

Fortnightly

The Truth International

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1st - 15th November 2022

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Has IK turned against Military as Institution?
Khan treading unending path of political adventure

The Politics of new Administrative Units
New administrative units demand is more political
than requirement

Short-Term Policies may Pose Risks for Default
A long-term approach is essential for economic revival

Unprecedented Press Conference



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Head-on

By Hammad Ghaznavi

Finally, the Long March: and Pakistan enters one of the most uncertain phases of its political history. Serious efforts were made by the Establishment to dissuade former Prime Minister Imran Khan from the Long March, and return to parliament to pave the way for the next general election, the primary demand of Mr Khan. Former PM's insistence, however, on immediate polls failed the talks. Many thought, the Long March was like 'nuclear capability', an effective deterrent, not a weapon to be employed. Imran proved them wrong.

With an unprecedented press conference by DGISI, it was evident that the backdoor mediation between the Establishment and former PM had failed. The DGISI's message in the presser was loud and clear – enough is enough. Imran had been mocking the military leadership, ever since he was voted out in April; inventing terms like neutral, janwar, Mir Jafar, Mir Sadiq to insult the military leadership. Recently, emboldened by the restraint showed by the COAS, Imran included the DGISIS in his hit-list. Then another tragic incident happened – the mysterious murder of a renowned Pakistani tv journalist Arshad Sharif in Kenya. The Kenyan police has been changing versions on the circumstances of Arshad's death. Imran, an astute political strategist, smelled an opportunity in Arshad's death and pounced on it, insinuating that our military establishment was involved in the killing of the journalist. That's when the military decided to come out in the open to puncture

the poisonous narrative. Hence, the DGISI press conference.

Imran's initial reaction to DG's press conference was measured. On the day the Long March started, Senator Azam Swati in his presser named two senior army officers who, he alleged, ordered his torture in custody. Later, Imran in his first speech in the Long March, adopted a belligerent tone, repeating the officers' names. He was also critical of the DGISI and the chief. It now seems a no-holds-barred battle till, at least, the announcement of the new COAS; and perhaps beyond. The timing of the Long March, insiders insist, cannot be dissociated with the abovementioned key appointment. Rumors have been rife about a group of officers who continued to support Imran Khan even after his fall out with the institution. That internal struggle, it's argued, seems to be finally surfacing as November arrives. Imran Khan has used his final card, the Long March. If the March fails to achieve its objective, Imran's politics is bound to suffer a huge setback. It's an uncertain alley that Pakistani politics has entered because of irreconcilable positions the stakeholders have adopted.

Those who understand the garrison alignments reveal that the two officers DGC Major General Faisal Naseer and Islamabad Sector Commander Brigadier Faheem are strictly professional soldiers who refused to be part of former DGISI's ambitions. Resultantly, according to a well thought out strategy, the officers were named by Imran Khan to exert pressure on



General Qamar Bajwa. It is understood that Imran Khan is being tutored by his 'coach', especially in the khaki matters. These efforts to fan divisions in Rawalpindi represent a truly worrying situation for the institution. Apparently, it is confusing to fathom Imran's desperation to cut a deal with the establishment before the appointment of the next COAS. After all, he has won all the recent by elections, emerging as a most popular politician in the country. He has a decent chance to win a fair election, which the powers that be are willing to ensure; this unto itself is a huge advantage denied in the past to all popular politicians who fell out with the mighty of the land. It's commonsense that he shall avoid confrontation with the Establishment, and wait for the elections, be it in April or August next year. But Imran Khan seems to have different notions. Now it's a head-on situation between the establishment and the former PM. Things are feared to look uglier in the days to come, as both sides look ready to go the whole hog.

There is, however, a silver lining to this sordid episode – the resolve expressed by the military leadership of late to return to its constitutional domain. The interference of army in the country's politics for decades has been damaging for the discipline and prestige of the institution, finally leading it into the present political mess. The establishment must stick to its resolve of obeying the constitution to restore its uncontroversial image as the defender of the land; and there lies the panacea for most of our ills.

FATF's shades of Grey

By M A Niazi



FATF has joined the grand conspiracy against Imran Khan and it has removed Pakistan from its grey list. It should have expressed its lack of trust in the imported government by retaining Pakistan on its blacklist so that Pakistan would be forced into default. Other countries around the world would have noticed this, and refused to give Pakistan any flood relief until a genuine government was elected, which could only be the PTI of course.

Virtually the day before, Fitch had downgraded Pakistan's viability to CCC+, which was bad news for Pakistan. Getting off the FATF grey list was not much to write home about, because the reason we wanted to get off that list was so that we didn't lose access to the global financial markets. Of course, even if we had been placed on the blacklist, we wouldn't have been shut out. Only we would have had to pay a much higher rate of interest. In other words, Pakistani paper would have had junk bond status.

As a matter of fact, we are heading towards that status with the latest downgrade. Moody's has not downgraded yet, which shows they are corrupt elements who are part of the conspiracy to oust Imran. Of course, they'll have to follow suit, and Pakistan will be heading toward junk-bond status. The downgrade indicates that we are that much closer to the default that will show the rest of the world that Imran should become PM.

Of course, the Election Commission showed its complete dedication to corruption by disqualifying Imran in the Toshakhana reference. It might have only disqualified Imran for the life of the current Parliament, which is less than a year, but it leaves the PTI without a Chairman for the time being, and may merely be a harbinger of things to come. Of course, Imran should get a stay order from the Islamabad High Court whenever he appeals. After all, he and his party have encountered the court before and got whatever it wanted from it.

Of course, it should be clear that ECP didn't do anything wrong in selling gifts. In fact, I doubt if any member would have left all those millions to stay tied up in any watches. Where the ECP jumped on Imran with both hobnailed boots was not telling them. He didn't even tell it he had received the gifts, as he should have done.

It seems that the basis of the PTI's appeal against the disqualification is that the ECP could not hear the case. OK. Then who can? The PTI lawyers seem to have skirted over that point, just as they've skirted the issue of whether a crime had been committed or not. I don't suppose it included as a ground of appeal the failure of the prosecution to produce evidence of a "lalkara", where the criminal is alleged to have yelled out a detailed explanation of why he was committing the crime, such as selling the watches

because an ancestor of Muhammad bin Salman had stolen one of Imran's ancestors' buffaloes. Imran should have stolen one of MBS's columns in return, but instead, he sold the watch he was presented. The CEC got nothing, not even a mention in the statement of assets.

Of course, the ECP is against Imran, or else why would he win by-elections it supervised? Those seats will now have to have by-elections again. You know, you only need two safe seats to keep a cycle of permanent by-elections going. Back in 1988, Farooq Leghari won both _ national and provincial seats. He opted for the provincial seat. He didn't get Nawaz, and failed to become CM. BB took him into the federal Cabinet. He now had to find a seat in Parliament, which he did, by again contesting the national seat he had given up.

Imran might be shocked by the cowardly resignation of Liz Truss as British PM just because the economy went wrong, but he should remember that has created space for Boris Johnson and the election of Rishi Sunak as the new PM of the UK. Are we to see a comeback of the demagogues? Trump is poised to regain the Republican nomination in 2024, and maybe the Presidency. Imran, though he doesn't have orange or yellow hair, nor is he grossly overweight, is one of the ousted populists. He too has an election to win. Soon or by August next year.

Pakistan's Democracy: An Unburied corpse at the Mercy of Vultures?

The problem in our political system is that political leaders never learn from history. They keep making the same mistake repeatedly. They join hands with the military establishment to conspire against their opponents. One after the other they keep changing roles among themselves. In the process, they just make the political institutions, which bring them to power, redundant.

By Umer Farooq

Back in the 1980s, Lahore was the center of an ideological ferment—with students at the core. Rightists, leftists, Islamists, communists, socialists, a few democrats, and other intellectuals used to sit at the tea house of Lahore Anarkali Bazaar, and the famous Pak-Tea House. Mostly the discussions and debates revolved around political topics, including democracy, revolution, Islamic state, and secularism. I was still a student back then, watching the developments in the city as a keen observer. Benazir Bhutto had just arrived back in Pakistan after a long exile and Lahore offered her a marvelous reception. Democracy was her slogan and it was becoming a buzzword in the intellectual circles of those days. I remember listening to some prominent left-leaning intellectuals advocating democracy and the idea that an uninterrupted and sustained democratic political process would cleanse the political system on its own. The fact that we have feudal, parasitical, and opportunistic classes in control of the political system is the result of the absence of a sustained and uninterrupted political process in the country. They can be pushed out of the system only through a sustained political process. If the political process, the argument went, had been allowed to sustain uninterrupted after the 1970s parliamentary elections and had there been no military coups, we would have had a smooth and vibrant political system in the country. I got convinced after repeatedly listening to this argument. Throughout my journalistic career, I have lived with this idea that democracy would produce its own reforms. More than 30 years have passed since and the political developments of the past three decades are enough to prove that democracy doesn't produce reforms on its own. The parasitical classes are too well entrenched in the system to be so easily pushed out by a circular political process



which, in essence, is not reforms oriented or pushed towards the same by a dedicated political class committed to a robust reforms program.

A scorecard of Pakistan's political system reveals that this system that we refer to as democracy has failed to make the country a viable state from a financial and economic point of view. In the post-Zia period, not a decade passed without our successive governments approaching IMF and other international financial institutions for a bailout package. The reason being that Pakistan cannot afford its essential expenditures out of its own financial and economic resources. We are dependent on big powers or the financial institutions which are under the control of big powers to run our state. Besides, the economic conditions of ordinary Pakistanis have worsened under successive democratic governments' watch. The size of the middle class persistently shrank and the size of the economy never was always below par to accommodate new graduates into the labor market. True, the military governments—between 1977 and 1988 and between 1999 and 2008—immensely hampered the economic capacity of common Pakistanis. But can any democratic government claim credit for having

substantially improved the lives of ordinary people, achieved substantial industrial growth, or expanded the manufacturing capacity of the country? Any effort to match the country's exports to the exorbitant import bill that the luxurious lifestyle of upper middle class and upper class forces upon Pakistani society? Any discipline in the economic life of the society that they introduced? None.

The luxurious lifestyle of the middle class, and upper class is the legacy of military governments. Zia and Musharraf accommodated them in exchange of political support for their authoritarian policies on the domestic front and adventurous foreign policies on the regional front. The democratic governments that followed were simply too weak to introduce some economic discipline into the society. Rather political leaders went the extra mile to accommodate the wishes of these classes, which were addicted to luxuries – into their economic, political, and social policies. In other words, political leaders turned out to be hostages of public opinion—a public opinion, which in the post-Zia period has remained hostage of non-representative institutions. Democracy in our society, in other words, never had a chance to become

reform-oriented. All along, the status quo was preserved. Growth based on coordinated and concerted policy objectives was never a priority for Pakistani rulers.

After running endlessly from pillar to post for more than a year, the present PMLN government was able to secure an IMF loan. But this blatantly exposed the lack of financial viability of the country. Our government and our society are saved from anarchy and chaos by a foreign financial institution, which has never displayed any sympathy for Pakistan's political aspirations and objectives of remaining an independent and sovereign country. Sovereignty and independence will remain just delusions in the absence of financial viability. A related reality is that our

groups in Pakistani society is a product of authoritarian rule in the country and democracy would do away with these tensions, conflicts, and confrontations. I still believe in this part of the argument. The tussle between PMLN and PTI could be attributed to the machination of non-representative institutions. Imran Khan picked up the age-old slogan of military rulers and military establishments that political elites are corrupt and not sincere to the national cause. He became a darling of the military establishment and laid the foundation of political confrontation that afflicts our society in the present times. Nawaz Sharif is not innocent in this regard either. In his time, in his way, he also played the role Imran Khan was now playing when Benazir Bhutto was in power in the 1990s.

brought our society to the brink of civil war.

The question is: what is democracy good for if it doesn't reform itself? If it doesn't push the parasitical classes out of our political system? If it doesn't make Pakistan financially a viable state? If it doesn't improve the living standards of ordinary Pakistanis? If it doesn't resolve political and military conflicts in society? And if it cannot make the central political institutions functional? The answer is that it is not the fault of democracy, it is the fault of those who are managing and running the political system. Let there be no doubt that without democracy Pakistan won't be able to survive for long. This political system has produced a political class that is too self-centered and intellectually corrupt.



political system has consistently produced a bunch of compulsive liars as politicians. When they are among the masses they raise high-sounding slogans of independent foreign policies, sovereignty, and independence. When in reality, on the foreign policy front, we remain dependent on big powers for our survival, both from a financial and security point of view.

Our present political system can't even sustain itself in the face of machinations of non-representative institutions, which since independence have dominated Pakistan's power structures. This was another argument of the left-leaning intellectuals back in 1980s that the conflict and confrontation we have witnessed between political

But the problem in our political system is that political leaders never learn from history. They keep making the same mistake again and again. They join hands with the military establishment to conspire against their opponents. One after the other they keep changing roles among themselves. In the process, they just make the political institutions, which bring them to power, redundant. Parliament is a case in point. Not even once in the past ten years any central political conflicts that afflict our society has been debated in the parliament. Our parliament plays no role in resolving political and violent conflicts that afflict our society. The result is a mindless use of force against anti-status quo militant organizations—a use of force that only recently

They have failed to institute a persistent and self-sustaining reforms program for a course correction of our society. The fault is with the self-obsessed leaders whose personal ambitions trump the cause of reforms in the society. The lesson we should learn from our last three decades of history is that democracy doesn't produce reforms on its own. An outside force or political group is needed to push reforms into the system. A critical mass of dedicated political-minded and democracy-oriented reformers is what we need at the moment. In the absence of persistent and self-sustaining reforms, our system will rot like a human corpse lying unburied for years, a corpse that is at the mercy of vultures.

Into the Storm Once Again

Whether Imran Khan becomes the next Prime Minister, or Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Shahbaz Sharif, or Nawaz Sharif himself, it doesn't matter

By Umer Farooq

Dismantling the political infrastructure that the military has constructed since 2014 to carry out political engineering is not a decision someone can take instantly. It must have been made under a lot of pressure from new political realities that were emerging in the country. Former political ally Imran Khan turned into a staunch opponent. Postings, promotions, and transfers within the military hierarchy are about to become new organisational realities, that would potentially affect a country's political situation. The geopolitics of changing regional security situations and super-power rivalry all indicate a drastic change in political perceptions of military leaders, and their political outlook. There are visible signs that military leaders are deeply averse to Pakistan becoming a battleground between an existing superpower, the USA, and an emerging superpower, China, and its sort of ally, the Russian Federation.

Imran Khan's naive approach of attacking Washington and perceptibly making an attempt to side with the Russian bloc came in a bad taste for the military. The military wanted a much more delicate handling of the situation. The bitter lessons learned by military top brass from their encounters with the two ruling parties that have ruled since 2013 until now—the PMLN and the PTI—have reinforced the military establishment's already existing belief that they should not have permanent allies in power game.

After the April 2022 ouster of Prime Minister Imran Khan, the military learned another lesson: ideological alignment with the ruling party or a seeming meeting of minds between the ruling party's slogans and half-cooked mindsets of ranks and files within the military could force military leaders into a situation where former allies like Imran Khan could make a bid to take them on for a head-on collision with the confidence that comes with a false



perception that ranks and files are supporting him. So, the former political allies of the military, PTI, which formerly acted as a front organisation of the Pakistani military for almost 8 years, left the military leaders with no option but to go for the dismantling of political infrastructure that was painstakingly constructed by the security apparatus of the country.

The initial signs that the military has made up its mind to dismantle this infrastructure became visible when the Director General of ISI, Lt. General Nadeem Anjum, appeared before the media along with DG ISPR. The two gentlemen clearly attacked all of Imran Khan's political positions, which are the bedrock of his post-ouster politics. They said Imran Khan's narrative about a foreign conspiracy built on a piece of paper was "far from reality." The Director General of ISI, Lt. General Nadeem Anjum, appeared before the media along with DG ISPR. The two gentlemen clearly attacked all of Imran Khan's political positions, which are the bedrock of his post-ouster politics. They said Imran Khan's narrative about a foreign conspiracy built on a piece of paper was "far from reality." ARY News played the role of a spin doctor in targeting the army; CEO Salman Iqbal should be brought back to Pakistan. If General Bajwa is a traitor, why he was presented with a "lucrative offer" for an extension in

March by Imran Khan,

The military officials vehemently attacked the ARY news channel, and its CEO, Salman Iqbal. The DG ISPR said that the name of the ARY CEO was surfacing again and again in connection with the killing of Arshad Sharif. "He should be brought back to Pakistan and made part of the probe." He said that after Sharif's death, people had started pointing fingers at the army. "It has to be determined who exactly benefited from his killing."

ARY News was the central brick in the infrastructure built for carrying out political engineering in the country that started in 2014 and culminated in the 2018 parliamentary elections. It appears that in ARY, the military learned the bitter lesson of how the infrastructure they built to bulldoze their political opponents and curb political dissent could eventually turn against them in a fluid and ruthless power game. ARY used to make fun of political opponents, especially of Imran Khan and his seeming ally, the current military leaders, who were at the forefront of expressing political dissent with the official state narrative.

ARY anchors used to laugh and make jokes about those who are languishing in Pakistani prisons just because they don't agree with the state or the government of the day politically. Pakistani journalism has a strong and



visible streak of blurring the line between the murky world of intelligence and espionage on the one hand and journalism and the media on the other. We always had journalists who never set clear boundaries. The results, therefore, comprise sensationalism, no-hold-bar accusations to defame everyone whom the spymasters consider an enemy of the state, and an avalanche of single-sourced stories. Across the globe, media outlets and editors tell their reporters that single-source stories are generally unreliable and unpublishable. In the effort to bulldoze the "enemies of the state", ARY crossed all lines of decency. But military leadership started to get a sense of how things were turning up only when ARY started to cross the red-line of attacking the military leaders themselves.

Why and how did Imran Khan turn against the military as an institution? And how did the military as an institution decide to dismantle the very infrastructure they built to bring Imran Khan into power? Imran Khan's diatribes are potent enough to make everyone in the military hierarchy insecure—both the outgoing and the incoming. This is for two reasons: The military's top brass is primarily a bureaucratic structure staffed by military bureaucrats who have repeatedly demonstrated an aversion to adventure and dislike those who are naturally adventurous. Imran Khan, during the past six months, has been treading a seemingly unending path of political adventure, which can not only badly destabilise the country but has the potential to destabilise the military structures themselves. Secondly, Imran

Khan's demand for military leaders itself is a source of conflict and destabilization. At present, he is the only leader in the country who is not demanding the military stay aloof from politics. At the time of his ouster from power, he was clearly demanding the military leaders end their neutrality and side with him against his political opponents. The Pakistan military has a long history of playing an active role in the country's political conflicts.



However, when the current military leadership repeatedly states that they will not become involved in the country's politics, they have in mind a completely neutral role in any current or future political conflicts. There seems to be a belated realisation that the 2014 soft intervention cost them dearly.

The Pakistani military is deeply immersed in the functions of the state and its leadership considers statecraft to be its forte—foreign policy, security policy, both external

and internal, the economy, and last but not least, how to run a strategic media policy, all of which they consider to come under their purview. Foreign policy, which sets the strategic direction the country will take in the regional and international setting, and internal and external security policy, which attracts a major portion of the federal budget and the economy at large, can remain in the hands of or under the direct influence of GHQ.

Filthy party politics, which includes electoral squabbles, off-election political confrontation, rallies, long marches, patently useless parliamentary affairs, and running a couple of dozen already-depleted ministries, can comfortably leave the field to whichever party comes to power after an exhausting battle. Whether Imran Khan becomes the next Prime Minister, or Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Shahbaz Sharif, or Nawaz Sharif himself, it doesn't matter.





A March to Freedom or Chaos?

Will Imran Khan sustain the momentum of his narrative till the next elections?

By Noor Aftab

Imran Khan's objectives remain unclear. Will he seek to surround the capital, enter the city and block its main arteries, or just create chaos to show his strength in order to negotiate with the establishment? Pakistan today has echoes of the post-January 6 moments in the United States; a polarisation so deep that each faction sees no validity in the other's arguments. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman, Imran Khan, has decided to take his fight with the coalition government to the streets after the initiation of a long march on October 28, soon after his disqualification by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in Toshakhana reference. Though Khan insists that his supporters must protest peacefully, his claims of foreign-sponsored regime change and his refusal to accept the legitimacy of the coalition government, together with his track record, give ground for concern.

Quite contrary to the claims of Imran Khan, PTI leader Faisal Vawda has said he is seeing blood and dead bodies in the long march. That could discourage many people who want to join Imran Khan on his upcoming long march.

The Karachi-based leader has also made some statements regarding the murder of prominent journalist Arshad Sharif that have been taken by the PTI leadership in really bad taste.

In the short term, the following key questions have been raised by political pundits in Pakistani politics: Will Imran Khan sustain the momentum of his narrative till the next elections? Will his disqualification lead to some sort of revolution? How will the "neutrals" react "if and when" there is a change of guards? And what will be the dispensation of 2023, the post-election dispensation?

Imran Khan is trying everything available to him in the form of support from some influential quarters, street power from his supporters, and widespread propaganda from enthusiasts on social and mainstream media. But it is difficult to predict if he will



succeed, although it seems quite unlikely. He is pulling all the levers to topple this government and pave the way for fresh elections, highlighting the fault lines in the democratic process of the country.

He has so far held 55 public meetings in different cities of Pakistan, and everywhere he tried to combine charisma, patriotism, Islamist credentials, and spine to show his courage and relative integrity in comparison with others.

He is galvanising his supporters through rallies across the country where he calls the coalition government an "imported government" and the new prime minister a "crime minister." He is also using his rallies and interviews to command media attention and argues that his government's fall returned to power the corrupt politicians that are responsible for Pakistan's problems. His supporters, many of them middle class, young, and urban, and furious at what they see as Khan's unceremonious, orchestrated ousting, repeat his words on social media.

The most alarming part of Khan's strategy has been his willingness to use violence to intimidate his political opponents. Imran Khan became the first Pakistani prime

minister to lose office through a parliamentary no-confidence vote. When he came to power in 2018, the opposition alleged that the PTI owed its victory in the elections to powerful quarters. After Khan took power, he enjoyed nearly free rein in the domestic domain while the establishment retained control of sensitive foreign and security issues. Khan and his cabinet ministers were often keen to emphasise that the PTI government and the military leadership were "on the same page."

Imran Khan's upcoming Azaadi The March on Islamabad has converted the federal capital into a city of containers. The government has already fortified the capital city with hundreds of shipping containers placed on the main arteries of Islamabad.

These containers have been seized from the dry ports of Islamabad, Faisalabad, Lahore, and other cities. While PTI's long march might hurt trade activity when it begins, the government is already hampering the trade and logistics industry by seizing containers and blocking roads.

Khan has repeatedly claimed that he would give the federal government a "surprise" this time as the government was clueless about his plan.



The federal government is also making tall claims and apparently not afraid of the threat of a second long march by Imran Khan. Its ministers have pointed out that they have many options, both legal and political, to deal with the long march toward Islamabad. Some of them even stated that Imran Khan, who has already been disqualified by the ECP, would now make an end to his politics through his other failed long march.

The Punjab government is also facing open threats, especially from the PML-N leaders, who have been saying that they have the plan to topple the provincial government and will do it at an appropriate time. According to political sources, this is an attempt to shore up his shaky government. The reports suggest that some ten to fifteen more PTI MPs from Punjab are ready to resign and they are looking for a green signal from some quarters.

Imran Khan is now mainly relying on the Punjab government because when he allegedly used the resources of the governments of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Azad Jammu and Kashmir during his first long march, he failed to make an impact on the political field. Now he believes that his long march will only succeed when the people of the Punjab province come in large numbers to challenge the legitimacy of the coalition government.

Amid all these political happenings, four recent meetings have become the talk of the town. Insiders claimed that Imran Khan and a top figure in the military establishment met twice and talked about some political issues. Another meeting took place

in a posh sector of Islamabad between three close advisers to Imran Khan, one of whom holds a top constitutional post and is a "favorite" of the PTI chairman. It is said that Imran Khan failed to get the desired results from his meetings with top military figures, due to which he started preparations for a long march and is also threatening to block all entry and exit points of Islamabad.

A fourth meeting was allegedly held between government officials and the PTI leaders, but it also failed to yield any positive result. The PTI leaders insisted that the government should announce the date for the next general elections, but the government officials maintained that these would be held after the completion of the constitutional term of the national assembly.

It is an open secret that Imran Khan wants elections held in March or April so that he may form his government with a two-thirds majority and appoint the chief of the Army Staff of his own choice. But the political situation clearly shows that it is not going to happen as the government is showing no flexibility towards the demands of the PTI chairman.

President Arif Alvi has been stressing the need for continued dialogue between the two sides, though Imran Khan is not very hopeful about a positive outcome.

In his news conference, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif categorically said that the coalition government had no plan to hold early elections and that they would complete the constitutional term of the national assembly.

The government also faces considerable hurdles, including an economic crisis that is partially shaped by exogenous factors, a tussle over power in Punjab, and a president who belongs to and is loyal to Khan's party.

With forbidding political and economic realities on one hand and high public expectations on the other, the coalition government and its leader do not have too many options on the table as they get ready to deal with multiple crises, at least not at the moment. The enormity of the economic and foreign policy challenges demands a strong government that is not encumbered by uncertainty over its future and has the public mandate to take tough and unpopular decisions.

A major question contributing to the political uncertainty in Pakistan is the timing of the next general elections, which must be held by the summer of 2023. Khan has made it clear that he wants to ride his present momentum to immediate elections. There is the question of whether Nawaz can or will return to Pakistan before the next general elections. If he does, that could boost the PML-N's base, but if he does not face prosecution on his return, that will bolster Khan's argument that the Sharifs have politically manipulated the corruption cases against them. Should political confrontation become more violent and the security environment deteriorates further, the military might once again be thrust into the political fray. How the coalition government navigates these minefields will actually determine whether Pakistan can turn the page on this political crisis and move to a peaceful vote in 2023.





PDM's six-month performance was a mix of Successes and Failures

The government changed, but the problems faced by the masses remained the same

By Tahir Niaz

The Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) voted out the Imran-led government at the Centre in April this year just to provide relief to the masses. They called the PTI government incompetent and said they couldn't get things done. They then moved a vote of no confidence against the premier.

The government changed, but the problems faced by the masses remained the same. Yesterday they were reeling under inflation, price hikes, and swelled utility bills, and nothing changed for the masses today, even after six months of the PDM's rule. The masses, especially the poor, continue to finish the day battered by price hikes and unemployment. The PDM government faced criticism, especially for the increased prices of essential commodities. The masses labelled the incumbent government as ruthless, with no regard for the people's miseries. So much so that many started making comparisons between the PDM government and their predecessors, believing that the Imran-led government was a lesser evil.

Nonetheless, the PDM ruling alliance has met with success on some fronts in the last six months. A review of the first 6 months of the performance of the PDM government suggests a mix of successes and failures. It failed on the domestic front but secured some landmark achievements on the external front. Still, inflation remains a bigger threat to the government than Imran Khan. However, the government is sure of doing wonders in the coming days.

Starting from the FATF success, one can say that it was a great achievement by the incumbent government on the diplomatic front. The credit also goes to the previous government as well. Soon after receiving a positive response from the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), increasing the chances of Islamabad's removal from the global money laundering and terrorist financing watchdog's grey list, a race started to take credit for the success.



As soon as the FATF announced that Pakistan had met all of its 34 conditions, PTI chairman Imran Khan, in a series of tweets, credited his government with leading the country to this achievement. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also felicitated the nation and government institutions, personalities, and the relevant teams over the development. Meanwhile, the leaders of the PPP also came out with a series of statements praising their party chairman and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari for "successful diplomacy". A military spokesman termed the development "a great achievement" and gave credit to the "civil-military team" and mainly to the core cell set up at the army's General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi for it. Even though political rivals didn't want to acknowledge each other's work, they all agreed that the military played a big part in the development.

A US deal to upgrade Pakistan's F-16 fleet: In the second week of September, the US government notified Congress of a proposed foreign military sale of \$450 million to Pakistan to sustain the Pakistan Air Force's F-16 programme. The proposed sale will sustain Pakistan's capability to meet current and future counterterrorism threats by maintaining its F-16 fleet. India, on the other hand, said that it was

"worried" about the US deal to upgrade Pakistan's F-16 fleet.

The incumbent government succeeded in the revival of the stalled IMF loan programme. In the last week of August 2022, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved the revival of Pakistan's Extended Fund Facility (EFF) programme, releasing a \$1.17bn loan tranche. The IMF's executive board approved the revival of Pakistan's EFF programme, after which the country will receive the 7th and 8th tranche of \$1.17 billion. The formal resumption of the IMF programme is a major step forward in the government's efforts to put Pakistan's economy back on track.

German FM's statement about Kashmir: The German Foreign Minister's statement about Kashmir was a major success on the diplomatic front in recent weeks. In October 2022, two key developments took place. US Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome and German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock separately made statements that appeared to endorse Pakistan's position on Kashmir. The statements helped Pakistan's longstanding efforts to highlight the issue of Kashmir internationally. India, however, took strong note of the German FM's advocating the role of the UN in the Kashmir dispute.



India has insisted that Kashmir is a bilateral issue between New Delhi and Islamabad.

CPEC revival: Development of the CPEC projects remained slow during the PTI government. The Pak-China Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC), which reviews the ongoing projects and inducts new projects, met on October 27th. There was only one meeting of the forum during the whole tenure of the PTI. The upgrade of the ML-1 project is almost nearing completion. China was not ready to invest in the rationalised cost of 6.8 billion dollars. The cost of the ML-1 railway project has been raised to \$9.85 billion, which is about Rs2 trillion. This is 45 percent more than what was originally planned for the project. ML-1 is the single biggest loan/investment in the CPEC project. ML-1 is the main project of CPEC, and its main part is to upgrade and double Main Line-1 from Karachi to Peshawar and Taxila to Havelian, which is a distance of 1733 km.

Earning money: In the first quarter of the fiscal year 2022–23, the amount of money earned was still more than the goal.

Averted default: According to the PDM government, Pakistan was on the verge of default when it took over the reins of the country. However, as a result of the government's efforts, the country averted the looming default. However, according to the latest reports, the risk of default has spiked to a 13-year high of 52.8%. Pakistan's risk of default, measured by the 5-year credit default swap (CDS), has spiked by 3.07 percentage points in a day on October 25 and hit a 13-year high at 52.8%, suggesting foreign investors have lost faith in the

country. The country is due to return \$1 billion to foreign investors at the maturity of the 5-year Sukuk on December 5, 2022. Foreign investors are worried because the country's foreign exchange reserves have dropped by about \$9 billion in the last 10 months.

Revival of ties with friendly countries: Imran Khan is said to have ruined important ties with the West, China, and the Gulf states. The PDM government was able to fix these problems, which paid off on the FATF and IMF fronts.

On the other hand, the PDM government badly failed on the economic front. A setback for the government happened when the US said something about the safety of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal.

US statement on N-arsenal: US president Joe Biden's statement on Pakistan's nuclear arsenal was seen as a diplomatic failure on the part of Pakistan. In October, Biden told a Democratic Congressional fundraiser that Pakistan "may be one of the most dangerous nations in the world" for possessing "nuclear weapons without any cohesion." The White House published the transcript of the president's address in California, which sparked outrage in the country. Pakistan later formally protested the United States over remarks by President Joe Biden, prompting the US to backtrack and say it can secure nukes.

Despite the resumption of the IMF programme, the country's currency continues to experience its worst slump. The situation demands urgent attention as there

is a dire need to stabilise the rupee by ending market speculation through the State Bank of Pakistan. Even though the IMF programme has been restarted, traders and business owners are in a lot of pain because there are no signs that the high inflation, loss of jobs, and lower profits will get better.

Rising fuel prices: The people have slammed the PDM government for increasing the petrol and diesel rates, which will not only multiply the woes of the already inflation-hit masses but will also push up the cost of production. The PDM government gave in to pressure from the IMF to cut fuel and electricity subsidies in exchange for a \$1 billion loan to pull the country's economy out of a crisis. This move was criticised by people from all walks of life.



High electricity prices: Already frustrated with the rapidly rising cost of living that is the result of inflation, domestic electricity consumers are outraged at their puffed-up power bills. The increased power bills are the outcome of the fuel price adjustment charges and the size of the various taxes being collected by the government on them. Thus, it is not surprising to see thousands of people protesting against the rapidly rising bills.

Still, the key area is the economy, where the sorry sight of the rupee in free fall has created images of economic doom. Political problems also make PDM's survival uncertain, especially after it lost Punjab. Even though the government has a lot of problems, political experts still hope that it will get out of the economic crisis and finish the term of the national assembly.





Toshakhana Case: Is it over?

The former prime minister was disqualified for making a false statement and incorrect declaration before the Election Commission in the statement of assets and liabilities filed by him for the year 2020-21

By Sarfraz Raja

It was certainly not an unexpected verdict for Imran Khan, who himself had speculated a day earlier that he would be disqualified by the election commission. A controversy that erupted for not declaring the purchase and sale of some precious gifts received by the former premier during his official visits abroad in his annual statement of assets and liabilities submitted to the ECP, ended in his disqualification as a member of the parliament.

Background

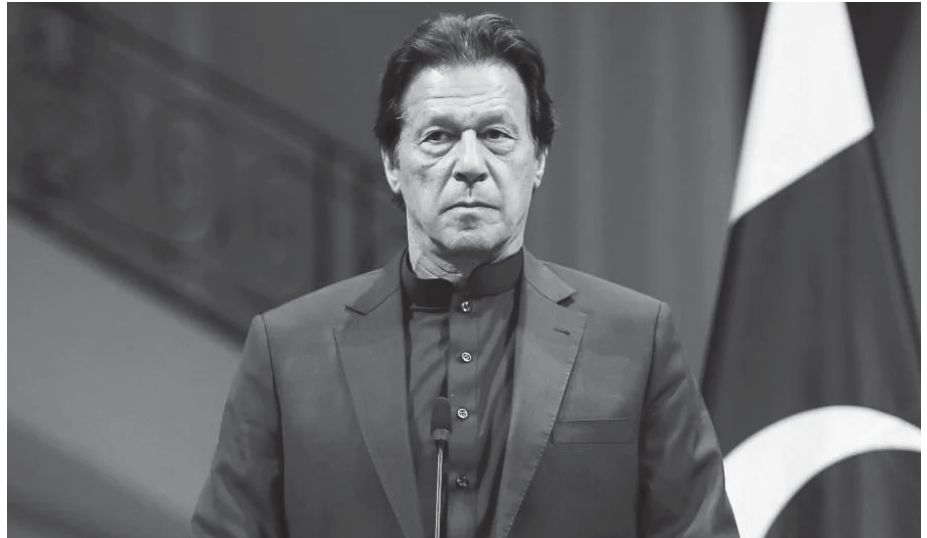
Toshakhana is a department established in 1974 under the administrative control of the Cabinet Division which stores unique and precious gifts given to rulers, members of parliament, bureaucrats, and other government officials by heads of other governments, states, and foreign dignitaries during their official visits.

According to Toshakhana rules, gifts and other such materials received by these government functionaries shall be reported to the Cabinet Division.

However, the PTI, while in government, had been reluctant to disclose details of the gifts presented to Imran Khan, maintaining that doing so would jeopardize international ties, even as the Pakistan Information Commission (PIC) ordered it to do so.

During Imran Khan's tenure as prime minister, the PIC had accepted an application by an Islamabad-based journalist and directed the Cabinet Division to provide the requested information about the gifts received by Prime Minister Imran Khan from foreign heads of state, heads of government and other foreign dignitaries. Their description, specification, and other information about the gifts retained by the PM and the Rules under which gifts received were retained by him.

The Cabinet Division was told to share the required information within ten working days and upload it on the official website as well.



The Cabinet Division had challenged the PIC order in the Islamabad High Court (IHC). The then government took the stance that the disclosure of any information related to Toshakhana would negatively affect relations with other countries.

Earlier in April this year, Islamabad High court had directed to ensure the implementation of the PIC order to publicize details of the gifts presented to former Prime Minister Imran Khan by heads of state since he assumed office in August 2018.

On August 4, lawmakers from the ruling multi-party alliance, Pakistan Democratic Movement, filed a reference seeking Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf Chief Imran Khan's disqualification from public office under Articles 62 and 63 of the Constitution for not sharing details of Toshakhana gifts in his annual statement of assets.

The reference was submitted to the National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf who subsequently forwarded it to the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikander Sultan Raja for further action.

In its hearing on Aug 29, the electoral body had sought a written reply from Imran Khan by Sep 8. In his reply, the Tehreek e Insaf chief admitted to having sold at least

four presents he had received during his tenure as the prime minister of Pakistan.

The former premier in his reply maintained that the sale of gifts he procured from the state treasury after paying Rs 21.56 million fetched about Rs 58 million. One gift included a wristwatch, a pair of cuff links, an expensive pen, and a ring while the other three gifts included four Rolex watches.

The ECP Decision

The election watchdog, after hearing arguments from all sides, reserved its decision on September 1 and announced the all-important verdict one month later on October 21.

In its written ruling, the commission said, the respondent (Imran Khan) had intentionally and deliberately violated the provisions contained in sections 137, 167, and 173 of the Elections Act, 2017, as he has made a false statement and incorrect declaration before the Commission in the statement of assets and liabilities filed by him for the year 2020-21.

Hence, he is liable to disqualification under Article 63(1)(p) of the Constitution.

The ECP ruling follows up by saying based



on the findings, facts available on record, and keeping in view the argument of learned counsel for parties herein, "we are of the considered opinion that the respondent has become disqualified under Article 63(1)(p) of the Constitution read with Section 137, 167 and 173 of the Elections Act, 2017, consequently he ceases to be a member of the National Assembly of Pakistan and his seat has become vacant accordingly."

The ruling said as the respondent has made false statements and incorrect declarations, therefore he has also committed the offense of corrupt practices defined under sections 167 and 173 of the Elections Act, 2017, punishable under Section 174 of the Elections Act, 2017.

The office is directed to initiate legal proceedings and to take follow-up action under Section 190(2) of the Elections Act, 2017, the verdict added.

Imran Khan's disqualification was made under Article 63 (1) (p) of the Constitution which states that an individual is, for the time being, disqualified from being elected or chosen as a member of the Majlis-e-Shoora (Parliament) or of a provincial assembly under any law for the time being in force.

Reaction Following The Big Decision

Although this was not an unexpected verdict for the PTI chief, as not only he but his other party leaders were showing concern and raising fingers at the electoral body for showing its alleged bias towards ruling parties. Even Imran Khan in his public gatherings used derogatory remarks against the head of the five-member electoral body Sikandar Sultan Raja, calling him the personal employee of Sharifs when in fact he was the nominee of Imran Khan. After the ECP verdict, on Imran Khan's call, PTI workers started protests in different cities blocking major roads, while to stop them from doing so, clashes occurred between Police and the PTI protestors in many areas. Later, PTI Chief called his workers to halt protests and start preparing for their Long March. On the other hand, ruling parties in the PDM welcomed the ECP decision and their workers held rallies and distributed sweets to celebrate this as a victory.

A Battle To Continue

Imran Khan's disqualification was not under those articles that PDM applicants were demanding. It was a disqualification for his current assembly membership, not a

lifetime disqualification in the case of PMLN Quaid Nawaz Sharif. For Khan, who won 6 national assembly seats out of seven he contested in the by-elections held on October 16, just a few days before the ECP's decision, the disqualification seems to be from the Mianwali seat from where he had been elected in 2018.

Even though Imran Khan is not disbarred from contesting the upcoming elections and is only de-seated from the seat he had already resigned from, he still challenged the verdict in the IHC. His credibility might take a blow, but legal experts believe that the ECP decision wouldn't affect Imran Khan's political career as he would remain eligible to continue parliamentary politics. Some experts opine he is de seated, not disqualified, but he could be trialed under the corrupt practices act as ordered in the ECP verdict. As per the Elections Act, any person found guilty of corrupt practices could be sentenced to three years in prison and some penalty as well, so in that case, Imran Khan could face disqualification for five years, keeping him out for at least one tenure. While he could appeal the ECP verdict in superior courts, his opponents could also pursue the case for his long term disqualification based on corrupt practices revealed by the ECP. Multiple options are available for both parties, and the tug of war is not over yet.





Farcical Verdict

Whether the disqualification was for the seat from which Imran Khan was currently a member of the National Assembly or for the current tenure of the National Assembly, is it for five years like in Yousaf Raza Gilani's case or for life like in the cases of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and ex-PTI leader Jahangir Khan Tareen?

By Wajih Safarish Khan

The Election Commission's verdict against Imran Khan in the Toshakhana case has generated more questions than it has answered. The commission, in its decision, has said that Imran Khan has made "a false statement and an incorrect declaration before the commission in the statement of assets and liabilities filed for the year 2021-2 and thus has become disqualified." The commission has said that Imran Khan's seat in the National Assembly, NA-75 Mianwali, which he won in 2018, is now open.

The verdict does not say anything about the further consequences of the disqualification. Whether the disqualification was for the seat from which Imran Khan was currently a member of the National Assembly or for the current tenure of the National Assembly, is it for five years like in Yousaf Raza Gilani's case or for life like in the cases of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and ex-PTI leader Jahangir Khan Tareen?

However, later, while hearing Imran Khan's appeal against the decision, the Islamabad High Court said that the disqualification was restricted to the membership of the former Prime Minister from his Mianwali seat. The Court said that Mr. Imran Ahmed Khan Niazi was free to contest the by-election for the National Assembly seat from Kurram, where the election is taking place on October 30 and where Imran Khan is already a candidate.

There was confusion later when the Election Commission announced the official results of the National and Punjab Assembly seats on which by-elections were held on October 16 and during which Imran Khan was a candidate in seven National Assembly constituencies and where he won a record six seats. The results of two National Assembly and three Punjab Assembly seats were announced. However, the results of the six seats that Imran Khan had won were withheld. Later, the commission clarified that the results were being



withheld because Imran Khan had failed to provide mandatory details of the election expenses, he had accrued in the campaign for each of these constituencies. With this information, the commission was able to confirm that Imran Khan's disqualification only affected the seat in the National Assembly where he was supposed to be on Friday, October 21, 2022.

The Election Commission, in its decision, has also said that it will file a criminal case against the former Prime Minister under section 174 read with section 192 of the Elections Act 2017. He could be awarded a maximum punishment of three years in jail for the violation. Any such sentence would disqualify a person from running for a seat in any house of parliament or a provincial assembly for five years after the sentence ends.

However, those familiar with criminal proceedings and procedures in the country know that any final punishment in this regard will take decades, not years, to finalize. The case will be heard by a civil judge/magistrate whose decision will be appealable in the court of session. Then an appeal may go to the High Court and Supreme Court before being finalized.

Thus, for all intents and purposes, the

punishment for Imran Khan for making "false and incorrect statements" with the Election Commission is de-seating from a seat he won at Mianwali in July 2018. Interestingly, Imran Khan was going to vacate the seat anyway on the day when the Election Commission finally published the verdict in the Toshakhana case after a four-day delay. Under Article 223 (2) of the constitution, a seat is vacated if the member holding it is elected from another seat in the National Assembly, Senate, or a provincial assembly. As already said, Imran Khan was elected from six National Assembly seats on July 16. For the time being, the results of the elections for the seats he won have not been announced as he has not provided mandatory details of his election expenses, but the same will be announced as soon as this formality is fulfilled. Imran Khan's seat in the National Assembly, NA-75, would have been declared empty as soon as that news came out.

That brings us to the farcical nature of the whole exercise and the hype it created; tens of millions of rupees spent on court cases; and the tension the nation had to face. Imran Khan had already publicly announced his resignation from NA-75 on April 11, 2022, when he was ousted by a vote of no-confidence in the National



Assembly. He told the Speaker of the National Assembly the same thing in his resignation letter, and said the same thing many times in person.

It is strange that Speaker of the National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf needs more proof to confirm that Imran Khan's resignation from his National Assembly seat, which has been on his desk for more than six months, was not given voluntarily and that his signatures on the resignation letter were taken at gunpoint. Our dear Chief Election Commissioner, and four of his colleagues worked for months to get Imran Khan kicked out of a seat he had resigned from six months earlier, even though he had been elected from six other places.

Now let's go back and look into identical cases of false declarations made by members of the National Assembly, Senate, and provincial assemblies to the Election Commission. Former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif did not declare his expected salary from a firm owned by his son, which he did not draw, and was disqualified for life. Faisal Vawda, a former minister in Imran Khan's government, could be banned from politics for life because he didn't say he was a US citizen when he filed his papers to run for a seat in the National Assembly from Karachi in July 2018.

Numerous other members of the



parliament and provincial assemblies were threatened with a lifelong ban for false declarations pertaining to dual nationality and made to resign from their seats, but our former cricket hero is just being kicked out of a job he already quit when he was found guilty of making false statements that were a lot worse than what the people above did.

The nation expects our courts and decision-making forums to be consistent in their application of laws, but it seems justice in this country is not blind. It can differentiate between friends and foes, has its likes and dislikes, foes and otherwise, and can act accordingly.

It will be pertinent for the nation to ask Imran Khan, who has been narrating the stories of the state of Madina, the pious

Caliphates, especially Hazrat Umar (peace be upon him), and European democracies for the last twenty-two years, what a pious Caliph would have done with the gifts he would have received for being in the position. What would a leader in any of the European democracies have done with the gifts received because of his/her position? Would any of them have used the gifts for personal aggrandizement? What would have been the consequences if a political leader in any of the European democracies was found making false statements under oath?

Please do not tell us that you or your opponents do the same. You have and will continue to promise them to change. If not better, you should at least be as honest as they are.



Should Pakistan have more Provinces?

Even if new provinces are created, it would be important to determine whether they would be divided along administrative or ethnolinguistic lines

By Mahnur Mehfuz

Pakistan, a country divided into four provinces and two administrative units; Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and Gilgit Baltistan, has five chief ministers. With a population of over 200 million people, half of which is in Punjab, governments appear to struggle while managing administrative affairs. With the passage of the 18th constitutional amendment in 2010, which allowed provinces sufficient power over resources, the call for more provinces reemerged.

The United States has 50 administrative units, followed by India (28 units) and eight union territories, Turkey (81), and China (34). With more units, these nations have been performing well on the political and economic front. This is one of the primary justifications given by those who advocate for Pakistan to have additional federating units, claiming that doing so would greatly improve Pakistan's political and economic conditions. In Pakistan, however, adding new provinces appears to be a difficult undertaking in contrast to India, which began this procedure from the beginning. Even if Pakistan is divided into new provinces, it would be important to determine whether they would be divided along administrative or ethnolinguistic lines.

For better administration, devolution of power is essential. Some believe that having only 4 provinces allows for provinces with a larger population to grab a lion's share of the development funding. In India, there are 28 states and eight union territories. When India gained independence from British rule in 1947, it was categorized as a "third-world" nation. Over the last seven decades, its GDP has increased from Rs 2.7 lakh crore to Rs 150 lakh crore. In China, there are 34 provinces. Each province's administration is overseen by a provincial committee that is chaired by a secretary. The committee secretary is in control of the

province first, and the governor of the provincial government is in charge second. In reality, daily operations are managed by a provincial party standing committee, which functions as the Politburo for the provincial government. China's foreign policy is frequently the consequence of conflicts between powerful central government institutions, provincial governments, and significant state-owned businesses (SOEs), all of which are vying for more influence and funding.

On the other hand, Afghanistan and Sri Lanka are the countries that have more provinces but are not successful in terms of power systems. Afghanistan (wilayat) has 34 provinces. Afghanistan's basic administrative divisions are its provinces. There are typically more than 1,000 villages or a handful of districts within each province. By comparing Afghanistan's division of provinces with Pakistan, it is found that only having more provinces and more chief ministers will not lead to the development of a country. The most important pillar of the development of a country is the work of provincial governments. A nation is the main asset of a state but Afghanistan's government collapsed because it was perceived as having no legitimacy by the populace. This legitimacy issue had numerous interrelated causes. Security is still a major issue in the country,

which has a huge impact on the sociopolitical environment. Due to internal differences and the influence of external forces, Afghanistan has failed to stabilize its system. 49.4% of Afghans are estimated to be living below the poverty line. In Afghanistan, 35.4% of the employed population is living on less than \$1.90 PPP per day.

Sri Lanka has 9 provinces. As a result of defaulting on international loans and experiencing severe fuel and food shortages, Sri Lanka's economy reached an all-time low, and the government declared a state of emergency. Multiple external shocks and Rajapaksa's prior resistance to seeking assistance from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) exacerbated years of mismanagement. Sri Lanka currently has a depreciated currency, hyperinflation, budget and current account deficits, and an enormous amount of unpayable sovereign debt. Everything that could go wrong with the economy has gone wrong.

Pakistan is in the grip of multiple crises of politicians' making. There is equal demand for new provinces as well against it. If Pakistan will be divided into more provinces, it should evaluate the effective strategies of China and India, and learn from the flaws of Sri Lanka and Afghanistan which made their economy and government collapse.



The Politics of making new administrative Units in Balochistan

By Ayaz Khan

On September 6, a young biker struggled to cross the main intersection on Western Bypass of thesil Hub which was blocked by bushes full of thorns. Spotted by one of the protesters wielding play card with a slogan 'Las ki takseem na manzoor' (dare not divide Las), the biker stood dead in the half way he had struggled to cross the road.

"Stop, you can't go ahead," said the play-card wielding protester.

"Sahi (alright)," replied the biker while appreciating the situation and nodding his head in agreement.

Though monsoon at its apogee, the blockade was not induced by it, but blocking the road were protesters who had gathered to record their demonstration against division of district Lasbela into two districts however knowing the fact that the fight can only yield results if fought on the floor of the provincial assembly. Blocking the road could only bring miseries to the commuters.

Creating new districts in Balochistan is as easy for the province-runners as for a magician's 'magic wound' bringing out uncountable rabbits out of the 'witch hat'. In terms of districts, the province, with the lowest population, stands behind Punjab which has the highest population in the country. Former has 37 districts with a total population of 12.34 million whereas the latter has 41 districts with a population of 110 million.

With the Jam Kamal Khan-led government's ouster after a no-confidence motion, Chief Minister Quddos Bezinjo forged the passage for three new districts in the province: Hub, Karezat and Usta Mohammad. Similarly, in 2017, Duki and Surab were raised to the status of districts augmenting the number of districts to 34. With three more districts, the total number of districts stands at 37 today.

"Till now there is no 'legislation' or 'mechanism' which can be made basis for creating new districts. However, there is a legal



legislative way to make a union council but not a tehsil or district. There should be a mechanism in which all aspects of that area (district in making) are taken into view vis-à-vis factors that will correlatively affect the one or the other area being divided," says former Chief Minister Jam Kamal Khan Alyani.

Reviewing the current situation in which many areas are notified as districts, Alyani believes that introducing new ones is done more on political reasons than making the need as the basis of the rationalising new districts.

The Balochistan government brought amendments into Balochistan Land Laws through The Balochistan Land Laws (amendments) Act 2009. Section 6 of the of Act, Balchistan Land Revenue Act, 1967, empowers the incumbent government to divide the province in to divisions, divisions into districts and districts into dub-divisions (tehsils). The Act, on the other hand, does not enshrine any method to carry out the said divisions.

"Ironically, a province with a population of more than 110 million and the other having only 12.34 million have almost similar number of districts," says Adnan Amir who

has been writing about the issue for a long now. For Adnan, justifying the division on the basis of the claim that the province has a big 'land mass', is a bluff and unjustifiable.

Until 1972, total number of district in Balochistan was 26. For almost three decades, no new districts were formed till 2002 and with constant increase in the number of districts onwards the province saw 30 districts carved out on its map by 2007 by 2007 when Harnai was notified as a district. Then, Lehri and Sohbatpur were added to the list as well.

"New districts are made on political basis merely. There is rationale side of the issue too. Most of the governments have been doing it without keeping the population of the area in view. For instance, Harnai has a population of 90,000 whereas Kech has a population of more than 900,000. However, Harnai is a district but Kech remains out of that debate. Same is the case with Khuzdar, one of the largest districts of Balochistan, which needs to be divided," Adds Adnan.

Creating unnecessary administrative units adds to the burden on exchequer. In 2016-17, expenditure on district administra



tion in the province was Rs14.5 billion. The addition of two more districts increased this figure in 2017-18 for which the province had passed a budget with a deficit of Rs52 billion. Budget deficit in Fiscal Year 2021-22 is said to be 72 billion. Despite this, the incumbent government has added to the districts further. For instance, each new district needs at least 14 new departments to look after the its affairs.

Sardar Muhammad Saleh Bhootani, current minister of local government and rural development who put his all weight behind creation of Hub tehsil a new district, believes otherwise.

“Lasbela is vast and is big district. It’s comprised of 9 sub-divisions (tehsils) within a distance that a deputy commissioner

(DC) can hardly reach the all sub-division if he intends to do survey. Most of the DCs have not gone beyond 4 or 5 sub-divisions. This needed to be given due consideration,” Shares Saleh Bhootani.

On the other hand, Bhootani is of the view that: “Hub induces a huge influx of migrants. Any disaster occurring in any corner of the province pushes a big number of people to this sub-division. This issue in particular has compromised the security of district Lasbela for which we needed to ameliorate policing and for this to achieve, we needed to notify Hub as a new district.”

To debar his district from being axed into two parts, ex-Chief Minister Jam Kamal Khan Alyani stood at the forefront. Despite his opposition to the division of district

Lasbela, current government has notified Hub a new district.

“Creating Hub a new district is like robbing an already fragile district of its economic hub. All the economic activities are concentrated in sub-division Hub that had been the back bone of the entire district. For instance, it has a coastline, and industries such as DG Khan Cement, Hubco Power, and Gaddani Ship Breaking Yard. The bifurcated parts are now imbalanced in terms geography as well as economy,” adds Jam Kamal.

For Abdul Khaliq Rind, president of Quetta Press Club and senior analyst based in Quetta, nothing can be rationalise until a province comes out of boom and bust cycle.

“A province already under financial constraints cannot or should not hop on the bus of creating new districts,” says Rind. While seconding Adnan Amir’s point of view, Rind says the districts in Balochistan are not divided on administrative basis. According Rind, many districts have been experiencing a population boom and having weak or ineffective management of administrative affairs.

“The government, after having holistic approach to sort out administrative issues, should strengthen existing districts in terms administrative management rather than making new ones,” concludes Rind.

New Units

Is it necessary to have more small units with more financial, administrative, and legislative powers?

By Ahmad Waleed

The devolution of power, more autonomy to provinces, and the need for new administrative units are the topics that have been in discussion since the inception of Pakistan. The provinces have been asking for more freedom to use their resources for the good of their people, but the federal government hasn't given it much thought.

In 2010, the Parliament of Pakistan passed the 18th Amendment with the full support of the political parties in the country. The long-standing demand of the people of Pakistan for provincial autonomy has come to execution, and the provinces have at the same time been provided legitimate constitutional rights in governance and in managing and utilisation of their natural resources.'

It was a giant step towards the development of the provinces and the utilisation of their resources. But the question is whether that step was sufficient to grant more rights to people living in different units of the country, or if they were given complete control over the fate of their regions. There are varied opinions about how to establish more administrative units in the country. Many believe that the main objective of creating new districts/units in Pakistan has been primarily political and linguistic in order to strengthen the political clout, which has only helped the powerful political families, not the common folks. One recent example is the Chaudhrys of Gujrat in Punjab, who gave the district the status of a division only for political reasons and to gain political power.

It's been decades since the debate about creating a new province – South Punjab – has continued without concrete results. All the major parties have been promising the people of the Siraiki belt that they will get the status of a province soon. Several resolutions have been passed in the National and Provincial Assemblies. Lately, the Punjab government under PTI rule tried to create a separate secretariat in the southern part of the province, but it has failed to resolve problems faced by the people living in those areas. For several decades, the powerful political families in Punjab have



been exploiting their respective voters in the name of creating a South Punjab province. The basic purpose behind their narrative was not, seemingly, beyond gathering the support of their voters to win elections. There is a need to create awareness among the masses to vote differently too. If not, giving tribal and political leaders with a lot of power in their own areas full control could make it easier for the strong political elite who have ruled those areas for centuries to take advantage of the common people.

There are two major reasons that are considered crucial: ethnic and administrative. On administrative grounds, some experts think that the grievances of the population in remote areas of traveling long distances to get their routine jobs done can be removed by introducing e-governance facilities for service delivery in different departments, as is being done in many developed countries. They think that, unlike India, Pakistan does not have many ethnic groups. With a few exceptions, it doesn't make sense to add more units based on ethnicity.

Others believe there is a dire need to divide the country into 20 or more units to provide administrative, financial, and legislative powers to the people of those areas to lessen reliance on the federal government in their internal affairs. For this reason, they also stress how important it is to set up a strong,

financially stable system of local government.

Unfortunately, the biggest hurdles in the devolution of power to the stage of collecting taxes at the local level and resolving people's problems at the council level are none other than powerful politicians. These politicians do not want even minor issues to be handled by a local government representative. They want total control over all petty issues so that the residents turn to them for the resolution of these small problems. That is the reason that all the major political parties in the country have always been reluctant to hold local body elections.

Moreover, the state institutions have always been interfering in different regions of the country in the name of security concerns, which shows that they also don't want the creation of more administrative units that are more independent in their decision-making. Even though the 18th Amendment only needs minor changes, the powers that be are now openly against it and want it repealed, reversed, changed, or made toothless.

In the larger national interest, is it necessary to have more small units with more financial, administrative, and legislative powers? This will not only help create competition among the units in terms of delivery, but they can also play their role in the progress of the country.

Pakistan needs \$16 Billion for Flood Rehabilitation

By Javed Mahmood

Pakistan needs at least \$16 billion for flood relief and rehabilitation. This has been mentioned in a detailed report titled “Pakistan Floods 2022 – Post-Disaster Needs Report.” Federal Minister for Planning and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal launched this report on Oct 28 in Islamabad along with senior officials of the NDMA and Ministry of Planning and Special Initiatives. This report has been prepared under the leadership of the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives through its Flood Coordination Cell, supported by the Asian Development Bank, the European Union, the United Nations agencies with technical facilitation by the United Nations Development Programme, and the World Bank with financial and technical support from the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery.

According to the report, the total damage is estimated at PKR 3.2 trillion (US\$14.9 billion), and the total loss at PKR 3.3 trillion (US\$15.2 billion). The sectors that suffered the most damage are housing at PKR 1.2 trillion (US\$5.6 billion); agriculture, food, livestock, and fisheries at PKR 800 billion (US\$3.7 billion); and transport and communications at PKR 701 billion (US\$3.3 billion). The transport and communications sector has the highest reconstruction and recovery needs at PKR 1.1 trillion (US\$5.0 billion); followed by agriculture, food, livestock, and fisheries at PKR 854 billion (US\$4.0 billion), and housing at PKR 592 billion (US\$2.8 billion). The provinces of Sindh and Balochistan account for approximately 50 percent and 15 percent of recovery and reconstruction needs, respectively.

According to the report, the relief efforts have largely focused on the provision of shelter, safe drinking water, food items, and health interventions amidst supply chain disruptions. On August 19, the government launched a PKR 37.2 billion flood relief cash program for 1.5 million



affected families. On August 30, the Government of Pakistan and the United Nations jointly launched the 2022 Pakistan Floods Response Plan (FRP), which highlighted the main humanitarian needs and outlined an action plan to respond to the immediate needs of the people.

Pakistan and the United Nations launched a Revised Floods Response Plan (FRP) on Oct 4, appealing for US\$816 million to cover the most urgent needs of 9.5 million people. However, as of Oct 21, only 13.7 percent of the requested amount has been funded. The international community and local and international organizations have provided aid, but accessibility due to standing flood waters, flood effects, and complex topographies remained a major challenge.

The 2022 floods have shown Pakistan's high vulnerability to climate change despite contributing less than one percent of global greenhouse gas emissions. This disaster has demonstrated what this vulnerability looks like for the people of the country. Since June this year, the federal and provincial authorities have been working tirelessly to manage the massive relief efforts that are ongoing across the country, together with local, national, and international partners. One-third of the country has been underwater,

and 33 million people have been affected. Nearly 8 million people are reportedly displaced. The scale of the disaster is unprecedented in Pakistan, exceeding the damage of the 2010 floods. It will take a collective, international effort to recover from the impacts of this calamity. The Post-Disaster Needs Assessment that has been undertaken will help understand the scale of resources required for recovery and reconstruction by calculating the damage, loss, and needs. However, the recovery and reconstruction needs are likely to exceed Pakistan's available resources and that assistance from multilateral and bilateral partners and philanthropists will be needed if the country is to rebuild itself in a sustainable and resilient manner. This comes at a time when countries around the world, including Pakistan's friends and partners, are also facing the impacts of the global economic challenges. We would therefore like to acknowledge those partners who are always ready to support Pakistan's recovery.

Pakistan faces a cascading crisis. Firstly, in the wake of rising prices at the global level, Pakistan was facing significant economic challenges even before the recent floods. In the face of very large fiscal and current account deficits, the government took important steps earlier this year to stabilize the economy, including implementing difficult energy tariff adjustments and

passing a contractionary FY23 budget. Secondly, the economic outlook has worsened with the floods, and market risk perceptions are once again rising. Growth is expected to slow down, the trade deficit is expected to expand, and revenues are expected to decline. Despite the difficulties, the Government is committed to doing its part to mobilize all domestic resources possible and target them toward those most in need.

Thirdly, the floods have disproportionately hit the poorest households in the poorest areas. Those areas of the country where human development outcomes were lowest even before the floods have been hardest hit. As the country recovers from this terrible disaster, there is an opportunity to do things differently and to create a better future, especially for areas of the country that had not benefited from the development of the last two decades. Enhancing Pakistan's resilience to shocks and stresses amidst climate change, especially for the poorest, by addressing the underlying drivers of vulnerability and building back better, is essential for the country's future.

This PDNA—an effort led by the Government of Pakistan and supported by a core team comprising the Asian Development Bank, the European Union, and United Nations Agencies, with facilitation from the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank—is a critical first step in the process of recovery and reconstruction. National and international experts across 17 sectors have collaborated closely with federal and provincial ministries, departments, and agencies to collect data from the 94 calamity-hit districts. The report will support the prioritization and targeting of resources through multisector recovery planning, which is generally undertaken as part of developing the Disaster Recovery Framework. Ahsan Iqbal, Minister for Planning and Special Initiatives said that it was the first step on the journey to climate-resilient, inclusive, and people-centered recovery. On behalf of the Government of Pakistan, I would like to thank all those who have supported Pakistan through the rescue and relief stage of the disaster and those who will continue to support the country through the recovery and reconstruction phase. With this collective resolve, I believe we can build a bright-

er future from the ruins of the disaster.

The report said, between June and August 2022, torrential rains and a combination of riverine, urban, and flash flooding led to an unprecedented disaster in Pakistan. According to the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), around 33 million people—that is, one in seven—have been affected by the floods, including nearly 8 million displaced. The floods have taken the lives of more than 1,700 people, including one-third of the children. Rain-induced floods, accelerated glacial melt, and resulting landslides devastated millions of homes and key infrastructure,

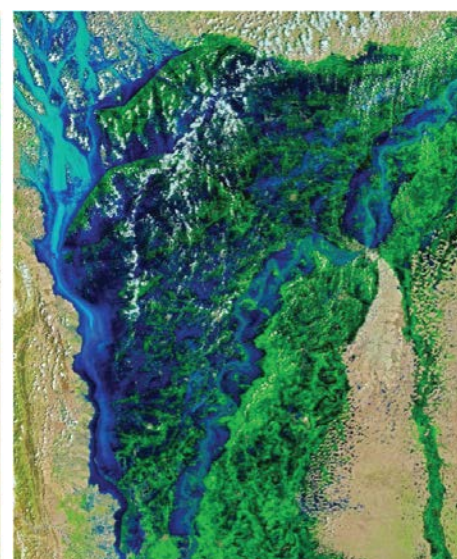


submerging entire villages and destroying livelihoods. Preliminary estimates suggest that, as a direct consequence of the floods, the national poverty rate will increase by 3.7 to 4.0 percentage points, pushing between 8.4 and 9.1 million people into poverty. As of October 11, 94 districts were declared as “calamity hit,” accounting for more than half of all districts in the country. The majority were in the provinces of Balochistan, Sindh, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). Out of the 25 poorest districts in the country, 19 were calamity-affected.

Pakistan ranks among the top 10 countries worldwide most affected by climate change. The country has observed changing weather patterns, including variations in precipitation and temperatures, increased frequency and severity of tropical storms and coastal rains, glacial melt, glacial lake outburst flooding, sea level rise,

loss of biodiversity, desertification, and droughts. At the coastal belts of Balochistan and Sindh, climate impacts are observed in increased frequency and severity of tropical storms, coastal rains, and seawater intrusion. The plains of Punjab and Sindh experience extended and frequent riverine floods and heatwaves, affecting economic and human development.

In the summer of 2022, the country experienced its wettest August since 1961. Sindh and Balochistan provinces were subject to unprecedented rainfall, surpassing average monthly totals by six and seven times,



respectively. Attribution research has shown that the five-day maximum rainfall, which is a measure of heavy precipitation, of these two provinces was around 75 percent more intense than it would have been had the climate not warmed by 1.2°C.⁷ The floods came on the heels of a severe heatwave—previously a 1-in-1,000-year event—and drought emergency during which temperatures continuously remained above 45°C, resulting in crop losses, power outages, and forest fires

While the underlying drivers of the disaster impacts are not limited to climate change, the scale of the flooding is unprecedented. Following the 2010 floods, which affected 20 million people, Pakistan invested in disaster risk management. The country had taken critical steps to develop its long-term policies, including the National Disaster Management Plan and National Flood

KEY FINDINGS

DAMAGE



3.2 PKR
trillion

(US\$ 14.9 billion)

with housing; agriculture, food, livestock, and fisheries; and transport and communication sectors most severely affected.

LOSS



3.3 PKR
trillion

(US\$ 15.2 billion)

with agriculture, food, livestock, and fisheries suffering the most losses, followed by commerce and industries; and social protection, livelihoods, and jobs sectors.

RECOVERY AND
RECONSTRUCTION
NEEDS

3.5 PKR
trillion

(US\$ 16.3 billion)

with transport and communication; agriculture, food, livestock, and fisheries; and housing sectors being the highest, respectively.

Protection Plan IV. However, challenges persisted, such as lack of operationalization and financing for the plans, and limited absorptive capacity to utilize risk assessments in infrastructure investments and land use planning. At the start of the 2022 monsoon season, the NDMA undertook a comprehensive Monsoon Contingency Planning Exercise, which included major federal and provincial stakeholders, as well as the international community. However, Pakistan's systems and institutions were not adequately equipped for the unprecedented scale of the climate-induced disaster. The 2022 flooding has further exposed underlying institutional and systemic challenges, including poor urban planning and water resource management, lack of systems for infrastructure maintenance, complex governance, structural inequalities, and limited disaster risk reduction capacity. Simultaneous multiple shocks, including natural hazards, COVID-19, rising inflation, an energy crisis, and fiscal challenges, continue to compound the impacts. Underlying political and economic instability are exacerbating the disaster impacts and undermining the effectiveness of recovery. A more resilient nation is critical to breaking the cycle of disaster-induced poverty.

According to the report, economic activity has been disrupted, livelihoods have been

severely impacted, with poverty expected to increase significantly. The size and duration of shocks will vary across locations and households depending on the intensity of the flooding and the time it takes for the water to recede, their existing socioeconomic status, as well as the quality and speed of relief and reconstruction efforts. Even in the best-case scenario, reversing these negative shocks to household welfare will take considerable time, and some losses, such as losses to human capital and loss of land productivity, could set in motion more durable declines in welfare and will require specific attention. The government is providing immediate relief to the impacted communities and supporting the early recovery; while aiming to ensure macroeconomic stability and fiscal sustainability. Moving forward, as recovery and reconstruction spending rises, the loss in output could be mitigated. Yet, significant international support will be needed to complement Pakistan's own commitment to increase domestic revenue mobilization and save scarce public resources, and reduce the risk of exacerbating macroeconomic imbalances. Evidence from previous natural hazards in Pakistan suggests that economic impacts may persist for an extended period, with damage to the productive capacity of the economy reducing growth prospects over the medium term. An overall decline in GDP as a direct

impact of the floods is projected to be around 2.2 percent of FY22 GDP.16 Among the major sectors, the agriculture sector value added is projected to decline the most at 0.9 percent of FY22 GDP, with floods causing the most losses to cotton, dates, sugarcane, and rice crops. Around 1 million livestock are estimated to have perished. Furthermore, damage in the agricultural sector is expected to have spillover effects on the industry and services sectors. Flood-related cotton losses are expected to weigh on the domestic textile industry, as local cotton constitutes about half of the industry's required cotton input. Textiles account for around one-quarter of total industry output and more than half of goods exports. Similarly, the local food processing and slaughtering industries will be negatively impacted by the expected reduction in food harvests and reduced supply of livestock. Industry sector value added is consequently expected to shrink by 0.7 percent of FY22 GDP. Similarly, lower agricultural and industrial activity are likely to weigh on wholesale and transportation services activities, which account for around half of the service sector output. In addition, transportation challenges arising from the loss of critical infrastructures, such as roads and bridges, are expected to disrupt supply and further dampen overall economic activity. Services sector value added is consequently

projected to decline by 0.6 percent of FY22 GDP.

The disaster will have a profound impact on lives and livelihoods. Preliminary estimates of the PDNA suggest that the national poverty rate will increase by 3.7 to 4.0 percentage points, pushing between 8.4 and 9.1 million people into poverty, as a direct consequence of the floods. Similarly, multidimensional poverty will increase by 5.9 percentage points, meaning that an additional 1.9 million households will be pushed into non-monetary poverty. Beyond the national average, poverty in Sindh would increase by between 8.9 and 9.7 percentage points, and in Balochistan by between 7.5 and 7.7 percentage points. Moreover, the depth and severity of poverty will increase for households that were already poor prior to the floods. The poverty gap has substantially increased, with the number of extremely poor people living more than 20 percent below the poverty line increasing from 18 to 25–26 million. The impact on household welfare will come through at least four channels: (i) loss of household income and employment/livelihoods due to destroyed harvest, killed livestock, or inactivity of businesses; (ii) loss of assets, including homes, livestock, productive equipment, and household durables; (iii) rising food prices due to shortages of food arising from lost food stocks and poor harvests; and (iv) loss of human capital, given the significant threat of disease outbreaks and food shortages, and prolonged school closures, with attendant learning losses. Even prior to the flooding, many of the calamity-hit districts showed higher monetary and non-monetary deprivations, especially among households in rural areas. Nineteen of the 25 poorest districts in the country were calamity-affected. Moreover, higher stunting rates in these districts undermined progress toward better development outcomes. Households in calamity-hit districts were more impoverished than the national average (31.2 percent compared to 21.9 percent), and poverty rates for many flood-affected districts in Sindh and Balochistan were much higher. For instance, district-level poverty rates for calamity-hit districts in Balochistan ranged from 26.3 percent in Kohlu to 75.8 percent in Khuzdar; and in Sindh, from 15 percent in Hyderabad to 53.4 percent in Badin.

Reversing these negative shocks to household welfare will take considerable time, and losses to human capital and land productivity can set in motion more durable declines in welfare. The impact of the floods is likely to exacerbate already existing inequalities, revealing serious differences in safety, education, decision-making, and employment. Vulnerable groups, such as women, children, people with disabilities, and refugees, are likely to be disproportionately affected by the floods due to their limited access and availability to social protection and coping mechanisms.



Catastrophic floods are a wake-up call for systemic changes to address the underlying vulnerabilities to natural hazards and their intersection with other shocks. At this critical point, swift action is necessary for a paradigm shift to build systemic resilience to natural hazards in development planning and asset management. This requires a participatory and inclusive approach, bringing together civil society, government, the private sector, academia, think tanks, and the international community around a common vision. Stakeholder engagement will be necessary to inform the scope, design, institutional arrangements, and monitoring and accountability framework for a comprehensive resilient recovery program. Such a program should prioritize the urgent needs of the affected population while ensuring that results are delivered in an efficient, equitable, and transparent manner. Building on global good practices of recovery and integrating the specific socioeconomic, cultural, and institutional

context of Pakistan through a people-centric approach will be crucial.

The catastrophic flooding has triggered a cascade of crises and consequences are still unfolding. Crop and livestock loss, as well as displacement, have led to the loss of livelihoods. Lost food stocks, poor harvests, and rising food prices will exacerbate food insecurity and nutrition outcomes. The prevalence of standing water, lack of safe drinking water, and limited access to sanitation and hygiene services are contributing to a rise in water-borne illnesses and further loss of lives.

Prolonged school closures and lack of education access will have long-lasting impacts on learning outcomes. The extensive loss of livelihoods, assets; and human capital builds on existing disparities and will affect the most vulnerable and marginalized households, with disproportionate impacts on women and girls. The floods have also exacerbated long-standing structural weaknesses, posing risks to a sustained recovery. Ensuring macroeconomic stabilization while supporting relief and recovery is a complex challenge with worsening external conditions, including the rise of global commodity prices and interest rates. Political stability is critical for a coherent and timely response. As climate change accelerates the severity and frequency of disasters, institutional reforms and investments must go beyond business as usual and build systemic resilience. If transformational measures are not taken for a resilient recovery, the disaster will have multi-generational impacts through the reduction of developmental gains.

Pursuing short-term policy poses Risks of Default for Pakistan

The coalition government is pursuing economic policies which indicate the short-term economic survival of Pakistan while long-term planning does not seem to be the priority of the government. For example, the term of the coalition government will complete in August 2023 and by that time, once again, Pakistan will be surrounded by circumstances that lead to financial bleeding and default.

For example, the government is seeking the rescheduling of \$27 billion in foreign loans payable in 2022-23. Also, the IMF loan programme is valid till June 2023, hence, after the expiry of the IMF loan programme, Pakistan, once again, will be surrounded by circumstances that lead to default and financing bleeding. And the most painful task for the new government, to be elected in the 2023 general elections, will be to run after the IMF again and get another bail-out package irrespective of its devastating impact on the masses of the country.

Another negative development for Pakistan is that the risk of default calculated by the 5-year credit default swap (CDS) spiked by 3.07 percentage points on Oct 26, touching a 13-year high level of 52.8%. Before the outbreak of the Covid pandemic in Feb 2020, the CDS fluctuated from around 5% to 6% only. Nonetheless, the CDS hit a peak of 30% in the middle of 2022 because of uncertainty about the resumption of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan programme.

After the resumption of the IMF loan, the CDS improved slightly, but these days it has started growing rapidly again, indicating foreign investors' lack of confidence in the repayment of the loans by Pakistan. Pakistan is scheduled to repay \$1 billion to foreign investors against the 5-year Sukuk, maturing on Dec 5, 2022. The yield (rate of return) on the 5-year Third Pakistan International Sukuk remains high around 145% these days. It hovered below 10% before the Covid-19 pandemic. The yield on the bonds maturing in 2024 and 2025 also stands high at 90% and 57.5%, respectively these days, compared with below



10% in the past. Foreign investors have panicked after the central bank's reserves fell to \$7.6 billion in Oct against \$10 billion in Sept when IMF released \$1.1 billion tranche.

Rescheduling of Foreign Loans

The coalition government has paced up its efforts to get rescheduled external loans to strengthen the foreign exchange reserves, value of the rupee, and revive the battered economy of Pakistan. In addition to the rescheduling of loans, the government is striving to pave the way for the revival of foreign investment in Pakistan particularly from China and Saudi Arabia. A couple of weeks ago, finance minister Ishaq Dar told the media that the government was negotiating the rollover of the \$27 billion worth of external loans mostly payable within this financial year, 2022-23. With the rescheduling of external loans, Pakistan will not be required to pay around \$22 billion worth of foreign loans in 2022-23.

Worth noting is that the United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres asked Pakistan to seek rescheduling of foreign loans to offset the devastating impact of recent floods and monsoon rains. The UN chief visited Pakistan during the floods and

he himself witnessed the catastrophe of floods that's why he advised the government not to pay the debt in 2022-23, urging the international community to cooperate with Pakistan in rescheduling loans. Consequently, the United States was the first country to announce the rollover of more than 300 million dollars worth of markup payments by Pakistan.

Now the government has taken up the rollover of \$6 billion loans with China and \$3 billion with Saudi Arabia and also negotiating investment projects with them. For example, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, who embarked on a 2-day official visit to Saudi Arabia on Oct 24 to attend a summit, met with top Saudi officials including Crown Prince Muhammad Bin Salman Bin Abdul Aziz. The most important agenda of PM Shehbaz Sharif's visit, among other things, was the rescheduling of a \$3 billion Saudi loan, \$12 billion Saudi investment in the proposed refinery and petrochemical complex project in Balochistan, and the creation of more jobs for Pakistanis.

Furthermore, Prime Minister is scheduled to visit China in November and the foremost issues the Premier is going to take up with Chinese high-ups are the rollover of more or less \$6 billion loans and the signing of multiple development

projects involving billions of dollars in investments by China. Additionally, the government is also negotiating with all the foreign creditors, excluding commercial lenders, to roll over their loans payable in 2022-23 so that Pakistan could support the flood-hit millions of people in the country with the start of winters season as floods rendered millions homeless who need immediate assistance from the government in cash and kinds.

Advantages of Loans Rescheduling and Foreign Investment

At present, the foreign exchange reserves with the State Bank of Pakistan are at a very low level – \$7.6 billion, down from \$10 billion when the IMF released a \$1.1 billion tranche for Pakistan in September this year. The quantum of the forex reserves with the central bank is barely equal to six weeks' imports – a benchmark that is considered critical for the economy of a country. With a very low level of reserves, the value of the rupee is fluctuating both ways, making vulnerable economic activities and driving inflation higher. When Ishaq Dar was appointed finance minister, local currency exhibited a strong recovery as a result of which the dollar-rupee exchange rate plummeted to around 215 rupees in the inter-bank (from 239) and 210 rupees in the open market (from 250). The stock market also demonstrated a bullish sentiment anticipating a turnaround in the overall economic activities in Pakistan. However, the gain in the value of the rupee was short-lived and the dollar again bounced back to 220 rupees in the inter-bank trading and 222 in the open market by Oct 25.

On Oct 21, the FATF removed Pakistan from its grey list and this development was considered a breakthrough for reviving foreign investment and seeking the rollover of foreign loans. Taking advantage of the FATF decision, the government has decided to influence China, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and other friendly countries to invest in Pakistan. Foreign investment not only reflects the confidence of investors in the economy of a country, but it also boosts the foreign exchange reserves and economic activities alike.

As the United Nations has supported Pakistan to get a rescheduling foreign loans, the country will get relief of more or less \$27 billion – and this will also stop erosion in the foreign exchange reserves, discourage dollarization, and enable the government to improve the troubled national economy. Finance Minister Ishaq Dar told the media on Monday that Pakistan is seeking a bilateral debt rollover, involving \$27 billion to get a major relief in debt repayment.

“Rescheduling of bilateral debt is fine,” Finance Minister Ishaq Dar said, adding there is no need to roll over international debt under Paris Club. Dar told the media that there was no point in Paris Club rescheduling debt; because the overall debt to these creditors was no more than 11pc of the total foreign debt. Pakistan owes Paris Club countries a combined sum of around \$10.7 billion, he added. He said that the repayments involve \$22 billion worth of foreign debt servicing and another \$10-12 billion are required for the current account deficit.

Balance of payment position

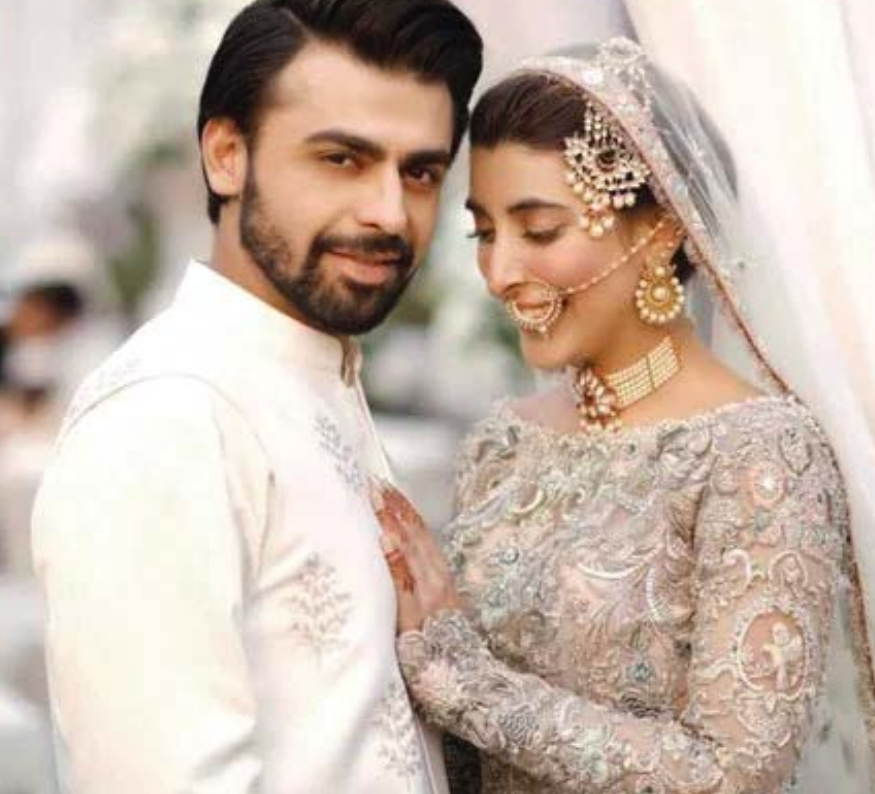
In the month of Sept, the current account deficit declined to 300 million dollars, from 700 million dollars in August and 1.1 billion dollars in July this year. This trend shows that the financial bleeding of Pakistan has slowed down in recent months because of a low level of foreign exchange reserves, the government's strategy to discourage non-essential imports, and a shortage of US dollars in the open market. Another significant development in October was that the erosion of the reserves of the central bank stopped as the SBP reported 7.6 billion dollars in reserves by Oct 21 – at the same level as of the preceding week. Earlier, every week the country has been recorded a hefty decline in the SBP's reserves because of the repayment of foreign loans and markup to the creditors. However, all the current economic measures are to tackle the ongoing scenario till the term of the coalition government and what would happen after the expiry of the IMF programme and the term of the government, no one bothers about it.

What Should Be the Next Strategy?

With the rescheduling of foreign loans, the government will be able to run the economic affairs of Pakistan for the next eight to 10 months, nevertheless, what would be the economic scenario of Pakistan after the expiry of the IMF programme and term of the coalition government, there is no clear vision or policy-making which make sure the economic survival of the country. Hence, instead of pursuing a short-term or short-sighted policy, the coalition government should put in place a mechanism which protects the country from the default lines before and after the 2023 general elections or the expiry of the IMF programme.

In the next stage, the government should focus on trimming the trade deficit, current account deficit, fiscal deficit, and a consistent decline in foreign exchange reserves. Rehabilitation of floods-ravaged crops and infrastructure, rising inflation, and relief to the masses from the record inflation must also be the foremost priority of the present government which had already lost its credibility due to a record high energy prices – electricity bills, gas rates and petroleum prices. After the appointment of Ishaq Dar as Finance Minister, the dollar has shed a significant value against the rupee, however, the general public is still looking towards the government to get much-needed relief in the rates of essential consumer items. Another area of immediate concern is the trade deficit, which amounted to a record \$50 billion in 2021-22. Technically, it wiped out the impact of the remittances, and foreign assistance and inflated the current account deficit as well. In 2022-23, the government must reduce the trade deficit by 40 percent. This, if done, will not only stabilize the value of the rupee but also improve the dwindling foreign exchange reserves of the central bank. To sum up, the rescheduling of international loans is a one-time facility and the government must not waste this golden opportunity to keep Pakistan away from the risk of default and avoid further dependence on the IMF. Also, efforts should be made to attract foreign investment as much as possible, otherwise, Pakistan will continue to face the risk of default and economic vulnerability.

By Javed Mahmood



Fault In Our Stars?

Pakistani Showbiz Celebrities That Split Up In 2022

Not all famous couples have the same happiness in their relationships, just like regular people. Although whether a couple is together or not is solely a matter for the two people concerned, because public figures, people are constantly curious about what their private lives are like.

Here is a list of some couples from the industry that broke up their marriages in 2022.



Sajal Ali and Ahad Raza Mir

Ahad stopped his wife Sajal from working in films but permitted her to do so in dramas. It was refused by Sajal Ali. Since then, there have been constant rumours that the pair are divorcing.

Aima Baig and Shehbaz Shigri

Aima Baig, a well-known singer from Pakistan, put off her September engagement to Shehbaz Shigri. "Yes, we have parted ways, but don't worry, we both are doing nice and fine," she wrote in a long Instagram post.

The "real reason," according to British model Taloula Mair, was disclosed after Baig made his announcement. She said the Malang singer had cheated on Shehbaz with her ex-boyfriend Qais Ahmed.





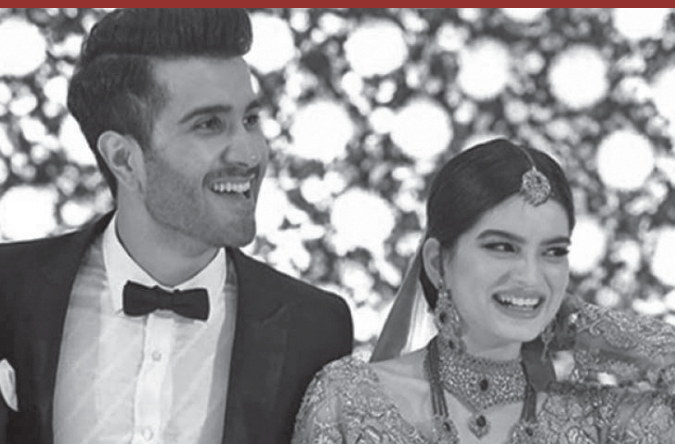
Imran Ashraf and Kiran Ashfaq

The actor from *Alif Allah Aur Insaan* confirmed his separation from his wife on Instagram. "We announce our mutually respected decision to split ways with a heavy heart", He posted.



Feroz Khan and Aliza Sultan

On their own social media platforms, Aliza Sultan and Feroz Khan shared their breakup news. Four years ago, Feroz and Aliza got married. Aliza said that the Habs actor had previously physically and psychologically abused her.



Urwa Hocane And Farhan Saeed

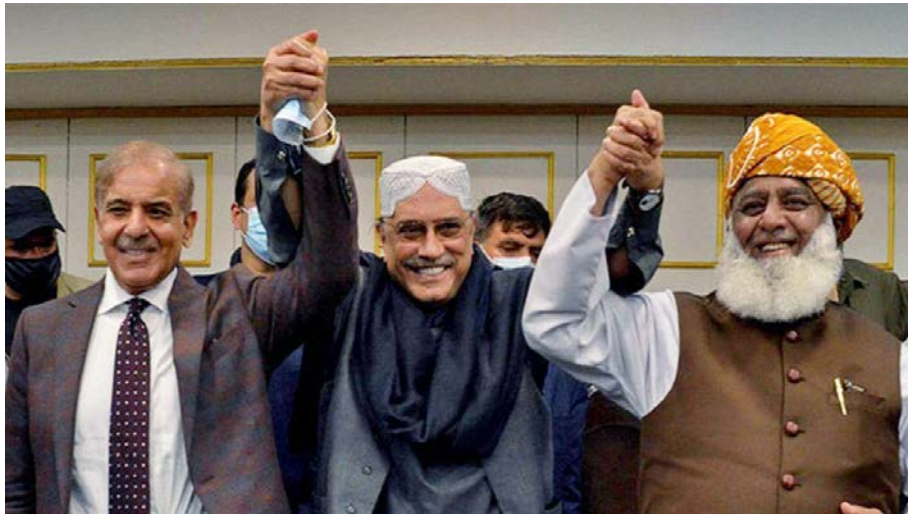
Farhad Saeed and Urwa Hocane are said to have made up after news of their participation in a drama surfaced. In an interview, Urwa said that she is not in need of a boyfriend. Are things between her and Saeed deteriorating once more?



PDM and the Current Regime

The second challenge for the PDM-led regime is to curtail rising inflation

By Mehtab Haider



Despite the revival of the IMF-sponsored bailout package in the aftermath of the assumption of the reins of power by the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) led regime under Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Pakistan's economic difficulties were compounded after witnessing severe floods.

It will be a million-dollar question of whether the PDM-led regime will be able to overcome lingering economic difficulties or will fail to deliver, because much of the political capital will rely upon the performance of the economic czar of the incumbent regime, Minister for Finance Ishaq Dar, who has returned to the country with the mandate to steer the economy out of crisis mode. If he failed in the wake of increased political instability, the Pakistan Muslim League (N) would have to face defeat in the coming general polls at a time when the popularity of the PTI led by Imran Khan was increasing.

What are the major looming challenges for the PDM-led regime? The IMF had estimated that Pakistan required external financing of \$30 to \$32 billion prior to the floods. In the aftermath of the floods, the external financing requirements went up to \$34 to \$36 billion owing to external debt servicing of \$23 billion as well as a yawning current account deficit ranging from \$9 billion to \$12 billion for the current fiscal year.

The first and foremost challenge for the incumbent regime will be in the shape of a persistent dollar liquidity crunch being faced by the country's economy. Pakistan's foreign currency reserves held by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) slipped by \$157 million to \$7.4 billion on October 21, 2022, due to external debt repayments. However, the country received \$1.5 billion from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) on October 26, 2022, which will be added to SBP's reserves in the coming week, bringing the total reserves held by SBP to \$8.9 billion.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif recently visited the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and he is now scheduled to visit China on November 1, 2022.

Pakistan requires immediate dollar injections in the shape of loan rollover, additional deposits, oil facility on deferred payments, and rescheduling of bilateral debt from China to the tune of \$27 billion. Without generous financial assistance from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and China, Pakistan will face a severe balance of payment crisis in the short to medium term.

It will be a challenging situation for Ishaq Dar to secure dollar inflows of \$5 to \$10 billion over the next three months in order to materialise its dream of restricting the exchange rate below Rs 200 against the US dollar. Without improving the persistent

dollar liquidity crunch, the dream of keeping the exchange rate stable will prove just a reverie or daydream.

The second challenge for the PDM-led regime is to curtail rising inflation, which sharply rose to around 27 percent on a monthly basis, and food inflation, in the shape of SPI, stood in the range of 45 percent on a weekly basis.

Without improving the exchange rate and agricultural productivity, inflation will not be curtailed. The National Price Monitoring Committee (NPMC) has been handed over from the Ministry of Finance to the Ministry of Planning, and this forum has failed to tackle rising inflation by adopting a timely and effective decision-making process.

Prior to the recent floods, GDP growth prospects for the current fiscal year were reduced from a projected growth rate of 5% to around 2%. Agriculture's growth might plunge into negative for the current fiscal year, posing serious challenges to the looming food insecurity in the country.

In such a doomsday scenario, the IMF and Pakistan were expected to hold parleys for the completion of the 9th review and release of the \$1 billion tranche under the Extended Fund Facility from mid-November 2022.

Pakistan's Minister for Finance, Ishaq Dar, will have to convince the IMF of a revised macroeconomic framework for 2022–23 by slashing down the GDP growth rate by around 2 percent and jacking up inflation ranging from 23 to 25 percent on average for the current fiscal year.

With such massive adjustments, the revision of the macroeconomic framework will leave no other option, but to change all relevant and important figures, including projections made on the fiscal and external accounts of the economy. The number of twin deficits known as the budget deficit and current account deficit will also be re-adjusted, so no easy task is lying ahead.

It clearly demonstrates that the budget deficit and current account deficit will worsen more, so Islamabad will have to seek a lenient attitude from the IMF. Otherwise, the Fund prescription will ask for more tightening of fiscal and monetary policies in the name of stabilising the economy through demand compression.

The IMF has already expressed concern about a potential shortfall due to the Petroleum Development Levy (PDL) and has asked for a budget deficit of 4.9 percent of GDP and a primary surplus of Rs 153 billion by June 30, 2023.

On the eve of the last review done in August 2022 and the report released on September 1, 2022, stated that in case of a shortfall there should be a "contingency plan" for additional taxation measures, including slapping 17 percent GST on POL products and increasing FED on beverages and tobacco. The government had already jacked up taxation on tobacco, so now there is no other option, but to increase taxation on POL and beverages if the revenue faces a shortfall.

The Ministry of Finance argued before the IMF that the government would curtail the budget deficit within the desired limits, but there should be exceptions related to flood-related expenditures. There should be no concerns from the IMF about where the government manages its revenue targets,



including the FBR collection target, and the PDL, but overall revenue collection would be materialised despite the compounded difficulties that surfaced in the aftermath of severe floods.

The government envisages fetching PDL to the tune of Rs 855 billion for the current fiscal year, with the possibility of jacking up the PDL ceiling to Rs 50 per liter.

With the existing pace, the IMF expects that there might be a shortfall in the current fiscal year, so the government would be asked to take other additional measures in

order to bridge the gap and avoid slippages on the envisaged budget deficit, especially the primary deficit for the current fiscal year.

In the wake of import compressions, the FBR faces difficulties in materialising the desired tax collection target of Rs 7470 billion for the current fiscal year. There is also pressure on the expenditure side as well, so it will be quite hard for the economic managers to curtail the budget deficit within the desired limits at a time when electioneering is around the corner.



Money market and debt management

By Waqar Masood Khan

Money market has been behaving quite unusually. The standard theory suggests the yield curve on the bills and bonds (showing relationship between return and term of investment) should be upward sloping, as the investors would require higher returns on longer investments.

In normal circumstances, upward yield curve signals expansive outlook for economy and therefore the investors are confident that higher returns will accrue on longer maturities. Conversely, an inverted yield curve shows pessimism about the future and investor shy away from investing in long-term securities.

In the T-Bills auction held on 21-9-2022, the cut-off yields on all three maturities of 3m, 6m and 12m, were the same at 15.99%. Subsequently, in the auction held on 5-10-22, the yields dropped by nearly 25 bps across the three tenors except for a difference of 1bps among them. So we have almost a flat curve for shorter maturities.

Clearly, it seems there is no premium for holding longer duration bills. What is more striking is the yields on long dated securities. The 3y, 5y and 10y securities were priced at 13.65%, 13.00% and 12.85%. This is the situation which shows an inverted yields for longer maturities.

These trends, therefore, reflect investors' assessment of impending recession. The finance literature uses the differences in yields across different maturities as a leading indicator for recession.

In particular, the negative difference between 10y bond and 3m T-Bill is considered as the predictor of recession. In our case, the difference is negative 2.88% — a level that would carry a very high probability of recession within the next four quarters. More interestingly, this inversion process started in the month of March as the difference between these two (10y and 3m) yields became negative.

But the difference at that time was negligible. This has entrenched itself gradually and presently it stands at a high of negative 2.88%. It would be recalled that



this was the time when the Russia-Ukraine war had started and it was visible that global economy is facing a recessionary phase of business cycle.

Are there some other indications which may support the recession hypothesis for Pakistan economy? At the outset, we must recognize that we had started this year with an overheated economy which required cooling-off or a significant reduction in aggregate demand to achieve stability. Therefore, an inherent element of economic policy is to slow down the economy.

Furthermore, the country has suffered floods on an unprecedented scale. This has led to loss of lives, output (standing crops), productivity (water levels are not receding as expected), infrastructure (roads, schools and hospitals) and property (loss of livestock and housing units). There are many initial estimates of losses going as high as \$40 billion. That is almost 10% in terms of GDP.

The combined effect of these developments is to reduce the potential growth. In its latest monetary policy statement, the monetary policy committee of SBP has noted that floods and reduced aggregate demand would indeed reduce growth to 2%. The World Bank and ADB have also lowered their forecast for similar reasons.

Technically speaking, though there are many definitions of recession, the common characteristic is two or three quarterly decline in GDP. We don't compile quarterly GDP numbers and therefore cannot be sure what is happening to GDP on that basis. But in our case we should await for revised GDP estimates in April-May. Only a negative growth as in the case of COVID days in FY20 will establish presence of recession.

There is also another significant development which is related to rising outstanding amount of Open Market Operations (OMOs). On 10-10-2022, the OMO (injections) stood at a staggering amount of 5,269 billion. In fact in recent months the basic structure of auctioning has undergone a major shift. This was only Rs.1674 billion as on 4-1-2022. For greater part of its history, OMO operations were conducted only for few days, hardly exceeding 10 days. But of late OMOs for as much as high of 70s days have become a routine.

The high level of OMOs is reflective of large borrowing needs of the Government. The nominal federal government deficit had amounted to Rs 2,225 billion in FY18 and has sharply risen to Rs 5,611 billion in FY22, an increase of more than 250%. To sustain such massive borrowings the

banking system with Deposits of Rs 22 trillion and Advances of Rs 11 trillion doesn't have adequate liquidity to support high borrowing needs, particularly after the central bank has been prohibited to lend to the Government under recent amendments in the SBP Act. Inevitably, the SBP injects liquidity into the market for banks to lend to the government.

Not surprisingly, the debt risks indicators for FY22 have also shown some deterioration. The first indicator measures the currency risk in the public debt composition. The share of foreign debt in total public debt was recorded at 37% which is increased from 34% in FY21.

The medium term strategy (MTDS) envisages benchmark of a maximum limit of 40%. The risk of refinancing is measured by three indicators, of which the first indicator is average time to maturity (ATM) for domestic debt which is indicative of longer term of the debt. MTDS has set the benchmark of 3.5 years. In FY22 it was recorded at 3.6 year, just as in FY21, barely on target. Second indicator is ATM for external debt, which was benchmarked at 6.5 year. In FY22, it was recorded at 6.2 below the benchmark.

Third indicator is the gross financing needs (GFN) which measures the speed with which refinancing is needed. The longer the duration of ATMs, the lower GFN would



be needed. GFN as a percentage of GDP has been set at a maximum of 35%. The actual in FY22 was 26%, which is quite satisfactory. Finally, the interest risk is judged by the share of fixed debt in overall debt. The indicative benchmark specified in MTDS is at a minimum of 25%. The actual outcome was 26%, which is a borderline performance.

The behaviour of debt indicators is likely would have worsened during the first quarter of FY23. For reasons explained

above, the relative share of short-term financing has been very high and foreign funding has been limited. Since July, Rs.10 trillion has been raised in T-Bills compared with less than one trillion in the three auctions since July. The government has to improve the overall debt profile of the country. Better signaling for future policies would go a long way to achieve this objective.

Courtesy Business Recorder



Courts or policies: Which matters more for climate action in South Asia?

Ahead of COP27, lawyers and NGOs have threatened to ramp up global climate litigation in response to government inaction, but IPCC experts stress that institutions and policymaking are also vital

By Rishika Pardikar

In 2015, Asghar Leghari, a tax lawyer and farmer, successfully sued the government of Pakistan. The Lahore High Court ruled that the state was failing to implement national climate change policies, impacting its citizens' constitutional right to life.

In his judgement, then chief justice of the court Mansoor Ali Shah referred to the concept of climate justice, and recognised that constitutional rights like right to life and human dignity encompass the right to a healthy and clean environment. The judgement resulted in the constitution of a Climate Change Commission for the province of Punjab to ensure the execution of climate change policies, as well as a draft climate change policy for the province.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) latest report on adaptation, released in February 2022, cites Leghari v Federation of Pakistan as a leading case in one of "a rising number of case laws addressing the state's failure to implement adaptation policies and resultant climate change litigation".

What was unique about the Leghari case, says Lahore-based environmental lawyer Ahmad Rafay Alam, was that it spoke about the principle of climate justice and by doing so, provided "a precedent to put my foot on if I were ever to push this any further".

However, Alam adds, the case was "demonstrably" not the start of a huge change in climate justice litigation: in the years since the judgement, he says, a significant amount of environmental litigation has happened in Pakistan, but none has "circled right back round to principles of climate justice that were talked about in the Asghar Leghari case".

Around the world, climate change litigation is growing, although "in a



much smaller proportion in developing countries", says the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) report on climate change mitigation, which was published this April. As of June, there are 2,002 climate litigation cases globally, of which 88 are from the Global South, according to a report by the Grantham Research Institute (GRI) at the London School of Economics. In contrast, just over 800 cases were filed between 1986 and 2014, the report points out.

The IPCC mitigation report states that courts play an "active role for climate governance in democratic political systems". Last month, lawyers from more than 20 organisations warned ahead of COP27 that governments will "face further legal action" if they do not do more to curb greenhouse gas emissions.

But how much difference does successful litigation like that brought by Asghar Leghari make in compelling governments to act on climate change – and how is this playing out in South Asian countries?

Why people are turning to the courts now

The majority of litigation on mitigation action is brought against governments, according to the IPCC, which says this highlights the failures of governments' executive branches.

Climate action at both the national and international level has been slow, points out Joana Setzer, an IPCC litigation chapter author and an assistant professorial research fellow at the GRI. This slow progress is one driver of litigation. Another driver is momentum: favourable judgements spur further litigation, like the 2019 Urgenda case in the Netherlands, where the court ordered the state to take on a more ambitious emissions reduction target of at least 25% compared with 1990.

Alam agrees, describing the "reverberations" from cases such as Urgenda felt by the international legal community.

He says the Asghar Leghari case, for example, “throws open the great potential of the legal system... to protect the rights of people against fossil fuel polluters; it opens up the possibility that this system, which is essentially derived to protect private property rights, does have a function beyond that”.

Litigation is expected to increase as climate attribution science matures, the IPCC adaptation report notes. A claimant seeking compensation needs to prove that an activity – such as burning fossil fuels – caused damage, which attribution science can help with. But there are limitations. Francesca Spagnuolo, author of the chapter on litigation in the IPCC adaptation report, tells The Third Pole that attribution requires data and models that are not always available in least developed countries.

Can climate litigation influence policy?

Returning to Leghari v Federation of Pakistan, the case does reveal that litigation can change policy – but also some potential shortcomings.

The Climate Change Commission set up in 2015 did deliberate for several months, identifying hundreds of initiatives the government of Punjab could implement that year, says Alam. But they were only acted on while the commission was still active and judge Mansoor Shah was still hearing the case; after the final judgement the commission and its responsibilities ended. The draft climate change policy for Punjab, meanwhile, remains a draft.

In Europe, climate litigation has led to clear policy change. In April 2021, for example, Germany’s Federal Constitutional Court ruled that the Federal Climate Change Act is unconstitutional because emission-reduction targets are insufficient to protect future generations.

“Leghari v Federation of Pakistan opens up the possibility that the legal system, which is essentially derived to protect private property rights, does have a function beyond that”

Ahmad Rafay Alam, environmental lawyer

Jannika Jahn, senior research fellow at the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law in Germany, says that the court relied on “fundamental rights as intertemporal guarantees of freedom” to oblige the German government to step up its climate mitigation efforts. The judgement led to amendments to the Federal Climate Change Act, committing the country to reach net-zero emissions by 2045 – five years ahead of its previous target – among other pledges.

Likewise, litigation has been used in developing countries to challenge policies seen as detrimental to the environment. In India and Indonesia, for example, there has been rapid environmental deregulation in recent years with forest clearances becoming easier and lighter penalties for violations.

In such a context, the idea that the legislature can be a space for progressive change like passing a climate law is far-fetched, says Arpitha Kodiveri, adjunct professor at New York University School of Law. As a result, “people are getting pushed to place their hope in the judiciary”. More generally, she adds, people seek action from courts mostly in cases where environmental laws and policies exist but are not enforced.

Courts in India have been able to shape policy by making sure their decisions are enforced. Kodiveri says that in general Indian courts have been creative in designing enforcement mechanisms, such as orders that seek to form specific committees to implement judgements, re-examine executive decisions or shape policy. In 1996, the Supreme Court of India ruled on the case of TN Godavarman Thirumulkpad vs Union of India & Others. This was initially filed to protect forest in Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu, from timber extraction. The court’s judgement not only defined the term “forest” but also set up a committee that has the power to review environmental clearances granted by the government. Kodiveri describes the Godavarman case as “a great example of judicial enforcement”.

The judgement has been criticised by some researchers as judicial overstep, where the court effectively took over “day-to-day governance of Indian forests leading to negative social, ecological, and administra-

tive effects”. Others have said it shows how courts can innovate to “fashion the law to find a way of protecting the environment using classical principles of judicial review”.

In Bangladesh, Kodiveri says, courts have been more receptive to cases that take into account concerns about people’s vulnerability as a result of global and historical emissions than cases that seek to hold the government accountable. In India, she says she sees more litigation based on constitutional rights like the right to life. To date, cases brought before courts have largely been restricted to constitutional rights like freedom of speech and expression, and freedom of movement. This July, India also supported a United Nations General Assembly resolution to recognise the right to a healthy environment as a human right.

In China, courts have played a significant role in shaping environmental policies, the IPCC’s April report notes. This is because of the availability of tools like public interest litigation, it adds.

The limits of litigation

Generally, litigation is a powerful tool to enforce existing legislation and policies. “In countries where courts are independent and are respected, they can bring about accountability,” Setzer says. But, she points out, if the executive and the legislative wings haven’t done their part, “it’s much more difficult for the courts to stand up and say ‘Do something’ because of the understanding that courts would then be interfering in the powers of the executive.”

The US, for example, historically has had no federal-level climate change law. And so, climate change litigation researchers say, “neither the federal courts nor any of the state courts have been receptive to pleas that, in the absence of adequate legislative or administrative action, they should step in and adopt their own rules of remission reduction or on liability.” The Biden administration’s recent Inflation Reduction Act is widely seen as a law that will help combat climate change; it aims to reduce emissions by 40% by 2030. But some organisations have pointed out that the law lacks specific emissions-reduction targets. They say that such targets are necessary for it to qualify as climate law.

In such a context, robust law- and policy-making can go much further in enabling climate action. “Policymaking is definitely the preferred tool because it’s a broader and a more straightforward approach,” says Maria Antonia Tigre, global climate litigation fellow at Columbia Law School’s Sabin Center. “Litigating takes time but it can help as a last resort, like in cases where regulatory policies haven’t worked or to address the urgency of broad emission-reduction needs.”



"Litigating can help as a last resort, in cases where regulatory policies haven't worked or to address the urgency of broad emission-reduction needs"

Maria Antonia Tigre, Columbia Law School's Sabin Center

An increase in litigation may not in and of itself indicate progressive change. The US has by far the most climate litigation of any country in the world – but much of this is brought by companies working against regulations to mitigate climate change. “There is a split between litigation that is aligned with climate change goals and those that directly challenge them,” Setzer says.

Reviews of global litigation outcomes point to similar conclusions. Research by the GRI found that of 369 decided cases, only 58% were favourable to the fight against

climate change, while 32% were unfavourable and the remaining 10% had no clear impact on climate policy.

Litigation can also backfire. “There can be political bias in how judges rule,” Kodiveri says. It also entails costs to vulnerable petitioners like local communities, both in terms of time and money. “Cases can stagnate for decades because litigation doesn’t always allow for [dispute] resolution,” Kodiveri points out, adding that

policy decisions can work faster, especially at the local administrative level.

Institutions and policymaking are vital

“In some countries, litigation has been used to spur further, deeper climate action. But the form that the action takes is typically shaped by institutions and policymaking,” says Navroz Dubash, professor at New Delhi-based think tank the Centre for Policy Research and coordinating lead author of the chapter National and Sub-national Policies and Institutions in the IPCC’s mitigation report. Institutions play a major role in enabling mitigation action, in terms of research support for law and policymaking, governance in terms of coordination between various stakeholders like the ministries involved and post-implementation tracking of progress.

“Many climate decisions are shaped by decisions on urban planning and industrial policy and even economic stimulus packages,” says Dubash. A key message of the IPCC’s mitigation report is that climate policy should be integrated within other spheres and development pathways.

The IPCC report on mitigation provides numerous case studies on integrated policy-making for sector-specific transitions. This includes the provisioning of mobility services in Kolkata, LPG subsidies in Indonesia and policymaking in Shanghai. The case studies highlight the kind of policies that are needed and existing barriers and enablers to such policies.

"The form that climate action takes is typically shaped by institutions and policymaking"

Navroz Dubash, Centre for Policy Research

“It’s not enough to just put a price on carbon,” Dubash says. “You have to provide actors incentives and disincentives and a package of policies.” In building such development pathways, the IPCC says carbon can be locked in, especially around land use or infrastructure choices – crucial for developing countries where roads, railways and cities are still being built.

The role institutions play varies widely by geography. In Europe, it is becoming more common to see climate change laws with binding emissions targets which are backed by institutions like the UK’s Climate Change Committee. On the other hand, Dubash explains, institutions in China are governed by much more vertical, hierarchical structures while the US seems to have multiple veto points where climate action by institutions can be blocked, such as the Supreme Court’s ruling in June to curb the Environmental Protection Agency’s powers to regulate emissions.

Ultimately, there may be no one-size-fits-all approach, be it in the litigation space or law and policymaking, to enable climate action. “Each country has to tailor mitigation action to suit its realities,” says Catherine Mitchell, the other coordinating lead author of the chapter on policies and institutions in the IPCC report on mitigation.

Courtesy THE THIRDPOLE

The way to Climate Justice

By Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri

The United Nations twice launched a flash appeal to help flood victims and survivors in Pakistan. The bad news is not that the revised appeal of \$860 million is nowhere near the initial flood damage estimates of \$35 billion to \$40 billion. The bad news is that the pledges made by the international community so far are nowhere near the amount requested by the UN.

Till recently, members' pledges were a little over \$180 million. An amount slightly more than the UN's first flash appeal but less than one-fifth of the revised appeal. The real bad news is that the pledges converted into commitment so far are less than \$100 million.

The weather extremes in Pakistan this year are a trailer of what would unfold in an increasingly warming world. There was no spring, and winter was followed by unprecedented heatwaves in most parts of Pakistan (damaging wheat and mango crops). The sizzling summer witnessed terrible forest fires, and glacier melting, while monsoons brought apocalyptic rains. Earlier in April and May, Jacobabad in the southeastern province of Sindh was most hottest place on earth (temperature exceeding 53 Celsius/ 127.4 Fahrenheit), while in August, it was submerged in flood water.

One wonders why the floods in Pakistan, which affected 33 million people – equal to the combined population of the Netherlands, Belgium, and Denmark – have not moved the hearts of the international community. Let me explain why:

Amidst the 'Triple C' crisis (conflict, climate change, and Covid-19), the whole world, except energy-exporting countries, is going through stagflation (low economic growth, high inflation). British PM Liz Truss announced to step down due to her inability to manage stagflation. Germany has formally declared recession, cutting its growth forecast to negative 0.5 per cent for 2022. In France, inflation led to refinery workers' strikes and subsequent chaos at the fuel stations. The US Fed has increased the interest rate to a multiyear high, and yet the inflation there is not sobering down.

Western governments struggling to avoid an energy crisis in the winter and burdened under their military, and non-military commitments for Ukraine are finding it difficult to show their generosity to flood survivors in Pakistan.

The question arises: when the amount the UN is asking for Pakistan is peanuts for most of the developed world, why the reluctance?



A possible answer to this is the external world's perception of Pakistan as a country that did not learn much from its previous disasters, especially the floods of 2010. One can't deny that the devastating impacts of recent floods got exacerbated by many of our own wrongdoings: faulty land use planning and proximity of human settlements and buildings to flood plains, inadequate and poorly maintained infrastructure, chronic governance issues, underlying vulnerabilities driven by high poverty rates and socioeconomic factors, and ongoing political, and economic instability. The international community is reluctant to commit to a country that does not bring its house in order.

Another contributing factor to the West's lukewarm response is Pakistan's shortsighted decision to create a hostile policy environment for international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) back in

2014-15. The unstated policy was not to renew the registration and provide NOCs for operations to the 'black sheep' among INGOs. However, the indiscriminate use of that policy also forced many credible international humanitarian organizations to wind up their offices in Pakistan. The forced exit of most INGOs from Pakistan makes it difficult for many European governments and citizens, who otherwise

wanted to provide aid through them, to support flood survivors.

All these (and perhaps many other factors) make sense. However, these factors are not and should not be used by the industrialized countries in the Global North as an excuse to avoid doing damage control for their historical mistakes.

Climate scientists have solid data-based evidence now that the excessive production of carbon emissions by the Global North (US, EU, and Japan are responsible for 46 per cent of global fossil fuel burning from 1992 to 2022) caused severe climate impacts in the Global South. Carbon emission by rich countries is warming the planet.

This global warming results in extreme climate events like the one Pakistan experienced this year. Exploring the scientific



reasons for the super floods in Pakistan, the World Weather Attribution Organization (WWAO), a collaboration between climate scientists from the UK, the Netherlands, France, the US, Switzerland, India, South Africa, and many others around the world, found that the '5-day maximum rainfall' over Sindh and Balochistan is now about 75 per cent more intense than it would have been had the climate not warmed by 1.2 Celsius. Likewise, the '60-day rain' across the Indus Basin is now about 50 per cent more intense. The WWAO warns that such heavy rainfall is now more likely to happen in the region.

In his opinion piece on Pakistan's floods and climate justice, Nobel Laureate Jeffrey Sachs argues that even if climate scientists attribute half of Pakistan's losses to long-term climate change and the other half to random year-to-year variation and local land-use practices [Pakistan's own fault], the rich countries should bear their fair share – cost of half of the losses due to floods for climate adaptation, emergency response, and recovery. According to Sachs, this would not be a charity or favour but a dispensation of climate justice, as Pakistan has played little to no role (0.4 per cent) in global carbon emissions.

Unfortunately, there is no mechanism (yet) either in the international dispute settlement arena or in the multilateral negotiations processes of climate change where an aggrieved victim of global warming like Pakistan can present its case against the world's largest polluters and sue for damages. However, the lack of such a mechanism does not and should not absolve rich countries of their historical

responsibilities, who have made certain commitments (mainly unmet) of mobilizing funds for financing climate change mitigation, and adaptation (called green climate funds).

To live on a warming planet would require long-term and costly investment to protect societies, and countries from the consequences of global warming, such as floods, glacier melting, heatwaves, forest fires, drought, typhoons, etc. Developing countries like Pakistan, one of the least polluters, cannot make this investment due to financial constraints. Still, it is against the principle of justice that Pakistan should be left to suffer from something that is not its wrongdoing.

So, what is the way forward for Pakistan?

In the existing geopolitical and geoeconomic situation, Pakistan may not

get much support from the international community for flood rehabilitation. On the domestic front, the government should formulate district-level rehabilitation plans, engage the corporate sector to mobilize funds, and operationalize those plans through local communities. The resilient people of Pakistan braved the 2010 floods mainly on a self-help basis, and they can do so again.

Besides building back flood-affected districts better, the government would have to build Pakistan's image too. It needs to bring its house in order, learn lessons from the recent floods, and should be known as a country that prepares itself to reduce the damages from any future climate disaster.

On the external front, Pakistan needs to push for climate justice. As a chair of G-77 in the forthcoming COP27, it needs to raise its voice not to ask for charity or donations for climate change victims, but to demand what was promised to the developing countries by the developed world – financing for mitigation and adaptation. A push to clear the obstacles in operationalizing both the loss and damage mechanism (L&DM) outlined in Article 8 of the Paris Agreement and the green climate fund is required by the developing world in COP27. Otherwise, in the climate change minister's words, "what started in Pakistan [climatic catastrophes] will not end here".

Courtesy THE NEWS



Pak-US ties on the mend

By Dr. Syed Rifaat Hussain

Having remained mired in controversy, uncertainty and unpredictability for the last one year, Pakistan's relations with the United States are now on a much firmer ground than before. Pakistan's relations with the United States nosedived following former Prime Minister Imran Khan's accusations that President Joseph Biden's administration was "upset" over his "independent approach to foreign policy" and a "visit to Moscow that coincided with the start of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Khan has accused the military establishment of supporting the "no confidence" move on April 9 that led to the ouster of his regime. Imran Khan's insinuations have been repeatedly rejected by Washington as devoid of substance.

With the advent of PM Shehbaz Sharif, whom Imran Khan has repeatedly excoriated as the "puppet" and "stooge" of Washington, Pak-US ties have taken a turn for the better.

Speaking on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, Prime Minister Shehbaz Shari, said he has been the most ardent supporter of the friendship between Pakistan and the United States and observed "Let bygones be bygones... as long as we have serious dialogues, we cannot go wrong."

The Prime Minister noted that Islamabad not only had strong security ties with Washington but expressed his confidence that a broad based relationship would soon develop between the two countries.

Referring to the floods in Pakistan, he said that the disaster is not made by Pakistan as it is a developing country that contributes little to CO2 emissions. "Pakistan is a very strong nation. People are very hard working. Our population is 50 percent male and 50 percent female. There is complete freedom of action. The US is our biggest trading partner. The catastrophic situation is not made by us, it is man-made but not by us. Some 1,600



people have died, including 400 children. More than a million mud houses have been thrown into the Arabian Sea. People are living under the open sky waiting for help. It is my duty to help but whatever we do will not be enough."

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif went on to express his desire to want to "go back to those wonderful times when our relations with the U.S had their own standing. I would work most willingly for those relations."

Reciprocating these positive sentiments, the US Ambassador to Pakistan, Mr. Donald Bloom underscored his desire to develop a broad-based bilateral ties between the two sides that would encompass bilateral trade, investment, and energy cooperation." He noted that Pakistan was one of the largest trading partners of the United States and emphasized that Washington was willing to provide the country relief assistance due to devastating impact of floods. The American envoy maintained that Pakistan-US ties are "necessarily broad-based, and profoundly important for both our countries, for the region, and for the world. It is not, and need not be, exclusive of any other regional relationship. At a moment of great change, the United States and Pakistan need to define a partnership that advances our shared interests and meets our mutual, ambitious goals."

One important development that contributed to this positive momentum in Pak-U.S ties has been the decision by the State Department to approve of the sale of F-16 air craft sustainment and related equipment valued at up to \$450 million. The proposed sale, according to the State Department, will continue the sustainment of Pakistan's F-16 fleet, which greatly improves Pakistan's ability to support counterterrorism operations through its robust air-to-ground capability".

This deal was announced during Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari recent visit to Washington. New Delhi had strongly objected to this sale of military equipment. In a widely published comments, Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankha had said that the US was not "fooling anybody" by claiming the equipment was for counterterrorism operations. These objections to arms deal were disregarded by Washington as it did not involve any new arms sales.

In October 2022, Army Chief General Qamar Ahmad Bajwa led a high-powered military delegation to Washington to hold bilateral talks and have discussions with U.S officials on matters of mutual interest. The Pakistan Army chief, held meetings with US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin and National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan, and Wendy Sherman, Deputy Secretary of State. During these meetings, both



discussed the regional security situation and bilateral ties.

In an exclusive interview with a Pakistani newspaper in Washington, Derek Chollet, a senior adviser to the US Secretary of State stated, “what we want to focus on is the direction in which the US-Pakistan relationship is going, reacting on all that what we have achieved in 75 years but also all that we have to achieve in the next 75 years.” More importantly, Mr Derek Chollet said that the US is not asking Pakistan to choose between US and China, but wants countries “to be able to have a choice.”

This upward trajectory in Pak-US ties suffered a temporary setback due to an informal remark by President Joe Biden at a California Fund raiser.

While referring to Pakistan in the context of US escalating tensions with both China and Russia, President Biden surprised everyone with his off the-cuff remarks about Pakistan. “What I think is maybe one of the most dangerous nations in the world: Pakistan,” he said. And then he explained why he thought Pakistan was dangerous: “Nuclear weapons without any cohesion.”

These incendiary “off the cuff” remarks by U.S President evoked a severe backlash from Islamabad. Both Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Pakistan called these remarks by Mr. Joe Biden “unwarranted” and contrary to the facts on the grounds relating to the security and safety of Pakistan’s nuclear weapons.

The opposition led by Mr. Imran Khan questioned the wisdom of trying to build good relations with Washington as misguided. Pakistan’s Foreign Office called U.S Ambassador Donald Bloom for a “demarche” and asked him to “provide” an explanation for these unprovoked and totally unwarranted remarks.

In response to these “negative” reactions by the Pakistan government, the State Depart-



ment tried to walk back President Biden’s remarks by publicly stating that Washington has full confidence in Pakistan’s ability to safeguard its nuclear capability and manage its nuclear assets. “The United States is confident of Pakistan’s commitment and its ability to secure nuclear assets,” US State Department spokesperson

Vedant Patel told journalists in Washington shortly after a meeting between Ambassador Masood Khan and Counselor Derek Chollet.

Mr. Chollet said in a tweet that he met Ambassador Khan “to discuss US-Pakistan longstanding partnership and (to) further grow our ties in so many areas including health, agriculture, education, entrepreneurship, energy and more for the benefit of our peoples and the region”.

These observations clearly indicate that Pak-US ties are on the mend and there is growing desire on both sides to avoid mistakes committed in the past and look for pathways to expand ties for the benefit of the people. How long will this trend persist?

Due to devastations caused by recent floods in Pakistan, there is a wave of sympathy for Pakistani people and it is imperative how forcefully Islamabad would plead its case before the international community particularly the rich industrial North led by United States. UN Secretary General has visited Pakistan in the wake of these floods caused by climate change and has been calling for international relief efforts to the

30 million Pakistani affected by floods. Pakistan should join hands with Washington to develop an effective response to catastrophic consequences of climate change. Such a strategy would be the lasting and enduring legacy of renewed Pak-US ties.

Turmoil in the UK's Politics Continues

Rishi Sunak will have no honeymoon to enjoy. He will have mega problems all around to tackle and solve. How well he will handle these problems without having a mandate from the public is to be seen.

By Dr. Khalid Bajwa



The conservative party has chosen Rishi Sunak as the first non-white Indian prime minister of the UK. He won the parliamentary vote of conservatives in September but lost the election to Liz Truss in a wider electoral group of around 160,000 conservative party members. The opposition and critics questioned the democratic credentials of prime minister Liz Truss for being elected by only 0.1 percent of the voters. She got her mandate to implement her policies from this small group. She was very clear about what she was going to achieve by pursuing her stated policies. One can only assume that the conservatives gave their mandate to her clear-headedly.

Once in office, she decided to implement these policies. In a mini-budget, her Chancellor, Kwasi Kwarteng, announced measures that were even bigger than to suit a full budget. The government cut down the higher income tax slab of 45 percent to 40 percent for the higher earners and the basic income tax rate to 19 percent from 20 percent. She reverted the Boris Johnson government's national insurance and corporation tax rise to their previous levels. At the same time, to help overcome the 'Cost of Living Crisis', she capped the energy prices at existing levels

for two years, scrapping the expected steep rise in energy prices in April and subsequent rises later on. She also announced additional support for the energy bills for the families to help them get through the cold winter. The government also removed the cap on bonuses for top bankers and investment managers. These caps were introduced after the financial crisis of 2008.

The purpose of her measures, as she had mentioned and stressed in her leadership



campaign, was to induce growth by making the UK an attractive place for foreign direct investment by having a lower tax regime and providing incentives to top executives and investors to induce them to choose the UK as their preferred place. However, the moment these measures were announced, they became unpopular. The markets reacted negatively, and the British pound slumped to a historic low against the dollar. The mortgage rates jumped significantly higher, and the bank of England had to intervene to calm the markets. President Biden described the plan as a mistake, and the IMF also came up with an advice of caution.

The government's fiscal and monetary policy came at a cross road, both gearing towards achieving opposite and conflicting goals. The situation worsened in the presence of historic levels of inflation.

The reaction of the markets was understandable as the fiscal measures were not accounted for, and the government remained silent about how it was going to fund these tax cuts. The answer was obvious; the government was to borrow money required for these measures. As a result, the cost of borrowing increased.

The response of the Conservative party was

bafling but understandable. They voted for these policies but, in the face of negative reaction of markets and international disapproval, performed a volte-face. The knives were out to get Liz. Overnight she became a burden. Rebellion broke out among the ranks of Conservatives. The prime minister was forced to admit mistakes and take massive U-turns. The chancellor was forced to resign, and the home secretary resigned after engaging in a shouting match with the prime minister. Many conservative MPs wrote to the powerful 1922 Committee expressing no

the Conservative party members.

Three candidates emerged. Rishi Sunak, Boris Johnson, and Penny Mordaunt were in the run. The candidacy of Boris Johnson was most interesting as it was because of him that this race commenced in the first place. He was the source of all trouble. Surprisingly he mustered enough support among the MPs to have his name on the ballot. However, his candidature drew deep splits in the party. Amid the criticism within and outside the party and realizing that it might not be a smooth sailing, he withdrew from the contest, paving the way

in British politics. Stability and certainty are an absolute must for ensuring economic certainty.

Political certainty and stability are just one part of the jigsaw to achieve economic certainty. The great damage done by Brexit and Covid will take decades to mitigate, even under the best of circumstances. The fallout of the Ukrainian-Russian war is making lives difficult in both the UK and the EU. The 'Cost of Living Crisis' has the potential for civil unrest in the world. The Ireland protocol and difficulties in negotiating new trade deals, especially with America, will continue to pose and aggravate problems for a foreseeable future.

Then there is the problem of China. Looking at the present trends, the conflict will likely exacerbate with severe jolts to the world's peace and economy. The world's economy is so intertwined, and supply chains are so complex that any disruption could be very costly. This is especially true for the world's largest economies. They cannot survive without each other. If this is the case, then the damage caused by any serious escalation of hostilities will be crippling, having far-reaching consequences not only for the peace among nation-states, but within each society as well. The China-West conflict will bring most world economic activity to a screeching halt. Only one example will be enough to shed some light. The world is heavily dependent on the supply of processors and semiconductors from Taiwan. Some estimates suggest that 80 percent of the supply of semiconductors comes from Taiwan. When it comes to highly sophisticated semiconductors, the figure shoots to 90 percent. One can only imagine what will happen if the supply of these lynchpins of the modern world is disrupted or cut off.

Rishi Sunak will have no honeymoon to enjoy. He will have mega problems all around to tackle and solve. How well he will handle these problems without having a mandate from the public is to be seen. In the absence of a public mandate, he will not be able to make tough decisions. For how long he will survive the infighting of Tories? The opponents say: not for long. The UK lumbers on.



confidence in the prime minister. The prime minister appeared weak. As a last resort, Jeremy Hunt was appointed Chancellor, who reversed all the taxation measures. The prime minister was humiliated. This restored a little bit of confidence in the markets, but it was too little too late to control the damage. It was a foregone conclusion that Liz Truss' days were numbered.

Finally, she resigned, and the bid for a new conservative leader started in earnest. To avoid the long-drawn process of electing a new leader, the 1922 Conservative Committee changed the rules. Each contender needed the support of at least 100 MPs to qualify for nomination. The purpose was to have the maximum number of 3 contenders in the beginning, to cut short the process of the final selection of two candidates to be on the ballot paper for

for Rishi Sunak. In the end, Rishi became the sole candidate when Penny Mordaunt withdrew from the contest.

The events at the heart of British democracy have raised questions about the spirit of democracy. Both Liz Truss and Rishi Sunak don't have a public mandate to rule the country. The case of the incoming prime minister, Rishi Sunak, is worse than outgoing prime minister Liz Truss. She was chosen by a much larger electoral realm than Rishi. The power has got out of the hands of the public as well as Conservative members to elect a democratically elected prime minister. Both public and conservative members became irrelevant in the case of Rishi. The Westminster democracy has become a hostage in the hands of a few influential individuals. To correct things, a fresh election is the need of the day, as it will bring back some stability and certainty

How Xi Jinping made himself Unchallengeable

BBC Report



Few foresaw that Xi Jinping would become the most assertive Chinese leader in decades - he is now all but set to secure a historic third term in power.

A decade ago little was known about Mr Xi - apart from the fact that he was a "princeling" because his father was one of the country's revolutionary leaders.

His lineage helped him win the support of party elders, which was crucial to ascending power within the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) as these leaders often wielded political influence even after retirement.

"Before his elevation, Xi Jinping was regarded as someone who could compromise with everyone," said Joseph Fewsmith, an expert in Chinese elite politics at Boston University.

But 10 years on, Mr Xi's authority appears to be unquestionable, and his power unrivalled. How did that happen?

The barrel of a gun

Mao Zedong, the founding father of Communist China, once famously said: "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun."

After the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Mao ensured it was the party, not the state, which controlled the People's Liberation Army (PLA). Since then, the CCP leader has also been Central Military Commission (CMC) chairman.

Mr Xi was luckier than his predecessor Hu Jintao because he became the CMC chairman instantly - and wasted no time in weeding out opposition within the armed forces. The most shocking episode came in 2014 and 2015, when former CMC Vice Chairman Xu Caihou and former PLA General Guo Boxiong were accused of corruption.

"They were already retired when the axe fell, but Xi's ability to target them reduced the former Chinese leader Jiang Zemin's linger-

ing influence in the PLA," said Joel Wuthnow, a senior fellow at the Pentagon-funded National Defense University.

"It also sent a powerful signal to current serving military officers that no one who resists Xi's control is immune from harm," he added.

In 2015, Mr Xi also overhauled the structure of the military. He abolished the four military headquarters - staff, politics, logistics and armaments - and replaced them with 15 smaller agencies. The new structure allows the CMC to issue orders directly to the various branches of the military - extending as far as even financial auditors, who now have to report directly to the CMC, adds Mr Wuthnow.

Above all this is the insistence upon absolute loyalty to Mr Xi - something that is still being reiterated.

Last month the People's Liberation Army Daily, the country's official military newspaper, published an article emphasising that the CMC is in overall command.

"The message helps counteract any tendency that might develop in the military to build loyalty towards senior PLA leaders who might someday oppose Xi," said Timothy Heath, a senior international defence researcher at US think tank RAND corporation.



"Loyalty to the party means the PLA is expected to carry out any and all orders to keep the party, and Xi in particular, in power."

Loyalty comes first

After securing the gun barrel, it is essential to bring the knife - the internal security apparatus - under total control.

Two years after Mr Xi came to power, authorities confirmed the arrest of a "tiger", former domestic security chief Zhou Yongkang, for corruption. He was closely linked with Bo Xilai, another "princeling" who was a rival of Mr Xi's.

The investigation sent political shockwaves as it shattered the

unspoken rule that members of the Politburo Standing Committee, the most powerful decision-making body, would not be subject to criminal punishment.

"Xi Jinping turned out to be a ruthlessly brilliant politician who patiently rose through the system before seizing his moment to rule," said Neil Thomas, a senior China analyst of Eurasia Group.

"The communist party elders who supported Xi's rise were likely surprised by the speed and scale of his power grab."

Observers say Mr Xi's signature anti-corruption campaign is also used to remove his political rivals and other factions within the party.

In the past decade, more than 4.7 million people have been investigated by anti-corruption authorities.



"In the last two years, Xi further purged career security officials who supported his rise to power in the first place," said Victor Shih, a political scientist at University of California, San Diego.

"Now the security agencies are run almost exclusively by officials who shared a past history with Xi and who are presumably trusted by him."

Mr Xi has also stacked his loyalists at important regional posts, such as the party secretaries of key cities like Beijing, Shanghai and Chongqing.

These positions are important because they are responsible for "interpreting and implementing central directives in localities with millions of people", said Mr Thomas.

At least 24 of the 31 provincial-level party secretaries are political associates of Xi, having previously known his family, studied with him, worked under him, or worked for one of his close allies, Mr Thomas says.

Meanwhile nearly all of the 281 standing committee members in provincial standing committees were promoted by Mr Xi, according to data compiled by Wu Guoguang, a politics professor at the University of Victoria in Canada.

Crafting a personal brand

In 2018 "Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era" was enshrined in China's constitution.

It may sound like a mouthful, but having an ideology named after him was something that cemented Mr Xi's legacy.

Before Mr Xi, only Chairman Mao achieved this. Even Deng Xiaoping, known as the architect of China's modernisation, only had a "theory" under his name, while Mr Xi's immediate predecessors, Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao, did not have any thought or theories attached to their names.

It's debatable what exactly Xi Jinping Thought means, but that's not the point, analysts say - it's a power move.

"Xi's thought is aimed primarily at strengthening Xi's own legitimacy and power above anyone else in the CCP and the country. It is part of a new personality cult that links up Xi not only to Mao but to the most glorious and successful Chinese emperors of yesteryear," says Jean-Pierre Cabestan, an emeritus professor of political science at Hong Kong Baptist University.

Dozens of universities and institutions, including the prestigious Peking University and Tsinghua University, have set up research centres under Mr Xi's names, according to Hong Kong newspaper Ming Pao.

In August, the Ministry of Education unveiled a plan to promote Xi Jinping Thought in the national curriculum.

In 2019, a mobile app called Xuexi Qiangguo - literally translated into "Learn from Xi, Strengthen the country" - that includes quizzes on Xi Jinping Thought was launched.



Mr Xi believes "he has the correct ideology, and everybody must accept it," says Andrew Nathan, a political science professor at Columbia University.

"Whenever Mao took a policy position, everybody else had to fall in line, and that is also true of Xi."

Illustrations by Davies Surya

Courtesy BBC

Unaffordable Electricity

The people of Pakistan are paying the cost of the power sector's inefficiencies, mismanagement, and corruption in their electricity bills every month

By Azeem Waqas

Electricity has become a luxury for domestic, commercial, and industrial customers in Pakistan. The cost of generating electricity in Pakistan has jumped by almost 46%. It hit Rs. 9.91 KWh in September 2022 from Rs 6.80 KWh last year, besides monthly fuel adjustments.

Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) sent two bills in September to its customers just to fulfill the IMF conditions. In September, domestic customers also paid RS.9/ kWh fuel adjustment which has burdened household incomes.

Muhammad Shabbir, a resident of Islamabad said that electricity cost in Pakistan is increasing almost every day. Income is reducing while expenditure is increasing. In a house of two rooms where the normal electricity bill was Rs. 800, now it costs more than Rs. 4000. Average rate per unit of electricity is Rs 50 inclusive of the forcibly imposed fuel surcharge and taxes while the electricity cost is around PKR 30. The people of Pakistan can either pay the hefty bills or fulfill their daily requirements.

Minister for Power, Khurram Dastgir, announced that the government will no



longer produce electricity from imported furnace oil; it will use cheaper resources to reduce the cost of electricity. Similarly, Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif has asked the concerned authorities to provide a comprehensive plan of action to reduce power prices before next summer.

The people of Pakistan are paying the cost of inefficiencies, mismanagement, and corruption in their electricity bills every month. The federal government has no plan to fix the power sector losses and provide relief to the masses.

Former Finance Minister, Dr. Miftah

Ismail, said that since currently there is huge pressure from IMF and World Bank to pass on the cost to the consumer, so the government is essentially passing on even the inefficiencies to the consumer.

National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) has endorsed Dr. Miftah Ismail in its report. It said that the power sector of Pakistan is dependent on the imported fuel price which at present has put pressure on the exchequer. This also contributes to the devaluation of the PKR as compared to US\$. Since as per the policy of the Government, currency indexation is allowed on the foreign debt payment, foreign O&M, and ROE/ ROEDC, this further enhances the consumer-end tariff. Higher T&D losses, fewer recoveries, and inefficient public sector GENCOs are resultantly putting the power sector at high risk. The performance in each segment of the electric power services i.e. generation, transmission, distribution, and supply is highly questionable. Due to all these factors, the country has been frequently facing electricity crises situation. To turn around, it is required to undertake emergency actions which include improving the performance of the public sector DISCOs by privatization or outsourcing their operations, and





maintenance in public-private participation. Further, involving provinces with clear responsibility may also improve the issue of recoveries of electricity dues and lower the theft of electricity.

The exorbitant electricity price indicates that through electricity bills subsequent federal governments have imposed various taxes, charges, and fees, which are not directly related to the electricity sector. Certain surcharges are also imposed on consumers that are not linked to the consumption of electricity and a few surcharges are being imposed to overcome the system's inefficiencies. All these factors increase the volume of the overall price of electricity. Under the Constitution of Pakistan, electricity is the basic right of every citizen. Recovering taxes, duties, fees (like TV fees), and other charges through electricity bills raise questions about the role of the relevant departments and their service delivery since they are unable to directly recover the same from relevant people. Revisiting the electricity billing mechanism is required to eliminate/reduce unrelated taxes and surcharges.

Dr. Miftah Ismail is of the view that in Pakistan power generation is not that inefficient if we shut down old furnace oil-based power plants. However, when you account for the recent increase in fuel prices, the overall cost of electricity is very high.

At least 10% of the industry in Pakistan remains shut because of a lack of supply of gas and electricity. Gas supply is the main concern of Pakistani businesses, and it shouldn't be this way. Industries should receive the gas, he said.

Dr. Miftah Ismail said that he had an unpopular view that we should increase the gas supply to Industry by 50 mmcf/d but this would increase daily load shedding by 40 minutes.

Energy Sector is Pakistan's biggest challenge and puts the country's survival at risk. Hence, urgent reforms are required otherwise the power sector will sink the economy.

NEPRA reports that the whole supply

chain is dependent upon the performance of DISCOs which are suppliers of the last resort and are liable to recover the billed amount and meet the targeted T&D losses. During the FY 2021-22, the allowed T&D losses for the DISCOs were 13.41% whereas actual losses were 17.13%. Due to the difference of 3.72%, the financial loss on this account has been worked out around Rs.113 billion. In addition, NEPRA determines the revenue requirement on 100% receivables. During the FY 2021-22 the receivable amount in terms of percentage was around 90.51% thus incurring a loss of Rs. 230 billion of the billed amounts. The overall impact on account of additional T&D Losses and less recovery works out to Rs. 343 billion, resulting in circular debt.

The higher T&D losses are of much concern keeping in view the higher average fuel cost, which is increasing the difference of loss due to costlier fuel and devaluation of PKR. Furthermore, the revenue loss in case of non-delivery of the generated electricity is another issue.

According to NEPRA's report, the major issue pertaining to the performance of DISCOs is receivables. NEPRA has highlighted this in the past many years through the SIRs, determinations, etc. During FY 2020-21, the receivable amount of DISCOs including KE was around Rs. 1,398,194 million, whereas during the FY 2021-22 the receivable amount is Rs. 1,680,426 million, showing an increase of Rs. 282,232 million.



Judiciary is not as independent as 'they' say

CJ's position weakens as government emerges as a decisive power in judges' appointments

By Asadullah Malik

The recent developments in top judicial appointments not only exposed rifts within the judiciary but the Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) appeared to be dependent on the government's support to elevate his nominees to the Supreme Court.

The two votes of Attorney General Ashtar Ausaf and outgoing Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar enabled Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial to appoint two judges to the Lahore High Court (LHC) and Sindh High Court (SHC), despite the fact that a majority of Supreme Court judges who are members of the Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP)—the body that recommends the appointment of judges in the superior judiciary—opposed their elevation for being junior.

After a meeting stretching over three and a half hours, the JCP unanimously approved the recommendation to elevate Islamabad High Court (IHC) Chief Justice Athar Minallah to the Supreme Court, gave a divided nod to two high court judges, and dropped outright the suggestion regarding one candidate, Muhammad Shafi Siddiqui of the SHC.

At its last meeting held on July 28, JCP rejected all five nominees for the Supreme Court of CJP Bandial by a majority of five to four votes. The reason for rejection was mentioned in the letter of the Senior Puisne Judge of the SC, Justice Qazi Faez Isa, written to all the members of the JCP.

Justice Isa disputed the facts mentioned in the SC statement. The letter stated: "The majority of the Hon'ble Members of the JCP, that is the Hon'ble Justice Sardar Tariq Masood, Hon'ble Law Minister Mr. Azam Nazeer Tarar, Hon'ble Attorney General Mr. Ashtar Ausaf Ali, representative of the Pakistan Bar Council, the Hon'ble Mr. Akhtar Hussain, and myself, decided to reject the nominations of the three junior judges of the Sindh High Court and one junior judge of the Lahore High Court."

The judge further wrote that about the Peshawar High Court chief justice, it was decided that "since he was neither the senior-most chief justice nor the senior-most judge from amongst the five high courts, his name may be considered when placed alongside those of his peers, that is, with the CJs of the other high courts and senior-most judges, with the

provision of comparable data. It was also decided that the Constitution did not permit appointments to "anticipated" vacancies.

The members also raised the issue of not considering three senior Sindh High Court judges. This was the reason that the federal government, which had lost its influence in top judicial appointments, regained some importance in the process while the CJP's control was minimized.

CJP Bandial aired his grievance with the ruling coalition in his speech at the opening ceremony of the new judicial year 2022–23. The CJP mentioned the July 26 apex court decision, which declared Chaudhry Parvez Elahi as the chief minister of Punjab in the July 22 run-off poll, observing that the displeasure of the federal government over this decision became evident two days later at the JCP meeting on July 28.

The CJP said that "for the first time since JCP was constituted through the... 18th Amendment, the representatives of the federal government in the commission either deferred or chose not to support the candidates proposed by its chairman (CJP). As a result, the meeting had to be adjourned. Reportedly, the CJP invited the Attorney General and Law Minister days before convening the JCP meeting. It is said that the government has also raised some demand for voting on CJP's nominees.

However, despite the government's support, Justice Shafi Siddiqui could not get the nod of the JCP's majority, which exposed the weak position of the CJP. There was a tussle between the executive and the judiciary since the criteria for the appointment of judges had been changed in the 18th amendment of the constitution.

Previously, the President and the Chief Justice of Pakistan used to finalise the names for appointment in superior courts. The 18th amendment referred this power to the JCP and the Parliamentary Committee (PC).

The controversy over the powers of the PC and JCP surfaced after then Chief Justice of Pakistan, Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry, in October 2010, while hearing petitions against the 18th Amendment, 'overpowered' the PC and held that, "if the Parliamentary

Committee disagrees or rejects any recommendations of the Judicial Commission, it shall give specific reasons and the Prime Minister shall send a copy of the said opinion of the Committee to the Chief Justice of Pakistan and the same shall be justiciable by the Supreme Court".

After the said verdict, the government introduced the 19th Amendment but did not give the JCP a final say in the appointment of judges. However, in February 2011, when the PC rejected the JCP's recommendations for four additional judges on the Lahore High Court and two judges on the Sindh High Court, the sympathisers for the aggrieved judges brought the matter to the Supreme Court.

In deciding the petitions, the apex court observed that the PC was not mandated to evaluate professional capabilities. The said order, according to lawmakers, made the PC merely a rubber stamp. After being little more than a "rubber stamp" body for over three years, Parliament also made efforts to regain its power in the process of appointing judges.

At the recent meeting of the JCP, formulating criteria for the appointment of superior court judges as soon as possible was also discussed, besides proposing that the rules committee should be headed by senior puisne judge Justice Qazi Faez Isa instead of the CJP.

During the last meeting of the rules committee on March 9, the CJP expressed the desire to maintain objectivity in the process of appointment of judges and stressed the need for setting out simple and straightforward criteria to make assessments, evaluations, and then selections of judges for appointment to the high courts and Supreme Court. The PBC—the regulatory body of lawyers—had been against any fresh elevation to the superior courts before carrying out amendments and developing criteria in the Judicial Commission of Pakistan Rules 2010.

Meanwhile, Sindh Bar Council (SBC) Vice Chairman Zulfikar Jalbani rejected the nomination of what he called junior judges of the high courts and demanded the JCP reconsider these nominations after framing criteria and amending the JCP rules on the elevation of judges.

Balochistan's Insurgency cannot be dismissed as a Conspiracy Theory

The neutralization of the Baloch insurgency and its funding can materialize only if the state shows some strategic foresight

By Hamzah Rifaat Hussain

When the debate over Pakistan's largest province subsides, it will be clear that Balochistan's insurgency was a product of nefarious designs of countries seeking to undermine the writ of the state. My trip to the province in August revealed that the issue does not solely stem from Baloch nationalists seeking to rebel against the Pakistani state. They are playing the role of a spoiler in the entire peace process. Insurgent activity should hence not be viewed as an anomaly, but as a systematic operational technique to deliver a message to the wider target audience.

The insurgency which started as the Balochistan Liberation Army in its nascent stage is now called 'BRAS' or 'Baloch Raaji Aajoi Sangar' which is an amalgamation of different insurgent groups under one umbrella organization. The combination includes the BLA, the Balochistan Liberation Front, and the Balochistan Republican Army which have been active since 2019. Their merger opens up a dangerous front as the previously scattered insurgency is now a potent force, and a monolithic entity with vast resources, expertise, and capacity being directed at the Pakistani state. Its potency stems from the strong, unified command which has made them even more difficult to deal with.

Most Baloch leaders denounce violence and have distanced themselves from BRAS. Nationalist politicians such as Sanaullah Baloch for example did not link the grievances of the people and political leadership of Balochistan with the need to attack the Pakistani state. Many also agreed that groups such as BRAS which have been recently formed, have been actively funded, trained, and promoted by foreign intelligence agencies such as the Research and Analysis Wing of India (RAW), and the National Directorate of Security of Afghanistan (NDS). Poor policymaking, neglect, and callousness from the Islamabad security establishment made such an interference possible in the first place.



The linkage between foreign funding, training, weaponization, and BRAS must be understood for conclusions to be drawn on why attacks have taken place so brazenly. On Chinese investments, for example, Baloch insurgents have targeted China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects. The same has remained a longstanding objective of Pakistan's rival and neighbor India. The rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party government in India coincided with heightened rhetoric from Narendra Modi on different platforms across the world to undercut Pakistan's writ in the province and call for separatists to rebel against the state. The inauguration of the 'Free Balochistan' office in New Delhi as well as Narendra Modi's speech on India's Independence Day delivered in 2015 is a testament to this very fact. While speaking of Balochistan, Modi, a right-wing Hindu nationalist championed India's role in providing support to the Mukti Bahini rebels in the erstwhile East Pakistan which is an open endorsement of separatism.

Alongside political endorsement comes the weaponization of BRAS. The arrest of

Indian naval officer Kulbhushan Yadav in March 2016 revealed harrowing details of the subversive role that Indian agents have played in the province and across Pakistan. The Indian doctrine of 'Arthashastra' is still operational and speaks of promoting state expansion, and controlling neighboring states such as Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Bhutan through coercion and the direct use of force by Indian forces/ intelligence agencies. The Indian funding of the LTTE (Lanka Tamil Tiger Eelam) as a prelude to the 1987 IPKF (Indian Peace Keeping Force) being deployed in Sri Lanka for example was a classic, quintessential intervention which only exasperated the problem and contributed to greater unrest in the Sinhalese dominated island. Similarly, in Balochistan, the Kautilya doctrine is very much visible. The ability to brazenly attack Chinese academics in Karachi by groups associated with, abetted by, or being an integral part of, BRAS is not possible without Indian financial support.

Funding primarily takes place through Indian consulates in Jalalabad in Afghanistan as well as Kandahar. The funding is a

systematic and multilayered process given that India's activities in the 2000s involve creating an Islamic State (ISIS) chapter in Pakistan by relocating 30 Daesh militants from India to the Pakistan border. Through consulates, and foreign platforms ripe to employ nefarious designs, RAW has launched radio and live broadcasts in the Baloch language for online listeners (particularly) the youth to benefit from Indian propaganda about discrimination against the Baloch population by the Pakistani state, forced disappearances conducted by the Pakistan armed forces and suppression of indigenous economic rights through the operationalization of CPEC.

To date, the province has witnessed five insurgencies, namely, 1948, 1958, 1962, 1973-77, and 2002. In 2009, the insurgency morphed into a new movement when UNHCR representative David Solecki was kidnapped from Quetta which resulted in three Baloch nationalist leaders being killed in Turbat in the same year. However, it was in 2002 that covert funding and abetting of the Baloch insurgency was started by RAW. This includes development of infrastructure, promotion of connections and relationships, setting up of fifty-eight training institutes, supply of both small and heavy weapons to the insurgents, development of a modern communication network, and the provision of heavy funds. These realities unfolded in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks on the United States in 2001 and while there is little to suggest



that the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) would have a role to play in fomenting discord in the province, the incentives were there from the Indian state to undercut the armed forces, which was considered a sponsor of regional terrorism.

The Khan of Kalat for example, while developing a Council for a separate Balochistan in London acknowledged the role that like-minded countries played in guaranteeing help and assistance. This statement must be viewed against the backdrop of former Indian intelligence officer B Raman's claims that battling for an

independent Balochistan is an incomplete plan of partition. The entire concept of Akhand Bharat stems from this notion of "unfinished business" of partition. Hence the funding and endorsements of Indian intelligence officers' activities in the province.

In the light of this irrefutable evidence, the Pakistani state must call out the Baloch insurgency and the transformed BRAS for what it is. It is simply not enough to draw a false equivalence between liberal ideals and the Baloch insurgency as hundreds of similar insurgent movements are wreaking havoc across the world. Any challenge to the writ of the state must be denounced in all forms, with the civil and military leaderships sitting together and forming a consensus on how to move forward.

That said, the Baloch nationalist leadership must be taken on board as alienation of people's representatives will play into the hands of BRAS. The lack of accommodation of a diverse range of perspectives on Balochistan has been a lingering problem where Islamabad-centric policymaking only contributes to anxiety and animosity. Such a fertile ground should not be provided for disruptive forces to exploit with impunity. Policy-making on development as well as CPEC must be indigenous in their approach. The neutralization of the Baloch insurgency and its funding can materialize only if the state shows some strategic foresight.



Durand Line Agreement: Aftermath - PART 1

It is argued that Afghanistan has refrained from taking the issue of the Durand line to the UN, the International Court of Justice, or any other global forum because of the weakness of its legal case

By Azmat M Saqib

According to British historians, in the presence of Mortimer Durand, Afghan elite and tribal leaders were briefed about the agreement. Two thousand copies were distributed among Afghans, and a boundary commission was established. This commission demarcated the boundary in consultation with local tribal leaders, and cement pillars were erected along the demarcated boundary. The final map was documented in the record of the Afghan and British Indian governments. The annual sum paid to Afghanistan was increased to 1.8 million rupees annually and Afghans were allowed to buy arms from Britain. Both the 1919 and 1921 treaties reaffirmed the Durand line as 'accepted by the late Ameer'. In 1919, under the Anglo-Afghan Treaty, the Mohmand region was demarcated and future slight adjustments were made in 1921 and 1932, but no major changes were introduced.

Tribes and Pashtuns (their division into two countries) were upset by the tribal area divisions, especially Achakzai and Kakar tribes, and they moved across borders giving little importance to the Durand line.

Kafiristan was divided into two and greater areas were given to Afghans. Immediately after the agreement, the Afghan government declared Jihad against Kafiristan. Most of the Kafir tribal and religious leaders were executed, their herds seized and their homes, temples, ancestral burial grounds, and images/idols smashed and burnt. Some were kept in Kabul Museum and the name of the province was changed to Nuristan from Kafiristan and religious scholars were sent to Islamize the region.

In 1901, Ameer Abdur Rehman died due to gangrene. He is credited for establishing Afghanistan as a nation-state, defining boundaries, and introducing reforms for female rights. His son Habibullah Khan inherited the Durand line issue and British-controlled foreign policy, both of which were



unacceptable to Afghan nationalists. This pushed the Afghans to prepare for the third Anglo-Afghan war with the difference being that this time they would attack British India.

Although Ameer Habibullah remained neutral in WWI but did receive support in arms from the Turko-German alliance for generating strife on the British side of tribal areas. British forces in India were depleted due to WWI, with surging troops demand in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa.

To divert attention from internal strife and eyeing the British troops' weakness, Ameer Habibullah's forces supported by 80,000 tribal warriors launched an attack from Khyber Pass and Kurram Valley and captured border areas. To make matters worse, North and South Waziristan Militia deserted the British Army. Initially abandoning their posts, the British partially recovered after getting reinforcements from Peshawar and Lahore.

Royal Air Force bombing and Ameer's ceasefire offer brought the situation to a stalemate. Peace talks resulted in the Treaty of 1919. Formal diplomatic relations were established with Britain, full independence was granted to Afghanistan including foreign affairs, and in return the yearly grant to Afghanistan was stopped.

Russian civil war of 1917 between the Bolsheviks and Whites ended the Great game and the utility of Afghanistan as a

buffer state was no more. The third Anglo-Afghan war strengthened the tribal warriors. They looted the ammunition left by retreating Afghan and British armies during battles. Additionally, deserter militias further contributed to the tribes' warring potential, seriously challenging British control of that region.

The third Anglo-Afghan war began on May 6, 1919, and ended with an armistice on August 8, 1919. While it was essentially a minor tactical victory for the British in so much as they were able to repel the regular Afghan forces, in many ways it was a strategic victory for the Afghans.

The Treaty of 1919 was the first time a treaty was signed between the Governments of Afghanistan (and not with an Ameer) and Great Britain. It also recognized the Durand line as a valid boundary.

As mentioned earlier, no major changes were introduced in the Durand line after 1932. In 1935, King Zahir Shah ascended the throne. The liberal leader introduced western reforms but faced resistance from conservatives.

Against this Afghan backdrop came the partition of India and the British exit. Zahir Shah exploited the opportunity to divert the attention of internal resistance by demanding the return of Pashtun areas all the way up to the River Indus from the British before they leave. The British rejected the demand and divided the sub-continent between India and Pakistan.

Britain rejected the demand of Pashtun nationalists to create a third independent state of Pashtunistan, West of the River Indus as that would have given rise to several other independent state demands all over the sub-continent, especially the Princely states.

One nationalist faction wanted to integrate Pashtuns under Loya (greater) Afghanistan since the interest was twofold: Firstly, a larger population of Pakistani Pashtuns would have integrated into Afghanistan resulting in an outright majority, leading to a Pashtun ethnic rule. Secondly, the Pashtun regions of Baluchistan would have given better access to the Arabian Sea to landlocked Afghanistan. But another Pashtun faction wanted an independent Pashtun state between the Durand line and River Indus.

The fate of NWFP Pashtuns was to be decided by a referendum according to the partition formula. Princely states as in the rest of India were not part of the referendum territory, and the ruler was to decide its fate. Out of 51% voter turnout, 99% voted to join Pakistan.

Pashtun Nationalists led by Khan Abdul Ghaffar (Bacha) Khan boycotted the referendum since the Pashtunistan state was not put as an option. Tribal Jirgas were consulted by the British Governor of NWFP and the majority opted to remain with Pakistan. Besides, the tribals were allowed to move cross-border on a permit.

Moreover, the international courts have universally upheld the binding bilateral agreements with or between colonial powers, and that they are passed down to successor independent states, as was the case with most of Africa.

In July 1948, the Afghan government unilaterally renounced the Durand line agreement and said that it did not recognize "the imaginary Durand or any similar line". It named NWFP as upper Pashtunistan and Baluchistan as lower Pashtunistan.

A unilateral declaration by one party, however, is of no consequence and has no effect. The Afghan government has yet to produce evidence to back its claim. It is

argued that Afghanistan has refrained from taking the issue of the Durand line to the UN, the International Court of Justice, or any other global forum because of the weakness of its legal case. But Afghanistan did oppose Pakistan's membership bid at the UN by voting against it, primarily due to the Durand line unresolved issue according to them.

Pakistani Pashtun nationalists prominently, Bacha Khan, Abdus Samad Khan Achakzai, Faqeer of Ipi, and some other tribal leaders passed a declaration in June 1947 known as Bannu Declaration for demanding Pashtunistan. This demand was rejected by the British partition planners. Nationalists rejected the post-independence referendum results of NWFP.

Afghan infiltration into the tribal territories of fledgling Pakistan began to rise. In 1949, A Loya Jirga was summoned to Afghanistan, which renounced Durand line boundary agreement, but the world didn't pay any attention since it had accepted the Durand line as an international boundary.

Faqeer of Ipi was appointed commander of a Lashkar in 1936 in North Waziristan to wage Jihad against the British who had returned a converted married Muslim girl (considered a minor) to her Hindu parents.

British suffered heavy casualties both in North and South Waziristan but refused to hand over the girl nor did they vacate Waziristan as demanded by Faqeer of Ipi. In 1938, the Faqeer shifted to an isolated place in Gurwek. At the start of WWII, both Italians and Germans supplied him with arms to engage the British Indian Army in the tribal belt to prevent the Indian armed forces from being sent to the main war zone.

After 1947, he did not recognize Pakistan and continued his raids against the new nation's army. He announced the creation of Pashtunistan, and a Tribal Jirga held in Razmak in 1951 appointed him as the first President of Pashtunistan. He demanded the withdrawal of Pakistani troops from Pashtun territories and recognition by the UN as a state. He never surrendered till his death in 1960 but his close associates surrendered to Pakistan authorities in 1954. Money flow from Afghanistan had also

stopped due to some misunderstanding. Earlier in 1952, Pakistan Air Force bombed the Afghan-sponsored rebel camps, resulting in a rise in tensions with Afghanistan as well. Another narrative says the bombed place was the Pashtunistan Assembly meeting which killed 18 and after 3 days the house of Wali Khan Kukekhel was destroyed.

None of the Afghan rulers since King Zahir Shah accepted Durand line agreement, but the strongest troublemaker was Muhammad Daud Khan, a senior general from 1939 to 1953, who served his last years as Defense Minister. He was also married to the sister of King Zahir Shah and served as the Prime Minister from 1953 to 1963. He actively supported resistance and infiltrations into Pakistani tribal areas. In 1955, when one unit based in West Pakistan merged all provinces including NWFP into one province, Afghanistan protested that this is an invasion of Pashtun culture and territories.

On March 30, 1955, Afghans ransacked Pakistani embassy in Kabul, replacing the Pakistani flag with that of Pashtunistan. Consulates of Jalalabad and Kandahar faced the same fate. Pakistan retaliated by cutting off diplomatic relations for some time and closing the landlocked Afghanistan's cross-border trade.

Yet, the Afghan hatred continued and in 1960, Afghan troops entered Bajaur but were repulsed by Pakistani forces. Afghan radio propaganda increased in 1961, and Daud Khan's forces again attacked Bajaur supporters by tribal warriors of Kunar in Afghanistan. This time Pakistan responded strongly and inflicted heavy casualties on invading forces through Air Force bombardment, took prisoners, and displayed them on international media. This was a great embarrassment for PM Daud Khan.

Pakistan completely sealed off its borders with Afghanistan and stopped cross-border trade. An economic crisis developed in Afghanistan although some trade did occur from the Russian side. King Zahir Shah forced Daud Khan to resign as PM, blaming his failed Pashtunistan policies. Pakistan opened its borders in May 1963 and normalcy in relations returned for some time.

The ICC T20 World Cup 2022

Teams must ensure that if they win, they win easily

By Ali Abdullah

The ICC T20 World Cup is underway in Australia. Each group has six teams. The top 8 teams automatically qualified for the top 12 rounds, whereas the other four teams had to play qualifiers to qualify for the final round of the ICC T20 World Cup 2022.

Ireland, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan qualified and went into Group 1. Zimbabwe and the Netherlands made it to Group 2. The tournament started with upsets. Namibia could not make it to the final round, but they did beat Sri Lanka in the qualifiers. The West Indies, the two-time world T20 champions, were unable to qualify.

Teams are now put into two groups: group 1 and group 2. Group 1: Ireland, Sri Lanka, New Zealand, Australia, England, and Afghanistan are in Group 1. Group 2 consists of Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, South Africa, Zimbabwe, and the Netherlands.

The hosts Australia played their first match against New Zealand. New Zealand gave them a target of 200, but Australia could only make 111. Ireland beat England in the group stage. Ireland made a total of 157 in 19 overs. England lost early wickets due to which they were not able to maintain their run rate. When England started to accelerate, the rain stopped the match and Ireland won by 5 runs using the DLS (Duckworth–Lewis–Stern) method.

Much-anticipated India vs Pakistan match in the World T20 2022 ended with India managing to win on the very last ball of the match. Interestingly, on all 3 occasions that India and Pakistan have come face to face this year, the match has finished in the final over.

India invited Pakistan to bat first. Arshdeep Singh came on a mission to destroy Pakistan's batting and that is exactly what he did. He sent back both the top batters of Pakistan, Rizwan and Babar, cheaply. Shan Masood and Iftikhar Ahmed took the responsibility of rebuilding the innings.

The 76-run stand between Iftikhar Ahmed and Shan Masood brought Pakistan back into the game, but the wickets started to fall again. Iftikhar Ahmed played brilliantly for his 51 (34), which included 4 sixes, while Shan Masood remained not out for 52(42). Pakistan posted 159/8 on the board. Arshdeep Singh and Hardik Pandya took 3 wickets each.

The Indian innings also had a shaky start when Naseem Shah sent back KL Rahul in the 2nd over of the innings. Haris Rauf then dismissed Rohit Sharma and Suryakumar Yadav in consecutive overs to put India in trouble. Virat Kohli held one end, while soon after Rohit's dismissal, Axar also went back. Then came Hardik Pandya, with whom the match-winning partnership was established by Virat Kohli.



Virat and Pandya had a partnership of 113 runs. The game was taken to the very last over, where India needed 16 runs to win. Mohammad Nawaz came on to bowl and dismissed Pandya on the very first ball. Nawaz kept things quiet till the third ball, when he bowled a high full toss, which was called a no ball by the umpires and went for six. While watching the replay, many believed it was below the waist line, but the umpire's decision was final.

After that no ball and six, Nawaz bowled another wide, and then, on the free hit, India took 3 runs off of byes. With only one ball left and two runs needed, Nawaz bowled wide and then gave up the last run, letting India win.

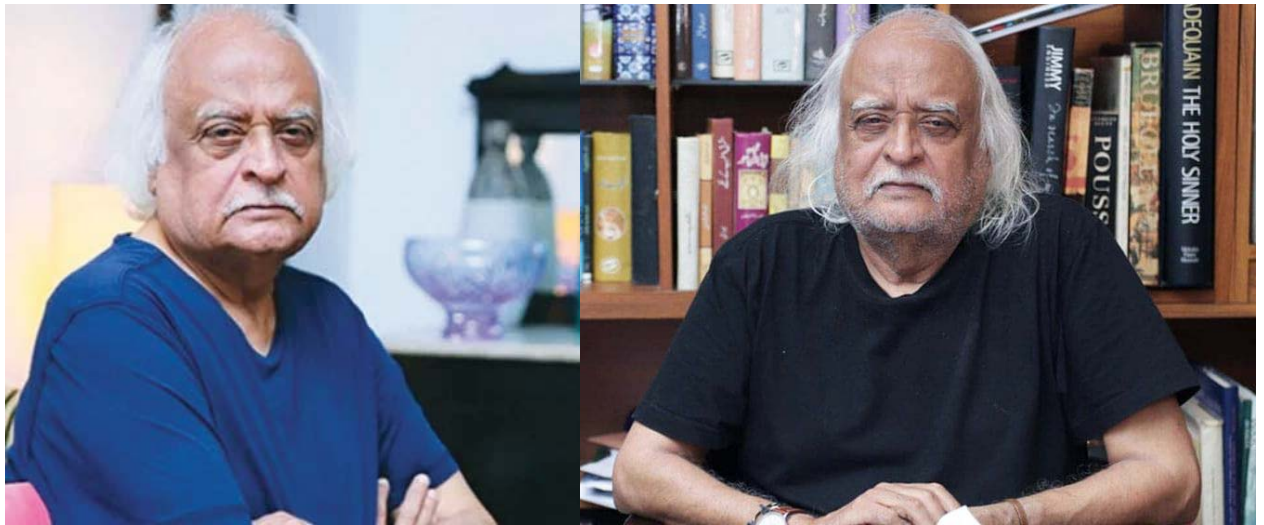
Interestingly, in Pakistan's earlier win over India, Nawaz was their hero, but today he proved to be the villain for them. The game was definitely one to remember because there was drama, tension, nerves, anxiety, and a controversial no-ball call.

On the 27th, South Africa played Bangladesh. Previously, Bangladesh beat the Netherlands easily. In this match against South Africa, the Bengal Tigers just managed to score a little over 100 runs while chasing 206.

Winning matches is always important if you want to qualify for the next round, but in this specific world cup in Australia, you have to win and make sure your net run rate is good enough as well because the month of October is the wettest month in Australia. A few games were abandoned due to rain. Afghanistan and New Zealand both got 1 point. The Zimbabwe vs. South Africa game also got washed out. A few teams played with reduced overs, which obviously affected the game plan.

In the end, the net run rate might play a huge role. As a result, teams must ensure that if they win, they win easily rather than taking the game to the final over on purpose.

A Conversation with the Legend: Anwar Maqsood



By Kaukab Jahan

The living legend of Pakistan, Anwar Maqsood, talked exclusively to The Truth International. He elaborately spoke about his recent political satire stage play, Sadey 14 August. He also explained why he had distanced himself from television.

You wrote to Pawnay on August 14, Sawa on August 14, and Saadhey on August 14. Why not August 14?

I was only eight years old when I migrated to Pakistan in 1948. Since then, I have been waiting for August 14. So, I could only write Pawnay, August 14, Sawa, August 14, and Saadhey, August 14, as a finale. I am 82 and I hope one day I will see August 14 too.

So how do you think August 14th can actually happen in Pakistan?

We, as a country, have been through a lot in the last 75 years, mostly sorrow rather than happiness. I believe sorrows in life enable us to differentiate between truth and lies. We are optimistic people. We lost half of our country 50 years ago but still love it. We are lucky to have everything in Pakistan, from fertile land to mineral-rich mines to flowing rivers in all four seasons, but remain unlucky to have good leaders. We could not get a sincere leader after Quaid-e-Azam. Otherwise, we would have been in a better situation as Pakistanis.

What the play 'Sadey 14 August' is all about?

It is about why India was divided. Was it the right or wrong move? Who was responsible for dividing this great state, Jinnah or Gandhi? To get a conclusion, some people in London have filed a case against both leaders. To fight the situation, they are asked to visit four cities: Delhi, Lahore, Kashmir, and London to ask the people there about what they thought of the partition that happened in 1947. If it was wrong, then who was responsible?

This time you have also included an item number in your play.

Yes. It was there. Some liked it, while others criticised its inclusion in the play. In this period, both leaders travel to Delhi. The city is bursting with poverty and many other problems, but there was an item being shot with millions and millions of rupees spent on it. That item number is not part of the story but necessary to include as, without it, a movie could not be a hit. So Quaid and Gandhi are sitting in a Dhaba near the shooting when the director comes and asks all participants to pat their heads in a certain way when it starts. Quaid resigned from that position, while Gandhi stayed to see where India was going.

Aaja Jani Paan Khila De.

Dila Dill Lele Mobile

Mantri Bun Jaon Gi Mantri Bun Jaon Gi Mein Bhi Mantri Bun Jaon Gi.

Pilade Moodi Bun Ja Chai.

You wrote 10 stage plays in the last 10 years. Most of them were about politics. Why?

I think nothing has been happening in Pakistan other than politics for the last many years. The entertainment I get from politics may not come from any comedy play. How much I enjoy and laugh while watching any assembly session can't be matched with a comedy-drama. In fact, these days I only watch one thing on television; the live session of the assembly, where I observe its members' mannerisms, clothes, and how they talk and misbehave with each other in bad language, which I can't use in my plays.

How much does a writer need to be politically aware?

If he or she believes in the truth, then it is impossible to ignore the political conditions of the country. The politicians are hanging on us like a star. We can't ignore or free ourselves from them.

On television, you were at your best, with memorable dramas, satire, and humour, and hosting shows. Why have you left the medium of television?

I did not leave television, but it left me. What is currently being aired and demanded on television, I can't compromise on that. I can't write a play in which, of a total of 45 minutes, 40 minutes are spent showing characters talking on cell phones, and half of the play is shot in the same bedroom. The same stories with the same characters are repeated. But I hope it will change.

What actors do you think are best suited for your scripts?

There are many. But Moin Akhtar was phenomenal and worked for the longest time with me (almost 32 years). He had a command of the script, whether it was serious or humorous. For female actors, Bushra Ansari plays characters well. There are many new actors these days. Actually, I believe that a good script helps an actor a lot. No matter if the actors and director of a play are weak, working on a strong script makes the project a hit.

Why haven't you written any feature films yet?

I tried once. Sajjad Gul, the ace producer of his time, once took me to Mauritius. It was released too, but when I watched it on screen, it had only one sentence of my script; Yasmeen Ismail's saying to Nadeem Baig, "Assalam Alikum." They said my script was too literary.

So, what do you think are the reasons that we are not coming up with good stories and fresh ideas?

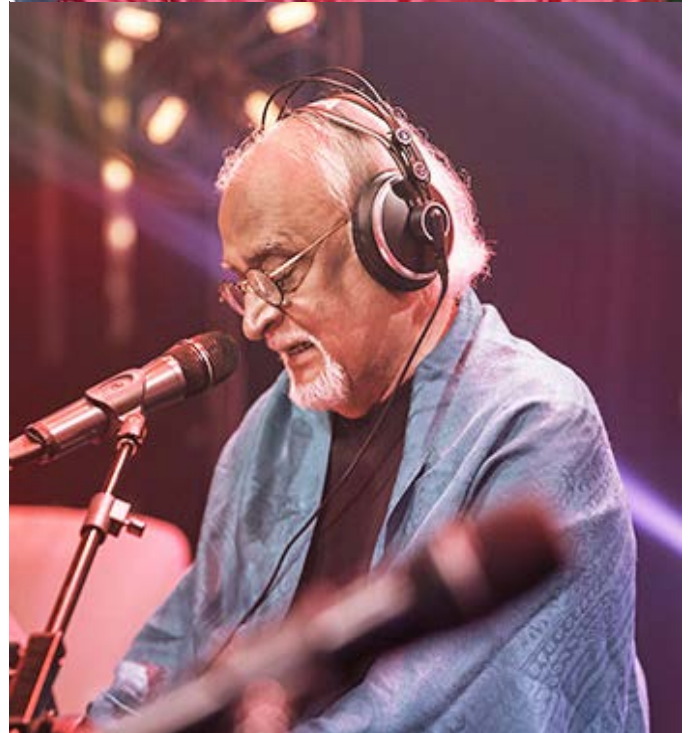
Actually, writers are constantly churning out what people want to watch. Plays with 70 to 100 episodes are coming out every day on every channel.

We see that for about the last decade, our mainstream television channels have stopped writing satire despite the fact that there has been too much political chaos in the country during this period.

I think in the whole world, the most difficult genre in literature is to write satire. If there are 10 million people who write seriously, you will find only 10 satirists in the comparison. Even in our classic literature, there are a few names that we can count on our fingers who write with humour. Writing satire is like walking on a razor's edge, from which you can fall to pieces at any time. So you have to be very careful when choosing and writing words. A certain kind of humour is still available; mimicking voices, acting, or moving in a certain manner. People are enjoying it too. Furthermore, serious issues are now being presented in a humorous manner. Then I think there is no need to write more humour.

We don't see any Anwar Maqsood or Moin Akhtar in the coming days. Why?

I am hopeful. The land of Pakistan is fertile with talent. New writers would definitely come.



The Parting Gift (1970)

By Zeenat Iqbal Hussain

They were madly in love. Happiness glowed on their cheeks when they faced the colourful world. Mark and Susan were the children of prosperous parents. Life had been kind to them but God's blessings were only bestowed on a few as would be proved later on. Kind as in material possessions. Mark's house was full of guests. It was there that in fact he met Susan. The first meeting was followed by a series of them. They decided to seal their relationship and with the consent of their parents they got engaged. Mark was a handsome boy. Girls did vie with each other for his attention. One such girl was his parents' choice for his partner. Obviously she was his mother's friend's daughter. Very compatible, because she was in and out of their house very often and was almost a family member. Mark liked her – but the liking was never to turn into love.

Mark was a businessman; and his commitments kept him busy for the day. 'The stocks of the company are experiencing a low'. He told a colleague. 'The clients are not satisfied and are not ready to invest'. 'We'll have to work the nights'. But he spared some time every day for his beloved. Sometimes with flowers, sometimes over a meal, sometimes just to remind her that he loved the colour of her eyes, he always had time for such sentiments.

After a brief engagement they married. They went off on their honeymoon to Switzerland. Switzerland was an ideal place. A place without an army. A peaceful setting, detached from the morbid states engaged in war. Amongst so many people, from all around the world, the two of them saw only each other. Walking in the shadows of the Alps, hand in hand, they made a commitment never to let this end. 'Wear your skis. I'll race you'. 'I'm too scared'. 'Take the plunge'. 'oo---oop---oops'. She was out of sight. Discovered in a pile of snow. 'I thought I told you to watch it at the curve'. Seeing her red nose poke through the snow he stifled a giggle. Having made a special trip to separate them, guess who else was there. The same girl. She had not accepted defeat. She tried to blackmail him,

by using his mother. Her befitting attitude towards his mother was a result of her long association with him. She was a good cook, unlike his mother and as they say, the way to a man's heart is through his stomach. She once cooked a meal that was so tasty that they licked their fingers clean. Susan's ego was offended.

But there was always Mark's shoulder to lean on. He assured and reassured her. There was no need to worry. The 'uninvited guest' would never change his love for her. Other couples saw them as ideals for a perfect married life. His mother would tell him that marriage was not a bed of roses and not to be disappointed if anything went against his wishes. She went on, saying that Mark's father had been short tempered at the start of their marriage and many times she kept quiet when he had an anger fit. Mark's retort, 'I know mom, I think I can handle it. You make it sound so difficult, when it is actually not'. 'The situation would get out of control, otherwise'. She advised him, as any mother would her son.

Susan conceived a child in their first year of marriage. Their first child was not going to be planned. The gynaecologist examined her every month. A girl was a great help for the mother and they desired a girl as their first born. Frills, bows all in pink with linen to match, Susan visualised her daughter's frocks and her room. Susan's mother had good taste, which showed in Susan's attire. She was nominated for the best dressed person at a party once.

It was the eight month of pregnancy. An ultra sound showed that it was a girl. Yet their elders were reluctant to make any baby clothes or other things for the baby before hand. They felt that others would be envious, and that was not a good sign.

'I can't wait to see her'. As he felt the baby turn in Susan's belly. 'Then you'll say you're pressed for time, because she is a handful'. 'That will never happen'. 'We'll see'. She got the last word.

The name, what should the name be. Natasha was selected. Natasha was a

Russian name. Susan's parents had spent some years in Russia. Her father had held a good post in the Pakistan Embassy there. Her mother liked the name and had wanted to name her grandchild Natasha.

The delivery time was near. She experienced contractions. The doctor and nurses were by her side. But God's blessing escaped them. Susan's life was in danger. On their knees they prayed – the parents. 'Oh! God, save her – if they are our sins you hold against us, do not make her pay, please God, please'. Some complications developed. Could it be that the evil spirit had entered Susan's body? The evil spirit that the fortune teller had warned Mark against. Could it be that the profound effort of giving birth and the effort of fighting the evil spirit broke down a weary and tired Susan and finally killed her? Mark awoke to religion as he had been advised by the fortune teller – better late than never. The doctor tried his utmost best to save both mother and child. It was touch and go. They all huddled together outside the operation theatre, looking at each other for strength. The doctor arrived, his face sullen. The message he was about to convey to them was obvious.

Susan breathed her last on a shocked Mark's lap. The parting gift, Natasha, lay in the nurse's hands. Caught between sorrow and happiness, he had to decide, to get over his sorrow for Natasha, Susan's and his Natasha.

Even to this day holding Natasha's finger he visits the grave, talks to her and gets her response. It seems like she tells him, do not give up, for Natasha. And little Natasha clasps her hands in prayer, taught to her by her father. In a whisper, she recites ----- in the name of the father, the son and the Holy Ghost. Amen. He walks away with the child, a smile on his face, ready to take on the world. And still in the race is the girl, who however much she tries will not change matters or should she try through Natasha. She would not give up. Mark was worth it. They do not make them quite like him nowadays.

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