

# HORIZON

February 2024

**PAKISTAN'S  
FIRST FEMALE  
PROVINCIAL  
CHIEF MINISTER,  
READY FOR  
CHALLENGE**

RESEARCH AND POLICY PLANNING UNIT  
PAKISTAN MUSLIM LEAGUE - NAWAZ



# FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Dear Readers,

February 2024 marks a significant milestone in Pakistan's democratic journey. The people of Pakistan have spoken, and their voices have been heard through the ballot box. The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has emerged victorious, forming a government in Punjab and a coalition government at the Centre. This historic moment was further elevated when Maryam Nawaz took the oath as Pakistan's first female provincial chief minister, extending a message of reconciliation and inclusiveness to her parliamentary opponents.

As we embark on the next five years, we are faced with immense challenges. It is imperative that all stakeholders, regardless of political affiliation, come together for the betterment of our nation. We look forward to the smooth formation of the federal government and the election of Mian Shehbaz Sharif as prime minister.

In this issue of Horizon magazine, we delve into the profile of Maryam Nawaz, tracing her journey from a political worker to the chief minister of Pakistan's largest province. Her ascent to this position is a testament to the evolving landscape of Pakistani politics and the growing role of women in leadership.

Transparency International's recent Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) ranking for 2023 saw Pakistan's position improve by seven spots. This positive development, after a period of decline during the previous government's tenure, coincides with the rule of the PML-N-led coalition at the Centre. The TI's CPI ranking has discredited the false propaganda against the party and reflects that sincerity of purpose and concerted effort can bring big changes in a short time.

As we celebrate our democratic achievements, we must not forget our Kashmiri brothers and sisters who continue to suffer under the yoke of Indian occupation. Our moral support for Kashmiris remains steadfast, and we stand in solidarity with them in their struggle for freedom and justice. We take this opportunity to also express our abhorrence for Israel's genocidal campaign in Gaza and call for an immediate ceasefire.

The road ahead is challenging, but with unity, determination, as well as a commitment to good governance, peace, and prosperity, we can overcome any obstacle. Together, let us build a brighter future for Pakistan.

Sincerely,

Saira Bano  
Editor-in-Chief

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## EDITORIAL BOARD

Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, Saira Bano, Attaullah Tarar, Badar Shahbaz



# GENERAL ELECTION 2024: FOUL OR FAIR?

**RANA IHSAN AFZAL KHAN**

Like all previous elections, the 2024 general election in Pakistan concluded with a slew of rigging allegations. Since no political party could secure a simple majority in the National Assembly, parties across the board have questioned the results. Living up to its history, the most clamorous among these is Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) which won the most seats in the National Assembly and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly. While there may have been some irregularities here and there, we saw a concerted campaign to build public perception that the election was rigged and discredit the whole electoral exercise. In addition, premature results announcements by private news channels created an atmosphere of uncertainty and damaged the credibility of the institutions of Pakistan.

Almost a week after the election, on 17 February 2024, then-Commissioner Rawalpindi Liaquat Ali Chattha held a press conference, claiming that he was pressured to manipulate election results in the district, blaming the Chief Election Commissioner and Chief Justice of Pakistan. After this press conference, the electronic media went into a frenzy with prime-time shows discussing his allegation without a shred of evidence. On the other hand, social media accounts linked with PTI spewed propaganda to further strengthen the idea that the election was heavily rigged.

After the committee tasked with investigating the

ex-commissioner's allegations found no evidence, Liaquat Ali Chattha admitted before the committee that he made his statement about rigging at the behest of a PTI leader and apologised to the Election Commission. The government has recommended strict action against Mr Chattha under extraordinary provisions. However, the damage has been done. The propaganda churned out in the week since he made his first statement has put a question mark on the credibility of the Election Commission in people's minds. His new statement may only strengthen the public perception that regularly feeds on conspiracy theories posted on social media platforms, claiming coercion of public officials to fall in line with the powers that be. It is difficult to fill the trust deficit with mere statements.

A similar situation arose on the eve of the election held on 8 February. In a race for ratings, private television networks started announcing partial results shortly after the polling time ended. It was both confusing and dangerous. Anyone familiar with the electoral process knows that after the polling time ends, it takes several hours to complete the counting of ballots, result verification by polling agents, and transportation of polling materials, including ballot papers, from the polling station to the returning officer's office, who then consolidates results from various polling stations to announce the final result. Instead of announcing consolidated results, certain

“ SEVERAL POLITICAL COMMENTATORS OBSERVED THAT THE UNOFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT OF PROGRESSIVE RESULTS BASED ON FORM-45 CREATED CHAOS IN AN EXTREMELY POLARISED SOCIETY LIKE PAKISTAN. ”



television channels started announcing partial results even before they had reached the returning officer's office. Candidates and voters who thought they were winning based on, say, the result of 40 per cent polling stations were disappointed and alleged rigging when the complete, consolidated result was announced by the Election Commission.

Several political commentators observed that the unofficial announcement of progressive results based on Form-45 created chaos in an extremely polarised society like Pakistan. Veteran journalist Nusrat Javeed tweeted: “Channels don't have these results, officially. They rely on Form-45, as they are received in candidates' offices. India had stopped this practice in the late 1990s. In countries like ours, projection of progressive results, that too on live TV, always lead[s] to chaos.”

This practice needs to stop. There are other ways to ensure transparency of elections than allowing television newsrooms to announce partial results of various polling stations and misleading the public on who is winning. Like games, there are times in elections when the competition is tough and no one knows who will end up winning. In such cases, a false public perception of a candidate winning on news screens but losing in official consolidated results damages institutional credibility. It is hoped that the new government will legislate to do away with the practice of announcing progressive election results.

As it happened in the hours following the polling, the urgency created by television channels built a perception that the Election Commission was unnecessarily delaying the election results in order to change them. Such perception was further strengthened when some losing candidates made statements that candidates who polled the most

votes were not announced as winners. Naturally, this amplified the narrative of largescale rigging, which is not true.

In response to the rigging allegations, the Election Commission released a statement comparing its performance in the general elections of 2018 and 2024. The statement noted that it took 72 hours to post the election results in 2018, while it took only 48 hours to post the results in 2024. It must be remembered that there were allegations of massive and very visible rigging in 2018 too, but the party that benefited from this rigging had no problem with a 72-hour processing time of final results. Now that the results are different from their liking, a 48-hour processing time looks too long. The truth of the matter is, that despite irregularities, the election reflects the mandate people have given to their respective candidates. A report shortly released after the election by an independent civil society network FAFEN (Free and Fair Election Network) observed, “Despite a spiral of allegations by multiple political parties about not getting a level playing field as well as a spike in militant violence in some parts of the country, none of the political parties backed out of the electoral race. All parties continued until the last minute their efforts to muster public support, which augurs well for Pakistan's struggling democracy. In addition, the pre-election perception of an unlevel playing field does not seem to have prevented the accusing political parties from gaining electoral ground.”

Those who still disagree with the result may seek legal remedy, but using the election results to agitate against the new government and destabilise the country is in no one's interest ■

*The writer is a former coordinator to the prime minister on commerce and industry.*



# PAKISTAN'S FIRST FEMALE PROVINCIAL CHIEF MINISTER, READY FOR CHALLENGE

MUHAMMAD MUGHEES ARIF

The post-election period in Pakistan has had everyone on tenterhooks, as no party secured a simple majority in the National Assembly, and painstaking negotiations between major parties to form a coalition took longer than expected. In this scenario, Maryam Nawaz's nomination for the position of chief minister of Punjab came as welcome news. The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) made a historic decision as this is the first time a woman has been nominated for the highest political office in Punjab.

Born on 28 October 1973 in Lahore to Mian Nawaz Sharif and his wife Kulsoom, Maryam Nawaz has emerged as a prominent leader within the PML-N, wielding considerable influence and re-shaping the

trajectory of politics, particularly in the province of Punjab.

Maryam Nawaz entered politics through her family's longstanding involvement in Pakistani politics and their struggle against political persecution, which she resisted to her best. As the daughter of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and the granddaughter of Muhammad Sharif, a prominent industrialist and philanthropist, Maryam Nawaz was exposed to politics from a young age. Her father's leadership of the PML-N provided her with a platform to become increasingly involved in political activities.

Many falsely claim that Maryam Nawaz's strong



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position is due to her father’s profile and accuse her of being a beneficiary of dynastic politics. They forget that while Maryam Nawaz Sharif carried her family’s legacy, she acquired her position through her own struggle. Here are some key contributions that led her towards success.

After the 2013 election, then-Prime Minister Mian Nawaz Sharif was busy improving governance and crafting long-term policies, while Maryam Nawaz took on the responsibility of modernising the conventional dynamics of the party. In the era of digital connectivity, the PML-N was far behind in using social media platforms to connect with members and voters. Maryam Nawaz was the one who established a well-organised social media team within the party. Her involvement has been instrumental in shaping the party’s online presence and communications with the public, with thousands of volunteers from around the globe. Her embrace of social media and

digital platforms has helped the party connect with younger generations, who are increasingly influential in shaping political discourse.

During her official visit to the US with then-Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in 2015, she advocated for the rights of Pakistani girls for schooling and managed to secure substantial funding of \$70 million to educate adolescent girls in Pakistan. Her advocacy convinced then-First Lady Michelle Obama to include Pakistan in the “Let Girls Learn” programme. About two million girls in Pakistan benefitted from this initiative. The project provided scholarships for girls to attend a year of high school in the US and live with a host family. For the under-represented girls of 13 to 18 years of age, two-year programmes of after-school classes and intensive immersion activities were started, to establish a foundation of English language skills. The project also created economic opportunities through skill building and training, securing income and



employment for girls.

In 2018, political persecution of the Sharif family and PML-N's senior leadership was at its peak. When the leadership resisted, Mian Nawaz Sharif, along with Maryam Nawaz and her husband Captain (retd) Safdar, was sentenced to jail in a fabricated corruption case. At the time of this verdict, Maryam Nawaz was in London, but instead of taking asylum there, she bravely came to Pakistan and surrendered to authorities despite knowing that she was falsely sentenced.

Those in power tried to demoralise her by preventing her from seeing her father in jail but she endured the torture. At that time she received the painful news of her mother's passing. She and her father had not been allowed to contact their family to inquire about Kulsoom Nawaz's health, who had been gravely ill when they returned from London. Only when

she passed did the authorities relent and allow the father and daughter to attend her funeral. Later, in September 2022, Islamabad High Court dismissed the case against Maryam and her husband due to lack of evidence.

Her fight against baseless allegations and political victimisation groomed her. Almost all senior party leaders were booked in bogus cases and the powers that be tried to wipe PML-N from the political landscape. At this time, Maryam gathered forces and built momentum to fight the injustice being done to her family, party, and the Pakistani public, whose mandate was stolen in the 2018 election.

Through her dynamic presence, Maryam Nawaz energised the party base. The PTI government and their backers did everything to break her resolve but she continued to forge ahead. In the process, she faced character assassination and relentless vilification



campaigns. Still, she proved herself to be a worthy successor to her father and continued to surprise her opponents by pulling massive crowds at her public rallies.

The PML-N is enjoying the fruit of Maryam Nawaz's relentless struggle. She was a rallying point for the opposition to unite against attempts to undermine democracy and civil liberties. Her leadership provided inspiration and motivation for others within the party and the broader opposition movement at the time. She helped galvanise PML-N and developed a sense of purpose among its members, particularly in the face of external pressures.

Through her advocacy and statements, Maryam Nawaz raised public awareness about issues such as political victimisation, judicial independence, and the erosion of democratic norms, prompting public discourse and scrutiny of PTI's government actions. Her powerful voice at a time of immense oppression kept her party relevant.

Acknowledging her efforts, the party designated her senior vice president and chief organiser. She proved herself in organisational matters by improvising the structural hierarchy and wings. She immediately activated all the dormant party wings such as students, women, youth, teachers, minorities, etc. In less than a year, the party was ready to go into election. The reason behind PML-N's return to power in Punjab

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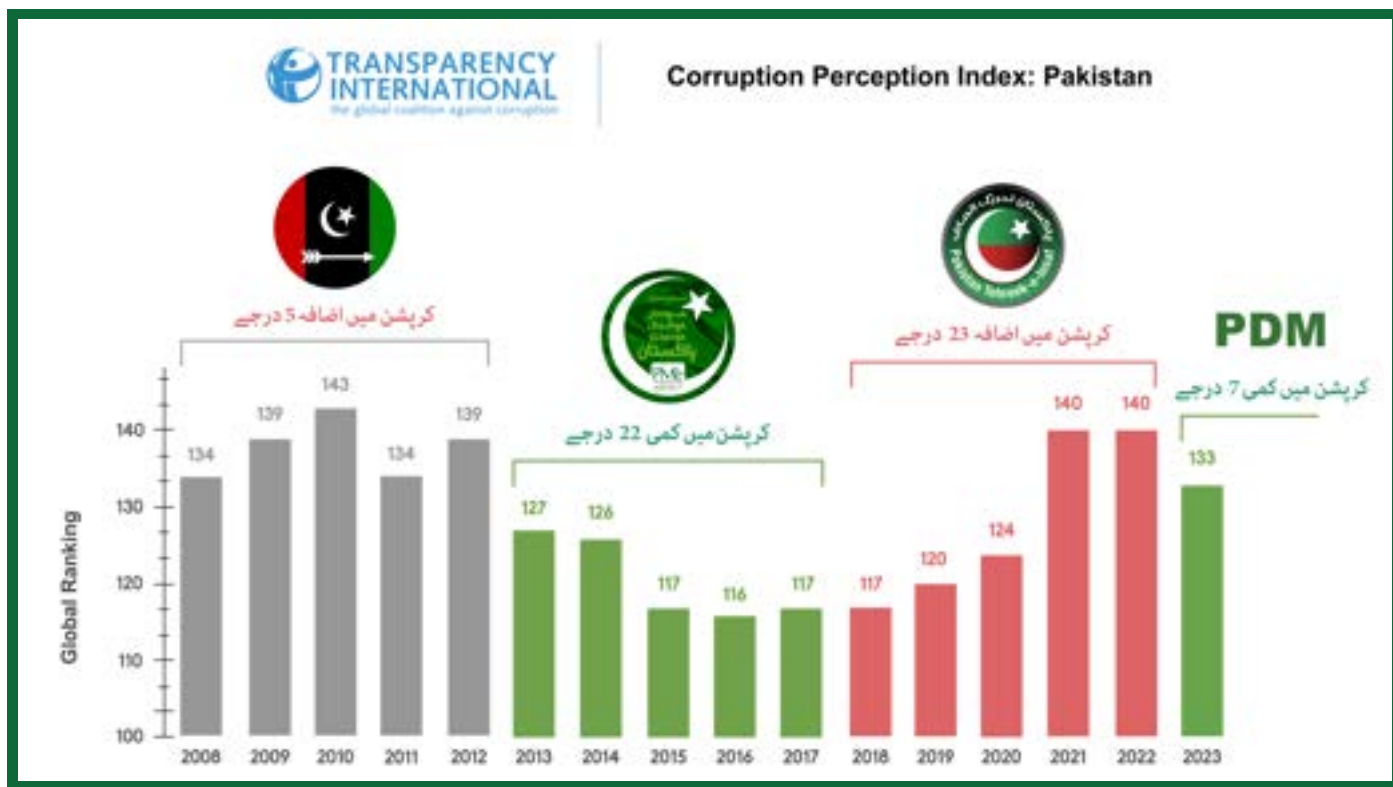
is Maryam Nawaz's organisational skills; even opponents cannot discredit her.

After getting elected as chief minister, Maryam Nawaz has announced a comprehensive development agenda for Punjab. For the youth, it includes interest-free loans and employment opportunities, anti-harassment measures and a safe environment for women at the workplace, a modern traffic management system, a revolution in agriculture for farmers, and up-gradation of facilities in basic health units, among others initiatives. Her agenda also includes education reforms, welfare programmes for special children, the establishment of safe city authorities, and sanitation and road maintenance systems throughout Punjab. It is hoped that she would revive PML-N's flagship initiatives related to women's empowerment, such as the long-dormant Punjab Commission on the Status of Women, and declare maternal mortality a provincial emergency.

The absence of a female chief minister in Punjab in the past reflects the broader challenges women face in accessing leadership roles in politics. It highlights the need for greater gender equality and opportunities for women in positions of power and decision-making. Maryam Nawaz's presence in the chief minister's office would encourage more women to participate in politics and help strengthen democratic representation ■

*The writer is a political activist and works in youth development.*





# PTI'S CORRUPTION PLUNGE: A COMPARISON OF PAKISTAN'S CPI RANKINGS

RANA MASHHOOD AHMAD KHAN

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI's) narrative of corruption has fallen flat on its face. A study of Pakistan's ranking on the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) since 2008 shows how the PTI plunged the country into corruption during its tenure, while the Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) improved governance, leading to an improved ranking.

The latest report by Transparency International (TI) released on 30 January 2024 shows Pakistan's ranking on the CPI improved by seven points last year, after just 16 months of good governance of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) led by PML-N. Pakistan moved from 140 in 2022 to 133 in 2023 out of 180 countries.

The CPI is an index that ranks countries "by their perceived levels of public sector corruption, as determined by expert assessments and opinion surveys." The graph of Pakistan's ranking from 2008

to 2023 shows how each government performed in their tenure.

During the Pakistan People's Party's (PPP) government from 2008 to 2013, Pakistan's position on the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) declined by five points, from 134 to 139, indicating an increase in the public perception of corruption. The public perception improved significantly when the PML-N formed governments at the Centre, and in Punjab and Balochistan in 2013. Pakistan climbed 12 points from 139 to 127 on the CPI in just one year. The country's ranking continued to improve and stood at 117 in 2017. The improvement would have continued had the PML-N mandate not been robbed in the 2018 election. When the PTI took charge of the government in 2018, Pakistan started its descent into corruption, progressively dropping 23 points on the index by 2022 and ranking 140th out of 180 countries, indicating that in public perception, corruption in Pakistan had



“ IT IS IRONIC THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF A PARTY THAT BUILT ITS ENTIRE NARRATIVE ON DISCREDITING ITS OPPONENTS AS CORRUPT, WHOSE LEADER USED TO QUOTE TI REPORTS IN HIS SPEECHES TO PROVE HIS POINT, TURNED OUT TO BE THE MOST CORRUPT IN RECENT HISTORY. ”

increased significantly.

Ironically, the government of a party that built its entire narrative on discrediting its opponents as corrupt, whose leader used to quote TI reports in his speeches to prove his point, turned out to be the most corrupt in recent history.

The social media warriors of the PTI have always painted their rivals, particularly the PML-N, as corrupt, but these numbers speak of a different reality. Poor governance, weak accountability of public officials, and corruption scandals contributed to Pakistan’s systematic downfall during PTI rule.

### KP EHTESAB COMMISSION

When the PTI first formed its government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) in 2013, despite the pre-existing Anti-Corruption Establishment and the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), it created a parallel provincial body named the Ehtesab Commission in 2014. The commission remained ineffective and failed to convict a single person in four years of its existence despite spending over Rs800 million. In 2018, when the PTI formed its government at the Centre, it abolished the Ehtesab Commission. Nobody ever questioned the PTI for weakening accountability mechanisms in the province and squandering Rs800 million of taxpayers’ money on the creation of an entity that failed to deliver any results.

### BRT CORRUPTION

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is a ‘flagship’ project of PTI

that caused the exchequer a loss of billions of rupees. Construction on the BRT began in October 2017 with a planned completion within six months, coinciding with the general elections. However, the project encountered long delays, leading the Peshawar High Court (PHC) to instruct the National Accountability Bureau in July 2018 to investigate what it termed a “shady and shaky” project.

NAB’s preliminary findings on the matter were not made public but a January 2019 report by KP’s Provincial Inspection Team (PIT) on Peshawar’s BRT later found its way into the media. It states, “Havoc has been played with the public money through faulty planning and designing, negligence in the execution of work, and poor management of the project.” The report said that instead of facilitating the city traffic, it caused bottlenecks. The project’s cost escalated from Rs49.346 billion to Rs66.437 billion due to mismanagement and corruption. Instead of fixing the responsibility and accountability of corrupt officials in line with their party manifesto, the then-KP government decried some of the PIT findings and continued to defend this project, despite removing its top officials. Currently, NAB is investigating this case.

### SUGAR SCANDAL

In April 2020, a Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) inquiry commissioned by the government found that the former PTI secretary general Jahangir Khan Tareen and then-federal minister for national food security Makhdoom Khusro Bakhtiar were among the

**“THE PAKISTAN TEHREEK-E-INSAF (PTI) GOVERNMENT’S MISHANDLING OF WHEAT AND SUGAR COMMODITIES COST THE COUNTRY OVER \$520 MILLION IN IMPORTS, GIVING OVER RS100 BILLION HIT TO THE NATIONAL EXCHEQUER AND ABOVE ALL FORCING CONSUMERS TO BEAR THE BRUNT BY PAYING 50 PER CENT HIGHER PRICES IN 2020.” - EXPRESS TRIBUNE**

main beneficiaries of the sugar crisis of 2020. First, the Economic Coordination Committee allowed the export of sugar, which left insufficient stocks within Pakistan and led to high sugar prices. Sugar mill owners profited from government subsidies on sugar exports, and again profited from price hikes in the local market. The government then imported sugar to meet the domestic shortfall. The FIA report did not mention why the government announced subsidies on sugar exports or who influenced the ECC to allow exports when sugar stocks were barely enough to meet domestic needs. Neither the beneficiaries nor the perpetrators of this scandal have been held accountable.

## WHEAT SCANDAL

Likewise, wheat prices started soaring throughout the country in early 2020. The crisis emerged because the government allowed wheat exports in 2018 and 2019, causing a shortage for domestic consumers. Like sugar, the government ordered wheat imports to meet the shortfall created by the government in the first place through exporting this commodity. According to a report by Express Tribune published on 1 January 2021, “The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government’s mishandling of wheat and sugar commodities cost the country over \$520 million in imports, giving over Rs100 billion hit to the national exchequer and above all forcing consumers to bear the brunt by paying 50 per cent higher prices in 2020.” No one was held accountable.

## LNG CRISIS

Another example of gross mismanagement and corruption by the PTI government concerns the import of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG). The PML-N government first imported LNG at \$8 per MMBtu from Qatar in 2016. Due to coronavirus-related lockdowns in 2020, LNG prices crashed below \$2

per MMBtu internationally. It was an ideal time to aggressively enter into long-term oil and gas import contracts at low prices, but the PTI government failed to avail the opportunity. When the LNG prices started soaring internationally, the government kept dilly-dallying. Meanwhile, independent power producers used expensive diesel to produce electricity, causing an increase in electricity prices, which was unsustainable.

In July 2021, Bloomberg reported that Pakistan had made the priciest LNG purchase of four cargoes at \$15 per Metric Million British Thermal Unit (MMBtu) to fuel power production. The same PTI government incarcerated former PML-N prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and his finance advisor, Miftah Ismail, for their alleged corruption in the 15-year LNG contract with Qatar. The story does not end here. In November 2021, the same PTI which questioned the PML-N government of corruption for its long term-LNG contract with Qatar at \$8 per MMBtu, accepted an LNG cargo at the highest-ever price of \$30.6 per MMBtu from Qatar Petroleum to avert a possible gas crisis in the upcoming peak winter months.

No one has ever investigated who blocked the government from entering into long-term contracts of cheap LNG during COVID lockdowns and orchestrating a cycle of inflation which heavily cost the consumers and the country. Who benefitted from expensive power production from diesel?

## MONEY LAUNDERING

Perhaps the most damning corruption scandal of the PTI government is money laundering through Al-Qadir University Trust. NAB has alleged that PTI leader Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi secured land valued at billions of rupees from the prominent property tycoon Malik Riaz to purportedly build a university in return for laundering £190 million worth



# PML-N'S BOLD PLAN FOR PUNJAB

## RESEARCH AND POLICY PLANNING UNIT

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) entered the general election of 2024 with a bold plan to deliver on its commitments to the people. Voters know that the PML-N has a proven track record of fulfilling promises and improving lives. By the grace of Allah, we have been entrusted with leading a coalition government at the Centre and bringing our manifesto to life in Punjab, the nation's largest province.

The newly-elected Chief Minister of Punjab Maryam Nawaz has announced her vision for the next five years in line with the party's manifesto. In her speech, she didn't just stop at mega projects and big cities but also talked about bringing government services down to the Union Council level and the people's doorsteps, be it the renewal of a driver's license, issuing a marriage certificate, or delivering food aid.

The salient features of PML-N's plan for Punjab outlined in the manifesto and CM Nawaz's speech, are as follows:

### SUPPORT TO BUSINESSES

The main plank of PML-N's agenda is the economic revival of the country. In her maiden speech, Maryam Nawaz vowed to make Punjab a business hub. She iterated that the government's job is to make business-friendly policies, create an enabling environment, provide incentives, and minimise paperwork for setting up businesses so that anyone with capital can set up a business. She pledged her government's support to all small, medium, and large enterprises by taking the above measures.

### GOVERNANCE

PML-N governments from 2013-2018 and 2022-2023 are known for strengthening the country's governance



structures that ease service delivery and curb corruption. PML-N's 2024 manifesto has underlined several measures to further improve governance. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz announced that her government would digitise 43 basic services, making them accessible from people's homes under the initiative called Digital Punjab. She pledged to ensure transparency and show zero tolerance for corruption in the province. Clear project timelines would be spelt out at the inception stage to ensure efficiency, which would be properly monitored and evaluated. As part of good governance, the CM would hold regular communication with the public.

### PRICE CONTROL AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION

As a first step, Maryam Nawaz announced a Ramzan Package for seven million deserving families, to be delivered to them directly to save them from the indignity of standing in queues. The government would ensure that prices of food items remain affordable for the people province-wide. It would also work to develop an accurate and reliable database of the underprivileged to be able to reach those families easily.

### YOUTH INITIATIVES

Recognising Pakistan's youth bulge, the PML-N has devoted a section of the manifesto towards initiatives to boost youth entrepreneurship and overseas job and business opportunities. Maryam Nawaz has announced merit scholarships for youth studying at educational institutions through the Punjab Educational Endowment Fund (PEEF), alongside scholarships



for admission to international universities. The government would offer interest-free loans, launch skill development training and mentorship focused on jobs and business opportunities in international markets, training for the skills development, including artificial intelligence, needed in local and international markets, and laptops, iPads, tablets, etc. to support young entrepreneurs. The government would initiate paid internship programmes and incubators for IT startups. In addition, electric motorbikes would be provided to young people to facilitate their mobility.

## SPORTS

The government has also announced to transform Punjab's sports infrastructure so that the youth can engage in healthy activities and have an opportunity to excel in sports. As stated in the PML-N manifesto, the government would establish sports academies at all levels to identify and nurture talent from grassroots to professional levels, launch a Talent Hunt Youth Sports League, and promote inclusive sports programmes across all educational institutions. Maryam Nawaz announced that the government would establish a sports ground in every Union Council in the next five years.

## EDUCATION

Being a provincial subject, the PML-N is giving education the place it deserves for the future of our country. In her inaugural address, Maryam Nawaz said no student should be out of school due to financial difficulties, and each school-going child should receive an excellent education atmosphere and good teaching quality. To achieve this, the government would launch extensive teacher training programmes and induct new teachers. To ensure education

quality and infrastructure, the government would launch public-private partnership programmes. The government would also revisit the curriculum to meet modern standards. Another transformative step would be a school transport system in the entire province.

Lauding the flagship initiative of Mian Shehbaz Sharif, Maryam Nawaz announced the expansion of Daanish Schools and the establishment of such schools in all districts of the Punjab. Likewise, she pledged to develop special education institutions in each district of Punjab where transport, treatment, and education for special children would be free. Scholarships for child labourers at brick kilns will be revived to bring the most underprivileged children into the mainstream. The government would also revive the E-libraries programme and expand it to more districts.

## HEALTH

Within five years, the government would fully equip Punjab's Basic Health Units, Rural Health Centres, and Tehsil Headquarters Hospitals with imaging and testing equipment, medicines, and trained medical and paramedical staff. In the next five years, all districts of Punjab will have a state-of-the-art hospital, which will have specialty units for cancer, liver, kidney, etc. Maryam Nawaz also announced that all hospital emergencies will provide free medicines from the first day of her tenure. The government would conduct screening of the population for hepatitis and tuberculosis so that these diseases could be diagnosed and treated. Maryam Nawaz pledged to give special attention to maternal and neonatal health.

A first in Pakistan, the Punjab government would initiate an air ambulance service for inaccessible areas. In addition, the 1122 rescue service would initiate a motorway ambulance service. The Punjab government would also issue a new health card that would include expensive surgeries related to kidneys and liver.

The government has announced that it would establish new nursing schools and upgrade the existing ones in line with international specifications so that Pakistan's nurses can meet local needs and also find employment opportunities abroad.

## SAFE PUNJAB FOR WOMEN

Maryam Nawaz has announced that her government will work to empower women financially, socially, and professionally. It will provide them with a safe environment. To tackle harassment of women, the government has announced a dedicated helpline. Hostels will be established in all major cities to facilitate working women. She also called for inclusive infrastructure in public buildings, such as separate washrooms and daycare centres.

## TRANSGENDER PERSONS AND MINORITIES

For the first time, the government has announced a package for transgender persons to bring them to the mainstream. Maryam Nawaz called for changing social attitudes towards the transgender community and minorities.

## PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND SAFE CITIES

Underscoring the importance of respectable public transport, Maryam Nawaz announced that Metrobus projects will be built in all big cities of Punjab.

Likewise, all districts of Punjab will have Safe City Projects. Initially, 18 cities will be brought under the Safe City Project to reduce the crime rate.

## POLICE REFORM

Maryam Nawaz Sharif has announced that model police stations would be built specifically with women in mind; these will have dedicated desks for women. Separate stations for women will also be built. The government would reduce the response time of police. She also called for proper medical facilities in prisons. Agriculture and livestock

In its manifesto, PML-N has outlined Pakistan's transition to smart agriculture by incentivising the adoption of modern technology, tech-driven storage solutions to minimise post-harvest losses and enhance agricultural efficiency, biotechnology integration to enhance crop yield, quality, and overall farm productivity, and using drone technology for precision farming, e.g. precise fertiliser, pesticide

application, and pest and disease assessment, as well as introducing mobile grain dryers for rice and maize, all to ensure efficient post-harvest processing.

In the next five years, smart agriculture zones will be built throughout Punjab with a focus on facilitating small farmers. The government would initiate a one-window operation for farmers where they can secure seeds, fertilisers, and loans. Maryam Nawaz announced the establishment of processing plants for the export of citrus to international markets.

In line with the manifesto, the PML-N government would also implement a province-wide initiative to construct 'Farm to Market Roads,' facilitating the seamless flow of agricultural products and machinery. The government would also invest in the livestock sector and boost meat exports.

## INFRASTRUCTURE AND SUTHRA PUNJAB

The government would work on the up-gradation of intercity and intra-city road infrastructure, in addition to introducing a system for the repair of broken roads, streets, and sewage disposal.

## ELECTRICITY BILLS

To help offset the enormous costs of electricity and in line with PML-N's agenda to promote renewable energy, the government has announced its plan to promote solar energy and offer solar panels to people consuming less than 300 units of electricity at subsidised rates.

## APNI CHHAT, APNA GHAR

Under this project, 100,000 houses will be built in the next five years to meet the burgeoning need for housing.

The PML-N's vision is a comprehensive blueprint that addresses a wide range of issues, from economic revival and governance to education, health, and infrastructure development. If implemented effectively, these initiatives have the potential to transform Punjab into a model province ■



# PML-N OVERSEAS COMES HOME FOR ELECTION

**DR RANA KHALID MEHMOOD**

Under the leadership of Chief Coordinator of PML-N Overseas, Barrister Amjad Malik, the overseas chapters of PML-N played a significant role in the party's campaign for the general election of 2024.

## CAMPAIGNING FOR ELECTION



Presidents, secretaries, chairmen, and senior officials from all over the world, ranging from Japan, France, Italy, Thailand, Chile, Saudi Arabia, the UK, Kuwait, Canada, Switzerland, South Africa, UAE, Oman, the Netherlands, and Malaysia, among others, flew home to actively participate in the election campaign in

their respective constituencies.

It is a matter of great pride for the PML-N overseas chapters that the party succeeded in securing a simple majority in Punjab and forming a coalition government at the centre in the general election of 2024. The PML-N overseas leadership celebrated the party's victory in the elections at an event in a local hotel in Lahore on 10 February.

## MEETING WITH ISHAQ DAR

President International Affairs and Overseas Pakistanis PML-N, Senator Ishaq Dar held a special meeting with a fifteen-member delegation of overseas Pakistanis led by the Senior Vice President and Chief Coordinator International Affairs Barrister Amjad Malik at PML-N Secretariat Model Town Lahore on 5 February 2024. Senator Ishaq Dar emphasised that Pakistan's economic development was the top priority of his party and overseas Pakistanis would be given



representation in parliament as per the manifesto.

Patron of PML-N Japan chapter Rana Abrar Hussain, PML-N Legal Wing President from London, Chaudhry Ansar Mehmood, PML-N UK's Azad Kashmir chapter's senior leaders Raja Sajid Hussain and Raja Ishtiaq Ahmed, Head of Trade Wing PML-N Kuwait Shamshad Tanuli, a social media expert from Canada Asad Chaudhry, PML-N Thailand President Asif Majeed and General Secretary Jawad Bashir, and PML-N Chile Chairman Sheikh Tanweer were present at the meeting.

## HONG KONG CHAPTER



Under the guidance of Barrister Amjad Malik, PML-N Hong Kong President Imran Khan is constantly striving for the expansion of PML-N's membership in Hong Kong. Recently, several prominent personalities from the Pakistani community in Hong Kong joined the party as a result of his efforts. On 10 February 2024, a notification was issued for nine new members to become officeholders of the Hong Kong chapter.

## TRIBUTE



PML-N UAE Senior Vice President Khawaja Abdul Waheed Pal (second from left) passed away in January 2024. PML-N pays tribute to the services of its leader and pays respects to his family in this moment of sorrow.

## PROFILE

Renowned American businessman and senior leader of PML-N USA chapter Danish Malik has been a loyal companion of his leader Mian Nawaz Sharif since his student years. Along with Khawaja Saad Rafique, he contested the election on the platform of the Muslim Student Federation in college. After graduating from college in 1988, he contested for the councillor seat in the local bodies elections on the PML-N ticket.

After he moved to the US, whenever PML-N leaders like Khawaja Asif, the late Mushahid Ullah Khan, Ahsan Iqbal, Abid Sher Ali, Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan, and others visited the US, Danish Malik always gave them a warm welcome. In addition, Danish Malik has links in the US government, which he uses to benefit Pakistan and the Pakistani community living in the US. Malik played an important role in the organisation of PML-N in the US and continues to campaign for the party and the country ■



# PICTURE GALLERY



MEMBERS OF PUNJAB ASSEMBLY TAKING OATH IN LAHORE WITH MARYAM NAWAZ AT THE FRONT. 23 FEBRUARY 2024



MIAN SHEHBAZ SHARIF MEETING MEMBERS OF NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLIES FROM BALOCHISTAN IN LAHORE. 24 FEBRUARY 2024



MIAN SHEHBAZ SHARIF MEETING NEWLY ELECTED MEMBERS OF PROVINCIAL AND NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES IN LAHORE. 21 FEBRUARY 2024



PML-N AND PPP LEADERSHIP ANNOUNCING THE FORMATION OF COALITION GOVERNMENT AT THE CENTRE. 21 FEBRUARY 2024



MIAN SHEHBAZ SHARIF AT A RALLY IN RAJANPUR. 29 JANUARY 2024



**MIAN NAWAZ SHARIF ADDRESSING THE PEOPLE IN AT PUBLIC RALLY IN MUREE. 05 FEBRUARY 2024**



**MIAN MUHAMMAD NAWAZ SHARIF WITH SUPPORTERS AT A PUBLIC RALLY IN GUJRANWALA. 03 FEBRUARY 2024**



**MIAN NAWAZ SHARIF AT A PUBLIC RALLY IN FAISALABAD. 02 FEBRUARY 2024**



**MIAN NAWAZ SHARIF AND MIAN SHEHBAZ SHARIF AT A PUBLIC RALLY IN GUJRANWALA. 03 FEBRUARY 2024**



**SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT PML-N PUNJAB RANA MASHHOOD AHMAD KHAN ADDRESSING A SEMINAR ON TI REPORT IN LAHORE. 5 FEBRUARY 2024**



**MIAN NAWAZ SHARIF AND MARYAM NAWAZ GOING TO CAST THEIR VOTES ON ELECTION DAY. LAHORE. 8 FEBRUARY 2024**



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