



The Pahalgam Terror Attack and Pakistan's Growing Anxiety

Shalini Chawla | 28 April 2025

“The Pahalgam attack is a desperate attempt by the Pakistan military to revive its strategic relevance, resuscitate its reverence within the country, challenge the normalcy in Kashmir, internationalise the Kashmir issue and instigate communal violence in India.”

Read More: <https://capsindia.org/the-pahalgam-terror-attack-and-pakistans-growing-anxiety/>

The Pahalgam Abyss

Pratap Bhanu Mehta | 25 April 2025

“As India chooses the next course of action, it will be difficult to shake off the sense of despair this kind of terrorism produces. A successful military operation might be an act of justice. It might restore a sense of confidence in the capabilities of the state, and, in some quarters, satiate a desire for revenge. But even if these actions were successful in a limited sense, we will remain close to the edge of an abyss.”

Read More: <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/pahalgam-terror-attack-jammu-and-kashmir-9963428/>

On the Brink, Again

Maleeha Lodhi | 28 April 2025

“India and Pakistan are back on the brink of a dangerous confrontation. Escalating tensions have pushed the subcontinent into uncharted territory heightening the risk of a full-blown crisis as bilateral mechanisms are cast aside and diplomatic relations further downgraded.”

Read More: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1907055/on-the-brink-again>

Pakistan-Bangladesh Relations – Friends in Need?

Shalini Chawla | 28 March 2025

“There are speculations about how long the cordial exchanges of visits and military and economic cooperation between the two countries will be sustained, given their bitter history. This raises the question of whether the anti-India sentiment is enough to sustain and grow the evolving bilateral relations. For Dhaka, Pakistan cannot be a substitute for India given the economic cooperation and development partnership India and Bangladesh have shared. Nevertheless, India must be watchful of these developments to guard its strategic interests.”

Read More: <https://capsindia.org/pakistan-bangladesh-relations-friends-in-need/>

Sino-Pak Bond Vs Collusion of Inimical Forces

Dr Raza Muhammad | 14 April 2025

“However, regardless of the external pressures, and regardless of who sits in the highest offices in Beijing or Islamabad, the Pakistan-China bond has evolved into a strong association. Now termed Iron Brothers, Pakistan and China have a long-term, mutually beneficial relationship spanning geo-economic and geo-strategic landscape of the dynamic mosaic of international power politics. This fruition owes a lot to the leaderships of both the countries which, despite external pressures, preserved and nurtured this bond successfully.”

Read More: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2539659/sino-pak-bond-vs-collusion-of-inimical-forces>

Failure of Afghan Policy

Muhammad Amir Rana | 20 April 2025

“It is often argued that Pakistan lacks a clear and independent Afghan policy. What the establishment has historically pursued on the Afghan front has largely been an extension of its India-centric approach. Once a pro-India regime was dislodged in Kabul, Islamabad appeared uncertain about navigating the new reality. Much of the establishment and its aligned intelligentsia held utopian expectations of forging transnational mega projects and cultivating a friendly regime in the neighbourhood.”

Read More: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1905416/failure-of-afghan-policy>

Ice-Breaking Interaction

Malik Muhammad Ashraf | 25 April 2025

“Pakistan has borne the burden of millions of Afghan refugees and has also extended support to the Taliban. It was among the three countries that recognized the Taliban regime in Afghanistan before 9/11, and even during their fight with the USA and NATO has been playing a positive role for an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned solution to the conflict and ultimately also helped in concluding Doha Agreement between the Taliban and USA. Pakistan would be the last country to think of harming Afghanistan in any way.”

Read More: <https://www.nation.com.pk/25-Apr-2025/ice-breaking-interaction>

In Fight Mode

Arifa Noor | 08 April 2025

“The PTI is always in fight mode. And this is not just because of its head-on collision with the establishment or the non-stop jostling with other political parties but because of internal tu tu main main. The second tier is fighting each other, over strategy, allegations of corruption, being compromised and more. It’s a house divided and the reason for its inability to make headway with the powers that be.”

Read More: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1902854/in-fight-mode>

The Leadership Deficit

Maleeha Lodhi | 21 April 2025

“Pakistan’s problems seem to multiply by the day and contribute to the country’s deepening polarisation and instability. Public protests, insurgency, militant violence, terrorism, centre province friction, disputes over the sharing of water and government opposition confrontation are happening all at once. This at a time when a fragile economy still has to make the transition to sustainable recovery from temporary stabilisation.”

Read More: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1905602/the-leadership-deficit>

Sindh’s Reformatory Prison Rules

Mohsin Saleem Ullah | 25 April 2025

“While Sindh’s progressive stance remains an exception rather than the norm. The other three provinces continue to be governed by the 19th century laws, which no longer reflect the values of a just and modern society. The need for a nationwide correctional reform agenda is more urgent than ever. Provincial governments must revise their prison laws and rules in line with international standards that prohibit torture and all forms of cruel or degrading treatment.”

Read More: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2542044/sindhs-reformatory-prison-rules>

India’s Approach to Taliban 2.0: Cautious and Persistent

Shalini Chawla | 28 March 2025

“When the republican regime rapidly disintegrated and the Afghan security forces lost ground, New Delhi came around to the realization that the Taliban 2.0 is the new normal. Given India’s high stakes involvement, New Delhi considered it sagacious to potentially begin engaging with the Taliban in order to manage the challenges emanating from Afghanistan.

Read More: <https://southasianvoices.org/geo-f-in-n-india-taliban-cautious-and-persistent-03-28-2025/>

Will the Taliban Return U.S. Military Equipment?

Mohammad Farhad Jalal | 07 April 2025

“After several days of discussions, reports indicate that the Taliban, following orders from their Supreme Leader, have transferred U.S. military equipment to Bagram Airfield. It appears the Taliban have chosen the “lesser evil” to secure favour with Washington and ensure their regime’s survival. The gradual, multi-phase handover of Bagram could help prevent distrust among Taliban ranks and preserve their regional alliances.”

Read More: <https://8am.media/eng/will-the-taliban-return-u-s-military-equipment/>

The Taliban’s Madrasas: A Growing Engine of Extremism the World Chooses to Ignore

Aamonpur | 06 April 2025

“The Taliban’s extensive push to establish religious schools in Afghanistan indicates that Islamic extremism is striving to take greater regional steps toward advancing the project of global jihad. It appears the Taliban are increasingly seeking self-sufficiency in supplying human resources for terrorism and, in addition, aim to achieve success in exporting terrorism. The Talibanization of life in Afghanistan through the creation of more religious schools finds its more precise meaning.”

Read More: <https://8am.media/eng/the-talibans-madrasas-a-growing-engine-of-extremism-the-world-chooses-to-ignore/>

The Blame Game: ISKP and the Fog of Geopolitical Rivalries

Priyadarshini Baruah | 27 March 2025

“Pan-Islamic identity of the ISKP allows it to transcend regional boundaries and rivalries, even as state actors try to co-opt the group in order to pursue their own geopolitical agendas. By misunderstanding and mischaracterizing the true nature of the ISKP, regional governments and major powers risk losing focus on the main issue. The blame game feeds a self-reinforcing loop that indirectly supports the ISKP.”

Read More: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/29769442251326409>

China's Assistance for Bangladesh's River Management: Good or Bad?

Nazrul Islam | 08 April 2025

“China’s approach to river management is fundamentally different from Bangladesh’s. China has followed an aggressive commercial approach to its rivers, which has not always yielded positive results. Criticism of this approach is increasingly growing in China.”

Read More: <https://en.prothomalo.com/opinion/op-ed/6sk1labq18>

New Year, Old Questions: What Will the State Do for the Hills?

Satej Chakma | 14 April 2025

“Chittagong Hill Tracts has always played a crucial and central role in Bangladesh’s political and cultural landscape. Due to its geostrategic location and the unique cultural, political, economic, and social structures of its diverse indigenous communities, the Hill Tracts remain a region of significant importance—yet also one fraught with conflict.”

Read More: <https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/focus/news/new-year-old-questions-what-will-the-state-do-the-hills-3870981>

One or Both?

Reaz Ahmad | 02 April 2025

“The Election Commission should lay out an election roadmap as soon as possible, while the government continues to forge agreement on key reforms. The reform commissions’ submitted reports, the administration now has plenty of options from which to craft a prioritized agenda. Political parties ought to examine these proposals seriously and determine which reforms they can realistically implement.”

Read More: <https://www.dhakatribune.com/opinion/op-ed/379611/one-or-both>

Defence Pacts with India and Need for Openness

K. K. S. Perera | 21 April 2025

“For Indo-Lanka relations to develop in a manner that respects both countries’ interests, transparency must be the guiding principle. Only through open dialogue, parliamentary oversight, and public awareness can Sri Lanka ensure that its relationships with regional powers enhance rather than diminish its sovereignty and autonomy.”

Read More: <https://www.dailymirror.lk/opinion/Defence-Pacts-with-India-and-Need-for-Openness/172-306963>

A Trade Deal with the US will not Solve our Export Woes

Subhashini Abeysinghe | 24 April 2025

“Sri Lanka faces one of the steepest tariff rates at 44% — a potentially crippling burden for a country that is already struggling with cost competitiveness. Sri Lanka, meanwhile, has joined others in pursuing a bilateral ‘trade deal’ with the US. However, securing a fair-trade deal with the US will be challenging for a small, developing country like Sri Lanka with little bargaining power.”

Read More: <https://www.dailymirror.lk/news-features/A-Trade-deal-with-the-US-will-not-solve-our-Export-Woes/131-307250>

Easter Sunday: Still Waiting for Truth, Justice and Reconciliation

Mahil Dole | 20 April 2025

“As the sixth commemoration of the tragic Easter Sunday attacks draws near, Sri Lanka finds itself still entangled in a web of unanswered questions, delayed prosecutions, political manoeuvring, and communal wounds that have yet to heal. The Easter Sunday tragedy should have been a turning point – a catalyst for deep reform, unity, and healing. Instead, it has become a symbol of what is broken in our systems, institutions, and society.”

Read More: <https://www.themorning.lk/articles/HpZ4qdf0JvkXF0IzsCku>

Is Maldives Offering Strategic Space to Turkey in Indian Ocean?

N Sathiya Moorthy | 19 April 2025

“Even as common neighbours, India and Sri Lanka have signed what possibly is the first bilateral defence cooperation MoU of the kind in South Asia; Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu seemed to have revived his early plans to usher in another extra-regional power in the form of Turkey.”

Read More: <https://www.firstpost.com/opinion/is-maldives-offering-strategic-space-to-turkey-in-indian-ocean-13881231.html>

Nepal's Democracy Fatigue

Harsh Pandey | 18 April 2025

“The resurgence of pro-monarchy protests in Nepal appears to be more about disillusionment with the post-2008 democratic experiment than a genuine yearning for the restoration of monarchy. The old generation leaders must therefore provide space for new faces to remove the stagnation in the country’s politics. The pro-democratic political elites should tackle the burgeoning discontent among the public by bargaining and negotiating among themselves to ensure that the political system meets people’s mandates.”

Read More: <https://kathmandupost.com/columns/2025/04/18/nepal-s-democracy-fatigue>

Political Turbulence in Nepal: Solution through Dialogue, Not Defiance

Jiba Raj Pokharel | 19 April 2025

“A fleeting glance at the aforementioned penta-decadal turbulences shows that the paradigmatic shift in the polity took place through confrontation rather than consultation. But the country cannot afford confrontations at any cost all the parties should submit to dialogue instead of defiance. Formation of an all-party government with new credible faces and mandate of holding the referendum on the restoration of the Hindu nation and the Constitutional Monarchy along with the local election can be made.”

Read More: <https://thehimalayantimes.com/opinion/political-turbulence-in-nepal-solution-through-dialogue-not-defiance>

Nepal's Ambitious Energy Vision

Anwit Pokharel | 20 April 2025

“Diversifying the renewable energy mix beyond hydropower and taking proactive measures to mitigate the effects of climate change will be crucial for long-term sustainability and energy security. By addressing these challenges strategically, Nepal can utilise its immense renewable energy potential to fuel its future, spur economic development and make a valuable contribution to the world’s climate objectives.”

Read More: <https://kathmandupost.com/columns/2025/04/20/nepal-s-ambitious-energy-vision>

Tackling Water Challenges in Kazakhstan: Call for Collaborative Action and Sustainable Solutions

Katarzyna Wawiernia | 04 April 2025

“Kazakhstan’s water challenges become more complex, the need for coordinated, multi-stakeholder solutions is more urgent than ever. By harnessing the power of innovation, digital technologies, and strategic partnerships, we can build a more resilient water sector capable of weathering the impacts of climate change. The journey ahead requires collective action.”

Read More: <https://astanatimes.com/2025/04/tackling-water-challenges-in-kazakhstan-call-for-collaborative-action-and-sustainable-solutions/>

Samarkand’s Moment: What did the EU-Central Asia Summit Offer?

Juliboy Eltazarov | 11 April 2025

“Samarkand is increasingly positioning itself as the “Dubai of Central Asia” – a dynamic hub where international summits, congresses, festivals and conferences are held with growing frequency. These events continue to shape the future of Central Asia and the Turkic world. The EU needs Central Asia and the Turkic world just as much as the region needs Western technologies and investments. The decisions made at this summit are of immense importance for building a shared and prosperous future for all the countries of Central Asia.”

Read More: <https://www.dailysabah.com/opinion/op-ed/samarkands-moment-what-did-the-eu-central-asia-summit-offer>

Tokayev Moves to Reclaim Kazakhstan’s Energy Future

Dr. Robert M. Cutler | 22 April 2025

“Whether the claim succeeds is less important than what it represents. It is an implementation of Tokayev’s declared policy to “strengthen the economy and society”, distributing benefits of extraction among the country’s citizens, in consonance with the demands of domestic legitimacy, rather than guarding them in the hands of a few hundred oligarchs as the old regime did.”

Read More: <https://timesca.com/opinion-tokayev-moves-to-reclaim-kazakhstans-energy-future/>

Trump, Khamenei, and the Return to Muscat

Abdulrahman al-Rashed | 14 April 2025

“Trump has a strong chance of securing an unprecedented “good” deal with Iran if he maintains his firm stance and if his team can counter Tehran’s shrewd tactics. The balance of power now tilts toward Israel, which has crippled Iran’s regional proxies, stripping Tehran of the “proxy card” it once used as a threat and negotiation tool.”

Read More: <https://english.alarabiya.net/views/2025/04/14/trump-khamenei-and-the-return-to-muscat>

Is a U.S.-Iran Deal Possible?

Muhittin Ataman | 23 April 2025

“It seems that reaching a final agreement between the U.S. and Iran is unlikely because the expectations of the two sides are different. Trump wants to destroy the Iranian capability of developing nuclear energy, while Iran asks for some guarantees for limiting its uranium enrichment. On the one hand, U.S. officials have announced that the Iranian nuclear program must be stopped. On the other hand, Tehran wants recognition of its right to develop nuclear energy and enrich uranium.”

Read More: <https://www.dailysabah.com/opinion/columns/is-a-us-iran-deal-possible>

Netanyahu’s Losing Game: Isolation in the US, Genocide in Gaza

Mehmet Rakipoğlu | 18 April 2025

“Netanyahu’s dual strategy, seeking cover in Washington while accelerating ethnic cleansing in Gaza, is no longer sustainable. The diplomatic trip to the U.S. revealed isolation, whereas Israeli military actions in Gaza have revealed the intention of destruction. Israel’s Gaza project is not a war. It is a project of annihilation of Palestine. If this continues, the consequences are more likely to extend beyond Gaza.”

Read More: <https://www.dailysabah.com/opinion/op-ed/netanyahus-losing-game-isolation-in-the-us-genocide-in-gaza>

Neoliberal Economic Objectives in Syria: The Real War Begins Now

Makbule Yalin | 24 April 2025

“The Syrian interim government has adopted neoliberal policies to rebuild the country after the war. The developments raise the question: Will Syria's potential to become a competitive market player be realized through a combination of strategic effort and determination, or will the neoliberal efforts exacerbate existing poverty and inequalities, potentially leading to further economic collapse?”

Read More: <https://www.dailysabah.com/opinion/op-ed/neoliberal-economic-objectives-in-syria-the-real-war-begins-now>

REGION IN PICTURES

In the wake of the terrorist attack in Pahalgam, Prime Minister Modi chairs a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) at this residence in New Delhi on 23 April 2025.



Pic Credits: The Indian Express

Prime Minister Narendra Modi met Bangladesh Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus on the sidelines of BIMSTEC Summit in Bangkok, Thailand on 4 April 2025. This marks the first high-level talks between the two nations since the controversial flight of Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina from Dhaka last year.



Pic Credits: Mint

Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar paid a daylong visit to Kabul on 19 April 2025 and held meetings with Afghan leadership, including Amir Khan Muttaqi, the Afghan interim foreign minister.



Pic Credits: Al Jazeera

Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran Gen. Mohammad Bagheri and Saudi Arabia's Defense Minister Khalid bin Salman during a welcome ceremony, Tehran, Iran on 17 April 2025.



Pic Credits: Daily Sabah



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