

## Herat bombing

### Editorial

ANOTHER devastating bombing in Afghanistan – this time occurring in the western city of Herat – highlights the **fragile** نازک state of affairs in the Taliban-run country. The apparent بظاہر target was a vocal **pro-Taliban** عالم حامی طالبان cleric, Mujibur Rahman Ansari, who was killed by a suicide bomber during Friday prayers. At least 18 people **perished** ہلاک ہوئے in the attack. While no group has claimed credit for the bombing, **suspicious** شبہات have **centred** مرکوز on the militant **Islamic State** group, which is active in Afghanistan, as the **slain** مقتول **preacher** مبلغ had received threats from the terrorist group. This is the second high-profile religious personality to have been targeted; last month IS admitted to having **assassinated** قتل کیا Rahimullah Haqqani in his Kabul madressah. Haqqani, who was a relatively liberal cleric in the Afghan context, also had close links with the ruling Taliban, while he had been **outspoken** کھل کر بولنا in his criticism of IS. Days after Haqqani's killing, over 20 people died in a Kabul mosque bombing.

When the Afghan Taliban **stormed to power** اقتدار میں آنا a year ago, one of their **'unique selling points** کسی چیز یا کام کی خاصیت **was that they had pacified** پرامن کر دیا the **war-torn** جنگ زدہ country. This was true to an extent, as with the exit of the US-supported government and its foreign **protectors** محافظ , the war in Afghanistan **effectively** مؤثر طریقے

سے ended. However, as the **aforementioned** بالا مذکورہ incidents indicate, the country is far from being fully **pacified** پرامن. The fact is that the threat IS **poses** لاحق کرنا to internal Afghan **stability** استحکام, as well as regional and global security, cannot be **understated** بیان کرنا کم کر کے. What is particularly worrying about the Herat attack – if it is indeed **traced back** سراغ لگانا to IS – is the fact that the self-styled caliphate (IS) has struck far from its core area in the east of Afghanistan. Therefore, there is an urgent need for the Taliban, as well as the international community, to deal with – and **neutralise** بے اثر کرنا – the IS threat before it transforms into a multi-headed monster (dangerous situation). The Taliban may be rigid سخت in their **outlook** نقطہ نظر, and their lack of progress in the human rights **sphere** شعبے is **holding up** روک رہی ہے international recognition of their rule. However, if IS were to make **prominent** نمایاں **gains** کامیابی in Afghanistan, the international community would be left dealing with a major security headache. That is why foreign states, particularly Afghanistan's neighbours, need to establish a working relationship with the Taliban to **get rid** نجات of the IS threat, while Kabul's rulers themselves need to play a more **proactive** فعال role in preventing the terrorist group from gaining further strength in the country.

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## Mistreatment of Uighurs

### Editorial

OUTGOING UN human rights chief Michelle Bachelet's report on state practices عمل طرز in China's Xinjiang Autonomous خودمختار Region has once again turned global attention to the mistreatment ناروا سلوک of the Uighur minority and raised concerns تشویش regarding the practices being used to suppress دبانا the ethnic نسلی group on the pretext بهانے of counterterrorism انتهاء دہشتگری and counter-extremism انتہاء strategies. Criticising the Chinese state over serious human rights violations, the report notes that arbitrary من مانی and discriminatory امتیازی detention حراست of members of Uighur and other Muslim groups constitutes "crimes against humanity". The document also describes reports of violations of Uighur women's reproductive تولیدی rights, including forced abortions استقاط حمل and forced placement of IUDs. It recommends that the Chinese government take immediate steps to release all individuals detained زیر حراست in its training centres, prisons and detention مراستی facilities.

Beijing, on the other hand, has issued a lengthy rebuttal تردید to the UN report, which Chinese foreign ministry spokesman باطل، Wang Wenbin described as "completely illegal and void". The Chinese response emphasises زور دیا the threat of terrorism and claims that its state-run "deradicalisation"

programme and “vocational اورانه education and training centres” have brought “stability استحکام” to Xinjiang, which was wracked تباہ ہوا by separatist علیحدگی پسند violence a few years ago. There may be substance حقیقت to China’s concerns that the Uighur issue has been politicised سیاسی رنگ دیا to suit its rivals حریف’ foreign policy goals. Even Ms Bachelet noted as much. “[...] The politicisation سیاسی بنانا of these serious human rights issues by some states did not help,” she was quoted as saying while explaining why it took so long to release the report. Be that as it may چاہے جیسا بھی ہو, there is too much evidence now on the record that Chinese practices in Xinjiang are far from acceptable. Beijing clearly needs to review its policies in the troubled region if it wishes to maintain its standing as a responsible state. Violent ہر تشدد suppression دباؤ، جبر can only prolong دینا طول or worsen internal security challenges rather than solve them meaningfully. They will also continue to invite global scrutiny جانچ پڑتال. As a rising superpower, China cannot simply walk away ہٹ جانا from the charge الزام that it is perpetrating ارتکاب crimes against humanity.

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## Time to hit 'pause'

### Editorial

DESPITE nature's **fury** قہر having affected over 30m of his fellow Pakistanis, leaving hundreds of thousands homeless in the worst-ever weather-related catastrophe تباہی this country has seen, former prime minister Imran Khan shows no signs of **calibrating** کرنا کم his **fury** غصہ at being **ousted** دخل سے from power.

On Friday, addressing a large rally in Gujrat he accused the "imported government" of "acting on the instructions of foreign powers" and warned that PTI supporters would march on Islamabad if the centre "continued to torture" his party's leaders and workers. Last week, at a public gathering in Jhelum, he declared that his fight for haqeeqi azadi (real independence) would continue during heatwaves, floods and even wars.

All populist **rhetoric** بازی is calculated to **evoke** کرنا اجاگر a **visceral** زبردست response in its audience – and Mr Khan has proved especially **adept** ماہر at it since his removal from power – but it is a **divisive** والا **tactic** تقسیم کرنے والا **ill-suited** حربہ غیر موضوع to the present moment. Even for a country that often seems to **lurch** لڑکھڑانا from crisis to crisis, Pakistan is in the midst of a particularly **harrowing** ہولناک **ordeal** آزمائش, with the humanitarian crisis compounded by the **harsh** سخت, سنگین conditions the **coalition** اتحادی government has had to

agree to for the **resumption** بحالی of the **IMF bailout** مالی معاونت. However, **buoyed** پر امید، خوش by his public support, the former prime minister is **pounding away** at his narrative as **relentlessly** بڑا حصہ as the floodwaters that are cutting a **swathe** بڑا حصہ of destruction on their way to the sea.

On Dec 17, 2014, one day after the Army Public School **massacre** قتل عام that killed nearly 150 people, most of them schoolchildren, Mr Khan announced he was calling off his four-months-long dharna in Islamabad because the need of the hour was for the nation to unite. This moment too demands a unified response by not just the government, but the entire civilian and military leadership.

Does the PTI chief not see how much damage can be caused to relief and **rehabilitation** بحالی efforts, which also involve aid from foreign governments and organisations, by **whipping up** بھرکانا public **sentiment** جذبات against the authorities? As he looks to regain power, everything for Mr Khan has become about political point-scoring — including raising funds for flood victims. At first, he was **inexplicably** ناقابل تشریح طور پر **reluctant** about doing so at all, but then better sense appeared to have **prevailed** پھیلا، غالب آیا. After his international fundraising telethon led to **pledges** وعدے worth Rs5bn mainly from overseas Pakistanis, Mr Khan could not resist باز آنا turning it into a **jibe** طنز at the chief election commissioner about 'foreign funding' — an **unwarranted** غیر ضروری, not to mention illogical, **analogy** مشابہت.

Even President Arif Alvi — before modifying his views in

deference to his party chairman's position – had suggested that a 'political pause' was in order at this time given the devastating flood situation. Calls for **restraint** تحمل and national solidarity have come from many others as well, but is Mr Khan capable of hearing anything other than what he wants to in his **echo chamber**?

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The **Islamic State** (IS), also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL;), Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and by its Arabic acronym Daesh (داعش,) is a militant Islamist group and former unrecognized quasi-state that follows the Salafi jihadist branch of Sunni Islam. It was founded by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in 1999 and gained global prominence in 2014, when it drove Iraqi security forces out of key cities during the Anbar campaign, which was followed by its capture of Mosul and the Sinjar massacre.

The **Uyghurs**, alternatively spelled Uighurs, Uygurs or Uigurs, are a Turkic ethnic group originating from and culturally affiliated with the general region of Central and East Asia. The Uyghurs are recognized as native to the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in Northwest China. They are one of China's 55 officially recognized ethnic minorities. The Uyghurs are recognized by the Chinese government as a regional minority and the titular people of Xinjiang.

An intrauterine device (**IUD**) is a small plastic T-shaped device used for birth control. It is inserted into the uterus where it stays to prevent pregnancy

### **Deradicalization**

the process of making someone become less radical انتہا پسند (= extreme) in their political or religious beliefs:

International Monetary Fund (**IMF**), United Nations (UN) specialized agency, founded at the Bretton Woods Conference in 1944 to secure international monetary cooperation, to stabilize currency exchange rates, and to expand international liquidity (access to hard currencies)

### **Pound away at something/someone**

to criticize something or try to get someone to do something: The campaigners have promised to keep pounding away at the council until the decision to build the road is reversed.

### **echo chamber**

an environment in which a person encounters only beliefs or opinions that coincide with their own, so that their existing views are reinforced and alternative ideas are not considered