Pakistan’s new war on terror

Why in news?

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Recently Inter Services Public Relations, media wing of the Pakistan Armed Forces, announced the launch of Operation Radd-ul-Fasaad against terrorists across the country.

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What is Radd-ul-Fasaad?

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- The latest in a string of Pakistani counter-terrorism operations, directed at dismantling jihadist infrastructure within the country.
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- It marks an official acceptance of the well-known fact that terrorists are active in Northern Sindh and Punjab, and that there’s a need to act against them if terrorism in the country is to be defeated.
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How is it different in tactically from the earlier operation, Zarb-e-Azb?

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- Zarb-e-Azb focussed on massive force operations against the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan and other jihadist groups in one region, North Waziristan (Federally Administered Tribal Areas) following the attack on Karachi’s Jinnah International Airport in June 2014.
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- Radd-ul-Fasaad is nationwide, and doesn’t seem to involve conventional military operations.
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- Zarb-e-Azb has not been called off officially yet.
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- But the Pak Army claims it has eliminated terrorists from all but a tiny sliver

of North Waziristan.
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How successful was Zarb-e-Azb?

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- It’s hard to say since the only source of information is the Pak Army, which claims several thousand terrorists have been killed.
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- In strategic terms, though, it’s clearly been a failure, as the TTP and other terror groups are relocating their infrastructure across the border into Afghanistan.
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Where is the operation Radd-ul-Fasaad headed?

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- A key test will be whether the Army or government actually goes after key pro-jihadist seminaries and institutions — a stated objective of the National Action Plan against terrorism.
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- If that continues, there’s unlikely to be major success.
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What are the major terror attacks in Pakistan in 2017?

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- **Parachinar -** Blast in a market in the Shia-dominated administrative HQ of Kurram Agency in FATA. The Sunni terrorist Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and TTP made claims of responsibility.
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- **Lahore -** A suicide bombing at a protest by pharmacists on the city’s Mall Road. The Jamaat-ul-Ahrar faction of the Pakistan Taliban claimed responsibility.

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- **Sehwan -** Suicide bombing of the shrine of Lal Shahbaz Qalandar in Sindh's Jamshoro district. The Islamic State-Khorasan Province claimed responsibility.
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- **Charsadda -** Suicide bombing in a sessions court in Tangi in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Charsadda district. The Jamaat-ul-Ahrar claimed responsibility.
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