



A Publication by Department of Mass Communication & Media Studies and the Diplomatic Academy

Pakistan's standing in the global rankings

Overview

Pakistan observed a slight improvement in the overall international rankings in 2021 covering socio-economic and political outcomes of the country. Several elements complemented the prospects including successful democratic transition, efficient counter-terrorism measures leading to enhanced peace and security, and foreign direct investment inflows under CPEC, among others. Albeit, decoupling economic growth from human development suggests that the country needs to enhance its scores in health, education and standard of living by ensuring political will, equitable financing and efficient governance to ensure parallel growth for marginalized segments as well. Civil and political liberties must grow hand in hand to ensure a conducive environment for democratic dialogue and accountability which ultimately supports its nation building process.

DEMOCRACY INDEX

Pakistan was placed at the 104th spot among 167 states on the global Democracy Index 2021, compiled by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU).

Index from 0 (authoritarian regime) to 10 (full democracy)

Compiled based on indicators covering: Electoral process and pluralism, Civil liberties, Functioning of government, Political participation, and Political culture.

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX

Pakistan ranked 161 out of 192 countries in the Human Development Index scoring 2022 0.562 out of 1.000 in 2018 compared to 0.560 out of 1.000 in 2017.

Index from 0 (low development) to 1 (very high development)

Compiled based on indicators covering: life expectancy, education, and per capita income

PRESS FREEDOM INDEX

Pakistan's press freedom rank dropped to 145 out of 180 countries in the Press Freedom Index, An annual ranking of countries published by Reporters Without Borders (RWB), an international non-governmental organization dedicated to safeguard the right to freedom of information.

Compiled based on indicators covering: pluralism, media independence, environment and self-censorship, legislative framework, transparency, and infrastructure.

TERRORISM INDEX

Terrorism Index in Pakistan decreased to 7.83 in 2021 from 7.92 in 2020.

Index from 0 (lowest impact) to 10 (highest impact)

Compiled based on indicators covering : Total number of terrorist incidents in a given year, total number of fatalities caused by terrorism in a given year, total number of injuries caused by terrorism in a given year and the approximate level of total property damage from terrorist incidents in a given year.

ECONOMIC FREEDOM INDEX

In 2021, index of economic freedom for Pakistan was 51.7 score.

Though Pakistan index of economic freedom fluctuated substantially in recent years, it tended to decrease through 2002 - 2021 period ending at 51.7 score in 2021.

Compiled based on indicators covering: Market openness, Regulatory efficiency, Government size and the rule of law.

Positive Post is a strategic effort to project achievement and contributions of Pakistan.

While showcasing Greenwich University's cultural diplomacy initiatives, it also encapsulates a compilation of different developments complementing Pakistan's socio-cultural, economic & Political outcomes.

November in History

18 November 1940: Nagar, a small valley state to the north of Kashmir acceded to Pakistan.

26 November 1964: The country's first television station goes on air in Lahore, operated on a pilot basis by Nippon Electric Company.

6 November, 1967: Pakistan is elected to the UN Security Council for a two-year term.[105]

30 November, 1967: Pakistan Peoples Party founded by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in Lahore.

16 November, 1988: New elections held; Benazir Bhutto becomes prime minister after 1988 Pakistani general election.

10 November, 2001: US President Bush meets President Musharraf in New York and assures additional aid of one billion dollars.

23 November, 2002: Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali sworn in as Prime Minister.

25 November, 2007: Nawaz Sharif returned Pakistan after 7 years of forced exile.

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Pakistan posts fiscal surplus for first time in 24 years

Unprecedented profits by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), driven by the highest-ever interest rates and record petroleum levy revenue both non-tax sources have helped the country convert its entrenched budget deficits into a fiscal surplus for the first time in at least 24 years.

According to the Fiscal Operations report for the first quarter (July-September) of the current fiscal year, released by the Ministry of Finance on Thursday, the central bank posted an all-time high surplus profit of Rs2.5 trillion, primarily due to the country's highest-ever policy rate of 22 per cent.

This gain was also supported by a record Rs262 billion earned from the petroleum levy, an 18pc increase from last year.

Due mainly to the SBP's record profits, the country's fiscal balance the gap between national revenues and expenditures reached a surplus of Rs1.696tr, or 1.4pc of GDP, in the first quarter.

This is in sharp contrast to the 0.9pc deficit recorded for the same period last year and marks the first time Pakistan has achieved a budget surplus, breaking a 24-year cycle of consecutive fiscal deficits since FY2001, the earliest year for which public data is available.

The country's primary surplus, which excludes interest payments from the fiscal balance, also touched a historic peak of more than Rs3tr, or 2.4pc of GDP, almost double the full-year target of 1pc of GDP, or about Rs1.24tr.

During the same quarter of last year, the country posted a budget deficit of roughly Rs980bn and a primary surplus of Rs400bn, or 0.4pc of GDP.

This fiscal position apparently

puts to rest, at least for now, the need for additional revenue measures or a mini-budget to make up for about Rs85bn shortfall on the tax revenue target committed to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for the first quarter.

The SBP's profit during the same quarter last year was zero, although it later came in at Rs972bn during the second quarter and remained unchanged throughout the year.

This year, non-tax revenue exceeded tax revenue for the first time, with non-tax revenues surging over 550pc to Rs3.05tr in the first quarter compared to Rs469bn in the same period last year. Tax revenues increased by 25pc to Rs2.77tr from Rs2.22tr last year.

Therefore, total revenues (both tax and non-tax) increased by almost 117pc to Rs5.83tr in the first quarter against Rs2.686tr last year. As a result, the total revenue-to-GDP ratio also almost doubled to 4.7pc of GDP as of Sept 30 this year against 2.5pc a year ago.

On the other hand, total expenditure also rose by about 13pc to Rs4.13tr against Rs3.67tr last year. Of this, current expenditure rose 11pc to Rs3.54tr compared to Rs3.17tr last year. Defence expenditure rose 20pc to Rs410bn during the quarter compared to Rs343bn.

Mainly because of the lower policy rate, the total interest payments dropped 5pc to Rs1.3tr in the first quarter against Rs1.38tr last year. Statistical discrepancy surged by almost 50pc to Rs317bn this year against Rs211bn last year, raising questions over the government's accounting credibility.

Unfortunately, though, the federal development programme appeared to have faltered, as is evident from an



almost 45pc fall in the federal Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) to just Rs22.7bn compared to about Rs41bn a year ago.

Net external financing was negative Rs157bn in the first quarter compared to Rs442bn in additional financing last year. Domestic bank borrowing also saw a downturn, registering at a negative Rs1.87tr compared to additional borrowing of Rs1.076tr in the first quarter of last year.

Moreover, the four provinces jointly provided a cash surplus of Rs160bn compared to Rs51.4bn last year. The PML-N-led provincial government in Punjab exceeded its expenditure limits, putting up its fiscal deficit at Rs160bn. This prevented the provincial surplus from exceeding Rs500bn.

The other three provinces collectively provided a surplus of Rs319bn, with Sindh contributing Rs131bn, Khyber Pakhtun-khwa Rs104bn, and Balochistan Rs85bn.

As a percentage of GDP, total revenues increased to 4.7pc compared to 2.5pc last year; tax revenues to 2.2pc from 2.1pc; and non-tax revenues to 2.5pc from 0.4pc. The rise in tax revenues was led by a 31pc increase in direct taxes and 24pc in sales tax.

Total expenditure as a percentage of GDP slightly decreased to 3.3pc from 3.5pc last year, while current expenditure reduced to 2.8pc from 3pc. Markup payments dropped to 1.1pc of GDP against 1.3pc last

year, while defence and development and net lending stood at 0.3pc in both years.

Courtesy: Dawn

75th birth anniversary of actor Ismail Tara observed

The 75th birth anniversary of renowned comedian Ismail Tara was observed on Saturday. Born on November 16, 1949, in Karachi, his real



name was Muhammad Ismail Merchant. He joined the performing arts at a very young age in 1964 and performed on stage, television and cinema during his career spanned over five decades. Ismail Tara was best known for his humorous show 'Fifty-Fifty' on Pakistan Television which was the household name from 1979 to 1981. The political satire is still acclaimed as one of the classiest comedy productions in the history of PTV. He won the Nigar Award for best comedian five times. Ismail Tara's notable work included 'Rubber Band', 'Ye Zindagi Hey', 'One-way Ticket' and 'Delhi Colony'. He died on Nov 24, 2022 in Karachi due to renal failure.

Courtesy: The Nation

Qatar to invest \$3bn in Pakistan: Attaullah Tarar

Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar said on Friday Qatar would invest \$3 billion in diverse sectors, adding that the financing would have a significant impact on the national economy and ultimately benefit the masses.

A delegation from Qatar would soon visit Pakistan to materialise the investment pledge, the minister disclosed while addressing a news conference highlighting Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visits to Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

He said Pakistan's economy is on the path to stabilisation, adding that inflation has come down to 6.9 per cent.

The country has received record remittances, while the interest rate has been reduced and the investment flow is increasing.

He pointed out that Pakistan had achieved a fiscal surplus after 24 years.

Mr Tarar recalled signing of 27 MoUs, envisaging \$2.2bn worth of investment, during the successful visit of a high-level Saudi delegation, led by Minister for

Investment Sheikh Khalid Bin Abdul Aziz Al Falih, a few weeks ago which included fruitful government-to-government and business-to-business meetings.

In a follow-up to that visit, the prime minister had very productive discussions in Saudi Arabia including his meeting with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman on the sidelines of the eighth session of the Future Investment Initiative in Riyadh, he noted.

Mr Tarar said that during the meeting, both sides reiterated their resolve to strengthen bilateral relations further and enhance trade and investment in Pakistan.

Both countries have longstanding people-to-people ties which spanned over decades, he said, lauding the hospitality extended by Saudi Arabia to Pakistani pilgrims during Umrah and Haj.

He said the prime minister thanked Saudi Arabia for the crucial role it played in Pakistan's deal with IMF and for hosting Pakistani pilgrims.

During the visit, the minister said, delegation-level talks were also held that led to an increase



in the number of recently concluded MoUs from 27 to 34, while volume of investment also went up to \$2.8bn.

The minister hoped that an additional investment of \$600 million would have a positive impact on economy, and "we believe this is a major step towards attracting foreign investment in the mining, energy, agriculture, livestock, IT and human resource development sectors of economy".

As regards the PM's visit to Qatar, he said this had great importance for relations between the two countries.

The information minister said Qatar hosted an exhibition celebrating Pakistani artwork from 1947 to the present. The exhibition featured renowned artists and painters, including the acclaimed architect Nayar Ali Dada.

The relationship between Prime Minister Shehbaz and the Qatari emir was further emphasised by the warm reception he received during his visit.

In reply to a question, Mr Tarar alleged that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had a 'non-serious' government, pointing out their 'misadventures' of the past, and asked about their performance in health, infrastructure and other sectors.

He said the KP government had not taken any public service initiatives, for which the masses would soon hold them accountable.

He said the KP chief minister was not qualified to run the provincial affairs. "Eradication of terrorism is the responsibility of the government, and we are committed to eradicating terrorism," he remarked.

Courtesy: Dawn

Zardari thanks Chinese President for goodwill message

President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday extended gratitude to the Chinese President Xi Jinping for the goodwill message, adding he would visit China in near future on a suitable date.

In his letter dated November 3, President Xi expressed concern over the President of Pakistan's injury and conveyed his best wishes for a speedy recovery, according to a press release issued by the President House Press Wing.

President Xi, in his letter reaffirmed the deep friendship between Pakistan and China.

Chinese President Xi Jinping also extended a warm invitation for President Zardari to visit China.

President Zardari stated that he was deeply moved by the messages inquiring his health by the leadership and people of China.

"I will visit China in the near future at an appropriate time," the president said.

He said this visit will further strengthen the long-standing and ironclad bonds between the two countries.



Both leaders highlighted the importance of the "All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership" between the two countries.

President Xi emphasised the commitment to building a China-Pakistan community

with a shared future in the new era.

President Zardari thanked President Xi Jinping for his insight, leadership, and cooperation in advancing Pakistan-China relations.

Courtesy: Business Recorder

IMF delegation meets Aurangzeb: Finance Division

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) delegation, led by IMF Mission Chief Nathan Porter, held an initial meeting with Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb.

According to a statement released by the Finance Division, the IMF team visited the finance ministry, where the delegation was welcomed by Aurangzeb.

The Finance Division statement, without delving into details, informed that Minister of State for Finance Ali Pervaiz Malik, Governor State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Jameel Ahmad, Chairman Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Rashid Mehmood Langrial and other senior officials from the

Ministry of Finance attended the meeting.

The IMF delegation arrived in Pakistan on Monday for a staff visit to discuss recent developments and the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) programme performance to date. This mission was not part of the first review under the \$7 billion EFF, which will be no earlier than the first quarter of 2025.

IMF team looks at fiscal performance

Sources had earlier told Business Recorder that the FBR briefed the IMF delegation on the revenue collection position for the fiscal year (2024-25), Tajir Dost Scheme and the strategy to overcome the expected shortfall of Rs230 bil-



lion in the second quarter (Oct-Dec) of the current fiscal year.

During the meeting, the FBR chairman shared short- and long-term measures to reduce anticipated shortfall of over Rs230 billion in the second quarter (Oct-Dec) 2024-25.

The FBR collected Rs877 billion during October 2024 against assigned target of Rs980 billion, a shortfall of

Rs103 billion. The FBR collected Rs3,440 billion during first four months of 2024-25 against the assigned target of Rs3,636 billion set for July- October of current fiscal year, reflecting a shortfall of Rs196 billion.

Reports indicate that measures aimed at curtailing expenditure and increasing tax collection are to be high on the agenda of the IMF-Pakistan meetings.

Courtesy: Business Recorder

US will back South Asia climate diplomacy: White House official

AFTER Pakistan floated the idea of 'climate diplomacy' to tackle cross-border pollution in light of smog which has engulfed vast tracts of India and Pakistan, a US official indicated on the sidelines of COP29 that the White House may throw its weight behind any initiative taken in this regard.

Talking to Dawn on the sidelines of COP29 in Baku, Ali Zaidi national climate adviser to the Biden administration said the US was "100 per cent supportive" of partnership-based approaches to tackle problems that cannot be solved in isolation.

"In the US, we have this thing called the 'good neighbour rule', which governs smog. It actually was developed when we witnessed exactly this phenomenon in the US. So you know when it comes to cross-border pollution and cross-border issues, we are 100pc supportive of partnership-based approaches to tackle problems that cannot be solved on their own," he said in response to a question about smog, which has made life unbearable for millions in Pakistan.

The White House official said the US was already active in the Hindu Kush often referred to as 'The Third Pole' for housing the most glaciers in the world outside the polar regions to better coordinate the mitigation response, because environmental impacts from glaciers do not isolate themselves to one jurisdiction.

"I think the regional solutions are a necessary complement to this sort of multilateral dialogue," he said, referring to the COP summit.

The adviser said regional cooperation among relevant parties to address climate change would have more impact than putting "another ornament on a 1,000-page document (COP)".

In response to a question about the failure of the world to help Pakistan after the 2022 floods caused damages to the tune of \$30 billion, he said the global community needed to reinvent its approach to rebuilding from disasters, particularly by investing in pre-disaster mitigation.

According to the White House of-



ficial, the US took a really long time to reengineer its thinking domestically in terms of building resilience into the recovery.

He favoured approaches that ran "consistent with the financial position" of states that needed to do rebuilding, saying there was a need to mobilise more countries to move more capital to help with adaptation and mitigation in these vulnerable countries.

In response to a question about the loan-laden climate finance framework, he said, "If you are targeting projects that have very clear cash flow and a strong counterparty then debt works just fine."

He agreed some concessionary capital did need to come in depending on the technological aspect, the richness of the resources and the maturity of the

market, while referring to India's solar projects.

Vulnerable areas need significant grant-based aid, but there is still a need to figure out how to monetise risk reduction associated with adaptation finance and that's why it was difficult to do. These places are going to soak up more grant-based finance, he said.

ernment stopped being part of it. About the US, he said it should remain part of the dialogue and be the author of the roadmap that will govern the contours of climate finance for decades to come.

Produced as part of the 2024 Climate Change Media Partnership, a journalism fellowship organised by Internews' Earth Journalism Network and the Stanley Centre for Peace and Security.

Courtesy: Dawn

Beijing renews resolve to help Pakistan in tackling terrorism

China reaffirmed its commitment to supporting Pakistan's counter-terrorism efforts and socio-economic development, moving to patch up bilateral ties that were tested by recent attacks on Chinese citizens in Pakistan.

This support was emphasised by Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Lin Jian during a regular press briefing in Beijing, where he responded to questions about China's concerns over rising violence against its nationals in Pakistan.

"China will continue to support Pakistan in fighting terrorism," Lin affirmed, underscoring Beijing's unwavering resolve to assist Pakistan in countering threats that risk destabilising the region.

Increased violence targeting Chinese nationals, especially those working on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects, has heightened Beijing's security apprehensions.

Attempts to undermine mutual trust won't succeed, says Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson

Lin highlighted China's strong commitment to protecting its citizens working abroad, saying, "We are firm in our commitment to protect the safety and security of Chinese nation-

als, projects, and institutions overseas."

He further suggested that terrorist attacks targeting Chinese nationals in Pakistan might be intended to strain the bilateral relationship between the two countries, undermining trust and progress within the CPEC framework.

Reaffirming the strength of the China-Pakistan partnership, Lin stated, "China and Pakistan have the resolve and capability to foil any attempt to harm China-Pakistan relations and ensure that terrorists will pay the price."

Referring to the enduring "iron-clad friendship" between China and Pakistan, Lin emphasised, "The relationship has taken deep roots among our peoples."

He warned, "Attempts to undermine the mutual trust and cooperation between the two countries will not succeed."

Lin added that China remains committed to supporting Pakistan's socio-economic development and improving the lives of its people, reinforcing Beijing's dedication to CPEC and its economic partnership with Pakistan despite security challenges.

These remarks come amid speculation that the recent violence could impact CPEC proj-



ects a key component of China-Pakistan cooperation aimed at bolstering Pakistan's economy.

Lin's statements also carry added weight in light of recent tensions between the two countries, highlighted by a rare public exchange between Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong and Pakistan's Foreign Office (FO).

Pakistan's FO spokesperson, Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, recently described the ambassador's critical remarks on Pakistan's security efforts as "perplexing" and uncharacteristic of the traditionally diplomatic rapport between the nations.

Previously, Ambassador Jiang had expressed frustration over the repeated attacks on Chinese nationals, describing the situation as "unacceptable" and urging Pakistan to enhance security measures.

Courtesy:Dawn

Sindh paves way for constitutional bench

The Sindh Assembly became the first provincial legislature to approve the resolution necessary for the formation of a constitutional bench in the province, under the recently adopted 26th Constitutional Amendment.

As many as 123 members belonging to the PPP and MQM-Pakistan voted in favour of the resolution, while the lone member of Jamaat-i-Islami Mohammad Farooq and three PTI members opposed it.

While fully supporting the resolution, the MQM-P, however, complained that the party was informed about the tabling of the resolution at the eleventh hour against the parliamentary practice and tradition.

Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah informed the house that the provincial government would approach the federal government to establish constitutional benches in the province as soon as possible.

The passage of a resolution in a provincial assembly with a simple majority is necessary for the constitution of benches under Article 202-A of the newly passed 26th

Constitutional Amendment.

Under sub-clause ii of the said article, a senior judge among the nominated judges of the high court will be the head of the constitutional bench.

Tabling the resolution, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Ziaul Hasan Lanjar said it was a constitutional requirement to pass the resolution for the formation of constitutional bench in the Sindh High Court.

The resolution said: "In pursuance of sub-clause 7 of Article 202A of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan read with sub-rule 1A of Rule 136 of the Rules of Procedure of the Provincial Assembly of Sindh, 2013, this House resolves to give effect to the provisions of Article 202A of the Constitution."

The chief minister said PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari had successfully convinced all parties on his draft of the amendment. "The PTI [chairman] also agreed to the draft, but one person did not agree", he said referring to Barrister Gohar Khan and PTI founder



Imran Khan, respectively.

He said it was an honour for the Sindh government to be the first province to bring the resolution in favour of the 26th constitutional amendment. "We want the benefits of the 26th constitutional amendment to be given to the people as soon as possible".

He said the provincial government was waiting for the formation of the Judicial Commission of Pakistan for moving the resolution to give effect provision of the constitutional amendment of the establishment of constitutional court in the province. Later, the assembly session was prorogued.

Courtesy: Dawn

Almost 180,000 Pakistanis to perform Hajj in 2025

The federal cabinet, under Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's leadership, approved the Hajj Policy 2025, setting a limit of 179,210 Pakistani pilgrims for the next year's Hajj.

In a recent meeting at the PM's House, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and the Cabinet reviewed key policy elements proposed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony for the upcoming Hajj 2025.

The policy enforces a new age restriction, barring children under 12 from participating in Hajj next year.

With 1,000 seats reserved for hardship cases and 300 seats

designated for low-income workers registered under the Workers Welfare Fund and Employees Old Age Benefit Institute.

The meeting members were told that the 'Road to Makkah' initiative will operate at Islamabad and Karachi International Airports, providing a streamlined departure process for Pakistani pilgrims.

New oversight measures include appointing one 'Nazim' for every 100 pilgrims from the welfare staff to manage facilities.

Additionally, Hajj Group Organizers (HGOs) will sign Service Provider Agreements with the Ministry of Religious Affairs to ensure accountability.



Compensation for casualties during Hajj has been doubled, with families of deceased pilgrims receiving Rs 2 million and injured individuals Rs 1 million.

A special Hajj management app has also been introduced, alongside dedicated training for pilgrims to enhance their

experience.

In related approvals, the Cabinet endorsed Saeed Iqbal, Moazzam Ahmed, Madiha Khalid, Usman Haider, and Muhammad Sajjad Farooqi as private members of the Board of Public Private Partnership Authority.

Courtesy: timesof karachi.pk

Pakistan's economy demonstrates resilience as trade deficit shrinks significantly

In a notable change that demonstrates the economy's resilience, Pakistan's trade deficit shrank significantly, falling 31.1% year-on-year in October 2024.

The deficit shrank to \$1.5 billion, a significant drop from \$2.17 billion in the same month in 2023-24, The News reported on Saturday.

This pattern indicates that the country's external financial situation is improving, especially with regard to its current account deficit (CAD), which has long been a source of economic weakness.

The monthly deficit also decreased by 17.7%, from \$1.82 billion in September, according to data from the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS).

Such gains offer some hope in the face of a difficult economic environment, with the cumulative trade deficit for the first four months of financial year 2024-25 already at \$6.97 billion, a 5.6% decrease from the \$7.39 billion recorded in the same period in 2023-24.

There are several factors contributing to this contraction. On the one hand, strict government policies intended to reduce foreign exchange constraints have caused a considerable softening of import demand.

In addition to reducing outflows, these limitations have put a great deal of pressure on sectors of the economy that depend on imports.

Conversely, exports have exhibited robust growth, increasing by 10.64% in October 2024 to reach \$2.975 billion. This marks the 14th consecutive month of rising exports, providing a much-needed counterbalance to the shrinking trade deficit.

Year-on-year, exports have shown consistent improvement since September 2023, with growth rates fluctuating between 1.67% and 29.27% in the months leading up to October 2024. When comparing October 2024 to September, exports increased by 4.9%, while imports decreased by 3.9%.



October's data highlights a significant decline in imports, which fell by 8.02% to \$4.47 billion. This marks the first month since February 2024 that imports have decreased, contrasting sharply with previous months where imports surged, notably rising by 63.2% in April. The government's efforts to stabilise the rupee and address the CAD have played a pivotal role in this transformation.

For the July-October 2024-25 period, cumulative exports climbed 13.45% to \$10.88 billion, while imports rose by a more modest 5.17% to \$17.85 billion, resulting in a trade deficit of \$6.97 billion for these four months — down from \$7.387 billion during the same period last fiscal year.

Additionally, the PBS reported on trade in services for first

quarter (July-September), revealing a services trade deficit. Pakistan imported \$2.6bn worth of services while exporting \$1.9bn, leading to a deficit of \$698.9 million, an improvement from \$893.3 million in the same timeframe last year.

In September 2024 alone, services exports totalled \$657 million, while imports amounted to \$882 million, creating a deficit of \$225 million. This represents a 20.5% reduction compared to August, where the deficit was \$283.2 million.

On a year-on-year basis, September 2024 services exports rose by 17%, while imports decreased by 4%. The trend highlights a growing efficiency in service exports, which is critical for diversifying Pakistan's economic portfolio.

Courtesy: Geo news

Conference of Pakistan Society of Neurosurgery, PINS: Over 50 research papers presented



Over 50 research papers were presented by the consultants and postgraduate residents of the Punjab Institute of Neurosciences (PINS) at the 37th annual National Conference of Pakistan Society of Neurosurgery and the PINS.

It should be noted that the annual conference of neurosurgery was held at Aga Khan University Karachi in which neurosurgeons from all over the country participated. This was the highest number of research papers presented by any institution in Pakistan. PINS Lahore also received the "Award for Presenting the Most Research Papers."

Executive Director PINS Prof. Asif Bashir while expressing this achievement said, "We are encouraging our doctors and researchers to advance in the

field of medical research and providing them with the best resources so that they can highlight their research not only nationally but also globally."

It may be added that the PINS Postgraduate Residents also presented 11 research papers at the 2024 AACNS conference in Taiwan.

Dr. Haseeb and Dr. Manal said, "Thanks to the guidance and support of Prof. Asif Bashir we have succeeded in making the name of our country shine at the global level. These achievements of PINS are not only a testament to the research capabilities of the institute but also an important step towards the promotion of research in the field of neuroscience in Pakistan."

Courtesy: Business Recorder

Pollution-free Karachi

ACCORDING to the Sindh Forest Department, approximately 200 hectares of mangrove forest along Karachi's coastline were lost between 2010 and 2022. Also, the green belts in the city have for long been turning into commercial areas, destroying the ecosystem. Overcrowded roads with a pathetic public transport system cause noise pollution, suffocation, anxiety and depression among the people.

Industrial units emit harmful

substances and gases into the atmosphere. Worn-out vehicles, including buses, cars and auto rickshaws, use low-quality fuel which leads to the discharge of an unacceptable amount of carbon into the environment. Besides, harmful gases, like carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide, generate the greenhouse effect that has been blamed for the rising global temperatures.

Apart from this, activities like deforestation and burning of waste add fuel to the fire. The

'Kabhi Main Kabhi Tum' makes history!



The biggest drama serial of Pakistan 'Kabhi Main Kabhi Tum', co-starring Fahad Mustafa and Hania Aamir with Emmad Irfani and Naeema Butt concluded with a bang.

The blockbuster serial was helmed by ace director Badar Mehmood whereas seasoned playwright Farhat Ishtiaq penned the heartwarming story of Mustafa and Sharjeena, the classic love tale of 'opposites attract', with the much-anticipated happy ending.

The most watched and loved serial of the country has created history with its unprecedented viewership in the history of Pakistani drama, entertaining more than 158 million viewers across the borders. On average, at least 43.7 million viewers watched each episode of 'KMKT' – the

highest average for an episode of any drama.

The hugely popular play garnered more than 1.4 billion views on YouTube.

Besides being the most trending serial of the season in the home country, Musleena captured millions of hearts across the world throughout its four-month run.

'Proud' father Salahuddin Tunio reacts to Fahad Mustafa's 'KMKT' success

Moreover, 'Kabhi Main Kabhi Tum' is the highest-ever rated Pakistani drama on IMDb, the world's most popular entertainment source, with an almost-perfect score of 9.2, in addition to the record TRP of 24.2, the highest for a TV drama in the last three years.

Courtesy: ARY news



use of plastic bags and bottles not just damage the fertile land and beauty, but also pose a threat to marine life. Research shows that plastic bags, nets and bottles take up to 1,000 years to decompose.

If we really want a clean as

well as pollution-free city, we must learn to take responsibility of our actions. Small and healthy acts, like planting trees, ensuring cleanliness, and recycling, can help us make our city pollution-free.

Courtesy: Dawn

ICC yet to reach decision on 2025 Champions Trophy

The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Saturday announced the Global Trophy Tour for the ICC Men's Champions Trophy 2025 will be starting from today in Islamabad.

The trophy, after travelling across eight participating countries, will return to host Pakistan — also the defending champions — on Jan 27, 2025.

The announcement comes amid tensions between India, the runners-up of the last iteration, and Pakistan over the former's refusal to visit Pakistan for the tournament.

The PCB, in its itinerary, had revealed the northern towns of Murree, Hunza, Skardu and Muzaffarabad located in Azad Jammu and Kashmir as the venues.

However, the ICC schedule only includes Murree, besides six other Pakistan venues.

Global Trophy Tour schedule announced by the ICC on Nov 16, 2024. — ICC

A statement issued on ICC's website today read: "The popular landmarks where the trophy will be displayed on the opening day of its tour in Islamabad are Daman-e-Koh, Faisal Mosque, and the Pakistan Monument where it will be accompanied by Pakistan cricket icon Shoaib Akhtar."

After Islamabad, the tour will head to "iconic cities and venues in Pakistan such as Karachi, Abbottabad, and Tax-



ila before leaving the land of defending champions", the ICC said.

The schedule includes a "series of physical and digital engagements traversing iconic destinations, sporting events, and key battles in the international cricket calendar", according to the ICC.

The statement quoted ICC Chief Commercial Officer Anurag Dahiya as saying: "We are delighted to launch the Trophy Tour with DP World ahead of the ICC Men's Champions Trophy, where another action-packed programme of activity is available to fans across the world.

"The silverware, which will be showcased across all participating nations, will allow the sport's passionate fanbase to enjoy the unforgettable experience of being up close with the iconic trophy," Dahiya said.

Last week, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) was informed that India would not tour Pakistan for the eight-team tournament, leaving the fate of the event hanging in the balance.

In response, PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi ruled out a "hybrid model". Later, the board sought ICC's clarification for the decision by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).

Amid political tensions between the two neighbours, the BCCI has stood firm by the government's policy of not engaging with Pakistan in terms of bilateral cricket over the years.

The brewing situation looks alarming for world cricket, in case India does not come to Pakistan which also stands firm on its stance that it would no longer accept a hybrid model used for last year's Asia Cup the scenario will become complex and may reach a very difficult point.

Courtesy: Dawn

Pakistan crush Australia to level ODI series



Pakistan crushed world champions Australia by nine wickets in Adelaide to set up a one-day international series decider.

The hosts were dismissed for just 163 off 35 overs as fast bowler Haris Rauf ripped through the middle order, taking 5-29.

Saim Ayub smacked 82 off 71 balls, with Abdullah Shafique adding an unbeaten 64 off 69, as Pakistan's openers put on

137 in reply.

Babar Azam then pulled Adam Zampa for six to take the tourists to their target with 23.3 overs to spare.

The third and final ODI is at Optus Stadium in Perth.

The two sides will then face each other in a three-match T20 international series.

Courtesy: bbc.com

Paton

Ms Seema Mughal
Vice Chancellor

Editor

Dr Sabir Ahmed
Assistant Professor

Graphics & Layout
Shazia Anwar
Senior Graphic Designer

Greenwichians interested in contributions! Stood an email to the editor, including your name, roll number and your work at drsabir@greenwich.edu.pk



DK-10, 38th, Street, Darakshan, Phase VI, Defence Housing Authority, Karachi-75500, Pakistan
UAN: (021) 111-202-303; Tel: (021) 35840397-98
Email: gu@greenwich.edu.pk; URL: www.greenwich.edu.pk