

# HORIZON

NOVEMBER 2025



RESEARCH AND POLICY PLANNING UNIT  
**PAKISTAN MUSLIM LEAGUE - NAWAZ**

# FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Dear Readers,

The recently passed 27th Constitutional Amendment represents one of the most significant steps toward modernising Pakistan's governance and strengthening institutional efficiency in over a decade. By restructuring key constitutional bodies and addressing long-standing gaps in judicial administration, the amendment seeks to ensure quicker and more consistent delivery of justice. The creation of new mechanisms for judge transfers and administrative oversight brings much-needed transparency and reduces the bottlenecks that have previously paralysed the courts. At the federal level, the amendment restores national coherence in critical sectors such as education and population welfare, where decades of fragmentation had undermined policy continuity. Similarly, revisiting the NFC framework provides the federation with vital fiscal space to respond to economic challenges and invest in national-level priorities. On the military-command front, the 27th Amendment introduces significant changes aimed at streamlining and strengthening Pakistan's defence leadership. It creates a new post, Commander of Defence Forces, which will unify command over the army, air force, and navy, promoting integrated command, better coordination, and strategic coherence. Together, these reforms reflect a forward-looking vision aimed at strengthening the state's capacity to meet the needs of a burgeoning nation.

Critics of the amendment have expressed concerns about judicial independence and provincial autonomy, but these claims overlook the core purpose of the reform: institutional clarity, national cohesion, and efficient governance. The creation of unified command is a global best practice adopted by all modern defence systems, ensuring quicker decision-making, better inter-service coordination, and more efficient use of resources. The amendment does not curtail the independence of the judiciary; rather, it introduces clearer procedures that protect courts from localised pressures and ensure consistency across provinces. The realignment of federal and provincial responsibilities is not an attempt to centralise power but a necessary recalibration to address pressing national issues, such as curriculum standards, demographic management, and financial sustainability, that require uniform policies across the country. While debate is natural in any democracy, the 27th Amendment reflects a responsible effort by the elected government to strengthen the state, streamline governance, and equip Pakistan with institutions capable of delivering stability and progress in a challenging era.

Sincerely,  
Saira Bano  
Editor-in-Chief

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*Front cover: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif inaugurates a fleet of 15 electric buses in Pakpattan, marking the city's move toward modern and eco-friendly public transport. 8 October 2025*



The special education school upgraded as a Centre of Excellence in Mumtazabad Town, Multan.

# TOWARDS A PROGRESSIVE AND COMPASSIONATE PUNJAB



SAFDAR ALI DANISH

In a short span of time, Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has redefined governance in Punjab by introducing a visionary model of development centred on people, progress, and prosperity. Her leadership embodies both compassion and competence, qualities that have transformed Punjab into a province of renewed hope and inclusive growth.

Soon after assuming charge of her office, Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz initiated landmark public welfare programmes, including Dhee Rani, which extends dignity and financial security to newborn girls; Apna Ghar Apni Chha brings low-income families closer to the dream of owning a safe home; and the School Nutrition Programme, which ensures that classroom learning is supported by daily access to healthy meals. Less than two years later, the province has expanded on these initiatives and brought about systematic reform.

## SWIFT JUSTICE AND PROPERTY PROTECTION

It is in this spirit of continued innovation and citizen empowerment that the Punjab Protection of Ownership Ordinance 2025 stands out as one of the government's boldest new measures. Under this law, property disputes will be resolved within 90 days, and appeals finalised by special tribunals in the same

“ UNDER THE PUNJAB PROTECTION OF OWNERSHIP ORDINANCE 2025, PROPERTY DISPUTES WILL BE RESOLVED WITHIN 90 DAYS, AND APPEALS FINALISED BY SPECIAL TRIBUNALS IN THE SAME PERIOD. ”

period. The restoration of possession is guaranteed within 24 hours after judgment, a first in Pakistan's judicial history. To uphold fairness, dispute resolution committees headed by Deputy Commissioners (DCs) and District Police Officers (DPOs) have been formed in every district. With plans for digital recordkeeping and live streaming, this reform strengthens justice, transparency, and citizen confidence. Beyond adjudication, enforcement could be backed by a dedicated force: authorities are reviewing proposals to engage the Punjab Enforcement and Regulatory Authority (PERA) to swiftly implement recovery orders and reclaim illegally occupied land.

## CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION



True progress is inclusive. Recognising the prevalence of conditions such as autism, Down syndrome, and learning disabilities, which traditional teaching methods often cannot address, the Punjab government has initiated the Centres of Excellence for Special Education across the province. Announced in March 2025, this programme upgrades 28 existing special education schools, with more centres planned for every district. These institutions provide tailored education, healthcare, and skill development for children with special needs, nurturing confidence, independence, and social inclusion. By combining specialised teaching methods, therapy services, and modern facilities, these centres aim to ensure that every child can achieve their full potential regardless of disability. Some of the upgraded centres have already begun operations, marking a ground-breaking step in Pakistan's inclusive education landscape.

In Lahore, Pakistan's first public-sector Autism School reached its final stages of completion in February 2025 and was fully operational by October 2025, with

“ THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SCHOOLS OF EXCELLENCE FOR SPECIAL CHILDREN MARKS A SIGNIFICANT EVOLUTION IN PUNJAB'S APPROACH TO SPECIAL EDUCATION. ”

more than 5,000 children enrolled by that time.

As more of these centres come online across the province, Punjab is building a modern, holistic system that combines tailored education, early assessment, speech and occupational therapies, psychological support, assistive technologies, and vocational training. This expanded network especially benefits children from low- and middle-income families who previously lacked access to such specialised care.

These Schools of Excellence embody a forward-looking commitment to dignity, inclusion, and equal opportunity, ensuring that every child in Punjab is supported according to their individual potential.

## EMPOWERING YOUTH THROUGH TECHNOLOGY



Punjab's youth-focused digital revolution continues to evolve. In November 2025, a high-level delegation from Google for Education and Tech Valley met with Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz to discuss the establishment of the plant, which is expected to assemble Chromebooks locally, pre-loaded with educational tools such as AI Gemini, "Read Along" for English learning, and Canva for creative projects.

In tandem, the Chief Minister has relaunched the IT Internship Programme, providing young graduates with hands-on experience in leading tech companies and a monthly stipend of Rs 50,000. Together, these initiatives lay the foundation for a digitally empowered, future-ready Punjab, where youth can develop skills locally and contribute to the growing high-tech economy.

## FAITH, HARMONY, AND SOCIAL STABILITY



In a historic step toward promoting harmony, the chief minister has directed the creation of mosque management committees in every district. Comprising respected local figures, these committees foster unity and discipline in community affairs. Additionally, Imams will now receive a monthly stipend of Rs25,000, alleviating financial hardships and promoting social respect for religious leaders. Punjab has also completed digital mapping of 56,000 mosques and compiled data, ensuring transparency and security in religious institutions, a measure reflecting administrative foresight and stability.

## A WEAPON-FREE FUTURE WITH MODERN DRONE POLICING



Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif chaired the fourth extraordinary meeting on law and order in

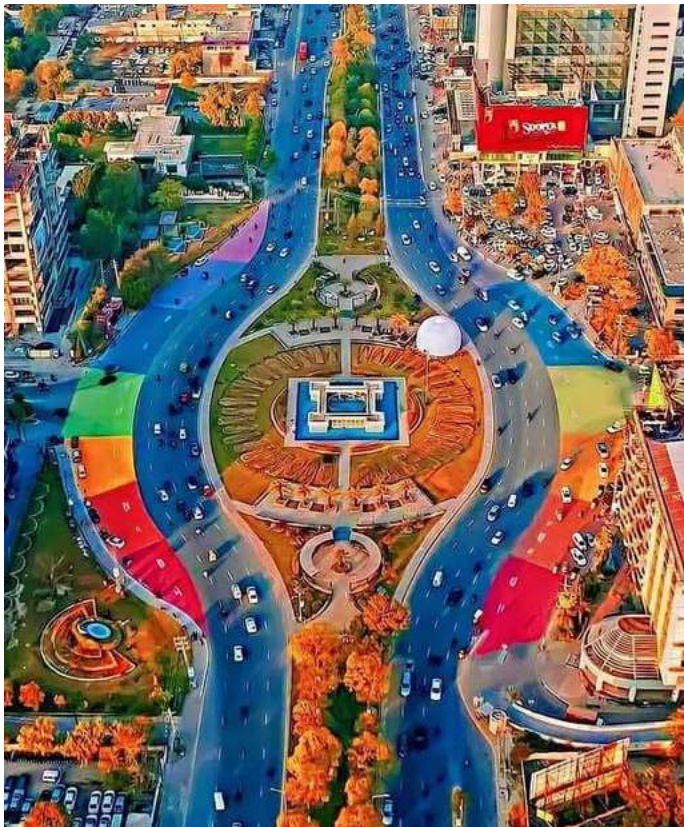
October 2025, introducing sweeping reforms to eliminate weapons and smuggling from Punjab. The government approved the Punjab Surrender of Illegal Arms Act 2025, to be executed in three phases — return, destruction, and enforcement — along with verification of one million licensed arms. Only police personnel and registered security guards will be allowed to carry weapons, while private security firms will be strictly regulated and linked to the Punjab Police Helpline 15. A pilot project of drone policing will be launched in Lahore for rapid digital response to crime scenes, later expanding across the province. Modern weapon scanners will be installed at 14 key entry and exit points, and arms smuggling will carry up to 14 years imprisonment. These decisive measures have already resulted in a 70 per cent decline in crime, marking Punjab's historic shift toward smart, technology-driven policing.

## BHAKKAR POLICE: A MODEL OF MODERN POLICING



Bhakkar Police has adopted Punjab's new era of technology-driven law enforcement. Under the leadership of DPO Shehzad Rafiq Awan, and with the guidance of RPO Sargodha and IG Punjab, it effectively used drone surveillance to curb smuggling and ensure public safety. In a recent joint operation with KPK Police, and with vital support from the Crime Control Division (CCD) Bhakkar, the team successfully recovered a four-year-old girl, Zainab, from kidnappers in KPK's District Karak within 24 hours, using advanced surveillance equipment and coordinated intelligence. The local community and civil society expressed heartfelt gratitude to Bhakkar Police and CCD officials for their timely action, professionalism, and humane conduct.

## BEAUTIFICATION AND URBAN RENEWAL



Maryam Nawaz Sharif's vision also encompasses clean, liveable, and beautiful cities. The provincial government has banned wall chalking and launched 132 beautification projects worth Rs16.5 billion across 39 districts. These projects include renovation of heritage gates, tuff tile pavements, market and road remodelling, and city wall cleaning. The campaign aims to restore Punjab's urban aesthetics, blending heritage with modernity and promoting civic pride among residents.

## WOMEN'S SAFETY AND MOBILITY



Ensuring women's independence and protection remains a key priority. The introduction of mobile police stations, licensing units, and pink vans for women has revolutionised public mobility and policing. These facilities ensure that women can travel, work, and participate in society with

confidence and safety, marking a new era of gender-sensitive governance. Building on that momentum, the government launched the Pink Scooty Scheme in 2025. In Phase I alone, around 7,300 scooties are set to be distributed, as part of a larger first-phase goal of more than 20,000 scooters, prioritising female students and working women across Punjab.

## COP30 CLIMATE CONFERENCE



Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif represented Pakistan at the COP30 Climate Conference in Belém, Brazil, in November, where she inaugurated the Pakistan Pavilion and showcased Punjab's flagship environmental initiatives. These included Suthra Punjab (waste management), expansion of e-mobility with electric buses, bikes, and taxis, smog reduction strategies, climate-smart farming programs, wildlife and biodiversity protection, and smart environmental monitoring through AI-driven Smog War Rooms and real-time Climate Observatories. She also forged a partnership with the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) to access carbon financing and announced a Climate Endowment Fund of Rs12.5 billion for long-term sustainability projects.

## A VISION ROOTED IN COMPASSION AND COURAGE

Maryam Nawaz Sharif has proven that her governance fuses innovation, inclusivity, and empathy, making Punjab a model of modern progress. With every reform and every welfare initiative, she is shaping a province that cares for its citizens, empowers its youth, and honours its daughters ■

*The writer, who holds an MPhil in English Literature, is an educationist, youth analyst and police observer affiliated with PML-N's official magazine, Horizon.*



# SENATOR IRFAN SIDDIQUI

## A STATESMAN, SCHOLAR, AND LOYAL SOLDIER OF DEMOCRACY



SULTAN ALI RANJHA

Senator Irfan Siddiqui, senior leader of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, distinguished columnist, and one of Pakistan's most respected intellectuals, passed away in Islamabad on 10 November 2025 after a brief illness. His departure has left the PML-N family in deep mourning. Widely admired for his integrity, wisdom, and unwavering loyalty, he served as a close and trusted advisor to Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and remained a steadfast companion of the party through some of the most testing chapters of Pakistan's democratic struggle.

Long before he entered the Senate, Irfan Siddiqui had already earned national recognition as a thoughtful and courageous Urdu columnist. His writing was marked by exceptional clarity and moral conviction. He consistently defended democratic norms, civilian authority, and constitutional continuity. At times when expedient narratives dominated the national conversation, he stood firm with principle and truth. His pen became an instrument for strengthening democratic institutions, resisting extra-constitutional interventions, and reminding the nation of the

“ THROUGHOUT HIS LIFE, IRFAN SIDDIQUI EXEMPLIFIED LOYALTY, COURAGE, AND WISDOM. HE STOOD BY NAWAZ SHARIF DURING MOMENTS OF ISOLATION AND ADVERSITY. ”

“ HIS REFLECTIONS ON CIVIL–MILITARY RELATIONS WERE GROUNDED IN A PRINCIPLED BELIEF THAT SUSTAINABLE PROGRESS CAN ONLY BE ACHIEVED WHEN INSTITUTIONS OPERATE WITHIN CONSTITUTIONAL BOUNDARIES, FREE FROM COERCION OR SELECTIVE ACCOUNTABILITY. ”



importance of political stability rooted in respect for public mandate.

As a parliamentarian, he brought scholarship, statesmanship, and deep institutional memory to the Senate. Whether speaking in committee meetings or addressing the House, he articulated positions with calm reasoning, historical perspective, and a profound commitment to the Constitution of Pakistan. He believed that all state organs must remain within their defined limits and that parliament, representing the will of the people, must hold its rightful and central place in the governance structure. His colleagues, regardless of party affiliation, respected him for his intellectual honesty, humility, and decorum. He also headed the PML-N committee that drafted the party’s 2024 election manifesto, a responsibility he fulfilled with characteristic depth, balance, and intellectual rigour.

In his columns and speeches, Senator Siddiqui often reflected on Pakistan’s relationship with global powers, urging the country to cultivate a foreign policy rooted in dignity and sovereignty. He cautioned against dependence on external actors and

frequently highlighted the need for national self-respect in the conduct of international relations. His reflections on civil–military relations were grounded in a principled belief that sustainable progress can only be achieved when institutions operate within constitutional boundaries, free from coercion or selective accountability. He was equally mindful of Pakistan’s moral identity, reminding citizens, especially those travelling for Hajj or representing the country abroad, that personal conduct contributes to the nation’s reputation and honour.

Throughout his life, Irfan Siddiqui exemplified loyalty, courage, and wisdom. He stood by Nawaz Sharif during moments of isolation and adversity, offering counsel informed by experience, history, and an unshakeable belief in democratic values. For the PML-N, his passing is the loss of a senior leader and a voice of conscience, a chronicler of our political journey, and a guardian of constitutional ideals.

He leaves behind a written legacy that will continue to shape how future generations understand Pakistan’s political evolution and the responsibilities of citizenship. The PML-N family extends its deepest condolences to Senator Siddiqui’s bereaved family, praying for their strength and for the eternal peace of his soul. Senator Irfan Siddiqui will be remembered with deep respect and gratitude, for his service to democracy, his devotion to the party, and his firm faith in Pakistan’s future■

*The writer is an educationist and teaches at the University of Central Punjab.*



# THE FALL OF PAKISTAN'S AGRICULTURE

## A THREAT TO FOOD SECURITY



SAIRA IFTIKHAR

Pakistan's agricultural story is one of early promise, prolonged neglect, and an increasingly stark warning for the nation's future. At independence, agriculture was the backbone of the economy, and in the 1960s, the Green Revolution transformed Pakistan into a food-secure nation. High-yield wheat and rice varieties, new canals, dams, and widespread tube wells produced spectacular results: wheat output rose by 91 per cent, rice by 141 per cent, and for nearly three decades, Pakistan faced no food shortage. But the momentum faded. As investments slowed and policies stagnated, the sector that once guaranteed national survival gradually weakened, quietly eroding the foundations of the nation's food security.

Today, agriculture still employs nearly 40 per cent of the workforce and indirectly supports more than half

the population, yet contributes only 24 per cent to GDP. That imbalance reflects more than inefficiency; it signals a sector deteriorating at the very moment the country needs it most. Water scarcity has become a severe threat, with Pakistan ranked among the world's highest-risk countries. Outdated flood irrigation, shrinking groundwater tables, and poor water governance have turned an agricultural challenge into a looming crisis. Soil degradation, affecting almost 20 million hectares, further constrains the country's ability to sustainably grow enough food for a rapidly expanding population.

The economics of farming have created another layer of vulnerability. A weakening rupee has made imported fertilisers, pesticides, and machinery increasingly unaffordable. High electricity and fuel costs have made irrigation, once a key driver of the Green Revolution,

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**INVESTING IN AGRICULTURE IS NO LONGER A MATTER OF ECONOMIC PLANNING; IT IS A MATTER OF NATIONAL SECURITY. A NATION THAT CANNOT FEED ITSELF CANNOT SUSTAIN GROWTH, STABILITY, OR SOVEREIGNTY.**

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prohibitively expensive for many. Small farmers, who make up 90 per cent of agricultural households, often cannot access formal credit and resort to low-quality inputs. These structural limitations directly translate into lower yields, weaker supply chains, and rising dependence on imported food staples.

Post-harvest losses represent yet another quiet but devastating threat. Between 20 per cent and 40 per cent of fruits and vegetables never make it to market due to poor storage, lack of cold chains, and weak logistics. These losses undermine farmer incomes and shrink domestic food availability. With Pakistan's population continuing to grow, such wastage is not merely a logistical issue; it is a critical concern.

Climate change has magnified these pressures. Scientific projections warn that Pakistan's agricultural productivity could decline by up to 10 per cent by 2040. The devastating floods of 2025 provided a stark preview: over 2.5 million acres of crops destroyed, including 60 per cent of the rice crop, and more than a billion dollars in losses. Livestock deaths and damaged rural infrastructure deepened distress, highlighting a future in which the nation may struggle to feed itself unless urgent, strategic investments are made.

Over the past few years, the government has begun taking steps to address some of these vulnerabilities. In 2018, the PML-N government launched Pakistan's first National Food Security Policy, followed by the establishment of a National Food Security Council, chaired by the prime minister, to improve coordination across provinces. In 2025, the Federal Committee on Agriculture set national production targets for the 2025–26 season, reflecting a more data-driven and climate-aware approach to food planning.

In 2024–25, the government also updated critical regulatory frameworks: a new National Seed Policy and Biotechnology Policy were initiated to improve

seed quality and advance research, while a Bio-Pesticide Regulatory Framework, rolled out in 2024, promoted safer pest management. At the provincial level, digital subsidy systems such as the Kissan Card (expanded in 2025) have eased small farmers' access to inputs through targeted financial support. Collaboration with international partners has also increased: in 2025, the government worked with the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) to assess and strengthen Pakistan's food control system, acknowledging that food security depends not just on crop production but on food safety and nutritional quality.

These initiatives mark a growing recognition that food security should be a national priority. Yet the scale of the crisis far exceeds the pace of reform. Policies exist, but implementation remains inconsistent. Provincial coordination — the backbone of agricultural delivery — still lags. Research institutions remain underfunded, and the country has yet to build the storage facilities, cold chains, and value-addition infrastructure required to stabilise food availability year-round. For a nation facing climate extremes, water stress, and rapid population growth, these measures, while encouraging, are not yet commensurate with the urgency of the threat.

Missed opportunities in allied sectors — livestock, fisheries, and meat processing — have further weakened Pakistan's food system. Livestock should be a natural strength for one of the world's top milk-producing countries, but with 92 per cent of the market informal, the absence of value addition limits both domestic nutrition and export potential. Fisheries contribute just 0.4 per cent to GDP despite ample coastline and inland water bodies, and modern aquaculture has yet to take off. Diversified food systems globally act as buffers in times of climate stress, but Pakistan's underdeveloped allied sectors leave the country dangerously exposed.



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**FOR PAKISTAN, THE PATH FORWARD MUST PLACE FOOD SECURITY AT THE CENTRE OF AGRICULTURAL REFORM. INVESTMENTS IN RESEARCH, CLIMATE-RESILIENT SEEDS, AND MODERN EXTENSION SERVICES ARE ESSENTIAL FOR ENSURING STABLE FOOD SUPPLIES.**

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International examples show what is possible when agriculture is treated as a strategic priority. The Netherlands, despite its tiny size, exports more than €65 billion in agricultural products annually due to its investment in research, greenhouse technology, precision farming, and farmer-centric policies. India’s recent agricultural tax reforms, such as reducing GST on tractors, irrigation equipment, micronutrients, and dairy products, show how policy can lower production costs and stabilise food supplies. The contrast is clear: countries that invest consistently in agriculture strengthen their food security; those that neglect it face recurring shortages and rising import dependence.

For Pakistan, the path forward must place food security at the centre of agricultural reform. Investments in research, climate-resilient seeds, and modern extension services are essential for ensuring stable food supplies. Better water management through precision irrigation, satellite monitoring, and improved infrastructure can curb losses and protect the country from future droughts. Strengthening storage and cold chains will reduce post-harvest losses and improve year-round availability of perishable foods. Expanding agro-processing and value addition will enhance both rural incomes and the national food basket.

There is also a social dimension to food security that Pakistan has long overlooked. Women make up 72 per cent of the rural workforce, yet remain largely unpaid and unsupported. Their empowerment through training, credit access, and entrepreneurship

can significantly improve household nutrition and agricultural productivity. Rural youth, increasingly drawn away from farming, can be engaged through agri-tech programmes, greenhouse models, and skill-development initiatives under PMYP and provincial training bodies. Retaining the next generation in agriculture is vital for ensuring future food availability. Ultimately, Pakistan’s agricultural sector is more than an economic variable; it is the nation’s first and last line of defence against hunger. The warning signs are already visible in rising food imports, volatile domestic markets, climate-induced crop losses, and declining productivity. A country of Pakistan’s size and agrarian heritage should not be vulnerable to food shortages. Yet without decisive investment, coherent policy, and a shift toward climate-smart farming, that is precisely the direction in which the nation is heading.

Investing in agriculture is no longer a matter of economic planning; it is a matter of national security. A nation that cannot feed itself cannot sustain growth, stability, or sovereignty. Pakistan’s future depends on whether it chooses to rebuild its agricultural strength today or continue delaying reforms until the cost becomes unbearable. The potential is immense, but so are the risks of inaction. The next decade will determine whether Pakistan secures food for its people — or slips deeper into a cycle of vulnerability from which recovery will be far more difficult ■

*The writer is a SUN (Scaling Up Nutrition) UN Global Champion and a dairy value chain professional.*



# PAKISTAN'S ECONOMIC RENEWAL UNDER PM SHEHBAZ



**DR RANA KHALID MEHMOOD**

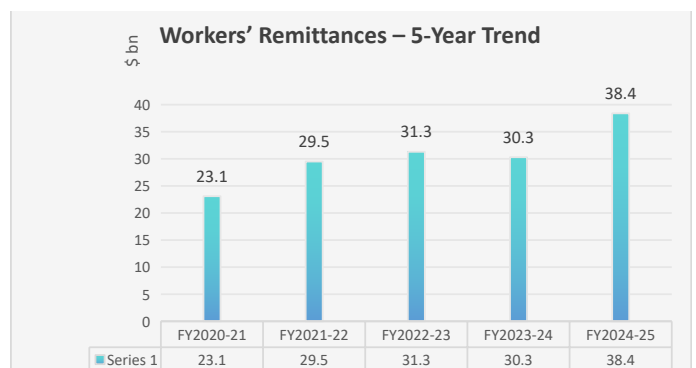
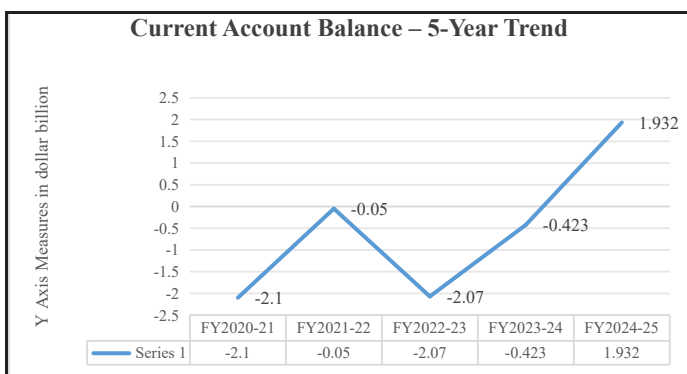
Over the past eighteen months, Pakistan has undergone a decisive economic correction. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, the government has shifted the country away from fiscal strain and volatile markets toward stability, restored confidence, and renewed international engagement. Prudent financial management, structural reforms, and proactive diplomacy have begun reshaping an economy long weighed down by systemic weaknesses.

## STABILISING THE ECONOMY

When the government took charge, Pakistan faced record inflation, shrinking reserves, and persistent

deficits. Instead of resorting to short-term fixes, it pursued reforms that strengthened the foundations of fiscal discipline. The digitisation of the tax system, improvements in SOE governance, and difficult energy-sector corrections helped restore credibility with multilateral partners.

Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb notes that these interventions have led to tangible macroeconomic stabilisation, reflected in improved credit ratings, better investor sentiment, and successful IMF reviews. Inflation, which had soared to 38 per cent in mid-2023, has now fallen to near 1 per cent, one of the sharpest regional disinflation cycles. As inflation eased, the State Bank gradually reduced the policy rate from 22 per cent to around 12



Source: SBP / Ministry of Finance

per cent, lowering borrowing costs and clearing the way for growth.

## MINISTRY OF FINANCE

At the external front, remittances hit an all-time high, over USD 38 billion, providing critical support to reserves and the exchange rate. The current account, historically in deficit, recorded a surplus in FY2024–25, signalling a structural shift driven by disciplined import management and stronger inflows.

## LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR GROWTH

The government's goal now extends beyond stabilisation. Through the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), Pakistan has introduced a unified, investor-friendly mechanism that streamlines decision-making and encourages foreign and domestic investment. The SIFC has drawn interest in energy, minerals, agriculture, and IT, positioning Pakistan for an export-oriented economic model rooted in productivity and competitiveness.

As the finance minister emphasises, macroeconomic stability is the beginning, not the culmination, of a broader transition toward sustainable growth, job creation, and technological advancement.

## A NEW ERA OF ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY

A defining feature of Pakistan's renewed engagement is the Saudi-Pakistan Economic Cooperation Framework, launched in Riyadh on 27 October 2025. Building on decades of brotherhood, the framework expands cooperation in energy, mining, tourism, IT,



Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif meets Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in Riyadh on 27 October 2025

and food security, with new joint studies on regional electricity connectivity and enhanced private-sector involvement.

A Saudi-Pakistani Supreme Coordination Council will oversee implementation, ensuring that both countries move from pledges to measurable outcomes. The alignment of Pakistan's Reform Agenda 2025 with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 strengthens the foundation for a long-term strategic partnership.

The government has also expanded its outreach to Central Asian states and Malaysia, strengthening trade corridors, energy cooperation, and regional connectivity. These engagements reflect Pakistan's broader shift toward diversified economic diplomacy beyond traditional partners.

Momentum accelerated immediately after the announcement: during 11–13 November, intensive engagements in Riyadh led to the signing of 38 new Letters of Intent in areas such as skill development and youth employment, positioning Pakistan's workforce as an important contributor to the Kingdom's economic transformation.

## STRENGTHENING PAKISTAN'S GLOBAL IMAGE

The government has complemented economic reform with soft-power diplomacy aimed at projecting stability and constructive engagement. The revitalised partnership with Saudi Arabia enhances Pakistan's role in the Islamic world and underscores a shift toward economic diplomacy built on shared prosperity rather than dependency.

## A DEFINING PHASE

Under Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the country has regained macroeconomic stability, restored international confidence, and reoriented its foreign policy toward strategic economic cooperation. The Saudi-Pakistan Economic Cooperation Framework represents Pakistan's determination to transform challenges into opportunities and anchor its future in reform, transparency, and regional partnership.

As Pakistan deepens its engagement with global partners, this new phase promises renewed confidence, stronger regional ties, and a more resilient economic trajectory■



# PM SHEHBAZ LAUNCHES PHASE IV OF YOUTH LAPTOP SCHEME



SABA ALI

The Jinnah Convention Centre in Islamabad was packed long before the programme began. Students, faculty, vice chancellors, and alumni of earlier youth initiatives gathered to witness the launch of Phase IV of the Prime Minister's Youth Laptop Scheme on 30 October 2025. The event marked the start of another nationwide distribution of 100,000 laptops to high-performing students enrolled in public-sector universities.

For many attendees, a laptop represents more than a device: it provides access to learning, opportunity, and a world increasingly driven by digital skills. Speaking at the launch, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif described the scheme as “an investment in national productivity,” adding that more than Rs500 billion had been allocated this year for education, skills, and youth-focused initiatives.

## FROM A PROVINCIAL START TO A NATIONAL PLATFORM

The scheme began in Punjab in 2011 and was expanded federally in 2013. Since then, more than 1.6 million students across Pakistan have received laptops, enabling them to complete research projects, access online libraries, take global courses, and earn income through digital work.

At the Phase-IV launch, PMYP Chairman Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan said, “The laptop is often the first personal computing device a student ever owns. It expands the radius of opportunity.” The impact of this access is perhaps best illustrated through the story of Kamran Khan.

## KAMRAN'S STORY: A TURNING POINT IN NASEERABAD

Kamran Khan, a civil service aspirant from the Naseerabad district of Balochistan, received a laptop under the scheme. Preparing for the CSS exam demands months of uninterrupted study, online resources, and digital organization, tools that are often out of reach for students in remote districts.

Kamran used his laptop to prepare for CSS, but he went beyond academics. He taught himself graphic design, and soon, he was supporting himself financially through freelance work. In a video message shared on the official PMYP Instagram account, Kamran explained why the scheme mattered:

“Apart from Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif’s Youth Laptop Scheme, I have never seen any government run a programme of this magnitude, and if such programmes do exist, they rarely reach young people from underdeveloped areas like ours. This scheme reaches remote districts, engages youth, and brings real change to their lives. I am living proof of that. Thank you, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. I am your empowered young citizen. I am Pakistan’s identity.”

### A TOOL THAT EXPANDS POSSIBILITIES

In today’s higher-education landscape, a personal computer has become essential. Research increasingly relies on digital journals, databases, and specialised software, while international courses, certifications, and skill-based learning are largely online. Pakistan’s rapidly growing freelancing economy depends almost entirely on laptop access, and students in fields ranging from engineering and architecture to business and the humanities require digital tools for coursework and project work. For first-generation university students, particularly those in underserved districts, a laptop often represents the first time they have access to a personal device powerful enough to support their academic ambitions.

### A PAUSE FOR PRINCIPLE

Phase IV was briefly delayed earlier this year after the prime minister objected to logos printed on the



laptops that resembled personal or political branding. He ordered the designs to be replaced with neutral, state-appropriate branding, stating that public resources should uphold public identity, not political promotion. With the issue resolved, the nationwide rollout has resumed through HEC-verified merit lists submitted by universities.

### THE WORK AHEAD

While the launch ceremony showcased political commitment, the true impact of the scheme will depend on how effectively students leverage the technology. The rollout of 100,000 new devices represents an opportunity for research, innovation, and entrepreneurship at a moment when Pakistan’s youth are increasingly entering global digital markets. For many students, a laptop remains the first real bridge to the digital economy, one that can determine not only how they study, but also how they earn, innovate, and engage with the world ■

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



# MAJOR OPC REFORMS MARK A MILESTONE YEAR



**DR RANA KHALID MEHMOOD**

The Overseas Pakistanis Commission (OPC) Punjab completed a landmark year under Vice Chairman Amjad Malik, delivering some of the most significant reforms introduced for overseas Pakistanis in recent years. The highlight was the establishment of Special Courts for Overseas Pakistanis, a long-standing demand finally implemented in line with the PML-N 2024 manifesto. The new courts offer faster, streamlined hearings for property disputes, fraud cases, illegal occupation, and other long-pending matters that previously took years to resolve.

During the past year, the OPC also strengthened coordination with police, revenue departments, and commissioners, enabling thousands of complaints to be addressed more efficiently. Modern IT systems, including real-time dashboards, online case tracking, and faster digital communication channels, made the complaint process more transparent and accessible. Another major achievement was the launch of the One-Window Facilitation Centre at Alfalah Building, Mall Road, Lahore, providing overseas Pakistanis direct access to multiple services under one roof.

These improvements collectively represent a shift toward a more responsive and service-oriented framework for Pakistanis abroad.

## PAKISTANI LEADERS DISCUSS COMMUNITY ISSUES WITH NEW AMBASSADOR TO SOUTH AFRICA



In Johannesburg, PML-N South Africa Senior Vice President and Pakistan South Africa Association (PASA) Chairman Rana Zahid Iqbal and PASA Head of International Affairs Prince Shehbaz held an important meeting with newly appointed Ambassador of Pakistan to South Africa Malik Farooq Awan.

The discussion focused on key community concerns such as improving consular services, expediting documentation processes, ensuring safety and legal support for Pakistanis in the region, and strengthening guidance for local business investors. Prince Shehbaz proposed initiatives for youth exchange programmes, trade networks, and community development to deepen engagement between Pakistan and its diaspora.

## PML-N DENMARK PAYS TRIBUTE TO SENATOR IRFAN SIDDIQUI



The PML-N House in Denmark hosted a memorial gathering in honour of the late Senator Irfan Siddiqui, a respected figure in Pakistan's intellectual and political circles. Organised by PML-N Denmark President Mehr Aftab Ahmed Romi, the event drew prominent community members, writers, and representatives of various organisations.

Participants remembered Siddiqui as a symbol of refined politics, principled journalism, and intellectual depth. His composed manner, thoughtful critique, and unwavering commitment to civil discourse were especially highlighted. Pakistan's Ambassador to Denmark, Shoaib Sarwar also paid tribute to Siddiqui's contributions and noted that his work would remain a guiding light for future generations.

## PML-N HONG KONG HOSTS RECEPTION FOR PAKISTAN CRICKET TEAM



In Hong Kong, the PML-N chapter held a spirited reception in honour of the Pakistan cricket team following their impressive performance at the Hong Kong Super Sixes. The evening brought together community leaders, professionals, and cricket fans to celebrate the team's achievement.

Players were presented with bouquets, shields, and gifts as a gesture of appreciation. Community members praised the squad for showcasing professionalism, discipline, and national pride in a fast-paced international tournament. Speaking at the event, PML-N Hong Kong Vice President Rai Ashraf Khan said the young players had "uplifted the national spirit by proving that talent and determination can shine on any global stage."

The reception also offered informal interactions between the team and the community, making it a memorable moment for overseas Pakistanis who follow cricket passionately from afar.

# PICTURE GALLERY



**PRESIDENT ASIF ALI ZARDARI AND PRIME MINISTER MUHAMMAD SHEHBAZ SHARIF RECEIVE KING OF JORDAN ABDULLAH II UPON HIS ARRIVAL IN ISLAMABAD. 15 NOVEMBER 2025.**



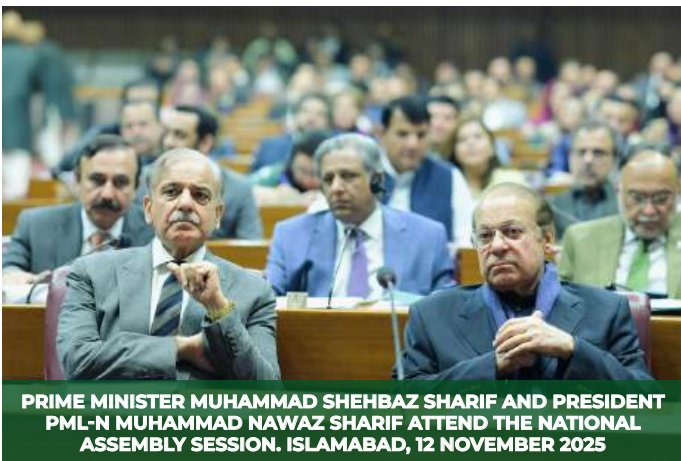
**PRIME MINISTER MUHAMMAD SHEHBAZ SHARIF MEETS KING ABDULLAH II TO REVIEW REGIONAL SECURITY, THE GAZA PEACE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION, AND BILATERAL COOPERATION. ISLAMABAD, 15 NOVEMBER 2025**



**KING ABDULLAH II VISITS TILLA FIELD FIRING RANGES ALONG WITH PRIME MINISTER MUHAMMAD SHEHBAZ SHARIF AND COAS FIELD MARSHAL SYED ASIM MUNIR. 17 NOVEMBER 2025**



**PAKISTAN AND JORDAN SIGNED FOUR MOUS IN MEDIA, CULTURE AND EDUCATION DURING KING ABDULLAH II'S VISIT TO ISLAMABAD. 15 NOVEMBER 2025**



**PRIME MINISTER MUHAMMAD SHEHBAZ SHARIF AND PRESIDENT PML-N MUHAMMAD NAWAZ SHARIF ATTEND THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SESSION. ISLAMABAD, 12 NOVEMBER 2025**



**PRIME MINISTER MUHAMMAD SHEHBAZ SHARIF JOINS THE FAMILY PHOTO AT THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY SPEAKERS CONFERENCE. ISLAMABAD, 11 NOVEMBER 2025**



**AZERBAIJAN PRESIDENT ILHAM ALIYEV, TURKISH PRESIDENT RECEP TAYYIP ERDOĞAN, PAKISTAN'S PRIME MINISTER SHEHBAZ SHARIF AND COAS FIELD MARSHAL SYED ASIM MUNIR INSPECT THE VICTORY DAY CELEBRATIONS. BAKU, 8 NOVEMBER 2025**



**PRESIDENT ILHAM ALIYEV, PRESIDENT RECEP TAYYIP ERDOĞAN AND PRIME MINISTER SHEHBAZ SHARIF MEET DURING VICTORY DAY CELEBRATIONS, WITH COAS FIELD MARSHAL SYED ASIM MUNIR ALSO IN ATTENDANCE. BAKU, 8 NOVEMBER 2025**



**AFC PRESIDENT SHEIKH SALMAN EBRAHIM AL KHALIFA CALLS ON PRIME MINISTER MUHAMMAD SHEHBAZ SHARIF TO DISCUSS FOOTBALL DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL SPORTS COOPERATION. ISLAMABAD, 6 NOVEMBER 2025**



**SPEAKER OF THE IRANIAN PARLIAMENT DR MOHAMMAD BAGHER GHALIBAF CALLS ON PRIME MINISTER MUHAMMAD SHEHBAZ SHARIF. ISLAMABAD, 7 NOVEMBER 2025**



**PRIME MINISTER MUHAMMAD SHEHBAZ SHARIF DISTRIBUTES LAPTOPS AMONG STUDENTS IN ISLAMABAD UNDER THE PRIME MINISTER'S YOUTH LAPTOP SCHEME ALONG WITH CHAIRMAN PMYP RANA MASHHOOD AHMAD KHAN. 30 OCTOBER 2025**



**PML-N PRESIDENT MUHAMMAD NAWAZ SHARIF OFFERS CONDOLENCES TO THE FAMILY OF SENATOR IRFAN-UL-HAQ SIDDIQUI IN ISLAMABAD. 12 NOVEMBER 2025**



**PRIME MINISTER MUHAMMAD SHEHBAZ SHARIF CUTS A CAKE TO MARK THE 102ND REPUBLIC DAY OF TÜRKIYE. ISLAMABAD, 30 OCTOBER 2025**



**CHIEF MINISTER OF PUNJAB MARYAM NAWAZ SHARIF INAUGURATES THE NEW ELECTRIC BUS SERVICE IN RAWALPINDI. 19 NOVEMBER 2025**



**PRESIDENT OF SIKHS OF AMERICA JASDEEP SINGH CALLS ON PRIME MINISTER MUHAMMAD SHEHBAZ SHARIF IN THE PRESENCE OF FEDERAL LAW MINISTER AZAM NAZIR TARAR. 18 NOVEMBER 2025**



**PRIME MINISTER MUHAMMAD SHEHBAZ SHARIF CUTS A CAKE ON THE BIRTHDAY OF KING CHARLES III OF THE UNITED KINGDOM. ISLAMABAD, 13 NOVEMBER 2025**



# HORIZON

Research and Policy Planning Unit  
Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz