

Starting from this week, this e-bulletin from IDSA will seek to focus on major developments in Pakistan on weekly basis and bring them to the notice of strategic analysts and policy makers in India.

## EDITORIAL

This week, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) order on Kulhushan Jadhav case was a significant development that dominated the print and electronic media in Pakistan. In this bulletin, an attempt has been made to understand the implications of the ICJ order and also look at other important issues pertaining to politics, economy and security.

## COMMENTARY

### Civil-Military Relations and Media

*Dr. Ashok Behuria, Senior Fellow, IDSA*

In a country like Pakistan, the performance of the democratically elected government is constantly under review by a hyper-vigilant military, which is a dominant stakeholder in the management of the affairs of the state. It has arrogated unto itself the extra-constitutional right to interpret what is in the national interest and what is not and assess the policies of the civilian government in light of it. In the post-2008 period, during the ongoing process of democratic revival, the military has been overzealous about protecting its power and it has reacted sharply to any real or imagined curtailment of its authority by the civilian government.

This is borne out by the military's well-known resistance to efforts aimed at revival of the process of normalization of relationship with India, its explicit or tacit encouragement to opposition political forces to launch 'dharnas' and 'marches' against the government, and its

disproportionate reactions to any suggestion to bring it under civilian control (memogate, Dawnleaks etc.).

It would not have been possible on the part of the military to retain its predominance without a significant and powerful section of the intelligentsia and opinion makers backing the view that civilian forces, even if duly elected through a democratic process, are utterly unreliable while the military, unelected and unimpeachable, has the legitimate power to evaluate and modify the government's policies. The military also has the instruments (through media and other propaganda tools) to whip up sentiments that sustain popular suspicion of the civilian government and confidence in the army as the institution of last resort in Pakistan.

In recent months, one has witnessed the debates in Pakistan over 'dawnleaks', which would not have led to any flutter in any other democratic country in the world. However, in Pakistan, as soon as a journalist published a report indicating civilian admonishment of the army over the latter's handling of the militant outfits, there was a raucous outpouring of emotions by commentators in the media (mainly in the vernacular media, but also in the English language) that it was utterly irresponsible for the government to leak out information to deliberately show the military in bad light!

The dawnleaks has taken its toll. A high-power investigation was carried out and as per its recommendations, some of the office bearers have been thrown out and actions are to be initiated against journalists reporting the case and publishing it in the newspaper. There was, in fact, a high-voltage political drama in the wake of the government's perceived non-seriousness about implementation of the recommendations of the joint inves-

tigation team (JIT) leading to another bout of media demonization of Nawaz Sharif and his team.

As if that was not enough, now the government has been forced to initiate measures to gag the media. Even as a new notification by the interior ministry on May 11, claimed that the "Dawnleaks" issue was settled, it observed that there was "a need to develop a Code of Conduct for the Print Media especially when dealing with issues relating to Security of Pakistan" as per the recommendations' of the Dawn Leaks Inquiry Committee vide Orders No. 1707/M/SPM/2017 dated 29th April 2017.

The Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) has issued a warning for all TV channels, in the meanwhile, against airing unverified news or analyses on Pakistan Army or its relationship with the civilian government. PEMRA has made it clear that all news and current affairs TV channels, including its employees, panelists and anchorpersons, shall not discuss unverified news or analyses pertaining to the country's civil-military relations without confirmation from the institutions concerned. What is particularly worrying is the fact that there was virtually no opposition to such a move. Good luck to democracy in Pakistan!

## THE WEEK AT A GLANCE

### OBOR/CPEC

#### OBOR Summit and Pakistan

At the OBOR Summit in Beijing on May 14-15, 2017, Pakistan and China signed six accords of cooperation which included the framework of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road initiative, two cooperation agreements worth \$333m for an airport in Gwadar, the site of a deep water port that is to provide an outlet to the Arabian Sea from the far western Chinese province of Xinjiang, establishment of the Havelian dry port in Pakistan, and agreement on economic and technical cooperation (\$160m) for the East Bay Expressway linking Gwadar to Pakistan's highway network. These agreements add to \$57bn already pledged for the CPEC. The following deals are among

the accords signed by two countries:

*Source: The Nation, <http://nation.com.pk/columns/20-May-2017/obor-summit-and-pakistan>*

#### China to invest \$50bn for mega dams in Pakistan

According to media reports on May 13, 2017, China and Pakistan signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to develop North Indus River Cascade with an estimated cost of US\$ 50 billion that has the potential of generating approximately 40,000mw of hydroelectric power. Under the initiative, five huge dams will be built in a region that starts from Skardu in Gilgit-Baltistan and runs through Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa as far as Tarbela, in the first-ever private sector investment in Pakistan's mega hydel projects. The MoU was signed by Water and Power Secretary Yousuf Naseem Khokhar and Chinese Ambassador in Pakistan Sun Weidong in the presence of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

As per MoU, China's National Energy Administration (NEA) would oversee financing and funding of Diamer Basha Dam (4500 MW), and hydropower projects at Patan (2,400 MW), Thakot (4000 MW), Bunji (7100 MW) and Dasu (4320 MW), with an estimated cumulative power generation capacity of 22,320mw, according to WAPDA estimates. This \$50 billion investment is in addition to the \$57 billion projects already being executed by Beijing in power and road infrastructure sectors in Pakistan under CPEC. It was reported that the NEA experts had already conducted feasibility study of the entire North Indus Cascade and China Three Gorges Corporation had expressed its willingness to participate in a financing consortium to fund these projects.

*Source: Daily Times <http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/14-May-17/china-to-invest-50bn-for-mega-dams-in-pakistan>*

#### Pakistan signs MoU with Alibaba to promote exports

On May 17, 2017, Pakistan signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Alibaba Group Holdings Limited in Hangzhou to promote the country's worldwide exports by small and medium enterprises through

e-commerce. The agreement between Alibaba and Trade Development Authority of Pakistan was signed by Commerce Minister Khurram Dastgir and Michael Evans, President of Alibaba Group, and Douglas Feagin, Senior Vice President of Global Business of Ant Financial, on behalf of Alibaba, during the visit of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to the headquarters of the company.

*<http://nation.com.pk/national/17-May-2017/pakistan-signs-mou-with-alibaba-to-promote-exports>*

### **Absence of Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister in OBOR Forum triggers strong reaction**

The absence of Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan, Hafiz Hafeezur Rehman in the Pakistan delegation that went to attend OBOR events in China has drawn strong reaction in the region. University students, lawyers and other professionals, have equated his absence in the delegation as a continuation of Pakistan's neglect of the strategic region that connects Pakistan with China, and through which the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor passes. Hundreds of memes, short write-ups, and statements posted on social media websites, like Facebook, are being used to protest the absence of Gilgit-Baltistan's elected Chief Minister in the delegation. A national daily, Pakistan Today, has reported that for 'unknown reasons' the name of Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan was allegedly dropped from the list of Pakistan's official delegation on the last minute.

*Source: Pamir Times: <http://pamirtimes.net/2017/05/13/absence-of-gilgit-baltistan-chief-minister-in-obor-forum-triggers-strong-reaction/>*

## **INTERNAL ISSUES**

### **Rising external deficit**

The latest data for the country's external account shows that the current account deficit is rising at a rapid pace. In the first 10 months of the fiscal year, the deficit has risen to \$7.2bn, more than triple the figure for the same period last year. Even month on month, between March and April of this year, there was a sharp spike of almost 100pc in the size of the deficit. The government attrib-

uted it to machinery imports.

*Source: Dawn <https://www.dawn.com/news/1333972/rising-external-deficit>*

### **Pakistan's solution to the energy crisis**

Pakistan's per capita consumption of electricity, estimated at 451 kWh, is only one-sixth of the world average of 2,730 kWh. It is increasing at the rate of 8 per cent a year. The International Energy Agency forecasts that total energy demand of the country will be 49GW in 2025. This means that Pakistan will need to generate an additional 28GW of electricity in the next eight years or 3,500MW a year. Pakistan will need to bring into production six power plants a year, each with the capacity to generate 600MW of power.

*Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1404028/pakistans-solution-energy-crisis/>*

### **TV channels warned for airing anti-army content**

Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) in its latest statement, made it clear that all news and current affairs TV channels, including its employees, panelists and anchorpersons, shall not discuss unverified news or analyses pertaining to the country's civil-military relations without confirmation from the institutions concerned. The content would be especially problematic if it accuses the military of something, and tarnishes its 'image' or if it encourages anyone to take extra-constitutional measures.

*Source: <http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/13-May-17/tv-channels-warned-for-airing-anti-army-content>*

## **DAWN LEAKS**

### **Dawn Leaks issue stands settled: Govt**

According to a new notification by the Interior Ministry on May 11, the issue of Dawn Leaks were settled "Since action on orders of the Prime Minister has already been completed by the respective Ministries and Divisions, the issue of Dawn Leaks stands settled, "it said. The prime minister was pleased to approve the

'unanimous recommendations' of the Dawn Leaks Inquiry Committee vide Orders No. 1707/M/SPM/2017 dated 29th April 2017", the new notification reads. There is a need to develop a Code of Conduct for the Print Media especially when dealing with issues relating

to Security of Pakistan" and directed All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) "to take disciplinary action against Daily Dawn/Zafar Abbas/Cyril Almeida".

*Source: <http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/11-May-17/dawn-leaks-issue-stands-settled-govt>*