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# Country Analysis

## REPORT

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**MONSOON OF MISMANAGEMENT**

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# Executive Summary

Pakistan is confronting one of its most severe climate-linked crises in recent history. The 2025 monsoon floods have killed more than 900 people, displaced over four million in Punjab, and destroyed livestock, crops, and nearly 2,000 schools. Food prices have surged, inflation is rising, and millions remain in relief camps with limited access to clean water and sanitation. These recurring disasters driven by erratic monsoons, glacial melt, and heatwaves reflect both climate change and failures in urban planning, zoning, and disaster preparedness.

Political uncertainty has compounded the crisis. The dismissal of lawmakers in Gilgit-Baltistan and PTI's boycott of parliamentary committees highlight weakening institutions and growing mistrust in representative politics. PTI's framing of unlawful cybercrime cases as targeted victimization, combined with its support for protests in Balochistan, underscores both institutional strain and widening governance gaps. Meanwhile, unchecked construction in floodplains and weak enforcement of laws continue to magnify the human and economic toll of climate disasters.

Economic stability remains fragile. Despite steady remittances and a modest credit rating upgrade, exports have contracted, the trade deficit has widened, and public debt has climbed beyond Rs 80 trillion. With debt servicing consuming nearly half of revenues, investment in the private sector is being crowded out. Analysts warn that without structural reforms controlling deficits, slowing population growth, and restoring competitiveness Pakistan risks sliding further into long-term stagnation

Security threats have escalated sharply, with more than 600 terrorist incidents reported in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa this year and renewed violence in Balochistan. Military operations continue, but militants retain networks and exploit governance gaps, keeping large parts of the population under persistent threat. Diplomatically, Pakistan has sought momentum through renewed CPEC commitments with China, \$500 million trade agreements in Washington, resumed flights with Iran, and Russian assurances on regional security. Yet bureaucratic delays, militancy, and economic fragility undermine the credibility of these initiatives.

At the same time, human rights and social concerns remain pressing. Reports of surveillance, website blocking, and data leaks have raised fears about privacy, while prison overcrowding driven by excessive pre-trial detention reflects systemic failures in justice. India's suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty adds another layer of humanitarian risk. Unless Pakistan shifts decisively from reactive crisis management to proactive reform, the cycle of climate disasters, political fragility, and economic vulnerability will continue to destabilize the country.

# Monsoon of Mismanagement

CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE COST OF INACTION

Pakistan is experiencing one of its gravest climate-linked crises in recent history. The floods of 2025, following earlier disasters in 2010 and 2022, reveal a disturbing trajectory: intensifying climate extremes colliding with [fragile governance](#), poor urban planning, and [inadequate disaster preparedness](#). With nearly 910 lives lost this monsoon season, thousands injured, over 4 million displaced in Punjab alone, and livestock losses surpassing 6,100 animals since late June, the picture is clear: climate disasters are no longer episodic shocks but recurring national emergencies.

## Causes and Climate Linkages:

Pakistan lies in the Indus Basin, a system increasingly destabilized by glacial melt, erratic monsoon patterns, and cross-border water flows. According to the Flood Forecasting Division, water flows in the Sutlej at Ganda Singh Wala reached 350,000 cusecs, the highest since 1955. Simultaneously, Chenab carried 516,000 cusecs at Head Trimmu, raising fears of super floods cascading south into Sindh. India's upstream dam releases further compound the problem, with Bhakra at 84%, Pong at 98%, and Thein at 92%, leaving Pakistan downstream exposed to sudden discharges. Climate change intensifies these risks by amplifying both rainfall intensity and glacier melt. The 2022 IPCC reports already warned that South Asia would see heavier monsoon bursts and prolonged dry spells. The 2025 experience bears this out: Pakistan is simultaneously grappling with floods in Punjab, urban inundation in Lahore, Islamabad, and Karachi, as well as heatwaves that erode urban resilience. This climate volatility is stretching the governance system beyond its limits.

## Urban Flooding and Mismanagement:

Cities like Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad, which are the supposed centers of resilience, are themselves collapsing under water. A joint study by MIT and LUMS found that Pakistan's stormwater [drainage systems are dangerously outdated](#), often relying on sewerage networks, which leads to overflow and the spread of disease. Copenhagen's "sponge city" model, which converts roads and parks into absorptive infrastructure, offers lessons that Pakistan has yet to consider seriously. Encroachments on riverbeds, illegal construction in floodplains, and disregard for zoning laws magnify the disaster. As seen in Swat, where tourists drowned in flash floods this July, there was no early warning system, no regulated construction, and no coordinated emergency response, a tragic example of how negligence, not just nature, kills.

## A Humanitarian Crisis:

The humanitarian toll of the 2025 floods has been staggering. By early September, at least 910 people had lost their lives, including 504 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and [234 in Punjab](#). More than [4.15 million people](#) have been affected in [Punjab alone](#), with nearly two million displaced from their homes. Between 60,000 and 70,000 are now sheltering in relief camps, where food shortages, unsafe drinking water, and poor sanitation compound their suffering.



The disaster has also devastated livestock, with 6,180 animal deaths recorded, an especially severe blow in a country where the livestock sector contributes about [13–14 percent of GDP](#). The economic ripple effects are already evident: wheat prices have surged to Rs 4,000 per 40 kilograms, the highest in two years, while beef prices rose by [14 percent](#) in just a matter of weeks as transport bottlenecks and fodder shortages disrupted supply chains. Financial experts warn that the floods could add another 100 basis points to inflation, deepening Pakistan's already fragile macroeconomic instability. The humanitarian toll extends beyond lives lost and homes destroyed. Education has also suffered a severe setback, with nearly [2,000 schools damaged](#) or rendered unusable across flood-hit regions. For hundreds of thousands of children, the floods have meant not just physical displacement but also the collapse of their only access to structured learning. Many schools are now serving as temporary relief shelters, further delaying the resumption of classes. In a country already struggling with one of the world's highest numbers of out-of-school children, this disruption risks compounding intergenerational poverty and eroding human capital.



Source: Tribune

Glaciers are melting at unprecedented rates, raising the volatility of rivers like the Indus, while unchecked urbanization is compounding the crisis. [By 2030, more than half of Pakistan's population will live in cities](#) many of which lack even basic stormwater management systems. Without decisive action, the nation risks locking itself into a cycle of recurring humanitarian crises, [food insecurity](#), and mass migration.

### What Can We Do?

Breaking this cycle requires systemic change across all sectors of society. For the [government](#), the shift must be from [crisis response to risk prevention](#). Annual hazard maps need updating, zoning laws should strictly prohibit construction in floodplains, and investment must be channeled toward adaptive infrastructure. Pilot projects on “sponge cities” in Karachi and Lahore could model how green-blue stormwater systems work in practice. Beyond the traditional fixation on dams, Pakistan must pursue flexible, decentralized water storage systems and revive wetlands as natural buffers against flooding. Most importantly, provincial and district disaster management plans must be made public to ensure transparency and accountability.



Civil society organizations also have a vital role to play. At the grassroots level, they can lead community preparedness efforts by training village-level disaster response units. They should also press for climate budget transparency and ensure that disaster response frameworks prioritize women, children, and persons with disabilities, who bear disproportionate risks during crises. Academia, for its part, must integrate climate change, water literacy, and disaster preparedness into school and university curricula, while universities should conduct localized flood modeling and partner with provincial disaster management authorities.

The media must also reframe the narrative: floods are not “acts of God” but failures of governance and symptoms of climate change. Journalists should disseminate early warnings, spotlight safe evacuation practices, and hold officials to account. Citizens, too, cannot remain passive. Communities must resist construction in flood-prone zones, demand enforcement of zoning laws, and actively participate in civic climate advocacy platforms. Everyday actions, from conserving water to reducing waste and supporting localized reforestation, can also help ease the climate burden.

Ultimately, Pakistan’s floods are no longer seasonal misfortunes but [predictable disasters](#). The scale of human, economic, and ecological destruction will only intensify unless disaster management is treated not as a peripheral concern but as a central pillar of governance. The shrinking Indus delta and waterlogged streets of Lahore are stark reminders that the climate clock is ticking. Unless Pakistan undertakes a paradigm shift in how it plans, manages, and adapts, each monsoon will bring fresh waves of death, displacement, and despair, tragedies less attributable to the wrath of nature than to the negligence of man.





# Political Updates

Pakistan's political climate remains unsettled, with institutional maneuvering and shifting alliances creating new fault lines. The dismissal of [Gilgit-Baltistan's chief minister](#) and 10 lawmakers from PTI highlights how fragile party structures have become under pressure, where defections and forward blocs are increasingly shaped by external factors as much as internal dissent. Such moves weaken the stability of representative politics and deepen public skepticism about whether assemblies truly reflect voter intent.

At the national level, Imran Khan has signaled [openness to dialogue](#) but framed it strictly within legal and transparent boundaries. His stance contrasts with a political culture that often relies on informal bargaining, while PTI's resignations from standing committees point to a broader strategy of questioning the legitimacy of parliamentary forums under current conditions. Whether this enhances PTI's credibility or limits its ability to influence policymaking remains a critical question. In parallel, the Senate committee's revelation that 372 cases were unlawfully registered under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, despite amendments restricting such powers, exposes how laws are being applied beyond their mandate. For PTI, which has been a frequent target of cybercrime cases, these findings lend weight to its claim that institutions are being used selectively to control political activity.

Meanwhile, the party's decision to back protests in Balochistan against lawlessness and terrorism shows its attempt to engage with regional grievances that go beyond its traditional base. Combined with revelations of unlawful [PECA cases](#) and ongoing debates over security and governance, these developments point to a political environment where parties, institutions, and citizens are locked in a contest over accountability and authority.



Source: 24 News

# Economic Updates

Pakistan's recent [economic indicators](#) reveal a fragile balance between temporary relief and deepening vulnerabilities. Remittance inflows have remained robust, the rupee has shown some stability, and Moody's offered a modest credit rating upgrade. Yet beneath these surface improvements, exports are stagnant, debt is climbing, and inflation is once again eroding household budgets.



The trade deficit widened [29 percent](#) in just two months of the fiscal year, hitting \$6 billion as imports grew faster than exports. Despite trade liberalisation under the IMF programme, exporters complain of exchange rate rigidity and weak competitiveness. August alone saw exports shrink by 12.5 percent year-on-year, suggesting that without significant reforms, Pakistan may face renewed external pressure as imports continue to outpace earnings.



Source: Pexels

Public finances add to the strain. Gross public debt rose to [Rs80.5 trillion](#) by June, breaching legal limits and consuming vast fiscal space through debt servicing, which took up nearly half of government revenue last year. Banks in turn have shifted heavily toward government securities, starving the private sector of credit. This crowding-out effect reduces investment in industries like textiles and energy, slowing growth and employment at a time when demand for credit is already weak.

The deeper challenge, however, is structural. In his interview, former [IMF official](#) Aasim Husain argues that Pakistan's economic decline stems from decades of policy missteps, unchecked population growth, and reliance on external borrowing rather than domestic savings. While Pakistan once outperformed its neighbors, it now lags far behind India and Bangladesh, whose slower population growth, higher savings, and structural reforms enabled sustained investment and competitiveness. Pakistan, by contrast, overvalued its currency, ran chronic fiscal deficits, and allowed debt servicing to consume public resources, leaving little room for human development or private sector growth. Husain stresses that without slowing population growth, curbing fiscal profligacy, and maintaining a competitive exchange rate, Pakistan will remain trapped in a cycle of short-term relief and long-term stagnation.

## Security and Governance

Terrorist violence in Pakistan has intensified in 2025, with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa reporting [605 incidents in the first eight months of the year](#). These attacks killed 138 civilians and 79 police personnel, while leaving more than 480 people injured. August alone saw 129 incidents, making clear how concentrated and relentless the threat has become in districts like Bannu, [North Waziristan](#), and Dir. In Balochistan, the [suicide bombing at a BNP rally](#) in Quetta that killed 14 people added to the sense of insecurity, while [mass arrests](#) of opposition leaders have fueled political tensions alongside the violence. Security forces have launched a wave of operations to push back. In early September, at least [23 militants](#) were killed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan during raids and intelligence-based operations. At the same time, the army has absorbed significant losses, including seven soldiers killed in Lower Dir and [six in Bannu](#) when militants attempted to storm the Frontier Constabulary headquarters with an explosives-laden vehicle.



Fighting in North Waziristan's Datta Khel showed how militants continue to embed themselves in civilian areas, using local populations as cover while carrying out attacks. This cycle of attack and response has kept large parts of the population living in fear and disruption.

The persistence of violence points to deeper weaknesses in Pakistan's security and political framework. Groups such as the TTP retain networks and local leverage despite years of military campaigns. Border regions remain difficult to secure, and the absence of meaningful governance or political outreach has allowed militants to exploit grievances. Official framing of these groups as "Indian proxies" highlights the regional dimension, but inside Pakistan, the drivers of militancy are linked to governance gaps and mistrust between the state and its citizens. Unless security operations are matched with political reforms, community engagement, and credible justice, the conflict is likely to drag on with high costs for both civilians and security forces.



Source: GNN

## Diplomatic Landscape

September has been one of the busiest months in recent memory for Pakistan's diplomacy. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's trip to China set the tone, where he met [President Xi Jinping](#), Premier Li Qiang, and President Vladimir Putin on the sidelines of the SCO gathering. The visit renewed momentum for [CPEC's second phase](#), with business forums connecting 300 Pakistani and 500 Chinese companies and producing 21 memoranda of understanding.

The government announced plans to float panda bonds and expand educational ties, including scholarships for 1,000 Pakistani agriculture graduates and the presence of nearly 30,000 students already in China. Islamabad pressed Beijing for early progress on delayed projects such as the ML-1 railway, the Karakoram Highway realignment, and the operationalisation of Gwadar port. Shehbaz also invited Xi to visit Pakistan in 2026, when the two countries will mark 75 years of diplomatic relations.



Source: Sabah News

Economic diplomacy did not stop there. In Washington, Pakistan signed fresh agreements with US partners, including one between [US Strategic Metals](#) and the Frontier Works Organization and another between the Mota-Engil Group and the National Logistics Corporation. The deals are meant to draw in about 500 million dollars in their first phase and focus on building capacity for processing critical minerals locally. Meanwhile, Islamabad's [engagement with Iran](#) produced mixed results.

A long-planned barter trade framework continued to face bureaucratic delays, and the opening of the Badini border crossing was postponed again, this time due to poor road conditions and weak coordination among ministries. But there was also a breakthrough: direct Islamabad–Tehran flights resumed after six decades, with a weekly service now operating on Tuesdays, giving tangible shape to closer people-to-people and commercial contact.

[Russia](#) added a more urgent security dimension to the month's diplomacy. Zamir Kabulov, Moscow's special envoy for Afghanistan, said in an exclusive interaction that Daesh (IS-KP) remained the most dangerous international terrorist threat, but stressed that other groups like the TTP and ETIM endangered Pakistan and China. He confirmed that Islamabad and Beijing had repeatedly complained to Kabul about these outfits, even as the Afghan authorities publicly denied their presence. Kabulov warned that such disputes, if left unresolved, could strain diplomatic ties and urged the Afghan government to work with its neighbors to address them.

Quoting Russian estimates of some 23,000 foreign fighters in Afghanistan, he argued that recognition of the Taliban regime was partly driven by Moscow's belief that a stronger Kabul would be better positioned to curb terrorism. He said Russia's decision was not just political but also economic, tied to safeguarding its investments and developing Afghanistan's role as a bridge between South Asia, Central Asia, and Eurasia. Kabulov praised Chinese projects in Pakistan and Afghanistan, including CPEC, and said Kabul itself welcomed such investments. He added that Afghanistan could benefit the most from CPEC by connecting regional economies.

Kabulov acknowledged that international recognition of the Taliban government remained difficult, citing hesitations in countries including Pakistan, China, India, and Iran. He noted, however, that China had already accepted an Afghan ambassador's credentials and Pakistan had elevated the Afghan envoy's status, both steps he described as signals of gradual acceptance. For Russia's part, he said, engagement had already deepened through inter-governmental channels even without formal recognition.



He voiced support for the trilateral process between Pakistan, China, and Afghanistan, though Russia does not plan to join it for now. The envoy also linked economic stability to reducing migration pressures, saying that Russian investment could create jobs in Afghanistan and indirectly benefit neighbors like Pakistan and Iran. He expressed condolences over the fatalities from the earthquake that struck five Afghan provinces in September, calling the tragedy a reminder of the human suffering the region still endures. At home, Pakistan has been negotiating the difficult balance between external commitments and internal constraints. The Senate Standing Committee on Commerce flagged delays in [implementing barter trade](#) with Iran and called for faster inter-ministerial coordination. The government, meanwhile, has pushed back on the IMF's Governance and Corruption Diagnostic Assessment, rejecting suggestions for a separate authority to oversee asset disclosures and insisting existing institutions can be strengthened instead. These developments come against the backdrop of a fragile economy. Inflation earlier this year surged into the high twenties, foreign direct investment remains under one percent of GDP, and the trade deficit hovers near 25 billion dollars. The urgency behind September's flurry of diplomacy lies in these numbers.



Source: Pexels

The month has therefore produced a dual narrative. On one side, there are promising headlines: business deals in Beijing, mineral agreements in Washington, resumed flights to Tehran, Russian assurances of investment in Afghanistan, and renewed talk of regional connectivity through CPEC. On the other hand, there are sobering realities: militant threats spilling across borders, bureaucratic bottlenecks that delay trade, and economic fragility that undermines foreign confidence. September captured the mix of hope and pressure Pakistan is operating under. Whether the country can turn diplomatic engagements into lasting results will depend not only on its external partners but on its own ability to deliver security, cut red tape, and follow through on commitments.

## Social and Humanitarian Updates

This September has been another difficult month for millions of Pakistanis. The floods that began in the summer are still taking lives and livelihoods, as discussed earlier. More than 900 people have died, and millions remain affected, especially in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Nearly two million people are still displaced, many of them in temporary camps with little access to clean water, food, or proper sanitation. Families in these camps are struggling with disease risks, and children are missing out on school, showing how long-lasting this disaster will be for communities.

At the same time, new concerns have emerged about the state's treatment of its citizens. [Amnesty International](#) has reported that Pakistan's authorities are monitoring millions of phones and blocking hundreds of thousands of websites through surveillance systems. On top of this, reports of sensitive personal data being leaked and sold online have left many people feeling unsafe and unprotected. For ordinary Pakistanis already dealing with displacement and rising costs of living, the fear that private conversations and personal information are no longer secure adds to the sense of daily vulnerability.

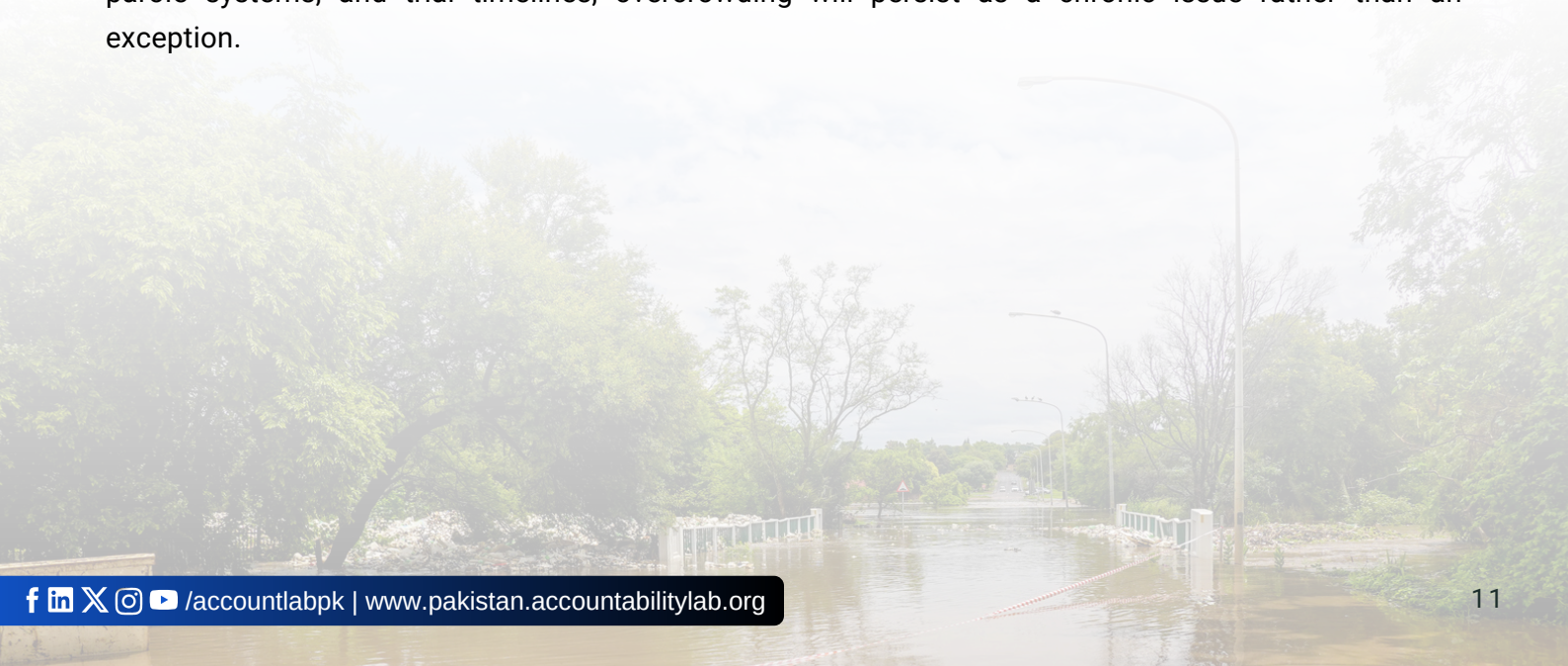


Source: Pexels

Another warning came from Pakistan's diplomats at the [United Nations](#), who raised alarm over India's suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty. Experts said such a move could bring serious humanitarian risks for Pakistan, a country where most people depend on farming and access to river water for survival. If water flows are disrupted, the result could be more food shortages, displacement, and suffering for women and children in particular.

Furthermore, according to the Ministry of Human Rights' 2024 data, [71 per cent](#) of Pakistan's prison population are under-trial detainees, many held for petty or bailable offences that should not require prolonged detention. The National Commission on Human Rights has repeatedly warned that such excessive pre-trial detention violates Article 10A of the Constitution, which guarantees the right to a fair trial. Yet, systemic delays in investigation and weak access to legal aid mean detainees remain trapped for years.

International standards, including the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules), stress rehabilitation and alternatives to incarceration, but Pakistan's reliance on outdated punitive laws keeps prisons overcrowded and unsafe. Without reforms to bail procedures, parole systems, and trial timelines, overcrowding will persist as a chronic issue rather than an exception.





# Reading Recommendations

- The Backyard Solution to Food Insecurity ([Click Here](#))
- Selling Misinformation ([Click Here](#))
- Data-Driven Cities: Lessons from World for Pakistan ([Click Here](#))
- The FY 2025–26 Budget and Its Impact on Pakistan’s IT & ITeS Sector ([Click Here](#))
- Planting for Survival: Pakistan’s Path Out of the Heat ([Click Here](#))
- Transparency Through Open Data: Key to Reforming Governance in Pakistan ([Click Here](#))
- From Reports to Reality: Why Pakistan Ranks Last in Global Gender Gap Index ([Click Here](#))
- From Policy to People: Rethinking Governance with Design Thinking ([Click Here](#))
- Floods, Heatwaves, and Hope: Reimagining Agriculture in a Warming Pakistan ([Click Here](#))
- 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](#))
- Water Governance Challenges in Pakistan ([Click Here](#))
- Consumer Protection in Pakistan ([Click Here](#))

