

COUNTRY ANALYSIS REPORT



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PREPARED BY

 **accountabilitylab**
PAKISTAN

11th Edition Part 01



PREAMBLE

Accountability Lab Pakistan is examining Pakistan's social, political, and economic development indicators to analyze the impact of policy actions and highlights challenges concerning each sector. Amid current political uncertainty and a financial crisis, the Country Report gives an overview of developments in different sectors such as security, governance, and the rule of law. The report also focuses on human rights progress, including the rights of minorities, women, and children and examines the progress across various developmental indicators to promote citizen awareness of a socially connected, economically stable, and politically accountable Pakistan.

POLITICAL AFFAIRS

Developing Political Consensus to Counter Terrorism

In wake of the growing intensity of terrorist attacks, the government is willing to develop a political consensus against terrorism. On February 3rd, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif called an [all-parties conference](#) and invited leaders from all political parties including PTI Chairman Imran Khan. However, the conference was [postponed twice](#), the latest on February 7 without mentioning the next schedule.



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Political Victimization Continues

While the government intends to develop political consensus over terrorism, political victimization also continues with many opposition leaders facing arrests and cases. In the latest, the Awami Muslim League (AML) leader, Sheikh Rasheed, and an ally of Imran Khan's PTI, was [arrested](#) for leveling allegations against the Chairman of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Asif Ali Zardari, who is also an ally of the current coalition government. Previously, former PM Imran Khan's aide Chaudhry Fawad Hussain was [arrested](#) for allegedly inciting violence against the ECP before he was [released](#) on February 1st.

President Arif Alvi has warned the ECP to schedule the election or face recourse for violating the constitution

The impending Election Saga in Pakistani Politics

Amidst the controversial delay in announcing election dates by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), President Arif Alvi has [warned](#) the ECP to schedule the election or face recourse for violating the constitution. Following this, the Lahore High Court (LHC) also [directed](#) the ECP to immediately announce election dates for Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The PTI-led opposition has been demanding re-elections after PTI dissolved their ruling assemblies in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Jail Bharo Tehreek

In a latest tactic to pressurize the government into announcing new elections, PTI Chief Imran Khan announced his [Jail Bharo Tehreek](#), where PTI workers are instructed to give their voluntary arrests. In the first such arrest on February 8, Aamir Dogar, an ex-MNA from PTI, was [arrested](#) by police, after a clash with workers of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) outside the ECP office.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INDICATOR

International Monetary Fund and Pakistan's Economic Conundrum

Pakistan's economic situation is fragile and facing the possibility of default, requiring bailout assistance from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Talks between Pakistan and the IMF have [resumed virtually](#), aiming to secure crucial funding. Despite previous negotiations between January 31st and February 9th, an agreement was not reached. To [unlock a \\$1.1 billion tranche](#), Pakistan has committed to increasing tax revenue by 170 billion rupees and eliminating circular debt as per [IMF demands](#). The Federal Cabinet has agreed to [approve different tax proposals](#) in order to gain the extra 170 billion rupees revenue through presidential



ordinance. The Finance Minister, Ishaq Dar, has described the delay in the tranche as a result of standard procedures.

The Human Rights Watch (HRW) [has called on the International Monetary Fund \(IMF\) to safeguard](#) the millions of economically vulnerable people whose livelihoods have been endangered by the worst crisis in the country's history.

To unlock a \$1.1 billion tranche; additional tax revenue of 170 billion rupees, up to 25% increase in utility tariff, removing the ban on imports and eliminating circular debt are some of the requirements from IMF.

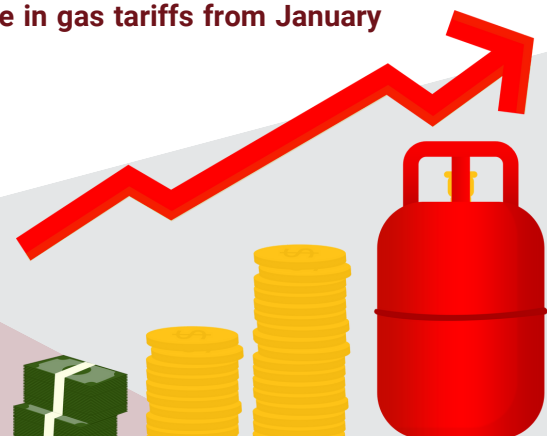
Historic Hike in the Commodity Prices and Taxes

The prices of common goods such as petrol and gas have increased, and the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) has approved a [124% hike in gas tariffs](#) from January to June in compliance with IMF conditions. Similarly, 9% increase on electricity prices has been witnessed as well. On January 29th, the Finance Minister, Ishaq Dar, announced a 35 rupee per litre increase in petrol and diesel prices, just minutes before they went into effect. Further increase is anticipated to fulfill IMF demands. In addition, [food prices have also risen](#) alongside the increase in prices for everyday commodities such as petrol and

gas. This surge in prices is likely to lead to further inflation, which has already risen to weekly [35 percent](#) jump from last year. As a result, the burden of these increases will affect the citizens the most. The ebb and flow in the appreciation and deprecation of rupee against dollar still continues.

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Pakistan is implementing strict measures to satisfy the IMF, but this is not a new experience for the country, which has repeatedly faced economic difficulties. The reason for this cycle is the lack of policy consistency and failure to make long-term structural reforms for economic stability. As a result, the salaried class, which makes up only 3.5% of the population, is the most adversely affected by these strict policies.



SECURITY AND RULE OF LAW SITUATION

The recent surge of terrorism in Pakistan has brought the country back to a state it was in a decade ago, undoing previous successes in combating terrorism, such as the defeat of the Tehreek-i-Taliban. The blame game between political factions continues, but the truth is that this resurgence of terrorism is a result of inconsistent and failed policies over the years. The suicide bombing in [Peshawar Police Lines](#) mosque in January 2023, which resulted in 59 fatalities and 157 injuries, [serves as evidence](#) of this.

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Peshawar Police Lines Mosque after blast

Pakistan's former Prime Minister Imran Khan has [criticized the security forces](#) and intelligence agencies for their perceived negligence leading to an increase in terrorism incidents in the country. He attributes this rise to the peace talks that have given the militant groups more confidence. Despite these challenges, the Counter Terrorism Group (CTD) has taken action to combat terrorism, resulting in the death of a TTP insurgent and the [arrest of 11 other members](#) of the banned organization from various cities, as a result of intelligence-led operations (IBOs) across the province of Punjab.

SOCIAL SECTOR INDICATORS AND DEVELOPMENT

Pakistan ranks low on 2022 Corruption Perception Index by Transparency International

Corruption is a social issue in which individuals or groups misuse their power and authority for personal gain. It often occurs due to a lack of transparency and weak institutional structures, reflecting broader social and institutional failures. Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI) for 2022 revealed that Pakistan was [ranked 140 out of 180 countries](#), indicating a sustained decline in the country's performance since 2012. The index measures the perception of corruption in the public sector of different countries and territories.



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Education

Pakistan [has the highest number of out-of-school children in the world](#), with an estimated 22 million children not receiving an education. The Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) for primary education in Pakistan is only 61%. To combat illiteracy, the Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and other international stakeholders have committed to a 12-year initiative to educate the most marginalized girls globally. As [part of this project](#), efforts will be made to educate 30,000 out-of-school girls in Baluchistan.



Health

Dr. Arif Alvi, the President of Pakistan, has urged for a joint effort to [address mental health disorders](#) in the country as they are often overlooked. In a survey conducted by the National Commission for Human Rights in August 2022, it was found that 24% of the population in Pakistan experiences significant mental stress and anxiety. The President has said that the Government is developing a helpline to advise and educate the people about the issues related to mental health and well-being.

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ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Pakistan At the Highest Risk of Melting Glaciers

Scientists have [issued](#) a warning in an article published in the journal Nature Communications, stating that melting glaciers pose a serious threat to half a million people globally. The [report](#) specifically identifies Pakistan as being at the highest risk of flooding from these melting glaciers. The researchers believe that proper preparations and responses, such as the early warning system in Nepal and Bhutan, can help mitigate the risks of glacial disasters as short-term measures.

Water War

The Indus Waters Treaty between India and Pakistan is facing increasing tensions, with some even referring to it as a "[water war](#)." On one front, the case is being heard at the Court of Arbitration in The Hague regarding the legality of India's Kishanganga and Ratle hydropower projects on Jhelum and Chenab. On another front, India has threatened to modify the 60-year-old treaty.

India, as the upper riparian, has a history of using water as a tool for control and coercion. The current water shortage in Pakistan, which is predicted to worsen by 2025, makes this situation particularly concerning as it could result in famine and population instability. An expert suggests that the pressing issue of climate change could provide a glimmer of hope and serve as a catalyst for enhanced collaboration across the politically divided nations of South Asia.

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Indus Delta has less time to prepare for the impacts caused by sea level rise; shows a study by NASA

According to a [recent study by National Aeronautics and Space Administration \(NASA\)](#) on LiDAR-Based (Light Detection and Ranging), early-stage sea level rise is the primary cause of the significant increase in global coastal exposure to flooding. The study has identified six high-risk deltas, including the Indus delta, and highlighted that these countries have less time for preparation compared to other nations. This is because the coastal elevation patterns in these areas are higher, which means that they have a shorter timeframe to get ready for the potential impacts of sea level rise.



STATUS OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Human Rights Commission of Pakistan Raises Alarm on Religious Freedom

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) has [released](#) a report entitled "A Breach of Faith: Freedom of Religion or Belief in 2021-22," which highlights serious concerns over the state of religious freedom in the country. The report notes that [incidents of persecution](#) against religious minorities have been consistent over the past year, from July 2021 to June 2022. The report specifically mentions forced conversions, the violation of minority religious places of worship, and the marginalization of these groups. Additionally, the report criticizes the national curriculum for promoting an "[exclusionary narrative](#)."

Sexual Assault Cases in Country

A woman was [subjected to a gang-rape](#) in Fatima Jinnah Park, Islamabad, an incident that has caused widespread distress and concern throughout the city. An official First Information Report (FIR) has been filed at the Margalla police station, with charges including Section 376, against two unnamed suspects. A sketch of one of the alleged perpetrators has been released to the public.

In another tragedy, an 18-year-old bus hostess has been [allegedly raped](#) by a bus guard at gunpoint, resulting in serious injuries. The survivor was taken to a hospital in Vehari for medical treatment. The accused has been arrested by the police and a case has been registered.



Mob Justice

On February 11, 2023, a 35-year-old man was [accused of blasphemy](#) in Nankana Sahab, Lahore. In response to the accusation, an angry mob of 800 individuals attacked the local police station and attempted to illegally detain the man. As a result of the attack, [60 suspects were arrested](#) by the police for their involvement in the lynching of the man outside the police station. The incident highlights the growing trend of mob vigilantism in the country, where individuals take the law into their own hands and resort to violence in response to perceived offenses, often without proper evidence or due process. These acts of violence threaten the stability and security of society and undermine the rule of law.

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FOREIGN RELATIONS

Indo-Pak

Despite historical tensions, the trade between India and Pakistan has significantly increased, reaching [1.35 billion dollars](#) from April to December 2022 compared to 516.36 million dollars in the entire year of 2021-22. This was reported by the Minister of State for Commerce and Industry in India. Despite past incidents, such as the close brush with "[nuclear conflagration](#)" in February 2019 as stated by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, the two nations have managed to expand their trade volume.

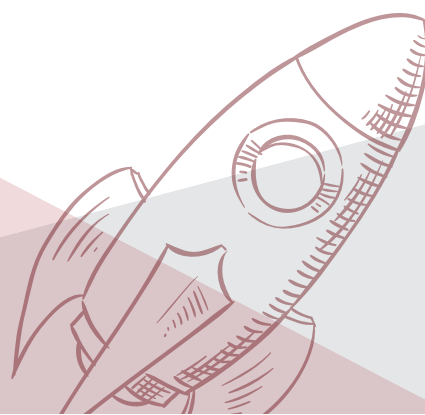


Pakistan [chose not to participate](#) in a multilateral meeting on Afghanistan hosted by Russia, citing the existence of alternative forums to effectively contribute to the Afghan peace process. The meeting at the advisor level will include representatives from Central Asian countries, China, and India. This decision is viewed as a [deliberate attempt to discredit India's efforts](#) in Afghanistan.

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Sino-Pak

In China-Pakistan sci-tech cooperation, under the Sino-Pak '[Seeds in Space](#)' project, seven types of Pakistani medicinal seeds, three from International Centre for Chemical and Biological Sciences (ICCBS) and four from Hamdard University, were sent to the Chinese space station for six months, making history as the first Pakistani seeds to do so. Space-bred varieties have shown better production and resistance, so Pakistan and China plan to conduct joint research on their genetic stability, material basis, effectiveness, and safety to identify new medicinal materials with higher quality and yield. Dr. Jiang Ning, Deputy Secretary-General of Sino-Pakistan Cooperation Center on Traditional Chinese Medicine, National Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine, China, provided these details in an interview with China Economic Net.



Afghanistan-Pak

Bloomberg [reported](#) that Pakistan has been smuggling millions of dollars into Afghanistan daily to aid its struggling economy, as interim governments are denied access to billions of dollars in foreign reserves after the U.S. and its allies withdrew from the country. Following the fall of Kabul, approximately \$9 billion of Afghan Central Bank reserves were frozen by the U.S. and Europe. In the meantime, the Pakistani rupee has declined by [37%](#) against the U.S. dollar.

The Foreign Office (FO) has [instructed](#) Pakistani embassies in European Union countries to cease issuing visas to Afghan nationals due to an alleged visa scam. Following the [issuance of 1,600 visas](#) to individuals of Afghan origin holding fake residence cards in Sweden, the Foreign Ministry of Pakistan has imposed a complete visa ban for Afghan citizens.

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U.S-Pak

On January 13th, a [mid-level defense](#) dialogue was held in Washington to consider various options for strengthening ties between the two countries' armies. The Pakistani delegation, headed by the Chief of General Staff (CGS) Lieutenant General Saeed, [met with his counterpart](#) at the Pentagon. During the four-day talks, they discussed expanding cooperation in the field of strategic issues, as well as global and key regional aspects.

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