

THE HINDU EDITORIAL ANALYSIS REPORT

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Article	Title	Page
Article 1	Cold calculations: On rival fronts, preparing for ...	1
Article 2	Turning tides: On Pakistan-Afghanistan tensions	2

ARTICLE 1: Cold calculations: On rival fronts, preparing for the Bihar polls

URL: <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/cold-calculations-on-rival-fronts-preparing-for-the-bihar-polls/article70182665.ece>

Status: Success

■ ORIGINAL EDITORIAL CONTENT

Rival fronts in Bihar are settling their internal dynamics even as constituents negotiate seat sharing and individual parties choose their candidates for the two-phase Assembly polls, on November 6, 2025 and November 11, 2025. The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) has had relatively smooth sailing in seat sharing with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Janata Dal (United), or JD(U) taking 101 seats each. The Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) is contesting 29 seats, while six seats each will be contested by the Hindustani Awam Morcha (Secular) and Rashtriya Lok Morcha. The Mahagathbandhan or Grand Alliance of the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), the Congress, the CPI, CPI(M), CPI(ML) and others is, however, struggling with conflicting claims over seat sharing and even leadership of the alliance. In the clearest manifestation of the BJP's upper hand in the NDA, it will, for the first time, contest as many seats as the JD(U). The JD(U) had already lost its senior partner status in the alliance in 2020, but its leader, Nitish Kumar, continued at the helm as the BJP did not want to upset the apple cart. In 2025, the BJP appears more confident of being an authentic platform for the backward caste communities which considered Mr. Kumar as their key leader. Consequently, the BJP has indicated that Mr. Kumar may be replaced in the event of the alliance winning yet another term, beating anti-incumbency.

The BJP's strategy for primacy involves a combination of caste-based social engineering and a consolidation of horizontal identities such as youth, women, farmers and senior citizens. It is clever in accommodating caste interest groups, but is also using state resources in a brazen manner to offer welfare schemes that cut across caste. It is notable that the BJP, which decries subsidies, has designed schemes which are little more than ill-disguised efforts to purchase votes. A grant of ₹10,000 to start businesses has reached more than a third of women voters. Between the Congress and the RJD too, there is a cold war. As they enter the decisive phase of the battle, the two big parties appear to consider each other necessary but share little organic and emotional bonding. Their resolve and posture appear to fall short against the challenges. A formidable caste combination in Bihar is against the Mahagathbandhan, and the RJD has a past that continues to haunt it. The Mahagathbandhan is trying to match the NDA's schemes by making undeliverable promises. Unfortunately for Bihar, the strategies of both alliance groups ring cynical than optimistic.

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■ GEMINI ANALYSIS

■ CENTRAL IDEA

The article analyzes the internal dynamics and strategies of Bihar's two main political alliances, NDA and Mahagathbandhan, ahead of the 2025 Assembly polls. It highlights the NDA's relatively

smooth seat-sharing and the BJP's increasing dominance, contrasting it with the Mahagathbandhan's struggles, internal conflicts, and cynical promises, suggesting a challenging electoral landscape for both.

■ **AUTHOR'S TONE**

ANALYTICAL

■ **PARAGRAPH-WISE SUMMARY**

- 1. The first paragraph details the seat-sharing arrangements within the NDA, noting the BJP's increased parity with JD(U) and its potential to replace Nitish Kumar, while the Mahagathbandhan faces significant internal conflicts over seat distribution and leadership, indicating a clear power shift within the NDA.
- 2. The second paragraph explains the BJP's multi-pronged strategy involving caste engineering and welfare schemes, which the author views as thinly veiled vote-buying, and contrasts this with the Mahagathbandhan's internal 'cold war' between Congress and RJD, its historical baggage, and its own cynical, undeliverable promises, suggesting a lack of genuine optimism in both alliances' approaches.

■ **VOCABULARY BUILDER**

Word	Meaning	Example Usage
Dynamics	The forces or properties that stimulate growth, development, or change within a system or process.	The team's internal dynamics shifted after the new coach arrived.
Constituents	A member of a constituency; a component part of something.	The constituents of the alliance are negotiating their demands.
Manifestation	An event, action, or object that clearly shows or embodies something, especially a theory or an abstract idea.	His anger was a clear manifestation of his frustration.
Primacy	The state of being first in importance or rank.	The company's strategy aimed at achieving market primacy.
Decries	Publicly denounce or condemn.	The activist decries the lack of environmental protection.
Formidable	Inspiring fear or respect through being impressively large, powerful, intense, or capable.	The opposing team presented a formidable challenge.
Cynical	Believing that people are motivated by self-interest; distrustful of human sincerity or integrity.	His cynical view of politics made him doubt all promises.

■ **CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS**

- 1. What are the primary differences in the internal stability and strategic approaches of the NDA and Mahagathbandhan as described in the article? (*main_idea*)
- 2. What can be inferred about the BJP's long-term political ambitions in Bihar, particularly concerning its alliance with JD(U) and Nitish Kumar? (*inference*)
- 3. What assumption does the author make about the public's perception of welfare schemes and political promises? (*assumptions*)

■ **KEY TAKEAWAY**

Pay attention to how the author contrasts different entities or strategies, as this often highlights the core argument and reveals underlying power dynamics.

ARTICLE 2: Turning tides: On Pakistan-Afghanistan tensions

URL: <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/turning-tides-on-pakistan-afghanistan-tensions/article70186646.ece>

Status: Success

■ ORIGINAL EDITORIAL CONTENT

When the Taliban recaptured Kabul in August 2021, after two decades of insurgency, Pakistan viewed it as a tactical victory. Imran Khan, then Prime Minister, famously said the Afghans had “broken the shackles of slavery”. But the Taliban’s return emboldened the Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which is organisationally distinct from, yet ideologically aligned with, the Afghan Taliban. Over four years, Pakistan, particularly the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province bordering Afghanistan, has seen a dramatic surge in militant attacks. This year alone, at least 2,414 people were killed in militancy-related violence in Pakistan, according to an Islamabad-based think tank. Pakistan blames the Afghan Taliban for sheltering the TTP, better known as the Pakistani Taliban, and tensions escalated into full-scale cross-border clashes. On October 9, 2025, while Taliban Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi was visiting India, Pakistan carried out air strikes in Kabul, apparently targeting the TTP. These strikes triggered a week of cross-border attacks that left dozens dead, before a fragile Qatar-brokered ceasefire took effect.

When the Afghan Taliban were waging an insurgency, Pakistan offered them refuge and support. Pakistan’s military establishment expected the Taliban to remain loyal once in power. But when the Taliban took over the reins in Afghanistan, the old patron-client relationship was replaced by state-to-state ties, with deep structural contradictions. The Pakistani Taliban, which oppose the merger of Pakistan’s tribal areas with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, want their version of a strict Islamic code to be enforced and demand the release of TTP prisoners, drew inspiration from the Afghan Taliban’s triumph. The Durand Line, the colonial-era border, re-emerged as another flashpoint as Kabul has never recognised it. Besides, Pakistan’s decision to deport thousands of Afghan refugees strained ties further. What likely provoked the Pakistani establishment even more was India’s diplomatic outreach to the Taliban. By carrying out air strikes on Kabul in response to militant attacks, Pakistan appears to be setting a new precedent — holding Kabul directly accountable for cross-border militant attacks — in a move reminiscent of India’s doctrine of responding to terrorism with overwhelming force against Pakistan. Yet, the security crisis in Pakistan now engulfing its tribal areas is largely of its own making. For decades, it has followed a contradictory policy — fighting terrorism while harbouring terrorist/militant groups that were fighting its neighbouring countries. It backed the Taliban for over two decades, hoping that a Taliban-controlled Kabul would offer it strategic depth. That strategy has now backfired. If Pakistan believes that it can restore internal security by bombing Afghanistan, it is mistaken. Prolonged conflict and chaos will only deepen instability and strengthen insurgency.

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■ GEMINI ANALYSIS

■ CENTRAL IDEA

Pakistan's long-standing policy of supporting the Afghan Taliban has backfired, leading to an emboldened Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and a surge in internal militant attacks. The article critically analyzes Pakistan's contradictory counter-terrorism strategy, arguing that its recent cross-border strikes against Afghanistan are a misguided and self-defeating approach that will only deepen regional instability rather than restore security.

■ AUTHOR'S TONE

ANALYTICAL

■ PARAGRAPH-WISE SUMMARY

1. The first paragraph details Pakistan's initial miscalculation regarding the Afghan Taliban's return to power, which emboldened the TTP and led to a dramatic increase in militant attacks within Pakistan, culminating in recent cross-border air strikes targeting the TTP in Afghanistan.
2. The second paragraph critically examines how Pakistan's patron-client relationship with the Afghan Taliban failed, leading to structural contradictions and the rise of the TTP. It argues that Pakistan's contradictory policy of supporting some militant groups while fighting others has backfired, and its current strategy of bombing Afghanistan will only exacerbate instability.

■ VOCABULARY BUILDER

Word	Meaning	Example Usage
Insurgency	An active revolt or uprising against an established government or authority.	The region has been plagued by a long-running insurgency.
Emboldened	Given the courage or confidence to do something.	His success in the first round emboldened him to take more risks.
Tactical	Relating to a plan or strategy for achieving a specific goal.	The general made a tactical decision to retreat and regroup.
Contradictory	Mutually opposed or inconsistent.	The witness gave contradictory statements, making it hard to believe her.
Flashpoint	A place, event, or issue where trouble or violence might easily flare up.	The disputed border area remains a major flashpoint between the two nations.
Precedent	An earlier event or action that is regarded as an example or guide to be considered in subsequent similar circumstances.	The court's ruling set a new legal precedent for environmental protection.

■ CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1. What is the author's primary argument regarding the effectiveness of Pakistan's current approach to counter-terrorism? (*main_idea*)
2. What assumption does the author make about the Afghan Taliban's willingness or ability to control the TTP? (*assumptions*)
3. Based on the article, what can be inferred about the future stability of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border region? (*inference*)

■ KEY TAKEAWAY

Focus on identifying cause-effect relationships between policy decisions and their outcomes, and how the author uses historical context to critique current strategies.