

Institute of Regional Studies, Islamabad

NEWSLETTER

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WEBINARS

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Focus: October, 2021

Rise of Hindutva as a Creed: It's Impact on India's Politics and Society

Amna Ejaz Rafi & Ishtiaq Ali Mehkri

The Indian political leadership during initial years of independence promoted its image as a secular and a democratic country. Pluralism, socialism, secularism and democracy were once considered as the hallmarks of the Indian society. 'The Nehru Consensus' earned India the status of a democratic secular state. It professed the idea of 'Mother India' as a place where people from various castes, creed and religions can live freely.¹ The Indian leadership by adopting such policies tried to negate the idea of Hindu-Muslim divide (as reflected in the Two Nation Theory), which was the bastion thought of Pakistan Movement. In fact, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru propounded for the first time the policy of Non-Alignment on September 7, 1946. He declared, "We propose as far as possible, to keep away from the power politics of groups, aligned against one another, which have led in the past to World Wars and which may again lead to disasters to even vaster scale.

Focus: November, 2021

India's inroads into the Middle East: Implications for Pakistan

Laraib Farhat, Asst. Research Officer

Since its independence, India's economic relations with the Middle East have been based on its urge for development and prosperity. Whereas, the course of its political relations has mostly been determined in the light of its post-cold war allegiances and subsequent formation of the Non-aligned Movement (NAM). Considering India's relationship with the Middle Eastern countries, New Delhi's preference has mostly been quite simple and focused, i.e., to export labour and to import oil. While these preferences have been practised and projected for most part of history, there has been a noticeable shift in Indian policy towards the Middle East in past few years.

India holds exceptional ties with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, i.e., Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). These ties range from cooperation in fields of economy, military, investment and trade.¹ It is noteworthy that this significant interdependence is not the result of some vacuum but can rather be traced back to India's historical geographical proximity² with the Middle East as its extended strategic neighbour.

Focus: December, 2021

Prospects of Middle Eastern Quad and its Implications for Pakistan

Fraz Naqvi, Asst. Research Officer

Celebrations continue across Afghanistan as well as in some parts of the region in the wake of United States withdrawal. The end game in Afghanistan, however, has different meanings to different people. For the Taliban, it is a victory. It is a defeat of the United States. The fall of a superpower that long kept the Taliban away from running the country on their terms. For many Afghans, it is freedom, a joyous moment as their country is liberated after decades-long foreign occupation. Similarly, there are mixed views at the regional level. For religious sects, Taliban's rise is indeed a beacon of hope to regain their lost ascendancy. For intelligentsia, it is a point of inflection, a glare opportunity to instill the region-ness within the region. Many people are rather deeply sceptical about the peaceful coexistence of the people and the societies belonging to different ideologies. The purpose here is not to contemplate how various segments of the society view US pull-out and Taliban's ascendancy but to shed light on underlying three broad narratives that continue to shape up the minds of the people across the globe.

List of Spotlights

- **The Future of JCPOA under the New Administrations of Iran and the US**

Willa Zainab (Intern at IRS)

- **Dragons vs Elephants - Fighting at 14,000 Feet on the Himalayas**

Aimen Aslam (Intern at IRS)

- **Instability in Afghanistan and the Prospects for Regional Connectivity**

Mehreen Khaskheli (Intern at IRS)

- **Sikh Separatism in India**

Maida Fareed (Intern at IRS)

- **Vandalising Gandhi's Statues: Is there really Something Wrong with Gandhi?**

Imran Sardar (Research Analyst)

- **The Significance of Putin's Visit to India Amidst the Straining Ties**

Fraz Naqvi (Asst. Research Officer)

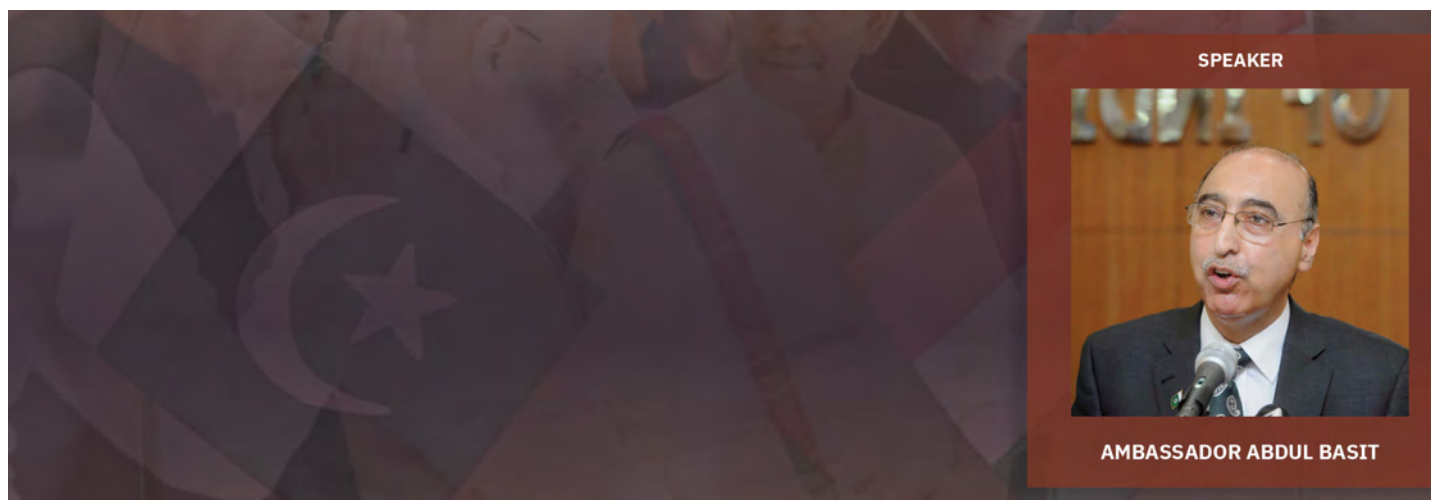


Developments in Afghanistan and its Impact on Pakistan - Challenges and Responses

October 06, 2021

Experts urge a regional approach toward Afghanistan

Participants of an open discussion on developments in Afghanistan and its impacts on Pakistan urged the government to build a regional consensus among Afghanistan's neighbours on the way forward for the country. They called for convening a regional summit on the subject. The open discussion was jointly organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) and the Pak-Afghan Youth Forum (PAYF).

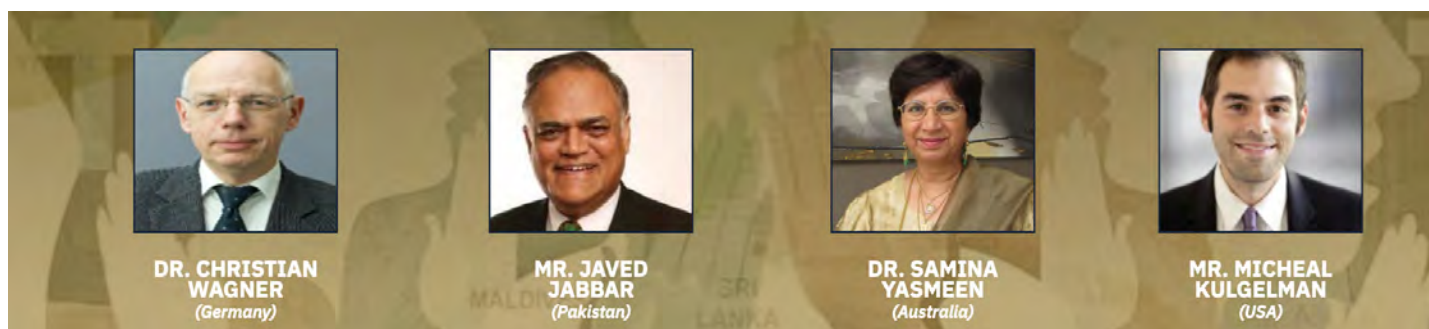


Biodiversity & Circular Economy in Pakistan towards "Well-being in Green" - Could Youth bridge the gaps?

October 13, 2021

Experts urge protection of biodiversity for sustainable development

Challenges to biodiversity are a reality and qualify as one of the foremost areas of attention under the current government, said Special Advisor to Prime Minister on Youth Affairs Usman Dar in his statement to the Sustainable Development Festival - ASviS 2021 gathering held at the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS). He added that policies such as tree plantation drives and collaborations involving an active role of the Ministry of Climate Change clearly reflected the resolve and commitment of the Government of Pakistan to mitigate the hurdles to sustainable development which compromised Pakistan's biodiversity.



Afghanistan Dilemma and Pakistan

October 20, 2021

Institute of Regional Studies organised a panel discussion on "Afghanistan Dilemma and Pakistan".



Sanctioned Iran: A Way Forward

October 21, 2021

Revival of JCPOA would be a win-win for Iran and the US

Mr Tariq Chohan, a legal expert from the University of Zurich, stated that revival of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) could be a win-win for both Iran and the US. He was addressing a webinar organised by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS).



Black Day: Kashmir Weeps

October 26, 2021

Pakistan stands with Kashmiris in their freedom struggle, Afridi

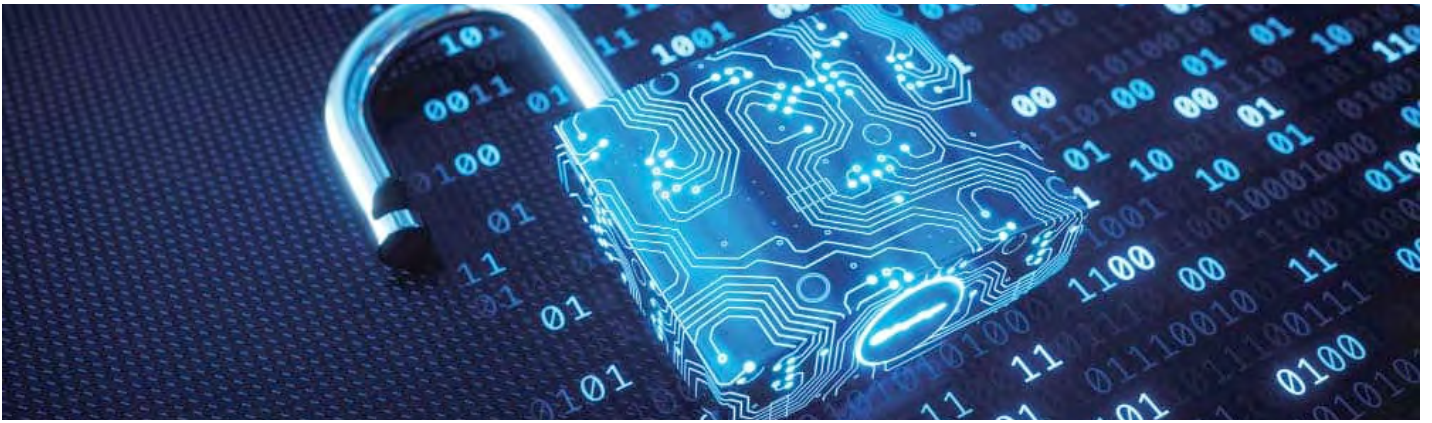
"Pakistan stands with the people of Kashmir for their just freedom struggle against Indian occupation," said Shehryar Khan Afridi, Chairman Parliamentary Committee on Kashmir. He was addressing an event organised by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) to mark the illegal Indian occupation of Jammu and Kashmir on October 27, 1947.



Kashmir Black Day and The Role of Youth in Nation Building

October 27, 2021

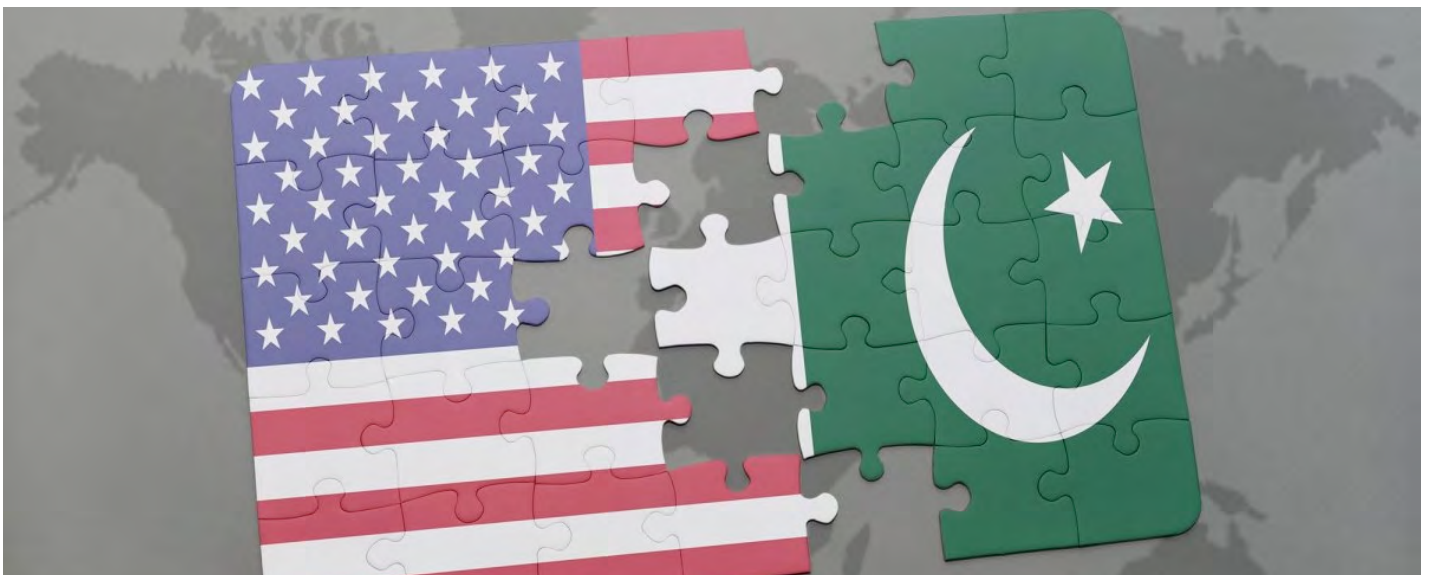
Institute of Regional Studies organised a seminar on "Kashmir Black Day and The Role of Youth in Nation Building".



Deliberations on National Cyber Security Policy

October 29, 2021

Huma Rehman, Manager Information Security Governance, Risk and Compliance at Telenor, acknowledged the step to incorporating cyber security into educational programmes. Farooq Naiyar, Director of Cybersecurity and Compliance from Canada, suggested not to judge an organization based on its breaches but rather how they respond to it. Syed Aun Abbas, Chief Information Security Officer in Financial Industry and a former cyber COP, after referring to the national security policy to be a great first step, commended specifically HEC's efforts to adding related courses to the academics.



Pakistan-US Relations Post-Taliban Return to Power in Afghanistan

November 02, 2021

Lack of warmth towards Pakistan in Washington is regrettable, Fatemi

"The existing lack of warmth towards Pakistan in Washington is quite regrettable," said Ambassador Tariq Fatemi. He urged deeper understanding and appreciation of Pakistan-US relations in Washington. The former adviser to the Prime Minister on foreign affairs was addressing an event on the future of Pakistan-US relations organised by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS).



Afghan Traditions, Values and Customs

November 04, 2021

Afghanistan's Diverse Tribal Culture Needs to be Understood Better

Afghan and Pakistani participants of a webinar were of the view that Afghanistan had a diverse but primarily rural culture with serious divergences from Western conceptions of democracy, which needed to be understood better. The webinar on Afghan traditions, values, and customs was organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS).



Ancient and Contemporary Pakistan

November 08, 2021

Discussion on "Ancient and Contemporary Pakistan" with Ambassador Afrasiab.



Interview with Amb. Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry on his book **Diplomatic Footprints**

November 15, 2021

Mr. Aarish U. Khan, research analyst at the Institute of Regional Studies interviewed Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry on his book "**Diplomatic Footprints**".



Talk with Ms. Aisha Khan on Climate Change

November 16, 2021

Talk with Ms. Aisha Khan (CEO MGPO and CSCCC) on Climate Change.



Diplomatic Footprints

November 23, 2021

Youth is Pakistan's Hope for a Bright Future

'Pakistan bears unrealised potential to strengthen its position among the comity of states. The primary asset in this regard which is not only the present but also, the custodian of a bright future for this homeland is its skilled youth, said Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhary, Director General Institute of Strategic Studies (ISSI), Islamabad. He was addressing a gathering at the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) organised to honour the release of his recent book titled Diplomatic Footprints: A Memoir. Ambassador Aizaz added that while the target audience for his recent book was a multifaceted one, he specifically wrote it for the youth in order to reiterate their significance as future leaders of Pakistan.



Talk by Prof. Gloria Taliani

November 23, 2021

Pakistan's response to COVID: A Commendable Framework

Of all the countries confronted with the pandemic, Pakistan has made some seriously commendable efforts to deal with COVID, mainly through the creation of the National Command Operation Centre (NCOC); an institute which adopted a phased approach to effectively attend to the health emergency, said Professor Gloria Taliani, Expert on infectious diseases at Sapienza University of Rome, Italy. She was addressing a gathering at the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), Islamabad. Sharing a timeline of the spread and control of Covid-19 in Italy, she emphasised the importance of awareness, management, and vaccination in controlling the pandemic.



Importance of Pak-Afghan Dialogues for Regional Peace and Stability

November 25, 2021

Importance of Pak-Afghan Dialogue for Regional Peace and Stability

The participants of a dialogue between a visiting Afghan youth delegation to the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) in Islamabad highlighted the importance of a people-to-people dialogue between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Afghan youth delegation visited IRS here on Thursday as part of a weeklong workshop jointly organized by the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) and International Research Council for Religious Affairs (IRCRA).



Post Cop26: Discussion

November 30, 2021

COP26 achieved a weak consensus

Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Climate Change Malik Amin Aslam has said that even though COP26 had achieved an international consensus, it was a weak one as it did not make the countries agree to stronger commitments. Mr. Aslam was addressing a conference on "Post- COP26: from Paris to Glasgow" organised here by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) in collaboration with the Civil Society Coalition for Climate Change (CSCCC).



Russia-Afghanistan Relations

December 01, 2021

Taliban need to prove their governance credentials to the rest of the world, Fatemi

Pakistan, China, and Russia have been trying to convince the Taliban to prove their governance credentials to the rest of the world, said Ambassador Tariq Fatemi. The former adviser to the Prime Minister on foreign affairs was speaking at an event on Russia-Afghanistan relations organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS).



Iran's Membership in SCO: An Opportunity

December 02, 2021

Iran Anticipates Great Integration After SCO Full Membership

In a discussion on 'Iran's membership in SCO' organized by the Institute of Regional Studies, Muhammad Sorkhabi, Deputy Ambassador of Iran said that 'Tehran anticipates greater integration after acquiring full membership of the SCO, added that Iran's modern communication and transportation infrastructure, centuries-old historical, cultural and religious ties with most of the member states would altogether help accelerate Iran's integration into the SCO.



Strengthening Regional Resilience of Mountain Ecosystems

December 10, 2021

Average global temperature to rise earlier than projected

Dr. Ghulam Rasul, former Director-General of Pakistan Meteorological Department, observed that the projected 1.5-degree Celsius rise in global temperature could occur in the 2040s, which is ten years sooner than the earlier projections. Dr. Rasul was addressing an event organised here by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) in collaboration with Civil Society Coalition for Climate Change (CSCCC) and the Mountain and Glacier Protection Organisation (MGPO).

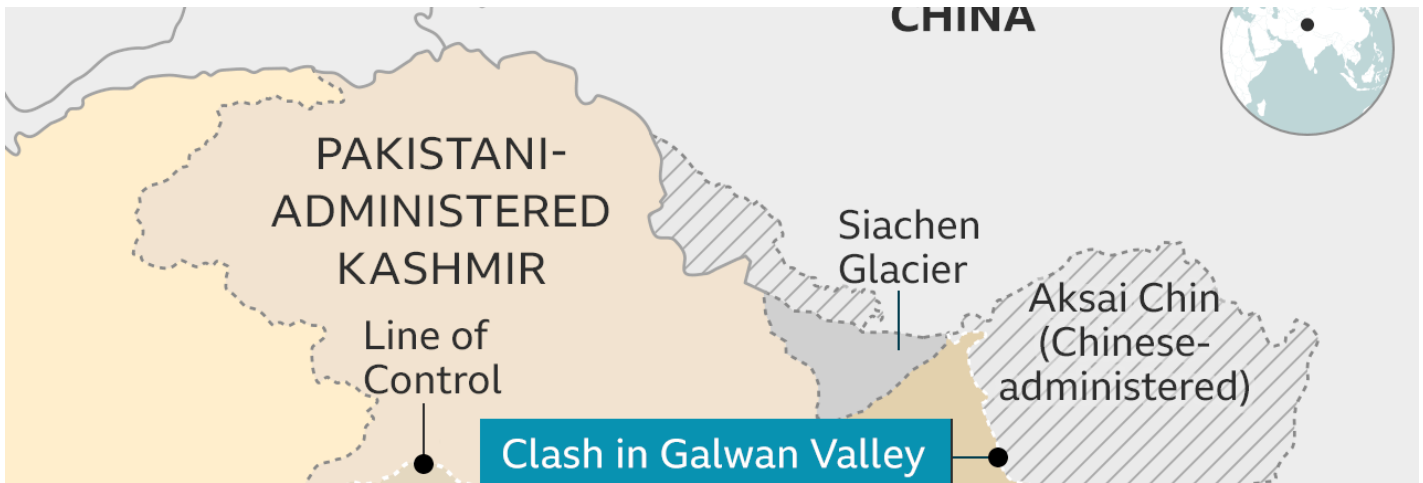


Mapping Pakistan-Bangladesh Relations: Past, Present and the Future

December 13, 2021

Hasina urged to visit Pakistan and address Parliament

Dr. Moonis Ahmar, Meritorious Professor, University of Karachi, has asked Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed to pay a visit to Pakistan and also address its Parliament here. He was addressing a webinar on "Pakistan-Bangladesh relations" organised by the Institute of Regional Studies. Dr. Ahmar said that the visit of PM Hasina would usher in an era of positive transformation of mindsets that could lead to a paradigm shift in the relations between the two countries. He was of the view that the past was important to learn the mistakes but one must not be hostage to it.



Ladakh China - India Standoff: Significance of Demarcated Boundaries and Challenges of Co-Existence

December 14, 2021

Sino-Indian border clashes termed as an outcome of Indo-US strategic partnership

Former diplomat Ambassador Shahid Masroor Gul Kiani linked the Sino- Indian border clashes in Ladakh to the compulsions of the Indo-US strategic partnership aimed at containment of China. Ambassador Kiani argued that Modi government got unnecessarily carried away by its alliance with the US, which, according to him, had laid to rest any claims of India with regard to its non-alignment. He was speaking at an event organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS).



The Tragedy of 1971: Myth and Realities

December 16, 2021

The Institute of Regional Studies organised a session on "The Tragedy of 1971: Myth and Realities".



Afghanistan Humanitarian Crisis: International Responsibility

December 17, 2021

Time for the world to stand up for Afghans and be counted

"Now is the time for the world to walk the talk, stand up for the people of Afghanistan, and be counted," said the Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Mr Ali Muhammad Khan. He gave the remarks while delivering his keynote address at a panel discussion on the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan and international responsibility organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS).



CPEC Challenges and Opportunities: The Way Forward

December 23, 2021

Pakistan welcomes third country investments in SEZs under CPEC

"Industrial Cooperation chapter of CPEC is all-inclusive in nature and open for third country participation. All SEZs [Special Economic Zones], including CPEC SEZs, are open for investment to all investors, whether domestic or foreign, with equal treatment," said Minister of State and Chairman of Board of Investment (BOI) of Pakistan Mr Azfar Ahsan. He was speaking at an international conference titled "CPEC: Challenges, Opportunities, and the Way Forward" at the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS).



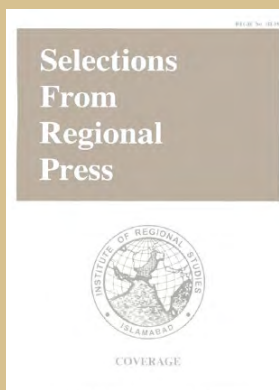
Cooperation Among South Asian Countries on Climate Change Issues

December 28, 2021

Regional conflicts termed an impediment to climate cooperation

"The conflict-ridden trajectory of the relationship between the two largest countries of the region is the biggest impediment in making meaningful progress on addressing the issue of climate change in South Asia," said Ambassador Shafqat Kakakhel. The former diplomat who is currently Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) was speaking at an event on the subject of regional cooperation on climate issues organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS).

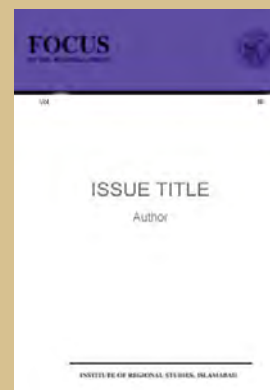
IRS PUBLICATIONS



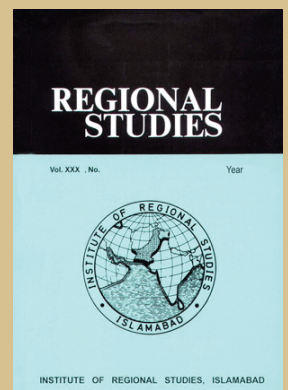
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Spotlight



Focus



Regional Studies