

## NEWSLETTER

January - March, 2021

ISSUE 03

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## **Spotlight 1: January**

### **Why India Wishes to Destabilize Pakistan?**

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*Maryam Mastoor, Research Analyst*

In a conflict ridden history of India and Pakistan relations, Pakistan for the first time has shared a dossier on Indian involvement in destabilizing Pakistan. The dossier contains evidence of Indian involvement in terrorist activities within Pakistan. It also alleges the Indian government of financially sponsoring terrorist activities in Pakistan. According to the dossier, India paid 820,000 dollars to the leadership of Tehrik e Taliban Pakistan. It is running 87 training camps out of which 66 are located in Afghanistan and 21 are located in India. With the dossier, the government of Pakistan wanted to convey to the world that India is actively involved in creating unrest in the country. And it also aims at jeopardizing China's project of China Pak Economic Corridor.

## **Spotlight 2: February**

### **Recklessness, War Crimes and the case of Afghanistan**

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*Zunaira Inam, Research Associate*

The recent news of the Australian troops perpetrating alleged war crimes on civilians and combatants within Afghanistan sparked a major outrage and uproar all over the world. Australia has been part of the of the US-led military coalition in Afghanistan since 2001. It is also a state party to the Rome Statute since 2002. As such, it is bound by the International Humanitarian Law (IHL). The principle of complementarity in Article 17 of the Rome Statute specifies that the International Criminal Court (ICC) "will only exercise its jurisdiction if a State fails to genuinely investigate and prosecute a situation in which crimes against international humanitarian law have been committed."<sup>1</sup> Essentially, it implies that until and unless Australia is unable or unwilling to prosecute, the jurisdiction remains with the state in question.

## **Spotlight 3: March**

### **The quandary of SAARC in the backdrop of COVID-19)**

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*Amna Nisar Abbasi, Asst. Research Officer*

With the spike of Covid-19 cases in March 2020, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi called the summit of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries to formulate a joint strategy to address "disease surveillance data in real time" to curb the spread of pandemic. The call for the summit was warmly received by all the member states. The Summit was held virtually on March 15, 2020 keeping into consideration the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. In the summit, all countries were represented by their heads of the governments except Pakistan. Pakistan deputed Dr. Zafar Mirza, de-facto health Minister for this meeting.



## Kashmir's Self Determination Day

*January 05, 2021*

The Institute of Regional Studies held an in-house Roundtable on 5th January on the occasion of Kashmir self-determination day. The event was moderated by Amna Nisar Abbasi, Asst. Research Officer. In her opening remarks, Ms. Abbasi stated that right of self-determination is an essential component of human dignity and its negation is actually a denial of basic human rights. The deteriorating human right situation in Kashmir followed by Indian unilateral revocation of special status on 5th August 2019, has necessitated immediate global intervention to implement UN resolution in its true spirit.



## Dr. Shireen M Mazari, Minister for Human Rights visits IRS

*January 06, 2021*

Shireen Mazari, Federal Minister for Human Rights visited the institute. President IRS, Ambassador Nadeem Riyaz gave her a detailed briefing on the functioning of the Institute. The visiting Minister was apprised about the scope of IRS research, its internship program, and IRS publications. She was informed about the new vision of IRS and the recent national and international collaborations which the Institute has signed in the last three months.



## India: A Hindu State?

January 12, 2021

Experts while speaking to the participants of a seminar opined that the future of democracy in India will continue to be overshadowed by the rising hyper-nationalists' sentiments in the country. They were of the view that both BJP and the Congress are two sides of the same coin when it comes to protect the Hindu identity of India. The seminar was organized by the Institute of Regional Studies organized on 'India: A Hindu State?', to discuss the future course of mainstream Hindutva policies and challenges for others. The panel of experts included Prof. Dr. Shaheen Akhtar from National Defence University, Islamabad, Dr. Muhammad Mujeeb Afzal, Asst. Professor from Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad and Dr. Asma Shakir Khuwaja, Associate Professor at National Defence University. Ms. Maryam Mastoor, Research Analyst from the Institute of Regional Studies was moderating the session.



## Sri Lanka and the Gunboat Diplomacies Around: Options and Challenges

January 20, 2021

"The competition in the Indian Ocean region does not necessarily present binary options for Sri Lanka," said political columnist and author of Sri Lanka at Crossroads: Geopolitical Challenges and National Interests Mr. Assanga Abeya-Goonasekera. He was speaking at a virtual conference titled "Sri Lanka and the Competing Gunboat Diplomacies Around: Options and Challenges" organized by the Institute of Regional Studies.



## IRS signs Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Quaid-i-Azam University

*January 22, 2021*

Institute of Regional Studies signed a memorandum of understanding with Quaid e Azam University on 22nd January, 2021. The two institutions pledged to cooperate in sharing knowledge and the research resources for benefit of the students at QAU and researchers at IRS for the period of three years.



## IRS signs Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Centre for International Peace and Stability (CIPS) NUST

*January 25, 2021*

IRS has signed memorandum of understanding with Centre for International Peace and Stability (CIPS) NUST on 25th January, 2021. The two institutions agreed to enhance mutual cooperation, in terms of research and education.



## India under Modi

*January 26, 2021*

Speakers of a panel discussion organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) here urged a consistent policy approach towards Kashmir by Pakistan. Speaking at the event titled 'India under Modi', former diplomat Amb Aziz Ahmed Khan called for a consistency of Pakistani stance on Kashmir in line with the UN Security Council resolutions. Dr. Zafar Nawaz Jaspal from Quaid e Azam University and Dr. Umer Cheema from NUML University also spoke on the event. Ms. Humera Iqbal, research analyst of IRS moderated the event.



## Speak for Freedom - Kashmir Solidarity Day Declamation Contest

*February 01, 2021*

Chairman Parliamentary Committee on Kashmir urged the youth to keep raising their voices against the Indian atrocities in the India-Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK). He was speaking at the prize distribution ceremony of the declamation contest "#speakforfreedom" organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) in collaboration with the Parliamentary Committee on Kashmir here on Monday. Mr Afridi was of the view that while India was ruled by one of the most extremist political forces, it had still projected its image of a shining country in the world. He urged the youth to use the internet and social media platform to raise voice for the Kashmiris.



## Standing with the Unheard Voices of Kashmir

*February 03, 2021*

Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mehmood Qureshi termed the revocation of Articles 370 and 35-A of the Indian Constitution on the part of the Indian government as reinvasion of the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). He was speaking at a seminar titled 'Standing with the Unheard Voices of Kashmir' organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS). He condemned the Indian action of issuance of over 1.8 million domicile certificates to non-residents of IIOJK under the watch of around one million-strong Indian forces stationed in the territory. He was of the view that the move was aimed at changing the demography of Kashmir. He added that India faced international censure for its August 2019 actions and called for greater focus on exposing Indian atrocities in Kashmir by engaging not only foreign governments but also foreign parliaments and think-tanks.



## Exhibition depicting 73 years long freedom movement of Kashmir

*February 04, 2021*

IRS in collaboration with Kashmir Committee organized an exhibition of pictures depicting human rights violations, armed struggle and atrocities of Indian forces in Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, at the premises of Pakistan's National Assembly. This event was held on 4th of February.



## Roundtable with H.E. Philippe Bronchain

*February 11, 2021*

The Institute of Regional Studies held a roundtable discussion with the Ambassador of Belgium H.E. Mr. Philippe Bronchain. H.E. Mr. Bronchain was accompanied by Mr. Sylvain Vanrie from the Embassy of Belgium in the roundtable discussion. The discussion covered a vast array of regional issues of mutual interest. The visiting delegation expressed a great amount of interest in the research and publications of IRS.



## US foreign policy towards South Asia under Joe Biden

*February 18, 2021*

Former Special Assistant to the Prime Minister with a status of a federal minister Amb Tariq Fatemi urged Pakistan to remain engaged with the US while enhancing cooperation with China. He was speaking at a seminar on the subject of US foreign policy towards South Asia under Joe Biden organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS).



## Disinformation as a Tool of Strategic Warfare

*February 22, 2021*

“India’s smear campaign against Pakistan has no limits,” said Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mehmood Qureshi. He was speaking at the concluding session of a seminar titled ‘Disinformation as a Tool of Strategic Warfare’ organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS). Referring to the recent report of the EU Disinformation Lab titled Indian Chronicles, the Foreign Minister stated that India had misused prestigious international and UN institutions for its nefarious designs. “Members of European Parliament were duped, disinformed and unabashedly manipulated” and “thinktanks, researchers and even students were used as pawns to peddle Indian fallacies,” said the Foreign Minister. Renowned speakers from Pakistan and other parts of the world participated in the event.



## The Inhumanity in Jammu and Kashmir

*March 04, 2021*

“There is a need for constituting an international tribunal on the pattern of Nuremberg for trying the Indians responsible for human rights violations in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir,” said the President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Sardar Masood Khan. He was speaking at a seminar on inhumanity in Kashmir organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS). Ms. Shabana Fayyaz and Ms Farzana Yaqoob also spoke on the event.



## PM Khan's Visit to Colombo

*March 05, 2021*

Experts were of the view that PM Khan’s visit to Sri Lanka is timely as it provided much needed boost to Pakistan-Sri Lankan relations. Also important in that the region is passing through rapid geostrategic transitions where Pakistan’s outreach was highly required. While speaking at the panel discussion on ‘PM Khan’s visit to Colombo’ organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), the panelists, however, stressed the need for institutionalization of bilateral relations between the two countries.



## Upscaling the Economic Activities Of CPEC: Opportunities and Challenges

*March 10, 2021*

“CPEC is not a debt trap. All CPEC projects in the energy sector are investments and loans constitute only a small proportion of the overall CPEC portfolio,” said Dr Ishrat Hussain, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Institutional Reforms and Austerity with a status of a Federal Minister. He was speaking at a seminar titled “Upscaling the Economic Activities of CPEC: Opportunities and Challenges” organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS).



## "A Good Neighbour is a Treasure and Better than a Distant Relative"

*March 11, 2021*

Ambassador Syed Hasan Javed, Director Chinese Studies Centre of Excellence, NUST visited IRS on 11th March, 2021 and spoke at a round table discussion with researchers at IRS. He elaborated upon China's amplified role in the region and the world.



## 1971: Fact and Fiction

*March 12, 2021*

Former Ambassador Mr. Afrasaib, and writer of a book '1971: Facts and Fiction' visited IRS and held a roundtable discussion on recollecting the facts regarding East Pakistan's tragedy.



## Roundtable with Ambassador Andreas Ferrarese

March 16, 2021

Italy's ambassador H.E Andreas Ferrarese visited IRS with a delegation. They held a meeting with IRS researchers and exchanged ideas about the region, and the world at large.



## ISLAMABAD SECURITY DIALOGUE 2021 - Together for Ideas

March 17 - 18, 2021

IRS had been a proud partner of the highly esteemed Islamabad dialogue. National Security Division of IRS closely collaborated with IRS to arrange the dialogue. It was held for the first time in history of Pakistan to document the prevailing narrative of the country. IRS proudly organized the third session of the dialogue. Instituting a Human Security Paradigm, was the third session of the Islamabad dialogue. Dr. Sania Nishtar, Dr. Faisal Sultan, Mr. Malik Amin, Mr. Ihsan Ghani were distinguished speakers of the session.

## Some experts of the speeches made by distinguished speakers at Islamabad Security Dialogue



### **Dr. Sania Nishtar**

Special Assistant of Pakistan's Prime Minister and Federal Minister, Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety

*"There are deep interlinkages between state and human security. And according to 1993 report, there were seven dimensions articulated in the report. Economic security, water security, food security, individual security, community security and health security. There is complex interdependence between these seven dimensions and state security"*



### **Dr. Faisal Sultan**

Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Health

*"In Pakistan's case one of the most important thing and one of the most important response was inclusivity and focus, and target of those who needed protection the most"*



### **Mr. Malik Amin Aslam**

Advisor to the Prime Minister on Climate Change

*"We are 135th on the list of countries even today which are contributing to the greenhouse gases. We are less than 1% in terms of the quantum of contributing greenhouse gases. But we are number 8th on the list of most vulnerable countries to the climate change"*



### **Mr. Ihsan Ghani**

Former National Coordinator, National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA)

*"Terrorism is a threat to the Constitution and countering terrorism is protecting the Constitution"*



## Cyber Threats and Pakistan's Response

March 30, 2021

Cybersecurity experts have warned that ungoverned rapid digitization in the country is a threat to important government and private organizations. Speaking at the IRS webinar, the experts urged that the heavy reliance on the imported hardware on the other hand is increasingly compromising the security of sensitive information since Pakistan is lagging in the field of manufacturing IT types of equipment. They also called for the inclusion of cybersecurity subjects in textbooks for a better understanding of the data threats. The panel of experts included Sehrish Mujtaba, a leading cybersecurity professional, Mr. Arzak Khan, internet governance and cybersecurity expert, and Umar Sheraz, the futurist, innovative policy analyst.



## IRS - ISSI

### Dialogue Series

March 31, 2021

Institute of Regional Studies and Islamabad Institute of Strategic Studies held a dialogue to share ideas on Pakistan and India Relations. Issues ranging from back channel diplomacy to Kashmir were discussed. Ambassador Nadeem Riyaz, Ms Humera Iqbal, Mr Aarish U Khan, Ms Nabila Jaffer and Ms Maryam Mastoor participated from IRS.

## Articles from Young Scholars



### Chinese Governance System and the Successful Control of Pandemic

*Aamir Iqbal, Intern at IRS*



### Prime Minister's Maiden visit to Sri Lanka

*Fatima Shabir, Intern at IRS*

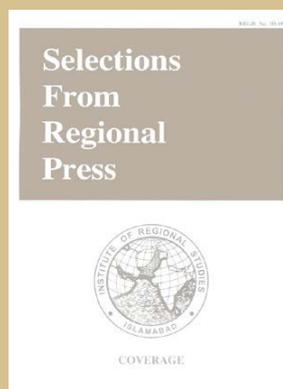


### Corona Pandemic in South Asia

*Fatima Shabir, Intern at IRS*

*\*Available on [www.irs.org.pk/blogs.html](http://www.irs.org.pk/blogs.html)*

## IRS Publications



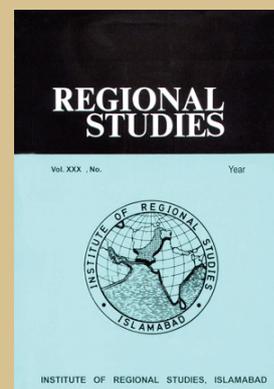
**Selection from Regional Press**



**Spotlight**



**Focus**



**Regional Studies**