



# Through Each Other's Eyes

## Pakistan-Afghanistan Media Monitoring



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**Pakistan-Afghanistan Media Monitoring Report**

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# INTRODUCTION

The impressive growth and vibrancy of the news media in Pakistan and Afghanistan in the last decade have been without precedence in either country's history. The media has massively grown in Afghanistan in the past one decade, although quality and coverage have not always kept pace with the quantity. There were around 80 terrestrial TV stations, more than 175 FM radio stations and hundreds of print media publications operating in Afghanistan at the end of 2012. But most of them, particularly the private outlets, are very young and have a long way to go to acquire the required human capacity and skills in order to produce timely, balanced and comprehensive reports, particularly from the region and the neighboring countries. With the exception of FM radio stations, the number of print and electronic media organizations in Pakistan is higher than in Afghanistan. Pakistan's print media has a long history that predates independence from Britain in 1947. The electronic news media in the private sector, both TV and radio, has only blossomed in the last decade, and already enjoys extensive coverage and sway.

Because of the commonalities between the two nations as well as the shared main challenges faced by the media in both countries, Afghan and Pakistani media have started limited cooperation in various forms, an example being joint debates recently organized by an Afghan and a Pakistani TV channel. However, the cooperation and sharing of experience between the media in both countries is still far from what one might expect from two neighbors who have shared cultural and religious values and who are so completely dependent on each other for peace and prosperity. In recent years, there has been growing appreciation for the

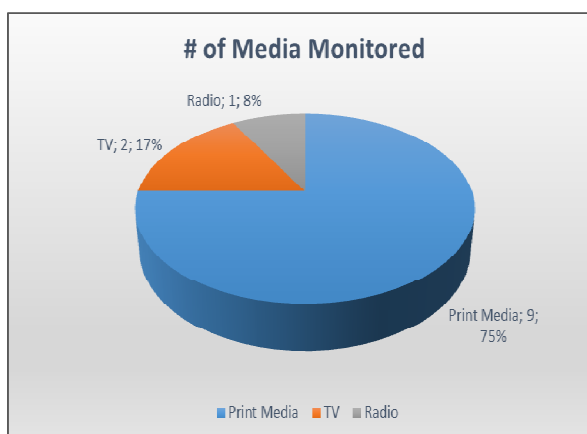
need for cooperation between journalists in the two countries that can help promote better understanding between the people on both sides of the border.

As the two neighbors struggle to overcome their challenges, many of them shared, it is important to know what picture their media shows their people of the other country. This report monitoring the two countries' media coverage of each other is an endeavor to explore what the media has considered important to report about the neighboring country and the manner in which it has been reported. It is equally revealing to examine the topics and issues about the other country that the news media has failed to report.

This study is the outcome of a one-month monitoring of selected media in Pakistan and Afghanistan from mid-April to mid-May 2013. It was carried out shortly before the conclusion of a two and a half year collaboration between The Killid Group (TKG) and Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS), made possible by financial support and technical expertise from International Media Support (IMS). The collaboration was aimed at improving cross-border cooperation between Pakistani and Afghan media houses and at enhancing quantitative and qualitative reporting on regional issues through facilitating media exchanges and trainings that strengthen the media's capacity to cover complex cross-border issues.

## MONITORING OF AFGHAN MEDIA

This media monitoring report under the project covers a one-month period, from mid-April to mid-May, 2013. For this report, major Afghan media outlets, print and electronic, such as Tolo TV, TV 1, Radio Killid, Daily Outlook, Daily Afghanistan, The Afghanistan Times, Kabul Times,



Daily 8 am (Hasht-e-Sobh), Daily Khedmatgar, Daily Wessa, Killid Weekly magazine and Pajhwok News Agency were analyzed, focusing on the coverage of issues related to Pakistan during this month. This report categorizes a variety of issues, including security, bilateral relations, trade, politics, etc., for monitoring, with a focus also on the May 11 general elections in Pakistan.

During the month, border tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan escalated and seriously undermined relations between the two countries. Border rows and deterioration of relations occupied most of the analysis and news reports related to Pakistan. The Afghan media also covered the elections in Pakistan and provided analysis on how the outcome could impact the situation in Afghanistan. Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf (PTI) that won the largest number of seats in National Assembly and in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provincial assembly, and formed the government in the centre and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, respectively, were alleged to have a soft corner for fundamentalist groups and Taliban in the country.

## **METHODOLOGY**

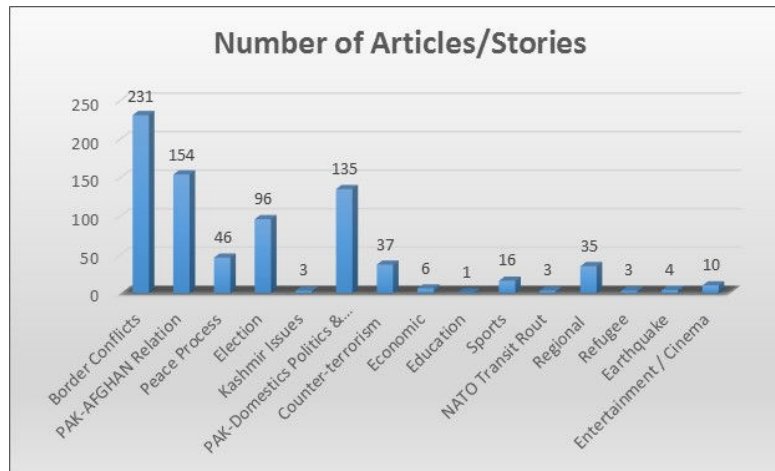
The Killid Group granted a contract to Banu Consultants to undertake a study of a number of selected electronic and print Afghan media and to report on the extent of coverage of Pakistan and related issues in these media. The consultants collected the available data and information, in print, audio and video, as per the project's terms of reference, for the agreed one month period from various sources.

The collected data went through several stages before it was ready to be produced in the form of this report. These included classification and sorting of the data; formulation of a code list; entry of the codes into an Excel-based database; provision of a tabular report and analysis; and preparation of graphs.

Related news and reports in Dari and Pashto were translated into English to better understand the spirit of the coverage. Analysis for this study was done at two levels: (i) on the basis of the topics, such as Afghanistan-Pakistan relations, border tensions, election, etc.; and (ii) on the basis of media organizations and the issues they covered during this period. The whole process went through three phases; pre-field activities, field activities and post-field activities.



## FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS BY TOPICS



The data collected for this study was divided into different topics to help better understand and analyze how different issues were reported in the Afghan media on Pakistan. Overall, the related news and reports were divided into 15 categories in an attempt to find which issues were reported more, as shown in the chart titled ‘Number of Articles’, indicating how many times an issue was reported and discussed in the selected media.

### (1) Border Conflict

After complaints by the Afghan government about Pakistani forces reportedly firing rockets into the Kunar and Nangarhar provinces over the past two years, the focus shifted on Durand Line during the monitoring period. Reports of border conflict increased tension along Durand Line and seriously affected relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan. In response to the initial media reports on building new military posts by the Pakistani forces along the border, Afghanistan



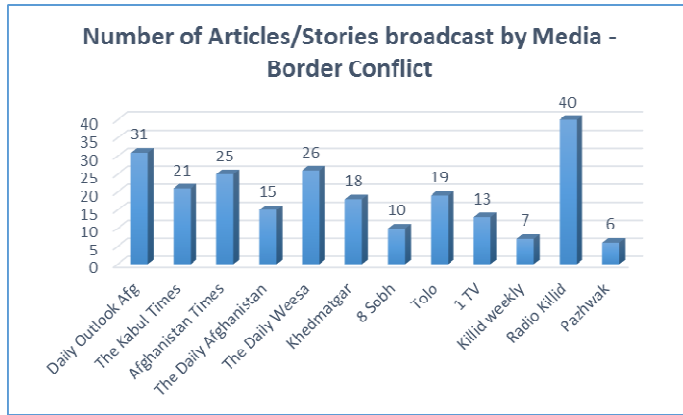
condemned the act and called it against international law and norms. Afghanistan does not accept Durand Line as the de-jure border between the two countries.

As the Afghan media began widely covering the developments at the border, particularly in Goshta district of Nangarhar, President Karzai ordered the Afghan ministries of Interior and Defense, during an Afghan Security Council meeting on April 15, to destroy any structures built by Pakistani forces on Afghan territory. On the same day, a spokesman for the Ministry of Defense stated that they would use all options for removing the structures along the border, but also expressed the hope that the matter could be resolved amicably. The media cited President Karzai's chief of staff as claiming that some of the structures were built by the coalition forces along Durand Line and handed over to Pakistani forces when they evacuated the area. As reported by Radio Killid on April 22, the minister of interior requested ISAF to help Afghan police address the border conflict issue with Pakistan. Radio Killid on April 29 reported that a spokesman for the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs had accused the international forces in Afghanistan of handing over Afghan territory and military posts to Pakistani security forces.

On April 19, various Afghan media outlets covered claims by the Ministry of Interior that Afghan Border Police had destroyed recently constructed Pakistani military border posts and quoted the government authorities that they were ready to respond to any border incursion. On the same day, some of the parliamentarians and members of Nangarhar Provincial Councils claimed in a gathering that the government was not capable of destroying a border gate built by Pakistan Army and that was why the authorities were not allowing the media to visit the area. Earlier, on April 17, Radio Killid quoted the Goshta district administrator as saying that Pakistani military had removed both plates of the newly established gate as a result of military and political pressure on them, but the frame was still seen standing in the area. However, on April 21, it quoted government authorities as saying that the gate built on the Afghan territory was

still in place and Pakistani military forces needed to remove it as soon as possible.

On April 30, members of the Afghan Senate called on the US forces that in accordance with the provisions of the Strategic Agreement between Afghanistan and the US, the latter should help remove the military



structures at the border. The Afghan deputy minister of foreign affairs had earlier briefed the upper house of parliament that the agreement between the US and Afghanistan was not the same as one between that country and South Korea, for instance. He said that the US was “not prepared to sign such an agreement with Afghanistan at this moment”.

On May 4, weekly Killid cited the BBC as quoting Karim Khuram, president's chief of staff, that President Karzai had sent a letter to US President Barack Obama two weeks earlier and asked Washington that based on the signed agreement between the two countries, the US should stop Pakistan from creating problems at the border. Khuram said that they had not received any response to the letter from Washington.

On a related note, the Afghan media reported on May 12 that the US State Department had announced that it recognized Durand Line as the international border between Pakistan and Afghanistan and its position on the issue would not change. The same day, *Fara Khabar* (beyond the news) programme of Tolo TV discussed with Afghan analysts the tensions on the border and quoted from President Karzai's press conference on May 10 where he had stated that no

government of Afghanistan would recognize Durand Line as the international border as the people of Afghanistan would banish such a government. On the same issue, TV 1 quoted a Pakistani Ministry of Foreign Affairs statement in response to President Karzai's remarks, saying that Durand Line was a closed chapter. The ministry added that it was a time for cooperation and not diversion from the priorities.

On May 5, Afghan media reported that Afghan parliamentarian Abudl Latif Pedram, who visited Goshta, stated in the house that Pakistan had issued Pakistani identity cards to Goshta residents. On the same day, Daily Outlook cited MPs who had traveled to the area as claiming that parts of the land in border areas had reportedly been secretly sold to Pakistan and the governor of Nangarhar was accused of not informing the central government. Earlier on May 3, TV 1 stated that Pakistani forces had distributed food items to the people in areas controlled by them, reportedly on the Afghan side of Durand Line, and were establishing clinics, schools and providing electricity there.

On May 6, the media reported that the Afghan and Pakistani forces had clashed at the border in Goshta district of Nangarhar for the second time in five days. Media reported enthusiasm for Afghan forces and their optimism for prevailing, but at the same time the authorities were reported to prefer reliance on all options, including negotiations for preserving the country's territorial integrity. On the same day, 8 am warned that politicizing the Durand Line conflict was not in Afghanistan's interest.

On May 6, in response to discussions on the role of international security forces, the NATO spokesman was reported to have stated that Afghanistan's border conflict with Pakistan was beyond the organization's mandate in Afghanistan, and that Kabul was entitled to take up the matter in the United Nations.

Following debates and discussion in media on the issue, on May 12, a high-level

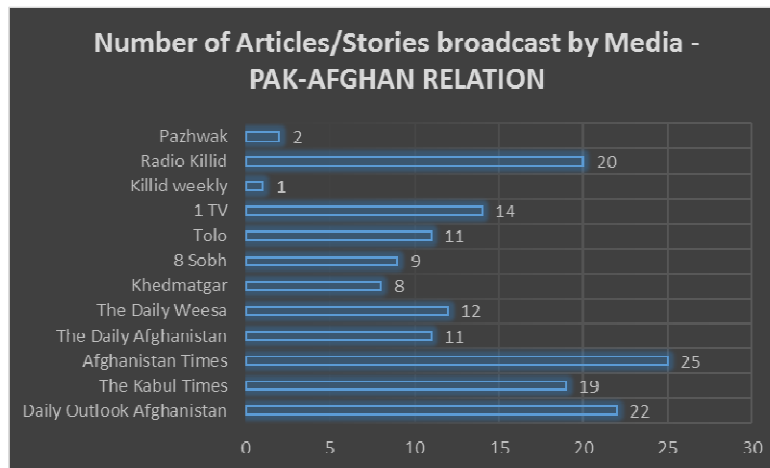
Afghan delegation, including President Karzai's national security advisor, was reported to have traveled to the conflict area. In Goshta border areas, Dr. Rangin Dadfar Spanta, said that neither government wanted another problem and supported peace on both sides of Durand Line, but they had the right to fiercely defend their territory. Reports praising Afghan border police and coverage of funeral of Mohammad Qaism, who was killed in the first military clash in Goshta, raised sentiments of the people and the media reported protests against Pakistan in different provinces. A few days later media reported that Afghan forces had destroyed the Pakistani border posts. The tension gradually deescalated in the following days and there were fewer news reports in the Afghan media on the issue in the rest of the monitoring period.

## **(2) Afghanistan-Pakistan Relations**

Relations between the two countries have been stormy for long, particularly in the past decade. Despite many similarities between the two nations, they are hugely influenced by the political environment on both sides of the border and practically disconnected from each other. Tensions on the border further deteriorated these relations as there were reports of Afghans expressing their anger in various forms and announcing 'Jihad' against Pakistan during a protest in Kabul.

Afghan authorities said that they will try and use all options, including referring the border issue with its neighbor to the UN. The Afghan Minister of Foreign Affairs said that attempts would be made to solve the problem through diplomatic channels. The media reported that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs summoned the Pakistani ambassador to Kabul and on the same day the Afghan cabinet agreed to allocate US \$60 million to help repair heavy machinery and artillery of the Afghan security forces. Kabul asked Islamabad to stop its forces' movement along the border and, as reported in the media, the relations consequently fell to their lowest level in recent months. On May 8, the media

reported that Pakistani Ministry of Foreign Affairs summoned the Afghan ambassador to Islamabad and protested a reported second attack at a border point by Afghan security forces.



On April 15, the Afghan media reported demonstration against Pakistan staged by university students in Jalalabad, in Nangarhar province. The people also reportedly demonstrated against Pakistan in various provinces and asked the government to find a solution to the border conflict through the UN and other forums. On May 3, the media reported that an Afghan youth group called *Khezesh-e-Jawanan* protested against Pakistan in Kabul and torched the Pakistani flag. They praised Afghan security forces for their reaction to a reported military incursion by Pakistan in the border areas. On April 24, daily Khedmatgar argued in an article the need for open and declared war against Pakistan.

In such a tense environment, US Secretary of State John Kerry organized a tripartite meeting, on the sidelines of a NATO summit in Belgium, among Pakistan, Afghanistan and the US, for which President Karzai traveled to Brussels on April 23. The meeting discussed several issues, including the peace process, border conflict and newly constructed Pakistani structures, Kabul-Islamabad

relations and Pakistan's sincere support to the war on terror. As reported by the media, the Afghans were not optimistic about the outcome of the tripartite meeting and they were reportedly skeptical about Pakistan's intentions. The NATO secretary general was also reported to have announced in Brussels that he would strive to find a solution to the Afghanistan-Pakistan problem and that the war on insurgency would be continued.

On April 23, the Afghan media reported that the Afghan chief of army staff in a parliamentary hearing accused Pakistan for trying to install a proxy government in Afghanistan. He was quoted as saying that Islamabad would never change its policies that aim to get the Afghans to recognize the border between the two countries and to have a greater share in Afghan water resources. In the same session, the deputy foreign minister was reported to have referred to Pakistan as the biggest threat to Afghanistan, stating that Pakistan was apprehensive about India's role and presence in Afghanistan. In its April 30 edition, Daily 8 am (Hasht-e-Sobh) quoted the UK ambassador that Afghanistan and Pakistan would not achieve stability without cooperation with each other. With regards to Pakistan's perception about India's role in Afghanistan, The Afghanistan Times quoted Pakistani politician Asfandiyar Wali on April 15 that Pakistan should stop being paranoid about India's role in Afghanistan.

On April 27, Pakistan announced that it would seal the borders with Afghanistan on polling day (May 11).

On May 3, Tolo TV of Afghanistan and Express TV of Pakistan jointly organized a show titled 'Discourse between Pakistan and Afghanistan: On the other side of the border' with the aim "to build bridges". Analysts from both sides insisted on the importance of working on confidence building measures, strengthening bilateral relations and putting an end to using militancy as a tactic. The discussion concluded that there were miscommunications in both countries about the other

side and both needed to facilitated better people-to-people relations. The programme also concluded that the major reality on the ground in both countries was that terrorism knew no boundaries and was a common threat that required a common stance, and firm decisions and response from both governments.

On May 3, Tolo TV reported that Green Party, a political movement, organized a running contest to announce its support to the Afghan security forces. Amrullah Saleh, former Afghan intelligence head, warned Afghan leaders against politicizing the national security institutions. On May 8, political parties, i.e. Haq wa Adalat, were reported to have requested the government not to use the border problem for political mileage at the cost of deteriorating relations with Pakistan, but to refer the issue to international legal bodies and the UN. On May 5, in an analytical article on Pakistan, 8 am highlighted the need for international consensus against that country. On May 15, President Obama was reported to have said that good Pakistan-Afghanistan relation were imperative for regional security.

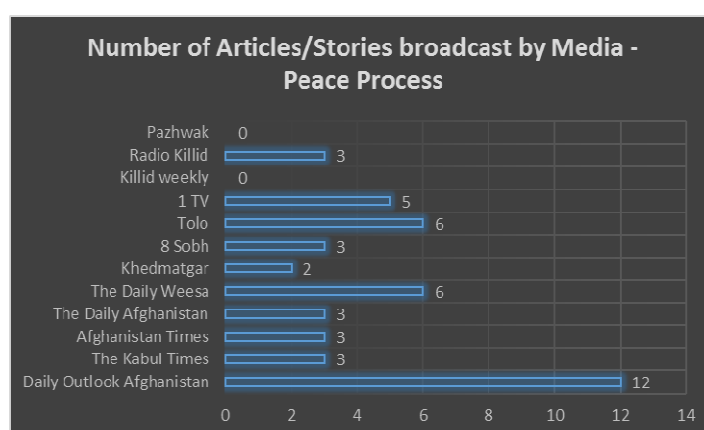
### **(3) Peace Process**

On April 17, Tolo News, quoted the Afghan Security Council deputy advisor as saying that Pakistan had not yet released any Taliban prisoners whose release had been requested by the government of Afghanistan, and had only released people who had no bearing on the peace process. The deputy adviser stated that Pakistan had no sincere cooperation with Afghanistan in the peace process. The former Afghan intelligence chief claimed in a live debate on Tolo News that he had reports that in the past three months Pakistan had allegedly captured and killed 12 Taliban who wanted to join the peace process.

On April 19, Tolo News quoted General Joseph Danforth, the ISAF commander in Afghanistan, as stating in his address to the US Senate's defense committee: "I do



not think President Karzai's statement that Pakistan undermines Afghanistan's peace process could be true', but he was reported to have stated that terrorists' safe havens in Pakistan were effective in planning terrorist attacks in Afghanistan and Pakistan. On April 20, daily Outlook reported that a spokesman of the Afghan Ministry of Defense disputed Gen. Danforth's remarks on Pakistan and called Pakistan the main obstacle to the peace process in Afghanistan and claimed that there were reasons and witnesses for the claim.



On the same day, Afghanistan Peace Council accused Pakistan of challenging the peace process in the country. Ismail Qasimyar, the spokesperson for the council, claimed in his talk to the media that the Taliban leaders who wanted to join the negotiations with the Afghan government were captured again and faced problems created by Pakistan. He said that such actions did not support the peace process. The Afghanistan Times reported on April 21 that Mehmood Khan Achakzai, a senior Pakistani politician from Balochistan, urged Mullah Omar and Maulana Fazlur Rehman to support an Afghan-led peace process. On April 17, the media quoted Mr. Achakzai as calling upon Afghanistan's neighbors to stop interference in that country.

On April 24, TV 1 reporting on the Belgium tripartite meeting attended by the US,

Afghanistan and Pakistan quoted Faiq Wahidi, deputy spokesman for President Karzai, that based on past experience and 'lack of sincerity' from Pakistan, it would be hard to expect tangible results from these discussions in term of sincere support to the peace process. The Afghan media also reported that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Pakistan had stated in a statement that Islamabad was committed to playing a constructive role in bringing stability in Afghanistan.

The nature of political ties between the two governments has widely influenced social and religious groups in both countries. Bodies of clerics from Afghanistan and Pakistan had agreed to meet a joint conference in Kabul, but it was cancelled due to the political environment. On April 18, a joint Afghan and Egyptian Muslim scholars' conference in Kabul declared suicide attacks, which have killed thousands of people especially in Afghanistan and Pakistan, *Haram* (prohibited by Islam).

On April 25, Kabul was again reported to have asked Islamabad to help bring Taliban to the negotiation table. Afghan media reported that President Karzai cautioned the Pakistani Army chief in the Brussels meeting that if Islamabad did not accept and work on Kabul's requests for bringing top Taliban leaders for talks, Afghanistan would not go for any other joint meetings with Pakistan. Kabul, Islamabad and Washington attached great importance to the tripartite meeting and hoped for a better future. Akbar Agha, a former Taliban leader now based in Kabul, in an interview with Tolo TV, was pessimistic about the outcome of the tripartite meeting.

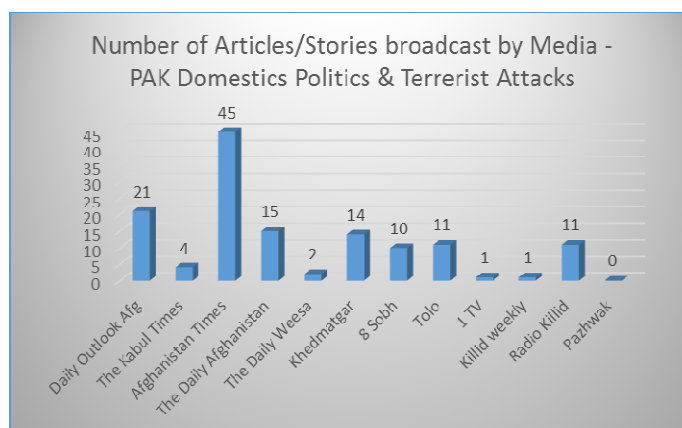
#### **(4) Domestic Politics and Terror Attacks in Pakistan**

On April 26, Tolo News reporter, Javid Zeyartjahi, who had visited Pakistan as part of a journalists' exchange programme, prepared a report on violence against women in that country. He had visited Pakistan under the Pakistan-Afghanistan

Media Collaboration Programme, implemented in Pakistan by Pak Institute for Peace Studies and in Afghanistan by The Killid Group. International Media Support had given financial assistance for the programme and for Zeyartjahi's visit to Pakistan. The reporter presented findings of Pakistani women's rights organizations, indicating that statistics on violence against women in Pakistan were three times more than the figures on violence against women in Afghanistan. For instance, he reported that women in the tribal areas were sold or given in exchange for solving tribal feuds. Aasim Malik, chair of Women's Right Foundation in Pakistan, said in an interview with Tolo that sexual harassment, rape, acid attacks and domestic violence were the main forms of violence against women and girls in Pakistan. Earlier on April 13, weekly Killid had printed case studies and stories of Pakistani women activists from the tribal regions and also Peshawar, who had defied the Taliban and extremism and believed that the country could only make progress by bringing women into the political mainstream.

On May 1, the Afghan media reported that former Pakistani dictator and ex-army chief Pervez Musharraf had been declared ineligible to contest elections in the country for life. He was reported to have escaped from the court earlier and was denied bail in a case regarding the assassination of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto. Earlier, Daily Outlook had reported on April 23 that Pakistan's caretaker government had refused to try Musharraf for his alleged unconstitutional actions.

On May 3, the majority of the media outlets monitored reported that Zulfiqar Ali, Pakistan's state prosecutor in the Benazir Bhutto assassination case, was shot dead by unidentified gunmen in Islamabad.



On May 7, the Afghan media reported that 15 people had died in Pakistan's Kurram Agency in FATA region when a bomb exploded during an election rally. On May 8, another 18 people were reported killed in Hangu, Dir in attacks on election rallies.

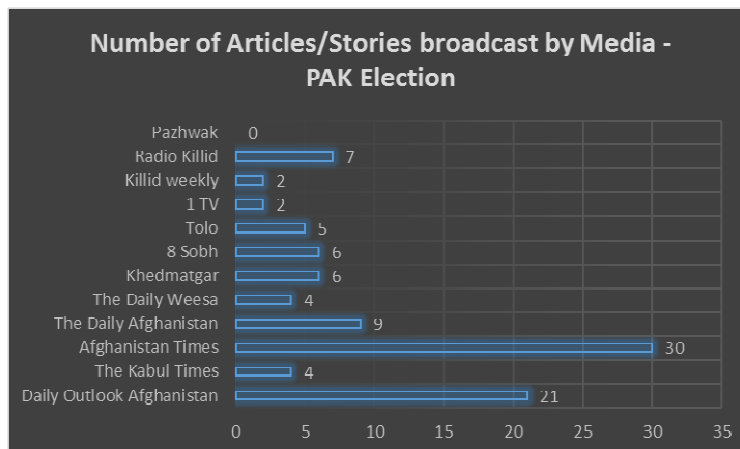
On May 10, one day ahead of the general elections in Pakistan, the Afghan media reported that more than 20 people were killed and injured in three separate explosions in Northern Waziristan and Quetta city of Pakistan. According to the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, as many as 1,200 attacks were registered in 2012 in Pakistan, but only major incidents like suicide attacks or those linked with terrorists' networks and Taliban had been reported by the Afghan media.

The Supreme Court of Pakistan's verdict on disqualification and arrest of Gen Musharraf was widely reported in the Afghan print and electronic media for several days. News and analysis around this issue continued while Musharraf appeared in court and was put under house arrest. Musharraf was in power from 1999 to 2008 and was believed to have a prominent role in recent developments in Afghanistan. On May 1, Radio Killid also reported that a Rawalpindi court extended Musharaff's house arrest until after the May 11 general elections in Pakistan.

## (5) Elections

On April 25, the Afghan media reported a decree by Pakistani Ulema Council that participation in the elections was a religious obligation and Islam had put no restrictions on women's participation in the elections. Earlier on April 20, some Afghan media reported that Pakistan's former minister of foreign affairs and the country's first female minister for that slot, Hina Rabbani, had withdrawn her nomination papers for contesting elections in favor of her father. On April 27, Weekly Killid reported on the elections campaign of Pakistan's Awami National Party (ANP) in Peshawar. The coverage assessed challenges for the party such as Taliban threats during the electoral campaign, but reported that the ANP leaders appeared determined to defy all threats and participate in the elections.

On April 28, Tolo TV reported that after an increase in the number of explosions in Pakistan, people had warned that if the attacks continued they would boycott the elections. With the polls approaching, the Afghan media reported increasing terrorist attacks, which mostly targeted secular parties such as Pakistan People's Party (PPP), ANP and Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), mainly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and the port city of Karachi. Earlier, on April 18, The Afghanistan Times reported that President Karzai had condemned attacks on ANP leaders.



On May 12, TV 1 interviewed Afghan analysts and some members of the upper house of the Afghan parliament who stated that a victory for Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, or Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf (PTI), led by cricketer-turned-politician Imran Khan, was not in the interest of Afghanistan and would have an adverse impact on the country. As per reports by the Afghan media, the PML-N had promised in their electoral campaign to negotiate with the Pakistani Taliban and media reports portrayed that the PML-N and PTI had anti-US and anti-western policies in Afghanistan.

On May 1, Tolo TV reported that the Pakistani army chief had assured the people of Pakistan that the general elections in the country would take place on May 11, as planned, and no one should doubt that. The army chief was quoted as saying that the elections presented an opportunity to the country to achieve true democracy and a high turnout would help realize that goal. The Afghan media also noted that it was the first time that a truly civilian government had completed its tenure in Pakistan.

On May 6, The Afghanistan Times reported that Maulana Fazlur Rehman, head of a religious political party in Pakistan, had issued a 'political *fatwa*' that voting for Imran Khan's PTI was *haram* (prohibited by Islam). The Maulana also alleged that Khan was sponsored by Western and Jewish lobbies.

On May 7, some Afghan media reported that not a single woman had voted in Pakistan's history in Mateela, one of the most conservative areas in the country, and some other remote areas, and no women would likely vote there in the 2013 elections either.

On May 8, The Afghanistan Times reported that religious minorities in Pakistani had no faith in democracy as intolerance had been on the rise under the democratically elected PPP government and extremists had attacked minority Christians in recent years in Pakistan for blaspheming Islam.

On May 11, Tolo News reported about the end of the election campaign in Pakistan and also about an appeal by former Pakistani prime minister Yousaf Raza Gillani in a press briefing to intelligence agencies to help find his son Ali Haider who had been abducted by unidentified gunmen during his elections campaigns on May 9. As reported by The Afghanistan Times on May 11, President Karzai, in a telephone call sympathized with Mr. Gillani over his son's abduction. It was reported that more than 60,000 armed forces personnel had been deployed, in addition to police, for ensuring security during the elections in view of increasing security threats. It was reported that more than 86 million Pakistanis were registered as voters for the general elections.

On May 12, The Afghanistan Times reported on Pakistan's landmark elections and that ANP had announced that the polls results were unacceptable. On May 13, the Afghan media reported that President Karzai felicitated Nawaz Sharif on his party's big victory in the elections and hoped that the new government would help fight terror and boost relations with Afghanistan. Sharif was said to have assured Karzai that since the beginning of his electoral campaign, he had publicly urged friendship and cooperation with Afghanistan. Karzai also reportedly congratulated renowned Pakistani politician Mehmood Khan Achakzai over his party winning seats in the elections in the province of Balochistan. On May 14, Karzai phoned Asfandiyar Wali Khan, the ANP chief, whose party was defeated in the elections, and Aftab Sherpao, whose party won important seats in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

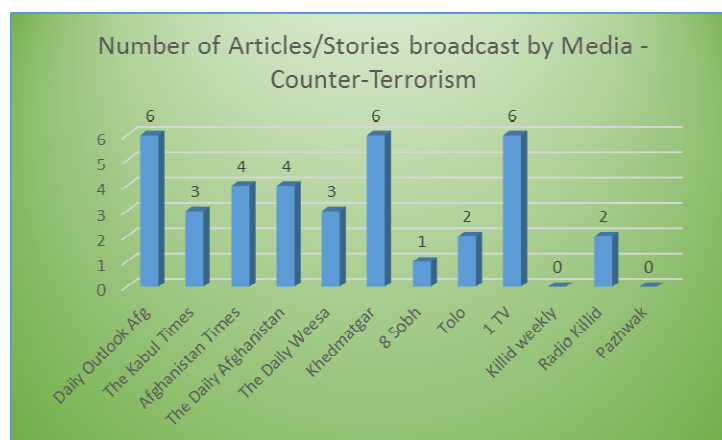
Also on May 14, The Afghanistan Times reported that the Imran Khan-led PTI would have to negotiate with either the PPP or MQM if the two parties decided to sit in the opposition, in order to gain their support to get the opposition leader's office in the National Assembly. The PTI had become the third largest party in term of seats won in the National Assembly. On May 15, The Daily Afghanistan reported that Gen Musharraf's party had managed to secure only two seats in



parliament, from northeastern Pakistan. On May 14, The Daily Afghanistan also reported that there was a possibility of deterioration of relations between Pakistan and the US as PML-N, which was to form government in the centre, and PTI, set to become the ruling party in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, were more lenient towards militancy and fundamentalism, which might undermine their relations with the US.

## (6) War on Terror

On April 16, daily Wessa quoted the governor of Badakhshan as saying that foreign fighters had recently entered his province after allegedly receiving trainings in Waziristan region of Pakistan. On April 24, the NATO secretary general stated that Pakistan's cooperation was imperative for the war on insurgency and peace in the region. On the same day, Radio Killid reported that Pakistani police found a vehicle full of explosives near Gen Musharraf's house in Islamabad. It noted that the Pakistani Taliban had threatened to target Musharraf.



On May 1, Tolo TV reported that on the anniversary of Osama Bin Laden's assassination by US special forces in Abbottabad, Pakistan, the majority of Pakistani authorities rejected having any link with Al Qaeda or other terrorists

and insisted that the US should not make such accusations against Pakistan, which had been the biggest victim of the war on terror.

Drone attacks on terrorist hideouts in Pakistan had been regularly reported in the Afghan media and a fall in the number of drone strikes during the monitoring period meant reduced coverage in the media. On April 17, Tolo News reported that five people were killed in a US drone attack in North Waziristan. Pakistani intelligence officers were said to have told reporters that the attack had targeted a TTP base in Babur Ghar and Al Qaeda members were among the casualties.

On May 7, Daily Outlook reported that the UK defense chief had lauded Pakistani armed forces' sacrifices in the war on terror.

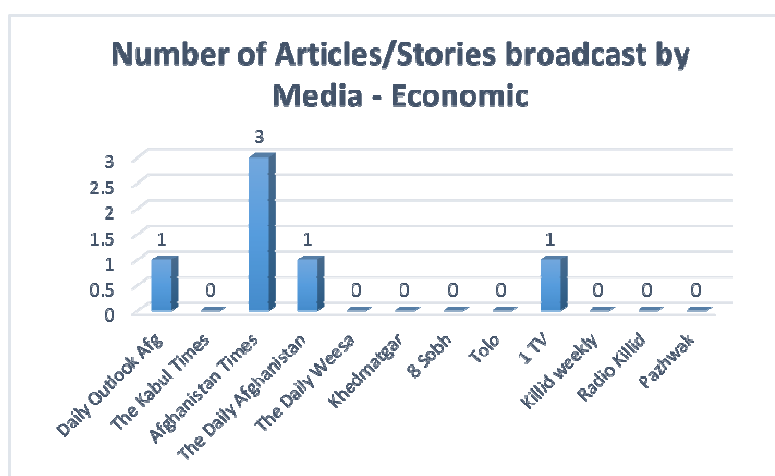
On April 19, the Afghan media reported that a five-member group of terrorists, including one woman, was captured and the Ministry of Interior claimed that investigations indicated their links with the Taliban and the Pakistan-based Haqqani Network. A would-be suicide attacker who wanted to target opposition leaders in Kabul was also arrested. He was linked to terrorist groups in Quetta and was alleged to have been trained in Pakistan.

## **(7) Economy**

On April 20, Weekly Killid published a report about Nangarhar's carpet weaving sector, where more than 700 women worked, and most of the carpets they made were sent to Pakistani markets. However, the government did not support the carpet makers in terms of provision of facilities, including electricity, and the people took their products to Pakistan for processing and sale.

On April 25, TV 1 claimed in a report that fake Afghan currency was being printed in Pakistan and injected into the Afghan market. On April 19, Tolo News quoted businessmen in the Afghan Chamber of Commerce that Pakistan used economic

pressure on Afghanistan to convince western powers for concessions and to find a solution to Pakistan's political problems. The channel claimed that in order to protect itself against pressures by the western countries, Pakistan tried to create problems in transit trade with Afghanistan that caused losses to Afghan businesses. Also on April 19, the deputy transport minister requested treaty mechanisms and international bodies dealing with trade between the two countries to urge Pakistan not to use trade for what he called leverage in its relations with Afghanistan.



On May 12, a report by The Daily Afghanistan stated that marble from Helmand was being smuggled into Pakistan with support of the Taliban and the pace of the smuggling had increased in recent months.

On May 14, The Afghanistan Times reported that after Pakistan's general elections, the Karachi Stock Exchange had hit an all-time high of 20,232 points.

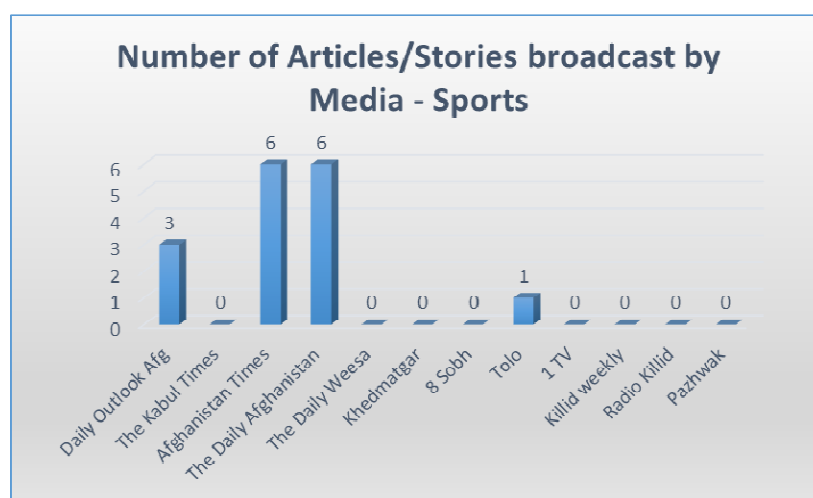
## **(8) Education**

Despite thousands of Afghan students studying in Pakistani universities and madrassas, there was no news, for instance, on the Afghan students' issues and

problems, or the support that the Government of Pakistan had been extending to Afghan students. The only news regarding education was published in The Afghanistan Times, stating that Pakistan had completed building of a faculty in Balkh University in Mazar-e-Sharif.

## **(9) Sports**

Afghanistan has made remarkable progress in sport in recent years, particularly in cricket which has huge following in Pakistan. Apparently, there has not been much cooperation between the two countries in this discipline and such news and reports are rarely published in Afghan media.



On April 23, Tolo News and Daily Outlook reported that after signing an agreement between Afghanistan and Pakistan, Pakistan Hockey Federation had announced that it would assist Afghanistan in developing the sport in Afghanistan and would invite the Afghan team to Pakistan.

## **(10) NATO Transition and Supplies**

On April 16, 8 am reported that the driver of a truck carrying NATO supplies was

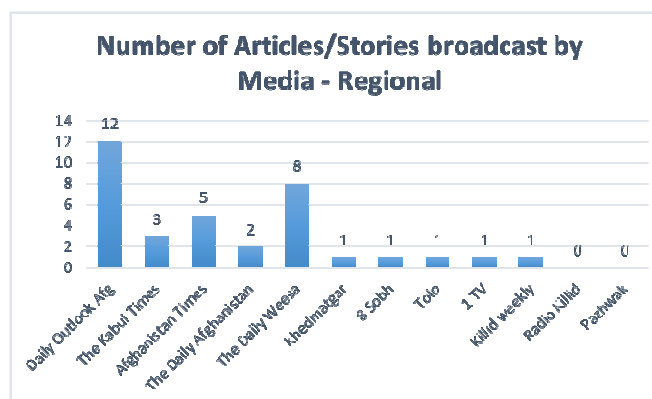
killed in northeast Pakistan by unidentified people. On May 14, Daily Outlook reported that the PML-N, the majority party in Pakistani parliament after the general elections, stated that Islamabad would help NATO forces withdraw from Afghanistan.

## (11) Entertainment

Only The Afghanistan Times printed some reports on the issues related to Pakistan's movie industry, music, etc. For instance, on April 27, it reported that Pakistani music icon Shehzad Roy had visited Harvard. On April 20, Weekly Killid reported that a Pakistani actress in Bollywood, Veena Malik, had got married to an Italian national.

## (12) Regional

On May 14, Afghanistan Times reported the Pakistani prime minister-in-waiting Nawaz Sharif as saying that he would invite the Indian premier to his oath taking ceremony and also that he sought improved relations with Kabul. The report also stated that President Obama had commended the elections and the democratic transition in Pakistan.

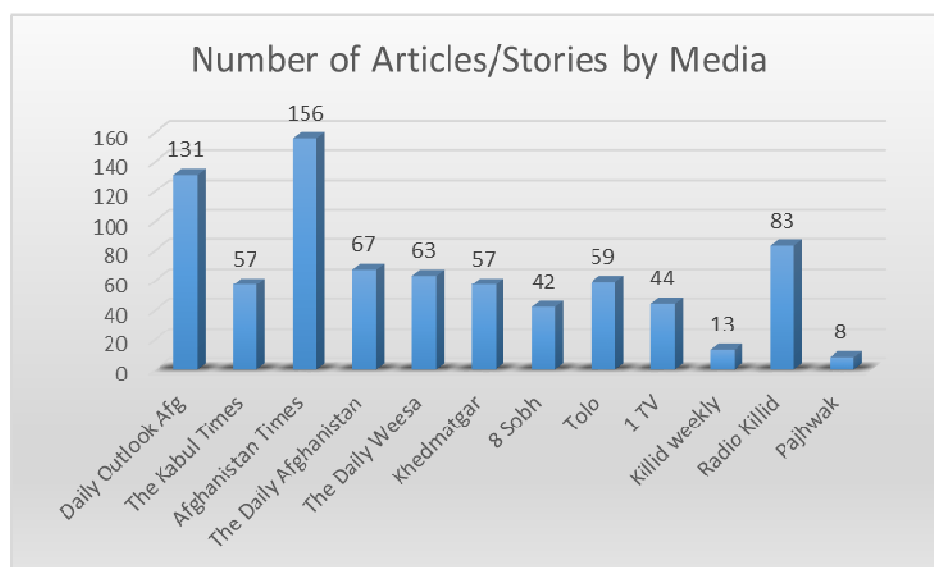


On May 15, The Afghanistan Times reported that Sanaullah, a Pakistani prisoner

injured in an attack on him in an Indian jail, had died. Sanaullah's death came only days after Sarabjit Singh, an Indian prisoner convicted of carrying out bomb explosions in which many civilians were killed, was attacked and killed in a prison in Lahore, Pakistan.

On May 15, The Daily Afghanistan expressed the hope in an article that Pakistan's general elections would lead to improved relations with India. The PML-N had repeatedly mentioned during the elections campaign its desire to improve ties with India.

## MEDIA ORGANIZATION-SPECIFIC FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS



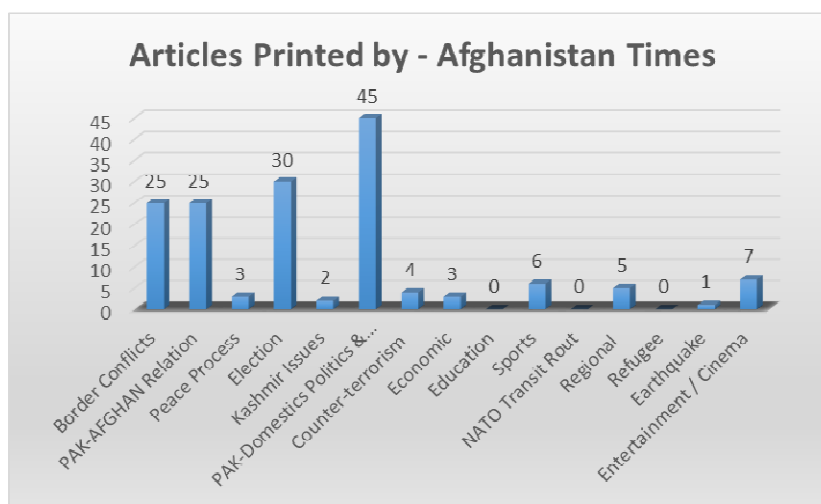
In this section, Pakistan-related coverage by the individual media organizations chosen for this study was studied. Every media has its own approach and reporting policy and priorities. However, during the one-month study almost all of the monitored media appeared to attach a very high priority to border tensions with Pakistan across Durand Line. There were some media outlets with a few news and reports on Pakistan, but the majority printed or broadcast at least this one news on Pakistan. The chart titled ‘Number of Articles by Media’ indicates the number of news, reports and analysis printed and broadcast on Pakistan by



each organization during the month. Only on Pajhwok, it might not have been the case, as its inputs for the whole month was not accessible.

### (1) The Afghanistan Times

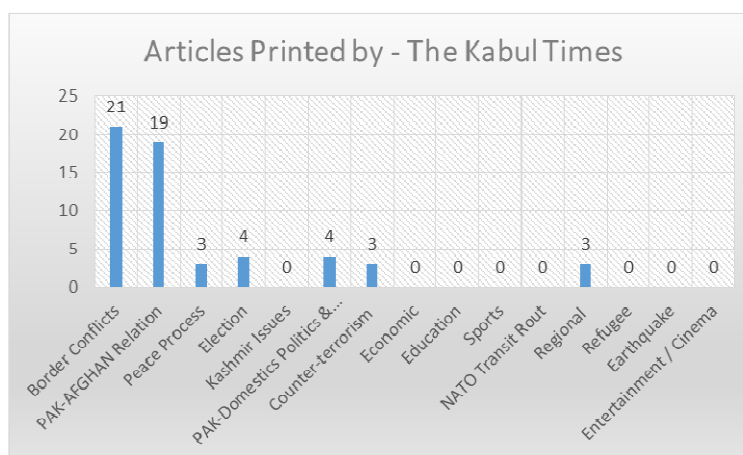
The Afghanistan Times comparatively widely reported on issues related to Pakistan. The period under study covered major developments and events in Pakistan. Unlike other media outlets, The Afghanistan Times not only covered politics and security-related issues, but also news on sports, cinema, entertainment and other topics.



In addition to analytical reports on issues related to Pakistan, the 12-page daily newspaper also published detailed news, for instance, on the phone calls that President Karzai made to Pakistani leaders such as Nawaz Sharif, Mehmood Achakzai, etc., after the elections. Post-election, one of the newspaper's articles focused on the Pakistani political parties and also discussed in detail results of the elections for several days consecutively. It also covered talks for forming the new government between different political parties in Pakistan and included several reports on resignations by PPP leaders from party office and key positions

after the party suffered a heavy defeat in the elections. The Afghanistan Times also covered in detail the election defeat of the ANP and printed a report on the return of Naseem Wali Khan, mother of the incumbent ANP chief, to politics in the Pakhtun-dominated area of Pakistan, after the party's election defeat. Several editorials also focused on Pakistan-Afghanistan relations and border conflict, including one titled 'Pakistan's deleterious game in Wardooj' [a district of Badakhshan province].

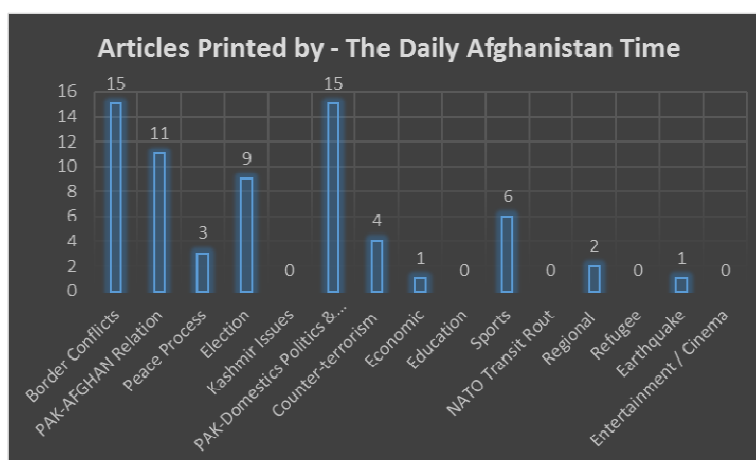
## (2) The Kabul Times



During the one-month monitoring period, The Kabul Times covered in detail two topics; border conflict and Pakistan-Afghanistan relations. In its analysis, the newspaper opined that Pakistan was not sincere in its commitments and did not like to see a strong government in Kabul with independent relations with New Delhi. The newspaper was pessimistic about the outcome of the tripartite meeting in Brussels and did not anticipate that the new government in Islamabad would have better cooperation with Kabul. The Kabul Times very rarely reported on most of the other issues covered by The Afghanistan Times. It printed only a few news and articles on the elections in Pakistan or on politics.

### (3) Outlook Afghanistan

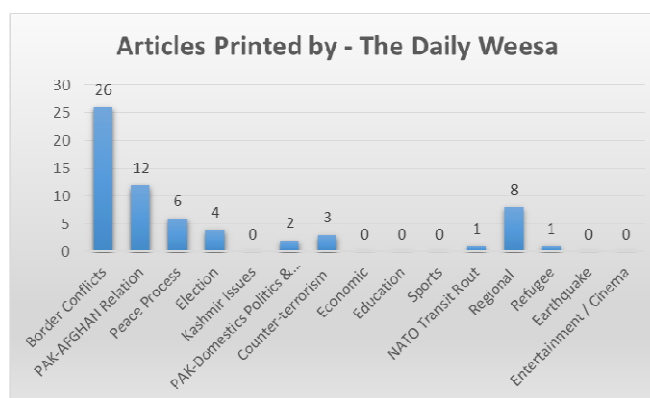
Daily Outlook published some good analytical pieces, particularly editorials, on Pakistan, for instance, an editorial titled 'democracy in Pakistan'. Generally, it also gave good coverage to Pakistan-related news and reported on major incidents in the country. The editorial on April 29 was titled 'What challenges will new elected Prime Minister face in Pakistan?' On May 5, it wrote in an analysis that Afghanistan-Pakistan relations must normalize. On May 8, an article titled 'elections and violence in Pakistan' and another, 'D-day for Pakistan', were published. On May 11, the newspaper appraised all political parties in Pakistan and their prospects in the elections in a comprehensive manner. On May 14, 'Pakistan Post-Elections Scenarios' assessed Pakistan under a new government.



Daily Outlook also reported on other issues vis-à-vis Pakistan that we not directly linked to Afghanistan, for instance, on April 23 it reported that the Iranian ambassador to Pakistan called on President Zardari. On April 24, a Nepalese media delegation meeting Pakistan's federal information minister was also covered.

#### (4) Weesa

Daily Weesa mostly reported very briefly on the areas of focus regarding Pakistan monitored in this study. During the monitoring period, the majority of the newspaper's analysis and news were about the bilateral border conflict. On April 30, the paper printed an article titled 'Is NATO involved in the border conflict between Afghanistan and Pakistan?' The writer believed that there was a conspiracy and big powers like the US were the main factor in tensions between the two countries. On May 7, its headline stated that Pakistani and US media were threatening President Karzai with death and warning him about his physical security. On May 11, the Senate chairman accused the US of having a hidden agreement on Durand Line with Pakistan. The same was discussed in an article on May 14, titled 'US and Pakistan in joint bargaining against Afghanistan.'

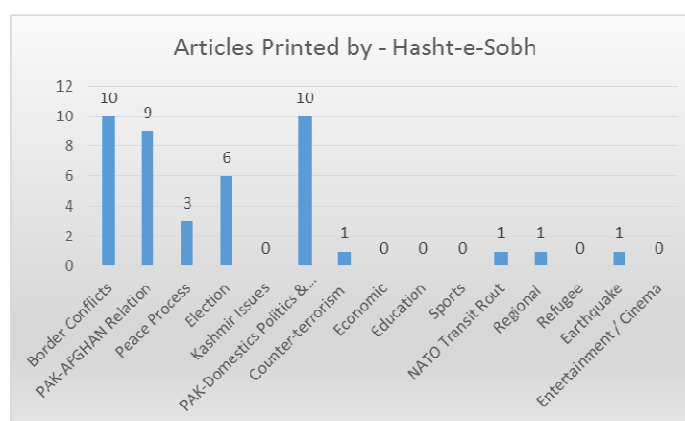


On May 8, another article published in Wessa analyzed Pakistan's parliamentary elections and the 'undefined and dark future' of the ANP. On May 12, in its editorial, the newspaper appraised possibilities of change in Pakistan after the elections. There was no report on trade with Pakistan, nor any news about other sectors such as sport, education, etc.

## (5) 8 am (Hasht-e-Sobh)

Daily 8 am published brief news on major incidents in Pakistan and mostly criticized Pakistan's policies in analytical articles. During the month under review, it mostly analyzed issues in the form of essays addressing various factors and published a few reports on issues related to Pakistan. For instance, on April 29, it published an article titled 'Behavior of some Afghan politicians and Pakistani projects'; on April 24 one titled 'Pakistan seeks more privileges in Afghanistan; and on May 12 'Establishing private relations [for individual interests] with Pakistani politicians is not an art.'

It also printed on May 12 an article titled 'Pakistani elections and political and security visions'. The author stated that victory in Pakistan for hardliners and political parties influenced by them could help revitalize Al Qaeda in Pakistan. He argued that if these groups enjoyed influence in the elections in Pakistan, they would also have influence in the practical policies of that country subsequently.

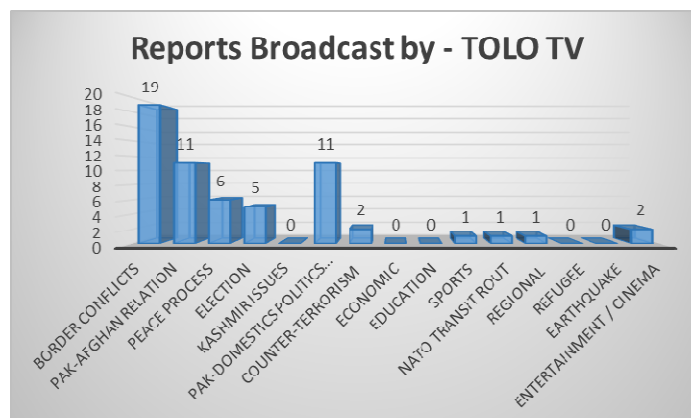


Daily 8 am welcomed the continuation of democratic process and a peaceful transfer of power in Pakistan. "Nawaz Sharif is a veteran politician and must have realized that the policy of supporting extremism is the main cause of the current insecurity in Pakistan. He must try and tell the powerful military and intelligence

agencies that continuation of the current policy would not benefit Pakistan or the democracy in that country,” an article in the paper said on May 13. On May 15, it printed a detailed interview with Mehmood Karzai, titled ‘Durand Line: from M. Karzai’s perspective.’

## (6) Tolo News

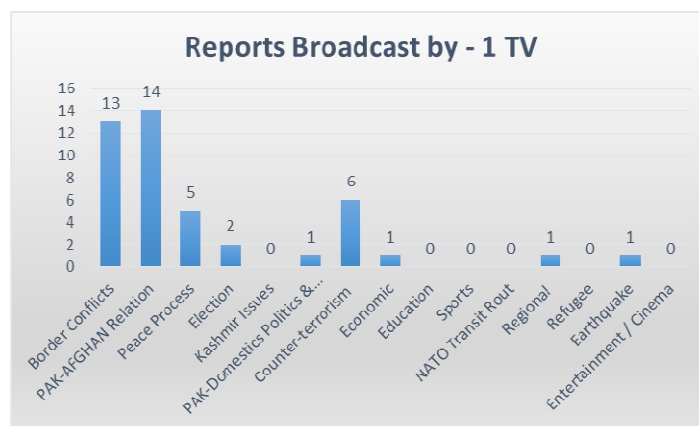
Tolo News widely reflected the border tensions between Afghanistan and Pakistan. It covered all incidents and developments around the border issue with Pakistan. On April 19, when the Ministry of Interior announced that posts recently set up on the border by Pakistan had been destroyed, Tolo News broadcast videos that the structures were still in place. It also widely covered the tripartite meeting in Brussels with analysis around Pakistan-Afghanistan relations. Tolo, jointly with Pakistan’s Express TV, organized a live debate on relations between the two countries. Skepticism was palpable in the live debate between Afghan and Pakistan diplomats and officials. It appeared that people on both sides wanted normal bilateral relations, but there were huge challenges to overcome.



On April 24, in Tawdi Khabari (hard talk) program, Tolo News discussed the border conflict with Pakistan. It believed that Pakistan was very concerned about India’s role in Afghanistan and would play all its cards to achieve its goals in

Afghanistan. On April 28, another Tawdi Khabari program focused on Pakistan-Afghanistan relations. It assessed the tripartite meeting in Brussels and the demands Afghanistan had made of Pakistan to release a number of Taliban leaders and to bring them to the negotiation table with Kabul.

## (7) TV 1



As one of the leading media news channels in the country, TV 1 widely covered all Pakistan-related issues that were directly linked to Afghanistan and the instability there. For instance, it extensively broadcast reports on the border conflict and its impact on relations between the two countries. It followed the elections in Pakistan and broadcast reports, interviews and analysis on that. The TV channel provided detailed analytical pieces on Pakistan-related issues through its famous *Amaj* (target) and Kabul Debate programs. On May 6, after the second wave of clashes erupted at the border between Pakistani and Afghan forces, TV 1's 48-minute *Amaj* program focused on discussing the border conflict. The president's spokesman provided background information and the steps the government had taken with regard to the issue in an interview with the channel. Earlier, on April 17, while discussing the upcoming presidential elections in



Afghanistan in a dedicated Kabul Debate program, relations with the country's neighbors, particularly Pakistan, were also discussed.

### **(8) Pajhwok News Agency**

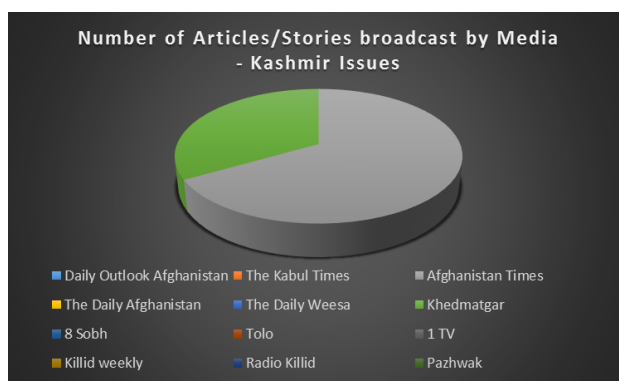
Pajhwok is Afghanistan's largest independent news agency with reporters in almost every province. It also publishes first-hand reports from across the border in Pakistan. During the monitoring period, Pajhwok reported on different issues such as tensions on the border, etc. As it required subscription, the team of consultants which drafted the Afghan media monitoring report was not able to obtain all news and reports required for this study. However, they tried to get as much information as possible.

### **(9) Daily Afghanistan**

In addition to news and reports on Afghanistan-Pakistan relations, this newspaper also published several analytical articles on the general elections in Pakistan. The newspaper mostly published analytical reports and discussed issues from different perspectives. On May 11, it discussed the role of the political parties and about who will gain power in Pakistan in the elections. It acknowledged that the PPP had not been able to come up to people's expectations, but that it was not an easy job at such a critical period in Pakistan. It noted that increasing terrorist threats, a debilitating energy crisis, corruption and economic recession had impacted the government's ability to deliver in Pakistan. It also believed that any civilian government in Pakistan would be in the interest of Afghanistan, as opposed to any military or radical government in that country. In an April 27 editorial, titled 'NATO's failed struggle for making peace', the newspaper assessed NATO's efforts for improving relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

## (10) Khedmatgar

Daily Khedmatgar published many news on Pakistan, mostly concentrating on Afghanistan-Pakistan relations and some major incidents. The coverage was critical of Pakistan's policies. On April 20, it said that terrorism was systematically nurtured in Pakistan. It was the only newspaper that published an article on Kashmir during the one-month media monitoring. On April 20, the newspaper analyzed the Kashmir issue and stated that withdrawal of international troops from Afghanistan in 2014 would also affect this issue.



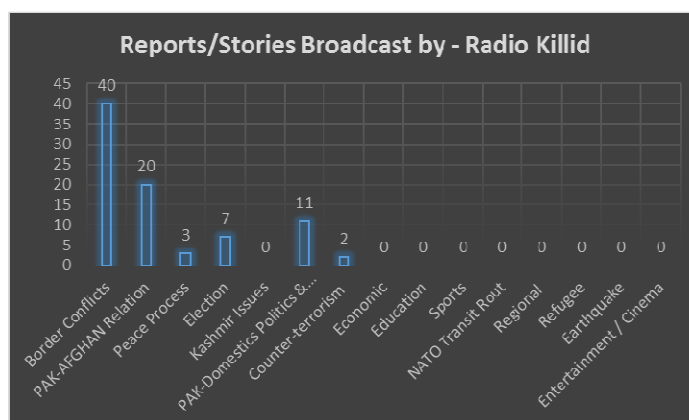
On May 7, in a front page article, the newspaper attacked the opposition leaders for their 'unacceptable' stance on Durand Line. In the same edition, it criticized the Taliban for their silence on the border conflict. On May 8, it claimed in a report that the Pakhtuns in Pakistan 'considered themselves strangers'.

Khedmatgar printed a few news and many analyses on the Pakistani elections. On May 13, it published news on results of Pakistan elections and analyzed in various articles the nature of Pakistan-Afghanistan relations in the future.

## (11) Radio Killid

In addition to its regular news, Radio Killid discussed several issues related to

Pakistan in analytical discussions during the monitoring period, where experts, parliamentarians, and Afghan government officials, etc., aired their views and the listeners also commented on the discussion.



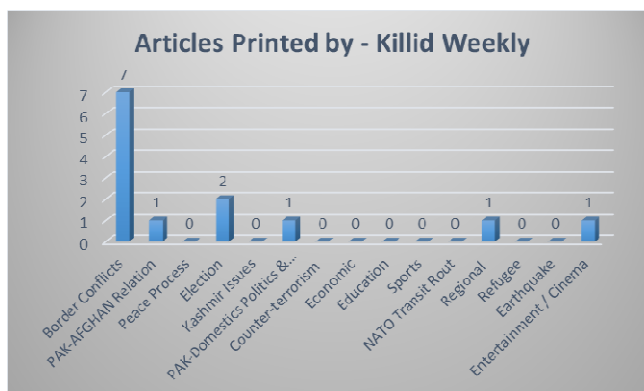
On April 24, radio program *Char Pehlo-e Khabar* (four sides of the news) analyzed border tensions and the comments made by the Afghan deputy minister of foreign affairs and the army chief of staff in the Senate. In a similar program on April 16, Radio Killid discussed the visit of a Ministry of Defense delegation to Pakistan to discuss the border issue with their Pakistani counterparts. On the 17<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> of April, Radio Killid organized two roundtables to discuss anti-Pakistani riots in parts of Afghanistan and border tensions with Afghan analysts.

Radio Killid also broadcast the following reports relevant to this study: tension in Goshta district and a Ministry of Defense spokesman's assertion that Pakistani forces had built a gate at Durand Line reportedly on Afghan soil (April 16); a report from Kunar citing a government official's claim that several rockets had been fired into Afghan territory from Pakistan (April 19); the Deputy Ministry of Foreign Affairs saying that Pakistan wanted to bring up discussions on Durand Line through its military activities at the border (April 23); President Karzai returning from the meeting in Brussels and an appraisal of the outcome of his

meetings (April 25); reported rocket attacks in Kunar from across the border in Pakistan (May 1); a seven-hour firefight between the Afghan and Pakistani security forces on the border (May 2).

## (12) Weekly Killid

Weekly Killid printed brief news and reports on issues related to Pakistan. Its reports on Pakistan varied from political and entertainment to economic relations and opportunities. On April 20, it published an article that stated that bilateral relations had been tested over the building of a military gate on the Afghan side by Pakistan. The article discussed the historical background and the issues and considerations of both sides vis-à-vis the recent escalation in tensions at the border. On April 27, it discussed in another article why Afghanistan's neighbors had worries about this country. It highlighted that China, Pakistan, India and Russia who had all been asking for a timetable for withdrawal of international forces were now worried and had been adopting a new approach to the issue.



On May 4, the weekly published a report quoting Karim Khuram in the President's office as saying that President Karzai had written a letter to US President Barack Obama on border tensions with Pakistan and had not received a

reply after two weeks. On May 11, Killid's editorial, titled 'Passions run high over Pak attacks on border', discussed border conflict in Goshta. In the same issue, it published an interview with Ann Wilkens, a former Swedish ambassador to Pakistan and Afghanistan, on the elections in Pakistan.

During the month covered in the study, two issues were most frequently reported by the media in Afghanistan vis-à-vis Pakistan: tensions on Durand Line; and the general elections in Pakistan. Conflict at the border, especially in the eastern provinces of Nangarhar and Kunar has been old news. However, escalation in tensions after Pakistani security forces were said to have built an entrance gate in what the Afghan government considered Afghan territory in Goshta district of Nangarhar led to deterioration in bilateral relations. The US hosted a tripartite meeting in Brussels to ease the tensions. The Afghan media extensively covered these developments and related stories regarding the peace process, the war on terror, and domestic politics in Pakistan, etc.

Realizing the importance of a civilian government in Pakistan for Afghanistan's stability, the Afghan media followed the period leading up to the May 11 general elections in Pakistan and related reports on matters such as Pakistani politics, terrorist attacks on elections campaigns, and regional issues, etc. The Afghan media focus increased when preliminary elections results showed that the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) had gained the highest number of seats in parliament and Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf (PTI) led by Imran Khan had become the third largest parliamentary party behind the PPP. The Afghan media believed that the PML-N and the PTI coming to power was not in the interest of Afghanistan as both parties had promised during their electoral campaign to negotiate with the Pakistani Taliban. The media seemed to believe that both parties had anti-US and anti-West policies in Afghanistan.

As Pakistan voted, Afghan TV channels endlessly debated the elections outcome

and the possible impact on Afghanistan when the PML-N, the party led by former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, came to power. It appeared from media reports that most Afghan analysts did not expect any major changes in Pakistan's Afghan policy, believing that the real power would remain with the military. Some Afghan analysts believed Nawaz Sharif's foreign policy to be a cause for concern for Afghanistan as well as for NATO and the US.

Overall, various issues related to or in Pakistan were reported on during the monitoring period. There were some reports on sports, education, regional cooperation, cinema, etc. But these were mostly printed in English newspapers.

Afghanistan National TV and Radio were part of the selected list of the media, but the authorities did not help the consultants' fieldwork team access the required data for this study. On Pajhwok, a private Afghan news agency, the team tried to obtain as much as news and reports as it could. The agency required subscription and that limited the team's access to all the required data. Weekly Mursal was also studied, but it did not carry any news related to Pakistan during the 30-day monitoring period.

## MONITORING OF PAKISTANI MEDIA

A team of media monitors from Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS) monitored four mainstream Pakistani newspapers and a TV news channel from April 15 to May 15, 2013. The monitored media included Urdu newspapers *Mashriq* (Peshawar), and *Jang*, and English dailies *The Nation*, and *Dawn*. Urdu TV channel Express News was also monitored. The newspapers and the TV channel had been chosen to get a flavor of a cross-section of the Pakistani media and also to include print or electronic outlets from among the main Pakistani media groups. The Peshawar edition of *Mashriq* was selected to look closely at the media's coverage in the Pakhtun-majority region of Pakistan which is adjacent to the Afghan border and which has been severely affected in the ongoing acts of terrorism by the militants.

During the month under review, tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan were decidedly higher than usual. This happened because of border clashes, the consequent accusations and counter-accusations and statements by the Afghan president calling into question the status of Durand Line, as the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan is known. Efforts to decrease tension, including a trilateral meeting hosted by the US in Brussels in late April did not achieve the desired result. Security challenges and terror attacks in Afghanistan were prominently covered as were developments with regard to talks with the Taliban.

## **METHODOLOGY**

A team of researchers at Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS) monitored the selected newspapers and the TV channel to examine the frequency of coverage of the chosen topics regarding Afghanistan. The print and electronic media was monitored from April 15 to May 15, 2013, as per the project's terms of reference.

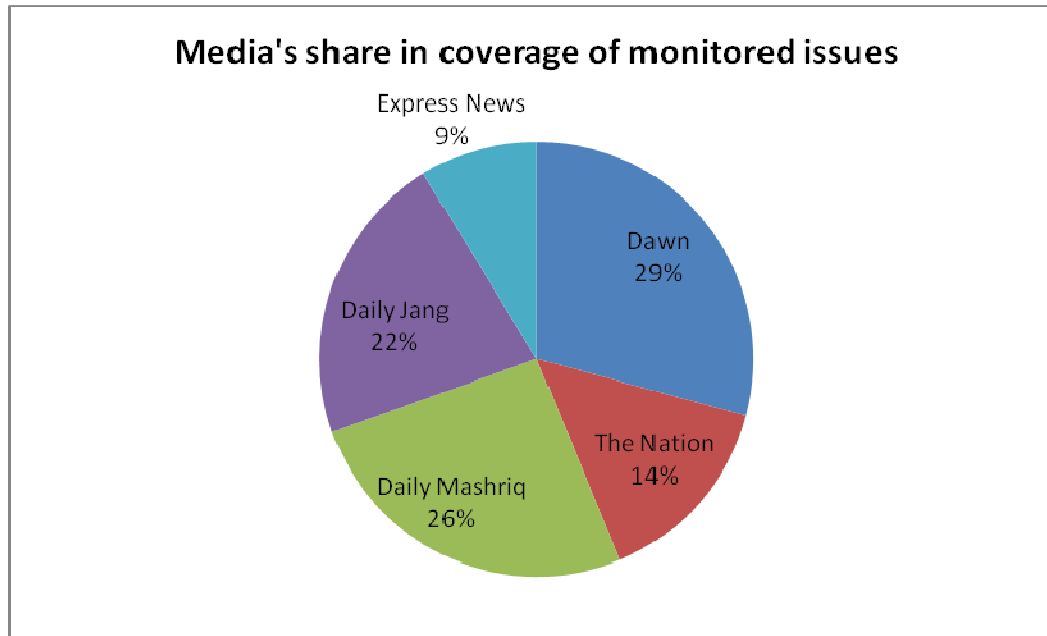
The relevant coverage was classified in accordance with the 15 topics that the media was monitored for, a code list made and the codes entered into a database; all the relevant monitored data in Urdu was translated into English before it was analyzed and the findings elaborated and included in the report. The analysis was based on examining both the coverage of the selected topics as well as the coverage for each media organization during the monitoring period.

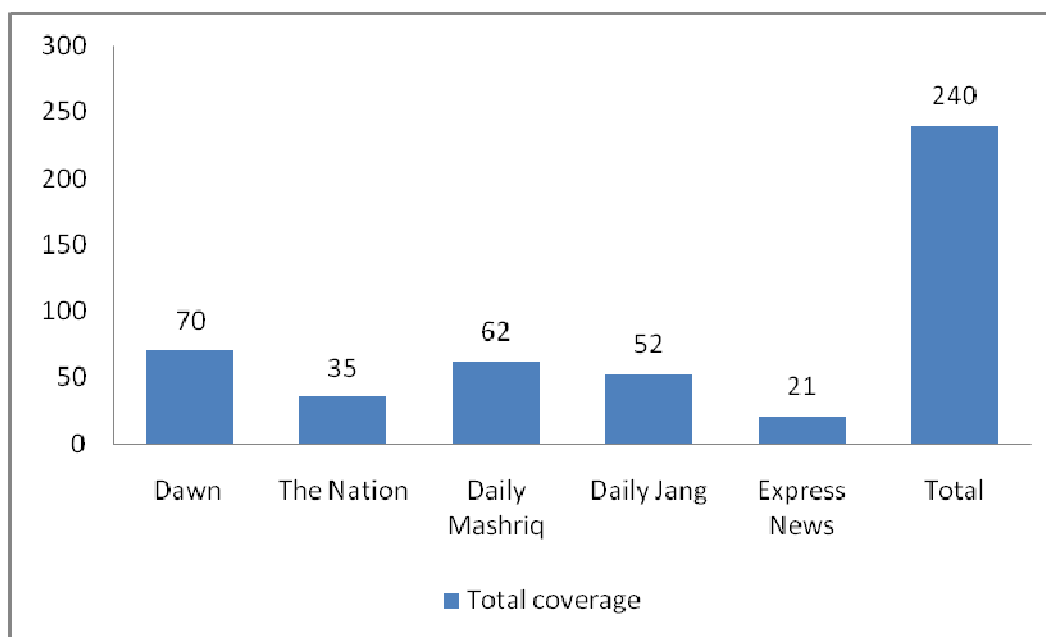


## FINDINGS & ANALYSIS BY TOPIC

The 15 topics for which the selected media was monitored for any coverage of Afghanistan-related issues were: Security issues/ war on terror; Pak-Afghan ties / border tensions; peace process; Afghanistan & allies; elections; regional issues; trade / economy; refugees; education; sports; entertainment; natural disasters health; and violence against women.

A category titled ‘miscellaneous’ news, op-eds and editorials that were not covered under any of the other categories.

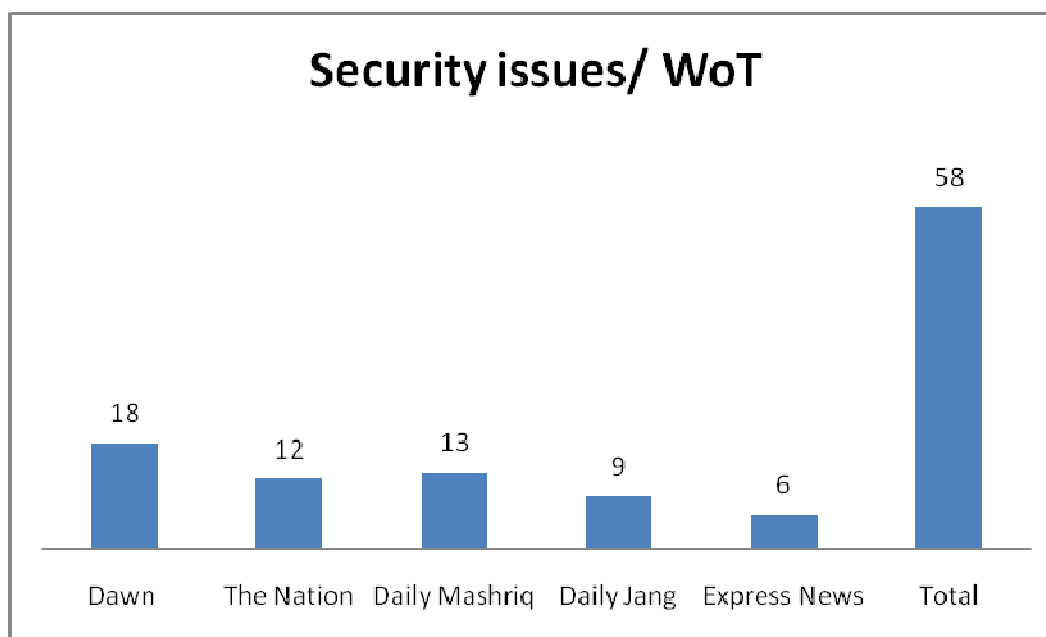




The media coverage over the one-month monitoring period comprised a total of 240 news reports, op-eds and editorials on Afghanistan-related issues.

### **(1) Security Issues/ War on Terror**

In this category, the selected Pakistani media was monitored for coverage of security issues in the context of the conflict in Afghanistan and the war on terror in that country. Almost a quarter (58 out of 240) of all Afghanistan-related data from the monitored media organizations belonged to this category, the highest number for any single categories.



For instance, *Dawn* reported (April 15) that Afghan security forces had killed 22 insurgents during an operation to capture a Taliban commander in eastern Afghanistan.

The media also covered an attack in northern Afghanistan in which two Red Crescent staffers were killed. (*The Nation*, April 18) The reports included concern by the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) officials that the men were deliberately targeted, as their vehicle was clearly marked.

On April 20 *Jang* reported that in Afghanistan's southern Ghazni province Taliban insurgents had killed 13 Afghan policemen as they slept at their check post.

On the same date, *Mashriq* quoted the Afghan Interior Ministry as claiming the arrest of five would-be suicide bombers from Jalalabad. The same news also included a decision by the German government that 800 troops from that country would take up responsibility in northern Afghanistan for two years after the NATO troops left Afghanistan in 2014.

On April 22, *Dawn* reported that Taliban had killed six police officers at a checkpoint in Ghazni province and a suicide bomber had killed three civilians at a shopping bazaar in Paktika province, as an independent security group warned that 2013 was on track to be one of the most violent years of the war.

*Dawn* (April 23) covered a claim by Afghan Taliban in Logar province that they had seized 11 civilians, including eight Turks engineers, after their helicopter had to make an emergency landing. Provincial officials were said to be talking to village elders to try to persuade the Taliban to release the captives. Four of the Turks were later released (*Dawn*, May 13) and the Taliban were reported to have promised to free the remaining four (*Dawn*, May 14).

*Mashriq* reported on April 28 that a NATO aircraft had crashed in Afghanistan and four service members on board had died.

In late April, the media covered news of the Taliban declaring the beginning of the 'spring offensive' across Afghanistan (*The Nation*, April 28), vowing to start a new campaign of mass suicide attacks on foreign military bases and diplomatic areas, as well as damaging "insider attacks".

The following day, the media (*Mashriq*, April 29) reported that Taliban had captured several villages in the Afghan province of Faryab, which was generally considered a peaceful region of Afghanistan. The provincial governor's spokesperson was cited as saying that 60 militants had been killed in clashes that had been going on for days. The fatalities included women and children.

*The Nation* (April 26) reported a NATO statement insisting that the war against the Taliban in Afghanistan was being won, despite reports by other organizations of a sharp upsurge in insurgent attacks in 2013. US General Joseph Dunford, head of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), was quoted

as saying that there was 'indisputable' progress towards the goal of a secure and stable nation.

On April 28, *Mashriq* covered Afghan Taliban's vow to target NATO forces, government officials in their 'spring offensive' and calling upon citizens to stay away from military convoys, official gatherings and security personnel and not to cooperate with 'President Karzai's puppet administration'.

*Mashriq* (April 29) also covered a statement by Britain about carrying out drone missions in Afghanistan. The British Department of Defence was quoted as saying that the drones were being used for surveillance but could be used to launch lethal weapons, if needed.

*Dawn* reported on April 29 that Taliban insurgents had marked the start of their spring offensive by claiming responsibility for a remote-controlled roadside bombing that killed three police officers in Ghazni province in southern Afghanistan.

The same newspaper reported on May 1 that three British troops of the NATO force were killed when their vehicle was hit by a roadside bomb in the southern province of Helmand.

*The Nation* (May 2) reported the killing of Mualum Shah Wali, head of the High Peace Council in the key southern province of Helmand, along with two police bodyguards when his vehicle hit a roadside bomb planted by the Taliban.

There were several news about attacks on NATO supply vehicles or opposition to letting the supplies pass through Pakistan. Two NATO supply containers returning to Karachi after delivering cargo in Afghanistan were shot at by motorbike riders. A cleaner, identified as Zar Wali, who was an Afghan national, was killed while another received bullet wounds.

*Dawn* reported on May 5 that a roadside bomb had killed five US troops in Kandahar and two other NATO soldiers were shot dead by an Afghan army soldier in an “insider attack” in Farah province.

On May 6, it was reported (*Dawn*) that a new jihadi magazine set up by militants in Afghanistan and Pakistan had appealed to Muslims around the world to come up with technology to hack into or manipulate drones, describing this as one of their most important priorities.

*Mashriq* reported on May 6 the death of the first German soldier in Afghanistan, in Baghlan, in an attack by militants. Another soldier was injured. The soldiers were said to have come under attack as they assisted Afghan troops in a military action.

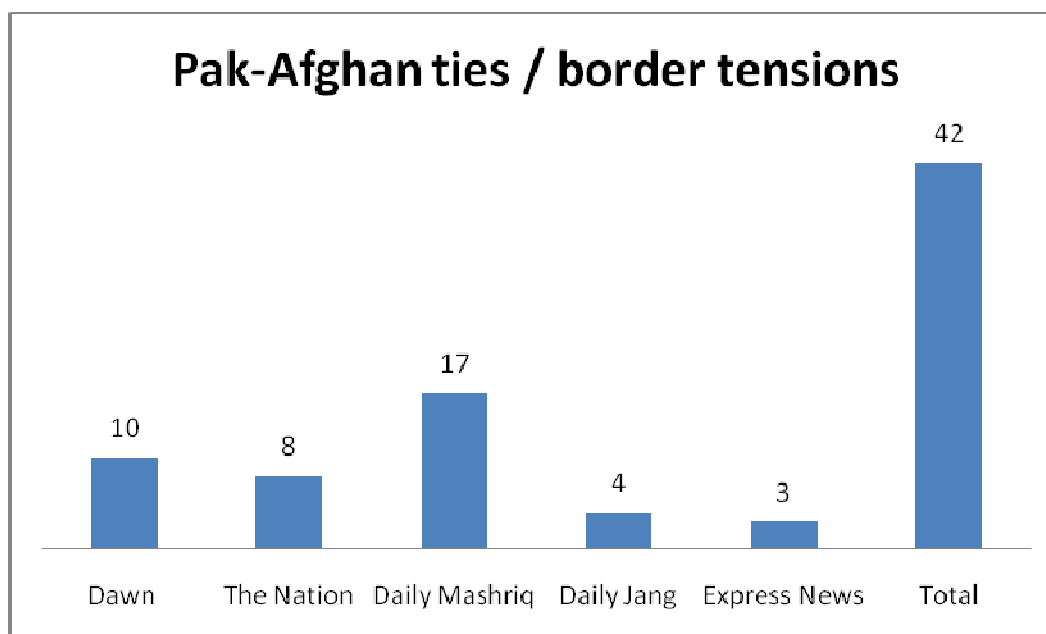
On May 11, the monitored media reported that unidentified kidnappers had abducted 11 Afghans working in a UN-affiliated landmine clearing program in Nangarhar province. Local officials and tribal elders were said to be trying to negotiate the mine clearers' freedom.

*Dawn* (May 14) covered the death of 13 civilians, including four women and five children, when their pick-up truck hit a roadside bomb. The victims were travelling to the funeral of two people who were killed by a similar blast a few days earlier.

## **(2) Pak-Afghan Ties & Border Tensions**

In the context of Afghanistan-Pakistan relations, the second most frequently covered topic during the month under review was the rise in tensions between the two countries following border clashes and statements by President Karzai about Durand Line which were interpreted in Pakistan as an attempt to revive a non-issue and to divert attention of the Afghans from the real issues that

confronted them. Border tensions and Pakistan-Afghanistan relations were covered in a total of 42 news reports, comments and editorials. Several editorials and op-eds were also written about this category. The op-ed writers included a number of ex-diplomats and former senior Foreign Office staff.



Tensions and the occasional clash between Pakistani and Afghan security forces at the Pak-Afghan border was covered by the media. On April 16, *Mashriq* reported that a dispute between Pakistan and Afghanistan over setting up a check post on the border in Pakistan's tribal region of Mohmand had been amicably resolved after talks between Pakistani and Afghan security authorities. *Dawn* reported on the same day that the issue of a border post in Mohmand Agency had been resolved after Afghanistan dropped its objections and acknowledged that Pakistan Army was renovating its post and not establishing a new one. A delegation of the Afghan army held talks on border coordination with Pakistan Army's Director General Military Operations. "All ongoing cross-border coordination issues, including border post construction in Mohmand Agency,

were discussed and amicably resolved.” Both sides agreed to continue such bilateral interactions to enhance border coordination and reduce space for detractors, the spokesperson said. The report added that the recent case propped up when the Afghan military confused renovation work at the Gursal post in Mohmand Agency to construction of a new border post.

On April 30, *The Nation* quoted a report published in Kabul-based newspaper Afghan Times that President Karzai had written a letter to his US counterpart Barack Obama, seeking America's help in getting control of nearly a dozen border security posts that he alleged were captured by Pakistani forces in eastern Nangarhar province a decade ago. The letter stated that the issue was sensitive because US troops had been involved in paving the ground for Pakistan's troops to capture these posts.

*Mashriq* reported on May 5 that Afghan President Karzai had talked to US Secretary of State John Kerry on the phone and discussed border tensions after a clash between Pakistani and Afghan forces in Goshta, a border region of Afghanistan's Nangarhar province.

On May 1, the media reported that an exchange of harsh words between Afghan army personnel and Pakistani border guards was followed by the Afghan army closing the border gate, after which the Pakistani guards also closed the Torkham border point. The report said that NATO supplies was also suspended and only Afghans wishing to enter Pakistan for medical treatment were allowed in.

On May 2, *Mashriq* reported that the Torkham border point between the two countries had been opened after a visit to Pakistan by a senior Afghan delegation. The visiting delegation reportedly assured the Pakistanis that the Afghan security personnel who had misbehaved with the Pakistani security personnel would be penalized and such an incident would not happen in the future.



On May 2, almost all of the media monitored reported injuries to two Pakistani paramilitary troops in a cross-border attack on a Pakistani check post in Mohmand Agency. Pakistani forces were reported to have fired back in response to the attack. *Dawn* reported that Pakistan's Foreign Office had summoned the Afghan charge d'affaires in Islamabad to protest the "unprovoked border clash by Afghanistan" in which the two Pakistani paramilitary troops were injured. The report said that an Afghan border policeman was also killed in the exchange of fire. It was the latest incident in a series of cross-border attacks, which Afghan and Pakistan authorities traded blame for initiating.

The monitored media on May 4 reported Afghan President Hamid Karzai as calling upon the Afghan Taliban to fight Afghanistan's enemies in what was widely seen as a swipe against Pakistan days after the neighbors' security forces clashed on their border. The report also said that Karzai had revealed that he had spoken to the CIA's Kabul station chief earlier in the day, asking that the US intelligence agency continue to provide payments to his country, adding that the money was "flowing to" Afghanistan's intelligence agency, the National Directorate of Security.

*Dawn* reported on May 6 that Afghanistan had lodged an official protest with Pakistan after troops exchanged fire at the border between the countries. The incident had occurred in the same location where a firefight between Afghan and Pakistani forces killed an Afghan border policeman and wounded two Pakistani soldiers the previous week.

On May 8, a *Dawn* report said that Pakistan summoned the most senior Afghan diplomat in the country to protest border latest skirmishes that it said left five security personnel wounded and strained bilateral relations.

According to a report by *The Nation* and other monitored media organizations on May 7, Pakistan's Foreign Office said that Durand Line was a settled matter and reverting to this issue was a distraction from the more pressing issues requiring

the priority attention and cooperation of Pakistan and Afghanistan.

In a May 8 editorial in *Jang* titled 'Durand Line: let's not escalate tensions', the newspaper commented that with Afghanistan already facing a plethora of problems and uncertainty ahead of NATO forces' withdrawal, the Afghan president "raising the settled issue of Durand Line was a sad attempt to raise tensions with Pakistan" and push the Afghan nation into new problems. The editorial said that even today Pakistan hosted four million Afghan refugees. Pakistan had fully backed Kabul in the war on terror in Afghanistan with the result that the terrorists had diverted their attention on Pakistan. It said that over 40,000 innocent Pakistani civilians and security forces personnel had lost their lives in the war. "Rather than the Afghan government acknowledging and appreciating these sacrifices by Pakistan and joining hands to ensure peace and stability in Afghanistan after the foreign troops withdraw, Karzai has tried to revive the long dead issue of Durand Line," the editorial said.

On May 10, *The Nation* carried a Reuters story that Afghan border police, following recent clashes with their Pakistani counterparts, were pleading for more weapons, escalating the tension between the two sides. The commander of the Afghan border police in Goshta district in Afghanistan's eastern Nangarhar province said that his 250-strong force were armed with mortars and machine guns, but they need more because it would be difficult to match Pakistan's heavy artillery and tanks, visible on the other side of the border.

There were sharp reactions to the Durand Line statement by President Karzai, which also became the focus of a number of op-eds and editorials.

In an article in *Dawn* (April 17) titled 'Karzai's latest charges' Najamuddin A. Shaikh, a former foreign secretary, drew attention towards the Afghan president instructing his ministers of defence, interior and foreign affairs to take "immediate action" to see to the removal of the border gate, check-post and other

installations built by Pakistan along the Durand Line. He had alleged that these had been built without coordination. These instructions had followed a verbal protest lodged by Afghanistan's deputy foreign minister with the Pakistani ambassador in Kabul on April 1. The former foreign secretary said that in issuing these instructions, Karzai had chosen to ignore a rejoinder to the April 1 protest by the Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman who said the post in question — Gursal in Mohmand Agency bordering Afghanistan's Nangarhar province — was well within Pakistan territory. The spokesman had said it had existed for many years and was only being renovated, and that an Afghan military delegation visiting Mohmand in January had been briefed on the nature of the renovation work.

The writer said that the saga had left several questions to ponder: "Why, for instance, was this verbal attack launched in April when the Afghans had known of the renovation at least since January? Why was there no attempt to counter the statement of facts relating to the post provided by the Pakistani officials and presumably communicated to the Afghans formally by our ambassador in Kabul or the Afghan envoy in Islamabad? It is difficult to find a logical explanation. Did this serve any purpose other than to further strain Pak-Afghan ties at a time when Pakistan has a caretaker government charged only with ensuring free and fair elections, not with undertaking new initiatives in foreign or domestic policy? Whatever the purpose of Karzai's outburst, one hopes that our interim government will not respond harshly but confine itself to reiterating the facts and then hold further discussions."

The writer said that Karzai appeared to be at loggerheads with both his principal supporter, the US, and his most important neighbor, Pakistan. "Hopefully, both benefactor and neighbor will avoid an intemperate public response. Today, Afghanistan has only one legitimate leader and therefore only one legitimate enunciator of Afghan policy. He, despite a belief to the contrary, is, at this time, the only person who can carry forward the currently stalled process of

reconciliation. The writer warned that Afghanistan's descent into chaos would cause enormous damage to US prestige but would be devastating for Pakistan and its own struggle against terrorist elements within the country. "We need peace in Afghanistan to have peace in Pakistan and, under the circumstances, must work with whoever is in power in Kabul," the writer said.

An editorial in *Mashriq* on May 6 said that Karzai's accusation that through border skirmishes Pakistan wanted to make Durand Line a permanent frontier between the two countries was akin to hiding from an acknowledged fact. It said that the slogan of Pakhtunistan had long deflated and even the political heirs of creators of such slogans in Pakistan had also opted for a political struggle within the law and the constitution of Pakistan. The editorial claimed that there was also no doubt that from Afghan border areas extremists wanted by Pakistan were launching attacks against Pakistan with assistance of the Afghan government and security forces. It said that when Pakistan acted against the militants then the Afghan forces tried to mislead the world by calling it intervention or action in the Afghan territory.

On May 12, an editorial in *Mashriq* titled 'Afghan border police's inappropriate demand' said the demand by the Afghan border police for heavy artillery fuelled belief that this was an attempt to open another front against Pakistan. It stated that the duty of the border police was "neither offensive nor defensive but merely confined to preventing illegal border crossing and smuggling". The newspaper said that if the border police were committed to its duty they should prevent smuggling and attacks on Pakistani territory from Afghanistan.

An op-ed piece in *Mashriq* on May 9, 'Durand Line is a fact', criticized Karzai's pronouncements on Durand Line and alleged that Karzai's mood swings, where he praised Pakistan one day and blasted it the next, were aimed "at keeping all sides happy and to prolong his days in power. "He finds it convenient to blame

Pakistan for everything to save himself from the wrath of the Afghan people,” the writer said, adding that when everyone agreed that Pakistan could play a most vital role in fixing Afghanistan's problems it was imperative that the Afghan president gave importance to the Afghan people's interests and took steps towards negotiations and reconciliation in the region.

Another comment (*Mashriq*, May 13) in response to Karzai's statement regarding Durand Line questioned President Karzai's motives in making the statement and called it a ploy to keep Pakistan busy on its western border. The writer accused the Afghan president of saber rattling at US instigation to ensure that Pakistan considers itself stuck between two enemies and was forced to make peace with India. He claimed that for that purpose, first the militants had been created to attack Pakistani territory and security forces and when that was not enough the Afghan forces were used for that.

One of the Jang editorial on May 14, titled 'the new prime minister's test', enumerated the challenges that Nawaz Sharif, the soon-to-be prime minister of Pakistan, faced on the domestic front as well as foreign policy issues, paramount among which was said to be situation in Afghanistan, terrorism, reestablishment of relations with the US in national interest against the backdrop of drone strikes, and dialogue with India on bilateral issues for durable peace in the region. The editorial noted that although President Karzai had been among the first leaders to congratulate Sharif on his party's election victory “`but there is a huge difference between what he says and does. On one hand he talks about good relations with Pakistan and on the other openly instigates the Afghan Taliban to attack Pakistan. The contradictory nature of his ever changing stance makes it difficult to ascertain what he wants.”

Cross-border attacks by large groups of militants from Afghanistan on Pakistan's territory and security forces, which had been reported by the media often a few

months earlier, were not reported during the one-month monitoring period for this study. On May 13, *Mashriq* reported that two rockets fired from Afghanistan had fallen in the Pakistani territory in Upper Dir. No loss of life was reported.

During the one-month monitoring so much of Pakistan's ties with Afghanistan seemed to revolve around border disputes that that seemed to be the defining character of bilateral ties.

Other important developments in the context of the two countries' relations included a suicide bombing in Peshawar on April 29 in which the 10 fatalities included two officials of the Afghan Consulate in Peshawar. The media reported that the two consulate officials killed were cousins and were identified as Hilal Ahmed Waqad, a member of the Afghan Consulate's trade commission, and Idrees Ahmed, attaché for Afghan minister for refugee affairs in Pakistan. Hilal was the son of former Afghan deputy prime minister Qazi Ameen Waqad.

On April 30, a *Mashriq* report said that Kabul had asked the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, of which Peshawar is the capital, for a report on the killing of the two Afghan consulate officials. Kabul wanted to know if the blast had sought to target the Afghan officials.

*Jang* (April 18) published a report on an address by Pakistan's Ambassador to Afghanistan Mohammad Sadiq to students of Peshawar University. The ambassador said that no military could remain in another country indefinitely and that the US army too would leave Afghanistan. He said that Pakistan wanted a peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan and wanted reconciliation among Pakhtun, Uzbek, Tajik and all other ethnic groups there. He said that Pakistan was willing to play any role in Afghanistan that Afghanistan wanted it to.

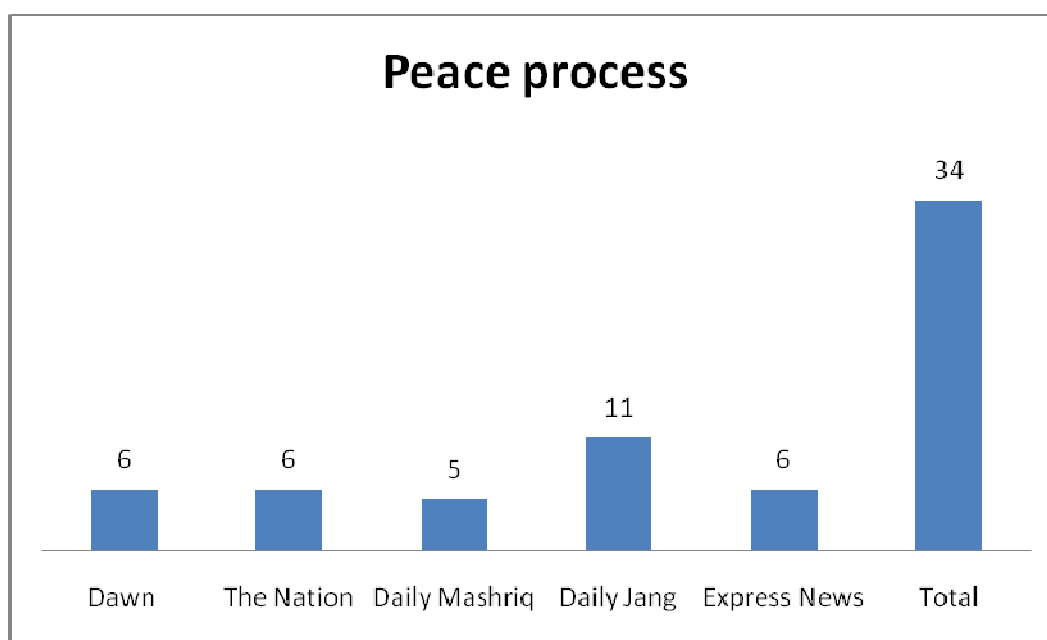
A *Mashriq* report on May 4 quoted a special prosecutor of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) that the FIA prosecutors had been getting threatening phone calls from

Afghanistan but the caretaker government was not attending to their security needs. He said that FIA prosecutor Chaudhry Zulfiqar, who was also the state's lawyer in the Mumbai attacks case and was murdered in Islamabad in April had also received threats but the prosecutors' security had not been increased.

*Dawn* (May 12) reported that Afghan President Hamid Karzai had called on Pakistan's incoming government to help negotiate an end to the Taliban insurgency that had ravaged his country for nearly 12 years.

### **(3) Peace Process**

The monitoring exercise found that the category with the third highest number of news, op-ed and editorial coverage was the peace process, i.e., attempts of finding ways to bring an end to the Afghan conflict, including by way of holding talks with the Taliban.



Much of the focus of the news in this category was on coverage leading up to trilateral talks among Afghanistan, Pakistan and the US in Brussels that the US secretary of state had hosted towards the end of April to try to “ease friction between often feuding neighbors”. The monitored Pakistani media did not seem to think that much progress had been made at Brussels.

On April 23, *Dawn* quoted US Secretary of State John Kerry as saying that he would host a meeting of top Afghan and Pakistani officials over the next week in Brussels to discuss reconciliation with the Taliban and other issues. He said that Afghan President Hamid Karzai and his defence minister, along with Pakistan's military chief and foreign secretary were to attend the meeting.

*Dawn* on April 24 quoted NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen as saying that Pakistan must play a positive role in bringing stability to Afghanistan as foreign troops prepared to leave the country in 2014.

On April 25, *Mashriq* reported that negotiations between Pakistan, Afghanistan and the US in Brussels had failed to make headway because of reservations over reconciliation with the Taliban. Quoting a foreign news agency, the newspaper stated that tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan could not be reduced during the negotiations.

A *Dawn* editorial (April 26) said following the Brussels meet that while official details about what transpired in Brussels among President Karzai, General Kayani, and John Kerry was “predictably non-existent”, the backdrop to the meeting was telling enough. “With tensions along the Pak-Afghan border escalating in recent weeks — disputes over Pakistani check posts in Mohmand Agency, missiles fired into Kunar and an Afghan military delegation postponing a scheduled visit — Mr Kerry will have been keen to get the Pakistani and Afghan sides together to ratchet down tensions and focus on the goal the Americans care most about: ensuring stability in Afghanistan post-2014 and preventing an



eventual Taliban takeover.” It said that the public comments made later by Kerry—that results were what would tell the story, not statements at a press conference—suggested that strong views were exchanged behind closed doors and perhaps not much movement was made or common ground found. It added: “Privately, the American and Pakistani sides express a growing understanding of each other’s positions and baselines in the region while both also suggest a frustration with the Afghan side led by Mr Karzai, for whom the clock is winding down rapidly with presidential elections slated for a year from now. Then again, convergences between the US and Pakistan on Afghanistan have proved transitory, or even illusory, in the past and it is difficult to pinpoint which among the three sides has a less coherent framework for achieving long-term stability in Afghanistan and the wider region, particularly the tribal areas of Pakistan.” The editorial said that from a Pakistani perspective, perhaps the most obvious talking point was Gen Kayani’s presence at the meeting with an elected Afghan leader and the cabinet appointee of a US president. It stated that even though Mir Hazar Khan Khoso was caretaker prime minister with a limited mandate, he should have been the one formally leading the Pakistani team in Brussels with Gen Kayani by his side.

An editorial in *Mashriq* on April 26 said that with the inconclusive end of the trilateral talks in Brussels another hope for progress on resolution of the problem in Afghanistan had died. The editorial said that every time there were trilateral talks in Brussels lack of unity and absence of progress led to the same result, demonstrating that neither side was willing to show flexibility. It said that things could perhaps move forward only when the circumstances themselves brought a change that would alter the situation and force the sides to come to an agreement. The editorial stated that even though Pakistan had made serious efforts to facilitate talks by releasing important Taliban leaders, the US and Afghanistan were not willing to show confidence in Pakistan and that was why

the trilateral talks had failed every single time. The editorial added that even if talks began with the Taliban after a consensus at the trilateral talks, the militants' conditions would be stringent and unacceptable to a large degree. In the circumstances, it said the best way for foreign troops would be to leave all matters aside with the exception of a guarantee for their safe exit to future rulers. "Kabul should consider the Taliban in Qatar refusing to negotiate with the Afghan government as the end of the matter and if that is not possible then the three sides would have to show compromise to end the deadlock."

An opinion piece in *Mashriq* (April 26) asked why Pakistan, a democratic country, had chosen to send the army chief to the trilateral talks in Brussels.

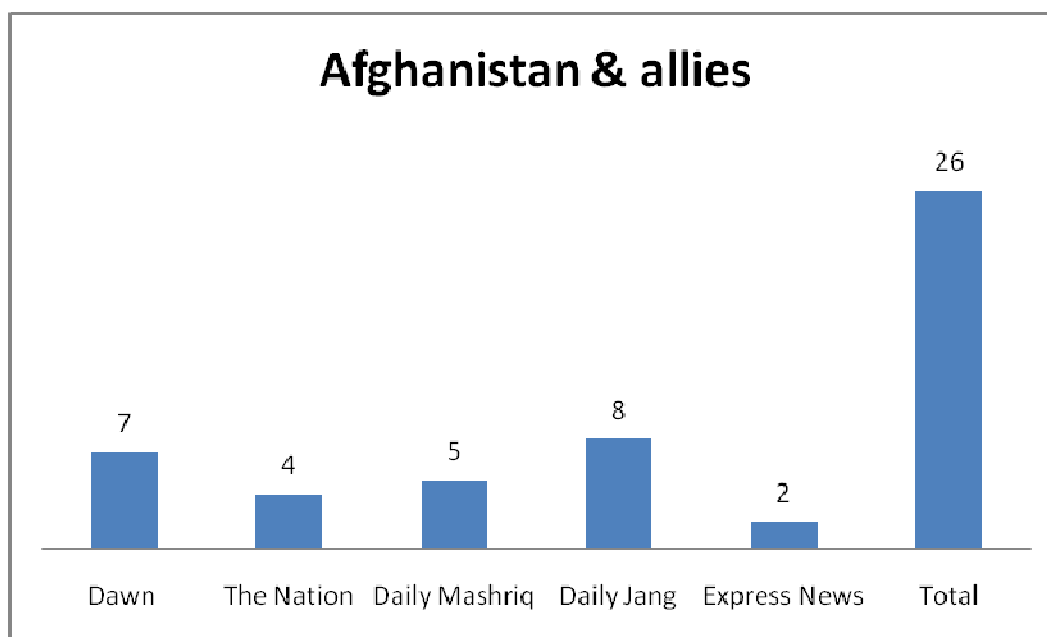
The Express News TV channel aired news, both in bulletins and news tickers, related to the Brussels talks and Pakistan's participation there ahead of the meeting.

On May 14, *Mashriq* reported that Pakistan Army chief Gen Ashfaq Kayani had been invited to attend the annual meeting of NATO Chief of Defence in Brussels. The situation in Afghanistan was said to be on the agenda.

On May 10, an op-ed in *Jang* commented on the recently held NATO countries' foreign ministers' meeting and its objective and explored the challenges that Pakistan should prepare for in the coming days.

#### **(4) Afghanistan's Ties with Allies**

One of the topics for monitoring was Kabul's ties with NATO, the United States and other countries helping and supporting Afghanistan secure its future through either ongoing or impending cooperation.



The coverage under this category included reports by multiple media organizations citing a The New York Times report that CIA had been giving bags stuffed with dollars to Afghan President Karzai and that millions in such ‘ghost money’ had been given in this manner over the past decade. The US newspaper was quoted that Karzai had also admitted that until a few years ago Iran had also been giving bags filled with US dollars to his senior aides. The NYT was reported to have seen the payments in the context of wider corruption reported in Afghanistan.

Titled ‘The steep cost of staying in Afghanistan’, a May 1 editorial in *Mashriq* said that the CIA report of giving money to Karzai was no news. The newspaper said that CIA tried to increase its clout in Afghanistan through bribery and corruption. The newspaper quoted a US official as saying that the US was one of the bigger sources of corruption in Afghanistan. The editorial said that the NYT report had exposed Karzai and showed how large sums had been dedicated to solidify “US hegemony” over Afghanistan and exposed the ploys in the war on terror in

Afghanistan. The editorial said that so long as there were cosmetic attempts for peace in Afghanistan based on greed, bribery and money, not only would peace elude Afghanistan but also neither the US nor Karzai would be able to deal with the militants.

Another report (*Mashriq*, May 11) quoted President Karzai that the US wanted to keep nine military bases in Afghanistan, after the international forces pullout. However, with respect to signing a security agreement with Washington in that regard, Karzai was reported to have said that his country wanted its demands and interests taken into account in the talks and that the US should accept their conditions.

The same day, *The Nation* carried a statement by a White House spokesperson that the United States was not seeking permanent military bases in Afghanistan, and any future American presence in the country would be possible only at the invitation of the Afghan government.

An editorial in the May 11 edition of *Mashriq* said that President Karzai's desire to simultaneously seek reconciliation with the Taliban and negotiating with the US to provide a basis for presence of American troops on Afghanistan were mutually contradictory goals.

A report in *Dawn* (April 21) said that President Karzai was determined to curb CIA operations after a US agent and 10 Afghan children died in a battle in Kunar province that the president believed was fought by an illegal militia working for the US spy agency.

On April 22, *Mashriq* reported that a 60-strong last batch of New Zealand soldiers had returned home from Afghanistan.

A May 15 news in *Dawn* quoted British Secretary of State for Defense Philip

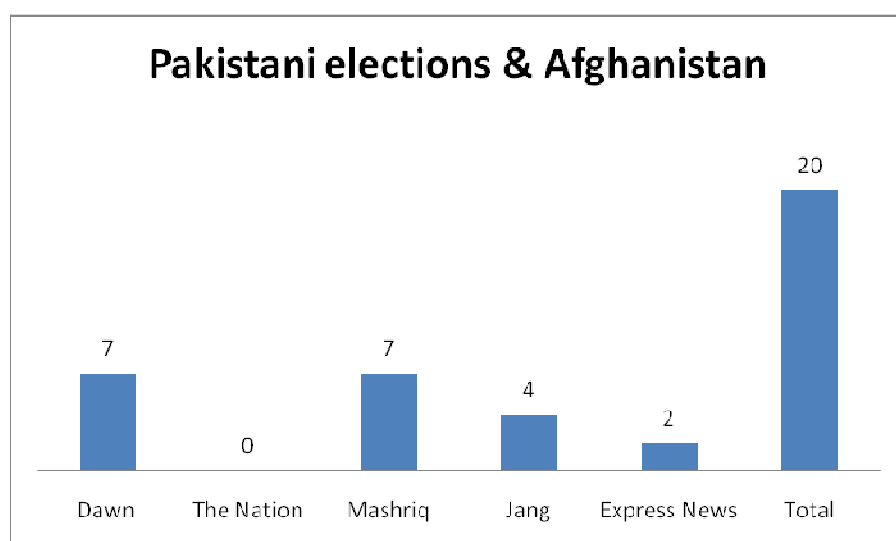
Hammond as saying that some British troops would have to stay in Afghanistan until 2015 to ensure that the departure of forces was properly managed.

The monitored Pakistani media also reported on May 14 the assumption of NATO command by four-star US General Philip, who promised to bolster the 28-member military alliance as it prepared for a difficult withdrawal from Afghanistan next year.

On May 8, Dawn reported that UK military had expanded its drone fleet to 500, which had been used extensively in Afghanistan.

## **(5) Elections in Pakistan**

One of the reasons for the media monitoring to be conducted from mid-April to mid-May was the May 11 general elections taking place in Pakistan, marking an important and historic democratic transition in the country, in order to assess the extent of the coverage of any reference made to Afghanistan in Pakistan's election campaign or political parties' manifestos, etc. It was apparent from the outset that the newspapers did not report much on elections which had any direct link with or bearing on Pakistan's ties with Afghanistan.



A total of 20 news, comments and editorials concerning this category were reported during the period under review.

The almost identical coverage by *Dawn* and *Mashriq* mainly looked at security on election day and either sealing of the Pak-Afghan border; bars on movement of Afghan refugees (*Mashriq*, May 9) on May 11; or felicitations by Afghan leaders to Pakistani politicians whose parties had done well in the elections. According to a news in *Jang* on May 2, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Home Department had ordered the closure of Torkham border for elections and that Afghan refugees should remain inside refugee camps on May 10, 11 and 12.

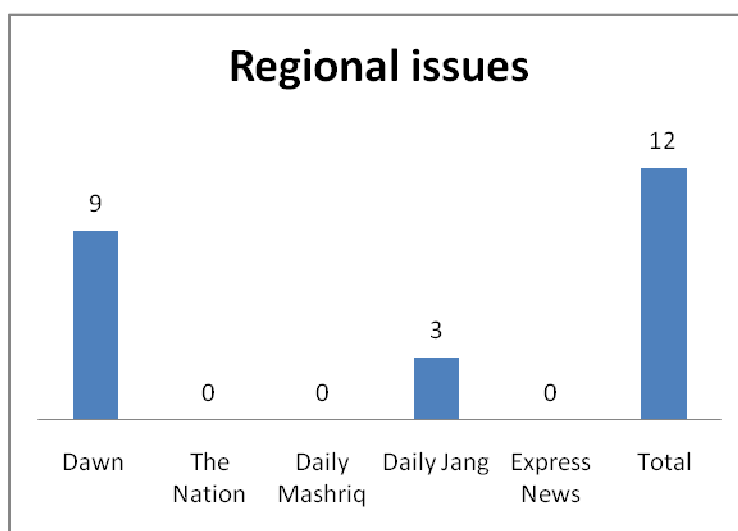
Quoting an interview of Nawaz Sharif, whose party won the largest number of National Assembly seats in the elections, with the Wall Street Journal, *Mashriq* cited him as saying that good ties with Afghanistan were imperative. He said that his party, the Pakistan Muslims League-Nawaz would fully support Afghanistan and had no intention of becoming a party in Afghanistan.

On May 14, it was reported (*Mashriq*) that President Karzai had telephoned Aftab Sherpao, a politician from Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, and congratulated him on his success in the elections.

On May 4, an editorial in *Dawn* titled 'Lack of substance Parties and foreign policy' focused on how Pakistan's foreign policy had been used "only as rhetoric", and had not received serious attention in the election campaign. "Afghanistan, Kashmir, nuclear policy and relations with the US, China and India were sensitive issues that need responsible handling, because those now treating geopolitical issues flippantly will be called upon to handle them one day," it said, noting that participants at a seminar in Karachi had observed that none of the party manifestos released recently attached much importance to foreign policy and resorted to clichés and generalizations.

A May 9 op-ed piece in *Mashriq* noted that the election campaign of the party of Pakistani religious leader Maulana Fazlur Rehman had been targeted in terrorist attack. It also said that militant attackers in Pakistan were being trained in terrorist training camps in Mazar-e-Sharif, Paktia and Kandahar. Insurgents of Baloch Liberation Army were being trained in Kandahar, the comment claimed without citing a source.

## (6) Regional Issues



The media covered a total of 12 instances, nine in *Dawn*, of coverage of regional issues linked to Afghanistan.

Media coverage on May 11 included Kabul accusing Tehran of killing 10 migrants when Iranian border guards fired on a large group of Afghan migrants illegally crossing the border overnight. On May 13, *Dawn* reported that Afghanistan had summoned the Iranian ambassador to protest the shooting dead of Afghan illegal migrants.

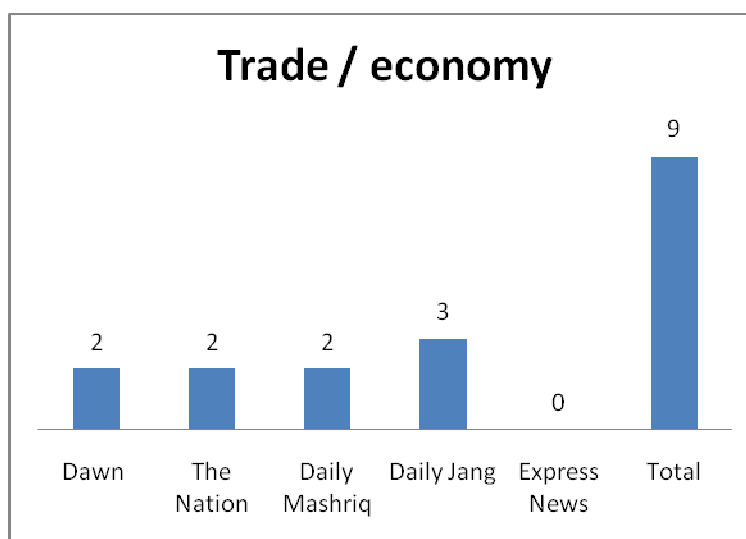
A *Dawn* report (May 9) quoted Russian President Vladimir Putin as stating that

Russia must strengthen its defenses in the south and work with Central Asian allies to protect itself against the threat of extremist violence emerging from Afghanistan.

On May 3, *Dawn* reported that the US had nominated veteran diplomat James Dobbins as the new special envoy to Afghanistan and Pakistan at what US Secretary of State John Kerry called “a pivotal moment” for the two nations.

An editorial in *Mashriq* (May 14) outlined the needs and demands of Pakistan's better ties with the US, Afghanistan and India. Praising a statement by Nawaz Sharif that his government will work to improve ties with all three countries, the editorial said that sustainable improvement in ties was possible only after outstanding complex issues with those countries were resolved.

## (7) Economy



For two neighbors whose economies inevitably depend on and can immensely benefit from each other, the media coverage on trade and economic issues was negligible, reflecting a failure to realize the potential of bilateral economic



prospects. Throughout the monitoring period trade and economy was covered only nine times.

In the only economy/trade-related news over the monitoring period in *Mashriq* (May 10), the newspaper reported that food department officials from Peshawar had foiled an attempt to smuggle 28 valuable animals to Afghanistan. Two suspects were arrested under Food Act and the officials vowed to continue a campaign to prevent smuggling of animals to Afghanistan via Peshawar.

*The Nation* (April 25) reported on an Afghan bank delegation's visit to Islamabad; and reported economic opportunity in Afghanistan and Iraq for Pakistani traders due to the presence of US forces there (April 27). *Dawn* (May 14) reported an Afghan official's statement that the new government in Pakistan could offer an opportunity to strengthen bilateral economic ties. On May 14, *The Nation* and *Jang* both carried a news about Afghanistan's finance minister naming in parliament several lawmakers who he said were guilty of corruption and the loss they had caused to Afghanistan's exchequer. The reports also noted that Finance Minister Omar Zakhilwal had launched a passionate defence against attempts to impeach him over separate nepotism and graft allegations. Zakhilwal easily survived a vote to impeach him.

According to a report by *Dawn* (May 8), the Peshawar High Court (PHC) was informed that the federal government had released 1.88 billion rupees to the National Highway Authority (NHA) for early completion of Peshawar's Northern Bypass Road, in the wake of growing trade between Pakistan and Afghanistan and Central Asian States.

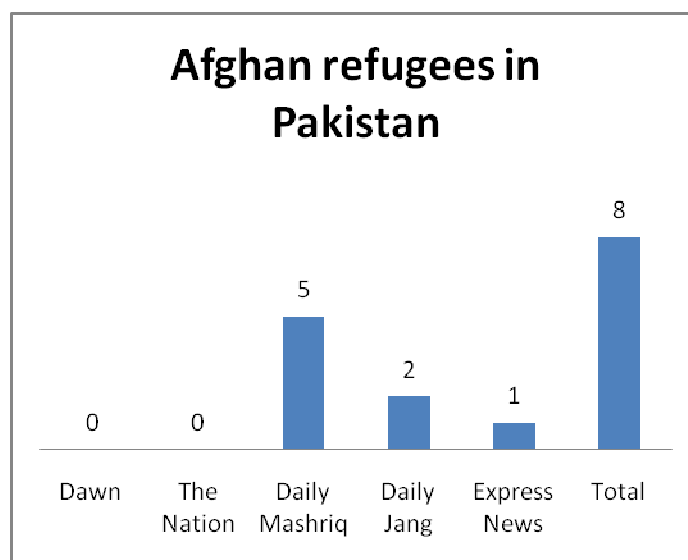
On April 15, *Jang* reported that Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) had decided to discontinue the twice weekly flights from Quetta to Kandahar which had been launched in December 2012. PIA said that the flights were being discontinued because of the low number of passengers and that if the numbers improved

flights on the route could be resumed.

A comment in *Jang* (April 15) narrated discussions of a roundtable on regional trade and emphasized the importance of trade between Pakistan and Afghanistan because of sheer volume.

## **(8) Refugees**

The large population of Afghan refugees in Pakistan had generally been covered in the media for security and socio-political reasons. Pakistan hosts around four million Afghan refugees.

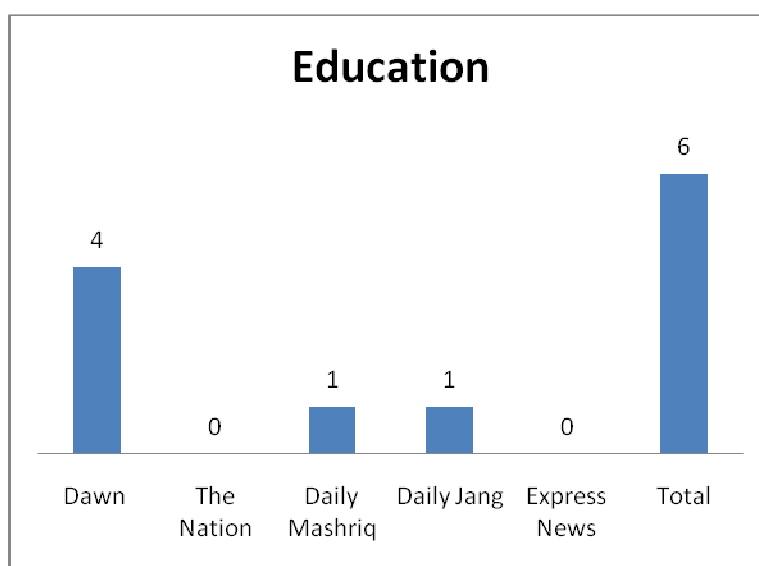


During the monitoring period, five out of the total eight media reports with a focus on Afghan refugees were given coverage in *Mashriq*. These included one that stated that the authorities were planning a crackdown on Afghan refugees illegal residing in Pakistan with relation to attacks on election candidates' offices (*Mashriq*, April 29). The Peshawar High Court issued notices to the federal and provincial governments for making changes in Afghan refugees' return schedule

(*Mashriq*, April 19). A judge of the high court was reported to have called Afghan refugees a danger to law and order, saying that they had taken possession of businesses in Pakistan, did not pay taxes, and wondered why then was the government constantly extending their stay in Pakistan. Curbs on movement of Afghan refugees on election day were also reported.

## (9) Education

Out of the six reports linked to various aspects of education in Afghanistan that got coverage during the monitoring period, four were carried by *Dawn*. One of the same news was also published by both *Jang* and *Mashriq*.



On April 15, a report in *Dawn* titled 'Jolie: beautiful stranger behind Afghan school' reported about film star and a special envoy of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees Angelina Jolie building a school in Qala-i-Gudar, a bombed-out Afghan village near Kabul. Jolie was said to be planning to open more schools in Afghanistan with profits from a newly-launched jewellery line that she had designed.

In another news report published by *Dawn* on April 22, at least 74 students at a girls' school in Afghanistan's far north fell sick after smelling gas and were being examined for possible poisoning. The report said that while instances of poisoning were sometimes later found to be false alarms, there had been "numerous substantiated cases of mass poisonings of schoolgirls by elements of Afghanistan's ultra-conservative society that are opposed to female education". The school was in Takhar province's capital, Taluqan. A spokesperson for the Takhar governor was said to blame "enemies of the government and the country" for the mass illness and said the aim was to stop girls from going to school.

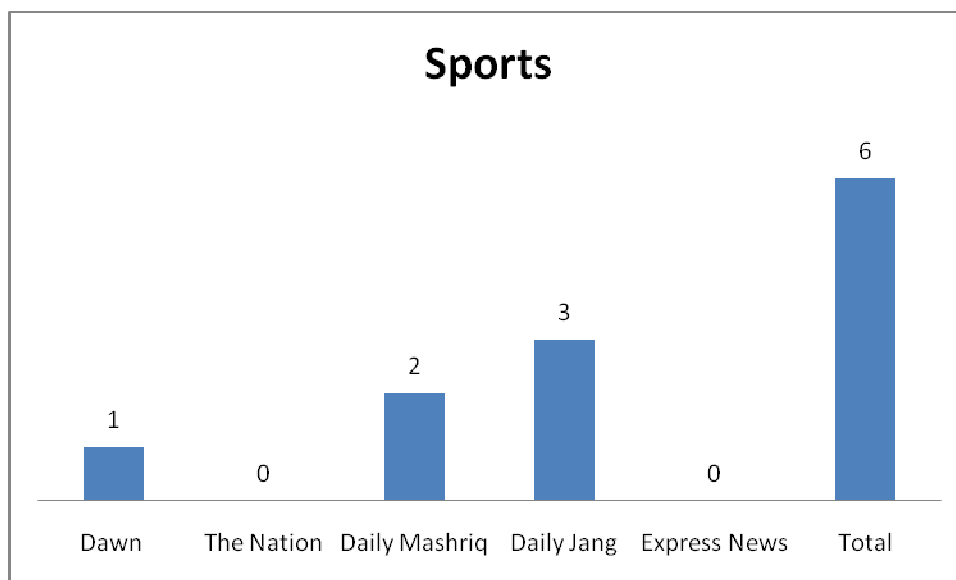
On May 8, *Dawn* reported that Afghanistan's education minister had threatened to punish schoolgirls who claimed to have suffered from alleged "poisonings" that many officials believed were actually temporary psychological illnesses. The reports said that scores of girls' schools over recent years had seen mysterious mass faintings, nausea and similar symptoms that were often blamed by police and the local media on poisoning by Taliban insurgents or toxic gas leaks. But no laboratory evidence of poison or other toxins had ever been found at schools and no deaths had occurred, with the girls often released from hospital after only a few hours. "From now on, if I find anyone saying 'I'm poisoned' and the poisoning is not proved by the hospital, I will punish the student," the education minister told a press conference. "I will punish the teacher, I will punish the head teacher and I will punish the school director," he added. The education department said the government was determined to crack down on the causes of outbreaks of psychological illnesses among young girls. "When one student faints, it spreads around and everyone might think it's poisoning," a spokesman for the ministry said. "If tests prove it is mass hysteria or any other natural cause, of course no one will be punished. What the minister said was that we will pursue those who disrupt the classes." A female education activist criticized the minister's stance and said that previous cases of "poisonings" had dissuaded

families from sending their daughters to school. “The minister should not have said that he will punish schoolgirls,” she said. “His job is to find out what has happened and protect schools.”

A *Dawn* report on May 8 said that pop singer Madonna had sold an abstract painting by French artist Fernand Leger for \$7.16 million to raise funds for girls’ education projects in Afghanistan, Pakistan and elsewhere. The pop singer had said in April that she had bought the painting in 1990. “I want to trade something valuable for something invaluable – Educating Girls!” Madonna was reported to have said.

## (10) Sports

On April 20, *Mashriq* reported on the former Soviet troops and Afghan refugees playing a friendly soccer match Kabul. Engineer Arif Sarwari was also part of the Afghan football team, who had taken part in jihad against of the Soviet army in the 1980s.



On May 2, *Jang* reported that Muhammad Saleh, a renowned player representing Afghanistan, had reached the final of the Asian Snooker Championship being played in Karachi. The 40-year-old, who had also represented Pakistan at the regional and world level from 1988 to 2006, had lived in Pakistan for many years after becoming a refugee. In 2006, he had switched to representing Afghanistan.

On May 3, *Jang* and *Dawn* reported that Saleh had become the first Afghan to win the amateur Asian snooker title, winning a glittering trophy and \$7,000 and expressing hope that his victory would lift the game in Afghanistan.

*Jang* also reported that Fawad Ahmed, a Pakistani citizen, until recently a member of the country's cricket team and a resident of the Pak-Afghan border region could be selected for the Australian cricket team. Fawad had reportedly recently applied for and received asylum in Australia after he was threatened by militants in the area where he resided.

Mashriq reported that Pakistan and Afghanistan were scheduled to play basketball matches in May and June.

## **(11) Entertainment**

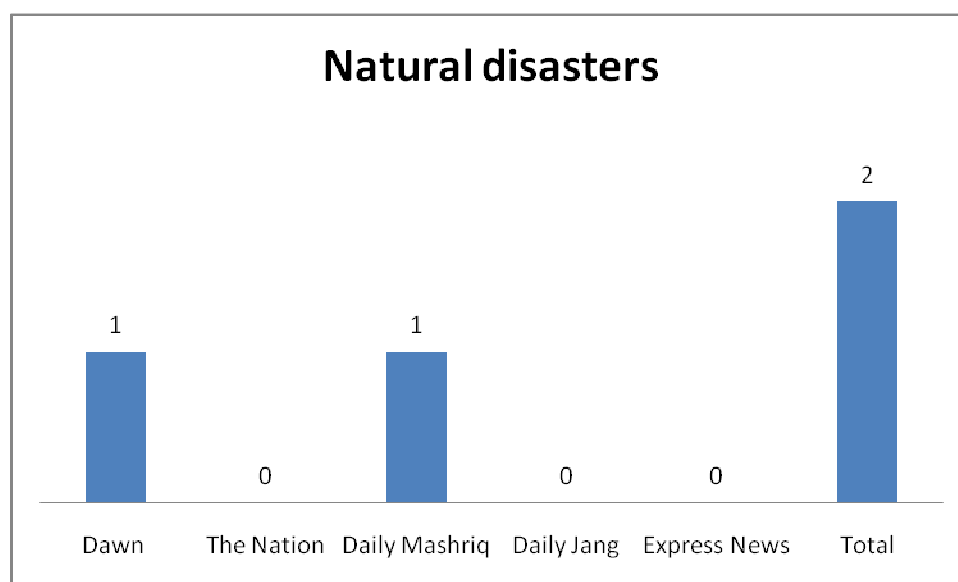
Coverage of Afghanistan-related news about performing art and entertainment in Pakistani media was rare. Only two were reported during the monitoring period, both by *Dawn*. On April 25, it was reported that Afghan President Hamid Karzai had ordered a crackdown on “un-Islamic and obscene” television shows in response to lobbying by the country's religious council. Karzai reportedly asked the culture ministry to block programmes “which are vulgar, un-Islamic, obscene and violate social morality, and Islamic morality”, according to a statement from his Council of Ministers.

On May 2, a *Dawn* report titled “Afghan rappers, break dancers and rockers at

the Sound Central Festival” said that more than a hundred people had attended the second edition of the Sound central festival, the only event of its kind that takes places in Afghanistan.

## **(12) Natural disasters**

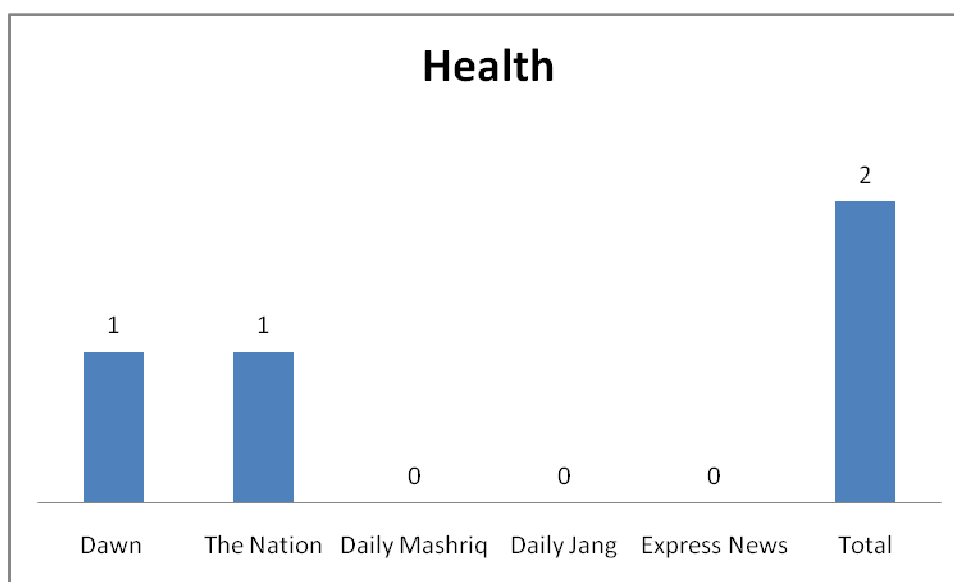
Two news reports on natural disasters were monitored. *Dawn* (April 25) reported that 13 people were killed, dozens injured and scores of mud-brick houses flattened when a powerful earthquake struck eastern Afghanistan.



*Mashriq* (April 26) reported that the death toll in floods and earthquake in Afghanistan had risen to 30. Seventeen people were killed and several buildings collapsed following torrential rains in the Balkh province. Over 2,500 houses had been destroyed and a large number of people rendered homeless in the floods in Balkh.

### (13) Health

On April 18, *The Nation* reported that two local employees of Afghanistan Red Crescent, a driver and vaccination worker, were shot and killed in a 'shocking' attack in northern Jowzjan province. A doctor and pharmacist were recovering from injuries in the shooting on a main road while their mobile clinic was travelling to the provincial capital. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) described the killings as 'shocking and unacceptable'. "It looks like they were deliberately attacked. The vehicle was clearly marked," the Red Cross staff said. The four-member mobile clinic team was providing medical help to people living in remote areas.



On April 20, *Dawn* covered a warning sounded by the ICRC in Kabul that an increase in armed groups and the splintering of insurgent factions was cutting Afghans off from healthcare in ever greater numbers. The ICRC stated that roadblocks, roadside bombs, the risk of being caught up in fighting and unprovoked attacks were all stopping civilians from getting to hospitals, and limiting travel of doctors and nurses to remote areas without clinics.

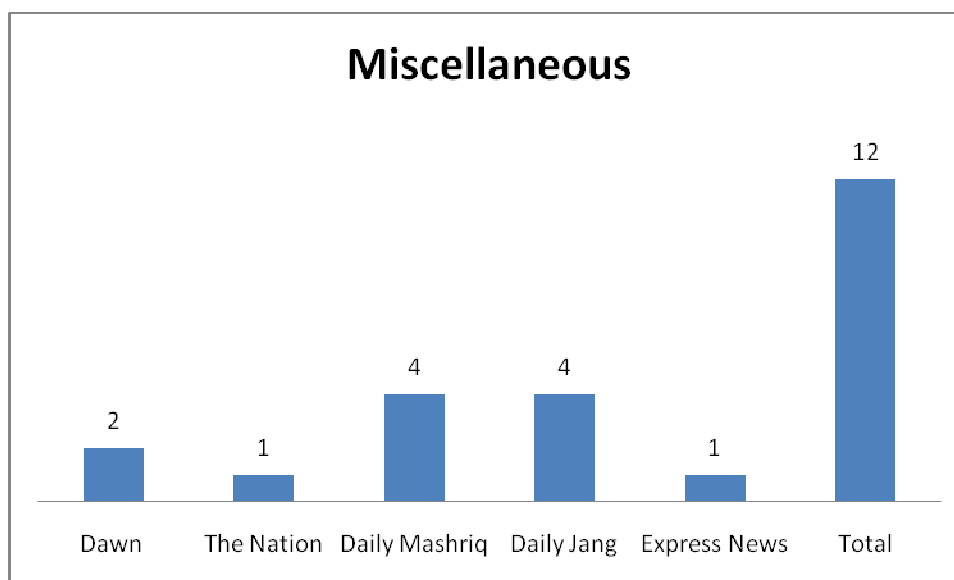


## **(14) Violence against women**

In the only news covered by the monitored Pakistani media regarding violence against women, *The Nation* reported on May 4 that an Afghan man had shot and killed his daughter in the northwestern province of Badghis over an alleged extramarital affair. The man was said to have shot his daughter in the head, stomach and waist in front of 300 villagers. It was reportedly a public execution overseen by local religious leaders to punish the woman, aged between 18 and 20 and a mother of two children, for bringing 'dishonor' on her family through an alleged affair. The woman was accused of running away with a male cousin while her husband was in Iran, and her father had sought advice from Taliban-backed clerics on how to punish her.

## **(15) Miscellaneous**

A dozen media reports that did not fall in any other category have been listed under this one. At times, the same news was carried by more than one media organization and was considered a separate news for the purpose of the count.



One such report (*Jang*, May 11) was about President Karzai calling former Pakistani prime minister Yousaf Raza Gillani on the phone to sympathize with him over his son's abduction days before the May 11 general elections in Pakistan.

*Jang* (April 26) reported a lethal road accident in Kandahar province when a passenger bus slammed into a fuel tanker, killing 30 passenger aboard the bus. Both vehicles had reportedly caught fire on impact. The bus passengers were reportedly going to Kandahar city for poppy cultivation.

On May 5, *Mashriq* reported that the Peshawar High Court chief justice had said that use of chemical weapons during the Afghan war had caused serious bone diseases among Pakhtuns, with a severe impact on FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa regions of Pakistan.

*Dawn* reported in a feature in April 17 that poppy farming was thriving in Afghanistan 12 years after the fall of the Taliban. The country was heading for a near-record opium crop, according to a UN report. Poppy cultivation was not only expected to expand in areas where it already existed in 2012 but also in new areas or areas where poppy cultivation was stopped, the Afghanistan Opium Winter Risk Assessment found.

*Dawn*, *Jang*, *The Nation* and Express News reported on April 30 the crash of a civilian cargo plane shortly after take-off at Bagram Air Field, north of the Afghan capital, killing all seven people aboard. The Taliban quickly claimed responsibility for the crash, but the coalition said in a statement that the claim was false and the cause of the crash was being investigated.

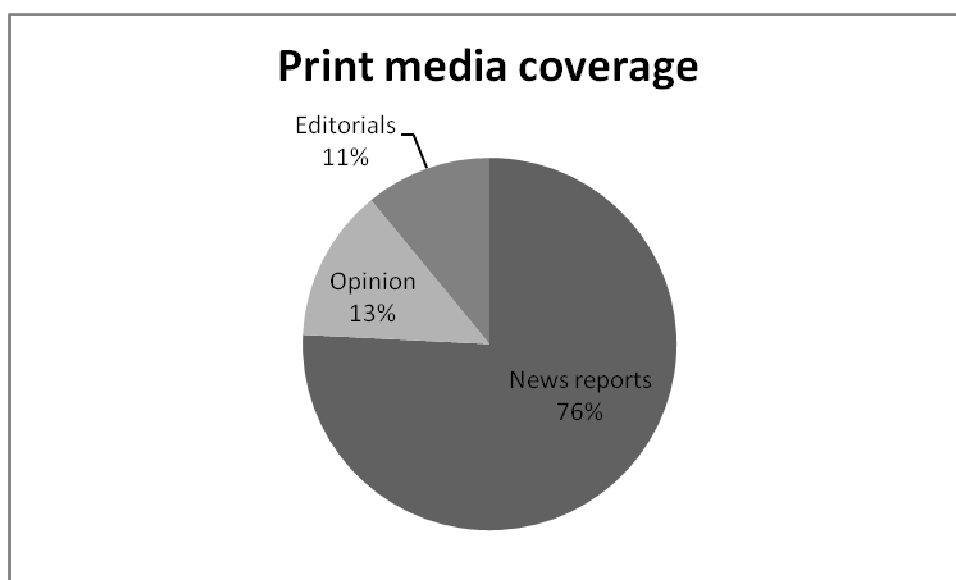
*Mashriq* (May 4) reported the passing away of Yaqoob Sharafat, senior Afghan journalist, in Peshawar. He was the director of a news agency Afghan Islamic Press (AIP). The report called him the pioneer of Afghan journalism in Peshawar. He had started his journalistic career during the Afghan Jihad. His funeral

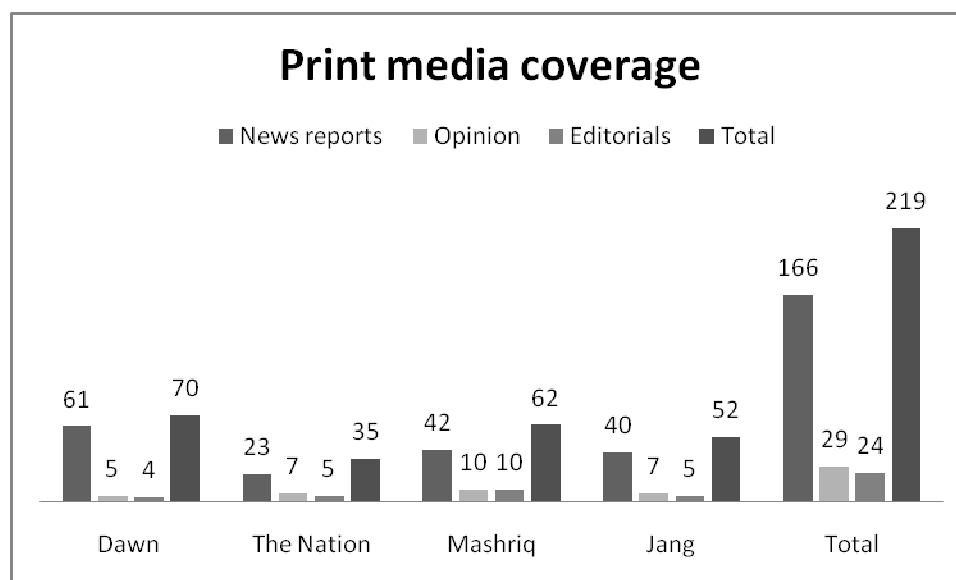
prayers were offered in Peshawar and his body was later sent to Afghanistan for burial in Jalalabad. On May 5, *Mashriq* praised Sharafat's contribution to journalism in an editorial titled "the shining star of journalism.

*Mashriq* reported on May 10 that eight civilians were killed in clashes between police and protesters in Kandahar. According to the report thousands of people were participating in the protest. The reason for the protests was not mentioned. Several protesters were injured and many others were reportedly arrested. On May 8, *Jang* reported that demonstrators protested against Pakistan in Kandahar after a cross-border attack on the Pak-Afghan border.

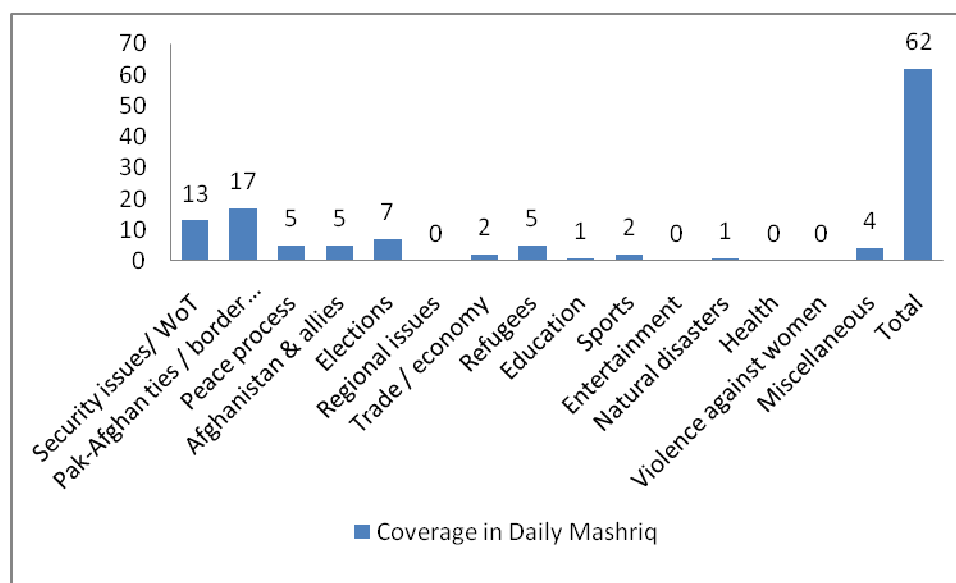
## **MEDIA ORGANIZATION-SPECIFIC FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS**

There were a total of 166 news reports, 29 op-eds, and 24 editorials about Afghanistan and related issues in the monitored print media coverage. Another 21 news were broadcast by Express News TV channel.





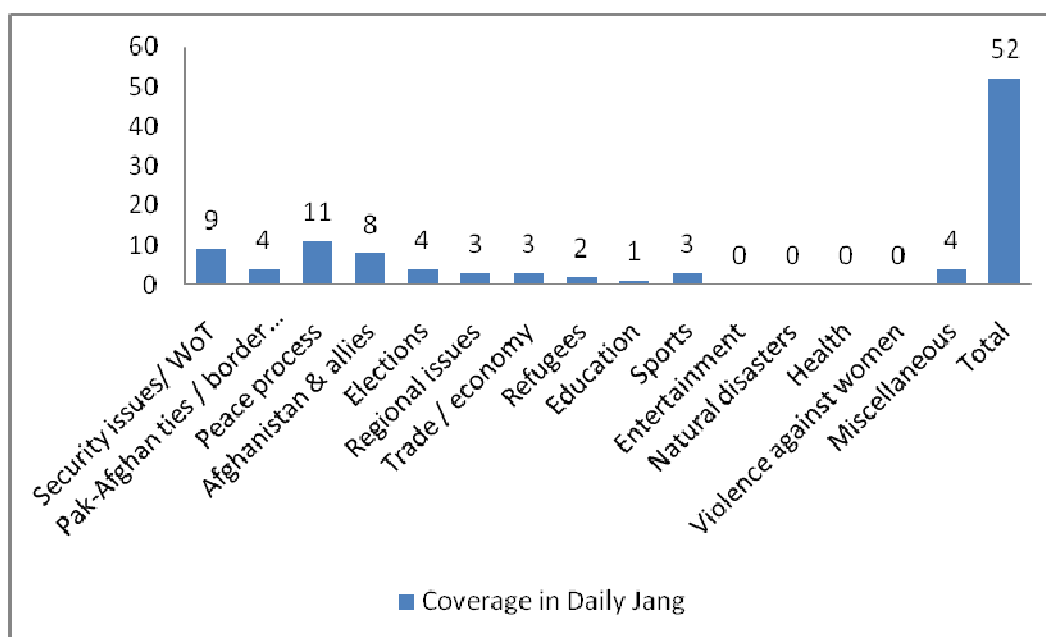
#### (1) Mashriq



The Peshawar edition of this Urdu daily newspaper published the second highest number of news about Afghanistan and related issues among all the monitored

print media publications. It published the highest number of editorials (10) and op-eds (10) among all the monitored media. It was also one of only two media organizations monitored that published news about devastation caused by natural disasters in Afghanistan. Out of the total monitored data, 26 percent was published by *Mashriq*. The newspaper covered in particular Pak-Afghan ties and bilateral border tensions. It also covered news about Afghan refugees in Pakistan, security issues and the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan. It also had some coverage of sports and education in Afghanistan.

## (2) Jang

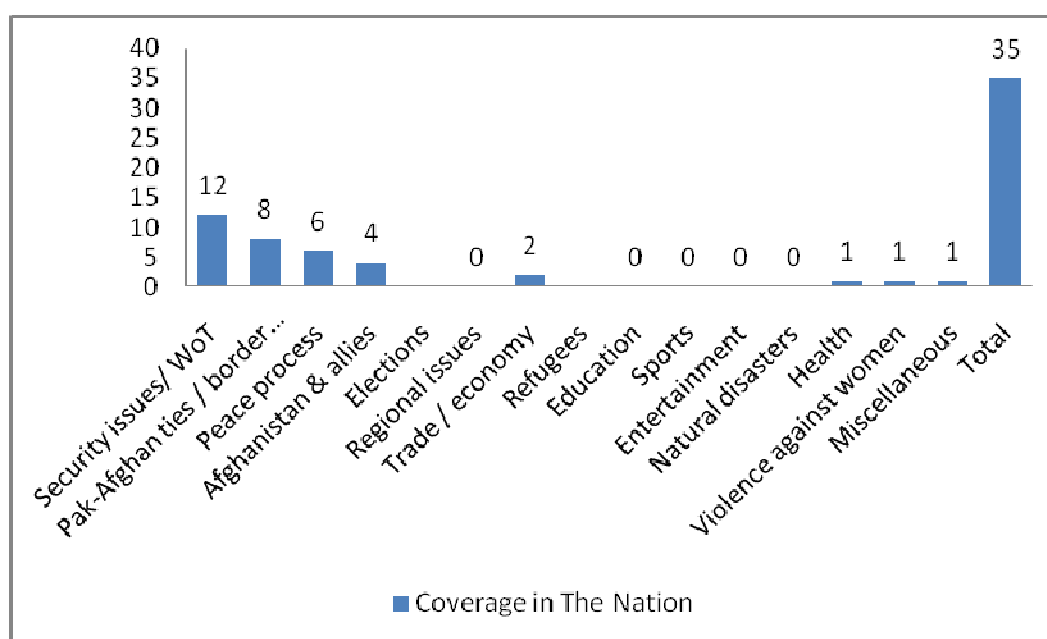


*Jang* is an Urdu newspaper with the highest daily circulation in Pakistan. The newspaper's total coverage of Afghanistan-related news reports, opinion and editorials was 52. The coverage was 22 percent of the overall coverage of all the monitored media. *Jang* published the highest proportion of the monitored data for coverage of the peace endeavors, Afghanistan and its allies and trade. Its

coverage of sports news related to Afghanistan was the highest of all the monitored media. The coverage also included seven op-eds and five editorials.

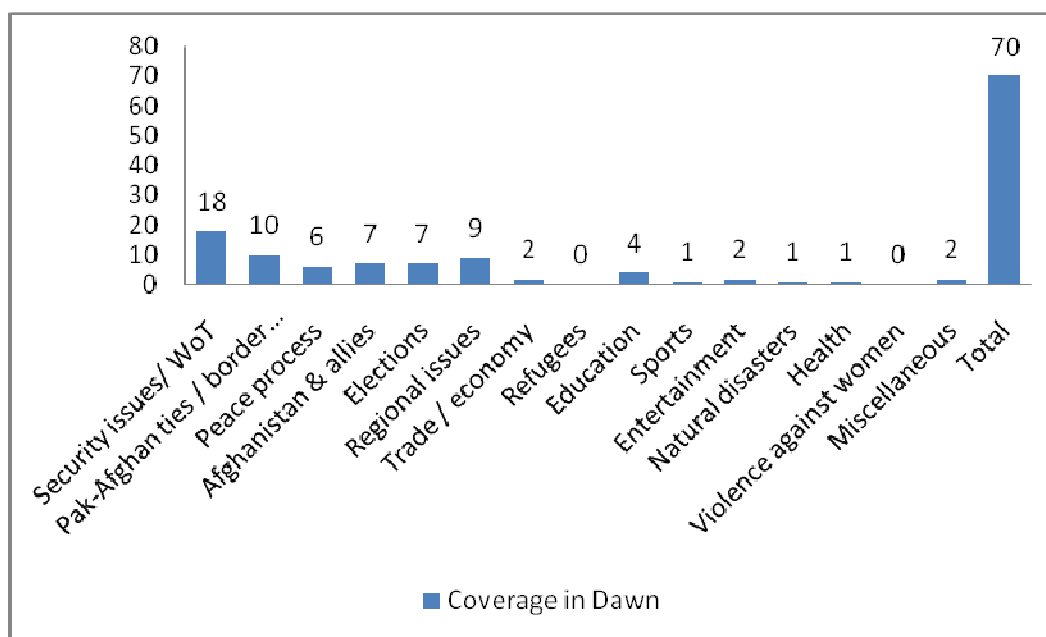
### (3) The Nation

The English language newspaper published 23 news, 7 opinions and 5 editorials between April 15 and May 15. The coverage of Afghanistan-related issues in *The Nation* was 14 percent, the lowest among all the monitored print media. However, *The Nation* was the only media organization to publish a news about violence against women and one of only two media organization to cover a health-related news from Afghanistan. Its coverage of Afghanistan-related issues focused on security issues, Islamabad's ties with Kabul, particularly border tensions, and moves aimed at securing peace in Afghanistan.



#### (4) Dawn

At 29 percent, this English newspaper had the highest ratio of overall coverage of Afghanistan-related issues and the highest number of news (61) among all five media organizations monitored for this study. The newspaper also had five opinion pieces and four editorials on themes that are the focus of this study. The newspaper was the only media organizations to publish entertainment news about Afghanistan. It also published four out of the six education-related news monitored during this study. *Dawn* included reports and op-eds on security issues, Pak-Afghan ties and regional issues.

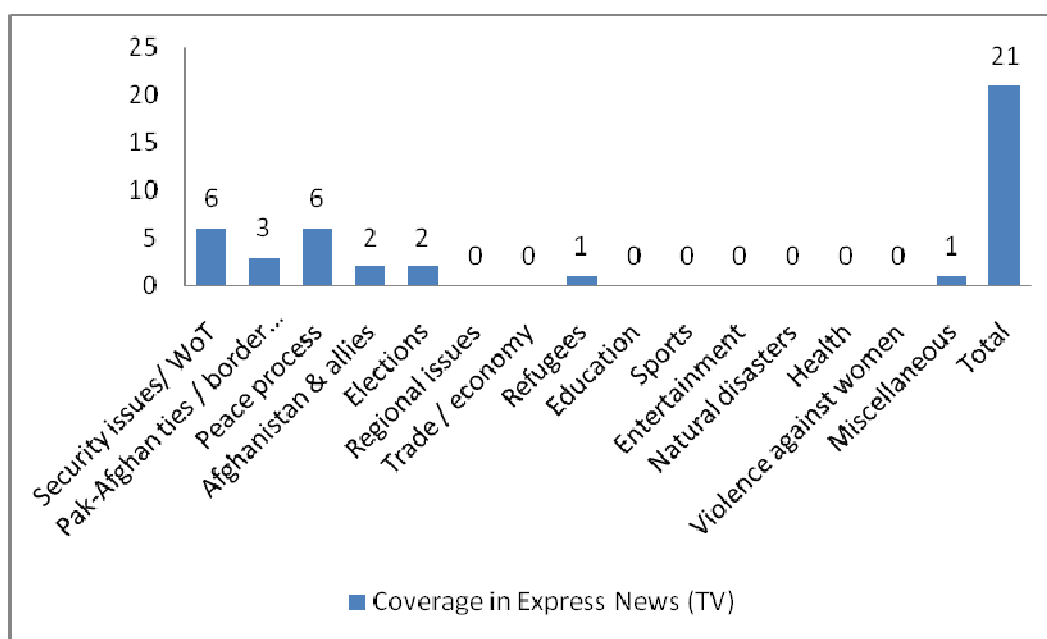


#### (5) Express News

The Urdu TV news channel had the fewest Afghanistan-related news among the five media organizations monitored for this study. In fact, eight of the 15 categories monitored did not get any coverage in the TV channel. Talk shows on Express News rarely focused on Afghanistan during the monitoring period. That



could partly have been because of much more focus on the May 11 elections in Pakistan, to the exclusion of most other issues. Although the 24-hour news channel was only monitored from 5 p.m. until midnight during the monitoring period, but even findings from this limited monitoring demonstrated the coverage of Afghanistan-related issues, or a lack thereof, during prime time.



## CONCLUSION

Even a cursory glance at the media monitoring results is enough to determine that the focus of media coverage in both countries is predominantly on issues such as security, conflict and border tensions, and events such as elections are also seen through the same prism. The coverage of topics like Afghanistan-Pakistan ties too is reduced to reporting about the border spats that the two countries endlessly blame each other for initiating.

Out of the 780 Pakistan-related stories monitored in the Afghan media, 517 look at border tensions, Pak-Afghan relations and Pakistan's domestic politics. Out of the 240 Afghanistan-related stories monitored in the Pakistani media, 126 deal solely with the security situation in Afghanistan, border tensions and Afghanistan's engagement with its allies. Although the results of the media monitoring speak for themselves, one or two things could be highlighted.

It is easy to see that apart from considerable apprehensions, there are also a fair bit of misperceptions about the other country on both sides of the Pak-Afghan border and Kabul and Islamabad both need to facilitate better people-to-people relations. Because of the hurdles in cross-border travel between Pakistan and Afghanistan, the media coverage determines to a large degree what the people of one country really know about the other. IN the monitoring one comes across a lot of one-sided stories from both countries. When accusations and claims are made against an individual, group pr actor in the other country the accused does not get a say. Getting the other side of the story might often be difficult but it did

not appear in general that too much effort was invested in that respect. As has been discussed at the outset, it is as important to consider what the media chooses to cover as it is to notice what it chooses to leave out. Some of the more significant aspects that have been ignored by the two countries' media include refugee rights, problems of workers, especially migrant workers in the other country, coverage of sports, education, environment, children, cinema, cultural events, and most importantly the views of the ordinary Afghans and Pakistanis about issues and about the other country. Then there is a lack of focus on the day-to-day issues of the people in the other country apart from security, for instance, access to electricity and to basic healthcare or indeed issues related to pervasive poverty in the two countries.

Finally and most importantly, it comes as no surprise that the two countries' media appear to be influenced by the political environment that they operate in and by relations between the governments in Kabul and Islamabad.

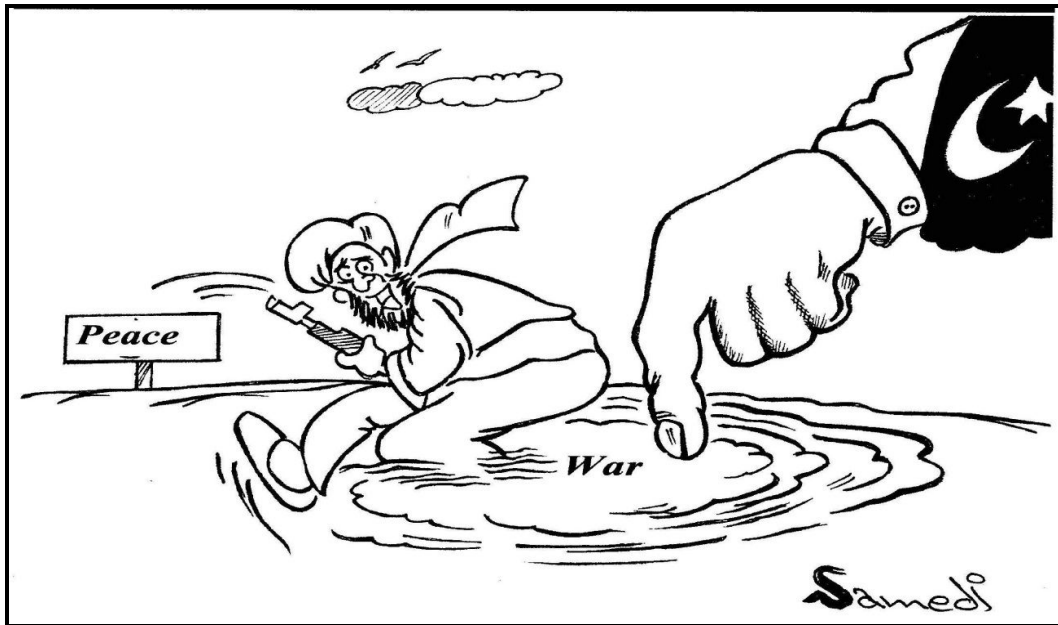
While the two governments are under no such compulsion, the media in both countries must try and filter out the negativity in the choice of words they employ and instead try and tell the story in as neutral, balanced and unbiased a manner as possible. That would go a long way in positively influencing people's perceptions about issues and chip away at biases.

## ANNEXES

A cartoon published in the Dawn newspaper in Pakistan during the monitoring month.



Subject-related cartoons published in the monitored Afghan media during the month.



The impressive growth and vibrancy of the news media in Pakistan and Afghanistan in the last decade have been without precedence in either country's history. As the two neighbors struggle to overcome their challenges, many of them shared, it is important to know what picture their media shows their people of the other country. This report monitoring the two countries' media coverage of each other is an endeavor to explore what the media has considered important to report about the neighbouring country and the manner in which it has been reported. It is equally revealing to examine the topics and issues about the other country that the news media has failed to report.

