

Fortnightly

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Cold War

The remnants of the past cold wars invigorate themselves into a new cold war

Punjab By-elections

This is make or break for Govt and Opposition. Both sides are aware of this fact

Finally IMF Deal Done

Pak- IMF deal brings tough conditions for N-league led coalition government

The New “Cold War”



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Editor:
Zaheer ud Din Babar Thaheem

Advisor to Editor:
Ashraf Malkham

Marketing / Advertisement:
Zamir A. Naushahi
Contact: 0321-4006247
Email: seniormanagermarketing@tti.org.pk

Circulation:
Irfan Ali
Contact: 0345-9908108
Email: irfanawku@gmail.com

Letter to Editor:
Feel free to mail us at: editor@tti.org.pk

Postal Address:
Fortnightly "The Truth International"
205-D, 2nd Floor, Evacuee Trust Complex,
Agha Khan Road, F-5/1, Islamabad, Pakistan.
Contact: +92 51 2820180-1
Email: info@tti.org.pk
Web: www.thetruthinternational.com

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Politics of Hate

By Hammad Ghaznavi



Without ignorance, the politics of hate cannot succeed. Dehumanizing your political opponent forms the basis of hate politics, a phenomenon at display in our polity today. The digital bubble most of us live in these days, makes it easier for us to hate anyone who holds opinions different from our own. The prisoners of digital bubble lose respect for the facts; any piece of information not in sync with their views feels like a pack of lies – ‘fake news’, as former POTUS Trump often put it.

For one, last week federal minister for planning Ahsan Iqbal was jeered at by a decent looking family, including young girls, while he was buying food at a restaurant near Bhera interchange. It was an odd sight, girls in their teens and 20s screaming ‘chor-chor’ at a man of perhaps their grandfather’s age, a man with degrees from Wharton School, Harvard and Georgetown University, and against whom not a single case of corruption has ever been registered in the country. (The NAB case he was arrested in was not a corruption case. It actually was a case of political victimization according to the Islamabad High Court that granted him bail).

The family that heckled Ahsan Iqbal later visited his Narowal residence to apologize. Ahsan accepted the apology. The apology was a bad news for the hate-mongers, rather discouraging for the future hecklers. Meanwhile, PTI chief Imran Khan has supported

the booing family for speaking the ‘truth’. Federal Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah reacting to the entire episode, dubbed the enthusiastic PTI supporters ‘Imrani Baoolay’ (Imran’s crazy brigade) and threatened them with the confiscation of passports and ID cards, if they assaulted or insulted political opponents in their private space. This issue alone, illustrates the gravity of hate politics we are talking about.

Does Rana Sanaullah’s harsh statement have a perspective? In July 2019, Rana was charged with peddling narcotics and arrested by the PTI government. In a joint press conference, the minister concerned Sheheryar Afridi and DG Anti-Narcotic Force Major General Arif Malik, claimed they had caught Rana red-handed, in possession of 15 KGs of drugs, and the video evidence would also be submitted to the relevant court. The infamous press conference was adorned with Islamic quotes and constitutional references on human rights. Later, it transpired, there was no video, there was no evidence. Rana stayed behind the bars for six months before Islamabad High Court granted him bail. Last week former federal minister Fawad Chaudhry publicly admitted, it was a false case. According to different superior courts, there were many such unfounded cases and arrests during the last few years. In a word, there are reasons for multiplying hate in our polity.

It is in this toxic environment that the Punjab is having the most crucial

by-elections of its history that are going to hugely impact the future politics not only of the province but that of the entire country. The outcome of the polls will determine who will rule Punjab. Of 20 seats up for grabs, the ruling coalition needs at least 9, failing which the Hamza government will lose majority in the Punjab Assembly and is bound to fall. Without the Punjab government, the federal government gets restricted to Islamabad, and goes wobbly – especially a federal government with a wafer thin majority in the House. The winner of the by-polls will also get a huge momentum for the next general elections. Imran Khan has repeatedly accused the Establishment and the Election Commission for being biased against the PTI. Also, insiders insist, if the coalition government secures victory in the by-polls, a few cases and arrests on corruption charges are in store for the PTI topcats. Will such a high-stake election be peaceful in the present poisonous environment?

Instead of accusing one party leader or the other for initiating or contributing more to the politics of hate, it seems in the fitness of things to universally condemn the merchants of hate, even if they are in the fold of the party one supports. Along with a Charter of Economy, perhaps we need a Charter of Decency. It is in the interest of all stakeholders, it is in the interest of every citizen of this state – a state that is fast slipping into a bottomless abyss of hate politics.

Armed Neutrality

Imran is trying to prove he didn't cross any red lines



By M A Niazi

An armed neutrality implies being neutral, but armed against all comers, not as an expression of pacifism. In Pakistan, however, it has been taken to mean a refusal by the armed forces to take side in a political dispute.

Imran Khan's protestations, reinforced by oaths before the Almighty, that he had not contemplated making Lt Gen Faiz Hameed the next Chief of Army Staff, are something of a slur upon an officer who has risen to the rank of lieutenant-general, and who has served not only as DG ISI, but who is nowadays Corps Commander Peshawar. However, Imran was responding to one of the underground defences that is being offered to the charge of an American conspiracy to oust him.

The defence runs thus: Imran was going to appoint General Faiz COAS in place of the present incumbent, and just as he was supposed to have delivered the 2018 election to him as DG ISI, he would proceed to deliver a two-thirds majority, which would enable Imran to introduce a presidential system. A concomitant was that the opposition

was to be totally crushed, with every leader of any stature to be arrested by NAB, disqualified for life and generally ousted from all kinds of political activity. This would pave the way for Imran to rule indefinitely while General Faiz would be rewarded with repeated extensions.

This seems to be a version of the Bangladesh model, where Sh Hasina Wajid has been in power since 2009, after elections following an extended caretaker period, when technocratic government was tried, with Army backing. The alternation Sh Hasina's Awami League and Begum Khaleda Zia's Bangladesh National Party has been jettisoned, mainly because the caretaker provision was removed in 2011, and the Awami League has won the next two elections with increased majorities.

There seems to have been a catch in Imran's plan. It involved the Army becoming a tool for continued PTI dominance. This is a red lie. The Army will maintain order, but not a regime. If a civilian cannot rule without the military, then the military itself will

take over. Thqat is the great lesson of 977, where it appeared to the Army that the PPP government was being maintained by the Army firing on PNA crowds. It seemed that the election had indeed been rigged, and thus the government was being maintained only by the Army.

At the same time, ever since the Zia era, the military has found itself involved in politics, but it has been obedient to the civilian government. However, the enthusiasm to determine the results of elections seems to have culminated with the coming of the PTI to power, which has been described by some commentators as 'civilian martial law', as the military was allowed veto power.

An American naval chief once said that he had no time to command the navy because he was too busy meeting Representatives and Congressmen lobbying for the budget. The service chiefs have not yet reached that point, but that is the only way the civilian-military equation can be solved.

The PML(N) had previously been favoured, but the result of that one big

red line had been a number of other red lines, like trade with India, the social services and military budgets, foreign relations, but especially with the USA, India and China. Oh yes, military postings. After overthrowing Nawaz in 1999, the military realized that the Constitution had to be followed. However, if the civilian ruler was obedient, it would be useful.



Hence the PTI and Imran Khan. However, the message also had to be put out that, unlike other politicians, Imran was not a scoundrel. There has been a progression. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was a feudal lord, Nawaz Sharif an industrialist, and Imran the son of a government servant. Imran himself had made his pile rather than inherited it. It is too often forgotten that the officer corps consists of those who have middle class origins, and spend their careers living from one salary to the next.

It is perhaps a short step from wondering why feudal lords or industrialists and businessmen have more money, to why they have more power. It is also a short step from wondering why these fat cats rely on them, the military, to defend the borders and maintain order (which means defending property rights) to wondering why theory rely on them to remain in power.

It was thus important that Imran convince the military that was not planning to use it

to perpetuate himself in power. Further, he would also want the impression removed that he was going to interfere in the COAs' term, as that would represent a crossing of the redline involving appointments.

It must not be good to be General Faiz these days, because he has been the subject of more discussion than any officer wants

to be. He must be the only officer to whose defence the DG ISPR has arisen, when Asif Zardari had joined the chorus of criticism, describing his move to Peshawar as 'khud-dey line'. It should not escape notice that a former President (and thus an ex officio commander-in-chief) viewed the Peshawar Corps Command as khuday line compared to heading the ISI.

For Imran to say that he would, if PM at the time, have appointed the next COAS strictly on merit is to beg the question, of how would the PM assess the merit of the lieutenant-generals eligible for the post. By implying that he would not have appointed General Faiz, is he implying that he did not think him up to the job, or was he implying that he would have appointed him if he had fulfilled the merit?

There lies a dilemma. The only appointment the PM can make in the Army is the COAS. That means he is perhaps over-reliant on the recommendations he receives

from the military itself. It is a little like judicial appointments, where this has been a major issue, and seems now resolved though the Judicial Commission of Pakistan, which so far has meant that the judiciary itself controls appointments and elevations, while the chief justiceships go by seniority.

The problem is that the military might become paralyzed by the concept of 'Buggin's' Turn', that if promotion is to go by seniority (which is probably how the decision would be made between two or more lieutenant-generals equally well qualified. wartime is a different matter, commanders may be sacked at any time And replaced, based on success. Civilian leaders may be changed, but that is a more challenging task. However, in peacetime, commands are not changed unless the officer really blots his copybook. One way this has been avoided is to make sure that promotion does not take place unless the officer is highly unlikely to make a fool of himself. After all, while civilian leaders may change a few generals, the Army is going to use junior officers where they are at the start of a war. Even then, officers may not be up to the mark, in which case they will be changed.

Selections are done by boards, so that an individual's current and former commanders express an opinion. However, history is replete with examples of senior commanders sacked in the early stages of conflict. Political acumen has never been a criterion, though it should be, perhaps, because the COAS will play a political role. He may choose to remain neutral, but that is because he chooses to. The extent to which a COAS has choice is also not clear, as it may be that he merely acts in accordance with the wishes of his institution.

An American naval chief once said that he had no time to command the navy because he was too busy meeting Representatives and Congressmen lobbying for the budget. The service chiefs have not yet reached that point, but that is the only way the civilian-military equation can be solved.

The Army too must realize that direct rule has not worked. Nor has proxy rule. It might be time to let politicians do their thing. Even if it seems they are running the country into the ground.

The New “Cold War”

The New Cold War is based on Western fears of the rise of China and a resurgent Russia under Putin



By Dr. Syed Rifaat Hussain

The NATO summit held in Madrid, Spain, on June 29–30 opened on an emphatic note after Finland, Sweden, and Turkey signed a trilateral memorandum paving the way for the two Nordic states to join the alliance. On the day before the summit, Turkey released its hold on Sweden and Finland's application to join the EU. This was because Finland and Sweden promised to stop the separatist Kurdistan Workers' Party, which has killed civilians in Turkey, and other terrorist groups from doing their work.

To reward Turkey for its cooperative behaviour, the United States signalled a new willingness to sell upgraded F-16 jet fighters to Turkey. With Finland and Sweden joining NATO, the 30-member alliance will have a lot more power to carry out the "New Strategic Concept" for 2022, which was announced at the NATO summit.

Guided by the new strategic concept, the new force plans include the deployment of a brigade-level military presence on NATO's eastern flank and an increase in its high-readiness joint task force from 40,000 troops to 300,000 troops by 2023.

The alliance also agreed to prioritize the integration of air and missile defences into its deterrence and defence posture.

The main goal of this "new concept" is to keep Russia and China from becoming too big of a threat to the West, which is led by the United States.

NATO countries also asserted a robust recommitment to NATO's nuclear capabilities in order "to preserve the peace, prevent coercion, and deter aggression."

The main difference from the previous strategic concept, which came out in 2010, is that it seems to recognize that NATO is now working in a very different security environment. Russia is now seen as the biggest threat.

As the new strategic concept states: "The Euro-Atlantic area is not at peace. [Russia] has violated the norms and principles that contributed to a stable and predictable security order." Also gone is the notion of the strategic partnership with Russia, based on the NATO-Russia Council, established more than 20 years ago as a key mechanism for dialogue and joint action.

The new concept highlights NATO's determination to "defend every inch of allied territory." We will ensure a substantial and persistent presence on the land, at sea, and in the air, including through strengthened integrated air and missile defense, the concept says. The move reflects NATO's concerns about

Russia's indiscriminate use of missile systems in Ukraine.

Military analysts believe that the new strategic concept is the codification of Western democracies' collective desire to prepare for fighting another round of the East-West cold war. As John Mearsheimer has observed, "Today, China and the United States are locked in what can only be called a new cold war—an intense security competition that touches on every dimension of their relationship."

Unlike the previous Cold War that lasted from 1947 to 1991, during which many nuclear crises broke out and in which the United States and the USSR were the principal actors, this new cold war involves the United States and its NATO allies on the one hand and Russia and China on the other.

The sources of this new cold war are very different. They involve not only a clash of values—Western democracies pitted against authoritarian regimes—but are based on Western fears of the rise of China and a resurgent Russia under Putin.

In the new cold war, there is an effort underway not only to compete with Russia and China in military terms but also to outmanoeuvre them economically through sanctions,

economic coercion, and political pressure. The new strategic concept clearly states that China's "malicious hybrid and cyber operations and its confrontational rhetoric and disinformation target allies and harm alliance security."

Another distinctive feature of this emerging confrontation between the burgeoning U.S.-Russia and China rivalry is a struggle for control over the "narratives." The Western media has portrayed Moscow's war against Ukraine and, by implication, Beijing's claims over Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the South China Sea as cases of aggression without paying heed to the fact that there is an equally plausible alternative view of history on all these matters.



For example, John Mearsheimer has convincingly argued that it is wrong to blame China or Russia for trying to fiercely fight against the U.S.-led world order that was put in place after the end of the Second World War when Moscow was weakened by that war by the loss of 20 million of its people and China was impoverished and did not count for much.

Today, the situation has been radically altered. Russia has become an energy superpower and the main provider of wheat and other agricultural products. Similarly, China has risen to be the second-largest economy, with foreign exchange reserves of over 400 trillion dollars. China has launched its multi-billion-dollar Belt and Road initiative that aims to connect many regions of the world by building many

regional corridors, including CPEC. By maintaining a 7% annual growth rate over the last two decades, despite the COVID pandemic, Beijing has been able to move 800 million of its people out of the poverty trap.

To contain the rising power and influence of both China and Russia as rival powers, Washington has been trying hard to strengthen its capabilities by expanding NATO and putting in place the AUKUS and QUAD systems of alliances in the Asia-Pacific region.

As part of its anti-Russian and anti-China global media campaign, President Putin has been called a "modern version of

Hitler", a "criminal", a "ruthless dictator" and a man committed to pursuing his imperial agenda and seeking to dominate the world, just like his communist predecessors, especially Stalin. The West's "demonization" of Russian and Chinese leaders in the media hasn't stopped Moscow and Beijing from trying to change the liberal international order that the West controls. Moscow's war against Ukraine seems to be a slow but steady success, and in winning the ongoing war, Moscow enjoys the full backing of China. This was clearly evident in the joint declaration issued on February 4 following President Xi and Putin's meeting in Beijing during the winter Olympics. The declaration stated: "The new inter-state relations between Russia and China are superior to the political and

military alliances of the Cold War era." "Friendship between the two states has no limits; there are no forbidden areas of cooperation.

Having withdrawn all NATO forward-based troops from Eastern Europe after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the alliance developed an "enhanced forward presence" comprising four rotational multinational battle groups in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland as "a trip wire to deter Russia." NATO also increased military exercises in the Black Sea. This happened in 2014 following the Russian military incursion into Ukraine. Following Russia's "special military operation" against Ukraine, dubbed an "unprovoked act of aggression" by the West, the NATO alliance doubled the number of rotational multinational battle groups; established four new battle groups in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia; and placed over 40,000 troops under direct NATO command.

These troops are part of NATO's Response Force, a multinational, multi-domain force that can be deployed quickly. NATO also expanded its air police missions and military exercises. These military actions taken by NATO became the direct cause of Moscow's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. At the Madrid summit, the allies agreed on a comprehensive assistance package for Ukraine. "Over the longer term, we will help Ukraine transition from Soviet-era military equipment to modern NATO equipment and further strengthen its defence and security institutions," NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said.

Moscow's reaction to these developments has been swift. The media quoted President Putin as saying: "We have nothing to worry about in terms of Finland and Sweden's membership in NATO." "They are welcome to join NATO. If they should clearly imagine that there were no threats to them before, but if military contingents and infrastructure are deployed there, we will have to respond in a mirror manner."

It is quite evident that as long as the Ukraine crisis persists with full American backing for the besieged Zelensky government, the new cold war will not show any signs of ebbing.

Pakistan's Foreign Policy Conundrum: Navigating Great Power Relations

For Washington, Pakistan was a strategic ally against Soviet communism—highly religious and with a sturdy military. With the absence of any visible strategic interest in the region, will Moscow prove to be as generous a partner as Washington had been during the Cold War?

By Umer Farooq

It is a general tendency among politicians to oversimplify complex political issues. They have an interest in converting difficult political concepts, phenomena, and realities into easily comprehensible slogans. This is what is happening presently in the political discourse on foreign policy in our society. Imran Khan wants to bring down the Shehbaz government which came to power after dislodging the PTI government through a no-confidence motion.

PMLN used to dub Prime Minister Imran Khan as a “selected Prime Minister”—meaning thereby that he was not elected legitimately and was a product of the selection process carried out by Army generals. PTI and Imran are not ready to be left behind in this race—they labeled the Shehbaz government as an “imported government”—meaning thereby that its legitimacy is questionable as it was brought into power as a result of a conspiracy hatched in Washington. To cut the long story short: Imran Khan went to Moscow on an official visit. He was there in the Russian capital city the day President Putin ordered his troops into Ukraine. Washington got angry with Prime Minister Imran Khan, according to an oversimplified version of the story recounted by PTI leaders, and it hired the then opposition to dislodge him from power. Which they eventually did.

The whole web of stories started to be churned out in Islamabad rumor mills. Imran Khan obtained the consent of President Putin for the supply of cheap oil to Pakistan, according to these stories. Russia is the new rising superpower and could act as our sponsor in the region, another version of the story stated.

Islamabad and Moscow have been coming closer in their bilateral relations much before Imran Khan became Prime Minister. In 2014, the chances of supply of Russian weaponry to Pakistan were bright when the



Russian Defense Ministry lifted an embargo imposed on Pakistan during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. The ban was lifted after bilateral negotiation between Pakistani military officials and the Russian Defense Ministry at the time of the official visit of the then COAS General Raheel Sharif. These talks and their content were later reinforced during subsequent visits of the incumbent COAS General Qamar Javed Bajwa. General Bajwa's predecessor had signed an agreement with the Russian Federation in October 2015 which allowed arms trade between the two countries and cooperation in weapon development. During his visit to Moscow, General Bajwa held talks with his Russian counterparts over political issues related to the purchase of Russian military hardware. Pakistan was facing problems in convincing the Russian military-industrial complex for the sale of military hardware, especially in the face of intense Indian lobbying in the power corridors of Moscow against Pakistan.

This was the most important content of Moscow-Islamabad relations that was

germinating in the minds of the defense establishment of the two countries. This is based on a realistic and mutually beneficial calculation of the two sides: Pakistan wants modern weapons and Russia is ever in need of hard cash. There was neither any expectation nor any chance of Moscow becoming over-generous in defense relations. Similarly, unlike the oversimplified stories being churned out in Islamabad's drawing rooms and newsrooms, there is neither a chance nor an expectation that Russia would turn generous in its supply of cheap oil to Pakistan.

Pakistan and Russia have got close in recent years, especially concerning their respective positions towards the Afghan Taliban. More than once during the past three years, the Russian security officials have obtained pledges from the Afghan Taliban that they would continue to fight the ISIS fighters in eastern and northern Afghanistan, and more than once have Russians helped them negotiate a deal with their client groups and leaders in northern Afghanistan to pave the way for the Taliban

capture of northern cities in the war-torn country.

Similarly, Russians have stressed that the Pakistani security establishment must deal with the threat from ISIS and other radical Sunni groups with a transnational agenda to consolidate their position in Afghanistan. There have been reports in local and Russian media about the close interaction between Pakistani and Russian intelligence services in connection with the rise of ISIS in Afghanistan. It was precisely for this convergence of thinking that there was no rise of the Northern Alliance-like military alliance in northern Afghanistan this time when the Taliban took over Kabul in August 2021. Last time, when the Taliban captured Kabul in 1996, Russians, Indians, and Iranians were the main backers of the Northern Alliance led by the legendary military commander, late Ahmed Shah Masood.

Russia's primary security fear with regards to Afghanistan stems from the possibility of a spillover of violence from Afghan territory into Central Asian states — that Russia still considers part of its strategic backyard and within its security parameters. Similarly, Russia also fears that the terror groups with transnational or global agendas, if allowed to consolidate their positions in Afghanistan, may attempt to reach the Russian heartland through the Central Asian territory.

Islamabad will be over-estimating Moscow's interests in Afghanistan if the basis of the assessment about its ability to convince Moscow into playing a major consolidating role in this war-torn country is superficial. Experts believe that the Russian policy towards our region is of low expectation. Russians expect little from Afghanistan and our region. They need a proxy — which they have found in the shape of the Afghan Taliban — that can counter the influence of terror groups with transnational and global agenda and religious motivations. They also hold that Russia is primarily interested in Central Asian states at the military level in achieving its dream of Eurasian economic integration, and maintaining Moscow's influence in Central Asia as the reemergence of Taliban and religious fundamentalism will shake up the region's balance of power and security dynamics.

Russians have recently assured the Central Asian countries, like Tajikistan, that are vulnerable to the spillover effects from Afghanistan, of their continued military support in case of violence in their territory. Pakistan's elaborate military and security structures are best suited for this security architecture. It can help the Taliban consolidate the military hold over the Afghan territory and defeat the groups with transnational agendas — to serve the strategic interests of Russians and Central Asian states.



In the wake of the Taliban takeover of Kabul, Pakistani ISI hosted the conference of 8 regional intelligence chiefs in Islamabad in which all the neighboring countries of Afghanistan participated. At this conference, Russia proposed that the neighboring countries should provide timely intelligence to the Afghan Taliban so that they could curb the activities of Sunni extremist groups inside the war-torn country. Ostensibly and possibly this is the only strategic interest Russia, at the moment, has in the region. Pakistan and Afghanistan cannot become a regular and profitable market for Russian weapons—both countries are too cash-strapped to become a source of regular weapon purchases from Moscow. Iranians are already playing that role in this region. Moscow has never been so generous as to provide weapons on concessional rates to Pakistan or for that matter to Afghanistan as Americans have been doing during the Cold War.

For Washington, during the Cold War, Pakistan was a strategic ally against Soviet communism—highly religious and with a sturdy military, Pakistan was an excellent choice of Washington's Cold War warriors as a recipient of American generosity. Washington provided the Pakistanis with cash, economic and military assistance during the Cold War. Pakistan became Washington's most allied ally—but once the Soviet Union collapsed after withdrawing from Afghanistan, Washington just left Pakistan in an unenviable situation, with

military and economic sanctions that crippled Pakistan's economy and military.

The absence of any visible strategic interest in the region will prevent Moscow from becoming as generous as Washington had been during the Cold War. For Moscow fears radical Sunni groups in Northern Afghanistan close to Central Asian borders—Central Asian states are still considered by Moscow to be their security backyard—Taliban can do a job to meet the threat at a much lower cost to Moscow. Secondly, despite all the closeness and warmth in Islamabad-Moscow relations, the Russian defense establishment was not ready to sell state-of-the-art Su-35 fighters to Pakistan after New Delhi objected to the sale. Despite intense lobbying by Pakistani officials in Moscow, the sale was not allowed by Moscow.

Ethics of war and International Humanitarian Law in the Russia-Ukraine conflict Pakistani social fabric

Why is it important to consider International Humanitarian Law while analyzing a conflict?



By Maryam Siddique

The dilemma of targeting civilians and other violations of international humanitarian law illustrates how the world is gravitating toward chaos and conflict.

As the Russian invasion of Ukraine is a thoroughgoing process, civilians continue to bear the brunt of these incursions at an alarming rate where killings are spewing high. There have been major blows to the infrastructure, including hospitals and bridges. To mention the facts, more than 200 attacks have been on health centres in the period of just three months of the war. Over 12 million people have been displaced, with some escaping to Poland and the European Union, while others finding safe havens in Ukraine itself.

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) is reiterating the obligation of all parties to adhere to international humanitarian law (IHL), focusing largely on the laws relating to the conduct and protection of civilians in war. The international community has always stressed the upholding of humanitarian laws in all armed conflicts, including conflicts in Syria, Yemen, and Africa. In a statement, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet stated

that "Over these eight weeks, international humanitarian law has not merely been ignored but seemingly tossed aside."

So why does the international community, time and time again, stress IHL? What is it? Why is it so vital an issue to wage war?

International humanitarian law is also known as the "law of war" or "the law of armed conflict". International humanitarian law is a set of rules relating to armed conflict aimed at limiting violence, either within or between states. It protects those civilians who are not directly or indirectly part of violence and limits the means and methods of warfare.

The International Committee of the Red Cross stated that IHL intends to "preserve a measure of humanity amidst conflict, with the guiding principle that even in war there are limits."

The majority of the applicable rules of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) have been derived from the Hague Conventions of 1907 and the Geneva Conventions of 1949, as well as from the Additional Protocols thereto.

International humanitarian law only applies to international armed conflicts and not to internal tensions or disturbances. The law applies equally to both parties to the conflict, irrespective of who initiated the conflict. It applies in totality once a conflict has begun. International humanitarian law creates a clear-cut distinction between international and non-international armed conflict. International conflict demands the involvement of a minimum of two states. These states are then subject to various rules and protocols, set out in the four Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocol I.

Although it deals with war crimes, not every violation of IHL gives rise to war crimes. The intensity and gravity of the situation actually determine whether it can fall within the ambit of war crimes or not. To quote an example, a news item was involved in publicizing and recording videos of Russian prisoners of war, which may constitute a violation of the Third Geneva Convention of 1949, but it cannot be considered a war crime. Whereas the intentional targeting of civilians is a sheer violation of IHL as well as a war crime.

A more recent articulation of rules relating to targeting can be found in Protocol I of 1977 (Additional Protocol). Ukraine and Russia are both unqualified Protocol I signatories.

Part IV of the Protocol deals with targeting. The basic rule laid down in this Protocol is that the parties to the conflict should know the difference between belligerents and civilians and therefore treat them differently. According to art. 51(2), "The civilian population as such, as well as individual civilians, shall not be the object of attack." This protection is only granted to civilians "unless and for such time as they take a direct part in hostilities." For civilian objects, art. 52(1) states, "Civilian objects shall not be the object of attack or of reprisals." Even though, in order to achieve a military objective, some degree of collateral damage is permissible. But how much collateral damage is permissible? According

to the use of certain weaponry, including chemical and biological weapons. Moreover, torture, ill-treatment of people being detained, and attacks on humanitarian and medical assistants are all prohibited by IHL.

IHL can be enforced through different methods.

Grave violations of IHL can be prosecuted and investigated by the International Criminal Court in The Hague so that those involved and responsible for the chaos can be held accountable. Such cases can also be tried by the domestic/local courts that possess "universal jurisdiction." It enables domestic courts to prosecute any violations committed outside its domain by offenders who are not its nationals, but the violation is grave enough to be prosecuted by any country. (The International Rescue Committee (IRC) urges states to adopt universal jurisdiction for the prosecution of

civilians, prisoners, the sick, and the wounded by prohibiting bestial treatment and the use of barbaric weapons, this body of rules come into action only in extreme cases of violence. Another difficult task is the implementation of these laws. Therefore, swift action is required for effective compliance.

The question, however, is: how can IHL be implemented? Measures must be adopted to ensure the complete implementation of international humanitarian law. The United States has to abide by its rules by inculcating these laws into the armed forces and the general populace. They must ensure that everyone abides by its principles and in

In the case of violations, punish the culprits with sanctions or take other appropriate action. In particular, legislation and the enactment of laws are necessary for dealing with the most serious violations of the



to art. 51(5)(b), an indiscriminate attack is one that "may be expected to cause incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians, damage to civilian objects, or a combination thereof, that would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated."

At times, the implementation of these rules is uncomplicated. For example, the recent attack on military barracks was a targetable object because these barracks inhabited combatants in the guise of soldiers. So, a building where soldiers were hiding would be considered a military object and could be shot at.

On the other hand, targeting buildings such as hospitals, schools, and bridges cannot be treated as military objects. Therefore, targeting these would result in a direct violation of art. 51. Moreover, IHL restricts

war crimes).

Suits in the International Court of Justice, sanctions, a watchdog mechanism, and investigation and prosecution by domestic courts are all options for dealing with such violations. As soon as the conflict comes to an end, accountability in the form of transitional justice should take place, which will enable reparations, criminal prosecutions, and truth commissions.

In reality, there are numerous violations of international humanitarian law, but there is almost no accountability. The major victims of these incursions are civilians. The IRC stresses the need to end the "age of impunity" where laws made for the protection of civilians are looked upon as an option. Although international humanitarian law has made its mark in protecting

Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols, which are considered war crimes. States must also pass legislation to protect humanitarian organizations, including the red cross and red crescent emblems. Although measures have been taken at an international level in the shape of the creation of tribunals to punish violations committed in two recent conflicts (the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda),

Another landmark was the creation of an international criminal court by the 1998 Rome Statute with the aim of containing, *inter alia*, war crimes. It is essential to ensure compliance with international humanitarian law, either as individuals or through governments or various organizations. Everyone will have to put in their share to establish harmony and world peace.

Peace talks with TTP

Surprisingly, militant attacks continue in full swing in Pakhtunkhwa despite the TTP's declaration of a ceasefire. The question is: who is carrying out these attacks in the presence of an indefinite ceasefire by militants?



By Syed Fakhar KaKaKhel

Mufti Noor Wali Mehsud, head of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), recently gave an interview. He said that he will not forgo the condition of integrating Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Earlier, Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah made it clear that the demand was unacceptable and that all decisions would be taken under the constitution of the country. The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) has also issued a separate statement in reaction. So is there a deadlock in negotiations between the government and the Taliban?

This month, a meeting of the Parliamentary Committee on National Security on dialogue and law and order with the Taliban was held. It was attended by both the civilian and military leadership including Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif other key political leaders. Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Director General Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Lt General Nadeem Anjum, and Peshawar Corps Commander Lt General Faiz Hameed briefed the PCNS about the talks with the

TTP. Fazlur Rehman, who is otherwise not a member of parliament, was also in attendance. Former prime minister Imran Khan was not invited to the meeting.

The meeting decided to hold talks with the Taliban strictly under the constitutional ambit, hence winning the support of the parliament.

However, despite the negotiation process, militant attacks continue. Security forces are constantly being targeted, especially in North Waziristan. The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) has accused the government of violating the ceasefire and that the government continues to crack down on its allies. It is also a fact that several operations by security forces have resulted in the deaths of militant commanders recently. In addition, attacks on polio workers continue in various places. Therefore, despite the peace dialogue, violence continues in the region. If TTP is claiming to stick to their ceasefire announcement then who is behind these incidents? Sources said that these attacks are continuing without the direction

of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan and so no responsibility has been taken on their part. These are the elements that were once part of the Tehreek-e-Taliban but have since either split from the movement or joined the Islamic State in the Khorasan Province (ISKP). These are the elements who do not want to see these talks succeed. There are also reports that militants who have not been convicted of any particular crime have been released. Many factions want the release of their comrades and since the government has made it clear that those wanted for serious crimes will face the courts, they want to increase the pressure through attacks to get their comrades back without court proceedings.

The Afghan Taliban also want the TTP's talks with the Pakistani government to be successful because they want peace in the border areas as soon as possible. The Afghan Taliban are facing resistance, especially in the north. The National Resistance Front (NRF) on the one hand and ISKP on the other are constantly targeting the Afghan Taliban from time to time.

A nationalist alliance of non-Pashtun nations in the form of the National Resistance Front and a movement based on religious extremism in the form of ISKP is dangerous in every way for the future of Afghanistan. That is why the Afghan Taliban want at least a settlement between the Pakistani Taliban and Pakistan as soon as possible. However, the interview of Mufti Noor Wali, head of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), was harsh, as it took a hard line on the return of integration to the tribal areas. But sources say it could be discussed.

The argument can be made to the Taliban that this decision is not an individual decision. This decision has the approval of the Pakistani Parliament. The parliament is elected by the people. It cannot be ended by mere declaration. For this, the government will have to approach the same parliament again. There is no other way. Therefore, the government will accept this demand, but since it needs a majority in parliament, they will have to wait. As the required number of parliamentarians is not present at the moment, the bill will be introduced when the required number is in the parliament. Therefore, those representing the government in the negotiations are satisfied that the Taliban will agree with them in the light of the argument. An important decision has also been taken to increase the development fund of the amalgamated districts to offset

the losses of the war. The government has also given positive signals on this. The Taliban faces various challenges in the war and economic field, the devastation of the recent earthquake also disturbed the Taliban government. A magnitude 6.1 earthquake on the Richter scale has killed more than a thousand people in Afghanistan. The worst-hit areas were near the Pakistani border. Therefore, after the earthquake, the first aid was sent from Pakistan to the Paktika province of Afghanistan. Dozens of aid trucks carrying food and medicine entered Afghanistan on the Pak-Afghan border with Waziristan. Afghan provincial hospitals were full of wounded. Many families took refuge at the airport. As the majority of mud houses were in a vulnerable condition after several days of rain, the quake caused severe damage to the houses. In addition to Pakistan, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, China, and Qatar also distributed aid to earthquake victims in Afghanistan.

According to local reports, more than 35 entire villages have been destroyed. Families affected by the disaster now say they are struggling to see a future in the already impoverished area that has long been cut off from the rest of the country. They have no electricity and only very poor phone signals.

Afghanistan is facing severe difficulties due to sanctions. The Taliban face many

problems as the United States freezes Afghan government assets. The Taliban met with the U.S., seeking to unlock Afghan banking reserves of 3.5 billion dollars. The U.S., in turn, wants assurances that the money will be used for the relief efforts. Taliban and the U.S. previously held talks in March. Ever since, the U.S. canceled them after the Taliban closed girls' secondary schools.

Although the Taliban government believes it is trying to improve, the ground realities are different. On June 30, clerics and leaders from across Afghanistan were called in to discuss the same issues. Its main purpose was to gain support for reform. The gathering discussed how the Taliban would have to adopt a soft stance in some areas to gain international support. Participants in the gathering believe that there is a lot of external pressure on the Taliban and that they will have to make some decisions as soon as possible to join the international community. There was also a discussion over confronting the movement that is going on in the name of ISKP. It was the largest congregation of the Afghan Taliban in recent days. ISKP tried to target it. Rockets were fired at the jirga from a building in Kabul. Although the attack did not cause many Taliban casualties, such an attack on such an important gathering was a clear message to the Afghan Taliban and their supporters across Afghanistan.



Conservative MPs to vote in leadership race

Tory MPs are to cast their first votes in the contest to replace Boris Johnson as party leader - and prime minister

TTI Report

After nominations closed, the eight hopefuls took part in a hustings event in Parliament as part of efforts to secure support from their colleagues.

They have to secure 30 votes in the first round to stay in the race.

The candidates for leader are: Kemi Badenoch, Suella Braverman, Jeremy Hunt, Penny Mordaunt, Rishi Sunak, Liz Truss, Tom Tugendhat and Nadhim Zahawi.

Voting will start at 13:30 with a result expected at 17:00 BST.

Further votes will take place over the next few days in order to whittle the number of candidates down to two.

About 160,000 members of the Conservative Party will then choose between these final two, with the winner due to be announced on 5 September.

Ex-Health Secretary Sajid Javid and junior minister Rehman Chishti failed to secure enough nominations - the support of at least 20 Tory MPs - and withdrew from the contest on Monday.

- Who could be the next prime minister?
- When will we know who the new PM is?
- What taxes would Tory leadership rivals cut?
- Firms urge PM hopefuls to focus on growth and tax
- Another hustings event is expected to take place on Wednesday morning.

Trade minister Ms Mordaunt - who currently has the second highest number of Tory MPs backing her - will also formally launch her campaign on Wednesday morning.

Mr Sunak - whose resignation as chancellor last week helped trigger the toppling of Boris Johnson - has the strongest backing so far, securing support from cabinet ministers Dominic Raab and Grant Shapps among others.

Speaking to the Daily Telegraph, Mr Sunak said his "number one economic priority is tackling inflation" and defended his refusal to promise tax cuts like some of his rivals by claiming that former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher would have backed his approach to get inflation down before cutting taxes.

On Tuesday, Foreign Secretary Ms Truss secured support from two Johnson loyalists - minister Jacob Rees-Mogg and Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries.

At midday, before voting starts, Prime Minister Boris Johnson will head to Parliament for his first Prime Minister's Questions since he announced his resignation.

Mr Johnson was forced into the announcement after a mass ministerial walkout, triggered by his handling of the Chris Pincher case.

Asked who he would support in the race to replace him, Mr

Johnson said he "wouldn't want to damage anyone's chances with my support."

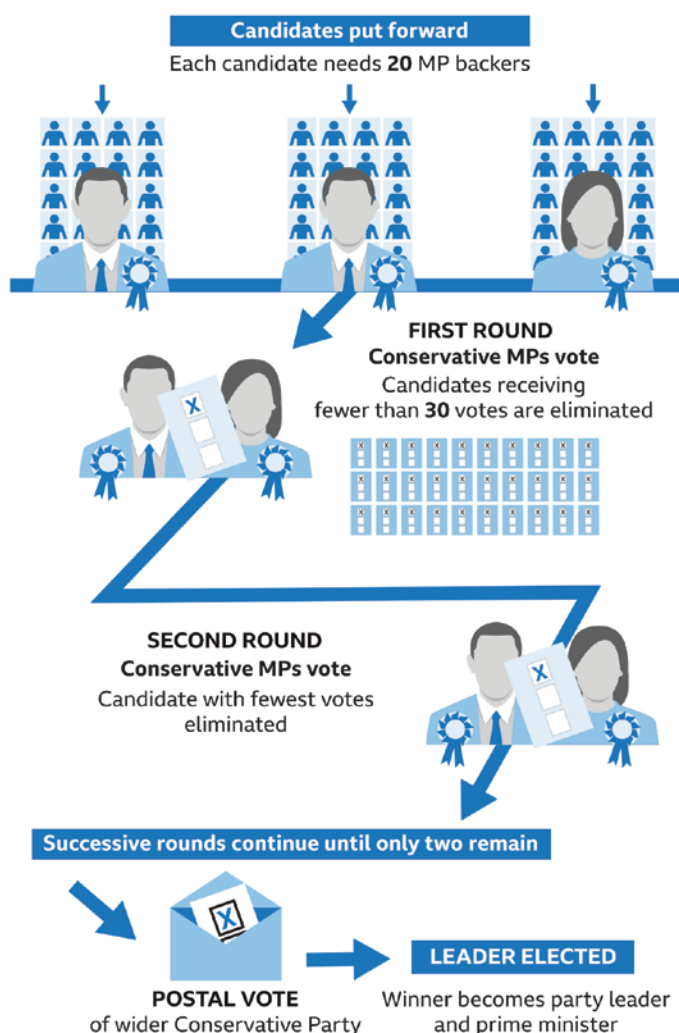
Meanwhile, Labour has said the candidates' pledging tax cuts would create a £24bn budget deficit and see public sector debt reach 84% of GDP by 2026-27.

It also accused them of abandoning the government's own fiscal charter, which commits it both to balancing the current budget and having public sector net debt as a percentage of GDP falling in three years' time.

In a speech at a Resolution Foundation think tank event on Wednesday, Shadow Chancellor Rachel Reeves will pledge that a Labour government would only borrow to invest and will also commit it to cutting the UK's public debt.

Courtesy BBC

How is a new Conservative leader elected?



BBC

Eroding Indian ‘secularism’ and Pakistani social fabric

The ruling elite in Pakistan used India's attachment to democracy as a negative argument against democracy itself

By Umer Farooq

On July 6, 2022, the last Muslim minister in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's cabinet resigned from office, creating a situation for the first time in 75 years of India's political history that India's central cabinet didn't have a single Muslim member. Indian intellectuals sometimes proudly claim that it has been a tradition in India that whoever was in power in New Delhi always had a Muslim member in his or her cabinet. But this new situation where India's central cabinet is without a single Muslim minister is not the only and most powerful indicator that India's secular political traditions are fast eroding. Since 2014, a Hindu nationalist government has been in power in New Delhi, whose political ideology of ethnic nationalism, or the dominance of the Hindu majority in government, is paving the way for a Hindu majoritarian democracy to replace the secular political traditions of India's Founding Fathers. The Indian National Congress, which represents secularism in India's political arena, is breathing its last breath. And the BJP, the party in the Indian political arena that represents religious vigilantism, religious persecution of minorities, and systematic marginalization of minorities in Indian society, is in continuous ascendance.

The BJP also represents the deinstitutionalization of Indian democracy, where the Indian Supreme Court no longer seems capable of resisting the Indian executive in the event of any move to delegitimize the secular content of the Indian constitution. Therefore, it would not be an exaggeration to suggest that Indian history has reached a point where India's founding political tradition of secularism or its experiment in the secular polity is proving to be an utter failure. However, it is not only India's secular experiment that has failed. Pakistan's original Islamist experiment is nearing its demise as well. There are analysts and observers who think that Pakistan's Islamist and India's secular experiments both turned out to be failures. In the case of Pakistan, the modernist form



of religion of the initial years gave way to extremist forms of religion at the social level and a Maududi-influenced type of Islamism at the state level. India's secularism was a more abject failure at the political level.

Pakistan was a hopeless case right from the beginning. We were never very fond of passing laws to protect our minorities. Protecting them with force comes next, which was not even once attempted by the Pakistani state. Our political analysts have written one book after another to prove that our political institutions are weak. And now every child in the country knows that this was the case with our political institutions. Our weak political institutions are the result of the military's dominance of power structures right from day one. Our military dominance, coupled with India-centric security and foreign policy, never allowed us to develop normal relations with India.

When the BJP started to increase its tally in the electoral politics of India, many among the Pakistani religious right predicted that there would be a corresponding rise in the fortunes of religious parties in Pakistan. That never happened. The rise of the six religious parties' coalition in the 2002 parliamentary elections was later analyzed by political commentators to be the handiwork of Musharraf's intelligence services,

which were given the task by the then military government to oust the mainstream parties like PMLN and PPP from electoral politics. However, a different political reality started to emerge on the country's political horizons—that is, the rise and rise of center-right parties in the electoral politics of Pakistan. The 2013 parliamentary elections saw a contest between center-to-right parties including PMLN and PTI, while center-to-left parties like PPP were completely routed from Punjab's electoral politics—a region where the chances of victory or defeat determine the prospects of any contender for power to form the government in Islamabad. In other words, after 2013, we entered a phase in our history where right-wing ideologies started to dominate the political arena. And not surprisingly, a corresponding social reality started to emerge in Pakistani society—attacks on religious minorities became commonplace, and angry reactions over blasphemy cases became a grass-roots level menace in our society.

Many in Pakistan have started hating India and everything that comes from across the border. They hated secularism, as they were told that it was the official political philosophy of the Indian political system. A section of our society closely aligned with the military came to hate democracy and to express it publicly. Whether we genuinely

hated Indian democracy or developed envy of their system—as we have failed to develop and run such a stable and continuous system—is a matter of conjecture. Whatever may be the case, the ruling elite used India's attachment to democracy as a negative argument against democracy itself. They started to develop a counter-set of arguments against those who were advocates of democracy in our society. They used to argue that democracy is the tradition of the enemy. "Our system is Islam" was the shortened form of their argument. Insisting in the present day, "Our heroes are all men of the sword," they claimed, implying in the process that in the present day, our heroes should come from the Pakistani military. The killings and torture inflicted on Muslim communities in India allowed Islamist ideologues in Pakistan to claim that what was now happening in India was a confirmation of the Two-Nation Theory.

A bunch of free souls in Pakistani society continued to argue in those dark times that democracy was the only way forward. Due to their deep aversion to all things Indian, these free spirits rarely, if ever, mentioned in our political discourse that we should learn something from India or how it had developed a sustained political process to which all accord legitimacy. Perhaps Pakistan's left-leaning and liberal intellectuals privately even admired Indian democracy and India's non-aligned foreign policy in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Pakistani society has changed a lot since then: we now have a large number of intellectuals who openly advocate democracy and independent foreign policy.

Something has changed in India as well. Indian secularism hardly has any reality beyond the text of the Indian constitution inscribed on a piece of paper. No book has captured that change more accurately than that by Christophe Jaffrelot, who has written extensively on the politics of India and Pakistan. Modi's India: Hindu Nationalism and the Rise of Ethnic Democracy effectively describes how the Sangh Parivar is changing the nature of and structure of the Indian political system from a secular parliamentary democracy to a Hindu ethnic democracy that is good for only one religious community or nationality. The Indian Supreme Court has been neutralized; secular opposition parties are almost

non-existent; the military has been co-opted into a Hindu nationalist framework; civil society and human rights organizations have crashed, and the media is on its knees. Hardly any obstacle is left in the way of the Sangh Parivar's plan to make India a Hindu-only nation. After reading the above-mentioned book, it became clear that India was on the path to becoming a "Hindu Pakistan"—as someone important in India described a few years back.

The killings and torture inflicted on Muslim communities in India allowed Islamist ideologues in Pakistan to claim that what



was now happening in India was a confirmation of the Two-Nation Theory, on the basis of which Jinnah argued for Pakistan. Now the Hindu majority is itself saying that Muslims are a separate nation.

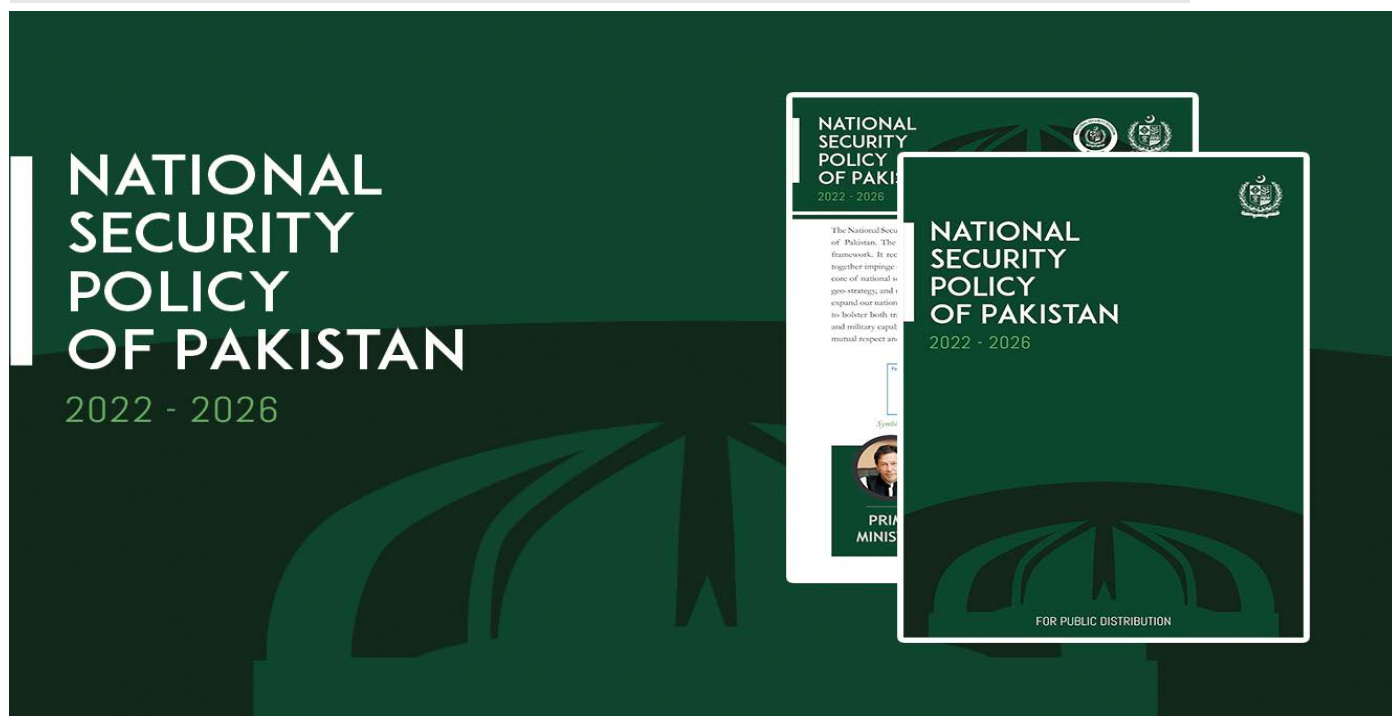
Let us say, for the sake of argument, that Islamist and Hindutvadi ideologues are absolutely correct. How will their positions now affect the inter-state relations in the subcontinent? And how will the culture of religious extremism in one country affect the culture of religious extremism in the other? Suppose there are acts of lynching in India. Will there be a corresponding lynching in Pakistan? In this country, no religious party has the slightest chance of winning parliamentary elections. But at the social level, the atmosphere is no less toxic than that in India. The lynching of a Sri Lankan engineer in Sialkot was a clear sign that we have already destroyed the social and political fabric of our society.

It is difficult to say with authority whether Indian political trends influenced Pakistani society to turn towards right-wing political parties as their favourites for forming a government in Islamabad. But one thing is certain: the rise of center-right parties coincides with the rise of the BJP in Indian society. side of this political reality is the fact that India ceased to be a factor in Pakistan's electoral politics in the post-Musharraf period. Our electorates don't react positively or negatively towards political contenders in electoral matches in the country on the issues of what is happening in India. But accepting influence

from social and political trends from neighbouring societies—which is extensively reported in the media and through Indian feature movies—is something that is happening on a daily basis. All this is not aimed at arguing that Pakistani society didn't already have indigenous trends that pushed its masses towards religiously-inspired political inclinations and proclivities. In fact, Hindu and Islamic revivalist thoughts and movements grew side by side in British India much before Pakistan and India were liberated from the British yoke. And they left deep impressions on each other in the process. Politically and administratively, the two societies are insulated from each other through the international borders. But they are still influencing each other through the media, feature movies, and modern, state-of-the-art information technology.

Understanding the Role of Strategic Culture in the Formulation of the National Security Policy of Pakistan (2022-2026)

Policy direction in the NSP (2022-2026) has been improved in relation to the current global order



By Ibrahim Azhar

The strategic culture of any state is based upon an understanding of its history, geography, ideology, religion, culture, traditions, and economic opportunities. In order to analyze a state's strategic culture, the behavior, and priorities of the strategic community, the core motivation behind sources of strategic culture and long-term adversity must be studied.

With the change in the global order of power politics and the state's future interests, many countries revised their pattern of priorities in state affairs. Strategic culture plays an important role in the formulation of national security policies, or grand strategies. For a country engaged in hybrid war or grey zone conflict, every policy shift needs to be aligned with the growing public narrative and the policy dimensions should be clarified before the public in order to get effective support during the time of policy implementation. Traditionally, our strategic culture is influenced by the continuous threat of aggression from India, atrocities in IIOJK

(Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir), deepening cultural and economic ties with the Middle East, long-term friendship with China for economic and strategic cooperation, and a unique strategic partnership with the United States of America.

The journey towards NSP (2022-2026)

Pakistan's leadership and strategic community realized the conceptual gap between the state and its people through traditional and non-traditional security challenges along with a stagnant economy. In February 2014, Pakistan launched its national internal security policy to cope with critical security issues, particularly internal security issues and concerns pertaining to national interests. Though the struggle was significant, it didn't address the core issues of security and left ambiguity in understanding national interests. Later, in June 2014, the Pakistan army started operation Zarb-e-Azb. In December 2014, the Peshawar

school massacre happened. 132 children, along with 16 members of staff, were martyred in a brutal terrorist attack. In a world with different problems, these events made it easier for everyone to get along.

However, it initiated the struggle for the formulation of a comprehensive national security policy, which could cover traditional and non-traditional security challenges, new opportunities for economic development with global change in power politics, modes of modern warfare, sustained state affairs within contemporary global trends, and most importantly, the welfare and security of humans in society.

Meanwhile, in 2019, India revoked articles 370 and 35-A of the IIOJK. Moreover, India imposed a curfew in IIOJK, which lasted for more than a year and a half.

In 2021, U.S. troops' withdrawal from Afghanistan marked a meaningful change in regional and international power politics. These events marked another conceptual

development in the strategic culture of Pakistan.

After the struggle and hard work of seven years, Pakistan launched its first documented national security policy in 2022. The NSP (2022-2026) brings the ideas of "needed" policies for the development, security, and welfare of the state. Most importantly, it states that it will: bridge the gap between the government and ordinary citizens; attract foreign investment; foster economic cooperation for development; emphasize non-traditional security threats; and engage the state of conflicts through dialogue and diplomacy.

Influence of strategic culture on policy formulation

Alexander Wendt is considered the founder of constructivism. Wendt states that "the structures of human association are determined primarily by shared ideas rather than material forces." Ideas are more important than materials in shaping narratives from an individual level to a state level. States are what people make of them. States do behave like human nature, as the decisions are made by humans governing the state. Their ideas and belief associations are influenced by a number of factors, like history, tradition, culture, religion, ideology, and normative values. The existing environment regarding the country's neighborhoods and their relations is vital for the formulation of any security-centric policy. Whenever you decide to go for a policy shift at a national level, a consensus is necessary between the strategic community and major public narratives. Public stories are based on what has happened in history, how countries treat each other, and how long-term policies are carried out.

If country A is a historical rival of country B, the people of country B would never support decision-makers to follow the alternative ways of normalizing relations with country A, unless country A opts to change its behavior. However, if the strategic community ignores the public narratives, the decisions would mark short-term and long-term strategic failures inside the country. The ideational factor is more important than materialistic benefits and short-term gains. However, when ideas are

aligned with the materialistic factors of any policy, the policy is considered to achieve its goal with precision.

As a result, policy direction in the NSP (2022-2026) has been improved in relation to the current global order; economic security and human security have been kept as the priority of the state. However, the steps involved in the formulation of these policies require analysis through the role of contemporary strategic culture. These policies need to be examined through the lens of *raison d'être*. There is also a lack of constructive coordination between the strategic community and ordinary citizens regarding the implementation of these policies. If the policies are being made, the next question is their implementation with effective ways and means. For example,



economic trade with India is necessary for the long-term benefits of Pakistan. The resolution of bilateral conflicts through dialogue and diplomacy is the most efficient way toward the peaceful coexistence of both states. But at the same time, the contemporary strategic culture of the state and the ideology of the existing majority in the rival state are crucial to understanding the formulation of national security policy. Contemporarily, the government wants to normalize the state's relations with India, but the behavior of our rival is the biggest challenge to gaining public support for the implementation of such a policy. In this situation, strategic culture is more important than anything else when it comes to making strategic decisions.

NSP (2022-2026) through the lens of strategic culture

According to NSP, Pakistan's strategic community decided not to engage in conflicts but cooperate for peaceful coexistence with adversaries. But the contemporary plight in IIOJK and India under the administration of the extremist BJP government is a negative barrier to cooperation with India in good faith. This trust deficit has always played an influential role in the strategic culture of Pakistan. There is also no clear framework that describes to what extent Pakistan's national security will use or not use the policy of cooperation and talks with India. That means the policy will not be effective under contemporary circumstances.

Another challenge is Pakistan's revised foreign policy of not becoming part of block politics. In the contemporary crisis, Pakistan is being dragged by major powers into block politics. The exploitative use of financial leverage by the IMF and FATF is continuously used by the U.S. Due to financial and economic vulnerabilities, Pakistan can't design its revised "independent" foreign policy to serve its long-term national objectives. There is no economic diplomacy framework that is aimed at being used for creating economic opportunities in the country. These events and factors contribute to the traditional strategic culture of Pakistan. However, there is a need for evolution in strategic culture to successfully achieve the national objectives described in NSP (2022-2026).

In the modern era, there is confusion, misinformation, and a lack of coordination among the strategic community, public narratives, political elite, and ideational motivation embedded in Pakistan's history, which is the main impediment to NSP implementation (2022-2026). This also identifies conceptual gaps in NSP as the element of strategic culture was undermined during the formulation of policy. As a result, without an explanation of the steps involved or a framework describing the ways and means to achieve ends, NSP provides little direction for the future. For example, in the NSP document, there is a continuous emphasis on the transformation of the traditional model of alliances. The NSP declared that Pakistan will seek economic alliances rather than military alliances to overcome economic vulnerabilities. However, this policy contradicts the current strategic culture. At a time when the country is facing devastating economic conditions, the current strategic community and political elite could not even decide on the import of cheap flows of fuel from Russia. The hurdle is the ongoing process of the IMF agreement, which has not been approved yet. Though the U.S. is a strategic partner of Pakistan, it always interacts with Pakistan through the Afghan prism or a specific security prism in South Asia. Pakistan-U.S. relations could be understood more in the domain of military cooperation in return for economic aid and benefits. Indeed, this policy is not beneficial, neither for NSP nor for the economic future. This model has already cost Pakistan humanitarian as well as economic losses.

Pragmatically, there seems to be no policy of alternate economic necessity and new ways to explore economic opportunities. No one could deny the historical financial vulnerabilities of Pakistan that always led the country to the IMF. But then the question comes: what is the benefit or purpose of a new national security policy? And why are these policies more ideal than practicable? If the contemporary strategic culture could be forehanded in the formulation of NSP, there would be two conditions. Either we could go for alternative means for economic needs or we didn't mention "just ideas" in the policy.

The strategic importance of Pakistan is undeniable. Regardless of its geographic and geostrategic advantages, there is no

evidence of the advancement and emergence of a strategic culture capable of addressing the vulnerabilities and complexities faced by the country. For example, Pakistan's geographic nature is known for its unique ability to bridge the Middle East and West with Central Asia and China (through CPEC, the shortest route). This location could serve as the point for the extension of Pakistani industries, which could generate an extensive increment in the country's exports. Sadly, it has been 9 years since CPEC's initiation. Still, there is a debate among the strategic community and political elite about the outcomes of CPEC. Due to stagnant economic conditions and instability, many projects have been slowed down for years. Also, despite CPEC, there are no other ways and means discussed in NSP for the extension of exports. All of these indications require the evolution of the strategic culture of Pakistan.



Conclusion

The strategic culture of a country indicates the extent of its capabilities, smartness, and discerning executives. If there is a deficiency of professionalism to cope with challenges and the priorities are not aligned with morals, it implies a paucity of strategic thinking, which is reflected in the contemporary strategic culture of Pakistan. Strategic culture is unable to be developed in a cloud. Yet there is a need for a coherent way of thinking on pivotal matters for sustainability and growth from the top to the bottom level of governance. Strategic culture is improved when ordinary citizens and decision-makers are furnished with modern modes of creativity and precision. The quest for a strategy by individuals and governments that complies with the concepts of perseverance, impulsiveness, wisdom, and positive insight is the recipe for the successful orientation of strategic

culture. Even though NSP (2022–2026) aimed to fulfil these deficiencies and was determined to bring positivity to the nation's future; the long-term, historically rotted elements in the strategic culture are the barriers to achieving the pathway for peace and prosperity.

In the case of Pakistan, there is an absence of adequate acknowledgment of the importance of an environment that reflects the pursuance of vibrant political and economic stability, strong institutions, and a productive cognizance of the nation's future. Corruption, mismanagement, political gridlock, religious extremism, and violence are all symptoms of failure, which contribute to a perception of gloom about the nation's present and future. Since the launch of NSP (2022–2026), one could not identify any positive development in the country other than increasing political instability, general inflation, and a stagnant

economy with each passing day. On the other hand, the current government's policies are contradictory to NSP (2022–2026). For example, NSP aimed to increase renewable energy dependence in the next 5–10 years. However, the government is determined to develop more coal-powered plants (currently 4 coal-powered plants are under construction) despite its emphasis on renewable energy resources and changing climate conditions (even though both concerns are addressed in the NSP) of the country.

Finally, the evolution of strategic culture is far more important than any constructive evolution for the country. Policies and strategies involve the factor of strategic culture at the core of their formulation. If the problems aren't fixed, the implementation phase of such a policy or strategy can be very bad for the country's economic, political, cultural, philosophical, and moral growth.

The Hegemony of the US over International Studies

International Studies are not international but American-centric

By Syed Ali Abbas

Consolidation of knowledge production has always been one of the key factors of global dominance. Whoever controls the means of knowledge production will sway the entire human population – as illustrated by Prof. Foucault: "Knowledge is power."

In retrospect, the United States consolidated its control over International Studies after WWII and under the unipolar world order, transforming it into an American social science. Rippling effects on International Studies of this dominance can be observed under ethnocentric, non-pluralistic, and idiosyncratic ways of American thinking regarding other non-western legit contributions to international studies.

Further, Kristensen's comparative analysis might illustrate that International Relations is not as dominating as compared to other social sciences, furthering the thesis that the US's persistent hegemonic dominance in the international relationship is shifting towards Euro-American dominance. Nonetheless, Kristensen's analysis was solely based upon yearly publications in journals related to international studies, which is unable to examine the United States' academia's holds on the so-called universal theoretical aspect – as if any theory which is crucial for American foreign policy must be universal for any circumstances throughout the globe. This aspect led to delegitimizing the knowledge produced by non-western scholars if it was not deemed as an American way of thinking. Thus, with limited input from periphery regions (the non-western bloc) and acting only as a consumer of knowledge rather than playing an active role in its production, the United States consolidated its hegemonic role with its control of knowledge production.

Liability is a curse. It gets even worse when the liability is enforced upon by the hierarchical structure. The truth is that natural sciences grow with the help of collective human efforts throughout the globe. However, in the case of social sciences, the broadening of their understanding follows a hierarchical structure. The structure was built and knotted by the United States to further its own self-interests. By creating hindrances for the orientalist to actively play a constructive role in knowledge production, they systematically enforced a mechanism that drifted the eastern communities towards full-fledged consumers.

The content of university syllabi in eastern universities is predominantly centered around an American way of thinking, enabling them to see the world through an American lens. Societal, normative, and cultural ties were deliberately ignored, crippling critical thinking from the eastern perspective. Therefore, Hoffman's analysis is factually correct that international studies are not that international; rather, they must be called American Social Sciences. After rendering the minds of eastern communities ineffective, the parochial knowledge production aspect of American social sciences, effectively enabled American hegemonic dominance.

The lethal combination of a narrow mindset and the authoritarian nature of the United States toward international studies crippled



inclusive knowledge production. Biersteker was of the opinion that parochialism exists in many forms: geographical, linguistic, methodological, and political. American positions on all four aspects sabotaged the divergent, pluralistic and critical worldview related to international studies.

For instance, it was believed that during the cold war era, no good social science could be produced by Russia. Linguistically, those who could not express an understanding of international studies in their language were labeled as others. Diverse interpretations and radical approaches to exploring and gaining knowledge were strongly discouraged from a methodological standpoint.

Furthermore, the apolitical aspect was gravely ignored and American academia, either implicitly or explicitly, legitimized the established order of the American social sciences as being of universal character. Consequently, the inclusive nature of International Studies was undermined, which led critical scholars to contest the domain of International Studies and how international is International Studies as it is already under the authority of the United States.

Critical scholars have always said that the domain of International Studies is fluid. The depth and understanding pertinent to International Studies are expanding exponentially from the idealism and realism during the two great wars to the positivism, post-positivism, and post-9/11 world. While the area of exploration has increased, the production of knowledge is concentrated among a few chunks of cities and institutions.

There is a competition for knowledge production both within and outside of American geography. Only dominant knowledge gets the opportunity to be massively produced and dispersed throughout the globe. This contested domain led the scholars to question the nature of International Studies. Kristensen's mapping of the geography of International Studies, clearly depicts that knowledge production is concentrated in the hands of a few: Northern America and Northern Europe. While the rest of the world was mostly acting as consumers of the knowledge produced, this demonstrates that International Studies are not international but rather American-centric and should be referred to as American Social Science.

Punjab's Political Paralysis

The by-election in Punjab will decide the future course of action for the two largest political parties. The people of Punjab hope political stability will return as the lawmakers elect a new chief minister, putting an end to the three months of uncertainty. But will this stability be short-lived as political polarization continues to rise?

By Ahmad Waleed

Pakistani lawmakers have become lawbreakers. The system has touched a new low and everything is happening for the first time in the political history of Pakistan. The recent episodes in the National Assembly, and then in the Punjab Assembly reflect that the Constitution has become a mere piece of paper and it has lost sanctity in the eyes of those who are considered the defenders of the Constitution through which they get themselves elected to the Parliament.

In both cases, the courts had to step in and play the role of a mediator or say, bound them to resolve their differences. Unprecedented scenes have been witnessed in recent months in Punjab's provincial assembly where the lawmakers abused and trampled the Constitution.

The Supreme Court gave a verdict to hold fresh elections on July 22 for the position of Punjab chief minister, previously won by Hamza Shahbaz. This will be held right after the July 17 by-elections on 20 provincial assembly seats that fell vacant after these members, who previously belonged to PTI, defected to PML-N. There are serious legal lacunae on this verdict though. Will it be a run-off election or a fresh election after the new members elected on July 17 polls, cast their votes? The court has deliberated over the legality of the actions Hamza's government took during his three-month rule.

Earlier, PTI hurried to celebrate victory after the Lahore High Court decision of holding fresh elections as pleaded by the PTI lawyers, and then it realized that the verdict was going to benefit the PML-N and allies more. The PTI leadership then decided to challenge the LHC verdict in the Supreme Court which accepted their plea of holding the fresh count on July 22 after the by-election on 20 Punjab Assembly seats. However, Hamza Shahbaz has been allowed to remain the chief minister till the election results are officially announced.



The July 17 by-elections will decide the fate of the future chief minister of the biggest province of the country. Both PML-N and PTI are fighting tooth and nail to win the majority of seats. While Maryam Nawaz Sharif is addressing the public meetings in the constituencies to woo the voters for over a week, Imran Khan has just started the election campaign. He vowed to defeat the 'umpire-backed' government candidates in the by-elections against all odds.

According to some experts, the PTI will need to win 14 seats to have its candidate for the chief minister's slot elected while PML-N would require only nine seats to retain Hamza Shahbaz as chief minister even if the Election Commission decides to award five special seats to PTI.

Although PML-N seems very confident about winning the required number of seats in the by-elections, it will have to face the voters' wrath while the country plunges into the highest inflation rate ever. The PML-N also has another dilemma of allocating party tickets to the defectors of PTI earning the ire of the voters who sought their candidates. During their speeches at the election rallies, the PML-N leaders are trying to shift the burden of tough decisions to the previous PTI government's follies and their 'worst' economic policies. This, they say, has forced the new government to increase the petrol prices and impose new taxes resulting in exorbitant prices of daily commodities.

The party will have to bear the brunt of the incumbency factor amid unbearable levels of inflation.

On the other hand, the PTI has managed to regain public support after the untimely ouster of the government in April this year holding the 'foreign conspiracy' as the reason behind its early exit. It is expected to benefit the party in the upcoming by-election even though it faces the challenge of fielding new candidates in place of the 'defectors' who had won them these 20 seats in 2018. The new candidates may not have deep roots in their respective constituencies to win seats.

The PML-N government, nevertheless, has a very strong grip on Punjab since it has firm administrative control in every constituency. Recently, the opposition cried foul over 'pre-poll rigging' as Chief minister Hamza Shahbaz announced free-of-cost electricity to those consuming less than 100 units and free solar panels to the underprivileged class of the province.

The by-election in Punjab will decide the future course of action for the two largest political parties. The people of Punjab hope political stability will return as the lawmakers elect a new chief minister, putting an end to the three-month rule of uncertainty.



Rescue call to their economic wizard

Shehbaz Sharif might consider all aspects before including Dar in his cabinet



By Sarfraz Raja

The US Dollar to Pakistani Rupee exchange rate was hovering around 108 when he took over as finance minister in June 2013. Some veteran politicians like Sheikh Rashed were publicly challenging him and betting that they would even resign from their assembly seats if the dollar depreciated below 100 PKR, and ultimately that happened in just a few months' time when the dollar-rupee exchange rate dropped down to 98 PKR to one dollar.

It was Ishaq Dar who made that happen. Dar, 72 years old, a chartered accountant and politician by profession, is among a few senior leaders of PMLN who have been part of the party for more than three decades. Dar made his parliamentary debut in a 1993 by-election, winning a seat in a Lahore national assembly constituency vacated by Nawaz Sharif. Ishaq Dar served as Pakistan's finance minister four times and also served as minister of commerce, industries, and investments during his decades-long political career.

An unusual exit

In July 2017, when Nawaz Sharif was declared disqualified by the Supreme Court

of Pakistan in the Panama Leaks scandal, his cabinet was dissolved as well, and PMLN senior leader Shahid Khaqan Abbasi took charge as the new prime minister of PMLN. Initially, Ishaq Dar was part of Shahid Khaqan Abbasi's new cabinet with the same portfolio of finance minister but with some fewer powers than what he was enjoying under Nawaz Sharif, where besides looking after some other relevant ministries, he was heading many important committees. He was actually considered the de facto deputy Prime Minister during Nawaz Sharif's term. He formally served under Shahid Khaqan Abbasi till October 2017, when he left for the United Kingdom for medical treatment. He was facing a NAB case of wealth beyond known source and in November 2017, the court issued a non-bailable arrest warrant for him while he was abroad and later declared absconder by the court. Since then, he has been residing in the United Kingdom. Ismail, a PMLN leader and businessman from Karachi, replaced Dar as Finance minister in Shahid Khaqan Abbasi's cabinet and proved himself as the second option for finance head in PMLN ranks after Ishaq Dar in his few months of tenure.

While he was not even in the country, Ishaq Dar was re-elected as a member of the upper House of Parliament in March 2018 from Punjab for another term of six years, that is till March 2024. In May of that year, the Supreme Court ordered the Election Commission of Pakistan to suspend the notification of Senator-elect Ishaq Dar as a member of the Senate for his failure to appear before the court. So, he couldn't take the oath as a member of the upper house, and till now he has been elected a member of the senate without taking the oath and attending a single sitting of the house.

An announcement to return back

Ishaq Dar's announcement to come back to Pakistan was sudden but not unexpected. The new coalition government took over from Imran Khan, whose major challenge, or perhaps only bigger challenge, was the worsening economy. They had to enforce some unpopular decisions like a huge rise in petroleum prices without any further delay. Miftah Ismail took over as finance minister, but everyone saw Dar as the de facto



finance minister, involved in every consultation and decision-making from abroad, with all eyes and expectations on him. Some allies even suggested the PMLN bring Dar back to directly oversee financial matters in the country.

Difficulties in Dar's return

Although he has confirmed his decision to come back to the country, probably at the end of July, it still looks like it is not going to be simple and straight for Ishaq Dar to come and join the government as there are some hurdles to cross. He has to face cases against him whenever he returns to Pakistan as he has been declared an absconder by the court in the case of assets beyond his means. He has to surrender before the court first and then the case would further proceed for bail or any sort of acquittal. He could guide and look after the affairs of the finance ministry but couldn't take full charge immediately as his possible nomination as minister could be challenged in court by the opposition because of pending court cases against him.

So, Shehbaz Sharif might consider all aspects before including him in his cabinet, but certainly, he would be part of consultations and decisions on the economy as Shahid Khaqan Abbasi is supervising ministries related to energy sectors without any specific portfolio.

Dar vs. Miftah in the PMLN

There were rumours of some groupings and differences among PMLN senior leadership in government after Ishaq Dar announced his return, and some tweets fueled these rumours when Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and Khawaja Asif highlighted the performance of Miftah Ismail on social media platforms, and some other mainstream leaders like Khawaja Saad Rafique in their Twitter messages called Ishaq Dar an integral part of their economic team and asked his presence much essential to when discussing this matter, PMLN sources say that if Ishaq Dar returns, he will be a powerful member of the cabinet. Some believe that because of the party's closeness to their

Quaid Nawaz Sharif, he will enjoy additional powers and retain some relevant ministries, as he did during Nawaz Sharif's previous tenure.

Ishaq Dar is considered a strict manager, who does not believe in broader consultations on his decisions, while on the other hand, Miftah Ismail shows flexibility in his decisions and consults all relevant seniors before proceeding ahead.

It is difficult to continue with Miftah

Government has a legal hurdle to continue with Miftah Ismail as finance minister. As per the constitution, any person who is not a member of the National Assembly or Senate could be appointed as federal minister by the prime minister, but it would be for six months only. During those six months, that person has to be elected as a member of the National Assembly or Senate to continue as a federal minister.



So, as of law, Miftah, who took over in April of this year, could continue as federal minister for another three months, and prior to that, if he had not been elected as a member of the upper or lower house, which doesn't seem possible right now, he could only continue as an advisor or special assistance, and he couldn't chair some important committees. On the other hand, if Ishaq Dar could get bail or, in the best scenario for PMLN,

Challenges Ahead

A win or defeat in the next general elections would depend on how the Shehbaz-led government performs, mainly on the economic front. Until now, some unpopular decisions such as a historic increase in petroleum prices, rising inflation, and hours of load shedding have severely harmed the PMLN's political standing, benefiting rival Imran Khan and his PTI.

Now they have limited time, at most a year, to get back on track on the economic front. If they could be able to manage public issues by bringing down inflation, fuel prices, and dollar exchange rates, which would be some visible parameters to establish their performance among the people, they would be in a better position to go to the next election and ask their voters for another term to make things better. Otherwise, it would be difficult to face the challenge of electoral competition. PMLN is no doubt very well aware of all these facts and ground realities.

Ishaq Dar was running the finance ministry at some of the most important junctures in the country's history, like the post-May 1999 period when Pakistan faced international sanctions after their atomic blast in response to Indian blasts the same year and then in 2013 when Pakistan was facing a severe energy crisis and terrorism.

Again, they might have to rely upon their tested economic wizard, Ishaq Dar, to rescue them, but how he could come up with this greater challenge, only time will tell.



PPP-MQM alliance and the future of Karachi

Many people in MQM-P think that PPP is now on good terms with the establishment

By Azfar Ashfaq

The Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan has a lot of complaints about the Pakistan Peoples Party government in Sindh. The primary issue it has with the ruling party of the province pertains to the non-implementation of a Charter of Rights that both parties signed more than three months ago. But it is not willing to take an extreme position against the PPP because of a possible backlash from the powers-that-be who were instrumental in its deal with the then opposition parties that resulted at the end of the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf government at the Centre.

On March 30, the MQM-P signed two agreements — one with the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz and the other with the PPP—and announced parting ways with the PTI government. And when Shehbaz Sharif became prime minister, he made MQM-P a coalition partner by giving it two federal ministries and a special assistant to the PM post, besides the office of the Sindh governor. The MQM-P had named Nasreen Jalil as Sindh governor and the PM had sent a summary to the president a long ago but a notification is still awaited.

Before entering into a deal with the PPP, the MQM-P informed the national leadership about its bitter past experiences with the ruling party in Sindh, and in exchange, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman, BNP-Mengal chief Akhtar Mengal, and Balochistan Awami Party's Khalid Magsi agreed to act as guarantors, and they signed the agreement with PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto.

Nearly four months after the deal, not a single point of the 18-point Charter of Rights between PPP and MQM-P has been addressed. The first point was relating to the implementation of a Supreme Court verdict delivered on February 1 through which it bound down the Sindh government to amend the Sindh Local Government Act 2013 to give financial, political, and administrative empowerment to the third tier of government. Both parties had



agreed to implement this clause within 30 days, i.e., it should have been done by April 30. Now comes July, but this clause is far from being implemented.

Four points of the Charter of Rights concern the implementation of the 60-40 rural-urban job quota; false domiciles; forcing members to join a committee to oversee quota observance; and so on. No committee has so far been formed, and in June, MQM-P approached the Sindh High Court against the procedure the Sindh government had adopted for the recruitment of 21,000 posts in the province. It also challenged the direct recruitment of DSPs in grade 17 by the provincial government.

Another point pertains to the withdrawal of what the two parties agreed were fake and fabricated cases against MQM-P workers. But earlier this month, former ports and shipping minister Babar Ghauri returned to Karachi from self-exile after getting pre-arrest bail in two cases from the Sindh High Court. Yet he was arrested at the airport by the Sindh police and the next day was booked in a seven-year-old case regarding facilitating an incendiary speech by MQM founder Altaf Hussain.

Besides the 18-point Charter of Rights, MQM-P and PPP sources have confirmed that the ruling party in Sindh had also made other promises, such as giving the slots of Karachi and Hyderabad administrators to MQM nominees and including the Karachi-based party in the provincial cabinet. All of the promises are yet to be fulfilled.

Although the MQM-P has been vocal in its criticism of the Sindh government, its leadership has ensured that no one in the party accuses the PPP by name for its bad governance. At a recent press conference, bureaucrat-turned-politician Javed Hanif lashed out at the Sindh government and the party which is ruling the province but named the PPP just once when he complained about a lack of implementation of the accord between his party and the PPP.

Despite the fact that recent rains in Karachi and other parts of the province have exposed the PPP's tall claims over the past 15 years, insiders claim the MQM-P is waiting for what they call the "right time" to become a coalition partner of the PPP, as it had become of the PML-N at the federal level.



Dr Siddiqui, the convener of the MQM-P, was asked by the media on the first day of Eid ul Adha, July 10, to comment on the city's rainy situation. To their utter surprise, the MQM-P leader said: "I think efforts have been made and the situation is better than before." [The statement came on the day when torrential rains played havoc on Karachi, causing urban flooding in upscale areas like DHA and Clifton and the outskirts of Malir and Superhighway alike.

with PML-N and PPP when the MQM-P was given no room in the LG polls. He warned that Sindh would become like Sindhudesh if the cities kept pushing up against the wall.

While MNA Qadri did not say a word about the naivety of his own party leaders, many think they are hand in glove with the PPP.

"Our leaders have their own vested

Many people in MQM-P think that PPP is now on good terms with the establishment and that any criticism of its leadership or even a threat to leave the ruling coalition at the Centre because of PPP's behaviour will upset some people.

"We are not a coalition partner of the PPP in Sindh, so we cannot be held responsible for the problems being faced by the province," says a senior MQM-P leader. He does agree, however, that the majority of people believe his party has joined the Sindh government because it is also a part of the Shehbaz Sharif-led federal government, in which the PPP plays a significant role.

"We are still an opposition party in Sindh." We are contesting elections against each other. Because they are coalition partners in Punjab, the PPP supports the PML-N in upcoming by-elections. But in Karachi, PPP contested the NA-240 by-election against us and it is contesting the NA-245 by-election on July 27 besides contesting the July 24 local government elections in Karachi and Hyderabad... because we are not coalition partners," he says.

But it seems the people of Karachi, especially supporters of the PTI, Jamaat-i-Islami and Pak Sarzameen Party, are not ready to buy this claim. They took to social media and posted hundreds, if not thousands, of tweets against the PPP and MQM-P for what they called "ruining" Karachi and doing politics for the sake of ministries. Even PTI's Fawad Chaudhry, whose party still has 14 MNAs and 30 MPAs from Karachi, takes a dig at MQM-P and PPP and terms them a ruling coalition.

A senior PPP leader, when contacted, says a lot of work has been done with regard to the implementation of the Charter of Rights signed between his party and MQM-P. "We formed committees a long time ago and they have been meeting regularly. I agree that the progress is a bit slow, but it's because of the local government election and not because of us. You will see that everything will be sorted out by August or September and MQM will come on board as our coalition partner," he says on the condition of anonymity.



The same evening, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and PPP chairman and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari phoned the MQM-P convener to exchange Eid greetings. An MQM-P press release, however, says both the PM and PPP chairman assured Dr Siddiqui of implementation of the agreements in letter and spirit. "The three leaders resolve to work together in view of the country's current political situation," the press release adds.

Few in the MQM-P agree with the sentiments of Dr Siddiqui as there are many people, especially in the mid-and low-level cadre, who cast doubts over the intentions of the PPP and MQM's top brass. A day after the June 26 local government election in 14 districts of Sindh, MQM-P MNA Osama Qadri conceded that his party was "used" to make someone prime minister and to benefit some people facing fake bank accounts and NAB cases. He wondered what would be the fate of the agreement

interests. The PPP has made a fool out of us on the issue of local government elections. Its leaders assured us that they wanted a postponement of the polls, but they told the court they didn't. The PPP won the first phase of LG elections in 14 districts, including Mirpurkhas, and now it is eyeing the office of Karachi mayor as the second phase of polls is going to be held on the 24th. "Zardari and Co know their moves, but it seems our leaders have no idea what politics is about," says an MQM-P lawmaker, asking not to be named.

For many years, the MQM-P slammed the PPP and blamed it for all the ills the urban parts of the province have been facing since 2008. It even upped the ante when it demanded a separate province to be carved out of Sindh to get people from urban areas. In such a situation, it's become difficult for the MQM-P to sell to its constituents the newfound relationship with the PPP.

Pakistan and IMF are back on track again

The immediate priority is to stabilise the economy



By Mehtab Haider

Pakistan and the IMF have struck a deal for the completion of the 7th and 8th reviews under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) and to revive the stalled Fund program.

The IMF announced that the Fund staff and the Pakistani authorities have reached a staff-level agreement on policies to complete the combined 7th and 8th reviews of Pakistan's Extended Fund Facility (EFF). The agreement is subject to approval by the IMF's Executive Board.

According to the IMF's prescription, high international prices and delayed policy action worsened Pakistan's fiscal and external positions in FY22, led to significant exchange rate depreciation, and eroded foreign reserves.

The immediate priority is to stabilise the economy through the steadfast implementation of the recently approved budget for FY23; continued adherence to a market-determined exchange rate; and a proactive and prudent monetary policy. It is important to expand social safety to protect the most vulnerable and accelerate structural reforms, including improving the performance of

state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and governance.

The IMF has also agreed to jack up the size of the EFF programme to \$7 billion, against an earlier commitment of \$6 billion. The IMF has so far disbursed \$3 billion and, with the completion of two reviews and after the Fund's approval, Islamabad will be able to draw \$1.117 billion by next month.

This IMF-sponsored \$6 billion EFF programme has been in stalling mode since last March 2022 when the previous PTI-led regime unveiled an un-targeted fuel subsidy, which under the IMF programme is considered a completely prohibited prescription for the health of any economy. Despite making claims, the IMF refused to strike a deal with the PTI-led regime.

Then the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) took over the reins of power after a no-confidence motion against former PM Imran Khan and made efforts to revive the IMF program. Pakistan's economic team led by Minister for Finance Miftah Ismail and Minister of State Aisha Ghaus Pasha visited Washington D.C to attend the annual spring meeting of the

IMF/World Bank, and on the sidelines, they managed to hold meetings with the IMF high-ups to make renewed requests to revive the Fund-sponsored program. However, the IMF just agreed to dispatch its mission to hold review talks provided Pakistan moved towards the elimination of fuel and power subsidies.

However, the government took nearly a month to make a decision, as the deadline for holding review talks in Doha to complete the 7th review approached. It could not be done because the IMF placed the withdrawal of subsidies as a prerequisite for the evolving staff level agreement. When the parleys concluded in Doha on May 18 to 25, 2022, Finance Minister Miftah Ismail came back and on May 27, 2022, announced the first hike in POL prices. Within one and a half months, the government hiked POL prices by over Rs 100 per litre as petrol prices went up by Rs 98 per litre and diesel prices by Rs 132 per liter.

Then the government presented a budget for 2022-23 but it was contrary to the demands of the IMF, which forced the government to increase

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'Let us go to Shandur'

Shandur festival is a symbol of cultural identities and traditions

By Zahiruddin



"Gior bisi Shanduro te" (Let us go to Shandur) is the phrase written on the backside of vehicles and on the walls of hotels and restaurants in Chitral and Gilgit-Baltistan aimed at persuading the residents to come along to Shandur, which is the venue of an annual festival situated at an altitude of more than 12 thousand feet above sea level. Until 1982, Shandur was a distant and inaccessible place for the people of Chitral and Gilgit-Baltistan, as for them it was really an 'uphill task' to get there. A jeepable road was constructed to connect Chitral with Gilgit, and the lush green pasture was made the venue of an annual festival lasting for three days. Shandur has found expression in the folk songs of Chitral and GB, which connote the inaccessibility and remoteness of the area, and the people crossing over it have been admired for their valour.

The Shandur festival has come to occupy an important position in the lives of people living on both sides of the river, who eagerly await it throughout the year; it is popular not only among the youth but also among the elderly, drawn from all walks of life. Shandur is the pasture of the people of the Laspur valley and separates Chitral from the Ghizer district of Gilgit-Baltistan, who graze their yaks here in the summer season while it remains snow-clad for five months of the year. The perennial natural lake of 2 miles in length flanked by mountains makes the scenery eye-catching and highly panoramic.

The chief event of the festival is the nerve-wrecking wild polo match between the teams of Chitral and Gilgit-Baltistan. However, the event provides an opportunity to showcase all the traits of local culture to the local people, and it satisfies the interests of people in each segment of life, ranging from players to businessmen. The vast field of the pasture turns into a tent village many days before the commencement of the festival, and a market is opened to satiate their needs.

Regularly held since 1982, the festival was included in the calendar of events by the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the 1990s and the date of July 7 was fixed for its commencement. It has been held regularly except in 1999 when it was cancelled due to the high number of casualties in the Kargil sector. The spate of terrorism in the Malakand Division did not hinder it, and by holding the event as before, the government showed the outer world that there is a place in Chitral where ideal peace and tranquilly prevails. The foreigners were really amazed to see the event going on in a peace-

ful atmosphere. The event has so far attracted many heads of state and heads of government, including General Zia, General Pervaiz Musharraf, Farooq Leghari, and Benazir Bhutto.

Festival 2022

After a gap of two years due to COVID-19, this year the festival was held from July 1st to 3rd under the aegis of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority (KPCTA). Much enthusiasm was witnessed among the people living on both sides of Shandur due to the gap. An official of the KP traffic police posted in the venue told The Truth International that nearly five thousand vehicles were registered to have entered the venue both from Chitral and GB. On the first day of the event, KP Chief Minister Mahmud Khan could not turn up to the venue to perform the inaugural ceremony due to the inclement weather. The KP secretary to the government for tourism and culture, Muhammad Tahir Orakzai, and commissioner of Malakand Division, Shaukat Yousufzai, inaugurated the festival by formally announcing its inception and throwing the ball into the centre line of the polo ground to start the first match.

Six matches were played between six different teams from Chitral and GB during the three days in which Chitral won five. In the first match of the festival played between the teams of Laspur team of Chitral and the Ghizer team of GB, Laspur thrashed its rival by 14 to 5 goals. In the second match played on the first day, the Chitral sub-division team (Chitral) beat the Yaseen valley team (GB) by three goals, while in the third match, the D team of GB emerged the winner over Chitral D by two goals (10-8).

On the second day of the festival, Chitral's B and C teams defeated the corresponding teams of GB with great ease, while the final day of the festival witnessed a most sensational and cut-throat competition between the A teams. The Chitral team led by Shahzada Sikan-darul Mulk (recipient of the Presidential Award for polo) was losing to GB by 4 to 7 by halftime. GB strengthened its position at the beginning of the second half as the scoreboard read 5-8 when 13 minutes (out of 25 minutes) had left. Shahzad Ahmed, alias Shaji of Chitral, changed the scenario in a dramatic way by scoring three goals one by one. Izhar Ali Khan got the crucial equaliser for Chitral when 6 minutes had left. A nerve-wracking competition continued for the next five minutes when no team succeeded in scoring a goal. Izhar Ali Khan scored the decisive goal when only 54 seconds had left and it made Chitral triumphant for the year.

The inspector general of Frontier Corps-North, Major General Adil Yameen, was the chief guest at the concluding ceremony of the festival, who gave away trophies to the winner and prizes to the players of both teams.

Cultural shows and military parades, including para-gliding and free-fall jumps by the special services group of the Pakistan Army, also formed the activities during the three days of the festival, which were also attended by foreign tourists.





FBR's tax collection target and reduce expenditures in order to bring down the budget deficit in line with the IMF's wish list of 4.9 percent of GDP for the current fiscal year.

It paved the way for evolving broader agreement on the budgetary targets, and finally, the government succeeded in passing the budget through Parliament. The revival of the IMF programme was still a far cry. The government had to take more measures as tightening of monetary policy was done by hiking the policy rate by 125 basis points, increasing it from 13.75 percent to 15 percent for the purpose of slowing down the economy and achieving stabilization.

The ECC approved a gas tariff increase, which was notified after seeking approval from the federal cabinet.

Pakistan's bond yield touched the peak of 40.1 percent, the highest ever, as the Eurobond was floated at 5.58 percent, which was now going to mature on December 5, 2022.

The exchange rate also depreciated further and crossed Rs 210 against the US dollar in recent days. The 3-month, 6-month, and 12-month T-bill auction rates were 15.48 percent, 15.71 percent, and 15.86 percent, respectively.

Pakistan's discussions with the IMF just concluded last Monday night, and Islamabad was now expecting a final statement from the IMF anytime soon.

After striking at the staff level, the Letter of Intent (LOI) will be signed duly by Minister for Finance Miftah Ismail and Acting Governor SBP. It will be dispatched to the Fund's Executive Board, which will meet in August to approve two reviews, the 7th and 8th, and the release of an approximately \$1.117 billion tranche for Pakistan's economy.

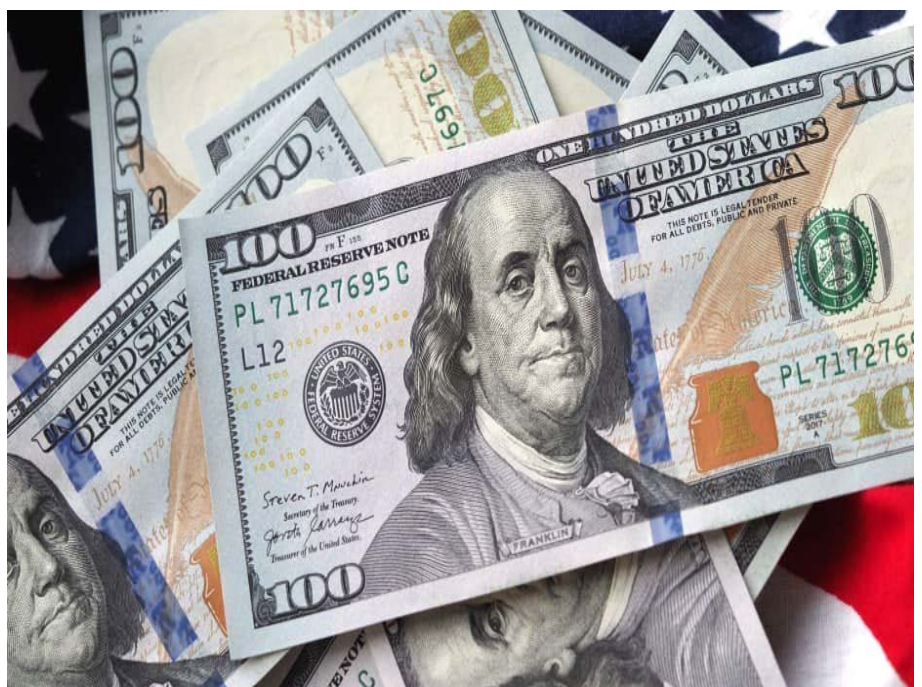
Pakistani authorities are confident that the revival of the IMF programme will pave the way for the provision of multibillion-dollar support from multilateral and bilateral creditors, so the clouds of default hovering over the economic horizon of the country will start

evaporating in the aftermath of the revival of the Fund program.

The IMF will also assess the external financing gap of the country during the current fiscal year. According to rough estimates, Pakistan requires at least \$36 to \$41 billion to fulfil its gross external financing. These massive dollar inflows cannot be managed at all without the Fund's stamped approval.

The budgetary loans from the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and Islamic Development Bank will now be revived and accelerated. Pakistani authorities also expect that bilateral donors such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and others will also come forward and provide generous support to Pakistan to overcome the existing morass and move towards higher growth without creating perpetual imbalances on the economic front.

The IMF and other creditors could only provide breathing space to Pakistan, but our fragile economy required short-, medium-, and long-term plans to steer the economy out of crisis mode on a permanent basis. This objective cannot be achieved without evolving consensus among all stakeholders for short-to-medium-and long-term reform plans. Otherwise, the country will again be in dire straits and seek IMF help again after a few months or at maximum by the next fiscal year.



IMF-Govt staff-level agreement ends uncertainty and it will revive stability



By Javed Mahmood

ISLAMABAD: The staff-level agreement between the IMF and the government for the resumption of loan has ended uncertainty about the resumption of the bail-out package of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which has created a panic in the economic circles in the country and also eroded afresh the key economic indicators with the passage of time. After the signing of the agreement, value of rupee, foreign exchange reserves, investment, stock market and other economic areas will witness a significant improvement.

Before the signing of the IMF-government agreed, after the disbursement of \$2.3 billion loan from Chinese banks, the liquid foreign exchange reserves of the State Bank of Pakistan had surged to \$10.2 billion which have, once again, plunged below \$10 billion (\$9.8 billion in first week of July).

Similarly, the US dollar which started dredging the value of rupee on a daily basis before and after Eid holidays, ended its flight with the announcement of agreement signing. The exchange rate of dollar-rupee was around Rs178 when the coalition government was formed and by June 24, 2022, the greenback has surged to 208

rupees again in the inter-bank. At one time, the US dollar exceeded the 212 rupees mark in the inter-bank and 215 in the open market. However, the greenback reversed its forward march on June 24, when the finance minister Miftah Ismail said that the State Bank has received a \$2.3 billion loan from a consortium of Chinese banks. A couple of days earlier, the Pakistan government and the consortium of Chinese banks had signed the agreement for the disbursement of loans.

Meanwhile, the Pakistan Stock market has also lost the bullish sentiment as rumours about postponement of the IMF loan have gripped the stock market for the past few days. However, the news of agreement signing has changed the stock market sentiment and now the investors would take a keen interest in making investment in the market.

On April 9, 2022, the SBP's reserves stood at \$10.60 billion when the PTI government was ousted, but these reserves dropped to \$8.2 billion by June 17, 2022, showing a decline of \$2.30 billion because of a wide trade imbalance and current account

deficit. On June 24, 2022, Chinese banks gave a \$2.3 billion loan to the State Bank of Pakistan after the signing of an agreement, which improved the reserves and value of rupee.

Meanwhile, whether it is petrol, gas, electricity or taxes, the PML(N) led government has endorsed each and every harsh requirement of the IMF, keeping aside their hazardous impact on the economy and the consumers. For the resumption of the IMF programme, the government has accepted all harsh demands of the IMF, including a massive taxation, elimination of subsidies, and a constant hike in the prices of utilities because the foreign exchange reserves have fallen to the dangerous level.

Fulfilling another major requirement of the IMF after the announcement of the new budget, on June 24, 2022, the coalition government has enforced 10 percent super tax on mega companies and super rich people in Pakistan. The mega companies, nonetheless, have reciprocated in the same manner by enhancing their charges. For instance, the telecom companies have revised upward the rates of their packages with effect from 1st July 2022. Meanwhile,

banks too have enhanced their services charges, including cash withdrawal from ATMs and inter-bank funds transfer cost with the aim to recover at least 10 percent, if not more, to cover the cost of 10 percent super tax. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif termed the super tax a major achievement of the government to realise more money from the superrich companies and individuals and he never informed the people that the impact of this super tax will be passed on to the consumers with complete honesty.



Is the IMF programme critical for Pakistan?

In Pakistan, the government and economists believe that as the national foreign exchange reserves are rapidly falling once again even after the disbursement of \$2.3 billion by Chinese banks, there is no other option but to secure an IMF loan as soon as possible. The foreign exchange reserves reflect the economic strength and stability of a country. If the reserves are falling constantly, this phenomenon will cast its ugly shadow on the value of the local rupee and gradually it will affect other areas too. Pakistanis have experienced an unprecedented price hike, a few weeks after the arrival of the coalition government because the reserves continued to deplete which eroded the value of rupee and strengthened the dollar to over and above 208 rupees level which no one has thought ever. Here is an interesting thing to note that these days the value of Bangladeshi

Taka was around 94 to a dollar, Afghani rupee is around 92 while the value of Indian rupee is 78. Except, Pakistani rupee, the currencies of these countries have exhibited stability. Although Bangladesh and Afghanistan are not nuclear powers unlike Pakistan, their currencies are much stronger than Pakistani rupee.

Another worrisome aspect is that in the ongoing financial year, 2022-23, Pakistan will have to repay about \$21 billion foreign loans while, in addition to this, the government needs another \$15 to \$17 billion

worth foreign exchange to cover up the current account deficit.

As the IMF is expected to release the next tranche of about \$1.17 billion, the threat of default will disappear till the time the IMF programme is in place. Nevertheless, when this programme ends (in June 2023), once again the country will be facing the risk of default and perhaps with more intensity because with the passage of time, the burden of loans and repayment is widening. For instance, in 2022-23, Pakistan government needs 21 billion dollars to repay loans and in the coming two to three years, the quantum of annual repayment will be around 30 billion dollars. And from where the country line-up this huge amount of foreign exchange? This question is very disturbing because getting big foreign loans every year will become impossible. Also, Pakistan doesn't have mega institutions for privatisation because in the past most of the big and profit-making state-owned entities

had already been sold.

Thus, for how long, whenever a government changes, the country faces default risk. This has been happening for decades. For example, when the Musharraf government ended 2008 and PPP came to power, the country was heading towards default and the government got an IMF bail-out package though it was suspended after three years due to bad governance of the PPP government and corruption. After PPP, PML(N) formed the government in 2013, once again the economic situation was in critical condition and once again the government rushed to the IMF and got a loan. Same strategy was applied by the PTI government in 2018 to run the country. All these examples indicated that every government adopted an ad hoc approach, focused on its 5-year term (though none of the Prime Ministers of PPP, ML(N) and PTI completed their terms) and did not evolve a long-term plan to keep the country away from the IMF.

Soon after the formation of this coalition government and implementation of the IMF's toughest conditions, the people are damning those who are the root cause of political instability in the country for decades, a phenomenon which has turned Pakistan into a failed economic state and it was evident from the prevailing economic scenario in the country.

The government has put a maximum burden of price-hikes and taxes on common people, while the elite class, known as Thugs, are still safe from these pains and they are getting everything free. Seeing the chaotic situation in Sri Lanka, where the people are setting fire homes of ministers, politicians and others and ransacking President's palace and PM House _ our traditional Thugs should learn some lesson from this painful situation and give-up their habit of sucking the blood of people and devouring the national resources. Otherwise, time is not far away when the people will be settling the score with more vengeance and fiery attitude than Sri Lankans. Taking the resumption of IMF programme as a golden opportunity, the government and other power-brokers must sit together and evolve policies to ensure a long-term economic stability without relying on the IMF again and again.

Why China's growth recovery approach worth it?

China is on the path to making history



By Hannan R. Hussain

At a closely watched economic meeting on July 7, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang underlined the need to consolidate China's robust economic recovery approach. A deep focus on catering to business sentiment was apparent. Also, Li attached significance to expanding financial output from some of the country's top provinces. All that is in line with the broad-based stimulus policies that are at the centre of China's growth stability so far. This is all of what stands to benefit as Li encourages China's provinces to back the country's efforts to open up in the face of international economic challenges.

First, expect China's infrastructure financing to make gains. During a State Council meeting last month, Beijing prioritised at least \$119 billion in line of credit for infrastructure projects, inviting more confidence in growth stabilisation as pandemic-focused gains become clear. Stronger growth outputs from key provinces help undergird Chinese financing for key infrastructure costs, which has historically been a time-tested approach to growth

target achievement. After all, Beijing wants to make it easier to carry out important growth-oriented policies, like the infrastructure-driven stimulus bill that was just passed.

Expanded provincial contributions to the overall stimulus can end up expanding the total pool of investments and future credit, a key consideration for putting the economy on track for sustained recovery. All that eliminates the risk of any overdependence on less certain imperatives, such as direct cash payments, to achieve target growth this year. Keqiang's focus on strengthening the foundation of China's stable recovery this week is thus an important step to ensure provincial commitment to the national recovery process.

Second, China has been trying for some time to tap into state-owned policy banks to drive funding for infrastructure projects. That has several merits now that senior provincial officials are on-board for recovery. First, a line of credit on infrastructure can help advance the double-digit growth

estimate for infrastructure investment this year and plays to China's strengths. Beijing has a track record of boosting growth on the back of infrastructure-driven impetus. The 5.5% growth target set for this year demands a conscious effort to limit economic pressures, meaning limiting dependence on any single sector to carry growth expectations forward.

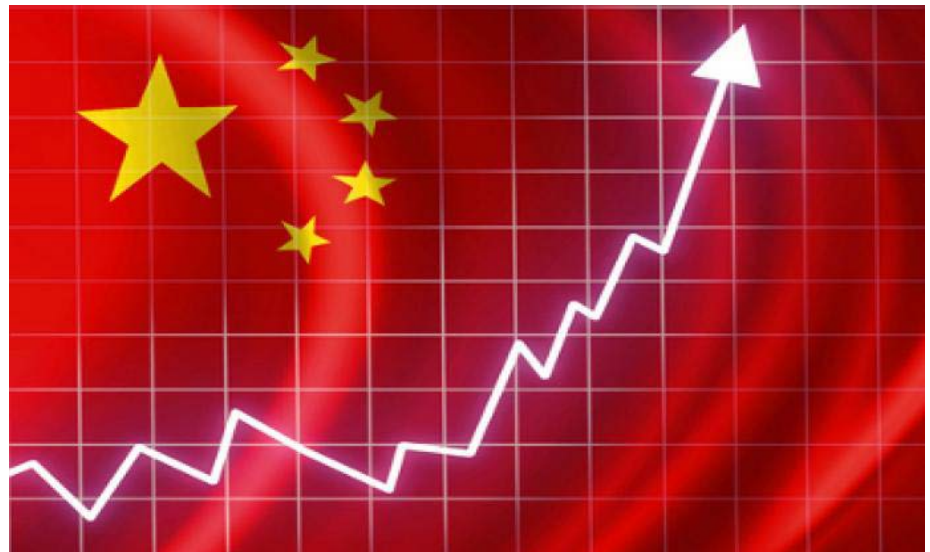
From an industrial economy viewpoint, Li Keqiang's focus on stabilising the economy is necessary to ensure the matchmaking of services from key industries in China and to ensure sectors benefit in sync. One of the strengths of China's economic planning is that policymakers strive to eliminate or minimise major costs of nonalignment among industries.

This is important because China's current push for growth stimulus entails a set focus on expanding consumption and making sure that the country's strategic sectors benefit from an uptick in investment. Concrete government assurances to small and medium-sized enterprises make the

case for better predictability in the business environment, particularly when both are substantial contributors to the Chinese economy. It is easy to assume that Beijing's focus on the infrastructure credit line indicates a missed opportunity from direct cash payments, which some insist is the best stimulant for domestic consumer demand in China. That assumption has several holes.

As Premier Li Keqiang rightly indicated last week and followed up in his July 7 address, such a course of action could prove needlessly untenable. The sheer expanse of China's 1.4 billion-strong population makes it difficult for direct payments to be issued to each and every consumer in China. It can be said with some certainty that some of those constraints do not apply to Beijing's current economic recovery plans. First, its experience with growth is not the same as that in the U.S., given China puts a premium on public spending on infrastructure to spur growth. Hence, parallels between the U.S. approach to economic recovery (which has relied heavily on direct cash payments at certain points in the past) and China's ignore fundamental nuances.

One, Beijing does not need to make direct cash payments the centrepiece of its growth stabilisation plan this year because efforts to ensure growth support for local governments are already in view. For instance, recall the consensus from China's Ministry of Finance authorities that local government special bonds—known as enablers of



infrastructure funding—would be issued in a smoother manner. It is thus in Beijing's interests to further streamline the bond programme and opt for their early issuance, as opposed to handing out cash directly for immediate consumption but with little long-term promise.

Finally, with China's COVID-19 control measures reflecting a heightened sense of stability for key industrial and manufacturing hubs, we see growth stabilisation measures accompanied by a similar set of timelines to better determine the performance from risk. "At present, the economy is recovering, but the foundation is unstable. "Hard work is needed to stabilise the economy," said Li this week.

China's dynamic market plays host to many players, both domestic and foreign

enterprises, and the cabinet has been transparent so far about the challenges facing some of these market stakeholders. Allowing primary growth stabilisation measures to identify closely with development strategies of the past is one way to weather those challenges, and ensure synchrony in implementation all the way from cabinet-level departments to local governments.

In short, China's sustained focus on optimising growth leverage from fiscal, financial, investment, and industrial policy instruments is well-founded. Li's added focus on strengthening the foundations of the approach, as opposed to letting policies assume an auto-pilot mode, indicates China is playing to its historic strengths in opening up.



Analyzing state policy for mainstreaming Pakistan's sustainable development goals

The objective is to mainstream SDGs at both the national and local levels



By Mahnur Mehfuz

The Government of Pakistan began localizing the SDGs shortly after the UN General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September 2015 by creating specialized SDG Support Units within the federal and provincial planning institutions. In February 2016, the National Assembly of Pakistan passed a resolution that made the UN SDGs the country's National Development Goals.

The SDG Support Units contribute to creating an environment that makes the 2030 Agenda possible to execute. These units operate as a cooperative venture between the provincial planning and development departments and the federal ministry of planning, development, and reform. The project is based on the Mainstreaming, Acceleration, and Policy Support (MAPS) for SDGs tool from the UN Development Group. The project helps the Pakistani government include the 2030 Agenda in its long-term, medium-term, and short-term planning and budgeting. It also helps the government come up with a customized plan for putting the SDGs into action in the country.

In order to implement the SDGs in a localized manner, UNDP has established national, provincial, and regional SDG Units in conjunction with the Federal and Provincial Governments. These units serve as a platform for coordinating and providing technical assistance to local governments in the implementation of the SDGs to a diverse range of stakeholders.

In each province, thematic steering/coordination committees were set up with the help of many stakeholders to talk about and agree on the SDG targets and key development areas.

The main objectives of this agenda are to incorporate the SDGs into development plans and policies at the national and local levels; to improve the SDGs' reporting and monitoring systems; to create a framework for funding and budgeting the SDGs, and to promote innovative and integrated methods for advancing the most important SDGs.

A nationwide conference was held by Pakistan's Ministry of Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives (PD & SI) to present the main results and highlights of

the country's first Voluntary National Review (VNR) of SDG implementation. Pakistan is one of 47 nations that submitted its VNR at the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in July 2019.

Provincial and national SDG frameworks have been developed as well. These guidelines establish baselines, set goals for SDG indicators, and outline short-, medium-, and long-term SDG priorities. Both Azad Jammu & Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan are working to complete their separate SDG frameworks. Provinces have also created District Level SDG Plans for efficient localization. Bhakhar and Rajanpur district plans are being created in Punjab. Plans of similar nature are being prepared for Balochistan's Qila Abdullah and Naushki. A comprehensive development and growth strategy for Balochistan has been created. With a focus on balanced development, inclusive growth and livelihood, improved image and living standards, and prosperous Balochistan, BCD & GS offer this vision. A defining feature of Balochistan's future planning and development will be BCD & GS 2020–25. An online dashboard is now

being built for efficient SDG monitoring and reporting. Dashboards will make data on SDG indicators easier to access and analyze. The online dashboard is anticipated to launch in November 2020.

The Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) and the federal and provincial budgets for 2019–20 have both been examined for compatibility with the SDGs. In 2019, studies were conducted to provide policy advice on the following topics: Assessment of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) practices; Resources Functioning in Federal Administrated Areas (ICT, GB & AJK); Exploring Structural Bottlenecks to Inculcate or Mainstream "Quality" in the Existing Public/Private Education System. All political parties represented in the provincial legislature of Sindh participated in a high-level policy dialogue on the SDGs, which was led by the chief minister of Sindh. Participants promised their support for efforts to realize the SDGs in the province. With help from the Finance Department, the Government of Sindh made a provincial budget tracking system to keep track of how much money the public sector gets and how much it spends on the SDGs.

This system resulted in the generation of high-quality information for policy and decision-making on SDGs at crucial points in the resource distribution process and during the implementation of the SDGs across the fiscal cycle. A thorough examination and revision of the Mine Rules of 1952, the Excise Rules of 1969, and the Auction Rules were carried out for the Mines and Mineral Department in Balochistan. A pamphlet on investment potential in the mining and minerals sector was created for the Board of Investment in Balochistan.

Furthermore, collaborations were made in businesses with the private sector to increase their involvement in the SDG; the government established an Innovation Fund to accelerate the development of the most important SDGs; reporting mechanisms have been strengthened by creating solutions for current data gaps and aimed at building statistics institutions' competence to report on SDGs in 2022–23. It also brought in local stakeholders, like the district administration and local government, to play a bigger role in making people aware of the SDGs and in tracking and putting them into action at the district level.

What have we achieved so far?

1. The development of SDG frameworks at the national and subnational levels included the identification of priority indicators, baselines, and targets, as well as a monitoring mechanism.
2. The establishment of national data and reporting systems for the SDGs.
3. Frameworks for budgeting and funding have been designed to coordinate already-available resources with the SDGs while also investigating cutting-edge financing options.
4. Partnerships with the commercial sector have been formed to improve SDG implementation.
5. Innovation is encouraged to address pressing problems impeding the realization of the SDGs.
6. The establishment of learning alliances on SDGs and functional coordination with several stakeholders at the federal and provincial levels in order to identify, analyze, and consolidate best practices and exchange solutions locally and internationally.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

17 GOALS TO TRANSFORM OUR WORLD



Issue Brief on 48th G7 Summit: An Assessment

The Group of Seven (G7) leaders met in Germany for the 48th Summit on June 26-28, 2022, along with the leaders of Argentina, India, Indonesia, Senegal, South Africa, and Ukraine. The summit which commenced with great fanfare, exposed much discord in the words and actions of the leaders, eventually concluding without a substantive response to the global crises



TTI Report

Unlike last year's G7 Summit in Cornwall, England, where the priority of the world's most powerful leaders (the US, UK, Germany, France, Italy, Japan, Canada - including European Union (EU) leadership) was to make joint efforts to fight the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, mitigate effects of climate change and help economies recover, the conversation of this year's summit revolved around reiterating: the unity of the G7 members; defense of universal human rights and democratic values; rules-based multilateral order; and resilience of their (G7) democratic societies.

According to German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, three messages emanated from this year's G7 Summit: Full support for Ukraine, a joint fight against global famine, and more ambition in climate protection.

The 48th G7 Summit commenced and ended with great fanfare as the entire world was waiting for the outcome of its discussions because leading up to the summit it was speculated that leaders of the G7 would

make some important decisions in the wake of the Russia-Ukraine war.

Although other important issues such as mitigating impacts of climate change, addressing issues of world hunger, and increasing commodity prices were also part of the summit agenda, it was no secret that the Russia-Ukraine war dominated the majority of discussions.

Some of the most significant announcements made in the final statement of the G7 comprise: An endorsement of the idea and plan to establish an International Climate Club (to mitigate the impacts of climate change); an additional contribution of \$4.5 billion (more than half of this amount will come from the US) under the Global Alliance of Food Security; Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII) Project (a rebranded form of Build Back Better World - B3W project that was announced in the last Summit - an alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative) which entails mobilization of massive grants and investments worth \$600 billion

in the next 5 years to narrow global investment gap; and building upon the previous commitment of provision of 1.175 billion COVID-19 vaccines internationally to overcome the pandemic.

There was also some development with regards to G7 plans to engage with emerging economies via PGII as well. The presence of countries like Argentina, India, Indonesia, and South Africa at the summit aligned with this particular agenda.

Although the summit was shrouded by sensational ostentation, it seemed that the gathering fell considerably short of the expectations that were attached to it.

It was clear that leaders of the largest industrialized democracies remained daunted and helpless in the face of the continuing Russia-Ukraine war, coupled with an exponential spike in inflation, persisting global food shortages, and unprecedented increase in energy costs. The G7 Leaders spoke of unprecedented unity and shared purpose but they failed to manifest it practically.

As these leaders met in Germany on June 27, Russia launched a deadly missile attack on the Ukrainian capital city of Kyiv, which was a reminder of the fact that regardless of Western steps - including military aid, financial assistance to Ukraine, and economic sanctions against Russia, Vladimir Putin remains undeterred.

While Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky made a passionate appeal at the G7 Summit, begging the G7 Leaders to provide Ukraine with advanced weapon systems along with the imposition of tougher sanctions on Russia to help turn the tide of war in Ukraine's favor, the final statement of the G7 Leaders stated that, "it was up to Ukraine to decide a future peace settlement, free from external pressure or influence", putting the entire onus on Ukraine for the resolution of the ongoing war and absolving themselves of any actual responsibility in this regard.

Moreover, at the end of the Summit, the G7 Leaders seemed to be failing on multiple fronts. As alluded to earlier, despite all their claims and efforts, the war in Ukraine continues, with Russia now establishing complete control over the Donbas' Luhansk region.

Western economic sanctions failed to dent the Russian offensive against Ukraine and

the meaningless attempt to rebrand the B3W as a PGII project to counter China's BRI was a clear testament to the vivid confusion among the G7 Leaders regarding the future course of action.

Unlike the expectations from this Summit, there were no new sanctions on Russian energy except for an agreement to ban the import of Russian gold.

The G7 Leaders, however, agreed to instruct their respective ministries to deliberate and formulate mechanisms to put price caps on Russian oil and gas. This matter has also been discussed by the US with India, as the latter has become one of the largest importers of Russian crude oil since late February this year.

Although experts state that this price cap strategy can also prove to be counterproductive as Russia can take its oil off the market and crash the world's energy market.

In addition, most solutions are given by the G7 Leaders during the Summit also seemed to be self-defeating: Pledging an end to the use of fossil fuels but simultaneously backing Chancellor Olaf's call to fund new gas infrastructures and exploration to quell Europe's dependence on Russian energy imports; Calling for an end

to the war in Ukraine but not fighting alongside Ukraine (militarily); Military, financial and political support to Ukraine but delaying Kyiv's EU and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) membership; Promoting capitalism but impose price control on energy.

The G7 Leaders also failed to substantiate how they would meet their goal of halving global carbon emissions by 2030, and there was also hardly any discussion about setting a deadline to phase out coal as they did during last year's Summit in Carbis Bay.

Several European countries have effectively turned back to coal-based power generation including Germany, Austria, Poland, the Netherlands, and Greece.

The G7 leaders aimed to present a strong and united front to the world in the wake of the prevailing international circumstances, but it is evident now that to a larger extent they failed to do so. There was considerable discord in their words and actions and it was clear that they lacked the necessary political will and plan required to achieve the goals that they have set out for themselves, especially with regard to deterring Russian aggression against Ukraine and controlling the raging global inflation and soaring energy prices.



Margalla Hills under Elite Capture

Despite the IHC's detailed decision, many questions have been raised about the elite capture

By Asadullah

The "Margallah hills harmed by the elites" is the crux of a 105-page judgement authored by the Chief Justice of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) that declared scenic eatery The Monal, Navy Golf Course, and the army's ownership of these hills as illegal.

However, those who dine at Monal, golfers, and the army's other tenants who run their commercial ventures in otherwise protected areas need not worry because the Supreme Court suspended the short order of this judgement in January of this year.

Even though the petition had not even been given a number by the registrar's office, the petition was heard by the highest court and the status quo was kept.

However, in a subsequent hearing, the apex court criticised city managers of the federal capital for making haste in implementing IHC orders to seal the premises of Monal and attempt to shut down the golf course.

Despite the IHC's detailed decision, many questions have been raised about the elite capture.

It starts with, "Imagine the planet without ecosystem services and the habitats created by nature; it would inevitably lead to the extinction of fauna and flora and thus the destruction of biodiversity." The erosion of biodiversity and ecosystem services undoubtedly has profound consequences for the survival of the human species on the planet. The extinction of the human species from the planet is no longer a fantasy.

With superior intellect and the ability to change the balance created by nature, the human species has already caused irretrievable harm to the flora and fauna that ensures its own existence on this planet. The State has an inherent duty to have a proactive role in protecting living species because the right to life guaranteed under Article 9 is dependent on it. The



beneficiaries are a few, while the victims of environmental degradation and the destruction of natural habitats and ecosystems are the people, not the human species. The violators are not ordinary citizens but institutions and public functionaries who exist solely to serve the actual stakeholders, i.e., the people of Pakistan."

The IHC Chief Justice, who is known for authoring landmark judgements on civil rights, lamented that the construction of buildings and allowing food outlets at the Margalla Hills by the CDA was done in violation of the Margalla Hills National Park Management Plan as well as the Wild Life Ordinance of 1979.

Earlier on Jan 11, 2022, IHC, in a short order, had ordered CDA to seal off the Monal Restaurant—situated at the picturesque Margalla Hills—and ordered taking control of the Margalla Greens Golf Club—built on encroached land, also declaring illegal the military's claim to 8,602 acres of Margalla Hills National Park.

However, on March 8, the Supreme Court suspended the Jan. 11, 2022, high court judgement of sealing and taking over possession of the Monal Restaurant.

In its judgment, CJ-IHC also mentioned the Stockholm Declaration on the Human Environment, adopted by the United Nations Conference in

1972; the World Charter for Nature in 1982; the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development 1992; IUCN Draft Covenant 1995; and the Global Pact for Environment 2017 and declared it was the duty of the State and its public functionaries to protect the Margalla Hills, its flora and fauna, and to restore the damage caused by removing illegal encroachments.

The judgement said it was also the duty to ensure that all those who were responsible for violating the rights of the people were proceeded against and made accountable, but regretted that the state and its public functionaries had failed in protecting, preserving, and managing the notified area of the Margalla Hills for the benefit of the present and future generations.

It was a classic case of undermining the rule of law and elite capture since the enforced laws had not been violated by private citizens, but rather by the institutions, and by doing so, they had exposed themselves to the consequences.

In his judgment, the CJ-IHC, in his judgment, regretted that the proceedings before the court were indeed disturbing because they had established a lack of political will to protect the rights of the citizens by allowing the destruction of Margalla Hills and thus irretrievably harming the native flora and fauna. The failure or willful disregard of institutions and public



functionaries to perform their fundamental duty of enforcing laws and preventing their violation and abuse has already caused irreparable damage to natural habitats, ecosystem services, and biodiversity, according to the judgment, and thus has grave consequences in the context of environmental degradation and the challenges faced by humanity as a result of the threatening consequences of climate change.

The Wildlife Ordinance of 1979 was brazenly violated and disregarded by public functionaries who were under oath to uphold the law and protect the rights of the citizens and were thus rendered ineffective, resulting in the destruction of the Margalla Hills and inevitably leading to environmental degradation, CJ-IHC bemoaned.

The claim of Remount, Veterinary and Farms Directorate (RVF Directorate) over possession of 8,602 acres of land falling

within the Margalla Hills was also in violation of the scheme of the constitution and the wildlife ordinance of 1979, the judgement said.

Referring to the Naval Golf Course, which the judgement said was established on lands that fall outside the area allotted for its use and thus willingly undermined the sanctity of the Margalla Hills and violated the enforced laws, The court ordered CDA and the Wildlife Board established under the wildlife ordinance of 1979 to take over the possession.

The high court ordered that the property will be taken over by the wildlife board and that its fate and future use will be subject to exercising the duty of due diligence by the federal government, the wildlife board, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) since 1979.

Likewise, assisted by CDA, the wildlife

board will also examine the legal status of other food outlets and take action and proceed in accordance with the law, and it will be ensured that all are treated equally.

The judgement held that the Monal restaurant was the first concrete building constructed by the CDA in the protected and preserved notified area of the Margalla Hills, followed by other constructions.

The CJ IHC termed this "a classic case of undermining the rule of law and elite capture."

The judgement concluded that "the expression "elite" has been defined in the

literature of the World Bank as 'actors who have disproportionate influence in the development process as a result of their superior, social, political, or economic status.'

Likewise, "elite capture" has been defined as referring to "a situation where elites shape development processes according to their own priorities and/or appropriate development resources for private gain".

The enforced laws have not been violated by private citizens, but rather by the institutions, and by doing so they have exposed themselves to the consequences. The court observed that it is now the duty of the state to restore the damage done to the Margalla Hills and take positive measures on the touchstone of the precautionary principle so as to save the notified protected area from further environmental degradation.



75th anniversary of PAK-U.S. relations:

Interview with U.S. Embassy Economic Counselor Daniel Froats

Pakistan and the United States are trying to reset and strengthen their economic relations. Recently, U.S. Special Representative for Commercial and Business Affairs Mr. Dilawar Syed visited Pakistan. During his whirlwind tour, he met the finance, commerce, and IT ministers, besides the business community. The Truth International takes a deeper look at the trade barriers between the two countries. U.S. Embassy Economic Counselor Mr. Daniel Froats, in an interview with us, discusses the challenges confronting this longstanding bilateral relationship



By Waqas Azeem

What are the economic interests of the U.S. with Pakistan?

The United States seeks a stable, prosperous, and inclusive Pakistan with a vibrant private sector. To that end, the United States has fostered sustainable, private sector-led growth through development cooperation and commercial ties. And those efforts have paid off. In 2021, U.S.-Pakistan trade exceeded \$8.8 billion, and the United States remained Pakistan's largest export market by far.

U.S. companies and their local affiliates are among Pakistan's largest employers, with roughly 80 U.S. companies directly employing more than 120,000 Pakistanis. Indirectly, U.S. businesses support over one million Pakistani jobs.

What are the major challenges for U.S. companies to invest in Pakistan?

Pakistan wants U.S. investments to gain access to advanced technologies, market connections, and financing, and U.S. companies recognize the strong potential that lies in Pakistan's young and dynamic market. But U.S. firms often face costs and uncertainties in Pakistan that can make risks outweigh rewards. Tax administration can be uneven and disproportionately falls on large and reputable firms, regulations and their enforcement vary, and intellectual property rights such as patents and copyrights are often violated. Embracing and implementing reforms that improve the business climate will improve the lives of

Pakistanis – workers, those who start businesses, consumers, and every Pakistani who seeks a better future.

Do you think the new government in Pakistan will bridge the economic mistrust between the two countries?

The United States continues to work closely with Pakistan's government to promote peace and prosperity, and we have always viewed a strong, prosperous, and democratic Pakistan as critical to U.S. interests. This year we are celebrating the 75th anniversary of bilateral relations; that relationship has endured because it was built on shared interests. Beyond economic cooperation, the U.S. government partners with Pakistan on expanded access to drinking water,

energy production, road construction, modernized health care, agricultural improvement, and education, including curriculum development, and school construction. Each year, approximately 800 Pakistanis – from high school students to senior academics in Ph.D. or post-doctoral programs, to mid-career professionals – travel to America on U.S. government-funded educational and professional exchange programs.

How can the USA support Pakistan on international forums such as FATF and IMF to overcome its economic problems?

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is a consensus-based body that helps countries and jurisdictions take decisive action against money laundering and terrorist/proliferation financing. The United States recognizes and supports Pakistan's continued commitment to take action in those areas and its significant progress in recent years and months. As the IMF's largest shareholder, the United States supports its mission to foster monetary cooperation, secure financial stability, facilitate trade, promote employment and sustainable economic growth, and reduce poverty around the world. We see FATF, the IMF, and other organizations like the World Bank and ADB as key partners to help Pakistan design and implement economic reforms that help unlock sustainable growth and high standards.

How can Pakistan benefit from the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) program? Can the USA consider a free trade agreement (FTA) with Pakistan, and what about the existing Trade / Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA)?

Pakistan has long benefited from the U.S. Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) program, the oldest and largest U.S. trade preference program which provides duty-free treatment to the exports of many of the world's developing countries. Our GSP preferences are nonreciprocal, meaning that

Pakistan does not need to provide duty-free access to U.S. goods. The program is presently suspended, pending U.S. congressional action, but may be reactivated in the future. Any FTA would require extended negotiations and ratification processes, and therefore Pakistan and the United States have generally worked under the TIFA framework to expand trade and commerce. The most recent TIFA talks took place in March 2022 in Islamabad, where the sides discussed ways to strengthen Pakistan's investment climate; expand trade in agricultural, digital, and pharmaceutical products; make regulations more transparent; empower women in the economy, and protect workers' rights. There is much both sides can do even while the GSP program awaits potential congressional action.



What are the major economic and trade troubles between Pakistan and USA? What is the stumbling block to signing a Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT)?

In recent years, Pakistani authorities have moved to terminate bilateral investment treaties (BITs) to avoid international arbitration with foreign firms on commercial contracts, and there is no process underway to implement a BIT between Pakistan and the United States. In many cases, improving the business climate in Pakistan would go a long way to expanding

trade and investment ties with the United States – not to mention boosting economic growth and jobs in Pakistan.

Pakistan is facing power outages once again. Can the United States help increase power generation? Is there any U.S. plan to invest in major projects here?

For over 50 years, we have been investing in and helping Pakistan implement a clean, modern energy future through development aid, technology transfers, and affordable finance. Much of our work has been to increase the share of renewables, from hydroelectricity to wind and solar, in Pakistan's energy portfolio. USAID-funded

energy infrastructure projects have added over 3,900 megawatts to the national grid, benefiting more than 47 million Pakistanis. That achievement was funded by taxpayer dollars from the American people, not by loans. Transitioning to renewable energy could not be more important: it will help Pakistan meet its climate commitments, enhance energy security, and provide relief from the financial burden of fossil fuel imports. Pakistan has a plan to have renewable energy provide 60 percent of power generation by 2030, and we will continue to help Pakistan's planning efforts and in establishing a wholesale market for clean energy.

Horrors of Human Trafficking: On the Rise?

There are numerous underlying factors to human trafficking, and they might vary from nation to nation

By Aimen Bukhari



Recently, there has been a global rise in human trafficking incidents. On June 27, 2022, near Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas, 53 deceased migrants were discovered in and around a tractor-trailer. An alleged effort to smuggle migrants over the U.S.-Mexico border resulted in the deaths of the migrants, who died of heat exhaustion and asphyxiation. As far as we know, this is the bloodiest smuggling episode in American history.

The tragedy in San Antonio highlights how carelessly human traffickers act when transporting migrants. At least 53 people have died in the disaster, and another 12 suspected migrants are currently hospitalised. Border crossing has become a significant business since the entry of Mexican organised crime gangs into migrant smuggling operations in recent years.

People who are being smuggled frequently pay fees, frequently in the thousands of dollars, for phoney documents or transportation. Trafficking, in contrast to smuggling, is not voluntary. Instead, it entails taking advantage of others, frequently for the purpose of commercial sex activities or forced labour. Consider it contemporary slavery.

Human Trafficking in the U.S

The number of migrants crossing the U.S.-Mexico border in 2022 is expected to exceed 2 million arrests, which is a record for the year. US Customs and Border Protection says that in May, a record number of illegal immigrants were caught at the border. In May, the Border Patrol made 239,416 arrests, a 2% increase over April.

Migration from Texas to the rest of the country often passes through San Antonio. Despite being just 150 miles (240 km) from Mexico's border, traffickers use big trucks to deliver migrants to the city.

The National Human Trafficking Hotline's data is used by the non-profit Polaris to examine trends in human trafficking in North America, but it is still difficult to put a number on the problem.

Andrea Rojas, the director of strategic initiatives for Polaris, an organisation that works to eradicate sex and labour trafficking in the USA, said, "It's tremendously underreported, so the numbers that we generally obtain and disclose are simply the

tip of the iceberg." Rojas points out that foreign nationals are particularly vulnerable, especially when it comes to forced labour, despite the fact that many trafficking victims are not migrants.

The Texas governor announced that the state will send two strike teams, each made up of 20 troopers, to busy crossing points. He laid the blame for the killings on what he called the U.S.

In a statement on Tuesday, Biden said that taking advantage of helpless people for financial gain and exploiting misfortunes for political gain were both unacceptable. The president said that early information suggested that the disaster was caused by people who smuggled drugs or sold people.

The Texas Tribune said that groups of undocumented migrants died in Texas in 1987, 2003, and 2017 after being locked in stuffy containers. This shows that people who come to the state without the right papers are always at risk of dying there.

The research claims that hundreds more people pass away alone or in smaller groups as a result of their desperate actions.

Human Trafficking in Turkey

According to the Turkish Foreign Ministry, Turkey has become a major migration route as more illegal immigrants, many of whom come from unstable nations like Syria and Iraq, cross the border to seek asylum in the EU.

Turkey is therefore also seeing an increasing amount of human trafficking. Approximately 700,000 illegal immigrants were detained in Turkey between 1995 and 2007, according to the ministry. This number increased to nearly 1 million in 2013.

According to a government official, Turkey enjoys greater socioeconomic appeal among migrants than its neighbours. More people are now being trafficked into and within the nation as a result of this.

After visiting Istanbul in 2013, Dr. Stephanie Nawyn, an assistant professor of sociology at Michigan State University, said that space is the main cause of Turkey's high levels of human trafficking and its connection to growing migration. Nawyn's research indicates that migrants are rarely abducted off the streets and coerced into trafficking. Instead, the lure of a new and better life tempts them. According to her, because they have less opportunity to assert their rights, immigrants are more vulnerable to human trafficking.

The Horrors of Trafficking

Human trafficking is one of the most horrible crimes in the world. It affects the lives of millions of people worldwide and deprives them of their dignity. Every day, traffickers trick women, men, and kids from all over the world into abusive situations. Even though sexual exploitation is the most well-known type of human trafficking, thousands of people are trafficked for forced labor, domestic servitude, child begging, or organ harvesting.

It can be quite profitable for organised crime gangs to exploit people. Although statistics vary, a 2005 estimate from the International Labour Organization (ILO) showed that over 2.4 million individuals were trafficking victims at any given time and that the crime generates roughly \$32 billion in revenue annually. However, recent studies on global trends in forced labour lead one to believe that the issue is far more widespread. With criminal organisations earning roughly \$3 billion from it annually, human trafficking is one of the most lucrative illegal industries in Europe. It is a big business that takes advantage of the weakest people in the world.

Human traffickers view victims as commodities—things that may be abused and sold for money. Male traffickers are more frequently found guilty of crimes in Europe than female offenders, but some gangs believe that women are better at seducing victims by earning their trust.

The Main Reasons Behind Trafficking and its Indicators

There are numerous underlying factors to

human trafficking, and they might vary from nation to nation. People often move away from oppression, poverty, unemployment, and other problems in order to find better living conditions. Conflicts, instability, civil wars, and other social and economic problems are also common reasons.

The vulnerability of victims to exploitation and abuse through forced labour, population displacement and destabilisation. Traffickers may threaten their victims with violence, force them to do what they want, or give them false promises of good jobs or happy relationships.



They search for those who are vulnerable due to a range of factors, including psychological or emotional fragility, economic difficulties, natural calamities, or political unrest. Because traffickers can cause a lot of stress, victims don't always know they're victims or know how to get help, even when they're in public.

Human trafficking is a terrible crime that is rarely reported, and victims often can't get help because they don't speak the language or are scared. Human trafficking is facilitated by a number of factors, including open borders, dishonest government officials, and organised international criminal gangs or networks.

It's critical to recognise warning signs of human trafficking because it's frequently concealed from view. Victims may look underweight, have signs of abuse or malnourishment on their bodies, avoid eye contact and give scripted answers in social situations, not have official identification documents, work unusually long hours, etc.

Traffickers also use intimidation methods like seclusion from friends and family, physical and psychological abuse, threats, and financial abuse. The ILO estimates that forced labour brings approximately US \$150 billion annually (as of 2014). Additionally, according to the ILO, there are 40.3 million victims of human trafficking worldwide.

International agreements like the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, also known as the Palermo Protocol, which is an international agreement under the UN Convention

against Transnational Organized Crime, say that human trafficking is a violation of human rights (CTOC).

The Palermo Protocol is the first globally binding anti-trafficking agreement in more than 50 years. One of its goals is to facilitate international collaboration in the investigation and prosecution of such trafficking. The other is to safeguard victims and offer support while fully upholding their rights as outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Prevention of Organized Crime Act (2004) makes human trafficking illegal in Namibia.

The majority of prevention methods fall into one of the following categories: lowering potential victims' susceptibility through social and economic development; decreasing the demand for the services of traffickers; public awareness campaigns; border security; and stopping government corruption. The secret to prevention is vigilance.

Karachi Submerged in Floods

The largest city of Pakistan is being run by several organizations, authorities, and institutions, and yet to the surprise of many, there exists no master plan for the country's largest metropolis. Citizens are asking where did the Karachi Transformation Plan worth 1100 bn go?

By Hamza Qureshi

Karachi has been receiving heavy rain since July 4. A few millimeters of rain is enough to overwhelm the city infrastructure. But with massive rainfall on July 7 and 12, roads, and pathways of Karachi were all submerged into water.

I.I. Chundrigar Road, Sharae Faisal, University Road, NIPA Chowrangi, DHA, Nazimabad, Nagan Chowrangi, and Qayyumabad Chowrangi were among the areas flooded with waist-high water. This caused thousands of people and cars stranded for hours. Several families remained trapped inside their cars or nearby 'eyots'.

Sindh Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) confirmed 14 deaths in Karachi since July 4. Karachi Police has listed the number of 24 deaths during the period 4-11 July. Out of these 24 unfortunate souls, 15 were killed due to electrocution, and 9 were killed due to other rain-related incidents such as wall collapse.

Karachiites have been accusing the electricity distribution company of the metropolitan for its negligence and unprofessional approach which caused the deaths of several young people. A picture of a victim lying dead near an electric pole in Bahadurabad shocked many. Bahadurabad is one of the famous commercial markets in Karachi. The dead body of 14-year-old Ishaq Jagirani remained on road for hours until the rescue team managed to shift it to JPMC.

In a separate incident on July 12, 2 girls (11-years-old Dua and 13-years-old Aqsa) drowned while playing in rainwater near Haji Ishaq Jokhio Goth near Malir. At least 11 people were also injured due to rain-related accidents, with 4 children while playing on their house rooftop got burned by nearby passing electric wires.

On July 7, 2 persons drowned due to the spillover of Thaddo Dam. They were passing through a causeway when they got stuck in flood water. Locals have long demanded the construction of a bridge at



that point. The area is PPP's stronghold, yet no development is seen.

Karachi received the highest rainfall on the eve of the second day of Eid Ul Adha. The rain data released by the PDMA on July 11 revealed that Keamari received the highest amount of rainfall (231.75mm) in 24 hours followed by District East (203.3mm), Korangi (191mm), District South (132mm), District Central (129.8mm), Malir (98mm) and District West (53.9mm).

The heavy downpour also exposed the authenticity of claims made by the provincial government and ex-federal government. Only after a few minutes of rain on July 4, did the city experience urban flooding, which created choke points throughout the city. This experience was intensified on July 7 and even further aggravated on July 11.

As most citizens sacrificed their animals in the streets, the rain caused blood rivers to flow in several parts of the city. A devastated solid waste management system caused the animal waste and sacrificial remains to float along rainwater in the streets and roads.

Karachi is facing civic problems on many fronts. Solid Waste Management is a significant one. Karachi produces about 1500 tons of solid waste every day. Due to

improper management, the solid waste litter the streets and fill up the drains. PTI government claimed to clean 1.1 million tons from a rain drain in Karachi under the Karachi Transformation Plan. There is less seriousness on part of PPP's provincial government to resolve the issue.

Where did Karachi Package worth 1100 billion go?

In December 2020, the then Prime Minister Imran Khan announced Karachi Transformation Plan. All three ruling political parties, PTI and MQM from the federal government and PPP from the provincial government were directly involved in the plan. Corp Commander Karachi was also part of the apex committee. The ex-PM announced 1100 billion rupees Karachi Package for the broken infrastructure and mega-projects such as the K4 Water Supply Project, Karachi Circular Railway (KCR), and cleaning of rain drains.

Citizens are rightfully asking where did the Karachi Transformation Plan go. The spendings are nowhere to be found. Former Prime Minister Imran Khan claimed that cleaning Nullahs cost about 35 billion rupees. People wonder about the quality of cleaning and maintenance which let Karachi submerge after 1 year.

According to renowned architect, Arif Hassan, more than 15000 houses were bulldozed off to extend the Gujjar Nullah. The houses were declared illegal despite several of them managing to get a lease from KDA. This step caused thousands of people to become homeless and destitute.

With some money being spent on the K4 project and uncompleted KCR, the entire sum of rupees disbursed was around a mere 100 billion. Kickbacks and corruption charges do stand still.

Former Federal Secretary, Younus Dhaga tweeted that Karachi is a colony to fund 'masters' He called the 1100 billion package a 'story' that falsely claimed to resolve all problems such as water, sanitation, public transport, etc.

Several other Karachiites took to social media to share their rage on the bad governance of PPP-led provincial and PTI-led federal governments. #KarachiRains was a popular hashtag that trended on Twitter for two days.

Provincial Government performance?

Sindh's development budget allocated during the period 2008-2022 is 5000 billion rupees. There is no explanation from the Sindh Government where the money was spent. While Karachi has drowned in every monsoon since 2015, there is no serious effort on part of the provincial government which controls the civic institutions of its provincial capital.

Interestingly, 70 percent of the officers posted at civic authorities and institutions in Karachi have their family homes in other parts of the country. Due to the Eid holidays, they were away. Despite Rain Emergency enforced, there was no one responsible to act in the time of need.

According to a press release issued by the Sindh government, Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah directed the local administration to get small pumps installed in the streets where rainwater had accumulated and clear them.

In a separate statement issued on July 12, PPP's Administrator for Karachi Murtuza Wahab said that he visited Malir, District East, District West, District South, and District Central along with provincial

minister Nasir Hussain Shah and Sharjeel Memon and reviewed the situation after the rains. It was claimed that the water was successfully drained out.

The situation in many areas such as North Karachi, Khudadad Colony, Malir, Keamari, DHA, and Nazimabad does not support the claims of the local administration.

Blame Game: Political Parties fighting over!

While PTI and MQM blamed PPP for its supposed incompetence and corruption, the government spokesperson rebutted by holding MQM's ex-mayor, Mustafa Kamal responsible for Karachi's current situation. Sharjeel Memon told the press that it was china-cutting during the time of Kamal which led to the destruction of the city's infrastructure and blockage of natural drains.

Meanwhile, Jamaat e Islami Karachi's President, Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman called out PPP's bad governance. He also held PTI and MQM responsible for the devastation of the city. Rehman has been vocal on issues of Karachi and many see him as the only voice of Karachi. He pointed out that last year, Rs1.2 billion were set aside for the cleaning of drains. However, he said, the government did not clean the drains. "Several areas of the port city have suffered urban flooding due to Sindh government's incompetence," he added.

Next week, on July 24, local bodies' elections are scheduled in Karachi and Hyderabad. Laymen blame political parties for political point-scoring and not being serious about the city.

Bizarre State of affairs in Karachi

The largest city of Pakistan is being run by several organizations, authorities, and institutions. About 50 percent of the city is governed by 6 cantonments. There are three development authorities namely Karachi Development Authority, Liyari Development Authority, and Malir Development Authority. KMC has been given the task of managing the civic work. Sindh Building Control Authority looks after the construction in the city. Defense Housing Authority (DHA) and Bahria Town are other exam-

ples of autonomous organizations operating in the city.

There are other governmental organizations such as Karachi Port Trust, Port Qasim, Civil Aviation Authority, Pakistan Railways, etc. which own a large area of Karachi.

To the surprise of many, there exists no master plan for Pakistan's largest metropolitan. The Supreme Court was told the same in the Karachi encroachment case last year.

Karachi's drainage problem is inexplicable since two main water streams are flowing through the middle of the city. Malir River's width exceeds 1 km at several points streams. While Liyari River is also about 500 meters wide. There are other smaller natural drains as well. Artificial drains were also constructed in due process of Karachi's expansion. It is beyond understanding why the authorities could not manage to drain stormwater out of the city.

Many experts identify S3 Project as the solution to Karachi's rain problem. S3 Project was proposed and planned in the time of ex-Nazim Naimatullah Khan. However, the project is still incomplete after 17 years. Several sewer pipes, rain drains, and pumping stations were to be built under this program.

Every cloud has a silver lining

With heavy rain in Karachi and areas of the Kirthar range, the Thaddo Dam and other 6 reservoirs on the Malir River are now filled. This is good news for farmers living in the rural Malir district of Karachi. Abdus Samad Jhokio is a farmer in Malir. He was very happy that his crops will be getting the required amount of water. There are guava, papaya and chiku orchards in Malir. The water supply comes from water bores and wells.

Despite being a PPP-dominated area, there are no water supply lines laid out for thousands of people living in these villages.

Similarly, 339 feet high Hub Dam is 12 inches away from spillover. Officials from Karachi Water and Sewerage Board claim that the water stored will be enough for Karachi's needs for the next 3 years.

System of Governance of Umar Al-Khattab (Part III)

In Umar's (RAA) era, ruler and ruled, elite and commoner, Muslims and Zimmis were provided with speedy justice without discrimination. It was the zenith of democracy in an autocratic system



By AM Saqib

Governance units of Umar's Caliphate

Provincial Units

Historians say that Caliph Omar (RAA) split the land into the eight provinces below in the year 20 A.H.

- Mecca
- Medina
- Syria
- Jazeera
- Basra
- Kufa
- Egypt
- Palestine

The Caliph sub-divided Egypt and Palestine into two sub-units. Additionally, he left the three provinces of the original Sasanid (Persian) empire intact, i.e., Fars, Khorasan, and Azerbaijan.

Officers of a Province

The following officers would be appointed by the Caliph, sometimes directly and other times by nomination from the people of the province, all done in writing:

- Waali (Governor)
- Mr. Munshi/Katib, Chief Secretary
- Defense Minister (Kaatib-ud-Dewan)
- The Collector of Revenue (Sahib-ul-Kharaj)
- Police Chief (Sahib-ul-Ahdath)
- Treasury Secretary (Sahib-ul-bait-ul-Maal)
- Judge (Qazi)

Relevant competency would be considered while appointing the officers. The Governor had a personal staff of several people directly appointed by the Caliphate office. In contrast to the common practise of notables who would refuse to take pay, Caliph Umar forced such appointed officers to accept the payment. This was to discourage the officials from taking financial gifts from the rich.

At the district level, the secretary/administrator, treasury secretary, judge, etc., were answerable to the governor of the province. At this level, the officer in charge and his personal staff would manage the affairs with great autonomy.

Appointment of talented persons

Omar (RAA) was an expert in talent hunting and appointment to the appropriate jobs, i.e., the right man for the right job. Hence, after the division of caliphate land into proper governing units, the next order of priority was the selection of officers on merit and the development of their code of conduct.

Omar (RAA) had a special talent for detecting the nature of personalities. Ameer Muawiya, Amr bin Al Aas, Mughaira bin Shuba, and Ziad Bin Samia (RAA) were exceptional in the art of politics and management in Arab lands. They were given heavy responsibilities at the regional level. Yet, Omar (RAA) kept a close watch on them so that they might not exceed their limits and abuse power. Abdullah Bin Arqaan's (RAA) writing skills were acknowledged even by the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH). When Omar (RAA) took over as Caliph, he appointed Abdullah Bin Arqaan (RAA) as his chief secretary (Mir Munshi). For the battle of Nahawand, sahabas endorsed his choice of Nauman Bin Muqrin (RAA) as commander. It may be noted that many important appointments had to be ratified by the Majlis e Shura at Madina.

Charter of Duties and Oath for Collectors and Secretaries

At the time of appointment, every officer was required to swear an oath to perform the following acts:

DOs

- Be like a leader (Imam) to be followed.
- Must fulfil the rights of Muslims.

Don'ts

- Do not ride a Turkish horse.
- Do not wear fine clothes.
- Do not eat refined foods.
- Do not place a guard on your door.
- Do not hit them in order to degrade them.
- Do not praise them unduly if they fall into folly.
- Do not close doors on the lowly, lest they become victimised by the powerful.
- Do not put yourself in preference over them, since this amounts to oppression.

Most of the time, the charter of rights and duties was given with the nomination papers. The oath would be administered in front of Sahabas (Companions of the Prophet (PBUH)). Many times, the administrators were to go to their stations and read the charter in front of the public they were to govern.

Assets Declaration

Collectors/administrators were supposed to declare their assets at the time of appointment. Any increase in assets during their term of office had to undergo strict accountability.

Public Accountability

All the key officials of different regions of the Caliphate were held accountable at the annual Hajj gathering. Anyone could file a complaint, and Omar (RAA) would handle it right away.

Investigation officer

Mohammad Bin Muslima Ansari (RAA), a trusted Sahabi of the Prophet (PBUH), as investigation officer over collectors. This officer would hold public hearings regarding complaints against collectors in the respective regions of duty. Saad Bin Abi Waqaas (RAA) had to undergo this investigation before being removed from the office of governor.

Inquiry Commissions

A group of trusted people appointed by the Caliph would form a commission. Generally, these commissions were formed to investigate complaints against very high officials like governors, revenue collectors, or notables of the area. Abu Musa Ash'ari (RAA) was subjected to such a commission.

Law and Order

The police and crime department

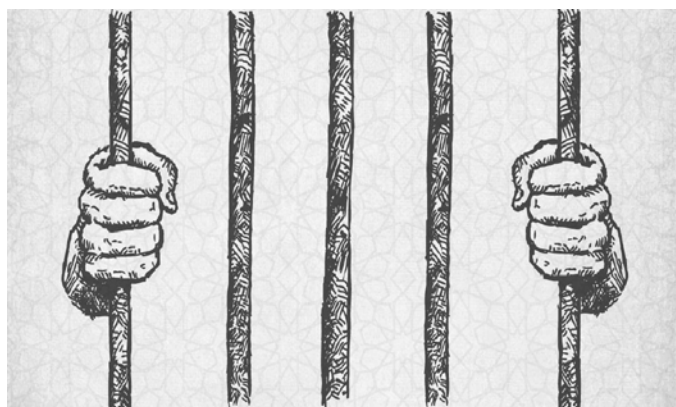
No separate department was established for dealing with criminal cases. Suits of theft and rape were dealt with in court. An initial investigation was done by the police in such cases. The Department of Police was fully functional. In Arabic, it was known as "Ahdaas." Abu Hurairah (RAA) was the police chief of Bahrain. Regarding the prevention of crimes in the marketplace, it is not clear whether separate inspectors were appointed or it was being implemented by the police department.

Jails

Caliph Umar was the first to introduce jails among Arabs. Harsh punishment among Arabs was due to the absence of jails. During Umar's caliphate, the first jail was established in a house at Mecca, then in Medina. Qazi Shurai used to sentence people to prison. One habitual drunkard was imprisoned instead of punishment by lashes.

Punishment by exile

Caliph Umar (RAA) also instituted this punishment when Abi Mahjan was exiled to an island for a crime.



The Department of Justice

The Judiciary and Executive were separated as institutions by Caliph Umar and courts were established up to the division level, all headed by a judge (Qazi). Umar (RAA) then wrote the principles for imparting justice in a letter addressed to Abu Musa Ash'ari (RAA), the Governor of Kufa. Quran, Hadith, Ijma, and lastly, Ijtihad were suggested to Qazi Shurai for referral in court cases.

Equality in Justice: Rich and poor, notables and commoners were all equal in the courts of Caliph Umar's Caliphate. He disapproved of the attitude of Judge Zaid bin Saabit (RAA) when the judge rose from his seat, seeing Caliph Umar (RAA) entering court as a defendant.

Caliph Umar's Judicial System

A robust judiciary should have the following features:

1. Excellent and complete legal code according to which judgement is passed.

2. Selection of competent and God-fearing personnel
3. The principles of the legal system should be such that bribery and abuse of authority are plugged.
4. Appointment of a sufficient number of judges in comparison to the population.

The Islamic legal system has to operate under divine guidance. Caliph Umar's (RAA) arrangements took care of all the above aspects, as mentioned in the following paras.



Caliph Umar's golden principles of judicial law

Umar (RAA) sent a memorandum of instructions to Abu Musa Ash'ari (RAA), Governor of Kofa, in which he laid down eight golden principles of judicial law, as listed below:

1. As a judge, he should treat everyone with equality.
2. The onus of proof is on the prosecutor.
3. If the defendant has no evidence or witness, then an oath (qasam) will be taken from him.
4. In all situations where reconciliation should be sought between two parties, unless it transgresses the legal limits,
5. The judge can review the judgement after the case has been decided.
6. The date must be ascertained for summoning the case.
7. If the defendant does not show up on the summons date, then judgement will be passed on the basis of one party only.
8. Every Muslim is eligible to be a witness unless he is already a convicted criminal or has been found to have lied as a witness, which disqualifies him from being a witness in the future.

Selection of judges

Very cautious and thorough scrutiny was conducted for the selection of judges. Personalities of repute among Arabs were considered. Judge Zaid bin Saabit (RAA) was the Prophet's (PBUH) writer of revelation, an expert in Syriac and Hebrew languages, and matchless among Arabs in obligatory aspects of Islamic Fiqh. Kaab Bin Sur Alazdi, Ubadah bin Saabit (RAA), and Abdullah Bin Masood (RAA) were some of the many judges of repute posted in different regions of the Caliphate.

Before the appointment, practical examinations of difficult cases were also held in order to test the competence. A famous judge, Qazi Shurai, also had to undergo such a test.

Measures for the prevention of bribery

1. The salaries of judges were kept very high, e.g., Qazi Shurai received 6000 Dirhams per year.
2. The judge to be appointed should be rich, and thus not be hungry for bribes.
3. The judge to be appointed should be notable and well placed in society, and thus will not be pressured by influential personalities.

Caliph Umar's (RAA) measures for improvement of the justice system

- A sufficient number of judges were appointed in comparison to the population.
- Experts were called upon when the judge needed advice. In a case where a poet wrote derogatory poetry (Hajv), Hassaan Bin Saabit (RAA), a famous poet, was consulted as an expert on poetry.
- Acquiring justice was made cheap and simple.
- No court fee was charged by the rival parties.
- Access to the courthouse was free for all.
- Judges were instructed to act with politeness when dealing with the poor.

Dar-ul-Ifta and the appointment of Muftis

Very competent lawmakers (Muftis) were placed at Dar-ul-Ifta so that ordinary people could seek legal advice free of charge regarding their cases. Only a handful was allowed to give fatwas (legal edicts). Ali, Usman, Maaz Bin Jabl, Ubai Bin Kaab, Zaid Bin Saabit, Abdur Rehman Bin Auf, Abu Hurairah, and Abu Darda May Allah have mercy on them) were the only Muftis of the time for difficult cases requiring Ijtihad (a decision-making act based on the Quran and Sunnah about life issues that are not clearly defined in the Quran and Sunnah).

A centre from where decisions concerning issues related to Islamic law are issued.

(To be continued)

England Cricket's Dream Run

The founders of cricket had a busy summer this year. They have been on fire ever since lifting Cricket World Cup 2019 trophy. Captain Ben Stokes and Head Coach Brendon McCullum are leading this record-breaking run



By Ali Abdullah

Recently, England hosted New Zealand for test matches. The hosts defeated New Zealand by seven wickets in Headingley, chasing down 296 in the 4th innings on the final day to seal a 3-0 series victory.

The final day began with only 113 runs needed to complete the series clean sweep. Rain delayed the start of the play and an early lunch was taken but play began at 13 30 BST. Ollie Pope was dismissed for 82 in the first over of the day while Jonny Bairstow and Joe Root shared an unbeaten stand of 111, helping England cross the line and complete the clean sweep. Root finished unbeaten on 86 while Bairstow smashed a whirlwind 71 not out from 44 balls. The total was chased in only 65 minutes and 15.2 overs of the day.

England also created another record with this chase as they became the first side to chase 3 consecutive scores of 250 plus in Test matches. Previously they chased 277 at Lords and 299 at Trent Bridge. This series victory also marked an astonishing start for captain Ben Stokes and coach Brendon McCullum as they both took over this side before the series following England's dismal run of one win in 17 Tests.

Their next opponent was mighty India. It's a tough task to win a test series against India. They have mastered the game.

England completed a record chase of 378 runs on Day 5 of the rescheduled 5th test match at Edgbaston ending the ENG vs IND series with a 2-2 draw. While India dominated most of the test match, the hosts bounced back brilliantly in the last

2 days; after having been asked to chase a mammoth total of 378 runs, the English batters batted confidently, continuing their form from the recently concluded series against New Zealand. Both Joe Root and Jonny Bairstow scored centuries and remained unbeaten, taking England to their highest successful chase in Test cricket and the ninth-highest in the history of the game.

The final day began with England requiring another 119 runs from their overnight score of 259-3, chasing 378. They easily cruised to the total with Jonny Bairstow and Joe Root sharing an unbroken partnership of 269, giving England one of their all-time most significant victories: winning the match by seven wickets. Joe root remained unbeaten at 142 and Jonny Bairstow was not out at 114, scoring his second century of the game. He became the Player of the Match.

This chase not only marked the highest ever by England in test matches but was also England's fourth successive chase of more than 275 runs following the recent 3-0 clean sweep against New Zealand.

After the conclusion of this test match which was postponed last summer, the series ended as a 2-2 draw. This also continued the winning test match streak of England this summer since the takeover of new captain Ben Stokes and new head coach Brendon McCullum. Earlier, the side had a poor run of just one win in 17 Tests. England's next test series is with South Africa in August.



While England was making records in test matches, the English captain Eoin Morgan struggled to perform well with the bat. He was under a lot of pressure. Although he's been a true ambassador of the match, eventually he not only stepped down as a captain but also retired from the game.

Eoin Morgan took charge of the T20 side in 2012 and one day in 2014 and was part of England's miserable 2015 World Cup campaign when they were knocked out in the group stages. However, after this campaign, he revolutionized England's white ball cricket over the past seven years and helped them to win their first-ever 50 over World Cup by beating New Zealand in the Final at Lord's in 2019.

Morgan is England's leading run-scorer in one-day and T20 cricket with 6,957 and 2,458 runs respectively. He has represented England in 225 ODIs and 115 T20s. This announcement came after a prolonged struggle with form and injuries. He recently scored back-to-back ducks against the Netherlands and did not play the final game due to an injury.

In his statement, he said: "After careful deliberation and consideration, I am here to announce my retirement from international cricket with immediate effect. To call time on what has been without a doubt the most enjoyable and rewarding chapter of my career hasn't been an easy decision, but I believe now is the right time to do so, both for me, personally, and for both England white-ball sides I have led to this point".

"From my start in the international arena with Ireland to win the World Cup in 2019, I have never lost sight of how integral family support is to any international sportsperson. To my Mum and Dad, my wife, Tara, and our family around the world thank you for your unconditional support throughout the good and more challenging times in my career. Without you all, this incredible journey would not have been possible," he added.

While revealing his future plans, he said: "To what lies ahead for me, I will continue to enjoy playing at a domestic level while I can. I'm really looking forward to playing and captaining London Spirit in the second edition of The Hundred this year".







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In many Pakistan television dramas, love stories are toxic masculinity and harassment in disguise

Love and romance? More like toxic masculinity masked as love through romantic dialogue, background music and powerful visuals of wealth

By Javaria Farooqui

Television drama serials in Pakistan have a long history of masking toxic masculinity as love through romantic dialogue, background music, and powerful visuals of abundant wealth. Toxic masculinity can be broadly understood as an unwritten social guideline for men that explains what heterosexual men should and should not be doing. In many dramas, which are often wrongfully grouped under the genre of romance, the male lead displays traits of misogyny, socio-economic privilege, and aggressive domination. This year however, the gendered show of toxicity has taken over the silver screen with the two major entertainment channels, HUM and ARY, glamourising harassment in their big budget productions *Zakham* and *Kaisi Teri Khudgarzi*.

This glamorisation can be looked at as a systemic construct, created especially for the audience belonging to middle and lower-middle socio-economic classes.

The glamour toolkit

The first item in the toolkit used for glamorisation is the man-costumery, which essentially includes dark sunshades, a handgun or revolver, and the most expensive cars and wrist watches. The wardrobe choice is all-black Western suits and shirts if the toxic male is from the urban elite, and immaculately stitched shalwar kameez and waistcoats in the case of feudal lords.



The toolkit is highlighted in the first two episodes of the serials, especially when the hero is introduced on screen. The vertical panning camera shots, which convey the grandeur of his lifestyle to the audience, are usually accompanied by music scores meant for adventure thrillers.

Music plays a significant role in glamourising harassment, as the core act of the harasser-hero falling in love with the unsuspecting heroine, is accompanied by the original soundtrack of the drama. The lyrics of the soundtracks contain meaningful commentary on love and usually gain popularity among the



public. So, usually the acts of harassment, stalking, and exploitation of the female lead by the toxic male lead, are disguised as love by the melodious romantic songs playing in the background.

Another important related component in the process of this masking is the structure of the dialogues. Some stock declarations of love used by toxic alpha male characters for their female love interests are: “you are mine,” “I will make you mine,” “no one can take you away from me,” and “you have no idea how much I love you.”

Technically, most scripts do not endorse acts of violence and domination, but the dialogues carry intense romantic vibes that give a different message altogether. For example, in *Kaisi Teri Khudgarzi* the hero has fallen in love with the heroine at first sight while holding a gun to her father’s head. His elite family is against his marriage to the girl because her socio-economic status is lower than theirs.

The hero dramatically states, with background music and still camera effects, “She is mine. I am her caste, and I am her family. And that is all you need to know about her.” Such a statement was appreciated by viewers in a society where cultural hierarchies impact individual relationships. The glory of the hero willing to let go of his wealth and status for the woman he loves, successfully glosses over the questions of consent and clear harassment.

The character of a hegemonic toxic male in Pakistani love stories is mostly played by five actors — Danish Taimoor, Feroze Khan, Faysal Quraishi, Nauman Ijaz and Humayun Saeed. The growing popularity of *Zakham* may establish Agha Ali as the new harrier on the block.

These actors have huge fan bases and their images work well in promotions. Consequently, the actual love interests of the targeted female characters get little to no limelight. For instance, all posters for *Deewangi* display the toxic male lead



(played by Taimoor) and his beloved (played by Hiba Bukhari). Bukhari's character is happily married and very loyal, to her husband (played by Ali Abbas), whose character never makes it to the posters. Similarly, in Khaani, the female lead (played by Sana Javed) never falls in love with her harasser Mir Haadi (played by Feroze Khan), who is also the cold-blooded killer of her twin brother.

However, Haadi's intense love is showcased grandiloquently, through wistful monologues, mad ravings of forlorn love, and romantic dream sequences. The lead pair, of the harasser and his victim, garnered immense public fame, leading to frequent casting of the duo in other bona fide romance and comedy dramas such as Dino ki Dulhania, Aye Musht-e-Khaak and Romeo Weds Heer.

A legacy of toxic masculinity

It will be very difficult to determine when and how the toxic alpha male trope gained popularity in our national narrative of love, but we can see its marked proliferation in the last decade. These dramas can be roughly divided into two categories of tragic and happy endings.

The tragic endings group include dramas like Jo Chaley Toh Jaan Se Guzar Gaye (2011) and Muqqaddar (2020), wherein the feudal lord heroes fall in love at first sight with beautiful and audacious women. The heroines are betrothed to their cousins in both stories, and the feudal lord heroes blackmail them into the matrimonial trap by kidnapping their fiancés.

After marriage, the women start acknowledging the more refined traits of their husbands' personalities and eventually fall in love with them. Nevertheless, the male lead of Jo Chaley Toh Jaan Se Guzar Gaye commits suicide at the end as he could not bear the guilt of entrapping his beloved by foul means. His wife remains in love with him but marries her former fiancé. Similarly, the hero of Muqqadar gets shot by his political enemies, but his wife does not remarry and dedicates her life to charitable causes.

But we also find happily-ever-afters for the toxic male and the oppressed female. One of the costliest television productions, Bashar Momin, tells the love story of a money launderer and criminal with strong political affiliations who manipulates the heroine into marrying him so that her fiancé can get married to his sister. The convoluted plot of intrigue and treachery ends with the heroine and

hero falling madly in love with each other and forgetting their problematic past, which includes marital rape and forced abortion.

In Malaal-e-Yaar, the heroine is kidnapped by her paternal cousin and compelled to sign the marriage contract to save her sister's life. She not only falls in love with the errant and wayward hero, but also manages to tame him into a doting husband.

Occasionally, Pakistani viewers get some variations in their toxic masculinity plots. In Dil Lagi, the male lead is a complicated modern-day Robin Hood who favours the poor but works for the land mafia. A case leads to love at first sight for the hero, him stalking the heroine and making sure that she cannot get married to anyone else. The heroine, however, has a strong personality. Her consistent fight for her identity and space lessens the masculine toxicity on screen, providing the audience with the side narrative of female emancipation.

Over the years, viewers have developed a taste of cheering for the on screen romance between a powerful man and a helpless female victim. Snippets of the longing gaze of the stalker, testimonies of his obsession with the unwilling female love interest, and his romantic monologues are turned into short videos and shared and re-shared by engaged fans.

Breaking the love code

Pakistani TV channels have time and again showed their potential to create unproblematic family entertainment, romance, intrigue, horror, and thriller genre dramas. Private production houses need to rethink their proclivity for using the code of love to beautify acts of stalking, forced marriage, and horrifying scenes of powerful men literally chasing the women they have randomly selected to love.

We live in a patriarchal society with a twisted sense of morality and limited social roles for women. Exploiting the concept of love to make harassment palatable — and in some cases attractive to the public — has a very obvious negative impact on society. There is an urgent need to find ways of enticing television drama viewers without adding unnecessary nuances to the miseries of existing as a woman in Pakistan.

Courtesy images.dawn.com

Rescue On The Sea

A riveting story of love, life, and compassion



By Zeenat Iqbal Hussain

Very little has been written about the ancient coastal people of Lyari – the irrepressible Makranis – who take their name from the Makran coast of Sindh and, Balochistan, which also indicates a common history of the two provinces; the Makran coast constitutes the South-East of Iran and the South-West of Pakistan; a 1,000 km stretch along the Gulf of Oman from RA's (cape) Al-Kuh, Iran (West of Jask), to the Lasbela District of Pakistan (near Karachi). The Makran coast is on the Arabian Sea, to the North-West of Quetta in Balochistan.

The following is a story of one such coastal village:

Children on bare-back camels, watch the sea, its vastness spanning even beyond the grasp of their eyes. Fishermen on the beach watch the sky like the city dwellers read their newspapers first thing in the morning. Through the knots of their nets hanging on the line, they seem to predict the weather. This exercise determines whether they should take a boat out or not on the deep sea, for their daily expedition to catch fish. The air is filled with the smell of rancid water that is due to the deposits of oil,

resulting in decayed and dead sea life. Music, which is a part of their lives, plays in the background. The sounds are a fusion of musical cultures from the Middle East, Indo-Pakistan, and Africa.

The shells on the beach look like the abandoned toenails of the old fishermen, and they are more beautiful there than on the foot. The broken wings, the sand-logged crabs, a woman's lonely shoe, a rusty toy damaged beyond recognition, and the plank or sail from a doomed boat, all lay sprawled on the beach, each with a story behind it, cleansed and sterilized by the salt and iodine in the great hospital of the sea. At night, the light from the tower was but a spot against the background of the sky and spectacular cliffs.

The weather-beaten villager munched dates from the interior while watching holiday-makers trying to teach their children to swim, like fish to water, amidst the shouts and screams of the children who are already submerged in the waters. The steps of the ladies faltered as they approached the sea, clad in shalwar kameezes filled with the wind, the Shalwar Kameez itself a deterrent for swimming.

The story told here is that of a villager who because of his sharp sense of hearing helped in the rescue of a drowning man. The villager was alone and since he had no family to fend for, he had no responsibilities to drain his energy. Somehow he had also preserved his youth, which he owed to mother nature. Religion that usually comes into the house with the presence of a woman was lacking in his and he was quite oblivious of it.

One evening when it was well after ten and the moon was full with black clouds scudding in ordered masses across the sky, he was still sitting on his wall, all alone. A cool wind suddenly sighed from an unexpected quarter and in its wake was a noise like that from a distant cavalry charge. His razor-sharp ears picked up the sound. His brow creased up as his eyes searched the distance. He hobbled to his neighbor's house and banged on the door of his traditional mud-hut – the two men, though natural lifeguards, knew thoroughly all that was written in the books about rescue on the seas. The coastal blacks were descendants of imported slaves – the fishermen being known as the Meds and the seamen as the Koras – when there was no

response; he banged on the door again. A groggy fellow soon appeared. He pointed towards the horizon and mumbled something in the Makranic dialect. The man's eyes tried to see beyond the direction of the location being pointed. A boat in trouble, he thought aloud. Without wasting any time they woke the other men.

A rule of the sea states, that half the purchase price of the vessel of the sea is given to the rescue party. This prize money was quite a temptation, but since it was always dangerous the case required to be argued, all hands knew that the proposed journey was perilous.

The village women had gathered on the beach and saw their men disappear, reappear, disappear, reappear and finally disappear into the darkness. They were now a speck in the vast vista of the sea – the ocean that is open to all and merciful to none, that which threatens even when it seems to yield, pitiless always to weakness.

Many of the Makrani women now worked as domestic servants in Karachi; they were also experts in the art of massaging any mother and child after birth. Their traditional long dresses with hand-woven embroidery gave them a distinct 'folk' touch, separating them from the typical Karachiites. The skirt-like look, with its wide circumference, and the loose shalwar

could be compared to the costumes of the Pathan and Kabuli women.

The men in the rescue boat changed sides, so as not to tip the balance of the boat as the surf sprayed them from head to toe. The taste of salt lingered in their mouths during the voyage. They were not bothered by their appearance. On the contrary, they felt no different from when they started out dry.

Suddenly, a dark object was thrown at them on the crest of a wave. It was a man. They held on to the poor fellow and eventually succeeded in dragging him aboard. Nobody felt sorry that this time, there was no prize. They rowed back to their village.

Couples fought with each other to offer hospitality to this half-dead man, and they almost came to blows in their struggle for this visa to heaven.

They fetched a doctor from a nearby village, while the women sat all around him wearing their beads. The doctor was a Karachiite who had been sent to the village to serve them. The doctor prompted the man to speak. The man said, "Mahganj" very faintly. Repeated attempts, received the same response. The diagnosis stated that he was a victim of a traumatic shock and was suffering from amnesia, which meant a loss of memory, if only temporarily.

The Priest, who was also a member of the village council, was also summoned, as was the case in other similar incidents. "What's going on here?" he asked one of the ladies. "A miracle," said all the ladies together. The Makrani women are predominantly Muslim.

The Priest was briefed about the rescue and what followed. Being an elderly fellow, he recalled that a girl by the name of 'Mahganj' had been registered in the mosque some eighteen years ago.

Now, it was easy to put two and two together. The man they found was associated with Mahganj and was discovered as belonging to the same village as hers. He was also supposed to marry her.

Mahganj was the granddaughter of the village tailor. Thus it was decided that the man be taken back to the same village that he originated from. Similar surroundings would help to revive his memory, it was hoped.

A therapist was hired from the city and surely, slowly though, his memory came back in bits and pieces. Mahganj's presence always evoked a response in the man, so strong was the bond of love. His memory did eventually return, which in turn led to their marriage. They led a happy married life.





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