

Fortnightly

# The Truth International

Islamabad

1<sup>st</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> October 2022**Winter Risks for Flood-hit People**

As winter is approaching, relief operations be paced up

**Politicizing The Army**

COAS appointment must be free from controversy

**Challenges of Reviving Crops & Infrastructure**

Strategies should be evolved to reverse floods-ravage

## No End to Flood Affectees Miseries



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## No End to Flood Affectees Miseries



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## Back to the Assembly?

By Hammad Ghaznavi

At least, some political fog has been lifted: the new army chief will be appointed according to the constitution, that is to say, by the Prime Minister, the next general elections will be held next year, and Imran Khan's long march call has been put on the backburner. On all three counts, Imran Khan could not prevail despite his best efforts. It seems Khan's support in the powerful quarters has dwindled in the recent weeks due to his unyielding style of politics.

A couple of weeks ago, Imran Khan came up with an interesting stance regarding the appointment of the next COAS due in November this year. He said the 'imported' government of 'thieves' doesn't have the mandate to appoint the new chief and that the new chief must be a patriot, to be appointed on merit. It was dangerous rhetoric, implying that the top military brass included 'unpatriotic' and 'incompetent' elements. In desperation to push the appointment of the new chief beyond the next general election, Imran Khan offered the incumbent chief to get an extension till the new government came in, contrary to his previous anti-extension stance. Reportedly a Chief-Khan meeting also could not yield positive results in this regard. It is for the first time, insiders reveal, there is serious realization in the upper echelons of the army that Khan's efforts to interfere in the institution could be extremely damaging if not stopped forthwith. Whosoever appointed as the next chief, Khan has set the stage to make him controversial. This is

a dangerous situation, the powerful quarters fully appreciate. With all efforts failing pending the key appointment, Khan has again hit the present military leadership below the belt. In his Chakwal jalsa Khan said that the Lions of the army were led by a jackal and would be defeated by an army of jackals led by a lion. The references were obvious. This is realpolitik. Imran Khan had vehemently attacked the chief, calling him a traitor, running social media campaign against him and bestowing titles on him like Mir Jaffar, Mir Sadiq and Janwar. Later, in desperation offered him an extension but when the deal couldn't be concluded, he resorted to the lion and jackal diatribe against him.

For a brief period last month, there were rumours of a plan in Rawalpindi that the new chief would be a consensus nomination of the government and the opposition, a formula to save the next chief from controversy. But Imran Khan's parleys with the chief on the issue led to nothing, further convincing the army leadership to go according to the constitution whereby it is the Prime Minister's discretion to appoint the chief.

It seems that Imran Khan has willy nilly accepted the fact that elections cannot be held this year. It's been communicated to Imran Khan that the shaky economic situation of the country, further hit by the unprecedented floods has rendered an early election impossible. The plan to put pressure on the government and other

stakeholders, it seems, has been dropped by Khan, as the idea has no takers among the powers that be; Instead, Imran Khan has reportedly been communicated that he would face the wrath of the powerful if he upsets the election schedule considered in the interest of the country. Mr Khan has been advised by his legal aids that there are many a case against him in the courts and Election Commission of Pakistan that may lead to his disqualification if he refuses to play ball. For political posturing, Imran Khan may keep referring to the call of long march, but no such political activity can be traced on the horizon at the moment.

In pursuit of his political ends, Imran Khan continues to be aggressive against all those unsupportive of his cause, from the army chief to ECP. There is only one institution at the moment that is admired and applauded by the PTI chief – it's the superior judiciary. Various recent court decisions can be termed positive for Imran. It is against this backdrop that the Supreme Court chief justice's advice to Imran Khan to 'go back to the assembly' becomes even more significant. Imran, in a roundabout way though, has responded positively. He said he would go back to the assembly if the government promised a probe in the infamous 'cypher'.

It seems the next round of government-opposition bout will be fought in the National Assembly – not a bad venue for democratic battles.





# Hail to the Chief

*Imran making COAS appointment unnecessarily controversial*



By M A Niazi

PTI chief Imran Khan has engaged in being dangerous. The comments he has been making about the Army, particularly its leadership, have not only dragged into the public gaze an institution which has avoided it, but has also revealed an ignorance of how the organization ticks. The ignorance is so abysmal, especially for a former PM, that the possibility of his lying to his followers is raised.

In successive weeks, he has raised two issues. First, that PML(N) Rehbar Nawaz Sharif and PPP Co-Chairman Asif Zardari cannot be trusted to appoint the new COAS because they are looters and plunderers, and would seek to appoint someone who would cover these crimes. If, Imran argued, a patriotic and strong officer was appointed, he would expose their thefts. The implication was that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif would appoint an unpatriotic and weak officer as COAS.

This implies that such an officer can be found. Imran has thus criticized the entire process of selection, and then promotion, of the Pakistan Army, which would allow an unpatriotic and weak person to reach the rank of lieutenant-general, and thus become eligible for promotion as COAS.

That was something Imran suggested in an address at a rally. The second place where he showed ignorance was when, in a TV interview, asked how the new COAS could be appointed by the next government if there was a gap in between, he refused to say the incumbent could get an extension. However, his not rejecting this was taken as a suggestion. This also showed not just a misunderstanding of how the military functions, but the place of the COAS in the Army's scheme of things.

The COAS has two overt functions, and one potential. He is the chief of staff of the Army, which means carrying responsibility for such responsibilities as training and equipping (what weapons? Where are they to come from?). He is also the operational commander. While the staff function may have a vacancy, the command function cannot. As a result, there is a prescribed procedure for the absence of a COAS abroad, or any sudden vacancy in the office.

When Gen Asif Nawaz suddenly died, the designated officer (then the Corps Commander Lahore) flew at once to Rawalpindi and took over as acting Chief (even though two lieutenant-generals were senior to him, the CGS and the DG ISI). This was because he was a corps commander.

This is not a special procedure for the COAS. It applies to any commander: if a brigade commander is hit in battle, and has to be evacuated to treat his wounds, the senior most unit commander will be called to brigade HQ to take command for the time being, until GHQ appoints a new commander. This also applies to senior and junior commanders. Thus, there is no need to extend the incumbent's tenure. Let him go home when the time comes, the senior most among the corps commanders would almost automatically come to take command. If he remained in position until a new COAS was appointed, though the Army might be in a sort of interregnum, it would not be without a commander.

What Imran does not seem to have calculated, is that the COAS may seem to control the military, but is actually just an expression of his service. The COAS has an indefinite constituency to satisfy, consisting of his officer corps. That officer corps gives the COAS total obedience, but in turn expects him to keep it out of politics. This has applied

even during military rule, when a number of officers also have civilian roles.

The COAS is seen as the key, but he is also a weak link, as this is the only appointment made by a civilian. All other promotions are made by the Army Promotion Boards. The COAS makes no promotions alone, but only as the Chairman of a board. He does what he wants, but this will not be the first time he chairs a board. He will have chaired boards as a divisional and corps commander, and been a member even earlier. The PM is not obliged to consult anyone, as the COAS is.



Thus, there is a murmur that seniority should be the deciding factor. Violating seniority, it seems, has not got either the PPP or the PML(N) anywhere, and there is no reason why the PDM should be any different. That would leave the decision effectively to the board promoting major-generals to lieutenant-generals. If seniority is to determine who will become COAS, then all a lieutenant-general could do is to ensure that he does a staff job, and commands a corps. If he is of the right seniority, he will automatically become COAS. If not, nothing he will do will make him COAS.

In a way, that will bring the three services (because the Air Force and Navy will follow the Army) into line with the judiciary, which has become independent and autonomous in respect of the politicians, even though theoretically judges are elevated by the

President. The mechanism there has been the Judicial Commission of Pakistan, which consists of the Chief Justice of Pakistan, four senior Supreme court judges, a retired judge, the federal law minister, the Attorney General, and a nominee of the Bar Council. However, the CJP thinks he should get his nominees in, and his speech at the beginning of the new judicial year indicated that he felt the government's opposition to his choices was because of certain judgements made by the Supreme Court.

There has been a writing of letters to the CJP by other judges, and it seems that the issue is whether the CJP should make decisions, or should there be a collective decision, or should there be only one. It also has transpired that there is no set criteria for judges' appointments or elevations.

The seniority principle has the advantage of certainty, but there is the danger of the Buggins' Turn syndrome, where a sort of sclerosis sets in, in the service. A brilliant officer might not win promotion because he had the wrong seniority. The danger is a little exaggerated. That brilliant officer would have risen at least to lieutenant-general, commanded a corps and done a PSO's job, and thus contributed to the Army. The officer promoted in his stead would probably be up to the job. True, a diamond may have been retired as a major, but he would not have ever been made COAS from that rank. He would first make lieutenant-colonel. But he didn't.

However, the seniority principle was tried in the UK after the end of the commission-purchase system (whereby an officer would have to buy the next higher rank from someone who had the commission for it; otherwise, it was not unknown for officers to retire as lieutenants, having bought a commission initially, but not being able to buy promotion). The result was a geriatric lot of officers. It could be argued that that was the lot with which the Empire was won and maintained.

That is a useful reminder that the COAS is essentially a military assignment, and his primary function is to prepare the Army to perform its functions, his secondary to be ready to command it in the event of conflict. Any political role is tertiary, and comes from his control of two intelligence agencies, the ISI and the MI.

Imran is committing the mistake of giving too much importance to the tertiary role. As a matter of fact, the PDM politicians are probably doing the same. Because of this, it is not possible for the military to completely withdraw from politics. The very act of resisting these attempts is itself political.





# Flood Damage Report 2022

By Neha Ayub

## Situation Overview

The terrible storms, floods, and landslides brought on by this year's high monsoon rains in Pakistan have affected almost 33 million people, including roughly 16 million children. Homes, farms, and vital infrastructures, such as roads, bridges, schools, hospitals, and public health facilities, were destroyed as some major rivers burst their banks and dams were inundated.

According to the statistics, the devastating floods in Pakistan have resulted in economic losses to the country's fragile economy of roughly USD 18 billion. Approximately 8 million animals and 4.6 million acres of crops have been severely damaged, and the financial losses that livestock and crops have suffered are estimated to be PKR 481.22 billion.

The precarious humanitarian situation of people in affected areas has gotten worse due to the increased rainfall and flooding, and formerly unaffected areas have been devastated. For the first time this season, the province of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) has designated areas as "calamity hit," while the number of such districts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) has nearly doubled. 80 districts have now been deemed "calamity stricken" across the country, including 31 in Balochistan, 23 in Sindh, 17 in KP, 6 in GB, and 3 in Punjab.

### Calamity hit districts and affected population

<u>Province / Region wise</u>	<u>Calamity hit notified District</u>	<u>Affected Population</u>
AJ&K	0	53,700
Balochistan	32	9,182,616
GB	9	51,500
KP	17	4,350,490
Punjab	3	4,844,253
Sindh	23	14,563,770
<b>Total</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>33,046,329</b>

Source: NDMA MONSOON SITREP - 2022 (Daily SITREP No 099 Dated 20th Sep 2022)

## Province-wise flood assessment

### Balochistan Province

In Balochistan province, approximately 9.18 million people have been affected in 32 districts as of September 21. Around 42% and 44% of IRC respondents indicated that shelter, healthcare, financial help, and food were the top needs of refugees in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Balochistan.

Communication infrastructure has received a major blow due to which access to information has become extremely difficult for the refugee community in the Balochistan districts of Pishin, Killa Abdullah, Chaman, and Chaghi. No access to information is reported by 58% of people in Pishin, 22% in Killa Abdullah, 85% in Chaman, and 85% of people in Chaghi. The primary obstacles include the suspension of



mobile services, absence of internet, disruption of social networks, weak signal, or the absence of television due to power outages.

The health sector has also been adversely impacted and according to recent estimates, 297 health centers have been damaged, according to the Health Ministry. Due to a lack of adequate health services, the province has seen a steep rise in cases of diarrhea, skin infections, gastrointestinal illness, and respiratory infections.

Approximately 3000 schools across 26 districts have been damaged, mostly in Lasbela and Quetta districts.

### Gilgit Baltistan Province

In Gilgit-Baltistan province, approximately 51,500 people are affected. At the moment, there is very limited information available on the damages and needs in this province. While less affected than other provinces, 9 districts have still been classified as 'calamity-hit' by the NDMA as of September 21, a rise from the previous 6 districts.

As for the infrastructural damages, at least 16 kilometers of roads and 65 bridges have been damaged.

### Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province

In KPK province, approximately 4.35 million people have been affected in 17 districts. In the KP districts of Nowshera and Lower Dir, access to information has become extremely difficult for the refugee population due to the damage to communication infrastructure. In Nowshera, 63%, and Lower Dir, 59%, of the refugees reported having no access to information.

According to the Ministry of National Food Security and Research, around 778,742 acres of crops have been destroyed. In addition to that, approximately 21,328 livestock have been lost. The health sector of the province has also suffered unprecedented losses. Around 221 health facilities have been damaged, including at least 53 fully damaged. According to IRC sources, 29% of health centers or health facilities surveyed by IRC are out of service (75% in DI Khan district). Adequate staff and medicines are available to only 6% of health centers in the province.

Due to the current health care situation in the province, skin infections, diarrhea, and fever cases are being reported every other day. An increasing number of cases of acute respiratory diseases, hepatitis, and typhoid are also being reported in the province. 57% of the refugee population assessed by IRC in Balochistan and KP do not have safe drinking water in their communities.

Approximately 1,575 km of roads and 107 bridges were damaged or destroyed.

## Punjab Province

In Punjab Province, around 4.84 million people have been affected according to the NDMA.

According to the Ministry of National Food Security and Research, approximately 706,797 acres of crops have been affected of which at least 130,140 acres were destroyed and 205,106 livestock lost, of which 136,000 small animals and close to 69,000 large, mostly in Rajanpur.

At least 1,250 schools have been destroyed and 569 are currently inundated, mostly in Rajanpur (484) and DG Khan (85).

As for the infrastructural damages, 877 kilometers of roads, mostly in DG Khan and Rajanpur, and 15 bridges have been damaged.

## Sindh Province

In Sindh Province, around 14.5 million people are affected according to the NDMA, and 10.92 million, according to the Sindh PDMA, showing an increase of 430,000 people during the last week, adding up to 2 million households. Approximately 7.25 million people have been displaced, of which 1.22 million in Khairpur, 1.07 million in Larkana, 804,000 in Dadu, and 557,000 in Umerkot. 673,353 remain in camps, a 60% increase in a week, two-thirds of which are in Larkana and SBA districts.

According to the Sindh PDMA, at least 4,860,000 acres of crops have been affected (25% in the Kamber district). 290,000 animals have died, mainly in Dadu, Ghotki, and Khaipur, including 20,000 on September 19 alone.

The health sector in Sindh has suffered detrimental consequences. At least, 1,091 health facilities have been damaged, mostly in Sukkur, Larkana, Hyderabad, Mirpurkhas, and Shaheed Benazirabad. At least 126 health facilities are destroyed, of which 65 are in Mirpurkhas, 22 in Hyderabad, 17 in Sukkur, 13 in Larkana, 7 in Shaheed Benazirabad, and 1 in Karachi. More than 1 million people in flood-affected areas of Sindh are infected by various diseases, including gastroenteritis, dengue, and diarrhea, according to the Sindh Health Department. An alarming number of dengue cases are also being reported in the province.



As for the infrastructural losses, around 8,389 Km of roads have been affected including 165 bridges.

Up to 50% of water systems have been damaged in the hardest hit areas of Sindh, with around 212 main water supply schemes/sources damaged, according to IRC.

Province	Houses Fully damaged	Houses Partially damaged	Total houses damaged
Sindh	719k	1M	1.8M
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	38k	54k	91k
Balochistan	20k	52k	72k
Punjab	26k	42k	68k
Gilgit – Baltistan	0.6k	0.6k	1.2k
<b>Total</b>	<b>803.4k</b>	<b>1.21M</b>	<b>2M</b>

Source: OCHA: 2022 Monsoon Floods: Houses Fully and Partially Damaged

Province /Region	Roads (Km)	Bridges	Houses			Livestock
			PD	FD	Total	
AJ&K	0	15	325	223	548	792
Baluchistan	2198	24	52208*	20027	72235	500000^
GB	16	65	636	575	1211	0
ICT	0	0	0	0	0	0
KP	1575	107	53938	37525	91463	21328
Punjab	896	16	42127	25854	67981	205106
Sindh	8389	165	1061788	720799	1782587	340015
<b>Total</b>	<b>13074</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>1211022</b>	<b>805003</b>	<b>2016025</b>	<b>1,067,241</b>

Source: NDMA MONSOON SITREP - 2022 (Daily SITREP No 099 Dated 20th Sep 2022)





# Once Ravaged by Floods, Now Hit by Lack of Rehabilitation Plan

*Although the PDMA has been coordinating with various government and non-government organizations to continue aid and relief work, it doesn't seem to have any rehabilitation program at the moment*

By Ayaz Khan

Jawad Rind, 27, and his volunteer team found it convenient to put their medical camp at Musharraf Khan Goth in Fareedabad Tehsil of district Sohbatpur; one of the flood-devastated districts of Balochistan province. Jawad took this decision after surveying Musharraf Goth which comprises 5 sub-villages, having 750 households. They are now exposed to malaria, diarrhea, and skin disease from the contaminated floodwater. The villagers seem to have found a masiha in Jawad and his team.

The camp has the capacity of treating 730 patients. However, Jawad couldn't reach the target due to the unavailability of medicines. "It was disheartening to see myself miss the target of treating 700 plus patients. We could hardly treat 305 patients. This was far lower than our expected target as each patient our health professionals attended, came with multiple diseases as our diagnosis showed," he said. According to Jawad, each patient suffered more than two diseases and this caused the medicine shortage.

"We had the capacity of treating 300 diarrhea, 180 malarial, 150 skin (Dermatitis), and 100 malnutrition cases but we could hardly attend and check 305 patients given the burden of diseases. Each patient we attended was having multiple issues," regretted Dr. Salam Khosa, a health professional working with the team.

According to the latest compiled data shared with The Truth International by the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), 75,000 houses have been completely demolished and 150,000 have received partial damages. The PDMA has established 38 medical camps in flood-ravaged areas and has treated 6100 patients, as per the data. The authority has been coordinating with various government and non-government organizations (NGOs) to continue aid and relief work. On the ground, however, the government seems devoid of any rehabilitation program at the moment.



## Stalled Post-flood rehabilitation process

Balochistan has received record rainfall this year. From July 1 to July 13, Balochistan received 57.8 mm of rainfall. Moreover, the rains have affected 34 districts in the province. The deadly rains entered the country in mid-June but they started lashing different parts of the province from July 7 and the devastating spells led to flash floods. The highly affected districts include Lasbela, Jafarabad, and Sohbatpur. Very little or no relief efforts have been made by the government to help the people of these areas.

Mohammad Anwar, 36, hails from Jafarabad. He has remained busy loading a mini truck with medicines and necessary food items after no relief poured in from government officials. The area where Anwar lives has hundreds of houses and more than 50 villages nearby. But all the houses, Anwar witnessed, caved in and were washed away by the ferocity of floodwater like a house of cards crumble with a push of blowing air.

"We haven't received any aid so far either by government or its officials. Some small

organizations, however, are seen providing relief aid. It's even difficult for the government to send relief aid for the affected, let alone initiate rehabilitation process," Anwar complained.

Khalil Roonjha and his NGO, Welfare Association for New Generation (WANG), have been engaged in relief work in district Lasbela. "Government has been working with the army to carry out an assessment of the affected areas, but it will take time to initiate a complete rehabilitation plan," he said.

District Lasbela was at the forefront of the devastating floods when the province received its first heavy spell of rain. Reports suggest, 14 people have lost their lives during the monsoon season. The number of completely damaged houses stands at 6,660, whereas 14,210 houses were partially damaged. This has left, as per rough estimates provided by the NGOs engaged in relief and aid work, more than 40,000 internally displaced (IDPs).

Murad Ali belongs to this fateful district, Lasbela. He is a resident of Tehsil Lakhra that has been affected by the floods unleashed by the protracted spells of monsoon. According to him, 50 houses in

his area have been damaged. The houses of his family members and his own have been completely demolished and the rest of the houses have been partially damaged. He is a father of 5 children who are unwell because of the non-availability of clean water and necessary food essentials. He complains that there is no medical health facility in the area.

A big chunk of infrastructure in the district also stands shattered. Flash floods washed away 3 bridges, one of them connecting the industrial city of Hub to Karachi. The floods also damaged 250.55 km of roads, resulting in a complete impasse for commuters.

### Compensating agricultural loss

35-year-old Tariq Aziz is a resident of a small town in Sohbatpur, Murad Ali Goth. Tariq had cultivated rice on his 400 acres of land when the flash floods washed them away. According to him, his current agricultural loss stands at Rs7 million. For Tariq, compensation for his loss remains a very crucial aspect because he has lost whatever he had in his pocket to invest in the cultivation process.

“Compensation of agriculture loss is our concern right now. Most of the farmers take loans during the cultivation period and re-pay their loans once they have their products ready. But, since now they have



lost whatever they had, their eyes are fixed on the government to compensate them or, at least, add this into its rehabilitation plan,” Anwar said.

As per Anwar, most farmers take loans for buying seeds during the cultivation of rice or other crops. “Now they have to pay their loans back once they approach the deadlines but no one knows how,” Anwar wondered.

The PDMA estimates 206,265 acres of agri-land have been damaged, while another 900,000 acres are threatened.

### No rehabilitation plan is in the offing

Following the devastating floods, the provincial government has repeatedly sought the federal government’s help to

compensate for the losses and initiate a massive rehabilitation drive. However, it will be too early to predict a massive and effective rehabilitation process in the province given the track record of previous rehabilitation plans and their implementation. The earthquake-stricken people of district Awaran in Balochistan have been waiting for their promised compensation for the last 11 years now. District Awaran was hit by a massive earthquake in 2013.

Nevertheless, In-Charge Control Room PDMA, Muhammad Younas Mengal, seems optimistic about a rehabilitation plan for the flood-affected people. “The government has not come up with a rehabilitation plan for the affectees yet; however, they [government] are going to sit to chalk out a rehabilitation plan soon,” he said optimistically.





# Sindh Under Siege

*The standing crops of cotton, rice, and vegetables on four million acres had been completely destroyed because of rain and floods*



By Azfar Ashfaq

While the disastrous monsoon rains have long gone and the floodwaters in the Indus have already passed, many districts of Sindh are still submerged and officials are unable to give an exact time frame as to how long it will take to drain out the accumulated water. People rendered homeless by the unprecedented rains and floods, who are currently living in the camps or setting up temporary tents in dry areas along main roads, desperately want to go back to their areas. They are unable to return because their areas are still under six to ten feet of water.

The gravity of the situation can be gauged from the fact that in the 12 most affected districts, stagnant floodwaters have not been drained out in major parts. By the evening of September 27, according to the minutes of a high-level meeting chaired by Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, only 15 percent of the areas of Qambar-Shahdadkot; 28 percent of Khairpur; 34 percent of Naushahro Feroze, Sukkur, Jacobabad, and Larkana; 37 percent of Badin; 39 percent of Mirpurkhas; 40 percent of areas of Shaheed Benazirabad; 46 percent of Sujawal; 48 percent areas of Shikarpur and 49 percent of Tando Allahyar have been cleared.

The situation is somewhat better in seven other districts, where floodwaters have receded in more than half of the areas. The

districts include Matiari, where 78 percent of areas have been cleared, followed by Thatta (76 percent), Ghotki (68 percent), Sanghar (61 percent), Tando Muhammad Khan (58 percent), while 53 percent of areas in Umerkot and Hyderabad districts have been cleared. The CM, during a three-day visit to the flood-hit districts of Sindh, told reporters that it would take 30 to 45 days to clear standing water from the affected areas.

However, hundreds of thousands of families have been displaced after they suffered huge financial losses in the form of the destruction of their property and livestock. They have to take shelter in relief camps set up across the province, where widespread complaints of the Pakistan People's Party-led Sindh government's neglect have been pouring in. People protested because their districts didn't have enough food and basic services.

While Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif visited two parts of Sindh, foreign dignitaries such as UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, USAID Global Head Samantha Powers, and humanitarian and actress Angelina Jolie also arrived in Pakistan and called upon the international community to help flood-ravaged people. The UN secretary-general said during his visit that Pakistan needed massive financial support for relief, recovery, and rehabilitation.

The devastation was so huge that Angelina Jolie, the Hollywood actress and UN goodwill ambassador, who visited Sindh's Dadu district twice and met with affected families, said she had "never seen anything like this".

To date, according to Sindh Information Minister Sharjeel Memon, around 750 deaths have been reported in the province. He puts the number of houses completely and partially destroyed due to floods at 1.7 million. The death toll of livestock has been estimated at over 313,000. The minister says that around 10.94 million people, belonging to 2.12 million families, have been affected in the province due to rain and floods. He says 7.25 million people are displaced and the provincial government has set up 1,718 relief camps for them in the flood-affected districts.

The standing crops of cotton, rice, and vegetables on four million acres had been completely destroyed because of rain and floods. Around 8,431 kilometres of 780 roads have been destroyed due to rain, while 180 bridges have also been damaged, Mr. Memon adds.

In a time of crisis, non-governmental organisations and charities come forward, and according to many people, these are the only entities that are seen taking steps to help out affected people, including a large number of displaced people.



In the affected districts, the number of people with infectious diseases like malaria, dengue, diarrhoea, dysentery, etc. is rising at an alarming rate. Volunteer doctors and paramedics from these NGOs can be seen helping people who are sick. There are around 9,685 pregnant women living in relief camps across the province, and the number of deliveries conducted there is 3,730. There are 165 health facilities in the province that have been damaged all the way through because of floods. Another 917 have been damaged in some way.

Amid relief activities, the Sindh CM recently met with World Bank officials and told them that rehabilitation of the flood-hit people in his province required \$1.1 billion. "Such a magnitude of the devastation is not only unprecedented but will cost billions of rupees to rehabilitate the people, their agriculture, infrastructure, and to create a source of income for the poorest of the poor," he was reported to have told the WB delegation.

While the government, the armed forces, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) have been claiming that they are doing their best to provide relief to people living in 23 affected districts of Sindh, opposition parties allege that the federal and provincial governments have left people displaced by the floods to stay on roads under the open sky. They say relief goods sent to the flood-hit and homeless people are being stored in warehouses by influential people.

The Sindh CM, Shah, is perhaps aware of the issues and he has time and again maintained that his government is doing its best within available resources. He mentions there's a demand for 1.5 million tents, but the provincial government has distributed around 300,000 tents only. He says the government has ordered 600,000 tents but so far it has received the delivery of only 200,000 tents because of a gap between demand and supply.

There are complaints of misappropriation of flood aid and the CM himself conceded it during a visit to Jacobabad. He said he met with people sitting at the camps in the shadow of their charpoys because they were not provided with any tents, despite the fact

that, on paper, all of them had been given tents by the officials concerned.

The senior leader of the opposition Grand Democratic Alliance, Dr Safdar Abbasi, who was once part of the PPP and now heads its rival Larkana Awami Ittehad, has recently told reporters in Larkana that the federal and provincial governments were not carrying out any relief and rehabilitation activities in most parts of the province. He was of the view that relief goods must have been distributed without any delay and without discrimination to help displaced people survive. He says that the people who were hurt also needed medical help and a good place to live because winter is coming.

As scientists and politicians blame climate change for Pakistan's catastrophic floods, a lack of an effective drainage system in most cities in Sindh has worsened the situation. The construction of unauthorised structures over or on the way of main drains as well as in Katcha areas is also one of the prime reasons behind the flooding. According to reports, influential people in many areas deliberately breached dykes or changed the course of floodwaters, submerging poor people's houses and fields in order to save their crops.

While the Sindh government has started a joint survey to estimate the damage in the flood-affected areas, there is a dire need to set up a judicial commission to investigate such allegations and take those responsible to task.





# After Floods, Snow Threatens Hilly Districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Experts

*In upper Dir, people are doing self-rehabilitation work. They are repairing road, water supply schemes, and even building small bridges themselves*

By Mahmood Jan Babar

As winter approaches, the distress of displaced people in the flood-affected hilly areas of Kalam, Kumrat, and Kohistan in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has reached new heights, with fears of snowfall soon adding to their woes. People are still living under the open sky, the roads have been washed away, and the agricultural lands have been destroyed along with the crops. To restore the suspended water and power supplies, it will cost over 100bn rupees.

In the three districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Deerbala, Swat, and Kohistan, cold winds start blowing a few days after October begins, and if not in October, then in November, there is snowfall, for which the people here make special preparations to deal with. Wood, fodder for animals and food materials for human needs are collected in the houses, but this year the floods have destroyed thousands of houses in the districts of Kalam and upper and lower areas of Swat, Kamrat, Sheringal, Patrak, etc., while the situation in Kohistan is also dire.

Tehsil Matta of Swat is famous for the new wave of Talibanization after the flood, but it is also the native area of Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Mahmood Khan.



The famous journalist here, Ghafoor Khan, says that after the flood in 2010, this year's flood not only destroyed people's houses and gardens but also deprived people of other goods. Especially in Upper Swat, if there is snow as usual, then the situation will be very bad. It will be buried in the snowfall that will start after a few days.

Ghafoor Khan said that the government has provided food, blankets, and comforts in the relief work, but this is not a permanent solution to the problem. It is a fact that the greatest need at this time is to build a temporary shelter home for these homeless victims to live in. No matter how many

times they get these food items, the problem is not solved; a tent village should have been built for them. There are still millions of victims in the most remote areas to whom aid supplies and institutions cannot reach and it will not be possible for them to come down on their own. Kalam, Bahrain, and other areas far away from them have disrupted road networks, and the roads will also be blocked by snow very soon. There are many areas in the three valleys of Matta tehsil and tehsil Khawaza Khela whose houses have been washed away and there is no accommodation for them. They said that it will not be possible for anyone to bear the cold of Swat. How will these people survive and how will they carry the goods they get? A large area of Kalam valley is affected.

According to Ghafoor Khan, there is no solution to bring the people living in the mountains to the lower areas. It is feared that the situation in these areas will remain as it is.

Rain, flood, cold, and now law and order situation has compounded many problems.

A similar case has also happened in the heavenly valleys of Kumrat, Sheringal, Patrak, Kohistan, etc. in Dirbala District of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Many tourists visit the areas in summers, and now due to the







devastation causes by floods, the local economy is affected.

Mohammad Ali, the former MPA of Jamaat-e-Islami from the area, said that we usually get cold in October, and in November people light fires in their houses. Most men keep two wives and have 13-14 children on average due to which large families exist. To bring them all back in the cold will be very difficult. Die because it is not possible to live here. The temperature remains so low that people die if they don't light a fire. It is the responsibility of the government, UN, and human rights organizations to provide them with houses, water, electricity, and other necessities, otherwise human tragedy can arise. The government itself is a witness that we are looking after our people, only Al-Khidmat foundation is working, and the community is supporting but the government is not doing anything.

According to Muhammad Ali, there has been a lot of damage in Upper Dir. The

flood has swept away stones, bridges, fields, electricity, mosques, houses, and schools. Fifty billion rupees worth of damage has been reported in just three tehsils of PK-10, a constituency of our provincial assembly.

Two hundred houses have been swept away by the flood, while twelve hundred houses have been partially destroyed, which will need to be completely repaired. There are cracks in hundreds of houses, so people now have to go to their relatives' houses. Before the flood, we had cabbage, tomatoes, and other vegetables that were ready to be taken to Gujranwala and Lahore. Crops have been destroyed and it is estimated to be worth twenty to twenty-two billion rupees. Sixty bridges have been swept away by flood in this one district, due to which 80% of the population in Kumrat and surrounding districts and tehsils has been cut off from the world. Now it's even difficult to take a patient to a hospital, necessary goods cannot be brought here, and the power plants that people had built

for themselves with 100-200 houses have also been swept away. 6 lakh people are living without electricity. One water supply scheme was built for two to three crore rupees. Even the surviving crops cannot be watered due to the destruction of water channels in the area. The road that has been destroyed in our area has been swept away in eleven places, now it will cost at least twenty billion rupees to rebuild it.

Muhammad Ali said that tourism in the area is completely gone. Investments in hotels, restaurants and many more have ended, hotels have been locked, and hundreds of people have become unemployed.

In our areas, people are doing self-rehabilitation work. People are also doing self-repair work on the road. Water supply schemes are being self-restored. People are even building small bridges themselves. Also, someone donated five million rupees for our power plant with which we have started the restoration work.

The state of relief is that the government has provided assistance to 10% of the people in the entire area, in which only a small sack of flour or a tent has been given, but we do not have the custom of living in tents, so people have returned to their homes. I have settled my relatives. Ninety percent of the people have not received anything from the government yet, but we are providing first aid, free medicine, food, and other assistance to the people, along with Al Khidmat Foundation.





# Pakistan floods made up to 50% worse by global warming

*According to the study, the climate crisis is likely to have increased rainfall and made future floods more likely*

By Fiona Harvey

Scientists have found that the intense rainfall that has caused devastating floods across Pakistan was made worse by global warming, which has also made future floods more likely.

Climate change could have increased the most intense rainfall over a short period in the worst affected areas by about 50%, according to a study by an international team of climate scientists.

The floods were a one-in-a-100-year event, but similar events are likely to become more frequent in the future as global temperatures continue to rise, the scientists said.

The scientists were not able to quantify exactly how much more likely the flooding was made by the climate crisis because of the high degree of natural variability in the monsoon in the region. However, they said there was a 1% chance of such heavy rainfall happening each year, and an event such as this summer's flooding would probably have been much less likely in a world without human-induced greenhouse gas emissions.

Friederike Otto, senior lecturer at the Grantham Institute for climate change and the environment at Imperial College London, said that the "fingerprints" of global warming could be clearly seen in the Pakistan floods, which were in line with what climate scientists had predicted for extreme weather.

"We can say with high confidence that [the rainfall] would have been less likely to occur without climate change," she said. "The intensity of the rainfall has increased quite a bit." Scientists looked at historical records and found that since people started putting greenhouse gases into the air, the amount of heavy rain in the area had increased dramatically.

"Our evidence suggests that climate change played an important role in the event, although our analysis doesn't allow us to quantify how big the role was. This is because it is a region with very different weather from one year to another, which makes it hard to see long-term changes in observed data and climate models.



About a third of Pakistan has been affected by the flooding, with water covering more than a tenth of the country after more than three times the average rain fell in August. Nearly 1,500 people have died and 33 million people have been affected, with 1.7m homes destroyed.

For the country as a whole, it was the wettest August since 1961, and for the two southern provinces of Sindh and Balochistan, it was the wettest on record, with about seven to eight times as much rain as usual.

While the increased rainfall was influenced by the changes to the climate, local factors also played a role in the flooding and its impacts. For instance, forests in the region have been cut down over many decades, and mangrove swamps removed, while human-made dams, irrigation, and other changes to the watercourses have also had an impact on natural flood patterns. More people have been hurt by the floods because of bad infrastructure, like homes that aren't built well or are in places that are prone to flooding.

Ayesha Siddiqi, assistant professor in the department of geography at Cambridge University, said: "[Flooding] has hit places where local socio-ecological systems were already pretty compromised. This disaster was the result of vulnerability constructed over a number of years, and should not be seen as an outcome of one single event."

Pakistan faces a cost of at least \$30bn in damage, with the loss of food crops alone

coming to about \$2.3bn, a particularly heavy burden at a time of rising food prices around the world. About 18,000 sq km of cropland have been ruined, including about 45% of the cotton crop, one of Pakistan's key exports, and about 750,000 livestock have been killed.

The report on the Pakistan floods came from World Weather Attribution, a group of scientists from around the world who try to discern the influence of human-caused climate change on extreme weather events. They analyse such events in real time to produce quick responses on whether climate change has influenced extreme weather, a process that used to take years.

Previous studies have found that climate change exacerbated the heatwaves in India, Pakistan, and the UK earlier this year and the floods in Brazil. WWA found last year that the heatwave in the Pacific north-west region of the US would have been "virtually impossible" without climate change.

A recent study by the Guardian showed how much the climate crisis is "supercharging" weather events, which has terrible effects.

Otto said that countries meeting this November for the Cop27 UN climate conference in Egypt should take note of the extreme weather the world has seen this year and in recent years. "The lesson is that this will become more likely, probably a lot more likely. Becoming more resilient is very important."

# With deadlines given, 'plans' ready to frustrate any attempt to siege Islamabad, Pakistan is expecting eventful days ahead

*The political players are not willing to sit down at the table to hammer out a way out of the political and economic crisis engulfing the country as masses remain a low priority*

By Tahir Niaz

With the deadlines given, 'plans' ready to frustrate any attempt to siege Islamabad, and no date for snap polls in sight, Pakistan is expecting eventful days ahead. The political and economic crisis are likely to aggravate in the coming days due to the continuing tussle between the ruling alliance and the Imran-led PTI. Relief efforts for the flood victims continue on the sidelines of the main stage where efforts to get a date for new elections are at their peak, discussions on the appointment of a new army chief are entering a bitter zone, and different options are being explored to ensure a "smooth" return of Mian Nawaz Sharif to the country.

To the disappointment of the people, the political players are not willing to sit down around the table to hammer out a way out of the political and economic crisis engulfing the country. The masses remain a low priority for the rulers.

Amidst an uncertain political situation, the people are curious about some key issues, such as when the next elections will be held; if the PML-N will enter the next elections before snatching Punjab from the PTI alliance again; and what the PML-N is thinking about the return of Mian Nawaz Sharif from London. According to some sources, the PML-N wants Punjab back from the PTI alliance before PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif returns to the country, as the party wants Quaid to lead the election campaign for the next elections after landing in Pakistan without any legal or judicial hurdle. If the PTI-PML-Q alliance continues to rule Punjab, the free movement of PML-N leader Quaid once he arrives in Pakistan may be jeopardized. The Sharifs seem to once again want to install their scion,



Hamza Shahbaz, in Punjab as chief minister. However, it seems difficult, if not impossible, under the circumstances, as the opposition party in the province would not easily find any dissidents in the PTI and the PML-Q ranks. The only option being discussed by the PML-N, according to the sources, is to win the heart of Ch. Pervez Elahi, and that too seems impactable.

A lot has been done so far by the ruling coalition for the relief of the top leadership of the ruling alliance, but still much more seemingly needs to be undone to pave the way for the smooth return of PML-N supremo Mian Nawaz Sharif, which also justifies the delay in the announcement of snap polls.

According to media reports, the courts have so far returned around 150 references to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) after the PML-N-led ruling alliance amended the NAB laws, literally turning the anti-graft body into a toothless institution. And given the swift passage of

bills by the government to amend the NAB laws in their favour, it seems just a matter of time. Attesting to the developments, an accountability court in Islamabad on September 23 paved the way for the return of senior PML-N leader and former finance minister Ishaq Dar to Pakistan by suspending his permanent arrest warrants. Giving a chance to the PML-N leader to surrender, Judge Muhammad Bashir ordered Ishaq Dar should not to be arrested on his return to the country and suspended his permanent arrest warrants issued by the NAB until October 7. The arrest warrants would be lifted once the former finance minister returned to his home country, according to the judge. In the subsequent development, Dar returned to the country in the plane of the prime minister on September 26 (Monday night) after five years in self-exile. The former minister landed at the Nur Khan Airbase in Chaklala, Rawalpindi. He accompanied Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on his trip back to the country from London. He





is now the finance minister of the country. Dar's return had been under speculation for months. On the other hand, PTI termed the return of Dar as a 'black day' for Pakistan. PTI leader Ali Zaidi said, "An absconder, money launderer and fraudster returned to the country to become the next finance minister". Upon arriving in Pakistan, Dar vowed to put Pakistan on the right direction adding that Pakistan can be turned into an economic power after it became a nuclear power.

The Sharifs also had a "family" discussion in London where different options were weighed for a "suitable" date for the general elections, the appointment of a new army chief and the return of Nawaz Sharif to the country. The PML-N's statement after the meeting didn't do much to improve the political situation in the country. Instead, it showed that the ruling family is split on important issues. Nothing substance was shared with the public after the meeting, in which even the PML-N federal ministers present in the city were not invited except to repeat the rhetoric that the elections would be held according to the official schedule. Hardly anyone knows what was discussed and what decisions were taken in the London meeting, suggesting that the Sharif family is keeping the cards close to the chest. The Sharifs didn't offer any insight into what was going on in their minds and if they would be able to control the political situation till the latter part of next year when they said the next general elections would be held.

According to the party sources, the return of Nawaz Sharif to the country is a priority at the moment and that will decide other issues as to when the elections will be held. According to the political observers, the return of 'financial wizard' Ishaq Dar to the country would pave the way for the smooth return of Mian Nawaz Sharif to the country also. The tone and tenor of the PML-N suggest that the ruling coalition seems in no mood to opt for early elections, especially before getting relief for Nawaz Sharif from the courts. According to party sources, this very issue is causing a delay in the announcement of the snap polls. At the moment, inflation remains a bigger issue for the ruling coalition than the PTI at the moment, with no immediate relief for the

masses in sight. The government functionaries themselves admit that going into the elections amidst the prevailing woes of the masses would be a disaster for the party. The recent floods in the country has provided the ruling alliance a good reason not to set a date for early elections.

On the other hand, pressure is gradually building up in Islamabad. Imran Khan has not missed a single day for criticising the government and warning it to announce the date of the elections as early as possible. He has been in talks with the government about announcing the date for the next general

not called. If the PTI goes with its plan of the anti-government movement, it would put the federal government in real trouble as the opposition party has its own governments in Punjab and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. On the other hand, the government, which seemingly intends to complete its tenure, has no clear plans for the future to counter Imran's narrative. It has nothing to offer to the masses at the moment; rather, each day brings bad news for them, be it inflation or an increase in petroleum prices. It would become even more difficult for the government to continue with such shallow slogans in the coming days.



elections. The question is whether the talks between the government and the opposition party will pave the way for new elections or whether the government's decision to hold snap elections will bring the PTI to the table for discussions on the next steps.

A circle of political observers believes that the appointment of new army chief is also a hurdle in the announcement of fresh polls. As the country's prime minister, Nawaz Sharif chose Pervez Musharraf, Raheel Sharif, and Qamar Javed Bajwa to lead the army each time, he ignored the most senior officers.

It is clear that Imran Khan is not going to rest unless he is given a date for the next general elections that he believes may provide him a path back to power. The question is how the government will deal with the PTI onslaught if new elections are

The days ahead seem crucial not only for the political parties but also for the country. A few days back, former prime minister Imran Khan, while reiterating his demand for fresh elections, linked the snap polls with the betterment of the country rather than his Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf. Meanwhile, PTI senior leader Fawad Chaudhry also expressed his party's willingness to hold talks with the prime minister provided a date for fresh general elections is announced. He suggested that a framework for the polls could be worked out by political parties. It is now a test for both the ruling alliance and the opposition PTI that they take consensus decisions on the key issues while sitting at the table and, most importantly, before entering into another round of acrimony.



## Deal Or No Deal: What's Going On?

*Political analysts believe that Khan is putting pressure not only on the incumbent government but on all other powerful circles to play their part in meeting his terms*



By Sarfraz Raja

A classic Alfred Hitchcock suspense thriller drama keeps the audience guessing what's going to happen next. With its ups and downs, surprises, and uncertainties, Pakistani politics is no different. Today's enemies are tomorrow's friends and today's friends are tomorrow's enemies – one never knows.

The last few months happen to be a classic case of learning for those who are interested in knowing what Pakistani politics is all about. Political manipulations changed the loyalties of party members, alliances were negotiated between erstwhile archrivals, and in a first, an in-house change through a no-confidence motion in the national assembly was materialized. Politics was full of suspense, keeping the public engaged, as circumstances flipped not in days but literally in hours.

Since his removal from the premiership, Imran Khan is aggressively running a campaign against the incumbent government and all those, whom he calls facilitators of regime change including the military establishment.

### Changing stance

While entering politics, Imran Khan came as an anti-establishment figure. He used to be a strong believer in the nonpolitical role of the military establishment and intelligence agencies. Although he supported Gen Pervez Musharraf in his controversial referendum to legitimize his rule in 2002, in his close circle he used to bluntly criticize the active military role in the country's politics and also remained a part of the opposition alliance which was established to get rid of Gen Pervez Musharraf-led regime. Later, in what is known as the real emergence or birth of his party as a major political power in Oct 2011 Minar e Pakistan Lahore jalsa, he earned a reputation of a party fully backed by the establishment and other powerful circles of the country.

His 126 days sit-in at D Chowk Islamabad was considered to have the backing of certain power circles. Even Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf's victory in May 2018 general elections was termed an establishment-aided win by the opposition and

that's why he was called a selected Prime minister by them, a term introduced by Bilawal Bhutto, chairman Pakistan People's Party in his first speech to the National Assembly. His government was popularly termed as the same page government and even Imran Khan himself took credit and pride in that he and the army are on the same page in all matters. He once claimed that his decisions and party manifesto is backed by the military leadership. Imran Khan is also responsible for giving a three-year term extension to the present Chief of Army Staff.

But soon after a no-confidence move was launched against him in National Assembly, he started targeting army leadership in public gatherings. He criticized military leadership for being neutral. One of his statements got viral when he said only animals could be neutral, not human beings. Interestingly, he always takes credit for introducing neutral umpires in cricket when he was captaining the Pakistan cricket team.

After his removal from the PM chair, his





aggression is rising every passing day. Initially, he addressed it in hidden words and then started pointing it out openly, and in his country-wide gatherings, he called all those who supported regime change as traitors. Earlier, he stated that the appointment of a new army chief was never an issue for him but later he started discussing the appointment of the military chief and that too in his political gatherings saying that Nawaz Sharif, Asif Ali Zardari, and the present set up wants to appoint their favorite as army chief. This statement sparked a strong reaction within army ranks and the spokesman of the armed forces termed it an effort to make this all-important appointment controversial.

A few days later in a TV interview, Imran Khan again changed his stance surprisingly and came up with a suggestion of delaying this appointment until the formation of a new government and till then the present army chief should continue, in simple words he was demanding an extension for the present COAS. This suggestion was a big u-turn from the stance and narrative he was building for the last many months. Defense Minister Khawaja Asif categorically rejected this, saying that the appointment of COAS is the sole constitutional prerogative of the prime minister of the country and he would do this job at the appropriate time.

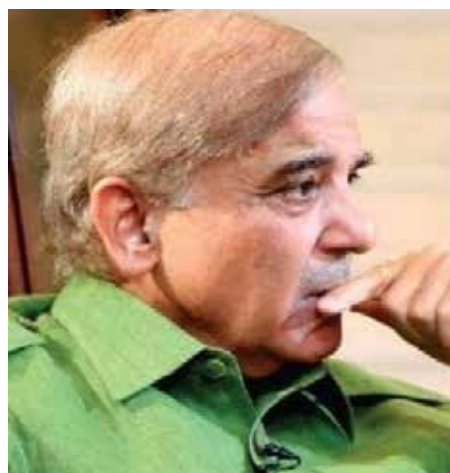
## Deal or no deal

After Imran Khan's sudden and surprising soft stance vis a vis military leadership, which proved temporary later, some news about back channel contacts and meetings were highlighted on social media by some journalists.

A meeting between two important personalities one from Bani Gala (Imran Khan's residence) and the other from the establishment met at a neutral place. Later, some sources disclosed that the president's office in fact facilitated some back-door contacts to normalize the political temperature. Other observers claimed that the above-mentioned meeting took place in an important retired officer's place who is supposedly a common friend and that the meeting was requested by Bani Gala. Such reports received no rebuttal, even some PTI leaders including Asad Umar and Fawad Chaudhary neither denied nor confirmed

any such meeting which was taken as an unofficial and off-the-record confirmation, so speculations started.

"Ice had started melting", "a deal has been finalized" – all such reports started emerging but none had any solid footing. Initially, a soft stance adopted by Imran Khan provided some room for such reports but suddenly he again came out harder with his previous stance which negated all these stories, speculations, and theories circulating mainly on social media.



On the other hand, there were reports of some PTI leaders maintaining contacts with the establishment in their individual capacity which Imran Khan took notice of and immediately refrained them from contacting them without prior permission.

## What's the emerging scenario?

Imran Khan has continued his agitation on the streets despite record devastation across the country caused by the floods.

Political analysts believe that Imran is putting pressure not only on the current government but all other powerful circles to play their part in meeting his terms. Still, his top demand is immediate elections which are impractical due to the flood situation in most parts of the country. There were some consultations for early elections after March next year some sources claim but after an important meeting in London between Prime minister Shehbaz Sharif and former prime minister and PMLN Quaid Nawaz Sharif, it was categorically stated by the information minister that elections would be held when their term expires i.e.

in August next year. Some experts believe Imran Khan is playing a game of nerves, as he is trying to influence the all-important appointment of a new army chief due before the end of November. The Prime Minister of Pakistan has constitutional authority for such appointments and no other office bearer has any role here, not even the opposition leader whose consultation is a constitutional requirement in many other appointments including the chairman of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), chief election commissioner,



members of the election commissions, and a caretaker setup to conduct new general elections. The Prime Minister has the sole right to appoint an army head, Imran Khan who is not even in the parliament right now cannot get any role by any means.

Some sources in the government say that right now besides flood devastations, the country is facing the worst economic crisis of its time, with huge difficulty a deal has been signed with IMF, and the government has taken unwillingly some unpopular decisions which carry a huge political cost and all concerned quarters know the sensitivity of this situation, so they realize

it's important to get the country out of this scenario first, and any sort of political adventure could destabilize things more and more on the economic front. These sources believe Imran Khan is playing his cards in haste and in desperation which could be damaging for his political future as nothing is expected to go his way. On the other hand, PTI leadership believes that Imran Khan would be able to carry forward his campaign successfully taking advantage of his rising popularity.



# Impact of PTI rallies on next general elections

*The euphoria of the slogans of 'Imported government Murda Bad' may soon die down*

By Wajih Safarish Khan

Former Prime Minister Imran Khan has been on the road since before his ouster from office on April 9 earlier this year. He has incessantly been demanding early elections for the National Assembly (the demand also included elections in Punjab when Hamza Shehbaz Sharif was briefly the Chief Minister but has not talked about it since his party returned to power through different court decisions in early August).

In the process, Imran Khan has addressed scores of rallies in the width and breadth of Punjab and KP, where his party is in power and which account for about 236 of 336 members of the National Assembly, and used the provinces as a base in his unsuccessful attempt to bring a large crowd into Islamabad on May 25 so as to besiege the government and force it to accept his demands. Since then, he has been constantly warning the government that he will make the effort again with double force unless his demand for early fresh elections is accepted.

There seems to be no let-up in his rallies and demands for early elections anytime soon. The ruling coalition, on the other hand, has made it known that it is not going to dissolve the National Assembly before the house completes its tenure on August 12, 2023, and the elections for the National Assembly, as those of the four provincial assemblies, will take place within two months' time of the same. That means that we are going to see a lot more rallies and marches by PTI to press for its demands. It will be interesting to see what impact such a long and continuous campaign will have on the outcome of the next elections, whenever they take place.

To this day, it seems that his strategy is working effectively. When the PTI was in power in 2021, it lost one and a half dozen bye-elections across the country. However, on July 17, 2022, when he was ousted and on the streets, his party won back 15 of the 20 seats vacated by his party turn-coats. This has not only allowed the PTI to retake control of all important Punjab provinces



from rival PMLN, but it has also given it a lot of confidence.

Imran Khan has become so emboldened by the results that he has decided to put himself on all nine National Assembly seats which were vacated due to the acceptance of the resignations of some of his colleagues. Of course, this is a big gamble because a loss on even a couple of these seats will put a huge dent in his popularity balloon. However, winning all of these seats would put enormous pressure on the ruling coalition as well as the forces of what is referred to as the establishment, which is said to be supporting it.

From the day when he first smelled that power was being pulled from under his feet, Imran Khan has played his cards ardently and made it known that he knows no bars when it comes to keeping or retaking the reigns of whatever power he had. He floated the constitutional provisions and stretched the document to breaking point to avert the passage of the vote of no-confidence against his premiership; he promoted a false narrative about US involvement in his ouster to get support from a population that generally has apprehensions about US intentions and in the way endangered Pakistan's relations with the whole western world; his visit to Russia on the eve of the country's attack on Ukraine supported his narrative despite the fact that a two-line Kremlin statement on the visit shows what 'importance' it gave to the visit.

The agreement with the International Monetary Fund, which was painstakingly concluded by his government after difficult negotiations that also involved controversial legislation, was brazenly violated by reducing and freezing the prices of petroleum products at a time when crude oil rates in the international market were skyrocketing. Consequently, the Fund halted the disbursement of a \$6 billion extended fund facility for Pakistan, risking Pakistan's creditworthiness and putting the country within sight of default on its external payments. Evidence even shows that the party tried to stop the renewal of the extended fund facilities in early August.

For weeks on end, social media accounts ostensibly associated with PTI continued to support trends against the army chief, so much so that many such accounts trolled the military spokesman when he announced the martyrdom of Pakistan army officers during the flood operation in Balochistan. Any institution trying to check his legal or illegal actions has been severely reprimanded by Imran Khan himself or through the social media accounts apparently maintained by party officials or workers. The tactic has so far played well, saving Imran Khan from any strong legal action and keeping his support base on its heels.

It is difficult to say whether this offensive strategy against the institutions and the government and the continued rallies will help Imran Khan in the next elections.





Firstly, victory in the July by-elections in Punjab should not be used as a barometer of his support. The elections were held during an unprecedented increase in the prices of petroleum products, which swelled inflation to new heights that greatly helped PTI. The realities of local politics, where PMLN ex-ticket holders were asked to support their former opponents, and the overconfidence of PMLN, played their roles.



The possibility of early general elections increasingly seems remote, and it is expected that they will take place next autumn as scheduled. That means that Imran Khan will have to keep the present momentum of his campaign for well over thirteen more months. That may well fatigue his support base. Already there are reports of a thinning of the crowds at his rallies. These may become thinner with the passage of time.

Irrespective of the number of people attending the rallies, it is not clear how many, if any, fresh supporters are added to the PTI. If no sizeable number of new voters are added, then PTI is not going to win the next elections on its own, whether the sequence of current rallies continues or is abated or abandoned. This is especially important given that the PTI may not have the open support of non-political powerful forces as it did in 2018 or even in 2013. Its opponents may not be as disadvantaged as they were five years ago.

So far, his aggressiveness has been rewarded without negative consequences, but luck can desert him at any time, and the state can step in, as it has in the cases of Imran Khan's far less aggressive predecessors.

However, relaxing the momentum of the campaign before elections might erode his support base as supporters may get dejected and may lose interest.

It's not the momentum of Imran Khan's campaign but the economic conditions that will play a major role in the outcome of the next general elections. Despite the renewal of the IMF programme, Pakistan is still under dire economic conditions. The

one-third of Pakistan's population. Most of rural Sindh is in roof-high floods; its crops and livestock are destroyed. The same is the case with most of the farmlands of Balochistan. It will be very difficult for the PPP-led provincial government to restore the lives of the people. Destruction of food stocks and crops will further swell the prices of commodities. Some people are also talking about a looming draught. International aid has started to come, but that will be slow to materialise and it cannot compensate for the nearly \$20 billion lost to the floods. This may have a huge impact on the performance of the PPP and PMLN during the general elections.

Bad economic conditions may play havoc with the ruling coalition, but in the long run, they can bite PTI too. The euphoria of the slogans of 'Imported government Murda Bad' may soon die down and give way to realities in Punjab and KP, which, as said above, make up 236 of 336 seats in the National Assembly. The djinni of the Taliban is raising its head in KP again. Unlike in earlier instances, the local population is rising against it. The Taliban incursion and resistance to them can eat up a lot of PTI support for the base there.

Thus, the momentum of the campaign will not be a sufficient guarantee for victory in the next general elections for PTI. Many aspects, including its performance in KP and Punjab and the fortunes of the ruling coalition at the centre, will play a role in this regard.

rupee's slide against the US dollar is continuing unabated. Inflation is at an unprecedented height. The slide of the rupee and IMF conditions on petroleum levies and sales tax mean that prices of petroleum products will not be decreased even if they are down in the international market.

Floods have devastated the lives of





# Centre-Punjab tug-of-war

*The federal government has upped the ante in the war of politics by registering various cases against the PTI leaders*

By Ahmad Waleed

The unending saga of Punjab politics has taken a new turn. The Centre-Punjab tug-of-war touched new heights after the federal government, through a directive, withdrew the services of the controversial CCPO Lahore Police Ghulam Mahmood Dogar and ordered him to report to the Establishment Division. The CCPO, who is going to retire in four months, refused to leave the charge after Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi invited the CCPO to his residence the next morning and gave him a pat on the back for doing a job "well done". "We won't let you go," remarked the chief minister, with a smile on his face. The humble-looking CCPO also smiled and showed respect to his "boss".

The video shared by none other than Moonis Elahi on the social media platform Twitter shows the CCPO hugging the CM while Moonis Elahi is standing by. The video went viral on social media, igniting a heated debate among social media users. The majority of bureaucrats deemed it "bad practice" to be on the side of a certain political party instead of reporting back to the Establishment Division. Many of the officers thought that CCPO Ghulam Mahmood Dogar might get in trouble with the federal government for not following orders.

The CCPO invited the ire of the federal government for registering the first information report against PML-N ministers Marriyum Aurangzeb and Javed Latif and two PTV employees under terrorism charges. It was said that the CCPO rushed to file the FIRs without getting permission from his boss, the Inspector General of Police, Faisal Shahkar, who didn't want these cases to be filed.

Meanwhile, the federal government has upped the ante in the war of politics by registering various cases against the PTI leaders, including Imran Khan, Murad Saeed, Fawad Chaudhry, Faisal Javed, Sheikh Rashid, Asad Umar, and Faisal Wavda for violating Section 144 by organising a rally in Islamabad on August 19, 2022.

While Imran Khan is also facing charges of threatening a judicial magistrate, Shahbaz Gill was booked on sedition charges. In response, the Punjab government booked over a dozen PML-N leaders, including Attaullah Tarar, for allegedly creating a ruckus during the Punjab Assembly session for the election of the chief minister on April 16. The tit-for-tat game by both rival parties has created quite a stir in the politics of Punjab.

There are rumours that the federal government has come up with a new plan to get rid of the PTI-led government in Punjab. Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif is said to have gone to London to talk to PML-N leader Nawaz Sharif about the plan and get his final approval. The PML-N believes that without getting power in the largest province of the country, it has become very difficult to bear the burden of tough measures taken by the government at the federal level. The PML-N leaders think that their party is facing the wrath of the public as they have been tasked with taking bitter steps



to meet the IMF conditions that have pushed the people of Pakistan into a financial quagmire while the Punjab government is spending the development budgets in their constituencies to earn goodwill in their respective areas. "Our popularity graph has nosedived since the PDM government took charge after ousting the PTI government." Former Prime Minister Imran Khan's narrative is selling like hot cake and it is going to dent the image of the PML-N in Punjab, which has been its stronghold for decades," a PML-N leader observed.

According to PML-N circles, the new formula to oust the Punjab government is being designed in such a way that the new government should last till the next election, leaving no chance for the PTI to return to power in Punjab. One of the PML-N leaders has revealed that this time their numbers are complete and the Punjab government will be ousted sooner rather than later. He also says that the bureaucracy has refused to work for the PTI-PML-Q government because the PTI leaders are rude.

Meanwhile, it has been hinted that the Pakistan People's Party co-chairperson Asif Ali Zardari is going to play yet another "trump card" that will surprise the PTI leadership for one more time.

On the other hand, the PTI Punjab leadership has managed to convince the party chairman, Imran Khan, that they have foiled the PDM attempt to win the support of PTI lawmakers and they are more than confident that their government is going to survive any attack launched by the opposition in the near future. They have also claimed that they are in touch with PML-N MPAs who have assured them of their full support to thwart the misadventure by the opposition.

There are also reports that a close associate of Asif Zardari, who enjoys good relations with the Chaudhry brothers, has met Nawaz Sharif to assure him of the support of lawmakers from PTI and PML-Q to help topple the Punjab government. It has also been assured that this time, Hamza Shahbaz may not be the candidate for chief minister.





# Politics of Polarization

*The buzz in political circles is that Nawaz Sharif will return from London via the Middle East along with some good news on the monetary front*

By Noor Aftab

Pakistan is in a dire economic and political crisis. The Shehbaz-led government is indecisive, struggling to find its footing, while ousted Prime Minister Imran Khan is leading rallies across the country, attacking the government's legitimacy and calling for fresh elections. Simultaneously, the country is also grappling with an acute climate emergency. One-third of Pakistan is underwater due to the catastrophic floods that have caused financial losses to the tune of 30 billion dollars.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is leading an unstable government with a razor-thin majority. The country's trade deficit during the current fiscal year (FY22) is the highest while its current account deficit has also reached an unprecedented level, and foreign reserves stand around \$10 billion. The floods have caused financial losses at a time the government is struggling to control rising inflation and unbridled price hikes. The dismal performance of the government has deepened the crisis with many pundits predicting the economic challenges will continue to shake the very foundation of the fragile government. The ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) however hopes that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, with his management skills, would be able to steer the country out of the crisis.

The country is in a dire need of external financing as it tries to divert the attention of the international community toward the devastating floods. The government has unwillingly swallowed the bitter pill of increasing petroleum prices to strike a much-needed deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This is not the first time such decisions vis a vis economy have been taken, and perhaps will not be the last one unless the energy and food sectors are deregulated and the pricing power is taken out of the hands of the government.

A day after fuel prices were increased for the third time in as many weeks, PM Shehbaz Sharif defended the unpopular



moves, saying that the government was left with no choice because of those who struck the worst ever deal with the IMF. The main goal of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) was to oust Imran Khan; they did not devise an alternative governance plan or economic strategy before coming into power. That lack of a plan is now showing in the face of an economic crisis.

When the government is finding itself between the devil and the deep blue sea, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) is leaving no stone unturned to create economic problems for it. Audio recordings of telephonic conversation between former Finance Minister Shaukat Tareen and the finance ministers of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Punjab revealed the PTI's plot for sabotaging the IMF loan program worth \$6 billion ahead of the lender's executive board meeting held on August 29.

The audio leaks endorsed the view that a letter written by KP Finance Minister Taimur Jhagra to Finance Minister Miftah Ismail threatening to withdraw from the IMF commitment was a deliberate attempt to sabotage the government's efforts to stabilize the economy.

PTI supporters also posted and shared a

fake picture of selling relief goods which were later circulated by more than 600 people who tagged international agencies and the United Nations, urging them to stop giving relief goods to Pakistan. A senior PTI leader also stated on a foreign news channel that the coalition government is corrupt and indirectly suggested the international community to not extend financial support to the flood-affected people in Pakistan.

Today, Pakistan echoes the politics of post-January 6 United States, where polarization was so deep that the other side's argument was not even heard, let alone respected.

Former Prime Minister Imran Khan has also made it clear that he would not let the incumbent government work and bring his workers from KP, Punjab, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan to besiege Islamabad from all sides and paralyze the federal capital.

He said he could wait for elections till March next year for which the government should dissolve the assemblies earlier and announce a date. He also stated that Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa should be given an extension for a few months so



that the new government that would come after the elections would be able to make the all-important appointment. Political pundits argue that Imran Khan delivered an 'inswing yorker' because he wants to win elections at any cost to appoint his 'favorite' candidate as the next Army Chief.

Imran Khan is also facing various cases in which he can be disqualified but the PTI supporters hope that their leader would avoid disqualification and lead them in the next general elections. The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has reserved its verdict in the Toshakhana reference filed against Imran Khan. The reference was filed against the PTI chairman by the coalition government, for not sharing details of Toshakhana gifts and proceeds from their alleged sale.

On the other hand, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) has accepted Imran Khan's apology in the contempt of court case and decided against indicting him. The deposed premier told the court that he was willing to apologize to Additional Districts and Sessions Judge Zeba Chaudhry for his remarks. The case had been registered against the ex-PM for threatening the judge at a rally last month when she approved PTI leader Shahbaz Gill's remand. Khan's contempt of court case was initiated after a speech he gave on August 20, where he threatened action by taking legal recourse against senior Islamabad police officials and Judge Zeba Chaudhry, who had approved the two-day detention of Khan's close aide Shahbaz Gill.

Earlier, the Election Commission of Pakistan, in its unanimous verdict ruled that PTI received funds from business tycoon Arif Naqvi and 34 foreign nationals. It went on to say that the party had taken ownership of eight accounts and kept 16 hidden.

The federal government has a ripe case in hand to file against the PTI on the following counts: 1) File a reference in the Supreme Court against Imran Khan under Article 62. It's time for the Supreme Court to consciously review its earlier judgment of declaring Imran Khan 'Sadiq' and 'Ameen'. 2) File a reference with the ECP to initiate a fiscal inquiry for funds received post-2013, in line with the Financial Times story. 3) Initiate an inquiry against the auditing firm for intellectual impropriety.

Shehbaz, the 70-year-old younger brother of former three-time prime minister Nawaz Sharif, has served as chief minister of the country's most populous and politically crucial province Punjab thrice. PML-N voters are waiting for the return of former finance minister Ishaq Dar who they believe could turn around the economy. The buzz is that Nawaz Sharif will return from London via the Middle East along with some good news; a big chunk of support from friendly countries, such as the 1.5 billion dollar gift (with no economic conditions) they secured back in 2014.

Imran Khan is preparing for the final round of his 'Haqqeqi Azadi Movement' and he knows that to continue exerting influence in the political field, he has to fight for early

elections as the present government is highly unpopular among the masses due to rising inflation and price hikes. He has been mobilizing party workers in his public meetings and preparing them for a showdown with the government in Islamabad.

In response to Khan's long march plans, Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah threatened to impose governor's rule in the provinces supporting the PTI's long march on the capital and warned of strict action against the marchers attempting to reach D-Chowk.

The coalition government is preparing itself to confront a mass protest. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah, and other cabinet ministers are showing resilience and assuring their supporters that they would foil all attempts of Imran Khan with the use of force, and constitutional means.

Rana Sanaullah has also said that the provinces supporting PTI's long march would violate the constitution and there would be consequences for it.

While the country's economy remains in the doldrums, the political leadership is found wanting when it comes to hard reforms to arrest this downward spiral. Imran Khan's obduracy and mass street movement have made governance a challenge for the PML-N-led coalition. It is a need of time that we as a nation continue our course in the right direction and never allow national interest to be sacrificed at the behest of personal ego and stubbornness.





# The challenges of reviving crops and rehabilitating ravaged infrastructure

*In response to about \$30 billion in damage to the economy of Pakistan due to climatic catastrophes in the shape of unprecedented rains and floods, the world community has disappointed everyone in the country and abroad because of their minimal support to Pakistan in the revival and rehabilitation of the flood-ravaged areas*

**By Javed Mahmood**

ISLAMABAD: The recent tormenting rains and catastrophic floods have caused an enormous loss to the infrastructures, livestock, and standing crops and also claimed more than 1,500 lives across Pakistan. The rains and floods also damaged, partially and wholly, about one million homes and affected 33 million people.

Balochistan, Sindh, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have reported much greater losses due to this natural calamity than the Punjab province. The Pakistan government has estimated more or less \$30 billion worth of losses in the shape of damage to roads, bridges, homes, livestock, and crops. Now the real challenges before the federal and provincial governments are the reconstruction, rehabilitation of the flood-hit 33 million people, cultivation of crops afresh, and provision of food to people. As the unprecedented rains and floods have swept away various essential crops and destroyed orchards of fruits and vast farmlands of vegetables, the foremost priority before the government is to line up essential food items at the first stage and then support the farmers to grow crops, once flood water dissipates.

A few days ago, the country faced a shortage of important vegetables such as onions, tomatoes, potatoes, and some kitchen items as a result of which their prices surged in the markets fourfold. Consequently, the government allowed immediate imports of vegetables from Iran and Afghanistan, which not only ended their shortage but also normalised their prices in the markets.

However, this strategy is just a short-term approach and the real task ahead for the government is to support the rain-ravaged farmers to grow vegetables and other crops for their sustainability, smooth production of essential crops, and their supply to the consumers.

Also, sugarcane and cotton – two major cash crops, along with others, have been destroyed in Sindh, Balochistan, KP provinces and the federal and provincial governments would have to facilitate farmers to grow these crops in the next season. The grants or markup-free loans would have to be given to affected farmers to revive the agriculture sector, otherwise, the country will be draining billions of dollars on the imports of essential items.

Punjab province is set to produce a bumper crop of rice of more than 6.5 million tons this year because of timely heavy rains at the time of the cultivation of this major cash crop which needs more water than other traditional crops, excluding sugarcane. It is expected the bumper rice crop would lead to a smooth supply of the staple food throughout the country. So far, there is no shortage of rice in the country because of its surplus production in 2021.



## International Community's Support to Pakistan

To muster the support of the international community, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, addressing the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York on Sept 23, highlighted Pakistan's plight due to the flooding crisis caused by global climate change, and urged global leaders to come together and "act now" before it's too late. The Premier explained the scale and magnitude of the climate catastrophe that has put one-third of Pakistan in a situation that "no one had seen in living memory". "For 40 days and 40 nights, biblical flood poured on us. Even today, huge swathes of the country are still underwater. 33 million people including women; and children are at high risk of health hazards. More than 1,500 of my people have gone from the world including 400 children. He noted that Pakistan had never seen such a devastating example of global warming. "Life in Pakistan has changed forever."

In response to about \$30 billion in damage to the economy of Pakistan due to climatic catastrophes in the shape of unprecedented rains and floods, the world community has disappointed everyone in the country and abroad because of their minimal support to Pakistan in the revival and rehabilitation of the flood-ravaged areas. Many countries have provided support for flood relief measures in kinds such as food items, tents, blankets, etc., but, so far, the international community's support for Pakistan was just peanuts in response to massive destruction in the country.

The Secretary General of the United Nations Antonio Guterres, who visited flood-hit areas in Pakistan in the month of September this year, urged the world community to come up with generous support for Pakistan to offset the rains and flood devastation. The UN's chief said that Pakistan's share in global warming was just one percent but

the country has faced a colossal climatic catastrophe due to others' wrongdoing. The UN's secretary general clearly stated that Pakistan has paid the price for global warming although its contribution to climate damage was the lowest. Mr Guterres was of the opinion that the developed nations which have the highest share in global warming must compensate Pakistan by giving generous financial assistance. But his appeals did not generate a much-needed response and he felt disappointed with this approach of the rich nations. Astonishingly, the United Nations launched a \$160 million flash appeal soon after the tormenting rains and floods started their ravage in Pakistan, but the UN's appeal barely attracted half of this



amount. The UN, nevertheless, received only \$150 million pledges from different countries but till Sept 25, 2022, only \$60 million have been received out of \$150 million commitments. This non-serious approach of the world's community to natural disasters has made it entirely difficult for Pakistan to cope with the flood ravage. The secretary general of the United Nations too has expressed his disappointment with the pathetic contribution of the international community.

Meanwhile, in the recent sessions of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, the UN chief, the US President Joe Biden, French President Macron, and the chief of the European Union Commission Ursula have promised with the Prime Minister of Pakistan Shehbaz Sharif to come up with big support for Pakistan to overcome the unprecedented damage to infrastructures, human lives, crops, and livestock.

The United Nations Secretary-General and French President Macron said that they are organising separate international conferences soon to raise financial assistance for Pakistan. Also, address-

ing the 77th session of the UNGA, US President Biden urged the world to support Pakistan as much as possible to help the flood-hit nation and the government to cover their losses. Biden announced \$2.9 billion for the climate change fund, but he did not announce a penny for Pakistan. Notably, the United States has supplied essential goods to flood victims in Pakistan through USAID but the size of the assistance was less than \$100 million, so far \_ which indicates how much serious the American donors and policy-makers are in helping Pakistan to move out of flood losses and resume normal activities as soon as possible.

## UNDP's advice to Pakistan to reschedule debt

Seeing a discourage response of the world's community to natural disasters in Pakistan, a few days ago, the United Nations for Development Programme (UNDP) floated the idea that Pakistan must not pay its foreign debt and get them rescheduled because of immense losses to the economy in the backdrop of the climatic devastation in the country. This idea has clicked the government's policymakers and Finance Minister has come up with the plan of rescheduling of the country's foreign loans \_ excluding the commercial debt. He, nonetheless, did not quantify the amount of commercial and other external loans which are payable within this fiscal year, 2022-23. Media reports, nevertheless, indicated that Pakistan can get rescheduled more or less \$10 billion worth foreign loans in the ongoing financial year.

Earlier, Finance Minister Miftah Ismail said that Pakistan needed \$35 billion in the ongoing financial year \_ \$21 billion for repayment of external loans and the remaining for managing the current account deficit. If this policy works well, Pakistan is expected to get more than \$11 billion in relief in repayment of foreign loans. For example, in the month of Sept this year, the country had already paid nearly one billion dollars in foreign loans and markup to the creditors. Thus, apart from negotiating rescheduling foreign loans, the government is also considering approaching the International Monetary Fund to soften some of its harsh conditions to give relief to the masses hit hard by the devastation of rains and floods. It is expected that from the month of October 2022, the government would initiate the process of seeking rescheduling foreign loans.

This much-needed support will enable Pakistan to cope with its foreign exchange requirements in this fiscal year and allocate additional funds for the revival of the agricultural sector and rehabilitation of farmers affected by the most devastating floods.

## Ishaq Dar \_ New Finance Minister

Ishaq Dar, once a proclaimed offender living in London for more than four years is taking oath on Tuesday as Finance Minister. First, he will take oath as Senator and then as Finance Minister. The sitting finance minister Miftah Ismail tendered his resignation on the night of Sept 25 (Sunday), a day before the landing of Ishaq Dar in Islamabad along with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in the full protocol. Dar is an experienced finance minister, well connected as well, and he is expected to manage the country's economic affairs in an efficient manner.



# Analyzing CPEC - A Case of Inclusive Development in Balochistan

*It is crucial to alleviate the grievances of the people of Balochistan and to improve the socio-economic status of the province*

By Aimen Bukhari and Arsim Tariq

CPEC, since its inception, got called in various academic papers or political discussions as a game-changer. It highlights its significance as it is expected to lift the socio-economic status of Pakistan's comparatively deprived province, Balochistan. Balochistan, before CPEC, lacked concrete actions for development as it was the least developed province of Pakistan with an absence of innovative policies that could nurture or stimulate its economic growth or relate to its population. It has consistently been marginalized throughout history with the non-existence of development, absence of security, and hypocrisy in the quota of funds.

## Origins of Baloch Conflict

The origins of the issue in Balochistan emerged in 1948, when Kalat, a part of Balochistan, chose independence. It contributed to the rise of a separatist movement, which touched a peak in the years 1958-59 and 1963-69. Initially, the Baloch concerns were about One-Unit Policy and military bases in Balochistan. But then, in 1973-79, Bhutto removed the provincial government of Balochistan. It launched an armed dissent and insurgency. After this event, there have been various extreme armed confrontations between Baloch Separatists and the Armed forces of Pakistan. Sometimes, the insurgency becomes latent, but it has been present and has become worse since 1948.

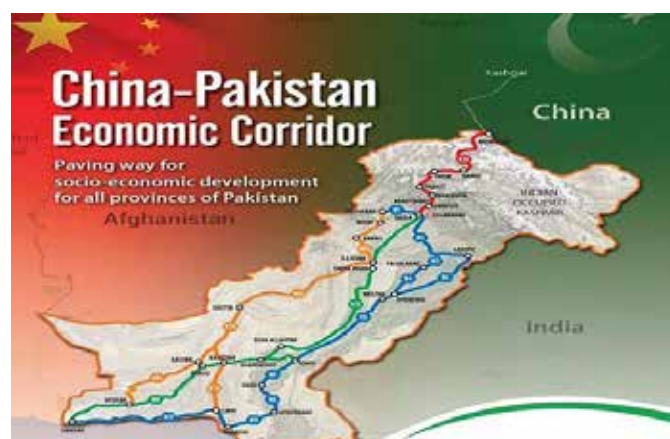
## CPEC Projects

Before CPEC, the government was more focused on this insurgency, and therefore development and security have been nonexistent compared to other provinces. It also added to the grievances of the Baloch people. But under CPEC, it is anticipated that Balochistan will advance socio-economically as numerous projects have been signed (shown in figure 1).

DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS FOR BALUCHISTAN	
NO. OF PROJECTS	PROJECT NAME
1	Gwadar East-Bay Expressway
2	New Gwadar International Airport
3	Construction of Breakwaters, Gwadar
4	Dredging of berthing areas & channels, Gwadar
5	Development of Free Zone, Gwadar
6	Necessary facilities of fresh water treatment, water supply and distribution, Gwadar
7	Pak China Friendship Hospital, Gwadar
8	Technical and Vocational Institute at Gwadar
9	320MW Coal-Fired Power Plant, Hub, Baluchistan
10	300MW Imported Coal Based Power Project at Gwadar, Pakistan.

Figure 1. Source: China Pakistan Economic Corridor M/O Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives. "CPEC Energy Priority Projects". <http://cpec.gov.pk/energy>

These projects target the energy and infrastructure development of the province. With CPEC, the government has declared that 7.1



billion USD will be invested to develop Balochistan solely. It is to develop the province and improve its security as well as the overall situation of Pakistan. The government has hyped CPEC for the future of Balochistan but the triumph of CPEC has still to be tangibly noticed.

## Significance of Balochistan for CPEC

Balochistan is very significant for CPEC because of its geo-strategic position which connects it to the Arabian Sea, Iran, and Afghanistan. Its Gwadar warm-water port is crucially important to Chinese objectives as it gives them easier and shortest access to the Persian Gulf and helps resolve their Malacca dilemma. That is why multiple projects (shown in the figure) have been signed to develop Gwadar port and build Gwadar port city. So, Gwadar is a fundamental arm of the CPEC.

List of Gwadar Projects in CPEC	
Sr. No	Projects
1	Eastbay Expressway
2	Gwadar International Airport
3	Construction of Breakwaters
4	Dredging of berthing areas & channels
5	Infrastructure for Free Zone & EPZs port related industries
6	Necessary Facilities of Fresh Water Treatment and Supply
7	Pak China Friendship Hospital at Gwadar
8	Technical and Vocational Institute at Gwadar
9	Gwadar Smart Port City Master Plan

Figure 5. Source: Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives GOP

Subsequently, there is no doubt in the point that CPEC offers an abundance of development opportunities to Balochistan. But development under CPEC can only be successful if it is inclusive. It entails that the development must make space for local participation and keep their grievances in mind.

*Continued on page 29*

# Places You Need to Visit Before You Turn 30

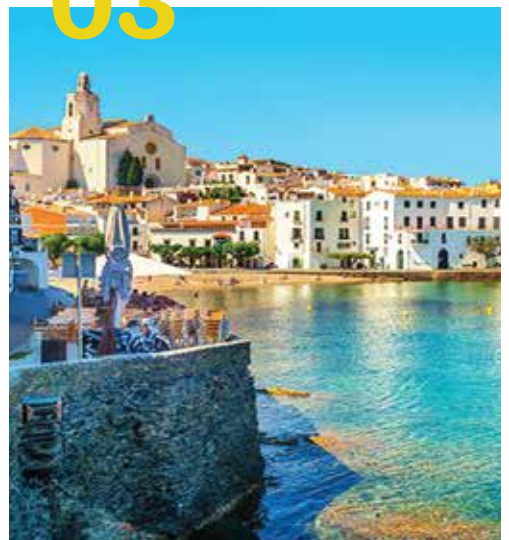
01



02



03



## Paris, France

How about exploring one of the most romantic places in Europe, all you romantics at heart? If you yearn for mornings with buttery croissants and wish you could take a boat down the Seine, Paris is the place for you. Don't forget to take Instagram-worthy photos with the gorgeous Eiffel Tower as a backdrop. A visit to Paris allows visitors to revel in the arts, music, and the city's numerous museums. Paris is also the center of culture in Europe. The Louvre Gallery One of the most well-known art museums in the world is located in Paris and is a must-see. For all those who enjoy history, there is also the Palace of Versailles! Don't forget to visit Disneyland, Disney fanatics!

## Sardinia, Italy

The second-largest island in the Mediterranean Sea and the subject of many people's travel fantasies is Sardinia. This Italian Island has over 2,000 kilometres of shoreline. Sardinia attracts tourists from around the world because of its serene beaches and hiking paths. It is one of Italy's most breathtaking locations and ought to be on every traveler's must-see list. Visits to Sella del Diavolo, the Costa Smeralda, Alghero, and Nuraghe Losa are all included in a trip to Sardinia. Dolphin sightings are also possible. Visitors can also tour the internationally renowned Museo Archeologico Nazionale, which features relics from the Punic, Greek, and Roman periods.

## Spain

Stunning natural features and jaw-dropping museums are the main attractions of a trip to Spain. Spain is every traveler's ideal destination thanks to its warm climate and dynamic culture. Therefore, save it right immediately! The breathtaking scenery and well-known mountain ranges are a visual delight.

When visiting Spain, you may swim in the Costa Brava's crystal-clear waters, visit Pueblos Blancos, Andalusia's white-washed villages, explore the Moco Museum, and see Casa Batlló Gaudí, one of Antoni Gaudí's masterpieces and located in Barcelona.



# 04



## Bangkok, Thailand

Want to take in a peaceful sunrise by the river? Go to Bangkok, known as the "City of Angels." With its serene klongs, cool bars, and magnificent temples, Thailand's capital city will astound you with its breathtaking splendor. Bangkok is a city with a lot to discover. Visit the Temple of Dawn, take a tour of the floating market, enjoy a boat ride on the Chao Phraya River, and perhaps go shark swimming at Siam Ocean World!

# 05



## Osaka, Japan

One of the Japanese cities where travellers may immerse in history and culture is Osaka. The 'Venice of The East' is well-known for its exciting nightlife, fascinating history, and mouthwatering cuisine. In addition to being a significant financial hub, Osaka is regarded as one of Japan's most diverse and modern cities.

One of the largest cities in Japan, Osaka is home to a variety of tourist attractions, including the Bay Area, Minoo Park, Umeda Sky Building, Tennoji, Bunraku Theatre, Osaka Aquarium, and Universal Studios Japan.

# 06



## Maui, Hawaii

Maui, a geographically diversified island in Hawaii, is known for its secluded ocean coves and towering mountain ranges. Maui is a sanctuary for all nature enthusiasts, offering a wealth of unspoiled natural beauty to discover.

There are several locations where you may enjoy this Hawaiian island at its finest. The stunning Wailea is accessible, as are Haleakala National Park's wilderness areas and the West Maui Mountains' rain forests. However, Kahana's underwater submarine excursion is what draws most visitors to Maui.



# 07

## Maldives

With its crystal-clear oceans, stunning palm trees, and white-sand beaches, the tropical paradise of the Maldives is home to almost 1200 of the most magnificent islands in the world. The island nation is the ideal location for organising your dream beach vacation. The Maldives are among the top destinations in the world for anyone with a spirit of adventure. Here, you must go jet skiing on the Arabian Sea! Further destinations for tourists to explore in the Maldives include Male City, Como Cocoa Island, Addu Atoll, and Maafushi.

## Local Grievances with CPEC

However, locals have asserted their apprehensions about these projects as they disrupt their way of life. For instance, the Gwadar port city projects have been restricting the local fishers in the coastal region. They have been told to fish only in a small area endangering livelihood. Some had to move because of the building. Others saw the securitization of Gwadar city in a veil of its construction as a threat. This securitization has spread to the region, burdening the locals. It has led to the rise of local grievances and the targeting of gas pipelines or Chinese workers. The government has also attempted to fence Gwadar city to secure it. This has also got negatively perceived by locals, which has blocked the fencing temporarily.



Likewise, the fencing of the Pak-Afghan and Pak-Iran international border is also one measure to ensure the security of the CPEC projects from external threats. Locals also negatively received the border management as they saw it as a measure to restrict informal border trade. Particularly, people inhabiting the borderlands of Balochistan who prosper from this cross-border trade. These restrictions will hurt their subsistence, which rests on commerce with bordering countries. The increased security monitors and the pressure of tariffs significantly make these development projects less convenient for Baloch people and particularly small local traders.

## Making Development Inclusive

Inclusive development within Balochistan entails local communities getting involved in the development process. Their opinions get respected, and their issues get resolved. This means that no one gets marginalized and in Balochistan, CPEC involves all sectors in social, political, and economic processes for enhanced social well-being, societal and environmental sustainability, and emancipation. This means that under CPEC, all the local issues such as illiteracy, misrepresentation, misallocation of resources, etc. get effectively handled. A report in (2005) expressed that only 26% of Balochistan was literate. Even now, this rate has not improved much. Balochistan is behind other provinces in sanitation, health, and safe drinking water. Most of the population lives in rural areas where there is an absence of essential facilities like health and housing. Several people, especially Baloch nationalists and youth,

have threatened the government and state with more development in the province unless it took them into confidence and offered a fair share. Out of approximately 20,000 undergraduates who graduate in Balochistan annually, only 1,800 can get jobs. Stagnation and underdevelopment are the dominant factors behind their resentment.

With CPEC, there has been a growth in migrants. The rising population has added to the oppression of insufficient natural resources in Balochistan, particularly Quetta. The casual usage of groundwater resources to satisfy water demands has caused environmental degradation in recent years. It has driven Balochistan into unsustainable development as it is starting a water shortage around the province. It is, therefore, crucial to examine how the purpose of the incoming migrants could get transposed into urban design schemes and the practical construction of urban planning associations. Without significant attempts toward establishing pacifically coexistent communities in Balochistan, the region cannot benefit from CPEC.

Inclusive public policies that give equal spaces/opportunities in public life, regardless of ethnic and religious history, need to be prepared. It should take determined positive steps to include/involve marginalized minority communities. This calls for an urban policy for Balochistan that holds a comprehensive view of the health, housing, education, water, and sanitation requirements of the urban areas. The professionals and help from the pertinent agencies could stimulate and facilitate the Balochistan assembly in performing a more forceful role in shaping an administrative framework for migrants and metropolitan planning. This is crucial to preserve native citizens and their political representation and to secure a community presence in the development of Balochistan.

Conclusively, to sum up, the above discussion, for CPEC to be successful in Balochistan, the development must be inclusive in nature. Before CPEC, Balochistan was comparatively ignored by the central government. But now with the much-needed attention, the security situation and conflict within Balochistan will not be resolved if the current development is not inclusive in nature. It is crucial to alleviate the grievances of the people of Balochistan and to improve the socio-economic status of the province. A better socio-economic situation with CPEC will decrease the deprivation that Balochistan as a province has been subjected to. But it can only be achieved if efficient inclusive development is set up and the government shows consistency in its policies towards Balochistan.

Balochistan is crucial to the completion and success of CPEC, but this success depends on local participation and inclusive development. It is essential that adequate policy measures that cater to social development along with infrastructural development. CPEC cannot succeed if the population of Balochistan is not involved because it will undermine the durability of an exclusive development. Inclusivity demands that securitization should be mindful of local people and should not threaten their livelihood. Similarly, the Gwadar city project should give considerable space to local fishermen, so their livelihood is not endangered. Additionally, the fate of Balochistan should not be solely left to CPEC, because its success must be seen in the coming years. Therefore, the government needs to strengthen its own state and national building efforts.



# Economic Recovery: Dr. Ashfaq Hasan sees no other way but Early Elections to achieve it

*In an interview with Hum News, renowned Economist Dr. Ashfaq Hasan deemed early elections critical for stabilizing the country's economy. He linked Pakistan's economic woes to extreme levels of political polarization*

By Dr. Ashfaq Hasan



Dr. Ashfaq Hasan revealed the true character of politicians when he said, "Politicians know the reality but they will never confess that the inflation is too high, their policies have failed to deliver positive results, or they couldn't achieve what they claimed to do."

While referring to the incumbent government's excessive reliance on the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as a means of allaying fears of an unstable economy he said: "They just give people false hopes that as soon as the IMF program is negotiated everything will be fine and the public believes such statements at face value since a large proportion of the population is illiterate."

"Economic condition in Pakistan is inextricably linked to political instability. Neither the IMF program nor any other donor agency can fix this. Only political stability can bring about economic stability," he said.

When asked about the steps the country should take to get out of the economic turmoil, he said: "There is no magic wand to fix the ongoing economic crisis. The country is gripped in political deadlock. For ensuring a better future, it's important that we first fix this political logjam. And the only way forward is free, fair, and transparent elections. The sooner the better."

Dr. Hasan reminded political leaders of the great sacrifices of the country's forefathers, "If someone is adamant on not holding early elections, they need to recall that Quaid e Azam was once adamant about securing an independent Muslim country. If today's political leaders don't budge, same Pakistan created through the untiring sacrifices of our forefathers will be destroyed by none other than ourselves."

"The country cannot endure political instability anymore. Political polarization has reached its peak. Vindictive cases against each other are being filed by political parties," he said.

When asked by the host, if a miracle happens and these demands are accepted, do you think the economy will improve, he said, "Inflation and currency depreciation are only because the government isn't doing what it ought to do."

Whichever party comes into power after elections for 5 years will have legitimacy, Dr. Hasan said while explaining his rationale for early elections. "This state of uncertainty will disappear when political stability is there, and businessmen won't have to be worried about the exchange rate first thing in the morning."



While commenting on the incumbent government's claims of saving Pakistan from default, he said: "No one has taken out Pakistan from default. This is just a political point scoring. Neither Pakistan has defaulted when it had \$800 million in reserves nor will it default in the future. Presently, we have \$8-9 billion reserves."

The country's leadership needs to focus on improving the economy rather than lodging cases against political opponents. "If things like this happen and the focus is on such things, how can the economy improve?" he asked.

Dr. Ashfaq Hasan expressed regret over the lack of heed paid to his call when he was repeatedly advising the government to avoid knocking on the doors of the IMF. "If the country had listened to me, the people wouldn't have suffered the way they did," he said while adding that "Today, I'm only asking for free, fair, and transparent elections. The country will suffer a lot if they aren't conducted."

## Politicizing The Army

*Chances are that mainstream political parties might enter into a contest of polemics after the COAS appointment and thus cause a unique political or constitutional crisis*



By Umer Farooq

In the wake of the October 1999 military coup, there was a widespread belief in the academic circles that the military leaders decided to intervene on the fateful night of October 12, 1999, after they perceived interference in the internal affairs of the Army by the then political leaders, especially former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. Former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was taking a personal interest in postings and transfers within the Army. He was meeting and hobnobbing with the corps commanders directly and was tinkering with the process of postings and transfers within the army hierarchy. The military leaders later accused Sharif of directly making efforts to divide the army's general staff. The prime minister's decision to remove General Musharraf from the office of COAS proved to be the last straw. Experts on civil-military relations like Dr. Hassan Askari believe that the Army jealously guards against any interference in its internal affairs including interference in the system of postings and transfers.

The political situation at present is completely different from what it was in October 1999, but still, there is one commonality between the two situations: in both situations, the military perceived interference of political leadership in the internal

affairs of the Army including that of the posting and transfers within the Army. Military leaders perceive it to be a visible attempt to divide the general staff. The intense bickering between the political leaders over how the military should behave in the political arena has led to myriad possibilities, in which the Army's top brass would be subjected to intense tussle and tug of war that could see the politicization of its ranks and files.

Pakistan's Chief of the Army Staff, General Qamar Javed Bajwa will soon start his farewell visits to the Army's formations. With only two months left in his official extended tenure of three years, General Bajwa could be described as the most politically controversial Chief of the Army Staff in Pakistan's history. The irony is that at least officially he remained committed to non-interference in the country's politics and yet he faced scathing criticism from two major political parties of the country. During the past three years, both the PMLN and PTI carried out insulting social media campaigns against General Bajwa for his alleged tilt toward the opposing political party. Normally those army chiefs who did not impose martial law escaped political criticism from the country's major political parties and groups. General Bajwa commanded

Army for six years and never imposed martial law and yet he rivaled those army chiefs in Pakistan's history, who imposed martial laws, in the number of controversies he was associated with during his career. First Nawaz Sharif accused him of orchestrating his ouster and jail sentence and then Imran Khan accused him of being party to his removal from power. The controversies these allegations generated are still chasing General Bajwa while he is preparing to doff the uniform.

Two direct impacts of the controversies surrounding the person and office of General Bajwa are that there has been restlessness in the Army's rank and file, as reported in the media, and secondly, the issues related to postings and transfers in the Army hierarchy have become issues of public controversies. For any military organization, it is almost impossible to remain impervious to social and political trends in the society which is hosting it. If the political, social, or religious tensions persist in society for a prolonged period, it is almost certain that it will substantially impact the rank and file of the military organization. The concept of a military garrison is primarily to ensure that the military organization exists in some kind of insulation from the social and political trends in society. Pakistan's military and society



are no exception to this rule. For quite a prolonged period—almost since August 2014—Pakistani society is persistently living in a kind of perpetual political turmoil, jumping from one crisis to another. Some of the unconfirmed media reports suggest that this persistent political turmoil has impacted the military rank and file in our society. The information in this regard is, however, sketchy and nobody could be sure of what is going on inside the military. Some events and happenings indicate that military leaders take this problem (or challenge) very seriously. For instance, the haste and aggressiveness the state displayed in instituting cases over attempts to provoke a mutiny inside the military, against a second-tier PTI leader are indicative of how seriously the military leaders are tackling the situation. The PTI leader is said to have instigated the military officers not to listen to the “Illegal orders” of their superiors. Initially, there were some media reports that General Bajwa faced some tough questioning from the young officers in a meeting with the garrison officers in Rawalpindi at the time of the ouster of Imran Khan from power. Some political analysts, however, disagree that there is any situation of restlessness in the army, “There is no restlessness in the army. Yes of course everybody has his own opinion and that’s it,” said Naseem Zehra, eminent political commentator, and TV anchor.

Since 2014 the political leaders of two major political parties including PMLN and PTI have been persistent in dragging military leadership into politics. Initially, the voices were subdued as the political leaders in cryptic language and tone were hinting that the military would intervene to dismantle the government of their opponents. Those in power responded by creating a photo opportunity with the military leaders in times of political crisis or in times of political assaults from their opposition. With time these voices, however, grew in intensity, severity, and seriousness of allegations. Former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif accused incumbent COAS, and former DG ISI of masterminding his removal from power through a court order and his conviction in a criminal case. The PTI was even blunter as it accused the military leadership of becoming part of an international conspiracy to dislodge him from power. The chances are that the rank

and file of Pakistan’s military is unlikely to remain immune from the massive social media campaign, one after the other, by both these parties. In such a situation, the impending appointment of a new Chief of the Army Staff could become an event when these rival political parties produce massive amounts of political polemics with their sharp tongues. Defence Minister Khawaja Asif has already warned that political leaders and parties should not indulge in politics over the appointment of COAS. There are already indications that at least one party, i.e. PTI, has saved its best propaganda efforts for the coming event.



Political analysts are predicting that most likely there will be controversy after the present PML-N government picks a general as the next COAS. The likely participants of this controversy would be political leaders and social media activists sitting inside and outside the country, “If they follow the seniority principle then there is a chance that there would be no controversy. But if the seniority principle is not adhered to and many generals are superseded then there will be a controversy. At least social media will erupt with comments and critical comments,” said Hassan Askari, an eminent political commentator, and author. Naseem Zahra, however, disagrees, “I don’t think the appointment will lead to any political crisis or a controversy,” she said.

In the recent past, military leaders at least on one occasion, have demonstrated extreme sensitivity to social and political trends in society. When some religious scholars declared TTP members killed in

Pakistan’s military campaigns and AL-Qaeda Chief, Osama Bin Laden as martyrs of Islam. Ostensibly this could have an impact on the rank and file and this statement from a religious scholar was followed by a hard-hitting rejoinder from the ISPR, in which the credentials of the religious scholar were questioned. We have a precedent where political and religious leaders make attempts to make the appointment of COAS controversial. For instance, before the former Prime Minister decided to appoint General Qamar Javed Bajwa as COAS in November 2016, a religious scholar tried to create doubts about the

religious identity of General Bajwa. However, this time it would not be an obscure religious scholar who would be attempting to make the appointment controversial. The chances are that the popular and mainstream political parties might enter into a contest of polemics over the appointment and thus cause a unique political or constitutional crisis.

“Army is facing a very difficult situation because of these controversies. The basic point is that we have reached a point where Pakistani politics cannot be controlled from one point. You can pressurize the local media but you cannot browbeat the people sitting out of the country and they will make comments on social media,” said Hassan Askari, “I would not use the word restlessness to describe the situation inside the Army. But what we understand from the situation is that people have opinions about the treatment meted out to Imran Khan and they express it in words. But it



would be wrong to suggest that there be any revolt-like situation. The internal discipline of the army is very strong.”

In the post-Musharraf period, Pakistani political parties—especially those in opposition—have demonstrated the tendency to ignite a political controversy just when the time of appointment of COAS comes near, ostensibly to put the incumbent Prime Minister under pressure. Since General Musharraf doffed his uniform, no army chief has been appointed without the opposition of the time going into agitation mode or coming out in the open with the threats to go into agitation mode. The assumption and fears in the political circles that the incumbent Prime Minister, if given free rein, would appoint his favorite as COAS is historically proven wrong time and again. Prime Minister Bhutto's and Prime Minister Sharif's attempts to control the institution of the army through an individual have turned badly wrong in our recent past.

In these times of deep political crises, the military top brass perceived the scathing criticism of the institutional involvement of the Army and its top brass in the country's politics as deeply disturbing and disheartening. The fact that criticism has been coming from two major political parties, PMLN and PTI, which are popular in Central and Northern Punjab and those areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which serve as recruiting grounds for Pakistani land forces, could expand into a major crisis for the Army as an institution. Experts say these controversies could transform into a major political crisis for the Army. This situation could cause major problems for the Army's top

brass to push the country's political elite into developing some kind of political consensus in case the Army is compelled by the situation in the Pak-Afghan border areas to launch another major military operation against TTP.

The situation on the Western border is worrying for Pakistan's security establishment, especially when the talks with the Taliban are getting nowhere. One military expert says that the chances are growing that the Pakistan Army would again have to launch a major operation against a regrouped and reorganized TTP in Pak-Afghan border areas. “Pakistani Taliban are now again in a position to pose a substantial terror threat to Pakistani security forces and urban centers after they were allowed to regroup in Taliban's Afghanistan since August 2021,” said one senior military official.



Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) or Pakistani Taliban has the largest components of foreign fighters presently stationed in Afghanistan after the Taliban takeover of Kabul, according to the United Nations Monitoring Committee report. United Nations Security Council's ISIL and Al-Qaeda Sanctions Monitoring Committee's 30th report on the presence and capability of various terror groups based in Afghanistan shows that the TTP currently has the “largest component” of 3,000 to 4,000 foreign fighters in Afghanistan. This number is larger than any other group of foreign fighters stationed in Afghanistan.

TTP's central leader, Noor Wali Mehsud started the efforts to reorganize the militant group sometime in 2020, when clear signs emerged about American withdrawal from Afghanistan. According to experts, Al-Qaeda leadership based in Afghanistan played a crucial role in assisting the re-organization of the TTP in Afghanistan. According to the UNSC Report, Noor Wali Mehsud's success in reuniting various TTP factions has made the group “more cohesive, presenting a greater threat in the region.” As the report mentions further, the “TTP is working in alliance with other transnational jihadi networks, such as the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), based in Afghanistan. The group is also tied to Al-Qaeda, as the February 2021 report of the UNSC showed that the anti-Pakistan group's merger was facilitated by Al-Qaeda”.

In talks with the Pakistani government, the



TTP leadership has completely rejected the government's demand to shun violence in return for an offer to come back and settle in their ancestral lands. Officials familiar with talks said that the Taliban wanted complete control of erstwhile Tribal Areas. The talks between the Taliban and the government are stalled for the time being but most experts in Pakistan believe that the TTP is planning for another wave of violence against Pakistani security forces and urban centers.

Many in the Army now recall the days when the entire political leadership of the country used to get under one roof—with the then Army Chief, General Ashfaq Pervez Kiyani briefing them—and arrive at a consensus to support Army operations in erstwhile tribal areas. This is no more a possibility, “We have witnessed so many political controversies involving military during six years of General Bajwa that it would be extremely difficult for the military leadership to convince entire political leadership to gather under one roof for building consensus to support another military operation against the TTP,” said a recently retired Army general who requested not to be named. Another retired military general lamented that under General Bajwa the role of the Army was transformed from that of a consensus builder (which it was under General Kiyani, according to this retired general) to a partisan of political parties, “This is now a very painful reality and is much strongly felt in Army’s rank and file,” he said. Naseem Zahra, however, has a different opinion on this, “I don’t think the army will face any problem in building a

consensus over the fresh need to carry out a military operation in Pak-Afghan border areas. General Bajwa has himself built consensus a number of times and if any need arises, the Pakistan Army will again play the role of a consensus builder,” she said.

There is a very strong feeling in the Army that the institution should retract from this controversial role as soon as possible. Most disturbingly for the army and its general staff is the fact that all this was happening at a time when General Bajwa would be retiring in two months and a new COAS would have to be appointed by the incumbent prime minister. Already there are signs that this time the process and decision regarding the appointment of the new COAS would result in political controversy. PTI leaders have already opined that elections should be held immediately and the new government which will come to power should appoint the new COAS. The PML-N government is already getting cold feet and some of its leaders have even suggested that General Bajwa should himself appoint the new COAS.

Experts and historians of civil-military relations in Pakistan have in the past opined that the Pakistan Army jealously guards against any interference in the processes of its posting and transfers. For instance, some historians have pointed out that one of the major reasons for the October 1999 coup was that the government of Prime Minister Sharif was interfering in the postings and transfers of the Pakistan Army. One of the negative sides of the present political crisis is the fact that the Army’s postings and

transfers were made controversial by major political parties or at least this is how the Army as an institution perceives the situation at present.

In several interviews with retired and serving military officials conducted for this story, two major factors of concern for the army as an institution emerged: a) Controversy surrounding the person of General Bajwa and some other senior officers of the Pakistan Army could engulf the Army as a whole and thus cause major problems for the image of the institution in Pakistani society; b) Army would not be able to play the role of consensus builder in case it is compelled to launch another military operation against the TTP and other terror organizations if the present political tensions persist for a longer period.

Therefore a consensus is emerging among the general staff in the Pakistan Army that the country should head towards a parliamentary election as soon as possible to put an end to these political controversies. The PML-N government, on the other hand, is determined to resist this demand if and when the military top brass put it before them in black and white form. Sources in the ruling party say that there are voices in the party which are in favor of giving General Bajwa an extension of one year so that he would be able to clear the situation for a “fair and free” election. But General Bajwa seems not in a position to retain control of the institution of the Army in the face of growing resentment within the general staff against attracting any more controversies.



# The devil is in the details

*When the Red Mosque operation occurred in 2007, it provided an opportunity for jihadi organisations in Swat*

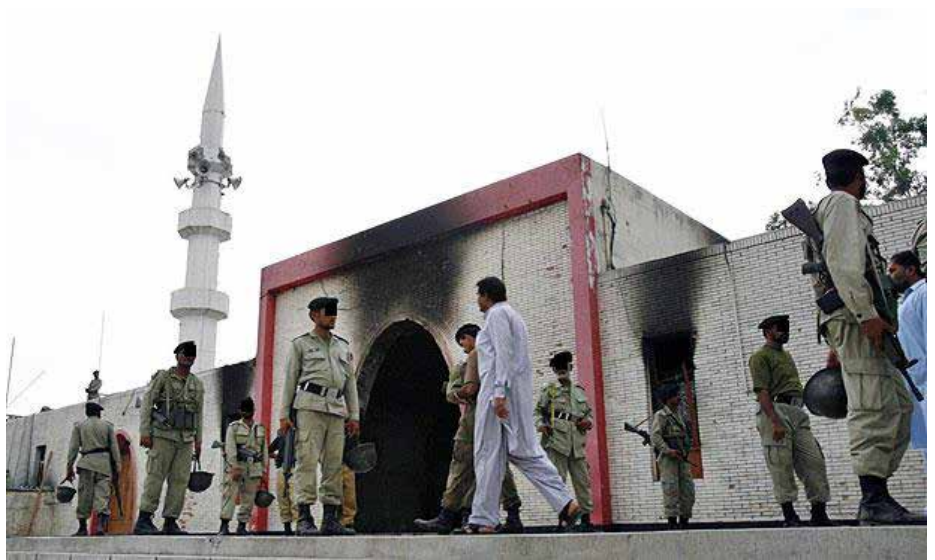
By Syed Fakhar KaKaKhel

Swat has always remained a popular tourist destination in Pakistan and has never been a centre of militancy or violence in its history. Peace and education were the hallmarks of Swat when it was an independent state run by the royal family of Swat. The Wali-e-Swat had established an excellent governance system. Even when Swat was merged with Pakistan, Swat was known as a peaceful tourist center.

This area was the top priority of filmmakers in the eighties and nineties because of its scenic view, peace, and tourist-friendly Pashtuns. Then demand was made by local clerics regarding the implementation of Sharia laws from the Dir region to the entire Malakand division. In 1992, Maulana Sufi Muhammad, a staunch follower of the Panj Piri school of thought, founded Tehreek Nifaz-e-Sharia Muhammadi (TNSM). He was the forerunner of this movement in the Malakand Division.

The activities of this organisation gradually turned violent and started to cover Swat as well. Then, 9/11 happened. Maulana Sufi Muhammad took thousands of youths from Swat and Malakand divisions to fight jihad in Afghanistan, crossing the border via Bajaur. Though he came back unhurt, thousands of young people are still missing who accompanied him to Jihad in Afghanistan. It is feared that most of them have been killed in the US bombings against Al-Qaeda and Afghanistan.

In the earthquake of 2005, when the clusters of jihadist organisations in Hazara were affected, hundreds of jihadists first came to the jihadist factions in the former FATA, but due to organisational and ideological differences, these jihadists did not stay long, and within two years, after staying briefly in Momand and Bajaur districts, they reached the upper forests of the Swat valley. The training of these jihadis was according to the regional structure of Kashmir, and they got the same environment in Swat. Another important point was that the majority of them belonged to the Salafi school of thought,



while the majority of the tribal areas belonged to the Deobandi school of thought and were Afghan-centric in Jihad.

When the Red Mosque operation occurred in 2007, it provided an opportunity for jihadi organisations in Swat as well. Maulana Sufi Muhammad's son-in-law, Mullah Fazlullah, declared jihad against the government.

In 2007 and 2008, Swat witnessed horrific acts of terrorism. The killings took place on a daily basis; the throats of police and security personnel were slit; and suicide attacks were carried out throughout Malakand Division. Restrictions were imposed on women. Schools were closed. Even the police were forced to perform their duties in plain clothes.

To control this situation, the coalition government of the Awami National Party and People's Party espoused negotiations. These negotiations were massively criticised by some quarters inside and outside the country.

However, ANP leaders believed that the public might not support the use of force in the first place. After brief negotiations and an initial agreement, a ceasefire was announced. But within 24 hours, the Taliban left Swat and moved towards

Buner and Shangla. After that, the 2009 military operation was carried out in Swat and three million people were forced to migrate from Malakand. Swat was cleared of militants within a few months. Tehreek-e-Taliban Swat, head of Tehreek-e-Taliban Swat, fled to Afghanistan along with his associates. He continued his operations in Afghanistan's Kunar province. During this time, he also attacked Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai from Swat. During this time, Mullah Fazlullah also became the head of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan and accepted responsibility for the attack on Army Public School Peshawar. He was killed in a drone attack in Kunar, Afghanistan.

Recently, the Tehreek-e-Insaf government, after the arrival of the Taliban in Afghanistan, decided to adopt the path of negotiations with the Pakistani Taliban as well. Former DGISI General Faiz Hameed played an important role in this. The deal is in its final stages. In the agreement, they were told that they could lay down their arms and go to their respective areas. Meanwhile, General Faiz Hameed was appointed Corps Commander in Peshawar.

During his tenure in Peshawar, reports started coming from several areas that the Taliban had started returning to their



respective areas. Meanwhile, Tehreek-e-Insaaf members of the provincial assembly and ministers from Malakand and Swat started receiving extortion calls with threats. In Swat and Malakand, there was an uproar. The fighters of Tehreek-e-Taliban Malakand believed that on August 15, the one-year anniversary of the Taliban's victory in Afghanistan, they would gradually start to appear back in their home towns. However, dozens of Taliban entered Bajaur, Dir, and Swat in the first week of August. Meanwhile, a clash took place between the local police and the Taliban during a police patrol in the Matta area of Swat.

After this encounter, the Taliban attacked the local police post and kidnapped the security personnel, including the DSP. When these incidents were reported by the media, the Taliban referred all the abducted officials to the Jirga and set them free. The Pakistan Army issued a statement denying the impression that the Taliban had established check posts in Swat. Given any possible threat in Swat during these developments, the force has increased in Swat. However, the Taliban retreated to unknown locations. Protests against the presence of the Taliban in Dir later spread to Swat too.

A major incident took place on August 7. The founding member of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan and the head of the Taliban negotiation team, Abdul Wali, alias Omar Khalid Khorasani, along with his son-in-law and his partner, were killed in Afghanistan. The militants of Swat, Bajaur, and Momand began to put pressure on the central leadership to end negotiations with the government of Pakistan. The central



leadership, though, did not end the ceasefire but the attacks in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa intensified. The term "defensive attacks" was used for these attacks by the Taliban. It was said that the ceasefire is in place, but where there are actions against their fighters, the organization's fighters have the right to retaliate.

This was the reason why Idris Khan, the leader of the local peace committee in Swat, along with seven other colleagues and policemen, was targeted by a bomb attack, after which another leader of the peace committee, Shireen Khan, was killed in the second attack. The situation in Swat is getting tense with each passing day. On the instructions of Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Corps Commander Peshawar Lieutenant General Sardar Hassan Azhar Hayat visited Swat and met the elders of the Malakand Division. He assured the people of the area that Malakand would not be left to terrorism and that strong action would be taken against the terrorists.

On the other hand, there are reports that many militants of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan are being seen in Dir and Bajaur apart from Swat. A sit-in protest has also been called for peace in Bajaur. All religious and political parties participated in this sit-in. Bajaur is currently under severe tension due to the border with Afghanistan. In other districts of Swat and Malakand, including Bajaur, calls for extortion continue. In his video message, former Federal Minister of Communications of Tehreek-e-Insaaf Murad Saeed, hailing from Swat, demanded the army take notice of the situation. Former Prime Minister Imran Khan himself has admitted on social media that his colleagues are being threatened by TTP.

It is worth mentioning that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Mehmood Khan is from Swat. At present, Tehreek-e-Insaaf is suffering from a strange conflict both politically and publicly. Imran Khan has always supported the Taliban. It was during his tenure that the Taliban re-emerged in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Barrister Mohammad Ali Saif, the provincial government's representative and government spokesperson, led the negotiations with the TTP in Afghanistan. Now suddenly, TTP's aggressive movements in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have put PTI in a dilemma. It has become difficult for them to maintain a pro-Taliban narrative.

On the other hand, the Taliban are receiving extortion from PTI's parliamentarians. In this way, their colleagues are involved in the financial support of terrorists even if they don't want to.



# Recalibrating Development Strategy in Merged Tribal Districts

*The government claims that in order to improve infrastructure, over 441 kilometres of new roads and 11 new bridges have been built and 612 kilometres of roads rehabilitated in different tribal districts*

By Dr. Raza Khan

After more than four years of merger with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the former Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) have been on a path of multi-pronged development, but the pace of progress has been slow while the direction of uplift has been somewhat misguided. The Merged Tribal Districts (MTDs), which used to be called FATA, have made some progress in many areas since merging with the KP province in May 2018. This was made possible by the 25th Constitutional Amendment, which was passed almost unanimously. However, the challenges to development in the Pashtun-dominated tribal region straddling the Afghanistan-Pakistan international border have been so huge and complex that they have markedly impeded the overall progress. Aside from problems, the slow pace of development in the tribal region is also due to the fact that public officials are either not good at their jobs or are not willing to do their jobs.

At the time of the merger of the former FATA with KP, the PML-N government, which had managed to pass the 25th Constitutional Amendment on the last day of its five-year long tenure, had announced that it would spend Rs. 1000 billion over the next ten years for the uplift of the tribal region under the then devised Tribal Decade Strategy (TDS), with each year receiving an allocation of Rs. 100 billion for multi-sector development. To help improve the tribal region, two plans have been made: the Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) and the Accelerated Implementation Program (AIP).

The TDS is aimed at generating employment opportunities, economic growth, increasing students' enrolment, provision of healthcare facilities, and creating avenues for investment in the rugged and remote tribal areas to bring about much-needed positive development. As the former FATA region had always had a

nondescript infrastructure, the development strategy focused on bridging infrastructure gaps and improving human as well as socio-economic development sectors. In this way, the federal and KP governments started a lot of development projects under the PSDP and AIP programmes to improve infrastructure and agriculture productivity, and promote technical education, food self-sufficiency, energy, sports facilities, water security, and flood protection.



The government claims that in order to improve infrastructure, over 441 kilometres of new roads and 11 new bridges have been built and 612 kilometres of roads rehabilitated in different tribal districts. There are also many initiatives to improve the educational and healthcare facilities and also increase their numbers. The government has approved a mega Khyber Pass Economic Corridor (KPEC) to link Peshawar with Torkhum in Khyber tribal district.

KPEC's 47.5 km long, four-lane expressway would connect Pakistan with Afghanistan and onward Central Asian Republics (CARs) through Jalabad-Kabul (Eastern Afghanistan) and Mazhar Sharif (Northern Afghanistan) routes. KPEC is a three-year

project for which the Federal Government would provide USD 385.6 million with the KP government's share of USD 75 million and would be completed by 2025. But because so much time has been wasted, there hasn't been any physical work done on the KPEC yet.

All these are very important developmental initiatives and programs. However, the overall Tribal Development Strategy has many issues and challenges with several

lapses. Consequently, the 10-year TDS has been converted into a three-year plan for meaningful and result-oriented execution. This speaks volumes about the inability and incompetence of the implementers, particularly the provincial and federal civilian bureaucratic officials. Even though international development agencies have not only given the much-needed money for the development of the merged tribal districts, they have also given knowledge and information about how to make and carry out the strategy by doing a lot of research on the ground to get a full picture of what the local communities need in terms of development.

According to a recent huddle of scholars at



an Islamabad think tank, the participant observed that objective realities in today's tribal areas are marked by large-scale underdevelopment and a slow pace of development, leaving people's needs and expectations unrealized. Analytically and empirically, this situation has resulted in growing discontent and disorientation among the residents of tribal districts, which in turn causes the gulf between the state and tribal area residents to widen. This is not at all a good omen for the region and Pakistan.

At the moment, the voices and forces that were strong proponents of a merger, as opposed to those calling for maintaining the status quo or giving a separate provincial status to the region, are on the defensive. The Grand FATA Alliance and others who want to give former FATA the status of a separate province are gaining support. They say that merging the region with the KP would be disastrous, which is now "beyond doubt" to be the case.

Against the backdrop of this situation, there is a need to revisit the development strategy in the former FATA for a better and more meaningful uplift of the region. Without this, there is always a chance that large-scale conflicts and crises will start up again in tribal districts. In this regard, it is important to note that the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), the largest terrorist-militant organisation in Pakistan, which emerged in the FATA in 2007 and whose members mostly comprise young men from the tribal region, in their recent negotiations with government-sponsored delegates held in Afghanistan, demanded the reversal of the merger of tribal districts with the KP.

The TTP has been uncompromising on the demand as it thinks that the tribal region would serve as their power base once they have successful talks with the government. The group thinks that an underdeveloped and unreformed former FATA region, once restored to its former quasi-integrated status and enmeshed in abject poverty, underdevelopment, and lack of education and infrastructure, would be used for its powerful political aims. The TTP has become emboldened to demand a reversal of the merger of the FATA region because of the overall slow pace of development in the region after four years of its merger. This is a very serious matter for the state to

focus its attention on. It has taken more than a decade of hard work and sacrifice to take back the land that militant and terrorist groups stole from the tribal region. So, the situation needs to be handled very carefully, or there will be a lot of damage.



The biggest issue that has afflicted the Pashtun tribal regions has been the lack of multi-dimensional security for its residents, particularly from local, national, and international militant and terrorist groups. In this regard, the Pakistani government has made the correct decision to institutionalise and modernise the law enforcement apparatus as well as to convert tribal-based levies into regular police forces, but capacity constraints have prevented the police from taking on all law-and-order responsibilities. The government also extended the jurisdiction of regular Pakistani courts to the tribal regions more than four years ago, but this has not ensured the provision of justice to most residents of the region. Then there is the issue of the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), which is far from being satisfactorily addressed. All of these problems need to be looked into right away and solved to everyone's satisfaction in the tribal area.

For the comprehensive and sustainable development of FATA, many new mega projects and programmes ought to be initiated. Of the existing projects, KPEC is one such project that would be instrumental in opening the vistas of economic development in the entire tribal region as well as KP and northern Punjab.

Therefore, the government needs to speed up the progress on the project and remove all the bureaucratic red-tape in this regard. One has learnt that Pakistani officials are

erecting unnecessary impediments in the way of implementing the KPEC. Notably, the project would be of massive value if it were linked up with the mega China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). As China has always been interested in extending

CPEC to Afghanistan and through it to Central Asia, Pakistani interlocutors must engage the Chinese in this regard.

A key aspect of development strategy in the FATA is that it is a race against time. Therefore, all developmental initiatives have to be undertaken on war-footing. Because as the process of development is delayed, more and more young people, who make up the bulk of the tribal areas' population, will become further disenchanted and lose faith in the state's efforts. This has previously occurred, resulting in a large number of FATA residents losing contact with the state and the rest of the country. This situation has been manipulated by militants and terrorists like the TTP and foreign terrorist groups like Al Qaeda to make erstwhile FATA their virtual fiefdom to launch terrorist attacks across Pakistan and inside Afghanistan on international forces occupying that state from 2001 to 2021.

Even today, young men and women from the MTDs, particularly students, have multiple complaints regarding the way the region has been governed since its merger with the KP province. These complaints need to be heeded to by the authorities. But the people who make public policy, like those in the national parliament, the KP assembly, and the intelligentsia, which includes the media and academia, especially the research community, have to give direction and keep an eye on things.

# Future of Monarchy and the Commonwealth

*One of the factors that glued the Commonwealth together was the person of Queen Elizabeth II*

By Dr Khalid Bajwa

Queen Elizabeth II symbolised continuity, stability, and constancy while presiding over the immense changes in her power, the empire, the Commonwealth, and the world. Her reign was the period of contraction of the empire, and it was a permanent slide. Not only that, the world was changing fast with the emergence of more independent countries and economic powers. Great Britain was the first country in the world to kickstart and experience first the green revolution and then the industrial revolution. However, it was also the first to see the reversal of the industrial revolution when there was a spate of factory closures for a lack of export markets as well as saturation of the domestic market with cheap imported goods.

The First World War in the early twentieth century shook the foundations of the existing political order and resulted in the abolition of many established monarchies in Europe. The Russian, Austro-Hungarian, and Ottoman empires fell, and some queer political dispensations started appearing in Europe, leading the way to the Second World War. This was the time when the sun never set on the British empire. The Second World War brought death and destruction to Europe but ushered it into an unprecedented period of stability and prosperity. At the time, when Queen Elizabeth got married, Britain was glowing in the aftermath of its victory but, at the same time, was precipitating into decline.

In the same year, India and Pakistan gained independence, and the process thus set in motion never stopped during the reign of the queen. The size and influence of the British Empire continued to dwindle in the decades to follow. It was a time of great change in society and politics, as people adjusted to the new realities of the world. However, the legacy of the colonial past made the process of change difficult for the populace.

Keeping pace with and adjusting to the earth-shattering changes, Queen Elizabeth II served her country and the institution of the monarchy, which she headed, well. She remained aloof from the political divide and dynamics of the country and kept the institution of the monarchy above criticism most of the time. She continued to welcome the countries gaining independence from Britain's colonial rule to the forum of the Commonwealth, which was created to further the noble causes of promoting democracy and economic development through trade and providing a forum to discuss, promote, and enact mutually beneficial cooperation. The Commonwealth forum also gave Britain's colonial hangover a psychological boost.

The Commonwealth could have been used much more effectively to the benefit of all member states if serious attempts had been made by its affluent members, especially Britain, to promote economic changes for the purpose of boosting standards of living in the member states, thus turning it into a potent and important block. Unfortunately, it never reached its full potential, and its role was reduced to that of a prop in the British psyche.



The Commonwealth was the big advantage Britain had over other countries but was wasted away for lack of political acumen and statesmanship. Instead, the attention remained focused on the glittering powers of the world, at the cost of ignoring the Commonwealth, putting Britain on par with powers having less clout and opportunities. However, it still presents a golden opportunity for Great Britain and other member countries to focus on economic development by developing human resources and necessary infrastructure. These endeavours will result in an effective say in the emerging multi-polar world. The Commonwealth block can also serve as a calming factor in the conflicts to come in the future.

In light of its ineffectiveness and failure to achieve anything in a substantial and meaningful way, the survival of the Commonwealth itself is puzzling. One of the factors that glued the Commonwealth together was the person of Queen Elizabeth II, who was widely respected and liked by the people. We can say that the queen kept at least the appearance of stability and consistency at home and abroad.

King Charles III has to tread very carefully both domestically, to keep all parties of the political divide happy, and abroad, to further the common good without irritating the nationalist forces. The king has provided continuity and stability on the death of the queen in the form of, "Long live the King, and abroad, to further the common good without irritating the nationalist forces. The king has provided continuity and stability on the death of the queen in the form of, "Long live the King." The public reaction so far has been stable with regard to him and the institution of the monarchy. However, the monarchy is likely to shrink further in his reign as many countries intend to become republics, but the institution of the Commonwealth is likely to endure longer. The king has replaced the late queen as its head.

King Charles III may preside over the split of the United Kingdom as independence movements are present in various components of the kingdom. The independence movement is quite strong in Scotland. The future of the monarchy and the Commonwealth rests a lot on the king and depends on how loveable and likable he becomes in time to come.



# Has Shahbaz Sharif's Samarkand spree reignited ties between Moscow and Islamabad?

*Russian President Vladimir Putin met with Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif and expressed an interest in providing a gas pipeline to counter Pakistan's pressing energy needs*



By Hamzah Rifaat Hussain

There has been a lot of talk about Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif's trip to New York, where he attended the 77th United Nations General Assembly session. The agenda for Pakistan in NYC was simple. Rallying for international assistance and UN coordination to address some of the worst floodings that the globe has seen; ensuring an unwavering commitment to neutrality, peace, and dialogue to defuse the Ukraine crisis; and calling out discriminatory approaches from primary contributors to climate change that are contributing to the woes of the developing world. Diplomacy took centre stage as Pakistan seeks to resuscitate its devastating domestic crisis, but prior to this all-important international odyssey came one of Pakistan's most eye-raising diplomatic visits. The trip to Samarkand, on the other hand, could have a lot of important effects on Pakistan's strategic future.

At the SCO summit, Russian President Vladimir Putin met with Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif and expressed an interest in providing a gas pipeline to counter Pakistan's pressing energy needs. The

meeting included discussions on matters of mutual interest, areas which can promote greater bilateral engagement, and redress the vagaries of the past. The scars from the Soviet era, when Moscow accused Pakistan of sponsoring militancy to thwart an impending communist coup, are still fresh in the memory but lack the collective and unified consciousness that defines the Russian orientation towards Pakistan. Former Prime Minister Imran Khan's tour, for example, coincided with an understanding that Pakistan's foreign policy would be diversified from a point of overt reliance on the West for economic sustenance to an equity-based solid foundation with bilateral ties with every state. Even though the former Prime Minister was fired earlier this year because of a "no-confidence" vote, the current Prime Minister's visit should be very interesting.

The reasons are obvious. Slating himself as a pro-establishment, pro-democracy politician, Sharif has plenty to gain from adopting a similar no-holds-barred approach to foreign policy as his predecessor did. Political capital is helpful for

Pakistan's current government at a time when the country's economy is in trouble due to things like rising sovereign debt, a falling currency, and the cost of spending a lot of money. To delegitimize the government, Pakistan Tehrik-I-Insaaf ensures that the government prepares for the upcoming elections, a multifaceted, variegated foreign policy with greater engagement with countries ranging from Iran to Russia works for the Sharif administration. Also, the tendency to be seen as a pro-Saudi supporter can be easily stopped if engagement with non-Western-aligned states is put first.

Domestic politics aside, a stronger relationship with Russia acts in Pakistan's national interests. Without antagonising traditional strategic partners that have castigated and censured Russian imperialism in Ukraine, many of whom characterised the special operations of the Kremlin as state-sponsored genocide, the Sharif administration can puncture the narrative that Pakistan is a one-dimensional state. India, for example, detracted from American pressure and pursued millions of dollars worth of

liquefied natural gas deals, and successfully managed to position itself as a pseudo-neutral state. This is despite the fact that the hyper-nationalist, Hindu supremacist Bharatiya Janata Party government has prioritised stronger relationships in the Quad with Japan, Australia, and the United States and greater engagement in the Indo-Pacific strategy. The fact that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi then criticised Vladimir Putin at the SCO Summit in Samarkand shows that making foreign policy should be done in a balanced way.



For Shahbaz Sharif to pursue a similar path would yield unprecedented domestic dividends given the impact of subsidised and sanctioned oil on reducing energy prices. A conduit for Russian oil and gas reserves allows Vladimir Putin to deflect Western sanctions, which have been met with plausible deniability from states in East Asia as well as China. This enhances chances for greater economic cooperation, which includes investments in energy corridors; greater solidification of existing projects such as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor; and the export of wheat at a time when Pakistan's agriculture shortages are hitting unprecedented levels due to the flooding crisis. So, the chances of economic cooperation are very good if diplomacy is done with maturity and independence.

At Samarkand, the Prime Minister already expressed Islamabad's willingness to

cooperate with Moscow in food security, investments, defence, and security. These are multifaceted areas that have been largely untapped since the end of the Soviet Union in 1991. In the post-US withdrawal scenario in Afghanistan after 2021, for example, there is an opportunity for both sides to constructively engage in efforts to prevent the proliferation of terrorism and build institutional strength for a country that has been at the receiving end of asset freezes. A lingering humanitarian crisis can be exaggerated further due to the Ukraine

crisis, and both countries can take their lead from the Samarkand Declaration, which clearly prioritises collective engagement to resuscitate the Afghan economy. A well-grounded approach from countries close to Kabul can be used instead of a strong military presence or ideas like "strategic depth."

There will be the next intergovernmental meeting in Karachi between Russian and Pakistani dignitaries later in 2022, which will be discussing a trade slump in relations. A positive trade map is being projected by both sides, which is an ideal opportunity to leverage economic shortcomings in a constructive manner. There are also important energy projects such as the Pakistan Stream gas pipeline, which provides the requisite infrastructure for the delivery of liquefied natural gas. This infrastructure is already in place in countries such as Kazakhstan and is a

critical cog in economic cooperation between Central Asia, Russia, and Pakistan. Given the hurdles encountered in completing the Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran pipelines and the Iran-Pakistan Gas pipeline due to American sanctions on the latter and technical difficulties in the former, it is worthwhile to explore infrastructural projects which can stimulate energy generation. Pakistan, for example, turned to its longstanding ally Qatar to meet its energy needs in light of delays in regional economic projects. If Pakistan wants to take advantage of it in 2022, it also has a chance with Russia.

There are also geopolitical costs involved. The inability to tap into economic dividends from potential cooperation with Moscow could result in the Kremlin prioritising New Delhi instead of Pakistan. It is noteworthy that India chose to abstain from voting against Russia in the United Nations Security Council emergency session on Ukraine, and the fact that Moscow is seeking extensive contact with Asian states as a strategic priority in 2022, means that there is little leeway for the Sharif administration to sidestep this important opportunity. With an abundance of reserves and the prolongation of the Ukraine war, a reality after Putin authorised the mobilisation of reservists, it is in Pakistan's interest to only secure its national interests beyond any cold war binaries or external pressures. Shrewd diplomacy can realise the long-coveted goal of outdoing India in bilateral and multilateral cooperation. While defence cooperation can be considered an afterthought, an official policy of neutrality in the absence of aggression can go a long way in cementing ties that are in sync with Pakistan's national priorities.

The opportunities for a reset in Russia-Pakistan ties with extensive economic cooperation at each other's disposal are ideal for both sides. With enormous reserves, Russia does have the option of bypassing Pakistan and seeking other conduits for greater economic clout, yet Pakistan has limited choices given the dire state of the national economy and widespread inundation. It is time for the Sharif administration to take the major optics from the SCO summit in Samarkand and translate them into tangible results for the people of Pakistan. Here is the answer to a long-term relationship that is multidimensional, real, and stable.



# Afghan Interim Government and International Recognition: Terrorists on the search for other extremist groups?

*The Taliban administration in Afghanistan runs the possibility of becoming an active safe haven again if the country is diplomatically boycotted and isolated*

By Tayyaba Razzaq

The caretaker government is still seeking recognition, and it is important to ensure security in the region. This is only possible when the caretaker government takes strict actions against terrorist groups, especially Al Qaeda, present on Afghan soil. Although the Taliban has guaranteed the international community that it will stop terrorist groups like Al Qaeda and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan Province (IS-K) from carrying out attacks abroad, Al Qaeda's strength and clout have significantly diminished since 2001.

However, the Taliban leadership is feared by many because of its continued defence of Osama bin Laden and its denial of his role in the 9/11 attacks. This also suggests that the Taliban have a soft place for Al Qaeda. The top brass of Al Qaeda had already released a statement commending the Islamic Emirate on its success in Afghanistan. As was stated in the announcement, "On this momentous occasion, we would like to extend our heartfelt congratulations to the leadership of the Islamic Emirate, and in particular to Haibatullah Akhundzada." It is important to note that Ayman al-Zawahiri had already pledged loyalty to each and every Taliban leader, including Mullah Omar, Mullah Akhtar Mansur, and Hebatullah.

This promise, and the partnership it has led to with the Taliban, means that the Taliban may, in response to foreign demands, allow Al Qaeda to engage in some covert activities within Afghanistan. A caretaker government was put in place, and Sirajuddin Haqqani, the leader of the infamous Haqqani network, was named the country's Interior Minister. Given his links to the Taliban and Al Qaeda, Haqqani is still on the FBI's most wanted list, with a USD 10 million rewards for information leading to his capture. There is little chance of decisive action being taken against Al Qaeda while Siraj is in charge of internal security.

However, we must recognise that the IS-K remains a threat to the Taliban. The IS-K danger in Afghanistan was put into perspective by the August 26, 2021, attack on the Kabul airport, which killed approximately 200 people, mainly Afghans. After the incident, China immediately demanded that the Taliban take strong action against the IS-K, and a representative for the Chinese government, Zhao Lijian, said that the Taliban had guaranteed Beijing that they would not allow any troops to endanger China via incursions into Afghanistan.

It appears that the Taliban want to take action against the IS-K, at least according to their words and statements. The details of putting these ideas into practise are murky and complicated. The Taliban have expressed hope in local media interviews that the end of the "foreign occupation" of Afghanistan brought about by the US pullout will lead IS-K members to cease their terrorist assaults. Such claims don't seem like a practical policy outline but rather like wishful thinking.



When it comes to actually doing what they preach about tolerance and forgiveness, the Taliban are likewise divided along hierarchical lines. Despite what the government in Kabul claims, there have been allegations of attacks on journalists, musicians, translators, and other cultural emblems in the countryside.

Especially among the "fedayeen" would-be suicide bombers, the most radical supporters and foot soldiers of Taliban, there is a strong doctrinal overlap with the IS-K. Members in this category may have difficulty engaging IS-K head-on. Last but not the least, the Taliban may be exaggerating the threat, which is still very real, to spread the idea that they are the only "line of defense" against the IS-K.

## Counterterrorism as the sole answer for recognition?

A stable, safe Afghanistan that poses no threat to regional or global security may be maintained with the help of the international community, which can cooperate with the Taliban under tight international oversight. Terrorism cannot be allowed to flourish in Afghanistan, thus exploring the option of working with a Taliban administration to prevent its rule is still vital. In addition, the international community may cooperate with the Taliban leadership to keep terrorist groups under control and combat them.

The Taliban administration in Afghanistan runs the possibility of becoming an active safe haven again if the country is diplomatically boycotted and isolated, leading to different socio-economic difficulties. As we've seen, the Taliban's desire for legitimacy and the lifting of economic sanctions may depend on the group's promise that no terrorist activity (like recruiting and operations) takes place within Afghanistan's borders.

# Ukraine War: Desperate Times Call for Desperate Measures

*If the recent setbacks to Russia on the battlefield and rising disapproval of Putin's policies, coupled with the seemingly low morale of his armed forces, were anything to go by – better sense may prevail after neither side retains decisive conventional superiority over the other*



By Shahmir Niazi

As the Ukraine war enters its seven-month, desperation seems to be the order of the day for Russia, which has been subjected to a lightning counteroffensive by Ukrainian armed forces in the country's northeast. Since early September, Ukrainian forces claim to have wrestled back more than 6,000 square km of territory from under Russian control.

Mobilization, referendum, thinly veiled nuclear threats, and playing the victim card (Russophobia) are all clear signs of a weakening offensive. Add to it, the abrupt replacement of its highest-ranking general Dmitry Bulgakov, and you find a country "disorganized and losing territory to a capable Ukrainian force," in the words of U.S. NSA Jake Sullivan who also pointed to the "huge amount of infighting among the Russian military leadership."

## Mobilization

President Putin has ordered mass mobilization in a bid to raise more than 300,000 troops to fight the war. Although the decision was inevitable, especially, since more than 80,000 Russian soldiers have been killed or injured since February, it's

noteworthy that such a massive mobilization is unprecedented since World War II. The recruits will not be able to formally join the war till after the mandatory training of up to six weeks.

"At the first stage, probably within a month-and-a-half, the enemy plans to complete the full complement of its units and military units involved in hostilities on the territory of Ukraine," said Brigadier General Oleksiy Gromov, a member of Ukraine's general staff. In a second stage, Russia would seek to create new "combined military formations" accompanied by artillery and missile units, he predicted, adding however that a lack of military specialists meant this process would take "a long time."

Ukraine thus has a small window of opportunity to consolidate the gains it made on the battlefield since the start of the month.

Putin's mobilization efforts received an early blow when protests erupted in many parts of the country as many Russians vehemently opposed conscription. Panicked citizens are trying to leave the country as Kremlin cracks down on dissent.

## Referendum

The referendum, which has long dominated Kremlin's playbook on annexation, is once again being employed by Putin after suffering huge battlefield losses in northeastern Ukraine. The voting, carried out on the pattern of the Crimean referendum of 2014, will include four regions: Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizka, and Kherson. Ukraine and its western allies are dismissing the polls as "sham" and "illegitimate," – and a means for generating a false pretext for defending Russian territory when in fact it's occupied land.

The five-day voting process provides ample room for rigging since it's being carried out in an active conflict zone where independent monitoring bodies have no footprint. Furthermore, many locals have already migrated to other areas and those left are being forced to vote. "The so-called referendum is more like an opinion poll under the muzzle of machine guns," Serhiy Haidai, the Ukrainian governor of the eastern Luhansk region said.



## Nuclear threat

Annexation has raised the specter of another threat that has become more existential after Putin raised the stakes in the war during his rare address to the nation recently. Putin has insisted the threat to defend what could be called Russian land after an annexation process “is not a bluff.” He said: “If the territorial integrity of our country is threatened, we will certainly use all the means at our disposal to protect Russia and our people. This is not a bluff.” It’s apparent now that these thinly veiled threats are pointing to the potential use of nuclear weapons. Russia possesses the largest stockpile of nuclear weapons and has also developed various forms of battlefield/tactical weapons that can be employed from a conventionally weak standpoint.

The potential of this conflict to turn nuclear has been there since the initial days of the offensive when Putin ordered his nuclear forces to be placed on a heightened alert level. Europe’s largest nuclear plant, Zaporizhzhia, has also narrowly escaped shelling on more than one occasion. And now the apparent conventional lethargy of the Russian armed forces has left Putin with limited options but to look toward his strategic capability for compensation.

Andrei Kortunov, director general of the Russian International Affairs Council, a research organization close to the Russian government, believes Putin won’t use nuclear weapons in Ukraine as long as NATO did not directly attack Russia.



Doing so would offer no significant battlefield advantage over conventional weapons, he said, while “the political risks associated with this are very high.”

The United States has taken a strong exception to Kremlin’s nuclear posture, with National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan threatening Russia with catastrophic consequences if it went down that road. He also indicated introducing new economic sanctions from the Group of 7 nations against Russia.



## Russophobia

At the UN General Assembly’s 77th session, Russia tried to shift the world’s attention to what it called the rising tide of “Russophobia” in the West. “The official Russophobia in the West has reached an unprecedented grotesque scale. They are not shying away from declaring their intent to inflict military defeat upon our country, but also to destroy and fracture Russia,” Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said.

In a visible push to earn sympathy for its invasion, the foreign minister offered explanations for the war which it refers to as a “special military operation.” The aim was “to remove the threats against our security, which NATO has been consistently creating in Ukraine,” he said.

Now that animosities have reached a level that it has become seemingly impossible to sit on the negotiating table anymore, one thing is for certain: the situation on the battlefield will eventually determine if a future settlement is possible. If the recent setbacks to Russia on the battlefield and rising disapproval of Putin’s policies, coupled with the seemingly low morale of his armed forces, were anything to go by – better sense may prevail after neither side retains decisive conventional superiority over the other.

# Book Review of “The Governance of China” All Volumes by President of China Xi Jinping, 2014-2022

By Pavan Manzoor

Through the fictional but realistic account of farmer Wang Lung, the former slave he made his wife, O-lan, and other Chinese commoners facing poverty, obscurantism, love, and loss at the beginning of a century of social revolution, a Presbyterian missionary, fluent Chinese speaker, and future Nobel Laureate, Pearl S. Buck, introduced the Americans to the Chinese people in *The Good Earth* (1931). "He had no articulate thought of anything; there was only... turning this earth of theirs over and over to the sun, this earth which formed their home and fed their bodies and made their gods".

The authoritarian political system since the fall of the Manchu dynasty has presented the bewildering spectacle of almost relentless ideological transformation, the most recent manifestation of which is styled "Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era," which was formally accepted as party doctrine on February 2. Even though the Chinese people's lives have been shaped by their constant fight for food and survival since the beginning of time.

The four volumes of *The Governance of China*, the most recent of which has just been published, provide an edited, translated, and ostensibly comprehensive collection of all the prepared public remarks of the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and President Xi Jinping, arranged in chronological order according to the subject matter. Seventy-two speeches, three interviews, two minutes of meetings, one memo, and one public letter are included in the first volume's contents, which span the period from November 12, 2012, to June 13, 2014. It also has a biography that is surprisingly detailed and interesting for any foreign intelligence unit.

Ninety-seven remarks, two meeting minutes, and two directives are included in volume two, which covers the time span



from August 18th, 2014, to September 29th, 2017. "Secure a Decisive Victory in Building a Moderately Prosperous Society in All Respects and Strive for the Great Success of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era" is the profoundly significant opening statement of the third volume, which covers the period from October 18th, 2017 to January 13, 2020. It serves as a sort of "state of the union" address to the Communist Party and lays out the broad objectives of the Xi Jinping regime. The fourth and most recent volume, which spans from 3 February 2020 to 10th of May 2022, includes 106 speeches, two letters, and one memorandum.

From a sociological perspective, the content in its setting is reminiscent of the ceremonial role played by the Queen of England, who frequently adorns the institutional landscape with platitudinous speeches of inspiration that are tailored to domestic or foreign as well as public or private audiences. The vague things the president says are also usually so practical that they could have been said just as well by a democratic head of state or government in the West.

But despite this, a consistent conceptual divide appears. The Chinese President frequently calls attention to the ideological

legacies of Jiang Zemin's "Three Represents," Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, and Hu Jintao's "Scientific Outlook on Development" when speaking before Communist Party organs. In the context of the political testament emphasised above, he describes China as "a socialist country of people's democratic dictatorship".

The more complex elements of the structural analysis of *Das Kapital*, like the theory of surplus value or the concept of alienated labour, seldom, if ever, occur. However, a few quotes from Marx, Engels, and Lenin frequently appear in support. In contrast, Marxism is fully abandoned when speaking to nearly anyone else in favour of neoliberal globalism founded on institutional development and economic interdependence. "We should implement reform to strengthen China's socialist market economy and uphold the fundamental state policy of opening to the outside world." Reform and opening up will always be a work in progress.

The most glaring and persistent discrepancy, then, is not between what the Chinese government says and does, nor between what its leader says to Communist and non-Communist audiences, but rather between these two groups of audiences.



People often say that the ideological timeline of "Xi Jinping Thought" starts with the humiliation of the Opium War in 1840, continues through the New Democratic Revolution from 1919 to 1949, and changes direction with the introduction of the reform and opening up policy in 1978, and enters its current stage with the announcement of the Two Centenary Goals for a moderately prosperous China by 2022.

However, with regard to the former, the reader is quickly overwhelmed by the accumulation of annotated lists used to remind party officials of their duties. In just the first volume, the reader learns about the Four Cardinal Principles, the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, the Chinese Dream, two unwaveringly, three further, six centering-one, two musts, three strict, three earnest, eight rules, and four misdeameanors.

It is simple to mock such Orwellian newspeak, to mock the ostensible hive-mind that should permit it, and to wax lyrical about the enormous liberties the Chinese Communists so blatantly take with the textual foundations of historical materialism. The accurate appraisal of Beijing's avowed and unique socialist policy of worldwide peace is considerably more urgent and crucial for China and the rest of the world. China's foreign policy is to uphold world peace and encourage shared growth. China has often said that it opposes hegemony and power politics in all of its manifestations, does not meddle in the internal affairs of other nations, and has no desire to hegemonise or expand. This serves as our overarching premise for both the

Chinese political system and every action we conduct.

President Jinping gives the strongest guarantees possible that China will never start an imperialist war to every audience, without exception or qualifier. Despite the fact that dictatorships frequently lie, governments must provide clear and consistent guidance in order to be effective. The absolute consistency with which doctrine and practise of international peacekeeping are articulated, combined with the recognition of the logistical near-impossibility of privately disseminating contrary guidance to so many uncounted people groups and party units, should raise concerns that certain Western countries, particularly the United States of America, maybe complicit. But strategic think tanks, especially in the U.S., can make the mistake of thinking that China's leaders have imperialist goals for Asia or even the whole world.

Further hints of non-hegemonic goals are provided by "Xi Jinping Thought" on the two most persistently unreliable foreign countries. Only two of its 379 total entries directly address Sino-American relations: one is a soundbite addressed to the newly elected President Trump, and the other is a speech to reserve army veterans on the anniversary of the start of hostilities in the Korean War, which is officially known as the "War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea" (IV, 83–89). But even that lone anti-American speech ends with President Jinping repeating the unqualified non-violence policy, saying, "Peace, development; and win-win cooperation are the proper path forward".

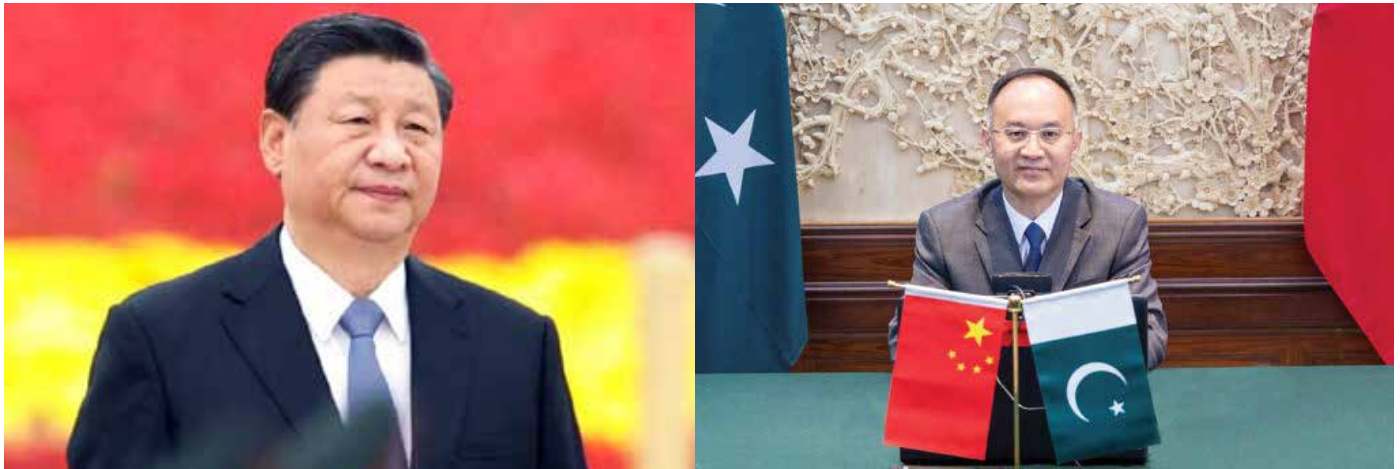
Cross-Straits issues, as opposed to international relations, guide Taiwan policy, which is regarded as the last part of China to be successfully reintegrated following the successful transitions of Hong Kong and Macau. According to President Jinping, the historical truth that Taiwan is a part of China and that the two sides are part of the same country cannot be changed by people or force. "We people on both sides of the Taiwan Straits are Chinese and share a natural affinity and national identity built on kinship and mutual help, a truth that can never be altered by any power or any person," reads the proclamation. But it is important to know that Taiwanese territorial recovery is the only expansionist goal that can be inferred from an official oeuvre that gives so little comparative political analysis in general.

The onus should be on the repeated "Taiwan-as-Rhineland" theory, no matter how valid or unfortunate it is that the people of Formosa feel insecure about their very existence. Chinese President Jinping has almost nothing on record about what is happening in Japan, Vietnam, India, Indonesia, or any other strategic competitor in the region.

In the end, "The Governance of China" by Xi Jinping differs greatly from Mao Zedong's iconic Little Red Book in that it is not as tiny, portable, or concealable. Instead, the official line as it stands now is big, heavy, ponderous, and immobile. As a result, perhaps the book should be judged by its cover.



# China asks US to do something 'Real and Beneficial' for Pakistan



## TTI Desk Report

Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Wang Wenbin called out the US for "passing unwarranted criticism against Pakistan-China cooperation" and urged the United States to do something "real and beneficial" for the people of Pakistan.

In a weekly briefing held on September 27, Wang said that since the floods hit the country, China has rushed to Pakistan's aid as it was a "genuine friend and brother in times of need".

"The Chinese government has provided 400 million RMB worth of humanitarian assistance and China's civil society has also lent a helping hand.

"We will continue to do our utmost to help the Pakistani people overcome the floods and rebuild their homes at an early date," he said.

"China and Pakistan have had fruitful economic and financial cooperation. The Pakistani people know it best. Instead of passing unwarranted criticism against China-Pakistan cooperation, the US side might as well do something real and beneficial for the people of Pakistan," the spokesperson added.

Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Wang Wenbin stated this a day after the US Secretary of State Antony Blinken asked Pakistan to seek debt relief from close partner China as floods devastate the country.

China is a key economic and political partner of Pakistan, pushing ahead with the \$54 billion economic corridor that will build infrastructure and give Beijing an outlet to the Indian Ocean.

Washington, whose alliance with Islamabad has frayed, has repeatedly claimed that China will reap the benefits while Pakistan will face unsustainable debt. The warnings by the United States — which considers China its pre-eminent global competitor — have repeatedly been brushed aside by Pakistan.

About 1,600 people — one-third of them children — have died in Pakistan's floods and more than seven million have been displaced, amid fears that such severe disasters will become more common due to climate change.

China's assistance for flood relief in Pakistan

China will provide relief and cash assistance to Pakistan, affected by flash floods and property destruction, which have left thousands marooned since mid-June. A statement issued by China's Foreign Ministry said Beijing has decided to "provide emergency humanitarian supplies, including 25,000 tents and other supplies in dire need, to be delivered as soon as possible."

"The Red Cross Society of China will provide \$300,000 in emergency cash

assistance to the Pakistan Red Crescent Society," the statement added.

Since June 14, over 700 people have died as a result of devastating floods triggered by torrential downpours in southern and northern Pakistan. The statement said China has already delivered 4,000 tents, 50,000 blankets, and 50,000 pieces of waterproof canvas to the victims under the social and livelihood cooperation framework of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

It said China will "continue to promote bilateral cooperation in disaster prevention and mitigation and against climate change."

Beijing believes, the statement said, with the joint help of the international community, the Pakistani government and people in disaster-hit areas "will overcome the difficulties and life and work will go back to normal at an early date."

"Our hearts go out to the bereaved families, the injured and those in the stricken areas," said the ministry.

Recalling Pakistan's assistance after the earthquake hit Wenchuan in 2008, the statement said: "China and Pakistan are true friends and good brothers sharing weal and woe."

"We are always ready to help each other in the face of major natural disasters."



# Solar Economics

*The government wants to encourage the use of solar power by installing 10,000MW, mostly in IPP mode*

By Azeem Waqas

Saifullah Khan has built his house in a posh society in Islamabad and is now indecisive about the electricity supply in it. He is planning to install roof-top solar panels at his newly built house. One of the solar companies has quoted Rs. 1.5 to 2 million to install solar panels at a 10-marla house. Without solar panels, his monthly electricity bill has risen by 100% in the last year. In August, he purchased electricity at Rs. 50 a KW.

Since the solar option is mostly used by upper-middle-class and rich households, their electricity bills have increased substantially with the recent increase in the base tariff and the rising cost of fuel. People are thinking about moving to solar with a net-metering option.

However, after getting quotations for roof-top solar panels, Saif Ullah Khan is no more interested in going with solar power generation.

He said that the vendor has told him that prices of solar panels are increasing with every passing day due to rupee devaluation and that they provide equipment and machinery at any fixed rate because they do not know the value of the dollar in the coming days.

The government wants to encourage the use of solar power by installing 10,000MW, mostly in IPP mode.

The new policy, which was announced on September 14, 2022, calls for prices to go up over time, land to be given away for free, and payment guarantees for interconnection.

The government has announced an exemption on all import-related bidding, duties, and taxes; The existing EPA and IA will be used, and the tariff will be 70% indexed to the dollar. COD within 12 months of the EPA's being signed; NEPRA's benchmark tariff; Term-25 years on a BOOT basis; income tax of 15%; The GOP guarantees payment on the 60th day following the invoice via bank debit.



Energy experts have objected to the government policy on the dollar indexation of tariffs.

An energy expert, Ammar Khan, while talking with The Truth International, said that "The policy is anti-consumer and anti-market and is only going to increase the price of electricity in the mid to long term given the indexation of the tariff to USD."

He said that there is literally no reason to have indexation to the dollar here. If this happens, this will be super-duper dumb. All the government needs to do is provide land and infrastructure and let the market take care of the rest.

This indexation to the dollar would result in higher and higher tariffs. More dollar indexation after all the dollar indexation that has happened in the past and caused Pakistan to have to pay back so much debt is a suicide plan.

He also said that he would give PKR-based IRR plus an incremental spread provision (based on the average devaluation over the past 10 years) to make up for any IRR loss.

Dollar indexation has also caused the price of solar power to go up by Rs. 8 KWH over the past few months.

NEPRA is proposing to reduce the payment of net-metering to Rs.9/unit

from the existing Rs.13/unit. The Rs13/unit calculation was done when the base-tariff was around Rs18, and now it has increased to around Rs24, and the solar net-metering rate was supposed to increase to Rs19/unit.

Throughout the world, green energy is being incentivized. Distribution companies have to buy energy that isn't being used at the same price it is being sold for.

In a letter to Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, Lt. Gen. (R) Moin ud-din-Haider, on behalf of the Karachi Net Metering Group, said that he didn't agree with the government's solar policy.

He said that NEPRA is taking regressive steps to discourage roof-top solar installation. The Net Metering Group of Karachi said that during former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's period, the concept of net metering was introduced in 2015 and, as a result, roof-top solar installations began throughout the country. Even though true net metering and tax incentives aren't used anywhere else, there has been a lot of interest in our country because the power keeps going out.

However, they regret that this interest is likely to diminish since NEPRA, through the attached Draft Notice published on August 24th, 2022, would

like to bring the net metering customers on par with the bulk suppliers of power in the country. Senior NEPRA officials have said at several public hearings that the country already has too much capacity and that there is no need to add more generations to the system.

Although for the public, NEPRA's regulations are already complex. Regrettably, in the draught notice, NEPRA has not explained the consequences this minor change will have on their electricity bills. In Karachi, we have formed a net metering group wherein a few members having knowledge of the subject viewed it as a regressive step and, on their behalf, I have sent the attached letter to the Registrar of NEPRA. However, Honorable Prime Minister, since the notice is already in the form of a SRO, NEPRA, as per its ongoing practise of not paying attention to public opinion, will implement it, which will discourage net metering as well as substantially reduce the pay-back period of those who have already installed the roof-top solar panels.

NEPRA has clarified the proposed amendment to the Net-Metering Regulations. It said that NEPRA has not made any decision as of yet, and as of today, NEPRA has asked for comments from the general public only. Here, it is important to highlight that the impact of the above changes is only on 20,700 consumers across



Pakistan who have been allowed net metering as per the regulations approved by NEPRA. It is clarified that the proposed amendment would not have any impact on self-consumption as well as the net of the units. The units would be netted off as per the already approved mechanism. The amendment and the regulations only apply to the excess units sold by net metering consumers. It is further clarified that the impact of any higher costs paid on excess units would be shared by the remaining consumers of the grid. NEPRA fully supports the GoP Solar initiative and, as such, NEPRA's net metering. Regulations have absolutely no impact on GoP

initiatives, which seems to be again. Also, the GoP is likely to buy large amounts of solar power at a price that is much lower than what NEPRA lets net-metering customers pay.

Energy expert Abdul Rehman said that the total cost of energy from solar is way cheaper than the variable cost of many coals, furnace oil, and RLNG plants. However, the government needs to keep two suggestions in mind. The first is to avoid government capacity payment guarantees; the second is to deregulate the energy sector. Second, investment should be arranged as FDI, as we are very short on dollars.





# Affidavit's Drop Scene: A Win-Win Situation for All

*The affidavit, extended affidavit, and its denial from the former top judge of Gilgit-Baltistan turned out to be a win-win situation for all involved: judiciary, political parties, and the former chief justice as it spared all at the cost of the 'status quo.'*

By Asadullah

In mid-November last year, an affidavit of former Chief Justice Gilgit-Baltistan Rana Shamim dropped a bombshell on the judiciary and the then ruling party Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI), claiming that the conviction of Nawaz Sharif and his daughter Maryam Nawaz was a result of extraneous factors.

It contradicted the narrative of PTI that labeled Sharifs as corrupt while the judiciary also portrayed them as "Godfather" and "Sicilian Mafia".

Following the publication of the affidavit in The News, Chief Justice Islamabad High Court (IHC) initiated contempt proceedings against senior journalist Ansar Abbasi who filed the story on affidavit, Aamir Ghouri, the resident editor of the newspaper, and its Editor-in-Chief Mir Shakeel ur Rehman.

Rana Shamim being the principal contemnor was also being tried under the contempt law. However, in January this year, the court deferred the indictment of Abbasi, Ghouri, and Mir Shakeel, but framed charges against Mr. Shamim.

The case which was then almost shelved was again fixed for hearing. Rana Shamim was directed to present a list of witnesses to prove the allegations that were part of his affidavit.

He has alleged that former Chief Justice Saqib Nisar during his visit to the northern areas called a judge of Islamabad High Court (IHC) Justice Aamer Farooq and asked him to make sure that Mr. Sharif and Ms. Nawaz will not be released until July 2018 elections were over.

On Sept 12, Mr. Shamim had partially backtracked from the contents of his affidavit executed on Nov 10 last year, stating that not a single sitting judge of the IHC was involved in the controversy and submitted an unconditional apology to the high court. He had however stood by his allegations against former CJP Nisar.

The former GB chief judge stated: "The

contents of the affidavit emanate from the sitting in which myself, my late wife, former CJP Justice Saqib Nisar along with his wife were present at my official residence when I was Chief Judge of Gilgit-Baltistan Supreme Appellate Court... former CJP on the first day of their stay while taking tea in the lawn of my residence, was trying to get connected with someone time and again but when the said person could not be connected he directed his registrar to go and see him at his residence and tell him that Mian Nawaz Sharif and Maryam Nawaz Sharif should not come out on bail."

He further said: "Since he could not be connected, therefore he directed the registrar to call him on WhatsApp as soon as possible. After some time, the then CJP was connected to the person, he talked for [a] few minutes; thereafter he felt relaxed and said that he had spoken to the senior puisne judge and demanded another cup of tea."

He called 2021 "annus horribilis for me and my family" owing to the deaths of several close family members, including his wife and youngest brother. "I, while suffering through the extreme stress of loss of my close family members in such quick succession, realized the importance of writing down the incident in my knowledge as soon as possible, as per my beloved late wife's will; therefore, I chose to do so during my transit stay in London."

The former chief judge, in a subsequent affidavit, submitted a week later, completely disowned his controversial affidavit that accused Justice Nisar of manipulating judicial proceedings to delay the release of Nawaz Sharif and Maryam Nawaz.

He submitted an unconditional apology in an affidavit submitted on Friday in response to the contempt of court proceedings initiated against him following the publication of his earlier affidavit in an English daily in Nov 2021.

Rana Shamim filed a fresh affidavit withdrawing from the contents of the 'incor-

rect' document of Nov 2021, and submitted an unconditional apology to IHC.

The affidavit stated: "I tender an unconditional apology for an affidavit which was neither correct nor required... I regret rather apologizing for an incorrect affidavit where the name of an honorable judge was mistakenly and unintentionally mentioned. I further regret and apologize for my grave mistake which should never have happened."

It further said: "The wrong and incorrect mention of a judge of this honorable court in an affidavit dated 10th Nov 2021 was due to my glaring misunderstanding and unintentional mistake. Hence, I withdraw from the contents of the said affidavit. I profusely apologize for the wrong [and] unnecessary affidavit."

IHC Chief Justice has nodded to the affidavit which means that there will be no more proceedings in this matter. Subsequently, it exonerated the newspaper and the judge.

Judicial sources said that a probe in this may expose Justice Nisar, however, the scope of inquiry may also expand to Sharifs as well since the time and manner in which the affidavit was executed in London was itself dubious since a report published in an English daily did connect some dots and would be sufficient to establish the connection of Sharifs with the British solicitor.

However, legal experts believe that the denial of the affidavit exonerated the judiciary, including Justice Nisar and IHC Judge, and PTI since it dispelled the impression of judicial engineering in the conviction of Sharifs. It also ruled out the possible probe that may bring some trouble for Sharis. Lastly, it enabled ex-Chief Justice Gilgit Baltistan to retain his lucrative job with a monthly salary of over Rs3 million. The contempt proceedings may entail a sentence for him; even a 30 seconds detention inside the courtroom would render him ineligible to hold public office in the future.

# National T20 Cup 2022 Reveals Young Talent

*The tournament was filled with exciting matches, featuring exceptional performances by national stars*

By Ali Abdullah

The semi-final stage of the National T20 Cup 2022 began on September 18. Defending Champions Khyber Pakhtunkhwa ended the group stage at the top spot, facing Northern in the semi-final. Sindh played against Central Punjab in the 2nd semi-final of the event.

Southern Punjab had a nightmare in the final group match of the Cup. Northern successfully defended 130, upsetting their opponents. Mehran Mumtaz proved to be the game changer for Northern with his 3-wicket over.

Northern and Balochistan were the two sides which were eliminated in the first round. Balochistan won 5 and lost 5 of their games but their net run rate was on the low, hence they were eliminated. Northern won the least number of matches and ended up being eliminated, winning only 4 out of 10 games.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa won the most number of matches (6) in the group stage of the tournament. Head-to-head in the group stage the two sides were 1-1. On both occasions the margin of victory was less than 10 runs, reflecting on how competitive the two teams are.

Central Punjab had a clear psychological advantage over Sindh. It twice defeated Sindh in the group stage of the tournament. Hence, Central Punjab was initially the favorite in the semi-final. However, cricket is a game of nerves; results aren't dependent on previous stats. Any team can win on their day and this is exactly what happened. Sindh defeated Central Punjab and qualified for finals.

Sindh played against Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the finals. It was a one-sided game. The National T20 Cup 2022 concluded with Saud Shakeel's Sindh defeating Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the final. This is Sindh's first National T20 Cup trophy in the new domestic cricket structure. A crucial factor for Sindh's victory was Saim Ayub.



Saim Ayub scored 416 runs in the tournament including a brilliant 36(24) in the final of the event. Saim Ayub ended the event as the 2nd best batter and was awarded Man of the Tournament. His batting average was 34 and his strike rate was 155. He smashed 2 half-centuries in the event as well. Saim Ayub was greatly praised for his resemblance with the great Saeed Anwar. Although, it is too early to compare him with such a legend, his impressive batting style won everyone's hearts.

Another top performer for Sindh was Sarfaraz Ahmed. Sarfaraz won the best wicketkeeper award in this tournament. He dismissed 13 batsmen behind the stumps. Moreover, Sarfaraz scored 209 runs at an average of 29 in this tournament.

Sahibzada Farhan was named the best batter of the tournament. Farhan scored 429 runs in the event including a phenomenal hundred. The best bowler of the event was Sohail Khan who was also named Man of the Match in the final for picking 4 wickets. Sohail collectively took 21 wickets at an average of 14 and an economy rate of 7.89.

The tournament was filled with exciting matches, featuring exceptional performances by national stars. Saim Ayub remained the highlight of the event and it would be interesting to see what the future holds for this exciting talent.



# England in Pakistan after 17 years

*Passionate performances by the Pakistani team, and the reverence for the game which runs deep in the cricket-crazy nation, kept the spirit of the game alive in the absence of home cricket*



During the years-long hard work to bring cricket back to Pakistan, there were several hiccups and occasional disappointments along the process. Last-minute tour cancellations such as the New Zealand team's abrupt departure from Pakistan after receiving security threats from an unknown source, and England's decision to postpone the tour, hurt the sentiments of the cricket-crazy nation.

Last year, these were the headlines on most mainstream and social media platforms. Fans and players felt heartbroken and helpless. Then newly appointed Chairman Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Ramiz Raja did not expect any of this to happen. It all happened last minute. Ramiz Raja was all fired up over the humiliation. Governments were involved. Prime Ministers were in contact with each other but there was no good news. All efforts to complete the tour failed and for the cricket board, it seemed like all these years what they had worked toward just went down the drain. Everyone thought that this time it is over for Pakistan. No international team will risk coming to Pakistan ever again.

Passionate performances by the Pakistani team, and the reverence for the game which runs deep in the cricket-crazy nation, kept the spirit of the game alive. Pakistan assumed center stage in the game during bilateral series and tournaments, leaving teams vying for competition. This allowed Pakistan to play on its terms, i.e., in home conditions.

Currently, Pakistan is one of the best teams in world cricket. Hence, it was not easy to say no to the PCB. A few months after Team Australia's tour, the England Cricket Board also rescheduled their postponed tour. England Cricket Team is currently touring Pakistan after 17 long years. A whole generation missed out on watching their star players perform at home. Earlier, fans were desperate for international teams to compete on their local grounds.

In 2005, when England toured the country, the hosts defeated them 2-0 in the test series and 3-2 in the ODI series.

In the ongoing series, England will play 7 T20Is against Pakistan. Afterward, the Englishmen will return in December 2022 for 3 tests. Test Matches will be played in Rawalpindi, Multan, and Karachi. The first match will be played on December 1 whereas the last match will be played on December 17.

The first T20I was played in National Stadium Karachi. England easily won the match due to the poor batting performance by Pakistan. The match was one-sided. In the second match, Pakistan not only defeated the visitors but also broke many records.

Pakistani Skipper Babar Azam and Wicket Keeper batter Mohammad Rizwan created history in T20I cricket as Pakistan defeated England by 10 wickets in the 2nd T20I at National Stadium Karachi. Pakistan leveled the series 1-1.

Batting first, England posted 199/5 on the board with Skipper Moeen Ali who scored 55(23) while Ben Duckett scored 43 (22). Pakistani bowlers Haris Rauf, and Shahnawaz Dahani returned with the figures of 2/30 and 2/37 respectively.

Pakistan chased the total with 3 balls to spare. Skipper Babar Azam scored his 2nd T20I hundred, and became the first Pakistani to score multiple centuries in T20Is. Babar ended with 110(66) \* while Rizwan scored 88(51) \*. This was the first occasion that a total of 200 or above was chased with 10 wickets to spare.

Babar Azam and Rizwan indeed delivered a special performance for Pakistan. With this hundred, Babar Azam became the Pakistani captain with the most international hundreds as captain. This was also Pakistan's highest partnership for any wicket in T20I Cricket. Moreover, this was the 5th highest partnership in the history of T20I Cricket.

In the 3rd T20I, though Pakistan lost, the team found a confident batter who already has experience in international cricket in Shan Masood. Though he is an opener, he's playing as a middle-order batter in this series. The inclusion of Shan Masood strengthened the hosts' middle order. Shan Masood came at number 4 and stayed not out after brilliant innings of 65.

By Ali Abdullah

# Pakistani Film Industry Can Do Better: Humayun Saeed

*Humayun Saeed needs no introduction when it comes to the entertainment industry of Pakistan. He is one of the ace stars of the country. His recently released film London Nahi Jaunga running in cinemas all over Pakistan and is credited for bringing viewers back to the big screen. Saeed has also stepped into some international projects. He is soon to be seen in the role of Dr. Hasnat Khan in season five of one of the most popular Netflix series 'The Crown.' The Truth International talked to the star in detail about his acting as well as production plans.*

**By Kaukab Jahan**

**Your recent film London Nahi Jaunga has a feel of your last movie Punjab Nahi Jaongi but the story and characters are different, why?**

We did it deliberately. We wanted to make a film like PNJ. We could do its sequel and prequel but actually needed to do it with a different story and characters. Yes the vibes, genre, and premise of both PNJ and LNJ are almost the same. It is like a franchise of the Housefull series in which they come with a different story and characters every time but with the same feel and flavor.

**You started shooting your film in early 2020, then Covid-19 happened and you had to halt everything and were only able to resume it at the beginning of this year. How difficult was it all?**

To be honest, the most difficult time was the wait to resume our shoot. We longed for it for almost two years. Our wait was longer because we had to complete our second spell in London, which was obviously the requirement of the story. Otherwise, if it was in Pakistan we would've finished it earlier as locally the shoots had resumed last year. We all know it was a bit difficult to take the full crew and cast abroad because of the strict SOPs of Covid-19 that included tests, restricted entries, and limited flights. But once we got back to the floor, it was just like our usual work.

**Did you face any technical jump in the flow of the story because of this two years gap?**

No. Not at all! We were lucky that it was a requirement of our story to be in completely different environments and get-ups like the looks and wardrobe in



our London spell. So, this gap didn't affect our product technically.

Do you think that the films released on this Eid-ul-Azha like London Nahi Jaunga and Quaid e Azam Zindabad did well for the cinema industry, which was almost closed for the last two years?

Yes. I think those viewers who had seen my successful films before like LNJ and Fahad Mustafa's movies like Namaloom Afraad, came to watch these films. If 'Spider Man' brought cinema lovers back to the cinema all over the world, then why cannot our films do the same?

**How do you see the overall situation of the Pakistani film industry at the moment, when we are just releasing the backlog of our movies?**

It is true that our film industry has been in turmoil for the last many years. The main reason which I believe is the low number of films. We are far behind the

required number of films that should be made every year to run the cinema business properly. But at the moment, the major reason is Covid-19. If we go three to four years back, it was getting better and we produced films like JPNA2, Load Wedding, Parwaaz Hai Junoon, and many more. These films were box office successes with JPNA2 being the highest-grossing film. So, the potential was very high at that time. We are still capable of doing this but the current scenario has affected the trend of cinema-going in the country if not diminished it completely yet.

**How much Bollywood is necessary for Pakistani cinema?**

I think that at the moment Bollywood is necessary for Pakistani cinema. They produce a lot of films and people go to cinemas to watch them. Not only Bollywood but films from different countries should also be released in Pakistan. This practice is crucial for cinema to run its business these days.



**Recently, the Government of Pakistan announced a new film policy that recognizes cinema as an industry with many privileges for the stakeholders. How do you see it?**

It is a very positive step by the government. This announcement is what we were struggling with for the last many years. I hope if it is implemented properly, it would be really helpful for the industry.

**What do you see as the most positive provision in the policy?**

As a producer, I think the most positive thing is minimizing the cost of production as the policy renounces many taxes, which unnecessarily burden the producers of the film. Like if you make a film for 12 to 13 crores, the tax waiver provision in the new policy will reduce the cost up to 2 to 3 crores.

Secondly, some taxes are waived from cinemas as well, which will ultimately increase the profit of producers. It can also decrease the price of movie tickets. I think it must be around 600 to 500 rupees to attract a larger audience. So overall, the policy is beneficial for cost recovery for both the producers and cinema owners. Actually, producers can only go for the next project if they recover the cost of their previous film. So this tax holiday will definitely help with this.

**Many of our actors are going abroad to work on international projects like Netflix and Hollywood. How will it benefit our industry?**

It will be beneficial. They would go there, have exposure, and observe their discipline. Discipline is one of the major issues in our industry. I wish we could send all our actors there to learn what discipline actually is. There, you have to follow the discipline if you want to work.

Besides the discipline, with a wide exposure there, they would come to know how the directors at the international level work. I have learned many things and others will learn them too. We can pass this knowledge on to our colleagues here as well. This exposure leads you to work better, and better. Moreover, if the actors pursue the producers' jobs later, they can apply these international procedures here as well.





ہم تیری رحمت سے نہ امید نہیں یا رب  
ہمیں ہر آزمائش میں کامیابی عطا فرما



شمارہ وسائل کم شیب لیکن لوگوں کی  
شر ممکن ملان کریں کہ وزیر اعلیٰ بلوچستان

سیلاب متاثرین کے ریسکیو، امداد و بحالی کے کاموں میں ہم سب نے بڑھ چڑھ کر اپنا حصہ ڈالنا ہے

ACCOUNT TITLE:	GOB FLOOD RELIEF AND REHABILITATION FUND
ACCOUNT NO:	00513181385136



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