

▶ from Afghanistan, where the TTP and other groups have found a haven in the country's "wild east". Since the bulk of NATO forces left Afghanistan in 2014, border provinces such as Paktika, Khost, Nangarhar and Kunar (see map on previous page) have become largely ungoverned spaces from which jihadists can operate with relative impunity.

Nasir Khan Janjua, a retired general who is national security adviser to the prime minister, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, says he has evidence that 143 attacks in Pakistan have been organised by groups in Afghanistan. In a mirror image of the long-standing claim that Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence agency actively supports (and even runs) groups that carry out attacks in Afghanistan and India, Mr Janjua

accuses Indian and Afghan spooks of helping the TTP and Islamic State, which is also active in another turbulent part of Pakistan, the southern province of Balochistan.

The army is seeking to reduce what it sees as the mayhem spreading across the border with Afghanistan by building a fence along all accessible parts of the 1,500-mile (2,400km) frontier. Major-General Asif Ghafoor, an army spokesman, says that the first phase, covering the most vulnerable 270 miles, should be completed by the end of the year and the rest of the \$550m project a year after that. It will consist of two tall fences with barbed wire, about two metres apart. Pressure sensors and CCTV cameras will run along its length. There will be manned posts every mile or so and 443 forts along its course.

One potential beneficiary of the army's campaign against domestic terrorism is the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). This is the Pakistani leg of China's Belt and Road Initiative to revive Asia's ancient trading routes.

China is investing over \$60bn to upgrade Pakistan's neglected infrastructure. New roads, railways, much-needed power stations and a deep-water commercial port at Gwadar in Balochistan are all part of the plan, which would link western China with the Arabian Sea. The projects could account for 20% of Pakistan's GDP over the next five years and boost economic growth by three percentage points.

But it is hard to imagine China seeing the projects through, or other investors piling in, unless security can be improved. At either end of CPEC are two violence-prone regions: Pakistan-administered Kashmir and Balochistan. Last year Baloch separatists killed ten labourers helping to build Gwadar port. There is talk of a Chinese-inspired scheme to install CCTV to monitor all the main roads that are part of CPEC.

The army's sprawling commercial empire provides further encouragement to tame lawlessness. The top brass are well aware of the business opportunities CPEC presents both for the country and for itself. That, more than Mr Trump's angry tweets, may persuade Pakistan to redouble its commitment to the war on terror. ■

Driving in Japan

End of the road

TOKYO

Elderly motorists are under pressure to surrender their licences

AFTER nearly half a century behind the wheel, Hisao Matsumoto, who is 85, is not ready to stop driving. He and his wife depend on their car to escape the confines of Hakone, the lakeside town where they live. Horror stories of pile-ups involving elderly drivers do not ruffle him. "I'm not that old yet," he says. "I still have 15 more years to go till I reach 100."

Mr Matsumoto is one of more than 5m drivers in Japan aged 75 or older. A million more will be on the roads by 2021. Unnerved, the police are trying to coax many out of their cars. Over-75s are twice as likely to cause a fatal accident as younger drivers, says the National Police Agency (NPA). Nearly half of older drivers who caused fatal accidents last year had signs of cognitive impairment.

Hundreds of older drivers turn the

wrong way into motorways every year. In January an 85-year-old man steered his vehicle into oncoming traffic on a country road, hitting a car and mowing down two schoolgirls. Police believe he mistook the accelerator for the brake. The man's family said he had long resisted their pleas to hand over his keys.

Such stubbornness is common, notes Kazunori Iwakoshi, who heads an NGO that supports elderly drivers. Motorists now in their mid-70s were born after the war and helped drive Japan's economic rebirth, he says. Many have never had an accident and resent being cast aside.

Since last March over-75s renewing their licences must take cognitive tests to screen for dementia. Tests are also mandatory after telltale violations, such as ignoring road signs. The NPA expects these changes to take 15,000 drivers off the road each year. It would also like to limit elderly drivers to cars with automatic braking systems.

Nagging families may be more effective. More than 250,000 over-75s surrendered their licences last year. Many were pushed down to the local police station by relatives, says Mr Iwakoshi. His organisation publishes a checklist for elderly drivers, aimed at getting them to gauge their responses themselves.

The Matsumotos are lucky. Hakone gives pensioners unlimited access to public transport for ¥10,000 (\$94) a year. Thousands of elderly people are stuck in rural communities with no buses. Next year, Mr Matsumoto says, he may give up his car, which costs him over ¥500,000 a year. But he'll keep his licence just in case. He has just passed his driving test again.



Politics in Afghanistan

Power-shedding

KABUL

The always-fragile government is becoming ever more embattled

FROM behind the counter of his optician's shop on the north bank of the Kabul river, Noorullah looks anxiously at his ten-year-old son. He fears for the boy's education under the current government and—worse—for his life. In the past month terrorists from Islamic State and the Taliban have run amok in the city, killing 150 civilians. Police recently found a suicide vest at a nearby checkpoint. "These attacks are good for the government," he says bitterly. "They are the only reason it is still surviving. People are afraid to go on the streets and protest."

Pressure is building on the government of President Ashraf Ghani nonetheless. He has labelled a recent suicide bombing, which killed 105 civilians, as his "9/11". But the government does not seem capable of stopping the attacks. Its haplessness is emboldening critics. Mr Ghani remains in a stand-off with the governor of the northern province of Balkh, Atta Muhammad ▶▶