



Centre for Aerospace Power and Strategic Studies



Centre for Aerospace Power and Strategic Studies

Opinions and Trends

58/26

Neighbourhood Insights Series

June 2026

The Sino-Pak Partnership

Muhammad Zahid Rifat | 05 June 2026

“Pakistan is seeking long-term economic modernisation and export-led growth, and CPEC 2.0 is expected to play a central role in this process. Both countries also agreed to move faster towards building an even closer China-Pakistan community with a mutually shared future.”

Read More: <https://www.nation.com.pk/05-Jun-2026/sino-pak-partnership>

The Elements of Hedging: Great Power Competition and Pakistan's Resource Diplomacy

Muhammad Adeel Qureshi | 16 June 2026

“If Islamabad can maintain this independent, strategically coherent foreign policy path, it can successfully transform its mountains from a site of regional vulnerability into an indispensable node of global energy and defense architecture. The geology is settled. The politics are not.”

Read More: <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2026/06/16/the-elements-of-hedging-great-power-competition-and-pakistans-resource-diplomacy>

Focus Shifts to Technical-Level Talks

Aamir Ilyas Rana | 19 June 2026

“Pakistan has achieved what officials laud as a diplomatic breakthrough few believed possible, helping steer the United States and Iran away from a deepening crisis and laying down a structured framework for reconciliation and implementation of their emerging agreement.”

Read More: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2614010/focus-shifts-to-technical-level-talks>

New Challenges

Huma Yusuf | 22 June 2026

“Pakistan will only remain a meaningful Middle Eastern player if it benefits equally from the strengthening ties. The relations will have to transcend securitised transactionalism to more holistic strategic cooperation, particularly in areas such as climate change and the future of work.”

Read More: <https://www.dawn.com/news/2009895/new-challenges>

Breaking Pakistan's LNG Dependence Cycle

Haneeza Isaad and Sam Reynolds | 10 June 2026

“Pakistan's LNG supply has been severely disrupted by the US–Israel war on Iran, exposing the country's heavy reliance on Qatari gas and leaving it vulnerable to spot market price spikes and power shortages as summer approaches.”

Read More: <https://eastasiaforum.org/2026/06/10/breaking-pakistans-lng-dependence-cycle/>

Can Colonial-Era Bureaucracy still Serve Pakistan Today?

M Shaban Uppal | 14 June 2026

“The issue is not whether Pakistan continues to attract talented young people into public service, but whether the system they enter is designed to nurture their abilities, develop their expertise, and deploy their talents where they can contribute most effectively.”

Read More: <https://www.thefridaytimes.com/14-Jun-2026/can-colonial-era-bureaucracy-still-serve-pakistan-today>

Digitally Sustainable Pakistan

Attiya Munawer | 14 June 2026

“Instead of being satisfied with claims of technological systems installation data, the government must devise a universal digital and automated monitoring system that can monitor the emissions of these factories round the clock.”

Read More: <https://www.nation.com.pk/14-Jun-2026/digitally-sustainable-pakistan>

Beyond the Numbers

Arifa Noor | 16 June 2026

“But despite the good news, the budget even in its current shape makes it clear the government, like its predecessors, has continued with some of its bad habits. Once again, real estate has emerged as the sector which will get concessions to provide a ‘kick’ to the economy.”

Read More: <https://www.dawn.com/news/2008237/beyond-the-numbers>

Policies Without Budget

Ali Tauqeer Sheikh | 18 June 2026

“Most of Pakistan’s climate policies are neither formally approved nor notified. The Federal Appropriation Act can only fund programmes anchored in policies duly approved by the relevant forum and notified in the Gazette of Pakistan.”

Read More: <https://www.dawn.com/news/2008724/policies-without-budget>

Thar Coal and Pakistan’s Imperative for Energy Sovereignty and Economic Resilience

Muhammad Ali | 19 June 2026

“Pakistan cannot control geopolitical crises or global commodity markets, but it can reduce its exposure to them by accelerating the development and utilisation of Thar coal as a cornerstone of energy security and economic resilience.”

Read More: <https://www.thefridaytimes.com/19-Jun-2026/thar-coal-pakistan-s-imperative-energy-sovereignty-economic-resilience>

Pakistan Needs to Rethink Healthcare

Sayed Mohammad Ali | 19 June 2026

“Despite a modest increase, the health sector's share in the overall social sector development budget stands at 2.2% of the total social sector allocation for the current fiscal year. Yet, Pakistan's health outcomes continue to underperform against regional benchmarks.”

Read More: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2613923/pakistan-needs-to-rethink-healthcare>

Inside the New Face of Baloch Militancy

Naveed Hussain | 21 June 2026

“The weaponisation of women in Baloch militancy reflects a troubling intersection of militant adaptation and societal vulnerability. By exploiting cultural norms, psychological manipulation, and digital propaganda, these networks promote a false narrative of empowerment.”

Read More: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2614279/inside-the-new-face-of-baloch-militancy>

Parliamentary Budget Office

Ahmed Bilal Mehboob | 21 June 2026

“While Pakistani legislators may continue to seek the creation of an independent parliamentary budget office, a practical compromise solution may be to strengthen the staffing of the Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue, both quantitatively and qualitatively.”

Read More: <https://www.dawn.com/news/2009619/parliamentary-budget-office>

Is the Taliban-Russia MoU Good for Afghanistan?

Shahmehmood Miakhel | 02 June 2026

“Afghanistan’s future stability and international standing will depend less on security memoranda with major powers and more on the creation of a political order that enjoys the confidence and support of its own people.”

Read More: <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2026/6/2/is-the-taliban-russia-mou-good-for-afghanistan>

Afghanistan's Tragedy

Dr. Muhammad Tayyab Khan Singhanvi | 02 June 2026

"Under the leadership of Hibatullah Akhundzada, the prevailing administrative order is frequently characterised by critics as an ideological absolutism in which public welfare has been subordinated to rigid doctrinal interpretation."

Read More: <https://www.nation.com.pk/02-Jun-2026/afghanistan-s-tragedy>

The End of Armed Struggle and the Beginning of an Awareness Movement

Arian Nasiri and Farhaad | 22 June 2026

"Afghanistan will be saved when its people once again see themselves as the owners of this land, not as spectators, not as victims, and not as tools in others' wars, but as the true masters of their own destiny. This struggle began late, but it remains possible."

Read More: <https://8am.media/eng/the-end-of-armed-struggle-and-the-beginning-of-an-awareness-movement/>

US Energy Deal Leaves Bangladesh Exposed

Moniruzzaman | 11 June 2026

"With around 95 per cent of its oil and fuel imported, Bangladesh was left paying more for rerouted US energy supplies, seeking Washington's approval to buy cheaper Russian diesel and constrained in its foreign policy."

Read More: <https://eastasiaforum.org/2026/06/11/us-energy-deal-leaves-bangladesh-exposed/>

Pakistan's Move to MENAAP: Why Bangladesh should Pay Attention

Jamil Iqbal | 18 June 2026

"Pakistan has been moved to another place on the development map. Bangladesh remains in South Asia, for now. The question is what we do with that position and whether we learn anything from watching a neighbour's reclassification before it is too late to shape our own trajectory."

Read More: <https://www.dhakatribune.com/opinion/longform/412956/pakistan%E2%80%99s-move-to-menaap-why-bangladesh-should>

Will the Agreement with the US Resolve Bangladesh's Energy Crisis?

Moshahida Sultana | 19 June 2026

"Bangladesh will remain trapped in this cycle of dependency if one ministry advocates for sustainable energy, while another signs agreements that contradict sustainable energy policies. Any agreement with foreign countries should be consistent with the country's own predetermined energy strategy."

Read More: <https://en.prothomalo.com/opinion/op-ed/efr6p4nyv5>

Setting Sail Again on the Rising Tide of the East

Yao Wen | 22 June 2026

"As exchanges on governance experience continue to deepen, political mutual trust between China and Bangladesh will become even stronger, and bilateral relations will continue to make steady and sustained progress."

Read More: <https://en.prothomalo.com/opinion/76nohhq0zy>

Bangladesh's Rightward Shift Leaves Pluralism Stranded

Ragib Anjum | 06 June 2026

"The BNP's strategic problem is both domestic and regional. As a centre-right party, it could compete with the religious right while still defending pluralism, minority rights and civic nationalism."

Read More: <https://eastasiaforum.org/2026/06/06/bangladeshs-rightward-shift-leaves-pluralism-stranded/>

Bangladesh's Revenue System is Failing the Nation

Sabbir Ahmad | 11 June 2026

"Transform tax compliance into a natural, straightforward choice rather than an administrative penalty. This transition has always been critical, but has now become an urgent necessity as a fragile domestic economy prepares for its upcoming LDC graduation timeline."

Read More: <https://www.dhakatribune.com/opinion/longform/412273/bangladesh%E2%80%99s-revenue-system-is-failing-the-nation>

Understanding Bangladesh's Growing Strategic Relevance

Siamul Huq Rabbany | 18 June 2026

"For decades, Bangladesh sought greater integration into the global economy. Today, it faces a different challenge: Managing the opportunities and expectations that come with growing geopolitical relevance."

Read More: <https://www.dhakatribune.com/opinion/op-ed/412953/understanding-bangladesh-s-growing-strategic>

The Budget has Revived Focus on Blue Economy, but there's a lot of Catching Up to Do

Md Syful Islam | 18 June 2026

"Whether this portion of the sea ends up as an economy of our own or becomes a buffer in someone else's calculations will depend on the decisions Bangladesh makes in the coming days and the institutional capacity we choose to build around these decisions."

Read More: <https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/views/news/the-budget-has-revived-focus-blue-economy-theres-lot-catching-do-4201501>

Does the Government Really Want an Independent NHRC?

Iftekharuzzaman | 20 June 2026

"The draft NHRC Act grossly undermines the commission's authority to investigate alleged human rights violations by government employees and members of law enforcement, security and armed forces. Unlike the 2025 ordinance, it imposes a requirement on the NHRC to seek prior permission from the government or the relevant appointing authority."

Read More: <https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/news/does-the-government-really-want-independent-nhrc-4203026>

Walk the Talk: Japan Urges Sri Lanka to Act on Export Corridor Plan

Sunil Jayasiri | 11 June 2026

"As Sri Lanka navigates its post-crisis economic recovery, the Ambassador of Japan to Sri Lanka Akio Isomata has urged the country to move from policy discussions to implementation, warning that opportunities for investment and export-led growth cannot be delayed indefinitely."

Read More: <https://www.dailymirror.lk/hard-talk/Walk-the-Talk-Japan-urges-Sri-Lanka-to-act-on-export-corridor-plan/334-342572>

An Opposition in Search of Unity

Lakdev Liyanagama | 04 June 2026

“While Premadasa and Rajapaksa have the support of two established political parties, the Samagi Jana Balavegaya (SJB) and the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) respectively, the parties of Ranawaka and Jayaweera lack a substantial following among voters and are relatively unknown.”

Read More: <https://dailynews.lk/2026/06/04/features/1005446/an-opposition-in-search-of-unity/>

Can the Sri Lankan Public Sector be Revived?

Dr. Nalin Jayasuriya | 10 June 2026

“Reviving the Sri Lankan public sector requires a comprehensive and long-term strategy. The first priority should be improving efficiency and productivity. The objective should not merely be reducing the number of employees but ensuring that every employee contributes effectively to organizational goals.”

Read More: <https://www.dailymirror.lk/opinion/Can-the-Sri-Lankan-public-sector-be-revived/172-342456>

Sri Lanka's Joining the RCEP – Opportunities and Challenges

P.K. Balachandran | 13 June 2026

“RCEP involves a diverse group of economies with different priorities. While the RCEP offers great scope for Sri Lanka to expand production and trade, it also requires the adoption of a totally different system which might not be easy.”

Read More: <https://www.dailymirror.lk/opinion/Sri-Lankas-joining-the-RCEP-opportunities-and-challenges/172-342806>

Sri Lanka's War Beneath the Soil

Nilantha Ilangamuwa | 14 June 2026

“The minefields will eventually disappear from maps, but they will persist in procedural archives and in the habits of those who once had to assume the ground was hostile by default. In that sense, demining in northern Sri Lanka is not only about removal. It is about sustained distrust of the earth, carefully managed until it becomes safe to trust again.”

Read More: <https://www.themorning.lk/articles/XCZo0ZRX03u2KpOfDict>

Wake Up Call for Sri Lankan Trade Bureaucrats and Diplomats

Sugeeswara Senadhira | 19 June 2026

“Sri Lankan diplomats and trade bureaucrats have missed two opportunities to point out country’s genuine concerns to USTR. At least now they should prepare to make amends and present the Sri Lankan case.”

Read More: <https://www.dhakatribune.com/opinion/op-ed/410912/the-cotton-gambit>

AKD, JVP/NPP Govt. Push Economic Momentum as Political Challenges Mount on Multiple Fronts

Capt. Vasabha | 21 June 2026

“The figures offer the Government an opportunity to strengthen its argument that economic stability and recovery are taking root despite a challenging global and domestic environment. However, sustaining growth will require translating macroeconomic gains into visible improvements where public expectations remain high.”

Read More: [Read More: https://www.themorning.lk/articles/j5M5Ztenso5SbqgYh4Uk](https://www.themorning.lk/articles/j5M5Ztenso5SbqgYh4Uk)

Post Gen Z Movement Budget: Overambitious, Little Realistic

Jiba Raj Pokharel | 06 June 2026

“The government, however, presented an overambitious budget, the largest of its kind in the country’s history of a little over Rs 21 trillion. But the much-hyped budget is a bundle of mere sweet nothings camouflaged by verbal jargons.”

Read More: <https://thehimalayantimes.com/opinion/post-gen-z-movement-budget-overambitious-little-realistic>

Can the Balen-Rabi Wave Survive its own Friction?

Lok Raj Baral | 13 June 2026

“Opposition parties, in general, are either weakened due to both intra-party conflicts and the rise of the RSP as a major challenger. Yet, many things will depend on the RSP’s image of being a viable party.”

Read More: <https://kathmandupost.com/columns/2026/06/13/can-the-balen-rabi-wave-survive-its-own-friction>

Nepal's Shifting State-Citizen Compact

Biraj Bahadur Bista | 19 June 2026

“The RSP’s commitment to time-bound service delivery, such as digital citizen services, passport delivery, corruption response mechanisms, local governance digitization, etc. is, without doubt, a meaningful governance by any measure Nepal has seen.”

Read More: <https://myrepublica.nagariknetwork.com/news/nepals-shifting-state-citizen-compact-98-26.html>

The Future is Turquoise: Why Kazakhstan May Become One of Eurasia's New Model Regions

Norbert Csizmadia | 03 June 2026

“Astana is one of the clearest symbols of this new Eurasian future. Built in the middle of the steppe, it is not only a capital city but also a statement of ambition. Its modern architecture, international institutions, digital infrastructure and growing academic ecosystem show that Kazakhstan is not merely preserving its past; it is actively designing its future.”

Read More: <https://astanatimes.com/2026/06/the-future-is-turquoise-why-kazakhstan-may-become-one-of-eurasias-new-model-regions/>

Uzbekistan Mahallasi Opens in Turkey's Earthquake-Hit Hatay

Sadokat Jalolova | 17 June 2026

“A residential complex built by Uzbekistan in Turkey’s Hatay Province has officially become the center of a new neighborhood named “Uzbekistan Mahallasi,” marking another milestone in the growing partnership between the two countries.”

Read More: <https://timesca.com/uzbekistan-mahallasi-opens-in-turkeys-earthquake-hit-hatay/>

The War on Iran has a Balochistan Problem

Amira Jadoon and Colin P Clarke | 30 May 2026

“The Iran war is worsening Balochistan’s existing drivers of instability, insurgency, jihadist expansion, cross-border conflict and political marginalisation, threatening the very investments that the United States, China and Pakistan are each counting on.”

Read More: <https://eastasiaforum.org/2026/05/30/the-war-on-iran-has-a-balochistan-problem/>

‘Nothing is Over’: Iran-Israel Conflict Enters a New Phase

Negar Mojtahedi | 08 June 2026

“The missiles may have stopped flying between Iran and Israel. But by tying its ceasefire to Lebanon, Tehran has ensured that the next test of the truce may come not in Tehran or Tel Aviv, but on Israel’s northern border.”

Read More: <https://www.iranintl.com/en/202606087614>

A US-Iran Deal Alone Won’t Rescue Iran’s Oil Economy

Mehdi Moslehi | 19 June 2026

“Even if the newly signed memorandum evolves into a broader deal, rebuilding Iran’s lost energy capacity will require years of work, tens of billions of dollars in investment and the restoration of confidence among international investors and financial institutions.”

Read More: <https://www.iranintl.com/en/202606190007>

Trump’s Iran Deal: A Victory Before the Victory

Adolfo Franco | 19 June 2026

“Iran pledges not to “procure or develop” nuclear weapons - a commitment it has made and hollowed out before. The disposition of its enriched-uranium stockpile is left vague, dilution “on-site” rather than removal, with the harder question of enrichment rights kicked to the future.”

Read More: <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2026/6/19/trumps-iran-deal-a-victory-lap-before-the-victory>

Iran May get a Lifeline, but Major Obstacles Remain

Dalga Khatinoglu | 20 June 2026

“Given Tehran’s strained relations with many Arab states in recent years, enthusiasm among regional investors may remain limited, although countries such as Qatar and Oman could encourage some level of participation.”

Read More: <https://www.iranintl.com/en/202606204644>

Iran War and the Future of Modern Conflict

Dr Muhammad Ali Ehsan | 21 June 2026

“Bombing Iran back to the Stone Age was a poor maxim used by Trump. Now, standing between the rock and the hard place, both the political future of the US President and this deal virtually stand on thin ice.”

Read More: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2614293/iran-war-and-the-future-of-modern-conflict>

Paying Off Iran has Never Worked

Nadim Shehadi | 22 June 2026

“So, could the IRGC follow the same arc? It has spent four decades building not just a military network but a vast economic empire - construction, telecoms, logistics, banking. At some point, does an organization with that much to lose from instability become a stakeholder in stability? It is a tempting idea.”

Read More: <https://www.arabnews.com/node/2648145>

Why Mutual Assured Destruction will Not Work with Iran

Boaz Golany | 22 June 2026

“The recent conflict may have significantly damaged Iran's nuclear infrastructure, but infrastructure can be rebuilt. Scientists cannot be “uneducated,” engineering knowledge cannot be bombed away, and nuclear know-how cannot be permanently erased.”

Read More: <https://www.jpost.com/opinion/article-900126>

Armageddon, Qiyamah and the Hamas Massacre

Rabbi Allen S. Maller | 22 June 2026

“There will be no peace until both Palestinians and Israelis declare the chant ‘From the river to the sea’ becomes an aspirational call for freedom, human rights, and peaceful coexistence, and not death, destruction, or hate.”

Read More: <https://www.eurasiareview.com/22062026-armageddon-qiyamah-and-the-hamas-massacre-oped/>

REGION IN PICTURES

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi joined world leaders for the family photo at the 52nd G7 Summit in Évian, France on 16 June 2026.



Pic Credits: Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India

NSA Ajit Doval met Deputy Secretary for Defence Affairs of the SNSC of Iran, Ghadir Nezamipour on the sidelines of the 16th BRICS NSAs Meeting in New Delhi on 22 June 2026.



Pic Credits: Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India

A regular meeting of the Council of National Coordinators (CNC) of the SCO Member States was held in Tashkent under the chairmanship of the Kyrgyz side on June 16-19, 2026.



Pic Credits: The Wire

U.S. Vice President JD Vance, meets Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, aimed at advancing a deal to end the Middle East conflict in Switzerland on 21 June 2026.



Pic Credits: Spectrum News



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.