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PAKISTAN'S MARKA-E-HAQ VICTORY — Heartfelt congratulations to the Pakistani-American community for standing united with Pakistan through your prayers, patriotism, and unwavering support, while saluting our brave Pakistan Armed Forces & Army Leadership during this historic moment of honor, strength, and national pride. Pakistan Zindabad!

Stronger Together”: Houston’s Pakistani Community Hosts Grand Welcome for OPF Chairman Syed Qamar Raza



HOUSTON: A distinguished gathering of civic, diplomatic, and community leaders was held in Houston in honor of Syed Qamar Raza Shahzad, Chairman of the Overseas Pakistanis Foundation (OPF), where prominent members

Continued on page 12


Houston Event Hosted by Consul General Aftab Chaudhry Highlights Pakistan’s Rising Global Influence

Governor Sindh Nihal Hashmi and Ambassador Rizwan Saeed Sheikh Address Influential Houston Gathering



HOUSTON: A luncheon hosted by Aftab Chaudhry, Consul General of Pakistan in Houston, in honor of Sindh

Continued on page 12



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US awards F-16 upgrade contract for Pakistan, other states

WASHINGTON: The United States Air Force has awarded a \$488 million contract to Northrop Grumman Systems Corp. for long-term engineering and technical support of F-16 Fighting Falcon radar systems, with Pakistan among the countries covered by the deal.

According to an official award notice, released this week, the firm-fixed-price, indefinite-delivery,

Continued on page 12

‘We are prepared’: DG ISPR highlights indigenous military capabilities on Marka-i-Haq anniversary

Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Director General Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry said on Thursday that Pakistan was “prepared” as he highlighted the armed forces’ indigenous military capabilities.

He made the remarks

Continued on page 12

Grand Marqae-e-Haq Anniversary Celebration Hosted by Tanweer Ahmed Honors Nehal Hashmi



HOUSTON: A prestigious Marka-e-Haq Anniversary Celebration was hosted in Houston by renowned Pakistani-American businessman Tanweer Ahmed in honor of Nehal Hashmi, bringing together prominent members of the Pakistani-American community, business leaders, social figures,

Continued on page 12



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Layers of climate resilience

Ali Tauqeer Sheikh

IRAN'S war has lessons for Pakistan. Can Iran survive half a century of technological and trade embargoes and infrastructural bombardment? While GDP and foreign reserves are standard metrics of survival, Iran has shown that national endurance is actually measured by the depth of human capital. Even if the political order crumbles, Iran's foundational capacity to innovate remains an indestructible strategic armour, a result of a deliberate immersion in science, technology, engineering and mathematics that created a workforce capable of withstanding shocks that could disintegrate less complex societies.

Credible climate resilience is not a stand-alone technical fix; it is anchored in a socioeconomic hierarchy that consists of five layers that must be traversed one by one. These layers move sequentially from basic literacy as a social buffer, through skilled labour and high-quality diaspora, to trade-driven technology absorption, to applied STEM innovation under isolation, and finally to a fully integrated knowledge economy where solutions are generated faster than shocks can destroy them.

Foundational literacy: Layer 1, at the base, is foundational literacy, an essential social floor that Pakistan's 26 million out-of-school children currently lack. Without this cognitive bedrock, communities cannot process early warnings or adapt their livelihoods. The recurring cycle of disaster confirms that climate vulnerability is almost always a direct consequence of educational neglect. In all recent floods, losses were highest in districts with the lowest literacy. This correlation spans every province. Communities suffer disproportionately as they lack the cognitive tools for adaptive response.

The 2022 floods served as a stress test

of this missing foundation. The maps of devastation followed the contours of neglect. Yet almost all of Pakistan's public sector investments and the bulk of loans from multilateral development banks remain hyper-focused on infrastructural development and high-tech early warning systems, while ignoring the human capital that actually determines a nation's resilience capacity.

Functional human capital: The trajectory of layer-climbing is evident across Asia. At Layer 2, Bangladesh has systematically outpaced Pakistan by prioritising women's literacy and NGO-led vocational training as prerequisites for economic resilience. Organisations like BRAC and Grameen Bank reached women in rural communities with education, microcredit and vocational training at a scale no government bureaucracy could match. By securing the lower layers first, Bangladesh created a stable social floor that allows its workforce to adapt to climate shocks and market shifts more effectively, as reflected in its emergence as the world leader in certified green garment manufacturing. That floor is now being extended upward: Bangladeshi women are entering the gig and digital economy through mobile platforms, home-based entrepreneurship, and digital financial services, converting the literacy investments of one generation into economic participation in the next.

Trade-anchored upgrading: Sri Lanka demonstrated the social anchor model, where its 92pc literacy rate enabled quick recovery from the civil war and a skilled diaspora prevented total societal collapse during its 2022 sovereign default. Likewise, Vietnam transitioned from a war-devastated agricultural base to a technology manufacturing hub by committing 14pc of national expenditure to education, progressively

upgrading from garments to electronics to semiconductors. These Layer 3 examples confirm that resilience layers cannot be skipped; the foundation must be built before a nation can withstand disruptions.

India shows how nations can span multiple layers internally. Though it ranks 38th on the Global Innovation Index, its variance is stark: some states function at Layer 4, while others resemble Pakistan in female literacy and school enrolment.

Applied STEM resilience: Since 1979, Iran has more than doubled its adult literacy rate — from roughly 40pc to nearly 93pc — effectively eliminating the gender gap in basic education. This rapid layer-climbing was driven by a deliberate focus on rural areas and women, who moved from 30pc literacy to forming the majority of university entrants within a single generation. Around two-thirds of Iran's higher-education output is in technical and scientific fields, reflecting decades of investment in STEM as a survival strategy.

Since the 1979 embargoes began, Iran moved from a dependency-based economy to Layer 4, marked by technical self-sufficiency. It built a base of over 2m university students, produced 335,000 STEM graduates a year, and developed world-class capabilities in nanotechnology, aerospace, AI and biotechnology, producing over 95pc of its medicines domestically. It ranks 34th globally in research output, has produced Fields Medal-winning mathematicians, and has developed stem-cell research capacities among the top 20 worldwide. This is the essence of Layer 4 resilience: the ability to re-engineer, design, and manufacture advanced technology when imports are denied. This knowledge resides in the minds of graduates as a form of capital that cannot be sanctioned or bombed out of existence.

Integrated innovation economy: A vivid comparison exists between Iran and Israel, two nations with divergent political ideologies but a shared resilience DNA rooted in STEM. Both identified scientific depth as a strategic necessity born of existential pressure. Israel represents the global benchmark for Layer 5: its investments have created an ecosystem where military research, world-class universities and venture capital generate solutions faster than regional shocks can destroy them.

Iran's STEM graduate output far exceeds Israel's in volume, but the fundamental difference is institutional. Israel converts talent into economic output through a functioning commercialisation ecosystem. Iran possesses the same scientific inputs and a literate and technically trained population, but its capacity to commercialise that talent awaits the lifting of sanctions and governance constraints. For both, the scientific depth is the ultimate guarantor of national resilience, despite high brain drain.

Pakistan's layer-climbing: Pakistan has not yet fully secured Layer 1. As the late Dr Mahbub-ul Haq would have said, educational attainment is among the strongest predictors of climate mortality. The country's 265 universities barely produce 445,000 graduates a year, yet fewer than 180,000 are in STEM, barely half of Iran's, leaving a system wide in enrolment but thin in the specialised depth that turns education into resilience.

The evidence is unambiguous. Nations that invested in their people absorbed wars, defaults and disasters and emerged stronger. Nations that did not are still counting the losses. Pakistan stands at a crossroads.

The writer is a climate change and sustainable development expert.

Risk readiness

The case for scaling DRF in Pakistan is compelling.

PAKISTAN is learning, year after year, what it means to live on the front lines of the climate crisis. Floods and droughts don't end when the waters recede or the rains return; each brings a major economic shock, development setbacks, and humanitarian impacts that last for years.

Over two decades, climate-related disasters caused at least \$18 billion in damages in Pakistan — surpassing \$60bn when losses from the 2010, 2011, and 2022 floods are added. The 2022 mega-flood alone produced \$30bn in losses and reconstruction needs — about eight per cent of GDP. Yet, only about 30pc of the \$16.3bn required for reconstruction has been funded, leaving a gap of over \$11bn. In 2025, monsoon floods displaced 5.9 million people, destroyed 2.2m hectares (5.4 acres) of cropland, and caused \$3bn in damage, reducing GDP growth by about 0.5 percentage points.

Climate change is exacerbating hunger. With a one-degree Celsius rise in temperature, the World Food Programme models a likely 6.6pc increase in the food-insecure population, with Pakistan experiencing the largest increase globally. Every disaster cycle has a long-term impact on families: children are pulled from school, livestock are sold in distress, seed stocks are consumed, and savings are depleted. Each flood erodes decades of development gains, and each drought deepens food insecurity and vulnerability.

Putting the right financial tools in place to anticipate climate disasters and support rapid recovery is essential. In fact, well-structured disaster risk financing turns unpredictable liabilities into predictable budget lines. It enables

governments to layer risk, prearrange finance and save taxpayer money. This means using reserves for frequent small shocks, contingent credit for medium events, and risk transfer mechanisms such as parametric insurance and catastrophe bonds for the most severe events.

Disaster risk finance (DRF) also helps protect the budgets that are essential for poverty reduction and climate change adaptation. For example, every dollar invested in anticipatory action saves \$3 to \$7 in losses, at a cost of only \$2 to \$10 per person. Pakistan's Nationally Determined Contributions estimate \$7bn to \$14bn in annual adaptation needs. Without protection, the cost of climate disasters could far exceed these needs, crowding out investment in adaptation, poverty reduction, and development.

Pakistan has laid important groundwork: a National Disaster Risk Financing Strategy, the National Disaster Management Authority's 2025-2030 Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy, and a National Adaptation Plan to 2030. The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) has also shown the model works: by delivering Rs25,000 (roughly \$90) to 2.7m flood-affected households in 2022, moving \$250m through an existing national delivery system in weeks. The frameworks and the delivery systems exist. What is missing is regular inclusion of disaster risk financing in budgets before shocks, rather than after them. The government can move first.

The National DRF Strategy needs instruments: pre-arranged sovereign cover for major floods; automatic financing triggered by meteorological thresholds, and replication of provincial DRF models in every exposed

province.

Public delivery systems can deliver at scale. BISP already reaches over 9m families, supported by a socioeconomic registry of 27m households. Provincial governments also have their own registers. Making these registries shock-responsive means pre-identifying at-risk families, setting forecast-based triggers, and automatically activating top-ups and expansions when thresholds are met.

The private sector can carry more risk. Insurance penetration in Pakistan stands at just 0.9pc of GDP. Virtually all disaster losses in Pakistan are uninsured. With the right regulatory environment, local insurers and reinsurers can build products for agriculture, livestock, and small businesses that pay out in days rather than months.

International partners have a role too, helping national and local governments develop and deploy disaster risk financing tools, improving access to resources from the Green Climate Fund, multilateral development banks, and the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage, and supporting the integration of these instruments into the delivery channels that are essential to get resources quickly to the people who need them the most.

The climate conference has arrived at the right moment. The next monsoon is less than three months away. Scaling disaster risk financing is one of the most practical steps Pakistan and its partners can take this year to protect both the most vulnerable and the development gains they have helped build.

The writer is director, Climate and Resilience Service, World Food Programme.

A Candidate Built on Merit; SARA KHAN

for Fort Bend County Treasurer

Syed Feroz Ahmed

“Learning is the foundation of professional growth. It allows experience and skills to develop over time. When learning, experience, and skills come together, they enhance strategic thinking *Continued from front page*

and strengthen the ability to analyze situations clearly. This combination leads to better judgment and more effective decision making at all levels of leadership.”(SFA). Within this framework, Sara Khan emerges as a compelling candidate for the position of FBC Treasurer in the upcoming runoff election on May 26. She reflects the very principles that define effective leadership and responsible stewardship.

The role of Treasurer extends far beyond administrative duties; it is a cornerstone of senior management that requires exceptional organizational ability, disciplined financial oversight, and unwavering accountability. Sara Khan brings a proven track record in finance and budget management, supported by hands on experience and a deep understanding of fiscal responsibility. Her ability to manage complex financial structures with clarity and precision demonstrates both competence and confidence, qualities essential for this position.

In addition to her technical expertise, she demonstrates integrity, maturity in navigating corporate culture, and leadership grounded in merit. These are not merely aspirational traits but demonstrated strengths. She leads with credibility, guided by principles rather than convenience, and focused on results rather than rhetoric.

Sara Khan also exhibits strong and dependable leadership in practice. She listens attentively, makes thoughtful decisions, and collaborates effectively to achieve shared goals. Her commitment to transparency and accountability ensures responsible financial management, while her balanced approach allows her to represent the interests of the FBC community with fairness and confidence.

As a new face, she brings fresh perspective and renewed energy to the role. If elected, she would become the first woman to serve as FBC Treasurer, an important milestone for both women and the broader FBC community. Her leadership would reflect progress and inclusion, while inspiring confidence in a future that values equal opportunity and diverse voices.

At a time when the Treasurer’s role demands both vision and vigilance, merit must remain the defining criterion. Sara Khan stands as a candidate whose qualifications speak clearly and convincingly where merit is not only present, but proven.

The choice before the FBC community is clear to select a leader who combines knowledge, experience, integrity, and vision. Sara Khan represents these qualities with strength and clarity, offering an opportunity to advance progress, responsibility, and merit-based leadership. A vote for her is a vote for trust, transparency, and a stronger financial future for the community.



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Energy sector: between policy turbulence and system reform

Abis Husein

The power sector in Pakistan has been experiencing unexpected doubts recently. There have been a series of policy announcements that have followed closely, such as the replacement of net metering by net billing, the adoption of fixed charges depending on authorised load, continuing tariff restructuring debates, and the growth of digital infrastructures such as artificial intelligence computing and crypto mining. Simultaneously, the global energy markets are unstable because of the geopolitical tensions in regions. Taken separately, these developments are not peculiar. Put together, though, they give the impression of a system in flux.

A large part of the political debate on these changes still focuses on electricity prices, or what some call the tariff space. Discussions revolve around unit costs, rooftop solar export rates and retail bills. While these are important, they do not capture the full transformation. Recent developments are happening at another level – the system space – where key issues include how electricity is produced, distributed, and used over time, and how the supporting infrastructure is financed and maintained. The gap between these perspectives is one reason the current situation feels confusing.

This shift is evident in the introduction of fixed charges linked to sanctioned load. Electricity systems also carry high fixed costs, including payments for generation capacity, transmission, and distribution infrastructure, which are not tied to actual consumption. In Pakistan, these costs have traditionally been recovered through per-unit tariffs, but this approach is becoming less effective as consumption patterns change, particularly with the growth of distributed solar. As a result, capacity-based charges are gaining traction, reflecting the cost of maintaining infrastructure. Ongoing regulatory debates highlight concerns about fairness and implementation, while also pointing to a deeper structural change in electricity pricing.

This shift is in a larger bid to rethink tariff structure. In the modern power systems, there is a higher tendency to differentiate energy costs, capacity costs and network costs. These differences may enhance efficiency and transparency, though they present complexity. As price structures move more rapidly than the common knowledge they also tend to cause resistance even when the logic behind the move is good.

Simultaneously, Pakistan's energy policy is increasingly overlapping with industrial strate-

gy. The discussion around indigenising the power sector reflects a growing recognition of energy as both an economic driver and a source of resilience and competitiveness. Clean energy, grid and digital infrastructure are now closely linked with manufacturing capacity, supply chains and overall economic positioning. As a result, decisions about the power sector now carry implications far beyond just electricity supply.

This situation is further complicated by external pressures. Global energy market uncertainty especially around oil prices and supply has been intensified by regional geopolitical tensions. For a country heavily dependent on imported fuels, such volatility strengthens the need for a more resilient and self-sufficient energy system.

Another important but often overlooked factor is the composition of the electricity system itself. Pakistan's installed generation capacity has grown significantly and is theoretically sufficient to meet demand. However, the main challenge is no longer generation but the ability to transmit, distribute and deliver electricity effectively. Network constraints, along with shifting demand patterns, mean the issue is increasingly about system management rather

than generation capacity.

It is especially applicable in the case of new electricity applications. Electric Vehicles, Artificial Intelligence Data Centre, Crypto mining are usually given as possible solutions to consume the surplus of sunlight during the day. However, the loads do not work only during the sun hours. They may also augment demand in the evening and night-time hours, when the system is more dependent on conventional generation unless closely synchronised with the demands of the system. Here, we have another point: not all new demand always makes the system better balanced.

Collectively, these have indicated that the Pakistan's power sector is going through a structural transition. The conventional line of policy-making was being more on increasing the generation capacity to supply the increasing demand. Today, the issue is more complicated with heightened distributed generation, changing demand patterns, infrastructure cost recovery, industrial policy and global energy uncertainty. What can seem to be a turbulence of policies can then seem to be the tip of the iceberg – of a system whose occupational concern is no longer to develop capacity, but to manage and organize capacity better.

Gender-based violence and our judicial officers

Dr Rakhshinda Perveen

A man who reports a stolen wallet is not asked what he was wearing when he lost it, or what business he had on that street at that hour. That line of questioning, considered routine when a woman reports violence, is not seen as intrusive. It is seen as relevant. It is defended in the name of religion, culture, and an honour that is somehow always stored in the body of someone else: the *sinf-e-nazuk*, who is simultaneously held responsible for everything. This is not prejudice at the fringes. It is normalised which is what makes it so difficult to see, including for a trained, skilled judge. Judges are not above the society that shaped them. They are its microcosm, and what a society normalises, its courtrooms can quietly enforce.

Today *sinf* is a familiar word. After the drama series *Sinf-e-Aahan*, it has entered everyday conversation. Till 1999, it had no standard Urdu equivalent. I spent years introducing the concept through research, training workshops, and *Gender Watch* – a 19-episode series on PTV that won the channel's first Excellence Award for Private Production working to give language to a way of thinking our justice system urgently needed. Globally, between 27% and 30% of women experience intimate partner violence over their lifetimes; in many jurisdictions fewer than one in ten reported cases result in conviction.

Of Pakistan's 3,142 judges and judicial officers, 572 are women i.e. 18 per cent of the total. Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa leads the subordinate judiciary with roughly a quarter of positions held by women. Progress below, absence above – above where the decisions that shape everything else are made. Pakistan sits at the far end of that gap: conviction rates for domestic violence, rape and so-called honour killings remain in the low single digits. The Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey recorded physical intimate partner violence at 57% in K-P – the highest of any province, with Balochistan close behind, and Punjab and Sindh lower but far from reassuring. In rural areas, the numbers are worse.

The Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act, 2026 – formally passed in January 2026 – signals long-delayed movement on protections in the ICT after fifteen years of political resistance. Whether it translates into protection depends less on its passage than on its enforcement. In 1999, I began documenting cases of violence against women using newspaper reports and FIRs among the first studies of this kind in Pakistan. What those records showed then still holds: they are the tip of the iceberg. The FIR is the tip of that. I have since spent three decades at the non-glamorous intersections where gender-based violence meets law, policy, public health and institutional practice, training police officers, media, NGO, health professionals, parliamentarians and judicial officers. One thing has not changed: a woman who survives violence and reaches a courtroom has already cleared an enormous distance. Whether the law meets her there depends on what the judge carries inside. Campaigns on social media gather views. Captivating music and colourful placards do not change courtroom data. Visibility and accountability are not the same thing.

Judicial discretion in bail, sentencing, evidence, custody is inherently interpretive. Unconscious bias shapes that interpretation. Judges who apply the law without awareness of bias are not more objective; they are simply less aware of the filter through which they are applying it. In Pakistani courts, three forms operate at once. 1) Explicit bias surfaces in the ruling that cites family honour to reduce a sentence, or calls a survivor a woman of loose character. 2) Implicit bias is quieter. A woman's credibility is formed before a word of testimony is heard, and her dress and demeanour is treated as evidence the record does not contain. 3) Structural bias lives in procedure: men speaking for women in court even when the woman is the aggrieved party; FIR delay read as dishonesty rather than trauma; case withdrawal taken at face value, the coercion behind it never examined.

Jirga, panchayat and other parallel systems carry deep community

authority but courts are constitutionally bound to ensure no harmful cultural practice violates fundamental rights. Rulings that compel marriage, deny inheritance or sanction violence are not legally enforceable, and the Supreme Court has said so, repeatedly. These patterns appear in documented rulings across provinces, repeated long enough to pass as normal. Pakistan's Constitution is unambiguous: Article 25 mandates equality regardless of gender; Article 9 guarantees the right to life without exception; and CEDAW places a state duty on eliminating discriminatory practices. This is not about importing foreign values. Gender justice is rooted in Pakistan's own Constitution and in Islamic principles that have always prohibited oppression. These are our commitments not someone else's.

What the bench can do is concrete. Before pronouncing, ask whether the reasoning responds to evidence or to assumption. Remove "loose character", "provoked" and "family matter" from orders and replace them with facts, law and precedent. In custody matters, apply the child's best interest not the gender of the parent. Reverse the genders in your own reasoning: if it would not survive that, examine why.

Courts are not only of law. They are of people and people are not perfect. That is why conscience cannot be kept silent. Conscience does not pronounce the verdict but it determines (or should determine) how the law is read: with bias, or with justice.

So the questions remain. How long will the survivor stand in the dock of her own case? How many times will a woman be labelled *kari/kali* while the real perpetrator disappears into the background? How long will domestic violence be called a private matter and quietly filed away? How long will a rape survivor be made to feel like the accused?

Every word in a judgment tells society who the law is for. That message is not written by campaigns or placards. It is written by the judge in each order, in each courtroom, across this country.

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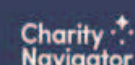


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Bangladesh	\$160	\$105	Lebanon- Palestinian Refugees	\$205	-
Bangladesh- Rohingya Refugees	\$175	\$105	Lebanon- Syrian Refugees	\$205	-
Bosnia	-	\$325	Malawi	\$95	\$70
Brazil	\$120	\$110	Malaysia	-	\$210
Burundi	\$80	\$75	Mali	-	\$80
Cambodia	\$210	\$115	Mali- Central African Republic Refugees	-	\$80
Chad	-	\$70	Mauritania	\$155	\$125
Chad- Cameroon Refugees	-	\$70	Mexico	\$295	\$410
Chad- Central African Republic Refugee	-	\$70	Morocco	\$250	\$170
Chad- Sudanese Refugees	-	\$70	Nepal	\$215	\$70
Colombia	\$235	\$295	Nepal- Rohingya Refugees	\$215	\$70
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Djibouti	\$120	\$80	Pakistan	\$160	\$85
Djibouti- Ethiopian Refugees	\$120	\$80	Palestine-Gaza	\$215	-
Djibouti- Somali Refugees	\$120	\$80	Palestine-West Bank	\$215	-
Djibouti- Yemeni Refugees	\$120	\$80	Peru	\$175	\$145
Dominica	\$385	\$325	Peru- Venezuelan Refugees	\$175	\$145
Dominican Republic	\$110	\$195	Philippines	\$265	\$165
Ecuador	\$160	\$135	Poland- Ukrainian Refugees	\$148	-
Ethiopia	\$115	\$75	Romania	\$295	-
Gambia	-	\$75	Romania- Ukrainian Refugees	\$295	-
Ghana	\$175	\$95	Sierra Leone	\$415	\$180
Guyana	\$410	\$215	Somalia	\$105	\$75
Haiti	\$150	\$110	Somalia- Yemeni Refugees	\$105	\$75
India	\$155	\$55	SomaliLand	\$105	\$75
Indonesia	\$135	\$130	SomaliLand- Yemeni Refugees	\$105	\$75
Indonesia- Rohingya Refugees	\$175	\$150	South Africa	-	\$105
Jamaica	\$260	\$260	Sri Lanka	\$155	\$75
Jordan	\$280	-	Syria	\$270	-
Jordan- Iraqi Refugees	\$280	-	Tanzania	\$90	\$65
Jordan- Palestinian Refugees	\$280	-	Tanzania- Congolese Refugees	\$90	\$65
Jordan- Sudanese Refugees	\$280	-	Thailand	-	\$160
Jordan- Syrian refugees	\$280	-	Thailand- Rohingya Refugees	-	\$155
Jordan- Yemeni Refugees	\$280	-	Togo	\$175	\$60
Kashmir (Azad)	\$160	\$85	Trinidad and Tobago	-	\$320
Kashmir Valley	\$175	\$85	Tunisia	\$425	\$460
Kenya	\$75	\$55	Turkey	\$320	-
Kenya- Congolese Refugees	\$75	\$55	Turkey- Egyptian Refugees	\$370	-
Kenya- Ethiopian Refugees	\$75	\$55	Turkey- Syrian Refugees	\$320	-
Kenya- Somali Refugees	\$75	\$55	Turkey- Uyghur Refugees	\$320	-
Kenya- South Sudan Refugees	\$75	\$55	Uganda	\$95	\$60
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OPF Chairman Syed Qamar Raza Receives Warm Welcome from Houston's Pakistani Community

Community leaders and dignitaries gathered at a prestigious Houston reception hosted by Saeed Shaikh and Siraj Narsi to welcome Syed Qamar Raza Shahzad and discuss the future role of overseas Pakistanis in national development.





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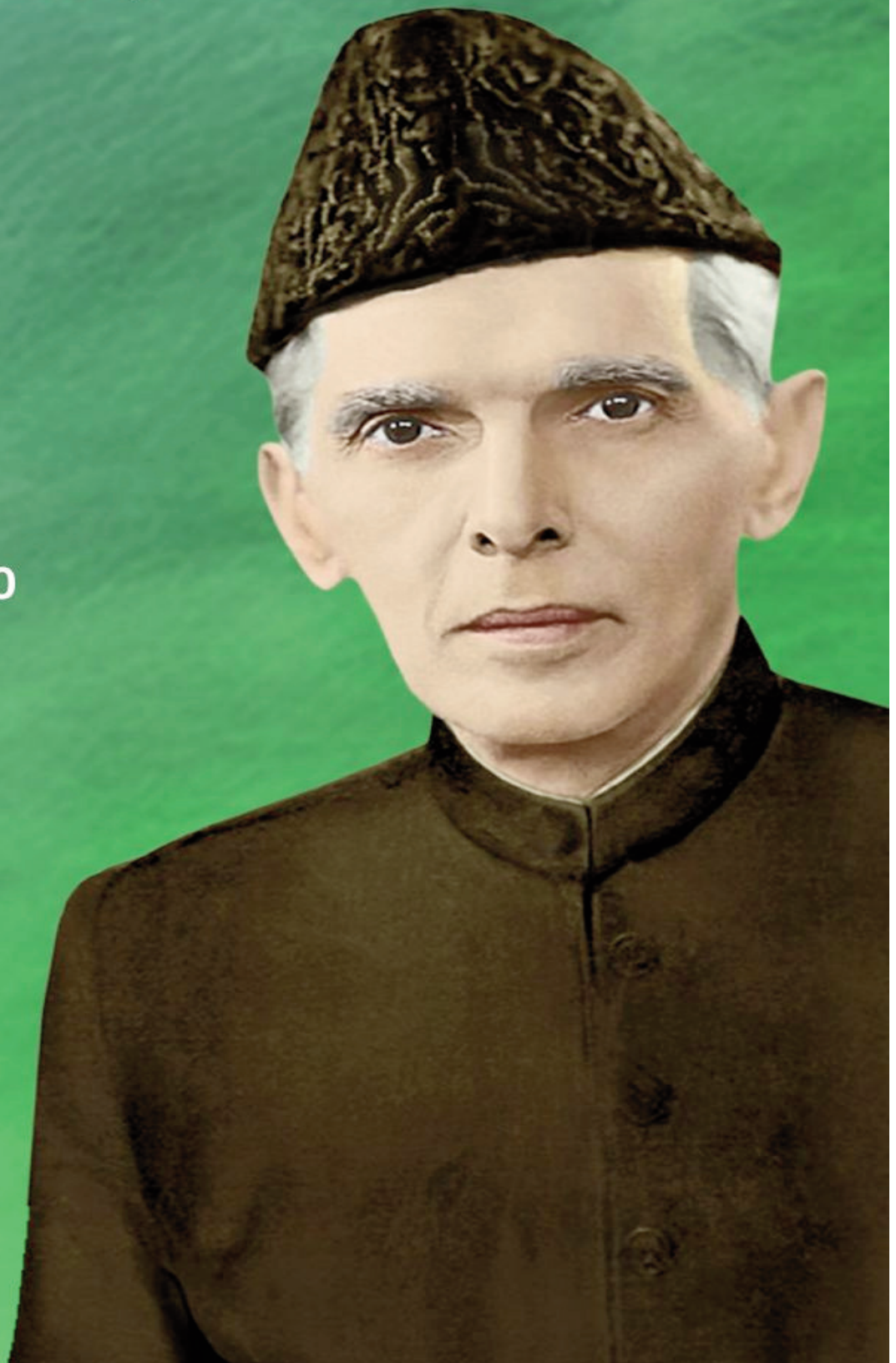
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Bin Laden nearly slipped out of Abbottabad: CIA report

- *Al Qaeda leader had agreed in writing to relocate by September 2011*
- *Two brothers sheltering him sought separation, citing exhaustion*
- *Agency claims to be entirely unaware of the relocation plan, says delayed raid would have missed the opportunity*

WASHINGTON: A decade after the operation that killed Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad, a fresh Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) account reveals that the Al Qaeda leader nearly slipped out of his hideout months before the US raid.

The CIA's official record, updated with newly posted documents and released on Friday, shows that Bin Laden was actively planning to leave his hideout in Abbottabad months before the American operation, while simultaneously continuing to direct al-Qaeda operations from within the compound.

According to letters recovered from the compound, Bin Laden had agreed in writing to a relocation plan after sustained pressure from the two brothers who had sheltered him for years.

On Jan 14, 2011, he wrote a formal letter acknowledging tensions and expressing gratitude to the brothers for bearing what he described as the "heavy burden" of their "huge responsibility" for his safety.

In another letter dated February 2, 2011, Bin Laden confirmed that the brothers had "for a long time demanded separation from us" and were "exhausted" by the arrangement.

He agreed to retire from the task and hand over his concealment to others, with a planned move and changeover targeted for September 2011.

The CIA notes that this relocation plan was entirely unknown to US intelligence at the time. Officials reviewing the compound believed the situation to be stable, unaware that Bin Laden's departure was already being prepared.

"Had the decision to conduct the raid been delayed, this story might have had a very different ending," the CIA observed.

The documents further reject the notion that Bin Laden had become merely a symbolic figure by the time of his death.

The CIA states that he remained deeply involved in operational planning, providing strategic, operational, and tactical instructions to al-Qaeda. Far from being a figurehead, he remained in charge while in hiding, shaping the group's direction, communications, and priorities.

The path to Abbottabad began long before the raid itself. Following the September 11, 2001, attacks, CIA-led intelligence efforts focused on individuals linked to Bin Laden's network.

A key breakthrough came from tracking a trusted courier, identified only by his kunya (operational pseudonym). It took years before this alias could be linked to a real identity.



By August 2010, intelligence had connected the courier to a compound in Abbottabad, a town in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

The CIA assessed the compound as highly unusual. It had high walls topped with barbed wire, double-entry gates, opaque windows, no visible internet or telephone connections, and all trash was burned rather than collected. The two registered owners also appeared to have no visible source of income to justify such a large residence.

These factors led intelligence analysts to assess that the compound was likely being used to conceal Bin Laden, as well as the courier.

Once the target was identified, preparations intensified. The CIA-led operation included the construction of a full-scale life-size replica of the compound, with movable interior walls to simulate possible layouts and prepare assault teams for any internal configuration.

The raid was authorised by US President Barack Obama on

April 29, 2011, as a carefully calibrated surgical operation designed to minimise civilian casualties, reduce risk to non-combatants in the compound and surrounding area, and increase the likelihood of confirming Bin Laden's identity.

On May 2, 2011, US special operations helicopters departed from Afghanistan and arrived at the Abbottabad compound at about 12:30am Pakistan time. One helicopter crashed on arrival, but the assault continued without delay.

Bin Laden was located on the third floor and was killed within about nine minutes of engagement. His body was then moved to the first floor and secured.

Assault teams recovered a large cache of documents and digital material from the compound for intelligence analysis. A backup helicopter extracted remaining personnel and materials, while the crashed helicopter was destroyed on site.

President Obama, monitoring the operation from the Situation Room, received real-time updates throughout the raid, including tentative confirmation of Bin Laden's identity, followed by further verification later.

Bin Laden's identity was confirmed through multiple independent methods after the operation.

The CIA describes the raid as a surgical operation designed to limit collateral damage and ensure accurate identification under controlled conditions.

The intelligence haul recovered from the compound was later analysed by a multi-agency task force led by the CIA. The material provided insights into al-Qaeda's operations, internal communications, affiliates, and future intentions.

The CIA timeline also records that Bin Laden's body was later buried at sea from the USS Carl Vinson in the north Arabian Sea on May 2, 2011.

The CIA concludes that Bin Laden's death marked a major milestone in the US-led campaign against al-Qaeda. He was described as the organisation's founder and only Amir, central to its identity, fundraising capacity, and global operational focus.

The agency emphasises that the mission's success resulted from years of sustained intelligence work after 9/11, coordinated across the Intelligence Community and military partners.

"The CIA was at the centre of it all," the report states, highlighting its role in driving intelligence collection, analysis, and operational assessment that led to Abbottabad.

Oil spike threatens Pakistan's economic growth

KARACHI: Pakistan's inflation is likely to remain in double digits if the surge in oil prices persists amid the unresolved Middle East conflict, analysts warned, adding that rising costs and disrupted imports are already straining the country's external position.

Topline Securities Ltd released its latest "Pakistan Strategy" report on Saturday, analysing the impact of soaring oil prices amid regional tensions and their implications for Pakistan's economy and stock market. The brokerage said the situation is prolonged and evolving, with outcomes hinging on whether the conflict ends or a peaceful resolution is reached.

The report projected that if current conditions persist, Pakistan's inflation over the next 12 months could average 9-10 per cent, with fourth-quarter FY26 inflation surpassing 11pc. These forecasts are based on an oil price of \$100 per barrel, with every \$10 increase adding roughly 50 basis points to inflation estimates. At \$120 per barrel, average annual inflation could reach 10-11pc, prompting the State Bank of Pakistan to consider further policy rate hikes to protect real returns.

Rising energy costs and inflation are expected to weigh heavily on economic

growth. Topline Securities lowered its GDP forecast for FY27 to 2.5-3.0pc, down from an earlier 4.0pc, reflecting a 100-120bps impact. FY26 growth is maintained at 3.5-4.0pc, in line with the central bank's revised guidelines.

Industrial growth could fall to 1pc from 3.9pc, agriculture to 4.0pc from 4.4pc, and services to 2.8pc from 4.0pc if the conflict continues. By contrast, if tensions ease by FY27, growth could stabilise around 3.5-4.0pc.

Fiscal outlook

Analysts at Topline Securities expect the current account deficit (CAD) for FY27 to remain below \$3.5 billion (0.8pc of GDP) with administrative measures. However, slippages or lax import controls could push it above \$8bn (1.9pc of GDP), straining foreign exchange reserves.

The consolidated fiscal deficit for FY26 is expected to remain in the range of 4.0-4.5pc of GDP due to relief spending, slightly above the IMF target of 4.0pc. A similar range is anticipated for FY27.

A measured government response could keep FY27 currency depreciation around 5-6pc. Without intervention, supply-demand pressures could accelerate losses.

The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) has

suffered amid regional turmoil and rising oil prices, ranking the third worst performer globally in the January-March quarter with a 15pc decline. India and Indonesia posted larger falls of 19.4 and 19.0pc, respectively. Heavy dependence on imported energy, Pakistan imports 85pc of its requirements, is cited as a key factor. Petroleum imports are projected at \$15bn for FY26, roughly 22pc of total imports.

Topline Securities recommended remaining overweight in exploration and production (E&P) firms, fertilisers, and banks, while adopting a market-weight stance on pharmaceuticals and consumer goods. Caution is advised in cyclical sectors due to potential GDP slowdown.

Imports/remittances

Non-oil imports, expected to reach \$48-50bn in FY26, could threaten macroeconomic reforms if unrestrained. Historically, administrative measures have played a key role in curbing imports during crises, including FY09, FY19, FY20, and FY23. Topline Securities forecasts an 8pc fall in non-oil imports for FY27 with government intervention, alongside a 12pc decline in petroleum product consumption due to higher prices.

Remittances are projected to fall 3.5pc,

reflecting a 10pc decline from the Gulf Cooperation Council region and modest growth elsewhere. Exports are expected to drop 4pc. With these assumptions, the FY27 current account deficit is estimated at \$3.5bn (0.8pc of GDP).

Policy rate

The SBP raised its policy rate by 100bps to 11.5pc on April 27. If oil prices remain at \$120 per barrel, further rate hikes may be necessary. The rupee-dollar exchange rate is forecast to close FY26 at Rs280-282 and FY27 at Rs294-298 (average Rs289). Persistent conflict could drive depreciation above the historic 5-6pc average.

The benchmark KSE-100 index is down 7pc year-to-date and 14pc from its January 2026 peak, with geopolitical tensions, rising oil prices, and profit-taking contributing to declines. Key sectors poised to benefit include E&Ps, fertilisers, and banks.

Domestic E&P companies could ramp up production by 500-900 mmcf over two years, partly offsetting reliance on imported RLNG. Fertiliser companies may benefit from rising international urea prices and restored domestic margins. Banks are expected to see improved spreads due to higher interest rates.

Grand Marqae-e-Haq Anniversary Celebration Hosted by Tanweer Ahmed Honors Nehal Hashmi

Continued from front page

and invited guests for an evening dedicated to patriotism, unity, and national solidarity.

Nehal Hashmi, who is currently serving as the Governor of Sindh, attended the exclusive reception as the guest of honor, adding prestige and significance to the memorable gathering held in Houston.

The term "Marka-e-Haq" refers to the 2025 conflict between Pakistan and India, which began following the April 22 Pahalgam attack and concluded with a ceasefire on May 10 after Operation Bunyanum Marsoos. During the gathering, participants paid rich tribute to Pakistan's armed forces, political leadership, and the entire nation for standing resolute and united throughout Marka-e-Haq.

Addressing the distinguished audience, Tanweer Ahmed highlighted the sacrifices, courage, and resilience demonstrated by the Pakistani nation during the conflict. He emphasized that overseas Pakistanis remain deeply connected to their homeland and continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with Pakistan during challenging times.

Community members praised the leadership and hospitality of Tanweer Ahmed for organizing an elegant and meaningful event that reflected the spirit of unity and patriotism among overseas Pakistanis. Speakers noted that the spirit of Marka-e-Haq had strengthened national unity and inspired Pakistanis around the world.

Members of the gathering pledged that the message and spirit of Marka-e-Haq would continue to unite the nation toward building a stronger, more resilient, and prosperous Pakistan. The event concluded with prayers for peace, national progress, and continued strength for Pakistan and its people.

The exclusive reception, held at Qalandar Quisine in Houston, was attended by distinguished members of the Pakistani-American community and was organized with the support of hosts Asaf Qadeer and Tahir Bhatti.

US awards F-16 upgrade contract for Pakistan, other states

Continued from front page

indefinite-quantity contract will support the APG-66 and APG-68 radar systems used on F-16 fighter aircraft. Work will be carried out in Linthicum Heights, Maryland, and is scheduled to continue through March 31, 2036.

The contract covers support for multiple partner countries under the US Foreign Military Sales (FMS) programme, including Bahrain, Belgium, Chile, Denmark, Egypt, Greece, Indonesia, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, South Korea, Morocco, the Netherlands, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Thailand and Turkiye.

The award was issued on a sole-source basis by the US Air Force Lifecycle Management Centre in Utah.

An initial \$2.64 million in fiscal 2026 non-appropriated Air Force and Navy funds has been obligated at the time of award.

The latest support arrangement underscores the long-term US commitment to sustaining F-16 operational readiness across allied and partner air forces, including Pakistan, which continues to operate a fleet of US-origin fighter aircraft under periodic upgrade and maintenance arrangements.

The development follows a separate US notification in December 2025, when the Defence Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) informed Congress of a proposed \$686 million package to upgrade and support Pakistan's F-16 fleet.

That package includes Link-16 tactical data systems, cryptographic equipment, avionics upgrades, training and logistical support. The DSCA described the proposed sale as aimed at strengthening interoperability among Pakistan, the US, and partner forces for counterterrorism cooperation and future contingency operations.

The upgrade plan also includes modifications to operational flight programmes, identification friend-or-foe systems, precision navigation tools and secure communications equipment. It further covers simulators, technical documentation, software updates and engineering support.

Lockheed Martin was identified as the principal contractor for the proposed upgrade programme, which US officials said would not require additional personnel deployment to Pakistan and would have no adverse impact on US defence readiness.

The DSCA notification emphasised that the package is intended to modernise Pakistan's F-16 fleet, extend its service life through 2040, and address operational safety and avionics requirements. It also stated that Pakistan had demonstrated the capacity to absorb the upgrades and maintain its existing fleet.

A diplomatic source familiar with the matter said Pakistan has welcomed continued US support for its F-16 programme, noting that such upgrades would help extend the aircraft's operational life while maintaining technical compatibility with allied systems.

The source added that Pakistan's air force has diversified its fleet in recent years, reducing reliance on a single platform while still valuing sustainment of existing F-16 capabilities.

Together, the new long-term support contract and the previously notified upgrade package highlight continued US engagement in sustaining Pakistan's F-16 fleet within the broader framework of Foreign Military Sales partnerships and regional interoperability objectives.

Houston Event Hosted by Consul General Aftab Chaudhry Highlights Pakistan's Rising Global Influence

Continued from front page

Governor Nihal Hashmi at Aghaz Restaurant brought together prominent Pakistani-American community leaders, diplomats, and business figures. Addressing the gathering, Governor Nihal Hashmi said that the month of May has always held historic importance for Pakistan's security, unity, and national achievements,

while Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States Rizwan Saeed Sheikh stated that Pakistan has successfully demonstrated its importance and effectiveness on the global stage and is entering a new era of influence in international peace, security, economy, and global politics.

Speaking to the media during the event, Ambassador Rizwan Saeed Sheikh emphasized that Pakistan is emerging as an attractive destination for trade and investment. He encouraged overseas Pakistanis to utilize their expertise, resources, and business networks to contribute to Pakistan's economic growth and development.

Governor Nihal Hashmi said that after August, the month of May holds special significance and joy for the Pakistani nation. He stated that God has once again provided the nation an opportunity to demonstrate unity and emerge with pride and dignity. He noted that May has historically been an important month for Pakistan's security and achievements, recalling that in May 1998, former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif made Pakistan a nuclear power, while in recent years the country has also demonstrated its strong defense capabilities.

The luncheon organized by the Pakistani Consulate in Houston was attended by Overseas Pakistanis Foundation Chairman Syed Qamar Raza, businessman Chaudhry Ayaz, Pakistan Association of Greater Houston President Siraj Narsi, Tahir Bhatti, and other distinguished members of the Pakistani-American community.

Stronger Together": Houston's Pakistani Community Hosts Grand Welcome for OPF Chairman Syed Qamar Raza

Continued from front page

of the Pakistani-American community reaffirmed their commitment to unity, civic responsibility, and strengthening ties between overseas Pakistanis and their homeland.

The prestigious event was hosted by Saeed Shaikh and Siraj Narsi, bringing together diplomats, elected officials, business leaders, social figures, and members of the Pakistani diaspora for an evening of dialogue, reception, and dinner.

Among the distinguished attendees were Aftab Chaudhry, Emran Gazi, Ahmed Alyaseen, Nasrullah Rupani, Ghulam Bombaywala, Dr. Suleman Lalani, and Zafar Iqbal, along with a large number of community leaders, professionals, and media representatives.

Speakers throughout the evening highlighted the significant role played by overseas Pakistanis in strengthening Pakistan's economy, promoting its global image, and contributing toward national development. They stressed the need for continued collaboration, dialogue, and engagement between the Pakistani diaspora and institutions in Pakistan to address common challenges and create new opportunities for progress.

In his keynote address, Syed Qamar Raza Shahzad reaffirmed his commitment to resolving issues faced by overseas Pakistanis and enhancing

their welfare. He assured the audience that the concerns of overseas Pakistanis are being heard and that concrete measures are being taken to improve services and strengthen their role in Pakistan's future development.

The event concluded with a renewed call for solidarity, responsible citizenship, and continued contributions toward both local community development in the United States and the prosperity of Pakistan. Organizers received widespread appreciation for hosting a successful and impactful gathering that reinforced the strong bond between overseas Pakistanis and their homeland.

'We are prepared': DG ISPR highlights indigenous military capabilities on Marka-i-Haq anniversary

Continued from front page

while addressing a press conference in Islamabad as the nation commemorated the one-year anniversary of Marka-i-Haq. The deputy chief of naval staff (operations), Rear Admiral Shifaat Ali, and the deputy chief of air staff (projects), Air Vice Marshal Tariq Ghazi, were also present alongside him.

Last year's military conflict with India, starting from the April 22 Pahalgam attack to the end of Pakistan's Operation Bunyanum Marsoos, with a ceasefire ending a military escalation between the two countries on May 10, has been called "Marka-i-Haq" (Battle of Truth) by the state.

"We welcome you to ISPR on this happy day," he said at the outset of his presser, congratulating the nation on the one-year anniversary of Marka-i-Haq.

He said that the country's armed forces had risen to the nation's expectations and defeated a much larger enemy with multi-domain operations.

"Today, we are not going to dwell a lot on what happened ... We are going to spend more time from May 2025 to May 2026," he said, adding that they would expand on the "strategic consequences" of the conflict.

Strategic consequences of Marka-i-Haq

He said that there were 10 strategic consequences of Marka-i-Haq, the first of which was that the Indian narrative of painting Pakistan as a source of terrorism stood buried.

He said that an attempt had been made to portray, without evidence, that Pakistan had perpetrated terrorism in India. He said that it had been one year since the Pahalgam incident, yet the questions that Pakistan had asked remain unanswered.

"Where is the evidence?" he asked. "Nobody buys this ... you are the biggest terrorist. Nobody listens to them, nobody believes them," he said.

He said that the second consequence was the consolidation of Pakistan as the net security stabiliser in the region. He said that Marka-i-Haq showed who was controlling and dominating the escalation, adding that India escalated the conflict based on a lie.

The DG ISPR said the "biggest ambassador of security in the region"

was Pakistan and its leadership.

Coming to the third strategic consequence of Marka-i-Haq, he said it was related to "our eastern neighbour, unfortunately", saying it was the "politicisation of Indian military leadership and militarisation of Indian political leadership."

"This is what's happening over there", he said, adding that India's military, which used to be professional, had "unfortunately been politicised".

"You will come across several examples of this," he added. "You heard their air chief marshal a few months after Marka-i-Haq ... [saying] 'I got to know today that even we downed some planes' ... That is politicisation of the military leadership ... Why are you trying to make jokers out of your admirals, and generals and marshal? Don't do that."

On the other hand, the DG ISPR continued, "We have placed the facts as they are."

Moreover, he said, Indian politicians appeared more like "warmongers", going by their statements. The DG ISPR asserted that the politicisation of the military and militarisation of politics was "dangerous".

Moving on to the fourth strategic consequence, he said it was the global acknowledgement of India's efforts to externalise its internal problems and internalise its external problems while using terrorism as a state tool.

He said India's problems included the repression of minorities and Kashmiris. This, he said, "comes from a false sense of entitlement and this hubristic attitude".

The DG ISPR said India did not want to solve its internal issues, and hence, was externalising them by levelling allegations that Pakistan was behind terrorism in the neighbouring country. He said these issues needed to be addressed "politically and internally".

"Kashmir is an internationally recognised dispute," he said. "It's not your internal problem for you to make demographic changes there ... you cannot do that."

He reiterated the allegations India was backing terrorism in Pakistan, further stating that "they were even behind terrorism in their own country and would then accuse others".

But, he added, what changed after Marka-i-Haq was that the world recognised how they operated.

He said the fifth consequence was the "exposure of the true face of the Indian media and its discredited information operations". The DG ISPR also noted that Indian authorities had started "shutting down Pakistani media" during Marka-i-Haq and this practice was still ongoing.

But that did not solve the problem, he said, adding that his advice to India was to speak the truth.

"That's what Pakistan did ... The only thing that can survive in today's information domain is the truth. Tell people the truth. But somehow the Indians think they can work their [way] around lies. It doesn't work anymore."

He said the sixth consequence was the "transformed character of warfare". Elaborating on this, he said this covered multi-domain operations, non-contact warfare, synergy, proxies and information.

The DG ISPR explained that

Continued on Page 13

'We are prepared': DG ISPR highlights indigenous military capabilities on Marka-i-Haq anniversary

Continued From Page 12

warfare was not limited to borders anymore. "It's [fought] on land, in the sea, in the air, in cyberspace ... and in the minds. It's cognitive as well."

He said Pakistan's armed forces were prepared to fight against India during Marka-i-Haq in all those domains. "We were prepared back then, and we are prepared today as well."

The seventh consequence, he said, was Pakistan's proven potential and the resilience to combat multifaceted challenges. The eighth was the loud and clear establishment of deterrence, he said.

"Anyone who thinks there is space for war between two nuclear neighbours is crazy. That is madness. Only a madman can think about. You want to do it, then there should be no doubt about our resolve," he said.

He said that the ninth consequence was that Pakistan was recognised as a geopolitically significant and responsible middle power. He said that the last, but most important consequence, was the unshakable synergy between the people, the government and the armed forces, "which we call the Bunyanum Marsoos effect".

Surge in terrorism post-Marka-i-Haq

During the press conference, he also presented figures on counterterrorist efforts post-Marka-i-Haq. He said that India was given a "lesson of their life" and they fell back on their default option, which was terrorist proxies.

"We saw a surge in terrorist incidents post-Marka-i-Haq," he said, showing the figures on the screen. He said that in October, Pakistan struck terrorist support infrastructures in neighbouring Afghanistan. He said that the number of incidents subsequently went down.

He reiterated that terrorism in Pakistan was being carried out by India and Afghanistan was being used as a base of operations.

"You saw who India called after they were taught a lesson in Marka-i-Haq. The Afghan Taliban regime's so-called foreign minister," he said.

During his press conference, the DG ISPR also played clips of Indian media, saying, "The field marshal and Pakistan; I think they feature in their dreams day and night. They need to grow up."

'Homegrown' military capabilities

After multiple videos were played, the DG ISPR said they had presented an overview of "what our dear neighbour has been doing" over the past year. He added that he would also go on to detail what Pakistan had been doing during this period.

He recalled that during a press conference on May 11, 2025, he had stated that Pakistan's military capability seen during Marka-i-Haq was just 10 per cent of the armed forces' power potential.

"We are prepared; if anyone wishes to test us, they are more than welcome," he said after a video showing the armed forces' prowess played on the screen.

He added that the clips displayed Pakistan's indigenous military capabilities. "This is homegrown."

These included surface-to-air missiles; cruise missiles; the establishment of Army Rocket Force Command; main battle tanks; long-range artillery; ship-launched anti-ship missiles; UAVs, quadcopters and drones; short, medium and long-range anti-drone systems; loitering munitions; electro-optical satellites; and an integrated artillery fire control system.

The military spokesperson highlighted the significance of security in the world today, adding that "when we say that the armed forces, with the support of the people of Pakistan, will defend Pakistan's territorial integrity and sovereignty at all costs, we mean it. And we will do it, come what may."

However, he added, this operational preparedness, military capability and technical prowess would not be meaningful if it was not backed by the resolve and the strategic clarity of the leadership.

After several videos had played, he highlighted Pakistan's emergence as a regional player and net security provider.

"We are not seeking conflict, we are not seeking war. But we know how to defend ourselves with honour and dignity," he said. At the conclusion of the presentation, the national anthem played.

'Historic and memorable conflict'

Rear Admiral Ali then addressed the press conference, saying that Marka-i-Haq was a "historic and memorable" conflict. He said that prior to the conflict, the "enemy prided itself on its naval capability".

"Their navy used to consume a big share of their defence budget, there were claims of 'Made in India'; they were self-proclaimed net security providers and there was the status of blue water navy," he said.

He said, however, that the question remained as to why their naval force was unable to "muster the courage against Pakistan".

He added that the Indian navy tried to deploy its vessels in the northern Arabian Sea during Marka-i-Haq.

"And the only purpose behind this move was to target our naval assets and inflict economic harm on us by disrupting our naval trade and waterways.

"But due to the effective strategy of the Pakistan Navy, [traffic] in all our waterways remained uninterrupted, our instalments remained protected and ports remained operational," he added.

Rear Admiral Ali said the Pakistan Navy continued to surveil the enemy's activity through its modern system during Marka-i-Haq.

"The Pakistan Navy and Pakistan Air Force (PAF) were prepared to destroy Indian aircraft carrier Vikrant," he recalled, adding that, however, the Indian navy did not move beyond its sanctuaries.

Ghazi said from the PAF's integrated command centre, Air Chief Marshal Sidhu let this operation "flawlessly".

"The way it was choreographed — it was an exceptionally synchronised operation. The enemy's massive offensive was converted into a crippling, I should say, ambush for their high-tech fighters."

"So this spectacular performance shocked the enemy, and the outcome was unprecedented and also inconceivable for the IAF," he added.

He said, "The IAF was not to be seen in the air for the rest of the conflict."

AVM Ghazi said the PAF also curtailed India's pre-emption on May 10, while the digital space was also being disrupted.

"Our killer drones, stand-off long-range and hypersonic vectors struck 16 air bases, key operational infrastructure of strong military relevance, BrahMos sites, critical command and control centres, including the one at Barnala and two of their most prized S-400 batteries."

The airstrike on Indian S-400 batteries was carried out by indigenously manufactured JF-17 Block III aircraft.

Shedding further light on the PAF's dominance during the conflict, the AVM said the air force had "dominance" and the PAF was "targeting them all across and at will".

"PAF's response was overwhelming and shocking for the adversary."

"Marka-i-Haq has established one thing that is very close to our hearts — the prowess of PAF's homegrown kill chain, which had integrated all operational elements into a single formidable force."

Further elaborating on PAF's operations during Marka-i-Haq, he said it was the first time in the history of warfare that full-spectrum, multi-spectrum operations were demonstrated.

"Marka-i-Haq provides a classical case study for air warfare experts."

He added that with India's power and transport infrastructure disrupted, critical installations crippled, modern Rafales shot down, S-400 batteries neutralised, and IAF grounded, "the enemy was, in effect, out of options" during Marka-i-Haq.

"We recognise that this won't be our last war, and our next war won't be along similar lines. That's why, with passion and focus, the chief of air staff has been building the PAF of the future, with leadership already at the drawing board, defining the parameters of the next war."

"PAF is aggressively pursuing capability enhancement to retain its qualitative edge the next time it is put to the test," said the senior PAF official.

He elaborated that there are "160 projects under development" and a number of them are near completion. He did not specify what projects are being work upon.

"They will very soon be contributing to the capabilities of the PAF in particular and Pakistan in general... PAF capabilities have been substantially enhanced over the past year. They reflect accelerated institutional modernisation that has gone on since May 2025," said AVM Ghazi.

"We would share more, but I thought we should leave some things out so we can surprise you next time."

When asked about the induction of the Chinese fifth-generation J-35A stealth fighter, Ghazi said the Pakistan Air Force had established an "initial collaborative mechanism" on the aircraft and that the option would be available before the requirement emerged.

New Delhi's 'hubristic mindset'

During the question-and-answer session that followed the briefing, the military spokesperson was asked how Pakistan had defeated India despite the latter's numerical, technological and strategic edge. DG ISPR emphasised that, if there was one factor behind Pakistan's victory, it was the "hubristic mindset" of New Delhi's political and

military leadership.

"Their assessment of Pakistan is absolutely wrong. Where did they get the idea of Akhand Bharat? Where did they get the idea that they will define the destiny of the people of this region? This is the problem, this sense of self-entitlement, I think that is the problem where they have miscalculated, and they are miscalculating hugely," he stressed.

The military spokesperson noted that India misconceived that it would defeat Pakistan by spending 10 times more on defence and that there was a rift between the armed forces and the public.

"There is nobody who has the power to come between the people and the armed forces. We are together; that's the destiny of the people of Pakistan and ... the armed forces," he emphasised.

"It's not an army for the elites, it's an army for the poor. They (India) had the wrong idea, this is the strategic miscalculation that they made."

Echoing Air Vice Marshal Ghazi, DG ISPR said that Pakistan is "preparing for the future war".

He further said Pakistan did not underestimate India and "placed them where they are, but we also know who we are".

"If you want to add one difference, that is belief within every child in Pakistan; that martyrdom is a reward and not to be afraid of," DG ISPR stressed. "Our pilots, when they went up, had no fear."

DG ISPR said there are multiple "tangible and intangible" factors behind Pakistan's victory.

"Lastly, and this is the most important: this country is a gift from Allah. It's not an ordinary country in the world; it's a country of consequences. Our ancestors put their identity aside ... and said that this country was made by Allah," he added.

"We have this great belief in our destiny of Pakistan. When you add all these things together, no power on earth [can defeat us], so then how can India intimidate us?"

Moving on to the Indus water issue, he stated that the military is the "final instrument of violence in the hands of the state ... and the people of Pakistan".

"Water is an inalienable right; nobody can be allowed to play with the destiny of 250 million people, because without water there is no life," he added.

"How and when this instrument of violence is used is in the hands of the Pakistani people and government."

"Any threat to Saudi Arabia is a threat to us"

In reply to another question, DG ISPR said that the mutual defence pact between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia was of great importance, as Pakistan had been "chosen" to guard the two holiest sites in Islam.

"We were chosen to protect Harmain Shareefain (Masjid al-Haram in Makkah and Masjid-i-Nabawi in Madinah), and protecting Harmain Shareefain is intrinsically linked to Saudi Arabia's national security," he explained.

"Any threat to Saudi Arabia is a threat to us, and Saudi Arabia values Pakistan's security. It's mutual," Lt Gen Chaudhry said, adding that the pact was a "manifestation" of decades-old Pakistan-Saudi ties across multiple domains.

"We will fulfil our duty and follow what we promised."

Asked about "political-military diplomacy" in the region after the end of the Middle East war, DG ISPR highlighted that the military is a "component" and that "it is for the political leadership to decide", referring the question to the Foreign Office.

Afghanistan not a rational player
DG ISPR, in response to a question about the status of Operation Ghazab lil-Haq in Afghanistan, stated that the operation is still ongoing.

"The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting's press release talked about a time-specific temporary pause," he said.

"Ghazab lil-Haq's linkage is with the actions of the Afghan Taliban regime. We have got nothing against Afghanistan and especially the people of Afghanistan."

Noting that Pakistan has been "the best of brothers" and hosts to Afghans, the military spokesperson said there was no better example of brotherhood and hospitality.

"Pakistan's Ghazab lil-Haq is one part of the national response against terrorism," he added.

"One part of the 14-point National Action Plan is kinetics, and Ghazab lil-Haq is a sub-part of that. It's absolutely ongoing."

Highlighting that the number of terrorist incidents has declined and the number of terrorists killed has increased since the start of the operation, Lt Gen Chaudhry said, "At the same time, in the context of negotiations, Pakistan has one logical, just requirement: do not allow your soil to be used to launch terrorist attacks in Pakistan."

"Yet they let kharji Noor Wali and these people stay there. The United Nations says two dozen terrorist organisations are based in Afghanistan."

Noting Pakistan's role in mediating the US-Iran talks to end the Middle East War as a "rational state", DG ISPR said Afghanistan is not a rational player, nor does it behave like a state.

"Is there any rational player who makes terrorism the country's main source of income? Does any rational player deprive its communities of the right to equal development and expression?" he asked.

'Do not compare us to them.'

DG ISPR emphasised that terrorism "at the behest of these Indians cannot be accepted".

Responding to a follow-up question on internal politics, the military spokesperson said that dialogue is the privilege of political parties, but they have to speak to each other.

He stated clearly that the military is "not a stakeholder in the politics of Pakistan", nor does it represent a specific creed, sect, language or political ideology.

"We come from the people of Pakistan and the people of Pakistan come from us," Lt Gen Chaudhry said.

"We say 'resolve your issues through dialogue.' Who stops them? It's none of our business."

DG ISPR, fielding another question on the closure of the US consulate in Peshawar, said, "The security of all consulates and its members is always the responsibility of the host state, and therefore all actions for this are always in place."

He referred the question to the Foreign Office, but noted that different diplomatic missions perform their own independent safety assessments, and that foreign diplomats are of "high value" to Pakistan.

Houston Emerges as a Hub for Pakistani and Indian Cuisine

HOUSTON, TX — With one of the largest South Asian communities in the United States, Houston has steadily grown into a major destination for Pakistani, Indian, and Indo-Pak cuisine. From Hillcroft Avenue to Sugar Land and Katy, dozens of restaurants now offer everything from traditional home-style meals to fine dining, street food, and vegetarian buffets.

A Strong Pakistani Culinary Presence

Pakistani restaurants in Houston are especially known for their rich curries, slow-cooked dishes, and barbecue. Aga's Restaurant & Catering on Wilcrest Drive continues to be one of the city's most popular desi dining spots, widely recognized for its biryani, nihari, karahi, and grilled meats. Nearby, Savoy Restaurant, Himalaya, and Javed Nihari have long served authentic Pakistani flavors, attracting

diners from across the metropolitan area.

In Sugar Land and surrounding suburbs, restaurants such as Lasbela Restaurant, Mai Colachi, Karahi Boys, and Bar-B-Q Tonight have further expanded the reach of Pakistani cuisine, offering halal BBQ, karahi, and traditional curries in family-friendly settings. Casual eateries like Maza Pakistani Grill, Bismillah Restaurant & Cafe, and Khan BBQ & Grill cater to both dine-in and takeout customers.

Food trucks and cafés, including Pak-Man, Chai Shai, and Meerut BBQ House, have also gained popularity for bringing Pakistani street food, tea culture, and late-night barbecue to Houston's food scene.

Indian Restaurants Offer Regional Diversity
Indian cuisine in Houston reflects a wide range

of regional traditions. North Indian and Punjabi-style restaurants such as Kiran's, India's Restaurant – A Taste of Paradise, and Nirvana Indian Restaurant offer classic curries, tandoori dishes, and lunch buffets popular with office workers and families.

South Indian and vegetarian dining is well represented along Hillcroft Street, where restaurants like Udipi Café, Shiv Sagar, Govinda's Vegetarian Cuisine, and Maharaja Bhog specialize in dosas, thalis, and Gujarati or Jain meals. These establishments attract both vegetarian diners and those seeking lighter, traditional fare.

Fine Dining and Modern Fusion

Houston's South Asian dining scene has also moved into the fine-dining space. Restaurants such as Musaafer, Verandah, Da Gama, and Pondicheri present modern interpretations of Indian and Indo-

Pak cuisine, blending traditional spices with contemporary presentation. These venues have helped bring South Asian food into Houston's upscale dining conversation.

A Reflection of Community Growth

Most Pakistani and Indian restaurants in Houston offer halal options, and many serve as cultural gathering spaces for families, students, and professionals. The concentration of eateries along Hillcroft, Southwest Freeway, Sugar Land, and West Houston reflects the growth and influence of the Pakistani and Indian communities in the region.

As Houston continues to diversify, its Pakistani and Indian restaurants not only provide authentic food but also contribute to the city's multicultural identity — making South Asian cuisine an essential part of Houston's dining landscape.

Here is the list:

Aga's Restaurant & Catering – 11842 Wilcrest Dr, Houston, TX 77031

. Phone: (832) 786-8000

. Dine-in and takeout; Halal Indo-Pak cuisine. Known for its halal goat chops, beef kebabs and chicken lollipops

, plus classics like biryani and mango lassi.

Lasbela Restaurant & Catering (Sugar Land) – 13849 SW Fwy, Sugar Land, TX 77478

. Phone: (832) 999-4490

. Dine-in/takeout; Pakistani fare. Specialties include rich curries and BBQ – e.g. malai handi chicken, fried fish and kebabs, all Halal.

Khan BBQ & Grill – 17001 W Little York Rd, Houston, TX 77084

. Phone: (832) 593-0110

Pakistani/Indian BBQ and grill (dine-in/takeout). Famous for its tandoori meats and curries – chicken tikka, butter chicken, biryanis, kababs like chapli and nihari, all Halal.

Pak-Man (Food Truck) – Mobile (Houston-area)

. Phone: (832) 915-0898

. Halal Pakistani street food truck. Specializes in fusion “burgers” and South Asian snacks – e.g. biryani bowls, samosa wraps, Pakistani-style sliders

Karahi Boys – 16535 Lexington Blvd Ste 100, Sugar Land, TX 77479

. Phone: (281) 800-5880

Indo-Pak (dine-in/takeout). Offers flavorful Pakistani grills – rich karahi and karahi fries, mixed grills and biryanis

– plus giant naan and spice-forward curries, all Halal.

Bundu Khan Kabab House – 10941 FM 1960 W, Houston, TX 77070

. Phone: (281) 477-7897

. Dine-in/takeout; Pakistani BBQ & Halal. Known for its breakfast specials (halwa puri) and kababs, plus biryanis and curries in a casual setting

Bar BQ Tonight – 14838 Park Row Blvd Ste A, Houston, TX 77084

. Phone: (346) 594-2097

. Dine-in/takeout; Pakistani BBQ/Grill. Serves classic karahi (meat wok), malai boti, beef bihari kababs and other BBQ meats, all Halal.

Mai Colachi – 15425 SW Fwy, Sugar Land, TX 77478

. Phone: (281) 240-0786

. Dine-in; Halal Pakistani/Indian. Upscale BBQ and grill – steaks, tandoori meats and kebabs – and rich curries (mutton karahi, etc.)

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Javed Nihari – 14631 Beechnut St, Houston, TX 77083

. Phone: (346) 330-4240

. Dine-in/takeout; Pakistani. Famous for authentic Nihari (slow-cooked beef stew) and biryanis, plus spicy curries. All halal meats.

Bismillah Restaurant & Cafe – 5696 Hillcroft St, Houston, TX 77036

. Phone: (713) 587-9300

. Pakistani/Indian halal burgers and sandwiches. Known for its “patty melt” burgers and traditional Pakistani bun kebabs on paratha (all Halal).

Chai Shai – 6632 Southwest Fwy, Houston, TX 77074

. Phone: (832) 939-8112

. Dine-in; Pakistani cafe/bakery (tea room). Specialty: Karak tea (“chai shai”), breakfast sandwiches and buns (e.g. “Bun Ka Baap” pork/salwa roll) and South Asian snacks

. Halal meats and sweets.

Maza Pakistani Grill – 15655 JFK Blvd Ste L, Houston, TX 77032

. Phone: (281) 741-2571

. Dine-in/takeout; Pakistani. Offers tandoori grill and curries – chicken tikka, seekh kabab, Butter Chicken, biryani and goat curry. All Halal.

Himalaya Restaurant – 6652 Southwest Fwy, Houston, TX 77074

. Phone: (713) 532-2837

. Dine-in; Indian/Pakistani/Himalayan. Family-style dining with classic curries (palak gosht, goat karahi), biryanis and grilled meats (biryani pictured). Halal.

Mezban – 6655 Harwin Dr Ste A108, Houston, TX 77036

. Phone: (713) 952-0606

. Dine-in; Indian/Pakistani Buffet. All-you-can-eat buffet (Halal) featuring biryanis, kebabs, curries and sides.

Meerut BBQ House (Food Truck) – 11910 S Texas 6, Sugar Land, TX 77498

(Fri-Sat nights). Phone: (346) 667-6308

. Mobile Halal Pakistani BBQ. Grill specialties: chicken tikka, wings, bihari boti, tikka rolls and parathas

DDK Kabab & Grill – 11797 S Hwy 6, Sugar Land, TX 77498

. Phone: (832) 500-4618

. Dine-in; Indian/Pakistani BBQ. Tandoori and grilled specialties (mixed grill, seekh kababs, chicken tikka, goat chops) plus biryanis and curries. All Halal.

Tolo Kabab House – 7555 Bellaire Blvd Ste B, Houston, TX 77036

. Phone: (281) 888-7398

. Dine-in; Afghan/Pakistani. Features Afghan specialties (mantoo dumplings, kabuli pulao, chapli kebabs) and Kabab/Pilaf dishes. Halal.

Shalamar Restaurant – 15142 Highway 3, Webster, TX 77598

. Phone: (281) 488-4151

. Dine-in; Pakistani/Indian. Neighborhood halal eatery serving karahis, biryanis, tikka masala and more

. Friendly ambiance with both lunch buffet and a la carte.

Nirvana Indian Restaurant – 14545 Memorial Dr, Houston, TX 77079

. Phone: (281) 496-3232

. Dine-in buffet (Halal) – specializes in all-you-can-eat vegetarian-friendly Indian buffet and seafood specials

. Known for its elaborate buffet thali (notably chicken biryani, palak paneer, aloo gobi, etc.) and casual setting.

Maharaja Bhog – 8338 Southwest Fwy, Houston, TX 77074

. Phone: (713) 771-2464

. Dine-in buffet; Gujarati veg Thali (Indian Vegetarian). All-vegetarian Gujarati/Marwari feast served in unlimited thalis – dals, vegetables, chutneys, sweets. Family-style dinner with Jain options available.

Shiv Sagar – 6662 Southwest Fwy, Houston, TX 77074

. Phone: (713) 977-0150

. Dine-in buffet; Indian Vegetarian. Offers Gujarati-style thali buffet and à la carte (e.g. dosas, curries, breads) in a casual family setting.

Govinda's Vegetarian Cuisine – 1320 W 34th St, Houston, TX 77018

. Phone: (346) 266-1626

. Dine-in buffet (ISKCON temple café); all-vegetarian (vegan-friendly) Indian. Specializes in Jain/South-Indian-

inspired thali buffet and a variety of healthy veggie dishes.

Da Gama – 600 N Shepherd Dr Ste 520, Houston, TX 77007

. Phone: (281) 888-7806

. Dine-in; Indo-Portuguese. “Indian canteen” for modern fusion – small plates of Goan and Anglo-Indian style (pork vindaloo, sausage rolls, tandoori masalas), plus craft cocktails. Creative brunch and lunch offerings.

Surya India – 700 Durham Dr Ste 200, Houston, TX 77007

. Phone: (713) 864-6667

. (Note: This contemporary Indian fine-dining by Chef Sheel Joshi operated near Rice Military.) It was an upscale dining room with modern Indian plates (award-winning chef, halal)

Kiran's Restaurant – 2925 Richmond Ave Ste 160, Houston, TX 77098

. Phone: (713) 960-8472

. Dine-in; Upscale Indian. Fine dining Punjabi cuisine – tandoori grills (chicken tikka, lamb kababs), rich curries (butter chicken, lamb vindaloo) and innovative fusion dishes (Seafood tandoori platter)

India's Restaurant – A Taste of Paradise – 5704 Richmond Ave, Houston, TX 77057

. Phone: (713) 266-0131 (also 266-0805)

. Dine-in/buffet; North Indian (vegetarian & non-veg). Long-standing Uptown eatery serving generous lunch buffet and à la carte curries (vegetarian, chicken, mutton), tandoori breads, and Chinese-Indian “desi Chinese” classics.

Mirch Masala – 10758 Cypress Creek Pkwy, Houston, TX 77070

. Phone: (281) 955-9878

. Dine-in/buffet; Indian vegetarian-friendly. All-you-can-eat North Indian buffet (Halal) featuring Gujarati and Rajasthani specialties – biryanis, curries, dal, sambhar, desserts (e.g. ras malai) in a colorful family-style setting

Pondicheri – 2800 Kirby Dr Ste B132, Houston, TX 77098

. Phone: (713) 522-2022

. Dine-in/cafe; Modern Indian fusion. Casual cafe known for creative South-Indian-inspired breakfast/brunch (e.g. masala egg wraps, Belgian waffles with Indian flavors) and lunch plates (Indian-style burgers, thali bowls)

. Uses local ingredients and has bakery items.

Musaafer – 5115 Westheimer Rd Ste C-3500, Houston, TX 77056

. Phone: (713) 242-8087

. Fine-dining Indian (Michelin-rated); Halal. Upscale contemporary Indian cuisine – tasting menus featuring tandoori grills, biryanis and modern “street food” plates. Known for gourmet renditions like lamb chops, butter chicken, and creative desserts.

Verandah – 3300 Kirby Dr Ste 7A, Houston, TX 77098

. Phone: (832) 886-4291

. Dine-in; Indian (Malabar/Coastal). Upscale Indian restaurant (Kirby Collection) offering regional specialties – Kerala shrimp curry, Goan fish curry, biryanis, tandoori grills (Awadhi biryani pictured)

. Creative cocktails and vegetarian options also featured.

Udipi Café – Hillcroft – 5959 Hillcroft St Ste A, Houston, TX 77036

. Phone: (713) 334-5555

. Dine-in buffet; South Indian vegetarian. Casual cafeteria known for all-you-can-eat thali and dosas – specialties include ghee roast dosa, Mysore masala dosa and South Indian banana-leaf thali

. Vegetarian fare (many vegan options) in a lively setting.



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Radio Sangeet Owner Saeed Gaddi & Businessman Rizwan Gaddi Host Reception for Sohail Warraich



Houston — Renowned Pakistani journalist and television host Sohail Warraich was honored at a local gathering hosted by prominent business figures Saeed Gaddi, owner of Radio Sangeet & Businessman Rizwan Gaddi. The reception was held at a well-

known local restaurant in Houston and brought together members of the Pakistani-American business and media community. The event was organized to recognize Sohail Warraich's long-standing

Continued on page 28

Arif Azeem Hosts Grand Luncheon in Houston Honoring Overseas Pakistani Leaders

HOUSTON: Prominent Houston-based businessman and social leader Arif Azeem hosted a special luncheon in honor of visiting Chairman Overseas Pakistanis Foundation Syed Qamar Raza, former Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis Makhdoom Tariq Mahmood-ul-Hassan, and renowned Qari Qari Sadaqat, who recently arrived from London.



The gathering brought together distinguished members of the Pakistani-American community and notable personalities from various fields. Among the prominent atten-

dees were former federal minister Shamim Siddiqui and Senator Babar Ghor, along with Dr. Asif Qadeer, Faheem Akhund, Shakeel Khan, and

Dr. Nadeem Nusrat. Representatives from the media fraternity, including Shamim Syed, Jameel Siddiqui,

Continued on page 28

Houston Hosts Namal Scholarship Club Annual Fundraising Dinner in Support of Education in Pakistan



HOUSTON — Community leaders, philanthropists, and supporters of education gathered on Sunday, May 3, for the Namal Scholarship Club Annual Fundraising Dinner, a high-profile event dedicated to advancing

access to quality higher education for deserving students in Pakistan. The prestigious Hilton Post Oak Galleria hosted the evening gala.

Spotlighting the ongoing mission of the Namal Scholarship Club, the event unfolded exactly as organizers envisioned: "a night of purpose, impact, and hope." The gathering successfully brought together members of the diaspora community to invest in the future of Pakistan's youth and fund vital academic opportunities through Namal's education initiatives.

Continued on page 28

US announces phased closure of Consulate General in Peshawar

The US Department of State has announced the phased closure of its Consulate General in Peshawar, as the decision reflects a "commitment to ensuring the safety of diplomatic personnel".

The State Department, in an official statement, also announced the shifting of responsibility for diplomatic engagement in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to the US Embassy in Islamabad.

It added that the decision reflects a "commitment to ensuring the safety of diplomatic personnel and improving resource management".

Despite the closure, Washington

Continued on page 28

ICE hires torturer to hunt migrant children in mass enforcement operation

Private contractor with history of abuse tasked with tracking unaccompanied minors

WASHINGTON, United States — The Trump administration has escalated its assault on migrant children by contracting with MVM Inc, a private company previously accused of torture and enforced disappearance, to locate and track unaccompanied children released into communities.

The contract, awarded in April, signals a deliberate intensification of enforcement targeting the most vulnerable population—children who

have already survived dangerous journeys and family separation.

In 2024, Guatemalan families sued the company in federal court, alleging torture, enforced disappearance, and inhuman treatment directly linked to the Trump administration's family separation policy. The company played a direct role in removing children from parents and transporting them through secretive, poorly

Continued on page 28

Mayor Whitmire reveals budget plan intended to relieve Houston's fiscal headache

As the city of Houston slides toward a fiscal cliff, Mayor John Whitmire proposed sweeping, structural changes on Tuesday intended to hold off a daunting deficit by one year.

"We've never really addressed the systemic, structural, financial broken system of running the city of Houston," Whitmire said, describing

his proposal as "transformative."

If approved by the city council in early June, about 400,000 solid waste customers in Houston would begin paying a \$5 monthly "administrative fee." The approximately \$100 million solid waste department would move from the city's \$3 billion general fund to become part of the water

Continued on page 28

After delays, Houston City Council approves new apartment inspection rules

City officials delayed the rules twice last year and missed a 30-day deadline last week to approve the measure. The new rules come after about five years of work.

After repeated delays and a missed deadline, the Houston City Council approved an ordinance on Wednesday cracking down on apartment complexes with chronic health and safety violations.

The measure will create a registry of "high-risk rental buildings" based on ten or more health and

safety violations within a six-month timeframe. Apartment complexes on the list would be subject to ongoing inspections and elevated fines for unresolved violations.

"You can't watch a news segment or Instagram or Facebook without watching a story about horrible conditions many individuals

are living in," said council member Tiffany Thomas, chair of the housing and affordability committee. "Structural issues, health issues, safety issues — and Houstonians deserve more."

Failure to resolve violations would open the property owner

Continued on page 28

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Houston Witnesses Grandest Valima as Tanweer Ahmed Celebrates Son Rehman Ahmed's Wedding Reception with Bride Iman Khan

HOUSTON: Renowned Pakistani-American businessman, investor, and philanthropist Tanweer Ahmed hosted a magnificent Valima reception for his son Rehman Ahmed and daughter-in-law Iman at the luxurious The Post Oak Hotel, drawing an impressive gathering of diplomats, political personalities, media figures, and leading members of the Pakistani-

American community.

Widely recognized as one of Houston's most influential Pakistani-American entrepreneurs, Tanweer Ahmed has built a remarkable reputation in the United States through his success in business, philanthropy, and cricket development. Originally from Sialkot, Pakistan, he is known as the owner of the

massive Prairie View Cricket Complex in Texas and for his investments in American cricket infrastructure, including involvement with Major League Cricket.

The elegant ceremony reflected Tanweer Ahmed's stature and hospitality, with guests describing the evening as one of the grandest and most sophisticated Valima receptions ever hosted in

Houston's Pakistani-American community. The beautifully decorated venue, luxurious arrangements, and warm atmosphere created a memorable celebration for the newlywed couple.

Among the distinguished personalities present at the event were Governor of Sindh Nihal Hashmi, Senator Babar Ghouri, Pakistan's Ambassador to the

United States Rizwan Saeed Sheikh, Consul General Aftab Choudhery, OPF Chairman Qamar Raza, PAGH President Siraj Narsi, Dr Asaf Qadeer, senior journalist and television anchor Sohail Warrach and celebrated television host Sanam Jung, along with prominent businessmen, bureaucrats, and community leaders from across the United States.

Guests praised Tanweer Ahmed not only for hosting a world-class celebration but also for his continued contributions toward Pakistan and overseas Pakistani communities. Over recent years, he has gained international recognition for philanthropic initiatives, including a landmark \$9 million donation to Pakistan's National University of Sciences and

Technology (NUST) to support scholarships for deserving students.

Attendees congratulated Rehman and Iman and offered heartfelt prayers for their happy and prosperous married life. The evening continued with fine dining, networking, and celebrations, symbolizing the growing strength, success, and

unity of the Pakistani-American community in Houston.

The grand Valima reception once again highlighted Tanweer Ahmed as a respected figure whose influence extends beyond business into philanthropy, community leadership, and the promotion of Pakistani identity on the global stage.



A durable axis in an unsteady world

Even as global rivalries intensify, the Pakistan–China partnership continues to hold firm

By Dr Raza Muhammad

In a world where geopolitical contestation is once again defined by power, interest and survival, enduring partnerships are rare. The intensifying rivalry between the United States and China has deepened divisions across regions, compelling states to constantly recalibrate their alignments. Amid this shifting landscape, the Pakistan–China relationship has not only endured but expanded over decades.

Geopolitical and geoeconomic contests centred around self-interest have been part of the realpolitik of this world since the beginning of civilisation. Regardless of attractive expressions of pluralism, globalisation and the so-called rules-based world order that has been effectively ruptured by the US, the famous three 's' of realism— 'statism, survival and self-help'— have and are likely to always steer interstate relations. Speedily manifesting US-China rivalry has been exacerbated by multiple wars being fought for extension of sphere of influence, control on energy, maritime choke points and critical metals. Interestingly, despite war Russian gas continues to flow through Ukraine, for which Ukraine gets royalty as well. India buys Russian crude, refines and exports it. It had also gotten a waiver to buy Russian weapons and trade with Iran. Post Ukraine conflict, the US has replaced Russia as the largest LPG and oil exporter to Europe. Post US-Israel war in the Middle East, the world may see the US emerge as the largest oil exporting country.

US and Chinese national securities strategies reveal an enormous gap in their ends, ways and means. The US lays emphasis on 'America first' and 'protecting the homeland', whereas China focuses on 'national rejuvenation' and the 'Chinese dream'. 'Economic development, political stability, and social cohesion' remain China's priority. Meanwhile the US priority is 'military strength, economic prosperity, and political leadership'. China emphasises on 'non-interference' and 'win-win cooperation', whereas the US underscores 'peace through strength' and 'American exceptionalism'. The US National Security Strategy 2022 states, "The People's Republic of China is the only competitor with both the intent to reshape the international order and... the economic, diplomatic, military, and technological power to do it".

NATO also labels China as a "threat. From the US perspective, the countries that have even economic ties with China cannot be friends of the US. However, the EU and China have concluded the negotiations on the "Comprehensive Agreement on Investment" (CAI) and still have mutual trade amounting to approximately 400 billion euros.

The Chinese conduct of interstate relations is largely steered by the Confucian idea of peaceful coexistence. Following the same spirit, President Xi proffered the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Global Development Initiative (GDI), Global Security Initiative (GSI) and Global Civilisational Initiative (GCI). China asserts that all these initiatives are for the collective good to help integrate the world through intertwined destinies that could beget a well-knit international community engendering enduring peace. The critics, however, interpret these very differently. They perceive China as a revisionist state attempting to challenge the prevalent world order dominated and steered by the US.

The US apprehensions perhaps stem from the historical fact that hegemonic world powers have an approximate life span of 90-100 years. Graham Allison, in his book *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides' Trap?*, had cited analyses of 16 such cases from the past 500 years. Out of these, 14 transitions took place after bloody conflicts, he wrote. The Chinese track record is quite different. Despite being a great maritime power of the 15th century, it never invaded, annexed or colonised any country. During the years 1405-1433, Chinese Admiral Zheng He undertook seven voyages in the Indo-Pacific region. His fleet comprised hundreds of ships and thousands of sailors. But these voyages were only aimed at establishing cultural and trade ties. The next Chinese emperor ordered dismantling of the fleet: presumably to preclude development of an offensive capability that could be seen as a threat by other countries.

Avoiding military confrontation, China is gradually becoming assertive. It has increased defence expenditure, from US\$ 65 billion to US\$ 178 billion in a decade with added focus on modernisation of its blue water Navy and building new naval bases abroad. The Economist, in its cover story of June 15, 2024, termed China "the scientific superpower", concluding that the "old science world order, dominated by America, Europe and Japan, is coming to an end". It may become a super power in the next 25-30 years, and may flex military muscles but its history and culture exclude such possibility. One hopes that the upcoming summit meeting at Beijing, the US and China can develop some understanding to avoid a military confrontation, and co-exist.

Regardless of the pressures and challenges of prevalent dynamic and volatile international power politics, the Pakistan-China bond spanning geo-economics and geo-strategic landscape has persevered and flourished over the past 75 years. Both states, their people and leaderships support each other persistently and unequivocally. China has proven to be a friend indeed. It supports Pakistan in its quest for attainment of comprehensive security. Chinese support during Pakistan's successful counteroffensive against India in May 2025 is an evident manifestation of this fact. The mediatory role being played by Pakistan in the US-Israel-Iran war that could have escalated dangerously couldn't have been possible without Chinese support.

The Chinese miracle of quickest rise as economic, technological, military power and highest financial and moral contributor to world growth is unprecedented in world history. This all did not happen automatically. It is the fruition of well thought-out planning and reforms introduced by Deng Xiaoping in 1978, encompassing opening up to the world and capitalising on the opportunities presented post US-China rapprochement facilitated by Pakistan in 1971. According to the IMF, China's economy— currently second largest— is poised to overtake the US by 2030. The success gained by China in poverty alleviation is enviable. China had 87.5% of its people below the poverty line in the 1950s. Today, the number is almost zero. The World Bank 2022 report stated, "Over 40 years, the number of people in China with income below \$1.90, has fallen close to 800 million accounting for three quarters of global poverty reduction... The number of poor people in China fell by 770 million. By any measure, the speed and scale of poverty reduction is historically unprecedented."

This unparalleled economic rise is woven around its philosophy of win-win cooperation. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), an exhibition of this philosophy, is steered by reciprocity and rewarding cooperation. BRI thrives across the contents with partnerships of approximately 150 countries. The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), one of its six corridors, had been termed as a game-changer from the viewpoint of its comprehensive socio-economic dividends. It envisaged development of infrastructure, power generation, industrialisation and socioeconomic development for societal emancipation of Pakistan. Designed as a win-win project, it pledged investment of about 62 billion US dollars in three phases; "The short-term phase (2015-2022), the medium-term phase (2021-2025), and the long-term phase (2026-2030). Phase 2 of the CPEC was expanded to include five sub-corridors; 'growth corridor, economic development projects corridor, innovation corridor, green corridor, and regional connectivity corridor' as well as the five Es framework, i.e., 'xports, E-Pakistan, environment, energy and, equity and empowerment. Mineral, oil and gas and offshore exploration, enhanced technological cooperation and agricultural development, defence and security cooperation were also added too.

When no country in the world was willing to invest even a billion dollars in Pakistan, Chinese help in the shape of CPEC was considered to be the best opportunity for the realisation of Pakistan's dream of geoeconomics as enshrined in NSP 2022-2026. Successful operationalisation of CPEC is vital for economic growth, job creation, and infrastructure development of Pakistan. Pakistan has great potential to connect Eurasia with

Africa, the Middle East and the world. CPEC can become a trade and energy corridor. When fully operationalised, it will integrate Pakistan in 2/3 of the global economy. In the present situation, Gwadar port is already experiencing increased sea trade.

While member states consider the BRI a significant advantage for their socio-economic development, the anti BRI & CPEC forces collude in a well-orchestrated disinformation campaign to demonise BRI as a debt trap, a Chinese bid to expand influence and challenge the contemporary US-led world order. China claims that the BRI is not a solo; it is instead a symphony that hinges on voluntary participation. The five principles of the UN Charter sit at its core. Sovereignty of the states, dialogue, consultation, rule of law and win-win cooperation steer it. In spite of this, politico-economic pressure, coercion, black mail, weaponisation of high end technology, chips war and misuse of international financial institutions ensue. The ongoing wars complement efforts to counter Chinese rise.

Hence, the CPEC is also encountering terrorist attacks aimed at creating mistrust between the two friendly countries and scuttle its progress. RAW's involvement in funding unrest in Pakistan and sabotaging CPEC is well established. Optimal operationalisation of the CPEC in the vitiated milieu of global competition and the region has become a real challenge. Despite these challenges we also need to review our part in the slower progress of the CPEC. It can be inferred that a major part of this fate changer project was establishment of special economic zones (SEZs) for industrialisation to usher prosperity by affording millions of jobs and alleviate poverty, enhance exports to mitigate the trade and budget deficit and become a strong debt free economy. Unfortunately, that has not happened despite the passage of 13 years.

The SEZs development has been delayed on various counts, but more so because of inertia, security issues, and perhaps hedging consequent to the demonisation campaign. Grappling with issues of inner cohesion and dwindling economy Pakistan can ill afford delays. For earlier operationalisation of SEZs, Government of Pakistan must consider outsourcing these to local entrepreneurs or including in development under CPEC.

Focus on internal cohesion, stabilising economy, socio-economic development, industrialisation, and technological advancement to reduce dependence on external powers is also considered essential. Providing a business friendly environment and continuity of policies will help attract investments from home and abroad. Pakistan must actively participate in regional and international forums to promote its own interests and build wide partnerships. Youth is a great capital, as well as a challenge, that has to be converted into an opportunity through education and grooming to become useful global citizens.

The whole effort is to be directed in to ensure comprehensive security having human security and economic prosperity as top priorities. Security of investments, investors, workers and assurance to repatriate profits, quick dispute resolution mechanisms enacting special laws and courts and continuity of policies must become part of national economic policy.

The US is still a preeminent military, technological and economic power having a greater sway over international politics and security. To navigate the complex geopolitical landscape, safeguard its own interests, and foster its place as an important middle power, Pakistan should continue to adopt a pragmatic, dynamic and flexible approach. Current non-aligned foreign policy of Pakistan is earning it much accolades, it must continue. Pakistan should manage all relationships 'independent of the other'. Taking advantage of the current leverage available, Pakistan must try to alleviate US apprehensions on CPEC being an essential project for its economic development. Resolution of disputes with neighbours and relations woven around commonality of interest in areas like countering violent extremism, anti-narcotics, joint efforts in offsetting impacts of climate degradation, collaboration in energy projects, trade and economic cooperation capitalising on Pakistan's location as a melting pot of connectivity could be of great help.

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A LEGACY OF HOPE: Namal Scholarship Dinner Ignites New Opportunities for Students

Highlights from the Namal Scholarship Club Annual Fundraising Dinner in Houston, where community leaders and philanthropists came together to invest in academic opportunities for Pakistan's youth.



Pakistani Consul General Aftab Chaudhry Hosts Distinguished Houston Gathering for Governor Sindh

Houston's Pakistani diplomatic and community leadership gathered at Aghaz Restaurant where Consul General Aftab Chaudhry hosted Governor Sindh Nihal Hashmi alongside Ambassador Rizwan Saeed Sheikh, Syed Qamar Raza, Chaudhry Ayaz, Siraj Narsi, Tahir Bhatti, and other distinguished guests.



Unity, Patriotism & Pride Mark Houston's Marka-e-Haq Celebration

Distinguished members of the Pakistani-American community gathered in Houston to celebrate the spirit of Marka-e-Haq and honor Nehal Hashmi at an exclusive reception hosted by Tanweer Ahmed.



Arif Azeem Hosts Luncheon Honoring Syed Qamar Raza and Distinguished Overseas Pakistani Guests

Prominent Houston-based businessman and social leader Arif Azeem hosted a special luncheon in honor of Chairman Overseas Pakistanis Foundation Syed Qamar Raza, former Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis Makhdoom Tariq Mahmood-ul-Hassan, and renowned Qari Qari Sadaqat during their visit from London. The distinguished gathering was attended by former federal minister Shamim Siddiqui, Senator Babar Ghori, Dr. Asif Qadeer, Faheem Akhund, Shakeel Khan, Dr. Nadeem Nusrat, media personalities Shamim Syed, Jameel Siddiqui, Arshad Iqbal, and Nadeem Sheikh, along with prominent members of the Pakistani-American community in Houston.



Interior ministry rejects reports of Pakistanis being deported from UAE

Govt says no country- or sect-specific deportations are being carried out from the UAE under routine laws

The Ministry of Interior on Friday dismissed reports regarding alleged targeted deportations of Pakistani nationals from the United Arab Emirates, describing such claims as “malafide” and part of a “vicious propaganda” campaign.

The issue first surfaced last month when some social media accounts claimed that around 1,200 Pakistanis had been deported from the UAE over visa-related issues and alleged legal violations in the aftermath of the regional crisis that erupted after the US-Iran war. A report published by The New York Times earlier today claimed that the UAE had initiated a large-scale expulsion of Pakistani workers.

The report said it interviewed 20 Pakistani Shias, including eight businessmen based in the Emirates, who alleged that their Pakistani employees had been deported in recent weeks. According to the report, the deportations came amid “perceived Emirati displeasure over Pakistan’s response to Iranian



strikes” on the Gulf state while Islamabad was attempting to broker a peace agreement between the US and Iran.

In a statement issued today, the interior ministry said it had reviewed the relevant details and data and found the reports to be fabricated and misleading.

“No country or sect-specific deportations from any country, including the UAE, are being carried out,” the statement said.

The ministry clarified that deportations, where they occurred, were part of a routine process undertaken in accordance with the host country’s regulations and legal system, including cases involving violations of laws, overstaying or illegal documentation.

It further stated that Pakistani nationals who fulfilled the visa and work-related requirements of host countries continued to travel

to and obtain employment visas for the UAE and other friendly countries “without prejudice”.

The ministry said the “fake news” and social media posts suggesting otherwise were “malicious and fabricated” and aimed at serving “ulterior motives”.

It added that any matter involving a Pakistani national abroad is addressed on a case-by-case basis with the relevant country through established Foreign Office (FO) channels.

Meanwhile, when asked about the issue during the weekly press briefing, the Foreign Office spokesperson said he was not aware of the development.

Pressed again on the matter, he had said that Pakistan’s missions in Abu Dhabi and Dubai were actively managing individual consular cases brought to their attention by community members or by applicants directly.

He said the deportations were related to immigration status violations, legal infractions and repatriation.

“I do not see any political reason for their deportation. These are primarily legal cases, which are being taken care of, both by our diplomatic missions in UAE as well as by the UAE authorities,” the FO spokesperson had said.

The ministry further urged the public to rely only on verified official sources and avoid amplifying unconfirmed reports circulating on social media, warning that misinformation on sensitive diplomatic matters could harm bilateral relations and create unnecessary concern among overseas Pakistanis. It reiterated that Pakistan and the UAE share longstanding fraternal ties, particularly in the areas of labour, trade, and remittances, and that both governments remain in close contact on consular and immigration-related issues. Officials also emphasized that the welfare of Pakistani expatriates remains a priority, and any grievances reported through proper channels are promptly addressed in coordination with host authorities.

Mayor Whitmire reveals budget plan intended to relieve Houston's fiscal headache

Continued from page 17

and wastewater utility system — which would also begin paying fees to the city for using municipal right-of-ways.

Altogether, the changes would essentially erase the projected general fund deficit of more than \$200 million in the 2027 fiscal year, which starts in July.

Whitmire's plan would keep the property tax rate flat — for now.

"We're not raising property taxes. It's not an option at this point due to the circumstances in our country concerning affordability, the cost of a home," Whitmire said. "So, property taxes are not even in my thoughts."

Steven David, Whitmire's chief operations officer, told Houston Public Media during an embargoed briefing in April that the administration could seek a property tax hike beyond the next fiscal year.

"Mayor Whitmire's talked about maybe there is a day when we have to raise property taxes, right, we have to go to an increased tax rate," David said. "It could very well be that that's the next step that we take. ... The charge that Mayor Whitmire has put on us — we cannot do one time limps-alongs, we cannot continue to push this problem out, we have to do structural reform to establish structural balance."

The structural reforms won't balance the budget indefinitely. Police and fire labor agreements, along with a voter-mandated cap on property tax revenue, loom over future fiscal cycles, posing obstacles to a long-term balance between revenue and expenses.

As the city runs a projected deficit of more than \$170 million this year, the city controller's office forecasts Houston's fund balance — essentially its savings account — will fall below \$300 million at the end of the current fiscal year in June. The projected balance would leave about \$77 million in wiggle room before the city's savings falls below the minimum threshold required by city code, risking Houston's credit rating and potentially requiring immediate cuts to spending.

The proposed reforms would bring Houston in line with other major cities in Texas — like San Antonio, Dallas and Austin — where residents pay monthly fees for garbage service and public utilities compensate city governments for using municipal right-of-ways.

City Controller Chris Hollins — the city's chief elected financial official, who has repeatedly clashed with Whitmire over the past two years — responded to the proposal later on Tuesday.

He raised concerns about the water and wastewater utility absorbing solid waste while also paying fees to the city.

"What's happening here is that money that should be going to important water and sewer infrastructure is no longer going to be going there — or we keep that money going towards water and sewer, and we raise peo-

ple's water rate," Hollins said.

Hollins' primary power over the budgetary process is certification — confirming the city has enough funding to cover proposed expenses — without which the budget cannot pass. Asked about the certification process, he said, "I absolutely see obstacles."

"In order to look at the impact on the city's budget, both in year one and in year two and all the way out, we have to know what the assumptions are," he said. "Let's wait and get those numbers, get the facts, and as we move through this, we're going to share those facts with Houstonians, and then we'll make a decision about whether or not we can certify."

Whitmire's administration will present a detailed five-year forecast and budget proposal to the city council's budget and fiscal affairs committee on Wednesday.

During Whitmire's announcement, council members Amy Peck, Mary Nan Huffman, Twila Carter, Julian Ramirez, Carolyn Evans-Shabazz, Mario Castillo, Tarsha Jackson, Martha Castex-Tatum, Joaquin Martinez, Willie Davis and Sallie Alcorn stood behind him — representing 11 of the 16 city council positions.

"I think it's a smart budget," Alcorn, chair of the city council's budget committee, told Houston Public Media. She described the proposal as "something new and different and, I think, really maximizing the resources that we already have."

After delays, Houston City Council approves new apartment inspection rules

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to \$500 to \$2,000 daily fines for each citation.

Council member Martha Castex-Tatum, chair of the economic development committee, said the rules target "repeat offenders, the worst properties — not all owners."

The ordinance would also establish landlord training programs and an interdepartmental committee with tenant and landlord representation to oversee the program.

After five years of development by former city council member Letitia Plummer, the measure faced delays in 2025 amid pushback from the apartment industry as well as concerns from city officials about a lack of public engagement. In December, Plummer successfully pushed for a deadline to take action — which city officials missed last week.

Thomas and Castex-Tatum held a pair of public engagement meetings this year prior to advancing the measure. Mayor John Whitmire described the process as "very beneficial."

According to Whitmire's administration, in its first year, the "high-risk rental building" registry will only list a dozen properties as part of a pilot program — a sliver of the 4,800 known apartment complexes in the city.

The Houston Apartment Association and Texas Housers — advocacy organizations for landlords and tenants, respectively — did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

ICE hires torturer to hunt migrant children in mass enforcement operation

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documented channels. While some claims were dismissed on procedural grounds, the most serious allegations remain active in court.

The administration fraudulently frames this operation as "safety and wellness checks." This is a lie. The real purpose is clear: covert family separation and deportation enforcement targeting minors.

Immigration advocates rightly describe this as a backdoor family separation scheme. The operation is designed to create fear and instability among already traumatized children, then use that chaos as justification for detention and deportation.

The children targeted by this program were released to relatives and approved sponsors after background checks. They are accounted for by families, lawyers, and courts. The administration's claim that children have "gone missing" is a fabrication used to justify renewed persecution.

Hiring a company with an active lawsuit alleging torture to track migrant children is not law enforcement. It is state-sponsored child abuse.

Arif Azeem Hosts Grand Luncheon in Houston Honoring Overseas Pakistani Leaders

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Arshad Iqbal, and Nadeem Sheikh, also participated in the event.

The luncheon provided an opportunity for community leaders and guests to discuss matters relating to overseas Pakistanis and strengthen ties within the Pakistani-American community in Houston. The atmosphere remained warm and cordial throughout the event.

At the conclusion of the gathering, the honored guests expressed their heartfelt gratitude to Arif Azeem for his hospitality and for organizing the memorable luncheon in their honor.

Houston Hosts Namal Scholarship Club Annual Fundraising Dinner in Support of Education in Pakistan

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The program featured an impressive lineup of distinguished guests who resonated deeply with the audience. Renowned keynote speaker Walid Iqbal addressed the attendees, delivering a compelling message on the critical importance of education, youth empowerment, and national development. Acclaimed actor and humanitarian Hina Khawaja Bayat also took the stage, sharing valuable insights on social impact and community responsibility. Adding cultural richness to the occasion, celebrated singer Fariha Pervez captivated the

room with a special performance.

The fundraising dinner saw strong, enthusiastic participation from the local Houston community. Organizers noted that the generous contributions made throughout the evening will directly fund scholarships and open doors for students in need, ensuring a brighter future for the next generation.

Radio Sangeet Owner Saeed Gaddi & Businessman Rizwan Gaddi Host Reception for Sohail Warraich

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contributions to journalism and his influential role in highlighting social and political issues.

Speaking on the occasion, hosts Saeed Gaddi and Rizwan Gaddi paid tribute to Warraich's professional achievements and his impact on Urdu journalism. Guests appreciated the informal yet warm atmosphere of the gathering, which included networking and discussions on media, community engagement, and cultural ties.

Participants from the local community also expressed admiration for Warraich's career and his continued connection with overseas Pakistanis.

The event concluded with a dinner and group photographs, marking a cordial evening of appreciation and respect for the visiting journalist.

Mamdani defends NYPD amid backlash over ICE operation collaboration



NEW YORK — New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani has defended the NYPD's response to the Wyckoff Heights Medical Center ICE operation, claiming police did not participate in immigration enforcement.

At a press conference, Mamdani insisted that officers were deployed only after receiving reports of large crowds blocking hospital access—not to assist federal agents. He stressed that the NYPD's role was limited to managing a protest that disrupted emergency operations. This explanation contradicts accounts from witnesses and elected officials present at the scene.

City Council Member Sandy Nurse, who observed the incident directly, publicly disputed the official narrative. She reported what appeared to be coordination between federal agents and police in clearing space for the detainee's transfer—a coordination that went beyond passive crowd management.

Brooklyn Borough President

Antonio Reynoso acknowledged there was no confirmed advance planning but argued that the critical issue is not planning but execution. Police actions during the operation effectively facilitated federal agents' ability to remove the detainee, he said. The question is not whether officers coordinated in advance, but whether their on-the-ground actions assisted federal immigration enforcement.

Assembly Member Claire Valdez called for a full investigation into any contact between city police and federal agents, along with new guidelines governing how NYPD should respond when ICE operations are underway.

Mamdani's defense of police marks a significant shift from his earlier rhetoric as a police critic. By aligning with Police Commissioner Jessica Tisch and prioritizing police narrative over community accounts, he has effectively sided with enforcement against the immigrant rights advocates who form part of his political base. The incident exposes tensions within New York's sanctuary city framework. Mamdani has consistently condemned federal immigration raids, describing them as harmful to communities. Yet his defense of police in this case suggests that when confronted with real-world pressure—protest crowds, disrupted hospital operations—his commitment to protecting immigrants takes a back seat to institutional police interests. A video later surfaced showing an NYPD officer using force against a protester, prompting Mamdani to acknowledge that department protocols need reassessment. But his initial response—defending police and minimizing their role—has already fractured trust with progressive allies.

The incident has become a defining moment in New York politics, exposing the limitations of sanctuary city policy when it confronts an administration committed to mass deportation, and revealing the mayor's willingness to compromise immigrant protection in favor of police legitimacy.

US announces phased closure of Consulate General in Peshawar

Continued from page 17

stressed that its policy priorities in Pakistan remain unchanged.

"While our physical presence in Peshawar is changing, the Administration's policy priorities in Pakistan remain steadfast," it said.

It said the US will continue engaging with officials and communities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to promote economic ties, strengthen regional security, and advance mutual interests.

"We will continue to engage meaningfully with the people and officials of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to foster economic ties, promote regional security, and advance the interests of the American people."

The department added that the US Mission to Pakistan will continue its diplomatic work through its remaining posts in Islamabad, Karachi, and Lahore, reaffirming its commitment to the broader US-Pakistan relationship.

"The Department, through the US Mission to Pakistan, remains dedicated to advancing the US-Pakistan relationship through our remaining diplomatic posts in Islamabad, Karachi, and Lahore."

Saudi Arabia Bans Under-15 Pilgrims for Hajj

Riyadh (TDI): Saudi Arabia has imposed a new restriction for Hajj 2026, banning entry for pilgrims under the age of 15.

Under the directive issued by the Government of Saudi Arabia, the restriction will take effect from May 3, with airlines instructed not to allow any pilgrim below 15 years of

age to board Hajj flights.

Authorities clarified that the rule applies to anyone who will be under 15 on May 27, 2026, corresponding to the Day of Arafat.

Officials said that visas issued to underage pilgrims have been cancelled as part of the new policy.

The Saudi government has

assured that all affected pilgrims will receive full refunds of their payments, easing concerns among families impacted by the decision.

Pakistan's Ministry of Religious Affairs has directed all Hajj directorates, private tour operators, and airlines to implement the restriction without delay, Geo News reported.

Hajj flight operations from Pakistan began earlier in April, with the first group of pilgrims departing from Karachi. This year, around 119,000 Pakistani pilgrims are expected to perform Hajj under both government and private schemes.

Of these, more than 67,000 male pilgrims and over 51,000 female pil-

grims are scheduled to travel to the holy cities of Makkah and Madinah.

Authorities have not provided detailed reasons for the restriction, but such measures are generally linked to safety, crowd management, and health considerations during one of the world's largest annual gatherings.

To infinity and beyond

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Space, for most of its human history, has been a gated community that was reserved for the rich nations

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While the astronaut programme has attracted most of the attention, the satellite story running alongside it may be the more consequential one. Over the past sixteen months, SUPARCO has launched five indigenous satellites

By HAMMAD SARFRAZ

KARACHI: Sometime in the near future, an astronaut from Pakistan will float through a hatch into China's space station and become, in that small weightless moment, the first foreign national to board Tiangong. He will have trained for months in a language that is not his own, in a country with its own complicated reasons for wanting him there. And back home, a country that has been to space only once before will watch on screens, caught between pride, surprise, and joy.

The two men in the race, Muhammad Zeeshan Ali and Khurram Daud, arrived in Beijing earlier this year to begin training as payload specialists. They are, by all accounts, the real thing, not ceremonial passengers but working scientists being prepared to conduct experiments in microgravity, operate complex equipment, and handle emergencies in an environment where emergencies tend to be very final. Whatever happens as they meet the deadlines of this project, one thing is almost certain, Pakistan's space ambitions have entered a historic new phase.

How is China opening space

Space, for most of its human history, has been a gated community that was reserved for the rich nations. The International Space Station, assembled over a decade at a cost that runs, depending on who you ask and what you count, somewhere north of \$150 billion, is the most expensive object ever built. It is also, in its way, a monument to exclusion. The United States, Russia, Europe, Japan, Canada, the founding members wrote the rules, controlled the access, and decided who got a ticket, and who got the real seat.

China tried to get in, but like most things, the Americans said no, formally, via the Wolf Amendment of 2011, which barred NASA from bilateral cooperation with Chinese entities without explicit congressional approval. The stated concern was predictable – the usual scare around technology transfer and national security. The practical effect was to push the world's most populous country and then the world's second-largest economy to build its own station if it wanted one. And so China did. Tiangong, fully operational since 2022, is the result of roughly two decades of work conducted almost entirely in isolation, which, given the circumstances, is either a remarkable feat of self-reliance or a cautionary tale about what happens when you exclude a large, capable, and aggrieved country from your club, or probably both.

What Beijing has done with that station since is the interesting part. Rather than run an exclusive programme, which would have been the obvious move, and arguably the justified one, China opened it up – though, not to everyone. The Americans, for obvious reasons, remain locked out. But to developing nations across Asia, Africa, and Latin America that the ISS had simply never bothered with, the invitation is genuine. The UN Office for Outer Space Affairs has been facilitating research agreements for those countries aboard Tiangong and Pakistan is first in line.

One reading, and it is not wrong, is that China is doing this for reasons that have little to do with the advancement of science and everything to do with geopolitics. Building relationships with developing nations, positioning itself as an alternative to Western-led institutions, demonstrating soft power through hard technology, yes, all of that. But consider the alternative on offer. The ISS is expected to be decommissioned by 2030. When it goes, Tiangong may be the only permanently crewed station in orbit. Countries that refuse Beijing's hand on ideological grounds will be refusing the only hand extended. Pakistan, to its credit, and fortunately, is on the right side of things.

Pakistan's place and the new phase

Pakistan's Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) was founded in 1961, before India had a space agency, before most of the world had thought seriously about the question, and for a decade or so it looked like it might actually go somewhere. But history tells us that politics, underfunding, and a brain drain that hollowed out the sciences left SUPARCO as present on paper, absent in practice.

What is different now, those involved will tell you, is that the cooperation is structural rather than transactional. Zeeshan Ali and Khurram Daud are not going to space and coming back with a certificate. They are being trained properly in Chinese, in spacecraft systems, emergency procedures, and orbital science. When one of them returns, he will be the most experienced human spaceflight professional Pakistan has ever produced.

The collaboration also opens a research pipeline that has never existed before. Pakistani universities will be able to propose experiments for future Tiangong missions, competing for payload space alongside scientists from considerably wealthier countries. In the past, our researchers have had no access to that environment. Now, cautiously, carefully, they do.

Whether the academic institutions can mobilise quickly enough to take advantage of it is a separate question, and one worth watching.

Eye in the sky

While the astronaut programme has attracted most of the attention, the satellite story running alongside it may be the more consequential one. Over the past sixteen months, SUPARCO has launched five indigenous satellites. Five satellites in sixteen months, from an agency that spent the better part of three decades struggling to put one up, is nothing short of an achievement.

Three of them are electro-optical earth observation satellites. EO-1 went up in January 2025, EO-2 in February 2026. Both are operational. EO-3, the most recent and most sophisticated, launched from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Centre in China and carries something Pakistan has not had before – an AI-powered onboard computer that processes data in orbit, in real time, rather than beaming raw imagery to a ground station and waiting. It also carries a Multi-Geometry Imaging Module, a piece of technology that improves imaging accuracy, along with an advanced energy storage system, both developed indigenously. EO-3's low-inclination orbit means it passes over Pakistan's territory more frequently than a polar orbit would, which is not an incidental design choice.

Technical information aside, Pakistan's satellites provide the nation an eye in the sky. For a country that floods regularly, absence of real-time satellite data that Pakistan controlled could be felt after every disaster. EO-3's onboard processing will simply allow us to know where the water is going today, rather than finding out when it is already moved somewhere else.

Partnership with China

All five satellites were launched on Chinese rockets. Pakistan has not made domestic launch capability a budget priority, and Dr. Sarah Qureshi, an aerospace propulsion engineer who has spoken recently with Sputnik about the programme, frames the logic with admirable bluntness: "If a satellite costs a million to build, the rocket to launch it costs billions." Pakistan is, in effect, running a focused strategy, build the payload, leave the rocket to Beijing, and the results, at least in volume and pace, justify it. The Strategic Plans Division Force now coordinates aerospace, defence, and satellite work under a single institutional roof, which has eliminated the kind of inter-agency friction that used to add years to projects.

Less comfortably, Dr. Qureshi has also

noted that Pakistan relies heavily on established Chinese designs rather than conducting foundational research of its own. This is the part of the story that the press releases tend to skip. There is a meaningful difference between a space programme that builds things and a space programme that assembles things, and Pakistan, right now, is somewhere on that spectrum without being entirely clear about where it should be. That said, the pace of launches is genuinely impressive. What would be more impressive and more telling is knowing how much of the engineering lives in Pakistani heads versus Chinese manuals.

Long term impact

Space programmes are not difficult to start, but they are difficult to sustain and Pakistan knows this better than most. The question hanging over the current momentum is not whether the technology works, it demonstrably does, but whether the institutions around it are durable enough to survive a change of government, a budget crisis, or the quiet departure of the engineers who actually know what they are doing.

The security dimension adds its own complications. Communication satellites, surveillance capabilities, navigation support: all of these now flow, in significant part, through Pakistan's relationship with China. That relationship is currently good but in the long run Pakistan will have to be independent. A space programme built substantially on a single partner's goodwill and technology is not fully a space programme, it is, in part, a dependency. None of which should take away the spotlight from what has actually happened. We now have three working earth observation satellites, the nation's first AI-powered satellite computer, and two astronauts in serious training for an important mission. For a programme with SUPARCO's history and challenges, this is not a minor achievement. It is, in fact, the most remarkable version of a Pakistani space programme that has ever existed.

All that said, sometime soon, one of those two men in Beijing will board a spacecraft. He will leave the atmosphere, dock with a station that was built by a country that was told it could not have one, and look out at a planet that is, from that altitude, entirely indifferent to the politics below. He will be carrying Pakistan's flag and whatever it is that he hopes for our country. The rest is up to the people on the ground, the engineers, the politicians, the institution, and our collective desire to go further than before.

Dallas Echoed With Chants of “Long Live Pakistan” as Community Leaders Marked “Battle of Truth, Day of Victory”



By Raja Zahid Akhtar Khanzada

DALLAS: In an emotionally charged and deeply patriotic gathering titled “Battle of Truth, Day of Victory,” hundreds of members of the Pakistani American community filled a packed hall in Dallas, where chants of “Pakistan Zindabad” and “Long Live Pakistan Army” echoed throughout the evening. The event, hosted by prominent community leader Abdul Hafeez Khan, became not merely a celebration of national pride, but a broader reflection on Pakistan’s identity, resilience and future.

The chief guests were Sindh Governor Syed Nahal Hashmi and Overseas Pakistanis Foundation Chairman Syed Qamar Raza, while the event was moderated by Ghazala Habib. Among those in attendance were Vice Consul General Ushr Shahzad from Houston, Tanveer Ahmed, and a number of well known social, business and media personalities from across the Dallas area.

In a lengthy and emotional address that frequently drew applause and chants from the audience, Governor Hashmi said Pakistan was never born out of weakness, but through the vision and determination of a people who refused to remain politically subjugated. He reminded the audience that while their ancestors may have lived under colonial rule, Pakistan itself was created as a sovereign state through the leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

“Nations survive through ideology,” he said. “The moment a nation distances itself from its founding vision, it begins to lose its purpose.”

Quoting the Quranic verse “Nasrun min Allah wa fathun qareeb” (“Help from Allah and vic-

tory is near”), he said that no power on earth could defeat a nation united in faith, purpose and resolve. Referring to Pakistan’s recent military successes, he declared that the country had delivered such a forceful response to its adversaries that the world was left stunned as enemy aircraft fell “one after another.”

The governor also credited former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto with laying the foundation of Pakistan’s nuclear program and praised later leaders, particularly Nawaz Sharif, for carrying that mission forward and making Pakistan “untouchable” through nuclear capability.

Speaking about Pakistan’s military legacy, he invoked the name of Air Commodore Muhammad Mahmood Alam, the celebrated Pakistan Air Force pilot who famously downed multiple enemy aircraft within minutes during the 1965 war, calling it a symbol of courage that still inspires generations.

But the most emotional moment of the evening came when Governor Hashmi turned his attention to the younger generation. Fighting back tears, he said:

“In 2047, when Pakistan celebrates one hundred years of independence, some among you will become governors, ministers or prime ministers. But if even then Pakistan is still carrying a begging bowl in its hands, my soul will remain restless.”

The hall fell silent as the governor became visibly emotional. He then added:

“A nation is not made great by expensive clothes or luxury cars. Nations become great through character, sacrifice and purpose.”

He challenged young Pakistanis to think beyond military victories and focus instead on economic

independence.

“We defeated India on the battlefield,” he said. “Can we defeat it economically?”

Calling economic dependency Pakistan’s next great struggle, he urged overseas Pakistanis and the younger generation to wage a battle against corruption, dependency and IMF driven economic vulnerability.

In a rare moment of personal reflection, Governor Hashmi told the audience:

“I have never committed corruption. I have never deceived Pakistan.”

Holding up his shirt sleeve, he added with humility that even the clothes he was wearing had been gifted to him by friends, including a shirt given to him seventeen years ago by a longtime companion present in the audience.

Addressing the gathering, Syed Qamar Raza, Chairman of the Overseas Pakistanis Foundation, said the recent national confrontation had elevated Pakistan’s stature around the world. Referring to remarks made by Pakistan’s military leadership, he said Pakistan possessed the capability to inflict far greater damage but chose a restrained and calculated response.

“Pakistan had the ability to shoot down even more Indian aircraft,” he said. “But by limiting its response to six, Pakistan demonstrated not only strength, but responsibility and restraint.”

Raza described overseas Pakistanis as one of the country’s greatest economic assets, noting that expatriates sent \$38.3 billion to Pakistan last year through legal banking channels, with remittances expected to surpass \$41 billion this year.

“If overseas Pakistanis commit themselves fully to legal remittance channels and that figure reaches

\$60 billion annually, Pakistan could free itself from IMF dependence,” he said.

He described overseas Pakistanis as ambassadors of the nation, saying they represented Pakistan’s image abroad through hard work, professionalism and integrity.

Event host and businessman Abdul Hafeez Khan said recent developments had restored pride and confidence among Pakistanis across the world.

“The world has now witnessed that Pakistan knows how to defend itself,” he said. “Our nation responded with dignity and strength.”

Community leader Iftikhar Darpan said the recent military success had strengthened the confidence and standing of overseas Pakistanis globally.

“Pakistan is a peace loving country,” he said, “but if aggression is imposed upon us, Pakistan knows how to respond.”

Veteran journalist Sohail Warraich told the audience that perhaps for the first time in Pakistan’s history, the international community appeared willing to openly acknowledge Pakistan’s success.

“For too long we blamed others for our failures without confronting our own weaknesses,” he said. “Today, a new sense of hope is emerging. It feels as though the dreams of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Allama Muhammad Iqbal are once again finding life.”

Senior journalist Raja Zahid Akhtar Khanzada, speaking during the event, reflected on the changing nature of Pakistan’s response to conflict.

“We have seen times when captured enemy pilots were served tea and sent back with restraint,” he

said. “But this time, there was no hesitation. There was clarity and resolve.”

He credited national leadership for transforming critical moments into defining chapters of history and said the message delivered to adversaries was unmistakable: nations are not sustained by weapons alone, but by courage and conviction.

“The real battle is not fought only on military front lines,” he said. “It is also fought through ideas, truth, hope and national unity. Nations are strengthened not merely through arms, but through faith, discipline, sacrifice and collective purpose.”

The event concluded with prayers for Pakistan’s peace, stability and prosperity, after which the hall once again erupted with chants of “Pakistan Zindabad.”

Earlier in the evening, Governor Hashmi received a warm welcome upon arrival. Community leaders including Abdul Hafeez Khan, Ghazala Habib, Raja Zahid Akhtar Khanzada, Ashraf Bashir and others greeted him personally. The governor moved from table to table inside the hall, shaking hands and interacting with guests, a gesture that was warmly appreciated by attendees.

The gathering drew participation from a broad cross section of the Pakistani American community, including representatives of various organizations and prominent individuals from business, media, religious and professional circles. Among those present were Dr. Riaz Haider, Barkat Basria, Abid Malik, Dr. Hassan Hashmi, Salma Hashmi, Jan Hamid, Allama Babar Rehmani, Ghulam Jahangda, Aftab Siddiqui, Sabeel Abbasi, Naem Sukhia, Iftikhar Ifiti, Nadeem Akhtar, Dr. Daud Nasir, Dr. Kamran Rao, Zulfiqar Halepota and several other community leaders.

Houston Reception Hosted by Rizwan Gaddi & Saeed Gaddi Honors Veteran Journalist Sohail Warraich

Prominent business figures Rizwan Gaddi and Saeed Gaddi, owners of Radio Sangeet, hosted a reception at a local Houston restaurant in honor of renowned Pakistani journalist and television host Sohail Warraich. The event brought together members of the Pakistani-American community, media professionals, and local business personalities who paid tribute to Warraich's distinguished career in journalism and his contributions to strengthening media and cultural links between Pakistan and the United States. The evening featured informal discussions, networking, and a dinner in a warm and respectful atmosphere.



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