uncertainty.

4 Regional Growth Projections (Real GDP Growth %)

Region / Country Group	2025	2026	2027
World	3.0	3.1	3.4
United States	1.9	2.0	2.1
Euro Area	1.2	1.1	1.4
China	4.8	4.8	4.2
India	6.6	6.6	6.2
Middle East & Central Asia	3.5	3.4	4.0
Pakistan	2.6	3.6	4.0

5 Key Risks Highlighted by IMF

- Renewed escalation in the Middle East and disruption to energy supplies.
- Higher and more volatile oil prices.
- Prolonged closure or further disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz.
- Trade policy uncertainty and rising protectionism.
- Persistent inflation and tighter financial conditions.
- Weak growth in major economies and fragile global demand.

6 Implications of a Hormuz Reopening



- Easing of global oil prices and energy market pressures.
- Improved global trade and supply chain stability.
- Support for economic recovery in the Middle East and beyond.
- Reduced risk of a deeper global slowdown.

7 Pakistan in the IMF Outlook



- Growth projected at 2.6% in 2025, 3.6% in 2026 and 4.0% in 2027.
- Improving macroeconomic stability but subject to external risks.
- Vulnerable to higher oil prices and regional instability.
- Continued need for structural reforms, fiscal discipline and export growth.

8 IMF's Policy Advice

- Maintain macroeconomic stability and rebuild buffers.
- Implement structural reforms to boost productivity.
- Enhance fiscal sustainability and debt management.
- Strengthen resilience to climate change and external shocks.

9 Key Takeaways for CSS

1. Global growth remains modest at 3.1% in 2026.
2. IMF outlook shows 'resilience under strain' with significant downside risks.
3. Reopening of Hormuz in March 2027 is a key assumption for improved energy markets.
4. Pakistan's growth is projected to improve but remains vulnerable to external shocks.
5. The outlook highlights the need for reforms, energy security and regional stability.

10 Relevance for CSS Domains

International Relations
Middle East, global economy and energy security.

Economics
Global growth, inflation, oil prices and development.

Pakistan Affairs
Pakistan's economy, external sector and reforms.

Current Affairs
Recent international developments and IMF outlook.

Environmental Science
Climate change, energy transition and sustainability.

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I6 | Global Economy & International Finance | Priority: **HIGH**

IMF Outlook in Bangkok: 3.1% Growth, 'Resilience Under Strain' and a Hormuz Reopening Assumed for March 2027

Continuity: Follows N2 (Pakistan chairing the IMF and World Bank boards): the same annual meetings produced the new outlook.

Past Paper Echo: No verified direct past-paper precedent checked. Syllabus anchors: IMF WEO, global growth, inflation, energy shocks.

Essay Topic: The global economy under strain: AI investment, energy shocks and uneven growth.

Flag: The 0.4-point AI-correction figure is from a secondary analysis; the full WEO text was not retrieved.

Infographic cross-check: The image's growth table gives world growth of 3.0% for 2025; the sources say 2026 growth is 3.1% (up from 3.0% forecast in July) against 3.5% last year. It shows US growth of 2.0% and 2.1% (sources: 2.3% in both years) and country figures for the euro area, China, India and Pakistan that were not retrieved. The 15 and 17 October timeline entries are not in the sources. The article text governs.

A. Executive Summary

The IMF released its October 2026 World Economic Outlook, titled 'Resilience Under Strain, Urgent Choices', on 13 October at the annual meetings in Bangkok. It projects global growth of 3.1 per cent in 2026, up from the 3.0 per cent forecast in July but below last year's 3.5 per cent, and 3.4 per cent in 2027, unchanged (CNBC; IMF briefing). Division chief Deniz Igan said global inflation is expected to reach 4.7 per cent this year, largely reflecting higher energy and food prices. The IMF said the AI-driven investment boom has helped offset some of the impact of surging energy costs, but that resilience is 'nearing its breaking point': the Fund estimated that without the buffers that supported growth, global growth would have been 60 basis points lower, at 2.5 per cent. It also said trade in AI-related goods grew 29 per cent and that growth was revised up sizably for China.

The outlook is 'highly uneven', research director Silvana Tenreyro told reporters: just 32 economies now account for 95 per cent of global growth, against 54 in April, and growth in the United States is projected at 2.3 per cent in both 2026 and 2027. The IMF sharply downgraded its forecasts for Gulf countries, including Saudi Arabia, 'under the shadow of a regional war', and it now assumes that the Strait of Hormuz will reopen in March 2027 and return to its pre-war state by October 2027 (CNBC). A secondary analysis (Tech Times) reports a Fund warning that a moderate correction in AI equity valuations could cost about 0.4 percentage points of global growth; the underlying report was not retrieved for this check. On 16 October, in her address to the Board of Governors, Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva described the economy as caught between 'two big opposing forces', an energy-supply drag and an AI-led investment surge, and warned that high sovereign debt and shrinking fiscal buffers risk fragmentation (Xinhua).

For CSS candidates the outlook is a handy source of global data for essays on the world economy, and it ties neatly to Pakistan: energy-importing and lower-income economies face a harder environment (Igan), Pakistan's own inflation is above the global average (Issue 21, N7), and the Hormuz assumption underlies fuel prices (N6) and the war (I1). A careful answer should quote the headline growth numbers, the 'uneven' theme and the energy assumption, and treat third-party summaries of risks such as the AI correction as secondary.

B. Key Arguments / Developments

- IMF released the October 2026 WEO, 'Resilience Under Strain, Urgent Choices', on 13 Oct in Bangkok (IMF).
- Global growth: 3.1% in 2026 (up from 3.0% in July; 3.5% in 2025) and 3.4% in 2027 (CNBC; IMF briefing).
- Global inflation projected at 4.7% in 2026, driven by energy and food prices (Deniz Igan, IMF).
- Without the narrowing buffers, 2026 growth would have been 2.5%, 60bp lower (IMF briefing).
- Trade in AI-related goods grew 29% (IMF briefing).
- Growth revised up sizably for China (IMF briefing).
- 32 economies account for 95% of global growth, down from 54 in April (Fortune; CNBC).
- US growth projected at 2.3% in 2026 and 2027 (Fortune).
- The IMF sharply downgraded Gulf economies, including Saudi Arabia (CNBC).
- IMF assumes Hormuz reopens in March 2027 and returns to pre-war state by October 2027 (CNBC).
- Tech Times: a moderate AI equity correction could cost about 0.4pp of global growth (secondary source).
- 16 Oct: Georgieva described 'two big opposing forces' and warned of fragmentation from debt and conflict (Xinhua).
- Meetings mark the IMF-World Bank return to Bangkok 35 years after 1991 (Xinhua).

C. Analytical Categories

Macroeconomic

- Growth is steady at 3.1% but uneven.
- Energy shocks versus an AI investment boom.

Energy

- Hormuz reopening assumed in March 2027.
- Inflation at 4.7% reflects energy and food prices.

Financial stability

- High sovereign debt and shrinking fiscal buffers.
- AI valuation risk flagged by secondary reports.

Pakistan-relevant

- Energy importers face a tougher environment.
- Pakistan chairs the boards in 2027 (N2).

D. Stakeholder Positions & Way Forward

- **IMF (Georgieva, Tenreyro, Igan):** Resilience is uneven and nearing its limits; risks tilt downward.
- **Gulf economies:** Downgraded because of the regional war.
- **Energy-importing and lower-income economies:** Face a more challenging environment (Igan).

Challenges Ahead

- Unevenness: 32 economies drive 95% of growth.
- Energy-supply shocks.
- Sovereign debt burdens.
- AI-concentration risk.

Way Forward (analytical suggestions, not reported positions)

- Rebuild fiscal buffers where possible (analytical suggestion).
- Diversify energy supplies.
- Broaden growth beyond a few economies.
- Strengthen multilateral financing.

E. Statistical Digest

3.1% 2026 global growth	**3.4%** 2027 global growth
3.5% 2025 growth	**4.7%** 2026 global inflation
2.5% 2026 growth without buffers	**32** economies driving 95% of growth
54 same measure in April	**2.3%** US growth, 2026 and 2027
29% growth in AI-related goods trade	**Mar 2027** Hormuz reopening assumption
0.4pp growth cost of a moderate AI correction (secondary source)	

F. Quotes & Essay-Relevant Vocabulary

- **Deniz Igan, IMF (briefing):** The global economy continues to prove resilient, but this resilience is becoming increasingly uneven.
- **Kristalina Georgieva (via Xinhua):** The global economy is navigating between two big opposing forces.

Vocabulary: World Economic Outlook | Resilience | Fiscal buffers | Sovereign debt | Energy shock | Uneven growth | AI-driven investment | Fragmentation | Inflation | Downside risk

G. Further In-Depth Study (sources used)

https://www.imf.org/en/news/articles/2026/10/13/tr-101326-press-briefing-transcript-world-economic-outlook-annual-meetings-2026 |
https://www.cnbc.com/2026/10/12/imf-world-bank-annual-meetings-october-bangkok-asia-.html |
https://fortune.com/2026/10/13/imf-global-growth-forecast-2026-ai-economic-divide/ |
https://english.news.cn/20261016/9499fa6bb51d4bc6b4e6f06626bd9ab1/c.html

ICEP's CSS Weekly
CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE
Issue 22
October 11 – 17, 2026
International Article – 07 (I7)

North Korea Claims an AI-Assisted 'Super-Speed' Torpedo Test (Zam-2.0)

A New Undersea Weapon, Renewed Provocations and Growing Threats to Regional Security



1 What Happened?

Oct 2026

- North Korea announced that it has successfully tested a new AI-assisted underwater torpedo, named "Zam-2.0".
- The test was reported by state media during the week of 11–17 October 2026.
- The weapon is claimed to be a "super-speed" torpedo with enhanced guidance and targeting capabilities.

2 Key Claims by North Korea

- AI-assisted guidance and navigation system.
- Described as a "super-speed" torpedo.
- Designed for improved accuracy and target recognition against naval assets.
- Part of ongoing efforts to enhance undersea warfare capabilities.

3 What is Zam-2.0?



- Underwater torpedo system ("Zam' series).
- Claimed to have higher speed than previous versions.
- Uses AI-based technologies for guidance and target tracking.
- Likely aimed at countering naval forces in the region.

4 Why Does It Matter?

- Enhances North Korea's undersea strike capability.
- Increases challenges for missile defence and naval security.
- Signals continued advancement in asymmetric military technologies.
- Adds to regional tensions in an already volatile security environment

5 Regional and Global Reactions

United States	Condemned the test and reaffirmed commitment to regional security.
South Korea	Expressed serious concern over North Korea's growing underwater capabilities.
Japan	Called for stronger deterrence and enhanced missile and maritime defence cooperation.
United Nations	Reiterated the need for full compliance with UN Security Council resolutions.
China	Urged all parties to avoid actions that could escalate tensions.
Russia	Called for dialogue and a balanced approach to regional security.

6 Broader Implications

- **Maritime Security** — Greater threat to naval forces in the region, including the US and its allies.
- **Nuclear Programme** — Reflects continued development of advanced weapon systems alongside nuclear and missile programmes.
- **Arms Race** — May trigger further military modernisation by neighbouring countries.
- **Regional Stability** — Increases uncertainty in the already tense security environment of East Asia.

7 North Korea's Strategic Objectives



- Strengthen deterrence against the US and allies.
- Enhance bargaining power in future negotiations.
- Demonstrate technological progress and military capability.
- Consolidate domestic legitimacy and project regional influence.

8 Way Forward

- Renew diplomatic engagement and dialogue.
- Strengthen regional maritime security cooperation.
- Ensure full implementation of UN Security Council resolutions.
- Address the root causes of tensions on the Korean Peninsula.
- Pursue a balanced approach combining deterrence and diplomacy.

9 Key Takeaways for CSS

1. North Korea tested an AI-assisted "super-speed" torpedo (Zam-2.0) in October 2026.
2. The test highlights advances in undersea warfare capabilities.
3. The development increases regional tensions and maritime security challenges.
4. It reflects North Korea's strategy of strengthening deterrence and bargaining power.
5. The issue is relevant for International Relations, Strategic Studies and Current Affairs.

10 Relevance for CSS Domains

- **International Relations** — Regional security, great power rivalries, non-proliferation.
- **Strategic Studies** — Military modernisation, deterrence, maritime security.
- **Current Affairs** — Recent developments in East Asia and global security.
- **Pakistan Affairs** — Implications for regional stability and Pakistan's security.
- **General Science** — Emerging military technologies and AI in warfare.

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Flags in red mark single-source, headline-level or unnamed-source items.

I7 | Military Technology, AI & Arms Control | Priority: **MEDIUM**

North Korea Claims an AI-Assisted 'Super-Speed' Torpedo Test (Zam-2.0)

Continuity: Complements Issue 21's I7 on the governance of AI: here the application is weapons.

Past Paper Echo: No verified direct past-paper precedent checked. Syllabus anchors: AI in warfare, arms control, Korean peninsula security.

Essay Topic: Artificial intelligence and weapons: arms races, verification and norms.

Flag: All technical claims come from North Korean state media and are unverified.

Infographic cross-check: The image lists reactions from the United States, South Korea, Japan, the UN, China and Russia; the sources report that South Korea's military offered no immediate comment and give no such reactions. It dates the report to 'the week of 11-17 October' while KCNA reported the 15 October test on 17 October. Technical claims remain North Korean state-media claims; the portrait is a generated illustration and its footer carries a stray note. The article text governs.

A. Executive Summary

North Korea said on Saturday 17 October that it had tested a 'new-type' precision-guided torpedo system that uses artificial intelligence for target detection and guidance. State news agency KCNA said the underwater test-fire of the 'super-speed' Zam-2.0 system took place on Thursday 15 October 'to confirm the successful technical updating' of the weapon, and that AI technology was applied to the target detection and guidance function. KCNA also said the test heralds a 'significant' change in the North's naval capabilities. The announcement follows North Korea's claim earlier this month that it had proceeded with an AI-assisted launch of an intermediate-range hypersonic missile, announced by Kim Yo Jong, and Kim Jong Un's call in September for raising 'the level of artificial intelligence' in weapons systems.

The claims are unverified. The Korea Times reports experts saying the weapon could be a supercavitating torpedo, given references to rocket propulsion devices, and a profile on the test notes that the AI functionality remains a state claim without independent technical verification. Analysts said North Korea may need more time to advance the system, particularly to reduce underwater noise. Lim Eul-chul of Kyungnam University told AFP that the South Korean and US navies deploy decoy targets to divert torpedoes and that AI could help distinguish real targets from decoys. South Korea's military, which regularly accuses the North of overstating technological advances, offered no immediate comment, according to Yahoo/AP. Days after the North's missile claim, Seoul test-fired its own hypersonic glide vehicle, which the North said may have 'failed to achieve hypersonic flight', a claim South Korea rejected; AFP called the situation an 'arms race'. Analysts also suggest the North could be advancing with Russian support in exchange for sending troops to Russia's war in Ukraine.

For CSS candidates the story is a concrete example of AI entering weapons development, with three analytical points: the difficulty of verifying state claims, the arms-race dynamic on the Korean peninsula, and the gap between norms on AI governance, which the IMF and others are debating in economic terms (I6), and the absence of equivalent arms-control norms for AI-enabled weapons. A cautious essay should use 'claims' and 'reported', avoid assuming operational capability, and note that the Russia link is an analyst assessment, not a confirmed fact.

B. Key Arguments / Developments

- KCNA (17 Oct): North Korea tested the Zam-2.0 'new-type' precision-guided torpedo system on Thursday (AFP; AP; Korea Times).
- KCNA: AI technology was applied to target detection and guidance (AP via Inquirer).
- KCNA: the test heralds a 'significant' change in the North's naval capabilities (Korea Times).
- Earlier this month the North announced an AI-assisted launch of an intermediate-range hypersonic missile (AP; Yahoo).
- Kim Jong Un called in September for raising 'the level of artificial intelligence' in weapons systems (AFP).
- Experts: Zam-2.0 could be a supercavitating torpedo (Korea Times).
- AI functionality has no independent technical verification (ProfileNews).
- Analyst: AI could help distinguish real targets from decoys (Lim Eul-chul via AFP).
- South Korea's military offered no immediate comment (Yahoo/AP).
- Seoul test-fired its own hypersonic glide vehicle; North Korea said it may have failed; South Korea rejected the claim (AFP).
- Analysts say the North may be advancing with Russian support in exchange for sending troops to Ukraine (AFP; Deccan Chronicle).

C. Analytical Categories

Technological

- AI applied to detection and guidance, per KCNA.

- Noise reduction and guidance at speed remain challenges (analysts).

Strategic

- Arms race with South Korea over hypersonic and torpedo systems.
- Possible Russian support (analyst view).

Verification

- State claims lack independent verification.
- South Korea regularly says the North overstates its advances.

Norms

- No dedicated arms-control norm for AI-enabled weapons (general).
- Link to wider AI governance debates.

D. Stakeholder Positions & Way Forward

- **North Korea (KCNA, Kim Yo Jong, Kim Jong Un):** Claims AI-assisted torpedo and missile tests; seeks higher AI levels in weapons.
- **South Korea:** Tested its own hypersonic glide vehicle; rejected the North's claim of failure.
- **Analysts (Lim Eul-chul):** AI may help distinguish real targets from decoys; noise reduction remains hard.

Challenges Ahead

- Verifying claims.
- Arms-race dynamics.
- No AI-weapons norms.
- Possible technology transfer.

Way Forward (analytical suggestions, not reported positions)

- Seek verification through transparency measures where possible (analytical suggestion).
- Pursue norms on AI-enabled weapons in UN forums.
- Maintain communication channels on the peninsula.
- Monitor third-party technology transfers.

E. Statistical Digest

15 Oct test date (Thursday)	**17 Oct** KCNA announcement
Zam-2.0 system designation	**2** AI-assisted tests announced this month (torpedo, hypersonic missile)
Sep Kim Jong Un's call for more AI in weapons	

F. Quotes & Essay-Relevant Vocabulary

- **KCNA (via AP):** AI technology was applied to the target detection and the guidance function of the new-type super-speed precisely guided torpedo.
- **Lim Eul-chul (via AFP):** AI could potentially help distinguish real targets from decoys.

Vocabulary: Supercavitating torpedo | Precision-guided | Hypersonic | Arms race | Decoy | Target detection | Verification | Weapons norms | KCNA | Technology transfer

G. Further In-Depth Study (sources used)

https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20261017-north-korea-says-tested-ai-assisted-torpedo-system | https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/foreignaffairs/northkorea/20261017/n-korea-conducts-underwater-test-of-new-precision-guided-torpedo-using-ai-kcna | https://sg.news.yahoo.com/north-korea-claims-tested-ai-114336164.html

Pakistan Affairs: Constitution Quick Reference

Provision	Subject
Art. 1	Pakistan as a Federal Republic; the territories of the Federation.
Art. 8	Laws inconsistent with fundamental rights are void.
Art. 9 / 10A	Security of person / right to a fair trial.
Art. 16	Freedom of assembly, subject to reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interest of public order.
Art. 17 / 19 / 19A	Freedom of association / speech / right to information.
Art. 25 / 25A	Equality of citizens / right to education.
Art. 90, 97	Executive authority of the Federation.
Art. 140A	Each province shall establish a local government system.
Art. 142, 154	Subjects of legislation; Council of Common Interests.
Art. 160	National Finance Commission.
Art. 175A	Judicial Commission of Pakistan and the appointment of judges.
Art. 184 / 199	Supreme Court original jurisdiction / High Court writ jurisdiction.
Art. 232	Emergency on account of war or internal disturbance.
Art. 233	Power to suspend fundamental rights during an emergency.
Art. 234	Failure of constitutional machinery in a province.
Art. 235	Financial emergency.
Art. 239	Amendment procedure; 239(4): changing a province's limits needs that Provincial Assembly's two-thirds.
Art. 245	Functions of the armed forces in aid of civil power.
18th Amendment (2010)	Devolved many subjects to provinces; enlarged provincial autonomy.

Islamic Studies Corner

Sanctity of the Haramain (link: I2)

Makkah and Madinah are the two holiest cities of Islam. Muslim jurists and states have long treated attacks on sacred spaces, worshippers and pilgrims as grave violations.

Brotherhood of believers

The Quran describes the believers as brothers (Surah al-Hujurat 49:10), the textual basis of Ummah solidarity. Essays should add that political alliances are state decisions, not religious obligations.

Shura (link: N1)

Consultation is a Quranic principle (Surah Ash-Shura 42:38; Al-Imran 3:159). It supports arguments for dialogue over coercion in political disputes.

Justice and restraint in conflict (link: I1, I2)

Islamic law emphasises justice even towards adversaries (Surah al-Ma'ida 5:8) and the protection of non-combatants, which underpins criticism of attacks on civilian infrastructure.

Maqasid al-Shariah (link: N3)

The higher objectives of Shariah traditionally include preservation of life, faith, intellect, lineage and wealth. Hunger and malnutrition touch life and intellect directly.

Feeding the poor (link: N3)

The Quran repeatedly urges feeding the needy (for example 76:8-9; 107:1-3). Use this alongside data from the Global Hunger Index in essays on food security.

Essay Corner

Emergency Powers and Provincial Autonomy

- Introduction: the federal bargain
- Arts. 232-234 and parliamentary endorsement
- The K-P proclamation of 11 Oct (N1)
- Judicial review in the PHC
- Comparative: India Art. 356, Nigeria (background)
- Safeguards and alternatives
- Conclusion

Food Security and Hunger in Pakistan

- Measuring hunger: the GHI
- Pakistan's 25.5 and rank 106 (N3)
- Stunting, wasting, floods
- Policy: social protection, nutrition
- Fiscal limits (Issue 21, N1)
- Conclusion

Pakistan and the Bretton Woods Institutions

- Borrower and board member
- Chairmanship of 2027 (N2)
- What the chair does and does not give
- Programme conditionality
- Reform of governance
- Conclusion

Local Government in the Peripheries

- Why local bodies matter
- GB Act 2026 (N5)
- Women's quota and tiers
- Art. 140A for provinces (background)
- Delays and deadlock
- Conclusion

Deterrence in South Asia

- May 2025 and its legacy
- Singh and the FO exchange (N7)
- Water and border factors
- Crisis communication
- Conclusion

Chokepoints and the Gulf War

- Hormuz in numbers
- Iran's seven conditions; US blockade (I1)
- Mediators: Pakistan, Qatar, Oman, Russia
- Economic transmission (N6, I6)
- Conclusion

Jerusalem and International Law

- UNSC Res. 476 and 478
- Colombia's embassy (I4)
- Muslim states' response
- Limits of declaratory diplomacy
- Conclusion

AI in Warfare

- North Korea's claims (I7)

- Verification problems
- Arms-race dynamics
- Norms and governance
- Conclusion

Subjective Question Bank (one per article)

N1	Examine whether the proclamation of emergency and governor's rule in K-P satisfies Arts. 232 and 234. (20)
N2	What does Pakistan's chairmanship of the IMF and World Bank boards mean in practice? (20)
N3	Why does Pakistan score 'serious' on the Global Hunger Index despite macro stabilisation? (20)
N4	Discuss Pakistan's conditions for talks with Kabul and the border clashes in Kurram. (20)
N5	Assess the significance of Gilgit-Baltistan's Local Government Act 2026. (20)
N6	Explain the difference between SBP reserves and total liquid reserves and why import cover matters. (20)
N7	Evaluate deterrence between India and Pakistan after May 2025. (20)
I1	How does the Hormuz closure affect global and Pakistani energy security? (20)
I2	Does Pakistan's defence commitment to Saudi Arabia limit its mediation with Iran? (20)
I3	Explain the role of the P5 in the selection of the UN Secretary-General. (20)
I4	Discuss the legal status of Jerusalem and the significance of Res. 478. (20)
I5	Why did the energy ceasefire in Ukraine collapse? (20)
I6	Summarise the IMF's October 2026 outlook and its risks. (20)
I7	What are the implications of AI-enabled weapons for arms control? (20)

Suggested Weekly Study Plan

Day 1	N1 with Extended Model Answer I; revise Arts. 232-234, 245 and 199.
Day 2	N2, N3 and N6 with the Economy Dashboard; write a 150-word note on hunger and fiscal space.
Day 3	N4, N5 and N7; map Pakistan's security and local-government issues.
Day 4	I1 and I2 with Extended Model Answer II; list mediators and Pakistan's commitments.
Day 5	I3, I4 and I5; practise the UNSG selection and Jerusalem resolutions.
Day 6	I6 and I7; summarise each in five lines.
Day 7	Precis, English corner, 30 MCQs and the Legacy of Issue 21 table.

Precis & Composition Corner

Task: Make a precis of the passage in about one-third of its length and give it a suitable title. (Original passage written for this issue.)

Passage

Hunger is often described as a problem of food, but it is really a problem of access. A country can produce enough grain and still have children who go to bed hungry, because the people who need food cannot afford it, or because the food they can afford lacks the nutrients a growing body needs. This is why hunger indices look not only at calories but at stunting, wasting and child mortality, which record the long-term price of poor diets.

Economic stabilisation can improve the numbers that finance ministries watch, such as inflation, the budget deficit and foreign reserves, without improving the numbers that families feel. When prices rise faster than incomes and when public spending on health and nutrition is squeezed to meet fiscal targets, the poorest households absorb the shock first. Floods and droughts then add a second blow by destroying crops and livelihoods.

The remedy is neither mysterious nor cheap. It needs reliable social protection that reaches mothers and children, school meals and clean water, climate-resilient farming, and a budget that treats nutrition as an investment instead of a cost. Above all it needs honest data, so that progress can be measured by the child's height and weight, not only by the ratios on a balance sheet.

Model Precis

Title: Hunger Persists Where Growth Does Not Reach the Table

Hunger stems from lack of access to affordable, nutritious food, which indices capture through stunting, wasting and child mortality. Economic stabilisation can improve fiscal indicators without helping poor families, especially when social spending is cut and floods destroy livelihoods. Remedies include social protection, school meals, clean water, resilient farming and nutrition-friendly budgets, tracked by honest data on children's growth.

English Corner

One-Word Substitutions

Meaning	Word
A person who walks in sleep	Somnambulist
Government by the people	Democracy
A remedy for all diseases	Panacea
One who eats too much	Glutton
A speech delivered without preparation	Extempore
Fear of open spaces	Agoraphobia
Rule by a few	Oligarchy
That which cannot be avoided	Inevitable
A person who loves mankind	Philanthropist
Murder of a king	Regicide
A place where birds are kept	Aviary
Incapable of being corrected	Incorrigible
Handwriting that cannot be read	Illegible
A person who cannot be satisfied	Insatiable
Government by officials	Bureaucracy

Idioms and Phrases

Idiom	Meaning
To bite the bullet	To face a difficult situation bravely
To burn the midnight oil	To work late into the night
A blessing in disguise	A misfortune that proves beneficial

Idiom	Meaning
To cut corners	To do something cheaply by skipping steps
To turn a blind eye	To ignore deliberately
The writing on the wall	A clear warning of future trouble
To walk on eggshells	To act very carefully to avoid offence
To sit on the fence	To avoid taking sides
A double-edged sword	Something with both good and bad effects
To hit the nail on the head	To describe exactly what is true
To pour oil on troubled waters	To calm a dispute
To bury the hatchet	To end a quarrel
To throw in the towel	To give up
The tip of the iceberg	A small visible part of a larger problem
To play with fire	To take a dangerous risk

Sentence Correction

Sentence	Correction / Rule
Neither of the two candidates have submitted their papers.	Neither of the two candidates has submitted his or her papers. ('Neither' takes a singular verb.)
He is senior than me.	He is senior to me. ('Senior' takes 'to', not 'than'.)
The committee have decided to postpone it's meeting.	The committee has decided to postpone its meeting. (Singular collective noun; 'its' not 'it's'.)
Each of the students were given a certificate.	Each of the students was given a certificate. ('Each' takes a singular verb.)
I prefer tea than coffee.	I prefer tea to coffee. ('Prefer' takes 'to'.)
Hardly had he arrived when the train left.	Correct as written. ('Hardly... when' is the standard pair.)
The news are good.	The news is good. ('News' is singular.)
She insisted for going.	She insisted on going. ('Insist on'.)
One must do his duty.	One must do one's duty. (Formal English keeps 'one... one's'.)
The number of applicants are increasing.	The number of applicants is increasing. ('The number of' takes a singular verb.)

Legacy of Issue 21

How each Issue 21 story moved this week (verified updates only; where nothing was found, the table says so).

Issue 21 thread	Update, 11-17 Oct	Reading
Health-education IMF cut (Issue 21, N1)	Staff-level agreement awaits Executive Board approval; Pakistan named incoming chair of the IMF and World Bank boards (N2).	Board approval is the open step.
12-district emergency plan (Issue 21, N2)	Became a province-wide emergency and governor's rule on 11 Oct, endorsed 14-15 Oct; PHC hears the challenge on 20 Oct (N1).	Plan to proclamation in nine days.
World Bank poverty report (Issue 21, N3)	The GHI 2026 gives Pakistan 25.5, serious (N3), a consistent picture.	Poverty and hunger data align.
Judicial Commission (Issue 21, N4)	No new development found this week.	Not searched in depth.
Balochistan cabinet (Issue 21, N5)	No new development found this week.	Not searched in depth.
UN chief's visit (Issue 21, N6)	Guterres' term ends in 76 days; the sixth straw poll was deadlocked by P5 vetoes (I3).	Succession now the story.
Reserves and PSX (Issue 21, N7)	Reserves rose a second week to $21.47bn; total $26.86bn (N6).	Small, steady gains.
Nobel Peace Prize (Issue 21, I1)	No new development found this week.	Ceremony 10 Dec.
Makkah pact and Houthi strikes (Issue 21, I2)	Houthi attacks continued; Pakistan reaffirmed its defence commitment (I2).	From declaration to restatement.
Hormuz deadlock (Issue 21, I3)	Iran ties reopening to US withdrawal; shipping about 8 crossings a day; Lavrov to Tehran 19 Oct (I1).	Stalemate persists.
Ukraine peace push (Issue 21, I4)	Trump's energy ceasefire collapsed on 15 Oct; sanctions waiver on 16 Oct (I5).	Diplomacy regressed.
Pre-COP31 (Issue 21, I5)	COP31 opens 9 Nov in Antalya; no new development found this week.	Next milestone.
Indus Waters Treaty and border killings (Issue 21, I6)	No new IWT development found; India-Pakistan rhetoric sharpened (N7).	Tension without process.
French student protests (Issue 21, I7)	No new development found this week.	Not searched.

Confusables Corner

- **Emergency (Art. 232) vs Governor's rule (Art. 234)**: Art. 232 covers war or internal disturbance; Art. 234 covers failure of constitutional machinery in a province; both were invoked in K-P.
- **Joint sitting vs Separate House resolutions**: A joint sitting of both Houses votes together by simple majority; separate resolutions are passed by each House.
- **Writ petition (Art. 199) vs Suo motu**: A petition is filed by a party; suo motu is the court's own initiative.
- **Board of Governors vs Executive Board (IMF)**: Governors are the highest body and meet annually; the Executive Board oversees day-to-day work and approves programmes.
- **GHI vs Poverty headcount**: The GHI combines four hunger indicators; poverty headcount measures people below an income line.
- **Stunting vs Wasting**: Stunting is low height for age; wasting is low weight for height.
- **Union council vs Municipal corporation**: Union councils are the lowest local tier; municipal corporations govern larger cities.
- **Deterrence by punishment vs by denial**: Punishment threatens retaliation; denial aims to prevent the attack from succeeding.
- **Chokepoint vs Blockade**: A chokepoint is a narrow passage; a blockade is a naval measure that closes it to traffic.
- **Straw poll vs Formal vote (UNSC)**: Straw polls are informal and secret; the recommendation is a formal vote with P5 vetoes.
- **Resolution 476 vs 478**: Both (1980) concern Jerusalem; 478 declared the Basic Law null and void.
- **Sanctions waiver vs Sanctions repeal**: A waiver suspends application; repeal removes the legal basis.
- **Real GDP growth vs Inflation**: Growth is output change net of prices; inflation is the rise in the price level.
- **Supercavitating vs Conventional torpedo**: A supercavitating torpedo travels inside a gas bubble at high speed; conventional torpedoes do not.

FPSC-Pattern Essay Outline

Theme: Centre-Province Relations and the Limits of Federal Power

Why this theme: Recurs across N1 (emergency), N5 (local government), N2 (multilateral role), N3 (social delivery) and N4 (border security).

- 1. Introduction: the federal bargain of the 1973 Constitution.
- 2. Constitutional framework: Arts. 232-235, 245, 239.
- 3. The 18th Amendment and provincial autonomy.
- 4. Case: the K-P emergency and governor's rule of 11 Oct (N1).
- 5. Local federalism: GB Local Government Act 2026 (N5).
- 6. Judicial review: PHC petitions and Art. 199.
- 7. Security federalism: Kurram and counter-terrorism (N4).
- 8. Social federalism: hunger and delivery (N3).
- 9. Counter-arguments: security and national unity.
- 10. Conclusion: negotiated federalism over coercive intervention.

MCQ Bank (100 questions)

Q1. On which date was an emergency and governor's rule proclaimed in K-P?

(A) 9 October 2026 (B) 11 October 2026 (C) 14 October 2026 (D) 20 October 2026

Answer: B - President House statement.

Q2. Which two Articles were invoked for the K-P proclamation?

(A) Arts. 232 and 234 (B) Arts. 175A and 199 (C) Arts. 90 and 97 (D) Arts. 239 and 245

Answer: A - Reported by Dawn and others.

Q3. What was the joint sitting vote on endorsing the K-P emergency?

(A) 214-57 (B) 200-100 (C) 250-30 (D) 180-120

Answer: A - Aaj English, 15 Oct.

Q4. Who chaired the joint sitting of Parliament on 15 October?

(A) Speaker Ayaz Sadiq (B) Chairman Yousuf Raza Gilani (C) Law Minister Tarar (D) President Zardari

Answer: A - Aaj English.

Q5. Within how many days must an Art. 232 proclamation be laid before both Houses, per the Law Minister?

(A) 10 days (B) 30 days (C) 60 days (D) 90 days

Answer: A - Express Tribune.

Q6. On which date will the PHC hear the petitions against the K-P emergency?

(A) 20 October (B) 14 October (C) 1 November (D) 5 December

Answer: A - Dawn, 16 Oct.

Q7. Under which Article did Gohar Ali Khan file the PHC petition?

(A) Art. 199 (B) Art. 184(3) (C) Art. 175A (D) Art. 10A

Answer: A - Writ jurisdiction of the High Court.

Q8. Who filed a separate petition against the emergency alongside the PTI chairman?

(A) TTAP (B) PPP (C) JUI-F (D) MQM

Answer: A - Dawn.

Q9. Pakistan was named incoming chair of the IMF and World Bank boards for which year?

(A) 2026 (B) 2027 (C) 2028 (D) 2030

Answer: B - Ministry of Economic Affairs.

Q10. When did Pakistan last hold that chair?

(A) 1953 (B) 1973 (C) 1993 (D) 2003

Answer: A - Dawn, 16 Oct.

Q11. Who is Pakistan's Governor to the World Bank who will lead the boards?

(A) Ahad Khan Cheema (B) Muhammad Aurangzeb (C) Ishaq Dar (D) Ahsan Iqbal

Answer: A - Dawn.

Q12. The 2026 IMF-World Bank annual meetings were held in:

(A) Bangkok (B) Washington (C) Marrakech (D) Dubai

Answer: A - Dawn; Xinhua.

Q13. Does the chair carry additional voting rights?

(A) No (B) Yes (C) Only at the IMF (D) Only at the World Bank

Answer: A - Dawn Business explainer.

Q14. The 2027 annual meetings Pakistan will preside over will be held in:

(A) Washington (B) Islamabad (C) Geneva (D) Tokyo

Answer: A - 4-9 Oct 2027.

Q15. Pakistan's Global Hunger Index 2026 score is:

(A) 25.5 (B) 15.5 (C) 35.5 (D) 45.5

Answer: A - GHI via ProPakistani.

Q16. Pakistan's rank in the GHI 2026 is:

(A) 106 of 122 (B) 56 of 122 (C) 86 of 122 (D) 120 of 122

Answer: A - Minute Mirror.

Q17. Which South Asian country has a higher GHI score than Pakistan?

(A) Afghanistan (B) India (C) Bangladesh (D) Sri Lanka

Answer: A - Afghanistan scored 28.6.

Q18. The GHI 2026 theme was:

(A) No Security Without Food Security (B) Zero Hunger Now (C) Feeding the Future (D) Hunger and Climate

Answer: A - Minute Mirror.

Q19. Share of Pakistani children stunted per the GHI reports:

(A) 33.6% (B) 13.6% (C) 53.6% (D) 3.6%

Answer: A - Geo via IANS.

Q20. How many people in Pakistan were in 'crisis' conditions per the GRFC 2026?

(A) 9.3 million (B) 1.7 million (C) 93 million (D) 930,000

Answer: A - Dawn via SocialNews.XYZ.

Q21. Kurram, where border clashes occurred on 17 October, is in which province?

(A) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (B) Balochistan (C) Punjab (D) Sindh

Answer: A - Dawn.

Q22. The FO said Pakistan rules out what with Afghanistan?

(A) Unconditional talks (B) All contact (C) Trade (D) Refugee return

Answer: A - Dawn, 16 Oct.

Q23. Which Pakistani state agency's sources reported Afghan personnel 'reportedly killed' in Ghuzgarhi?

(A) APP (B) Reuters (C) BBC (D) AFP

Answer: A - Dawn via APP.

Q24. The GB Assembly passed the amended Local Government Act 2026 on:

(A) 14 October (B) 1 October (C) 20 October (D) 5 December

Answer: A - Dawn, 15 Oct.

Q25. Municipal corporations under the GB act are in Gilgit, Skardu and:

(A) Chilas (B) Hunza (C) Ghizer (D) Astore

Answer: A - Dawn.

Q26. The women's quota in GB local bodies is:

(A) 17% (B) 33% (C) 10% (D) 50%

Answer: A - The Standard; Minute Mirror.

Q27. GB local bodies categories were reduced from seven to:

(A) Four (B) Three (C) Five (D) Six

Answer: A - Dawn.

Q28. SBP reserves in the week ended 9 October were about:

(A) $21.470bn (B) $26.863bn (C) $5.394bn (D) $12.0bn

Answer: A - SBP, 15 Oct.

Q29. Total liquid reserves reached:

(A) $26.863bn (B) $21.470bn (C) $31.0bn (D) $16.5bn

Answer: A - SBP.

Q30. Rajnath Singh recalled which operation at the National Defence Conclave?

(A) Operation Sindoor (B) Operation Parakram (C) Operation Meghdoot (D) Operation Vijay

Answer: A - Dawn.

Q31. Who condemned Singh's remarks on 16 October?

(A) FO spokesperson Sajjad Haider Khan (B) ISPR DG (C) Interior Minister (D) Prime Minister

Answer: A - Dawn; Express Tribune.

Q32. About how many commercial crossings of Hormuz per day versus pre-crisis?

(A) 8 vs 85 (B) 50 vs 85 (C) 85 vs 8 (D) 30 vs 60

Answer: A - NIAC analysis of AIS data.

Q33. Which foreign minister was due in Tehran on 19 October?

(A) Sergey Lavrov (B) Wang Yi (C) Antony Blinken (D) Hakan Fidan

Answer: A - NIAC.

Q34. Which two countries did the Saudi diplomat name as leading mediation?

(A) Pakistan and Qatar (B) Oman and Egypt (C) Turkiye and UAE (D) China and Russia

Answer: A - Al Arabiya, 16 Oct.

Q35. Which airport did the Houthis attack on 12 October?

(A) King Khalid, Riyadh (B) King Abdulaziz, Jeddah (C) Dubai (D) Muscat

Answer: A - The New Arab.

Q36. Which Egyptian leader said Egypt would defend Saudi Arabia?

(A) Abdel Fattah al-Sisi (B) Hosni Mubarak (C) Mohamed Morsi (D) Adly Mansour

Answer: A - Iran International live blog.

Q37. Pakistan's PM thanked Saudi leaders for what?

(A) Economic and financial support (B) Oil prices (C) Hajj quota (D) Arms sales

Answer: A - Dawn, 16 Oct.

Q38. The sixth UN straw poll used what new feature?

(A) Colour-coded ballots (B) Public voting (C) Electronic voting (D) General Assembly ballots

Answer: A - PassBlue via Rio Times.

Q39. Grynspan's 'encourage' votes in the sixth poll:

(A) 9 (B) 10 (C) 7 (D) 5

Answer: A - PassBlue.

Q40. How many P5 'discourage' votes did Grynspan receive?

(A) 2 (B) 0 (C) 4 (D) 5

Answer: A - Rio Times.

Q41. How many days remained in Guterres' term as of 17 October?

(A) 76 (B) 30 (C) 120 (D) 200

Answer: A - IANS.

Q42. Which candidate had 10 'discourage' votes in the sixth poll?

(A) Olara Otunnu (B) Rafael Grossi (C) Rebeca Grynspan (D) Macky Sall

Answer: A - Chimp Reports citing PassBlue.

Q43. Colombia's Jerusalem embassy opened on:

(A) 14 October (B) 1 October (C) 20 October (D) 9 October

Answer: A - Reuters via Tribune.

Q44. Colombia became which number among countries with an embassy in Jerusalem?

(A) 10th (B) 3rd (C) 20th (D) 50th

Answer: A - Reuters via Aaj English.

Q45. The joint statement cited which UNSC resolutions?

(A) 476 and 478 (B) 242 and 338 (C) 181 and 194 (D) 1701 and 1559

Answer: A - The Nation.

Q46. Pakistan's FO press release on the Colombia statement was No.:

(A) 290/2026 (B) 271/2026 (C) 100/2026 (D) 400/2026

Answer: A - Daily Business News.

Q47. Trump announced an energy ceasefire in Ukraine on:

(A) 11 October (B) 1 October (C) 20 October (D) 5 October

Answer: A - Al Jazeera.

Q48. Ukraine's drones struck a refinery in which Russian region?

(A) Ryazan (B) Moscow (C) Kursk (D) Rostov

Answer: A - Al Jazeera; NPR.

Q49. Under which US law did Trump issue a sanctions waiver on 16 October?

(A) Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act (Graham) (B) CAATSA (C) Magnitsky Act (D) NDAA 2020

Answer: A - Kyiv Independent.

Q50. Putin claimed Russian forces captured over how many square kilometres in September?

(A) 1,300 (B) 130 (C) 13,000 (D) 300

Answer: A - TASS via Webindia123.

Q51. The IMF's October WEO projects 2026 global growth of:

(A) 3.1% (B) 2.1% (C) 4.1% (D) 5.1%

Answer: A - IMF, 13 Oct.

Q52. The WEO's 2026 global inflation projection is:

(A) 4.7% (B) 2.7% (C) 6.7% (D) 8.7%

Answer: A - Deniz Igan, IMF.

Q53. How many economies account for 95% of global growth per the IMF?

(A) 32 (B) 54 (C) 10 (D) 100

Answer: A - Fortune; CNBC.

Q54. The IMF assumes Hormuz reopens in:

(A) March 2027 (B) December 2026 (C) June 2028 (D) October 2026

Answer: A - CNBC.

Q55. North Korea's torpedo system tested was named:

(A) Zam-2.0 (B) Haeil-2 (C) Hwasong-18 (D) Pulhwasal

Answer: A - KCNA.

Q56. The torpedo test took place on:

(A) 15 October (B) 1 October (C) 17 October (D) 20 October

Answer: A - KCNA via AFP.

Q57. Which type of torpedo might Zam-2.0 be, per experts?

(A) Supercavitating (B) Wire-guided only (C) Nuclear (D) Acoustic homing only

Answer: A - Korea Times.

Q58. Who announced the AI-assisted hypersonic missile launch earlier in October?

(A) Kim Yo Jong (B) Kim Jong Un (C) Choe Son Hui (D) Pak Jong Chon

Answer: A - Yahoo/AP.

Q59. Article 234 deals with:

(A) Failure of constitutional machinery in a province (B) Financial emergency (C) Local government (D) Amendment procedure

Answer: A - Constitution.

Q60. Article 232 deals with:

(A) Emergency on war or internal disturbance (B) Fundamental rights suspension (C) NFC (D) Armed forces

Answer: A - Constitution.

Q61. Article 140A requires provinces to establish:

(A) Local government systems (B) High courts (C) Election commissions (D) Police academies

Answer: A - Constitution.

Q62. Which UN Charter article covers the appointment of the Secretary-General?

(A) Art. 97 (B) Art. 51 (C) Art. 2 (D) Art. 108

Answer: A - Charter.

Q63. Art. 27(3) of the UN Charter concerns:

(A) Concurring votes of permanent members (B) Appointment of judges (C) Self-defence (D) Trusteeship

Answer: A - Charter.

Q64. Iqbal Day is observed on:

(A) 9 November (B) 14 August (C) 23 March (D) 25 December

Answer: A - Pakistan.

Q65. Kashmir Black Day is observed on:

(A) 27 October (B) 5 February (C) 5 August (D) 14 August

Answer: A - Pakistan.

Q66. Which Article deals with the National Finance Commission?

(A) Art. 160 (B) Art. 154 (C) Art. 140A (D) Art. 90

Answer: A - Constitution.

Q67. Which Article guarantees freedom of assembly?

(A) Art. 16 (B) Art. 19 (C) Art. 25 (D) Art. 10A

Answer: A - Constitution.

Q68. Which Article guarantees the right to education?

(A) Art. 25A (B) Art. 19A (C) Art. 9 (D) Art. 8

Answer: A - Constitution.

Q69. Which Article provides for the Council of Common Interests?

(A) Art. 153/154 (B) Art. 160 (C) Art. 175A (D) Art. 239

Answer: A - Constitution.

Q70. The 18th Amendment was passed in:

(A) 2008 (B) 2010 (C) 2012 (D) 2015

Answer: B - Provincial autonomy.

Q71. Constitutional amendments need what majority in both houses?

(A) Two-thirds of total membership (B) Simple majority (C) Three-fourths (D) 60%

Answer: A - Art. 239.

Q72. Changing a province's limits needs approval of the Provincial Assembly by:

(A) Two-thirds (B) Simple majority (C) Unanimity (D) Three-fourths

Answer: A - Art. 239(4).

Q73. Which Article provides for judicial appointments through the Judicial Commission?

(A) Art. 175A (B) Art. 184 (C) Art. 199 (D) Art. 245

Answer: A - Constitution.

Q74. Which Article allows the armed forces to act in aid of civil power?

(A) Art. 245 (B) Art. 234 (C) Art. 232 (D) Art. 175A

Answer: A - Constitution.

Q75. Writ jurisdiction of High Courts lies under:

(A) Art. 199 (B) Art. 184 (C) Art. 186 (D) Art. 212

Answer: A - Constitution.

Q76. Which UN Charter article covers self-defence?

(A) Art. 51 (B) Art. 2 (C) Art. 97 (D) Art. 27

Answer: A - Charter.

Q77. The 1960 Indus Waters Treaty was brokered by:

(A) World Bank (B) IMF (C) UN (D) ADB

Answer: A - Background.

Q78. The Indus Waters Treaty allocates the western rivers mainly to:

(A) Pakistan (B) India (C) China (D) Nepal

Answer: A - Indus, Jhelum, Chenab.

Q79. India announced the Indus Waters Treaty abeyance on:

(A) 23 April 2025 (B) 5 August 2019 (C) 1 January 2026 (D) 15 May 2025

Answer: A - After the Pahalgam attack.

Q80. UN Day is observed on:

(A) 24 October (B) 26 June (C) 10 December (D) 1 January

Answer: A - UN.

Q81. World Food Day is on:

(A) 16 October (B) 5 October (C) 9 October (D) 24 October

Answer: A - UN.

Q82. International Day for the Eradication of Poverty is on:

(A) 17 October (B) 1 May (C) 20 June (D) 8 March

Answer: A - UN.

Q83. The 2026 Nobel Peace Prize went to:

(A) Navi Pillay (B) Donald Trump (C) Greta Thunberg (D) Maria Ressa

Answer: A - Nobel committee, 9 Oct.

Q84. The Makkah Joint Defence Agreement was formalised on:

(A) 7 August (B) 17 September (C) 1 January (D) 9 October

Answer: A - Pakistan-Saudi-Turkiye (Issue 21).

Q85. COP31 will be held in:

(A) Antalya, Turkiye (B) Nadi, Fiji (C) Sydney (D) Baku

Answer: A - 9-20 Nov 2026.

Q86. Pre-COP31 was held in:

(A) Nadi, Fiji (B) Antalya (C) Bonn (D) Dubai

Answer: A - 5-8 Oct 2026.

Q87. The IMF staff-level agreement of 7 October covered which reviews?

(A) Fourth EFF and third RSF (B) Second EFF (C) Fifth EFF (D) First RSF

Answer: A - IMF statement.

Q88. Health and education spending target at issue in Issue 21 was:

(A) Rs4.2tr (B) Rs2.1tr (C) Rs8.4tr (D) Rs1tr

Answer: A - Express Tribune.

Q89. The World Bank said Pakistan accounts for about what share of the MENAAP region's poor at $3/day?

(A) 48% (B) 12% (C) 28% (D) 78%

Answer: A - Express Tribune.

Q90. SBP policy rate as of mid-October 2026 (last stated):

(A) 11.5% (B) 9.5% (C) 13.5% (D) 15%

Answer: A - Held on 14 Sep.

Q91. PBS CPI inflation for September 2026 was about:

(A) 10.3% (B) 5.6% (C) 13.3% (D) 3.1%

Answer: A - PBS, 1 Oct.

Q92. The Strait of Hormuz carries about what share of global oil and gas in peacetime?

(A) One-fifth (B) One-half (C) One-tenth (D) Two-thirds

Answer: A - Al Jazeera.

Q93. UNSC straw polls are:

(A) Informal and non-binding (B) Binding (C) General Assembly votes (D) Vetoed formally

Answer: A - Charter practice.

Q94. The Secretary-General is appointed by:

(A) The General Assembly on Council recommendation (B) The Security Council alone (C) The ICJ (D) ECOSOC

Answer: A - Art. 97.

Q95. Resolution 478 (1980) declared Israel's Jerusalem law:

(A) Null and void (B) Valid (C) Provisional (D) Binding

Answer: A - UNSC.

Q96. Stunting means:

(A) Low height for age (B) Low weight for height (C) Low weight for age (D) Anaemia

Answer: A - Nutrition.

Q97. Wasting means:

(A) Low weight for height (B) Low height for age (C) Obesity (D) Vitamin deficiency

Answer: A - Nutrition.

Q98. GHI is built from how many indicators?

(A) Four (B) Two (C) Six (D) Ten

Answer: A - GHI methodology.

Q99. Import cover is measured in:

(A) Months of imports (B) Dollars (C) Percent of GDP only (D) Tonnes

Answer: A - External sector.

Q100. A supercavitating torpedo travels:

(A) Inside a gas bubble at high speed (B) On the surface (C) By wire only (D) By sound only

Answer: A - Weapons background.

Consolidated Vocabulary

Acute food insecurity | AI-driven investment | Air-safety advisory | AIS tracking | Arms race | Attribution | Basic Law | Belligerent posture | Board of Governors | Border management | Brent crude | Bretton Woods | Chairmanship | Child mortality | Chokepoint | Collective defence | Colour-coded ballot | Commercial loan | Compliance | Crisis stability | Cross-border firing | Current account | Deadlock | Debt repayment | Decoy | Deterrence | Devolution | Discourage vote | District council | Donbas | Downside risk | Durand Line | East Jerusalem | Election commission | Embassy relocation | Emergency | Encourage vote | Endorsement | Energy ceasefire | Energy infrastructure | Energy shock | Escalation | Escort | Eurobond | Extended Fund Facility | External buffer | Facilitator | Failure of constitutional machinery | Final-status settlement | Fiscal buffers | Food insecurity | Fragile states | Fragmentation | Front line | General Assembly appointment | Global Hunger Index | Governor (IMF/WB) | Governor's assent | Governor's rule | Haramain | Hypersonic | Impeachment motion | Import cover | Infiltration | Inflation | Intelligence sharing | Jerusalem | Joint sitting | Judicial review | KCNA | Liquid reserves | LNG | Local bodies elections | Local government | Mala fide | Maritime Trade Operations | Mayor | Mediation | Multilateralism | Municipal corporation | Naval blockade | Net reserves | Null and void | Nutrition | Occupied territory | Operation Sindoor | P5 | Plenary | Precision-guided | Pro forma respondent | Procedural role | Proclamation | Provincial autonomy | Provocative | Proxies | Proxy conflict | Recognition | Recommendation | Refinery | Reopening conditions | Reserve accumulation | Resilience | Resilience and Sustainability Facility | Retaliation | Retaliatory fire | Sanctions waiver | Sanctity | Sanctuary | SDG 2 | Security Council resolution | Sovereign debt | Sovereignty | Strait of Hormuz | Straw poll | Stunting | Supercavitating torpedo | Target detection | Technology transfer | Teller | Territorial integrity | TTP | Two-state solution | Ummah | Undernourishment | Uneven growth | Unilateral announcement | Union council | Unprovoked | Verifiable mechanism | Verification | Veto signal | Voting share | Wasting | Weapons norms | Women's quota | World Economic Outlook | Writ petition

Reports, Organisations & Personalities Index

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- **Sohail Afridi:** Removed K-P Chief Minister (N1).
- **Gohar Ali Khan:** PTI chairman; filed the PHC petition (N1).
- **Azam Nazeer Tarar:** Law Minister; explained the Art. 232 procedure (N1).
- **Mohsin Naqvi:** Interior Minister; briefed the Senate on talks (N1).
- **Maulana Fazlur Rehman:** Mediator between Centre and opposition (N1).
- **Peshawar High Court:** Hears petitions on 20 Oct (N1).
- **Ahad Khan Cheema:** Economic Affairs Minister; incoming chair of IMF/WB boards (N2).
- **Muhammad Aurangzeb:** Finance Minister at the Bangkok meetings (N2).
- **Ajay Banga / Kristalina Georgieva:** World Bank president / IMF managing director (N2, I6).
- **Global Hunger Index:** Annual hunger report; Pakistan 25.5 (N3).
- **Sajjad Haider Khan:** Foreign Office spokesperson (N4, N7).
- **Ishaq Dar:** Deputy PM and Foreign Minister (N4, N7).
- **Rajnath Singh:** Indian Defence Minister (N7).
- **GB Assembly / Zulfiqar Ali Murad:** Passed the Local Government Act; Local Bodies Minister (N5).
- **State Bank of Pakistan:** Weekly reserves (N6).
- **Esmaeil Baqaei / Mohsen Rezaei:** Iranian spokesman / security official (I1).
- **Abdulaziz Krimly:** Saudi diplomat on mediation and Houthi attacks (I1, I2).
- **Sergey Lavrov:** Russian FM due in Tehran 19 Oct (I1).
- **Houthis:** Attackers of Saudi airports (I2).
- **Abdel Fattah al-Sisi:** Egypt's president (I2).
- **Rebeca Grynspan / Olara Otunnu:** UNSG candidates (I3).
- **PassBlue / Security Council Report:** Sources on straw polls (I3).
- **Abelardo de la Espriella:** Colombia's president; opened Jerusalem embassy (I4).
- **Omar Bula / Gideon Saar:** Colombian / Israeli foreign ministers (I4).
- **Donald Trump / Volodymyr Zelenskyy / Vladimir Putin:** Principals in the Ukraine story (I5).
- **Deniz Igan / Silvana Tenreyro:** IMF officials on the WEO (I6).
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ICEP's CSS WEEKLY

THE WEEKLY CURRENT-AFFAIRS MAGAZINE FOR CSS / PMS ASPIRANTS

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TO FLY ON 25 NOVEMBER CHINA'S TIANGONG AND A 2035 LUNAR GOAL

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HOUTHI STRIKES ON RIYADH

EGYPT'S TROOP VOTE AND THE FIRST TEST OF THE MAKKAH JOINT DEFENCE AGREEMENT

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INDIA'S SEA-BASED DETERRENT AND THE CREDIBILITY OF "NO FIRST USE"

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'ATTAINING ESCAPE VELOCITY'

WORLD BANK SAYS FASTER REFORMS COULD TRIPLE PAKISTAN'S INCOMES BY 2050

INTERNATIONAL

COP17 BIODIVERSITY TALKS

FROM YEREVAN TO ANTALYA AND THE ROAD TO COP31

14 ARTICLES | **7** NATIONAL | **7** INTERNATIONAL | **100** MCQs

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ISSUE AT A GLANCE

Coverage: October 18 – October 24, 2026. This issue selects 14 stories (7 National, 7 International) in 14 different CSS/PMS domains, favouring durable exam value over one-day news. All statistics are taken from the cited reporting; where a figure is a government or advocacy claim it is labelled as such. Each article's last section lists real URLs for further study.

ID	Story	CSS Domain	Priority
N-01	Emergency and Governor's Rule in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Constitutional Test Before the Peshawar High Court	Constitutional Law & Federalism	HIGH
N-02	Kidwai's Warning on South Asian Strategic Balance: India's Sea-Based Deterrent and the Credibility of 'No First Use'	Nuclear Strategy & Deterrence	HIGH
N-03	'Attaining Escape Velocity': World Bank Says Faster Reforms Could Triple Pakistan's Incomes by 2050	Economy & Development	HIGH
N-04	Conditional Dialogue with Kabul and the 10th Pakistan–EU Counter-Terrorism Dialogue	Counter-Terrorism & Af-Pak Relations	HIGH
N-05	Iran Border Trade Halt and the LPG Squeeze: Balochistan's Informal and Formal Lifeline	Energy Security & Border Trade	MEDIUM-HIGH
N-06	Pakistan's First Astronaut to Fly on 25 November: China's Tiangong and a 2035 Lunar Goal	Science, Technology & Space Diplomacy	MEDIUM
N-07	Quorum Collapses and Thin Attendance: How Effective Is Pakistan's National Assembly?	Parliamentary Governance & Democracy	MEDIUM-HIGH
I-01	Houthi Strikes on Riyadh, Egypt's Troop Vote and the First Test of the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement	Collective Security in the Middle East	HIGH
I-02	The 'Islamabad Understanding' Under Strain: Pakistan's Mediation Between Washington and Tehran	Diplomacy & Non-Proliferation	HIGH
I-03	Witkoff in Oslo and Moscow: Ukraine Talks to Resume in Abu Dhabi — Peace or Pause?	Conflict Resolution in Europe	HIGH
I-04	Rubio Skips Delhi for Mumbai and Jamnagar: US–India Trade Deal 'Very Close' as Energy Takes Centre Stage	Great-Power Diplomacy & Trade	MEDIUM-HIGH
I-05	South China Sea Code of Conduct: A Deal Is Not Enough Without Enforcement	Maritime Law & ASEAN Diplomacy	MEDIUM
I-06	From Yerevan to Antalya: COP17 Biodiversity Talks and the Road to COP31	Climate & Environmental Diplomacy	HIGH
I-07	Loudspeakers and Warning Shots: Inter-Korean Tensions at Their Highest Since Lee Took Office	Korean Peninsula Security	MEDIUM

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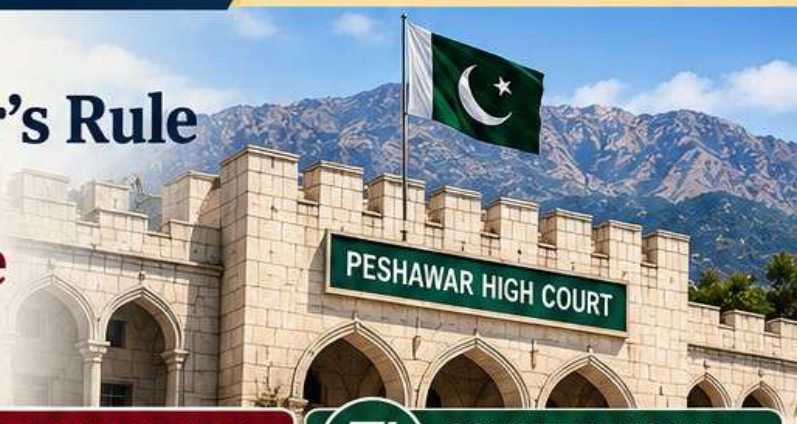
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CSS WEEKLY
ISSUE 23
OCTOBER 18 – OCTOBER 24, 2026

NATIONAL ARTICLE – 01

Emergency and Governor's Rule in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Constitutional Test Before the Peshawar High Court



BACKGROUND

- Federal government proclaimed **emergency** and imposed **Governor's Rule** in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) on **11 October 2026**.
- Decision taken citing **security situation** and need for effective counter-terrorism action.
- PTI termed the move **"unconstitutional"** and filed petitions in the Peshawar High Court (PHC).

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

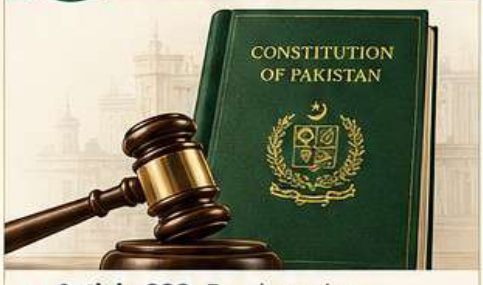
Federal Government
Says it acted on security grounds with parliamentary approval.

PTI
Calls the move unconstitutional; alleges terrorism is a pretext.

Opposition (PML-N, PPP, JUI-F)
Opposed the resolutions in the Senate; some want both decisions withdrawn.

Peshawar High Court
Has sought the Attorney General's reply; next hearing on **10** November.

CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT



- **Article 232:** Proclamation of emergency.
- **Article 234:** Effects of emergency.
- **Governor's Rule:** Federal administration of a province through its governor.
- Requires parliamentary approval within **10** days.
- Subject to judicial review.

KEY FACTS & FIGURES

11 October 2026
Emergency and Governor's Rule proclaimed in KP.

15 October 2025
Afridi government formed.

93 of 145
PTI seats in the KP Assembly.

86 pages
PTI petition length (7 constitutional petitions).

20 October 2026
PHC bench (Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice Muhammad Faheem Wali) heard the case.

Next hearing: 10 November 2026

KEY ARGUMENTS

GOVERNMENT'S POSITION

- Security situation and counter-terrorism needs justified the move.
- Terrorism is being used as a pretext by the provincial government.
- Action taken with parliamentary approval.
- Claims the move ensures effective governance and security.

PTI'S POSITION

- Move is unconstitutional and politically motivated.
- No constitutional grounds for emergency.
- Security narrative is a pretext to destabilize the elected government.
- Demands restoration of the provincial government.

POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS

Federal–Provincial Relations
May deepen political polarization and centre–province tensions.

Democratic Governance
Raises concerns over the federal use of emergency powers.

Judicial Precedent
PHC's eventual ruling could shape the interpretation of Articles 232/234 for future cases.

Security Situation
May affect counter-terrorism efforts depending on political stability.

WAY FORWARD

1. **Early judicial clarity** on **Article 232** to set a clear precedent.
2. **Political dialogue** among federal and provincial stakeholders.
3. **Transparent public** data on the security rationale.
4. **Time-bound plan** for restoring the elected government.

Emergency and Governor's Rule in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Constitutional Test Before the Peshawar High Court

PRIORITY: HIGH — Constitutional / Federalism

Continuity: Follows the Oct 11 proclamation and the Oct 14–15 parliamentary endorsements (Issue 22); this week the fight moved to the courts.

Essay Topic: Security Emergencies vs Provincial Autonomy: Can Federalism Survive Counter-Terrorism?

Past Paper Echo: No direct past-paper precedent verified (adjacent: 18th Amendment / provincial autonomy questions recur).

Infographic cross-check: The infographic lists 'PML-N, PPP, JUI-F' as the opposition; PML-N leads the federal government and PPP is its coalition partner, and the researched text names PTI and JUI-F-aligned opposition only. It also glosses Article 234 as 'effects of emergency'; Art. 234 deals with failure of constitutional machinery in a province (governor's rule). Use this article's text.

A. Executive Summary

On 11 October 2026 President Asif Ali Zardari, acting on the prime minister's advice, proclaimed an emergency under Article 232 and imposed governor's rule under Article 234 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). The federal cabinet had deliberated for about two and a half hours before recommending the step, and the PTI-led provincial government of Chief Minister Sohail Afridi, formed on 15 October 2025, was removed. Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar defended the move by citing rising terrorism, internal unrest and cross-border infiltration, and told the National Assembly that the provincial approach to counter-terrorism had become a threat to national security.

Parliament moved quickly to ratify. Because the President acted on his own, Article 232 requires approval by both Houses within ten days. The National Assembly and the Senate endorsed the proclamation on 14 October, with PTI senators staging a walkout, and a joint sitting approved the emergency and the governor's rule on 15 October under Articles 232(7) and 234(3). Reports described it as the first time an Article 232 emergency and Article 234 governor's rule had been imposed together in KP.

The contest then shifted to the judiciary. PTI chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan filed an 86-page petition in the Peshawar High Court (PHC), arguing that after the 18th Amendment a proclamation on grounds of internal disturbance needs a prior resolution of the provincial assembly, which was bypassed. On 19 October he filed an amended petition to also challenge the parliamentary resolutions. On 20 October a two-member bench of Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice Mohammad Faheem Wali heard seven petitions, issued notice to the Attorney General and adjourned the matter to 10 November.

On the ground, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi is running the province with an 11-member technocratic advisory council. Mr Gohar told the court that 38 deputy commissioners had been transferred. For CSS candidates the case is a live test of Articles 232 and 234, the limits of the federal government's emergency powers, and the balance between the 18th Amendment's provincial autonomy and the state's duty to protect life and property.

B. Key Developments

- 11 Oct: President proclaims emergency (Art. 232) and governor's rule (Art. 234) in KP on the PM's advice.
- 14 Oct: National Assembly and Senate pass resolutions endorsing the proclamation; PTI senators walk out.
- 15 Oct: Joint sitting of Parliament approves both proclamations, as the Constitution requires within 10 days.
- Governor Faisal Karim Kundi assumes executive authority, assisted by an 11-member technocratic KP Advisory Council.
- The notification states that the powers of the KP Assembly will be exercised by Parliament or under its authority.
- 14 Oct: PTI files its first petition in the Peshawar High Court; 19 Oct: amended petition challenges the joint-sitting resolutions too.
- 20 Oct: PHC bench issues notice to the Attorney General; hearing adjourned to 10 November.
- Opposition Leader Mahmood Khan Achakzai demands withdrawal of both measures; PTI says terrorism is a pretext.

C. Analysis

- **Constitutional Law.** The key question is procedural: whether Article 232 on internal disturbance needs a provincial assembly resolution before the President can act alone. The government relies on the proviso allowing presidential action followed by parliamentary approval within ten days.
- **Federalism.** The 18th Amendment (2010) devolved law and order and much else to the provinces. Removing an elected government, with Parliament exercising assembly powers, tests how far the Centre may override a province.
- **Security.** The government cites a surge in militant violence in KP; critics reply that the province has been the front line and that governance, not displacement of an elected government, is what counter-terrorism needs.

- **Political Economy of Power.** KP was the only province PTI governs. The emergency lands amid a wider PTI-versus-establishment contest, which colours how each side reads motive.
- **Judicial Review.** Pakistani courts have historically heard emergency challenges after the fact; the PHC's eventual ruling could shape Article 232/234 practice for years.

D. Stakeholder Positions & Way Forward

Federal Government	Says it tried to reach agreement with PTI first and acted on security grounds with parliamentary approval.
PTI	Calls the move unconstitutional, seeks restoration of Afridi's government and says terrorism is being used as a pretext.
Opposition / JUI-F	Opposed the resolutions in the Senate; Achakzai wants both decisions withdrawn.
Peshawar High Court	Has sought the Attorney General's reply; next hearing 10 November.
Way forward	Early judicial clarity on Art. 232; a political dialogue track; a time-bound plan for restoring elected government; transparent public data on the security rationale.

E. Key Facts & Figures

■ Emergency and governor's rule proclaimed: 11 October 2026.	■ Parliamentary approval window under Article 232 when the President acts alone: 10 days.
■ Afridi government formed 15 October 2025; PTI held 93 of 145 seats in the KP Assembly.	■ Government cited 3,787 terrorist incidents in KP over the past year during the NA debate (as reported).
■ PTI petition length: 86 pages; seven constitutional petitions heard on 20 October.	■ Technocratic advisory council: 11 members; deputy commissioners transferred (as alleged in court): 38.
■ PHC bench: Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice Mohammad Faheem Wali; next date 10 November 2026.	

F. Quotes & Vocabulary

❝ *"threat to national security"* — Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar on the provincial counter-terrorism approach (NA debate, 14 Oct)

❝ *"acted on security grounds after efforts at agreement"* — Government position as stated in the Senate by the Interior Minister (paraphrased)

Word	Meaning
Proclamation	A formal public declaration by the head of state
Emergency	A situation permitting extraordinary powers
Governor's rule	Federal administration of a province via its governor
Ratify	To approve formally
Technocratic	Run by experts rather than politicians
Pretext	A false reason given to hide the real one
Walkout	A protest by leaving a chamber
Autonomy	Self-government
Writ	A formal court order
Infiltration	Secret entry into a territory

G. Examiner's Perspective

? **Likely question:** Critically examine the constitutional basis for emergency and governor's rule in a province after the 18th Amendment.

? **Likely question:** Does counter-terrorism justify the suspension of an elected provincial government? Argue with examples.

H. Further In-Depth Study

- Dawn: NA, Senate endorse emergency in KP — https://www.dawn.com/news/2037086
- Dawn: PHC hears petitions against governor's rule — https://www.dawn.com/news/2038383/peshawar-high-court-hears-petitions-against-governors-rule-today
- Express Tribune: Joint sitting resolution tabled — https://tribune.com.pk/story/2634969/resolution-to-ratify-k-p-emergency-governors-rule-tabled-in-parliaments-joint-session
- The News: Parliament approves emergency, governor's rule — https://www.thenews.pk/print/1443038-parliament-approves-emergency-governor-s-rule-in-kp
- Daily Times: PHC seeks response — https://dailytimes.com.pk/1569802/peshawar-high-court-seeks-response-on-kp-emergency-petitions/

MODEL ANSWER BLUEPRINT

Question: Critically examine the constitutional basis for imposing emergency and governor's rule in a province after the 18th Amendment. (20 marks)

Model answer (≈190 words): Articles 232 and 234 empower the Centre to act when war, external aggression or internal disturbance threatens a province, or when its government cannot function constitutionally. The 18th Amendment devolved law and order but did not remove these powers; PTI, however, argues it requires a prior provincial-assembly resolution for internal disturbance. The government invokes the proviso under which the President acts alone and Parliament approves within ten days, which both Houses and a joint sitting did on 14–15 October 2026. Critics reply that parliamentary approval cannot cure a procedural defect and that displacing an elected government holding 93 of 145 seats strains federal principle. Supporters cite the government's figure of 3,787 militant incidents in a year and the need for unified command. The Peshawar High Court, which has sought the Attorney General's reply, will decide how far judicial review reaches the factual basis of an emergency. A balanced conclusion: emergency powers are legitimate but must be proportionate, time-bound and transparent; durable security needs political consensus and capable local policing, not federal administration alone.

Structure to copy: constitutional text → government case → critics → judicial review → balanced conclusion.

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NATIONAL ARTICLE – 02

Kidwai's Warning on South Asian Strategic Balance:

India's Sea-Based Deterrent and the Credibility of 'No First Use'



BACKGROUND

- Former Foreign Secretary Shamshad **Ahmed Kidwai** warned that India's growing **sea-based nuclear deterrent** could alter the strategic balance in South Asia.
- India is operationalising nuclear-armed submarines (SSBNs) as part of its credible minimum deterrence.
- This development raises questions about the credibility of India's **'No First Use' (NFU) doctrine** and its impact on regional stability.
- Kidwai's remarks came amid India's advances in the nuclear triad and expanding maritime capabilities in the Indian Ocean.

KIDWAI'S KEY WARNINGS

India's sea-based deterrent enhances its second-strike capability, making its nuclear deterrence more credible and survivable.

This could undermine the stability of South Asia's strategic balance and may lead to an arms race.

The expansion of India's nuclear capabilities raises doubts about the credibility and sincerity of its 'No First Use' policy.

INDIA'S SEA-BASED DETERRENT



- **INS Arihant:** India's first nuclear-armed ballistic missile submarine (SSBN).
- **Armed** with K-15 (750 km) and **K-4** (3,500 km) SLBMs.
- Part of India's nuclear triad (land, air and sea).
- Aims to ensure a survivable second-strike capability.
- Strengthens India's position in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

WHY IT MATTERS?

May shift the nuclear deterrence dynamics in South Asia.

Could trigger a security dilemma and an arms race.

Implications for Pakistan's nuclear posture and regional stability.

Affects the broader strategic environment in the Indian Ocean Region.

INDIA'S 'NO FIRST USE' (NFU)

- **Official policy:** India declares it will not be the first to use nuclear weapons.
- Kidwai questioned the credibility of NFU in light of India's expanding capabilities and doctrinal debates.
- Recent developments, including improvements in delivery systems and sea-based deterrence, have fuelled scepticism about India's long-term adherence to NFU.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PAKISTAN

- Necessitates strengthening Pakistan's credible minimum deterrence.
- Greater focus on survivable second-strike capabilities.
- Need for advancement in nuclear delivery systems and early warning mechanisms.
- Importance of diplomatic engagement to maintain strategic stability.

REGIONAL AND GLOBAL IMPACT

Increases strategic competition in South Asia.

Enhances India's maritime role in the Indian Ocean.

May attract greater involvement of major powers (US, China, Russia) in the region.

Raises the stakes for arms control, crisis management and confidence-building measures.

CHALLENGES AND RISKS

Risk of an arms race in South Asia.

Increased chances of miscalculation in a crisis.

Maritime domain may become a new arena for nuclear competition.

Weakening of global non-proliferation efforts.

WAY FORWARD

Revival of bilateral dialogue on strategic stability.

Regional confidence-building measures.

Adherence to international arms control norms.

Greater role for global powers in de-escalation and risk reduction.

KEY TAKEAWAY



India's advancing sea-based nuclear deterrent strengthens its second-strike capability and raises serious questions about the credibility of its 'No First Use' policy, with significant implications for South Asia's strategic balance and regional stability.

Kidwai's Warning on South Asian Strategic Balance: India's Sea-Based Deterrent and the Credibility of 'No First Use'

PRIORITY: HIGH — Strategic Studies / IR

Continuity: Continues Pakistan–India strategic thread after the 2025 confrontation; Pakistan's FO also warned of Indian 'false flag' operations (23 Oct).

Essay Topic: Nuclear Deterrence in South Asia: Stabiliser or Source of Instability?

Past Paper Echo: No direct past-paper precedent verified (nuclear deterrence and South Asian strategic stability are recurring IR themes).

Infographic cross-check: The infographic calls Kidwai a 'former Foreign Secretary Shamshad Ahmed Kidwai'; the speaker was Lt Gen (retd) Khalid Kidwai, NCA adviser. It also presents the sea-based deterrent as making Indian deterrence more credible, whereas Kidwai's argument was that patrolling, mated warheads weaken the credibility of No First Use. Missile ranges (K-15, K-4) were not part of the researched sources.

A. Executive Summary

Speaking at the second Islamabad Non-Proliferation Conference on Tuesday 20 October, Lt Gen (retd) Khalid Kidwai, adviser to the National Command Authority (NCA), said Pakistan has never accepted and never will accept strategic imbalances being induced in South Asia. He and Lt Gen (retd) Sarfraz Sattar, also an NCA adviser and a former head of the Strategic Plans Division, argued that India's reported deployment of nuclear weapons aboard a submarine, together with missile modernisation and recent confrontations between the two countries, raises serious concerns about regional stability.

Citing the SIPRI Yearbook 2026 and other open sources, the speakers pointed to reports that India has put about 12 warheads on a submarine for deterrence patrols and is moving towards missile canisterisation. Kidwai said this implies that nuclear warheads have been mated with submarine-launched ballistic missiles, which would cast doubt on India's declared No First Use (NFU) policy. In his words, India could in operational terms undertake a first strike at zero notice, and he also objected to the absence of advance notification of Indian submarine-launched missile tests.

Pakistan's doctrine, he reminded India, is Full Spectrum Deterrence within the larger philosophy of credible minimum deterrence: weapons at strategic, operational and tactical levels held across the army, navy and air force. Pakistan, he said, reserves the right to take appropriate measures to restore balance while retaining strategic ambiguity. A day earlier the Foreign Office spokesperson said Pakistan was prepared for any Indian false-flag operation, signalling the same rhetorical posture.

For examiners the issue links deterrence theory, command-and-control, the stability-instability paradox and arms-control options such as missile-test notification. Candidates should also note India's counter-narrative, which presents its posture as a minimum credible deterrent against two nuclear neighbours.

B. Key Developments

- 20 Oct: Kidwai and Sarfraz Sattar address the Islamabad Non-Proliferation Conference (second edition).
- They cite SIPRI Yearbook 2026 reports of about 12 Indian warheads on a submarine on deterrence patrol.
- They flag missile canisterisation as raising readiness and blurring the line between peacetime and wartime postures.
- Kidwai argues a continuous at-sea deterrent weakens the credibility of India's No First Use policy.
- Pakistan objects to the lack of advance notification of Indian SLBM tests.
- Pakistan says it will review deployments to restore balance while keeping strategic ambiguity.
- Kidwai urges India to study Full Spectrum Deterrence closely.
- 23 Oct: Foreign Office says Pakistan is ready for any Indian 'false flag' operation.

C. Analysis

- **Deterrence Theory.** Sea-based second-strike assets are traditionally stabilising; Pakistan's argument is that mated, patrolling weapons add first-use capability and shrink decision time.
- **Doctrine.** Full Spectrum Deterrence aims to close every rung of the escalation ladder, while credible minimum deterrence remains the declared umbrella.
- **Arms Control.** Pre-notification of missile tests, a 1999 Lahore-era confidence-building idea, is the obvious low-cost measure; the speakers frame its absence as a destabilising gap.
- **Great Powers.** Washington, Beijing and Moscow shape the context: SIPRI-type disclosures and Indian ties with the US complicate any bilateral nuclear risk-reduction.

■ **Rhetoric vs Policy.** The statements are deterrence signalling; the open question is whether they translate into new deployments.

D. Stakeholder Positions & Way Forward

Pakistan	Seeks to deter and to build the case that India is disturbing the balance.
India	Presents its posture as defensive and NFU-based (official line, not stated at the conference).
Global arms-control community	Watches submarine nuclearisation and test-notification gaps.
Way forward	Test-notification agreement; nuclear risk-reduction centres; renewed expert-level strategic dialogue; transparency about SSBN patrol doctrine.

E. Key Facts & Figures

■ Conference: second Islamabad Non-Proliferation Conference, 20 October 2026.	■ Reported Indian warheads on submarine patrol (SIPRI Yearbook 2026, as cited): about 12.
■ Pakistan's Full Spectrum Deterrence spans strategic, operational and tactical tiers; Kidwai has described range coverage from zero metres to 2,750 km (2023 remarks).	■ Kidwai: India could mount a first strike against Pakistan at zero notice.
■ NCA advisers speaking: Lt Gen (retd) Khalid Kidwai and Lt Gen (retd) Sarfraz Sattar.	

F. Quotes & Vocabulary

❝ *"never will accept strategic imbalances"* — Lt Gen (retd) Khalid Kidwai, 20 Oct

❝ *"dangerously disturbed by India once again"* — Kidwai on strategic balance in South Asia

Word	Meaning
Deterrence	Preventing attack through fear of retaliation
Canisterisation	Storing missiles in sealed launch canisters for fast use
Second strike	Ability to retaliate after being hit
Parity	Equality of strength
Escalatory	Likely to intensify conflict
Ambiguity	Deliberate lack of clarity
SLBM	Submarine-launched ballistic missile
Proliferation	Spread of weapons
Doctrine	Stated principles guiding strategy
Asymmetry	Imbalance between sides

G. Examiner's Perspective

? **Likely question:** Evaluate the impact of submarine-based nuclear weapons on South Asian strategic stability.

? **Likely question:** Explain Pakistan's Full Spectrum Deterrence and respond to its critics.

H. Further In-Depth Study

› Express Tribune: New Delhi warned against shifting nuclear balance — https://tribune.com.pk/story/2636003/new-delhi-warned-against-shifting-nuclear-balance
› Business Recorder on Kidwai remarks — https://www.brecorder.com/news/40445207
› CISS: Defence, Deterrence and Stability in South Asia — https://ciss.org.pk/?p=1915
› Dawn: Full Spectrum Deterrence explained — https://www.dawn.com/news/amp/1375079

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NATIONAL ARTICLE – 03

'Attaining Escape Velocity': World Bank Says Faster Reforms Could Triple Pakistan's Incomes by 2050

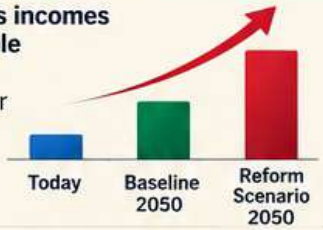


BACKGROUND

- World Bank's latest report suggests that Pakistan can significantly increase its income levels by 2050 if it undertakes deeper and faster economic reforms.
- The report states that with the right policy choices, Pakistan can **"attain escape velocity"** and **triple** its incomes by 2050.
- Without reforms, Pakistan risks remaining in a low-growth trap, with limited job creation and continued fiscal and external vulnerabilities.

KEY PROJECTIONS

Pakistan's incomes could triple by 2050 with faster reforms.



- Significant increase in per capita income.
- Millions of new jobs through higher and diversified growth.
- Higher productivity and competitiveness.
- Stronger, more resilient and inclusive economy.

WHY REFORMS CAN WORK?

- **Demographic dividend** — A young population can drive growth if matched with jobs, skills and investment.
- **Strategic location** — Potential to become a regional trade and transit hub.
- **Untapped sectors** — Agriculture, manufacturing, IT, minerals and services offer significant potential.
- **Improved governance** — Reforms can attract investment and enhance policy stability.

KEY REFORMS RECOMMENDED

- **Fiscal consolidation** — Reduce deficits and increase tax-to-GDP ratio.
- **Governance and institutions** — Improve efficiency, transparency and rule of law.
- **Human capital development** — Invest in quality education and healthcare.
- **Private sector–led growth** — Remove regulatory barriers and improve ease of doing business.
- **Energy sector reforms** — Ensure affordable, reliable and clean energy.
- **Trade and regional integration** — Enhance exports and leverage regional connectivity.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES BY 2050

- Three times higher income levels.
- Expanded middle class.
- More diversified and competitive economy.
- Greater job opportunities and reduced poverty.
- Stronger resilience to external shocks.
- More sustainable and inclusive growth.

KEY CHALLENGES

- **Macroeconomic instability** — High debt, low tax revenue and external vulnerabilities.
- **Weak governance** — Policy inconsistency and slow institutional reforms.
- **Low human capital** — Gaps in education, skills and healthcare.
- **Energy and infrastructure deficits** — High energy costs and inadequate infrastructure.
- **Political and security risks** — Policy uncertainty and regional instability.
- **Climate change impacts** — Increasing vulnerability to natural disasters and environmental stress.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PAKISTAN

- A reform-driven growth path can transform Pakistan into a more prosperous and stable economy.
- Can help reduce poverty, unemployment and regional disparities.
- Strengthens Pakistan's position in the regional economy and global trade.
- Aligns with long-term goals of sustainable and inclusive development.

WAY FORWARD

1. Deep and sustained economic reforms with political consensus.
2. Strengthen fiscal discipline and broaden the tax base.
3. Invest in human capital, innovation and technology.
4. Improve governance, transparency and institutional capacity.
5. Enhance regional trade, connectivity and private sector participation.
6. Build climate resilience and ensure inclusive growth.

'Attaining Escape Velocity': World Bank Says Faster Reforms Could Triple Pakistan's Incomes by 2050

PRIORITY: HIGH — Economy / Pakistan Affairs

Continuity: Follows the IMF programme and stabilisation thread tracked since Issue 17; adds a long-run growth benchmark.

Essay Topic: From Stabilisation to Growth: What Pakistan's Economy Needs Next

Past Paper Echo: No direct past-paper precedent verified (growth, reforms and stabilisation are recurring Economics/Pakistan Affairs themes).

Infographic cross-check: No factual conflict found. The 'Today / Baseline 2050 / Reform Scenario' bars are illustrative, not plotted data; use the figures in Section E.

A. Executive Summary

On 22 October 2026 the World Bank Group released its Pakistan Development Update, titled 'Attaining Escape Velocity'. Its central message is that macroeconomic stabilisation has largely been achieved but is not enough: with fiscal resources and foreign exchange still tightly constrained, structural reforms that encourage private investment are the necessary next step. The report says incomes could triple by 2050 if reforms are implemented faster.

The Bank reports that real GDP growth rose to 3.7 per cent in FY26 from 3.2 per cent in FY25, and that revenue growth and expenditure restraint produced record primary fiscal surpluses of 2.9 per cent of GDP in FY26. Strong remittances helped Pakistan rebuild foreign-exchange reserves. Yet per capita growth is only around 1.6 per cent a year, so living standards improve slowly. Growth is expected to hover around 3.8 per cent in 2027.

The reform scenario is ambitious: lifting policies and institutions to the standard of the average middle-income country could support sustained growth of 6.2 to 6.9 per cent a year, enough to reach Vietnam's current income level by 2050. Priorities named include a better business environment, an overhaul of the tax system, a smaller state role in the economy and wider access to finance. The report credits power-tariff adjustments, trade liberalisation and the privatisation of PIA as measures already taken.

The IMF used its recent annual meetings to stress price stability, fiscal sustainability, central-bank independence and productivity reforms. For aspirants, the update is a ready-made evidence base for essays on reform sequencing, state-owned enterprises, taxation and why stable macro numbers have not yet translated into broad-based welfare gains.

B. Key Developments

- 22 Oct: World Bank Group publishes Pakistan Development Update — 'Attaining Escape Velocity'.
- Real GDP growth: 3.7 per cent in FY26, up from 3.2 per cent in FY25.
- Primary fiscal surplus reached a record 2.9 per cent of GDP in FY26.
- Strong remittances allowed reserves to be rebuilt despite the impact of the Middle East conflict.
- Reform scenario: 6.2–6.9 per cent annual growth, reaching Vietnam's present income level by 2050.
- Reform priorities: business climate, tax system, smaller state footprint, access to finance.
- Reforms already taken include power-tariff adjustments, trade liberalisation and PIA privatisation.
- IMF urges price stability, fiscal sustainability, central-bank independence and structural reform.

C. Analysis

- **Macroeconomic.** Stabilisation delivered primary surpluses and reserves, but growth near 3.7 per cent is too slow to lift per capita incomes meaningfully.
- **Structural Reform.** Tax reform, SOE restructuring and trade liberalisation are the levers; the political economy of exemptions and subsidies is the obstacle.
- **Social Impact.** With per capita growth at about 1.6 per cent, jobs and poverty outcomes lag headline stability.
- **External.** Remittances and Middle East shocks make the external account sensitive to Gulf conditions.
- **Comparative.** The Vietnam benchmark invites comparison of export orientation, investment climate and institutional quality.

D. Stakeholder Positions & Way Forward

World Bank	Argues stability is necessary but insufficient; pushes private-sector-led growth.
Government	Presents surpluses and reserves as proof of stabilisation; faces pressure on taxes and SOEs.

IMF	Emphasises price stability, fiscal discipline and central-bank independence.
Way forward	Broaden the tax base; finish SOE privatisation; improve trade and investment policy; target jobs and human capital; protect the vulnerable during reform.

E. Key Facts & Figures

■ FY26 GDP growth 3.7 per cent (FY25: 3.2 per cent); 2027 projection about 3.8 per cent.	■ FY26 primary surplus: 2.9 per cent of GDP, a record.
■ Per capita real growth: about 1.6 per cent.	■ Reform scenario growth: 6.2–6.9 per cent a year; target: triple incomes by 2050.
■ Report title: Pakistan Development Update, October 2026 — Attaining Escape Velocity; lead author Sebastian Essl; Country Director Bolormaa Amgaabazar.	

F. Quotes & Vocabulary

❝ *"Pakistan has made real progress in restoring stability"* — World Bank Country Director Bolormaa Amgaabazar

❝ *"structural reform to encourage private investment"* — Sebastian Essl on the necessary next step

Word	Meaning
Escape velocity	Speed needed to break free of a gravitational pull
Primary surplus	Revenue minus spending before interest payments
Structural reform	Change to underlying economic institutions
Per capita	Per person
Liberalisation	Easing of economic controls
Privatisation	Transfer of state assets to private owners
Stabilisation	Restoring macroeconomic balance
Remittances	Money sent home by overseas workers
Productivity	Output per unit of input
Fiscal	Relating to government revenue and spending

G. Examiner's Perspective

? **Likely question:** Why has macroeconomic stabilisation not translated into higher living standards in Pakistan? Suggest remedies.

? **Likely question:** Assess the role of structural reforms in achieving sustained growth.

H. Further In-Depth Study

› Dawn: Faster reforms could triple incomes by 2050 — https://www.dawn.com/news/2038999/faster-reforms-could-triple-pakistans-incomes-by-2050-says-world-bank

› Daily Times: WB sees incomes tripling, IMF flags risks — https://dailytimes.com.pk/1571037/wb-sees-pakistans-incomes-tripling-by-2050-but-imf-flags-risks/

› ProPakistani coverage — https://propakistani.pk/2026/10/22/pakistan-super-rich-by-2050-world-bank/amp/

› Asia News Network version — https://asianews.network/faster-reforms-could-triple-pakistans-incomes-by-2050-says-world-bank-report/

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NATIONAL ARTICLE – 04

Conditional Dialogue with Kabul and the 10th Pakistan–EU Counter-Terrorism Dialogue



BACKGROUND

- Pakistan has adopted a policy of **conditional dialogue** with the Taliban-led government in Kabul, linked to verifiable action against terrorist groups, especially the TTP.
- The **10th Pakistan–EU Counter-Terrorism Dialogue** was held to strengthen cooperation on counter-terrorism, border security and regional stability.
- Both developments reflect Pakistan's dual approach of regional engagement and international partnership to tackle terrorism.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS WITH KABUL

- Pakistan has expressed readiness for dialogue with Kabul, but only on the condition of concrete and verifiable action against terrorist groups operating from Afghan soil.
- Focus on dismantling TTP infrastructure and preventing use of Afghan territory for cross-border attacks.
- Pakistan has urged Kabul to fulfil its commitments under the Doha Agreement.
- Engagement to be based on mutual respect, non-interference and regional stability.

10th PAKISTAN–EU COUNTER-TERRORISM DIALOGUE

- 10th round held between Pakistan and the European Union with participation from senior officials.
- Discussions on counter-terrorism cooperation, extremist narratives, border management and regional security.
- Both sides stressed the need for enhanced intelligence sharing, capacity building and addressing the financing of terrorism.
- EU reaffirmed its support for Pakistan's counter-terrorism efforts and regional stability.
- Agreed to continue regular dialogue and practical cooperation in the future.

WHY IT MATTERS?

- Directly linked to Pakistan's internal security and the threat of TTP.
- Stability in Afghanistan is essential for lasting peace in the region.
- EU's support strengthens Pakistan's international partnerships.
- Effective counter-terrorism cooperation can help prevent radicalization and cross-border militancy.

KEY CHALLENGES

- Continued presence of TTP and other militant groups in Afghanistan.
- Lack of trust between Pakistan and the Afghan Taliban.
- Porous and difficult-to-manage border.
- Differing regional interests of major powers in Afghanistan.
- Limited enforcement of commitments by the Afghan side.

OPPORTUNITIES

- A stable Afghanistan can unlock regional trade and economic connectivity.
- Stronger Pakistan–EU cooperation in counter-terrorism and law enforcement.
- Joint efforts to counter extremist ideologies and online radicalization.
- Possibility of broader engagement on humanitarian, economic and regional development issues.
- Opportunity to integrate counter-terrorism with regional connectivity initiatives (e.g., CPEC and Central Asian trade).

IMPLICATIONS FOR PAKISTAN

- Better border security and reduced cross-border terrorism.
- Improved regional and international standing.
- Enhanced cooperation with the EU in security, trade and governance.
- Potential for greater regional stability and economic opportunities.
- Failure to secure action from Kabul could lead to continued security challenges.

WAY FORWARD

1. Maintain principled, condition-based engagement with Kabul.
2. Seek verifiable and time-bound action against terrorist groups.
3. Strengthen border management and intelligence cooperation.
4. Deepen Pakistan–EU cooperation in counter-terrorism, cyber security and anti-money laundering.
5. Address root causes of extremism through regional economic cooperation and development.
6. Ensure a coordinated national policy with long-term strategic vision for a stable and peaceful Afghanistan.

Conditional Dialogue with Kabul and the 10th Pakistan–EU Counter-Terrorism Dialogue

PRIORITY: HIGH — Foreign Policy / Security

Continuity: Continues the Pakistan–Afghanistan/TTP thread tracked since Issue 17.

Essay Topic: Pakistan–Afghanistan Relations: Between Security Compulsions and Diplomatic Engagement

Past Paper Echo: No direct past-paper precedent verified (Pakistan–Afghanistan relations is a perennial theme).

Infographic cross-check: The infographic says Pakistan urged Kabul to meet 'Doha Agreement' commitments and centres on the TTP; the researched FO statement asked for acknowledgement of terrorism and a verifiable mechanism, citing 20+ militant groups per UN figures. Use the article text.

A. Executive Summary

On 22 October 2026 Pakistan and the European Union held the 10th round of their Bilateral Counterterrorism Dialogue in Islamabad. Pakistan's delegation was led by Director General Counterterrorism Dr Fareha Bugti and the EU's by Anna Strzaska, the European External Action Service's Special Envoy for Counterterrorism. The two sides agreed to strengthen cooperation, including at multilateral forums such as the United Nations, on violent extremism, terrorist financing and the misuse of cyberspace. The EU condemned recent attacks in Pakistan, and both sides expressed concern about the security implications of the situation in Afghanistan. The next round will be held in Brussels next year.

The dialogue came days after Pakistani security sources reported border clashes with Afghan forces who, they said, opened fire to facilitate militant infiltration. Islamabad accuses militants based in Afghanistan of attacks inside Pakistan; Kabul denies the allegation. At the Foreign Office briefing on 23 October spokesperson Sajjad Haider Khan said Pakistan is not averse to negotiations and has engaged Kabul since 2021, but that talks would be meaningless unless Afghan authorities acknowledge terrorist activity from their territory and agree to a verifiable mechanism to control and eliminate it.

The spokesperson said, citing the UN, that more than 20 militant groups are present in Afghanistan, and noted that China, Uzbekistan and other neighbours face threats from the same source. The refugee dimension also continues: Dawn reported on 20 October that repatriation of Afghans at Torkham resumed after about two hours of interruption. A year earlier, a Doha ceasefire formalised on 19 October 2025 and Turkish-Qatari mediation had paused clashes, and Torkham reopened for refugee movement on 1 November 2025 with around 1.56 million Afghans having returned by then.

The strategic question is how Pakistan converts international sympathy into pressure on Kabul while keeping channels open. The EU's explicit condemnation and its focus on financing and online radicalisation give Islamabad useful diplomatic cover, though European engagement with the Taliban government remains limited.

B. Key Developments

- 22 Oct: 10th Pakistan–EU Bilateral CT Dialogue held in Islamabad.
- Agenda: violent extremism, terrorist financing, misuse of cyberspace, regional security.
- EU condemns recent attacks and acknowledges Pakistan's counter-terrorism efforts.
- Both sides voice concern about Afghanistan; next round to be held in Brussels next year.
- Border clashes with Afghan forces reported by Pakistani security sources days earlier.
- 23 Oct: FO says Pakistan will talk if Kabul acknowledges terrorism and accepts a verifiable mechanism.
- FO cites UN figures of more than 20 militant groups in Afghanistan.
- Repatriation of Afghans at Torkham briefly interrupted and resumed on 20 October.

C. Analysis

- **Diplomatic.** Conditionality shifts the burden to Kabul and aligns with international concern about extremist groups in Afghanistan.
- **Security.** Border management, infiltration and cross-border strikes are the operational face of the problem.
- **Multilateral.** The EU dialogue links Pakistan's case to UN counter-terrorism frameworks and financing controls such as FATF-type standards.
- **Humanitarian.** Repatriation policy and trade closures affect ordinary Afghans and border economies.
- **Regional.** China and Central Asian states share the concern, supporting a regional approach.

D. Stakeholder Positions & Way Forward

Pakistan	Wants verifiable action against groups and fewer attacks; open to talks on conditions.
Taliban authorities	Deny hosting groups that attack Pakistan.
European Union	Supports Pakistan's counter-terrorism efforts and stresses multilateral cooperation.
Way forward	A verifiable monitoring mechanism; mediated talks via Qatar/Türkiye; calibrated border and trade reopening; regional platforms including China.

E. Key Facts & Figures

■ 10th round of the Pakistan–EU Bilateral CT Dialogue, 22 October 2026.	■ Pakistan delegation: Dr Fareha Bugti; EU: Anna Strzaska.
■ More than 20 militant groups present in Afghanistan, per UN figures cited by the FO.	■ Pakistan–Afghanistan engagement since 2021 (FO).
■ One year ago: Doha ceasefire on 19 Oct 2025; about 1.56 million Afghans returned by 1 Nov 2025.	

F. Quotes & Vocabulary

❝ *"not averse to negotiations"* — FO spokesperson Sajjad Haider Khan, 23 Oct

❝ *"verifiable mechanism"* — Pakistan's condition for dialogue with Kabul

Word	Meaning
Counter-terrorism	Measures to prevent terrorism
Infiltration	Covert crossing into a territory
Repatriation	Return to one's country
Verifiable	Able to be independently checked
Radicalisation	Process of adopting extremist views
Bilateral	Between two parties
Multilateral	Involving several parties
Conditionality	Making cooperation depend on conditions
Cyberspace	The online environment
Mediation	Third-party help to settle a dispute

G. Examiner's Perspective

? **Likely question:** Why has dialogue with Kabul repeatedly stalled? Suggest a roadmap.

? **Likely question:** Assess the role of multilateral cooperation in Pakistan's counter-terrorism strategy.

H. Further In-Depth Study

› Arab News: Pakistan, EU voice concern — https://www.arabnews.pk/pakistan/pakistan-eu-voice-concern-over-threats-from-afghanistan-vow-closer-counterterrorism-ties-3004940

› Express Tribune: Pakistan, EU agree to boost CT cooperation — https://tribune.com.pk/story/2636315/pakistan-eu-agree-to-boost-counterterrorism-cooperation-tackle-online-radicalisation-fo

› 24NewsHD: FO briefing — https://www.24newshd.tv/23-Oct-2026/pakistan-mediating-us-iran-reduce-tensions-fo

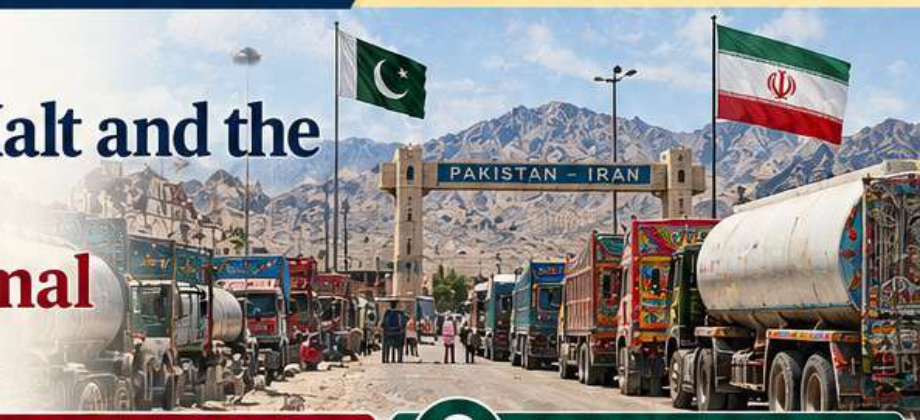
› Hum English: Pakistan ready for talks if Kabul acts — https://humenglish.com/latest/pakistan-ready-for-talks-with-kabul-if-it-acts-against-terrorists-fo/

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NATIONAL ARTICLE – 05

Iran Border Trade Halt and the LPG Squeeze: Balochistan's Informal and Formal Lifeline



BACKGROUND

- Border trade between Pakistan and Iran, particularly through Balochistan, has been a vital source of livelihood and supply chain support for the province.
- Recent security incidents and regional tensions led to a halt in cross-border trade at key border points.
- The suspension disrupted the supply of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) and other essential goods, causing price hikes and shortages in Balochistan and neighbouring areas.
- Both formal and informal trade networks play a crucial role in the local economy.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

- Iran temporarily suspended border trade with Pakistan after security concerns.
- LPG imports from Iran were significantly reduced, leading to a supply squeeze.
- Prices of LPG and other essential commodities increased in Balochistan.
- Long queues of vehicles were reported at border crossings such as Taftan and Gabd.
- Local communities, traders and transporters faced economic hardships.

KEY BORDER POINTS



WHY IT MATTERS?

- Balochistan depends heavily on border trade for its economy and livelihoods.
- LPG is a major source of domestic fuel, especially in areas without gas supply.
- Prolonged suspension can deepen economic woes and public discontent.
- Border stability is essential for regional cooperation and energy security.

IMPACT OF TRADE HALT

LPG Shortage
Reduced supply led to higher prices and availability issues.

Price Hike
Prices of LPG and other goods increased in local markets.

Livelihoods Affected
Traders, transporters and daily wage earners faced income losses.

Essential Goods
Shortage of food items and other necessities in border areas.

FORMAL VS INFORMAL TRADE

Formal Trade

- Conducted through designated border crossings.
- Includes officially documented goods.
- Generates revenue and offers regulatory oversight.

Informal Trade

- Long-standing and deeply rooted in border communities.
- Involves goods such as LPG, food items and consumer products.
- Supports local livelihoods but remains vulnerable to security crackdowns and policy changes.

STAKEHOLDERS

Government of Pakistan
Balances border security and economic needs.

Government of Iran
Cited security concerns for trade halt.

Local Communities
Depend on cross-border trade for livelihood.

Traders & Transporters
Faced losses due to trade suspension.

Security Forces
Managing border security and preventing smuggling.

CHALLENGES

- Security concerns and cross-border smuggling.
- Economic instability in border regions.
- Dependence on informal trade networks.
- Lack of alternative energy sources and infrastructure.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Development of alternative energy supplies and infrastructure.
- Formalisation and regulation of border trade.
- Economic development of Balochistan through legal trade.
- Improved Pakistan–Iran cooperation for regional stability.

WAY FORWARD

1. Resume border trade with better security arrangements.
2. Ensure stable and affordable LPG supply through alternative sources.
3. Strengthen border infrastructure and efficient management.
4. Formalise trade to increase revenue and reduce smuggling.
5. Promote economic development and provide alternative livelihood opportunities.

Iran Border Trade Halt and the LPG Squeeze: Balochistan's Informal and Formal Lifeline

PRIORITY: MEDIUM-HIGH — Energy / Economy / Balochistan

Continuity: Links the Pakistan–Iran relationship (Issue 22) to winter energy supply; ties to I-02 on mediation.

Essay Topic: Energy Security and Regional Connectivity: Pakistan's Dependence on Neighbours

Past Paper Echo: No direct past-paper precedent verified (energy security and regional connectivity recur).

Infographic cross-check: The infographic says Iran suspended border trade; the researched reports say Pakistan's Commerce Ministry suspended trade at Gabd-Rimdan and Taftan on 17 Oct, without giving a reason. It also omits the 24 Oct reopening at Gabd-Rimdan.

A. Executive Summary

On 17 October 2026 Pakistan's Ministry of Commerce suspended trade at the Gabd-Rimdan and Taftan crossings with Iran and withdrew a 3 October trade order with immediate effect, without giving a reason. Dawn reported the closure of Iran border crossings for trade on 18 October. For a week, trucks were stranded on both sides of the 909-km border between Balochistan and Iran's Sistan and Baluchestan province, and traders warned of disruption to goods that include liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), whose demand typically rises in winter.

On 20 October Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Chief of Defence Forces and Army Chief, travelled to Tehran accompanied by Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on what was reported as his fifth visit to Iran in recent months. He met President Masoud Pezeshkian, Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and Mohsen Rezaei of the Supreme National Security Council. Iranian readouts quoted him as saying border issues had been resolved and called them temporary and technical, though one Iranian outlet reported that crossings stayed shut that evening.

Trade resumed on Saturday 24 October at the Gabd-Rimdan crossing (Gate 250) in Gwadar district, with officials allowing consignments accompanied by notes dated 16 October or earlier to pass and extra forces deployed to protect trade convoys. Gwadar's chamber of commerce welcomed the decision, saying restored supply would help ease a nationwide LPG shortage and soaring energy and food prices ahead of winter.

The episode shows how bilateral politics, security and household energy are tied together. Pakistan and Iran's Joint Trade Committee had reaffirmed a $10 billion trade target in August, yet the border's reliability depends on security conditions in Balochistan and on the wider US–Iran standoff in which Pakistan is a mediator.

B. Key Developments

- 3 Oct: Commerce ministry issues a trade order later withdrawn.
- 17 Oct: Trade suspended at Gabd-Rimdan and Taftan; trucks stranded.
- 20 Oct: CDF Munir visits Tehran and announces the border is reopened; reports on the ground conflict.
- Pakistan says issues were temporary and technical.
- 24 Oct: Trade resumes at Gabd-Rimdan (Gate 250) for consignments dated 16 Oct or earlier.
- Additional forces deployed to protect convoys.
- Traders link the reopening to relief on LPG shortages before winter.

C. Analysis

- **Energy Security.** Dependence on imported LPG through a single land route exposes households to border decisions.
- **Economy.** Border trade supports Balochistan livelihoods; closures raise prices and strand perishable goods.
- **Security.** Convoy protection signals concern about militant threats along the Makran coast corridor.
- **Foreign Policy.** Opening the border before high-level talks served as a goodwill gesture while Islamabad mediates between Washington and Tehran.
- **Governance.** An order issued and withdrawn within two weeks without public reasoning invites questions about transparency.

D. Stakeholder Positions & Way Forward

Traders and transporters	Want predictable rules and compensation for stranded goods.
Government	Balances security, diplomacy and supply needs.
Iran	Seeks reliable trade and sanctions relief.

Way forward	Publish clear border-trade rules; diversify LPG sources and storage; formalise barter and trade facilities; coordinate security with commerce policy.

E. Key Facts & Figures

■ Pakistan–Iran border length: 909 km.	■ Trade suspended at two crossings on 17 October 2026; resumed at Gabd-Rimdan on 24 October.
■ Joint Trade Committee target: $10 billion (reaffirmed 4–5 August 2026).	■ CDF Munir's visit: reported fifth to Iran in recent months.

F. Quotes & Vocabulary

❝ *"temporary and technical"* — CDF Munir describing the border problems (as reported)

Word	Meaning
Suspension	Temporary stoppage
Consignment	A batch of goods sent together
Stranded	Left unable to move
LPG	Liquefied petroleum gas
Chokepoint	A narrow route with outsized importance
Corridor	A route linking regions
Convoy	A group of vehicles travelling together
Barter	Trade by exchanging goods
Goodwill	Friendly attitude
Logistics	Organisation of movement of goods

G. Examiner's Perspective

? **Likely question:** Discuss Pakistan's energy security challenges and the role of regional trade.

? **Likely question:** How do border-trade disruptions affect Balochistan's economy?

H. Further In-Depth Study

› ProPakistani: Pakistan reopens Iran border — https://propakistani.pk/2026/10/25/pakistan-reopens-iran-border-after-special-meeting/
› The Print/PTI: reopens crossing after week-long suspension — https://theprint.in/world/pakistan-reopens-iran-border-crossing-after-week-long-suspension-of-trade/3080945/
› Express Tribune: Pak-Iran border reopens as CDF visits Tehran — https://tribune.com.pk/story/2636015/pak-iran-border-reopens-as-cdf-visits-tehran
› Al Arabiya analysis — https://english.alarabiya.net/features/2026/10/21/analysis-why-pakistan-s-iran-border-reopening-matters-for-us-diplomacy

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NATIONAL ARTICLE – 06

Pakistan's First Astronaut to Fly on 25 November: China's Tiangong and a 2035 Lunar Goal



BACKGROUND

- Pakistan's first astronaut is scheduled to fly to China's **Tiangong** space station on **25 November 2026**.
- The mission is part of the Pakistan–China cooperation in space and marks a major milestone for Pakistan's space programme.
- It reflects the deepening strategic partnership between the two countries in science, technology and space exploration.
- The mission is also linked to Pakistan's long-term goal of participating in a lunar mission by **2035**.

KEY DETAILS OF THE MISSION

Launch Date
25 November 2026

Destination
China's Tiangong space station

Mission Duration
Short-term scientific mission (multiple experiments)

Focus Areas
Space medicine, life sciences, materials science and technology demonstration

Part of
Pakistan–China Space Cooperation

Long-Term Goal
Participation in a lunar mission by 2035

CHINA'S TIANGONG SPACE STATION



- China's permanent space station in low Earth orbit (LEO).
- Operational since 2021.
- Used for scientific research, technology testing and international collaboration.
- Hosts astronauts from partner countries for short-duration missions.
- Provides a platform for experiments in microgravity and space applications.

SIGNIFICANCE FOR PAKISTAN

- Boosts Pakistan's capabilities in science, technology and innovation.
- Builds human resource development in advanced technologies.
- Inspires youth and promotes STEM education.
- Strengthens Pakistan–China strategic partnership.
- Supports long-term goals such as the 2035 lunar mission and future space programmes.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Conduct scientific experiments in space.
- Gain practical experience in human spaceflight.
- Develop indigenous expertise in space sciences and technologies.
- Explore opportunities for future Pakistani participation in lunar and deep-space missions.
- Enhance Pakistan's role in international space cooperation.

REGIONAL AND GLOBAL CONTEXT

- China is expanding its space diplomacy through the Tiangong programme.
- Several countries, including Pakistan, are participating in its international collaboration efforts.
- Space cooperation is becoming an important tool for strategic partnerships and technological advancement.
- Enhances Pakistan's visibility in the global space community.
- May open avenues for future collaboration in satellite technology, remote sensing and lunar exploration.

CHALLENGES

- High cost of space programmes.
- Need for sustained investment and policy continuity.
- Developing indigenous capacity beyond symbolic participation.
- Dependence on foreign technology and limited domestic infrastructure.
- Ensuring practical spin-offs for education, industry and national development.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Development of Pakistan's satellite and space technology sector.
- Applications in agriculture, climate monitoring, disaster management and communication.
- Strengthening academia–industry linkages in space sciences.
- Potential for future lunar and deep-space missions.
- Greater international collaboration and technology transfer.

WAY FORWARD

1. Ensure continuity in Pakistan's space programme.
2. Invest in indigenous research and human resource development.
3. Strengthen collaboration with China and other countries.
4. Utilise space technology for socio-economic development.
5. Build a clear roadmap towards the 2035 lunar mission and beyond.

Pakistan's First Astronaut to Fly on 25 November: China's Tiangong and a 2035 Lunar Goal

PRIORITY: MEDIUM — Science & Technology / Pakistan–China

Continuity: Extends the Pakistan–China strategic partnership; Karakoram 2026 exercise (14–22 Oct) shows the defence dimension.

Essay Topic: Space Technology and National Development: Can Pakistan Compete?

Past Paper Echo: No direct past-paper precedent verified (science and technology policy questions recur).

Infographic cross-check: No factual conflict found. The Pakistani flag shown on the Tiangong station is artistic licence; the article reports a payload specialist on a reported one-week visit.

A. Executive Summary

On Sunday 18 October 2026, addressing the concluding ceremony of World Space Week in Narowal, Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal announced that Pakistan's first astronaut will undertake a space mission from a Chinese space centre on 25 November. He added that Pakistan aims for a lunar landing by 2035 and said cooperation with China would help the country reach new heights in space exploration.

The flight rests on an Astronaut Cooperation Agreement signed in February 2025 between Pakistan's space agency SUPARCO and the China Manned Space Agency. In April, Xinhua announced the selection of two Pakistani nationals, Muhammad Zeeshan Ali and Khurram Daud, as the first foreign astronauts to train for a Chinese mission. One will fly as a payload specialist, someone who runs experiments rather than operating the spacecraft, and will become the first foreign astronaut aboard the Tiangong space station, reportedly on a one-week visit.

The mission will fly on a Chinese-built spacecraft, launched from a Chinese site, with Chinese instructors, and communication in Mandarin. Beyond prestige, it advances science diplomacy and technology transfer, and sits alongside defence cooperation: from 14 to 22 October the two militaries held the 'Karakoram 2026' training in Xinjiang, focused on high-altitude counter-terrorism, drones and sniping.

Critics note that a seat on a Chinese mission is not an indigenous human-spaceflight capability, and that Pakistan's R&D spending is low. Supporters argue it is a rapid entry into the field that can inspire science education and open payload opportunities for Pakistani researchers.

B. Key Developments

- 18 Oct: Ahsan Iqbal announces 25 November launch of Pakistan's first astronaut from China.
- Goal: lunar landing by 2035.
- Feb 2025: SUPARCO and China Manned Space Agency sign Astronaut Cooperation Agreement.
- April 2026: Xinhua announces two Pakistani candidates for training.
- One candidate will fly as payload specialist — first foreign astronaut on Tiangong.
- 14–22 Oct: Karakoram 2026 joint training in Xinjiang.

C. Analysis

- **Science Diplomacy.** Space cooperation cements the all-weather partnership beyond CPEC infrastructure.
- **Technology Transfer.** Real benefit depends on training, payload design and follow-on projects that build domestic capacity.
- **Geopolitics.** Chinese space expansion offers partners an alternative to US-led programmes.
- **Development Trade-offs.** Space spending must be weighed against education and health budgets; the payoff is long-term.
- **Soft Power.** A first astronaut can galvanise public interest in STEM.

D. Stakeholder Positions & Way Forward

SUPARCO / Planning Ministry	Frame the mission as a national milestone.
China	Showcases Tiangong as an international platform.
Critics	Warn against symbolic projects without R&D funding.
Way forward	Raise R&D funding; build satellite and payload capacity; link the mission to curriculum reform; publish mission science objectives.

E. Key Facts & Figures

■ Launch date announced: 25 November 2026.	■ Two Pakistani astronaut candidates: Muhammad Zeeshan Ali and Khurram Daud.
■ Lunar landing target: 2035.	■ Karakoram 2026: 14–22 October 2026, Korla/Xinjiang.

F. Quotes & Vocabulary

❝ *"reach new heights in space exploration"* — Ahsan Iqbal on cooperation with China

Word	Meaning
Payload specialist	Crew member who runs experiments
Tiangong	China's space station
SUPARCO	Pakistan's national space agency
Lunar	Relating to the Moon
Orbit	Path around a planet
Technology transfer	Sharing of know-how between countries
Indigenous	Locally developed
Aerospace	Air and space technology sector
Milestone	A significant stage
Soft power	Influence through attraction rather than force

G. Examiner's Perspective

? **Likely question:** Evaluate the significance of Pakistan–China space cooperation.

? **Likely question:** Should Pakistan invest in space technology given its development needs?

H. Further In-Depth Study

› Express Tribune: first astronaut on Nov 25 — https://tribune.com.pk/story/2635525/pakistan-to-launch-first-astronaut-into-space-from-china-on-nov-25-ahsan-iqbal
› Arab News: first Pakistani astronaut — https://www.arabnews.pk/pakistan/first-pakistani-astronaut-to-embark-on-space-mission-from-china-on-nov-25-minister-3004545
› The Diplomat: Karakoram 2026 — https://thediplomat.com/2026/10/karakoram-2026-inside-china-pakistan-joint-military-training-in-xinjiang/
› Shafaqna: first astronaut — https://pakistan.shafaqna.com/EN/339421

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NATIONAL ARTICLE – 07

Quorum Collapses and Thin Attendance: How Effective Is Pakistan's National Assembly?



BACKGROUND

- Recent days witnessed repeated **quorum collapses** and **thin** attendance in the National Assembly (NA).
- Several important sessions were delayed or adjourned due to insufficient number of members.
- The situation has raised questions about the effectiveness, seriousness and performance of Pakistan's lower house.
- It reflects deeper structural issues in Pakistan's parliamentary governance and democracy.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

- Multiple sessions in recent weeks faced quorum collapses.
- Important legislative business could not be taken up due to low attendance.
- Government and opposition blamed each other for the situation.
- Public criticism increased over lawmakers' absence during crucial debates.
- The issue has revived the debate on parliamentary reforms and accountability of MNAs.

QUORUM REQUIREMENT

Article 54 of the Constitution: Quorum for a meeting of the National Assembly is one-fifth of the total membership.



If quorum is not present, the Speaker shall adjourn the meeting or suspend it until quorum is made.

WHY ATTENDANCE IS LOW?

- Political polarisation and boycotts.
- Focus on constituency politics and local engagements.
- Lack of internal accountability mechanisms.
- Comfortable salaries and allowances despite low productivity.
- Weak party discipline and ineffective whips.
- Frequent adjournments and short sittings.

IMPLICATIONS

- Weakens legislative effectiveness and oversight of the executive.
- Important national issues remain unaddressed.
- Erodes public trust in parliament and democratic institutions.
- Delays in lawmaking and policy decisions.
- Creates space for executive dominance over the legislature.
- Undermines Pakistan's democratic maturity and international image.

EXAMINER'S PERSPECTIVE (CSS / PMS)

- Reflects deeper issues of democratic governance and political culture.
- Highlights the need for electoral, parliamentary and political reforms.
- Tests understanding of constitutional provisions, role of the legislature and checks and balances.
- Links with broader themes of democratic consolidation and institutional strength.
- Relevant for essay, Pakistan Affairs, Political Science and Governance & Public Policy.

POSSIBLE REFORMS

- Strict enforcement of attendance rules and penalties for unjustified absence.
- Strengthening of parliamentary committees.
- Fixing a minimum number of sitting days in a year.
- Reforming the role of party whips and ensuring discipline.
- Greater use of technology for transparent attendance records.
- Public disclosure of attendance and performance reports of MNAs.

WAY FORWARD

1. Political parties should prioritise parliamentary work over short-term political gains.
2. Strengthen internal party discipline and accountability.
3. Ensure regular sittings and meaningful legislative business.
4. Enhance the role and capacity of parliamentary committees.
5. Promote a culture of responsible and active parliamentarianism to strengthen Pakistan's democracy.

Quorum Collapses and Thin Attendance: How Effective Is Pakistan's National Assembly?

PRIORITY: MEDIUM-HIGH — Governance / Constitution

Continuity: Connects to the 28th Amendment and legislative speed thread (Issue 17) and to N-01's rapid ratification.

Essay Topic: Parliamentary Supremacy or Rubber-Stamp Legislature? Democracy in Pakistan

Past Paper Echo: No direct past-paper precedent verified (parliamentary democracy and legislative effectiveness recur).

Infographic cross-check: The infographic cites 'Article 54', quorum of one-fifth and 67 of 336 members. The Constitution's quorum rule is Article 55: one-fourth of total membership. FAFEN counted 332–333 sitting members in the 2026 sessions. Use this article's text.

A. Executive Summary

On 21 October 2026 the National Assembly set aside its agenda to allow a general debate, and members raised issues ranging from terrorism and agriculture to loadshedding, petrol prices, healthcare, exports, the emergency in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and a proposal to move Pakistan Petroleum Limited's headquarters from Karachi to Islamabad. MQM-Pakistan's Khawaja Izharul Hassan questioned the deputy speaker's decision to suspend the agenda and allow points of order.

On 22 October, after Question Hour, the House again lost quorum, but not before passing the Life Insurance (Nationalisation) (Amendment) Bill, 2026, which provides for the federal government to establish State Life Insurance Company Limited and makes it a statutory body. The Dawn report also recorded an MNA's concern over families displaced by the ML-1 railway project in Karachi's Malir area and an assembly briefing that the CDA was only demolishing illegal structures in Islamabad.

The pattern is documented by the Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN). In the 29th session (17–28 August) only 65 of 332 members, about 20 per cent, attended all eight sittings, 37 members (11 per cent) attended none, and the Prime Minister attended one sitting; of 26 ministers due to answer questions, 12 were present. In the 27th session (11–22 May) 66 of 333 members attended all sittings.

The contrast with the speed at which Parliament approved the KP emergency within days is central to the debate. A Dawn commentary headlined 'A rubber-stamp parliament' captures the concern that Parliament ratifies executive decisions quickly while core scrutiny functions weaken. Reform options include attendance disclosure, quorum rules, committee strengthening and ministerial accountability.

B. Key Developments

- 21 Oct: NA suspends the agenda for a general debate on public issues.
- Members demand action on terrorism, load-shedding, petrol prices and healthcare.
- PPP legislators oppose shifting PPL's headquarters from Karachi to Islamabad.
- 22 Oct: NA passes Life Insurance (Nationalisation) (Amendment) Bill, 2026 — State Life becomes a statutory body.
- Quorum lapses again after the bill is passed.
- FAFEN: 20 per cent of MNAs attended every sitting of the 29th session.

C. Analysis

- **Constitutional.** Article 55 sets the quorum at one-fourth of total membership; repeated lapses weaken the legislature's legitimacy.
- **Accountability.** Low ministerial attendance in Question Hour undermines oversight.
- **Legislative Quality.** Bills passed in thin houses receive limited scrutiny.
- **Political.** Opposition and treasury both use points of order to raise constituency issues when the agenda is suspended.
- **Reform.** Public attendance data, committee oversight and a calendar of sittings can improve discipline.

D. Stakeholder Positions & Way Forward

Treasury benches	Say business continues and bills pass.
Opposition	Argue Parliament is bypassed on major decisions.
FAFEN / civil society	Document attendance and press for transparency.

Way forward	Mandatory attendance disclosure; stronger committees; quorum enforcement; minimum sitting days; ministerial accountability in Question Hour.

E. Key Facts & Figures

■ 29th session (17–28 Aug 2026): 65 of 332 MNAs attended all 8 sittings (20 per cent); 37 attended none.	■ Prime Minister attended 1 sitting in the 29th session; 12 of 26 ministers were present for Question Hour.
■ 27th session (11–22 May 2026): 66 of 333 members attended all sittings.	■ Bill passed on 22 Oct 2026: Life Insurance (Nationalisation) (Amendment) Bill, 2026.

F. Quotes & Vocabulary

❝ *"A rubber-stamp parliament"* — Dawn headline on Parliament's role (22–23 Oct)

Word	Meaning
Quorum	Minimum members required to conduct business
Statutory body	Entity created by law
Point of order	Procedural objection raised in a House
Adjourn	Suspend a sitting
Oversight	Supervision of executive actions
Nationalisation	Bringing a business under state ownership
Treasury benches	Government-side seats
Sitting	A single meeting of a legislature
Scrutiny	Close examination
Ratify	Approve formally

G. Examiner's Perspective

? **Likely question:** Why is Pakistan's Parliament often described as weak? Suggest reforms.

? **Likely question:** Discuss the role of quorum and attendance in legislative accountability.

H. Further In-Depth Study

› Dawn: NA proceedings succumb to lack of quorum — https://www.dawn.com/news/2039167/national-assembly-proceedings-succumb-to-lack-of-quorum-again
› Dawn: NA sets aside agenda for general debate — https://www.dawn.com/news/2038678/na-sets-aside-days-agenda-to-allow-general-debate
› FAFEN: 27th session attendance — https://fafen.org/national-assembly-attendance-report-27th-session/
› Express Tribune: 20pc attend all sittings — https://tribune.com.pk/story/2627163/only-20-mnas-attend-all-sittings-of-assembly

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INTERNATIONAL ARTICLE – 01

Houthi Strikes on Riyadh, Egypt's Troop Vote and the First Test of the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement



BACKGROUND

- Yemen's **Houthi group** launched missile and drone attacks targeting **Riyadh**, marking an escalation in the regional conflict.
- The attacks underscored the growing reach and capabilities of the Houthis, and the vulnerability of regional capitals.
- In response to rising threats, Arab states had recently signed the **Makkah Joint Defence Agreement** to enhance collective security and coordination.
- **Egypt's parliament** held a crucial **vote** on the deployment of troops as part of its commitments under the agreement, signalling stronger military cooperation among member states.

HOUTHI STRIKES ON RIYADH

Type of attack
Missiles and drones targeted Riyadh and other Saudi areas.

Objective
To pressure Saudi Arabia and gain regional leverage amid the Gaza conflict.

Significance
Demonstrates improved Houthi capabilities and expanding threat to Saudi territory.

Claim
Houthis claimed responsibility as part of their support for Palestinians in Gaza.

Impact
Heightened regional tensions and raised questions about air defence and regional security cooperation.

EGYPT'S TROOP VOTE

What happened?
Egypt's parliament approved the deployment of troops as part of the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement.

Purpose
To support collective defence, regional stability and deter aggression in the region.

Significance
Reflects Egypt's growing role in Arab security architecture and its commitment to regional collective security.

Message
A signal of unity among key Arab states in the face of increasing regional threats.

THE MAKKAH JOINT DEFENCE AGREEMENT

Nature
A regional defence agreement among key Arab and Muslim states.

Objective
To enhance collective security, intelligence sharing and coordinated response to external threats.

Key Features
Mutual defence commitments, joint military coordination and institutional mechanisms for crisis response.

First major test
Houthi strikes on Riyadh and Egypt's troop deployment vote are being seen as the first real test of the agreement's effectiveness.

REGIONAL CONTEXT

Yemen conflict
Ongoing war with Houthis backed by Iran, causing humanitarian crisis and regional instability.

Iran's role
Allegations of Iranian support to Houthis through arms, funding and training.

Gaza conflict
Houthis link their attacks to the Gaza war, presenting themselves as part of a "regional resistance" axis.

Broader implications
Rising risk of a wider regional confrontation involving Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and other Arab states.

KEY IMPLICATIONS

Regional security
Strengthens the case for collective defence and integrated air and missile defence systems.

Power dynamics
Enhances the strategic alignment among Saudi Arabia, Egypt and other regional partners.

Risk of escalation
Potential for a broader Iran–Arab confrontation if hostilities continue.

Impact on Pakistan
Implications for energy security, regional stability and Pakistan's relations with both Iran and Saudi Arabia.

KEY CHALLENGES

- Continued Houthi attacks and improved capabilities.
- Risk of wider regional war.
- Differences among member states on the scope and implementation of the agreement.
- Humanitarian crisis in Yemen.
- Threats to global energy supplies and vital maritime routes.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Stronger regional security architecture through the Makkah agreement.
- Enhanced defence cooperation, intelligence sharing and technology transfer.
- Greater role for moderate regional powers in conflict management.
- Possibility of renewed diplomatic efforts for a political settlement in Yemen.

WAY FORWARD

1. Full and effective implementation of the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement.
2. Strengthen regional air and missile defence systems.
3. Address the root causes of the Yemen conflict through inclusive diplomacy.
4. Prevent further escalation through confidence-building measures.
5. Ensure humanitarian access and support a lasting political solution in Yemen.

Houthi Strikes on Riyadh, Egypt's Troop Vote and the First Test of the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement

PRIORITY: HIGH — IR / Middle East / Pakistan's Foreign Policy

Continuity: Continues the Makkah pact and Gulf security thread (Issues 17 and 19); Egypt's parliament votes on 26 October.

Essay Topic: Collective Defence Pacts and Regional Security: Opportunities and Entanglement for Pakistan

Past Paper Echo: No direct past-paper precedent verified (collective defence, Saudi–Pakistan ties and Yemen recur in IR).

Infographic cross-check: The infographic says Egypt's parliament 'approved' troop deployment; the vote was postponed to 26 Oct and had not been held in the researched reports. It describes the Makkah pact as among 'Arab states'; the signatories are Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye. The Houthi Gaza-solidarity claim was not in the researched sources.

A. Executive Summary

On 10 October 2026 a Houthi strike on King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh killed 13 people and wounded more than 300, according to Saudi authorities, and a new attack the next day killed one more. Turkey, Pakistan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia jointly condemned the attacks as a dangerous escalation. On 15 October the UN Security Council adopted presidential statement S/PRST/2026/4 condemning Houthi attacks on aviation and energy infrastructure and threats to Red Sea shipping, and calling for a negotiated settlement.

Egypt's response became the week's main story. Its National Defence Council, chaired by President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, approved 'all necessary and possible forms of support' for Saudi Arabia on 18 October. Because Article 152 of Egypt's constitution requires a two-thirds majority, or 398 of 596 members, for combat deployment abroad, the House of Representatives postponed its vote from 19 October to 26 October after the Egyptian Social Democratic Party said its members would abstain pending clarity on objectives, duration, cost and risk. Egypt's foreign minister and intelligence chief carried a letter from Sisi to Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman on 21 October saying support would be limited to defending Saudi territory and borders, and Egypt urged political solutions including a Houthi withdrawal from territory seized in September near Bab el-Mandeb. Houthi parliament speaker Yahya Ali al-Ra'i warned Cairo against involvement.

For Pakistan the issue is the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement, signed in August 2026 with Saudi Arabia and Türkiye. At the Foreign Office briefing on 23 October the spokesperson said Pakistan and Saudi Arabia had completed ratification, Türkiye's parliament was still processing it, the pact is defensive and not directed against any third country, and it contains no secret clauses. Under it, the three would consult on external aggression and decide on a response; a trilateral committee last met on 5 October. Pakistan has denied that its jets took part in strikes in Yemen.

The wider problem is entanglement: Pakistan mediates between the US and Iran (see I-02) while Iran backs the Houthis, so Islamabad must honour commitments to Riyadh without surrendering its mediation role.

B. Key Developments

- 10 Oct: Houthi strike on Riyadh's King Khalid airport kills 13, wounds over 300 (Saudi figures).
- 12 Oct: Türkiye, Pakistan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia condemn the attacks.
- 15 Oct: UNSC presidential statement S/PRST/2026/4 condemns the Houthi attacks.
- 18 Oct: Egypt's National Defence Council pledges 'all necessary and possible forms of support'.
- 19 Oct: Egyptian parliament postpones the troop-authorisation vote to 26 October.
- 21 Oct: Egyptian delegation carries Sisi's letter to Riyadh; support limited to defence of Saudi territory.
- 23 Oct: Pakistan says Makkah pact ratification is complete on its side and Saudi Arabia's; Türkiye's parliament is processing it.

C. Analysis

- **Collective Defence.** The pact's 'attack on one is an attack on all' logic is being tested for the first time by non-state actor missile strikes rather than interstate war.
- **Constitutional Constraints.** Egypt's two-thirds rule and Türkiye's pending ratification show that alliances depend on domestic legislatures and procedures;.
- **Economic Linkages.** Saudi Arabia is due to deposit $5.3bn into Egypt's central bank this month, helping explain Cairo's calculus.
- **Maritime Security.** Houthi threats near Bab el-Mandeb endanger Suez revenue and global shipping.
- **Pakistan's Balancing.** Obligations to Riyadh sit alongside Pakistan's mediator role with Iran and its need to avoid sectarian or regional overreach.

D. Stakeholder Positions & Way Forward

Saudi Arabia	Seeks allied backing and UN endorsement of its right to self-defence.
Egypt	Pledges support but limits it to defence and promotes mediation.
Pakistan	Affirms solidarity, denies offensive involvement, stresses diplomacy.
Houthis / Iran	The Houthis threaten Cairo; Tehran has offered to mediate between Riyadh and the Houthis.
Way forward	Clarify triggers and command arrangements; parliamentary oversight in each capital; parallel Yemen political track; maritime de-confliction.

E. Key Facts & Figures

■ Riyadh airport strike of 10 Oct: 13 killed, 300+ wounded (Saudi authorities).	■ Egypt's constitutional threshold for foreign combat deployment: two-thirds, i.e. 398 of 596 MPs.
■ Saudi deposit due to Egypt's central bank: $5.3bn plus $267.39m interest (Al Jazeera).	■ UNSC statement: S/PRST/2026/4, adopted 15 Oct 2026.
■ Makkah pact signed August 2026; Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have completed ratification.	

F. Quotes & Vocabulary

❝ *"dangerous escalation that cannot be justified"* — Joint statement of Türkiye, Pakistan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, 12 Oct

❝ *"no secret clauses"* — FO spokesperson Sajjad Haider Khan on the Makkah pact, 23–24 Oct

Word	Meaning
Collective defence	Mutual protection among allies
Escalation	Intensification of conflict
Supermajority	Majority above a simple one
Abstain	Decline to vote
Ratification	Formal approval of a treaty
Chokepoint	Strategic narrow passage
Mandate	Official authority to act
Proxy	Actor fighting on behalf of another
De-confliction	Avoiding accidental clashes
Sovereignty	Supreme authority over a territory

G. Examiner's Perspective

? **Likely question:** Analyse the strategic implications of the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement for Pakistan.

? **Likely question:** How do domestic legislatures constrain alliance commitments? Use Egypt as an example.

H. Further In-Depth Study

› Al Jazeera: Egyptian parliament delays vote — https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/10/19/egyptian-parliament-delays-vote-on-military-support-for-saudi-arabia

› US News/Reuters: Egypt calls for Yemen talks — https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2026-10-22/egypt-calls-for-yemen-talks-as-parliament-weighs-military-support-to-saudi-arabia

› Samaa: Pakistan completed ratification of Makkah pact — https://www.samaa.tv/2087358989-pakistan-has-completed-ratification-of-makkah-pact-fo

› TRT World: Pakistan announces ratification — https://www.trtworld.com/article/e70243f73dff

› Aaj News: Joint condemnation of Houthi attacks — https://english.aaj.tv/news/330476158/turkey-pakistan-egypt-saudi-arabia-condemn-houthi-attacks-on-riyadh-airport

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INTERNATIONAL ARTICLE – 02

The 'Islamabad Understanding' Under Strain: Pakistan's Mediation Between Washington and Tehran



BACKGROUND

- Pakistan has been playing a mediating role between the United States and Iran to reduce tensions and prevent a wider regional conflict.
- This effort, often referred to as the 'Islamabad Understanding', led to a temporary de-escalation in June 2026.
- The initiative reflects Pakistan's growing diplomatic engagement to promote regional stability in the Middle East.
- Despite progress, recent developments show increasing strains and uncertainty over the future of the understanding.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

April–May 2026
Heightened US–Iran tensions and regional escalation.

Pakistan's mediation
Islamabad facilitated backchannel contacts and confidence-building measures.

June 2026
An interim understanding reached, leading to a temporary de-escalation.

Recent strain
Disagreements over nuclear issues, sanctions and verification have put the understanding under pressure.

Parallel diplomacy
Qatar has also been engaged in diplomatic efforts alongside Pakistan.

POSITIONS OF KEY STAKEHOLDERS

United States
- Demands stringent verification of Iran's nuclear programme.
- Seeks restrictions on uranium enrichment.
- Maintains sanctions and pressure to curb Iran's nuclear and regional activities.

Iran
- Insists on its right to peaceful nuclear programme.
- Seeks relief from US sanctions.
- Demands credible security guarantees.

Pakistan
- Advocates dialogue and diplomacy to prevent escalation.
- Aims to balance relations with both sides.
- Seeks regional stability and economic connectivity.

Qatar
- Playing a parallel mediating role alongside Pakistan.
- Facilitating indirect contacts between the US and Iran.

KEY ISSUES UNDER DISPUTE

Nuclear programme
Level of uranium enrichment and verification mechanisms.

Sanctions relief
US demands for maintaining sanctions vs. Iran's call for their removal.

Regional security
Iran's role in regional conflicts and US concerns over its influence.

Verification and trust
Lack of mutual confidence and disputes over monitoring and compliance.

IMPLICATIONS

Risk of renewed tensions
Failure of the understanding could lead to escalation and a wider regional conflict.

Regional stability
Continued dialogue is crucial for peace in the Middle East.

Impact on Pakistan
Enhances Pakistan's diplomatic profile but also increases challenges in maintaining neutrality.

Global non-proliferation
Affects the credibility of international efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation.

Regional cooperation
Success could open avenues for greater economic and strategic cooperation in the region.

CHALLENGES

Deep mistrust
Long history of hostility between the US and Iran.

Domestic pressures
Hardline positions in both countries limit flexibility.

Verification disagreements
Differences over scope and methods of monitoring.

Regional dynamics
Involvement of other regional actors complicates the process.

Sustainability
Ensuring long-term commitment to the understanding.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Strengthen Pakistan's role as a credible mediator.
- Prevent a wider regional war and ensure stability.
- Facilitate sanctions relief and economic integration in the region.
- Build confidence through phased and verifiable steps.
- Create space for broader regional dialogue and cooperation.

WAY FORWARD

1. Revive and strengthen the Islamabad Understanding through continued dialogue.
2. Engage regional partners, including Qatar, for a coordinated approach.
3. Address core issues with a phased agreement and credible verification.
4. Provide security guarantees to build mutual trust.
5. Focus on long-term regional stability, economic cooperation and conflict resolution.

The 'Islamabad Understanding' Under Strain: Pakistan's Mediation Between Washington and Tehran

PRIORITY: HIGH — IR / Diplomacy / Nuclear Policy

Continuity: Follows the Pakistan-brokered US–Iran interim arrangement of June and the Hormuz tensions of earlier issues.

Essay Topic: Mediation as a Foreign-Policy Tool: Pakistan's Role in Great-Power Conflicts

Past Paper Echo: No direct past-paper precedent verified (Pakistan's mediation roles and Iran's nuclear programme recur in IR).

Infographic cross-check: The infographic dates heightened tensions to 'April–May 2026', which the researched sources do not support; they report an interim arrangement via Islamabad in June that collapsed weeks later when fighting resumed.

A. Executive Summary

Pakistan has tried to bring the United States and Iran back to the table after an interim agreement reached through Islamabad in June collapsed when fighting resumed weeks later, according to Al Arabiya's analysis. On Tuesday 20 October Field Marshal Asim Munir travelled to Tehran, on what was reported as his fifth visit in recent months, and met President Masoud Pezeshkian, Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and Mohsen Rezaei of the Supreme National Security Council.

The Iranian side was blunt. Rezaei told Munir that Iran would not allow its enriched nuclear material to be removed from the country, describing it as a national asset for domestic use. Ghalibaf accused the Trump administration of violating what Tehran calls the 'Islamabad understanding' and said threats and military manoeuvres cannot change Iran's strategic decisions. Rezaei added that the first step towards trust is for the United States to meet Iran's conditions, which Tehran links to sanctions relief and an end to threats.

On 23 October the Foreign Office said Pakistan remains in touch with both Washington and Tehran in its mediatory role and supports negotiations rather than confrontation. Iran's foreign minister said talks continue through Pakistan and Qatar, and Tehran has also offered to mediate between Saudi Arabia and the Houthis, a sign that regional crises are interlinked with Pakistan's obligations under the Makkah pact (see I-01).

The mediator's dilemma is acute: Pakistan must preserve trust with Washington and Tehran while being allied with Riyadh and managing a long Iranian border (see N-05). Success depends on sequencing: verification of nuclear material, sanctions relief and de-escalation guarantees.

B. Key Developments

- June 2026: Interim agreement through Islamabad; collapses weeks later amid renewed fighting.
- 20 Oct: Munir, with Interior Minister Naqvi, meets Iranian leadership in Tehran.
- Rezaei: enriched material will not be shipped abroad.
- Ghalibaf: US violated the 'Islamabad understanding'; threats will not change decisions.
- Iran says talks continue via Pakistan and Qatar.
- 23 Oct: FO says Pakistan remains in contact with both sides.
- Pakistan's trade crossings with Iran reopened the same week.

C. Analysis

- **Nuclear Diplomacy.** Disposition of enriched stockpiles is the core bargaining chip; Iran rejects export while the US seeks verifiable limits.
- **Mediation Theory.** A mediator needs leverage and credibility; Pakistan's military-led channel gives access but raises questions about civilian institutions.
- **Regional Linkage.** Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia complicate the Iran file for all parties.
- **Sanctions.** Iran ties movement to relief; the US ties relief to verifiable steps.
- **Risk.** If talks fail, escalation could hit Gulf shipping and Pakistan's western border.

D. Stakeholder Positions & Way Forward

United States	Pressing Iran on enrichment and regional conduct.
Iran	Wants sanctions relief and an end to threats before concessions.
Pakistan	Seeks regional stability and diplomatic prestige.
Qatar	Parallel channel for talks.

Way forward	Sequenced step-for-step deal; IAEA verification role; guarantees against renewed strikes; humanitarian and trade carve-outs.

E. Key Facts & Figures

■ Munir's reported visits to Iran in recent months: five.	■ Interim US–Iran agreement through Islamabad: June 2026; collapsed weeks later.
■ Iranian line: no export of enriched nuclear material.	■ Pakistan–Iran border: 909 km.

F. Quotes & Vocabulary

❝ *"cannot influence the strategic decisions of the Islamic Republic"* — Ghalibaf on US threats (paraphrased in part)

Word	Meaning
Mediator	Neutral third party helping negotiate
Enrichment	Raising the share of fissile isotopes in uranium
Interim	Temporary
Sanctions relief	Lifting economic penalties
Verification	Independent confirmation
Sequencing	Order of steps in a deal
Brokered	Arranged through mediation
Stockpile	Accumulated reserve
De-escalation	Reducing tension
Leverage	Power to influence outcomes

G. Examiner's Perspective

? **Likely question:** Assess Pakistan's capacity to mediate between the US and Iran.

? **Likely question:** What are the obstacles to a durable US–Iran nuclear settlement?

H. Further In-Depth Study

› Express Tribune: US–Iran talks continue through Pakistan, Qatar — https://tribune.com.pk/story/2636079/us-iran-talks-continue-through-pakistan-qatar-iranian-fm
› Al Arabiya analysis — https://english.alarabiya.net/features/2026/10/21/analysis-why-pakistan-s-iran-border-reopening-matters-for-us-diplomacy
› Daily Times: Pakistan moves to break US-Iran deadlock — https://dailytimes.com.pk/1570060/pakistan-moves-to-break-us-iran-deadlock/
› Pakistan Today: Iran rules out shipping enriched material — https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2026/10/21/iran-rules-out-shipping-enriched-nuclear-material-abroad-as-cdf-munir-pushes-to-revive-us-talks

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INTERNATIONAL ARTICLE – 03

Witkoff in Oslo and Moscow: Ukraine Talks to Resume in Abu Dhabi — Peace or Pause?



BACKGROUND

- The US Special Envoy **Steve Witkoff** held separate meetings in Oslo and Moscow to revive stalemate peace talks between Ukraine and Russia.
- Diplomatic efforts aim to restart negotiations, with the next round of talks expected in **Abu Dhabi**.
- The conflict, ongoing since 2022, has caused massive destruction, humanitarian losses and global economic disruptions.
- Despite multiple rounds of diplomacy, core differences between the two sides remain unresolved.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Oslo meeting
Witkoff held talks with Ukrainian officials on security guarantees and a potential framework for negotiations.

Moscow meeting
Discussions with Russian leadership focused on a possible ceasefire and areas of mutual interest.

Talks in Abu Dhabi
Next round of talks expected to resume in Abu Dhabi, with UAE playing a key facilitation role.

Focus of discussions
Possible ceasefire, humanitarian arrangements and a roadmap for a broader settlement.

POSITIONS OF KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Ukraine
- Seeks full withdrawal of Russian troops from occupied territories.
- Demands strong and credible security guarantees.
- Opposes any settlement that legitimises territorial gains by Russia.

Russia
- Demands recognition of its territorial control.
- Seeks a neutral status for Ukraine.
- Opposes NATO expansion and insists on addressing its security concerns.

United States
- Aims to broker a negotiated settlement to end the war.
- Supports a ceasefire and humanitarian measures.
- Seeks to maintain Western unity while engaging with Russia diplomatically.

United Arab Emirates
- Hosting the next round of talks in Abu Dhabi.
- Providing a neutral platform for dialogue.
- Strengthening its role as a regional mediator.

KEY ISSUES AT STAKE

Territorial control
Dispute over Russian-occupied territories, including Crimea and eastern Ukraine.

Security guarantees
Ukraine seeks long-term security assurances from Western allies.

NATO expansion
Russia demands a halt to NATO's eastward expansion.

Humanitarian crisis
Continued civilian casualties, displacement and destruction of infrastructure.

Global economic impact
Impact on global energy markets, food security and economic stability.

IMPLICATIONS

Possibility of de-escalation
Talks could lead to a limited ceasefire and confidence-building measures.

Fragile peace prospects
Deep trust deficit and irreconcilable demands make a comprehensive deal unlikely in the near term.

Impact on global stability
The outcome will affect European security, US-Russia relations and global economic conditions.

Effect on Ukraine
A prolonged conflict could further weaken Ukraine's economy and infrastructure.

Role of regional actors
UAE and other regional players may gain prominence as facilitators of peace.

CHALLENGES

Deep mistrust
Decades of hostility and unresolved grievances.

Conflicting demands
Both sides have maximalist positions on territory and security.

Risk of a prolonged conflict
Limited scope for compromise in the short term.

Domestic political pressures
Leaders in both countries face internal constraints.

Spoilers
Continued military actions on the ground and involvement of other global powers could derail the process.

OPPORTUNITIES

- A ceasefire could reduce civilian suffering.
- Talks may open the way for a phased settlement.
- UAE's role can strengthen regional diplomacy.
- Possibility of confidence-building measures.
- A negotiated settlement could restore global stability and economic normalcy.

WAY FORWARD

1. Sustain diplomatic engagement and ensure continuity of talks.
2. Build on humanitarian measures to create a conducive environment.
3. Involve regional and international stakeholders for broader support.
4. Explore phased agreements starting with a ceasefire.
5. Address core security concerns through a balanced and realistic framework.

Witkoff in Oslo and Moscow: Ukraine Talks to Resume in Abu Dhabi — Peace or Pause?

PRIORITY: HIGH — IR / Conflict Resolution

Continuity: Continues the Ukraine–Russia talks thread from Issue 17.

Essay Topic: Ceasefire vs Settlement: Lessons from the Russia–Ukraine War

Past Paper Echo: No direct past-paper precedent verified (Russia–Ukraine war and great-power diplomacy recur).

Infographic cross-check: The infographic adds Crimea, a neutral Ukraine and NATO expansion; the week's reporting centred on Russia's demand for all of the Donbas, Ukraine's demand for guarantees (including a large funded army) and Abu Dhabi talks. Use the article's framing.

A. Executive Summary

US special envoy Steve Witkoff met Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and European leaders in Oslo on 20 October and then President Vladimir Putin in Moscow on 21 October. Putin said on 22 October that Russia was ready to resume US-mediated talks with Ukraine next month, but that the aim must be a final settlement and security guarantees for Russia and Ukraine and an overall European security framework, not a short-lived ceasefire. Zelensky said Ukraine was ready, with talks likely by early November, and reports pointed to Abu Dhabi as the venue. Trilateral rounds were held in January and February.

The Washington Post argued that Putin had to do very little to win praise and announce resumption, noting the release of a US citizen, agreement to resume talks and a Russian diesel shipment bound for the United States. Zelensky objected to the diesel deal and to the postponement of sanctions on Moscow, and on 24 October announced that Starlink and Starshield speeds in Ukraine had been restored after a slowdown that affected frontline logistics and drone defence.

The sticking points are familiar. Russia demands Ukraine cede all of the Donbas region; Kyiv wants robust guarantees, including a large army funded for at least ten years, and a leaders' meeting with Europe involved. The Kremlin rejects a Zelensky–Putin meeting unless it is held in Moscow.

For examiners, the case tests the logic of ceasefires versus comprehensive settlements, the role of mediators with economic interests, and the credibility of security guarantees.

B. Key Developments

- 20 Oct: Witkoff meets Zelensky and European leaders in Oslo.
- 21 Oct: Witkoff meets Putin in Moscow.
- 22 Oct: Putin says Russia is ready to resume trilateral talks; wants final settlement not a temporary ceasefire.
- Venue and date: Abu Dhabi, early November (reported).
- A US citizen is released; a Russian diesel cargo is set to sail to the US (Washington Post).
- 24 Oct: Starlink speeds restored in Ukraine after a limitation.

C. Analysis

- **Negotiation Theory.** Russia's insistence on 'final form' agreements reflects a preference for settling territorial and security questions together.
- **Security Guarantees.** Kyiv's demand for a funded ten-year army echoes lessons from Budapest Memorandum failure.
- **Mediator Interests.** Energy and commercial side-deals complicate perceptions of US impartiality.
- **Europe.** European leaders want a seat, as the post-war security architecture is theirs to live in.
- **Territory.** The Donbas question is the central trade-off between sovereignty and ending the war.

D. Stakeholder Positions & Way Forward

Ukraine	Wants guarantees and no forced territorial concessions.
Russia	Seeks a comprehensive settlement on its terms, including Donbas.
United States	Mediates and pursues economic openings.
Europe	Seeks inclusion and a durable security order.
Way forward	Technical-level agreements on prisoners and children first; clear guarantee architecture; European participation; sanctions sequencing.

E. Key Facts & Figures

■ Day of the war when talks announced: about day 1,703 (EA WorldView count).	■ Previous trilateral rounds: January and February 2026.
■ Ukraine demands security guarantees including a large army funded for at least 10 years.	■ Russia demands Ukraine cede all of Donbas.

F. Quotes & Vocabulary

❝ *"not as a result of a temporary ceasefire"* — Putin, 22 Oct, on the goal of the talks (translated)

Word	Meaning
Trilateral	Involving three parties
Ceasefire	Temporary halt to fighting
Settlement	Final agreement ending a dispute
Security guarantee	Commitment to defend a state
Envoy	Representative sent on a mission
Cede	Give up territory
Donbas	Eastern Ukrainian region
Sanctions	Economic penalties
Architecture	Overall structure of arrangements
Mediation	Third-party help in negotiation

G. Examiner's Perspective

? **Likely question:** Is a ceasefire preferable to a comprehensive settlement in Ukraine? Discuss.

? **Likely question:** Evaluate the role of mediators in the Russia–Ukraine war.

H. Further In-Depth Study

› US News/Reuters: Putin says talks must focus on security — https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2026-10-22/putin-says-talks-must-focus-on-security-for-russia-ukraine-and-europe-overall
› Washington Post analysis — https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2026/10/22/russia-agreed-restart-trilateral-talks-peace-ukraine-is-far-off/
› EA WorldView: Talks in November — https://eaworldview.com/2026/10/ukraine-war-russia-zelensky-talks-november/
› The Hill: Starlink access restored — https://thehill.com/policy/international/6169915-starlink-starshield-access-restored

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INTERNATIONAL ARTICLE – 04

Rubio Skips Delhi for Mumbai and Jamnagar: US–India Trade Deal 'Very Close' as Energy Takes Centre Stage



BACKGROUND

- US Secretary of State Marco Rubio visited India but skipped New Delhi, travelling instead to Mumbai and Jamnagar.
- The visit focused on trade negotiations and energy cooperation, reflecting the growing strategic and economic ties between the two countries.
- A US–India trade deal is considered 'very close', with energy trade emerging as a central element.
- The shift from Delhi to Mumbai and Jamnagar highlights the importance of commercial and energy interests in the current phase of bilateral relations.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Trade deal 'very close'
Both sides expressed optimism about finalising a trade agreement in the near future.

Energy cooperation
Discussions focused on long-term US energy supplies, including oil, LNG and nuclear cooperation.

Visit to Jamnagar
Rubio visited Reliance's Jamnagar refinery, one of the world's largest, signalling the importance of India's energy market.

Strategic partnership
Both countries aim to deepen economic and strategic ties to counterbalance China's growing influence in the Indo-Pacific region.

Broader cooperation
Talks also covered technology, defence and supply chain resilience alongside trade and energy.

POSITIONS OF KEY STAKEHOLDERS

United States
- Seeks to finalise a trade deal with India.
- Aims to expand energy exports (oil, LNG and nuclear).
- Views India as a key partner in Indo-Pacific strategy.

India
- Interested in securing stable and affordable energy supplies.
- Seeks greater market access for its exports.
- Aims to strengthen economic and strategic partnership with the US.

Reliance Industries
- Showcased its Jamnagar refinery during Rubio's visit.
- Seeks long-term energy supply deals and investment opportunities.

Regional Context
- Part of broader efforts to build supply chain resilience.
- Aims to reduce dependence on China and diversify trade and energy partnerships.

KEY AREAS OF COOPERATION

Energy trade
Long-term supply of US oil, LNG and possibility of nuclear cooperation.

Trade agreement
Reduction of tariffs and market access for key goods.

Technology and innovation
Collaboration in advanced technologies and digital economy.

Defence and security
Strengthening defence ties and regional security cooperation.

IMPLICATIONS

Strengthened bilateral ties
A successful trade deal could take US–India relations to a new level.

Impact on global energy markets
Increased US energy exports to India could reshape global energy dynamics.

Counterbalancing China
Closer economic ties enhance the US–India partnership in the Indo-Pacific region.

Economic growth
Greater trade and energy cooperation could boost economic growth and create new opportunities in both countries.

CHALLENGES

Trade barriers
Differences over tariffs and market access remain.

Energy pricing
Ensuring affordable and stable energy supplies.

Balancing interests
Managing diverse interests in trade, energy, defence and regional security.

Domestic pressures
Both governments face domestic political and economic constraints.

China's response
Closer US–India ties may provoke a stronger reaction from China.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Finalise a comprehensive trade agreement.
- Expand US energy exports to India.
- Attract investment in India's energy and infrastructure sectors.
- Strengthen supply chain resilience.
- Enhance strategic partnership to ensure regional stability.

WAY FORWARD

1. Finalise the trade deal with a focus on mutual benefits.
2. Secure long-term and diversified energy supplies for India.
3. Expand cooperation in technology, defence and supply chains.
4. Address trade disputes through dialogue and flexibility.
5. Maintain strategic balance while managing regional sensitivities.

Rubio Skips Delhi for Mumbai and Jamnagar: US–India Trade Deal 'Very Close' as Energy Takes Centre Stage

PRIORITY: MEDIUM-HIGH — IR / South Asia / Trade

Continuity: Extends the US tariff and trade-diplomacy thread; relevant to Pakistan's balancing between Washington and Beijing.

Essay Topic: The US–India Partnership: Implications for South Asian Stability and Pakistan

Past Paper Echo: No direct past-paper precedent verified (US–India strategic partnership recurs in IR papers).

Infographic cross-check: The infographic shows Prime Minister Modi and lists LNG and nuclear cooperation; the researched reports centre on Rubio meeting Jaishankar in Mumbai, a Jamnagar refinery visit and Venezuelan crude refining.

A. Executive Summary

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio made a two-day visit to India on 20–21 October 2026, his second in five months, but skipped New Delhi. He met External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar in Mumbai on 20 October and on 21 October travelled to Jamnagar in Gujarat to tour the Reliance Industries refinery complex, the world's largest single-location refinery, and to meet business leaders. He also visited the 26/11 memorial in Mumbai.

Rubio said a bilateral trade agreement is 'about as close as you can be without having executed the agreement'. The two countries are trying to revive talks stalled for months by American tariffs and India's purchases of Russian oil. A February 2026 announcement had cut US tariffs on Indian goods to 18 per cent from earlier punitive levels, and India has since signed trade agreements with the European Union and others. In Jamnagar Rubio said Washington would discuss with Reliance refining more Venezuelan crude, a sign that energy is the centrepiece.

Commentators read the unusual itinerary in different ways. The Diplomat's analysis called it a paradigm shift towards transactional, business-led diplomacy, while Indian opposition parties criticised the choice of venue. The visit also follows signals that Washington wants India to cut Russian energy purchases without damaging its energy security.

For Pakistan, the lesson is that US policy under President Trump is transactional and issue-specific, so Islamabad's own engagement, on minerals, mediation on Iran and counter-terrorism, can coexist with a closer US–India relationship, but cannot rely on it being exclusive.

B. Key Developments

- 20 Oct: Rubio meets Jaishankar in Mumbai; says a trade deal is about as close as can be without signing.
- 21 Oct: Rubio visits Reliance's Jamnagar refinery and meets industry leaders.
- New Delhi is skipped; the venue choice draws criticism from Indian opposition parties.
- Energy: US seeks Indian refining of Venezuelan heavy crude.
- Feb 2026: US had agreed to cut tariffs on Indian goods to 18 per cent.
- Both sides discuss trade, energy, technology and defence.

C. Analysis

- **Trade.** A bilateral trade agreement would stabilise tariffs after months of friction.
- **Energy Geopolitics.** India's Russian oil purchases and the US push for Venezuelan crude shape the bargain.
- **Strategic Partnership.** The Quad, defence cooperation and technology remain pillars despite trade quarrels.
- **Diplomatic Style.** Bypassing the capital for a refinery signals corporate-led, transactional diplomacy.
- **Pakistan Angle.** Washington's multi-alignment means Pakistan must keep separate lines on minerals, security and mediation.

D. Stakeholder Positions & Way Forward

United States	Wants energy deals, market access and strategic alignment.
India	Seeks tariff relief without sacrificing strategic autonomy.
Reliance and Indian industry	Stand to benefit from refining and trade arrangements.
Way forward	Finalise a phased trade agreement; manage Russian-oil issue; keep strategic dialogues insulated from tariffs.

E. Key Facts & Figures

■ Visit dates: 20–21 October 2026; Rubio's second India trip in five months.	■ Tariff cut on Indian goods announced Feb 2026: to 18 per cent.
■ Jamnagar: world's largest single-location refining complex.	

F. Quotes & Vocabulary

❝ *"about as close as you can be without having executed"* — Rubio on the trade agreement (Mumbai, 20 Oct)

Word	Meaning
Bilateral trade agreement	Trade deal between two countries
Tariff	Tax on imports
Transactional	Based on exchange of benefits
Refinery	Plant processing crude oil
Strategic autonomy	Freedom to act independently of blocs
Heavy crude	Dense, high-sulphur oil
Paradigm shift	Fundamental change in approach
Diversification	Spreading risk across sources
Quad	US–India–Japan–Australia grouping
Itinerary	Planned route of travel

G. Examiner's Perspective

? **Likely question:** Discuss the implications of the US–India partnership for Pakistan.

? **Likely question:** Is US foreign policy under Trump transactional? Illustrate.

H. Further In-Depth Study

› AP via US News: Rubio and Jaishankar hold talks — https://www.usnews.com/news/politics/articles/2026-10-20/rubio-and-jaishankar-hold-talks-in-mumbai-as-us-and-india-aim-to-finalize-trade-deal

› Al Jazeera: Why Rubio is visiting Reliance — https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/10/20/why-rubio-is-visiting-reliances-oil-refinery-in-india-the-worlds-largest

› The Diplomat: Rubio's unusual visit — https://thediplomat.com/2026/10/rubios-unusual-visit-to-india-marks-a-paradigm-shift-in-india-us-ties/

› BusinessToday: Rubio in Jamnagar — https://www.businesstoday.in/india/story/marco-rubio-arrives-in-jamnagar-to-visit-reliance-refinery-as-india-us-trade-deal-moves-closer-to-final-agreement-562763-2026-10-21

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INTERNATIONAL ARTICLE – 05

South China Sea Code of Conduct: A Deal Is Not Enough Without Enforcement



BACKGROUND

- The South China Sea is a strategically vital region, rich in fisheries, potential oil and gas reserves, and major global shipping routes.
- Multiple countries — China, Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan — have overlapping territorial claims, leading to frequent tensions.
- ASEAN and China have been negotiating a Code of Conduct (CoC) for many years to manage disputes and prevent conflicts.
- Recent discussions have shown progress, but a final legally binding CoC is still not achieved, with key differences remaining on scope, enforceability and dispute resolution mechanisms.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Renewed negotiations
ASEAN and China have intensified talks on a revised draft Code of Conduct in 2026.

Progress but no final deal
Both sides agreed on some principles, such as avoiding the use of force and managing maritime incidents, but core issues remain unresolved.

Scope of the CoC
Disagreements persist on whether the CoC should cover all disputed areas, including the militarised features in the Spratly Islands.

Enforcement debate
Many ASEAN members, especially the Philippines and Vietnam, insist that any CoC must have clear enforcement and dispute resolution mechanisms.

External involvement
The United States, Japan, Australia and the EU continue to support a rules-based order and freedom of navigation in the region.

POSITIONS OF KEY STAKEHOLDERS

China
- Seeks a CoC that recognises its "historic rights" and excludes third-party involvement.
- Prefers a non-legally binding framework with limited scope.

ASEAN
- Seeks a comprehensive and effective CoC covering all disputed areas.
- Demands clear enforcement and dispute resolution mechanisms.

Philippines
- Calls for a legally binding CoC and opposes China's expansive claims.
- Seeks international support and freedom of navigation.

Vietnam
- Insists on a strong, enforceable CoC.
- Opposes unilateral actions and militarisation of disputed features.

Malaysia
- Supports a rules-based approach and peaceful dispute settlement.
- Seeks protection of its maritime rights and resources.

United States
- Not a claimant, but supports freedom of navigation and a rules-based international order.
- Conducts freedom of navigation operations (FONOPs) in the region.

KEY ISSUES

Territorial claims
Overlapping claims and China's nine-dash line remain the core dispute.

Natural resources
Rich fisheries and potential oil and gas reserves increase strategic significance.

Freedom of navigation
One-third of global trade passes through the South China Sea.

Militarisation
China's construction of artificial islands and military facilities enhances regional tensions.

Legal framework
Uncertainty over the legal nature, scope and enforceability of the CoC.

IMPLICATIONS

Regional stability
A weak or ineffective CoC may lead to continued tensions and risk of accidental military clashes.

Global trade
Disruptions in the South China Sea could affect global supply chains and energy security.

ASEAN unity
Differences among ASEAN members may weaken the organisation's bargaining power.

China's regional influence
A limited CoC could allow China to consolidate its control over disputed areas.

International law
The credibility of a rules-based international order is at stake.

CHALLENGES

Lack of enforceability
Without binding mechanisms, the CoC may remain a political statement.

Diverging interests
ASEAN members have different strategic and economic interests.

Continued militarisation
China's ongoing activities on artificial islands increase mistrust.

External competition
Great-power rivalry (US–China) complicates the negotiation process.

Slow progress
Decades of negotiations have yielded limited results.

Risk of escalation
Incidents at sea could trigger a wider regional conflict.

OPPORTUNITIES

- A strong and effective CoC can reduce the risk of conflict.
- It can promote maritime cooperation and sustainable resource management.
- It may enhance ASEAN's role in regional security.
- It can ensure freedom of navigation and stability in global trade.
- It can build trust and open avenues for broader regional dialogue.

WAY FORWARD

1. Finalise a legally binding and comprehensive Code of Conduct.
2. Include clear enforcement and dispute resolution mechanisms.
3. Ensure the CoC covers all disputed areas, including militarised features.
4. Strengthen ASEAN unity and coordination.
5. Engage external stakeholders constructively to support a rules-based order.

South China Sea Code of Conduct: A Deal Is Not Enough Without Enforcement

PRIORITY: MEDIUM — IR / Maritime Law

Continuity: New thread; links to UNCLOS and freedom-of-navigation themes and to Red Sea/Hormuz chokepoint debates.

Essay Topic: Maritime Disputes and International Law: Can Codes of Conduct Prevent Conflict?

Past Paper Echo: No direct past-paper precedent verified (South China Sea disputes recur in IR).

Infographic cross-check: No factual conflict found with the researched text.

A. Executive Summary

ASEAN and China are racing to conclude a binding framework for behaviour in the South China Sea. Negotiations date back to the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties (DOC), formal talks on a Code of Conduct (COC) opened in 2018, and foreign ministers have set a target of concluding by the end of 2026. The Philippines, as current ASEAN chair, is hosting leaders in Manila in November, and the Manila Times describes the COC as one of the year's four major ASEAN deliverables. On 23 October The Diplomat published an argument that 'a deal is not enough' unless the code has credible enforcement.

Monthly negotiating sessions have been held all year. Malaysia estimated at the start of the year that about 70 per cent of the text was agreed, but the hardest issues remain: the code's geographic scope, its legal status, its relationship to the 2002 DOC and whether it restricts third-party military exercises. ASEAN has long wanted a legally binding code, while China has never accepted that position and rejects the 2016 arbitral ruling on the sea. Beijing asserts historic rights over most of the sea, and Manila has warned against a 'talk and take' strategy.

Analysts quoted in recent coverage say the code is unlikely to be finished in time. The Asia Times noted in July that the COC deadline has been recalibrated twice in six months, and Chatham House argued that tensions between China and the Philippines make agreement difficult during the Philippine chairmanship. The Diplomat's author Abdul Rahman Yaacob warns that provisions limiting legitimate defence cooperation would weaken ASEAN's strategic independence.

The relevance for Pakistani examiners lies in UNCLOS, freedom of navigation and the broader pattern of chokepoint politics, which also drives anxiety over the Red Sea and Strait of Hormuz.

B. Key Developments

- 2002: ASEAN and China sign the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties.
- 2018: Formal negotiations on a COC open.
- 2026: Foreign ministers set a target of concluding by the end of the year.
- Monthly negotiating sessions continue; Malaysia estimated 70 per cent of the text was agreed early this year.
- Open issues: scope, legal status, enforcement and third-party exercises.
- 23 Oct: The Diplomat argues a deal without enforcement would do little to prevent incidents.
- November: Manila hosts the ASEAN leaders' summit where the COC is a target deliverable.

C. Analysis

- **International Law.** UNCLOS and the 2016 arbitral award anchor the legal debate; China's refusal to accept the ruling limits the code's legal force.
- **Institutional.** ASEAN consensus and diverse claimant interests slow progress.
- **Security.** Frequent confrontations at sea show that incidents continue despite talks.
- **Great Powers.** US alliances and China's maritime assertiveness shape ASEAN's room for manoeuvre.
- **Enforcement.** Without dispute resolution or arbitration, a code risks being aspirational.

D. Stakeholder Positions & Way Forward

Philippines	Chair of ASEAN and the most exposed claimant; wants rules and a win.
China	Prefers a non-binding code and limits on outside powers.
ASEAN states	Divided between caution and desire for stability.
Way forward	Agree a practical incident-prevention mechanism first; clear scope; keep defence cooperation rights intact; dispute-resolution channel.

E. Key Facts & Figures

■ DOC signed in 2002; formal COC negotiations opened in 2018.	■ Target conclusion date: end of 2026.
■ Malaysia's early-2026 estimate: about 70 per cent of the text agreed.	■ China asserts historic rights over nearly 90 per cent of the sea (as reported).

F. Quotes & Vocabulary

❝ *"talk and take strategy"* — Philippine warning to Beijing (as reported by Archyde)

Word	Meaning
Code of Conduct	Agreed rules of behaviour
UNCLOS	UN Convention on the Law of the Sea
Arbitral award	Ruling by an arbitration tribunal
Claimant	State asserting a territorial claim
Enforcement	Making rules binding in practice
Freedom of navigation	Right of ships to pass
Consensus	General agreement
Maritime	Relating to the sea
Assertiveness	Confident pursuit of claims
Third party	An outside power

G. Examiner's Perspective

? **Likely question:** Why has the South China Sea Code of Conduct taken over two decades?

? **Likely question:** Evaluate UNCLOS's role in resolving maritime disputes.

H. Further In-Depth Study

› The Diplomat: South China Sea Code of Conduct — https://thediplomat.com/2026/10/south-china-sea-code-of-conduct-a-deal-is-not-enough/
› Manila Times: PH to take center stage in ASEAN Summit — https://www.manilatimes.net/2026/10/12/tmt-anniversary/ph-to-take-center-stage-in-asean-summit/2440665
› Asia Times: The South China Sea consensus no chair can move — https://asiatimes.com/2026/07/the-south-china-sea-consensus-no-asean-chair-can-move/
› Philippine Information Agency: COC progress — https://pia.gov.ph/news/asean-china-aim-to-conclude-south-china-sea-code-of-conduct-by-year-end/

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INTERNATIONAL ARTICLE – 06

From Yerevan to Antalya: COP17 Biodiversity Talks and the Road to COP31



BACKGROUND

- COP17 to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was held in Yerevan, Armenia, in October 2026.
- It reviewed global progress towards the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), adopted in 2022.
- COP31 will be hosted by Türkiye in 2028 (Antalya), and is expected to focus on turning commitments into concrete implementation.
- The talks come at a time of accelerating biodiversity loss, climate change impacts, and growing calls for stronger financing and accountability mechanisms.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS AT COP17

Progress review
Countries assessed progress towards the 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Framework (2030 goals).

Financing discussions
Renewed calls for increased and predictable financial resources for biodiversity conservation.

Indigenous peoples' role
Recognition of indigenous and local communities as key stewards of biodiversity.

Monitoring and accountability
Debate on stronger monitoring mechanisms and national reporting frameworks.

Road to COP31
Agreed to carry forward unresolved issues to COP31 in Antalya, with a focus on implementation and resource mobilisation.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

United Nations & CBD
Providing overall framework and facilitating negotiations.

Armenia (Host of COP17)
Played a key role in advancing the global biodiversity agenda.

Türkiye (Host of COP31)
Expected to lead the implementation phase and mobilise global commitments.

Developed Countries
Pushed for stronger commitments and increased financing.

Developing Countries
Demanded financial support, technology transfer and fairer burden sharing.

Indigenous Peoples & Civil Society
Highlighted the importance of local knowledge and community-led conservation.

International Organisations (GEF, UNEP, IUCN, WWF, etc.)
Supported negotiations with technical expertise and funding proposals.

KEY AREAS OF DISCUSSION

Implementation of GBF
Review of progress on 23 global targets for 2030.

Biodiversity financing
Debate on a dedicated global biodiversity fund and greater contributions from developed countries.

Nature and climate nexus
Integration of biodiversity goals with climate change action.

Rights of indigenous peoples
Recognition of indigenous knowledge and community rights.

Monitoring and reporting
Strengthening national-level accountability mechanisms.

Technology and capacity building
Support for developing countries through technology transfer and institutional capacity.

IMPLICATIONS

Strengthens global biodiversity governance
Reinforces commitment to the Kunming-Montreal Framework.

Links biodiversity with climate action
Highlights the interdependence between nature, climate and sustainable development.

Opportunities for developing countries
Potential for increased financial and technical support.

Enhances Pakistan's role
Pakistan can benefit by aligning its conservation priorities with global initiatives.

Paves the way for COP31
Sets the stage for implementation-focused outcomes in Antalya.

CHALLENGES

Insufficient financing
Current financial commitments fall short of global needs.

North–South divisions
Differences over burden sharing and responsibility.

Weak implementation
Past agreements have struggled with effective implementation.

Biodiversity loss continues
Rapid loss of species and habitats despite global commitments.

Competing priorities
Economic and geopolitical concerns often overshadow biodiversity goals.

Accountability gap
Lack of robust enforcement mechanisms and transparency.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PAKISTAN

- Access to international financing for conservation projects.
- Highlighting Pakistan's unique biodiversity (Himalayas, Indus ecosystem, mangroves, wetlands).
- Strengthening climate-biodiversity synergies.
- Collaboration with global partners on conservation and sustainable development.
- Positioning Pakistan as a responsible stakeholder in global environmental diplomacy.

WAY FORWARD

1. Translate global commitments into national action plans.
2. Enhance conservation efforts for priority ecosystems (forests, wetlands, marine areas).
3. Mobilise international funding and technical support.
4. Integrate biodiversity goals into climate and development policies.
5. Build regional and global partnerships ahead of COP31.

From Yerevan to Antalya: COP17 Biodiversity Talks and the Road to COP31

PRIORITY: HIGH — Environment / Climate Diplomacy

Continuity: New thread; builds on the monsoon and climate-vulnerability coverage of earlier issues.

Essay Topic: Climate Change as a Security Threat: Pakistan's Vulnerability and Global Responsibility

Past Paper Echo: No direct past-paper precedent verified (climate change and climate finance questions recur).

Infographic cross-check: The infographic says COP31 will be held in Antalya in '2028'. This is wrong: COP31 is 9–20 November 2026 in Antalya, with the leaders' summit on 11–12 November. Use this article's dates.

A. Executive Summary

Two UN environmental gatherings frame the final weeks of 2026. The UN Biodiversity Conference (CBD COP17) is under way in Yerevan, Armenia, from 19 to 30 October, assessing progress on global biodiversity goals and the growing links between climate and nature finance. It is followed by COP31, the UN climate conference, in Antalya, Türkiye, from 9 to 20 November, with a World Leaders' Summit on 11 and 12 November. COP31's Host Country Agreement entered into force on 9 October, and a Pacific pre-COP in Fiji preceded it.

The negotiating agenda is dominated by money, ambition and implementation. Developing countries want predictable, accessible and grant-based finance: the East African Community, for example, has adopted a common position demanding grants rather than new borrowing and supports tripling adaptation finance by 2035. The EU is pressing for faster emissions cuts but is not proposing major new finance commitments. By mid-2026, 147 parties had submitted updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). The COP31 Presidency has launched a 'Climate Implementation Bridge' to turn NDCs into investment-ready projects, and the New Collective Quantified Goal on finance adopted at COP29 remains the benchmark.

UN officials have warned that 'overshoot is not a reason to surrender' and that a 'super' El Niño is widening the reach of drought and deluge. For Pakistan, which suffers floods, heatwaves and glacier-related risks, the finance and adaptation agenda is directly relevant, and the country's diplomatic positioning at Antalya will matter.

The meeting also tests the just-transition mechanism, loss and damage funding and the delivery of earlier pledges, with a draft decision on the just transition expected at COP31.

B. Key Developments

- 19–30 Oct: CBD COP17 in Yerevan, Armenia.
- 9 Oct: COP31 Host Country Agreement enters into force.
- Early Oct: Pacific pre-COP held in Fiji.
- 9–20 Nov: COP31 in Antalya; leaders' summit on 11–12 November.
- EAC position: grants not loans; triple adaptation finance by 2035.
- EU: faster emission cuts; no major new finance proposal.
- 147 parties submitted updated NDCs by mid-2026.

C. Analysis

- **Climate Finance.** The gap between pledged and delivered finance and the loan-versus-grant dispute are the core divides.
- **Mitigation Ambition.** Updated NDCs still leave overshoot risks; pressure falls on large emitters.
- **Adaptation.** Tripling adaptation finance is a key developing-country demand.
- **Nature-Climate Link.** COP17's biodiversity agenda ties forests, oceans and finance to climate goals.
- **Pakistan's Stakes.** Flood and heat vulnerability makes loss-and-damage and adaptation finance vital.

D. Stakeholder Positions & Way Forward

Developing countries	Want grant-based, predictable finance and adaptation support.
EU	Seeks faster emission cuts and stronger NDCs.
Türkiye (host)	Prioritises implementation, cities and finance.
UN	Warns against complacency about overshoot.

Way forward	Deliver on the finance goal; scale adaptation; clear just-transition mechanism; align nature and climate finance.

E. Key Facts & Figures

■ CBD COP17: 19–30 October 2026, Yerevan.	■ COP31: 9–20 November 2026, Antalya; leaders' summit 11–12 November.
■ Parties with updated NDCs by mid-2026: 147.	■ EAC supports tripling adaptation finance by 2035.

F. Quotes & Vocabulary

❝ *"Overshoot is not a reason to surrender"* — UN call ahead of COP31, 8 Oct (headline)

Word	Meaning
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
Mitigation	Reducing emissions
Adaptation	Adjusting to climate impacts
Loss and damage	Compensation for unavoidable climate harm
Overshoot	Exceeding the 1.5°C limit temporarily
Just transition	Fair shift to low-carbon economy
Biodiversity	Variety of life
El Niño	Warm phase of Pacific climate pattern
Grant	Money given without repayment
Implementation	Putting plans into practice

G. Examiner's Perspective

? **Likely question:** Analyse the challenges of climate finance for developing countries such as Pakistan.

? **Likely question:** Why does the link between biodiversity and climate action matter?

H. Further In-Depth Study

› COP31 official site — https://cop31.tr/
› Climate Current: battle over money, emissions and fossil fuels — https://climatecurrentorg.substack.com/p/cop31-a-battle-over-money-emissions
› UNEP FI: From Belém to Antalya — https://www.unepfi.org/themes/climate-change/from-belem-to-antalya-what-cop31-means-for-financial-institutions/
› Geneva Environment Network: Antalya hub — https://www.genevaenvironmentnetwork.org/resources/updates/climate-action-from-geneva-to-antalya-un-climate-change-conference-cop31/

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INTERNATIONAL ARTICLE – 07

Loudspeakers and Warning Shots: Inter-Korean Tensions at Their Highest Since Lee Took Office



BACKGROUND

- Inter-Korean tensions have reached their highest level since President Lee took office.
- North Korea has intensified provocative actions, including loudspeaker broadcasts, GPS jamming and warning shots along the Military Demarcation Line (MDL).
- South Korea has responded with counter-broadcasts, increased military readiness and diplomatic outreach.
- The situation reflects a breakdown in inter-Korean trust and a return to a more confrontational phase after a period of limited engagement.

KEY RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Renewed loudspeaker broadcasts
North Korea resumed loudspeaker propaganda targeting South Korea along border areas.

GPS jamming
Reports of intensified GPS interference affecting civilian flights and maritime navigation in the region.

Warning shots
North Korean forces fired warning shots near the MDL in response to South Korean activities.

Military mobilisation
Both sides have increased military alert levels, with live-fire exercises and troop movements.

Diplomatic efforts
South Korea, the US and regional partners are coordinating to prevent further escalation.

POSITIONS OF KEY STAKEHOLDERS

North Korea
- Resumed loudspeaker broadcasts.
- Accuses South Korea of hostile activities and US-led military drills.
- Seeks to maintain pressure and extract concessions.

South Korea
- Responded with counter-broadcasts.
- Strengthened military readiness and surveillance.
- Calls for international support against North Korean provocations.

United States
- Reaffirms commitment to South Korea's security.
- Conducts joint military exercises.
- Calls for North Korea to refrain from provocative actions.

China
- Urges restraint from both sides.
- Calls for dialogue and stability on the Korean Peninsula.
- Opposes actions that may lead to further escalation.

Japan
- Supports South Korea and the US.
- Expresses concern over regional security and missile threats.
- Calls for complete denuclearisation of North Korea.

KEY ISSUES AT STAKE

Psychological warfare
Use of loudspeakers to influence public opinion and increase pressure.

GPS interference
Disrupts civilian aviation and maritime activities, raising regional security concerns.

Military confrontations
Risk of accidental escalation into a broader conflict.

Nuclear and missile programme
Continued development of North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile capabilities.

Humanitarian impact
Rising tensions affect civilian populations near the border.

Diplomatic deadlock
Lack of meaningful dialogue and trust between the two Koreas.

IMPLICATIONS

Increased risk of conflict
Higher chances of miscalculation and accidental military clashes.

Regional stability
Escalation could destabilise North East Asia and affect US-China relations.

Impact on global security
Diverts international attention and resources from other pressing global issues.

Effect on denuclearisation
Hardens North Korea's stance, making denuclearisation talks more difficult.

Economic consequences
Prolonged tensions may affect trade, investment and economic stability in the region.

Diplomatic opportunities
Despite tensions, there remains scope for renewed dialogue through regional and international mediators.

CHALLENGES

Risk of escalation
Provocative actions could spiral into a larger military confrontation.

Lack of communication
Absence of direct dialogue mechanisms increases misunderstandings.

Domestic political pressures
Both leaders face internal constraints that limit flexibility.

Humanitarian concerns
Civilians near the border remain vulnerable to military activities.

Role of external powers
Competing interests of the US, China, Japan and Russia complicate diplomatic solutions.

Denuclearisation deadlock
No clear pathway to resume meaningful denuclearisation talks.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Revive inter-Korean dialogue and communication channels.
- Engage regional actors (US, China, Japan) to de-escalate tensions.
- Explore confidence-building measures (CBMs).
- Address humanitarian issues and improve people-to-people contacts.
- Create conditions for future denuclearisation talks.

WAY FORWARD

1. Urge immediate cessation of provocative actions by both sides.
2. Re-establish military and diplomatic communication channels.
3. Strengthen regional coordination for de-escalation.
4. Explore confidence-building measures (e.g., no-fly zones, border protocols).
5. Work towards a long-term framework for peace and denuclearisation.

Loudspeakers and Warning Shots: Inter-Korean Tensions at Their Highest Since Lee Took Office

PRIORITY: MEDIUM — IR / East Asia

Continuity: New thread; relevant to deterrence and miscalculation themes across IR.

Essay Topic: Confidence-Building Measures and the Limits of Engagement: Lessons from the Korean Peninsula

Past Paper Echo: No direct past-paper precedent verified (Korean Peninsula questions recur in IR).

Infographic cross-check: The infographic says North Korea 'resumed' broadcasts and adds GPS jamming, live-fire drills and South Korean counter-broadcasts; the researched reports say Pyongyang announced loudspeakers would be ready within days, and Seoul had halted broadcasts and proposed military talks on 24 Oct.

A. Executive Summary

On 21 October 2026, after visiting border fortifications with senior military officers, North Korea's Kim Yo Jong said Pyongyang would activate anti-South Korea propaganda loudspeakers along the entire border by the end of October. On 22 October she said the loudspeakers would be on standby 'within days' and that unspecified new countermeasures were on alert. She accused South Korean troops of warning broadcasts and warning shots at multiple points, and warned that North Korean troops would 'mercilessly eliminate' South Korean forces if warning fire harmed the North's territory or personnel.

The announcement reverses a key confidence-building measure of President Lee Jae Myung, who took office in June 2025 and had halted loudspeaker broadcasts and dismantled fixed speakers, after which the North suspended its own broadcasts. Seoul says the recent warning shots are 'legitimate and defensive measures' to prevent crossings of the Military Demarcation Line (MDL). North Korea says it never removed its loudspeakers, calls the MDL a permanent border not to be crossed, and has designated South Korea a hostile state.

On 23–24 October Seoul proposed military talks to confirm the precise MDL location and to restore military communication lines, citing an explosion in the DMZ that further strained relations. Kim called Lee's earlier call for dialogue 'the climax of the farce'. A professor in Seoul cautioned that the threats do not necessarily mean immediate activation.

For exam purposes, the episode illustrates the security dilemma, the fragility of confidence-building measures and why border definition and communication channels are the first rung of crisis management.

B. Key Developments

- 21 Oct: Kim Yo Jong says loudspeakers will operate along the whole border within October.
- 22 Oct: She says loudspeakers on standby 'within days'; new countermeasures on alert.
- Seoul: warning shots are legitimate and defensive.
- North Korea reportedly installs new speakers opposite Cheorwon and Hwacheon.
- 24 Oct: South Korea formally proposes military talks to confirm the MDL and restore communication lines.
- Kim dismisses Lee's overture as 'the climax of the farce'.

C. Analysis

- **Security Dilemma.** Each side's defensive measures appear threatening to the other, driving escalation.
- **Confidence-Building.** Mutual loudspeaker halts in 2025 were reversible, showing how fragile unilateral CBMs are.
- **Border Ambiguity.** Disputed MDL perceptions create risk of accidental clashes.
- **Domestic Politics.** Lee's engagement policy is under pressure; Pyongyang treats Seoul as a hostile state.
- **Great Powers.** Russia–North Korea ties and the US alliance with Seoul frame the context.

D. Stakeholder Positions & Way Forward

North Korea	Uses loudspeakers as signalling and sovereignty assertion.
South Korea	Maintains engagement but defends warning shots.
US/Japan/China	Watch for escalation and spillover.
Way forward	Military talks on MDL; restore hotlines; mutual loudspeaker moratorium; third-party facilitation.

E. Key Facts & Figures

■ Lee Jae Myung took office in June 2025.	■ Kim Yo Jong statements: 21 and 22 October 2026.
■ New North Korean speakers reported opposite Cheorwon and Hwacheon.	■ South Korea's proposal for military talks: 23–24 October 2026.

F. Quotes & Vocabulary

❝ *"the climax of the farce"* — Kim Yo Jong on Lee's call for dialogue

Word	Meaning
Loudspeaker warfare	Broadcast propaganda across a border
DMZ	Demilitarised Zone
MDL	Military Demarcation Line
Confidence-building measure	Step that reduces mistrust
Hostile state	Declared adversary
Escalation	Intensification of tension
Hotline	Direct communication channel
Propaganda	Biased persuasion material
Fortification	Defensive structure
Moratorium	Agreed pause

G. Examiner's Perspective

? **Likely question:** Why do confidence-building measures fail on the Korean Peninsula?

? **Likely question:** Discuss the security dilemma with reference to inter-Korean tensions.

H. Further In-Depth Study

› Reuters via US News: Kim Yo Jong warns South Korea — https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2026-10-21/north-koreas-kim-yo-jong-warns-south-korea-says-border-loudspeakers-to-be-ready-within-days
› Al Jazeera: North Korea to resume propaganda broadcasts — https://aljazeera.com/news/2026/10/22/north-korea-to-resume-propaganda-broadcasts-south-korea-urges-dialogue
› Manila Times/AFP: South Korea proposes border talks — https://manilatimes.net/2026/10/24/world/asia-oceania/skorea-proposes-holding-border-talks-with-nkorea/2452805
› The Diplomat: Korean loudspeaker standoff — https://thediplomat.com/2026/10/this-time-the-korean-loudspeaker-standoff-is-different/

LEGACY TABLE — How This Week Connects to the Series

Use this table to build comparative answers: each thread shows what earlier issues tracked, this week's development, a one-year-ago anchor where a verified fact exists, and what to watch next. A dash means no verified anchor.

Thread	Earlier Issues	This Week	Anchor / One Year Ago	Watch Next
KP: PTI vs the Centre	Oct 11–17 window (Issue 22): emergency and governor's rule proclaimed; Parliament endorsed.	PHC notice to Attorney General (20 Oct); amended PTI petition (19 Oct).	Sohail Afridi sworn in as KP Chief Minister, 15 Oct 2025.	PHC hearing, 10 Nov.
Makkah pact / Gulf security	Issues 17 and 19: Mecca pact and regional-security thread.	Pakistan and Saudi Arabia complete ratification; Houthi strikes on Riyadh; Egypt vote.	Sept 2025: Pakistan–Saudi Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement (precursor).	Egypt vote 26 Oct; Türkiye ratification.
Pakistan–Afghanistan / TTP	Issue 17: tensions thread.	Conditional dialogue; EU CT dialogue; border clashes.	Doha ceasefire 19 Oct 2025; Torkham reopened for refugees 1 Nov 2025.	Any verifiable-mechanism talks.
US–Iran mediation	Issue 17: Strait of Hormuz thread.	Munir in Tehran; Iran rules out exporting enriched material.	—	Talks via Pakistan and Qatar.
Ukraine–Russia	Issue 17: talks thread.	Witkoff meets Zelensky and Putin; Abu Dhabi talks expected.	Trilateral rounds Jan–Feb 2026 (earlier this year).	Talks in early November.
Economy / IMF	Issue 17: IMF 4th EFF review thread.	World Bank 'Attaining Escape Velocity'.	—	Next IMF review; budget measures.
US tariffs / India trade	Issue 17: Section 301 tariff thread.	Rubio in Mumbai/Jamnagar; BTA 'very close'.	27 Oct 2025: Jaishankar–Rubio in Kuala Lumpur; deal 'very near'.	BTA signing.
Gaza ceasefire	Issue 17: disarmament / ISF thread.	Not an article this week.	Ceasefire took effect 10 Oct 2025.	ISF deployment; Israeli withdrawal lines.
Climate	Issue 17: monsoon 2026.	COP17 (Yerevan) and COP31 run-up.	COP30 held in Belém, 10–21 Nov 2025.	COP31, 9–20 Nov.

CONFUSABLES CORNER

Term A	Term B	The Distinction
Emergency (Art. 232)	Governor's rule (Art. 234)	232: war, external aggression or internal disturbance; 234: failure of constitutional machinery in a province.
Signing a treaty	Ratifying a treaty	Signature expresses intent; ratification is formal binding consent under domestic procedure.
Ceasefire	Peace settlement	A ceasefire pauses fighting; a settlement resolves underlying issues.
Deterrence	Compellence	Deterrence prevents action by threat; compellence forces a change of behaviour.
Mediation	Arbitration	A mediator facilitates; an arbitrator issues a binding decision.
Mitigation	Adaptation	Mitigation cuts emissions; adaptation prepares for impacts.
Primary surplus	Fiscal surplus	Primary excludes interest payments; fiscal includes them.
No First Use	Full Spectrum Deterrence	NFU is a pledge on first use; FSD is a posture covering all levels of the escalation ladder.
Quorum	Majority	Quorum is the minimum presence for business; majority is votes needed to pass a measure.
Sanctions	Tariffs	Sanctions are broad penalties often political; tariffs are taxes on imports.
DOC (2002)	COC (under negotiation)	The DOC is a political declaration; the COC aims at a more detailed code of conduct.
Repatriation	Deportation	Repatriation is return to one's country; deportation is forced removal by the state.
GDP growth	Per capita growth	GDP is total output; per capita adjusts for population.

EXTENDED STUDY SECTIONS

1. The Week Day by Day (Oct 18–24, 2026)

Day	What happened
Sun 18 Oct	Ahsan Iqbal announces first Pakistani astronaut will fly on 25 Nov (N-06). Sisi seeks authority to deploy troops for Saudi defence; Egypt's National Defence Council backs 'all possible support' (I-01).
Mon 19 Oct	PTI files amended petition in the Peshawar High Court (N-01). Egypt's parliament postpones troop vote to 26 Oct (I-01).
Tue 20 Oct	CDF Munir in Tehran (I-02, N-05). Kidwai speaks at Islamabad Non-Proliferation Conference (N-02). PHC issues notice to the Attorney General (N-01). Witkoff meets Zelensky in Oslo (I-03). Rubio meets Jaishankar in Mumbai (I-04).
Wed 21 Oct	Rubio at Reliance's Jamnagar refinery (I-04). Witkoff meets Putin in Moscow (I-03). NA suspends agenda for general debate (N-07). Kim Yo Jong announces border loudspeakers (I-07).
Thu 22 Oct	World Bank releases Pakistan Development Update (N-03). 10th Pakistan–EU CT Dialogue (N-04). Putin says Russia will resume trilateral talks (I-03). NA loses quorum after passing State Life bill (N-07).
Fri 23 Oct	FO briefing: conditional dialogue with Kabul, Makkah pact ratification, mediation (N-04, I-01, I-02). The Diplomat on South China Sea COC (I-05).
Sat 24 Oct	Gabd-Rimdan trade resumes (N-05). South Korea proposes military talks (I-07). Starlink speeds restored in Ukraine (I-03).

2. Syllabus Map — Where Each Story Fits

Story	Papers / Subjects	Key Concepts
N-01 KP emergency	Pakistan Affairs; Constitutional Law; Current Affairs	18th Amendment, Arts. 232/234, federalism
N-02 Strategic balance	International Relations; Current Affairs; Pakistan Affairs	Nuclear policy, deterrence theory
N-03 World Bank update	Current Affairs; Pakistan Affairs; Economics (PMS)	Growth, reforms, fiscal policy
N-04 Afghanistan & EU CT	Pakistan Affairs; International Relations	Foreign policy, counter-terrorism
N-05 Iran border / LPG	Pakistan Affairs; Economics; Current Affairs	Energy, regional trade, Balochistan
N-06 First astronaut	Science & Technology (Current Affairs); IR	Space policy, Pakistan–China
N-07 Parliament	Pakistan Affairs; Political Science; Constitutional Law	Legislature, accountability, Art. 55
I-01 Makkah pact / Houthi	International Relations; Current Affairs	Collective defence, Middle East
I-02 US–Iran mediation	International Relations; Current Affairs	Mediation, non-proliferation
I-03 Ukraine talks	International Relations; Current Affairs	Conflict resolution, security guarantees
I-04 US–India	International Relations; Current Affairs	Trade diplomacy, South Asia
I-05 South China Sea COC	International Relations; International Law	UNCLOS, ASEAN
I-06 COP17/COP31	Environmental Science; Current Affairs; Essay	Climate finance, biodiversity
I-07 Korean Peninsula	International Relations	Security dilemma, CBMs

3. Extended Model Answer I (International Relations)

EXTENDED MODEL ANSWER I

Question: Evaluate the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement as an instrument of Pakistan's foreign and security policy. (20 marks)

Introduction. The Makkah Joint Defence Agreement, signed in August 2026 by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye, is a trilateral framework for collective deterrence. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have completed ratification, while Türkiye's parliament is still processing it. The Foreign Office describes it as defensive, not directed against any third country, and free of secret clauses. This week's Houthi strikes on Riyadh airport, which killed 13 and wounded over 300 according to Saudi authorities, turned a document into a live test.

Case in favour. First, it deepens a strategic relationship with a financial and diplomatic partner and a major host of Pakistani workers. Second, it adds deterrence value: aggressors must account for three militaries, one of them nuclear-armed and one a NATO member. Third, the language of consultation, under which parties decide an appropriate response to external aggression, preserves sovereign discretion. Fourth, the R4 grouping with Egypt widens regional support, and the UN Security Council statement of 15 October gave political cover to Saudi self-defence.

Case against. The risks are entanglement and role conflict. Pakistan mediates between Washington and Tehran while Iran backs the Houthis, so defending Riyadh may strain the mediator's credibility and the 909-km border with Iran. Domestic constraints matter: Egypt's constitution requires a two-thirds vote for deployment, Türkiye has yet to ratify, and the debate in Pakistan about parliamentary oversight is thin, as FAFEN data on attendance suggest. Over-commitment could also stretch forces already engaged against militancy in KP and Balochistan.

Assessment. The agreement is valuable if treated as a consultative deterrent rather than an automatic war guarantee. Pakistan's denial that its jets took part in strikes in Yemen shows the intended limits. Success depends on three conditions: clarity on triggers and command arrangements, parliamentary scrutiny, and a parallel diplomatic track on Yemen.

Conclusion. The Makkah pact enhances Pakistan's strategic weight but tests its capacity to balance. A middle path of defensive commitments, active mediation and economic diplomacy best protects national interest.

4. Extended Model Answer II (Economy / Pakistan Affairs)

EXTENDED MODEL ANSWER II

Question: Why has macroeconomic stabilisation not produced prosperity in Pakistan, and what reforms does the World Bank's latest update suggest? (20 marks)

Introduction. Pakistan has stabilised: the World Bank's October 2026 update reports FY26 growth of 3.7 per cent, up from 3.2 per cent, a record primary surplus of 2.9 per cent of GDP and rebuilt reserves aided by strong remittances. Yet per capita growth is only about 1.6 per cent, so living standards rise slowly.

Why stability is not enough. Stabilisation corrects imbalances through fiscal tightening and external financing; it does not itself raise productivity. With fiscal resources and foreign exchange tightly constrained, the state cannot spend its way to growth. Growth around 3.8 per cent projected for 2027 is below what is needed to absorb new labour-force entrants.

The reform agenda. The Bank argues that raising policies and institutions to the standard of an average middle-income country could sustain 6.2 to 6.9 per cent annual growth and bring Pakistan to Vietnam's present income by 2050. Priorities: a better business environment, an overhaul of the tax system, a smaller state role, and wider access to finance. It credits power-tariff adjustments, trade liberalisation and PIA's privatisation as steps already taken.

Obstacles. Political economy resists reform: exemptions, subsidies and loss-making enterprises have entrenched beneficiaries. The IMF stresses price stability, fiscal sustainability, central-bank independence and productivity reforms, but social protection must accompany adjustment.

Way forward and conclusion. Sequence reforms to protect the poor; broaden the tax base; complete restructuring of state enterprises; improve trade and investment policy; invest in skills. Stability is the foundation, not the building: sustained prosperity requires private investment and institutional quality.

5. Interview Corner — 12 Likely Questions with Answer Pointers

Question	Answer pointers
Why did the federal government impose governor's rule in KP, and is it constitutional?	State the government's security case under Art. 232/234, parliamentary approval within 10 days, PTI's argument on a prior provincial resolution, PHC hearing on 10 Nov. Conclude that courts will decide.
What is Full Spectrum Deterrence?	Weapons at strategic, operational and tactical levels across land, sea and air, within credible minimum deterrence; aim is to close all escalation rungs.
Do you think Pakistan can mediate between the US and Iran?	Access through military and diplomatic channels, trust on both sides, but limits: Iran refuses to export enriched material; obligations to Saudi Arabia complicate neutrality.
What does 'primary surplus' mean?	Revenue minus non-interest spending; Pakistan recorded 2.9 per cent of GDP in FY26.
How should Pakistan deal with Afghanistan?	Conditional engagement: verifiable mechanism against militants, humanitarian handling of repatriation, regional diplomacy with China and Central Asia.
What is the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement?	Trilateral defence framework among Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye signed Aug 2026; consultative deterrence; Türkiye still ratifying.
Why is a first Pakistani astronaut significant?	Prestige, science diplomacy, China partnership; but indigenous capacity needs R&D funding.
What is the difference between ceasefire and settlement?	Pause versus resolution; relevance to Ukraine talks.
How can Parliament be made more effective?	Attendance disclosure, committees, quorum enforcement, ministerial accountability.
What is COP31 and why does it matter to Pakistan?	UN climate summit in Antalya 9–20 Nov 2026; finance and adaptation matter for a flood-prone country.
What is the South China Sea Code of Conduct?	Proposed ASEAN–China rulebook under negotiation since 2018; issues: scope, legal status, enforcement.
Why did the US Secretary of State visit Jamnagar?	Energy cooperation, Venezuelan crude, trade deal 'very close'; transactional diplomacy.

6. Précis & Composition Corner

Passage (≈160 words) — reduce to about one-third:

Parliamentary democracy depends not merely on the holding of elections but on the daily conduct of its legislature. When members absent themselves from sittings, ministers skip Question Hour and a house repeatedly loses its quorum, scrutiny of the executive weakens and decisions are taken elsewhere. In Pakistan, civil society monitors have documented that only about one in five members attends every sitting of a session. At the same time, Parliament has shown that it can act with great speed when the government requires it, as in the recent endorsement of an emergency in a province within days. This contrast fuels the charge that the legislature has become a rubber stamp. Defenders reply that business continues, that committees do useful work and that attendance alone does not measure quality. Yet without open attendance records, enforced quorum rules and ministerial accountability, public trust in the institution will not improve. Reform, therefore, is less a matter of new laws than of habit and discipline.

Model précis (46 words). Parliamentary democracy requires an active legislature, yet Pakistan's Parliament suffers poor attendance and absent ministers while acting swiftly on executive demands, prompting charges of being a rubber stamp. Though defenders cite continuing business and committee work, transparency, quorum enforcement and accountability are needed to restore trust.

Title: Reviving Parliamentary Discipline

7. Idioms & Phrases from This Week

Idiom	Meaning	Example
A tall order	A very difficult demand	Persuading Kabul to accept verification is a tall order.
Rubber-stamp	To approve without scrutiny	Critics fear Parliament will merely rubber-stamp executive decisions.
Walk a tightrope	To balance carefully between risks	Pakistan walks a tightrope between Riyadh and Tehran.
Cut both ways	Have good and bad effects	Strategic ambiguity cuts both ways.
Raise the stakes	Increase the risk or consequences	The Riyadh strikes raised the stakes for the pact.
Bite the bullet	Face a hard necessity	Reformers must bite the bullet on taxation.
Back to square one	Return to the start	Failed talks would send mediators back to square one.
Tip the balance	Decide an outcome	The vote could tip the balance in Cairo.
Hold the line	Maintain a position	Seoul says it will hold the line at the MDL.
In the same breath	Almost simultaneously	He condemned the attacks and urged talks in the same breath.
Pave the way	Prepare conditions for	Verification could pave the way for talks.
Fall short	Fail to reach a target	Current growth falls short of what jobs require.

8. Debate Cards — Both Sides

Motion	For	Against
Governor's rule in KP was justified	For: terrorism data, Art. 232 procedure followed, parliamentary approval.	Against: elected government with 93/145 seats removed; provincial resolution missing; federalism harmed.
Pakistan should join collective-defence pacts	For: deterrence, financial ties, regional weight.	Against: entanglement, Iran border, mediator role conflict.
Conditional dialogue with Kabul is the right policy	For: verification protects citizens; international support.	Against: closes space for engagement; border closures hurt civilians and trade.
Pakistan should invest in a space programme	For: prestige, science education, technology transfer.	Against: low R&D funding, symbolic mission relying on China.
Ceasefire first, settlement later in Ukraine	For: stops killing, builds trust.	Against: freezes conflict, rewards aggression, Russia wants a final deal.
Climate finance should be grants not loans	For: avoids debt for victims of emissions.	Against: donors' budgets limited; loans mobilise larger sums.

9. Essay Evidence Bank

Theme	Verified data points to cite
Federalism & governance	KP emergency from 11 Oct; 10-day approval rule; 7 petitions; PHC hearing 10 Nov; NA 20 per cent full attendance.
Economy	FY26 growth 3.7%; primary surplus 2.9% of GDP; per capita growth ~1.6%; reform scenario 6.2–6.9% growth; Vietnam 2050 benchmark.

Theme	Verified data points to cite
Security & foreign policy	Makkah pact ratified by Pakistan and Saudi Arabia; 20+ militant groups in Afghanistan (UN figure cited by FO); Munir's fifth Iran visit; Kidwai's FSD.
Science & technology	First astronaut 25 Nov; lunar landing goal 2035; Astronaut Cooperation Agreement Feb 2025.
Environment	COP31 9–20 Nov; COP17 19–30 Oct; 147 parties with updated NDCs by mid-2026; EAC wants grants and tripled adaptation finance by 2035.
Global order	Ukraine talks Abu Dhabi (Nov); US–India deal 'very close'; ASEAN COC target end-2026; Korean MDL tension.

10. Rapid Revision Facts

N-01

- Emergency and governor's rule proclaimed: 11 October 2026.
- Parliamentary approval window under Article 232 when the President acts alone: 10 days.
- Afridi government formed 15 October 2025; PTI held 93 of 145 seats in the KP Assembly.
- Government cited 3,787 terrorist incidents in KP over the past year during the NA debate (as reported).
- PTI petition length: 86 pages; seven constitutional petitions heard on 20 October.
- Technocratic advisory council: 11 members; deputy commissioners transferred (as alleged in court): 38.
- PHC bench: Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice Mohammad Faheem Wali; next date 10 November 2026.

N-02

- Conference: second Islamabad Non-Proliferation Conference, 20 October 2026.
- Reported Indian warheads on submarine patrol (SIPRI Yearbook 2026, as cited): about 12.
- Pakistan's Full Spectrum Deterrence spans strategic, operational and tactical tiers; Kidwai has described range coverage from zero metres to 2,750 km (2023 remarks).
- Kidwai: India could mount a first strike against Pakistan at zero notice.
- NCA advisers speaking: Lt Gen (retd) Khalid Kidwai and Lt Gen (retd) Sarfraz Sattar.

N-03

- FY26 GDP growth 3.7 per cent (FY25: 3.2 per cent); 2027 projection about 3.8 per cent.
- FY26 primary surplus: 2.9 per cent of GDP, a record.
- Per capita real growth: about 1.6 per cent.
- Reform scenario growth: 6.2–6.9 per cent a year; target: triple incomes by 2050.
- Report title: Pakistan Development Update, October 2026 — Attaining Escape Velocity; lead author Sebastian Essl; Country Director Bolormaa Amgaabazar.

N-04

- 10th round of the Pakistan–EU Bilateral CT Dialogue, 22 October 2026.
- Pakistan delegation: Dr Fareha Bugti; EU: Anna Strzaska.
- More than 20 militant groups present in Afghanistan, per UN figures cited by the FO.
- Pakistan–Afghanistan engagement since 2021 (FO).
- One year ago: Doha ceasefire on 19 Oct 2025; about 1.56 million Afghans returned by 1 Nov 2025.

N-05

- Pakistan–Iran border length: 909 km.
- Trade suspended at two crossings on 17 October 2026; resumed at Gabd-Rimdan on 24 October.
- Joint Trade Committee target: $10 billion (reaffirmed 4–5 August 2026).
- CDF Munir's visit: reported fifth to Iran in recent months.

N-06

- Launch date announced: 25 November 2026.
- Two Pakistani astronaut candidates: Muhammad Zeeshan Ali and Khurram Daud.
- Lunar landing target: 2035.
- Karakoram 2026: 14–22 October 2026, Korla/Xinjiang.

N-07

- 29th session (17–28 Aug 2026): 65 of 332 MNAs attended all 8 sittings (20 per cent); 37 attended none.
- Prime Minister attended 1 sitting in the 29th session; 12 of 26 ministers were present for Question Hour.
- 27th session (11–22 May 2026): 66 of 333 members attended all sittings.
- Bill passed on 22 Oct 2026: Life Insurance (Nationalisation) (Amendment) Bill, 2026.

I-01

- Riyadh airport strike of 10 Oct: 13 killed, 300+ wounded (Saudi authorities).
- Egypt's constitutional threshold for foreign combat deployment: two-thirds, i.e. 398 of 596 MPs.
- Saudi deposit due to Egypt's central bank: $5.3bn plus $267.39m interest (Al Jazeera).
- UNSC statement: S/PRST/2026/4, adopted 15 Oct 2026.
- Makkah pact signed August 2026; Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have completed ratification.

I-02

- Munir's reported visits to Iran in recent months: five.
- Interim US–Iran agreement through Islamabad: June 2026; collapsed weeks later.
- Iranian line: no export of enriched nuclear material.
- Pakistan–Iran border: 909 km.

I-03

- Day of the war when talks announced: about day 1,703 (EA WorldView count).
- Previous trilateral rounds: January and February 2026.
- Ukraine demands security guarantees including a large army funded for at least 10 years.
- Russia demands Ukraine cede all of Donbas.

I-04

- Visit dates: 20–21 October 2026; Rubio's second India trip in five months.
- Tariff cut on Indian goods announced Feb 2026: to 18 per cent.
- Jamnagar: world's largest single-location refining complex.

I-05

- DOC signed in 2002; formal COC negotiations opened in 2018.
- Target conclusion date: end of 2026.
- Malaysia's early-2026 estimate: about 70 per cent of the text agreed.
- China asserts historic rights over nearly 90 per cent of the sea (as reported).

I-06

- CBD COP17: 19–30 October 2026, Yerevan.
- COP31: 9–20 November 2026, Antalya; leaders' summit 11–12 November.
- Parties with updated NDCs by mid-2026: 147.
- EAC supports tripling adaptation finance by 2035.

I-07

- Lee Jae Myung took office in June 2025.
- Kim Yo Jong statements: 21 and 22 October 2026.
- New North Korean speakers reported opposite Cheorwon and Hwacheon.
- South Korea's proposal for military talks: 23–24 October 2026.

11. Question Bank — Likely Descriptive Questions

1. [N-01] Critically examine the constitutional basis for emergency and governor's rule in a province after the 18th Amendment.
2. [N-01] Does counter-terrorism justify the suspension of an elected provincial government? Argue with examples.
3. [N-02] Evaluate the impact of submarine-based nuclear weapons on South Asian strategic stability.
4. [N-02] Explain Pakistan's Full Spectrum Deterrence and respond to its critics.
5. [N-03] Why has macroeconomic stabilisation not translated into higher living standards in Pakistan? Suggest remedies.
6. [N-03] Assess the role of structural reforms in achieving sustained growth.
7. [N-04] Why has dialogue with Kabul repeatedly stalled? Suggest a roadmap.
8. [N-04] Assess the role of multilateral cooperation in Pakistan's counter-terrorism strategy.
9. [N-05] Discuss Pakistan's energy security challenges and the role of regional trade.
10. [N-05] How do border-trade disruptions affect Balochistan's economy?
11. [N-06] Evaluate the significance of Pakistan–China space cooperation.
12. [N-06] Should Pakistan invest in space technology given its development needs?
13. [N-07] Why is Pakistan's Parliament often described as weak? Suggest reforms.
14. [N-07] Discuss the role of quorum and attendance in legislative accountability.
15. [I-01] Analyse the strategic implications of the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement for Pakistan.
16. [I-01] How do domestic legislatures constrain alliance commitments? Use Egypt as an example.
17. [I-02] Assess Pakistan's capacity to mediate between the US and Iran.
18. [I-02] What are the obstacles to a durable US–Iran nuclear settlement?
19. [I-03] Is a ceasefire preferable to a comprehensive settlement in Ukraine? Discuss.
20. [I-03] Evaluate the role of mediators in the Russia–Ukraine war.
21. [I-04] Discuss the implications of the US–India partnership for Pakistan.
22. [I-04] Is US foreign policy under Trump transactional? Illustrate.
23. [I-05] Why has the South China Sea Code of Conduct taken over two decades?
24. [I-05] Evaluate UNCLOS's role in resolving maritime disputes.
25. [I-06] Analyse the challenges of climate finance for developing countries such as Pakistan.
26. [I-06] Why does the link between biodiversity and climate action matter?
27. [I-07] Why do confidence-building measures fail on the Korean Peninsula?
28. [I-07] Discuss the security dilemma with reference to inter-Korean tensions.

12. Seven-Day Study Plan for This Issue

Day	Task
Day 1	Read N-01, N-07; write 150-word answers on federalism and Parliament.
Day 2	Read N-02, N-04; revise nuclear and Af-Pak vocabulary; attempt 25 MCQs.
Day 3	Read N-03, N-05, N-06; practise economy data recall.
Day 4	Read I-01, I-02; write the extended Makkah pact answer from memory.
Day 5	Read I-03 to I-05; map each to the IR syllabus.
Day 6	Read I-06, I-07; do précis and idioms; attempt 25 MCQs.
Day 7	Write the essay from the outline; revise rapid facts; 25 MCQs; review mistakes.

FPSC-PATTERN ESSAY OUTLINE

Strategic Autonomy and Mediation: Pakistan's Foreign Policy in a Fractured Multipolar World

Drawn from the most recurring theme of this issue: Pakistan’s foreign and security policy under pressure (N-02, N-04, N-05, N-06, I-01, I-02).

Part	Content
1. Hook	Open with the image of a Field Marshal flying to Tehran on the same week Pakistan ratifies a defence pact with Riyadh: one state, many roles.
2. Thesis	Pakistan's security and prosperity depend on balancing alliances, mediation and economic reform, which requires domestic institutional strength.
3. Historical Background	Cold War alignments, the 1979 Afghan war, post-9/11 partnership, and CPEC.
4. Present Context	Makkah pact; US–Iran mediation; Afghan border; China space cooperation; US–India warming (I-01, I-02, I-04, N-04, N-06).
5. Security Challenges	Terrorism, the nuclear balance with India, Gulf entanglement (N-02, I-01).
6. Economic Dimension	World Bank's 'Attaining Escape Velocity': stabilisation without growth (N-03).
7. Domestic Constraints	Federal–provincial tension and parliamentary weakness (N-01, N-07).
8. Comparative Lens	Egypt's constitutional limits on deployment; Vietnam as an economic benchmark; ASEAN consensus.
9. Way Forward	Institutionalise mediation; parliamentary oversight of alliances; economic diplomacy; verifiable mechanisms with neighbours.
10. Conclusion	Strategic autonomy is earned through institutions and economy, not declared through pacts alone.

20 PRACTICE ESSAY TOPICS

1. Federalism and security in Pakistan
2. Parliament and executive dominance
3. Nuclear deterrence in South Asia
4. Climate finance and vulnerable states
5. From stabilisation to growth
6. Pakistan as a mediator in great-power conflicts
7. Collective defence pacts: security or entanglement?
8. Pakistan–Afghanistan relations
9. Energy security and regional trade
10. Space technology and development
11. Judicial review of emergency powers
12. Maritime law and the South China Sea
13. Ceasefires versus comprehensive settlements
14. Transactional diplomacy in the Trump era
15. Confidence-building measures in conflict zones
16. Parliamentary attendance and accountability
17. Remittances and external-sector resilience
18. Biodiversity and climate action
19. Strategic autonomy of small and middle powers
20. The role of the media in covering conflict

MCQ BANK — 100 Questions with Answers & Explanations

Q1. [N-01] Under which Article did the President proclaim the emergency in KP on 11 October 2026?
(A) Article 232 (B) Article 245 (C) Article 190 (D) Article 184
Answer: A *— Article 232 deals with Proclamation of Emergency on war, external aggression or internal disturbance; Art. 234 covers failure of constitutional machinery.*

Q2. [N-01] When the President acts on his own under Article 232, Parliament must approve within:
(A) 30 days (B) 10 days (C) 60 days (D) 7 days
Answer: B *— The 10-day approval requirement was cited by Law Minister Tarar.*

Q3. [N-01] Who is the KP Governor administering the province?
(A) Faisal Karim Kundi (B) Ghulam Ali (C) Shaukat Ullah (D) Haji Ghulam Ali Bilour
Answer: A *— Governor Kundi leads administration with an 11-member advisory council.*

Q4. [N-01] Which court is hearing the PTI petitions against the emergency?
(A) Islamabad High Court (B) Peshawar High Court (C) Federal Constitutional Court (D) Lahore High Court
Answer: B *— Seven petitions were heard by a two-member PHC bench on 20 October.*

Q5. [N-01] Next PHC hearing in the case is fixed for:
(A) 26 October (B) 3 November (C) 10 November (D) 1 December
Answer: C *— The bench adjourned the matter to 10 November.*

Q6. [N-01] PTI's core legal argument rests on which amendment?
(A) 8th (B) 17th (C) 18th (D) 26th
Answer: C *— PTI says the 18th Amendment requires a prior provincial assembly resolution for internal-disturbance emergencies.*

Q7. [N-01] The 11-member body assisting the Governor is described as:
(A) Parliamentary committee (B) Technocratic advisory council (C) Caretaker cabinet (D) Council of Common Interests
Answer: B *— It is a technocratic KP Advisory Council.*

Q8. [N-02] The October 2026 conference where Kidwai spoke was the second edition of the:
(A) Islamabad Non-Proliferation Conference (B) Islamabad Security Dialogue (C) Margalla Dialogue (D) CISS Annual Forum
Answer: A *— It was the second Islamabad Non-Proliferation Conference.*

Q9. [N-02] Kidwai is an adviser to which body?
(A) National Command Authority (B) NSC Secretariat (C) Strategic Plans Division only (D) Joint Staff HQ
Answer: A *— He is an NCA adviser.*

Q10. [N-02] Which yearbook was cited on Indian submarine-deployed warheads?
(A) IISS Military Balance (B) SIPRI Yearbook 2026 (C) Jane's (D) GPI 2026
Answer: B *— The advisers cited SIPRI Yearbook 2026.*

Q11. [N-02] Pakistan's declared nuclear philosophy sits within:
(A) Massive retaliation (B) Credible minimum deterrence (C) Flexible response (D) Mutual assured destruction
Answer: B *— Full Spectrum Deterrence works within credible minimum deterrence.*

Q12. [N-02] Which Indian policy did Kidwai say is undermined by sea-based deterrent patrols?
(A) Cold Start (B) No First Use (C) Look East (D) Neighbourhood First
Answer: B *— He questioned NFU credibility.*

Q13. [N-02] Which measure did Pakistan complain is missing for Indian missile tests?
(A) Advance notification (B) Joint inspection (C) UN observer (D) Satellite launch ban
Answer: A *— Pakistan flagged absence of advance notification of SLBM tests.*

Q14. [N-02] The three tiers of Full Spectrum Deterrence are:
(A) Land, sea, air (B) Strategic, operational, tactical (C) Nuclear, chemical, biological (D) Offensive, defensive, hybrid
Answer: B *— Strategic, operational and tactical weapons.*

Q15. [N-03] The World Bank's October 2026 Pakistan report is titled:
(A) Attaining Escape Velocity (B) Rising Tide (C) Road to Resilience (D) Growth Unlocked
Answer: A *— Pakistan Development Update: Attaining Escape Velocity.*

Q16. [N-03] Pakistan's FY26 real GDP growth per the report:
(A) 2.4% (B) 3.2% (C) 3.7% (D) 5.1%
Answer: C *— 3.7 per cent, up from 3.2 per cent.*

Q17. [N-03] Primary fiscal surplus in FY26 was:
(A) 0.5% of GDP (B) 1.2% of GDP (C) 2.9% of GDP (D) 4.0% of GDP
Answer: C *— A record 2.9 per cent of GDP.*

Q18. [N-03] Sustained growth needed under reform scenario:
(A) 3–4% (B) 4–5% (C) 6.2–6.9% (D) 8–9%
Answer: C *— 6.2–6.9 per cent annually.*

Q19. [N-03] Which country's current income level could Pakistan reach by 2050?
(A) Vietnam (B) Malaysia (C) Turkey (D) South Korea
Answer: A *— The report names Vietnam.*

Q20. [N-03] Per capita growth currently stands near:
(A) 0.2% (B) 1.6% (C) 3.7% (D) 6%
Answer: B *— About 1.6 per cent.*

Q21. [N-03] Which privatisation is cited as an already-taken reform?
(A) PIA (B) Pakistan Steel (C) WAPDA (D) OGDCL
***Answer: A** — PIA privatisation is cited.*

Q22. [N-04] Which round of the Pakistan–EU CT Dialogue took place on 22 Oct 2026?
(A) 5th (B) 8th (C) 10th (D) 12th
***Answer: C** — It was the 10th round.*

Q23. [N-04] Who led the EU delegation?
(A) Anna Strzaska (B) Kaja Kallas (C) Josep Borrell (D) Ursula von der Leyen
***Answer: A** — Anna Strzaska, EEAS Special Envoy for Counterterrorism.*

Q24. [N-04] Where will the next dialogue round be held?
(A) Islamabad (B) Brussels (C) Geneva (D) New York
***Answer: B** — Brussels, next year.*

Q25. [N-04] Pakistan's condition for talks with Kabul is a:
(A) Verifiable mechanism (B) Trade treaty (C) UN peacekeeping force (D) Border fence agreement
***Answer: A** — Acknowledgement plus a verifiable mechanism.*

Q26. [N-04] Number of militant groups in Afghanistan cited by the FO:
(A) Over 5 (B) Over 10 (C) Over 20 (D) Over 50
***Answer: C** — More than 20, per UN figures cited.*

Q27. [N-04] The Doha ceasefire between Pakistan and Afghanistan was formalised on:
(A) 19 Oct 2025 (B) 1 Jan 2025 (C) 5 Aug 2024 (D) 30 Nov 2025
***Answer: A** — A year ago, 19 October 2025.*

Q28. [N-04] Which crossing saw interrupted repatriation on 20 October?
(A) Chaman (B) Torkham (C) Ghulam Khan (D) Angoor Adda
***Answer: B** — Torkham.*

Q29. [N-05] Date trade was suspended at Gabd-Rimdan and Taftan:
(A) 3 Oct (B) 10 Oct (C) 17 Oct (D) 24 Oct
***Answer: C** — The Commerce Ministry suspended trade on 17 October.*

Q30. [N-05] Length of the Pakistan–Iran border:
(A) 589 km (B) 909 km (C) 1,200 km (D) 2,430 km
***Answer: B** — 909 km.*

Q31. [N-05] Gabd-Rimdan crossing is in which district?
(A) Gwadar (B) Chagai (C) Panjgur (D) Kech
***Answer: A** — Gwadar district, also called Gate 250.*

Q32. [N-05] Who accompanied the CDF on the Tehran visit?
(A) Mohsin Naqvi (B) Ishaq Dar (C) Ahsan Iqbal (D) Khawaja Asif
***Answer: A** — Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi.*

Q33. [N-05] The Joint Trade Committee's target trade volume:
(A) $1bn (B) $5bn (C) $10bn (D) $20bn
***Answer: C** — $10 billion.*

Q34. [N-05] Which fuel shortage worry accompanied the closure?
(A) Petrol (B) LPG (C) Coal (D) Diesel
***Answer: B** — LPG ahead of winter.*

Q35. [N-05] Trade at Gabd-Rimdan resumed on:
(A) 20 Oct (B) 22 Oct (C) 24 Oct (D) 26 Oct
***Answer: C** — Saturday, 24 October.*

Q36. [N-06] Pakistan's first astronaut mission date:
(A) 25 Nov 2026 (B) 5 Dec 2026 (C) 14 Oct 2026 (D) 1 Jan 2027
***Answer: A** — 25 November.*

Q37. [N-06] Which space station will the astronaut visit?
(A) ISS (B) Tiangong (C) Mir (D) Gateway
***Answer: B** — China's Tiangong station.*

Q38. [N-06] Pakistan's stated lunar landing goal year:
(A) 2030 (B) 2035 (C) 2040 (D) 2050
***Answer: B** — 2035.*

Q39. [N-06] Who announced the date?
(A) Ahsan Iqbal (B) Ishaq Dar (C) Khawaja Asif (D) Atta Tarar
***Answer: A** — Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal.*

Q40. [N-06] The astronaut's role will be:
(A) Commander (B) Payload specialist (C) Pilot (D) Flight engineer
***Answer: B** — Payload specialist.*

Q41. [N-06] Agency that signed the 2025 cooperation agreement with CMSA:
(A) SUPARCO (B) PAEC (C) NASTP (D) PCSIR
***Answer: A** — SUPARCO.*

Q42. [N-06] Karakoram 2026 was held in:
(A) Xinjiang (B) Tibet (C) Gilgit (D) Yunnan
Answer: A *— Korla, Xinjiang.*

Q43. [N-07] Which bill did the NA pass on 22 Oct 2026?
(A) Life Insurance (Nationalisation) (Amendment) Bill (B) Budget Bill (C) Privatisation Bill (D) Elections Bill
Answer: A *— It makes State Life a statutory body.*

Q44. [N-07] Share of MNAs attending all sittings of the 29th session:
(A) 10% (B) 20% (C) 40% (D) 60%
Answer: B *— 65 of 332, about 20 per cent.*

Q45. [N-07] Who documents NA attendance independently?
(A) FAFEN (B) PILDAT only (C) ECP (D) Auditor-General
Answer: A *— FAFEN.*

Q46. [N-07] How many ministers were present of those due for Question Hour (29th session)?
(A) 12 of 26 (B) 20 of 26 (C) 5 of 26 (D) 26 of 26
Answer: A *— 12 of 26.*

Q47. [N-07] The proposal opposed by PPP legislators concerned moving which HQ?
(A) PPL (B) OGDCL (C) SNGPL (D) PSO
Answer: A *— Pakistan Petroleum Limited from Karachi to Islamabad.*

Q48. [N-07] Under Article 55, quorum is:
(A) One-fourth of members (B) One-third (C) One-half (D) Two-thirds
Answer: A *— One-fourth of total membership.*

Q49. [N-07] The company created under the bill is:
(A) State Life Insurance Company Limited (B) National Insurance Co. (C) PICIC (D) EFU
Answer: A *— State Life Insurance Company Limited.*

Q50. [I-01] Which airport was struck on 10 Oct 2026?
(A) Jeddah (B) Riyadh King Khalid (C) Dammam (D) Abha
Answer: B *— King Khalid International Airport.*

Q51. [I-01] Egypt's constitutional majority for foreign combat missions:
(A) Simple (B) Three-fifths (C) Two-thirds (D) Unanimity
Answer: C *— Article 152: two-thirds.*

Q52. [I-01] Egypt's parliamentary vote date was moved to:
(A) 19 Oct (B) 22 Oct (C) 26 Oct (D) 1 Nov
Answer: C *— 26 October.*

Q53. [I-01] UNSC statement number:
(A) S/PRST/2026/4 (B) S/RES/2803 (C) S/PRST/2019/9 (D) SC/16429
Answer: A *— Presidential statement S/PRST/2026/4.*

Q54. [I-01] The three Makkah pact signatories are:
(A) Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Türkiye (B) Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt (C) Saudi, UAE, Egypt (D) Türkiye, Qatar, Pakistan
Answer: A *— Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye.*

Q55. [I-01] Which country's parliament is still processing the Makkah pact?
(A) Türkiye (B) Pakistan (C) Saudi Arabia (D) Egypt
Answer: A *— Türkiye.*

Q56. [I-01] Houthi speaker who warned Egypt:
(A) Yahya Ali al-Ra'i (B) Mohammed Abdulsalam (C) Abdul-Malik al-Houthi (D) Mahdi al-Mashat
Answer: A *— Yahya Ali al-Ra'i.*

Q57. [I-02] Iran's official on the Supreme National Security Council who met Munir:
(A) Mohsen Rezaei (B) Ali Larijani (C) Hossein Salami (D) Saeed Jalili
Answer: A *— Mohsen Rezaei.*

Q58. [I-02] Iran said enriched material would:
(A) Stay in Iran (B) Go to Russia (C) Go to China (D) Be destroyed
Answer: A *— It will not be removed.*

Q59. [I-02] Iran's name for the earlier diplomatic arrangement:
(A) Islamabad understanding (B) Doha accord (C) Muscat framework (D) Geneva pact
Answer: A *— The 'Islamabad understanding'.*

Q60. [I-02] Which Gulf state is a parallel channel for talks?
(A) Qatar (B) Kuwait (C) Bahrain (D) Oman
Answer: A *— Qatar (per Iran's FM).*

Q61. [I-02] Number of Munir's reported recent visits to Iran:
(A) Two (B) Three (C) Five (D) Ten
Answer: C *— His fifth.*

Q62. [I-02] Who is Iran's Parliament Speaker?
(A) Ghalibaf (B) Pezeshkian (C) Araghchi (D) Rezaei
Answer: A *— Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf.*

Q63. [I-02] When did the interim US–Iran agreement through Islamabad occur?
(A) June (B) January (C) September (D) March
Answer: A *— June 2026.*

Q64. [I-03] Where did Witkoff meet Zelensky?
(A) Oslo (B) Geneva (C) Istanbul (D) Berlin
Answer: A *— In Oslo, Norway.*

Q65. [I-03] Putin said talks should aim for a:
(A) Final settlement (B) Short ceasefire (C) Referendum (D) Sanctions waiver
Answer: A *— Final settlement.*

Q66. [I-03] Reported venue for talks:
(A) Abu Dhabi (B) Riyadh (C) Vienna (D) Doha
Answer: A *— Abu Dhabi.*

Q67. [I-03] Russia demands Ukraine cede:
(A) Crimea only (B) Donbas (C) Odesa (D) Kharkiv
Answer: B *— All of Donbas.*

Q68. [I-03] Technology whose speeds were restored in Ukraine:
(A) Starlink (B) Galileo (C) 5G (D) BeiDou
Answer: A *— Starlink/Starshield.*

Q69. [I-03] Previous trilateral rounds were held in:
(A) Jan & Feb 2026 (B) Mar & Apr 2026 (C) Oct 2025 (D) None
Answer: A *— January and February.*

Q70. [I-03] Kremlin says a Zelensky–Putin meeting is possible only in:
(A) Moscow (B) Istanbul (C) Minsk (D) Oslo
Answer: A *— Moscow.*

Q71. [I-04] Rubio's visit city for the energy talks:
(A) Jamnagar (B) Delhi (C) Chennai (D) Kolkata
Answer: A *— Jamnagar, Gujarat.*

Q72. [I-04] Which Indian minister met Rubio in Mumbai?
(A) Jaishankar (B) Rajnath Singh (C) Piyush Goyal (D) Nirmala Sitharaman
Answer: A *— S Jaishankar.*

Q73. [I-04] Refinery owner visited:
(A) Reliance (B) Indian Oil (C) Nayara (D) BPCL
Answer: A *— Reliance Industries.*

Q74. [I-04] US tariff cut on Indian goods in Feb 2026 was to:
(A) 10% (B) 18% (C) 25% (D) 50%
Answer: B *— 18 per cent.*

Q75. [I-04] Which crude did the US seek Indian refiners to process?
(A) Venezuelan (B) Libyan (C) Nigerian (D) Iraqi
Answer: A *— Heavy Venezuelan crude.*

Q76. [I-04] Rubio's number of India visits in five months:
(A) One (B) Two (C) Three (D) Four
Answer: B *— Second.*

Q77. [I-04] The city skipped on the itinerary:
(A) New Delhi (B) Mumbai (C) Jamnagar (D) Ahmedabad
Answer: A *— New Delhi.*

Q78. [I-05] Which country chairs ASEAN in 2026?
(A) Philippines (B) Malaysia (C) Thailand (D) Vietnam
Answer: A *— The Philippines.*

Q79. [I-05] Formal COC negotiations began in:
(A) 2002 (B) 2012 (C) 2018 (D) 2022
Answer: C *— 2018.*

Q80. [I-05] The 2002 document is called the:
(A) DOC (B) COC (C) MOU (D) TAC
Answer: A *— Declaration on the Conduct of Parties.*

Q81. [I-05] Target date to conclude the COC:
(A) End of 2026 (B) Mid-2027 (C) 2030 (D) Already signed
Answer: A *— Year-end 2026.*

Q82. [I-05] Which treaty anchors maritime rights?
(A) UNCLOS (B) NPT (C) Antarctic Treaty (D) Outer Space Treaty
Answer: A *— UNCLOS.*

Q83. [I-05] One unresolved issue is:
(A) Legal status (B) Currency (C) Visa policy (D) Tariffs
Answer: A *— Legal status, scope and enforcement.*

Q84. [I-05] The Diplomat piece's author is:
(A) Abdul Rahman Yaacob (B) Catherine Putz (C) Shannon Tiezzi (D) Lee Sook-yeon
Answer: A *— Abdul Rahman Yaacob.*

Q85. [I-06] COP31 host city:
(A) Antalya (B) Baku (C) Belém (D) Dubai
Answer: A *— Antalya, Türkiye.*

Q86. [I-06] COP31 dates:
(A) 9–20 Nov 2026 (B) 1–12 Nov 2026 (C) 15–26 Nov 2026 (D) 6–17 Dec 2026
Answer: A *— 9–20 November.*

Q87. [I-06] CBD COP17 location:
(A) Yerevan (B) Geneva (C) Montreal (D) Nairobi
Answer: A *— Yerevan, Armenia.*

Q88. [I-06] NDC stands for:
(A) Nationally Determined Contribution (B) National Disaster Council (C) Net Domestic Capacity (D) New Development Compact
Answer: A *— Nationally Determined Contribution.*

Q89. [I-06] The EAC wants climate finance as:
(A) Grants (B) Loans (C) Equity (D) Bonds
Answer: A *— Predictable grant-based finance.*

Q90. [I-06] World Leaders' Summit dates:
(A) 11–12 Nov (B) 9–10 Nov (C) 18–19 Nov (D) 20–21 Nov
Answer: A *— 11 and 12 November.*

Q91. [I-06] Parties with updated NDCs by mid-2026:
(A) 147 (B) 95 (C) 60 (D) 200
Answer: A *— 147.*

Q92. [I-07] Who announced the loudspeaker plan?
(A) Kim Yo Jong (B) Kim Jong Un (C) Choe Son Hui (D) Lee Jae Myung
Answer: A *— Kim Yo Jong.*

Q93. [I-07] South Korea's president:
(A) Lee Jae Myung (B) Yoon Suk Yeol (C) Moon Jae-in (D) Park Geun-hye
Answer: A *— Lee Jae Myung.*

Q94. [I-07] MDL stands for:
(A) Military Demarcation Line (B) Maritime Defence Line (C) Missile Defence Layer (D) Mutual Deterrence Link
Answer: A *— Military Demarcation Line.*

Q95. [I-07] Seoul described its warning shots as:
(A) Legitimate and defensive (B) Accidental (C) Provocative (D) Unauthorised
Answer: A *— Legitimate and defensive measures.*

Q96. [I-07] Seoul proposed talks to:
(A) Confirm MDL location (B) Sign a peace treaty (C) Reunify (D) End sanctions
Answer: A *— Confirm MDL and restore communication.*

Q97. [I-07] Lee took office in:
(A) June 2025 (B) Jan 2024 (C) March 2022 (D) Oct 2023
Answer: A *— June 2025.*

Q98. [I-07] North Korea has designated South Korea a:
(A) Hostile state (B) Partner (C) Neutral party (D) Protectorate
Answer: A *— Hostile state.*

Q99. [GEN] Which Article of the Constitution deals with governor's rule on failure of constitutional machinery?
(A) Article 232 (B) Article 234 (C) Article 245 (D) Article 270AA
Answer: B *— Article 234 deals with failure of constitutional machinery in a province; Art. 232 with emergency on war or internal disturbance.*

Q100. [GEN] The 18th Constitutional Amendment, central to the KP emergency debate, was passed in:
(A) 2002 (B) 2010 (C) 2015 (D) 2018
Answer: B *— The 18th Amendment was passed in 2010 and devolved major powers to the provinces.*

CONSOLIDATED VOCABULARY (135 words)

Word	Meaning	Article
Abstain	Decline to vote	I-01
Adaptation	Adjusting to climate impacts	I-06
Adjourn	Suspend a sitting	N-07
Aerospace	Air and space technology sector	N-06
Ambiguity	Deliberate lack of clarity	N-02
Arbitral award	Ruling by an arbitration tribunal	I-05
Architecture	Overall structure of arrangements	I-03
Assertiveness	Confident pursuit of claims	I-05
Asymmetry	Imbalance between sides	N-02
Autonomy	Self-government	N-01
Barter	Trade by exchanging goods	N-05
Bilateral	Between two parties	N-04
Bilateral trade agreement	Trade deal between two countries	I-04
Biodiversity	Variety of life	I-06
Brokered	Arranged through mediation	I-02
Canisterisation	Storing missiles in sealed launch canisters for fast use	N-02
Ceasefire	Temporary halt to fighting	I-03
Cede	Give up territory	I-03
Chokepoint	A narrow route with outsized importance	N-05
Claimant	State asserting a territorial claim	I-05
Code of Conduct	Agreed rules of behaviour	I-05
Collective defence	Mutual protection among allies	I-01
Conditionality	Making cooperation depend on conditions	N-04
Confidence-building measure	Step that reduces mistrust	I-07
Consensus	General agreement	I-05
Consignment	A batch of goods sent together	N-05
Convoy	A group of vehicles travelling together	N-05
Corridor	A route linking regions	N-05
Counter-terrorism	Measures to prevent terrorism	N-04
Cyberspace	The online environment	N-04
De-confliction	Avoiding accidental clashes	I-01
De-escalation	Reducing tension	I-02
Deterrence	Preventing attack through fear of retaliation	N-02
Diversification	Spreading risk across sources	I-04
DMZ	Demilitarised Zone	I-07
Doctrine	Stated principles guiding strategy	N-02
Donbas	Eastern Ukrainian region	I-03
El Niño	Warm phase of Pacific climate pattern	I-06
Emergency	A situation permitting extraordinary powers	N-01
Enforcement	Making rules binding in practice	I-05
Enrichment	Raising the share of fissile isotopes in uranium	I-02
Envoy	Representative sent on a mission	I-03
Escalation	Intensification of conflict	I-01
Escalatory	Likely to intensify conflict	N-02
Escape velocity	Speed needed to break free of a gravitational pull	N-03
Fiscal	Relating to government revenue and spending	N-03

Word	Meaning	Article
Fortification	Defensive structure	I-07
Freedom of navigation	Right of ships to pass	I-05
Goodwill	Friendly attitude	N-05
Governor's rule	Federal administration of a province via its governor	N-01
Grant	Money given without repayment	I-06
Heavy crude	Dense, high-sulphur oil	I-04
Hostile state	Declared adversary	I-07
Hotline	Direct communication channel	I-07
Implementation	Putting plans into practice	I-06
Indigenous	Locally developed	N-06
Infiltration	Secret entry into a territory	N-01
Interim	Temporary	I-02
Itinerary	Planned route of travel	I-04
Just transition	Fair shift to low-carbon economy	I-06
Leverage	Power to influence outcomes	I-02
Liberalisation	Easing of economic controls	N-03
Logistics	Organisation of movement of goods	N-05
Loss and damage	Compensation for unavoidable climate harm	I-06
Loudspeaker warfare	Broadcast propaganda across a border	I-07
LPG	Liquefied petroleum gas	N-05
Lunar	Relating to the Moon	N-06
Mandate	Official authority to act	I-01
Maritime	Relating to the sea	I-05
MDL	Military Demarcation Line	I-07
Mediation	Third-party help to settle a dispute	N-04
Mediator	Neutral third party helping negotiate	I-02
Milestone	A significant stage	N-06
Mitigation	Reducing emissions	I-06
Moratorium	Agreed pause	I-07
Multilateral	Involving several parties	N-04
Nationalisation	Bringing a business under state ownership	N-07
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution	I-06
Orbit	Path around a planet	N-06
Overshoot	Exceeding the 1.5°C limit temporarily	I-06
Oversight	Supervision of executive actions	N-07
Paradigm shift	Fundamental change in approach	I-04
Parity	Equality of strength	N-02
Payload specialist	Crew member who runs experiments	N-06
Per capita	Per person	N-03
Point of order	Procedural objection raised in a House	N-07
Pretext	A false reason given to hide the real one	N-01
Primary surplus	Revenue minus spending before interest payments	N-03
Privatisation	Transfer of state assets to private owners	N-03
Proclamation	A formal public declaration by the head of state	N-01
Productivity	Output per unit of input	N-03
Proliferation	Spread of weapons	N-02
Propaganda	Biased persuasion material	I-07
Proxy	Actor fighting on behalf of another	I-01

Word	Meaning	Article
Quad	US–India–Japan–Australia grouping	I-04
Quorum	Minimum members required to conduct business	N-07
Radicalisation	Process of adopting extremist views	N-04
Ratification	Formal approval of a treaty	I-01
Ratify	To approve formally	N-01
Refinery	Plant processing crude oil	I-04
Remittances	Money sent home by overseas workers	N-03
Repatriation	Return to one's country	N-04
Sanctions	Economic penalties	I-03
Sanctions relief	Lifting economic penalties	I-02
Scrutiny	Close examination	N-07
Second strike	Ability to retaliate after being hit	N-02
Security guarantee	Commitment to defend a state	I-03
Sequencing	Order of steps in a deal	I-02
Settlement	Final agreement ending a dispute	I-03
Sitting	A single meeting of a legislature	N-07
SLBM	Submarine-launched ballistic missile	N-02
Soft power	Influence through attraction rather than force	N-06
Sovereignty	Supreme authority over a territory	I-01
Stabilisation	Restoring macroeconomic balance	N-03
Statutory body	Entity created by law	N-07
Stockpile	Accumulated reserve	I-02
Stranded	Left unable to move	N-05
Strategic autonomy	Freedom to act independently of blocs	I-04
Structural reform	Change to underlying economic institutions	N-03
SUPARCO	Pakistan's national space agency	N-06
Supermajority	Majority above a simple one	I-01
Suspension	Temporary stoppage	N-05
Tariff	Tax on imports	I-04
Technocratic	Run by experts rather than politicians	N-01
Technology transfer	Sharing of know-how between countries	N-06
Third party	An outside power	I-05
Tiangong	China's space station	N-06
Transactional	Based on exchange of benefits	I-04
Treasury benches	Government-side seats	N-07
Trilateral	Involving three parties	I-03
UNCLOS	UN Convention on the Law of the Sea	I-05
Verifiable	Able to be independently checked	N-04
Verification	Independent confirmation	I-02
Walkout	A protest by leaving a chamber	N-01
Writ	A formal court order	N-01

REPORTS, ORGANISATIONS & PERSONALITIES IN THE NEWS

Category	Entries
Federal / Pakistan	National Command Authority (NCA); Strategic Plans Division (SPD); Foreign Office; Ministry of Commerce; SUPARCO; FAFEN; Peshawar High Court; National Assembly; Senate.
International organisations	World Bank Group; IMF; UN Security Council; European Union (EEAS); ASEAN; UNFCCC (COP31); CBD (COP17); SIPRI; Makkah Joint Defence Agreement parties.
Personalities — Pakistan	Asif Ali Zardari (President); Shehbaz Sharif (PM); Field Marshal Asim Munir (CDF/COAS); Azam Nazeer Tarar (Law Minister); Mohsin Naqvi (Interior); Ishaq Dar (FM); Sajjad Haider Khan (FO spokesperson); Ahsan Iqbal (Planning); Khalid Kidwai and Sarfraz Sattar (NCA advisers); Barrister Gohar Ali Khan (PTI); Sohail Afridi; Faisal Karim Kundi; Mahmood Khan Achakzai.
Personalities — International	Abdel Fattah el-Sisi; Mohammed bin Salman; Masoud Pezeshkian; Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf; Abbas Araghchi; Mohsen Rezaei; Steve Witkoff; Volodymyr Zelensky; Vladimir Putin; Marco Rubio; S Jaishankar; Kim Yo Jong; Lee Jae Myung; Bolormaa Amgaabazar; Sebastian Essl; Anna Strzaska.
Reports / documents	Pakistan Development Update — Attaining Escape Velocity (World Bank, Oct 2026); SIPRI Yearbook 2026; UNSC S/PRST/2026/4; FAFEN NA Attendance Reports; Makkah Joint Defence Agreement (Aug 2026).

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