

PAKISTAN WATCH

No. 02

January 2011

Political Issues

Bahrain

1. Pakistan attaches high importance to ties with Bahrain: PM

Islamabad, Thursday, 2 December 2010

The Prime Minister of Pakistan informed the Commander National Guards of Bahrain that Pakistan greatly valued its 'fraternal and cordial' relations with the Kingdom of Bahrain. He stated his satisfaction with their current bilateral defence cooperation and also suggested an MoU in the field of labour and manpower. He requested Bahrain to help initiate negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement between Pakistan and the GCC countries.

Source: *Dawn*, Karachi

<http://www.dawn.com/2010/12/02/pakistan-attaches-high-importance-to-ties-with-bahrain-pm.html>

2. Absence of Pakistani civilian leaders at Manama summit raises eyebrows

Manama, Monday, 6 December 2010

The absence of the Foreign Minister of Pakistan Shah Mehmood Qureshi was noted at the Manama Dialogue 2010 security summit that was organized by International Institute for Strategic Studies. Chief of the General Staff Lt. Gen. Waheed Arshad Chaudhry headed the Pakistani delegation. The primary conclusion at the summit regarding Pakistan was that it did not seem likely that they would start a military operation in North Waziristan in the near future.

Source: *Arab News*, Jeddah

<http://arabnews.com/middleeast/article209635.ece?service=print>

Iran

3. Iran Mosque bombing kills dozens

Wednesday, 15 December 2010

Jundallah, a Sunni Muslim rebel group, claimed responsibility for an explosion in the Iranian port city of Chahbahar that lies close to the border with Pakistan. The attack took place outside the Imam Hussein mosque, targeting worshippers gathered to mark Ashura. Around 39 people were killed. Iran blamed Pakistan, especially Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), for not anticipating the attacks since terrorists were mainly based in Pakistan.

Source: *Guardian*, London

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/dec/15/iran-chahbahar-suicide-bombing-mosque>

4. Pakistan and Iran jockey for influence after bombings
Islamabad, Wednesday, 22 December 2010

Tension between Iran and Pakistan increased after the bomb attack carried out by Jundallah in Iran on 15 December. Iran accused Pakistan of providing shelter to the militant group since many Jundallah members are based in the province of Baluchistan. Pakistan denied this claim and their Interior Minister Rehman Malik responded by assuring them that they would assist in finding the perpetrators of the bombing.

Source: *Reuters*

<http://af.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idAFTRE6BL1D520101222?pageNumber=1&virtualBrandChannel=0>

5. Iran hails Raouf Rigi's arrest
Islamabad, Sunday, 26 December 2010

Pakistan's capture of the Jundallah leader Raouf Rigi in Baluchistan was welcomed by Iran. Ali Akbar Javanfekr, the press advisor to the Iranian president, asserted that the terrorist should be sternly dealt with by Pakistan.

Source: *Dawn*, Karachi

<http://www.dawn.com/2010/12/26/iran-hails-raouf-rigis-arrest.html>

See also: *The Nation*, Lahore

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Politics/26-Dec-2010/Pak-may-hand-over-seized-top-Baluch-militant-to-Iran-report/>

Israel

6. Pakistan slams Israel's defiance of calls for Mideast settlement
United Nations/New York, Wednesday, 1 December 2010

Pakistan's delegate to the UN Tahir Hussain Andrabi informed the General Assembly that Pakistan condemned Israel's unresponsiveness to the calls of the international community to settle the Middle East dispute. The major hurdle he pointed out was Israeli settlement activity in the occupied Palestinian territory. He asserted that meaningful negotiation must be accompanied by an improvement in the livelihood of the Palestinians.

Source: *Dawn, Karachi*

<http://www.dawn.com/2010/12/01/pakistan-slams-israels-defiance-of-calls-for-mideast-settlement.html>

7. Pakistan passed potential attack info to Israel

Islamabad, Wednesday, 1 December 2010

An October 2009 US diplomatic cable published by WikiLeaks revealed that the head of the ISI Lt. Gen. Ahmad Shuja Pasha had informed the US ambassador that he had followed up on reports from Washington about a terrorist attack against India. He claimed to have been in direct touch with the Israelis regarding the possibility of threats against Israeli targets in India.

Source: *Reuters*

<http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE6B05N720101201>

PNA

8. India stops 40 peace activists from entering Pakistan

Lahore, Sunday, 5 December 2010

Activists of the Asian Gaza Solidarity Campaign were not allowed to cross the border at Wagah on Saturday since the Indian government had not issued a No Objection Certificate. Amanullah Kariapper, a spokesperson of Pakistanis for Palestine, stated that both the Pakistani and Indian government had posed obstacles. Pakistan had initially denied visas for the Indian participants and later only granted them permission to travel till Lahore.

Source: *Dawn, Karachi*

<http://www.dawn.com/2010/12/05/india-stops-40-peace-activists-from-entering-pakista.html>

Oman

9. Pakistan, Oman to boost defence, economic ties

Muscat, Tuesday, 28 December 2010

Pakistan's Prime Minister and Oman's Sultan Qaboos bin Sa'id exchanged views on regional issues and agreed to implement the decisions taken last March by a Joint Ministerial Commission. They also looked to increase cooperation between their armed forces in joint exercises, defence procurement, training and exchange of delegations.

Source: *Dawn, Karachi*

<http://www.dawn.com/2010/12/28/pakistan-oman-to-boost-defence-economic-ties.html>

See also: *Dawn*, Karachi

<http://www.dawn.com/2010/11/29/pakistan-oman-working-together-for-regional-development-gilani.html>

Qatar

10. PNS Babur's visit to boost ties with Qatar

Doha, Tuesday, 14 December 2010

Pakistan's naval ship PNS Babur made a goodwill visit to Doha. The crew on board interacted with officials of the Qatar Emiri Navy as a sign of boosting relations between the two countries.

Source: *Qatar Tribune*, Doha

http://www.qatar-tribune.com/data/20101214/content.asp?section=nation4_1

Saudi Arabia

11. WikiLeaks cables: Saudi Arabia wants military rule in Pakistan

Islamabad, Wednesday, 1 December 2010

Relations between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan have been strained over the past two years according to the US diplomatic cable released by WikiLeaks since the former prefers the opposition leader Nawaz Sharif over President Asif Ali Zardari. King Abdullah made disparaging remarks about Zardari and claimed he was incompetent to counter terrorism. Abdullah's preference for military rule in Pakistan was also noted.

Source: *Guardian*, London

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/dec/01/saudis-distrust-pakistan-embassy-cables>

See also: *The Express Tribune*, Karachi

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/84326/wikileaks-saga-saudi-arabia-makes-no-effort-for-damage-control/>

Dawn, Karachi

<http://www.dawn.com/2010/12/03/leaked-memos-reveal-us-pressing-for-saudi-help-in-pakistan.html>

Time

<http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2035347,00.html>

12. WikiLeaks: Saudis 'chief funders of Sunni militants'

London, Sunday, 5 December 2010

According to WikiLeaks US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton claimed that donors from Saudi Arabia were the main source of funding for most Sunni terrorists groups worldwide. She had urged diplomats to act to prevent the funding of militants 'threatening stability in Pakistan and Afghanistan and targeting Coalition soldiers.' Another cable revealed that the Pakistani charity Jamaat-ud-Dawa, a front for Lashkar-e-Taiba, received Saudi funding for its activities in 2005.

Source: *BBC*, London

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-11923176>

13. Illegal stay: 110 Pakistanis deported from Saudi Arabia
Islamabad, Thursday, 30 December 2010

According to the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), 110 Pakistani nationals whose visas had expired or had lost their passports were deported from Saudi Arabia and handed over to relatives in Pakistan. Most had travelled there for Hajj and Umra a long time back and stayed on, getting involved with illegal businesses or begging.

Source: *The Express Tribune, Karachi*

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/96679/illegal-stay-110-pakistanis-deported-from-saudi-arabia/>

Sudan

14. Islamabad and Khartoum discuss sending Pakistani farmers to Sudan
Khartoum, Sunday, 5 December 2010

Pakistan's Federal Minister for Food and Agriculture Nazar M. Gondal received the Sudanese ambassador to Pakistan, Mohamed Omer Moussa, on Thursday (2 December) to discuss the provision of land and family visas for Pakistani farmers to allow them to farm in Sudan. The ambassador supported this proposal and said Sudan would facilitate this move to the best of their abilities.

Source: *Sudan Tribune, Khartoum*

<http://www.sudantribune.com/Islamabad-and-Khartoum-discuss,37168>

Syria

15. Pakistan Syria enjoy brotherly ties: Ambassador
Islamabad, Tuesday, 14 December 2010

Dr. Ali Mehra, the Syrian ambassador to Pakistan, informed media that Pakistan and Syria enjoy excellent brotherly relations and their cooperation in the areas of trade, politics and culture has been thriving for the last five decades. Both countries are looking to improve their trade relations and help facilitate visas for students wishing to study in the other country.

Source: *Associated Press of Pakistan*

http://app.com.pk/en /index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=124573&Itemid=2

Yemen

16. Terrorism is int'l dilemma - Yemeni, Pakistani officials say
Sana'a, Wednesday, 29 December 2010

Yemen's Foreign Minister Abu Bakr al-Qirbi and Pakistan's Federal Minister for Industries and Production Mir Hazar Khan Bijarani claimed that terrorism is a dilemma that concerns all of the international community and not just Pakistan and Yemen. They discussed possibilities to increase mutual cooperation in counter-terrorism ventures.

Source: *Yemen News Agency (SABA)*, Sana'a
<http://www.sabanews.net/en/news231990.htm>

Multilateral

17. UAE, Syria's support shocks Pakistan Islamabad, Saturday, 4 December 2010

Pakistan expressed its deep concern and disappointment with UAE and Syria for supporting India's bid for a permanent seat in the UNSC. Pakistan asserted that it had always supported Arab countries against Israel and felt let down. Pakistan does not believe that India should be supported in this bid due to a poor human rights record and poor relations with their neighbours.

Source: *The Nation*, Lahore
<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Politics/04-Dec-2010/UAE-Syrias-support-shocks-Pakistan>

18. Turkey, Afghanistan, Pakistan to hold joint military drill next year Istanbul, Friday, 24 December 2010

Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Turkey agreed at the Trilateral Summit held at Istanbul to hold a joint military drill in March 2011 meant to further military cooperation and assured that it was not against any other party.

Source: *Xinhua*
http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/world/2010-12/25/c_13663798.htm

Economic Issues

Iran

19. Pakistan-Iran trade hurt by LC issue Karachi, Wednesday, 22 December 2010

Though the UN and the US have imposed ban only on five major Iranian banks for alleged illicit nuclear activity, Pakistani banks refuse to accept letters of credit (LC) of any Iranian bank and this is harming Pakistan's exports to Iran.

Source: *Pakistan Today*, Lahore
<http://pakistantoday.com.pk/pakistan-news/Business/22-Dec-2010/PakistanIran-trade-hurt-by-LC-issue>

Kuwait

20. Zardari seeks Kuwait's cooperation for GCC FTA Islamabad, Tuesday, 21 December 2010

President Asif Ali Zardari asserted that Pakistan was looking forward to concluding a Free Trade Agreement with the Gulf Cooperation Council to enhance trade between Pakistan and the Gulf countries. He claimed that Pakistan was looking for support from Kuwait for this purpose. The envoy of the Amir of the State of Kuwait Dr. Abdullah Maatooq Almaatoq met the President.

Source: *Pakistan Today, Lahore*

<http://pakistanoday.com.pk/pakistan-news/Business/21-Dec-2010/Zardari-seeks-Kuwaits-cooperation-for-GCC-FTA>

Oman

21. Pakistan eyes maritime trade with Oman

Muscat, Monday, 27 December 2010

Initiating passenger and maritime trade between Gwadar and Muscat was on Pakistan's agenda during the Prime Minister's visit to Oman. The route between these two ports is only a few hours and is beneficial to both countries compared to the three days between Karachi and Muscat. Both sides would like to increase mutual cooperation and expand their trade. Bilateral trade in the past three years had doubled to around US 250 million dollars.

Source: *Dawn, Karachi*

<http://www.dawn.com/2010/12/27/pakistan-eyes-maritime-trade-with-oman.html>

United Arab Emirates

22. Pakistani REITs seen drawing local and foreign investment

Dubai/Karachi, Wednesday, 5 December 2010

Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) will probably be launched in Karachi in the first quarter of 2011. REITs will enable Pakistan to expand its local and Gulf-based investors by formalizing the real estate sector, which will allow for transparency.

Source: *Reuters*

<http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSLDE6BD0CA20101215>

23. Emirates to expand operations in Pakistan

Karachi, Saturday, 11 December 2010

Emirates looked to expand its operations in Pakistan by increasing the number of flights, especially in the northern region of the country. Emirates Pakistan Vice President Badr Abbas said that Pakistan was a prime market for them and they were looking to strengthen their presence there.

Source: *Daily Times, Lahore*

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\12\11\story_11-12-2010_pg5_1

Yemen

24. Yemen, Pakistan emphasize trade relations' development

Sana'a, Wednesday, 29 December 2010

The sixth session of the Yemeni-Pakistani Joint Ministerial Committee concluded by emphasizing bilateral trade and cooperation between the two countries. Both sides also agreed to name ten representatives for the Yemeni-Pakistani Businessmen Council, which is to be held in the first quarter of 2011. The formation of a joint technical committee for oil, gas, and minerals was also agreed upon.

Source: *Yemen News Agency (SABA), Sana'a*

<http://www.sabanews.net/en/news232012.htm>

Multilateral

25. ECO summit issues declaration on regional economic cooperation

Istanbul, Friday, 24 December 2010

A declaration on regional economic cooperation was adopted by the Heads of State and Government at the 11th Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) at Istanbul on Thursday (23 December). This included establishing a Free Trade Zone in the region and close energy cooperation. It also mentioned that the success of the Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul cargo train route that began in August 2010 and further proposed the same between Istanbul and Almaty in 2011.

Source: *Xinhua*

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/world/2010-12/24/c_13662173.htm

Energy

Iran

26. Iran plans wind farm for Pakistan

Tehran, Monday, 6 December 2010

The Iranian Company SANIR, which is associated with the country's Energy Ministry, has signed a \$100 million deal with the Pakistani Chamber of Commerce to construct a 1000 megawatt wind farm in the province of Sindh.

Source: *United Press International*

http://www.upi.com/Science_News/Resource-Wars/2010/12/06/Iran-plans-wind-farm-for-Pakistan/UPI-44971291652813/

27. Govt to divest shareholding of 2 gas firms

Islamabad, Friday, 24 December 2010

The Pakistani Government looked to withdraw its shareholding in two gas utilities from Interstate Gas Company Limited (ISGCL) to avoid possible international sanctions since the company is responsible for carrying out the Iran-Pakistan Gas Pipeline project.

Source: *Dawn, Karachi*

<http://www.dawn.com/2010/12/25/govt-to-divest-shareholding-of-2-gas-firms.html>

Qatar

28. Five IPPs allowed to import LNG

Islamabad, Friday, 31 December 2010

Five independent power producers (IPPs) in Punjab have been given permission by the government to use the transmission networks of state-run gas companies to import 3.5 million tons of liquefied natural gas (LNG) annually from Qatar for 25 years.

Source: *Dawn, Karachi*

<http://www.dawn.com/2010/12/31/five-ipp-allowed-to-import-lng.html>

Miscellaneous

29. Top Pak court takes notice of alleged corruption during Hajj arrangements

Islamabad, Friday, 3 December 2010

The Supreme Court of Pakistan has formed a five-member bench to investigate the allegation of corruption in Hajj operations and improper Hajj arrangements. The Federal Minister of Religious Affairs Hamid Kazmi has been issued a notice. The hearing would begin on 6 December.

Source: *Arab News, Jeddah*

<http://arabnews.com/world/article207152.ece>

30. FIA arrests joint secy in Hajj corruption case

Islamabad, Friday, 10 December 2010

The Joint Secretary (Hajj) for Religious Affairs was arrested by the Federal Investigation Agency for his alleged involvement in corruption while acquiring residential buildings for Pakistani pilgrims in Saudi Arabia.

Source: *Daily Times, Lahore*

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\12\10\story_10-12-2010_pg1_5

31. Hajj scam: FIA team leaves for Saudi Arabia today

Islamabad, Monday, 13 December 2010

A three-member team of the Federal Investigative Agency left for Saudi Arabia to further investigate the allegations of corruption in the handling of Hajj affairs this year. The team is to remain there till the completion of the investigation. A preliminary report was also due to be submitted by the FIA that day.

Source: *Dawn, Karachi*

<http://www.dawn.com/2010/12/13/haj-scam-fia-team-leaves-for-saudi-arabia-today.html>

32. Relief ship from UAE RCA arrives in Karachi

Karachi, Tuesday, 14 December 2010

Six hundred tons of relief items like food, medical supplies, blankets etc. were sent by UAE Red Crescent Authority to support the victims of the floods in Pakistan.

Source: *UAE Interact, Abu Dhabi*

http://www.uaeinteract.com/docs/Relief_ship_from_UAE_RCA_arrives_in_Karachi/43710.htm

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