

Roundtable Discussion Series



The Indus Waters Dilemma: War, Woes and the Way Forward



National Institute of Public Policy

Report on Roundtable Discussion

The Indus Waters Dilemma: War, Woes and the Way Forward

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National Institute of Public Policy

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Rector's Message



The National School of Public Policy (NSPP), through its National Institute of Public Policy (NIPP), continues to uphold its mandate as the premier national institution dedicated to fostering research-based discourse on issues of critical importance to Pakistan. The recent Roundtable Discussion on “The Indus Waters Dilemma: War, Woes and the Way Forward” reflects our enduring commitment to provide a forum where the complexities of policy, security, law, and governance are examined in a holistic and constructive manner.

The suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) by India has brought into sharp focus the urgency of water security for Pakistan. At a time when climate change, demographic pressures, and geopolitical tensions converge, the weaponization of water presents a multidimensional challenge - legal, diplomatic, technical, and strategic. Pakistan, as a lower riparian state, must be prepared not only to safeguard its rights under international law but also to strengthen its domestic water governance and institutional capacity.

This dialogue brought together eminent experts and practitioners from diverse fields who deliberated on the far-reaching consequences of India's actions and explored viable policy, legal, and diplomatic responses. The discussions highlighted the importance of enhancing our water infrastructure, pursuing legal remedies under the treaty framework, broadening international diplomatic outreach, and integrating sustainable water management practices at home.

Way forward, this report aims to guide federal and provincial policymakers, legal experts, and civil society stakeholders. It underscores the need for a coherent, evidence-based, and forward-looking water security strategy - one that merges diplomacy with institutional competence and climate resilience.

It is my earnest hope that the insights gathered herein will serve as a catalyst for concrete policy action and enable Pakistan to navigate this critical challenge with wisdom, unity, and

Dr. Ijaz Munir

Foreword by Dean NIPP

The threats and challenges posed to Pakistan by India's desire and design to weaponize water in the wake of the recent face-off between the two neighbours have unleashed a spate of discussions at the government level, in the media, and at many other forums. As the federal government's think tank on public policy, the National Institute of Public Policy (NIPP) considered it necessary to arrange a roundtable discussion to analyse the implications of India's unilateral suspension of the IWT and to reflect on Pakistan's legal, diplomatic, and policy options in response. The session was built on in-depth research and content analysis, offering a timely and policy-relevant forum for strategic deliberation.

It is a well-known fact that following the incident in Pahalgam, Indian Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IOJK) on 22 April, the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, in a knee-jerk reaction, arbitrarily accused Pakistan of the violent act and declared the IWT to be held in abeyance, along with other unreasonable measures. Pakistan outrightly rejected this allegation and immediately offered a third-party investigation into the incident. However, it appears that Modi had a premeditated plan to weaponize water against Pakistan and thus outrightly ignored the offer, choosing instead to escalate the situation into armed conflict.

It is worth mentioning that the IWT was signed between Pakistan and India in 1960, with the World Bank acting as a guarantor, to regulate water management and the division of the Indus River system between the upper and lower riparian states. India has been tinkering with the Treaty for many years, seeking significant modifications that could render the agreement meaningless. The idea of weaponizing water dates back to Modi's first term in 2016, he stated that "water and blood cannot flow together." In August 2024, India formally wrote a letter seeking to modify the IWT and suspend it until changes were implemented. However, the treaty contains no provision for suspension, and both Pakistan and the World Bank rejected the letter. Thus, India's intent to shelve the treaty was evident long before the Pahalgam incident.

In case of a violation of the IWT, Pakistan, as the lower riparian state, fears devastating floods or distressing droughts, which would impact millions of people and severely damage the economy. Modi's decision to hold the treaty in abeyance, followed by the brief but intense war in May 2025 between India and Pakistan, has created a new and dangerous situation where war over water is no longer a distant possibility. Pakistan has clearly stated that any violation of the IWT would be considered an act of war. The recent harsh rhetoric from both nations' leadership does not bode well. The situation is deteriorating.

It is high time to discuss the issue threadbare to anticipate the dangers, formulate strategies to prevent escalation, and be prepared to handle potential crises, whether floods, droughts, or war. NIPP recognized the complexity of the matter, which involves multiple viewpoints and dimensions. It was deemed appropriate to scrutinize the issue

from technical, legal, diplomatic, political, and security angles. Accordingly, NIPP invited a panel of seasoned experts to shed light on these aspects and to formulate actionable recommendations for the Government of Pakistan.

The esteemed panel included Mr. Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Former Foreign Secretary of Pakistan; Maj. Gen. (R) Noel Khokhar, Former Ambassador of Pakistan to Ukraine; Mr. Tahir Basharat Cheema, Former Managing Director, Pakistan Electric Power Company; Dr. Seemi Waheed, Professor of Practice (Water Governance), University of Management and Technology; and Mr. Ahmad Rafay Alam, Environmental Lawyer. They offered valuable insights and candid, concrete analysis. Prior to that, NIPP researchers Mr. Jahanzeb Waheed and Ms. Sadia Pirzada conducted a content analysis of articles on the water issue published in leading dailies of Pakistan during the month following 23 April 2025. The highest concerns highlighted in these articles were: Legal and Treaty Framework, Weaponization of Water, Agriculture and Economic Concerns, Hydro-Diplomacy and Mediation, Public Sentiment and National Identity, Environmental and Climate Risk, Infrastructure and Development.

We were particularly eager to ask Mr. Aizaz Chaudhry what steps Pakistan has taken to garner international support against India's position and how we can convince the world that tampering with the IWT is an act of aggression. Kashmir is already a nuclear flashpoint between the two nations, and now the threat has become even more combustible. Mr. Chaudhry, a seasoned diplomat, stressed the importance of using diplomacy effectively to build international pressure on India and prevent interference with a sensitive issue between upper and lower riparian states. He emphasized engaging key global stakeholders, including the World Bank, the UN, and riparian countries like China, to highlight the strategic and humanitarian risks of undermining the IWT.

Given India's unilateral threat to cut water flow and Pakistan's declaration that such a move would constitute an act of war, Maj. Gen. Noel Khokhar was asked to address this scenario in the broader context of Kashmir a core conflict and nuclear flashpoint. Water and Kashmir are deeply linked. A short, intense war has already occurred over one issue, and war over the other is not far-fetched. Are the political and military leaderships aligned in considering IWT violation an act of war? Maj. Gen. Khokhar, a soldier, diplomat, and academic, examined the issue from all three perspectives. While recommending restraint, he did not rule out kinetic measures if necessary. He noted that India may not stop water flows entirely but could withhold critical hydrological data to disrupt Pakistan's water management something equally damaging. He advised integrating water policy with national security planning. Prioritize climate resilience, early warning systems, and cross-sector coordination to protect Pakistan's water future.

Dr. Seemi Waheed, an expert on water governance, stated that while India currently lacks the capacity to fully block Pakistan's water share, it could build dams in violation of the treaty to pursue this objective. She underscored the need for Pakistan to be prepared for such eventualities.

When discussing the technical aspect of the IWT, it was questioned whether it is time to reexamine the treaty in light of climate change and evolving realities since 1960. For example, climate-induced water scarcity will likely make water disputes more contentious. Mr. Tahir Basharat Cheema emphasized the need for well-planned and robust responses to India's strategic moves.

Regarding legal recourse, it was asked what actions Pakistan has taken following India's unilateral attempt to renege on the treaty. There is no provision in the IWT for suspension. Some argue that China, as the actual upper riparian, could intervene if it does not recognize the IWT or the Kashmir issue as purely bilateral. Mr. Ahmad Rafay Alam offered legal insights on the possibilities and limitations of third-party involvement and the evolving legal interpretation of transboundary water agreements. He recommended enhancing Pakistan's hydrological monitoring, legal readiness, and regional water diplomacy to anticipate, detect, and counteract treaty violations.

It is a perplexing development that only a week after this roundtable while this report was on the anvil the federal minister for Climate Control revealed that India had already tried to stop the waters, which affected seasonal crops. It means that the seed of the next armed clash has already started blooming. When agreements are violated or truces come to an end, greater violence and bad blood take place. As predicted and feared, the chances of getting closer to war over water are more visible and tangible now. The spat of sordid statements has fast turned into a real clash of states. I believe this report will serve as a critical reference for federal and provincial policymakers, legal and water practitioners, civil society actors, and researchers alike. It consolidates evidence-based analysis with the strategic thinking of seasoned experts. The recommendations given in this report and the action plan formulated in this regard have must be adopted in the water policy and integrated into the security policy to grapple with the emerging ominous scenario with a strong and steady approach.

Dr. Naveed Elahi

Team NIPP



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Panelists of the Roundtable Discussion



Maj. Gen. (R) Noel Khokhar, HI(M)
Former Ambassador of Pakistan to Ukraine



Mr. Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry
Former Foreign Secretary of Pakistan



Dr. Seemi Waheed
Professor of Practice (Water Governance),
University of Management and Technology



Mr. Tahir Basharat Cheema
Former MD Pakistan Electric Power Company



Mr. Ahmad Rafay Alam
Environmental Lawyer

Summary of the Proceedings

The NIPP organized a roundtable discussion on “The Indus Waters Dilemma: War, Woes and the Way Forward” on Tuesday, 3rd June, 2025.

The panel comprised leading experts including Maj. Gen. (R) Noel Khokhar, Former Ambassador of Pakistan to Ukraine; Mr. Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Former Foreign Secretary of Pakistan; Dr. Seemi Waheed, Professor of Practice (Water Governance), University of Management and Technology; Mr. Tahir Basharat Cheema, Former Managing Director, Pakistan Electric Power Company; and Mr. Ahmad Rafay Alam, Environmental Lawyer. The session was moderated by Dr. Naveed Elahi, Dean, NIPP. It was attended by Research Associates and Research Fellows of NIPP, including Ms. Bushra Bashir, Dr. Saif Ullah Khalid, Dr. Ali Abbas, Ms. Faryal Maaz, Mr. Jahanzeb Waheed, Dr. Sumreen Khalil, Ms. Sabina Babar, Dr. Muhammad Abdullah, Mr. Sajid Sultan and Ms. Sadia Pirzada.

Dean, Dr. Naveed Elahi, warmly welcomed the panelists and attendees at the roundtable discussion. He opened the session by contextualizing and historicizing Indian belligerency. He noted that India's abeyance of Indus Waters Treaty was weaponization of water and was premediated as evident from Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's previous belligerent rhetoric on the Treaty. As both countries have engaged in military operations and Pakistan has called any attempt to divert or stop the flow of water as an “act of war”, Dean highlighted the urgency of the issue. He noted that this roundtable has been organized to anticipate the dangers, and devise a strategy to tackle, if any, situation of flood, drought, or war occurs.

NIPP's research team comprising Mr. Jahanzeb Waheed and Ms. Sadia Pirzada prepared and presented content analysis of the newspaper articles on the abeyance of the Indus Waters Treaty, highlighting the thematic concerns on the issue ranging from legal, diplomatic, environmental, agricultural and economic aspects and way forward.

The panelists deliberated upon the ramifications that the Indus Waters Treaty's abeyance had on regional stability and hydro-political relations. They discussed the historical, diplomatic, technical, and legal aspects of the treaty, as well as the recourse whether legal, diplomatic, or tactical available to Pakistan. They called for a diplomatic and legal resolution to the matter, including the proposal to renegotiate the treaty.

The panelists also shifted attention toward the domestic aspect of the issue and discussed the internal situation regarding water management. They identified inefficient water governance and policies, unsustainable water consumption patterns, and ill-equipped institutions as key drivers contributing to water scarcity in Pakistan. They underscored the need for international cooperation, regional diplomacy, improved water governance, modernization of infrastructure, and capacity building of institutions for an effective, sustainable, and climate-resilient Pakistan.

NIPP aims to build consensus on actionable strategies emerging from the roundtable for effective policy implementation. Several recommendations gleaned from the discussion have been incorporated into this report.

Road Map of the Roundtable Discussion

Context and Rationale

The National Institute of Public Policy convened a high-level Roundtable Discussion (RTD) in response to a strategic inflection point in South Asia's water politics. Following the Indian Prime Minister's announcement placing the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) in abeyance, Pakistan publicly declared that any such disruption to river flows would be interpreted as an "act of war". This stark language marks an unprecedented escalation in regional hydropolitics, where water a shared and vital resource is increasingly viewed as a tool of coercion, dominance, and political signaling.



"No Water for Pakistan from Indian rivers": Modi

The RTD was convened to address the urgent need to recalibrate Pakistan's strategic response to this evolving threat landscape. Should Pakistan prepare for military retaliation, diplomatic engagement, or legal arbitration? Should the state initiate multilateral diplomacy with other riparian nations such as Nepal and Bangladesh, or engage with neutral actors like the World Bank and United Nations? These are no longer theoretical questions. The war over water if not military in form has already begun in policy, perception, and diplomacy.



Indus Waters Treaty suspension an Act of War: PMO Pakistan

This RTD brought together senior military and civil bureaucrats, former institutional heads, water sector experts, and legal scholars to debate these questions in a rigorous and forward-looking manner. By drawing on structured media content analysis and real-time geopolitical developments, the session sought to establish a shared understanding of the risks, responsibilities, and actionable options for Pakistan. Water is no longer seen merely as a developmental concern but as an existential threat deeply tied to national sovereignty, identity, and long-term security.

Content Analysis: Media Reflections on the Indus Waters Crisis

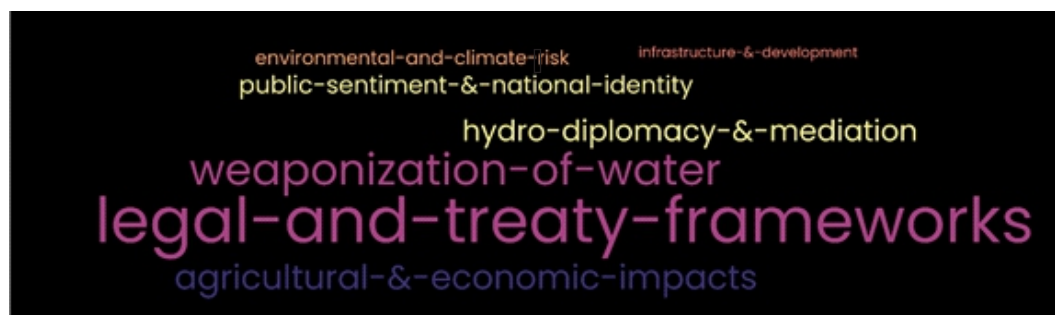
To inform the Roundtable Discussion with grounded, evidence-based insights, a structured content analysis was undertaken by the research team at the National Institute of Public Policy. The goal was to examine how Pakistan's public discourse reflected in the nation's leading English-language newspapers has responded to the Indian decision to place the IWT in abeyance. The analysis aimed to extract dominant narratives, frame policy concerns, and identify recurring themes that signal national anxieties, strategic thinking, and legal positioning.

Sr.	Newspaper	Frequency
1.	Dawn	15
2.	The News	13
3.	The ExpressTribune	7
Total		35

A total of 35 articles were reviewed, published between 24 April and 21 May 2025 in Dawn, The News International, and The Express Tribune. These publications were selected due to their widespread readership, editorial credibility, and representation of mainstream national sentiment. The analysis employed emergent thematic coding, where each paragraph of the articles was treated as a unit of analysis. Researchers identified seven core themes and multiple sub-themes, tracking the frequency of references and framing patterns within the sampled media.

Emergent Themes

The analysis identified seven core themes shaping the national discourse on the Indus Waters Treaty crisis. The most dominant themes were Legal and Treaty Frameworks and Weaponization of Water, which appeared in over two-thirds of the articles. These were



followed by concerns around Agricultural and Economic Implications, Hydro-Diplomacy and Mediation, Public Sentiment and National Identity, Environmental and Climate Risks, and Infrastructure and Development Projects. The frequency of these themes underscores the layered nature of Pakistan's policy concerns, spanning hard security, legal standing, food security, public resilience, and environmental sustainability.

Thematic Insights

The most frequently occurring themes were Legal and Treaty Frameworks and Weaponization of Water, reflecting the dominance of legal anxieties and coercive strategy in national media narratives. Legal questions revolved around the permissibility of India's actions under international law, such as the Vienna Convention and the Indus Waters Treaty itself, with additional concern over whether dispute resolution mechanisms were robust enough to counter unilateralism.

The second dominant theme Weaponization of Water highlighted concerns about India's perceived use of river flow control as a strategic pressure tactic. This theme appeared across articles warning of "hybrid warfare," the undermining of lower riparian rights, and water insecurity as a trigger for broader geopolitical escalation.

Other significant themes included Agricultural and Economic Implications, Hydro-Diplomacy and International Mediation, and Public Sentiment and National Identity. The first category documented fears of crop failure, economic instability, and long-term irrigation crises, especially in Punjab and Sindh. Articles under hydro-diplomacy explored Pakistan's engagement options with the World Bank, neutral expert panels, or friendly nations, while also expressing skepticism about effective outcomes.

Theme	Number of Articles	Percentage (%)
1. Legal and Treaty Frameworks	18	51.4%
2. Weaponization of Water	14	40.0%
3. Agricultural and Economic Concerns	12	34.3%
4. Hydro-Diplomacy and Mediation	11	31.4%
5. Public Sentiment and National Identity	10	28.6%
6. Environmental and Climate Risk	9	25.7%
7. Infrastructure and Development	8	22.9%

The emotional resonance of water with national identity surfaced through narratives of betrayal, resistance, and the framing of rivers as symbolic lifelines.

Themes such as Environmental and Climate Concerns and Infrastructure and Development Projects, though mentioned less frequently, nonetheless carried significant strategic weight. They raised forward-looking concerns about the resilience of water-sharing treaties in the face of climate volatility, and the strategic implications of India's dam construction alongside Pakistan's reliance on Chinese-backed infrastructure projects.

These findings reveal a layered and highly securitized discourse around water, where legal, environmental, strategic, and identity-related concerns intersect. The media has not only unfolded the situation but shaped public framing, policy narratives, and pressure on decision-makers. The content analysis also shows how Pakistan's mainstream discourse calls for action whether in the courtroom, on diplomatic tables, or in regional alliances signaling a national demand for a coherent and multidimensional water strategy.

Points to Ponder

The following questions were posed for the consideration of the panelists to set the course of discussion for policy recommendations:

1. Is India's suspension legally and technically tenable?
2. What should be Pakistan's strategy to face/ward off floods, drought or war?
3. Can China intervene to support us on the issue?
4. Do we need to muster international political support?

Discussion by the Panelists

Maj. Gen. ® Noel Khokhar, HI(M)

Major General Noel Khokhar began by stating his observation regarding the content analysis given by the NIPP research team. He noted that one dimension has been missed out in the analysis which is "What would be Pakistan's kinetic response if all other options fail?", given rising Indian rhetoric.

He informed the audience that Pakistan prefers for diplomatic and political resolution within the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) framework and is aiming to revert to the treaty's original operative status. However, he questioned Pakistan's path if India refuses to comply.

He stressed three key points:

- i. Pakistan considers the treaty still operative and has not withdrawn.
- ii. As a peace-loving nation, Pakistan should continue upholding the treaty in all forums.

- iii. A dossier should be prepared on current and potential Indian violations, especially where Pakistani interests are harmed.

He remarked that if water is weaponized, it becomes a tool of strategic leverage. India, he argued, is using it to serve broader political ends. Maj Gen Noel questioned how Pakistan should react to India's manipulation of the IWT. He emphasized analyzing capabilities, not just intentions, since the latter can change. He acknowledged China's advice to India but urged a realistic view of China's actual influence.

On the River Indus, he noted India currently lacks the infrastructure to halt water flow to Pakistan. Though Ladakh offers a geographical opportunity, infrastructure development would take time, and the tributaries from Ladakh carry limited water in the short term. However, China's dam construction on its side of Ladakh may counterbalance India's future moves.

He cited India's attempt to divert Neelum and Kishanganga Rivers through a 22-km tunnel, threatening the Neelum Valley and Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Project. But the international arbitration ruled in Pakistan's favour stating that India could construct run-of-the-river hydroelectric dam, but it could not divert water. He was of the view that seasonal ponding by India could still reduce Neelum water flow during dry periods.

On the River Jhelum, he highlighted India's control via the Wullar Barrage, Tulbul Project, and Uri power plants. These allow India to restrict flow in dry seasons, impacting Mangla Dam and canal systems dependent on the Jhelum and Chenab.

Regarding the Chenab, he identified Dul Hasti, Baglihar, and Salal as major storage projects that allow India to withhold or release water, potentially causing floods. Additional projects on Chenab tributaries are underway raising future risks. While Pakistan can somewhat mitigate sudden releases on the Jhelum using Mangla Dam, it lacks control mechanisms on the Chenab. The only control point, Marala Headworks, is outdated and urgently needs remodeling and added storage to manage sudden flooding.

He concluded that Indian threats primarily relate to Pakistan's rightful water share under the IWT, especially from the western rivers Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab. India already fully utilizes eastern rivers. Pakistan has built infrastructure to transfer western river waters to the east, but stressed that without proper logistical planning, such infrastructure fails to strengthen national resilience. He stated that strategic preparedness requires integrated connectivity and delivery systems.

Mr. Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry

Mr. Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry addressed the panel discussion concerning the evolving challenges to the IWT considering the recent Indian actions. He expressed appreciation to the organizers and emphasized the importance of understanding the broader context

behind the issue. He stated that India had sought revisions to the IWT as early as 2007 when former Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh expressed this desire to Pakistan's then Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi.

Mr. Aizaz highlighted that the matter had escalated since August 2024, when India suspended meetings of the Permanent Indus Commission and ceased sharing essential hydrological data which was a violation of treaty norms. He pointed out that India had used the Pahalgam incident to pursue longstanding strategic objectives regarding water control, which both sides viewed through the lens of perceived historical concessions.

On the question of whether India could unilaterally cut off water flows, Mr. Aizaz concurred with Maj. General Noel Khokhar that such action would require massive infrastructure and was not immediately feasible. However, he warned that India's withholding of data and manipulation of seasonal flows posed significant risks to Pakistan's agriculture, hydropower generation, and water security.

He proposed a series of legal and diplomatic responses. Legally, he recommended pursuing arbitration under the IWT by engaging the World Bank, which had facilitated the treaty. He emphasized that the treaty had been suspended, not terminated, and therefore the World Bank could be urged to establish a Court of Arbitration. He also suggested pushing for referral to the International Court of Justice and exploring the jurisdiction of the current Court of Arbitration handling Kishanganga and Ratle disputes. He encouraged further engagement with the Permanent Court of Arbitration and, if necessary, raising the issue before the UN Security Council.

Diplomatically, Mr. Aizaz appreciated the Prime Minister's outreach to P5 countries but recommended broadening the outreach beyond them to include other states with transboundary water concerns. He cited Egypt as an example of a nation with a strong position on historical water treaties. He called for an active public diplomacy campaign involving articulating Pakistani voices around the world, and proposed outreach towards regional states including seeking Chinese support.

Mr. Aizaz underscored the strategic importance of China, recalling its withholding of Brahmaputra River data during the 2017 Doklam crisis as a precedent. He recommended confidential consultations with Chinese authorities involving legal and water experts. Domestically, Mr. Aizaz emphasized the need to upgrade water infrastructure particularly the Marala Headworks and to reform agricultural water usage. With agriculture consuming 90% of Pakistan's water, he urged a shift toward sustainable irrigation and conservation practices. He reiterated the warning by Ambassador Richard Holbrooke that future conflicts could be water-related and cautioned against underestimating this risk.

In conclusion, Mr. Aizaz described the situation as a form of aggression and asserted that while Pakistan had a strong legal case, a kinetic military response should remain the absolute last resort. He urged a coordinated legal, diplomatic, and domestic strategy to protect Pakistan's water rights and national interests.

Dr. Seemi Waheed

Dr. Seemi critically examined the IWT, emphasizing its unique yet limited framework. She stated that while globally water-sharing treaties focus on cooperation, the IWT partitions rivers between India and Pakistan wherein Pakistan was given the western rivers and India the eastern ones. Though the treaty has withstood decades of hostility, it has limitations: it overlooks climate change and demographic pressures. While the IWT does not allow unilateral suspension, it is open to renegotiation.

She highlighted that India considers the treaty unfair, as Pakistan controls over 80% of the Indus Basin's water. However, under the treaty, India can still construct run-of-the-river hydroelectric projects. She stated that Pakistan's challenge lies in poor water storage capacity and delayed legal response when India initiated projects like Kishanganga. She stressed that Pakistan should have proactively taken its case to the International Court of Justice.

Dr. Seemi quoted UN's definition of water security to pivot her discussion towards domestic issues related to water in Pakistan. She underscored governance, transboundary cooperation, financing, and political stability as key pillars for water security. She noted that Pakistan lacks preparedness, particularly in regions like Balochistan where water infrastructure remains underdeveloped despite flash flood risks. She criticized over-reliance on tube wells and minimal investment in water infrastructure, highlighting that Pakistan stores only 10% of its river water, compared to India's 21%.

Further, she broke down water types green, blue, grey, and black and noted Pakistan's focus remains only on blue water. The country extracts around 50 MAF of groundwater annually, surpassing the sustainable recharge level of 44 MAF. Meanwhile, wastewater remains untreated, worsening water quality. Despite a plethora of policy documents, twenty-two in total, with the latest being the National Water Policy (2018), she stated that water governance remains fragmented and the implementation is weak.

In conclusion, Dr. Seemi stated that Pakistan is not water-scarce but severely mismanages its resources. Inefficient water use, underpricing, outdated cropping patterns, and lack of treatment infrastructure amplifies the crisis. She advocated sustainable pricing, investment, and cohesive institutional reform to ensure future water security.

Mr. Tahir Basharat Cheema

Tahir Basharat Cheema provided a comprehensive analysis of the historical, technical, and institutional challenges surrounding the IWT. Drawing on personal experience and historical insights, he critically examined Pakistan's water resource management and highlighted India's comparative advantage in water diplomacy.

He traced the roots of Pakistan's water woes to the 1947 partition which despite expectations of religious demarcation, ceded key waterworks like Firozpur and Madhupur to India due to political maneuvering by figures such as the Maharaja of Bikaner and British

officials. In 1948, India abruptly stopped water flows from these headworks, causing severe agricultural and energy crises in Pakistan. The situation caught the attention of U.S. President Eisenhower, who dispatched experts from the Tennessee Valley Authority, leading to the formation of WAPDA in Pakistan.

Despite this support, Mr Tahir believed the 1960 treaty, brokered by the World Bank, was flawed. It led to an ecologically damaging division of rivers and costly replacement infrastructure, disproportionately affecting riverine communities. He emphasized the stark disparity in technical capacity during the treaty's negotiation, India fielded specialists, including engineer A.N. Khosla and Mr. Gulhati, while Pakistan relied mostly on generalist civil servants.

Over time, this gap widened. He further noted that India's Indus Waters Commission employed 43 experts and could draw upon 20,000 specialists through the ICID. In contrast, Pakistan's Commission had just 13 members, only two of whom were engineers, working from a poorly maintained office with limited capacity.

He criticized Pakistan's chronic institutional instability, pointing out that the Ministry of Water and Power had seen 24 secretaries in two decades. Frequent changes and political appointments, he argued, weakened Pakistan's ability to engage effectively with India. India, meanwhile, had been steadily developing infrastructure and legal tools to extract maximum benefit without breaching the treaty.

He called for an overhaul of the Indus Waters Commission, recommending the appointment of skilled engineers, treaty lawyers, and environmental economists. He also suggested building low-head dams and involving provinces like Sindh in transparent consultations. He concluded by urging policymakers to prioritize water governance as a matter of national survival.

Mr. Ahmad Rafay Alam

Mr. Ahmad presented a historical background of the Indus Basin and canal irrigation system, particularly through the colonial period. He stated that the irrigation system during British rule was a colonial experiment. It was mismanaged and resulted in a series of famines in Punjab in 1860-1861, 1868-1870, 1896-1897 and 1899-1900. He stated that there were very few canals that existed between what would eventually become a border between India and Pakistan. However, through the canal infrastructure development, interlinkages would be created which would change the distribution of canals after the Partition.

Mr. Ahmad highlighted that before IWT was signed, India had repeatedly misappropriated and violated Pakistan's rights as a lower riparian state such as in the case of Bhakra dam when a diversion of Sutlej through the Bhakra Canal was created. It is this environment of repeated violation of customary international law that IWT is signed to protect Pakistan's riparian rights. However, IWT is an anomaly in transboundary water

treaties wherein rivers were divided and cut and not shared on an equitable basis. He highlighted that under this technically crafted Treaty, the relinquishment of three eastern rivers meant relinquishing rights as a lower riparian state for those three rivers. This relinquishment would eventually result in dry riverbeds of eastern rivers in Pakistan which would impact inter-provincial water relations.

Mr. Ahmad stated that under the dispute resolution mechanisms provided in IWT, World Bank's role is limited to merely facilitation in the appointment of a neutral expert and establishing the Court of Arbitration. However, a problem has arisen regarding use of forum for settling issues especially after Kishanganga dam decision in 2016 by Court of Arbitration, which has prohibited India from building dams with drawdown flushing mechanism, and the Uri attacks subsequently. India wants to have a matter referred to a neutral expert whilst Pakistan wants it to be taken to Court of Arbitration.

Regarding India's capabilities to manipulate water flows and cause damage to Pakistan, Mr. Ahmad stated that whilst Baglihar dam has drawdown flushing mechanism, however, if India tries to manipulate its flow, then Salal dam being downstream would have to be destroyed for Pakistan to be flooded. Hence, the threat on western rivers is not imminent. As for infrastructure on the three eastern rivers, Mr. Ahmad pointed out that these rivers feed India's red basket. For India to stop water for Pakistan, it would need to first stop water for its own territories which would be detrimental for itself. Moreover, Pakistan has already dry riverbeds there so it would not be a catastrophic event for us.

Mr. Ahmad concluded that we need to understand the significance of Indus Basin as a part of Tibetan plateau which is shared by 2.5 billion people of the world. We are living in different times where there are different needs. Water cannot be divided. It must be shared with the needs of 2.5 billion people to be kept in perspective. Hence, a much more radical approach which accounts for equity and future climate change and regional cooperation is required.

Analysis

The panelists' discussions presented multifaceted dimensions of the issue. They presented historical, institutional, legal, diplomatic and technical insights that highlighted the need for a dynamic solution to India's abeyance of IWT and Pakistan's water policy. Whilst there were some divergent opinions whether military action should be an option for Pakistan, all the panelists agreed and recommended that Pakistan should keep the treaty intact and use international legal apparatus to ensure that the IWT remains operative. This consensus reflected the need to resolve the issue through peaceful means. However, Major General Noel's views underscored that India has introduced a military dimension to the IWT by weaponizing water. His detailed mapping of Indian infrastructure projects and assessment of Pakistan's vulnerabilities added a tactical layer to the discourse. He stated that kinetic response should not be off the table, however, treaty-based resolutions should be exploited first. Mr. Aizaz, on the other hand, emphasized on exploring and deepening international alliances to ensure Pakistan's lower riparian rights are protected. The need for international cooperation on water as a shared resource was also echoed by other panelists.

The discussion also pivoted attention towards the anomalous nature of IWT amongst existing transboundary water treaties. The IWT partitions rivers and making rivers exclusive to the countries involved rather than apportioning the water on an equitable basis. Through Mr. Tahir's institutional and personal memory and Dr. Seemi's input, it emerged that India always perceived IWT as unfair and made a pernicious attempt to sabotage it. Moreover, Mr. Ahmad's legal perspective on partitioning of the rivers highlighted the effect this had on Pakistan's inter-provincial water relations as a corollary. It also revealed that because Pakistan relinquished its riparian rights to the eastern rivers, it could no longer criticize building of Indian dams on them which gradually dried out the riverbeds.

The intensity of threat from India's water flow manipulation was largely downplayed by the panelists. Through mapping of Indian infrastructure, it was shown that currently India does not have the capacity to cause flooding or drought without at least causing damage to itself. It was also mentioned that due to satellite, Pakistan can track water levels in rivers and dams, improve flood forecasting, adjust irrigation practices and optimize water distribution to be prepared for floods and droughts potentially triggered by India's water management practices.

Considering the historical animosity of India towards IWT, the anomalous nature of IWT and the changing circumstances such as climate change and demographic pressures, it was generally recommended that IWT needs to be renegotiated through cooperation to avoid future conflicts. The call for radical water-sharing approaches indicated the need for long-term regional stability over nationalistic competition.

The institutional weaknesses were also a point of focus during the roundtable. The

mismanagement of water and weak governance were marked as contributors of water scarcity. This input by Mr. Tahir and Dr. Seemi framed the conversation around sustainability and institutional issues. Dr. Seemi's perspective that Pakistan's undue focus on blue water rather than taking a holistic approach and focusing to manage and conserve other types of water highlights a policy gap in national water management practices. Pakistan's lack of preparedness, particularly in regions like Balochistan, over-reliance on tube wells and minimal investment in water infrastructure, plethora of policy documents, under-resourced and lack of technical capacity were amongst the issues that were discussed. A coherent policy-making, investment in infrastructure and capacity building and technical upskilling was strongly recommended by the panelists.

To sum up, the discussion presented a multifaceted and well-rounded dialogue, ranging from historical insight, policy critique, legal strategy, technical evaluation to geopolitical analysis. The panelists in general argued for a holistic reassessment of Pakistan's water security policy, merging diplomacy, infrastructure reform, legal action, and sustainable governance to ensure long-term and climate resilient water management.

Conclusion

The Roundtable Discussion (RTD) on the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) served as a critical policy and knowledge forum that illuminated the evolving dimensions of the Indus water dispute. The event underscored that the issue at hand is no longer merely a bilateral water-sharing disagreement, but a complex, multi-dimensional challenge involving legal contestation, geopolitical rivalry, climate-induced water stress, and questions of national security and sovereignty. The confluence of expert insights and media content analysis affirmed that Pakistan must adopt a multidirectional response diplomatic, legal, technical, ecological, and institutional to navigate the emerging water crisis.

The discussion revealed historical animosity by India towards IWT, the anomalous nature of IWT in international water treaties, and identified institutional weaknesses and mismanagement of water resources as other drivers of water insecurity. The need for international cooperation and diplomacy by reaching out to regional and other major countries highlighted that water is a critical resource which needs to be shared equitably. Furthermore, the call for a radical approach to water management including through renegotiation of IWT also highlighted that nationalistic sentiments need to be tempered with regional stability and peace. Therefore, peaceful resolution by utilizing international law and diplomacy was a theme found common in both the roundtable discussion and the content analysis of the national dailies. The RTD also dispelled the eminent threat of water flow manipulation by India and clarified that currently India's capabilities to store water are very limited.

The panelists and the content analysis both recommended strategies which included investing in infrastructure upgrading infrastructure on and capacity building of institutions, advancing legal claims at relevant forums, enhancing water diplomacy, engaging in basin-wide dialogue, and integrating Nature-Based Solutions within climate adaptation policy. The RTD concluded that a proactive, knowledge-led, and regionally grounded water strategy will be key to Pakistan's long-term resilience.

Ultimately, the RTD brought forward a shared recognition: that the path forward lies not in unilateralism or militarization, but in evidence-based, legally sound, and ecologically sustainable strategies. Whether through treaty modernization, infrastructure upgrades, or regional confidence-building, Pakistan must lead with institutional competence, regional vision, and a commitment to equitable water governance. The discussions at NIPP reaffirmed the role of policy research, inter-sectoral dialogue, and expert engagement in shaping the next generation of water diplomacy and security frameworks for South Asia.

Policy Recommendations:

1. **Pursue Legal Remedies Under the Indus Waters Treaty:** Approach the World Bank to set up the Court of Arbitration. If needed, urge the Bank to refer the case to the ICJ as a second legal option.
2. **Utilize Existing Arbitration Mechanisms:** Push and engage for the Court of Arbitration handling Kishanganga and Ratle to take up the issue.
3. **Expand Diplomatic Outreach to Build Pressure on India:** Mobilize global diplomatic efforts to highlight India's treaty violations and the broader risks to transboundary water sharing. Engage a wider range of countries, including those with shared water concerns like Egypt, to build international consensus and pressure.
4. **Strengthen Water Infrastructure and Strategic Preparedness:** Enhance national water storage through new dams and sediment management, focusing on vulnerable regions like Balochistan. Upgrade key infrastructure such as Marala Headworks to manage excess flows and mitigate seasonal variations. Improve water conservation and agricultural efficiency. Simultaneously, monitor India's water infrastructure developments to assess potential risks and ensure timely strategic responses.
5. **Prioritize Legal and Diplomatic Solutions:** Focus on legal and diplomatic measures over military escalation. Build a dedicated legal team and empower the Pakistan Commission on Water to monitor, respond, and advocate effectively in bilateral forums.
6. **Balance Treaty Commitment with Proactive Renegotiation:** Reaffirm Pakistan's adherence to the Indus Waters Treaty to maintain legal and moral credibility, while proactively pursuing diplomatic engagement with India to address emerging challenges such as climate change, population growth, and hydropower development. Leverage the treaty's renegotiation provisions and seek international legal forums when needed.
7. **Diversify Focus Beyond Blue Water:** Develop policies and technologies for managing green, grey, and black water. Promote wastewater recycling and introduce treatment facilities nationwide.
8. **Modernize Agricultural Water Use:** Shift cropping patterns from water-intensive crops like sugarcane to more sustainable alternatives. Invest in efficient irrigation systems like drip and sprinkler irrigation.
9. **Implement Consumption-Based Water Pricing:** Introduce rational, tiered water pricing to reduce wastage and reflect the true cost of supply and treatment. Ensure subsidies only benefit low-income or water-stressed communities.

10. **Develop a Kinetic Contingency Plan:** Formulate a well-defined strategic response in case diplomatic and treaty-based solutions fail, clearly outlining military and non-military options to deter water aggression.
11. **Compile a Treaty Violation Dossier:** Develop a comprehensive and continually updated dossier documenting India's existing and potential treaty violations, to be used for legal, diplomatic, and advocacy purposes.
12. **Monitor Regional Developments:** Maintain vigilance on China's hydropower activities in Ladakh and assess their strategic implications for Pakistan and regional water dynamics.
13. **Ensure Legal Compliance of Existing Indian Projects:** Monitor India's adherence to international arbitration rulings (e.g., Kishanganga case) and prepare for legal recourse if diversion projects are reactivated.
14. **Revamp the Indus Waters Commission (IWC):** Overhaul the IWC by recruiting qualified professionals, especially water engineers, treaty lawyers, and economists, to match India's technical strength.
15. **Build Low-Head Dams:** Construction of four low-head dams at Wazirabad, Chiniot, Balochistan and Shajib to increase water storage capacity and manage flow more effectively.
16. **Improve Institutional Coordination:** Ensure effective coordination among the Ministry of Water Resources, Ministry of Law and Justice, Foreign Office, and WAPDA to handle treaty obligations and disputes professionally.
17. **Invest in Office Infrastructure and resources:** Improve the working conditions of the IWC office in Pakistan, modernize facilities and provide adequate technical resources for effective treaty management.

Action Plan for Strengthening Pakistan's Position under the Indus Waters Treaty

Short-Term (0–1 Year)

Objective: Secure immediate legal, diplomatic, and institutional actions to safeguard water rights and prevent treaty violations.

Action	Details	Lead Stakeholders	KPIs / Indicators of Progress
1. Pursue Legal Remedies under the Indus Waters Treaty	Formally approach the World Bank to re-activate the Court of Arbitration. Prepare dossier for potential ICJ reference if arbitration fails.	Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR), Ministry of Law, IWC, Foreign Office	Court of Arbitration reconstituted. Legal dossier prepared and submitted to World Bank
2. Activate Existing Arbitration Mechanisms	Coordinate with legal experts and past arbitrators of Kishanganga & Ratle cases to push for proceedings.	IWC, MoWR, Attorney General's Office	Pakistan's petition accepted by the Court. Regular legal briefings to the Foreign Office
3. Compile Treaty Violation Dossier	Establish a dedicated cell within IWC to compile and continuously update evidence of Indian violations.	IWC, MoWR, WAPDA	Dossier completed and updated quarterly. Shared with legal and diplomatic channels
4. Expand Diplomatic Outreach	Engage global partners (e.g., Egypt, Turkey, OIC, UN) to highlight India's treaty breaches. Leverage multilateral forums.	Foreign Office, MoWR	Joint communiqués or statements from 2–3 countries. Media coverage and think-tank briefings
5. Institutional Revamp of IWC	Recruit legal, hydrological, and environmental experts; modernise infrastructure and technical systems.	MoWR, Establishment Division	New professionals hired. Digital database and GIS monitoring system deployed
6. Improve Inter-Ministerial Coordination	Establish a high-level "Water Security Coordination Committee."	PM Office, MoWR, MoFA, WAPDA	Monthly coordination meetings held. Action tracking dashboard operational

Medium-Term (1–3 Years)

Objective: Build strategic resilience through infrastructure, policy reforms, and institutional empowerment.

Action	Details	Lead Stakeholders	KPIs / Indicators of Progress
1. Strengthen Water Infrastructure	Accelerate construction of low-head dams (Wazirabad, Chiniot, Balochistan, Shajib). Upgrade Marala Headworks.	WAPDA, Provincial Govts	50% completion of low-head dams. Improved flood control capacity
2. Monitor India's Water Projects	Continuous satellite-based monitoring of Indian projects; quarterly technical review reports.	SUPARCO, IWC, WAPDA	Four technical monitoring reports annually
3. Enhance Legal and Diplomatic Capabilities	Train a specialised legal cadre on international water law; strengthen diplomatic engagement cells.	MoWR, MoFA, NSPP	20 officials trained. Annual review of legal proceedings
4. Develop Water Pricing Mechanism	Introduce tiered pricing in Punjab and Sindh to promote conservation.	Provincial Govts, Water & Power Dept.	Pilot projects launched. 10% reduction in urban water wastage
5. Promote Efficient Irrigation and Cropping Patterns	Shift from sugarcane/rice to less water-intensive crops. Launch pilot schemes for drip/sprinkler irrigation.	Ministry of Food Security, Provincial Agriculture Departments.	5% reduction in canal water usage. 10 pilot projects operational
6. Expand Diplomatic Pressure	Organise annual "Transboundary Water Forum" inviting regional stakeholders and experts.	MoFA, IPRI, SDPI	Annual conference conducted. Inclusion in international water policy reports

Long-Term (3–7 Years)

Objective: Achieve sustainable water governance, self-reliance, and resilience against regional hydro-political challenges.

Action	Details	Lead Stakeholders	KPIs / Indicators of Progress
1. Revisit and Modernise Indus Waters Treaty	Pursue renegotiation or expansion clauses to include climate adaptation, data sharing, and new hydropower norms.	MoFA, MoWR, International Legal Experts	Bilateral dialogue framework revived. International endorsement for revised treaty principles
2. Develop Alternative Water Resources (Green, Grey, Black Water)	Establish wastewater recycling plants and policies for water reuse in agriculture and industry.	MoWR, MoCC, Provincial Govts, EPD	10% reduction in freshwater dependency. National wastewater recycling policy approved
3. Build National Water Resilience Plan	Integrate AI, IoT, and satellite-based early warning systems for floods and droughts.	SUPARCO, NDMA, WAPDA	National dashboard operational. Reduction in flood losses by 20%
4. Enhance Regional Monitoring (China, Afghanistan)	Build partnerships with regional monitoring agencies to observe hydropower developments.	MoFA, MoWR, ISI (Strategic Wing)	Joint monitoring reports shared. Crisis coordination mechanism activated
5. Develop a Kinetic Contingency Plan	Formulate non-military deterrence and response options for water aggression scenarios.	National Security Division, MoD, MoWR	Approved contingency plan. Annual simulation exercises conducted

Cross-Cutting Reforms

Area	Reform Action	KPIs
Institutional Capacity	Establish National Water Diplomacy and Arbitration Training Cell.	50 officials trained per year
Research & Innovation	Launch joint university–think tank programme on water governance.	3 annual research papers; 1 policy white paper
Public Awareness	Initiate a “Water Security for Pakistan” media campaign.	Awareness surveys showing >30% rise in public knowledge
Coordination	Monthly inter-ministerial review chaired by PM's Special Envoy on Water.	Quarterly published progress reports

Monitoring & Evaluation Framework

- Quarterly Review Meetings: Chaired by the Federal Secretary (Water Resources)
- Annual Progress Report: Submitted to the PM's Office and National Security Committee
- Independent Evaluation: Conducted biennially by an external body (e.g., NIPP or SDPI)

Annexure: Newspaper articles for content analysis

No.	Title	Author(s)+Bio	Date	Source	Link
1	What India's Indus Waters Treaty suspension means for Pakistan	Hassaan F Khan Assistant Professor at Tufts University	24-Apr-25	Dawn	https://www.dawn.com/news/1906274
2	US, World Bank may try to save Indus treaty	Khalid Hasnain, Anwar Iqbal Journalists at Dawn	25-Apr-25	Dawn	https://www.dawn.com/news/1906350
3	Legal aspect of Indus Waters Treaty suspension	Ahmer Bilal Soofi Ex-federal law minister & advocate Supreme Court	25-Apr-25	Dawn	https://www.dawn.com/news/1906366
4	India can't stop Pakistan's water	Ali Tahir Barrister	25-Apr-25	The News	https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1304812-india-can-t-stop-pakistan-s-water
5	Pahalgam: Indian blame game and ground realities	Imtiaz Gul Heads the independent Centre for Research and Security Studies	25-Apr-25	The Express Tribune	https://tribune.com.pk/story/2542287/pahalgam-indian-blame-game-and-ground-realities
6	Assault on rivers will be 'act of war'	Baqir Sajjad Syed Commentator on foreign policy and security issues with over two decades of experience writing for Pakistan's Daily Dawn newspaper	25-Apr-25	Dawn	https://www.dawn.com/news/1906354
7	The Indus must flow	Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri Heads the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) and is a member of the advisory board of the Asian Development Bank Institute	26-Apr-25	The News	https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1305229-the-indus-must-flow

No.	Title	Author(s)+Bio	Date	Source	Link
8	IWT and lawfare in South Asia	Kamran Adil Serving police officer, working as DIG Technical Procurement for the Punjab Police, Lahore	27-Apr-25	The News	https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1305551-iwt-and-lawfare-in-south-asia
9	War is not an option	Dr. Muhammad Ali Ehsan Assistant Professor at International Relations Department of DHA Suffa University Karachi	27-Apr-25	The Express Tribune	https://tribune.com.pk/story/2542451/war-is-not-an-option
10	On the brink	Amjad Bashir Siddiqi Senior staffer at The News, Karachi	27-Apr-25	The News	https://www.thenews.com.pk/tns/detail/1305075-on-the-brink
11	A legal look at IWT	Hafiz Ahsaan Ahmad Khokhar Advocate of Supreme Court of Pakistan	28-Apr-25	The News	https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1305837-a-legal-look-at-iwt
12	Pahalgam exposes India's Kashmir contradiction	Durdana Najam Public policy analyst	1-May-25	The Express Tribune	https://tribune.com.pk/story/2543263/pahalgam-exposes-indias-kashmir-contradiction
13	Indus water wars	Khurram Husain Business and economy journalist	1-May-25	Dawn	http://dawn.com/news/1907677
14	Delhi's IWT move is dangerous	Muhammad Zaman Khan Director of the Centre for Law, Justice & Policy (CLJP) at Denning Law School	1-May-25	The News	https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1306940-delhi-s-iwt-move-is-dangerous
15	Modi madness at the third pole	Engr. Khurram Dastgir Khan Former Pakistan's minister for foreign affairs, defence, commerce, and energy	1-May-25	The News	https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1306941-modi-madness-at-the-third-pole

No.	Title	Author(s)+Bio	Date	Source	Link
16	Why India's treaty hubris could backfire	Dr. Murad Ali Teaches at the University of Malakand	2-May-25	The News	https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1307261-why-india-s-treaty-hubris-could-backfire
17	If the Indus goes, we go too	Riffat Inam Butt Legal and policy expert specialising in international law, water diplomacy and legislative reform	2-May-25	The News	https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1307262-if-the-indus-goes-we-go-too
18	Commission finalises report on Indus treaty violations	Khalid Hasnain Journalist at Dawn	5-May-25	Dawn	https://www.dawn.com/news/1908458
19	Resistance is duty	Dr. Sharmila Faruqi Member of the National Assembly	7-May-25	The News	https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1309004-resistance-is-duty
20	A war over water?	Atta-ur-Rahman Former federal minister, UNESCO science laureate and founding chairperson of the Higher Education Commission	7-May-25	The News	https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1309003-a-war-over-water
21	War for water	Dr. Ramesh Kumar Vankwani Member of the National Assembly and patron-in-chief of the Pakistan Hindu Council	8-May-25	The News	https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1309672-war-for-water
22	The legal case against India's abeyance of the Indus Waters Treaty	Maham Naweed Chair International Law at IPRI	11-May-25	The Express Tribune	https://tribune.com.pk/story/2545221/the-legal-case-against-indias-abeyance-of-the-indus-waters-treaty
23	Space for peace diplomacy	Muhammad Amir Rana Security analyst	11-May-25	Dawn	https://www.dawn.com/news/1910208

No.	Title	Author(s)+Bio	Date	Source	Link
24	UN Charter, IWT & terrorism	Justice Qazi Faez Essa Former Chief Justice of Pakistan	15-May-25	Dawn	https://www.dawn.com/news/1911141
25	An ecologically sensible response to India on IWT	Syed Mohammad Ali Academic and researcher and author of Development, Poverty, and Power in Pakistan, Routledge	16-May-25	The Express Tribune	https://tribune.com.pk/story/2546062/an-ecologically-sensible-response-to-india-on-iwt
26	Rehabilitating the treaty	Ali Tauqeer Sheikh Climate change and sustainable development expert	16-May-25	Dawn	https://www.dawn.com/news/1911278
27	Heat, hate and hegemony	Maleeha Sattar Teaches at the Department of Government and Global Studies at ITU, Lahore	16-May-25	The News	https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1311914-heat-hate-and-hegemony
28	International law & Indus wars	Sikander Ahmed Shah Former legal adviser to Pakistan's foreign ministry, and faculty, LUMS Law	17-May-25	Dawn	https://www.dawn.com/news/1911542
29	Let rivers flow	Masood Lohar Expert on climate change and sustainable development, and founder of the Clifton Urban Forest, Karachi	17-May-25	Dawn	https://www.dawn.com/news/1911541
30	Time for a SAARC summit	Muhammad Amir Rana Security analyst	18-May-25	Dawn	https://www.dawn.com/news/1911741

No.	Title	Author(s)+Bio	Date	Source	Link
31	India's risky gambit over the Indus	Naveed Hussain, Hammad Sarfraz Contributors at the Express Tribune	18-May-25	The Express Tribune	https://tribune.com.pk/story/2546426/indias-risky-gambit-over-the-indus
32	After the Crisis	Maliha Lodhi Former ambassador to the US, UK and UN	19-May-25	Dawn	https://www.dawn.com/news/1911922
33	Politics of hate	Ayesha Khan Head of the Civil Society Coalition for Climate Change	19-May-25	Dawn	https://www.dawn.com/news/1911923
34	Bound by geography	Moazzam Husain Business strategist	20-May-25	Dawn	https://www.dawn.com/news/1912087
35	Modi's two-front war	Dr. Moonis Ahmar Former Dean Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Karachi	20-May-25	The Express Tribune	https://tribune.com.pk/story/2546729/modis-two-front-war

Brief Bios of the NIPP Team

Dr. Naveed Elahi

Dean NIPP. Earlier, he served in the public sector in various departments for more than three decades. He did his master's and PhD from King's College London, UK. He is the author of several books and has taught national security, public policy, and foreign policy of Pakistan at various universities.

Ms. Bushra Bashir

Senior Research Associate at NIPP. She is an Information Group officer with nearly 25 years of experience, having worked across various departments under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, the Punjab Government, and the Civil Services Academy. She holds an MBA from the University of Hull, UK, and a Master's in Media and Communication Technology from Brunel University, London. She occasionally writes on social issues in national dailies and has a strong interest in public policy.

Dr. Saif Ullah Khalid

Research Associate at NIPP. He completed his PhD, from Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, where his doctoral thesis was "Theory and Practice of Police Corruption Control in Pakistan Case Studies of three Police Departments". He has also served as a Strategic Planning Expert in USAID projects in Pakistan.

Dr. Ali Abbas

Research Associate at NIPP. He served in public and private academic and research institutes for more than ten years. He did his PhD in Economics from NCBA&E Lahore, where his doctoral thesis is on "Key Driving Factors of Business Cycle Synchronisation among Pakistan and its Trading Partners". He is the author of several research articles published in national and international journals in the field of environmental and development economics.

Ms. Faryal Maaz

Research Associate at NIPP. She has completed an M.Phil in Commerce and MSc in Accounting & Finance from Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan. Previously, she has served at SMEDA, Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, and Centre of Excellence for CPEC (PIDE). She has experience in policy research at public sector organisations and is also author of academic publications.

Mr. Jahanzeb Waheed

Research Associate at NIPP. He is currently a PhD candidate in Development Studies at the University of Lisbon, Portugal, holds an MSc in Development Studies from the

University of Glasgow, UK. He has taught Public Administration and Analysis of Institutions courses at the FCCU and worked for the Planning and Development Department, Punjab.

Dr. Sumreen Khalil

Research Fellow at the NIPP. She holds a PhD in Total Quality Management from the University of the Punjab, Lahore (2021). With prior experience in local government administration and lecturing at prestigious Pakistani universities, notably at the University of the Punjab, Lahore, since 2015, she has published articles in HEC recognized national and international journals.

Dr. Muhammad Abdullah

Research Fellow at NIPP. He graduated with a Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) in 2011 from Lahore Medical and Dental College and later obtained a master's in public health (MPH) from Griffith University, Australia, in 2017. He has also been awarded by the Governor as a "Best volunteer" for healthcare in Punjab.

Ms. Sabina Babar

Research Fellow at NIPP. Holds an MPhil in International Relations from Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad. She has served as a Research Officer at the Centre for Aerospace and Security Studies, Lahore. She has held the position of a Researcher at Strategic Vision Institute, Islamabad. Prior to that she has also worked as a lecturer at the University of Central Punjab. She is a prolific writer with publications in national and international journals.

Mr. Sajid Sultan

Statistical Analyst at NIPP. Before that, he was a Data Analyst at the Population Welfare Department, Govt of Punjab. He has also served in many other institutions as Lecturer as well as Controller of Examination. He has done MPhil in Statistics from Minhaj University Lahore.

Ms. Sadia Pirzada

Ms. Pirzada joined civil service in 2019 in Office Management Group. She has worked in the Ministry of Finance and dealt with international development partners and multilaterals. Most notably she was Section Officer (EF-IFR) where she was the desk officer for IMF program loans and responsible for examining and implementing the policies under the IMF program. She was also Section Officer to Special Secretary Finance (SSF) wherein she provided policy input and assistance to SSF on issues concerning the finances of the Federal Government.

Brief Bios of the Panelists

Maj. Gen. (R) Noel Khokhar, HI(M) Former Ambassador of Pakistan to Ukraine

Former Ambassador of Pakistan to Ukraine, Dr. Khokhar holds a PhD in International Relations and has served as Professor and Executive Dean at Forman Christian College University, Lahore. A retired Major General, he was awarded the Hilal-e-Imtiaz (Military) and held senior roles including Chief Instructor at the National Defence University and Director General of its Institute of Strategic Studies. He also served as a UN peacekeeping liaison officer in Congo. An alumnus of St. Anthony's High School, FC College, King's College London, Quaid-e-Azam University, and the University of Balochistan, he trained at top military institutions in Pakistan, France, and the UK. He has been an instructor at key national military academies. Currently, he serves as a Senate member at NDU, Advisor at Islamabad Policy Institute, and President of the Fazal Foundation. He is set to return to FC College, continuing his commitment to public service, education, and policy engagement.

Mr. Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Former Foreign Secretary of Pakistan

Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry has served as a member of the Foreign Service of Pakistan for over 37 years, rising to the rank of Foreign Secretary. His last diplomatic assignment was as Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States of America. He also served as Ambassador of Pakistan to the Netherlands, Foreign Office Spokesman, Additional Secretary for UN and Disarmament, and Deputy Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations in New York. During his career, he remained closely associated with India-Pakistan peace process and Pakistan's relations with the US. After his retirement from the Foreign Service, Ambassador Chaudhry served as the Director General of Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad. Presently, he is serving as Chairman of Sanobar Institute Islamabad, an independent voice on issues of strategic significance. He has authored three books and numerous research and opinion articles, including his memoir 'Diplomatic Footprints'. Ambassador Chaudhry holds Masters in International Relations from Tufts University, Massachusetts.

Dr. Seemi Waheed, Professor of Practice (Water Governance), University of Management and Technology

Dr. Seemi Waheed is Professor of Practice in Public Policy and Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Public Policy Practitioners at the University of Management and Technology, Lahore. She founded the Sustainable Water Resources Initiative and organized international conferences on water security and governance. She also serves as Board Director at the Punjab Rural Support Programme, with widely published research on sustainability and reform. Her expertise spans water governance, collaborative governance, institutional analysis, and social-ecological systems. She has led national

programs, including the World Bank and DFID's Punjab Family Health Project, and conducted extensive fieldwork on rural health and stakeholder engagement. As a governance expert and policy scholar, she brings over 30 years of distinguished service in public administration, research, and academic leadership. She served the Government of Pakistan for 32 years, including senior roles at the National School of Public Policy (NSPP), where she was instrumental in civil service reforms during the 2004–2009 restructuring period.

Mr. Engr. Tahir Basharat Cheema, Former MD Pakistan Electric Power Company

Engr. Tahir Basharat Cheema, former MD Pakistan Electric Power Company. He is the foremost Power Sector specialist in the Country with 50 years of hands-on experience. He was the first DG Energy Management and also served as the Chairman Energy Management Office at the Ministry of Water & Power. He has been the President of both the IEEEEP - The Institution of Electrical & Electronics Engineers and the Institute of Engineers Pakistan. At one time, he was the Project Director for the WAPDA International Technical University. Presently Advisor (Energy) APTMA he has a B.E (Electrical), Post Graduate Certificate in Statistical Sciences (with special studies in Operational Research) and a Masters in Business Administration. He has recently authored two books on the Power Sector of Pakistan - to wide acclaim. He has again been elected as the President IEEEEP for 2025-2027.

Mr. Ahmad Rafay Alam, Environmental Lawyer

Ahmad Rafay Alam is an environmental lawyer and Yale World Fellow specialising in the energy, water, natural resources and urban infrastructure sectors. Mr. Alam has vast experience in environment law and regulation and regularly advises clients on environment, water, sustainability, climate change, energy efficiency and air quality issues. Mr. Alam has served as a Member of the Punjab Environmental Protection Council and as Chairman of LESCO and LWMC. He currently serves as a Member of the Pakistan Climate Change Council, Senior Advisor to Air Quality Asia and Member of the Hisaar Foundation Think Tank on the Rational Use of Water.

Glimpses from the Roundtable Discussion







National Institute of Public Policy (NIPP)

The National Institute of Public Policy (NIPP) is an integral unit of the National School of Public Policy (NSPP) and acts as a “Think Tank” for the Federal Government. It is the principal research arm of NSPP. With a team of researchers and in collaboration with its partner institutions, NIPP provides research-based policy advice to the Federal Government on matters of public policy and advises it on the issues of policy significance referred to it.

Vision

An internationally recognized public policy research institute, acting as an independent think tank of the Government of Pakistan and a hub for public policy research in/on Pakistan.

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