

January 2026

HORIZON



THE CULTURAL REVIVAL OF PUNJAB

RESEARCH AND POLICY PLANNING UNIT
PAKISTAN MUSLIM LEAGUE - NAWAZ

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Dear Readers,

As spring approaches, the anticipation around Basant once again stirs the cultural imagination of Punjab. More than a festival, Basant has long symbolised colour, renewal, and the collective joy of public space. Its gradual return — cautious, regulated, and mindful of past excesses — reflects a broader shift underway: a province attempting to reconnect with its cultural rhythms without abandoning responsibility. Culture, after all, flourishes not in chaos, but within order.

Punjab's cultural revival today is not limited to nostalgia-driven celebrations. It is visible in the reclaiming of public spaces, renewed interest in heritage, and a conscious effort to balance tradition with safety and inclusion. This renewed emphasis signals an understanding that culture is not an accessory to governance; it is one of its outcomes. When citizens feel secure and engaged, cultural expression follows naturally.

This brings us to the performance of the Punjab government, which in recent months has demonstrated a more responsive and visible style of governance. Whether it was the management of heavy snowfall in Murree or swift administrative action following a tragic incident at a civic work site, where a woman and her daughter lost their lives after falling into an open manhole, the message has been consistent: negligence will not be ignored. Accountability measures, departmental action, and public communication have all pointed toward a governance model that prioritises responsibility over rhetoric.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has positioned her administration around visibility, decisiveness, and delivery. Her approach signals continuity with a governance tradition that emphasises administrative control, rapid response, and citizen-facing performance. This is particularly significant in a province where governance failures are immediately felt by millions.

At the federal level, leadership under Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is setting the broader direction within which provincial governance is unfolding. This was evident in Davos, where Pakistan signed the Board of Peace initiative in a high-level setting attended by President Donald Trump. On the sidelines of the World Economic Forum, the Prime Minister also met the IMF's Managing Director, who publicly acknowledged the extent of Pakistan's efforts to stabilise its economy after a prolonged period of stress.

Equally significant have been people-to-people and soft-power gestures: the resumption of direct flights between Dhaka and Karachi after fourteen years, Pakistan's diplomatic support for Bangladesh on international sporting platforms, and the presence of the Australian cricket team in Lahore — all reinforcing a narrative of normalcy, openness, and engagement.

Culture thrives where governance works and confidence returns. Punjab's revival, as explored in this issue, is therefore not merely symbolic. If sustained, it may well become a durable expression of performance-led governance, rooted in accountability, reinforced by leadership, and sustained by public trust.

Sincerely,
Saira Bano
Editor-in-Chief

EDITORIAL BOARD

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



THE CULTURAL REVIVAL OF PUNJAB

SAIRA BANO

As winter loosens its grip and spring edges closer, Lahore is once again vibrating with a familiar, long-missed energy. Rooftops are being cleared, kite strings are quietly resurfacing in markets, and conversations drift inevitably towards Basant. After nearly two decades of absence, the festival's return has sent the city into a state of collective anticipation, recalling a time when spring was not merely a season but a public celebration.

This excitement builds on a broader cultural revival sweeping across Punjab. Over the past year, the province has witnessed a visible embrace of heritage, diversity, and civic aesthetics, guided in part by the leadership of Maryam Nawaz, who has championed initiatives aimed at restoring Punjab's cultural identity while making public spaces more inclusive and accessible. From state-supported Christmas festivities to spring fairs and urban

restoration projects, Punjab is rethinking how culture is experienced in daily life.

The return of Basant is the most visible expression of this shift. Once synonymous with Lahore's identity, the festival had long been sidelined, remembered more through nostalgia than practice. Its re-emergence, under a regulated and safety-conscious framework, signals a move away from outright prohibition towards negotiated celebration. Rooftop gatherings, kite markets, and public awareness campaigns underscore the care with which this cultural tradition is being revived. More importantly, it has reopened a conversation about what it means for a city to celebrate collectively — responsibly, visibly, and without fear.

Alongside Basant, the Punjab Horse and Cattle Show has become another emblem of cultural pride. These



BASANT FESTIVAL

After nearly two decades, Lahore prepares for rooftops alive with kites, bustling markets, and citywide excitement. This carefully regulated revival emphasises safety while celebrating a cherished spring tradition.



HORSE AND CATTLE SHOW

A proud display of Punjab's rural heritage, connecting urban audiences to equestrian skill, livestock culture, and age-old traditions. Families and enthusiasts flock to witness the spectacle.



displays of equestrian skill and livestock heritage are drawing families and enthusiasts from across the province, connecting rural traditions with urban spectatorship, and reminding the city that Punjab's identity is deeply rooted in both land and craft.

Punjab's cultural revival is also taking tangible form through the restoration of heritage sites. In Lahore, conservation of the Lahore Fort's Sikh-era Hammam, Athdara Pavilion, and Loh Temple has reopened these monuments to public appreciation. The Shahdara Heritage Complex, historic bazaars, and colonial-era buildings in the Walled City are being revitalised, while iconic landmarks like the Multan Clock Tower have been restored as civic symbols.

New museums, including the Multan Museum and the Bhagat Singh Gallery at Poonch House, have

been inaugurated, expanding access to Punjab's history and art. Even historic wells, such as the Bahar Wali Baoli and the Well of Dina Nath in Wazir Khan Chowk, have been carefully conserved, reclaiming these once-forgotten elements of urban heritage.

In Gujranwala, Sikh and Hindu heritage sites, including the Maharaja Ranjit Singh Haveli and Tomri and Jain Mandirs, are undergoing restoration, while the ancient Indus Valley Civilisation site at Harappa is being revitalised with new visitor facilities. These initiatives restore buildings and anchor cultural memory in daily life, celebrate Punjab's plural heritage, and invite communities to engage with history as a living experience.

At street level, the revival extends far beyond



CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS

December saw state-backed Christmas events promoting interfaith engagement and inclusivity, reflecting Punjab's commitment to celebrating cultural diversity beyond major festivals.

Punjab Horticulture Authority signboards further reinforces linguistic identity in daily urban life, while ongoing canal beautification projects — complete with landscaped walkways and improved lighting — are reclaiming neglected spaces as venues for leisure and social interaction.

Youth-oriented initiatives such as cultural selfie points and heritage-themed installations further encourage engagement with history and art. Museums, galleries, and restored historical sites are no longer static reminders of the past but living spaces where people, especially younger generations, can see themselves reflected in Punjab's story.

Meanwhile, government-backed Christmas and New Year celebrations in December illustrated a similar ethos of inclusivity. By officially supporting events, encouraging interfaith engagement, and opening churches to the wider community, authorities highlighted that cultural and religious diversity is not merely tolerated but actively celebrated. These initiatives, together with Basant and the Horse and Cattle Show, suggest a provincial vision where culture is participatory, visible, and woven into everyday life.



Restored Bahar Wali Baoli stepwell, Kharian.

HERITAGE RESTORATION

Historical sites across Punjab are being carefully restored, preserving architectural and cultural legacies while inviting public interaction.

festivals. Heritage and cultural sites across Punjab are being restored, pedestrian-friendly streets are being established, and beautifully designed carts are being distributed to fruit and vegetable vendors, transforming routine commerce into vibrant public theatre. The appearance of Punjabi sayings on

What ties these developments together is intent: a recognition that social cohesion and civic pride are strengthened when people see themselves reflected in the spaces they inhabit, the festivals they celebrate, and the heritage they preserve. Festivals are returning not as rare allowances but as managed



URBAN BEAUTIFICATION & PUBLIC SPACES

- Pedestrian-friendly streets are emerging in key urban areas.
- Canal beautification projects include landscaped walkways, improved lighting, and spaces for leisure.
- Fruit and vegetable vendors now operate from attractively designed carts, turning daily commerce into vibrant public engagement.



Punjabi language saying

LANGUAGE & IDENTITY

Punjabi sayings are appearing on Punjab Horticulture Authority signboards, reintegrating the mother tongue into everyday city life and reclaiming linguistic pride.



YOUTH ENGAGEMENT & MODERN HERITAGE

Cultural selfie points, art installations, and museum exhibits encourage younger generations to connect with Punjab’s rich history and living traditions.

traditions. Public spaces are being reclaimed not as monuments alone, but as active, vibrant corridors for daily interaction. Language, history, and craft are being reintroduced not as nostalgia but as living, breathing elements of the city.

restored vibrancy of its streets, it carries more than colour and festivity. It carries the promise that celebration, inclusivity, and heritage can rise together — and that Punjab’s cultural heartbeat is once again being felt, in full, across the province ■

As Lahore looks skyward this spring, anticipating the swirl of kites, the parade of livestock, and the

The writer is the editor of this magazine.



PIA PRIVATISATION A STRATEGIC MOVE FOR PAKISTAN'S FUTURE



SAFDAR ALI DANISH

Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), once an emblem of national pride and a pioneer among global airlines, has officially entered a new chapter in its history: privatisation. In December 2025, the Government of Pakistan successfully sold 75 per cent of its stake in PIA to a private consortium led by the Arif Habib Group for a total bid of Rs135 billion (approximately \$482 million), marking a decisive shift in economic policy and state enterprise reform.

This transaction is more than just a business deal; it is a milestone in Pakistan's economic reform agenda. While it has drawn global attention and stirred public debate, its significance goes far beyond headlines. A clear understanding of the background, economics, and future implications reveals why this decision has the potential to be transformative for Pakistan's economy.

UNDERSTANDING PRIVATISATION

Privatisation, at its core, refers to the transfer of ownership, either full or partial, of government assets and enterprises to the private sector. It is a policy instrument widely used by governments to improve efficiency, reduce fiscal burdens, enhance competitiveness, and attract investment. This process can take various forms, including direct sale of shares,

“ A TRANSPARENT AND SUCCESSFUL PRIVATISATION BUILDS CONFIDENCE AMONG BOTH DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL INVESTORS IN PAKISTAN'S POLICY CONTINUITY. ”

“ NATIONAL PRIDE IS BEST RECLAIMED THROUGH PERFORMANCE RATHER THAN SYMBOLISM. ”



public offerings, management contracts, or public-private partnerships.

Across the world, privatisation has frequently been used to revive loss-making or strategically misaligned state enterprises by introducing market discipline, professional management, and improved governance. For many countries, it has served as a corrective mechanism where state control has failed to deliver efficiency or sustainability.

WHY PIA PRIVATISATION WAS NECESSARY

PIA's decline over the past decades was not the result of a single failure but of entrenched structural inefficiencies, persistent political interference, management weaknesses, financial stress, and operational mismanagement. As a state-owned enterprise, the airline became increasingly unsustainable. Years of political appointments, overstaffing, inefficient fleet utilisation, and mounting liabilities steadily eroded its financial position.

To keep PIA operational, successive governments were compelled to provide repeated subsidies, diverting scarce public resources away from health, education, and infrastructure. Operational inefficiency also left PIA at a competitive disadvantage in the global aviation market. In an industry where fleet modernity, service quality, cost efficiency, and customer experience determine success, PIA's rigid,

state-controlled structure limited its ability to adapt and innovate.

Pakistan's broader economic context further underscored the need for reform. Under successive agreements with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the reduction of fiscal losses from State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) has remained a central policy objective. The privatisation of major SOEs, including PIA, formed part of a wider roadmap aimed at strengthening public finances, restoring macroeconomic stability, and improving investor confidence.

The aviation sector is inherently capital-intensive, requiring continuous investment in aircraft, maintenance infrastructure, human capital, and route development. Government budgets, already under strain, have struggled to meet these demands without compromising other national priorities. Private ownership offers access to fresh capital, strategic partnerships, and long-term planning capacity — elements essential for the airline's revival.

RESTRUCTURING AND SALE

The privatisation of PIA was not a sudden or impulsive decision. It followed years of policy debate, failed attempts, and institutional learning. Earlier efforts to privatise the airline were hampered by weak investor interest, valuation disputes, and the burden of legacy debt. Recognising these constraints, the government undertook a strategic restructuring between 2024 and

2025 to make the airline investible.

Under this plan, PIA's core airline operations were separated from its historical liabilities and non-core assets. The airline was reorganised under PIA Holding Company Limited (PIA Holdco), with passenger services, cargo, ground handling, training, and catering retained within the core entity. Legacy debt and non-essential assets were placed outside the operating structure, significantly improving transparency and investor appeal.

These reforms laid the groundwork for a credible and competitive bidding process. The eventual auction in late 2025, conducted transparently and broadcast live, resulted in a winning bid by a consortium led by the Arif Habib Group, one of Pakistan's most diversified and established investment firms. The consortium also includes prominent Pakistani businesses such as Fatima Fertiliser, City Schools, and Lake City Holdings. Their bid of Rs135 billion exceeded the government's reserve price, signalling strong investor confidence in the airline's prospects.

Under the terms of the deal, the government retains a 25 per cent stake, ensuring continued oversight and alignment with national priorities. Notably, over 90 per cent of the bid value is committed to reinvestment within PIA for operational revival, fleet acquisition, and efficiency improvements.

ECONOMIC RATIONALE AND STRATEGIC GAINS

Despite political noise, the economic rationale behind PIA's privatisation rests on well-established principles. The airline had long been a drain on public finances, and privatisation relieves the state from the burden of repeated bailouts. This fiscal relief allows public funds to be redirected toward more productive and socially beneficial sectors.

Private ownership enables the infusion of capital required for fleet modernisation, service enhancement, technological integration, and route expansion, without straining government resources. Market discipline incentivises efficiency, cost control, and customer-centric management. International experience demonstrates that airlines such as British

Airways and Air India improved their performance and market positioning following privatisation under professional management.

A revitalised national airline can also play a significant role in boosting tourism, facilitating business travel, and enhancing Pakistan's global connectivity. Improved international routes and service quality translate into higher foreign exchange earnings and broader economic spill-overs across hospitality, logistics, and services.

POLITICAL PROPAGANDA VS FACTS

The privatisation has, predictably, attracted political criticism. Some opposition voices have portrayed the move as "selling national assets" or undermining sovereignty. Such arguments often equate national interest with state ownership, regardless of performance outcomes. In reality, national interest is better served by economically viable institutions that contribute to growth, employment, and international credibility.

The PIA transaction was not a distressed sell-off. The valuation reflected market conditions following restructuring and debt separation, designed to create a viable airline. Legacy liabilities were addressed through institutional reform, and the state continues to hold a strategic stake. Privatisation in this context represents modernisation rather than surrender.

Overall, the privatisation of Pakistan International Airlines marks a decisive step toward economic revival and institutional reform. By easing the fiscal burden on the state, improving efficiency, and restoring investor confidence, this move sends a clear message that Pakistan is serious about restructuring loss-making entities and improving governance. If pursued with transparency and accountability, this landmark decision can become a turning point, driving sustainable economic growth and helping reclaim national pride through performance rather than symbolism ■

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



PAKISTAN LEAPS TOWARD ZERO-COST DIGITAL REMITTANCES



SABA ALI

Millions of Pakistanis working abroad have long faced challenges in the remittance process. High transaction fees and reliance on informal channels significantly reduce the amount that reaches families back home. In response to this issue, the Government of Pakistan has taken a decisive step towards a cashless economy by formally initiating a strategic partnership aimed at digitising the flow of remittances.

A strategic partnership for zero-cost digital remittances The Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP) signed a Letter of Intent (LOI) with Dellsons Associates Private Limited, Karachi, to initiate the

creation of a proprietary Digital Wallet specifically designed for overseas Pakistanis.

The ceremony, held on 18 January 2026, represented a commitment to enhance the financial ecosystem for Pakistan's workforce abroad. The signing was witnessed by Chairman PMYPRana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, along with representatives from the Ministry of Finance, ONE LINK, and United Bank Limited (UBL). The ceremony was attended by Dr Muhammad Ali Malik, joint secretary PMYP, and Mr Ibrahim Amin, founder and chairman of Dellsons Associates Private Limited, along with their respective teams.

“ A REGULATED DIGITAL WALLET SOLUTION WILL BE LINKED WITH PMYP’S DIGITAL YOUTH HUB, ENABLING OVERSEAS PAKISTANIS IN THE UAE TO SEND REMITTANCES INSTANTLY THROUGH FORMAL CHANNELS AT NO COST. ”



Through this collaboration, a regulated digital wallet solution will be linked with the Digital Youth Hub, which is PMYP’s flagship platform, enabling overseas Pakistanis in the UAE to send remittances instantly through formal channels at no cost.

Chairman Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan said that this initiative reflects the Prime Minister’s vision for a cashless economy and aligns with the PMYP’s four Es framework: Education, Employment, Engagement, and Environment. By leveraging financial technology and digital infrastructure, this collaboration promotes financial inclusion and secure remittance channels for Pakistani youth working in the UAE.

EMPOWERING THE BLUE-COLLAR WORKFORCE

This initiative addresses long-standing issues faced by Pakistani blue-collar workers in the UAE, such as high transfer costs and a lack of formal banking access. Through zero-cost and instant transfers, the government aims to incentivise the adoption of formal, documented channels. This shift will offer direct financial relief to workers and provide a substantial boost to the national foreign exchange reserves.

DELLSONS ASSOCIATES

Under the proposed framework, Dellsons Associates Private Limited will support the design and implementation of the digital remittance solution, including the development of a user-friendly digital wallet integrated with the Digital Youth Hub. Working with implementing partners, the company will help establish the necessary technological infrastructure,

operational systems, and customer onboarding processes. Secure cross-border remittance processing will be carried out through financial partners such as ONE LINK and United Bank Limited (UBL). Dellsons Associates will also set up service offices and customer support centres in the UAE to provide on-ground assistance to workers using the platform.

Compliance and security

Built in line with stringent global financial regulations, the initiative places compliance at the centre of its framework, ensuring full adherence to the regulatory requirements of both the Central Bank of the UAE and the State Bank of Pakistan. It incorporates strict Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism protocols, robust Know Your Customer verification, advanced cybersecurity safeguards, and consumer protection measures to ensure secure, transparent, and trustworthy remittance transactions for overseas workers.

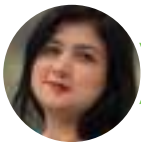
A CATALYST FOR ECONOMIC STABILITY

This collaboration serves as a potential macroeconomic stabiliser by lowering barriers to formal remittance channels through zero-cost transfers. As the project moves from the Letter of Intent to implementation, it is expected to enhance digital literacy among youth and strengthen Pakistan’s economic resilience. The initiative also repositions the Digital Youth Hub as an active platform for financial inclusion, illustrating how public-private collaboration can narrow the financial and practical distance between Pakistan and its overseas workforce ■

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



SYEDA AMNAH BATOOL ON EDUCATION, POLICY, AND PUBLIC SERVICE



FATIMA HASAN ZAIDI

A parliamentarian with deep roots in education, research, and social advocacy, Syeda Amnah Batool represents a new generation of policymakers shaped as much by academic rigour as by grassroots experience. A member of the National Assembly on a reserved seat for women from the Pakistan Muslim League–Nawaz (PML-N), she has spent over a decade working across youth-focused initiatives, public policy research, and social development. In this interview with Horizon, she reflects on her personal journey, her transition into politics, and her vision for education-led national progress.

HORIZON: Tell us about your childhood and family background.

SAB: I grew up in what many would describe as an ordinary household, but it was one rich in ambition and a quiet belief that I could serve my country in

meaningful ways. My father's unwavering support and his vision for my future formed the foundation of this journey. While our circumstances were modest, the aspirations certainly were not. From an early age, I was raised with the determination to contribute to Pakistan beyond the confines of a classroom.

HORIZON: What early experiences inspired you to become an education advocate and social worker?

SAB: My inspiration comes from a value-driven upbringing that instilled a strong sense of responsibility toward my community. This sense of duty was reinforced by my father, a respected religious scholar and philanthropist, whose life exemplified service.

Education advocacy became a clear path when I experienced the transformative power of opportunity

“ WHEN INTENTIONS ARE SINCERE, AND PURPOSE IS ROOTED IN SERVICE, DESTINY OPENS DOORS THAT ONCE SEEMED OUT OF REACH. ”



firsthand. Receiving the Chief Minister’s Laptop was a defining moment — not because of the device itself, but because it symbolised trust in a student’s potential. That realisation shaped my belief that empowering students, especially from smaller towns, is one of the most effective forms of social work. This conviction ultimately led to the launch of my Street to School initiative, aimed at bridging opportunity gaps and restoring dignity through education.

HORIZON: Tell us about the ‘Street to School’ initiative.

SAB: It began as a moral obligation to address the realities of vulnerable children. The mission is simple: bring children off the streets and into classrooms, restoring dignity and creating pathways out of poverty through education.

HORIZON: Did you grow up with role models who shaped your values around education and social justice?

SAB: My earliest and most profound role model was my father, whose life taught me that service to others is the highest calling. Beyond my family, I was inspired by global figures such as Dr Muhammad Yunus, whose work in microfinance demonstrated how sustainable

models can lift marginalised communities, and Kofi Annan, whose emphasis on education and peace broadened my understanding of systemic change.

On the national front, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has been a defining influence. His discipline, tireless work ethic, and commitment to merit shaped my own approach to public service. I was also deeply influenced by the intellectual legacy of Dr Arfa Sayeda Zehra and the education reform work of Baela Raza Jamil, both of whom reinforced my belief that education is central to social justice and national development.

HORIZON: When did you decide to step into politics?

SAB: My transition into politics was gradual and purposeful. I believed that meaningful service required a platform capable of delivering systemic change. My academic training in public policy naturally inclined me toward legislation and governance.

I began my political journey in 2011 as a volunteer during the Chief Minister’s Laptop Scheme. It was my first exposure to youth-centred policymaking in action. Over time, I became involved in research, advocacy, and manifesto development, while also



contributing to public discourse through writing. This long-standing engagement, grounded in policy work rather than ambition alone, laid the foundation for my role as a parliamentarian.

HORIZON: How has your long association with PML-N shaped your political identity?

SAB: PML-N has been my political school. Over the years, it instilled in me discipline, teamwork, and an unshakeable belief in hard work and merit. The senior leadership's consistent recognition of sincerity and dedication reinforced my own values. Today, I see myself not merely as a representative but as an active contributor to the party's broader vision for national progress.

HORIZON: What motivated you to pursue advanced studies in governance and public policy?

SAB: After completing my MPhil in Public Policy, I felt the need to deepen my understanding of Pakistan's structural challenges. Academic rigour is essential for evidence-based policymaking, and my doctoral research strengthened my resolve to contribute meaningfully at the policy level.

HORIZON: How did teaching influence your views on education policy?

SAB: Teaching reinforced the urgent need to bridge theory and practice. It showed me that education remains the most powerful tool for social mobility, and that policies must be practical, research-driven, and rooted in the realities students face.

HORIZON: Your research focuses on child labour

and sustainable development. How has this shaped your legislative priorities?

SAB: My research highlighted the direct link between child labour, educational access, and weak social protection systems. These findings anchor my legislative focus on child rights, education reform, and sustainable development policies that break cycles of poverty.

HORIZON: How do you balance data-driven policymaking with social empathy?

SAB: Effective policy requires both. Data provides structure and accountability, while empathy ensures that dignity remains central. Initiatives like Street to School are driven by compassion but designed using evidence to ensure lasting impact.

HORIZON: How has your background shaped your work in the National Assembly?

SAB: My approach is hands-on and outcomes-focused. Grassroots activism helps identify urgent needs, while academic training provides the framework for sustainable solutions. This combination guides my legislative work, particularly in youth development and social welfare, and aligns closely with national priorities under initiatives like the Prime Minister's Youth Programme.

HORIZON: What does holding a reserved seat for women mean to you?

SAB: It is both an honour and a responsibility. Personally, it represents trust in the potential of Pakistani women. Politically, it ensures that women's



and youth perspectives actively shape legislation and national vision.

HORIZON: What youth-centric reforms are you prioritising?

SAB: Equitable digital empowerment is central. Through the Prime Minister's Youth Programme, we are expanding access to skills training, business loans, and digital platforms like the Digital Youth Hub. This ecosystem equips youth to compete globally and contribute meaningfully to Pakistan's economy.

HORIZON: If you could change one thing about Pakistan's education system overnight, what would it be?

SAB: I would guarantee universal, digitally enabled access to quality education. This is not a welfare expense but a strategic national investment, one that dismantles inequality, empowers girls, and accelerates economic and social progress.

HORIZON: How do you unwind outside of public life?

SAB: My free time belongs to my family. As a mother of three, those moments keep me grounded and energised.

HORIZON: How do you balance motherhood, academia, and politics?

SAB: For me, it's about integration rather than balance. My children remind me daily why this work matters. Every policy decision is filtered through a simple question: will this build a better future for them, and for every child in Pakistan?

HORIZON: Have you faced challenges because of your gender or background?

SAB: Early on, the challenge was proving that ambition was not misplaced. I overcame it by focusing on results, continuous learning, and sincerity. When intentions are genuine, the work speaks for itself.

HORIZON: Do you have a guiding mantra?

SAB: "When intentions are sincere, and purpose is rooted in service, destiny opens doors that once seemed out of reach."

HORIZON: Your message to Pakistan's youth and aspiring women leaders?

SAB: Dream big, invest in your education, and work relentlessly. Believe in merit and service. Challenges will come, but with sincerity and persistence, leadership becomes possible. The future belongs to those who turn admiration into action ■

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



DIASPORA FACILITATES HIGH-LEVEL ENGAGEMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA



DR RANA KHALID MEHMOOD

Members of the Pakistani community in South Africa played an active role during the visit of Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON, Ameer Muqam, on 10 January 2025. Community leaders coordinated engagements that went beyond routine outreach, enabling high-level interactions aimed at strengthening Pakistan–South Africa relations.

A central outcome of the visit was a special meeting between Ameer Muqam and Prince Thumbo Muzi Dlamini, a prominent regional figure, son-in-law of the late Nelson Mandela and elder brother of the King of Eswatini. The meeting focused on exploring avenues for enhanced trade, defence and diplomatic cooperation between Pakistan and South Africa.

The engagement was facilitated through the efforts of Prince Shehbaz, head of international affairs at the Pakistan Association South Africa (PASA), and Aashir Azeem, member of the National Youth Council for South Africa. Prominent businessman Habib Khan, former parliamentarian Fazalullah Khan

and other notable figures were also present during the interaction.

Addressing community members, Federal Minister Ameer Muqam appreciated the constructive role played by overseas Pakistanis in advancing Pakistan's interests abroad. He described the diaspora as a valuable national asset and reaffirmed the government's commitment to strengthening relations with friendly countries through sustained diplomatic engagement supported by overseas communities.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AT THE COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT



In London, Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP) Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan held a substantive meeting with Deputy Secretary General of the Commonwealth Secretariat Dr Arjun Sidhu. Discussions focused on strengthening the Commonwealth Youth Programme and advancing collaborative strategies to empower young people across member states.

Rana Mashhood highlighted Pakistan's key youth-focused initiatives, including the Prime Minister's Youth Business and Agriculture Loan Scheme, which has allocated Rs200 billion for youth financing, alongside the Green Youth Movement and the Digital Youth Hub. These programmes were presented as practical models for promoting economic self-reliance, environmental responsibility and digital skills among young people. Dr Sidhu appreciated Pakistan's efforts and reaffirmed the Commonwealth's commitment to continued technical cooperation.

PML-N UK HOSTS DINNER TO HONOUR PMYP CHAIRMAN



Later in London, Pakistan Muslim League-N UK hosted a dinner in honour of Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan. The event was attended by party office-bearers, workers and members of the Pakistani community. PML-N UK Secretary General Rashid Hashmi, Focal Person PMYP Farooq Ali Khalid and AJK Coordinator Raja Waseem welcomed the guests.

In his address, Rana Mashhood outlined the objectives and ongoing projects of the PMYP, emphasising leadership development, education, employment and positive civic engagement. He encouraged overseas Pakistani youth to serve as ambassadors of Pakistan's positive identity and to remain actively connected with national development efforts.

NATIONAL LEADERS' BIRTHDAYS IN LAHORE AND TOKYO



In Lahore, a dignified ceremony was organised to mark the birthdays of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, alongside Christmas celebrations. Hosted by Shahzad Bhatti, President PML-N Minority Wing, the event emphasised interfaith harmony, national unity and respect for diversity. Barrister Amjad Malik, chairman Overseas Pakistanis Commission Punjab, addressed the gathering and reiterated the government's resolve to realise Quaid-e-Azam's vision of a progressive and inclusive Pakistan.



Similar commemorations were held in Tokyo under the auspices of PML-N Japan. Senior party leader Rana Abrar Hussain paid tribute to the contributions of Quaid-e-Azam and Nawaz Sharif, highlighting their enduring impact on Pakistan's political development and national cohesion ■

PICTURE GALLERY



PRIME MINISTER MUHAMMAD SHEHBAZ SHARIF WELCOMES UAE PRESIDENT SHEIKH MOHAMED BIN ZAYED AL NAHYAN ON HIS ARRIVAL IN ISLAMABAD. 26 DECEMBER 2025



UAE PRESIDENT SHEIKH MOHAMED BIN ZAYED AL NAHYAN HOLDS HIGH-LEVEL TALKS WITH PRIME MINISTER MUHAMMAD SHEHBAZ SHARIF DURING HIS VISIT TO PAKISTAN. 26 DECEMBER 2025



PRIME MINISTER MUHAMMAD SHEHBAZ SHARIF AND CHIEF OF DEFENCE FORCES AND COAS FIELD MARSHAL SYED ASIM MUNIR WITNESS THE SIGNING OF AN MOU BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN AND SC FINANCIAL TECHNOLOGIES LLC ON CROSS-BORDER DIGITAL PAYMENT ARCHITECTURE. ISLAMABAD, 14 JANUARY 2026



PRIME MINISTER MUHAMMAD SHEHBAZ SHARIF INAUGURATES THE PAKISTAN ASAN KHIDMAT CENTRE IN ISLAMABAD IN THE PRESENCE OF THE AZERBAIJAN ASAN KHIDMAT MARKAZ DELEGATION. 15 JANUARY 2026



PRIME MINISTER MUHAMMAD SHEHBAZ SHARIF MEETS AN ERICSSON DELEGATION LED BY PRESIDENT PATRICK JOHANSSON. ISLAMABAD, 13 JANUARY 2026



CHIEF MINISTER OF PUNJAB MARYAM NAWAZ WELCOMES PARTICIPANTS OF THE NATIONAL WORKSHOP BALUCHISTAN IN LAHORE, ANNOUNCING LAPTOPS FOR THEM FROM THE PUNJAB GOVERNMENT. 5 JANUARY 2026



PRIME MINISTER MUHAMMAD SHEHBAZ SHARIF RECORDS HIS REMARKS IN THE VISITORS' BOOK AT THE BANGLADESH HIGH COMMISSION, WHERE HE OFFERED CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF FORMER PRIME MINISTER BEGUM KHALIDA ZIA. ISLAMABAD, 5 JANUARY 2026



CHAIRMAN PRIME MINISTER'S YOUTH PROGRAMME RANA MASHHOOD AHMAD KHAN MEETS PAKISTAN'S HIGH COMMISSIONER TO THE UK, DR MOHAMMAD FAISAL, IN LONDON, JANUARY 2026.



REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FIRMS ACQUIRING TWO NEW PAKISTAN SUPER LEAGUE TEAMS MEET PRIME MINISTER MUHAMMAD SHEHBAZ SHARIF. ISLAMABAD, 9 JANUARY 2026



VICE MINISTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF CHINA SUN HAIYAN CALLS ON PRIME MINISTER MUHAMMAD SHEHBAZ SHARIF. ISLAMABAD, 15 JANUARY 2026



PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER MARYAM NAWAZ DISTRIBUTES MINORITY CARDS AND CHRISTMAS GRANT CHEQUES AMONG MEMBERS OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY. 25 DECEMBER 2025



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



PRIME MINISTER MUHAMMAD SHEHBAZ SHARIF CUTS A CAKE AT THE CHRISTMAS CEREMONY HELD AT THE PRIME MINISTER'S HOUSE. ISLAMABAD, 25 DECEMBER 2025



PRIME MINISTER MUHAMMAD SHEHBAZ SHARIF POSES WITH THE PAKISTAN UNDER-19 CRICKET TEAM AFTER THEIR ASIA CUP VICTORY. ISLAMABAD, 22 DECEMBER 2025



CHIEF MINISTER MARYAM NAWAZ SHARIF DISTRIBUTES THE CHIEF MINISTER OF PUNJAB IMAM HONORARIUM CARDS, PROVIDING MONTHLY FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO MOSQUE LEADERS. 8 JANUARY 2026



CHIEF MINISTER OF PUNJAB MARYAM NAWAZ SHARIF MEETS A DELEGATION OF DUBAI-BASED DAMAC GROUP AND INVITES INVESTMENT ACROSS KEY SECTORS IN PUNJAB. 7 JANUARY 2026



HORIZON

Research and Policy Planning Unit
Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz



HorizonEdition



HorizonEdition



HorizonEdition



www.horizonedition.com



info@horizonedition.com