



Weekly



POLICY PULSE

NATIONAL INSTITUTE
OF PUBLIC POLICY

Vol. 6 Issue No. 73
20 - 26 January 2026



CONTENTS

Overview

Governance

Ministers, bureaucrats at odds over specialised bureaucracy reforms scheme

Pakistan Railways to digitise network by June

Minister launches app to improve municipal services

Grief gives way to anger amid search for Gul Plaza victims

First phase of Karachi Safe City Project to be launched in two months

Federal funding for provincial health schemes ruled out

Economic Issues

Centre moves to replace net metering with net billing, raising concerns for solar consumers

Trade gap with nine neighbours widens 44.4pc in first half

Security and Law & Order

Police indispensable to internal security: CDF



Contd

Five killed in D.I. Khan suicide blast

International Affairs

India, UAE sign letter of intent for defence partnership

Pak-Saudi defence pact expansion to be decided jointly: Asif

Humanity faces 'era of water bankruptcy', says UN report

Elon Musk says in 10 to 20 years, work will be optional and money will be irrelevant thanks to AI and robotics

Trump Rules Out Use of Force but Pushes Negotiations to Acquire Greenland at Davos

3,117 killed in recent 'foreign-backed' terror acts in Iran

Policy Nuggets

NIPP 5th Batch Internship

OVERVIEW

This week, the *Policy Pulse* presents a consolidated view of Pakistan's evolving governance, security, economic, and international policy landscape. The thematic coverage reflects a state under pressure to modernise institutions, strengthen service delivery, manage security risks, and respond to emerging global challenges such as water scarcity, energy transition, and rapid technological change. Across sectors, the developments point to a recurring tension between reform intent and institutional capacity, highlighting the need for coordinated, implementation-focused policy responses.

The news briefs capture a strong reform narrative, particularly in governance and urban management. Debates over specialised bureaucracy reforms, digitisation of Pakistan Railways, municipal complaint systems, and the rollout of Safe City surveillance projects signal efforts to improve efficiency, transparency, and citizen engagement through technology. At the same time, incidents such as the Gul Plaza fire and continued militant violence in KP expose deep regulatory failures and security vulnerabilities. These developments imply that while reform agendas are gaining momentum, weak enforcement, fragmented accountability, and legacy governance structures continue to limit impact.

In real-world terms, these policy choices translate directly into lived outcomes. Infrastructure digitisation and local governance tools can improve safety, service delivery, and mobility, while energy policy shifts like net billing risk discouraging renewable adoption and raising household costs. Together, the briefs underline how governance quality increasingly determines social protection, economic resilience, and public trust.

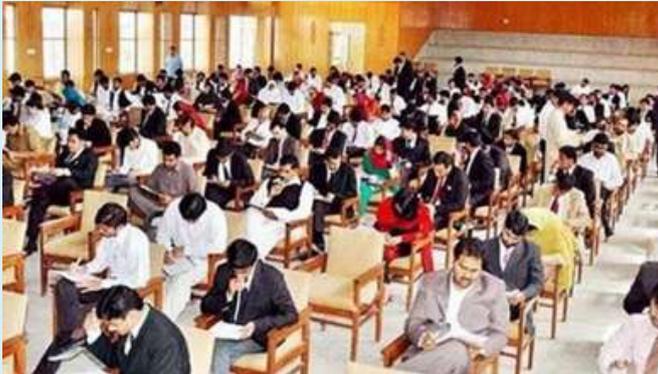
The Policy Nuggets sharpen these insights into actionable priorities, focusing on water security, agricultural investment, health equity, environmental sustainability, etc. Their implication is clear: durable impact depends on early intervention, regulatory clarity, and institutional coordination. When aligned with will and data-driven implementation, these policy choices can reform intent into measurable national outcomes. In conclusion, this edition underscores how timely, coordinated policy action remains critical to translating reform intent into durable national outcomes.



Pakistan's current policy landscape reflects strong reform intent across governance and technology, but persistent institutional weaknesses and poor implementation continue to limit real-world impact, underscoring the need for coordinated, execution-focused action.

GOVERNANCE

Ministers, bureaucrats at odds over specialised bureaucracy reforms scheme



The civil service reform committee in Pakistan is divided over replacing the generalist bureaucracy model with a specialized recruitment system under the CSS framework. Ministers support specialization, language flexibility in exams, digitization, and quota reforms to improve inclusivity and efficiency. Senior bureaucrats oppose these changes, arguing that the generalist model ensures coordination and administrative cohesion. The prime minister may receive competing recommendations if consensus is not reached.

Analysis:

The debate reflects a broader governance challenge between traditional administrative continuity and modern technocratic efficiency. Specialization could improve state capacity and policy outcomes, but may risk bureaucratic fragmentation without strong coordination mechanisms. Language and quota reforms highlight equity concerns in elite recruitment systems. Overall, this reform agenda signals a critical shift toward institutional modernization in Pakistan's governance structure.

Way Forward:

- Implement cluster-based CSS examinations to align academic backgrounds with service groups and improve policy effectiveness.
- Allow selected compulsory papers in Urdu alongside English to broaden access and reduce elite linguistic barriers, while maintaining English for professional competence.
- Pakistan should gradually move toward a hybrid system combining generalists and specialists to ensure domain expertise and inter-ministerial coordination.

Pakistan Railways to digitise network by June



Pakistan Railways has launched the Railway Advanced Infrastructure Network (RAIN) Project Phase I, aiming to fully digitise its network by June 2026. Key features include GPS tracking of trains and locomotives, smart railway stations, high-speed internet, command and control centres, and fiberisation of 1,700 km of the ML-1 line. The initiative aims to reduce delays, enhance safety, improve passenger services, and enable data-driven decision-making. Additionally, the Senate Standing Committee on Railways elected Senator Shahadat Awan as its new chairman.

Analysis:

The RAIN Project represents a significant step toward modernising Pakistan's state-owned transport infrastructure and improving operational governance. Digitisation and real-time monitoring will enhance efficiency, safety, and service delivery, while strengthening institutional capacity. Financial self-reliance of the project underscores sustainable public sector management. Overall, it demonstrates the government's commitment to integrating technology in public services and improving citizen-centric infrastructure.

Way Forward:

- Extend GPS tracking to all locomotives, coaches, and cargo trains nationwide for enhanced safety, efficiency, and accountability.
- Conduct quarterly progress reviews and independent audits to ensure project transparency, accountability, and adherence to timelines.
- Complete fiberisation of the ML-1 and other key railway lines to support high-speed communication, digital signalling, and data-driven maintenance.

GOVERNANCE

M inister launches app to improve municipal services



Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Local Government, Mian Khan Afridi, launched the digital complaint redressal app Mansooba-i-Amal to improve transparency, accountability, and efficiency in municipal services. The app allows citizens to register complaints regarding sanitation and service delivery, with automatic escalation to higher authorities if issues remain unresolved. Officials briefed the minister on its monitoring and operational features, and the minister emphasized personal oversight and public participation for better governance outcomes.

Analysis:

The initiative reflects a strong push toward digital governance and citizen-centric service delivery in KP, leveraging technology to streamline municipal operations. By ensuring complaints are addressed promptly and accountability is maintained, the app can improve public trust and efficiency in local governance. Encouraging citizen participation also promotes a collaborative approach to problem-solving, making municipal services more responsive and effective.

Way Forward:

- Roll out the Mansooba-i-Amal app in all districts and tehsils of KP to ensure uniform access for citizens and standardised complaint management.
- Use complaint data to identify recurring issues, service gaps, and resource allocation needs, enabling data-driven decision-making in municipal governance.
- Launch awareness campaigns to educate citizens on using the app responsibly, promoting participation in maintaining cleanliness and improving local services.

Grief gives way to anger amid search for Gul Plaza victims



A devastating fire at Karachi's Gul Plaza killed at least 21 people, with dozens missing and many bodies recovered in fragments. Authorities suspect a short circuit, while investigations into negligence are underway. The Sindh government announced Rs10 million compensation per victim and support for affected traders. The disaster destroyed around 1,200 shops, leaving over 8,000 people jobless and triggering political debate on regulatory failures.

Analysis:

The tragedy highlights chronic governance and regulatory failures in enforcing building and fire safety laws in Pakistan. Allegations of corruption and building code violations reveal systemic weaknesses in urban governance and oversight institutions. Beyond humanitarian loss, the incident has severe socio-economic consequences for traders and workers. It underscores the urgent need for institutional reforms, accountability mechanisms, and strict urban safety enforcement to prevent recurring disasters.

Way Forward:

- Strengthen enforcement of building by-laws, occupancy limits, and fire safety regulations, with zero tolerance for violations.
- Conduct compulsory periodic fire safety audits of commercial and residential buildings, with public disclosure of compliance status.
- Upgrade fire brigade capacity with modern equipment, trained personnel, and rapid response systems, especially in dense urban areas.

GOVERNANCE

F

irst phase of Karachi Safe City Project to be launched in two months



Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah announced that the first phase of the Karachi Safe City Project is scheduled to be formally launched within about two months, with installation largely complete and trial operations underway. This phase will initially cover high-security areas like the Red Zone and the airport corridor, using surveillance technology to improve real-time monitoring and overall urban security.

Analysis:

This marks a significant move toward bolstering public safety and crime prevention in Pakistan's largest city, filling a long-delayed gap in Karachi's security infrastructure. However, the success of the project will depend on sustained operational effectiveness, maintenance of equipment, and integration with responsive law enforcement — areas where past initiatives have faced challenges.

Way Forward:

- Fully staff and train the Safe City command and monitoring centers with technically skilled personnel to maximize the impact of surveillance systems.
- Link Safe City analytics with community policing units to ensure rapid, localized response to incidents.
- Establish a dedicated budget and oversight mechanism for routine maintenance of cameras and technology.

F

ederal funding for provincial health schemes ruled out



The federal government has ruled out funding provincial health coverage schemes, including health insurance expansion, citing the 18th Constitutional Amendment which devolves health responsibilities to provinces and recommended that provinces adopt contributory health insurance models instead. It approved continuation of the Prime Minister's Sehat Sahulat Programme (SSP) only for the Islamabad Capital Territory, Azad Jammu & Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan until June 30, 2027, and rejected proposals to include the impoverished Sindh district of Tharparkar under SSP.

Analysis:

This decision underscores fiscal constraints and constitutional boundaries but risks widening disparities in access to subsidized health coverage across provinces, particularly affecting vulnerable populations in poorer regions.

Way Forward:

- Provinces should strengthen and fully finance their own health insurance schemes, ensuring coverage for vulnerable and low-income populations.
- The federal government can support provinces by developing a national framework for contributory social health insurance best practices and data sharing without direct funding.
- Launch affordable pilot health insurance projects with co-payment structures to demonstrate scalable, sustainable coverage mechanisms.

ECONOMIC ISSUES

Centre moves to replace net metering with net billing, raising concerns for solar consumers



The federal government has decided to replace the net metering system for solar energy with a net billing policy, where electricity drawn from the grid will be charged at full retail rates while solar power exported to the grid will earn a lower credit. This policy change significantly increases costs for solar consumers, potentially penalizing those who invested in renewable energy. The shift comes amid unresolved net-metering applications and unconnected solar systems, raising concerns about the fairness and efficiency of the new approach.

Analysis:

The move may discourage household and commercial solar adoption, undermining citizen-funded renewable energy initiatives. While intended to cover grid costs, it risks reducing public confidence in energy policies, slowing progress toward sustainable energy goals, and creating financial strain for existing solar users.

Way Forward:

- Set up a periodic review of net billing impacts to adjust rates or incentives, ensuring alignment with national renewable energy targets.
- Launch public awareness campaigns to educate solar consumers about the new billing system, energy efficiency, and cost management.
- Ensure exported solar electricity is credited at a rate closer to retail value to fairly reward citizen investment in renewable energy.

Trade gap with nine neighbours widens 44.4pc in first half



Pakistan's trade deficit with nine neighbouring countries widened sharply by 44.42% to \$7.683 billion in the first half of the 2025-26 fiscal year, driven mainly by a decline in exports to regional partners such as China, Afghanistan and Bangladesh while imports continued to grow. The overall exports to Afghanistan, China, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Iran, Nepal, Bhutan and the Maldives countries dropped to 18.56% while imports surged to 24.76%.

Analysis:

The widening trade gap highlights Pakistan's increasing reliance on imports and weakening export performance in key neighbouring markets, exacerbating pressure on foreign exchange reserves and external balances. Without structural shifts to improve competitiveness and diversify export markets, this trend could further strain the economy and limit growth.

Way Forward:

- Provide targeted incentives and support to export-oriented industries to improve product quality and price competitiveness in neighbouring markets.
- Negotiate trade facilitation agreements and reduce non-tariff barriers with key neighbours like China, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka to expand market access and rebalance trade flows.
- Promote domestic production of high-import items through fiscal support, technology transfer and investment in value chains to reduce dependency on foreign goods and improve the trade balance.

SECURITY AND LAW & ORDER

P olice indispensable to internal security: CDF



Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Asim Munir emphasised the crucial role of a professional and people-centric police force in ensuring internal security and upholding the rule of law during his visit to the National Police Academy in Islamabad. He praised police sacrifices against terrorism and crime, while senior officers reaffirmed commitments to capacity building, institutional reforms, and modernisation through initiatives like the SHIELD programme. The visit also paid tribute to police martyrs, highlighting the police as the first line of defence for citizens' safety.

Analysis:

The visit underscores Pakistan's focus on strengthening internal security through closer military-police coordination and professionalisation of law enforcement. By prioritising training, modernisation, and elite programmes, the country aims to enhance operational efficiency and public trust in the police. The engagement also signals the armed forces' support for policing standards and institutional reforms, reinforcing a collective approach to maintaining law, order, and national security.

Way Forward:

- Foster closer collaboration between the armed forces and police to jointly address terrorism, organized crime, and emergency response, without compromising civilian policing independence.
- Promote people-centric policing, including outreach programs and public feedback mechanisms, to strengthen trust between law enforcement and local communities.
- Establish independent monitoring mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of reforms, training, and operational performance regularly.

F ive killed in D.I. Khan suicide blast



A suicide bomber attacked a wedding at the residence of a peace committee member in Dera Ismail Khan, killing at least five people, including the peace committee leader Waheedullah Mehsud alias Jigri, and injuring 10 others when the explosion caused part of the roof to collapse. Rescue teams transported the dead and injured to the District Headquarters Hospital, and authorities have launched an investigation while provincial leaders condemned the blast and promised support for victims.

Analysis:

The attack underscores persistent security challenges in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where militants continue targeting local peace and government-aligned figures to destabilize state authority and intimidate communities. The incident highlights gaps in protective measures during public gatherings despite ongoing counterterrorism efforts.

Way Forward:

- Increase deployment of trained security personnel and use bomb-detection equipment at weddings and large gatherings in high-risk districts to deter or intercept attacks.
- Provide better protection, training, and intelligence support for peace committee members and other local mediators who are targeted by militant groups.
- Boost coordination between federal and provincial intelligence and law enforcement agencies to identify threats early and disrupt militant planning before attacks occur.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

India, UAE sign letter of intent for defence partnership



India and the UAE signed a \$3 billion LNG supply deal, making India the UAE's top customer, alongside a letter of intent to establish a strategic defence partnership. Leaders pledged to double bilateral trade to \$200 billion within six years and expand cooperation in areas such as cyber security, counterterrorism, and special operations. The LNG agreement will supply 0.5 million metric tons annually to India's Hindustan Petroleum for 10 years, bringing the total UAE-India LNG contracts to over \$20 billion.

Analysis:

The agreements strengthen India-UAE economic and strategic ties, combining energy security with defence cooperation. The LNG deal ensures a long-term, reliable energy supply for India, while the defence partnership signals growing regional collaboration without committing India to regional conflicts. This move reflects India's strategy to diversify energy sources, enhance trade relations, and strengthen geopolitical partnerships in the Gulf region.

Way Forward:

- Pakistan should reinforce diplomatic, trade, and defence cooperation with the UAE to maintain its strategic presence and influence in the Gulf region.
- Closely observe India-UAE defence cooperation, particularly in cyber, counter-terrorism, and special operations, to evaluate potential security implications for Pakistan.
- Participate actively in Gulf and regional forums to foster transparency and reduce strategic misperceptions arising from bilateral defence deals involving India.

Pak-Saudi defence pact expansion to be decided jointly: Asif



Defence Minister Khawaja Asif stated that any expansion of the Pakistan-Saudi Arabia defence pact, including potential inclusion of Turkiye or other countries, will be mutually decided by Islamabad and Riyadh. A draft trilateral defence agreement between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Turkiye is under discussion, separate from the existing bilateral SMMA. Asif emphasized the need for a broader collective defence framework among Muslim countries and reaffirmed Pakistan's supportive stance on regional security issues, including Gaza and Iran.

Analysis:

The proposed defence cooperation highlights Pakistan's strategy to strengthen regional security alliances and balance geopolitical dynamics in the Middle East. Inclusion of Turkiye could enhance military interoperability, strategic coordination, and collective security among key Muslim states. Pakistan's emphasis on diplomacy, regional stability, and multilateral frameworks reflects its effort to assert influence in Middle Eastern security while maintaining strong bilateral ties with Saudi Arabia and Turkiye.

Way Forward:

- Ensure that any expansion of the Pakistan-Saudi defence agreement, including the inclusion of Turkiye or other countries, is based on mutual consent to maintain trust and strategic balance.
- Establish structured consultations between military and civilian leadership of Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Turkiye for consistent review of defence cooperation, exercises, and joint planning.
- Leverage Turkiye's expertise in naval ships, F-16 upgrades, and drone technology to modernize Pakistan's armed forces and improve regional defence readiness.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Humanity faces ‘era of water bankruptcy’, says UN report



A UN report warns that the world is entering an “era of water bankruptcy” due to chronic over-extraction, pollution, land degradation, and climate change. Groundwater depletion, shrinking rivers, lakes, and glaciers, along with urbanisation and agriculture, have pushed water systems in many regions into a post-crisis state of failure. The report highlights visible consequences globally, including subsiding land, desertification, and repeated urban water shortages.

Analysis:

The findings underscore the urgent need for science-based water management and international cooperation. Human overuse and environmental mismanagement are the primary drivers, emphasizing that without immediate corrective measures, both ecological systems and socio-economic stability will face severe, widespread disruption.

Way Forward:

- Incentivize farmers to adopt modern irrigation techniques and soil moisture conservation methods.
- Implement smart metering, leak detection, and citizen feedback mechanisms in cities like Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad.
- Establish a national water monitoring authority using GIS, satellite data, and real-time tracking to guide policies.

Elon Musk says in 10 to 20 years, work will be optional and money will be irrelevant thanks to AI and robotics



Elon Musk predicts that within 10–20 years, work will become optional due to widespread AI and robotics automation, with humans able to pursue work only if they choose, while money may become largely irrelevant in a post-scarcity world. He envisions AI-driven productivity, universal high income, and robots performing complex tasks, including surgery, reshaping the global labor landscape.

Analysis:

While Musk’s vision highlights potential efficiency and human freedom, it raises concerns about social and economic disruption, including job displacement, inequality, and the need to redefine human purpose and meaningful engagement in society. Policymakers and societies will need strategies like universal basic income and education reforms to adapt to this automated future.

Way Forward:

- The government should invest in AI, robotics, and digital skills training to prepare the workforce for automation, ensuring youth are employable in high-tech, AI-driven sectors.
- Considering potential job displacement, Pakistan could explore pilot schemes for universal basic income or social support programs to safeguard vulnerable populations.
- Deploy AI and robotics in sectors like municipal services, healthcare, and agriculture to improve efficiency, reduce costs, and enhance service delivery for citizens.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

T rump rules out use of force but pushes negotiations to acquire Greenland at Davos



US President Donald Trump, addressing world leaders at the World Economic Forum in Davos, ruled out the use of military force to acquire Greenland for the first time but called for “immediate negotiations” with Denmark over the island’s acquisition. Trump criticised Denmark for refusing to relinquish Greenland, claiming that the United States alone could ensure the security of the mineral-rich Arctic territory amid perceived threats from Russia and China. While easing fears of military escalation, Trump reaffirmed his strategic interest in Greenland, unsettling transatlantic relations and drawing mixed reactions from Denmark, NATO allies, and global markets.

Analysis:

Trump’s remarks highlight growing strains in the transatlantic alliance and reflect a shift from coercive rhetoric toward diplomatic pressure. Although ruling out force has reduced immediate security concerns, his insistence on acquiring Greenland underscores broader geopolitical competition in the Arctic, driven by strategic resources, trade routes, and great power rivalry. The episode exposes vulnerabilities within NATO unity, raises questions about respect for sovereignty, and reflects a broader erosion of trust in the US-led international order.

Way Forward:

- Strengthen diplomatic engagement between the United States, Denmark, and NATO partners to address Arctic security concerns through dialogue rather than unilateral pressure.
- Promote multilateral frameworks for Arctic governance to manage strategic competition, protect sovereignty, and ensure regional stability.
- Reinforce international norms respecting territorial integrity while enhancing cooperative security arrangements to counter emerging geopolitical threats.

3 ,117 killed in recent ‘foreign-backed’ terror acts in Iran



The recent events of terror attacks in Iran led to the death of 3117 individuals including citizens and security forces personnels. While the Iranian administration had proactively controlled the situation, they have also been transparent to the international community, providing evidence, on foreign involvement in turning protests into terror attacks.

Analysis:

The report highlights the role of non-state actors and foreign actors in influencing a political landscape. Politics in contemporary society have a geo-political nature with diverse actors consistently pursuing their own interests. It reflects the need of a strong state mechanism that ensures that foreign and anti state discrepancies do not override national stability and interests.

Way Forward:

- Ensure comprehensive border management to prevent any spillovers from the recent instability
- Stricter security measures to deter actors like TTP and BLA from pursuing similar terror attacks in Pakistan.
- Demonstrate support with Iran against terrorism and anti-state activities in the region

POLICY NUGGETS

1 Quetta faces an escalating water crisis

Impact

Pushed Quetta into a chronic water crisis, forcing residents to depend on costly private tankers and threatening complete water exhaustion within a decade.

Recommendation

Invest in recharge dams, rainwater harvesting, and alternative surface water sources to ensure long-term urban water security.

“Water is life’s matter and matrix, mother and medium. There is no life without water.” – Albert Szent Györgyi

2 National health data reveals a significant gender disparity in end-of-life care in Pakistan

Impact

Gender gaps prevent Pakistani women from receiving life-saving medical interventions at hospitals.

Recommendation

Expand gender-responsive emergency care, referral systems, and transport services, particularly in underserved areas.

“Of all forms of inequality, injustice in health is the most shocking.” – Martin Luther King Jr.

3 Sherry Rehman’s ban on plastic addresses the need for sustainable retail practices

Impact

The proposed ban aims to stop the introduction of persistent toxins and micro plastics into the ecosystem.

Recommendation

Ban all single use of plastic especially from grocery shops and markets. Adopt tote bags for sustainable practices.

“There is no such thing as ‘away.’ When we throw anything away, it must go somewhere.” – Annie Leonard

4 Pakistan China \$4.5bn farm deal aims to boosting jobs and food supply

Impact

79 investment agreements in agriculture sector will contribute to economic growth, expand industries and increase exports.

Recommendation

Ensure good quality of food to weaken reliance on processed food and agricultural imports.

“The greatest service which can be rendered by any country is to add a useful plant to its culture.” – Thomas Jefferson

5 Supreme Court issues directions to enhance procedural efficiency

Impact

Meetings with advocates of the Supreme Court, Advocates-on-Record and Bar Association to strengthen case management and improve facilitation for advocates and litigants.

Recommendation

Sustain inter departmental coordination for coherent policy practice and enhanced service delivery.

“To give real service you must add something which cannot be bought or measured with money, and that is sincerity and integrity.” – Douglas Adams

6 Pakistan’s export-led growth and economic reforms signal a promising future

Impact

Structural reforms, increased revenue collection, and investment in IT, mining, and agriculture position Pakistan for sustainable economic growth.

Recommendation

Focus on skill development, digital infrastructure, and public-private collaboration to sustain growth momentum.

“The best way to predict the future is to create it.” – Peter Drucker

7 Punjab is expanding telemedicine and cardiac care

Impact

Improved healthcare access reduces treatment delays, saves lives, and ensures equitable services for both local and interprovincial patients.

Recommendation

Scale up telemedicine and specialized cardiac services to more districts, while integrating training programs for medical staff to ensure sustainable, high-quality care.

“In the last analysis, the health of the people depends on the health of the services available to them.” – Dr. Brock Chisholm

8 CTD’s Intelligence-based operations kills five terrorists in Mastung operation

Impact

Enhanced security posture and reduced vulnerability to future attacks in the operational area.

Recommendation

Consistent intelligence operations should locate arm supply chains to weaken terrorist attacks and hold in the region.

“Know the enemy and know yourself; in a hundred battles you will never be in peril.” –Sun Tzu

9 India suspension of Indus Water Treaty threatens Pakistan water security and regional stability

Impact

Exacerbates Pakistan’s water insecurity, endangering agriculture, livelihoods, and human security for over 240 million people.

Recommendation

Strengthen national water resilience through integrated planning, groundwater replenishment, while urgently pursuing bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

“Transboundary water management is not merely technical; it is central to peace, security, and sustainable development.” – Peter H. Gleick

NIPP 5TH BATCH INTERNSHIP

National Institute of Public Administration, Lahore



A visit to the National Institute of Public Administration (NIPA), Lahore, was conducted as part of the internship learning activities. The purpose of the visit was to gain practical exposure and understanding of the role and functioning of NIPA, which operates under the National School of Public Policy (NSPP) and is responsible for training and capacity building of civil servants in Pakistan. Mr. Yasir Iqbal, Director of Staff, explained in detail how NIPA trains officers and discussed its key courses, including the Mid-Career Management Course (MCMC) and the Senior Management Course (SMC). He shared that MCMC is designed for BS-18 officers to enhance their managerial, administrative, and leadership skills, while SMC is aimed at BS-19 officers to prepare them for senior leadership roles by strengthening strategic thinking, policy formulation, and decision-making abilities. He also emphasized the importance of ethics, governance, and practical problem-solving in public administration.

Following the briefing, a question-and-answer session was conducted in which interns actively raised queries related to NIPA, its training structure, course content, and career relevance. After the discussion, Mr. Yasir Iqbal facilitated a brief visit of the NIPA premises. He guided the interns through different academic areas, including training halls, auditoriums, and common facilities. He also informed us about the on-campus cafés and other amenities available to officers and trainees, which provided insight into the learning environment at NIPA.

Conclusion:

At the conclusion of the visit, one of the interns, Mr. Hassan, presented a vote of thanks and expressed sincere appreciation to Mr. Yasir Iqbal for his time, guidance, and hospitality. Overall, the visit proved to be a valuable learning experience and significantly enhanced our understanding of public administration training and the role of NIPA in strengthening the civil service.

Friends of Police and Punjab Safe Cities Authority



As part of the research internship at the National Institute of Public Policy (NIPP), interns participated in a field visit on 24 December 2025 under the Friends of Police Program, an initiative of the Punjab Police aimed at enhancing public trust, transparency, and youth engagement. The visit covered key policing and public service institutions in Lahore, including District Police Lines Qila Gujjar Singh, Police Station Gulberg, Police Khidmat Markaz Liberty, Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA), and the DIG Operations Office. The activity provided interns with firsthand exposure to the operational structure, modernization efforts, and citizen-focused reforms within the Punjab Police.

Exposure to Policing Practices and Citizen Services:

During the visit, interns observed practical aspects of policing such as public order management, firearm handling protocols, FIR registration, and station-level service delivery. Interactions at the Police Khidmat Markaz highlighted efficient, time-bound, and inclusive services, including facilities for women, children, minorities, and transgender individuals. These engagements demonstrated a clear shift toward accessibility, professionalism, and improved public perception at the grassroots level.

Technology, Governance, and Learning Outcomes:

Briefings at the Punjab Safe Cities Authority and the DIG Operations Office emphasized the role of digital governance, AI-driven surveillance, and real-time data analysis in modern policing. Interns also observed an open court session, reinforcing accountability and responsive governance. Overall, the visit significantly reshaped interns' understanding of policing by showcasing a technology-enabled, service-oriented, and people-centric law enforcement model, making it a concise yet impactful learning experience.

NIPP 5TH INTERNSHIP BATCH

Visit to Governor House Lahore and Meeting with Governor



Interns of the National Institute of Public Policy (NIPP), accompanied by Dean, Dr. Naveed Elahi and Research Associate, Ms. Ishrat Akhtar, visited the Governor House Lahore as part of their experiential learning activities. The Governor House, a site of historical and administrative significance, has been a center of provincial governance since the colonial era and continues to play a key role in Pakistan's constitutional framework. The visit provided interns with an opportunity to observe its institutional setup and understand its relevance in provincial administration.

Meeting with the Governor of Punjab:

A highlight of the visit was an interactive session with the Governor of Punjab, who shared insights on leadership, governance challenges, and public service ethics. He emphasized integrity, accountability, and the importance of citizen-oriented policymaking. Interns engaged in a discussion, asking questions on governance, youth participation, and policy implementation, receiving detailed responses and practical guidance from the Governor.

Learning Outcomes:

The visit offered interns valuable exposure to constitutional governance and institutional processes, linking theoretical knowledge with practical understanding. It enhanced their awareness of provincial administration, leadership responsibilities, and the historical context of governance in Pakistan, inspiring them to approach public service with integrity, responsibility, and commitment to national development.

City 42 : Observing real-time news dissemination



The visit to City 42, Lahore's first city-centric news channel proved to be a highly informative and insightful experience. A group of 18 interns, with Research Associate, Ms. Ishrat from the National School of Public Policy (NSPP), reached the channel at 11:00am on 20 January 2026. The channel has an established focus in covering local news making it a pioneer of city based journalism in Pakistan. The participants had an entire tour of the facilities of the channel during the visit including newsroom, ticker section and studios. The staff explained how the entire news production process which includes news packages preparation, up-to-date tickers, and technical input and output. Another topic that was discussed was how reporters gather, cross-check and verify information and do all of that with severe time limitations. One of the main talks was the external pressures of the private media organizations, especially the difficulty of being objective in journalism in the face of social and political forces.

Role of Social Media and Journalism:

In addition, the staff explained the growing role of social media in countering misinformation and disinformation. They highlighted how digital platforms are used for real-time fact-checking, source verification, audience engagement and rapid correction of false narratives, while also acknowledging the risks posed by unchecked viral content. The visit concluded with reflections on the fast-paced and evolving nature of journalism and the critical responsibility of media. They emphasized the real time fact-checking and source-checking with the help of digital platforms the involvement of the audience and quick corrections of fake stories and the dangers of uncontrolled viral content. The visit was completed by the reflection on the busy and dynamic character of journalism and the pivotal role of the media.

NIPP 5TH INTERNSHIP BATCH

Mera Apna School: Kids Happy Home



The visit to Mera Apna School – Kids Happy Home, located in Heir Village near Bedian Road, Lahore, provided interns of the National Institute of Public Policy (NIPP) with a comprehensive understanding of how inclusive education initiatives operate at the grassroots level. This visit served as a vital bridge between classroom-based theoretical frameworks of public policy and their practical implementation in marginalized communities. Interns observed how education can be transformed into a powerful instrument of social mobility and national development when guided by purpose-driven leadership and efficient use of resources. The experience reinforced the idea that addressing Pakistan’s low literacy rate requires not only sound policies but also committed institutional and individual action.

School Infrastructure and Learning Environment:

Upon arrival, interns were welcomed into a warm, vibrant, and well-organized school environment. The infrastructure of the school reflected thoughtful planning despite limited resources, demonstrating how quality education can be delivered through discipline, care, and dedication. Classrooms were observed to be lively and engaging, with students displaying curiosity, confidence, and enthusiasm for learning. One of the most striking observations was the visible sense of hope and joy among the children, highlighting the transformative impact that access to education can have on young minds. The school atmosphere stood as a clear example of how safe and nurturing educational spaces contribute to holistic child development.

Interaction with Students and Community Engagement:

Interns spent time interacting directly with students in their classrooms and learning spaces, creating meaningful engagement beyond observation alone. Simple gestures such as distributing chocolates served as encouragement and strengthened the bond between interns and students. A particularly memorable moment was gathering in the main hall to collectively sing Milli Nagmas, fostering a shared sense of patriotism and unity. This interaction allowed interns to connect emotionally with the children and better understand the human dimension of educational policy. The visit concluded with a group photograph, capturing a moment of shared happiness and leaving interns with a deep sense of fulfillment and social empathy.

Leadership, Vision, and Educational Impact:

Kids Happy Home is a welfare center for marginalized children in the suburbs of Lahore, operated by the Hameed Naeema (HN) Elahi Trust. Under this initiative, Mera Apna School has been established to provide free education, along with books and learning materials, without charging any tuition fees. The project is spearheaded by Dr. Naveed Elahi, Vice President of the HN Elahi Trust and Dean at NIPP, whose active involvement exemplifies leadership beyond institutional boundaries. His commitment demonstrated how senior policymakers and academics can translate policy ideals into tangible social impact. Witnessing their own Dean personally championing such an initiative inspired interns to view public service not merely as administrative responsibility, but as a moral obligation to promote equity, social justice, and inclusive development. The visit reaffirmed the belief that when education is treated as a right rather than a privilege, it becomes a foundational pillar for a literate, equal, and prosperous Pakistan.

NIPP 5TH INTERNSHIP BATCH

Lecture on Central Superior Services (CSS)



An informative and interactive CSS Orientation Session was organized at the National Institute of Public Policy (NIPP) for interns to enhance awareness about the Central Superior Services (CSS) Examination, its evolving nature, and the diverse career opportunities it offers in public service and beyond. The session was conducted by Mr. Mairaj Ariff, Director General, National Institute of Public Administration (NIPA), and Mr. Ahsan Tariq, a CSS qualifier and senior mentor, both of whom shared valuable academic and professional insights to guide aspiring candidates. Mr. Mairaj highlighted the strategic importance of CSS in strengthening governance and state institutions. He discussed the role of civil servants in policy formulation, national security, public administration, and international cooperation, and outlined emerging career pathways in key ministries, regulatory bodies, and UN-affiliated organizations. He encouraged interns to view CSS as a platform for leadership and national service rather than merely an examination. Mr. Ahsan Rana focused on the practical aspects of CSS preparation, including optional subject selection, understanding examination trends, and developing analytical writing skills. The session also highlighted how CSS preparation builds transferable skills such as critical thinking, policy analysis, and effective communication, opening avenues in development organizations, research institutions, and international agencies.

Conclusion:

The session concluded with an engaging question-and-answer segment, addressing interns' concerns regarding preparation strategies, career planning, and alternative pathways. Overall, the session proved to be insightful and motivating, providing interns with clarity and direction to explore CSS as a meaningful career option.

Public Policy Lecture by Dr. Naveed Elahi



On January 13 2026, Dr. Naveed Elahi, Dean of the National Institute of Public Policy (NIPP), delivered an insightful lecture on Public Policy and Governance for the interns. He explained the concept of public policy, its development process, and its importance in decision-making and effective governance. The lecture highlighted how social policies are formulated to address societal challenges and guide government actions, emphasizing their practical relevance in improving administrative efficiency.

Interactive Discussion on Regional Affairs:

The session included an interactive discussion on ongoing developments in Afghanistan and regional security issues. Interns actively asked questions and shared perspectives on diplomacy and international relations. Dr. Elahi provided thoughtful analyses, connecting policy theory to real-world scenarios and encouraging critical thinking.

Learning Outcomes:

The lecture enhanced interns' understanding of governance, policy-making, and global affairs. It promoted active participation, analytical thinking, and the ability to link theoretical knowledge with practical challenges, contributing significantly to their intellectual growth.

NIPP 5TH INTERNSHIP BATCH

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) Training



A comprehensive training session on Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and Basic Life Support (BLS) was held at the National School of Public Policy with the objective of strengthening emergency response capacity among staff members and internees. The session was facilitated by Dr. Asif Mahmood and supervised by Ms. Ishrat Akhtar, ensuring both technical accuracy and effective delivery. All participants attended the session to develop essential life-saving skills and to better understand the importance of immediate action during medical emergencies. Special emphasis was placed on the "golden minutes" following cardiac arrest, heart attack, stroke, or respiratory failure, during which timely intervention can significantly improve survival outcomes. Participants were also guided on ensuring scene safety, self-protection, and conducting rapid initial assessments.

Emergency Response Techniques and First Aid:

The training provided detailed instruction on core CPR principles, including identifying indications for CPR, performing correct chest compressions, and understanding when CPR should be continued or discontinued. The importance of early activation of emergency services (1122 / 115) and clear communication with emergency responders was highlighted. In addition to CPR, the session covered basic first aid responses to a wide range of emergencies, including choking, heart attacks, strokes, epileptic seizures, hypoglycemia, bleeding, burns, poisoning, near drowning, hypothermia, shock, and spinal or head injuries. Participants were trained to recognize warning signs, provide immediate and appropriate first aid, avoid harmful practices, and ensure timely referral to medical facilities.

Ethical Considerations and Conclusion:

Ethical responsibility, calm and informed decision-making, and the importance of public awareness in emergency preparedness were emphasized throughout the session. The training reinforced that CPR and BLS skills are not limited to healthcare professionals but are essential competencies for responsible citizens. The session concluded with a vote of thanks by Dean Dr. Naveed Elahi, who appreciated the facilitator's efforts and reaffirmed the institution's commitment to enhancing emergency preparedness. He also announced plans to install a CPR machine in the near future, underscoring NSPP's dedication to structured emergency response education and public safety.

Quaid-e-Azam Day Event



Quaid-e-Azam Day was celebrated at the National Institute of Public Policy (NIPP) on 26 December 2025 with active participation from interns, faculty members, and Dean Dr. Naveed Elahi. The event began with a short documentary on Muhammad Ali Jinnah's life, highlighting his leadership, struggles, and contributions to the nation. An intern, Khabeer Ul Tanwir, delivered a speech reflecting on Jinnah's attributes such as determination, integrity, and vision, while another intern, Darisha Ejaz, recited a couplet that captured his enduring legacy and inspired attendees.

Dean's Reflections:

Dr. Naveed Elahi emphasized upon Jinnah's visionary leader who had clarity of purpose and pragmatic policies. He encouraged interns to emulate Jinnah's dedication, integrity, and sense of responsibility, highlighting the importance of these values in public service and nation-building.

Inspiring Interns to Serve the Nation:

The event motivated interns to reflect on their roles as future leaders and public servants. Through the discussions and collective celebration, they were inspired to uphold values of honesty, commitment, and service, reinforcing a sense of responsibility toward contributing positively to the country. Celebration was efficiently managed by the interns, Barraaq Sohail and Muhammad Usman, ensuring smooth proceedings and full engagement of participants. The event concluded with a cake-cutting ceremony, symbolizing collective respect and admiration for the Father of the Nation, leaving a lasting impression of patriotic enthusiasm among interns and faculty alike.

LIST OF ACTIVITIES

1 Reading circle on book titled: “Governing the Ungovernable”

A reading circle on “Governing the Ungovernable” was conducted as part of the internship activities to introduce interns to key governance and state capacity challenges. The activity helped interns strengthen their critical thinking and analytical skills. It also helped them connect governance theory with practical policy challenges.

2 Lecture on research methodology by Dr Ali Abbas

A lecture on research methodology was arranged at the National Institute of Public Policy (NIPP) and delivered by Dr. Ali Abbas. The learning outcomes of the lectures included the use of various research tools, data analysis, and writing strong academic and policy papers. The two-hour-long research methodology lecture provided students with an insightful understanding of how to conduct quality research, how to differentiate between a policy paper and an academic paper, and what methods and tools are to be used to conduct research.

3 Policy making competition

The Policy making competition was executed by the intern Kamran Nazim who had participated in a similar activity in the United States. Divided into 4 groups, the interns focused on developing a succinct policy brief on ‘Controlling student dropout at the primary school level in Punjab’. The highlight of the activity was the diverse recommendations given by each group. One member per group presented the work which was evaluated by the most senior intern, Khabeer ul Tanwir, who gave each group feedback.

4 Public awareness poster making competition

Amongst one of the most engaging activities of the internship, this activity enabled interns to turn policy understanding into creative public communication. All the interns designed posters on socially relevant issues such as air pollution, e-transport, polio awareness, and interfaith harmony. The activity strengthened their understanding of public awareness as a policy tool while fostering creativity, teamwork, and civic responsibility, making it a memorable learning experience.

5 Policy brief 1.0

The policy paper activity conducted by the NIPP as part of the 5th Internship provided a structured and practical approach for interns to analyze real-world policy issues in Pakistan. The activity was well-designed, emphasizing both research rigour and critical thinking, and allowed interns to engage with various policy domains such as public sector reform, climate change, healthcare, education, taxation, and security.

6 Policy brief 2.0

The Policy Brief 2.0 was conducted as an interactive group activity in which participants were divided into four groups, wherein each group was assigned a different national policy topic: Pakistan AI Policy, National Food Security Policy 2018, National Education Policy Development Framework 2024, and the New Energy Vehicle Policy 2025–2030. Each group critically analyzed the objectives, key provisions, and implementation challenges of their respective policy. Based on this analysis, the groups presented practical and policy-relevant recommendations aimed at improving effectiveness, inclusivity, and long-term impact.

7 Individual presentations on current issues

The interns at NIPP delivered analytical presentations on key public policy challenges, including education, transport, youth mental health, child labor, and digital governance. Using evidence-based research and global best practices, they offered practical policy recommendations, linking local challenges with international solutions and deepening understanding of sustainable social change.

8 Policy Paper Research

The key and final activity of the interns is to conduct research on key policy themes, including climate change, e-governance, information management, and maritime security etc, under the mentorship of their assigned research associates. The activity allows interns to engage in evidence-based analysis, synthesize data, and develop actionable recommendations. It also provides practical exposure to the research process, enhances analytical and critical thinking skills, and deepens understanding of contemporary policy challenges.

9 Movie screening of “13 Days”

Interns of the National Institute of Public Policy attended a screening of 13 Days, depicting the Cuban Missile Crisis and high-pressure decision-making. Curated by the intern, Abdul Wakeel, the session highlighted the importance of considering multiple perspectives, clear communication, patience, and strategic thinking—offering practical lessons for leadership and critical decision-making in challenging situations.

LIST OF ACTIVITIES

10 SNGPL/EDI Report Writing

During their internship, NIPP interns prepared detailed reports on Executive Development Institute’s (EDI), an integral unit of National School of Public Policy, (NSPP) training sessions for SNGPL executives and SMEs directors. The reports captured key lessons on leadership, decision-making, governance, crisis management, design thinking, and productivity. By documenting these sessions, interns gained practical exposure to organizational training processes, analyzed best practices, and highlighted strategies for effective management and sustainable growth.

11 Publications by Intern

The interns at NSPP was tasked with producing policy-oriented and academic write-ups. As part of this assignment, a letter to the editor titled “Culture of Hate Has Seized Social Media” was published in Pakistan’s most reputable newspaper, Dawn, on 14 January 2024, while an opinion article titled “Learning Becomes a Liability” appeared in The Nation on 14 January 2023.





Editorial Team

**Dr. Naveed Elahi
Naeema Naem
Jahanzeb Waheed
Sadia Pirzada**

Editorial Assistants

**Saffa Amjad
Barrag Sohail
Laiba Tanveer**

National School of Public Policy
87- Shahrah e Quaid e Azam, Lahore.

Email: polycypulse.nipp@nspp.gov.pk