



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.

June in History

3 June 1947: British Government decided to bifurcate British India, into two sovereign states-India and Pakistan.

June 25 1958: Presidential rule imposed in East Pakistan.

June 1 1962: Soviet Union awarded Lenin Prize to Faiz Ahmed Faiz for his literary contribution.

June 7 1962: SUPARCO launched Pakistan's first weather rocket, Rehbar-I from Somniani.

8 June 1962: 1962 Constitution is promulgated. National Assembly elected. Ayub Khan takes oath of first President of Pakistan under new constitution.

1 June 1964: Pakistan acquires from the United States its first submarine, the PNS Ghazi.

16 June 1993: Bosnian Muslim refugees leave Croatia for Pakistan.

26 June 2004: Prime Minister Zafarullah Khan Jamali steps down and nominates Ch. Shujaat Hussain as his interim successor.

19 June 2009: Operation Rah-e-Nijat started by Pakistan.

June 2010: Orakzai and Kurram offensive, battle ends in a Pakistani victory.

4 June 2010: Operation Madad by Pakistan navy.

5 June 2013: Nawaz Sharif is elected Prime Minister of Pakistan, following the Pakistan Muslim League (N)'s victory in the 2013 general elections for the 3rd time.

'Neutral' Pakistan will skip Ukraine summit in Switzerland

Pakistan has turned down Switzerland's invitation to the Ukraine Peace Summit citing scheduling conflicts and other considerations.

"Pakistan received an invitation from Switzerland for the Conference, which is being held from 15th to 16th of June. However, due to a host of factors, including scheduling challenges, Pakistan is not participating in this conference," FO Spokes-person Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said at the weekly media briefing.

The two-day summit being held at the Bürgenstock resort outside the city of Lucerne in Switzerland is designed to gather international support for Ukraine's vision of peace, detailed in Ukrainian President Zelensky's ten-point peace formula.

Despite the invite to 160 countries, only about 90 are attending, with notable absences including China, and several important countries from Global South, which have shown unwillingness to join an anti-Russia forum and peace discussions in Moscow's absence.

Beijing rejected the allegation. Expectations for tangible outcomes are modest because of Moscow's absence.

Islamabad's decision to skip the conference is a diplomatic move to maintain neutrality in the conflict, especially since Russia is not participating in it. Pakistan has historically maintained good relations with Ukraine, having purchased weapons systems from it in the past, but has also been strengthening ties with Russia in recent years.

"We reiterate our call for immediate cessation of hostilities and stress the need for diplomacy and dialogue for an early negotiated end to the conflict between Ukraine and Russia," the spokesperson said.

"Pakistan stands for universal and consistent application of UN Charter principles, including non-use or threat of use of force, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of states, pacific settlement of disputes, and equal security for all states," she added.

Spokesperson Baloch rejected Delhi's allegations of involvement in latest surge in violence in India-held Kashmir.

"The Indian occupation authorities and media have a habit of making such irresponsible statements. No one takes these allegations seriously," she said. Responding to another question, she said these were unsubstantiated news reports that did not merit her comment.



Police in India-held Kashmir have accused Pakistan of orchestrating a series of attacks that resulted in the deaths of 12 individuals and left dozens injured over the past three days.

UN report: Pakistan welcomed the report of the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory including East Jerusalem and Israel, saying time has come for Israel to be held accountable.

The spokesperson said: "We call on global conscience to force Israel towards an immediate and unconditional ceasefire. It is also critical to bring an end to the war on the people of Gaza."

She also welcomed the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2735 and hoped for a permanent and sustainable ceasefire and an end to the suffering of the Palestinians in Gaza.

Courtesy: Dawn

Miss Pakistan Holds Inaugural Crowning Ceremony In Lahore

Sonia Ahmed, the president of Miss Pakistan, believes that all girls can contribute to the pageant industry as there are so many pageants of all levels.

The Miss Pakistan held an inaugural crowning ceremony at a local hotel in Lahore on Friday evening. The ceremony marked the beginning of an annual event.

Since 2020, Lahore has been the epicenter of Pakistan's beauty pageant industry. Areej Chaudhary was the first beauty queen crowned in Pakistan, and since then, numerous titles have been awarded.

Sonia Ahmed, President of Miss Pakistan, emphasized, "I believe that all girls can contribute to the pageant industry as there are so many pageants of all levels. I don't feel comfortable getting Pakistani girls to compete for just one title. If they are eligible, we welcome them to the ceremony, prepare them, and send them to international pageants. Given our limited numbers, the best approach is to provide opportunities for these girls to represent Pakistan."

Dr. Shafaq Akhtar, Miss Pakistan Universal, was the first to bring international titles back to Pakistan. Recently married, she now holds the title of Mrs. Pakistan World 2024, her 7th winning title. Trained by a certified pageant coach in Malaysia, Dr. Akhtar

has been coaching new participants since 2023 and continues to mentor the 2024 batch.

Sonia Ahmed added, "We subsidize everything for our girls because pageant training is crucial. Dr. Shafaq has not only won titles but has also significantly contributed to pageantry. She now focuses on training girls for future competitions. Everything is by Pakistanis and for Pakistanis."

The winners of the 2024 Miss Pakistan, Mrs. Pakistan, Ms. Pakistan, and Mr. Pakistan titles are:

Wajiha Ihsan – Miss Pakistan World 2024, a software engineer in New Zealand

Usman Janjua – Mr. Pakistan World 2024, an international model in the UK

Dr. Shafaq Akhtar – Mrs. Pakistan World 2024, six-time titleholder

Dr. Rabail Aslam – Ms. Pakistan World 2024, a pathologist from the USA

Ali Javaid – Mr. Pakistan Universal 2024, a 19-year-old aspiring actor from Karachi

Kokab Mahmood – Miss Pakistan Universal 2024, an airline industry professional and swimming instructor from the UK

Mehwish Butt – Miss Pakistan Global 2024, a pathologist studying at Sargodha Medical College

Maryam Raja – Ms. Pakistan Universe 2024, data analyst.



These winners will represent Pakistan internationally in 2024.

Sonia Ahmed stated, "We always want to encourage girls and boys with strong educational backgrounds. It's important to highlight that career-oriented individuals can participate in pageantry, which is distinct from the modeling industry. These participants are not models; they are doctors, lawyers, software engineers the true face of Pakistan. They balance their careers, families, and pageant life, embodying the strength and ambition of Pakistani women."

It may be mentioned here that Miss Pakistan World organization was established in Ottawa, Canada, in 2002 and relocated to Toronto in 2004.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Lahore emerged as the central hub for Pakistan's pageant industry, an initiative led by Sonia Ahmed.

Courtesy: www.pakistanpoint.com

PM Shehbaz acknowledges IMF's role in budget preparation

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif confirmed that the federal budget for next year was prepared in collaboration with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). His remarks came as Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb announced significant amendments to the proposed finance bill for 2024-25.

"We had to prepare the budget jointly with the IMF" because of the prevailing circumstances and ground realities, the prime minister said in the National Assembly when he took the floor briefly to respond to some points raised by a PTI member regarding the prevailing sense of deprivation in south Punjab, taxes on fertilisers and burden on farmers.

PM Shehbaz expressed hope for a positive response from the lender, but refrained from making a premature statement. He said if the government received any response from the IMF, he would share it with parliament, expressing hope for some "good news". However, it was unclear if the premier was referring to the IMF bailout or relaxations related to fertiliser.

The prime minister's statement came shortly after Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb departed from some critical reform measures announced in his budget speech on June 12, apparently after the government came under pressure from some influential industrialists and doled out more taxpayer money to appease public sector employees working in parliament.

The entire staff of the National Assembly and the Senate would get honoraria equivalent to three basic salaries, he said in his winding-up speech on the budget debate in the National Assembly.

Mr Aurangzeb said the government was progressing positively with the IMF, insisting that a bailout was necessary to achieve a sustainable solution to prevailing national economic and financial challenges.

Key changes to the original budget include the revival of zero rating (zero sales tax) on local sales of export industries and stationery items. To balance the revenue loss from these amendments to Finance Bill 2024-

25, the government has reduced allocations for the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) by Rs250 billion.

This amount would now be shown against the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) at Rs350bn instead of Rs100bn earlier, but this notional funding has to come from the private sector, which would be an uphill task.

Besides the PSDP, Mr Aurangzeb announced three major changes to his original budget, including relaxations for hybrid vehicles, stationery items and the Export Facilitation Scheme 2021.

The finance minister also advocated for provincial contribution to expenses of national importance, reduction in provincial expenses and increased provincial resource mobilisation for national financial stability under what he called a "national financial pact".

He said the budget was "based on homegrown reform plan through which the government wanted to take the country out of the current economic situation for which structural reforms are needed".

He recalled key points of this plan, including increasing the tax-to-GDP ratio to 13 per cent, implementing state-owned enterprise (SOE) reforms, privatisation, and energy sector reforms, besides giving a central role to the private sector to transform a government-led economy into a market-driven economy.

In addition, he said the plan also envisaged an end to subsidies creating distortions in pricing and efficiencies and building a targeted social protection system through the establishment of a "broad-based and fair taxation system".

He said the government was committed to these reforms and would provide quarterly progress reports to all the stakeholders.

On budgetary changes, he said that based on recommendations from various stakeholders, including the Senate Standing Committee on Finance, the government had decided to give an opportunity for personal hearing to non-filers of income tax before



blocking their phone SIMs or foreign travels.

Likewise, under Section 116 of the Income Tax Ordinance, an explanation will be added to the declaration of foreign assets and assets of spouse in case of spouse being dependent on the taxpayer.

The finance minister also announced that default surcharge in terms of sales tax, income tax or federal excise duty would be charged at the rate of Kibor plus 3 or 12pc, whichever is higher.

On the other hand, Mr Aurangzeb said that stationery items would continue to be exempted from sales tax. In his June 12 budget speech, he announced a 10pc tax sales tax on stationery items.

He also announced changes to fines for late filers and non-filers of income tax, saying the tax rate would not be increased for those who had timely filed tax returns at least once in the last three years.

Likewise, he also announced the continuation of reduced sales tax rates at the existing level for hybrid electric vehicles in Schedule 8 and Serial no. 73 besides the continuation of zero rating on local supplies of the export sector under Export Facilitation Scheme 2021, which was subject to 18pc GST on local sales under the draft financial bill 2024-25. This will have a revenue impact of about Rs10bn.

He promised to accommodate tax exemptions demanded by PPP leader Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari for charity hospitals and to seriously review income tax rebates to professors and said that agriculture, education, health and renewable energy sectors had been protected as much as possible on the instructions of the prime minister.

He announced strict measures for retailers and distributors outside the tax net, saying the government was fast-

tracking FBR reforms and the prime minister himself was monitoring the digitalisation of FBR under which the scope and operations of track-and-trace system (TTS) and point of sales (POS) would be expanded and tax policy and administration were being separated.

He said it had been decided to heavily increase tax rates on traders, shopkeepers, retailers and distributors who are non-filers under Section 236G and Section 236H. "This will be implemented from July 1, 2024, on all sectors," he said.

He said the government was also taking expenditure control measures and austerity in the government departments would continue next year as well. In this regard, he also mentioned pension reforms for future expenditure management besides the creation of a committee to recommend the closure and merger of federal ministries or transfer to provinces functions of the devolved ministries.

Mr Aurangzeb announced that the financial requirements of the armed forces and civil armed forces would be met notwithstanding all the difficulties and provided foolproof security to Chinese workers as investment through the second phase of CPEC was at the top of the government priorities. He also expected the reduced electricity rates and SBP's policy rate would promote the industrial sector.

The finance minister delivered his winding-up speech with empty front rows as no other minister, except Planning and Development Minister Ahsan Iqbal, was present in the house at that time.

Mr Iqbal was also seen busy in his mobile phone most of the time. In the middle of his speech, Adviser to the Prime Minister Rana Sanaullah, who is not an elected member of the house, came to the assembly hall and sat on a chair in the front row.

Courtesy:diplomag.com

PM's five-day tour to China from next week

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is set to embark on a five-day visit to China, starting on Tuesday to chart the future direction of bilateral ties, with a focus on revitalising the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and securing economic relief.

At the invitation of President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang of the People's Republic of China, PM Shehbaz would undertake an official visit to China from June 4 to 8, the Foreign Office announced. The PM would, during his trip, meet President Xi, besides holding delegation-level talks with Premier Li. He will also meet top Chinese legislator and the Communist party's third ranked official Zhao Leji.

His first tour to China since his reelection this year comes at a critical time when Pakistan is grappling with a severe debt crisis and persistent fiscal deficits, which necessitated new negotiations with the IMF for financial assistance.

Additionally, the country is facing escalating terrorism, particularly from the banned Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan and their links with the Afghan Taliban. Also, Pakistan must navigate the complexities of maintaining balanced relations with major global powers and regional states.

At a media briefing in Beijing, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said, "The leaders of the two countries will ... jointly draw up a blueprint for the growth of bilateral relations."

Elaborating PM Shehbaz's agenda during the visit, the FO said, "The two sides will undertake discussions to further strengthen the all-weather strategic cooperative partnership; upgrade China-Pakistan Economic Corridor; advance trade and investment; enhance cooperation in security and defence, energy, space, science & technology, and education; and promote cultural cooperation and people-to-people contacts, thus setting the future trajectory of Pakistan-China friendship."

A significant component of the prime minister's visit will involve strategic meetings with senior executives from China's leading corporations in the oil and gas, energy, ICT, and emerging technologies sectors. In Shenzhen, he will deliver a keynote address to the China-Pakistan Business Forum, engaging with business leaders and investors from both countries. Also, he will conduct site visits to China's Economic and Agricultural Zones, exploring potential areas of cooperation and development.



The Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson emphasised the enduring and robust ties between China and Pakistan, likening them to the stability of Mount Tai — a symbol of steadfastness in Chinese culture. She noted successful practical collaborations and significant progress in CPEC. Looking forward, she expressed China's readiness to collaborate closely with Pakistan for deepening the bilateral all-weather strategic cooperative partnership.

On Friday, PM Shehbaz reviewed the preparations for his upcoming visit at a meeting, wherein he sought comprehensive plans to hold result-oriented business-to-business interactions and strategies for attracting Chinese industries to set up their units in Pakistan. According to an official statement, the PM will be accompanied by a delegation of industrialists, investors, and businessmen during his tour to Shenzhen city.

Courtesy: Dawn

Ties with Pakistan stable: US official



A senior US official has reassured Islamabad that despite occasional friction, the United States and Pakistan maintain a stable and extensive relationship.

Speaking during a mango party hosted at the Pakistan Embassy, US Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Elizabeth Horst said "Like any long-standing relationship, there's occasional friction." "However, the US-Pakistan relationship is currently in its best state in years. We have achieved stability and broadened our engagement in ways not seen in many years."

The US Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary has said relations with Pakistan were in the "best place" they had been in years, days after a US congressional resolution calling for a probe into alleged election irregularities drew a strong reaction from Islamabad.

Ties between Islamabad and Washington, once close allies, have just started to warm after some years of frosty relations, mostly due to concerns about Pakistan's alleged support of the Taliban in Afghanistan. Pakistan has always denies this support.

Relations strained further under the government of former prime minister Imran Khan, who ruled from 2018-22 and antagonized Washington throughout his tenure, welcoming the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in 2021 and later accusing Washington of being behind his ouster from power in a parliamentary vote of no-confidence in April 2022. Washington has dismissed the accusation.

PM Shehbaz Sharif, now in his second term as premier since Khan's ouster, has tried to mend ties but analysts widely believe the United States is not seeking a significant broadening of ties with Islamabad in the near future but will remain mostly focused on security cooperation, especially on counterterrorism and Afghanistan.

"I just want to note that the US-Pakistan relationship is in the best place it's been in years, in part, in large part to what Ambassador Masood Khan has done to represent Pakistan and to build bridges between Islamabad and Washington."

Horst said at a farewell dinner for the outgoing Pakistani envoy. "You should know you depart Washington leaving the relationship between Pakistan and the US better than when you came and the strongest it has been in a long time."

The two countries had held "new dialogues" and identified new areas of cooperation on trade, health, energy and climate in recent years, Horst said.

"And of all that is because you Masood have been an extraordinarily representative of the Pakistani people and the government ... And like any long-standing relationship, there is always a little bit of friction at times but because of you we know how we can talk through this through a framework."

Earlier, Pakistan's Foreign Office confirmed the appointment of senior bureaucrat Rizwan Saeed Sheikh as the country's new ambassador to the US.

Courtesy: Dawn

Hamza Khan secures victory in Asian Junior Squash Championship

Pakistan's star player Hamza Khan has won the Asian Junior Squash Championship held in Islamabad, marking a significant achievement in his career.

The event also saw young talents from across Asia competing fiercely for the title as Hamza emerged victorious in the Under-19 category.

He faced Malaysia's third seed, Harith Danial, in the Under-19 final. The match, which lasted 35 minutes, showcased his dominance on the court as he secured a comfortable win with scores of 5-11, 10-12, and 9-11.

This victory highlighted his potential to become a future star in



the sport.

The tournament also witnessed other notable performances by Pakistani players. Sohail Adnan claimed the Under-13 title, demonstrating the depth of talent in Pakistan's junior squash ranks.

However, the Under-17 final brought mixed emotions for the home crowd. Abdullah Nawaz, despite a strong start, faced defeat against Malaysia's Nikleshwar.

Abdullah initially led 2-0, but Nikleshwar staged a remarkable comeback, winning the match 3-2, including a dramatic tie-breaker in the third game.

Courtesy: The News

Changes suggested to proposed digital rights authority

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif constituted a committee, headed by Adviser to the PM Rana Sanaullah, on May 20 to sort out the matter and build consensus on the final draft for the proposed DRPA before seeking the cabinet approval.

Sources told Dawn some of the changes made to the draft include streamlining the process of lodging complaint against any social media content.

"It has been added that only the aggrieved person can lodge a complaint and there has to be mechanism to determine if the complainant was the aggrieved person or not," sources said, adding, "Secondly it is important to pre-determine if the complaint, too, is a genuine violation of the rights of the complainant or not."

Some committee members confided to Dawn that after criticism over some harsh clauses, it was decided that the draft would be reverted back to the IT ministry to balance it and ensure more transparency in the affairs of the proposed DRPA.

"We all acknowledge that online space is the most effective and free medium to propagate hate speech, child abuse, and harassment and even instigate violence or anti-state activism," a committee member said,

adding: "This has to stop, but at the same time any law should not give free hand to the authorities for political victimisation or grant them powers beyond accountability."

The IT ministry after carrying out the proposed changes sent the draft back to the committee, but it has not been taken up yet due to political engagements and preparation of the upcoming federal budget. Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar told a news channel on Saturday that there was a need to streamline social media content, adding that social media had largely been unbridled without any respect and concerns to the norms and ethics.

He said the print media as well as the electronic media show maturity as there are regulations related to them. "There has to be some protection on social media too," the minister said, while referring to legal protection against fake news and defamation on social media.

According to the introductory paper, the proposed 'Digital Rights Protection Authority' (DRPA) will replace 'Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016' (Peca), but the new authority was being established through amendments to Peca.

At the same time, the recently notified 'National Cyber Crime Investi-



gation and Agency' (NCCIA) would also function under the proposed DRPA. The NCCIA has replaced the functions and powers of the cybercrime wing of the FIA, but the NCCIA will become operational only after the DRPA is established under an act of parliament.

A high-ranking official said media and entertainment content should be fair and socially acceptable, but the onus of responsibility would also be on social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, X (formerly Twitter), YouTube and Facebook to block content that violates the country guidelines.

On the other hand, digital rights activists have expressed concerns over the 'secretive nature' of drafting the proposed authority.

Haroon Baloch, an activist for digital space freedom, said that despite several attempts, the IT ministry did not respond to his request to become part of the drafting process as

a stakeholder.

Neither State Minister for IT Shiza Fatima nor Adviser to the PM Rana Sanaullah responded to the query about not sharing the draft with relevant stakeholders till date.

However, a senior IT ministry official said the draft would become a public document soon as it would be presented in the parliament and the standing committees of both the houses would discuss it. The official explained that there was a long way as the draft, even if it is approved by the committee, would be forwarded initially to the cabinet committee on legislative business. "Later after several steps when the federal cabinet approves it, the draft will be presented in the parliament," the official added.

However, during the budget session, no other agenda item can be taken in the parliament.

Courtesy: Dawn

PM Shehbaz in China pledges full support, security for investors

Emphasising the need for business-to-business cooperation between Pakistan and China, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif assured Chinese investors and their investment-oriented projects of all-out facilitation and foolproof security in Pakistan.

Addressing the Pakistan-China Business Forum in Shenzhen on the second day of his China visit, the PM highlighted bilateral trade and investment potential, especially in key sectors including transfer of Chinese technology, industry and partnership in IT, agriculture, mining, steel, textiles and renewable energy.

He repeatedly lauded the Chinese model of development and economic transformation and vowed to replicate the same in Pakistan.

“I will go back to Pakistan with this resolve, come what may, we will follow this model of great economic transformation in Pakistan. This model is enough to copy and simulate if we are sincere to our purpose and people. By God, I can tell you this is difficult but not impossible,” he told the gathering of hundreds of business leaders from Pakistan and China.

He also urged Pakistani businessmen to sit with their Chinese counterparts and find ways to move Chinese textile industries to Pak-

istan and make joint collaborations in steel and other industries.

He told the forum that Pakistan had mineral deposits of around \$10 trillion, while the country's exports stood at \$30 billion. The mineral deposits offer huge potential to convert them into finished and semi-finished goods for exports, he said.

The PM also assured the Chinese side that his government had already started structural changes to rein in corruption.

PM Shehbaz drew a comparison between the \$500 billion GDP of the 13 million-strong city of Shenzhen and the \$380 billion GDP of Pakistan, with its 250 million people, and called the Chinese city's swift transformation a “miracle of this century”, which others could learn from.

Referring to a terror attack on Chinese workers in Besham in the recent past, the prime minister conveyed his condolences, saying that the government had taken various measures to ensure foolproof security to protect the lives of Chinese workers in Pakistan.

“I will spare no effort to protect the lives of Chinese workers and assure and guarantee that we will provide them security more than our children. This will never happen again,”



he added.

Earlier, PM Shehbaz was greeted at Beijing airport by Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong and officials of Pakistan's embassy in Beijing.

The prime minister has an extensive programme in Beijing and will meet with Chinese President Xi Jinping, Premier Li Qiang and chairman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee.

He will also attend a Pakistan-China Friendship and Business event and have meetings with the CEOs of leading Chinese companies working on CPEC projects.

PM Shehbaz Sharif witnesses the signing of an agreement between the Ministry of Information Technology and Huawei. A number of MoUs between the two countries on cooperation in various fields are likely to be signed.

The prime minister also visited the Nanshan One-Stop Service Centre and the Shenzhen Exhibition Mu-

seum. Also visited the headquarter of Chinese telecommunications and technology giant, Huawei, and invited the company to invest in Pakistan's taxation and e-governance sectors besides enhancing its presence in the various Safe City projects operational across the country.

He also invited the Huawei chairman to invest in the introduction of modern technology in the agriculture sector and also invited the Huawei chairman to visit Pakistan.

Later, the prime minister also attended the signing ceremony of a framework agreement between Huawei and Pakistan's Ministry of Science and Technology under which the company would impart free of charge training to around 200,000 youngsters in information technology including artificial intelligence.

Besides, the company would also extend its support to Pakistan in the establishment of Safe Cities, e-governance and digitisation of the economy.

Courtesy: Dawn

Pakistan's Election as Non-Permanent Member of the UN Security Council

Pakistan has been elected as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for the term 2025-2026, receiving an overwhelming support in the elections held by the UN General Assembly in New York today.

We are grateful to all members of the UN General Assembly for their confidence in Pakistan and electing it as a non-permanent member of the Security Council. We are also grateful to the members of the Asia-Pacific Group for endorsing Pakistan's candidature for the Council.

Elected for the eighth time as a

non-permanent member, Pakistan brings to the UN Security Council a rich experience and a strong legacy of contributions towards the maintenance of international peace and security, manifested by its strict adherence to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter as well as its UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding endeavours across many regions of the world.

In its upcoming term, Pakistan will remain committed to pursuing just and peaceful resolution of outstanding and ongoing disputes; opposing the resort to unilateral and illegal use or threat of use of force; combatting terrorism in all its forms



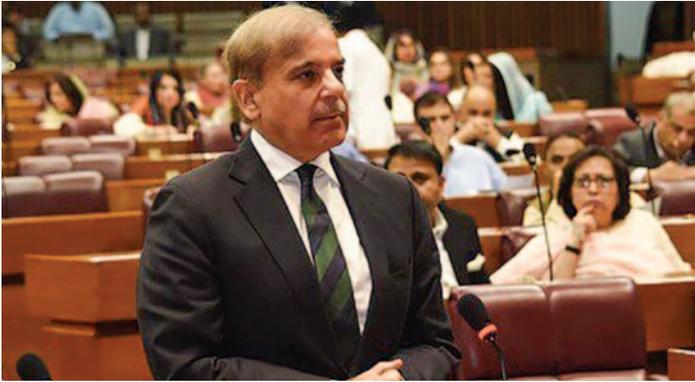
and manifestations; supporting effective UN peacekeeping, peace enforcement and peacebuilding efforts; and contributing effectively towards the resolution of regional and global crises.

Pakistan looks forward to working

closely with the other members of the UN Security Council and with the broader UN Membership for upholding the UN Charter and pursuing the vision of preventing war and promoting peace; fostering global prosperity and promoting universal respect for human rights.

Courtesy: <https://mofa.gov.pk/>

PM Shehbaz to take up budget; launch of economic survey today



Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has called a meeting of the federal cabinet to review the upcoming federal budget, which is expected to be tabled before the National Assembly.

The huddle will also provide the PM an opportunity to take his aides into confidence over decisions made during his recent visit to China, a source in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said.

In addition, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb will launch the Economic Survey 2023-24 on Tuesday afternoon, which contains a roundup of the country's economic performance over the past year.

Separately, in a meeting with Prince Rahim Aga Khan, the PM invited the

Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) to increase its investment in Pakistan's tourism sector.

The prime minister also congratulated Prince Rahim on receiving the Nishan-i-Pakistan Award. He expressed gratitude to him for establishing various social welfare projects in less developed and remote areas of Gilgit-Baltistan and Chitral.

He said setting up of various welfare projects in Pakistan's education, health, agriculture, tourism, IT and other sectors was commendable. Besides, the newly launched software technology park and solar power plants in Hunza were also highly commendable, he added.

Courtesy: Dawn

PIA slashes Umrah fares for pilgrims



Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has announced a significant fare reduction for individuals planning to perform Umrah.

According to the airline's spokesperson, the reduced rates will make it more affordable for Umrah pilgrims traveling from Pakistan to Madinah.

Effective immediately, the discounted two-way fare from Lahore

and Islamabad to Madinah has been set at Rs86,000 (plus tax).

For those departing from Karachi, the fare to Madinah is now Rs76,000 plus tax. Previously, the Umrah ticket cost Rs120,000.

This promotional fare is available until July 15, as part of PIA's efforts to facilitate pilgrims during the Umrah season.

Courtesy: Pakistan Today

China, Pakistan form digital education alliance to foster skills development

China, Pakistan have formed a digital education alliance to foster skills development.

The alliance, jointly initiated by ITMC Technology Co., Ltd. and UNI International, along with over 160 Chinese and Pakistani technical and vocational education and training (TVET) partners.

This aims to strengthen Pakistan's TVET system and transform it into a leading digital education hub. This milestone in the educational sector between the two countries was achieved this week in Beijing.

The formation of the alliance was announced during the International Digital Skills Exchange Seminar of the 2nd Belt and Road International Skills Competition held in Chongqing from June 24 to 26.

Over 200 experts from both countries, representing more than 140 colleges and universities, witnessed the historic event both online and offline.

Leading the alliance from Pakistan is Rao Rashid Ali, Director General of Punjab TEVTA. Ali highlighted the importance of this collaboration in bridging the digital skills gap in Pakistan and underlined its poten-



tial to transform the education landscape in the country.

From China, Professor Xue Maoyun, former president of Jiangsu Commerce Vocational and Technical College, assumed the role of chairman of the alliance. He stressed the shared vision of advancing digital education and fostering mutually beneficial partnerships.

Muhammad Omar, Counsellor and Head of Chancery at the Pakistani Embassy in China and Afifa Shajia Awais, Counsellor of Education also attended the seminar.

Praising China's achievements in talent transformation, especially in the development of highly skilled talent, Omar expressed the hope that Pakistan could leverage China's experience in digital transformation to enhance its own educational institutions.

Courtesy: Pakistan Today

Pakistan 'decides' to attend in UN-hosted Doha talks on Afghanistan

Pakistan has decided to participate in the talks on Afghanistan in Doha, Qatar, kicking off on June 30.

According to sources, Pakistan's Special Representative for Afghanistan, Asif Durrani, and Assistant Secretary for Western Asia at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ahmad Naseem Warraich, will leave for Doha in the next few days and will represent Pakistan in the talks.

The third round of Doha talks, hosted by the United Nations, will begin on June 30 and will last for two days.

The Afghan interim government will also participate in the talks, marking a significant development in regional efforts to address the Afghan conflict, sources added.

For the first time, special representatives from around the world will sit



face-to-face with Afghan Taliban representatives. Diplomats and special representatives from 25 countries are expected to participate in the talks, which will be attended by the UN Secretary-General and special representatives.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres first convened envoys on Afghanistan from various countries in May last year to work on a unified approach to dealing with the Taliban authorities. The Taliban were not invited.

Courtesy: ARY news

Mahira Khan's mother's witty response to nose question wins the internet!

Pakistani actress Mahira Khan, known for her captivating performances, has once again won hearts with her latest social media post.

The star shared a video showcasing her nose ring, and it's her mother's witty comment that has stolen the spotlight.

Known for her stellar performances in dramas like 'Humsafar', Mahira Khan has often been subject to commentary about her nose, with some suggesting she should consider surgery. However, the actress embraced her unique feature, refusing to succumb to societal pressures.



In the video, she can be seen posing with a golden nose ring to the tune of a Punjabi song.

When she asked her mother about

getting her nose pierced, her mom replied, "If your nose was small, I would definitely say yes." Mahira Khan shared this comment along with the video, and it has sparked

a chain of hilarious reactions.

Former actress and host Sanam Jung also shared her own experience, revealing that her father initially agreed to her getting her nose pierced, but later changed his mind, saying she looked perfect just the way she was.

The Legend of Maula Jatt actress's post has received an outpouring of love and support from fans and fellow artists, with many praising her confidence and her mother's sharp wit. The video has gone viral, and it's clear that Mahira Khan's nose ring has become a symbol of self-love and individuality.

Courtesy: Samaa TV

Vivek Oberoi's dance with Atif Aslam at Abu Dhabi concert goes viral

Bollywood star Vivek Oberoi recently delighted fans by dancing to a song by Pakistani legendary singer Atif Aslam, creating a viral sensation on social media.

The Indian actor attended Atif Aslam's ongoing concert in Abu Dhabi, where Atif invited him to perform on stage.

With much enthusiasm, he took to the stage and danced energetically, much to the excitement of the audience. Pakistani actress Saba Qamar was also present at the event and joined in the excitement, clapping along with the fans.

An interview clip of Vivek Oberoi has also been circulating on social media, where he praised Pakistani fans for their warmth and hospitality. Vivek is currently



residing in Dubai and shared his experiences during an interview with an Indian YouTube channel.

During the interview, Vivek was seen conversing with a female host



while sitting in his car. When he encountered Pakistani fans on the road, they expressed their admiration for him by saying "I love you" in English. Vivek graciously smiled and thanked

them for their kind words.

Reflecting on his experiences, Vivek mentioned to the host that Dubai is unique for its diverse population, including many Pakistanis, Sri Lankans, Bangladeshis, and Nepalese who openly show their love and appreciation. He remarked on the common cultural affinity for food, movies, and plays, questioning the animosity some people harbor towards each other.

Vivek Oberoi's spontaneous dance and his heartfelt comments about mutual admiration among different nationalities have resonated with fans, underscoring the power of art and culture to bridge divides. The actor's performance and his positive interactions with fans highlight the unity and shared love for entertainment across borders.

Courtesy: Samaa TV

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