

This E-Bulletin focuses and analyses major developments in Pakistan and brings them to the notice of strategic analysts and policy makers in India.

EDITOR'S NOTE

The domestic politics in Pakistan is heating up with the announcement of election on July 25. While all the parties are busy finalizing the final list of candidates, Nawaz Sharif's interview to the Dawn criticizing the security establishment for failing to proceed with the Mumbai attack trial and sheltering non-state actors, drew severe criticism from the military establishment. The military proposed a meeting of the National Security Council to discuss the public accusation by Sharif. The Spy Chronicles written by former heads of intelligence of the two countries, which made several revelations, also made the Army uncomfortable which summoned the former ISI chief General Asad Durrani, to the GHQ and placed him in the exit control list. The announcement of the reinstatement of the 2003 ceasefire was seen as a welcome step in bilateral relations.

COMMENTARY

Truce on LoC: What Next For India and Pakistan

*Smruti S Pattanaik**

The Director Generals of Military Operations of India and Pakistan recently reaffirmed their intention to observe the 2003 ceasefire along the Line of Control (LoC). Violations of the ceasefire began soon after Musharraf's exit from power in 2007. According to Annual Report of the Ministry of Defence, there were 51 ceasefire violations between January 2008 and March 2009. Especially after the terrorist attacks in Mumbai in November 2008, tensions along the LoC steadily

escalated and began to cast a dark shadow on bilateral relations. The recent decision to adhere to the Ceasefire comes as a huge relief to people in both countries. What could have led to this turn of events and what does it mean for India-Pakistan relations?

Facilitating Peace: Previous Ceasefires

The present announcement of reinforcing the 2003 ceasefire is third such initiative to enforce peace across the Line of Control and International border in the Jammu Kashmir sector. In 2001, the then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee had announced Ramazan ceasefire which was extended till May 2002. Pakistan responded to Indian initiative by saying it will exercise 'maximum restraint'. In 2003, Prime Minister of Pakistan, Zafarullah Khan Jamali announced id-ul-Fitr unilateral ceasefire across the LoC. India responded by saying "in order to establish a full ceasefire on a durable basis, there must be an end to infiltration from across the Line of Control" while assuring that it will respond positively to Pakistan's announcement. Next day on the 25th of November, Ministry of External Affairs in a press statement said, Director Generals of Military Operations of India and Pakistan, "agreed to observe a ceasefire with effect from midnight tonight along the international border, LOC and Actual Ground Position Line (AGPL) in Jammu & Kashmir." This ceasefire declaration most importantly had come in the aftermath of attack on Indian Parliament and mobilisation of troop. This initiative paved the way for Vajpayee-Musharraf summit on the sidelines of 12th SAARC summit in Islamabad, January 2004, where Musharraf promised that "he will not permit any territory under Pakistan's control to be used to support terrorism in any manner".¹ The peace initiative also resulted in an agreement on Cross LoC

Trade and people to people contact, an initiative unthinkable in the past. It also allowed India to fence the LoC to stop infiltration apart from establishment of Joint Anti-terror Mechanism.

The unravelling of the India-Pakistan peace process began with the exit of General Musharraf from Pakistan's political scene. General Kayani, who succeeded Musharraf as Army Chief, was not committed to the peace process. There was, perhaps, a major section within the Army that was not comfortable with Musharraf's peace overtures with India. After Musharraf's exit, the Army disowned the peace process including the back channel process started by Musharraf. The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) government that came to power in 2008 was keen to improve bilateral relations; however, it found itself in a difficult situation to pursue the process after the Mumbai attack. Delinking terrorism from the composite dialogue in Sharm el Sheikh in 2009 to announcing 'terror and talks cannot go together' India and Pakistan has found it difficult to resume dialogue. While Pakistan Army wanted to control the pace of the dialogue and unwilling to give civilian government a free hand; incidents of beheading of Indian soldiers and cease fire violation turned the public mood against Pakistan in India. The NDA government's 'neighbourhood first' policy and Prime Minister Modi's bold initiatives to take the relationship forward suffered major setback with the Pathankot attack.

Coming to ceasefire violations, such incidents have steadily increased especially since 2014, along the AGPL, LoC and IB in Jammu and Kashmir. According to the Ministry of Defence Annual Reports from 2014 to 2017, there were 153 violations in 2014. In 2015 there were 152 violations along the LoC, and 253 along the IB². The number of violations along the LoC rose to 228 in 2016³ and to 860 in 2017. In 2018 January alone, there were 209 cases of ceasefire violations.⁴ However, compared to the pre-2003 Ceasefire violations, the numbers are still less⁵. It needs to be mentioned that firing across the LoC and IB only added to bilateral tensions.

The announcement of the latest ceasefire is not surprising if one takes into account some of the developments preceding it. After bilateral relations touched rock bottom following harassment of diplomats in both countries, the two countries have slowly tried to put the relationship back on track. As Pakistan High

commissioner Sohail Mehmood, reflecting on the harassment of diplomats, told *The Hindu* in March, "This is a moment for sober reflection on the state of the bilateral relationship. It is too important to be allowed to drift. There is a need to handle matters with wisdom and thoughtfulness"⁶, underlining the delicate nature of bilateral relations that many a times went to the brink and back. The seeming thaw appeared to have come after the Pakistan Army signaled a change in its approach to India. Departing from past practice, for the first time, Pakistan Army invited the Indian Defence Attaché and senior officials of the High Commission to join the March 23 Pakistan Day celebrations this year. This was followed by a report that Pakistan Navy helped Indian fisherman whose boat had developed a snag. Both countries also released fisherman and prisoners as a goodwill gesture.

In January this year, Islamabad sent a four-member team of counter-terrorism and intelligence specialists to attend a Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) meeting held in Delhi. The permanent Indus Water Commission also had a meeting in New Delhi. And, both the countries had the meeting of the coast guard signaling a normal state to state relations. Speaking to *The Indian Express* in May, Ajay Bisaria, Indian High commissioner to Pakistan said, "We have in recent months been working on small steps forward, particularly on the humanitarian side, to build an atmosphere of trust between the countries."⁷ Between May 10 and December 01, 2017, India provided 380 medical visas to patients from Pakistan⁸ signaling the humanitarian aspect of the relationship.

While these developments indicated a growing thaw before the reinstatement of ceasefire was announced, there are a number of internal and external factors that could have prompted the bilateral thaw and the timing of the announcement. To some extent, the bilateral ceasefire was prompted by announcement of cessation of hostility within Kashmir during the holy month of Ramadan. Most of the villages on either side of the LoC are predominantly Muslim the ceasefire will give them some relief during this holy month. Second, the firing across the LoC and IB caused civilian and military casualties without corresponding strategic policy success. Increasing ceasefire violations were not helping the two countries as each one of them was in a position to inflict casualty and could not succeed in area domination. Third, Pakistan's internal security situation has improved

significantly after Operation *Radd ul Fasad*. The military appears confident in the domestic front and with the weakening of civilian regime it has emerged as the most powerful entity.⁹ It feels that this is the right moment to initiate dialogue with India. Fourth, the Army was concerned with the increasing debt burden of the economy and reasoned that constant tension with India does not help the investment scenario in the country. Externally, the two countries will be participating in the SCO joint terror exercise to be held in Russia in September. There are indications that SCO member states are averse to India Pakistan tensions that would affect the effective functioning of the SCO.¹⁰ Finally, the reason could be that the two National Security Advisers who are engaged in back channel diplomacy and reportedly met four times in the past probably want to defuse tension before the elections and move the two countries towards dialogue.

Powerful Signaling

The ultimate message to peace came from Pakistan Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa. Speaking at the passing out parade of the cadets at the Pakistan Military Academy in Kakul in April this year, he said that the route to peace with India runs through comprehensive and meaningful dialogue. Bajwa had earlier spoken to some selected journalists about his vision of Pakistan which includes the internal situation which is popularly known as Bajwa Doctrine. Appearing before the Senate Committee on Defence, General Bajwa urged the political leaders to improve relationship with India.¹¹ Echoing similar sentiment, the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) Spokesperson Maj. Gen. Asif Ghafoor in a meeting with Indian journalists said, “Issues between India and Pakistan can only be resolved through dialogue; positive engagement based on trust can take us forward. If we continue to be dictated by history, we will continue to make mistakes.”¹² The signals of dialogue coming from Pakistan Army is a significant development.

What Next?

Though resumption of the dialogue process will take time, the ceasefire provides the context and atmospherics for initiating a result oriented meaningful dialogue to take the relationship forward. Several initiatives in the recent past like releasing fishermen, release and repatriation of women, disabled prisoners and those above 70 and allowing judicial commission to visit each

other’s jails points towards a positive direction, even though India-Pakistan relations are prone to accidents. To sustain the dialogue, Pakistan needs to take steps to ensure that terrorists based in its territory do not act as spoilers. Such steps would be more important since Pakistan is already placed in the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) grey list. The Kulbhushan Jadhav case which will come up for hearing sometime this year is likely to put stress on bilateral relations. However, signaling a forward movement that is facilitated by the ceasefire, the United Jihad Council, which had earlier rejected talks with New Delhi, has offered conditional dialogue. The Hurriyat for the first time declared that it is willing to have a dialogue, if Pakistan is a part of the process. These expressions of willingness to have even conditional dialogue would not have been possible without Rawalpindi’s nod. India Pakistan tensions have invariably divided the separatists and made them wary of initiating talks with New Delhi. But de-escalation of tensions between the two countries has always forced the separatist leaders to engage New Delhi. Moreover, with the Pakistan Army on board on the issue of resuming dialogue, the two countries may move to restore normalcy in their bilateral ties.

Endnotes:

- ¹ “India-Pakistan Joint Press Statement, Islamabad”, Indian Ministry of External Affairs, January 06, 2004, at http://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/2973/IndiaPakistan_Joint_Press_Statement_Islamabad
- ² Rajya Sabha, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, July 27, 2016, at <https://mha.gov.in/MHA1/Par2017/pdfs/par2016-pdfs/rs-270716/1097%20E.pdf>
- ³ Press Information Bureau, Government of India, Ministry of Defence, <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=176301>
- ⁴ “Ceasefire Violations J&K”, Ministry of Home Affairs, Press Information Bureau, Government of India, March 07, 2018, at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=177081>
- ⁵ According to Mehbooba Mufti statement on June 28th, 2016, in 2002 there were 8376 incidents of border incidents, in 2003 it was 2045 and between 2004 and 2007 there was no violation at the border. <http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/jammu-kashmir/11-270-ceasefire-violations-since-2002/258248.html>
- ⁸ Krishna Kumar, “RTI plea raises questions over Pakistan’s medical visas”, The Economic Times, February 13, 2018, at <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/rti-plea-raises-questions-over-pakistans-medical-visas/articleshow/62896344.cms>

- ⁹ According to Kamal Alam, “Major General Ahmed Hayat, the Director-General-Analysis of the Inter-Services-Intelligence, in 2013 authored the so-called India Plan in 2013, which tried to ascertain how and when Pakistan should approach India. He concluded that the Pakistani military would approach India once Pakistan’s own defence diplomacy was strengthened and not under American threats or pressure. See Kamal Alam Pakistan’s Military Reaches Out to India, May 3, 2018, Commentary, RUSI, <https://rusi.org/commentary/pakistan%E2%80%99s-military-reaches-out-india>”
- ¹⁰ Luo Yingjie, “New members bring challenges for Eurasian bloc”, Global Times, June 8, 2017, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1050726.shtml>
- ¹¹ Baquir Sajjad Saeed, “Bajwa says army not destabilising civilian govt”, Dawn, December 20, 2017, at <https://www.dawn.com/news/1377681/bajwa-says-army-not-destabilising-civilian-govt>
- ¹² Sushant Singh, “In bilateral chill, small steps towards thaw, says Indian envoy to Pakistan Ajay Bisaria”, Indian Express, May 22, 2018, <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-pakistan-relations-exchange-of-prisoners-indus-water-commission-ajay-bisaria-5186022/>
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THE WEEK AT A GLANCE

POLITICS

For Nawaz, it’s not over till it’s over

In a wide-ranging and exclusive interview with *Dawn* ahead of his rally in Multan, a Nawaz Sharif dismissed the recent defections from the PML-N, particularly in southern Punjab. “They didn’t leave the party, they were taken away. Who took them away?” Mr. Sharif asked. Asked what he believes is the reason for his ouster from public office, Mr. Sharif did not reply directly but steered the conversation towards foreign policy and national security. “We have isolated ourselves. Despite giving sacrifices, our narrative is not being accepted. Afghanistan’s narrative is being accepted, but ours is not. We must look into it.” He continued: “Militant organizations are active. Call them non-state actors, should we allow them to cross the border and kill 150 people in Mumbai? Explain it to me. Why can’t we complete the trial?” — a reference to the Mumbai attacks-related trials which have stalled in a Rawalpindi anti-terrorism court. He denied that a third ouster from

the premiership represented a failed approach on his part and suggested he had no regrets nor would he have to do anything differently if he returned to public office. “The Constitution has to be supreme. There is no other way. Look, we put a dictator on trial; it had never been done before,” referring to retired Gen Pervez Musharraf.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1407192/for-nawaz-its-not-over-till-its-over>

The Spy Chronicles: ruminations of former ISI, RAW chiefs

Former ISI chief Asad Durrani’s new book titled *The Spy Chronicles: RAW, ISI and the Illusion of Peace*, co-authored with former RAW chief Amarjit Singh Dulat and journalist Aditya Sinha, may not be explosive in the traditional sense, because many of the ‘revelations’ have been the stuff of coffee table discussions for years. Recounting ISI’s biggest failures against India, Durrani says: “At the operational level, [during] the 1965 war, we could claim we got good information about the other side, how they are assembled for war. But it was a lost effort. In the 1971 war, the ISI was unable to anticipate the attack in East Pakistan. In my time, we predicted that India’s military build-up after the Kashmir uprising was not intended for war. I can pat my own back for that. But the biggest failure was when the Kashmir uprising happened, we did not know how far it would go.” But for many hawks, the most eye-catching comment the general makes may have to do with an EU-like South Asian Confederation. “...At some stage we can think of a common currency, or laws applicable to when we develop the new South Asian Union: a Confederation of South Asia.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1720514/1-spy-chronicles-ruminations-former-isi-raw-chiefs/>

NA passes ‘historic’ Fata, K-P merger bill

The bill seeks reduction in number of the Senate seats from 104 to 96 members as Fata will no longer have separate representation after the merger but for now they will continue till expiry of their respective terms in office. Hence half of the existing eight senators would retire in 2021 and the remaining four in 2024 and thereafter there would be no separate representation for Fata in the Senate. Similarly, the K-P Assembly will have 145 seats, including 115 general, 26 reserved for women and four for minorities. Fata will have 21 seats in the K-

P Assembly, including 16 general, four for women and one reserved for non-Muslims. Elections to the aforesaid seats would be held within one year after the general elections 2018. The bill also amends Article 246 of the Constitution that seeks to merge areas of Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (Pata) in Balochistan and K-P. The bill has also exclusively repealed Article 247 that places the tribal areas under the ambit of president of Pakistan. Under the new amendment the name of Fata as a separate entity from the country's four existing provinces will be removed.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1717822/1-imran-khan-likely-attend-na-session-k-p-fata-merger/>

Justice (retd) Nasirul Mulk takes oath as caretaker PM

Former Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice (retd) Nasirul Mulk took oath as Pakistan's caretaker prime minister at the President House. President Mamnoon Hussain administered oath to the caretaker prime minister at a ceremony which was also attended by the Senate chairman, deputy chairman, politicians and military officials. Mulk is the seventh caretaker prime minister of Pakistan. The former chief justice was unanimously nominated as the caretaker prime minister by the government and opposition. Mulk, who has also served as the interim chief of Election Commission of Pakistan, will be heading the government until the general elections as the incumbent setup will be dissolved soon. While speaking to journalists after taking oath, the newly-appointed caretaker premier said they will announce the Cabinet members after discussion. He added the Cabinet would be concise as a few members would be appointed. When asked about elections, Mulk said they will make sure elections are held on time and in a transparent manner. "Will fulfil the responsibility we have come for." The caretaker prime minister said they would support the Election Commission of Pakistan for timely and fair elections.

<https://www.geo.tv/latest/197592-justice-retd-nasirul-mulk-to-take-oath-as-caretaker-prime-minister-today>

Nawaz's statement grossly misinterpreted, PML-N clarifies

The military said Sunday it had suggested a meeting of the National Security Committee to discuss the statement former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif made

in the interview which apparently vindicates Indian position against Pakistan on Mumbai attack of 2008.

However, the PML-N in a tweet from the official twitter handle issued a statement that said, "PMLN would like to set the record straight on the interview of PML-N Quaid carried yesterday by DAWN. At the outset, statement of the Quaid has been grossly misinterpreted by the Indian media. Unfortunately a section of Pakistani electronic & social media has intentionally or unintentionally not only validated but has lent credence to the malicious propaganda of Indian media without going through the full facts of the statement. The PML-N as the country's premier popular national political party and its Quaid need no certificate from anybody on their commitment and capacity to preserve, protect and promote Pakistan's national security." Sharif interview drew criticism from other political parties like the PTI and PPP who said India was responsible for the delay in the trial. Former foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi who was in India when the attack happened said, "Every Pakistani feels hurt by Nawaz Sharif's statement. It is indeed an open pro-Indian declaration."

<https://nation.com.pk/13-May-2018/nawazs-statement-grossly-misinterpreted-pml-n-clarifies>

ECONOMY

Govt presents Rs. 5.9 trillion budget

Finance Minister Miftah Ismail Friday unveiling a budget outlay of Rs 5.932 trillion, announced a growth oriented budget setting the GDP growth target for 2018-19 at 6.2 per cent with the ever high proposed revenue generation at Rs 4435 billion against total expenditure of Rs 5246 billion. Presenting the sixth budget of the Pakistan Muslim League (N) government before the general election, Miftah Ismail said the main targets include keeping inflation below six per cent. He said the government is set to achieve a growth target of 5.8 per cent for the current year, the highest in the last 13 years putting Pakistan among the fastest growing economies. The minister told that Rs 44.7 billion is proposed for AJK and Gilgit Baltistan and Rs 24.5 for Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Rs 10 billion has been approved to implement a ten year development plan for FATA and Rs 90 billion for

rehabilitation of millions of people who had to leave their homes in the areas of military operations.

<https://nation.com.pk/27-Apr-2018/govt-presents-rs5-9-trillion-budget>

Balochistan presents budget with massive Rs61.9bn deficit

The budget documents show that Balochistan is facing a big hole of Rs61.9 billion in its planned development investment of Rs88.2bn for the next financial year as the pace of growth in its total income is projected to slow down to 4.9pc against 9.3pc estimated for 2017-18. The slower increase in income and a large development investment gap notwithstanding, the province plans to create 8,035 new jobs in education, health, levies and other departments that will have a total financial impact of Rs4.1bn on the new budget. In spite of a slower growth in its income, the provincial government has decided to raise its total outlay of development and current spending by almost a quarter to Rs352.3bn from Rs328.5bn. This means the province will be left to search for additional resources and / or try to cut its current expenditure drastically to fund its development spending next fiscal year.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1407716/balochistan-presents-budget-with-massive-rs619bn-deficit>

SECURITY

Pakistani, Indian DGMOs establish hotline contact in bid to tamp down ceasefire violations

A special hotline contact was established between the Director Generals of Military Operations (DGMO) of Pakistan and India in a bid to defuse the volatile situation along the Working Boundary (WB) and the Line of Control (LoC). The senior officials agreed to “fully implement the ceasefire understanding of 2003 in letter and spirit forthwith and to ensure that henceforth the ceasefire will not be violated by both sides”. According to the ISPR, the two agreed to exercise restraint and

resolve matters through hotline contacts and border flag meetings at the local commanders’ level in case of any future incidents. The heavily-militarized LoC has witnessed ceasefire violations in the recent past. The wave of cross-border attacks had surged after September 2016 in a serious breach of a truce signed by the two armies in November 2003.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1410751>

Assassination bid: Interior Minister Ahsan Iqbal injured in Narowal gun attack

Federal Minister for Interior Ahsan Iqbal was shot and injured in Narowal district of Punjab in the first week of May. The shooting took place when Iqbal was leaving the meeting, which was held at MPA Rana Manan’s residence. Police said the minister received two bullets to his arm. The attacker, identified as Abid Hussain, was arrested and shifted to an undisclosed location. The attack on Iqbal comes as the ruling party is struggling to regain its footing ahead of the coming general elections after a series of blows to its top leaders.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1703789/1-ahsan-iqbal-escapes-attack-narowal/>

18 labourers perish in coal mine accidents near Quetta

At least 18 workers died and several others suffered injuries when a gas explosion and mudslide struck two coal mines in Balochistan. The blast occurred because of accumulation of methane gas in three branches linked to the main mine in the Marwar area. The other incident was caused by a mudslide in a mine in the Sur-range area, some 60km east of Quetta. The mines collapsed, dumping the rubble at the exit point and trapping the workers inside. Official sources said that 25 to 30 workers were inside the mines, run by a private company, when the explosion occurred. Quetta Commissioner Javed Anwar Shahwani confirmed 16 miners were killed in the Marwar mines.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1405907/18-labourers-perish-in-coal-mine-accidents-near-quetta>

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