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GALLUP & GILANI PAKISTAN

NEWSPAPER CONTENT

ANALYSIS REPORT

March 2025

A monthly series from Gallup & Gilani Pakistan Media Research Wing looking at more than 2700 Newspaper columns and editorials

Compiled by Aisha Aamir
Research Executive at Gallup Pakistan

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Content Analysis of Newspaper Articles Published During March (2025)

In the 12 English and Urdu newspapers analyzed March 2025 covering over 2700 opinion pieces, ‘International’, ‘Politics,’ and ‘Economy’ issues dominated the space (GALLUP & GILANI PAKISTAN)

Islamabad, 21st May, 2025

INTRODUCTION

According to a Monthly Newspaper Content Analysis Research Study conducted by Gallup & Gilani Pakistan, under the supervision of Executive Director Bilal I. Gilani, the main issues under discussion during March 2025 in the mainstream media belonged to the categories ‘International, ‘Politics, and ‘Economy.’

An analysis of the content of **12** national newspapers consisting of a total of **2,763** opinion articles/columns written by various columnists for **March 2025**. This is part of Gallup & Gilani Pakistan Media Research Division’s initiative to empirically understand opinion leaders’ views on national issues.

This is the 60th edition of this study. The previous editions (dating back to 2015) can be accessed at the following link: <https://www.gallup.com.pk/search/Newspaper%20Content%20Analysis>

Which Newspapers Have Been Analyzed?

Out of the **12** newspapers, **5** were Urdu newspapers: namely Daily Pakistan, Daily Express, Daily Jang, Daily Khabrain, and Nawa-i-Waqt, and **7** were English newspapers: namely The Express Tribune, Daily Times, Dawn, Pakistan Today, The Pakistan Observer, The Nation, and The News.

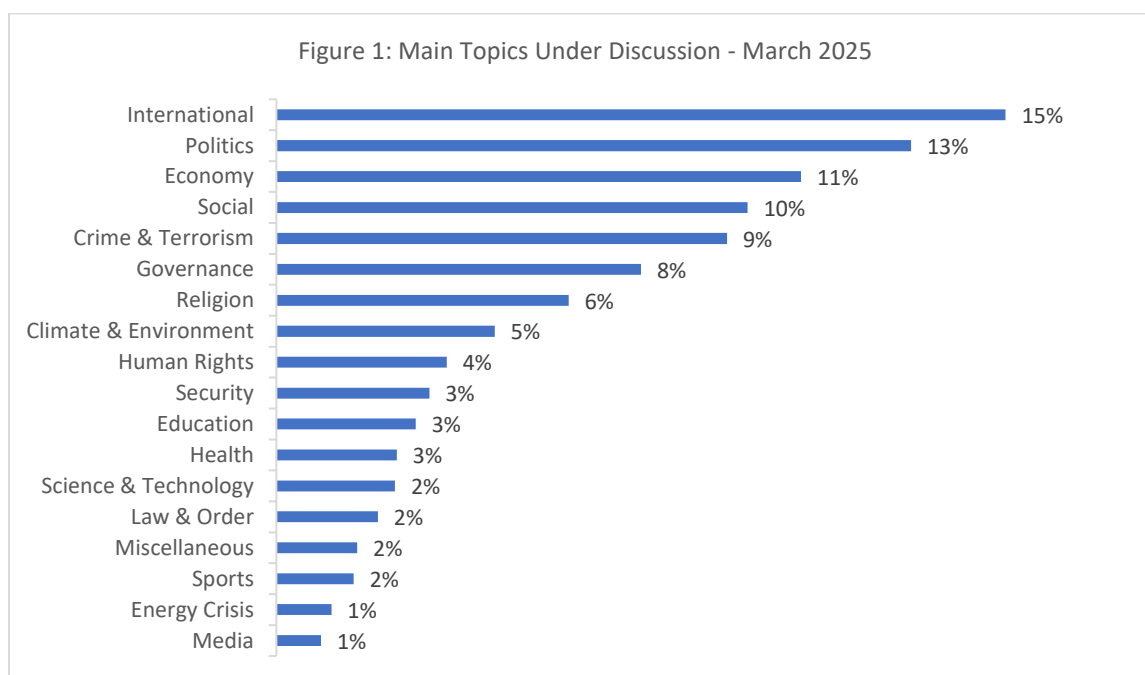
MAIN TOPICS UNDER DISCUSSION

The topics discussed in these opinion articles/columns were categorized into 18 broad themes: *Climate & Environment, Crime & Terrorism, Economy, Education, Energy Crisis, Governance, Health, Human Rights, International, Law & Order, Media, Miscellaneous, Politics, Religion, Science & Technology, Security, Social, and Sports.*

MARCH 2025

‘International’ dominated, with ‘Politics’, ‘Economy, and ‘Social’ taking priority over the rest.

‘International’ gathered the most attention, comprising 15% of all articles. Following was ‘Politics’ at 13% ‘Economy’ occupied 11% of newspaper space, with ‘Social’ at 10%. ‘Crime & Terrorism’ constituted 9% of the total content, succeeded by ‘Governance’ at 8%, ‘Religion’ at 6%, ‘Climate & Environment’ at 5% and ‘Human Rights’ at 5%. Articles concerning ‘Security’, ‘Education’, and ‘Health’ accounted for 3% each. ‘Science & Technology’, ‘Law & Order’, ‘Miscellaneous’, and ‘Sports’ comprised 2% each. Lastly, ‘Energy Crisis’ and ‘Media’ were represented by 1% each.



Source: Newspaper Content Analysis by Gallup & Gilani Pakistan Media Research Consultancy
www.gallup.com.pk, www.gilanifoundation.com

DISCUSSED WITHIN ‘INTERNATIONAL’

In March, op-eds in the international category centered around debates on multilateralism and shifting global alliances. Several pieces emphasized the importance of true multilateralism, urging global powers to act as constructive forces in an increasingly fragmented world. NATO's future and strategic options were widely discussed, alongside calls for greater European strategic autonomy. The evolving nature of the Middle East, particularly in light of changing regional dynamics, also featured prominently. Bilateral relations were explored through the lens of Pakistan-Azerbaijan cooperation, while broader analyses sought to understand the chaos underlying recent geopolitical developments. The transformation of the EU from a peace-oriented project to one entangled in military conflicts sparked critical commentary. Additionally, India's restrictions on Kashmiri organizations drew attention in the context of regional human rights concerns.

DISCUSSED WITHIN ‘POLITICS’

In March 2025, op-eds in the politics category reflected on the internal dynamics of Pakistan's governance and political instability. A number of analyses revisited the first year of Maryam Nawaz's government, offering assessments of its performance and political direction. Commentators also explored the role of non-state actors in contributing to national decline, raising concerns about accountability and institutional erosion. Bilawal Bhutto's political maneuvers, including his mediation efforts and strategic offers, sparked debate on coalition-building and leadership. Political instability and the persistent threat of terrorism were recurring themes, often presented as interconnected crises undermining democratic progress. Finally, some writers warned against the manipulation of historical narratives for political gain, urging a more responsible engagement with the country's past.

DISCUSSED WITHIN ‘ECONOMY’

In the Economy section, opinion pieces from March 2025 focused on the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 budget and tax reforms, highlighting their impact on businesses. The IMF program was a key topic, along with discussions on the ramifications of rising inflation and public unrest. The strategies the government is considering to tackle the economic crisis were also explored. Additionally, the commentary examined foreign investment flows, stock market trends, and the dynamics of import-export activities.

URDU VS ENGLISH NEWSPAPER ANALYSIS

March 2025

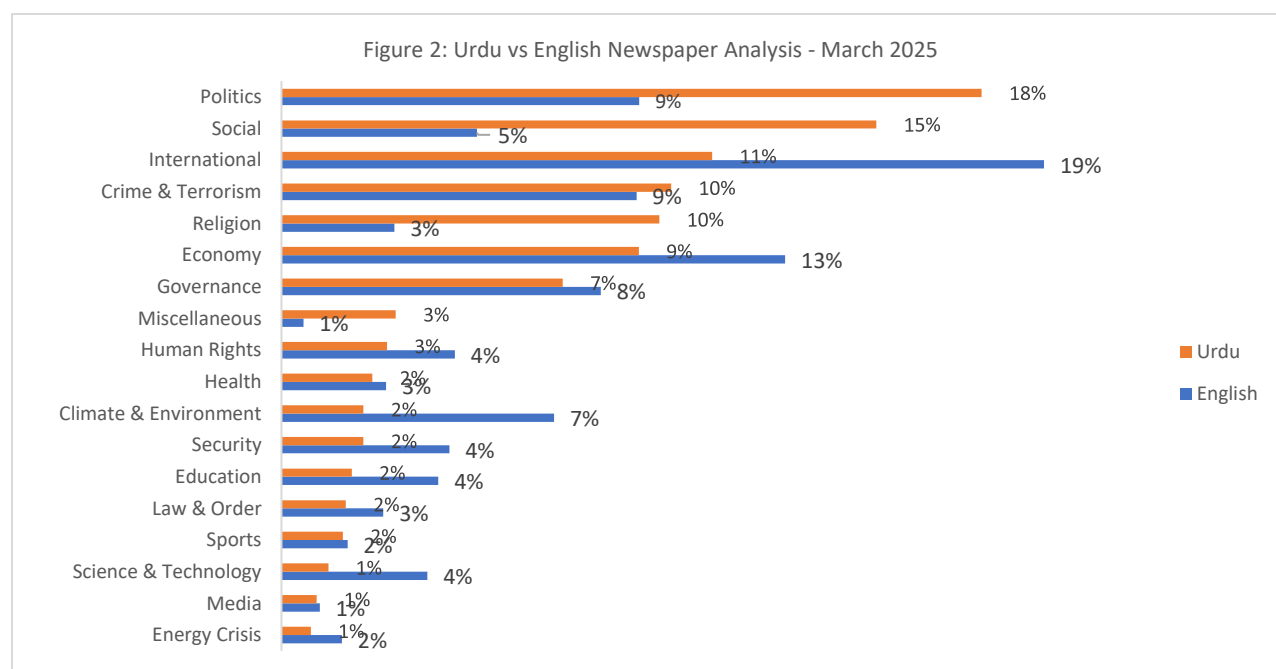
‘International’ was the most discussed category in both English and Urdu newspapers.

The *International* category dominated op-ed content in both Urdu and English newspapers in March 2025, with a significantly higher presence in English newspapers, where it constituted 19% of all op-eds compared to 11% in Urdu newspapers—a difference of over 8%.

Other categories also had greater representation in English newspapers. *Climate & Environment* was 5% more prevalent, *Science & Technology* saw a 3% increase, and both *Education* and *Security* had a roughly 2% higher share in English-language publications.

Conversely, *Politics* had a notably higher presence in Urdu newspapers, making up 18% of the op-eds compared to 9% in English newspapers. Similarly, the *Social* category was 10% more prevalent in Urdu newspapers, *Religion* had nearly a 7% higher share, and *Miscellaneous* was over 2% more represented in Urdu content.

Other categories such as *Economy*, *Crime & Terrorism*, *Governance*, *Human Rights*, *Health*, *Law & Order*, *Sports*, *Energy Crisis*, and *Media* exhibited only marginal variations—mostly ranging from 0.5% to 1%—between Urdu and English newspapers.

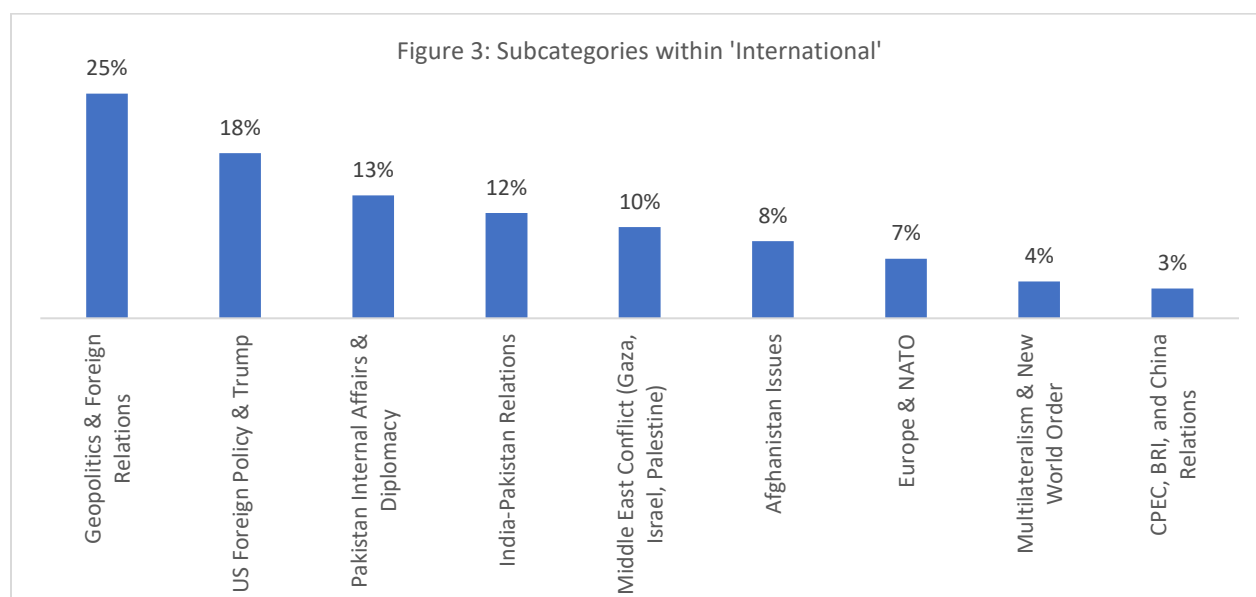


Source: Newspaper Content Analysis by Gallup & Gilani Pakistan Media Research Consultancy
www.gallup.com.pk, www.gilanifoundation.com

SUBCATEGORIES WITHIN ‘INTERNATIONAL’

March 2025

From a total of 2763 articles, 424 fell within the category of ‘International.’ These articles spanned a broad range of topics – from discussions on ‘Geopolitics & Foreign Relations’, ‘US Foreign Policy & Trump’, ‘Pakistan Internal Affairs & Diplomacy’, and ‘India-Pakistan Relations’. Other discussed topics were ‘Middle East Conflict (Gaza, Israel, Palestine)’, ‘Afghanistan Issues’, ‘Europe & NATO’, ‘Multilateralism & New World Order’, and ‘CPEC, BRI, and China Relations’.



Source: Newspaper Content Analysis by Gallup & Gilani Pakistan Media Research Consultancy
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Discussed within ‘Geopolitics & Foreign Relations’

In the geopolitics and foreign relations category, the emphasis was on global power dynamics and Pakistan’s positioning within them. Discussions explored shifting alliances, strategic partnerships, and the emergence of a multipolar world order. Key themes included regional tensions, international diplomacy, and the impact of great power competition—particularly between the United States, China, and Russia—on South Asia. The analysis also reflected on how global developments are influencing Pakistan’s foreign policy objectives and its pursuit of national interest in a rapidly evolving international landscape.

Discussed within ‘US Foreign Policy & Trump’

In the US foreign policy and Trump category, the focus was on America’s shifting global role, especially under the Trump administration and its aftermath. Discussions analyzed the impact of Trump's "America First" doctrine, withdrawal from international agreements, and reshaping of traditional alliances. Attention was also given to the Biden administration’s attempts to recalibrate foreign policy and re-engage with multilateral institutions. The analysis examined how these changes affected South Asia, particularly US-Pakistan relations, and what they signaled for the future of global diplomacy.

Discussed within ‘Pakistan Internal Affairs & Diplomacy’

In the Pakistan internal affairs and diplomacy category, the discussion centered on the country's domestic challenges and how they intersect with its international relations. Topics included civil-military relations, governance issues, and Pakistan’s diplomatic outreach efforts in multilateral forums. The pieces also examined how internal stability, political transitions, and policy priorities are shaping the country’s external engagements. The analysis provided insight into how domestic developments are influencing Pakistan’s diplomatic standing and regional strategy.

Discussed within ‘India-Pakistan Relations’

In the India-Pakistan relations category, the focus was on the evolving bilateral dynamics between the two neighboring countries. Key themes included border tensions, diplomatic standoffs, and opportunities for dialogue. The analysis examined how political developments in both countries, such as elections and leadership shifts, impacted the tenor of bilateral engagement. Special attention was paid to security concerns, including Kashmir and cross-border incidents, highlighting the enduring complexities of this fraught relationship.

Discussed within ‘Middle East Conflict (Gaza, Israel, Palestine)’

In the Middle East conflict category, the emphasis was on the ongoing violence in Gaza and broader Israel-Palestine tensions. The analysis delved into the humanitarian crisis, regional diplomatic reactions, and the role of global powers in influencing the conflict’s trajectory. Discussions also explored Pakistan’s official stance and public sentiment on the issue, reflecting on the implications for the country’s foreign policy in the Muslim world. The pieces provided a critical lens on how this enduring conflict continues to reshape alliances and geopolitical narratives in the region.

Want to Access our Newspaper Op-Ed Headings and Columnist Names List?

We are now providing access to our database comprising of titles of all the newspaper articles analyzed, as well as names of columnists who wrote them, for all columns published from the time Gallup Pakistan initiated this activity. If you wish to gain access to this database, kindly write to Ms. Aisha Aamir at aisha.aamir@gallup.com.pk

THE RATIONALE BEHIND THIS CONTENT

Bilal Ijaz Gilani, Executive Director of Gallup Pakistan and Chief Editor of this series, explains, “The aim of this new series of content analysis of mainstream media (newspapers as well as talk shows) is to understand how public disclosure and agenda-setting happens. Among other issues, once significant monthly data collection happens, we hope to establish a monthly ‘trend’ analysis and see how sensitive Urdu and English newspaper opinion articles/columns are to changing current issues. It is also hoped that this analysis sheds some light on understanding who sets the agenda and who follows, i.e., whether TV talk shows set the themes for newspaper opinion articles/columns or vice versa.

Another theme that we hope to explore is to understand who the opinion leaders/ shapers are when it comes to the media. Is there a significant difference in the background of English and Urdu opinion article/ column writers? How does the profile of TV talk show guests vary from newspaper opinion article/ column writers? The overall theme of the research is to empirically understand the Pakistani Media which has undeniably witnessed exponential growth in its numbers, its audience and also improved its legitimacy (and therefore its soft power) in the public sphere.

We hope that these two studies (newspaper as well as talk shows) and their analysis helps shape a healthy and constructive debate among media practitioners on how the media industry can improve its quality and outreach in the future.”

The study was released by Gilani Foundation and carried out by Gallup & Gilani Pakistan; the Pakistani affiliate of Gallup International. The duration of the analysis is **March 2025**. This data was obtained after reviewing **2,763 Op-Eds**, spread over **12 newspapers** (as mentioned in the third paragraph of this press release).

About Gilani Research Foundation

Gilani Research Foundation is a not-for-profit public service project to provide social science research to students, academia, policymakers, and concerned citizens in Pakistan and across the globe.

Gilani Research Foundation is headed by Dr. Ijaz Shafi Gilani who pioneered the field of opinion polling in Pakistan and established Gallup Pakistan in 1980. Currently Dr. Gilani, who holds a Ph.D. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and has taught at leading universities in Pakistan and abroad, is Chairman of Gallup & Gilani Pakistan.

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For more survey data on social and other issues see website www.gallup.com.pk

For any queries please contact:

Ms. Aisha Aamir

Phone: +92-51-2655630

Research Executive

E-mail: aisha.aamir@gallup.com.pk

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Contact Details:
Islamabad : +92 51 2655630
Email: isb@gallup.com.pk
www.gallup.com.pk