

HORIZON

December 2025



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK
YEAR IN REVIEW 2025

RESEARCH AND POLICY PLANNING UNIT
PAKISTAN MUSLIM LEAGUE - NAWAZ

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Dear Readers,

The past year will be remembered as one in which Pakistan confronted pressure on multiple fronts and emerged with renewed strategic confidence. The most serious test came on 7 May, when India carried out cross-border strikes in Pakistani territory, violating sovereignty and pushing the region toward a dangerous escalation. Pakistan's response combined military preparedness with political restraint, avoiding reckless confrontation while firmly asserting its position. By engaging the international community, Pakistan helped prevent further escalation.

The confrontation highlighted the maturity of Pak-China defence cooperation, with jointly developed platforms operating effectively during heightened tensions. In the aftermath, Pakistan witnessed a diplomatic rebound. Engagement with the United States resumed on broader terms, moving beyond a narrow security lens toward trade, climate, and regional stability. Ties with Saudi Arabia were elevated through deeper strategic and economic cooperation, reaffirming a partnership that remains central to Pakistan's regional standing. At the same time, Pakistan expanded its regional outreach, renewing ties with Jordan and Egypt, strengthening links with Central Asian states, and deepening engagement with Malaysia, Indonesia, Bangladesh, and Iran, reflecting a more confident and outward-looking foreign policy.

Economic stabilisation remained a parallel priority. Inflation was brought down to single-digit levels, the policy rate was reduced to 10.5 per cent, and foreign exchange reserves climbed to around \$21 billion. For the first time in years, Pakistan has strengthened its economic position and increased foreign reserves, improving its capacity to meet international obligations while continuing to work with the IMF and friendly countries for additional support. While critics remain impatient, reversing years of economic distress is neither simple nor swift. Stabilisation, however, has created the conditions for growth, and if current trends persist, the economy is well-positioned to take off in the coming year.

On the governance front, the passage of the 27th Constitutional Amendment, decisive action against violent extremism, and the unprecedented prosecution and conviction of a former DG ISI marked significant steps toward institutional accountability and the rule of law. Social initiatives, including the distribution of laptops to students and visible progress across sectors in Punjab, reflected continued investment in youth and development.

At the same time, Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan have strained, with border closures and trade disruptions following repeated attacks by militants operating from Afghan territory. Islamabad has held the Afghan authorities responsible for failing to curb these groups, highlighting ongoing security and economic challenges along the border.

Taken together, 2025 demonstrated Pakistan's capacity to confront external aggression, stabilise its economy, and recalibrate diplomacy while advancing governance reforms. The year marked a consolidation of direction rather than perfection.

Wishing you a very Happy New Year!

Sincerely,
Saira Bano
Editor-in-Chief

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



27TH AMENDMENT CRIPPLING THE JUDICIARY?



ZEYAD KHAN YOUSAFZAI

The passage of the 27th Amendment to the Constitution of Pakistan during the pendency of a petition challenging the 26th Amendment before the Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court has attracted severe criticism. Detractors argue that it compromises the independence of the judiciary by disturbing the basic structure of the Constitution as preserved by its framers. According to critics, the amendment grants excessive authority to the executive, allowing interference in the appointment and transfer of judges, curtailing the original jurisdiction of the Supreme Court through the omission of Article 184 and diminishing the stature of the Supreme Court by establishing a Federal Constitutional Court (FCC).

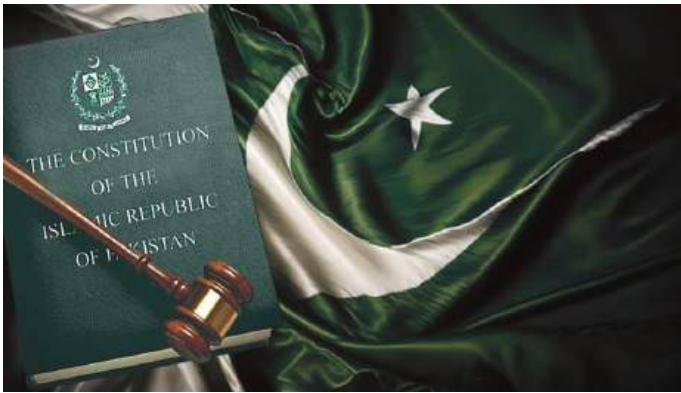
The appointment of judges has remained a contentious issue since the inception of the judicial system of Pakistan. The judiciary itself took the task of streamlining the process of appointments, but unfortunately kept the equilibrium tilted towards itself, prioritising its own family demesne. The attempt of

Parliament to make the process transparent through the 18th Amendment was thwarted by the Supreme Court when it declared void the role assigned to parliamentarians through a parliamentary committee — intended to ensure transparency and improve the quality of judicial appointments — terming such involvement as interference in judicial appointments.

To strengthen democracy, which had suffered from unconstitutional judicial decisions since 1955 — starting with the Maulvi Tamizuddin Khan case — Parliament decided to retake the task of bringing

“ IRONICALLY, MANY LAWYER LEADERS WHO NOW OPPOSE THE JUDICIAL COMMISSION’S APPOINTMENT PROCESS AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FCC WERE ONCE AT THE FOREFRONT OF THESE VERY DEMANDS. ”

“ THE DEMAND FOR A SEPARATE CONSTITUTIONAL COURT DATES BACK TO THE 1990S, WHEN LAWYERS’ REPRESENTATIVE BODIES CALLED FOR AN INDEPENDENT FORUM TO ADJUDICATE POLITICAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL CASES WITHOUT BURDENING CASES OF ORDINARY CITIZENS. ”



impartial and independent judges of impeccable character by introducing the 26th Amendment of the Constitution. It is not an attempt to undermine the judiciary, though successive elected governments had repeatedly fallen victim to judicial decisions influenced by military dictators, bringing anarchy, unrest and severe economic crises in the country. The intention of the Parliament is to have a strong judicial system for the true administration of justice.

The portrayal of dominance of the executive over the judiciary has no substance, as the amendments are introduced on persistent demand of the legal fraternity to revamp the system of appointment of judges packed with favourites, relatives, juniors, and individuals associated with sitting judges by blocking the path of competent lawyers from being appointed on merit. Parliament’s earlier attempt to break this vicious cycle through the 18th Amendment failed due to judicial intervention. Nonetheless, Parliament remained committed to the principle that no state can survive without an independent judiciary, and that such independence fundamentally depends on merit-based appointments. To this end, an effective and objective-oriented Judicial Commission was reshaped through the 26th and 27th Amendments.

The critics also allege the dominance of the Executive in the Judicial Commission. Out of thirteen members, five are judges, including the chief justice of the Federal Constitutional Court after the 27th Amendment,

while five members are from Parliament, along with the law minister and the attorney general. This, critics argue, tilts the balance in favour of the executive. However, this criticism overlooks the fact that two parliamentary members belong to the opposition, and representatives from the bar act as an additional safeguard to ensure merit-based appointments. For the first time, a prescribed nomination form has been introduced, enabling the Commission to objectively assess a nominee’s credentials for appointment to the superior judiciary.

It is also alleged that the transfer of High Court judges without their consent, introduced in the amendment, would be used as a Damocles’ sword to pressure judges into delivering favourable decisions for the executive, and their refusal would result in a reference to the Supreme Judicial Council. This apprehension is misplaced as the Constitution provides transfer of judges under Article 200, and prior to the 1973 Constitution, judges served in different High Courts of West Pakistan under the One Unit system. The sole and true objective of this provision is to improve and harmonise the quality of the judicial system. Judges serving in different regions gain broader exposure to diverse social realities, enabling better administration of justice and protection of public interest. Recently, the Supreme Court itself reprobated practices that undermined the dignity of citizens in certain regions and emphasised the need for a uniform judicial approach across the country. Moreover, a judge who



functions under the fear of transfer has no right to stay in office, as he will not be able to do justice with his oath of preserving and upholding justice without fear or favour.

The omission of Article 184 has also drawn criticism. Without going into details, the judiciary, instead of making its own house in order, frequently resorted to suo motu powers to interfere in executive affairs. The misuse of this provision is evident: former Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry took 79 suo motu notices, while Justice Saqib Nisar initiated 47 during his two-year tenure.

The establishment of the Federal Constitutional Court is perhaps the most controversial aspect of the 27th Amendment. The resignation of two Supreme Court judges in protest has further emboldened opposition to the FCC. However, this ignores the historical context. The demand for a separate constitutional court dates back to the 1990s, when lawyers' representative bodies called for an independent forum to adjudicate political and constitutional cases without burdening cases of ordinary citizens. Political cases had clogged the Supreme Court, often requiring full-court hearings, particularly after the dissolution of the Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif governments.

Bar associations across the country passed resolutions demanding an independent constitutional court. Notably, the Lahore High Court Bar organised a seminar on 7 December 1996, addressed by former Chief Justice of Pakistan Syed Nasim Hassan Shah

and Justice Asif Saeed Khosa (later Chief Justice of Pakistan), both of whom advocated the establishment of such a court and called for transparent judicial appointments. In subsequent years, the Supreme Court Bar Association also endorsed these demands. Ironically, many lawyer leaders who now oppose the Judicial Commission's appointment process and the establishment of the FCC were once at the forefront of these very demands. Their current opposition appears driven by political considerations, despite their earlier calls to regulate suo motu powers under Article 184 — powers that were sparingly misused to dismiss elected governments.

Reflecting these long-standing demands, all major political parties signed the Charter of Democracy in 2006, committing to transparent judicial appointments and the creation of a Federal Constitutional Court. The objective was to ensure judicial independence, provide equal representation to federating units in constitutional adjudication, and reduce the backlog of cases in the Supreme Court, which had reached nearly 60,000 by early 2025.

Critics argue that making FCC decisions binding on all courts, including the Supreme Court, undermines the latter's authority. This argument ignores the fact that the FCC is mandated to decide only constitutional matters, while all other cases remain within the Supreme Court's jurisdiction. Granting appellate or revisional powers to the Supreme Court over FCC decisions would defeat the very purpose of establishing a separate constitutional forum and would only add to the suffering of litigants.

The concept of a constitutional court is neither novel nor radical; more than 80 countries around the world have adopted similar institutions to ensure the smooth administration of justice. In essence, the 27th Amendment fulfils the long-standing demands of the legal community: merit-based judicial appointments and the establishment of a Federal Constitutional Court to serve the cause of justice for the common citizen, for whom this country was created ■

The writer is an advocate practising at the Peshawar High Court, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



BY-ELECTIONS PERFORMANCE, STABILITY, AND THE PUBLIC VERDICT



SAFDAR ALI DANISH

The by-elections of 23 November 2025, held across thirteen constituencies, six National Assembly and seven Punjab Assembly seats, marked an important moment in Pakistan's political trajectory. While these polls were necessitated by vacancies created following the disqualification of several lawmakers convicted in relation to the 9 May 2023 incidents, their outcomes were shaped far more by voter assessment of governance and performance than by the circumstances that led to the seats falling vacant.

In an environment where the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) anticipated a sympathy-driven electoral response following the incarceration of its leader,

the electorate instead delivered a decisive verdict in favour of stability, service delivery, and administrative continuity. The Pakistan Muslim League–Nawaz (PML-N) emerged with a commanding majority, reinforcing the view that Pakistani voters, particularly in Punjab, are increasingly prioritising performance over protest.

The events of 9 May represented one of the most unsettling episodes in Pakistan's recent political history. Attacks on military installations following the arrest of the PTI chairman disrupted public order and prompted a strong institutional response. Subsequent legal proceedings, investigations, and electoral

“ FROM DOORSTEP SERVICES AND MOBILE CLINICS TO SOLAR ENERGY SCHEMES AND AGRICULTURAL SUPPORT, PUNJAB’S GOVERNANCE TRANSLATED POLICY INTO EVERYDAY IMPROVEMENTS FOR CITIZENS. ”



scrutiny resulted in the disqualification or inactivity of several lawmakers who failed to disassociate themselves from the violence.

These developments led to multiple seats becoming vacant, particularly in Punjab, making by-elections unavoidable.

THE BY-ELECTIONS AND CONSTITUENCY DETAILS

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), through its 19 November 2025 notice, reiterated the legal obligations of candidates under Section 182 of the Elections Act 2017, emphasising lawful campaigning and public order. The polling process was conducted under heightened security and oversight, remaining largely peaceful and orderly.

The by-elections were held in the following constituencies:

National Assembly:

NA-18 Haripur
 NA-96 Faisalabad-II
 NA-104 Faisalabad-X
 NA-129 Lahore-XIII
 NA-143 Sahiwal-III
 NA-185 Dera Ghazi Khan-II

Punjab Assembly:

PP-73 Sargodha-III
 PP-87 Mianwali-III
 PP-98 Faisalabad-I

PP-115 Faisalabad-XVIII

PP-116 Faisalabad-XIX

PP-203 Sahiwal-VI

PP-269 Muzaffargarh-II

Out of these thirteen seats, the ruling PML-N secured all but one, which went to the Pakistan People’s Party (PPP). FAFEN observed that the by-elections were largely peaceful and well-managed. The results underscored a significant shift in political ground realities, particularly in Punjab, where governance performance appears to have overtaken political sentiment as the primary determinant of voter behaviour.

VOTE FOR PERFORMANCE

Conventional political wisdom suggested that the PTI would benefit from public sympathy due to the incarceration of its leader. However, the by-election outcomes demonstrated the limits of sympathy-based politics when weighed against lived governance experience.

Voters distinguished between emotional identification and practical decision-making. Rather than responding to narratives of victimhood or confrontation, they evaluated which political force had delivered relative stability, economic relief, and functional administration. The by-elections thus reflected a maturing electorate that increasingly demands outcomes rather than slogans.

ECONOMIC STABILITY

At the federal level, the PML-N government under Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has focused



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THE NOVEMBER 2025 BY-ELECTIONS WERE A CLEAR ENDORSEMENT OF GOVERNANCE, STABILITY, AND DELIVERY. VOTERS CHOSE PERFORMANCE OVER SYMPATHY, CONTINUITY OVER DISRUPTION, AND INSTITUTIONAL FUNCTIONALITY OVER AGITATION.

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on stabilising an economy that had been pushed to the brink by inflation, currency volatility, and unsustainable interest rates. Instead of announcing new mega-projects, the administration prioritised macroeconomic correction.

Inflation, once entrenched in double digits, has been brought down significantly, while the policy interest rate has fallen from a peak of 22 per cent to nearly 10.5 per cent. Exchange rate volatility has been reduced, creating a more predictable environment for businesses and consumers alike. These measures, while gradual, restored a degree of confidence that had been absent for years.

Equally significant has been Pakistan’s diplomatic re-engagement. By rebuilding working relationships with Gulf countries, China, and international financial institutions, the federal government focused on credibility rather than premature claims of investment inflows. Strong remittance flows, approximately \$38 billion, played a crucial role in offsetting a sizeable

trade deficit in goods, enabling Pakistan to meet external payment obligations and avoid default during a critical phase.

PUNJAB’S GOVERNANCE AND DELIVERY

While federal policy stabilised the macroeconomic environment, it was Punjab’s government under Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif that translated governance into everyday impact. In by-election constituencies, voters encountered a governance model that was service-oriented, technology-driven, and visibly responsive.

Punjab’s flagship initiatives addressed multiple dimensions of public welfare. The Dastak programme transformed service delivery by bringing essential government documentation to citizens’ doorsteps, reducing bureaucratic delays and corruption. Healthcare access expanded through field hospitals and clinics on wheels, while education reforms



combined merit-based support through the Honhaar Scholarship Programme with social protection initiatives such as school meal schemes.

Economic inclusion was reinforced through agricultural programmes like the High-Tech Farm Mechanisation Finance initiative and the Grow More Wheat programme, strengthening rural livelihoods and food security. Youth employment and skills development received a boost through the Chief Minister's IT Internship Programme, while eBiz Punjab streamlined regulatory processes to facilitate ease of doing business.

Urban and environmental concerns were addressed through the launch of e-bikes, electric taxis, and e-buses, alongside the Free Solar Panel Scheme aimed at reducing household energy costs. Social protection measures, including the CM Punjab Minority Card and the Apni Zameen Apna Ghar housing initiative, broadened the welfare net. In flood-affected regions, the Wazir-e-Aala Punjab Sailab Bahali Programme 2025 focused on rehabilitation and recovery, reinforcing state presence in vulnerable communities.

Beyond sectoral development, the Punjab government has focused on deep structural reforms aimed at restoring the writ of the state and delivering swift justice to citizens. A province-wide crackdown on smuggling has tightened border controls and disrupted illicit supply chains, while revised traffic laws and strict enforcement have brought much-needed discipline to public spaces.

The establishment of the Punjab Enforcement and Regulatory Authority has centralised oversight and strengthened implementation capacity, ensuring that laws are not merely passed but enforced. Simultaneously, a modern quick-justice framework is being rolled out to reduce delays and ease the burden on citizens seeking legal redress, particularly in land-grabbing cases, alongside reinforced mechanisms for women's protection. Together, these reforms signal a decisive shift toward rule-based governance, where accountability, safety, and timely justice form the backbone of public administration.

A MANDATE ROOTED IN PERFORMANCE

The November 2025 by-elections were a clear endorsement of governance, stability, and delivery. Voters chose performance over sympathy, continuity over disruption, and institutional functionality over agitation.

For the PML-N, the verdict offers both validation and responsibility. Public confidence has been earned through measurable outcomes at the federal and provincial levels, particularly in Punjab. Sustaining that confidence will depend on deepening reforms, maintaining economic stability, and continuing to deliver at the grassroots. The message from the electorate is unambiguous: governance, not grievance, now shapes Pakistan's political future ■

The writer, who holds an M.Phil in English, is an educationist, youth analyst, and police observer.



STRATEGIC CONVERGENCE ISLAMABAD AND DHAKA IN A NEW ERA



RANA MASHHOOD AHMAD KHAN

Sixteen December has long been remembered in South Asia as a day of rupture. In 1971, it marked the separation of East Pakistan and the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent state, an event that cast a long shadow over relations between the two countries for decades. For much of that period, the bilateral relationship remained constrained by history, political sensitivities, and shifting regional alignments.

Yet more than half a century later, Pakistan and Bangladesh engaged in a cautious but unmistakable diplomatic reset, one that suggests both countries are

reassessing the weight of the past in light of present-day strategic realities.

The most visible expression of this shift came earlier this year, when Pakistan and Bangladesh broke a diplomatic silence that had endured for over a decade. High-level exchanges resumed after years of minimal contact, culminating in reciprocal visits that reactivated political, economic, and security dialogues between Islamabad and Dhaka. The visit of Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar to Bangladesh, the first such engagement since 2012, signalled a conscious decision by both sides



Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar called on Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh and former Prime Minister and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia in Dhaka, 24 August 2025.



to move beyond inherited narratives and reassess their strategic interests in a rapidly shifting regional environment.

Importantly, this diplomatic thaw has continued beyond that initial breakthrough. Subsequent interactions, including visits by senior Bangladeshi military and civilian officials to Pakistan and sustained foreign office-level consultations, have reinforced the sense that the reset is not episodic but part of a broader recalibration.

What has emerged was a warming of ties and the early contours of a strategic convergence with implications for South Asia's balance of power.

A DIPLOMATIC THAW

The reset did not occur overnight. In early 2025, a series of unprecedented official exchanges quietly laid the groundwork: senior Bangladeshi military leadership, including the army chief and navy chief, visited Pakistan — engagements unthinkable just a few years earlier. Pakistan's foreign secretary travelled to Dhaka in April 2025, the first such visit in 15 years.

Institutional dialogues, including foreign office consultations and defence cooperation talks, were revived. These exchanges culminated in Ishaq Dar's August visit, during which multiple memoranda of understanding were signed, covering diplomatic visas, cultural cooperation, training of civil servants, and media collaboration. Discussions on restoring direct air links and shipping routes, frozen for decades, further underscored the seriousness of intent.

Crucially, Dar's engagements were not limited to the interim government. He met leaders across

Bangladesh's political spectrum, including opposition figures and student leaders, signalling Pakistan's desire to de-politicise bilateral ties and anchor them institutionally rather than ideologically.

ECONOMIC AND STRATEGIC RE-ENGAGEMENT

Parallel to diplomatic outreach, economic cooperation has gained momentum. In early 2025, Bangladesh imported rice directly from Pakistan for the first time since independence, a symbolic yet substantive step that demonstrated confidence-building at the state level. Talks are underway to revive the Joint Economic Commission, dormant for years, while trade, pharmaceuticals, textiles, IT, and agricultural cooperation have emerged as priority sectors.

Defence cooperation has also re-entered the bilateral agenda. Bangladesh has expressed interest in joint training, military exchanges, and defence procurement, including Pakistani-manufactured platforms. Pakistan's performance during the 7th May regional escalation with India, where it demonstrated technological and operational readiness, appears to have reinforced Islamabad's credibility as a defence partner in Dhaka's strategic calculus.

This growing defence dialogue reflects Bangladesh's broader effort to diversify security partnerships and reduce overdependence on any single regional actor.

THE POLITICAL CONTEXT: WHY NOW?

The diplomatic opening cannot be understood without acknowledging the political transition in Bangladesh



Pakistan's Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC), General Sahir Shamshad Mirza in a meeting with Bangladesh's Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus in Dhaka. 26 October 2025.



following the departure of Sheikh Hasina Wajid as a result of a popular movement against her government. Her long tenure had been marked by a strongly India-centric foreign policy, in which relations with Pakistan were constrained by historical grievances and domestic political considerations.

The interim government led by Muhammad Yunus has adopted a markedly different approach, one that prioritises strategic autonomy, economic pragmatism, and regional balance. Rather than assigning a dominant place to a single partner in Bangladesh's foreign policy, Dhaka has sought to widen its diplomatic space by strengthening ties with China, Pakistan, the Muslim world, and Western capitals simultaneously.

This shift has also been driven by public sentiment. Many Bangladeshis perceived India's response to the political upheaval, including hosting Sheikh Hasina,

as intrusive, reinforcing calls for a more independent foreign policy posture.

REGIONAL REPERCUSSIONS

The Pakistan–Bangladesh reset has not gone unnoticed in New Delhi. For India, Bangladesh has long been a cornerstone of its eastern strategy; any erosion of that exclusivity inevitably raises concerns. The deepening engagement between Pakistan, Bangladesh, and China, including trilateral discussions on connectivity and development, suggests a gradual rebalancing rather than outright alignment.

Bangladesh has been careful to frame its outreach as non-confrontational, maintaining diplomatic civility with India while refusing to subordinate its foreign policy choices. Pakistan, for its part, has pursued a calibrated approach, emphasising trade, culture, and people-to-people ties rather than overt security blocs.



A delegation led by Lieutenant General S M Kamrul Hassan, Principal Staff Officer of the Armed Forces Division of Bangladesh, meets Pakistan's Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir at the General Headquarters. 16 January 2025

Yet strategically, the implications are clear: South Asia is becoming more multipolar, and Pakistan has leveraged diplomatic dexterity to expand its strategic space at a moment when regional equations are in flux.

A CALCULATED RESET WITH LONG-TERM POTENTIAL

What distinguishes the current phase of Pakistan–Bangladesh relations from earlier attempts at rapprochement is intentionality. Both sides appear committed to institutionalising cooperation rather than relying on personalities or transient political alignments.

By breaking a decade-long diplomatic impasse, Islamabad and Dhaka have signalled that history, while acknowledged, will no longer dictate the future. If sustained, this reset could enhance regional connectivity between South and Southeast Asia,

expand economic and defence cooperation, reduce zero-sum alignments in South Asia, and strengthen Pakistan's diplomatic positioning beyond its western and northern frontiers.

Viewed in this broader perspective, the reset with Bangladesh represents a tangible demonstration of Pakistan's ability to turn historical estrangement into constructive engagement. By re-establishing meaningful ties with a country that once seceded from its territory, Islamabad has shown patience, strategic foresight, and skill in navigating sensitive legacies. In a region often defined by entrenched rivalries and zero-sum thinking, Pakistan's outreach to Dhaka highlights a pragmatic approach that balances reconciliation, economic opportunity, and regional influence. If sustained, this strategy not only consolidates bilateral cooperation but also reinforces Pakistan's credibility as a capable and adaptive actor in South Asia's complex diplomatic landscape ■



PM TALENT HUNT NATIONAL LEAGUE CONCLUDES STRONGLY

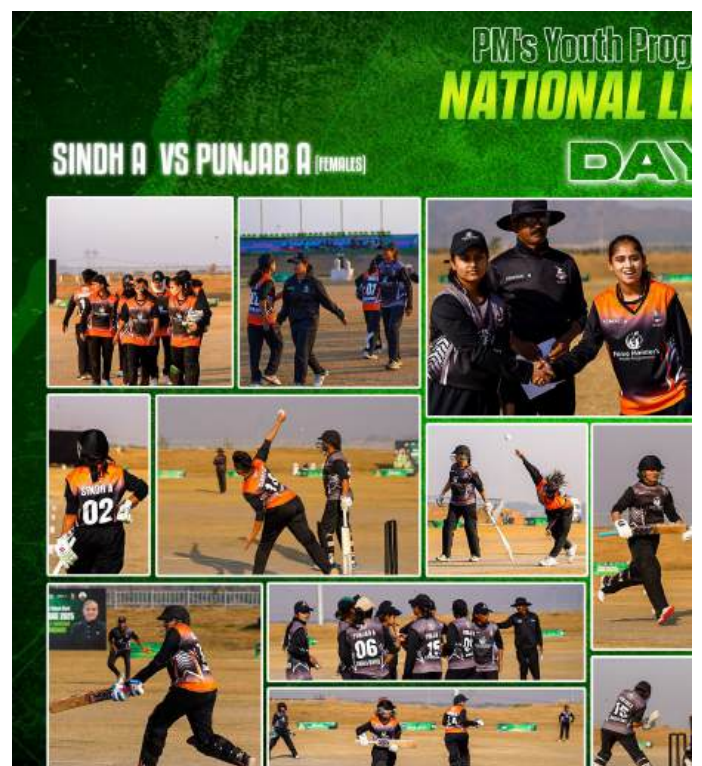


SABA ALI

The Prime Minister’s Youth Programme (PMYP) Talent Hunt National League has concluded in Islamabad, marking the successful completion of Pakistan’s largest grassroots cricket initiative and setting the foundation for a new generation of male and female cricketers drawn from across the country. The league, which brought together elite performers from a nationwide talent hunt, culminated in competitive finals that highlighted both depth and diversity in Pakistan’s emerging cricket talent. In the men’s final, Men B defeated Men A by five runs, while Women B clinched a convincing seven-wicket victory over Women A, underscoring the rising standard of women’s cricket and the programme’s inclusive vision.

PMYP Chairman Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan described the conclusion of the National League as a decisive step towards building Pakistan’s future cricket core, with top performers now set to enter a structured development pathway.

FROM NATIONWIDE TRIALS TO NATIONAL FINALS



The journey to the PM Talent Hunt National League began months earlier in Quetta in June 2025 and expanded rapidly across all provinces.

Trials were conducted in major cities as well as remote regions, ensuring broad access and merit-based selection. In Karachi, nearly 15,000 boys and girls participated in two days of trials at NED University. Larkana and Sukkur witnessed massive turnouts, with over 7,000 participants in Larkana and more than 8,000 in Sukkur. Similarly, Bahawalpur and Multan recorded combined participation of over 15,000 young cricketers, reflecting strong engagement from South Punjab.

Overall, more than 122,000 young players registered for trials nationwide, a scale unprecedented in Pakistan's cricket history.

EMERGING TALENT FROM EVERY CORNER OF PAKISTAN



This cricket tournament is a story of a nation's belief that cricketing excellence can emerge from anywhere. Ayesha, a 19-year-old left-arm spinner from Layyah, has reportedly clocked a bowling speed of 118 kph during the Prime Minister's Cricket Talent Hunt. This is a remarkable achievement as a speed of 118 kph (approximately 73 mph) is considered very fast for a female bowler, especially for a spinner.

The strong representation and performance of women's teams throughout the league reinforced the programme's commitment to gender inclusion. As PMYP Chairman Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan noted earlier in the process, the presence of female teams is

a significant step forward for women in sports and youth empowerment.

PATHWAY TO HIGH-PERFORMANCE CRICKET



The conclusion of the PM Talent Hunt National League now transitions into its most critical phase: player development. Under the programme's long-term vision, the top male and female performers from the league will be inducted into the Lahore Qalandars High Performance Centre.

There, selected players will receive elite coaching, modern training facilities, and professional mentorship, preparing them for domestic and international cricket. Backed by Lahore Qalandars' proven talent-development model and supported by the Prime Minister's Youth Programme, the initiative aims to create a sustainable pipeline for Pakistan cricket.

A NEW CHAPTER FOR YOUTH CRICKET

For aspiring players aged roughly 15 to 25, the PM Talent Hunt National League represents an opportunity, structure, and continuity. By bridging grassroots discovery with professional development, the programme has concluded a successful tournament and laid the groundwork for Pakistan's next generation of cricket stars■

The writer is a digital media executive at the Prime Minister's Youth Programme.



PM SHEHBAZ SHARIF MEETS OVERSEAS PAKISTANIS IN BAHRAIN



DR RANA KHALID MEHMOOD

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif met overseas Pakistanis during his two-day official visit to Bahrain on 26–27 November 2025. The interaction highlighted the important role played by the Pakistani community in the Kingdom, with particular appreciation for the active contributions of the PML-N Bahrain Chapter. President Nazeem Hafeez and his team welcomed the prime minister and briefed him on the chapter's organisational work, community outreach and efforts to strengthen Pakistan–Bahrain relations.

During interactions with the Pakistani community, the prime minister emphasised that overseas Pakistanis

continue to serve as a vital pillar of national economic stability. He noted that his meetings with Bahrain's leadership were productive, with both sides agreeing to strengthen economic cooperation, create new investment opportunities in Pakistan, and enhance facilitation for expatriates.

On the sidelines of the visit, a detailed meeting was also held between the Bahrain chapter's leadership and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar, along with Ambassador Saqib Rauf. Discussions included employment prospects, support for skilled professionals, expansion of business linkages, and improved consular services.

MANCHESTER BRIEFING ON NEW OVERSEAS REFORMS



In Manchester, the Pakistan Consulate organised a comprehensive media briefing hosted by Consul General Imtiaz Feroz Gondal. Vice Chairman of the Overseas Pakistanis Commission (OPC) Punjab, Barrister Amjad Malik, briefed journalists, business leaders and community representatives on wide-ranging reforms underway in Punjab for the protection of overseas Pakistanis.

He announced that special courts dedicated to overseas cases are now functioning in all 37 districts of Punjab, with judges appointed and a three-month timeline set for the disposal of cases related to property disputes and illegal occupation. He explained the establishment of the Property Eviction and Removal Agency (PERA), the introduction of digital property transfer systems and the success of the One-Window Facilitation Centre in Lahore, which has processed more than 26,000 applications so far.

Barrister Malik also shared plans to empower embassies and consulates with registrar-level authority to record statements, simplify documentation and strengthen transparency. He added that proposals such as overseas seats in parliament and the establishment of an overseas bank are under active consideration. The event concluded with a dinner in honour of the attendees.

JEDDAH HONOURS CONSUL GENERAL KHALID MAJID



A dignified farewell reception was held in Jeddah for

Consul General Khalid Majid, recognising his six years of service to the Pakistani community. The event was organised by Sheikh Saeed Ahmed, Masood Ahmad Puri and Chaudhry Akram Gujjar, and attended by prominent community representatives from multiple Saudi cities.

Speakers praised Khalid Majid's contributions, including the successful construction of the new consulate building, and acknowledged his close engagement with the diaspora. Barrister Amjad Malik also addressed the gathering, appreciating the organisers and sharing updates on Punjab's ongoing facilitation initiatives for overseas citizens. Shields and gifts were presented to the guests of honour, and participants extended heartfelt wishes for the outgoing consul general.

STRENGTHENING PML-N IN NORTH WEST UK



In the UK, PML-N North West held a major organisational conference at the Royal Nawaab Pyramid, bringing together over a hundred office-bearers from across the region. The meeting reviewed the past year's performance, noting growth in membership and improved community coordination. A key development was the presentation of a policy memorandum by Rana Zia Aslam Khan, President of the North West Legal Wing, to PML-N UK President Ahsan Dar. The document, to be shared with the prime minister, proposed measures to enhance the political representation of overseas Pakistanis and recommended allowing foreign-trained Pakistani lawyers to practise before the Supreme Court. Certificates of appreciation were also awarded to Ahsan Dar, Zubair Gul, Rashid Adeel Hashmi and Khurram Butt for their organisational contributions ■

PICTURE GALLERY



PRIME MINISTER MUHAMMAD SHEHBAZ SHARIF AT THE INTERNATIONAL FORUM MARKING THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF PEACE AND TRUST, WHERE HE ALSO HELD SIDELINE MEETINGS WITH PRESIDENT OF TURKMENISTAN SERDAR BERDIMUHAMEDOW, IRANIAN PRESIDENT MASOUD PEZESHKIAN, TURKISH PRESIDENT RECEP TAYYIP ERDOĞAN, AND RUSSIAN PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN. ASHGABAT, 12 DECEMBER 2025



SECRETARY OF IRAN'S SUPREME NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL ALI ARDESHIR LARIJANI HOLDS MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER MUHAMMAD SHEHBAZ SHARIF. ISLAMABAD, 25 NOVEMBER 2025



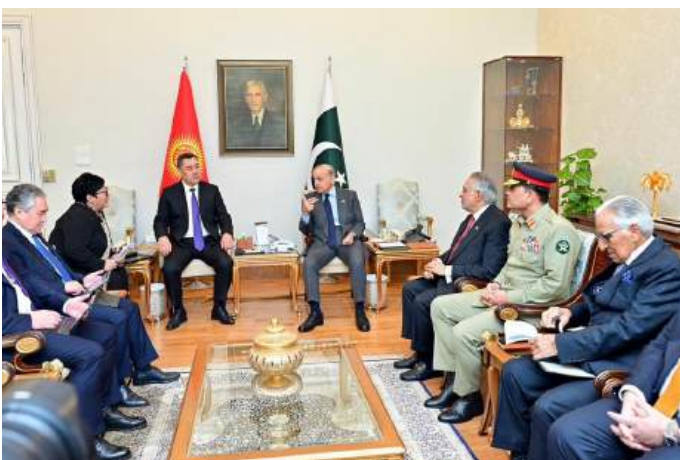
PRIME MINISTER MUHAMMAD SHEHBAZ SHARIF RECEIVES GUARD OF HONOUR AT AL-QUDAIBIYA PALACE DURING HIS VISIT TO MANAMA, BAHRAIN. 26 NOVEMBER 2025



KING HAMAD BIN ISA AL-KHALIFA CONFERS THE ORDER OF BAHRAIN (FIRST CLASS) ON PRIME MINISTER MUHAMMAD SHEHBAZ SHARIF. MANAMA, BAHRAIN, 26 NOVEMBER 2025



PRIME MINISTER MUHAMMAD SHEHBAZ SHARIF AND TURKISH ENERGY MINISTER ALPARSLAN BAYRAKTAR WITNESS THE EXCHANGE OF MOUS IN THE PETROLEUM SECTOR BETWEEN PAKISTAN AND TÜRKİYE. ISLAMABAD, 2 DECEMBER 2025



PRIME MINISTER MUHAMMAD SHEHBAZ SHARIF HOLDS BILATERAL TALKS WITH PRESIDENT OF KYRGYZSTAN SADYR JAPAROV. ISLAMABAD, 4 DECEMBER 2025



PAKISTANI AND KYRGYZ COUNTERPARTS EXCHANGE MOUS DURING THE PAKISTAN-KYRGYZSTAN AGREEMENTS SIGNING CEREMONY. ISLAMABAD, 4 DECEMBER 2025



PRESIDENT ASIF ALI ZARDARI AND PRIME MINISTER MUHAMMAD SHEHBAZ SHARIF WELCOME INDONESIAN PRESIDENT PRABOWO SUBIANTO UPON HIS ARRIVAL AT NOOR KHAN AIR BASE. 8 DECEMBER 2025



INDONESIAN PRESIDENT PRABOWO SUBIANTO AND PRIME MINISTER MUHAMMAD SHEHBAZ SHARIF WITNESS THE EXCHANGE OF MOUS BETWEEN PAKISTAN AND INDONESIA. ISLAMABAD, 9 DECEMBER 2025



PRIME MINISTER MUHAMMAD SHEHBAZ SHARIF AND CHIEF MINISTER PUNJAB MARYAM NAWAZ SHARIF UNVEIL THE PLAQUE AT THE GROUND BREAKING CEREMONY OF THE GUJRANWALA MASS TRANSIT SYSTEM. GUJRANWALA, 6 DECEMBER 2025



CHIEF MINISTER PUNJAB MARYAM NAWAZ SHARIF INAUGURATES THE MARYAM NAWAZ CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION AND LAUNCHES THE CM SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAMME FOR SPECIAL STUDENTS IN LAHORE. 27 NOVEMBER 2025



HORIZON

Research and Policy Planning Unit
Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz