

Institute of Regional Studies, Islamabad

NEWSLETTER

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Spotlight: July

Citizenship Act's Impact on Assam and BJP's Clever Election Gimmick

Amshall Asif, Intern IRS

The BJP government got the Citizen Amendment Act (CAA) passed from the parliament on 12 December 2019. The Act amended the 1955 Citizenship Act to offer citizenship to illegal migrants belonging to Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, and Christians from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan arriving in India before December 2014. The Act, therefore, clearly deprives the similarly eligible Muslims from the privilege. The bill was presented before a 30- member Parliamentary Select Committee back in 2016 and after the parliamentary process, it was enacted into a law. This act reduces the requirement for citizenship from 11 years to 6 years and grants fast-track and easy-to-access Indian citizenship to non-Muslims immigrants from three Islamic states.

Spotlight: July

The Rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Future of Indian National Congress (INC)

Shrouq Tariq, Intern IRS

The Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) emerged as a popular political party following Narendra Modi's first term in the office. The party managed to secure another term, leaving the Congress with a seemingly irredeemable defeat. The BJP won a staggering 303 seats in the 545-member parliament, acquiring 50 per cent of the vote in its bid to establish itself as the sole national party across India. Meanwhile, the main opposition party, The Indian National Congress (INC) managed to win a meagre 52 seats. While the Modi-led BJP continues its march forward, the INC, i.e., the grand old party which led the nation through independence from the British colonial rule seems to be on its way to an inevitable decline.

Spotlight: August

Low Voter Turnout in Iranian Elections 2021

Humza Tariq, Intern IRS

Elections of 2021 had the lowest voter turnout since the Iranian revolution in 1979. The turnout was considerably low as compared to the previous elections of 2017 which Mr. Raisi had lost. Ebrahim Raisi, a conservative, principlist and former Chief justice was elected as the new president of Iran. 590 applicants registered for elections, only seven were selected. Not even a single woman was among them.¹ The world already thinks that Iranian political system is not democratic. There were plenty of reasons for the low turnout while internationally it was just considered one. Low turnout made the 2021 elections suspicious and definitely affected its credibility.

Spotlight: August End of Afghan Conflict?

Syed Imran Sardar, Research Analyst IRS

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. ¹ 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.

Spotlight: September China's Greater Role in Afghanistan in Post-Withdrawal Environment

Fakhar Alam, Intern IRS

China paid close attention to the changing political and security conditions of Afghanistan during the military exit of the United States from the war-torn country. Amid the fragile peace negotiation and with the collapse of Ashraf Ghani's regime, the country invited a lot of attention from the region as well as from the entire world. China also showed its concerns over the changed scenario and so vowed its pledge to respect and support the political settlement between the Taliban and other political stakeholders in Kabul. China showed utmost support to the peace process among the Afghan stakeholders and now also desires to work for the reconstruction and stability of Afghanistan long with other regional and global contenders. China does not have any historical baggage in Afghanistan and it has never sided with any of the factions or interfered in the internal political matters therein. Therefore, China can confidently partner with any of the future government(s) of Afghanistan. Moreover, Beijing's decentralised diplomatic approach is always acknowledged by stakeholders in Afghanistan. China's role in Afghanistan would also be compatible with the other neighbours of Afghanistan, especially Pakistan and the Central Asian Republics (CARs).

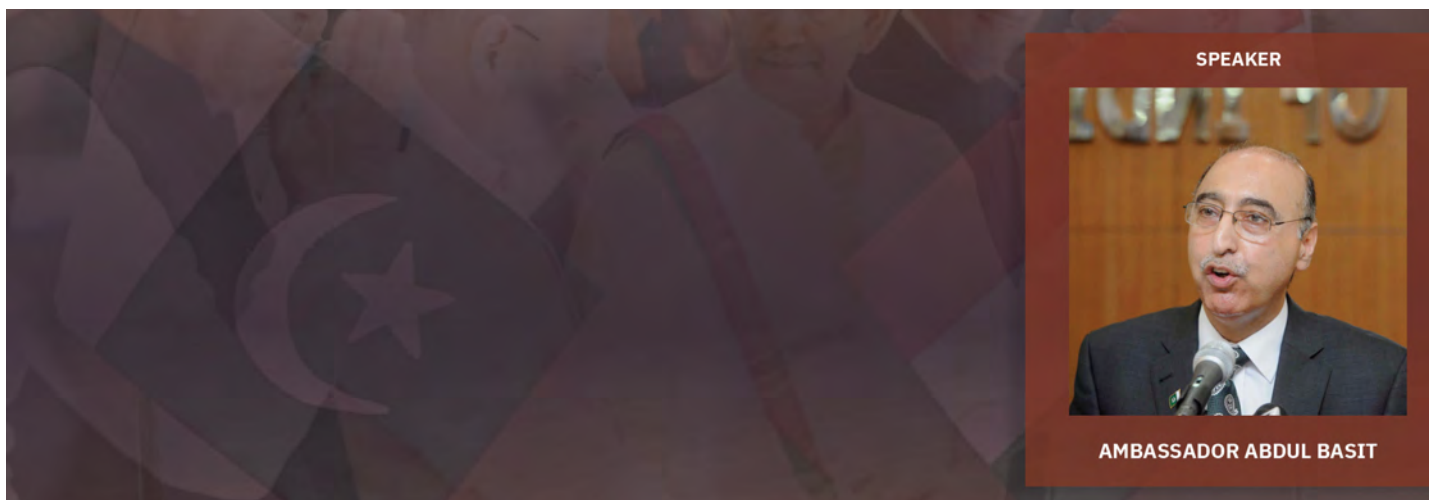


Regional Integration and CPEC: The Case Of Gwadar Port

July 05, 2021

Greater integration of locals and the Private Sector is crucial for the success of CPEC

Pakistan needs to work on greater integration of locals, private sectors as well as the overseas Pakistanis into the CPEC projects', said Ambassador Syed Hassan Javed, Director Chinese Study Centre, NUST. While speaking at the webinar on the 'Regional Integration and CPEC: The Case of Gwadar Port' organized by the Institute of Regional Studies, Amb. Javed stressed that the need to adopt an innovative approach for the second phase of CPEC to untap huge multi-sectoral potentials between the two countries.



Pakistan-India Relations: Any Hopes for a Thaw?

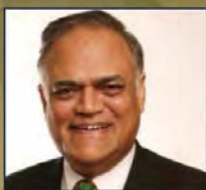
July 12, 2021

Pakistan should appoint a special envoy on Kashmir

Pakistan's former High Commissioner to India Ambassador Abdul Basit called for the appointment of a special envoy on Kashmir to project the true spirit of the Kashmir cause internationally. Ambassador Abdul Basit, who is also the author of *Hostility: A Diplomat's Diary on Pakistan-India Relations*, was speaking at an event organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS).



**DR. CHRISTIAN
WAGNER**
(Germany)



**MR. JAVED
JABBAR**
(Pakistan)



**DR. SAMINA
YASMEEN**
(Australia)



**MR. MICHEAL
KULGELMAN**
(USA)

Resurgence of Religion in International Politics (South Asia)

July 15, 2021

Resurgence or recognition of religion in Politics?

“Whether it was a resurgence or a recognition of religion in international politics of South Asia, the politicization of religion per se was an existential threat to pluralist thoughts in society, say panelists at a webinar organized by the Institute of Regional Studies. On a prescriptive note, scholars from Germany, Australia, the US, and Pakistan called for a greater understanding of ‘others’ to seed religious tolerance in the region.



Nuclear Non-proliferation, Arms Control and Disarmament

July 16, 2021

‘Nuclear arms control provides lessons for other technologies

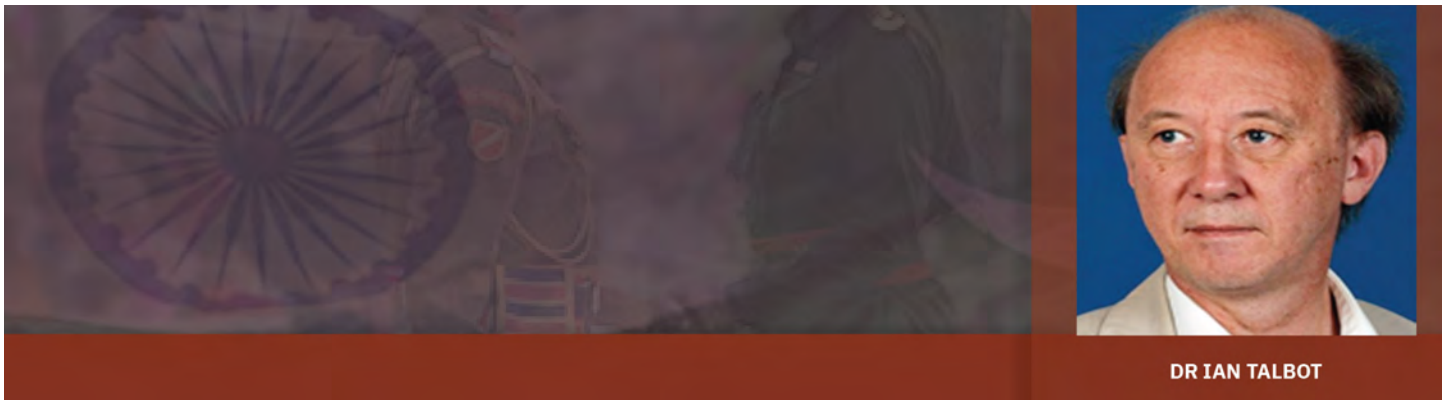
“Nuclear arms controls and disarmament efforts may provide useful lessons for introduction of controls on arms in various emerging technologies, such as lethal autonomous weapons systems,” said former Director-General of Arms Control and Disarmament Affairs (ACDA) of the Strategic Plans Division (SPD) Air Commodore (Retd) Khalid Banuri. He was speaking at an event on nuclear politics and arms control organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS).



Pak-Afghan Media Conclave

July 28, 2021

Institute of Regional Studies in collaboration with Pak Afghan Youth Forum organized an international conference constituting representatives of media from Afghanistan as well as Pakistan. The purpose of the event was to bring together voices of both countries so that a better understanding of each other can be achieved.



Insights Of Dr. Ian Talbot on India Pakistan Relations

July 28, 2021

EU could play a role on Kashmir

Renowned British historian, Professor Ian Talbot, urged the Government of Pakistan to explore its relations with the EU for facilitating a dialogue with India on Kashmir. He was speaking at a webinar organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS).



The Climate Threat: Opportunities and Challenges in Pakistan's Agriculture

July 29, 2021

Experts urge judicious use of water resources in Pakistan

Participants of a webinar urged judicious use of water resources through water- smart agriculture and climate adaptation in Pakistan. They were speaking at a webinar titled 'the climate threat: opportunities and challenges in Pakistan's agriculture' organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) in collaboration with the Project on Prosperity and Development of the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).



The Future of Peace in Afghanistan

August 03, 2021

Pakistan termed a victim of proxy terrorism

"Pakistan is a victim of proxy terrorism, not extremist militancy," said senior journalist and author Mr Imtiaz Gul. Therefore, he urged greater vigilance and surveillance of the border regions of Afghanistan with Pakistan, which had experienced their fair share of militant violence in the past. He was speaking at a webinar on the future of peace in Afghanistan organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS)



IIOJK - Uncertainty Continues

August 05, 2021

A global citizens' movement for IIOJK urged

Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs Ms Andleeb Abbas called for a global citizens' movement against the Indian atrocities in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). She was speaking at a seminar titled "Kashmir: Uncertainty Continues" organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) to observe August 5 as Youm-e-Istehsal.



5G Technology and The Cybersecurity Challenges

August 12, 2021

Panelist urged incorporation of cybersecurity vision into development vision of Pakistan

5G technology with greater connectivity and enhanced speed couldn't be advantageous unless we upgrade our cybersecurity infrastructure in Pakistan. Cooperation with China over cybersecurity was crucial to safeguarding several projects of CPEC from increasing espionage incidents taking place all over the world. Third-party malicious intervention using proxies and provoking each other citizens was also a looming challenge that needed to be dealt with effective cyber governance, and mutual cooperation among the regional countries.



Independence Day Celebrations at IRS

August 14, 2021

Institute of Regional Studies organized a get together of IRS staff and participants of civil society to celebrate the day of independence. A flag hoisting ceremony was also held at the premises. President Institute of Regional Studies, Ambassador Nadeem Riyaz hoisted the flag.

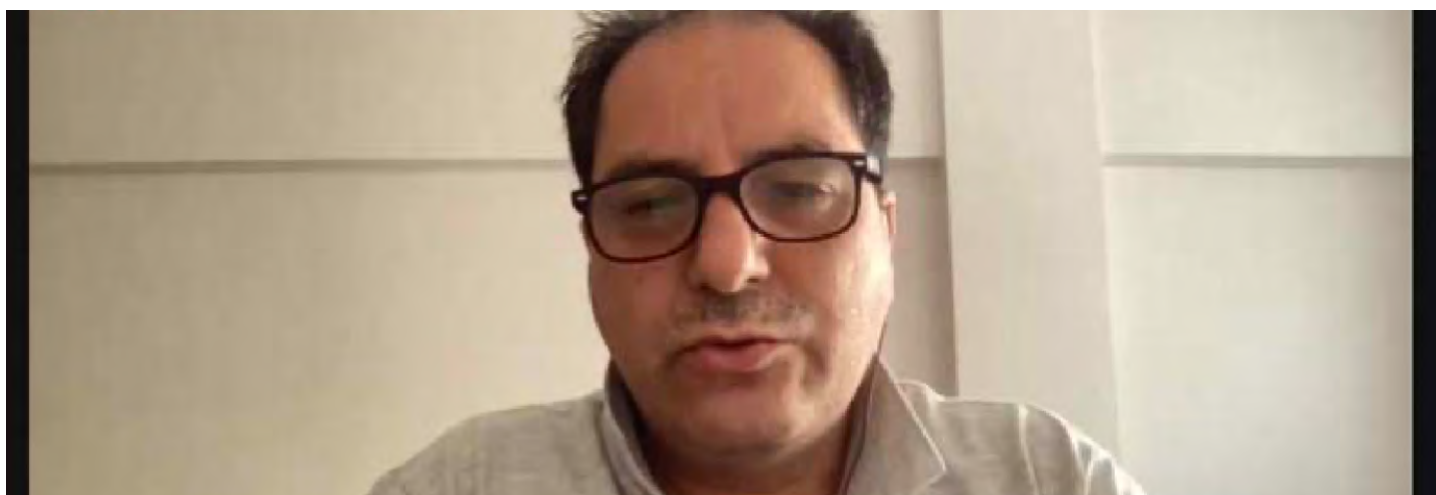


Post Withdrawal Afghanistan

August 16, 2021

US committed mistakes in Afghanistan, says O'Hanlon

Michael O'Hanlon, Senior Fellow and Director of Research in Foreign Policy at the Brookings Institution, US, admitted that the US had committed mistakes in its foreign policy towards Pakistan and Afghanistan in the past. He was speaking at a webinar on post- withdrawal Afghanistan organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS).



Politics of Delimitation in J&K and Its Impact

August 24, 2021

“Delimitation of Kashmir is nothing but ‘a planned disempowerment of Kashmiri Muslims’, says Iftikhar Gilani

‘The continuous divisions and sub-divisions of Kashmir since 1947 have not only shrunk the geography of Kashmir but the voices and the power of its people too’ said Mr. Gilani, adding that dividing Kashmiri Muslims was a real agenda of India’s delimitation scheme for Jammu and Kashmir.



The Future of Women in Afghanistan

August 25, 2021

Taliban will protect women’s rights, says Afghan businesswoman

Afghan businesswoman and social worker Ms Hassina Syed expressed her strong hope that the Taliban would protect women’s rights in Afghanistan because their leadership had reiterated so. She was speaking at a webinar at the Institute of Regional Studies.

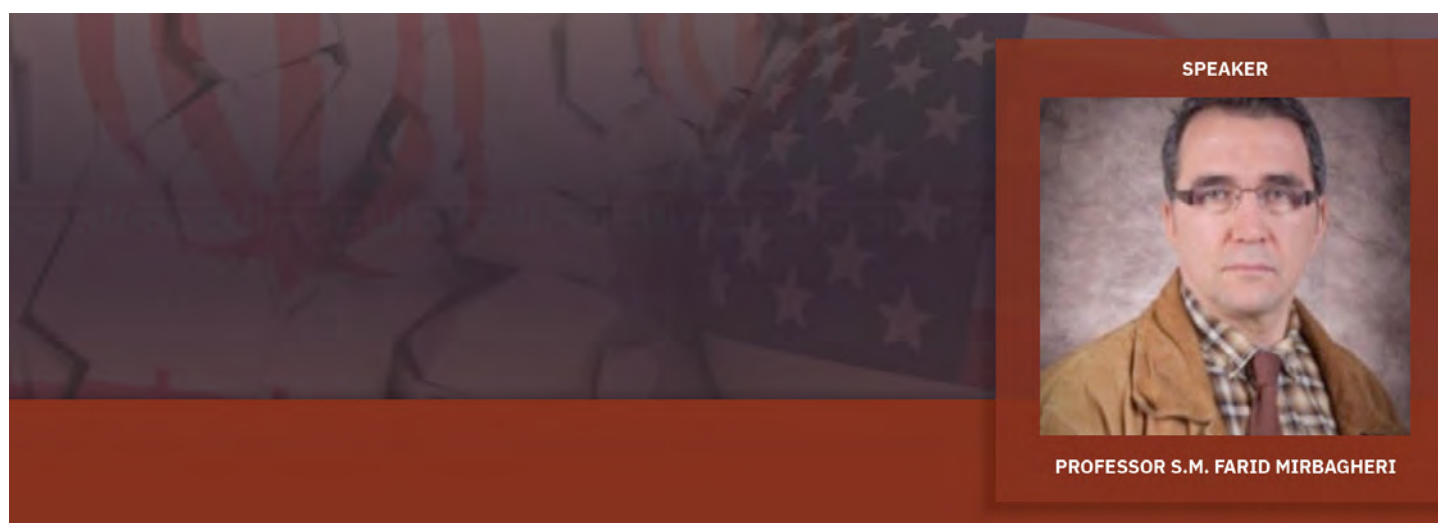


Post Taliban Takeover Afghanistan

August 30, 2021

Former diplomats urge support to peace and stability in Afghanistan

Senior former diplomats urged the international community to support peace and stability in the war-torn Afghanistan. They were speaking at a seminar on the post-Taliban takeover situation in Afghanistan organized by the Institute of Regional Studies.



Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post US Withdrawal

August 31, 2021

Tehran-Taliban relations have entered into a reconciliation mode, albeit cautiously, says Prof. Farid Mirbagheri

The relationship between Tehran and the Taliban was still evolving and the recent engagements were seemed to be a 'makeshift arrangement' said Prof. SM Farid Mirbagheri of Iran, adding that both Iran and Taliban remained at ideological odds on the issue of understanding and implementing the Islamic Sharia and the recent change in Iran's policy towards Taliban can be attributed to its domestic as well as foreign policy concerns.



Pakistan's Foreign Policy Challenges

September 01, 2021

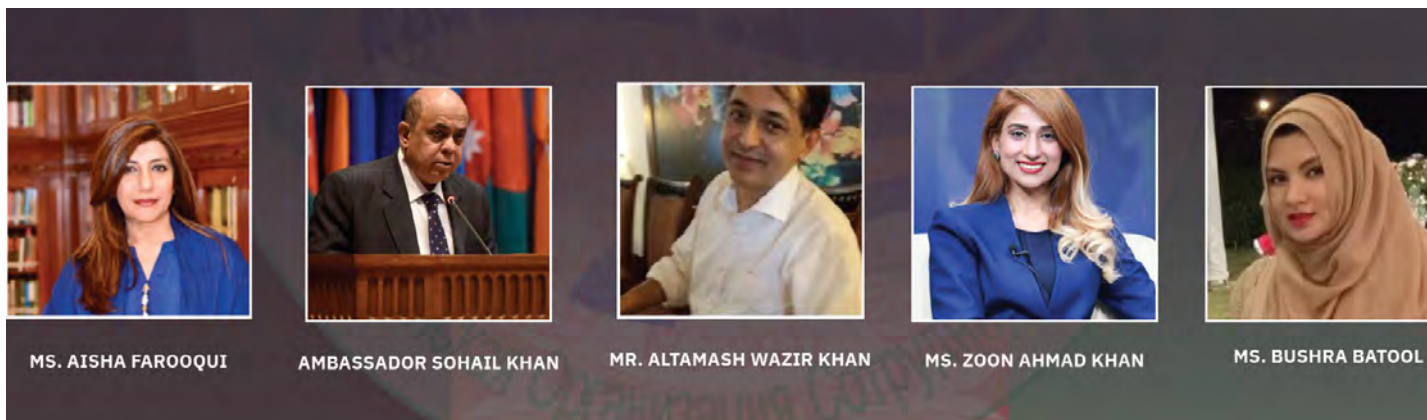
Ambassador Najam us Saqib gave an elaborated presentation on foreign policy challenges of Pakistan. He was of the view that it is need of the contemporary times to have a comprehensive foreign policy amidst Hybrid war fare. Pakistan needs to have mechanism first to make a strong narrative about itself and then to utilize effective tools to market and sell it across the world. He addressed IRS scholars on a round table discussion



Visiting Afghan Delegation Urges Cooperation for Peace

September 02, 2021

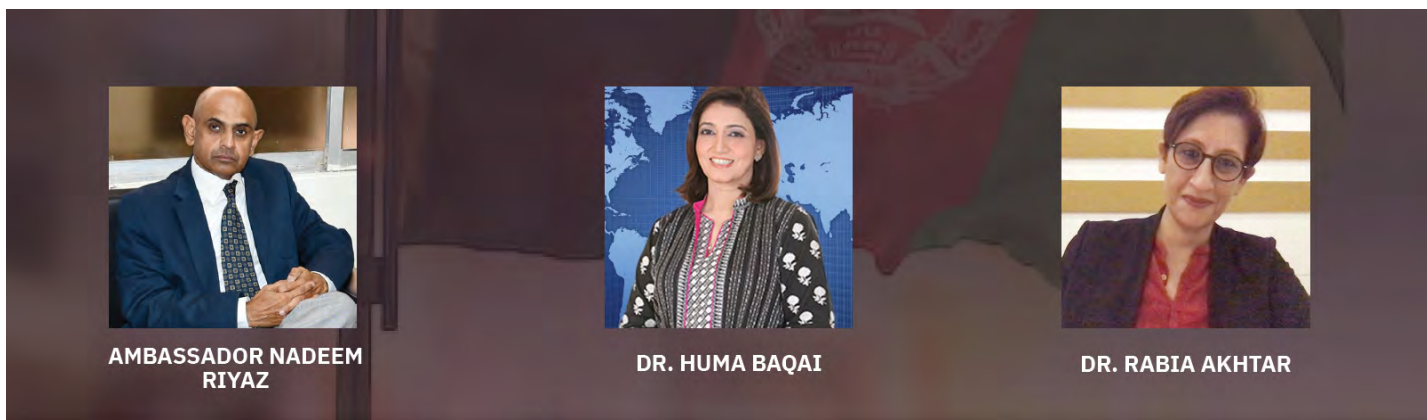
A delegation comprised of senior-level Afghan politicians and journalists urged national and regional cooperation for promoting peace and stability in Afghanistan. They were speaking at a conference organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) in collaboration with the Pak-Afghan Youth Forum (PAYF).



Role of SCO in Post-Withdrawal Afghanistan

September 06, 2021

The post-withdrawal situation in Afghanistan is worrisome. Looking at the current developments, no one can rule out a new wave of 'terrorism and extremism' in the region. The role of regional countries, as well as the international community, has become very crucial at the time when Afghanistan is at the crossroad of development and destruction. The role of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Afghan's sphere has already been established. On this theme, IRS organized a webinar



Afghanistan: What Next?

September 07, 2021

Taliban's swift control in Afghanistan has certainly surprised the whole world. This was an expected outcome, but nobody envisioned a fall of Kabul to Taliban within such a short span of time. Looking at the fast-changing scenario, the international community rushed to inculcate Taliban about the promises they have made: formation of inclusive government; commitment to not let their soil use against any country; respect for women 'rights. Taliban, mindful of legitimacy they acquire, have given a general amnesty to its opponents; softened their stance towards women; and opened up for inclusive government. For having an analytical discussion on the subject, IRS organized a webinar with the experts.



PRE COP26: From Paris to Glasgow

September 08, 2021

"Experts urge global partnership on climate change"

Climate experts and practitioners termed climate change a shared responsibility and urged the need for global partnership on the subject. They were speaking at the 'Pre-COP26 Dialogue' organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) in collaboration with the Civil Society Coalition for Climate Change (CSCCC), the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), and the Embassy of France here on Wednesday. The aim of the dialogue was sharing ideas on climate change in the run up to the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) to be held in Glasgow from 31 October to 12 November.



For COP 26, it is important to give the message that Pakistan is a responsible country which, though affected by climate change in an unjust manner, is still willing to be a part of the solution to climate change and not add to the problem, says Minister for Climate Change / Special Assistant to the Prime Minister.



The Chargés d'Affaires for France, Mr. Yves Manville, speaking at PreCop26 said that climate action is a top priority for French embassy in Pakistan and will emphasize cooperation.



H.E. Andreas Ferrarese, Ambassador of Italy to Pakistan said in his opening statement that climate change is a shared responsibility, can be used to preserve historical heritage and boost economies via incentives for taking environmental precautions.



H.E. Dr. Christian Turner said in his opening statement that Pakistan has the tools to lead the way to show other developing economies what is possible for adaptation and mitigation of climate change



Andaleeb Abbass said in her keynote address at Precop26 from Paris to Glasgow, "Climate change is all encompassing and affects everyone regardless of who and where they are. Cooperation and coordination is the way forward."



The End of an Era: The Legacy of Syed Ali Shah Geelani

September 09, 2021

Geelani proved that Kashmiris are Pakistanis, Afridi

Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Kashmir Mr Shehryar Khan Afridi stated that Syed Ali Shah Geelani had proved to the Indians through his life, struggle, and death that Kashmiris are Pakistanis. He was speaking at a commemorative event in the honour of the late Kashmiri freedom fighter organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS).



Reflections on Afghanistan

September 15, 2021

Experts call for encouraging the Taliban to act responsibly

Experts speaking at a webinar organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) in collaboration with the Romanian Diplomatic Institute (RDI) called for encouraging the Taliban to act responsibly.

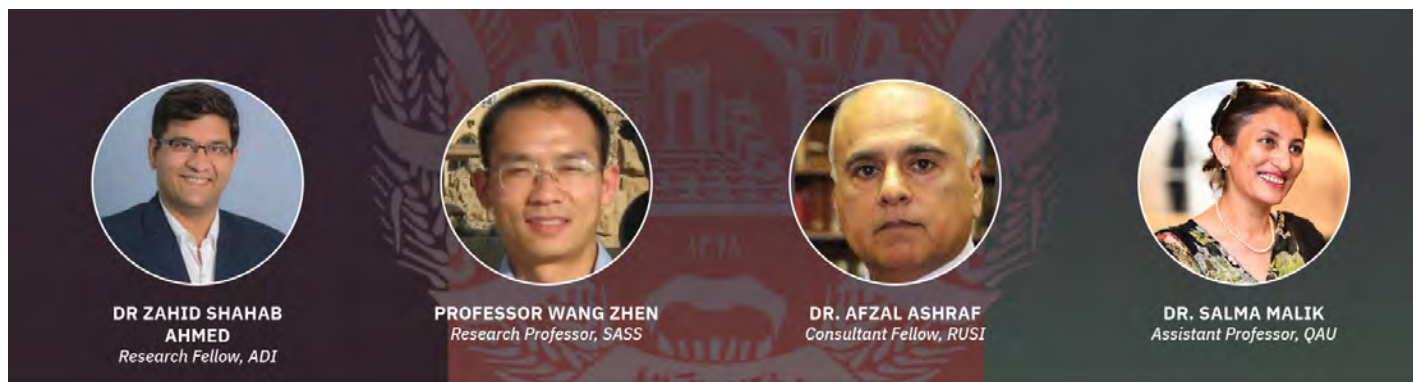


The COVID Pandemic: Lessons from Italy and Pakistan

September 16, 2021

Government strategy against Covid termed scientifically correct and realistic

Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Health Dr Faisal Sultan termed the government's strategy against the Covid-19 pandemic scientifically correct as well as grounded in the reality of the country. He was speaking at a seminar organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) in collaboration with the Italian Embassy and the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation.



Regional Approach to Stability in Afghanistan

September 20, 2021

Cooperation urged to thwart humanitarian catastrophe in Afghanistan

Regional countries have greater responsibility to reach out to the people of Afghanistan as the country was in limbo after US withdrawal. The whole region would feel the heat if the humanitarian crisis was not dealt effectively. In this difficult time, relationships with the people of Afghanistan be kept separated from the regional politics. These were the views expressed by the panelists at the webinar organized by the Institute of Regional Studies on 'Regional Response to Stability in Afghanistan'.



Post-Taliban Takeover: Implications for the West

September 22, 2021

'Time to engage with Afghanistan to stave off civil war', says Peter Jouvenal

'The worst you could do was to walk away as happened in 1989, and the best was to engage in a friendly manner, said Peter Jouvenal, a British TV Producer and Former Video Journalist. The history of Afghanistan was replete with mistakes committed by the international community said the British Journalist, adding that turning back on Afghanistan has always resulted in civil wars, deaths of many Afghans, and conflict spillover to regional countries.



Inauguration of Digital Library

September 27, 2021

IRS Digital Library has been inaugurated. It will provide access to books, articles, research papers available on **Proquest Dissertation and Thesis (PQDT), Wiley , INFORMS , Springer, OVID, ASTM and T&F.**



China's Future Role in Afghanistan

September 28, 2021

Future of Afghanistan-China relations is bright, says Amb. Syed Hassan Javed

Taliban has the capacity to provide security to the Chinese projects, said Amb. Javed at a roundtable conference organized by the Institute of Regional Studies on 'China's future role in Afghanistan'. Foreign investments, however, would only be possible when the Taliban was able to create a conducive environment, and for that, the Taliban would certainly strive, he opined. He was of the view that Pakistan would be greatly benefitted from the stability in Afghanistan as it could resolve security dilemmas that Pakistan was facing for decades.



Reflections on India

September 30, 2021

"Modi is a phenomenon, which has come to stay"

Ambassador Afrasiab visited IRS to share his valuable knowledge of Indian society and culture. He has served as a High Commissioner to India in late 90's. while addressing a round table with IRS scholars he stressed upon the need to understand Indian society before devising a strategy to deal with Pakistan's 'antagonist' neighbor. He also said that 'Modi is a phenomenon which has come to stay'. The meeting was also attended by distinguished diplomats of Pakistan.

FROM INSIGHTS

- **Prospects of the Afghan Economy Post-Taliban Takeover**

Nabiya Imran (Intern, IRS)

- **The Developing Nexus between Pakistan, China, and Russia on the Afghanistan Question**

Nabiya Imran (Intern, IRS)

- **Afghanistan-What Next?**

Nabiya Imran (Intern, IRS)

- **The Global Responsibility for Afghan Refugees**

Zunaira Inam (Research Analyst)

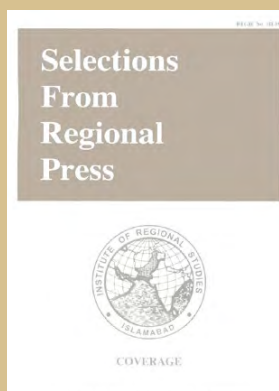
- **Abandoning Afghanistan**

Zunaira Inam (Research Analyst)

- **Pandemic Diplomacy and Politicization of Vaccines**

Jugnoo Aijaz (Intern at IRS)

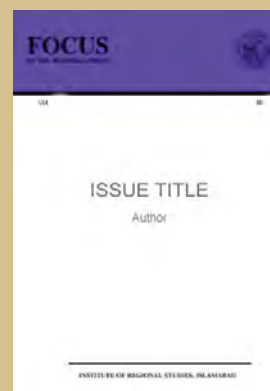
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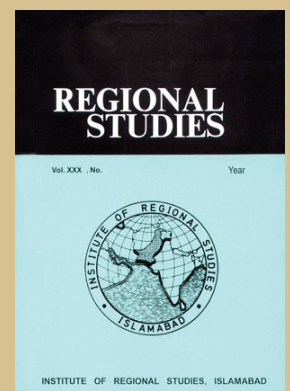
***Selection from
Regional Press***



Spotlight



Focus



Regional Studies