



# Centre for Aerospace Power and Strategic Studies



Centre for Aerospace Power and Strategic Studies

Opinions and Trends

52/25

Neighbourhood Insights Series

December 2025

## Pakistan Seeks New South Asian Bloc to Cut India Out: Will it Work?

*Usaid Siddiqui | 05 December 2025*

“Pakistan says an emerging three-way cooperation with Bangladesh and China could be expanded. But will a new SAARC without India find takers across South Asia? The proposal amounts to the creation of an alternative bloc focused on South Asia, with China added, at a time when SAARC, the region’s main grouping has been made almost defunct by heightened India-Pakistan tensions in recent years.”

**Read More:** <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/12/5/pakistan-seeks-new-south-asian-bloc-to-cut-india-out-will-it-work>

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## Islamabad, Cairo, Ankara

*Muhammad Zahid Rifat | 17 December 2025*

“The visits of the Egyptian Foreign Minister and the Turkish Minister for Energy and Natural Resources to Pakistan certainly augurs well for further enhancing, promoting, and strengthening bilateral relations between brotherly countries Pakistan, Egypt and Turkiye in mutually beneficial manners.”

**Read More:** <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2025/12/17/islamabad-cairo-ankara/>

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## **Pakistan and Libya: Defence Diplomacy**

*Dr Muhammad Ali Ehsan | 21 December 2025*

“Pakistan must carefully engage and keep a balance in its relationship with Libya under FM Haftar and Turkey. Pakistan must also demonstrate to Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Egypt that it respects their security concerns in Libya. It must also give the right indicators of supporting the UN-backed political process in Libya.”

**Read More:** <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2583257/pakistan-and-libya-defence-diplomacy>

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## **An ‘America First’ Strategy**

*Maleeha Lodhi | 22 December 2025*

“But the new strategy has implications for Islamabad that need to be carefully assessed. At the end of the day, it is actual US foreign policy conduct that will count. How much of the strategy is put into practice is what will matter especially with a leader whose mercurial personality and whimsical ways put US consistency and reliability in serious doubt.”

**Read More:** <https://www.dawn.com/news/1962551/an-america-first-strategy>

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## **The Terrorism Drift**

*Dr. Tehmina Aslam Ranjha | 10 December 2025*

“The Baloch terrorist groups have been deceiving the security forces with the use of soft face called females who are trespass security barriers using the mask of cultural conservatism. The kind of disguise is to the detriment of the FC personnel, who show leniency to females (on suicide missions) and get harmed.”

**Read More:** <https://www.nation.com.pk/10-Dec-2025/terrorism-drift>

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## **Punjab’s Governance Overhaul**

*Maria Talal | 14 December 2025*

“Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has positioned her administration around a model of governance that is data-driven, citizen-focused, and explicitly designed to move beyond traditional cycles of crisis management. Her emphasis on institutional modernisation, digital oversight, and accountability is reshaping provincial machinery across multiple sectors.”

**Read More:** <https://www.nation.com.pk/14-Dec-2025/punjab-s-governance-overhaul>

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## **Climate Change and Pakistan's Struggle for Survival**

*Oshaz Fatima | 15 December 2025*

“For years Pakistan’s climate conversation has swung between fatalism and wishful thinking. Fatalism says the country is condemned to suffer for others’ sins. Wishful thinking assumes the world will pay whatever it takes. Neither is persuasive. There is no path to prosperity that does not run through resilience and cleaner growth, and no viable path without domestic reforms paired with external support.”

**Read More:** <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2025/12/15/climate-change-and-pakistans-struggle-for-survival/>

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## **Argument vs Persuasion**

*M Nadeem Nadir | 22 December 2025*

“Argument and persuasion are diametrically opposite ways of reasoning. Argument aims at discernment of truth, while for persuasion, winning is the ultimate goal. Subjective reasoning leads to persuading the opponent, while objective reasoning aims at the truth for a new awakening.”

**Read More:** <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2583382/argument-vs-persuasion-1>

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## **The Missing Variable**

*Arifa Noor | 23 December 2025*

“Pakistan’s history goes around in circles, it is said repeatedly, these days. It has easily become the most popular analysis presented on the talk shows, so much so that the Urdu phrase, daiyron ka safar, has become rather familiar. For every incident in the present, there is one from the past to suggest that this is how Pakistan rolls.”

**Read More:** <https://www.dawn.com/news/1962767/the-missing-variable>

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## **Learning Under Siege**

*Dr. Zafar Khan Safdar | 23 December 2025*

“The impact of targeting education extends far beyond a single village. In Pakistan, nearly 22 million children remain out of school, and girls constitute the majority of those excluded. Female literacy lags behind male literacy by a significant margin, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, where millions of children never see a classroom.”

**Read More:** <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2025/12/23/learning-under-siege/>

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## **Uraan Hyperbole**

*Dr Niaz Murtaza | 23 December 2025*

“Balanced regional progress is a tricky art that eludes our rulers. Industrial jobs will decrease in Karachi and upper Punjab while dirtier, riskier and cheaper mining jobs will rise in Balochistan. Would the laid-off workers take up such jobs given the risks migrants face even now in Balochistan? Who will reap mining benefits given the dodgy mining law passed in Balochistan?”

**Read More:** <https://www.dawn.com/news/1962765/uraan-hyperbole>

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## **Psychology of Poverty**

*Murad Moosa Khan | 24 December 2025*

“Poverty in Pakistan is not only a failure of economics; it is a crisis of the mind. It erodes hope, corrodes trust, and diminishes the belief in collective progress. For millions of Pakistanis, poverty means living with daily psychological strain that no relief package can quantify. To end poverty, we must first understand — and care for — the psychology of the poor.”

**Read More:** <https://www.dawn.com/news/1962945/psychology-of-poverty>

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## **AI Governance Begin?**

*Naveed R Khan | 24 December 2025*

“Social media in Pakistan has exploded with frustration. Drivers across Lahore and Karachi have been posting screenshots of unexpected challans, debating wrongful fines, sharing blurry images captured by traffic cameras and asking the same question, “How did I get this ticket?” Some report receiving multiple challans at once, while others argue the system is unfair, confusing or technologically flawed.”

**Read More:** <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2583684/ai-governance-begin>

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## **Widespread Observance of Yalda Night: A Sign of the Taliban’s Failure to Engineer Society**

*Kiomars Samadi | 22 December 2025*

“The observance of Yalda Night shows that Afghan society, despite the heavy and pervasive restrictions imposed by the Taliban, is still alive, still capable of choice, and still able to resist imposition, however quietly and understated that resistance may be. This form of cultural resistance, even when slow and subdued, will leave a lasting impact over time precisely because of its persistence.”

**Read More:** <https://8am.media/eng/widespread-observance-of-yalda-night-a-sign-of-the-talibans-failure-to-engineer-society/>

## **Mullah and Talib: One in the Home, the Other on the People's Backs**

*Siah-Jameh Herawi | 24 December 2025*

“The mullah and the Taliban are not two separate accidents; they are two functions in one system, one brings force, the other manufactures meaning. If that bond is not understood, the Taliban may leave while the Taliban mindset remains, because mindsets are not produced by guns but by justification.”

**Read More:** <https://8am.media/eng/mullah-and-talib-one-in-the-home-the-other-on-the-peoples-backs/>

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## **Economy Under the Dark Cloud of Violent Politics**

*Fahmida Khatun | 23 December 2025*

“What is now at risk are public trust and citizen security. People want to feel that the state stands firmly by their side, that their safety matters and that the law applies equally to all. At a time when the country awaits a democratic transition through the elections scheduled for 12 February 2026, the interim government’s immediate priority should be to restore law and order to protect citizens.”

**Read More:** <https://en.prothomalo.com/opinion/op-ed/9ajfdkju7>

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## **The ‘Strange Fruit’ of Bhaluka and a Republic in Retreat**

*Zakir Kibria | 24 December 2025*

“The mob’s accusation, as relayed by Rapid Action Battalion later, was that he had insulted religious sentiments. The smoke that rose that night was not just from that unceremonious pyre; it was the smoke of our shared social contract slowly burning to ashes.”

**Read More:** <https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/views/news/the-strange-fruit-bhaluka-and-republic-retreat-4064896>

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## **Hopes and Hesitations**

*Md Shafiul Alam | 24 December 2025*

“In a nation still marked by social fragility and economic vulnerability that may be the only path toward stability and renewed hope. It is not simply a matter of who governs, but how. For that reason, the widespread hope that a democratically-elected government will soon come to office is not mere wishful thinking. It is a rational longing for legitimacy, trust, and normalcy.”

**Read More:** <https://www.dhakatribune.com/opinion/op-ed/399445/hopes-and-hesitations>

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## **Nightmare of the South Asian Springs Bangladesh's Descent into Islamist Extremism**

*Ranga Jayasuriya | 25 December 2025*

“The tightening grip of Islamism on the country of 170 million is partly owing to the controversial bail release of known Islamist leaders and around 300 rank-and-file activists, previously held under terrorism charges. In the meantime, intelligence agencies have noted that transnational terrorist groups AQIS, ISK, and the TPP are making inroads into Bangladesh.”

**Read More:** <https://www.dailymirror.lk/opinion/Nightmare-of-the-South-Asian-Springs-Bangladeshs-descent-into-Islamist-extremism/172-328770>

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## **Bangladesh's Next Election is About More Than Power**

*Siamul Huq Rabbany | 25 December 2025*

“The challenge now for Bangladesh is not simply to conduct an election, but to navigate a transition out of critical volatility. This is a fragile threshold moment in which outcomes are path-dependent, and mistakes are costly. Whether the coming elections help stabilise a renewed political order or deepen fragmentation.”

**Read More:** <https://www.dhakatribune.com/opinion/op-ed/399522/bangladesh%E2%80%99s-next-election-is-about-more-than>

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## **Cultural Heritage at the Crossroads**

*Dr. Ganga Rajinee Dissanayaka | 07 December 2025*

“The Sri Lankan cultural landscape today stands at an important juncture where the promise of global visibility meets the reality of local dispossession. As we enthusiastically parade our ancient cities, colonial fortifications, and sacred sites before international audiences, it is perhaps time to question very substantially the framing terminology itself.”

**Read More:** <https://www.themorning.lk/articles/UmaCKGJoXn0V8hmhIA1b>

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## **Positioning Sri Lanka in an Emerging Multipolar World Order**

*Air Chief Marshal Gagan Bulathsinghala | 11 December 2025*

“Sri Lanka stands at a historic juncture. We possess strategic advantages that many nations envy, yet economic vulnerabilities limit our choices. The world is being reordered, messily, rapidly, irreversibly. The question is not simply Where does Sri Lanka stand today? The real question is: Where will Sri Lanka choose to stand tomorrow?”

**Read More:** <https://www.dailymirror.lk/opinion/Positioning-Sri-Lanka-in-an-emerging-multipolar-world-order/172-327500>

## **The Silver Lining Behind Cyclone Ditwah**

*Dr. Jehan Perera | 23 December 2025*

“Ditwah has become a turning point. It has highlighted the need to strengthen governance and disaster preparedness, but it has also revealed a different possibility for Sri Lanka, one in which the people lead with humanity and aspire for the well-being of all, and the political leadership emulates their example.”

**Read More:** <https://www.themorning.lk/articles/cOMc1FGGnEktCVLsjeol>

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## **Why the Global Digital Rights Conversation Matters for Sri Lanka: A Sri Lankan in a Global Community of Digital Defenders**

*Prasad Perera | 23 December 2025*

“As Sri Lankans, being part of the GG is both a privilege and a shared responsibility. It’s not just one person, several Sri Lankans have participated over the years, each bringing back valuable insights, ideas, and connections. Together, we’ve shared this knowledge widely at home and linking many Sri Lankan groups with global digital defenders who can guide and collaborate.”

**Read More:** <https://www.dailymirror.lk/opinion/Commemorating-JVP-and-LTTE-heroes-Lessons-the-North-could-learn-from-Southern-reconciliation-with-the-JVP/172-326036>

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## **How Nepal Became Easy Prey for China’s Predatory Infrastructure Deals**

*C K Peela | 12 December 2025*

“Pokhara’s so called international airport has now confirmed what many Nepalis quietly suspected for years. It was never about connecting Nepal to the world; it was about connecting a Chinese state owned contractor to a captured political class. The fact that fifty five officials and a major Chinese company are now facing prosecution is not a surprise.”

**Read More:** <https://thehimalayantimes.com/opinion/how-nepal-became-easy-prey-for-chinas-predatory-infrastructure-deals>

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## **Nepal’s Enfeebled Water Future**

*Madhukar Upadhya | 15 December 2025*

“Nepal is now facing its fourth consecutive rainless winter. Winter precipitation has failed since 2022, and the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology’s latest seasonal forecast confirms that rainfall from December 2025 to February 2026 will once again be below normal, with some places receiving no rainfall.”

**Read More:** <https://kathmandupost.com/columns/2025/12/15/nepal-s-enfeebled-water-future>

## **Nepal: The Nation We Could Build**

*Ram C Acharya | 18 December 2025*

“Nepal lacks these foundations not because we invest too little, but because we mismanage and misallocate what we have. Our wounds are, in many ways, self-inflicted. With fairness, skills, energy, enterprise, and connectivity, Nepal can become the beacon on the hill we always believed it could be. The path is clear. The choice is ours.”

**Read More:** <https://myrepublica.nagariknetwork.com/news/nepal-the-nation-we-could-build-83-26.html>

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## **Is Uzbekistan Importing a Future Crisis**

*William Cui | 15 December 2025*

“Is Uzbekistan importing a future financial crisis? In practice, no country can be fully immunized against global volatility. Yet, history has proven that the FDI model is indispensable for rapidly improving the standards of living for citizens. The question is not if Uzbekistan should take the money, but how it manages the flow and prepares for the worst-case scenario.”

**Read More:** <https://timesca.com/opinion-is-uzbekistan-importing-a-future-crisis/>

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## **Ulytau: New Growth Point of Independent Kazakhstan**

*Katarzyna Wawiernia | 16 December 2025*

“Kazakhstan has undergone a profound transformation in nature conservation from restoring populations of rare species to significantly expanding its network of specially protected natural areas. The country is introducing modern wildlife research and monitoring systems, updating environmental legislation, engaging international partners, and establishing national parks that promote ecotourism and support local communities.”

**Read More:** <https://astanatimes.com/2025/12/ulytau-new-growth-point-of-independent-kazakhstan/>

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## **Central Asia Through Tehran’s Lens: What are Iran’s Interests in Region?**

*Muhammad Shamauddinov | 24 December 2025*

“Iran can no longer afford to overlook Central Asia without risking economic, political, diplomatic and strategic losses. While significant barriers remain, Tehran has distinct advantages that could enable it to strengthen its position in the region if it invests sustained attention and resources.”

**Read More:** <https://astanatimes.com/2025/12/central-asia-through-tehrans-lens-what-are-irans-interests-in-region/>

## **Three-Way Regional Chess: Tehran, Ankara, Riyadh seek Stability Amid Crisis**

*Maryam Sinaiee | 06 December 2025*

“Ankara, Riyadh, and Tehran view Syria as a critical arena where their security interests and regional influence intersect, pushing them toward cautious coordination despite deep differences. Accordingly, Syria appears to have featured prominently in the Tehran talks.”

**Read More:** <https://www.iranintl.com/en/202512024978>

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## REGION IN PICTURES

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin during a meeting, in New Delhi on 5 December 2025.



Pic Credits: The Hindu

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi meets King of Jordan Abdullah II, in Amman, Jordan on 15 December 2025.



Pic Credits: The Astana Times

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President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Masoud Pezeshkian during a meeting in Astana, Kazakhstan on 11 December 2025.



Pic Credits: The Wire

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President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari met Dr. Abdul Latif Jamal Rashid, President of the Republic of Iraq at Baghdad Palace on 21 December 2025.



Pic Credits: Tehran Times

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Centre for Aerospace Power  
and Strategic Studies

The Centre for Aerospace Power and Strategic Studies (CAPSS) is an independent, non-profit think tank that undertakes and promotes policy related research, study and discussion on defence and military issues, trends, and development in air power and space for civil and military purposes, as also related issues of national security. The Centre is headed by Air Vice Marshal Anil Golani (Retd).

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

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The views expressed in this brief are those of the author and not necessarily of the Centre or any other organisation.