

Fortnightly

# The Truth International

Islamabad

15<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022

ABC Certified

Catastrophic Floods in Pakistan

Relief operation needs paced up

Politics Amidst Floods

Political polarization to undermine relief activities

IMF's Assessment of Pak Economy

Political instability can derail economy of Pakistan

## No Relief In Sight





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# Flood Politics

By Hammad Ghaznavi

The 'monsoon on steroids' has caused floods of biblical proportions in Pakistan, killing hundreds of people, sweeping away infrastructure, homes and schools, displacing around 33 million people, destroying crops and livestock. Water-born diseases and serious food shortages have multiplied the tragedy, making it a Herculean task to handle the worsening situation. Due to the floodwaters submerging 100,000 square miles, including the wheat-belt, the fears regarding the approaching wheat planting season look real. Already amidst an acute economic crisis, Pakistan has been taken years back if not decades. According to estimates, approximately \$30 billion are required to rebuild the devastated country.

UN General Secretary Antonio Guterres, and the Pakistan government, have appealed to the world community to donate \$160 million for immediate relief efforts for around five million people facing hunger and disease. Mr Guterres sounds passionate in his appeals and efforts for hapless flood victims, reminding the world that Pakistan that produces 0.4 emissions responsible for climate change, is paying for the sins of the so called developed world. Aid is coming in from the UN agencies and various countries but looking at the epic proportion of tragedy, a much bigger international effort is required. The required aid, economists fear, may not be forthcoming because of the donor fatigue. "Pakistan needs to slash non-development expenditure, including the non-combatant defense budget, ration petrol and ban non-essential imports to generate more money that will

be required for flood rehabilitation," suggests renowned economist Kaiser Bengali.

While floods play havoc across the length and breadth of the country, politics, unfortunately, has not taken a backseat. Political parties, it is proven again, do not have the organized party structures to play a meaningful role in the relief efforts. It is the NGOs like Alkhidmat, Edhi Foundation, Akhuwat and many more that are seen as leading the relief efforts on the ground, while political parties keep attacking each other for 'doing nothing' for flood victims. The country is politically so divided that even a tragedy of this immense proportion could not convince the political opponents to call a truce. A PTI leader Shandana Gulzar while talking to the international media has dissuaded the world community from donating to the government of Pakistan for the money or goods may not reach the flood victims. Another PTI leader Shozab Kanwal voiced similar concerns as for donating to the 'imported government'.

Despite devastating floods and displacement of millions, Imran Khan continued his public rallies which his political rivals thought was callous on Khan's part. Imran Khan has done two telethons so far, claiming to have raised around Rs one billion, which his opponents describe a totally fictional figure. PTI underlines the claimed figure as a proof of their Chairman's popularity. Likewise, when by-elections were postponed for a couple of weeks due to flood situation, PTI termed it the fear of



Imran Khan's popularity that caused the postponement of polls.

On the other hand, the cases against Imran Khan are multiplying. Every other day, he is seen in the courts seeking bail in different cases. These visuals emphasize the unrelenting political battle in the country, unaffected by the flood situation that demanded at least a semblance of unity of the nation in this hour of crisis. Looking at the political picture, Imran Khan's fears of 'minus-one' seem real. There are various examples of cutting down to size of the popular leaders in the past and Imran seems no exception. In a word, minus-one formula means getting rid of a popular leader by disqualifying him from contesting the elections on one pretext or the other. From PRODA and EBDO disqualification laws to Article 62 and 63, there have been many 'legal methods' to achieve the end. Examples are numerous, from Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardi to Nawaz Sharif. For one, Sharif was disqualified to contest elections or even hold a party position, to ensure his gradual fade out from politics.

The same fate awaits Imran? Such a move, to put it mildly, will be myopic and will only testify our incapacity to learn from history. All previous efforts to disqualify popular leaders have failed, and only embittered our politics.

With wheat shortage and unprecedented inflation approaching, there are genuine fears of tougher times ahead. Politics never stops, and that's how it should be, but as a nation we can make it less poisonous.

# Floods In Pakistan: Role of Government and NGOs in Relief Operations

*Alkhidmat Foundation is one of the many NGOs that are responding to the flood disaster on the front line by initiating a wide array of relief activities for the victims*

By Neha Ayub

## Pakistan Flood Impact Assessment 2022

Torrential monsoon rains have been lashing Pakistan since mid-June 2022, causing the worst flooding the nation has experienced in almost a decade. More than 33 million people have been affected by the floods, and more than 1 million homes have been demolished or damaged (NDMA, 2022). Floodwaters covered tens of thousands of square kilometers of the nation, and have caused at least 1,100 casualties including over 350 children, over 1,600 people have been injured, over 287,000 homes have been completely and 662,000 partially demolished, over 735,000 animals have died, and 2 million acres of crops have been ruined, including severe damages to the communications infrastructure.

**TABLE 1: POPULATION AFFECTED BY FLOOD SEPTEMBER 9, 2022**

Province/ region wise	Affected Population	Rescued Population
AJ&K	53,700	300
Balochistan	9,182,616	600
GB	51,500	7317
KP	4,350,490	69,775
Punjab	4,844,253	75,719
Sindh	14,563,770	23,554
<b>Total</b>	<b>33,046,329</b>	<b>177,265</b>

Source: NDMA Monsoon 2022 Daily Situation Report No 082

## Large Scale Humanitarian Assistance by Government and NGOs in Pakistan amid Heavy Floods

The government of Pakistan has initiated flood relief operations in northern and southern districts of Pakistan which have been struck by heavy floods. The federal government and multiple stakeholders i.e., provincial governments, NGOs, IGOs, private sector, and communities are functioning together to mitigate the unprecedented damages to the infrastructure, human lives, and livestock caused by chaotic floods in Pakistan. Taking into consideration the flood situation in Pakistan, government alone cannot mitigate and respond to this disaster hence, the role of NGOs has become crucial during this challenging period.

With massive floods wreaking havoc across the country, NGOs in Pakistan have jumped into the battleground with prodigious enthusiasm to help the flood victims. These front-line warriors are effectively mobilizing the citizens for immediate emergency assistance to the flood victims and a large number of spontaneous volunteers at the disaster sites.



## Flood Relief Campaign by Federal and Provincial Governments

### Prime Minister's Flood Relief Fund

The Pakistani government has amalgamized all of its assets. The "Prime Minister's Flood Relief Fund-2022" has been formed to provide emergency assistance with food, shelter, medical care, and rehabilitation efforts. The Fund accepts contributions from both domestic and foreign sources. Donors have a variety of alternatives for making contributions/donations through various channels.

### Balochistan Flood Relief and Rehabilitation Fund

Balochistan has been devastated by flash floods brought on by heavy monsoon rains, which have destroyed over 20,000 homes, claimed 225 lives, and destroyed the crops on over 200,000 acres. The Balochistan government has established the "Balochistan Flood Relief and Rehabilitation Fund." A Balochistan Government official told the Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) that the fund's basic goal is to accelerate the relief and rehabilitation efforts in the flood-affected districts.

He added that Balochistan's cabinet members would donate their month's salary to flood victims. The cabinet has also decided to contribute one day's wage of government workers to the Balochistan relief fund.

### Sindh Government Flood Relief Funds

In Sindh, the relief fund has received a donation of one month's net salary for the chief minister and all ministers, five days' salary for public servants in grades 17 and up, and two days' salary for those in grades 16 and under.

### Pakistan Army Flood Relief Funds

Under the leadership of Commander Army Air Defence Command, who was also serving as National Coordinator of the National Flood Response and Coordination Center, the



Army Flood Relief Coordination Center was founded. The Pakistan army is working to mitigate the destruction by following the strategy of relief, rehabilitation, and rescue with the collaboration of civil administration, disaster management authority, and welfare organizations. The Army chief has made repeated visits to the flood-affected areas of Sindh, Punjab, KPK, and Balochistan to examine the on-ground situation and progress of the relief operations. The helicopters of Pakistan Army Aviation have made commendable efforts in rescue and relief activities throughout. Approximately 276 helicopter sorties have been operated in multiple areas. Pakistan Army Aviation pilots have jeopardized their lives not only to rescue people but also to make sure that they could have access to the necessary relief supplies.



## Flood relief campaigns by NGOs in Pakistan

### Alkhidmat Foundation

Alkhidmat Foundation Pakistan is one of the leading, non-profit organizations in the country, fully dedicated to humanitarian services since 1990. Alkhidmat is one of the many NGOs that are responding to the flood disaster on the front line by initiating a wide array of relief activities for the victims. As of now, Alkhidmat has rescued thousands of families and provided PKR 147.1 million in relief aid to approximately 221,816 flood-affected people.

In the flood-affected regions of Sindh, Balochistan, and South Punjab, Alkhidmat is actively engaged in rescue and relief efforts. The foundation has arranged temporary tent villages in the affected

areas. People in these tent villages are provided with two meals a day, medical facilities, and clean drinking water.

Alkhidmat is also actively working in partnership with corporate elements in order to expand its relief operations and strengthen its corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities. Tech giant Samsung Pakistan has partnered with Alkhidmat Foundation Pakistan to donate a total of PKR 18 million to the flood victims. International organizations such as Unilever, United Nations, and Humanitarian aid Canada are also sponsoring food items and financial aid for the Alkhidmat foundation. Companies like DALDA, Lays Pakistan, and Cheetos Pakistan have also joined hands with Alkhidmat foundation on this journey.

Alkhidmat also signed an MOU with NUST university to support and provide opportunities for the youth through volunteerism for enhancing their civic engagement sense during such challenging times. ILM trust has also agreed to provide technical and financial support to AK in its flood relief efforts. President ILM trust donated PKR 5 million in Alkhidmat relief funds. UMT family (teachers, staff, and students) happily agreed to volunteer in relief and rehabilitation efforts. KSB pumps made considerable donations for the cause and Titlis pharma, a famous pharmaceutical company donated medical supplies for the flood victims.

The president of Alkhidmat, Shakoor said in his video message that “Alkhidmat Foundation Pakistan has planned to arrange Mobile Filtration Plant facilities in these flood-stricken areas. Our target is that we send as many 10 Mobile water Filtration plants to affected areas as soon as possible, The estimated cost of each mobile water filtration plant is near PKR 7.5 million”

**Table 2: ALKHIDMAT RELIEF ACTIVITIES  
SEPTEMBER 10, 2022**

<b>Volunteers</b>	50,720	<b>Relief Boat Vehicles</b>	40
<b>Food Packs</b>	71,873	<b>Cooked Food</b>	50,672
<b>Clean water</b>	75,000	<b>Tent villages</b>	23
<b>rescue</b>	54500	<b>Medical camps</b>	317
<b>Tents and Tarpaulins</b>	Relief	<b>Relief Trucks</b>	665
<b>Patients treated</b>	111,850	<b>Tent Schools</b>	17

*Source: Alkhidmat Foundation, Pakistan*





## Akhuwat Foundation

Akhuwat is a not-for-profit organization that was founded in 2001 by Dr. Amjad Saqib on the Islamic principle of Mawakhat or solidarity. They have almost 700 branches in 350 cities in Pakistan. Akhuwat has initiated a “flood rehabilitation fund” to help provide rehabilitation to thousands of deserving individuals and families affected by floods. The organization is managing the disaster in two phases i.e. relief and rehabilitation. During the first phase of ‘relief,’ the organization has been successfully providing cooked meals, ration bags, emergency cash, and medical camps.

**Table 3: AKHUWAT RELIEF ACTIVITIES (Phase 1)**

**SEPTEMBER 9, 2022**

<b>Ration Distributed</b>	33,803 (families)
<b>Medical Facility</b>	2884 (patients)
<b>Meal distribution</b>	45,483(food Packets)
<b>Cash Support</b>	27,909 (families)
<b>Tents</b>	350 (families)

*Source: Akhuwat Foundation, Pakistan*

After the successful execution of the first phase i.e., ‘relief,’ the second phase of ‘Rehabilitation’ was launched on September 8 by Akhuwat Foundation. In the second phase, the organization has started to provide Interest-free loans (Qarz-e-Hasna) up to Rs. 300,000 for the reconstruction of the destructed houses during floods.

Dr. Izhar-ul-Haq Hashmi, the Director of the Akhuwat Foundation, provided insights on the second phase of rehabilitation. He told The Truth International that the interest-free loan scheme is based on 100% recovery and is not based on a charity model. The people in the affected districts are not demanding charity, rather they are asking for loans with a payback guarantee within 3-4 years. The rehabilitation housing scheme has an estimated cost of 2 billion PKR and each house would cost almost 1-2 lacs. He further stated that “after September 15, the second phase will be launched on a full scale”. In order to ramp up the flood relief operations, organizations like LAAM, Papa jones, and PEL (Pak Electron Limited) have joined hands with Akhuwat.

Akhuwat is working in the following flood-affected districts.

Province	District
<b>Balochistan</b>	Duki, Gwadar, Killa Saifullah, Lasbela, Loralai, Mastung, Pishin, Quetta and Sibi
<b>Gilgit, Baltistan</b>	Diamer, Ghanche, Ghizar, Gilgit and Nagar
<b>Khyber Pakhtunkhwa</b>	Chitral, D.I. Khan, Charsada, Lower Kohistan, Mardan, Nowshera and Swat
<b>Punjab</b>	D.G Khan and Rajanpur
<b>Sindh</b>	Badin, Ghotki, Hyder Abad, Jacob Abad, Khair Pur, Mirpur Khas, Sujawal, Sukkur, Tando Allah yar, Tando Muhammad Khan, Thatha, Umerkot and Shikarpur

*Source: Akhuwat Foundation, Pakistan*



# Relief Work Continues in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with the Fear of Further Destruction

*The entire country has come together in response to the catastrophic floods. Along with government, non-governmental and welfare organizations, political parties have generously provided help to the people in different areas*

By Mahmood Jan Babar



From June 15 until today, the extraordinary rains and the resulting floods have wreaked such havoc in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa that people touch their ears as soon as it is mentioned. It has been made worse by the news of impending rainfall predicted for September. The disaster in about 17 districts of the province has not yet been managed and the relief process is ongoing after the rescue phase.

However, a glimmer of hope has been seen in all this disturbing situation that among the political parties of this province, after Jamaat-e-Islami, two other parties, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, and Awami National Party have also started the process of taking part in relief operations with thousands of their workers and they have distributed goods worth crores of rupees in their respective affected areas.

However, apart from these three political parties, various non-governmental and welfare organizations generously provided help to the people in different areas of the province.

## PDMA

Ever since these rains and floods started, the provincial government through PDMA directed the administration of all the

districts to take measures, after which the rescue and relief process is going on according to DG PDMA Sharif Hussain. Since June 15, 290 people have died and 351 have been injured. 35,357 houses have been destroyed and 52,789 houses have been partially destroyed. 675,348 people have been displaced in the province. He said that 38,588 family tents were provided while blankets, kitchen sets, hygiene kits, water containers, and other essential items were also provided to thousands of people. He said that since the beginning of July, PDMA had given an amount of 1,752 million rupees to the administration of all the districts, which was to be used for the compensation and relief of the victims. The concerned organizations have been issued instructions by the KP Chief Minister for relief operations to continue day and night.

## Al Khidmat Foundation

After the government, with its big relief setup, volunteers of Al-Khidmat Foundation affiliated with Jamaat-e-Islami were seen in most places in the province. The provincial chief of the foundation, Khalid Waqas said that in Upper and Lower Dir flood continued for two months. It has affected Shabqadar, Tangi, and Charsada while passing through Upper and Lower Dir. He said that in Nowshera, Swabi, Tank, DI Khan, Karak, and Hazara Kohistan there wasn't a

place where their workers were not present to fight the rain and floods. In the seventeen districts that were affected, water, flood, and Al Khidmat were all present. This is the reason why people have the best attitude towards us and give us money and serve together with us.

Khalid Waqqas said that we are now working on the second phase of relief after the rescue and so far, we have provided relief worth 60 million rupees to two and a half lakhs people. The phase of providing food and clean drinking water to the people is going on. Treatment facilities are being provided to the people in the affected districts continuously through medical camps. We are also working on the restoration of mosques along with wells and irrigation projects, while work is also being done on the reconstruction of houses destroyed by floods. We have so far established a tent city and a field hospital.

## Ansarul Islam

This time when unusual rains were predicted in Karachi, Jamiat Ulema Islam Ameer Maulana Fazlur Rehman also ordered the party workers to come out to help the people. Party provincial leader Maulana Atta-ul-Rehman Darwish has been appointed in charge of relief operations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He said, "On July 20, when the rains started in Karachi and then in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, we were ordered to leave the rest of the work and do this work."

He said that this is not the first time that he is doing this work, but before that, he also worked in the flood of 2010 and reached house to house for help. Then in covid too, we offered unconditional support and fifty thousand workers to the provincial government. Then when the Murree incident happened, Ansar-ul-Islam was the first to help. People were taken out of the snow and brought to their homes.



And then in the flood, it was announced that all political programs are being suspended. Now the nation needs to reach out to the people. Maulana Fazlur Rahman himself and his sons came to help in Tank. The cabinets of the four provinces were given the status of relief committees.

I was put in charge of the committee of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and we appointed our representatives in all the four affected divisions and districts of the province. We collected supplies for the worst affected districts of the affected divisions and delivered them to the people. Our target was Lower and Upper Kohistan in Hazara Division, Deer Bala, Chitral, Charsadda, Nowshera, Tank, and Dera Ismail Khan in Malakand. "We rescued 30 thousand families, and when people returned to their homes, we started giving kitchen supplies to the people," he said. Supplies worth crores of rupees have been distributed and sent to Charsada Nowshera and other affected districts. Kohistan was far away so we sent cash there. "We used to send meals from Peshawar to Charsadda," he said.

He said that we cannot be compared with Al-Khidmat Foundation because it is a trust or institution and we are not registered. Ansar-ul-Islam volunteers are political workers, they organize meetings, but when it is time to serve, they come out.

"Earlier, when we were doing relief work, the media gave us very little coverage, now social media is powerful, so we are also getting coverage."



"In the earthquake of 2005, our Jamaat and Ansar-ul-Islam were the first to help. The students and imams of the madrassas all came and gave relief to the victims. We fully cooperated on the SOPs in covid, without the cooperation of Ulama, it would never have been successful."

## Servant of God

Awami National Party itself is a political party but it also activated the Khudai Khidmatgar wing of party founder Bacha Khan in these floods and directed its workers to help people in their areas. Chief of the wing and former DG Health and DG 1122 Dr. Shams was entrusted with the task of helping the people. He says that it has been two years since we started the work of



reorganizing the Khudai Khidmatgar movement, this is the continuation of Bacha Khan's centenary movement because most of the work of his movement used to be welfare. According to him, the different wings of the party are being organized in fifteen countries as well as in Pakistan and its every province, division, district, tehsil, and village council.

He said that this was an emergency, and

Kabul River in Nowshera and the villages along the Sardriab and Khayali in Charsadda Doaba, we tried to give timely information to the people there. Yes, we evacuated people from these areas before disaster struck, due to which the loss of life has been reduced. For those who left their homes, prepared food was delivered to Charsada and Nowshera. Our organization in Mardan was supporting Charsada in Peshawar. We set up a camp in Namak

mandi, people gave money, wheat, and goods, and we provided clean water, milk, and biscuits for the children. Then when these victims returned home, we gave them dry food, ghee, flour, sugar, and other goods. The supply is continuous. We don't have external resources and are not a very big organization – but we've put in the effort.

Help has arrived from Dubai for Bahrain in Swat. The mayor of Mardan has sent doctors to Bahrain and Madin. Help has also been provided in Chitral. Our people are donating in Karachi. Thousands of workers are working at the village council level in this province and Balochistan, but we are new and therefore not organized.

We are preparing ourselves for our nation, even now when we started cleaning the houses where five feet of water was standing, bodies of people and animals were also found there. And there is no preparation, there is a need to increase the capacity of the people, they need to be trained, and there is a need to find ways to minimize the damage. We will also benefit from Germany's experience in minimizing damage caused by floods.

even during peace times, we started our work in the village council in the style of Khudai Khidmatgar Bacha Khan. All sorts of issues are being resolved.

"Two weeks ago, the rains and floods started in the province. In the flood-affected areas of 2010, in the villages along the

# The cause of floods persists

*The common tragedy is that our governments swing into action only when a mishap or disaster occurs*

By Zahiruddin

In the highly polarised atmosphere prevalent in the country triggered by the animosity between PTI and other political parties, the President of Pakistan and the Prime Minister of the country were interestingly found to be in unison in their viewpoints about the recent flood that lashed three-fourths of the country. The two poles apart, the President and the PM, have termed encroachment of rivers and waterways as the major factor in causing the devastating floods that wreaked havoc in eighty districts of the country, bringing to it a colossal loss of 30 billion US dollars.

According to the preliminary assessments, as of September 8th, about 1400 people lost their lives; 1.1 million houses were destroyed; 5000 kilometres of roads and 243 bridges were affected; and the standing crops and orchards on 3.6 million acres of land directly affected 5.2 million people. The disaster has caused a lot of pain for the country and its people, and it will continue to do so for a long time. A big chunk of the country's development budget will be used to fix up the damaged infrastructure and fight the poverty it has caused.

It is unfortunate that the provinces miserably failed to enforce the recommendations of the Flood Inquiry Commission submitted to the Supreme Court after the 2010 floods, on the basis of which the apex court had ordered the federal government and the provincial governments to end the encroachments on the natural waterways. The apex court had constituted a commission headed by Muhammad Azam Khan and comprising Fateh Khan Khajjak, A.W. Kazi, and Kh Zaheer Ahmed to investigate the damages caused by the 2010 floods that engulfed Pakistan and caused unprecedented loss of life and property. The commission had strongly suggested that things that were blocking the flow of water and sending it in different directions on both sides of the river or its tributaries or waterways should be taken down.

The encroachment of rivers, tributaries, and waterways has continued unabated since the country's independence, and laws

prohibiting illegal construction and other activities have never been enforced even partially by successive governments. Despite the presence of stringent river and canal protection laws in all four provinces, which are essentially a continuation of the Sind Irrigation Act of 1879, political inefficiency and a sluggish attitude of the rulers may be major factors in the situation. The Punjab Water Act 2019, the Punjab Canal and Drainage Act 1873, the Sind Environmental Protection Act 2014, the Baluchistan Environmental Protection Act 2012, and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Protection Ordinance 2002 (amended in 2014) are powerful tools for protecting rivers and their tributaries, as well as waterways.



The KP River Protection Act states that "No person shall construct or undertake any related physical work on any commercial or non-commercial building or undertake any other development work within 200 feet to be measured along the slope (lay off land) beyond the high-water limit on either side of the rivers or their tributaries or on a space within the limits between the banks of a river." At least 200 feet have been fixed as the red line beyond the high-water limit on either side, but in practice, huge buildings are erected inside the rivers or their tributaries, diverting the course of water to the other side. The resultant constriction of the natural waterway leaves no space for the passage of the high flood and obstructs its way, thereby making it run

amuck in all directions. The other day, a video of a five-story building near Swat went viral in which the massive structure crumbled like a house of cards. The devastation on a large scale was caused when the flood water was diverted by the obstacles in the form of buildings erected within the prohibited limits as given in the river protection law.

The Sindh High Court observed during the hearing of a petition about the encroachments that "if people encroach rivers and block the flow of water, there will be a flood. If the government ends such encroachments, the water will flow naturally."

The common tragedy is that our governments swing into action only when a

mishap or disaster occurs and a massive loss to lives, properties, or infrastructure is caused, disrupting normal life. The rulers' resort to rhetoric and express their "firm determination" to do the needful once in the centre of the trouble, but the spirit goes on diminishing with each passing day and consigns it to oblivion thereafter. The same will be repeated here, and the powerful encroachers of rivers, their tributaries, and waterways will restart their activities on the same scale and with the same vigour as before, and the rulers will shrink from enforcing the laws, fearing their doomsday in power. Losses will be bigger than they are now if the laws meant to protect rivers are just on paper and aren't enforced in full and with force.



# Pakistan's Policy Inaction on Climate Change

*Ambassador Abdul Basit links Pakistan's diplomatic inactivity on climate change to capacity constraints and lack of climate experts*

By Umer Farooq

British Journalist Anatol Lieven, who has spent some time as a reporter in Pakistan, has recently written a book titled, "Climate Change and the Nation State". It is based on his analysis of the role state and institutions need to play to tackle the climate catastrophe that awaits our planet. Besides the thorough analysis of the situation, Lieven makes a very interesting recommendation for dealing with the threat of climate change. He says that only military establishments across the world have the capacity, wherewithal, and the right kind of attitude and approach to deal with the threat of climate change. This would be music to the ears of those who support an increased role for the military in public policy-making in Pakistan. Many analysts think that the Pakistan Army must play its role to tackle the natural calamities that await the Pakistani nation on account of climate change.

Immediately after the 2010 floods, the Pakistani government and military started getting information from the Western capitals, which were informing Pakistan state officials based on the predictions of their scientific communities that more devastating floods than in the past were expected to hit the country very soon. The predictions were based on scientific data that Pakistani territory is situated at the confluence of two weather systems. Even about the latest floods, the scientific community agrees that "Pakistan is located at a place on the globe which bears the brunt of two major weather systems. One can cause high temperatures and drought, like the heat wave in March, and the other brings monsoon rains".

Lt General (R) Naeem Khalid Lodhi, who was serving as defense secretary in the immediate wake of the 2010 flood, recalls that this issue was generally under discussion in high-level meetings then, "We were hearing from different sources that more devastating floods are likely to hit Pakistan primarily on account of climate change" Lt General (R) Lodhi told Truth International,



"we just missed the opportunity and ignored the danger....in the intervening ten years period we did nothing to meet the challenge towards which international community drew our attention".

Lodhi said that there was a growing feeling in the power corridors that climate change and the accompanying environmental disaster would pose a security threat to Pakistan, "maybe we still have time to reconsider our priorities and declare climate change as a prime security threat," he said.

To list climate change as a top national security priority, Lt General (R) Lodhi said that a national effort should be made to convince institutions including Pakistan Army and Foreign Office to change their orientation. "Pakistan Army's manpower should be used for building dams, cleaning waterways and water reservoirs and all other efforts that are needed to meet climate change induced calamities and secondly Foreign Office should be convinced so that the climate change and the threat this phenomenon poses for Pakistan's security should be made a major issue of our public diplomacy that we conduct on the international stage," said Lt General (R) Lodhi.

The floods in Pakistan began in late July

2010, resulting from heavy monsoon rains in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh, Punjab, and Balochistan regions of Pakistan, which affected the Indus River basin. Approximately one-fifth of Pakistan's total land area was affected by floods, with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province facing the brunt of the damage and casualties. Nationwide, there were 1,985 deaths. According to Pakistani government data, the floods directly affected about 20 million people, mostly by the destruction of property, livelihood, and infrastructure.

The latest floods caused once again by climate change, have inflicted even more devastation. There are more than 33 million people displaced, with the country now facing the spread of waterborne diseases and other health challenges in the affected regions.

Federal Minister for Climate Change Sherry Rehman, in one of her press statements, described Pakistan as ground zero of global warming. She said global emission targets and reparations must be reconsidered, given the accelerated and relentless nature of climate catastrophes hitting countries such as Pakistan, "global warming is the existential crisis facing the world and Pakistan is ground zero – yet we

have contributed less than 1% to [greenhouse gas] emissions. We all know that the pledges made in multilateral forums have not been fulfilled,” said Rehman, 61, a former journalist, senator, and diplomat who previously served as Pakistan’s ambassador to the US.

“There is so much loss and damage with so little reparations to countries that contributed so little to the world’s carbon footprint that the bargain made between the global north and global south is not working. We need to be pressing very hard for a reset of the targets because climate change is accelerating much faster than predicted, on the ground, that is very clear,” she added.

Experts say Pakistani diplomacy during all these intervening ten years between the two floods remained focused on issues such as traditional military security, IMF loans, the situation in Afghanistan, and relations with the United States and India.

Never for once during the last ten years has the Pakistan government or Foreign Office made climate change and the threat it posed to Pakistan’s security the main plank of the country’s diplomacy. Playing second fiddle to China in the international forums on the issue of climate change—one of the main emitters of greenhouse gases, with 27 percent of world emissions originating from China—remained the main activity of Pakistani diplomacy.

“The reasons for this inactivity [on climate change] are obvious. We don’t have a capacity for climate-related diplomacy or public diplomacy to present Pakistan’s case at the international stage,” said Ambassador Abdul Basit, an eminent and experienced former diplomat.

Ambassador Basit added that the people at the Ministry of Climate Change hardly have any capacity to conduct diplomacy to present Pakistan’s case at the international level, “We have developed some expertise in the Foreign Office on these issues...three to four experts were produced during past two decades....but the problem is when our diplomats become experts they either join UN or some International NGO.”

Pakistan contributes less than one percent of world carbon emissions but it is considered by climate experts to be one of the countries most at risk of climate disasters.

Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif and Climate Minister Sherry Rehman repeated this fact in their interaction with foreign media in the wake of the latest devastations caused by floods. This is not a fact that the Pakistani government has come to know recently. The international community was telling the Pakistani government and other power centers about this immediately in the wake of the 2010 floods, “We were receiving information on these counts ten years back,” said Lt General (R) Naeem Khalid Lodhi.



One reason for Pakistan’s diplomatic inactivity could be the fact that any aggressive diplomacy against carbon-emitting countries would directly put Pakistan on the wrong side of its political and strategic partner, the People’s Republic of China—which tops the list of carbon-emitting countries. Pakistan’s diplomatic inactivity on these issues is strange from another perspective. Diplomatic observers say that Pakistan never misses an opportunity to criticize India for its conduct, both on the international stage and in the domestic Indian context. Yet the Pakistani Foreign Office has never uttered a word on the fact that India is one of the top polluters of the world. In contrast, Pakistan’s industrialization level is low and therefore its carbon emission levels are also low. From its own perspective, aggressive diplomacy on climate change would have been perfectly safe.

Ambassador Abdul Basit, however, disagrees with this notion. He believes that China is not a factor in our diplomatic inactivity, “our domestic political environment is not conducive for such a diplomacy and we don’t have the intellectual capacity and nor we have the resource for such an aggressive and active diplomacy.”

According to experts at the political level, the Pakistani government and other power centers are convinced that climate change is an issue about which Pakistan should be

serious about, “The problem is not that we don’t agree with the west that climate change is a serious issue the problem is that we and China believe that developing countries cannot commit shifting to renewable energy as quickly as the developed world could,” Ambassador Basit said, “besides what had happened developed world’s pledge of 100 billion dollars aid to build an infrastructure for renewable energy in developing countries.”

The point to note is that Pakistanis don’t have the luxury to indulge in such polemics. Climate change is happening and the international scientific community is predicting that the world has a window of 11 years to arrest global warming after which climate change will be irreversible. Pakistan would still be at risk of a climate disaster and arguments and polemics that this climate change has been caused by the industrial west would be useless for us.



# Politics Amidst Floods

*More than 33 million people, or one in seven Pakistanis, have been affected by the catastrophic flooding*

By Noor Aftab

While the country grapples with the worst climate disaster, former prime minister Imran Khan continues to hold a series of public meetings wherein he is pushing the country towards extreme polarisation and even putting bets on state institutions by discussing issues like the appointment of a new Chief of Army Staff (COAS) in public.

Addressing a public rally in Faisalabad, Khan alleged that Asif Ali Zardari and Nawaz Sharif wanted to bring their favorite as the next army chief because they have stolen public money. He said they were afraid that if a patriotic army chief came, he would ask them about their loot.

In a rare public rebuke, Pakistan Army slammed Imran Khan for his “defamatory and uncalled for statement” about the appointment of the new army chief, saying the institution was “aghast” at his remarks about the top military leadership.

Even President Dr. Arif Alvi distanced himself from the deposed premier’s remarks concerning the army chief and said that he should “clarify the comments himself.”

Chief Justice of Islamabad High Court (IHC) Justice Athar Minallah had remarked that Imran “should first decide what he wants” and that he should not “expect that courts will give any relief after doing all this.”

Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa is set to retire in the last week of November after holding the top post for six years. He was initially appointed in 2016 but after a tenure spanning three years, the then government of Imran Khan, in 2019, extended his service for another three years.

The upcoming appointment is in the headlines for all the wrong reasons. When Khan was in power, the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), an alliance of opposition parties, accused him of trying to bring an army chief of his choice who could support his



alleged agenda of victimizing opposition leaders.

Since he lost power, the equation has reversed and now Khan is saying that the coalition government wants to install an army chief of its choice to protect looted wealth and steal the upcoming general elections.

Shahbaz Gill, chief of staff of Imran Khan, warned lower-ranking military officers a few weeks ago against following “illegal orders” from their superiors. The remarks were taken as an attempt to divide the country’s all-powerful army and Gill was promptly arrested.

The arrest of his close aide infuriated Imran Khan who warned top police officials and judges they would face consequences for their involvement in the case.

This statement counted as a threat and the police registered a case against him under anti-terror laws. He is now facing hearings on multiple cases including contempt of court charges.

Political analysts believe that arresting Khan on any flimsy ground is likely to make him a political martyr. From there he will be able to encourage even more disruptive demonstrations and raise his popularity to stratospheric levels.

His like-minded followers firmly believe that a US diplomat masterminded their leader’s sacking as prime minister. They have no doubt Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and some other high officials are behind this attempt to take down a dangerous political rival.

Adding fuel to fire, PTI Chairman Imran Khan defended his ‘controversial’ remarks about the top military brass in his speech during a public meeting in Peshawar saying “under any circumstances, thieves cannot be allowed to appoint the next army chief”.

He said a new army chief should be appointed on merit and alleged that thieves: Nawaz Sharif and Asif Ali Zardari, could not be allowed to pick the new army chief.

Imran Khan has also so far avoided submitting his apology in contempt of court case. While talking about his controversial remarks due to which he is facing contempt proceedings, he said he might have passed harsh words against additional sessions and district judge Zeba Chaudhry unintentionally due to the alleged torture of party leader Shahbaz Gill in the police custody.

It seems his campaign has no end, given



that his party members including former finance minister Shaukat Tareen made a serious effort to sabotage the deal between the government and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Economic experts believe that had PTI succeeded in its efforts, Pakistan could have defaulted and faced serious implications.

Khan is making controversial remarks about the Army and judiciary but is never ready to apologize and instead he is often seen defending such remarks on one pretext or another.



On one hand, Imran Khan is pursuing aggressive politics and attacking everyone who is either not supporting his demands or showing courage to oppose him, while on the other, the coalition government is struggling to achieve political and financial stability. Most of the time, it appears to be lacking strength or ability to take decisions on crucial political issues. It also lacks any counter-political narrative against Imran Khan. Some Political commentators unanimously support this argument that the coalition government and even PML-N have no political narrative due to which Imran Khan is pushing them into troubled waters.

The government circles are also giving new dimensions to the aggressive politics of Imran Khan and they are claiming that he is heading towards the Altaf Hussain-like politics who also tried to 'smash' everything

coming in his way, thinking the public support would protect him from all quarters including establishment.

Amid all this turmoil created due to the recent statements by Imran Khan, some of his close aides and political rivals criticize him for holding public meetings when heavy monsoon rains and flash floods have washed away the happiness and prosperity of the poor people, and more than thirty million of them have been severely affected and displaced due to these rains and floods.

Pakistan People's Party (PPP) chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said, it was a highly regrettable act and there was no word of humanity in Imran Khan's dictionary while adding that he should first become a human being and then become a politician.

His party leaders also said that the people of Pakistan were suffering and facing difficulties due to floods and unprecedented rains but Imran Khan was busy holding public meetings to serve his political interests.

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leaders also criticized him and said the flood-affected people were in dire need of remedial measures as their lives were in danger but Imran Khan disappointed the nation by doing politics at this critical juncture and hurling threatening statements in public meetings.

Referring to the government's criticism of

him for holding public meetings despite the devastation caused by floods, Imran Khan remarked, "I am told not to do politics due to floods. I want to tell the critics that I will do my best for the flood victims, and will fight for their rehabilitation, as well as continue the struggle for the real freedom of my country."

In the wake of devastating floods in major parts of Pakistan, the federal government has opened up a Prime Minister's Flood Relief Fund 2022. The United Nations and Pakistan issued an appeal for 160 million dollars in emergency funding to help millions affected by record-breaking floods that have killed more than 1,160 people since mid-June.

More than 33 million people, or one in seven Pakistanis, have been affected by the catastrophic flooding, which has devastated a country already struggling to revive its economy. More than one million homes have been damaged or destroyed in the past two and half months, displacing millions of people. Around half a million of those displaced are living in organized camps, while others have had to find their own shelter.

According to the PPP, foreign countries had assured Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari of 592 million dollars (Rs130 billion) in one hour for the assistance of flood victims. The World Health Organisation, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), Red Crescent, and Red Cross have also responded positively to the foreign minister's appeal.

Although rains have stopped, large swathes of the country remain underwater, and the main rivers: Indus and Swat are still swollen. The government and the international donor agencies have said that it would take years to completely rehabilitate the displaced people and enable them to live normal lives. Given the catastrophic situation, the government and the opposition parties should sit together and find out a solution to the problems confronting the country. But it is unlikely that Imran Khan will ever be ready to sit with the government coalition although his party is ruling four provinces including Punjab, KP, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan.





# Freedom of expression at what cost?

*There is freedom of speech, but I can't guarantee you freedom after speech*

By Sarfraz Raja

While the country is facing devastating flooding, Pakistani politics has also become stormy, mainly due to Imran Khan's aggressive campaign, speeches, and some controversial statements that he is making every other day in his countrywide public gatherings, targeting not only his political rivals, but institutions like the judiciary and PAK army. Soon after his removal from power, Imran Khan is on the road, but his narrative and rhetoric are becoming harsher, harder, and more aggressive, which is called a "sign of desperation" by his political opponents.

## Freedom of speech: what laws define it?

"There is freedom of speech, but I can't guarantee you freedom after speech." That is the famous quote of a former military dictator and ruler of Uganda. This quote actually shows the state of freedom of speech in undemocratic setups. Although every democrat and civilised country guarantees freedom of expression, there are some red lines established in laws and basic ethics. Article 19's consultation of Pakistan also protects freedom of speech, which makes it clear that.

## What made Imran Khan's statements so contentious?

In fact, it was his office that granted the current COAS a three-year term extension, but soon after a no-confidence motion against him was submitted and allies began to separate, he started targeting the military establishment, criticising their role as neutrals in politics. Imran Khan, who used to take credit for introducing neutral umpires in cricket, started calling that humans couldn't stay neutral; it was only

animals that could be neutral, and that was the statement when he first hit directly at the military establishment by criticising their role while keeping themselves neutral from politics.



Then he started referring to Mir Jafar Mir Sadiq, who was a symbol of betrayal in history without naming anyone, blaming that he lost his prime ministership because of such traitors who supported his rival and became part of that alleged foreign conspiracy against him under the United States of America. However, following criticism from political circles and a response from the army's public relations wing, ISPR, he comes up with his own definition of his words and refers to his political opponents as Mir Jaffar and Mir Sadiq. Every time after Khan's statement, his spokespersons and social media followers start defending and defining him in a much more open way.

The situation became concerning for him when his vocal close aide and chief of staff, Shehbaz Gill, was arrested for allegedly inciting mutiny in the institution of the army following his telephonic interview with a private news channel, which was also considered a strong supporter of his, and they had to bear the burden of this talk as suspension of transmission and the arrest of their news head. The charges were serious against Shehbaz Gill, but the reaction of the party turned things more difficult and concerning. Even though Article 144 makes it illegal for more than five people to gather in one place, Imran Khan directly named a female judge who

had given police remand to Gill and the Inspector General of Police Islamabad and his deputy. He said that they were responsible for Gill being tortured in custody and threatened to take legal action against them at a protest against Gill's arrest and a show of support for him on August 20 in Islamabad.

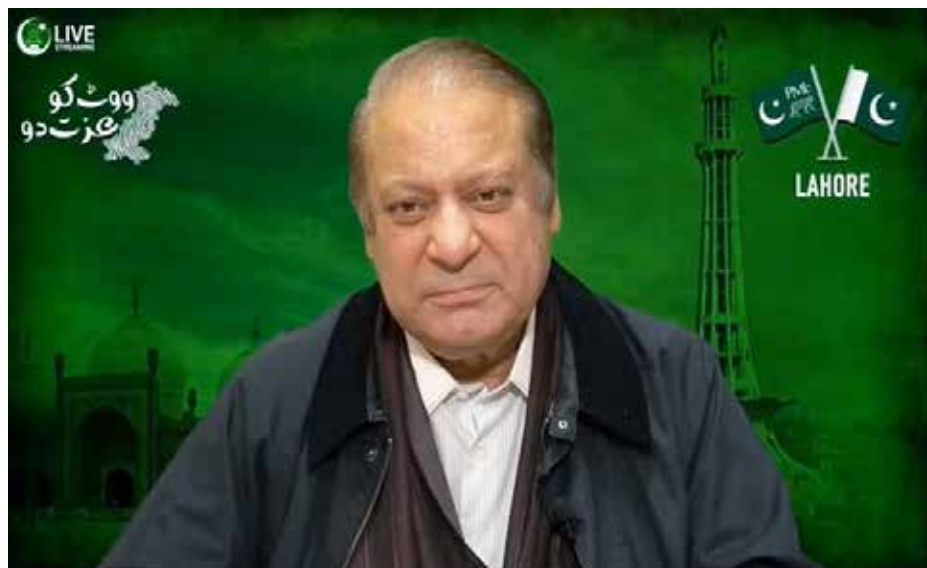
This speech turned out to be a setback for him, as a strong reaction was expressed by the Islamabad police spokesman for threatening remarks against their leadership, as well as an FIR registered against Imran Khan under the anti-terrorism act for threatening government functionaries and judges in order to pressurise them in order to gain their favor, and subsequently a ban was imposed by the electronic media regulatory body PEMRA on live telecast of his speeches on TV channels. On the other hand, the Islamabad High Court, which has a reputation for showing softness and leniency in contempt of court matters, took a suo motu against Imran Khan's remarks, and a five-member bench headed by the chief justice of Islamabad High Court, Athar Minallah, was constituted to hear the case.

This was no doubt a serious matter, but Khan's reply to the court's notice showed he or his legal team was not assessing its seriousness, which was also expressed by



the judge's bench during the case hearing. In his first reply, Imran Khan in fact defended his speech, calling it a political statement, and at the end, he concluded with an offer to take his words back if it hurts someone. The full bench of the Islamabad high court showed their complete dissatisfaction over his reply. CJ IHC came up with his hard comments, saying that even a word from a leader of such a huge following can create risk for their intended target. The Court, while giving seven days' time, asked you to rethink and submit another reply. In his new reply, Imran Khan didn't tender an unconditional apology to the court and just showed regrets over his words. Again, five members of the bench unanimously showed their dissatisfaction and rejected his reply.

This matter was still in court when Imran Khan, in his other speech, sparked a new controversy. Imran Khan claimed at a public gathering in Faisalabad that his political rivals, Nawaz Sharif and Asif Zardari, want to appoint their preferred army chief because they know that if a strong and patriotic army chief is appointed, he will demand accountability for their alleged corruption. The Army leadership took a strong exception to the remarks made by the PTI chairman, as expressed by ISPR in its press release. It is regrettably an attempt that has been made to discredit and undermine the senior leadership of the Pakistan army at a time when the institutions are laying down lives for the security and safety of the people of Pakistan every day. Not only the Pakistan army, even in the next day's hearing of the case against the ban on televising Imran



Khan's speeches, the CJ of Islamabad high court also came up with harsh remarks on that statement.

## Other leaders' statements

While defending Imran Khan's speeches, PTI leaders cite previous statements by other political leaders such as Nawaz Sharif, Maryam Nawaz, and Molana Fazal Ur Rehman. They also demand action against these statements as well. Nawaz Sharif faced a complete ban on TV channels after his controversial speech in Gujranwala Jalsa at the start of the PDM anti-government campaign after its constitution in September 2020. In her media talk, PMLN vice president Maryam Nawaz, responding to a question, remarked that Pakistan's army chief should be a non-controversial officer.

PDM leaders defend their comments by saying that they have always talked about the military's neutral and non-political role, asking them to stay out of politics and not get involved, and letting politicians handle their own business. Imran Khan, on the other hand, is asking the military to get involved in politics and drop their neutral stance, which is in his favor.

## Impact on popularity

It is considered that Pakistan's politics has a pro and anti-establishment divide. Soon after his removal from power, Imran Khan tried to make his status as an anti-establishment leader. As his popularity grew, he began to believe that it is his stance that people are buying in general. But this narrative began to threaten national security as his alleged social media trolls started hitting it harder and some derogatory trends against military leadership caused concerns in the rank and file of the army. Even the crash of a military helicopter in Lasbella, Baluchistan during flood relief operations, killing the commander of southern command and officers and jawans also made controversial by these social media trolls.

Political analysts believe that Imran Khan's hard-hitting and uncalled-for attack on military leadership is causing irreparable damage to not only him but his party, as his party's former secretary general and president of Pakistan, Dr Arif Ali, and his allied Chief Minister of Punjab, Ch Pervaiz Elahi, have distanced themselves from his remarks, and it's becoming difficult for seasoned party leadership to stand with or defend his remarks, particularly after the funding case decision.







# Will the government cross the "Red Line"?

*Khan himself has invited trouble by threatening the Islamabad court judge*

By Tahir Niaz



After failing to achieve a complete media blackout of IK, registering FIRs against the PTI leadership, and appealing to PTI supporters to stop supporting the party Chief, the PDM government's only option to check the rising popularity of the PTI Head is to arrest him, which may cost the government dearly.

Imran Khan's arrest could cause the PTI to go all out against the government, leaving the government with few options.

The Game of Thrones seems to have already entered into the "Last over Game". The tussle between the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) and the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) constituent parties is on the rise. PTI Chief Imran Khan is regularly coming up with new warnings to the PDM parties that if the government wants to avoid the PTI's wrath, it must announce early elections in the country. The option with Imran Khan, in case the federal government doesn't announce general elections, is very clear; march towards Islamabad. With governments in Punjab and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, two provinces close to the federal capital, it may be hard for the federal government to stop the PTI marchers at the gates of Islamabad.

The PDM parties are worried over the soaring popularity of the PTI. In the

meantime, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leadership is trying to secure a link between PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif and the Pakistani people, no matter if it is virtual. They are trying to get relief for Nawaz Sharif, at least to the extent that his address to the Pakistani people is telecast live on Pakistani TV channels. Different options are already being explored by the PTI, with the main focus being on relief from the courts. And if he returns to Pakistan before the general elections, as is being desired by the PML-N circles, it would be a boon for the party, the leadership believes.

But it seems that at the moment, the PDM leadership lacks a recipe to counter the increasing popularity of Imran Khan. They most likely lack a counter narrative for the reasons Imran Khan reveals in his public rallies. Imran Khan was on a quick tour of the country for canvassing. He has been bashing the PDM leadership, especially the Sharifs and Zardari family, for their alleged corruption. Both families have so far failed to answer these allegations. Now the PTI has started displaying past videos of the members of the two families in their public rallies to prove that they were involved in plundering the national wealth. On the other hand, the PDM leadership is not coming out of office. The PDM had planned a big public rally in view of the

upcoming by-elections before the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) postponed by-polls in all the 13 constituencies. This means that the PDM and, especially, the PML-N leadership have accepted that the PTI is in charge of politics for now, and that they have no way to stop the PTI.

After facing a humiliating defeat in the by-polls on 15 Punjab Assembly seats in July that also cost the PML-N the office of the chief minister, the leadership appeared downcast when it came to the election campaign. The fact of the matter is that the PDM lacks the face that could present a counter narrative and attract people at this critical juncture of time.

The Election Commission of Pakistan said on September 8 that by-elections that were supposed to take place on September 13, September 25, and October 2 in 13 national and provincial assembly constituencies across the country would be moved. This is because law enforcement workers are busy helping people who have been affected by floods. Maryam Nawaz was scheduled to address a public rally in Bahawalnagar the same day. The party candidates who were contesting the by-elections were said to be unhappy with the leadership for not holding any rallies in their constituencies. Party Quaid Nawaz Sharif had reportedly asked Maryam Nawaz to come out in public before the by-elections, but the party leadership feared that it would have little to no impact, as was witnessed in the July by-polls on 20 Punjab Assembly seats. The PML-N couldn't afford to lose the upcoming by-elections as a defeat would establish that Imran Khan is stronger than the 13-party ruling alliance. Former chief minister Hamza Shehbaz was also absent in public even after returning from London. Some critics see the postponement of the by-polls under a weaker excuse as good news for the government as it was not confident of winning the elections. One conspiracy theory is that the PML-N and other allied parties are silently working on a plan to topple the Pervez Elahi government in Punjab and set up their own so that they





can give a hero's welcome to the party supremo as he plans to return to Pakistan at the earliest.

It seems that the PML-N leadership is apparently banking on Imran's disqualification from the courts in various cases. The new hope for the government would be the contempt of court case against PTI Chief Imran Khan for threatening an Islamabad court judge. The Islamabad High Court has announced it will indict Imran Khan on September 22nd after it found Imran Khan's reply to the show-cause notice unsatisfactory. The ruling coalition may take the possible disqualification of IK as a blessing, as he otherwise appeared not to be enthusiastically contesting the by-polls.

So, the PML-N, especially, has a lot to do on the political front to regain the political space. The test will determine whether their approach was right or not. The leadership has already tried so many methods, such as ensuring complete blackout of Imran Khan, registration of FIRs against the PTI leadership even on ignorable issues, and making appeals to the IK followers to shun their support for the PTI Chief, to counter the PTI's rising popularity, but none of them worked.

So far, the PDM has failed to give a counter narrative to the people. So far, the only option left for the PDM parties to check the soaring popularity of Imran Khan and disconnect the PTI chief from its supporters is his arrest. But the question is what it may cost the government. Another question is whether the popularity could possibly be an obstacle to Imran Khan's arrest. The



answer to both the questions is that despite Imran Khan's unprecedented popularity, the government can arrest him in any of the cases registered against him, but it may cost the government dearly.

The PTI has already declared Imran Khan's arrest a "Red Line" for the party. Protests and sit-ins are likely in the country if IK is arrested, given the PTI Chairman's massive public support. If the PTI leadership decides not to go for a march towards Islamabad, even then, the party supporters may block the whole country, putting the government in an awkward position. Imran Khan's arrest may possibly trigger a full-throttle PTI crusade against the government, and that is the only reason probably barring the government from executing

Imran Khan's arrest. The possible arrest of Imran Khan will also have a negative impact on the law and order and economy of the country, especially when heavy floods are playing havoc with the masses.

Given the attitude and outburst of Imran Khan against the institutions that should not have been his target, it can be safely said that the PTI Chairman has made the government's task easy. Khan himself has invited trouble by threatening the Islamabad court judge, and his ego seems to be an obstacle in his way out of trouble. Despite repeated hints by the IHC, Khan avoided going for an unconditional apology—the only possible way for IK. So, the coming days will determine the fate of Imran Khan and also the country's politics, with no one thinking of the people's woes.







# New Punjab Crisis

*The PDM and the powers that be do not see a smooth running of the federal government until the Punjab government is removed*

By Ahmad Waleed

It seems the political crisis in the largest province of the country is far from over, even though PTI and PML-Q managed to form the government after a thumping majority in the July 17 by-elections. It was initially thought that Punjab would witness some stability after remaining in political chaos for over four months. However, differences between the leaders of the PTI and the PML-Q have begun to emerge.

PTI wants Chief Minister Pervaiz Elahi to go hard on its political opponent, the PML-N, and to take action against all government officials who were responsible for launching a crackdown on PTI leaders on May 25 when they attempted to reach Islamabad on Imran Khan's call. Pervaiz Elahi, however, is reluctant to follow the instructions in true spirit, which has irked the PTI top slot, although he ordered the police chief to remove SHOs and senior officers who helped the previous government foil PTI's move to get out of the city on May 25. During an informal chat with reporters, Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi has also expressed his desire to have good ties with the federal government and vowed not to take stern action against the bureaucracy for May 25 actions. He said the government should not waste time on useless fights with the federal government.

PTI Chief Imran Khan wants these officials to be dismissed from service, while the CM thinks otherwise. Punjab Police Inspector General Faisal Shahkar hinted that many senior and junior police officials have either been transferred or sent to the lines as they have no plans to register cases against them or remove them from service to bring down the morale of their "men". It has disappointed the PTI leadership.

On the issue of Shahbaz Gill, Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi has distanced himself from the controversy, saying that he admonished Shahbaz Gill for his attempt to incite mutiny in the armed forces. "Have you gone insane?" were the remarks of the CM during an interview where he was

asked about Shahbaz Gill's anti-state statement.

In response to the recent remarks by Imran Khan against the senior officers of the armed forces, Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi



issued a detailed statement eulogising the services of the Army Chief, General Qamar Bajwa, instead. He lauded Gen. Qamar Bajwa's efforts in the name of "Islam, democracy, and national defense." He went on to say that the Army Chief had helped save the country from "chaos and civil war" after successfully reaching an agreement with Islamic scholars to avert a serious crisis at the time when a decision had been taken to launch a crackdown on Tehreek-e-Labaik a couple of years ago.

The coalition partners also have differences over the way the Punjab government is being run. One of the PTI leaders has expressed lately that "Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi is making his best efforts to strengthen his own party instead of the PTI. The PTI leaders and supporters have also shown their resentment over the massive budget spending in the areas of the PML-Q vote bank. The PTI leader said that the chief minister had made his home district of Gujrat into a division, given hundreds of jobs to people in those areas, and set aside a lot of money for development in those areas.

The federal government is trying to make the most of the emerging political situation in Punjab. The PML-N claims they have managed to win the support of six PML-Q lawmakers who are willing to oust the government of Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi. It may also be noted that despite a serious move by the Pervaiz Elahi-led faction of PML-Q to remove Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain from the position of party head, Ch Shujaat has not reacted as sternly as he should have. Rather, he expressed that he was holding out an olive branch to the PML-Q MPAs to return to the party folds.

There are reports that Ch Shujaat is also actively pursuing the policy of convincing his estranged cousin, Ch Pervaiz Elahi, that he still stands a chance of becoming the candidate of PDM for the slot of the chief minister. On the other hand, senior PML-N leader Atta Tarrar has recently claimed that the party is short of only one MPA's support to oust the PTI government in Punjab. Another PML-N leader claimed that they are also in talks with a number of PTI lawmakers to withdraw their support for the current chief minister. He, however, stated that PTI lawmakers are simply hesitant to resign in light of the previous incident in which they lost their seats in by-elections on July 17. "They don't want to end up in the same situation as the PTI, which is getting a lot of support from the public after Imran Khan started a big campaign blaming foreign powers and institutions for his ouster," the leader of the PML-N said.

It is believed that the PDM and the powers that be do not see a smooth running of the federal government until the Punjab government is removed. Hectic efforts are being made to achieve this goal. Recently, Imran Khan warned that efforts are being made to oust the Punjab government besides expressing that the 'desperate imported rulers are working on a minus one formula'.

It seems that the clock has started ticking.

# Rising food, fuel prices to trigger instability in Pakistan: IMF

*Spillovers from the war in Ukraine through high food and fuel prices, and tighter global financial conditions will continue to weigh on Pakistan's economy, pressuring the exchange rate and external stability*

By Javed Mahmood

The International Monetary Fund said rising food and fuel prices can trigger instability in Pakistan, posing a threat to economic stability. This is what the IMF said in its country assessment report, which was released after a loan programme for Pakistan was restarted and the seventh and eighth reviews of the Pakistani economy were paid out.

Concerning the future outlook for Pakistan, the report said that real GDP growth is projected to decline to 3.5 percent in FY23, following two years of above-trend growth as the economy recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic with support from expansionary policies. The pass-through of energy prices will have some dampening effect on activity, while fiscal consolidation and the loss of purchasing power due to high inflation are expected to restrain domestic demand, notably. Growth is expected to slowly return to its medium-term potential of 5% if policies and reforms continue to be put into place.

As international commodity prices are passed on to domestic consumers, average CPI inflation is expected to reach 20% in FY23. Core inflation is also projected to remain elevated due to higher energy prices and sizable depreciation. With tighter monetary and fiscal policies firmly entrenched, inflation is expected to fall significantly in FY24, supported by favourable base effects. The SBP thinks that inflation will slowly rise to 5–7 percent and then fall to 6.5 percent in the middle term.

The current account deficit is projected to narrow to 212 percent of GDP in FY23, down from the estimated 4.7 percent of GDP in FY22, reflecting monetary, fiscal, and energy policies consistent with moving demand to sustainable levels and supported by the continued commitment to a market-determined exchange rate. This change to



the current account would make the reserve strong enough to cover about 2.3 months of imports by the end of the forecast horizon, up from about 1.7 months of imports when the programme started.

Due to a tighter fiscal stance and inflation eroding the value of local currency debt, public debt is expected to fall by 7 percent of GDP to 72.1 percent of GDP at the end of FY23. This follows an increase in the debt-to-GDP ratio from 77.9 percent at the end of FY21 to 78.9 percent at the end of FY22 on account of the large fiscal deficit and a depreciating exchange rate despite low real effective interest rates. With the planned fiscal adjustments and robust growth, public debt is expected to fall to 60% of GDP by FY27, while external debt is expected to fall to 25% of GDP.

Discussing the key risk factors, the IMF report said that the risks to the outlook and programme implementation remain high and tilted to the downside given the very complex domestic and external environment. Spillovers from the war in Ukraine through high food and fuel prices and tighter global financial conditions will continue to weigh on Pakistan's economy, pressuring the exchange rate and external stability. Policy slippages remain a risk, as evident in FY22,

amplified by weak capacity and powerful vested interests, with the timing of elections uncertain given the complex political setting. Socio-political pressures are expected to remain high and could also weigh on policy and reform implementation, especially given the tenuous political coalition and their slim majority in Parliament. Furthermore, high food and fuel prices could prompt social protest and instability.

All this could affect policy decisions and undermine the program's fiscal adjustment strategy, jeopardising macro-financial and external stability and debt sustainability. Moreover, elevated near-term domestic financing needs may overstretch the financial sector's absorption capacity and cause market disruption. Debt Sustainability Analysis (DSA) highlights that public debt remains sustainable over the medium term with strong policies and robust growth, albeit with increased uncertainty.

Substantial risks stem from higher interest rates, a larger-than-expected growth slowdown, pressures on the exchange rate, renewed policy reversals, weaker medium-term growth, and contingent liabilities related to SOEs. Further delays in structural reforms, particularly those



related to the financial sector (resolving undercapitalized banks and winding down SBP involvement in refinancing schemes), could jeopardise financial sector stability and reduce monetary policy effectiveness. Finally, climate change risks are mounting, including a tendency for more frequent climate-related disasters.

In the executive summary of the report, the IMF said, "Pakistan's economy has been buffeted by adverse external conditions due to spillovers from the war in Ukraine and domestic challenges, including from accommodative policies that resulted in uneven and unbalanced growth." Steadfast implementation of corrective policies and reforms is essential to regain macroeconomic stability, address imbalances, and lay the foundation for inclusive and sustainable growth. The authorities' plan to achieve a small primary surplus in FY2023 is a welcome step to reduce fiscal and external pressures and build confidence. Containing current spending and mobilising tax revenues are critical to creating space for much-needed social protection and strengthening public debt sustainability. Efforts to strengthen the viability of the energy sector and reduce unsustainable losses, including by adhering to the scheduled increases in fuel levies and energy tariffs, are also essential. In a time of high inflation, it is important to make more efforts to reduce poverty and protect the most vulnerable by improving targeted transfers.

At the same time, maintaining a proactive and data-driven monetary policy would help to reduce inflation and address external imbalances, while close oversight of the banking system and decisive action to address undercapitalized financial institutions would help to support financial stability." Reforms that create a fair and level playing field for business, investment, and trade necessary for job creation and the development of a strong private sector are essential.

The economic backdrop Economic activity remained robust in FY22, fueled by loose fiscal policy and a delayed monetary response to inflationary pressures. These, combined with the international food and fuel price shocks, led to a marked deterioration of the external position with an unsustainable current account deficit, a significant decline in reserves, and a marked depreciation of the rupee. At the same time, inflation

has increased considerably, putting pressure on the most vulnerable. programme performance. Program implementation deteriorated shortly after the completion of the sixth review. Amid a tense political landscape, programmed fiscal adjustment was undone and several key EFF commitments were reversed. Two end-June performance criteria (PC)—on net international reserves (NIR) and the primary budget deficit—as well as three continuous PCs were missed. Moreover, seven structural benchmarks (SBs) were unmet.



However, more recently, the authorities have taken several actions to bring the EFF back on track, including passing an ambitious budget for a primary surplus; significantly increasing the policy rate; eliminating post-tax fuel subsidies; and increasing fuel taxation and electricity tariffs. They also plan to strengthen supervision and take the necessary actions to safeguard financial sector stability. Key policy recommendations: the programme seeks to restore fiscal discipline and debt sustainability while protecting social spending, safeguarding monetary and financial stability, maintaining a market-determined exchange rate and rebuilding external buffers. New structural benchmarks support efforts to enhance social protection, strengthen energy sector viability, and support financial stability.

Despite the recalibration, the goals of mobilising additional high-quality tax revenue and substantially increasing reserve coverage are out of reach. Staff views. Staff is in favour of completing the seventh and eighth reviews, extending the programme through June 2023, and increasing access by SDR 720 million based on corrective actions and policy commitments. Still, programme risks remain exceptionally high, and consistent and decisive implementation will be essential to

improve economic prospects. This review will make available SDR 894 million and help catalyse essential external financing.

## Breach of IMF agreement

The new government took power after a no-confidence vote against former PM Imran Khan. The political environment, however, is complex: the governing coalition enjoys a slim majority and comprises traditionally opposing parties, while former PM Imran Khan continues to hold large protests across the country and had a strong showing in key Punjab by-elections. The government has expressed its intention to complete its term, with elections due no later than August 2023. Political tension led to significant fiscal slippages. The former government granted a 4-month "relief package" in late February 2022 that reversed commitments to fiscal discipline made earlier in the year. The largely untargeted package (i) reduced petrol and diesel prices (through a generous general subsidy and setting fuel taxes at zero taxation); (ii) lowered electricity tariffs by PRS 5/kwh for almost all households and commercial consumers; and (iii) provided tax exemptions and a tax amnesty. These measures were accompanied by the deferral of regular electricity tariff increases as well as increases in the minimum wage, public wages and pensions, and additional food subsidies.

The continuation of these measures, combined with additional slippages in Q3 and Q4, increased the FY22 fiscal deficit to more than 112 percent of GDP, falling far short of the end-of-June fiscal target.3.0 The authorities have stepped up efforts to stabilise the economy and get the programme back on track. After some initial delay, the new government started to unwind the relief package in late-May 2022, removing the untargeted power and post-tax fuel subsidies and commencing the restoration of the Petroleum Development Levy (PDL), while expanding social support schemes. Also, it passed the FY23 budget, which includes a big change to the primary balance, and the SBP tightened monetary policy a lot to deal with inflationary pressures.

Accommodative policies in FY22 supported strong growth momentum with signs of overheating. Significant fiscal stimulus and delayed monetary tightening fueled domes-

tic demand to unsustainable levels. The underlying primary deficit in FY22 is estimated to have reached 1.6 percent of GDP (against the sixth review target of a primary balance). SBP was also slow to increase the policy rate in the tightening cycle that started in September 2021, keeping ex-post real rates in negative territory in FY22 (about -2.5 percentage points on average). This helped push growth to 6 percent (authorities' provisional estimate) in FY22 but also led to high and rising inflation (21.3 percent in June). Private credit growth accelerated during FY22, reaching 24 percent year on year in May 2022 due to strong demand for business credit. 5. Worsening external conditions, due to spillovers from Russia's war in Ukraine, are compounding domestic challenges. Despite a 25% year-on-year increase in exports, the trade deficit reached a new high of \$40.1 billion (10.7 percent of GDP) in the first 11 months of FY22.

Imports increased dramatically, owing to continued strong growth in non-oil imports and an 86% increase in fuel imports, reflecting both higher prices and volumes. The widening trade deficit was only partially offset by remittance inflows (around US\$2.5 billion per month). As a result, the current account deficit nearly quadrupled in fiscal year 22 to \$15 billion (4.5 percent of GDP). Gross reserves fell from US \$17.6 billion at the end of December 2021 to US \$9.8 billion at the end of June 2022, equivalent to about 1.5 months of import coverage due to debt repayments and frequent SBP intervention to mitigate exchange rate pressures. Private credit growth accelerated during FY22 due to strong demand for business credit, reaching 24 percent year on year in May 2022. Risks have increased considerably, and the EMBIG spreads are close to 2,000 bps since mid-July. During FY22, COVID-19 waves, like the Omicron wave in January–February 2022, haven't had much of an effect on Pakistan's economy.

## Economic Underperformance and IMF Agreement Breach

Overall programme performance has remained weak since the completion of the last review and until recently. Several quantitative criteria were missed and gaps in implementation, particularly in the fiscal

and structural reform agenda, arose amid challenging circumstances, including domestic political turmoil and spillovers from the war in Ukraine, but a waning decisiveness to push forward agreed reforms. The authorities have, however, recently renewed their commitment to the EFF's medium-term objectives, as also shown through the implementation of four prior actions that are critical to ensure the achievement of programme fiscal objectives and financial viability of the power sector: (i) parliamentary approval of the FY23 budget, including a personal income tax (PIT) reform in late-June; (ii) signature of Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with provincial governments in late-July; (iii) reversal of the February relief package during May through July; and (iv) catch-up on overdue power tariff adjustments during July and August.



## Performance criteria

The authorities met the four quantitative PCs on the ceilings on: (i) the SBP's net domestic assets (NDA); (ii) the SBP's FX forward book; (iii) net government budgetary borrowing from the SBP; and (iv) the amount of government guarantees by the end of June 2022. They also met the two continuous PCs for (i) no new SBP credit to the government and (ii) no external public payment arrears. At the same time, the authorities missed the two quantitative PCs on: (i) the floor on net international reserves (NIR) owing to reserve losses in a difficult external environment; and (ii) the ceiling on the general government's primary budget deficit due to fiscal slippages. Both these QPCs were missed at the end of March 2022 for the same reasons. In addition, the authorities missed three continuous PCs; (i) non-imposition and non-intensification of exchange restrictions; (ii) non-modification of multiple currencies practises (MCPs); and (iii) non-imposition of import restrictions for BOP purposes after extending cash margin

requirements for imports, banning imports of luxury and nonessential items, and requiring import payment authorization for certain goods.

## Indicative targets

At the end of June 2022, the authorities met the two ITs on the floor on net tax revenue collection (thanks to buoying import taxes just overcompensating for the elimination of sales tax on fuel) and the gross issuance of longer-term debt instruments. At the same time, they fell short of the four ITs on: (i) targeted cash transfer spending (BISP), due to slower-than-expected enrolment in the unconditional cash transfer (UCT) programme Kafalat and an earlier-than-planned phasing-out of the emergency cash transfer programme due to a better COVID-19 trajectory; (ii) floor on health and education spending, due to less spending on both COVID-19 vaccine procurement in FY22 Q3 and education due to The Indicative Targets.

## Structural benchmarks

Of the ten SBs due by the end of June 2022, the authorities met one and implemented two with delays. Specifically, parliament adopted the OGRA Act Amendments for the gas sector in March (end-June 2022 SB). Also, with some delay, the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) released rules in May for the publication of beneficial ownership information in large procurement contracts (end-March 2022 SB). In June, steps were taken to improve the effectiveness of the AML/CFT framework (end-March 2022 SB).

At the same time, the authorities missed seven SBs as they granted further tax amnesties (continuous SB) and new preferential tax treatments (continuous SB), most of which lapsed in line with their embedded sunset clauses by the time of the FY23 finance bill. Their draught PIT law also deviated from the commitment during the sixth EFF review (end-February 2022 SB). Even though there has been a lot of progress, there are still four SBs that need to be done. These are the parliamentary approval of the new SOE law; a plan for the phase-out of SBP refinance facilities; the first-stage recapitalization of two private sector banks; and the creation of an asset declaration system.



# Transactions: What's going to happen?

*Pakistan and the IMF had struck a staff level agreement*

By Mehtab Haider



In order to revive the stalled IMF program, the government has put in place very ambitious plans to generate multibillion-dollar inflows in the form of attracting investments into government-owned companies. Pakistan and the IMF had struck a staff level agreement as, under the prior actions, Pakistan obtained a commitment from bilateral partners to get financial support on different accounts, and one possible form was attracting investment. During the IMF's Board meeting, the representatives of these bilateral friendly countries made a commitment that they would bridge the financing gap of \$4 billion for the current fiscal year 2022–23.

The government prepared a piece of legislation and promulgated an ordinance for Inter-Governmental Transaction 2022 in order to sell out state-owned enterprises in order to raise billions of dollars. It was aimed at fulfilling prior actions taken by the IMF for reviving the stalled Fund program, and it helped Pakistan to get approval from the Fund's Executive Board for reviving the stalled programme after a pause of seven months.

The Federal Government may enter into a government-to-government (G2G) agreement with the government of a foreign state. The G2G agreement will have broad

rules and methods for carrying out the planned business transaction.

The Federal Government will set up a Cabinet Committee on Inter-Governmental Commercial Transactions by putting a notice in the official gazette.

The Cabinet Committee has the authority to: authorise negotiations for a G2G agreement between the Federal Government and the government of a foreign state; form a negotiation committee for a G2G agreement or a commercial agreement, as the case may be; and approve price discovery mechanisms; recommend approval of the G2G agreement or a commercial agreement finalised by the negotiation committee; and recommend relaxations, exemptions, exclusions, or concessions from regulatory compliance.

The Cabinet Committee shall facilitate and supervise the commercial transactions under this Ordinance and pass necessary directions for the removal of hurdles or difficulties. The Cabinet Committee may co-opt any person as a member or may require the attendance of any person by special invitation as it deems appropriate. No act, decision, or proceeding of the Cabinet Committee shall be invalid because of an absence, vacancy, or defect in the Cabinet Committee's constitution.

The Federal Government may issue appropriate directions to a provincial government, local government, agency, or authority concerned to implement the objective of the inter-governmental commercial transaction, including land acquisition, rehabilitation, and re-settlement; provision of utility services; construction of approach roads to the main highways; and such other activities of similar nature. A direction issued under subsection (1) is enforceable.

On the advice of the Cabinet Committee, the Federal Government may, by publishing a notice in the Official Gazette, exempt any inter-government commercial transaction from the regulatory requirements or operations that are needed by any law that is in effect at the time. This is for the purposes of this Ordinance.

If a person working for the Federal Government or a nominated entity has a direct, indirect, or perceived personal interest in any agreement made under this Ordinance, that person must (a) immediately write to the Cabinet Committee about that interest; and (b) immediately write to the Cabinet Committee about that interest.

(b) unless directed otherwise by the Cabinet Committee, refrain from participating in any consideration of that matter.

An application, petition, or suit challenging any process or act carried out or done, intended or purported to be carried out or done under this Ordinance shall not be heard in court.

(2) No court shall grant or consider an injunction against any process carried out, intended to be carried out, or purported to be carried out in connection with a commercial transaction or agreement under this Ordinance.

No suit, prosecution, or other legal proceedings or action in damages shall lie for anything done, procedural lapses or omissions in the exercise or performance of any function, power, or duty conferred or imposed by or under this Ordinance or any administered legislation unless the act or omission is shown beyond a reasonable

doubt to have been done in bad faith.

(2) Notwithstanding any other law, an investigating agency, anti-graft agency, law enforcement agency, or court shall not inquire into or initiate an investigation into any procedural lapse or irregularity committed by any person in a commercial transaction or agreement governed by this Ordinance unless there is evidence of personal monetary gain with corroborative evidence of a link between such monetary gain and the undue benefit rendered to any party to the transaction or agreement.

(3) No one may be sued in his or her personal capacity for actions taken in the course of official duties.

(4) A procedural irregularity or lapse under this Ordinance does not affect, void, set aside, annul, or rescind a commercial transaction or agreement.

The provisions of this Ordinance shall have effect notwithstanding anything inconsistent therewith contained in the Companies Act, 2017 (XIX of 2017), the Privatization Commission Ordinance, 2000 (LII of 2000), the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority Ordinance, 2002 (XXII of 2002), the Public-Private Partnership Authority Act, 2017 (VIII of 2017), the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan Act, 1997 (Act No. XLII of 1997), the Securities Act, 2015 (Act No. III of 2015), or any other law for the time being in force or in any instrument having effect by virtue of any law other than this Ordinance.

By putting a notice in the official Gazette, the Federal Government can make rules to carry out the goals of this ordinance and make its provisions work.

The government promised the government in writing that they would keep putting in place a number of comprehensive structural reforms to attract investment, help growth, and create jobs.

We will continue to focus on policies that (1) reform state-owned enterprises (SOEs); (2) improve the overall business environment; and (3) enhance governance. We are committed to improving SOEs' governance, transparency, and efficiency as well as limiting their fiscal risks. Specific actions include: a. Enhancing the SOE legal and regulatory framework. The National

Assembly adopted our new SOE law in July 2022, which is now awaiting Senate approval (end-June 2022 SB, reset to end-September 2022). In line with IMF staff recommendations, inter alia, it will: (1) ensure that SOE operations are grounded on a commercial footing, including by defining what constitutes a commercial SOE; and (2) regulate oversight and ownership arrangements. At the same time, we are working with the help of the ADB to finish more regulatory reforms by the end of December 2022. One of the things we are trying to do is get the cabinet to approve an SOE ownership policy.



This will help operationalize the principles of the SOE law (once enacted) into a policy that clarifies ownership arrangements and the division of roles within the federal government and amend SOE-dedicated acts. We have selected four SOEs (out of about 20 that are still operating under outdated dedicated Acts and thus ad-hoc statutory frameworks) and will submit to parliament amendments to their Acts to make the new SOE law applicable to those SOEs as well and thus help improve their governance as per the new SOE law: (1) Pakistan Post; (2) Pakistan National Shipping Corporation; and (4) Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation.

1. Strengthening the monitoring of SOEs. We are in the process of establishing a Central Monitoring Unit (CMU) within

the MoF to improve SOE performance functions and provide better analysis at the aggregate SOE level. We aim to operationalize the CMU by January 2023 (new end-January 2023 SB).

2. Increasing transparency. SOEs are continuously audited by external auditors. We have asked our Auditor General to conduct special audits, including that of SSGCL, HESCO, and PESCO. d). Advancing privatisation and SOE support We are working toward debt recapitalization and refinancing of two RLNG power

plants. After the resolution of inter-ministerial issues, the process is expected to be completed by the end of 2022. Thereafter, the process of equity sale of the two RLNG power plants will be initiated afresh, with proceeds to be channelled to debt reduction and poverty programs. We are also advancing the privatisation of (1) House Building Finance Company Limited, a development finance institution, and aim to complete the privatisation process by end-March 2023; and (2) First Women's Bank Limited, a public bank, for which we will complete the 2018–20 outstanding annual audits of the bank by end-November 2022 and the 2021 annual audit by end-December 2022, with the aim of completing the privatisation process by end-June 2023.



# The continuing drift

By Waqar Masood Khan

The trade data for the month of August has revealed continuing challenges to macroeconomic framework. It is shocking to note that the imports were up by a hefty rate of 21%, rising from \$4.9 billion in July 2022 to \$6 billion in August. We do derive comfort from higher exports of \$2.5 billion compared to \$2.3 in July, a growth of 11%. But our nemesis is imports and in the short term we cannot hope to accomplish a high growth in exports particularly when the world is bracing for recession, which would adversely affect export demand. In the short run, our survival is in cutting the demand for imports.

Those who would like to compare this level of imports to the same period of last year, and feel emboldened, would be complacent. Even last year, rising imports were ominous which eventually unraveled the economy. This year, we are rebuilding the economy and for this purpose have signed perhaps the toughest IMF (International Monetary Fund) programme ever. We had welcomed the trade data for July which paved the way for alleviating the turmoil in the forex market, which erupted in July. We are back to the same situation facing an unsustainable demand for imports. No matter how difficult it would be, for couple of years, we will have to live with a self-imposed constraint of limiting imports to our forex earnings comprising exports and remittances. Otherwise, we would face market turmoil and instability of the type we are confronting at the moment.

The inflation data has been unprecedented. Never in country's history have so many unfavorable events stacked together to wreak havoc on Pakistan's economy. Covid-19, the Ukraine War, political instability and now floods, have all brought economic ills.

The CPI inflation for the month of August was 27.3%, highest in 45 years. It was the third consecutive month when inflation stayed above 20%, which is also unprecedented. The rural inflation was up 28.8% while urban was 26.2%. As in the previous three months, food inflation was the primary reason, which stood at 30.2% in rural areas and 28.8% in urban areas. The average inflation for two months Jul-Aug is

26.1% compared to 8.38% and 8.74% for 2021-22 and 2020-21, respectively. One can well imagine how deeply the inflationary pressure is affecting the people.

The core inflation (excluding food and energy) is also on the rise after a long containment in single digit since 2012. For the last three months it is in double digit and rising, with 11.5%, 12.0% and 13.8% in June, July and August, respectively, in urban areas and 13.6%, 14.6% and 16.5% for rural area.

That the price situation is systematically pointing to run-away inflation is reflected in two other indices. First, the sensitive price index (SPI) is depicting the rising and unprecedented price trend during the last 10 weeks, rising gradually from 32.01% on 30-6-2022 to 45.5% as on 1-9-2022. The SPI is a basket of kitchen items and some essential energy related item. Such high prices are breaking the back of the fixed income families whose wages and salaries are sticky.

Whether there is a chance for these prices to come down any time soon, we examine the last index, which is the wholesale price index (WPI), normally considered a harbinger of future retail prices. Inflation of this index has been in double digit since March 2021 and rising almost uninterrupted since then and clocking inflation of 41.2% in August. Thus, it would be unrealistic to expect slowing down of inflation any time soon.

It is also important to note that this exceptional inflation would not come down until nearly June 2023, unless the high energy and food prices drop significantly, because the base effect of low inflation would continue to produce high readings of inflation. The reduction of international oil prices to \$70/barrel could herald a price retreat. This is possible but the recent action by OPEC+ cartel to cut the production has led to partial reversal of recent price gains. Furthermore, the flood situation would worsen the inflationary pressures because of supply shocks which are in the making.

While we are facing such challenges, the much-expected stability after the release of an IMF tranche is sourly missing. It has

taken just a few days after the release for the forex market to revert to its previous trend. On 6-9-2022, the interbank rate climbed back to Rs 221.48/\$ almost at the level of Rs 222.23/\$ it was on 29-8-22 the day when the tranche was approved by the Board. In the open market, against the rate of Rs 232/\$ as on 29-8-2022, and after falling to Rs 219/\$ on 1-9-2022 it rapidly climbed to even higher rate of 233/\$ with Rs.10 gaining in a single day on 6-9-2022. It shows an unbelievable difference of Rs 11 between the interbank and open market.

We would like to reiterate what we argued in our last article titled "A drifting economy" (BR:1-9-2022) in response to a similar situation in the market: "...it was quite surprising that during this period there was no voice guiding public sentiments or explaining the causes behind such untoward activity in the market. The Acting Governor has spared no opportunity to underline the fundamental fact that Pakistan has lined up \$36 billion financing against its needs of \$32 billion, implying a reserves build-up of at least \$4 billion at the close of the year. So where the need for continuing adjustment in the exchange rate is coming from? We believe there is no basis for exchange rate volatility and strong oversight on market practices should be exercised and speculative tendencies should be curbed to help stabilize the market."

There are reports that FIA (Federal Investigation Agency) has rounded up few people who were involved in illegal dealings in foreign exchange. Such actions are imperative. We had alluded to such actions in our previous article as well. Without strict vigilance and monitoring there is an inherent tendency in the market behavior to seek unwarranted gains and engage in speculative activity. With the revival of the IMF programme and availability of required financing we see no reason why such large volatility is observed in the forex market. Also, prices have to be monitored also as has been done all along by the Ministry of Finance. There is no other agency which can bring all stakeholders together to ensure that prices are competitive and no economic rents are accruing to the sellers.

# Stage Being Set for Next Government to Return to IMF

*He believes that no economic policy can function in such a tense political atmosphere, with so much uncertainty in the market*

**By Dr. Ashfaq Hasan Khan**

There is no doubt that the floods this year are a much greater catastrophe than the 2010 floods. Along with precious lives lost, roads, bridges, schools, hospitals, dispensaries, and crops have been destroyed. "It's difficult to assess the exact amount of damage in monetary terms; it will take time for such an assessment to be precisely made. However, the impact is wide-ranging," Dr. Ashfaq said in an interview.

"At a time when Pakistan was already going through IMF-related issues – especially after the 7th and 8th review, which prolonged for a very long time, the floods have damaged Pakistan's economy very much." He believes Pakistan's incumbent government is incapable of handling the magnitude of the crisis, "so many crises have emerged concurrently and been compounded by a weak government that is limited to a few kilometers, inside Islamabad only."

While alluding to the instability that has gripped the country ever since the toppling of PTI's government at the center, he said: "I was in the favor of elections from day one. People were saying that since the IMF program wasn't happening that's why the market wasn't stable. However, even after the IMF staff-level agreement, stability didn't return. The reason is that currently there is an extreme nature of political destabilization this is why people don't know what to expect tomorrow. When there is so much uncertainty, no economic policy can function."

Unfortunately, in Pakistan, politics takes precedence over the economy, he regretted. "Floods have just hit us. I had started calling for elections in April/ May. There is no other option. The political temperature will only drop when that happens," he said while making an impassioned plea, "Hold free, fair, and transparent elections then hand over the economy to the winning party to deal with."



When the host pointed to the allegations that almost every losing party hurls after elections, he rebutted that with the examples of the 2008 and 2013 general elections. "The losing side will always make noise, however, the party in power always completes the tenure," he said. "Right now, we need to decrease the political temperature. There is a political logjam, we need to break it. We all are being inflexible and in turn destroying the country. Announce a date for election today; you will see the political temperature decrease and more people focusing their efforts on floods."

Dr. Ashfaq regretted that whenever his opinion was not accepted, Pakistan bore the brunt. "I was saying in 2018 that don't go to the IMF, and since April/ May this year, I have been calling for a new mandate. Now we've paid a huge cost since my call was not accepted," he said while adding that "Whenever the public has not paid attention to my call, the country has lost a lot."

Now the IMF program has been extended to June 2023. After the elections, what will happen? He asked the host while answering himself, "Whichever government comes into power will have to decide whether or not to go to the IMF."

Having extensive experience working with the IMF, Dr. Ashfaq knows what goes on behind the scenes. "No one knows the dynamics of IMF better than me. There are both pull and push factors. Pull is from there push is from here, in the form of cabinet ministers," he said while giving the example of former Prime Minister Imran Khan's cabinet ministers who pressurized him into going to the IMF. We had other options then as well, he said.

"Mark my words, come April next year, things will be made so bad for the party that comes into power in the upcoming elections that they will have no other option but to return to the IMF for the 23rd Program. I know this happened in 2008, 2013, and 2018 – and now again it will happen."





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# OPERATION SOMNATH 1965

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# The most beautiful places to visit in *Turkiye*



The eclectic city of Istanbul, the fantastical rock forms of Cappadocia, the ancient ruins of Ephesus, and the glimmering Mediterranean and Aegean coastlines are *Turkiye*'s biggest draws, but each region of the country has something distinct to offer.

*Turkiye*'s transcontinental culture clash, its east-west spice mix of influences, flavours, cultures, faiths, and history, is what makes this country so attractive at the point where Europe and Asia collide. This is a land rich in sensorial richness, from its bazaars and mosques to its cuisine and culture; unique and romantic, from its Ottoman palaces to fairytale Cappadocia. Its scenic places are diverse.



## The Fairy Chimneys of Cappadocia

High on the Anatolian plateau, the curious landscapes of Cappadocia resemble a fantasy world. Honey-coloured rocks have eroded into sculptural forms resembling minarets, magic mushrooms and what have become known as Fairy Chimneys. The thing to do is take a hot-air balloon ride at sunrise or sunset.

## The pools of Pamukkale

Pamukkale, which means "cotton castle" in Turkish, is a natural site in Denizli in southwestern *Turkiye*. The area is famous for a carbonate mineral left by the flowing water. Over the course of thousands of years, this mineral has formed white water pools famous around the whole world for their healing properties.







## The domes of Istanbul

Across the Golden Horn, the more modest Ortaköy Mosque is one of the city's prettiest, white in marble and stone, with pink mosaics within; located at the water's edge beside the Bosphorus bridge, it is breathtaking at sunset with the golden light, and in the morning, when the call rings out across the water. Some of Istanbul's most beautiful places are its mosques. The Hagia Sophia, whose name means "holy wisdom," is a domed monument originally built as a cathedral in Constantinople (now Istanbul, Türkiye) in the sixth century A.D. It contains two floors centered on a giant nave that has a great dome ceiling, along with smaller domes.



## Patara

Stretching more than seven miles, Patara Beach is the longest and most wildly beautiful in Türkiye – and also one of the emptiest. Breakers crash along one edge of this deep, wide stretch of pale sand; along the other are dunes and pine trees, marshes and lagoons, now a natural park rich in birdlife, so you are completely surrounded by water and wildlife – most notably, endangered loggerhead turtles.

## Culinary delights of southeastern Anatoli

The often-overlooked southeastern Anatolia region is one of Türkiye's cultural – and culinary – stars. The cities of Gaziantep and Antakya (Hatay) are famed for their food, and both also boast museums with incredible collections of Roman mosaics. Mardin's picturesque, well-preserved old town also makes a great base for exploring the monasteries and Roman ruins in the surrounding area. The world's oldest religious site, Göbeklitepe, lies just outside of Şanlıurfa, which has its own fine archaeology museum and bazaar.



## Balat, Istanbul

Istanbul's artsy neighbourhood of Balat, the old Jewish quarter, has colour-popping pockets amid its more down-at-heel residential streets – bright-painted stairs (like those up to Incir Ağacı Kahvesi café), street art, parasol-shaded streets and terraced wooden houses in sugary pastels and rainbow shades (try Kiremit Caddesi). Wind around the steep cobbled lanes to dig out surprises in the rootsy cafés and vintage shops, live music venues and edgy art galleries.



# Pakistan Navy Day: A Pledge to Maritime Defence

*The four-dimensional force has full capability to face the enemy on the surface, underwater, air, and land*

By Ali Basit



After gaining independence, Pakistan realized that to endure freedom, it ought to have the strategic ability to turn down malicious designs of its enemy. This could be well predicted by Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah who had the foresight to precisely direct various segments of the newly emerged state to prepare for future challenges. In his address to the officers of the Pakistan Navy on Jan 23, 1948, he stated, "Pakistan must be prepared for all eventualities and dangers. The weak and defenseless in this imperfect world invite aggression from others. The best way we can serve the cause of peace is by removing the temptation from the path of those who think that we are weak and therefore they can bully or attack us."

Jinnah was well aware of the fact that Pakistan, due to its peculiar geostrategic location and a hostile neighboring environment, required strong Armed Forces to protect its national interests. The Pakistan Navy was thus designated as an instrument to defend the maritime frontiers and interests of Pakistan. In his aforementioned address, Jinnah also outlined his vision for the Pakistan Navy by observing that "Pakistan is still in its infancy and so is its Navy... you will have to make up for the smallness of your size by your courage and selfless devotion to duty...I trust that,

by your behavior and deportment you will never let Pakistan down, but would keep up the best traditions of the service and maintain high the honor and prestige of Pakistan as one of the greatest nations of the world."

During wartime, the Pakistan Navy has always espoused high standards of professionalism and valor. In the 1965 war, Operation "Dwarka" launched by the Pakistan Navy caused irreparable damage to the Indian Navy and vehemently destroyed the Indian Radar system. In addition, Pakistan Navy's submarine Ghazi moved its patrol to Bombay harbor to challenge the enemy's ships namely INS Vikrant and INS Mysore to dock out and get destroyed. This psychological fear of

Ghazi adversely affected the Indian Navy's operational maneuvers. Yet again, in the 1971 war, the sinking of the Indian warship Kukri was a huge wartime casualty inflicted by PNS Hangor and is the only incident after WWII wherein any conventional submarine sank a Warship. In recent times, the detection of Indian Navy submarines on various occasions by the Pakistan Navy portrays its effective employment strategy coupled with superior professional acumen.

Having transcendence in operational preparedness, Pakistan Navy is no less at meeting its internal obligations by effectively engaging in the event of a natural calamity, to shoulder the government's efforts to mitigate the risks. The recent historic monsoon rains and flooding in Pakistan have affected more than 30 million people and killed more than 900 people, according to the Minister for Climate Change, Sherry Rehman. In this hour of need, the Pakistan Navy has initiated wide-scale Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations in the far-flung rural areas of Sindh which are the most affected by the recent flooding.

The Pakistan Navy rescue teams have rescued locals stranded in flooded homes and shifted them to safer locations. These rescue operations by





the Pakistan Navy in different areas are complemented by the establishment of free medical camps to provide first aid to the locals. Dedicated teams of doctors and paramedical staff are also providing treatment and free medicines to the aggrieved populace in these areas. Moreover, the Pakistan Navy troops have distributed ration bags, fresh drinking water, and household items in the affected areas.

The Pakistan Navy has many achievements and stories in its glorious past. This four-dimensional naval force has full capability to face the enemy on the surface, underwater, air, and land. With time, its strength and capability are increasing. The induction of various ships equipped with new and modern technology is being carried out to modernize the Pakistan Navy fleet. In this regard, two of the four 054-A/P frigate ships: PNS Tughriland and PNS Taimur, which are being built at HudongZhonghua Shipyard in China, have been commissioned in the Pakistan Navy while the two others are in various stages of completion. These ships are capable of effective operation in various combat situations.

Besides these inductions, eight Hangor-class submarines are also being built with the cooperation of China to strengthen the wartime capabilities of the Pakistan Navy fleet. These submarines will be equipped with advanced sensors and command and control systems that will also have the ability to target multiple positions simultaneously. This project to build frigate ships and submarines is a reflection of the strong defense ties between Pakistan and China.

In addition to this, four Milgem-class corvette ships are being built with the cooperation of Turkey and they are also in various stages of completion. The contract for the purchase of these ships was made with ASFAT (Turkey's state-owned defense company) under the transfer of technology program. Under the contract, two ships are being built in Turkey while the other two are to be built at Karachi Shipyard and Engineering Works (KSEW). Milgem-class corvettes are state-of-the-art ships equipped with surface, underwater, and air-to-air weapons, sensors, and advanced combat capabilities. No doubt these above-mentioned inductions over the period will enhance Pakistan Navy's defensive capabilities to counter any uncertain events at sea.

To sum up, the Pakistan Navy, in addition to ensuring the maritime security of the country, counters sea-based global terrorism, smuggling, piracy, and provides land and sea-based security to shipping lanes. Staying true to Quaid's words, the Pakistan Navy has stood firm against every test and trial. Every year, Sept 8, revives the essence of patriotism among the people of Pakistan. As we breathe in a free country today, tribute must be paid to the ones who sacrificed their present for our future. On this historic day, Pakistan Navy reaffirms its pledge to defend the maritime borders of the country for a secure and prosperous future for our generations.



# Armed Forces of Pakistan and Our National Heroes



By Mehak Zamir Naushahi

Traditionally, the Armed forces are heavily armed, and highly organized, primarily intended for warfare. The protection and progress of the country depend upon the armed forces of that country. Just like the other countries, Pak Armed Force is the source of protection for our motherland. Pak Armed Force is the combined military force of Pakistan and is the world's sixth largest military.

In fact, Global Firepower has ranked the Pak Armed Forces as the ninth most powerful military in the world. Pakistan's army represents faith, unity, and discipline. It consists of three formally uniformed services which are Military, Airforce, and Navy. Services of armed forces mean the time spent on protecting the country. There are countless services of the Pak Armed Forces \_ whether it is in the Army, Air force, or Navy. Pakistani soldiers have always served the whole nation without being solicitous about their own viability. Since the founding of Pakistan, the military has played a key role in holding the state together, promoting the feeling of nationhood, and providing a bastion of selfless services. History brings to us some incredible heroes of the military, who plated up the

whole nation by sacrificing their own lives. Some far-fetched heroes of the nation and their services are as elucidated below:

Captain Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed unfolds as a symbol of fortitude and tenacity. He represented the moral strength of the opposition during the Kargil Conflict at LOC. He defeated 5 tactical posts which he entrenched at an altitude of 17,000 feet in a gultary area. On 5th July 1999, the Indians with about two contingents captured one of his posts. Colonel Sher Khan set a counterattack and got back his post. Then he pursued the enemies and captured them. He then released them and asked them to go and tell their leader to face him during a raid. He accidentally entered an enemy camp where he was fired on his chest and embraced martyrdom on the 5th of July 1999.

Major Tufail Muhammad Shaheed is the symbol of bravery and courage. The Indian troops occupied the Lakshmipur area in Pakistan. Major Tufail Muhammad reoccupied the area and fought against the enemies although he was injured critically. He set an example of intrepidity and courage. He embraced Shahadat on 7th August 1958.

Major Shabbir Sharif Shaheed was instructed to seize the high ground area near Sulemanki headworks. Major Shabbir Sharif occupied that area and killed forty-three Indian fighters. He also destroyed four Indian tanks. He was attacked by two Indian regiments. On the 6th of December 1971, he was struck by a tank shell without any deviation and embraced Shahadat.

Also, a few months ago the army rescued all the people who were trapped in snow in Murree tragedy. In the end, it is the Pak army that rescues the people in need.

Not only the army, but Pakistan's air force has also played a vital role in serving the country and still is fulfilling its duty. If we put forward some outstanding and enthusiastic heroes of history, we'll get to know about the passion of our soldiers.

Pilot Officer Rashid Minhas Shaheed attempted to gain control of his jet trainer when his trainer Flight Lieutenant Matiur Rahman tried to take control of jet and take plane to India forcibly to join the Liberation war of Bangladesh. But, Rashid Minhas crashed the jet, failing mission of Matiur Rahman and embraced martyrdom.



GD-Pilot Maryam Mukhtar Shaheed stands witness that not only men but women can also play roles in protecting the country. Maryam died flying a Pakistan Air Force FT-7PG aircraft near Kundian in Mianwali District in order to save the people living in the district. She did not want the aircraft to crash on the people living there and so she sacrificed her own life. She was the first female fighter pilot to be killed in the line of duty. She is an inspiration to the young generation. Women aren't weaker than men and don't lack enthusiasm.

GD-Pilot Hassan Siddiqui is a lionhearted pilot of the Pakistan Air force who made millions of Pakistanis proud by spilling the 2 Indian jets and saved the country from a big loss in 2019. He was appreciated by everyone for his courageous act which will be worth remembering.

Just like the army and Air Force, the Navy plays an important role in making Pakistan progressive.

Submarine Operation 1971 is the achievement of the Pakistan navy. INS KHUKRI, the ship of the Squadron commander of India was sunk within two minutes. About 18 officers and 176 seafarers including the commander were killed. This was an incredible defeat to India.

VICE-ADMIRAL Ahmad Tasnim had participated in the 1965 war as second-in-command of submarine PNS Ghazi which, while deployed in enemy waters, bottled up the bulk of the Indian navy, making it possible for the Pakistan



Navy flotilla to bombard and destroy military installations of Dwarka. He is the sole admiral who is awarded Sitara-i-Jurrat twice which, indeed, is a rare distinction. He proved himself a great warrior in a great country with great catastrophe taking place around him. While the navy recently commemorated Hangor Day, the nation should also salute and remember him for his heroic ventures.

On 8 October 2005, an earthquake measuring 7.6 on the Richter scale - the most devastating to hit the region in a century - destroyed towns and villages in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), and the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP), leaving more than three million people homeless. Pakistan Armed Forces served the whole nation. Many years of recovery

and rehabilitation remained in the region, however, the emergency response effort has been praised for its success and uniqueness in coordinating the work of different military forces, as well as NGOs.

Pakistani soldiers are brave and full of enthusiasm. They have a firm belief in Allah Almighty. Not even a single Pakistani soldier is afraid of being killed in fact; every other soldier has the desire to embrace Shahadat. As Allah Almighty says in Quran:

"Think not of those who are slain in Allah's way as dead. Nay, they live, finding their sustenance in the presence of their lord; they rejoice in the bounty provided by Allah. And with regard to those left behind, who have not yet joined them (in their bliss), the (Martyrs) glory in the fact that on them is no fear, nor have they (cause to) grieve."

Pak Army is running many pre-eminent educational institutions as well. We must thank Army for keeping our country stable. If today Pakistan is progressive, it is only because of the Pak Armed Forces and their countless efforts and services for the nation. As a citizen, it is our right and duty to return back all the efforts of the Armed Forces by cooperating with them and taking care of our country, and by supporting them in every aspect of life. What they've done for the betterment of this country is what an ordinary person can't do. May Allah protect our beloved country and our incredible Armed Forces.



# Minorities in the Land of The Pure: Takeaways, Challenges, And Opportunities

*Riots in South Asia are not solely motivated by the otherization of certain ethnic groups but are also due to a sense of economic discrimination*

By Hamzah Rifaat Hussain

While Pakistan has witnessed considerable flak from the international community over its treatment of minorities, there are reasons for the country to be optimistic about their future. While true that bigotry and reductionist prisms of societal understandings have continued to threaten the country's social fabric, there are instances where minorities' rights are not only safeguarded but encouraged, promoted, and pushed forward with great aplomb. The diversity of ethnicities and religious coexistence deserves greater media coverage instead of a few negative narratives.



Minorities in Pakistan do face considerable challenges today but on the other hand, the majority of Pakistani society denounces vile and extremist attacks on them. Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, and Sikhs continue to brandish their patriotic credentials and view the land of Muhammad Ali Jinnah with love, affection, and ownership. While mobs have attacked their places of worship, there have been efforts by the civil society, the Pakistani state, and the vast majority of Muslim citizens to thwart the senseless barbarity of the mobs. Mob logic and mob violence have been successfully called out by Pakistani society as senseless – while quoting religious edicts and principles. There is a common misconception that the majority of Pakistanis endorse extremism or violence against minorities with only a fraction of society abetting the perpetrators.

The interesting aspect about minorities in Pakistan in 2022 is that their treatment is reflected in the political landscape of the country. Religious parties which have a penchant for Islamizing the country have failed to garner the requisite support needed to form governments or coalitions. This is in stark contrast to neighboring India where hyper-national laced with a vituperative brand of Hindutva is upending the Nehruvian Gandhian ideals which have historically kept the world's largest

democracy together. International news coverage is also awash with stories of how the Modi-led Bharatiya Janata Party is threatening India's minorities with vigilante attacks, state-sponsored discrimination, and social exclusionism which mirrors the aftermath of the state of Gujarat after the 2002 riots. Such coverage does not apply to Pakistan where isolated incidents of mob violence are reported instead. There is little talk of state-sponsored isolationism or minorities living under threat in Pakistan which deserves approbation.

If anything, an assessment of Supreme Court decisions in both countries underlines the essence of upholding respective constitutions. The Indian Supreme Court's verdict on the demolition of the Babri Mosque only perpetuated religious divides and allowed for greater societal dissonance to take hold. Pakistan on the other hand has witnessed its apex court denounce acts of violence, whether it was the lynching of Sri Lankan national Priyantha Kumara or the attempted demolition of Hindu temples in Sindh. In fact, perpetrators are incarcerated or charged. As bigoted elements attempt to divide the country through active engagement in hate speech or passive silence which reflects plausible deniability, the

apex court ensures that any such act is reprimanded with adequate compensation coming in the form of penalties. Most Pakistani minority groups while fearing attacks from majoritarian violence, look up to the apex court to deliver them justice. The same cannot be said about India where releasing architects of sexual violence during the Gujarat Riots of 2002 has become a harrowing reality in 2022.

At places of worship, initiatives such as the Kartarpur Corridor and the smooth functioning of the Hinglaj Temple bring optimism to minorities. Whether they are churches in the federal capital Islamabad or the relics from the Gandhara civilization, religious places of worship and admiration for them remain intact. Pakistan deserves more credit for this than what is accorded. Take the example of the Katas Raj temple and how it continues to be a popular tourist destination for local and international tourists who marvel at the intricacy of the structure. Numerous gurdwaras in Lahore also remain unscathed with the tiny but politically significant Sikh community continuing to partake in civil, political, and military life. While it's true that communal violence will continue to be an existential threat to the South Asian fabric, both provincial and federal governments under-



stand the importance of acting swiftly to uphold secular ideals in a predominantly Muslim state.

Challenges, however, center on curbing the dissemination of hate speech, sectarian proclivities, and building a more inclusive society. Think tanks across the country have encouraged interfaith dialogue to ensure that peaceful coexistence between various religious groups continues to materialize. There is a massive disconnect between what is portrayed and what is actually taking place, with the international media, especially the Indian outlets quick to pounce on any opportunity to denigrate Pakistan for its treatment of minorities by quoting isolated incidents. The reporting often stops at the incident with no follow-up on the action taken by state officials, civil society groups, and Pakistani society in general which condemns such acts on minorities fueled by patriotism and nationalism.

It is also critical to understand that disinformation, fake news, and negative propaganda are preventing greater social inclusion, cohesion, and positive projection which Pakistan still needs. The proliferation of hate speech videos that target minorities in India under the Modi-led BJP, with prominent artists with a massive following inciting communal tensions, is absent from Pakistan. While it's true that far-right political parties such as the TLP remain a challenge to minority inclusion – the acceptance of virulence and violent attacks does



not exist in the vast majority of Pakistani society. Most razed temples are rebuilt, while most Pakistanis offer glad tidings to the Christian minority when Christmas approaches. The 2022 floods have also united Pakistanis where all groups, relief camps, and government efforts are devoid of sectarian and religious leanings. Again, this marks a stark contrast to relief camps during the Delhi riots of 2020, when the disbursement of aid, rehabilitation, and reintegration remained a challenge due to religious polarization. Pakistan deserves some credit here.

The future for minorities in Pakistan depends on a host of factors that cannot be limited to religious extremism alone. Political stability coupled with economic prosperity has a positive impact on religious integration. Riots in South Asia are not

solely motivated by the otherization of certain ethnic groups but are also due to a sense of economic discrimination. As is the case in the Sinhalese Buddhist majority in Sri Lanka, where extremist groups such as the Bodu Bala Sena exploit public sentiment and arouse negativity for the majority population to undertake attacks against Christian and Muslim populations. Like Pakistan, the majority of Sri Lankans do not subscribe to the views of the BBS but the truth is that an economic meltdown can either unite or divide the country. Positive community engagement during natural disasters or a state of financial freefall as was the case in Sri Lanka, is a good sign for national integration while caving into fringe elements remains a challenge. Greater educational outreach and civic sense can also reduce the probability of minority discrimination. Educational uplift of society is hence, an area that governments should focus on, as the long-term benefits outweigh the costs.

While challenges remain, the state of minorities in Pakistan except for a few isolated incidents of violence, gives optimism for Pakistanis to capitalize upon. The trends in 2022 do point out that if certain aspects of social engagement such as curbing propaganda, educational investment, and interfaith dialogue are taken into account, Pakistan can serve as an important case study for South Asian countries to look up to. Tackling Indian propaganda is possible through concrete action. The more governments invest in protecting minorities the better it is for their international image as well as their domestic standing which is otherwise heavily scrutinized due to several misgivings.



# IPU: Democracy, Development, and Policy

*IPU's main focus is to protect democracy*



By Mahnur Mehfuz

The International Parliamentarian's Union (IPU) is a worldwide association of national parliaments. More than a hundred and thirty years ago, it was established as the first multilateral political organisation in the world to foster cooperation and discussion among all nations. Since 1991, Mr. Duarte Pacheco has served as a Member of Parliament in the country of Portugal. During his time in Parliament, he has done a lot of different things. For example, he has been on the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Portuguese Communities, and the Committee on Budget and Finance.

Since 2002, Mr. Pacheco has served in his current role as leader of the Portuguese mission to the International Political Union (IPU). Mr. Duarte Pacheco is the 30th President of the International Political Union.

The president of the International Political Union, Mr. Duarte Pacheco, spoke about women's empowerment, democracy, and

climate change. "This is my first trip to Pakistan," he said. This is not a good time for your country. My presence here is a manifestation of my support for the people of Pakistan. The fact that many individuals perished despite your inability to contribute to the problem in our world makes it intolerable. It's bad news for the economy. Many people have lost everything, and now is the time for us to fully awaken.

He remarked that his main focus as IPU president is protecting democracy. Although not perfect, there is no greater political system than democracy. Then he was asked the question, "What are the goals that IPU has achieved towards women's empowerment?" He said, "It is not possible to think about real democracy if our population will not be completely represented. Therefore, encouraging more women to enter the elective office is a top priority. This is a step towards a more equitable and representative democracy. We've recently acquired additional resources. The population is large-

ly made up of young people. There will be less resistance to their thinking. It's important to encourage young people's active participation in political parties. He claimed that Pakistan has the potential to increase the number of women in parliament but that a more pressing problem is the lack of women's availability for an active role in politics and government in the country. There are occasions when there are open seats but there are either not enough qualified applicants or not enough qualified female applicants. Instead of revolution, we need reforms.

In light of the devastation that the recent monsoon floods have wreaked in Pakistan, climate change has become a major issue of discussion there. For its part, IPU is actively looking for solutions. The issue is widespread throughout the world. In this country, Parliament is the ultimate authority and ruler. The government tends to be misunderstood as the ultimate authority. Pre-disaster and post-disaster planning should be



accounted for in parliament-made budgets. The International Parliamentarian's Union urges parliaments to consider pressing issues like climate change when developing budget and management strategies. Everyone needs to realise that we are laying the groundwork for the next generation. We are building their future. Every one of these objectives has been corrected in all legislatures. We are all being affected by climate change. In Portugal, forest fires broke out three years ago. In less than 24 hours, the death toll topped 100. They get aid from countries through strategies to prevent and respond to fire disasters. However, lives cannot be saved.

The need for teamwork was highlighted. He warned that the issue would persist unless everyone involved made an effort to find a solution. To address this issue in a unified fashion, the IPU has brought together representatives from 128 different nations to work on a common agenda. Weather-related problems have set Pakistan's progress back by 20 years. As president of the IPU, he will meet with other members



to discuss how to best assist Pakistan in its fight against the effects of recent natural catastrophes. It is understood that merely growing the economy is not enough. We should focus on other crises too. The International Parliamentarian's Union (IPU) will organise a meeting to urge

parliamentarians to address environmental concerns and stress their government to work on it. Each nation must make a financial contribution. He gave a message to the youth, "they need to realise that they are building their future. One day you will wake up and understand this."



# Afghanistan-Pakistan Militancy Fiasco

*The leaders from Kandahar running the ministry of foreign affairs heavily criticised the interior ministry under Siraj Haqqani*

By Syed Fakhar KaKaKhel

It has been a year since the American withdrawal from Afghanistan, but the Afghan Taliban has not yet received international acceptance. The lives of ordinary Afghan citizens are facing difficulties due to economic restrictions. In such a situation, differences between Taliban leadership and attacks by the Islamic State in the Province of Khorasan (ISKP) have harmed Afghanistan's atmosphere of peace and harmony. Following the death of Al-Qaeda chief Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri, the Afghan Taliban faced numerous questions from the government.

The July 25-27 conference in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, follows the latest report on Afghanistan by the United Nations Security Council, which contains alarming details on the activities of terrorist groups, including al Qaeda, now enjoying the Taliban's protection in Afghanistan. The report said that Afghanistan has pretty much gone back to how it was before September 11, 2001, when it was home to al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden while the group planned the big terrorist attacks on New York and Washington.

The leaders from Kandahar running the ministry of foreign affairs heavily criticised the interior ministry under Siraj Haqqani. Criticism was of two types. Members of the Kandahari shura believed that the presence of the al-Qaeda chief in the Afghan capital had seriously damaged their diplomacy on the global stage. Apart from this, his death in a drone strike has raised questions about internal security in general. In both cases, the responsibility lies with Siraj Haqqani and his team at the Ministry of Interior. Kandahar leaders have had complaints about Haqqani network in the past. They are also suspicious of the role of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). The Kandahari lobby gave a clear message to the leaders of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan that either they should go back to Pakistan or else they could live a peaceful life in Afghanistan by registering themselves as refugees with refugee cards.



However, the Ministry of Interior took responsibility for the repatriation of the Pakistani Taliban through negotiations between Pakistan and the Pakistani Taliban. On their initiative, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan started negotiations and declared an indefinite ceasefire. But in the meantime, the death of the founding member of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan and the leader of the negotiating team, Abdul Wali alias Umar Khalid Khorasani, along with three other colleagues, worsened the situation. On the other hand, the Taliban entered Swat. Thus, the pressure was built up on both the government and the TTP. The death of the TTP leader in Afghanistan itself became a problem for the Afghan Ministry of Interior and Siraj Haqqani in particular, who is playing as a guarantor in the negotiations. It was even said that he was targeted by drones flying from Pakistan.

However, local sources believe that no evidence of a drone attack was found at the location. The TTP militants began pressuring their leadership to announce the end of the ceasefire and avenge the death of Umar Khalid Khorasani. This pressure was especially from the Taliban fighters of the Mohmand, Bajaur, and Swat regions.

Following this, the death of Yasser Prakay, another TTP and Haqqani network leader in Kandahar, created security issues for the TTP's central leadership. The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan stated that meetings with the head of the movement, Mufti Noor Wali, have been banned for two months. All the regional commanders and fighters were requested to avoid meeting the TTP's chief. The result of this situation was that, despite the ceasefire by Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, the militants intensified their attacks on the police and security forces in the border areas of Pakistan.

Although TTP has not claimed responsibility for these attacks and has responded to one incident by claiming that it was a defensive attack, the reality is that militants have been carrying out continuous attacks. The peace agreement between the TTP and the government is in jeopardy after these killings and attacks.

On the other hand, unrest in Afghanistan has increased the difficulties for the Taliban regime. Afghan Taliban leaders themselves are not safe in the national capital, Kabul. This situation is different from the Taliban regime of the 1990s. At that time, the



Afghan Taliban were facing resistance in certain areas, and the threats were limited, but the situation in rest of Afghanistan was under their complete control.

Now they are being attacked from across the country, and threats are unpredictable. The threat is not only physical, but also ideological. Decrees of disbelief are being issued against the Taliban and their followers. The deaths of their most important leaders, Rahimullah Haqqani, in a suicide attack and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Ansari in a suicide attack in Herat, have shaken the leadership of the Afghan Taliban. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Ansari had the same status in non-Pashtun Afghanistan as Rahimullah Haqqani had in the Pashtun majority regions of Afghanistan. Both of these leaders were staunch opponents of ISIS and supporters of Taliban ideology and government. These two were the ideological pillars of the Afghan Taliban.

This is proving to be a huge loss for them. It should be noted that Herat is the third largest province in Afghanistan, which shares a border with two countries, Iran and Turkmenistan. It is also known as the Pearl of Khorasan. ISIS-ISKP has its sights set on this province in particular. ISIS-ISKP considers Iran and Russia as its enemies globally. It is also evident from the recent attack in front of the Russian Embassy in Kabul. The ISKP said it was behind the attack, and the Russian foreign ministry said something about it.

In the statement, the ministry said that on September 5, at 10:50 a.m. In the immediate vicinity of the entrance to the consular section of the Russian Embassy in Kabul, an unknown militant set off an explosive device. As a result of the attack, two employees of the diplomatic mission were killed, and there were also victims among Afghan citizens.

The former Afghan President, Hamid Karzai, said on Twitter that he had a phone conversation with the Russian special envoy for Afghanistan, Zamir Kabulov, and condemned the attack. Karzai emphasised the importance of strengthening ties between Afghanistan and Russia. It's important to note that former President Hamid Karzai was one of the first leaders to talk about ISIS fighters coming from Syria and Iraq to Afghanistan.

Russia has already said that it doesn't like the fact that ISKP is in parts of Afghanistan that are close by.

The main reason for this is the operations of these two countries against ISIS in Iraq and Syria. In a sense, ISIS-ISKP now wants to take space in the neighbourhood of its enemies.

It is believed that more than 1,000 Tajik nationals may have travelled to Syria and Iraq to join the ranks of the Islamic State at the height of the group's power during the last decade. Several hundred women joined them.



Back home in Tajikistan, a large but undisclosed number of people have been imprisoned on charges of belonging to or sympathising with the Islamic State, always after secretive and cursory trials which even close relatives are forbidden from attending. Dozens of women, along with hundreds of children, have arrived back from the Middle East, while hundreds of families on their way back home are staying in Afghanistan.

In August, the Afghan Taliban claimed to have killed the commander of ISKP in Farah province, adjacent to Iran. Iranian influence in Herat is quite high. As far as Sheikh Ansari was concerned, the threats to his life were so high that special security teams were sent twice to check his security because the Afghan Taliban feared that Sheikh Ansari could be targeted after

Rahimullah Haqqani. A few moments before the attack, Sheikh Ansari was busy meeting with important Taliban leaders and had reached the Jamia Masjid of Herat to offer Friday prayers, where a suicide bomber targeted him. Sheikh Ansari's death in broad daylight with so much security on high alert has a psychological impact not only on the Afghan Taliban, but the threat from ISKP has also increased for the Shia population of Herat.

In addition to internal factionalism, the threat of ISKP continues to worry the Afghan Taliban. If the Afghan Taliban does

not overcome the economic and internal political problems, there is a risk that the fighting factions of the Afghan Taliban themselves will join ISKP or declare separate organizations. Thus, an unstable Afghanistan can pose a permanent threat to the peace and stability of not only South Asia but also Central Asia.

Russia, Iran, China, Pakistan, and the Central Asian states were united in support of the Taliban's victory over the former government in August 2021, as they were happy to see the United States leave the region. Now that they've got the Taliban on their hands, few appear to know how to halt their brutality and transform them from hardcore indiscipline assassins into policemen and politicians. The resurgence of terrorism in Afghanistan is also giving its neighbours tough times.

# Durand Line: Great Game and the Anglo-Afghan wars - Part I

*Records of Afghan history can be traced back to the Persian Achaemenid Empire (500 BCE)*

By Azmat M. Saqib

## A BRIEF HISTORY

Modern day Afghanistan was founded by Ahmed Shah Abdali (Durrani), a general in Nadir Shah's Army. After the death of Nadir Shah, who ruled Iran and Afghanistan, Ahmed Shah Durrani was chosen by Loya Jirga as the ruler of Afghanistan at Kandahar in 1747. He ruled over Afghanistan, present-day Pakistan, and parts of India.

Records of Afghan history can be traced back to the Persian Achaemenid Empire (500 BCE). Urban culture has existed in the land between 3000 and 2000 BCE. Bactrian rule (capital Balkh) dates back to 2500 BCE. The Indus Valley Civilization, centred at Harappa in central Punjab, stretched up to a large part of Afghanistan in the north. Alexander marched into Afghanistan in 330 BCE and replaced the Persian Achaemenid Empire. After his death, his general's Seleucid Empire ruled over Afghanistan. Since then, many empires have made Afghanistan their capital, including the Greco-Bactrians, Kushans, Indo-Sassanids, Kabul Shahi, Saffarids, Samanids, Ghurids, Timurids, Hotakis, Durrani, and Mughals, many of which were not Afghan dynasties.

The land occupied by Afghan tribes was called Afghanistan, which loosely covered a wide area between the Hindu Kush Mountains and the Indus River, principally around the Suleiman Mountain range. Afghanistan served as a centre of the Silk Road in Central Asia, a gateway to the Indian Subcontinent, connecting China to Western Asia and Europe. Afghanistan is inhabited by diverse people: the Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras, Uzbeks, Turkmans, Qizilbash, Aimak, Pashayi, Baloch, Pamiris, and others. Most of these tribes live on both sides of their borders with all their neighbors. The majority of the Afghan population are Pashtuns (48%), who have mostly ruled modern-day Afghanistan.

So, even though Afghanistan was an



independent state, its borders with all of its neighbours stayed fluid until 1893 CE, both in terms of ethnic groups and the dynasties in power.

## HISTORICAL EVENTS LEADING TO THE DURAND LINE AGREEMENT

After the death of Ahmed Shah Abdali in 1782, his dynasty weakened, and by 1837, Ranjit Singh had captured Punjab, Kashmir, and frontier areas till the Khyber Pass. Despite several attempts, Afghans were unable to get back to these regions next to their borders. The Sikhs were allies of Britain in conflicts with Afghanistan. Most of the nineteenth century witnessed a regional struggle between Russia and Great Britain in India. This was the great game, a political and diplomatic struggle for almost a century (1813–1907). India feared that Russia might invade India, their prized colony, and Russia feared British advances toward Central Asia. Both distrusted each other. British defense, political, and foreign policies were overshadowed by this great game. According to one view, Britain

wanted to gain control over Afghanistan and make it a protectorate as part of a chain of buffer states until the Ottoman Empire. Thus, blocking Russian advances to ports in the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. Russia prospered in Afghanistan as a neutral zone. The Great Game resulted in the failed first Anglo-Afghan war of 1838; the first Anglo-Sikh war of 1845; the second Anglo-Sikh war of 1848; the second Anglo-Afghan war of 1878; and the annexation of the Khanate of Kokand by Russia.

Afghanistan fell victim to this game. The British wanted to keep Afghanistan under their control. In response to the Iranian siege of Herat backed by Russia, the British in India wanted to dethrone Dost Muhammad, Amir of Afghanistan, to drive out the invaders. Dost Muhammad wanted Peshawar back from the Sikhs as a bargain. Furious Britishers colluded with Ranjit Singh, an Afghan royal, who attacked Kabul and installed Shah Shuja as Amir. This was the first Anglo-Afghan war. In 1841, unhappy Afghans rebelled, massacred the British Army, and expelled all Britons. Amir Dost Muhammad again took control of Kabul in 1843. By 1848, the British defeated the Sikhs and annexed all regions up to the



Afghan Territory. In 1855, Iran, backed by Russia, sieged and took over Herat. Dost Muhammad sought the help of the British and signed a treaty of perpetual peace and friendship. Britain, after defeating Iran on the Persian Gulf Front, forced Iran to leave Afghanistan. Under the terms of the friendship treaty, he agreed to let Peshawar and other parts of the border become part of British India.

Sher Ali, son of Dost Muhammad, became the new Amir after his father's death in 1863. By refusing entry to a British diplomatic mission from Khyber Pass, he demonstrated his bias toward Russians. Viceroy Lord Lytton was annoyed and planned to change the situation in his favor. The British launched a three-pronged attack from Khyber Pass, Kurram Valley, and Bolan Pass. Facing defeat, Amir Ali fled and later died in Mazar Sharif in 1879. This was the second Anglo-Afghan war.

Muhammad Yaqub, son of Sher Ali, surrendered and signed a treaty, and handed over the Kurram valley, Pishin, and Sibbi. The British also took control of Afghanistan's foreign affairs.

Sometime later, Afghans rebelled again and killed the British mission chief. The British put an end to the rebellion. They thought Amir Yaqub had something to do with it, so they sent him to India and made Yaqub's nephew Abdur Rehman the new Amir.

In 1873, the Russians captured Khiva, and in 1881, they took control of western Turkmenistan. In 1884, they took the Merv

oasis and eastern Turkmenistan as well. The British feared their next target would be Herat. To avoid the inevitable, Britain now suggests to the Russians that they create a buffer zone in Afghanistan between the two empires.

During the mid-1880s, a joint Anglo-Russian Boundary Commission was formed. They agreed to work together to mark the northern boundary of Afghanistan. The government of Afghanistan had no say in it. The Commission delineated a permanent border along the Amu Darya (Oxus) River.

Secured from Russia by the delineation of the northern boundary, Amir Abdur Rehman remained apprehensive of the British intentions and, thus, sought to finalise a boundary between Afghanistan and India. The British also wanted a clearly demarcated buffer zone in Afghanistan.

In 1888, Amir Abdur Rehman wrote a letter to Lord Dufferin, the Indian Viceroy, requesting him to send a mission to Kabul to settle the Anglo-Afghan border. Viceroy did not respond. In 1890, the Amir wrote again to the Secretary of State of India. Lord Lansdowne was getting ready to send a mission led by Lord General Roberts.

Amir postponed the mission because he didn't want General Roberts in Kabul after the second Anglo-Afghan war. He delayed the matter till the general's retirement. On delay, the British government sent an ultimatum to finalise the dates or agree to British conclusions on the boundary of Afghanistan. The Amir thus invited the

mission from India.

However, to his disappointment, the map sent by the Viceroy excluded the territories of Waziristan, New Chaman, Chageh, Bulund Khel, Mohmand, Asmar, and Chitral from the state of Afghanistan. The Amir wrote another letter to the Viceroy, this time warning him of the pitfalls and dangers of removing these areas from both sides.

However, the British dismissed Abdur Rehman's warnings and forcefully occupied certain frontier tribal areas, like Bulund Khel and Wana Zhob. During these rising tensions, Sir Mortimer Durand led a mission, arriving in Kabul on October 2, 1893.

The mission was well received and negotiations were held in a peaceful and friendly atmosphere, as mentioned by Sir Durand. On November 12, 1893, Amir Abdur Rehman and Sir Mortimer Durand signed a final agreement. This is known as the Durand Line Agreement.

The day after the signing of the agreement, the Amir summoned a public Durbār attended by numerous tribal leaders. The Amir presented the agreement, explaining its terms. He thanked Lord Durand and expressed his pleasure and satisfaction at the agreement. However, some other narratives illustrate a contradictory sentiment, mentioning that Amir Abdur Rehman was reluctant to sign the agreement. It also says that the tribesmen were afraid because their "carefully guarded independence" would be in danger because of the British.



# King Charles III Has The 'Biggest Shoes' to Fill

*The King has a huge challenge ahead of him to carry out his constitutional role without evoking any controversy*

By Dr. Khalid Bajwa

The death of the much-loved Queen Elizabeth II (1926-2022) is widely mourned by the British public and people around the world. She was the longest reigning monarch of Britain and the second longest in the world; Louis XIV ruled for seventy-two years and 110 days but he was throned at the age of four so remained a minor king for a long time. The queen was a remarkable person who avoided controversies at personal, political, and constitutional levels. This was an amazing achievement over generations and in a fast-changing world. She did not earn her love and reputation based on any radical agenda or oratory but rather on the opposite. She remained calm and composed throughout her reign and one thing she mastered was not to give away anything that fuelled controversies. Over seventy years of her reign, she dealt with personalities and situations of different hues and colors.

The beauty of British democracy is that it embodies contradictory political and ethical systems which seamlessly run as a smoothly functioning system without hindering the progress of democracy as well as development in different fields of life. The queen was the 'Head (Supreme Governor) of the 'Church of England' but religion never proved to be a hindrance to practicing democracy. This flies in the face of many in the world who believe democracy and religion cannot coexist.

Similarly, it is being propagated that monarchy and democracy are contradictory and cannot coexist. Queen Elizabeth II was the sovereign and therefore, the ultimate citadel of power. She appointed 15 prime ministers and worked with them without indulging in any kind of controversy or conflict. Has she ever tried to overlap her roles as 'Head of the Church of England and a reigning monarch to influence the policy realm of the governments in any way, the British democracy might have taken a different shape and tenor. It was her strength of character and extreme self-control that helped her to carry the weight of all kinds of roles so successfully. It does not mean she did not have her own views on



various issues. She never expressed her opinion publicly.

When she was throned in 1952, she was crowned as the sovereign queen of seven independent nations that included Australia, Canada, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), New Zealand, Pakistan, South Africa, and the United Kingdom. She was still a sovereign for fifteen commonwealth nations at the time of her death. She was loved and respected in all these countries and was one of the main reasons that anti-monarchy movements in these countries never got strong enough to abolish the monarchy and become separate republics.

She never interfered in the internal affairs of these nations and earned respect and honor across the political divide. For example, when Sir Khawaja Nazimuddin's government was dismissed by Governor General, Ghulam Mohammad, the government petitioned the queen as the sovereign head of the state to intervene but she declined and let the events take their own course. Her rule over the country was abolished on March 23, 1956, when Pakistan adopted a new constitution and became the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Pakistan also contributed money for the coronation ceremony of the queen in 1952. She visited Pakistan twice, but only after she was relieved as the sovereign of Pakistan, in 1961 and 1997. She declared Pakistan as one of the powers in the Islamic World and admired Pakistan as one of the great nations of the Commonwealth. With her death, the last monarch of Pakistan died as well.

King Charles III has a huge challenge ahead of him to carry out his constitutional role without evoking any controversy. As the Prince of Wales, he was involved in promoting several charities and had strong and passionate views on many things which if he carried on expressing and supporting in public might result in many policy-related controversies and clashes. He is aware of it and has expressed, to the disappointment of many, that he may not be able to support many causes which are close to his heart in the way he used to do. For instance, his views on climate change are quite strong and date back to around forty years when only a few people were aware of the impending dangers of climate change. Now, he has to keep quiet about the policy choices of his government even if he feels uncomfortable about them. The second challenge faced by the new king is to keep the commonwealth as it was left to him by his mother or make it stronger. Voices have already started emerging in various countries that they want to go the 'Republic Way' and abolish the monarchy. The third challenge he faces is to keep the institution of monarchy as loved and respected as Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth left with him.

A new era has started that will determine the fate of Monarchy in the UK and the Commonwealth. King Charles III has to fill the great void his mother left for him. He has to tread very carefully in a breathtakingly fast-changing world. His long experience as the heir to the throne will help him in his endeavors.



# UK Royal Family:

## Who is in it and what does the King do?

*King Charles III has succeeded his mother, Queen Elizabeth II, following her death at Balmoral Castle, aged 96. Earlier this year, the Queen celebrated her Platinum Jubilee, when she became the longest-serving British monarch.*

### What does the King do?

The King is the UK head of state. However, his powers are symbolic and ceremonial, and he remains politically neutral.

He will receive daily dispatches from the government in a red leather box, such as briefings ahead of important meetings, or documents needing his signature.

- King Charles III, the new monarch
- Plans for the Queen's lying in state and funeral.

The prime minister will normally meet the King at Buckingham Palace, to keep him informed on government matters.

These meetings are completely private and there is no official record of what is said.

The King also has a number of Parliamentary functions:

- Appointing a government - the leader of the party that wins a general election is usually called to Buckingham Palace, where they are formally invited to form a government. The King also formally dissolves a government before a general election
- State Opening and the King's Speech - the King will begin the parliamentary year with the State Opening ceremony. He will set out the government's plans, in a speech delivered from the throne in the House of Lords
- Royal Assent - when a piece of legislation is passed through Parliament, it must be formally approved by the King in order to become law. The last time Royal Assent was refused was in 1708

In addition, the King will host visiting heads of state, and meet foreign ambassadors and high commissioners based in the UK. He will normally lead the annual Remembrance event in November at the Cenotaph in London.

The new King is head of the Commonwealth, an association of 56



independent countries and 2.4 billion people. For 14 of these countries, known as the Commonwealth realms, he is also head of state.

- What will happen to stamps, coins, banknotes and passports?

### How does succession work?

The order of succession sets out which member of the Royal Family takes over as monarch when the existing one dies or abdicates. First in line - the heir to the throne - is the monarch's eldest child.

As Queen Elizabeth's first-born child, Charles became King on his mother's death, and his wife, Camilla, became Queen Consort.

Royal succession rules were amended in 2013 to ensure that sons no longer take precedence over their older sisters.

King Charles' heir is his elder son, Prince William. The King has conferred on him the title of Prince of Wales and he inherits

his father's former title of Duke of Cornwall.

Prince William's eldest child Prince George is second in line to the throne, and his daughter Princess Charlotte is third.

### What happens at a coronation?

The coronation is the ceremony at which the monarch is formally crowned. It takes place after a period of mourning for the previous sovereign.

Elizabeth II became Queen on 6 February 1952 on the death of her father King George VI, but wasn't crowned until 2 June 1953.

It is not yet known when Charles' coronation will take place.

Queen Elizabeth's coronation was the first to be broadcast live on TV, and was watched by more than 20 million people.

For the past 900 years, the coronation has been held in Westminster Abbey - William

the Conqueror was the first monarch to be crowned there, and Charles will be the 40th.

It is an Anglican religious service, carried out by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The monarch is anointed with "holy oil", and receives the orb and sceptre, symbols of royalty. At the climax of the ceremony, the Archbishop will place St Edward's Crown on Charles's head - a solid gold crown, dating from 1661.

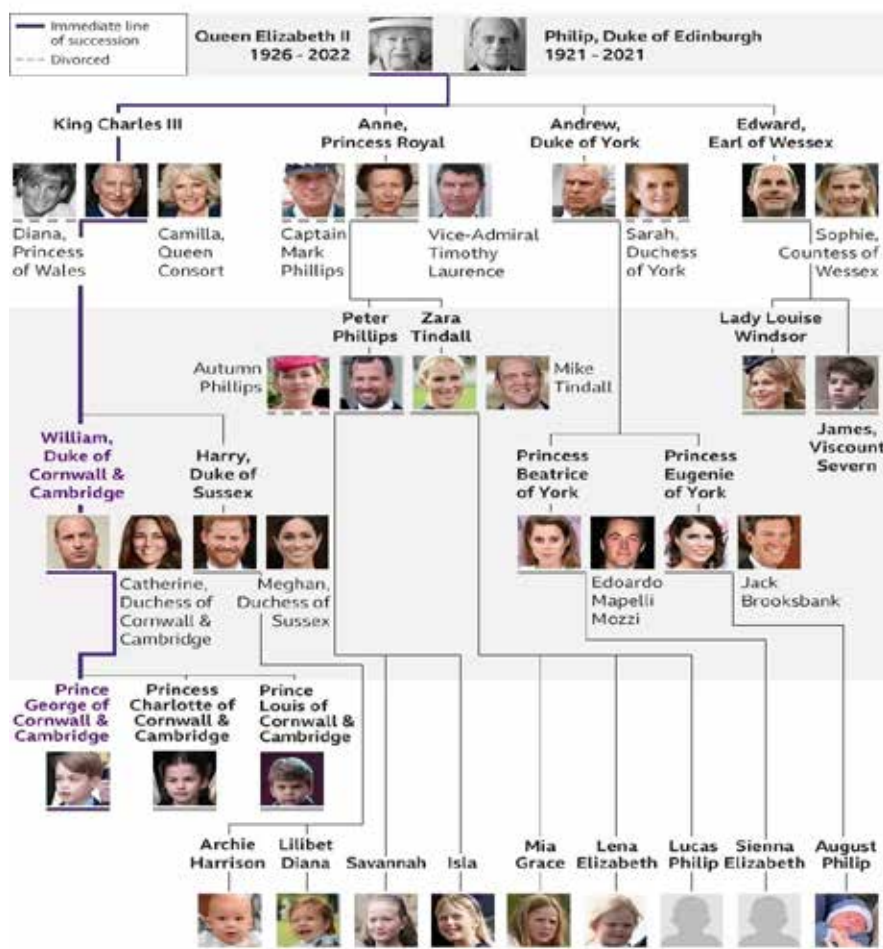
This is the centrepiece of the Crown Jewels at the Tower of London, and is only worn by the monarch at the moment of coronation itself.

Unlike royal weddings, the coronation is a state occasion - the government pays for it, and ultimately decides the guest list.

- The Royal Family: 50 Facts about the Queen's Coronation
- Queen's coronation gown on show for jubilee

## Who else is in the Royal Family?

- Prince William is the elder son of King Charles and his first wife, Diana, Princess of Wales. Following the death of the Queen, he has become the Prince of Wales and Duke of Cornwall and retains the title of Duke of Cambridge. He is married to the Princess of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall and Cambridge (Catherine). They have three children: Prince George, Princess Charlotte and Prince Louis
- The Princess Royal (Princess Anne) was the Queen's second child and only daughter. She is married to Vice Adm. Timothy Laurence. She has two children with her first husband, Captain Mark Phillips: Peter Phillips and Zara Tindall
- The Earl of Wessex (Prince Edward) was the Queen's youngest child. He is married to the Countess of Wessex (Sophie Rhys-Jones). They have two children: Louise and James Mountbatten-Windsor
- The Duke of York (Prince Andrew) was the Queen's second son. He has two



daughters with his former wife, the Duchess of York (Sarah Ferguson): Princess Beatrice and Princess Eugenie. Prince Andrew stepped down as a "working Royal" in 2019 after a controversial Newsnight interview about allegations that he had sexually assaulted Virginia Giuffrè. In February 2022, he paid an undisclosed sum to settle the civil sexual assault case Ms Giuffrè brought against him in the US

- The Duke of Sussex (Prince Harry) is William's younger brother. He is married to the Duchess of Sussex (Meghan Markle). They have two children: Archie and Lilibet. In 2020, they announced they were stepping back as senior royals

## Where do members of the Royal Family live?

King Charles and the Queen Consort are expected to move to Buckingham Palace. They previously lived in Clarence House in London and at Highgrove in Gloucestershire.

The Prince and Princess of Wales recently

moved from Kensington Palace in west London to live in Adelaide Cottage, on the Queen's Windsor Estate.

## How was the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrated?

The Platinum Jubilee was the Queen's fourth - she marked her Silver Jubilee in 1977, her Golden Jubilee in 2002 and her Diamond Jubilee in 2012.

She was born on 21 April 1926 but also has a second, official birthday, in June, when ceremonial events take place.

This tradition started with the Queen's great-grandfather Edward VII, who was born in November, to make it more likely that there would be good weather for public festivities.

The main Platinum Jubilee celebrations were during a four-day bank holiday weekend in June, and included a special Trooping of the Colour, a concert outside Buckingham Palace and a pageant. Thousands of street parties were held across the country.

Courtesy BBC



# William and Harry united in grief



The sight of Princes William and Harry meeting the crowds together will become one of the stand-out and most unexpected images from what have been sombre days.

With their wives, Catherine and Meghan, they greeted people in Windsor, in a way that couldn't have been predicted last week, when the Sussexes returned to the UK.

The talk then was of feuds and unbridgeable differences between couples. They were said to be staying in houses close together on the Windsor estate, while emotionally many miles apart. The couple hadn't been seen together in public for more than two years.

That all changed on Thursday. If William and Harry were not planning to see each other, they were brought together in ways that couldn't have been predicted.

It already seems a long time ago, but as the news worsened about the Queen, and the country was checking for updates on their phones, the two brothers were both making rushed journeys to Balmoral.

Families can fall out when there's a bereavement. Feelings are running high and are close to the surface. It's easy for old arguments to be brought back by grief. But losing a loved one can also bring unity, putting things into perspective and setting disagreements aside. It can be a time to come together.

Of course, looking in from the outside, no one watching the TV pictures really knows what's happening. Was this only a show?

Had they been told to send out this positive message?

It's going to be complicated and private between two brothers. And William and Harry have already faced the hard-to-measure sense of loss at an early age, with the death of their mother Diana.

For the waiting public, looking to show their own solidarity with the mourning Royal Family, they clearly warmed to the idea of William and Catherine, Harry and Meghan, appearing together. For a few minutes at least, the royal famous foursome were back. It tuned in to the public mood.

According to royal sources, it was Prince William who had extended the invitation to Prince Harry and Meghan to go on this walkabout.

Even if this is a moment of togetherness, there is no disguising that this is also a moment of great divergence. The brothers

are on pathways about to take them in completely different directions.

On the death of the Queen, William became heir to the throne. He will be keenly aware of what now lies ahead. He has a new and much more important status than his brother.

William is now the Prince of Wales, the name that they both until yesterday used to call their father - that must seem strange enough in itself.

When the reign of King Charles III was proclaimed at the Accession Council on Saturday, William was standing firmly behind the new monarch.

It's likely that the King and Camilla, now the Queen Consort, with William and Catherine will be the core group, almost a separate unit, at the heart of the monarchy. It was this foursome that often appeared together when Charles was standing in for his mother.

Prince Harry is on a very different route, living with Meghan and his young family in California, with media ventures, charities and campaigns. They have to invent their own post-royal life, while still part of the Royal Family. They generate huge public interest, not always positive, and seem to live with a media tornado hovering above them.

Even among the most carefully-choreographed steps of public mourning, there are still families and people falling out and making up.

Courtesy BBC



## Charles III proclaimed as King in ceremony televised for the first time



By Amna Shoaib

At 73, after a lifetime's preparation, Prince Charles III assumed the throne right after the passing of his mother, her late majesty Queen Elizabeth II. However, it is understood that he won't be crowned until next year.

In contrast to the memorial service for his mother seven decades ago, the future king's coronation will be a more simplified occasion that will represent his desire for a more condensed and contemporary monarchy. Camilla will be crowned with King Charles III after his mother stated earlier this year that she wanted to be the Queen Consort as part of her Jubilee celebrations. According to The Telegraph, the coronation will most likely occur in the spring or summer of next year, following a time of mourning. The only remaining religious coronation in Europe will take place at a shorter, less expensive service than Queen Elizabeth II's 1953 ceremony. It is normal for palace staff to ask that information about a new king or queen's coronation not be shared.

It is also unlikely that the ceremony will be on the king's mind following the death of his mother, with whom he had a close relationship. However, plans have been quietly developed under the codename Operation Golden Orb. Discussions have been ongoing for several years, in part due to the Queen's age.

According to sources, it will be shorter, smaller, less expensive, and more representative of various faiths and community groups. King Charles is also said to have expressed a desire for it to reflect modern Britain's ethnic diversity. Queen Elizabeth was crowned on June 2, 1953, sixteen months after her father, King George VI, died and when her son, King Charles, was only four years old. It was a moment of national celebration that cheered the post-war nation.

The Palace will want King Charles' coronation to be a similarly joyful occasion, so they will give the country time to mourn and plan an event for the spring or summer when the weath-

er is warmer. King Charles has also planned to hold the ceremony earlier than his mother did.

The Royal Family's website states: "The coronation ceremony, which is both a pageant and a solemn religious ceremony, has remained essentially unchanged for over a thousand years. The ceremony has been held at Westminster Abbey in London for the past 900 years. The Archbishop of Canterbury leads the service, as he has almost always done since the Norman Conquest in 1066."

The coronation oath, which is required by law, will be given, as will many of the ceremonies in this mother's service, such as the Archbishop of Canterbury anointing the queen with holy oil, giving her the orb, and putting her on the throne.

The King, like Queen Elizabeth, will be crowned with the St. Edward's Crown, which is made of solid gold and contains over 400 gemstones such as rubies, garnets, and sapphires.




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# Digital Lending

*Digital Lending has its pros and cons but is important*

By Azeem Waqas

With the rise of digital media and the use of mobile apps, digital lending has seen a significant increase in recent years. Technology has certainly made it easier to get instant cash. In the past year, there have been a lot of loan apps that take advantage of people by using misleading terms to get them to sign up.

Instant credit apps have taken over Pakistan's Play Store, dominating the Finance Top 100 charts. 19 of them offer PKR loans, and the top 8 loan apps have been downloaded around 15.4 million times in FY22.

Digital lenders provide up to Rs 25,000 loans in less than half an hour to clients.

Recently, there have been many reports that several unregistered digital lending apps are charging exorbitantly to customers and trapping them with their shady practises in such a way that customers cannot payback them.

Amjad Ansari, from Lahore, is one of the victims of such companies. He said that the user downloads the app, enters their information, is given a limit, and the money is sent to them. However, when it comes time to pay back the money, there are technical problems that cause delays and late fees.

These apps have few details on who's behind them. Publisher and company info are generally not available, and most do not have a license.

He explained that "These apps lure people by advertising at least a 90-day lending period to a maximum of 120 days, but after approving the loan, they impose a 7-day loan period, and someone stuck assumes that he can't even afford to lose this opportunity to get a 7-day relief."

Amjad said that other than the short loan period and 25% to 45% interest, there are a lot shadier issues where they sometimes approve loans and do not disburse them for a few days, and then update loan status as disbursed, mentioning repayment date, and then the same calls and threats to name shame.



He further said that another issue I faced was that I paid my loan timely but they didn't update the loan status, which remained showing overdue with multiple penalties. Another thing is that they can discontinue approving your loans without any reason. They just say no matter what you were paying on time. They have their own reasons.

Instead of focusing on increasing his income, Amjad now spends his days and nights worrying about juggling these loans on a daily basis, borrowing from one app and paying off another.

He is of the view that the tragedy is that our governments and other authorities are doing nothing to protect their people from such frauds. There is no government or social opportunity window available to get relief in hard times.

Amjad added that there were no safety alerts or warning mechanisms by governments, though no such warning was needed if they didn't allow such fishy businesses to run in the country to mentally torture people.

He said, "I am badly stuck in a loop of around 150k with these apps and can't find my way out. The ratio of income to mandatory expenses went above and beyond what a person in Islamabad who made between \$60,000 and \$70,000 a month and had a family could handle.

According to Appfigures, there were over 27 instant lending platforms featuring in Google Play's Finance Category in Pakistan, including four in the top 10. 19 were offering loans in the local rupee through eight apps: PK Loan, Easy Loan, Barwaqt, FORI MONEY, AiCash, WeCash, Quick Loans, Bad Credit Loans, and FlexiMoney. All of these apps have been downloaded an estimated 15.4 million times in the current fiscal year.

According to Appfigures, the Barwaqt has over 9.26M estimated downloads while the AiCash has 1.33M. Meanwhile, Easy Loan has crossed the 3 million mark, putting it second in the overall tally.

In the meantime, several companies without licences have joined the fight, and the government can't stop them.

The only two licenced companies that offer digital loans are SeedCred (Barwaqt) and Sarmaya Microfinance (EasyLoan).

Within one year of their introduction, the business volumes of these digital lending platforms crossed Rs 10 billion in the 2021-22 fiscal year.

The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan brought the problem to the attention of the Federal Investigation Authority after getting several complaints from customers.



According to Appfigures, Sarmaya Microfinance's Easy Loan was removed from Google Play. Meanwhile, SeedCred Financial's Barwaqt is not appearing in searches.

A large share of digital lending is actually done outside the regulatory ambit, by shady companies offering exploitative rates and no consumer protection.

Lending in Pakistan is a regulated business, where the SBP has the mandate for banks and the SECP oversees non-banking finance companies. So, to operate purely as a loan provider, one should have an NBFC license. Except for SeedCred Financial (Barwaqt) and Sarmaya Microfinance (PK Loan and Easy Loan), none of the names in the Play Store's Top 100 chart have a license.

The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has warned digital lending NBFCs of regulatory intervention if full disclosure and fair business practises are not ensured by the industry as a whole.

SECP called a Zoom meeting of the CEOs of NBFCs that do digital lending to talk about recent news stories about lending platforms using high interest rates, not giving enough information, and forcing people to pay back loans.

During the meeting, SECP advised the digital lending NBFCs to adopt best lending practices, ensure full disclosures and fair treatment of borrowers, avoid excessive pricing, deploy a robust complaint resolution mechanism, and ensure privacy



protection and data security. The lenders were informed that SECP does not want to stifle this nascent industry with excessive regulatory burden but would expect the industry to itself practise caution and develop standards that protect borrowers through adequate disclosure.

The representatives of NBFCs shared their concerns, chief among which was the existence of a large number of unregulated entities operating in the digital lending sector. The people who were there said that these apps that aren't licenced and aren't authorised are hurting the reputation of the regulated sector.

They were informed that the SECP has

already taken cognizance and that very soon, in collaboration with other regulators and law enforcement agencies, strict action will be taken against these illegal platforms.

The representatives of NBFCs also shared that even some licenced NBFCs were approached to sublet their license, an offer which the industry participants have rejected.

The NBFCs also informed SECP that despite the incidents of complaints on social media, the overall number of these complaints is a very small fraction compared to the total number of loans extended by these digital lenders. They said that the number of satisfied customers was much larger in comparison to the unhappy customers.

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# One Constitution Project: Islamabad's Greatest Real Estate Default

*The buyers of these apartments include former Prime Minister Imran Khan, former CJP Nasirul Mulk, and Defence Minister Khawaja Mohammad Asif*

By Asadullah



The owner of luxurious apartments at One Constitution Avenue expressed their inability to clear the outstanding amount, Rs14.5 billion, of the Capital Development Authority (CDA) which can be termed the biggest default in Islamabad's history of any real estate entity. They instead offered the civic agency to swap the amount with a portion of the land. Interestingly, the office of the Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) appears to support the idea.

CDA leased the land to M/s BNP in 2005 to build a luxury hotel by Jinnah Convention Centre. The lessee instead built 240 luxury apartments. According to the latest auction, the cost of the aforementioned land if auctioned for commercial purposes and not for a hotel would be more than Rs60bn.

In 2016, CDA canceled the lease of this land and took over the under-construction twin towers for the reason that the plot was auctioned for the construction of a luxury hotel, but the building plan approved was more or less mixed-use commercial. This violated the planning parameters and by-laws approved by the CDA board on Oct 11, 1997.

The builder termed One Constitution Avenue the most exclusive address in Pakistan. Designed and developed by a world-class, award-winning team, One Constitution Avenue is a haven for people who are looking to experience the ultimate lifestyle in the heart of the capital.

It is a versatile development that encompasses residences, serviced apartments, a shopping mall, corporate offices, and the 5-star Grand Hyatt hotel. It spans over 13.5 acres in the most prestigious and secure neighborhood.

The matter went to the Islamabad High Court which upheld the cancellation of lease and directed the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) to proceed against the officials responsible for leasing the land and relaxing rules and extending favors to the company in post-bid changes.

IHC Chief Justice Athar Minallah held that the "construction of the residential apartments on the plot and the purported sale thereof was illegal, void and in flagrant abuse and violation of CDA Ordinance 1960 read with the Zoning Regulations, Building Regulations, and the Building Control Regulations."

The court order noted the "Authority placed on record copies of the internal official notes relating to the plot. It is a reflection of how the officials have been bending over backward by extending undue benefits to the petitioner/company in complete disregard of the mandatory regulations, thus causing loss to the exchequer on the one hand and enabling the petitioner/company to defraud and deceive members of the general public on the other." The judgment said the case had brought to the surface the most conspicuous example of undermining the rule of law by one of the most important regulatory authorities established under the 1960 ordinance.

In response to the petitions of the buyers, the bench observed: "This court definitely sympathizes with the victims who have been made to suffer either because of complicity or regulatory capture of the authority as a regulator. Rights cannot be claimed on the basis of an illegality. No right had accrued in favor of the purchasers since the title of the petitioner/company was contingent upon obtaining a completion certificate under the provisions of the ordinance read with the Building Regulations and the Building Control Regulations."

It, however, said the "purchasers would not have fallen in the trap of the petitioner/-company if the federal government and the authority had not been negligent or complicit. It is, therefore, the duty of the federal government to ensure that the victims i.e. the purchasers do not suffer due to their own wrongful actions and omissions, particularly when the regulatory failure of the authority stands admitted.

The federal government is also expected to take immediate and appropriate measures to ensure that the members of the general public do not suffer in the future at the hands of developers.

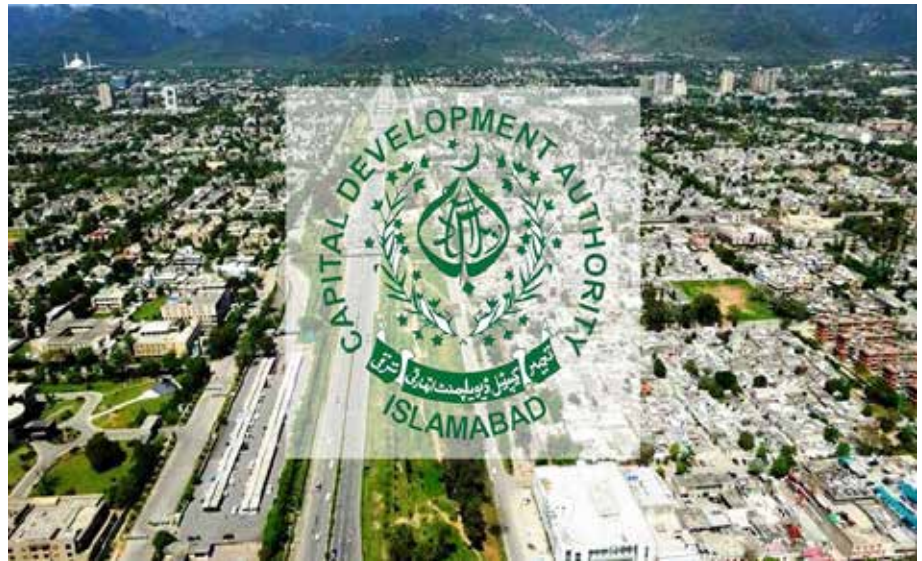


Counsel for the CDA Kashif Ali Malik had argued that the petitioner (the builder of the hotel) was also in litigation with the Bank of Punjab from where it had obtained a Rs7 billion loan. The company had challenged the high court's decision in the Supreme Court, before a bench led by the then Chief Justice Mian Saqib Nisar.

The Supreme Court restored the lease of the plot meant for a luxury hotel that was canceled after the lessee built and sold residential apartments directing the private firm to pay the CDA Rs17.5 billion over eight years.

Interestingly, the buyers of these apartments include former Prime Minister Imran Khan, former chief justice of Pakistan Nasirul Mulk, ex-chairman Pakistan Cricket Board Chairman Ehsan Mani, Defence Minister Khawaja Mohammad Asif, and Federal Ombudsperson for Protection of Women Against Sexual Harassment at the Workplace Kashmala Tariq.

Recently, the owner of Ms. BNP wrote a letter to the CDA and expressed their inability to pay the cost imposed by the Supreme Court. He stated that due to current economic conditions "it has become impossible for us to complete the project and also make the annual installment of Rs2.9 billion". "Present value of the balance amount of Rs14.583 billion [which, according to him] comes to Rs9.46 billion discounted at 15.57pc," the developer wrote.



The letter further stated: "BNP offers to transfer the commercial area valuing Rs9.46 billion in favor of CDA immediately...CDA will become the exclusive owner of the said commercial property in lieu of the balance 'discounted' lease amount payable and will be at the liberty to use, rent or sell the commercial area."

The group also requested buyers of apartments to "voluntarily share some of the unreasonable burden imposed on us by the Supreme Court" but none of them responded positively, the letter stated, adding regrettably, that all this has compromised our ability to complete the project and make payments of lease installments.

The CDA in response to this letter has sought an opinion from the Attorney

General. Secretary Khalid Khan Niazi said the proposal of the developer appeared to be a lawful and reasonable way to conclusively settle all outstanding litigation.

The secretary stated: "The benefit to CDA from the implementation of the proposal is a better outcome for CDA than if BNP were to be successful in its review, which is a possibility given the lack of reasoning in support of the SC order and given the admitted inability of the CDA to find a solution to the problem of the third parties, in whose favor rights have been created." In case the CDA "decides to accept the proposal, then the civic body and BNP will have to make a joint application in the SC" along with the BNP praying for the litigation to be disposed of.





# Sri Lanka Crowned Asian Champions

*This is Sri Lanka's 6th Asia Cup Trophy*

By Ali Abdullah

Pakistan took revenge when it secured a win against India in the Super 4 stage of Asia Cup 2022. Interestingly, in both Indo-Pak clashes, the team chasing won the game. Pakistan won the toss and decided to bowl first.

Initially, it appeared that Pakistan regretted the decision to bowl first since India had all guns blazing; scored 62 runs in the powerplay which was their highest powerplay score against Pakistan in T20Is. However, Pakistan did manage to pull things back. The spin duo of Shadab and Nawaz picked 3 wickets together and conceded 56 runs in 8 overs together to rescue Pakistan. Virat Kohli held one end, completed his half-century, and made sure that India finish strongly. Pakistan did make some fielding errors which allowed India some advantage. At the end of the first innings, India managed 181/7. The best batter was Virat Kohli 60(44) while Shadab was the best bowler with 2/32.

Pakistan began the chase hesitantly. Their powerplay didn't go well. Babar Azam was once again dismissed cheaply, this time by Ravi Bishnoi. Pakistan managed 44 runs in the powerplay. Rizwan once again was the key batter for Pakistan, securing one end. However, he didn't receive support from Fakhar Zaman. After Fakhar was dismissed for just 15, Pakistan made a change in the batting order and sent Mohammad Nawaz ahead of Iftikhar Ahmed. Nawaz played a fine inning of 42(20). Nawaz and Rizwan piled up 73 runs together before Nawaz was dismissed by Bhuvneshwar Kumar. Rizwan continued to keep the scorecard ticking. The 16th over was the one with the twist as Hardik Pandya conceded 9 runs but got the prized wicket of Rizwan. With Rizwan's dismissal at 71(51), Pakistan had two new batters Khushdil Shah and Asif Ali at the crease.

Pakistan now required 34 runs in the final 3 overs. Ravi Bishnoi bowled an eventful 18th over, conceding 8 runs and creating a couple of chances. Arshdeep Singh dropped the catch of Asif Ali which proved to be very crucial. In the very next over, Asif Ali smashed a six and a four, with the two batsmen amassing 19 runs in the 19th over. With 7 runs required in the final over, young Arshdeep Singh was given the responsibility. Arshdeep began with a good yorker however Pakistan still managed a run. With 6 off 5 deliveries required, it was only a matter of one hit for Pakistan. Asif smashed the next one for a four and now only 2 were required off the next 4 balls. The next ball is a dot once again, creating plenty of drama in the game. With 2 needed off 3 balls, a loud appeal from Arshdeep for an LBW created more drama. Asif Ali was given out, he did take a review but it was lost and Asif Ali was dismissed for 16(8). Pakistan now required 2 runs off 2 balls and the new man walking in was Iftikhar Ahmed. The drama finally concluded as Iftikhar Ahmed smashed it down the ground for a couple of runs and Pakistan won with one ball to spare.

Indian Cricket Team was almost knocked out of the Asia Cup 2022 final race as they suffered 2nd consecutive defeat in



the Super 4 stage of the tournament. After being defeated by Pakistan, India suffered a setback from Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka won the toss and decided to bowl first. Although KL Rahul fell cheaply and Virat was dismissed for a duck, skipper Rohit Sharma took the responsibility to get his team to a good total. Suryakumar Yadav and Rohit Sharma had a partnership of 97 runs for the third wicket that gave stability to the Indian Innings. Although they should have finished strongly, Sri Lankan bowlers pulled the game back. Dilshan Madushanka was the star bowler with 3 wickets while Chamika Karunaratne & Dasun Shanaka picked 2 wickets each as India finished on 173/8.

Sri Lankan batsmen stepped onto the ground with their eyes set on the trophy. They began quite aggressively, smashing Indian bowlers all along the ground. In the Power play overs, Sri Lanka managed 57 runs without losing any wicket. The opening partnership was of 97 runs, however, a collapse did happen after that. Sri Lanka lost wickets in quick succession and they were struggling at 110/4 in 14.1 overs.

Dasun Shanaka and Bhanuka Rajapaksa took the responsibility of guiding Sri Lanka home. Both the batsmen batted brilliantly, keeping the required rate in control and saving their wickets as well. Sri Lanka needed 21 off 12 balls and it seemed all over for India. Bhuvneshwar Kumar came to bowl the 19th over, and his poor line gave some additional benefits to Sri Lanka. Bhuvneshwar bowled a couple of wides and conceded two boundaries to Dasun Shanaka which eased up things for Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka needed just 7 runs in the final over with two set batsmen at the crease. Young Arshdeep came on to ball the final over just like in the game against Pakistan. He bowled the first 3 balls brilliantly, and Sri Lanka needed 3 off 3 balls to crush the hopes of Indian Fans. Arshdeep continued to bowl brilliantly as the equation was narrowed down to 2 off 2 balls now. Although he bowled the 5th ball brilliantly as well, the overthrow by Arshdeep cost India the game as Sri Lanka stole a couple and won with a ball to spare.



The lineup for the final was finalized after the Super 4 stage match between Afghanistan and Pakistan concluded. Pakistan won the low-scoring thriller over Afghanistan to win their 2nd consecutive match of the Super 4 stage and make it to the final of Asia Cup 2022.

Pakistan won the toss and elected to bowl first and did a pretty good job with the ball. Afghanistan lost 2 wickets inside the powerplay but their run rate was fine. However, they lost the plot afterward. With 78/3 in the 12th over, Afghanistan still had things in control but they couldn't carry on. Both Shadab Khan and Nawaz chipped in with one wicket each to pull back things for Pakistan. Afghan batsmen just got short starts, and then departed. Only Rashid Khan did some damage by scoring 18(15)\* while from the top order it was Ibrahim Zadran who scored 35. From Pakistan, it was Haris Rauf who got 2 wickets from the top order, while all other bowlers got a wicket each.

Pakistan didn't begin the chase convincingly as Babar Azam was dismissed for a golden duck. Soon after, Fakhar Zaman came in but he went for a risky run and got run out. With 18/2 on the board, Pakistan was in all sorts of trouble. Rizwan and Iftikhar had a little partnership but Rizwan was half fit and he couldn't score big. He was trapped LBW by Rashid Khan for 20(26). Shadab Khan walked in next and this was the game-changing partnership.

Shadab did hit some good shots, including the 2 sixes against Mohammad Nabi in the 12th over, while Iftikhar Ahmed rotated the strike nicely. Shadab hit some great hits out of the park to bring the required run rate down and this partnership was indeed the one that took the game away from Afghanistan. The partnership was broken by Fareed when he dismissed Iftikhar Ahmed for 30. However, Shadab continued to do the damage.

The 17th over was quite crucial in the game. Rashid conceded a six to Shadab Khan, only to dismiss him later. Shadab scored 36(26) including 3 sixes. Asif Ali came in next and smashed Rashid Khan for a first-ball six. The equation was now 25 off 18 balls with Nawaz and Asif at the crease for Pakistan.

Fazl Farooqi came to bowl the 18th over and dismissed Mohammad Nawaz to add to the troubles of Pakistan. Khushdil Shah walked in next. Fazl finished the over in the same fashion as he started, dismissing Khushdil Shah this time.

Pakistan now needed 21 in 2 overs to win with Asif Ali as their last hope on the crease. Fareed came on to bowl in the 19th over, Asif Ali took a single on the first ball, and on the very next ball, Rauf was dismissed for a duck. Naseem walked in next. Asif Ali smoked a six to bring back life in the Pakistan camp however he was dismissed on the very next ball. Pakistan now needed 11 off 6 balls with just one wicket left.

Naseem Shah smashed a six off the first ball in the final over to make the equation 5 runs required off 5 balls. Now the pressure was back on Farooqui. He bowled another full toss and Naseem smashed another six that took his side home. Afghanistan and India both were knocked out of the tournament.

This was the first time after 8 years that Pakistan featured in the Asia Cup final.

On Sunday, September 11, Sri Lanka and Pakistan clashed in Dubai in the final of Asia Cup 2022. Pakistan won the toss and decided to field first. Pakistan brought back Naseem Shah and Shadab Khan who had been rested in the previous game.

Pakistan started the final dominantly, with Naseem Shah and Haris Rauf wiping the top order of Sri Lanka cheaply. Sri Lanka was 58/5 in the 9th over, but this is where the actual trouble started for Pakistan. In form, Bhanuka Rajapaksha and Wanindu Hasaranga put up a partnership of 58 runs to rescue their side from trouble. Haris Rauf once again proved to be Pakistan's trump card as he dismissed Hasaranga. With Sri Lanka 116-6 in 14.5 overs, it seemed that Pakistan will restrict them to under 150. However, it was not to be as Sri Lanka went on to score 170. The partnership between Chamika Karunaratne and Bhanuka Rajapaksha was 54 runs that gave Sri Lanka a great finish. Rajapaksha remained not out on 71(45)\* while Haris Rauf was the best bowler of Pakistan with 3/29.



Pakistan began the chase poorly. In the 4th over, they lost Babar and Fakhar on back-to-back deliveries to young Pramod Madushan. Mohammad Rizwan continued to nudge the ball in gaps while Iftikhar Ahmed supported him. Both batsmen spent time at the crease but their strike rate was unacceptable in this huge run chase. The partnership was 71 runs but they used nearly 10 overs for that.

As pressure was mounting, Iftikhar Ahmed tried to smack one out of the arena but got caught at the ropes. This was probably the end for Pakistan as Rizwan was unable to hit big and since the required rate was high, every Pakistani batter came in and went back trying to hit back. Nawaz, Khushdil, and Asif Ali scored 8 runs collectively. Rizwan also got out in the process after completing his half-century.

Pakistan fell short by 23 runs and Sri Lanka was crowned Asia Cup 2022 champions. This is Sri Lanka's 6th Asia Cup Trophy. Pramod Madushan was the star for Sri Lanka with the ball, picking up 4 wickets, while Wanindu Hasaranga took 3 wickets.

# ‘Bakhtawar’ Gives TV Drama New Meaning

By Kaukab Jahan

The Pakistani drama industry has come a long way since its inception six decades ago, but currently, very few drama producers are coming up with unconventional subjects. However, in recent years, Hum TV has taken the initiative to shift the content of plays from typical saas bahu stories (prevalent almost for the last decade) to social and psychological issues.

When the whole country was under lockdown amid the outbreak of Covid-19 two years back, the primary activity for families to pass time was to watch television. The utmost choice was Urdu drama, more accessible and understandable. Hum TV took the opportunity to recreate its content; drifting away from typical family disputes where an evil saas (Mother-in-law) or bahu (Daughter-in-law) or a greedy husband or wife schemed against each other, to produce dramas on subjects that were more related to society and its issues in general. Be it *Pyar Kay Sadqay*, *Saraab*, *Kashf*, *Raqs-e-Bismil* in 2020; *Raqeeb Se*, *Parizaad*, *Dobara*, and *Ishq Laa* in 2021; and *Sang-e-Mah* this year. The latest TV serial *Bakhtawar* is gaining a lot of interest amongst viewers.

*Bakhtawar*, written by Nadia Akhtar, is a story of a young lower middle-class girl Bakhtawar (played by Yumna Zaidi) who finds difficulties and hurdles at every point when she tries to spend her life on her own terms.

At the tender age of a college-going girl, she witnessed her father sell her elder sister Naseema, in the name of marriage, to a man years older just to get the money for pursuing gambling and drugs. After the disappearance of her father and the death of her disabled younger brother, Bakhtawar decided to run away from her village with her mother to escape the marriage her uncle had arranged with his mentally retarded son. In Karachi, she still faces street crimes and greedy loafers on the street in her new neighborhood. To meet the ends and continue her studies, she chose to walk outside in a male get-up, which she thought would save



her from the grasping stares and unwanted advances from men. Bakhtawar also escaped from her uncle who tried to reach her through a relative in Karachi. Going to a girl's college during the day and working as a waiter under the disguise of a boy in the evening had become the routine of Bakhtawar's life until a wealthy customer at the restaurant offered her a huge amount of money if she (he) goes with him. He even resorted to physical advances.

Yumna Zaidi playing the titular role has impressed the audience with her distinctive personality. The role is unique in that she is simultaneously playing a boy and a girl for the first time in her career, and is proof that she would go a long way with more surprising characters in the future.

Zaidi has been inspiring drama viewers with her acting skills in her 10 years of career. From her first TV appearance in 2012 to her notable supporting role in *Ullu Baraye Farokht Nahi*, to the start of leading characters in plays like *Rishtay Kuch Adhooray Se*, *Jugno*, *Zara Yaad Kar*, *Dar Si Jati Hai Sila*, *Ishq Zahe Naseeb*, *Pyar Kay Sadqay*, *Ishq-eLaa*, and *Sinf-e-Aahan*.

The other important cast of *Bakhtawar* includes Huma Nawab as Shareefa (Bakhtawar's mother), Zaviyar Nauman Ejaz as Malik Dilawar (a would-be love interest of Bakhtawar), Noreen Gulwani as Naseema (Bakhtawar's sister), Noor-ul-Hassan as Razaq (Bakhtawar's father), Adnan Shah Tipu as Hameed (Shareefa's

brother & Bakhtawar's uncle), and Qaiser Khan Nizamani as Malik Sherzaman (Dilawar's father).

Zaviyar Nauman has proved in a short span of his career that he has got some traits from his father, the veteran Nauman Ejaz. From his debut *Qissa Mehrbano Ka* last year opposite Mawra Hocane and Ahsan Khan, he has left a mark of his good acting prowess.

*Bakhtawar* is his fourth play, in which he plays the role of the young and energetic son of a renowned politician who has no interest in politics. He has done a good job so far as a straightforward wealthy man. We hope he will make his own niche in the industry aside from the huge shadow of his father.

Directed by Shahid Shafaat, *Bakhtawar* truly depicts the problems faced by women in Pakistan even in the 21st century. She lives in a society where a woman is only considered safe and respectable if attached to a man. To be physically, emotionally, and financially independent is merely a thought or a dream for which many women are fighting every day.

Pakistani drama is in dire need to get out of its current stagnant state, but Hum TV's initiative to produce dramas like *Bakhtawar* would bring a positive change in the course of the country's entertainment industry.

*Bakhtawar* airs on Hum TV every Sunday at 8 pm.



# The Hidden Favour

By Zeenat Iqbal Hussain

Khatija was a robust, healthy, 19 year old girl. She had just finished her studies and had found a good job. Because of her good health she managed to work long hours, both in the office and at home. The envy of her peers who could not even do half the amount of work, she did. The secret behind this was that a lot of effort had gone behind raising her. Her mother had spent so many sleepless nights at her bedside, sometimes reading bedtime stories. Her father too had contributed a lot, towards his daughter's upbringing. They both doted on her. Her life passed just like the brook meandering on its way. Seldom was she unhappy like the ripples on the surface of the brook. But what does it take for the unexpected to be. But as luck has it, all good times are met with an unhappy event. One-day disaster struck. Khatija fell ill, not knowing what fate had in store for her. After a prolonged spell of illness and numerous tests, it was detected that she had to have a kidney transplant. Her parents tried to find a compatible donor but that is something which is not very easy as it is understood that a member of the family stands more chance of being compatible, then an outsider. Many family members volunteered, as it is common knowledge that living with one kidney is possible.

"She stands a one in ten chance", said the doctors. "She is young and has the ability to recover very fast, after her transplant". But to everyone's dismay his or her kidneys were not compatible. Kidney transplants were not child's play, and yet people with one kidney or recipients led very healthy lives. Medical technology was so advanced that events such as the above that seemed impossible years ago were conducted nowadays, and successfully at that, too. Medical research had opened up so many vistas and miracles were performed on the operation table. Khatija was aware of all this and it was this hope that kept Khatija going. The hope that some-where, someone would be a right donor. Although they seemed few and far between the search was on.

Who would have dreamt that the donor would be overseas? There, lived a young man who decided to take a trip to his home country. He saw this appeal in the newspaper, for a kidney donor. Maybe it was his

instinct, or a simple act out of human sympathy that he thought he should respond. Maybe it was telepathy, as indeed he believed such things did exist. Yes it was telepathy with Khatija. He longed to return to his home country and there could not have been a better opportunity.

"I have not been home in ages, have even forgotten what it looks like", he told a friend. "Better late than never". He had also heard that a racket of selling kidneys existed in his home country and he wanted to do something about it.

The hospital that had made the appeal had a good reputation and as he sat in the waiting room of the hospital, waiting for the doctor to see him, his thoughts travelled to the past. He recognized the hospital where his father spent his last days. Tears blurred his vision for a while, but they dried up quickly as he was consoled by the thought that his father had led a good life and had died peacefully at a ripe old age. But then, a father is a father, and nobody can be compared to him. The young man recalled his childhood days, when he had been taken ill. His father sat in a chair, beside him, until the danger subsided.

"Do not let me down, young one. I can't take any bad news, especially where you are concerned".

"Cheer up, Dad. I've almost recovered. I've had a hearty meal, and a stroll down the road".

Many such incidents, showed the love his father had for him. He felt satisfied. Nobody could love his own son more. Abid (the young man) was an adopted child. He owed all he had to his father. His position in life, the respect he commanded and a never-ending list of favours.

The Doctor nudged him to gain his attention. He had been so lost in his thoughts. He took him to a room and interviewed him, before conducting tests. Then Khatija's particulars were given to him. His mouth opened wide in amazement. Khatija was the daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Moiz Khan. Seemed like his dream had been realized. His cherished dream of maintaining relations with his sister and now there was an opportunity to do so. Mrs. Moiz

Khan was his sister; she had left a doting father, whose life became empty, until he adopted Abid. He had opposed his daughter's choice of husband; he had banned her from returning to his home. You'll regret, he told himself but he was not going to compromise on matters of principle.

His sister's daughter needed his kidney. The only kidney that was compatible. There was no going back, he assured himself. Even his father would have softened, had he seen his grand daughter's difficulty. Difficult times had made friends out of enemies, and this was his niece. It seemed like all those long years when they were cut off, now seemed to have shrunk, because a chance for their reunion existed. But how could he hide his identity. He requested the Doctor to tell Khatija's parents that the kidney donor was a dead man.

The operation was successful. Mr. and Mrs. Moiz Khan's jubilation knew no bounds. Their only child had a second life. The doctor fabricated the truth, as Abid wanted it to be. He was too scared to confess his identity. Scared, because he felt it might ruin everything and the matter was delicate – a matter of life and death, the kidney donation. "I feel a confession just might make matters worse. Let her recover fully. Then wait for an opportune moment, "he told the doctors.

Abid was at home recovering after his donation. He was a health-conscious man. He ate well and exercised and hence recovered soon. He was grateful to God for the opportunity to return the favour his father had given him.

At the airport he waited in a queue for his turn to get his passport stamped. The passport, before him belonged to Khatija Moiz Khan. Again it was instinct that saw them together, this time hers and nobody knew where it would lead. It was telepathy indeed. There was a bond between them. A bond that needed to be restored and further strengthened. And this time he would take the initiative. He smiled at her and she smiled back. It seemed like his father blessed them. Heaven had this affect on the hardest of them. He awaited the outcome, eagerly.

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