

Fortnightly

The Truth International

Islamabad

1st - 15th July 2022

Fragility of Allied Government

Shahbaz led Govt facing difficult economic and political task

The end of East-West Cold War

Active armed conflicts across globe and threatening world peace

Pak-IMF Programme

Pakistan accepted all harsh demands, uncertainty about agreement still exists

Who is Responsible for Political & Economic Mess?



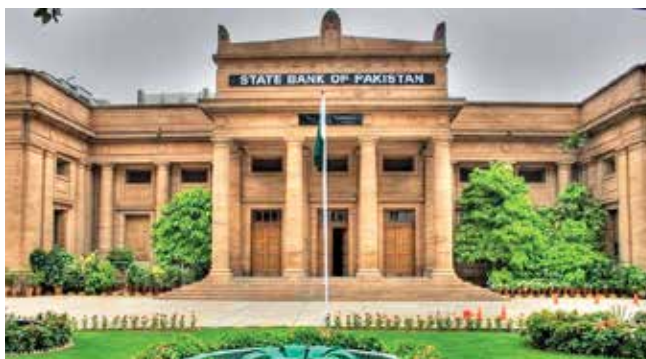
EDITORIAL

by Hammad Ghaznavi – Page 04

OPINION

CITY NOTES: Why is Ali Wazir to be jailed? By M A Niazi – Page 05

Interventions for inclusion by Dr. Reza Baqir – Page 06



Inequality, not poverty by S. Akbar Zaidi – Page 08

Who destroyed Afghanistan? By Dr. Moonis Ahmar – Page 10



Pakistan doesn't need a Miracle Man to Fix the Ills by Rashid Munawar Virk – Page 12

POLITICS

Shehbaz Sharif's Political Conundrum by Noor Aftab by Noor Aftab – Page 14



PTI out of agitation mode? by Sarfraz Raja – Page 16

Allied Parties Double Crossing Each Other? By Naveed Miraj – Page 18



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

Edition: 01st - 15th July 2022

Price: Rs. 435

Publisher:

Muhammad Fahad Thaheem

Printer:

Masha Allah Printers

Basement # 9, Ratta Mansion, Fazal e Haq
Road, Blue Area, Islamabad.

Design & Layout:

Abdul Qadir

DISCLAIMER: The articles published in this magazine collected from various writers, and sources are disseminated for information only. Therefore, the publisher shall not be responsible for any mistake/error.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Arms-build up: A threat to world peace? By Dr. Syed Rifaat Hussain – **Page 20**



Pakistan's TTP Dilemma by Syed Fakhar KaKaKhel – **Page 22**

President Xi Commitment to Peace and Prosperity at BRICS by Shakeel Ahmad Ramay – **Page 24**

Internationalization of the Russia-Ukraine War: A global reality by Hamzah Rifaat Hussain – **Page 26**



A real-life Top Gun sequel between Iran and the West: JCPOA unlikely by Naqi Akbar – **Page 30**

Queen Elizabeth II's Jubilee Celebrations by Aimen Bukhari – **Page 32**

ECONOMY

IMF programme lands coalition govt, people in hot waters by Javed Mahmood – **Page 34**

Pakistan Economy: Trapped Between China and US by Salman Rafi Sheikh – **Page 36**



Inflationary Storm and Its Consequences for the world by Dr. Khalid Bajwa – **Page 38**

What did we learn from the 3rd Major Economies Forum? By Hannan R. Hussain – **Page 39**

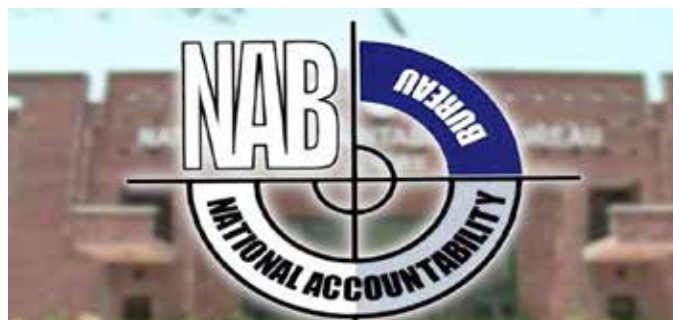
Twitter seals the Deal with Elon Musk by Amna Shoaib – **Page 41**

Water or Weapon of War by S. Zeeshan A Shah – **Page 42**

INVESTIGATION

Edible Oil Import Bill by Azeem Waqas – **Page 44**

Can NAB law pass Judicial Test? By Asadullah – **Page 46**



HISTORY

The governance system of Caliph Umar al Khattab (Part II) By Azmat Mumtaz Saqib – **Page 48**

EDUCATION

CSS, PMS: How to Prepare for Competitive Exams? By Aimen Bukhari – **Page 50**

SPORTS



The unpredictable Pakistani cricket – **Page 51**

UEFA Champions League 2022 – **Page 52**

By Ali Abdullah

ENTERTAINMENT

I feel More Margin of Acting in Negative Roles: Syed Jibran by Kaukab Jehan – **Page 53**

Khalil ur Rehman's London Nahi Jaunga set to release this Eid – **Page 55**

Saba Qamar and Imran Abbas starring in Umera Ahmed's film Tumaray Husn Ke Naam – **Page 55**

By Amna Shoaib

The Jerky Coalition

By Hammad Ghaznavi



After eighty days in power, the coalition government is still struggling to settle in, grappling with myriads of challenges both on economic and political fronts. A victory on a front is followed by an embarrassment on another; that seems like a pattern now with the government. Is the present setup likely to remain in a similar shaky situation as long as it stays in power? Let's discuss.

The multiplying Inflation is proving to be the most ferocious enemy of the Shehbaz government. The prices have spiraled up, especially those of petrol and electricity, leading to an overall increase in the cost of living, making life even tougher for a huge bulge of the population. On the other hand, the first whiff of fresh air in the economic corridors came with China transferring a loan of \$2.3 billion to Pakistan which helped the market to feel positive. As a result, the Rupee gained considerably against the US dollar, and the stock market began to show some signs of stability.

Then came the 10 percent Super Tax on the big industry which, many fear, will be passed on to the consumers, leading to further inflation. The overall economic picture of Pakistan is less likely to appear rosy for quite some time to come, and the best the government can do is to arrange relief for the poor through targeted subsidies, judicious administrative cut downs, and focused spending on development. To give a semblance of economic

stability, Islamabad is desperately waiting for the IMF to resume its enhanced programme, which is likely to open more gates of economic support from donor agencies and friendly states.

The political front is not calm either. Former Prime minister Imran Khan, after a botched attempt at Dharna, spent a few days in a state of relative limbo, gauging the public reaction to the price spike. After a hiatus, he has decided to hold a jalsa in Islamabad on the July 2nd, immediately after the federal annual budget is finalized. Importantly, there is no controversy regarding the venue of jalsa; it is parade ground, not the D-chowk in the red zone. Commentators insist that Imran Khan doesn't seem to have the backing of the powerful quarters at the moment, which is why, he is relatively cautiously moving forward.

The threat to the government looks more real from within its own ranks, as different coalition partners are getting a bit jittery, allegedly because of the guarantees given to them are not being honoured by the PML-N and PPP, the key coalition parties. For one, in the wake of the first phase of Local Bodies' polls in Sindh, JUI and MQM are singed at the 'highhandedness' of the PPP provincial government. "The promises are not kept," the leadership of the two important coalition partners repeated in unison. The MQM members, Sabir Qaimkhani and Salahuddin, expressed their anger in the national assembly as well.

"The government is dependent on our votes," they reminded the House in unequivocal terms. Likewise, two Baloch legislators, Aslam Bhotani and Khalid Magsi of BAP party were even more expressive as for their grievances against the government, of which they are a part at the moment. It is important to remember that the incumbent government enjoys a wafer thin majority of two votes in the national assembly.

This is also an open secret that the MQM and BAP parties enjoy close contacts with the powers-that-be, and do not make their political decisions without the garrison's input. Hence, any fluttering of the wings by these parties is construed as a vivid indicator of the mood in Rawalpindi. In Punjab, the Hamza government is still on a bumpy road. The court decisions, at the end of the day, will probably not pave the way for the ouster of the Punjab government. But the confusion persists that damages the government's claims of political stability.

In mature democracies, even with one-seat majority, the government can complete its term. Our political system, however, is much more wobbly. Having said that, it seems the stakeholders are not in a hurry for the general elections. First, the economic ship has to be stabilized. Period. Pakistan's economic situation is too precarious, the decision makers of the land agree, to think of the luxury of early polls.

CITY NOTES: Why is Ali Wazir to be jailed?

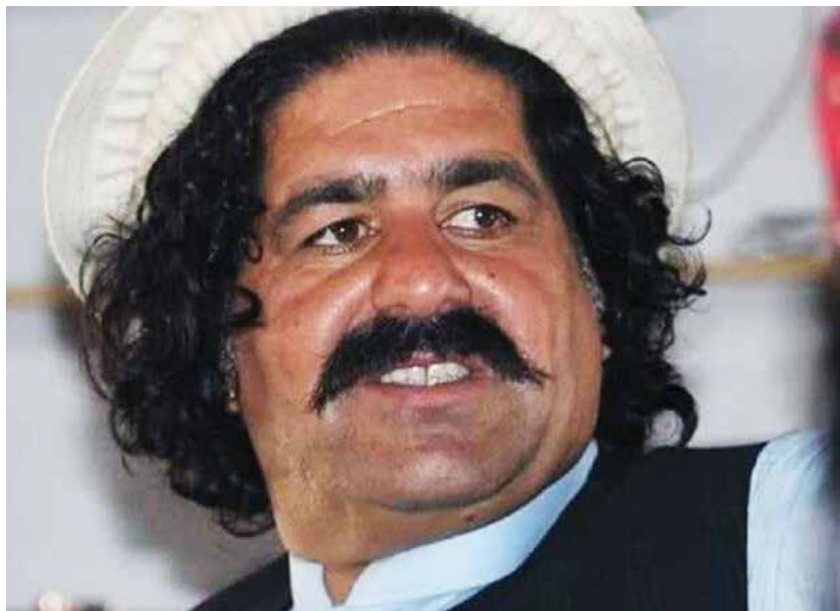
By M A Niazi

Some nasty and mean-minded people out there, who've been saying that it's perfectly all right to sling Ali Wazir in durance vile for daring to say things against the Army in a speech in Waziristan, but not to take any action against Imran Khan for his accusations that the 'neutrals' were animals for not supporting the right, which is him. As far as I know, Ali Wazir doesn't want the Army on his side. Imran does.

Perhaps both can learn from Saudi Crown Prince Muhammad Bin Salman, who has for some time suffered because of the accusation that he was behind the brutal murder of Saudi dissident Jamal Khashoggi in 2019 in Saudi Arabia's Istanbul consulate. True, Imran Khan had him visit Pakistan at a time when he was persona non grata in most countries. Even Imran, according to a highly unreliable source, baulked at the invitation to dinner at the Saudi Embassy.

Far from being persona non grata, the Crown Prince has hosted the US President, Joe Biden, who campaigned on a platform which demanded the MBS be punished for the murder. As if that wasn't enough, MBS went on an official visit to Turkey where he was received by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The visit was to the capital, Ankara, and did not include an Istanbul leg, where an inspection of the consulate by the Crown Prince would have almost automatically been on the schedule.

That should give Imran hope. I mean, if there is life for MBS after the Khashoggi murder, then why not life for Imran after dismissal by conspiracy. And if the USA can forgive MBS to the extent of having Biden go visit, why can't it learn to live with Imran again? As for the reasons why it overthrew him, he can leave the Shehbaz government to take the steps it wants, and the USA let him come back. Through those who he can call neutral, though Ali Wazir wouldn't know what hit him if he had the temerity to do so.



I wonder why this Friday there was no rise in petrol prices. Instead Finance Minister Miftah Ismail imposed a one-time tax on company profits. Well, let's hope this one-time stayed one-time. Previous one-time measures didn't stay one-time. Like the income tax, which had been introduced as a wartime measure to help the UK finance World War-I.

Well, it's still around. And then there was of the fiduciary issue of £14 million to help finance the Napoleonic War. A fiduciary issue meant that the Bank of England would print banknotes that weren't backed by gold. Well, now all money consists of fiduciary issues, because none of the money is backed by anything, except government securities.

The banknote contains a promise to pay by the Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan. The bearer is promised the money 'on demand'. But no one makes the demand. Once upon a time, under the Raj, you could demand and would be paid silver rupees, each coin of a certain weight and purity. Now, if you presented the promise to pay, once the derisive laughter had subsided, you would be given government securities for the amount on the note. In short, more paper. So a measure introduced partially to finance a war, has now swept out gold and replaced it with fiat.

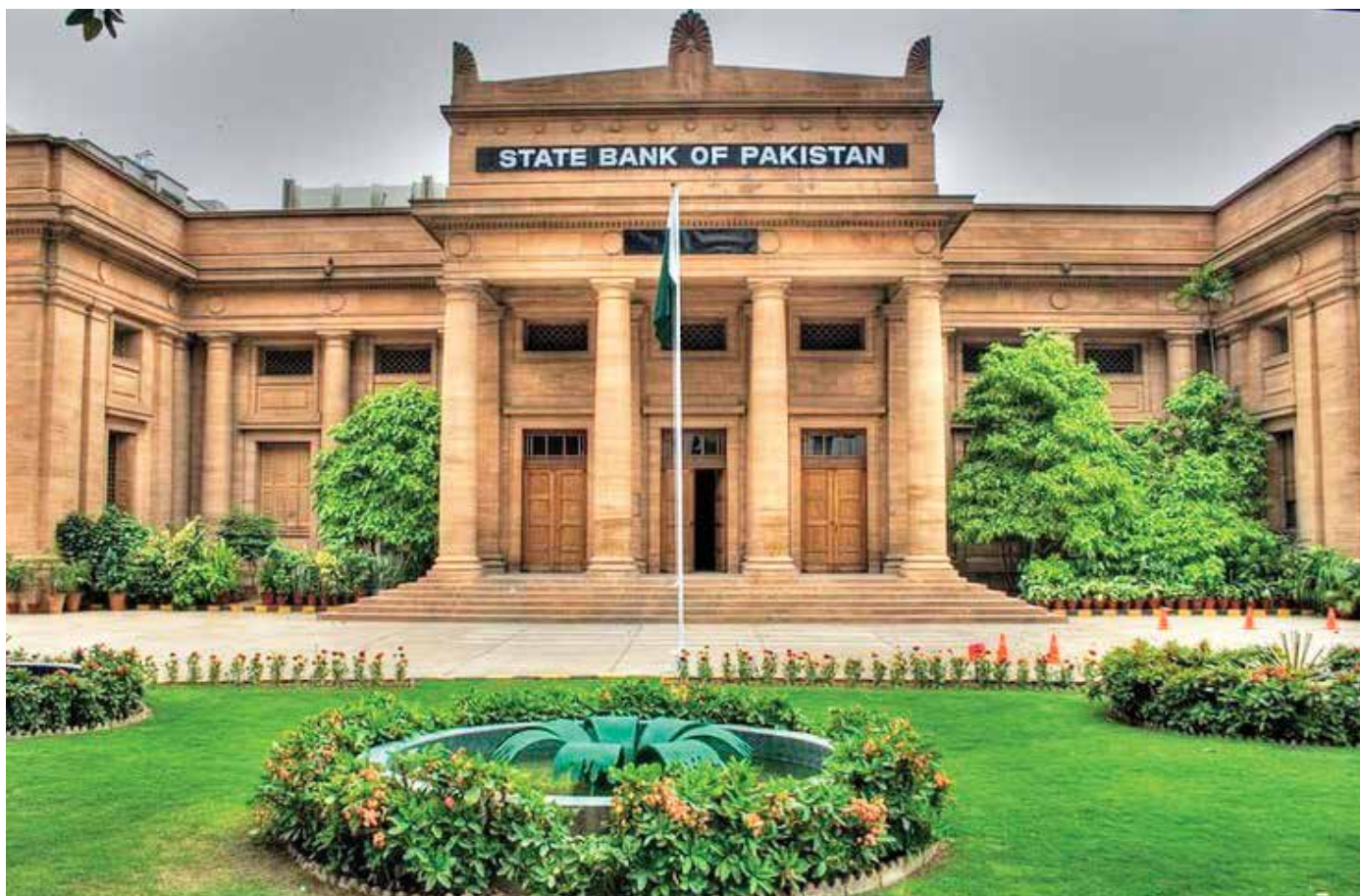
Imran might be interested to know that the replacement of gold by fiat currencies has made it possible for the USA to exert dominance over the world.

You see, the US dollar has replaced gold. Countries now use gold to buy dollars. The other countries have to kick and bite, fight and strive, and sell goods abroad, to afford to buy goods from abroad. Like us. The USA? It just prints more dollars.

So what's happened is that any country running up a surplus has got piles and piles of dollars. Which is just paper. Well, China instead has bought US government securities, over \$1 trillion worth. That means China has sent over goods to the USA, and in return it has got paper. And it has a handicap in the trade war the USA started, because if the dollar grows weak, the value of that paper mountain, goes down.

Meanwhile, the UK's PM, Boris Johnson, is showing he's learned a thing or two from Imran. Boris Johnson has not only been convicted of violating covid-19 revelations, but has led his party to two by-election defeats. But is he giving up? Not at all. He is refusing to give in to any Malawian conspiracy. But he hasn't bothered to offer the explanation the PTI is already giving for its performance in the coming Punjab by-elections: rigging.

Interventions for inclusion



By Dr. Reza Baqir

IT has now been well-recognised that relying on markets and competition, as opposed to directed government control or privilege, is the best way for countries to achieve sustainable prosperity for their citizens. However, the rise of wealth inequality in recent years, as starkly illustrated by the French economist Thomas Piketty in his bestseller *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, has made it equally important to recognise that markets — more often than we may have thought — fail to provide resources in an equitable manner for a country's citizens to feel they have a level playing field to aspire to raise their living standards. In such cases, the government or the regulator must lean in to address the market failure.

A key illustration of such market failure is equitable access to finance: the ability to bank with ease for everyone. Over the past several decades, Pakistan's banking system has not risen to the challenge of providing a level playing field in access to finance to

different sections of society. This is particularly so for housing finance for those who did not have the good fortune of being born into a household of means. In most economies, one of the principal components of household wealth is home ownership. Consequently, programmes that promote affordable finance for owning a home for the less well-off are key for reducing the glaring wealth gap between the haves and the have-nots in our country.

A simple example is useful. A typical employee in his or her 30s with a spouse and two children providing a service (secretary, driver, etc) in a mid-sized company in a large city does not own their own home. The rent for their modest home would easily be in the Rs20,000 per month range which would likely increase 10 per cent yearly. If her or his salary does not rise at a commensurate pace, their rent will eat up a growing share of their total household budget, crowding out the ability to save or provide for other needs of the family.

If the same employee were to get financing so that he/she could buy their modest home (that is a mortgage) for about the same monthly instalments as rent, at least two key benefits would accrue. First, mortgage payments are typically fixed in rupee terms over the life of a loan. Thus, the share of housing expense in the household budget should shrink over time, allowing the family to better cater for their other needs to raise their living standards. Second, by owning their home, this family would benefit from the general rise in home values over time and feel wealthier. Importantly, they would also feel less anguish at seeing others getting wealthier because they would be part of a rising tide.

The importance of policies to reduce wealth inequality cannot be overemphasised.

Pakistan's market failure was that its banks never developed an ecosystem for such mortgages. It took the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and the government to

create an affordable housing finance programme, Mera Pakistan Mera Ghar, to address this market failure. Under this programme, available in both Sharia and conventional form, the government subsidises the markup payment and the Pakistan Mortgage Refinance Company can provide partial risk coverage. The subsidy is targeted because it is only available for a first-time home buyer of a house that is 125 or at most 250 square yards — and rich people don't like to live in small houses.

When this programme was started, the take-up by banks in sourcing and facilitating low-income customers was slow. The SBP eventually had to sharpen its system of rewards and penalties and address regulatory and other bottlenecks. Today, after about a year and a half, banks own this programme: to date they have approved about Rs210 billion (about \$1bn) in such housing loans and disbursed about Rs85bn. The typical loan size is about Rs3 million which for a 125 square yard home generates a fixed monthly instalment of about Rs20,000. The decision of which loan application to approve is with the bank, not with the SBP or the government. It is a non-partisan programme in that whichever political party the applicant may support is irrelevant for the purposes of the bank to decide whether it is an acceptable credit risk. As a testament to the merits of the



programme, the World Bank has recently signed an agreement to support it.

This programme, and its progress to date, is the tip of the iceberg. The approval and disbursement numbers illustrate how much more is possible now that banks have put in place the needed systems to run this as a sustainable business. The subsidies involved are one of the best returns for the taxpayer's money. To illustrate the magnitude of the benefit-to-cost ratio, if

another Rs100bn is disbursed in the coming fiscal year in such affordable mortgages, the programme would require a subsidy from the budget of around Rs20bn. This is much better use of taxpayer money than, for instance, the less well-targeted energy

subsidies that accrue mostly to the well-off and are several times greater in magnitude. Further, international institutions may consider supporting such subsidies as a targeted intervention to reduce wealth inequality.



This programme is but an example. The importance of policies to reduce wealth inequality cannot be overemphasised. This is even more poignant now as rising international energy and commodity prices are raising inflation, squeezing further the household budgets of the less well-off and driving the wedge of wealth disparity deeper and sharper in the social fabric. It was only about a decade ago that the desperation of one Tunisian fruit-seller, Mohammed Bouazizi, in the face of rising inequities, drove him to douse himself in petrol and set himself on fire. That one act started the Arab uprising in the Middle East. It should be a lesson to us. Proactive programmes to reduce wealth inequality in a sustainable manner need to be front and centre of our priorities for our progressive and peaceful future.

The writer is former governor of the State Bank of Pakistan.

Inequality, not poverty

By S. Akbar Zaidi

The key social, economic and political concern of our times, both domestically and globally, ought to be inequality, not simply poverty. Poverty has been far easier to address and to reduce, inequality, far more complicated, almost near impossible. Poverty is seen by most, especially the well-to-do and privileged, as a moral issue, with some economic and social consequences. Inequality, on the other hand, is clearly a political issue, requiring far greater understanding and action.

One of the most remarkable developments and achievements over the last quarter century for the seven billion people living in the world has been the huge fall in poverty globally. Extreme poverty has fallen for the world, from a population of 37.1 per cent below the poverty line in 1990, to 18.8pc in 2012. The most striking fall in population poverty in this period has come about in South Asia, falling from 50.6pc in 1991 to only 12.7pc in 2012. Even in the case of

Pakistan, evidence has shown the marked fall in poverty levels over the last two decades or more.

Evidence from the World Bank shows, quite clearly, that “Pakistan has seen a rapid, and consistent, decline in poverty since 2001, with the headcount poverty rate falling from close to 35pc to well under 10pc by 2014”. There are a large number of reasons why poverty has fallen globally and in Pakistan, and these include social and economic intervention in the form of targeted transfers and programmes, the rise in overall incomes, and social and physical infrastructure and development. In Pakistan’s case, while a number of factors have played a key role in the fall in poverty, remittances have been singled out as the most significant.

What looks like poverty is actually inequality.

Moreover, according to the World Bank, in Pakistan, 18pc of the poorest households

now own motorcycles, compared to just 2pc 15 years ago; the number of households without any type of toilet has been cut in half — from close to 60pc to about 30pc among the poorest; and even the least advantaged families in Pakistan have moved towards a more diverse diet, with a greater consumption of dairy, meat, fruit and vegetables. This has also brought the rural diet into much closer alignment with urban food preferences and tastes, as often happens with development.

For many Pakistanis, especially the privileged, this evidence is difficult to accept, for they think they see poverty everywhere. What they actually see is inequality, which they perceive, in a commonsense, common-parlance way, to mean poverty. Poverty, the way it has been defined and measured academically and by the government, simply means that people do not have a certain income to purchase a pre-designated bundle of goods, largely food and other items.





Academic evidence points to a very sharp fall in poverty in Pakistan, in that more of those who were poor have moved out of poverty and can now purchase better and more food and other goods, such as education, healthcare and better housing. Inequality, on the other hand, has grown markedly in Pakistan despite the fall in poverty.

Research on inequality in Pakistan is far limited compared to the hundreds of studies on poverty. Nevertheless, research by scholars and even government figures show that income distribution has clearly become less equal over the last three decades. In other words, the rich have become richer, and the gap between them and the rest of the population has increased. Even if what is commonly known as the 'middle class' has expanded over the last three decades, the income and asset differences between the richer 40pc of the population have grown at a faster pace than those of the lower 60pc. Again, to emphasise, only a few in this lower 60pc bracket are actually defined as being poor.

Although there are still a handful of people who believe in the myth of feudalism in Pakistan, data shows that inequality in the urban areas has been much higher than in the rural areas. This is on account of the existence of extremely rich and extremely poor households in the urban areas, where incomes and wages are much more diverse. In rural areas, most landowners are either

small or very small, with inequality less extreme. In fact, rural inequality has actually fallen, while urban inequality has continued to rise. Pakistan is now urban, almost completely, and hence dominates such data.

It is not just income inequality which has worsened, regional inequalities in Pakistan have also worsened despite measures such as greater provincial autonomy and resources. While the more urbanised Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are far more prosperous than rural Sindh, south

Punjab and Balochistan, a surprising finding is that inequality levels in Punjab and Sindh are much higher than KP and Balochistan.

The only positive finding over the last three decades, one which needs to be much celebrated, is that the gender gap between women and men, while still unacceptable, has narrowed significantly. Despite the general perception of girls not going to school, the data for the last decade shows a huge shift, far greater than it does for boys. While boys outnumber girls in school, girls are catching up fast.

Moreover, in 2014-15, it is estimated that there are more girls enrolled in Pakistan's universities than boys, 52pc compared to 48pc. Poverty alleviation simply requires cash transfers and remittances. Reducing growing inequality, on the other hand, requires a fundamental change in bourgeois property relations with their inherent power structure, which constitute the cornerstone of crass capitalism. With the rich getting richer, and the middle class expanding, with political control in the hands of both under the despotism of capital in the neoliberal present, inequality is only going to grow in Pakistan.

The writer is a Karachi-based political economist.



Who destroyed Afghanistan?

Afghanistan's history is replete with unfortunate events - the country was devastated even before the Taliban



By Dr. Moonis Ahmar

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock in her recent official visit to Pakistan criticized the Taliban government for "destroying Afghanistan" and directing the country in the wrong direction. "Parents are deprived of feeding their children, girls are deprived of their right to education, and women have been excluded from society," she said. Voices of dissent are being suppressed, and the economy is stagnating. In a joint press briefing with Pakistan's Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, she said, "As long as they are on this path, I don't see a room for normalcy or granting legitimacy to the Taliban government." The Taliban have "brought immense suffering and hunger to the people of Afghanistan." She warned that the consequences of this crisis would be beyond Afghanistan's borders and that Pakistan could suffer too.

German Foreign Minister's statement that the Taliban government is responsible for worsening the situation in Afghanistan due

to its harsh and irrational actions should be taken seriously. She blamed the Taliban government for refusing to educate girls and pursuing misguided policies that exacerbated economic and humanitarian crises in the country. Similarly, she accused them of aggravating the pain and suffering of the Afghan people. Naturally, the Kabul government will not have international recognition or legal status in these circumstances. However, this situation needs to be critically reviewed. Since the 9/11 attacks, Germany has played an important role in Afghanistan, along with other countries. Therefore, it is unrealistic to blame the Taliban alone for the current crisis. It is worth examining who is responsible for fomenting war, civil war, and armed conflict in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan's history is replete with unfortunate events, which testify to the fact that the country was devastated from 1996 to 2001, even before the Taliban and their first government came to power. The devasta-

tion of Afghanistan was followed by the outbreak of the left-wing pro-Moscow pig revolution in April 1978 and the subsequent Soviet collapse in December 1979. It began with a military intervention. Hundreds of thousands were killed during the Thor revolution, which led to Soviet intervention and these fights between Mujahideen groups. In February 1989, Soviet troops withdrew, millions of Afghans were displaced, and the country witnessed one of the worst phases of violence. The emergence of the Taliban in the fall of 1994 was aimed at bringing peace and security to the people, which had been shattered by the civil strife between the Mujahideen groups and the militants. The people favored the Taliban, which led to their capture of the capital Kabul in September 1996.

However, the Taliban, who came to power to restore peace and free their country from the tyranny of the militants, have taken strong action against the people themselves. They implemented their way of life accord-

ing to their interpretation of the Shari'ah. During their first government, the Taliban were busy consolidating their control over Afghanistan and failed to stop Osama bin Laden and Amin Zawahiri from forming al-Qaeda. It eventually turned the country into a center of international terrorism, which led to the events of 9/11 and the overthrow of his government.

The Taliban's resistance to foreign occupation and the imposition of puppet governments by Hamid Karzai and Ashraf Ghani ushered in another phase of the civil war, which ended last year. After the withdrawal of NATO, the Taliban returned to power. Thus, the Taliban alone cannot be blamed for the destruction of Afghanistan.

Who destroyed Afghanistan and why the country is still suffering from armed conflict needs to be analyzed from three angles?

First of all, in modern times, there has been no foreign intervention in any other country three times, first by the British and then by the Soviets, and then by the U.S. However, along with the foreign powers, the Afghan elite and the people must also be held accountable for creating the

situation which provided room for foreign intervention and its consequent conflict.

Afghanistan is currently facing one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world. Classification of Integrated Foods Certificates, including the United Nations World Food Program and the Food and Agriculture Organization, revealed that "extreme levels of food scarcity and human insecurity persist throughout Afghanistan, with 20 million Afghans deprived of food due to a devastated economy and drought." Initially, the United States froze \$9.5 billion in Afghan money, but in February it announced that 3.5 billion in unofficial funds had been released. Organizations will be launched to help Afghanistan deal with the food and humanitarian crisis. Even so, most Afghans still suffer from hunger and malnutrition, which threatens their livelihood. Many Afghans feel they face constant oppression and deprivation.

Second, the Afghan elite and the Mafia have long contributed to the country's instability and civil strife. Foreign powers and neighboring countries have tried to resolve these issues. Nevertheless, some

Afghan circles accuse Pakistan of meddling in the country's internal affairs and exacerbating the humanitarian crisis. In contrast, Pakistan has distanced itself from Afghanistan's internal problems and sheltered more than 3 million Afghan refugees. It has also provided financial and educational assistance. All this while Pakistan itself is suffering from the Afghan war due to the proliferation of drugs and weapons, as well as the rise of extremism and sectarian violence.

Ultimately, to save itself from further catastrophe, Afghanistan must advance the democratic process and its pluralism, and tolerance, good governance and the rule of law should be promoted. The Taliban must take a pragmatic approach, giving people the right to vote and ensuring the equal rights of women. The Afghan people have been suffering for decades, now is the time for Afghanistan to move forward and focus its efforts on social and human development.

He is a former dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Karachi.



Pakistan doesn't need a Miracle Man to Fix the Ills

There is a fragrance of change in the air of Pakistan, triggering the realization that we need a major systematic change that can constructively transform our society



By Rashid Munawar Virk

Pakistan's national struggle to maintain a democratic course has always been off mostly for the worst but it has had its constructive moments too. Imagine a system where most of the public-school teachers were never fully qualified to bring up youngsters who could bear a moral responsibility to act straight and do what's right. Instead, till today, our youth is stuck in basic issues of life.

What occupies our youth's minds nowadays is exactly what our generations were supposed to reap from the seeds of confusion sown by our own; an unconstructive vibe crying out loudly the abject desire to feel worthy. This hue of worthiness is shrouded in what we have nurtured and evolved our culture into. Thoughts like do I know anyone influential? Do I have someone on the inside who can bend the system for me? (Khancha or jugaar in Urdu), whose reference will I use when the next policeman stops me or how can I cheat my way through the system to get what I want.

Our whole nation is riled up in this confused survival race by means that are toxic and extremely unbeatable for anyone with the slightest moral compass. To me this sounds like a national moral disaster.

It's the same disaster that reflects our reality in our personalities, in our sense of calling it out when someone has done wrong, or perhaps the reason why we have never been able to put together a system that could vertically boost our economy with a horizontal outpouring of benefits to the broad base of our society. I don't even know where we'd start if we had to put together a good educational system. We are broken to an extent that our kids lack self-esteem, our youngsters lack a moral compass, and our elders are living in a completely unaware reality called cluelessness where they have no idea what's happening to us as a nation let alone getting to understand how they carelessly contributed to raising our national ignorance. I may be blaming our pre-colonial DNA here which is only as good of a way as our current state of collective morality.

Neither did our public system produce a national strategy to elevate our sense of civic duties. Has Pakistan as a nation ever philosophized the foundational values that it would need to prosper and foster a certain type of constructive democratic system? Have we as a nation ever introduced a charter of civic duties that are needed as a baseline to create a sense of morality and virtue in society? We have rather left it all to

come from our religion and no one has ever bothered to think that we are now stuck in a dark tunnel from a national civility perspective where our socio-religious norms are being mocked by chronic bribery, lowest human rights, extremely broken law and order system, major traffic violations, building code derision, absence of waste management, lack of moral code to hold the influential responsible for their crimes and no sense of civic duty is reaching hallmark of ignorance.

The starting point to fix all of it would perhaps come from nothing but the realization that our democratic process requires an educated civilian lot that understands and embodies the baseline civic education required to participate in a simple process of creating a peaceful society.

Our conventionally polluted and rotten to the core civic system hasn't gone far beyond repair because our young generation has somehow learned from TikTok or movies or YouTube videos that they have been fooled by everyone who told them to leave their country and go abroad because they were made to believe that there is nothing in Pakistan that could be fixed. Our young generation has been brain drained by the promoted detachment to their country

where they were made to believe that going to a foreign country is the only way to make life. By everyone who said we can't operate without corruption so let's not change it. Our young generation has understood that our government officials including politicians and policemen are ignorant and will never act straight unless we bring in a better lot of individuals and laws that hold them accountable. Such are priorities of our young generation that are making them support Imran Khan and they see him as an icon of hope.

Imran Khan or an individual isn't the solution, neither is Army as an institution nor is any political party or Pakistan's so-called deep state; the true solution lies in introducing a robust system that's put together by us as a nation, by our socioreligious public and by our respected thinkers from all walks of life. Of course, it would be someone in the leadership position who'd need to drive the whole process and I won't mind rooting for, yet to be trusted, Abraham Lincoln of Pakistan who can define morality, virtue, free capital market, and respect for private property in Pakistan. Someone who can inspire institutional leaders to introduce a system that encourages moral responsibility as a yardstick for everyone to do their job – character building of the nation backed by a system of check and balance.

We are weak because our system isn't built properly, our institutions lack the operational efficacy and no one body is there to think through and sort out the binding ropes of our society. It's not the strong PM we need rather a strong system that has been thought through from the top tiers of constitutional relevance for the public to the bottom tier of municipal adjudication of civic responsibilities and this can be achieved by paving the way to form a national body of smartest individuals of Pakistan whose recommendations get implemented as part of national security agenda. Once you have a well-thought-out system in place, you can change everything.

There is a fragrance of change in the air of Pakistan, triggering the realization that we need a major systematic change, and this could very well be the core constructive moment of Pakistan's existence that has the potential to minimize our dark history as we march towards brightness (of change).

It's important to mention that we are seeking change in a society that has so many missing elements to welcome the shift and yet all the missing pieces make our nation the perfect host for change. Without further dichotomizing the strength and weaknesses of our society we can simply connect the dots and read the writing on the wall which says, 'change is here to stay and this time around for the good of our nation, let's not waste our time and get ready for it.'



This isn't the typical political change I am referring to rather the change that requires a well-thought-out system to ease our public life. It is not that hard to do it. Petty reasons like change of ISI chief, debate on Army's role in politics, digressive journalism where mainstream TV channels are coercing petty narrative of blaming friend of a friend for the corruption of past government and honestly 95% of what you see in newspapers or TV channels these days is reflective of poor civility and broken educational system of Pakistan that produced minds who are collectively missing the purpose of their jobs and rather playing a damaging role in the broken system. The craziness keeps catching fire with every passing day and you can't blame anyone except for the absence of reason, education, morality, virtue, and privacy.

The question on everyone's mind is: who do we entrust the responsibility to put together a detailed system as we discussed above? The answer is our institutional leadership including Army.

To understand the amount of struggle and effort it'd take for this system to come

about, let me take you back to the USA of 30's to 70's when American radio and later TV media used to play commercials to boost civic sense among the public. Study the national drive of civic education in America and understand how the USA taught its public what a civic sense is. From how they need to drive their cars to how they should treat their fellow citizens with respect. I am not praising the USA so we can follow the cultural values of America

but rather impress upon you that we have so many institutions that can bring an extremely positive change in our society. For example, the institution of Mosque. Yes, our mosques are a perfect ground for a national revolution. Our Imam can be educated and offered a stipend to educate the public on basic civic duties. Our Imams of various mosques in any municipality can be easily trained to keep local police and municipality politician in check. We have mosque as the most powerful venue to boost nation-building and this is just one example without mentioning the strength of our family system in Pakistan which has an immense power to adapt any change for the betterment of our lives.

Wake up Pakistan, don't wait for the miracle man, it's time to get to work everybody.

He lives in Canada and is known for his work as a thinker for children's rights. A successful business figure who cares about Pakistan. You may reach the writer by emailing at ali.rashid-v@gmail.com

Shehbaz Sharif's Political Conundrum

Public is facing worse kind of inflation with no hope of remedy in near future



By Noor Aftab

The political spectrum confronting the Shehbaz-led coalition government has never been this fractured since the late 1960s and in the run-up to Partition in 1971. It is also facing the daunting task of managing a stuttering economy that is currently showing a sliding growth rate, drying foreign reserves, and growing dependency on foreign loans. The revival of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) program will certainly help tackle the economic crisis to some extent but life for Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will never be easy as the people have pinned high hopes on his ability to deal with the challenges.

The social media team of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) is relentless and unforgiving both on the corruption narrative and the newer foreign conspiracy or 'imported government' narrative. The ensuing political polarisation has few parallels in recent history, and social media is busy amplifying the divide, giving it an inflammatory edge. But Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is not likely to devote his energies to these attacks because he is currently

walking on a tight rope where a slight distraction can push his government into troubled waters.

Imran Khan has stated time and again that his government faced problems due to a delay in going on an IMF program. Imran Khan took oath on August 18, 2018, and the loan agreement began on 3rd July 2019 after almost eight months. The PPP-led government also took eight months to strike a deal with IMF as the 'Standby Arrangement' was approved on November 24, 2008. Nawaz Sharif took oath as the prime minister on June 5, 2013, and Pakistan went on an IMF program on September 4, 2013, after three months.

Now Shehbaz Sharif is going to secure an IMF deal for his government almost three months after coming to power. The economic challenges are grave and the stakes high, leaving no room for the government to make any kind of mistake. The inflation rate measured by the Sensitive Price Index (SPI) has increased by 3.38 percent due to a massive increase in petroleum prices. The prices of high-speed diesel, petrol,

kerosene, and light diesel oil have gone up by a massive 83pc, 56pc, 73pc, and 68.4pc respectively since May 26. The essential household commodities are getting costly and have become out of reach of the common person due to hikes in petrol prices and power tariffs.

The political instability in the recent past gave rise to unprecedented volatility in economic indicators. The current account deficit has widened and central bank reserves as they stand today can barely cover two months of the country's import payments.

Now the opinion given by a majority of the economists underlines the need for several short-term decisions that are required to restore the confidence and trust of the local and foreign stakeholders, and more importantly stabilize key macroeconomic indicators.

The country needs to go back to the fiscal prudence it has promised in the IMF Article IV Consultation. The implementation of a circular debt management plan in the power sector needs to be expedited. There has to be a



consensus on what import regime is required by the country. The central bank's independence should allow for a monetary policy with positive real interest rates, and market-determined exchange rates. The government and its economic team must listen carefully to the disgruntled investors including the Chinese.

The experts have also maintained that Pakistan's chronic fiscal and balance of payments deficits are at a record high, foreign exchange reserves have depleted, the Pakistani rupee is under pressure, inflation has soared and debt has risen exponentially.

As far as the stability of the government is concerned it is hanging by a proverbial thread as it has now a majority of only one vote. The 10-party alliance in the national assembly initially crossed the minimum required threshold of 172 with only two votes in a house of 342. Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has 84 seats, Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has 56, and the rest of the seven political parties provide the remaining 34 votes. This is, at best, a fragile balance and, at worst: a political nightmare. In this situation, a government composed of parties with divergent and even seemingly irreconcilable standpoints could lose the support of a small party having three-four members at any moment. In this case, the government would no longer be in majority, and with the head of state, President Arif Alvi, belonging to the PTI, he may ask Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif at any moment to take the vote of confidence, which would be very difficult to attain.

After failed long march former prime minister Imran Khan is engaged in chalking out strategies against the military establishment for early elections. His party supporters on social media have been continuously naming the head of a powerful institution as the main source of conspiracy against the Imran Khan's government. Imran Khan believes that this narrative can generate enough pressure on the key personality to force an election. When he was in power he and his ministers constantly reminded the people that their government and the powerful establishment were on the same page.

Now PTI chairman Imran Khan ramped up his criticism of the alleged role played by 'neutrals' in the vote of no-confidence that led to his ouster as prime minister, claiming they had failed to act despite his warnings of the plot being hatched against his government.

The PTI seems to operate under a system where a declaration by Imran, supported or not by evidence, is the equivalent of a trial. He has transformed a normal application of the Constitution, with the transfer of power from one party to another, into a titanic struggle between 'good' and 'evil'. Now Imran Khan is saying to his supporters to remain prepared as he would give a call for another long march towards Islamabad.



Despite all these political challenges Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also has to restore fractured relations even with those countries that are considered close allies of Pakistan. Imran Khan did many things on the foreign policy front that made things worse including his open denunciation of the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi; his tilt towards Turkish President Erdogan's jingoism; his choice to drift away from Pakistan's traditional allies like the Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates; his open support for the Taliban breaking the shackles of American slavery; and the American conspiracy theory.

Securing the trust of the establishment should remain a top priority for the government. Various political circles are not ready to believe that Imran Khan was not planted as the prime minister by the powerful quarters. But it is still debatable how Imran

Khan lost the trust of the establishment that later decided to stay neutral. Whatever may be the reason, both the ruling coalition as well as the establishment need to recalibrate and reassess their position to reach an amicable decision so that a stable civil government can operate for the betterment of the people.

The ruling coalition has to dispel skepticism and meet the expectations of the public that yearns for stability. The unprecedented and uncalled-for price increase is adversely affecting the quality of life of the common people. The rulers should cut their expenditures through austerity measures. Now various quarters are also raising questions about subsidies worth Rs. 2,600 billion is

given annually to elites and super elites of the country. On one hand, the government is 'advising' the common man to face the hard times with patience and on the other, it is not ready to take back or even reduce the perks and privileges of the upper strata of the society. A video recently went viral on social media in which security guards of a federal minister riding three to four vehicles were seen at a commercial market in Islamabad. Unfortunately, all of them arrived there just to collect food items from a local restaurant ordered by the federal minister.

The people are facing the worst kind of price hike and financial pressure and the situation is getting worse with each passing day. So there is a need that the government should introduce a fiscal discipline and all its functionaries should avoid wasting government resources and instead work tirelessly to provide relief to the common people.



PTI out of agitation mode?

Till the last minute, Imran Khan and his party tried all out to not let it go

By Sarfraz Raja

It was unexpected and certainly unacceptable for them and that's why they have gone to every extent they could to save the power seat. Imran Khan, when removed from the premiership, was not ready to accept the change at any cost, but it seems now he and his party have accepted what has happened to them. It would not be wrong that in the desperation of removal, Imran Khan went with some hasty steps to force the new regime to hold immediate elections. Some of them certainly backfired.

Where do they go wrong?

Till the last minute, Imran Khan and his party tried all out to not let it go. For that, they took some steps which were later declared unconstitutional by the apex court, but after removal from the power; they played some desperate moves, which now they realized were counterproductive and damaging for their party and politics.

Resignations

To resign from the National Assembly, seats was their first move in protest after defeat in the no-confidence move first time in the country's history. Out of their total strength of 155, only 131 had submitted their resignations but insiders say almost half of them were not willing to resign they put their resignations just to follow party instructions, and later some of them approached the assembly secretariat not to accept their resignations. This concerned PTI that if those members could individually get the verification of their resignations in front of the speaker national assembly, many of them might slip away.

So, the decision of resignation was now considered as a move which actually they shouldn't go for and later have some heated debate within the party as now there is an opposition leader who has a soft corner for government and considered their man. The government has completed some important appointments which required consultation of opposition leaders with no hurdle.



Call for Long March

Immediately after his removal from PM office Imran Khan announced a series of political gatherings across the country and in a few weeks' time PTI organized about three dozen jalsas in all major cities of the country from Peshawar to Karachi followed by a call for March towards Islamabad on 25th of May on and a half month later after their defeat in parliament.

These back-to-back jalsas and successful show of strength put huge political pressure on the new government but an unplanned, un-prepared long March destroyed the momentum which was built during countrywide public gatherings. Now it has been realized within the party that this call for long March was in haste and uncalled for. Party local leadership was not ready. They were not consulted and not given much time for their preparations. It shows desperation and overconfidence on behalf of Imran Khan.

Confusions persist

Still, there is much confusion shown in decision-making within PTI. After a realization of what they did wrong, now how to make that right should be the point

of discussion. A strong view within the party is to rejoin the assembly as a strong opposition with the nomination of their own opposition leader and to take part in proceedings with the fittest of their strength and to give tough time to treasuries as their resignations move was not up to the target, now why should they keep themselves out of the ground but Imran Khan considers this proposed move as a defeat. Some in the core group believe that right now PTI is isolated from all other parties and powers, on another hand they couldn't able to achieve their demand of immediate elections so they should wait and see how things proceed for the new regime but some who are fewer still insist that they should rely on their street power and public support.

Next Plan of action

In PTI, Imran Khan has veto power, as with many other leading political parties in the country where party heads have the final authority to decide. So Imran Khan's decision would be final as a belief, party core team and others could not go beyond his verdict.

Despite a strong view in the party about PTI members return to assembly Imran



Khan is not in favor as he believes it would be the negation of his stance that he does not accept a government led by Shehbaz Sharif which he calls an imported government and if their members rejoin assembly, it certainly means they are accepting all this new setup. Imran Khan is not considering anything about what they are losing politically by not rejoining the assembly, but he just doesn't want to step back from his stance.

Khan was not accepting Shehbaz Sharif as opposition leader when he was PM, how could he accept him as Prime minister, says a mainstream PTI leader in an informal discussion. Many others who think they should go back to assembly don't debate or advocate as they think it's useless, as Imran Khan doesn't want to listen to anything about that. So it's not a matter of rejoining the assembly at least in the near future despite a majority view in its favor.

Imran Khan is more interested in building pressure through public gatherings by showing his strength on the streets rather than inside parliament and he is keen on another protest long March but his core team convinces him it wouldn't be beneficial right now and after an unconvincing long March attempt of May 25th Imran Khan himself is discouraged with efforts of some of his party leaders, especially from Punjab and he is hesitant in announcing another date although he reaffirms every

time he addresses any gathering that he would soon announce a date but it didn't seem possible in the next few weeks. Imran Khan was also expecting a decision from Supreme Court in his favor to allow his party protest march as they want but they could not find such a verdict from the court.

PTI is now waiting for the result of by-elections of 20 constituencies of the Punjab assembly that got vacant after the disqualification of their dissidents going to be held on July 17th. PTI would now completely focus on the election of these 20 seats of the Punjab assembly, as it would decide the future of the Punjab government. If they could win most of these seats, they could keep their majority in the provincial house and could get back their government in the largest province, which would be a huge setback for the present ruling alliance and a boost to their cause.

So, in the coming days, PTI is likely to focus more on electoral politics as they also have taken part in all by-elections of the National Assembly as well including NA 245 Karachi, the seat vacated by the death of PTI MNA Aamir Liaquat Hussain. They would also focus on local body elections in Islamabad, Punjab, and elsewhere to establish their strength at the grassroots level, which benefits elections, too.

So, they plan to focus on the electoral process of keeping pressure on the govern-

ment for that PTI would keep organizing public gatherings in different cities, including in those where by-elections are to be held.

Popularity graph

We can say Imran Khan was touching the lowest ever of his popularity before April this year when he faced the challenge of no trust in parliament, which he admits now. But after his government was throw-out by opposition parties with the support of his allies in an in-house change. Then he built a narrative of a foreign conspiracy against him. His popularity Graph jumped upwards. Some surveys show he gained a 20 percent rise in his popularity a few days after his removal.

PTI and Imran Khan were encouraged by this popular trend and with the drastic inflation after history hike of petroleum prices in the shortest period, the downfall of the rupee and increasing public miseries, he hopes his Popularity would further go up and Parties in power would lose their popularity reciprocally. So it's another factor for Imran Khan and his party to let things go as they are going. Right now, they are keeping their eyes on by-elections in Punjab. Whether their popularity would reflect in the ballot box or not. If PTI gets the result of their satisfaction, they would fight their war in assemblies otherwise, agitation mode would again be on.





Allied Parties Double Crossing Each Other?

Supreme Court's ruling last month that the votes of defectors cannot be counted has increased the fragility of the coalition government

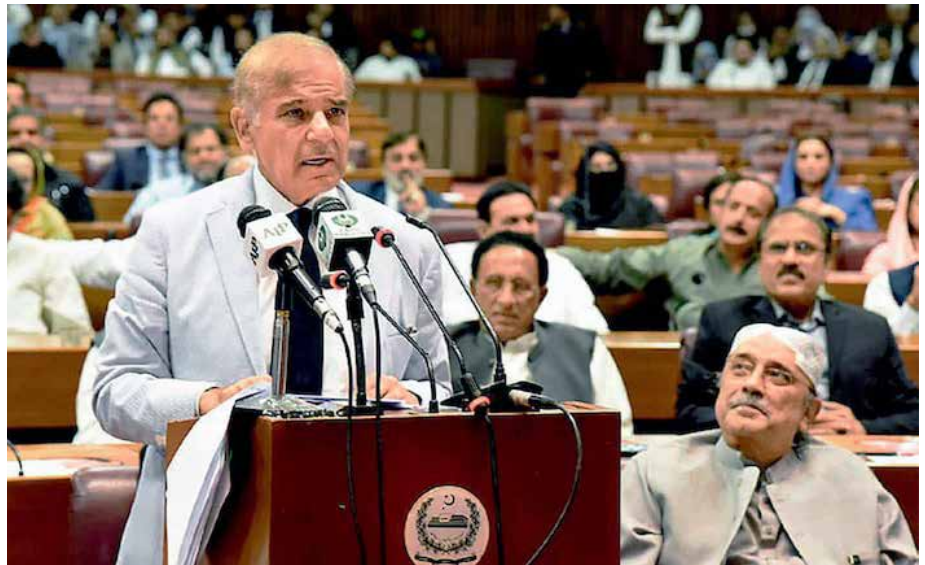
By Naveed Miraj

Islamabad: Though both inside and outside the parliament house, coalition parties in the government try to give the impression of unity and seriousness of purpose to take the current assemblies towards completion of their tenure, yet behind the scenes, something else is cooking up, which only indicates the uneasiness amongst the allies over the current state of affairs.

Sources within PML (N) told this correspondent that the party's top leadership wants the early dissolution of assemblies to pave the way for fresh elections. "This has been the consistent stance of the leadership from day one as it does not want to take responsibility for the mess left behind the previous government," they added.

The sources said although the coalition government led by PML (N) has taken the most difficult and painful decisions such as substantially increasing the prices of petroleum products and those of electricity whilst putting political reputation at stake, there is an understanding within the party that the situation will not improve in the short term or the next one year. Even if the agreement with the IMF is reached and help is extended by some friendly countries, the issue of inflation is far from over rather will further swell. "As per the understanding reached with the IMF, petroleum development levy and sales tax on petroleum products have to be levied in order to meet the revenue target for the next fiscal year." They said such decisions will only trigger another wave of inflation and further hurt the popularity of PML-N in the masses- something which is not acceptable to the party leadership.

The sources said the Sharif family believes that their party, at the moment, still has better chances in the elections regardless of the protest campaign and narrative built by the former Prime Minister Imran Khan around foreign conspiracy. "Sharifs, however, fear a serious backlash from the



public once the budget 2022-23 induced inflation hit them".

In this whole backdrop and gauging the current and future prospects, the sources said that Shahbaz Sharif in the direction of PML-N Quaid Nawaz Sharif has in recent days contacted PPP Co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari directly and through the senior leadership of PPP to convince him for early polls. "However, Zardari is not agreeing to the early elections – something which has perturbed the Sharifs."

According to sources, the PML-N has even offered the PPP leadership to make seat adjustments in the next general elections and collectively form the next government. "We believe we can secure a two-thirds majority by this course of action." However, the PPP Co-Chairman appears to be not giving any weight to the idea, at least for now.

There is a general impression that Zardari, known for his political acumen and shrewdness, pushed the Sharifs to take charge of the government to ruin their politics, sensing that the economic mess is so serious that they won't be able to tackle which will benefit the PPP in the elections whenever they are held.

There are also certain leaders within the PML (N) who also harbor the same opinion and want PM Shehbaz Sharif to dissolve the assemblies without taking the PPP into confidence.

Separately, other smaller parties within the coalition government are also not satisfied as promises made to them before voting on the no-confidence motion against Imran Khan have not been fulfilled.

MQM-Pakistan has serious reservations that the agreement signed with them is not being honored. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had last month appointed Nasreen Jalil as the Governor of Sindh but she is yet to take the oath of office. Similarly, the promise of making an MQM leader the administrator of Karachi has not been fulfilled.

Sources within MQM told this correspondent that the narrow win of its candidate in NA-240 is an eye-opener for the party and it will never take responsibility for the decisions which are adding to the woes of the common man in the form of price hikes. Political observers believe that given the treacherous record of MQM and the way it frequently changes sides, the possibility of it withdrawing support to the current



coalition at any time cannot be ruled out.

Awami National Party (ANP) has also reservations that they have not been considered for any slot in the federal cabinet or for the Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

BNP-Mengal Chief Akhtar Mengal is currently out of the country because of the indisposition of his wife. Sources said that the BNP-Mengal is not happy both with the PPP and the PML (N) over their failure to make any headway to address the issue of missing persons.

Both Mohsin Dawar and Ali Wazir are also unpredictable given their stance on certain issues pertaining to the tribal districts. Regardless of being an ally, it was just the other day that the production order of Ali Wazir was issued to enable him to attend the last few days of the budget session.



It merits mentioning here that PM Shehbaz Sharif was elected to power with a majority of only two votes. Supreme Court's ruling last month that the votes of defectors cannot be counted has increased the fragility of the coalition government as withdrawal of support by any ally will be enough for its collapse.

When contacted, the PTI sources said that their leadership is demanding early elections, yet if the present government continues for the next two or three months, it will not harm them but only the incumbents given the current inflation, especially the prices of petroleum products which have gone beyond the reach of the common man.

Dera Ismail Khan: One day workshop on "Patent Filing", Gomal university



Dera Ismail Khan: A Groups Photo Director CADR Comsats University of Abbottabad Campus, Prof. Dr. Jamshed Iqbal (T.I), Dean Faculty of Pharmacy Prof. Dr. Muhammad Jamil Khan, Dean Faculty of Sciences Prof. Dr. Haleem Shah, Chief Organizer Dr. Adnan Amin and others one day workshop on "Patent Filing" organized by the Gomal Center of Pharmaceutical Sciences and Successful Youth Center of the Faculty of Pharmacy, Gomal University

Gomal Center of Pharmaceutical Sciences (GCPS) of the Faculty of Pharmacy and the Kamyab Jawan Markaz, Gomal University, organised a session on "Patent Filing" in Dera Ismail Khan on June 25, 2022.

Prof. Dr. Jamshed Iqbal (T.I), Director, ADR Comsats University, Abbottabad Campus, was a guest speaker at this workshop in addition to Prof. Dr. Muhammad Jamil Khan, Dean, Faculty of Pharmacy, serving as the Chief Guest.

Professors Dr. Muhammad Jamil and Dr. Adnan Amin stated in their joint address that Vice-ChancellorChancellor Professor Dr. Iftikhar Ahmed, who not only has a keen eye for knowledge and research but also has the best knowledge and research in his field for the successful coordination of students in the fields of education and research, is guiding not only our students but also our teachers in the light of their qualifications. The workshop today is a link to the same aspect.

Prof. Dr. Jamshed Iqbal (T. I), Professor, the workshop's guest speaker, went into great detail about patent filing, including how to file a patent and which agencies can do so.

And how patents are currently filed in Pakistan and what advantages they offer. The attendees also questioned the guest speaker about filing for patents at the workshop's conclusion.

It should be taken into the point that the online workshop also included about 50 researchers from the UITM Malaysia, Korean University, Shafat Ameer Millat University Islamabad, Bahauddin Zakaria University Multan, NARC, and other organisations.

There were several faculty members and students from the Faculty of Pharmacy in attendance, including Prof. Dr. Haleem Shah, Dean of the Faculty of Sciences.

The guest speaker, Prof. Dr. Jamshed Iqbal, received an honorary shield at the conclusion of the workshop.

Arms-build up: A threat to world peace?

As the nuclear-armed states either develop or deploy new weapon systems, efforts should be made to return to dialogue and arms control if one has to avoid a bleak future of mass mayhem



By Dr. Syed Rifaat Hussain

The end of the East-West cold war, triggered by the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, had spawned hopes for a global peace dividend that would allow countries to spend less on arms and focus more on the needs of people.

Global and regional arms races stemming from security dilemmas inherent in the anarchic nature of the international system were to lose their intensity and pave the way for cooperative security structures.

Yet, in the four decades since the ending of the cold war, the opposite has transpired.

The world today is not only a more violent place, as evidenced by the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the brutally violent aftermaths of the American wars of aggression in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the virtual epidemic of unending civil wars in the global South. Active armed conflicts occurred in at least 46 states in 2021; 8 in the Americas, 9 in Asia and Oceania, 3 in Europe, 8 in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), and 18 in sub-Saharan Africa.

This violent trend has led many to recall John Hobbes's description of the state of nature in which "nature was red in tooth and claw" where "life was brutish nasty and short". The ongoing Russian war of aggression against Ukraine epitomizes this tendency alluded to by Hobbes.

One primal cause of this armed violence in the world is what President Eisenhower had described as the role played by the "military-industrial complex" or the arms industries mainly located in the Western capitalist world. Earlier, they were called "Merchants of death".

States seek arms for a variety of reasons. These range from compulsions of self-defense in an anarchical world to imposing their imperial will on others to engage in influence building to goals of attaining prestige and power projection capabilities. As pointed out by Andrew J. Pierre, "arms sales are more than an economic occurrence, a military relationship, or an arms control challenge," and have become "foreign policy writ large."

The international arms trade encompasses a broad range of weapons and military systems, ranging from small arms and other light weapons to tanks, aircrafts, missiles, and warships.

In worldwide terms, arms transfers have more than quadrupled since late 1960, having grown from \$9.4 billion in 1969 to \$40 billion in 1999 to over \$2 trillion in 2022.

According to data recently released by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the five largest suppliers of major conventional weapons that constitute 77 percent of the total arms supply to the world dominate the arms market today. These arms suppliers include the United States, Russia, France, China, and Germany.

The 25 largest suppliers accounted for 99 percent of the total volume of exports, and the 5 largest suppliers in the period—the United States, Russia, France, China, and Germany—accounted for 77 percent of the total volume of exports. Since 1950, the USA and Russia (or the Soviet Union before 1992) have consistently been by far the largest suppliers.

However, the USA's arms exports were 108 percent higher than Russia's in 2017–21, compared with 34 percent higher in 2012–16, and the gap is likely to increase. In 2017–21 the USA's arms exports accounted for 39 percent of the global total and were 14 percent higher than in 2012–16. In contrast, Russia's arms exports decreased by 26 percent and its share of the global total dropped from 24 percent in 2012–16 to 19 percent in 2017–21. Exports by France, the third-largest supplier, grew by 59 percent between 2012–16 and 2017–21, while China's and Germany's exports decreased by 31 percent and 19 percent respectively.



According to SIPRI, there were 163 states as importers of major arms in 2017–21.

The five largest arms importers were India, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Australia, and China, which together accounted for 38 percent of total arms imports. The region that received the largest volume of major arms supplies in 2017–21 was Asia and Oceania, accounting for 43 percent of the total, followed by the Middle East, which received 32 percent, Europe (13 percent), Africa (5.8 percent) and the Americas (5.5 percent).

Between 2012–16 and 2017–21, the flow of arms to Europe (19 percent) and the Middle East (2.8 percent) increased, while flows to Africa (34 percent), the Americas (36 percent), and Asia and Oceania (4.7 percent) decreased.

According to SIPRI estimates, the total value of the global arms trade was at least \$112 billion in 2020 compared with \$87 billion (in constant 2020 US dollars) in 2011. The total value of the arms trade in 2020 was about 0.5 percent of the total value of global international trade in 2020.

These estimates indicate that the arms trade has become a very lucrative business for the firms and countries engaged in the production of arms and as long as there is profit to be made the world would remain a dangerous place. Western countries' coordinated arms deliveries to Ukraine, tens of billions of dollars, have cast a fresh spotlight on global military assistance as the vector of a rising threat to world peace. According to a recent study by the United Nations, the poorly regulated flow of firearms disrupt peace agreements, undermines the work of peacekeepers, prolongs armed conflicts, and inflicts untold pain and suffering on civilians. Outside

these war zones, hundreds of thousands more people die as a result of gunfire every year—including in ostensibly peaceful countries such as Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, and the United States. Gun violence is the leading cause of death for men between the ages of 15 and 34 in each of these countries and many others.

Another disturbing trend highlighted by SIPRI relates to the proliferation of nuclear arms. SIPRI notes that at the start of 2022, nine states—the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, China, India, Pakistan, Israel and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea possessed approximately 12,705 nuclear weapons, of which 9440 were estimated to be in military stockpiles for potential use. About 3732 of these warheads were estimated to be deployed with operational forces, and around 2000 of these were kept in a state of high operational alert.

Global reductions of operational warheads appear to have stalled, and their numbers may be rising again.

At the same time, both Russia and the USA have extensive and expensive programs underway to replace and modernize their nuclear warheads, missile and aircraft delivery systems, and nuclear weapon production facilities.

The nuclear arsenals of the other nuclear-armed states are considerably smaller, but all are either developing or deploying new weapon systems or have announced their intention to do so. China is in the middle of a significant modernization and expansion of its nuclear arsenal, which appears to include the construction of over 300 new missile silos.



India and Pakistan also seem to be increasing the size of their nuclear weapon inventories, while in 2021 the UK announced its intention to increase its nuclear stockpile.

The net result of this growing reliance on nuclear weapons as a means of deterrence and defense including war-fighting against adversaries would essentially mean that the world would become a highly dangerous place for not only people living in the combat zones but in case of nuclear war-fighting, for the world at large. Efforts should be made in earnest to return to dialogue and arms control if one has to avoid a bleak future of mass mayhem.

Pakistan's TTP Dilemma

The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) was present in Afghanistan even when the coalition forces were in Afghanistan

By Syed Fakhar KaKaKhel

Afghan Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said that talks had taken place between the TTP and the Pakistani government. The Afghan Taliban spokesperson told reporters in Kabul that the talks between Pakistan and the TTP concluded, hoping for a positive outcome of the negotiations. Hezb-e-Islami Afghanistan chief Gulbuddin Hekmatyar has said that the issue of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) is not new. He said that earlier TTP was active inside the country since 2007.

The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) was present in Afghanistan even when the coalition forces were in Afghanistan. He foresees that Pakistan can deal with it and would overcome this problem. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar said that the real issue is stability in Afghanistan. In his meeting with a delegation of Pakistani journalists in Kabul, he said that stability in Afghanistan would be the key to stability in the region, so Afghanistan must first stand on its own two feet as soon as possible.

Following the PPP's decision to bring the issue of dialogue with the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) to Parliament, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari formed a three-member committee to take the rest of the political parties into confidence. The committee has been in touch with various parties. All parties have agreed that negotiations and an agreement with the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) should be taken up with the parliament in confidence.

In this regard, former DG ISI and current Corps Commander Faiz Hameed recently gave a detailed briefing to a high-level military meeting regarding talks with Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan. Likely, an in-camera briefing will also be given to the parliament. The government's position is that all issues with the TTP are being dealt with within the framework of the Constitution of Pakistan. Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah has already said that a meeting on national security, attended by civil and



military leadership, had decided that the talks with the proscribed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) will be held only under the framework of the Constitution.

According to sources, help has also been sought from religious circles in these talks. Prominent Islamic scholar Mufti Taqi Usmani is in touch with the Afghan Taliban in this regard. Earlier, Mufti Taqi Usmani had a meeting with Prime Minister Mian Shehbaz Sharif along with the chief of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Maulana Fazlur Rehman.

It seems that this time the government is seeking help from all quarters in negotiating with the TTP. Perhaps that is why the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) has been persuaded that Pakistan is an Islamic state and that its constitution is as per the principles of the Qur'an and Sunnah. That is why now the TTP has put the demand for restoration of the old status of FATA at top of the list. They are insisting reverse of the FATA merger.

Sources in the talks said that the Taliban had been told that the issue is constitutional. Therefore, a two-thirds majority in parliament is required to reverse the decision, which is currently impossible.

Therefore, the government has succeeded in getting a respite from the TTP on this issue as well. The biggest success is the indefinite ceasefire. The announcement by the TTP after talks is a sign of positive progress. It is worth mentioning that despite all the efforts and demands of the Afghan government and US coalition forces, the Afghan Taliban did not declare a ceasefire indefinitely during the Doha talks. Therefore, the credit for this goes to General Faiz Hameed and his team who started the negotiations after a lot of homework. The unusual aspect of these negotiations is that a foreign country is playing the role of guarantor in the negotiations. The Afghan government is facilitating these talks. Afghan Interior Minister Siraj Haqqani, also known as Khalifa, has a responsibility to oversee possible agreements.

In such a case, if any party deviates from the agreement, it will be the responsibility of Interior Minister Siraj Haqqani to take action or decide against that party. Therefore, if the Pakistani Taliban violate the agreement, then the Afghan government itself will turn against them and the asylum facility for them will end.

Concerns are being raised in many quarters regarding these talks in the country, but the

ground realities are that no neighboring country of Afghanistan is ready to risk further chaos and unrest close to their borders. The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) is of the view that former rulers brought the war to Pakistan and started the war by becoming an ally of the United States. It also claims that their fighters in the war were captured and killed or handed over to the United States.

As far as their captive fighters are concerned, the government believes that those who have served their sentences will be released. In addition, after seeing all the cases, their sentences and release will be decided according to the law. Sources in Afghanistan believe that many fighters may not return to Pakistan. The majority of TTP members are tribes like Wazir, Mohmand, Safi, and Mamoond which are present across the Pak-Afghan border so staying in Afghanistan will not be a new thing for them. It is also possible that many TTP fighters remain under the shadow of the Afghan Taliban.

But despite this, many militant factions may disagree with the TTP's decision. The real challenge is how to convince or counter them. While the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) has declared an indefinite ceasefire, the security forces, police, and the people are constantly under attack in the border regions. The southern districts,



including Waziristan, have seen an increase in targeted killings. Four young citizens were targeted in North Waziristan. Objections were then raised as to why these operations were going on despite the negotiations and ceasefire.

Some actors or spoilers do not want to see the talks succeed. These are the people who will continue these operations even after the success of negotiations with the TTP. There are fears that many fighters will join Islamic State in Khurasan Province (ISKP) after reaching an agreement with the TTP. Because if they do not abide by the

agreement, they will lose the sympathy of the Afghan Taliban in Afghanistan. Therefore, for fear of action against them, they will resort to international organizations like ISKP. Since there are networks of extremist organizations in Pakistan, after the arrival of the Pakistani Taliban to their ranks and files in Afghanistan, the international organizations in Afghanistan will try to reactivate the networks of these extremist organizations in Pakistan.

Therefore, it will be necessary for the government to consider these threats after the agreement to address these concerns.



President Xi Commitment to Peace and Prosperity at BRICS

A vast majority of experts believe that West is adopting such tactics out of fear of losing hegemony and economic power

By Shakeel Ahmad Ramay

President Xi Jinping speech at BRICS Business Forum can be summarized as a sincere proposal and commitment for sustainable peace and prosperity. It is not first time that President Xi urged world to for peace and prosperity. It is constant feature of President Xi's talks and actions. President Xi never let any moment to slip away, without highlighting the importance of peace and prosperity for people and nations. It does not matter, where he is talking, his focus is always on peace and prosperity. World has seen him talking at UNs platform, regional associations and forums, bilateral forums and national forums with the same message. He believes that without ensuring peace and prosperity, world cannot achieve the goal of community with shared future. It also shows his conviction and commitment to the vision of community with shared future, which can only be achieved through cooperation.

The analysis of historical data shows that it was cooperation, which helped world to grow and overcome many challenges. World Bank has pointed out that from 1970 to 2015, the world GDP grew by 25-folds in the aftermath of globalization. In monetary terms, it increased from US\$2.96 trillion in 1970 to US\$74 trillion in 2015. World was also able to halve the poverty (1.9 billion people in 1990 to 689 million in 2019) and food insecurity. Despite, huge benefits of cooperation and economic linkages, world is moving in other direction.

President Xi rightly identified the problems and causes of problems. He said, world is facing contradictions between 1)- peace or war? 2)- progress or regression? 3)- openness or isolation? And 4)- cooperation or confrontation? There is no denying fact that these contradictions are haunting humanity for long time, but in recent times



the situation has been aggravated. Trade war, economic isolation through country first slogans and confrontation at the name of so-called human rights and democracy have become new normal. Hegemonic aspirations are igniting the flames of new conflicts and crises. Ukraine crisis is latest example.





Ukraine crisis is interesting case study to understand the Western mentality and preferences. The analysis of Ukraine crisis tells us that it was designed and fueled to achieve three specific objectives. First, to weaken the Russia by engaging in conflict and depriving Russia from economic opportunities by imposing sanctions. Second, create law and order situation around the BRI corridors and undermine economic interests of China. Third, to push Ukraine in Western block and target Chinese investments in Ukraine.

However, a vast majority of experts believe that West is adopting such tactics out of fear of losing hegemony and economic power. Since the rise of China, the efforts have been accelerated to undermine global system. Rather, Western countries in the leadership of USA are hell bent to dent the global system without realizing that fall of global system will be disaster, and no one will be winner, rather everyone will be loser. We have seen worst impacts of such mentality during the last century in the form of two World Wars, which engulfed millions of human beings in addition to destruction of resources.

In this context, President Xi's advice has rational, which emphasize on abandoning

the hegemonic mentality and aspirations. He asked world to say goodbye to this mentality, as world cannot afford new world war. He also urged powerful countries to depart from the philosophy of "position of strength", as it will not serve the purpose of peace and prosperity. By citing historical lessons, he urged all to pursue and defend peace, at all cost. It is only way to secure sustainable prosperity. He reiterated the importance of Global Security Initiative and its four pillars the common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security for securing sustainable peace.

Thus, he proposed that we must try to forge partnerships based on the principles of win-win cooperation. We must create a new world order with the core values of justices, fairness and respect for everyone. Besides, UNs must be at center of all international engagement and we should adhere to core values and principles of UNs. It is not choice; it is need of the time. It is required to combat multifaceted challenges like food insecurity, energy security, health, COVID-19 and existential threat of climate change. By keeping in mind these huge challenges, China proposed Global Development Initiative.

However, the challenges are so huge that no single country or region can handle these challenges alone. Thus, there is need to strengthen the cooperation and avoid isolation or compartmentalization. We should understand that small courts with high fences will not serve the purpose. World should promote trade, economic linkages, technology development and investment through the WTO based system. It will be win-win proposition for everyone. It is pre-requisite to benefit from the real potential of world. It will also give boost to innovation and creativity, which would be good news for global growth and development.

In nutshell, it was good speech, especially in prevailing global situation. However, BRICS can contribute and spearhead global changes by make it inclusive through the expansion of membership. It is suggested that countries like Pakistan, Indonesia, Gulf and other should be offered membership in first phase. It will give hope to developing countries and build positive image of BRICS. Otherwise, BRICS will be considered as G-7 of emerging economies by low- and middle-income countries of world.

Writer is Political Economist, Asian institute of Ecocivilization Research and development.

Internationalization of the Russia-Ukraine War: A global reality

The Ukraine war has now entered a dangerous stage where international implications are becoming visible



By Hamzah Rifaat Hussain

Russia's crackdown in the Donbass region is now reaching significant heights. The fight for Severodonetsk and Lyschansk is now part of Vladimir Putin's ideology to completely annihilate the Ukrainian state and ensure that the separatist regions of Donetsk and Luhansk become self-governing independent entities. The calls from President Volodymyr Zelensky for greater ammunition and weaponry from the European Union and the US can be construed as a desperate bid to ensure that further territory does not secede away from Kyiv as the conflict becomes increasingly internationalized with deep implications for the global community.

The key is to understand where this conflict will eventually end and what variables need to be factored in while making assessments.

It is important not to tread in two extreme directions while coming up with conclusions. The Ukraine war has exposed global fissures not only in the international financial system but also in a world defined by unipolarity.

Firstly, talks will be held in Brussels by all EU member states to ensure that the Russian blockade on Ukrainian ports in the Black Sea is lifted as global grain supply shortages send shockwaves to countries across Africa, Asia, and beyond. The economic toll of the conflict is translating into supply-side shocks that are contributing to inflation and massive social upheaval in countries such as Sri Lanka that had relied heavily on imported products for their economic sustenance.

Assessments from the World Bank and the UNDP point to staggering amounts of food insecurity which can easily hamper the progress of conflict-torn countries such as Afghanistan for which a swift political solution to the Ukraine war is needed. The absence, thereof, will only ensure that the conflict will continue to gain international inroads and push countries into difficult quagmires which require swift policy-making from their respective leaderships.

The Biden administration is also pursuing a policy of camp politics by dividing the world

into pro-freedom and pro-Russia binaries. It is important to note that his Asia Odyssey and attempts to lure in countries such as South Korea, Japan, Australia, Indonesia, and Singapore to adopt a harsh stance on China is part of this binary strategy.

The NATO Security Concept of 2022, for example, mentions China for the very first time despite the fact that the Madrid Summit of 2022 in June is being convened to tackle the Ukraine crisis only.

The coupling of China with Russia has only resulted in Beijing and Moscow solidifying ties with economic partnerships, trade in oil and gas reserves, and infrastructural development becoming the hallmark of a relationship between the two UN Security Council members. Failure of Western diplomacy to allay the concerns of Moscow which include providing security guarantees has ensured that traditional allies expand strategic relations and denounce attempts from capitals such as Washington D.C. and London to sow discord and undermine peace.

Much of the Russia/China nexus can be attributed to the attempts made by the Biden administration and its allies to launch slanderous, malicious campaigns against Beijing's right to seek peaceful reunification with Taiwan and link it with the crisis in Ukraine.

Geographical dynamics, the nature, and history of grievances, and the inability to understand the underlying tensions in the South China Sea have resulted in a more emboldened stance. China which has expressed an official policy of neutrality with regard to the crisis in Europe is constantly being provoked by the United States and the EU over adopting a tougher stance on Russia despite Beijing's unwavering adherence to Zhou En Lai's Five Principles of Co-Existence. To ensure that the diplomatic faux pas witnessed in Ukraine materializes in the South China Sea is only adding to a highly polarized and divided world.

Central to the internationalization of the conflict is Ukraine's candidacy in the EU where its status is slated to be approved by member states. The international politics of the EU where the expansion of the EU has been resisted by countries such as Serbia and Hungary can be linked to how both Belgrade and Budapest have refused to partake in a sanctions regime that would hurt their domestic economies.

Polarization and divisions are hence visible in the EU as well as Russia's campaign to intensify its operations in the East of Ukraine that is being predicated upon the membership of Kyiv into the bloc. Warnings had been issued prior to the war regarding NATO's expansion, and given that disinformation and propaganda warfare is rampant during the conflict, there exists a possibility that Ukraine's membership in the EU is viewed with hostility and suspicion. Moreover, President Volodymyr Zelensky's claims that Russia would intensify its operations in the East as a result of talks surrounding Ukraine's membership.

World headlines continue to feature Russian advances in the Donbas region with the Institute of the Study of War, a Washington D.C.-based think tank consistently updating the status of the war on international platforms.

The issue, however, is the fact that the world crisis since World War II is now becoming more intense with little end in sight. Credit lines are already being issued to countries worst affected by the war with countries in Sub-Saharan Africa facing the worst effects of the conflict. Divisions are being exaggerated by lobbyists, warmongers, anti-Russia advocates, and far-right groups which operate in an environment where animosity is allowed to fester.

Beyond the UN Secretary-General who has called for restraint and opening up of humanitarian corridors, the two parties to the conflict have issued conflicting claims and have been distrustful of each other's intentions. The spillover effect is a decline in human capital, loss of life, and complete degradation in the infrastructure needed to propel the global economy forward.

The harrowing aspect of the Ukraine war is that it has now entered a dangerous stage where international implications are becoming visible, palpable, and difficult to contain. As alliances strengthen and leaderships continue to remain emboldened, fighting in places such as Severodonetsk underlines a wider point.

Unless and until de-escalation does not take place or dialogue is not resumed between all parties, the crisis in Ukraine will continue to increase in its international scope, posing a threat to the global community. The lack of options and recalcitrance from the Kremlin, the Duma, and the government in Kyiv are only contributing to the problem. The unfortunate reality is that there is simply no end in sight and with the world remaining deeply concerned about the after-effects of a prolongation, no solution has been proposed which has meant that the resolution of the quagmire remains a distant reality.



Integrity Icon Pakistan

5 govt officials win 'Most Honest' officers award

Accountability Lab is striving for a new generation of active citizens and responsible leaders across Pakistan. In each country, local accountability lab teams run a nationwide campaign to identify and encourage civil servants who demonstrate exemplary integrity in their work. Officials are nominated by and voted for by the public at large, with the annual campaign culminating in an award ceremony to celebrate the finalists. The lab then works with the winners to push for integrity within government. In Pakistan, Integrity Icon is currently in its fifth year, with hundreds of nominations received from across the country.

Pakistan's Integrity Icons 2021 Crowned in Islamabad

The Integrity Icon Pakistan 2021 celebrated the five winning icons in a ceremony held at the Serena Hotel. Zil E Huma, Deputy Director at Press Information Department in Islamabad; Shahzadi Noshad, DSP Traffic Incharge In Haripur, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; Romana Murad Khoso, Section Officer from Quetta, Balochistan; Nasir Bashir, Assistant Professor at Government Diyal Singh in Lahore, Punjab; and Muhammad Naseer Musvi, Deputy Director (Admin) Directorate of Schools Education (Primary) in Sukkur, Sindh; were awarded in recognition of their work excellence, integrity, and honesty in respective categories.

The award is an effort to name and fame such individuals in the public sector who are playing their role in service delivery, practicing core values of integrity and empathy.

Ms. Katherine Twomey, first secretary development in the Australian High Commission was the chief guest at the ceremony. While addressing the audience she said that strong institutions are the bedrock of an effective democracy. She emphasized the need to build strong institutions by supporting processes and frameworks that promoted good public service practices.

She remarked that Australia recognized the need for effective frameworks to stamp out corruption. Australia regularly reaffirmed its commitment to anti-corruption measures to



help promote higher rates of economic growth, enhance economic development and reduce poverty in Pakistan. She underlined that accountability and improved governance can only be possible when there is a strong response to corruption, democratic institutions are supported, the rule of law promotes stability and trust, and fosters open and efficient markets for economies and societies to thrive.

Speaking to the Accountability Lab, Chairman Board of Accountability Lab Pakistan (ALP), Ali Imran said that "Accountability and transparency are inevitable for the democratic governance, leading to the wise use of resources and benefiting everyone fairly. We must recognize and appreciate all those who are contributing to the positive change in Pakistan."

While addressing the ceremony, one of AL's former integrity icons, a civil educator and human rights advocate Mr. Zafarullah Khan remarked that "Integrity is an integral part of personality especially when you are interested to serve the people. I often say that duty is beauty and this initiative is to appreciate that beauty".

He further said that "what else could be the greatest satisfaction when you are responsible to serve the citizen and citizens feel satisfied that you are always there to bring some kind of hope, some kind of relief, some kind of justice, some kind of equality into their lives".

The Icons have become well known for their efforts in their service to citizens, pushing back against corruption and advocating for better governance in their provinces. Musvi, during his posting in Sukkur, devised rules to prevent the misuse of the school's procurement committee from approval for personal purchasing.

Integrity Icon is an annual event to benchmark the values of accountable leadership, transparency, and integrity in Pakistan's civil service. The campaign recognizes and celebrates government officials from across the country for their integrity and honesty. Integrity Icon is currently in its sixth consecutive year in Pakistan and received more than 100 nominations which were screened and vetted by a jury comprising credible professionals from the civil services, academia, and civil society of Pakistan. The Icons' dedication to serving citizens and carrying out their duties honestly earned them the respect of their colleagues, superiors, and most importantly, of Pakistani citizens.

"During this year's campaign, we saw incredible energy from Pakistani citizens who have truly shown that they support and want to celebrate honest leaders," noted Fayyaz Yaseen, Director of Programs for Accountability Lab Pakistan. "Let's move away from 'naming and shaming' and towards 'naming and faming' those who uphold the Pakistani values of honesty, integrity, and accountability."



A real-life Top Gun sequel between Iran and the West: JCPOA unlikely

Americans would certainly not want to leave any stone unturned when Iran is concerned



By Naqi Akbar

With the economy in shambles, partly due to the sanctions, the last reformist administration's dependence upon JCPOA, and overall governmental inefficiency in running the affairs of the state and economy, the Iranian nation-state is increasingly moving towards a conflict.

As the western powers are led by the United States and supported by the top EU states, the stage is more than set for any real-life military conflict, surgical strike, or a controlled regime change in the neighboring Islamic Republic of Iran.

As the impact on Iran is inevitable, its impact on geopolitics, the global economy, and future relationship between the states cannot be predicted prudently. Recent domestic politics in Pakistani political lingo have revealed that calculations can go terribly wrong. The impact on the economy, polity, and political inclusion or exclusion can be life-threatening for any nation-state in particular. Replicating the template on the international geo politics, a

strike on Iranian nuclear-suspected sites as recreated in the recent Sequel of the Top Gun, might not be an incident in isolation but can have repercussions for all concerned parties.

The scenario gets a serious turn on the count that despite the Jamal Khashoggi episode, the United States is in no mood to distance itself from the old Arab monarchy. Similarly, Israel is being tactically encouraged to build up militarily for any potential strike against Iranian military and nuclear targets.

Likewise, on the sidelines, unrelated states are being cajoled to join the Abraham accord as envisaged by the outgoing Republican administration of Donald Trump. In recent months, furthermore, the Pakistani state has been quizzed to consider accepting Israel as a legitimate Jewish nation-state. The reasons for that push emanate from the fact that once the defanging of the radical Islam is completed in the form of the demise of the Iranian Islamic

Republic, the neutralization of the Islamist Palestinian resistance will happen; the Egyptian Ikhwan is already brutally neutralized, courtesy the pro-US Egyptian military; it is just natural that a nation-state like Pakistan with declared support for the Islamic world needs to be neutralized as soon as possible via the Abraham Accord.

Apparently, the issue of discussion is JCPOA; however, a wider picture makes the conclusion of JCPOA and Abraham Accords, making it relevant that both the issues are discussed in unison.

Coming back to Iran, recent years and months have seen that deadlock is being deliberately prolonged. In fact, it resembles Pakistan dealing with FATF. Pakistan despite being a nation-state and an economy that conforms to the western standards in the name of the best international practices in every sense is being pressurized. A close look at the Iranian negotiations reveals the same. Initially, the issue seems to be enrichment.

However, issues like the Iranian weapon development program and Iranian regional interests are added to make the deadlock as permanent as it can be.

As things now stand, the western powers have expressed their uneasiness about Iranians being weeks away from weapon-grade uranium. The IAEA resolution seems to be the first step toward a consensual build-up to a surgical strike against Iran.

Here it might be pointed out that the political factors are being played up gradually to make the going difficult for the Iranians. Recent events like protests over inflation and unemployment are being played up by the western media to make a case for an alienated regime in power. Even a defective construction episode is enough for the media to play up emotions against the setup in that country.

What is going to be the fallout for the world at large or the region in particular? Any military initiative on Iran will automatically legitimize the places from where the US or Israeli weapon systems have been activated. Not so long ago, during the concluding days of the Trump administration, it was customary threat practice on part of the USAF to send a B-52 from any German Airbase to the Middle East. These B-52, when entering Middle East Air Spaces will be escorted in part by the Israeli Air Force and also the Royal Saudi Air Force jets. These jets will circle close to the Iranian international air space and then take a return loop towards their respective landing air bases.

Any understandable base for the US or Israeli activity in the Middle East would automatically put that particular country in the line of fire from the IRGC. Keeping in view the fact that oil still counts for much of the fuel needs around the world, any escalation over Iran has to be taken into consideration by the western powers.

Towards that goal, the west led by the United States would squarely go for a devastating strike and not just a surgical strike. The United States and Israel will surely ensure that Iranian defenses are effectively decapitated to allow any other response. It may be pointed out that in the aftermath of the devastating drone strikes near Baghdad Airport in the wee hours of January 3, 2020, which took out Qasem

Soleimani, the Iranian retaliation towards Ain al Assad airbase was not reported completely in the western media which could have suggested that Iranians retaliated on the same level.

Americans would certainly not want to leave any stone unturned.

As for the last scenario, it is going to be a regime change exercise in the near future under the pretext of restricting Iran not to make a nuclear bomb. Any regime change activity will draw a similar response from the threatened nation-state, in this case, Iran.



Simply put, the whole region will be on fire. With the majority of the POL products emanating from the Gulf, whether we call it Persian or Arabian, the economic calculations for weak economies like Pakistan will be devastating. The same can be imagined for the so-called strong economies.

Recent disruptions in the energy supplies, especially gas in the case of Ukraine have revealed that nation-states like Germany despite siding with the United States as per the NATO protocol still try to find ways, where its energy issues and trade-related issues are not rudely disturbed. Even the European financial sector had to do its risk weightage exercise to avoid a major shock of the crisis.

With the world economy on fire, irrespective of the states whether they are siding with the Abraham accord or not or are standing with the western politico-econom-

ic system or not, this wildfire will impact each and every nation-state and the economy on a macro scale.

For Pakistan, it is going to be double trouble. Pressure from external POL shock, time bombs of tough economic decisions courtesy of the IMF, and political instability over miscalculated moves can combine to add fuel to the public discontent. With the public already discontented, any sideline pressures on foreign policy issues like the Abraham accord can only invite more unrest.

Of importance will be the behavior of the

so-called anti-western block of Russia and China. If they are willing to neutralize the western intent, it will also expose them for good or for bad, whether they want an alternate system of the economy or want to be a part of the western politico-economic system.

The stakes are high for all sides, the Iranians as well as the west. Equally important is looking for the onlookers like Pakistan, and how they manage the external shocks while already dis-leveled by the internal and external economic and geopolitical contradictions.

Conclusively, the summers will be the staging ground for many new developments in our part of the world, as well as the economy on the whole. The fallout of the third world war is all set for disturbing the budgets of the states as well as the individuals.

Queen Elizabeth II's Jubilee Celebrations

This year marks the Queen's 60th anniversary of her coronation, making her the longest-serving monarch in British history

By Aimen Bukhari

The Queen's jubilees have been colourful displays of spectacle, celebrations, and pop performances that have brought the whole country together to honour the queen and her years of service.

This year marks the Queen's 60th anniversary of her coronation, making her the longest-serving monarch in British history. Her Silver, Golden, Diamond, and Platinum Jubilees have all been significant moments in her reign. There are always a lot of festivities involved in Queen's events. Everything has been exemplary, from the flag-festooned street jamborees of 1977 to the star-studded televised concert of 2002 to the river extravaganza of 2012 to the platinum jubilee in June 2022.

Let's have a look at the Queen's Jubilees:

The Silver Jubilee in 1977

It took the Queen 56,000 miles to celebrate her first jubilee, travelling from Western Samoa to New Zealand, Tonga, Fiji, Tasmania, Papua-Nepal, Canada and the West Indies.



The Queen, decked up in brown kiwi feathers for her Silver Jubilee visit, stands with Maori warriors at Rugby Park in Gisborne, New Zealand (PA).

There were celebrations all around the country, including the lighting of beacons in her honour.

More than a million people went to London's Mall, and the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh rode in a state carriage to St. Paul's Cathedral for a Thanksgiving ceremony.

In 1977, the Queen and Prince Philip left Buckingham Palace to go to St. Paul's Cathedral for a ceremony of thanks for the Silver Jubilee. On the way, they got on the Golden State Coach (PA).

Fireworks, a Palace balcony appearance, and a River Progress of 140 boats down the Thames were all part of the celebrations for the Queen's Jubilee. While punk music and Red Rum's record-breaking

third Grand National victory occurred in 1977, other notable events included the Lib-Lab agreement, Grunwick picket battles, and the Lib-Lab accord.



From the balcony, the Queen and Philip, along with the Prince of Wales, Prince Edward, Princess Anne, Lord Mountbatten, Princess Margaret, Prince Andrew, and the Queen Mother, greeted the onlookers with smiles and hand gestures (PA).

The anti-authoritarian song God Save the Queen by the Sex Pistols was banned from the radio.

They were arrested at the end of a Jubilee boat cruise along the Thames because they were trying to sell the product there.

1992 Ruby Jubilee

Known as "annus horribilis," this year marked the Queen's 40th year on the throne and one of the most trying times of her reign.

Three of her four children's marriages were in shambles by this time. The Princess Royal has divorced, the Duke and Duchess of York have separated, and the Prince and Princess of Wales are splitting up.

According to Andrew Morton's book *Diana: Her True Story*, the late Princess of Wales was depressed and even contemplated taking her own life.

Then Windsor Castle was devastated by a catastrophic fire. As a result of worries that the taxpayers would foot the bill, public opinion began to swing against the royals.

In an unusually personal speech, the Queen addressed guests at a London Guildhall luncheon celebrating her 40th year as monarch, saying "1992 is not a year on which I shall look back with unadulterated delight." She said: "It has been an 'annus horribilis' in the words of one of my more sympathetic correspondents."

1992 was also the year of Black Wednesday, which was the day Britain walked out from the European Exchange Rate Mechanism and when Yugoslavia broke apart.

In 2002, the United Kingdom celebrated Monarch's Golden Jubilee

Crowds gathered in the mall for the monarch's tour of Britain and the Commonwealth, just like during the Silver Jubilee. The Party at the Palace, on the other hand, marked a significant departure.

Brian May rehearses on the roof of Buckingham Palace before the concert in honour of Queen Elizabeth II's Golden Jubilee (PA)

Sir Paul McCartney led the ensemble of stars with Hey Jude, while Dame Edna Everage proclaimed, "The Jubilee Girl is here, possums," as the 76-year-old Queen sat down for her first public appearance since her Coronation in 1953.

After lighting the centre beacon, the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh looked out over Buckingham Palace and saw a spectacular display of fireworks above the palace (PA)

It had been a difficult year for the monarch as she had lost her sister Princess Margaret and mother to illness. But despite the predictions of critics who predicted a failure, the Queen's Golden Jubilee was an enormous triumph.



Queen Elizabeth II's Golden Jubilee - the royal family

The Queen is only the second British monarch to celebrate a Diamond Jubilee, following in the footsteps of her ancestor, Queen Victoria, who was the first monarch to achieve this milestone. After the wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, there was a boom in interest in the Windsors.

To mark the Diamond Jubilee in 2012, there were a lot of festivities. During the Diamond Jubilee festivities, planes passed above in a ceremonial flypast. As many as 1,000 watercraft, including kayaks, Dunkirk ships, and dragon boats, had taken part, and more than 1.25 million onlookers had gathered along the river banks to witness the Queen, the duke, and senior royals cruise on an opulent royal barge. Concerts were hosted in front of Buckingham Palace as well-wishers flocked to the mall for the second time since the triumph of the Golden Jubilee extravaganza. Thames Pageant was also held to mark the Jubilee of Her Majesty the Queen.

On the Spirit of Chartwell during the Diamond Jubilee River Pageant, HRH Prince of Wales, Prince Philip, Queen Elizabeth II, Duchess of Cornwall, the Cambridges, and Prince Harry (PA).



A hula-hooping Grace Jones in a PVC leotard was among the performers brought on by Gary Barlow of Take That. Philip, on the other hand, missed both the performance and the Thanksgiving ceremony because of a bladder infection.

The Olympics and Paralympics were also held in London, and William and Kate revealed that they were expecting their first child.

In 2017 - the Sapphire Jubilee

Her Majesty's Blue Sapphire Jubilee marked the first time a British monarch has been on the throne for 65 years. It was a quiet day for the Queen, who spent it alone at Sandringham in anticipation of the Platinum Jubilee celebrations in 2022.

In 2022- Queen's platinum Jubilee was celebrated

The Commonwealth of Nations observed the 70th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth II's coronation, with the Platinum Jubilee. The typical Spring bank holiday was relocated from the end of May to the second week of June in the United Kingdom to create the four-day Platinum Jubilee Central Weekend, which ran from Thursday, June 2 through Sunday, June 5. It was the first platinum jubilee celebration by a British monarch. The governments of other Commonwealth countries and territories, such as Australia, Canada, the Cayman Islands, New Zealand, and Papua New Guinea, have also announced plans to mark the Jubilee.

Stamps and coins were produced by various Commonwealth countries, and beacons were lit in the capital cities of all Commonwealth countries for the first time. Trees were also planted in honour of the Queen in numerous areas.

There were many highlights from the four-day spectacle which also included the appearance of the 96-year-old queen via hologram in the Pageant procession and a star-studded concert called "Party at the Palace."

Prince Louis, the 4-year-old son of Prince William and Kate Middleton, stole the show while witnessing Trooping of the Colour on Thursday and the Pageant on Sunday.

IMF programme lands coalition govt, people in hot waters

Whether it is a petrol, gas, electricity or taxes bomb, the PML(N) led government is ready to do everything in a bid to fulfill each and every condition of the IMF

By Javed Mahmood

ISLAMABAD: The bail-out package of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has landed the coalition government and the people of Pakistan in hot waters equally. Almost every day, the government is coming up with news that is related to price hikes and the ultimate victim of this unending vicious cycle are the people of Pakistan. Additionally, the US dollar is playing havoc with Pakistani rupee and the image of the coalition government as well by gaining value and vigour because the foreign exchange reserves with the State Bank of Pakistan have depleted to \$10.6 billion by June 26, 2022 – barely equal to six weeks' national imports, which is a very dangerous sign for the sustainability of the economy. In April 2022, the reserves of the State Bank of Pakistan stood at \$10.60 billion when the PTI government was ousted (on April 9 at midnight), which dropped to \$8.2 billion by June 17, 2022. Thus, in less than three months' time of the coalition government, Pakistan has lost \$2.30 billion foreign exchange reserves 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 gave some support to the reserves and value of rupee. With the arrival of a loan from a consortium of Chinese banks, the foreign exchange reserves of the State Bank are again at par with the level where the PTI government left the reserves. Total national reserves, including \$6 billion of the commercial banks, are around \$16.6 billion.

The government inherited dollar-rupee exchange rate of around Rs180 and by June 24, 2022, the dollar soared to 208 rupees. At one time, the US dollar crossed 212 rupees mark, but the green-back reversed its forward march on June 24 when the finance minister announced that the State Bank has received a \$2.3 billion loan from a consortium of Chinese banks. A couple of days earlier, Pakistan government



and the consortium of Chinese banks had signed the agreement for the disbursement of loans.

Meanwhile, whether it is a petrol, gas, electricity or taxes bomb, the PML(N) led government is ready to do everything in a bid to fulfill each and every condition of the IMF, irrespective of their hazardous impact on the economy and the people of the country particularly those who are not familiar with the culture of hefty pay and lucrative perks. The people with a fixed income (salaried-class especially in the private sector and those doing small business) are in serious trouble as they are losing their purchasing power with the passage of time. From the day the coalition government came to power, it has been rapidly losing its popularity graph because of price-hike related events while masses in the country are facing erosion in their buying capacity.

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 while Pakistan's time-tested friendly countries like China and Saudi Arabia want our government to follow the IMF

doctrine. A couple of weeks back, Finance Minister Miftah Ismail candidly admitted that none of our friendly countries is willing to lend money to Pakistan in the prevailing situation. That's why in less than three weeks' time, the government has enhanced petrol prices by Rs 85 per liter in three phases and also promised with the IMF to impose petroleum levy on petroleum products in phases, which will further trigger price-hike across the country.

Importantly, on June 24, 2022, the coalition government dropped the "mother of all bombs" (Super Tax) on the corporate sector, resultantly, the stock market crashed within 20 minutes after the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif announced that 10 percent super tax will be charged from the mega companies from 1st of July, which are already paying corporate tax (ranging up to 39 percent). At present, the banking sector is paying the highest corporate tax – 39 percent and now they will be paying another 10 percent as super tax. Like other mega companies, the banks would certainly make sure that in 2022-23, they pass on the impact of the super tax with all honesty to their customers and corporate clients. Thus, the real victim of the mother of all bombs, will again be the people of Pakistan.

Why is the IMF programme essential for Pakistan?

The coalition government and independent economists believe that amid the rapidly falling national foreign exchange reserves which dropped to \$8.2 billion by June 17, 2022, there is no other option but to seek IMF loan at whatever conditions they offer. Though the \$2.3 billion loan disbursed by the Chinese banks has raised the quantum of \$10.6 billion reserves with the State Bank of Pakistan, still these reserves were insufficient to meet requires in the financial year 2022-23. By considering \$6 billion reserves with the domestic commercial banks, total national reserves of the country amounted to \$16.60 billion, more or less equal to 10 weeks' imports. If the IMF further delays the resumption of loan, the existing reserves will again decline to the dangerous level, triggering further depreciation of rupee in the inter-bank and open market trading. Already the value of Pakistani rupee has increased to over and above Rs 200 (207 on June 26 in the inter-bank), after hitting Rs 212 before the disbursement of Chinese loan on June 24.

Important to note is that the value of Bangladeshi Taka is around 93 these days, Afghan rupee is around 91 while the value of Indian rupee is at 77. Except, Pakistani rupee, the currencies of these countries have demonstrated stability. Neither Bangladesh nor Afghanistan are nuclear powers unlike Pakistan, but the value of their currencies is much greater than Pakistani rupee. Today, like the past, we have no other choice but to run after the IMF and other donors to seek loans to meet our foreign exchange requirements in the financial year 2022-23, starting from July 1, 2022. Finance Minister Miftah Ismail had already stated that the government needs at least \$21 billion to repay foreign loans in FY23. In addition to this, the government requires \$16 billion more for the current account deficit and overall budget financing.

Point to note is that whenever we see a change of government, the first thing we hear is that the country is at the brink of default. And 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 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. The key focus of the governments (previous and incumbent) remained the completion of their tenure amid their leg-pulling and premature termination.

Super Tax

A few days ago, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif announced the imposition of a 10 percent super tax on mega companies operating in Pakistan. Banking sector, pharmaceutical, textile, cement, fertilizer, cement, telecom and all other leading companies will have to pay 10 percent super tax. When the PM announced this tax, the stock market crashed with more than 2000 points decline, but later on, the Pakistan Stock Exchange showed recovery, after realizing that the cost of the tax will be passed on to the consumers and clients, etc. Importantly, in 2021, the United States proposed at least 15 percent super tax on the profit of multinational companies and soon the G7 leaders and others endorsed it with the aim to use this tax to support the low-income groups and to alleviate poverty. Pakistan, however, has taken the lead by imposing 10 percent super tax with effect from 1st of July 2022. Hence, the super tax is an international initiative and it will be imposed in all the leading economies globally in coming weeks and months.

Way out of this crisis

Like the past, the coalition government has resorted to massive taxation in the new budget with the objective to obtain loans from the International Monetary Fund. Fulfilling the upfront requirements of the IMF will essentially prove a gateway to

receive more international loans and to mop up billions of dollars through sale of international banks and privatization of public entities and assets. Getting a loan from the IMF is an easy option for any government to complete its term, but it is a challenging task to adopt to the strategies which keep the country away from the IMF. Instead of relying on IMF and others for borrowings, the government should focus on increase in exports, inflows of remittances, minimize the current account and trade deficits. For example, in 11 months of the fiscal year 2021-22, Pakistan has sustained nearly \$40 billion trade deficit while the current account deficit has also been above \$13.7 billion during July 2021 to March 2022 period. Now it can be imagined how a country which has pledged its economy with the IMF drains a huge amount of foreign exchange every year in the absence of a long-term prudent economic plan. The coalition government, therefore, must make it sure that the current account of Pakistan remains surplus in the new financial year, 2022-23, otherwise, making the country financially sustainable would become a very difficult task and after the completion of this government's tenure, the next government will also be running towards the IMF with critical condition of reserves, value of rupee, and overall economy.

Another way of reducing unnecessary public expenditures is that the government should suspend hefty perks of all the government servants for at least one year. Merely reducing oil allowance of government officials and ministers wouldn't serve any purpose in reducing the fiscal imbalances and the government should also pass on some 'tough decision' to bureaucrats, judicial officers and all those who belong to the armed forces. If a common man with just 30,000 to 40,000 monthly salary can pay for all facilities, all the government officers, irrespective of their status and institution, should also learn to live with their salaries. In this way, all the government officers will be contributing their much-needed share towards the national economic stability. Merely shifting the burden of massive taxation and hikes in the cost of utilities on common people would not be much productive in achieving the desired goals.

Pakistan Economy: Trapped Between China and US

IMF, US, offer carrots to lure Islamabad in a new direction



By Salman Rafi Sheikh

On June 20, after multiple rounds of talks failed to produce a deal, crisis-hit Pakistan officially sought Washington's help to get favorable treatment from the International Monetary Fund for a bailout from the country's disastrous fiscal situation – at a potential price of tilting away from its relationship with China.

The request to the IMF came against the backdrop of rapidly falling foreign exchange reserves (less than US\$9 billion), a free-falling rupee (Rs215:US\$1) and China's refusal to provide any additional financial help to what had previously been described as its "all-weather" friend. On top of an economy teetering towards bankruptcy is the rapidly increasing cost of living due to constantly rising oil/diesel prices as well as an electricity crisis, which is in many ways tied to the Chinese Independent Power Plants (IPPs) working in Pakistan.

Earlier in June, the IPPs refused to supply electricity unless Pakistan paid Rs340 billion (US\$ 1.5 billion) up front. The

cash-strapped government's inability to pay more than Rs50 billion led the Chinese IPPs, which are a part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), to shut down their plants, causing massive electricity outages across Pakistan and putting the new government under enormous political pressure.

The shutdown happened despite major violations by – and even corruption of – Chinese companies involved in the electricity business. According to the 2021 report of the government-formed 'Mohammad Ali committee,' Chinese companies are openly defying the stipulated 15 percent maximum profit ratio and are making profit up to 50 to 60 percent, one key reason why electricity prices have been shooting up in Pakistan for the last few years.

This is yet another reason why the IMF has asked Pakistan to renegotiate the electricity rate with the Chinese IPPs to bring down the prices that consumers pay. The IMF has pushed Pakistan to renegotiate particularly because one of the fund's key demands for

releasing the agreed US\$8 billion bailout package is to increase electricity prices. Since the Pakistani authorities are reluctant to increase the prices too much, the IMF has asked Pakistan to renegotiate with the Chinese IPPs to bring the overall cost of electricity down and reduce the circular debt.

As various official sources have revealed, Pakistan has not been able to pay the Rs340 billion to the Chinese because of IMF pressure not to pay without renegotiating the prices as well as the illegal profiteering.

The complexity surrounding the role of the IPPs as well as Pakistan's negotiations with the IMF reflects the actual state of affairs between Pakistan and China on the one hand and Pakistan and the US on the other. Pakistan's growing tilt towards the US, a direct outcome of the failure of the CPEC to generate the expected "win-win" growth for Pakistan – has led China to redefine its ties with Pakistan; hence, Beijing's refusal to provide any additional loans.

The 'CPEC backlash' is not exclusive to

Pakistan. In Nepal, for instance, dozens of Chinese companies involved in infrastructure and energy were recently banned for negligence and various malpractices. The Chinese, as usual, have blamed the new Nepalese government for all the troubles. Across much of the world, the Covid-19 crisis has impoverished governments, with as many as 30 Chinese policy banks, commercial banks, and companies lending to African companies or governments seeking to work out debt relief, which typically involves extending repayment periods, cutting interest rates and seeking to drive up cash flows with varying rates of success according to international agencies.

In Sri Lanka – which owes about US\$7 billion to China – Chinese projects have completely failed to generate revenue, leading Colombo to hand over the Hambantota port to Chinese on lease for 99 years. Even though China has financial stakes in Sri Lanka, it has refused to offer any help to Colombo amid the ongoing economic crisis, as Beijing did not entertain the Rajapaksa government's request to restructure debt-servicing. In Pakistan too, expected revenue generation from Gwadar – which is already on lease to the Chinese for the next 40 years – is marginal at best. In fact, Beijing's exploitation of Gwadar's fisheries recently led the residents – mostly fishermen – of Gwadar to organize a mass movement against China.

That other CPEC projects, too, have failed to yield the expected level of growth, and

are in fact contributing to Pakistan's troubles by extracting revenue via illegal profit margins, is hardly a surprise.

For the IMF, which is closely aligned with US intentions despite its putative international role, however, this state of affairs is an opportunity to wean Pakistan away from China as much as possible to pave the way for Pakistan's meaningful participation in any future anti-China regional configuration that Washington is seeking to organize in the Indo-Pacific region.

The IMF has been successful insofar as Pakistan has allocated only 20 to 25 billion rupees for CPEC in the recent budget announced in the second week of June, a meager amount compared with hundreds of billions of rupees needed to revive and complete its many projects. Pakistan is thus changing the CPEC narrative from economic lifeline to marginal project.

But Washington's interests in Pakistan are not simply anti-China; they are also tied to Afghanistan in many ways. When the head of Pakistan's powerful Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) recently visited the US, the key focus of these talks was to enlist Pakistan's help in organizing an anti-Taliban resistance movement led by the National Resistance Front (NRF) of Ahmad Masood and Amrullah Saleh.

Key leaders of this movement are currently based in neighboring Tajikistan, a country itself opposed to the Taliban's violent – and exclusive – takeover of Afghanistan and the

Islamist threat it poses to the entire neighborhood.

As various Pakistani diplomatic sources confided, Washington indeed wants Pakistan to shift its policy vis-à-vis the Afghan Taliban at a time when India, Pakistan's arch-rival, is showing indications to develop ties with them.

A major regional reconfiguration may therefore be in the making. With Washington, which is the largest shareholder and exercises considerable influence on the fund, agreeing to intervene on behalf of Islamabad to help finalize an agreement, a long-term deal changing the erstwhile fault-lines of Pakistan-China ties seems well underway to the long-term and short-term advantage of Washington and Islamabad, respectively.

This will be critical for the development of Pak-US ties, as Islamabad has requested the IMF to not only resume disbursement but also expand and prolong the program. Analysts and politicians see in this deal a significant pro-West positioning of Pakistan's foreign policy orientation. There is, therefore, possible writing on the wall for a major (geopolitical and economic) restructuring away from Beijing and towards Washington.

This is also evident from Pakistan's efforts to effectively dial down – and even neutralize – former prime minister Imran Khan's supposedly 'pro-Russia' stance. Pakistan, as it stands, has lost its appetite for Moscow and/or buying 'cheap' Russian oil.



Inflationary Storm and Its Consequences for the world

The situation in the developing world is close to disaster

By Dr. Khalid Bajwa

Inflation has emerged as one of the biggest challenges the world is facing right now. It has been on the rise since the world economy was opened up with the decreasing severity of the COVID-19 pandemic. The economies were expanding and business activity was picking up, thus contributing to increased aggregate demand for inputs, goods, and services. With diminished economic activity during the pandemic, which put a complete halt to economic activity in many countries, the world was faced with shortages of all kinds of inputs and commodities due to decreased aggregate supply.

With the opening of economies, these shortages have become far more severe, putting downward pressure on prices. Food and fuel were hardest hit, as by their very nature they have inelastic demand. With high demand and disruptive and inadequate supply, there was pressure on the prices on both sides of demand and supply. Mutually enhancing demand-pull and cost-push inflationary pressures were present and were pulling the prices higher. Increased demand for fuel, metals, and other industrial inputs was feeding into the cost of production, making it dearer to produce, thus stroking pressure on the prices.

Transport and marketing costs were also on the rise, but the policy makers were sure that as things settled down, disruptions in the supply chain would be overcome, and with a few policy tweaks, things would be brought under control and normalcy in the markets would be restored. One factor that was not helping, though, was OPEC's refusal to increase the supply of oil, consequently putting lots of pressure on fuel prices in the face of increasing demand.

Then enters Putin's invasion of Ukraine on the world stage, and the world supply chains are catapulted upside down, unprecedentedly pressuring prices. The annual inflation rate in the United States, the United Kingdom, and the European Union has risen to 8.6, 9.1, and 8.1 percent, respectively, in May 2022, the highest in decades. Some of the European countries are seeing inflation in the high teens or even in the twenties. Fuel, food, and metals are leading the charge, making stock markets plummet around the world. The central banks are raising interest rates to arrest the price hike by dampening demand and slowing down the economies, which, in combination with high inflation, is likely to reduce economic growth significantly. Interestingly, in countries like the UK, where wage increases are pegged to the rate of inflation, the governments are dithering to increasing the wages in line with inflation because these increases will be unsustainable.

Persisting high inflationary conditions are resulting in decreased economic growth, loss of currency value, plunging real household incomes, waning business confidence, increased poverty, and plummeting stock exchanges. This makes for a grim reading of the world economy. The middle and poor classes are being hit hard and are facing a 'cost-of-living crisis.' Food banks are on the rise, and people are faced with the choice between 'eating or heating.'

Decreasing growth rates with increasing prices is a perfect recipe for stagflation. If stagflation sets in, it becomes difficult to break the



vicious cycle of decreasing growth rates and increasing prices. It decreases the efficiency of monetary tools to combat inflation and puts the economy back on the growth track. This situation can also result in 'built-in inflation,' which can continuously feed inflation in the long run. The present situation the world is facing is not defined by any one type of inflation, but rather a combination of various types of inflation. If the Ukraine issue is not solved soon by putting an end to death and destruction, and if sanctions and counter-sanctions continue, then the world is in for a turbulent storm for a long time.

Europe is heavily reliant on Russian energy supplies; Russia and Ukraine account for 29% of global wheat exports, 19% of global corn exports, and 78% of global sunflower oil exports. Russia is also the largest exporter of nitrogen fertilizer, the second largest exporter of potassium fertilizer, and the third-largest exporter of phosphorus fertilizer. Disruption in the supply of these commodities and inputs is playing havoc with the world, especially in terms of food shortages. Russia is also a big exporter of palladium and gold, which has an effect on the industries that use these goods.

The situation in the developing world is close to disaster. For instance, 85 percent of Africa's food is imported, with the major suppliers of the food being Russia and Ukraine. Some estimates place Russia and Ukraine as supplying 90 percent of the wheat consumed in East Africa. Interestingly, almost all countries that depend on food imports are less developed countries, with a major chunk of household income, on average 40 percent or more, compared to 17 percent in the developed world, going to buy food. With disrupted supplies and increasing food prices, millions of people could die from hunger and starvation in the developing world. Also, even if they survive the disaster that is coming, the stunted growth of their children will be a problem for many years to come.

The question is, will this scale of death and destruction haunt the world leaders whose actions have precipitated such a scenario? The answer is probably not, as human life in distant, destitute lands does not matter and is inconsequential to them, it seems.

MSc (QAU), PhD (UK) Economist, Social & Political Scientist, and Analyst with wide range of interests.

What did we learn from the 3rd Major Economies Forum?

Expecting less developed economies to follow suit is a recipe for a mixed reception



By **Hannan R. Hussain**

On June 17, 2022, US President Joe Biden convened leaders of major economies virtually for the Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate (MEF). Biden's push to "strengthen energy security, enhance the resilience of global food security, and tackle the climate crisis" carried familiar do-good echoes of the past. Biden called on the world to step up climate action, and follow US leadership on energy, which demands greater alignment between Washington's own climate progress and the needs of the developing world.

First, Biden's decision to formally partner with Egypt on the "Adaptation in Africa" climate initiative puts a premium on enhancing the livelihoods and resilience of countries in the face of a changing climate.

However, to render US interventions on emission reduction concrete, Biden must join several other developed economies in addressing some upticks in greenhouse gas emissions of their own accord. The United States – as the leader of the summit – is yet to dial back a reported increase in green-

house gases within its own borders, despite pledges for multibillion-dollar clean energy projects and public investment calls on the world stage.

To be sure, it is a welcome step from Canada, the European Commission, France, Germany, Indonesia, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United Arab Emirates to support a \$90 billion-strong climate financing target under the "Clean Energy Technologies Demonstration Challenge." The target deserves attention because it is in line with the large-scale demonstration projects that the International Energy Agency (IEA) suggests are required within the decade.

The MEF, despite the target, offered limited incentives to several climate-vulnerable economies absent at the forum to deepen their stakes in increased public funding.

Consider how some of these economies have been disappointed that their calls for acquiring compensation funding for climate

damages and losses have gone unanswered. MEF didn't really open the gates to a discussion that helped these nations secure funding for damages. That is an odd look for leading emitters that appear to influence the climate agenda within this decade.

Therefore, the \$90-billion public financing target is prudent on the grounds that it challenges nations to overcome complacency and contribute additional headway in support of the net-zero emissions target by 2050. But it falls short in securing widespread buy-in from climate-vulnerable nations, particularly when the same economies may be required to contribute to some of the highest cuts in methane emissions ever.

Interestingly, U.S. advocacy at the forum to "improve the affordability and reliability of energy" and reduce greenhouse gas emissions risks being undermined by several factors on the world stage.

Consider the lax pace of the country's own transition to cleaner energy. It is true, that

Biden wants top economies to step up climate change efforts. But unresolved issues in reforming US federal oil, gas, and coal leasing casts some doubt over the country's own 2030 goal attainment.

Understand that the majority of the world – which includes scores of developing nations – deserve more than just pledges when it comes to tightening their grip on oil and gas sectors. After all, the MEF represents the largest leader-level climate gathering ahead of the United Nation's flagship climate conference in November, and thus, it ought to reflect a build-up where climate progress expectations are uniform for all nations, without exception.

It is unclear if redoubled aid from the US to vulnerable economies in the past has helped improve climate financing and plug capacity gaps on technologies, casting some doubt over the latest commitments on the same fronts. The absence of key emitters from the official list of attendees, including those with documented climate vulnerabilities, raises further doubts about collective thinking among US and major economies in formulating a credible, truly united front on climate.

Further, in the developing world, their food and energy supply exigencies have intensified in the wake of limited international initiatives to cool Russia-Ukraine tensions.

Beijing was quick to remind world powers about the risks of putting confrontation above diplomacy in the Ukraine-Russia war, though the West's sustained resistance to Russian security demands has given strength to many adverse impacts; dwindling food and energy supplies are among them.

Now as Biden puts significant emphasis on Russia's war, and its contributions to intensifying global energy woes, there is no mention of US-led sanctions that have wreaked havoc on the global energy market and made supply procurement a mounting challenge for developing economies. "So, let's make sure the war in Ukraine is not used to increase that [unstable fossil fuel] dependency," urged UN Secretary-General António Guterres in his remarks. The risk presented by US federal fossil fuel production to America's 2050 net-zero emission target is enough to underline the split between prescription and practice. Plugging that gap is in the interests of the Biden administration, his climate partners, and the energy economy he aims to support in the long term.

Finally, from a participation viewpoint, this forum assumed some willingness on Washington's part to connect with world leaders it saw as "critical to the global effort to tackle the climate crisis."

However, the virtual event saw little beyond rhetoric to address the root causes of high gasoline prices, and extend scrutiny to oil and gas production that the US is pushing to record highs.

Hence, urging nations to stay sharply focused on climate commitments is a tough sell for the US and fellow participants when some of the domestic legwork needed to support global climate impact is facing challenges. For the US alone, major elements of Biden's green climate agenda are still stalled in Congress, and some Western oil companies struggle to align with climate leadership demonstrated at major fora. As a result, major economies risk overstating their case for forging an international emission-reduction consensus ahead of the UN climate conference, when these divisions persist.

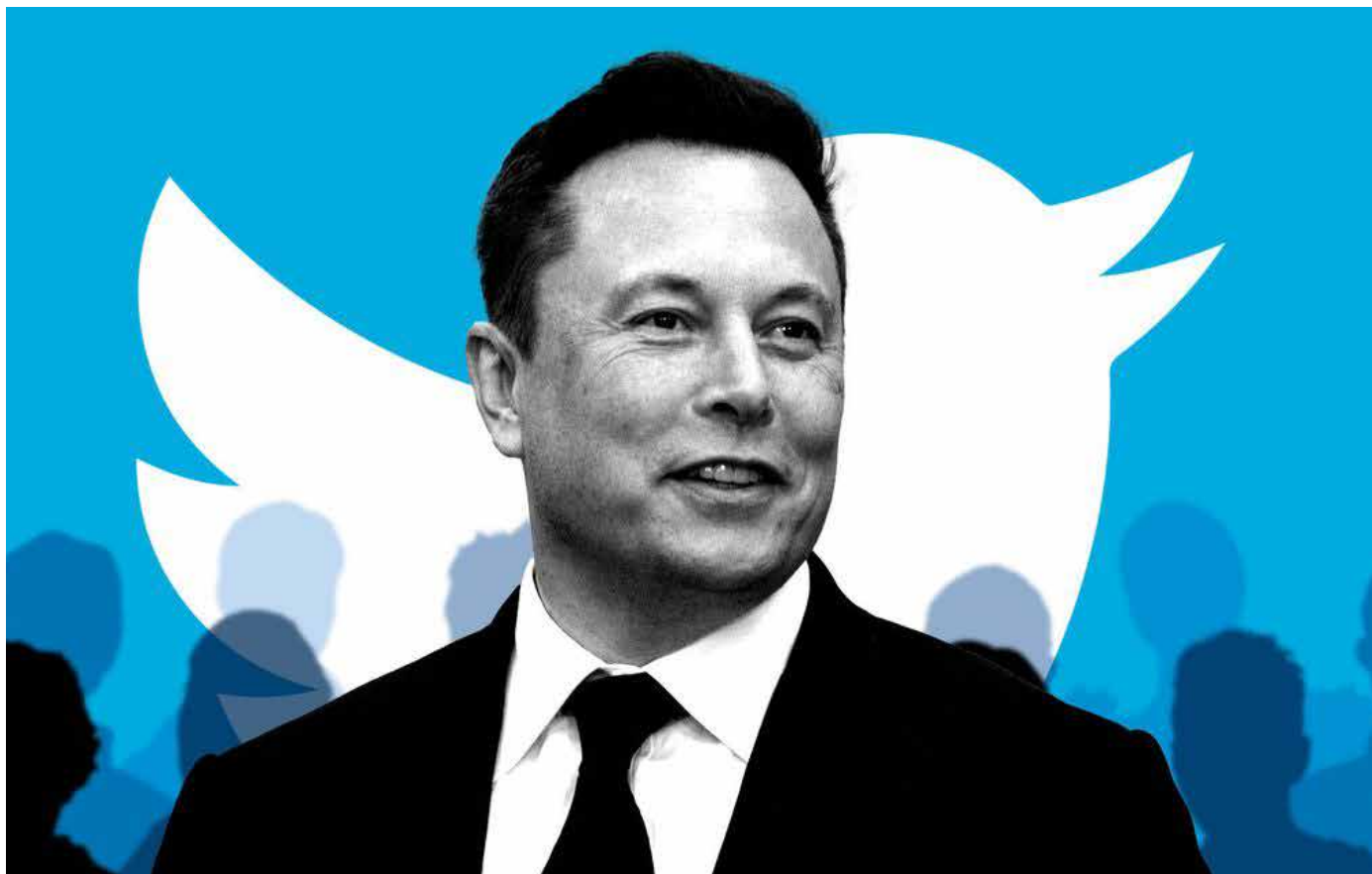
Thus, it promotes the interests of major economies if their domestic commitments to the global climate agenda are tall on progress and short on domestic opposition. Doing so could prove valuable in securing future buy-in for the public spending targets, technology adoption, and emission reduction interventions announced at the forum.

Simply expecting less developed economies to follow suit is a recipe for a mixed reception.



Twitter seals the Deal with Elon Musk

By Amna Shoaib



Twitter's deal is sealed as it finally comes to a mutual consensus to sell itself to Elon Musk for \$54.20 a share, a 38% over the company's share price this month. It will be the largest deal to take a company private which, according to Dealogic, is something Musk says he intended to do with Twitter in the past two decades.

"Free speech is the bedrock of a functioning democracy, and Twitter is the digital town square where matters vital to the future of humanity are debated," Mr. Musk said in a statement announcing the deal. "Twitter has tremendous potential — I look forward to working with the company and the community of users to unlock it." While Musk is an apparent advocate for free speech, he has been having a rocky relationship with the online speech which, this year, went as far as his attempt to quash a Twitter account that tracked the movements of his private jet, citing personal and safety reasons. On Monday, he tweeted that he hoped his worst critics would

remain on Twitter because "that is what free speech means."

The billionaire, who has more than 83 million followers on Twitter and has romped across the service hurling gibes and memes, has repeatedly said he wants to "transform" the platform by promoting more free speech and giving users more control over what they see on it. By taking the company private, Mr. Musk could work on the service out of sight of the prying eyes of investors, regulators, and others.

In a statement, Bret Taylor, Twitter's chairman, said the board had "conducted a thoughtful and comprehensive process to assess Elon's proposal with a deliberate focus on value, certainty, and financing. The proposed transaction will deliver a substantial cash premium, and we believe it is the best path forward for Twitter's stockholders."

Twitter is not the biggest social platform; it has more than 217 million daily users, compared with billions for Facebook and

Instagram. However, it has had an outsized role in shaping narratives around the world. Political leaders have used it as a megaphone, while companies, celebrities, and others have employed it for image-making and brand building.

"Without any conditions for Musk to purchase Twitter, the platform's community standards and recourse to ban users who violate those standards, Twitter could set a dangerous precedent for other social media companies to follow," said Bridget Todd, director at UltraViolet, a women's rights organization. "This is a massively slippery slope."

Besides being debatable about freedom of speech, Twitter has been questionable about its agenda, and its business whether it is only a platform for free speech or part of a bigger conspiracy. The company has been struggling with its user growth for years until the 'meme' culture evolved. Twitter revenue however is generated only with advertising which has been inconsistent since the last decade.

Water or Weapon of War

The future of conflict in South Asia is centered around the availability of water and we must act immediately to address this rising threat of war

By S. Zeeshan A Shah

In the years after the partition in 1947, Pakistan witnessed a significant battle with India over Kashmir. The founder of the nation, Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah was a visionary leader having predicted the two-nation theory successfully. Unfortunately, he succumbed to an illness right after the partition in 1948. Before his passing, he made one thing clear to the people of the new Muslim Nation: the strategic importance of Kashmir to Pakistan. He called it 'the jugular vein,' and for a good reason.

We all know today that the water supply that reaches Pakistan comes from the five precious rivers that flow from Kashmir. India controls the majority share of water but Pakistan is currently going through a 'water crisis'. Escalation in Kashmir and the failure of the Indus Water Treaty between India and Pakistan could create a big problem for the country in the shape of a water war.

Beyond South Asia, the Middle East is going through its rage for order. Many countries in the Middle East have been fighting for resources for decades but some of them are at war. From the Middle East to Far East Asia, water wars are imminent. The battle lines have been drawn clearly as the world enters a more deadly and decisive phase of the war. Water is the new weapon of war.

Going backward in history, we see the dark underbelly of wars in the making. At the heart of the Gaza strip lies the river Jordan, where Syria, Iraq, and Turkey remain in constant conflict over the shared rivers – the Tigris and Euphrates. Elsewhere, in Africa, the construction of the Great Ethiopian Renaissance Dam in the Blue Nile triggered a red alert between Egypt and Ethiopia. A full-blown water war would be catastrophic to the hundreds of millions of people in India and Pakistan if the Kashmir dispute is not resolved between the two nuclear-armed nations.

In Yemen, over 3.6 million residents of Sana'a have been forced to leave the city due to water scarcity as war rages across the



border. The Yemeni government estimates that over 4,000 deaths take place every year over local disputes over land and water, despite the recent mediation to end the conflict. There is civil war elsewhere as Israel strips Palestinians of all legal rights of ownership over water.

However, the Indus Water Treaty between India and Pakistan sustains itself, despite two great wars but occasionally tensions mount over the construction of dams on the Indian side of the border that could deprive Pakistan of fresh drinking water in future years and dry out fresh water banks. India has threatened to cut back on water flowing through its rivers to arid Pakistan, even more so now due to election season.

Diversion or rhetoric, a full-blown water war could be catastrophic for the hundreds of millions of people in India and Pakistan who depend on river water. Sometimes, the offense is the best defense when one does not have actual evidence, as it seems in the case of India. Quick to accuse Pakistan, India must be kept on the back foot, especially with its clout with both Russia and USA as trading partners. Pakistan must break forward and fix its relationship with Arab Nations and its South Asian neighbors including Iran, Bangladesh, Turkey, and China, to stop the proxy war in Afghanistan.

Under a longstanding treaty governing the use of the Indus River and its tributaries,

Pakistan still controls most of the water and India may or may not be able to win the legal battle in the International Court of Justice, as it is a violation of the International Charter of Human Rights, anywhere in the court of law. Under the Indus Water Treaty, a World Bank-brokered agreement that goes back decades, India and Pakistan divided the rights to the enormous Indus River and its tributaries that wind across the subcontinent. Both sides have grumbled over certain provisions and rely heavily on the water flows for hydropower and agriculture.

In the book 'The price of thirst – water scarcity and the coming chaos', the writer cites three big issues: the rise of extremism, privatization of water resources, and water scarcity as the biggest causes of potential and current wars between nations today. Pakistan faces all three factors today and a growing pressure to create water resources for the rising population.

A recent UN report states that in 15 years, the world could face over 40% of water shortfall. The book also further sketches a horrifying outlook on the water as the cause of previous deadly wars and their impact on human populations, breakdown of eco-systems, crop failures, the collapse of industries, disease, and poverty.

Potentially, we are witnessing the initial flashes of water wars. In Iraq and Syria, behind the deadly slaughter lies the rise of the Daesh (the self-nominated Islamic State

of Iraq) who now mark control over many dams, namely the Mosul Dam – the largest dam in Iraq that controls the majority of water resources. This has become the strategic battleground between Daesh and Kurdish Iraqi forces, leading many people to die of thirst in this war.

Water shortages have contributed to the emergence of extremist groups like ISIS (Daesh) as a whiplash effect of the Gulf War since 1991. In the Middle East, water shortage, cut-offs, and dam takeovers are being used as tools to manipulate and politically control governments and societies, using pressure tactics. In the case of the Mosul Dam, whoever eventually controls the dam will control the downstream flow of water and could threaten user-dependency on the water for survival – by floods or drought. Events leading up to the Daesh invasion of Iraq further showed us a deeper pattern of war. Water was made a man-made emergency.

During the American coalition-led Gulf War, water facilities were attacked by ground forces destroying infrastructure that fractured and was never repaired after that, leading to an early undetected water crisis and the rise of Daesh, a natural by-product of the American occupation of Iraq. It also exposes the long history of corruption under the US reconstruction drive that was primarily driven to acquire oil resources and deplete water reservoirs leading to the arms race in Iraq and perpetual civil war.

Analysts have predicted that the Syrian civil war was a direct result of the intense drought of 2007 as a hidden water war continues in that region. Over 500,000 people were massacred and 15 million displaced, the past is a horrible reminder of the water war that was deliberately triggered.

At the time, Turkey was promoting agricultural development near the Syrian and Kurdish borders, bringing in Turkish farmers to replace the Kurds. And Turkey's position over the GAM dams at the time further worsened the situation as irrigation on Turk borders was being ramped up while the Syrian side was shut down. Daesh exploited this eventually leading to its emergence as the new player in the war. Ruthless dam-building across the Middle East and Asia is also leading to enormous water losses due to evaporation.

The UN has reported that by 2050, Global Water demand will increase by 55%. Rich countries may apply for desalination plants – expensive and oil-intensive processes. Others will suffer the consequences of war. Saudi Arabia for example risks its existence over the distribution of wealth, be it oil or water.

Desalination is a short-term strategy for survival, not an eventual solution. Saudi Arabia needs Pakistan, which in turn needs Turkey for support on the river-water crisis to broker support to avert an International War on Water. For CPEC, Pakistan needs water resources to support the immense infrastructure being built in Baluchistan and any backlash with Iran could be counter-productive. Water wars and their escalation would determine the peace process in the future for Asia and the Middle East.

Safe drinking water is shrinking globally. With a lack of an integrated approach to water resource management, more ways need to be found before there are more climate change impacts and more wars. Water conservation should be looked at from a macro perspective – not just the per capita consumption. Wasteful industrial and agricultural water usage must also be accounted for. Gender equality, low poverty rates, and a cleaner greener environment is the only possible solution. Costa Rica for example become the first carbon-neutral country in the world by 2021. Pakistan needs to go green and conserve water resources instead of investing in expensive coal mining.

Water must be seen as a source of cooperation and not as a prelude to war. In South Asia, China, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and other such countries are at high risk – fearing loss of freshwater banks and future water insecurity. An increase in flood-drought cycles may lead to further water crises within the region.

Today, 100 liters of water per person per day is not enough. Are banks financing water projects for public utilities or private profiteering? Are governments adopting water policies that conserve water? Is the water industry getting rich from the poor water without supplying them with clean water? Has any current or past government in Pakistan unveiled a comprehensive 'water policy for the nation'? The answer is NO.

In 1950, there were approximately 2.5 billion people; today we are over 8 billion

people. By 2050, the population is projected to top 9 billion. By 2050, nearly 40% of global youth will live in Asia, another 50% will live in Africa.

How much water is required in the future for our children? People will probably live better and longer lives. Global GDP will likely triple; natural resource consumption will double. And the effects of climate change—somehow inevitable—will be felt more strongly than they are today. Without water, however, no country can ensure future growth.

In 2016, after militants attacked an Indian Army base near the town of Uri, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said “blood and water can't flow together” and his government threatened to do the same thing. Instead, the Indian military staged what it called surgical strikes against targets just across the border in Pakistan. The new and more aggressive threat of a water war between India and Pakistan is on the radar.

According to a political analyst at the Middle East Institute in Washington, India's threats were driven by national elections expected in the coming months. Yet another view from Brahma Chellaney, a professor at the Center for Policy Research in New Delhi and an expert on the India-Pakistan water treaty, who said that for years India has struggled to harness waters from the rivers it controls.

The region is water-stressed. Today, there are roughly 700 million people across 43 countries living in regions with severe water scarcity.

This might be the beginning of a Global Crisis that would change the fate of nations around the world. There will be water shortages wherever there is war and in places where there is severe climate change. No one knows what changes will emerge but what we do know today is that changes have already started to happen. Water wars will kill a lot more humans. We may be getting a glimpse of the future of conflict in South Asia and we must act immediately to address this rising threat of war.

The writer works with the health sector and is an expert on International Relations, public policy, governance, and social justice. He is a distinguished broadcaster and writer. He tweets on @zeeshan82445998.

Edible Oil Import Bill

Palm oil imports are inevitable for Pakistan given the demand-supply gap of edible oil, but growing prices of refined palm oil matched with a dependence on finished products can lead to a drastic spur in the agro import bill



By Azeem Waqas

With dwindling foreign reserves and an increasing trade deficit, Pakistan is struggling to allocate resources for the import bill of edible oil, which is expected to cross \$6 billion next year.

Finance Minister Miftah Ismail while terming this unsustainable for Pakistan, said that country's palm and soybean-related imports reached \$4 billion in fiscal 2021, up 47% annually, and is expected to rise to \$6.5 billion in the next few years.

An official of the Ministry of Industry and production has said that the import bill for these products has reached over \$4 billion in FY 2021 which is straining the balance of trade and the balance of payment. With global uncertainties and challenges facing the oilseeds sector, including the sharp price fluctuations, market instability, and favorable tariffs for imports, the import bill is likely to move upward. According to estimates by Pakistan Oilseed Department, total demand for edible oil is expected to

grow to 5.9 million tonnes in 2025-26, from 4.7 million tons in fiscal 2021.

Palm oil prices ranged between \$450-600 pre-Covid. In 2020, Pakistan consumed 3.5mn tons of palm oil out of total 4.7mn tons of edible oil. A major portion of this supply comes from Indonesia. Locally 95% of palm oil is used in food preparation while soap manufacturing, cosmetics, candles, and pharma are some other industries that use palm oil.

Karachi-based analyst of international commodity trade, Abdul Rehman said that labor shortages in Malaysia along with a rise in fertilizer prices and strong demand from India and China led to prices peaking at \$1800/ton in early 2022. Similarly, it was aggravated by Indonesia imposing a ban on palm oil exports to control local prices. The expected shortage of rapeseed and sunflower oil from Russia and Ukraine also contributed to this exponential rise in prices.

Pakistan's local consumption of edible oil is 5 MMT, out of which 1.5 MMT (30 percent of edible oil) is domestically produced, and the remaining 3.5 MMT (70 percent of edible oil) needs are met through the import of refined palm oil.

The crushing industry consumes 42 percent of locally produced oilseeds and 58 percent of imported oilseeds, indicating Pakistan's high dependence on imports of palm oil and oilseeds to meet the increasing demands of the growing population.

The Ministry of Industry and Production says that India, China, and Pakistan are the top 3 importers of palm oil in the world. All three importing countries import palm oil from Indonesia and Malaysia, and each destination has individually given similar tariff concessions to both exporting countries for RBD palm oil as well as for CPO. Pakistan has the lowest tariff among the three, having effectively applied a tariff of 6 percent on both RBDO and CPO.

Among the major edible oil-consuming countries including India and China, Pakistan has the highest per capita consumption of edible oil. Pakistan consumes 24 kg per capita whereas India and China consume 19.5kg and 9.8kg, respectively. The overwhelming local demand for edible oil reflects the upward trend of import bills since the growth in domestic production is comparatively slower.

The domestic production of edible oil is growing at the rate of 1.3 percent annually whereas the imports of refined oil is exceeding by 3 percent yearly.

Pakistan imports palm oil from Malaysia and Indonesia through FTA and PTA respectively, granting it ease of access to palm oil. In terms of price, palm oil is the cheapest edible oil than other soft oils.

Pakistan, in collaboration with Malaysia, had established palm oil refinery units in the country to boost crude palm oil imports due to which Pakistan imported the highest quantities of crude palm oil in 2011. However, the later years witnessed a sharp decline in crude palm oil import resulting in the shutting down of refineries. It came as a repercussion after Indonesia's act of slashing the highest tariffs on crude palm oil and lowering prices of refined palm oil as much so the locally produced palm oil became comparatively expensive for edible

oil manufacturers of Pakistan.

Pakistan has approximately 18 palm oil refineries with the capacity to consume about 1.5 million tons of CPO annually according to the Pakistan Edible Oil Refiners Association (PEORA). Despite the capacity, Pakistan only imported 190 thousand tons of CPO and imported 3.3 million tons of RBD palm oil in FY 2020-2021

According to Trade Development Authority (TDAP), Pakistan can save a tremendous amount of import bills if it replaces refined palm oil with crude oil. Pakistan is currently capable of refining 1.5 million tons of crude oil annually. Malaysia has an 8 percent export duty while Indonesia has a 14 percent export duty on crude oil. Thus, Malaysia can be a potential exporting market for the import of crude oil.

TDAP recommended that Pakistan must negotiate a fixed import quota of crude oil from Malaysia and using FTA it should negotiate to waive export duties and reduced transfer pricing. The tariff structure of palm oil products should be revised and to facilitate the crude oil refiners, tariff on crude oil should be lowered than the refined oil which at this time is the same. When import tariffs are the same, increased export duties on crude oil make it hard for importers to buy crude oil making the locally produced refined oil more expensive than

the imported one.

Pakistan should fully optimize its FTA and PTA with Malaysia and Indonesia simultaneously and should negotiate price or quota in form of forward contracting to give security to the crude oil importers, TDAP proposed.

TDAP said that with a growing population and financial capacity, imports of palm oil are likely to increase at a much faster rate than domestic production.

Abdul Rehman said that prices of palm oil have eased off considerably in the last 2-3 weeks after the scare of export ban from Indonesia died down and a global reversal in Commodity Super Cycle. The latest prices are around \$1000-1100/ton.

Pakistan is likely to remain a big importer of palm oil and with dwindling FX reserves, a price drop brings welcome respite which can reduce our import bill by \$1-2Bn for FY23, easing our external financing requirements.

Palm oil imports are inevitable for Pakistan at least for the next 10 to 15 years given the demand-supply gap of edible oil, but increasing prices of refined palm oil and Pakistan's dependence on palm oil finished products can lead to a drastic spur in the agro import bill.



Can NAB law pass Judicial Test?

Even though the government seems confident over amendments in NAB law and claims that they were derived from ordinances and judgments of the courts, PTI vows to challenge what it calls a second NRO before the Supreme Court

By Asadullah

Despite the dissent of President Dr. Arif Alvi, the crucial amendments to National Accountability Ordinance (NAO) – which govern the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) – have become the law. However, the former Prime Minister Imran Khan termed these amendments a second National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) and vowed to challenge it before the Supreme Court which also seems ready to examine the law, hence generating the debate on the existence of the law.

days, failing which such assent shall be deemed to have been given.”

The law has introduced 27 amendments in the NAO and virtually clipped the wings of the anti-corruption watchdog, but empowered the other regulators.

The definition of ‘asset’ has been changed ‘drastically’. Previously, it meant any property held by the suspects, directly or indirectly, in his/her name or the name of a spouse or relative. “Now, a property only in

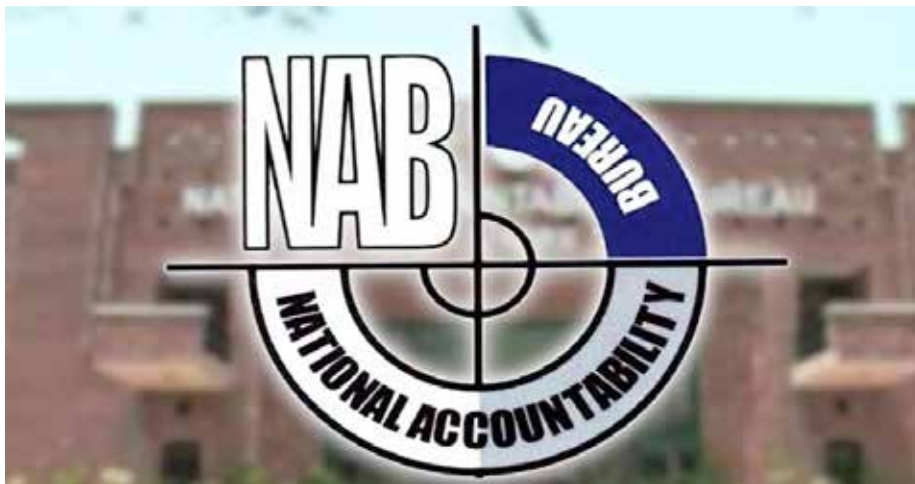
Likewise, Section 23 of the NAO 1999, which says a suspect cannot dispose of his property during inquiry and investigation without permission of a court, has been deleted. “Inquiry or investigation time is restricted to six months by law, which is not practical in white-collar crime cases. Similarly, the remand time in NAB custody is reduced to 14 days. Keeping in view the complexity of white-collar crimes, in some cases, even 90-day remand seems insufficient. Restricting it to 14 days will greatly affect the investigation.”

The most sweeping changes have been made in Section 24 of NAO 1999 which regulates the NAB chairman’s power of arrest. The power of arrest was widely misused in the past. It is mentioned that the chairman may issue an arrest warrant during an investigation if the accused is intentionally or willfully not joining the investigation after repeated notice, the accused attempted to abscond, if there are sufficient grounds that the accused may tamper with the prosecution evidence and if there is sufficient information regarding repetition of continuation of an offense under this ordinance. Likewise, NAB could detain the accused for 14 days during the investigation. Earlier, NAB could detain the accused person for 90 days.

Through an amendment to Section 26 of the NAO, an accused person becoming an approver in a case shall be disqualified from holding any public office for five years.

A change has also been made in Section 36 of the 1999 law. This provision provides indemnity to the state functionaries and NAB officers for actions done in good faith in pursuance of the provisions of the NAO.

With an amendment to the application clause (Section 4), the decisions of federal, provincial cabinets, ECNEC, or any regulatory body have been excluded from the domain of the NAB. In the appointment of a NAB chairman, the role of the president has been eliminated. Now, the federal



The bill to amend the NAO had sailed through both Houses of Parliament in May and was sent to the president to sign into law, but Dr. Arif Alvi refused and returned the NAB bill as well as the one pertaining to electoral reforms, saying they had violated Article 46 of the Constitution.

Subsequently, the bill was tabled in the joint sitting of both the houses of the Parliament. Article 75 (2) reads: “When the president has returned a bill to the Majlis-e-Shoora (Parliament), it shall be reconsidered by the Majlis-e-Shoora (Parliament) in joint sitting and, if it is again passed, with or without amendment, by the Majlis-e-Shoora (Parliament), by the votes of the majority of the members of both Houses present and voting, it shall be deemed for the Constitution to have been passed by both Houses and shall be presented to the president, and the president shall give his assent within 10

the name of the accused or his/her benamidar will be included in the definition of an asset. This will benefit several high-profile suspects like incumbent Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, former principal secretary to the premier Fawad Hassan Fawad, etc who have been accused of accumulating assets in the names of their spouses and relatives.”

Through the amendment, Section 14 has been omitted from the NAO. This section “Presumption against accused accepting illegal gratification” empowered conviction based on the presumption of the judge and under a proviso of the section the burden of proof was also on the accused person.

In Section 21, clause (g) has been omitted. It made every evidence received from a foreign state admissible in court proceedings notwithstanding with provisions of Qanun-e-Shahadat Order 1984.

government will appoint a chairman whose tenure has been reduced from four to three years.

Ex-PM and chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) Imran Khan criticized these amendments and termed them as "mockery and a joke with the country". NAB's autonomy had been reduced drastically, as it would not be able to investigate money-laundering cases under the new law, he said.

Hoping that the courts would take notice of the development, he said such moves would be detrimental to the country if not prevented, while adding that laws formulated in the country should not be specific to any person but instead apply to the collective whole.

Tackling the major amendments one by one, the PTI chief explained how they would be used to allegedly eliminate several cases against leaders of the coalition government.

Mr. Khan claimed that he was pressured throughout his tenure as prime minister and blackmailed to provide an NRO to major political figures of the present coalition government, but he did not give in. The NRO is the abbreviation of the National

Reconciliation Ordinance introduced by former military ruler retired General Pervez Musharraf, who granted amnesty to politicians, bureaucrats, and others in corruption cases. The Supreme Court, however, in 2009 declared the NRO unconstitutional.

While there are over 100 would-be beneficiaries of these amendments, the PTI believes that the major beneficiaries are PML-N's supreme leader Nawaz Sharif, incumbent Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, and Maryam Nawaz, and PPP co-chairman Asif Zardari.

During the hearing of a Suo moto case, Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial observed that the apex court would examine the new amendments in the NAB law. He said that they could not ignore any move to minimize the role of NAB.

Following these observations, it is reflected that the apex court would examine the amendments. Once again, the composition of the bench will be significant to decide the fate of these 27 amendments brought by the coalition government led by the PML-N.

However, a serving judge of the superior courts said that some amendments including one related to reducing 90 days remand,

rationalizing powers of arrest of chairman NAB, shifting the burden of proof from accused to the prosecution, definition of assets have been derived from the various judgments of the Supreme Court and High Courts.

The government seems confident over amendments in NAB law and claimed that about 80pc amendments in the NAO were carried forward from these ordinances in the recent legislation and the rest of the 20pc amendments were derived from the judgments of the Supreme Court and High Courts. The onus of proof from accused to prosecution was shifted in the line of recommendation of the Council of Islamic Ideology.

Federal Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar defended the law and tried to justify the logic behind each amendment. He pointed out that the Supreme Court in the case of Salman Rafique had observed that NAB has been used for political engineering. He said that NAB had unfettered powers for arrest and the 90 days of remand was against the dignity of the citizen, therefore, certain conditions have been introduced for arresting a suspect. According to him, the legislation has set a timeframe to conclude the inquiry and investigation.



The governance system of Caliph Umar al Khattab (Part II)

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 Azmat Mumtaz Saqib

After the death of Caliph Abu Bakr Razi Allho Anho (RAA) in 13 A.H (634 AD), as per his nomination, Umar al Khattab (RAA) succeeded him as the second caliph. He inherited a stable Hijaz region with Muslim armies on the march in Iraq and Syria. Outstanding impression of Muslim armies, their character, and superior form of governance was spreading in bordering regions.

Nature of governance of Caliph Umar (RAA)

No doubt foundations of the caliphate were laid down by Caliph Abu Bakr (RAA) and he governed well as per the need of the hour, but a system of governance started developing during Umar's (RAA) caliphate. Caliph Umar's (RAA) era saw the expansion of conquests initiated by Abu Bakr (RAA) alongside the establishment of proper organs of government. It may be noted that the Caliphate system was ideological. The question is whether his nature of governance was democratic or autocratic? Zenith of democracy is achieved when the personal status of the head of government is minimized to such an extent that he becomes like any other member of the party. On the other hand in an autocratic form of government, complete authority concentrates on one person.

Caliphate was autocratic in authority but democratic in fruits of governance. The main principles of democratic forms are that an individual's rights are protected. He has the freedom to achieve his objectives within the permissible framework. Under Umar's (RAA) caliphate, an individual was completely free to demand his rights publicly. Every year delegates from districts would visit him and get their grievances redressed without any hurdle. In comparison, contemporary neighboring empires were ruled by autocratic kings.

Consultative forums

Ensuring public participation was viewed as a necessity for the success of the caliphate and not just as a handout to the public. Ratifications of nominations for important posts were done in consultation with Shura. In the words of caliph Umar (RAA); "There is no Caliphate without consultation".

Two forums existed during Umar's caliphate. Majlis e Shura comprised of notables of Muhajirin (immigrants) and Ansar (helpers from Medina). Day-to-day affairs were dealt with in this group. For the consultation of very important matters, all the Muhajirin and Ansar (in Medina) were invited. These sessions were open to all members of the two groups. Lands of conquests whether to be distributed as war booty or not, and whether the Caliph should go to the war front in-person are two out of the many issues resolved by this forum.

Meetings were called when needed but the frequency was low. Masjid e Nabawi was the venue of these meetings.

Another consultative body comprised only of Muhajirin. News on daily basis came from provinces and districts, and if needed consultation was presented to them.



Public participation in matters of state

Besides members of Shura, public participation in state matters was common. Even selection and replacement of administrators and revenue collectors were left to the public of the respective areas, as long as the nominees fulfilled the requirements of competence and honesty.

Every individual was given the liberty to exercise their rights. Delegations from different parts of the caliphate were invited to give feedback about the state of affairs in their areas. Sometimes the caliph would summon in public (Hajj time) all the revenue collectors, and grievance settlements were made on the spot. Special instructions for public awareness were announced at Hajj gatherings.

Rights of the ruler and ruled

The zenith of democracy is that both ruler and ruled are equally accountable to the law of the land. The authority and personal privileges of rulers should be as minimal as possible and every citizen should feel free to criticize issues. Caliph Umar's governance was an excellent embodiment of the above-mentioned characteristics. He expressed publicly his status of equality.

While the Caliph was nearing Shahadat(death), he reminded his followers to beware of the rights of five groups of people: Muhajirin, Ansar, Arabs (of Hijaz), Arabs settled in different cities, and Ahle Zimma (Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians). Regarding Zimmis, he warned Muslims to safeguard their contractual obligations, protect them, and not burden them beyond capacity.

System of government

The maturity of any governance system demands organs of state to be distinct and autonomous from each other. The achievement of Caliph Umar (RAA) was to introduce these features in a society that was tribal; where all activities were concentrated on one person, the chieftain. This aspect of Caliph Umar's governance will be elaborated on in the next article (Part III).

Qualities of Umar (RAA) as a Caliph

In Umar's era, ruler and ruled, elite and commoner (both in a religious and worldly sense), Muslims and Zimmis were provided with speedy justice without discrimination. Incidents like unjust slapping or lashing by administrators were immediately redressed, and assets wrongly taken by revenue collectors were returned. As mentioned earlier, Hajj gatherings were utilized for redressing the injustices of government servants.

In courts, Caliph and a commoner were treated equally. Umar (RAA) would reprimand a judge if he would give decorum to the Caliph instead of the complainant.

Across the board implementation of justice was ensured. When the Caliph's son was being lashed for drinking (80 lashes), noticing leniency in the executioner, he started lashing himself. Unfortunately, due to the shock of punishment the son died later on. But this sent a clear message to all, rich and poor.

Khalid Bin Walid (RAA), Commander in Chief was removed from command during the war due to ignoring the orders of the Caliph. The offense was that he was not sending documented accounts of expenditures and booties of war periodically.

Hero of war with Persia, Saad Bin Abi Waqas (RAA) was removed from the governorship of Kufa due to public complaints.

Umar was a true custodian of the public treasury (Bait ul Maal). After becoming Caliph he curtailed his profession of trade. Sought advice for fixation of a salary, on the advice of Ali (RAA), his salary was fixed to that of an average income person. Once he became sick and needed honey. There was some honey in Bait ul Maal, he went to Masjid e Nabawi and took permission from the public for little use.

Selection of the most appropriate persons was Umar's (RAA) trait. Four Arabs were famous for their management and political acumen; Amir Muawiya, Amr Bin Aas, Mughaira Bin Shoba, and Ziad Bin Sameya [RAA]. They were given heavy influential posts in Syria, Kufa, and Egypt. Similarly, suitable personalities for departments of war and justice were Nauman Bin Muqrin (RAA) as general and Abdullah Bin Masood (RAA) as a judge.

Merit of piety was based on the year of conversion to Islam, level of

sacrifice, and closeness of relationship to the Prophet (PBUH). Scholarships and stipends were based on these criteria, and the closeness of the Prophet (PBUH) took the highest priority. The turn of the audience at the Caliph's office was also based on the above-mentioned factors, i.e. who will be given priority on the waiting list.

It was Caliph Umar's political awareness that he dealt differently with different nations and tribes. In Iran and Iraq, due to the presence of landlords and farmers, he gave them ample monthly stipends as per their status. In Syria, people were unjustly treated, and landownership was denied to locals by the Romans. Caliph Umar handed over the lands to locals and treated them with justice. In Egypt, Maquus (Egyptian ruler) was given due importance, so that his loyalties shifted from Romans to Muslims.

He would never let very powerful public office holders remain in one place for a longer period, lest they start abusing their authority. Umar (RAA) was fully aware of aspiring groups striving for their choice of nominees for Caliphate. He did not give any public office to his clan as well as the clan of Banu Hashem.

Umar (RAA) kept himself abreast with the state of affairs of neighboring empires and regions. When sending armies for war, he would get maximum information from men who had visited the relevant regions. Once, Iraq was conquered, he summoned two notables from Iraq along with a translator. He understood the system of revenue collection, added improvements, and implemented those rules in Iraq. Umar (RAA) was an admirer of the administrative system of King Nausherwan of Persia. After conversion to Islam, Hurmuzan, the Persian general became an adviser to the Caliph.

Omar (RAA) would be planning and sending instructions to far-off armies, issuing edicts for people, and at the same time would be redressing complaints of the subjects. While the armies were ordered to march towards the Nahawand front (Persia), their commander Saad bin Abi Waqas (RAA) underwent investigation for complaints received from his subjects in Kufa. While delivering Khutba, a Christian asked whether one thing can be taxed twice a year, and he replied in the negative. Hence, all matters of state were done in time; one activity would not cause a delay for another activity.

In and around Medina, he would personally check on matters of subjects. Such was the case when he traveled to Syria, and later to Jerusalem. Many times he would personally take sacks of food grains etc. to the needy. During his night watch, the Caliph saw a Bedouin sitting outside his tent at night. Getting close he heard the moaning of a female from inside the house. On inquiry, the Bedouin informed him of his wife's labor pains. Omar (RAA) returned home and took along his wife who midwife the baby. While handing over the baby to his father, Omar (RAA) instructed him to come the next day and get his baby registered for the monthly stipend.

During a famine in Arab lands, he would seek forgiveness for his sins and supplicate to Allah not to punish his subjects for the sins of the Caliph. He stopped eating meat, fish, vegetable ghee, and many delicious foods.

CSS, PMS: How to Prepare for Competitive Exams?

Aimen Bukhari on anxious, sometimes depressive, and sometimes fun, competitive exams in Pakistan

By Aimen Bukhari

With the CSS and PMS Exams taking place in the country, aspirants are anxious, and most do not know what to do.

Do not worry, we have got your back! Here are some tips to help you out:

Read, read, and then, read some more

“Once you learn to read, you will be forever free.” – Frederick Douglass

One related or side book should be read each month in addition to your course work. Some recommended books are:

From the books you read, never forget to write short summaries/important points of each book in your notes in order to use them in your answers in competitive exams. Focus on vocabulary and terminologies.

Students are advised to visit public libraries and read books and newspapers regularly to keep in touch with what is happening around them. If you do not keep yourself updated, competitions will be very challenging.

Sounds like a plan

“By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.” – Benjamin Franklin

Students sometimes feel that there are not enough hours in the day leading up to examinations. However, they can make significant improvements in their preparation by gaining a better awareness of how they spend their time.

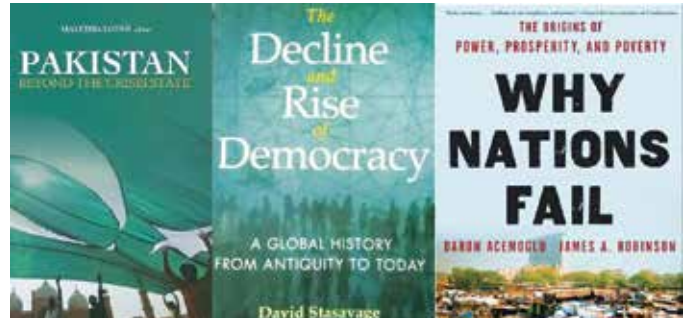
Setting a time limit and sticking to it helps if an aspirant spends a lot of time on social media or other distractions. Having a strategy on how to spend the time helps a lot, it reduces stress as a person maximizes their time by strategizing it properly.

It is important to keep an eye on the big picture.

Stay hydrated

“Thousands have lived without love, not one without water.” – W. H. Auden

One of the primary reasons aspirants are continuously feeling drowsy and lethargic is because they are dehydrated. Drinking a suitable quantity of water every day is vital to help concentrate. Especially in this hot weather, it is advisable to maintain sipping water throughout the day. Drink coconut water, sugarcane juice, and fruit liquids to keep refreshed. Studies show that when you are well hydrated, you will feel improved clarity and creativity. Consuming enough drinks also lowers headaches.



Read aloud

“If you truly love a book, you should sleep with it, write in it, read aloud from it, and fill its pages with muffin crumbs.” – Anne Fadiman

When you feel you're nodding off, attempt to read out the themes aloud. This will not only keep you awake but will also increase your memory capacity.

Before the exam, it is really important that you focus on these things:

- 1: Essay writing practice: Try to do one daily
- 2: Revising fact sheets and quotes sheets
- 3: Revise vocabulary
- 4: Do not read new topics

The students will benefit from two mantras in addition to their understanding of the subject matter:

1. Choosing the correct questions to answer
2. Accurately answering the questions asked through proper evidence

Candidates who have a thorough grasp of the exam's format and criteria might maximize their chances of success by focusing on the amount of time they spend on each question throughout the exam window.

Because of our current education system, many students are unfamiliar with the notion of Test Writing Strategy, which is brought to the forefront by this method of exam preparation.

For the most part, candidates should attend to every requirement laid out in writing by the exam's sponsoring body and the testing facility until they are seated in the exam hall, at which point they should focus solely on their preparation and avoid thinking about "What Ifs" as they proceed through the exam paper in order to achieve a well-earned result that is worthy of the time and effort put in by candidates.

Lastly, before the exam, students should believe in themselves, and their fate and do their best!

The unpredictable Pakistani cricket

The next Champions Trophy will be hosted by Pakistan in 2025

By Ali Abdullah

The month of June and Ramadan have been two very lucky months for Pakistan cricket. Pakistan won their first ICC World Cup in the month of Ramadan in 1992, as well as the Champions Trophy in 2017.

The story starts from the very first T20 World Cup in 2007 when Misbah Ul Haq played one loose shot which cost Pakistan a T20 World Cup trophy. Pakistan did not only lose the game in the very last over and that too against its arch-rivals, India. Fans were heartbroken, the team was shattered.

The next T20 World Cup was in 2009, England. Pakistan was in group B with two other teams, England and Netherlands. Pakistan won one and lost one. All teams in this group were equal. They had played two matches each and won one game too.

Pakistan did not perform well in the early stages of the tournament. They were not the favorites at all.

Eventually, soon enough the team started making a comeback. It seemed like everyone is playing for the team now. Pakistan had to face mighty South Africa in the semi-finals, where obviously South Africa was the stronger team on paper but, then the unexpected happened.

Shahid Afridi took the game into his hands and took two important wickets. While batting, he scored a half-century. The commentator quoted "he's the king of Lahore and Karachi and Peshawar". With his brilliant all-round performance and Umer Gul's record-breaking spell, Pakistan qualified for the finals of the T20 World cup second time in a row and they were keen to go back home with the trophy.

Pakistan faced Sri Lanka in the finals who performed like they will lift the trophy easily. The Pakistani team had other plans. It was Pakistan's day, it was Shahid Afridi's day. The Pakistani bowling attack did not disappoint at all. They kept Sri Lanka under pressure.

Sri Lanka was unable to put a score on the board. Their legendary batting line-up failed. Pakistani openers went to the pavilion shortly. Shahid Afridi and Shoaib Malik kept their cool. They batted brilliantly throughout the innings.

Afridi played his natural game. Everything he touched turned into gold. He was able to score 54* runs in the final as well. Pakistan won its first T20 title in 2009 with ease under Younis Khan's captaincy. Shahid Afridi was named Man of the Match in the final as well. He is the only player to get Man of the Match awards in the semi-final and final in the same tournament.

The kids who were not even in their teenage saw Pakistan lift an ICC trophy in 2009, and ever since, they are desperate to see Pakistan on top.

Before the champions trophy, it was unsure if Pakistan will qualify for the tournament or not. Pakistan had to face the



West Indies and win the series to play for the Champions Trophy. It was their last chance. Both teams' future regarding the Champions Trophy was dependent on this series.

Pakistan was able to win the series and qualify for the biggest ICC tournament.

Pakistan played their first match against India. Fans were hyped up. The only talk in the country was regarding this game. Everyone was excited. It was Pakistan's first match. The team was young and the captain was new. Pakistan lost the game as if India was playing with a local street team. The team was humiliated by the Indian cricket team.

There is a saying that you have to lose something to gain something. Pakistan lost the match but they were motivated, pumped, fired up, and whatnot. Since that first game, it seemed like this team is not the same team that played India. One by one, Sarfraz's men defeated every opponent. They faced England in the semi-finals. England was in red hot form as well. Team Pakistan, however, could not care less. They were not seeing who is the opponent, they trusted themselves and defeated the hosts as well.

It was time for the final.

Pakistan was in the final. It was a pressure game. It was the final. Pakistan was facing mighty India in the finals. It could not get any better. Pakistan batted first and batted brilliantly. Indian bowling line-up was helpless. They could not tackle Sarfraz's men. Pakistan put a huge total on board.

The second innings started and Muhammad Amir did not wait to showcase his skills. He sent Rohit Sharma back to the pavilion on duck. India was zero for one. India could not recover. India was unable to recover. Pakistan defeated India by 180 runs in the finals. Pakistan won the Champions Trophy under Sarfraz Ahmed's captaincy when no one even thought about it. It was not even confirmed if Pakistan will qualify for the tournament. Pakistan amazed the world.

The next Champions Trophy will be hosted in 2025 and Pakistan will host the tournament. It will be the first ICC tournament hosted by Pakistan after the 2009 incident.

UEFA Champions League 2022

Officials said that they want the stadiums to stay full



Sixteen teams will be taking part in the tournament this year, including newcomers from Northern Ireland and holders of the Netherlands, with the final to be played at an 87,200 sell-out Wembley on 31 July.

The tournament will be held in ten different venues in the country with over 450,000 tickets.

This is not the first time that England is hosting this event. The last time England hosted the tournament was in 2005.

Back in 2005, only eight countries took part as Germany defeated Norway in the final in front of 21,105 people at Blackburn's Ewood Park.

Seventeen years on, the event has been called the "biggest ever" event by UEFA.

Portugal will be playing in the tournament instead of Russia. Despite qualifying, Russia will not be taking part in the tournament due to the ongoing situation in the country.

Manchester, Southampton, Brighton, Milton Keynes, London, Leigh, Sheffield, and Rotherham will benefit from almost £54m; this will boost their economic activity.

Almost 100,000 fans are expected in the stadium, and 250 million fans are expected to watch the game at home on their television screens.

When they say it will be the biggest event in women's football, they mean it. They are not just talking about the viewership; they

are also using Video Assistant referees for the first time.

First Women's Euros for five years

The Women's Euros usually take place every four years. The last EURO was held in 2017 and accordingly, it should have taken place in 2021.

It was pushed back 12 months after the men's 2020 European Championship and the 2020 Tokyo Olympics were both postponed until 2021 because of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Later it was decided that UEFA will postpone again. The reason behind this was that there was a women's tournament happening in 2021, and it was decided that two women's tournaments in the same summer is not a good idea.

England was named hosts in 2018. When England previously staged the tournament in 2005, venues across the North West - Blackpool, Manchester, Blackburn, Warrington, and Preston - were used. More venues are included this time.

Other than the Midlands or North East, games will be played all over the country.

The decision to use the Manchester City Academy Stadium - which will have a reduced capacity of just 4,700 Euros - has been criticized.

"It's embarrassing," said Iceland midfielder Sara Bjork Gunnarsdottir, whose side plays

two of their three group games at the home of Manchester City's women's team.

"It's disrespectful towards women's football because it's so much bigger than people think."

Euro 2022 organizers defend using Manchester City Academy Stadium

Low-priced tickets and record crowds

UEFA has made 700,000-plus tickets available. A pre-tournament impact report projected that between 435,000 and 525,000 tickets will be sold.

The previous edition staged in the Netherlands was watched by 240,045 fans.

Ticket prices have been kept low. Prices start from £5 and go up to £50. Prices are kept low to attract families. For example, a family can enjoy the game for just £30. This will attract more people to buy the tickets.

"We want as many full stadiums and as many spectators in the stadiums as possible," the head of tournament delivery, Chris Bryant, said.

There is pressure on the organizers to deliver an event that draws fans in beyond the Euros.

"We are confident that many matches will be sold out and are looking forward to more than doubling the total attendance of UEFA Women's Euro 2017 in the Netherlands," said a Euro 2022 spokesman.

By Ali Abdullah

I feel More Margin of Acting in Negative Roles: Syed Jibran

Syed Jibran talks to The Truth International about his interesting and unique ride in the Pakistani entertainment industry



By **Kaukab Jehan**

Syed Jibran is a well-known name in the Pakistani entertainment industry. He has earned fame for his notable characters in television dramas. After a successful career in television, Jibran finally appeared in the film *Ghanbrana Nahi Hai* as his debut, which is currently being screened in cinemas.

He was born in Jhelum but kept on moving to different cities because of the nature of his father's job, who was an army officer. In 1984, the family finally settled in Rawalpindi, where Jibran spent most of his childhood and completed his medical education at Rawalpindi Medical College. Coming into television is another interesting part of his life. He wanted to win a bet with his friend, who challenged him that people who come into showbiz were from some other world, which Jibran did not agree with. It was when he was in his third year of medical college. He struggled very hard for some on-screen appearances in dramas or films and finally got a small role in a single PTV play. Then, because of his distinct looks and acting skills, he was cast in other dramas by PTV Islamabad. He considers Tariq Meraj as his mentor in acting. Another guru of his in this field is Samina Ahmed, who cast him in the role of Bond in the popular series *Jutt and Bond* from Lahore. After completing his studies, Jibran settled in Karachi in 2004 to pursue a full-time acting career.

The friendly and versatile actor Syed Jibran talks to The Truth International in-depth about his interests, his choices of roles, and his plans for the future.

After a successful stage career, you finally came into the film with the comedy role of Vicky. Where did you get the inspiration for this character?

Hasan Bhai sent me the script to read. By the way, he often sends me scripts randomly on and off for proofreading. Yes, I have a little interest and know-how to write as well. When I read just the first half of the script, I said, "Amazing." Then he asked me which character I wanted to play. I found Vicky more challenging and decided to go for that. He asked me if I really wanted to play that character. Then he sent me the second half, in which I came to know that my character had been minimized a bit, but still, I wanted to do that. The character of the other male lead was very much along linear lines, whereas Vicky had everything to do with comedy and fun with more body language.

Interestingly, the director of the film, Saqib Khan, offered me the same role later. That was what I wanted to start with my big-screen career. I don't know what reviews are coming, but I am sure people will appreciate seeing me in a different role.

What was the experience of working with Saba Qamar?

Before GNH, I had done only two or three series with Saba, and those were in the PTV days of the Tariq Meraj era. Then we did a few simple ads. To me, it doesn't matter how long you have been disconnected from a person, but on what note you ended with him or her. So, when we met again on the sets

of GNH, we only talked about how much fun we had working together. She has always been very comfortable with me, so the film was another good experience of working with her.

What are your future projects, especially after an applauded performance in Ghanrna Nahi Hai?

I have a very interesting script by Mohsin Ali, who also wrote for GNH. I'm considering making a film about it. The role I want to do is quite exciting. I can't reveal too much detail at the moment, but a little hint about the character is that it feels like Don. It is an international project that will be shot both in and outside Pakistan. It is a pure entertainment film with all the ingredients of thrill and chase.

It has no working title yet, but the script is ready with all the premise, story, and screenplay. We are just waiting for the right time to see how it can be executed. I pray to God to give me the courage to do what I am going to do next.



Your breakthrough on television was Chup Raho (2014). How did it happen?

I was going through a bad patch in my career; I was not getting good roles from major channels. So my wife and I decided to move to England. Just six months before leaving, I got a call from Yasir Nawaz for a drama series by Six Sigma. He knew I was leaving soon, so he asked me to do this in the meantime. My role was only from July 7th to July 14th. It was not a lead role but a parallel one. I had already worked with Yasir, so I accepted. That one was Shuk. After a long time, I got very good feedback on my drama. Then, Yasir asked for another series by Six Sigma but warned me about the controversial aspect of my role. According to Yasir, Humayun Saeed wanted to do the role but was short of dates because of his film. That series was Chup Raho. Reviews of Chup Raho were more overwhelming than Shuk. After all this, my wife also asked me to stay or delay our shift as things were going in the right direction for us.

Then you become picky about your characters.

I realized it very late. When I started, private channels in Pakistan were a new phenomenon, so the first trend was to be on as many channels as possible all the time. We were sometimes doing four series at a time. After a while, the trends shift, and you now need to be in a good project, but not everyone.

Yes. After Chup Raho, the time came when I became choosy about

my roles. I was never worried about or reluctant to do negative roles as I knew my breakthrough was with negative roles, but I was a little cautious. So, I did Ghairat, which is about a brother burning his sister.

It seems you are not yet more attracted to the roles written and created in grey areas.

Currently, I am playing a different role in a Geo Television drama series, Dekh Tamasha e Roshni. The play is set in Swat and is about Pashtun culture. In that play, Ahsan Khan is playing the villain or antagonist. I am an all-out positive. It was just a 180-degree shift completely opposite from my last play, Muhabbat Dagh ki Surat. In that play, my character was against girls' education, but in this, he is the biggest supporter of the cause.

But honestly, and this is an ironic statement, mostly negative or grey characters excite me more for acting aspects. Tracks on positive roles are very linear, while those on negative roles give you more challenge.

The role you just did for any reason?

It was Sita Bagri. Frankly speaking, I was not sold on that role as it was also for a smaller platform TV one. I will be honest, the only reason for me to accept or do that role was to work with Bushra Ansari. Adnan Bhai knew it. Believe me, none of my heroines have romanced me as she did in that drama; a solid, mature romance. It was really fun.

Another one was Bholi Bano, which honestly speaking, I did courtesy of Hasan Zia Bhai. I didn't know anybody from the cast, co-star, or director, so I tried to refuse, but Hasan Bhai requested me to do that. I have had a very long and close relationship with Hasan Zia, so it is very hard for me to say no to him. But Bholi Bano came out to be hit. That play also made Hiba Bukhari the star.

Among all your roles, which is very dear to your heart?

Besides my roles in Chup Raho and Ghairat, which I really enjoyed doing, it is Junaid in Yasir Nawaz's play Khudgarz (2017). That is my all-time favourite character to date. I missed that character. But somehow, that series was not appreciated much for whatever reason.

How was your acting school experience in India?

In 2008, I went to the Kishor Namit Institute to learn acting. That was a great experience. In that diploma course, they taught me the forms of expression required in acting, dance, and fighting. I have used that learning for 14 years.

That is why when we started dance performance in GNH and Nigah Jee gave us some steps to learn, I picked them up quickly. It made Nigah Jee curious if I had already been dancing. I did not tell him at that moment, but one day, to ease his curiosity, I revealed to him my acting school in India.

As for action, unfortunately, we are still far away from those techniques in our fight scenes. On-camera fighting is a completely different art form that is performed solely by an action director. I think I can choreograph the fights better than what is already happening here. I believe we must study and learn these things to make our films more interesting.

Khalil ur Rehman's London Nahi Jaunga set to release this Eid

Directed by the versatile Nadeem Baig and penned down by the famous Khalil-Ur-Rehman Qamar, London Nahi Jaunga is all set to release this Eid Ul Adha in Cinemas while social media has already been flooded with appreciation posts or hilarious memes in response to the theatrical trailer aired on ARY Digital since 11th June.

The romantic drama film revolves around a love triangle between three characters Sara played by Mehwish Hayat, Chaudhry Jameel played by Humayun Saeed and Arzoo played by Kubra Khan with Lollywood's renowned actors Asif Raza Mir, Wasay Chaudhry, Iffat Omar, Saba Faisal, Gohar Rasheed, Eve Yasmin, Raftan Shaukat, Sohail Ahmed, Shani Arshad, Waqas Danish and Meher Bano in supporting roles.

While some fans have been in awe with the cinematography and the cast's new looks, others have expressed disappointment since they were expecting a sequel to the 2017 hit film, Punjab Nahi Jaongi. The film instead seems like a similar story with different actors in supporting roles while same actors in leading roles. Humayun Saeed clarified in an interview when told about how the casting is being applauded, but the story is perceived as repetitive, that even though the storyline in trailers seems coinciding with Punjab Nahi Jaongi, it is entirely different. It is about Sara, a girl who seems to have had a full life on the surface but in reality, she has always felt that there is something out there that's missing, till she stumbles upon her mothers Diary and embarks on a journey in Punjab wherein she crosses paths with Chaudhry Jameel whose cousin Arzoo is in love with him.



London Nahi Jaunga seems promising from the exuberant vibrant trailers as one emotional rollercoaster with heartbreaks, drama, and romance coupled with captivating music tracks, and dance sequences touted as a complete package under Baig's direction.

Saba Qamar and Imran Abbas starring in Umera Ahmed's film Tumaray Husn Ke Naam

Imran Abbas and Saba Qamar have their fans already excited as they share behind-the-scenes clips from their first-ever project together, a TV serial written by the 'Hum Kahan Kay Sachay thay' novelist Umera Ahmed, Tumaray Husn kay Naam. The series is being shot in Karachi and Lahore with Sidra Niazi, Asad Siddiqui, Maha Hassan, and Nayyer Ejaz revealed as the supporting actors so far. What seems to be a love story from the BTS pictures and on-set videos; little is known about the plot of the series except that it is unconventional.

"The subject is very nice and unusual, different from what is happening these days," Imran Abbas revealed in a conversation with Images, adding that the story is very well articulated and the music well done. "It's a new pairing. I'm working with Saba for the first time," he said, revealing that there's a fresh feel for the audience too as they see new faces cast with each other. Tumhare Husn Ke Naam will mark Saba's return to television after two years. She last appeared in Cheekh (2019) in which she received a lot of praise for her strong performance. The release date is yet to be announced keeping fans inquisitive about the teasers and promos.

By Amna Shoaib



میرا ووٹ
میری پہچان



الیکشن کمیشن آف پاکستان کی جانب سے ملک بھر میں ڈسپلے سینٹرز کا قیام



مزید معلومات کیلئے موبائل ایپ
"ClickECP" ڈاؤن لوڈ کریں

مزید رہنمائی / معلومات کیلئے درج ذیل نمبروں پر رجوع کریں۔

- الیکشن کمیشن آف پاکستان 051-9216943
- صوبائی الیکشن کمیشن پنجاب 042-99210690
- صوبائی الیکشن کمیشن خیبر پختونخوا 091-9211034-5
- صوبائی الیکشن کمیشن سندھ 021-99203385
- صوبائی الیکشن کمیشن بلوچستان 081-9203674

کسی قسم کی رہنمائی یا مشکلات کی صورت میں درج ذیل نمبروں

پر رابطہ کریں