



# POSITIVE



Greenwich University

A Publication by Department of Mass Communication & Media Studies and the Diplomatic Academy

## Pakistan's standing in the global rankings

### Overview

Pakistan observed a slight improvement in the overall international rankings in 2021 covering socio-economic and political outcomes of the country. Several elements complemented the prospects including successful democratic transition, efficient counter-terrorism measures leading to enhanced peace and security, and foreign direct investment inflows under CPEC, among others. Albeit, decoupling economic growth from human development suggests that the country needs to enhance its scores in health, education and standard of living by ensuring political will, equitable financing and efficient governance to ensure parallel growth for marginalized segments as well. Civil and political liberties must grow hand in hand to ensure a conducive environment for democratic dialogue and accountability which ultimately supports its nation building process.

### DEMOCRACY INDEX

Pakistan was placed at the 104th spot among 167 states on the global Democracy Index 2021, compiled by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU).

Index from 0 (authoritarian regime) to 10 (full democracy)

Compiled based on indicators covering: Electoral process and pluralism, Civil liberties, Functioning of government, Political participation, and Political culture.

### HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX

Pakistan ranked 161 out of 192 countries in the Human Development Index scoring 2022 0.562 out of 1.000 in 2018 compared to 0.560 out of 1.000 in 2017.

Index from 0 (low development) to 1 (very high development)

Compiled based on indicators covering: life expectancy, education, and per capita income

### PRESS FREEDOM INDEX

Pakistan's press freedom rank dropped to 145 out of 180 countries in the Press Freedom Index, An annual ranking of countries published by Reporters Without Borders (RWB), an international non-governmental organization dedicated to safeguard the right to freedom of information.

Compiled based on indicators covering: pluralism, media independence, environment and self-censorship, legislative framework, transparency, and infrastructure.

### TERRORISM INDEX

Terrorism Index in Pakistan decreased to 7.83 in 2021 from 7.92 in 2020.

Index from 0 (lowest impact) to 10 (highest impact)

Compiled based on indicators covering : Total number of terrorist incidents in a given year, total number of fatalities caused by terrorism in a given year, total number of injuries caused by terrorism in a given year and the approximate level of total property damage from terrorist incidents in a given year.

### ECONOMIC FREEDOM INDEX

In 2021, index of economic freedom for Pakistan was 51.7 score. Though Pakistan index of economic freedom fluctuated substantially in recent years, it tended to decrease through 2002 - 2021 period ending at 51.7 score in 2021.

Compiled based on indicators covering: Market openness, Regulatory efficiency, Government size and the rule of law.

Positive Post is a strategic effort to project achievement and contributions of Pakistan. While showcasing Greenwich University's cultural diplomacy initiatives, it also encapsulates a compilation of different developments complementing Pakistan's socio-cultural, economic & Political outcomes

### Historic November

**November 27, 1958:** Iskander Mirza is exiled to London

**26 November, 1964:** The country's first television station goes on air in Lahore, operated on a pilot basis by Nippon Electric Company.

**6 November, 1967:** Pakistan is elected to the UN Security Council for a two-year term.

**30 November, 1967:** Pakistan Peoples Party founded by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in Lahore.

**7 November, 1968:** Start of 1968–69 Pakistan revolution

**27 November, 1969:** 6 December: Pakistan sends pilots to help Saudi Arabia against South Yemen in the Al-Wadiah War.

**16 November, 1988:** New elections held; Benazir Bhutto becomes prime minister after 1988 Pakistani general election

**10 November, 2001:** US President Bush meets President Musharraf in New York and assures additional aid of one billion dollars.

**23 November, 2002:** Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali sworn in as Prime Minister.

**25 November, 2007:** Nawaz Sharif returned Pakistan after 7 years of forced exile.

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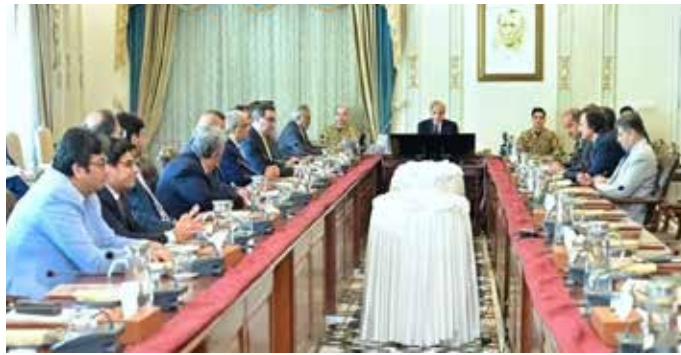


## National Assembly panel seeks clear timeline to complete PIA bidding process

The National Assembly Standing Committee on Privatisation sought a clear timeline to complete the ongoing bidding process for the privatisation of Pakistan International Airlines Corporation Ltd (PIACL) and directed that the process be accelerated.

The committee, headed by Muhammad Farooq Sattar, asked the privatisation commission to present the timeline at its next meeting. The committee also emphasised safeguarding PIA employees' jobs before the sale.

It called for retaining staff based on performance and merit and ensuring benefits, such as pensions and gratuity, are processed fairly. Officials were instructed to consult the PIA employees' union and address their concerns to ensure a transparent process.



The privatisation commission has already approved a transaction structure to sell a stake of 51 per cent to 100pc in PIACL, along with management control.

Four bidders have been pre-qualified for the sale: Lucky Cement Consortium, Arif Habib Corporation Consortium, Fauji Fertilizer Company Limited Air Blue Limited.

According to the commission, the

pre-qualified bidders now have access to a virtual data room, can conduct site visits and participate in the pre-bid conference. Negotiations are ongoing to finalise commercial terms, advancing the privatisation process.

In a separate matter, an additional secretary for the power division told the committee that the government has begun the phased privatisation of public sector power generation companies

(GENCOs), under a 2024-29 programme.

He said only operational plants will be offered, with the Gudu (747MW) and Nandipur (525MW) facilities identified for privatisation once pre-conditions are met. Non-operational units are proposed for delisting from the programme.

The privatisation commission advised GENCOs may dispose of old, non-functional assets with the board and ministry's approval. The committee also sought a detailed report from the power ministry on the installation of 1.5 million smart meters nationwide and requested a formal briefing for Karachi's elected representatives about the project's progress and to explain why Karachi is not included in the current phase.

Courtesy: Dawn

## Dialogue is way to resolve issue, NA speaker tells opposition

National Assembly (NA) Speaker Ayaz Sadiq has again ostensibly made an offer of talks to the opposition, telling a group of parliamentarians visiting him on Friday that dialogue was the way to resolve issues.

He made similar offers to facilitate dialogue between the government and the opposition, the PTI, in the past as well. But no substantial headway has been made so far and differences between the two sides largely remain unresolved.

A handout issued by the NA Secretariat said Mr Sadiq met opposition members of both houses of Parliament in his chamber in Parliament House soon after the adjournment of the NA session due to lack of quorum.

The visiting opposition members included Senator Allama Raja Nasir Abbas, Senator Faisal Javed, former NA speaker Asad Qaiser and PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan. MNAs Iqbal Afridi, Atif Khan, Sardar Latif Khosa and Jamal Ahsan Khan.

"Our bond of brotherhood and mutual respect is greater than politics. I have been in contact with you brothers since 2014. Politics does not last a lifetime it ends eventually," said the speaker according to the handout.

Mr Sadiq said the members of Parliament "should have a relationship that lasts throughout life".

The speaker further stated that he had always advocated for dialogue, stressing that dialogue was the means to resolve issues.

Sources said the PTI lawmakers asked Speaker Sadiq to announce the new opposition leader in the house. The PTI members have been protesting the delay in the appointment of Mehmood Khan Achakzai as the opposition leader.

During the previous NA session, the speaker had declared that matter was sub judice.

PTI's Barrister Gohar, during the meeting, raised the issue of PTI founder Imran Khan's family members not being allowed to meet the incarcerated leader, said the statement.

It added that the opposition members "appreciated" the speaker's efforts to facilitate dialogue between the two sides. The matter of talks between the opposition, mainly the PTI, and the government has been in the news since last year.



After more than a year of heightened tensions, the two sides had commenced dialogue in the last week of December last year to bring down political temperatures. But despite weeks of negotiations, the dialogue process stalled on major issues the formation of two judicial commissions to probe the protests of May 9, 2023 and Nov 26, 2024, and the release of PTI prisoners.

The PML-N government had once again extended a dialogue offer to the opposition PTI in February as NA Speaker Sadiq insisted that the option of talks had never been dropped.

However, a day after the PM made the offer, the PTI refused it, with party leader Asad Qaiser asking how they could enter a dialogue with the government when the rulers had stepped up the crackdown on the PTI.

Mr Qaiser alleged the government had

started raids to round up the PTI workers, and dozens of them had reportedly been arrested across the country.

In early August, the dialogue offer was again extended by government ministers and Speaker Sadiq during a debate on the Kashmir issue in the NA.

The PTI members welcomed the offer for talks but questioned the government's authority to initiate dialogue.

More recently, Mr Sadiq reiterated his offer on Nov 13 to facilitate a dialogue between the government and the opposition parties.

The offer was made by the speaker at a time when the opposition members belonging to the PTI were protesting in the assembly during the passage of the 27th Constitutional Amendment Bill.

Courtesy: Dawn

## Pakistan, Bahrain pledge to deepen economic, defence ties

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif reiterated Pakistan's commitment to deepening ties with the Kingdom of Bahrain, based on shared faith and mutual respect.

The prime minister, who is in Bahrain on a two-day official visit, met King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa in Manama and reaffirmed the strong and historic partnership between the two countries, the PM Office said.

Discussing economic relations, the prime minister underlined Pakistan's desire to expand trade and investment and said bilateral trade was set to grow with the Pakistan-GCC Free Trade Agreement, which is at an advanced stage of finalisation.

He invited Bahraini investors to explore opportunities in Pakistan through the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), especially in food security, information technology, construction, mining, tourism and healthcare.

The prime minister appreciated Bahrain's support for the more than 150,000 Pakistanis living there and thanked the king for pardoning Pakistani prisoners.

Both sides reaffirmed the importance of their longstanding de-



fence partnership and agreed to deepen cooperation in training, logistics, manpower and defence production. They reviewed the encouraging momentum in bilateral ties and agreed to further enhance cooperation in political, economic, defence and cultural fields.

The situation in Gaza also came under discussion. Both sides agreed that peace and stability were long overdue for the people of Gaza who had suffered for decades.

PM Shehbaz congratulated Bahrain on securing a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council for the 2026-27 term and expressed Pakistan's readiness for close coordination during its tenure.

The meeting also focused on economic cooperation. The prime minister noted the potential to raise bilateral trade, currently over \$550 million, to \$1 billion honour upon his arrival at Al-Qudaibiya Palace.

Meeting with crown prince PM Shehbaz also met Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa. The meeting concluded with confidence that the discussions would translate into tangible outcomes and further elevate Pakistan-Bahrain relations across strategic, economic, security and people-to-people spheres.

According to state broadcaster PTV, the premier received a warm welcome at the Manama airport by Crown Prince and PM Sal-

man, Deputy PM Khalid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, Foreign Minister Dr Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, and senior members of the Bahraini leadership.

The Pakistani delegation includes Deputy PM and FM Ishaq Dar, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Information Minister Attaullah Tarar, Minister of State for Railways Bilal Azhar Kayani, and other senior officials.

"This visit reflects the longstanding cordial relations between the Kingdom of Bahrain and Pakistan, with the aim of promoting a results-oriented and strategic partnership between the two countries," PTV said.

"The visit will strengthen traditionally warm and cordial relations, chart new avenues of partnership, and deepen people-to-people connections, which will contribute to mutually beneficial cooperation," it added.

Last month, the two countries agreed to strengthen bilateral cooperation in different fields during the first meeting of the Pakistan-Bahrain Parliamentary Friendship Group.

Courtesy: Dawn

## Market dominance confirmed: Master MoltyFoam wins 'best brand of the year (Home & Living)' at Global Digital Awards

Master MoltyFoam, the name synonymous with comfort and quality in Pakistan, has achieved a pivotal recognition, being honored with the "Best Brand of the Year (Home & Living)" award at the prestigious Global Digital Awards. The ceremony, held on November 8th at The Nishat Hotel, Lahore, and powered by the Pakistan Ecommerce Association (PEA), celebrates the nation's top performers excelling in both product quality and digital adaptation.

This award is a clear validation of Master MoltyFoam's strategic success in navigating the rapidly



growing e-commerce landscape while maintaining its foundational promise of superior Home

& Living products. It places the brand firmly at the forefront of the industry, recognizing its lead-

ership in innovation and customer trust.

Blending legacy with digital leadership

The Home & Living category at the Global Digital Awards is highly competitive, assessing brands on their ability to deliver exceptional physical products alongside a seamless digital consumer experience. Master MoltyFoam's win highlights its mastery of this dual challenge, leveraging its extensive manufacturing legacy to power a modern, customer-centric online presence.



## PM Shehbaz reaffirms Pakistan's commitment to peace



Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif reiterated that Pakistan, like its Azerbaijani and Turkish brothers, seeks peace but made it clear that no one will ever be allowed to challenge the country's sovereignty or undermine its territorial integrity.

Addressing Azerbaijan's Victory Day parade, the prime minister said that Pakistan, Turkiye, and Azerbaijan were like three brothers whose hearts beat together. "Today, we stand shoulder to shoulder, celebrating this momentous occasion," he added.

"What a proud and scintillating sight it is to witness our valiant armed forces marching beside their Azerbaijani and Turkish brothers, as the skies come alive with the roar of the JF-17 Thunder jets a resounding symbol of our enduring friendship, which has, Alhamdulillah grown from strength to strength over the years," the prime minister said.

He recalled that Azerbaijani and Turkish military contingents had proudly marched alongside the Pakistan Armed Forces in Islamabad amid tremendous applause on August 14 this year, when Pakistan celebrated Marka-i-Haq to commemorate its historic victory in the four-day war with India.

The premier said that their hearts swelled with pride over Azerbaijan's celebrations. "Today, as I witness your radiant faces and shining eyes, those cherished childhood memories are being refreshed," he remarked.

PM Shehbaz said Azerbaijan's victory in Karabakh was a glorious vindication of a just cause.

He noted that this year, the entire world had witnessed how the great

people and resolute leadership of Azerbaijan and Turkiye stood firmly with Pakistan during the four-day war with India in May.

The PM said under the dynamic and fearless command of Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Pakistan's highly professional armed forces delivered a "bloody nose" to the enemy with a precise and highly effective military response that stunned the adversary into shock and disbelief. "Our ever-vigilant air force hawks, ably commanded by Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Baber Sidhu, shot down seven highly sophisticated enemy aircraft with lightning speed in defence of the motherland," he added.

PM Shehbaz lauded US President Donald Trump for his bold leadership that led to a ceasefire between Pakistan and India, restoring peace in South Asia and averting a major war.

He also lauded the successful development model of present-day Turkiye, whose architect, he said, was none other than President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. He expressed gratitude to President Erdoğan and the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, for their invaluable contributions in facilitating peace efforts between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

President Ilham Aliyev, in his remarks, thanked PM Shehbaz for his presence and said Pakistan stood firmly with Azerbaijan during the 44-day war.

He said that Azerbaijan, Turkiye, and Pakistan demonstrated their unity, brotherhood, and friendship through the presence of their military personnel in the parade.

*Courtesy: Dawn*

## Cybersecurity Act essential to national security, says IT minister



Federal Minister for Information Technology (IT) and Telecom Shaza Fatima Khawaja said the Cybersecurity Act 2025 was essential for national security and reflected the government's whole-of-nation approach to cybersecurity, marking a major reform initiative.

She noted that the Act will establish the National Cybersecurity Authority (NCA) to lead nationwide incident response and threat intelligence, while expansion of the Pakistan Computer Emergency Response Team (PKCERT), and the development of secure digital public infrastructure under the Digital Economy Enhancement Project (Deep) will further strengthen national cyber resilience.

Ms Khawaja was addressing a gathering at FAST National University, Islamabad, on the theme 'Securing Pakistan's Digital Frontier: CyberShield, Policy & the Future'. The event was hosted by the FAST Public Policy and Research Society (FPPRS). She added that Pakistan's long-term objective is to build a cyber-resilient, innovation-driven digital nation where secure infrastructure, technological excellence, and human capital development advance together.

The minister underscored that Pakistan's digital transformation is accelerating at an unprecedented pace, bringing with it the critical responsibility of safeguarding national digital infrastructure and citizen data.

She highlighted Pakistan's Tier-1 ranking in the ITU Global Cybersecurity Index as a reflection of the collective commitment of the government, academia, and youth to-

ward building a secure digital future. The minister said Pakistan is rapidly advancing toward AI-driven cybersecurity, dark-web monitoring, and cloud security under the Cloud-First Policy, along with secure digital identity frameworks.

She also referred to the recent Marka-i-Haq, calling it a defining moment in which the armed forces, national institutions, and cyber experts stood united with remarkable resilience.

She emphasised that Pakistan's effective and coordinated cyber warfare response during this period demonstrated exceptional national strength and technological capability, adding that Marka-i-Haq proved the cyber domain is the first line of defence in the modern era, and Pakistan has shown it can safeguard its digital frontiers with confidence and competence.

The minister also toured FAST-NU Islamabad's IC Design Lab along with Director Dr Waseem Shahzad, Dean Dr Sadia Nadeem, and Fast Public Policy and Research Society (FPPRS) President Zainab Inam Cheema, and met scholars enrolled in Ignite's flagship training initiative, "Training in IC Design & Verification."

Under this Ignite-funded programme, 30 young engineers including seven female participants are undergoing a rigorous 10-month training course covering IC design, verification, and fabrication processes.

Implemented by FAST-NU, the programme offers hands-on training aligned with global semiconductor industry standards.

*Courtesy: Dawn*

## Ruling allies green-light 27th Amendment draft

Amid a boycott by opposition lawmakers, a joint meeting of the Senate and the National Assembly's law and justice standing committees approved the 27th Constitutional Amendment Bill with minor changes.

The bill aims to set up a federal constitutional court and grant permanent immunity to the president as well as lifetime status to the field marshal rank, amid criticism that the amendment will erode the judiciary's independence.

Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar, who also attended the meeting, said all key amendments, including changes to Article 243, were amicably approved by both committees. In response to a question about amendments to Article 243, Mr Dar said that all the amendments have been approved. The said article pertains to the military command structure.

Senator Farooq H. Naek, who was presiding over the meeting, said the bill was adopted with minor changes. He said that the committees empowered him and the law minister to make a couple of amendments.

The committees, however, de-

ferred the proposals of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) seeking to amend Article 140 related to local governments as well as the Awami National Party's (ANP) amendment for changing the name of the province.

The ANP submitted a proposal to rename Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by removing 'Khyber', arguing that Khyber is a district and other provinces do not include district names in provincial titles. Likewise, the Balochistan National Party's proposed amendment to increase the seats in the province was also deferred.

Earlier in the day, ANP's Hidayatullah Khan had told reporters that the committee had sought time until tomorrow (Monday) to decide on his party's suggestion for changing the name of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Meanwhile, Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar told reporters it was decided that provinces be taken into confidence on changing the province's name. MQM-P's suggestion regarding local governments was also discussed, he said, adding that it was decided that provinces be taken into confidence on changing the prov-



ince's name. Mr Tarar further said that the report of the committees would be tabled before the Senate.

The standing committees met on Sunday to discuss the proposed bill for the 27th Constitutional Amendment a day after it was tabled in the Senate. This bill was approved by the federal cabinet on Saturday hours before it was presented in the upper house of parliament. As Senator Farooq H. Naek chaired the meeting, the PTI, the Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam (JUI-F) and the Majlis Wahdat-i-Muslimeen (MWM) continued their boycott of the parliamentary committee.

Referring to the JUI-F's absence, the law minister had stated its members had informed the committee on Saturday about their party's policy. He emphasised that parliamentary parties should uti-

lise their right to vote, rather than boycotting the process altogether. The opposition alliance Tehreek Tahafuz-i-Ayeen-i-Pakistan (TTAP), which includes the PTI, announced a nationwide protest movement against the 27th Amendment, urging the people to take a stand against the "extremely dark and dangerous" change in the Constitution.

Separately, PPP's MNA Kasim Gilani, in a tweet summarised, that the 27th Constitutional Amendment "mainly touches 5 key areas: establishment of the Federal Constitutional Court, transfer of judges (Article 200), fixing the KP Senate election anomaly, [two per cent] cabinet size increase on smaller provinces' demand (Article 130(6), [and] amendments in Article 243 on defence services & presidential immunity".

*Courtesy: Dawn*

## Pakistan extends airspace ban for Indian aircraft

The Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA) has extended the airspace restrictions on Indian aircraft for another month, till December 24.

The new ban for Indian aircraft has been notified just four days before a previous one is set to expire, according to a notice to airmen (Notam) issued. The latest restriction went into effect from 2:50pm Pakistan time on November 19 to 4:59am on December 24, the notice said.

The ban will apply to all India-registered aircraft as well as any aircraft operated, owned, or leased by Indian airlines or operators, including military flights. The airspace closure applies from ground level up to unlimited altitude.

India and Pakistan have closed

their airspaces to each other's airlines since tensions between them escalated in April in the wake of an attack in occupied Kashmir's Pahalgam that killed 26 people. Last month, Islamabad extended the airspace ban till November 24. Pakistan's airspace is divided into two flight information regions (FIRs) Karachi and Lahore, according to a Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PCAA) document from 2022. The Notam applies to both the Karachi (OPKR) and Lahore (OPLR) FIRs.

On April 24, in response to India's decision to suspend the Indus Waters Treaty after the Pahalgam attack, Pakistan had announced a series of measures, including the closure of its airspace to all India-owned or Indian-operated airlines.



It may be noted that due to the financial toll of a ban on Indian carriers flying over Pakistan, Air India is lobbying the Indian government to convince China to let it use a sensitive military airspace zone in Xinjiang to shorten routes.

For Air India, the country's only carrier with a major international network, fuel costs have risen by as much as 29 per cent and journey times by up to three hours on

some long-haul routes, Reuters reported, citing a document submitted to Indian officials in late October.

The airline, owned by Tata Group and Singapore Airlines, estimated the Pakistan airspace closure's impact on its profit before tax at \$455 million annually — a significant amount given its fiscal 2024-25 loss stood at \$439m.

*Courtesy: Dawn*



## Parveen Shakir remembered on her 73rd birthday anniversary

The 73rd birthday of Parveen Shakir, the poetess known for her delicate feelings, fragrances, and the essence of love in Urdu literature, was celebrated with devotion and respect across the country on Monday. Her words, tone, and unique style of expression breathed new life into Urdu poetry, earning her a special place in the literary world. Born in Karachi on November 24, 1952, Parveen Shakir began writing poetry at a young age. Alongside her poetic journey, her academic achievements were equally remarkable. She earned a degree in English literature and linguistics, and later completed her Masters in Public Administration from Harvard University. A particularly notable moment in her career came when, during the CSS exam, one of the questions featured her poetry—a testament to her widespread popularity and literary stature. Parveen Shakir brought a refreshing, unique voice to Urdu

poetry, describing love, feminine emotions, loneliness, fragrance, and the subtle nuances of relationships with such depth that readers were often captivated by the sweetness of her words. Her acclaimed poetry collections include *Khushboo*, *Sad Barg*, *Khod Kalam*, *Ankar*, and *Mah-e-Tamm*. Her first collection, *Khushboo*, brought her nationwide fame and earned her the prestigious Adamji Award. Later, the Government of Pakistan honoured her with the Pride of Performance Award in recognition of her literary contributions. Even today, Parveen Shakir's words continue to resonate in the hearts of her readers, with the fragrance of her poetry still fresh. The poetess of love, fragrance, and emotion has left a timeless legacy. Shakir's work is deeply rooted in feminism, romanticism, and the critique of social stigmas. She was one of the first women poets to use the term *larki* (girl) in her writings, challenging the tradi-



tionally male-dominated space of Urdu poetry. Her poetry reflects the feminine perspective on love, romance, longing, separation, and

intimacy, making her an iconic figure in Urdu literature.

*Courtesy: The Nation*

## Nation remembers legendary Ismail Tara Third death anniversary



The third death anniversary of comedian Ismail Tara was observed where fans and colleagues through media platforms paid tribute to his memorable work, especially his iconic performances in the classic comedy show 'Fifty-Fifty.' A report noted that admirers across the country reflected on Ismail Tara's remarkable contributions to Pakistani comedy, especially his unforgettable sketches in 'Fifty-Fifty.' They shared that his expressive style and natural humour helped define an era of television, leaving a legacy that continues to inspire new generations of performers. Despite his passing, the joy he brought to audiences still resonates strongly today, local news channel reported. Ismail Tara first gained recognition as part of the Zia Mohyeddin Show in 1972-73. He later became best known for his work on the hit TV show 'Fifty-Fifty', even contributing to its scripts alongside fellow comedian Majid Jahangir after the original writer, Anwar Maqsood had a disagreement with the cast in 1981. Ismail Tara,

born Muhammad Ismail Merchant on November 16, 1949, in Karachi was a celebrated Pakistani actor and comedian. He began his journey in the performing arts in 1964, building a versatile career across stage, television, and film. Tara gained widespread fame in the 1980s for his satirical comedy show 'Fifty-Fifty', which became a landmark in Pakistani television. He also appeared in numerous films, taking on a variety of roles that showcased his comedic and acting talents. Over the course of his career, he was honoured with the Nigar Award five times for his exceptional contributions to entertainment. Among his other well-known works were television dramas such as *Rubber Band*, *Yeh Zindagi Hai*, *One-Way Ticket*, *Delhi Colony*, *Ismail Time*, along with numerous stage performances that delighted audiences. Ismail Tara passed away on November 24, 2023, in Karachi at the age of 73, after battling kidney disease, leaving behind a rich legacy in Pakistan's entertainment industry.

*Courtesy: The Nation*

## Tributes paid to Waheed Murad 42nd death anniversary



Chocolate hero Waheed Murad was remembered on his 42nd death anniversary on Sunday. The legendary actor, who introduced new dimensions to Pakistani cinema, passed away on November 23, 1983, in Karachi. His remarkable contributions earned him numerous accolades, including the Nigar Award, Graduate Award, and National Award. He began his film career as a supporting actor in the movie *Aulad*, while his first successful role as a hero came with *Heera Aur Pathar*. Murad rose to iconic status with the 1966 release

*Armaan*, a record-breaking film that ran continuously in cinemas for 75 weeks. Over his illustrious career, Waheed Murad appeared in more than 124 Urdu, Punjabi, and Pashto films. His most popular films include *Andaleeb*, *Doraaha*, *Salgirah*, *Anjuman*, *Dil Mera Dharkan Teri*, *Jab Jab Phool Khile*, *Devar Bhabhi*, and *Naseeb Apna Apna*. In recognition of his enduring legacy, the Government of Pakistan posthumously honoured him with the Sitara-e-Imtiaz in 2011.

*Courtesy: The Nation*

## Pakistan, Iran look to align on major fronts

Ali Ardeshir Larjani, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, discussed ways to deepen economic cooperation, besides coordinating positions on regional and international developments, particularly the Gaza peace plan, in meetings with Pakistan's civilian leadership.

The top Iranian security official, who began a two-day visit to Islamabad by holding talks with President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, is scheduled to meet Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir and National Security Adviser and ISI chief Lt Gen Asim Malik

The visit is focused on reviewing bilateral ties, pursuing pending agreements and discussing regional developments, including those in the Muslim world.

After landing in Islamabad, Mr Larjani told reporters "changing conditions of the region necessitate enhanced cooperation across multiple fields", while noting Pakistan's "privileged position" in shaping regional security.

Gaza peace on the table as Larjani discusses regional, global issues with civilian leadership; will meet army, intel chiefs today

The trip comes as Iran expressed reservations about US President Donald Trump's Gaza plan, now moving into its implementation phase after being adopted by the UN Security Council on Nov 17. The initiative includes an international stabilisation force for Gaza, a move Tehran fears could entrench foreign military involvement. Pakistan has supported the plan and is seen as a potential contributor to the force.

Though the various statements on the top security council official's meetings by the Pakistani side didn't say much on discussions about Gaza peace plan, the Iranian official in a post on X at the end of the day, conveyed greetings of Iranian Supreme Leader Aya-



tollah Khamenei to "honourable people of Pakistan" for supporting Iran during the 12-day war with Israel and said it showed the "firm and principled thinking of the Pakistani people".

In what many saw a possible balance act, Mr Larjani in the same post on X said, "We extend our gratitude to the government, the parliament, and the armed forces of Pakistan."

The PM Office said Shehbaz Sharif and Mr Larjani exchanged views on major regional and international developments and "stressed the importance of coordinated efforts to promote peace and stability."

The premier expressed appreciation for Iran's engagement, while the Iranian official thanked Pakistan for its role in advocating dialogue and diplomacy for peaceful settlement of disputes, possibly a reference to Islamabad's role of a messenger between Tehran and Washington.

The two sides agreed that a delegation led by Deputy PM and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar would soon visit Tehran to advance cooperation, particularly in agriculture and connectivity.

The Foreign Office said Mr Dar and Mr Larjani reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening bilateral ties and expanding cooperation on regional and international issues.

In comments to Iran's state news agency IRNA, the deputy premier said he held "detailed and frank discussions" with Mr Larjani,

adding he was "very pleased" with the visit. The security official told IRNA the talks covered economic progress, ways to expand cooperation, and regional and international developments.

During his call on President Zardari, cooperation in energy, commerce and railways were discussed.

The president underscored Pakistan's desire to boost trade with Iran and pressed for strengthening the rail link to facilitate commerce and travel, especially for religious pilgrims. He emphasised the need for a "mutually workable solution" on the stalled Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline, citing Pakistan's growing energy needs, and welcomed technical discussions held recently in Islamabad.

Mr Larjani said directives issued after the Iranian President Pezeshkian's visit to Pakistan in August including for preferential access for Pakistani products had set the path toward achieving the \$10 billion bilateral trade target.

Mr Larjani also met NA Speaker Ayaz Sadiq at Parliament House, where they discussed parliamentary cooperation, regional security and opportunities for expanded economic engagement.

His trip follows a visit by Iranian parliament speaker Bagher Ghalibaf last month, marking the second senior Iranian delegation to Islamabad in weeks and underscoring intensified diplomatic activity between the neighbors amid shifting regional dynamics.

Iran and Pakistan share a long, often tense border where terrorist

groups have carried out attacks on both sides, prompting growing security coordination. Tehran has also offered to mediate between Islamabad and Kabul as cross-border tensions are rising.

Courtesy: Dawn

## Pakistan Idol 2025: Gala Rounds and Rising Stars

As the journey toward the Top 12 intensifies, Episodes 13 and 14 of Pakistan Idol reveal a powerful shift in the competition. The Gala Rounds emerge as a defining phase, where raw talent and technical skill evolve into confident, soulful performances.



Pakistan Idol steps into its most thrilling chapter yet. With the competition growing fiercer and the spotlight shining brighter, contestants rise to the occasion — delivering performances that feel truly unforgettable.

Episodes 13 and 14 make it clear that Pakistan Idol 2025 is far more than just a singing competition. The Gala Rounds highlight the strength of community and peer support, as contestants perform with greater ease and assurance. Seamless interaction with the house band and fellow performers reflects their growing confidence. Judges noted that with less fear of elimination, contestants took creative risks, deepened emotional expression, and developed grounded stage presence. Personal dedications, tributes, and culturally resonant song choices transformed strong performances into deeply moving moments.



## Pakistani pair creates history as Aisam, Muzammil march into ATP Challenger Final

Pakistan witnessed one of the most historic moments in its sporting history as the veteran-rising-star duo of Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi and Muzammil Murtaza stormed into the final of the Pakistan ATP Challenger Cup 2025 at the PTF Tennis Complex, Islamabad, becoming the first-ever all-Pakistani pair to reach an ATP Challenger Tour final.

The landmark achievement arrived during a memorable and emotionally charged week for Pakistan tennis, as the country proudly hosted its first ATP Challenger event, featuring top-tier international talent from 14 nations, including Sweden, Great Britain, the United States, Italy, Turkey, and Kazakhstan. With 25 foreign players and 10 of Pakistan's leading professionals in action, the tournament has not only elevated Pakistan's global tennis profile but also placed Islamabad firmly on the ATP map.

For Pakistan's legendary icon



Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi, the nation's most decorated tennis player, this final holds even deeper significance. The 44-year-old maestro, who announced his retirement from ATP Tour events earlier this year, is now set to take the court for the last ATP Challenger match of his illustrious career, turning the moment into a fitting climax to more than two decades of global excellence. And fittingly, it has come on home soil. Pakistan awards Nishan-e-Pakistan to Indonesian President

Abowo Subianto, strengthening bilateral ties

Displaying class, composure, and vintage brilliance, Aisam partnered with Muzammil Murtaza, one of the country's brightest emerging talents, to deliver a commanding 6-1, 6-4 semifinal victory over Turkey's Alp Horoz and Mert Alkaya. The Pakistani pair dominated from the outset, combining Aisam's unmatched doubles intellect with Muzammil's explosive stroke-making

to overpower the Turkish third seeds in straight sets.

In the men's singles quarterfinals, the tournament produced high-drama upsets and hard-fought victories. Turkish sixth seed Mert Alkaya stunned top seed Elias Ymer of Sweden in a three-set thriller, while Britain's Jay Clarke, the second seed, survived an intense battle against Ukraine's Vadym Ursu. Kazakhstan's Denis Yevseyev and Britain's Zach Stephens also secured semifinal berths, ensuring a high-quality international contest as the event moves toward its conclusion.

In the second doubles semifinal, the Czech-Kazakh duo of Dominik Palan and Denis Yevseyev defeated the Ukrainian-American pair of Nikita Bilozertsev and Preston Brown 6-1, 7-5, setting up a mouthwatering final against Pakistan's home favourites.

Courtesy: The Nation

## Pakistani film shines at Eurasian Open Award in Moscow

Pakistani actress Sonya Hussyn has won the Best Supporting Actress award for her powerful performance in the film Deemak at the prestigious Eurasian Open Award "Diamond Butterfly" ceremony held in Moscow. The film stood out among 34 entries from 17 countries, including two Pakistani productions — Deemak and Love Guru, according to a press release from the Pakistan Embassy in Moscow. The festival celebrated cinematic excellence from across Eurasia and beyond, with Deemak earning high praise from the international jury. Following the win, Sonya Hussyn said in her remarks on a social media plat-



form, "Deemak rises again... This moment is bigger than an award. It's proof that when a dream is carried with honesty, hunger, and heart... it finds its way home." "To every young girl in Pakistan who wonders if her voice matters — this win is yours," she commented. She also expressed gratitude to the Russian government, the festival organizers, jury, and founder Nikita for embracing the film, as well as the Government of Pakistan for its support in facilitating the participation. "Tonight, Pakistan didn't just win an award... Pakistan was seen," she added.

Courtesy: The Nation

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