

Fortnightly

# The Truth International

Islamabad

1<sup>st</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> December 2022

ABC Certified

Posting of CJCS and COAS

Political uncertainty deepens with IK decision to quit Provincial Assemblies

Economic condition remains critical

IMF loan could not stabilize Pak economy

Durand Line

Century old disputes can trigger more despite a friendly Government in Afghanistan

## Change of Command Political & Economic Instability Still a Challenge



# CONTENTS

## Editorial

Ladies and Gentlemen, The New Chief! By Hammad Ghaznavi – **Page 04**

## Opinion

Hail to the Chief by M A Niazi – **Page 05**

When comedy kings leave us crying by M A Niazi – **Page 07**

## Politics

Will the change of command also change perceptions? By Tahir Niaz – **Page 08**



The Shadow of Political Uncertainty By Noor Aftab – **Page 10**

Are we heading toward a Popular Dictatorship? By Umer Farooq – **Page 12**



Punjab: PMLQ-PTI Coalition's Performance by Ahmad Waleed – **Page 15**

A costly watch could prove costly by Sarfraz Raja – **Page 16**

## Foreign Affairs

Another war at home by Syed Fakhar KaKaKhel – **Page 18**

Durand Line Agreement: Aftermath by Azmat M Saqib – **Page 20**

Fortnightly  
**The Truth International**  
Islamabad  
1<sup>st</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> December 2022

Posting of CICS and COAS  
Political uncertainty deepens with 1K decision to quit  
Parliament & Islamabad  
Economic condition remains critical  
IMF loan could not stabilize Pak economy  
Durand Line  
Centers and provinces can trigger more dispute a critically  
Government in Afghanistan

**Change of Command  
Political & Economic Instability  
Still a Challenge**

**Editor:**  
Zaheer ud Din Babar Thaheem

**Advisor to Editor:**  
Ashraf Malkham

**Marketing / Advertisement:**  
Zamir A. Naushahi  
**Contact:** 0321-4006247  
**Email:** seniormanagermarketing@tti.org.pk

**Circulation:**  
Irfan Ali  
**Contact:** 0345-9908108  
**Email:** irfanawku@gmail.com

**Letter to Editor:**  
Feel free to mail us at: editor@tti.org.pk

**Postal Address:**  
Fortnightly "The Truth International"  
205-D, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Evacuee Trust Complex,  
Agha Khan Road, F-5/1, Islamabad, Pakistan.  
**Contact:** +92 51 2820180-1  
**Email:** info@tti.org.pk  
**Web:** www.thetruthinternational.com

**Price:** Rs. 435

**Publisher:**  
Muhammad Fahad Thaheem

**Printer:**  
Masha Allah Printers  
Basement # 9, Ratta Mansion, Fazal e Haq  
Road, Blue Area, Islamabad.

**Design & Layout:**  
Abdul Qadir

**DISCLAIMER:** The articles published in this magazine collected from various writers, and sources are disseminated for information only. Therefore, the publisher shall not be responsible for any mistake/error.



G-20 Summit: Analysing Implications of Xi-Biden Meeting by Aimen Bukhari – **Page 23**



Will Russia's tormenting of Ukraine work? By Dr Moonis Ahmar – **Page 25**

## Economy

IMF and the Debt Crisis by Mehtab Haider – **Page 27**

Despite the IMF programme, the economic condition of Pakistan remains critical by Javed Mahmood – **Page 30**



Economy in Shambles by Arsim Tariq – **Page 32**

The state of the textile industry in Pakistan by Hamza Qureshi – **Page 34**

A consistent downward slide by Miftah Ismail – **Page 37**



## Investigation

Amendment in Army Act story by Umer Farooq – **Page 39**

Arshad Sharif's murder: Still a Mystery by Asadullah Malik – **Page 41**



Pakistan's Options for Climate Financing by Azeem Waqas – **Page 42**

## Climate Change

Poor Nations Facing the Brunt of Climate Change by Mahnur Mehfuz – **Page 44**

SMOG: Environmental and Health Impacts by Anum Akram – **Page 46**

## Technology

Terrifying Model 'Mindy' Reveals What Humans May Look Like in The Year 3000 by Pavan Manzoor – **Page 48**

Musk feuds with Apple over Twitter advertising by Ben Derico – **Page 49**

## Sports

Qatar World Cup 2022: Shrouded in Controversies by Ali Abdullah – **Page 50**



'Historic Test Series': England in Pakistan after 17 years by Ali Abdullah – **Page 51**

## Entertainment

Yasir Hussain: Talent Speaks for Itself by Kaukab Jahan – **Page 52**

Rising Stars: Interview with Rabia Shah by Neha Ayub – **Page 54**

# Ladies and Gentlemen, The New Chief!

By Hammad Ghaznavi



Finally, Pakistan has a new army chief, General Syed Asim Munir. Uncertainty gripped the country for months as for the new appointment, despite apparently being a simple matter according to the constitution that vested the power concerned in the Prime Minister. The new chief has his platter full, as he has entered the office at a juncture when the country faces political instability, economic meltdown and return of terrorism, besides numerous regional challenges. Institutionally, the new chief will have to tackle the factors impacting the internal discipline of the army. Above all, the much trumpeted institutional decision to stay apolitical will be a major test for the new chief.

It was no secret that former PM Imran Khan's choice for the chief was General Faiz Hameed, who was known for his role in bringing Imran Khan into power. That was not to be, as Khan was voted out of the PM office last April. The new chief's appointment, however, remained on Khan's mind. He came up with many a formula to have a say in the appointment of the new chief. For instance, he offered General (retd) Bajwa to have an extension, ensure snap polls, and leave the COAS appointment to the new government: then he said that the new chief should be selected on 'merit', while 'thieves' would not be allowed to have their 'own man' as the new chief and so on. Basically, Khan was not comfortable with one contender because of their unsavoury past. General Asim Munir was unceremoniously

transferred after eight months from DG ISI office when he presented evidence to PM Khan of his wife's involvement in dubious financial activities. Efforts to get Gen Bajwa an extension continued till PML-N's supremo Nawaz Sharif put his foot down, reportedly ignoring the threats of 'intervention'. In the end, however, better sense prevailed and all the stakeholders, the institution and the politicians, agreed on the seniority principle in the appointments of Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee and COAS.

This backdrop does not mean that the new chief is indebted to the Sharifs for his appointment and going to favour them in any sense. History testifies, the army chief is his own man, loyal to the institution and country. Neither is he expected to hold grudge against those who opposed his appointment. Simply put, the chief and the institution, do not afford it. The hybrid regime proved a bad idea. Supporting one political party and vehemently opposing others during the last few years had put the army in an odd situation. When the army decided to go neutral around a year ago, former PM didn't like it, and started a vitriolic campaign against his hitherto benefactors. What are Khan's options now? If he continues to attack the new military leadership on any pretext, or try to create political and economic instability, he will miss the opportunity to mend fences with the Establishment, which will further hurt his politics.

A word about the new chief: The new chief,

a Hafiz e Quran, an upright, no-nonsense character, has served as DG MI and ISI. He has the reputation of an apolitical, moderate, straight, professional soldier. To start with, he has to put his own house in order. The army's decision to get out of politics – a gigantic task – has to be implemented in letter and spirit. With the huge multiplying economic interests that the Establishment has in the system, abandoning all political power seems a tough choice as the two go hand in hand. On the external front, the new chief is expected to toe his predecessor's policies. The ceasefire agreement with India is likely to remain in-tact; the Afghanistan policy of finding ways to cut off the Taliban government support to TTP will possibly be pursued with renewed vigour under the new military leadership. And the relations with traditional allies – West, Islamic world and China – are expected to be repaired.

All in all, it's the internal politics that poses the biggest challenge to the new chief. The Long March of former PM has ended without putting enough pressure on the PDM government for snap polls, but Khan refuses to budge. He has now decided to dissolve his governments in Punjab and KP. If he does so, the government will have to deal with its biggest political challenge thus far. Traditionally, in such situations the Establishment has been playing the key role of resolving the political crisis. If such a situation arises, how will the new COAS intervene, without kicking up a controversy? That's the question!



# Hail to the Chief

*The price of being COAS*

By M A Niazi

The appointment of Lt Gen Asim Munir as the next Chief of Army Staff, though dramatic, was hardly a surprise. However, General Asim had been rendered controversial because of his having been removed early from his assignment as DG ISI, back in 2019, after it is alleged, he told then Prime Minister Imran Khan of corruption in Punjab. The allegations were of old-fashioned corruption, of money being taken for postings, by Chief Minister Usman Buzdar, whom Imran had labelled his 'Wasim Akram-Plus', Imran's wife Bushra and her friend Farah Shahzadi 'Gogi'. Imran's reaction had not been to stop the corruption; but to get the officer moved out of ISI. His replacement, Lt Gen Faiz Hameed, was more to Imran's liking, and the delay, in late 2020, over his being posted as Corps Commander Peshawar, was because Imran wanted to retain him as DG ISI.

Interestingly, General Faiz was also on the list of the six most senior eligible officers for the posts of COAS and Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, but at seniority No 5. General Faiz retires in April, while General Asim's three-year tenure ends in November 2025.

On the face of it, General Asim just happened to be the senior most, but his stand as DG ISI showed that he was not a True Believer in the Imran narrative. It could also be seen from the episode how the Army protects its own. He did not suffer from that incident and was given the Gujranwala Corps instead of the ISI. After two years as a corps commander, he came to GHQ as the Quarter Master General, his present assignment. He had been DGMI before going to the ISI, where he remained until June 2019.

Some historical lessons can be drawn from that episode, assuming it occurred. First, it would have served as evidence to the Army that Imran was afflicted by the politicians' disease of corruption. It would also explain the pressure on Imran by the military to



remove Buzdar. It was just his inefficient governance, but his being at the centre of the nexus of corruption. This episode would also have provided a strong argument for those who felt that Army interventions in politics, which were ongoing up to the time of the 2018 elections, were counterproductive. The best way of preserving the Army's reputation would be to withdraw itself from politics, General Asim would be the right person for such a task, as he has been not just DG ISI, but was DGMI just before that. While his appointment was given such wide coverage and close attention because of the Army's previous political role, the speech of his predecessor, Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa, to a Defence and Martyrs Day ceremony the day before, would also express sentiments that would tie his hands. However, his political importance may not be as great as that of some of his predecessors, but it will still be great.

The country is a little like a recovering alcoholic or drug addict. Martial law is like a relapse, and as alcoholics or addicts can attest, once in the trap, one cannot ever assume that one is out of it. Alcoholics and addicts always identify themselves as such, merely adding the

number of days they have stayed away from substance abuse.

There is no indication of his having been feverishly pro-Imran before his taking over the ISI, but it is a safe assumption that he was likely to have been favourably inclined. That apparently did not stop him from doing what was right. It is possible to see him telling Imran about the malfeasances in Punjab in a positive spirit, in the belief that he would carry out a self-correction. Instead, he demanded his head. The COAS had to do some clever footwork to get him his corps command; and make sure he qualified for the COAS slot. General Bajwa can be seen as fair to all, for his insistence on moving General Faiz from ISI was so that he could command a corps, and thus qualify for the top slot.

There is another reason why General Asim is a standout: he is not a Kakul graduate. He passed out from the Officers Training School, Mangla. Having won the Sword of Honour there in his course; would have stood him in good stead, but he would have spent his working life having to live down the OTS label. He would also have found himself excluded from the informal network which is under the formal



network that constitutes the structure of the Army. He is a Piffer (that is, was commissioned into a unit of the Frontier Force Regiment), which means that the infantry retains the slot, as it has done continuously since a gunner last held the job, Gen Pervez Musharraf. General Bajwa belonged to the Baloch Regiment, his predecessor, Gen Raheel Sharif, was also a Piffer.

That he is of a different caste from General Bajwa (whose very name identifies him as a Jat) means that Punjab Chief Minister Ch Pervez Elahi (or other Jat politicians) will no longer be able to trade on this. Ch Pervez has used the caste coincidence to increase his own importance in Imran's eyes. However, though there are a number of Syed politicians, none can use that to claim access to Syed who has now become COAS. The last Syed to have held the job was Pervez Musharraf. He did not allow this to become a means of getting close to him.

Though Imran did not want General Asim appointed, the vigour of the institution's

reaction may force him to tacitly accept the appointment. He had earlier tried to make the appointment controversial by saying that consulting Mian Nawaz Sharif and Asif Zardari would mean they would attempt to pick a COAS who would help them cover up their corruption. The episode of the Punjab corruption makes it seem that he wanted to make the appointment because he wanted his own corruption covered up.

Be that as it may, it should be noted that the new COAS will not be beholden to the Prime Minister, as he was after all the most senior officer. Even if he feels beholden, he will be overcome by his institution. From one point of view, the COAS is all-powerful, but from another he is powerless. He is all-powerful if his orders are the ones that will be obeyed. He is powerless in that he must ensure that his orders do not go against the wishes of the institution, which essentially means the officer corps.

That means that whenever Martial Law

was imposed, it was done because the officer corps wanted it. In the case of the third Martial Law imposed by Ziaul Haq, he resisted doing so, but then found he had to. Once he had, everything then followed.

Similarly, General Musharraf would not have imposed Martial Law if a redline had not been crossed. It is a separate discussion of how much he and his team contributed to that crossing (his dismissal), but the fact of the matter is that the officer corps was more or less ready.

The COAS thus has to keep on assessing the mood of the officer corps, which relies on his judgement. That also means that political leaders have to do the same. It should not view the COAS as an uncrossable barrier. The new COAS should try to make sure that matters do not reach the point of no return.

The country is a little like a recovering alcoholic or drug addict. Martial law is like a relapse, and as alcoholics or addicts can attest, once in the trap, one cannot ever assume that one is out of it. Alcoholics and addicts always identify themselves as such, merely adding the number of days they have stayed away from substance abuse. Pakistan has been under Martial Law. At this point, it has avoided military rule for under a decade. Hopefully, General Asim will lengthen that time. It is a pity that the primary method of assessing his legacy will not be on how well he leads the Pakistan Army, what reforms he introduces, or anything that he does, but rather on something he doesn't do (impose martial law). But that is the price of being COAS.



## When comedy kings leave us crying



While the whole country has been focused on Imran Khan's Long March and the COAS' appointment, tragedy has struck the world of comedy. Tariq 'Teddy' and Ismail Tara died within five days of each other last week. Tariq Teddy was the ornament of the Lahore stage, while Ismail Tara was that of Karachi's.

He was probably better known, for he exploded into public view in Fifty Fifty – a famous TV show, it must be about 50 years now. Teddy on the other hand, was a stage comedian par excellence; and did not have such a long career. It is not known, but I'm sure the young Teddy must have been influenced by Tara, whom he must have seen on TV even before he had made it in his native Faisalabad. Of course, Faisalabad was not enough, for he had to come to Lahore, where he made it big.

The passing of these two puts me in mind of a decade ago, when in April 2011, Babbru Bral and Mastana died within five days too, of one another. Tariq had been their junior, but the loss of those two at the same time shook Lahore's theatre to its foundations, for they were two of the premier comedians on the Lahore stage.

Tariq was known as Teddy because he was a small chap, just like a teddy bakra, a breed of a small goat. Tariq's size provided much

grist to the mill of scriptwriters, and he turned this apparent disadvantage to a comic advantage.

Tariq and Ismail were never paired together, though both were parts of celebrated pairs. Tariq Teddy had a pairing with Mastana, though that was broken by Mastana's death. For those who saw them on stage, it was apparently a love-hate relationship, for though both engaged in jugatbaazi (exchange of quips, preferably one-liners) with other comedians to great effect, the jugatbaazi they engaged in with each other was not just wildly funny, but reached a new comic level, almost as if theory inspired each other.

But then Ismail Tara too had an incredible pairing on Fifty Fifty, with Maajid Jehangir, when they played a pair of elderly Karachi businessmen. Ismail Tara was 73, which meant a generational difference with Tariq Teddy, who was only 46. Tara died of kidney failure, Tariq of the liver. They will both be sorely missed.

Will Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa be sorely missed? He was hardly a comic figure; and had the glowering presence of an army officer. Like his two predecessors, he was the son of a soldier. Just as he was going, there was a report about his and his family's accumulation of assets. PTI people think that is why he replaced Imran, and while he

was in office, prevented him from taking action against the Sharifs or Zardari. Is that going to be his new narrative?

But what's the point of re-electing him if the new COAS will prevent him from pursuing the corrupt? And he will; because there're already stories swirling about shakedowns of leading businessmen when he was Corps Commander Gujranwala.

Meanwhile, there's turmoil in the Bahasa-speaking world. Malaysia has been through an election, which has had some odd results. First of all, Dr Mahathir Muhammad lost his seat. That's a bad thing to happen to any 97-year-old, let alone a former PM. Imran should learn from that example, though he must be heartened by the example of Anwar Ibrahim, who has finally become PM at the age of 75. A long, long time ago, he had been brought in by Mahathir to attract the youth vote. Anyhow, he later went to jail for assaulting his driver. However, he has made it. Somebody Imran can learn from.

Of course, Imran is too busy these days to learn stuff. Now that he has got the Long March out of the way, telling people he will dissolve the assemblies and force elections. That sounds like a formula for fresh elections, but it depends on Ch Parvez Elahi agreeing. Will he?

By M A Niazi

# Will the change of command also change perceptions?

*Damage control remains the first and foremost task for the new army chief. Being apolitical means ensuring due space for the political forces to display their statesmanship*

By Tahir Niaz

A change of command ceremony was held at the General Headquarters on Tuesday, November 29. The ceremony—a military tradition that represents a transfer of authority and responsibility for a unit or command—marked the change in Pak Army leadership after six years.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif appointed Lt. General Asim Munir as his new military chief on Thursday. Sharif's predecessor, Imran Khan, who is leading a campaign against the incumbent government, wanted his pick. Khan has been demanding fresh elections since he was voted out of power in April this year through a no-confidence motion. Anyhow, the appointment of a new army chief was as smooth as it should have been.

Munir, a former spymaster, took the reins of the army at a turbulent time in the country, especially in political terms. The country is in a serious political and economic crisis because the ruling coalition and opposition parties are unwilling to sit down and devise a strategy to steer the country out of the crisis. The political forces in the country have negatively redefined "politics" in the past few months by going far away from morality and decency. The political acrimony is at its peak, while the protracted political instability has led to economic turmoil. Political instability coupled with uncertainty has left the common man nowhere.

The ex-army chief, General Bajwa, has been claiming for months that the army's role in the country's politics has been reviewed. He assure the nation that the military has been apolitical since February this year. The army chief is considered the most powerful person in Pakistan due to the country's geopolitical position and security dynamics. But the military's role in the country's politics has always



been a topic of discussion, with the military itself denying having played any such big role. Nonetheless, the military on one side has a big economic stake in Pakistan, and on the other, it plays a crucial role in national affairs. Who commands this highly significant institution is a matter of great significance and consequence.

Given the background, the role of Pakistan's military chief has always been of great importance, and the present political and economic situation increases it many fold. General Munir has officially replaced General Qamar Javed Bajwa, who led the military for six years. Bajwa's final years as the army chief were quite turbulent because of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan's persistent attacks on the army for "orchestrating" his ouster. He is also critical of the present ruling alliance for conspiring against his rule. In his efforts to expose the Shehbaz-led government, Khan damaged his ties with the military to a great extent. He has been campaigning for months to put pressure on the government and the state institutions to get a date for snap polls.

With General Asim Munir having no baggage and the unpopularity that General Bajwa experienced during his last few months in office, the nation is justified in pinning hopes on the new army chief for the future. The new chief faces two immediate challenges: damage control, winning the trust of the nation, and ensuring political stability by removing tensions between Imran Khan and the rest of the political parties. The political turmoil in Pakistan has reached a decisive point. The ongoing tussle and acrimony have the potential to develop into a clash between the institutions. Accusations of a "regime change" conspiracy have already damaged the political fabric. The fluid political situation in the country can encourage enemy forces to become more active on external fronts.

Being less political, or let's say apolitical, than his predecessor might be a key for General Munir to tackle what can simply be tagged as "unprecedented political mayhem" in the country. The military has a legacy of political interference, but one can hope that the new chief will remain apolitical, try to





lower the political temperature, and bring economic stability.

The Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) and its constituent parties and the opposition Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) led by Imran Khan are poles apart on almost every important national issue at the moment. Political acrimony is at an all-time high, with opposing political forces refusing to even sit together. The trend of allegations and counter-allegations has been dominating the political scene as the new normal in the political arena. In addition, the appointment of the next army chief has never been so openly debated. From the media to the drawing rooms, the role of Gen. Bajwa as army chief and the appointment of his successor remained under discussion for months.

Nonetheless, things have seemingly taken a positive turn after the appointment of a new army chief. Imran Khan had given a call to his supporters to converge on the garrison city of Rawalpindi on November 26 to mount further pressure on the rulers to give a date for the next elections. Constitutionally, the polls are due to be held in the last quarter of 2023. Instead of relying on chaos and confrontation to achieve his goals, PTI Chairman Imran Khan chose a political move—resigning from all provincial assemblies—to bring the government to heel. Expectations from the new army chief might have played a role in PTI's reviewing its strategy for pressuring the government.



On the other hand, the government also looks flexible toward the PTI's demand. Actually, the PDM leaders had been asking the PTI to dissolve the provincial assemblies of Punjab and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa to pave the way for the next general elections. Though it was a political statement on the part of the PDM, now that Imran Khan has announced his intention to resign from the assemblies, the PDM is forced to meet the PTI's demand. Political observers have persistently said that new elections are the only way out of the current political impasse.

The new Chief of the Army Staff will have to persuade both sides to join hands to solve the country's problems. Political parties

should be made aware that rising inflation and dwindling remittances require more immediate attention than political point scoring and efforts to gain ground by levelling accusations against one another.

The political and economic role of the Pakistani military is undeniable. Pakistan's armed forces are among the most modern, largest, and best equipped in the world. The army is the most powerful institution in the country. In view of the poor state of the economy, the new chief should also think of taking measures that could be helpful in boosting the production and export of defence equipment. The proceeds should be used as a contribution to the defence budget.

It's a good omen that the military leadership has vowed to remain neutral, but it also cannot turn a blind eye to the issues Pakistan is grappling with today. A mediatory role by General Asim Munir is due; it will be helpful in rebuilding the image of his institution and changing perceptions that were at stake due to the irresponsible utterances coming from various quarters. For this purpose, he will have to shelve, for the time being, the decision of his institution to stay out of politics to be able to play a role in bridging the gulf between the ruling coalition and the opposition PTI. Such mediation is vital for political stability, which is linked to economic stability. In the larger national interest, the new army chief will have to go above and beyond his professional and constitutional responsibilities, because only the top soldier is in a position to pull off the "miracle."





# The Shadow of Political Uncertainty

*Khan was ousted in April through a no-confidence vote in Parliament, but tensions had gripped the country when he hurled accusations at the Army leader of conspiring with the U.S. to force his government's resignation—a charge Washington, Sharifs and the military have repeatedly denied as baseless*

By Noor Aftab



The shadow of political uncertainty in the country is getting deeper instead of diminishing. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has decided to resign from all assemblies in a bid to force the incumbent rulers to announce early elections.

Questions are also being raised on the survival of the coalition government. PTI chairman Imran Khan is increasing pressure on the federal government to hold general elections before time. It is still difficult to say anything with certainty about what the outcome of the power struggle will be, as uncertainty on the political horizon is increasing with each passing day. Imran said he had discussed the matter of stepping down from all assemblies with the chief ministers and the final decision in this regard would be announced after PTI's parliamentary party meeting.

Since his ouster from power, Imran Khan has been insisting that the only way out of the prevailing political impasse is to hold early elections. Apparently, growing pressure from protest marches for early elections has weakened the position of the coalition government.

Khan was ousted in April through a no-confidence vote in Parliament, but tensions had gripped the country when he hurled accusations at the Army leader of conspiring with the U.S. to force his government's resignation—a charge Washington, Sharifs and the military have repeatedly denied as baseless.

After charging his electoral base in the last few months with all sorts of hyper-nationalist and foreign conspiracy claims, Khan now believes that free and fair elections at this stage can bring him back to power. In his quest to get elections held soon, he has targeted anyone and everyone who he thought was trying to undermine his plans.

This stubbornness has got to a point where Khan is now trying to use his political capital to undermine the country's already battered economy to get early elections. He recently raised alarm about the economic situation and alleged that the government is not able to control it. Finance Minister Ishaq Dar said Pakistan would not default and meet its upcoming one billion dollar bond payments.

Pakistan in recent years was unable to borrow money from other multilateral and bilateral agencies, and even commercial markets, to finance its external needs due to the suspension of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) program. But after the successful seventh and eighth reviews of the IMF program, there is no immediate threat of Pakistan going into default.

Political circles have been indicating for the last many weeks that if Imran Khan felt he was being isolated politically or legally, he would go one step further and dissolve the Punjab and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa assemblies. A free and fair election in these two provinces can surely bring PTI back to power.

However, it is unlikely that Khan's party will get elections in these two provinces even if he decides to dissolve the assemblies. The ECP can come up with countless reasons to stall the electoral process. Moreover, the coalition government can also end up finding some loopholes in the constitution to impose the governor's rule in these two provinces.





The 13-party alliance of the government categorically rejected Imran Khan's demand for early elections. It said the constitution, democracy, and the system would not be allowed to be enslaved based on bullying and intimidation. The economy of the country and rehabilitation of the flood victims is the national priority at the moment.

The issue of the long-pending appointment of the Army Chief also came to an end after Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif picked Lt Gen Asim Munir as the new army chief. The debate over the appointment of the new chief intensified since the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) confirmed that General Qamar Javed Bajwa would doff off his uniform on November 29.

While typically a landmark event because of the military's traditionally dominant role in politics, the appointment of a new Army Chief has been the focus of months of Machiavellian politicking between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's coalition government and PTI chief Imran Khan.

Gen Munir has served as chief of two most powerful intelligence agencies—the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and the Military Intelligence (MI) – but his stint as the spy chief at the ISI was the shortest ever as he was replaced by Lt Gen Faiz Hamid within eight months on the insistence of then-Prime Minister Imran Khan in 2019.

According to the political pundits, PTI did not want the job of army chief to go to General Munir because he was removed as ISI chief in 2019 by then prime minister Imran Khan, reportedly for investigating corrupt practices by Khan's wife.

Despite political uncertainty, the coalition government seems to be in a decisive mood to take on the challenges upfront. At a time when the economy has nosedived and political uncertainty is soaring, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has taken his allies on board to chalk out a way out of the crisis. It is a good omen that the government, at least, is not abdicating its responsibilities to address the gigantic tasks ahead and diligently trying to craft a way out.

Though Imran Khan is trying to mount pressure on the coalition government, his political problems are also increasing at the

same time. He repeatedly claimed that Washington conspired in his fall from grace and power. But now he has taken a U-turn on this narrative and signaled his readiness to mend ties with the United States. In his interview with the Financial Times, he stated "As far as I'm concerned, it's over, it's behind me. The Pakistan I want to lead must have good relationships with everyone, especially the United States. His popularity has often surged because of his anti-Washington rhetoric, but Khan's walking back the US conspiracy theory is not likely to go down well with his supporters who have been supporting that narrative since April this year.



Reacting on this issue, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said, the PTI chief's rebuttal of his foreign conspiracy theory is a reminder of the vicious role he played to harm Pakistan's external relations while pursuing his own petty politics. Government officials have also termed it the 'mother of all U-Turns' and questioned 'who is responsible for all damage caused to the country's diplomatic ties by his false narrative?'

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) disqualified Imran Khan, accusing him of unlawfully selling state gifts and concealing assets. The legal cases against Khan have started growing quickly after months of zero action. The criminal trial of Imran Khan has formally begun for concealing information about the Toshakhana gifts. This case will continue to act as a Sword of Damocles hanging over his head.

The bitter political feud between the government and PTI comes as Pakistan struggles to deal with the aftermath of devastating floods. Thousands are still

living in makeshift homes following the record-shattering floods that killed 1,739 people and affected 33 million.

Pakistan continues to hurtle toward an uncertain future, led by an utterly unserious elite unable to grasp the enormity of the challenges facing the country. There should be a consensus that representative democracy, while not flawless, imbues a country with a greater chance of long-term political stability than its alternatives.

Many economists are seriously concerned that Pakistan may default. Whether it can avoid such an eventuality depends greatly on the extent and speed of IMF support,

which in turn rests on how willing countries such as Saudi Arabia or China are to bail Islamabad out, whether in the form of debt forgiveness, restructuring, or plain old cash. But even in the best-case scenario, the solution of IMF, Saudi, or Chinese money only kicks the can down the road. Pakistan's debt problem is not going away, nor is its reliance on bailouts from stronger or richer countries.

At this time, when the country needs all hands on deck, its political elite is caught in narrow power games, such as an ongoing political struggle to defeat opponents at any cost. A major question contributing to the political uncertainty is the timing of the next election, which must be held by the summer of 2023. Khan has made clear that he wants to ride his present momentum to the immediate election but the coalition government is determined that the national assembly will complete its constitutional term. Whenever the next elections are held, it is far from clear whether these will help end political crises or further worsen them.



# Are we heading toward a Popular Dictatorship?

*We may be at the cusp of a political process that will ultimately end up in the establishment of a popular dictatorship*

By Umer Farooq

People who know me as a journalist or a political analyst, often ask me what type of political leader Imran Khan is? Is he a second Bhutto? Is he more popular than Benazir Bhutto, when she arrived back in Pakistan after a prolonged exile in 1986? They often answer themselves (without waiting for me to respond) that Imran Khan is totally different from Nawaz Sharif.

Nawaz Sharif was born into a wealthy family while Imran Khan is a self-made man. Nawaz Sharif is allegedly a corrupt man while Imran Khan is Mr. Clean. I sometimes retort; in purely political terms, there is hardly any difference between Imran Khan and Nawaz Sharif—both are dependent on the Punjabi middle class for their vote banks, both started their political careers as protégés of military spymasters, both rely on crony capitalists for their political campaign finances, and feudals of Punjab for their entry into power corridors. Both are also reliant on their star value in Pakistani society to claim political prominence. Both claim to preside over political parties when in reality, they are hardly political parties in any strict definition of the term—I mean political parties have specific ideas, literature, cadre, and organizational strength in the society which hosts them, as opposed to this, the PMLN and the PTI are clubs of political influentials who are primarily focused on media management and act as electoral machines every five years. Besides this, these political parties hardly indulge in any activity which could be described as political.

Pakistan's political history has produced many photocopied Bhuttos. Imran Khan is no exception—just like Bhutto, Imran Khan uses derogatory language against his opponents. Just like Bhutto, he uses his Charisma to attract the public to his cause. But Bhutto's Charisma was a product of a political process, which was spearheaded by Bhutto himself. Imran Khan's charisma, at its foundation, is based on his successes as a cricketer in the 1980s and 1990s. He



seems to have successfully mobilized urban Punjab in his anti-American and Anti-establishment rhetoric and narratives. He has drawn large crowds in central Punjab since being ousted from power last April. But whether his charisma translates into electoral success, is yet to be seen. His last electoral success in July 2018 parliamentary elections came with a large question mark after opposition parties accused the then-military spymaster of engineering his success.

This is where Imran Khan differs from Zulfikar Ali Bhutto; never in his political career has Bhutto owed any electoral success to the military or its intelligence agencies. In fact, till Bhutto's time, intelligence agencies were never so influential to make a popular political leader win a general election. Imran Khan has a longstanding partnership with the country's military intelligence services. In this, he is more like Nawaz Sharif, who owed at least his initial electoral successes to the country's spy agencies. I think, however, it would not be wrong if we put Imran Khan, Nawaz Sharif, and elder Bhutto in the same category of politicians groomed by the military and its intelligence agencies. Bhutto served

in Ayub Khan's cabinet. Nawaz Sharif served as the handpicked Chief Minister of Punjab during Zia's military rule. Imran Khan never served in any military government but he supported Musharraf when he organized a fraudulent referendum. Afterward, Imran Khan had a long honeymoon with the military-led intelligence agencies.

I often have to explain to some of my somewhat naïve readers that as a journalist I don't support or oppose any political leader. The political activism of any kind is not my job. Supporting a political leader means supporting a political interest, which is bound to come into conflict with journalistic objectivity. I define my job as an observer who observes, analyzes, and reports political developments from a position of detached neutrality—I detach myself emotionally from political developments and events and report them as they happen. I don't take sides. Biases and prejudices cannot influence my analysis—I try to base my analysis on rational thinking as far as is humanly possible. However, one caveat I would like to add here. Today's political environment is highly charged—what we are witnessing is a





political upheaval in the heart of the Pakistani political and military establishment—central Punjab. The last time social and political upheaval of this nature happened in Central Punjab was in Ayub Khan's time when after many state-induced agriculture revolutions in rural Punjab and Sindh, a large number of landless tenants migrated to urban areas and became daily wagers in the burgeoning industrial sector while Ayub's military government was nearing its end. Bhutto cashed on this social change or upheaval and became their voice. What Imran Khan is cashing in on is the discontent of the Punjabi middle class who are threatened by the twin factors of joblessness and inflation. These are highly malleable classes as far as their political opinions are concerned.

There is another similarity between elder Bhutto and IK: both had their friends and mentors in powerful positions in the state structures who kept egging them on till the time they entered the power corridors themselves. The upheaval that we are witnessing around us as a result of Imran Khan's rhetoric is likely to be a transitory phenomenon, even though the changes it would bring are likely to have far-reaching repercussions for our political system. In the rest of the piece, I would briefly explain why Imran Khan's rhetoric doesn't impress me at all and why Imran Khan's politics compels me to become deeply worried about the future of our political system. Not for a moment, I would depart from my position of detached neutrality that has always defined my journalistic writings and analysis.

A. Imran Khan's strong sense of entitlement and the nature of our political system: Imran Khan's rhetoric indicates a very strong sense of entitlement. He appears to have a feeling that he is on some kind of mission to put Pakistan nation on the right track and this gives him a special privileged position in Pakistan's political system. His sense of entitlement is similar to the one Pakistan's military and religious clergy hold. Both religious lobby and the military think that they have a special mission and this mission or its espousal gives them a special privileged position in Pakistani society. Not even once did they come close to taking Pakistan near the dreamland. Yet this mission destined them to a special

privileged position in Pakistani society. Now we have reached a point where the religious lobby and military enjoy privileged positions, while they keep paying lip service to the special mission. The rhetoric of special mission entitled them to special privileges and made them a special interest group in society. Imran Khan is on the same path: he has a so-called mission to eradicate corruption from society, therefore he should be treated as a special person by the courts, the military, and by the intelligence services. His opponents are bad and corrupt therefore they don't deserve the same special treatment which is offered to him. This sense of entitlement is the root



cause of many of our political problems. Special missions and interest groups which these missions spawned made our system hostage to special interests. Both democracy and our socio-religious traditions require absolute equality to become the basis of our political system.

B. Imran Khan's democratic credentials and belief in constitutional norms are very weak. Khan and the social classes he mobilized are very late entrants into the political system. The second tier of Imran Khan's party is drawn mostly from the middle and upper middle classes of Central Punjab and the urban and semi-urban districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. These classes and Imran Khan himself are not accustomed to or acclimated to the norms of Pakistani political culture which are deeply rooted. One of these norms is adherence to the constitution of 1973 and its

basic provisions. The 1973 constitution in its short life has been trampled upon twice by the military boots. And yet Pakistani old political elites, despite all their weaknesses, have not abandoned the constitution. In the old political circles, violation, and abrogation of the constitution are still considered a sin or a taboo. Imran Khan and his party have at least once demonstrated that they don't take the norm of inviolability of the constitution very seriously. Consider this: when the no-confidence motion was tabled against him in the national assembly, Imran Khan made his party's speaker and deputy speaker defeat the motion without counting the votes—something which was not

possible under constitutional provisions. Time and again, Imran Khan defended this move and said that the state is bigger than the constitutional and political process. This was precisely the argument employed by military dictators when they disrupted the political processes in 1958, 1977, and 1999. Now a popular political leader is employing this argument and this worries me. It means that he could violate the law and constitution and get legitimacy from the public on account of his popularity. Democracy undoubtedly means the rule of the majority. But democracy also means the rights of minorities and the rights of individuals—minorities and individuals who have the courage to dissent with the majority. And what under majority rule ensures the rights of minorities and individuals? Law, constitution, and courts. Law-violating popular leaders are a dangerous development for our society.



C. Use of state institutions in the conflict with his opponents is almost a policy of Imran Khan, which could be a recipe for civil war: Imran Khan has no qualms about expressing his anger with military leadership for not siding with him when the opposition voted him out of power through a no-confidence motion in the national assembly. “Ok, let’s say for the sake of any argument that the military establishment has not conspired against me. Let’s assume

armed—with one or the other segments of society. The military is not like other institutions in the state machinery. It’s armed to the teeth. And their taking sides in a conflict is likely to lead to a civil war. Imran Khan is either too naïve to understand this or he is deliberately doing this to start a conflict in society.

D. Use of religion in political aggrandizement is almost a policy of Imran Khan.

philosophies, idioms, and jargon hammered into their heads by popular political leaders like former Prime Minister Imran Khan. In his press conference in Peshawar to announce the program of his long march, Imran Khan repeatedly labeled his political campaign as “jihad.” Remember: his political movement or protest campaign is directed against a coalition government of political parties, of which a majority consists of believers. The implication is that the theoretical problem of divisiveness — Kufr vs Islam — that we have inherited from Islamists’ style of politics of the 1970s would come to haunt us someday.

Imran Khan’s jihad means that all of his political targets could be dubbed as non-believers. This may seem innocuous as the word “jihad” is one that we use in everyday discussion in our society. But in Imran Khan’s case, this word is coupled with the Quranic verse of “commanding right and forbidding wrong,” which by now has almost become a constant refrain in the former prime minister’s political discourse. Imran Khan uses this Quranic verse to remind the army troops and its leadership of their duties for deciding between himself as an agent of piety and his opponents which he describes as evil or bad.

This short critique of Imran Khan’s politics is not intended to take a position in opposition to his political ambitions. For two reasons I believe Imran Khan, at least at this moment, should not be opposed as one opposes a political evil. There are always chances that a political leader will do some introspection after coming to power and do some course corrections. We should expect that Imran Khan will engage in course correction. Secondly, popular politics generates pressure—never before in our history have popular pressures compelled popular leaders away from democracy and constitutionalism. But here lies the danger. Imran Khan shares many of his political opinions with the military dictators of the past. One of them I have pointed out in this article, i.e., the state and its interests are bigger than the constitutional and political process. We may be at the cusp of a political process that will ultimately end up in the establishment of a popular dictatorship.



that I agree with this notion. But they could have stopped the conspiracy against me. Why didn’t they intervene to stop the conspiracy,” Imran Khan said in a speech. Little does he realize that if military leaders had intervened and prevented the no-confidence motion, they would have become a party to the political conflict. After all, it was not the opposition leader in the Indian parliament who had submitted the no-confidence against Imran Khan. Shahbaz Sharif was a duly elected member of the National Assembly. When he tabled the motion, he was President of one of the largest political parties in the country, PMLN. Why should the military side with Imran Khan and not with his opponents? We are not a banana republic or Ba’th party-led Arab post-Second World War Revolutionary state where military and armed forces act as an arm of the ruling party. We are supposed to be a constitutional republic with a democratically elected government, non-partisan state machinery, judiciary, military, and intelligence services. True, our military has a strong tradition and history of taking part in political, social, and religious conflicts. On certain occasions, the decision of military leaders to take sides in political conflicts dragged them into conflicts—sometimes

Pakistani politicians have a tradition of using religion for obtaining political objectives. Imran Khan is no exception. He is as adept as those who came before him in using religion for political aggrandizement. But we are living in different times. The political use of religion has proved to be a highly divisive force in our short history of 75 years. Islamist parties, when they contested elections or launched political movements, always talked in the idiom of “Kufr” and “Islam”, which in other words meant that those who supported Islamists were true believers and those who opposed these parties were non-believers or worst “Kafir.” This became very problematic as those who were opposing Islamists were often on the right side of public opinion. But in Islamists’ parlance, they were the enemies of religion or Islam. The problem, however, persisted in theoretical terms, although the majority of Pakistanis never accepted Islamists’ interpretation of events in the country’s political history.

Things have taken a turn for the worse. Islamists have been replaced by mass parties who are using the idioms of Islamists in front of large crowds. These are crowds who are ready to accept the divisive





# Punjab: PMLQ-PTI Coalition's Performance

*Former Prime Minister Imran Khan has played all his cards to reach the peak of his popularity after his ouster from power through the historic vote of no-confidence in March this year*



By Ahmad Waleed

Chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Imran Khan wants the Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi to go the extra mile in his efforts to make the protest campaign to send the government of the 13-party alliance Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) packing. The Chaudhry of Gujrat thinks otherwise and believes that the government should complete the term. He has also advised Imran Khan that it is in the best interest of the PTI and PML-Q to retain power as long as they can so that they could show some performance in Punjab which has been the stronghold of Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) for decades. To some extent, Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi has managed to convince the PTI.

There seems to be no concrete plan to claim what should be the hallmark of their performance when they go to election in October 2023. Instead, the Punjab government has awarded huge sums of money to the lawmakers of both parties in the name of development projects. While the Punjab CM wants to focus on the areas of his party's vote bank, the PTI wants to ensure that the government gives more attention to the party agenda besides keeping the interests of their MPs. For this purpose, Mian Aslam Iqbal, senior minister, has

been assigned the task of de facto CM to keep an eye on the PML-Q leadership.

Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi wants more funds to be spent in his hometown Gujrat and nearby areas of Wazirabad, Mandi Bahaudin, Sialkot, Daska, etc so that his party could win more seats in the next elections. It has created quite a stir in the PTI folds as there are reports of misappropriations of funds issued by the CM Secretariat. Although the PTI is relying more on the narrative built by their leader Imran Khan than the development projects, the party is also worried about the performance as the bad governance stigma of the Buzdar rule still haunts them. The PTI government in Punjab faced several corruption charges during the Buzdar era which impacted its credibility. Various scandals in South Punjab and Farrah Gogi scams brought a bad name to the self-proclaimed 'clean' party.

So far, despite spending huge funds on various development projects, the government of Punjab has not been able to create a major impact in Punjab, especially in Lahore. Except for a couple of underpasses and an overhead bridge (to facilitate the housing scheme of the biggest property

tycoon), there is no considerable project in Lahore by the PTI government to beat its strongest rival PML-N.

There is a clear difference of opinion on various issues between PTI and PML-Q. The reaction of Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi to every attack on the establishment launched by Imran Khan was in contrast, claiming that his party enjoys very good relations with the army and he cannot go against it the way his partner in Punjab wants.

On the other hand, former Prime Minister Imran Khan has played all his cards to reach the peak of his popularity after his ouster from power through the historic vote of no-confidence in March this year. He has exhausted all the possibilities to throw out the PDM government but to no avail. The party is now facing a dilemma of how to remain relevant in national politics and keep the momentum going till the next general elections as it has already touched its peak. They fear the popularity graph of the chairman and the party may start to drop in the months to come. Imran Khan has already taken back the hard-hitting stance he took against the establishment and foreign powers.



# A costly watch could prove costly

*The PTI chief admitted to purchasing gifts from Toshakhana and selling them in the market*

By Sarfraz Raja

The story of one of the most unique and expensive watches on the planet is everywhere, from television newsrooms to courtrooms and drawing rooms. The case of the misuse of Toshakhana gifts against former Prime Minister Imran Khan is still ongoing, but it is taking some unexpected twists and turns. Every day brought new stories and revelations to the mainstream and social media, making the situation difficult and politically damaging for the former prime minister and his party.

## Latest revelations

The famous and much-discussed Toshakhana case, which involved the purchase and sale of gifts received by Imran Khan during his visits abroad as Prime Minister, took a new turn with the revelations of a well-known Dubai-based businessman who claimed he had bought some of the state gifts, including an expensive one-time Makkah edition Graff wristwatch from Farah Gogi, a friend of former first lady Bushra Bibi referred to as

In his sudden and surprise TV appearance, Umar Farooq Zahoor showed the expensive gifts he bought, including a set of unique wristwatches, pens, and cufflinks gifted to former Prime Minister Imran Khan by Saudi Crown Prince Muhammad Bin Salman for 2 million dollars.

He also claimed that former Prime Minister Imran Khan's accountability advisor, Shehzad Akbar, contacted him in 2019 to sell watches, rings, and other unique and expensive gifts given by foreign rulers and heads of state during official visits of Pakistani government delegations. Umar Farooq also claimed that he has evidence to back up his claims and that he could produce this evidence whenever and wherever required.

The businessman alleged that he was later blackmailed, and fake cases of money laundering were registered against him by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) at the behest of Shehzad Akbar.



According to Umar's claim, Farah Gogi herself brought the gifts to his office in Dubai and told him that the items had been gifted to Prime Minister Imran Khan by the Saudi Crown Prince. He was convinced and bought them after confirming them through his sources.

On the other hand, Ahsan Jameel Gujjar, the husband of Farah Gogi, immediately denied the allegations of any such trade, terming them a fabricated and baseless story. Ahsan Gujjar said in his statement that neither he nor his wife know Umar Farooq and categorically denied any link with Shehzad Akbar. He also asked Umar Farooq to produce any video evidence or CCTV footage of any such meeting.

## PTI Response

Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf slammed Umar's claim, calling him a notorious and wanted man involved in money laundering cases, and claimed that there had been no foul play on Imran Khan's part in the Toshakhana gifts matter and that whatever he did was in accordance with the rules, that almost all former heads of government purchased gifts from Toshakhana, and that nothing unusual had occurred now.

PTI leaders admitted that Imran Khan, during his official visit to Saudi Arabia in

2018, received a watch that was actually received by the chief of protocol, who deposited it at the depository of the cabinet division. The prime minister had nothing to do with these matters. The gift's price was evaluated by the cabinet division, and after paying 20 percent of that price, this gift became Imran Khan's personal possession. Later, Imran Khan sold that gift, and capital gains tax was also paid for it accordingly; details were mentioned in Imran Khan's tax returns and also in the Election Commission's annual declarations.

PTI leaders revealed that the watch was not sold to Umar Farooq Zahoor, and Farah Bibi has nothing to do with this matter; according to them, the gift was sold to a local watch dealer in Islamabad, who might have sold it to someone else, perhaps Umar Farooq, who has these gifts right now. PTI also announced it would sue Umar Farooq, the TV channel and anchor who aired this news in the United Kingdom and the Gulf state.

After all these revelations, the ruling coalition called out the former PTI chief for the abuse of Toshakhana and hinted those criminal proceedings would be initiated as per the election commission of Pakistan's order.





## Where has Imran Khan violated the law?

The PTI chief admitted to purchasing gifts from Toshakhana and selling them in the market, but where is the legal violation? That was the Tehreek e Insaaf leadership's opinion, but there have been some violations. Some media reports reveal that PTI chief Imran Khan violated the Toshakhana rules for purchasing gifts, which were actually amended under his own government.

The law was first amended by the former prime minister during his tenure, as the purchase price was raised to 50 percent from 20 percent, but Imran Khan didn't pay 50 percent and bought it by paying 20 percent of the amount. According to a report, Imran Khan paid 20% of the price for the gift given by Saudi Crown Prince Muhamad Bin Salman while he should have paid 50%. The PTI government changed the Toshakhana rules on December 18, 2018, changing the payable amount from 20 to 50 percent. However, according to official documents shown in media reports, 35 days after changing the law, the PTI chief purchased the Toshakhana gift given by the Saudi Crown Prince on January 22, 2019, by paying only 20% of the amount.

As to Imran Khan's claim, they sold the wristwatch for over Rs 50 million and made a payment of Rs 20 million to Toshakhana the day the watch was sold. This resemblance of dates shows that either Imran Khan sold the gift in the market before



taking it from Toshakhana or someone else deposited the amount on his behalf, as the reports describe.

## Implications of new revelations

On October 21, the election commission of Pakistan in its decision disqualified Imran Khan from his national assembly membership under Article 63/1/p for making false statements and incorrect declarations in his annual assets statement, which actually was a one-time disqualification described by the high court later, and he was declared eligible to participate in the national assembly seat from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in a by-election soon after the ECP decision against him. But the biggest point of concern for the PTI chief was the order to initiate criminal proceedings against him for corruption by the electoral body, which could lead to a sentence of imprisonment for three years

and a consequent disqualification from the election for five years.

Following new revelations by Dubai-based businessman Umar Farooq and proofs of the alleged gift purchase deal, the allied government has already hinted at launching criminal proceedings against Imran Khan and bringing back accused Farah Gogi for questioning. Legal experts believe that the matter related to the sale and purchase of costly gifts is politically damaging for Imran Khan and his party, and opponents are already using it rather successfully for their political gains, but alleged violations of Toshakhana rules in the evaluation of the actual price of the gifts, depositing less than the due amount for the purchase, etc., if put under trial and a high-level investigation, could create some serious hurdles for Imran Khan and could place his political future in doubt, and the costly watch he sold could prove costly and could show some harder times for the sellers.



# Another war at home

*As far as Afghanistan is concerned, not a day goes by without a clash inside Afghanistan or on the Pak-Afghan border*

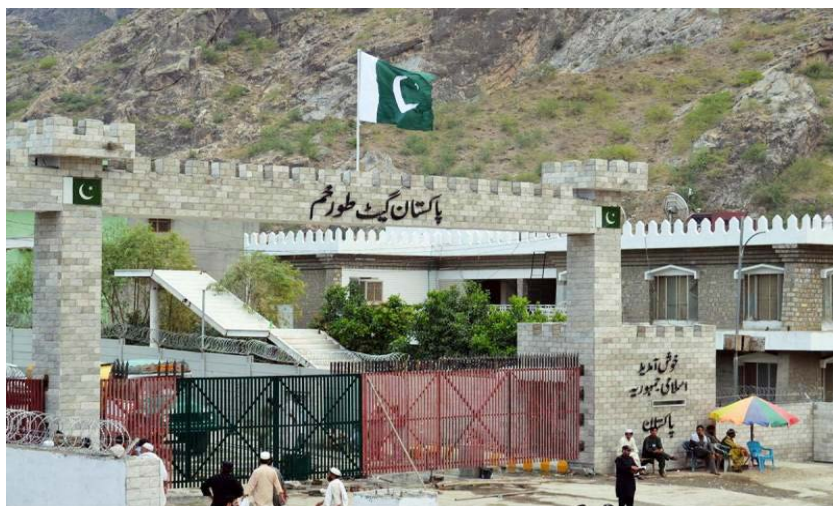
By Syed Fakhar KaKaKhel

With the withdrawal of American coalition forces from Afghanistan, the war did not end, but it took another form. War has its dynamics, and it changes. Now, this war appears to be local and homegrown, but the driving forces and goalposts behind it are global. Due to media blackouts, headline news from Afghanistan, like that from our other neighbour, Iran, is missing from the mainstream media, but this does not mean that there are no distractions in these two neighbouring countries, and it is no less than a misreading to think that any such developments in these countries will not affect us. Due to the relatively safe border with Iran, the intensity of the effects is reduced, but there are certain developments in the Iranian province of Sistan-Baluchistan, and their reverberations will appear in Baluchistan sooner or later.

As far as Afghanistan is concerned, not a day goes by without a clash inside Afghanistan or on the Pak-Afghan border. The spillover effects of an unstable and chaotic Afghanistan have been strongly felt in the border areas of Pakistan. A few weeks ago, an Afghan Taliban attacked Pakistani security personnel at the border post in broad daylight on the Pak-Afghan border in the Chaman region of Baluchistan.

According to the sources, the Afghan Taliban showed ignorance about the assassin, but a few days later it was reported on the Afghan media that the person involved in the killing had been handed over to the Pakistani authorities. A few days later, the Afghan Taliban removed the fence under their patronage at various places on the Pakistan-Afghan border. Meanwhile, mortar shells were fired by the Afghan Taliban in the Pakistani district of Kurram, adjacent to the Pak-Afghan border.

The Afghan Taliban, at its lowest level, does not recognise the Pakistan-Afghanistan border as a permanent border



and considers it a pre-partition British-drawn "Duran Line." This confusion was actually due to the former so-called "independent tribal areas" on the Pak-Afghan border, which were being administered as Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). But when the Parliament of Pakistan abolished the tribal status of these areas and gave them the status of administrative districts like the rest of the country, the question of the Durand Line became completely irrelevant. Even now, however, some forces are demanding to restore the status of FATA. Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, along with Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) and Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP), supports reversing the FATA merger.

Tehreek-e-Taliban had made the return of former FATA, effectively ending integration, the first condition for talks. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government spokesperson Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif still hopes that the talks have stalled, but the talks have not completely ended. He said that after the death of Al-Qaeda leader Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri in Kabul, the Afghan Taliban itself suffered from this issue, considering it a violation of national sovereignty, due to which the talks stalled. He said that since the Afghan Taliban had a very important role in these negotiations, the third round of negotiations with the

Pakistani Taliban was not started after their engagements in security-related issues internally. He revealed in his interaction with the media that he participated in the Afghan Jihad and in the war against former Afghan President Dr. Najibullah. He cited Haqqani Network chief and Afghan Interior Minister Siraj Haqqani as a reference to his past jihad in Afghanistan. This conversation of his can be used against Pakistan anytime in the future. Such irresponsible statements are the reason for the hatred against Pakistan among the Afghan people themselves.

On the other hand, the Afghan Taliban itself has started to be dominated by extremist groups. Since Islamic State in Khorasan Province (ISKP) has become a challenge for them internally, their fighters have started joining ISKP in droves. Due to this fear, the Afghan Taliban also distanced themselves from the idea of an all-inclusive government and avoided appointing non-Sunnis in all important positions.

On September 30, 2022, a suicide attack inside the Kaaj Educational Center in the Dasht-e-Barchi district of West Kabul, Afghanistan, claimed the lives of over 35 girls and young women belonging to the Hazara community. Over 82 others were injured in the attack. The attack was perpetrated as



students were sitting for a practise university exam. No group has claimed responsibility for the attacks as of yet. However, the Hazara community has been subjected to targeted attacks by IS-K and the Taliban.

ISKP is not only targeting Hazara but has also carried out multiple attacks in the Afghan province of Herat, bordering Iran. On the ideological front, the Afghan Taliban has to face criticism from its hardcore fighters. The political cadre favours women's education but so far is unable to convince its staunch followers, who believe that girls' education is a western phenomenon. Meanwhile, to address their concerns, the Afghan Taliban's supreme leader, Mullah Haibatullah Akhunnzada, issued fresh orders to follow Sharia.

Zabihullah Mujahid, a spokesman for the Afghan Taliban, said that Afghanistan's supreme leader has told judges to fully follow Islamic law, which includes public executions, stonings, floggings, and the amputation of thieves' limbs.

Zabihullah Mujahid tweeted that the "obligatory" command by Haibatullah Akhunnzada came after the supreme leader met with a group of judges.

Following these orders, nineteen men and women were recently flogged as hardline Afghan clerics demanded stricter punishments in the light of Sharia as in the past. The reason for the deterioration in relations with Pakistan is also the reason for hardline circles, who believe that Pakistan supported



America in the war on terror by not only arresting key Taliban commanders and supporters across the Pakistan-Afghan border, but also targeting their Pakistani supporters with drone attacks; however, there are still strong sections of the Afghan Taliban who support the anti-Pakistani Taliban. An example of this is Tariq alias Button Kharab, the mastermind behind the suicide attack on Chinese engineers in Dasu, Kohistan, back in 2021. Although two people involved in this attack have been sentenced to death by the Hazara Anti-Terrorism Court, despite this, Tariq alias Button, who provided the suicide attack, is hiding in Afghanistan. On the other hand, the pressure from Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan is increasing on Interior Minister Siraj Haqqani. The deaths of the founding leader of Tehreek-e-Taliban

Pakistan, Abdul Wali, also known as Omar Khalid Khorasani, and his fellow commanders in Afghanistan; the killing of the Pakistani commander of the Haqqani network, Prakash; the targeted killing of the ex-spokesman of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan in Nangarhar; the TTP commanders killed in November like Zakreen and Commander Adil alias Saifullah Babujee; dozens of important commanders have been killed so far after the arrival of the Taliban in Afghanistan; The Pakistani Taliban are asking the Afghan Taliban why their colleagues are being killed by their government.

Along with this, the TTP has intensified its attacks in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Especially in the southern districts of North and South Waziristan, Bannu, Lakki Marwat, Tank, and Dera Ismail Khan, the TTP is continuously targeting the police and the army. In one such attack, six policemen of the Lakki Marwat police were killed. A day earlier, CTD personnel killed three important commanders of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan in an operation in Dera Ismail Khan. A strong statement was also issued by the TTP. In response, the TTP attacked the police and the army in Lakki Marwat and South Waziristan.

Officials believe that the militants are not targeting civilians as a policy so far. They don't want to attract civilians' anger. Therefore, their first priority is to target security forces. But due to efficient counterintelligence operations, law enforcement agencies have been able to thwart many of their attacks.



# Durand Line Agreement: Aftermath

*Pakistan considers Durand Line agreement as binding and bilateral. The international community, including the US, the UK, China, and other states, and international organizations have backed the legal position of Pakistan*

By Azmat M Saqib



For a decade after 1963, interference in Pakistan's territories was minimal. Being an ex-Army general, Daud Khan wielded strong influence in the Army rank and file. Backed by Afghan generals in 1973, he overthrew King Zahir Shah, declared Afghanistan a republic, and became its first President.

President Sardar Daud Khan resumed the policy of interference in Pakistani tribal territories. One major incident was the bomb blast assassination of the then Chief Minister of KPK, Hayat Muhammad Khan Sherpao (1975).

By this time Pakistani establishment was convinced that Afghanistan will not give up its policy of interference despite its backwardness and a weak economy, Pakistan decided to increase its influence inside Afghanistan and started supporting Islam learning leaders of Afghan polity.

In 1978, Daud Khan's rule was overthrown, and the Communist regime took control of Afghanistan. In 1979, Russian forces entered Afghanistan. They were later expelled in 1989. From 1996 to 2001, the Taliban ruled Afghanistan led by Mulla Umar.

In 2001, the American-led coalition forces invaded Afghanistan. Hamid Karzai and later Ashraf Ghani backed by Americans, ruled Afghanistan till August 2021. Since

then, the Taliban government is ruling the country.

Despite losing millions of lives in wars against foreign invaders and internal strife, ruled by leftist, rightist, and western-backed regimes, Pashtuns never gave up the dream of Loya (greater) Afghanistan and none recognized Durand line's legitimacy.

Afghan nationalist viewpoint about the Durand line can be understood against the backdrop of the following:

- In 1893, Amir Abdul Rehman feared that demarcation of this sphere of influence among the frontier tribes would be a prelude to permanent annexation and ultimately cause the removal of the only "virtual buffer" between his country and British India.
- Tribesmen regarded the agreement with disdain since it formally ended their jealously guarded independence.
- Improper physical demarcation of the Mohmand agency by the joint commission was raised by the Afghan Amir, who was forced to accept what was offered by the British under the barrel of the gun. Demarcation of the boundary was done with pillars only up to areas where the Commission could reach under security.

- Anomalies of the treaties were raised by all Afghan Amirs but remained unresolved even in the 1919 Treaty of Peace at Murree Hills/ Rawalpindi. The Afghan Amir unsuccessfully demanded territorial concessions based on the Afghan's right to self-determination in the North-West Provinces of India. The Treaty of Kabul in 1921 also couldn't resolve the territorial and diplomatic disputes between the two nations. The Treaty was agreed by both parties, thus, to be a temporary arrangement.
- The two governments had several other diplomatic exchanges, especially in 1930 and 1934. For lack of an alternative, the Treaty of Kabul remained in force until after India gained independence.
- Post-1947, Afghanistan challenged the legitimacy of the Durand line. As previously mentioned, Kabul convened an Afghan Tribal Assembly (Loya Jirga) in July 1949 which voted its full support for a separate independence of the tribal areas from Pakistan. The Jirga also proceeded to announce the unilateral cancellation of all the treaties that former Afghan governments had signed with British-India, including the Durand Line Treaty, thereby proclaiming that they do not recognize the Durand line as a legal boundary. Though this proclamation did not find any international approval, the Afghan Government's denunciation has remained unchanged to date.

## Afghanistan-Pakistan legal confrontation over Durand Line

There have been three major arguments put forward by Afghanistan that question the legal status of the Durand line agreement.



**(a) Pakistan is a 'clean state' and not the legal successor of British India.**

Firstly, the question of state succession was raised by Afghanistan as Pakistan was a new state carved out of the British domination of India. During a meeting with the British Secretary of Foreign Affairs on 31 July 1947, Afghan Prime Minister, Shah Mahmood Khan, declared that all agreements in respect of the Indo-Afghan affairs were concluded with British Indian authorities and therefore all of them would be null and void after British India cease to exist and power was handed over to the new state of Pakistan. This was the official viewpoint of Afghanistan conveyed to Britain.

This Afghan argument, however, is countered by Pakistan. In the words of A.A. Qaseem from the Institute of Policy Studies, Islamabad: At the international level, issues of the succession of states are dealt with by the "Vienna Convention on Succession of States in Respect of Treaties (VCSST). Article 11 of VCSST explicitly states that the succession of states cannot impact (a) international borders agreed upon as a result of an agreement, and (b) rights and obligations concerning international borders created through an agreement. Thus, under this agreement, the cessation of British India and the birth of Pakistan as its successor in the northwestern region of the Indian subcontinent does not affect the legality of the border".

This has been the response given by Pakistan to the question of succession of the Durand Line agreement from the time of its independence. The International Court of Justice holds the principle that executed bilateral agreements defining international borders with or between colonial powers are "passed down" to successor independent states.

As far as the question of whether Pakistan is the legal successor of British India is concerned, the British government had clarified, in the Indian Independence Act (1947), that the "Rights and obligations under international agreements having an exclusive territorial application to an area comprised in the Dominion of Pakistan will devolve upon that Dominion". Thus, Pakistan is legally the rightful successor of British rule before 1947 and therefore any

binding bilateral agreement defining an international border adjacent to their territory signed by the British should be legally passed onto them.

However, the question that has not been investigated, until recently, is whether the Durand Line agreement is a binding bilateral agreement defining a sovereign border or not.



**(b) Pakistan violated the Durand Line Agreement**

In 1949, a Pakistan Airforce plane bombed a village in Afghanistan, the Afghan Government convened a Loya Jirga and declared that it neither recognizes Durand nor any similar line and that all agreements – from the 1893 Durand line agreement onward – pertaining to the issue were void. According to the Afghan government, Pakistan had violated the agreement that no side will interfere on the other side of the line.

Pakistan again highlighted the international law and with backing from Britain and most of the global powers, argued that

Afghanistan, in any case, could not repudiate an executed binding treaty/agreement.

**(c) The Durand Line Agreement expired after 100 years in 1993**

Some Afghan scholars, prominently Dr. Hasan Kakar, argue that the Durand Line agreement, signed in 1893, expired after 100 years of being in force. They argue that

the translated version of the agreement given to Amir was different from the one which the British declared later--Drawing similarities to the case of Hong Kong and its transfer to China by the British.

However, this claim is very weak as there is no evidence backing it. Confirmed by the UK Government, verified by the the US, it's accepted and highlighted by scholars that no such clause of expiration in any documented version of the Durand Line agreement exists. Afghan scholars are unable to present any version of the translated agreement. Thus, these Afghan arguments stand legally weak and are of no importance in the legal understanding of the Durand Agreement.

Flaws in the Pakistani Argument, according to Afghan and Indian scholars

- 1) The Durand Line agreement, signed in 1893, was a political line separating respective spheres of influence and not a physical line to define two sovereign states. On the ground, the British wanted to restrict the Afghan Amir's political influence over the tribal areas under British India. The British did not ever control these free tribal areas.

The sphere of influence was a product of the last stages of colonial power's expansionism in Asia and Africa for peaceful coexistence, different from territorial boundaries. They claim that Foreign Secretary Durand created a virtual boundary that was supposed to define and separate the British sphere of influence from the rule of Amir to create a buffer state in the Great Game.

When Northwest Frontier Province was created in 1901, the free tribal areas were kept under separate arrangements with the Federal Government. It provided monetary subsidies, arms, and ammunition to the Maliks (tribal chiefs), who conducted their own affairs independently and promised not to interfere in the politics of NWFP and Punjab. Hence, they were only kept away from Amir's influence and the British never enjoyed sovereign rights over these territories.

Therefore, the question of succession of state of sovereign boundary (Vienna

Convention) does not apply here, since Durand Line was a colonial agreement defining the Sphere of influence. Hence after 1947, it is still subject to negotiations.

- 2) Both the 1893 agreement and the 1905 treaty were personal in nature with respective Amirs' lifetimes and not binding indefinitely.
- 3) Treaties of 1919 and 1921 were concluded upon cancellation of all previous treaties made between British India and Afghanistan. They were negotiated to remove the anomalies of the 'original' Durand Line physically. Hence the Durand is not a sacrosanct boundary and has undergone revisions
- 4) The Treaty of Kabul signed in 1921 was the first treaty concluded between the two governments that includes the clause which gave either of the "High Contracting Parties" the right to denounce the Treaty serving one year's notice. Since Kabul wanted to resolve the anomalies but the British delayed, consequently the two parties maintained the Status quo. That treaty was only a temporary arrangement (Article XIV).

Thus, the Government of Afghanistan, as one of the contracting parties of the Treaty of Kabul, 1921, has always had the legal right to denounce the treaty unilaterally and will be effective after one year of denouncement.

- 5) Pakistani scholars' analysis of the treaty came up with another defense, that in 1930, the Government of Afghanistan had accepted the treaty through correspondence with the British government and declared it valid and in full force. Thereby have lost the right to denounce it, even though the provision remains in the treaty. This point is based on the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (VCLT), 1969. The Afghan and Indian scholars argue that since 1921 and 1930, this convention did not exist and is therefore not applicable. Afghanistan had never lost the legal right to denounce the Treaty of Kabul.

Pakistan considers Durand Line agreement as binding and bilateral; it clearly defines the international border between Afghanistan and Pakistan (the inheritor state). The international community, including the US, the UK, China, and other nations, and international organizations have backed the legal position of Pakistan. Afghanistan on the other hand considers Durand Line as a virtual line defining the sphere of influence of the colonial era and not an international boundary. The Agreements of the colonial era were always under negotiation with Britain. Since 1947, Pakistan has an unresolved border whose resolution is subject to negotiations to which it turns a blind eye. Hence this dispute between the peoples of the bordering region remains unresolved. The world does not view and support the Afghan case, but they may never give up their right to get their territories back.





# G-20 Summit: Analysing Implications of Xi-Biden Meeting

*Both Washington and Beijing are looking to strengthen their strategic positions and are preparing to avoid a military conflict over the delicate question of Taiwan's future status*

By Aimen Bukhari

This November has been very eventful internationally, with the G-20 summit on November 14 in Bali, Indonesia. It provided space for the first in-person meeting between President Joe Biden of the United States, and Chinese President Xi Jinping after Biden's inauguration in January 2021.

As a platform for collaboration on economic and financial issues, the G-20 was established in 1999. In 2008, in response to the worldwide financial crisis that followed the collapse of Wall Street, the G20 summit was recognised as having an international character. The United States realised that the Western-led G7 alone was not sufficient to deal with that particular situation. After concluding that the world could not avert a catastrophe similar to the Great Depression of the 1930s without the assistance of rising economies like China, the Bush administration organised the G-20 summit, bringing major developed and developing nations to a single platform to discuss critical international security issues.

The nations in the group include Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the European Union. They also include Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, and Russia. The G20 leaders blamed protectionist trade practises for contributing to the Great Depression of the 1930s and its terrible effects on the global economy. The G20 leaders vowed to learn from their past blunders and prevent a recurrence. The markets were stabilised thanks to their resolve and cooperation. The worldwide recession that followed the 2008 financial crisis was not, thankfully, the beginning of another Great Depression.

However, this year's G20 summit had to decide on the world's efforts to reduce carbon emissions that contribute to climate



change, Russia's war on Ukraine, the necessity of cooperation between states, especially the USA and China, and other problems.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said during the "B-20" business summit that "the G-20 was established for occasions like these and constructed for these problems." Together, we can do far more than we ever could alone.

But the most recent G20 conference, convened 14 years after the global financial crisis, did not take any significant action to calm the markets, despite a potential catastrophe once again. Even the meeting between Biden and Xi was somewhat mundane, since no great breakthrough was reached or even anticipated throughout the course of the three-plus hours both leaders spent talking. However, it has to be recognised that the meeting was a step toward finding common ground between the two rival great powers. It helped reassure the world that a new Cold War was not on the horizon yet.

The meeting's main topic was how to prevent a catastrophic breakdown in ties between the United States and China by

putting "guardrails" and "rules of the road" in place to prevent the relationship from continuing on its current, more antagonistic course. Both leaders emphasised the need for clear lines of communication to reduce the likelihood of misunderstanding and subsequent conflict and to look for amicable solutions to disputes in order to establish norms that would allow for a "managed strategic rivalry" to flourish.

In his opening remarks, Biden said that the two nations had a shared obligation to "find ways to work together on pressing global challenges that demand our mutual collaboration and to avoid competitiveness to stay away from any kind of conflict."

The talk focused mostly on three topics: Taiwan (as expected), the ongoing crisis in Ukraine (including Russia's threat to use nuclear weapons against it), and North Korea's testing of long-range missiles. Both presidents agreed that using nuclear weapons was undesirable, so although Beijing did not release an official condemnation of Pyongyang's long-range missile launch, it also did not express an outright support of it.

But on the very tricky issue of Taiwan,

Beijing remained unyielding; Xi had told Biden that Taiwan was "the number one uncrossable redline in China-US ties."

He reaffirmed the stance taken on Taiwan in the three joint Sino-US communiqués issued in 1972, 1979, and 1982, where the United States oddly maintained an ambiguous stance by only "acknowledging" rather than "accepting" that "all Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain there is but one China."

Unsurprisingly, Biden reassured Xi that the United States will continue its long-standing policy of supporting Taiwan militarily and upholding Beijing's "One China" attitude towards Taiwan. The aforementioned concerns, despite their apparent danger, were easy to resolve peacefully since they were shared by both parties.



In light of the magnitude of their economic transaction, it would be counterproductive to ignore the possibility of a win-win outcome, and so both states should instead work together to address issues of mutual concern, such as climate change, nuclear proliferation, global health, and international financial stability.

Xi has no reason to continue Deng Xiaoping's four-decade-old foreign policy formulation of hiding Chinese strength and biding its time now that his ability for uncontested centralization of power has been firmly established following the recent Communist Party of China Congress's endorsement of his precedent-breaking third term as its head. He sees foreign forces intent on undermining China's pursuit of national rejuvenation and growth, and he warns of impending "hazardous storms."

With the Democrats now in charge of the Senate, the midterm elections did buy President Biden more time, but there are still some complicated considerations to make. The US midterm elections resulted in a divided Congress, with Democrats holding a slim majority in the Senate and Republicans maintaining control of the House of Representatives. This could have a chilling effect on US domestic politics, make the country more isolationist, and limit its ability to engage actively in international affairs. From a strategic perspective, this might give other nations (most notably China) more influence over the international agenda, which would be bad for the United States.

Although the Bali summit gave off the appearance of business as usual, serious geopolitical issues were being ignored.

While ties between President Biden and President Xi have remained relatively calm, the truth is that both are competing for leadership roles in Asia and beyond.

In particular, Xi has spoken out against what he sees as the United States' efforts to foment a cold war mindset in the area by establishing a security architecture and incorporating alliances with the regional nations, whose main objective is to undermine China's rising preeminence. He implied that the US's efforts to encourage bloc and group politics would only widen differences, and he spoke from a position of moral authority as he emphasised China's "global measures" to construct a benign and inclusive development and security paradigm.

The Chinese are opposed to the Indo-Pacific

ic concept championed by the United States because of its potential to sow discord in the region. In contrast, they are working to foster a global society with "a shared future" and guide a much more peaceful world, free from sanctions and interference in the affairs of other nations.

Despite his claims that China has no desire to "alter the current international order..." and has no intention of challenging or replacing the United States," Xi nonetheless envisions a Chinese century and aspires to achieve a new world order that would reflect Chinese rather than American interests, power, and values. For obvious reasons, the United States has no intention of giving in to Chinese pressure.

Both Washington and Beijing are looking to strengthen their strategic positions and are preparing to avoid a military conflict over the delicate question of Taiwan's future status.

The US president did bring up the issues of Xinjiang, Tibet, and Hong Kong during their meeting in Bali, but he did so in a way that was conciliatory and muted, if not downright deferential, so as not to roil Chinese sensibilities. The Chinese government views these issues as "internal matters" and will not tolerate "external interference" in what it considers to be "internal matters."

The key controversial US-China bilateral problems, such as the origins of the COVID-19 virus in China, trade, and notably the US restriction on advanced semiconductor technology exports to China, were not addressed.

In China's post-summit summary, the United States was chastised for trade wars, technology warfare, and decoupling, yet the necessity for bilateral cooperation was stressed, given the de facto interconnected structure of the two economies.

Still, the most important thing to take away from the Bali summit is that neither the United States nor China plans to further escalate tension in their mutual relations and, knowing full well the limits of their power and the prohibitive costs of any direct military encounter, would likely explore a constructive and sustainable path to remain engaged.



# Will Russia's tormenting of Ukraine work?

*Russia's tormenting of Ukraine has been going on since 2014 when it occupied Crimea*



By Dr Moonis Ahmar

Moscow's relentless use of colossal force to destroy Kyiv's command and control system, including its power installations, is another manifestation of Russia's last attempt to destroy its perennial adversary.

Russia's tormenting of Ukraine has been going on since 2014 when it occupied Crimea. Russia's failure to occupy Kyiv and its back-to-back debacles of losing Kharkiv region in the northeast in September and Kherson in November forced Moscow to retaliate by missile attacks over Ukraine's power plants plunging more than half of that country into darkness. Ruling out negotiations with Moscow, as covertly suggested by the US, President Volodymyr Zelensky's adviser Podolyak made it clear that "when you have the initiative on the battlefield, it's slightly bizarre to receive proposals like you will not be able to do everything by military means anyway, you need to negotiate. Despite Russia's heavy military defeats in recent weeks, including Ukraine retaking the key southern city of Kherson, President Vladimir Putin still thinks that he can destroy Ukraine, this is his obsession and negotiating with him makes no sense."

Russia as a tormentor by destroying Ukraine's infrastructure and causing displacement of millions of people with its invasion on February 24, 2022 is however unable to achieve its strategic objective by occupying and then giving legal shape by holding referendum in four territories. British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, during his recent visit to Kyiv, announced providing 55 million pounds worth of air defence system along with other military equipment so as to effectively counter Russian's continuous missile attacks. Yet, there is no let-up in Moscow's unrelenting military pressure, with key Ukrainian nuclear power stations being targeted so as to put people under psychological pressure by depriving them of water and power and making their lives miserable during winters.

How will Russia face international criticism of severe human rights violations and occupation of parts of a sovereign country? Will tilting military balance in the Russia-Ukraine war in favour of the latter culminate into the former's withdrawal from territories it had occupied including Crimea?

The human cost of war in Ukraine could be

gauged from the fact that in the last nine months more than 100,000 people from both sides have been killed. Russia has suffered three times more casualties in Ukraine than it had in its 10 years of military intervention in Afghanistan. Billions of dollars of military cost of war along with colossal damage done to the country's infrastructure is another reality. Still, there is no let-up in the war as Moscow still thinks that it can sustain its territorial gains by striking a deal with the West by holding negotiations and getting the guarantee of Kyiv not joining NATO. A neutral Ukraine by giving legitimacy to the Russian occupation of Crimea and four territories in the eastern part of that country will be acceptable to Moscow but not to the Ukrainian people and the regime.

In its editorial, 'Dreams of peace' in the November 12, 2022 issue of *The Economist* (London) it is stated: "Imagine a victorious Ukraine in 2030. It is a democratic nation, preparing to join the European Union. Reconstruction is almost complete. The economy is growing fast; it is clean and diverse enough to keep corrupt oligarchs at bay." It may appear as a fallacy given the destruction of Ukraine and the bleeding of

Russia, but the West has already started doing brainstorming about that future of that war-devastated country by offering a 'Marshall Plan' of rebuilding and reconstruction. The total cost of that plan is around 100 billion dollars which Kyiv and the West hope to retrieve from Russia as reparation, as was done by the victorious allied powers from defeated Nazi Germany after the end of WWII.



It may appear to be a wishful thinking but the ultimate objective of Ukraine and its Western allies is to bleed Russia to an extent that it is forced to surrender; and that it should pay reparations to Ukraine of its occupation, destruction and serious human rights violations. Trying Russian soldiers and officers for war crimes is also a possibility as stated by various Ukrainian officials from time to time.

Russia's tormenting of Ukraine will not work because of three main reasons.

First, the resilience and patriotism of Ukrainian people against the Russian aggression. When Russia attacked Ukraine in February, it appeared that Kyiv will not be able to withstand a superior Russian military and will capitulate. Defiance and the crucial help which Ukraine got from the West paved the way for a systematic strategic planning to give a bloody nose to the advancing Russian forces and launch an offensive to liberate some of the territories, particularly the southern city of Kherson. If Ukrainian military, helped by the resistance offered by people in occupied territories, are able to stop the Russian forces, the outcome

will be a new Ukraine capable of protecting its sovereignty from any external threat.

Second, the hatred harboured by the people of Ukraine for Russia will diminish hopes of reconciliation between the two countries. When genocide is a state policy and the aim is to cleanse Ukrainians and replace them with Russians, the outcome will be eternal hostility and hatred among those who

torment Ukraine. The latest is relentless bombardment that seeks to wreck Ukraine's infrastructure. Residents of the capital have been told that they may have to evacuate if the power grid collapses, halting water and sewage services." More than that, Putin is trying to give another colour to Russia's attack over Ukraine as "he sees today's conflict as a clash of civilizations between Russia and the West."

There is certainly no short cut to ceasefire and subsequent withdrawal of Russian forces from territories occupied in Ukraine since 2014. Diplomacy, mediation and backchannel negotiations could have prevented the Russia-Ukraine conflict from escalating, but the intransigent position taken by the parties concerned tend to further aggravate the crisis. Ukraine has rejected any solution barring the withdrawal of Russian forces and Moscow is adamant that it will not vacate Russian-speaking territories, including Crimea.

Third, tormenting Ukraine has backfired as it is Russia which is facing military debacles, sanctions and international condemnation. The war in Ukraine will only end when one party ceases to exist which means either Ukraine surrenders or Putin's regime is changed. As a result, the world order would be destabilised.





# IMF and the Debt Crisis

*For the past few weeks, Pakistan and the IMF have held virtual rounds of talks*

By Mehtab Haider

Pakistan's economy has gone back to square one because of ongoing political instability and the country's inability to bring in enough dollars. Clouds of default risk are once again hovering over the heads of economic managers.

For the current financial year, Pakistan's debt service on its external debt and liabilities, which includes the principal and markup, was around \$22 billion. This number has been rising quickly over the past few years.

For the next two months, until January 31, 2023, Islamabad will have to pay over \$4 billion in debt service on loans from outside the country. One of the biggest payments is due on December 5, 2022, an Islamic-based Sukuk bond.

With key appointments of top military brass, such as the Chief of Army Staff (COAS) and Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, the time has come to ensure political stability by holding parleys on key political issues, such as holding free and fair elections. However, one thing should be included in the Treasury and opposition benches' talks: both sides should devise ways and means to reach a consensus on the much-needed "Charter of Economics" for providing certainty and predictability.

Amid lingering uncertainty on the political front regarding how the lingering tussle between the ruling PDM and PTI was going to unfold in coming episodes on the political horizon of the country, Pakistan and the IMF have continuously been engaged through a virtual round of parleys, but both sides have so far remained unable to strike any consensus for finalising the schedule to conclude the pending 9th review and release of a \$1 billion tranche under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF).

In the aftermath of severe floods, the Pakistani side shared a revised macro-economic and fiscal framework whereby Islamabad revised its budget deficit upward, mainly because of increased

requirements for debt servicing. However, the FBR's tax target of Rs 7.47 trillion was kept unchanged despite the compression in imports.

Imports are estimated to be worth at least \$60 billion because monthly imports have surpassed the \$5 billion mark. It is yet to be seen how the FBR manages to collect its desired tax collection target. The exports will fetch less than \$32 billion in the current fiscal year, and they are likely to hover around \$25 to \$26 billion. The remittances are falling in the range of 8 to 9 percent. So, the current account deficit will be around \$10 billion.

For the past few weeks, Pakistan and the IMF have held virtual rounds of talks. Despite sharing revised macro-economic and fiscal frameworks for incorporating flood-related impacts, the IMF does not seem to agree with the projections made by the government of Pakistan.

The real GDP growth target was revised downward from 5 percent to 2 percent, while CPI-based inflation was projected to escalate around 23 to 25 percent. For the current fiscal year, nominal growth is expected to be 25%.

The revised fiscal framework raised the budget deficit target from 4.9 percent of GDP to the tune of Rs 900 billion, mainly in the shape of increased debt servicing requirements for the current fiscal year, so the budget deficit would go close to 5.9 percent of GDP. It did not include flood-related expenditures, for which the IMF will allow adjusters to hike expenditures up to a certain extent.

Another shortfall is expected due to non-tax revenues in the form of a petroleum development levy, which was expected to be Rs 855 billion but is now expected to be Rs 500 billion due to a 22 percent decrease in POL product consumption.

There might be a shortfall of Rs 350 billion on account of PDL. The government expects to compensate Rs 71

billion through increased SBP profits, as the government expects to collect Rs 371 billion for the current fiscal year, up from the initial target of Rs 300 billion.

The original amount of Rs 727 billion that was set aside for the Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) for the current fiscal year was expected to go down.

The real problem will arise on the external front of the economy as the revised macroeconomic framework will work out fresh numbers for the current account deficit, thus affecting the figures of exports, imports, remittances, and foreign direct investment as well.

Overall, the current account deficit in the first four months of the current fiscal year (July–October) was \$2.82 billion, a 47 percent decrease from the previous fiscal year's figure of \$5.3 billion. The IMF has projected that the CAD will stand at \$9.2 billion for the current fiscal year, as this assessment was done prior to the recent floods.

The major challenge for Pakistan's economy lies on the external front, as the Fund assessed that Islamabad required dollar inflows to the tune of \$32 to \$34 billion for the current fiscal year. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and China had committed \$13 billion in the form of rollovers, additional rollovers, jacking up debt SWAPS, and additional oil facilities on deferred payments in order to shore up dwindling foreign exchange reserves.

The foreign exchange reserves held by the SBP decreased to \$7.8 billion. There are firm-up dollar inflows from the AIIB to the tune of \$500 million, the IMF's tranche of \$1 billion if everything goes well in January 2023, and project loan disbursements from multilateral creditors. Now the repayments or outflows on account of external debt will total more than \$4 billion in the next two months. So, the country is left with no other option but to generate dollar inflows in order to overcome the persistent dollar liquidity crunch being experienced by the country.



# Lux Style Awards 2022

For the last 21 years, Lux has successfully organised awards, called the Lux Style Awards, in the fields of fashion, film, television, and music. People related to these fields wait for this night, when the winners are announced for their work over the last year.

The 21st edition of LSA was held in Lahore in its trademark style this year, two years after the ban on public gatherings was lifted due to COVID-19 restrictions. The last LSA with all its glitz and glamour happened in 2019, then in 2020, when gatherings were still prohibited because of Corona, the awards were given without inviting guests or media, while in 2021, they were held on a very limited level following the SOPs of the pandemic.

But besides all the show and display in 2022, many stars managed to grace the red carpet of one of the most anticipated entertainment events of the year. Many other winners were not present to receive their awards, especially in the fields of film and TV.

This year, there were altogether 27 awards given in four categories: six in fashion, four in film, six in music, and 11 in television. Two special awards in the categories of "Lifetime Achievement Awards" and "Change Maker Awards" were given to film actress Anjuman and late singer Nazia Hasan, respectively.

Lux, as usual, provided some special performances throughout the evening, including a tribute to late Pakistani pop star Nazia Hasan and living Punjabi film legend Anjuman. The television and film actors Amar Khan and Kinza Hashmi performed on Hasan's song "Aao Na Pyar Karen" along with Usman Khalid But. Another presentation to pay tribute to the icon was a dance number on "Disco Diwane" by Urwa Hocane and Usman Khalid But.

Another talented star from Pakistan, Humaima Malik, paid tribute to Anjuman Jee on her famous song, "Sone Dea Kanga, Sauda Ako Jiya," originally sung by Madam Noor Jahan.

Other highlights of the show were the execution of the National Anthem by Shahzad Roy and Coke Studio fame Abdul Wahab Bugti in a unique style, Asim Azhar's rendition of his song "Meri Jaan," during which he presented a flower to his fiancé Merub Ali, and Ali Zafar's dance performance with Gul Panra and Abid Brohi on folk songs, sung by the singer in different regional languages.

Fahad Mustafa, digital and television personality Tabish Hashmi, film and television actor Mansha Pasha, and Dananeer Mubeen hosted the event.







# Despite the IMF programme, the economic condition of Pakistan remains critical

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

By Javed Mahmood

As per the predictions of the IMF and assessments of the international credit rating agencies such as Moody's – the economic condition of Pakistan remains precarious even three months after the resumption of the IMF loan and financial support provided by friendly countries, including Saudi Arabia, China, United States, and some other countries.

Before the resumption of the IMF loan, international organizations were of the opinion that the economy of Pakistan would remain in trouble because of dwindling foreign exchange reserves, depreciation of rupee value, hostile political environment, lack of foreign investment, and a wide gap in the balance of payment position of Pakistan.

According to the latest balance of payment (BOP) position of Pakistan issued by the State Bank on Nov 22, in the first four months of the ongoing financial year (July-Oct), Pakistan has sustained \$2.93 billion current account deficit. The quantum of the CAD is almost 45 percent less than a \$5.41 billion current account deficit reported in the corresponding period of the previous fiscal.

Nevertheless, keeping in view the meager amount of foreign exchange reserves – around \$7.8 billion with the central bank by mid-Nov-2022, the quantum of \$2.93 billion current account deficit seems to be unbearable. It reflects the net outflow of \$2.93 billion in four months of this fiscal year. At this time, the coalition government is running from pillar to post to obtain new loans – in addition, to rescheduling about \$27 billion in foreign loans which are payable in 2022-23. Also, the current size of the foreign exchange reserves with the SBP is hardly equal to six weeks' national imports while in the first week of Dec 2022, Pakistan will be returning a \$1 billion Sukuk loan. It means that after the payment



of \$1 billion Sukuk bonds on Dec 5, the reserves with the central bank would decline to below \$7 billion in case the government does not line up foreign financing from any country or financial institution before this payment.

The low foreign exchange reserves of the SBP – on the one hand are driving up the value of the dollar and other major currencies against local currency while on the other, dollars are rarely available in the open market. And despite the repeated assurances of the Finance Minister Ishaq Dar to throw the value of the US dollar to below Rs200, the dollar-rupee exchange rate is fluctuating around 224 rupees in the open market on Nov 24 and 230 in the open market.

According to the Finance Minister and some other government officials, the IMF was willing to release in advance \$1.1 billion next tranche in the month of November to support Pakistan to cope with the challenges arising out of recent catastrophic floods and improve the foreign exchange reserves. However, this did not materialize till the filing of this article on Nov 25 – consequently, the government's rival political circles and speculators have actively started spreading rumours about the default of Pakistan.

Technically, Pakistan has defaulted as the country has requested creditors to reschedule their \$27 billion loans. Because, in the prevailing circumstances, the Pakistan government is unable to pay foreign loans, especially in the backdrop of recent devastating floods. That's why the United Nations urged the creditors of Pakistan to defer their loans payable by Pakistan in 2022 and 2023.

However, Pakistan will not default till the time the government officially announces bankruptcy. And it is understood that the coalition government would not take any risk which forces it to declare a default. Also, the IMF, World Bank, ADB, and friendly countries such as Saudi Arabia, China, and UAE are offering financial assistance to Pakistan to support economic stability, rehabilitation of flood-hit areas/victims, and save Pakistan from default. At this time, the real challenge for the coalition government is to improve the foreign exchange reserves, end economic uncertainty, defuse political imbroglio, and line up big foreign investments in the country to bolster economic growth, employment, and trading activities.

Another major issue for policy makers has been the trade deficit which has caused an immense damage to the economy, reserves,



and undermined the value of rupee versus dollar and other currencies. From July-Oct period of this fiscal year, the country has sustained \$13 billion trade deficit. In comparison with the comparative period of the previous fiscal, the trade deficit has slumped by \$3.5 billion, from \$16.5 billion in July-Oct 2021 to \$13 billion this year. However, on average, the monthly trade deficit remains over and above \$3 billion, which was not affordable in the prevailing circumstances. If the government did not take measures to reduce trade gap to an affordable level, at the end of this financial year (June 2023), Pakistan will be facing at least a \$30 billion trade deficit.

Apart from the issues quoted above, the government will have to look into the record-high inflation in October 2022. In Pakistan, inflation surged above 26 percent in Oct on a year-on-year basis, according to data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. The benchmark of inflation was the second highest in the past 47 years and similar inflation was reported in 1974.

In comparison with Oct 2021, when the index was recorded at 9.2%, this year, inflation made a significant surge in Oct this year, hitting 26.6%. The CPI inflation General; increased to 26.6% on a year-on-year basis in Oct 2022 as compared to an increase of 23.2% in the previous month and 9.2% in Oct 2021. This is an area where the coalition government appears helpless because of its commitments with the IMF to keep energy prices very high to generate maximum tax and non-tax revenues to meet the fiscal targets. The prices of petrol, gas, and electricity are at the maximum level through international



crude oil, and gas prices have slumped in the international markets amid reports of a possible economic slowdown in the world.

## ECO Bank and AIIB lending to Pakistan

The Economic Cooperation Organization Trade and Development Bank is providing 150 million Euros to Pakistan. President of ECO Trade and Development Bank Yalcin Yuksel stated this in a meeting with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Istanbul last week. PM Shehbaz said the financial package will contribute to the flood relief efforts and the import of fuel for Pakistan. Shehbaz Sharif said overall financial assistance to Pakistan since the launching of the ECO Bank would increase to one billion dollars after the disbursement of another 150 million Euros in the coming days. Premier thanked the ECO Trade and Development Bank and he lauded the role of the Bank in fulfilling the developmental pursuits of ECO member countries.

Similarly, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) has also promised to offer financial assistance to Pakistan to cope the country meet its foreign exchange requirements for imports, development, and balance of payment.

Meanwhile, AIIB signed a USD500-million loan agreement with Pakistan at COP27 to support the Building Resilience with Countercyclical Expenditures (BRACE) programme. By creating fiscal space for crucial health and social sector spending, BRACE will strengthen Pakistan's macroeconomic management and support more sustained inclusive growth. BRACE is also supporting Pakistan's recovery from the adverse impacts of the combined exogenous shocks including supply chain disruptions, soaring energy prices, and climate-induced devastating floods. The programme will provide critical countercyclical financing support to Pakistan to implement priority measures to build the resilience of vulnerable groups, strengthen social protection, and increase food security and support economic revitalization.

"It is essential that we proactively and flexibly address our Members' urgent needs in the face of multiple challenges," said Konstantin Limitovskiy, AIIB Vice President for Investment Operations (Region 2). "We look forward to enhancing our partnership with Pakistan and collaborating with global partners to significantly increase our support to help Members' efforts in achieving a green, resilient and inclusive recovery. AIIB is dedicated to promoting regional cooperation in addressing development challenges in an integrated way."



# Economy in Shambles

*The coalition government has a mountain of problems to solve, including skyrocketing inflation, the significant devaluation of the Pakistani rupee versus major world currencies, rising fuel prices, and dwindling foreign currency reserves*

By Arsim Tariq

A minor shift in political power can have a profound effect on economies that are still developing, lowering the rate of economic activity, creating a sense of uneasiness in the financial sector, and deflecting the country's progress toward economic security. It's possible for this to lead to yet another set of issues. Just this happened in Pakistan over three months before the federal budget for 2022-23 was made public.

The coalition government has a mountain of problems to solve, including skyrocketing inflation, the significant devaluation of the Pakistani rupee versus major world currencies, rising fuel prices, and dwindling foreign currency reserves. Debt default anxiety permeates all of these problems.

Recent numbers from Pakistan's State Bank indicate that the country:

A current account deficit of \$17.41 billion for the fiscal year 2021-2022 and for July 2022 \$3.13 billion; a balance of trade deficit of \$44.71 billion for the fiscal year 2021-2022 and for July 2022 of \$3.35 billion; total reserves of \$8.8 billion; commercial bank reserves of \$5.67 billion.

The national inflation rate measured by the Consumer Price Index rose to 24.9% in July 2022, from 21.3% in June. As of this point in the year, GDP growth stands at 5.97% (versus a 5% goal for 2022-2023).

Many of the political choices in Pakistan's past were taken without regard to the country's financial state. Furthermore, many prior governments failed economically because they lacked a competent group of economists who could design long-term economic strategies. Governments that put their financial ministries in the hands of bankers or chartered accountants failed to set their countries on a path to sustainable development.

Inconsistent economic policies, the pursuit of the wrong priorities, and poor leadership

are to blame for the ongoing economic problems. For this reason, Pakistan has made little progress during the past seven decades. Inconsistency in fiscal policy has also contributed to economic uncertainty, as succeeding administrations have shifted their focus to favour different industries.

The new finance minister touched on some of these issues in his budget speech.



According to the article, "every year, a different individual used to present budget, and every year... economic policies of the government would change, due to which confidence of investors and development partners was damaged,"

"The tax to GDP ratio in emerging market countries is around 16%, but in Pakistan it is only 8.6% at the time."

While each new administration has pointed fingers at its predecessor for the country's economic woes, none of them have made any real efforts to rescue the country. Governments have joined the International Monetary Fund programme to overcome fiscal challenges and lower the budget deficit, but then they spend more (and earn less), devoting the vast majority of their revenue to paying down the national debt.

It is projected that Pakistan will spend 3.95 trillion Pakistani rupees (\$17.9 billion) on debt servicing in fiscal year 2022/23. At 4.44 quadrillion rupees (or 72.5% of GDP) in March of 2022, public debt was at a crisis level.

Fiscal management in Pakistan has not improved. There has never been a strong tax culture established by the state due to

poor leadership, ineffective policies, and a lack of incentive to pay taxes. Even in major urban centres, there appears to be a no concerted effort to formally register, and income-tax retail establishments.

The total amount of tax revenue in Pakistan for the fiscal year 2021-22 is 6,125 trillion rupees. Seven trillion rupees are planned for revenue in the fiscal year 2022-23. The Federal Board of Collection typically reaches revenue projections, but this does not necessarily mean that the amount received equals the true tax owed by a country of 220 million. According to an estimate, tax theft has amounted to roughly 3 trillion rupees.

Although the World Bank and other international agencies have provided financing to help reform and reorganise tax systems, successive governments have



failed to strengthen tax governance. The government has raised taxes on those who currently pay them instead of doing anything to reduce tax evasion or increase the number of taxpayers. Because of this, commercial activity has slowed even further. There are around 220 million individuals living in Pakistan, however, only about 2% of them actually fill out tax forms.

Retailers (other than tier one and defined service providers) in Pakistan will pay an income tax of between 3,000 and 10,000 Pakistani rupees per year via their commercial power bills, as suggested by the government in the Finance Bill 2022.

Coalition government officials predicted that these measures will result in tax revenue collection from businesses totalling over 30 billion rupees. Governments at all levels in Pakistan have tried and failed for decades to tax the country's millions of shopkeepers. There have been several attempts at fixing this problem, including fixed tax plans, but each time, retailers have threatened to go on strike, closing their stores until the contested tax rules are repealed. As a result, the government has abandoned its plans to impose taxes on locally-owned businesses.

On the other hand, this time around, the administration chose to lessen the monetary impact of the proposed fixed tax charge after originally delaying it. If a store's



monthly electricity bill is less than 20,000 rupees, the retailer must pay a 5% tax; if the bill is more than 20,000 rupees, the retailer must pay a 7.5% tax.

A current account deficit of over \$10 billion and principal repayments on almost \$24 billion in external debt are putting a strain on Pakistan's economy. In the months between April and July of 2022, the value of the rupee dropped by more than 10%. Demand for US dollars rose as political uncertainty intensified, money markets became volatile, and reserves gradually dwindled. Fuel and energy price hikes contributed to a general increase in inflation. It's obvious that the government is in a bind; how should it address issues like inflation, trade deficits, and the current account deficit?

Imports of autos, mobile phones, and machinery were all subject to the State

Bank of Pakistan's prior permission and 100% cash-margin requirements in April as part of its efforts to reduce the trade deficit. But after four months, they loosened up on that rule. There is currently a 25% cash margin requirement for imports with periods of payment between 91 and 180 days. If the payment terms are more than 180 days, there will be no interest charged. The actions taken to increase the cash margin required have reduced the cost of imports. July 2022 saw a decline from June's \$7.9 billion Pakistani rupees to July's \$6.1 billion.

Pakistan's 23rd IMF programme has been authorised, and the country has received the first instalment of roughly \$1.2 billion. Since Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves are low, the country urgently requires \$4 billion in additional aid. Diverse finance options, such as loans from ally nations, are currently being negotiated.





# The state of the textile industry in Pakistan

*The textile industry blames the country's bureaucratic culture for several issues it has been facing*

By Hamza Qureshi

Pakistan's textile industry shares the largest percentage of the country's exports. With textile units distributed over cities such as Faisalabad, Karachi, Sialkot, and Lahore, the textile industry roughly contributes more than 55 percent to Pakistan's exports.

Denim jeans, knitwear, hand gloves, and cotton yarns have traditionally been the premier exports of Pakistan. Since the early 2000s, we have witnessed unprecedented growth in the technical textile sector. For the past two decades, different Pakistani textile manufacturers have successfully created and maintained their space in the international arena in collaboration with E.I. du Pont de Nemours and Company and its local partner.

The IDEAS 2022 conference held at the Karachi Expo Center attracted different companies from the defence sector. Along with pavilions displaying military hardware and software, there were also exhibitors from the textile sector. Garments, shoes, and gloves play an important role in the personal safety of on-ground troops. Therefore, the defence sector is one of the largest customers of textile products.

## A leaf from history: the improvisation of Silk

Legend says that the Khwarazmian forces wore silk vests as soft body armour against the Mongols. Though the Khwarizmis were unsuccessful, their rivals liked the idea. They discover that an arrow hitting silk does not break the silk but ends up embedding the arrow in the flesh wrapped in silk, allowing the arrow to be removed. Genghis Khan was said to have issued all his horsemen with silk vests.

Today we know that spider silk is one of the strongest and toughest materials on Earth. Similarly, silk is also a naturally occurring protein fiber. It is known for its flame resistance and heat resistance. In the past, lightweight silk armour provided a competitive advantage over enemy forces.



## Synthetic fibres: transforming lives

DuPont™ is a synthetic fibre industry pioneer. DuPont's research and development introduced Kevlar®, Nomex®, and Tyvek®-like products in the 1960s. These synthetic fibres were very much inspired by naturally occurring silk. Since then, Kevlar has been found to be an important component of bullet-proof vests. It is known for its high tensile strength-to-weight ratio, being five times stronger than steel!

Nomex is a flame-resistant meta-aramid. It is used in firemen's and emergency suits. Tyvek is a paper-like nonwoven material. It is breathable yet resistant to water, abrasion, bacterial penetration, and aging. Common applications include medical packaging, personal protective equipment (PPE), and construction.

## Pakistan's shares in the global market

Pakistan hosts several leading manufacturers in terms of technical textiles. Escorts International is the official distributor for DuPont in Pakistan. They claim to be the world leader in advanced textiles and manufacture a variety of intermediate and

end products made of Kevlar® and Nomex®, both of which are imported from DuPont™ US. They have historically held full integration across the spectrum, from fibre to yarn to fabrics to apparel.

CEO of Escorts International, Sher Ahmed, shared that fabric and yarn are produced in their textile facilities near Mureedke, Lahore. Custom-made goods are then supplied to local and international manufacturers.

## Military-grade garments

Kevlar® products have high demand in the sports, military, rescue services, and energy sectors. Jeans, shirts, gloves, socks, and neck protection garments are made of Kevlar, which provides them with the necessary durability and strength. Head of DuPont Operations and ex-VP of the American Business Council, Kamran Khan, added that the fabric produced in Pakistan is of higher quality than anywhere else in the world. This is due to the skilled workforce of the textile sector, which possesses the necessary expertise and experience.

Kevlar is used in denim jeans and hand gloves. Motorcyclists used these abrasion-resistant garments to safeguard



themselves. Pakistan is exporting these garments aggressively and stands at the top of the world, holding roughly 60% of the total global sales.

Nine layers of Kevlar fabric are compressed to be transformed into a 9 mm bullet-proof vest. Additional Kevlar sheets can be included to provide anti-ballistic protection from Russian Kalashnikov or US M16 rifles. Kevlar fabric is also used for protection in ballistic helmets.



Bullet-proof jackets now include cut-resistant polyethylene, which is a relatively new addition. It lacks the flame retardancy of Kevlar while also being hard body armor. Kevlar vests and jackets are also available for civilians, with the variants being lounge suits and waistcoats. Kevlar sheets are also incorporated into vehicles to make them bullet- and bomb-proof.

Gloves used by special forces and police are also manufactured in Sialkot and Karachi. The military uses special gloves when rappelling through ropes from a helicopter. Similarly, police gloves are designed to be abrasion-, cut-, and puncture-resistant. Such gloves could easily grab a knife or any other sharp blade. GT Pilot gloves are supposed to be anti-static, UV-proof, and flame-retardant. These gloves are exported to several countries in the Middle East, North America, the Far East, and Europe. Sher Ahmed shared that even the Israeli and Indian militaries used gloves manufactured in Pakistan. Pilots' coveralls are also manufactured in Pakistan and are used by various air forces around the world. Kamran Khan emphasised that Pakistan is one of the top four countries in the world for glove production. Cut and sewn gloves require a labor-intensive skillset, which is held by Pakistani skilled labor.

## Life-saving garments

Life-saving garments are a very important market in technical textiles. They could include anything from a firefighter suit to medical PPE to steel shirts for casual wear. Sher Ahmed revealed that his company has manufactured steel shirts that literally have steel threads and are breathable and as soft as normal cotton shirts at the same time. However, their resistance against abrasion and tears makes them a perfect garment for

engineers working in the tiresome conditions of a factory.

Daniyal Ahmed, COO of Escorts International, told this correspondent that fireman's suits and industrial suits are exported to many countries around the world. The flame-retardant firefighter suits are made with Kevlar and Nomex material. The multi-layer protects a firefighter from the

flash as well as the heat. A Pakistani firm is currently producing and exporting EN 469-certified firefighter suits. He exclaimed that 1122 Emergency Services were also using their products. The cost of a fireman's suit has been significantly reduced by more than half in contrast to an imported one, which cost about a thousand dollars.

The company is also manufacturing Molten Splash Protective Kevlar Aluminized Suits and Arc Flash Fire-Protection Balaclavas, whose twin coating can stand against 400°C hot splashes. Their applications include the glass and metal industries. Geologists can wear these suits while working near active volcanoes where lava splashes out. Nomex III-A flame-retardant winter jackets are made of anti-static material, which can be used in low-temperature areas. Anti-static material helps to reduce the chances of sparks caused by static charge. Such a static charge could cause a fire in volatile environments such as flammable chemical factories or oil refineries. Anti-static coveralls are also extensively used in the oil and gas industry.

## Biological and medical protection

Escorts International is also producing the lint-resistant and anti-bacterial Sontara Suit, which is essentially made from Tyvek®. Tyvek is a non-spun-bonded material that is tear-resistant and as light as paper. The suit is mainly used in the medical industry. Its demand increased



exponentially during COVID. The industry in Pakistan was successful in fulfilling the demand. Polypropylene PPEs were also used during COVID, but the suit is not breathable, making it quite uncomfortable for medical staff.

Tychem 2000C is a PPE suit that offers types 2–6 protection against concentrated organic or inorganic chemicals. It is basically Tyvek with a yellow protective layer. Tychem 6000F is an enhanced version of the same. Tyvek 500 PPE overall offers protection against diluted chemicals and dust. Tyvek bags are also used to pack medical and biological waste. The tear-resistant feature provides the best protection against sharp edges such as surgical blades and syringes.

As of now, Pakistani textiles have to ship their goods to laboratories in China, Switzerland, or the United Kingdom to get the standardisation tests done. The whole process of testing takes 4-6 months. Such time- and cost-intensive tests are a barrier to completing orders on time and within budget.

According to military sources, the Pakistan Army is short of more than 200K military ballistic protective helmets. No official from Global Industrial Defense Solutions (GIDS), a state-owned defence conglomerate, was available to comment on this. Sources say that the major reason behind this huge shortage is the non-existence of military-grade testing facilities. If there had been a laboratory with facilities for

Prime Minister in the third week of November, urging him to reconsider the zero-rating for the export-based industry. Export of essential industrial filters is prohibited because they are considered luxury items!

The textile industry blames the country's bureaucratic culture for several issues it has been facing. They say that the concept of the "right person for the right job" is unfortunately nonexistent in this country. The State Bank of Pakistan's EPD Circular No. 11 from July 5, 2022, says that water filtration equipment is now on the list of luxury items.

RO membranes, ultrafiltration modules, and wastewater filtration membranes are used for water purification by several



Customers for such suits come from MNCs and companies in places like North America, Oceania, MEA, and the Far East. Local consumers included energy sector companies, hospitals, rescue services, and the armed forces.

## What is Pakistan's advanced technical textiles sector lacking?

Kamran Khan, Country Head of DuPont for Pakistan, told The Truth International that standardisation is still lacking in the industry. To worry more, there is also no vision present at the policymakers' level for making that happen.

fragmentation tests, bomb blast velocity, and computerised gunfire, such issues would not have arisen. The Chinese laboratory, which used to perform tests for the military, has been closed since COVID.

Experts say that the cost of building a military-grade lab is less than 50 million rupees. It only requires the department's will to initiate such projects. Other issues include audits and missing international accreditation. Textiles must invite foreign auditors for regular audits, which is a burden.

Exporters also complain about rising energy costs and the removal of subsidies. The All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APTMA) issued an open letter to the

industries, including food, textiles, beverages, cement, pharmaceuticals, steel, and municipalities. It is an important and key component of national water-saving efforts. They help reduce dependency on fresh water and curb environmental pollution by reusing wastewater.

Delay in replacing the water filtration membranes results in poor quality water, which affects production and causes energy losses, thereby resulting in higher operating costs. Moreover, water filtration projects initiated by the government itself are also affected. Manufacturers have requested the federal government on various occasions to remove the water filtration products from the items' ban list, but all this has been to no avail.



# A consistent downward slide

*Damage control remains the first and foremost task for the new army chief. Being apolitical means ensuring due space for the political forces to display their statesmanship*



By Miftah Ismail

Ask anyone familiar with economic matters what is the basic problem with Pakistan's economy and they will say it's the current account deficit.

And that would be the correct answer. The boom and-bust cycle of our economy is precisely because we run into a current account deficit every time we try to achieve growth. (The fact that we remain poor is due to our low productivity, but that's a separate discussion.) Current account deficit is the difference between foreign exchange going out (imports) and foreign exchange coming in (exports plus remittances). In Pakistan's case we have always had current account deficits (except for three out of 75 years), meaning that we have always had less to sell to foreigners than our propensity to consume their products. Of course, such an arrangement is not sustainable forever, and we have reached a stage where it is not.

There was a time in the 1950s when Pakistan's exports were more than South Korea's and a time in the 1990s when our exports were more than Vietnam's. Today, South Korea's and Vietnam's exports are 18 times and six times more than Pakistan's respectively. So, the story of our relative

decline is both old and consistent. However, it has taken on a sharper edge in this century.

When Gen Pervez Musharraf imposed martial law in 1999, our exports were 16 per cent of GDP.

When General Sahib at long last left, our exports had decreased to 12pc of GDP. In 2007-08 the government kept the rupee propped up to an unsustainable value of about Rs60 to a dollar, sold petrol at a loss, and ran the highest current account deficit in our history. (We aren't particularly innovative in our policy errors; as you will see below even our mistakes are recycled.) When the new PPP government came, it had to devalue the rupee and run to the IMF. Although there wasn't much that was stellar about its governance except for the Benazir Income Support Programme, the PPP should get the credit that it increased exports to 13.5pc of GDP. Next came the PML-N and where as it did solid work in building energy and transport infrastructure and ushering in CPEC, our exports declined by a debilitating 38pc to only 8.5pc of GDP and we ran the second-largest current account deficit in our history. Again, the issue was a currency pegged to a

dollar that highly subsidised imports and made them surge even as our exports were getting priced out.

We tried to make amends in the five months I worked as Shahid Khagan Abbasi's finance minister through devaluation but the solution lay in the IMF, which could only happen after a new government was formed post-elections. In the event, the incoming PTI government dithered for a while before agreeing to a new IMF programme.

With the advent of the coronavirus pandemic, which the PTI government handled quite well, IMF conditionalities were lifted even as loans kept coming. This allowed it to spend borrowed money without raising tax revenues. The push for unsustainable growth turbo-charged our imports and with export-to-GDP remaining almost stagnant we ran into the third-largest current account deficit in our history. Although in December last year, the PTI government had restarted the much-needed IMF programme, in February, faced with a vote of no-confidence, it opted to sacrifice the national interest for political interest and scuttled the IMF programme, giving unfunded subsidies for electricity and

petrol, and another amnesty to business. It was this breaking of the IMF agreement that set in motion the upward trend in our default risk.

When the new government came, we did what we had to do to renew the IMF programme and avoid default. This obviously involved some hard choices and I was relentlessly criticised from all sides. The main criticisms were about our letting the markets decide the rupee-dollar parity, increasing fuel prices and raising taxes.

We would've been happy if the dollar had organically depreciated, but I wasn't in favour of either, spending money or issuing administrative fiats to keep the dollar at a certain rate. I don't know what is the optimal rate of the dollar; I think only the market can determine that. Last year, our imports were \$80 billion and exports only \$31bn. Surely the number one priority of the finance minister should not be to make imports cheaper and export harder, which is what an appreciated rupee does.

We have been down this road before in 2007-8 and 2017-/18, without any joy. (A complaint that Western countries had in the 1990s was China keeping its currency depreciated to promote its exports. We, on the other hand, like to promote imports and restrict exports and remittances by keeping the rupee overvalued and then complain when we run out of dollars.) Today, there is

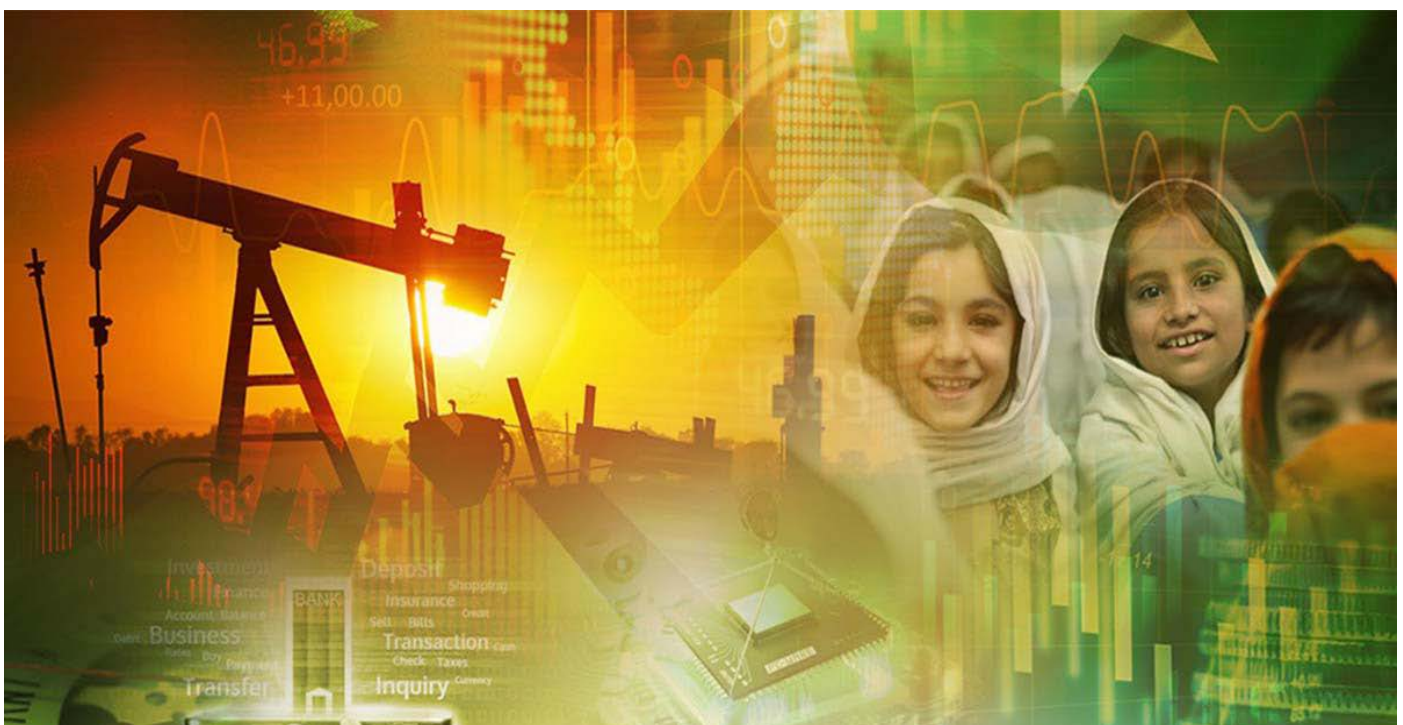


a large and persistent difference between the open market and the interbank exchange rates. This suggests that the State Bank is informally guiding banks on the exchange rate. The large difference is also detrimental to our exports and remittances and is encouraging imports.

The other criticisms were increasing the price of fuel and imposing new taxes. But should our government be selling petrol at a loss? Moreover, if there are 2.2 million shops in Pakistan and only 30,000 pay income tax, is it not fair to ask them to pay just Rs3,000 per month? Today, our default

risk has climbed up again and reached dangerous levels. This risk won't vanish even after the December bonds are paid off. At the risk of sounding an alarm, I have to say that we have no room left for error. Concrete measures that reassure markets and lenders are urgently needed.

There comes a time when the national interest must prevail over political interest. This is that time. This government will have no right to criticise PTI or anyone else if, having eagerly decided to come in power, it is unable to do what is right for the country.





## Amendment in Army Act story

*The PTI has the political capacity to make the appointment controversial by the sheer size of the public rally it will hold in Rawalpindi on November 26*



Pakistan's ruling class has never been particularly fond of law and constitution—they observe and obey the law only when it is convenient. Normally they settle their mutual conflicts and controversies through mechanisms of naked power while maintaining a façade of their commitment to rule of law and constitution for public consumption. There are, nevertheless, occasions in our political life when this ruling class has found itself engaged and entrapped in the web of laws and their provisions. The appointment of the Chief of the Army Staff is one such occasion. Undoubtedly, the most powerful office in the country, COAS appointment this time around is preceded by a storm of controversies spawned by conflicting political positions and choices of major political rivals.

Services chiefs under the 1973 Constitution are appointed under constitutional provisions, which bestow the authority for appointment on the shoulders of the Prime Minister of the country. The military governments of Zia and Musharraf passed martial law orders through which the power to

appoint service chiefs was bestowed in the office of the President, who during military rule happened to be a serving general. Zia never exercised this power as Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) as he kept giving himself extensions as army chief throughout his 11 years of rule. Although he did appoint several Naval and Air Force chiefs during his tenure.

Musharraf only once exercised his power to appoint COAS, when he came under a lot of pressure from the opposition to doff his uniform. He appointed General Ashfaq Pervaiz Kiyani as COAS in 2007. This was one of the strongest reasons for downfall. President Zardari, showing a lot of grace reverted the power to appoint COAS to his Prime Minister when he made the parliament, which was then under his party's control, repeal the amendments introduced by the previous military government. In the existing form, the constitution gives the power to appoint service chiefs to the prime minister. The role of the President in the process of appointment of an army chief is only ceremonial.

Why do the law and constitution suddenly become important when the time for the appointment of chief of the army staff comes every three years? Firstly, the military and its offices are primarily bureaucratic structures—their command, their organization, and their hierarchies are all governed by law and rules. There are occasions when the military acting outside its organization in the society behaves and act as if it is above law. However, as far as its internal matters are concerned, the military has an inherent need and requirement to work strictly by the book. Chaos and anarchy in society on account of the absence of rule of law may seem manageable. But the absence of laws and rules in the internal running of the military machine is simply not affordable. Secondly, there is a strong requirement to show the society that the military is strictly a law-abiding force. Hence, we see a strong display of adherence and commitment to observe and obey the law as far as the process of appointment of chief of the army staff is concerned.

In the post-Musharraf period, the process of the army chief's appointment



has never been trouble-free. At the time of the appointment of General Kiyani, the then-opposition was threatening to take to the roads if General Musharraf would not have doffed his uniform

At the time of the appointment of General Qamar Javed Bajwa as COAS in November 2016, there were signs of political unrest in the country, and true to his political character, former Prime Minister Imran Khan was threatening to take to the roads. Days before General Bajwa's name was announced by the then Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif in November 2016, a religious scholar close to the ruling party, in a video message on social media tried to link the new COAS with a heterodox religious sect. This caused an uproar in media and political circles, that was duly controlled and prevented from becoming a major controversy through the use of military's immense power of social and political control.

So, the political unrest we witnessed in November was not unprecedented. The political unrest now only existed in a magnified form when a popular leader, Imran Khan threatened to march not only on Islamabad but also threatening to cause unrest in Rawalpindi—but he changed his plan and surprised everybody.

This time the nature of the controversy was different and perhaps beyond the capacity of a military machine to control. A day before the appointment of COAS, former Army Chief Qamar Javed Bajwa's family

member's tax information was leaked by website showing extraordinary increase in their wealth, which was denied by DG ISPR. The ruling PMLN has its man as the prime minister and who decided the COAS appointment. The only problem was that the PTI had the political capacity to make the appointment controversial, which they tried to do by holding public rally in Rawalpindi on November 26. But before that the Prime Minister announced the name of COAS. There was a technical problem, PMLN's favorite according to media reports was set to retire two days before the

retirement date of General Bajwa, which made him unqualified for the office of new COAS. The legal wizards of PMLN answered this problem by proposing an amendment to the Army Act through which the Prime Minister is given the authority to retain any officer of the armed forces beyond the date of his retirement by simple executive order, which Prime Minister Exercised. No constitutional amendment or legislation was required for this purpose under the provision of the amendments. This led to a hue and cry.

Experts say that since COAS is a three years tenure post, one appointed as Army Chief would automatically receive a three years extension in service. So Prime Minister appointed new COAS. Imran Khan, on the other hand, in response to all these decisions/appointments announced to quit parliament system. He has announced to dissolve Punjab and Provincial governments and resign from Sindh and Balochistan Assemblies, creating more political instability. IK thinks by this move PDM Government will be left with no option other than to announce general election-which so far federal government is resisting due to political damage the PML-N is facing due to different reasons, specially inflation and bad governance.

By Umer Farooq





# Arshad Sharif's murder: Still a Mystery

*Arshad Sharif used to be known as a journalist who was against the establishment*

By Asadullah Malik

The murder of a well-known Pakistani journalist Arshad Sharif in Kenya is still a mystery. However, the case has become even more complicated after the so-called spokesperson of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz said that the plot to attack Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan and kill journalist Arshad Sharif was planned in London.

Sharif, one of the most influential anchor persons in Pakistan, came into hot water with the change of regime earlier this year. He was close to the old government, especially Imran Khan, the leader of the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI).

Sharif, who used to be known as a journalist who was against the establishment, got closer to the establishment at some point, especially after the Panamagate scandal broke out in 2016. But his harsh criticism of the military establishment after the regime change upset the powerful, and as a result, he was nominated in about two dozen FIRs across the country.

Luckily, he got unprecedented relief from the Islamabad High Court (IHC). On May 25, the then chief justice of the IHC, Justice Athar Minallah, who had been elevated to the Supreme Court in November, made the arrest of Sharif in all the FIRs impossible.

The court verdict on Sharif's petition states: "The Inspector General of Police, Islamabad Capital Territory, and the Deputy Commissioner, Islamabad Capital Territory, are directed not to curtail the liberty of the petitioners nor hand them over to officials of other provinces without seeking permission from this Court."

However, when Justice Minallah proceeded to the US for two months of annual leave, the government registered some new cases against Sharif, and he fled from Pakistan.

Initially, he went to Dubai, from where he flew to Kenya. Sharif started his YouTube channel, and within a very short span of time, 443,000 people subscribed to the channel. Things were going smoothly until

fake news regarding Sharif's documentary against the PML-N's Sharifs hit social media. The news that Netflix was going to broadcast this documentary was denied by the company's management.

A few days later, the Kenyan Police claimed responsibility for his "accidental" death on October 23. The initial police report said officers were on the lookout for the missing vehicle when he was killed.

According to this report, the driver of Sharif's Land Cruiser disobeyed orders to stop at a roadblock, and officers then shot at the car at least eight times as it moved away, killing the journalist in the process. Thousands turned up to Arshad Sharif's funeral on Thursday in Islamabad to mourn his death.

A Pakistani investigation team, comprising officials of the Intelligence Bureau (IB), and the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), visited Kenya and Dubai.

The estranged leader of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI), Faisal Vawda, has recorded the statement before the investigation team, while another PTI leader, Murad Saeed, expressed reservations and said that an impartial inquiry is not expected from this team. Arshad Sharif's post-mortem examination revealed 12 wounds on his body.

According to the report, the left part of his skull was also missing. The medico-legal experts spotted black marks around his left eye and a wound on his back. The wounds were spotted on the left side of the neck, right side of the chest, left shoulder, and back.

The medico-legal experts stated in the post-mortem report that four nails on his right hand were missing and a scratch mark was present on his right wrist.

It was presumed that the slain journalist was tortured before his murder and that the "accidental" death was a cover-up. While some people were pointing fingers at the establishment and the ruling coalition for

this murder, the sudden revelations of the so-called spokesperson of the PML-N, Tasneem Haider Shah, who said he was associated with the PML-N for the past 20 years, are seen as a twist in the murder case.

He told a press conference in London that he had three meetings with PML-N supreme leader Nawaz Sharif in the office of his son Hassan Nawaz, alleging that he was called to kill Arshad Sharif and Imran Khan. According to Shah, the first meeting was held on July 8, the second on September 20, and the third on October 29. He added that he was told that Arshad Sharif and Imran Khan should be removed before the appointment of the new army chief.

He further alleged that Nawaz Sharif had told him that if he could provide the shooter, they [the PML-N] would give him a place in Wazirabad and the blame would fall on the Punjab government. However, Shah added that he refused. Shah also said that the plot was reported to the British police. However, in a subsequent interview, Shah conceded that he has no evidence of any kind to prove his claims and that Khan's shooter has reached Kenya, and the belongings of Sharif have reached London too.

He claimed that Sharif's laptop, iPads, and other gadgets had also reached London and that Waqar Ahmad and Khurram Ahmad were in touch with PML-N UK senior vice president Nasir Butt. He said Butt had told him all of this.

He claimed that as soon as he became aware of the alleged plot to kill Khan, he sent a message to Khan through British-Pakistani businessman Liaqat Mahmood, who sat with him at the press conference on October 29, that there was a plan to kill him. The investigators may take notice of the new development. According to Mr. Vawda, the investigation team is going in the right direction, and he will share some evidence related to the murder of Sharif with the inquiry team in a subsequent meeting.

# Pakistan's Options for Climate Financing

*At the United Nations COP27 Climate Conference in Egypt, countries have agreed to establish a fund to help cover the loss and damage to poor countries caused by extreme weather, such as global warming and floods*

By Azeem Waqas

In the international market, Pakistan is having difficulty in obtaining climate finance. Developmental partners have estimated that Pakistan needs \$200 to \$300 million annually to mitigate the losses from climate risks, which is not enough to meet the demands and requirements of flood evacuees. Reliable sources shared this with The Truth International (TTI) Magazine.

At the United Nations COP27 Climate Conference in Egypt, countries have agreed to establish a fund to help cover the loss and damage to poor countries caused by extreme weather, such as global warming and floods.

People are happy that money is being set aside for poor countries like Pakistan, but technical and legal problems make it hard for Pakistan to take advantage of the chance.

According to the Global Climate Risk Index, between 1998 and 2018, Pakistan is estimated to have lost nearly 10,000 lives to climate-related disasters and suffered losses amounting to \$4 billion from 152 extreme weather events in that period. According to another World Bank estimate, environmental damage and climate change cost the Sindh province in Pakistan 15% of its GDP every year. This means that disaster risk reduction measures need to be put in place as soon as possible.

In 2019, the total climate finance provided and mobilised by developed countries for developing countries was \$80 billion, and current estimates indicate that the \$100 billion goal for 2020 was not met. This encouraged the UK, the host of COP26 in 2021, to call for more funding from wealthy countries ahead of the conference. The United States has recently pledged to increase climate financing.

Pakistan has limited options to explore the international market and reach out to developmental partners to get climate financing. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has suggested that



financial instruments play a critical role in creating incentives and triggering financial flows toward these investments. Governments around the world have put various financial instruments in place to drive climate change mitigation, backed by funding from a variety of sources. The climate finance eco-system comprises: 1) public and private sources of funds; 2) Financial intermediaries that facilitate, access, and manage coordination, collection, blending, and disbursement of climate finance; 3) financial instruments that raise and/or deploy climate-responsive investments. These provide projects, policy processes, and technical support for international cooperation. For example, the Green Climate Fund and the Least Developed Countries Fund.

According to UNDP, the Government of Pakistan, in an endeavour to pay heed to the increasing international focus on environmental issues and fulfil its NDCs made at COP26, may consider issuing a Nature Performance Bond (NPB). The NPB could be based on the Ten Billion Tree Tsunami Program, with linked long-term performance goals. The programme will be underpinned by regular reporting of results, together with independent review and verification. Since the proceeds from the NPB are not ring-fenced, the government of Pakistan shall have the autonomy to use the

funds for any purpose, including budgetary support or refinancing maturing debt, in which case the net debt stock of Pakistan would remain unchanged.

The NPB would reward the speeding up of the tree plantation programme while also supporting a set of secondary development indicators such as rural employment, and community participation, avoiding any conditionality often imposed on sovereigns in exchange for financial support. The NPB will be floated in the international capital markets, with potential subscribers being private ESG investors. It will be structured in a manner so as to ensure full payment of the coupon to the investors, while any debt relief, subject to meeting the performance targets, may be borne by the development partners through a grant or credit relief to the issuer, i.e., the Government of Pakistan.

NPBs can be beneficial for Pakistan in the following ways: they can support short-term economic recovery and can lead to debt restructuring since the NPB structure offers a mechanism to obtain debt relief. Application of proceeds to achieve environmental objectives, including those on biodiversity and climate change, as well as critical economic and social goals over the short, medium, and long term "Contribution to improved nature and climate outcomes, such as restoration of degraded



forests and other landscapes, wetland management, or species' conservation and recovery," says UNDP.

Pakistan can issue catastrophe bonds. The glaciers in the Himalayas, and the Karakoram in northern Pakistan are melting at an accelerated pace. If the emission trends and temperature rises continue unabated, the result will be catastrophic, leading to landslides, heavy flooding, dam bursts, and soil erosion. In anticipation of potential disasters, the government of Pakistan can consider issuing catastrophe bonds to manage the risks associated with such catastrophic events.

After the recent floods, Pakistan can start an agriculture insurance programme for the flood-afflicted farmers to boost agricultural production in the country. Notwithstanding the importance of Pakistan's agriculture sector for the economy of the country, very few disaster-related insurance solutions are currently available. Agriculture insurance has an important role to play in managing disaster risks, in particular pertaining to extreme weather events. Well-designed and executed agricultural insurance programmes can rapidly deliver claims, creating incentives for investment, protecting food security, and increasing farmers' resilience to weather.



The UNDP report says that. In its ambitious efforts toward afforestation through the Ten Billion Tree Tsunami Programme, Pakistan expects significant carbon sequestration, which can potentially be sold to third parties as carbon credits, earning substantial income for the country. Moreover, in Pakistan, alternative and renewable energy projects have the same prospects for development as carbon offsetting initiatives.

Pakistan's national vision for climate change is aligned with the national development plan and sectoral priorities. Pakistan has so far had limited access to international climate finance, whereas Pakistan's financial needs remain high given the country's vulnerability to climate change and capital-intensive transition to a decarbonized

economy. Aiming to achieve SDGs and NDCs as a party to and in compliance with the Paris Agreement under the UNFCCC, Pakistan must explore market- and non-market-based approaches for enhanced access to a diversified pool of international funding sources.

With a strong commitment towards sustainable development, debt sustainability endorsed by the IMF, and a dedicated political will to realise the vision of a sustainable, low-carbon, and climate-resilient Pakistan, it is high time that the GoP accelerates efforts toward exploring the policy options stipulated herein. The UNDP is fully committed to providing maximum support to the GoP and leveraging its network in order to successfully achieve climate-related outcomes.



# Poor Nations Facing the Brunt of Climate Change

*Pakistan experienced devastating flooding that, according to scientists, was made worse by anthropogenic climate change. This led to more than 1,500 fatalities, submerged one-third of the nation, and resulted in \$30 billion in damages, even though Pakistan produces less than 1% of the global greenhouse gas emissions*

By Mahnur Mehfuz



**COP27:** The UN Climate Change Conference took place in Egypt from November 7-18. The conference was held against the backdrop of the hottest seven years ever recorded. In terms of ecosystems, property, infrastructure, human health and safety, we are quickly nearing dangerous tipping points. Along with major partners, UNDP has observed the transformations brought about when political will, leadership, and investment come together in the country. Adaptation is possible. Future generations will be impacted by the choices we make today.

Pakistan needs debt relief and will seek compensation for climate damage, according to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, as the nation recovers from disastrous floods causing damage worth \$30 billion. Speaking alongside UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres at the COP27 climate summit, the premier claimed that Pakistan's rising public debt was impeding the country's economic recovery.

COP27, held in Sharm El-Sheikh, offers a chance to make a difference. UNDP urged governments, commercial sector, civil society, and communities to support and invest in addressing this global emergency, and to help nations fulfill their commitments to

take action on climate change. We must increase political will, technical assistance, and financial backing to accelerate the transformation toward net zero and climate-resilient pathways, and fulfill the promises made. Through the NDCs, the world made promises, which we now have to keep. "Millions of people are going into winter without shelter or livelihood," PM Shehbaz Sharif said, "Women and children are still looking to us to protect their basic needs."

Even though "we have mobilized every available resource toward the national

relief effort," according to PM Shehbaz Sharif, there are still hundreds of broken bridges throughout the nation, and stagnant lake water has contaminated Pakistan's southern agricultural terrain. Meanwhile, Guterres urged leaders and international financial institutions like the World Bank to change the rules that govern decisions about concessional loans and debt relief to support middle-income nations like Pakistan in putting more of their efforts into reconstruction than repayment.

The prime minister urged the international community to assist Pakistan in reducing the risks posed by climate change at the meetings. According to the Prime Minister's Office, Shehbaz Sharif's continued presence in the flood-affected areas was described by the heads of several governments as an "extraordinary gesture" during their interactions with him on the sidelines of the mega climate change summit. The meeting brought attention to the harm done to Pakistan as a result of the recent flash floods. 45% of the country's cropland has been destroyed by "monster monsoon" floods, primarily in Sindh, a province in the south that is still half-submerged in floodwater. The





\$10 billion in damage has already affected 33 million people.

Shehbaz Sharif mentioned at the meeting that the massive task of recovery and reconstruction would necessitate significant international assistance for Pakistan to rebuild more sustainably. In response to Pakistan's unprecedented flood disaster, PM Shehbaz Sharif thanked the UNSG for his support and his call for widespread aid to the nation. He also emphasized that the floods were "clear manifestations of the challenge posed by climate change."

Additionally, he agreed with the UNSG's call for climate justice and solidarity. The climate summit, according to the Prime Minister, is a "welcome opportunity for the international community to catalyze concerted international action to mitigate the impact of climate change and promote climate justice based on the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities." He emphasized that tackling "loss and damage" would be a crucial "deliverable" at COP27. The number of displaced individuals at this time is thought to be greater than 10 million. South Sudan is one of the nations which is most susceptible to the effects of climate change due to the enormous floods and droughts that have hit the nation. By the end of 2021, it had 506,000 internally displaced people (IDPs), placing it among the top five countries in the world where such a huge number of people is displaced. The floods in the Horn of Africa are reported to have cost the nation \$3 billion, resulting in over 1,700



fatalities, and displaced eight million people.

The lives and livelihoods of 22 million people in the Horn of Africa is in danger due to an extended, unprecedented drought. In Somalia, the worst drought the nation has seen in more than 40 years has affected about 7.8 million people, or almost half of the total population.

Poor nations like Pakistan, where about eight million people were displaced, frequently suffer the brunt of catastrophic weather disasters. The meeting also covered strategies for allocating funds to underdeveloped nations so they can deal with a disaster's aftermath. The California wildfires of 2017–18, with damages projected to reach approximately \$328.5 billion, was the most expensive calamity of the previous ten years. This was followed by the \$297 billion in losses caused by the

Atlantic storms Harvey, Irma, and Maria in Florida, Texas, Puerto Rico, and the Caribbean in August and September 2017. The 2019–20 Australian bushfires cost \$110 billion. The environmental and climate challenges are not unavoidable, though. To make our planet clean, sustainable, and egalitarian, we already know what to do. We now require investment and political will.

Developing countries have pushed for compensation for loss and damage for more than three decades. Pleading with wealthy, industrialized nations to pay for the costs of damaging storms, heat waves, and droughts caused by climate change. But for a long time, the United States and other wealthy nations opposed the idea out of concern that they might be held legally responsible for the greenhouse gas emissions that are causing climate change. The 134 developing countries that Pakistan led in pushing for loss and damage payments, served as a timely reminder of the destructive effects of climate change. Over the course of the summer, Pakistan experienced devastating flooding that, according to scientists, was made worse by anthropogenic climate change. This flooding led to more than 1,500 fatalities, submerged one-third of the nation, and resulted in \$30 billion in damages, even though Pakistan produces less than 1% of the global greenhouse gas emissions. The European Union agreed to the concept of a loss and damage fund as the summit was coming to a close, but it insisted that any aid should be targeted at the most vulnerable countries and that aid could include a variety of options such as new insurance programs in addition to direct payments.



# SMOG: Environmental and Health Impacts

*The truth is that smog is completely a result of our negligence because the pollution is caused by the hazardous emission into the atmosphere by man-made factories*



By Anum Akram

Air pollution is increasing by the day in Pakistan. Smog, which is a variant of fog, begins during winter in various parts of the country. Fog turns into smog on the availability of pollutants. Big cities like Lahore, Faisalabad, D.G Khan, Gujranwala, and Karachi are engulfed by smog because of several factors including prolonged floods.

Lahore is once again blanketed by smog. According to the Air Quality Index, values that are greater than 100 are regarded as unhealthy. Pakistan's AQI has ranged from 150 to over 350 during the past few years, however this year it is approaching 400. Air quality has been worsened by poor fuel quality, uncontrolled emissions, agricultural stubble burning from farmers clearing fields, and floodwater absorbed at a lower rate in winters who's evaporation creates dense smog. Furthermore, with the results of climate change, warmer temperatures have caused the resulting smog to persist for months.

Different particles are found in the air including dust, dirt, smoke, liquid droplets, and burning fumes of chemicals. The resulting air pollution reduces visibility and harmfully impacts the economy, health, gender, and tourism.

## Economy

The polluted air has major consequences on health and economy. The lower-income workers are the ones who suffer most because the nature of their job exposes them to very unhealthy air quality. 135,000 deaths are caused by air pollution each year, and pollution

reduces life expectancy. Air Pollution affects the economy in different ways; it cost human lives, reduces people's ability to work, lowers agricultural productivity (premature death of plants), affects food production, and increases food and health expenditures. It reduces the ability of the ecosystem to perform per society's needs, incurring huge costs for restoration. Pakistan continues to blame India for its bad air quality because Indians near the border burn crops which increases pollution in Lahore. However, agriculture-related crop burning only account for around 20% of all pollutants, while transport accounts for nearly 43%. The rest is coming from power and industry. The ratio of transport pollutants is high as compared to agriculture because the government imports low-grade oil while the world has gone to euro-6 technology. It will take a long time before this shift occurs.

## Health

Air pollution has a major toxicology impact on human health. Six major air pollutants have been named by the World Health Organization: nitrogen oxides, sulphur oxides, carbon mono oxide, particle pollution, and ground-level ozone. They can be linked to many health-related issues such as irritation of the eyes, pulmonary, respiratory, heart, and skin diseases, and acute lower respiratory infections in children. Large concentrations of particulate matter are typically emitted by the sources such as diesel vehicles and coal-fired power plants. Particles less than 10 micrometers in diameter pose a health concern because they can inhale and accumulate in the respiratory system. Particles that are



less than 2.5 micrometers in diameter pose the greatest health risks, because of their small size they can easily enter the lungs. This could lead to DNA damage, which can cause breast, liver, and pancreatic cancer.



## Gender

It's not wrong to say air pollution is a silent killer. Women were more likely to go to work and breathe in higher levels of outdoor air pollution. Women who are doing low-paying jobs such as street vending, sweeping, construction, and healthcare face a high level of exposure. Women also face indoor exposure to pollution because they are responsible for cooking and using firewood as a source of cooking fuel and they are also responsible for the collection of fuelwood. Indoor and outdoor exposure to harmful air pollutants leads to higher rates of miscarriages, pregnancy complications, and menopause. All these problems can create physical and emotional stresses for women.



## Tourism

Climate change badly affected tourism in Pakistan. Smog increases the risk of illness and consequently discourages tourism. Suffering from toxic smog may generate a negative attitude among tourists, which adversely affects their perceived destination image and country image.

We already know the root causes of air pollution: the cities are filled with cars and industries that have deadly emissions. Worst of all is that it has been consistently ignored since it isn't prevalent in summer. Government should take short-term measures that must provide immediate relief until a better and long-term action plan can be implemented.

Globally, many big cities such as London, Beijing, Delhi, and Los Angeles are negatively affected by smog. This is nothing new, thick smog used to blanket the UK capital in the 19th and 20th centuries when people burned coal to keep their houses warm and industries in the city released their chemicals into the air. These events were the so-called Great Smog of London in 1952. As a result, the Clean Air Act was passed and regulated both industrial and domestic smoke. Smokeless fuel could be burned in industries and given subsidies to households to convert to cleaner fuels.



The government took temporary actions to this problem rather than a sustainable plan and put people at greater risk. The administration should take action in the populated provinces to lessen air pollution. They should provide financial support for machinery that enables farmers to utilize crop waste as opposed to burning them. The truth is that smog is completely a result of our negligence because the pollution is caused by the hazardous emission into the atmosphere by man-made factories.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, within a few weeks, owing to the mobility restrictions on national and international travel and other economic activities, air pollution and emission of other gases significantly reduced not only in Pakistan but all over the world.



# Terrifying Model 'Mindy' Reveals What Humans May Look Like in The Year 3000

*For the past few weeks, Pakistan and the IMF have held virtual rounds of talks*

By Pavan Manzoor

A terrifying artificial intelligence model that predicts what people will look like in a few hundred years may inspire some to spend less time on tech devices, even though it's almost like a nightmare for this generation to spend time without our phones and laptops.

Experts have created a model called "Mindy," which shows what we might look like in 3000. Years of staring down at our phones or up at computer screens will result in a hunched posture. After repeatedly gripping our smartphones, our hands will be permanently shaped into a claw shape. Most people begin their days by rolling over and checking their phones, but it appears that our obsession with technology may have far-reaching consequences.

A new model has revealed the negative impact that technology may have on human bodies in the future. Toll-Free Forwarding was developed by Mindy as a way to visualise how technology affects our bodies. Toll Free Forwarding, a telecommunications company, says it "sourced scientific research and expert opinion" before collaborating with a 3D designer to create a future human whose body has physically changed due to "consistent use of smartphones, laptops, and other technology."

Mindy, the model, offers a terrifying glimpse of what people might look like in 800 years if our obsession with technology continues.

## Arched Back, Neck, and Text Claw

According to the company, hours spent looking down at a phone will result in a hunched back and a thicker neck. Humans in 3000 could have a hunched back, a wide neck, a texting clawed hand, and the second set of eyelids.

The muscles in the back of the neck have to contract in order to hold your head up when looking down at a computer or phone. They also said, "A closer inspection of Mindy's arm reveals two notable anatomical changes that were directly brought on by the use of one specific technological device—the smartphone." "Text claw," a recently coined condition, happens when you grip your smartphone repeatedly, curling your fingers into an unnatural position for extended periods of time.

## 90-Degree Elbow

The nerve behind the elbow can become stretched and compressed if the elbow is kept bent for an extended period of time, which is typically done while holding a phone.

## Tech Neck

In reference to Mindy's posture, they stated: "Returning to tech neck, the effects of technology on the neck have also given rise to a new condition, aptly named "tech neck."



## Thicker Skull

According to the company, future humans can also anticipate having thicker skulls as a defence against radiation from smartphones. Future humans may also have a smaller brain and an additional set of eyelids to protect them from excessive light exposure, among other horrifying changes.

## Smaller Brain

The researchers further questioned: "We all know that technology can divert our attention from tasks that are important, but has it permanently altered Mindy's brain?"

If so, how might she differ from other people when trying to lessen that harm? Once more, the research focuses primarily on smartphones. There are growing worries that radio frequency radiation from smartphones could have negative effects on the brain's health. They also said, "The following modification to Mindy's appearance is imperceptible to the unaided eye." "Though one scientific theory suggests that technology may also alter the size of our brains, we may also develop thicker skulls."

## Second Eyelid

They continued: "The last change Mindy makes may be the most bizarre."

"The eyes are one area that we haven't yet covered." Given the well-established research linking screen use to headaches, eye strain, and even blindness, how does Mindy's body appear to protect against this?

*Mindy is the replacement for Emma, the sickly coworker of the future, who was constructed in 2019 to emphasise the significance of comfortable working conditions. After speaking with more than 3,000 workers about their health issues and concerns, researchers created Emma. She spends hours each day hunched over her desk, has dry, red eyes from staring at a computer screen for too long, and has sallow skin from years spent in the glare of artificial light.*



# Musk feuds with Apple over Twitter advertising

*The truth is that smog is completely a result of our negligence because the pollution is caused by the hazardous emission into the atmosphere by man-made factories*

By Ben Derico

Elon Musk has said Apple has halted most of its advertising on Twitter and accused the company of threatening to remove the platform from its app store.

The feud comes as many companies have halted spending on Twitter amid concerns about Mr Musk's content moderation plans for the site.

Apple has not responded to requests for comment from the BBC.

Mr Musk has said Twitter has seen a "massive" drop in revenue, blaming activists for pressuring advertisers.

In a series of Tweets on Monday, he accused Apple of "censorship" and criticised its policies, including the charge it levies on purchases made on its app store.

"Apple has mostly stopped advertising on Twitter. Do they hate free speech in America?" he said.

He appealed directly to Apple's CEO - asking: "What's going on here @tim\_cook?"

The owner of the social media platform also claimed Apple had threatened to withhold Twitter from its app store, but did not say why.

Mr Musk, who purchased Twitter for \$44bn last month, is under pressure as some companies halt spending.

He has said he hopes to make money by turning Twitter verification into a paid subscription service, but currently the vast majority of the site's revenue comes from advertising.

The Washington Post reported Apple was the top advertiser on Twitter, spending \$48m on ads on the social network in the first quarter of 2022.

Companies including Cheerios maker General Mills and Volkswagen are among the firms that have halted their spending in recent weeks.



Media Matters, a watchdog site, reported last week that half of Twitter's top advertisers had pulled their advertising on Twitter after concerns about the direction of Twitter.

Apple's media agency Omnicom recommended the Silicon Valley giant pause advertising on the platform out of concern for Apple's "brand safety", according to US tech site The Verge.

Elon Musk squares up to Apple

Elon Musk has worked out who really holds the power over social media companies.

The billionaire famously doesn't like being told what to do. And yet Apple holds all the cards when it comes to Twitter.

Firstly, as others have found out, only Apple decides who's allowed on the App Store. If Apple wanted to, it could stop Twitter from being downloaded on iPhones around the world - which would be a devastating blow for Twitter.

Not only that but Apple can also charge what it likes for the privilege of being on

the App Store. For companies like Twitter, it can charge anywhere from 15-30% for in-app purchases. That charge has been challenged in the US courts by Fortnite producer Epic Games. In 2021, the company sued over Apple's commission for access to their "walled garden", as the App Store is referred to in the case.

Lastly, Apple has the power to stop advertising on Twitter - an important source of revenue for the company.

Mr Musk isn't the first to flag this power imbalance. Meta has for years complained about the dominance Apple holds over its Instagram and Facebook apps. But in Mr Musk, Apple now has another powerful and very rich adversary.

In picking a fight with Apple, Mr Musk is wading into a wider debate over the clout that Apple wields over online activity via its app store, which is the way that iPhone owners download games and other apps.

As it stands, Apple could take up to 30% of the money from the monthly fee Twitter plans to charge some users.

Courtesy BBC

# Qatar World Cup 2022: Shrouded in Controversies

*'We cannot change our culture for 28 days'*

By Ali Abdullah

The awarding of the FIFA World Cup 2022 to Qatar created numerous controversies due to several reasons. Qatar has repeatedly made headlines for violating human rights. Several questions have also been raised regarding Doha's climate. This is the first time that a FIFA world cup is being held in November-December. Earlier editions used to take place in May-June. LGBTQ issues were also raised since being a Muslim country such acts aren't permitted; the management and officials of the country informed participating nations that it cannot be practiced publicly.

One of the most discussed issues of the Qatar World Cup was the treatment of workers hired to build the infrastructure. According to Human Rights Watch and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), the kafala system leaves migrants vulnerable to systematic abuse. Workers cannot change jobs or even leave the country without their sponsor's permission. In November 2013, Amnesty International reported "serious exploitation", including workers having to sign false statements that they had received their wages in order to regain their passports. Most Qatari nationals avoid doing manual work or low-skilled jobs.

In August 2022, Qatari authorities arrested and deported over 60 migrant workers who protested about the non-payment of wages by their employer, Al Bandy International Group, a major construction and hospitality firm. Some of the demonstrators, from Nepal, Bangladesh, India, Egypt, and the Philippines, had not been paid for seven months. London-based labor rights body Equidem said most were sent home. Qatar's labor ministry said it was paying Al Bandy workers and taking further action against the company.

The legal status of LGBT civil rights in Qatar has attracted considerable attention in the media. Homosexuality is illegal in Qatar, with offenders facing fines and up to seven years imprisonment. The HRW reported that Qatar has arbitrarily arrested LGBT people and subjected them to ill-treatment in detention. The Gay Times reported that there are no known cases of death penalty being enforced for homosexuality in Qatar. FIFA President Sepp Blatter initially said: "I would say they should refrain from any sexual activities" he later added that: "we don't want any discrimination. What we want to do is open this game to everybody, and to open it to all cultures, and this is what we are doing in 2022". After rumors and allegations that Qatar would introduce "medical screening tests" to "detect" and ban homosexuals from entering the country, LGBT rights activist Peter Tatchell said that "FIFA now has no option but to cancel the World Cup in Qatar". However, no such screening test exists. It was later revealed that this proposal came from Kuwait and not Qatar. In January 2022, openly gay Australian footballer Josh



Cavallo suggested he would support the World Cup happening in Qatar if it could cause laws to be changed, describing this possibility as "a fantastic opportunity" for the nation.

On several occasions, the Qatari organizers have promised to comply with FIFA rules on promoting tolerance, including LGBT+ issues. On December 8, 2020, Qatar announced that rainbow flags will be allowed in stadiums at the 2022 World Cup. Nasser Al-Khater, 2022 World Cup chief executive, said: "When it comes to the rainbow flags in the stadiums, FIFA have their own guidelines, they have their rules and regulations, whatever they may be, we will respect them. On September 21, Football Association chief executive Mark Bullingham said, there had been assurances that LGBT+ will not be arrested if they are seen showing PDA. Although these statements came out in the past, the Qatari Government said that they will not be changing their culture for 28 days. Everyone should respect everyone's culture. The Muslim world showed support for Qatar and some people on the internet even said that the West should learn that their culture is not universal. Flags, shirts, or PDA nothing is, and will be, tolerated which represents LGBTQ.

As the World Cup usually occurs during the northern hemisphere's summer, the weather in Qatar was a concern, with temperatures reaching more than 50 °C (122 °F). Two doctors from Qatar's sports hospital in Doha who gave an interview in November 2010 to Qatar Today magazine said the climate would be an issue, stating that the region's climate would "affect performance levels from a health point of view" of professional athletes, specifically footballers, that "recovery times between games would be longer" than in a temperate climate and that, on the field of play, "more mistakes would be made". One of the doctors said that "total acclimation is impossible". The inspection team for evaluating who would host the tournament said that Qatar was "high risk" due to the weather. FIFA President Sepp Blatter initially rejected the criticism.



# 'Historic Test Series': England in Pakistan after 17 years

*The 3 matches will be played at 3 different venues: Rawalpindi, Multan, and Karachi*



The England Cricket Team is all set to play Pakistan for a 3-match Test series. The series is very important, keeping the context of the World Test Championship in mind. Englishmen will play a test series in Pakistan after 17 long years. Earlier, they were in Pakistan for a 7-match T20I series just before the T20 World cup. Both teams also played each other in the final of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup.

They last toured Pakistan for a test series in 2005, in which the hosts won 2-0. Pakistan took their first victory over England at home since 1987-88, despite surrendering a first-innings lead of 144 and setting a target of 198. England was 64/1 when Kaneria removed Andrew Strauss and Ian Bell in the same over, before Paul Collingwood was dismissed lbw to Mohammad Sami in the next. England had gone from 64/1 to 67/4.

Andrew Flintoff and Kevin Pietersen added 26 before Kaneria struck again, as Flintoff swept him to Younis Khan. Eventually, they were 117/7 when Shaun Udal came in and added 49 with Geraint Jones. Shoaib Akhtar bowled out Jones for 33, leaving England to hit 33 for the last two wickets. Udal and Steve Harmison went in quick succession as England finished on 175. Despite the bowlers' efforts, it was Salman Butt who became Man of the Match, as his 122 in the second innings enabled Pakistan to set a formidable target. The second test match was tied as Pakistan lead the series 1-0. The third and final test match at Lahore saw Pakistan enforcing their authority on the series on the back of the momentum they had built by winning the first test and dominating most of the second one.

The upcoming Test series begins in Rawalpindi on December 1 and will conclude with the final Test in Karachi on December 17. Speaking of the head-to-head record, Pakistan's record against England in Test Cricket is quite decent. Both sides have played 86 Test matches against each other. England has won 26, while Pakistan has managed to win 21. 39 Tests between these two sides have ended in a draw.

The last time Pakistan visited England was in 2020, and the rain-af-

fect series was won by England by a 1-0 margin. The last time Pakistan defeated England in a Test Series was in 2015 when they defeated the Englishmen in UAE (2-0). It has been 7 years now, but Pakistan has failed to win a series against England in red-ball cricket and this presents a golden opportunity to end this wait.

Interestingly, in the last 5 Test series between the two nations, Pakistan has won 2 (Both in UAE), 2 series ended in a draw (both in England) and 1 was won by England (in England). Judging by the Pakistani squad, it is a good mix of young and experienced players. The same is the case with England. Plenty of new faces will be seen in the English side and it will be quite interesting to see who wins this series.

Talking about young blood and new faces in both squads, Pakistan has 2 debutants in the team. Abrar Ahmed and Mohammad Ali are the two new names that every Pakistan cricket fan is hearing. Abrar and Ali, both earned their maiden Test call-ups thanks to some brilliant performances in the Quaid-e-Azam Trophy 2022.

Abrar Ahmed has previously been in the T20 squad. He was picked for the 7-Match series against England. However, he did not get a chance in the Playing XI for any of the 7 games. Abrar's chances are quite bright now as Pakistan has axed Yasir Shah from the squad due to his poor performance lately in red-ball cricket. England batters do struggle against quality spinners, and Abrar possesses the ability to trouble them. He has taken 43 wickets in the Quaid-e-Azam trophy, averaging 21 with the ball which is quite impressive for a leg spinner. He has 5 five-wicket hauls in the event.

Mohammad Ali is another new face in the squad. The new-ball bowler from Central Punjab has shown great skill in the Quaid-e-Azam Trophy with the new ball. He generates good swings with the ball. Ali was the third-highest wicket-taker of the event before he joined the Pakistan camp. In 6 outings so far, he has taken 24 wickets and he is the most successful pace bowler of the Quaid-e-Azam Trophy 2022. He has 2 five-wicket hauls in the event. Mohammad Ali has a phenomenal first-class record with the ball, same as Abrar Ahmed. However, the difference between two is of age. Ali is 30, and this will be the first time he will join the National Squad. It is uncertain for how long he could play. He is not an express pacer, but more of an accurate bowler. Abrar, 24, on the other hand, has a long future for Pakistan.

Both the players have been picked on merit and it is expected that they will feature in the Playing XI. Since Pakistan is without Shaheen Shah Afridi, Hasan Ali, and Mohammad Abbas, Ali will likely get a game and since Yasir Shah is not there, Abrar is also likely to play. The 3 matches will be played at 3 different venues. The 1st Test will be played in Rawalpindi, 2nd at Multan, and the final at Karachi. Stadiums are expected to be crowded, if not full. After all, the Englishmen are playing test series after 17 long years.

By Ali Abdullah

# Yasir Hussain: Talent Speaks for Itself



By Kaukab Jahan

**Y**asir Hussain is a household name in Pakistan's entertainment industry. He has proved his versatility by doing roles ranging from comedy to antagonist, whether it is television, cinema, or even theater. His role as Pir Qaiser in *Badsha Begum* is being much appreciated by fans and critics.

Born in Islamabad to a Rajput family, Hussain began his career as a theater artist and simultaneously started doing roles in television dramas. His breakthrough in film came with the comedy character of Moti in *Karachi Se Lahore* (2015) which earned him instant fame. He then came as a lead in the sequel *Lahore Se Aagey*.

Recently, the actor has turned his forte from acting to direction. He is currently directing a murder mystery serial for Express Entertainment, *Aik Thi Laila*, which stars his talented wife Iqra Aziz as a lead. ATL is his third directorial project; The first was *Koel* which aired on Aaj TV while another one *Laggar Baggay* would be aired on Green Channel.

Hussain talked to The Truth International about his acting preferences, direction endeavors, and controversies that often surround social media.

**What enticed you to become a director when you are already famous and appreciated for your acting skills?**

I chose to be a director as I feel in Pakistani dramas there are not many potential roles for many actors. Otherwise, in the last five years, most of the actors in the industry are doing the same kind of roles in any other drama. I seriously try hard to find different characters in dramas but they are very low on numbers so you must have to do some other things to keep your workflow on. Then I thought I had to come into direction. By the way, I joined the industry as a writer and now I have started direction as well.

**What is *Aik Thi Laila* all about?**

*Aik Thi Laila* is a five-episode murder mystery that will be aired on Express Entertainment soon.

**Why have you cast Iqra Aziz for this role?**

Ask any director, why they cast Iqra Aziz in their project, and I am sure their reply would be, "her excellent acting skills". Actually, I just approved her casting. It was already suggested by the channel.

**Are you acting in the play as well?**

Yes. This is the first time I am acting in my direction. Initially, I never wanted to act in ATL but when the channel insisted on casting me for that role, then I had to opt for it.

**You played an antagonist in the recently ended, critically acclaimed drama serial *Badshah Begum*. How was the reception of doing a negative role in a comedy?**

Actually, this is my second negative role. Before *Badshah Begum*, I played a negative character in the drama serial *Baandi*. To be honest, if I find anything challenging after comedy is doing a negative role. I feel there is a very small margin of performance in playing a positive character.

**You started your career with theater with the well-known *Shah Sharaeel* and *KopyKats Productions* but now your fans don't see you on stage plays anymore, why?**

I started my career with the theatre of Shah Sharabeel. Then I joined *KopyKats*, with whom I luckily did most of my stage plays. Why don't I do more of it as I think there is not a very bright future for theatres in Pakistan.



Moreover, there was no theatre being done in Pakistan for the last couple of years because of Covid-19. Saadhay 14 August is in theatres after three years. So if one was relying just on theatres, they would have been doing nothing for the last three years.

**Your film 'Javed Iqbal: The Untold Story Of A Serial Killer' was stopped from being shown in Pakistan. How do you think these bans affect the creativity of an artist?**

The ban on the screening of Javed Iqbal was a step by the government. I think the producers of the film did not go to the lengths to fight for their film. Secondly, when it was stopped to be released in Pakistan we could send the film to festivals all over the world. It got a very positive response when we took it to the DC South Asian Film Festival. I received the best actor award and the director received the award of best director for the film but I don't know why the producers didn't send the film to any other international festival. It has been a year now, and they have not planned anything further for the film yet.

**What is your next film?**

I am not doing any films yet. Currently, my focus is more on direction. Moreover, there are very few new film projects on the floor all over Pakistan at the moment. Films in general (except a few) are not doing good business these days. So, producers and financiers would think twice to invest in films in this situation.

**Some of your status and comments on social media are often criticized by the public, what do you think the reason is?**

I think those were the old days when what I said or wrote used to be criticized by the media and public. For the last three years, nothing controversial has come from me or has been the topic of news. But yes, other actors have been in the news in recent years. I think they have learned a lot from me. So ask them. I have distanced myself to comment or give my views on things. I have no idea or nothing to do with controversies now. Laughs.



# Rising Stars: Interview with Rabia Shah

*Speaking in an interview with Truth International Islamabad, Rabia shared her exciting journey as a Pakistani delegate in AYIMUN*

By Neha Ayub



The internationalization of education has picked pace in recent global settings. While the phenomenon of globalization has fueled economic and social activities worldwide, it has also proved beneficial for the education sector. The significance of the internationalization of education is also reflected in national and foreign policy agendas. This development has picked pace in the 21st century in response to the reaction to globalization in a highly securitized international setting to encourage cross-border interaction and promote the first-hand experience of cultural exposure through exchange programs.

In Pakistan, the influx of students in international exchange programs has significantly increased in recent years.

Exchange programs open doors for participants from multiple nationalities to learn, grow, and collaborate on a single platform to discuss issues of common interest and assure a cooperative future.



Future leaders who innately recognize the importance of international cooperation, understanding, and empathy are produced by exchange programs

Pride of Pakistan, Rabia Shah, a young leader, and a student of the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) was

selected among hundreds of applicants for Asia Youth International Model United Nations 2022, held in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia. She was the representative of Pakistan at this international conference.

Speaking in an interview with Truth International Islamabad, Rabia shared her exciting journey as a Pakistani delegate in AYIMUN.



## 1. How would you narrate your experience at AYIMUN?

One word, incredible! Joining AYIMUN was a lifetime experience for me. It brought a lot of positive changes to my professional life and helped me develop so much as a person as well. My communication and diplomatic skills have surely improved by attending this event. In those three days, I've learned what it takes to be a leader and how to steer your team in the direction that will yield success. For being a leader, you first must be a team player and work even harder than all your teammates. Only then you will gain the trust of your team and be someone that the whole bloc will look up to. Being my first international tour, I wanted to give my 100% to this MUN and, make the most out of it by the grace of God, this was surely a remarkable experience for me that I will always cherish.

## 2. How did you represent Pakistan's stance on peace and stability at AYIMUN?

Given Pakistan's long history and struggles to maintain peace, there was so much content for me to share with the world that how Pakistan is working towards stability and global peace. In the last decade, Pakistan has commenced many national and international student exchange programs including the Inter-Provincial Youth Exchange Program, Punjab Youth Festival, and many others. And these programs are not only limited to cultural promotion, they also aim to provide vocational training, internships to graduate students, short courses on various skills, and sports competitions for athletes so that people from all walks of life can showcase and polish their skills. Apart from this, Pakistan is also providing scholarships to students from other countries like Sri Lanka and





Afghanistan. This is an extraordinary effort that Pakistan, despite being a low-income country, still offers scholarships to other nations' students.

Other than this, Pakistan also inaugurated the Kartarpur corridor in Nankana Sahib in Nov 2019, where Indian pilgrims can visit this holy place visa-free. This is an exceptional step towards nurturing peace between Pakistan and its neighboring country, India.

### 3. How would you narrate your cross-cultural exposure at the AYIMUN conference?

I must say this was the first time I was able to meet people with diverse backgrounds. Meeting people from over the world was such a good exposure and they all were friendly and eager to know more about Pakistan. Especially the Indian people, they were also nice, and we got along pretty well. The massive networking you can do over there will last for a long time.

In the closing ceremony, they arranged a cultural night where every delegate had to wear their traditional attire and represent something about their country in the cultural performance. Five delegates from Pakistan including me performed the traditional dance Luddi and everyone loved it. We also distributed almost 250 badges of Pakistan to the delegates, chairing heads, and organizers as a souvenir.

I remember one of the delegates from the Philippines saying to me "You have improved the image of Pakistan through your composure and conduct. Everybody over here is now talking about Pakistan." These words felt like the world to me, I felt like I have been successful in portraying a positive image of Pakistan.

### 4. What recommendations you would propose to Pakistani students who wish to apply for international exchange programs?

Never stop believing in yourself. You don't know how much you are capable of until you put your hands into it. Apply to as many opportunities as you can and never take rejection to your heart.

Upgrade your skills and play your part in representing the good side of Pakistan.

People with lesser abilities than you are chasing their dreams because they were able to muster the courage. So, never underestimate yourself and develop that grit in yourself. The world is waiting for you; Pakistan is waiting for you. Make us proud!



### 5. Given your tremendous achievement at an international platform, would you like to propose any tips for improving public speaking skills that may help Pakistani students, especially those who struggle with public speaking?

Know that everyone in the hall is a little nervous and for most people, it is their first time just like you. No one has it all figured out and public speaking is mostly about controlling your nerves. You must be very clear in your head about what you want to talk about, your language should be impressive, and practice as much as you can before taking the stage. One thing that has helped me while addressing a large audience is to look above the heads and not into the eyes of people. Eye contact is good in one-to-one conversations but might not be necessary during public speaking.



GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN  
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION & BROADCASTING  
(AUDIT BUREAU OF CIRCULATION)



## Extension In Deadline For Renewal of Expired ABC Certificates

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has extended the deadline for renewal of expired ABC certificates for publications.

In the worst floods of Pakistan's history, hundreds of lives have been lost while millions have been displaced from their homes and livelihood.

In view of this unforeseen calamity and the hardships caused by it, the Ministry of I&B feels that it would not be possible for the publications whose ABC certificate have expired, to meet the deadline announced for renewing their certificates. Hence, the deadline for submission of complete documents for renewal of ABC for the publications whose ABC has expired, is being extended up to



### 31st December 2022

In case of failure, Audit Bureau of Circulations would recommend the names of the non-compliant publications for removal from CML, resulting in stoppage of release of government advertisements to the publication.

**No extension in  
the deadline**  
would be allowed, under  
any circumstances.