

Greenwich University

# Positive Post

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.

### April in History

**8 April 1950:** Liaquat and Nehru sign the Liaquat-Nehru Pact.

**17 April 1953:** Muhammad Ali Bogra is sworn as the new prime minister.

**2 April 1954:** Pakistan forms an alliance with Turkey which, although not including military cooperation, opens the way to the Middle-East alliance due to its allowance of the entry of other nations.

**April 1962:** Elections for the National and provincial assembly were held on the basis of Basic Democracies

**9 April 1965:** Pakistan starts Operation Desert Hawk in the Rann of Kutch.

**10 April 1973:** 1973 Constitution of Pakistan enacted by the National Assembly.

**April 1979:** The military ruler Zia ul-Haq enacts the Hudood Ordinances.

**30 April 2002:** General Pervez Musharraf wins a referendum thus ensures 5 more years in office.

**22 April 2004:** The European Parliament voted in favour of a new trade and cooperation agreement with Pakistan, giving a vital boost to Islamabad's relations with the European Union.

**26 April 2006:** Pervez Musharraf lays foundation-stone of Diamir-Bhasha dam.

**13 April 2009:** Nizam-e-Adl Regulation 2009 is passed.

## Work on Chinese projects to continue at full pace: PM

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said enemies' evil designs to end the China-Pakistan friendship would never succeed, and all mega development projects being executed by Beijing would continue with full pace and might.

"I am here to express my heartfelt condolence with you on five Chinese engineers who laid their lives for the prosperity and development of our country, and assure you their precious blood would never go waste and perpetrators behind this cowardly terrorist attack might be taken to justice soon," he said during an interaction with Chinese engineers and workers employed at the Dasu hydropower project, during a visit to Upper Kohistan.

The prime minister was accompanied by Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong and federal ministers Amir Muqam and Atta Tarar. He reached Kass residential camp directly from the federal capital and expressed his deep condolences and sorrow over the demise of Chinese engineers in a suicide attack on their coach in the Bisham area of Shangla on March 26, 2024.

"I assure you and Chinese President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Li Qiang that we would never provide such an opportunity to our enemies in future to carry out such a cowardly act on our soil," he said.

Ambassador Jiang calls on govt to 'flush out terrorists' from the country.

PM Shehbaz said he was saddened by the Bisham terrorist attack.

"I visited the Chinese embassy just after this cowardly terrorist attack carried out by our enemies who want to disturb and damage our friendship which is higher than Himalayas and deeper than ocean, and offered sincerest condolence on behalf of me and nation to the Chinese people and government," he said.

The prime minister said he had constituted an inquiry committee to probe the Bisham attack and would act on its findings.

"We would never hesitate to act and take to justice all those involved in this attack as the committee constituted just after the Bisham incident shared its findings with us," he said.

The prime minister said that the security of Chinese nationals working on the Dasu hydropower project and the rest of the country would be beefed up to a level where nobody could execute another 'cowardly' act.

He said that the government had taken the Bisham attack seriously and held a high-level meeting, attended by Chief of Army Staff Asim Munir, intelligence chiefs and chief ministers of provinces and other high-ranking officials.

It evolved a strategy to ensure no such subversive activities take place again in the country.

"We are going to hold a follow-up meeting



within days to finalise our strategy to provide foolproof security to the Chinese nationals working on the Dasu hydropower project and other development projects in progress across the country," Mr Sharif said.

Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong thanked the prime minister for his visit to Dasu to extend condolences and sorrow to his country natives over the Bisham attack.

"I am thankful to Mr Sharif for his visit here and condolence and all those actions taken by him to console Chinese and their families on Bisham attack, we want such a foolproof security that no such attacks could happen in future," the Chinese ambassador said.

He said the Pakistani government should also take extraordinary measures to flush out terrorism from the country.

PM Sharif and others present on the occasion observed a silence of 30 seconds for the departed souls.

*Courtesy: Dawn*

## US pledges to expand security partnership with Pakistan

The State Department said that the United States would continue to expand its security partnership with Pakistan.

At a news briefing in Washington, a US official also emphasised the need to ensure that international assistance sent to Afghanistan did not reach "unintended recipients".

When reminded of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's offer to work with the US on the shared targets of international peace and regional security, Spokesperson Matthew Miller said Washington was also willing to do so.

The prime minister made this offer earlier this week while responding to a friendly letter from US President Joe Biden, expressing the desire to strengthen bilateral ties.

"We will continue to expand the security partnership between the United States and Pakistan," Mr Miller said, when asked how the US could help Pakistan fight the banned



Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and other militant groups. "We have spoken to that a number of times from this podium. It has been a priority for us and will continue to be so," he added.

Mr Miller disagreed with a journalist who claimed that the United States was keen to condemn the arrest of opposition leaders in India, but ignored those in Pakistan. "I would not agree with that characterisation. We have made clear on a number of occasions that we want to

see everyone in Pakistan treated consistent with the rule of law, treated with respect for human rights as is our position with any country in the world," he said

Responding to a question about an Indian intelligence operator's attempt to assassinate a Sikh lawyer in New York, the US official said:

"We have made clear to the government of India that we want to see them conduct a full investigation and we continue to look forward to the results of that investigation."

Responding to another question about UN aid reaching militants in Afghanistan, he said: "We require all of our partners' safeguard in place to ensure the assistance reaches those who need it."

The United States, he said, also monitors "all of our assistance programmes" to ensure that US assistance did not "indirectly benefit the Taliban or could be diverted to unintended recipients."

*Courtesy: Dawn*

## Saudi team in Pakistan to hold investment talks

A Saudi delegation led by Foreign Minister Faisal Bin Farhan Al Saud arrived in Islamabad on Monday to lay the groundwork for the upcoming visit of the Saudi crown prince later this year and to kick-start formal negotiations on potential investment projects between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.

Upon his arrival, the Saudi delegation which is on a two-day visit was welcomed by Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar at the airport. During its stay, the delegation is scheduled to meet President Asif Zardari, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Foreign Minister Dar, Chief of Army Staff Gen Asim Munir, and the apex committee of the Special Investment Facilitation Council.

A statement issued by the Foreign Office highlighted that the visit aimed to “expedite follow-up on the understanding reached between Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Mohammed bin Salman, crown prince and prime minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, during their recent meeting



in Makkah Al Mukarramah to enhance bilateral economic cooperation.”

During that meeting, the Saudi crown prince pledged to expedite the first tranche of a \$5 billion investment in Pakistan. Overall, Saudi Arabia has committed to investing \$25 billion in Pakistan over the next five years, focusing on energy, IT, minerals, defence, and agriculture sectors under the Special Investment Facilitation Council.

The Pakistani officials will present specific projects for potential invest-

ment to the visiting Saudi officials, who will assess their feasibility. “No MoUs will be signed during this visit. The agreements, once finalised, will be signed during the visit of Crown Prince Muhammed bin Salman,” said a source.

“This visit is aimed at lending positive impetus to enhanced bilateral cooperation and a mutually rewarding economic partnership,” the FO said.

Particular interest has been shown in the Reko Diq gold and copper mines, with Barrick Gold Corp

revealing last August that there might be involvement from Saudi Arabia’s Public Investment Fund, given the Pakistan government’s 25 per cent equity in the project.

Further investment opportunities in the mining sector and some state-owned enterprises, which Pakistan is considering privatising, will also be proposed. According to a statement shared by state-run PTV, the delegation will consult on the next phase of investment and implementation.

The visit will also advance the achievement of the SIFC’s objectives and boost the economic recovery of Pakistan.

The Saudi FM is accompanied by a high-level delegation that includes Abdul Rahman Abdul Mohsen Al-Fadley, the minister of water and agriculture; Bandar Ibrahim AlKhorayef, the minister of industry and mineral resources; Badr AlBadr, deputy minister of investment; Mohammad Mazed Al Towajjri, and other officials.

*Courtesy: Dawn*

## COAS links sovereignty with financial stability

Chief of Army Staff Gen Asim Munir on Friday emphasised the crucial connection between economic stability and the country’s sovereignty, and vowed to combat the disruptive effects of social media trolls to prevent distractions from impeding national progress and development.

He was speaking at the Green Pakistan Initiative (GPI) Conference, hosted by the military at the General Headquarters. The conference, attended by key civil and military officials including Federal Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal and Federal Minister for National Food Security Rana Tanveer Hussain, showcased various agricultural advancements under GPI.

The GPI aims to revolutionise agriculture through the introduction of model farms, water management schemes, technology innovations, and investment partnerships. The initiative, launched in July last year,

is aimed at ensuring food security and enhancing agricultural productivity across Pakistan.

The Fauji Foundation, through its subsidiary Fon-Grow, is leading the corporate farming initiative.

Gen Munir stated, “Complete independence is not possible without economic stability,” underscoring that economic growth is a foundational element for maintaining national sovereignty.

With the aggravation of country’s economic turmoil, the military has significantly broadened its role in economic domain. The Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), which aims to secure foreign investments and boost economic stability, exemplifies this trend. Moreover, the involvement of the military in facilitating major agreements with countries like Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Qatar shows the expanding economic influence of the military.



The army chief reassured military’s continued support for the economic development of the country, affirming that “Army will continue to provide all possible support for the economic development of Pakistan”.

Gen Munir used the occasion to highlight the military’s intensifying worries about the social media challenge. “Negative propaganda and social media trolls cannot distract us from working for the development and prosperity of Pakistan and its people,” he maintained. In his remarks at the

conference, he urged national unity against detractors, saying, “We are all a united team Pakistan... Inshallah with the cooperation and support of the people, all efforts of those who distract and obstruct Pakistan’s development journey will fail.”

The federal ministers, who participated in the conference, praised the “transformative potential” of the GPI. “The initiatives will introduce contemporary best practices in Pakistan’s agriculture sector,” they remarked.

*Courtesy: Dawn*

## Internet 'back' after service disruptions countrywide



According to Down detector, which tracks outages by collating status reports from several sources, users reported issues with the services of three internet service providers Pakistan Telecommunication Company Ltd (PTCL), Transworld Home, and Nayatel shortly after noon.

Around 4pm, the internet tracker showed that user reports indicated no current problems with the latter two and possible problems with PTCL.

Internet monitor Netblocks also reported the disruption followed by the recovery. It said operators had attributed the disturbance to a "technical issue".

For PTCL, users had reported a disruption in services primarily from Lahore, Karachi and

Rawalpindi. For Transworld Home, issues were earlier reported from Lahore, Karachi, Rawalpindi and Peshawar.

For Nayatel, users had reported issues from Rawalpindi, Lahore and near Okara.

In an email to customers, seen by Dawn.com, Transworld Home said that there was an "unexpected nationwide outage affecting internet services in Pakistan".

Today's disruption came as access to social media platform X has been largely disrupted in the country since February 17, after former commissioner Rawalpindi Liaquat Ali Chhatta made a statement in front of the media claiming that the "elections were rigged".

*Courtesy: Dawn*

## China to continue to be main driver of the global economic uplift: Ambassador Hashmi

While commenting on China's economic growth target of 5 percent proposed for the current year, Pakistan Ambassador to China Khalil Hashmi said that this makes it clear that Beijing will continue to be the main driver of global economic development, a main trading partner of most nations in the world, and an important source of peace, stability, and prosperity.

He said in an interview with a Chinese newspaper that China's growth will drive the growth of the rest of the world. For example, the miracle of China's electric vehicles has promoted the advancement of renewable energy and had a great impact on the rest of the world.

Hashmi, who assumed as Pakistan's

ambassador in China in November 2023, was invited to listen to China's Two Sessions for the first time.

He said that the Two Sessions are an important embodiment of the democratic practice of China and attract attention at home and abroad.

He said that there are many highlights of this year's Two Sessions and first of all is China's economy. Despite the face of some "backwinds", such as industrial chain, supply chain adjustment, geopolitical tensions, and other factors, China's economy still achieved 5.2 percent growth last year. By any standard, this is very good news for Beijing and the rest of the world.

## Mahira Khan delights at Arijit Singh's concert in Dubai



At a recent concert held in Dubai, renowned Indian playback singer Arijit Singh captivated the audience with his soulful rendition of a song from the Bollywood movie, *Raees*, which starred superstars Shah Rukh Khan and Mahira Khan.

Coincidentally, Mahira Khan was spotted among the attendees of the concert, gracefully immersed in Singh's performance while elegantly clad in a black attire.

An intriguing moment unfolded

when Singh initially failed to recognize Khan's presence, prompting him to express surprise during his interaction with the audience. Eventually, Singh recalled his past collaboration with Khan and extended his heartfelt gratitude for her attendance.

The incident added a touch of charm and camaraderie to the memorable evening, leaving attendees delighted by both the musical performance and the unexpected reunion between the talented singer and actress.

*Courtesy: Dawn*



China Contributes 30% of Global Economic Growth

China contributes 30 percent of global economic growth. This year's growth target is also about 5 percent, which once again proves the self-confidence of China.

Hashmi said that diversification is important to the current Chinese economy. While providing policy support to traditional industries,

Pakistan should also diversify to high-standard development, constantly innovate, and promote Chinese-style modernization.

On this basis, this year's Two Sessions continue to stress innovation and high-standard development, as well as new quality productivity. This will be a very important policy direction for China in the future.

*Courtesy: weneenglish.pk*

## Ready to join hands for regional peace, PM tells Biden

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif responded to a letter penned by US President Joe Biden, seeking enduring ties with Pakistan, by saying that Islamabad was willing to engage with Washington for the common goals of regional and global peace.

The letter from the US president came at a time when a newly elected government led by Shehbaz Sharif is grappling with economic crisis as well as security challenges on its western border, particularly the cross-border attacks claimed by the outlawed Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

The letter shared with the media by the PM's Office on Sunday said that Pakistan was willing to work with the US towards "a common goal of global peace and security and development and prosperity of the region".

PM Shehbaz, who became premier after Feb 8 elections with the help of his allies, termed the relationship with the US of key importance as he welcomed the collaborations with the US administration in several fields, including the energy sector.

The PM said both countries had

been working together on various significant initiatives in energy, climate change, agriculture, health and education sectors, welcoming the cooperation in the energy sector and the Green Alliance Framework.

In a recent State Department briefing, spokesperson Matthew Miller had reassured the global community that the US would not allow Afghanistan to re-emerge as a base for terrorism.

"The United States remains vigilant against the evolving threat posed by terrorist groups, including IS-K, and has maintained an unwavering focus on terrorism since President Joe Biden took office three years ago," Miller said.

The US, he said, was "working both unilaterally and with its partners to successfully disrupt threats across the globe and degrade IS".

The relationship between Pakistan and the US faced a setback after former PM Imran Khan blamed the US for his ouster from power using a diplomatic cable cipher to corroborate his claim. During his term in office, Mr Khan never received any correspondence from the White House.



After Imran Khan's ouster in a no-trust move, Shehbaz Sharif became the premier in April 2022 but he was not congratulated by Mr Biden upon his election either.

Nonetheless, the letter by Mr Biden on Friday was the first communication between the new government whose credibility was questioned by a US diplomat during a congressional committee hearing citing irregularities in Feb 8 polls and the Biden-led US administration.

In the letter sent to the PM, President Biden assured Islamabad that the US would continue to stand by Pakistan amid the most pressing global and regional challenges.

He termed the enduring partnership between the two nations critical to

"ensuring the security of our people and people around the world".

In the letter, the US president recalled the realms in which Washington is helping Pakistan, such as health security, economic growth, and access to education for all.

The message from the US president arrived over a week after a US diplomat questioned the credibility of the general elections ahead of his appearance at a Congressional panel.

Assistant Secretary of State Donald Lu had submitted a written statement expressing Washington's concerns about irregularities in the February 8 elections while also emphasising the need to stay engaged with Pakistan to help it navigate through the crises it was facing.

*Courtesy: Dawn*

## Afghan minister asks TTP, Islamabad to negotiate

Acknowledging that the activities by an outlawed militant organisation inside Pakistan were leading the international community to point fingers at Afghanistan, a senior Afghan Taliban leader urged the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Islamabad to sit together and negotiate for peace.



"We ask the government of Pakistan and advise the brothers (TTP) who are fighting with them to come together and talk," Muhammad Nabi Omari, deputy interior minister of the interim Taliban government in Afghanistan told an iftar gathering in the southeastern Khost town.

The Afghan Taliban have been privately urging Pakistan and the TTP to engage in direct negotiations to end over a two-decade-long conflict that has claimed thousands of lives and seen massive displacement of people in the tribal region straddling Afghanistan.

But this marks the first time a senior Afghan Taliban figure has chosen to publicly speak on the subject, not only calling for direct engagement between Islamabad and the TTP, but also chiding the militant conglomerate.

Attempts by the Afghan interim regime to "facilitate" talks between the two sides in the past have ended in deadlock, prompting Islamabad to accuse Kabul of providing sanctuary and urging it to take action against the militant organisation.

The Afghan Taliban have strenuously denied that the TTP is using

the Afghan soil and have been urging Pakistan to look inward to address its internal security problems.

Relations between the two countries have been strained ever since Pakistan carried out airstrikes in Khost and Paktika in retaliation for the death of seven of its soldiers in a suicide bombing in North Waziristan in March.

Omari cautioned Islamabad and the TTP that both sides could not win the war. Citing the Afghan Taliban experience, the senior Taliban figure said that even if Pakistan had a ten million strong army, it could not eliminate its opponents.

Likewise, he said, the TTP too could not win this war. He said that the Afghan Taliban could win the war because the whole Afghan nation was behind them, supporting them with food and shelter.

In the same breath, Omari again chided the TTP without naming them, that it possibly did not enjoy mass support amongst the Pakistani

population.

It was not immediately clear what prompted a high profile figure to speak on an issue, which the Kabul leadership has been shying away from discussing publicly citing its sensitivity.

Pakistan's stated policy has thus far been that it would not engage in any direct talks with the TTP and that the Afghan interim regime is bound under the terms of Doha agreement to take action against the outfit.

A highly placed source said that Pakistan had collected evidence of the TTP's involvement in the killing of Chinese workers in Besham, which would be shared with Beijing, which is likely to take it up with Kabul.

China has been a major investor in Afghanistan and has senior level diplomatic presence in both countries, recently having formally accepted the credentials of Kabul's ambassador.

*Courtesy: Dawn*

## Saudi Arabia eyes cooperation in agriculture sector

Riyadh told Islamabad that Saudi agriculture companies were looking at Pakistan with great interest and expressed the hope that both countries would benefit from joint ventures for improving the value chain of agriculture economy.

This transpired at Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's meeting with Faisal Al-Ibrahim, Minister of Economy and Planning, and Eng Abdulrahman Abdulmohsen Al-Fadley, Minister of Environment, Water and Agriculture of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, on the sidelines of a special World Economic Forum meeting.

At the conclusion of the WEF meeting, PM Shehbaz called on Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman and both leaders reiterated to honour the commitment made during the former's recent visit to kingdom. The two leaders also vowed to enhance bilateral cooperation.

During his meeting with the ministers of economy and agriculture, the PM highlighted the potential of Pakistani agriculture sector and underscored that Pakistan could become a bread basket for the kingdom and could play a critical role in ensuring food security not only for the two countries but for the entire region.

The Saudi minister for agriculture briefed the premier on the fruitful discussions that he and his delegation held in Islamabad on April 15-16.

He said the kingdom valued Pakistan's strategic and competitive advantages in the field of agriculture and considers Pakistani agricultural sector as a significant area of cooperation.

According to the PM's Office, the premier also held a meeting with Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman Al-Saud, the Minister of Energy. The Saudi energy minister was accompanied by the CEO & president of Aramco and the chairman of ACWA Power.

The PM underscored various avenues available for energy cooperation between the two countries. The Saudi energy



minister showed keen interest in developing energy projects identified by the PM.

PM Shehbaz also held a meeting with Saudi Minister of Commerce Dr Majid bin Abdullah Al-Qasabi. He said the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) was playing an active role in promoting and facilitating foreign investment in the country. The Saudi minister told the prime minister that on the directives of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the kingdom was prioritising trade and investment in Pakistan.

PM Shehbaz also told a WEF plenary his government was working for deep-rooted structural reforms and meaningful austerity.

He said natural resources are biggest assets of Pakistan and so are the country's youth.

"The youth are our biggest asset and we have to provide them will modern tools and technology, including education in information technology and artificial intelligence and vocational training, so that they can become self-earners and establish small and medium size businesses and contribute to the nation-building efforts in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia," he told the plenary meeting of World Economic Forum's special session on the theme of "Rejuvenating Growth".

He said it was for the first time in the country's history that after getting credible input from agencies he had removed high-level officers who were not functioning well and had grey record.

"Our revenue sector is in tatters. What we receive annually in revenue, we lose four times more due to leakages in the system. Unless we plug loopholes we will not recover from our problems in revenue collection," he explained.

He said there were also problems of inflation and debt trap which was a "death trap".

The premier also recalled how the Sharif family had turned its fortunes around due to "hard work" and vowed to replicate this secret to rid the country of economic challenges.

PM Shehbaz said his government would promote agriculture through modern technology and by providing best seeds and fertilisers to farmers.

"A huge task is ahead of us and we have to go for higher exports and incentivise our exporters and utilise our mineral resources and fertile land," he added.

PM Shehbaz and Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim recalled the historical ties between Pakistan and Malaysia, especially in the fields of education, science & technology and trade, and undertook to further enhance the cooperation in the future, APP adds.

During a meeting with his Malaysian counterpart, Mr Sharif invited a trade and business delegation from Malaysia to Pakistan to discuss enhancing trade and investment relations.

The two sides agreed to have the next meeting of Joint Ministerial Commission in Islamabad soon.

*Courtesy: Dawn*

## Pakistan PM Shehbaz Sharif Visits Saudi Arabia

Prime Minister of Pakistan Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif will visit the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from 6 to 8 April 2024, during the last days of Ramadan. This would be the Prime Minister's first foreign visit since his election.



The Prime Minister will be accompanied by Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Defence; Finance, Information and Economic Affairs. He will perform Umrah and offer prayers at the Masjid Nabwi Al-Sharif.

The Prime Minister is expected to meet the Crown Prince and Prime Minister HRH Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz and discuss issues of mutual interest. The leaders will also exchange views on regional and global developments.

Pakistan and KSA have longstanding fraternal relations rooted in religious and cultural affinity. The people of Pakistan have the deepest respect and regard for the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, His Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud.

The leadership of both countries is committed to advancing the fraternal ties and mutually rewarding economic and investment relations.

*Courtesy: Arab New*

## Business leaders in Karachi give PM food for thought

As Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif sat down with the business community to find ways to uplift the economy through exports, his resolve was met with apprehensions from industry leaders who said it was “almost impossible” to do business under the current circumstances, particularly with high energy costs and inconsistent government policies.

Posing tough questions during an hour-long meeting at the CM House, Karachi’s business community appreciated the PM’s “determination”, but advised him to focus on bringing about political stability to “turn around” the economy.

Appreciating the newly-installed government for moving forward with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that brought some consistency to the money market and contained inflation, they suggested PM Shehbaz initiate trade talks with India and “shake hands” with imprisoned PTI founding chairman Imran Khan apparently for political stability.

PM Shehbaz, who had arrived in the port city on his maiden visit after his election, said the meeting was an attempt to listen to the “brilliant minds of business, absorb what they say and put it into action” for a comprehensive economic growth roadmap.

“You all are great minds of business... Today we need you to take a step forward and bring this rental business to an end. Let’s focus on genuine industrial and agricultural growth and double the exports in the next five years. It’s difficult but not impossible. It’s an article of faith for me. I would listen to you and make a plan to put that into action.”

In a veiled reference to the booming economy of Bangladesh, he recalled ‘East Pakistan’, which was “once considered” a burden on the country, but had made tremendous strides in industrial growth.

“I was quite young when ... we



were told that it’s a burden on our shoulders... Today you all know where that ‘burden’ has reached [in terms of economic growth]. And we feel ashamed when we look towards them,” said PM Shehbaz. Trade ties with India

After the PM’s brief speech, the house was opened for a question and answer session, where business leaders voiced their appreciation for the government’s recent moves, but made more demands.

They also shared proposals for economic policies to achieve desired results.

There was a sense of concern among the business leaders over the political instability in the country for which they even advised the PM to take initiative as the head of the government. “You have made a few handshakes after taking the charge that has produced good results and progress on the IMF deal is one of them,” said Arif Habib, the chief of Arif Habib Group a capital market giant.



“I suggest you do a few more handshakes. One of them is regarding trade with India, which would greatly benefit our economy. Secondly, you should also [patch up] with a resident of Adiala Jail (a reference to jailed PTI leader Imran Khan). Try to fix things at that level as well and I believe that you can do it.”

The PM avoided responding directly to the questions aimed at political stability, but claimed to have noted down his proposals for economic growth and assured him that he would soon invite businessmen from all across the country to Islamabad and sit with them “till all the issues aren’t resolved”.

Then came a presentation from Zubair Motiwala, a prominent industrialist and chief of the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP), who heads the Karachi businessmen’s body called Businessmen Group (BMG).

In his presentation, he questioned the government’s ambitious plan amid the existing business regime. “The prime minister is keen to sup-

port the industry by doubling exports and reducing business costs but it seems impossible in the current situation,” said a point of his presentation shared by the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI).

“Due to the increasing cost of doing business with these gas and electricity prices, our competitors would soon take us over and get Pakistan’s export orders. It is surprising that we want to increase exports and local manufacturing, but we are increasing energy prices by including cross-subsidies, which has resulted in a gas tariff of Rs2,600 per unit for industrial heating and Rs3,100 per unit for captive power.”

‘Fair gas price’  
He referred to the gas prices six months ago when they were charged at Rs1,150 and Rs1,350 per unit respectively and asked “if any business can survive with such an increase in the current international market situation”.

“The industry is willing to pay 100 per cent of the gas price without any subsidy. We don’t want any subsidy. We just want the industry to get a fair gas price,” said Mr Motiwala. In his presentation, he pointed out that the “unnecessary capacity” of power plants had put a burden on Pakistan in the form of capacity charges, resulting in a situation where surplus electricity was neither sold nor provided to industries at lower rates.

“This unnecessary capacity is also increasing the circular debt issue in the power sector. Therefore, it is necessary to introduce a scheme to reduce the flat tariff for industrial consumers, which will increase electricity consumption and also help reduce the circular debt issue,” he added.

Earlier, the premier was received by Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori, CM Murad Ali Shah, Sindh ministers and senior officials at Karachi airport. The PM also went to the Quaid-i-Azam’s mausoleum to pay his respects.

Courtesy: Dawn

## Sana Mir named ambassador of ICC Women's T20 World Cup Qualifier

The International Cricket Council (ICC) unveiled former Pakistan captain Sana Mir as the ambassador for the ICC Women's T20 World Cup Qualifier on Wednesday.

Sana Mir, who has captained Pakistan in 137 international matches, will be monitoring the 10-team tournament, where the two finalists will qualify for the Women's T20 World Cup in Bangladesh. The former captain expressed excitement to be part of the tournament as an ambassador, hoping to witness some great cricketing action as ten teams battle out for two coveted spots.

"Other than the big qualification opportunity for two teams, the tournament will provide excellent exposure to the Associate Member teams and their players," said Sana Mir. "The women's game has become more and more competitive in recent years and the 10 nations involved in the Qualifier possess a number of quality players."

Experts advise people to use pineapple to avoid heatstroke

The former all-rounder has represented Pakistan in several qualifying events during her 14-year career and will share her experience with the players participating in the tournament. "My aim is to talk to the various teams and players during the Qualifier and help guide them on how to deal with the pressure of these events and what

it takes to succeed. "Pakistan had a great record in these events, and I in particular have fond memories of the 2008 edition of the 50 over World Cup qualifier event that I played."

She along with Netherlands' Caroline de Fouw jointly won the Player of the Series award during the 2008 ICC Women's Cricket World Cup Qualifying Series. Mir also believes that the gap between the top-ranked teams and Associate Member teams is getting smaller due to increased playing opportunities for players through ICC pathway events.

"The players are playing a lot more and getting decent exposure through their domestic tournaments and the ICC pathway programme. For women's cricket to grow further, the regional events and the Qualifier are incredibly important.

Four-day PCR training for S Asian medical entomologists ends

She picked Sri Lanka and Ireland as favourites but did not rule out the possibility of upsets from lower-ranked teams. "While Sri Lanka and Ireland will probably be favourites to qualify alongside Thailand, teams like Scotland, Netherlands, United Arab Emirates, Uganda and Zimbabwe surely have the potential to cause major upsets and make their way through to the semis and



eventually to the final as well.

"I am particularly keen to see the progress of some of the Zimbabwe players whom I worked with in my mentorship role during the inaugural ICC Women's U19 T20 World Cup in South Africa last year," she concluded.

The ten-team tournament will commence on 25 April in Abu Dhabi. All matches will be played at the Tolerance Oval and Zayed Cricket Stadium. The teams participating have been divided into two groups of five each. Group A comprises Scotland, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Uganda, and the USA, whereas Group B consists of Ireland, the Netherlands, the UAE, Vanuatu, and Zimbabwe.

*Courtesy: The Nation*

## Hayley Matthews' dream Karachi tour continues

West Indies Women's captain Hayley Matthews produced another stellar performance with the bat and the ball to inspire her side to a comfortable seven-wicket victory over Pakistan Women, taking a 2-0 lead in the five-T20I series at the National Bank Stadium.

Matthews returned figures of 4-0-25-3 to limit Pakistan to 121 for seven, then scored a 43-ball 58 with 10 fours as the West Indies achieved the target with 10 balls to spare. The outstanding all-round performance earned Matthews her third Player of the Match award, after she had picked up two awards in the ODI series, also earning her the Player of the ODI Series award.

Together with Shemaine Campbelle (21),

Matthews added 67 runs for the second wicket after Qiana Joseph (seven) had departed at the score of 21. After Campbelle was the third batter to be dismissed at the score of 95 in the 15th over, Chedean Nation (17 not out) and Chinelle Henry (eight not out) made sure there were no late hiccups.

Two Palestinian teens killed by Israeli gunfire in West Bank, Palestinian officials say

Earlier, Muneeba Ali scored 55 off 47 balls with five fours as Pakistan collected 121 for seven in their innings. The top-order batters got starts but were unable to convert them into big scores. Gull Feroza scored 14, Nida Dar scored 13, and Sidra Amin got 10. Apart from these four players, no



other batter crossed the double figures.

Apart from Matthews' three wickets, Henry, Karishma Ramharack, and Afy Fletcher took one wicket each. Pakistan will attempt to keep the series alive when the third T20I is played at the National Bank Stadium.

*Courtesy: The Nation*

**Patron:**  
Ms. Seema Mughal  
*Vice Chancellor*  
**Editor:**  
Dr. Sabir Ahmed  
*Assistant Professor*  
**Graphics & Layout:**  
Shazia Anwar

Greenwichians interested  
in contributions!  
Shoot an email to the editor,  
including your name,  
roll number and your work at  
drsabir@greenwich.edu.pk

*Greenwich University*

Greenwich University, DK-10, 38th Street, Darakshan, Phase VI,  
Defence Housing Authority, Karachi-75500, Pakistan  
UAN: (021)111-202-303; Tel: (021) 35840397-98; Fax: (021)35851910  
Email: gu@greenwich.edu.pk ; URL: www.greenwich.edu.pk