



Centre for Aerospace Power and Strategic Studies



Centre for Aerospace Power and Strategic Studies

Opinions and Trends

56/26

Neighbourhood Insights Series

April 2026

The Double Life of Pakistan

Nilantha Ilangamuwa | 12 April 2026

“Peace is brokered abroad, war executed at home. Negotiations are public, killings clandestine. Citizens are displaced, silenced, expendable. Pakistan’s double-edged strategy is structural and persistent. Advocating peace internationally while masking domestic repression may be nothing more than a mirage.”

Read More: <https://www.themorning.lk/articles/MkDHaJ0Oqwa0S3HIQd8I>

Iran War, Peace Talks and Pakistan’s Stakes

Dr Shalini Chawla | 13 April 2026

“Pakistan’s projected threat perceptions seem to have intensified with Pakistan’s inability to address its economic vulnerabilities and security challenges. Continuation of the crisis in Iran will have serious strategic, financial and sectarian repercussions for Pakistan and Islamabad’s integration in the peace process is well understood.”

Read More: <https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/comment/iran-war-peace-talks-and-pakistans-stakes/>

These are Difficult Times for the World, So What Will Pakistan Do?

Maleeha Lodhi | 20 April 2026

“The Islamabad talks were neither a major achievement nor a failure; the two delegations returned to their capitals to consult with their leaderships in a generally positive atmosphere, and neither side said the talks had collapsed. The diplomatic option remained on the table for both sides, keeping the door open to the possibility of continuing negotiations.”

Read More: <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2026/4/20/these-are-difficult-times-for-the-world-so-what-will-pakistan-do>

Pakistan's Peacemaking Puzzle: Bridging the US-Iran Trust Deficit

Ameen Izzadeen | 24 April 2026

“Given the gravity of the conflict and the economic pain it inflicts on the rest of the world — disproportionately on oil-dependent developing countries — an upgrade of Pakistan's facilitator role could serve global peace. What is required of it is the promotion of confidence-building measures between the two parties to defuse the tension and narrow the trust deficit.”

Read More: <https://www.dailymirror.lk/opinion/Pakistans-peacemaking-puzzle-Bridging-the-US-Iran-trust-deficit/172-338589>

How Pakistan Became the Iran War's Unlikely Peace Negotiator

Joshua Kurlantzick | 28 April 2026

“Islamabad has begun to exert sizable regional and global influence and is being courted by states across the world. It has found some success as the primary negotiator between the United States and Iran in their conflict. Pakistan actually achieved something many diplomats from wealthy democracies and leading global organizations had failed at for nearly five decades: producing direct talks between Washington and Tehran.”

Read More: <https://www.cfr.org/articles/how-pakistan-became-the-iran-wars-unlikely-peace-negotiator>

Pak-Afghan Reconciliation

Dr. Tehmina slam Ranjha | 28 April 2026

“Pakistan has been demanding that lasting peace requires the Afghan Taliban to sever ties with the TTP targeting Pakistan, no headway has been made in this direction. Pakistan has been left with no choice but to feel frustrated with terrorist groups attacking its mainland while seeking refuge in the hilly border areas along the frontier between the two countries.”

Read More: <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2026/03/25/pakistan-takes-lead-in-us-iran-peace-push>

Pakistan's Unlikely Mediation and What it Must Do Next

Haris Mehmood | 29 April 2026

"Pakistan has not created a way out. It has created a pause - a breathing space in which peace might eventually become imaginable. Mistaking a pause for ripeness is how mediators overplay their hand and lose the trust of the very party they most need at the table."

Read More: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2605324/pakistans-unlikely-mediation-and-what-it-must-do-next>

Condoning the Terror

Omay Aimen | 07 April 2026

"The people of Balochistan deserve a future defined by opportunity, not one held hostage by competing propaganda. Distinguishing between legitimate dissent and the instrumentalisation of human rights is essential, and it is only through such clarity that an honest and constructive dialogue can emerge."

Read More: <https://www.nation.com.pk/07-Apr-2026/condoning-terror>

The Myth of Innocence

Muhammad Umair Tariq | 24 April 2026

"We can continue to hide behind the myth of innocence, abandoning our children to the education of the street, or we can take control. By embracing a structured, professionally delivered model of safety education rooted in our own traditions of Adab and privacy, we can build a meaningful defence. Predators rely on silence. It is time we replaced it with clarity."

Read More: <https://www.nation.com.pk/24-Apr-2026/myth-innocence>

Pakistan's Promised Prosperity is a Castle in Air

Dr. Shujjat Ahmed | 27 April 2026

"Pakistan's persistent economic failures mirror political and governance dysfunction. It has become a fact deepened by our national fallacy of doing the same things again and again and expecting different outcomes. Without changing this self-indulgent, insulated mindset, we will keep dramatising and fictionalising our poor performance as triumphs."

Read More: <https://www.thefridaytimes.com/27-Apr-2026/pakistan-s-promised-prosperity-castle-air>

Mining in Pakistan: A Call for Safety

Dr Zafar Khan Safdar | 28 April 2026

“Pakistan’s mining sector does not lack potential but a safety revolution. Such a revolution requires more than condolences after each tragedy. It demands enforceable national standards aligned with international conventions. It requires provincial inspectorates to be empowered, resourced, and held accountable.”

Read More: <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2026/04/28/mining-in-pakistan-a-call-for-safety>

Struggling at Home

Dr Niaz Murtaza | 28 April 2026

“If war makes Iran unstable, militancy in Balochistan may increase. It may also increase as a result of mining in the province. Insecurity will be further intensified if we unwittingly get sucked into the three Middle East conflicts: Iran-Arab, Israel-Arab and intra-Arab.”

Read More: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1995689/struggling-at-home>

Predatory Financing

Hameedullah Jan Afridi | 30 April 2026

“The people of Fata were promised inclusion. What they received was a constitutional amendment and, in its wake, continuing fiscal silence of nearly a decade. The debt that remains is more than financial; it is constitutional, moral and long due. The state that merged these districts into its mainstream cannot, in the same breath, exclude them from its resources.”

Read More: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1996258/predatory-financing>

From Investment to Stability: China’s Recalibration in Afghanistan

Salma Alokozai | 19 April 2026

“The Taliban appeared to offer China and Pakistan a rare strategic convergence: a regime that could stabilize Afghanistan, facilitate access to its vast natural resources, and integrate the country into regional economic corridors. For China, this presented an opportunity to expand its economic and geopolitical footprint westward; for Pakistan, it reinforced long-standing ambitions to position itself at the center of regional connectivity.”

Read More: <https://8am.media/eng/china-afghanistan-investment/>

Afghanistan's Response and the Price of Empty Words

Dr. Usman | 15 April 2026

"Afghanistan does not need a softer public relations line. It needs proof that it can act like a responsible state. That means controlling armed groups, respecting borders, treating its own people with dignity, and showing neighbours that Afghan soil will not be used to spread fear."

Read More: <https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2026/04/15/afghanistans-response-and-the-price-of-empty-words/>

The Durand Line Issue: How can Ethnic Politics be Resisted?

Rastakhiz Shoala | 27 April 2026

"Confronting ethnic politics in Afghanistan faces serious challenges. This politics is rooted not only in power structures but also in minds and everyday discourse. From political leaders to social media users, all are in some way involved in its reproduction."

Read More: <https://8am.media/eng/durand-line-issue-ethnic-politics/>

A Year into the MAHASAGAR

Radhey Tambi | 06 April 2026

"The Indian Ocean becomes more congested and contested in the times to come, India's traditional space of action could potentially shrink. Additionally, the use of leverage by smaller countries, in particular island countries, will rise exponentially."

Read More: <https://capssindia.org/a-year-into-the-mahasagar/>

Bnagladesh and the IMF: Understanding the Reform Gap

Firoz Alam | 28 April 2026

"The IMF program was never simply about dollars. It was a framework for structural reforms that Bangladesh's economy genuinely needs -- greater revenue mobilization, a more resilient banking sector, reduced fiscal dependence on subsidies, and a more transparent exchange rate mechanism."

Read More: <https://www.dhakatribune.com/opinion/op-ed/408845/bangladesh-and-the-imf-understanding-the-reform>

Is Bangladesh-US Trade Deal a Backdoor for GMO Dumping?

Farida Akhter | 29 April 2026

“Under this trade agreement with the US, Bangladesh is not importing soybean and corn directly; they will come through the import of meat and dairy products and other soybean- and corn-based products. Besides, a genetically modified growth hormone called recombinant bovine somatotropin is used to increase cows’ milk production by 10-15 percent.”

Read More: <https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/views/news/bangladesh-us-trade-deal-backdoor-gmo-dumping-4163231>

Why is Bangladesh so Divided?

Md Yeasir Arafat | 14 April 2026

“For those who deeply understand the essence of 1971, the uprising of 2024 may be seen as a continuation of that very spirit, re-emerging across generations as a renewed call for justice, dignity, and collective responsibility”

Read More: <https://en.prothomalo.com/opinion/op-ed/ldgnqtw45w>

Bangladesh Must Balance Stabilisation and Reform

Fahmida Khatun | 18 April 2026

“Bangladesh’s graduation from LDC status reflects its development achievements, but it also entails the gradual withdrawal of trade preferences that currently support a large share of exports. Without improvements in productivity, diversification and competitiveness, the economy could face significant adjustment costs.”

Read More: <https://eastasiaforum.org/2026/04/18/bangladesh-must-balance-stabilisation-and-reform/>

What Sort of Government does BNP Want to Be?

AKM Zakaria | 20 April 2026

“By not passing these ordinances, the BNP has, to a considerable extent, handed over the sole agency of the mass uprising and reform agenda to Jamaat and the NCP. These two parties have now emerged as the bearers of reform.”

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

Bangladesh's Transition is Trapped by its Own Design

Faisal Mahmud | 25 April 2026

"The uprising is over. The real challenge now is alignment: Reconciling electoral mandate, constitutional procedure and transitional promises into a workable order. Until that happens, Bangladesh's new politics will be defined less by the strength of its mandate than by the fragility of the structure beneath it."

Read More: <https://kathmandupost.com/columns/2026/04/25/bangladesh-s-transition-is-trapped-by-its-own-design>

A Road Map to Boost Foreign Direct Investment in Bangladesh

Owais Parray and Kiyoshi Adachi | 28 April 2026

"While Bangladesh aspires to become a world-class manufacturing hub, the country's absolute and relative FDI performance continues to lag behind that of several regional peers, including Cambodia, Indonesia, and Vietnam, as well as averages for the ASEAN and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)—regional groups Bangladesh aims to join."

Read More: <https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/views/news/roadmap-boost-foreign-direct-investment-bangladesh-4162346>

Sri Lanka's Impending Energy Crisis: Implications for Political Stability

Rajni Gamage | 03 April 2026

"The duration of Sri Lanka's measures to manage an impending energy crisis remains uncertain. The country has already begun seeking alternatives; it recently received 38,000 metric tonnes of fuel from India and is exploring the possibility of procuring fuel from Russia following the temporary easing of certain Western sanctions."

Read More: <https://www.eurasiareview.com/03042026-sri-lankas-impending-energy-crisis-implications-for-political-stability-analysis/>

From Crisis to Catalyst: Why SL Must Embrace Floating Energy Infrastructure Now

Shashi Dhanatunge | 09 April 2026

"Sri Lanka stands at a crossroad. The choice is clear: continue reacting to global disruptions with costly, State-driven capital commitments or embrace a flexible, market-aligned, and strategically visionary energy infrastructure model that transforms crisis into catalyst."

Read More: <https://www.themorning.lk/articles/2WUvsJigrboPh6iFpcL2>

The Indispensable Island: Sri Lanka's Blueprint for Sovereign Survival

Maj. Gen Boniface Perera | 28 April 2026

"The nation does not need a savior; it needs a Grand Manager. With a vision that aligns its ecological 'heaven' with its geopolitical 'gravity', Sri Lanka will not just survive it will lead. The potential is there for all to see: a resilient, green, and blue powerhouse that stands as the true indispensable foundation of the Indian Ocean."

Read More: <https://www.dailymirror.lk/opinion/The-Indispensable-Island-Sri-Lankas-blueprint-for-sovereign-survival/172-338870>

Powering Up Nepal-India Ties

Angana Guha Roy | 15 April 2026

"The elevated Nepal-India digital partnership seeks to promote regional innovation and accelerate South Asia's digital transformation. In order to become operational the framework would require a foundation for structured collaboration and delivery, which is under discussion now."

Read More: <https://eastasiaforum.org/2026/04/15/powering-up-nepal-india-ties/>

The Geopolitics of the Plate: Nepal's Fragility in the Shadow of Iran Conflict

Purna Bahadur Pokhrel | 06 April 2026

"While missiles fall across the Persian Gulf, the economic casualties are mounting in local markets, forcing Nepal to pay a steep "Geopolitical Tax" for a war in which it is a non-combatant. This crisis reveals a fragile structural reality where the very act of cooking a meal in Kathmandu is tethered to the stability of energy corridors thousands of miles away."

Read More: <https://reviewnepal.com/articles/the-geopolitics-of-the-plate-nepal-s-fragility-in-the-shadow-of-the-iran-conflict.html>

Nepal's Rapper PM Takes on the Old Guard

Dr. Imran Khalid | 09 April 2026

"If Nepal can successfully transition from a "fragile democracy" defined by corruption to a "functional State" defined by the rule of law, it will provide a powerful template for youth-led movements across the Global South. The mandate is clear, and the first strikes against the old guard have been landed. Now comes the hard part: building a new system that is as robust as the one that it is tearing down."

Read More: <https://www.themorning.lk/articles/xL39hSokPpP8pBiJ9QhQ>

Nepal's AI Policy Exists: But is Nepal Ready?

Sanjib Shah | 14 April 2026

"Nepal stands at a critical turning point. The National AI Policy 2082 signals that the government recognises both the opportunities and risks associated with AI. The key question now is whether this signal will be matched by adequate resources, strong institutions, and real accountability. The global landscape is evolving rapidly."

Read More: <https://thehimalayantimes.com/opinion/nepals-ai-policy-exists-but-is-nepal-ready>

Nepal's LDC Graduation is a Structural Stress Test

Nischal Dhungel | 21 April 2026

"Nepal's LDC graduation exposes a structural gap in the country's development. Nepal's growth is primarily consumption-driven, financed by human capital outflows that fund essential imports. While international support provided a safety net, remittances drove this milestone. But relying on remittances also introduces economic fragility."

Read More: <https://eastasiaforum.org/2026/04/21/nepals-ldc-graduation-is-a-structural-stress-test/>

The Historical Footprint of Youth in Nepali Politics

Abhi Subedi | 25 April 2026

"The autocratic Rana rule always had the youths in its sights, whenever they made plans and took up the cudgels to introduce some modern changes in Nepal that they thought were for the youths. They did not want to see politically enlightened youths in the country."

Read More: <https://kathmandupost.com/columns/2026/04/25/the-historical-footprint-of-youth-in-nepali-politics>

Nepal's Education Policy Crisis

Kamana Adhikari | 29 April 2026

"The concern is not that any party in Nepal today intends harm. The concern is structural: that a system designed to be this responsive to political change will, over time, be shaped by the full range of political forces that pass through it. History teaches that those forces are not always benign."

Read More: <https://myrepublica.nagariknetwork.com/news/nepals-education-policy-crisis-80-36.html>

Moscow Worried by Rise of Pan-Turkism Across Central Asia

Paul Goble | 29 April 2026

“What Russians are again calling pan-Turkism, however, is far more likely to be about promoting unity among Central Asian countries and Azerbaijan than about Turkish dominance, although this is certainly taking place or even to serve in the more distant future, as Russian commentators fear, as the basis for a NATO backed effort to undermine the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation itself.”

Read More: <https://www.eurasiareview.com/29042026-moscow-worried-by-rise-of-pan-turkism-across-central-asia-analysis/>

Kazakhstan's New Constitution Sends a Key Signal for Global Partners

Javier M. Piedra | 09 April 2026

“Backed by a clear majority, Kazakhstan’s leadership is seeking to strengthen governance by redistributing power, lessening political ambiguity, and grounding politics in shared values—however difficult that may be to accomplish. All of this is being pursued despite—and perhaps because of—the nation’s history of corruption and nepotism.”

Read More: <https://timesca.com/kazakhstans-new-constitution-sends-a-key-signal-for-global-partners/>

From Tradition to Transformation: Rethinking Volunteering in Central Asia

Haoliang Xu | 16 April 2026

“The International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development should not be another awareness campaign. It can be a turning point—a moment to invest in regional and national systems that make volunteerism more effective, more inclusive, and more visible in Central Asia’s development.”

Read More: <https://astanatimes.com/2026/04/from-tradition-to-transformation-rethinking-volunteering-in-central-asia/>

Central Asia's Ascent: From Geopolitical Object to Collective Actor

Islam Supyaldiyarov | 21 April 2026

“The idea of Central Asia as a place of creation and not a geopolitical confrontation, formulated by President Tokayev during the first China-Central Asia summit, was more than a diplomatic rhetoric.”

Read More: <https://www.e-ir.info/2026/04/21/central-asias-ascent-from-geopolitical-object-to-collective-actor/>

As Water Runs Short, Uzbekistan Faces New Migration Pressure

Kodirjon Eshonkulov | 28 April 2026

“Uzbekistan’s climate migration problem cannot be solved by managing water resources alone. This requires a new strategic framework, a “Water-Migration-Security” strategy that combines regional cooperation, innovative water-saving technologies in agriculture, and proactive adaptation measures for the communities most at risk.”

Read More: <https://timesca.com/opinion-as-water-runs-short-uzbekistan-faces-new-migration-pressure/>

Political Legitimacy, Monarchy, and Democratic Transition in Iran

Ramesh Sepehrrad | 13 April 2026

“The Iranian case thus sharpens transition theory: symbolic capital can accumulate much faster than organizational capacity, especially when exile media, foreign commentary, and wartime conditions convert recognizability into presumed mandate.”

Read More: <https://www.e-ir.info/2026/04/13/political-legitimacy-monarchy-and-democratic-transition-in-iran/>

The War on Iran is Eroding Nuclear Non-Proliferation

Olamide Samuel | 27 April 2026

“Iran is unlike any other non-nuclear-weapon state under the NPT, and has given the world reasons to be concerned about its nuclear activities. The IAEA has raised questions about Iran’s unresolved safeguards issues, limited inspector access and its accumulation of uranium enriched far beyond normal civilian needs.”

Read More: <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2026/4/27/the-war-on-iran-is-eroding-nuclear-non-proliferation>

The Hormuz Blockade: War Behind the Ceasefire

Mohammad Abdur Razzak | 26 April 2026

“By imposing a naval blockade while simultaneously claiming to uphold a ceasefire, the United States has exposed a dangerous contradiction at the heart of its foreign policy, one that undermines the very foundations of international law.”

Read More: <https://en.prothomalo.com/opinion/op-ed/3pit7cvizq>

Removing Netanyahu Must Not be Rival's Sole Aim

Hani Hazaimah | 28 April 2026

“Netanyahu’s departure would not signal true national renewal — it would merely confirm that Israel has changed its leadership while preserving its crisis. And perhaps that is the greatest danger of all: not that Netanyahu stays but that Israel removes him without truly changing course.”

Read More: <https://timesca.com/opinion-islamic-state-khorasan-province-and-the-strategic-risks-for-central-asia/>

REGION IN PICTURES

Prime Minister of Sri Lanka Dr. Harini Amarasuriya hosted the Vice President of India Shri C. P. Radhakrishnan during his visit to Sri Lanka on 19 April 2026.



Pic Credits: Ministry of External Affairs of India

Ministry of External Affairs Secretary (South) Neena Malhotra poses for a group photograph during the BRICS MENA meeting in New Delhi, on 24 April 2026.



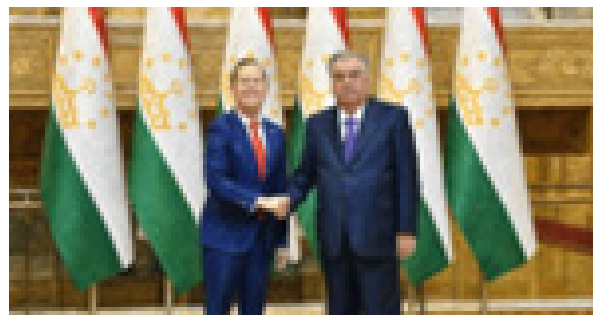
Pic Credits: The Hindu

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi met with Pakistani Army Chief Field Marshal Asim Munir in Islamabad, Pakistan on 26 April 2026.



Pic Credits: Islamic Republic News Agency

Tajik President Emomali Rahmon met Special Envoy of the President of the United States for South and Central Asia Sergio Gor in Dushanbe for talks on 28 April 2026.



Pic Credits: The Times of Central Asia



**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).

Centre for Aerospace Power and Strategic Studies
P-284, Arjan Path, Subroto Park, New Delhi 110010
Tel: +91 11 25699130/32, Fax: +91 11 25682533

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

Editor: Dr Shalini Chawla e-mail: shaluchawla@yahoo.com

Compilation and Designing: Ms Priyadarshini Baruah and Mr Rohit Singh

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