



NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC POLICY

OVERVIEW

The period under review encompasses incidents and developments across various domains, highlighting significant challenges and opportunities in Pakistan's policy landscape. The proposed military operation in Balochistan to address escalating militancy could achieve quick success if a calculated combination of kinetic measures and socio-economic interventions is implemented. Such efforts should also address pressing issues, like child abductions in the region. A revitalized National Counter-Terrorism Authority (Nacta) could play a pivotal role in providing civilian support and oversight for these operations. Similarly, the loss of soldiers and security personnel in parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and the sectarian violence in Kurram highlight the urgency for well-coordinated, technology-driven counter-terrorism (CT) operations.

Gwadar International Airport remains a cornerstone of economic growth under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), yet its potential is hindered by security challenges and weak marketing strategies. Strengthening governance and fostering inclusive development could unlock its full potential. Meanwhile, escalating militancy in KP underscores vulnerabilities in Pakistan's security frameworks, necessitating improved intelligence coordination, advanced surveillance, and community engagement to counter insurgencies effectively.

Climate resilience initiatives, such as the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) educational strategies and Pakistan's ecosystem-based adaptation plans, offer promising solutions to environmental challenges. However, execution gaps, particularly in funding and stakeholder coordination, remain significant barriers. Additionally, the timely introduction of the New Energy Vehicle (NEV) Policy signals progress, though its implementation must address concerns raised by the local auto industry.

The visit of the Belarusian President presents opportunities to strengthen bilateral trade and investment, especially in sectors like IT, machinery, and agriculture. Belarus' proximity to Russia also offers Pakistan a potential channel to advocate for peace in Gaza amid ongoing Israeli aggressions, which continue to provoke global condemnation. While the economy is on the right path, the ongoing political protests, especially emanating from KP, undermine the environment. Besides, the abuse of social media needs to be restrained in a reasonably.

Inside This Issue

✚ Govt unveils plan to crush militancy in Balochistan	2
✚ Terrorism galore-Need to tackle it	2
✚ Belarus high-level Delegation visits Islamabad	3
✚ Building Climate Resilience: ADB's Educational strategies	4
✚ Ahsan seeks plan to commercialise Gwadar airport	5
✚ Fresh Policy to transition 30 percent vehicles to Electric	6
✚ Policy Nuggets	7

Govt Unveils Plan to Crush Militancy in Balochistan



The National Action Plan (NAP) apex committee has approved a military operation in Balochistan to counter militancy and separatism, targeting groups such as the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) and its affiliates. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif stressed the importance of unified political and military efforts under *Vision Azm-i-Istehkam* to address terrorism, sub-nationalism, and disinformation campaigns.

Key decisions included revitalizing the National Counter-Terrorism Authority (Nacta) and establishing intelligence fusion centers. The government underscored the link between political and economic stability and called for national consensus to effectively combat terrorism.

Analysis

The approval of a military operation in Balochistan signals Pakistan's intensified commitment to counter separatism and terrorism that threaten national stability and economic progress. However, the reliance on military measures highlights the ongoing challenges in addressing the socio-political grievances that often fuel unrest. Revitalizing Nacta and establishing intelligence fusion centers are positive steps toward a more integrated counter-terrorism framework. While the emphasis on national consensus and cohesive political support is critical, achieving this remains difficult amid deep political divides. Furthermore, while the government ties terrorism control to economic progress, these operations must be complemented by socio-economic development to ensure sustainable stability.

Way Forward

- Kinetic force with care: Military operations should avoid overkill to prevent collateral damage and public reaction.
- Strengthen Nacta: Activate Nacta and equip it with adequate resources, operational autonomy, and efficiency.
- Foster Political Consensus: Political parties of Balochistan should be taken into confidence.
- Engage Local Communities: Promote dialogue and development projects in Balochistan.

Terrorism galore-Need to tackle it

In the first two days of the week under review over two dozen security personnel lost their lives in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, reflecting a troubling escalation in militant violence in the region. Eight security personnel were martyred, and three others sustained injuries during intense gun battles in Tirah Valley in an assault on a military camp near the Bagh-Maidan Markaz. In the exchange of fire, nine 'Khawarij' (militants) were also killed. Next day a suicide attack targeted the Mali Khel checkpoint in Bannu, causing significant casualties. The same day, twelve security personnel were martyred, and six militants were neutralized

following another attack on a checkpoint in Mali Khel. After four days there was a mayhem in Mandori Charkela area of Kurram in which at least forty persons, all Shias, were killed in attacks on two convoys of residents of the area. It led to retaliatory attacks resulting in more deaths from other groups.

Analysis

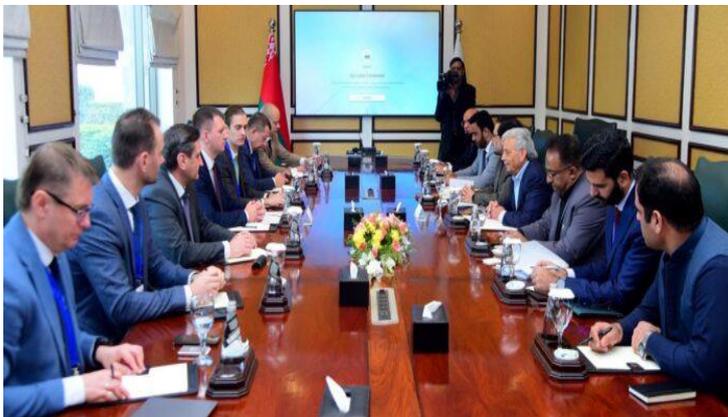
These incidents are part of a broader trend of increasing militant activity in some parts of KP. The resurgence of militancy poses significant challenges to regional security and underscores the need for enhanced counter-terrorism measures. The militants' ability to carry out such attacks indicates sophisticated planning and access to resources, raising concerns about their organizational strength and intent to destabilize the region further. This series of attacks calls for immediate measures to address the vulnerabilities in security infrastructure and operational readiness.

Way Forward

- Strengthening intelligence coordination among the military, police, and intelligence agencies is imperative.
- Advanced surveillance technologies, including drones and AI-based monitoring systems, should be deployed.
- Community participation will be key to undermining the support base of militant groups.
- Rapid Force (RF) and private military companies (PMCs) must be raised.

International Relations

Belarus Delegation Visits Islamabad



A 68-member delegation from Belarus, including ministers and 43 business leaders, arrived in Islamabad ahead of President Aleksandr Lukashenko's state visit. The delegation aims to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) outlining a trade roadmap for 2025-2027. Key officials include Belarusian ministers of energy, justice, transport, natural resources, and emergencies, as well as the chairman of the Military Industry Committee.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi emphasized Pakistan's commitment to strengthening ties with Belarus, highlighting the potential for enhanced cooperation in trade, industry, and other sectors.

Analysis

Belarus is a strategically located in the heart of Europe. It has strong industrial, agricultural and IT sectors. Pakistan can benefit from these strengths of Belarus. Pakistan and Belarus share strong trade relations, with Belarus exporting machinery, industrial equipment, and fertilizers, while Pakistan primarily exports textiles, rice, and leather goods. The visit is expected to open avenues in untapped sectors such as IT, pharmaceuticals, and education. The planned MoU seeks to reduce tariffs and improve logistics to boost

bilateral trade. Both nations aim to leverage their strengths to achieve mutual economic growth, with a focus on expanding trade in machinery, chemicals, and electronics.

Way Forward

- Encourage investment: Cheap labour and conducive environment can attract investment from Belarus in automotive, aerospace and machinery sectors.
- Get access to European markets: Belarus' proximity to European markets should be exploited to avail opportunities for trade and investment.
- Exchange of Establish Joint Trade Committees: Create platforms for regular dialogue to address trade barriers and explore sector-specific opportunities.
- Organize Trade Missions: Facilitate business delegations to identify partnerships and investment prospects.
- Utilize Digital Platforms: Develop software development companies and IT parks with the help of Belarus.

Environment

Building Climate Resilience: ADB's Educational Strategies and Pakistan's Ecosystem-Based Adaptation Plans

Reports from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Pakistan's adaptation plans underscore the importance of climate resilience in education and water management. ADB's strategy emphasizes the development of climate-resilient schools, climate literacy, and green skills training. It proposes measures such as energy-efficient designs, renewable energy integration, and sustainable facilities to mitigate climate risks while delivering economic and educational benefits. Concurrently, Pakistan's adaptation initiatives,



including the \$4.4 million *Recharge Pakistan* project, prioritize ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA). These efforts focus on restoring wetlands, improving water quality, and addressing flood risks. By emphasizing community involvement and nature-based solutions, the project aims to enhance water resources and benefit millions directly and indirectly, fostering long-term resilience.

Analysis

Both strategies highlight the critical role of climate resilience in addressing challenges posed by global warming. ADB's focus on schools as hubs for climate action promotes long-term societal transformation through education and green skill development. Its approach integrates sustainable infrastructure practices with immediate and future climate goals. Pakistan's *Recharge Pakistan* project, on the other hand, tackles immediate flood risks through EbA and community participation, restoring ecosystems to support water management and biodiversity. However, these initiatives face challenges, including funding gaps, limited local engagement, and coordination issues among stakeholders. The success of these strategies depends on their translation into actionable, inclusive, and sustainable projects.

Way Forward

- Establish a National Climate Resilience Task Force: to oversee and align education, infrastructure, and ecosystem-based adaptation efforts under a cohesive national framework.
- Incentivize Private Sector Involvement: Encourage public-private partnerships through tax benefits and grants, reducing the reliance on limited public funds. Bind the private sector with low-investment, high-impact initiatives for building climate resilience.
- Develop Localized Climate Action Plans: to address unique environmental and socio-economic challenges, ensuring inclusivity and community-driven solutions for sustainable implementation.

Economy

Ahsan Seeks Plan to Commercialize Gwadar Airport in 3 Weeks

The New Gwadar International Airport, a flagship project under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), was developed with a \$230 million grant from China. Despite its inauguration by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chinese Premier Li Qiang last month, the airport remains underutilized due to failures by the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PCAA) and Pakistan Airport Authority (PAA) to market it internationally or engage consultants for its commercialization.



In a recent meeting, Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal criticized aviation authorities for delays and gave them a three-week deadline to present a detailed commercialization plan with clear timelines and stakeholder engagement strategies.

Analysis

Gwadar International Airport is a pivotal CPEC project, yet marketing failures and security challenges in Balochistan hinder its potential. While the PCAA and PAA are responsible for commercialization delays, the broader issue lies in the region's unstable security situation. Persistent violence and political instability deter foreign investment, economic activity, and trade through Gwadar Port. Without a secure and predictable environment, efforts to commercialize the airport are unlikely to yield significant economic change. Security is essential for protecting assets, enforcing contracts, and reducing the risks associated with political and legal uncertainties.

Way Forward:

- Develop and Enforce Marketing Plans: create and implement effective marketing and commercialization strategies.
- Strengthen Security Measures: Improve physical security, governance, and cybersecurity to protect investors and labor.
- Establish Conflict Resolution Mechanisms: to resolve disputes between foreign investors and local communities, ensuring investor interests.

- Promote CSR Initiatives: such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure, to build trust and enhance local stability.

Industry

Fresh Policy to transition 30 percent vehicles to Electric by 2030



Government has announced 'New Energy Vehicle (NEV) Policy' aimed at transitioning 30 per cent of all new vehicles, imported as well as locally manufactured in Pakistan, to electric power by 2030. The new policy includes electric vehicles (EVs) and other emerging energy sources like hydrogen. government introduced subsidies of Rs50,000 for electric motorcycles and Rs200,000 for three-wheelers (rickshaws), with a total allocation of Rs4 billion. These subsidies will be distributed through auctions.

However, after launch of the NEV policy, Pakistan Automotive Manufacturers Association (PAMA) issued statement expressing strong reservations about the potential impact of the new policy on the local auto industry.

Analysis

NEV policy is timely as there is an emerging trend and need to use electric vehicles, mostly electric cars and motor bikes for their significant benefits particularly in reducing environmental impact and improving energy efficiency. Transition is the need of the hour, but measures should be adopted to counter the potential impact of the new policy on the local auto industry. Traditional automakers, many of which have built their businesses around internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles, may adapt to rapidly shifting consumer preferences and regulatory pressures to reduce emissions.

Way Forward

- Motivate and facilitate the traditional auto-making industry proactively to adapt modern electronic vehicle manufacturing.
- Develop charging infrastructure to support electrical vehicle usage among the public.
- Increase public awareness of the environmental benefits, cost savings, and practical advantages of EVs through information campaigns.

Policy Nuggets

Incident/ News	Impact	Recommendation	Priority
IT firms, ISPs advise govt against ban on VPNs.	It can hit IT exports, financial transactions, and academic research.	Reasonable regulations should be adopted to ensure legitimate use of technology. <i>“Regulations must catch up with innovation, not stifle it.”</i>	Highest
Putin warns US with revised nuclear doctrine	In response to Ukraine’s attacks deep inside Russia with US-made ATACMS (Army Tactical Missile System) missiles.	Pakistan must play its role through China and Belarus to avert the impending WW III. <i>“In the nuclear age, the only way to win is to make sure it never starts.” – Adapted from John F. Kennedy</i>	Highest
Balochistan lawmakers seek action to stop child kidnappings.	the kidnapping of an 11-year-old boy had resulted in huge protests in Quetta.	Child security and protection should be accorded highest priority. <i>“Every child deserves to feel safe and protected, no matter where they live.”</i>	Highest
Showdown looms as govt vows to resist PTI march.	Zero tolerance policy, especially in presence of Belarus’ President and delegation, worked well.	Talks and stringent measures ought to be employed to maintain law and order, especially when a foreign dignitary is around. <i>“Dialogue is the foundation of resolution in all conflicts.”</i>	High
Islamabad again asks Kabul not to let Afghan soil be used against Pakistan	Attacks by TTP and IS elements based in Afghanistan have resulted in extreme violence and mayhem in KP and Balochistan.	Pakistan should ask the powers like China, Russia and the US to build pressure on Afghan Taliban government not to let Afghan be used for terrorist activities abroad, especially in Pakistan. <i>“Peace is achieved not through force, but through understanding and partnership.”</i>	Highest

Israel attacks central Beirut; 120 more killed in Gaza. UK, Ireland 'to arrest' Israeli PM on arrival.	Israel's criminal activities in Gaza and Beirut continued unabated, with impunity.	Muslim world, other countries and UN will have to pressurize Israel to the hilt to stop this genocide. <i>"Humanity must unite to end inhumanity."</i>	Highest
Warring tribes agree to ceasefire after Kurram bloodshed.	A lull in the storm and reprieve for seven days, at least.	Sustained talks and stringent security measures can ensure long lasting peace in the area. <i>"Peace is a journey of a thousand miles, and it must be taken one step at a time." – Lyndon B. Johnson</i>	Highest
Three more cases of poliovirus take year's tally to 55.	Alarming situation depicts the immunity gap among the children.	Devise new strategy to combat the outbreak. <i>"The fight against disease is a fight for a nation's future."</i>	High

Editorial Team

Dr. Naveed Elahi

Faryal Maaz

Naeema Naeem

Jahanzeb Waheed