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subhenaau

a greener vision

Pakistan's first international award winning magazine on environment and health



**Realizing lasting security and peace
in Pakistan and beyond: harmonizing
within, with each other and nature**

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Sea buckthorn (chash e guno)

Sea buckthorn (*Hippophae rhamnoides*), locally known as chash e guno in Burushaski, grows wild across Pakistan's northern Gilgit-Baltistan and Chitral regions. Locally it is often seen as a hardy, thorny shrub used for fencing and boundary protection, yet globally it is increasingly recognised as a nutrient-dense fruit with a unique profile of vitamins, antioxidants, and healthy fats.

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May 2026

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subh-e-nau
 a greener vision

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Letters to the Editor

Cover Story April 2026

As a mother in Lahore, I want to thank you for connecting architecture to health in a way ordinary families understand. We are not only paying higher electricity bills, but we are also paying with our sleep and our children's comfort. Your point that buildings are becoming "health infrastructure" is exactly right. If homes trap heat and streets have no shade, people suffer quietly, and then we call it normal life.

—Sana Tariq, Lahore

I work in Karachi's construction sector, and your cover story felt like an honest mirror. We build quickly, we pour concrete, we sell "development," and then we blame citizens when flooding worsens and heat becomes unbearable. Your focus on water-sensitive design and preserving natural drainage lines should be required reading for every housing scheme developer. It is cheaper to design correctly than to keep rebuilding after every monsoon shock.

—Engr. Faisal Mehmood, Karachi

As a family physician in Rawalpindi, I appreciated how you framed green architecture as prevention, not decoration. Every summer I see more dehydration, heat exhaustion, asthma flares, and stress-related illness. Patients cannot "exercise" or "walk" when the built environment punishes them for stepping outside. Shade, ventilation, and green public space are health interventions, and your cover story explained this clearly.

—Dr. Amina Yousaf, Rawalpindi

I am a university student in Islamabad, and the occupational security lens made the whole story feel ethical, not only technical. When you said the wealthy can buy comfort through air-conditioning and generators while the poor absorb heat, flooding, and pollution, it sounded like the reality we live in. Sustainability without justice becomes another form of inequality. Green architecture should not be a luxury product. It should be a basic standard for dignified living.

—Taimoor Javed, Islamabad

As a teacher in Skardu, I want to add that climate resilience is not only a city issue. When urban development ignores nature, the damage spreads through water systems and ecosystems that connect regions. Your call for truth and measurable "green" standards was important. A building is not green because a brochure says it is. It is green if it reduces heat stress, manages water responsibly, and protects health over time.

—Shafqat Ali, Skardu

What is Subh-e-Nau

This journalistic endeavor primarily focuses on the environment and public health sector, and is published every month. The dismal state of affairs in this sector demands public awareness and community involvement for the protection of our natural environment. The magazine cuts across a diverse range of environmental issues, which require thought and conveys action-oriented messages for the general public and decision makers.



Chief Editor's Message

This month's cover story, "Realizing lasting security and peace in Pakistan and beyond: harmonizing within, with each other and with nature," is written for a time that feels heavy for many people. Wars and regional tensions are shaping the emotional climate of our world, climate crises are becoming more frequent and more intense, and the pandemic era reminded us how quickly fear, misinformation, and inequality can spread. In such a moment, peace cannot be treated as a distant ideal. Peace must be treated and realized as a daily necessity.

Pakistan has been called upon to play a constructive role in peace efforts beyond its borders. Yet our cover story asks a deeper question: how do we build peace that lasts if insecurity remains rooted within our own society through division, injustice, poverty, and environmental harm. We cannot carry peace outward while neglecting peace within. This is why we present occupational security as a resolution framework. It shifts the meaning of security away from fear and control, and toward the protection of life and dignity in daily living. It reminds us that security must include the ability of people to work, study, care, worship, move, and rest safely, without constant disruption and harm. It also insists that nature is not separate from our security. When air, water, land, and ecosystems are degraded, insecurity grows through heat stress, disease, displacement, and conflict over resources.

Most importantly, this cover story is grounded in spirituality and the sacredness of life. For Pakistan, Islamic spirituality offers a powerful foundation for peace: mercy, justice, truthfulness, restraint, and responsibility. It teaches us that compassion is strength, and that injustice corrodes societies from within. It also reminds us that protecting creation is part of moral responsibility, not an optional concern. This issue is a call to unity at three levels. Unity within us, by rejecting hatred and rebuilding the inner conditions of peace. Unity among Muslims, by refusing sectarian contempt and reviving the ethics of brotherhood, justice, and mercy. Unity with humanity, by defending dignity beyond tribe and border and refusing to normalize cruelty anywhere. And unity with nature, because a world at war with its ecosystems will never be stable, no matter how many treaties are signed.

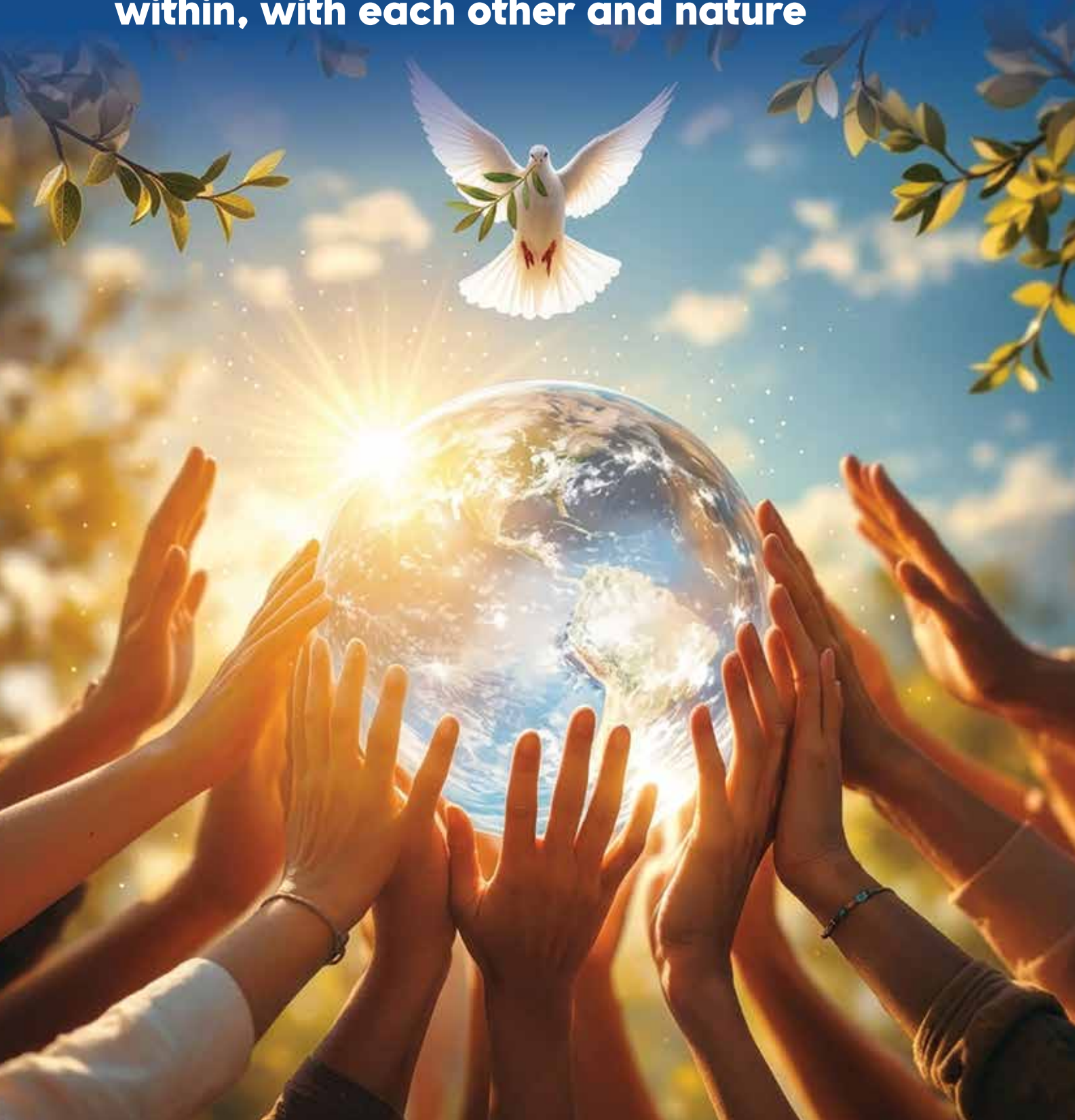
As you read this month's issue, I invite you to see peace not only as diplomacy, but as a way of living. If we treat life as sacred, if we make compassion and justice non-negotiable, if we insist on truth, and if we stop committing violence against each other and against the natural world, then Pakistan can become a stronger home for its people and a more credible voice for peace beyond its borders.

Shahida Kauser Farooq

Chief Editor

Cover Story

**Realizing lasting security and peace
in Pakistan and beyond: harmonizing
within, with each other and nature**



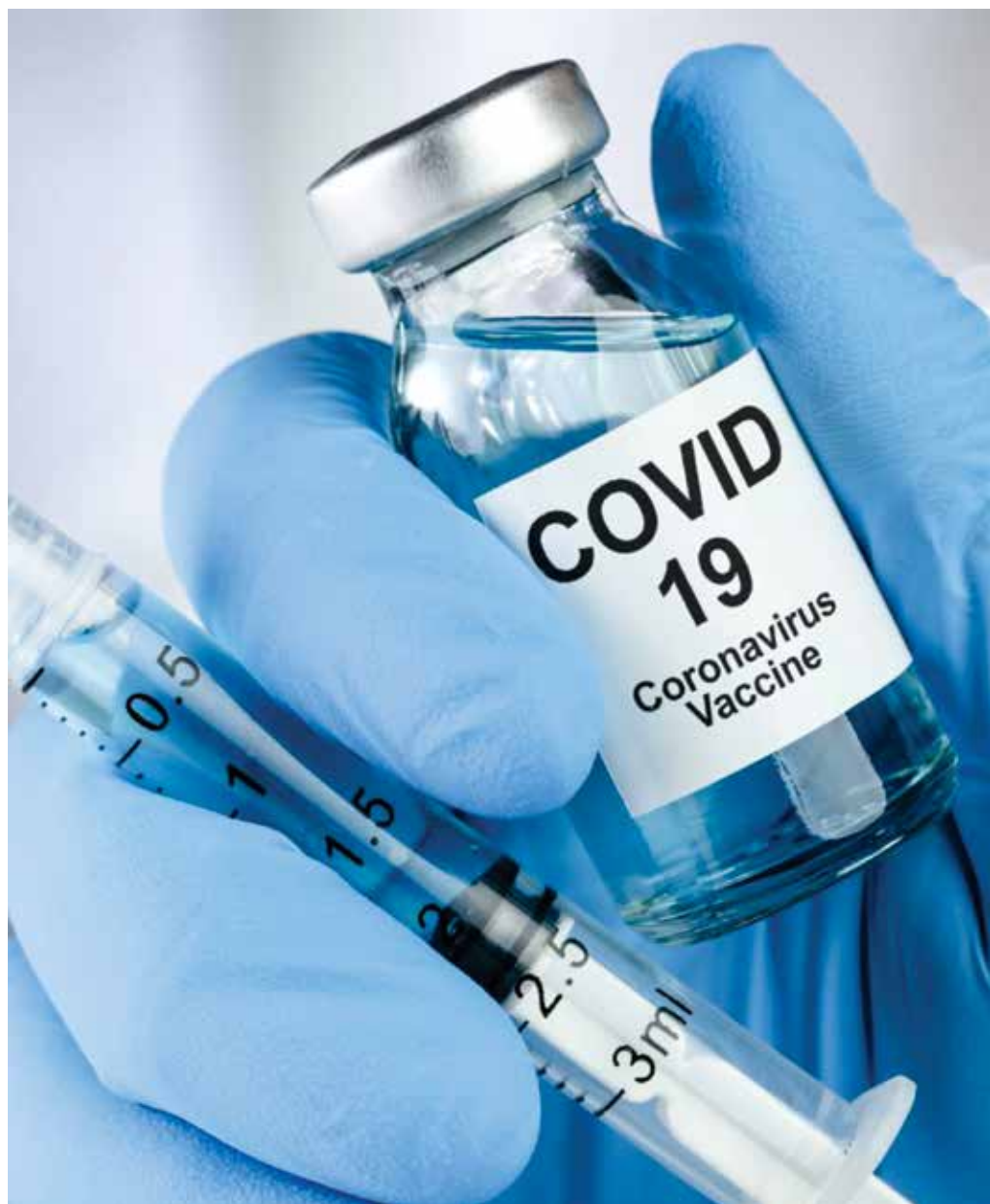
Dr. Farrukh A. Chishtie

We are living through a time when it feels as if the ground beneath ordinary life is shifting with crises going global from local scales including wars, climate change and pandemics. An ethics-based pathway is needed to overcome these existential threats, which we offer via occupational security and spirituality as a way out into a better world.

A world in fracture: wars, climate shocks, and pandemic lessons

Wars are no longer distant headlines. They spill into energy prices, supply chains, food security, and the emotional climate of entire regions. Climate crises are no longer occasional “natural disasters.” They are repeated shocks that hit homes, hospitals, farms, and cities. Pandemics are no longer unimaginable. COVID-19 showed how quickly fear, misinformation, inequality, and broken systems can ripple across the world.

In Pakistan, these overlapping crises have a painful clarity. When heatwaves intensify, they do not only raise temperatures. They raise hospital burdens and electricity stress. When floods strike, they do not only damage roads. They disrupt care, schooling, livelihoods, and dignity. When misinformation spreads, it does not remain online. It changes real health decisions and fractures trust, as the pandemic taught.



Now add the war context of 2026. Pakistan is being pulled into a visible peace role beyond its borders, particularly around the Iran war. Reuters reported in April 2026 that Egypt was working with Pakistan on a framework for a lasting US–Iran peace plan, as part of broader regional diplomacy to prevent renewed escalation. The Guardian has also described Pakistan’s army chief as a central intermediary figure in these de-escalation efforts. This matters. When Pakistan is seen as a peace builder externally, it is also a moment to ask what peace must look like internally.

Because the harsh truth is that internal strife is also real. Social polarization, economic exclusion, community violence, and the quiet violence of environmental destruction continue to erode the conditions needed for calm living. Environmental violence is not a metaphor. It is poisoning air until breathing becomes a health risk. It is draining water systems until scarcity becomes conflict. It is stripping trees until cities become heat traps. It is degrading land until livelihoods collapse. This is violence against life support, and it breeds insecurity like a slow fever.

If we want “lasting security and

peace,” we cannot limit peace to diplomacy, ceasefires, or speeches. We must define peace as a condition of everyday life, inside homes, streets, schools, workplaces, and ecosystems. That is the shift this cover story proposes.

The resolution we need: security grounded in sacredness, not fear

After wars, climate shocks, and pandemics, many societies respond by hardening. They tighten control, increase surveillance, and normalize harshness. Yet history



Destruction in a conflict zone highlights how war continues to devastate infrastructure, environment, and human security



Volunteers assist stranded civilians through floodwaters

repeatedly shows that fear-based security does not produce lasting peace. It produces temporary quiet and long-term resentment.

The occupational security framework offered here as a resolution starts exactly from this reality. It names today's "cascading and intersecting crises" as climate change impacts, ongoing armed conflicts, and the COVID-19 pandemic, and it warns that these dangers and restrictions harm life itself and daily occupations, disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable and marginalized. In other words, crisis is not only geopolitical. Crisis is lived in the body and in daily routine. It is felt in whether people can earn, study,

care, travel, heal, and rest without constant disruption.

Occupational security offers a different foundation. It begins with a moral stance: "All authors believe in the sanctity of life" and are deeply concerned about today's security measures under escalating local and global crises, which is why they propose occupational security as a meaningful response. This is the spiritual core the world often forgets. If life is sacred, then security is not only a state function. It is a duty of care. It is our faith, our calling, our Imaan.

Islamic spirituality makes this foundation natural for Pakistan and beyond. Our faith tradition

“ This is the spiritual core the world often forgets. If life is sacred, then security is not only a state function. It is a duty of care. It is our faith, our calling, our Imaan ”

teaches that peace begins within, through the cultivation of mercy, justice, truthfulness, restraint, and responsibility. It insists that human dignity is not optional and that oppression is a form of darkness that destroys societies. In this spiritual view, peace is not only a political agreement. It is a moral environment where people can live without humiliation and fear, and where the vulnerable are protected rather than discarded.

Occupational security then translates this moral foundation into a practical framework. It defines occupational security as the interrelated, sustainable, just, and compassionate protection of humans' and non-humans' right to



Pakistan is playing an important role in promoting peace and diplomatic harmony in the tensions between Iran and the United States

a safe, peaceful, and dignified life, including daily occupations, using measures and solutions that are authentic and accurate. It explicitly expands what we protect beyond humans to include non-humans and life-sustaining elements such as air, water, energy, and land, because humans are part of nature rather than separate from it. This is not foreign to Islamic ethics. It resonates with a worldview in which creation is meaningful, entrusted, and not ours to vandalize.

The occupational security paper also draws on Indigenous knowledge to highlight that

spirituality and reverence for the natural world are intrinsic to sustainable stewardship, and it notes that across cultures, ecological principles are often tied to what is sacred, with parallels across faith traditions. This is precisely the bridge Pakistan needs today: a peace framework that unites inner life, social life, and environmental life under one ethical umbrella.

Compassion, peace, and justice as the urgent national priorities

In a time shaped by war anxiety,

climate stress, and post-pandemic strain, Pakistan needs three values to lead the national recovery of peace.

Compassion, because societies are increasingly divided and isolated, and harshness multiplies insecurity. The framework argues that compassion is essential to heal divides and restore well-being in a world shaped by competition and social fragmentation.

Justice, because peace without fairness is only a pause. The framework places justice at the center of security because

structural inequities intensify vulnerability and suffering during crises.

Peace, because the goal is not only the absence of armed conflict, but the ability to carry out daily life without constant fear, disruption, and violence.

Pakistan's mediation role in the Iran war shows that dialogue and restraint are possible at the international level. The challenge is to bring that same ethic home, and to extend it further, so peace becomes a lived condition across society and across nature.

In the next pages, we will map Pakistan's peace fractures in three domains, within the self, within society, and within the natural world, and we will show how occupational security and Islamic spirituality together offer a practical route to lasting security for Pakistan and for the wider region.

Peace fractures inside Pakistan: where insecurity is produced in daily life

To build lasting peace, we must name what is breaking it. Pakistan's insecurity is not only the result of "bad people" or "bad politics." It is also produced by conditions that repeatedly damage daily life and dignity. Occupational security is useful here because it defines security as protection of safe, peaceful, dignified life through daily occupations, and it explicitly recognizes that crises

and long-term structural harms can make security increasingly difficult.

The first fracture is economic and occupational insecurity. When livelihoods are unstable, inflation rises, and young people see no realistic path to meaningful work, society becomes tense. People become easy prey for exploitation, criminal recruitment, and extremist narratives. The occupational security paper connects insecurity to outcomes such as poverty and homelessness and emphasizes that insecurity disproportionately harms vulnerable and marginalized communities. This is not only a social problem. It is a peace problem, because desperation narrows moral choices and breaks social cohesion.

The second fracture is social disconnection. When communities lose trust, and when daily life becomes competitive and isolating, people stop seeing each other as allies in survival. The occupational security paper points to how neoliberalist systems can promote social disconnection, competition, and loneliness, weakening well-being and cohesion. In Pakistan, this disconnection is sharpened by polarizing media, class segregation, and urban life that reduces public space and shared community rhythms.

The third fracture is injustice. Peace cannot grow where people feel permanently excluded or humiliated. Occupational security treats justice as a necessary value because pre-existing systemic

“To build lasting peace, we must name what is breaking it. Pakistan's insecurity is not only the result of “bad people” or “bad politics.” It is also produced by conditions that repeatedly damage daily life and dignity. Occupational security is useful here because it defines security as protection of safe, peaceful, dignified life through daily occupations, and it explicitly recognizes that crises and long-term structural harms can make security increasingly difficult”

“Pakistan does not need to treat these values as abstract. They can become a national peace program and we can set ourselves as an example for the rest of the world to follow”



injustices and power structures worsen insecurity and require redress for equitable distribution of security. In Pakistan, injustice is not only legal. It is experienced in uneven access to clean water, safe housing, fair education, dignified work, and protection under law. When these are unequal, resentment becomes a fuel that can ignite conflicts.

The fourth fracture is truth collapse. A society cannot heal if it cannot agree on reality. The occupational security framework insists on authenticity with accuracy because misinformation and manipulation can distort public understanding and allow harmful agendas to advance,

especially during crises. In Pakistan, where rumor and propaganda often inflame fear and hatred, truth-telling becomes a peace practice. When people know they are being lied to, trust collapses, and trust is the soil peace grows in.

The fifth fracture is environmental violence. Occupational security explicitly includes non-humans and life-sustaining elements such as air, water, energy, and land, highlighting that humans are part of nature. When Pakistan's environment is degraded, insecurity multiplies through heat, floods, disease, crop stress, displacement, and resource conflict. Environmental harm thus

becomes a generator of social tension, not merely an environmental “issue.”

These fractures produce a society where peace becomes fragile even without formal war. The point is not to despair. The point is to diagnose. If we name the fractures, we can design repair.

The occupational security roadmap: turning values into national peace-building

Occupational security offers a simple but powerful shift. It says security must protect daily life, not only borders. It defines occupational security as the interrelated, sustainable, just, and compassionate protection of humans' and non-humans' right to a safe, peaceful, dignified life, through solutions that are authentic and accurate. It also states that its five interrelated values are sustainability, justice, peace, compassion, and authenticity with accuracy.

Pakistan does not need to treat these values as abstract. They can become a national peace program and we can set ourselves as an example for the rest of the world to follow.

Compassion as infrastructure

Compassion is not only charity. It is the design of systems that prevent humiliation. It means clinics that treat the poor with respect, schools that protect children rather than shame them, policing that protects communities rather than terrorizes them, and public services that do not force people into desperation. The occupational security paper describes compassion as necessary to heal divides created by isolation and division, and insists compassion must extend to non-humans through conservation in an era of environmental destruction. Compassion therefore becomes a foundation for both social peace and ecological peace.

In Islamic spirituality, compassion is not a weakness. It is strength. It is a sign of moral maturity. A nation that cultivates compassion becomes harder to manipulate into hatred.

Justice as prevention

Justice is prevention. It prevents conflict by reducing grievances. Occupational security emphasizes collective justice, including social and climate justice, as central to equitable security. For Pakistan, this means prioritizing the rights of the vulnerable in policy design. It means that the burdens of climate impacts, pollution, and economic shocks cannot be dumped onto the poor while the powerful remain insulated.



Justice is also practical in conflict prevention. It means resolving local disputes fairly, protecting minorities from scapegoating, ensuring women's safety as a non-negotiable condition of social stability, and creating real pathways for youth to find dignity through education and employment.

Peace as daily life

Occupational security does not reduce peace to diplomacy. It sees peace as harmony and the absence

of violence, conflict, and tension, and it emphasizes that peace improves quality of life and strengthens social cohesion. For Pakistan, peace means making daily occupations safe: commuting, studying, working, worshipping, caring, and resting. If people cannot do these in safety, society cannot claim peace.

Pakistan's role in peace efforts beyond its borders, including the Iran war mediation reported by Reuters, shows that peace is achievable through dialogue and restraint. That same ethic must

apply internally, in community disputes, political discourse, and governance.

Sustainability as security

Sustainability is not an environmental slogan. It is security for future generations.

Occupational security notes that sustainability aims to sustain life long-term and stresses that sustainable ways of living must be

harmonious with each other and nature. When Pakistan invests in clean air, water protection, climate adaptation, and biodiversity, it is reducing future conflict over resources and reducing displacement and disease.

Authenticity with accuracy as national trust

Finally, authenticity with accuracy is the antidote to manipulation.

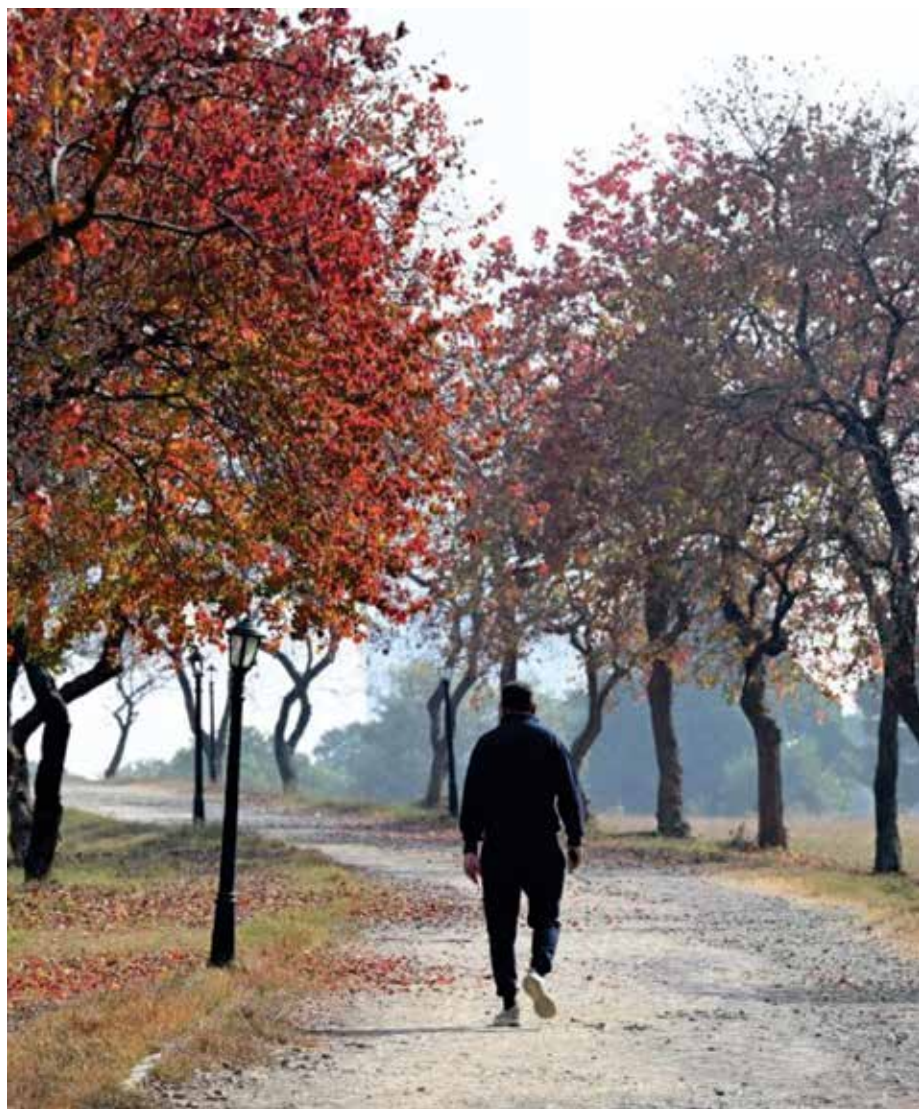
Occupational security calls for full disclosure and transparency from authorities about security solutions so people can question motivations, efficacy, and long-term impacts. In Pakistan, this means truth in governance, truth in media, truth in statistics, and truth in public messaging. Without truth, people become cynical and polarised. With truth, trust can be rebuilt.

In the next pages, we will show how this roadmap applies in concrete domains: education and youth peace-building, media and public discourse, environmental restoration as peace work, and Pakistan's role as a peace actor beyond its borders while healing peace within.

Youth, education, and the inner foundations of peace

Pakistan is a young country. That is either our greatest strength or our greatest risk. If young people grow up with dignity, opportunity, and ethical grounding, they become a stabilizing force. If they grow up with humiliation, hopelessness, and constant exposure to hate, they become easy targets for violence, exploitation, and social breakdown.

Occupational security helps us understand why. It treats security as the protection of the right to a safe, peaceful, dignified life, including daily activities, and it highlights how crises and structural harms restrict life and occupations, especially for vulnerable groups. When education



Protecting nature is not separate from peace—it is central to human security and long-term stability



Photo Credit: Brookings.edu

Empowered youth, equipped with knowledge and values, are the strongest foundation for a peaceful future

becomes inaccessible, unsafe, or disconnected from real opportunities, young people face occupational insecurity at the very stage when they should be building their future.

A peace-building education in Pakistan must therefore do three things.

First, it must teach truth and critical thinking. Authenticity with accuracy is not only for governments. It must be taught in classrooms as a life skill. When young people can detect manipulation, they become resistant to propaganda, conspiracy culture, and hatred.

Second, it must teach compassion as character. Occupational security describes compassion as necessary to heal divides created by disconnection and isolation. In Islamic spirituality, compassion is a core expression of faith, not a soft emotion. Schools and universities should cultivate practices that normalize empathy, service, and respect, especially toward those who are different or vulnerable. This includes disability inclusion, anti-bullying cultures, and community service that is not performative but relational.

Third, it must teach justice and responsibility. Peace is not achieved by telling young people to

“be nice.” Peace is achieved when people understand fairness, rights, duties, and accountability. Occupational security emphasizes justice as central because insecurity worsens when structural injustices are ignored. Youth must be taught how to disagree without dehumanizing, how to demand rights without becoming oppressive, and how to repair harm when it occurs.

A feasible proposal for Pakistan is to make peace-building part of civic education through three modules: conflict resolution skills, ethical media literacy, and environmental stewardship. This is not a

“A feasible proposal for Pakistan is to make peace-building part of civic education through three modules: conflict resolution skills, ethical media literacy, and environmental stewardship. This is not a distraction from academics. It is training for a stable society”

distraction from academics. It is training for a stable society.

Environmental repair as peace work: harmonizing with nature to reduce conflict

In Pakistan, environmental collapse is a direct driver of insecurity. Heat stress increases aggression and health burdens. Floods destroy livelihoods and push migration and displacement. Water scarcity deepens local conflict. Smog damages health and productivity. These are not separate issues from peace. They are peace issues.

Occupational security is explicit that humans are part of nature and that security must include non-humans and life-sustaining elements such as air, water, energy, and land. It also argues that compassion must extend to non-humans through conservation, because ecosystem degradation threatens non-human species and human survival together. This is a spiritual truth as well as a practical one. When we destroy the conditions that sustain life, we create desperation, and

desperation breeds conflict.

Pakistan can treat environmental repair as a national peace strategy through four actions.

First, protect water as a peace asset. Water governance must be transparent and fair, because water injustice creates grievance

quickly. Community-level water protection, rainwater harvesting, wetland conservation, and responsible industrial discharge enforcement reduce both disease and social conflict.

Second, restore urban shade and breathable air. Tree canopy, green corridors, and enforcement against burning and toxic emissions are not beautification. They are protection of life. A cooler, cleaner city is a calmer city, and it reduces the daily stress that makes communities reactive.

Third, rebuild disaster resilience with justice. The poor suffer most from floods, heat, and disease. Occupational security insists security must be equitable, and



justice must be central. That means disaster planning must prioritize informal settlements, floodplain communities, and vulnerable workers. It also means relocation, compensation, and recovery must be handled with dignity rather than coercion.

Fourth, reconnect people with nature as part of inner peace. Pakistan's spiritual culture already values reflection, gratitude, and humility. Green public spaces, safe parks, and nature access are not only environmental. They support mental well-being, community cohesion, and healthier daily rhythms.

Environmental peace also requires truth. Occupational security argues for authenticity and

accuracy, including transparency and full disclosure from authorities about security solutions. Pakistan needs honest reporting of air quality, water safety, heat deaths, flood risks, and environmental enforcement, without hiding behind slogans. Truth is not embarrassing. Truth is how repair begins.

In the next pages, we will connect Pakistan's internal peace-building to its role beyond borders, showing how a nation can contribute to regional peace while also building a domestic peace culture rooted in Islamic spirituality, compassion, justice, and environmental responsibility.

Pakistan's peace role beyond borders must be matched by peace practice at home

Pakistan's diplomacy and mediation efforts during the Iran war have placed the country in a visible role as a bridge-builder in a tense region. Reuters described regional work involving Pakistan toward a lasting US–Iran peace framework, reflecting how urgently the world needs de-escalation and restraint. (reuters.com) But lasting credibility in peacemaking comes when a nation's moral language matches lived reality inside its own borders.

This is not a criticism. It is an invitation. Pakistan can become a stronger global peace actor by becoming a clearer domestic peace culture.

Occupational security gives us the structure for this. It defines security as the sustainable, just, and compassionate protection of humans' and non-humans' right to a safe, peaceful, and dignified life, through solutions that are authentic and accurate. It begins from sanctity of life. And it insists that humans are part of nature, and that life-sustaining elements such as air, water, energy, and land must be protected.

When we apply this lens, we see that peace is built through daily conditions. Peace is built when children can learn safely, when families can breathe and drink without harm, when people can work with dignity, when women can move without fear, when disputes are resolved fairly, and when nature is treated as an amanah rather than a resource to destroy. These are not "soft" ideals. These are the foundations of stability.

Islamic spirituality strengthens this framework, because it turns peace into worshipful responsibility. It reminds us that life is sacred, that oppression is forbidden, that justice is commanded, that mercy is strength, and that arrogance and cruelty destroy societies. It also reminds us that the natural world is not separate from faith. It is a sign and a trust.

So, the practical message for Pakistan is simple. If we want to contribute to peace beyond borders, we must build peace within by making compassion and justice real in how institutions treat





Peace becomes possible when humanity chooses unity, compassion, and harmony with each other and with nature

people, how media speaks, how communities handle disagreement, and how development treats the environment. Peace does not begin in conferences. It begins in character, in systems, and in the protection of daily life.

A final call: unity, compassion, and harmony for global peace

Pakistan's future security cannot be built through division, contempt, or environmental neglect. A lasting peace project requires unity at three levels.

Unity within, by returning to inner discipline. This means resisting hatred, refusing cynicism, and strengthening the heart through

mercy, patience, and truthfulness. It means recognizing that anger without justice becomes destruction, and justice without compassion becomes cruelty. The most dangerous poverty is moral poverty, because it can turn a society into a place where people stop caring who suffers.

Unity among Muslims, by reviving the ethics of brotherhood and the seriousness of harm. This does not mean uniformity or denial of differences. It means refusing sectarian hatred, refusing dehumanization, and remembering that no nation and no community becomes strong by humiliating its own people. The Ummah's strength is not only in slogans. It is in Adl, Amanah, and rahmah, or justice, trust, and mercy, carried into daily

life. When Muslims embody these ethics, they become a healing force in the world rather than a fragmented body.

Unity with humanity, by defending dignity beyond tribe and border. War has taught the world that when one region burns, other regions inhale the smoke. The pain of civilians, the displacement of families, and the suffering of children are not foreign problems. They shape the moral health of the world. Pakistan's peace efforts abroad should be strengthened by a clear commitment to human dignity at home, and by a refusal to normalize cruelty anywhere.

And unity with nature, because the planet is not a stage for human conflict. It is the life support of

“Islamic spirituality strengthens this framework, because it turns peace into worshipful responsibility. It reminds us that life is sacred, that oppression is forbidden, that justice is commanded, that mercy is strength, and that arrogance and cruelty destroy societies. It also reminds us that the natural world is not separate from faith. It is a sign and a trust”



every future. Occupational security insists that compassion must extend to non-humans through conservation, because ecosystem destruction threatens non-human species and human survival together. Climate crises are now producing displacement, disease risk, and resource conflict. If we want global peace, we must reduce environmental violence, restore ecosystems, and treat water, air, and land as sacred trusts.

This is the meaning of harmonizing within, with each other, and with nature. It is the path out of endless cycles of fear and violence for good. Pakistan can model this path by building policies and social norms that protect life in daily reality, and by carrying that moral credibility into its regional peace role.

The final message of this cover story is not complicated. Peace becomes possible when we treat life as sacred, when we make compassion and justice non-negotiable, when we speak truthfully, and when we stop fighting nature as if we can win. If Pakistan commits to these values, it can help build peace within its own streets and homes and also contribute to a more stable and humane world. ■

Birds of Life

Birds are unique and life giving in their own ways. Their conservation, especially across Pakistan is direly needed.



Bald eagle



Kingfisher



Bulbul

The world of birds is fantastic. It is full of wonder in shape with chirping calls, singing and romantic displays including the ethereal shows of gorgeous plumes, exquisite combination of design, superb arrangement of feathers

and the placing of color producing units which, although in close proximity never err in producing feather of specific design color and size that the Almighty had painted with moving finger and pen that is a brush at one time and a quill at

another.

Next time when you see a bulbul or a parakeet cooing and chirping



Parrot



Owl – A hunter of the night

on the branches of the tree in front of your window, any attention to the arrangement of the feathers in the neck on the wings, and on the head and you will know what I am hinting it. There will be wings that will make a whirring sound in flight, a loud *shain shain* by the other or no sound at all by the other



A symphony of color and design

group, as in the owl in search of a lurking rat. The wings of the owl, although in flight, beating rapidly to keep the bird poised in the air, will be soundless so that its prey will not know about it. The attack will be in total silence. When the vulture or kite takes off, its beating of the wings for a lift from the ground will be audible even at twenty feet. The wings at fifty to eighty beats per second in a hummingbird will be inaudible, even to the bird itself!

And so on, the caravan of strange and the eerie goes on endlessly in the air, in the silent world of the sea and in dreaded desert. The mind of man boggles in amazement

at the creative ingenuity of the Almighty, the greatest artist of the universe who has also created birds that cannot fly at all; and yet they sing, hop, run and can outrun a galloping horse. That was necessary because the wilderness where they live is full of blood thirsty predators that hunt day and night.

Among them are winged members of prey that are a dignified lot because they do not eat the dead – a very different creation far above the repugnant brotherhood that does this act.

Over fifty species of these proud elites are spread over the globe, some of which eat the fish that they catch without giving time to the wily fish to dive down. The bald eagle – the national bird of America is one I am hinting at.

You may have seen the colorful kingfisher poised stationery in the air, scanning the water below for a minnow where it will drop and swoops like an F-16 fighter jet, enter the water if necessary and emerge with quivering prey in its beak.

One of the branch and members in style and skill is kestrel that can poise itself in the air like a helicopter, turning right and left in search of a mouse on which it will dive, catch it, fly back, perch on a branch, and gobble it as if it were a tasty pizza from a six-star hotel. I have spent hours watching this fascinating bird that does not care whether it is being watched and keeps on searching in the wild in the bush, in grassy patches, in

“ The world of feathered community is composed of the clean, the drab, the lovely, and not necessarily beauty from our point of view where some can sing, prance like playful kids, many can fly, dive, soar, swoop, weave like an expert weaver, usurp, dig – absolutely amusing – activities like us and not at all like us ”



Falcon

shrubs and perches in a shady tree to rest, plan for the evening trip and snooze because it is warm outside. It resumes in the evening when it is cool enough. Why bother about storing the food? I can see up to the horizon from my perch high in the tree and I hear the chorus of *chun chun* at night; so, I imagine there must be many more. You know I cannot count because I never went to a school; so, my way of estimating is little, many and many more.

On the other hand, I have seen vultures eating, snatching meat from the carcasses and gobbling until it cannot take off. At that

miserable stage when it will sit on a nearby tree and throw back morsel after morsel until it is light enough to take off.

The world of feathered community is composed of the clean, the drab, the lovely, and not necessarily beauty from our point of view where some can sing, prance like playful kids, many can fly, dive, soar, swoop, weave like an expert weaver, usurp, dig – absolutely amusing – activities like us and not at all like us.



Shrike

When in romantic mood a male will dance like amorous Romeo for hours before a bevy of admiring, smiling, belles, watching him with sly glance, sing, whistle, like a canary, imitate calls of different birds, including the resonant trumpeting of the mighty sarus crane – high above, in the lower clouds.

I will urge my readers to excuse my fluttering memory, hopping here and there, without caring that I was to describe the birds that

hate the dead; but I love nature and when I enter their realm I get astray, pulled by the magnetic domain of the feathered world. They are a pleasing lot and if you listen or watch the form through your window, you too will get lost in admiring environ like me.

Birds of prey have fascinated man from time immemorial for their

which the commoner will not witness. Here it is: on reaching the target area the hooded falcons are placed on their perch and held steadily by the attendant. When a houbara is flushed out the hood is removed at which it adjusts its sight and on locating the query, takes off. The houbara flies slower than the falcon and soon enough

reward. Before the hunt the falcon is kept hungry for twenty-four hours. The small piece of meat is not enough, and the hood is placed again on the head of the bird, the hood replaced and the bird goes back on the perch again.

This process is repeated until the targeted number of birds have been hunted for the day. At the camp, the gizzards of houbara are wrapped in aluminum foils and tossed in cinders. The sheikhs had spent a fortune for this delicacy which, as the myth goes, acts as an



Houbara

ability to hunt game birds like partridges, houbara and pigeons in flight. The Arabs zoom on particular species of falcon like peregrine and pay fabulous money to purchase them to hunt game birds and houbara every year, irrespective of the international ban on killing of houbara. Their logic is simple when the country's bureaucracy invites them, why should they refuse such hospitality?

I have been with the Arab sheikhs on their falconry trip, the like of

the falcon slashes the bird with its talons, the injured bird falls on the ground with falcon on the top. There are shouts of joy and encouragement for the falcon of its expertise.

During the chase, a jeep races to prevent the falcon from tearing the bird to pieces. A small piece of the houbara usually from the brisket area is removed and offered to the excited and hungry falcon as a



Dove

aphrodisiac, the like of which no man-made drug can provide.

In this group of birds are eagles, falcons, buzzards, hawks, shrikes – all killers that do not touch the dead. The list is, however, long and amusing so I will request the readers to search for details of a particular species because all are interesting studies that know no end.■

Landscaping without water

Xeriscaping is a fancy word for gardening with as little water as possible or, depending on the selection of plants, with no water at all; which makes it eminently suitable for maintaining a garden in a world running dry.

This style of gardening need not be a growing area full of nothing but cacti and

succulents — although it is recommended that they are included in beds/containers of their own — as a surprising number of lovely flowering plants are quite capable, once established, of thriving on very small amounts of precious water, preferably of the recycled kind.

There are some basic tricks to creating a sustainable xeriscape garden:

1. Soil preparation is of utmost importance. Irrespective of whether soil is high on sand or is predominantly clay, digging in copious amounts of compost, leaf mold, fully rotted manure or a combination of all three — with an emphasis on organic, of course — before planting anything is a must. Amending existing soil in this way adds a varied array of essential nutrients, encourages microorganisms to work to their full capacity, increases beneficial soil life of all kinds and vastly improves the water retention properties of the soil.



Aloes in bloom



“A xeriscape garden, suitable for water-scarce environments, uses local, drought-resistant plants in efficient ways”

2. Garden layout is equally important. Plants with the same growing requirements should be grouped together. Some plants prefer shade to direct sun, others enjoy partial shade; some may need watering just once a week, others may need no water after the initial watering in phase. It goes without saying, tall plants should be at the back, smaller ones in front. Such groupings make for easier management and an irrigation schedule, where needed, that is uncomplicated to implement.
3. Careful selection of, preferably, indigenous plant varieties that are known to require very little, if any, water with these plant groups playing major roles: Cacti and succulents, drought-tolerant shrubs and creepers, plants that thrive in desert or near- desert conditions, other drought-tolerant species that bear beautiful flowers have eye-catching foliage, with ornamental, dry-soil, grasses



Euphorbia plants

for added interest.

Giving priority to perennial (permanent) plant species over purely annual/seasonal ones is preferable but, admittedly, seasonal flowers, even in pots, can add distinct splashes of vibrant colour that may otherwise be missed — these though will, no doubt, require regular watering.

Mulching around plants to conserve soil moisture, reduce evaporation, continually feed the soil as it breaks down, suppressing weeds in the process, is highly important. The mulch — a subject detailed in this column quite a few times in the past — being laid around the plants without actually coming into direct contact with their stems — should be two to three inches deep and maintained at this level via topping up whenever necessary.

Ideally, a xeriscape garden contains very little, if any, lawn area and, if there is such an area, it is one which can be, and is, in regular use, not simply looked at.

Top plants for creating a sustainable xeriscape garden

Cacti and succulents: These two groups of plants contain literally hundreds of different varieties with extremely varied growth habits. Most of them also produce stunning flowers when they are mature and others have lovely colored foliage. Some can reach gigantic sizes and others have creeping habits that make them excellent ground-cover material. Examples: the Opuntia cactus or



Flowering Shrubs



Some cacti and succulents are huge

Prickly pear can easily attain a height of 15 feet and a similar spread, although it does take quite a few years for it to do this. It bears golden-colored, daisy-like flowers in spring and early



Rudbeckia

summer, and these are followed by a delicious fruit, known as an Indian fig.

Opuntias have both large and small thorns, some as fine as hair, so it must be handled with extreme care and leather gloves. Agaves



Ornamental grasses

and Aloes are found in sizes ranging from very small to very tall. Many have variegated leaves and they tend to produce white, yellow or red spikes of bloom. Lithopes — living stones — are tiny plants that resemble intricately patterned pebbles until, that is, they suddenly burst into eye-catching flowers. Sedum varieties tend to be rock lovers, trailing masses of predominantly pink or yellow blooms down or over rockeries and other rock formations. The well-known Euphorbia needs no introduction

and are more drought-tolerant than many people seem to think.

Shrubs and creepers/climbers:

Yuccas deserve a prominent place in any xeriscape garden. They can reach over 12 feet in height and slightly less in width when they reach maturity. Their creamy flower spikes are a glorious sight and bees love them.

Whilst poisonous, Oleander is so pretty that it would be a shame not to include it here. Its perfumed flowers may be pink, deep red, white or peach and in single or double form. Never forget though that all of its parts are poisonous and please wear gloves when handling it.

Then there are the following to consider:

Lantana, Buddleia, Russian sage, Echiums, Bougainvillea, Adenium, lavender, blue globe-thistle, rosemary, Japanese flowering quince and Juniper.

Perennial flowers: Gaillardia, Rudbeckia, Echinacea, Limonium, Yarrow, Verbena, Wallflowers, curry plant, Sedum varieties, Rose campion, Valerian, Euphorbia, Coreopsis, African daisies, Liatris along with annual Portulaca and Californian poppies.

Foliage plants: Quite a few of the aforementioned plants, especially in the succulent department, double up as attractive foliage plants on an all-year-round basis.

Ornamental grasses: Pampas grass, blue fescue and wheat grass are just three of the many grasses that are perfectly at home in a xeriscape garden. ■

Pak players dominate Subh-e-Nau ITF Juniors 2026

Continuing its tradition of developing tennis in Pakistan, Subh-e-Nau organized the International Tennis Federation (ITF) from 13-17 April 2026 which featured local and international players who delivered memorable high-quality tennis for all to enjoy and appreciate.



Group photo of winners and runners-up with Chief Guest Brigadier Saleem, Director Administration of Mari Energies, PTF Officials and Chairperson, Subh-e-Nau, Mrs Shahida Kausar Farooq

Subh-e-Nau (SN) holds a dedication for supporting development and access to tennis for all, in hosting a range of international, national, and local tennis events for more than three decades. Since its inception in 1990, the organization has

remained committed to identifying and promoting emerging talent, providing young athletes in Pakistan with opportunities to compete at both national and international levels. Continuing this longstanding tradition, SN organized the

International Tennis Federation (ITF) Pakistan Junior International Tennis Championship (Leg-II) in mid-April 2026 at the Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF) Tennis Complex in Islamabad. The event was successfully held from 13 to 17



Chairperson, Subh-e-Nau, Mrs Shahida Kausar Farooq interacting with players during the opening ceremony of the Subh-e-Nau ITF Juniors 2026, encouraging sportsmanship and team spirit

April 2026, bringing together promising young tennis players from around the world in a highly competitive international environment. Once again, the championship reinforced Pakistan's growing reputation as a reliable and capable host of international junior tennis events. The tournament featured 41 players in total, including 22 boys and 19 girls, representing 15

countries: Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Singapore, Japan, China, Australia, Russia, Poland, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Hong Kong, the Netherlands, and Thailand. Despite global travel disruptions and regional geopolitical tensions in the Middle East that led to a few withdrawals, the event maintained a strong international field and a high level of competitive spirit

throughout.

The championship officially commenced on 13 April 2026 with an opening ceremony at the PTF Tennis Complex. Mrs. Shahida Kausar Farooq, Chief Editor of Monthly Subh-e-Nau magazine, inaugurated the event as chief guest. In her address, she expressed satisfaction over the strong international participation and appreciated the Pakistan



Players in action at the Subh-e-Nau ITF Juniors 2026

Tennis Federation for its efficient arrangements and smooth conduct of the tournament. She highlighted that SN has been actively engaged in promoting tennis and youth development initiatives for over three decades, contributing meaningfully to sports development in Pakistan. Mrs. Farooq emphasized that ITF Junior events serve as an important platform for local players to gain exposure against international opponents without

the need to travel abroad. She noted that such competitions help bridge experience gaps and elevate the competitive standards of Pakistani players. Recalling the event's legacy, she mentioned past participants such as Sania Mirza and other international players who went on to achieve global recognition, expressing confidence that the current edition would similarly help nurture future tennis stars. As the tournament progressed into

the main rounds, the matches held on 16 April 2026 produced intense and closely contested encounters across all categories. In the Boys' Singles semifinals, Pakistan's Mikaeel Ali Baig delivered a strong performance, defeating compatriot Abubakar Talha in a hard-fought three-set match, 7-6(2), 6-7(5), 6-4. In the other semifinal, Sri Lanka's Ganuka Fernando overcame Pakistan's Amir Mazari 6-1, 6-4, setting up a Pakistan–Sri Lanka final.



Players in action at the Subh-e-Nau ITF Juniors 2026

The Girls' Singles semifinals featured dominant performances from Chinese and Russian players. Varvara Rubtsova of Russia defeated China's Yijia Wang 6-4, 6-1, while Zhiyu Zhou of China secured her place in the final with a 6-3, 6-3 victory over compatriot Zihan Feng.

In the doubles categories, the competition remained equally strong. The Boys' Doubles final lineup saw Pakistan's Mikaeel Ali Baig and Ahtesham Humayun

defeat fellow Pakistanis Zohaib Afzal Malik and M. Yahya 6-3, 6-4. On the other side, Sri Lanka's Ganuka Fernando and Hong Kong's Jayden Park overcame the Japan-Hong Kong pair Jamie Chen and Masamune Matsumoto 6-2, 7-5 to reach the final. In the Girls' Doubles semifinals, Chinese and mixed Asian-European pairs delivered impressive performances, with Varvara Rubtsova (Russia) and Safia Urazalina (Kazakhstan) advancing to the final after a

closely contested win.

The final day on 17 April 2026 featured thrilling championship matches. Pakistan's Mikaeel Ali Baig emerged as the standout performer of the tournament, clinching the Boys' Singles title with a commanding 6-1, 6-2 victory over Sri Lanka's Ganuka Fernando. He further strengthened his remarkable run by partnering with Ahtesham Humayun to secure the Boys' Doubles title, defeating the Sri Lankan-Hong Kong pair



Winners and Runner-ups of Subh-e-Nau ITF Juniors 2026 receiving trophies at the award distribution ceremony

“Mrs Farooq emphasised that ITF Junior events serve as an important platform for local players to gain exposure against international opponents without the need to travel abroad. She noted that such competitions help bridge experience gaps and elevate the competitive standards of Pakistani players”

6-1, 6-2.

In the Girls' Singles final, China's Zhiyu Zhou displayed exceptional form to defeat Russia's Varvara Rubtsova 6-2, 6-1, securing the championship title. The Girls' Doubles final proved to be the most closely contested match of the event, where Russia's Varvara Rubtsova and Kazakhstan's Safiia Urazalina overcame China's Ai Teng and Zhiyu Zhou in a gripping encounter, winning 2-6, 6-1, (10-7).

The closing ceremony was graced by Brigadier Saleem, Director Administration of Mari Energies, as the chief guest, while Mrs. Shahida Kausar Farooq attended as guest of honor. Col. Gul Rehman, Director C&S of the Pakistan Tennis Federation, also participated and distributed prizes among winners and runners-up. The ceremony was well attended by players, coaches, parents, and tennis enthusiasts, reflecting strong public engagement and growing interest in the sport.

Sponsors including Bank Alfalah, Serena Hotel Islamabad, Mari Energies, Arif Habib Group of Companies, and SN were acknowledged for their continued support in promoting junior tennis in Pakistan.■



Mrs Shahida Kausar Farooq presenting Honorary Shield to Brigadier Saleem, Director Administration of Mari Energies at Prize Distribution Ceremony



Mikaeel Ali Baig with his winning trophies



Trophies for the Winners and Runner-ups on display for the Subh-e-Nau ITF Juniors 2026

SN continues National Plantation Year at ITF Championship Event

Contributing to a greener and sustainable future, Brigadier Saleem, Director Administration of Mari Energies and Chief Guest Subh-e-Nau ITF Juniors 2026, along with Chairperson of Subh-e-Nau and the tennis players participated in a tree plantation drive under the Green Pakistan initiative.







HEAT is not only uncomfortable
It can be **DANGEROUS:**

Here's a guide to avoiding heat stress

Pakistan is facing unusually high temperatures across multiple regions, with official advisories warning of severe heatwave conditions in parts of Sindh, southern Punjab, and Baluchistan, and spillover risks into central Punjab and parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Heat is now a predictable public health hazard, and the safest response is preparation, smart routines, and early action.

What heat stress is, and why it becomes an emergency fast

Heat stress happens when the body cannot cool itself properly. Our main cooling system is sweating. If the air is extremely hot, humid, or if you are dehydrated, your body struggles to release heat. Heat stress can worsen quickly, especially when people keep working outdoors, travel in crowded transport, or stay inside rooms with poor airflow. The World Health Organization notes that heat can affect everyone, but risk rises sharply for people over 65, infants and young children, people with heart, lung, or kidney conditions, people with disabilities, and those living alone. Outdoor workers are also at higher risk because prolonged exposure and physical exertion raise body temperature.

Know the warning signs early

Heat illness often begins with mild symptoms and then escalates. Heat

exhaustion commonly includes heavy sweating, headache, dizziness, nausea, weakness, muscle cramps, and fainting. If untreated, heat exhaustion can progress to heat stroke, which is life-threatening. Heat stroke warning signs include confusion or unusual behaviour, very high body temperature, hot skin (which may be dry or still sweating), seizures, and loss of consciousness. Heat stroke is a medical emergency. Do not wait.

The most important rule: reduce exposure during peak heat

In severe heat, the most protective habit is to avoid the hottest hours. If you can, limit outdoor activity during the high-sun window, and shift errands, shopping, and exercise to early morning or later evening. If you must be outdoors for work, use a work-rest rhythm:

work in shorter blocks and rest in shade regularly. Never “push through” dizziness, nausea, or heavy fatigue.

Keep your body cool

The WHO recommends simple cooling steps that work even without expensive equipment: wear light, loose clothing, take cool showers, and cool the skin with a damp cloth or wet light clothing. In Pakistani homes, these methods matter. A wet cloth on the back of the neck, wrists, and forehead can reduce discomfort. A fan helps, but when the room is extremely hot, you still need hydration and cooling of the body.

Hydration that actually protects you

Dehydration is the fastest path to heat illness. The WHO recommends drinking water regularly and aiming for at least 2



to 3 litres per day for many adults, more if you are sweating heavily. Do not wait until you feel thirsty. Use simple signs. If urine is dark or urination becomes less frequent, you are likely dehydrated. For heavy sweating, oral rehydration solution can help restore salts. This is especially important for outdoor workers and for children after exertion.

Special protection for high-risk people

Children and older adults: Ensure frequent water intake, light clothing, and cooler rooms. Never leave children in parked cars, even briefly. People with heart disease, diabetes, kidney disease, or on diuretics: Heat can worsen dehydration and strain. Follow your doctor's advice, keep water accessible, and avoid peak heat. Pregnant women: Heat can increase dehydration risk and fatigue. Prioritize rest, hydration, and shade.

Home safety in extreme heat

Many heat illnesses happen indoors, especially in poorly ventilated rooms, top-floor flats, and homes with metal roofs.

Create a “cool room”

Choose the shadiest room, keep curtains closed during the day, and use a fan there. If you have limited electricity, focus your cooling efforts on one room rather than trying to cool the whole house.

Night ventilation strategy

If outdoor air becomes cooler at night, open windows to flush out heat, then close earlier in the morning as temperatures rise. This can lower indoor heat build-up.

Cooling with water safely

Cool showers or sponge baths can reduce body temperature. (World Health Organization) For elders,

ensure bathroom safety to prevent falls.

Workplace safety for outdoor workers

Heat protection is not only personal responsibility. It is workplace responsibility.

Employers should provide

Safe drinking water on site, shaded rest areas, and scheduled breaks. Heat illness increases when workers are pushed to meet targets without rest. Even simple shade and water access can prevent emergency events.

Protective clothing

Use a wide-brim hat or head covering, breathable cotton clothing, and light colours. Avoid heavy synthetic fabrics that trap heat.





Buddy system

Workers should watch each other for confusion, unsteady walking, or sudden fatigue, because heat stroke can reduce self-awareness.

What to do if someone shows heat illness symptoms

Heat exhaustion response

Move the person to shade or a cooler place. Give water in small sips. Loosen clothing. Cool the skin with wet cloths and fan airflow.

Heat stroke response

Call emergency medical help immediately. Move the person to a cool place, remove extra clothing, and cool the body fast using wet cloths, ice packs to neck/armpits/groin if available, and fan airflow. Do not delay. Heat stroke is life-threatening.

Food and daily habits that reduce heat burden

“ Simple cooling techniques such as wet cloths, cool showers, and shaded rest areas can significantly reduce body temperature and provide effective relief even in high-temperature environments ”

Eat lighter during peak heat

Heavy, oily meals increase heat load and discomfort. Choose lighter meals, fruits, yogurt, and watery foods.

Avoid dehydration traps

Limit excessive caffeine and very sugary drinks during peak heat because they can worsen dehydration for some people.

Check in on others

The WHO urges checking vulnerable people regularly, especially those living alone. In Pakistan's community culture, this is one of the most powerful safety actions: a quick visit, a glass of water, and a reminder to rest can save a life.

A final safety message for Pakistan's heat season

In summary, heatwaves are now part of Pakistan's reality. Official advisories show that extreme heat is not confined to one city or one week. The safest households and communities will be those that plan early, hydrate consistently, reduce exposure during peak hours, and treat warning signs seriously. Heat illness is preventable. The key is to act before the body reaches a crisis point. ■

Spring into Summer: Eco-Living for a Hotter Pakistan

Pakistan's spring is beautiful, but it is also a warning. The sun grows sharper, evenings turn warmer, and many families can already feel the pressure of the coming months: higher electricity bills, more water stress, more dust, more heat fatigue, and the anxiety of power cuts in peak season. Eco-living in Pakistan is not a luxury hobby. It is a practical way to protect health, reduce costs, and lower the strain on neighborhoods and cities.

Shade is the cheapest cooling tool

The most effective cooling is the cooling you never have to buy. Begin with shade, especially for west-facing walls and windows that receive harsh afternoon sun. A simple cloth shade outside a window can block heat before it enters. Bamboo blinds, a small awning, or a trellis with a climbing plant can reduce indoor heat more than many people expect. Do not wait until June. If shade is installed in spring, the house stays cooler throughout summer.

Roof heat is the hidden enemy

In much of Pakistan, the roof receives the strongest sunlight all day. If the roof heats up, the whole home heats up. A practical spring step is to whitewash or use a reflective roof coating where appropriate. If a family has access to shade netting, a raised net layer above part of the roof can reduce direct heat. Roof insulation is even better where affordable, but even a basic reflective approach can reduce indoor discomfort.

Ventilation with timing, not just open windows

Fresh air matters, but Pakistan's summer air often carries dust and pollution. The safest approach is timed ventilation. Open windows



This Eco-Living guide focuses on steps that matter most for spring and early summer: staying cooler without fighting the sun, using

water wisely before scarcity becomes severe, reducing waste that worsens floods and air pollution, and harvesting rain when it comes.

early in the morning when air is cooler and generally cleaner, then close them as heat and dust rise. If cross-ventilation is possible, open windows on opposite sides briefly to flush warm air out. In single-facing apartments, a small exhaust fan in the kitchen or washroom can help push hot air out.

Kitchen heat management

In summer, the kitchen can become the hottest room. Cook early in the morning if possible, use lids to shorten cooking time, and shift some meals to lighter options that require less stove heat. If you have a balcony or semi-open space, keep it shaded and use it wisely for preparing ingredients.

Cooling habits that protect health

Heat is not only uncomfortable. It is dangerous. Children, older adults, people with heart disease or diabetes, and outdoor workers face higher risk. Drink water regularly, avoid heavy outdoor tasks at midday, wear light cotton clothing, and keep a wet cloth available for quick cooling. Check on neighbors who live alone. Eco-living is also community care.

Spring is the time to fix leaks

Most households start caring about water only when it becomes scarce. The smarter time is spring. Fix dripping taps, repair leaking pipes, and check overhead tanks. A small leak can waste a surprising amount of water over weeks.

Build a simple water-saving routine

Use a bucket for washing where

possible rather than running water continuously. Reuse clean rinse water from vegetables for plants or floor cleaning. If you have a small garden, water it early morning or evening to reduce evaporation.

Rainwater harvesting: start small, but start now

Rainwater harvesting is one of the most practical eco-living habits for Pakistan because rain often arrives suddenly, then disappears for long stretches. You do not need a complicated system. A clean drum or container placed under a downpipe can collect water for cleaning, gardening, and other non-drinking uses. If you want to go one step further, use a simple first-flush method: let the first few minutes of rain run off (it can carry roof dust), then begin collecting. Keep containers covered to prevent mosquitoes. Use the stored rainwater within a reasonable time and keep the container clean. Even modest harvesting reduces pressure on municipal supply and helps families cope during dry spells.

Plant for shade and survival, not for decoration

Spring planting can change summer comfort. If you have any space, add a shade indigenous plant, a vine, or a hardy local tree that does not demand excessive water. Even small greenery cools air locally and supports birds and insects.

Reduce plastic before monsoon drains become a disease risk

Plastic blocks drains, increases

flooding, and spreads filth after rain. Spring is the time to reduce single-use plastics before the monsoon season. Carry a cloth bag, keep a reusable bottle, and store food in steel or glass when possible, especially for hot foods. Avoid burning plastic waste because it poisons air. Separate dry waste if any recycling system exists in your area.

A clean street is a safer street

Monsoon floods often begin with blocked drains. Speak with neighbors before the rainy season and organize a small drain check day. Remove litter near drains, identify blocked spots, and report them early. This is one of the simplest community actions that directly reduces flood risk.

A simple spring-to-summer pledge

Eco-living does not require perfection. It requires direction. Shade the home, protect the roof, ventilate wisely, fix leaks, harvest rainwater, reduce plastic, keep drains clear, plant for shade, and practice energy discipline. When many households do this together, Pakistan becomes safer, cooler, and more resilient, one season at a time.

Eco-living is also energy discipline

When summer demand rises, power cuts often follow. In spring, clean fan blades, service coolers if used, and check wiring safety. Use LED lights, turn off unnecessary appliances, and keep refrigerator doors closed. These habits reduce peak demand, lower bills, and reduce stress on the grid that affects everyone. ■



NDMA issues May heat-wave advisory as extreme temperatures spread across southern and central regions

Pakistan's disaster authority has issued a May heatwave advisory warning of severe to extreme temperatures in parts of Sindh, southern Punjab, and Balochistan, with a spillover risk into central Punjab and parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Health officials and disaster managers emphasize early precautions because heat-related illness rises fastest among children, older adults, people with chronic disease, and outdoor workers. The advisory underscores that heat is now a predictable public-health hazard that requires preparedness, not panic.

(Courtesy: NDMA)

Northern Pakistan placed under GLOF alert as above-normal temperatures accelerate glacier and snowmelt risk

NDMA issued a Glacial Lake Outburst Flood alert for Gilgit-Baltistan and upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, citing above-normal temperatures and a widespread weather spell that can elevate risks of flash floods, mudslides, and landslides in vulnerable valleys. Officials warn that GLOF events can destroy roads, clinics, communication networks, and water systems with limited evacuation time. The alert reinforces that mountain hazards are now a front-line climate-and-health concern. (Courtesy: NDMA)



Polio campaign continues amid attacks as Pakistan pushes to close immunity gaps nationwide

Pakistan's second nationwide polio campaign of 2026 has continued under heavy security as militants targeted police assigned to protect vaccinators in Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa, killing an officer and injuring others. Health leaders say repeated campaigns remain essential because the virus can circulate silently, while violence against teams disrupts routine coverage and delays eradication. Pakistan and Afghanistan remain the only two countries where polio has not been eliminated.

(Courtesy: AP News)

Karachi records first dengue-related death of 2026 as Sindh confirms rising early-season case counts

Sindh health authorities confirmed the first dengue-related death of 2026 in Karachi's East District and reported that cases have already been recorded across the province, with Karachi carrying the largest share. Officials warn that early surveillance and source reduction matter because stagnant water and inconsistent sanitation can rapidly expand mosquito breeding. The update is a reminder that dengue is no longer confined to a narrow seasonal window. ■

(Courtesy: Aaj English)



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Creature of the Month

Honeybee (Shehad ki Makhi)

Honeybees are small, but they do one of the biggest jobs in nature. When a bee visits a flower to collect nectar and pollen, it carries pollen from one flower to another. This helps plants make fruits and seeds.

Food and Agriculture Organization information explains that bees and other pollinators help keep people and the planet healthy by supporting food production and biodiversity.

In Pakistan, bees help pollinate many crops and wild plants, which means healthier orchards, better yields, and richer ecosystems. Bees also teach us teamwork. A hive is like a busy city where each bee has a role, and together they protect their home and store honey for the future. You can help bees by planting flowers, avoiding unnecessary pesticide sprays, keeping water in a shallow dish for insects in hot weather, and never throwing litter into parks and gardens where pollinators live.

(Source: *FAO World Bee Day*)



Flower of the Month

Jasmine (Chambeli)



Jasmine is loved in Pakistan for its sweet fragrance and delicate white, star-shaped flowers. It blooms through the warmer season and can perfume a whole courtyard or street corner. Jasmine is also known as the national flower of Pakistan, and many people grow it on fences, gates, and small trellises because it climbs easily and rewards careful watering with fresh blossoms.

Try this at home. Watch a jasmine plant in the evening. You may notice the fragrance feels stronger around dusk. Bees and other insects visit flowers for nectar, and flowering plants support the tiny life that keeps ecosystems healthy. If you have a jasmine plant, keep the soil lightly moist, give it sunlight, and protect it from harsh midday heat in very hot weeks.

(Source: *Missouri Botanical Garden Plant Finder*)

Poem

The Bee and the Jasmine



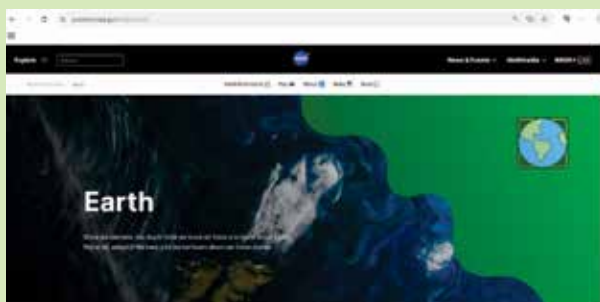
In May, when days grow bright,
Chambeli blooms in soft white light.
A buzzing bee with wings so thin,
Sips sweet nectar, dives within.
From flower to flower, it helps them grow,
Making fruit and seeds to show.
Plant small blooms, keep gardens clean,
So bees stay strong and fields stay green.

Hira Salman

Interesting website

NASA Climate Kids

<https://climatekids.nasa.gov/>



Learn about Earth, weather, and climate with games, activities, videos, and simple explanations designed for students.

Quote

“Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts.”

~ *Rachel Carson*

International days



World Migratory Bird Day

Migratory birds travel across countries and oceans. This day reminds us to protect their habitats, wetlands, and resting places along the way.



World Bee Day

A day to celebrate bees and all pollinators and to learn how to protect them.



International Day for Biological Diversity

Biodiversity means all living things, plants, animals, and tiny organisms. Protecting biodiversity helps keep nature balanced and healthy. ■

Sea buckthorn (chash e guno): The northern “superfruit” with real science behind it

Sea buckthorn (*Hippophae rhamnoides*), locally known as chash e guno in Burushaski, grows wild across Pakistan’s northern Gilgit-Baltistan and Chitral regions. Locally it is often seen as a hardy, thorny shrub used for fencing and boundary protection, yet globally it is increasingly recognised as a nutrient-dense fruit with a unique profile of vitamins, antioxidants, and healthy fats.

What makes sea buckthorn special is that it is not only “vitamin rich” in a vague way. Scientific reviews repeatedly describe its berries as unusually high in vitamin C and rich in carotenoids and tocopherols (vitamin E compounds), along with a broad range of polyphenols that contribute antioxidant activity. In a 2020 review published in *Food Production, Processing and Nutrition*, Vilas-Franquesa and colleagues highlighted sea buckthorn’s high concentrations of vitamin C, carotenoids, and tocopherols, and its wide range of bioactive compounds used in food and nutrition products.

Nutritional and bioactive profile

Sea buckthorn is sometimes called



a “superfruit” because it combines two worlds in one berry. It contains hydrophilic antioxidants, such as vitamin C and polyphenols, and lipophilic antioxidants, such as carotenoids and tocopherols, alongside oils with a distinctive fatty-acid composition. The same 2020 review emphasized that both the pulp and seed fractions offer valuable bioactive components, which is why sea buckthorn appears in juices, concentrates, supplements, and skin products. (Springer Link)

Health benefits

Supports skin and mucosal health
Sea buckthorn has a long history of topical and dietary use for skin support. A 2017 review in the MDPI journal *Cosmetics* discussed sea buckthorn oil as a valuable source for cosmeceuticals and highlighted that the plant has been used historically as both food and medicine, with multiple vitamins and bioactive substances identified in the berries and oils. This helps explain why sea buckthorn is widely used in dry-skin products and why people often report improved “skin comfort,” especially in harsh climates. One of the more convincing human studies on sea buckthorn is related to dry eye. In a double-blind randomized trial published in 2010, Larmo and colleagues reported that oral sea buckthorn oil attenuated the increase in tear film osmolarity during the cold season and had a positive effect on dry-eye symptoms. A follow-up study by

Järvinen and colleagues explored mechanisms and continued to support the view that sea buckthorn oil may influence dry-eye symptoms through pathways beyond simple tear fatty-acid changes.

Antioxidant and inflammation pathways remain a major research focus

Sea buckthorn is often promoted for immunity and inflammation, but the most responsible way to phrase this is that the research focus is strong and growing, while outcomes depend on preparation, dose, and the health condition studied. A 2020 review in *RSC Advances* summarized sea buckthorn’s chemical profile and discussed nutritional, health-related, and toxicological findings, describing it as a plant with extensive bioactive constituents and broad research interest.

How to use it right

In northern regions, sea buckthorn is often consumed as juice, syrup, or a tart fruit preparation. Its taste can be strongly sour, so people commonly blend it with other fruits or dilute it. If using commercial products, choose reputable sources and avoid assuming that “more” is better. For many households, the simplest approach is occasional seasonal use as part of a balanced diet, rather than daily high-dose supplementation.

Cautions and considerations

Sea buckthorn are nutritious but are not suitable for everyone in medicinal doses. WebMD warns that sea buckthorn can act as a blood thinner and may increase bleeding risk, especially when combined with medications that also slow blood clotting. People on blood thinners or with bleeding disorders should avoid sea buckthorn supplements unless a clinician specifically approves. WebMD also cautions that sea buckthorn may lower blood sugar, which can be risky for people with diabetes who take medications to reduce glucose, because it can increase the chance of low blood sugar episodes. Reliable safety data in pregnancy and breastfeeding is limited, so it is safer to avoid medicinal use during these periods unless medically advised.

In summary, sea buckthorn is one of Pakistan’s northern gifts that deserves both pride and prudence. Its nutrient density and antioxidant profile are well-supported by scientific reviews, and specific human trials suggest real promise in areas such as dry-eye symptoms. At the same time, responsible use matters, especially for people on blood thinners, managing diabetes, or in pregnancy. When treated as a supportive food, not a miracle cure, sea buckthorn can be a meaningful addition to health-focused living.■

Sea buckthorn (chash e guno) has a bright, tangy flavour that works beautifully in drinks and light desserts. Respecting basic precautions for safe use, enjoy!

Sea Buckthorn Sharbat (Chash e Guno Summer Cooler)

Ingredients

Sea buckthorn berries, fresh or frozen, 1 cup
Water, 3 to 4 cups
Honey or sugar, 2 to 3 tablespoons (adjust to taste)
Lemon juice, 1 to 2 teaspoons (optional)
Pinch of salt, 1 small pinch
Mint leaves, for serving (optional)
Ice, as needed

Instructions

Wash the berries well. Add berries and water to a pot and simmer gently for 8 to 10 minutes until the berries soften. Mash lightly, then strain through a fine sieve to remove seeds and skins. Return the juice to the pot, add honey or sugar, and stir until dissolved. Let it cool completely. Add a pinch of salt and a little lemon juice if you want extra freshness. Serve chilled with ice and mint. Sea buckthorn is very tart and concentrated. Start with a small serving. People on blood thinners, those with bleeding disorders, and people managing diabetes with medication should consult a clinician before using sea buckthorn regularly.



Sea Buckthorn Yogurt Parfait (Tart and Creamy Dessert Cup)

Ingredients

Plain yogurt, chilled, 2 cups
Sea buckthorn puree or thick juice, ½ cup
Honey, 2 tablespoons (or to taste)
Banana or mango, chopped, 1 cup
Oats or granola, ½ to ¾ cup
Crushed nuts, 2 tablespoons (optional)

Instructions

Whisk yogurt with honey until smooth. In serving glasses, layer a few spoonfuls of yogurt, then add a thin layer of sea buckthorn puree, followed by chopped fruit. Add a sprinkle of oats or granola. Repeat layers once more. Finish with a small drizzle of sea buckthorn puree and a few nuts if using. Chill for 10 minutes before serving so the flavours settle. Keep the sea buckthorn layer modest, as it can be quite sharp and acidic. If someone has gastritis or acid sensitivity, reduce the amount and balance it with more yogurt and fruit. Avoid medicinal-style use during pregnancy or breastfeeding unless medically advised. ■



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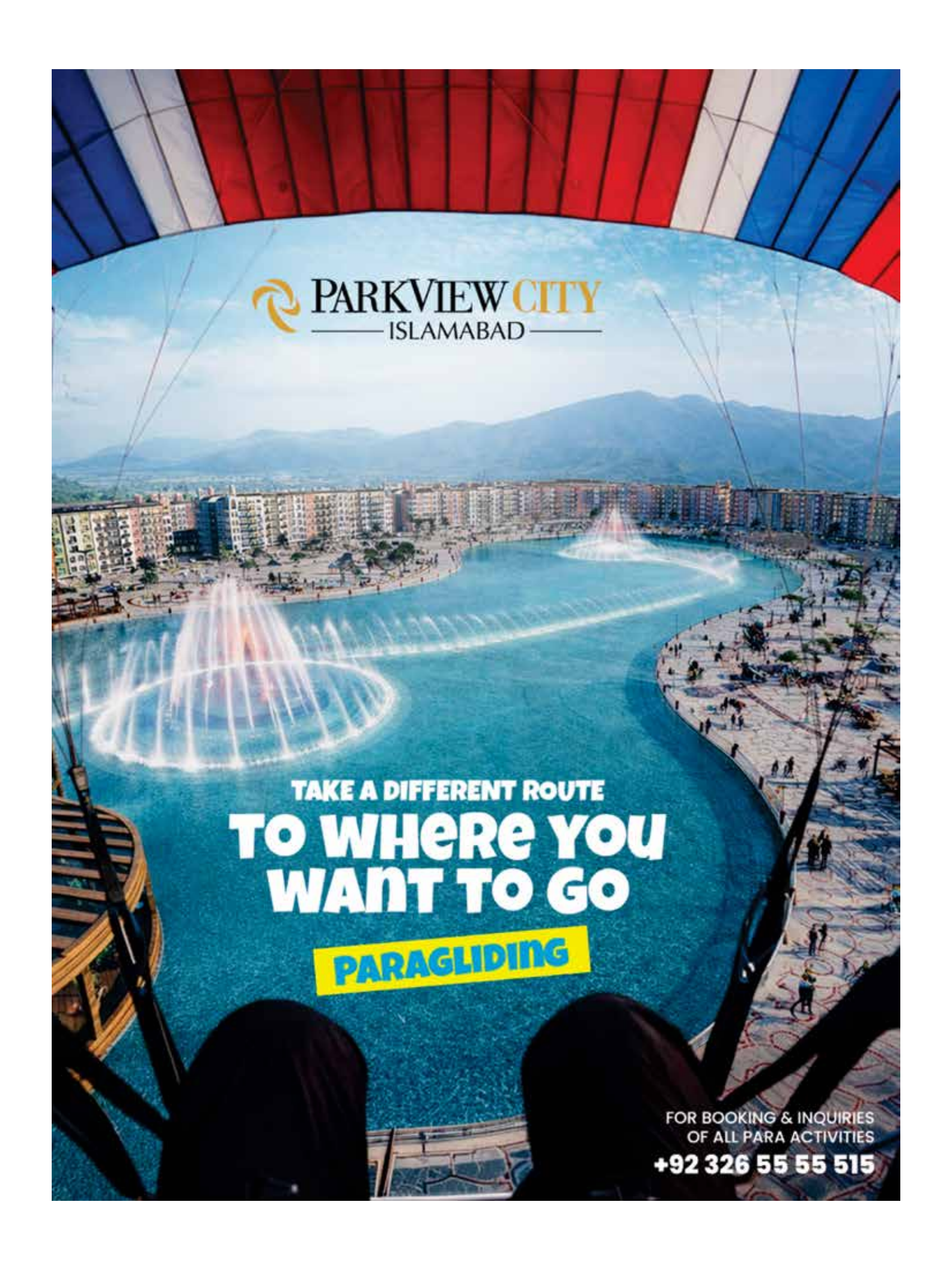
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