



Weekly

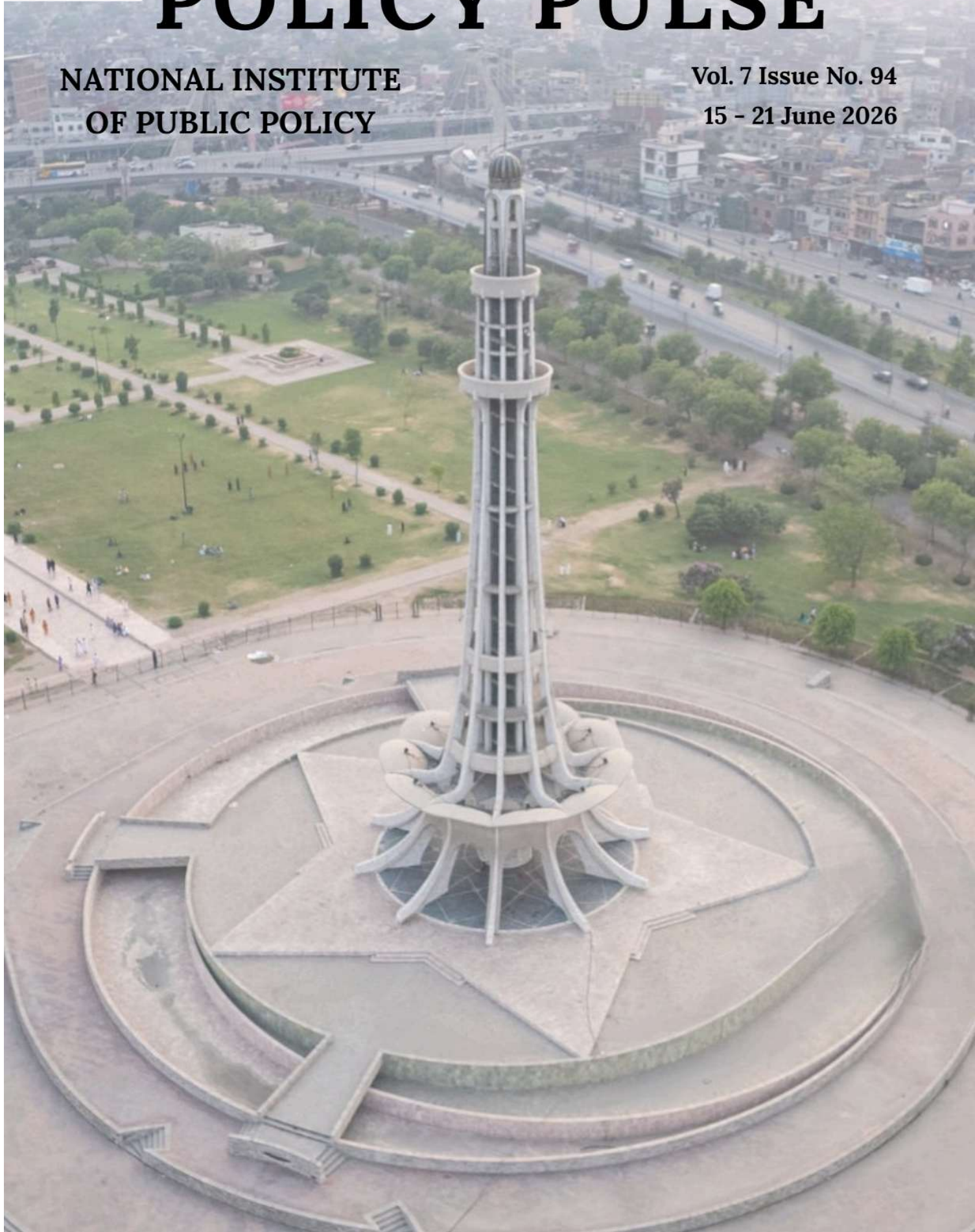


POLICY PULSE

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OVERVIEW

This week's *Policy Pulse* highlights developments across governance, public service delivery, public health, and international diplomacy, reflecting Pakistan's efforts to strengthen institutional capacity amid growing developmental and geopolitical challenges. The central theme is resilience improving governance, enhancing service delivery, and strengthening strategic preparedness in response to economic, environmental, and security pressures.

In governance, the federal government's 100MW solarisation project in Gilgit-Baltistan reflects efforts to expand renewable energy in remote regions. Real-time digital oversight of ministries and development projects signals a push for greater accountability and efficiency. Punjab's reforms in digital licensing, data integration, housing regulation, and legal modernisation further highlight a shift toward technology-driven governance. Meanwhile, Pakistan's emphasis on regional peace and Sindh's Rs210.5 billion allocation for policing and law-enforcement modernisation underscore efforts to strengthen public order.

Socio-economic and public service developments highlighted persistent structural challenges. UN findings that Pakistan's per capita water availability has fallen by nearly 80 per cent since independence underscore growing water security concerns affecting agriculture, health, and food security. Rawalpindi's deployment of QR panic buttons and GPS-enabled transport safety systems reflects increasing reliance on digital tools to improve citizen safety. Meanwhile, the ASER 2025 report revealed infrastructure gaps between government and private schools, highlighting persistent inequalities in education access.

Internationally, growing support for restricting social media access for children under 16 reflected rising concerns over online safety and youth well-being. The WOMAN-2 study identifying anaemia as a leading cause of maternal mortality highlighted critical public health challenges. Meanwhile, Pakistan's facilitation of a US-Iran peace agreement and discussions on a proposed 14-point framework underscored its expanding role in regional diplomacy and conflict mediation ,
The Sun may not engulf Earth after all, scientists say. Global monitor puts Bosnia on 'grey list', One-third of France under red heat alert, and Meloni hits back as Trump escalates G7 photo spat.

The policy nuggets reinforce priorities of governance modernisation, education reform, water security, digital safety, public health, and proactive diplomacy.

Overall, the week underscores the importance of institutional reform, service delivery improvements, and strategic engagement in addressing Pakistan's evolving domestic and international challenges.



The central theme is resilience improving governance, enhancing service delivery, and strengthening strategic preparedness in response to economic, environmental, and security pressures.

GOVERNANCE

1 00MW solarisation of GB govt buildings, households under way, PM informed



The federal government's 100MW solarisation project in Gilgit-Baltistan aims to provide affordable and sustainable energy by converting government buildings and households to solar power. The project, fully financed by the federal government, is expected to be completed by December 2026, with the Baltistan Division component targeted for October 2026.

Analysis:

The initiative reflects Pakistan's efforts toward renewable energy expansion, energy security, and sustainable development, particularly in remote regions like GB. However, ensuring transparent implementation, timely completion, and effective maintenance will be essential for achieving long-term benefits for local communities.

Way Forward:

- Strengthen project monitoring mechanisms through independent audits and third-party evaluations to ensure transparency and efficient use of resources.
- Develop local capacity and maintenance systems by training local technicians to ensure the sustainability and long-term operation of solar infrastructure.
- Expand renewable energy initiatives beyond GB by promoting similar solar projects in other energy-deficient regions of Pakistan to improve national energy security.

P M Shehbaz Decides to Transform Govt's Monitoring Mechanism Through Real-Time Digital Oversight



On June 17–18, 2026, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif directed the transformation of the government's monitoring system into a real-time digital oversight mechanism. He emphasised the use of modern technology to track the performance of ministries and provincial projects, particularly development schemes, with the aim of reducing delays and improving accountability. The move was announced during high-level meetings on governance reforms.

Analysis:

This initiative shows the government's push towards technology-driven governance and better project monitoring ahead of the new fiscal year. However, similar past efforts have struggled due to bureaucratic resistance, lack of capacity, and inconsistent implementation across federal and provincial levels.

Way Forward:

- Fully integrate digital dashboards with geo-tagging for all major PSDP projects.
- Ensure regular public reporting on progress and bottlenecks.
- Build capacity of officials to effectively use the new monitoring tools.

GOVERNANCE

Pakistan's water availability falls 80pc since independence: UN



The UN reports highlight that Pakistan's per capita water availability has declined by nearly 80% since independence, with over half of the population lacking access to safely managed drinking water. The country faces increasing water stress due to climate change, population growth, weak sanitation systems, and insufficient investment in the water sector.

Analysis:

Pakistan's declining water availability represents a major national development and human security challenge, affecting agriculture, public health, and food security. Addressing this crisis requires sustainable water management, improved infrastructure, and long-term policy planning.

Way Forward:

- Strengthen water conservation and management by investing in storage facilities, modern irrigation systems, and reducing water wastage.
- Improve access to clean water and sanitation through targeted public infrastructure projects, especially in rural and underserved communities.
- Develop climate-resilient water policies by integrating climate adaptation strategies, improving governance, and encouraging efficient water use.

Rawalpindi to install QR panic buttons in public transport



Rawalpindi Traffic Police has launched a QR panic button and GPS tracking system in public transport to improve passenger safety and emergency response. The system will allow real-time location sharing and quick police assistance, especially for women, students, and daily commuters.

Analysis:

The initiative reflects Pakistan's shift toward smart policing and digital safety solutions in public transport. If effectively implemented, it can reduce response time in emergencies, improve accountability, and enhance public trust in transport security systems.

Way Forward:

- Nationwide expansion of QR panic systems should be ensured to all major cities for uniform passenger safety standards.
- Strong monitoring and maintenance mechanisms must be developed to ensure devices remain functional and are not misused or neglected.
- Public awareness campaigns should be launched to educate citizens, especially women and students, on how to effectively use emergency safety tools.

GOVERNANCE

G

ovt schools lag behind private sector in key facilities: report



The ASER Pakistan 2025 report shows that government schools lag significantly behind private schools in basic infrastructure, including electricity, sanitation, digital access, and learning facilities. These gaps continue to affect the quality of education and highlight persistent inequalities in Pakistan's education system.

Analysis:

The findings indicate systemic underinvestment and governance challenges in public education, leading to weaker learning environments compared to the private sector. Infrastructure inequality is directly contributing to uneven educational outcomes and long-term human development gaps.

Way Forward:

- Increase public investment in school infrastructure to ensure electricity, clean water, sanitation, and basic facilities in all government schools.
- Expand digital and learning resources by providing computer labs, internet access, and libraries in public schools, especially in rural areas.
- Strengthen education governance and monitoring systems to ensure accountability, reduce disparities, and improve the quality of public schooling nationwide.

P

unjab cabinet panel reviews key governance reforms



The Punjab Cabinet Standing Committee reviewed multiple governance and institutional reform proposals aimed at improving public service delivery, regulatory efficiency, and inter-departmental coordination. Key initiatives included digital arms licensing systems, climate and agriculture data integration, housing regulation reforms, and legal and prosecution sector modernization.

Analysis:

The reforms reflect Punjab's shift toward digital governance and evidence-based policymaking to enhance efficiency and transparency. However, effective implementation and inter-departmental coordination remain critical challenges for translating policy reforms into real administrative improvements.

Way Forward:

- Ensure effective implementation and monitoring mechanisms to translate governance reforms into measurable improvements in public service delivery.
- Strengthen digital integration across departments to improve data sharing, transparency, and evidence-based decision-making.
- Build institutional capacity through training and accountability reforms to support sustainable and efficient governance at the provincial level.

SECURITY AND LAW & ORDER

Pakistan's broader vision, sincerity averted a major war



The article highlights Pakistan's security leadership's claims regarding the country's diplomatic efforts, regional peace initiatives, counterterrorism operations, and strategic response to security challenges. It focuses on Pakistan's role in regional stability, water security concerns, Kashmir policy, and internal security measures.

Analysis:

The article reflects Pakistan's broader security and foreign policy priorities, emphasizing diplomacy, defence preparedness, and national interests. However, maintaining regional peace requires continued diplomatic engagement, effective governance, economic development, and transparent security policies.

Way Forward:

- Strengthen diplomatic engagement with neighboring countries and regional partners to reduce tensions and promote long-term peace and stability.
- Improve internal security and governance mechanisms through stronger law enforcement, counterterrorism strategies, and addressing socio-economic factors behind instability.
- Enhance water and economic security by investing in water management, infrastructure development, and sustainable policies to protect national interests.

Rs210.5bn Allocated for Law and Order in Sindh Budget



On June 18, 2026, the Sindh government allocated Rs210.573 billion for law and order, policing, security, prisons, and prosecution in the provincial budget for FY2026-27. A significant portion is earmarked for police modernisation and Karachi's security challenges, where street crime and targeted incidents remain major concerns.

Analysis:

The substantial allocation reflects the provincial government's priority on improving law and order, especially in urban centres like Karachi. While increased funding is welcome, past experience shows that money alone is not enough without institutional reforms, better coordination, and addressing root causes such as unemployment and political interference.

Way Forward:

- Focus on modernising police training, intelligence, and technology use.
- Improve coordination between Sindh Police, Rangers, and federal agencies.
- Introduce performance-based accountability for law enforcement outcomes.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

G lobal push gathers pace for under-16 social media ban



Several countries, including the UK, Australia, Malaysia, France, and others, are introducing restrictions or bans on social media use for children under 16 to protect young users from online harms. These measures focus on age verification, digital safety, and reducing exposure to harmful content.

Analysis:

The global trend reflects growing concerns about children's online privacy, mental well-being, and digital security. However, implementing such bans requires balancing child protection with freedom of expression, technological access, and effective regulation of social media companies.

Way Forward:

- Pakistan should introduce stronger child online protection laws by developing age verification mechanisms and regulating harmful content to ensure a safer digital environment for children.
- Pakistan should launch nationwide digital literacy programs in schools and communities to educate children, parents, and teachers about responsible social media use, online privacy, and cyber safety.
- Pakistan should collaborate with social media companies to improve content monitoring, reporting systems, and child protection measures while ensuring a balance between online safety and digital freedom.

A naemia is leading cause of maternal deaths worldwide, study finds



A global WOMAN-2 study finds that anaemia, not postpartum haemorrhage, is a major underlying cause of maternal deaths, especially in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. In Pakistan, where up to 70% of pregnant women are anaemic, the condition significantly increases risks of maternal death, stillbirths, and childbirth complications.

Analysis :

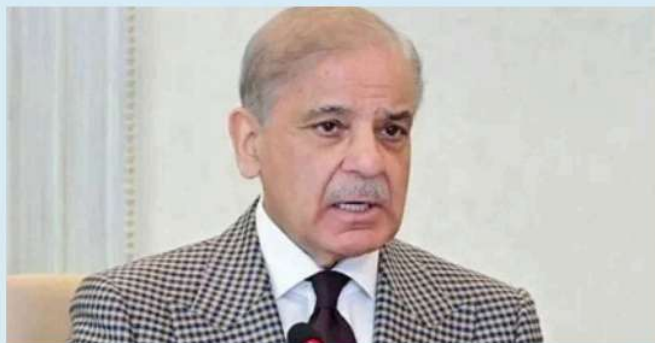
The findings highlight a serious maternal health crisis in Pakistan, showing that anaemia is a hidden but critical driver of maternal mortality. It exposes gaps in nutrition, sanitation, and prenatal care, indicating that current maternal health strategies need urgent revision.

Way Forward:

- Make anaemia screening mandatory during pregnancy at all public and private health facilities with early treatment protocols.
- Strengthen nutrition and iron supplementation programs targeting adolescent girls, pregnant women, and rural populations to prevent long-term deficiency.
- Improve water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) systems to reduce worm infections and other preventable causes of anaemia, especially in underserved areas.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Sun of peace finally rises:
PM



Pakistan's leadership announced a mediated US–Iran peace agreement, portraying it as a major diplomatic success that ended hostilities and enhanced regional stability. The deal was widely welcomed internationally, with Pakistan credited for facilitating dialogue and reducing geopolitical tensions in the Middle East.

Analysis

The report highlights Pakistan's attempt to project itself as a key diplomatic mediator on the global stage, strengthening its soft power narrative. However, the emphasis on high-level claims and political credit also reflects strategic messaging aimed at domestic legitimacy and international recognition.

Way Forward

- Institutionalize diplomatic mediation capacity through a dedicated conflict-resolution and peace diplomacy unit in the Foreign Office.
- Strengthen multilateral engagement (UN, OIC, SCO) to ensure Pakistan's mediation role is backed by consistent international credibility.
- Balance diplomatic gains with domestic economic and governance reforms so foreign policy successes translate into internal stability and public benefit.

What we know about
'14point deal' so far?



A proposed 14-point US–Iran peace framework, reportedly mediated by Pakistan and Qatar, outlines phased de-escalation, sanctions relief, asset unfreezing, and technical talks on Iran's nuclear programme. It also includes contentious elements like maritime fees in the Strait of Hormuz and a 60-day negotiation window for final agreements.

Analysis

The draft reflects a pragmatic but fragile ceasefire architecture, combining economic incentives with strategic concessions to reduce immediate conflict. However, unresolved issues especially nuclear enrichment, sanctions enforcement, and Hormuz control indicate that the deal is still highly conditional and politically sensitive.

Way Forward

- Maintain neutral, facilitative diplomacy to ensure credibility as a mediator rather than a stakeholder in disputes.
- Advocate for phased verification mechanisms under UN or multilateral supervision to sustain compliance and prevent breakdown of talks.
- Leverage mediation success to strengthen Pakistan's long-term diplomatic role in regional energy security and conflict resolution frameworks.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

The Sun may not engulf Earth after all, scientists say



A new scientific study suggests that Earth may avoid being engulfed by the Sun when it enters its red giant phase about five billion years from now. Improved models indicate that the Sun's mass loss could push Earth into a wider orbit, allowing it to escape a fate previously considered likely, although Mercury and Venus are still expected to be swallowed.

Analysis:

The findings demonstrate how advances in astrophysical modelling can challenge long-held scientific assumptions and improve understanding of stellar evolution. While the study has no immediate practical implications for humanity, it highlights the dynamic nature of scientific inquiry and the importance of continuously refining theoretical models with new data and methods.

Way Forward:

- Promote investment in space science and astronomy research to strengthen understanding of planetary systems, stellar evolution, and long-term cosmic phenomena.
- Enhance international scientific collaboration by enabling Pakistani universities and research institutions to participate in global astrophysics and space exploration initiatives.
- Expand STEM education and public science awareness programmes to encourage scientific literacy, inspire future researchers, and build national capacity in emerging scientific fields.

Global monitor puts Bosnia on 'grey list'



The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has placed Bosnia and Herzegovina on its grey list due to deficiencies in its anti-money laundering (AML) and counter-terrorism financing (CTF) framework. While Bosnia has made some progress since 2024, it must address shortcomings in nine key areas to strengthen its compliance with international standards.

Analysis:

The grey-listing underscores the growing importance of robust AML/CFT regimes in maintaining international financial credibility and investor confidence. The case demonstrates that even countries showing progress can face increased scrutiny if reforms are not effectively implemented and institutional weaknesses persist.

Way Forward:

- Sustain FATF compliance beyond evaluations by continuously strengthening AML/CFT institutions, enforcement mechanisms, and regulatory oversight rather than relying on periodic corrective measures.
- Enhance inter-agency coordination and data-sharing among financial regulators, law enforcement agencies, and intelligence institutions to detect and disrupt illicit financial flows more effectively.
- Regularly assess emerging financial risks, including virtual assets, cyber-enabled financial crimes, and cross-border transactions, to ensure Pakistan remains aligned with evolving FATF standards and international best practices.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

One-third of France under red heat alert



France placed more than one-third of the country under a red heatwave alert, affecting approximately 26 million people as temperatures reached dangerous levels. Authorities imposed restrictions, including a ban on public alcohol consumption in affected regions, while transport services and educational activities faced disruptions.

Analysis:

The heatwave highlights the growing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events linked to climate change, placing significant pressure on public health systems, infrastructure, and emergency services. France's preventive measures demonstrate the increasing need for proactive governance and climate adaptation strategies to protect vulnerable populations.

Way Forward:

- Develop comprehensive heatwave action plans at national and provincial levels, including early warning systems, cooling centres, and public awareness campaigns to reduce heat-related illnesses and deaths.
- Strengthen climate-resilient urban planning through increased green spaces, heat-resistant infrastructure, and improved water management to mitigate the urban heat island effect.
- Enhance coordination between meteorological, health, and disaster management agencies to ensure timely emergency responses and protect vulnerable groups during extreme weather events.

Meloni hits back as Trump escalates G7 photo spat



A public diplomatic dispute emerged between Giorgia Meloni and Donald Trump after Trump claimed Meloni repeatedly sought photographs with him during the G7 summit. Meloni strongly rejected the allegations, accusing Trump of making "senseless" attacks and defending Italy's policies regarding US military facilities.

Analysis:

The episode highlights how personal diplomacy and political rhetoric can strain relations even between ideologically aligned leaders. The dispute also reflects broader transatlantic tensions over burden-sharing, security cooperation, and differing approaches to international crises, potentially complicating coordination among Western allies.

Way Forward:

- Maintain a balanced and pragmatic foreign policy by engaging constructively with both the United States and European partners while avoiding involvement in personal or partisan disputes among major powers.
- Monitor shifts in transatlantic relations to assess potential implications for global security, trade, NATO dynamics, and broader geopolitical alignments that may affect Pakistan's strategic environment.
- Strengthen diplomatic diversification by expanding economic, political, and technological partnerships with multiple international actors to reduce vulnerability to fluctuations in great-power relations.

POLICY NUGGETS

1 Only half of FY26 development budget spent in 11 months

Impact: Delays infrastructure projects, public service delivery, and economic growth while reducing the effectiveness of budget allocations.

Recommendation: Strengthen project planning, procurement processes, and quarterly expenditure monitoring to improve development spending efficiency. *“A budget is not just an accounting document; it is a reflection of a nation's priorities.”* – Paul O'Neill

4 Fafen calls for strengthening Balochistan's Right to Information law

Impact: Improves public accountability, reduces corruption risks, and enhances citizen trust in government institutions.

Recommendation: Amend RTI legislation to ensure timely disclosure of public information and stronger enforcement mechanisms. *“Information is the currency of democracy.”* – Thomas Jefferson

7 SBP Holds Policy Rate Steady Amid Conflict-Driven Inflation

Impact: Rising geopolitical tensions are sustaining inflationary pressures and complicating monetary policy management.

Recommendation: Maintain prudent monetary policy while strengthening measures to cushion external price shocks. *“Inflation is always and everywhere a monetary phenomenon.”* – Milton Friedman

2 Parliamentary panel raises concerns over export decline

Impact: Widens the trade deficit, weakens foreign exchange reserves, and limits industrial growth and job creation.

Recommendation: Accelerate export diversification, improve trade facilitation, and support value-added manufacturing sectors.

“Exports are a country's economic vote of confidence from the rest of the world.” – Pascal Lamy

5 Karachi road fatalities decline by 30% following e-ticketing enforcement

Impact: Demonstrates how technology can improve road safety and reduce accident-related deaths.

Recommendation: Expand intelligent traffic management systems and data-driven enforcement to other major cities.

“What gets measured gets managed.” – Peter Drucker

8 Ceasefire Brings Renewed Hope for Regional Stability

Impact: The ceasefire reduces immediate conflict risks and creates space for diplomatic engagement.

Recommendation: Institutionalise dialogue mechanisms to convert temporary calm into lasting peace.

“True peace is not merely the absence of tension; it is the presence of justice.” – Martin Luther King Jr.

3 Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal and NUTECH partner for women's skills training

Impact: Increases labour force participation, household incomes, and economic inclusion.

Recommendation: Align training programmes with market demand and facilitate industry linkages for job placement.

“When women are empowered through skills and opportunity, economies grow.” – Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala

6 UK announces additional £8 million to support anti-illegal migration efforts in Pakistan

Impact: Enhanced cooperation may strengthen border management, curb human smuggling networks, and improve migration governance.

Recommendation: Pair enforcement measures with expanded legal migration pathways and overseas employment opportunities.

“Migration should be a choice, not a necessity.” – António Guterres

9 UK Plans Social Media Ban for Under-16s

Impact: Growing concerns over youth mental health and online safety are driving stricter digital regulations.

Recommendation: Strengthen age-verification systems and digital literacy programmes to protect young users.

“We shape our tools, and thereafter our tools shape us.” – Marshall McLuhan

Reader's Insights

Reducing reliance on imported fuel through greater adoption of solar energy and supportive net-metering policies can help address inflationary pressures and enhance Pakistan's energy resilience.

by Rehan Sayeed

NIPP Knowledge and Policy Discourse

NIPP webinar calls for inclusive, evidence-based approach to transgender and intersex rights

Summary

NIPP convened a webinar on “Mainstreaming Transgender/Intersex Persons in Our Society: Is the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2018 Enough?” bringing together legal experts, medical practitioners, religious scholars, activists, and policy professionals. Participants highlighted implementation gaps in the 2018 Act and emphasized improved access to healthcare, identity documents, education, and employment.

Analysis

The discussion underscored that the principal challenge lies in implementation, social stigma, and conceptual ambiguity rather than legislative absence. It reinforced the importance of inclusive, evidence-based policymaking and translating legal protections into meaningful outcomes.

Way Forward

- Strengthen institutional capacity to implement existing protections effectively.
- Expand access to identity, healthcare, education, and employment services.
- Promote awareness and stakeholder engagement to reduce stigma.
- NIPP roundtable advocates a preventive framework for child protection

NIPP’s roundtable on “Child Abuse and Neglect in Pakistan”

Summary

NIPP’s roundtable on “Child Abuse and Neglect in Pakistan” brought together experts from law enforcement, child protection institutions, academia, and civil society. Participants identified weak implementation, fragmented institutions, and inadequate mental health support as key challenges.

Analysis

The discussion emphasized prevention, family support, and stronger institutional coordination, framing child protection as both a governance and human development imperative.

Way Forward

- Establish a national coordinating mechanism for child protection.
- Expand counselling and awareness programmes.
- Strengthen investigations, data systems, and inter-agency coordination.



Editorial Team

Dr. Naveed Elahi
Naeema Naeem
Jahanzeb Waheed

Editorial Assistants

Saffa Amjad
Arhum Kammran Shah
Laiba Tanveer
Abdul Wakeel

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

Email: polycypulse.nipp@nspp.gov.pk

