

Fortnightly

The Truth International

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75 Years of Pakistan

Potential for Economic growth, Export oriented economy and Natural resources materialisation not explored

One Year of Taliban Rule

Taliban handled drought, food shortage and ISIS threat successfully

Speculations of Default Dissipate

Action against dollarisation, COAS request for IMF loan stabilising economy

Pakistan Needs Attention



INDEPENDENCE DAY OF
PAKISTAN

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Blurred Red Lines

By Hammad Ghaznavi



Numerous indicators suggest, finally, the Establishment has decided taking on former Prime Minister Imran Khan. Having been ousted from the office, Khan and his party, many thought, was treated 'politely' by the Establishment, despite their unsheathed assaults on the Army Chief. Lest it be construed as a personal vendetta, the Chief did not react to naked attacks on his alleged role in ousting Khan from power. While everything looked favourable for Khan, he failed to recognize the line separating the individual and the institution. His aggression earned him many a victory but then he didn't know where to stop. It was on August 2nd when in a helicopter crash six army officers including regional corps commander Lieutenant General Sarfraz Ali, embraced martyrdom; the reaction of many PTI trolls was simply appalling, enraging the institution that interpreted it as crossing the proverbial red line. Those who wanted to sternly deal with Khan, got an argument.

True, Imran Khan was propelled to power with the help of the garrison, a process that reached its zenith in 2018 when Khan's arch rival Nawaz Sharif was jailed before the elections. During Imran Khan's rule, the collaborators of the hybrid system used a code-word, the same page, underlining the cordial relationship between Khan and the Establishment. Because of this dodgy background, many friends and foes, ignored Imran Khan's personal traits responsible, at least partly, for his rise in politics. He is a fierce fighter, resolute and aggressive. His narrative making skills are simply unparalleled. He came up with a

mindboggling narrative of 'regime change' by USA, and overnight popularized terms like imported government, beggars, slaves and haqeeqi azadi. He sets the political agenda and his opponents merely react. Far ahead of his political rivals when it came to the efficient use of social media, Imran Khan achieved perhaps his biggest political victory, purely on his own, in the 17th July Punjab by-elections.

After his ouster, his aggression off-balanced his rivals and it seemed the next general elections are approaching fast, particularly after the by-elections. The Establishment also felt the heat both from within the institution and on the streets. It was against this backdrop that Khan marched on to conquer one territory after another. Unlike the former leaders ousted from the office by the Establishment, Khan looked far from jail, exile or humiliation. But then came the U-turn; this time not by Khan but the Establishment. There is a list of developments in the last fortnight that points to the new strategy to handle Imran Khan. After eight years came the Pakistan Election Commission's decision on prohibited foreign funding case. It's a scathing decision for Imran Khan and PTI, with dangerous implications for Khan. There are at least a dozen cases that can be initiated against Khan on its basis that may lead to his disqualification, considering the apex court's previous verdicts in similar cases, especially that of Nawaz Sharif. The Tosha Khana case, wherein Khan allegedly failed to declare his actual assets may prove fatal for Khan.

It was ensured by the mighty of the land that the PTI trolls' video messages confessing their malicious reaction to the helicopter crash got due coverage on the mainstream media. It put the PTI on the back foot, and the message was conveyed to its unbridled media brigade that ridiculing the army through disparaging media trends would have serious consequences. A key military transfer from Peshawar was a clear signal that the last 'same page' in the country was no more, and that the PTI will have to share power in the KPK. (A couple of days after this change, Imran Khan talked about the return of the TTP and the 'sudden' threat it posed to the country). Five key officers appointed by the former DG have been removed from their positions in the premier intelligence agency – so that the agency could pursue its future goals in unison.

Shehbaz Gill's arrest for allegedly inciting sedition in the ranks was another indicator of the mood of the mighty. The decision to off-air ARY news and a couple of pro-PTI news anchors fleeing the country could also be understood in the same light. Even the dollar plunge, insiders insist, was a result of the intervention of the stakeholders.

Imran Khan said in a recent speech that there were efforts afoot to disqualify him to put him in the same boat as Nawaz Sharif, and then treat them equally – either both stay disqualified or both participate in politics. It seems Imran Khan's analysis is spot-on!

CITY NOTES: The real American conspiracy

By M A Niazi



I'm sure Imran Khan was distracted by the prohibited funding case verdict, which may be why he didn't notice Al-Qaeda chief Ayman al-Zawahiri's killing in Kabul by a specially adapted Hellfire missile loaded on a Predator drone. The outburst directed at the army chief, hoping that he had been on the helicopter, could have been directed at him through the high-profile killing.

There are a number of interesting things about his death. He was staying in a building which was owned by an aide to Sirajuddin Haqqani, the Deputy Head of the Taliban, and current head of the Haqqani Network. The founder of the network, Jalaluddin Haqqani, had close ties to Pakistani agencies. Of course, those agencies have nothing to do with al-Zawahiri.

Also, their ignorance is so obdurate that they don't admit to knowing if he was alive or not.

Now al-Zawahiri was definitely the victim of an American conspiracy. Imran should realise that American conspiracies led to fatal results. So far, his being alive indicates that there was no conspiracy.

And then the US has trapped him in the foreign funding case because as everyone and the Supreme Court knows he is Sadiq and Ameen. The funding case where Imran was caught with his hand in the till.

Of course, the Kuptaan only put his hand in the till to help out Arif Naqvi, who is facing fraud and embezzlement charges in the USA. Those charges are part of the American conspiracy against Imran. Don't be surprised if Arif Naqvi suddenly conks out. Maybe that would give Imran what he wants, the halo of martyrdom without actually dying. So, the conspiracy goes on,

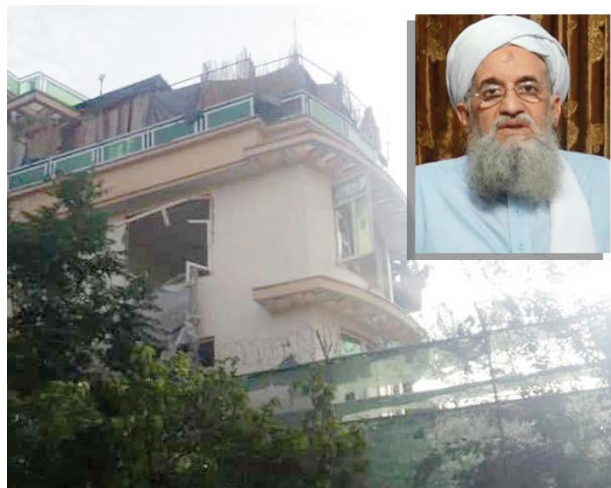
I see that our sportsmen are winning medals at the Commonwealth Games. What has been disappointing has been the way our athletes have been losing to India. I would suggest that those athletes should be put up against the wall as soon as they land, and made to face firing squads for being dyed-in-the-wool traitors. And there will certainly be no chance of any of them being adopted to be placed on the same page.

Imran is still paying for the sale of the multi-million watch he got from the Saudi crown prince.

I mean, would the Saudis have handed such heavy sentences to those who disturbed the peace of the Al-Masjid an-Nabawi. He would probably have got them be let off as lightly as PTI supporters are in Pakistan.

Well, today is Ashura. I know that there are the grand themes of sacrifice and dedication to a cause, but I am struck every year by the pettiness of the concerns of those who killed the Imam. They were not bothered about Islam, and what it meant, whether Yazid was fir for the Caliphate or not. They were just concerned about doing their jobs, about obeying orders. It was clearly one of the earliest examples of the Nuremberg defence.

Perhaps that is one lesson of Karbala we should take: BuReaucrats should pay particular heed because they keep facing such situations. But it's not just about examining the order received. What do we examine it against? How do we know whether an order is legal? I suppose we have to use the Almighty's law, which is expressed in the Sharia. That was what the Imam was referring to. Yazid was not capable of being Caliph because of his inability to meet the requirements of the Sharia. The Imam took the path prescribed by Sharia, of putting forward himself as a candidate.



It is a salutary lesson that those who obeyed the orders, who committed the crime of murdering the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), may have kept their jobs, but couldn't get much out of everything. He had ascended to the Caliphate at 34, at the time the youngest of all Caliphs. But he was dead at 37. So, all that effort was really for nothing.

Are we about to see more effort for nothing? Imran has decided to contest the nine by-elections to the seats for which resignations are accepted. Everyone and his uncle is scratching their head, wondering why Imran is contesting for seats none of which he will take up. Of course, we mustn't forget that until he takes oath for one seat, all seats he won remain unavailable to the government, so the bolstering of the government majority would be foiled.

75 years of independence: Achievements, challenges, and opportunities

What Pakistan has lost over the past 75 years is tremendous potential for economic development

By Hamzah Rifaat Hussain

The 14th of August 2022 marks 75 years of independence for Pakistan, a land that was created for the predominantly Muslim majority population of British India to live as a separate nation, away from Congressional dominance. The transitions that have taken place in the country's history are unparalleled and unique, which outsiders could view as examples of political instability. The truth is that within this time frame, Pakistan has gained significant achievements while confronting challenges that are not unique to the country alone. It is imperative for observers to view this country's history impartially prior to coming up with definitive conclusions.

Firstly, Pakistan's societal evolution has meant that the once overtly religious society has transformed into a more inclusive, tolerant, and civically engaged polity. The Zia years of Islamization may have left a footprint on certain segments of society that brandish the religion card for narrow parochial interests, but the society in 2022 is defined by greater ethnic inclusivity, an understanding of human rights, and a greater cause for social identity. Interethnic marriages, for example, demonstrate that most Pakistanis, while predominantly Muslim, still consider fellow citizens to be part of a nation, not a monolithic ethnic identity that has been historically dominated by the Punjabi elite.

Secondly, Pakistan's youth bulge has contributed to a vibrant and exhilarating social makeup. The country has one of the youngest populations in the world, which is considered an asset as many youngsters grow up with an apolitical orientation or an anti-status quo demeanour that challenges regressive schools of thought. The creation of active start-up culture in metropolises such as Karachi, for example, is not only helping to build a more digitalized economy with greater benefits for



individuals but also acts as an act of defiance to those who claim that Pakistan is not an investor-friendly nation. The youth continue to remain largely unemployed, but those who have chosen to engage themselves in start-ups continue to be rewarded despite technological shortcomings. The youth of the country are also known to be more civically engaged, as has been the case due to the social media revolution, where opinions, facts, beliefs, and narratives all contribute to the national discourse. Such trends were unheard of in Pakistan in the 1970s.

75 years should also be classified as a journey where numerous road bumps have been complemented with significant achievements. As a country known for being on the extremes, Pakistan has won two world cups, a champions trophy in cricket, gold medals in athletics, and produced some of the world's best drama series. While not promoted locally, these soft power achievements have gained universal acclaim and continue to strengthen as the process of identifying new talent and eschewing nepotism, cronyism, and crass degradation of institutions is replaced by a genuine quest for greater theatrical and sporting impact. Amid all the chaos of terrorism, a fragile security situation on the eastern border with India and economic difficulties,

the soft power aspect of the country has thrived. Charitable initiatives have proliferated over time and the Edhi legacy has held up. It is therefore important to understand that developing countries such as Pakistan have to evolve soft power cultures.

One of Pakistan's major achievements over the last year has been the transition, albeit limited, to democracy. As a country that has often been demonised as being a unitary state, Pakistan has made big strides in ensuring parliamentary democracy is strengthened and representative politics takes hold. It is important to note that Pakistan has often been chastised for being a state where democracy has been thwarted repeatedly, yet in 75 years, transitions have taken place with active political parties promoting greater democratic norms. The strengthening of democracy has resulted in the media becoming one of the main pillars of the state, which has informed discourse and contributed to enriching public debates ranging from Supreme Court proceedings to the inundation of the provinces. In stark contrast to the nascent stages of Pakistan's existence, this prominence of discourse is aiding Pakistan's development with a vibrant and active civil society, contributing to displaying an array of perspectives for Pakistanis to explore.



With optimism comes significant challenges that must be overcome in order for Pakistan to realise its full potential. While investments in the youth bulge, soft power, and ethnic inclusivity have yielded positive dividends, Pakistan still confronts the same lingering issues that have plagued it since independence. Troubled transitions from democracies to dictatorships have compromised economic growth and only contributed to uneven levels of development. During the 1960s, the country was progressing at a rapid rate, only for it to be upended in the 1970s. The loss of East Pakistan, which created Bangladesh, also dealt a severe blow, with the scars of 1971 continuing to remain relevant today.

What Pakistan has lost over the past 75 years is tremendous potential for economic development with higher GDP growth rates, an export-oriented economy, and vast natural reserves never materializing. Even in 2022, the state of the national economy remains dismal, with any sustenance dependent on IMF bailouts and relief packages. The political elite, while campaigning on platforms for an improvement in livelihoods and better economic performance, continues to be entangled in needless wrangling, which is suffocating Pakistan's balance of payments and contributing to the widening of the current account deficit. While it is true that diversification and export earnings need to be the hallmark of Pakistan's nosediving state, it is also true that political squabbling is clouding prospects for a smooth economic recovery. After 75 years, the country stands on the cusp of one of its worst economic



meltdowns, with a high degree of employment and rising poverty standing in stark contrast to Quaid e Azam's vision of an Islamic welfare state.

Then comes the challenge of security. Those entities which are adamant in challenging the writ of the state continue to proliferate in the form of the Baloch insurgency of the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan. While the economy can be recovered through tougher austerity measures and adjustments to the monetary and fiscal policies, the state of insecurity has been hanging over the country since independence. Trends indicate that geopolitical realities such as the state of Afghanistan and the rise of the BRAS (Baloch Raaji Aajoi Sangar) as an amalgamation of different Baloch separatist groups are haunting Pakistan and pose an existential threat to the country's existence. While significant gains have been made in neutralising both

secessionist and terrorist tendencies, the high incidence of attacks clearly indicates that much has to be done. The solution lies

in the quick implementation of the National Action Plan and ensuring that each of its tenets is operationalized for the betterment of future generations of Pakistan.

On the foreign policy front, 75 years have witnessed constant tensions with India but good cordial relations with the wider international community. While relations with the United States have been constantly in a state of flux, it is high time to prioritise meaningful cooperation which is based on mutual respect for state sovereignty and greater emphasis be placed on investments in important sectors of the economy. Amiable relations, otherwise, have been the hallmark of Pakistan's foreign policy, which is commendable given that it still has an amicable orientation with the exception of its eastern border.

These last 75 years must be viewed through the lens of practicality and in the absence of negativity and pessimism to gain a holistic view of Pakistan's achievements and challenges. The country continues to be one of the most dynamic places in the world, with every evolving social, political, and economic phenomenon defining its illustrious landscape. There is plenty of opportunities to capitalise on, but it is safe to say that the last 75 years have brought a smorgasbord of developments that should give Pakistan plenty to be proud of and think about.





Politics of Power in Pakistan and the Common Man

The political fight between the coalition government and PTI is going on, and the common people are affected

By Noor Aftab

At a time when the coalition government maintains that it bit the bullet to save Pakistan from default and bankruptcy and the common people face unprecedented price hikes due to the rise in petroleum prices, the Pakistani rupee is recording the highest gains against the US dollar.

The statement by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in which it said Pakistan has completed the last precondition—increasing the levy on petroleum products—for the combined seventh and eighth reviews was taken positively by the market and the stock exchange also performed very well after a series of setbacks.

More inflows from friendly countries, along with the IMF tranche disbursement, are expected by the end of this month and are also likely to play a role in stabilising the economy.

Now it is quite clear that the coalition government wants to dig its heels in for the long haul until 2023 and implement an unpopular IMF programme that may further create economic problems for the people.

This is not the only development that has given some confidence to this otherwise fragile government. The verdict of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in the prohibited funding case has also enabled it to take on its archrival Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) with new vigour after facing unparalleled defeat in recent by-elections in the Punjab province.

The coalition partners may show confidence and strength, but all of them are still not certain whether their government will be able to continue till August 2023. Its recent measures indicate that it is trying to ensure its numerical strength in the national assembly in case small coalition parties part ways with it anytime in the future. By the way, it is widely assumed that these small parties cannot make independent decisions and must wait for orders from higher-ups.



Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, Speaker of the National Assembly, has taken a piecemeal approach to accept the resignations of PTI lawmakers. It is obvious that the government wants by-elections in national assembly constituencies and to get its members elected. That will improve its strength and lessen its dependence on the small parties.

PTI has approached the Islamabad High Court (IHC) against this approach of the Speaker of the National Assembly with the aim of defeating the new political strategy of the government.

Imran Khan left behind a checkered record, marked by economic and political instability. His political opponents, who now hold power, have been promising reform, but they are facing big challenges. At a time when Pakistan was heading towards its dreadful doom, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif blamed the previous government of Imran Khan, claiming that he left a huge mess behind, but in the same instance, forgot that the economic crisis of our state had peaked since he took charge. Political instability can again plunge the economy into a downward spiral, and, with the prices of commodities already as high as ever, it can create public unrest. International creditors are not expecting stability to return in the foreseeable future. The country has a bond repayment due in December—and

markets are watching closely to see if Pakistan can meet its obligations in time. The situation is still becoming untenable and requires both immediate and farsighted action to give relief to members of the public.

Dr Atif Mian, a prominent economist, has also highlighted the lack of credibility of the coalition government as being the key factor pushing Pakistan towards a difficult situation. In his tweet, Atif stated that "the toughest challenge Pakistan faces is restoring some modicum of credibility—credibility with investors, credibility with its own people

On the political front, the government is facing severe challenges and there is still a divided opinion on whether it will survive in the coming months in the face of "onslaughts," especially by PTI chairman Imran Khan.

After sweeping the by-polls to regain its majority in the Punjab legislature, Imran Khan had said that the country must get ready for polls as "any other path will only lead to greater political uncertainty and further economic chaos." Now it is interesting to see whether Imran Khan will be able to trot out a narrative of victimization, rooted in the idea that an international conspiracy removed him from power, and use this to rally his base and prepare for by-elections.



The PTI chairman has made a startling announcement stating that he would contest all nine general seats of the national assembly in the by-polls to be held on September 25, including NA-22 Mardan, NA-24 Charsadda, NA-31 Peshawar, NA-45 Kurram, NA-108 Faisalabad, NA-118 Nankana Sahib, as well as NA-237, 239, and 246 of Karachi.



The seats fell vacant after National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf on July 28 accepted the resignations of 11 PTI members, exactly 109 days after they resigned from their seats.

The political circles are of the view that Imran Khan, who is facing multiple challenges after the verdict of the ECP in prohibited funding case, is not ready to give any kind of space to the coalition government. PTI has already swept by-elections in Punjab, and if he does so again, it will provide a massive boost to party workers, who are currently confused due to allegations levelled against their leaders from various circles.

PTI leader Fawad Chaudhry has also announced that the government must announce fresh elections within one month, otherwise their party would take necessary steps to achieve their political targets.

The coalition government seems to be utilising all its resources and strength to get Imran Khan disqualified in the manner adopted against three-time prime minister Nawaz Sharif. National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf has sent a reference to the ECP to disqualify Imran Khan in light of the Toshakhana case. In the reference, it has been said that Imran Khan never declared the gifts taken from Toshakhana in his assets and also failed to share the details

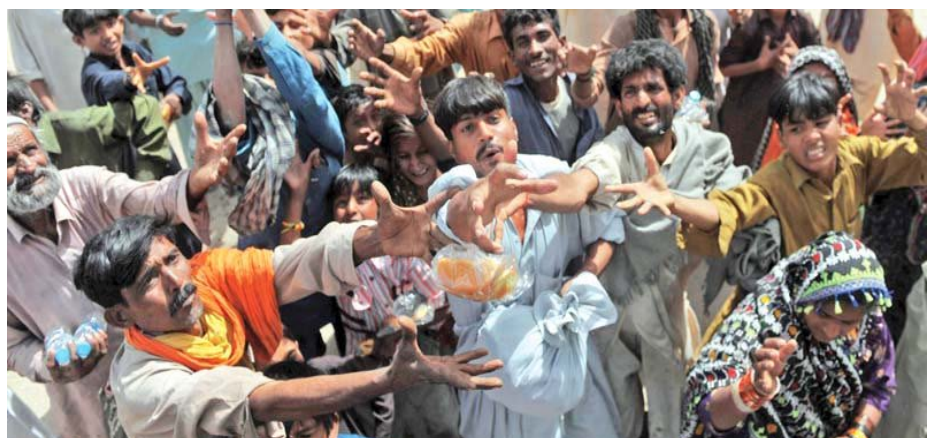
of the amounts he obtained after selling the gifts in the statement. The reference has now been listed for hearing by the ECP on August 18th.

The ECP has also issued an official show-cause notice to Imran Khan in the prohibited funding case, directing him to appear on August 23.

The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has commenced its country-wide inquiry into prohibited foreign funding cases.

The agency has so far summoned PTI leaders Asad Qaiser, Mian Mahmood-ur-Rashid and 11 others to address questions during the probe, with a total of six inquiries opened concurrently in major cities across the country, including Islamabad, Lahore, Peshawar, Quetta and Karachi.

With all these developments happening in the political scenario, PML-N has decided to highlight the verdict in the prohibited funding case at all available international forums, pointing out how Imran Khan received prohibited funds to promote his politics.



In this respect, PML-N leader Ishaq Dar has sent a letter to heads and other office-bearers of international chapters in which he directed them to let the world know about the verdict given by the ECP in the foreign funding case.

Unfortunately, Pakistan has become a state with an uncertain political situation, an adverse economic crisis, and a state where the plight of injustice is born every day. But the political parties, both belonging to the government and the opposition, seem to be pursuing their personal agendas.

The coalition government is determined to see the prohibited funding case through to its conclusion. The government is going to file a reference in the Supreme Court and many believe that it will issue a notification imposing a ban on PTI on the basis of the verdict in the foreign funding case.

Legal experts say that this kind of notification will not come into effect unless the Supreme Court gives a decision in favour of the government. But if it happens, then all the lawmakers belonging to the PTI will be disqualified for the next four years.

The political fight between the coalition government and PTI is going on, and the common people are facing an unprecedented price hike. Economic experts predict that people's socioeconomic conditions will worsen in the coming months as price increases and inflation continues to affect them. In this situation, the government and PTI must sit together and find a solution to the political issues, because this is the only way to steer the country out of the crisis.



PTI-PML-Q Affair

The new Punjab Chief Minister is going to face severe resistance from his major ally – the PTI



By Ahmad Waleed

The PML-Q and PTI have renewed their relations on new terms and conditions. The most coveted slot of Chief Minister was offered to Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi after Imran Khan asked his 'Wasim Akram-Plus', Usman Buzdar, to resign and pave the way for the election of the new chief minister. However, it all didn't go well as the largest province in the country plunged into a deep political crisis never seen before. Finally, the Supreme Court played its part, and Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi was declared "as the duly elected Chief Minister of Punjab."

Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi has taken the oath and his 18-member cabinet was sworn in. Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi is faced with new challenges, and it sounds like things are not as smooth as the father and son (Moonis Elahi) had thought they would be. They have issues in the family as the cousins (Shujaat Hussain and Pervaiz Elahi) are not enjoying the ideal relations that have historically been witnessed for decades. The battle lines have been drawn by the next generation of the Chaudhrys of Gujrat. Moonis Elahi wanted his father to go with Imran Khan, while Chaudhry Shujaat and

his son Salik Hussain decided to mend ties with the Sharifs. Both the leaders think they have made the right decisions.

Despite infighting in the party, Chaudhry Shujaat has extended an olive branch to his estranged cousin Pervaiz Elahi, asking him to come back to the party. Pervaiz Elahi's group in a so-called party committee meeting ousted the party head, Chaudhry Shujaat. The Pervaiz Elahi group has not replied to the Chaudhry Shujaat group's "goodwill" gesture.

Outside the party differences, the new Punjab Chief Minister is going to face severe resistance from his major ally – the PTI. It has been heard that PTI Chairman Imran Khan turned down the PML-Q's first request to increase the number of cabinet members. Instead, he asked the CM to limit the number of cabinet members to 18, with no ministers for the PML-Q since it already has the most important position of chief minister.

While the PTI would like the Punjab government to focus on the party programmes initiated by the previous chief minister, Usman Buzdar, like Sehat Card,

Langar Khanay, and Shelter Homes, Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi would want more budgets for the constituencies where PML-Q leaders have won. The PML-Q would rather spend money in their own areas to help get more people to vote for them in the next general election.

The toughest challenge for Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi would be to handle Imran Khan's direct involvement in Punjab affairs, although the Chaudhrys have maintained that they would have no problem with the PTI chief calling the shots from Islamabad. PML-Q leaders believe they would not try to embarrass their senior partner in the Punjab Assembly as Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi is a seasoned politician who can manage the affairs without fail, as he did during Usman Buzdar's tenure as Speaker of the Punjab Assembly.

There are reports that Khan wants Pervaiz Elahi to take action against the police officers who maltreated the party leaders during the May 25 Azadi March in Lahore. The chief minister has initiated inquiries against all those officers, many of whom



have already been transferred. Knowing his tendencies, Pervaiz may not be able to go beyond a certain limit to appease Imran Khan.

Just before the new cabinet took oath, the Chief Secretary of Punjab sent a request to the Establishment Division that his services may be withdrawn with immediate effect, citing "personal reasons" and conveying his inability to work with the new government. On the other hand, many police officers have been transferred and hundreds of bureaucrats are awaiting similar orders.

Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi had expressed his anger at Chief Secretary Kamran Ali Afzal and former police chief Rao Sardar Ali Khan at the police's high-handedness towards the PTI legislators, while Imran Khan, in a public meeting, had also promised the top bureaucrats legal action for maltreating the party leaders after the PTI comes into power again. Fearing action against him, the chief secretary has sought a posting outside of Punjab.

There were reports that the former chief minister, Usman Buzdar, had forced the top bureaucracy to pick PTI dissident MPAs and ensure that they did not vote against the party's directions. But, he flatly refused to obey what he called "illegal" action against the lawmakers.

It has been learned that all the posting and transfer directions are coming from Bani



Gala, where Imran Khan, along with his confidants, approves the suitable officers to execute the PTI agenda, not of PML-Q. It seems that the bureaucracy will continue to feel uncomfortable, as it did during Usman Buzdar's tenure as chief minister, because of frequent transfers and postings in the province. This time they may not be afraid of NAB cases. But their performance will go down if the PTI keeps doing the same thing, which is to change faces all the time.

Most of the PTI lawmakers and party leaders in Punjab have been opposed to Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi. Many of them fear that Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi has all the tricks to hijack the PTI, causing an

irreparable loss in Punjab. Given the current party stance against the establishment, many PTI leaders are sceptical that Chaudhry will side with them if the party encounters a serious problem, as the PML-Q has long been known for its pro-establishment stance.

The PTI-PML-Q coalition government has one year to perform in the stronghold of the PML-N. There is a big question if it will be able to dent the popularity of the largest political party in the country through performance. The answer is "no." Although Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi is known for courting friendly working relations with the bureaucracy, PTI is not capable enough to keep good relations with bureaucrats, which will be a big hurdle for the CM. Moreover, can Imran Khan's narrative of 'foreign conspiracy' and anti-establishment stance last until the next general elections to keep his vote bank intact?

Action against PTI leader Shahbaz Gill is not likely to help Chaudhry Pervaiz get along with a party that is on the warpath with the powers that be. His cousin Chaudhry Shujaat has already reaffirmed his 'cordial relations' with the establishment in very clear words. In a tweet, Ch Shujaat wrote: "I cannot support anyone criticising state institutions because he [Shujaat] has had cordial relations with the institutions for the past three decades. The state institutions guarantee stability in Pakistan."





Foreign Funding Verdict: A Challenge for All

It would be a serious challenge for the judiciary how they proceed in this rare and historic case which would determine the future course of politics in the country

By Sarfraz Raja

Three governments and four elected Prime ministers changed then came the much-awaited verdict which as expected created a stir in the entire political scenario. The case is referred to by different names: foreign funding, prohibited funding, and PTI party funding case. Many lawyers, courts, and even ECP changed but one man who remained steadfast till the end and did not back down from his accusations was the complainant.

He was a former secretary of information, vice president, and member of the central executive committee of Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf. Being a founding member and close aide of party head Imran Khan, Akbar Sher Babar had access and first-hand knowledge of almost all internal matters of PTI. That's why when in mid of December 2014 he came up with his allegations about misappropriations and misdeclarations of party funding it was not considered a petty matter by all concerned. Akbar S Babar, in his application to the Election Commission of Pakistan, demanded action against Imran Khan and other party office bearers for violating the political parties' order 2002.

It was claimed that from 2007 to 2012, PTI didn't declare exact details of its funding which they were bound to do as per law. It was mentioned in his application that he brought these irregularities to Imran Khan's notice in 2011 in a detailed written letter and when got no response from the party chief he approached the ECP. In his application, Mr. Babar claimed that PTI didn't declare funds received from abroad and their sources.

8 Long Years In Courts

Initially, when Akbar S Babar approached the ECP, the PTI was busy in its famous D chowk dharna Babar's allegations were termed as a counter strategy by the sitting government to malign PTI leadership. However, as the case progressed, the seriousness of the allegations came to light.



Akbar S Babar filed an application before the Election Commission on December 14, 2014, which was subsequently accepted for hearing.

On April 1, 2015, ECP In its order declared that the PTI didn't disclose its funding details and its sources. The PTI challenged the ECP's jurisdiction in hearing this case which was rejected by the commission on October 8, 2015.

PTI filed an application in Islamabad High court on Nov 26, 2015, challenging the status of Petitioner Akbar S Babar. The PTI took a stance that the petitioner was expelled from the party and he is doing all this in revenge.

On Feb 17, 2016, Islamabad High Court referred the case to the ECP. The ECP found no proof against Akbar regarding his expulsion from the party, thus constituted a committee to investigate his claims. The hearing in the Election Commission was temporarily halted due to the PTI's appeals to high courts.

In March 2018, the ECP constituted a committee for scrutiny of funds. In July, the ECP approached State Bank for the PTI's accounts details, declaring a lack of cooperation from the PTI by not providing party accounts details.

Although the scrutiny committee was formed in March 2018 to completely scrutinize the PTI's accounts, it took almost four years to present its report to the Election Commission, which was submitted in Dec 2021.

According to the report, the PTI underreported an amount of Rs312 million over four years, between 2009 and 2013. An amount of over Rs145 Million was underreported in the financial year 2012-13 alone.

The report said that the PTI disclosed only 12 accounts, out of 77. The party hid 2 bank accounts in 2008-09. It also did not give access to the party accounts in Canada and New Zealand.

After this report from the scrutiny committee, ECP heard arguments by the PTI lawyers and then reserved its decision which they announced on August 2, 2022.

ECP's Decision

A three-member bench comprising Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja and ECP members Nisar Ahmed Durrani and Shah Muhammad Jatoti announced the verdict.

In its verdict, the ECP said that the party, in violation of the Constitution, had received



funds from 34 foreigners. The party received funds from the US, Australia, and UAE.

“The party accepted funds from a US business personality and 13 unidentified accounts also surfaced during the probe in the PTI funding case.”

The ECP said that the PTI had submitted a false affidavit about the party's accounts. PTI Chairman Imran Khan had submitted a false F1 form to the ECP, the commission is satisfied that the contributions and donations have been received by the respondent party from prohibited sources, the ruling stated.

A show-cause notice was issued to Imran Khan about the confiscation of funds collected through prohibited means, and the decision was also sent to the federal government to proceed further as per the law.

What Law Says?

The case falls under the ambit of political parties order (PPO) 2002. It was issued during Gen Pervez Musharraf's tenure before General Elections 2002 to regulate and control the functioning of political parties. Later it was amended in the Elections Act 2017.

This act clearly states that the fee and donations made by any member or supporter shall be duly recorded by that party.

Any contribution or donation made directly or indirectly by any foreign source including any foreign country, a multinational, public or private company, firm, trade, professional association, or individual shall be prohibited.

Any contribution and donation prohibited under this act shall be confiscated in favor of the government. Contributions and donations include those made in cash, kind, transport, stock, fuel, and provision of other such facilities. Foreign sources shall not include any overseas Pakistani holding national identity card for overseas Pakistanis NICOP issued by national Database and registration authority NADRA.

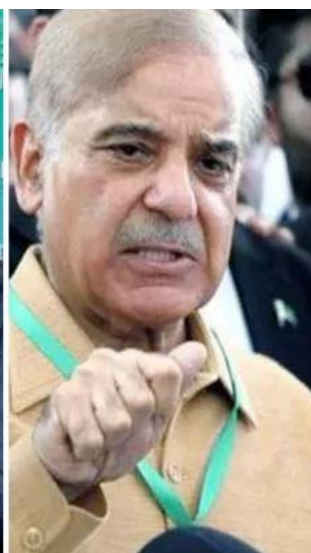
It is also necessary for all political parties to provide their annual assets and liabilities

funds and expenditures detail to the Election commission of Pakistan duly attested by a chartered accountant and signed by the party head to be eligible for contesting elections.

What's Next?

With the issuance of a show-cause notice to Imran Khan as party head, ECP also referred the matter to the federal government for further action as per law, but still, it's not so simple.

Law suggests differently in the case of foreign and prohibited funding. In the case of foreign funding, if a party is declared as foreign-aided it could be dissolved which still has a legal process. The federal government after analyzing the matter refers the case to the Supreme Court which after conducting a hearing decides the fate of a party. In case of a decision against the party, it would be dissolved, its members of parliament would lose their membership, and accounts would be frozen. However, in the case of just prohibited funding, ECP can confiscate those funds collected through prohibited means.



In the ECP decision, there is another charge of wrong or misdeclaration of accounts which is considered a serious charge against the signatories party head Imran Khan and secretary-general of the time, Dr. Arif Alvi. Experts say these charges could lead to disqualification of these signatories under article 62[1] f.

Challenges For Both Government And PTI

ECP verdict has become a challenge for both parties, the PTI and the federal government. PMLN-led allied government has to decide to what extent they could go by the electoral body verdict. Investigation under the Federal Investigation Agency was initiated soon after the verdict was issued to probe the facts and details about foreign funding and obtain strong enough evidence to prove their point in court. However, seeking the dissolution of a party for foreign funding could have political repercussions.

On the other hand, Party Chairman Imran Khan is certainly in hot waters after the ECP decision and could be trialed under article 62[1] f for hiding facts. The article says: “A person shall not be qualified to be elected or chosen as a Member of Parliament unless he is sagacious, righteous, and non-profligate, honest and amen, there being no declaration contrary by a court of law.”

Already former three-time prime minister Nawaz Sharif has been facing lifetime disqualification for hiding and not declaring assets. So Imran Khan could be another one who can fall under these constitutional clauses. It would be a challenge for the judiciary how they proceed in this rare and historic case which would determine the future scenario of politics in the country.

Pelosi's visit to Taiwan invites Chinese Ire

The latest episode involving Nancy Pelosi's controversial visit to Taiwan has to be viewed against the backdrop of intensifying Sino-American rivalry in the Asia-Pacific region

By Dr. Syed Rifaat Hussain

American Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan on August 2 has further strained ties between Beijing and Washington.

After issuing several warnings to Nancy Pelosi, the current speaker of the House of Representatives, not to visit Taiwan which the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) regards as its territory and a renegade province devoid of international legitimacy based on the principle of "one country and two systems," Beijing has reacted strongly in the aftermath of the visit. Pelosi became the highest-ranking elected US official to visit Taiwan in nearly a quarter of a century.

She has justified her visit to Taipei as a "demonstration of America's commitment to democracy and open society". She was invited by the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) to visit Taiwan. DPP has been in power since 2016 and is known for its pro-independence proclivities and nationalistic fervor.

The problem of Taiwan arose at the end of the Chinese civil war when during its concluding phase in 1949, the Chinese communists led by Mao Tse Tung defeated the Nationalist forces.

Following this defeat, Chiang Kai-shek, the Nationalist leader of Kuomintang moved his government, party, and military to the nearby island, Taiwan.

However, Taiwan as the Republic of China (ROC) continued to represent China at world forums including the United Nations until 1971, when the PRC took over China's official seat. Subsequently, Chiang's government lost its international standing.

Following the normalization of Sino-American relations in the early 1970s, Washington began to treat ROC as a province of the PRC but committed itself to the security of Taiwan.



PRC also promised the peaceful reunification of ROC with PRC but insisted that it retains the right to use force, if necessary, under the principle of "one country, two systems."

With DPP's rise to power in 2016 and the decline of the rival political party Kuomintang, the pro-independence sentiment grew in Taiwan. Beijing fears that DPP's leadership is being tacitly encouraged by the United States to weaken its claims of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and unity over Taiwan.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has been a fervent advocate of "democratic Taiwan" and a relentless critic of the PRC's record on human rights, the alleged use of prison labor, and the Communist Party of China's treatment of Tibet. Pelosi also represents the powerful Taiwan lobby in Washington that works to promote the cause of a democratic and independent Taiwan. It is instructive to note that during her visit to PRC in 2009, Nancy Pelosi had presented a Congressional letter to then President Hu Jin-Tao calling for "the release of political prisoners".

Partly to placate her domestic constituency and partly to pander to the Taiwan lobby, Nancy Pelosi thumbed her nose at the angry Chinese and defied several warnings of serious consequences for Sino-American relations issued by Beijing.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijiang stated that Beijing would take "resolute and strong measures." He observed that Pelosi's visit "would severely undermine China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, gravely impact the foundation of China-US relations and send a seriously wrong signal to Taiwan independence forces." Earlier in his telephonic conversation with President Joe Biden, President Xi had warned Washington that it would be playing with fire if it let Nancy Pelosi visit Taiwan.

The interesting question is how far Washington has been implicated in Pelosi's provocative visit to Beijing. Pelosi flew into Taiwan in an American Air Force plane and was escorted by U.S. jets, according to some media reports, as Washington feared that her flight might be interrupted by Chinese warplanes that were scrambled at the time of her arrival from Singapore. This shows that Washington was playing a "good cop and a bad cop" game with Beijing over Pelosi's visit. Beijing was faced with a difficult choice. Short of creating a horrible diplomatic incident by physically preventing her plane from landing in Taiwan, Beijing decided to punish Washington by going ahead with some measures to vent its diplomatic ire.

Beijing banned Pelosi and her family members from future travels to PRC.

China's Foreign Ministry stated that dialogue between the US and Chinese regional commanders and defense department heads would be canceled, along with talks on military maritime safety. Cooperation on returning illegal immigrants, criminal investigations, transnational crime, illegal drugs, and climate change will be suspended, the ministry said.

John Kirby, the White House official said that senior US officials have been meeting regularly with their Chinese counterparts over the dispute. Calling China's actions "provocative," Kirby said the Biden administration condemned China's military maneuvers as irresponsible and "at odds with our long-standing goal of maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait."

"We also made clear that the United States is prepared for what Beijing chooses to do," he said.

China's actions come ahead of a key congress of the ruling Communist Party later this year at which President Xi is expected to obtain a third five-year term as party leader. With the Chinese economy slowing down, the Party has stoked nationalism and 'issued near-daily attacks on the government of Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen, which refuses to recognize Taiwan as part of China.'

China further announced that more than 100 warplanes and 10 warships have taken part in the live-fire military drills around Taiwan. The Rocket Force also fired projectiles over Taiwan into the Pacific marking a serious escalation in tensions.

According to media reports, tourists gathered on Friday to try to catch a glimpse of any military aircraft heading toward the exercise area and chanting slogans "let us take Taiwan back."

Pelosi's visit stirred emotions among the Chinese public, with the local press calling upon the government to "make us feel that our motherland is very powerful and gives us confidence that the return of Taiwan is the irresistible trend". The Chinese public expressed disappointment when the military announced the ending of live fire drills across the Taiwan Strait.

China summoned European diplomats to

protest statements issued by the Group of Seven industrialized nations and the European Union, criticizing the Chinese military exercises surrounding Taiwan. US Secretary of State, Antony Blinken called the drills a "significant escalation" and urged Beijing to back down.

Moscow in its statement accused the U.S. of "destabilizing the security situation surrounding Taiwan" and characterized Pelosi's visit to Taiwan as an unnecessary provocation.

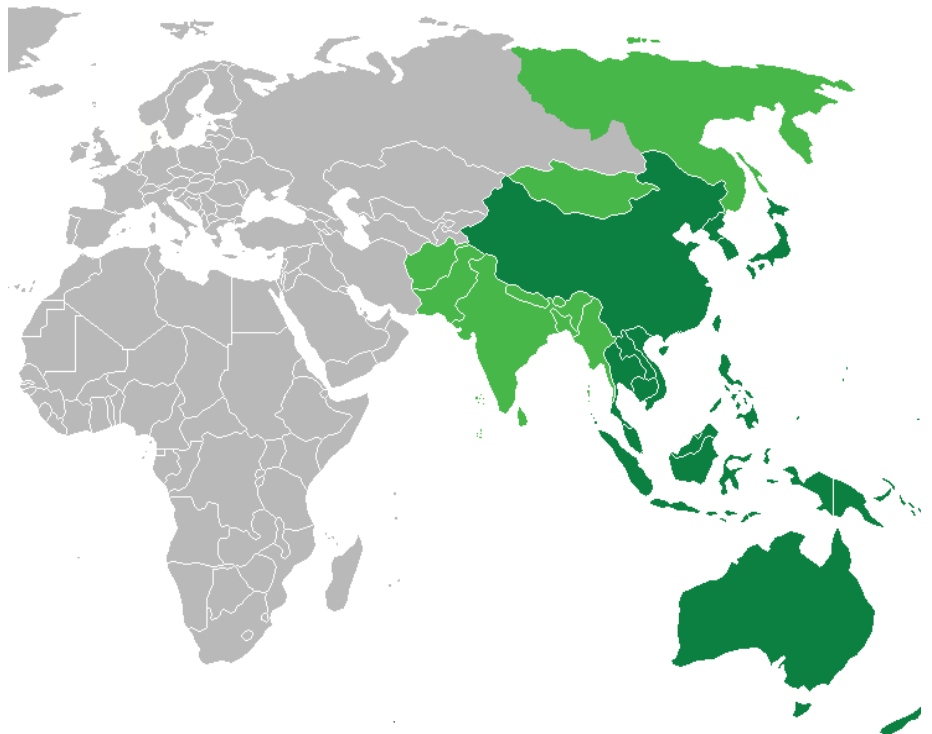
The latest episode involving Nancy Pelosi's controversial visit to Taiwan has to be viewed against the backdrop of intensifying Sino-American rivalry in the Asia-Pacific region. In its national security documents, Washington has characterized PRC as its "peer competitor" whose expanding influence must be contained. Taiwan is one area in which Washington with its regional allies like Japan, South Korea, Australia, and Singapore would engage in diplomatic provocations such as Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan to force a military show-down with Beijing. By encouraging forces of independence within Taiwan, Washington hopes to cross the PRC's redlines and provoke a military conflict with China.

Beijing has refused to take the American

bait over Taiwan and has exercised strategic prudence by suspending all dialogue with the U.S.

The Chinese position on Taiwan is firmly rooted in principles of international law, diplomatic norms, and legal treaties. For example, the Shanghai Communiqué that normalized relations between PRC and U.S. clearly stated, "Taiwan is China's internal affairs in which no other country has the right to interfere." It went on to add that "all US forces and military installations must be withdrawn from Taiwan." It further stipulated that "Taiwan is a part of China," reaffirmed "its interest in a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan question by the Chinese themselves," and affirmed the "ultimate objective of the withdrawal of all U.S. forces and military installations from Taiwan." The language of the Shanghai Communiqué has been codified in all subsequent bilateral treaties signed by the U.S. with PRC.

It is incomprehensible to any objective observer that the PRC's claim over Taiwan as its territory might be called into question. And that is exactly what Nancy Pelosi with the tacit approval of Washington was trying to achieve during her visit to Taiwan but failed in the end.



One year of Taliban govt in Afghanistan

Taliban had bright chances in early 2022 to get world recognition, but a sudden change in the girls' education policy stopped the world community to go forward

By Mehmood Jan Babar

On the eve of their very first anniversary of ruling Kabul, the Afghan Taliban are still struggling hard to convince the West to recognize them as a legitimate govt and let them be a member state of the world community at the UN. However, the countries 'defeated' by them seem hesitant to go a step forward in this direction before their demands are fulfilled.

After one year, many in the West and even within the ranks of the Taliban are critical of some of their policies, especially towards accommodating all ethnicities in the govt to make it an 'inclusive' and acceptable ruling group. Ban on girls' education has also attracted huge criticism from the locals and the UN member countries.

But some independent experts like Ismail Khan, resident editor of Dawn in Peshawar comprehend it as a great achievement of the Taliban to sustain for one long year and run the state affairs; govern and generate revenue despite an abrupt halt of international funding and assistance to Afghanistan.

"There were drought and food shortage in Afghanistan when they came to power last year, but they handled it very effectively alongside ensuring peace, fighting ISIS, and surviving financially", Ismail Khan said.

The Afghan Taliban seeks to be treated as a legitimized government based on signing the Doha Agreement with the Trump administration on February 29, 2020, and thus have grievances over the placement of sanctions and freezing of the country's central bank assets. These assets were frozen after the Taliban seized control of Afghanistan in August last year.

"Ban on girls' education seems a reciprocated tactic to get the frozen funds released", a Taliban leader privy to the issue in Kabul hinted while talking to this scribe.

They had bright chances during the first three months of the current year to get recognition from the world. But a sudden



change in the girls' education policy stopped the world community to go forward, a former Pakistani diplomat close to developments in Afghanistan said while commenting on the situation.

As far as the formal recognition of the Taliban govt is concerned, it will take time, Ismail Khan commented on the process saying that the world response is slow but not disappointing because the US was talking to them in Doha till the recent Drone Attack in Kabul. Interim Foreign Minister Mulla Mohammad Amir Mutaqi was also invited to attend the meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and other countries too are having positive engagements with them.

During the last few months, some Western countries have positioned second-tier staff at their Kabul embassies to keep the relations intact at a low level. These embassies are being operated through 'Charge, d Affairs' instead of full-fledged ambassadors which is a clear indication that they are still not satisfied with the Taliban govt.

"We are ready to go with the world community at the pace they want us to go. We are interested to increase trade and business with the world community. The world should recognize us without wasting

time", Taliban Interim Foreign Minister Mulvi Amir Khan Mutaqi has said on different occasions.

The recent drone attack in Kabul has attracted the wrath of the Taliban, in a statement regarding this attack they said that an air strike was carried out on a house in Kabul city. Two days later, US President Joe Biden claimed that US troops had targeted Al-Qaeda leader, Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri, in this attack. The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has no information about Ayman al-Zawahiri's arrival and stay in Kabul.

The leadership of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has instructed the investigation and intelligence agencies to conduct a comprehensive and serious probe into the various aspects of the incident.

There is no threat to any country, including America, from the soil of Afghanistan, the Islamic Emirate wants to implement the Doha pact and the violation of the pact must end. The fact is that America invaded our territory and violated all international principles, we strongly condemn the action once again, said the Afghan Taliban. "If such action is repeated, the responsibility for any consequences will be on the United States of America," the statement added.

Some experts closely monitoring the situation in Afghanistan said that on one hand, such drone attacks may jeopardize the future of the Doha Agreement by halting the Afghan funds by the US and on the other hand trigger a reaction from the Taliban like a ban on girls' education.

On Aug 15, the day when the US forces started withdrawal from Afghanistan around one hundred thousand educated and highly skilled professionals were encouraged to leave their country for a 'better future' in Western countries. This opportunity for the people having fear, cultural, and freedom-related issues with the Taliban preferred to leave the country without delay. This practice had also confronted the newly born 'govt' of the Taliban with enormous problems to survive and run the state's affairs effectively.

But as per the press statements issued by Taliban officials from time to time, during the last few months, a good number of the former govt officials and heads of different departments have returned to Afghanistan to serve their country. While most of the skilled Afghans are even now abroad, "We have invited all of them to come back to Afghanistan to participate in reconstruction and rehabilitation of their homeland, they are free to go anywhere and enjoy freedom in Afghanistan", Afghan Ministers said on different occasions.

The funds required for different sectors, especially health and education were immediately halted by the international aid organizations like World Bank, IMF, and

USAID soon after the allied forces' withdrawal from Afghanistan. This had also increased the problems of the patients in more than 2500 hospitals and clinics since both medicines and the staff was in short supply.

Another major problem, Ismail Khan while commenting on the overall situation said, is that the system is being run on an ad-hoc basis under an interim govt rather than having a proper political govt.

"Taliban still needs to be more flexible and moderate to live with the world community. They are stagnant and divided on ideological grounds and have to shun the hardline stance", Ismail Khan added.

A former diplomat who wished not to be named said that for better results the IEA govt in Afghanistan has to induct properly experienced banking experts in this sector instead of running this important sector through the clerics. The Taliban, the former diplomat added, must improve the stranded relations with neighboring Iran, Pakistan, and some of the Central Asian States which is a key to enhancing trade with them.

Of the developments and reforms in the governance system, IEA Spokesperson Ustad Faridoon said that reforms are taking place in all the important sectors. He added that under the Ministry of Land and Urban Development, the new Kabul project, which will provide shelter for three and a half million people, is starting again, "with the construction of this project, the problem of shelter in Kabul will be solved and

residential houses will be sold in installments."

The minister said that 110 officials of the Ashraf Ghani govt have returned to Afghanistan owing to the struggle of the commission made for contact with them during the last month since Eid-ul-Azha which is a great achievement in the sector of human resources. A good number of these skilled officials are in contact with the Taliban govt for their return home and services, he added. "Defense Ministry of Afghanistan is very close to installing its latest radar-and-missile system to counter foreign air aggression very soon. We will hit them in our premises at sight."

The minister said that vocational training for thousands of women is being provided in different parts of Afghanistan to enable them to support their families. These trainings are provided to the poor and homeless women.

We, Ustad Faridoon added, are eliminating ISIS from society so the people could live a peaceful life. Recently, their plan to target Shia Community in Kabul was unearthed and the terrorist was killed.

Afghanistan's Ministry of Mines and Petroleum said that it has collected 13.2 billion afghanis in revenue in the past year.

Speaking at a press conference as part of the new ministerial accountability program, Shahabuddin Delawar, acting minister of mines and petroleum, said that the ministry signed contracts for the extraction of 158 small mines over the past year.



The dilemma of Gender Rights in Afghanistan

Are the Taliban of 2021 different from the Taliban of 1996?

By Tayyaba Razzaq

The Taliban's severe treatment of women in the 1990s sparked concerns about gender equality in Afghanistan. After that, the Taliban instituted a restriction on the education of women and openly discriminated against them by not allowing them to hold jobs outside the home. In addition, they forbade women to drive cars.

In order for women to leave their houses, they had to be accompanied by a "mahram," which is a male family relative who acts as an escort. Men were coerced into keeping women confined to the home.

Women in Afghanistan, particularly in the urban centers, who have now enjoyed relative freedom, equal rights, and access to education and work, are reminded of the suffering, restrictions, and curbs they faced in the 1990s when they see the Taliban patrolling the streets and overseeing the country's governance. This is especially true in the rural areas of Afghanistan, where women are not allowed to attend school or work. It was projected that by the year 2020, the male literacy rate in Afghanistan would be at 59 percent, while the female literacy rate would be at 29.8 percent. Despite the fact that the female literacy rate of 29.8 percent is among the lowest in the world, it only improved after the US/Coalition presence after 2001 and was significantly higher than it was during the Taliban regime in the 1990s. This is despite the fact that the rate is one of the lowest in the world.

Since the fall of the Taliban in 2001, the number of students enrolled in Afghan schools has increased from 900,000 male students in 2001 to more than 9.5 million students in 2020, with 39% of those students being female. In addition, the percentage of Afghan women who are actively participating in the labour force has been documented at 22% in recent years.

When it comes to the direction that the Taliban intend to take their policy toward women, the Taliban have purposefully chosen to exclude specific details from their response. When asked to clarify their



position on the issue, the Taliban's stock response is that they "support women's rights under Sharia law." This is one of the primary reasons why the ministry for women's affairs was immediately dismantled and the ministry for vice and virtue was reinstated. It is not made clear what is meant by the statement that the "Taliban supports women's rights," nor is any further clarification supplied.

Stanikzai stated in a recent interview with the BBC that "women will not be in the cabinet or high government positions." Stanikzai made this statement in response to a question about whether or not women will hold top government roles. However, they might be able to function at a reduced level. This comment provides further evidence that the Taliban's outlook on women in Afghanistan has not altered to a significant degree. They believe that women are unable to perform senior or decision-making responsibilities because of their biological make-up. This problematically hyper-masculine perspective on the role that women play in society, particularly in Afghanistan, needs to be addressed.

Fears that the Taliban may not have changed their stance on treating women as equal human beings are exacerbated by the fact that they still hold a "degrading" view of women and there are no women in

leadership positions within the organization. The Taliban's track record from the 1990s is also taken into consideration.

Even while the Taliban maintains that women in Afghanistan have rights that are in accordance with Sharia, there is no guarantee that they will not use the fact that these rights are in accordance with Sharia as a reason to restrict women's rights. There is still a significant chance that Afghan women may be subjected to the same kind of cruel treatment that they received when the Taliban ruled the country in the 1990s.

When it comes to issues concerning the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan, the question that continues to beg to be answered is this: Are the Taliban of 2021 different from the Taliban of 1996?

Both yes and no!

Yes, for the following reasons: The group is now knowledgeable in both technology and politics; it wishes to develop regional linkages and alliances; and, in the course of doing so, it also demands governmental recognition and economic concessions. In this aspect, the international community may hold some sway over the Taliban and be able to exert some pressure on them to grant universal human and gender rights to the people of Afghanistan in exchange for some form of recognition and economic concessions.

And no, because a group that brags about having nearly 5000 ready-to-detonate suicide bombers and that has fought arguably the sole global superpower for two decades to get where it is will, in the long run, go back to its "basics." This is because a group that has fought for two decades against the United States, which is arguably the only global superpower.

These fundamentals have their origins in a hyper-masculine patriarchal mindset, which hesitates to grant women full personal and professional rights and actively

works to deny them such rights. This worldview is also opposed to cultural activities, including the participation of women in the arts and media.

As a result, any promises made by the Taliban with regard to gender rights may initially be motivated by a desire to seek and gain global recognition and a relaxation in economic sanctions. The most recent developments, on the other hand, in a variety of locations around the country likewise paint a bleak image. On September 5, 2021, Zaki Daryabi, the editor-in-chief of

the Etilaatroz daily, relayed the tragic incident of Negar, a pregnant female police officer who was allegedly murdered by the Taliban in front of her son and husband in Ferzkoh, Ghor. The Taliban have stated that they will conduct an investigation into the incident and have not confirmed that members of their group were responsible for the murder. On the other hand, incidents such as this are the primary reason women in the country feel afraid, particularly in rural sections of the country where there is little media access and concentration.

Pakistan Joins ASEAN in 55th ASEAN Day Celebrations

Pakistan appreciates ASEAN's progress and significant strides in advancing regional cooperation. In line with its 'Vision East Asia' policy, Pakistan attaches high priority to further strengthening its multi-dimensional relations with ASEAN, including through enhanced connectivity and people-to-people contacts

TTI News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan felicitates the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Member States on the 55th ASEAN Day.

Founded on principles of cooperation, amity and non-interference, ASEAN has evolved into a dynamic and integrated economic community advancing shared interests of regional peace and development. The Foreign Office of Pakistan said in a press statement issued on Tuesday.

Pakistan has long-standing cooperation with ASEAN, as the Sectoral Dialogue Partner since 1993, member of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) since 2004, also having acceded to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in South East Asia in 2004.

Pakistan appreciates ASEAN's progress and significant strides in advancing regional cooperation. In line with its 'Vision East Asia' policy, Pakistan attaches high priority to further strengthening its multi-dimensional relations with ASEAN, including through enhanced connectivity and people-to-people contacts.

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's participation in the 29th ARF Ministerial Meeting held recently in Phnom Penh was a manifestation of Pakistan's commitment to advancing its partnership with ASEAN.



Failure of the Marketplace of Ideas: A National Security Perspective

'The strong do what they have to do, and the weak accept what they have to accept.'

By Syed Ali Abbas



One of the virtues of democracy is to entertain the marketplace of ideas, whereby the decisions are based upon the collective consensus. However, even among the mature democratic states, the provision of an inclusive dialogue fails from the national security standpoint. Critics have argued that the present normative behavioral patterns, either of a state, their leaders, or the media, under the aegis of the national security perspective, are averred to be inherently undemocratic.

Critical Scholars contend that the bipolar world war order has embedded these undemocratic norms worldwide in the security policies, and it continues to sway the dominant discourse to this day. In furthering the cause, the notions of 'silenced patriotism' and fixation on meanings have befit the executive authorities with the tools to implicitly influence even the presumed national dialogue on an assertive security policy.

These normative patterns are also among the other factors liable for the failure of the marketplace of ideas even in mature democracies like the United States of America.

Past has undoubtedly imprisoned us in its realm. Hands from the graves have chained human behavior, and it is a daunting task to seek freedom under the strong manifestation of behaviors shaped by past experiences. Under this understanding of the past, the historical anomalies, grievances, and threat perceptions have substantially emboldened the peculiar undemocratic norms in security policies even among the mature democratic states.

Globally, due to "the free world" sacred discourse, the USA is seen as the sole pillar of light in the heap of darkness. However, the sacred discourse of the free world and freedom from the past does not reflect in respecting the marketplace of ideas, especially in security matters related to foreign and domestic policies.

To make the case, looking in retrospect, the invasion of Iraq explicitly illustrates the failure of inclusive dialogue even when the built-in institutional apparatus was in place to deter such misadventures. One of the factors responsible for the systemic failure was that the Cold War Era had generated a militarized political culture whereby the transformed and assertive political culture

was the need of the hour- to swiftly deal with the crisis; however, the far worst happened when the perceived crisis translated into new a political reality and strongly embedded itself when the perceived threat was no longer there to deter.

In this hindsight, the dialogue during the pre-invasion of Iraq has not received enough introspection from the opposition in congress nor from the media. In an explicit sense, it can be called an undemocratic practice -now a set precedent regularly exercised under the national security paradigm.

Furthermore, due to a lack of broad political consensus, it can be asserted that the undemocratic norms were ascribed to silenced patriotism, and the cognitive dissonance of an individual explains how such practices were enforced upon them by tactics, using the unavoidable label of being called unpatriotic.

A plethora of undemocratic practices can be rendered unquestionable by invoking the silenced patriotism and it either implicitly or explicitly threatens the individual or the institution with an unpatriotic label. Under the hood of ordinary patriotism, there exists a silencing effect that easily engineers deference towards an established order or policy. Unable to avoid the label of being unpatriotic, the executive authority cripples the inclusive political dialogues, manipulates the decision-making bodies, and constitutes an environment where what can and what can't be questioned is clearly defined – failing to do so will result in grave consequences.

While people were swayed under the silenced patriotism, the spatial and temporal settings of this normative behavior prior to the invasion of Iraq helped the Bush administration to easily exercise the unilateral decision of the US to declare the war on Iraq – without facing any dire political consequences for their administration.

Rhetorical coercion was seldomly used by the executive body as clearly the silencing effect was enough to suppress and silence the voices of the people, lawmakers, and the media houses.



By acknowledging the cognitive dissonance, the opposition and the media houses not only remained silent but also assisted in developing and legitimating the dominant discourse of executive authority.

Consequently, emboldened by the fixation on dominant meaning as a universal, the marketplace of ideas again failed under the construction of an inclusive meaning and in return constructed a myopic knowledge that was both reactionary and parochial in nature.

Void in knowledge can easily be supplemented with an overarching idea of a fixed meaning, which effectively generates a dominant discourse that gets beyond the matter of an inquiry. In the midst of the chaos after 9/11, the fixation on meaning plays a constitutive role to limit the marketplace of ideas to generate a broader consensus among the groups and identities. Culture and identities can be maliciously used for one's own benefit to make the ends meet.

In the matter pertinent to Iraq's case, Bush's administration fixed Iraq's state identity with a nexus of evil. The personality cult of Saddam was introduced as the next Hitler. By doing so, it enables the sufficient environment to inflate the threat by arguing that the weapon of mass destruction (WMDs) is even getting into the hands

of non-state actors – Al-Qaeda – as Saddam Hussain has a close tie with them.

By alleging that Saddam was a proponent of global terrorism and a horizontal nuclear

proliferator - a crime in so-called American Social Sciences, not the vertical nuclear proliferation of recognized nuclear states - the media and the opposition leaders could not gather the moral strength to question the facts which depict a picture that was far from what the Bush's administration had said. What happened next was that the Bush administration adopted a reactionary and parochial approach toward the security policies regarding Iraq and unilaterally declared the war on Iraq.

Without taking the consensus from the congress and multilateral organizations, the fixation on meaning enabled the environment for the Bush administration to take



such undemocratic steps without having the fear of political upheaval.

Thus, it can be argued that there exists hypocrisy in the western discourse on democratic norms where it is legitimate to preserve the national interests and international security of mature democracies via undemocratic means while developing democracies cannot partake in the same course of action. In the event that the developing democracies dare to commit any undemocratic practices, they will be labeled as rogue or failed states, and they will have to face the wrath of the western democracies in the form of either sanctions or war. The cases of Venezuela and Iraq are glaring examples of western punishment for exercising undemocratic means in the 21st century.

But the question comes who will punish the powerful western democracies when they act in ways that aren't democratic? Should the weak countries of the global south institutionalize a mechanism to punish if the powerful democracies of the global north commit such crimes? On the other hand, can the Security Council deprive permanent members of democratic states of their powers if they engage in an undemocratic practice that has global ramifications?

Alas, the utopian concept of justice cannot be applied in this world. On the contrary, justice is defined by the people and states that control power. Thucydides once said, "The strong do what they have to do, and the weak accept what they have to accept."

Govt's belated action against dollarization, army chief's involvement in IMF programme dissipate default speculations

Amid constantly declining value of the US dollar, a rush of people is seen at the foreign currency exchange companies to sell the greenback in anticipation of further decrease in its value in the coming days

By Javed Mahmood

ISLAMABAD: The federal government and State Bank of Pakistan's belated actions against dollarisation in the country have yielded much-needed positive outcomes in recent days. The federal government has announced measures to restrict imports for another three months to contain trade deficit and current account deficit have led to downfall of the US dollar in the inter-bank and open market. The central bank has also taken regulatory actions against the foreign currency exchange companies and their franchises involved in manipulation of value of dollar and its black-marketing have discouraged the unbridled trend of dollarisation in Pakistan.

In recent weeks the State Bank of Pakistan has not only suspended licenses/operations of some currency exchange companies but also imposed huge fines on them for violating the SBP's rules while trading the greenback. The combined strategies of the federal government and the central bank have thrown down the value of the US dollar to 116 rupees in the open market, from record high level of 250 in couple of weeks while in the inter-bank the greenback is being traded around 220 rupees as against its record value of 245 rupees a few days ago. Amid constantly declining value of the US dollar, a rush of people is seen at the foreign currency exchange companies to sell the greenback in anticipation of further decrease in its value in the coming days. The capital markets analysts are estimating the dollar-rupee exchange rate to fall to 190 rupees in the inter-bank and open market soon because the executive board of the IMF is scheduled to hold its meeting either on August 24 or 25 to approve \$1.2 billion tranches for Pakistan, which will further boost value of rupee.



The IMF officials will resume their office from August 13, after enjoying their summer vacations and by that time, the Pakistan government will be able to line up \$4 billion financing commitments from friendly countries such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar. As the IMF has noted a \$4 billion gap in the external financing of Pakistan in 2022-23, the fund has asked Pakistan to arrange this financing ahead of the board meeting to qualify for the resumption of loan.

Most importantly, the chief of army staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa has personally spoken to high-level officials in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, seeking their support for \$4 billion financing arrangement ahead of IMF board meeting. Earlier, army chief talked to the senior treasury officials in the United States, seeking their support for the timely approval of the IMF loan. With the involvement of army chief in the IMF loan programme's approval, the fears and speculations of default of Pakistan have dissipated, resultantly, the US dollar is constantly losing its value on a daily basis.

The IMF loan programme was scheduled to end in June 2022, but on the request of the government, the officials

of the fund have extended the programme to June 2023. Once the IMF approves the disbursement of the loan, the country will be out of the risk of facing default, at least for one financial year _ 2022-23 and after the expiry of the IMF programme, once again Pakistan will be at the brink of the default and the new government, which forms the government after 2023 general elections, will have to run after the IMF once again to combat the risk of default and to arrange the required foreign financing for the 2023-24 financial year.

Now it is important to discuss as to why the government and the central bank have taken tough measures to curb the flight of the greenback in the inter-bank and open market. These days, the foreign exchange reserves of the State Bank of Pakistan have fallen around \$8.3 billion and by the time the IMF releases its loan, the reserves of the SBP would be fluctuating around \$7 billion level _ barely enough to cover five weeks imports. In this situation, the only option with the government is to discourage speculative trading of the dollar, end black-marketing and keep pressure minimum on the national reserves. Additionally, it is becoming difficult for the State Bank to arrange dollars for imports.

Furthermore, the international prices of crude oil have plummeted to below \$96 a barrel (Brent oil) while OPEC crude is trading around \$100 per barrel. Unfortunately, Pakistan is unable to take advantage of falling oil prices because the value of the US dollar has increased to 222 rupees in the inter-bank, from 175 rupees when the coalition government was formed. In this situation, the government will have to further bring down the rate of dollar to below 200 rupees, otherwise, the coalition government will be able to provide any relief to the consumers in the country.

Meanwhile, a record hike in the value of the US dollar has forced the government to increase oil, electricity, gas, cooking oil and other essential consumers' items which have annoyed the general public. Hence, the strategy of the government and the State Bank of Pakistan appear the only remedy to the prevailing critical situation which will enable the government to reduce non-essential imports, curb dollarisation, improve economic activities in the country and save the government entities like Pakistan State Oil from default.

Importantly, in 2021-22 Pakistan has suffered a record trade deficit of more than \$48 billion as imports crossed \$80 billion while exports ended around \$31.4 billion. Interestingly, the quantum of remittances sent by overseas Pakistanis in the last fiscal year surged to \$31 billion, but the trade deficit wiped out the impact of record inflow of remittances in a year. The trade deficit also enhanced the current account deficit of Pakistan to over \$17 billion in 2021-22. Thus, the root-causes of the economic erosion in the country, among other things, are the trade deficit and the



current account deficit. Therefore, the government and the central bank have decided in principle to control financial bleeding by curbing both the deficits, flight of the dollar and putting the country back on track after getting the IMF loan. In 2022-23, the government needs more or less \$35 billion dollars equivalent foreign financing – through loans and sale of bonds. About \$21 billion are required to pay back foreign loans while 13 to 14 billion dollars are needed to cover the current account deficit. The huge volumes of trade deficit and current account deficit indicate how we waste billions of dollars and ultimately run after the International Monetary Fund to get more loans for economic survival of the country.

Finance Minister links IMF programme with economic stability

Minister for Finance Miftah Ismail said that macroeconomic stability is

forthcoming in the wake of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme that is being resumed by the end of August 2022. He said the government has accomplished all conditions in this regard. The Finance Minister stated this in a meeting with Pakistan Stock Exchange officials, authorities and businessmen on Aug 9 in Karachi.

Chairperson of Pakistan Stock Exchange board Dr Shamshad Akhtar, Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan Chairperson Aamir Khan, PSX CEO and Managing Director Farrukh H. Khan, Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Chairperson Asim Ahmad, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Deputy Governor Dr Inayat Hussain, Special Secretary Finance Awais Manzoor, and key stakeholders including Arif Habib Group Chairman Arif Habib, Pakistan Stock Brokers Association & AKD Group Chairman Aqeel Karim Dhedhi, Bank Alfalah Limited CEO Atif Bajwa, NBP Funds CEO Dr Amjad Waheed, Arif Habib Corporation Director Nasim Beg, and Pakistan Business Council CEO Ehsan Malik participated in the meeting.

Miftah Ismail assured the participants of the meeting that the country's balance-of-payments position was "well under control" and it may even have a surplus in the coming months because of increased hydel power, lower energy demands and lower oil prices. Fiscal discipline will be strictly followed and all additional expenditures will be fully funded by tax measures. The 10 per cent super tax is only imposed for one year while alternative revenue streams are developed," he said.



Roadmap to economic recovery [Part - II]

By Humayun Akhtar Khan

The first parts in this series discussed why we keep falling into crisis situations, and the need for the economy to grow. Low public and private investment are behind uneven growth and falling exports. For public investment, the government needs to both cut costs and increase revenue. Tax policy must serve export growth. Public and private finance must fund more investment and self-reliance would cut our import bill.

Tax policy to increase revenue and exports: We already see steps to widen the direct tax base. The government must go further and reduce exemptions. Many exemptions have outlived their utility. Apart from denying the government much-needed revenue, they redirect investment from the manufacturing and export sectors. It is time to reassess tax policy so that it serves our economic goals.

To enable private firms to compete globally, the government may help them scale up. In this regard, the policy to tax inter-corporate dividends needs review. According to the Pakistan Business Council, a number of tax measures hinder investment. Upfront payment of sales tax and income tax are an issue. These conditions also need revision.

It is unfair also to levy more tax on existing taxpayers. The FBR must set separate targets for revenue from existing and new taxpayers.

The problem of low investment: Public and private investment both have fallen. I would have liked the government to take note of this alarming trend and do something about it. So far, there is not even a discussion. Falling growth, exports and the fragile current account are all outcomes of low investment.

Re-cast and increase public investment: There is a strong case to recast the federal PSDP so that it helps raise private productivity. The Planning Commission may develop new metrics for selection of projects to provide infrastructure and HR aid to exporters. Most new projects must fit into the new criteria. Given its large pipeline, the shift would be gradual.



Also, for years the government has talked about Public Private Partnership to add to its allocation. PPP is a useful platform to boost public investment. The Viability Gap Fund may be funded from the PSDP. The idea of SEZs has been around for over ten years with no progress. Now, the government has pledged three SEZs. I hope to see them working soon to attract export-oriented FDI. These zones do not just help economic activity. They are good models for city governments to follow. In addition, setting up Special Technology Zones would help greatly to spread use of tech in public and private sectors.

Private credit: With government borrowing high, access to credit for most private firms is an ask. The economy and jobs will not grow without private investment. Within the fiscal and monetary framework, the SBP may keep credit flowing. It must have especial credit windows for selected export industries

The SBP's TERF was received well by businesses. They would be happy to see its return. SMEs also need more capital. Credit to targeted SMEs must grow to boost exports in new or traditional industries. Existing sectors such as electric fans must build capacity to compete in the

global market. Similarly, our usual exports such as surgical goods, metal products, sports goods must increase world market share.

Pakistan must revive Development Finance Institutions. Fixed cost, long-term project loans were key to industrial growth of the 1960s. DFIs have been done away with on IFI advice. That has not served us well. The private sector needs predictable project finance. Fall in industry has accompanied drop in private credit. Another idea discussed for long but not put into effect is setting up an EXIM Bank: EXIM banks offer export finance at preferred rates. If need be, its initial capital may come from the Export Development Fund.

Private fund for projects: In a cash-scarce economy, private finance can play a key role in industrial growth. This is especially so as the country's investment needs are far in excess of resources, while FDI is non-existent. Setting up a Pakistan Equity Fund is an option. The fund could be a platform for global investors to invest in Pakistan's high growth, high return sectors. A strategic approach is to establish the first \$2 billion private equity with capital from global investors. The Pakistan Equity Fund would be capital protected and managed by an

experienced team. It would be a closed-end, off-shore fund.

The fund could have three parts. The Pakistan Opportunity Fund to invest in private projects in consumer goods, food products, healthcare, among other areas; the Pakistan Climate Change Fund that could invest in renewable energy; and the Pakistan Technology Fund to invest in areas such as Software as a Service or Internet of Things. The fund has the potential to mobilize large sums of capital with great impact on growth. If done right, it will jumpstart the economy.

I also propose venture capital funds for fintech. Growth of fintech is a sure way to boost productivity in the economy. These funds offer much needed capital. Global practices show that technology venture capital in a country grows with tax and regulatory incentives. For example, low capital gains tax or incentives for leveraged buyouts and other tech projects would enable the funds to grow. Also, fewer regulatory requirements for private company owners allows them space to make decisions freely.

Taking cue from growth economies, Pakistan too must offer targeted incentives for exports. The usual tools for doing so are credit at low rate, duty drawbacks and workers' training. These subsidies will not be endless. They must have a sunset clause. Only firms that meet previously agreed technical and export performance benchmarks would benefit.

Increase in e-commerce and online payments will lower transaction cost and

create efficiency. They will also bring exporters in Pakistan and overseas buyers in direct contact. The use of cash in the economy should be reduced.

Self-reliance: Domestic energy must have a larger share in our supply mix: The last major energy policy was in 2012. Since 2013, our main focus has been importing LNG. While that is good to tide over immediate needs, building a reliable supply chain is important. The Energy Information Administration of USA which is an office under the US Department of Energy has identified Pakistan as one of the top shale gas sources.

Shale gas exploration needs complex technology with high cost and great risk. Pakistan must have a separate policy for shale gas that helps access technology and reduce risk. Without such a policy, shale gas would forever be a potential that stays unrealized. Increased production would directly help with the current account deficit. Pakistan must also examine if the 2012 policy needs to be updated to boost the rate of exploration. No cost is too high to build energy self-reliance, as frequent global energy crises have shown us.

We may also incentivize production of power from green energy, such as hydro, solar, wind, or biomass. Gradually, we will end import of coal and move to its domestic production.

In the same vein, Pakistan has for long talked about mineral exploration. Pakistan could set up the Balochistan Area Development Organization. The organization would offer incentives to domestic and

foreign investors in mineral explorations. The government may incentivize with favourable regulation, not with guarantees. Mineral production will have a high impact on growth and prosperity in that province. Another subject talked about for long is to build substitutes at home for imports. Import of edible oil, pulses, and wheat exact a high charge on our forex reserves. It is time to bring these plans to fruition.



The same goes for import of raw materials. Pakistan must produce raw materials by offering incentives and R&D support. This would add value to our exports. This won't happen quickly, but is a worthwhile medium-term goal.

This essay offers a plan to revive the economy by moving away from conventional ideas. Its analysis of the problems and flaws in our approach is both new and deep. The list of what needs to be done is long. But it is doable. This is a national cause and must be led from the top with all shades of views in the public and private sectors playing their role. Also, all levels of government must act in unison. Most of all, we need political stability and an uncompromising approach to decision-making by the top leadership. This is the only way to give confidence to all to play their roles. Nations have seen worse and have come out successfully.

The writer, former commerce minister, is chair and CEO of the Institute for Policy Reforms.

Courtesy The News



TTP's Re-emergence

The situation is different from what is being reported in the media

By Syed Fakhar KaKaKhel

After the death of the founding member of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, Abdul Wali alias Umar Khalid Khorasani, there was concern about the peace talks in Afghanistan, but the Taliban has indicated that the ceasefire will remain in place with the government.

After the delegation of Pakistani scholars and later the tribal jirga, it was believed that significant progress could be made in the negotiations at any time, but during this time, news came that a vehicle had been targeted in the Afghan province of Paktika. This vehicle killed Abdul Wali, also known as Umar Khalid Khorasani, Mufti Hasan Swati, Hafiz Daulat Khan Orkazai, and Ali Hassan Momand, founder member of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan and head of Jamaat-ul-Ahrar.

Umar Khalid Khorasani was born in the Kandaharu area of the Momand district and belonged to the Safi tribe. Born in 1980, Umar Khalid started his jihadi life back in 1996 with the organisation Harakat al-Mujahideen. He also went to Kashmir for jihad training, but he returned after the steps were taken by former President Pervez Musharraf against Kashmir-based jihadi outfits. After the arrival of Western troops in Afghanistan, he formed ties with the Afghan Jihad in the Momand district. When Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan was founded in 2007, others like Baitullah Mehsud, Hakimullah Mehsud, Qari Hussain, Faqir Muhammad, and Umar Khalid also joined it and became the head of the former Momand Agency chapter of TTP. Meanwhile, after the Lal Masjid incident, Umar Khalid Khorasani founded the Lal Masjid in his hometown and announced a violent movement against the Pakistani government.

In 2014, Umar Khalid separated from the Tehreek-e-Taliban based on differences with Mullah Fazlullah, the then head of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, hailing from Swat, and formed a separate organisation known



as Jamaat-ul-Ahrar (JUA). However, in 2020, Umar Khalid returned to Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan. Following him, Mufti Hassan from Swat and Hafiz Daulat Khan from Orakzai also left TTP and took the oath of allegiance to ISIS after its establishment in Afghanistan in 2015. Later, Umar Khalid Khorasani returned to Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan when Mullah Fazlullah was killed in a drone strike. As for Ali Hassan Momand, he was the son-in-law of Umar Khalid. Mufti Noor Wali, the current leader of the Tehreek-e-Taliban, has previously criticised Mufti Hasan Swati and expressed his reservations about Mufti in his book.

Concerning the recent negotiations, it was also being said that Umar Khalid, Mufti Hassan, and Hafiz Daulat Khan had adopted a tough stance in these negotiations. Umar Khalid Khorasani was initially not in favour of the talks, but when he was asked to lead the talks by the Taliban, he agreed to proceed. Umar Khalid Khorasani was particularly prominent in the meetings with the delegations going to Kabul in the course of negotiations.

However, Mufti Hasan Swati and Hafiz Daulat Khan still had links with ISIS, and there was a perception within Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan that they might be leaning toward ISIS. When the negotiations entered the final stage,

the demands of Umar Khalid Khorasani and his associates began to increase, thus putting pressure on both the TTP Central leadership and the government. In this regard, he had come to Paktika to meet Mufti Noor Wali Mehsud, head of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, when he was targeted on his return. It should be clear that Umar Khalid Khorasani was among the wanted persons of the United States' Reward for Justice and a head bounty of three million dollars was put on him. Umar Khalid Khorasani and his son-in-law Ali Hassan Momand were buried in Afghanistan's Kunar province's Shonkaray area. On the day this incident took place, a military convoy was targeted by a suicide attack in North Waziristan in which several security personnel was martyred. On the other hand, in Swat, some Taliban took security personnel hostage. The Taliban claimed that after the ceasefire, they were told that they could go to their areas, but the local policemen stopped them, after which they did so. The hostages were released after the Jirga negotiations the next day. Earlier, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Member of Provincial Assembly Malik Liaquat was attacked in which his brother and nephew were killed. Later demonstrations were also held in District Dir. The Awami National Party has criticised the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf in this regard and said

that the ministers of the Tehreek-e-Insaf are giving extortion to the Taliban and the Taliban are once again spreading in the province. On the other hand, Tehreek-e-Insaf chief Imran Khan has claimed that his members are receiving threats from the Taliban.

The situation is different from what is being reported in the media or what is being analysed by analysts. A propaganda magazine recently released by ISIS has the Afghan Taliban and Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan as enemies on its cover page. Imran Khan's position regarding the Taliban may cause problems for him. Sometimes misunderstandings lead to unpredicted issues.

As far as talks are concerned, despite all the circumstances, the statement issued by Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan after the death of Umar Khalid Khorasani was restricted to condemnation. The majority believed that the ceasefire would be ended, but no such statement was issued by Tehreek-e-Taliban. The main reason for this is the homework that was done before the negotiation. Whenever negotiations were held in the past, they ended in some unpleasant incident. It seems that this time it was premeditated that even if such an unfortunate incident occurred, the process of negotiations would continue. It is certain that during the peace talks and after the peace agreement, it was planned that strong



action would be taken against those who oppose the process and disrupt the peace. So far, no statement has been issued by the Afghan Taliban on the current events. It appears that the negotiation process will continue and that efforts will be monitored by the Afghan Taliban as usual.

For the Afghan Taliban themselves, the situation became quite complicated after the Al-Qaeda chief, Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri. The US president has killed the head of al-Qaeda in a drone strike in Kabul. The Afghan Taliban protested this, but the intensity of the protest was not at a high level since the Taliban itself had assured

the Doha talks that they would not give shelter to such foreign elements on Afghan soil. Regarding Ayman al-Zawahiri, it was said that he had moved to Kabul in early 2022 and was present in Kabul along with his family. Ayman al-Zawahiri had been virtually removed from al-Qaeda operations for some time and had become a symbolic figure. In his absence, Saif al-Adl was taking charge of Al-Qaeda's operations. Therefore, it is believed that after his death, among the few names, Saif-ul-Adl is so far the most likely strong candidate.

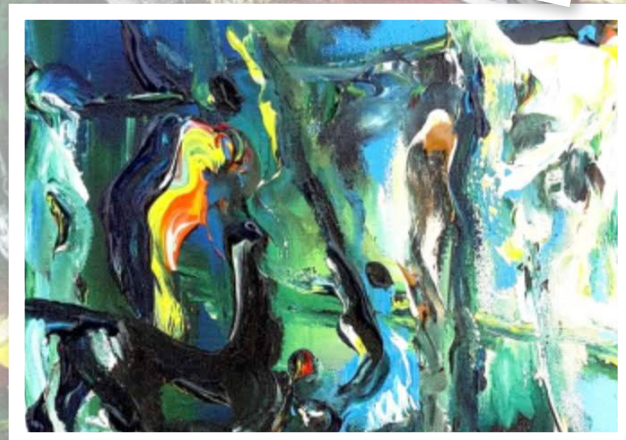


The upcoming show: “Majmua The Art Gallery”

Asim Amjad is the artist of these paintings.

Asim Amjad's statement:

We are facing such kind of mental phenomenon that we can not make sense of behind the mask of life; “man” has become a melancholic clown and his commitments with life have become an erotic matter of fact. His spirit demands clarity and calmness of thoughts but who will give “Him” these melodious things which belong to holy spheres? My paintings are the personification of my innate hidden emotions which I want to capture. My exhausted soul still breathing in the realm of raped ethical values of my beloved society; searching for the beauty of nature in the heart of compassion.



Mehreen Illahi

*(Founder and Curator of Majmua The Art Gallery)
on Asim Amjad's Paintings*

Asim Amjad's paintings are expressing the anguish of a soul caught in the chaos of life. This predicament many of us are facing in our daily lives. His paintings are also a reflection on the current situation of the last 5 months in the country and how people are tortured having to cope with high taxes and rising food costs and bills. His paintings are universal also because they represent the brutal pain of the Kashmiris as they are slaughtered and butchered and the world watches on. So many families lose their youth and their gurls at the hands of the Indian forces. Amjad's use of color and technique is amazing. One wants to know how he creates an everlasting effect for the viewer. Does he really use a brush or knife? He seems a mystic searching for his identity and pleading the case of the lost souls.



When Truth Loses its Value

Arsim Tariq on the global impasse between a revolutionary right and a defensive left

By Arsim Tariq

There is hardly any region in the world that right-wing populism did not impact in the mid-2010s. The election of Donald Trump in the United States, Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, and Narendra Modi in India, the Brexit vote in the United Kingdom, and the swift rise of far-right political parties in Europe are evidence that contemporary politics is now the leitmotif of right-wing populism. By 2018, there were about twenty populist leaders that were shaping our world including Germany's first far-right political party – the AfD – to enter the political arena in decades. These significant political changes that took place in this decade and the rise of other right-wing populist parties in France, Indonesia, Austria, Poland, Hungary, and Italy, to name a few, have prompted the need for careful inspection of the phenomenon.



Through the 2010s, populism held different forms. Some countries witnessed a socioeconomic and anti-establishment form of populism where the working class and the people were set against big businesses, political elites, and the bourgeoisie that were deliberately favored by the global capitalist system. The populism of this form was seen in countries such as the US and France where the mantra “the establishment has failed the people” was evoked. In other countries such as Germany and India, where issues of race, identity, and caste existed, civilizational and cultural populism arose.

Populism, in a sense, advocates the idea of direct democracy. It supports the interest of the general public over that of a specific group and its narrative roams around the juxtaposition of the corrupt class and the people. The central or perhaps the permanent agenda of the populist parties is one that builds on the “interests of the people,” in which a situation or a crisis is capitalized on to win public support. It sounds comforting to say that such an agenda is based on highlighting the interests of the people, but what makes it manipulative and vicious? It is the distinguishing characteristics of this

form of right-wing politics that make it so alarming: the sharply “us versus them” attitude and the leaders’ tendency to manipulate people with phantoms and false contradictions. It can be a deceptive affair indeed!

After World War I, developments such as the emergence of the League of Nations and the concept of free markets surfaced. The world was becoming globally interconnected. In 1929, the Great Depression threatened liberal democracy and constitutionalism, leading the world towards the fascism and right-wing populism of Hitler and Mussolini. The mantra of “us versus them” and the populist tendency of nationalism led the world into World War II.

But, after World War II, the need for welfare states and the establishment of global organizations such as the UN, NATO, and Bretton Woods Institutes (WB and IMF) gained momentum, and economic growth flourished. The global environment was somewhat free of fascism.

Then, the financial crash of 1973 occurred. Countries around the world gathered and agreed to sign the Washington Consensus in the 1980s under which austerity,

restriction of welfare states, free trade, and economic favors to multinational corporations (MNCs) were encouraged. These economic rules destroyed local industry, allowed big businesses to coerce workers, damaged the climate, and increased the wealth gap among the masses. The world entered into a neo-liberal capitalist setting that is familiar to us today.

The financial crash of 2008 crippled the capitalist economy, collapsed the growth rate, and increased criticism of the current economic, political and financial establishment. This became an opportunity for the right-wing parties to assert themselves. They acted as a replacement for the collapsed system: Obama blamed the Republicans for giving a free hand to immigrants (Trump has done the same), Modi criticized Nehru and other founding families for sympathizing with Muslims and Europeans encouraged xenophobic and Islamophobic sentiments. As liberals had feared, the crash of 2008 appeared to be the turning point toward bolder right-wing populist movements across the world, like it had done after 1929.

In the contemporary world, there is

growing inequality, rising precariousness, a youth bulge, a surplus population, globalization that has made people insecure, and an increasing global atmosphere of fear triggered by the refugee crisis in Europe. These are abnormal times; we are facing multiple crises such as economic, linguistic, cultural, identity, regional conflicts, climate change, cosmopolitanism, and now, health. People are angry and frustrated.

With these dynamics, the right-wing populist movements are able to impose themselves and cash in on a state of crisis. The contradictions and phantoms that they create either turn into realities because of the negligence of the current political establishment or their followers start believing those fictions themselves. As Matthew d'Ancona puts it: "playing fast and loose with the truth has moved from fiction to real life."

The politics where truth loses its value to fiction can be referred to as the politics of delusion.

Right-wing populists in today's world feed people with the fear of foreign elements: fear of the immigrants and black community in the US, fear of Muslims in India, and xenophobia and Islamophobia in Europe. They make a dichotomy between the internal and the external, good versus evil, the deprived majority versus the wealthy minority, and "us versus them."

On the other hand, there is the left which is at the moment, shattered. Even in this moment of weakness, elements of the left are resisting, as witnessed in the historical



Black Lives Matters movement, the almost candidacy of the socialist Bernie Sanders in the US, and the student rights movements in India. The left today is becoming defensive. It is trying to protect its status quo. Meanwhile, the right is bold and revolutionary. It is a challenge for the left to gather itself and create a common language of solidarity against the right-wing.

But, neither of them has what it takes. Even if the right-wing populism is letting fascist powers come to the office, they do not have the vision to govern. There is a difference between fantasy and vision. They become irrelevant with time if they fail to deliver. The left, on the other hand, may become revolutionary and bold again but they do

not have the necessary solutions to get political and economic systems back on track.

Under Joe Biden's administration, the world is hoping for a progressive change in US policies because of his inclination from the center to the left. The progressive rhetoric he used in his campaigns and the vision he displayed on his campaign website can be seen as left-oriented. But the reality is more complicated. To take just one example: he campaigned in favor of Elizabeth Warren's bankruptcy plan to give people relief but he is the same person who was among the few Democrats that favored the harsh bankruptcy bill. Even though Bernie Sanders reserves hope in Biden's administration, one wonders: how can Biden justify his interview, amidst the pandemic, where he said that he would veto the Medicare For All bill if both houses of Congress passed it?

The opportunistic shift of Biden's rhetoric from his unprogressive past can only be seen in one context: he is a chameleon that changes its colour with the situation at hand. The left, therefore, needs to come out collectively and boldly against both opportunists and populists. But this, as mentioned earlier, will have to be done with an effective vision to govern a progressive welfare-based society.

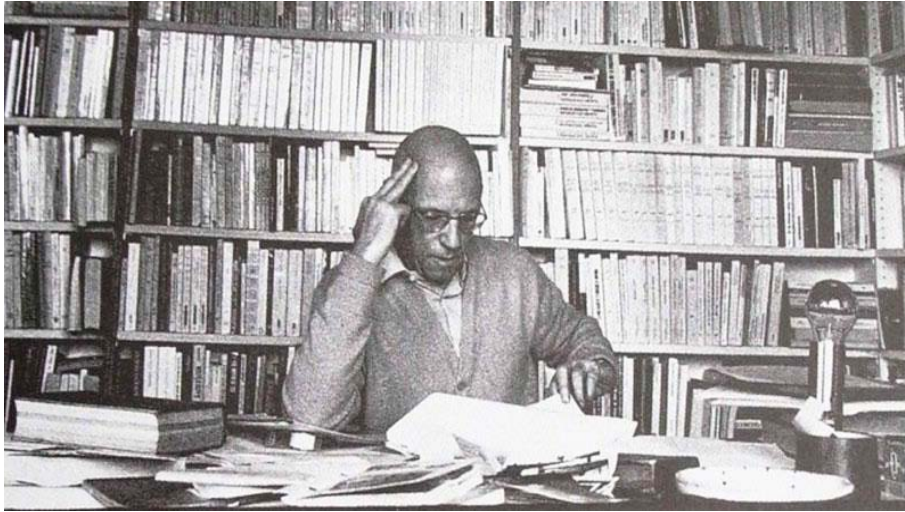
Otherwise, one fears, the future is bleak and tyrannical.



Knowledge is Political

There is always something happening, a piece of fresh news, a new narrative, or a new truth

By Aimen Bukhari



In the world that we are living in presently, everything is so fast. Every day there is some buzzing news or some buzzing reality.

Take Pakistan, for example. In a week, we had a long march; roads to Islamabad were blocked; petrol prices rose; the dollar fluctuated back and forth; the stock market crashed and rose; a ban on commercial luxury items was imposed; women got kidnapped; and then there has been a heavy polarisation of the nation and high volatility of political parties.

To take the example of the Russia-Ukraine war, the US and Europe are trying to counter it through sanctions, and globally, food and fuel commodity prices are mounting everywhere, the Sri Lankan economy is crashing severely, monkeypox is spreading, Elon Musk is trying to get hold of Twitter, and the number of gun violence incidents in the US is increasing, among other such things.

There is always something happening, a piece of fresh news, a new narrative, or a new truth. All this makes up our knowledge. Now the question is how this knowledge comes to be and how the notion of truth is ascribed to it.

The emergence of liberalist philosophy within international relations can be used to get a better understanding of the empirical

method in which the study and practise of knowledge production are attributed within international relations. Liberal philosophy holds that "knowledge is not only conceivable but may flourish in ways predicted and promised by the Enlightenment movement", that is, through the application of science, a logic that many critical theorists have come to reject, like Geller and Vasquez.

The empiricist theory of knowledge claimed that only sensory experiences could yield authentic knowledge. It gave rise to the positivist paradigm, as Dunne, Kurki, and Smith argue. The positivist strand conforms to the idea that actual reality may be isolated from the techniques used to analyse it and has persisted in liberalism.

These beliefs fed the Enlightenment and, consequently, the classical liberal approach to knowledge production. The scientific method of liberal conceptions of knowledge was supposed to liberate humankind from religious dogma, yet empiricism's supremacy established dogma in and of itself as knowledge became "equated with science and reason restricted to scientific reason".

As a result of this dogmatism, social life became "centred on technological control over nature and administrative control over individuals, such that political concerns became matters of order and efficiency".

Another example would be the erasure of Indigenous knowledge and its replacement with ideas produced by elite knowledge corridors in the West that are culturally and socially irrelevant to many societies in the South. Such parochialism isolates social, political, and cultural contexts.

This may be observed in important liberal assumptions, such as Kant's uncritical trust in human reason. The Kantian view that people are rational beings increases the scientific purpose of the Enlightenment Movement by assuming that humans not only exist apart from objective reality but that humans are rational enough to perceive and explain the world objectively. This logic eventually leads to the liberal conclusion that there is an objective truth that can be comprehended and explained.

So, liberalism's empirical history stresses that the Enlightenment's pursuit of eliminating religious dogma in favour of scientific reasoning has resulted in the liberalist relationship to knowledge being one of science, which attributes a level of objectivity and lack of politics to human reasoning.

In terms of theory, poststructuralism differs from liberalism in terms of content. Poststructuralism does not suggest a paradigm for understanding IR but a post-positivist critical attitude that may be applied to the study of nearly everything. As a result, poststructuralism is not a theory, and its greatest skill and insight is to see theory as practice.

Because of the absence of separation between theory and practice, poststructuralism denies the objective idea of separating the observer from the observed, asserting that the observer will always impact the observed. For instance, the dissemination of knowledge in the West about the Russia-Ukraine war is made up as truth to many in the West. The problematization of that knowledge is absent. The post-structuralist strand problematizes that knowledge through political and historical contexts.

Secondly, post-structuralists argue that language is "rooted in social activity and inseparable from the world," rejecting the empirical concept of a "universal scientific language". This approach to language reinforces the post-structural view that knowledge production is essentially political. Rather than dismissing the possibility of objective truth, poststructuralism contends that scientific research methods are fundamentally flawed.

It makes slight difference whether there is an objective truth since language, the only medium through which people can express information, is biased and politicised. So, language itself is not the object through which knowledge is produced.

Post-structuralists also see speech as consisting of binary elements. Everything, according to post-structuralism, is defined by another. Conceptual and political practises are continually including and excluding some. Therefore, "post-structural theories were concerned with how inside-outside interactions were mutually produced." Examples of such binaries in the study and practise of international relations include sovereign/anarchic, West/East, masculine/feminine, and so on. For example, Stuart Hall, for example, uses Edward Said's Orientalism to build his case to explain binary divisions in international relations. He argues certain meanings are attached to the idea of the West, and anything that is not the West is



considered the East, creating an incredibly significant global binary.

The post-structuralist emphasis on how binaries constitute discourses also highlights the intrinsically political aspect of knowledge production, since nothing can exist in and of itself. All the elements of knowledge are defined in relation to something else. This shows that discourse is based on a complicated relationship between power and knowledge.

Finally, poststructuralism contends that power may be constructive. Power, according to poststructuralism, has a reason, objectives, and methods for achieving them; however, as Gutting and Oksala argue, this rationality of power does not imply human rationality. Thus,

poststructuralism contends that, despite the presence of reason, people are unable to make conscious sense of it.

In his work *The History of Sexuality*, Volume I, Foucault discussed the production of power, stating that power should not be understood in the simple sense of being a limitation. Power, on the other hand, is constructive since, without power relations (i.e., the aforementioned binaries), their constraints would not exist. As a result, the constraints become productive since we know what something is by understanding what it is not, as Stuart Hall argues.

To put it simply, all of this makes us think that making new knowledge is inherently political.



The Social Media Capture of PTI

The death of Al Qaeda leader Ayman al Zawahiri was used as leverage by PTI activists on social media

By Zahiruddin

In their desperate attempt to settle scores with the PML-led federal government and the state institutions, the social media corps of Pakistan Tahrik Insaf (PTI) did not pause and ponder for a moment to see the magnitude of hatred, abhorrence, and revulsion caused by the campaign on different social media platforms. The PTI social media activists painted disgusting pictures and unleashed a barrage of negative propaganda in response to the crash of a Pakistan Army helicopter near Lasbela, Baluchistan, carrying top brass army officers and the killing of Al Qaeda exponent Ayman al-Zawahiri via a drone attack.

"Despite our strenuous efforts and billions of rupees spent, we never dreamt of disparaging the image of the Pakistan Army to the extent that Imran Khan's social media corps did in the Lasbela helicopter crash," said an Indian defence commentator, as quoted by a private TV news channel. The crash of the chopper carrying officers and jawans, as well as the massive loss of life in any disaster, has always left the nation bemoaned and inspired cohesion and solidarity across the political spectrum, but this time it deepened the schism in different segments of society. In an unprecedented tone and filthy language, the social media activists ridiculed the martyred and not only talked foul of them but also tried to establish a connection between the martyred and those involved in the "regime change". People were so upset by the negative PTI propaganda on social media that President Alvi was told not to go to the funeral of the people who died in the helicopter crash.

The Pak Army exhibited tolerance and patience in this regard and totally abstained from taking direct action against the perpetrators of the negative propaganda on all the social media platforms. The media wing of the military establishment came up with meticulously tailored words to condemn the campaigns by saying, "while the whole nation stood with the institution in this difficult time, certain insensitive quarters resorted to hurtful and derogatory comments on social media." At the same



time, it called for a collective national effort to counter such propaganda.

Meanwhile, under the direction of the prime minister, a joint investigation team (JIT) has been formed with an additional director general of the Cyber Crimes wing of the Federal Investigation Agency, Muhammad Jaffar, who has kicked off its job. In the preliminary stage of the investigation, a number of social media activists of PTI have been rounded up who admitted to their crimes and expressed their repentance. All of them were in unison to state that they were impressed by the posts of those who belonged to the higher echelon of the party and that they just reproduced them on their respective social media platforms. The video of one activist named Muneeb Kayani, who is the convener of the students of the party in the Jhelum chapter, has gone viral. In it, he says he's sorry for spreading bad news on his social media pages, but he still names many PTI leaders, such as Major (retired) Riaz Adil and Imran Riaz Khan.

The death of Al Qaeda leader Ayman al Zawahiri was used as leverage by PTI activists on social media, who rushed to claim that the drone that hit him was either launched from Pakistani soil or used its airspace as a trajectory. All the social media

platforms are also brimmed with comments like "The price of slavery (to America) is only 10 rupees" and "big shame". It is astonishing to note that the Afghan Taliban government has so far abstained from accusing Pakistan of letting its soil or airspace be used for the drone attack, but in a fit of rage, the PTI leadership did it without caring for the national interest. It has now become an open secret that the drone was fired from a US base located near Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. The rise in the value of the Pakistani rupee against the US dollar that happened coincidentally those days was correlated with the drone attack that killed the top Al-Qaeda leader in Kabul, as they propagated that it was done by 'obliged America.' The move (social media campaign to malign the federal government) may jeopardise relations between the Taliban government and Pakistan, which is a hypersensitive issue, but they failed to realise it.

The spokesman of ISPR has denied the substance of the propaganda, saying that "there is no question of Pakistani soil being used in al-Zawahiri's killing". In both cases, the official version of the PTI did not come to the fore, either in the agreement or in rejection of the campaign's themes, which chose to remain silent about it.

Monsoon and Sindh Governance

The Sindh government was accused of a slow response that compounded the problems and miseries of the rain-hit people across the province

By Azfar Ashfaq



The unprecedented monsoon rains in different parts of Sindh, especially Karachi, during the month of July have wreaked havoc on the ill-maintained civic infrastructure, resulting in about a hundred deaths and causing huge financial losses to thousands of citizens.

The first spell of the monsoon rains occurred from July 2 to July 11. The second spell began on July 14 and lasted till July 18, while the last spell in the month of July started on July 23 and ended on July 27 in major cities and towns like Karachi, Hyderabad, Sukkur, Mirpurkhas, Larkana, and Shared Banazirabad divisions.

A report prepared by the Sindh government states the three spells of heavy rains in the province during July killed 95 people, including 47 children, destroyed completely 2,807 houses and washed away 388 kilometres of road infrastructure in the rural and urban parts. A total of 5,547 houses were partially damaged and 89,213 acres of standing crop were submerged or washed away.

The Met Office says Sindh has received 308 per cent more rain in just one month than it received in the entire previous monsoon

season. It says Karachi received over 605 mm of rain during these three spells in July, making it the wettest city in the country in the last month.

All small dams constructed by the provincial government have been filled to capacity, and the spillways of Hub Dam in neighbouring Balochistan were opened to release excess water beyond its capacity of 339 feet. The water pressure was so high that a 150-foot breach was developed in Hub Canal in Karachi's Manghopir area, forcing authorities to evacuate residents of low-lying areas. The bridge connecting Sindh and Balochistan on the Hub River was also washed away, suspending vehicular traffic between the two provinces for days.

As usual, the Sindh government was accused of a slow response that compounded the problems and miseries of the rain-hit people across the province. In Karachi, the issue of multiple stakeholders reared its ugly head again as the posh area of Defence Housing Authority, which falls within the jurisdiction of Cantonment Board Clifton, was submerged by rainwater which could not be drained out for days.

The three rain spells also played havoc with

the ill-maintained sewerage system of the metropolis, as 35 major sewerage lines of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board had sunk at different locations, including one a few yards from CM House. The devastating rains had affected three bridges in Karachi's District West and Malir, while EBM and Korangi causeways were washed away, disconnecting the city's major localities with each other.

The ruling Pakistan Peoples Party, which has ruled Sindh for the past 14 years, hid behind the excuse of unprecedented rains and passed the buck to the federal government, where it is a key partner in the coalition government led by Shehbaz Sharif.

PM forms a special body

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif formed a six-member special committee to assess damage caused by rains, led by Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman and comprising Federal Minister for IT and Telecom Syed Aminul Haq, Privatisation Minister Abid Hussain Bhayo, and MNAs Mir Amir Ali Khan Magsi, Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah, and Kesoo Mal Kheel Das Kohistani.

The committee flew to Karachi and visited different rain-hit areas before leaving for Hyderabad and other parts of the metropolis. The members spent around three days in the province.

The committee was told that the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) controlled less than 40 per cent of Karachi and the rest was under the control of cantonment boards, railways, Karachi Port Trust, etc. Minister Aminul Haque advocated the need to give all municipal functions being performed by other stakeholders to the KMC.

While another rain spell has lashed Karachi and other parts of Sindh since August 8, no one knows what recommendations the special committee has made.

The Sindh government is interested in funding for Bahria Town

While the Sindh government has a lot of funds thanks to the 18th Amendment, it tried to turn the rain tragedy into an opportunity and demanded from the federal government more funds, specifically mentioning those being deposited by Bahria Town into the Supreme Court accounts as part of an Rs. 460 billion settlements regarding its mega housing project in Karachi.

In March 2019, an apex court bench accepted an offer made by Bahria Town to deposit Rs460 billion in a period of seven years for the purchase of the land measuring 16,896 acres in the Malir Development Authority (MDA). The real estate giant had already possessed the subject land.

By December 2021, Bahria Town had deposited over Rs 65 bn. The instalments being deposited were invested in T-Bills through the National Bank of Pakistan, and around Rs, 9 bn has been earned as profit/mark-up.

Administrator Murtaza Wahab for failing to remove silt from hundreds of storm water drains controlled by the KMC and district municipal corporations.

On July 18, a tragic incident in which a young couple and their two kids fell into an unfenced nullah during heavy rain in Shadman Town, Karachi, shocked the people at large. While the man and his daughters were rescued, a strong current swept away his wife and infant son. While the body of a young woman was found the same day, the corpse of her infant son could not be recovered till this date.



"The serious situation calls for the support of the federal government to compensate for the losses of lives, infrastructure, crops and houses, and the agriculture bank may be directed to defer recovery of its loans it has advanced to the growers in Sindh," Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah told the PM in a recent meeting.

After mentioning a long list of losses that required funds for the rehabilitation, CM Shah requested the PM that "a huge amount of money is required to carry out rehabilitation works, therefore the funds recovered from Bahria Town may be provided to the Sindh government for construction of nullahs and other important uplift works". A statement issued from the Sindh CM's house further stated that the prime minister "assured the chief minister that he would help him in handing over the money recovered from M/s Bahria Town".

Opposition parties criticise the Sindh government

When the first two spells of rain battered Sindh, all the opposition parties, as well as the ruling PPP, were gearing up for the second phase of the local government elections in Karachi and Hyderabad divisions, then scheduled for July 24. The rains provided them with an opportunity to heap scorn on the PPP over its performance led to urban flooding in the metropolis and Hyderabad.

While the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan is a member of the ruling coalition at the centre with the PPP, it was the Jamaat-i-Islami, Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf, Pak Sarzameen Party, Grand Democratic Alliance, and other parties that chastised Karachi

The Election Commission of Pakistan also rescheduled the LG polls in Karachi and Hyderabad divisions from July 24 to August 28 in view of the rough weather and rain forecasts.

While Administrator Murtaza Wahab and Information Minister Sharjeel Memom credited their government for making major thoroughfares motorable in the shortest amount of time possible, opposition parties credited the National Disaster Management Authority for widening and rehabilitating three major storm water drains in Gujjar Nullah, Orangi Nullah, and Mehmoodabad Nullah, increasing their capacity to carry rainwater to the sea.

The rain situation has forced the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) to ask the prime minister to declare Karachi a calamity-hit area. KCCI president Muhammad Idrees and Businessman Group chairman Zubair Motiwala urged the Sindh CM to explain how long it would take to provide modern day facilities to Karachi. The KCCI demanded a major relief package for the people and businessmen who have suffered intense losses due to the devastation caused by heavy monsoon rains.

As the monsoon season is yet to end, more rain will bring more water from the hills of Balochistan and the Kirthar range in Sindh, which may aggravate the existing situation of Hub Dam and adjoining areas of Karachi and increase the in-flow of water in Kamber-Shahdadkot, Dadu, and Jamshoro districts.

Nature's Fury in KP

Water channels get blocked due to construction in the river channels, encroachment in the canals, and excessive dumping of plastic shopping bags

By Owais Khan

Monsoon in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which started in June, continues unabated. As a result of unprecedented rains and floods, around a hundred people have died and thousands of houses and other buildings have collapsed. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has also announced an increase in compensation for loss of life and property, while it has also ordered to immediately remove all encroachments in waterways.

According to the records of the KPK Disaster Management Authority, from July 1 to August 7, rains and floods have killed 86 people, including 28 men, 19 women, and 35 children, while 26 men, 33 women, and 35 children were injured. Similarly, 1248 houses were destroyed and around 4000 houses and 84 other buildings were damaged.

According to the reports received from the districts, Kirk district was the most affected by the rains in July, where ten children, two men, and one woman died in various accidents, while three hundred houses were destroyed and eighty-two houses were partially destroyed. Fifteen people died in Mardan, including three men, five women, and seven children, while twenty-one houses were destroyed and forty-eight partially destroyed.

In August, the highest damage due to rains was recorded in Momand district where 347 houses were destroyed, while the number of houses destroyed in Dera Ismail Khan was 192. More than a hundred houses were also destroyed in Mardan. In Hangu, the number was twenty. Overall, 784 houses were destroyed in the first seven days of August in the province while sixteen people were killed.

Chief Minister Mehmood Khan has approved the increase in the compensation for damages during a meeting, according to which the compensation to the relatives of the deceased has been increased from three lakh rupees to eight lakh rupees per person, while the families of the damaged houses will get a compensation of Rs.4 lakh each.

A senior journalist from Mardan, Musrat Asi, said that it is raining here [Mardan] and the state of damage is that 18 people have died due to the flood, whereby the collapse of houses has killed women and children.

He said that this time there has been more rain than usual, but the real problem is that people are trespassing on government property illegally. When it rains, the water accumulates and enters the roads and houses. This time also, a lot of water accumulated in Mardan and its surroundings, which damaged the houses and buildings.

There was no planning by the government. Every year there is rain in Monsoon, and the Kalpani canal in Mardan gets flooded which causes damage to the surrounding areas. Mardan Development Authority, TMA, WSSM, Civil Defense and District Administration, and others have no planning or preparation according to the forecast.



He said that along with the encroachments on land and drains, excessive usage of plastic bags causes damage.

In the southern district of Tank, 437 houses were destroyed by rain and two people, including a child, were killed. Checks worth Rs. 10 lakhs were given by the Prime Minister and the chief minister respectively to the families of the victims.

According to the reports coming from most of the districts of the province, water channels have been blocked due to construction in the river channels and encroachment in the canals. Additionally, the flow of water has been affected due to plastic shopping bags stuck in the canals.

In response to a question about whether the administration of the districts was not informed in time before the rain and flood, a PDMA official said on the condition of anonymity that PDMA is executing a project worth Rs. 350 million with the deadline of June 2023 in which around forty employees are working day and night on a temporary basis, and with the increase in the severity of the weather, the need for permanent arrangements has increased. He said that in seven divisions of the province, stations have been built in all the commissioners' offices, each of which has cost seven crore rupees, where the water level in the rivers is monitored. We have monitoring in these stations. During the period, when it is found that the water level in the river is rising too much, we make announcements in the mosques in these districts that people should not go near the rivers, then when the water level rises too much, the alarm is sounded.

We check the water level of the rivers twice a day, once at noon and again at 11 p.m., and include them in the report under the monitoring system, based on which instructions are then issued to the relevant government agencies.

Challenges of Water Scarcity and Floods in Pakistan

Pakistan has to get its irrigation system in order before building dams; a single river system provides for 95.8 percent of the country's total renewable water resources

By Mahnur Mehfuz

Pakistan, a water-deficit country, requires water reservoirs, and building new dam projects is the only way forward for maintaining the prevailing agricultural practices, increasing irrigation options, and creating new jobs.

The most common natural disaster is flooding, which occurs when a large volume of water enters normally dry ground. In coastal areas, flooding is frequently brought on by heavy rain or a storm surge caused by a tropical cyclone or tsunami.

In the event of a flood, people can lose their lives, property, and important public health infrastructure. Calls for a new large dam have grown louder over the last decade. A prolonged drought can potentially devastate the country if it fails to construct any further dams, as water will be scarce not only for public use but also for farmers to raise their crops.

Mohmand and Diamer-Bhasha are the two most important Pakistani dams currently under development. Naulong and Kurram Tangi dams are nearing completion, as are Diamer-Bhasha and Dawarat dams. Together, these five dams can hold about 7.747 million acre-feet [MAF] of water, while there are four further dams in the works that are expected to be operational shortly. The combined storage capacity of these four dams is 0.142 million acre-feet. Seven further dam projects in Pakistan, including the Hingol dam, Akhori dam, Shyok dam, Mohmand Dam, Tank Zam dam, and Chiniot dam, are also in the works. All these dams together will alleviate most of Pakistan's water concerns in the future, as well as produce hydropower and meet much of the country's electrical needs at a considerably lower cost than at present.

The chairman of the Indus Water Commission (IWC), Mirza Asif Baig, claims that the devastation caused by the floods could have been avoided if Pakistan had spent more on dams, as the country fights the furious waves of its angry rivers.



While the country is presently in the grip of floods, for most of the year the climate is arid. With water and energy issues on the horizon, new reservoirs are essential in light of increased urbanization, population growth, and food insecurity. The extra storage capacity from building new reservoirs might retain floodwater for productive use and lower flood peaks downstream. Dams facilitate water regulation. In addition to providing valuable water storage for agriculture, dams can also help alleviate the country's energy crisis. Pakistan is rapidly running out of water.

By 2050, Pakistan's population is expected to grow by 53%, from 230 million people to 338 million. City dwellers are expected to rise from 37.2 percent to 52 percent between 2020 and 2050. ¹⁹ We could see an over-100 percent drawdown ratio if we don't improve our water efficiency. While not everyone agrees with the idea of building dams, dam proponents fail to take into account the hydrologic changes that may occur. A discussion concerning dams occurs after every flood, however, most of the people who support dams come from Punjab province, which is upstream. diverting and storing flood water is neither the only nor the best option.

As a result of climate change and other reasons, we may witness more large-scale flooding in the future. Dams of various sizes are an important part of flood control management. The Indus River Basin, Pakistan's primary water source, is especially vulnerable to climate change due to its dependence on glacial and snowmelt and precipitation. Due to a lack of water, a substantial number of farmers in Sindh Province have already relocated to metropolitan areas. Provinces in the country are increasingly at odds over water distribution because of a dearth of water resources. According to the 1991 Water Accord, a baseline volume of 144.8 BCF of water is shared among the provinces, with 48 percent going to Punjab, 42 percent to Sindh, 7 percent to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and 3 percent to Balochistan.

Using the principles of private sector engagement and water pricing optimization, policymakers in Israel and Singapore can encourage wastewater recycling as a new approach to water management.

Pakistan has to get its irrigation system in order before building dams. A single river system provides for 95.8 percent of Pakistan's total renewable water resources,



making the country's dependence on a single river exceedingly dangerous. For the second time, the Indus Basin aquifer has been recognized as the second most overstressed subsurface water supply in the world. Groundwater is under a lot of stress. One hundred percent of all industrial uses in the country are reliant on this single source of freshwater. Population increase and urbanization are the most significant

threats to Pakistan's dwindling water resources and decreasing per capita water supply.

Over seventy-eight percent of Pakistan's water comes from outside the country, rendering it vulnerable to natural disasters. Our canal and irrigation systems are about 60 percent inefficient. Even though flood irrigation should be abandoned, it is

currently used in many areas. A large portion of Pakistan's available water can be directed toward the drought-stricken Thar Desert, the Indus delta that is being devastated by seawater intrusion, or even Karachi, which is experiencing a water shortage. Utilizing technology is critical for effective water use, but the correct innovation must also be selected to give the intended outcome. Instead of flooding their crops, farmers can utilize precision watering.

Another option is to make water metering mandatory for all water users, regardless of whether they are home, agricultural, or industrial. Once the quantity of utilization is established, planning and management of the precious resource can be improved. Water conservation isn't being rewarded in the present pricing scheme. Pricing can be linked to a variety of factors, including income levels. Consumers will be compelled to use water more wisely if the price of water is raised. Moreover, this will also generate enough income to maintain infrastructure and water-conserving devices.



Aftershocks of Foreign Funding May Haunt PTI in Next Elections

The Supreme Court will have a final word on the party's fate because a reference for dissolution sent by the federal government will be subject to the endorsement of the apex court



By Asaduallah

Though the recent judgment against Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) on “foreign funding” which has been renamed as “prohibited funding” by the Islamabad High Court (IHC) did not pose any imminent threat to the survival of the party or its Chairman Imran Khan, the decree of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) may haunt PTI in the next general elections.

Politically speaking, the decision has enabled the opposition alliance Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) in general and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) in particular to launch a vilification campaign against arch-rival PTI. Legally, the decision empowered the PML-N-led federal government to open a floodgate of never-ending inquiries on foreign funding, and it has authorized the ruling party to file the reference before the Supreme Court for dissolution of the party.

Since the funding in question was received before the promulgation of the Election Act 2017, therefore, PTI will be charged under the Political Parties Order (PPO) of 2002.

The relevant Section 6(3) of the PPO says, “Any contribution made, directly or indirectly, by any foreign government, multi-national or domestically incorporated public or private company, firm, trade or professional association shall be prohibited and the parties may accept contributions and donations only from individuals.”

As per the Statutory Regulatory Order (SRO) of July 23, 2002, The Election Commission may confiscate the prohibited funding of any political party subject to providing the opportunity of a hearing. As far as the Elections Act 2017 is concerned, it is almost identical to the PPO, however, it declared funding from any foreign national as prohibited.

In both the laws, the federal government is empowered to send a reference or declaration to the Supreme Court which then decides the fate of a foreign-funded party.

The Supreme Court will have a final word on a party's fate, because any such declaration by the federal government if taken, will be subject to endorsement

by the apex court that can uphold the federal government's declaration or reject the same but after complete satisfaction of its own through proper hearing into the matter.

If the apex court upholds the federal government's declaration, then according to Section 15(3) of PPO-2002, the foreign-aided political party will stand dissolved forthwith. In addition, the members who contested elections on the tickets of the party will also be disqualified for the remaining term from the provincial and the national assemblies.

For the time being, the commission has show-caused the party and will commence proceedings on whether to impose the penalty of confiscating the funds. The decision has opened up a new round of litigation before the superior courts since the PTI intends to challenge the issuance of show cause notice by the commission before the Islamabad High Court (IHC).

It is worth mentioning that a division bench of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) deciding the PTI's appeal related

to ECP's proceedings in the foreign funding case, had already advised the ECP on June 14 to provide a level playing field to all the political parties.

The relevant portion of the judgment is: "The Commission has been established under the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973 and it is competent to regulate its own proceedings. The learned counsel [of PTI] may raise the same concerns on behalf of the political party before the Commission and we see no reason why they would not be considered so as to ensure a level playing field for all the parties. We repose our confidence in the Commission and we have no reason to doubt that the legitimate rights of the petitioner party [PTI] will not be safeguarded."

As far as the issue of non-disclosure of the 'concealed' bank accounts is concerned, the alleged falsity of the certificates signed by Imran Khan and submitted to the ECP about the party funds, the ECP's decision on foreign funding is silent on this. Even otherwise, there is no concept of proceeding against the party head for receiving funding from prohibited sources. The only threat under the PPO is the dissolution of the party that too is linked with the Supreme Court's decision.

However, the certificates on part of Mr. Khan before the ECP that no foreign funding was received by the party could bring problems for him. The legal experts are divided on the issue of non-disclosure. Some lawyers believe that submitting false certificates is tantamount to presenting false

affidavits which may lead to disqualification under Article 62 (1) (f) of the Constitution.

Advocate Faisal Hussain, who belongs to PTI referred to the 2018 Khawaja Muhammad Asif case in which the Supreme Court had held that an elected member could not be disqualified for life by invoking Article 62 (1) (f) of the Constitution unless dishonesty was established in an appropriate judicial proceeding.

Attributing dishonesty to every omission to disclose an asset and disqualify a member for life could never have been the intention of the parliament while incorporating Article 62 (1) (f) in the Constitution, the SC had observed while setting aside the Islamabad High Court disqualification of PML-N stalwart Khawaja Asif under Article 62 (1) (f) of the Constitution for not disclosing salary drawn from a UAE firm.

Advocate Supreme Court Kashif Ali Malik said that the Supreme Court in several decisions has termed the submission of false certificates as dishonesty. "The apex court used the term "false declaration" for false certificates", he said adding to conclude whether the submission of false certificates was an innocent mistake or was it a dishonest act, the apex court may examine the entire evidence presented before the ECP.

According to advocate Malik, it will be a tough job for PTI's lawyers to prove that this was an innocent mistake and this case was identical to Khawaja Asif's case since the courts can take a lenient view for some minor mistakes such as slight miscalcula-

tion, little bit difference in measurement of land in the assets declaration, however, the apex court may not tolerate non-disclosure of about a dozen bank accounts.

Making it worse for the PTI, the PML-N government has tasked the FIA to initiate multiple inquiries into the party's funding. FIA has constituted a five-member team to supervise the inquiry teams.

As per the FIA notification, the probe is being conducted under Section 6 of the Political Parties Order, 2002. FIA's Additional Director Khalid Anees, Deputy Director Khawaja Hammad, Chaudhary Ijaz Ahmed, and Assistant Director Ijaz Ahmed Sheikh are members of the team tasked with supervising the ongoing inquiries into PTI's funding.

The lower staff of PTI through a petition has challenged the FIA's inquiry before the IHC. While terming it mala fide on part of the investigation agency, the counsel for PTI argued that notices were issued to his clients at midnight after the minister's presser and requested the court to set aside the notices issued to them by the FIA.

In 2011, PTI's financial board authorized four employees of the party's central secretariat —telephone operator (Tahir Iqbal), computer operator (Mohammad Nauman Afzal), accountant (Mohammad Arshad), and PTI's office helper (Mohammad Rafiq) — to receive funds from within Pakistan and abroad in their personal accounts, according to the Election Commission of Pakistan.



Russian Oil Imports: Opportunities and Challenges

It has become rather political to import oil from Russia

By Azeem Waqas

Importing Russian oil has become a political matter in Pakistan. The PTI and the Coalition government are still playing with the galleries to import Russian oil. Refineries have responded to the government and highlighted some of the difficulties in importing Russian oil, particularly regarding payment methods and transportation charges.

PARCO in its response says that the initial technical assessment on the basis of crude oil assays of Russian grades indicates that the sum of the Russian crude grades is technically suitable for processing at Mid-Country Refinery (MCR), in the range of 15 to 30% of the crude oil blend by replacing some of the existing grades. However, a detailed technical analysis of processing Russian crude oil at a refinery can only be assessed on the basis of a crude oil blend of Russian grades along with current grades. Therefore, we request to arrange samples of some of the Russian grades like SOKOL, ESPOL URALS, and Siberian light. A maximum of 1 or 2 cargos of 70000 metric tonnes can be processed at MCR in a month. Furthermore, since most of the Russian crude oils have the same quality as our imported grades, their food grade product mixes can be processed by replacing crude oil with Russian crude oil grades like Siberian light. We have learned that our crude oil transportation carrier PNSC is not permitted to call on Russian ports. Therefore, alternate transportation arrangements would be required through a supplier or trader.



The current transportation rate for imports from Russian ports is estimated in the range of 3.0 to 3.5 million dollars, compared to the current freight of 0.8 to 1 million dollars from Middle East ports. The sea voyage from Black Sea ports would also be around 16 to 25 days, compared to 4 to 5 days from Middle Eastern ports.

As per our understanding, payment in US dollars may not be acceptable to Russian companies. Therefore, a payment mechanism will have to be devised between Pakistan and Russia and local banks will need to be supported by payment to facilitate it.

PARCO has term contracts with Saudi ARAMCO and ADNOC with committed upliftment of 110,000 barrels per day, or 6 cargos per month. These commitments are

sufficient enough to meet our crude oil requirements.

Russian-origin crude oil can be processed in a certain quantity, 15 to 30%. For a limited period, we can manage the procurement of Russian-origin crude oil without compromising on our existing obligations under term contracts with ARAMCO and ADNOC. But if we want to lift Russian crude oil on a regular basis, we may have to reduce contractual volumes in the medium to long term.

Pakistan Refinery Limited (PRL), in its response, also highlighted some of the difficulties to be faced while importing Russian oil.

PRL, in its response, says that SOKOL would always be the first choice for PRL when compared with other available grades. However, a final decision on the procurement of the subject code will be made after evaluating its economic viability in comparison with the cruds that are currently being processed to PRL.

PRL imports a major chunk of its crude oil from the Middle Eastern region, whose rate varies between 1 to 1.5 dollars per barrel, while from Kozmino to Karachi it is \$8 per barrel as coated by the national carrier as a provisional quote. It's important to know that it takes about 22 days to travel by sea from Kozmino port to Karachi.



A confirmed letter of credit in USD from a first-class bank will be required for payments. However, it is pertinent to mention that presently, all Pakistani banks are not willing. Current long-term contracts with ADNOC and ARAMCO say that 9 million barrels of oil must be lifted every year.

It says that all Russian crudes can be processed in PRL with a blend ratio of Sokol %, ESPO %, and URALS %, respectively.

PRL's current preference is Sokol crude. However, a final decision on the procurement of the subject crude will be made after evaluating its economic viability in comparison with crudes that are currently being processed at PRL.

Payment Methodology: PRL said that a confirmed Letter of Credit (LC) in USD from a first-class bank will be required for payments. However, it is pertinent to mention that, presently, all Pakistani banks are not willing to open LCs for Russian Origin crudes.

The existing commitment to upliftment from the Arab Gulf region with respect to term contracts According to current term contracts with ADNOC, ARAMCO, and KPC, 1.2 million MT or 9.0 million barrels per year are required to be uplifted. After meeting the terms of its current crude oil term contract, PRL can look into the possibility of processing 300,000–400,000 MT/year more.



Cnergyco Private Limited, in its response, says that we have analysed the available market data and found that voyage time from Russian ports to Karachi varies between 28–37 days and freight charges are

8–12 times higher in comparison to UAE ports. Because of the risk of sanctions, only a small number of ships are showing up at Russian ports. This could cause freight rates to change even more.

Furthermore, the Pakistani and Russian governments must decide on an effective payment channel because, under current conditions, commercial banks will find it difficult to open LC/Contracts due to the risk of sanctions. It is said that our crude procurement maintains a balance between spot and term cargos for a particular quarter based on market fundamentals.



Governance System of Umar Al Khattab - Part V



By Azmat M. Saqib

Salient features of Umar's (RAA) Military Department

1. Declared the whole Muslim adult males as part of the army, which was of two types: standing and reserve army
2. Able generals were appointed having the following qualities:
 - a) Men with integrity.
 - b) Valiant and vigilant.
 - c) To be well versed in Islamic Scholastics.
 - d) Self-confident and unwavering in front of the enemy.
3. Pays of warriors were fixed on the basis of their level of contribution to war duties.
4. Establishment of military headquarters: Medina Kufa, Musil, Fustat, Egypt, Damascus, Hims, Palestine, and Jordan (4 HQs) are some famous military headquarters.
5. Hundreds of cantonments were established throughout the caliphate, both for offensive and defensive purposes. Their locations were near key cities of Syria, Iraq, and Egypt, near border areas, along waterways from where waterborne attack was expected, and along the seafont (as in Egypt).
6. New barracks were constructed in these cantonments and some old forts and their living quarters were refurbished.
7. War-related papers and records were kept in these cantonments.
8. Stables of four thousand horses were maintained at many of these cantonments so that whenever required, a cavalry of 4000 horsemen could be mobilized.
9. Storage of food supply and other necessary provisions for the army were kept in those cantonments and their headquarters.
10. Maintenance of records of new recruits was kept. Starting with Muhajirin and Ansar, the recruitment expanded to the whole Arab land. Census was conducted of all the tribes, and pay were fixed for those registered in books. It is estimated that at least one million men in arms were registered at one time.
11. During Umar's (RAA) caliphate 30,000 fresh troops were sent to the fronts on a yearly basis, which kept the onslaught of Muslim armies on full throttle.
12. It is interesting to note that conquering Muslim armies were joined by Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, Persians, Romans, and Indian warriors as well. Since many of these nationals were already subdued members of Roman and Persian armies. All those entrants were given proper pays as was given to the Muslims.
13. Since the warriors were not allowed to do trade or farming, pay raises were given for an incentive. Children of the army persons were also paid a monthly stipend from the day they were born.
14. A full-time supply department was established which maintained stock of grains, dry food, oils, and vinegar. Every soldier was given a monthly ration at the beginning of the month. Later on, cooked food was served instead of a dry ration.

15. Clothes for uniforms were also provided by the state. Additionally, a special allowance was also paid to the warriors. Horses for mobility were to be maintained by the soldier, if he could not afford a horse, then it was provided by the state. Four thousand horses were kept at Medina for this purpose.
16. If possible, military mobilization was done keeping in mind the severity of the weather, i.e., in colder regions like Syria, summertime operations were preferred. Stationed armies were also moved to colder regions in summer and warmer regions in winter, to safeguard the better health of a soldier.
17. During mobilization, Friday would be the rest day.
18. Umar (RAA) emphasized learning swimming, horse riding, archery, and walking barefoot. Advancement in the art of war was practiced in military tactics by Muslim generals. Previously, flanks used to fight under independent commands. In the Battle of Yarmouk, Khalid bin Waleed's (RAA) army fought for the first time under his unified command.
19. Leave was granted to an army once or twice every year. But after the incident of a female in Medina crying and longing for her husband at warfront. Umar (RAA) decreed that every soldier must visit home after four months. Despite these soft measures, a tough training schedule was implemented for the soldiers.
20. Umar (RAA) introduced an accounts officer, an auditor, a judge (Qazi), and several translators to accompany every army. Even a doctor was introduced to the fighting army.
21. Corps of engineers (Safar meena) was established to clear the paths, build roads and bridges, and provision of other logistics support ahead of the army.
22. Counterintelligence activities were performed both by Muslims and non-Muslims on behalf of the Muslim army. Due to better dealing of Muslim armies with the local population and better incentives in coming under the caliphate, intelligence gathering was furnished by the local population and sometimes some officials of non-Muslim armies who secretly converted to Islam.
23. In some wars, females also participated in the fighting, though in exceptional cases, where some flanks of the Muslim army got disintegrated.
24. Chroniclers (Waaqia Nigar) and reporters (Percha Navees) were appointed with each army and every incident of the army camp and war activities was recorded and reported to Caliph Umar on daily basis. If any instruction was needed it would be conveyed to the warfront on daily basis.

Public Works

The objective of an Islamic form of governance is to provide an enabling environment where an individual's welfare is supreme, an environment where he or she comes in harmony with the state and the Creator. Public workers, education, and religious affairs, thus, play a key role in achieving the objectives of an Islamic welfare

society. No separate department existed for public works, but very organized infrastructure development was pursued by the Caliphate.

Construction of canals

Besides canals for agricultural use, the following are some of the famous canals constructed during Umar (RAA)'s era:

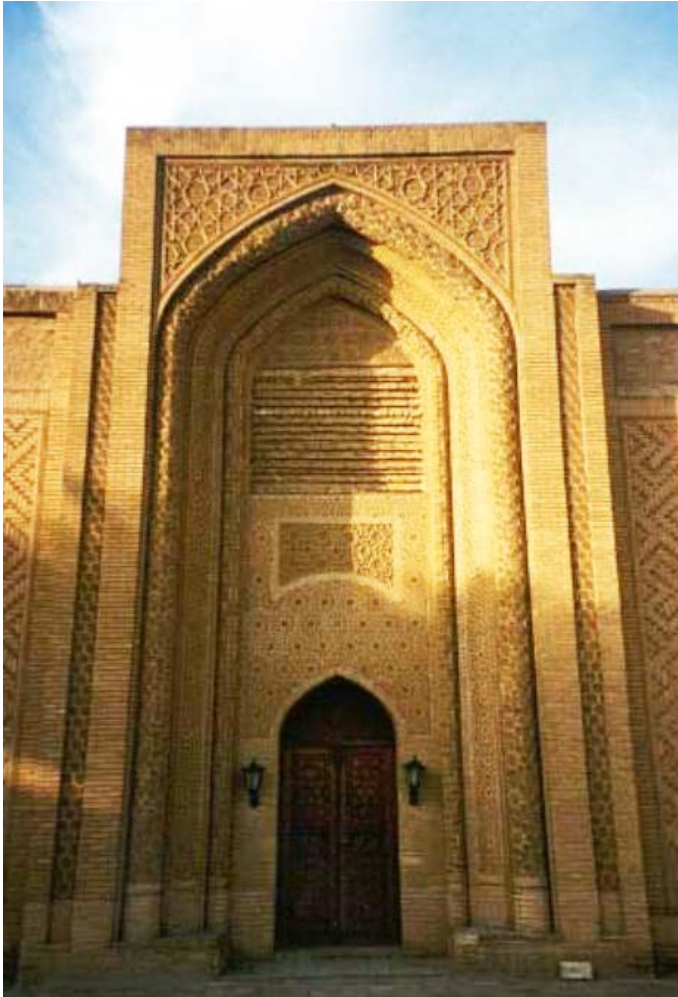
1. Abu Musa Canal: Due to the brackish water table, on request of the people of Bursa, a nine-mile-long canal was constructed between River Tigris and Basra.
2. Maa'qal Canal: this canal was carved out from the Tigris River. Maa'qal Bin Yousef (RAA) was the main person in this project.
3. Saad Canal: This canal was partially constructed when Governor Saad Abi Waqas (RAA) was approached by the people of Anbar. It was abandoned due to a mountain, later to be completed in the time of Hajjaj bin Yousef.
4. Amir Ul Mu'mineen Canal: A sixty-nine-mile-long canal between the river Nile and the Red Sea. Umar (RAA) ordered the construction. Built-in a short duration of six months, it provided shipping transport for food grain at the time of famine. Its route of transport was from Fustat (Egypt) to the Red Sea to a port near Medina. This canal was also used for trade.



Construction of Buildings

During Caliph Umar's (RAA) time three types of buildings were constructed;

- a) Religious: like mosques
- b) Military: like forts, cantonments, barracks
- c) State: Daar-ul-Imarat, where governor, divisional, and district heads had their official secretariat.



Umar (RAA) ordered the construction of the following state buildings:

1. Daar-ul-Imarat: Official residence and secretariat of Governor and Chief Administrator of Division.
2. Dewan: Where official records were kept. The office of the military was also housed in this building.
3. Bait ul Maal: House where state assets (treasury) were kept. Usually, such buildings were constructed to be strong and well-guarded.
4. Jails: Some places it was within the building of Daar-Ul-Imarat.
5. Guest House: These were constructed in cities for visiting travelers who wanted a place for a short stay.

It may be noted that these buildings were constructed very simply (mortar and bricks), but military buildings and Bait ul Maal were constructed to be strong. The construction of these buildings was financed by state funds.

Roads and Bridges

Many roads and bridges were constructed but not by direct government funds. In conquered lands like Iraq, Syria, and Egypt, the local population was supposed to fund such constructions themselves. It may be noted that, unlike other victors, Muslims let the locals own assets and hence were in a position to contribute funds for public welfare of their areas.

Cities

Cities in the time of Umar's (RAA) Caliphate were constructed for various purposes. Some as outpost Cantonments (Kufa, Iraq), others for Arabs tribes' settlements (Fustat, Egypt) still others as port cities (Jeeza, Nile). Some cities were constructed at crossroads of regions e.g., Musil linking eastern and western routes. Besides these, Basra and Fustat were among the famous cities constructed then.

Construction of Post and Rest Houses

The terrain between Mecca and Medina is dry and uninhabited. Umar (RAA) ordered to construct a check post, a guest house, and springs of water at every 'stage'.

Social Welfare

- i. It was ensured that no one under the caliphate should die of hunger.
- ii. Stipends were fixed from Bait ul Maal for handicapped, old persons, and persons unable to work.
- iii. Standing and reserve army, numbering in hundreds of thousands were given pay from state funds, irrespective of active duty.
- iv. Stipends for poor Muslims and people of the book were also paid from Bait ul Maal.
- v. Unclaimed children found near roadsides; stipends were provided for those who would milk the baby and give him shelter.
- vi. Caring for Orphans and their assets was given personal attention by the Caliph. Sometimes, their money was invested in trade so it increased with time.
- vii. At the time of famine in Arab lands, Caliph acquired food gains (on state fund) from Egypt. Everyone affected would get a daily quota as per the recorded allotment. Daily 20 camels were slaughtered and meat is given to the needy. The Caliph (RAA) supervised this activity personally. The Caliph ensured that people should not abuse the system of free stipend and they should continue working.

To be continued

Is US Army building Metaverse?

By Amna Shoaib

Every industry has been attaching itself to the 'metaverse' ever since Facebook rebranded to Meta in 2021. However, the language around different 'metaverses' in various industries gets confusing. We do not yet have a shared imagination for the metaverse and the technology required to build it. Virtual worlds that were introduced in gaming could be taken for the metaverse. For instance, the computer game, Second Life, has built an enduring community of millions who are 'living' together in virtual spaces which is nothing new.

The present hype around metaverse has revolved around marketing from big technology players. Each of these companies steers the conversation towards technology. Meta owns VR headset developer Oculus therefore it makes sense that its buzz around the metaverse will push its customers to buy more headsets. This is an indication that companies want their consumers reliant on their technology within a closed commercialized ecosystem. Despite their rhetoric, big tech has presented a rather narrow view of the metaverse. Simulation technology has the power to be so much more. By prioritizing cloud development and clear goal-setting, military organizations have taken significant leaps toward building an actual realization of this metaverse.

No organization has come further than the U.S. Military when it comes to any industry progress towards the cloud-supported, scalable metaverse. Their Synthetic Training Environment (STE) has been in development since 2017. The STE aims to replace all legacy simulation programs and integrate different systems into a single, connected system for combined arms and joint training. The STE will replace older simulation programs and produce a connected system for joint training.

It is different from the typical server-based approaches. For example, it will produce highly realistic terrain data for a digital twin of the Earth. New terrain management platforms



like Mantle ETM will make sure that all systems run on the same terrain data. This means trainees on a flight simulator will see the same plateaus, trees, or buildings as a trainee in a tank simulator.

Better scaling with computational power will lead to better real-world representation of important details like terrain complexity which traditional servers are unable to support. STE aims to extract data from all available resources to create simulated conditions like pedestrians and vehicles all at once.

The difference, however, is that STE is designed especially for the army personnel to train better and rehearse missions. Meanwhile, metaverses are for entertainment uses which is why they do not require an accurate pictorial representation of the planet.

Cloud scalability (that is, scaling with available computational power) will allow for a better real-world representation of essential details such as population density and terrain complexity that traditional servers could not support. The ambition of STE is to automatically pull from available data resources to render millions of simulated entities, such as AI-based vehicles or pedestrians, all at once.

Despite its advanced terrain rendering, large scale, and ease of use, the STE won't precisely represent the popular conception of the metaverse. This is

because the Army designed it in light of specific goals. STE focuses on allowing soldiers to better train, experiment with systems, and rehearse missions. Accurate representations of large sections of the earth are needed to accomplish these goals. Therefore, developers are creating a high-fidelity, digital twin of the entire planet.

Commercial metaverses created for entertainment or commercial uses may not require an accurate representation of the earth. They will likely be more aesthetic, fantasy worlds that allow users to perform actions, such as flying or teleportation, that don't represent real life. Training metaverses designed for industries that do not require the full extent of the planet (like healthcare) could look different as well. In the future, there may not be a metaverse at all because enterprises will create different digital environments for specialized purposes.

Still, the military metaverse could be a microcosm of what may soon be a large-scale, open-source digital world that is not controlled or dominated by a few commercial entities. I believe the STE will be used in daily training by 2030, a relatively short timeframe compared to the level of needed innovation. STE success will pave the way for any cloud-based, open-source worlds that come after it, and will help prove that metaverse's value extends far beyond that of a marketing gimmick.

Alibaba faces a reality check as the e-commerce giant reports quarterly results on Thursday

Alibaba Group Holding Ltd. faces a reality check as the e-commerce giant reports quarterly results on Thursday. Analysts say Ali Baba and Tencent face an end of an era as sales start to shrink.

Investors will be later focused on forward guidance, particularly after harsh COVID lockdowns in China during the second quarter put a drag on growth. Concerns about a slowing economy, an ongoing crackdown on regulations, and higher tensions between the U.S. and China also make this outlook more complicated.

Shares of the tech firm have almost wiped out their rebound from a March low and are down 20% this year in Hong Kong, in line with a slump in the Hang Seng Tech Index. The stock rose as much as 5.8% on Thursday.

Here are three charts showing the roadblocks ahead for Alibaba's shares:

Analysts expect Alibaba's April-June sales to fall 0.9% from a year earlier, marking its first-ever quarterly revenue contraction. Some analysts are also focusing on cost-cutting measures and investment spending plans in the company's results.

Daiwa Capital Markets sees a larger sales reduction, as core commerce may "take a



hit from supply chain disruptions in April-May," analysts including John Choi wrote in a note last month.

Alibaba's more than 21% slump from a July high has put the stock near technically oversold territory. Shares have fallen below both the 50-day and 100-day moving averages, which have been providing some support. A fresh regulatory penalty on past deals, a reported probe into data leaks, and a soft macroeconomic environment have sent stocks tumbling. News that co-founder

Jack Ma was also planning to cede control of Ant Group also created uncertainty.

Investors are trying to gauge how much Alibaba's businesses can recover in the coming quarters after China started easing quarantine rules and vowed to support the economy. Geopolitical tensions and global recession worries have stalled a recent uptick in analysts' profit projections, sending the company's 12-month forward earnings to estimate back toward 2019 levels.

By Amna Shoaib

The Truth International

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England Returns

England will play seven T20Is before the T20 World Cup in October

By Ali Abdullah



The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), over the years, has struggled hard to regain the image it lost after the Sri Lanka Bus Attack almost a decade ago. Since international cricket moved away from cricket-loving countries, cricket fans have been trying very hard to get international cricket back in the area.

After an immense struggle the officials have put up to get it back on track, Pakistan has welcomed numerous teams in the last 5 years. Not only is the nation's security assured, but the nation has cheered up by embracing the foreigners with a big heart.

The years-old hard work to get cricket back in Pakistan was not to see the disappointment that is trending across the cricket fraternity. NZC has cancelled the Pakistan tour after receiving security threats from an 'unknown', 'unapproved', and 'unauthentic source.'

These were the headlines on every major news channel and social media. Fans and players were heartbroken and felt helpless. The newly appointed chairman, PCB Ramiz Raja, did not expect this to happen. Everything happened at the last minute. Ramiz Raja was all fired up. Both governments were involved. The Prime Ministers were in contact with each other, but there was no good news. Everything failed, and it was known that all efforts put in by the cricket board in all these years went down the drain.

Just a few days after the England Cricket Team refused to travel to Pakistan for a T20 series scheduled in October prior to the World T20 2021, The ECB took the decision after New Zealand abandoned the Pakistan tour.

The Pakistani cricket team travelled to the UAE for the T20 world cup. Pakistan had to face the arch-rivals, India, in the very first match and then New Zealand.

Following Pakistan's outstanding performance in the T20 World Cup, cricket Australia toured the country, and the England Cricket Board (ECB) has rescheduled their tour of

Pakistan. England will play seven T20Is before the T20 World Cup in October. The English will return in December for a test series.

The England cricket team is coming back after a break of nearly 15 years. England last toured Pakistan in 2005. They played 5 one-day internationals and 3 tests. Teams travelled all around Pakistan, including Faisalabad and Multan. England, which was looking to continue its form after winning the Ashes, suffered a sharp reversal of fortune, losing the test series 2-0 to Pakistan. Pakistan also won the one-day series by 3 games to 2.

England failed to chase a target of under 200 runs for the first time since the fourth Test of the 1998-99 Ashes, as Danish Kaneria and Shoaib Akhtar shared seven wickets to bowl England out in three spurts at Multan. Pakistan took their first victory over England at home since 1987-88, despite surrendering a first-innings lead of 144 and setting a target of 198, and England was even 64/1 chasing that target. However, Kaneria removed Andrew Strauss and Ian Bell in the same over, before Paul Collingwood was lbw to Mohammad Sami in the next. England had gone from 64/1 to 67/4—Andrew Flintoff and Kevin Pietersen added 26, before Kaneria struck again, as Flintoff swept him to Younis Khan. Eventually, they were 117/7 before Shaun Udal came in and added



49 with Geraint Jones—and then, Shoaib Akhtar bowled Jones for 33, leaving England to hit 33 for the last two wickets. Udal and Steve Harmison went in quick succession, and England finished on 175. Even though the bowlers worked hard, Salman Butt was named Man of the Match because his 122 runs in the second innings helped Pakistan set a target.

The second test match was tied and Pakistan was still leading the series 1-0. Pakistan asserted their dominance over the series in the third and final test at Lahore, capitalising on the momentum gained by winning the first test and dominating the majority of the second.

England won the toss and chose to bat and after a useful start

where the openers put on 101, they were then regularly pegged back by Pakistan to end the day on 248/6. Criticism was levelled at the English batsmen for getting out to some injudicious shots. The use of the sweep shot came in for particular attention, as five batsmen lost their wickets attempting such a shot. Despite a battling 96 by Paul Collingwood, England were bowled out for 288.



Pakistan initially struggled in their reply, losing two very early wickets to be 12/2 at lunch on day 2, and they lost their third wicket before the score reached 100. However, Inzamam-ul-Haq continued his dominance over England's attack, and only left the crease due to a hand injury. Mohammad Yousuf also built on his good form, and profited from being dropped at 16. In fact, he would eventually bat through the entire third day, which was an awful one for England, as their only success was the wicket of the night watchman, Shoaib Akhtar, and that was only after he had made a score of 38.

Mohammad Yousuf and Kamran Akmal put on 269 runs for the fifth wicket, with Yousuf scoring a career-best 223. Akmal scored

154, which was also a career best. England then faced the daunting prospect of the return of Inzamam after his injury, with the latter returning to resume his innings nearly 2 days after he had left the crease. Inzamam returned to play some expansive strokes with the lower order and accelerate the scoring to an extent that it would be impossible for England to win the game. He was eventually run out on 97 just before lunch on the 4th day, and he immediately declared his side's innings on an enormous 636/8.

England, by this point, was shattered, withdrawn, and dispirited. Although Paul Collingwood and Ian Bell produced a determined rearguard effort in the second innings, putting on 175 for the third wicket, England would not be able to bat out the match. They went from 205/3 to 248 all out, losing by an innings and 100 runs. Danish Kaneria and Shoaib Akhtar were the standout bowlers involved in the collapse, recording figures of 4/52 and 5/71 respectively.

Pakistan and their supporters were delighted with such a convincing victory over a side that had recently triumphed over Australia. England, on the other hand, had some serious questions to ask themselves, and realised that winning back the Ashes was by no means the ultimate achievement. In fact, the loss of the first test in Multan is considered by many analysts of the game to be a turning point for the fortunes of the England side, one from which they still have not fully come back to this date. It was a match they should have won, and they assumed they would win. But Pakistan took advantage of their lack of focus and pretty much dominated the rest of the series. Pakistan did not turn back after the test series. Pakistan then played a 5-match ODI series and won 3-2.

Fans are excited to see one of the biggest teams in world cricket. Everyone's hopeful that the series will be played without any problems and the fans will witness a great series.



Commonwealth Games 2022: Golden Australia, Enchanting India, and Bitter-Sweet Pakistan

The indifference of the government towards extracurricular activities at the school and college level, unscrutinized funding at the department level, and a paralyzed structure of sports at district, provincial and national levels are costing Pakistan heavily in sports

By Shah Faisal

Commonwealth Games is a quadrennial international sports saga that is contested by nations that were once under the rule of British imperialism. The event first took place in 1930 as British Empire Games and since then has been taking place periodically except for 1942-46 when the world war made the event practically impossible to hold. This year the games took place in its imperial home, England, hosting 72 countries for 19 different games from July 28 to August 8.

Australia clinched the most medals (178), comprising 67 gold. The most notable of their performances was their cricket gold medal, won in a table-turning manner against a strong Indian side. They also defeated Jamaica in a nail-biting women's netball final (55-51). Similarly, the Aussies maintained their champions streak in hockey, winning the 7th successive hockey gold medal.

However, their main suit was swimming where they won 65 medals in total, including a bulk of 25 gold medals. The most pronounced swimmer for Australia was their women swimmer, Emma McKeon, who reached the prestigious podium 8 times and also her total tally of 8 medals in the competition made her a player who alone won more medals than 56 other nations, only 16 countries managed to win 8 or more medals in the competition. Australia has now become the sole country in CWGs history to win more than 1000 medals.

Hosts England missed the top position by a thin margin of 2 medals and came second on the chart with a tally of 176 including 57 gold medals. England missed the gold 66 times, ending up with bronze. Their most prominent performance was Jake Jarman's four gold medals in gymnastics. His fellow countryman Tom Dean, with six silver medals and one gold in swimming,



departed Birmingham with the most medals for England. England now sits second on the list of medals (776) in CWG history. Other than England, Canada, India, and New Zealand performed well at the games, finishing with a fairly high number of medals.

Several records were made at the CWG. Ese Brume the heroic Nigerian long jumper leaped 7.17 meters in her last jump in the final to become the first women in CWG history to cross the 7-meter mark. Her incredible comeback in the final after a no jump in the first attempt remains the best example of commitment and willpower. Another Nigerian woman, Goodness Chiemerie Nwachukwu, set the commonwealth games record in discus throw and sent the metallic discus 36.56 meters to claim gold for her country. In Para weightlifting, Sudhir from India established a CWG record for accumulating 134.5 in his two attempts which were enough to secure a gold medal for India. Pakistani juvenile thrower Arshad Nadeem became the first South Asian to

send the juvenile further than the 90-meter mark, a proud record for him and his country. Other significant records were also made in men's 200m, men's 1500m, and women's triple jump.

Significant records were also registered by India, especially by its women. Poonam Sharma in athletics and Chanu Saikhom Miraba in weightlifting made their country proud by winning gold with record-breaking performances.

The story of India sprouted as the most enchanting story of the event. India finished with 61 medals and ranked fourth on the table. They won a decent number of 22 gold medals, the first time they managed so many in a single event. Indian women managed a total of 27 medals in total, while men remained exceptional in wrestling. India's success in the event is being widely celebrated by Indians and proves how hard Indian sports departments are working to showcase top talent on a global level. It also enumerates how deeply the authorities have focused on the basics of sports that

PAKISTAN COMMONWEALTH GAMES MEDAL-WINNERS



resulted in the side's 12 medals in the 19 sports that were open for competition. Their successful journey in CWG 2022 indicates an established and functional infrastructure of sports in a country that is heavily populated.

The story of Pakistan, however, continued as austere as many cynical people would have pessimistically presumed. They were not in serious competition across many categories, and even in those where they appeared focused, they failed to reach the final line or deliver the final blow. Pakistan grabbed 8 medals in total which is not something one should seriously be proud of. However, the nation took delight in the two gold medals as they found new heroes in Arshad Nadeem and Nooh Dastagir Butt – the former being a constant performer

since the last Olympics; he satisfied the imaginations and hopes of Pakistanis by winning the juvenile throw final. Besides these, Pakistan appeared ambitious and combative in wrestling, weightlifting, and squash but went short of the victory line and could only secure bronze and silver medals in the respective categories.

The new weightlifting sensation, Nooh Dastagir Butt, recorded not just a gold medal against his Pakistani badge but also registered a commonwealth record by lifting combined, record-breaking, 405 kg in the final. This achievement is surely going to be a torchbearer for the future of sports other than cricket in the country.

There wasn't much good news in the cricketing arena as well. Pakistan women's team lagged behind since the start of their campaign and in the course of the tournament ceded to India in a one-sided game. India however went on to lose in an unfortunate manner against the Australian women's team securing bronze that could potentially have been gold had they kept their nerves calm and functional. Pakistani women in other categories also performed poorly, failing to secure any medal collectively. In swimming, Pakistani swimmer, Jahanara Nabi, clocked 1:01.51 in women's 100m freestyle heats, thereby breaking her own national record which previously was 1:02.05.

Though Pakistanis as a nation would optimistically be talking about the heroics of Arshad Nadeem and Nooh Dastagir Butt, however, it should be a matter of concern given that the country has regressed even in the sports that were once its strong suits: squash and hockey. This reflects the hollowness of the country's sports culture.

The reasons for this failure are countless, starting from the lack of proper infrastructure and facilities to the blame game that authorities and officials play with each other. But the most important reason is the lack of sincerity from athletes and the public administration. We often see professional athletes whining against the government and respective departments for lack of support and financial assistance. The most recent lament came from Inayat Ullah, the bronze medallist wrestler, who insinuated that facilities are the reason why Pakistan fails to compete and also revealed that the department lacks proper funds to support us and send us abroad for training and competitions.

The indifference of the government towards extracurricular activities at the school and college level, unscrutinized funding at the department level, and the paralyzed structure of sports at district, provincial and national levels are costing Pakistan heavily in sports. It's high time proper heed is paid to this injured spot to stop it from festering further, at least before the SAF games that are going to take place in Pakistan next year.

Ayeza Khan became the first celebrity in Pakistan to have 12 million Instagram followers



By Pavan Manzoor

Ayeza Khan, a Pakistani actress and model, mainly appears in Urdu television programmes. Ayeza has played more than 30 different roles and has won numerous awards, including Lux Style Awards, Hum Awards, and Pakistan International Screen Awards.

She has starred in various popular drama series, including Mehar Posh, Do Qadam Door Thay, Yaariyan, Mohabbat Tumse Nafrat Hai, and Mere Pass Tum Ho. Ayeza Khan lives in millions of hearts with her charming beauty and outstanding performances.

While still in school, Ayeza Khan took part in the "Pantene Shine Princess" competition and finished as the first runner-up. Soon after, she received a modelling offer for a telecom advertising campaign, and she immediately began to concentrate on modelling. As soon as she started college, she started taking on more modelling jobs, and she eventually dropped out of school to pursue a career in show business.

In 2009, she was given the opportunity to play a supporting role in the comedy-drama Tum Jo Miley, alongside Fahad Mustafa, Sunita Marshal, and many other actors. She was offered the major role in the drama series "Pul Sirat" in 2010. She got her first big role in the love story Tootay Huway Per on Geo TV. Before that, she had played small parts in a number of other TV shows.

In 2014, she won the Best Actress Award at the Lux Style Awards for her work in the drama series Pyaray Afzal. After getting married, she turned down several offers from Bollywood and took a vacation from the business.

She then made a comeback two years later, alongside Imran Abbas in the sad love story Tum Kon Piya (2016). Imran

Abbas, Muneeb Butt, and Areeba Habib are characters in her series, Koi Chand Rakh.

The Pakistan International Screen Award was given to her for the role she played in the 2019–20 romance drama Meray Paas Tum Ho.

She co-starred with Osman Khalid Butt in the comedy series Chupke Chupke in 2021.

The charismatic personality and stunning, elegant appearance of Pakistan's most prominent actress, Ayeza Khan, have won her a sizable fan base. Fans are fascinated by the star's enticing Instagram feed, which she possesses at age 31. The Laapata actor is one of Pakistan's entertainment industry's fashionistas and a consummate performer.

Following an eight-year relationship that began in 2006 and was publicised on the morning show Ek Nayee Subha with Farah on A-Plus, Khan married actor Danish Taimoor in 2014. On March 25, 2020, Danish Taimoor confessed to Maria Wasti on Croron Mein Khel-Bol TV that he first met Ayeza Khan on a social networking website. In 2015, she gave birth to a girl; in 2017, a son.

She also serves as a brand ambassador for a number of brands in her non-screen capacities.

By becoming the first Pakistani celebrity to have 12 million followers on Instagram, Ayeza Khan has accomplished another significant feat.

In appreciation of her achievement, Khan got comments from her fans on Instagram after she broke the 11 million follower mark in January of this year.

Viva la Resistance, Viva la Revolution... but from UAE

By Arsim Tariq & Shah Muhammad

Arshad Sharif, a Pakistani rebel, fled to UAE on EK 637 with courage and conviction. On his departure, Imran Riaz Khan said that “Arshi lived up to the standards of resistance that we require to bring down the neutrals. The way he fled the country is exceptionally valiant on so many levels.” When The False International correspondent asked about the “levels,” he referenced his own attempt to escape the country and said that “the levels that I could not achieve.”

Furthermore, PTI leader Fawad Chaudhary argued that “if Nelson Mandela had fled before his imprisonment, he would not have been such a failure. And if Che Guevara had fled the oppressors, his life would not have been in vain. Nobody knows them today but everybody in the world knows Arshad Sharif.”

“Fleeing the country when you are in trouble is the real resistance,” he further added.

When asked about his inspiringly remarkable bid to flee, Arshad Sharif responded, “there is deep-seated wisdom in my attempt to escape that ordinary minds can not fathom.” He went on to add, “I am actually following in the footsteps of Khomeini who spearheaded revolution from abroad.”

When asked about the individuals who have wreaked havoc in the body politic of Pakistan, he yet again exhibited revolutionary courage by refusing to name anyone.

Nation's youth backs Shahid Anwar as next prime minister of Pakistan

By Abdul Basit

The launch of Shahid Anwar's political career is only a matter of time as the internet sensation continues to garner the support of the decisive vote bank in the country.

Shahid Anwar, famous for telling people straight in the face of their miserable lives, is becoming especially popular among the nation's youth.

Analysts claim that his popularity is soaring among the middle-class youth, especially those, psychologists reveal, who betray more than their fair share of insecurities, and in many cases, daddy issues.

“Nobody else knows what to do with this country, especially the economy. We believe that Shahid Anwar should be made the next finance minister or better the prime minister,” said Kainat Ahmed, a spokes-

person of the Rawalpindi-based Shahid Anwar For Prime Minister (SA4PM), while talking to The Dependent.

As The Dependent's surveys across the country have revealed, this is a popular sentiment among those in the 18-24 age demographic, especially those overlapping with a penchant for personality cults.

“Shahid Anwar makes big bucks and tells people to get out of poverty. He can apply the same formula to the country. After all he knows riches better than riches themselves,” exclaimed Subhan Basit, an IT student from Karachi.

“And what else do we need? He is handsome, gets good lighting in videos, and finally got the Islamic touch as well,” underlined Sana Batool, a business student.

In a recent video, Shahid Anwar gave an

example from Islamic history on how one's number of marriages should be in proportion to one's resources.

“And that's why he is a motivational speaker! He is encouraging all of us to earn more,” said an excited Ali Murad, an aspiring husband.

“Shahid Anwar can use his own Islamic touch to make Pakistan the true Riyasat-e-Madinah,” maintained Saqib Azhar, a teenager from Lahore.

Hira Shahid, a Peshawar-based teenager, said Shahid Anwar will be the most Sadiq and Ameen prime minister because he is rich. “After all, why would a rich man do corruption? God has given him everything. If he had to make money, he could do commentary and tell people about Amazon,” she added.

Peace is not possible under the presence of savage states, says Nancy Pelosi

By Syed Ali Abbas

The Empire system that has encompassed most of the human history has been the reason for peace since the medieval times. It was primarily because the savages and barbarians like Africans, Asians and Latin Americans were nonexistent in the power games of that time. But as soon as these savage states emerged, peace started to fade away. It is impossible today to think of peace as long as these savage states like Palestine, Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq, for example, have even iota of existence in this world.

Nancy Pelosi's recent visit to Taiwan illustrates the American inherent desire to dictate its terms to the world. She quoted, “We came here to express solidarity with the Taiwan's independence;

however, we are deeply concerned of the Palestinian brutal separatist movements, started for its own inherent right to savagely self-determination and to create a geopolitical mess in the Middle East.”

US State Department explicitly announced that we would only endorse for the independence of developed countries. However, underdeveloped, uncivilized, failed, and rogue nations do not deserve to be either at peace or have any right to self-determination. State Department asserted with rhetorical prudence that only the most supreme and peace-exporting country like the US has legitimate authority to determine the self-determination and culture of peace formula.

Why Should I Be Hungry?

A vast majority of beggars have taken to this lucrative profession as a means of making some easy money

By Zeenat Iqbal Hussain

Salman, come and have your lunch," shouted his mom from the door of their hut in the Katchi Abadi. He was playing marbles with his friends, Adversary. His mother was thin, a widow who lived in a slum in Karachi. Her husband died when Salman was 6 years of age. He was 10, now in the adolescent phase. She worked hard as a domestic servant in the city. Their slum was outside the city. Salman knew that she always kept the meat for him. If Salman asked her to have it, she would say she had eaten at Begum Saheba's. But Salman, although not so old, knew in his heart of hearts that his mom was lying. He knew that she saved as much food as she could for him, of the little that they had. He entered his hut with his friend. His mom looked up as if to say, "There is not enough for the both of us." But she told Rahman to come in. So Rahman and Salman sat together and ate the dried bread with curry.

One day, Rahman told Salman that a guest in the slum, whom he called Ustadji, had given him 5 rupees, which was a lot of money for Rahman. He asked Salman to come with him to meet Ustadji. Ustadji seemed to be a nice person. He gave Salman Rs. 5; only nice people gave money, just like that, thought Salman.

Upon enquiring, Salman found out that Ustadji lived in the city. He told Salman that he had a big house and that he and Salman could come and stay with him. He would receive Rs. 500 per month.

Salman convinced his mom to let him go. He wanted to help his mom by earning some more money.

They sat in a taxi, which wound through roads that Salman had not seen in a lifetime. After an hour or so, the taxi stopped outside a building. Ustadji stepped outside and asked Salman to follow. A boy of about 14 years of age came to Ustadji. He enquired about who Salman was. Ustadji asked him to take Salman to his room.

There, Salman saw a quilted robe and



Kashkoll. A pair of crutches were propped up against the wall.

Many cases of children being deliberately mutilated and disabled by their inhuman Ustadji's for the purpose of beggary have been reported. A substantial number of takings from these poor and innocent child beggars fill the purses of their cruel tormentors.

After a couple of days, Salman found himself on the streets with the boy who shared his room, begging for money. He had to report to Ustadji in the evening, declaring the amount of money he had collected to him.

It is a fact that a vast majority of beggars are able-bodied and have taken to this lucrative profession as a means of making some easy money. Well-meaning people give alms to them on Fridays in particular and during Ramazan. But they don't realise that by doing so, they are not really implementing the spirit behind the concept of charity. No doubt, some of the destitute need our help, but by giving alms to them we are really encouraging them to become lazy and harass people.

Salman hated this job, but what could he do? He missed his mother and Rahman very much. But what could he do? Ustadji kept giving excuses for not sending him home. Salman did not know how to find his way home. At night, he cried himself to sleep. Take this money. Ustadji gave him Rs. 10 as a bonus whenever he was in a good mood.

One day, Salman set out early. In the midst of the crowd, he thought he saw Begum Saheba. She lived in the city. He ran like a bullet towards her. With wet eyes, he told her his story. She said she would take him to his mom. She gave him some clothes to wear and made sure he had a bath.

He hugged his mom and would not leave her. He hugged Rahman and thanked Begum Saheba profoundly. He would skip a meal, even three, and live on an empty stomach as long as he could be with his mom and Rahman.

One wonders where the crores of rupees that the government annually collects as zakat goes. Of course, the bulk of the amount should be given as annual aid to the poor, whether they live in slums or are beggars.



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