



**27th
National
Security
Workshop**

Looking Beyond Perceptions

27 Oct-28 Nov 2025

Post Workshop Report



ISSRA

INSTITUTE FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES, RESEARCH & ANALYSIS



WORKSHOP SPONSOR

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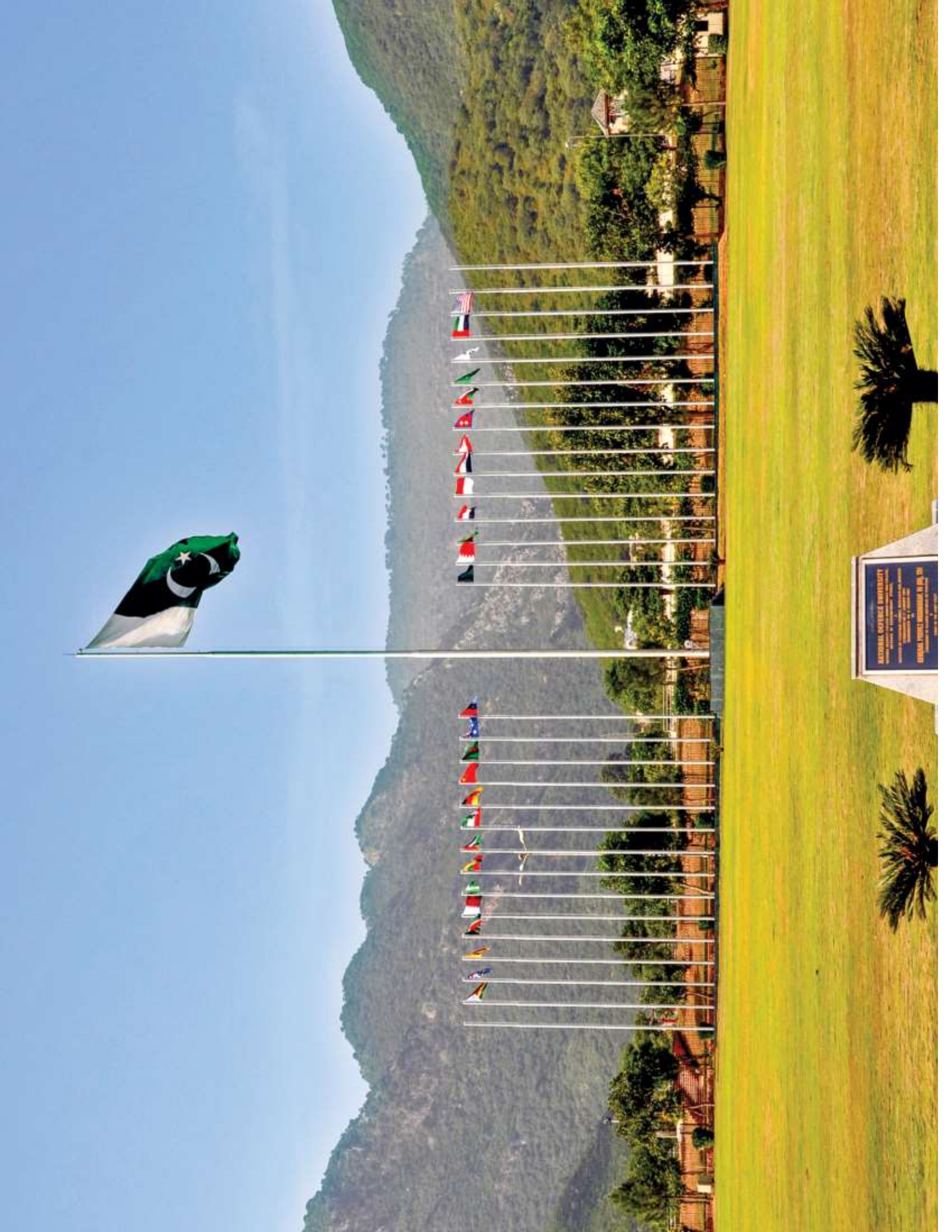
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CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Inaugural Address by DG ISSRA	3
Conclusions of 27 th NSW	5
TALKS BY GUEST SPEAKERS	
Comprehensive National Security	7
Transforming Global Order: Strategic Choices Ahead	9
Emerging Global Trends	11
Regional Stability: Pathways for Peace and Development	13
Economic Landscape of Pakistan: Opportunities and Challenges	15
Trade, Investment and Entrepreneurship in Pakistan	17
Manufacturing and Industrial Sector of Pakistan: Opportunities and Challenges	19
Agriculture and Food Security in Pakistan	21
Monetary Policy and Tax Reforms	23
Pakistan's Energy Landscape	25
Talk by Commerce Minister	27
Governance Reforms - Judicial System of Pakistan	29
Education Sector in Pakistan	31
Social Sector Reforms - Health and Population Welfare	33
Governance Reforms - Bureaucracy	35
Media Landscape of Pakistan	37
Narrative Building in the Digital Age	39
Media Regulations, Code of Conduct & Ethics	41

Role of Art, Culture & Heritage in Public Diplomacy	43
Governance in AJ&K and Gilgit Baltistan	45
National Identity & Cohesion	47
Emerging & Disruptive Technologies	49
Talk by IT Minister	51

INLAND VISITS

Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA)	55
National Aerospace Science & Technology Park (NASTP)	56
Peshawar	57
Quetta	59
Karachi	61
Lahore	63
Gwadar	65
HIT	66
Pakistan Institute of Nuclear Science and Technology (PINSTECH), Nilore	67
Naval Headquarters (NHQ)	68
Joint Staff Headquarters (JSHQ)	69
Anti Narcotics Force Headquarters (ANF)	70

Exercise Pakistan Painsdabad

Certificate Award Ceremony

Picture Gallery

INTRODUCTION

The National Security Workshop (NSW) provides a platform to the participants from various segments of society to comprehend, analyse and discuss the dynamics of the National Security of Pakistan. 27th NSW was held under the overarching theme “Looking Beyond Perceptions” from 27 October to 28 November 2025. The workshop is aimed at enabling senior political, military, and civilian leaders including the representatives from civil society to debate and discuss the issues of national security through interaction with intellectuals, academicians, foreign diplomats, policy makers, and national leadership under Chatham House Rule. It contributes to enhancing connectivity, national cohesion, and understanding across the official spectrum and promotes interprovincial harmony. NSW, being held since 2003, is an annual feature of the Institute for Strategic Studies, Research and Analysis (ISSRA) and have around 1,632 Alumni to date.

The scope of the 27th NSW was to study the global and regional strategic security environment, strategic dynamics of South Asia, Pakistan's foreign policy challenges and response



while addressing comprehensive national security. The programme was structured to bring an in-depth understanding of the human rights, perception building, social sector reforms. It also covered the economic challenges of Pakistan and the role of technologies in modern era. It highlighted analysis of policy options to deal with challenges, and capitalise on the opportunities. During workshop, the participants were exposed to discussions on important issues and visits to the provincial capitals and other civil and military institutions/installations. Participants interacted with Governors, Chief Ministers and Heads of State Institutions to gain first-hand knowledge of structural and organisational aspects.

The workshop was successfully conducted; thanks to the full support and efforts of all the branches of ISSRA and NDU. One would remiss not to acknowledge the efforts of all members of ISSRA research community in recording and preparing the proceedings of the workshop.



Inaugural Session

October 27, 2025

Perceptions

Oct-28 Nov 2025





Conclusions of 27th NSW

- These reflections underscore Pakistan's challenges and opportunities, as well as the collective responsibility required to navigate them effectively.
- First and foremost, Pakistan needs 'Strategic Clarity' to navigate a complex regional environment successfully. The evolving dynamics of the US-China rivalry make this even more challenging.
- Second, there is a dire need for an “institutional approach” to deal with all external and internal challenges facing Pakistan today. This will only be possible by “building up the institutions” at all levels rather than undermining them, wittingly or unwittingly. It implies the “depoliticisation of institutions” so that each can more efficiently focus on its task. Such an approach will foster a culture of 'accountability' and 'transparency' in each institution.
- Third, we need “internal stability” to face growing external challenges. The key to achieving internal stability is the urge for “rule of law” in society. The rule of law is the foundation for “good governance,” leading to a robust “Social Contract,” a must for national cohesion and harmony.



- Fourth, Pakistan needs to leverage its “youth potential” and “technology” to find its proper place in the comity of nations. Unlike previous generations, today's youth is much more informed and technologically savvy. We must give them 'space' and 'freedom with responsibility' to realise their true potential.
- Fifth and last point, but not the least and probably the most fundamental: How is it all possible? It is likely not through everyday political rhetoric, but once we carry out 'Structural Reforms' in all domains. Legacy structures cannot take advantage of opportunities and mitigate modern-day challenges.
- Unless we display the “political will and seriousness” to understand today's realities, we shall continue to grow 'seasonal flowers' of progress instead of planting, protecting, and sustaining the 'deep-rooted evergreen trees' capable of withstanding storms and weather.
- To develop the requisite political will and seriousness, the country's political forces need to draw their strength from the masses (the public) rather than from artificial and temporary support mechanisms, which can be both internal and external.



Monday, October 27, 2025
Session-I
Comprehensive National Security



SPEAKERS



Lt Gen Nasser Khan Janjua (Retd)



**Moderator
RF Maham Ayaz**

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- National security is no longer confined to military defence alone but now encompasses political stability, economic strength, social harmony, environmental safety, and human well-being, because a state cannot be truly secure if its people live with fear, deprivation, and daily insecurity.
- Political instability weakens national security by eroding public trust in institutions and leadership, while recurring political crises distract from long-term planning and reform, ultimately undermining coherent and effective security policymaking.
- Economic weakness directly translates into strategic vulnerability, as trade deficits, high production costs, and reliance on external financing reduce national autonomy, making economic resilience a fundamental requirement for sustainable national security.
- Cyberspace has emerged as a critical security domain alongside land, sea, air, and space, since cyber-attacks threaten economic systems, critical infrastructure, data integrity, and governance, making digital security essential for national sovereignty and stability.
- Education and human capital development function as long-term security investments because an educated population enhances productivity, innovation, and social cohesion, while also countering extremism and fostering informed and responsible citizenship.
- Religious harmony and social inclusion are essential for national cohesion, as marginalisation and exclusion fuel radicalisation and conflict, whereas inclusive policies strengthen unity, trust, and resilience within society.
- Civil-military relations play a decisive role in shaping national security outcomes, since balanced, constitutional, and cooperative relations promote stability. In contrast, tension or imbalance in this relationship weakens governance and strategic security planning.
- Climate change is increasingly recognised as a serious non-traditional security threat, as it intensifies resource scarcity, food insecurity, displacement, and disaster risks, which, in turn, can trigger social unrest, forced migration, and conflict, particularly in developing states.

Monday, October 27, 2025

Session-II

The Transforming Global Order: Strategic Choices Ahead



SPEAKERS



Distinguished Visiting Fellow
Dr Maleeha Lodhi



Dr Patrick Paterson



Mr Victor Gao



Dr Shabana Fayyaz



Lt Gen Aamer Riaz, (Retd)



Moderator
Dr Ayesha Malik

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The international system is undergoing a significant transformation: unipolarity is ending, power is diffusing, and uncertainty is the defining feature of the emerging order.
- Multiple overlapping orders are taking shape - US-led security alliances, China-led economic networks, a Chinese-dominated digital ecosystem, and a multipolar climate governance structure.
- Great-power rivalry, resurgent major conflicts, erosion of multilateral norms, and the weakening of rule-based systems drive this fragmentation.
- The rise of right-wing populism, hyper-connected information flows, and increasingly assertive middle powers further complicate global governance.
- Historically, the US evolved from early restraint to post-1945 leadership, building the International Liberal Order through alliances, aid, and multilateral institutions.
- Although often misunderstood, U.S. foreign aid accounts for less than 1% of the federal budget and is mainly humanitarian. Reduced U.S. engagement has opened space for China's expanding global influence.
- Pakistan's partnership with China is long-standing, strategic, and grounded in mutual trust. It is an independent relationship that should not be viewed through U.S. strategic lenses.
- Pakistan is willing to work constructively with all states, with its partnership with China remaining a central pillar of its foreign policy.
- Pakistan's national objectives focus on building a stable, resilient, and self-assured state, anchored in political stability, economic self-reliance, and a modernised full-spectrum deterrence posture.
- Expanding regional connectivity is essential for Pakistan's economic growth, strategic relevance, and long-term security.
- National security remains paramount; all dimensions - conventional and unconventional must be strengthened and modernised.
- AI is increasingly vital to national security and should evolve in an open, widely shared, and open-source direction to prevent deepening global divides.

Tuesday, October 28, 2025

Session-I

Emerging Global Trends: Security, Stability, and Strategic Challenges



SPEAKERS



Distinguished Visiting Fellow
Mr Ahmer Bilal Soofi



Ms Kashmala Kakakhel



Maj Gen Inam-ul-Haque, (Retd)



Ms Linda Hyokki



Moderator
Dr Simbal Khan

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Contemporary global challenges extend beyond traditional military risks to include terrorism, migration pressures, climate change shocks, and fast-moving digital risks such as artificial intelligence and advanced cyberattacks, which affect states in layered, interconnected ways.
- Climate change governance requires both global commitment and local capacity, as emissions responsibility is uneven across countries. Technology and minerals are reshaping climate geopolitics, making resource strategy and local geologic expertise essential.
- Environmental instability stems from climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, and resource depletion, which can render regions unlivable, drive forced migration, and intensify competition over water, food, and land, thereby producing long-term insecurity.
- Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism are framed as both social and institutional challenges, where law, policy, and public discourse matter, and effective responses require balancing freedom of expression with protections against incitement under international legal standards.
- Muslim communities abroad also have responsibilities as citizens of their resident states, and better community guidance can reduce backlash dynamics. In contrast, states should still address structural discrimination and securitisation that undermine trust.
- Terrorism is linked to key UN Security Council frameworks, particularly resolutions that function like mini conventions, helping states build legal grounding for counterterrorism cooperation, sanctions regimes, and engagement with Taliban linked networks.
- The regional picture highlights Afghanistan as a complex security space shaped by internal power structures and factional dynamics, where governance weaknesses and the complexity of the militant ecosystem affect Pakistan directly, including through the TTP challenge.
- India-Kashmir dynamics are framed through heightened rhetoric, staged narratives, and water-related pressure, along with proxy dimensions and information war signalling on social media, which adds a public opinion layer to strategic competition.
- Practical coordination mechanisms within government can improve treaty compliance, reduce blame shifting, and strengthen national credibility, since obligations to the international community are not optional and directly connect to national security and stability.
- States respond to these threats through different models, including military projection, alliance building, economic diplomacy, hedging and strategic autonomy, mutual defence frameworks, and multilateral engagement, depending on their capabilities and risk perception.

Tuesday, October 28, 2025

Session-II

Regional Stability: Pathways for Peace and Development



SPEAKERS



Distinguished Visiting Fellow
Amb Sardar Masood Khan



Amb Abdul Basit



Amb Asif Ali Khan Durrani



Dr Maria Sultan



Moderator
Ms Sumera Khan

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Pakistan's geographic location is its most significant strategic asset, as it sits at the crossroads of South Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East, and China, giving it natural potential to function as a regional trade, transit, and connectivity hub rather than a landlocked or isolated state.
- Pakistan's proximity to energy-rich regions such as the Middle East and Central Asia positions it as a natural energy corridor, offering long-term opportunities for pipelines, power transmission, and regional energy cooperation if political and governance challenges are managed.
- Pakistan's position along key regional fault lines also enables it to serve as a stabilising actor, mediator, and facilitator in regional diplomacy rather than remaining a perpetual frontline state.
- Pakistan-India relations remain stuck in an adversarial frame, with little space for unilateral flexibility, and breakthroughs look difficult unless the core disputes are addressed in a serious, structured way that reduces mistrust and restores a minimum of political space for engagement.
- A “bilateralism plus” approach is suggested, meaning Pakistan could accept bilateral engagement to meet India's stated preference, but with a third party at least facilitating rather than formally mediating, so the process gains credibility and does not collapse into blame cycles.
- Afghanistan's deep economic distress and dependence on international assistance raise the risk of renewed migration toward Pakistan, making border and trade policies not just security choices but humanitarian and socio-economic decisions with long-term consequences.
- Pakistan's relationship with Iran is described as strategically essential and improved, yet shaped by post-1979 revolutionary perceptions, with the understanding that instability in Iran would have direct spillover effects on Pakistan.
- Pakistan is described as being strategically squeezed between eastern and western pressures, requiring constant vigilance, sustained capacity building, and avoidance of complacency even after tactical successes, as threats can re-emerge in evolving forms.
- Pakistan must rethink its strategy through geo-economics and internal reform, as geography alone yields no benefit unless supported by the rule of law, trade, institutional enforcement, and a shift from reactive security towards planned regional engagement.

Wednesday, October 29, 2025

Session-I

The Evolving Economic Landscape of Pakistan: Challenges and Opportunities



SPEAKERS



Mr Haroon Sharif



Mr Sakib Sherani



Moderator
Ms Musarat Jabeen

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Pakistan's economic underperformance is not recent or cyclical but structural, spanning several decades, and is reflected in declining growth, weak institutions, poor social indicators, and stalled human development, despite strong potential in human capital and geography.
- Long-term GDP growth has steadily declined from over 7% in the 1960s to around 3.5% in recent years, indicating a sustained erosion of economic momentum rather than short-term shocks or temporary policy failures.
- Pakistan's economic progress especially post cold war is mainly due to adversarial geopolitics.
- Chronic reliance on IMF programs highlights profound structural weaknesses, showing that Pakistan's crisis is rooted in governance and political economy failures rather than isolated economic mismanagement.
- The core argument is that economic problems are symptoms, not causes, as the fundamental constraint lies in politics, governance, and institutions, since the economy functions as a subsystem shaped by political power structures.
- Despite firmly aligned with the West during the Cold War, the transformation in the global order (US-China rivalry) pushed Pakistan out of western camp, a tough neighbourhood made the matters even more worse.
- CPEC and regional connectivity were primarily driven by China's geo-economic strategy, which sought to extend the limits of globalisation, manage surplus production, expand markets, and reshape transport routes through infrastructure-led integration.
- Pakistan benefited mainly through infrastructure investment in power, ports, and transport, totalling over 30 billion dollars, financed primarily through loans and concessional terms, but without sufficient integration into a broader productivity and export strategy.
- Connectivity has not yet resolved Pakistan's core economic fault lines, including job creation, youth employment, productivity growth, industrial upgrading, export competitiveness, and private-sector-led value generation.
- Pakistan has historically monetised its geopolitical position instead of building a sustainable economic value proposition, relying on alliances and security assets rather than long-term investment in markets, innovation, and trade capacity.
- Sustainable connectivity requires attracting private capital, establishing functional special economic zones, offering transparent incentives, ensuring reliable dispute resolution, and harmonising border and customs procedures, none of which can work without institutional reform.

Wednesday, October 29, 2025

Session-II

Trade, Investment and Entrepreneurship



SPEAKERS



Distinguished Visiting Fellow
Mr Nasim Beg



Ms Saira Awan Malik



Mr Usman Shaukat



Mr M. Jehanzeb Khan



Mr Shafique Shahzad



Moderator
Ms Sumaira Khan

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Multiple regulations, permits, and NOCs, combined with weak policy coherence and poor inter-agency coordination, remain key barriers to development and investment.
- SIFC operates as a hybrid model involving multiple stakeholders, including the military and the federal cabinet, to bypass bottlenecks and fast-track priority projects.
- Inflation and fiscal deficits have declined, exports and remittances have marginally improved, foreign direct investment is gradually increasing, and investor confidence is showing early signs of recovery.
- Entrepreneurship fundamentally involves addressing market inefficiencies, yet Pakistani entrepreneurs operate under far higher uncertainty and risk than their counterparts in developed economies.
- Logistics is central to trade competitiveness, and Pakistan has the geostrategic potential to emerge as a regional logistics hub.
- Sectoral growth depends on infrastructure upgrades, customs reform, digital payments, technological adoption, sustainability measures, women's entrepreneurship, and effective public-private collaboration.
- Entrepreneurial leadership transitioning from international finance to domestic pharmaceutical success highlights the potential of private-sector leadership, now reflected in chamber-level advocacy.
- Greater value addition is essential, particularly in food and halal exports, to improve competitiveness and foreign exchange earnings.
- High energy costs, heavy taxation, expensive debt, policy inconsistency, and lack of continuity significantly undermine business competitiveness.
- Pakistan must pursue stable and consistent economic policies, drawing lessons from Bangladesh's economic charter and long-term industrial policy framework.
- Pakistan's exports remain stagnant and heavily concentrated in textiles, which account for nearly 57 % of exports, while imports continue to rise due to dependence on manufacturing and energy.
- Structural weaknesses, narrow export baskets, governance failures, and institutional fragmentation undermine coordinated export growth.
- Diversification of products and markets, stronger institutional coordination, and resolution of supply- and demand-side constraints are urgently required.
- The way forward requires continued support for SIFC, targeted incentives for exporters and import substitution, and a unified "Charter of Economy."

Thursday, October 30, 2025

Session-I

Manufacturing and Industrial Sector of Pakistan: Opportunities and Challenges



SPEAKERS



Distinguished Visiting Fellow
Mr Parvez Ghias



Mr Raheel Asghar



Mr Mubbasher Omar



Mr Shaikh Muhammad Tanveer



Capt Saif Anjum, (Retd)



Moderator
Ms Huma Fakhar

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Recent macro stabilisation has not translated into micro-level gains, as high interest rates, costly energy, heavy taxation, and weak administrative credibility continue to deter investment and job creation.
- Pakistan is facing gradual de-industrialisation, with factory closures, stagnant large-scale manufacturing, declining export competitiveness, and widening gaps relative to peers such as Vietnam and Bangladesh.
- Structural constraints such as unreliable and expensive energy, complex and distortionary taxes, refund delays, and frequent policy changes raise costs that firms cannot absorb on their own.
- An inward-looking, protection-heavy model has reduced pressure to innovate and export, keeping the industry dependent on cycles of protection and external financing.
- Pakistan's low motorisation rate signals industrial potential, but risks include weak localisation incentives, used-vehicle imports undermining the industry, and the absence of a national auto brand.
- Cluster-based industrial development offers a practical pathway, building on existing strengths in sectors like sports goods, cutlery, fans, furniture, and Agri-based products to scale exports.
- Human capital constraints limit productivity, as firms struggle to find job-ready technicians despite a large labour force and significant vocational spending.
- Stronger public-private training partnerships, industry-led curricula, and accredited centres of excellence are needed to align skills with factory and export requirements.
- Governance failures, fragmented approvals, weak one-window systems, and administrative bottlenecks discourage exporters and push firms toward defensive domestic markets.
- Proposed reforms include cheaper industrial power, phased tax reductions, expanded credit, innovation funds, investor protection, and insolvency reforms, with success dependent on disciplined implementation.
- Energy transition and EV adoption present long-term opportunities, but only if infrastructure, regulation, and incentives are coordinated and credible.
- Industrial revival requires a long-term, export-oriented strategy, consistent policies, improved governance, and sustained investment in skills and productivity beyond political cycles.

Thursday, October 30, 2025

Session-II

Agriculture and Food Security in Pakistan: From Crisis to Resilience



SPEAKERS



Distinguished Visiting Fellow
Dr Iqrar Ahmed Khan



Ms Saira Iftikhar



Dr Asif Ali, (TI)



Mr Kazim Saeed



Mr Ahmed Umair



Moderator
Ms Sobiah Becker

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Agriculture remains central to Pakistan's economy, supporting rural livelihoods, food availability, and allied sectors. It contributes about 22% of GDP and employs nearly 37% of the workforce, making it critical to stability and poverty reduction.
- Rapid population growth, projected at around 255 million in 2025, is intensifying pressure on the food system. Rising urban demand and affordability concerns increase the risk of food insecurity.
- Climate change poses a serious threat through higher temperatures, erratic rainfall, floods, and droughts. These shocks disrupt cropping cycles, lower yields, and strain food supply for a growing population.
- Water scarcity is becoming acute as per capita availability declines and inefficient irrigation wastes resources. This undermines sustainable food production under population and climate stress.
- Low productivity persists due to outdated farming practices, soil degradation, pest attacks, and limited mechanisation. These constraints weaken competitiveness and reduce farm incomes.
- Significant post-harvest losses result from poor storage, weak cold chains, and inefficient supply systems. This raises food prices and reduces availability for millions.
- Smallholder farmers face structural vulnerabilities, including poverty and limited access to quality inputs, credit, technology, and extension services. These gaps increase exposure to climate and market shocks.
- Strengthening food security requires climate-smart agriculture, efficient water use, resilient crop varieties, and modern technologies. Investments in storage, logistics, farmer support, and land-water governance are essential for sustainable outcomes.
- Implementation delays, coordination gaps, and weak targeting often constrain policy responses. As a result, government interventions fall short of building long-term resilience.

Thursday, October 30, 2025

Session-III

Monetary Policy and Tax Reforms



SPEAKERS



Distinguished Visiting Fellow
Mr Nadeem Ul Haq



Mr Rashid Mahmood Langrial



Mr Fida Hussain



Moderator
Ms Afia Malik

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The SBP Amendment Act 2022 expands the central bank's mandate to include domestic price stability, financial stability, and support for the government's broader economic policies.
- Pakistan has faced severe domestic and external shocks in recent years, including inflationary pressures, climate-induced floods, and food shortages, with inflation peaking at 38 % in 2023.
- The policy rate was held at 22% to stabilise the economy and was later reduced to 11% following fiscal consolidation and improved macroeconomic conditions.
- The current account shifted from deficit to surplus, foreign exchange reserves strengthened to approximately \$14.5 billion, and external sector stability improved.
- Real GDP growth moved from near stagnation toward recovery, rising from around 0.2 % to an estimated range of 2-4 %, reinforcing the link between stable inflation and positive growth.
- Pakistan continues to show the lowest and declining investment trend within South Asia, constraining long-term growth potential.
- FBR tax collection reached 8.83 % in FY 2024, but since the 2015-16 base period, no major structural transformation of the tax system has occurred.
- The tax-to-GDP ratio increased to 10.33 %, marking the highest growth in over two decades, alongside gradual improvements in digitalisation through new tax programs.
- Although the tax rate now exceeds 10 %, there is a strong recommendation to rationalise it to a flat 10 % to improve compliance and economic stability.
- Tax filing has been reduced to a five-step digital process, yet nearly 60 % of registered taxpayers remain in non-taxable income categories.
- Loan defaulters will be barred from future borrowing, as defaults impose long-term damage on both the financial system and the broader economy.
- Pakistan requires sustained growth of 2-3 % in the short term and must achieve approximately 7 % growth consistently over several decades to overcome structural economic divisions.
- Infrastructure investment must be prioritised over other expenditures to support long-term development.
- Frequent introduction of new taxes undermines confidence; a stable, predictable tax regime is essential for investors, businesses, and long-term economic planning.

Friday, October 31, 2025
Session-I
Pakistan's Energy Landscape



SPEAKERS



Distinguished Visiting Fellow
Mr Khurram Dastgir Khan



Dr. Imran Saqib Khalid



Mr Khawar Munir



Mr Kashif Mateen Ansari



Mr Mahfooz Bhatti



Moderator
Ms Zanib Naeem

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Pakistan has an estimated hydropower potential of around 70 GW, of which only 15–20 % has been utilised; hydropower is low-cost, renewable, and vital for emissions reduction and energy stability.
- Pakistan has numerous large and small hydropower stations, with most untapped potential located along the Indus River and its tributaries, including several projects exceeding 50 MW.
- Multiple large projects are under construction, planned, or identified, to increase hydropower's share from about 27 % to 40–50 %.
- Progress has been constrained by limited financing, delays in fund availability, reliance on imported equipment, and weak private-sector response.
- Pakistan's energy challenges span five interlinked areas: generation, transmission, distribution, power finance, and regulation.
- Pakistan faces serious renewable energy challenges related to energy security, affordability, and reliability, and ranks low globally due to heavy reliance on imported fuels.
- Investment in renewables and energy storage is rising worldwide, with renewable energy shares increasing and fossil fuels steadily declining.
- The domestic sector consumes most electricity, while transport relies almost entirely on imported petroleum, exposing consumers to global price volatility.
- Achieving sustainability requires integrated energy planning, privatisation of distribution companies, governance reforms, digital upgrades, competitive electricity markets, and debt restructuring.
- Governance failures in the water sector have been acknowledged, with ongoing efforts to strengthen institutions, improve transparency, and leverage international climate partnerships.
- Pakistan has not deviated from the Water Accord. Still, all central water storage and canal projects require unanimous provincial consent through the Council of Common Interests, which can cause delays when consensus is lacking.
- Pakistan wastes a significant portion of its annual rainfall, and initiatives such as Recharge Pakistan focus on wetland restoration, floodwater storage, and community-level rainwater harvesting.
- New hydropower investment models are being developed using public-private partnerships, concessional financing, and long-term purchase agreements to reduce investor risk.
- There is no immediate water emergency from India, but vigilance is required, particularly regarding flows on the Chenab River.

Friday, October 31, 2025
Session-II
Talk by Commerce Minister



SPEAKER



Mr. Jam Kamal Khan

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Pakistan is facing a difficult economic phase that cannot be addressed through isolated fixes, as the economy functions as an interconnected ecosystem requiring a holistic strategy, especially amid rapid global change.
- Shifting global alignments, emerging conflicts, and changing economic fortunes worldwide have intensified Pakistan's vulnerabilities, while high production costs, rising taxation, and weak competitiveness continue to constrain growth.
- Pakistan's export structure remains narrow and undiversified, dominated by textiles, with agriculture and services underdeveloped and limited investment in value addition and innovation.
- Heavy imports combined with low value addition discourage export expansion, as domestic markets offer easier profitability than competing internationally.
- Trade patterns are shaped by historical comfort zones, diaspora links, and psychology, with exports concentrated in Western markets and limited regional trade due to security issues, sanctions, weak connectivity, and political tensions.
- Export earnings rely on a small set of markets, though sectors such as pharmaceuticals, cement, plastics, fisheries, and tobacco show potential but require strong policy support to scale meaningfully.
- Pakistan has managed to survive recent external shocks through austerity and difficult decisions, but stabilization should not be mistaken for economic recovery or sustained growth.
- High costs of doing business, regulatory unpredictability, fluctuating interest rates, energy price instability, and policy inconsistency remain major structural barriers to investment.
- Dual quality standards—low for domestic markets and higher for exports; encourage inward-looking business behavior, while enforcing uniform standards could naturally drive export competitiveness.
- Persistent internal security challenges undermine investor confidence, disrupt economic activity, and raise risk premiums, making stability a prerequisite for economic reliability.
- Governance failure, rather than economic constraints alone, lies at the core of Pakistan's challenges, with decades of stalled civil service, institutional, and political reforms weakening state capacity.
- Unlike countries that adopted long-term development models, Pakistan remains reactive and crisis-driven, highlighting the need for strategic planning, continuity, and preventive governance.

Monday, November 03, 2025

Session-I

Governance Reforms - Judicial System of Pakistan



SPEAKERS



Distinguished Visiting Fellow
Mr Mansoor Usman Awan



Ms Sibah Farooq



Ms Ayesha Hamid



Justice (Retd) Abdul Shakoor



Moderator
Ms Minahil Khan

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Pakistan has approximately 2.4 million pending cases, with around 86% concentrated at the district court level, leading to severe delays in the delivery of justice and growing public frustration.
- Frequent adjournments are a major contributor to the backlog, with about 40% of district court cases adjourned in 2023, forcing litigants to attend court repeatedly over several years.
- Only about 5% of courts are digitised, leaving most judicial processes paper-based, which weakens case management, record-keeping, and communication while increasing errors and delays.
- Pakistan has only 13 judges per million people, far below the global average of around 90, placing an unsustainable caseload on judges and making timely justice nearly impossible.
- Weak coordination between police investigations, prosecution, and courts results in incomplete cases, poor documentation, and delayed judicial outcomes.
- Alternative dispute resolution mechanisms exist but remain underutilised, despite global evidence that most disputes are settled through mediation rather than full trials.
- District courts lack adequate gender representation, transparency, and standardised oversight, limiting access to justice for marginalised groups and creating inconsistencies in decisions.
- High courts face massive backlogs, such as over 185,000 pending cases in Lahore High Court, while judges can realistically hear only a few substantive cases per day.
- The Punjab Ombudsman's resolution of more than 45,000 complaints in 2024 demonstrates that alternative justice institutions can deliver timely and effective outcomes.
- Pakistan's judicial system reflects layered historical influences from Hindu, Islamic, Mughal, and British periods, many of whose structures and procedures persist today.
- High court judges are often appointed with limited administrative experience, relying heavily on registrars, which weakens judicial management.
- District courts depend on provincial budgets, but weak resource allocation and executive follow-through undermine everyday justice delivery.
- Insufficient investment in technology, digital libraries, and infrastructure restricts access to justice, especially in rural areas.
- Improved coordination between executive authorities and the judiciary, along with professional management of administrative and technological functions, is essential for a more efficient, accessible, and credible justice system.

Monday, November 03, 2025
Session-II
Education Sector in Pakistan



SPEAKERS



Distinguished Visiting Fellow
Ms Shahnaz Wazir Ali



Mr Faisal Mushtaq



Mr Haider Abbas



Maulana Hanif Jalandhry



Syed Junaid Ikhlq



Moderator
Dr. Marium Fatima

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Pakistan's education system remains rooted in an outdated industrial-era, factory-model design that emphasises conformity and examination performance over capability, creativity, and problem-solving.
- Public, private, and community schools rely on outdated, non-scientific pedagogies, treating students as uniform outputs rather than as diverse learners.
- The education sector lacks alignment with national strategic priorities, human capital needs, and innovation-driven economic development.
- Critical thinking, digital skills, global competencies, and future-ready capabilities are largely absent from mainstream education delivery.
- Institutional fragmentation persists, as curriculum design, governance, teacher training, and assessment bodies operate in silos with weak coordination and oversight.
- Weak regulation has resulted in wide variations in quality across public, private, and madrassah education systems.
- Pakistan's youth bulge risks becoming a demographic liability as the system produces graduates with low employability and limited skills.
- Education reform requires a strategic reframing focused on system redesign rather than piecemeal fixes.
- There is a need to integrate education with SDGs, AI literacy, civic competence, national cohesion, and innovation-led growth.
- Values-based education rooted in moral, civic, and character development remains central, including the positive role of Islamic and madrassah education.
- Digital transformation is essential for both madrassahs and mainstream schools to reduce inequality and improve access to quality education.
- Post-18th Amendment, gaps persist between Federal and Provincial mandates, weakening coordination and policy coherence in education governance.
- Weak inter-ministerial coordination undermines regulatory uniformity, despite the role of bodies such as the National Curriculum Council.
- Initiatives such as teacher excellence programs and campaigns for out-of-school children indicate progress but remain limited in scale.

Tuesday, November 04, 2025

Session-I

Social Sector Reforms - Health and Population Welfare



SPEAKERS



Distinguished Visiting Fellow
Dr Zafar Mirza



Ms Saleha Khaqan



Mr Amer Ali Ahmad



Dr Ayesha Isani Qaiser Majeed



Moderator
Prof Dr Ghazna Khalid Siddiqui

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Rapid population growth is Pakistan's most pressing challenge, placing severe pressure on limited national resources and requiring careful planning for efficient resource use.
- Weak primary healthcare remains the central challenge in the health sector, undermining prevention, early treatment, and overall health outcomes.
- Income support and poverty alleviation are distinct policy objectives; programs such as Benazir Income Support provide income support rather than long-term poverty reduction.
- Without strategic planning, health and social sector interventions cannot deliver sustainable outcomes.
- Targeted interventions across health and other social sectors are possible only through the effective use of existing data systems.
- Health sector reform is not possible without strong public-private collaboration, particularly in service delivery and capacity building.
- Population growth and health outcomes are inseparable, making a population policy essential for any effective health policy.
- The government must retain strategic oversight of health outcomes, regardless of whether public or private providers deliver services.
- Effective health reform depends on good governance, with person-centred care and population-focused planning at its core.
- Strong policy alignment between the Federal and Provincial governments is necessary to ensure coherence and impact across the health system.
- Expanding medical seats alone is insufficient without accompanying improvements in governance, regulatory capacity, and quality assurance.
- A significant nursing shortage is projected by 2030, with current numbers far below future requirements, particularly as AI-enabled healthcare expands.
- Training and expansion of healthcare professionals must balance domestic needs with opportunities for overseas employment.
- Artificial intelligence is being incorporated into medical and nursing curricula to prepare future healthcare workers for emerging technologies.
- Expansion of medical and nursing education must proceed in parallel with strict quality standards.

Wednesday, November 05, 2025
Session-I
Governance Reforms - Bureaucracy



SPEAKERS



Distinguished Visiting Fellow
Dr Ishrat Husain



Dr Shoaib Suddle



Mr Inamullah Khan



Ms Syedah Ramallah Ali



Moderator
Dr Maria Malik

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Bureaucracy is often criticised for relying on generalist cadres, but evolving governance needs have shown that the inclusion of subject specialists has improved service delivery in key sectors.
- Accelerating digitisation is essential to improve efficiency, enhance accountability, and reduce redundant administrative positions.
- Political influence over bureaucracy is often overstated, but it does affect promotions and transfers, shaping bureaucratic behaviour and incentives.
- Pakistan's legal system is frequently misused in service-related matters, which should fall under the jurisdiction of federal service tribunals rather than the High Court.
- There is an urgent need to downsize unproductive segments of government while strengthening high-impact and performance-driven areas.
- All autonomous bodies and attached departments are now required to have their human resource decisions vetted by the Finance Division to prevent long-term fiscal liabilities.
- The government is moving towards hiring lower-level staff on daily-wage or contractual terms rather than permanent appointments to reduce future burdens.
- Recruitment for grades 1–5 has been halted, and vacancies in grades 5–15 are to remain unfilled, effectively phasing out redundant lower-tier positions.
- Civil servants are expected to maintain institutional neutrality and avoid self-promotion on social media, serving as faceless public servants in accordance with official conduct rules.
- Governance is a multidimensional system involving the executive, legislature, judiciary, local governments, and external factors such as the IMF, all of which collectively shape governance outcomes.
- Pakistan's bureaucracy was once among the world's strongest due to merit-based recruitment, neutrality, security of tenure, and rigorous training, but erosion of these principles has weakened performance.

Friday, November 07, 2025

Session-I

Media Landscape of Pakistan: Narratives, Influence, and National Dialogue



SPEAKERS



Distinguished Visiting Fellow
Mr Yousaf Baig Mirza



Mr Iftikhar Firdous



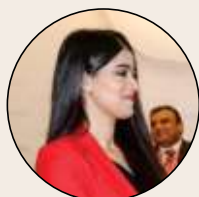
Mr Duraid Qureshi



Mr Kaiser Rafiq



Ms Ambreen Jan



Moderator
Ms Aniqah Nisar

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The media environment has transformed from print and broadcast to digital, OTT, and social platforms, fundamentally changing how audiences consume information.
- Public television channels are state-funded institutions meant to serve the public interest through universality, diversity, accessibility, and factual reporting rather than commercial goals.
- The core mandate of public TV includes information, education, cultural representation, and fostering social cohesion beyond market logic.
- Declining TV viewership across age groups has reduced advertising revenue and increased financial pressure on public broadcasters.
- Public television must adapt to multi-platform delivery while maintaining editorial independence and technological relevance.
- Negative international media coverage undermines Pakistan's image despite comparatively lower crime rates than many Western cities.
- Hard power requires security and rule of law, but soft power depends on people-to-people engagement and cultural projection.
- Major global powers invest heavily in soft power, while Pakistan underinvests in public diplomacy and international media outreach.
- Non-traditional and digital media now shape perceptions faster than mainstream television. TV viewership has declined sharply, making digital platforms the primary source of news and narratives.
- Emerging technologies like 5G will further shift television consumption to mobile devices, accelerating the decline of traditional TV.
- Credible voices and modern perception-management techniques are essential for effective state messaging.
- Conflict reporting is often distorted because Pakistan lacks sustained media presence in peripheral regions.
- Bureaucratic delays prevent timely official responses, while non-state actors shape narratives instantly.
- Entertainment content - drama, music, fashion, and film has proven more effective globally than news-driven narratives alone.
- Private media's credibility is reinforced by audience accountability, as trust is directly tied to viewership.
- State and private media must develop synergy rather than rivalry to strengthen national messaging.

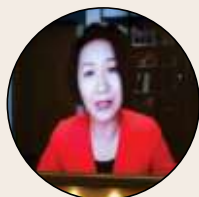
Friday, November 07, 2025
Session-II
Narrative Power in the Digital Age



SPEAKERS



Distinguished Visiting Fellow
Mushahid Hussain Syed



Liu Xin



Ms Laurie A Watkins



Mr Muhammad Maalick



Mr Habib Ullah Khan



Moderator
Ms Naila Shuja

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The rapid growth of AI platforms such as ChatGPT was noted, highlighting their ability to reach one million users in a very short time.
- Narrative formation is driven by repetition, shared social identity, and institutional gatekeeping, shaping how societies interpret events.
- Messages that conflict with personal or group identity are often rejected, even when factually accurate, while emotionally charged content can spread to millions without verification.
- Artificial intelligence and deepfake technologies are increasingly blurring the boundary between truth and fiction.
- Technological advances have transformed narrative competition into an optimisation process driven by algorithms and engagement metrics.
- Mainstream media relies on rules, laws, verification, and transparency, whereas social media is more influenced by populism, emotion, and speed.
- Pakistan faces an intellectual fog across public discourse, media, and academia, where misinformation is criticised but uncomfortable truths are often avoided.
- Countering deceptive narratives requires transparency, credible independent journalism, and resilient, fact-based storytelling.
- Ajit Doval was referenced as applying a Chankayan strategy of “attacks from the edges” to undermine Pakistan's sovereignty, with claims that the BJP employed around 50,000 individuals for disinformation warfare.
- India has reportedly developed algorithmic systems that flag specific keywords as part of coordinated “attack vector loops,” enabling agenda-setting against Pakistan.
- Online media analysis shows that searches related to Pakistan often surface India-generated or India-amplified content.
- Addressing information warfare demands a whole-of-society approach that involves academia, civil society, the media, and state institutions.
- Pakistan currently operates with a largely reactive narrative posture rather than a proactive and anticipatory strategy.
- China was described as a multilingual society with 85 languages and a vastly expanded media ecosystem compared to the 1990s, when only one English-language broadcaster existed.

Monday, November 10, 2025

Session-I

Media Regulations, Code of Conduct & Ethics



SPEAKERS



Mr Wakeel Khan



Brig (Retd) Amer Shehzad



Muhammad Akram Mughal



Moderator
Ms Mahnoor Qureshi

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- PEMRA was established under the 2002 Ordinance to regulate electronic media through licensing, content monitoring, and enforcement of broadcasting standards to promote accountability, transparency, and diversity
- PTA regulates telecommunications and internet services, ensuring legal compliance, service quality, consumer protection, and cybersecurity standards.
- The National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) is responsible for investigating cybercrime, monitoring online activity, and enforcing digital laws against unlawful or harmful conduct.
- Together, these bodies aim to uphold professional, ethical, and legal standards in media and digital spaces while safeguarding national and public interests.
- PEMRA has the authority to issue warnings, impose fines, suspend transmissions, and revoke broadcast licenses for violations.
- PTA can regulate digital platforms, block websites, and penalize telecom operators for non-compliance.
- NCCIA conducts investigations and pursues legal action against cyber offenses in coordination with relevant institutions.
- Major challenges include political interference, limited transparency, selective enforcement, vague regulatory provisions, and bureaucratic barriers that disadvantage smaller or independent media outlets.
- Fear of penalties has created a culture of self-censorship among journalists, broadcasters, and digital creators, weakening media freedom and ethical reporting.
- Inconsistent enforcement, weak inter-agency coordination, and resource constraints limit the effectiveness of regulatory oversight.
- Meaningful reform requires institutional independence, transparent decision-making, clear regulatory frameworks, and uniform application of rules.
- Support for independent media, small broadcasters, and responsible digital creators is essential to strengthen ethical journalism and public trust.
- Strong coordination among PEMRA, PTA, and NCCIA, alongside legal protections for journalists and digital users, is necessary to sustain a secure, responsible, and ethical media ecosystem.

Monday, November 10, 2025

Session-II

Role of Art, Culture & Heritage in Public Diplomacy



SPEAKERS



Distinguished Visiting Fellow
Mr Salman Rashid



Mr Farhan Saeed



Ms Shazia Wajahat



Dr Najeeba Arif



Moderator
Ms Huma Amir Shah

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Arts, culture, and heritage serve as Pakistan's most persuasive tools of public diplomacy, as they communicate identity, values, and resilience more effectively than official narratives and allow Pakistan to shape global perceptions with credibility and emotional depth.
- Soft power through media, film, music, and literature travels faster than traditional diplomacy. These platforms reach global audiences without political filters and allow stories of Pakistan to be shared in relatable and human ways.
- Youth represent Pakistan's strongest strategic advantage in cultural diplomacy. Their creativity, digital literacy, and global connectivity amplify national narratives.
- Authentic representation is essential for building trust and countering negative stereotypes, as truthful storytelling that acknowledges both challenges and strengths without defensiveness helps project a balanced image and strengthens Pakistan's credibility internationally.
- Cultural individuality distinguishes Pakistan in a crowded global cultural landscape, as original stories, and aesthetics carry greater influence than imitation, turning an identity rooted in local culture into a global strength.
- Institutional support is needed to move beyond dependence on individual brilliance, as sustainable systems that nurture talent, provide resources, and ensure continuity can turn isolated success into long term cultural impact.
- Digital platforms have become central arenas of narrative and image competition, where cultural visibility directly shapes perception and influence, making strategic online engagement essential.
- Cultural heritage strengthens national identity and international legitimacy, since languages, traditions, and historical sites reflect civilizational depth and reinforce Pakistan's image as a culturally rich society.
- Translation and cross cultural exchange expand the reach of Pakistani ideas, allowing literature and thought to access global audiences and deepen mutual understanding across societies.
- Arts and media contribute to social cohesion and mental resilience, especially during crises, by offering connection, expression, and collective healing beyond entertainment.
- Cultural diplomacy builds people to people connections across borders, creating human ties that endure beyond political shifts and policy changes.
- Education in arts and culture develops long term narrative capacity, preparing future creators, thinkers, and cultural leaders for sustained soft power influence.

Tuesday, November 11, 2025
Session-I
Governance in AJ&K and Gilgit Baltistan



SPEAKERS



Mr Abrar Ahmed Mirza



Flt Lt Khushal Khan (Retd)



Moderator
Ms Ayesha Khan

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Gilgit Baltistan's extremely sparse population, rugged terrain, and scattered settlements make service delivery, connectivity, and administration significantly harder.
- Historically, the region followed a different trajectory from mainland Pakistan, parts of the northern region remained under varying administrative arrangements until the 1970s, leading to decades of unclear political status.
- Multiple governance experiments occurred from direct federal control under FCR to partial representation councils and later limited reforms in 1972 and 1975. These systems offered selective representation but failed to produce a fully empowered, locally accountable government.
- Major reforms came in 2009 with the Gilgit-Baltistan Empowerment and Self-Governance Order, transforming the "Northern Areas" into Gilgit-Baltistan with a legislative assembly, a chief minister, and a governor. However, real power still remained largely with the GB Council, headed by the Prime Minister of Pakistan.
- GB's constitutional ambiguity and dependence on federal decisions stem from Pakistan's diplomatic position on the Kashmir dispute, fuelling internal grievances and political instability.
- Internal political divisions, economic disparities, and competing interest groups further complicate governance. Recent reforms, such as disability centres, expanded representation of underprivileged groups, and emerging local political movements, indicate progress, but deeply rooted structural and constitutional issues remain unresolved.
- AJ&K's administrative framework is directly linked to Pakistan's federal system. This connection shapes how governance functions across the region.
- Under the 1994 Karachi Agreement, AJ&K was envisioned to operate under a quasi-federal structure, maintaining its political identity while aligning with Pakistan's broader constitutional framework. This agreement remains a reference point for understanding the governance paradigm.
- Council on Economic and Social Rights (ECOSOC), comprising 48 members from diverse professional, academic, and regional backgrounds, advisory body created in 2014 to help bridge socioeconomic disparities across Pakistan.
- The administrative insights present the American-style administrative hierarchy, with a chief secretary and departmental secretaries. Despite population pressures and rapid urbanisation over the next 20-30 years, their performance metrics have outpaced those of comparable cities, reflecting strong administrative capacity.

Wednesday, November 13, 2025
Session-I
National Identity & Cohesion



SPEAKERS



Dr Anis Ahmed



Mr Javed Jabbar



Moderator
Ms Marukh Hameed

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- National identity and cohesion become most critical during periods of crisis, as unity and a shared national narrative determine whether a society responds with resilience or fragmentation.
- Cohesion is more appropriate than integration as it allows diversity to exist naturally while still fostering unity, whereas integration often implies forced uniformity that weakens organic national bonds.
- A nation cannot be defined scientifically in the same way as a state, because national identity is shaped by shared history, collective memory, aspirations, and lived experience rather than borders alone.
- Identity operates at two levels: inherited identity, such as birthplace, religion, language, and class, and chosen identity shaped by personal decisions, values, profession, and migration.
- Pakistan is unique because it was formed without a single shared ethnicity, language, or historical territorial unity, making cohesion dependent on shared ideas and values rather than race or language.
- Despite historical ruptures, including 1971, national identity in Pakistan has continued to evolve through everyday interaction, mobility, interprovincial migration, intermarriages, education, and social communication.
- Loss of national confidence and growing self-doubt are serious threats to cohesion, particularly when governance failures, elite-driven decisions, and rushed constitutional changes exclude public participation.
- Ethnic, linguistic, and provincial nationalisms pose significant obstacles to cohesion, especially when they are promoted as primary identities rather than as complementary cultural expressions.
- Unequal education systems and uneven economic development create perceptions of injustice and double standards, which deepen social divisions and undermine trust in the state.
- Misinformation and one-sided narratives amplified through electronic and social media intensify polarisation and prevent a fair understanding across communities.
- National cohesion in Pakistan requires a shared ethical and ideological foundation, because ethnicity, language, and territory alone cannot sustain unity in a multi-regional society.
- Culture should be understood through values and behaviour rather than outward symbols, as justice, empathy, and responsibility shape cohesion more than dress or regional customs do.

Friday, November 14, 2025
Session-I
Emerging & Disruptive Technologies



SPEAKERS



Distinguished Visiting Fellow
Ms Fatima Asad Said



Dr Haider Abbas



Mr Zeeshan Ahmad



Brig (Retd) Shoaib Ahmed Khan



Moderator
Mr Javid Iqbal

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Digital transformation powered by AI, cloud, and IoT is fundamentally reshaping global economic systems and creating new competitive dynamics.
- By 2027, digital technologies will generate a \$7 trillion global opportunity, with AI and cloud driving nearly half of that growth.
- Digital payment ecosystems can only function effectively when telecom, banking, fintech, and platforms work in a fully coordinated manner.
- Pakistan's IT, AI, and cloud policies create a governance base, but they require further strengthening for real digital impact.
- Millions of traditional jobs will disappear, but new roles will emerge that demand advanced digital, analytical, and ethical skills.
- Blockchain is a decentralized system where no authority owns it and all participants validate transactions. It is more about large-scale trusted data than coins, as noted by the World Bank in 2024.
- Crypto is a borderless digital value, enabling global peer-to-peer transactions with significantly lower remittance costs. Pakistan has 10–13 million crypto users who transacted nearly \$70 billion in 12 months
- Bitcoin's scale \$1.35 trillion market cap, 19.7 million coins, and \$40–60 billion daily trading volume.
- Pakistan has a potential savings of \$500 million in cross-border payments and a possible 2–3% GDP uplift through blockchain.
- Pakistan traded \$30 billion in Bitcoin informally and has allocated 2,000 MW for crypto mining with licensing expected soon.
- Pakistan has prospects of formalizing a \$25 billion asset economy and positioning Pakistan as a regional crypto-asset hub.
- Cyber warfare has no start or end point; all states exist in a constant war-like condition where perception, systems, and even human life can be targeted.
- Pakistan faced 70 critical-infrastructure attacks in 2024 and 369 in 2025, including ransomware that locked hospital and government systems.
- Supply-chain vulnerabilities are Pakistan's biggest weakness since 90% of technology and hardware is imported and potentially compromised.
- National CERT is moving towards a coordinated 3-tier architecture for monitoring, audits, child-safety programs, cyber awareness, and global partnerships.
- AI now shapes military and civilian technology across Asia, permeating every system from sensors to targeting to decision-making.

Friday, November 14, 2025

Session-II

Talk by IT Minister



SPEAKER

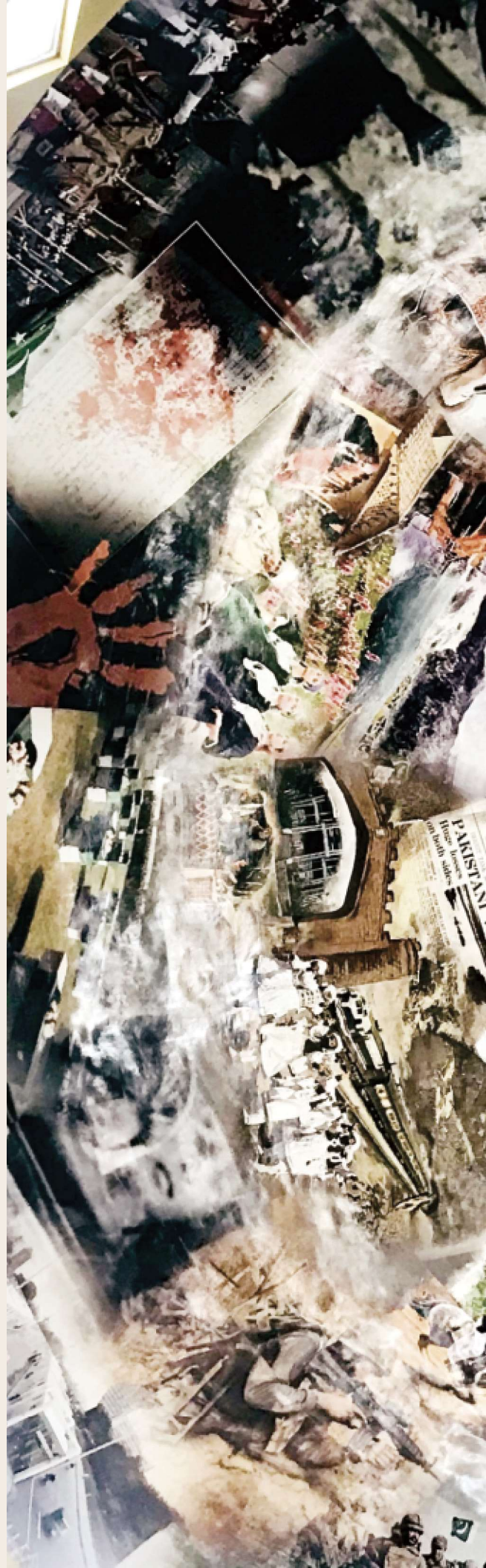


Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The IT sector now underpins the entire economy, supporting agriculture, industry, services, education, health, governance, and national security as a cross-cutting enabler.
- IT exports have grown strongly from \$2.4 billion to \$3.8 billion (2023–2025), with a 25% year-on-year rise in September 2025, showing global competitiveness and resilience.
- Technology exports generate an 85% trade surplus, making IT the largest and most reliable service-sector source of foreign exchange.
- Pakistan's English-speaking, skilled workforce serves clients in over 170 countries, strengthening global partnerships and investment potential.
- The talent base includes around 600,000 IT professionals, 75,000 new ICT graduates annually, and nearly 500,000 youth trained each year in digital skills.
- The freelancing and remote-work economy nearly doubled from \$400 million to \$790 million in one year, driven by large-scale government training programs.
- Strong incentives such as zero-rated exports, tax exemptions, foreign currency accounts, and full profit repatriation support industry growth and reinvestment.
- Infrastructure has expanded through E-rozgaar centres, technology parks, co-working hubs, and private-sector collaboration to support SMEs and startups.
- The start-up ecosystem includes 85 incubators and accelerators, national incubation centres, and targeted programs for agri-tech, climate tech, and women-led startups.
- Pakistan Startups Fund and "Startup Fund 2.0" provide equity-free grants and attract global venture capital with first-loss funding models.
- Programs like Bridge Start enable startups to join global accelerators, helping Pakistani firms scale and access international markets.
- Human capital initiatives focus on AI, soft skills, and global certifications, with large-scale training through Digi-Skills and industry-linked programs.
- International partnerships and branding efforts, including global roadshows and major tech collaborations, are improving Pakistan's digital image.
- Digital Nation Pakistan advances a cashless economy, cybersecurity, digital governance, and inclusion, particularly for women and rural communities.

INLAND VISITS





U.S. ALLIANCE AN

MINISTRE KENNEDY VICTORIA

India's Rule

LAHORE

THE QUEEN'S VISIT TO LONG BEACH

THE AUSTRALIAN VICTORY

THE QUEEN'S VISIT TO LONG BEACH

Ministry of Foreign Affairs



National Aerospace Science & Technology Park (NASTP)



Peshawar



Peshawar



Quetta



Quetta



Karachi



Karachi



Lahore



Lahore



Gwadar



HIT



Pakistan Institute of Nuclear Science and Technology (PINSTECH), Nilore



Naval Headquarter (NHQ)



Joint Staff Headquarters (JSHQ)



Anti Narcotics Force HQ (ANF)



EXERCISE PAKISTAN PAINDABAD

During the final week, the participants undertook an exercise “Pakistan Painsdabad”. Eight broad themes were identified and allocated to each group comprising specialists, technocrats, professionals and the politicians, to carry out an in-depth assessment of the themes:-

- How can Pakistan evolve a comprehensive and sustainable counterterrorism framework for KP and Balochistan?
- What strategic measures can enhance Pakistan's export competitiveness and attract sustained foreign investment?
- How can Pakistan safeguard its national interests amidst intensifying U.S.-CHINA strategic competition?
- How can Pakistan leverage youth potential and technological innovation for inclusive national development?
- What reforms are essential to strengthen transparency, accountability, and effectiveness in Pakistan's governance system?
- How can Pakistan counter the challenge of disinformation while upholding freedom of expression and media integrity?

For the purpose of exercise, participants of each group were tasked to explore the challenges and opportunities of respective theme, while devising pragmatic recommendations for sustainable policies.



THEME - 1: HOW CAN PAKISTAN EVOLVE A COMPREHENSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE COUNTERTERRORISM FRAMEWORK FOR KP AND BALOCHISTAN?



Dr Aurangzeb Khan



Dr Shumaila Umer



Mr Umer Khan



Senator Mashal



MNA Akhtar Bibi



MNA Mr Umair Khan



MPA Khurram Karim



MPA Malik Zaheer



Sardar Dr Rashid Ilyas



MPA Hadia Nawaz



Dr Muhammad Kamran



Maj Gen Adnan Sarwar



Brig (R) Dr Khalid



Mr Osman Syed



Ms Sara S Sheikh



Mr Rehman Aziz

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Stability in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa depends on consistent enforcement rather than short-term operations. The National Action Plan must be implemented in full, with NACTA strengthened as a coordinating body rather than a symbolic institution.
- Police forces require continued modernisation, better training, and intelligence-led policing. Border management and an organised framework for managing Afghan inflows are critical to prevent militant regrouping and criminal networks.
- Terrorism cases should be fast-tracked through specialised courts, supported by forensic-based investigations and updated security laws that reflect present-day threats.
- Regulation of madrasas, youth engagement programs, and sustained community awareness campaigns are essential to cut off the social and ideological space in which extremism survives.
- Political reconciliation, inclusive governance, and development-driven security must move together. Addressing grievances through local government empowerment, transparent resource management, and economic revival will weaken the appeal of violence more effectively than reactive crackdowns.
- Countering hybrid threats requires long-term planning. A province-specific security charter, precise civil-military coordination, and investment in social cohesion can create trust between the state and local communities.

THEME - 2: WHAT STRATEGIC MEASURES CAN ENHANCE PAKISTAN'S EXPORT COMPETITIVENESS AND ATTRACT SUSTAINED FOREIGN INVESTMENT?



Syed Shayaan Shah



Mr Shahid Iqbal



Ms Sarah Akram



Senator Asad Qasim



MNA M Sanaulah



MPA Fayaz Ali Butt



MPA Mehwish Sultana



MLA Nisara Abbasi



MPA Musarrat Jabeen



Dr Saeed Ul Hassan



Dr Abdul Khaliq



Mr Farid Ahmad Khan



Mr Zeeshan Rehman



Syed Ali Shehryar



Dr Shabana Haider



Syed Mazhar Ali

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Provide long-term investment certainty by granting constitutional and legal protection to foreign direct investment, including safeguards against sudden policy reversals and expropriation.
- Simplify the tax regime by reducing overlapping taxes and approvals, and introduce a single, predictable tax rate guaranteed for a minimum of ten years to allow investors to plan with confidence.
- Regulatory and tax system modernization can lower costs for exporters and SMEs, as eliminating arbitrary taxes and complex compliance helps Pakistan reach the lowest cost quartile in Asia.
- Establish a genuine one-window system for investors by launching a single digital portal that handles all registrations, licenses, permits, tax filings, and regulatory approvals across federal and provincial bodies.
- Develop sector-specific industrial clusters by setting up dedicated zones for Mining, Agriculture, IT, Pharmaceuticals, and Creative Industries, supported by affordable financing, export credit guarantees, insurance coverage, and targeted incentives for small and medium enterprises.
- Strong provincial federal integration is required to overcome coordination gaps, as corridor based pilot models can align policies and execution across regions.
- SME led export growth is critical for diversification, as expanding SME participation in value chains creates jobs beyond major cities and strengthens export resilience.
- Mining offers high value reform opportunities, as value addition in salt, gemstones, rare earths, and precious metals can unlock downstream processing and strategic exports.
- Pharmaceuticals offer strong upgrading potential, as finished medicines, APIs, biologics, and contract manufacturing can integrate Pakistan into global supply chains.

THEME - 3 HOW CAN PAKISTAN SAFEGUARD ITS NATIONAL INTERESTS AMIDST INTENSIFYING U.S.-CHINA STRATEGIC COMPETITION?



Dr Muhammad Omer



Ms Eyesha Raheel



Mr M Zulqarnain



Senator Samina Muntaz



MNA Malik Shah



MNA Syed Shah Ahad



MPA Makhdoom Fakhar



MGBA Engr M Anwar



Dr Shafiq Ur Rehman



Mr Tariq Abbas Qureshi



Mr Izhar Ahmed Awan



Dr Sana Imran



Ms Qurat ul Anne



Mr Malik M Adnan



Mr Samiullah Khan Luni



Barrister Hira Haroon

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Preserving strategic autonomy allows Pakistan to benefit from both the U.S. and China without becoming part of their rivalry.
- Strategic autonomy is rooted in historical lessons from Cold War alliances, which exposed Pakistan to abandonment and dependency. This experience now shapes its preference for multi-alignment and hedging.
- Pakistan should continue using diplomacy to secure IMF support, diversify trade partners, and protect CPEC gains. Balancing Chinese infrastructure investment with Western finance and exports reduces vulnerability to coercion from any single power.
- Pakistan can deepen counterterrorism and defense cooperation with the United States while maintaining its core strategic partnership with China. Selective engagement, intelligence sharing, and military training should strengthen Pakistan's capacity without compromising sovereign decision-making or regional balance
- Pakistan's location gives it leverage as a transit, trade, and energy corridor. By institutionalizing regional connectivity through CPEC, Gwadar, and Central Asian linkages, Pakistan can turn geography into a bargaining asset.
- Economic diplomacy has become a core foreign policy function due to chronic balance of payments pressures. Trade diversification, FDI attraction, and debt restructuring are now central diplomatic objectives.
- Pakistan's independent position in the global political economy provides economic flexibility. It allows engagement with competing powers for energy, finance, defence, and trade without sanctioning any.

THEME - 4 HOW CAN PAKISTAN LEVERAGE YOUTH POTENTIAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION FOR INCLUSIVE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT?



Ms Javeria Masood



Ms Anousha Shaigan



Mr Rabeel Hamza



Senator Anusha Rahman



MNA Adil Khan Bazai



MNA Farhan Chishti



MPA Nadia Khar



MPA Suriya Bibi



Dr Mahboob Hussain



Mr Nazer Aslam



Mr Farooq Javed



AVM Syed Kamran



Syed Zeeshan Haider



Mr Hassan Sheheryar



Syed Mustafa Ali Nasir

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Pakistan's large youth population is a strategic advantage, but without structured economic pathways it risks becoming a source of instability. Skills and energy alone cannot deliver growth unless they are connected to opportunity and demand.
- Transform youth into drivers of inclusive, secure, innovation-led national development, ensuring equitable growth, resilience and data sovereignty
- Build affordable national digital infrastructure, including cloud systems and a national skills passport, while reserving at least 20% of ICT procurement for youth-led enterprises.
- Strengthen skills-to-jobs pathways by certifying 200,000 young people and expanding sector-based innovation clusters linked to real market demand.
- Expand youth access to finance and markets through innovation funds, vouchers, and at least 1,500 startup contracts across public and private sectors.
- Boost creative and digital exports by scaling freelance and remote work platforms, targeting a 25% increase in youth-driven export earnings.
- Ensure inclusion by achieving over 40% participation of women and youth, with tailored support for rural areas, regional languages, and out-of-school learners.
- Promote youth-led innovation for national resilience through GovTech pilots, startup passports, and early results, including 200 cloud-based startup pilots.
- Youth potential exists far beyond universities and major cities, including government-school graduates, artisans, freelancers, and civic innovators. These groups remain disconnected from national value chains and formal markets.

**THEME - 5 WHAT REFORMS ARE ESSENTIAL TO STRENGTHEN
TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND EFFECTIVENESS IN
PAKISTAN'S GOVERNANCE SYSTEM?**



Ms Yasmin Dadabhoy



Mr Muhammad Riazuddin



Mr Hassan Yaqoob



MNA Sohail Sultan



MNA Sofia Saeed Shah



MPA Khurram Khan Virk



MLA Nisar Ansar



MPA Noor Muhammad



MPA Ghulam Raza



Ms Tara Uzra Dawood



Rear Admiral Asim Sohail



Ms Shaista Khosa



Syed Abu Afzal



Ms Farah Javed



Mr Mian Yousaf Jamal

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Effective governance is central to national stability, economic resilience, and public trust. In Pakistan, governance weaknesses stem less from lack of institutions and more from weak execution, coordination, and accountability.
- Fragmented authority and overlapping mandates dilute responsibility across institutions. This leads to duplication, slow decision making, and blurred accountability for policy outcomes.
- Frequent policy reversals across political cycles undermine long-term planning and reform continuity. Bureaucratic incentives weaken when policies lack predictability and political backing.
- Weak and inconsistent local governance limits citizen level service delivery. The absence of empowered local governments increases the distance between the state and communities.
- Isolated and non-integrated data systems prevent evidence-based policymaking. Without interoperability, transparency, oversight, and timely decisions remain constrained.
- Governance reform is a national security priority, not just an administrative agenda. Transparent, accountable systems strengthen state legitimacy, resilience, and long-term stability.
- Sustainable reform requires shifting from rhetoric to results. When performance is measured, data is open, and authority is devolved, governance becomes effective and trusted.
- Declining public trust is driven by opaque procurement, inconsistent service delivery, and lack of visible performance metrics. Citizens disengage when outcomes are unclear and accountability is absent.
- Accountability requires strong oversight institutions, whistle blower protection, and performance-based contracts. Digital monitoring tools can shift systems from reactive to preventive control.

THEME - 6: HOW CAN PAKISTAN COUNTER THE CHALLENGE OF DISINFORMATION WHILE UPHOLDING FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA INTEGRITY?



Ms Faeza Dawood



Mr Saud Faisal Malik



Dr Zubair Iqbal



Senator Poonjo Bheel



MNA Ghazala Anjum



MNA Natasha Daultana



MPA Asif Khan



MPA Sher Ali Afridi



Mr Aurangzeb Marral



Dr Naveed-ur-Rahman



Ms Rameeza Majid



Syed Mohammed Hussain



Dr Parviez Iqbal



Syeda Mehwish Rizvi

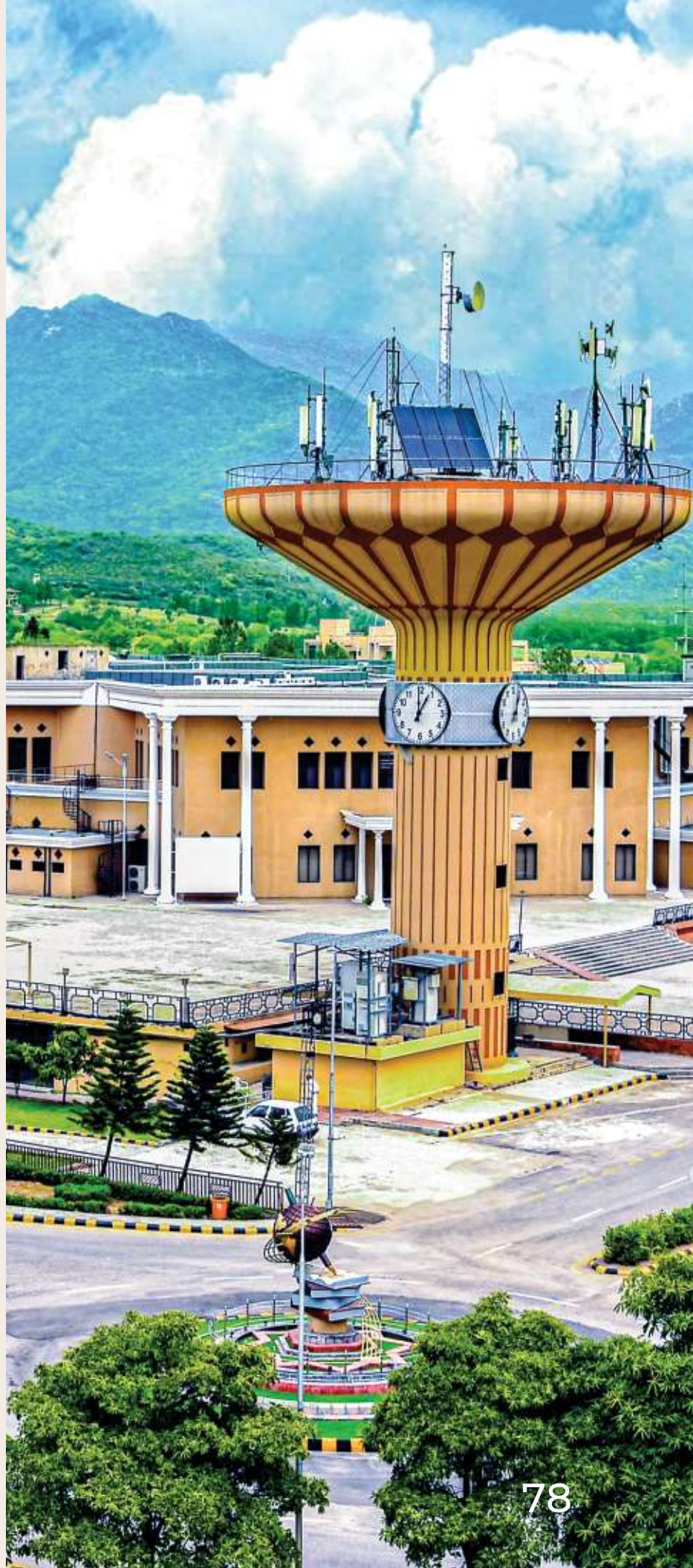


Mr Saquib Ahmad

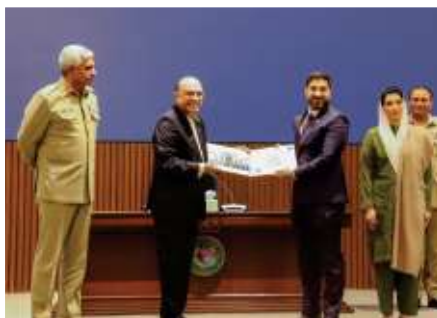
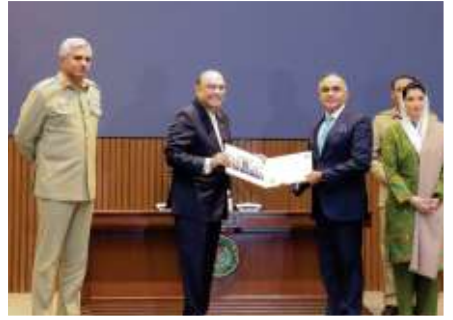
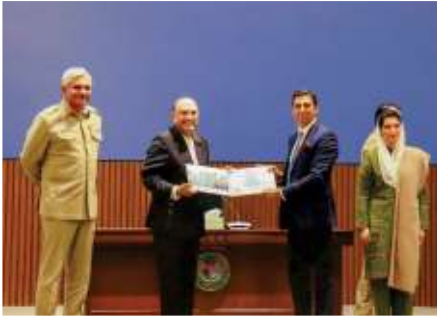
KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Disinformation in Pakistan stems from a mix of low media literacy, political polarization, and institutional distrust, degraded by the unregulated spread of content on social media.
- Across the globe, disinformation has been weaponized to manufacture perceptions, incite conflict, and suppress dissent. In South Asia, such campaigns are straining regional stability.
- Disinformation does not merely spread lies; it undermines trust, weakens institutions, and Separates society. When people stop believing in verified information, both Democracy and Governance falter. The core crisis is the collapse of credibility.
- Pakistan's response must be multi layered, balancing truth, liberty, and accountability in an increasingly contested information space. Efforts to combat disinformation should protect freedom of expression while clearly targeting falsehoods, hate campaigns, and hostile influence operations.
- Strengthen ethical journalism by supporting fact-checking units, training reporters in verification tools, and expanding collaboration with trusted national and international fact-checking networks.
- Build digital literacy as a national defence by teaching citizens, especially youth, how to verify information and think critically through education and public awareness campaigns.
- Establish rapid-response communication mechanisms so state institutions can issue timely, verified information before misinformation spreads widely.
- Partner with social media platforms to flag and limit misleading content, particularly in local languages, while respecting freedom of expression.
- Protect journalists through legal and institutional reforms that target deliberate disinformation without suppressing criticism, satire, or press freedom.

Certificate Award Ceremony













Picture Gallery















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