Quarterly Round Up

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Devastation for Gaza

Since October 7, 2023, Gaza has been a part of the news for every electronic, print, and social media outlet. It is because of the ongoing conflict, where Israel has attacked Palestinians, causing a lot of violence and thousands of deaths. Nearly 42,000 Palestinians have been killed, more than half of them are women and children, and around 96,000 people are wounded as per the report of Palestinian Health Officials. Due to the Israeli aggression, infrastructure has seen vast destruction, there is a lack of health facilities, and many people are deprived of electricity. People are suffering from a humanitarian crisis. By mid-November, Egypt and Qatar played the role of mediator to temporarily stop the war. However, by December, Israel again started bombardment resulting in killings of innocent civilians. There is a dire need for a ceasefire between Israel and the Gaza Strip and resolve the Palestine issue for durable peace in the region.

NATO and Ukraine

Russia and Ukraine have been fighting the war since February 2022. Russia considers Ukrain's will to join NATO as a security threat to its sovereignty. The NATO Security Assistance and Training for Ukraine (NSATU) was agreed by NATO leaders at the Washington Summit in July 2024. As of December 2024, the NSATU is up and running. At the 2024 Washington Summit, Allied leaders announced a commitment to long-term security assistance to Ukraine and agreed to provide a sustainable level of security assistance to Ukraine to ensure that it remains resilient. Allies had provided more than EUR 50 billion by the end of 2024, of which about 60% came from European Allies and Canada.

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SCO Summit 2024

On 15-16 October 2024, Pakistan hosted the 23rd Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit. The meeting was attended by Prime Minister of Belarus Roman Golovchenko, Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, Iranian Industry Minister Seyyed Mohammad Atabek, Kazakh Prime Minister Alikhan Bektenov, Chinese State Council Premier Li Keqiang, Kyrgyz Prime Minister Aqlbek Japarov, Pakistani Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif, Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin, Tajik Prime Minister Kokhira Rasulzoda, and Uzbek Prime Minister Abdullah Aripov. SCO Secretary-General Zhang Ming, Executive Director of the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorism Committee RE Mirzayev, and Sheikh Atif Ikram of the SCO Business Council of Pakistan also attended the meeting. In addition, SCO Interbank Association Chairman M.T. Alibayev and representatives of various observer states such as Mongolia and Turkmenistan were also part of the meeting.

The summit was held under the shade of “One Earth. One Family. One Future" slogan. The meeting emphasized the need to improve the region's capabilities in non-traditional areas such as green development, digital economy, trade, e-commerce, investment, high technology, and poverty alleviation. The summit elucidates strengthening multilateral dialogue and promoting sustainable peace and prosperity, based on the Shanghai Spirit of mutual trust and cooperation as mentioned in Article 1 of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. The meeting highlighted the potential of economic cooperation in the region. In addition, the need for joint efforts to combat terrorism, separatism, and extremism under Article 1 was also stressed. Highlighting the impact of terrorist organizations on the region and the importance of stability in Afghanistan, the role of the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS) was also mentioned, which can help address these challenges. The successful organization of Summit is seen as a diplomatic success of Pakistan.

The Collapse of the Asad Regime in Syria

At the dawn of December 8, 2024, the world saw Bashar al-Assad's government collapse by the rebel group or opposition, with this decline 50 years of Assad's family rule ended. Ahmed al-Sharare, a former rebel

leader, has been named Syria's interim president after a 12-day rebel war that toppled the government of Bashar al-Assad. Al-Sharare, who played a key role in Assad's defeat, is now tasked with forming a transitional government and drafting a new constitution. United States, which once offered a $10 million bounty on al-Sharare, has since engaged diplomatically, calling it 'practical.' As Syria transitions, the challenges include rebuilding state institutions, ensuring civil peace, and addressing the legacy of the war.

COP-29

COP-29 is the continuation of the international conference in which world leaders sit together and a benchmark is set on how to reduce the Earth's temperature to 1.5 Celsius. Due to climate and temperature changes in the past 100 years. Between 2015 and 2024, global temperatures were 1.28 degrees Celsius warmer than at the end of the 19th century, with 2024 being the warmest year on record, exceeding 1.5 degrees Celsius for the first time. Greenhouse gases emitted from the burning of fossil fuels are the main cause of this increase, which has increased the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere by 50% since the Industrial Revolution.

The climate conference, held in the Azerbaijani capital Baku, ended with an agreement after 33 hours of negotiations, in which rich countries pledged to provide $300 billion annually to help poor countries tackle climate change, an effort to increase to $1.3 trillion by 2035. However, developing countries called the amount 'insufficient.' UN environment chief Simon Steele acknowledged that the deal was not complete, but it was a sign of continued cooperation. Amid the growing impact of extreme heat, hurricanes, and environmental disasters, the funds will help developing countries invest in renewable energy and move away from fossil fuels. However, the meeting also discussed the impact of President Donald Trump's possible return after the US election, as he supports the US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, which has raised concerns about a reduction or withdrawal in financial commitments.

Trump Presidential Election 2024

The 2024 United States presidential election was announced on November 5, 2024, with the inauguration scheduled for January 20, 2025. Donald Trump's opponent was Democratic Party candidate Kamala Harris. Win for Donald Trump was formally announced by the Electoral College on December 17, 2024. Trump's campaign was marked by a series of high-energy rallies and key events across the country. Elon Musk, the world's richest person, was with him during the election campaign. After his victory, Trump initiated controversial policies including new tariffs, talks over control of the Panama Canal, and renewed interest in purchasing Greenland, raising concerns among the international community.

26th Amendment

The National Assembly and Senate of Pakistan passed the 26th Constitutional Amendment on October 21, 2024, by a two-thirds majority. The Amendment introduces significant judicial reforms, changes in the appointment and tenure of the Chief Justice, and a commitment to abolish interest (Riba) in 2028 through Article 38 of the Constitution. The amendment fixes the term of the Chief Justice of Pakistan at three years. Furthermore, a 12-member parliamentary committee comprising eight members of the National Assembly and four members of the Senate will select the Chief Justice from a panel of three senior judges. The selected name will then be sent to the Prime Minister and the President for final approval.

While some legal experts have criticized the amendment, Former Sindh High Court Bar Association President Salahuddin Ahmed said giving the ruling party more control in picking chief justices might push senior judges to show loyalty to the government. ICJ Secretary General Santiago Canton also warned that the amendment could reduce the judiciary’s power to act independently and protect human rights.

Commonwealth Games 2026

Commonwealth Games are expected to happen in 2026, and Glasgow has been confirmed as the host, it was officially approved on 22 October 2024. Before that, Australia was the host, but it withdrew last year, so the

Games' future was in trouble. But the Scottish government and Commonwealth Games Federation have now given a green signal to Glasgow to host the Games, from July 23 to August 2, 2026. Once again, the key priority of the Games will be Para sports, with six Para sports included in the program. The athletes from seventy four countries and territories will participate, which would be around 3,000 in numbers. The CGF said that Glasgow 2026 will bring over $130 million of investment into the city.