

Monthly FORESIGHT Islamabad

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Chief Editor Note

As we step into May, FORESIGHT Magazine focuses on the pivotal geopolitical and economic developments shaping Pakistan's current landscape. This month, we explore key issues that demand our collective attention and strategic action.

The recent visit of the Iranian President to South Asia underscores the importance of strengthening regional ties. For Pakistan, this is a chance to deepen our historical bonds with Iran, enhance economic cooperation, and address shared security concerns. Navigating these diplomatic waters with skill is crucial to aligning our national interests with broader regional stability and prosperity.

Terrorism remains a significant threat to Pakistan, with emerging trends presenting new challenges. Our fight against this menace requires a dynamic and resilient approach. In this edition, we analyze the latest trends in terrorism and the necessary countermeasures, emphasizing the importance of a coordinated and comprehensive strategy to ensure national security.

The geopolitical triangle of China, Pakistan, and Afghanistan presents both opportunities and risks. As China expands its influence and Afghanistan remains fragile, Pakistan must carefully balance its alliances to promote regional peace and development. This issue explores how Pakistan can leverage its position within this trilateral relationship to foster stability and mutual benefit.

In economic news, Saudi Arabia's decision to fast-track investment in Pakistan offers a promising boost to our economy. This strategic move can catalyze growth in various sectors, from energy to infrastructure. To maximize this investment, Pakistan must implement necessary reforms and create a conducive environment for sustained economic development. We provide an in-depth analysis of the implications of Saudi investment and the steps needed to harness its full potential.

This May edition of FORESIGHT Magazine aims to equip you with a comprehensive understanding of the critical geopolitical and economic issues at hand. Through insightful analysis and expert perspectives, we strive to empower our readers to engage thoughtfully and proactively with these challenges.

Let us move forward with determination, guided by the vision of a prosperous and secure Pakistan.

With warm regards,



Tanveer Ali Maken

GEOPOLITICAL MANEUVERS

Iranian President's Mission to Strengthen South Asian Ties

Tanveer Ali Maken

Gaining regional influence is becoming a necessity, not just Iran's desire. Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi's recent visit to Pakistan and Sri Lanka is considered an important development to achieve these goals, indicating strategic efforts to deepen relations with South Asian countries. With recent efforts to strengthen bilateral relations with South Asian countries, Iran intends to demonstrate its diplomatic influence domestically and globally. These visits highlight Iran's deep interest in promoting closer economic cooperation, especially in areas such as trade, energy and infrastructure development. Through access to Pakistan and Sri Lanka, Iran seeks to strengthen bilateral relations,

enhance strategic partnership and explore avenues for regional cooperation. Furthermore, Iran's efforts to reach out to South Asian countries reflect its broader geopolitical ambitions and recognition of the region's growing importance in global affairs.

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei, as well as Raisi and Iran's Foreign Minister Amir Abdullahian, have stressed on several occasions that in order to overcome its isolation, Iran should try to reach out to countries facing economic or political challenges, and through diplomatic access and connectivity, Iran should promote mutual interest stability and prosperity in the South Asian

region. Present as a key player in taking advantage of shared goals.

President Raisi's visit is the first by a head of state to Pakistan since the formation of the government formed as a result of the recent elections. As soon as the newly elected government is formed, it is surrounded by various problems, it is facing challenges like inflation, law and order situation and a mountain of foreign debt. On the other hand, relying on the Bailout packages of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Pakistan needed to take extraordinary steps to overcome the serious economic situation to deal with the debt of China and Saudi Arabia. The new government in Islamabad (elected in March) led by Prime Minister





Shahbaz Sharif has already taken some extraordinary decisions, including making efforts to resume trade with Pakistan's historical rival India. In addition, the decision to significantly advance economic relations with Iran shows that Pakistan believes it has to benefit more from the move than it could lose from US sanctions or further international aid.

Furthermore, Pakistan-Iran relations increase China's influence in the Middle East and South Asia in the backdrop of the United States. The two sides are key members of the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and cooperation between them is beneficial to Beijing's interests. The joint statement during the visit indicated that as members of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the Organisation of Economic Cooperation (ECO), the two countries expressed a strong commitment to enhance cooperation in the areas of connectivity, infrastructure development and energy. The two countries also agreed to expand

mutually beneficial and sustainable connectivity between the sister ports of Gwadar and Chabahar.

President Raisi held delegation-level meetings as well as one-on-one talks with the Prime Minister, President, Army Chief, Chairman Senate and Speaker National Assembly in the Pakistani capital. They signed eight MoUs and agreements related to various sectors including trade, science and technology, agriculture, health, culture and judicial affairs. These include a Memorandum of Understanding on the establishment of the Ramden-Gabbed Joint Free/Special Zone. Cooperation between the Ministry of Cooperative Labor and Social Welfare of Iran and the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development of Pakistan was discussed. He said that the economic and trade volume between Iran and Pakistan will be increased to \$ 10 billion.

The interior ministers of Pakistan and Iran discussed border

management to prevent smuggling and drug trafficking in a meeting and "decided in principle to ban terrorist organisations in their respective countries." "The two sides agreed on a joint strategy to combat the threat of terrorism, including mutual support and further improving intelligence sharing. On the other hand, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi also recently made a special visit to Sri Lanka and reiterated the commitment to strengthen bilateral relations between the two countries in various fields including trade, energy and cultural exchange. The visit has provided an opportunity for fruitful discussions on how to enhance economic cooperation and explore new avenues of cooperation.

The Iranian president's recent visit is the first by an Iranian head of government in 15 years. The visit comes against the backdrop of changing regional and global dynamics as Sri Lanka prepares for its presidential elections. Iran is keen to accelerate its economic partnership with Sri Lanka, which



has been badly hit by US sanctions, while for Sri Lanka, boosting trade and protecting foreign investment is crucial at this juncture. Facing a severe economic crisis, Sri Lanka has recently received an IMF bailout package and the government is facing public discontent caused by a plethora of taxes and a sharp increase in daily living costs.

During his visit, Raisi called on Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe and signed agreements for cooperation in the fields of economy, trade, science and technology, art, media and tourism. Raisi inaugurated the Uma Oya Hydropower and Irrigation Project, which was developed with Iranian support. The \$514 million project aims to irrigate land, provide drinking water and contribute electricity to the national grid, particularly benefiting poor districts. The Uma Oya project was significantly delayed due to sanctions on Iran.

President Risi, during a recent visit, criticized the current world order and stressed that Iran's resistance to the current international system reflects the common concerns of the global South. While Iran wants to expand its economic partnership in the region.

Cash-strapped Sri Lanka exported \$20 million worth of tea to Iran to partially repay its \$251 million oil debt. Under the Barter Trade Agreement signed in December 2021, Iran can obtain tea imports without reducing its foreign exchange reserves despite sanctions. Relations between Iran and Sri Lanka are a great example of how external factors can

change the course of bilateral economic relations.

Iran understands the importance of Sri Lanka's geo-strategic location, especially as the Iranian Navy continues to demonstrate its military strength and influence in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). Sri Lanka's proximity to key sea routes, including the Strait of Malacca and the Strait of Hormuz, further enhances Iran's importance in protecting its interests, particularly maritime trade and security.

A closer look at the Iranian president's recent visits makes it clear that Iran wants to strengthen its position economically and defensively in the region. And despite differences and conflicts of interest, Iran seeks a lasting and strong alliance in the region, especially in South Asian countries, forgetting past policies and differences. Who are united to achieve their own interests. Iran also stresses the need for regional and global developments and bilateral cooperation to address the common threat of terrorism.

Cooperation in economic and defense agreements during Iran's visit to Pakistan and Sri Lanka comes at a time when both countries are facing security threats and economic crisis, while Iran is also facing similar challenges, including increased security concerns and economic sanctions by Western countries. The Iranian president's recent visits provide an opportunity for productive discussions on expanding economic cooperation and exploring new avenues of cooperation. Furthermore, it will provide a platform to deepen diplomatic relations and promote mutual understanding. Overall, these visits by the Iranian president represent a step towards strengthening friendship and cooperation in the region, which can lay the foundation for future contacts and partnerships.

However, amid these diplomatic engagements, the US also issued warnings about possible sanctions for countries doing business with Iran. This indicates the geopolitical implications of Raisi's visit and Pakistan maintaining a delicate balance in its international relations.



The honeymoon period for the government is over and marking a considerable passage of time since the establishment of the new national administration. Presently, the nation grapples with multifaceted challenges spanning economic, administrative, defense, and peacekeeping realms, demanding urgent and concerted efforts. In particular, the time has come

testament to this collaboration. Additionally, China has openly supported Pakistan in technology and industrial sectors, further strengthening the bond between the two countries.

In recent times, there have been several terrorist attacks specifically targeting Chinese citizens, resulting

BREAKING THE WAVES

Pakistan

Struggling Against Emerging Terrorism Trends

Irshad Ahmed Khan

for decisive action against militancy. From the coast and interior of Balochistan to the difficult mountains of the north, violence is increasing alarmingly. At a time when Pakistan is trying to attract foreign investors to bring their dollars here to breathe some life into a dead economy, the country cannot afford to give terrorists a chance to play freely. - The recent wave of terrorism is a clear indication of the enemy's strategy against Pakistan's interests and its friendly countries.

China extended a helping hand to Pakistan during challenging periods, making significant investments in Pakistan when many other friendly nations hesitated. The projects like CPEC and Gwadar Port stand as

in casualties. For instance, the attack near Bisham in 2021 and the incident at The Confucius Institute of Karachi University last March highlight this concerning trend. In a tragic event, terrorists ambushed a vehicle carrying Chinese engineers in Bisham tehsil of Shangla district, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, leading to the loss of lives of at least five Chinese citizens. Consequently, Beijing urged Islamabad for a comprehensive investigation into these incidents.

The recent attack has sounded a major alarm, not only disrupting vital infrastructure projects but also severely impacting the confidence of Chinese nationals operating in Pakistan. This incident has sent



shockwaves through the community, highlighting the urgent need for enhanced security measures and a thorough investigation into these ongoing terrorist threats.

Globally, terrorism has undergone various phases, each marked by distinct characteristics such as frequency, lethality, targets, and modes of operation, tailored to specific agendas during that period. These shifts reflect the impact of global political shifts and technological advancements, shaping the strategies adopted by terrorist groups. The evolution of terrorism is encapsulated in four waves: the 'anarchists' wave (1880s-1920s), the 'anti-colonial' wave (1920s-1960s), the 'new leftists' wave (1960s-end of the century), and the 'religiously influenced' wave (post-1979). Understanding these phases provides us with valuable insights into the motivations driving terrorist activities and their fluctuations over time.

During the anarchist wave, anarchist and nationalist groups used similar tactics and even provided joint training, highlighting the interconnection and influence between different terrorist ideologies. Irish rebels in the 19th century benefited from financial aid, weapons and volunteers provided by the Irish-American community

Between 1968 and 1982, the global landscape was marked by 49 international kidnappings involving 951 hostages. Notably, the abduction and tragic demise of former Italian Prime Minister Aldo Moro at the hands of the Red Brigades in 1979 underscored the enduring significance of kidnapping as a tactical tool. This period also witnessed heightened attempts at political assassinations, notably orchestrated by groups like the IRA. Instances include the targeted killings of two British ambassadors in 1976 and 1979, the assassination of Lord Mountbatten in 1979, and thwarted assassination plots against Margaret Thatcher and John Major. Furthermore, the Black September Group's assassination of Jordan's prime minister in 1971 added to this wave's notoriety. The term 'international terrorism' gained prominence during this wave, characterized by coordinated attacks, kidnappings, and hijackings by militant factions.

While the third wave of revolutionary terrorism saw eventual setbacks, global efforts toward counter-terrorism cooperation encountered hurdles. Nevertheless, these challenges spurred initiatives to

strengthen international collaboration against terrorism. This period witnessed the signing of key international conventions, such as those under the United Nations, spanning from 1970 to 1999. These conventions aimed at curbing hijacking and hostage-taking incidents, reflecting a collective commitment to thwarting terrorist activities on a global scale.

The fourth wave of terrorism is characterized by a distortion of religious ideologies, attributing to militant groups' utilization of the internet for recruitment, radicalization, and fundraising. Moreover, these groups adeptly harness social media platforms to propagate contemporary propaganda. Unlike earlier waves driven by political objectives, this wave's distinctiveness lies in its warped religious interpretation. Advocates of religiously motivated terrorism justify their actions under the pretext of combating perceived injustices, legitimizing militancy as a means to an end.

In 1901, President Roosevelt called for a global crusade against terrorism. Exactly a century later, in September 2001, President George W. Bush declared a "war on terror" vowing to identify, prevent, and defeat every terrorist group with global reach. This echo of commitment from world leaders across time raises questions about the effectiveness of this ongoing war. Has the battle against terrorism fallen short of its goals, or are we witnessing a shift into a new era of global terrorism?

The crucial question now arises, Will the current wave of global terrorism, which has evolved from 'anarchist' to 'anti-colonial', 'new left', and then 'religiously influenced' (after 1979), persist or subside by 2025? Alternatively, could the ruthless pursuit of economic agendas, the vested interests of global powers, proxy conflicts, and the exploitation of resources in smaller nations lead to a dark and unprecedented era in the history of state interventions and global terrorism?

However, a statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) on the recent terrorist incidents said that "some foreign elements are responsible for the latest wave of terrorism and they have been identified". Now it is the responsibility of the government to send a clear message to the enemies using diplomatic channels that their facilitation of terrorist violence will be exposed to the international community. And such actions within another country will destroy the peace of the entire region.

The higher education sector in Pakistan has traditionally practiced memory, book writing and theory knowledge more vigorously, relying heavily on ancient theoretical frameworks and traditional teaching methods. There is a growing gap between the degrees obtained through traditional educational methods and the practical applications required in the industrial and business level. Graduates often find themselves unprepared for the workforce, and this unpreparedness arises due to several factors. Many educational programs are outdated and incompatible with the current needs of the industry. Secondly, these students rarely have

gap between academia and industry is worrisome and should be seen as a serious issue. In this regard, we will discuss the current gap between the expectations of academia and industry and also discuss modern tools and techniques to fill this gap effectively.

How to fill the gap? It is a fact that the current education system involves excessive emphasis on memory and minimal emphasis on creativity. The rapid pace of change in the external business environment and modern technology must bring both academia and industry together to fill this gap. Practical steps have to be taken to connect the

educational institutions and industry. In Pakistan it currently feels as if both academia and industry live in different worlds and work in different places. They have to come together, talk and cooperate to achieve the desired results. Adopt team teaching where educators and industry experts provide knowledge in the classroom. The first teaches theoretical aspects while the latter trains students in practical aspects to enable students to engage with theory in practice. Ensure the right chemistry between campus and corporate. Invite industry experts to conduct guest lectures to understand the pulse of students and report back to the industry with your

BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Bridging the Gap Between Academia and Industry

Dr. Tanveer Kiani

opportunities to do real-world projects or internships that provide practical experience and fully prepare for practical life after completion of education. Causes distance.

In order to bridge this gap in the present era and enable students and young people to support the rapidly developing world, make their place in businesses and industry, and avoid the scourge of unemployment after completing degrees with high fees, the contradiction between the needs of industrial institutions and the availability of skilled people required from educational institutions. Steps should be taken seriously and immediately. The

campus with corporate. Set realistic goals. Students should be counselled and made to select subjects according to the needs of the industry in the future. Build a strong alumni network. Be a student-centered educational system, facilitate practice-based learning for students to try and train procedural skills, emphasize experiential learning. Benjamin Franklin rightly said, "Told me I forgot. I remember being taught. Add me and I'll learn. Mix both hard and soft skills properly. Train soft skills. Combine teaching approaches and current concepts with emerging industrial trends.

Ensure seamless communication and coordination between

feedback. This enables the industry to develop its own induction programs and corporate training programs accordingly. Invite teachers to the industry to understand expectations, and invite recruiters to visit campuses to empathize with the challenges of educational institutions.

Academia should take inputs from the industry to develop the course curriculum as per industry expectations. It should develop a course curriculum that is relevant and useful for students. After providing education, it should take feedback from the industry and update the course curriculum and teaching pedagogy to meet industry expectations. It should

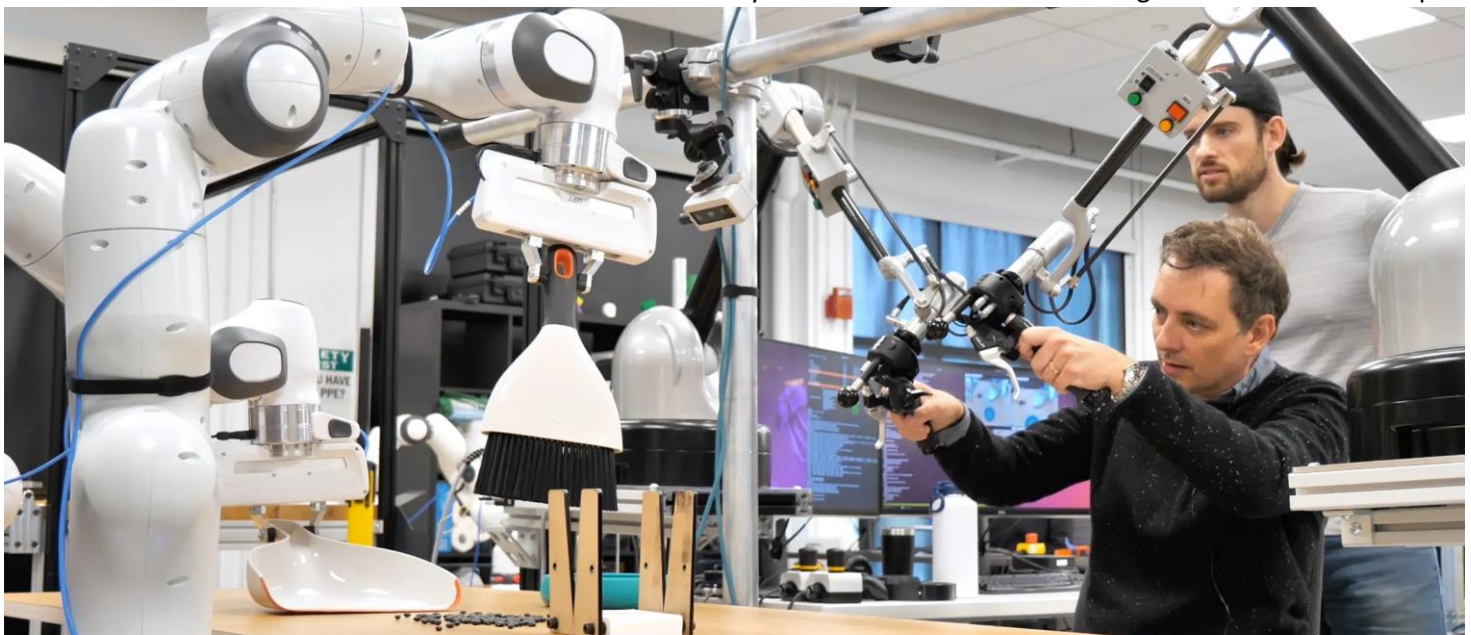


be implemented from time to time as the expectations and aspirations of the industry are changing rapidly. Direct collaboration between educational institutions and industries is an effective way to fill this gap. For example, inviting industry professionals to deliver guest lectures and conduct workshops can give students insight into the latest industry trends and practices.

As Jack Welch said, "You can hire people for a lifetime by training them, enabling them to adapt,

A trained and talented human workforce is the key to Pakistan's economic development. No country can progress without the development of its human capital. Human minds and hands are always counted behind machines, not machines behind humans. The future of higher education always lies in its ability to adapt to the changing demands of the industry. By fostering close ties between academia and industry, educational institutions can ensure that their graduates are not only knowledgeable but also skilled and ready to face the

leaders for the nation. Therefore, research and development activities should be promoted within educational institutions and this gap can be significantly reduced by facilitating partnerships with industries. Joint research projects between universities and industries, focusing on the practical application of academic research, can lead to breakthroughs that can benefit both fields. The establishment of innovation laboratories where students can work on state-of-the-art technologies and develop



making them mobile phones to move to other places to do other jobs." But you can't guarantee a lifetime of employment. Therefore, they should learn, learn and re-learn regularly. Parents should not put pressure on their children in choosing subjects. They should appreciate their children's passion and encourage their children to choose subjects of their choice. Follow these tools and techniques to fill the skill gap by taking into account the latest trends and technologies so that students can become employable and usable in the corporate world.

challenges of the modern workplace. This requires a concerted effort to integrate innovation and reform in traditional educational practices, practical experiences and industrial insights into the educational curriculum. By doing so, Pakistan can create a workforce that is globally competent and competitive and ready to play an effective role in the country's economic and social development.

Educational institutions are the backbone of any country as they produce healthy citizens and

prototypes to meet industry challenges provides a dynamic learning environment that bridges the gap between theory and practice.

Finally, a coordinated effort by all stakeholders including teachers, students, parents, academic institutions, industry, intellectuals and nonprofits is necessary to bridge the existing skill gap between academia and industry. Changing times demand that our classrooms function as laboratories and universities to serve as Human Resource Development Centers.





Building Pakistan's

Tech Future

Dr. Arfan Jafar's

Dedication to Research and Education

Dr. Arfan Jafar stands as a pioneering figure in the realm of computer science and academia, revered for his profound contributions and unwavering dedication to the field. As the Dean of one of Pakistan's most prestigious faculties of CS and IT at Superior University, Dr. Jafar brings over two decades of rich experience and expertise. His remarkable journey includes being the first PhD in Computer Science under the Indigenous Scheme across Pakistan, a testament to his commitment to advancing education and research in the country. With a prolific portfolio comprising over 130 publications and a significant number of books and books chapters, Dr. Jafar epitomizes excellence and innovation in CS and IT education, shaping the minds of future tech leaders and driving transformative change in the



INNOVATING THE FUTURE

Dr. Arfan Jaffar Superior University on the Frontier of CS Education

Tanveer Ali Maken



Can you share your experience and journey in the field of Computer Science and Information Technology?

My fascination with computer science began at QAU Islamabad, where I earned my Master's degree and after that gaining valuable industry experience. This strong foundation propelled me to pursue further studies at FAST Islamabad, where I completed both my MS and PhD. My thirst for knowledge didn't stop there, and I ventured to GIST South Korea for a postdoctoral fellowship, immersing myself in the cutting edge of the field. Following my academic pursuits, I embarked on a rewarding journey as an Assistant Professor at FAST Islamabad & Imam Saud University, Saudi Arabia. Here, I had the privilege of guiding and inspiring the next generation of computer scientists, fostering their problem-solving skills and nurturing their passion for technology. Currently, I serve as the Dean at Superior University Lahore. This role allows me to leverage my experience and expertise to shape the direction of computer science education, ensuring our students are equipped with the knowledge and skills to thrive in the ever-evolving IT landscape. My journey in computer science and information technology has been one of continuous learning and exploration. From the theoretical underpinnings of the field to the practical applications that transform our world, I am constantly seeking new ways to contribute to this dynamic and impactful domain.

What inspired you to pursue a career in academia, specifically in the domain of Computer Science?

The allure of academia, particularly in Computer Science, stemmed from my fascination with the rapid evolution of technology and its impact on society. I was driven by a desire to delve into the complexities of computer systems, algorithms, and emerging technologies. The pursuit of knowledge and the excitement of making a groundbreaking discovery in computer science might have fueled my desire for an

academic career. Academia allows me to contribute to the field's advancement through research and development of new technologies that can have a real-world impact. Additionally, the opportunity to mentor and educate future generations of tech professionals was a compelling motivation for me to pursue a career in academia.

As the Dean of one of Pakistan's esteemed faculties of Computer Science and IT, what are your key responsibilities and objectives?

Answer: As the Dean, my responsibilities encompass academic leadership, curriculum development, faculty management, and fostering a conducive learning environment. My primary objective is to ensure that our Computer Science and IT programs remain at the forefront of innovation and relevance. I strive to cultivate a culture of excellence, research, and industry collaboration to equip our students with the skills and knowledge needed to excel in the digital age.

What are the unique academic offerings and initiatives at Superior University that differentiate it from other institutions?

Superior University sets itself apart through a focus on innovation, global exposure, and real-world application, all designed to empower students for success. Here's a breakdown of our unique offerings:

3U1M Program: 3 Years in University & 1 year in Market

Entrepreneurial Teaching and Training Program (ETTP)

Focus on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

On top of these unique offerings, Superior University provides well-rounded academic experiences through Freshman programs, Project-Based Learning (PBL), Mentorship programs and SEP (Social Entrepreneur Program).

By combining these innovative programs with a commitment to academic excellence and real-world application, Superior University equips its graduates with the skills and knowledge to become not just successful professionals, but also responsible global citizens.

- **3U1M Program (Superior Go Global):** This program goes beyond traditional academics, integrating a one-month international experience into the curriculum. Students gain



valuable exposure to foreign cultures, education systems, and potential career paths, giving them a significant edge in the globalized job market.

- **Entrepreneurial Teaching and Training Program (ETTP):** This groundbreaking initiative flips the script on traditional learning. ETTP equips students with the skills and mindset of an entrepreneur, fostering a culture of innovation and problem-solving that sets them up for success in any career path they choose.
- **Focus on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** Superior University integrates the UN's SDGs throughout the curriculum, ensuring graduates possess the knowledge and tools to tackle pressing global challenges like poverty, climate change, and inequality. This commitment positions Superior at the forefront of education for a sustainable future.
- **Strong Emphasis on Internationalization:** Superior University fosters a global environment through its Semester Exchange Program, Dual Degree Programs, vibrant international student community initiatives like the African Students Association Pakistan (ASAP), and the "1 Month with Global Experience" component of the 3U1M Program. This focus on international collaboration prepares students to thrive in an interconnected world.
- **Additional Distinctive Programs:** On top of these unique offerings, Superior University provides well-rounded academic experiences through Freshman programs, Problem-Based Learning

(PBL), Mentorship programs, and the Speaksure Language Center, ensuring students receive all the support they need to excel.

By combining these innovative programs with a commitment to academic excellence and real-world application, Superior University equips its graduates with the skills and knowledge to become not just successful professionals, but also responsible global citizens.

Superior University prides itself on offering cutting-edge academic programs that blend theoretical rigor with practical application. Our institution places a strong emphasis on hands-on learning through Project Based Learning (PBL), industry internships, and collaborative projects with leading tech companies. Additionally, we offer specialized courses and certifications in emerging technologies such as AI, machine learning, cybersecurity, and data analytics, providing our students with a competitive edge in the job market.

How does Superior University prepare its students to meet the challenges of the rapidly evolving technology landscape?

At Superior University, we adopt a forward-thinking approach to education. We regularly update our curriculum to reflect the latest trends and advancements in technology. Our students benefit from exposure to industry-relevant projects, workshops, hackathons, and seminars conducted by industry experts. We also emphasize soft skills development, entrepreneurship, and critical thinking to ensure that our graduates are well-prepared to navigate and lead in the ever-changing technology landscape.

Can you discuss any ongoing research initiatives or collaborations that Superior University is engaged in within the field of Computer Science and IT?

Superior University is actively involved in several research initiatives and collaborations within Computer Science and IT. We have partnerships with leading research institutions, government agencies, and industry partners to conduct cutting-edge research in areas such as artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, data science, and smart technologies. Our faculty and students are engaged in impactful research projects that contribute to knowledge creation and technological innovation.

How does Superior University support entrepreneurship and innovation among its students in the technology domain?

Entrepreneurship and innovation are integral components of the educational experience at Superior University. We offer dedicated incubation centers, startup accelerators, and entrepreneurship programs that empower students to transform their ideas into viable businesses. Our university provides mentorship, networking opportunities, access to funding, and resources to nurture entrepreneurial ventures. We encourage a culture of innovation, risk-taking, and creativity among our students to fuel technological advancements and startups.

In your opinion, what are the key skills and attributes that tech professionals need to succeed in today's competitive industry?

Answer: The tech industry demands a diverse skill set and a continuous learning mindset. Key skills and attributes that tech professionals need to succeed include technical proficiency in programming languages, problem-solving abilities, adaptability to new technologies, strong communication and collaboration skills, data analysis capabilities, and a keen understanding of industry trends. Additionally, soft skills such as leadership, creativity, and resilience are increasingly valuable in driving innovation and success.

How does Superior University contribute to addressing societal challenges through technology and innovation?

Superior University is committed to leveraging technology and innovation to address societal challenges. We encourage our students and faculty to undertake projects and research initiatives that have a positive impact on society. Whether it's developing solutions for healthcare, education, environmental sustainability, or community development, our institution fosters a culture of social responsibility and innovation. We collaborate with stakeholders to implement tech-driven solutions that contribute to social progress and inclusive development.

What advice would you give to aspiring students looking to pursue a career in Computer Science and IT?

My advice to aspiring students is to embrace lifelong learning, curiosity, and a growth mindset. The field of

Computer Science and IT is vast and constantly evolving, offering endless opportunities for exploration and innovation. Seek hands-on experience, engage in real-world projects, and stay updated with industry trends. Cultivate a strong foundation in fundamental concepts while also developing soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and adaptability. Most importantly, be passionate about making a positive impact through technology and continuous learning.

We, at FORESIGHT Magazine, extend our heartfelt appreciation to Dr. Arfan Jaffar for enlightening us with his profound insights into the field of computer science and information technology. His distinguished expertise in these fields has not only enriched our understanding but also ignited a sense of intellectual curiosity and aspiration.

Dr. Jaffar's visionary leadership and dedication to excellence in academia serve as a testament to the transformative power of education. His pioneering work in computer science, backed by a wealth of scholarly contributions and groundbreaking research, underscores the pivotal role of higher education institutions like Superior University in shaping the future of technological innovation.

As we reflect on the enlightening discourse we've had today, it's evident that Dr. Jaffar's passion for advancing the frontiers of knowledge and his unwavering commitment to nurturing the next generation of IT professionals are catalysts for positive change. His endeavors not only elevate the status of computer science but also inspire a new wave of intellectual curiosity and innovation in Pakistan's academic landscape.

In closing, I express my gratitude to Dr. Jaffar for his invaluable insights and commendable contributions to the field of computer science. His visionary outlook and intellectual prowess serve as beacons guiding us toward a future of limitless possibilities in the realm of technology and education.



A PRECARIOUS TRIANGLE

China-Pakistan-Afghanistan

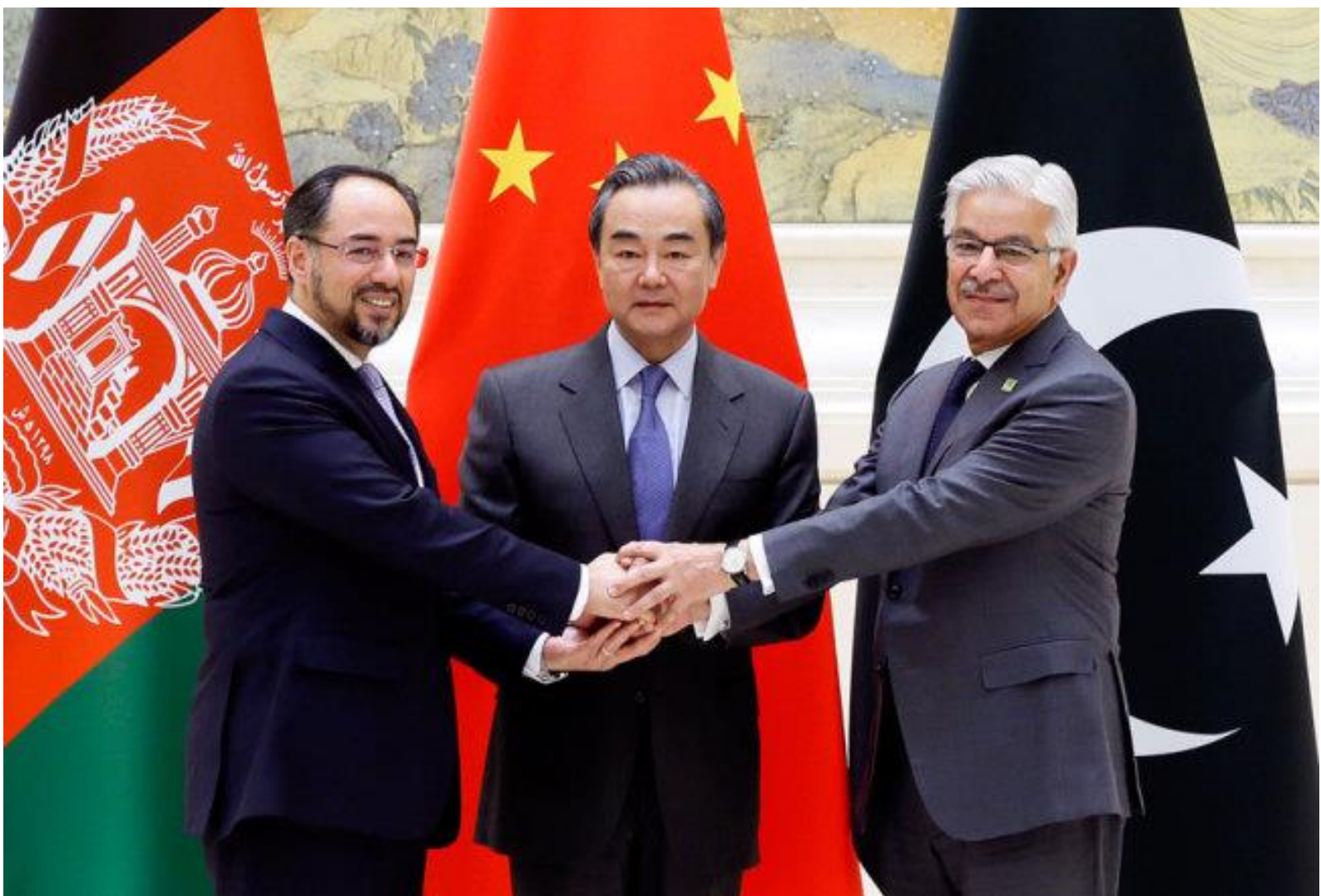
Dr. Azeem Khalid

The resurgence of the Taliban in Afghanistan has thrown the region into a geopolitical flux. Three key players - China, Pakistan, and Afghanistan itself - are locked in a complex, and often precarious, dance. The trajectory of this "trilateral relationship" will not only shape the future of Afghanistan but also hold significant implications for regional security and economic prosperity.

Both China and Pakistan have a vested interest in a stable

Afghanistan. A war-torn and ungoverned Afghanistan serves as a breeding ground for extremism and terrorism, posing a direct threat to their borders. Pakistan, with its long history of entanglement in Afghanistan, feels particularly vulnerable. China, with its ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) aspirations in the region, views a peaceful Afghanistan as crucial for securing vital trade routes and access to natural resources.

However, their approaches to Afghanistan diverge. Pakistan, a long-standing ally of the Taliban, has traditionally played a more hands-on role in Afghan affairs. China, on the other hand, adopts a more calculated and pragmatic approach. Beijing has emerged as a "pragmatic friend" to the Taliban regime, offering substantial humanitarian aid, exploring lucrative infrastructure projects within Afghanistan, and subtly lobbying for the easing of international sanctions. This





proactive engagement reflects China's desire for a stable Afghanistan that serves its economic and geopolitical interests.

The Taliban leadership, for its part, is engaged in a delicate balancing act. They seek international legitimacy and much-needed economic assistance, both of which China can help them achieve. However, their counterterrorism efforts remain limited, raising concerns amongst the international community. Additionally, their recent diplomatic overtures to regional players like Russia and Iran suggest a desire to diversify their support network and lessen their dependence on China and Pakistan. This balancing act creates uncertainty about the Taliban's long-term commitment to cooperation with China and Pakistan.

Adding another layer of complexity is the growing discord within the trilateral relationship. Pakistan, sidelined by China's proactive approach, feels increasingly disillusioned. Decades of nurturing ties with the Taliban leadership seem to be yielding diminishing returns for Islamabad. This growing tension between China and Pakistan further complicates the prospects for trilateral cooperation in Afghanistan.

China's decision to accept the credentials of the Taliban's ambassador sparked speculation about imminent recognition. However, Beijing, echoing the international community's stance, has made clear that formal recognition hinges on the Taliban's fulfillment of key conditions. These conditions include the formation of an inclusive government with

representation from non-Taliban and non-Pashtun ethnic groups, demonstrable action against terrorist organizations, and respect for human rights.

The future of the China-Pakistan-Afghanistan triangle remains uncertain. Each player has its own agenda, and the ability to navigate these competing interests will be crucial. China seeks stability and access to resources, while Pakistan seeks to maintain influence and prevent regional instability. The Taliban, for their part, must demonstrate a genuine commitment to international expectations if they hope to secure the economic and political support they desperately need. This precarious triangle will undoubtedly shape the future of Afghanistan and the broader region for years to come.



The international landscape is undergoing a seismic shift. The once-dominant, US-led unipolar system is

a decline in the dominance of centralized institutions like the UN, with regional organizations and alliances

A SHIFTING TIDE

Pakistan in the Evolving Global Order

Ahsan Mukhtar

facing increasing challenges from a group of countries pushing for a multipolar world order. This new order, characterized by a constellation of power centers, presents both opportunities and challenges for Pakistan.

Countries like Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea have become increasingly vocal in their criticism of what they perceive as American unilateralism and interventionism. They argue that the current order unfairly favors the US and hinders their own economic and strategic ambitions. This shared discontent has led them to collaborate on building an alternative order that reflects a more equitable distribution of power and influence.

The emerging multipolar order prioritizes regional cooperation and empowers regional powers to play a more prominent role in global affairs. This could lead to

wielding greater influence in areas such as trade, security, and diplomacy. Additionally, the alternative order emphasizes multipolarity in economic systems, potentially leading to a shift away from the US dollar's global dominance and a rise of regional currencies.

Pakistan finds itself at a critical juncture in this evolving geopolitical landscape. Despite facing economic challenges, its nuclear arsenal grants it a unique status on the world stage. This status allows Pakistan to potentially leverage its capabilities to secure more favorable partnerships in the emerging multipolar world.

Pakistan shares borders with two key players in the alternative order - China and Iran. These geographical ties, coupled with a history of sometimes-strained relations with the US, could lead Pakistan to forge closer strategic and economic partnerships with these

rising powers. China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) presents Pakistan with significant opportunities for infrastructure development and economic integration with a vast and growing market. Additionally, Iran's energy resources could offer a more reliable alternative to Pakistan's current dependence on volatile Middle Eastern suppliers.

While the emerging multipolar order presents Pakistan with exciting opportunities, it also comes with challenges. Pakistan will need to navigate this complex geopolitical landscape with careful diplomacy. Ensuring internal political stability and enacting economic reforms will be crucial to attracting investment and maximizing the benefits of new partnerships. Additionally, Pakistan needs to tread a cautious path



With the current world order seemingly offering limited benefits, Pakistan needs to carefully re-evaluate its existing partnerships. A strategic shift towards economic regionalism with China and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) could be crucial for fostering economic growth and diversifying trade relationships. Additionally, exploring closer alliances with Russia, another key player in the multipolar landscape, could offer Pakistan valuable security cooperation and access to advanced weaponry.

between the US and the new power bloc, avoiding alienating either side entirely.

Pakistan's primary goal remains fostering economic recovery and political stability. Exploring partnerships within the framework of an alternative order could provide vital resources and support in achieving these crucial goals. However, carefully balancing its foreign policy and navigating this shifting tide will be essential for Pakistan to secure a prosperous and stable future in the emerging multipolar world.





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A STRATEGIC ECONOMIC MOVE

Fast-Tracking Saudi Investment in Pakistan

Desk Report

During his recent visit to Saudi Arabia, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif sought assistance from the Saudi leadership to revive Pakistan's economy through investment. In response, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman directed key ministers to explore investment opportunities in Pakistan. Prime Minister Sharif has taken significant steps to strengthen bilateral economic relations with Saudi Arabia to stabilize Pakistan's economy. Over the past month, he made two separate visits to Saudi Arabia, meeting Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman on both occasions. Concurrently, the Saudi Foreign Minister visited Islamabad in April, accompanied by senior officials.

A notable development in these high-level exchanges was a two-day investment conference held in Islamabad, where a Saudi delegation, led by the Assistant Minister for Investment, included 50 members representing 30 Saudi companies. Pakistan anticipates that Saudi Arabia will invest billions of dollars, addressing the country's longstanding economic challenges. Sectors such as energy, agriculture, mines, minerals, and hydropower have been identified as potential investment areas. The Saudi Foreign Minister acknowledged Pakistan's "usable potential" in many sectors that need to be leveraged.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif announced that bilateral trade agreements worth billions of dollars between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are nearing completion. Reports suggest that Saudi Arabia is considering a \$5 billion investment in Pakistan. During the conference, the Saudi Assistant Minister emphasized that his country views Pakistan as a "high priority economic investment and business opportunity." At a joint news conference with his Pakistani counterpart, Ishaq Dar, the Saudi Foreign Minister expressed being "impressed" by the new measures and arrangements made by Pakistani authorities to attract investment. A high-level delegation led by Prince Faisal, including the core team of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, will explore potential investment opportunities in Pakistan under the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC).

While the \$5 billion investment from Saudi Arabia may not significantly transform Pakistan's economy, it signals to the world that Pakistan is open for business.



Historically, Pakistan has relied heavily on foreign and multilateral loans and financial aid for survival. However, attracting foreign investment and boosting exports offer a more sustainable model for economic growth. Saudi Arabia is a natural partner to lead this initiative due to the longstanding and deep bilateral relations that have endured various challenges but have always maintained a foundation of mutual trust and respect.

The Saudi Crown Prince's upcoming visit to Pakistan this month will provide excellent opportunities to strengthen the agreements already under discussion. It is crucial that work on these projects begins earnestly to capitalize on the momentum generated by these high-level exchanges. Securing and implementing these investments can set an example for other potential investors, moving Pakistan towards a more sustainable economic model. However, political stability and clear, transparent policies are essential to attract and sustain such investments.

The government's proactive approach to dialogue with Saudi Arabia demonstrates its commitment to economic recovery through strategic partnerships. By leveraging historical ties and personal connections between leaders, Pakistan can use Saudi investment to signal greater openness to global business, paving the way for sustainable economic growth and stability. Nonetheless, investment from any foreign partner will be most beneficial when there is internal political harmony and transparency in policies.



International Press Freedom Day is celebrated every year on May 3 as a day of solidarity with journalists. This day highlights the fundamental principles of press freedom, reviews the conditions of journalists worldwide, and honors those who have sacrificed their

of governments' obligations to respect and uphold the right to freedom of expression under Article 19 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Press freedom is the cornerstone of democratic societies. It ensures transparency, accountability, and the flow of

SILENCING THE SILENCERS

The Fight for Global Press Freedom

2023: The Deadliest Year for Journalists Worldwide

Mian Jazak Allah

lives in the line of duty. The global landscape is rapidly changing. Due to intolerance, repressive behavior, inability to face the truth, and the obsession with spreading lies, the world is becoming an increasingly hostile place, especially for frontline journalists. As per report there were 99 murders of journalists last year, a 44% increase from 2022 and the highest number of deaths since 2015. May 3 is International Day of Solidarity with Journalists, but now this day is more a matter of the survival of journalists than solidarity on principles.

Established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1993 following a recommendation from the UNESCO General Conference, this day also serves as a reminder

information, enabling citizens to make informed decisions. Despite its recognized importance, press freedom faces significant challenges globally. According to Reporters Without Borders (RSF), only 8% of the world's population currently lives in a country with press freedom. These alarming figures highlight widespread restrictions on the media in many parts of the world, where journalists often face harassment, censorship, and violence.

Digital surveillance and online harassment have emerged as modern threats to press freedom. Governments and other entities use advanced technology to monitor journalists' communications and online activities. In many cases, journalists are



subjected to cyberattacks, doxing, and coordinated defamation campaigns. Women journalists, in particular, face disproportionate levels of online harassment, often threatening their personal and familial safety. The rise of celebrities defaming and attacking independent journalism incites their supporters to physically and verbally assault journalists online and offline. A 2021 UNESCO study found that 73 percent of women journalists surveyed experienced online violence during their work.

The National Press Club Islamabad and the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists are powerful voices for journalists in Pakistan. Whether advocating for media freedom and journalists' rights or addressing issues of national identity, the NPC and PFUJ represent Pakistan on the international stage. Like the rest of the world, International Press Freedom Day was celebrated in Pakistan to honor the hard work, dedication, and service of journalists. Across the country, including Azad Jammu and Kashmir, numerous events and special activities were organized to uphold the right to press freedom and promote responsible journalism. In Islamabad, the Press Council of Pakistan (PCP), National Press Club, and other media organizations held seminars, walks, and special events to recognize the contributions of the journalist community to society and to highlight the importance of responsible journalism.

In his message on the occasion of International Press Freedom Day, the President emphasized that it is also the media's responsibility to uphold journalistic ethics and report responsibly and accurately, keeping in mind the national interest. Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif assured that the current government would make every effort to develop the media industry and address its challenges. He reiterated the government's commitment to maximum cooperation to protect the rights of the media industry and media workers. He paid tribute to journalists, media workers, writers, and cameramen, lauding their struggle for truth. Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani called for collective efforts for the rights and welfare of the journalist community.

The COVID-19 pandemic in Pakistan exacerbated the financial instability of many news organizations, resulting in layoffs, pay cuts, and closures. Advertising revenues, the main source of income for many organizations, declined, forcing some media houses to reduce coverage and shut down some operations entirely. In areas where government subsidies are essential for survival, financial dependence often leads to editorial influence, undermining press freedom. Initiatives such as the Global Media Defense Fund, established by UNESCO in 2019, provide legal support and aid to journalists at risk. Additionally, training programs aimed at enhancing the safety and security of journalists working in hazardous environments are increasingly being prioritized.

Public awareness and support play crucial roles in promoting independent journalism. Engaging citizens in defending press freedom and encouraging them to demand accountability from their governments can create a more conducive environment for independent journalism. Educational initiatives highlighting the importance of media literacy can empower individuals to understand reliable information sources and appreciate the role of a free press in democracy.

As we celebrate World Press Freedom Day, it is essential to reflect on the state of press freedom globally, recognize efforts to protect it, and recommit to the principles of freedom of expression. A free press is not just a pillar of democracy; it is a lifeline for justice, transparency, and informed citizenship. Ensuring its protection is a collective responsibility that requires vigilance, solidarity, and unwavering commitment to truth.





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TAXING TOBACCO, SAVING LIVES

Policy Dialogue Paves the Way for Progress in Pakistan

Urooj Rajput

Pakistan faces a daunting public health crisis – tobacco use. The staggering statistics paint a grim picture: an annual healthcare burden exceeding PKR 615 billion, countless lives lost to preventable illnesses, and a significant portion of the population grappling with the consequences of tobacco addiction. In a landmark event aimed at addressing this pressing issue, prominent figures from diverse sectors convened for a policy dialogue on "Tobacco Taxation." Organized by the

Human Development Foundation (HDF) in collaboration with partner organizations, this event marked a crucial step towards a unified response to Pakistan's tobacco epidemic.

Organized by the Human Development Foundation (HDF) and partner organizations, this policy dialogue on "Tobacco Taxation" signified a crucial step towards a unified response to Pakistan's tobacco epidemic. It gathered policymakers, healthcare professionals,

activists, and industry stakeholders to discuss comprehensive strategies for addressing widespread tobacco consumption.

Mr. Usman Shaukat, representing HDF, emphasized the organization's comprehensive approach and the significance of collaboration in combating this public health challenge. Dr. Nelson Azeem, a Member of the National Assembly, shed light on the alarming healthcare burden of tobacco-related illnesses, costing





Pakistan a staggering PKR 615 billion annually. He stressed the urgent need for effective measures to curb tobacco use and mitigate its detrimental effects on public health and the economy.

Mr. Muhammad Sabir, an economist from SPDC, presented a compelling case for increased tobacco taxation. He highlighted its potential to benefit both public health and government revenue. Recent figures reveal a significant rise in revenue collection from cigarette taxes between July 2023 and January 2024, exceeding PKR 122 billion. Full-year projections indicate collections surpassing PKR 200 billion – a stark contrast to previous years. These findings underline the success of recent excise tax reforms, acting as a dual strategy for public health and economic growth.

The dialogue also benefitted from presentations by experts like Ms. Maryam Gul Tahir and Mr. Shahzad Alam. Ms. Tahir, Director of the Center for Research & Dialogue (CRD), provided insights on the impact of tobacco taxation, while Mr. Alam, a WHO Technical Advisor, revealed concerning statistics about Pakistan's illicit tobacco trade, estimated to account for 23% of the total cigarette market. These figures highlight the complexities involved in tackling tobacco-related issues.

A subsequent panel discussion facilitated an open exchange between representatives from the Federal Board of Revenue, Ministry of Health, tobacco control activists, and parliamentarians. This session explored strategies and policy interventions for effectively

addressing tobacco consumption through taxation mechanisms.

The dialogue concluded with a renewed commitment from all stakeholders to collaborate in the fight against tobacco use. This event served as a platform for meaningful engagement and collaboration, reaffirming the collective resolve to implement evidence-based strategies for tobacco control in Pakistan.

This policy dialogue signifies a crucial step forward in Pakistan's fight against tobacco use. Increased awareness, combined with collaborative efforts by policymakers, healthcare professionals, and the public, may pave the way for a healthier future for Pakistan.

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