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Riyadh Summit

Gaza and Lebanon bombings condemned

Glittering Bitcoin

Will Bitcoin hit the \$100K Level soon?

Quetta Suicide Attack

Is it a security failure?

# STUNNING VICTORY OF TRUMP





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# Victory of Donald Trump and the Future of Imran Khan



By Kanwal Munir

## Introduction

The 2024 U.S. presidential election marked a defining moment in American politics. The fierce race between Republican Donald Trump and Democrat Kamala Harris saw Trump emerge victorious, securing 295 electoral votes and 73.5 million popular votes (50.7%), while Harris earned 226 electoral votes and 69.1 million popular votes (47.7%). Trump's successful campaign capitalized on his strong connection with his base, targeted voter engagement, and strategic messaging on key issues. Despite ongoing legal challenges and controversies surrounding his previous term, Trump's appeal to certain voter groups, particularly in critical swing states, proved decisive. This article delves into the various elements that contributed to Trump's victory, such as his policy positions, campaign tactics, and the pivotal issues that shaped voter decisions. It also discusses the implications of his second term on both domestic policies and global relations, as the U.S. braces for the consequences of another Trump presidency.

## Candidates and Parties

### Donald Trump: Republican Candidate and Key Political Figure

Donald Trump, having previously served as the 45th President of the United States, ran for a second term in 2024 with the Republican Party. His political platform was anchored in his "America First" ideology, which focused on strengthening the economy, curbing immigration, and ensuring U.S. sovereignty in global affairs. Trump's message resonated with many voters, especially in rural and working-class areas, who supported his emphasis on job creation, tax cuts, and deregulation. Trump's unorthodox leadership style, as well as his tough stance on foreign policy, helped solidify his position as the leader of the Republican Party.

Trump's victory can also be attributed to his ability to connect with his base. His branding as a political outsider,

along with his populist rhetoric, continued to energize voters who felt left behind by Washington. Despite facing multiple legal challenges and accusations, Trump remained defiant, framing himself as a champion for ordinary Americans and an opponent of the political elite.

### Kamala Harris: Democratic Candidate and Running Mate

Kamala Harris, the incumbent Vice President under President Joe Biden, ran as the Democratic candidate in 2024. As the first female, first Black, and first South Asian American Vice President, Harris was seen as a historic figure within the Democratic Party. Throughout the campaign, she emphasized the need for national healing and unity, presenting herself as a voice of progressivism and social justice. Her policy platform focused on expanding healthcare access, addressing climate change, protecting voting rights, and making the economy more inclusive. Harris's message resonated with younger voters, minorities, and





women, groups that had been key to the Democratic Party's success in previous elections.

However, Harris faced significant challenges in the race, including the struggle to energize her base and overcome criticism regarding the Biden administration's handling of key issues such as inflation and the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic. Her efforts to unify the Democratic Party were challenged by internal divisions and the continued fallout from policies under President Biden. Despite this, Harris's message of hope and progress continued to find support among those who saw her as the best option to build on the achievements of the Biden administration.

### Overview of Party Platforms and Political Strategies

Trump's platform was built on economic nationalism, which included tax cuts for individuals and businesses, deregulation of industries, and the promotion of U.S.-made products. His administration's economic policies were aimed at reviving American manufacturing, reducing trade deficits, and ensuring that the U.S. was no longer burdened by unfair trade deals. Additionally, Trump's stance on immigration remained a defining issue throughout his campaign, with promises to strengthen border security and limit illegal immigration.

In contrast, Harris's campaign emphasized social reforms, including healthcare for all, a Green New Deal to tackle climate change, and police reform to address systemic racism. Harris focused on progressive policies aimed at improving economic opportunities for marginalized communities, increasing access to education, and ensuring reproductive rights for women. Her campaign also sought to unite a broad coalition of voters, including progressives, moderates, and African American and Latino communities, to ensure a diverse representation in Washington.

Both candidates leveraged technology and digital media to reach voters. Trump's heavy reliance on social media, especially platforms like Truth Social, allowed him to directly engage with his supporters. Meanwhile, Harris utilized platforms like Instagram and Twitter to mobilize younger voters and encourage early voting through digital campaigns.

### Campaign Strategies

#### Trump's Successful Campaign Tactics: Voter Engagement, Rallies, and Key Issues

Trump's campaign strategy was focused on energizing his base. He held large rallies across key battleground states, including Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Florida, where he sought to bolster voter enthusiasm

and reaffirm his policies. These rallies were not only a method of voter engagement but also a symbol of Trump's political identity. His speeches often centered around a combination of economic policies, immigration reform, and opposition to progressive values. Trump's populist appeal and directness made his rallies highly effective in motivating his base, and he capitalized on the discontent many voters felt toward Washington's political establishment.

Trump also leaned heavily into issues such as law and order, presenting himself as the candidate who would ensure the safety and security of American citizens. His approach resonated particularly with suburban voters, who were concerned about crime and lawlessness. Furthermore, Trump's campaign focused on vilifying the Democratic Party's approach to issues like defunding the police, calling it a threat to American security.

#### Harris's Focus on Policy Reform and Appealing to Diverse Voter Demographics

Harris's campaign centered on policy reform, focusing on healthcare access, climate action, and social justice. Her policy proposals included expanding the Affordable Care Act, pushing for a \$15 minimum wage, and tackling climate change through the implementation of the Green New Deal. Additionally, Harris's





team worked hard to engage minority voters, particularly African Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans, who formed a significant portion of the Democratic electorate.

While Harris focused on unity and progress, she faced significant challenges in rallying the Democratic base. Many progressive voters, especially in the aftermath of the 2020 election, felt disillusioned by the lack of bold action on certain issues. Harris's campaign sought to bridge this gap by promoting a message of inclusivity and equality, but the divisive nature of national politics, coupled with concerns about the state of the economy, made it difficult to sway some voters.

Trump also focused on inflation management, arguing that his administration's policies would keep the costs of goods and services manageable. His critics, however, contended that the tax cuts favored the wealthy and large corporations, leading to greater income inequality.

### **Foreign Policy: Trade, International Relations, and Military Presence During Trump's Term**

Trump's foreign policy was marked by his "America First" stance, which sought to reduce U.S. involvement in international conflicts and demand better terms in trade agreements. He was critical of multinational organizations like the United

### **Social Issues: Trump's Stance on Healthcare, Immigration, and Racial Equality**

Trump's stance on healthcare remained clear: he aimed to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act (ACA). His focus was on creating a more market-driven healthcare system that would lower costs by promoting competition. On immigration, Trump continued to push for the construction of a border wall along the U.S.-Mexico border, citing the need to prevent illegal immigration and safeguard national security. His administration also took a hard stance on sanctuary cities and implemented policies that made it more difficult for immigrants to seek asylum in the U.S.

On racial equality, Trump's approach was often controversial. His response to the Black Lives Matter movement and calls for police reform were divisive. Trump consistently emphasized law and order, portraying his administration as a protector of public safety. This approach appealed to many voters who were concerned about rising crime rates but alienated others who sought broader social reforms in the wake of police violence against Black Americans.



## **Key Issues and Policy Discussions**

### **Economy: Tax Cuts, Inflation Management, Job Creation under Trump**

Trump's economic policy was central to his re-election strategy. He promised to build on the economic growth achieved during his first term by implementing further tax cuts for individuals and businesses. These cuts were designed to stimulate investment and create jobs, especially in the manufacturing sector. Trump's messaging around economic recovery resonated with many voters who had felt the financial impact of the pandemic. He emphasized that the U.S. economy was flourishing under his leadership, with unemployment rates at historically low levels during his first term.

Nations and NATO, arguing that these institutions often did not serve American interests.

Trump's approach to trade, particularly with China, was confrontational, with tariffs imposed to balance trade deficits and encourage the return of American manufacturing jobs. His administration also renegotiated NAFTA, replacing it with the USMCA, which he argued was more favorable to U.S. workers.

During his first term, Trump also made significant efforts to reduce military presence in the Middle East, notably through troop withdrawals from Afghanistan and Syria. These moves were popular among his base, who supported his promise to end "endless wars" and bring American troops home.

## **Electoral Process and Voting Mechanisms**

### **Breakdown of the Electoral College System and Its Role in Trump's Victory**

The Electoral College played a significant role in Trump's victory. While Harris won more popular votes, Trump secured a commanding lead in the Electoral College. This was due to his success in key swing states, where his campaign's messaging on economic growth, security, and national sovereignty resonated most strongly. Trump's ability to win crucial battleground states such as Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Florida allowed him to amass the necessary electoral votes to secure his second term in office.

In the U.S., the Electoral College system means that candidates must focus their campaigns on winning individual states, rather than simply pursuing the popular vote. This system benefits candidates like Trump, who can win by securing a narrow victory in key states. Trump's electoral





strategy, which focused on winning over working-class voters and the white rural electorate, was critical in tipping the balance in his favor.

**Overview of Voter Turnout, Mail-in Ballots, and State-Specific Results**

Voter turnout in the 2024 election was higher than in previous years, reflecting a highly engaged electorate. Both candidates focused on mobilizing voters, especially in battleground states where the race was expected to be close. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, many states expanded access to mail-in voting, which allowed voters to cast ballots safely. Trump’s legal challenges regarding election fraud and mail-in ballots added another layer of tension to the election, though no significant evidence of widespread fraud emerged.

**Polling and Predictions**

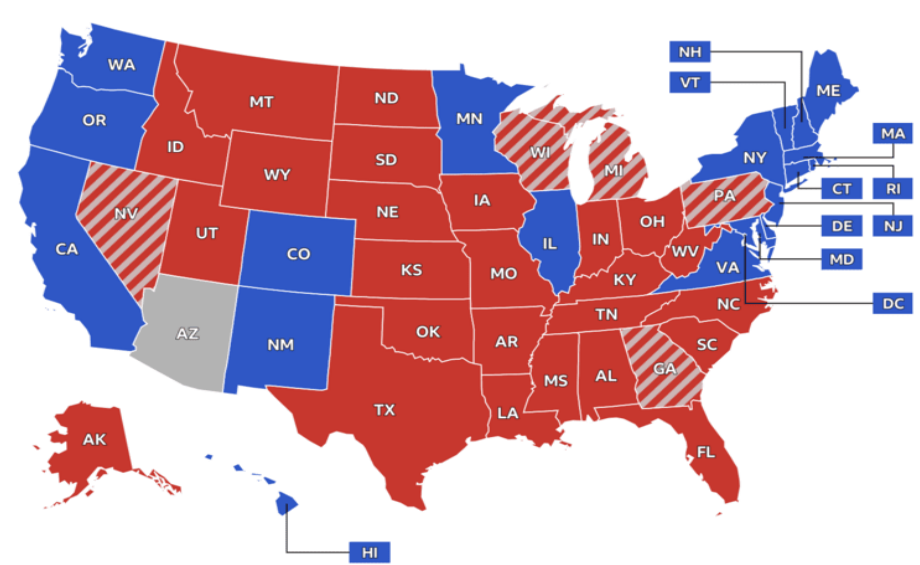
Leading up to the 2024 election, polls reflected a closely contested race between Trump and Harris, with swing states like Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Arizona seen as pivotal. As Election Day drew near, the gap between the candidates tightened, with Trump gaining momentum in key battleground areas. Some polls showed an underestimation of his support, particularly in rural regions, where Trump’s base was more resilient than anticipated. This polling inaccuracy was evident in states like Florida and Georgia, where Trump’s victory margin exceeded expectations. Despite the fluctuating polling predictions, his success in these critical states proved crucial to his win. The polls struggled to capture the true scale of Trump’s appeal in certain demographics, particularly in areas where his message resonated deeply. Ultimately, the polling discrepancies highlighted the challenges of predicting electoral outcomes, especially in a polarized political climate.

**Legal Challenges and Controversies**

Legal challenges were a significant factor in Trump’s campaign, both in terms of its impact on public perception and the energy it brought to his base. Trump faced several ongoing investigations, including those related to election fraud, classified documents, and his role in the January 6th Capitol riot. However, Trump maintained

that these investigations were politically motivated and that they would not hinder his ability to govern. The legal battles surrounding Trump may have bolstered his appeal to certain voter groups who viewed him as a victim of political persecution.

Despite the controversies surrounding his personal and professional life, Trump’s base continued to rally around him, seeing him as a figure who was fighting against a corrupt system. These ongoing investigations played a significant role in shaping the narrative of his second term, raising questions about the legal challenges he may face once in office.



**Voter Turnout and Engagement**

Voter turnout was a crucial factor in the 2024 election, significantly influencing the results. The rise of mail-in voting, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, made it easier for more people to cast their ballots. Trump’s campaign focused on energizing his core supporters, particularly in rural and working-class communities, where his policies found strong resonance. On the other hand, Harris’s campaign worked hard to mobilize young voters and marginalized communities, aiming to boost participation from those who historically have lower turnout rates. The high voter turnout in both urban and rural regions reflected the nation’s heightened engagement with the election and underscored the increasing political divide. Both candidates emphasized the importance of early voting, recognizing that a strong turnout would be key to winning

critical states. This emphasis on voter engagement ultimately played a pivotal role in shaping the election’s outcome.

**Election Night: What to Expect**

Election night in 2024 was filled with anticipation as key battleground states began to report their results. The race remained close throughout the evening, with early results showing Harris leading in urban areas while Trump gained ground in rural counties. The turning point came late in the evening when results from Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Florida were confirmed in Trump’s favor. As these

crucial swing states swung toward the Republican candidate, it became clear that Trump would secure the necessary electoral votes to win the election.

Trump’s victory was officially called as key states like Georgia, North Carolina, and Arizona, which had been contested, ultimately went in his favor. The final tally showed Trump with 295 electoral votes to Harris’s 226. While Harris’s campaign conceded defeat, the nation remained divided, reflecting the deep ideological rift that characterized this election.

**Impact of Trump’s Election Victory**

**Domestic Policy: Key Reforms, Tax Policies, and Economic Outlook under Trump**

Trump’s victory in 2024 guarantees that his economic policies, which focus on tax cuts,



deregulation, and national security, will continue for another four years. He is expected to push for further tax reductions, especially for corporations and wealthier individuals, with the goal of stimulating job creation and economic growth. The outlook for the U.S. economy under Trump is mixed, with some analysts predicting robust growth, while others express concerns about rising national debt and growing income inequality.

### **International Impact: Global Relations, Trade, and U.S. Influence on World Politics**

On the international stage, Trump's re-election will likely lead to continued tensions with traditional allies, particularly regarding trade agreements and defense spending. His "America First" foreign policy is expected to remain the cornerstone of U.S. diplomatic efforts, with Trump advocating for renegotiated trade deals that benefit American workers. Trump is also expected to take a hardline approach to China, particularly on issues related to intellectual property theft and trade imbalances.

### **Legal and Social Implications: Potential Impacts of Legal Cases and Trump's Approach to Governance**

Trump's second term is likely to be marked by continued legal battles, particularly in relation to the investigations into his role in the January 6th Capitol riot, as well as his handling of classified documents. While

Trump maintains that these legal challenges are politically motivated, their outcomes will have a significant impact on his ability to govern. The potential for criminal charges, along with ongoing debates about his role in American democracy, will continue to shape the national conversation throughout his second term.

### **Trump's Policies Toward Pakistan After Winning the 2024 Election**

After Donald Trump's win in the 2024 election, his policies toward Pakistan are expected to reflect his transactional approach to foreign policy. While Trump has previously been critical of Pakistan's democratic practices and its military, particularly regarding issues like the incarceration of political figures such as Imran Khan, he is likely to continue his relationship with the Pakistani military. His focus will be on key security concerns such as counterterrorism and nuclear stability, areas where Pakistan plays a crucial role in U.S. strategic interests.

Trump's skepticism about climate change may hinder efforts to secure further U.S. support for Pakistan's climate resilience initiatives, which are critical given the country's vulnerability to natural disasters. Additionally, his economic policies, particularly his trade stance, could create challenges for Pakistan's exports to the U.S., as tariffs and trade restrictions might be reinforced.

In terms of regional security, Trump's more confrontational policy toward Iran could escalate tensions in the Middle East, which would have direct implications for Pakistan, especially regarding its counterterrorism efforts and sectarian stability. However, Trump's admiration for strongman leadership could lead him to downplay concerns over Pakistan's democratic backsliding, as long as the military supports U.S. national security priorities.

### **Conclusion**

Donald Trump's victory in the 2024 presidential election underscores the deep divisions in American politics and the strength of his political base. Despite facing multiple legal challenges and criticism for his leadership, Trump's economic policies, nationalistic rhetoric, and strong voter support helped him secure another term in office. As Trump prepares for his second term, both the U.S. and the world will watch closely to see how his policies will unfold, and whether his legal issues will impede his ability to govern effectively.

The world awaits Trump's continued influence on global politics, trade, and diplomacy. His second term could reshape American foreign policy and domestic law, depending on the trajectory of ongoing legal investigations. As the political landscape continues to evolve, Trump's presidency will remain a focal point of debate, both in the U.S. and abroad.





# Will Trump's Return to the White House Influence Imran Khan's Fate?

*In a recent interview, PTI leader Zulfi Bukhari revealed his intention to raise the issue of the alleged mistreatment of Imran Khan with the incoming Trump administration. Bukhari, who serves as Khan's adviser on international affairs, mentioned that he has been in contact with Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner, the daughter and son-in-law of former President Donald Trump.*



By Romana Afsheen

As Donald Trump's apparent victory in the recent U.S. presidential election awaits official confirmation, a wave of cautious optimism has spread among supporters of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman and former Prime Minister Imran Khan. Many within the PTI and Pakistan's diaspora community are speculating on whether Trump's administration might advocate for Khan's release from prison, given the rapport the two leaders shared during Trump's previous term. However, while some hold out hope, others recognize that Trump's focus may ultimately lie elsewhere.

## Trump's Victory Ignites Speculation in Pakistan

For Khan's supporters, Trump's return represents potential leverage in their ongoing struggle to secure Khan's freedom. The stakes are high following a severe crackdown on PTI by the Pakistani government and with general elections in Pakistan

approaching in February. Trump's win, some PTI supporters believe, could be a turning point, or at the very least, a spotlight on the party's grievances, including allegations of political repression.

Still, it's uncertain whether Trump would actively intervene in Pakistan's internal politics, even as president. Imran Khan's situation, while significant for many Pakistanis, may not be a priority for Trump. The former U.S. president's current foreign policy concerns, especially regarding issues involving key allies like India, could override any inclination to intervene in Pakistan's political landscape.

## PTI's "Good Friend" Trump: A History of Amicable Ties

During his tenure, Imran Khan developed a cooperative relationship with Trump, with the two leaders meeting multiple times, including at the White House. The

meetings were cordial, with Trump even describing Khan as a "good friend." This close relationship gave rise to expectations that Trump would be more sympathetic to Khan's plight than the Biden administration, which PTI leaders have often criticized for its perceived "negativity" toward Pakistan. The Biden administration's alleged involvement in Khan's ouster has only fueled these sentiments, with many PTI supporters viewing Trump as a potential ally in their campaign for Khan's release.

However, foreign policy experts like Michael Kugelman from the Wilson Center suggest a more pragmatic interpretation of Trump's relationship with Khan. Kugelman argues that Trump's outreach to Khan was likely motivated by his interest in engaging the Taliban and facilitating U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan. The Trump administration's dealings with Pakistan were, therefore, less about personal loyalty and more about strategic interests.



Trump's recent campaign silence on Khan's predicament could reflect this. Kugelman's assessment suggests that Trump, focused on other pressing issues, may not prioritize Khan's situation in his foreign policy.

## Khawaja Asif's Perspective: Pakistan's Government Remains Unmoved

The Pakistani government, however, appears unperturbed by Trump's victory. Speaking in Islamabad, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif stated that the administration does not anticipate Trump intervening in Khan's case. Asif expressed skepticism over any potential U.S. pressure for Khan's release, adding that Pakistan would wait 15 to 20 days to observe any definitive stance Trump might take once in office.

According to Asif, the government remains firm in its stance, unconcerned by external influence on its domestic policies. He reiterated that Pakistan is more focused on securing its internal stability ahead of the elections rather than heeding external demands.

## PTI Leaders' Take: A Mixture of Hope and Realism

PTI leaders have shared a mixed response to Trump's victory. While some members see it as a positive development that could potentially benefit Khan, others have been quick to downplay any immediate expectations. PTI leader Raoof Hasan commented that the party had not placed its hopes on Trump's return to power as a means of securing Khan's release, noting that PTI's strategy rests primarily on domestic avenues, such as the judiciary, parliamentary lobbying, and public protests.

Hasan's comments reflect a sentiment of tempered optimism within PTI ranks. He stressed that while PTI supporters might appreciate Trump's diplomatic goodwill, the party's official strategy remains grounded in Pakistan's institutions. He added that PTI's interactions with Pakistan's military establishment have been largely routine, denying any ongoing discussions with the

establishment regarding Khan's release.

In a recent interview, PTI leader Zulfi Bukhari revealed his intention to raise the issue of the alleged mistreatment of Imran Khan with the incoming Trump administration. Bukhari, who serves as Khan's adviser on international affairs, mentioned that he has been in contact with Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner, the daughter and son-in-law of former President Donald Trump.

However, Imran Khan has expressed doubt that the new U.S. government will intervene or help secure his release. Speaking to reporters at Adiala Jail, Khan stated, "I hope Trump will remain neutral and not follow the path of Joe Biden. The issue of my release will be resolved within Pakistan, not through the United States."

Bukhari further emphasized his plans to personally visit Washington to meet with Ivanka, Jared, and members of their team. He intends to discuss the alleged injustices faced by Khan and his party, along with broader issues like human rights, democratic values, and the rule of law in Pakistan once Trump assumes office.

Bukhari also claimed that Trump had previously voiced concerns regarding Khan's legal challenges. Meanwhile, former PTI leader Fawad Chaudhry echoed similar sentiments, stating that the U.S. has already expressed its concerns over the "unfair trials" faced by Khan. Chaudhry expressed confidence that Trump would advocate for Khan's release, suggesting that the President-elect would not ignore congressional resolutions on the matter.

Chaudhry also pointed out that members of the PML-N party had been deleting old social media posts after Trump's victory, fearing the implications of his return to office. He reiterated his hope that the Pakistani government would uphold its constitutional and international human rights commitments, respecting the will of the people.

Opposition leader Omar Ayub congratulated Trump and Vice President JD Vance on their electoral win, expressing hope that their leadership would foster stronger ties between the people of Pakistan and the United States.

In response to Defence Minister Khawaja Asif's statement that some believed it was only a matter of time before the U.S. would intervene to secure Khan's release, PTI leader Asad Qaiser dismissed the remarks, stating, "Asif is at an age where his comments should not be taken seriously."

Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch also addressed the issue, clarifying that claims of foreign interference in Pakistan's internal affairs are unfounded. Qaiser concluded by reiterating that the PTI remains focused on its internal struggle, emphasizing that the party will not allow any foreign interference in Pakistan's sovereignty.

## Imran Khan's Message: "Positivity" in Trump's Win

From prison, Imran Khan himself has expressed measured optimism regarding Trump's return, according to PTI leader Ali Muhammad Khan. Ali shared that Imran sees Trump's win as potentially easing the "negativity" toward Pakistan that he attributes to the Biden administration's stance. The PTI has long alleged that the Biden administration, in its preference for political stability, maintained a "hostile" posture towards Khan's tenure, leading to interference in Pakistan's domestic affairs.

In this context, Khan's supporters abroad have celebrated Trump's election victory as a potential opening for reestablishing favorable relations with the U.S. For the PTI, Trump's return represents an opportunity to foster U.S.-Pakistan relations rooted in mutual respect for democracy, peace, and human rights. As Khan himself reportedly noted, he hopes Trump's leadership will encourage a more balanced U.S. policy in the region.

## The Diaspora's Role: An Overseas Support Network

Pakistani Americans and other overseas supporters of Imran Khan play a crucial role in keeping international attention on his situation. This diaspora community, vocal in its advocacy, has long campaigned for Khan's release and frequently raises





issues related to Pakistan's political climate on global platforms. For these supporters, Trump's re-election is seen as a potential diplomatic lever, one that might facilitate international pressure on Pakistan's government to reconsider its stance on PTI and Khan.

Many overseas PTI supporters also see Trump's administration as a counterbalance to what they perceive as a biased approach under Biden. These supporters believe that with Trump in the White House, there may be renewed international interest in Pakistan's political developments, particularly with human rights, political repression, and democratic norms.

## Challenges Ahead: The Road to Imran Khan's Release

Despite Trump's return, Khan's release faces substantial obstacles. The Pakistani government's recent crackdown on PTI has been extensive, with arrests, legal restrictions, and aggressive monitoring of party activities. Khan's imprisonment stems from convictions in multiple cases, part of what PTI leaders argue is a coordinated effort to undermine their political standing ahead of the general elections.

While Trump's administration could potentially highlight concerns over Khan's treatment, Pakistani analysts caution that any such intervention might yield limited results. Given the legal proceedings underway in Pakistan, any attempts by foreign powers to intervene in Khan's case would likely be met with resistance from Pakistan's judiciary and government institutions. The administration remains adamant that its judicial process operates independently of external influence, and any foreign input on the matter might be viewed as undue interference.

## A Complex Diplomatic Landscape: U.S. Interests in South Asia

Ultimately, Trump's foreign policy, even if sympathetic to Khan's plight, would have to account for the broader dynamics of U.S.-South Asia relations. The U.S. has significant interests in the region, with India as a key ally and China as a regional

competitor. Trump has previously shown an inclination toward strengthening the U.S.-India partnership, a stance that aligns with strategic priorities.

In recent weeks, Trump has taken to his platform, Truth Social, to praise the U.S.-India relationship and address issues related to religious freedoms in South Asia. Notably, he condemned what he described as "total chaos" in Bangladesh regarding the treatment of religious minorities. However, his silence on Khan's situation has left some PTI supporters disappointed, leading to doubts about whether Pakistan will figure prominently in Trump's agenda.

Kugelman's analysis, supported by Trump's recent statements, suggests that India will likely remain a focal point of Trump's South Asia policy. Given this, any diplomatic gestures from Trump towards Pakistan may be limited to general statements on human rights rather than specific calls for Khan's release.



## Looking Ahead: PTI's Domestic and International Strategy

For PTI, the path forward remains challenging, but party leaders appear resolved to pursue both domestic and international avenues for Khan's release. The party's reliance on the judiciary and parliamentary channels demonstrates a pragmatic approach, while their outreach to the diaspora and international community reflects an understanding of the potential

impact of global support.

Raouf Hasan emphasized that PTI's advocacy efforts are ongoing and will persist independently of U.S. political developments. The party's parliamentary group has also denied any significant negotiations with the Pakistani establishment regarding Khan's case, underscoring its focus on legal recourse within Pakistan. This balanced approach reflects a realistic assessment of PTI's options in the current political climate.

## Conclusion: Cautious Optimism and Realistic Expectations

While Trump's return to the White House has generated speculation among PTI supporters, the prospects for his intervention in Khan's case remain uncertain. Trump's administration may choose to champion democracy and human

rights in general terms, but it is unlikely to prioritize Khan's release as a policy objective.

For PTI, Trump's presidency might bring an easing of perceived "negativity" from the U.S., as Imran Khan and his supporters hope, but the tangible impact of this remains to be seen. Khan's fate, for now, will largely depend on PTI's ability to navigate Pakistan's political and legal landscape, with international support as a supplementary, rather than decisive, factor.



# Imran Khan's Final Call: A Nationwide Protest on November 24

By Kanwal Munir

## Introduction

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan, once a celebrated cricket star turned politician, has once again taken center stage in the political turmoil of Pakistan. This time, however, it is not his government's fall that has brought him into the limelight, but a resolute call to the people of Pakistan to rise up and demand their rights through a nationwide protest scheduled for November 24, 2024. This "final call," as Khan has termed it, is not just a political move but a desperate cry for the restoration of democracy, the rule of law, and the release of political prisoners, including the former prime minister himself.

## The Call to Protest: A Moment of Decision

In a poignant address to the nation, Imran Khan, currently imprisoned in Adiala Jail, expressed his belief that Pakistanis were at a crossroads. His sister, Aleema Khan, relayed his message after meeting him at the jail. Imran's words, as quoted by Aleema, painted a dire picture of Pakistan's political future: "This is the moment when you will have to decide [whether] you want to live under martial law or live with freedom." Khan's message was not just directed at his supporters but aimed at the entire nation, from farmers and students to civil society members and lawyers. He urged them to take a stand for their rights, judicial protection, and the restoration of the democratic process that he believes was stolen from them during the controversial February 2024 elections.

Imran's call is fueled by his disillusionment with the current political landscape, particularly after the passage of the 26th Constitutional Amendment, which, according to him, has severely curtailed judicial powers and further consolidated control over Pakistan's judiciary. His argument is simple yet powerful: "All of your rights have been taken away; the Supreme Court has been occupied, and the current conditions are



even worse than previous martial laws." The PTI leader sees this as the culmination of a broader strategy to undermine the judiciary and stifle democratic freedom.

## PTI's Core Demands: Restoration of Democracy and Justice

The PTI's call for a nationwide protest is grounded in three key demands:

- 1) **Restoration of the Judiciary:** The 26th Constitutional Amendment has become a flashpoint in Pakistan's political discourse. PTI argues that the amendment is a direct assault on judicial independence, seeking to concentrate power within the executive branch, and thereby undermining the checks and balances that the judiciary provides. PTI's leadership insists that judicial independence is crucial for Pakistan's democratic fabric.
- 2) **Release of Imran Khan and PTI Leadership:** Imran Khan's imprisonment, along with the arrest of numerous party leaders and workers,

has been a central grievance for PTI. Imran's incarceration, which has lasted over a year, is framed by the party as politically motivated, aimed at suppressing dissent and punishing those who challenge the establishment.

- 3) **Return of the "Stolen Mandate":** The PTI claims that the 2024 elections were marred by fraud, alleging that the mandate of the people was stolen. The PTI contends that the election process was rigged in favor of the ruling political elites, and the party has demanded fresh elections to restore legitimacy to Pakistan's political system.

## PTI's Growing Frustration: A Series of Unfulfilled Protests

The November 24 protest is not the first time PTI has called its supporters to the streets. Since September 2024, the party has organized several rallies in an attempt to pressure the government into meeting its demands. However, these protests have largely failed to achieve their objectives.





The most notable failure came on October 4, 2024, when a protest aimed at forcing the government to release party leaders and restore democratic processes fizzled out due to a lack of momentum and a failure to gain the necessary traction. This led to considerable disappointment among PTI's ranks, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), where the provincial government had earlier promised a major demonstration but failed to deliver.

The frustration among PTI workers is palpable. Party leadership had raised hopes for an impactful rally, but the sudden end of the October protest without any clear outcomes further disillusioned the party's supporters. In response to this, KP Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, a key ally of Imran Khan, announced that he would lead a convoy from the province to Islamabad as part of the final protest, signaling a more organized and determined approach this time around.

## Legal Struggles: Omar Ayub Khan's Statement

While the protests are gaining momentum, the legal battles faced by PTI members, particularly Imran Khan, continue to be a major concern. Omar Ayub Khan, a prominent PTI leader and the opposition leader in the National Assembly, has been at the forefront of defending the party's legal and political interests. Ayub recently spoke out about the ongoing judicial harassment of PTI leaders, revealing the intense personal strain caused by over 100 legal cases he is currently facing.

In a recent interview, Ayub condemned the politically motivated charges against PTI members, asserting that the cases against them were fabricated to suppress dissent. He lamented the lack of direct access to Imran Khan, noting that he had not been able to meet with the former prime minister for over two months. Instead, Ayub and other PTI leaders are forced to rely on media reports to get updates on Khan's condition, further exacerbating the party's sense of isolation and injustice.

Ayub also expressed concern about the government's apparent strategy to fracture PTI by using intelligence agencies to pressure its members into leaving the party.

These efforts, Ayub claimed, were designed to create divisions within PTI and weaken its ability to mount a serious challenge to the government. Despite these challenges, Ayub emphasized that PTI would not back down and would continue its fight for justice, democracy, and the rule of law.

## The 26th Constitutional Amendment: A Key Point of Contention

The 26th Constitutional Amendment has emerged as a focal point in the political struggle between the PTI and the ruling government. The amendment is widely criticized by PTI leaders as a blatant attempt to reduce the judiciary's role in holding the executive accountable. PTI's legal experts argue that the amendment undermines the independence of the judiciary, which they believe is critical for maintaining democratic checks and balances in Pakistan.

In this context, Ayub revealed that PTI members who had lost contact during this period had been issued show-cause notices, and a thorough investigation would be conducted to ensure that innocent individuals would be exonerated. However, he also expressed his dissatisfaction with the parliamentary committee's handling of the amendment, accusing it of overstepping its mandate and failing to act in accordance with constitutional principles.

## Imran Khan's Political Strategy: The Final Protest Call

Imran Khan's decision to issue a "final call" for protest comes at a time when his political options are narrowing. After months of failed negotiations, protests, and legal challenges, PTI's leadership has exhausted all channels to secure Khan's release from jail and restore what they consider to be the stolen mandate of the people. The announcement of the protest, however, is also a calculated risk. Imran Khan and his party know that the success of this protest is crucial not just for his political survival, but for the future of democracy in Pakistan.

The protest is expected to be a show of force, with PTI mobilizing its supporters

from across the country and from abroad. In addition to the core demands of judicial restoration, the release of political prisoners, and fresh elections, the protest also serves as a powerful symbol of resistance against what PTI perceives as an authoritarian regime. The stakes are high, and the outcome of this protest could shape the political landscape of Pakistan for years to come.

## Looking Ahead: The Political Future of PTI and Imran Khan

As Pakistan inches closer to the November 24 protest, the future of PTI and its leader Imran Khan hangs in the balance. The party's struggle is not just against the government but also against powerful forces that seek to undermine its leadership and the democratic values it espouses. The final protest march is more than just a demonstration of political will; it is a defining moment in Pakistan's ongoing battle for justice, freedom, and democratic integrity.

Whether PTI's demands will be met or whether the party will face further repression remains to be seen. But one thing is clear: Imran Khan and his supporters are prepared to continue their fight, no matter the cost. The November 24 protest will likely be a pivotal moment in Pakistan's political history, one that could either restore hope for a democratic future or mark the end of an era for the party that once promised to bring change to the country's political system.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, Imran Khan's call for a nationwide protest on November 24 marks a critical juncture in Pakistan's political crisis. As PTI battles legal challenges, political pressure, and calls for judicial independence, this protest is not just a political act, but a stand for democracy and justice. Whether it will spark the change PTI seeks or face further suppression remains uncertain. However, it will undeniably shape Pakistan's political trajectory, with the outcome determining the future direction of the nation's democracy and governance.

# Arab and Muslim Leaders Gather in Riyadh for Urgent Summit on Gaza and Lebanon Crises



By Romana Afsheen

In a moment of profound diplomatic significance, leaders from over 50 Arab and Muslim-majority nations gathered in Riyadh for an urgent summit aimed at addressing the escalating crises in Gaza and southern Lebanon. This extraordinary meeting, organized under the leadership of Saudi Arabia, sought to forge a united response to the recent cycle of violence between Israel and Palestinian forces and to address the humanitarian toll in Gaza, where thousands have been killed and displaced amid Israel's retaliatory strikes. The summit also highlighted the intensifying conflict in Lebanon, where Hezbollah forces, supported by Iran, continue to clash with Israeli forces along Lebanon's southern border.

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman chaired the summit, which comes just weeks after the October 7 attack by Hamas militants on Israel. This unprecedented attack left over 1,200 Israelis dead, primarily civilians, and set off a wave of violence that has reshaped regional dynamics. Israel's

military response has devastated Gaza, leading to an official death toll of over 43,600 as reported by Gaza's Health Ministry. The assault has also intensified unrest in Lebanon, adding new urgency to the summit's agenda.

## The Humanitarian Crisis in Gaza: An Urgent Call for Ceasefire

The summit opened with an impassioned appeal for a ceasefire in Gaza, with Saudi Arabia's leadership and other key figures urging an end to hostilities. A humanitarian catastrophe has unfolded in Gaza, where relentless airstrikes have flattened entire neighborhoods, destroyed critical infrastructure, and displaced hundreds of thousands. With access to food, water, and medical supplies severely constrained, Gaza's population is facing one of the gravest humanitarian crises in recent history.

Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Pakistan, and

other prominent nations at the summit called for an immediate cessation of hostilities to allow humanitarian aid into the region. Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman decried the civilian casualties, emphasizing the necessity of protecting innocent lives and providing immediate relief. Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan echoed these sentiments, condemning what he termed "collective punishment" against Gaza's civilian population. Leaders from Qatar, Jordan, and Egypt also called for a sustainable humanitarian corridor to provide essential resources to those affected.

## Key Players and Their Positions: A Unified Stance with Regional Nuances

The summit was attended by numerous high-profile leaders, each bringing their own country's perspective to the table. Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, known for advocating a balanced foreign policy



approach, reiterated the Kingdom's firm stance in support of Palestinian rights while also emphasizing the need for regional stability. Saudi Arabia's position at the summit reflects its vision for an Arab world that remains united yet resilient in the face of external pressures, particularly as it pursues normalization talks with Israel under U.S. mediation.

Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan used his platform at the summit to call for a robust international response to Israel's actions. Erdogan, who has long positioned Turkey as a champion of Palestinian rights, issued one of the summit's strongest rebukes of Israel, accusing it of war crimes and urging global leaders to take a firmer stance against what he described as disproportionate aggression.

Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif took a similarly resolute stance, condemning the ongoing military actions and expressing Pakistan's unequivocal support for the Palestinian people. Highlighting Pakistan's historic ties to the Palestinian cause, Sharif urged the United Nations to intervene and ensure the protection of civilians. His comments reflected a widespread sentiment shared by other Muslim-majority nations, where public outrage over the situation in Gaza has continued to mount.

Meanwhile, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas used the platform to call for renewed international focus on the two-state solution. Abbas, whose leadership has faced growing challenges from within Palestine, urged Muslim nations to not only condemn Israel's actions but to push for a viable path toward Palestinian statehood.

## The Regional Impact of the Crisis and Iran's Involvement

The Riyadh summit also served as a platform to address the complex role of Iran in the regional crisis. Iran's support for both Hamas and Hezbollah has amplified its influence across conflict zones in Gaza and Lebanon. Iran's involvement in these conflicts has fueled longstanding fears of regional instability and raises questions about the potential for escalation, especially

as Hezbollah continues to engage Israeli forces along the Lebanese border.

During the summit, several Arab leaders cautiously addressed Iran's influence, recognizing its support for anti-Israeli factions while emphasizing the need for unified Arab leadership in the peace process. While Saudi Arabia and Iran have made recent strides toward diplomatic rapprochement, the ongoing crisis in Gaza has highlighted the strategic differences that still exist. Some summit participants expressed concern that Iran's influence could lead to greater entanglement of regional actors in the conflict, potentially drawing Lebanon and other neighboring states further into the fray.



## Lebanon on the Brink: Hezbollah's Escalating Role

As Israeli airstrikes continue to target Hezbollah positions in southern Lebanon, the Riyadh summit devoted a significant portion of its discussions to the rising violence in the region. Hezbollah, an Iran-backed Shia militant group with significant political sway in Lebanon, has ramped up its military presence along the Israeli border. This escalation poses a direct threat not only to Israel but to Lebanon's fragile stability, which has already been tested by economic collapse and internal political turmoil.

At the summit, Lebanese officials expressed grave concerns over the potential repercussions of an all-out war with Israel, warning that the conflict could have devastating effects on Lebanon's already vulnerable

population. The Riyadh summit's participants underscored the need for diplomatic solutions to prevent Lebanon from becoming another battlefield. Several countries, including Jordan and Egypt, pledged support for diplomatic initiatives to de-escalate tensions in Lebanon, while also emphasizing the need for greater coordination with international actors to avoid further instability.

## Reinforcing the Two-State Solution: A Path Forward?

A recurring theme throughout the summit was the need to reestablish commitment to

the two-state solution. Despite decades of stalled progress, leaders at the Riyadh summit highlighted the two-state solution as the most viable path toward lasting peace in the region. This proposal envisions an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel, with Jerusalem as a shared capital. However, recent events have underscored the immense challenges facing this vision, as mistrust and violence continue to escalate on both sides.

Saudi Arabia, which has previously shown openness to engaging in normalization talks with Israel, reiterated that its commitment to peace is contingent upon the establishment of a Palestinian state. Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman emphasized that normalization with Israel is not possible without meaningful progress on Palestinian statehood. The Saudi stance is a pivotal signal to other regional players, many of whom view the Kingdom's

position as critical in shaping broader Arab and Muslim support for Palestine.

## International Intervention and Calls for Accountability

With mounting civilian casualties and the worsening humanitarian crisis, summit attendees urged the United Nations and other international bodies to hold Israel accountable for its actions. Several leaders proposed taking the issue to the International Court of Justice, advocating for an investigation into potential human rights violations and war crimes. The call for accountability was echoed by representatives from Pakistan, Iran, and Turkey, who stressed that the international community has a moral obligation to prevent further loss of civilian lives.

In a joint statement, the summit participants called on the United Nations Security Council to take decisive action. This included recommendations for economic sanctions on Israel and the imposition of arms embargoes to restrict military actions. These suggestions underscored the frustration within the Arab and Muslim world regarding what many perceive as an unequal application of international law. Summit participants argued that selective enforcement of international norms only deepens the grievances fueling regional unrest.

## Prospects for Peace: A United Stand with Complex Challenges

As the summit concluded, leaders reaffirmed their commitment to the Palestinian cause while acknowledging the challenging path forward. The Riyadh summit demonstrated a rare moment of unity among Arab and Muslim nations, whose leaders pledged to support Palestine both diplomatically and financially. Saudi Arabia announced a new humanitarian aid package for Gaza, while Turkey pledged to send medical supplies and infrastructure support to assist with immediate recovery efforts.

Despite the symbolic show of unity, the summit underscored the deep-rooted complexities of the Israeli Palestinian conflict and the broader Arab-Israeli divide. While the Riyadh summit succeeded in consolidating regional support for Gaza, the path to a lasting peace remains fraught with obstacles. Divisions within the Palestinian leadership, Iran's role in Lebanon, and Israel's firm stance against Hamas all complicate prospects for progress. However, the summit served as a crucial platform for Arab and Muslim leaders to present a united front, reaffirming their commitment to the Palestinian cause and signaling their readiness to seek international support for peace efforts.

## Saudi Cabinet Reaffirms Support for Palestine, Lebanon at Arab-Muslim Summit

The Saudi Cabinet, led by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, convened in Riyadh on Tuesday to assess recent high-level summits and international engagements.

A primary focus was the review of the recent Arab and Islamic summit held in Riyadh on Monday, alongside discussions from the crown prince's meetings with various world leaders. The cabinet praised the summit's outcomes, particularly welcoming the signing of the Tripartite Mechanism Document to Support Palestine — a joint initiative of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Arab League, and the African Union Commission.

Reaffirming its support for the Palestinian and Lebanese people amid the severe humanitarian impact of ongoing Israeli military actions, the cabinet urged the global community to join an international coalition backing the two-state solution. This initiative, spearheaded this year by the Arab-Islamic Ministerial Committee under Saudi leadership, is supported by the European Union and Norway.

During the session, the crown prince





briefed the cabinet on recent discussions with Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian, Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, and a phone call with U.S. President-elect Donald Trump.

The minister of media highlighted the cabinet's appreciation for Saudi Arabia's Arab Week at UNESCO, held at the UN headquarters in Paris, as a means to enhance cultural dialogue and foster understanding among diverse communities.

On domestic matters, council members praised the reception of the Saudi medical team that achieved the world's first full robotic heart transplant. The cabinet also celebrated the success of the 10th Beban 24 Forum in Riyadh, which generated agreements and initiatives valued at over SR35.4 billion (\$9.42 billion) to boost entrepreneurship and support small and medium enterprises in contributing to the national GDP.

## Moving Forward: The Role of Arab Nations in Shaping Regional Stability

The Riyadh summit may mark a turning point in how the Arab and Muslim world approaches the Israeli Palestinian conflict. With regional heavyweights like Saudi Arabia and Turkey at the forefront, the summit demonstrated that the Palestinian



cause remains a central issue in Arab political discourse. It also highlighted the evolving role of Arab nations in shaping a more assertive and independent foreign policy, one that prioritizes humanitarian concerns and aligns with global norms.

Moving forward, the challenge will be to translate the summit's resolutions into tangible actions. Many observers are hopeful that Saudi Arabia's diplomatic influence, combined with Turkey's active engagement and Pakistan's vocal advocacy, could prompt renewed international focus on the Middle East peace process. However, the risk of further escalation in Lebanon, the unpredictable role of Iran, and the persistent instability in Gaza mean that the region remains at a delicate crossroads.

## Conclusion: A Unified Call for Peace Amid Ongoing Challenges

The Riyadh summit ended with a strong display of solidarity among Arab and Muslim nations, reaffirming support for Palestine and addressing the crises in Gaza and Lebanon. While leaders called for an immediate ceasefire and humanitarian aid, the road to lasting peace remains complex due to internal divisions and regional dynamics. Despite these obstacles, the summit reinforced the commitment to a two-state solution and international accountability, marking a significant step in efforts to resolve the ongoing conflicts. Moving forward, the focus will be on translating this unity into actionable steps toward peace.



# Trump Raaj \_ The New World Order

*Despite reconciliatory tones; fears remain*



By Naqi Akbar

As the results poured in across the United States, the Republican presidential candidate and one-time President of the United States Donald Trump was again elevated to the post of leading the United States or rather leading world affairs by the American electorate. With the American system allowing roughly two months for the transition from one administration to the succeeding one; it is all clear for the American polity within and the world at large; that it is going to be a new world; even much before the formal swearing-in on January 20, 2025.

There has been much talk and gossip about how the new administration will react to world issues at this stage; however, it goes without saying that there are definitely few upsets and few expectations with Republicans virtually taking the center stage of this world. To begin with, there has been much enthusiasm amongst the political divide that the arrival of Trump will auger return from the political wilderness of certain figures in Pakistan.

The political realities suggest otherwise. Towards that count; it is important to observe that despite being a compliant left-wing politician Bhutto; did not disturb the Pentagon arrangements like CENTO and SEATO when in power; the United States for the sake of its interests preferred a military dictator. Rather it allowed the dictator to physically eliminate Bhutto. Likewise, when the Afghan war was closing down and there were 'winds of change' on board a "Lockheed Hercules" military transport, the republican administration under the senior Bush did not put all the eggs in the popular leader Benazir Bhutto basket; rather it tactically saved the heads of the previous administration through various assurances. It would not be out of context to say that the government BB inherited was something which prompted the founder of the Nation to use the term 'moth eaten' in 1948 during his own circumstances and observations.

The new man in Washington D.C might precipitate a breathing space for the 'prison-

er'; but to expect a complete regime change will be asking for too much. Apart from that; the geo political scenario forces global actors to depend more on militaries than the popular political movements to get their work done. Towards that count the militaries in South Asia have proved themselves to be completely in line with PENTAGON goals.

Treading the geo political space in its entirety, the biggest upset seems to be for the Iranian reformists as well as for the mainstream state. The Iranian reform group practically led by the foreign minister of the Rouhani administration Jawad Zarif was hoping that Democrats would manage things to the point where the reformist only viable project JCPOA will be restarted. Towards that goal, the reformist President, foreign minister, and Zarif were more concerned about securing their political fortunes than the geo political interests of the state they were supposedly representing.

As things stand, JCPOA has no chance to



be restarted anytime now. Rather, despite good words of reconciliation by the president-elect there are fair chances that the days of Trump's crippling sanctions might return. The fears are founded on credible grounds. Firstly, the Trump administration last time was a firm supporter of the Abraham Accords, which in simple words means recognition of Israel and submission to the dictates of the unipolar world. The Hamas incursion into the occupied territory on October 7, 2023, in a spectacular way aimed at breaking the stalemate.

For obvious reasons, after Biden, Trump will stand behind Netanyahu with even more force to get the job done; which means wiping out the resistance for all times to come. Towards that count, they have enough local players to support. Hamas will be crippled militarily, followed by last rites with the help of Egyptian and Jordanian military structures; not to forget the fund's investment from sheikhdoms led by Saudi Arabia. Hezbollah will be militarily decapitated and Lebanese political players like Druze and Maronites will be encouraged to go for legislation aimed at disarming Hezbollah.

Secondly, during much of 2024, Iran has

emerged as the greatest stumbling block to the Abraham Accords, helping the resistance as well as launching two strikes, despite political divisions at home. The crippling sanctions will help the United States and Israel to stab the center of resistance from within. The disgruntled Iranians and the reform movement might be the forces that will make the job easy for the United States to get the job done.

If the current stalemate of Iran doing nothing to deter IDF continues, emboldening the latter to harm the resistance even till the January 20, 2025 time; than the combined US and IDF onslaught will be a reality. Even now, when the affairs were being run by an indecisive Biden administration, the US AWACS provided critical intelligence to the IDF for eliminating the Hezbollah cadres. Likewise, the refueling of IDF jets over Iraq was take care off. The first week of November saw B-52 bombers, F-16 and F-15 jets being transferred to the Gulf based bases, in a clear sign of support for the IDF. How things will unfold, the on-ground events in the Middle East and especially within Iran will determine.

Coming to South Asia, given the fact that Indians have got along with the Trump administration quite well, there is fair

chance that the military and economic ties will be strengthened with the Pakistani military left in the lurch. With practically Saudi Arabia the only political and economic supporter of the Pakistani political and military elite, the new world practically does not offer much more for Pakistan than the Urdu proverb "working on old take home".

The heralding of the new world order managed by the US military establishment like some third world countries is writ large on the US Department of Defence memorandum for the joint forces dated November 6, 2024. The language demonstrates the lurking guilt of bringing an impulsive man on center stage to get things done.

The world of tomorrow can be unpredictable. No miracles can be expected from the anti-Abraham Accord countries in the coming days; however, as the attrition is expected to continue things might touch the boiling point where all the players might be tuned towards thinking in a do or die mode. Conclusively; war, strife, and economic meltdown due to the first two factors can push the triggering buttons to the limits, where there might not be a point of return.





# What Does Hezbollah's New Leader Mean for Lebanon, Iran, and the Region?

By Hina Kashif

Hezbollah's deputy secretary general, Sheikh Naim Qassem, who has been a prominent figure in the Iran-backed group for over 30 years, was elected as its head on Tuesday.

In a televised address from an undisclosed location on October 8, Qassem stated that the conflict with Israel was a "war about who cries first," asserting that Hezbollah would not be the first to do so. He claimed the group's capabilities remain intact despite suffering "painful blows" from Israel. Notably, he expressed support for efforts by parliament speaker Nabih Berri—a Hezbollah ally—to secure a cease-fire, marking the first time he omitted mentioning a Gaza truce deal as a precondition for halting hostilities against Israel.

Qassem's 30-minute speech followed the suspected targeting of senior Hezbollah figure Hashem Safieddine in an Israeli strike and came 11 days after the death of Hezbollah's secretary general, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, which was confirmed by the group on October 23.

Qassem was appointed deputy chief in 1991 by the then-secretary general Abbas al-Musawi, who was killed by an Israeli helicopter strike the following year. He remained in his position when Nasrallah took over and has long served as a leading spokesperson for Hezbollah, frequently engaging with international media amid ongoing cross-border hostilities with Israel.

His October 8 address was his second since tensions escalated between Hezbollah and Israel in September, and he was the first member of Hezbollah's top leadership to speak publicly after Nasrallah's killing in an Israeli airstrike on September 27. On September 30, Qassem stated that Hezbollah would choose a successor to Nasrallah "at the earliest opportunity" and vowed to continue fighting Israel in solidarity with Palestinians, acknowledging that the struggle may be prolonged.

Born in 1953 in Beirut to a family from southern Lebanon, Qassem's political



activism began with the Shi'ite Amal Movement. He left the group in 1979 following Iran's Islamic Revolution, which significantly influenced many young Lebanese Shi'ite activists. He participated in discussions that led to the formation of Hezbollah, established with support from Iran's Revolutionary Guards in response to the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

Since Hezbollah first contested parliamentary elections in 1992, Qassem has been the general coordinator of its election campaigns. In 2005, he published a history of Hezbollah, offering a rare insider's perspective on the organization. Unlike Nasrallah and Safieddine, who wear black turbans indicating their descent from the Prophet Muhammad, Qassem wears a white turban.

## Hezbollah's New Leader: Implications for Lebanon, Iran, and the Region

For the second time in as many months, Hezbollah has been forced to appoint a new leader after Israel's targeted strikes killed its

two previous leaders. Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah died in September, followed by his deputy, Hashem Safieddine, just days after being named Nasrallah's successor.

The latest appointment, Naim Qassem, marks a significant shift but also underscores the challenges Hezbollah faces in the wake of these devastating losses. His ascension to Secretary-General appears more about ensuring internal stability within the group rather than signaling a shift in Hezbollah's overall direction. However, his appointment carries considerable implications not only for Lebanon but also for Iran and the broader Middle East region.

## Stress Test for Hezbollah's Survival

Hezbollah's resilience has been put to the test by a series of catastrophic blows from Israeli airstrikes over recent months, especially following Israel's expansion of military operations against Gaza. Hezbollah has long positioned itself as a staunch supporter of the Palestinian resistance, earning it popularity among many Arabs.



However, its direct involvement in the conflict has come at a severe cost, particularly after Israel's air raids decimated key figures within the organization's leadership.

The killing of top figures like Nasrallah and Safieddine has raised doubts about Hezbollah's future and its ability to maintain control. Qassem's appointment, while significant, reflects the movement's struggle to maintain cohesion amidst such losses. As a known figure within Hezbollah, his leadership does not represent a radical shift in strategy but rather a necessary step to stabilize the organization. His "populist" image, however, has raised questions about his readiness to lead Hezbollah during such precarious times.

The fact that Hezbollah has been on the defensive after a series of Israeli attacks—particularly those targeting its senior leadership—highlights the critical moment the group finds itself in. Despite Hezbollah's attempts to engage in limited conflict with Israel, the escalation of violence and the deaths of its top leaders have made it clear that the movement's survival is at stake.

## Escalating Conflict with Israel and Iranian Intervention

Hezbollah's strategy of engaging Israel in a limited capacity amidst the ongoing Gaza conflict quickly backfired. Israel's military response has surpassed expected levels, compelling Hezbollah to adapt to a far more intense and aggressive conflict than originally anticipated. The result was a wave of targeted assassinations against the group's leadership, weakening its ability to operate effectively.

This unprecedented escalation led Iran, Hezbollah's primary benefactor, to reconsider its approach. Initially, Iran had opted to delay its direct military response after the assassination of Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran in July. However, realizing that Israel's campaign threatened to undermine Hezbollah's operational capacity, Iran decided to step in decisively.

Iran's leadership decided to intervene directly to preserve Hezbollah as a critical ally. Two key strategies emerged: Iranian bombings deep within Israeli territory and

restructuring Hezbollah's leadership under the guidance of Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

Following the assassination of Hezbollah's leaders in September, Iran's Quds Force commander Esmail Qaani traveled to Lebanon to oversee the reorganization of Hezbollah. His mission was to ensure that the group's military capabilities remained intact, enabling it to continue confronting Israel and leveraging the momentum from Iran's broader regional strategy. Within just a few days, Qaani had restored Hezbollah's leadership structure, bringing the group back under Iran's direct supervision and aligning its objectives more closely with Tehran's interests.

## Qassem's Appointment: Iran's Influence and Hezbollah's Future

Qassem's elevation to Secretary-General is a direct consequence of these developments and underscores Iran's pivotal role in Hezbollah's survival and its ongoing military strategy. His appointment has not only stabilized the group but also further integrated it into Iran's broader regional ambitions.

As Hezbollah's new leader, Qassem inherits a party that is both under immense pressure from Israeli aggression and reliant on Iranian backing to maintain its relevance. His leadership will be closely monitored, as it comes at a time of growing tension between Hezbollah and Israel, as well as heightened Iranian involvement in the group's operations. His appointment marks not just a reshuffling of leadership but a recalibration of Hezbollah's strategy under Iran's influence, potentially shaping the course of the broader regional conflict in the coming months.

With Hezbollah now more directly aligned with Iran's strategic goals, the group's role in the Middle East, particularly in relation to Israel and the Palestinian cause, will likely evolve. The success or failure of Qassem's leadership, alongside the ongoing regional challenges, will significantly impact the future trajectory of both Hezbollah and Iran's influence in Lebanon and beyond.

## RECENT DESTRUCTION IN GAZA AND LEBANON BY ISRAELI VIOLENT AIR STRIKES

Israeli airstrikes killed dozens of people in Lebanon and Gaza on Sunday, including 13 children, as part of ongoing military operations ahead of a US-imposed deadline to improve aid access to Gaza.

In Gaza, rescuers reported that Israeli strikes killed 30 people in the northern region, with 13 of them being children. The first strike, which targeted a house in Jabalia, killed at least 25 people, including the children, and left more than 30 others wounded, according to Gaza's civil defense agency. Abdullah al-Najjar, a relative of those killed, described the scene as horrific, with bodies "torn apart" following the explosion at the Alloush family home.

Israel's military operations, which began on October 6, have been focused on preventing Hamas from reorganizing in the northern part of Gaza, which the UN has called "under siege." Israel's military claimed the airstrike targeted "infrastructure" being used by militants, posing a threat to Israeli forces.

Another attack in Gaza City's Sabra neighborhood killed five more people. The Israeli airstrikes have been met with increasing international pressure, particularly from Washington, which set a deadline this week for Israel to allow more aid into Gaza or risk cuts to US military support. Meanwhile, in Lebanon, at least 38 people were killed by Israeli strikes, with 23 deaths reported from a raid north of Beirut. A strike on the village of Almat in the Jbeil district, located outside Hezbollah's strongholds, killed 23 people, including seven children. The strike occurred shortly after a Hezbollah member visited the house, and he was later confirmed dead from his injuries.

Footage from the scene showed rescuers digging through the rubble of destroyed homes, pulling out bodies wrapped in blankets and using excavators to move the debris. These attacks are part of Israel's broader military operation in Gaza and Lebanon, with escalating violence threatening to spread further across the region.

# Controversy surrounding North Korean troops deployment in Russia to fight against Ukraine



By J. Choudhry

North Korean soldiers have deployed into combat in Russia's Kursk Oblast alongside Russian forces. Ukraine's Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) reported on October 24 that the first units of North Korean personnel deployed to Kursk Oblast on October 23, following a few weeks of training at various military bases in Russia's Primorsky and Khabarovsk krais, Amur Oblast, and the Republic of Buryatia. The GUR's October 24 statement follows recent South Korean and Ukrainian intelligence reports warning of the rapid deployment and training of tens of thousands of North Korean soldiers in Russia's Far East and mounting visual evidence of North Korean troops training and assembling at Russian military bases.

South Korea's National Intelligence Service (NIS) reported on October 18 that North Korea deployed a first wave of approximately 1,500 special forces personnel to Russia between October 8 and October 13, sharing satellite imagery purportedly showing North Korean soldiers gathering at

Russian military facilities in Ussuriysk, Primorsky Krai and Khabarovsk, Khabarovsk Krai. South Korea's Yonhap News reported on October 18 that the NIS assessed after a closed-door emergency security meeting with South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol that North Korea decided to send four brigades totaling 12,000 personnel to Russia, and the NIS warned on October 25 that a second wave of 1,500 personnel will soon depart for Russia.

Ukraine's Center for Strategic Communications released footage on October 18 reportedly showing North Korean troops receiving their equipment at the Sergeevka training ground in Primorsky Krai, and additional social media footage published in subsequent days purportedly showed North Korean troops arriving and training at military bases in eastern Russia. GUR Head Lieutenant General Kyrylo Budanov noted to the Economist on October 22 that the total North Korean contingent of 12,000 personnel includes 500 officers and three

generals. The Pentagon and the White House confirmed on October 23 that the US has evidence that thousands of North Korean soldiers have deployed to Russia. Russian President Vladimir Putin failed to deny the reports on October 24, and in fact appears to have obliquely affirmed them, responding to a media question on October 24 about satellite imagery purportedly of North Korean troops at Russian training grounds, remarking that "photos are a serious thing" and "reflect something."

North Korea and Russia have somewhat diverged in their official responses to news of North Korea joining the war on Russia's behalf. North Korea has so far denied all evidence outright. A North Korean representative to the United Nations General Assembly's First Committee on Disarmament and International Security dismissed reports on October 21 of North Korean troops in Russia as "groundless stereotyped rumors aimed at smearing the image of North Korea and undermining the legitimate, friendly, and cooperative



relations" between Russia and North Korea. North Korean Vice Foreign Minister Kim Jong-gyu told North Korean state-controlled Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) on October 25 that news about North Korean troops in Russia is all "rumors," but that any potential deployment of North Korean troops to Russia would be "in accordance with international law." Kremlin officials have attempted to claim that any cooperation between Russia and North Korea is legitimate and not aimed at other states but have not explicitly denied the reports. The Kremlin in particular has repeatedly emphasized the supposed legality of Russia's cooperation with North Korea, likely in order to manage relations with South Korea and prevent Seoul from directly sending direct military aid to Ukraine. North Korea's more explicit denial may reflect a desire to avoid additional or increased international sanctions against Pyongyang.

## The evolution of Russia-North Korea relations, 2022 to present

The growing requirements on Russia's ability to sustain its war in Ukraine have opened new avenues for cooperation between Moscow and Pyongyang. The Soviet Union was the first country to recognize North Korea in 1948 and supported North Korea during the Korean War. The Soviet Union continued to back North Korea economically and militarily throughout the 1960s, but Communist Party General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev began opening to South Korea diplomatically in the 1980s. The Soviet Union established diplomatic relations with South Korea in 1990, driving a further wedge between Moscow and Pyongyang. Russian President Vladimir Putin attempted to re-establish a more solid relationship with North Korea upon his accession to the presidency in the early 2000s and visited Kim Jong-il in Pyongyang in 2000, framing his outreach as a recognition of the common anti-Western values that both Russia and North Korea share. Russia supported United Nations Security Council (UNSC) sanctions against North Korea over North Korean nuclear weapons and missile programs between 2006 to 2017 but

has largely reversed course since the start of the war in 2022.

## South Korea is considering deployment of its troops in Ukraine

The recent deployment of North Korean troops to Russia, reported by South Korean intelligence on October 18, is raising tensions on and around the Korean Peninsula, prompting Seoul to rapidly reassess its defence strategies in light of the potential direct threats to not only Ukraine but South Korea. As the South Korean government evaluates the implications for stability on the Korean Peninsula, it is also formulating its response in co-ordination with allies, including Canada.

The South Korean government is worried about North Korean troops gaining combat experience and acquiring advanced military knowledge from Russia. Seoul is exploring various options — including whether to provide lethal aid to Ukraine to help enhance its defence readiness — while collaborating with the U.S. and Japan to analyze the impact of North Korea's involvement in this conflict and develop a phased response strategy.

Canada, along with the U.S. and other NATO allies, strongly condemned the increasing military collaboration between North Korea and Russia, viewing the North Korean troop deployments as a violation of several UN Security Council resolutions. These countries are considering tightening sanctions against North Korea, increasing



Although Pyongyang and Moscow initially denied that North Korean troops were being sent to fight in the Russia-Ukraine conflict, a Russian official effectively acknowledged it at a recent meeting of the UN Security Council.

This deployment is enabled by the North Korea-Russia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Treaty, signed in June 2024, which allows the two sides to provide military support to the other in the event of an attack. The treaty was unanimously ratified by Russia's State Duma on October 24, solidifying this military alliance. To try to conceal their presence, North Korean soldiers were reportedly issued forged identification documents resembling those of residents from Siberia's Yakutia and Buryatia regions.

their support for Ukraine, and re-evaluating their strategic postures, while NATO closely monitors the situation.

## Implications

There are risks of a wider war. Analysts have described the deployment of North Korean troops to Russia as signalling a "hazardous new phase" in the Russia-Ukraine war. The presence of these forces may prompt other countries to reconsider their positions, potentially igniting a chain reaction that further 'internationalizes' the war. There is also now a heightened risk of the conflict evolving into a proxy war involving North and South Korea. North Korean soldiers stand to gain real battlefield experience, and they may apply that combat experience on

the Korean Peninsula.

Kim Jong Un has received an economic lifeline from Russia — and possible military and diplomatic upgrades. South Korea's National Intelligence Service estimates that North Korean troops will receive C\$2,783 per soldier per month. With the U.S. Pentagon estimating troop levels at 10,000, the financial benefit to the Kim Jong Un regime could reach approximately C\$27.8 million per month, or roughly C\$334 million annually. These funds could alleviate some of the domestic economic pressures faced by North Korea, including the punishing effects of international sanctions, and fund further military development.

North Korean troops may gain access to advanced Russian military technology, enhancing their capabilities in areas such as drone warfare, electronic warfare, and modern artillery tactics. This exchange raises the possibility of Russia providing North Korea with sensitive military technology — such as satellite launch systems, nuclear submarine technology, and ballistic missile advancements — that Pyongyang has long sought to strengthen its strategic military assets. Diplomatically, Pyongyang can also use this contribution to Moscow's war effort as an opportunity to solidify its “blood alliance” with Russia, making the latter's security commitments to North Korea more binding and demonstrating to South Korea and the U.S.

that its relationship with Moscow is a formidable one.

There is unease in Beijing over the deployment. China's concerns stem from the possibility that North Korea's actions could complicate regional dynamics and invite greater U.S. involvement in East Asia — something Beijing very much wants to avoid. The U.S. has been urging China to pressure North Korea to pull its troops back, but even if Beijing were to comply — and it seems very unlikely that it will — there are questions as to whether Pyongyang would listen. The deepening of the North Korea-Russia alliance has already strained Pyongyang's relations with Beijing; China has removed several symbolic signs representing its amicable relationship with North Korea. Meanwhile, North Korea's foreign minister attended a ceremony in Moscow to unveil a plaque commemorating Kim Il Sung's first visit to the Soviet Union in 1949. Moreover, China's muted response to this latest turn of events reflects its apprehension that regional instability might threaten its own strategic interests, including stability along its northeastern border and influence over developments on the Korean Peninsula. At the same time, Beijing is unlikely to openly criticize North Korea or Russia, given its interest in Russia's resilience in Ukraine and the potential advantages of closer ties with both countries, considering its strategic rivalry with the U.S.

## What's Next

### Canada-South Korea Military Cooperation

Canada previously engaged in discussions with South Korea to purchase artillery shells to bolster Ukraine's defence capabilities. These discussions might resume as both countries seek to collaborate in addressing global security challenges. In their 2+2 foreign and defence ministers' meeting on November 1, the two countries launched an “Indo-Pacific Dialogue” to discuss cooperation and agreed to expedite negotiations for an intelligence-sharing pact.

### South Korea's possible policy shift toward Russia

Seoul has tried to avoid a worsening of its relations with Moscow, not only in anticipation of an eventual end to the conflict but also due to its ongoing economic ties with Russia. However, this tightening of North Korea-Russia security ties could prompt South Korea to alter its foreign policy, which could mean reducing its dependence on Russian resources such as uranium, and more robust support for Ukraine.

### South Korea sending independent observers

Seoul is considering dispatching observer teams in partnership with Ukraine and





NATO to monitor the situation, which could be an opportunity to gather intelligence on North Korean military equipment and combat tactics. Additionally, casualties among North Korean troops in Ukraine could be utilized in psychological operations against Pyongyang.

## Moscow expects better US-Russia ties after the victory of Trump

While President Vladimir Putin has yet to officially congratulate Donald Trump on his U.S. presidential election victory, high-ranking officials in the Kremlin, Russian government, and Foreign Ministry have privately expressed cautious optimism.

Moscow views Trump's potential return to office as an opportunity to bolster Russia's nearly three-year campaign in Ukraine, challenge a weakened European Union, and possibly improve relations with Washington, according to seven senior officials and three Russian business leaders.

"For now, we'll continue advancing in Ukraine," a Russian government official stated, noting a goal to reach the administrative borders of Donetsk and Luhansk regions by January. "After that, we'll determine the next steps regarding Kherson," he added, referring to the Kyiv-held capital of the Kherson region, partially occupied by Russian forces. Some officials believe continued Russian advances could encourage the incoming U.S. administration to propose negotiations, expecting that Kyiv might also show more willingness for dialogue. "When Trump takes office and his team is in place, we can start consultations," another official suggested, adding that the current U.S. administration has no emissaries to approach Moscow for discussions.

Most sources in government and business believe a resolution to the war favoring Russia could be within reach, provided that "Ukraine, with U.S. help, acknowledges the current territorial realities," they suggested. Russian diplomats anticipate that Trump will eagerly seek negotiation opportunities in Ukraine and the Middle East, viewing these as potential foreign policy wins. "Trump might look to position

himself as a peacemaker, possibly eyeing accolades like the Nobel Peace Prize," a Foreign Ministry insider commented, adding, "He's always driven by self-interest."

As the U.S. continued to tally votes, President Putin oversaw the launch of the Chukotka nuclear icebreaker remotely from his office. Kremlin officials intended this to highlight Russia's economic and technological prowess in the Arctic, though some admit that Putin's absence from the event in northern Russia reduced the PR impact. Throughout the U.S. campaign, Putin publicly favored President Joe Biden, although insiders claim this was a tactic to mislead observers and harm the Democratic candidate. In reality, the Kremlin was rooting for Trump's success.



Officials are particularly optimistic about Trump's second term, as the Republicans may control both chambers of Congress, potentially reducing opposition from Democrats. "Without a divided government, there's less chance of sabotage from the Democrats," one source noted. However, the interim period before Trump's inauguration remains risky, with fears that the outgoing Biden administration could take bolder actions against Moscow. "The Democrats might push measures that complicate future dialogue, like approving American weapons for strikes deeper into Russian territory," a diplomatic source told The Moscow Times.

Moscow will closely observe Trump's cabinet selections in the coming months, focusing on key roles like national security

advisor, secretary of state, and defense secretary. A government official expressed confidence in Vice President-Elect JD Vance, suggesting that "his involvement may bring rational actors into the team."

Dialogue between Russia and the U.S. is currently frozen, though a Russian diplomat cautiously predicts that some contact may resume. Moscow also plans to appoint a new ambassador to Washington following Trump's inauguration. However, diplomats hold no illusions that a full restoration of relations is imminent, given entrenched U.S. political views on Russia. Trump's inclination to scale back U.S. involvement in European security could favor Russia, as European nations may struggle to manage security independently, a diplomatic source remarked.

Kremlin officials showed enthusiasm for Trump's win but remained critical of the U.S. electoral system. "It's satisfying, as they tried to deny him victory in 2020," one official said, echoing conspiracy theories about election interference against Trump. Russian officials noted that they often find more common ground with Republicans, sharing similar values on issues like migration and traditionalism.

"I'm optimistic about normalizing international relations," another official said while acknowledging that Trump is part of the political system and that radical changes are unlikely. "If Harris had won, the military-industrial and pharmaceutical lobbies would have likely continued their influence unopposed," he added.

# Monetary Policy Statement and its Impact on Economy and Inflation



By Javed Mahmood

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) decided to cut the policy rate by 250 basis points to 15 percent, effective from November 5, 2024. The Committee noted that inflation has declined faster than expected and has reached close to its medium-term target range in October. The Committee assessed that the tight monetary policy stance continues to play an important role in sustaining the downward trend in inflation. Moreover, a sharp decline in food inflation, favorable global oil prices, and the absence of expected adjustments in gas tariffs and PDL rates have accelerated the pace of disinflation in recent months. Taking into account the inherent risks associated with these factors, the MPC assessed that the near-term inflation may remain volatile before stabilizing within the target range.

The Committee noted the following key developments since its last meeting that could have implications for the macroeconomic outlook. First, the IMF Board approved Pakistan's new

EFF program, which has reduced uncertainty and improved the prospects for realization of planned external inflows. Second, the surveys conducted in October showed an improvement in confidence and a reduction in inflation expectations of both consumers and businesses. Third, the secondary market yields on government securities and KIBOR have declined substantially. Fourth, tax collection during the first four months of FY25 fell short of the target. Lastly, while global oil prices have exhibited significant volatility amidst escalating geopolitical tensions, prices of metals and agricultural products have increased notably.

Considering these developments, the Committee viewed the current monetary policy stance as appropriate to achieve the objective of price stability on a durable basis by maintaining inflation within the 5 – 7 percent target range. This will also support macroeconomic stability and help achieve economic growth on a sustainable basis.

## Real Sector

The latest data showed a gradual pick-up in economic activity. The initial estimates of major Kharif crops turned out better than the MPC's earlier expectations. Higher-than-targeted estimates of rice and sugarcane production have more than offset the estimated shortfall in maize and cotton output. Moreover, the pace of industrial activity is gaining further traction. In particular, textile, food, automobile and allied industries have recorded significant growth during July-August 2024, which is expected to gain further momentum in the coming months. This assessment is supported by increasing imports of raw materials and machinery, improving business confidence, and easing financial conditions. Better prospects of commodity-producing sectors and easing inflationary pressures are also expected to support services sector. Overall, the MPC expects real GDP growth in FY25 to be better than its earlier assessment, while remaining in the range of 2.5 – 3.5 percent.



## External Sector

The current account posted a surplus for the second consecutive month in September 2024; narrowing the cumulative deficit to \$98 million in Q1-FY25. Despite a substantial increase in imports, robust workers' remittances and higher exports helped contain the deficit. On the financing side, foreign investment recorded a slight uptick in September. These developments, along with receipt of the first tranche under the IMF program, helped in further build-up of SBP's FX reserves to \$11.2 billion as on October 25, 2024. Going forward, imports are expected to pick up further amidst increasing economic activity. The MPC, nonetheless, assessed that relatively higher workers' remittances and exports will help keep the current account deficit within the projected range of 0 – 1 percent of GDP. This, together with the realization of planned official inflows, is expected to increase the SBP's FX reserves to around \$13 billion by June 2025.

## Fiscal Sector

During Q1-FY25, the fiscal and primary balances posted surpluses of 1.4 percent and 2.4 percent of GDP, respectively. This improvement is mainly explained by record high SBP profit, which substantially increased the non-tax revenues. In contrast, the FBR tax collection fell short of the target during July-October. This implies that achieving the FY25 tax target will

require significantly higher growth going forward. On the expenditure side, lower interest payments are creating a sizable fiscal space that would help keep a check on the overall fiscal deficit. Meeting the targeted primary balance, however, would be challenging. The MPC emphasized the importance of continued fiscal consolidation to support macroeconomic stability and reiterated the need for fiscal reforms, focusing on broadening the tax base and curtailing PSEs' losses.

## Money and Credit

The broad money (M2) growth increased slightly to 15.2 percent y/y as of October 25, with noticeable changes in its composition since the last MPC meeting. Specifically, the net budgetary borrowing from the banking system declined considerably, while banks' credit to the non-government sector increased. After the receipt of SBP profit, the government reduced its borrowing from banks and also initiated buy-back operations of its outstanding debt securities. This created additional room for banks to extend credit to the private sector. At the same time, there was a significant reduction in SBP's liquidity injections, which is reflected by a decline in outstanding stock of OMOs. On the liability side, deposits continued to remain the major driver of M2 growth. Going forward, the MPC viewed that demand for private sector credit may further pick up with easing financial

conditions and an expected increase in economic activity. Furthermore, in the coming weeks, banks may also extend advances to avoid additional tax on non-compliance of Advances-to-Deposit ratio (ADR) thresholds.

## Inflation

Since the last MPC meeting, inflation eased significantly and fell close to its medium-term target range. The headline inflation (y/y) dropped to 6.9 percent in September and 7.2 percent in October, from 9.6 percent in August 2024. Besides contained demand, improved domestic supply of key food commodities, benign global oil prices, and favorable base effect accelerated the pace of disinflation in recent months. The MPC noted that the continuation of these factors may bring inflation further down in the next few months. Moreover, underlying inflationary pressures continued to ease, as indicated by a relatively gradual decline in core inflation and moderation in inflation expectations. Considering these developments, the MPC now expects the average inflation for FY25 to be significantly lower than its previous forecast range of 11.5 – 13.5 percent. The Committee also assessed that this outlook is subject to multiple risks, such as escalation in the Middle East conflict, recurrence of food inflation pressures, ad hoc adjustments in administered prices, and implementation of contingency taxation measures to meet shortfalls in revenue.



# Will Bitcoin hit the \$100K level in the coming days?

*Pricing investment assets, especially cryptocurrencies, is complex and often doesn't conform to traditional demand-supply models. Like other assets, Bitcoin's price movements are influenced by perceptions of how specific news affects future user adoption and transaction volumes.*



By J. Choudhry

Bitcoin approached the \$90,000 mark on Tuesday, fueled by optimism following Donald Trump's election as U.S. president with expectations that his administration may adopt crypto-friendly policies. The world's largest cryptocurrency became one of the most watched assets in the week since the election, hitting \$89,637 in Asian trading—a rise of over 25% since November 5.

Bitcoin's rally is paralleled by Tesla's surge, as Elon Musk's automaker gained nearly 40% since the election results, with investors betting that Trump's allies and business interests could benefit under his administration.

"This is a Trump-driven trade, given his supportive stance on the industry, which could boost demand for both crypto stocks and digital currencies themselves," said Nick Twidale, chief market analyst at AFX Global in Sydney. Bitcoin was already trading near all-time highs when the election outcome was announced, creating what Twidale described as "clear skies" for further growth.

During his campaign, Trump voiced strong support for digital assets, pledging to make the U.S. the "crypto capital of the world" and even accumulate a national Bitcoin reserve. While the timeline and mechanics of such plans remain uncertain, the mere prospect has sparked speculative interest in crypto mining and trading stocks.

"This could prompt other nations to preempt the U.S. by acquiring Bitcoin themselves," said Matthew Dibb, chief investment officer at crypto asset manager Astronaut Capital. "It could also be a major catalyst for U.S.-listed Bitcoin mining companies, with potential for them to even be nationalized."

Crypto miner Riot Platforms saw a nearly 17% jump on Wall Street, with further gains after hours, while fellow miners MARA Holdings and CleanSpark surged close to 30%.

Meanwhile, software firm and Bitcoin investor MicroStrategy announced it had spent around \$2 billion on Bitcoin between October 31 and November 10, pushing its

stock up 26% with additional gains in after-hours trading. The rally extended across the crypto market, with smaller tokens like ether (ETH) and meme coin dogecoin (DOGE) also climbing. Crypto investors are hopeful for a reduction in regulatory pressures, as Trump has pledged to replace U.S. SEC Chair Gary Gensler. Trump also launched a crypto-focused venture, World Liberty Financial, in September.

"What we're witnessing is more than a price milestone; it's an indication that the market is embracing Bitcoin as a more stable, potentially politically favored asset," said Justin D'Anethan, head of Asia-Pacific business development at digital asset market maker Keyrock.

Meanwhile, the excitement around cryptocurrencies has returned, with Bitcoin prices surging this year and renewed interest from investors and media alike. For the average investor, a key question emerges: What has fundamentally shifted in the cryptocurrency space to drive Bitcoin's impressive 120% gain over the past twelve months? Addition-



ally, the price increase has come with rising trading volumes, signaling robust buying interest.

The momentum doesn't seem to be slowing down. Speculation is growing that Bitcoin could soon surpass the \$100,000 mark—a significant jump from its current level of around \$80,000. Such a milestone would represent a massive increase, raising curiosity about whether Bitcoin's trajectory will follow the pattern of commodities like oil during the 2008-09 financial crisis, or whether it will chart a new course altogether.

## The Broader Perspective

Pricing investment assets, especially cryptocurrencies, is complex and often doesn't conform to traditional demand-supply models. Like other assets, Bitcoin's price movements are influenced by perceptions of how specific news affects future user adoption and transaction volumes.

For Bitcoin, demand is primarily driven by two factors:

1. The number of active users.
2. Their transaction volumes.

On the supply side, Bitcoin's total supply is capped, with nearly 94% already mined, so demand—user growth and transaction volume—plays a central role in price dynamics.

## What's Driving Demand?

A few major shifts seem to be fueling demand:

### 1. A Renewed View of Bitcoin as a Dollar Alternative

Amid concerns about the strength of the U.S. dollar, there's a growing belief that Bitcoin could serve as a dependable alternative currency and asset class.

### 2. Political Support for Cryptocurrency

Political support, notably from figures like Donald Trump and Kamala Harris, has bolstered confidence in the U.S. government's favorable stance toward Bitcoin and other digital assets. Historically, regulatory

actions have had a significant impact on cryptocurrency prices, and recent stability in global policies adds further support.

### 3. Institutional Interest, Led by Blackrock's Spot Bitcoin ETF

Institutional interest has reassured retail investors, with Blackrock's spot Bitcoin ETF emerging as one of the fastest-growing funds. This ETF has bolstered confidence in Bitcoin as a long-term asset while increasing open positions and user activity—both demand-positive factors.

## Is Bitcoin an Attractive Buy Now?

Bitcoin's performance has been volatile: it gained 60% in 2021, dropped 64% in 2022, and soared 155% in 2023. This volatility is in stark contrast to portfolios like Trefis' High Quality (HQ) Portfolio, a collection of 30 stocks that have consistently outperformed the S&P 500 with less risk and volatility.

Given these demand-supply dynamics, Bitcoin's outlook for the next 12 months remains uncertain. Will it continue its climb toward \$100,000 or settle as an underperforming asset?

## Why the \$100,000 Mark Matters

Interest in Bitcoin options with a \$100,000 strike price has surged, with a rise in open interest suggesting upward momentum. While some positions are speculative, this interest indicates that many investors expect Bitcoin's price to rise. In the meantime, Bitcoin must clear resistance levels at \$70k, \$80k, and \$90k, each of which could bring more volatility. If demand remains strong, Bitcoin may eventually surpass the \$100,000 mark, although the road may be bumpy.

## Bitcoin surpasses \$80K level

Bitcoin surged to a record high on Sunday as traders speculated that Donald Trump's potential return to the White House could boost the cryptocurrency sector. The digital currency crossed the \$80,000 mark for the first time in its history shortly after noon.

Since Trump's victory in last Tuesday's U.S. presidential election, Bitcoin has been on the rise amid optimism that the Republican candidate will relax regulations on digital currencies.

Bitcoin climbed to \$75,000 on Wednesday, surpassing its previous all-time high of \$73,797.98 set in March. In the race against Democratic candidate Kamala Harris, Trump was widely regarded as the pro-crypto candidate.

Although Trump had previously criticized cryptocurrencies as a scam during his first presidency, he has since reversed his stance, even launching his digital currency platform.

Trump has promised to establish the United States as the "bitcoin and cryptocurrency capital of the world" and has pledged to appoint tech billionaire Elon Musk to lead a comprehensive audit of government waste. His previous term was marked by corporate tax cuts that injected liquidity into markets, spurring investments in high-growth assets like cryptocurrencies. In September, Trump announced the upcoming launch of World Liberty Financial, a digital currency platform co-founded with his sons and business partners.

However, the platform's token sale earlier this month saw limited demand, with only a small portion of tokens finding buyers. Cryptocurrencies have been known for their volatility and high-profile scandals, including the collapse of major industry players like the FTX exchange.

Leading up to the election, Trump reportedly became the first former president to use Bitcoin in a transaction, purchasing burgers at a New York City restaurant that celebrated the sale as a "historic transaction." Bitcoin trading remains active around the clock, including Sundays.

## Standard Chartered prediction of Ethereum and Bitcoin prices

In a bold new forecast, Standard Chartered has projected that Ethereum could reach \$10,000 in the near term, fueling optimism amid a strong crypto rally. The report also suggests that Bitcoin may follow suit with an impressive run towards the \$200,000

mark. This prediction aligns with recent momentum in the digital assets space, especially following Donald Trump's election victory and the recent 25 basis points rate cut by the Federal Reserve.

## Standard Chartered Predicts Ethereum Will Reach \$10,000

According to Standard Chartered, the overall cryptocurrency market cap could see a fourfold increase by the U.S. mid-term elections in 2026. Currently, at around \$2.5 trillion, this would imply a future market cap of approximately \$10 trillion. Additionally, the firm reiterated its target of \$10,000 for Ethereum, expecting it to hit this level by late 2025, a forecast that has bolstered market confidence in the ongoing rally.



Standard Chartered Head of Research, Geoffrey Kendrick, highlighted factors such as the recent Republican win and anticipated regulatory clarity as reasons for his bullish forecast. He believes Trump's presidency could foster crypto-friendly policies, potentially accelerating digital asset adoption.

Moreover, Standard Chartered anticipates that the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) will adopt a more lenient stance on the crypto market under Republican leadership. This speculation is further fueled by reports suggesting that SEC Chair Gary Gensler may step down soon, which has sparked discussions around potential regulatory shifts.

Prominent crypto analyst Ali Martinez

echoed this sentiment, stating that Ethereum's recent rise to \$3,000 is "just the beginning" of a larger bull run. He previously noted that Ethereum might follow a similar trajectory to the S&P 500 and reach the \$10,000 mark shortly.

## What's the Next for ETH and BTC?

The bank also reaffirmed its prediction that Bitcoin would hit \$200,000 alongside Ethereum's \$10,000 target. According to Standard Chartered, Bitcoin and major altcoins, including Solana and Ethereum, are well-positioned to benefit under the new administration.

The firm also considers the possibility—albeit slim—that the U.S. might adopt Bitcoin as a national strategic reserve,



which could further support the crypto's growth. Trump previously suggested he would consider Bitcoin as a reserve, and Senator Cynthia Lummis has also endorsed this idea.

Today, Bitcoin's price rose by 0.3% to \$76,532, after reaching a 24-hour high of \$77,252. Increased inflows into U.S. Spot Bitcoin ETFs also reflect rising institutional support for the asset.

In another positive development, fresh wallets are accumulating Bitcoin, indicating strong demand among retail and institutional traders. Crypto analyst Ali Martinez highlighted that over 57,800 BTC—valued at approximately \$4.16 billion—has been accumulated over the past few days, further boosting investor sentiment.

## What is the Leverage Trading? Waqar Zaka explains it with stunning profit

In a bold move that has left his followers in awe, Waqar Zaka—a prominent figure in Pakistan's cryptocurrency scene—claims to have transformed an initial Rs3 million investment into an impressive \$1 million in just four days. Using an aggressive, high-risk tactic known as 200x leverage trading, Zaka's achievement has sparked a blend of admiration and astonishment from fans, many of whom are now eager to learn about his unconventional methods.

Leverage trading is a high-stakes approach that allows traders to amplify their investments by borrowing funds, enabling them to make trades larger than their actual capital. By adopting a 200x leverage, Zaka took on significant risk, where both gains and losses are magnified proportionally to the leverage ratio. With each market fluctuation, Zaka's investment multiplied quickly, at times doubling within minutes and occasionally reaching up to 500 times his initial stake.

"Crypto isn't just about profits; it's about mastering the right skills," Zaka shared on Instagram, where he documented his trading journey for free, encouraging followers to focus on developing their leverage trading skills. Zaka emphasized that these skills are essential for achieving financial independence in the volatile world of digital assets. He assured followers that similar trading opportunities would arise in the future.

## What is Leverage Trading?

For newcomers, leverage trading is a strategy that allows investors to control larger sums of money by borrowing funds based on their original capital. This leverage is often represented in ratios, like 5:1 or 5x, meaning a trader can control a position five times their initial investment. In Zaka's case, 200x leverage allowed him to control a position worth 200 times his capital, creating a scenario of heightened returns and risks.



# Quetta Railway Station Suicide bombing: Is it a security failure?



By Hina Kashif

A suicide bombing at a crowded railway station in Quetta, the capital of Pakistan's volatile Balochistan province, has killed at least 26 people and left more than 60 others injured. The attack, which took place on November 8, 2024, occurred around 8:45 a.m. local time while nearly 100 passengers were waiting for a train to Peshawar. According to Wasim Baig, a spokesperson for the Balochistan health department, the death toll from the powerful blast has now risen to 26, with many others critically injured. The blast opened a fresh debate \_ Is it a security failure?

Among the dead were over a dozen soldiers and six railway employees. The explosion left 62 people injured, several of whom are in serious condition.

Balochistan, Pakistan's largest and most impoverished province, has long been a hotspot for violence. The region is rich in natural resources, but separatist groups, including the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), have repeatedly targeted military and civilian infrastructure in their struggle for independence. The BLA, which has been designated a terrorist group by

Pakistan, the U.S., and the U.K., claimed responsibility for the attack, stating that a suicide bomber targeted security forces stationed at the railway station.

Balochistan has witnessed a sharp increase in violence in 2024, with a rising number of attacks on security forces. This bombing marks the first major attack in central Quetta, raising concerns among local residents and officials. Journalist Saadullah Akhter, who witnessed the aftermath, described the attack as "shocking," noting the surge in violence across the province, but emphasizing that such an attack in the heart of Quetta is unprecedented.

Shahid Rind, a provincial government spokesperson, confirmed that the bombing appeared to have been a suicide attack, although investigations are still ongoing to verify the claim by the BLA. Security forces continue to gather evidence at the site, where footage showed bloodied clothing and personal items scattered across the platform, and the steel structure of the platform's roof torn apart by the explosion.

Balochistan, which borders both

Afghanistan and Iran, remains a volatile region with ongoing conflicts driven by ethnic separatist movements, competing political interests, and the exploitation of the province's rich natural resources.

In a statement following the bombing, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed deep sorrow over the tragic loss of life and extended his condolences to the families of the victims. He stressed the importance of providing immediate medical care to the wounded and vowed that those responsible for targeting innocent civilians would be held accountable and face the full force of the law.

Prime Minister Sharif also called for swift action and a thorough investigation to ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice. Political leaders across the country have united in their condemnation of the attack, underscoring the need to maintain stability and security in Pakistan despite the ongoing threats of terrorism.

Acting President Yousuf Raza Gilani also condemned the attack, labeling the perpetrators as "enemies of humanity" for deliberately harming innocent

people. He reaffirmed the government's firm commitment to fighting terrorism and pledged to take all necessary actions to completely eliminate such threats.

National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq expressed his solidarity with the grieving families, condemning the attackers as ruthless enemies of humanity. He offered his support to those affected by the tragedy, emphasizing the need for unity and compassion during such a difficult time.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif vowed that those responsible for the attack "will pay a very heavy price." He emphasized that Pakistan's security forces are committed to eradicating the "menace of terrorism" in the country. His statement reflects the government's ongoing efforts to combat militant groups, particularly in the restive

act aimed at destabilizing Pakistan. He stressed that attempts to instill fear and division would not be tolerated, assuring the public that the government would take decisive action to dismantle this "heinous conspiracy."

Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to eradicating terrorism, stressing that this mission would be pursued with collective determination. Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori, Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, and Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz also condemned the attack, offering condolences and prayers for the injured.

Religious leaders, including JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman and Pakistan

## World leaders condemn suicide bombing at Quetta railway station

The suicide bombing in Quetta has drawn widespread condemnation from political, religious, and international leaders across the globe.

### Russian President Vladimir Putin

In a letter of condolence, Russian President Vladimir Putin expressed his deep sorrow over the tragedy, which claimed the lives of several civilians, including women and children, and left many others injured. He strongly condemned the "barbaric crime" and called for justice for those responsible. Putin emphasized Russia's solidarity with Pakistan in the fight against terrorism, reaffirming his country's commitment to working closely with Pakistani authorities to combat extremism and protect citizens from violent attacks. "We are determined to continue our close cooperation with our Pakistani partners against all forms and manifestations of terrorism," Putin wrote.

The US Mission to Pakistan also expressed its condolences, assuring the Pakistani government of its full support in the fight against terrorism. In a statement, the mission said: "We extend our deepest condolences to the victims and their families. We will continue to stand by Pakistan in preventing such acts of terrorism against civilians and soldiers."

### Malaysian PM conveys sympathies

Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim conveyed his heartfelt sympathies, writing on X: "On behalf of Malaysia, I extend our deepest condolences to the people of Pakistan, who mourn this senseless and devastating loss." He emphasized Malaysia's steadfast solidarity with Pakistan in its ongoing fight against terrorism.

Turkey also condemned the terrorist attack, with the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs extending condolences to Pakistan and wishing a swift recovery to those injured. "We will continue to support Pakistan in its fight against terrorism," the ministry stated.



Balochistan province, where separatist movements have long been active.

However, the government's military operations to suppress these separatist movements in Balochistan have raised serious concerns about human rights abuses. Over the years, there have been numerous reports of enforced disappearances, torture, and extrajudicial killings targeting Baloch activists and dissenters. These actions have sparked criticism from both local and international human rights organizations, which accuse the Pakistani military of using heavy-handed tactics in its efforts to quell opposition in the region.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi condemned the bombing as a "cowardly"

Ulema Council chairman Hafiz Tahir Ashrafi, condemned the bombing. Ashrafi further suggested that the Pakistani government review its Afghan policy to ensure that Pakistan's "goodwill is not misused."

The tension in Balochistan reflects a deep-rooted conflict over the province's wealth of natural resources, with Baloch nationalist groups arguing that the central government unfairly exploits the region's gas, oil, and mineral reserves while providing little benefit to the local population. The military crackdown, which is part of Islamabad's strategy to suppress separatist movements, has further alienated many in Balochistan, fueling resentment and calls for independence.



## UK calls it divisive act

The United Kingdom's High Commissioner to Pakistan, Jane Marriott, called the bombing "horrific" and noted that such acts sow division within society. "My sympathies are with the families of the victims and the injured," Marriott said, adding that the UK stands firmly with Pakistan in condemning terrorism and supporting its efforts to combat extremism and violence.

## UN chief slams attack

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres condemned the "heinous" attack, calling for the perpetrators to be held accountable. He expressed condolences to the families of the victims, as well as to the people and government of Pakistan. Guterres also wished a speedy recovery for the injured, stressing that those responsible must be brought to justice.

This broad international and domestic condemnation highlights the global consensus on the need to combat terrorism and reaffirmed Pakistan's determination to confront these violent threats.

## The Rise of the Baloch Liberation Army in Pakistan

Aziz Baloch, an independent security expert in Balochistan, noted that the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) is determined to show that it can "demoralize the [Pakistani] Army" and assert itself as the "dominant militant group" in the region.

Balochistan has been plagued by a low-level insurgency and a harsh military crackdown for decades. The BLA, alongside other separatist groups in the region, seeks independence from Pakistan, accusing the government of exploiting the province's rich natural resources and committing serious human rights abuses.

The BLA is the largest armed group in Balochistan, with experts estimating it has several thousand members. This year, researchers have noted a sharp uptick in attacks carried out by Baloch separatist groups.

## Enhanced Capabilities and Deadlier Tactics

Experts believe the BLA has become more

organized and increasingly dangerous. Following the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021, militant groups, including the BLA, reportedly seized large quantities of American weapons and military equipment left behind by U.S. and international forces. These weapons have significantly improved the BLA's combat capabilities.

Aziz Baloch, the journalist, pointed out that the BLA, although a secular group, has begun adopting tactics typically associated with Islamist militant groups like the Afghan Taliban and the Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP), such as suicide bombings, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and complex attacks involving multiple assailants and vehicle-borne IEDs. The BLA's Majeed Brigade, its suicide squad, is thought to have carried out many of these complex attacks.



In 2022, the BLA saw a significant shift when a 31-year-old mother became the first woman to carry out a suicide bombing for the group, a move that some observers described as a "paradigm shift."

## Exploiting Local Discontent

Local socio-economic conditions have also played a role in strengthening the BLA. Balochistan's population is largely young, with around 65 percent of its 15 million people under the age of 30. This youthful demographic has been a primary target for BLA recruitment, and the group has even attracted female recruits.

Balochistan's widespread poverty, high

unemployment, political repression, and reports of state abuses have made the region a "fertile ground" for the BLA's recruitment efforts. Many of the group's leaders and fighters come from educated backgrounds, including former professionals and university students.

Pakistan's response to the Baloch insurgency has largely been one of military force, with little effort to address the long-standing grievances of the Baloch people. Aziz Baloch argued that the BLA represents the state's failure to govern Balochistan effectively.

Abdul Malik Baloch, former chief minister of Balochistan, said that growing disillusionment with Islamabad's political interference has fueled support for the insurgency. He cited the rigging of elections in Balochistan as a key factor in the erosion

of trust in the political system. "Many Baloch see democracy as a fraud," Baloch remarked. "They feel their time is being wasted."

Opposition leaders have accused Pakistan's powerful military of rigging the parliamentary elections, further alienating the population. Abdul Malik Baloch, a key figure in the secular National Party, lost his seat in the February elections, a development that many believe reflects the military's influence over the political process.

Baloch, the former chief minister, concluded that growing frustration is driving more people toward the insurgency, as they see no other avenue for change.

# Why do Nations fail?



By M. Shaheer Kashif

History is full of countless civilizations, some changed history through success while others failed to survive. Why? Why do many nations throughout history fail at stability, success, or progress? It is a complex interplay of factors—weak institutions, entrenched corruption, widening inequality, and failure to adapt to changing global dynamics—that drives nations toward crisis and decline. In their book *Why Nations Fail*, economists Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson argue that nations fail not because of geography, climate, or culture but largely due to political and economic institutions. According to their thesis, inclusive institutions encourage prosperity, while extractive institutions lead to poverty and decline. Understanding why nations fail is essential, as it reveals lessons not just about history but about the choices that build or break societies.

The downfall of nations is rarely caused by a single event or an instant outplay, instead, it's a disaster that's slowly built from root problems that began often as far back as the creation of the nation. Venezuela is an excellent example of this, a nation so rich in oil yet still a failed state. It wasn't always

like that, at one point Venezuela was a rich and developed land full of growth and harmony yet the issue was that Venezuela built its entire economy on a single thing: oil and when it collapsed so did the country.

## Unraveling the Causes of National Decline

### Building or Breaking a Nation

Institutions are the frameworks within which economic, political, and social activities occur, and they play a critical role in shaping a nation's future. Inclusive institutions empower a broad segment of the population to participate in economic and political life, enabling innovation, productivity, and shared prosperity. On the other hand, extractive institutions concentrate power and wealth among a few, stifling growth and creating social tensions that often lead to decline.

For example, consider South Korea and North Korea. These two nations share a common history and culture, yet their fates diverged dramatically due to differences in governance. South Korea developed inclusive institutions that encouraged

economic growth, innovation, and political stability, while North Korea developed extractive institutions, concentrating power in the hands of a few and restricting personal freedoms. This institutional divide is one of the most striking reasons why South Korea flourished while North Korea remains isolated and impoverished.

### The Silent Saboteurs

When governance is weak, corruption often takes root. Corruption erodes trust in government, wastes resources, and diverts funds from essential services like education, healthcare, and infrastructure into the hands of a select few.

Corruption disrupts the development process by creating inefficiencies in resource allocation and discouraging foreign investment, as investors shy away from corrupt environments where profits are unreliable. Additionally, a corrupt government often fails to protect property rights or enforce the rule of law, making it difficult for businesses to thrive and for citizens to feel safe and secure in their own country.



Venezuela offers a modern example of how poor governance and corruption can devastate a nation. Once one of Latin America's wealthiest countries, Venezuela became heavily reliant on its oil industry. Instead of reinvesting oil revenue into infrastructure, education, or economic diversification, the government allowed corruption to flourish, with funds going into the pockets of officials rather than into development projects. As oil prices fell, the lack of diversified industries and the weakened state institutions left Venezuela with few options, leading to economic collapse, hyperinflation, and mass migration as people fled the country in search of stability and opportunity elsewhere.

### Excluding the Many to Serve the Few

Inequality can become deeply embedded in a society when wealth, power, and resources are concentrated in the hands of a few. This creates a cycle in which a large segment of the population is excluded from economic opportunities, resulting in widespread poverty and limited social mobility. Economic inequality not only hinders growth but also breeds resentment and social instability, which can lead to national failure.

South Africa provides an example of how inequality affects long-term stability. Although it has one of Africa's largest economies, South Africa struggles with a high level of income inequality, much of which stems from the legacy of apartheid. Economic opportunities are limited for many, leading to a high unemployment rate and increased social tensions. The exclusion of so many from economic prosperity has contributed to political instability and occasional social unrest, showing how deeply inequality can affect national resilience.

### The Fragile Foundation of Failing States

Institutions—such as the judicial system, law enforcement, and government agencies—are the foundation of a functioning state. Weak institutions often fail to enforce laws, protect citizens' rights, or deliver basic services, leaving the state vulnerable to corruption and social unrest.

When institutions lack legitimacy or are poorly managed, it creates an environment in which crime and disorder can thrive, leading to national instability and failure.

Somalia serves as a stark example of how weak institutions can undermine a nation. Since the early 1990s, Somalia has struggled with a lack of effective central governance, which has left the country in a prolonged state of conflict and lawlessness. In the absence of strong institutions, power shifted to local warlords and militias, resulting in frequent violence and instability. Even today, despite some progress, Somalia continues to grapple with weak governance structures, showing how institutional collapse can create enduring challenges for national recovery.



### Over-reliance

An over-reliance on a single industry, such as oil, agriculture, or mining, can create vulnerabilities in a nation's economy. When a country's income is predominantly tied to one sector, any downturn in that sector can trigger widespread economic hardship. Over-reliance not only stifles growth in other sectors but also leaves a country unprepared for economic shifts.

This is the one topic you don't want your country to be in but this one has appeared twice: Venezuela, as previously mentioned, relied heavily on oil revenues, which accounted for nearly 90% of its exports at one point. When oil prices plummeted, Venezuela faced a severe financial crisis because it lacked other sources of income. In contrast, countries like Norway, which also have large oil reserves, invested their oil revenues in a sovereign wealth fund and

diversified their economies, enabling them to weather fluctuations in oil prices without severe economic distress.

### Conflict

Political stability is a cornerstone of national success, as it fosters economic growth, attracts investment, and provides a secure environment for citizens. When political instability becomes the norm, it creates uncertainty that undermines governance, weakens institutions, and can lead to prolonged periods of conflict.

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has been mired in political instability and conflict for decades. Rich in natural resources, the DRC should, in theory, be

one of the wealthiest nations in Africa. However, years of political turmoil, frequent leadership changes, and violent conflicts have disrupted governance, leaving much of the population in poverty and the infrastructure in disrepair. The ongoing instability has prevented the DRC from harnessing its resources to build a stable and prosperous society, illustrating how political unrest can trap a nation in a cycle of poverty and underdevelopment.

### Learn to adapt!

Globalization and technology are reshaping the world economy, creating new industries and job opportunities while rendering others obsolete. Nations that fail to adapt to these changes risk being left behind. A refusal or inability to embrace globalization and technological advancement can stifle innovation, limit economic growth, and reduce competitiveness on a global scale.

An example of this failure to adapt can be seen in Zimbabwe. For much of the 20th century, Zimbabwe was one of the most prosperous countries in Africa, with a strong agricultural sector that included tobacco and corn as key exports. However, during the 2000s, Zimbabwe's government under President Robert Mugabe failed to embrace global economic trends and technological changes. Instead, policies like land redistribution, which led to the expropriation of white-owned farms, destroyed the country's once-productive agricultural sector. Alongside this, Mugabe's government clung to outdated economic policies and mismanagement, while the rest of the world moved toward more open, tech-driven economies.

As global trade patterns shifted and new technologies emerged, Zimbabwe found itself increasingly isolated. Its inability to modernize its agricultural sector, embrace technological innovations, or diversify its economy left it vulnerable to economic collapse. The country's economic decline was marked by hyperinflation, massive unemployment, and a growing humanitarian crisis. Meanwhile, nations that adapted to these changes by modernizing their industries, such as Kenya with its growing tech sector, moved ahead economically. Zimbabwe's example illustrates how failure to adapt to the globalized, technology-driven world can leave a nation in decline, unable to compete or recover from economic crises.

## The Consequences of Neglecting Education

A well-educated and healthy population is a crucial asset for any nation. Investment in education and healthcare builds human capital, allowing people to contribute effectively to the economy and society. Nations that fail to prioritize these areas often struggle with low productivity, limited innovation, and an unskilled workforce.

A striking example of the consequences of neglecting education and human capital can be seen in Yemen. Yemen is one of the poorest countries in the Middle East, and its development has been severely hindered by years of political instability, conflict, and inadequate investment in education and healthcare. Despite its strategic location and potential in sectors like agriculture and energy, Yemen has faced significant challenges in improving its human capital.

The education system in Yemen has been weak for decades, with low enrollment rates, particularly for girls, and high dropout rates. The civil war that began in 2014 further exacerbated the situation, leading to the destruction of schools, universities, and healthcare infrastructure. With little access to quality education and healthcare, Yemen's youth have been left without the skills necessary to drive innovation or contribute to the country's economic development. The result has been

a stagnant economy, a lack of skilled workers, and a reliance on aid from international organizations.

In contrast, neighboring countries like the United Arab Emirates (UAE) invested heavily in education and human capital development. Over a few decades, the UAE transformed from a small, underdeveloped nation into a global economic hub, largely due to its emphasis on education, technology, and innovation.

Yemen's failure to invest in education and human capital has contributed to its ongoing crisis, highlighting how neglecting these sectors can stunt a nation's potential and lead to long-term economic and social challenges.

## Conclusion

This essay while being 1802 words has barely described this topic. While appearing simple, it is a concept so complex many could never fully understand since every example varies and contradicts certain points. Yet in a nutshell, national decline are recurring theme: weak institutions, poor governance, inequality, political instability, and failure to adapt to changing global realities. If you want more information on this topic, try out the book "Why Nations Fail by Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson".

*The Writer is an O'Level Student in Islamabad.*





# The Art of Manifestation: Defining One's Dreams



By Rabia Hussain Ali

## Introduction

To manifest is to embrace that aspiration as thousands of people have done. To manifest means to make things happen actively. One's objective can be attained through manifesting techniques, including setting an intention, using creative imagery, repeating good statements, or taking steps to succeed. But can everything be reduced to wanting something badly enough that it eventually appears? Might there be more than instant magic to this?

In this article, we focus on how Manifestation works, the core principles and practices that one must embrace, and how to cultivate a suitable attitude for it to be effective. This article will cover the neurological and spiritual aspects of Manifestation, as well as the reasons behind it, and offer guidance on how to implement this skill effectively to meet one's needs.

## Introducing the Shim-shim Movement: Initial Learning and Images

In quantum terms, thoughts, beliefs, and emotions are energy, and this energy has the power to affect one's life.

Our brain is an incredible generator; it can alter our vision of the world and our reaction to what is happening on the outside. A person's active beliefs often get fulfilled: if someone believes in themselves, they tend to feel more assured, make successful decisions, and avoid problems rather than create them.

## Belief and Self-Concept

Everything has a beginning, and self-belief is the mother of Manifestation. If there is an outcome, such as being married or progressing in one's career, then the person should first believe that such a thing is within reach. Self-concept is everything; people discover that as soon as they set the objectives they want to pursue and change the views they believe in, they automatically start to make decisions that move them closer to the target.

The dichotomy between "fixed mindset" and "growth mindset" also applies in this context. However, those with a growth mindset set their hearts and minds to successful outcomes because they believe 'effort helps develop ability', which is the essence of Manifestation. A growth mindset helps you look into the future and be hopeful

because improvement is possible, and the effort is in your control, so you will get what you want in the process.

## Visualization: The Power of Imagining Your Goals as Being Achieved

The act of visualizing is not just a technique, it's a powerful tool in manifesting one's goals. It's a process where mental pictures are formed for the desired result, and this result is believed to be a reality already. The most popular application of visualization is in sports, where athletes picture themselves performing well and feel the emotion of winning while carrying out the steps that will be needed to win. In a similar context, if you've set your goals, visualizing them makes whatever you're doing more meaningful because it shows where you want to end up. This power of visualization can inspire and motivate you to keep moving forward.

## How to Optimize Your Visualization Exercise

When you are about to do a visualization exercise, locate a peaceful environment and relax your body. Imagine

where you have achieved the goal—what do you see, hear, or feel? Try to visualize as vividly as possible as if you are on the verge of breaking the accomplishment: where you are, how you are dressed, and how pleasing the feeling of victory is. The brain does not generally see a distinction between actual events and visualized scenarios, and if you create pictures in the mind in a properly exaggerated manner, it becomes possible for the human mind to consider these images as truth. It can then influence your behavior and mindset, helping you remain energized and on track.

## Affirmations: Rethinking the Hidden Thoughts of the Mind

Affirmations are subtle deeds that include proclamations intended to strengthen the creative potential of the subconscious, which may be advanced and even baseless. On the other hand, weaknesses, including negative self-talk and limiting self-beliefs, could also prevent a person from actively manifesting their desires. Affirmations, when upheld consistently, modify the process of thinking, portraying a consistent effort to model one's thinking to one's specific objectives.

## Writing of Affirmations

Writing effective affirmations requires one to state their ideas or thoughts in the present. They must be brief but specific and end in a positive or healthy conclusion. For example, instead of saying, 'I am going to be famous,' one should say, 'saying that I am a known Motivational speaker in society.' The present tense allows the subconscious to receive the pronouncement, making it easier to live by. Power can also be found in simply saying affirmations while looking into a mirror and allowing your body language to speak the affirmation.

## Gratitude: The Benefits of Appreciation in Manifestation

Gratitude is not just a feeling, it's a powerful force in the universe. Expressing gratitude shifts your inner person and your perspective to consider the abundance in the world, aligning you with positive

energy. This practice switches on the correct neural circuitry so that more of the same gets attracted and noticed. Gratitude is a loop – appreciation leads to more appreciation, which leads to more things for you to enjoy and thus enhances your manifestation process. It's a practice that can make you feel appreciative and positive, enhancing your manifestation journey.

## The Application of Thankfulness

As part of this practice, maintain a gratitude record and note at least three daily circumstances for which you are thankful. It is essential to emphasize the experiences of gratitude while doing so. A fundamental and remarkable action one can take is to thank what is desired as if it has already been received. For example, instead of expressing such a wish, say, "I am grateful for the abundance and opportunities that are coming to me." This mental framework trains your brain to view your wishes as already forth, pushing you closer to the wish.

## Action: Taking Notice of the Distance between Wish and Accomplishment

Manifesting involves not just thoughts and feelings, but also a physical aspect. The likelihood of achieving your dreams is much greater when you continuously work toward them. Here, setting more minor and more realistic goals comes into play. When people take steps towards their desired goal, they inform both the universe and their subconscious that they are playing for real. This emphasis on taking action can make you feel determined and proactive in your manifestation journey.

## How to Start Taking Inspired Action

### 1. Dividing Tasks:

Use task division to manage your goals. Dividing large tasks into smaller, more manageable ones is always advisable. Instead of striving for too much at once, go for incremental change that will help you stay motivated.

## 2. Deadlines for Goals:

A deadline works wonders in keeping you accountable. If, for example, you seek to build a business, then start by fixing a timeframe for researching, planning, and launching the business.

## 3. Listen to Your Intuition:

Manifestation can also be referred to as taking "inspired action" in that one should not take unnecessary steps but instead work by their inner guidance. The quiet, small voice in you that pushes you in various directions is your sixth sense. Such actions can even enhance seeing things that you'd never envisioned.

## Overcoming Obstacles: Overcoming Challenges in the Process of Manifestation

Obstacles and struggles are unavoidable, but they shouldn't derail your manifestation journey. How you deal with challenges can either bar progress or instill a spirit of perseverance.

## When Overcoming Attachments, Say Goodbye to Fixation Big Time

Overcoming attachments requires relinquishing the need to stare at the goal and allowing yourself to be sidetracked along the way without anxiety. One way detachment is killed is by being too emotionally involved in manifesting one's desires. No timelines are attached to such situations, which is precisely what detachment means.

## Overcoming the Barriers Caused by Self-Doubt

Self-doubt is one of the greatest, if not the most significant, challenges to manifest and achieve one's goals. When self-doubt or negative thoughts come, notice them but do not validate them, as there is no truth to those thoughts. Self-motivation comes from within; prove yourself right by reminding yourself of what you have achieved and what defines you. If one is more forgiving



of oneself and accepts failure as a stream of becoming rather than shames them, then self-doubt is less and helps in the progress of whatever one is working on.

## How Does Man Dream and Make it Accurate?

Most people think an affidavit only happens in their heads, but this is untrue. Neuroscience and psychology explain it also occurs in the physical realm. As the name suggests, the

Reticular Activating System (RAS) is an exhaustive feature. It features an allow listing system and does have the mechanisms to prioritize information based on relevancy. Goals act like feedback from the environment. In such cases, the environment constantly feeds itself with more specific information. Hence, particular goals help turn desires into reality and allow the mind to spot potential opportunities that others look right past.

Also, neuroplasticity is the ability of your brain to mold itself as it forms synaptic bonds. When people are set on achieving their goals, they think about their targets constantly. What happens is that the target becomes intertwined with your neural networks. When a new network is created, one begins using those targets without conscious thought, like a swallow learning how to fly—it happens naturally without forcing or overthinking.

## Spirituality and Manifestation: The Power of the Universe

For more spiritual people, Manifestation involves aiming with the help of higher forces- the universe, God, or some other notion—and the process is always co-creation. Spiritual Manifestation also means the conviction that the higher power is at work to ensure that those desires that are meant for you come into your life. This sort of belief induces hope, faith, and detachment, easing practitioners of the urge to control the situation.

### Belief in Divine's Clock

Belief in the divine clock emphasizes that everything happens in an orderly manner – at the right time, perhaps not when one

wants it. For instance, a person may need to focus on one particular objective, but that is not achieved within acceptable time frames; in such a situation, one needs to believe that there is a time for everything. With that mindset, one does not lose hope in achieving the targeted goal but instead keeps doing functional activities devoid of frustrations and aims inherently focused on growth and assimilation.



## Posts about Manifestation That Are Not Accurate

Its excessive popularity notwithstanding, Manifestation is persistently misrepresented. Some of the common ones are:

- 1. Manifestation is Instant:** Almost everyone else expects their desires to come overnight, but Manifestation is in the making and requires patience, consistency, and effort.
- 2. It's Only About Positive Thinking:** Yes, positivity is significant, but don't forget that Manifestation deals with overcoming limiting beliefs, setting reasonable objectives, and implementing an action plan that resonates with your aspirations.
- 3. Manifestation Means No More Setbacks:** The power of Manifestation doesn't remove obstacles; it simply changes how one approaches obstacles. Setbacks are not failures; instead, they are helpful

revisions or learning opportunities.

**4. Manifestation Makes Sure That We Get Everything Of Our Desire:** Manifestation helps you get closer to what you desire, but that does not mean you will get all your wishes. This may seem ironic, but sometimes what we hope is not necessarily what will be good for us, or there is something that needs to be understood first.

## Conclusion: Find Comfort in the Techniques of Manifestation

Manifestation is an art that is always in progress. It requires hard work, faith, and patience. It means tuning yourself to your goals, acting out those plans, and having faith in the process.

You may look at Manifestation through a scientific lens, as a psychological process, or consider it a spiritual experience. In every aspect, these principles allow you to build a meaningful life of aspirations and growth. No longer should Manifestation be seen as a simple fix to all your problems but rather something to be practiced, and in turn, this improves your connection with your mind and inner desires. In this purpose-driven voyage, the art of Manifestation becomes a reality and alters not just one's insight but the entirety of one's world.

# Pakistan Secures Historic Win Against Australia in ODI Series



By Kanwal Munir

## Introduction

In an extraordinary turn of events, Pakistan's cricket team, led by captain Mohammad Rizwan, achieved a historic victory over Australia in their recent ODI series. The win marked Pakistan's first ODI series victory over Australia in 22 years, setting the stage for a new chapter in Pakistan's cricket history. This remarkable achievement has sent waves of excitement through the cricketing world, as the series victory showcases Pakistan's growing potential and the emergence of key players who can compete at the highest level.

## The Historic ODI Series Victory

Pakistan's triumph over Australia in the three-match ODI series was a moment of great significance for both the team and its supporters. The series was hotly anticipated, as it was the first time in over two decades that Pakistan had managed to defeat Australia in an ODI series. The previous two decades had seen Australia consistently dominate Pakistan in the 50-over format, making this win an even more significant milestone.

Australia, with its history of world-class cricketers and a reputation for being one of the most formidable teams in international cricket, posed a significant challenge. This series win was not just about the final scoreline; it was about resilience, skill, and determination displayed by the entire squad. Led by Mohammad Rizwan, Pakistan's captain and wicketkeeper, the team showcased their prowess in both batting and bowling, overcoming the challenges posed by Australia's formidable lineup.

## Key Moments of the Series

The series kicked off with a nail-biting encounter in the first ODI, where Australia took a slender lead, winning the match by just two wickets. Australia's captain Pat Cummins played a pivotal role in guiding his team to victory, contributing both with the bat and the ball. Cummins scored a vital 32 runs and took two crucial wickets, playing an essential part in Australia's chase of Pakistan's modest total of 204 runs.

Despite strong bowling performances from Pakistan, including significant

contributions from Haris Rauf, Shaheen Afridi and Naseem Shah, Australia managed to get over the line in a thrilling encounter. The close nature of the first match highlighted the fierce competition between the two teams, setting the tone for the remaining games in the series. However, Pakistan was far from discouraged. In the second ODI, they demonstrated resilience and grit. Pakistan's batting lineup, led by the experienced Saim Ayub, Abdullah Shafique, Babar Azam, chased the target easily. Rizwan's leadership was especially vital, as his calm demeanor under pressure helped steady the ship for Pakistan.

The defining moment of the series came in the third ODI. Pakistan's bowlers, spearheaded by the dynamic Shaheen Afridi and the ever-reliable Naseem Shah, dismantled the Australian batting lineup with ease. Pakistan restricted Australia to a modest total, and the chase was completed with confidence as Pakistan won by eight wickets, clinching the series 2-1. This victory was historic for multiple reasons. It marked Pakistan's first-ever ODI series win against Australia on home soil in 22 years, and it showcased



Pakistan's ability to rise to the occasion, even against a team with Australia's pedigree.

## Squad and Key Players

The Pakistan squad for the series against Australia was a blend of seasoned players and emerging talents. The squad included:

- Mohammad Rizwan (c) & (Wk)
- Abdullah Shafique
- Babar Azam
- Irfan Khan
- Saim Ayub
- Aamer Jamal
- Arafat Minhas
- Kamran Ghulam
- Salman Agha
- Haseebullah Khan (Wk)
- Faisal Akram
- Haris Rauf
- Mohammad Hasnain
- Naseem Shah
- Shaheen Afridi

Haris Rauf, Shaheen Afridi, and Naseem Shah were the key bowlers in Pakistan's victory against Australia. Afridi's pace and bounce, combined with his swing and accuracy, made him a constant threat, especially in the third ODI where he played a pivotal role in breaking the Australian batting. Naseem Shah, despite his youth, impressed with his speed and aggression, excelling in the death overs. Rauf, with his fiery pace, was outstanding throughout, claiming 10 wickets and the 'Man of the Series' title. Together, they formed a lethal bowling attack that was instrumental in Pakistan's success.

## Pakistan's Historic Win Against Australia

This series victory was not just another win for Pakistan; it was a historic achievement that will go down in the annals of the country's cricketing history. The Pakistan cricket team's ability to defeat Australia in an ODI series for the first time in 22 years was a significant milestone in their

underlines the PCB's efforts to develop the infrastructure and support systems necessary for the team's continued success.

## The Importance of Mohammad Rizwan's Leadership

The success of this series cannot be discussed without highlighting the leadership of Mohammad Rizwan. Rizwan, a wicketkeeper-batsman with immense experience and a reputation for being calm under pressure, led the team with maturity and tactical acumen. His leadership was evident throughout the series, from the way he handled the pressure after the first ODI loss to his calm and composed approach during the final match when the series was at stake.

Rizwan's wicketkeeping was also exemplary. Throughout the series, he was involved in several key dismissals, showcasing his sharp reflexes and ability to read the game. His understanding of the game and ability to make quick, decisive calls helped Pakistan overcome numerous challenges during the series. His success as a leader has undoubtedly raised his stock, not only among his teammates but also among fans and cricket pundits.

## Haris Rauf, Shaheen Afridi, and Naseem Shah, Lead the Bowling Attack

Shaheen Afridi, Naseem Shah, and Haris Rauf were the standout performers in Pakistan's bowling attack during the series against Australia, each contributing to the team's remarkable success. Afridi, with his lethal pace and bounce, consistently troubled the Australian batsmen throughout the series. His ability to swing the ball, combined with impeccable accuracy, made him a formidable force. Afridi's performance in the third ODI was particularly crucial, as he played a vital role in breaking the backbone of the Australian batting lineup, finishing with key wickets that shifted the momentum in Pakistan's favor.

Naseem Shah, despite being one of the youngest in the team, showcased remarkable maturity and raw pace. His fiery



Key players like Mohammad Rizwan, Haris Rauf, Shaheen Afridi, and Naseem Shah delivered exceptional performances throughout the series. Rizwan, who captained the side with composure, was instrumental in maintaining team morale and providing stability during tense moments, especially in the final ODI when the series was on the line. His leadership skills were lauded by analysts, and his calmness under pressure proved crucial in guiding the team through the series' ups and downs.

cricketing journey. Australia has been one of the most dominant teams in the world, and Pakistan's victory over them on home soil signalled that the team is capable of competing at the highest level.

The win also holds considerable importance for the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) and its leadership. Under the guidance of PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi, the Pakistan cricket team is gradually building a reputation for resilience and competitiveness on the global stage. This series win

deliveries, coupled with his aggressive approach, caused consistent problems for the Australians. Naseem's ability to bowl precise yorkers in the death overs added an extra layer of threat, particularly in the pressure-filled moments when wickets were needed most. His energy and speed played a key role in applying pressure and taking wickets at crucial times.

Haris Rauf, renowned for his blistering pace, was exceptional throughout the series, taking 10 wickets and claiming the 'Man of the Series' title. His ability to break partnerships and take wickets at pivotal moments proved invaluable for Pakistan. Rauf's aggression and consistency in both the middle and death overs gave Pakistan a distinct edge in the series. Together, Afridi, Naseem, and Rauf formed a dynamic and lethal trio, each complementing the other's strengths. Their collective brilliance with the ball was a defining factor in Pakistan's triumph over Australia.

## Australia's Struggles

Australia, despite having a strong squad and the experience of several world-class players, found themselves under immense pressure throughout the series. The absence of key players, including Steve Smith and David Warner, due to injuries, had a noticeable impact on their performance. Although Australia's squad still boasted several talented individuals like Pat Cummins, Glenn Maxwell, and Mitchell Starc, the lack of consistency from their batting lineup was evident.

Pat Cummins, the Australian captain, was one of the few players who stood out with his all-round performance. His leadership, combined with vital batting contributions, helped his team in the opening ODI. However, Australia's failure to replicate their strong performances in the subsequent games left them vulnerable. The lack of a solid top-order performance meant that Australia was often chasing the game, and despite their efforts, they fell short in the final ODI.

## The Significance of the Series Win for Pakistan

This historic series win over Australia has far-reaching implications for Pakistan's cricketing future. For a team that had been

inconsistent in recent years, this victory serves as a confidence booster and signals the beginning of a new era. The win will undoubtedly bolster the morale of the team, giving them the self-belief to take on future challenges, including the Champions Trophy 2025.

Moreover, this victory strengthens Pakistan's position in international cricket, particularly in the 50-over format. As Pakistan prepares for the upcoming Champions Trophy, the series win against Australia provides a much-needed psychological advantage, showing that Pakistan can compete with and defeat top teams on their home turf.



## Challenges Ahead: Pakistan's Stance on Champions Trophy 2025

As Pakistan's cricket team celebrates its historic series win, the national cricket board is preparing for the challenges ahead, particularly regarding the upcoming Champions Trophy 2025. This prestigious tournament is set to take place in Pakistan, and it holds immense significance for both the PCB and the Pakistani players.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has been at the center of discussions surrounding the participation of all major cricketing nations, particularly India. The controversy stems from India's reluctance to travel to Pakistan, citing security concerns. India has officially informed the International Cricket Council (ICC) that it will not participate in the tournament if it is held in Pakistan.

This stance, backed by the Indian government, has left the fate of the tournament hanging in the balance.

Pakistan has firmly expressed its desire to host the tournament and is committed to ensuring the security and safety of all visiting teams. The PCB has offered assurances of a safe environment for international cricket in the country and is working closely with the ICC to resolve the issue. However, the dispute over India's participation remains a significant challenge. If the dispute over India's participation is not resolved, the tournament could face potential relocation, which would be a blow to Pakistan's cricketing

ambitions. Nonetheless, Pakistan remains optimistic about hosting the Champions Trophy and hopes that the series win against Australia will provide further momentum for cricket's growth in the country.

## Conclusion

Pakistan's historic series win against Australia has captured the imagination of cricket fans worldwide. With an impressive showing from key players like Mohammad Rizwan, Saim Ayub, Abdullah Shafique, Haris Rauf, Shaheen Afridi, and Naseem Shah, the team has firmly placed itself among the top competitors in international cricket. This victory will undoubtedly be remembered as a pivotal moment in Pakistan's cricketing journey, providing the foundation for future success and growth.



# The Backyard Ultra: Pushing Human Endurance to its Limit



The Backyard Ultra is unlike any other race. This unique endurance race stands apart from all others due to its unconventional format of having neither a set distance nor a clear finish line until only one runner remains.

## Backyard Ultra - World Team Championship 2024 is Complete!!

### Fun Fact

Race Stats: Total distance completed by teams around the world:

25,302 yards | 169,665 kilometers | 105,425 miles | A total distance of 4.23 trips around the world

Runners are tasked with continuously tackling a 4.167 mile (6.706 km) looping course, every single hour, on the hour, with the sole victor being the final man or woman still competing when all others have chosen to stop.

What begins as a test of physical mettle and

stamina evolves into a true challenge of mental fortitude like no other as competitors slog through loop after punishing loop. The appeal of the Backyard Ultra lies in its deceptively simple yet brutally demanding structure, which provides a unique opportunity to witness the incredible resilience of the human spirit.

### Traditional Marathons VS the Backyard Ultra

Unlike a standard marathon that races against the clock to finish as quickly as possible, the Backyard Ultra is a battle of attrition. It's not about the distance or the time, but about how long one can endure. Runners must find a carefully paced rhythm, allowing them to cover the 4.167 mile course every hour, while conserving enough energy to continue should the race extend into days.

### The Key Differences That Set the Backyard Ultra Apart

1. There Exists No Finish Line - Only When One Person Is Still Standing: Its

Hourly Loop Structure Pits Runners against the Internal and External Forces of Fatigue

2. Its Hourly Loop Structure - Pits Runners against the Internal and External Forces of Fatigue: The Unknown and Potentially Long Distance Makes Mental Grit As Important As Physical Fitness

### Backyard Ultra: Demanding Rules for an Epic Test of Endurance

The regulations governing the Backyard Ultra are straightforward yet unforgiving. Every runner must traverse a 4.167 mile path each hour without fail. They may finish the circuit in under sixty minutes but must be prepared to embark on the next loop precisely on the hour. Should an athlete neglect to complete a loop within the allotted timeframe or delay starting subsequent ones, they are disqualified. The solo survivor prevails.

### A Summary of Pivotal Provisions:

1. An Hourly Circuit: Competitors cover 4.167 miles per loop, commencing each on the hour.
2. No Leeway Granted: Missing a loop or delaying departure results in elimination without exception.
3. The Final Man Standing Wins: Victory is claimed by the last athlete still circling at intervals' end.

## Backyard Ultra World Record: Pushing Human Boundaries

The Backyard Ultra has seen exceptional records that showcase human endurance at its peak. The top three runners, Merijn Geerts, Ivo Steyaert, and Frank Gielen, set a new world record by running 110 yards (458.33 miles/737.61 km). To achieve this, they ran for days without sleep, enduring

honor is bestowed upon the victor of Big's Backyard Ultra, widely considered the best in this singular event format. Achieving such a designation necessitates unprecedented grit, carefully managed stamina, and relentless fortitude in the face of exhaustion. All who hold this distinction have surpassed the limits of body and brain, driving through extreme suffering to earn their eminent status.

### What It Takes to Reign as Backyard Ultra Champion

1. Stamina that seems boundless.
2. Resilience that refuses to relinquish.
3. Strategic preservation of energy, hydration, and repose.
4. Mental strength enabling continued forward motion when others fall away.

### Backyard Ultra Training Plan

Preparing for a Backyard Ultra involves more than extended runs. Runners must train for endurance, practice maintaining a steady pace, and cultivate mental fortitude. Many athletes employ 'loop training' to simulate race circumstances, repeatedly running shorter circuits with only brief respites in between. Cross-training in endurance, strength, and flexibility is crucial to avoiding injuries from repetitive running. Developing resilience to sleep deprivation is also a key component of training, as these competitions regularly span multiple days. Mental resilience, built through visualization and mindfulness, can help handle the exhaustive demands of continual laps.

#### 1. Loop training:

Imitating competition conditions through repetitive brief runs.

Cross-trainings: In endurance, strength, and flexibility is crucial to avoiding injuries from repetitive running.

#### 2. Mental resilience:

Built through visualization and mindfulness can help handle the exhaustive demands of continual laps.



### Strategies for Mastering the Backyard Ultra

Devising an effective approach is key to thriving in this demanding race. Runners typically aim to traverse each loop in 45-50 minutes, allowing time to replenish before the next one begins. Strategic nutrition and hydration are indispensable to sustaining energy levels throughout while mental fortitude plays a huge role in overcoming overwhelming fatigue as the hours stretch on.

#### Crucial Tactics for Triumph

1. Consistent Pacing: Completing loops at an enduring, sustainable pace.
2. Recovery Between: Maximizing minutes between loops to refuel and relax.
3. Mental Resolve: Staying determined and avoiding burnout as night falls.

hour after hour in an unrelentingly demanding test of physical and mental resilience.

### The Key Facts Behind the Backyard Ultra World Record

110 circuits completed: Equivalent to 458.33 miles (737.61) km run.

Over four days of continuous running, Contestants remained awake for over 110 hours with little opportunity to relax.

The world record underscores the inner fortitude necessary to endure the demands of the Backyard Ultra, Mental, and Physical Resilience

Backyard Ultra World Champion: An Extreme Test of Perseverance

Claiming the Backyard Ultra World Champion title stands as the pinnacle achievement for ultra-endurance runners. This



## Top 10 Backyard Ultra Events Worldwide

The Backyard Ultra format has spread internationally, and numerous prestigious events have emerged globally. These races draw in participants eager to test their limits against some of the best. Here is a survey of some of the premier Backyard Ultra competitions:

- Big Dog's Backyard Ultra - Tennessee, USA
- Down Under Backyard Ultra - Australia
- Backyard Ultra Sweden - Sweden
- Team Canada Backyard Ultra - Canada
- Swiss Backyard Ultra - Switzerland
- UK Backyard Ultra - United Kingdom
- Backyard Ultra Japan - Japan
- Backyard Ultra France - France
- Backyard Ultra Germany - Germany
- Backyard Ultra South Africa - South Africa

## Most Famous Event in Backyard Ultra - Is Big's dog Ultra

Big's Backyard Ultra, the original event held on creator Lazarus Lake's Tennessee property, remains the most prestigious format. Named for Lake's dog Big, elite international runners flock here for the unofficial championship. Records often fall amid grueling competition showcasing remarkable perseverance.

## Rules of Backyard Ultra \_ Mistakes to avoid

Sometimes jokingly called "rulres," guidelines seem simple but contain hidden challenges. Unlike marathons with breaks, this tests limits more. Newcomers tend to underestimate tolls of constant laps, sleep loss, and psyche's plight.

Many go under slept, unaware of days without rest. Some burn out from pacing flaws, too fast or slow at first. Not enough

prepare their minds for fatigue's mental curses.

## Backyard Ultra in Pakistan: Rising Stars of Pakistan

The Backyard Ultra format has landed in Pakistan in 2022 and with it comes a budding community of endurance athletes keen on pushing their limits. Enter Jamal Said, the king of Pakistani Backyard Ultra since 3 years. The national champion, known for its resilience and determination has been consistently clinching gold medals with pride higher than the Pakistani flag.

and an endurance athlete who completed 25 loops in the Backyard Ultra. Her acceptance is a proof of her determination and she keeps on gearing lots more people from all over Pakistan, rival in Pakistani contests.

The emergence of the Backyard Ultra in Pakistan and the evolution that it seems to be driving among athletes — like Jamal and Umaira — is indicative, on some level, of an unaware giant waking up from a long slumber. Perhaps in the next few years, with greater acknowledgment and backing by their home country Pakistani racers could shine on world level



In 2023, he made history when he became the South Asian Backyard Ultra Champion finishing a record-breaking score of 55 loops— with no rest for more than two days. And his efforts will see him earn a place in the Big's Dog Backyard Ultra Championship in America. Unfortunately for a talent like Jamal, he is still not resourced to go compete internationally at this moment. He feels he could set a world record and has the spirit to match.

It is after all a difficult sport and even Pakistan's women are not behind in practicing it. This year the national champion was crowned Umaira Shiraz, a police constable

## Conclusion:

### Why the Backyard Ultra Defines the Boundaries of Human Endurance

The Backyard Ultra presents a challenge above all others. It demands participants surmount constraints, loop after unending loop, with no closure in sight. For those embracing its demands, it allows discovery of their furthest frontiers. All embarking on this trial undertake a personal quest, testing how far their reserves may be depleted before determination dissipates to nothingness.

# Mahira Khan's Inspiring Journey to Global Recognition: A Lifetime Achievement Award from the UK Parliament



By Romana Afsheen

In a landmark moment for Pakistan's entertainment industry, celebrated actress Mahira Khan recently received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the United Kingdom Parliament. This prestigious honor, held at the historic House of Commons, marks her as the first Pakistani actress to be recognized in this way. The award acknowledges her pivotal role as a cultural ambassador, her contributions to women's empowerment, and her lifelong dedication to the arts. The event celebrated her journey, from her early days in Pakistan to becoming an international icon for South Asian cinema and a powerful advocate for gender equality.

## Early Life and Career Beginnings

Mahira Khan was born and raised in Karachi, Pakistan, where she developed a love for the arts from an early age. Her upbringing in a supportive family environment encouraged her ambitions, even as she pursued her goals in a society that traditionally limited the roles of women in entertainment. Her family stood by her as she explored her talents, attending college briefly in the United States before returning to Pakistan to pursue her

dreams of acting.

Her entrance into the entertainment industry came with its share of challenges. As a female artist, she encountered cultural barriers and societal expectations, yet she persisted, driven by an inner strength and a desire to prove herself. In interviews, Mahira has often spoken about her experiences as a woman in Pakistan's media landscape, highlighting the resilience required to succeed. Despite the obstacles, she quickly gained attention for her captivating screen presence and dedication to her craft, traits that would propel her to stardom.

## The Road to Stardom

Mahira's breakthrough came with her role in the iconic Pakistani drama *Humsafar*, which aired in 2011. Her portrayal of Khirad Hussain, a character embodying resilience and quiet strength, won the hearts of audiences across Pakistan and beyond. The show's popularity spread to India and other parts of South Asia, solidifying Mahira's place as a leading actress and a cultural icon. Her performance not only earned her critical acclaim but also sparked a new wave of cross-border admiration, introducing Pakistani

television to international viewers.

In 2017, Mahira debuted in Bollywood with *Raees*, starring alongside Shah Rukh Khan. This role marked a significant moment in her career, bringing her further recognition and allowing her to reach a global audience. Her work has since contributed to bridging cultural divides, and she has become a celebrated representative of Pakistani culture on the world stage.

## The Lifetime Achievement Award from the UK Parliament

Receiving the Lifetime Achievement Award at the UK Parliament was a high point in Mahira's career, symbolizing her years of dedication to the arts and her role as a cultural ambassador. The award ceremony took place at the House of Commons, hosted by British MP Afzal Khan, and attended by an array of dignitaries and notable personalities, including Pakistan's High Commissioner to the UK, Dr. Sarah Naeem; Atta Haq of the Labour Asians Society; and Shafiq Shahzad, Minister for Trade and Investment. The prestigious setting and the presence of such



respected figures underscored the importance of the occasion, honoring Mahira not just as an actress, but as an icon representing Pakistan on an international stage.

During the ceremony, Mahira Khan spoke from the heart, reflecting on her journey and the sacrifices she had made to reach this point. The award, she explained, held a special meaning, symbolizing not just her personal achievements, but also the progress of Pakistani women in the arts and the entertainment industry.

## Mahira's Emotional Acceptance Speech

In her acceptance speech, Mahira was visibly emotional as she acknowledged the people who had supported her along her journey, including her family, friends, and mentors. She spoke of her gratitude for her parents, her brother, and her young son, all of whom played vital roles in her life and supported her aspirations. Mahira also gave credit to her teachers, particularly an English teacher who once told her she would "see her at the UN one day," an offhand comment that left a lasting impact on her young mind.

Her speech centered on the importance of uplifting women and fostering environments where girls are encouraged to dream big. She shared her hopes that more women would be able to achieve their goals without societal limitations. Mahira emphasized the significance of female mentorship and collaboration, urging women to support each other instead of competing. "I stand on the shoulders of those who lifted me up," she remarked, underscoring the value of having a strong support system.

In addition, Mahira addressed the role of men in women's lives, highlighting how her brother had fiercely supported her throughout her career. She expressed a desire for boys, brothers, and fathers to be raised as allies to women, helping to create a culture of respect and equality.

## Mahira Khan as a Cultural Ambassador

Mahira Khan's influence extends beyond her roles in film and television. Over the years, she has become a cultural ambassador, using her platform to share Pakistani

culture with a global audience. Through her work, she has helped to dispel misconceptions and stereotypes, offering a more nuanced view of Pakistan's rich heritage. Her advocacy for women's empowerment and gender equality is another dimension of her legacy, as she continually strives to uplift women and address societal barriers.

In interviews and speeches, Mahira has emphasized her commitment to empowering women, both in Pakistan and beyond. She has used her visibility to speak out on issues of gender inequality, advocating for greater opportunities for women in all fields. Her efforts have earned her the admiration of fans and fellow artists alike, and she has become a symbol of resilience and strength for women around the world.

## Social Media and Public Reactions

Following the award ceremony, Mahira took to Instagram to share her thoughts, posting a video capturing the day's memorable moments. In a heartfelt message, she expressed her gratitude to her fans and supporters, reflecting on the meaning of the award and the responsibility that comes with it. "The recognition award was completely unexpected but proved to be a perfect end to my stay in London," she wrote. She went on to share how she sometimes feels uncomfortable with the label "self-made woman," as her achievements were built upon the foundation laid by her family, friends, and colleagues.

The post was met with an outpouring of love and support from fans and celebrities, many of whom praised Mahira for her humility and dedication. The messages of encouragement highlighted the deep connection she has with her audience and the impact of her work.

## A Call to Action for Artists and Influencers

In her address, Mahira urged other influential figures to use their platforms to advocate for gender equality and cultural representation. She expressed a desire for a world where girls can pursue their dreams without fear of judgment or discrimination, calling on those in power to foster inclusive and supportive environments.

Her words resonated with the audience, many of whom were inspired by her message of resilience and empowerment. Mahira's advocacy for women's rights and her efforts to bridge cultural divides have set a powerful example, encouraging others to follow in her footsteps.

## Legacy and Impact on Pakistani Cinema

Mahira Khan's impact on Pakistani cinema and media is profound. She has played a key role in elevating Pakistan's entertainment industry, gaining international recognition and paving the way for younger generations. Her journey serves as an inspiration to countless women, showing them that success is possible, even in the face of societal barriers.

Through her work, Mahira has also helped to change perceptions of Pakistani cinema, showcasing its talent and diversity on a global stage. Her achievements have opened doors for other Pakistani actors and artists, contributing to the growth of the industry.

## Conclusion

Mahira Khan's Lifetime Achievement Award from the UK Parliament is a testament to her dedication to cultural diplomacy, women's empowerment, and artistic excellence. Her journey from a young girl with dreams to an internationally recognized actress has been marked by resilience, compassion, and an unwavering commitment to her craft. As she continues to champion these causes, her story will inspire future generations, reminding them of the power of dreams, the importance of support, and the value of staying true to oneself.

This award not only marks a personal milestone for Mahira but also solidifies her role as a powerful advocate for women and a celebrated ambassador for Pakistani culture. Her message to "live accordingly" resonates as a call to action for all, inspiring us to support one another and work toward a world where everyone, regardless of background, can reach their full potential.



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