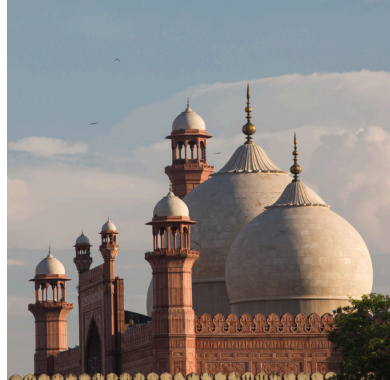


COUNTRY ANALYSIS REPORT



Executive Summary

This report provides a comprehensive review of Pakistan's socio-political, economic, and technological landscape, emphasizing notable developments and enduring challenges. The £190 million corruption case involving former Prime Minister Imran Khan, marked by repeated delays and political undertones, raises concerns about judicial fairness and political motivations. Additionally, PTI protests over the alleged mistreatment of civilians by military courts highlight tensions within Pakistan's political framework.

Economically, Pakistan's tax-to-GDP ratio improved to 10.8% by December 2024, signaling progress in fiscal reforms, but the poverty rate, projected to rise to 25.3% by the end of 2024, indicates deepening economic disparities. While the discovery of 32 tonnes of gold in Attock offers a potential lifeline for economic recovery, the country's GDP growth remains insufficient to meet its needs. Structural weaknesses in the agricultural and industrial sectors, compounded by climate vulnerabilities, underscore the need for sustainable economic strategies.

Technological progress is evident in the launch of the indigenous EO-1 satellite, which aims to enhance disaster management, agricultural monitoring, and environmental conservation. However, Pakistan's leadership in global financial losses due to internet and social media shutdowns, amounting to \$1.62 billion in 2024, reflects significant governance challenges in balancing information control and economic impacts.

Diplomatically, Pakistan faces complex relations with neighboring Afghanistan and ongoing challenges with the TTP's cross-border attacks. While initiatives like the new border crossing with Iran and advancements in CPEC 2.0 with China indicate regional cooperation, tensions with the Taliban regime highlight Pakistan's security dilemmas.

Socially, the education crisis persists, with over 26 million children out of school, exacerbated by systemic issues, climate change, and inadequate public investment. Meanwhile, the approval of a bill for dedicated child courts marks progress in addressing child abuse cases, reflecting incremental but essential steps in human rights.

To address these multifaceted issues, Pakistan must prioritize judicial transparency, climate resilience, economic diversification, and technological innovation while fostering inclusive policies to ensure equitable development across all sectors.

Political Updates

Imran Khan's £190 Million Case Postponed Again Amid Legal Controversies:

The ongoing [£190 million case](#) involving former Prime Minister Imran Khan and his wife, Bushra Bibi, continues to experience unjust delays, with the Rawalpindi accountability court once again postponing its verdict.

The latest adjournment, the third in a series, reportedly, came due to the absence of both the accused and their legal representatives, despite repeated efforts to summon them. This continuous delay only adds to the growing concerns over the fairness and transparency of the judicial process.

The case, centered around the alleged misappropriation of funds transferred by the UK's National Crime Agency, seems increasingly politically motivated, designed to hinder Khan's political future.

Khan's leadership and contributions to Pakistan's political and economic landscape are indisputable, yet his detractors seem intent on using the courts to undermine his position.

The case, which involves claims that Imran Khan and his wife received land worth billions of rupees intended for an educational institute, has raised questions about the validity and timing of the charges. Khan's supporters believe that the accusations are a part of a broader political vendetta, with little evidence to substantiate the claims.



Source: Tribune

Imran Khan's arrest in November 2023 by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has not deterred his resolve or his supporters' confidence in his leadership. Despite the absence of key witnesses from the defense and multiple changes in judges during the trial, Khan's legal team remains committed to clearing his name. This case, mired in delays and controversy, highlights the need for a fair, transparent, and unbiased judicial process that upholds the rights of all citizens.

Lahore High Court Overrules Objections to Imran Khan's Bail Petitions:

In a significant legal development, the Lahore High Court on Monday overturned the registrar office's objections to seven bail petitions filed by Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan, related to the May 9 riots, including the attack on the Lahore corps commander's residence. The two-judge bench, led by Chief Justice Aalia Neelum and Justice Asjad Javed Ghural, directed the office to proceed with the cases, a move seen as a procedural victory for the PTI leader. The objections had primarily focused on technicalities such as the absence of thumb impressions and missing certified documents.

Barrister Salman Safdar assured the court that necessary corrections would be made, reflecting a proactive legal strategy to address procedural hurdles. This development highlights the ongoing legal battles faced by Imran Khan, as his counsel argues that the charges are part of a politically motivated campaign to undermine his leadership.

The petitions emphasize the lack of direct evidence linking Khan to the incidents and highlight alleged inconsistencies in the prosecution's narrative. By overruling the objections, the court has opened the door for a more substantive examination of the cases, which could expose the fragility of the accusations. This subtle yet critical legal reprieve may bolster Khan's position, allowing him to frame the legal challenges as part of a broader political struggle for justice and accountability.

PTI Protests at National Assembly Amid Ongoing Talks:

The National Assembly session on Monday witnessed heightened tensions as PTI lawmakers disrupted proceedings with protests over the alleged disappearance of activists and the events of November 26.

Opposition Leader Omar Ayub called for an independent inquiry into the treatment of civilians by military courts and questioned the government's handling of the Al-Qadir Trust case.

The session quickly descended into chaos, with PTI members raising slogans and staging a walkout during Question Hour, overshadowing the intended discussions.

Government ministers responded sharply, accusing the PTI of using protests as a diversion from meaningful dialogue. Defence Minister Khawaja Asif criticized the opposition for creating a hostile environment, arguing that such behavior undermines the potential for productive talks. Information Minister Attaullah Tarar dismissed the PTI's narrative as a "smokescreen" and highlighted inconsistencies within their own ranks regarding the November 26 events.

PTI's actions aimed to bring attention to issues they believe the government is ignoring, like the disappearance of their activists. Their persistence suggests they are committed to pressing the government for answers, despite pushback from other lawmakers.

Economic Outlook

Pakistan's Tax Reforms and Economic Growth Plans: A Step Toward Fiscal Sustainability

Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb is optimistic about Pakistan's ability to meet the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) [tax targets](#), citing the country's rising tax-to-GDP ratio, which reached 10.8% by December 2024.



Source: Brecorder

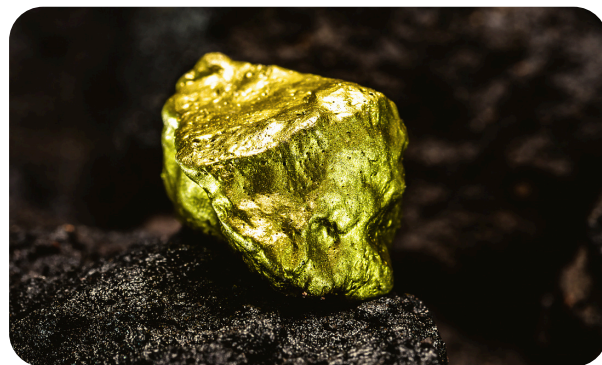
He emphasized the government's commitment to broadening the tax base and improving fiscal sustainability, noting that achieving these targets is crucial for Pakistan's long-term economic health. The country's GDP growth target for this fiscal year is set at 3-3.5%, with an ambitious goal of increasing it to 6% in the next 2-3 years. The finance minister also highlighted the government's focus on transitioning to an export-led economy.

Aurangzeb expressed confidence in securing further credit rating upgrades, following improvements from all three major agencies over the past year. He discussed plans to tap into international capital markets, particularly through the issuance of Panda bonds, aiming to raise \$200-250 million. As part of this effort, Pakistan has appointed China International Capital Corporation Limited (CICC) as an advisor, following the Egyptian model for credit enhancement. The finance minister also revealed that the first review of Pakistan's \$7 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF) with the IMF will take place in February, marking a significant step in the country's path toward economic stability.

Pakistan Discovers Almost 32 Tonnes of Gold in Attock, Offering Hope for Economic Revitalization:

In a significant development for Pakistan's ailing economy, a discovery of 32 tonnes of gold, valued at approximately **800 billion PKR**, has been made across a 32-kilometer stretch in Attock, Punjab.

This finding, confirmed by the Geological Survey of Pakistan, offers a promising opportunity to unlock the country's mineral wealth.



Source: Pixabay

The discovery could potentially fuel economic growth and help address some of Pakistan's pressing financial challenges, such as rising unemployment and poverty. However, the country's GDP growth remains insufficient to meet the needs of essential sectors like health and education, exacerbating the difficulties faced by its population, particularly women, in accessing job opportunities.

Rising Poverty in Pakistan Demands Immediate Economic Reforms:

The World Bank's [latest report](#) on Pakistan's poverty projections reveals a stark reality: the poverty rate is expected to reach 25.3% by the end of 2024, a sharp increase of 7 percentage points from the previous year.

This surge in poverty will push an additional 13 million people below the poverty line, with the most vulnerable households facing disproportionate welfare losses.



Source: Brecorder

Despite efforts to use data models for projections, concerns over the reliability of Pakistan's economic statistics persist, as highlighted by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The IMF points to deficiencies in key data sectors, including Government Finance Statistics, which hinders accurate economic assessments.

This grim picture underscores the urgent need for action to mitigate the worsening economic crisis. While previous reports have suggested poverty rates of 40.5% among lower middle-income households, the World Bank's latest figures point to a much higher number of people falling into poverty, highlighting the failure of existing economic policies. The government must prioritize enhancing social safety nets, such as increasing the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) budget, and focus on sustainable economic policies that reduce reliance on indirect taxes and curb the burden on the most vulnerable. Without significant structural reforms and a shift in focus toward equitable economic development, the country risks further deepening inequality and public discontent.

Pakistan Tops Global Financial Losses from Internet and Social Media Shutdowns in 2024:

Pakistan led the world in financial losses due to internet and social media shutdowns in 2024, with a staggering **\$1.62 billion in economic impact**, surpassing conflict-ridden nations like Sudan and Myanmar. The Top10VPN.com report highlighted that Pakistan experienced 18 instances of deliberate internet disruptions, primarily linked to elections, information control, and protests.

The shutdown of social media platform X since February 18 was the costliest, totaling \$1.34 billion. These disruptions affected over 82 million users and lasted 9,735 hours. The report underscores the broader global trend, with internet shutdowns causing substantial economic damage, particularly in Asia, where countries like Myanmar and India also suffered significant losses.

Unlocking Pakistan's E-Commerce Potential: A Path Forward

Pakistan's e-commerce sector has made significant strides in recent years, with a projected growth to **\$6.7 billion by 2029**. However, the industry still faces numerous challenges that must be addressed for it to reach its full potential.

While platforms have democratized business opportunities, especially in remote areas, the unregulated market has allowed international giants to dominate, using predatory pricing strategies that undermine local businesses.

These practices risk creating an uneven playing field, where local entrepreneurs struggle to compete despite their investments in infrastructure.

To safeguard local enterprises and foster growth, the Pakistani government must update its e-commerce policy, ensuring fair competition and protecting consumer trust. A forward-looking approach is essential to realizing the sector's potential. By leveraging successful regional models like Malaysia's 'Shop Malaysia Online' campaign and India's partnership with Amazon, Pakistan can empower small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) to scale digitally and expand globally.

Additionally, strengthening digital payment infrastructure and providing incentives for local sellers, such as tax relief and capacity-building programs, would stimulate the sector's growth.

However, this must be coupled with stricter regulations to prevent anti-competitive practices and ensure that international platforms contribute positively to the local economy. Only with the right regulatory framework and support for local businesses can e-commerce become a sustainable driver of economic growth in Pakistan.

Google Pay Set to Revolutionize Pakistan's Digital Payments Landscape by 2025:

Google Pay is set to officially launch in Pakistan by mid-March 2025, marking a major milestone in the country's growing digital payments landscape. The service will allow users to link their bank-issued debit and credit cards to Google Pay via the Google Wallet app, enabling seamless contactless payments at compatible terminals.

With partnerships from Visa, Mastercard, and leading local banks, and the support of over 133,000 point-of-sale (POS) terminals, [Google Pay's entry](#) is expected to significantly accelerate the adoption of digital payments in Pakistan.

This expansion comes at a time when electronic payments have already doubled to account for 9.3% of all transactions in the country, positioning Pakistan's payment infrastructure for rapid growth in both POS and e-commerce sectors.

Pakistan's Economic Recovery: A Fragile Hope for Sustainable Growth

Pakistan's economy is on a [path to recovery](#), with promising signs such as a six-year low inflation rate and record-breaking stock market performance.

The Asian Development Bank's upward revision of the growth forecast for fiscal year 2025 to 3% reflects growing international confidence in the country's economic management. While this marks an improvement, the 3% growth rate falls short of the ambitious progress needed to tackle the country's deep-rooted challenges.

Pakistan's economic resilience is evident, yet the pace of recovery is not sufficient for long-term prosperity, particularly when compared to the accelerating growth of regional neighbors like India and Vietnam. Despite efforts by the government to stabilize the economy, Pakistan continues to face structural vulnerabilities.

The agricultural sector, battered by climate shocks, needs urgent climate-resilient policies, while industrial capacity remains underdeveloped. The digital economy, which could be a key driver of future growth, has been hindered by regulatory crackdowns and slow internet speeds.

To transform the recovery into lasting prosperity, Pakistan must prioritize climate resilience, digital innovation, and export diversification. By focusing on these areas and fostering public-private partnerships, Pakistan can build a more inclusive and sustainable economy for the future.

Pakistan Prepares to Launch Panda Bonds as Part of Financial Recovery Strategy:

In a strategic move to bolster its financial position, Pakistan is set to debut its first-ever [yuan-denominated bonds](#), known as panda bonds, this year. Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb confirmed that the government is keen to tap into China's capital markets as part of efforts to stabilize Pakistan's finances. The aim is to raise between \$200 million and \$250 million from Chinese investors over the next six to nine months. This step comes amid ongoing efforts to meet the terms set by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for the country's bailout package, which remains critical to Pakistan's [economic stability](#).

Pakistan's introduction of panda bonds signals a significant shift in its financial strategy, looking beyond traditional Western markets for support.

The Finance Minister also highlighted that an IMF mission is scheduled to visit Pakistan next month to assess the country's progress in fulfilling the requirements of the bailout. Meanwhile, Aurangzeb projected a modest 3.5% GDP growth for the fiscal year ending in June, despite the financial challenges.

The issuance of panda bonds is seen as a vital tool in securing much-needed capital, reflecting Pakistan's growing ties with China and its ongoing efforts to navigate through economic hurdles

Environment and Climate Perspectives

What does the WFP report say about Pakistan's Climate Crisis:

The World Food Programme (WFP) has highlighted the severe impact of climate change on Pakistan, emphasizing the country's vulnerability to natural disasters and economic fragility. In its December 2024 Country Brief, WFP noted that recurrent flooding and other climate-related events have exacerbated food insecurity and malnutrition, particularly among women and children.

The organization reported that nearly 40% of children aged 6-59 months suffer from chronic malnutrition, indicating a pressing need for targeted interventions to enhance food and nutrition security in the face of these challenges.

Pakistan's Carbon Market: A Controversial Path to Climate Finance

Pakistan has entered the global carbon markets, marking a significant step in addressing its climate finance gap. The approval of guidelines for carbon markets under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement allows Pakistan to trade carbon credits, aiming to generate much-needed funds for climate resilience.

While carbon markets offer a short-term solution, particularly for developing countries like Pakistan, they have sparked controversy. Critics, including climate activists, argue that these markets, promoted by the Global North, are a "false solution" to the climate crisis, with concerns over the lack of transparency and questionable credit integrity.

Pakistan, however, sees them as a lifeline to bridge its \$380 billion climate finance shortfall. Despite the potential, Pakistan faces significant challenges in maximizing its carbon credit revenue. The country's lack of baseline data, technical resources, and adequate regulatory frameworks make it difficult to measure and verify emissions reductions, which are essential for successful carbon trading. While certain provinces like Sindh and Balochistan, with their coastal ecosystems, hold promise for carbon projects like afforestation and clean cookstoves, experts caution that Pakistan must overcome these gaps to remain competitive in the carbon market. Competing with nations like Ghana and Ethiopia, which already have strong carbon trading projects, Pakistan needs to develop high-quality carbon credits to attract international buyers such as Singapore, Norway, and South Korea.

Transparency issues and the involvement of middlemen in carbon trading have raised concerns about the legitimacy of credits, with some projects in China and Africa under scrutiny for failing to reduce emissions. However, Pakistan is taking steps to address these challenges by working with development partners to ensure that its carbon projects meet international standards for environmental integrity.



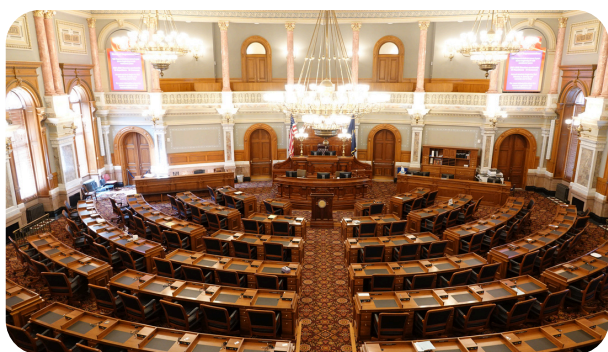
Source: Getty Images

Diplomatic Landscape

US Lawmaker Moves to Revoke Pakistan's major non-Nato ally (MNNA)

Status:

Congressman [Andy Biggs of Arizona](#) has reintroduced a bill seeking to revoke Pakistan's status as a [major non-NATO ally \(MNNA\)](#), a designation it has held since 2004.



Source: Pexels

The proposed legislation, primarily targeting the Haqqani Network, demands Pakistan take decisive action against the group's safe havens and cooperation with Afghanistan to restrict militant movements.

This effort aligns with past pressures from the Trump administration but faces skepticism regarding its practical impact, especially given the ongoing U.S. engagement with Afghanistan through the Doha process.

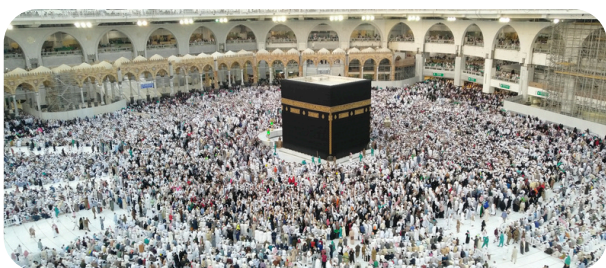
While Biggs' push reflects broader geopolitical tensions, particularly involving U.S.-China dynamics, its implications remain uncertain.

Critics suggest such moves might inadvertently push Pakistan closer to Beijing, rather than aligning it more tightly with U.S. strategic interests. The repeated introduction of similar bills without progression highlights the limited traction these initiatives have gained within Congress, underscoring the complexity of U.S.-Pakistan relations amidst shifting global alliances.

Pakistan-Saudi Arabia Sign Annual Haj Agreement for 2025 Pilgrimage:

The recent signing of the annual Haj agreement between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia by Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Chaudhry Salik Hussain and Saudi Minister of Haj and Umrah Dr. Tawfiq Bin Fawzan Al-Rabiah marks a significant milestone in facilitating the pilgrimage for Pakistani Muslims.

Under the [agreement](#), 179,210 Pakistani pilgrims will perform the sacred ritual this year, with 89,602 traveling through the government scheme, while others will opt for private tour operators. The agreement emphasizes enhanced comfort and accessibility for the pilgrims, with special accommodations in Mina and the introduction of a short 20-25 day Haj programme. This initiative seeks to make the pilgrimage more manageable and efficient by offering pilgrims more control over their experience, including the option to stay in Madina for four to eight days.



Source: Getty Images

Pakistan's Shifting Strategy Toward Afghanistan: A Complex Balancing Act:

When the Taliban took control of Afghanistan in 2021, Pakistan anticipated a stabilizing effect on its western border, particularly in light of ongoing tensions with India. However, this assumption has proven to be a strategic miscalculation.

The Taliban's rise to power inadvertently facilitated the reorganization and resurgence of the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which has escalated cross-border attacks, presenting a significant security threat to Pakistan.

Despite multiple rounds of talks between Pakistani officials and the Taliban, Pakistan's efforts to address the TTP issue have largely yielded little, with the Taliban unwilling to take concrete action against the group. The United Nations has corroborated Pakistan's concerns, highlighting the TTP's continued strength in Afghanistan and its operations targeting Pakistan.

As TTP attacks have surged, resulting in the highest number of casualties in nearly a decade, Pakistan has [adopted a harder line toward Kabul](#).

Diplomatic engagements have continued alongside military actions, including unannounced airstrikes on TTP sanctuaries in Afghanistan, aimed at pressuring the Taliban to act.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has made it clear that Pakistan's red line on terrorism must be respected, while military officials have held the Taliban responsible for arming terrorists and offering safe havens.

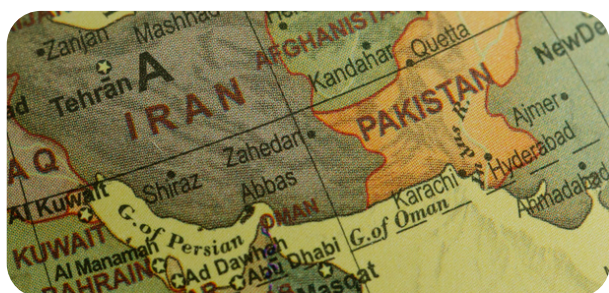
This aggressive stance culminated in an exchange of fire between the two countries in December 2024, which further strained relations. Pakistan's approach, which blends coercive measures with diplomatic re-engagement, has yielded limited results, necessitating a shift back to dialogue.

New Pakistan-Iran Border Crossing to Boost Trade and Employment in Balochistan:

The federal government has announced the opening of a [new border crossing at Kohak Cheedgi in Panjgur](#), Balochistan, in collaboration with Iran. This new trade route aims to promote legal trade, curb smuggling, and create employment and business opportunities for residents on both sides of the Pakistan-Iran border.

The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has officially notified the establishment of this crossing as the fourth official point between the two nations. Local business leaders, including those from the Quetta Chamber of Commerce and Industry, have welcomed the move, seeing it as a long-awaited step to boost trade and formalize the import-export process.

The opening of this crossing, following the inauguration of the Gabd-Rimdan border in December, is expected to enhance economic activity and foster closer ties between the neighboring countries.



Source: Pexels

Pakistan and China Reaffirm Commitment to CPEC 2.0 Amid Economic Challenges:

Pakistan and China have reaffirmed their commitment to advancing the second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), with a focus on industrialization, Special Economic Zones, clean energy, and agriculture.

This came after a meeting between Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong and Pakistan's Foreign Secretary Amna Baloch in Beijing, where both sides emphasized the strengthening of their bilateral ties.

The [CPEC](#), initially launched in 2015 as part of China's Belt and Road Initiative, faces challenges such as political instability, economic stagnation, and energy shortages.

Pakistan hopes that the enhanced investment from China will help address its economic difficulties, despite recent protests over power outages in the Gilgit-Baltistan region.



Source: DW

Security and Governance

Deadly Methane Explosion Claims Lives of 13 Coal Miners in Balochistan:

A methane gas explosion in a coal mine in southwestern Pakistan has tragically claimed the lives of **13 miners**. Eleven bodies were recovered following the explosion in Singidi, Balochistan, on Thursday, while a 12th worker remains missing. The incident is part of a broader pattern of mining accidents in the region, where safety standards are often overlooked, leading to regular fatalities. In a separate incident on Sunday, two more miners died in a mine collapse in Harnai, Balochistan. The province, rich in mineral resources, has long struggled with mining-related disasters, which are compounded by the area's political instability and separatist insurgencies.



Source: AMU TV

Kidnapping of Government Workers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa:

In a disturbing incident from northwestern Pakistan, militants abducted at least 16 government workers associated with a state-run mining project in Lakki Marwat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, an area known for frequent **Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) attacks**. The workers were taken hostage while traveling to their worksite, and the kidnappers set the

minibus on fire before fleeing with the captives. The TTP claimed responsibility for the act, although the group's demands for the hostages' release remain unclear. The video released by the militants, showing some hostages urging authorities to comply with their demands, has heightened concerns over the safety of those still held.

Despite this, police have managed to rescue eight hostages, though three sustained injuries during the operation, with one in critical condition. This attack comes just a day after separatist militants from the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) launched a coordinated assault in Balochistan province, underscoring the escalating security challenges Pakistan faces from militant groups.

Both the TTP and BLA have intensified their activities since the Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan, with claims of operating from Afghan soil, a situation that Islamabad contends threatens regional stability. While the authorities in Kabul deny the presence of foreign militants, Pakistan remains on high alert as these attacks continue to destabilize its borders and challenge national security.



Source: Getty Images

Tech Updates

Pakistan to Launch Indigenous EO-1

Satellite:

On January 17, Pakistan is set to launch its [Indigenous Electro-Optical \(EO-1\) Satellite](#), a major step forward in the country's space exploration and technological innovation. The satellite will be launched from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre (JSLC) in China, marking a significant milestone for the Pakistan Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (Suparco). The EO-1 satellite is a product of Pakistan's own technological capabilities, showcasing the country's commitment to advancing in space science. This launch is expected to enhance Pakistan's ability to monitor natural resources, respond to natural disasters, and support sustainable development.



Source: Geo TV

The EO-1 satellite is designed to [deliver multifaceted benefits](#) across a wide range of sectors. In agriculture, it will aid in precision farming by monitoring crops, assessing irrigation needs, and predicting yields, which will play a vital role in ensuring food security. For urban development, it will help track infrastructure growth and manage urban sprawl, facilitating more effective city planning.

The satellite will also significantly contribute to environmental monitoring, providing crucial data on floods, landslides, deforestation, and other natural disasters. Additionally, it will support the management of natural resources, offering valuable insights into mineral extraction, oil and gas fields, glacier recession, and water conservation. This project underscores Pakistan's growing capabilities in space technology and its potential to leverage this innovation for sustainable economic and environmental development.

Social and Humanitarian Focus

Pakistan's Crackdown on INGOs:

In a move that has sparked widespread debate, Pakistan's Ministry of Interior recently suspended the operations of two prominent international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), Tobacco-Free Kids (CTFK) and Vital Strategies.

This decision has brought to the forefront the critical role of civil society in addressing public health challenges and the importance of maintaining an environment where such organizations can operate effectively.

While ensuring compliance with national regulations is crucial, the broader implications of curbing civil society's space warrant careful consideration.

Civil society organizations, both local and international, have historically played a vital role in advancing social welfare and advocating for vulnerable populations. Their work often complements government efforts, filling gaps in resources and expertise, particularly in sectors like public health. By bringing in diverse perspectives and global best practices, these organizations contribute to the holistic development of society. The recent suspensions, however, risk creating a chilling effect, potentially discouraging other organizations from engaging in important advocacy and service delivery roles.

As Pakistan navigates this complex landscape, it is essential to strike a balance that safeguards national interests while also fostering an enabling environment for civil society. Transparent regulatory frameworks that promote accountability without stifling advocacy are key.

Strengthening dialogue and collaboration between the government and civil society can ensure that the contributions of these organizations continue to benefit the public, supporting a shared goal of improving health and well-being across the nation.

Pakistan's Education Crisis: Poverty, Climate Change, and Systemic Challenges

In rural Pakistan, children like 11-year-old Aneesa Haroon juggle education and labor,

highlighting the severe [education crisis in the country](#). Despite efforts by a number of civil society organisations working on education in Pakistan, over 26 million children remain out of school, with poverty, inadequate infrastructure, and cultural barriers as major impediments. The situation is exacerbated by climate change, with frequent school closures due to extreme weather, and by militancy in regions like Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Public schools struggle with limited resources, creating a reliance on private institutions and madrassas, which often fail to equip students for modern challenges. This fragmented system has led to what experts describe as "education apartheid," where quality education is accessible only to those who can afford it. The growing number of out-of-school children reflects a crisis not just in enrollment but also in the quality of education, as low standards deter parents from valuing formal education.

Despite Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's declaration of an "education emergency" and promises to increase the education budget, the road ahead is fraught with challenges. Climate change, political instability, and systemic issues continue to hamper Pakistan's dream of universal literacy, leaving millions of children like Aneesa in a struggle between education and survival.



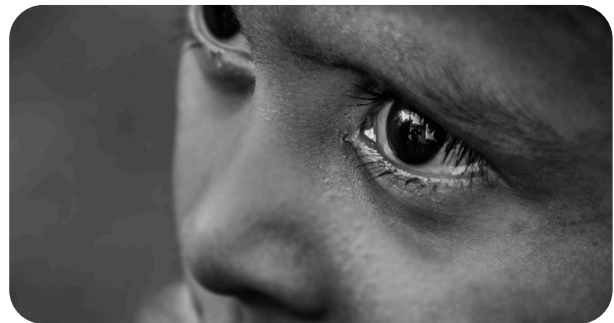
Source: DAWN

Policy Spotlight

Child Protection Efforts Strengthened as Bill for Child Courts Approved:

In a significant step towards addressing the rising cases of child abuse, the National Assembly's standing committee on defence has unanimously [approved a bill](#) aimed at establishing dedicated child courts for victims of rape. Presented by PML-N Member of National Assembly Syeda Nausheen Iftikhar, the bill seeks to amend criminal laws to provide a specialized judicial process for child victims. The proposed child courts will offer a supportive environment where rape victims can record their statements in the presence of a psychiatrist.

Additionally, the bill ensures that these cases will be resolved within six months. Despite opposition from some members, including Jam Aslam, the bill received widespread approval, marking a crucial advancement in child protection legislation.



Source: Pixabay

Reading Recommendations

- The Fight for Transparent Access to Information in Pakistan ([Click Here](#))
- Life without Autonomy: Understanding Our Culture of Dependency ([Click Here](#))
- Prioritizing Citizens Beyond the Ballot ([Click Here](#))
- Solving the corruption challenge: The key may lie with the citizens. ([Click Here](#))
- Citizens' Inclusion and Accountability is the Key to Improved Governance and Efficient Public Sector Institutions ([Click Here](#))
- Digital Community Policing ([Click Here](#))
- Privatization of Schools in Punjab ([Click Here](#))