

Fortnightly

The Truth International

Islamabad

15th - 30th November 2022

Political Uncertainty

PTI protests are taking violent turn around Islamabad,
IK fiery speeches adding fuel to this

Flood Situation

No shelter, people are fighting for survival

PDM Govt and Economy

Political instability coupled with economic difficulties,
aggravated the situation for Govt

Decisive November Nearing End



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Web: www.thetruthinternational.com

Price: Rs. 435

Publisher:

Muhammad Fahad Thaheem

Printer:

Masha Allah Printers

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

Design & Layout:

Abdul Qadir

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The Longest November

By Hammad Ghaznavi



Politics has never been smooth in Pakistan but the ongoing political chaos is unprecedented. Uncertainty reigns supreme and every aspect of the Republic seems shrouded in mysterious ambiguity. How long will the Shehbaz government last? When will the next elections be held? Who wanted to assassinate former Prime Minister Imran Khan? What are the real aims of Khan's intermittent Long March? Who will be the next army chief, or will the incumbent continue? Questions galore, answers none!

The six months long tiff between Khan and the Establishment has been further intensified, as the PTI chief accused a senior army officer allegedly involved in the assassination attempt on his life last week. Despite Khan's best efforts, he could not get the army officer's name included in the FIR. Reportedly, Punjab Chief Minister Pervez Elahi, considered close to the army, chickened out. Insiders insist, had Pervez succumbed to Khan's wish, it would have been a bad news for his chief minister-ship. Rumours of the Governor's rule in Punjab had this backdrop.

Khan's politics looks predictably unpredictable as he lambasts the army leadership one day, and praises the forces the next. Recently, a PTI official letter signed by the party chairman, has been circulating on social media directing the party office bearers to stop attacking the armed forces 'till further directions'. He also took another U-turn on the appointment of the new army chief. "They can appoint whoever they want," Khan said to a group of journalists last

week. His previous stance was that the 'looters and thieves' would not be allowed to appoint the new army chief and that the matter might be postponed till a new government comes in after the elections. Earlier, he was insistent on his input on the key appointment; but no more. Why the change of heart/strategy? This U-turn has coincided with the rumours surfacing in Islamabad that still there are efforts afoot to give an extension to the incumbent army chief. Will General Qamar Javed Bajwa stay? "It's a billion dollar question," Khan responded in an equivocal fashion to a journalist's query.

The military spokesperson had earlier revealed that Khan offered an unlimited extension to the COAS in behind the door talks. Imran Khan, insiders reveal, is terribly uncomfortable at the prospects of a 'particular' General succeeding Qamar Javed Bajwa; someone who was replaced from his position by Mr Khan when the officer produced proofs of his wife's involvement in dodgy financial deals. On the other hand, ISPR has regularly started sharing information on General Bajwa's farewell visits to different garrisons, aiming to refute the extension rumors. Sources confirm that a couple of weeks ago it was suggested to the government by 'certain quarters' to consider retaining General Bajwa at least for six months. Without the chief's nod, the initiation of the move seems difficult to imagine. These diametrically opposed indicators confirm the uncertainty surrounding the chief's appointment/extension issue.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif went from COP27 to London to see party supremo Nawaz Sharif for final consultations on the new chief's appointment. The Sharif family sources insist that the last ditch efforts to give extension have been thwarted and the new chief is coming in on time. "To avoid politics of 'my chief' and 'your chief', it has been decided that the seniority principle will be strictly adhered to this time around," claim sources. Considering Nawaz Sharif's unsavoury past experiences of selecting junior officers for the top military slot, his advice in this regard can be guessed. Besides, Nawaz Sharif's record shows he has been averse to the idea of giving extensions to the army chiefs. Raheel Sharif, despite his deep-seated desire and consistent effort, could not convince the then PM Nawaz Sharif of an extension in his tenure as COAS.

It's a sordid situation, no matter which way it goes – appointment or extension. The entire country has been held hostage to an appointment for many months, a phenomenon the constitution cannot explain. It will be an even worse development if an extension is granted in light of the prevailing political situation. A professional army needs to have its chief for purely professional reasons and not political expediency. The delay in the nomination of the new chief has already damaged the polity in many ways. It is hoped that better sense will prevail and the new COAS will assume charge on time.

Shootout at Wazirabad

By M A Niazi



Imran Khan's shooting was not a one-off, but a sort of culmination, as the Long March had been spattered with blood, if not quite bloodstained. As a matter of fact, I'm not all that sure that Imran was shot at all.

For a start, he has not had a medico-legal examination conducted. That means there's no piece of paper that would tell any court of his injuries. Then there was his appearance on television, reclining on a sort of bed, with his leg in plaster. Shouldn't his leg have been encased in bloodstained bandages? As a matter of fact, he should have had his head wrapped up in bandages. Also, throughout his TV appearance, he didn't cough even once. Now if you've been shot in the leg, why should you cough? Perhaps for the same reason, they put a plaster on a leg when there was no bone broken.

The problem with his not having an MLE done, and thus a case registered, is that the murder case of the PTI worker who was killed in the firing has also not been registered. That case can't be registered, even after the autopsy on the body would show that there was indeed death by shooting, but it would be inextricably linked with the FIR registered against Imran's attackers.

Imran said three people were responsible: PM Shehbaz Sharif, Interior

Minister Rana Sanaullah, and ISI DG-'C' Maj-Gen Faisal Naseer. I know he meant they had planned it, but the image is irresistible of Shehbaz crawling by the side of the bus, handing Rana Sanaullah the weapon with which the shooting was done, all under the general supervision of General Faisal, who would run up and down the container shouting encouraging remarks through a bullhorn.

There's a problem with naming one's political opponents. It all goes back to a discovery made by the Raj. It had imported in its Evidence Act the common-law assumption that someone would not lie on his deathbed. Thus the dying declaration was taken as conclusive evidence. But then the British found that natives, even when under the shadow of death, would lie through their teeth, and name their enemies with gusto as being personally responsible for stabbing them. It was only after people thus named produced witnesses placing them miles away from the murder that the British realised that the natives were exploiting this loophole to get at their enemies. Thus the dying declaration was downgraded by being taken as conclusive evidence, to simple presumptive evidence, which needed other evidence to confirm it.

Besides, neither Imran nor anyone in

the PTI has died. But even though Imran has survived, the spirit of nominating everyone he seems to be alive, with the result that Shehbaz and Rana Sana are in the exalted company of a major-general.

Even before the attempt on him, the Long March was claiming victims. A woman journalist was run over one day, and a young passerby the other, not to forget that a cop died of a heart attack while on duty. Before the March, telejournalist, Arshad Sharif was murdered in Kenya, then there was the audio clip released of former PTI minister Ali Amin Gandapur talking about bringing in arms and people to Islamabad. Unreliable sources have confirmed that he has been seen in the overcoat and full boots compulsory for all such talk.

It's been a bad time for Imran, and not because the Long March has not drawn the expected crowds. Corruption is making a comeback. Lula da Silva beat Jair Bolsonaro, the sitting President, for the Brazilian Presidency. Lula had recently been in jail for corruption. Then the Israeli electorate, after its fourth election in five years, returned Benjamin Netanyahu to power, after bringing him down. Netanyahu still faces the corruption charges that have dogged him for years now.

Where the March would lead?

Independent observers say that after announcing a march, Imran Khan lost his bargaining position quite a bit

By Sarfraz Raja

The political environment in the country is supercharged; mounting uncertainties put everyone on edge, and Pakistan is no doubt passing through one of the most critical junctures. November was the month that was most talked about, primarily because an appointment was the most important, and now we're in the middle of the month. Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf chief Imran Khan has already launched his much-awaited long march towards Islamabad with many looming uncertainties.

Why were all eyes focused on November?

General Qamar Javed Bajwa's extended six-year term as Chief of the Army Staff ends on November 29th. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif appointed Gen Bajwa to this top military post for a three-year term that was set to expire in November 2019, but Prime Minister Imran Khan extended Gen Bajwa's term as COAS for another three years. Imran Khan has been on the road since April, immediately after his removal from the premiership, openly targeting the military leadership for not supporting him in the no-confidence motion to remove him from the prime minister's office.

Initially, he denied this view and said that his actual target was the most important appointment, that of the chief of the army staff, saying that he had nothing to do with this matter, but later in his public speeches, Imran Khan openly talked about this issue, blaming the fact that Nawaz Sharif and Asif Zardari wanted to appoint their favourites as the army chief. His remarks were followed by a strong statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations Department against questioning the merit and qualifications of the Army General.

Some sources confirm that backdoor channels remained active in this matter. President of Pakistan Dr Arif Alvi, who



is also a close aide to the PTI Chairman, suggested in an interview that this appointment be done with mutual consultation, whereas Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif revealed in a media interaction that Imran Khan, through a mutual nonpolitical friend, offered him to appoint a new Army chief with mutual consultation, and according to Shehbaz Sharif, Imran Khan had offered that both of them send three names each. As a result, it is the sole constitutional right of the country's Prime Minister, and no formal consultation is required. For the purpose of this appointment, November was considered an important month in this entire political scenario.

A delayed and yet surprised call

Following the long march on May 25 earlier this year, Imran Khan announced that he would call for another date within six days, but it took him about five months to come up with a new date to begin his march, which came as a surprise to many, as Imran Khan announced the start of his march on the day, he had to announce the date of the march. So, it was actually considered an urgent call, mainly influenced

by the emerging political scenario, especially after the murder of renowned Pakistani journalist Arshad Sharif in Kenya, who was a vocal critic of the present government and establishment as well.

Taking off from Lahore on the 28th of October, Imran Khan's march was much slower in pace, and the march, which was initially scheduled to reach Islamabad on the 4th of November, just travelled about 150 km in six days, reaching Wazirabad on the 3rd of November, where the sad and shocking incident of the firing on the PTI chief took place, putting the marchers on hold.

Revised strategies of the PTI and government

After taking a few days off following the March attack, the Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf leadership devised a revised plan of action for continuing the march from Wazirabad, where it was attacked, and planning to reach Rawalpindi, the twin city of the federal capital, in ten to fifteen days. It was decided that from Rawalpindi, Imran Khan would lead the march, and in between, he would



address gatherings in different cities via video link while other leadership would

After the incident of firing in Wazirabad, PTI workers, on the instruction of the party leadership, started protests in different parts of the country, especially in some cities in Punjab and Karachi, and blocked some major roads, causing disturbance to the public. On the other hand, the government made plans to counter the protestors' mob. The red zone has been extended for several kilometres to zero point, and thousands of personnel from the Sindh police, Rangers, and FC have been called in to deal with any unpleasant situations that may arise. A written guarantee was demanded from the top leadership of PTI to obey the agreement, and some strict guidelines were issued.

The Ministry of Interior also knocked on the doors of the court to get some clear directives for the protesting marchers. Interior Minister Rana Sana Ullah clarifies and reiterates in all of his media appearances that no one would be allowed to take the law into their own hands at any cost, and protestors wouldn't be allowed to cross the lines drawn for them.

Where does it seem to be going?

It actually seems like a war of nerves. Imran Khan used his long march as a threat, keeping opponents on their toes for many months, but willingly or unwillingly, he had to go for this march after all the hype he



had created and what he opted for. Long March was undoubtedly a risk for Khan, following his previous failed attempts in 2014 and on May 25 this year, but he took his chance because he had no other choice.

From Lahore, where the March took off at the end of October, public participation was not satisfactory, even for PTI, as all of their success depended upon the demonstration of people's power. Although the PTI claims more marchers, government agencies reported a maximum strength of 12 to 15k marchers in Lahore, and slowing down was seen as a strategy to gain time to either build momentum or bargain on their demands.

PDM leaders now openly claims that Imran wants face-saving, which won't be given to

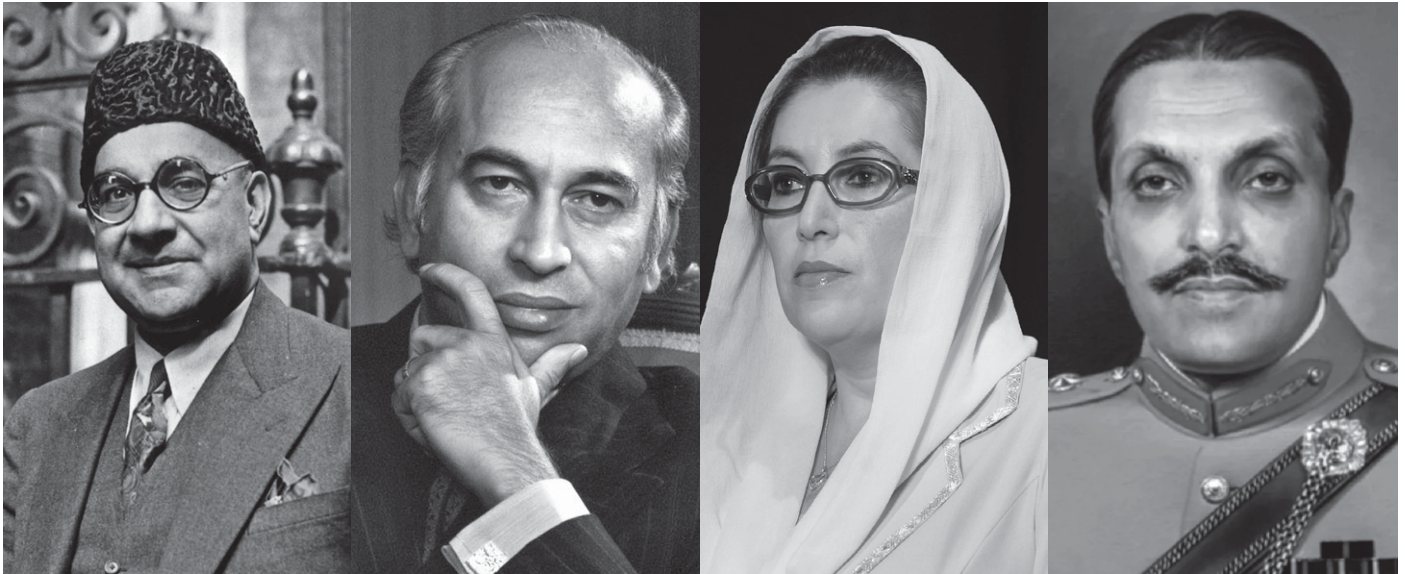
him, and no date for early elections will be announced. On the other hand, Imran Khan has started showing some softness and flexibility in his stance, saying that he could continue his struggle for many months, which shows he too is not anticipating much with this march. Independent observers say that after announcing a march, Imran Khan lost his bargaining position quite a bit, as all other relevant quarters are very well aware that Khan couldn't sustain this march for a longer period of time than he did in 2014. So now he needs something for his supporters, which the government is not ready to provide yet. Politics, especially in Pakistan, is fraught with uncertainty, but the PDM and the government appear to be unconcerned about Imran Khan's current venture.





High-Profile Assassinations in Pakistan: Lessons from History

The latest attempt on the life of former Prime Minister Imran Khan near Wazirabad stands out among the rest of the high-profile assassination attempts, but there is one commonality that makes it akin to the rest of them—the political situation is highly unstable and the power structure is in flux with superpower rivalry lurking in the background



By Umer Farooq

Liaquat Bagh has a special place in Pakistan's political history. Two Pakistani Prime Ministers—one serving, Liaquat Ali Khan, and one former, Benazir Bhutto—were assassinated in and around Liaquat Bagh which is famous for political rallies since the independence of the country. Apparently, there is no connection between the two assassinations and yet if one searches for similarities, one only has to scratch the surface of the political facade to find striking similarities. Liaquat Ali Khan as Prime Minister in the early 1950s, was desperately seeking a security paradigm for a newly independent country. This took him on the path of diplomacy and the treacherous world of superpower rivalry, which was ruthless and murky.

Pakistan's internal power structure was in a flux primarily because of the indecisiveness within the official circles about whether to join the American Camp, an option that was presented to Pakistan as Hobson's choice, or to remain neutral, an option seemingly less practical. By visiting Washington, Liaquat Ali Khan put his weight behind those elements in officialdom who wanted Pakistan to join the US camp.

Benazir Bhutto was out of power when she was assassinated just outside Liaquat Bagh, roaming in the political wilderness. But the political events surrounding her assassination were no less entangled in superpower politics. Only six years back, the United States had invaded Afghanistan and since then American generals in Afghanistan were overly reliant on the Pakistani security apparatus to run their show in war-torn Afghanistan. In the process, Pakistan got destabilized, both politically and from a security point of view. The American-backed military government of Musharraf was weak and unstable and needed the political support of moderates in Pakistan's political arena. The militants and extremist groups in Pakistan, which were somewhat allied with the Afghan Taliban, were on the offensive. Americans were actively involved in searching for moderate political forces within Pakistan which could bolster the sagging legitimacy of the US-backed military government.

Just like Liaquat Ali Khan, Benazir Bhutto had also put all her eggs in an American basket. She was in touch with American and British diplomats who were acting as a

go-between, between herself and the Musharraf regime. Some of the American diplomats were indicating that in the envisaged future setup, General Musharraf would handle the security affairs related to the war against terror while Benazir Bhutto would handle the internal and domestic political situation—and that would make an ideal political couple to run the affairs of Pakistan which was, by then, often described in Western media as a highly unstable western ally.

All this is not to suggest that Liaquat Ali Khan and Benazir Bhutto were both assassinated by anti-American forces or groups in Pakistan after they decided to join the pro-American camp in Pakistani politics. I am only trying to suggest that in both cases, the assassinations of two former prime ministers were carried out in the backdrop of the highly unstable political situation prevailing in the country at the time of both assassinations, and the highly fluid power structure.

Otherwise, Liaquat Ali Khan's assassination had been blamed on western intelligence services as well as Afghan intelli-



gence service, without the presence of any concrete evidence. Benazir Bhutto's assassination was blamed by her family on the military dictator, General Musharraf and the Musharraf regime itself blamed it on the Pakistani Taliban. Nevertheless, it would not be irrelevant to suggest that both Liaquat Ali Khan and Benazir Bhutto were having a tryst with the murky world of diplomacy and intelligence at the time of their assassination, while at the same time facing a political situation in Pakistan that was highly unstable, primarily on account of the volatile power structure.

Perhaps it would not be an exaggeration to suggest that most of the high-profile assassination attempts in the country's history took place in a time of either political instability or when the power structure was in a deep flux. In 2003, twice attempts on the life of General Musharraf were made. Both assassination attempts took place in Rawalpindi, "They sent shock waves through Pakistan's military establishment and raised questions about the quality of the general's security, as well as whether some police or army officials are assisting the attackers," international media reported, "But suspicions immediately centered on Pakistani militants, on members of Al Qaeda or a combination of the two. The twin attacks came two months after the release of an audiotape purportedly from Al Qaeda's No. 2 leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, that urged Pakistanis to overthrow President Musharraf", "A senior Pakistani intelligence official said several men from Arab countries were believed to have entered Pakistan and to be operating in four teams carrying out the attacks. The official said members of two Pakistani militant groups, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and Jaish-e-Muhammad, were believed to be in contact with the foreigners".

The Musharraf regime was politically isolated and it had introduced reforms in the security paradigm to move the Pakistani state away from its reliance on militant groups and extremists. The attacks were conveniently blamed on local and international terror groups. Some of those involved in the attacks were later apprehended by intelligence agencies. However, there is no denying the fact that the assassination attempts were made in a highly

unstable political environment. The power structure was in a state of flux and those opposing General Musharraf's pro-American policies were being shunted from state structures. There was a palpable sense of struggle in the power corridors. Americans were in a tight embrace with the military government of General Pervez Musharraf. Yet there were forces opposed to this close alliance and the resulting power struggle in the power corridors made the political situation highly unstable.



The latest attempt on the life of former Prime Minister Imran Khan near Wazirabad stands out among the rest of the high-profile assassination attempts, but there is one commonality that makes it akin to the rest of them—the political situation is highly unstable and the power structure is in flux with superpower rivalry lurking in the background. Imran Khan as prime minister went to Russia and met President Putin on the day the latter ordered his army into Ukraine. Americans got infuriated, according to Imran Khan, and conveyed their anger through diplomatic channels. After his ouster from power, Khan launched a frontal attack against Washington and started propagating that Russia and China were more reliable partners. He succeeded in mobilizing public opinion in his support. Now we are witnessing a process through which the Punjabi middle classes are seemingly shifting loyalties toward Imran Khan. But Imran Khan is no less a Punjab-centric leader than Nawaz Sharif. Imran Khan also enjoys the loyalties of another ethnic group that dominates the bureaucracy, both civil and military—the

Pashtuns. All this made the political situation in the country highly unstable and the power structure palpably in a state of flux.

Completely apart is the elimination of military dictator General Zia-ul-Haq from the political scene through a sabotage operation that led to the downing of C-130 aircraft in which the military president was traveling. Pakistan's then-president and army chief was accompanied by the

military's top brass and the envoy of the United States to Pakistan at the time of the fatal crash. The cause of the crash is not known and a judicial commission report into the incident has not been made public to this date. At the time of the crash, the Soviets had started withdrawing from Afghanistan and there were signs that tensions started to arise between Washington and its client, Pakistan's military establishment led at that time by General Zia-ul-Haq. Understandably the political situation inside the country was unstable and the power structure was in flux. There are other types of assassination attempts in Pakistan's history which do not exactly fit into this theory—these assassination attempts simply could be described as terror attacks. In July 2004, an assassination attempt was carried out against Shaukat Aziz who was the country's then-finance minister and a prime ministerial candidate for the Musharraf-led government. Aziz survived the attack and went on to serve as prime minister from 2004 to 2007. At least seven people were killed and 70 others were injured in the suicide bomb attack, which was claimed by Al Qaeda.



Violence by State Machinery will give a trump card to IK

Let's see whether the boss of the Interior Ministry acts smartly and lets the crowd fizzle out on its own

Imran Khan's naive approach to politics is on full display in his efforts to influence the decision to appoint a new Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) through so-called Long March—a protest rally that hardly attracted the kind of crowd that could make Islamabad's officialdom shiver and tremble with fear of public reprisal. There is absolutely no doubt that Islamabad's powers that be are impervious to the influence of public opinion if it doesn't come in the shape of mammoth and absolutely unruly crowds. Following the Arab Spring revolutions, Pakistani officials developed a paranoia about spontaneous displays of public anger as a result of public opinion mobilisation via social media—a phenomenon that occurred in Egypt and Tunisia.

Imran Khan, who remained in power for almost four years, must be familiar with this fear in the official circles of Islamabad. Not surprisingly, the former Prime Minister kept delaying his arrival in Islamabad to coincide with the announcement of a new Chief of the Army Staff. To his utter dismay and absolute glee, the powers that be rejoiced at the fact that Imran Khan's campaign failed to mobilise the kind of crowd that could make them tremble or shiver.

A couple of thousand people were travelling with him en route from Lahore to Islamabad until they reached Wazirabad, where an attempt on his life was made in that industrial city. On the way, he succeeded in drawing large crowds wherever he stopped to address the people. His popularity in Central Punjab undoubtedly contributed to the assembly of these large crowds, but no less a factor was the persistent congestion and traffic jams on the GT Road.

His long march still could impact the power struggle revolving around the process of appointment of the Chief of the Army Staff that has already been initiated by the



Defense Ministry, while Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif is in the process of making up his mind about finalising the name of the new military leader. PTI Protests are taking a violent turn in and around Islamabad, where PTI workers, and activists are engaged in daily clashes with the local police. Imran Khan's nationally televised fiery speeches and sinister allegations heightened the tenor of the situation.

His Long March, despite its unimpressive crowds—at least for Islamabad's impervious officialdom—could still influence the course of political events in Islamabad in two ways. First and foremost, if there are noticeable and visible instances of violence in the upcoming clashes between federal police and PTI supporters, ordinary tear gas shelling won't work here. Something more sinister—God forbid—has to take place to break the impervious nature of Islamabad's officialdom. Secondly, this long march could impact the events in Islamabad, and Rawalpindi only if it succeeds in making the appointment of the new Chief of the Army Staff controversial. Will the appointment become contentious if the Prime Minister's Office announces the new name of COAS and Imran Khan appears on television to announce his refusal to accept the position?

Not really!

Imran Khan's rhetoric suggests he has a plan—he often refers to a plan that he has to influence the events in his speeches. Since his ouster, his associates have repeatedly stated that they will not accept the appointment of new COAs by Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif. Imran Khan's own words implicitly hint at his own self-image as a saviour of the army and its troops. Imran Khan, for example, recently referred to army troops as his children. His followers and associates describe his diatribes against the military as exclusively directed against four or five people in the Army. It doesn't require knowledge of rocket science to draw conclusions from the statements and speeches of Imran Khan and his associates—they think they have a following within the ranks and files of the Army.

The public relations and media myths are that the Pakistan Army is a highly disciplined and politically monolithic force. According to this myth, the Chief of the Army Staff is all-powerful within the organization, and everybody acts, functions, and works under and according to his command. The ranks and files of the Army, according to this myth, have no independent political role in the body politic of the country. This myth



has served a basic stabilising function in our political system, and all the political forces that believed in strong centralised state power have acted according to this myth while conducting day-to-day politics, even if they didn't clearly believe in it. The events of the past eight years have seen the gradual breaking of this myth, though in a very subtle fashion. The reason our society is still living under the spell of this myth is the massive propaganda machinery that sustains it.

The Army and its organisation have a very different face to show the masses on the periphery—in remote areas of Baluchistan and erstwhile tribal areas. In these areas, power flows nakedly from the barrel of the gun. The subtle political questions of who is in charge and who is overruling who don't really arise in those areas, where penetration of the media and civil society is minimal. The media, especially social media, don't really give a blow-by-blow account of who is hobnobbing with whom. Political events since August 2014 have been critical in dispelling this myth. Two former prime ministers, Imran Khan and Nawaz Sharif, in particular, must have their political behaviour scrutinised for the impact it had on the veracity of this military myth. Both Imran Khan and Nawaz Sharif, when ousted from power, were highly critical of the present COAS, General Qamar Javed Bajwa, for his role in their dismissal from office. In the cases of both of these leaders, it was believed that they were egged on by elements from within the army hierarchy.

Nawaz Sharif's aggressive campaign to target General Bajwa came on the heels of his three-year extension, which was granted to him by the Imran Khan government. Imran Khan's campaign, on the other hand, coincided with the time when Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif's government initiated the process to search for General Bajwa's replacement. In both cases, the office of COAS became the central pivot around which Pakistani politics revolved. Major political parties are supposed to contest among themselves for the office of prime minister. This was a clear indication of how the power balance has shifted towards non-representative institutions in the post-Musharraf period, as both former Prime Ministers were aiming to get their favourites in the office of COAS.

There are people in Islamabad and Rawalpindi who believe that Nawaz Sharif's aggressive campaigning against General Bajwa was aimed at creating unrest among the Pakistani Punjabi middle classes, from which most of the officer corps of the Pakistani Army is drawn. This unrest would have built pressure on the Army's top brass, whose junior and senior ranks are from the middle classes in central Punjab. Nawaz Sharif miserably failed, and General Bajwa got off the hook. But Sharif had shown the way. When Imran Khan was ousted, he embarked on a similar path to destabilise Central Punjab and its middle classes—the same middle classes from which the majority of the officer corps of the Pakistan Army are drawn. According to media reports.



Imran Khan's political message found more receptive ears within the army's organisational structure. According to observers, the boldness and aggressiveness of Imran Khan's political campaign suggest that he is either being egged on from within the organisation or he knows that ranks and files are being generally affected by general unrest in the middle classes of Central Punjab. Imran Khan is now riding a wave of sympathy from the middle classes. "Imran Khan's behaviour clearly shows that he is not only riding a wave of the middle classes' sympathy, he is also utilising the politicisation of ranks and files in the army to get into direct confrontation with the military top brass, which seems to be out of touch with the feelings of Pakistani middle classes, which are the main support base of the Pakistan Army," said a senior-ranking retired army officer on the condition of anonymity.

The Army was never a monolith, politically. This myth was painstakingly crafted by cunning media executives and army loyalists among media men, intellectuals, literary figures, poets, writers, and political leaders. There are numerous examples in our history of Army generals from the top brass maintaining contact with political leaders that appeared to be independent of the COAS's office. I will give a more recent example. The military dictator, General Pervez Musharraf's autobiography, "In the Line of Fire," clearly tells us how several Lt. Generals were present in the Prime Minister's House on the night of the October 12th, 1999 coup, and they were apparently taken into custody by the military units that took control of the Prime Minister's House on the night of the coup. In the media and political circles, there are dozens of stories doing the rounds about what is going on inside the Army hierarchy and how the junior ranks are being affected by the political situation. But these remain in the realm of rumors and don't deserve to be reported. One thing is for sure: the calm on the surface may be a lull before the storm.

The subtle nature of the power struggle being witnessed in Islamabad is certainly impervious to the mild ripples created by Imran Khan's so-called Long March. Participation of the ordinary masses is minimal, and the crowds he succeeded in assembling between Lahore and Wazirabad don't constitute a threat to Islamabad officialdom that could evoke the memories of the Arab Spring among the powers that be. Reports say Imran Khan won't be leading the Long March now that he has been injured in a gun attack at Wazirabad. The impact this will have on the size of the crowd is not very difficult to imagine. These crowds are passing through friendly territories until the time they make an attempt to enter Islamabad. That is when the likelihood of violence increases. Let's see whether the boss of the Interior Ministry acts smartly and lets the crowd fizzle out on its own or if he tries to attain a sadistic pleasure by unleashing the uncouth police and constabulary sepoy on PTI workers. Violence by state machinery against his party men will give Imran Khan a trump card to play.

By Umer Farooq



Back-channel talks might have compelled Imran Khan to slow the pace of the Long March

The arrival of the marchers in Rawalpindi coincides with the process of appointing the next COAS, which will have an impact

By Tahir Niaz



It is almost time for the government to take a decision regarding the appointment of the next Chief of Army Staff. It is without a doubt one of the more difficult decisions that the incumbent government has had to make, with inflation on one side and the opposition party, Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) on the other.

Imran Khan is pressuring the government to announce snap polls. The government is upset because of PTI's anti-government campaign as the appointment of the next army chief coincides with the arrival of PTI marchers in Islamabad. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif could initiate discussions on the appointment soon and possibly take a decision within a few days. The general perception is that he will consult his allies in the ruling coalition and, surely, his elder brother Mian Nawaz Sharif before making a final call. According to Article 243(3) of the Constitution, the President appoints the service chiefs on the recommendation of the Prime Minister.

Following the attack on Imran Khan's container in Wazirabad on November 3, the PTI, seemingly under the strategy, has further slowed down the pace of the already

slow-long march. The long march resumed its journey towards Islamabad on Thursday (November 10) from the same point where the container was attacked. PTI's vice chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi is leading the march in the absence of Imran Khan, who is recovering from the bullet injuries sustained in the attack.

The PTI Chairman had announced that the marchers would take 10–14 days to reach the federal capital, where he would join them after recovery. In an interview with CNN on November 7, he, however, said that it might take him 4–6 weeks to recover from the injuries.

Political observers are calling the PTI marchers' delay in reaching Islamabad a "method in the madness," though the government blames the delay on the smaller number of march participants. Imran Khan might have set some objectives for the long march, and the delay might have been a key to them.

The possible arrival of the marchers in the federal capital coincides with the initiation of the process and the date for the appointment of the next army chief. Some believe that despite having been ousted from the

government and having no say in the appointment of the army chief as per the constitution, Imran Khan wants to sway the appointment. And the long journey would be critical. Entering Islamabad and, most importantly, the garrison city with thousands of supporters will surely have an impact on the political situation of the country. The long march cannot change the decisions to be taken by those at the helm of affairs at this critical juncture of time, but Imran Khan might think of creating a stir and recording his presence on the political spectrum through the long march. So, the arrival of the marchers in Islamabad after the third week of November really has some impact.

Appointed in 2016, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa is set to retire on November 29.

The army chief's appointment is meant to be for three years, but General Bajwa was given an additional three-year term in 2019 after a bit of political drama. The legislation had, however, fixed 64 as the age at which a service chief must be retired. General Bajwa, still 61, can therefore be eligible for another term. This technicality had led to speculation that the incumbent may be seeking or interested in another extension.

The army chief's position is not the only four-star position that will fall vacant in November. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC), Gen. Nadeem Raza, will also be retiring at the same time. The simultaneous appointment of two four-star generals gives the government a little bit of space to pick a commander for the army without causing too much consternation among the top brass.

The manner in which this process plays out is less clearly defined in the rule books. Nor have any specific criteria been laid down for consideration for elevation, except for the



vague condition that the general chosen to lead the army should have commanded a corps.

The tradition is that General Headquarters (GHQ) sends a list of the four to five senior-most lieutenant generals, along with their personnel files, to the Ministry of Defense, which then forwards them to the prime minister to pick the officer he finds best suited to the role. The credentials of the generals are then deliberated either at the Prime Minister's Office or in the cabinet. The matter comes down to the prime minister's "informal consultation" with the outgoing army chief, his own perceptions, and his discussions with his closest advisors.

Of the ten army chiefs the country has had since 1972, five were appointed by the incumbent's elder brother, Mian Nawaz Sharif, in separate tenures as prime minister. The elder Sharif was frequently chastised for appointing officers he considered to be "apna banda" (his men). Ironically, none of the appointments worked out very well for him.

When the decision is made to appoint the next CJCSC and COAS, Lt-Gen Asim Munir will be the most senior of the lot. Although he was promoted to the rank of two-star general in September 2018, he took charge two months later. As a result, his four-year tenure as Lt. Gen. will end on November 27, around the same time when the incumbent CJCSC and COAS will be donning their army uniforms.

Lt-Gen Mirza is the senior-most candidate in the current cohort, out of four candidates from the same batch. He hails from the Sindh Regiment, the same parent unit as the outgoing CJCSC, Gen. Nadeem Raza. In October 2021, he was posted as Corps Commander Rawalpindi to enable him to acquire operational experience and become eligible to be considered for the top posts.

Lt-Gen Azhar Abbas is the most experienced in Indian affairs among the current brass. Currently, he is the chief of general staff (CGS), effectively running the army with direct oversight of both the operations and intelligence directorates at GHQ.

Belonging to the Baloch Regiment, Lt. Gen. Nauman Mehmood is currently

president of the National Defense University. He also has extensive experience as chief instructor at the Command and Staff College, Quetta. On his promotion as a three-star general in 2019, he was appointed inspector general of Communications and Information Technology, GHQ. In December 2019, he was sent to the Peshawar-based XI Corps. From there, he oversaw security along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border and its fencing at a time when the US withdrew its forces. In November 2021, he handed over command of the XI Corps to Lt. Gen. Faiz Hamid.



Lt-Gen Faiz Hamid, too, belongs to the Baloch Regiment and is one of the most widely discussed contenders among the competitors for the top office. Gen. Bajwa and Lt. Gen. Hamid have reportedly known each other for a long time. As a brigadier, Lt-Gen Hamid served as chief of staff of the X Corps under Gen Bajwa, who was commanding the corps at the time. After his promotion to the three-star rank, he was initially appointed adjutant general at the GHQ in April 2019. But only two months later, in a surprise move, he was appointed DG ISI.

In the last phase of his stint as head of the ISI, he became the focus of controversy between Imran Khan and the COAS, as the latter had decided to post him as commander of the Peshawar Corps and the former was not willing to relieve him. He was ultimately posted out to Peshawar, where

he served for less than a year before being moved to the Bahawalpur Corps. Some political pundits say it might be difficult, if not impossible, for the PML-N leadership to consider him for the post of the next COAS due to the highly publicised nature of his role as ISI chief during the last government's tenure.

Lt. Gen. Mohammad Amir belongs to the Artillery Regiment and is, at present, commanding the Corps in Gujranwala. He is considered a close confidant of General Bajwa.

The other factor that might have compelled Imran Khan to delay the arrival of the PTI caravan in Rawalpindi is that both warring parties might have engaged in some backchannel negotiations on key national issues. Back-channel talks are most commonly used in diplomacy as they help negotiators circumvent potential deal spoilers. Though both parties have denied any talks on the election date, there are some indications that something is cooking behind the curtains. At least President Alvi is striving hard in his capacity to find a solution to the political crisis.

The nation can no longer go along with the political crisis gripping the nerves of the people, even for the past few months. Negotiations are the need of the hour, and it would be best if the political leadership sat down together and hammered out a solution to the crisis at the earliest possible date.



Imran Khan and the FIR

Imran Khan termed the FIR "farcical."

By Ahmad Waleed

It took the Punjab police almost five days to register the first information report (FIR) of the gun attack on former prime minister Imran Khan in Wazirabad, where he received injuries to his legs. This only happened after the intervention of the Supreme Court of Pakistan. The major impediment to registering the FIR was Imran Khan's insistence on including the names of Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah, and ISI Maj-Gen Faisal Naseer. It was learned that the PTI supremo, during a meeting in Lahore, had even rejected the advice of the top party leadership that he should not insist on the inclusion of these names, especially that of the ISI official.

Being a big supporter of the establishment, Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi remained in deep water on the issue as his major ally in Punjab was hell-bent on the FIR issue. Six months into the coalition government, relations between the partners in Punjab reached an all-time low.

The PTI was upset that the FIR for the assassination attempt did not include the desired names. Fawad Chaudhry termed it a "piece of paper" with no legal standing if the names of the PM, the Interior Minister, and an army official are not made part of the FIR.

Other leaders of the PTI also reacted sharply to what they called a "meaningless FIR." "It is a mockery of justice and a meaningless FIR, and it is not worth the paper it's written on," PTI leader Asad Umar said. He also accused the powerful quarters behind the police of not registering the FIR according to his demand.

Imran Khan termed the FIR "farcical." He took to Twitter to express his outrage over the FIR, which did not include the names he had nominated in his application. "On the issue of the farcical FIR, my lawyers will give their position." All my life, I dreamed of seeing my country as a prospering welfare state, and my struggle throughout has been to make this dream a reality for my nation. "Today the nation has awakened, understood, and risen," he tweeted.

Meanwhile, legal experts opine that registering an FIR is the right of the victim, which cannot be denied by the police, and delaying the process may result in a miscarriage of justice as there are chances that the evidence can be tempered. "Police are duty-bound to register the FIR without delay on the victim's request," the experts believe. However, some lawyers think the desired names, if not inserted at the time of registration of the FIR, can be included at a later stage, after the investigators reach the conclusion that more than one person is involved in the attack.

Legal experts say the PTI chief can nominate anyone, and if his allegations prove wrong, the police or a court can exonerate the accused for lack of evidence after the investigation, and the accused has the right to claim damages for malicious prosecution.



The inordinate delay in the registration of the FIR provided the PTI another opportunity to further the narrative that the party is being victimised by the powers that be. During all this time, the party managed to get more support from all quarters of society.

Since the PTI chairman was ousted from power six months ago through a no-confidence motion by the 13-party alliance of the opposition, former prime minister Imran Khan has been on the roads, holding massive rallies to regain popularity that was hit by the poor performance of around four years' rule of mismanagement and bad governance.

He claims that his ouster from power has brought him to the highest level of popularity, and he is more than confident that if elections are held immediately, his party will sweep the provinces of the country. His tirade against his rivals and sharp criticism of the establishment, along with the narrative of "foreign conspiracy," have won him laurels with the public.

Former prime minister Imran Khan has finally agreed on how the attack will be probed by the Supreme Court commission suggested by the prime minister, Shahbaz Sharif, and at the same time, he is trying to complicate matters by insisting that everyone he has accused must resign first. It shows that he is trying to score political points and putting pressure on the government and the establishment to announce the date of free and fair general elections right away.



PPP sustains its Power

According to the survey, PPP is the most popular, while MQM-P is the least popular

By Azfar Ashfaq

Although local government elections in four of the six divisions of Sindh—Sukkur, Larkana, Shaheed Benazirabad, and Mirpurkhas—have already been successfully organised five months ago, the same process for Karachi and Hyderabad divisions has been delayed three times due to heavy monsoon rains followed by floods and a security situation. While the delay in nine districts of Hyderabad division is somehow justified because of damaged infrastructure and the displacement of a large number of people due to unprecedented floods, there is a lot more to the frequent postponement of the key electoral exercise in seven districts of Karachi division than meets the eye.

The local government elections in Karachi and Hyderabad were scheduled for July 24. But due to the forecast of heavy rain, the polls were postponed until August 28. For the same reason, the elections were postponed indefinitely, and a few days later, the Election Commission of Pakistan gave October 23 for the polls only in Karachi Division since the situation in Hyderabad Division was not conducive for polling due to floods.

However, weeks before the new deadline, the Pakistan Peoples Party-led Sindh government informed the election commission that it was facing a shortage of police personnel in Karachi—16,786 to be



exact—and that it would be difficult to provide security to more than 5,000 polling stations, 4,900 of which were classified as "most sensitive and sensitive." On October 18, the ECP once again announced the postponement of the local government elections in Karachi division at the request of the Sindh government for an indefinite period until the availability of adequate security.

But was the postponement decision really motivated by the shortage of police personnel? Almost every major opposition party disagrees.

The Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf and Jamaat-i-Islami see a conspiracy behind the repeated postponement of the polls and

allege that sensing their defeat, the PPP and its coalition partner at the Center, the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan, manipulated the security situation to their advantage and ran away from the elections. Both PTI and JI had already approached the Sindh High Court against the delays, and their respective petitions are pending adjudication.

In a bid to control the damage, the PPP and MQM-P separately claimed that they did not want any delay in the election. PPP's Sharjeel Memon and Saeed Ghani said they had asked the ECP to conduct polls in Karachi in two phases, but the ECP did not agree. But, in background conversations, various PPP leaders say their government was forced to approach the ECP for postponement as the MQM-P threatened to leave the coalition government.

On its part, the MQM-P said that it did not want a delay, but the real issue was the unjust delimitation of constituencies, and without correcting them, the electoral exercise would be meaningless.

"I give you one example of unfair delimitation. A union committee in Manghopir is comprised of 2,668 voters, whereas a UC in Orangi Town is based on 64,775 voters. Is it justified? "The PPP wants to bring its own mayor by gerrymandering, but thank God powerful quarters took notice and





intervened," says a senior MQM-P leader, asking not to be named. "We are already in court... but after the recent thaw, we now hope the PPP government will redress our grievances," he says in a thinly veiled reference to on-going talks between the two parties that may lead to amendments in the Sindh Local Government Act 2013 and the appointment of MQM-nominated persons as administrators of Karachi and Hyderabad.

According to the survey, PPP is the most popular, while MQM-P is the least popular.

If the findings of a recent survey are to be believed, there seems to be some truth in the opposition parties' allegation that the PPP and MQM-P do not want to hold LG polls because of their unpopularity among the masses.

Pulse Consultants, which describes itself as a marketing and social research company, released in the first week of November the results of a survey it conducted in October about the leadership choices of the people of Karachi.

The company presented the names of incumbent Karachi Administrator Murtaza Wahab of the PPP, former city mayor Wasim Akhtar of the MQM-P, former Karachi mayor Syed Mustafa Kamal of the Pak Sarzameen Party, JI's Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman, and PTI's Firdous Shamim Naqvi

to over 1,000 participants in seven districts of Karachi and asked them three questions as to whom they considered more vocal about Karachi's issues, who could solve the problems, and who they thought would become the country's commercial capital.

Answering the question as to whom they want to see as the next Karachi mayor, 51 percent of the survey participants named JI's Hafiz Naeem, followed by Mustafa Kamal, whom 16 percent wanted to see in the same position. Murtaza Wahab of the PPP and Wasim Akhtar of the MQM-P finished last, with only 5% and 4% of the vote, respectively. PTI's Firdous Naqvi is slightly above them with 7 percent.

Similarly, 58 percent of people believe Hafiz Naeem is the most vocal politician in Karachi, followed by Mr. Kamal (14%), Mr. Naqvi (6%), and Mr. Wahab and Akhtar (4% each). And 46 percent believe Hafiz Naeem can solve Karachi's problems, followed by Mr. Kamal (12 percent), Mr. Naqvi (8 percent), and Mr. Wahab (5 percent), while only 4 percent believe Mr. Akhtar of the MQM-P can.

Over the years, Hafiz Naeem of the JI has emerged as an alternative choice for people in Karachi, especially since the establishment ousted MQM founder Altaf Hussain. While the JI contested the 2018 general elections from the platform of the Muttahi-

da Majlis-i-Amal and bagged only one provincial assembly seat from Lyari, Karachi, it did not contest any by-elections. However, because of Hafiz Naeem, the party's performance in the 2021 cantonment board elections in Karachi was impressive and better than MQM-P.

It is widely believed that if the local government elections were held on July 24, there were good chances that the JI could have emerged as the single largest party in Karachi, as the turnout must have been low because of the boycott call of MQM founder Altaf Hussain. But analysts believe the JI's chances are not that bright now against the backdrop of the victory of the PTI in two consecutive by-elections on as many National Assembly seats as people voted for the Bat, despite the fact that the PTI did not run an effective election campaign.

An MQM-P leader, however, terms the survey results biased, alleging that the company that conducted the study was a front for the JI. He says Hafiz Naeem himself is a candidate, but neither Wasim Akhtar nor Murtaza Wahab is contesting the polls, so making them the mayoral candidates of the MQM-P and PPP was simply wrong and unjustified. "The results would have been different if they [Pulse Consultant] had taken Faisal Subzwari instead of Wasim Akhtar."

Impact of Floods on Pakistan's Economic and Food Security

The damage caused by the floods calls for an immediate emergency response from the international community as well as a long-term recovery and development plan, with an emphasis on food and nutrition security and livelihoods

By Mahnur Mehfuz

The worst floods in recent Pakistani history occurred due to monsoon rains, washing away villages and leaving about 10 million children in need of immediate life-saving assistance and vulnerable to watery illnesses, drowning, and hunger. Since June 2022, Pakistan has experienced an unprecedented climate-induced disaster that has resulted in widespread fatalities, livestock deaths, and damage to and destruction of public and private infrastructure.

This disaster was caused by heavy rains and a combination of riverine, urban, and flash flooding. Landslides and floods brought on by rain have also harmed forests and agricultural land, affecting regional ecosystems. Pakistan's government declared 84 districts throughout the country as "calamity affected," mostly in Balochistan (32 districts), Sindh (23 districts), and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (17 districts).

Along with numerous public health facilities, water systems, and schools, hundreds of thousands of residences have also been destroyed or damaged. The situation has worsened into a severe catastrophe even as the floodwaters have receded. Children who are weak and hungry are fighting a lost struggle against acute respiratory infections, severe acute malnutrition, diarrhea, malaria, dengue fever, typhoid, and painful skin disorders. Along with physical issues, children's mental health is also at stake while the crisis drags on. The total economic losses are expected at USD 15.2 billion and the total damages are likely to exceed USD 14.9 billion.

Without taking into account the urgently needed investments, outside of the affected assets it is estimated that Pakistan will require at least USD 16.3 billion in rehabilitation and



reconstruction to support the country's overall resilience to future climate shocks and its adaptation to climate change. The most substantial losses were in the housing, agriculture, livestock, transportation, and communications sectors, at USD 5.6 billion, USD 3.7 billion, and USD 3.3 billion, respectively.

Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Punjab were severely affected, accounting for close to 70% of all damages and losses. Sindh remained the worst-affected province overall. The Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA), which was carried out with assistance from the World Bank and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), was coordinated by the Ministry of Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the European Union (EU), and the United Nations agencies.

The PDNA estimates damages, economic losses, and recovery, along with rebuilding needs and evaluation of broader macroeconomic and human repercussions. It also recommends guiding principles for the creation of an extensive framework for recovery and reconstruction.

The 2022 floods are anticipated to severely impact output, which will vary greatly by location and sector, adding to the country's already pressing economic problems. It is anticipated that the floods will directly incur a GDP loss of about 2.2 percent of FY22 GDP. At 0.9 percent of GDP, the agriculture sector is predicted to experience the greatest decline. The industrial, foreign commerce, and services sectors will all be impacted by the harm and losses in agriculture. According to preliminary analysis, the economic losses are expected to be between \$15 billion and \$20 billion, reflecting the significant harm caused to the nation by flash floods that engulfed large populations.

Direct economic losses were \$12 billion, housing infrastructure losses total \$6 billion, and livestock losses totaled \$4 billion. The Ministry of Finance is compiling a study titled "An Early Assessment of Flood Impact on Pakistan's Economy" that states that the actual economic losses are much greater than the \$10 billion to \$12 billion that was initially projected.

According to the research, between 1-2 million individuals have lost their employment, and between 9 million



and 12 million more people would live in poverty. In rural areas, women make up 77.7% of the informal labor force, while the agriculture industry employs 6 out of every 10 young women. With only 19% of women working in agriculture for pay and 2.5 times as much unpaid, the majority of the job is done out of need and without their consent. Initial assessments indicate that as many as 604,212 small companies supporting the lives of 6.55 million people without work and income prospects have been impacted. Estimates indicate that 282,167 of these SMEs are in Sindh.

The government has calculated that decreased exports, particularly of cotton and cotton value-added products, might cause the trade deficit to increase by \$3 billion to \$4 billion. It is anticipated that exports of beef, tents & canvas, leather & leather footwear, fruits & vegetables, tobacco, oil seeds and nuts, and cement will decline dramatically. Contrarily, there may be an increase in imports of raw cotton, wheat, pulses, sugar, construction equipment, and medications. Natural catastrophes and climate change pose a serious threat to Pakistan. For years, the nation has been plagued by calamities like earthquakes, typhoons, flooding, and drought, which frequently destroyed the foundations on which the lives of hundreds of thousands of families were constructed.

Political tensions on the domestic and international levels have also impacted the nation, creating ongoing instability. Over 2.5 million displaced people, largely from

crisis-ridden Afghanistan, now call Pakistan home as a result of anti-terror operations along the Afghan border. Since the Taliban seized power in 2021, more refugees are coming. "Devastating floods struck Pakistan, wiping out not only lives but also livelihoods. It is now anticipated that a country with a sizable population that has restricted access to a variety of meals on a physical and financial level, will experience severe food scarcity, leading to a triple burden of malnutrition. Consequently, a successful, multi-sectoral, well-coordinated response is essential. Before the monsoon, malnutrition was a problem for small children, teenagers, pregnant women, and nursing mothers who lived in flood-affected areas. This heavy rain is predicted to result in a rise in cases of malnutrition since millions of people who were displaced by the floods are now living beneath the sky with stagnant flood waters,

which can cause water-borne illnesses like acute diarrhea, escalating risks of malnutrition.

Long-term food shortages are imminent in the nation due to the destruction of a substantial portion of food stores and severe damage to staple crops. The International Rescue Committee estimates that the floods destroyed 70% of Pakistan's rice and 65% of its major food crops. The distinction between humanitarian and development assistance is irrelevant in nations like Pakistan that are being severely impacted by climate change. Building synergy between humanitarian and development organizations is necessary for thorough planning and action to mitigate the effects of climate change. Given how closely linked climate change and nutrition are, it is important to increase the ability of civil society organizations to respond and mitigate climate change locally. The damage caused by the floods calls for an immediate emergency response from the international community as well as a long-term recovery and development plan, with an emphasis on food and nutrition security and livelihoods. Before the monsoon, malnutrition was a problem for small children, teenagers, pregnant women, and nursing mothers who lived in flood-affected areas. A multi-faceted approach to mitigation would take into account steps like preventing or restricting new or inappropriate development or activities in the flood plain; removing some structures from the floodway; flood-proofing structures in the flood plain; and introducing structural measures like levees, and dams that can help with flood management.



Situation After Floods

Pakistan is one of the world's most climate-vulnerable countries. The government would have to rise to the occasion and take steps before natural calamities turn much worse and inflict irreparable damages

By Hamza Qureshi

As the world gathers for COP27, the climate change victims of Pakistan still wait for their share of climate justice. At least 1,700 people died, and eight million were displaced. The government of Pakistan is calling on Western nations for help after the devastating floods affected 33 million. The process of rehabilitation is slow and impeded by various factors such as the magnitude of the calamity, kickbacks, political motives, and incompetency of local administration.

Tehsils of District Jamshoro (Manjhand and Sehwan) which are located on the right bank of the River Indus; became submerged when cuts were made at Manchar Lake and adjoining canals. Manchar is the largest freshwater lake in Pakistan. Located west of the Indus River, the lake is spread over an area of 250 Km². The maximum storage capacity of Manchar Lake is 130 ft above sea level. During the recent floods, the pressure of water at Daanstar Regulator Gates touched the limits due to improper planning and delayed arrangements by the Irrigation Department. Currently, the water level is around 116 ft.

Various cuts were made at different places to protect the historical cities of Sehwan and Bhan Saeedabad. Most devastation in these areas happened due to the mismanagement of the Irrigation Department which did not correctly ascertain the inflow and outflow of water from Manchar Lake.

While traveling back to Karachi from Sukkur on the National Highway in the last week of October, one could see water standing in farms and villages. We passed through Khairpur, Gambat, Moro, and Qazi Ahmed. The consequences of flooding were evident. We saw water still standing at a few places despite more than three months elapsed since the hazardous rain spells hit areas of Sindh and Baluchistan.

Road Networks

The floods have damaged major highways and local roads. Stormwater has washed away entire roads or major chunks in places. Indus Highway near Sehwan was shattered. The Sehwan to Larkana track is still in bad shape. The National Highway Authority (NHA) has remained unsuccessful in maintaining smooth flow of traffic. Cuts were made at various points such as 114 RD Bachal Charna near Sehwan Toll Plaza, Zero Point, RD 62, and RD 64.

Roshan Ali is an ex-Nazim of Bhan Saeedabad. He revealed that majority of local roads were affected due to cuts made in canals. Stormwater flowing through roads caused the damage. Connectivity has been badly disturbed. Sehwan-Karampur, Dadu-Sehwan local (old) road and Bhan-Sidhi Road were hit by continuous rains and flooding.

Temporary paths (kacha rasta) have now been made at various points on the highway. This has allowed the traffic to pass. Vehicles



are traveling both ways on a single track as the other track is closed due to maintenance work. Bridge near Sehwan Toll Plaza was damaged which has caused impairment in traffic management.

Israr Ali Tenio, DSP Motorway Indus Highway Sehwan shared that there are difficulties in managing the traffic. The flow is slow. Sehwan to Bhan Saeedabad track is greatly damaged. Routine transportation of goods and food is interrupted due to road damages. This highway receives the most traffic on normal days.

Plight of Manchar's Fishermen Community

Sharif Mallah is a resident of the area. He belongs to a fishermen family which is settled around Manchar. He describes life at Manchar as difficult. This is due to the all-year-flowing waste from nearby factories and Siim Nallas (Saline water canals) which has greatly disturbed the pH of the largest freshwater lake in Pakistan. The water is bitter to the extent of being undrinkable. Fishermen suffer due to lesser catch as fish cannot survive in polluted waters.

Flood Water has brought fresh water into the lake as well. With exception of some polluted water which is now flowing into the lake from Kashmore, Kankot, and Larkana, most of the lake water is clean. Floods have been good for the fish. However, at the same time, the fishermen community has been deprived of their homes due to floods. They are stranded, living in relief camps which too are not in very good shape.

Mallah told The Truth International that the tents in Relief Camps (such as of Laal Bagh) are tearing apart. They can not bear the rage of winter which is about to start in a few days. He anxiously questioned; "What would we do, in case of rainfall? Before floods, there were homes to take shelter in. Now there are none. We are abandoned." He added that the government is not doing enough for their rehabilitation.

Returning Not Easy!

People began to return as water finally receded out of some villages and farms. Farmers have started sowing seeds. Crops such as wheat and mustard are being planted at Bubak, Jhangara, and Talti union councils of Taluka Sehwan. But life is not easy for those who have returned. With no house or shelter, people are fighting for their basic survival. While there were tents available in relief camps, there is no place to take shelter other than the wrecked home. Several areas received moderate rainfall in the second week of November.

The subsequent decrease in temperature by 4°C has worried the locals. With no proper structure and facility to deal with the increasing severity of the weather, they are concerned about their livestock and children's health.

Chief Minister Sindh, Murad Ali Shah claimed in a recent visit that 70% area is now cleared. Locals say that water is still present in several areas. About 6 of the 10 Union Councils of Sehwan are still submerged. Bhan Saeedabad's Roshan Ali believes that political bias is influencing rehabilitation work. While thousands of houses are damaged, relief aid is being provided to those landlords who reserve their political support for the ruling party in the province.

The power distribution network has also been affected. 12 hours of load-shedding is normal in these areas. Due to the power shortage, the communication towers of telecom companies are not fully functional. This has led to disrupted communication in several areas.

Situation in Lower Sindh

Lower Sindh is the most neglected of all affected areas. Although water has been removed from Jhaddo City, Malkani, and Pangrio of District Badin, surrounding villages are still deluged. Traces of floods are visible throughout. A welfare worker from Badin, Shahnawaz Buledi did an outstanding job during the floods. He managed to rescue many people and supplied cooked food to villages for more than a month. He said that 25 percent of all houses need reconstruction in Jhaddo City. While 100 percent of houses need immediate maintenance. Water has been standing in this vicinity for more than 50 days.

Due to surrounding villages and farms being submerged, the crops could not be planted this season. Seeds can't be sown due to the soil being unsuitable. People could not even return to their lands. They are still living in tent cities.

The reason behind standing water in villages and towns of Badin District is clearly political. Special Assistant to CM and MPA of Peoples Party, Arbab Lutufullah, and his brother Amanullah have been opposing the cuts being made at LBOD. The natural flow of stormwater is towards the Puran Naddi (old river) for which cuts must have been made at LBOD. If cuts were allowed, the water in the cities would have flowed to the delta region causing comparatively less damage.

Protests were organized so that the cut could not be made. The local administration showed some presence until protests were ongoing. But when it was decided that cuts were not to be made, the protest ended, shifting the attention of the government from the area.

Protestors belong to the residential areas which have been illegally

established in the riverbed of Puran Naddi. These residential areas were constructed to safeguard large farmhouses and crop fields of political figures of the area. With time, the NGOs are also backing off. People of lower Sindh are questioning the role of government which is nowhere to be found.

Health Issues

Ali and Buledi shared that basic health facilities are almost non-existent in most areas. Malaria, skin infections, and diarrhea are some of the common diseases to which the flood affectees are falling prey. People travel several kilometers for a medical center only to find inadequate equipment. Shortage of medicine has caused several cases to deteriorate.

On the other hand, some patients are suffering from water-borne diseases through direct contact with polluted waters, such as wound infections, dermatitis, ear, nose, and throat infections. Pregnant women and new-born are more prone to danger than anybody else. Malnutrition has greatly impacted the growth, physical and cognitive development of children. As per UNICEF, more than 1 in 9 children in flood-affected areas of Pakistan is suffering from severe acute malnutrition.

What Government Is Doing?

Locals from Sehwan told The Truth international that governments and some Non-Governmental Organisations are currently conducting surveys to calculate the actual loss of lives, livestock, crops, and homes. However, locals complain that the provincial government is not doing enough. Despite claims, the government has failed to initiate any major facilitation project. Mallah says that promises were made by officials but they see no development on the ground.

Issues Caused By Bad Governance

Ali shared that the rehabilitation process is quite slow. The government has not provided any facility or subsidy for agriculture. It was promised that seeds and fertilizers will be provided to small farmers. However, the procedure is marred by political bias.

During our visit, we saw that maintenance work was being done in full swing at the National Highway. However, questions were raised about the quality of work. "50-50 percent" is a common phrase that is used by locals to explain the commissions and kickbacks in governmental projects. We witnessed that the potholes and cuts at the highway were being repaired as it was a street road. Such maintenance work won't last long as it would not be able to sustain the load of heavy traffic.

The locals in all affected areas demand flood planning while keeping in view that the natural flow of water must be determined. All drainage projects such as RBOD must be completed in due time. Encroachments in the natural flow of water must be removed. Corruption and kickbacks must be punished and transparency ensured at all costs.

Pakistan is one of the world's most climate-vulnerable countries. The government would have to rise to the occasion and take steps before natural calamities turn much worse and inflict irreparable damages.

The Dam Affairs: Balochistan, dams and outworn policies

The dams constructed in Balochistan are of three kinds: purposefully built to recharge groundwater, store water for agricultural use, and fulfill consumption needs

By Ayaz Khan

In July, Jabbar Zehri, Executive Engineer (XEN) Irrigation Department, was continuously working on two fronts. On the one hand, he was swamped with voice and text messages and calls from journalists fervently waiting for updates about 'Hub Dam breach', as the words about dam getting breached had gone abuzz like wild fire. On the other, he was busy in carrying out his official duty to evacuate the catchment area to shun any loss of life. He was successful in this debut but was unable to foresee that the flow of heavy floodwater gushing out of spillway of the dam will sweep away the main bridge which connected one province to the other.

Soon the alarm bells started ringing confirming the collapse of the bridge. Journalists rushed to the site so were the Edhi rescue workers up in arms to avoid loss of precious lives in case any traveler was caught unaware and came down with the broken chunk of the concrete peeled off because of the ferocity of floodwater.

"My rescue team is on the way," said an Edhi worker. "They have searchlights and boats and we can initiate our rescue work with team's arrival without wasting a single minute," he shouted while look into the water to make sure no one had fallen down along the debris. After Edhi and police were satiated enough that no one had fallen into the water, they called off their operation while people still murmuring that they had seen few motorcyclists going down with falling concrete patches of the bridge.

However, after a week, authorities found a swollen body of one of the K-electric (KE) workers who was said to be passing the bridge on that fateful moment and slipped along with his bike into the crushing waves of the floodwater, and could not be spotted by the rescue team and the police.

As monsoon ravaged many parts of the province, its ferocious impacts were also felt on dams scattered across Balochistan.

As per estimations of Balochistan Irrigation Department, the province has 1020 small and big dams out of which 120 received various sort of damages and 27 could not sustain the flow of floodwater. As per data, almost 30,3620 acre feet land has been damaged owing to dam bursts and floodwaters.



In Hoshab, a town in Kech district in Makran, two dams have been built. Tal, one of the two dams located some 20km to Hoshab, broke during the monsoon rains and soon sent alarm bells to residents. Jameel Fazal, a resident of Hoshab, witnessed Dumb Bazar getting encircled by the floodwater flowing downstream.

"The water cordoned off the entire bazar. The bazar is elevated area which is why it's called Dumb. Bazar remained intact but agricultural land was destroyed because of floodwater reaching the city following Tal Dam burst," tells Jameel Fazal to The Truth International.

Apart from unexpected torrents, Balochistan has long been in the grip of draughts. Following the devastating rains, experts foresee prolonged draughts in upcoming years as climate change and augmenting

temperatures take momentum. Provincial governments have been struggling to overcome water shortage in the province while embarking on building dams particularly in districts that have no sources of water other than groundwater reservoirs. Recharging these reservoirs lies at the core of the issue.

Hameedullah is a hydrologist and has been assessing dams and groundwater recharging methods in the province. Given the natural elevation (places without any oceanic and river source vis-à-vis upstream flow of water) of some districts, he believes, dams are essential.

"Four districts are on natural elevation currently: Quetta, Kalat, Mastung and Pishin. The annual precipitation [rainfall and snow] is quite low in these districts and in the absence of methods employed to recharge groundwater, these districts might run out of water," Hameedullah emphasises. He adds further, "we need to build check dams, delay-action dams and injecting wells so that we can stop surface flow of water from one basin to the other."

The dams constructed in Balochistan are of three kinds purposefully built to recharge or

store water for agricultural use or fulfil consumption needs. Delay-action or check dams aim to recharge the groundwater whereas storage dams are built to store water to satiate the consumption needs.

Keeping in view the ebb and flow of floodwater, which increases in wet years and decreases during dry ones, in 2009, Balochistan government initiated 100 dams project approved in Federal Public Development Sector Programme (PSDP) 2007-8 with a cost of Rs2154.080 million. The project is comprised of 5 packages anticipated to reach completion by 2024. In a span of 6 years, until 2015, package 1 that included construction of 20 dams was completed. After completion of the package 1, the package 2 (26 dams) was underway when the province, like entire country, encountered deluges lashing almost all districts. The calamity has hampered the process. Many experts believe that lack of dams in the province exacerbated the situation. In addition, the issues that led or added to the susceptibility of the dams were multifaceted.

“There are many lacunae that can be attributed to the dam bursts. The dams in Balochistan are earthen dams unlike the dams made with required concrete material which adds to the durability of the dams,” informs site supervisor and soil inspector Alamgir who is working on 100 dams project currently. Apart from this, according to him, relocation of dam sites adds to the issues further. He complains that one of the most complex parts of the work is to convince people of the area where dam(s) are being constructed.

“Once the survey is completed and work is about to kick off, area residents start voicing against one or the other issue, forcing the concerned department to relocate the dam site. This is a Herculean task since the other site needs work afresh including surveys and other plans. And if this is done rather hesitantly, it leaves the dam vulnerable after construction,” Alamgir says.

District Lasbela experienced the worst post-monsoon affects and the floodwaters have washed away a big chunk of infrastructure in the district. The district remains one of the fertile districts of the province, natural water sources enriching it for agricultural activities. Land cultivators faced huge loss amounting to Rs300 billion. Since Lasbela is the gateway to supply cultivated crops to bigger markets in Karachi, its demolished infrastructure added to the losses, as the main roads remained closed for many weeks. The collapse of main bridge on Hub River left the entire produce in lurch. Fruits and vegetables started rotting, for the transporting vehicles remained stuck on roads with rain lashing them further.

“The main arteries remained closed because of floodwater washing away many a bridge in Bela, Uthal and Hub. There are more than 16 dams in Lasbela including Hub Dam whose excessive water led to the collapse of the main bridge connecting Balochistan with Sindh’s Karachi city. Nevertheless, the other dams received little damage as it happened owing to record-breaking rains,” adds Jabbar Zehri.

As per estimation of Irrigation Department,

approximately 20 lakh cusec water has been lost in the form of runoff floodwater. According to metrological department, in two months (July and August), Balochistan together experienced 300 per cent increase in average rainfall. On usual basis, Balochistan receives 22-154 millimeter rainfall. The loss of water in shape of floodwater runoff is adding to the water woes of the province. But construction of dams without proper planning is adding to it further.

“One of the issues regarding dam bursts remains to be the construction of dams consecutively which means building 3 or more dams in a vertical position, one following the other. First dam built atop and other adding to the tail end,” complains Alamgir, “when the first dam is unable to sustain the ferocity of floodwater ballooning it and finally leading to its outburst, it washes away the other remaining ones. This is what happened in many cases of dam bursts during monsoon rains.”

To come up with a solution and make the construction of upcoming dams, constructed under 100 dam project, sustainable and climate resilient, Alamgir appears unsure.

“We are, unfortunately, still struggling with basic issues such as construction of sites, required material and other things. Keeping climate change in view while making dams climate resilient is related to a stage when we come out of these baseline issues first,” says Alamgir.

Ayaz Khan is a journalist and researcher based in Pakistan and has been covering climate change. He tweets at @Ayaz_Jurno.



IDEAS 2022: Modernizing Defense

Maj. Gen. Muhammad Arif Malik, DG DEPO, told The Truth International that the slogan of IDEAS is "Arms for Peace,"

By Hamza Qureshi

The International Defense Exhibition and Seminar (IDEAS) is all set to have its 11th iteration from November 15 to 18 at the Karachi Expo Centre.

IDEAS is a biennial event that is organised by the Defense Export Promotion Organization (DEPO) at the Karachi Expo Center. According to the statistics, Pakistan's Ideas has grown by a spectacular 800 percent in terms of international and national participation since its first edition. The concept was introduced by then-Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf in 2000.

The Vision of DEPO

DEPO works to facilitate and promote the export of defence products. It tends to coordinate marketing efforts with the defence manufacturing sector by establishing the Pakistani Pavilion in international exhibitions abroad and organising IDEAS in Pakistan.

DEPO, on behalf of Pakistan, annually participates in 10–15 defence exhibitions held in different countries. The aim is to reinforce Pakistan's footprint in the defence market. This year, DEPO participated in the World Defense Show in Riyadh. A Pakistani pavilion was set up at the WDS. Along with state-owned defence manufacturers, eight private companies from Pakistan were also provided space there. The private companies also received manufacturing orders.

Traditionally, the IDEA has played an important role in strengthening Pakistan's strategic ties with the international community while also helping to achieve shared goals of global peace and stability. The last exhibition held in 2018 was attended by 524 exhibiting delegations from 45 countries, with over 262 high-level delegations also visiting the event. The exhibition was not held in 2020 due to COVID restrictions.

IDEAS's size has increased manifolds compared to yesteryear. The exhibition area has been expanded to accommodate more international participants.



IDEAS 2022

Maj. Gen. Muhammad Arif Malik, DG DEPO, told The Truth International that the slogan of IDEAS is "Arms for Peace," which explains that strengthening military power serves as a deterrent to conventional and non-conventional threats.

Malik shared that 200 local companies and 160 international companies are exhibiting at IDEAS this year. More than 82 delegations, which include defence ministers, chiefs of general staff, naval chiefs, air chiefs, and other military persons from 53 countries, will be attending the exhibition.

Malik commented that he couldn't share the exact details of Pakistan's defence exports. Due to the nature of these trade agreements, a majority of them are officially kept secret and not disclosed to the

public. But to give us an idea, he told TTI that the shipyard in Karachi is not taking any orders for the next 3–4 years due to a backlog of projects. Karachi Shipyard & Engineering Works has been manufacturing frigates and destroyers in collaboration with Turkiye.

He shared that there are joint ventures and defence agreements in place with various brotherly nations. There are joint ventures with several nations in the fields of research and development. As per SIPRI, Pakistan exported defence products worth \$53 million in 2021.

Pakistani defence manufacturers are pushing themselves ahead in the production of drones, anti-drones, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), and communication technologies. Malik emphasized that Pakistan is competing in the international

arena due to the lower costs and high-grade technologies of its products.

IDEAS was started in 2000, and since then it has become a central event for promoting cooperation and the exchange of information in the defence sector for local product manufacturers, research and development experts, financial experts, and policymakers.



In past years, Pakistan's main exports have been Al-Khalid military tanks and aircraft, including the Super Mushak, K-8, and JF-17. The ammunition produced by Pakistan's ordinance factories complies with international standards and is also exported to various clients. It was shared by DEPO officials that Pakistan's defence exports have seen a 100 percent increase in the last 20 years.

Exhibition Floor Plan

China, the Czech Republic, France, Ukraine, Germany, Italy, Jordan, Poland, South Korea, Turkiye, the United Arab Emirates, the USA, and host Pakistan have become crucial parts of the event with their respective pavilions established at Karachi Expo Center.

Sources in DEPO told us that military hardware from Turkey will be displayed in Halls No. 1 and 2, while Hall No. 3 has been reserved for Chinese defence products. European companies will exhibit their military hardware in Hall No. 4. Halls No. 5 and 6 are reserved for defence equipment and technology from Pakistan and other countries.

Apart from international participation, the Pakistan Army, Pakistan Ordnance Factories (POF), Global Industrial Defense Solutions (GIDS), National Logistics Cell, Anti-Narcotics Forces, Frontier Works Organization, Armed Forces Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine, Counter-IED Organization, and Directorate of Military Training will also be setting up their pavilions.

Moreover, the event will also display major defence products like the Al-Khalid tank, the JF-17, and UAVs in a bid to increase Pakistan's defence exports.

Miscellaneous military equipment will be displayed in Halls No. 7, 8, and 9 set up in the marquees. Traditional small arms weaponry from the infamous Dar-e-Adamkhel, as well as armour and military-grade textiles, are available at the stalls here.

Paradigm Shift: Seminars on Artificial Intelligence

IDEAS 2022 is focused on the use of technology in the defence sector. DEPO has planned a seminar on the first day of the exhibition. The main theme is "Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the Defense Market," with sub-themes being about cybersecurity, remote sensing, OSINT, and machine learning. The seminar is to be attended by international and national professionals and academics who will discuss the significance and applicability of the latest technologies on the battlefield.

University students from across the country have been invited to attend the seminar, according to Air Cdre Abdul Basit, Director of EPS. A call for research papers was initiated by the National Center of Artificial Intelligence. Six papers were selected out of the sixty that were submitted. There is also a cash award for winners.

Basit stated that the country's defence manufacturers have taken significant steps to implement artificial intelligence (AI) in order to automate various tasks in industries. He highlighted the future prospects of artificial intelligence and how cybersecurity is becoming necessary in every domain. Some local companies working in the AI domain are also setting up their installations at the exhibition.

Ideas for Side Activities

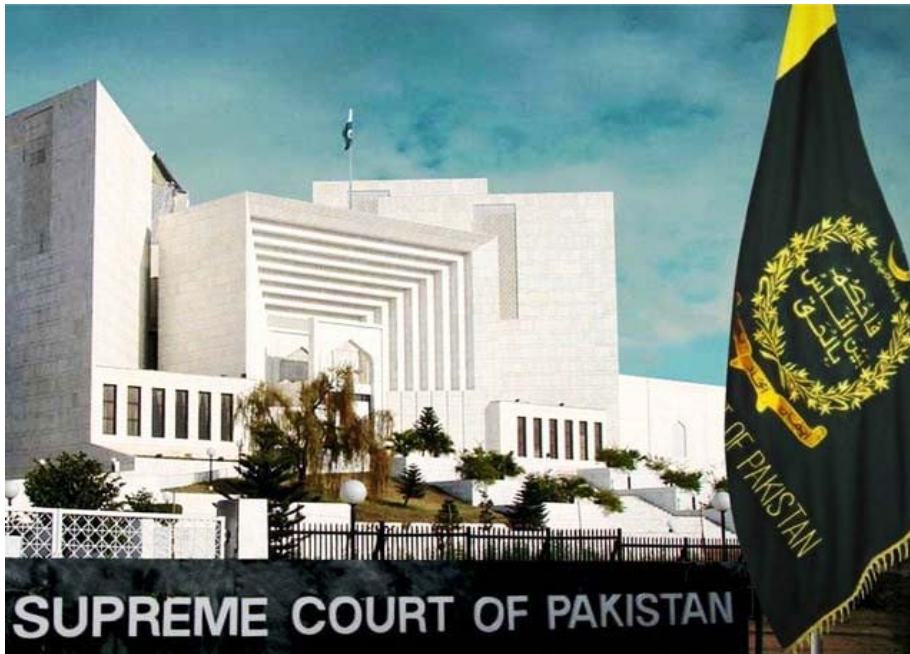
A small military show will also be organised at Sea View, Clifton Beach, on November 17. The Pakistan Air Force (PAF) will organise the air show. It will feature the legendary JF-17, F-16, and Super Mushka aircraft. Team Pakistan Navy will perform demonstrations of parachuting and marine activity. The Pakistan Army will demonstrate Pakistan-made tanks at the Expo Center Karachi.

Being the largest exhibition in Pakistan, IDEAS also provides direct economic prospects to the citizens of Karachi. With hundreds of dignitaries coming in from around the world, the hospitality industry sees a significant boom. Hotels and car rental services are frequently used at such events. A large number of blue-collar workers earn employment in the construction of pavilions and stalls. Moreover, other cities also benefit as delegates like to visit factories before or after the MOU signing.

Due to IDEAS, surrounding roads are blocked for security reasons. This has aggrieved citizens who call for better traffic arrangements. IDEAS is held at the Expo Center Karachi, which is located near the city's center. Blockage of roads does impact daily commuters by increasing their commute time. Authorities must work in this regard so that the citizens don't feel stressed and their conveyance remains convenient.

Who will judge the Judges

By Wajih Safarish Khan



Appointment of the judges of high courts and the Supreme Court of Pakistan has been a major controversy in the country for many decades. Over the years the management of the court, especially the formation of benches and assignment of cases to them has also become an issue.

Prior to the 1990s, the Chief Justice of Pakistan would forward a panel of recommended names for appointment as judges of high courts or their elevation to the Supreme Court to the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister would pick a name from the list and forward it to the President for appointment/ elevation.

In case of a high court the process would start from the chief justice of the high court concerned and goes through the relevant Governor and Chief Justice of Pakistan to the Prime Minister, who would forward a name to the President for appointment.

However, the Supreme Court of Pakistan in *Al Jihad Trust Case* took away any discretion from the Prime Minister and President and converted them into just a post and stamping offices. The court said that the recommendations of the chief justice of Pakistan on appointment/elevation of judges, were binding on the Prime Minister and President.

Parallel to it another development had started taking place in the Supreme Court. Up to the early 1990s it was normal for the Supreme Court to decide cases in full court which consisted of all its judges. However as the strength of the court increased, it became normal for the Chief justice to assign different cases to different benches of the court. At the same time the court became active in what is called 'public interest litigation'.

Over the decades different chief justices, starting from Chief Justice Afzal Zullah used such litigations to check different government actions or to reverse the legislation done by parliament.

In most of time it was observed that a Chief Justice would more often than not, constitute benches of a particular set of 'like-minded' judges to take up such cases of public litigation where generally important constitutional questions were decided.

In 1990s both the governments led by PPP and PML-N suffered a lot due to such judicial activism where the sitting chief justices would use benches of their choice to checkmate the sitting government.

Taking this in view, Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto and Mian Nawaz Sharif addressed the subject in the Charter of Democracy

signed by them in May 2006 in London. CoD promised that appointment of judges of the Supreme Court will be on the recommendation of a judicial commission headed by chief justice of Pakistan and consisting of vice chairman of Pakistan, Bar Council, President Supreme Court Bar Association Federal Minister for Law minister and Attorney General of Pakistan.

While considering the names for the judges of the high court the commission will also include chief justice of the provincial high court concerned as well as the vice chairman of the provincial bar council and president of the provincial high court bar association.

CoD promised that the commission will send a panel of three nominees against each vacancy to the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister will send one of these names to a joint Parliamentary Committee established for the purpose. The committee will confirm the same through a transparent public hearing process. The joint parliamentary committee will have equal representation from treasury and opposition benches in the parliament. The members will be nominated by respective parliamentary leaders.

The Charter of democracy also addressed the issue of constitution of benches of the Supreme Court and assignment of cases to them and said that such powers will be exercised by the chief justice and two senior most judges of the court while sitting together.

The COD also said that Supreme Court and high courts will only hear regular civil and criminal cases while a Federal Constitutional Court will be set up to resolve constitutional issues. It said that the constitutional court will have equal representation from all provinces and its judges will be appointed through the same process as judges of the Supreme Court for a period of six years.

After the 2008 elections PPP, PMLN and their allies built a national consensus and passed the 18th amendment and made major changes in the constitution. Issues related to powers of the chief justice related to constitution of benches and assignment

of cases to the same, and the establishment of constitutional court were ignored but an effort was made to adopt some of the provisions of the Charter vis a vis appointment of judges.

For this purpose article 175A was inserted into the constitution which provided for the establishment of a Judicial Commission of Pakistan for recommending names for appointment of judges of the Supreme Court, the Federal Shariat Court and the high courts of the provinces as well as Islamabad.



However in diversion from the CoD promise where the commission would have forwarded three names against each vacancy, the commission provided only one name against each vacancy. Under the amendment the commission comprised the Chief Justice of Pakistan, two senior most judges of SC, a former judge of SC to be nominated by CJP sitting together with other two judges of the court who are members of the commission, federal Law Minister, Attorney General of Pakistan and a senior lawyer nominated by Pakistan Bar Council.

While recommending judges of provincial HCs, the commission will also include the Chief Justice and the senior most judge of the relevant high court, provincial law minister and senior lawyer nominated by provincial bar council concerned.

The amendment provided that a parliamentary committee comprising eight members,

equally divided among both houses of parliament as well as government and opposition benches will consider the recommendations of the judicial commission and can approve the same within fourteen days with a simple majority, failing which the recommendations will be deemed to be approved. However it allowed the commission to reject any name with three fourth majority.

The 18th amendment was challenged in the Supreme Court on the ground that it violated the so-called basic structure of the

constitution. A full bench of the court, consisting of all 16 judges of the court in its order raised several objections to the newly inserted article 175A. The decision said that Chief Justice of Pakistan was pater familias i.e. the head of judiciary. His opinion had primacy in the consultative process in appointment of judges but the new law has taken away his position and made him just an ordinary member of the judicial committee with just one vote. Furthermore, it said that the parliamentary committee has been empowered to do away with decisions of the judicial committee which was equal to veto power. The court also objected to the presence of the law minister and the attorney general in the judicial commission.

The court adjourned the hearing of the petitions and gave an interim order in which parliament was asked to make necessary amendments in the said article. The language of the order made clear that if the

'recommended' amendments were not made in article 175A then the court may strike down the whole 18th amendment with possibility of proceeding against the initiators.

Soon thereafter the parliament passed the 19th amendment into the constitution to incorporate the 'recommendations' of the court. As per the court order, the number of Supreme Court judges in the judicial commission was increased from two to four thus further squeezing the non-judges minority in the commission.

The court said that proceedings of the parliamentary committee on judicial appointments will be in camera but recorded and will be justiciable and will not have protection as is available to the parliamentary proceedings.

The rules of the Judicial Commission made by the Supreme Court give power of the initiation of the names of nominees for the high courts, the Supreme Court and Federal Shariat Court to the Chief Justice of Pakistan. The rift among the judges of the Supreme Court on appointment or elevation of judges, as witnessed this year, is quite rare. Thus virtually the chief justice of Pakistan being the sole authority on appointment or elevation of judges, as ordained by the court in Al-Jihad Trust case in 1996, remains in tact.

It may be mentioned that the Supreme Court controls the process of removal of judges. A reference against any judge is normally not taken up by the Supreme Judicial Council and if taken is stalled through appeals in the Supreme Court. Shaukat Aziz Saddiqui case is very rare.

As already said parliament did not consider the CoD promise about restricting chief justice's power on establishment of benches of the court and assignment of cases to them and it remains at the discretion of the chief justice.

Thus the whole exercise which started with the signing of charter of democracy and later the 18th amendment in the constitution has come to nought and the authority of the chief justice of Pakistan remains as it was decided in the Al-Jihad Trust case in 1996.

Deepening Political Imbroglio and its Consequences for the Economy

If the political unrest gets out of control in the days ahead, Saudi Arabia, China, and other countries who intend to make huge investments in Pakistan will be left with no other choice but to opt for a 'wait and see' policy

By Javed Mahmood

The unabated political tug of war which is deepening by day, can be disastrous for the national economic stability and prosperity. On the one hand, recent catastrophic rains and floods have caused an immense loss of more than \$40 billion to the economy while on the other, unending political chaos is poised to hurt the economy in a way that its revival may not be possible in the near future.

Presently, although all the political parties in Pakistan are either in the central government or in the provincial governments, they have locked horns over different issues, intensifying political rifts. This is affecting economic stability. In the center, over a dozen political parties, under the umbrella of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), are part of the coalition government while PTI is ruling in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa alone and Punjab in coalition with its political ally PML-Q. Sindh province is already under the control of PPP along with a little share of MQM. PPP is a mainstream party in the PDM while various political parties are ruling Balochistan province through alliance.

Notably, the attempt to assassinate PTI Chief Imran Khan on Nov 10 during the long march in Wazirabad, has added fuel to the fire, triggering even greater political unrest in the country. PTI leaders and workers are on roads since October 20, demanding action against the key suspects named by Imran Khan: PM Shehbaz Sharif, Major-General Faisal Naseer and Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah. PTI protesters are setting tires on fire, blocking roads, and causing hardship to the general public. Additionally, clashes are also being reported between police and PTI activists.

The ongoing political battle is badly affecting the investment climate in



Pakistan, while different business sectors, including real estate, are experiencing an unprecedented slowdown. The rupee remains vulnerable to the dollar and other major currencies while the masses are experiencing unprecedented price hikes. The shortage of energy (gas and electricity) and hours-long power outages even in the winter season in suburban and rural areas are not only depriving the government of revenues but also affecting business sentiment and creating frustration among the masses.

On the economic front, key areas such as the stock market, dollar-rupee exchange rate, and real estate are reacting negatively to the political developments, and their stability and growth is interconnected with the prevailing political scenario in the country.

Since Pakistan has been in the grip of an unabated political tussle between the leading parties for the past many months, the KSE-100 benchmark index has fluctuated between 40K to 42K levels and foreign investors have remained absent from the market because of economic uncertainty. The dollar-rupee exchange rate had also been showing vulnerability, at around Rs 220 in the inter-bank and above

Rs 225 in the open market despite the fact, the Asian Development Bank had released \$1.5 billion in the first week of November while China and Saudi Arabia, according to Finance Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar, are giving \$13 billion financial packages to Pakistan till June 2023. On Nov 4, Dar told media that during recent visits of PM Shehbaz Sharif, China and Saudi Arabia have promised to provide \$13 billion worth of financial support to Pakistan.

Owing to this development, the people were anticipating a big blow to the value of dollar in the country in the following week, but this did not happen mainly because of the ongoing political tug-of-war. The dollar-rupee parity remained the same on Nov 7 (first working day after Dar announced \$13 billion package from China and Saudi Arabia). When Ishaq Dar was appointed finance minister, he pledged to bring the dollar down to Rs200 in a few weeks. At that time, the dollar-rupee exchange rate was hovering around 239 rupees, which is a record high mark in the inter-bank, and Rs250 in the open market.

Nonetheless, Dar's statements and a few positive developments on the economic front improved the value of

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Find your perfect Rishta on Dil ka Rishta

Finding your match is just a few clicks away with Dil Ka Rishta!

OMG, we have some good news for you. Parents no longer need to be worried about their children's marriages. "Dil ka Rishta" is Pakistan's most trusted and secure platform, dedicated to serious candidates only.

"Dil Ka Rishta," which is rapidly gaining popularity, is one platform that connects people to find their best matches through safe and secure online methods.

The app was created by a Pakistan-based venture studio that focuses on consumer and business technology startups. It offers excellent matchmaking services for those looking for a long-term relationship.

Rishta Culture

The conservative mindset is so deeply ingrained in our society's mindset that it is nearly impossible for people to seek marriage outside of their caste or community. Arranged marriages, fraught with the horrors of the lethal Rishta culture, are likely the only option for people looking for the perfect match. The matchmakers' rules and regulations to look and behave a certain way add to the horror. And, because of the prevalent misogyny in society, the girls bear the brunt of the Rishta culture's consequences.

The wind of change is blowing.

Things have changed gradually and steadily. Boundaries are being broken, traditions are changing, Pakistan's youth is moving forward, parent thinking is changing, and more is happening. Global dating and marriage apps, which arrived like a domain in a new world, have now solved the Rishta problems.

For women, Dil Ka Rishta is safe.

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SAFE FOR WOMEN



the rupee and the exchange rate declined to 220 rupees in the inter-bank and 225 in the open market. Keeping in view the resumption of long march and the uncertain political scenario in the country, the value of the rupee may remain more vulnerable to the dollar and Ishaq Dar's plan and people's expectations of seeing dollar below 200 rupees level may not materialize. In other words, people will continue to suffer from rising costs of essential consumer items, including gas, petrol, electricity, edible oil, etc., which are directly linked to the value of the dollar.

are enjoying government, some in the center and others in provinces. Thus dialogue is the only way to find a solution to problems. Our leaders must show some flexibility to save Pakistan from multiple tragedies. We have already lost half of the country (now Bangladesh), spectated idly when India formally annexed occupied Kashmir in August 2019, and now we are allowing Pakistan to descend into anarchy. If our leaders did not mend their ways in the current painful scenario, people will not forgive them in case an unexpected tragedy occurs sooner or later.

regime, and now Shehbaz Sharif's coalition government indicate that "our enemies have saved Pakistan from default 22 times, but the policies and approaches of our leaders (whether civilians or the men in uniform) have been pushing the country towards chaos."

Saudi and Chinese upcoming Investments at Stake

Saudi Crown Prince Muhammad Bin Salman is expected to visit Pakistan this month. According to media reports, the Saudi Crown Prince will unveil a more than \$10 billion investment plan in Pakistan to establish an oil refinery in Balochistan and a petrochemical complex. Muhammad Bin Salman, who is expected to be in Pakistan on Nov 21, will also announce over \$4 billion in assistance for Pakistan in cash and oil supply on deferred payment.

Unfortunately, political tension in Pakistan has reached the climax after the attack on PTI chairman Imran Khan and the long-march has also resumed. If the PTI protesters continue to dominate roads and streets in different cities, including Islamabad for the next couple of weeks, the Saudi Crown Prince might not visit Pakistan in November. According to diplomatic sources, a Saudi team is arriving ahead of the visit of the crown prince for the evaluation of security situation in Pakistan. If the scenario remains tensed, it is understood that Saudi security experts will not advise Muhammad Bin Salman to visit Pakistan in November which will be a setback for the country's image and economy.

Meanwhile, during the recent visit of PM Shehbaz Sharif to China, Chinese authorities and companies showed interest in launching some mega projects in Pakistan, some as part of CPEC. However, if the political unrest goes out of control in the days ahead, Saudi Arabia, China, and other countries who intend to make huge investments in Pakistan will be left with no other choice but to opt for a 'wait and see' policy. Thus, in this situation, the key players from all sides and parties must find a way out of the ongoing crisis to save Pakistan from further political and economic damage.



The present political state of the country makes it clear that the priorities of the leaders of various political parties are their vested interests and they are least bothered about the damage the current situation is causing to the national economy. After this year's devastating floods, Pakistan has barely escaped default. The United Nations urged major lenders of Pakistan to defer its loans. Resultantly, the Pakistan government sought \$27 billion in loan rollover from different countries and multilateral donor agencies, excluding IMF. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) does not allow the rescheduling of its loans to any country in any circumstances.

How to end political chaos?

Instead of adding fuel to fire every day, spreading more political uncertainty, hate, and chaos to achieve their vested interests, leaders of all the political parties must sit around a table to evolve a mechanism that revives stability in the country. Presently, almost all the mainstream political parties

Pakistan is a nuclear country, but political and economic difficulties have turned the country into one of the world's infamous beggars. How much our economy has suffered in the past can be guessed well from just one example: the value of the US dollar in Pakistan is around 225 rupees these days in the open market. Whereas in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and India, one US dollar is equal to 87 (Afghani), 101 B'desh Takas, and 82 Indian Rupees as of Nov 7, 2022. It shows how mercilessly the value of PKR had been butchered against the US dollar and other major currencies due to the myopic strategies of our leaders.

Also, in the past two and a half decades, Pakistan has obtained 22 IMF programs as bail-out packages to avoid default, but our policymakers did not learn any lesson from the past. Our people often say that the United States, Israel, and India want to ruin Pakistan. Nevertheless, 22 IMF loan programs starting from Nawaz Sharif to Benazir Bhutto, General Musharraf, Asif Zardari-led PPP govt, Nawaz Sharif-led PML-N third term, Imran Khan's PTI

Inflows

China and the KSA have given assurances to provide \$8.8 billion and \$4.2 billion, respectively, for the current fiscal year 2022–23

By Mehtab Haider

In the midst of rapidly depleting foreign exchange reserves, the incumbent regime, led by the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), has been rushing from pillar to post to manage dollar inflows in order to avoid a full-blown crisis in the twilight of its tenure until June 2023.

This transition period folded into political instability coupled with economic difficulties, which aggravated the situation for the incumbent regime. It is left with no other option but to muster up the required financial support in order to overcome the lingering dollar liquidity crunch.

When the PDM-led regime assumed power after ousting Imran Khan through the No Confidence Move, the foreign exchange reserves held by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) stood at \$10.8 billion, which had now nosedived to \$8 billion despite securing a \$1 billion tranche from the IMF and \$1.5 billion from the Asian Development Bank. Now the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) has also granted approval for the co-financing of a \$500 million loan, which is expected to be disbursed within November 2022.

Despite securing programme loans from the multilateral creditors, the dollar liquidity crunch could not be overcome because Pakistan required major dollar injections to



build up its dwindling foreign currency reserves.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has assessed that Pakistan had an external financing requirement of \$32 to \$34 billion during the current fiscal year.

Pakistan's dollar inflows in the form of loans and grants witnessed a decrease of 30 percent to \$2.23 billion in the first quarter (July–September) of the current fiscal year. Pakistan raised \$3.2 billion as loans and grants in the first quarter of the last financial year. It demonstrates that Pakistan's ability to generate dollar inflows has shrunk badly. On November 4th Pakistan's reserves fell to

USD 7.957 billions as USD 956 million were decreased.

Pakistan could not generate any dollar inflows in the form of launching international bonds or securing commercial loans in the first quarter of the current fiscal year. In the first quarter of the last fiscal year, Pakistan obtained \$1.04 billion through the launch of international bonds and secured commercial loans of \$457.5 million, but in this fiscal year so far, not a single penny could be obtained in these two heads so far.

Pakistan's bond yield has gone up manifold, so Islamabad does not consider it an appropriate appetite for launching any international bond. But the Ministry of Finance did not prefer to go ahead with commercial borrowing so far in the current fiscal year, despite projecting \$7.4 billion in loans generated through getting commercial loans for the whole financial year 2022–23.

Keeping in view this massive financing requirement of \$32–\$34 billion, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif recently visited two important friendly countries, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and China, to secure assurances about a loan package of approximately \$13 billion in order to restore the confidence of investors and avoid the risk of defaults during the time of political transition occurring in Pakistan.



After his return from both friendly countries, Federal Minister for Finance Ishaq Dar told reporters that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and China extended assurances for the provision of a \$13 billion loan package, including the rollover of sovereign loan deposits, refinancing of commercial loans, jacking up additional SWAPS, and an oil facility on deferred payment in line with the IMF agreement.

China and the KSA have given assurances to provide \$8.8 billion and \$4.2 billion, respectively, for the current fiscal year 2022–23.

China assured Pakistan that it would roll over \$4 billion in sovereign rollover deposits on all coming maturity dates. The Chinese authorities also assured that the commercial loans of \$3.3 billion would also be refinanced.

China also agreed to jack up the SWAPS funding from 30 billion RMB to 40 billion RMB, which, in the shape of the US dollar, would be added by \$1.45 billion, so the total Chinese package would go up to \$8.75 billion for the ongoing financial year. The Bank of China had already provided \$200 million recently.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia assured Pakistan it would provide an additional \$3 billion in deposits and jack up the oil facility on deferred payment by an additional \$1.2



billion, so the additional amount of \$4.2 billion would be considered by KSA authorities. Saudi Arabia would also roll over existing deposits of \$3 billion, and their oil facility of \$1.2 billion on deferred payment (\$100 million on a monthly basis) would continue till June 2023. So, the total Saudi package is expected to reach \$8.4 billion.

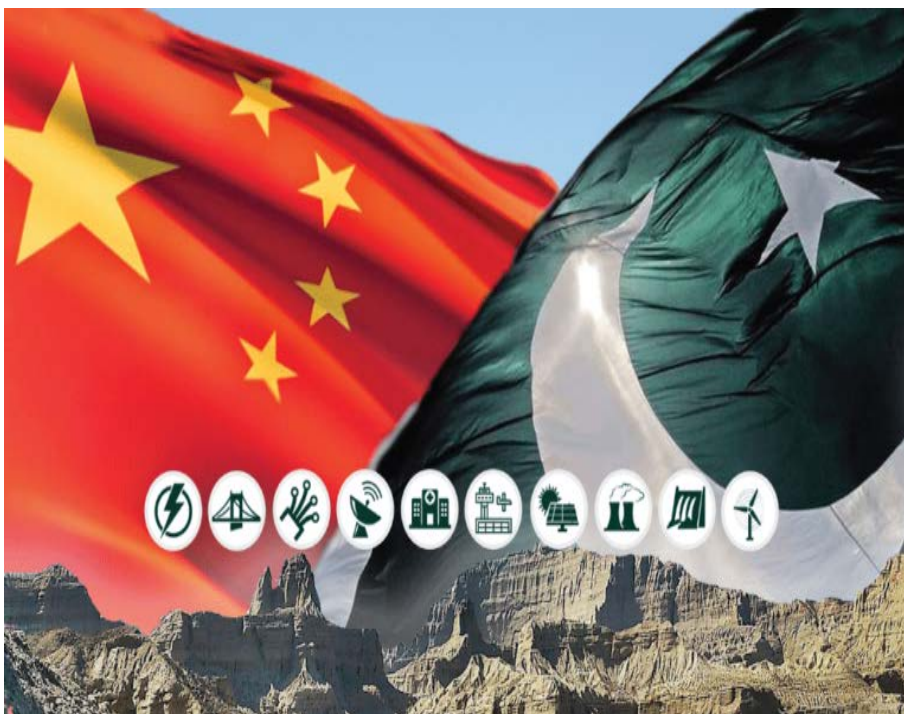
Saudi Crown Prince Muhammad Ben Salman is expected to visit Pakistan during the third week of the ongoing month. Saudi

Arabia would also construct a petrochemical complex in Gwadar with an estimated investment of \$11 to \$12 billion.

The materialisation of the \$13 billion package, it will help Pakistan shore up its foreign currency reserves. If it happens, then it will be viable for Mr. Dar to materialise his dream of improving the exchange rate. According to him, the real effective exchange rate (REER) for the rupee against the dollar should hover around Rs 190 against the dollar, but it cannot be achieved without improving the dollar's liquidity crunch.

In the wake of the possibility of an improvement in the exchange rate, the skyrocketing inflationary pressures will also start eroding in the months ahead, which stood at 26.6 percent on a monthly basis for October 2022. Although the Planning Ministry has projected an upward revision in CPI-based inflation and now estimates that it might go up to hovering around 23 to 25 percent on average.

However, there is a chasm between the cup and the lips, and Islamabad will need to pull its act together as well as ensure political stability in order to secure multibillion-dollar packages from multilateral and bilateral creditors and lift the cloud of default that has hung over Pakistan's economic managers.



Global Economy and Challenges for Pakistan

By Waqar Masood Khan

The following two paragraphs from the World Economic Outlook, October 2022, neatly sum up the challenges facing the global economy: “Global economic activity is experiencing a broad-based and sharper-than-expected slowdown, with inflation higher than seen in several decades.

The cost-of-living crisis, tightening financial conditions in most regions, Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, and the lingering Covid-19 pandemic all weigh heavily on the outlook. Global growth is forecast to slow from 6.0 percent in 2021 to 3.2 percent in 2022 and 2.7 percent in 2023. This is the weakest growth profile since 2001 except for the global financial crisis, and the acute phase of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Global inflation is forecast to rise from 4.7 percent in 2021 to 8.8 percent in 2022 but to decline to 6.5 percent in 2023 and to 4.1 percent by 2024. Monetary policy should stay the course to restore price stability, and fiscal policy should aim to alleviate the cost-of-living pressures while maintaining a sufficiently tight stance aligned with monetary policy.

Structural reforms can further support the fight against inflation by improving productivity and easing supply constraints, while



multilateral cooperation is necessary for fast-tracking the green energy transition and preventing fragmentation.”

This is a fairly grim assessment of what is in store in the rest of the year. Loss of nearly half of the growth (to be continued next year also) and fiercely rising and doubling inflation (predicted to ease off next year) constitute the most dreadful scenario. Notice that there is no precipitous crisis of the type like the international financial crisis of 2008-09. If anything of this type does come to pass we can well imagine how destructive it would be.

In the short run, there is hardly a chance that these conditions would be improved. The decline in growth would have implications for poverty as many economies would be showing outright contraction. Higher interest rates and a strong dollar would have adverse effects on capital flows for the emerging markets and developing economies, with consequences for debt burden and repayment capacities. Furthermore, this would have implications for value of imports and thus add to inflationary pressures as well. Under the circumstances, Pakistan is facing unenviable challenges.

As expected after floods, the Federal Committee on Agriculture (FAC) has noted that the production of sugarcane decreased by 7.9 percent (81.6 million tonnes from 88.7 million tonnes); rice by 40.6 percent (5.5 million tons over last year’s production of 9.3 million tonnes); maize by 3.0 percent (9.2 million tons versus 9.5 million tons).

The cotton production declined by 24.6 percent (6.3 million bales from 8.3 million bales last year. The wheat production is likely to be affected also as area under cultivation. The wheat production target for upcoming Rabi 2022-23 is fixed to the tune of 28.370 million tonnes from an area of 9.3 million acres.

On the other hand, the LSM data has showed a decline of 0.4 percent during





Jul-Aug. More concerning is the tractors production and sales which declined by 36.2 percent (7,991) and 30.3 percent (8,379), respectively, in July-September FY2023. During Kharif 2022 (Apr-Sep), urea and DAP off-take was 3,137 thousand tonnes (3.7 percent less than Kharif 2021) and 491 thousand tonnes (44.8 percent less than Kharif 2021).

However, the credit to private sector has taken a big hit. Against a credit flow of Rs.227 billion during 1 July to 21 October 22, the flow for the same period this year was negative Rs.86 billion or registered a decline of 138%. This is again consistent with austerity measures limiting imports and consequently domestic production. Inevitably, employment and poverty levels would be affected. Keeping slowing agriculture, manufacturing and credit it is clear that the economy is slowing down.

Another concerning development is the persistence of high inflation. The CPI inflation for October 2022 versus same month last year has increased to 26.6%,

with urban inflation at 24.6% and rural at 29.5% showing. When in September inflation had come down to 23.2% from a high of 27.3% in August, it was hoped that it would moderate in coming months. However, this hope was short lived.

The slowdown was due to waiving of fuel price adjustment (FPA), which is yet to be recovered. But now another FPA has been imposed which is the basic reason of resurgence in inflation. A new rent survey has further fueled inflation.

What is more worrying is the trend in core inflation. Based on non-food, non-oil, it was 14.9% in urban and 18.2% in rural areas. The weighted average of core inflations with weights of 55% and 45% for urban and rural areas gives a core inflation of 18.25. This level of inflation would put pressure on the policy rate at 15%.

There are few more problems. The OMO (open market operation) injection has jumped in two weeks from Rs 5.2 trillion to Rs 5.8 trillion, an increase of Rs 600 billion.

The inverted yield curve is persisting. Clearly, there is a major shift in short-term maturities, as few would be interested in buying low-yielding long-term bonds when T-Bills offer higher returns. The dollar has halted its descend and mostly trading in or around Rs 220/\$ while open market difference is again quite high.

The budget numbers for first quarter would not be available for another month. However, an official report of finance division shows that the deficit for first two months was recorded at Rs 672 billion compared to Rs 462 billion.

The primary deficit was Rs 90 billion compared to Rs 37 billion. It may be pointed out that the Fund programme has envisaged steep fiscal adjustment targets which would be difficult to achieve if this pattern is not altered soon. There are significant expenditures on account of flood support which were incurred in subsequent months. Besides, many new proposals for subsidies have been approved, which would add to expenditure pressures. Tax revenues increased by 17% and would face an uphill task going forward as the required overall growth is 23%. The economic slowdown would make this task quite challenging.

Evidently, economic management has to balance competing demands on public resources and ensure that the choices so made are not in conflict with the demands of the lenders whose support is critical for continued stability.

Courtesy Business Recorder



Sino-Pak ties during PDM's regime

The incumbent PDM government has been successful in removing doubts surrounding Pak-China ties and got these strategic ties, including CPEC, back on track

By Dr. Syed Rifaat Hussain

Pakistan's relations with China are built on the sound foundation of their convergent geo-political interests, shared animosity towards India, and the shared desire to fashion a developmental strategy that would meet the socio-economic needs of their people.

These overarching goals led to the launching of the One Belt One Road initiative by China in 2013 of which China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) became a flagship project.

The progress on CPEC considerably slowed down during the PTI regime. It is remarkable that during PTI's rule from August 2018 till April 2022, US officials publicly voice criticism of CPEC as a project which was not in Islamabad's long-term interest and if pursued in earnest could lead to Pakistan's "economic enslavement". Speaking at a seminar organized by ISSI in 2019, Alice Wells, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, criticized extensive Chinese economic cooperation under the CPEC framework with Pakistan, highlighting risks of debt trap and absence of transparency in projects awarded to Chinese-state-owned enterprises. She directly referred to the "expensive" proposed costs of up-gradation of Pakistan's main railway line from Karachi to Peshawar project (ML-I) and the recently completed Sukkur Multan Motorway (M-5).

Her comments suggested that Washington was advocating a "go slow" approach to implementing CPEC projects in Islamabad. This drew a strong response from Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, Mr. Yao Jing, who denied any potential debt risk to Pakistan arising from the Chinese financing of infrastructure projects in Pakistan.

He went on to say that, "China never forces other countries to pay debts", while "Western financial institutions are the biggest creditors of Pakistan".



He underlined that the principles governing economic cooperation are "mutual respect and win-win cooperation", while CPEC follows "extensive consultation, joint contribution, and shared benefits."

During its negotiations with IMF, the PTI government shared all the data with IMF and Washington relating to CPEC projects in Pakistan. These steps did not go down well with Beijing and caused apprehensions in Beijing about the seriousness of the PTI government's commitment to pursuing CPEC. When the PDM government replaced PTI, there was a visible sense of relief in Beijing about CPEC.

The new Chairman Planning Commission and Federal Minister for Planning, Mr. Ahsan Iqbal, ordered an inquiry into CPEC projects to ascertain why Pakistan was unable to implement the second phase of CPEC. He assured his Chinese partners, especially IPP producers that their outstanding claims would be addressed and promised to move expeditiously to resolve all matters relating to CPEC.

To underscore his commitment to CPEC and Pakistan's enduring interest in Pak-Sino ties, the new foreign minister of Pakistan, Mr. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari visited Beijing on a two-day official visit in May 2022. As a grandson of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, the architect

of Pakistan's entente cordiale with China in the early 1960s, Mr. Bilawal Bhutto was very warmly received in Beijing.

He was invited to China at the special invitation of the State Councilor, and Foreign Minister Wang Yi. The visit coincided with the 71st anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and Pakistan.

During his visit, the two sides reviewed the entire gamut of their bilateral relations with a special focus on CPEC.

The joint statement issued at the end stated that there was a strategic understanding between the two sides and they were committed to carrying this process forward. On CPEC, both sides agreed that this project was in the long-term interests of both people and its expeditious implementation was emphasized. Both sides agreed that it has effectively improved Pakistan's infrastructure and boosted its socio-economic development.

Similarly, both sides expressed firm resolve to synergize development strategies, "pushing forward all CPEC projects in a safe, smooth, and high-quality manner, promoting cooperation in areas such as economy and trade, investment, industry, agriculture, health, and science and technology, contributing to the people's



well-being and delivering greater benefits to local communities.”

Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif's two-day official visit to China in November 2022 followed Bilawal Bhutto's successful visit. This visit was equally important for both countries as it occurred against the immediate backdrop of the conclusion of the 20th National Party Congress of the Communist Party of China. At the Party Congress, President Xi Jinping was elected as General Secretary of the CPC for the third time and he has now been recognized as the undisputed leader of China.

PM Shahbaz Sharif became the first leader to visit Beijing in the aftermath of the CPC Party Congress. During his stay in Beijing, Mr. Shahbaz Sharif met with President Xi, Li Keqiang, Premier of the State Council, and met with Li Zhanshu, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress. The Prime Minister felicitated President Xi Jinping on his re-election as General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC), expressed admiration for his leadership, wisdom, vision, and people-centered philosophy of development, and commended his contributions to the continued growth of Pakistan-China relations.

The Prime Minister invited President Xi to visit Pakistan. President Xi expressed that he would visit at his earliest convenience. The two leaders pledged to work together to further deepen the bilateral ties.

In the 47-point joint statement issued at the end of Mr. Shahbaz's official visit to China, both sides held an in-depth exchange of

views on the bilateral relations as well as the regional situation and international political landscape. The two sides agreed on the importance of the China-Pakistan “All-weather strategic cooperative partnership” amidst the emerging global challenges.

To help Pakistan overcome its economic difficulties compounded by the catastrophic flood, the Chinese side agreed to provide 500 million Yuan to Islamabad. More significantly, Beijing agreed to “roll over \$4 billion in sovereign loans, refinance \$3.3 billion in commercial bank loans and increase currency swap by about \$1.45 billion, from 30 billion Yuan to 40 billion Yuan.”

These fiscal arrangements are critical to Pakistan's economy. The Chinese President reportedly told Mr. Sharif “do not worry, we will not let you down.” According to Mr. Ishaq Dar, Pakistan's Finance Minister “Pakistan would be getting about \$9 billion from China and \$4 billion from Saudi Arabia on top of assurances for \$20 billion in investments.” This financial help will stave off the threat of looming default over Pakistan. On its part, Pakistan had taken the extraordinary step of allowing Chinese workers to use bulletproof vehicles for their safety and security. The joint statement reaffirmed “that close strategic ties and profound friendship between China and Pakistan were time-tested and resilient. Pakistan-China friendship is a historic choice of both peoples that serves the interests of the two countries. The Chinese side reiterated that relations with Pakistan will always be given the highest priority in its foreign policy. The Pakistani side under-

scored that the Pakistan-China relationship is the cornerstone of its foreign policy and that the Pakistani people always support the closest friendship between the two countries.”

Both sides reiterated their mutual support on issues concerning each other's core interests. The Pakistani side expressed its commitment to the one-China Policy and support on issues of Taiwan, the South China Sea, Hong Kong, Xinjiang, and Tibet. The Chinese side reaffirmed its support for Pakistan's sovereignty, territorial integrity, security, and promoting its socio-economic development and prosperity.”

The joint statement also noted “the holding of the 11th CPEC Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) on 27 October 2022, which reviewed the progress of ongoing projects and agreed to continue the momentum of CPEC's high-quality development.”



The two countries expressed “their strong determination to counter all threats and designs against CPEC and Pakistan-China friendship.” Pakistan reaffirmed its “commitment to the safety and security of all Chinese personnel, projects, and institutions in Pakistan. The Chinese side appreciated Pakistan's strong determination and vigorous measures in this regard.”

Pakistan should feel gratified that the uncertainty surrounding Pak-China ties has finally been removed and the PDM government has got these strategic ties including CPEC back on track.

Pakistan's Climate Justice call at COP 27

The Pakistani government needs to create a roadmap for significant internal changes in the area of climate change readiness as well as important access points for international assistance to adapt and mitigate its effects

By Neha Ayub



Despite having historically low greenhouse gas emissions, developing nations are at the front line of facing severe economic and human casualties as a result of the climate crisis.

Due to mounting pressure from vulnerable nations to give this issue top priority, Egypt, the summit's host, has included loss and damage caused by climate catastrophes on the summit's agenda for COP27.

The conference convened on 6th November 2022, is organized by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). 200 convention participants discussed targets for carbon emissions for the upcoming year, along with energy planning, and financial assistance for developing nations that are having a hard time meeting their climate targets.

Negotiations had to go on through the night before the conference's start in order to include the contentious issue of paying reparations, which wealthy countries have long resisted and poorer countries that are suffering the most from the effects of climate change, see essential to ensuring fairness in addressing global warming and ensuring climate justice.

As the agenda items exclude discussions on identifying accountability or payments for the losses caused by human-induced

climate change, the parties arguing in support of loss and damage in the negotiations, have only partially succeeded.

The agenda issue was suggested by Pakistan, which recently suffered severe economic losses as a result of massive floods, during discussions in Bonn earlier this year before the commencement of the U.N.'s 27th Conference of the Parties. The parties involved in the negotiations then came to an agreement to add money for loss and damage as an official agenda item for the first time in the history of the United Nations climate conferences.

"My country, Pakistan, has seen floods that have left 33 million lives in tatters and have caused loss and damage amounting to 10 percent of the GDP," said Ambassador Munir Akram, the 2022 chair of the G77—a group of 134 developing countries, many of which are on the front lines of climate change—at the opening ceremony for COP27, where he urged that a finance mechanism be dedicated to addressing losses and damages.

Despite contributing less than 1% of the world's carbon emissions, Pakistan is among the countries most vulnerable to climate catastrophes. Monsoon rains and floods this past summer submerged a third of the nation, damaging farms, uprooting millions of people, and killing close to 2,000

people. The cost of the economic losses has been put at \$40 billion.

Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif remarked while addressing the 27th U.N., "Pakistan is a victim of something with which we had nothing to do... a man-made disaster." UN Secretary General António Guterres also reiterated the need for debt relief and climate compensation for Pakistan. Guterres also urged the international community and multilateral lending institutions to change their policies and permit debt swaps, particularly in the wake of natural disasters.

Since at least COP15, which was held in Copenhagen in 2009, the idea of wealthier countries paying for the costs of less developed countries dealing with climate change has been in place, separating the world into the haves and the have-nots. But for Pakistan, the devastation this year wasn't a first-time experience: It also experienced terrible floods in 2010, which resulted in comparable quantities of damage and fatalities. Its persistence has invited attention to Pakistan's vulnerability to climate change but also raised concerns about its erratic political culture, corruption, and whether mitigation funding will really be used at all.

The PML-N/PPP administration's rallying cry has until now been "climate justice." However, the story has been expanded to include money for climate change and debt relief. When he visited the U.N., Prime Minister Sharif argued vehemently in the General Assembly for debt relief as a component of climate justice, warning that "all hell will break loose" if wealthy nations do not provide Pakistan with debt relief.

Way Forward

Pakistan will not benefit from a blank check for exclusive development assistance. The Pakistani government must prioritize longer-term technical assistance and strengthen its domestic capabilities to increase resilience to upcoming natural



disasters. Indications that Pakistan is prepared to commit to this kind of forward-thinking approach for addressing its climate change concerns in the years to come will be scrutinized by potential funders and international partners at COP27.

Pakistan has already prepared the groundwork to some extent. A key element of human security in the most recent National Security Policy (NSP) was the fight against climate change. The NSP, however, constrained the definition of climate change by tying it to water security. Separate discussions were held regarding issues such

as food security and others. The strategy, which was written in 2021 and released in early 2022, does not take into account how climate change and disasters caused by it affect all facets of human security, including migration and population, gender security, food security, and health security. The floods made all of these problems worse, and they will only get worse over the time it takes to recover.

The National Flood Response Coordination Center (NFRCC) was recently formed by the Pakistani government to meet its primary climate change concerns. The NFRCC is tasked

with ensuring coordination across various agencies involved in both the flood response and rehabilitation efforts, as well as working with international donors and nongovernmental organizations on relief. This organization is modeled after the mechanism used by the previous government to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

New bodies and systems, however, are not always the solution or the only solution. And if Pakistan is to take advantage of its opportunity at COP27 and beyond, the nation must demonstrate a desire to develop the institutions that are already in place to deal with disasters, whether they are caused by nature or human activity. This comprises its provincial counterparts as well as the National Disaster Management Authority, which was created following the 2010 floods. The National Disaster Risk Management Fund, the District Disaster Management Authorities, and all other relevant institutions must get enough funds from the Pakistani government.

The Pakistani government needs to create a roadmap for significant internal changes in the area of climate change readiness as well as important access points for international assistance to adapt and mitigate its effects.



Climate Finance Requirement

Pakistan has a cumulative conditional target of an overall 50% reduction of its projected emissions between 2015 and 2030, with a 15% reduction using the country's own resources, and an additional 35% subject to international financial support

By Azeem Waqas

At a desperate time, Pakistan has called for desperate measures to seek climate financing from the international community.

Being a signatory to the Paris Agreement 2015, Pakistan had aligned its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) with the country's economic and sustainable development vision, which seeks to reduce 20% of the projected emissions by 2030. This requires approximately \$40 billion.

Alternative Law Justice (ALJ), an environmental firm comprising lawyers, policy analysts, and academics, has asked the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to cancel Pakistan's debt and suspend all debt servicing and surcharges. They have also sought debt for climate swaps and a reallocation of SDRs to unlock further funding for addressing the damages caused by the catastrophic floods in Pakistan.

The body has called on Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) to arrange urgent non-debt-creating and condition-free grants sufficient to meet Pakistan's immediate flood response and rehabilitation needs as well as its future climate adaptation needs. In a presentation at the IMF Annuals this year, Director of Research Zain Moulvi revealed that expected annual damages from future flooding are expected to touch \$5.8 billion in the coming years, if we go with this year's \$30 billion in losses. Meanwhile, reeling under foreign debt, the country is set to spend well over half its tax revenue in debt servicing for 2023 alone.

Pakistan is presently in an IMF program – the Extended Finance Facility (EFF) program which claims to “step up to climate change.” The IMF's loan report recognizes Pakistan's dire situation as one of “the 10 countries worldwide with the largest damages from climate-related disasters since 2000.” The report estimates



US\$22 billion in losses with more than 11 thousand killed and 55 million affected in climate-related events in this period and designates climate action as a “critical priority.”

Moulvi, however, is of the view that the IMF's claims are empty rhetoric belied by its on-ground practices. A report published by Recourse and ALC finds that the EFF program failed to include any systematic analysis of climate risks in its loan conditionalities and, in fact actively impeded climate action by derailing local efforts for a just energy transition. According to experts, the fiscal austerity measures imposed by the IMF have also deepened Pakistan's climate vulnerability by diverting resources for adaptive action, eroding the capacity for community-based local solutions, and exacerbating the impact of the floods on the lives and livelihoods of the poorest sections of the population – especially women and children.

Earlier this year, a coalition of global CSOs raised alarms that new IMF-backed taxes on renewables technologies in Pakistan imposed via “prior action” conditions under the EFF program were imperiling Pakistan's NDC commitments under the Paris Agreement. Removal of tax exemptions on solar, wind products,

and electric vehicles led to a crippling of the local renewables market, depriving the most vulnerable segments of cheap and accessible energy. These tax reforms were inconsistent with Pakistan's plans under its Alternative and Renewable Energy (ARE) policy for transitioning to renewables-based generation, as well as its intended transport sector reforms under the National Electric Vehicle (NEV) policy.

Meanwhile, at COP 27, experts have suggested that this sort of mixed messaging and greenwashing is nothing new. They point out that the IMF and MDBs have been blatantly ignoring obligations under the Paris Agreement by failing to develop climate compatible and socially just finance models and continuing to support fossil fuels through loopholes and backdoor channels.

According to Moulvi, however, the problem runs deeper: aside from climate risk investments, IFIs also perpetuate unsustainable and unjust paradigms of economic development, facilitating finance flows away from the global south to the global north. Through “development policy lending” and “technical assistance” IMF, WB, and ADB push for creditor-driven lending terms,



privatization of public resources, and the creation of exploitative markets for risky imports and services sustained through debt. MDBs lie at the center of a destructive global financial architecture continuing to wreak havoc on local populations the world over. It remains to be seen how they respond to Pakistan's present predicament with climate disasters.

According to the NDC 2021, Pakistan's energy transition alone will require \$101 billion by 2030, plus an additional \$65 billion by 2040, given the costs involved in

completing in-progress renewable energy projects, building additional hydropower capacity and improving transmission lines and phasing out coal. The tree plantation program is estimated to cost \$800 million per year; and for now, this expense will be met from Pakistan's national resources, as an annual unconditional contribution. However, this is a major assumption unless continued financing mechanisms are put in place.

According to UNDP, Pakistan's updated NDCs reveal substantially enhanced

ambition as compared to its first pledge after the Paris Agreement. In Pakistan's first NDCs submitted in 2016, the government of Pakistan had projected a whopping 300% growth in greenhouse gas emissions between 2015 and 2030 based on a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate of 9% and increased reliance on fossil fuels. At that time, Pakistan intended to reduce up to 20% of its GHG emissions by 2030, subject to the availability of international grants.

In contrast, Pakistan's updated NDC sets a cumulative conditional target of an overall 50% reduction of its projected emissions between 2015 and 2030, with a 15% reduction using the country's own resources, and an additional 35% subject to international financial support.

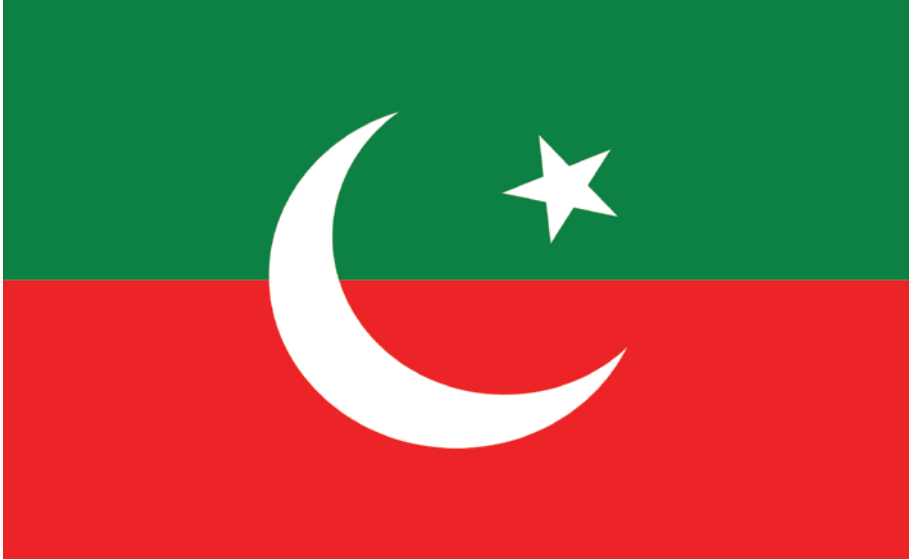
Alternative Law Justice (ALJ) has suggested restructuring the IMF EFF program on "Do No Harm and Adaptation first" principles, for this government should restore tax exemptions on renewables, incentivize local renewables production, roll back fiscal austerity measures and develop alternatives to eliminate consumer energy subsidies and incentivize Green Financing in the Banking sector.



Fate of the ruling Coalition's Foreign Funding?

The PTI approached the ECP in October 2017 for scrutiny of the funding records of the PML-N and the PPP for the years 2013–2015

By Asadullah Malik



ISLAMABAD: While the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) is still struggling to cope with the aftershocks of the damning report on its prohibited funding, which not only opened a floodgate of criticism on its financial affairs but also enabled the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) to proceed against the leadership of the former ruling party, the incumbent regime may meet with the same fate in the near future.

Last month, the FIA booked former prime minister Imran Khan and other PTI leaders for their involvement in connection with the prohibited funding case against the party.

The FIR lodged in Islamabad included sections 420, 468, 471, 477-A, and 109, read with sections 5 and 23 of the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act of 1947. According to the FIR, the Abraaj owner transferred \$2,121,500 of his "ill-gotten" money to a PTI account in the UBL. The signatories of the UBL account included Imran Khan and Saifullah Nyazee, among other PTI leaders.

The PTI's foreign funding case landed before the Election Commission of Pakistan in 2014, while the PTI filed complaints against the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) in 2017.

However, when the ECP expedited proceedings on the PTI's foreign funding case, the latter moved the Islamabad High Court, seeking scrutiny of the funds of at least 17 major political parties, including the PML-N and PPP.

The PTI expects a level playing field for all the political parties.

Its petition requested the court direct the ECP to approach the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) for information regarding the funding of the 17 political parties, named respondents in the plea, before proceeding with daily hearings against their party.

According to the petition, which is still pending adjudication before the IHC, the PTI was the only party facing accountability in the form of daily proceedings. It requested the court end this "discrimination" by holding other political parties accountable as well.

The petition said that the ECP had been asked time and again to verify the source of funding for the PML-N and PPP, but the commission allegedly ignored these requests. However, the ECP rejected these allegations in a statement last week, saying there were no delays in cases against other parties.

The PTI approached the ECP in October 2017 for scrutiny of the funding records of the PML-N and the PPP for the years 2013–2015.

The PTI accused the PML-N and the PPP of concealing their sources of funds and companies registered by them in the United Kingdom and the United States, respectively, and sought cancellation of election symbols allocated to them "for their failure to meet legal requirements for eligibility to obtain the symbols."

The complaint against the PML-N says that the party has relied on audits by non-quality control review-rated firms, which have adopted the wrong reporting format. No



sources of funds have been declared, the accounts are contradictory, do not comply with the mandatory requirements of the Political Parties Order (PPO) or the Political Parties Rules (PPR), and exhibit violations of articles 6 and 13 of the PPO read with rules 4 and 6 of the PPR, it alleges.

"The respondent political party may be generating money from prohibited sources, but since they have consciously failed to provide any information, it is clear that the respondent political party is attempting to conceal where the money is being generated from," the complaint says.

It says the PML-N received funds from "other revenues" but fails to disclose what these other revenues were and how they could raise such an exorbitant fund. "This revenue could be coming from a foreign company, a foreign government, or a multinational, but no disclosure is being made clear in order to conceal this information so that nobody can question the person or organisation that is sending these funds."

Referring to reports that Rs1.3 billion was spent by the PML-N on its election campaign in 2013, the complaint says: "None of this amount or even part of this amount is explained as to how it was generated and what the source of funds was."

It alleges that the PML-N ran a private limited company in the UK, which was not disclosed in the documents submitted to the ECP. "This is a foreign-incorporated



company that is registered under the Registrar of Companies for England and Wales." "What is more alarming is that under the Objective Clause, this company has the power to carry on any trade or business and to enter into any arrangement with any government or authority that may seem conducive to the attainment of the company's objectives or any of them and to obtain from any such government or authority any charter, decree, right, privilege, or concession that the company may think desirable and to carry out, exercise, and comply with

any such charter, decree, right, privilege, or concession," it reads.

It claims that the PML-N was used to launder money after receiving a Rs 100 million donation from former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in 2013 and remitting Rs 45 million back into Mr Sharif's personal account. It points out that the transaction was not disclosed to the ECP.

The complaint against the PPP says the account statements of the party between 2009 and 2012 are not available either due to non-filing or for reasons best known to the party. The 2013 accounts started with an opening balance of Rs 41.47 million from the previous year. However, where the amount of the opening balance generated was not disclosed.

The complaint says the PPP has a company registered under US laws, namely the PPP LLC, which has been created to collect funds for the party. As per details of the PPP LLC, funds have been collected from foreign nationals and the government of Pakistan in large amounts. "This is against the spirit of the PPO, as contributions from foreigners or the Government of Pakistan are prohibited under the PPO." Furthermore, the PPP has failed to disclose the existence of this LLC established in the USA.



The return of the Devil

Most of the hostile elements toward Pakistan that left Kandahar after the fall of Kabul have now taken refuge in Iran



By Syed Fakhar KaKaKhel

The US and its allies have withdrawn from Afghanistan, leaving the entire region in chaos. What has happened in Afghanistan in the last 20 years and what is happening now after the US-led coalition withdrawal are having an impact on Afghanistan's neighbouring countries, especially Pakistan? Besides the worsening situation in Afghanistan, there are also radical developments in Iran. It is not possible to deny its impact on Pakistan as a neighbouring country. Especially Balochistan, the country's largest province, which shares borders with Afghanistan and Iran. That is why we can see some of its effects, especially in Balochistan.

Most of the hostile elements toward Pakistan that left Kandahar after the fall of Kabul have now taken refuge in Iran. In addition, the effects of Iran's role in Iraq and Syria against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) are now emerging in Afghanistan and Iran. Recently, there have been some incidents inside Iran. In October, ISIS killed dozens of people in a suicide attack at a local shrine in Shiraz. Earlier, ISIS carried out a suicide attack in the Herat province of Afghanistan. Activities of the Islamic State in Khorasan Province (ISKP) are gearing up and expanding in the Afghan province of Herat, which is adjacent to Iran.

Demonstrations have taken place in cities and towns across Iran since the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini, an Iranian Kurd who was detained on September 13 by the morality police for allegedly violating the country's hijab law. She died three days later.

Yet in another incident reportedly in Sistan-Baluchistan in the same month, public anger at the authorities was raised further by reports that a 15-year-old Baluch girl had been raped by a police officer in the province's southern port city of Chabahar. This incident was later confirmed by a Sunni cleric, Maulana Abdul Ghafar Naqashbani, in a Friday sermon.

According to media reports, this confirmation led to protests in Sistan-Baluchistan by Sunni Baloch. The protests in Zahedan, the capital of Sistan-Baluchistan, and the deaths during these protests are causing great anxiety among the Sunni Baloch tribes living in the border areas near the Pakistani border. Local sources believe that as a result of the events taking place with the Sunni Baloch in Iran, the sympathies of the Sunni youth will be more towards organisations like Jaish-ul-Adl. Organisations like Jaish-ul-Adl and Jundullah may take advantage of these incidents to recruit youth. Due to Iran's role in Syria and Iraq,

the Hazara community living in Balochistan has also faced backlash in the past. At present, the direct effects of the rise of ISKP in Afghanistan may be seen in the form of sectarian tensions in Balochistan.

The Afghan province of Kandahar, which in the recent past was involved in a proxy war against Pakistan under the auspices of the Kabul government, has now largely been cleared of these elements. In particular, Baloch insurgents were running regular training camps in the Afghan province of Kandahar and adjacent Afghan provinces.

Their main leaders, like Aslam Baloch alias Aslam Achu, not only took refuge with the former head of the Kandahar Police, Abdul Raziq Achakzai, in the Ainu Mena area of Kandahar but also received his full support. Aslam Achu was injured during an operation in Balochistan and was first transferred to Afghanistan and then to India for medical treatment. During his stay in India, as a result of his meetings with the Indian handlers there, he was reprimanded by the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) leaders, and so he started operations under the name Majeed Brigade. Chinese installations in Pakistan were targeted by the Majeed Brigade. Aslam Achu himself was killed in a suicide attack, along with his colleagues in Kandahar. After his death, his



deputy commander, Bashirzeb Baloch, took over the leadership of the Majeed Brigade. Regarding Commander Bashirzeb and BLA chief Dr. Allah Nazar, it is said that after the arrival of the Taliban in Afghanistan, most of the Baloch insurgents have left Afghanistan and are hiding in the Baloch areas of Iran.

It has not yet been denied or confirmed at the official level, but local sources say that the movement of Baloch rebels to Iran is not a new thing, but it is very difficult for these fighters to stay permanently in Pakistan or Balochistan. So these fighters, along with their leaders, are regularly changing places and are not staying in one place or one region. It is also a fact that the weapons that have been left in Afghanistan on a large scale after the US-NATO withdrawal have now fallen into the hands of the Baloch rebels, along with other militant outfits. Ex-soldiers and warlords in Afghanistan had large-scale secret caches of weapons. While leaving Afghanistan, they referred these godowns of weapons to their trusted men in Afghanistan.

Now, when any militant organisation needs arms, they buy those arms from the same weapon stores, and these arms are also smuggled into Pakistan on a large scale. The same weapon was seen with Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), the ISKP, and Baloch insurgents during various attacks. Recently, the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) of Balochistan arrested Abdul Wajid and Jan Muhammad Baloch during an operation. Arms were also recovered from them.

These two men were running the BLA camp in Balochistan after the closure of the training camp in Afghanistan. It is also worth mentioning here that during some attacks in Balochistan, traces of joint operations of the TTP and BLA have also been found. During their stay in Afghanistan, some TTP elements were able to secretly marry BLA members.

Some Baloch youth have also joined ISKP. According to the sources, this element of religious extremism was not present in the Baloch population, but due to the ongoing situation in Afghanistan, many Baloch youths went to Afghanistan from Balochistan and joined ISKP there, where they received formal training. Rather, some fighters even moved their families to Afghanistan. As mentioned, the ongoing tension in Afghanistan and the presence of ISKP or its affiliated organizations in Iran

may become a major problem for Balochistan itself in the future.

In terms of funding for these terror operations, this region has remained a narco-financing hotspot. Afghanistan, which is the world's largest poppy market, has once again become the centre of the drug trade worldwide due to economic sanctions and depression. The common border areas of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran are a magnet for smugglers and are known as the "Golden Crescent" among drug cartels globally. Drugs are supplied to Pakistan and Iran through these borders. The same drugs are also used in terrorism. Drug money has also been used for terrorism in the past. This is the reason why Pakistan has started fencing its border with Afghanistan as well as the adjacent border with Iran.

The fencing has greatly reduced the movement of militants and smugglers. But monitoring the fence, which stretches hundreds of kilometres between the two countries, is a separate issue. Sometimes smugglers cut through this border fence. Although the Border Force immediately re-imposed this fence, it is difficult, if not impossible, to constantly monitor the borders of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran and prevent such incidents.

So, terror outfits and smugglers are now taking advantage of the situation in Afghanistan. As far as Balochistan is concerned, its geostrategic position is a major reason for unrest in this province. The importance of Balochistan to Iran and China is one of the reasons for the attacks by the ISKP.



Philosophy of the Left: The Frankfurt School and Neo-Marxism

Neo-Marxism has left a great impact on western academia due to the socio-economic conditions of Europe and the opportunities given to academia there in the form of imperial investment projects

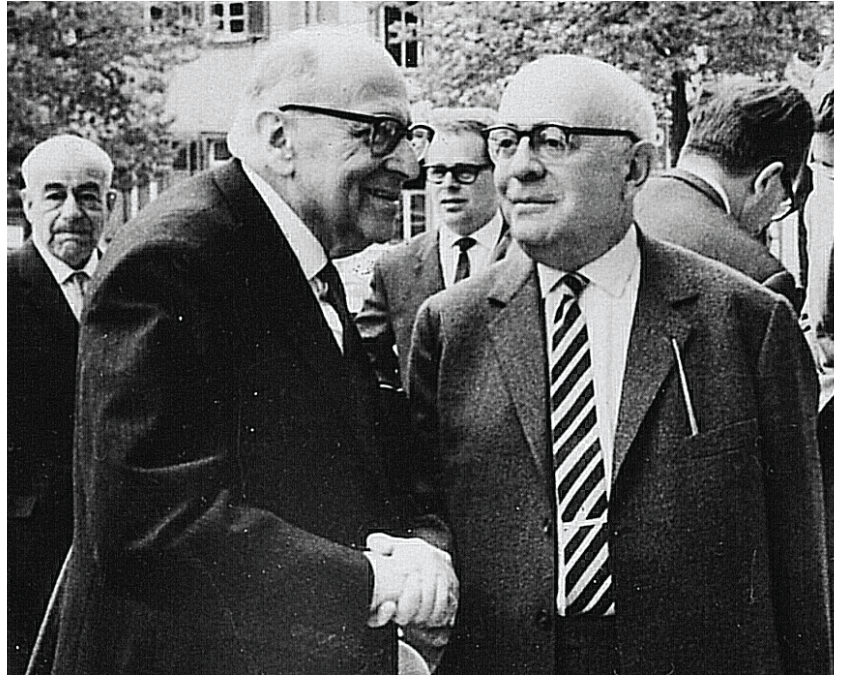
By Rana Azam

The main objective of the Frankfurt School is to present a critical evaluation of social problems. The method used by the institution for this purpose was actually Marxist. For this purpose, the institution considered historical materiality foremost. The conclusion of using this method was that it is possible to see society in totality only through it. The Marxist conviction of the researchers associated with the institution was and is completely separate and independent from the "traditional, dogmatic" approach of the Soviet Marxists. The original purpose of the institution was to negate Bolshevism and now its legacy. If we go one step further, it was to attack the philosophy of class struggle.

Critical Theory and the Frankfurt School

"Critical theory" is a term that has been associated with this school of thought. In 1937, Horkheimer came to prominence when he presented his two essays, "Traditional and Critical Theory," and "Philosophy and Critical Theory" which he co-authored with Marcuse. The first treatise "Traditional and Critical Theory" became a manifesto and became an important document. Horkheimer insisted on the possibility of integrating some other and different branches of science in critical theory and said that critical theory has this ability. Horkheimer also insisted on the practical value of critical theory, which can play a significant role during the process of social, and historical evolution.

If critical and traditional theories are compared, the pioneers of neo-Marxism declared the traditional theory to be historical and said that this theory has a non-critical tendency in the material production process. While critical theory sees the human being at



the very center of its socio-historical framework, according to the institute, it also considers the connection between practical and theoretical situations of knowledge. According to him, society makes progress one day at a time so that a social revolution can take place as a result of this progress. Horkheimer expresses the belief that the secret of the validity of any theory lies in the applicability of that theory in real life. This is the point where the whole truth of Neo-Marxism is exposed. This is a big fact that all the research projects of the Frankfurt School could never go beyond the scientific and theoretical boundaries. This theory could never play any role in making people active, nor could it make them organized or trained.

Neo-Marxism has left a great impact on western academia due to the socio-economic conditions of Europe and the opportunities given to academia there in the form of imperial investment projects. It's pertinent to mention here for your information and interest, that probably the first English

translation of the Holy Quran was done by a former editor of an English newspaper under an American-funded project. He revealed this in one of his interviews. Professor-ism has seriously damaged the International Communist Movement. At the same time, our target is western academia. Yet China remains among "poorly" promoted professors. We still apologize to them. Yes, our academia is certainly in need of western academia in other physical sciences as well as in social sciences. Their effects are also present in us. So, they play the role of irritants in some way or another.

Philosophy of Neo-Marxism

After the Second World War, several major intellectual changes took place in Europe. Due to these changes, the thinkers of the Frankfurt School felt the need to consider Marxist sociology. In view of them, the question is how Stalinist thought started to undermine the foundations of the socialist revolution. In 1922,

Lenin had complete intellectual and administrative control over the affairs of the state. Horkheimer, Marcuse, Adorno, and Habermas, all these people were looking for an alternative in their own way for the new interpretation and explanation of social phenomena from the very first day. One solution they sought was a psychological understanding of social roles under Freud's approach to thought. On the other hand, Marxist philosophers have always criticized Freud's theory of psychoanalysis as a target. Marx defined the social situation by taking into account the external conditions of class contradiction. Marx never brought to light the internal forces within human consciousness as the solution to man's economic and social problems. Marx attributed these problems to the theory of alienation.

Freud's concern about human civilization seems to produce a negative result. Because even if we want to try to remove this situation of pressure or coercion from these biological movements of man, then we still have to make our civilized and cultural life purposeful otherwise it will not work. Marcus disagrees with Freud and seems to be moving towards the formation of a class in which there is a harmony between the two extremes of individual and society, biological movements, and class interests. In fact, Marcuse is related to Freud in his thinking if we study Marcuse's book "Love and Civilization" which he wrote in 1953.

This book was written for the reason that modern society can be interpreted and explained from the "Freud-Marxist" point of view. He seems to want to create a society free from economic and sexual pressure. And it also says that this oppression is a pressure that is put on individuals in society by socio-political institutions to remove economic weakness.

Here you should remember Gramsci's view of civil society. Gramsci was also associated with the Frankfurt School in his early years. Two explanations for Gramsci's departure from Marxism are offered. One is that his writings were written in prison so he had to be camouflaged. Other is his association with the Frankfurt School.

Marcuse believed that the negative attitude of thought is a definite tool for change in society and social criticism of it. He also says that our technological society lacks this kind of ability. The dominant political system has presented certain forms of life that make it feel that this system wants to create understanding with its opposing forces by giving birth to false needs and false happiness. By this, he means that by fulfilling material needs at the cost of freedom, the people should be satisfied. Therefore, such a feeling in people, on the other hand, gives rise to false happiness in them. Because the greatest happiness for a human is freedom and not slavery.

Meaningless slogans of freedom do not contribute to social change. Even in a capitalist society, no person can be considered free because in this capitalist society the capitalist himself is also a slave of capital. In this way, this flood of wealth brings society to a state where abundant resources are available for the material satisfaction of each person. However, this increases the proportion of white-collar workers in society. The revolutionary consciousness begins to decline.

Adorno-Freud's psychoanalysis and fascism

The second major philosopher of the Frankfurt School was Adorno. He fully accepted Freud's theory of disintegration of the psyche, because without understanding this theory, it is not possible to reach the authoritarian tendencies of fascism and personality. Before Adorno, Pollock, and Marcuse had explained the hidden economic causes of the emergence of fascism in Europe. Thus, in this regard, Marcuse writes, "The real foundations of the spread of fascism can be seen deep down in the contradictions between industrial monopolies and democratic systems."

The first intellectual war was followed by rapid industrialization. But difficulties also arose in the process of its utilization, especially because distortions began to appear in the world market. The second reason was the process of social legislation, which was supported by the labor movement. Therefore, in such a situation, the

industrial groups that were too powerful created a role for themselves to gain direct political power to organize monopolies of production, so that communal opposition is annihilated and an effective role is played for the promotion of imperialist expansionist tendencies.

The process of the economic interpretation of fascism shows only one side. But Adorno shed more light on the political situation through the process of research explanation of Freud's psychology. He said that the rise of fascism had already been predicted by Freud himself in his book "Group Psychology and the Analysis of Ego".

According to Freud, the binding force that plays an effective role in keeping people together in a society is the "pleasure principle" because an individual gets biological satisfaction by maintaining his identity with a larger group. Using his leadership ability, he keeps other followers in his midst as a result of his mechanically principled pleasure absorption. His narcissism (Narcissism) keeps him imprisoned in the fence of self-love. Then whatever the powerful person does, this action is considered acceptable and desirable for other members of society. Then, in such a case, the group status of these members also becomes extinct and destroyed.

Adorno argues against a monistic approach to philosophy; any philosophy that asserts that reality is unique. It strengthens totalitarian trends, and then this trend gives birth to fascism. Therefore, according to Adorno, there are three factors behind the development of fascism. The first is economic which we find in the concern of Marcuse and Pollock. The second is psychological which is mentioned in Freud's thought. The third and last is philosophical which covers the first two factors.

Another important point that needs clarification and mention at the end of this statement is Habermas' criticism of Marx's theory of surplus value. And from his criticism, he concludes that in a highly technical society, this value does not come from the labor of the surplus working class, but its entry or extraction is due to the high mechanical and technological innovations of this society.

Everything You Need to Know About Elon Musk's Twitter Takeover

Following Musk's takeover of Twitter, several celebrities have announced their exit from the social media platform. A few public figures have decided to leave Twitter even before his proposed changes take effect



By Pavan Manzoor

Elon Musk met the October 28 deadline to conclude the \$44 billion Twitter deal, avoiding a trial in court. When Musk tried to backout of the deal, Twitter filed a lawsuit against him forcing him to purchase the social media giant. Elon Musk changed his Twitter profile to "Chief Twit" signaling that the deal was moving forward. Additionally, he uploaded a video of himself entering Twitter's headquarters in California.

Elon Musk, the richest man in the world, has been securing funding ever since Delaware Judge Kathaleen McCormick halted court proceedings on October 6. The judge will probably "bring the hammer down" and move quickly to trial if the buyout doesn't close by the end of the business day, Badawi said back then.

Soon after his unsolicited offer was accepted, Musk tried to backout of the deal. In July, he claimed he was canceling the agreement because Twitter had misled him about the number of fake "bot" accounts; however, the company has denied the

claims. Twitter responded by alleging that Musk was inventing justifications to leave because he had changed his mind.

Musk Fired CEO, Other Executives After Assuming Control

After assuming control of Twitter, Elon Musk dismissed the company's general counsel, chief executive officer, and chief financial officer.

It's still unclear whether the \$44 billion deal had closed and all the required paperwork signed. Nevertheless Musk, who is in charge of the social media platform, fired CEO Parag Agrawal and other executives.

The billionaire first announced his surprise bid for Twitter in spring, only to later change his mind and announcing withdrawal in July. The decision to finalize the transaction, which was made one day ahead of a court-imposed deadline, marks the conclusion of a turbulent six-month process.

The firing of the top two Twitter executives, signals the start of what is expected to be a period of significant change at the social media company. Who knows where Twitter will be headed under serial entrepreneur Elon Musk? His businesses have upended the financial, automotive, and space exploration sectors.

Earlier, the Tesla CEO attempted to evade the terms of the takeover agreement, prompting Agrawal to approach court to enforce it. Rumor mills were churning hours before Musk was required by a court-imposed deadline to complete his on-again, off-again agreement, to purchase the social media network.

Musk justified his purchase in a tweet, saying he was buying Twitter because having a common digital town square where a wide range of beliefs can be discussed healthily is critical for civilization's future.

Musk is well-known for trolling other Twitter users, so the prospect of Musk running Twitter has alarmed activists who fear an increase in harassment

and false information. He has cemented his control over the company by dissolving the board of directors.

He acknowledged that Twitter "cannot become a free-for-all hellscape where anything can be said with no consequences." Musk is expected to make it easier for former US President Donald Trump to rejoin the platform by minimizing content moderation. The then-president was barred from tweeting, out of fear of inciting further violence to overturn his election defeat, similar to the deadly attack on the Capitol.

Elon Musk stated that this strategy would address the platform's bot and troll issues while also provide a new revenue stream for the company.

According to the new business plan, paid subscribers will receive Twitter's blue check mark, which indicates a verified and authentic account, thereby eradicating the fake account culture. Nevertheless, this paid service is only available to public figures, a strategy Musk earlier described as a "lords and peasants' system."

For the time being, Elon Musk intends to

full-time basis when the COVID-19 pandemic struck. But under Musk, this policy is set to be reversed.

Elon Musk has broken his silence on Twitter layoffs, claiming that he had 'no choice' but to fire thousands of Twitter employees just days after acquiring the company.

Celebrities Quit Twitter After Musk's Takeover

Following Elon Musk's takeover of Twitter, several celebrities have announced their exit from the social media platform. A few public figures have decided to leave Twitter before his proposed changes take effect.

Stephen Fry is the most recent celebrity to leave the social media platform, tweeting a photo of Scrabble letters spelling out "Goodbye" on Tuesday (November 8). The actor, comedian, and writer had 12.5 million followers and was following 47.6k people.

Actress Whoopi Goldberg stated on the US television show *The View* that she is done with Twitter. "I'm going to leave, and if things calm down and I feel more at ease, maybe I'll come back," she added.

Gigi Hadid, the supermodel, also left Twitter. She stated on Instagram that she had deactivated her account. "I'm not hanging around for whatever Elon has planned," said producer Shonda Rhimes. Bye."

"I'm shocked and appalled at some of the 'free speech' I've seen on this platform since its acquisition," singer Toni Braxton said.

"Welp," singer Sara Bareilles said. It's been a pleasure, Twitter. I'm out. See you on other platforms, my friends. Sorry, but this one isn't for me." Large exodus happening on this platform, said actor Josh Gad, who played the adorable snowman Olaf in *Frozen*. I'm not sure if I should stay or not.

Mick Foley, a retired professional wrestler, and actor, and Brian Koppelman, co-creator of the TV drama *Billions*, have also left the platform. Celebrities such as NBA star LeBron James have urged Musk to take action against users who use offensive words.



Verified Accounts Will Be Charged At \$8

Elon Musk announced that the user verification method on Twitter is being altered, in a tweet just three days after taking full control of the world's most influential social media network. "The entire verification process is being revamped right now," he said.

In the meantime, Twitter has indicated that it will charge a fee for showing the coveted blue check mark that verifies the identity of the social media account holder. For their "verified" badges, Twitter account holders would need to subscribe to Twitter Blue for \$8 per month. It is likely to be raised to \$19.99.

sell all types of Twitter accounts, whether fake or genuine. Blue subscribers would also get "priority" placement in "replies, mentions, and search."

Massive Layoffs

To cut costs at the social media platform, Elon Musk intends to relieve 3,700 employees at Twitter, or roughly half of the workforce, he also wants to take away employees' rights to work remotely and force them to spend all of their time in the office. Following the firing of Twitter's top executives, the multibillionaire CEO introduced a host of measures including a paid subscription, and resurrecting of the long-defunct video-sharing service Vine. Twitter was among the first businesses to permit employees to work remotely on a

The Unexpected 'Shaheens'

History will remember Pakistan as the most unexpected cricket team in the world

By Ali Abdullah

Pakistan, courtesy of a blooming miracle, qualified for the WT20 finals. The first big hurdle in Pakistan's way was South Africa. However, the prayers did work, as the Netherlands defeated South Africa to give Pakistan and Bangladesh hope.

The game between Bangladesh and Pakistan was a virtual quarterfinal. Both teams just needed to win this game and make it to the semi-finals. After winning the toss, Bangladesh opted to bat, and they were doing pretty well, but once the wicket of Soumya Sarkar fell, Bangladesh never recovered. From 73/2, they went to 127/8. Shaheen Shah Afridi was the star with 4 wickets, while Shadab Khan was also phenomenal as he was the one who broke the important partnership between Shanto and Sarkar.

Pakistan didn't begin the chase convincingly. Mohammad Rizwan threw a catch in the very first over, but it was put down. The openers did struggle a little, but they continued to stay at the wicket and kept on scoring somehow.

The opening stand ended in the 11th over, and Pakistan was 57/1. Things did mess up for Pakistan as soon as Babar, Rizwan, and Nawaz got out too, and Pakistan was in trouble. Mohammad Haris continued to smash the bowlers from where he had left. His explosive innings brought Pakistan back into the game.

The 16th over, which was bowled by Taskin Ahmed, cost 16 runs, and that was the game-changing moment for Pakistan. In the final 4 overs, Pakistan needed just 18 runs to win. Mohammad Haris' innings ended, but his 31 (18) eased things for Pakistan, and he was a key contributor to Pakistan reaching the WT20 semi-finals. Shan Masood ended up with 22 points (14) and was also a key contributor with the bat. Pakistan won the game by five wickets.

Pakistan obviously did a lot of hard work to fix things for themselves in



World T20 2022 after the first two defeats, but the washed-out game between South Africa and Zimbabwe and South Africa's shocking defeat against the Netherlands also contributed to their qualification. It was purely a result of hard work, passion, prayers, and miracles that Pakistan is in the semi-finals. Pakistan, India, England, and New Zealand have qualified for the WT20 semi-finals in 2022.

Pakistan stepped into their second consecutive World T20 semi-final this year. Pakistan locked horns with the Kiwis in the all-important semi-final. After winning the toss, Kane Williamson opted to bat first.

Shaheen Shah Afridi showed excellent skill, as he always does, and picked up the wicket of Finn Allen in the first over. In the beginning, New Zealand's progress was slow. At the end of the PowerPlay, New Zealand lost another wicket and ended up with 38/2.

Soon after, in the eighth over, New Zealand's informant Glenn Phillips was caught and bowled by Mohammad Nawaz, and things went from bad to worse for the Kiwis. Kane Williamson

and Daryl Mitchell piled up 68 runs together to give New Zealand some runs on the board. Mitchell completed his half-century as well. New Zealand wasn't able to do a lot of damage in the final 5 overs. They scored only 46 runs in the final 5 overs and ended up with 152/4 on the board. Shaheen Shah Afridi was the best bowler, with 2 wickets to his name.

Pakistan began the chase with a dominant style. They scored 55 runs in the Power Play without losing a single wicket. More importantly for Pakistan, Babar Azam regained his scored 55 runs in the PowerPlay without losing a single wicket. More importantly for Pakistan, Babar Azam regained his touch, and Pakistan was cruising to victory. Babar Azam did get out, but that did not stop Pakistan from winning. Mohammad Rizwan continued the progress and scored a half-century. Mohammad Haris also contributed with 30 (26), and in the end, despite losing 3 wickets, Pakistan won by 7 wickets and made it to the World T20 Final this year.

Pakistan appeared in a World T20 Final for the first time in 13 years. It was Pakistan's third World T20 final and sixth semi-final (the most by any team). They lost one in 2007 and won one in 2009. Pakistan was the first team to qualify for the finals of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2022.

The second semi-final was played between England and India. England won the toss and elected to bowl first. Indian openers took their time and eventually got out. The Indian batting order crumbled for the third time in the tournament. Virat Kohli stood on the crease and watched his partners come and go. He scored a slow 50 on 40 deliveries. He got out as soon as he scored his half-century. Hardik Pandya played brilliantly. He gave some hope to India after his fiery innings. India gave England a target of 169.

From the very first ball, English openers sent a message to both the Pakistani and Indian teams by playing fearless cricket. It seemed like they were in a hurry to reach Melbourne. English openers thrashed an Indian bowling line-up. Alex Hales had an unassisted 86-point performance, while Jos Butler had an unassisted 80-point performance. England won the game by 10 wickets and reached the final.

Note: This article was written prior to the finals between Pakistan and England, and therefore, does not discuss it in detail.



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The Arab Host: 2022 FIFA World Cup

This will be the first World Cup ever to be held in the Arab world

The 2022 FIFA World Cup is scheduled to be the 22nd running of the FIFA World Cup competition, the quadrennial international men's football championship contested by the senior national teams of the member associations of FIFA. It will be held in Qatar from November 20 to December 18, 2022. This will be the first World Cup ever to be held in the Arab world and the second World Cup held entirely in Asia after the 2002 tournament in South Korea and Japan. In addition, the tournament is scheduled to be the last with a 32-team field; the field is slated to increase to 48 teams for the 2026 tournament in the United States, Mexico, and Canada.

Due to Qatar's intense summer heat, this World Cup will be held from late November to mid-December, making it the first tournament not to be held in May, June, or July, and the first to take place in the northern autumn. It will be played in a reduced timeframe of around 29 days. The opening match will be contested between Qatar and Ecuador at Al Bayt Stadium, Al Khor. The final is due to be held on December 18, 2022, which is also Qatar National Day. The reigning World Cup champions are France.

There are eight groups of four teams, with the top two advancing to the 16-team knockout stage. There will be four games back-to-back per day for most of the first two sets of group games, then simultaneous kickoffs for the last two games in each group. There'll be no break for the knockout stage, which begins the day after the group stage ends. The first day without any action comes on December 7, the 17th day of the competition.

Qatar vs. Ecuador, November 20th: the first match of the tournament is always a date to save on the calendar. Argentina vs. Mexico, November 26th: The first of the big continental rivalries is in the group stage, with Messi potentially sealing his and Argentina's spot in the last 16. Spain vs. Germany, November 27th Surely there can't have been many bigger group-stage matches than this at a World Cup? Two recent champions, two giants of European

and world soccer Iran vs. the United States, November 29th It has been labelled as "The Mother of All Games Part II." Just like at the 1998 World Cup, the two countries will meet in the group stage in a politically charged matchup. Diplomatic relations have yet to be restored between the two nations.

The two current greats of the game, Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi, will most likely retire soon after this World Cup. Two still have not won world cups for their countries. This can be their last chance to win it, but of course, only one can take the trophy home.



The first five proposed venues for the World Cup were unveiled at the beginning of March 2010. The country intends the stadiums to reflect the historical and cultural aspects of Qatar and for the designs to meet the following terms of reference: legacy, comfort, accessibility, and sustainability.

The stadiums will be equipped with cooling systems that aim to reduce temperatures within the stadium by up to 20 °C. Their marketing includes statements describing the stadiums as "zero waste," and the upper tiers of the stadiums will be disassembled after the World Cup and donated to countries with less developed sports infrastructure. Qatar aspires to be compliant with and certified by the Global Sustainability Assessment System (GSAS)

for all the World Cup stadiums. All five of the stadium projects launched so far have been designed by German architect Albert Speer & Partners. Al Bayt Stadium will be the only indoor stadium of the eight used.

Several records can be broken during the FIFA World Cup 2022. Diego Armando Maradona currently holds the record with 21 World Cup appearances. Messi has 19 appearances to his name and is likely to break it this time. He could also match German legend Lothar Matthaus with 26 World Cup appearances if he makes it all the way to the final. France manager Didier Deschamps has already entered the record

books for being only the third person to win the World Cup as a player and a coach and one of only two to win the title as captain and coach. However, he could enlist himself for another record. Deschamps has recorded nine wins in the World Cup, and getting two more wins will see him enter the record book.

Ronaldo has managed to get on the scoresheet for four different World Cups. If he scores again in this tournament, he will be the only player to do so.

These are more personal records that fans are looking forward to seeing broken by their favourite players.

By Ali Abdullah

The Legend of Mola Jatt: One record after another



By Khalid Farshori

The Pakistani Punjabi film *The Legend of Maula Jatt* is busy breaking record after record at the international box office. Apart from becoming the first Pakistani film to cross the 150 crores international mark, this film has also surpassed the recently released Bollywood films, surprising even the trade pundits of Bollywood.

Akshay Kumar's *Ram Sethu* and Siddharth Malhotra's *Thank God*, released on October 25, were expected to create a stir at the box office, but both films entered their second week in the UK and North America. The Pakistani film *The Legend of Maula Jatt* was unable to compete. Indian films *Milli* (Jhanvi Kapoor), *Double XL* (Sonakshi Sinha), and *Phone Bhoot* (Katrina Kaif, Ishaan), which released this week, also faced stiff competition from *The Legend of Maula Jatt*.

At the UK box office, *The Legend of Maula Jatt* grossed 1,134,000 British pounds on its 23rd day of release. This is the record box office for any Punjabi film (Indian or Pakistani) in the UK.

At the US box office, the film's screens

increased significantly last week, while the film's screens in the UK recorded an increase this week.

The Legend of Maula Jatt is also fast approaching the title of the world's most successful Punjabi film. So far, Indian Punjabi films that have created worldwide business records include *Carry On Jatta 2* (\$7.2 million), *Sukan Sukne* (\$7.2 million), *Chal Meera Pat 2* (\$7.2 million), *Honsla Rakh* (\$6.8 million), and *Shada* (\$6.6 million). *The Legend of Maula Jatt* is fast on its way to breaking these records.

In Pakistan, the film has made 55 crore and 21 lakh rupees in three weeks. Thus, *The Legend of Maula Jatt* has broken the all-time business record of Humayun Saeed's most successful film, *Jawani Phir Nahi Aani 2*. *The Legend of Maula Jatt*'s total overseas collections has surpassed Rs. 105 crores. By including domestic figures, this film has grossed 160 crores and 21 lakh rupees worldwide.

After four decades, Pakistani filmmaker Bilal Lashari has made an "unofficial" sequel to director Younis Malik's Punjabi film *Maula Jatt*, titled "*The Legend of Maula Jatt*."

While the older film *Maula Jatt* is considered a hit, it has also been criticised for making Pakistani cinema too "loud," with films following the same formula of violence, revenge, and gore.

Contrary to this thought, in 2013, Bilal Lashari made *Maula Jatt*'s story and characters the subject of his new film by calling *Maula Jatt* a classic film and *Gandase* a culture of Punjab.

He says that the Pakistan film industry will start the journey of recovery again with "*The Legend of Maula Jatt*."

Filmmaker Mohammad Sarwar Bhatti and writer Nasir Adeeb's *Maula Jatt* were released on February 9, 1979, while Bilal Lashari's *Maula Jatt* was released on October 13, 2022.

The characters and stories of the new and old "*Maula Jatt*" are similar, but the political conditions faced by both films at the time of their release have not changed since the last half-century.

When the original *Maula Jatt* was released, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was hanged a few weeks later under General Zia-ul-Haq's martial law regime.

The atmosphere of the country was gloomy, and the situation became violent. In such a situation, freedom of expression was banned in the country.

On the one hand, there was suffocation in the country; on the other hand, on the screen of the film, Noori Nath and Sultan Rahi were shown challenging each other and killing each other with goons and axes.

The most interesting thing about the movie was that the dialogue spoken by both of them while fighting was sharper than a goon and an axe.

In this fight, Zalim is defeated and the fair Maula Jatt wins, but the character of the villain Noori Nath is given immense power and glamorization, which was not done in earlier films.

The dialogues from the film *Maula Jatt* were so popular that important politicians in Pakistan used them as an idiom on the occasion.

The extraordinary popularity of *Maula Jatt*'s dialogue can also be gauged by Asif Zardari's response to journalist Sohail Waraich's question, "Mola nu Mola na mare te Mola ni marda."

Barrister Chaudhry Aitzaz Ahsan has also been using the same dialogue in his speeches in Parliament.

Some important points to be noted in this regard are that the original *Maula Jatt* was made on a low budget of just more than 1.1 million, whereas the latest version is a heavy budget project that costs Pkr 40 crore. The heroine of the film, Mahira Khan, is mostly criticised because of her alleged weak Punjabi accent, but the fact is that Mahira not only worked hard for this film but also took part in the shooting during the coldest temperatures, once feeling ill due to the cold.

Hero Fawad Khan intentionally put on kilos of extra weight to make himself fit for the said role; another fact is that neither he nor Mahira belongs to Punjabi-speaking families, but they tried their best to make things accessible in the end. In the original *Mola Jutt*, both super hit characters, Sultan Rahi and Mustafa Quraishi, were from non-Punjabi speaking backgrounds; Sultan Rahi's family migrated from Saharanpur, India, whereas Mustafa Quraishi is from Hyderabad, Sindh.



What Prompted Kanye West's Sudden Downfall?

The rapper, 45, who has come under severe fire for spreading hate speech and anti-Semitic comments is no longer a billionaire

The rap artist and businessman, Kanye West (Ye), posed in a "White Lives Matter" T-shirt during Paris Fashion Week in early October. He then started a string of allegedly antisemitic and conspicuous comments on various platforms. As a result, numerous companies connected to Ye severed ties with him.

Adidas Under Pressure to Sever Ties with Kanye West Over Anti-Semitic Remarks

Adidas, a major manufacturer of athletic apparel, is under pressure to take action against Kanye West for his purported anti-Semitic remarks. A video of the rapper from the hit song "Stronger" boasting that he can accomplish anything, has surfaced amid mounting criticism of his anti-Semitic rants towards Jews. West is heard saying the following in the brief video clip from the Drink Champs hip-hop podcast's episode from October 16: "Even if I say things that are anti-Semitic, Adidas won't fire me. What's next? What's next?" Since then, the podcast has been removed. Since the video went viral, there have been calls for the German sportswear giant to sever ties with West. Since October 21, when the video was posted, the hashtag "Boycott Adidas" has been on the rise on Twitter.

A petition on change.org has amassed more than 108,000 signatures, and numerous well-known people have weighed in on the issue.

The online petition stated, "We, the undersigned, call on Adidas to terminate its partnership with Ye, popularly known as Kanye West, due to his recurrent anti-Semitic rants." If Adidas remained associated with a popular figure who has come out as a nasty anti-Semite it would be deemed complacent about racism against Jews.

Responding to criticism, the sports giant announced that it would reconsider its Yeezy collaboration with West after the rapper sparked outrage by showing up to a Paris Fashion Week show wearing a



"White Lives Matter" T-shirt. In a statement at the time, Adidas said, "We will continue to compare the current product during this period. The US-based Anti-Defamation League (ADL) has also pushed Adidas to sever its ties to Kanye West."

Instagram and Twitter suspend West's accounts

Ye was suspended by the two social media companies, following a series of antisemitic posts, including an Instagrammed screenshot of a text conversation with Sean "Diddy" Combs in which Ye accused Diddy of being controlled by Jewish people. On Twitter, the rapper threatened to "go death con 3 on JEWISH PEOPLE," mispronouncing the United States' defense-condition readiness alert system's "DEFCON" label.

Both companies stated that they had removed offensive content posted by Ye and that his accounts had been restricted. By Oct. 27, access to @kanyewest's Instagram account had been restored — at least for the time being — while his Twitter account had shown no posts since Oct. 8.

JPMorgan Chase

Ye was photographed in a "White Lives Matter" shirt with Candace Owens in Paris, and on October 12 she tweeted that Ye had been "kicked out" by JPMorgan Chase Bank. She also attached a letter that had been redacted and had the subject "IMPORTANT: Closing of Our Banking Relationship."

Although they sent this letter to confirm that he has until late November to find another place for the Yeezy empire to conduct banking transactions, Owens wrote, "I was told there was no official reason given."

Madame Tussauds London

Tourists to the renowned wax museum in London won't be able to pose with a rapper model: The BBC says Ye has been moved to an archive.

Donda Academy

Since it is Ye's academy, the private Christian K-12 prep school didn't exactly sever

ties with him, but it did reportedly close on October 27 for the remainder of the academic year. The prep school's existence is being investigated by The Times where the annual tuition is about \$15,000.

Other brands include T.J. Maxx, Peloton, Jaylen Brown and Aaron Donald / Donda Sports, Foot Locker, MRC, CAA, Balenciaga, and Def Jam.

West is no longer a billionaire; lost \$1.5 billion of his net worth

As a result of Adidas' decision to terminate their partnership, Kanye West is no longer a billionaire. The rapper, 45, who has come under severe fire for spreading hate speech and anti-Semitic comments, recently challenged Adidas to terminate him. Ye believed he was invulnerable because he has been working with Adidas since 2013 on his wildly successful and extremely costly Yeezy shoe line.

After all, according to investment firm Cowen, Yeezy products account for 4% to 8% of Adidas' total sales. It was much more significant for Ye because it contributed \$1.5 billion to his worth.

How Kim Kardashian Is Handling the Drama?

Kardashian, who has four young children with West (North, Saint, Chicago, and



Psalm), has undoubtedly been impacted by West's public controversy. In an interview where the rapper said that he and his ex-wife Kim Kardashian were only legally divorced, he also doubled down on his anti-semitic remarks. According to a source close to Kardashian, she is handling her ex-public husband's fallout well.

Kardashian has not commented on West, but she has condemned anti-Semitism on her Instagram Story. "Hate speech is never acceptable or excusable." "I stand with the Jewish community in calling for an end to the terrible violence and hateful rhetoric directed at them," she wrote.

Fans Regret Getting Rapper's Tattoos

Following Kanye West's recent anti-Semitic tirades, some ardent followers

who went to great lengths to tattoo the Chicago-native rapper's likeness on their bodies are now experiencing severe tattoos' regret.

Ashley Smith, a 20-year-old musician from Cardiff, Wales, told The Post, "When I actually saw that he was making these comments about Jewish people, it was just gut-wrenching — this guy was supposed to be like one of my heroes, someone that I aspire to be like in making music and recording music."

Cringed-out fans are looking to remove the all-too-obvious links to their former idol after witnessing Kanye's downfall — the artist has been fired from significant business deals and collaborations with brands like Adidas and Vogue.

By Pavan Manzoor



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