

NEWSLETTER

April - June, 2021

ISSUE 04

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Spotlight: May

Bajrang Dal: The Saffron Avengers

Amshal Asif, Intern IRS

Bajrang Dal is part of the "Sang Parivar" and is the militant youth wing of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), an organization that promotes the ideology of Hindutva. The militant youth wing was named Bajrang Dal to emphasize the physical might of the greater saffron family. The name of the organization is influenced by the Hindu deity Hanuman, who led the armies of Lord Rama into battlefields. It was founded in 1984 by Vinay Katiyar to forward the ideology of the Sangh i.e. RSS. Their ideology is based on "Seva Surksa Sanskrit" which means protection of the Hindu Culture.

Spotlight: June

Naxalite Movement: A Fierce Homegrown Insurgency in India

Amshaal Asif, Intern IRS

Communist movements erupted in India during the colonial era and later after the independence from British rule in 1947 the first Marxist movement started in the Southern region of India. To overthrow the government and formulate a communist regime, the Naxalite movement emerged in India in 1967 to address the inequality and the exploitation that the tribal community faced in India. The insurgency erupted in West Bengal in a small village named Naxalbari, from where the term derived and is one of the longest-running homegrown insurgencies. The term Naxalism refers to the fierce radical and revolutionary communist group that was born out as a consequence of the Sino-Soviet split in the Indian Communist Movement.¹ The movement started against the local landowners, aggravated by the exploitation of the landlords, the working class across the Naxalbari initiated a mass rebellion which spread across India and till date threatens India in the form of the Naxalite/ Maoist movement.

Spotlight: June

Pakistan-Russia Relations: Future Prospects

Aamir Iqbal, Intern IRS

Diplomatic relations between Pakistan and the Soviet Union were established in 1949 at the very beginning of the Cold War when rivalry for global dominance was at its peak between the United States and the Soviet Union. The US-Soviet global power competition in the cold war era presented a complex political environment in which both Pakistan and the Soviet Union could not build cordial and cooperative bilateral relations. Their relations saw many ups and downs with the changing global political structure and international order. However, leaving the past behind, Pakistan and Russia are heading towards friendly relations and diversifying their areas of cooperation for mutual benefits realising the changing global and regional dynamics.

Focus: The US Security Leadership in Asia-Pacific and China's Countermeasures

Muhammad Abubaker , Intern IRS

The advent of the 21st century brought with itself a shift from the “American Century” towards the “Asian Century”, and it enhanced the significance of Asia-Pacific region by manifolds. The region of Asia-Pacific has emerged as the central playing field for the strategic competition between the United States and China. Both the great powers are employing different strategies in the power struggle to counter the influence of each other, and they have their own reasons to do so. The US is increasing its footprints in the region to contain China in its neighborhood and not to allow it to expand its sphere of influence. The US feels threatened, due to China's increasing economic and military influence. They are aware of the fact, that China has the potential to cripple the superpower status of America and to deal with China they have adopted a hegemonic approach to topple the increasing influence of China in international system in general and particularly in Asia-Pacific region. They have devised a full-blown China containment policy to prevent it from dominating the US sphere of influence and impeding the Geo-political interests of the US. That is evident from the US “Pivot to Asia” policy developed back in 2011, that has guided American maneuvers and policy in a region extending from the United States Pacific coast all the way to India.

Other Contributions by IRS Scholars

A Counter Offensive - April 2021

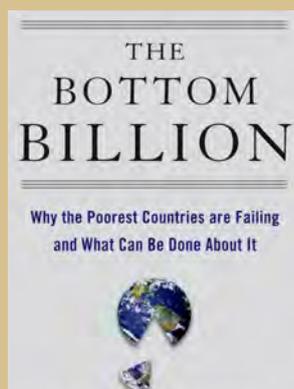
Amna Nisar Abbasi , Research Officer

India has been continuously perpetrating fifth generation war techniques to achieve its objectives against Pakistan. It's not just restricted to India; there are other forces at play as well. By promoting national unity, conventional capability, economic prowess and diplomatic sensitisation can help in neutralizing Indian efforts.

New Wars, New Targets - May 2021

Amna Nisar Abbasi , Research Officer

The unending turbulence and tides of Baloch nationalism, religious and jihadist activism, and ethnic conflict including sectarianism, has had major ramifications for domestic, regional, and global security. Since 2009, Balochistan has come under increased scrutiny, with the Americans alleging that Quetta and its surrounding areas are a safe haven for the Taliban leadership. The situation developing in the region is reflecting some characteristics of what has been called New Wars.



The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries are failing and What can be done about it by Paul Collier

Book Review by Amna Nisar Abbasi , Research Officer



Farmers' Protest in India: Has the Government Weathered the Storm?

April 01, 2021

“The movement could get international attention because of the powerful Sikh diaspora communities in countries like Canada, the UK, and the US”

“Like Pakistan, India has a large agriculture sector, which employs 47 per cent of its workforce. Despite its large contribution to absorbing the workforce, the sector is not as productive. It only contributes 15.4 per cent to its GDP,” said Mr. Aarish Ullah Khan, Editor/Research Analyst at IRS. He presented a detailed analysis of the situation. The webinar was attended by several people.



LT. GENERAL (RETD.)
ABDUL QAYYUM

PROFESSOR MOHAMMAD
REZA TAKHSID (IRAN)

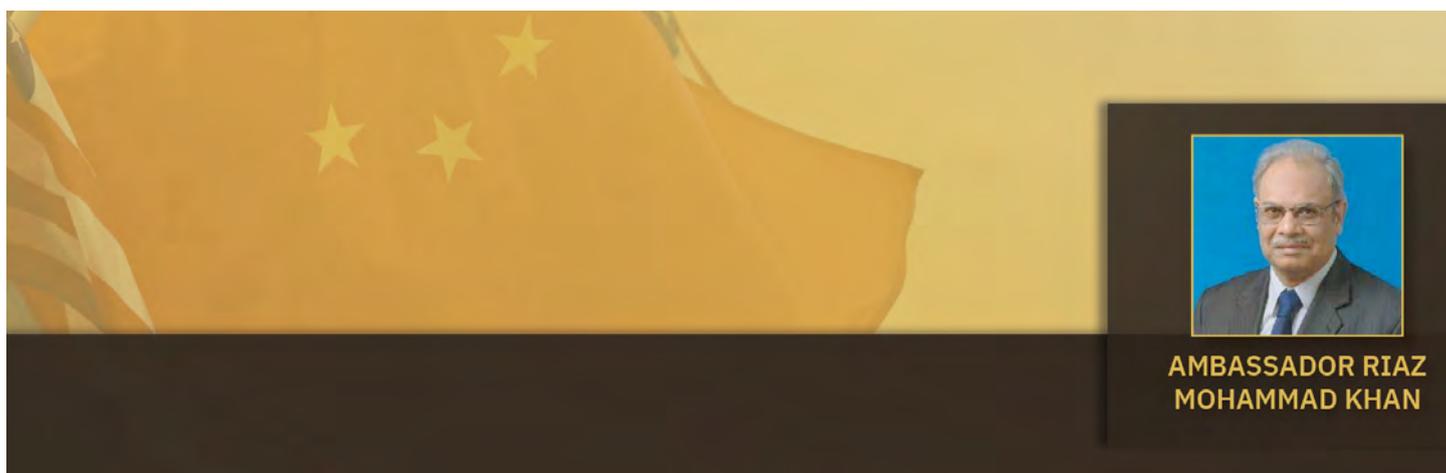
PROFESSOR SYED
QANDIL ABBAS

JCPOA and International Multilateral Diplomacy

April 07, 2021

‘Revival of US, Iran talks an opportunity for both to revisit policies’

Expectations are high as talks began in Vienna between remaining signatories of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and Iranian officials. This revival of dialogue has provided an opportunity to both the United States and Iran to revisit their policies and achieve some sort of confluence. These views were expressed by panelists of a webinar highlighting the JCPOA and international multilateral diplomacy, organised by Institute of Regional Studies (IRS)

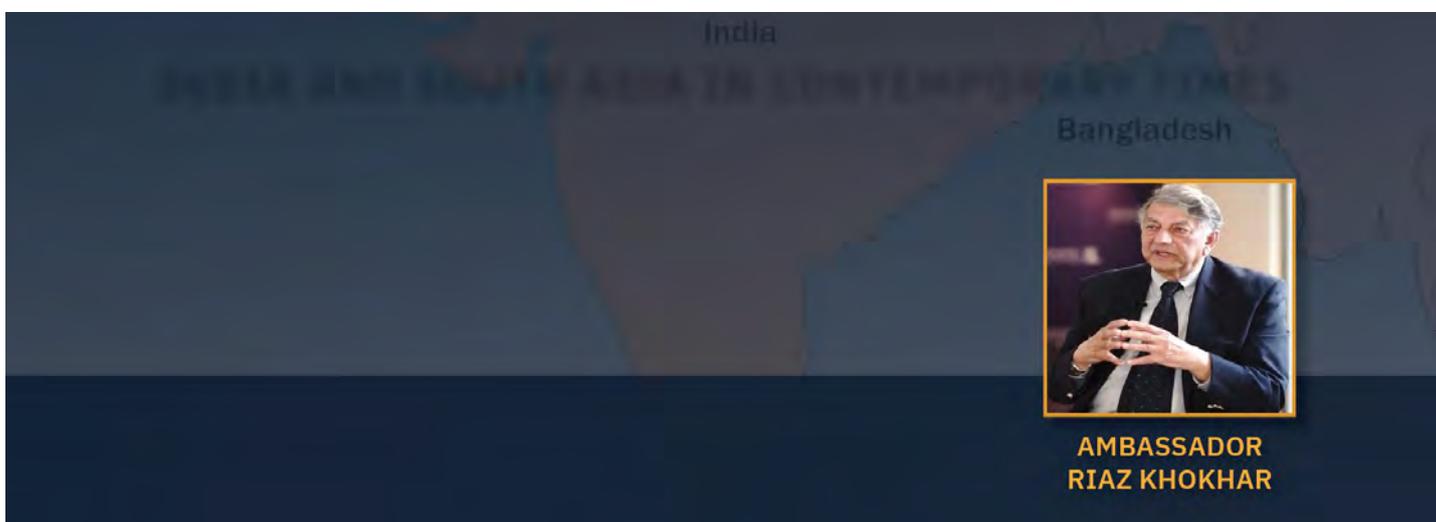


Dynamics of Sino-US Relations under the Biden Administration

April 12, 2021

China-US competition will not escalate into an outright conflict, Riaz

“Although President Biden has described Sino-US relations as ‘extreme competition’, it is not likely to escalate into an outright conflict,” said Amb Riaz M Khan. The former foreign secretary of Pakistan was speaking at a webinar titled Dynamics of Sino-US Relations under the Biden Administration organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS)



India and South Asia in Contemporary Times

April 13, 2021

‘Status quo on Kashmir not a solution’

“You are not dealing with a country that is committed to better relations with Pakistan. India wants domination of Pakistan the way it has dominated all its other neighbours,” said Amb Riaz Khokhar. The former foreign secretary of Pakistan was speaking at a webinar titled ‘India and South Asia in Contemporary Times’ organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS)



DR. SALMA MALIK
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, QAUID-I-
AZAM UNIVERSITY, ISLAMABAD



D. SUBA CHANDRAN
PROFESSOR, NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
ADVANCED STUDIES, BANGALORE



QAMAR ABBAS CHEEMA
LECTURER, NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF
MODERN LANGUAGES, ISLAMABAD

Prospects of India Pakistan Relations

April 14, 2021

“Right, if not ripe, moment to go with normalization between India and Pakistan”

There are mixed vibes on the both sides of the border that have the underlying message of hope. The revival of the SAARC in the present circumstances is crucial to bringing the arch rivals closer to each other. Several opportunities in the non-traditional spectrum are also awaiting political will from both sides. These were the views expressed by the panelist in a webinar on the prospects of India-Pakistan relations organized by the IRS.



Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh RSS

April 19, 2021

“Indian External Affairs Minister, Mr Jaishanker has been carefully selected by Modi as his father was chief architect of partition of India”

Ambassador (retd) Afrasiab visited IRS and highlighted various facts about India. He said that Nehru used to say that Hindu, Muslim brotherhood was just a phonological Phenomenon. Nathuram (devotee of RSS) who assassinated Gandhi is celebrated by Modi and Mr. Gandhi is not given enough importance by him. Mahabharata was recited first time in Taxila. Rigveda was written in Punjab. India was never a one country; now it has become one India. Indian External Affairs Minister, Mr Jaishanker has been carefully selected by Modi as his father was architect of patriciate of India. The meeting was held in IRS Jinnah Hall.



**DR. SAIF UR
REHMAN MALIK**



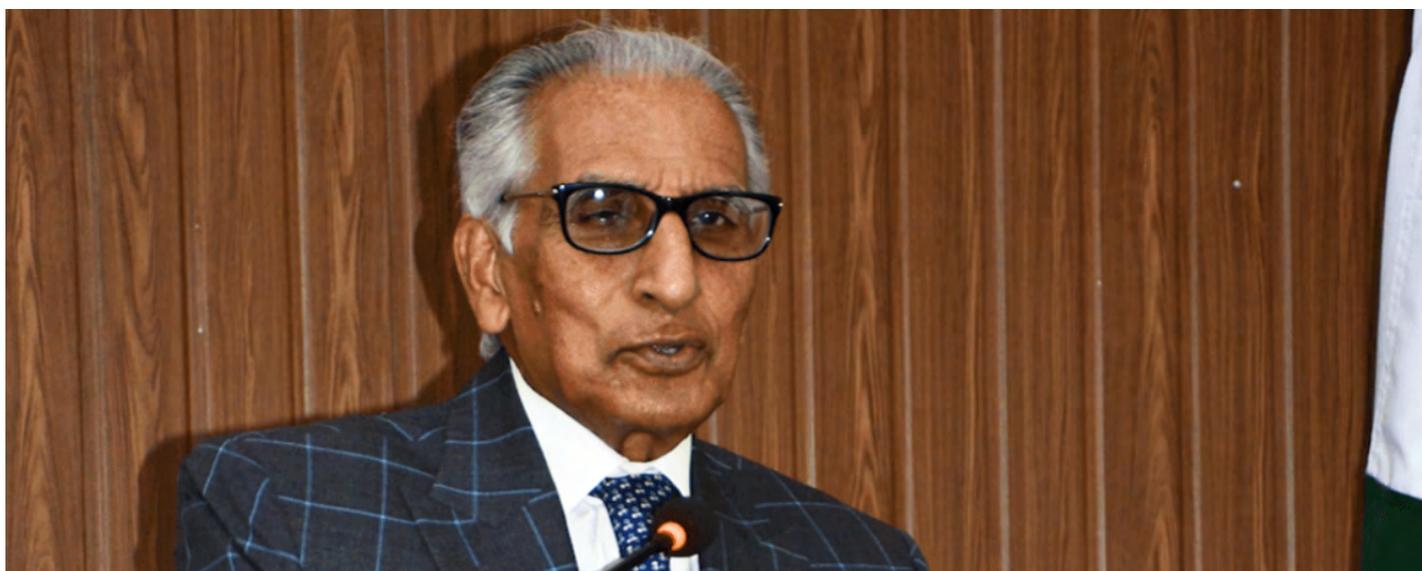
**DR. MUJEEB
AFZAL**

RSS and Sangh Parivar: Social and Political Role in India

April 22, 2021

“RSS is essentially striving to create a ‘hierarchal society’ in India where the Hindu ethos have complete supremacy”

Apart from political engineering, the Rashtriya Sewak Sangh (RSS) in India has now gained a considerable influence on education and the judiciary, said Dr Saif-ur-Rehman Malik, director, India Study Center at Institute of Strategic Studies. While speaking to the occasion, Dr Mujeeb Afzal, from School of Politics and International Relations, QAU, said that RSS is essentially striving to create a ‘hierarchal society’ in India where the Hindu ethos have complete supremacy. The scholars expressed their views on a webinar organized by IRS.



Prospects of Russia-Pakistan Relations

May 05, 2021

Good Pakistan- Russia relations beneficial: Fatemi

“the leadership in Islamabad and Moscow recognized the potential of enhanced relations and there is a keen willingness to engage in vast areas of cooperation. At present, both countries enjoy excellent diplomatic ties with each other which are of imminent importance in the current changing global scenario, said Ambassador Tariq Fatmi while addressing a public talk arranged by IRS.

DR. HABIBA SARABI
(Member of Afghan Peace Negotiation Team, Former Minister Of Women's Affairs)

MS. FATIMA GAILANI
(Member of Afghan Peace Negotiation Team, President of Afghan Red Crescent Society)

MS. PALWASHA HASSAN
(Executive Director of the Afghan Women's Educational Center (AWEC))

MODERATOR

BENAZIR JATOI
(BARRISTER, FOCUS ON WOMEN AND MINORITY RIGHTS)

The Afghan Peace Process: Role of Women in Peacebuilding

May 06, 2021

“Pakistani women need to show solidarity with Afghan women”

Members of the Afghan government’s peace negotiation team Dr Habiba Sarabi and Fatima Gailani urged Pakistani women to stand up in solidarity with the women of Afghanistan in the crucial time of negotiation between the Taliban and the Government of Afghanistan. They were speaking at a webinar on ‘the role of women in the Afghan peace process’ organised by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS)

SENATOR MUSHAHID HUSSAIN SAYED
(Chairman, Senate Foreign Affairs Committee)

AMBASSADOR MASOOD KHALID
(Pakistan's former Ambassador to China)

AMBASSADOR NAGHMANA HASHMI
(Pakistan's former Ambassador to China)

MR. HASSAN DAUD BUTT
(CEO KPK Provincial Board of Investment & Trade KP-BOIT)

MODERATOR

MR. HASAAN KHAWAR
(International Development & Public Policy Professional)

70 Years of Pakistan-China Relations

May 20, 2021

CPEC is Chinese vote of confidence on Pakistan, says Mushahid

Initiation of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) at an economically challenging time for Pakistan is a Chinese vote of confidence to Pakistan, said Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, chairperson, Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Senator Syed was speaking at a webinar commemorating 70 years of Pak-China friendship organised by Institute of Regional Studies (IRS).



Response to Challenges of Pandemic in South Asia

May 24, 2021

“Understanding of scientifically ‘spread, control of Covid-19’ stressed”

Prof Swaran Singh from the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, has said that the democratic and demographic dividend of South Asia was under threat from the coronavirus and supported the already under discussion idea of introducing a global treaty for fighting the pandemic. Prof Singh was speaking at a webinar on ‘Response to challenges of pandemic in South Asia,’ organised by Institute of Regional Studies (IRS)



JCPOA and International Multilateral Diplomacy-II

May 27, 2021

“Iran urged for working relationship with the US amid nuclear talks”

Upcoming presidential elections are crucial as the change of leadership in Iran, one way or the other, will impact the ongoing nuclear talks. In that, there can be a lull, whilst the momentum of current engagement among the key stakeholders needs to be strengthening to grasp whatever has agreed so far in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Actions (JCPOA). While appreciating the EU efforts, panelists at the webinar on ‘JCPOA and International Multilateral Diplomacy’ organized by the Institute of Regional Studies, also called for further change in attitude of both Iran and the US toward each other.



DR. SIMA SAMAR
(member of the United Nations
Secretary-General's High-Level
Panel on Internal Displacement)



**LT. GENERAL (R) FLORIAN
COLDEA**
(Senior Lecturer, National Intelligence
Academy)



MR. JAWAD ZAWULISTANI
(Managing Director of Afghanistan
Human Rights and Democracy
Organization)



MR. RAHIMULLAH YUSUFZAI
(RESIDENT EDITOR, THE NEWS
INTERNATIONAL, PESHAWAR AND
CORRESPONDENT BBC WORLD SERVICE)

Prospects of Security and Stability in Afghanistan

February 22, 2021

"Pakistan and Afghanistan should agree on a 'ceasefire of blame-game,'" Yusufzai

Referring to the recent negative statements by Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and Afghan National Security Adviser Hamdullah Mohib, which were strongly rebutted by the Government of Pakistan, Mr Yusufzai said that such statements did not serve any purpose for Afghanistan. He further highlighted that non-withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan would amount to a violation of their agreement with the US for the Taliban. He was speaking at a webinar titled 'Prospects of Security and Stability in Afghanistan' organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS)



**PROFESSOR SANJAY
KUMAR**
Centre for the Study of Developing
Societies (CSDS), New Delhi
(SPEAKER)



DR. NIRANJAN SAHOO
Observer Research Foundation (ORF),
New Delhi
(SPEAKER)



DR. SALMA MALIK
Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad
(DISCUSSANT)



DR. HUMA BAQAI
Former Associate Dean, Faculty of
Business Administration, IBA Karachi
(DISCUSSANT)

Recent State Assembly Elections in India: Results and Implications

June 09, 2021

"West Bengal election not a major setback for BJP"

Although the BJP had performed worse than its performance in the state in the last Lok Sabha election, it performed far better than in the last assembly election in the state. He was of the view that voting more in favour of regional political parties in state assembly elections was a recurring pattern in Indian electoral politics, said Professor Sanjay Kumar while speaking at a webinar organized by IRS. He was of the view that the Modi factor played an important role in the Lok Sabha election victories of the BJP.



Iran’s Presidential Election & Regional Implications

June 10, 2021

“Pakistan ready to work with any elected Political entity in Iran”

The experts are of the view that who so ever will come to power, Pakistan will continue to support Iran and Saudi Arabia to harness workable relations. Webinar held at IRS included speakers from Iran as well as Pakistan.



Future of Afghanistan: Challenges and Prospects

June 15, 2021

“NATO committed to future stability of Afghanistan”

Pierluigi Barberini, Security and Defence Analyst at the Rome-based Centro Studi Internazionali (Ce.S.I.), stated that NATO was committed to the future stability of Afghanistan despite troop withdrawal. He was speaking at a webinar titled ‘Future of Afghanistan: Challenges and Prospects’ jointly organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) and Ce.S.I.



Evolving Situation in Afghanistan: People's Perspective

June 16, 2021

"Pakistan's role is crucial amid US withdrawal from Afghanistan, says Hasina Sayyed"

Ms. Hasina Sayyed, a female entrepreneur and politician from Afghanistan, on her visit to the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) spoke on the evolving situation in Afghanistan. While expressing her views on the prospects of peace in Afghanistan she argued that peace was achievable if the domestic, regional as well as international community took 'collective responsibility'. The stakeholders must not lose that opportunity to end the conflict in Afghanistan', she stressed



Roundtable with Mr. Ihsan Ghani Khan

June 17, 2021

"Civil war in Afghanistan to affect Pakistan seriously"

Former IG Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and National Coordinator NACTA, Mr Ihsan Ghani Khan, said that the possibility of the onset of a civil war in Afghanistan could be a serious challenge for Pakistan. He maintained that in case the Afghan Taliban managed to get control of Kabul militarily, they could become an inspiration for all hues of extremists from all over Pakistan He was speaking at a roundtable discussion organized by the Institute of Regional Studies



Climate change: Impact on Coastal Belt of Sindh

June 21, 2021

“Impact of climate change on coastal areas of Sindh is grave, say climate experts”

How the climate change is threatening the coastal belt of Sindh was the subject under discussion in the webinar organized by the Institute of Regional Studies, Islamabad in collaboration with the Area Study Centre, Far East and Southeast Asia, University of Sindh Jamshoro.



MOU signed with Afghanistan Youth Forum

June 24, 2021

A delegation of Afghanistan Youth Forum visited IRS and signed MOU with IRS for enhancing mutual cooperation.



Roundtable with Dr. Saleem Hassan Ali

June 25, 2021

“More active role of Pakistani think tanks in terms of creating awareness regarding climate change is urged”

Dr. Saleem Hassan Ali, professor at University of Brisbane, Australia visited IRS and interacted with IRS researchers. While discussion, areas having potential of mutual cooperation were explored.



LT. COL. TARIQ NIAZ
BHATTI (R)

DR SYED QANDIL ABBAS
QUAID-I-AZAM UNIVERSITY

DR FOUZIA AMIN
NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY

Iran-Saudi relations: Challenges & Opportunities

June 29, 2021

“Saudi-Iran détente is crucial for enduring peace in the Middle East”

Saudi-Iran rapprochement was essential for lasting peace in the region marred by an increased spate of tensions and proxies, said Prof. Dr. Qandil Abbas of QAU. ‘Normalization between the two historical rivals can potentially bring the tensions in the Middle East to an ultimate end, he said adding that it will have a positive impact on Pakistan as well as on the entire Muslim world.’ He was speaking at a webinar organized by the Institute of Regional Studies, on ‘Iran-Saudi Relations: Challenges and Opportunities’

Articles from Young Scholars



Prospects of peace in Afghanistan

Fatima Shabir, Intern at IRS



Indian Vaccine Diplomacy in Changing Geopolitical Post-Pandemic Era

Ammara Kalsoom, Intern at IRS

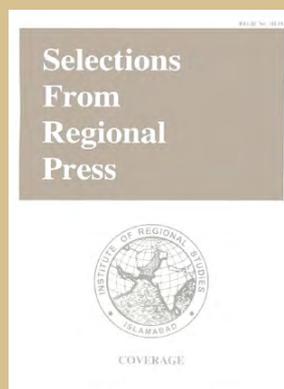


India-Bangladesh Bridge

Fatima Shabir, Intern at IRS

**Available on www.irs.org.pk/blogs.html*

IRS Publications



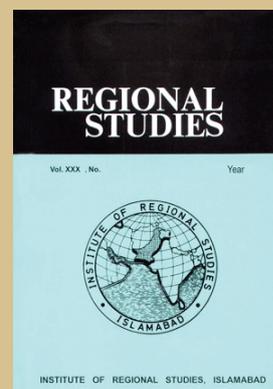
**Selection from
Regional Press**



Spotlight



Focus



Regional Studies