

POSITIVE POST



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

July 2025

8 July, 1947: Constituent Assembly of Pakistan approves the design of Pakistan.

27 July, 1949: Pakistan and India sign the Karachi Agreement.

11 July, 1950: Pakistan joins the International Monetary Fund and World Bank.

July, 1962: the National Assembly passes the Political Parties Act,[100] legalizing the formation of political parties.

22 July, 1964: The heads of state of Iran, Pakistan and Turkey issue a joint communique from Istanbul, establishing the Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD).

5 July, 1999: Nawaz Sharif officially announces the Pakistan Army's withdrawal from Kargil following a meeting with President Clinton.

15 July, 2001: Agra Summit starts. President Pervez Musharraf and Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee holds talks over long-standing issues.

11 July, 2003: Lahore-Delhi bus service resumed after suspension of 18 months.

14 July, 2005: NWFP Assembly passes the Hasba bill with a majority vote.

15 July, 2009: Second Battle of Swat ends in a Pakistani victory.

30 July, 2013: Mamnoon Hussain is elected as the 12th President of Pakistan in 2013 Presidential elections.

25 July, 2018: 2018 Pakistani general election are held and Imran Khan became Prime Minister of Pakistan with majority

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Govt looks to invite several satellite-based internet firms

The launch of satellite-based internet services in the country has been delayed as authorities look to invite more players into the field and formulate stricter regulations for foreign satellite operators, following the recent India-Pakistan and Iran-Israel conflicts.

Following the expiration of the temporary no-objection certificate (NOC) for Starlink in March, all foreign satellite operators are now required to submit new applications under the newly drafted Satellite Communications Regulations.

These regulations are being finalised by the Pakistan Space Activities Regulatory Board (PSARB), based on industry feedback gathered during a recent roundtable discussion.

In addition to Starlink, two other Low Earth Orbit (LEO) operators, OneWeb and Shanghai Spacecom Satellite Technology (SSST), have expressed interest in

starting operations in Pakistan.

Once registered under the new regulations, satellite internet providers will need to obtain operational licences from the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA).

A PTA official said that all companies, including Starlink, can launch their services by the end of this year. Meanwhile, sources told Dawn that Elon Musk, the founder of SpaceX, is also likely to attend the launch ceremony.

Starlink was the first company to submit a formal application for registration, but delays in licensing have occurred due to the absence of regulations. The company has already been granted approval to provide satellite internet services in India.

A senior official from the Ministry of IT and Telecom emphasised the need for stringent regulations to ensure security, particularly in light of recent conflicts.



“The new regulations will include important security clauses that may have been overlooked if the recent wars had not occurred,” the official said. “Besides, Pakistan needs more than one satellite internet provider, and two more companies have expressed interest.”

The LEO satellite network operates at an altitude of less than 2,000km from the Earth’s surface, offering high-speed data connectivity in all weather conditions at a relatively low cost, with a latency delay of only 25 milliseconds.

Pakistan’s state-owned company, PakSat, a subsidiary of Suparco, currently provides satellite inter-

net through Satellite Multi-Mission-1 (MM-1), the country’s second telecommunication satellite, launched in August 2024.

Unlike LEO satellites, the MM-1 is a geostationary satellite positioned at an altitude of around 37,500km above the Earth’s surface, with a latency delay of about 600 milliseconds.

PakSat currently serves around 300 clients, with a capacity to accommodate up to 5,000 users. The service is primarily sold to the corporate sector, armed forces and telecom providers for remote regions.

Courtesy: Dawn

Still ready for ‘meaningful dialogue’ with India: PM

Appreciating Britain’s role in deescalating tensions between Pakistan and India during their armed stand-off earlier this year, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif reiterated that Islamabad was ready for meaningful dialogue with New Delhi on all outstanding issues.

His remarks came during a meeting with British High Commissioner Jane Marriott, the PM Office said in a statement.

While expressing satisfaction at the positive trajectory of bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and the United Kingdom, PM Shehbaz said the recently-held trade talks between the two countries would lead to mutually beneficial opportunities for both sides.

The prime minister said Pakistan was cooperating closely with the UK at the UN Security Council, where Islamabad currently holds the monthly presidency.

He also welcomed the UK government’s recent decision to resume PIA flights to and from the UK, which he said, would go a long way in alleviating the hardships faced by the British Pakistani

community as well as enhancing people-to-people exchanges. He particularly appreciated the role of the High Commissioner in this regard.

During the meeting, Mr Shehbaz conveyed his warm wishes for King Charles III and Prime Minister Keir Starmer and said he looked forward to his meeting with the UK leadership later this year.

The UK high commissioner thanked the prime minister for receiving her and briefed him about her recent visit to London, where she had extensive consultations on enhancing Pakistan-UK bilateral ties.

The regional situation of South Asia and the Middle East came under discussion. Pakistan has previously invited India to a comprehensive dialogue to address all contentious issues, including the Kashmir dispute and the water distribution.

The April 22 attack in occupied Kashmir’s Pahalgam killed 26 people, sparking a military confrontation between nuclear-armed India and Pakistan as New Delhi blamed it on Islamabad,



which strongly denied the allegations while calling for a neutral investigation. A US-brokered ceasefire ended the war.

India asked to ‘change behaviour’ Meanwhile, Pakistan’s envoy to the UN Security Council, Ambassador Usman Jadoon, rejected Indian allegations of cross-border terrorism and asked India to change its behaviour, instead of resorting to its “tired narrative of victimhood and blame-shifting”.

Speaking during a debate on ‘Promoting International Peace and Security through Multilateralism and Peaceful Settlement of Disputes’ on Tuesday, Mr Jadoon responded to Indian envoy Parvathaneni Harish’s remarks following Deputy PM Ishaq Dar’s speech, where he had underscored the need for the resolution of the Kashmir dispute.

“It is India which actively spon-

sors, aids and abets terrorism in my country and beyond,” Mr Jadoon, Pakistan’s deputy permanent representative to the UN, told the 15-member body.

“Rather than being blinded by hubris and a misplaced sense of impunity, and instead of resorting to its tired narrative of victimhood and blame-shifting, India must introspect seriously, change its behaviour and comply with its international legal obligations on all counts,” he said.

“While claiming to abide by the UN charter, and purportedly the principle of peaceful settlement of disputes, India has been in violation of security council resolutions on the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, and has refused to implement those resolutions, thereby denying the Kashmiri people the exercise of their inalienable right to self-determination,” he said.

Courtesy: Dawn

Pakistan to resist 'weaponisation of Indus waters'

Pakistan remains determined to protect its rights and entitlements under the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) and firmly rejects India's attempts to weaponise water for its narrow geopolitical objectives, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said.

Meanwhile, the Foreign Office also called on India to resume the functioning of the treaty, which it has held in abeyance since May.

Speaking at the 52nd Foundation Day ceremony of the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), Mr Dar said India's illegal and unilateral action of putting the treaty "in abeyance" has no validity. He further said the mettle of the nation was tested again recently with India's unfounded allegations following the Pahal-gam attack, and its unprovoked aggression in May 2025.

Islamabad swiftly retaliated to the Delhi's escalation with a "quid pro quo plus" response — which is the "new normal" set by Pakistan if India insists on its dangerous notion of "limited war under the nuclear threshold", he said.

'Hinge moment'

The foreign minister further said Pakistan values the efforts of all friendly countries, including the US, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Türkiye that resulted in preventing further escalation with India and putting the ceasefire in place.

"Going forward, it is essential to consolidate the ceasefire, institute a reliable crisis management mechanism, and develop confidence-building measures that would help stabilise the regional security situation," he remarked.

"It is our considered view that sustainable peace in South Asia remains contingent on a just and lasting solution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions and the wishes of the Kashmiri people."

Mr Dar said the world was passing through another "hinge" moment in history. He said the profound transformation was taking place in the world order and the globe was witnessing changes un-



seen in a century.

The peaceful rise of China, attempts to 'contain' China's rise, resurgence of Russia, increasing salience of Eurasia in global geopolitics, emergence of 'Middle Powers', and the growing role of the 'Global South' are some of the prominent features of this transitional phase, he remarked.

He said that amidst global turbulence and transformation, from unipolar world to a multipolar one, Pakistan is charting a forward-looking course as a confident and self-assured nation.

Gaza and Iran

He observed that Israel's genocidal war against Palestinians in Gaza continues to be a stain on the conscience of humanity.

"The wanton killing of children and women, use of starvation as an instrument of war, mass destruction of homes, schools, hospitals and critical infrastructure, and deliberate targeting of humanitarian workers have no parallels in history."

"These actions are beyond condemnation," he said.

"We condemned Israel's completely unjustified aggression against Iran as well as the attack on Iranian nuclear facilities by the US".

Mr Dar further said these actions, representing a highly dangerous escalation, have been in violation of the UN charter and international law.

He said Islamabad has consistently supported Iran's legitimate right to self-defence under the Charter. "We appreciate the constructive and pragmatic approach that Iran adopted in finding a negotiated solution to the nuclear issue."

Positive trajectory.

He said that in recent months, Pakistan has purposefully made efforts to reset its relations with Afghanistan on a positive trajectory.

"Among other things, we agreed to upgrade our diplomatic representation to ambassadorial level and extend CPEC to Afghanistan," he said.

"Having made sincere efforts in Afghanistan's interest, it is our legitimate expectation that the Afghan interim government would take all steps necessary to ensure that Afghanistan's soil is not used for terrorism against any state, particularly Pakistan.

India urged to restore IWT

Meanwhile, the Foreign Office (FO) has welcomed the decision by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague to issue a "supplemental award" on its case over the Indus Waters Treaty.

"In a supplemental award announced on 27 June 2025, the Court of Arbitration hearing the Pakistan-India dispute over Kishenganga and Ratle hydro-electric projects has found that its competence remains intact, and that it has a continuing responsibility to advance these proceedings in a timely, efficient, and fair manner," the FO said.

"The Court of Arbitration decided to announce this supplemental award in the wake of India's illegal and unilateral announcement to hold the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance."

The FO urged India to "immediately resume the normal functioning of the Indus Waters Treaty, and fulfil its treaty obligations, wholly and faithfully."

Courtesy: Dawn

Govt approves pension hike for post-July 2025 retirees

The federal government has approved relief for employees retiring after July 2025, resulting in an equal pension increase for all federal pensioners.

In a memorandum issued by the Ministry of Finance, the details of the pension increase and payment process were outlined. The memorandum confirms that all federal pensioners will receive the pension increase on an equal footing. According to the memorandum, the relief in-



cludes the integration of five previous ad-hoc relief allowances, granted between 2011 and 2024, into pension payments. The total cumulative percentage of these allowances amounts to 70%.

The memorandum clarifies that the baseline pension for government employees will be considered as their net pension.

The finance ministry further stated that the gross pension, minus the commuted pension, will include these five ad-hoc reliefs. The five allowances include increases of 15% in 2011, 7.5% in 2015, 15% in 2022, 17.5% in 2023, and 15% in 2024.

Courtesy: Dawn

Pakistan-UK trade talks to tackle non-tariff barriers

The upcoming UK-Pakistan Trade Dialogue will prioritise reducing non-tariff barriers (NTBs) to enhance bilateral trade, British trade envoy to Pakistan Mohammad Yasin said.

“We’re launching the UK-Pakistan Trade Dialogue a structured ministerial platform focused on reducing non-tariff barriers through practical cooperation, technical support, and regulatory alignment,” he said in a written interview with Dawn.

He expressed the hope that the dialogue would help accelerate progress in strengthening trade ties between the two countries.

Mr Yasin visited Pakistan last week to lay the groundwork for the trade dialogue, which is set to begin later this year. During his visit, he held meetings focused on investment opportunities, regulatory cooperation, and enhancing business-to-business linkages, particularly in high-value sectors such as technology and pharmaceuticals.

British envoy hopes upcoming dialogue will help accelerate progress in strengthening bilateral ties

The dialogue aims to unlock the full potential of the bilateral trade relationship, which currently stands at £4.7 billion. It is intended to address persistent challenges in the business environment, diversify Pakistan’s export base, and improve market access to sectors beyond traditional textiles, including clean energy, digital services, and value-added manufacturing.

Key NTBs hampering Pakistan-UK trade include stringent UK technical standards, especially in textiles and pharmaceuticals, that many Pakistani small- and medium-sized en-



terprises (SMEs) struggle to meet due to the high costs of certifications. Additional barriers include sanitary and phytosanitary measures complicating agricultural exports, complex post-Brexit customs procedures leading to delays, and growing UK consumer demands for sustainably and ethically sourced products.

On Pakistan’s end, inefficient export procedures and infrastructure bottlenecks further impede trade. While Pakistani products enjoy duty-free access under the UK’s Developing Countries Trading Scheme, these non-tariff obstacles continue to limit growth, particularly in high-value sectors, preventing businesses from fully benefiting from the scheme.

Commenting on the prospects of a free trade agreement (FTA), Mr Yasin said: “While FTAs require significant resources and time, this dialogue allows us to make faster, targeted progress on the issues that matter most to exporters to support growth. This work complements both countries’ economic priorities.”

There is currently no bilateral FTA between Pakistan and the UK. However, officials view the trade dialogue as a pragmatic step toward aligning standards and facilitating smoother market entry, potentially laying the foundation for a future agreement.

Mr Yasin also emphasised the UK’s commitment to supporting Pakistani SMEs, particularly in the tech sector. “We’re working through the UK’s REMIT programme to improve the business environment, enhance access to finance, and support digital transformation,” he said.

While noting that Pakistan’s tech and digital services sectors are among the most dynamic in its economy, the envoy said that the UK “wants to see more Pakistani tech companies use the UK as a springboard to access wider European and global markets”.

He highlighted the role of British development finance institutions in this effort. British International Investment is actively investing in Pakistan’s digital infrastructure and promoting financial inclusion, while UK Export Finance supports Pakistani firms seeking to expand exports or partner with the UK companies.

The UK is leveraging its development finance tools, Mr Yasin said, to help Pakistani firms expand their exports or partner with the UK companies.

Mr Yasin, however, parried questions about the impact of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor on UK-Pakistan trade and how the UK navigates geopolitical considerations while advancing economic cooperation with Pakistan.

Courtesy: Dawn

Pakistan, US reach accord on trade and tariffs

With less than a week to go before the July 9 deadline, Pakistan and the United States have concluded a critical round of trade negotiations, reaching an understanding on a deal that could shape the future of the country’s key export sectors.

The Pakistani delegation, led by Commerce Secretary Jawad Paal, was scheduled to return after completing four days of talks in Washington.

While both sides have reached an understanding, a formal announcement is expected only after the US concludes similar ongoing negotiations with other trade partners.

The delegation arrived in Washington on Monday with the aim of finalising a long-term reciprocal tariff agreement that would prevent the re-imposition of a 29 per cent tariff on Pakistani exports primarily textiles and agricultural products.

Formal announcement expected once Washington wraps up talks with other nations

The tariff relief, temporarily paused earlier this year, was at risk of expiring if no progress had been made by the July 9 deadline.

Officials familiar with the negotiations say the talks were successful, with both sides agreeing to a broad framework.

The agreement, when signed, could lead to increased Pakistani imports of US goods notably crude oil and potential American investment in Pakistan’s mining, energy, and infrastructure sectors.

Projects like the Reko Diq copper and gold mine and related energy infrastructure were a focus of the discussions. The deal could also pave the way for expanded engagement through the US Export-Import Bank.



Although US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent had earlier indicated that Washington might allow limited flexibility on the deadline if meaningful progress was evident, Pakistani officials say they pushed for early completion to remove uncertainty for exporters and investors. Officials remain optimistic that the agreement will sustain Pakistan’s access to the US market and help reset bilateral economic ties, which had been under strain since the high tariffs were introduced during the Trump administration.

Courtesy: Dawn

Pakistani delegation arrives in US to finalise trade deal

A Pakistani delegation arrived in Washington on Monday to finalise a trade agreement as the country looks to recalibrate economic ties with the US and ease tensions stemming from high import tariffs imposed by President Donald Trump.

The delegation, led by Commerce Secretary Jawad Paal, is scheduled to hold talks with US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer and senior officials from other departments.

Talks between Pakistan and the United States, which have been ongoing for over a month, are expected to conclude this week, the Finance Ministry stated on Wednesday following a meeting between Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb and US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick.

The ongoing discussions, centred on reciprocal tariffs are part of a broader effort to “reset economic ties at a time of shifting geopolitical alignments,” according to Pakistani officials.



The finance ministry also noted that “a longer-term strategic and investment partnership is also under discussion.”

Pakistan currently faces a 29 per cent tariff on its exports to the US. In 2024, Pakistan’s trade surplus with the United States was around \$3 billion.

To ease tariff pressures and address the trade imbalance, Islamabad has offered to increase imports of American goods, including crude oil and expand investment opportunities for US firms, particularly in its mining sector.

“Both sides showed satisfaction on the ongoing negotiations and resolved to conclude the trade negotiations next week,” the ministry said.

Last week, the two governments co-hosted a webinar to promote investment in Pakistan’s mineral sector, highlighting the \$7 billion Reko Diq copper-gold project in Balochistan.

Senior officials and US investors discussed public-private partnerships and regulatory reforms aimed at attracting foreign capital. The US Export-Import Bank

is currently reviewing financing proposals worth between \$500 million and \$1bn for the Reko Diq project.

In an interview with Fox Business, US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said the administration is negotiating trade deals with 18 “important trading partners” and expects several of them to be finalised in the coming weeks.

“If we can ink 10 or 12 of the important 18 ... then I think we could have trade wrapped up by Labour Day,” Mr Bessent said, indicating a more flexible timeline than the previously set July 9 deadline.

President Trump has already claimed he used trade as a leverage to stop hostilities between Pakistan and India in May.

US officials have said finalising trade agreements with both India and Pakistan could provide a much-needed stabilising influence and offer a path toward broader economic cooperation.

Courtesy: Dawn

Pakistan, Bahrain vow to deepen security ties

Pakistan and Bahrain have agreed to deepen security cooperation, making the Pakistan-Bahrain Joint Security Committee more effective.

The understanding was reached during a meeting of Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi with his Bahraini counterpart Gen Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa in the capital of Bahrain, Manama, on Saturday.

The discussion centred around collaboration in counterterrorism, anti-human trafficking and anti narcotics, besides regional and global challenges.

According to the interior ministry, both sides appreciated their coordination and cooperation in security and other sectors and emphasised the need to “further strengthen their security collaboration”.

Shaikh Rashid said Mr Naqvi’s



visit presented an opportunity to solidify security relations. Bahrain highly valued security cooperation and coordination, he said.

Mr Naqvi said that enhancing cooperation between the Bahraini and Pakistani interior ministries in combating narcotics and human trafficking was the need of the hour.

He later invited his Bahraini counterpart to visit Pakistan.

He also recorded his remarks in the visitors’ book at the Bahraini Ministry of Interior.

Bahrain’s Deputy Interior Minister Major General Adel bin Khalifa bin Hamad, chief of public security, senior military officers, Pakistan’s ambassador to Bahrain, deputy head of mission, and other senior diplomatic officials were also present on the occasion.

Earlier on his arrival at the airport on a daylong official visit, Mr

Naqvi was warmly welcomed by his Bahraini counterpart. A guard of honour was presented to him when he later arrived at Manama Fort, the headquarters of Bahrain’s interior ministry.

Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf had met Bahrain’s top civil and military leadership during an official visit to the kingdom in December 2024. A month later, Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) Asim Munir met King of Bahrain Sheikh Hamad bin Isa bin Salman Al-Khalifa.

In February, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had expressed the desire to increase the trade volume between the two countries in a meeting with a parliamentary delegation from Bahrain. Next month, Field Marshal Asim Munir met Commander of the National Guard Gen Shaikh Mohamed bin Isa bin Salman Al-Khalifa.

Courtesy: Dawn

Mountains tourism: A pathway to prosperity of Pakistan



As the cold monsoon winds sweep down from the mighty Tirich Mir, Pakistan's highest mountain peak outside Gilgit-Baltistan, excitement stirs in the remote valleys of Chitral. Rising to a staggering 7,708 meters above sea level, the snow-clad giant nestled in the Hindukush range is once again at the center of a renewed drive to turn Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) into a global destination for mountaineering and adventure tourism. On July 13, 2025, the base camp of Tirich Mir will welcome its first group of national and international trekkers for the 2025 climbing season. For many, it's more than a journey to the summit but it's a revival of rural dreams, local livelihoods, and cultural heritage. "I have traveled to mountain ranges around the world, but nothing matches the awe Tirich Mir inspires," said Abu Zafar, President of Alpine Adventure Sports Club of Pakistan. "Its unexplored potential is unmatched."

PM reviews flood relief efforts, orders early warning system upgrade

First ascended in 1950 by a Norwegian expedition, Tirich Mir has remained an under-promoted jewel, shrouded in myths, pine forests, and cascading waterfalls. Now, it is taking the spotlight once more, supported by an ambitious push by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority (KPCTA). "Tirich

Mir, Falak Sair (5,957m) in Swat, and Malika Parbat (5,290m) in Kaghan Mansehra are making KP an emerging hotspot for adventure and mountains sports," said Habib Arif, Director General of KPCTA. He added that more than 600 local applicants, including over 100 women, have registered for the climbing events at Tirich Mir, which will span from July through August in three phases. Local porters and guides are being actively engaged, ensuring the economic benefits trickle down to the grassroots. With the establishment of camping pods, training schools, and integrated tourism zones (ITZs), KP is transforming its mountainous backdrops into bustling eco-tourism hubs. At a time when unemployment, poverty, security concerns and urban migration continue to plague rural areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, tourism offers a practical, inclusive and sustainable solution. "The economic potential of mountains tourism is massive in Pakistan as five mountains peaks of over 8000 meters found here" said Dr. Naeem Khattak, former Chairman of the Economics Department at the University of Peshawar. "Despite Pakistan being home to five peaks above 8,000 meters including world second highest K2, we are earning only a fraction revenue compared to our regional peers due to lack of publicity."

He referred to World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) sta-

tistics that revealed that Pakistan's tourism industry contributed \$8.8 billion (2.9% of GDP) in 2017, peaking at \$15 billion in 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic, however, dragged it back to \$11.6 billion, slashing jobs and halting momentum. Meanwhile, China reaped \$814.1 billion from tourism in 2022. Even Malaysia and Indonesia reported significantly higher returns. The disparity, experts say, lies in marketing, infrastructure, and policy execution.

"We must leverage digital technology and highlight our untapped scenic assets to the world," Dr. Khattak emphasized. Investments are pouring in. The World Bank-funded 16-km Madaklasht-Kumrat cable car project is poised to be a game changer. With an estimated cost of \$200 million, it will be one of the world's highest cable cars, connecting valleys, reducing travel time, and generating opportunities for over a million annual visitors. "We envision Chitral as the hub of high-altitude tourism," said Omair Khattak, General Manager Investment, KPCTA. Furthermore, the Integrated Tourism Zones (ITZs) in Mankiyal (Swat) and Ganol (Mansehra) are being developed with road connectivity, land development, and eco-friendly facilities across 90 acres combined. To counter the high costs of private hotels in valleys like Naran and Kaghan, the KP government has introduced affordable camping pods, charging Rs. 3,500–5,000

per night. These pods are now open in locations including Sharan Lake, Gabeen Jaba, Mahaband, Bamburet, Bishigram, and more. Tourists visiting Tirich Mir will also get to witness the Kalash culture, a unique ethnic group believed to have migrated in the 18th century. Their festivals, dress, and cultural traditions add a vibrant cultural flavor to the region's natural beauty. To boost international climbing expeditions, KP has announced a complete royalty fee waiver for 2025–26, which usually ranges between \$2,500 and \$4,000.

CM Maryam reaffirms commitment to minority rights on Minorities Day

Additionally, an MoU with Italian Professor Pinelli will pave the way for establishing an Adventure Training School in Chitral, catering to both men and women. As preparations mount for Sunday's event, the air in Chitral is filled with anticipation. Local trekkers Hussain Shah and Mahmood Chitrali expressed their excitement and said this is our moment to shine. "We have invited friends from Peshawar and hope to show them what makes our mountains so special."

The path to Tirich Mir may be steep, but for the people of Pakistan and the tourism sector at large, it's a climb worth taking—one summit at a time.

Courtesy: The Nation

Army brass vows 'decisive' action against all proxies

The military brass on Thursday asserted that it was imperative to take "decisive and holistic actions at all levels against the Indian-backed and sponsored proxies", said the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) in a statement.

"Following its manifest defeat in direct aggression against Pakistan, post Pahalgam incident, India is now doubling down to further its nefarious agenda through its proxies of Fitna al-Khawarij and Fitna al-Hindustan," the statement read after the Corps Commanders' Conference held at the General Headquarters.

A day earlier, ISPR Director General Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry labelled Indian National Security Adviser Ajit Doval as the chief architect of terrorism in Pakistan, and spoke of Indian support for terrorist groups in Pakistan.

The meeting, chaired by Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, took stock of recent successes against terrorism. The forum resolved that the blood of the martyrs would not go in vain and that the safety and security of the people of Pakistan would remain the top priority for the Armed Forces of Pakistan.

Taking note of Indian Army's insinuations to offset its comprehensive defeat in the conflict with Pakistan in May

this year, the army chief stated, "Invoking third parties in what is unmistakably a bilateral military confrontation reflects a disingenuous attempt at bloc politics aimed at falsely projecting India's self-assigned role as a net security provider to accrue benefits in a region that is visibly growing disillusioned with Indian hegemonic ambitions and Hindutva-driven extremism."

The India-Pakistan conflict, triggered by the April 22 militant attack in Pahalgam, escalated into a four-day military confrontation in May involving missile strikes, drone warfare, and airstrikes. This marked a dangerous turning point between the two nuclear-armed neighbours and raised serious fears of nuclear escalation.

The forum also discussed the Iran-Israel war that lasted over a week. The US and Israel had launched airstrikes on Iran's nuclear facilities in June to neutralise its nuclear programme. The 12-day conflict underscored a broader global trend of states increasingly resorting to preemptive and retaliatory military action to address perceived threats.

Reflecting on these developments during the Corps Commanders Conference, the generals noted the growing use of force as a policy tool. The forum conducted a review of the pre-



vailing internal and external security dynamics, with particular emphasis on the recent developments in the Middle East and Iran and growing propensity for 'use of force' as a preferred policy tool, which warrants persistent development of self-reliant capabilities as well as national unity and resolve.

The army chief also shared the details of Pakistan's successful diplomatic manoeuvre, including recent visits to Iran, Türkiye, Azerbaijan, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE, where the COAS accompanied Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. The forum was also briefed on the visit of COAS Munir to the US, where meetings with top-tier leadership afforded an opportunity to share, first hand, Pakistan's objective perspective on bilateral, regional and extra-regional developments.

The forum was briefed on Pakistan's Army's ongoing drive with quick adaptation towards evolving threat

spectrum and the changing character of war. The COAS also appreciated the leadership of the Pakistan Navy and the Pakistan Air Force for further strengthening tri-services synergy.

In his concluding remarks, the army chief expressed full confidence in the operational readiness of the Pakistan Army against the complete threat spectrum.

In July last year, the government designated the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) as Fitna al-Khawarij, while mandating all institutions to use the term khariji (outcast) when referring to the perpetrators of terrorist attacks on Pakistan. In May this year, the government designated all terrorist organisations in Balochistan as Fitna al-Hindustan — a new phrase aimed at framing India's role in terrorism as a deliberate destabilisation strategy, potentially to galvanise domestic support.

Courtesy: Dawn

Historical Haram Gate to serve as Heritage Cafe from next month

A Heritage Cafe is going to be functional at the historical Haram Gate next month to showcase traditional Multani foods with cultured hospitality the City of Saints and mangoes is known for.

The novel initiative is the brainchild of Walled City Multan Authority (WCMA), to be operated under public private partnership. It will hopefully be inaugurated on Aug 1, however, if that does not happen due to unavoidable circumstances, then August 14, Independence Day, would be the most appropriate day for its opening, says Umair Ghazanfar, a spokesman for WCMA in Multan. Commissioner Multan Amir Kareem Khan is expected to inaugurate the facility at the monument. The initiative would help WCMA resolve the issue of



encroachments blocking the view of the 19th century monument, one of the six historical gates to the ancient walled city of Multan. It stands as a proud sentinel of centuries-old Islamic urbanization and Mughal architecture.

After the British annexation of

Multan in the mid-19th century, the original gate was damaged but was later rebuilt in the latter half of the 1800s with pointed arches and double-storey castigated towers. In 2018, the monument was restored to its historical form with the help from Italian funding and expertise as part of

the Multan Walled City Project that was aimed at preserving Multan's heritage and promote cultural tourism. Four traditional wooden carts have been developed by the authority to showcase traditional foods like Multani 'Doli Roti', 'Dal Moong', famous Rabri 'Kheer' of Haram Gate as a traditional dessert, besides tea, coffee, cold drinks and Paan shop, Umair said. While people would be allowed to enjoy traditional food at seating arrangements near the historical gate, tourists from foreign countries and those who would avail WCMA's 'Cycle Rani' ride facility for a tour to the Walled City would be allowed to enjoy breakfast with tea at the top of any of the two Haram Gate towers.

Courtesy: The Nation

Two Pakistani movies win awards at SCO Film Festival in China

On the international front, Pakistani cinema is making an undeniably strong impact. The slow yet steady resurgence of the industry is finally being recognized on the global stage. After years of struggle, Pakistani films are gaining the commercial and critical recognition they deserve.

Deemak and Nayab have won top honors at the Shanghai Co-operation Organization (SCO) Film Festival 2025. The five-day festival in Yangzhou, China, became a landmark moment for Pakistani films.

the film's prestigious win at the SCO Film Festival. In his post he added, "Grateful to the @scosectco_org, the Government of Pakistan, and the Ministry of Information for their support and recognition. Pakistani cinema continues to rise!

Actor Sonya Hussyn who played the role of 'Hiba' in the film was also in attendance along with Rashdi. After the historic win, she posted a selfie with the award deeming their win "a proud moment for Pakistan." And it absolutely is!

Written by Ayesha Muzzafar,



starring Sonya Hussyn, Samina Peerzada, and Faysal Quraishi, Deemak is proof that Pakistani cinema can deliver on both entertainment and quality.

Meanwhile, Nayab, directed by Umair Nasir Ali and written by Ali Abbasi Naqvi and Basit Naqvi, captivated audiences at the festival with its heartwarming and inspiring story of a middle-class girl's dreams of succeeding in the competitive, male-dominated world of cricket.

Starring Yumna Zaidi and Usama Khan, Nayab won the Special Jury Award and was selected as the winner out of 19 other films.

Director Umair Nasir Ali shared his joy on Instagram, saying, "This

is a proud and emotional moment for Pakistani cinema. Thank you to every single person who has been part of Nayab's journey. This belongs to all of you."

He also expressed hope for increased collaboration, adding, "I hope this win and our participation help open more doors for collaboration between filmmakers from Pakistan, China, and other SCO countries, so that our stories continue to travel, connect, and inspire across borders."

Here's to a brighter future for the Pakistani film industry!

Courtesy: Express Tribune



Patron

Ms Seema Mughal
Vice Chancellor

Editor

Dr Sabir Ahmed
Assistant Professor

Graphics & Layout

Shazia Anwar
Senior Graphic Designer

Greenwichians! Interested
in contributions!

Send an email to the editor
with your name, roll number,
and your work at
drsabir@greenwich.edu.pk.



Greenwich University, DK-10, 38th, Street,
Darakshan, Phase VI, Defence Housing Authority,
Karachi-75500, Pakistan

UAN: (021) 111-202-303; Tel: (021) 35840397-98
Email:gu@greenwich.edu.pk; URL: www.greenwich.edu.pk