



Imran's Street Politics Hardens Battlelines in Pak

Dr Shalini Chawla | 02 December 2024

“The establishment has expanded its powers and strengthened its control on the state institutions where Imran, in the recent past, enjoyed fractional support. The current crisis once again presents an old game with different actors in Pakistan. The actors change, intensity varies, tactics differ, but the bottomline remains unaltered — a military-run state with sufficient power and resources manages to crush any rebellion or opposition questioning its legitimacy and power.”

Read More: <https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/comment/imrans-street-politics-hardens-battlelines-in-pak/>

Pakistan: Persistent Economic Crises

Dr Shalini Chawla | 09 December 2024

“In the last two years, Pakistan has experienced compounding financial challenges, including an alarming decline in foreign reserves at the Central Bank, which dropped to as low as US\$2.9 billion in February 2023—just enough to cover three weeks of imports. The country faced a high debt burden, hard-hitting inflation that peaked at almost 30 per cent, and a desperate need for external assistance from the IMF and Pakistan’s traditional donors, who have stepped in to provide relief in the past.”

Read More: <https://capsindia.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/CAPS-Wrap-Up-5.pdf>

The Syrian Impact

Muhammad Amir Rana | 22 December 2024

“The triumph of the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS)-led resistance in Syria has further disturbed the geopolitical equilibrium in the Middle East and beyond. For Pakistan, this development should mean not only modifications in its diplomatic priorities but also careful evaluation of the country’s internal and regional security dynamics.”

Read More: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1880290/the-syrian-impact>

A National Compact for 2025

Maleeha Lodhi | 23 December 2024

“The complex nature of overlapping challenges and the fact that no single party can tackle them on its own calls for political leaders and other stakeholders to rise above their narrow interests and evolve agreement on core issues even as they continue to compete with each other. A national compact is needed that reflects political consensus on the following key issue areas.”

Read More: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1880475/a-national-compact-for-2025>

Turning Challenges into Opportunities

Omay Aimen | 24 December 2024

“The U.S. sanctions on Pakistan’s ballistic missile program reflect a broader agenda to curtail the rise of independent Muslim states capable of challenging Western dominance. US has in fact never supported Pakistan’s nuclear program or missile technology, although India already has advanced missile systems but US supported them, shows Washington’s hypocrisy.”

Read More: <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2024/12/24/turning-challenges-into-opportunities/>

House of Sharifs

Dr Niaz Murtaza | 24 December 2024

“Two political families have mainly piloted our twisted and bumpy semi-democratic ride. The Bhuttos do better on legislation and social work; the Sharifs on project work. The Bhuttos have charisma and colour; the Sharifs are dull and drab. But the Bhuttos leave the Sharifs far behind on key political sins.”

Read More: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1880737/house-of-sharifs>

A Common Journey of Climate Resilience

Zhao Shiren | 24 December 2024

“The Pakistani government has been actively taking measures to address these challenges. For example, the Punjab government has vigorously formulated policies, and action plans and introduced new technologies, calling for cross-border cooperation to tackle the smog in Lahore.”

Read More: <https://www.nation.com.pk/24-Dec-2024/a-common-journey-of-climate-resilience>

Afghanistan: Navigating Uncertainty under the Taliban 2.0 Rule

Dr. Anchita Borthakur | 09 December 2024

“At present, rural households in the country are highly dependent on the remittance sent to them by their family members living abroad. With the current economic challenges faced by the country, the reliance on remittances has grown even more pronounced, and these remittances play a vital role in sustaining Afghanistan’s economy under the Taliban regime.”

Read More: <https://capsindia.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/CAPS-Wrap-Up-5.pdf>

Oppression Against Afghan Women

Munazza Hameed | 19 December 2024

“The latest blow came when the Taliban government extinguished the dreams of aspiring midwives and nurses, banning women from pursuing education in these fields. This heartless decision has not only left countless women in despair but also raises a critical question: what risks will Afghan women face as patients when denied access to educated healthcare providers?”

Read More: <https://www.nation.com.pk/19-Dec-2024/oppression-against-afghan-women>

Why Afghanistan is Once Again a Hotbed of Terrorism

Chris Fitzgerald | 23 December 2024

“The Taliban look weak in the eyes of the Afghan people who were promised security under the new regime. With the Taliban failing to improve the lives of the people and increasingly clamping down on the rights of women and minority groups, its mantra of security through strength looks increasingly hollow.”

Read More: https://www.scmp.com/opinion/asia-opinion/article/3291983/why-afghanistan-once-again-hotbed-terrorism?module=perpetual_scroll_0&pgtype=article

Bangladesh: Stumbling through Crises

Priyadarshini Baruah | 09 December 2024

“On one hand, Beijing’s foothold in the country is widening; on the other, the money that China provides comes with strings attached. Chinese loans are opaque and loaded with high interest rates that often go beyond the paying capacities of countries. Additionally, they are mostly cornered around strategic projects in recipient nations.”

Read More: <https://capsindia.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/CAPS-Wrap-Up-5.pdf>

The Hypocrisy of Selective Outrage

Mir Aftabuddin Ahmed | 19 December 2024

“Beneath the thin mask of unity lies an ideological battlefield dominated by two opposing forces: Islamists and progressives. At its most aspirational, this clash of ideas could and should foster democratic consolidation. In reality, however, and if history is any guide, it may breed a vicious cycle of hypocrisy, where both camps demand accountability but refuse to shoulder their own.”

Read More: <https://www.dhakatribune.com/opinion/longform/368535/the-hypocrisy-of-selective-outrage>

Politics, Patience, and People’s Mandate

Manzoor Ahmed | 24 December 2024

“As the parties clamour now to reclaim power through a quick election, have they asked themselves if they promoted and practised democracy in their parties? What did they do when they were in power to ensure accountable governance to serve the public interest, stem corruption, and ensure fair elections and people's right to vote freely?”

Read More: <https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/views/news/politics-patience-and-peoples-mandate-3783251>

Sri Lanka: Road to Economic Recovery

Bantirani Patro | 09 December 2024

“As such, Chinese investments in this island nation have often been subjected to scrutiny, since they are seen as attempts to acquire strategic assets in the event of Sri Lanka defaulting on its debt repayments to China. The 2017 Hambantota Port deal, in which Beijing obtained an 85 per cent stake in the port through a 99-year lease, is a case in point.”

Read More: <https://capsindia.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/CAPS-Wrap-Up-5.pdf>

Towards Building a Prosperous Future

Tilak W. Karunaratne | 16 December 2024

“Without increasing national productivity, sustainable economic improvement is unattainable. Borrowing for consumption, and repaying those loans, only exacerbates the economic crisis, leading to an unsustainable debt burden. By 2024, Sri Lanka’s national debt has grown despite efforts to repay loans following the 2022 economic crisis, underscoring the need for a more sustainable approach.”

Read More: <https://island.lk/towards-building-a-prosperous-future/>

Maldives: State of Economy and Prospects

Radhey Tambi | 09 December 2024

“The projection for 2024 is 5.2 per cent, but it remains to be seen how well the Maldives can maintain this rate amid the ongoing Ukraine war, which has increased the prices of food, fuel, and fertilisers. All of this becomes more relevant for the Maldives as it is a net importer of agricultural products and fossil fuels.”

Read More: <https://capsindia.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/CAPS-Wrap-Up-5.pdf>

Nepal Economy in Disarray: Challenges and Concerns

Subodh Chandra Bharti | 09 December 2024

“In the recent past, Nepal has encountered an array of daunting challenges and issues within its political economy, contributing to a state of disarray. These challenges encompass persistent political instability, leading to policy fluctuations due to frequent changes in governance and leadership. The resultant instability has effectively impeded long-term economic planning and development.”

Read More: <https://capsindia.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/CAPS-Wrap-Up-5.pdf>

Consti-tuition, A Lesson Parties Need

Sanjeev Satgainya | 19 December 2024

“Nevertheless, once promulgated, it was incumbent upon Nepali parties to focus on full implementation of the constitution. This required following due processes- enacting laws, devolving power and strengthening institutions. However, none of the parties paid attention to these fundamentals. Instead, they treated the constitution as a tool to “rule” when the charter required them.”

Read More: <https://kathmandupost.com/columns/2024/12/19/consti-tuition-a-lesson-parties-need>

Bhutan: Economic Progress and Challenges

Anadi | 09 December 2024

“The concept of GNH has influenced Bhutan’s development policy since its articulation and has been mooted on the global stage. Bhutan’s application of the concept of the GNH index has introduced a practical measurement tool in policymaking. The GNH index serves as an incentive to the government of Bhutan, NGOs, and businesses to bring societal well-being and happiness.”

Read More: <https://capsindia.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/CAPS-Wrap-Up-5.pdf>

Failure of Value-Based Politics: Implications for Central Asia

Miras Zhiyenbayev | 16 December 2024

“Central Asia’s strategic pragmatism—prioritizing stability, sovereignty, and economic development—has already positioned it as a region adept at balancing competing interests. By embracing an approach centered on shared interests rather than imposed values, the region can further its development while maintaining the geopolitical equilibrium necessary for long-term resilience.”

Read More: <https://astanatimes.com/2024/12/failure-of-value-based-politics-implications-for-central-asia/>

Central Asia Faces Devastating \$9 Billion Annual Loss from Climate Crises

Sadokat Jalolova | 20 December 2024

“Climate change poses one of the most pressing threats to the region. Natural disasters—including floods, which affect about one million people annually, and earthquakes, impacting two million – result in \$9 billion in annual GDP losses. Rising temperatures are expected to exacerbate issues such as water scarcity, droughts, heat waves, and the loss of agricultural land.”

Read More: <https://timesca.com/central-asia-faces-devastating-9-billion-annual-loss-from-climate-crises/>

Tehran Faces a Mega-Crisis with Seven Challenges

Morad Veisi | 07 December 2024

“ Hamas and Hezbollah have been significantly weakened by heavy military losses and the elimination of key leaders. Meanwhile, Assad's forces have faced a string of defeats, particularly the rapid loss of vast areas of the country, key military bases and the apparent disintegration of its military units.”

Read More: <https://www.iranintl.com/en/202412065940>

Israel is Losing the War on Poverty - Opinion

Eran Weintrob | 18 December 2024

“When a security conflict erupts and the economy spirals, the economic implications are dramatic. The heavy costs of military confrontation, coupled with the prolonged recovery process, are exacerbated by inflation, fears of a recession, high interest rates, and sharp increases in the prices of food and basic goods, bringing us to the brink of an economic crisis.”

Read More: <https://www.jpost.com/opinion/article-833847>

REGION IN PICTURES

Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake during a meeting, at the Hyderabad House in New Delhi.



Pic Credits: Mint

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was welcomed by Kuwait Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmed Abdullah Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah during a ceremonial welcome and Guard of Honour at Bayan Palace on December 22, 2024.



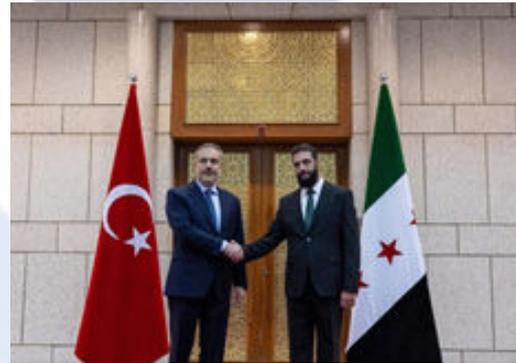
Pic Credits: Rising Kashmir

Bangladesh Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus and Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif met on December 19 in Cairo, Egypt.



Pic Credits: The Indian Express

Turkey's Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan meets with Syria's de facto leader Ahmed al-Sharaa, also known as Abu Mohammed al-Golani, in Damascus, Syria, on December 22, 2024.



Pic Credits: Reuters



Centre for Air Power Studies

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NOTE: **Regional Opinion and Trends** aims to capture prevailing opinions in South Asia and West Asia.

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