

HORIZON

January 2025



RECORD REMITTANCES

OVERSEAS PAKISTANIS
ARE FUELING THE
NATION'S REVIVAL

RESEARCH AND POLICY PLANNING UNIT
PAKISTAN MUSLIM LEAGUE – NAWAZ

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Dear Readers,

As we step into the New Year, a series of encouraging events have unfolded, bringing hope and optimism on multiple fronts. On 20 January 2025, President Trump made a historic return to the White House. In his inaugural address, he emphasised a commitment to unity and global cooperation. Pakistan's leadership extended heartfelt congratulations, with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressing a desire to strengthen the enduring Pakistan-US partnership. This renewed leadership in the US presents an opportunity to bolster bilateral ties on shared goals of peace and prosperity.

In a significant move, a ceasefire has been declared in Gaza, which followed immense human suffering — including tens of thousands of Palestinian casualties, displacement, and infrastructure destruction. The PML-N calls for an end to Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories and the establishment of a Palestinian state.

The economy, a cornerstone of PML-N's agenda, has shown promising signs of stability. Overseas Pakistanis contributed 3.5 billion remittances in December 2024, culminating in a record annual total of 35 billion remittances — a reflection of renewed confidence in the PML-N government. The State Bank's decision to reduce the key policy rate to 12 per cent from 13 per cent, paired with inflation dropping to single digits, will alleviate pressures on households and businesses alike. In Punjab, Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz's initiatives, such as the Livestock Card and Kissan Agriculture Card, have digitised subsidies to ensure farmers receive direct support for seeds and machinery. Her Dhee Rani Programme provides resources to underprivileged couples to start a new life, empowering rural women through vocational training, and innovative prawn farming projects in South Punjab are unlocking new social and economic opportunities.

In a heartening development, Pakistan and Bangladesh have taken steps to improve bilateral relations — a shift from years of frosty ties. In December 2024, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Bangladesh's Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus agreed to enhance cooperation in trade, cultural exchanges, and people-to-people contacts. In November 2024, Pakistan and Bangladesh reestablished direct maritime trade after more than five decades — a significant step toward enhancing bilateral trade and regional integration. This aligns with PML-N's broader vision of regional stability and brings hope that the two countries will resolve historical grievances.

Sincerely,
Saira Bano
Editor-in-Chief

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



DISINFORMATION: A POSTMODERN FATAL WEAPON

SAFDAR DANISH

In politics, disinformation has emerged as a potent and destructive force, leaving in its wake a trail of confusion, mistrust, and social discord. This deliberate dissemination of false and misleading information masquerading as truth has become an integral component of modern-day political warfare. The insidious nature of disinformation lies in its ability to manipulate public opinion, often to further the interests of those who seek to undermine the very fabric of a nation.

Richard Grenell, the former US Ambassador to Germany, was nominated by President Donald Trump for special missions in various countries, including Venezuela and North Korea. These countries are far from Pakistan, yet Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) sought help from Grenell for the release of their incarcerated leader. Despite chanting “Absolutely Not,” PTI actively promoted Grenell’s statement, “Free Imran Khan!” -- a clear contradiction to their stated principles. This blatant inconsistency exposes

the party’s willingness to compromise their values for personal gain.

Grenell’s involvement in global hotspots, as appointed by Trump, has no direct connection to Pakistan’s internal politics. Nevertheless, PTI’s eagerness to seek his support undermines their claims of independence. The party’s actions demonstrate a lack of integrity and a willingness to pursue power at any cost. PTI’s hypocrisy is a stark reminder of their duplicity and lack of transparency. Their contradictory actions have eroded trust and damaged their credibility.

The PTI’s narrative on the November 2024 protest in Islamabad is riddled with contradictions and false information. Initially, the party claimed that law enforcement agencies had opened fire on protesters, resulting in the deaths of up to 200 PTI workers. However, this claim was soon disputed by the party itself, with multiple statements citing different death toll rates: 200, 140, 70, 40, and then 12. However,

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PTI'S RELIANCE ON DISINFORMATION IS A CALCULATED ATTEMPT TO MANIPULATE PUBLIC PERCEPTION AND PROTECT IMRAN KHAN FROM ACCOUNTABILITY.

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PTI's claims of a massacre have been widely debunked.

PTI's reliance on disinformation is a calculated attempt to manipulate public perception and protect Imran Khan from accountability. By portraying protests as a democratic right, PTI masks its true intent: to disrupt governance and undermine state institutions. Their militant and fascist tactics are a direct threat to Pakistan's stability and democratic integrity.

The PTI's disinformation campaigns have been rampant, and one notable example is the boycott of Fauji products, a well-established Pakistani brand. By instigating the general public, PTI aimed to create a false narrative against the Pakistan Army, which allegedly led to a significant backlash against Fauji products. This boycott resulted in substantial financial losses for thousands of employees, causing harm to the country's economy.

The consequences of disinformation are far-reaching and devastating, potentially undermining democratic processes, creating social unrest, and even inciting violence. The ubiquity of social media platforms has led to the proliferation of disinformation. These platforms have become breeding grounds for falsehoods and conspiracy theories.

PTI's recent disinformation campaign to discourage Pakistani workers abroad from sending remittances has backfired. Despite their efforts, overseas Pakistani workers refused to participate. This reflects their resilience in the face of manipulated information and dealt a significant blow to PTI's disinformation tactics.

In a statement, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif congratulated the nation on the record surge in foreign remittances, which reached \$3.1 billion in December 2024. He expressed gratitude to overseas Pakistanis for their confidence in government policies, resulting in a 29 per cent increase in foreign remittances compared to the same period last year. The prime minister acknowledged overseas Pakistanis as the country's ambassadors and a precious asset.

As Pakistan moves forward, it is imperative to hold PTI accountable for its actions while strengthening democratic institutions to prevent future threats. The government's measured response, grounded in legal and moral principles, is bound to protect the state and its citizens. It is hoped that PTI's tactics are soon exposed to the international community for what they truly are: a dangerous pursuit of power that undermines Pakistan's progress, stability, and sovereignty.

The PTI's attempts to overwhelm the nation's youth and citizens through propaganda and disinformation have ultimately failed — a testament to the resilience and maturity of the Pakistani people. Under the leadership of PML-N, Pakistan is making rapid progress, with the premier's five-year economic plan Uraan Pakistan serving as a strategic response to propagandists, abettors, non-state actors, foreign lobbyists, and anti-state elements. The future of Pakistan depends on this democratic response■

The writer is a political analyst and youth activist.



PUNJAB ASSEMBLY IN THE ERA OF SPEAKER MALIK AHMAD KHAN

MUHAMMAD MUGHEES ARIF

Punjab Assembly, the provincial legislature of Punjab, fulfils the legislative function and provides public representatives with a platform to elect their leader and raise concerns of prime importance regarding the province's people. The custodian of the house is known as the provincial speaker, with special prerogatives given in the Constitution of Pakistan to conduct the business of the assembly. There have been many notable speakers in Punjab's history but the current speaker and his performance surpasses them all.

PML-N's Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan assumed charge as the 22nd Speaker of the Punjab Assembly on 24 February 2024. He belongs to a well-known

political family from Kasur, who have contributed greatly to our democratic system. His father Malik Muhammad Ali Khan was a successful politician, having been elected as the Deputy Chairman Senate. As a law graduate from Buckingham University and a seasoned legal practitioner, Malik Ahmad Khan is well versed in the law and adept at managing the matters of the house, with a focus on enhancing its democratic values.

As speaker, he runs the house smoothly by allowing parliamentarians to add their remarks and question any act, irrespective of whether they belong to the government or the opposition. He established many working groups of parliamentarians from all parties to

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 MALIK AHMAD KHAN, THE
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collaborate for the public’s welfare and to scrutinise the relevant department’s performance. Recognising the pressing need, he recently established a task force of members of the provincial assembly (MPAs) to work specifically on sustainable development corresponding with the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The task force’s recommendations will pave the way towards sustainability. Their interpretations will allow relevant ministries and departments to upgrade their policies according to UN-given standards, ensuring swift progress for the people of Punjab.

The Parliamentary Development Unit (PDU) is another body formed under the speaker’s patronage. With the evolving needs of our society, it is imperative to enhance parliamentary practices continually. The unit will supplement legislative processes within the assembly, promote accountability, engage the public, and use this unique platform to spearhead special initiatives in line with the spirit of a deliberative and inclusive democratic system. The initiative hopes to

bridge the gap between civil society and lawmakers and explore and develop avenues for cooperation that align with emerging trends in parliamentary practices worldwide.

In 2024, the speaker participated in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) General Assembly in New South Wales during the topical debate ‘Votes vs Likes – the Role of Parliament in Strengthening Democratic Resilience in an Age of Fake News and Synthetic Media.’ On 3 November 2024, Malik Ahmad Khan embarked on a seven-day trip to Australia to attend the CPA conference. This prestigious gathering brought together parliamentarians from across the Commonwealth to discuss key issues, share legislative practices, and promote democratic governance. The conference covered climate change, economic development, and strengthening parliamentary ties among member countries. Malik Ahmed Khan shared his insights to combat the problems faced by member countries. On the sidelines of the conference, Speaker Malik Ahmad Khan held a meeting with Secretary

“FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HISTORY, THE FIRST JOINT CPA ASIA AND CPA SOUTH-EAST ASIA REGIONAL CONFERENCE WILL BE HELD IN THE PUNJAB ASSEMBLY IN FEBRUARY 2025.”



General CPA Stephen Twigg. Twigg appreciated the initiatives taken by the speaker to strengthen democracy and promote sustainability.

For the first time in history, the first joint CPA Asia and CPA South-East Asia Regional Conference will be held in the Punjab Assembly in February 2025. Parliamentary groups from member countries will join the session in the Punjab Assembly led by Speaker Malik Ahmad Khan. This will enhance Pakistan's international image, instilling confidence in the developing world to strengthen ties with Pakistan, while helping to counter negative perceptions and showcase our true potential. Malik Ahmad Khan deserves credit for securing such a landmark opportunity.

Under the progressive leadership of Speaker Malik Ahmad Khan, the Punjab Assembly has witnessed groundbreaking reforms aimed at enhancing transparency, accountability, and efficiency. A specialised committee has revised the outdated Rules of Procedure through rigorous research and discussion. The new framework mandates forming standing committees for each ministry, empowered



to address matters ranging from legislation to public affairs, with the compulsory inclusion of at least two women parliamentarians in each committee.

For the first time, assembly proceedings are broadcast live without censorship, fostering public trust and awareness about parliamentary processes. Speaker Malik Ahmad Khan has also introduced thematic parliamentary caucuses to address critical issues like climate change, local governance, minority rights, women's empowerment, and border area development. A strict code of conduct has also been implemented, barring violence and verbal abuse in the assembly. A dedicated committee on law reforms, chaired by the speaker, is actively working on pending matters from the 18th Amendment, reflecting a commitment to meaningful legislative progress and public service.

With the implementation of these initiatives, the Punjab Assembly is well on its way to creating history as the best-performing provincial legislature in the country. Its credit goes to Malik Ahmad Khan ■

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



ROMINA KHURSHID ALAM: ON THE FRONTLINES OF CLIMATE ACTION

RESEARCH AND POLICY PLANNING UNIT

In an exclusive interview with Horizon, Romina Khurshid Alam, a prominent member of the National Assembly and Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change, shares her inspiring journey from Gujranwala to becoming a key advocate for climate action on global forums.

HORIZON: Can you tell us about your early life, education, and how you entered politics?

ROMINA KHURSHID ALAM (RKA): Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim. I hail from Gujranwala, where I completed my schooling. Regarding education, learning never truly ends; it's a continuous process. Although my roots are in Gujranwala, let me clarify that I'm not an avid fan of traditional local delicacies like 'chirray' or heavy meat dishes! My upbringing was shaped by my grandfather, Khurshid Alam, who came from a military background. After my parents separated when I was three, he took on the

responsibility of raising me. Whatever values I carry today are largely due to his guidance and my schooling at St. Peter's English High School in Gujranwala.

I pursued various roles alongside my education. From understanding grassroots professions to teaching at The City School, I gathered diverse experiences. My political career began in 2005 when I joined PML-N. By 2007, thanks to Maryam Nawaz's vision of empowering youth, I was appointed general secretary of the PML-N Youth Wing. Since then, I have been a committed member of the party. In 2013, the leadership encouraged me to apply for women's reserved seats in the Punjab Assembly. However, I was honoured to be nominated for a seat in the National Assembly, and I am currently serving my third term. Over the years, I've contributed significantly to parliamentary forums, focusing on climate diplomacy, international relations, and sustainable development goals (SDGs). I've also been part of the World Commission on

“ PAKISTAN EMERGED AS A KEY VOICE AT COP29. OUR DELEGATION PUSHED FOR INCREASED FUNDING AND STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF REGIONAL SOLUTIONS, ENGAGING THE PRIVATE SECTOR, AND HOLDING DEVELOPED NATIONS ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR COMMITMENTS. ”



Forced Displacements and convened Pakistan's SDG Task Force. These milestones are blessings from Allah, who continues to guide me.

HORIZON: You recently represented Pakistan at COP29, where the country's pavilion received widespread appreciation. Can you share your experience?

RKA: Alhamdulillah, Pakistan's representation at COP29 was commendable. For the first time, we ensured the active engagement of all provinces, ministries, and regions, including AJK and Gilgit-Baltistan. We also involved youth and children through COP simulations, giving them a platform to contribute. Pakistan's advocacy went beyond national interests, addressing the needs of all vulnerable countries. We highlighted the urgent need for access to climate funds, emphasising that the proposed mechanisms were overly complicated and inaccessible despite trillions being available globally.

Pakistan emerged as a key voice at COP29. Our pavilion was abuzz with activities, discussions, and international engagement from morning to late evening. Our delegation pushed for increased funding and stressed the importance of regional solutions, engaging the private sector, and holding developed nations accountable for their commitments. Pakistan's efforts made it the talk of the conference, and I'm optimistic about the future.

HORIZON: Some argue that the agreed-upon climate funds at COP29 are insufficient. What is your perspective on the negotiations?

RKA: If we look at Pakistan's climate loss alone, we need over \$350 billion. The initial funding proposal was far less, but Pakistan's persistent advocacy helped increase it to \$350 billion — though it's disheartening that this amount will only be accessible by 2030 or later. The developed countries' approach to dragging their feet on such critical matters is more painful than



disappointing. This is why Pakistan has emphasised the need for regional collaborations, risk pooling, and mutual support among developing countries. We must work together, utilise our expertise, and push for collective solutions.

HORIZON: Can you share insights about your work on SDGs and youth empowerment?

RKA: During my first tenure as a member of the National Assembly, I had the privilege of being part of Pakistan's SDG Secretariat, established under Speaker Ayaz Sadiq's leadership in 2013. Marriyum Aurangzeb played a pivotal role in shaping this initiative. Later, as the convener, I led various global and national efforts, including hosting Pakistan's first Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Conference. These experiences deepened my understanding of climate

diplomacy and sustainable development.

Regarding youth empowerment, I firmly believe the youth are not just our future — they are our present. Through initiatives like the Green Youth Movement and COP simulations, we've actively engaged young minds, inspiring them to take ownership of national challenges. I'm optimistic about Pakistan's future, provided our youth channel their energy positively and work towards national unity.

HORIZON: How has your experience been with the PML-N leadership?

RKA: My experience with the PML-N leadership has been exceptional. I was welcomed without bias when I joined the party, despite being from a minority background. The leadership's trust in me has been



unwavering, and their words of encouragement remain a treasure in my life. For example, Maryam Nawaz's mentorship has been invaluable. Similarly, Shehbaz Sharif's acknowledgement of my contributions motivates me to strive harder. Representing Pakistan at COP29 wasn't just about me; it was proof of the party's confidence in my abilities.

HORIZON: Could you share how embracing Islam influenced your life?

RKA: Embracing Islam was a deeply personal decision. Life is a continuous journey of shaping and reshaping oneself. Every day brings new lessons, and while the journey hasn't been easy, I find immense peace and focus through my faith. My dua has always been to please Allah and earn His approval. I'm a mother of three — two daughters and a son. My daughters, especially, have been my greatest support, understanding the challenges of my journey and standing by me.

HORIZON: Balancing work and personal life must be challenging. How do you manage?

RKA: To be honest, there isn't much balance. Public service demands sacrifices, and maintaining equilibrium is a constant struggle. However, I owe much of my ability to cope to my daughters, who have been incredibly understanding. My work is my passion, and while I may not achieve the perfect balance, I remain committed to fulfilling my responsibilities with sincerity.

HORIZON: What are your hobbies and personal interests?

RKA: I'm a simple person who enjoys the little things in life. I love reading, writing poetry, and maintaining cleanliness — some even say I'm obsessive about it! I also adore animals, especially dogs and horses. Unfortunately, my busy schedule doesn't leave much time for hobbies, but whenever I get the chance, I cherish these moments. It's less about what I do and more about who I share those moments with.

HORIZON: Thank you very much for talking to us.

RKA: The pleasure is mine ■



RECORD SURGE IN REMITTANCES: A REJECTION OF PTI'S CALL TO HALT FUNDS

RESEARCH AND POLICY PLANNING UNIT

In December 2024, Pakistan witnessed a historic surge in remittance inflows. Overseas Pakistanis sent home a staggering \$3.08 billion, a 29.3 per cent increase compared to the \$2.38 billion recorded in December 2023. This remarkable growth highlights the resilience of the Pakistani diaspora and serves as a resounding rejection of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan's call to boycott remittances amid ongoing political tensions.

The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported that December 2024 remittances grew by 6 per cent month-on-month, rising from \$2.92 billion in November 2024. This growth was driven by contributions from key regions, with Saudi Arabia leading the way at \$770.6 million, followed by the United Arab Emirates (\$631.5 million), the United Kingdom (\$456.9 million), and the United States (\$284.3 million). Notably, remittances from the UAE surged by 51 per

cent year-on-year, while Saudi Arabia saw a 33 per cent increase.

The first half of the fiscal year 2024-25 (July to December) also saw a 33 per cent increase in remittances, totalling \$17.8 billion compared to \$13.4 billion in the same period of the previous fiscal year. This growth reflects the success of government

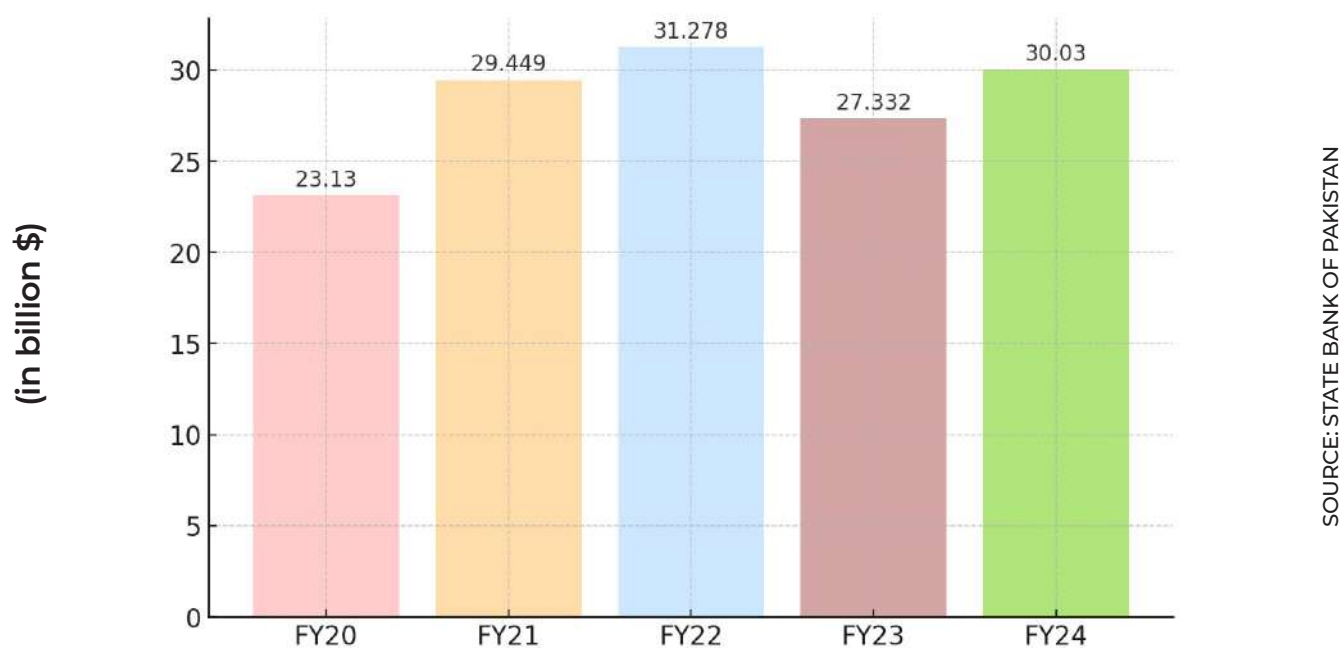
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THE RECORD INFLOWS IN DECEMBER 2024 PROVIDED MUCH-NEEDED RELIEF TO THE CASH-STRAPPED ECONOMY, NARROWING THE TRADE DEFICIT AND SUPPORTING THE PAKISTANI RUPEE'S STABILITY.

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“EXPERTS BELIEVE THAT OVERSEAS PAKISTANIS WOULD CONTINUE TO SEND MONEY TO THEIR FAMILIES, REGARDLESS OF POLITICAL APPEALS.”

YEAR-WISE INFLOWS FROM OVERSEAS PAKISTANIS



initiatives to formalise remittance channels and stabilise the economy.

The surge in remittances comes against the backdrop of a political standoff between the PTI and the government. In December 2024, Imran Khan, through his sister Aleema Khan, warned that he would urge overseas Pakistanis to halt remittances if the government failed to meet his demands, including the release of incarcerated PTI workers and the formation of judicial commissions to investigate alleged state brutalities. By January 2025, Khan reiterated this call, urging overseas Pakistanis to boycott remittances, claiming that sending money would “strengthen the very hands that are tightening the noose around your necks.”

However, the data from December 2024 clearly shows that overseas Pakistanis ignored this appeal. Instead, they demonstrated a strong commitment to supporting their families and the national economy. Experts believe that overseas Pakistanis would continue to send money to their families, regardless of political appeals, highlighting the deep emotional and economic ties that bind the diaspora to their homeland.

Remittances play a critical role in Pakistan’s economy, contributing to foreign exchange reserves, stabilising the external account, and boosting household incomes. The record inflows in December 2024 provided much-needed relief to the cash-strapped economy, narrowing the trade deficit and supporting the Pakistani rupee’s stability.

Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb and SBP Governor Jameel Ahmad have projected that remittances for FY25 could reach an unprecedented \$35 billion, up from \$30.25 billion in FY24. This optimistic outlook is supported by the government’s efforts to incentivise formal remittance channels and crack down on illegal money transfer systems like hawala/hundi.

The record increase in remittances in December 2024 shows the resilience and patriotism of overseas Pakistanis. It also serves as a clear rejection of PTI’s call to halt remittances, demonstrating that the diaspora prioritises the well-being of their families and the nation over political rhetoric. As Pakistan continues to navigate economic challenges, the support of its overseas community remains a cornerstone of its stability and growth■



TRUMP 2.0 AND PAKISTAN: THE PML-N'S BALANCING ACT

RESEARCH AND POLICY PLANNING UNIT

As Donald Trump assumed the US presidency for a second term on January 20, 2025, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has adopted a pragmatic stance, balancing cautious diplomacy with a firm defence of national sovereignty. Drawing from historical precedents and current geopolitical realities, the PML-N-led government views President Trump's return as a test of Pakistan's ability to navigate an increasingly transactional US foreign policy while safeguarding its strategic interests.

OPTIMISM AMID RENEWED ENGAGEMENT

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif congratulated President Trump on his inauguration via social media, emphasising Pakistan's commitment to strengthening the longstanding US-Pakistan partnership and decades of collaborative efforts toward regional stability. President Asif Ali Zardari echoed this sentiment, framing the occasion as a chance to renew ties, with Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi representing Pakistan

at the ceremony. While Naqvi's unofficial attendance drew scrutiny, it signalled Islamabad's pragmatic intent to engage with the Trump administration despite domestic debates over protocol. Defence Minister Khawaja Asif bolstered the optimistic tone, praising President Trump's inaugural focus on global unity and peacemaking — a departure, he claimed, from Washington's historical role as a “conflict instigator.” Economic priorities over aid dependency

President Trump's “America First” doctrine signals a likely reduction in US aid, which the PML-N views as an opportunity to recalibrate Pakistan's economic strategy. Historically reliant on US assistance,

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THE PML-N HAS CONSISTENTLY REJECTED EXTERNAL PRESSURE, PARTICULARLY REGARDING DOMESTIC POLITICAL MATTERS.

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“**THE PML-N-LED GOVERNMENT VIEWS PRESIDENT TRUMP’S RETURN AS A TEST OF PAKISTAN’S ABILITY TO NAVIGATE AN INCREASINGLY TRANSACTIONAL US FOREIGN POLICY WHILE SAFEGUARDING ITS STRATEGIC INTERESTS.**”



Pakistan now faces pressure to diversify partnerships and attract investment from China, Gulf states, and international financial institutions. Trump’s disdain for “free aid” could exacerbate Pakistan’s debt crisis, but the PML-N has prioritised structural reforms and austerity measures to reduce dependency. As foreign policy expert Muhammad Faisal noted, Pakistan must “skillfully navigate” US-China tensions to avoid alienating either power while securing economic stability.

MANAGING US-CHINA RIVALRY

The PML-N recognises that the Trump administration’s adversarial stance toward China will strain Islamabad’s alliance with Beijing, particularly regarding the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). With President Trump vowing 60 per cent tariffs on Chinese imports and scrutinising CPEC’s strategic implications, Pakistan risks becoming collateral damage in this rivalry. However, the PML-N has resisted calls to distance itself from China, instead advocating for a “normalised” relationship with the US that focuses on shared counterterrorism goals and economic cooperation. This balancing act reflects PML-N’s broader strategy of maintaining neutrality in great-power competition.

Regional stability: India, Afghanistan, and Kashmir President Trump’s perceived tilt toward India — a cornerstone of his Indo-Pacific strategy — poses challenges to Pakistan’s security calculus. The PML-N has long criticised India’s actions in Kashmir, and Trump’s indifference to the issue risks deepening regional asymmetry. Meanwhile, Afghanistan remains a flashpoint, with cross-border terrorism and Taliban-aligned groups threatening CPEC projects. Pakistan

has called for renewed US engagement in stabilising Afghanistan, though analysts like Christopher Clary argue that the country must first address its own economic and governance challenges to regain leverage.

SOVEREIGNTY AND NON-INTERFERENCE: A RED LINE

The PML-N has consistently rejected external pressure, particularly regarding domestic political matters. Defence Minister Khawaja Asif underscored this stance by dismissing speculation that Trump’s administration could secure the release of jailed PTI founder Imran Khan. Drawing parallels to Nawaz Sharif’s 1998 refusal to abandon nuclear tests despite US pressure, Asif emphasised that Pakistan’s decisions are “guided by national interest, not foreign diktats.” This sentiment was echoed by PML-N Senator Talal Chaudhry, who rebuked Trump ally Richard Grenell’s calls for Khan’s release as “interference in internal affairs.” For the PML-N, Trump’s transactional approach necessitates vigilance against perceived overreach, even as bilateral ties remain crucial.

PRAGMATISM IN A TRANSACTIONAL ERA

For the PML-N, Trump’s inauguration underlines the need for Pakistan to adopt a clear-eyed, interest-driven foreign policy. While the party acknowledges the risks of reduced US aid and heightened scrutiny over China ties, it remains committed to sovereignty, economic resilience, and regional stability. As Trump’s unpredictable style reshapes global dynamics, the PML-N’s success will hinge on its ability to transform challenges into opportunities—a task requiring both strategic foresight and a firm resolve ■



PML-N'S DRIVE FOR REMITTANCES

DR RANA KHALID MEHMOOD

In recent months, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) overseas chapters have launched a series of events and campaigns to counter the perception that expatriate communities exclusively support the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

The awareness campaigns urging Pakistanis abroad to send remittances to Pakistan bolstered PML-N's political support and contributed to an impressive increase in remittances. In December 2024, a record-breaking \$3.08 billion was sent to Pakistan, reflecting the overseas community's renewed trust in the federal government under Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

The government, led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, has taken concrete steps to address overseas Pakistanis' concerns and ensure their meaningful participation in the economy. These measures include enhanced diplomatic support, legal assistance, and the establishment of specialised facilitation centres.

PML-N's overseas chapters have played a pivotal role in amplifying these efforts, thus strengthening the

community's trust in the party's leadership and its vision for Pakistan's progress. The overseas chapters conducted a series of events to promote the party's point of view and campaign for the country.

LONDON SEMINAR

In London, the PML-N UK chapter organised an impressive seminar on the role of overseas Pakistanis in the stability of Pakistan, hosted by Haji Abid Hussain, president of the Overseas Pakistanis Welfare Council (OPWC), and Ayaz Rafiq, general secretary of the Youth Forum. The event featured Barrister Amjad Malik, vice chairman of the Overseas Commission Punjab, as the keynote speaker, alongside Syed Qamar Raza, chairman of the Board of Governors, Overseas Pakistanis Foundation (OPF).

Barrister Amjad Malik commended the crucial role of overseas Pakistanis in Pakistan's economy and development. He also acknowledged the sacrifices of the Pakistan armed forces in safeguarding national sovereignty. Other speakers, including Deputy High Commissioner Haseeb bin Aziz, emphasised the patriotism and unity of the overseas community.

ITALY: BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS



In Brescia, the PML-N Italy chapter held a grand event presided over by Chaudhry Faheem Khalid, president of Italy's youth wing. Federal Minister for Information Atta Tarar joined the event virtually, highlighting the contributions of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and PML-N President Mian Nawaz Sharif to Pakistan's development.



Key participants included notable figures such as Qamar Riaz Khan, Raja Shiraz Ahmed, and Chaudhry Tasawur Abbas Gondal, who reinforced that overseas Pakistanis' earnings contribute to the state of Pakistan, not the ruling political party.

LONDON: BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS



A magnificent event hosted by PML-N UK President Ahsan Dar in London marked the birthday of Mian

Nawaz Sharif. The chief guest, Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif announced the restoration of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) services in Europe and the United States, signalling the government's commitment to addressing overseas Pakistanis' concerns.

The event attracted thousands of PML-N supporters, reaffirming their confidence in Mian Nawaz Sharif's leadership.



DENMARK: BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

PML-N Denmark's youth wing organised a distinguished event to celebrate the birth anniversaries of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Mian Nawaz Sharif. The event, hosted by Youth President Mehir Aftab Ahmed Rumi and General Secretary Mian Muhammad Mansha, featured speeches highlighting Quaid-e-Azam's vision and Mian Nawaz Sharif's leadership's pivotal role in shaping Pakistan's future.



The organised efforts of PML-N's overseas chapters have made it clear that overseas Pakistanis' support is not confined to a single political party. Instead, they have shown unwavering trust in national institutions and the leadership of PML-N.

These events have strengthened the political engagement of the overseas community and showcased their role as a vital economic asset.

PICTURE GALLERY



PRIME MINISTER MUHAMMAD SHEHBAZ SHARIF WITNESSES THE EXCHANGE OF MOUs BETWEEN MUSLIM WORLD LEAGUE AND OIC, AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON GIRLS' EDUCATION. ISLAMABAD. 11 JANUARY 2025



PRIME MINISTER MUHAMMAD SHEHBAZ SHARIF IN A GROUP PHOTO WITH THE MINISTERS OF EDUCATION PARTICIPATING IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON GIRLS' EDUCATION. ISLAMABAD. 12 JANUARY 2025



PRIME MINISTER MUHAMMAD SHEHBAZ SHARIF INAUGURATES FACELESS CUSTOMS ASSESSMENT SYSTEM OF THE FEDERAL BOARD OF REVENUE (FBR). KARACHI. 08 JANUARY 2025



PRIME MINISTER MUHAMMAD SHEHBAZ SHARIF MEETS PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, HIS HIGHNESS SHEIKH MOHAMED BIN ZAYED AL NAHYAN, TO STRENGTHEN BILATERAL TIES. RAHIM YAR KHAN. 05 JANUARY 2025



PRIME MINISTER SHEHBAZ SHARIF LAUNCHES 'URAAN PAKISTAN: HOMEGROWN NATIONAL ECONOMIC PLAN'. ISLAMABAD. 31 DECEMBER 2024





FORMER CHIEF MINISTER PUNJAB HAMZA SHAHBAZ IN A MEETING WITH CHAIRMAN PRIME MINISTER'S YOUTH PROGRAMME RANA MASHHOOD AHMAD KHAN. LAHORE. 26 DECEMBER 2024



CHIEF MINISTER PUNJAB MARYAM NAWAZ SHARIF INAUGURATES ZAHRA HOMES/MASKAN RAVI SCHEME, ALLOTTING LETTERS AND KEYS OF HOUSES TO 100 FAMILIES. KALA SHAH KAKU. 13 JANUARY 2025



CHIEF MINISTER MARYAM NAWAZ DURING A VISIT TO BAHAWALPUR WHERE SHE DISTRIBUTED 3,011 HONHAAR SCHOLARSHIPS. 13 JANUARY 2025



CHIEF MINISTER PUNJAB MARYAM NAWAZ SHARIF INAUGURATES PAK-TURK MAARIF INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL & COLLEGE. MULTAN. 10 JANUARY 2025



DEFENCE MINISTER KHAWAJA ASIF CELEBRATES THE RESUMPTION OF PIA'S FLIGHTS FROM ISLAMABAD TO PARIS. ISLAMABAD. 10 JANUARY 2025



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PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER MARYAM NAWAZ LAUNCHES THE "PUNJAB DHEE RANI PROGRAMME" BY ATTENDING THE FIRST MASS WEDDING OF 51 COUPLES. LAHORE. 11 JANUARY 2025



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