

Fortnightly

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Politics Engulfed Institutions

Ongoing court battle between the parliament and judiciary have split the judiciary

Pakistan Foreign Policy

Geopolitical tussle and, military conflicts have given us underdevelopment, imbalances, lawlessness, and begging bowl

Pakistan Economy and IMF

International politics based on injustice with Pakistan should end

All Red Lines Crossed



CONTENTS

Editorial

CHAOS by Hammad Ghaznavi – Page 04

Opinion

Botham's mother-in-law and Banga's bank by M A Niazi – Page 05

Politics

No end in sight to political animosity as 'red lines' crossed by Tahir Niaz – Page 06



The redline PTI finally crossed by Sarfraz Raja – Page 08

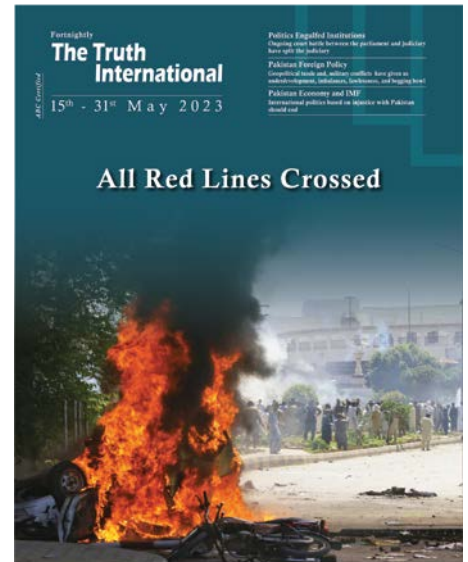
Imran arrest: What is the Al Qadir Trust case? By Hawwa Fazal – Page 10



Timeline of former prime ministers arrested in Pakistan by Areesha Rehan – Page 12

If spirit of democracy still exists in country by Hamza Qureshi – Page 14

Squandered opportunity by Maleeha Lodhi – Page 16



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Foreign Affairs

Who controls Pakistan's foreign policy? By Umer Farooq – **Page 18**

China, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Trilateral Dialogue promises a lot by Zarghon Shah – **Page 23**



Bilawal India yatra brings home plaudits or humiliation by Anum Akram – **Page 25**

King Charles III: coronation and beyond by Dr Khalid Bajwa – **Page 27**

Economy

Finance Minister Dar says Pakistan will not default even without IMF loan - TTI Report – **Page 30**



After 20 years, Ethiopian Airlines re-launches its service in Pakistan by Javed Mahmood – **Page 33**

On our way to stability by Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar – **Page 35**

Towards industrial policy 2.0: Part - I by Ishrat Husain – **Page 36**

How to facilitate investment by Sardar Ahmad Nawaz Sukhera – **Page 38**



Technology

Artificial Intelligence – a must pill? By Sara Dania – **Page 40**

Pakistan's Internet worst among world, says report by Pavan Manzoor – **Page 42**

AI: boon or bane? By Atta-ur-Rahman – **Page 43**



Flood

Sindh still struggling with aftermath of floods, seven months on by Zulfiqar Kunbhar – **Page 45**

Social Issue

Pakistan's trans community battles climate catastrophe and exclusion by Adeel Saeed – **Page 47**

Heritage

Walking into the past with Heritage Walk Karachi by Wara Irfan – **Page 49**

Sports

Asia Cup rift and Najam Sethi's UAE visit by Ali Abdullah – **Page 52**

Pak plung to No 2 in ODI world rankings By Ali Abdullah – **Page 53**



Entertainment

Actor Hira Tareen calls out those vandalising public property in the name of protest – **Page 54**

Priyanka Chopra Miss World Pageant was watched by baby Nick Jonas on TV – **Page 55**

CHAOS

By Hammad Ghaznavi



It's New Pakistan. The country stands more divided today than it was perhaps in 1971. This time even institutions are divided, from the judiciary to the garrison. The army installations have been physically attacked across the country, something unprecedented in the West Pakistan. The aggressors have been identified but they are not 'terrorists' in the traditional sense. Like the Awami League workers in the East Pakistan, they are apparently political leaders and workers. It is not merely a law and order issue, it's the crisis of a chaotic state, it's a crack of a much bigger proportion.

Throughout Pakistan's history, the army has perceived itself as the biggest stakeholder and the ultimate crisis manager of the state. A big chunk of population agreed with the military in this belief. Traditionally, the army has been meddling in the political system, from direct Martial Laws to orchestrating elections and deciding who to rule. Almost all mainstream political leaders are products of the khaki nursery, and Imran Khan was no exception. In the past, when the army used to part ways with a politician, its support base stayed with it, abandoning the politician. This time it was different because of various factors coming into play.

Since Ayub Khan, there has been a systematic, successful campaign to malign political leadership as unpatriotic and corrupt. When Nawaz Sharif was declared corrupt through years' long media campaign many believed it. Still, many didn't, as they had seen in the past numer-

ous such poisonous campaigns against the politicians who refused to kowtow to the garrison. The results of 2018 elections proved that, wherein Nawaz Sharif's PML-N emerged as the single largest party in Punjab. The Imran Khan phenomenon was not created in a day. It's a decade long project. It was instilled in the minds of millions through the 'fifth generation warfare' that Khan was a politician without the vices of politicians; he was super honest, hyper patriotic, extremely spiritual, etc. A generation fed on this propaganda firmly believed it, and when former COAS Qamar Bajwa overnight abandoned the institution's 'creation', many traditional army supporters couldn't swallow it. The campaign to build Imran Khan was much more sophisticated than the one to demolish him. Imran was not the product of one man; he was the creation of an institution over a long period of time. It was ingrained in a generation's mind that Imran was the messiah, way superior to his corrupt opponents.

Hence, when Bajwa dumped Khan, his support base, within the institutions and without, didn't. If a part of the judiciary visibly appears super kind to Khan, it has reasons. Some of these judges have been partners in building the hybrid system that was designed to destroy all the IK opposition, particularly former PM Nawaz Sharif. It's an open secret and, hence, an open war. It's a battle of survival for those judges and they are willing to go to any length to save their necks. Likewise, the ghost of Faiz Hameed is still lurking in the corridors of the GHQ. Meanwhile, Imran

Khan has once again proven his street power. When Khan was arrested for a day his supporters turned out on the streets, maybe not in huge numbers, but charged enough to attack and burn military buildings and state property. The violence, some leaked audios and videos of PTI leaders showed, was planned. Khan said in the court that the incidents of violence were spontaneous reaction of his followers, and if he was ever arrested again, the reaction, he threatened, would be the same. The Courts gave him blanket bail, in all the FIRs that were there and those that might be registered in the coming weeks. This blanket love didn't go down well with the PDM, already stung by the Chief Justice in a string of cases. Many jurists agree that the manner in which Khan was arrested can be debated, but there is no denying the fact that the courts have not allowed even to conduct investigations into scandals against Imran, from the BRT Peshawar to Tosha Khan cases.

Encouraged by the support he enjoyed in the institutions, Imran has attacked the COAS by name, taking his anti-establishment fight to the next level. Imran is not anti-establishment in the traditional sense. He doesn't want the army to be subservient to the civil authority; many argue, he wants an army loyal to him, the symbol of ultimate good. IK has made it a straight bout – Imran Khan vs COAS Asim Munir. It's unprecedented! If Imran Khan wins this war, it will unleash forces and phenomena that may pose an existential threat to an already teetering state.

Botham's mother-in-law and Banga's bank

By M A Niazi

About 40 years ago, English cricketer Ian Botham told the press that Pakistan was "the kind of place to send your mother-in-law for a month, all-expenses-paid." As a comment on Pakistan as well as on Pakistan, it was uncomplimentary.

Now, it seems, the mother-in-law of the Chief Justice of Pakistan has struck back. Yes, her conversation with the wife of Tariq Rahim was taped and made public by mysterious persons, but one of the points that have not received enough attention is that she was praying for him.

She didn't mention it, but she must have been also praying for her son Amjad Ali, who is being prosecuted for an improper appointment while Solid Waste Management Company Chairman of one Azhar Hayat as Director Procurement, and with whom he allegedly caused a loss to the exchequer of Rs 631 million. How much of the money Azhar actually made, and how much was given to Noon, we don't know, but we do know that the Anti-Corruption Establishment's appeal against the LHC granting bail has been taken before the Chief Justice.

No wonder he has managed that very difficult feat, earning the approval of one's mother-in-law. You would not normally think chief justices had mothers-in-law, but they do. And they have saala saabs.

Well, we know what Botham thought of his mother-in-law, but we don't know what Mr. Justice Bandial thinks of his. He might find the sentiments of the great Australian pacer Dennis Lillee more to his feeling. After Pakistan made 382 for two, with keeper-opener Taslim Arif getting a double hundred. In reply, That was a heck of a wicket. Not only was that Taslim's only Test hundred, but6 when play closed with Pakistan on 382 for 2, it had still not saved the follow-on, for Australia had made 607. Australia had batted till the fifth day, taking its time, as the rain had washed out the first two days.

Australia's 607 all out. Lillee took none



for 93, off 19 overs. Heart overflowing, he had expressed the wish to be buried under the Faisalabad wicket. The learned Chief Justice might like to be buried somewhere in the Punjab. As it is his native province, he will probably get this wish.

Meanwhile, the raids going on for Ch Pervaiz Elahi must also make him wish he had a mother-in-law praying for him. He was also a little disappointed that PTI workers didn't rush from Zaman Park to his Zahoor Elahi Road residence (not all that far-off, though one would have to cross at least one busy road.

Perhaps the absence of the PTI people was because while 'Imran is their red line', s they say, Ch Pervaiz is not anybody's line, nor is that line any color. That line resembles one in non-Euclidean geometry: it doesn't exist. And because Imran has never studied non-Euclidean geometry (in fact, the Euclidean kind gives him a headache), PTI supporters don't know or care what is happening to their party President.

Meanwhile, pay attention to Russia, where Vladimir Putin has claimed that Ukraine sent a drone into the Kremlin to kill him. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky proved his previous job as a TV comedian by

dignifying this claim with a denial.

We should take this claim seriously. Imran must already be kicking himself for not having thought of it. He's already claimed to have had two attempts made on his life, the first at Wazirabad, the second at the Judicial Complex Islamabad, when he appeared before the sessions judge there.

Now, it seems, we are entering Bond-movie territory. There is the injection with polonium, then there is the poison which leaves no trace, but only a dead victim who seems to have suffered a heart attack. Oh, and not to forget the rare Asiatic poison favored by 19th-century thriller writers.

But some good news for all countries borrowing from the World Bank. They will probably get more innovative loans, now that the ex-head of Mastercard, Ajay Banga, takes over as World Bank chief. The IMF has already got an Indian Chief Economist.

But I don't think she is the reason for Pakistan not getting the IMF tranche. We'd have to sell China down the river to get US approval, without which the IMF won't give approval. In fact, the IMF negotiations (conducted by Ishaq Dar) should have told us that the PTI-government (led by Dar) talks were going to go nowhere.

No end in sight to political animosity as 'red lines' crossed

IK ouster from office through vote of no confidence didn't end political instability in country, so seems his arrest; red lines were crossed on both sides



By Tahir Niaz

"If someone has a warrant, they should directly bring it to me; bring the warrant, my lawyer will be there; I'm ready to go to jail myself," were the words of Imran Khan, chairman Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) hours before his arrest by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) from inside the Islamabad High Court in the Al-Qadir Trust case on Tuesday.

It seemed Khan got a wind of his arrest hours earlier and even before leaving Lahore for Islamabad High Court to seek bail in multiple FIRs registered against him. The government's mindset was clear; and it exactly happened what the PTI was fearing for months given the escalated acrimony and political hatred among political leaders of the country.

Imran Khan was the PTI's 'red line'. The government crossed it. On the other hand, the protestors also crossed the 'red line' as they stormed army houses and installations – the scenes the nation had hardly seen before – during the riots following Imran Khan's arrest. The way paramilitary troops broke

doors, smashed windows of court offices and scuffled with Khan's supporters and lawyers to reach and grab the beleaguered politician, was judged as 'illegal' by the top court.

The way Rangers held Imran Khan and the reaction by Khan's supporters both were unprecedented in the country's history. So, the red lines were crossed on both sides, leaving the country's restive politics further into a deep morass, with Imran Khan lying at the heart of the crisis. The stand-off is related to Khan's personality as he seems not willing to make a compromise.

Given the protracted trust deficit between the military establishment and the PTI, the reaction by the PTI supporters was not something unexpected. Protests after Tuesday's arrest seem to be a continuation of the bitter deep-rooted bitterness among political entities and what has emerged as a new phenomenon in the country's history is changing public sentiment towards army. The feeling of dislike and acrimony has now turned into active hostility. The last couple of days

saw extraordinary violence by Imran Khan's supporters who were obviously enraged by the manner in which he was nabbed by NAB.

Khan's lawyers alleged that the Rangers personnel tortured the party chairman during the arrest. "Imran Khan was hit on the head and his injured leg," they alleged. PTI condemned the arrest of party chairman terming it an "abduction" by the law-enforcement agency. The Tuesday frenzy was not acceptable at any cost. What the nation perceived is that the country has no law and one could be arrested in a hostility driven fashion. Previously, Islamabad police had twice arrived at Khan's Zaman Park residence in Lahore to arrest him after he failed to appear in courts on multiple occasions.

The Supreme Court decision declaring PTI Chairman Imran Khan's arrest in the Al-Qadir Trust case "unlawful" also speaks volumes of the political vengeance being employed against the opponents. The manhandling of the PTI workers arrested during protests



also suggests that the government believes in suppression of opponent views. Imran Khan said Thursday at the Supreme Court that people approached the court for justice, but contended that he was instead hit with batons. "Even murderers are not treated this way," he stated.

Politicians have been wrangling over who should run Pakistan while the country suffers. No one among the nation is in a position to answer what changed in Pakistan in the past one year. Meanwhile, the number of court cases against IK has been on the rise. His party says there are over 100 charges that include corruption, terrorism and contempt of court. But Khan has smartly made this a part of his campaign, accusing the government of living by the "law of the jungle".

Pakistani society is politically polarized, economy is on the brink of utter collapse, foreign reserves are depleting on a regular basis and have plummeted to one of the lowest levels in decades. Talks with the International Monetary Fund that started earlier this year, are yet to bring any good to the country. Pakistan is still recovering from the damage done by last year's floods and there is no dearth of harsh questions the political leadership needs to answer.

Political uncertainty is making things even more difficult for the entire system which is almost on the brink of crumble in Pakistan.

If that happens, it won't benefit anyone - neither political parties, nor the establishment or the people of the country.

These ongoing court battle between the parliament and judiciary have split the judiciary. The government has accused some judges of bias in Khan's favour, and the division and furious disagreement, if continued, may lead to a constitutional crisis.

It seems that Khan has decided not to let the government sit and take rest as the latter is battling for its political survival. The political deadlock is complicating with each passing day suggesting that Pakistan's institutions are failing with no entity to mediate.

General elections are due to be held at the end of this year but the PTI is fearing that it could be delayed using the same tactics used to delay the Punjab and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa polls. Even if general elections do take place at time, there will not be a conflict resolution unless and until the political parties decide what their priorities are and that the political rivals must not treat opponents as personal enemies.

Over the past few months, Pakistan has witnessed increasing political and economic uncertainty. Political rivalry is likely to engulf much of Pakistan's energies and resources in the coming days. The ouster of

Imran Khan from office through a no-confidence vote last spring didn't end political instability in the country and so seems his arrest this summer. Polarization and instability have only intensified since April last. Since then, Pakistan has been facing political conflict and political demeanour is threatening the country's prospects for social cohesion and stability.

The biggest question for Pakistanis remains when the general elections will be held and who will win the polls. Will former prime minister Nawaz Sharif return to Pakistan to run his party, the PML-N? Can Imran Khan continue his popularity and win on the strength of his popular support, despite his confrontation with the military?

The struggle for power in the country is likely to continue in the days to come. As the incumbent government has not succumbed to PTI's demand for early elections, country-wide elections are unlikely to be held by October this year. It benefits the government politically to postpone them as long as it possibly can as it tries to dig itself out of Pakistan's economic crisis. Last year cost the country's precious political capital; and this year seems set to harm the country more if sanity doesn't prevail. Polarized politics is tearing Pakistan apart. It's time that we take things forward and talk to each other before there's a collapse of the entire system.





The redline PTI finally crossed

PTI cultivated 'Khan our redline' dogma among supporters; attacks on military premises to keep haunting Imran Khan

By Sarfraz Raja

And finally, it happened--Imran Khan got arrested; for Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf its 'red line' got crossed; and then PTI crossed all the red lines. Imran Khan and his party's hierarchy were anticipating this top arrest but not at the time and the way all that took place. May 9 turned out to be an unfortunate day for PTI and the party made it a dark day for the whole country. The arrest of the PTI chief sparked countrywide protests and attacks on some most important and sensitive state institutions like military headquarters which got a reaction from the army. Imran Khan's arrest from inside the Islamabad High Court was declared illegal by the Supreme Court of Pakistan, two days later. But these 24 hours cost a huge and unprecedented loss to the state of Pakistan.



How did it happen?

Imran Khan apprehended his arrest in a series of cases registered against him, purportedly over 120 in number. For months the former prime minister avoided arrest while surrounded by his supporters who fought battles with police to keep him out of custody. Despite the issuance of arrest warrants against Khan by the court, his supporters surrounded his residence 24/7 for the last many months, in Ramazan and Eid days too to shelter him from any possible arrest.

The PTI chief travels with a convoy of vehicles and workers whenever he needs to go somewhere or to appear before courts. It has become difficult for police and other relevant institutions to go for his arrest seeing the response of his workers. On 9th May, Imran Khan traveled to Islamabad where he had to present himself before the High Court to get bail in two of the cases against him. Khan was arrested from High Court premises in another case by the National Accountability Bureau when he was in the registry branch of the court for his biometrics verification. It was a surprise for his followers when the breaking news of

his arrest appeared on all the news channels.

Chief Justice Islamabad High Court took notice of his arrest from the court's premises and later after hearing the arguments validated the arrest declaring it legal, which was again a shock for PTI leadership who were expecting relief from IHC. Khan was presented before the NAB court the next morning and got eight days remand for investigations. Besides that same day, the former prime minister was also indicted by another court for selling state gifts he obtained from Tosha Khana and not declaring them in his annual assets details, during the three and half years of his tenure.

Unrest followed arrest

Imran Khan's arrest set off skirmishes between police and PTI supporters in many cities across the country that left a few people dead and hundreds injured including top-ranked police officers. Clashes continued in the capital city Islamabad where Khan was being held. Police and other law enforcement agencies were deployed across the country, and shipping containers were placed on different roads.

In Lahore, PTI supporters stormed Jinnah House which is the residence of corps commander Lahore and ransacked this historic building. In the garrison city of Rawalpindi, PTI workers also attacked the General Headquarters of the Pakistan Army. Khan's supporters, in Peshawar, raided a building of Radio Pakistan trampling its equipment and setting it on fire; some of the radio employees were also trapped inside. Police arrested around one thousand protesters including top party leaders, Vice Chairman Shah Mehmood Qureshi, and Secretary General Asad Umar. To control the worsening situation, Pakistan Army is called to control the situation after approval of the federal government.

Pakistan Army through ISPR came up with a strong response against violent PTI protests, calling May 9 a 'black chapter' in the country's history. According to a statement issued a day after Khan's arrest, ISPR referred to PTI protests asserting that the demonstrations specifically targeted army property and installations. In this strongly-worded statement, the army's media wing emphasized that no one would be allowed to take the law into their own



hands. The arrest of Imran Khan from the Islamabad High Court was justified by the ISPR, citing the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) statement and the law. However, ISPR highlighted that the aftermath of Imran Khan's arrest witnessed a wave of attacks on the army's properties and installations, accompanied by anti-army slogans being raised. ISPR condemned these actions and expressed its concerns regarding tactics employed by certain elements within the protesting groups.

The ISPR statement lambasted PTI protesters, describing their actions as an attempt to manipulate the nation's sentiments for their own limited and selfish objectives. The military media wing further accused them of deceiving the people by simultaneously highlighting the importance of the army. "This is an example of hypocrisy," the ISPR stated, denouncing the contradicting stance taken by those involved in the protests. It emphasized the significance of maintaining law and order, highlighting the need to respect the institutions of the country. ISPR further said that "one group wearing a political cloak, driven by its lust for power, has accomplished what the eternal enemies of the country could not do in 75 years."

The statement went on to add that the army has demonstrated extreme tolerance, patience, and restraint; and has worked with utmost patience and endurance in the best interests of the country, without even considering their own reputation. "As per the strategy, a situation was created to use the army's response for nefarious political designs which were thwarted by the army's vigilant response," it said. "We are well aware that behind this, there were some orders, instructions, and complete planning of some nefarious leaders of the party."

This statement was the strongest reaction by the military against a political party after direct attacks by its workers on Pak Army premises.

Although PTI leaders were calling their protest peaceful some audio leaks of their leaders denied this claim. In these telephonic conversations, PTI leaders could be heard talking about attacks on sensitive state and military installations.

What is the case?

Imran Khan along with his wife Bushra Bibi and some other party leaders are facing an NAB inquiry related to a settlement between the former PTI government and a famous property tycoon of the country, reportedly causing a loss of 190 million pounds to the exchequer. According to charges, Khan and other accused allegedly adjusted Rs 50 billion at the time sent by the British crime agency NCA to the Pakistani government as part of the agreement with a property tycoon and got undue benefit in the form of over 458 kanals of land near Jhelum to establish Al Qadir University.



The UK crime agency had seized assets worth 190 million pounds from the property tycoon in Britain. NCA said the assets would be passed to the Pakistani government and the settlement with the Pakistani property tycoon was a civil matter and does not represent a finding of guilt. On December 3, 2019, Khan got approval for the settlement with NCA from his cabinet without disclosing the details of the confidential agreement. And it was decided that the money would be submitted to the Supreme Court of Pakistan on behalf of the tycoon. Subsequently, Al Qadir Trust was established and after a few weeks, the Imran government approved an agreement with the property tycoon; and a few months after the cabinet's approval, 458 kanals of

land were transferred to the trust.

According to the NAB officials, Khan and his wife obtained land worth billions of rupees from the property tycoon to build an educational institute in return for striking a deal to give legal cover to the black money received from the UK crime agency.

Where could it go?

Imran Khan is not the first political leader in Pakistan who was arrested. Under the PTI government itself, almost all top opposition leaders were jailed for months. Imran Khan and his top party leader, right from the day their government was

removed, through a vote of no confidence, were nurturing the minds of their supporters contending Khan could be arrested and that would not be tolerated at any cost. In fact, countless times, trends were generated on social media with hashtags: "Imran Khan is our red line." So PTI supporters were ready to go to every extent and they actually crossed the red line. Imran Khan was arrested after warrants were issued by the NAB court, his arrest was also declared legal by the Islamabad High Court. He may get acquittal from the case but the violent reaction PTI has shown, especially attacks on sensitive state and government institutions, would be seriously damaging and haunt them for a long time.



Imran arrest: What is the Al Qadir Trust case?

Case alleges Imran Khan and his wife, Bushra Bibi, accepted Rs5 billion for whitewashing Rs50 billion that was returned by the UK during the PTI govt's tenure



By Hawwa Fazal

PTI chief Imran Khan was arrested on Tuesday from outside the Islamabad High Court (IHC) premises, where he was present for the hearings of two cases.

Subsequently, Islamabad Police released a statement quoting Inspector General (IG) Akbar Nasir Khan as saying that Imran had been arrested in relation to the Al Qadir Trust case, which alleges that the PTI chief and his wife obtained billions of rupees and land worth hundreds of kanals from a real estate firm for legalising Rs50 billion that was identified and returned to the country by the UK during the previous PTI government.

But what is the Al Qadir Trust case and why has the former premier been implicated in it?

The origins

It all started five years ago when the The National Crime Agency (NCA) of the United Kingdom agreed to a settlement worth £190 million with the family of property tycoon Malik Riaz.

According to the statement released by the NCA, the settlement included a UK proper-

ty — 1 Hyde Park Place, London, W2 2LH — valued at approximately £50 million and all of the funds landed in the frozen accounts of Malik Riaz.

The first record of the NCA's move to probe the property and assets belonging to Riaz in the UK surfaced in December 2018, shortly after the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) came to power. The crime agency in a press release dated Aug 14, 2019 stated: "The NCA has been granted freezing orders on eight bank accounts containing a total of more than £100 million, which is suspected to have derived from bribery and corruption in an overseas nation. Approximately £20m held by a linked individual was frozen following a hearing in December 2018."

Earlier that year, the Supreme Court of Pakistan had accepted Riaz's offer of Rs460bn as settlement dues by his real estate firm, Bahria Town Ltd, after it was found to have illegally acquired thousands of acres of land on Karachi's outskirts in district Malir.

Hours after the NCA verdict, Malik Riaz had tweeted that the recovered amount would go to the Supreme Court against the

fine worth Rs460bn.

Subsequently, the money was transferred to the Supreme Court's accounts, instead of the Government of Pakistan's account. When the NCA had announced its decision on Dec 3, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Accountability Mirza Shahzad Akbar had claimed that the money would directly come to the state.

On being questioned over this ambiguity later, SAPM Akbar had replied: "Is the Supreme Court not part of the government? So if the money goes to the apex court, it means that the money comes to the state."

The SAPM had also refused to entertain questions regarding the origin of the money and how it had come to be stashed away abroad, citing confidentiality clauses between the parties involved in the case, including the UK. "We have inked a bond of confidentiality with the UK government and therefore we cannot talk about the details of the case," he told a presser.

The case against Imran

In June 2022, the matter resurfaced after an alleged audio leak, purportedly of a



telephone conversation between Malik Riaz and his daughter, wherein the two could be heard talking about the supposed demands of Farah Khan aka Gogi — a friend of Imran Khan's wife Bushra Bibi — against some alleged favours from the previous government of Imran Khan. The woman, believed to be Riaz's daughter, told her father that Farah had told her that the (former) first lady had asked her not to accept a three-karat diamond ring and demanded a five-karat one.

Subsequently, Riaz had denied his role in any political matters, and in a tweet claimed that the leaked audio clip attributed to him and his daughter was "fabricated".

A week later on June 14, Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah had accused Imran and his wife of accepting Rs5bn and hundreds of kanals of land for protecting the real estate firm in a money laundering case.

Addressing a press conference in Islamabad, Sanaullah said Bahria Town had "illegally transferred" Rs50bn to a Pakistani national in the UK. The transfer, he said, was identified by the UK's National Crime Agency, which subsequently informed the then PTI government of the crime.

Sanaullah claimed that Imran, the prime minister at the time, had tasked Shehzad Akbar, ex-PM's aide on accountability, to resolve the matter. Akbar "settled" the entire case, while the Rs50bn — which was state property and belonged to the national treasury — was adjusted against Bahria Town's liability, the interior minister had alleged.

The next day, the federal cabinet constituted a committee to probe into Imran and his wife Bushra's alleged involvement in the case.

According to Sanaullah, Bahria Town had donated hundreds of acres of land to Al-Qadir Trust, with the agreement bearing signatures of the real estate developer's donors and Bushra Khan — the wife of former premier Imran.

He said the non-profit organisation had only two trustees: Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi. The minister added that another 240 kanals were transferred to "Farah Shehzadi".

NAB steps in

In an apparent attempt to tighten the noose around real estate tycoon Malik Riaz and close aides to PTI Chairman Imran Khan, the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) asked Riaz and other beneficiaries to appear before it on Dec 1.

"Call-up notice to the persons acquainted with facts of the case under section 19 of the National Accountability Ordinance-1999, inquiry against holders of public office and others qua misuse of authority, financial gains and criminal breach of trust in recovery of crime proceeds received from the UK and illegal sealing of its record," the NAB notice had said.



It said the inquiry into allegations of misuse of authority, financial gains and criminal breach of trust had revealed that Ali Riaz Malik and others entered into an out-of-court settlement agreement with Britain's National Crime Agency for repatriation of funds to the government of Pakistan.

"Moreover, M/s Bahria Town donated land measuring 458 acres, four marlas and 58 square feet, situated at Mauza Barkala, Tehsil Sohawa, District Jhelum, for Al Qadir Trust University. Therefore, you are in possession of information /evidence whatsoever, which relates to the commission of the said offence(s)," the notice added. According to unconfirmed reports, Imran Khan's wife is one of the trustees of the trust.

The NAB had earlier sent notices to 21 members of former premier Imran Khan's cabinet. Prominent among them were: Ghulam Sarwar Khan, Murad Saeed,

Pervez Khattak, Shafqat Mahmood, Shireen Mazari, Ali Haider Zaidi, Hammad Azhar and Zulfi Bukhari.

Bukhari was initially summoned by the NAB on Nov 29, but only appeared before the accountability watchdog on Jan 10 after missing several hearings.

On Tuesday, as Imran appeared before the IHC in an unrelated case, he was apprehended by Rangers personnel. Hours after the arrest, Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah said in a press conference Imran was arrested by officials of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) specifically in the Al-Qadir Trust case, adding that there were "dozens" of other cases with

corruption inquiries in progress against the former premier.

The interior minister said that the NAB had issued notices to the PTI chief regarding the corruption cases against him and asked him to present himself and become a part of the investigation. He added that there was no need for extensive investigations if Imran had become involved since there was documentary proof and evidence present in the cases.

"It was necessary for him to present himself and give answers but he did not do so. He challenged those notices in the high court and ultimately the high court said that the [legal] process in accordance with law cannot be stopped and he should become a part of the investigation and submit his response but despite that, he did not feel it appropriate to become a part of the investigation. Because of this NAB had to implement his arrest."

Courtesy Dawn



Timeline of former prime ministers arrested in Pakistan

Pakistan has a long history of incarcerating individuals who have held the country's top executive office

By Areesha Rehan

Former prime minister and PTI chief Imran Khan was taken into custody on Tuesday by paramilitary Rangers from the premises of the Islamabad High Court, where he had arrived for hearings in two cases.

Pakistan has a long history of incarcerating individuals who have held the country's top executive office.

Here, Dawn.com presents a timeline of former prime ministers of Pakistan who at one point or another spent time in custody.

1960s



Jan 1962: Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy was the fifth prime minister of Pakistan (Sept 1956-Oct 1957). He refused to endorse Gen Ayub Khan's seizure of government. Through the Elective Bodies Disqualification Order (Ebdo), he was banned from politics and was later accused of violating the Ebdo in July 1960. In Jan 1962, he was arrested and put in solitary confinement in the Central Jail of Karachi without trial on concocted charges of "anti-state activities" under the 1952 Security of Pakistan Act.

1970s

Sept 1977: Zulfikar Ali Bhutto served as the prime minister from Aug 1973 to July 1977. In Sept 1977, he was arrested for conspiring to murder a political opponent in 1974.



He was released by Lahore High Court Justice Khwaja Mohammad Ahmad Samdani who stated that his arrest had no legal grounds, but was arrested again three days later under Martial Law Regulation 12. The regulation empowered law enforcement agencies to arrest a person who was working against security, law and order, or the smooth running of martial law. This law could not be challenged in any court of law.

Bhutto was eventually sentenced to death and executed on April 4, 1979.

1980s



Aug 1985: Benazir Bhutto served as Pakistan's prime minister twice (Dec 1998-Aug 1990 and Oct 1993-Nov 1996). Under Ziaul Haq's dictatorship (1977-1988), Benazir served as an opposition leader. She arrived in Pakistan in Aug 1985 for her brother's funeral and was put under house arrest for 90 days.

Aug 1985: Benazir Bhutto served as Pakistan's prime minister twice (Dec 1998-Aug 1990 and Oct 1993-Nov 1996). Under Ziaul Haq's dictatorship (1977-1988), Benazir served as an opposition leader. She arrived in Pakistan in Aug 1985 for her brother's funeral and was put under house arrest for 90 days.



1990s

May 1998: The Ehtesab Bench of the Lahore High Court issued bailable arrest warrants for Benazir Bhutto.

June 1998: The Public Accounts Committee issued an arrest warrant against Benazir Bhutto.

July 1998: The Ehtesab Bench issued a non-bailable arrest warrant against Benazir Bhutto.

April 1999: Benazir Bhutto was sentenced to five years and disqualified from holding public office by the Ehtesab Bench on charges of taking kickbacks from a Swiss company hired to fight customs fraud. She was not in the country at the time of the verdict and the conviction was later overturned by a higher court.

Oct 1999: The Ehtesab Bench re-issued non-bailable arrest warrants for Benazir Bhutto due to her non-appearance before the court in the assets reference case.

2000s



Sept 2007: Nawaz Sharif returned to Pakistan after being cast into exile by Gen Pervez Musharraf in 1999. On his return to Islamabad, the airport was sealed and Nawaz was arrested within hours of his return and sent to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, to complete the three remaining years of his 10-year exile.

Nov 2007: Benazir was put under house arrest for a week in Punjab at PPP Senator Latif Khosa's house to prevent her from leading a long march against Gen Musharraf's dictatorial government.

2010s

July 2018: Nawaz was arrested and given a 10-year sentence for corruption by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) along with his daughter Maryam Nawaz. He was released two months later when the court suspended the sentences to wait for a final judgement by the high court.

Dec 2018: Sharif was jailed again and given a seven-year sentence in relation to his family's ownership of steel mills in Saudi Arabia. In November 2019, he was allowed to leave the country to receive medical treatment. He has since not returned to Pakistan.

July 2019: PML-N's Shahid Khaqan Abbasi served as the prime minister of Pakistan from January 2017-May 2018. On July 19, he

was arrested by a 12-member NAB team for alleged corruption while awarding a multi-billion rupee import contract for LNG in 2013 when he was the minister for petroleum and natural resources. He was granted bail and released from Adiala Jail on Feb 27, 2020.

2020s



Sept 2020: The current prime minister of Pakistan, Shehbaz Sharif, was arrested on Sept 28 after the Lahore High Court rejected his bail in a NAB money laundering case. He was released from Lahore's Kot Lakhpat central jail nearly seven months later.

2023s



March 2023: Two separate arrest warrants were issued for Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf Chairman and former prime minister Imran Khan after he skipped proceedings in cases pertaining to alleged threats issued to a judge and the Toshakhana gifts. Party supporters had gathered outside Khan's residence in Zaman Park to prevent his arrest. The standoff resulted in violence with security personnel firing tear gas shells at protestors.

May 2023: Imran Khan was arrested from the premises of the Islamabad High Court on May 9 on corruption charges in a case related to the Al Qadir University Trust.

Courtesy Dawn



If spirit of democracy still exists in country

Karachi bye-elections marred with violence, rigging

By Hamza Qureshi

Pakistan, 75 years after its independence, has yet to experience a fair and free election. The latest local bodies' bye-elections held on May 7, 2023, in Karachi, were no exception. Despite the country's long-standing struggle for democracy, polls were marred by reports of rigging and vote tampering. This correspondent, who had a first-hand account of violence and irregularities during the polls, wonders if the spirit of democracy still exists in the country.

As the dust settled on the Karachi local bodies elections, it became clear that despite violence and chaos that hampered the polling process, competing parties remained determined to achieve their goal of securing the seat of mayor of Pakistan's largest metropolitan.

With the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) winning 91 seats, Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) securing 85 seats, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) taking 42 seats, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) winning 7 seats, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) securing 2 seats, and a handful of independent and other candidates also winning seats, none of the parties gained an absolute majority in the January 15 main elections.

The number game became all the more crucial during the recently held bye-elections, with JI and PPP focusing their efforts on securing a majority in terms of union council (UC) chairmen seats. A systematic election campaign was run by Jamaat-e-Islami which has managed to get back into the city's political landscape after 17 years. While PTI remained most silent, PPP and the Sindh government were charged to contest and win majority seats.

The PPP secured support from PML(N) on several union councils, suggesting a strong desire by the PPP central leadership to win the mayoralty. However, the PPP's campaign during the bye-elections gave the impression that the party was not actively competing. In reality, the PPP managed the elections on multiple fronts, leading to



allegations of rigging by opposition parties which appear valid.

There were reports of political transfers and postings of various administrative lower staff and assistant commissioners before the bye-elections. Similarly, the posting of SHOs in multiple areas were also allegedly influenced by political motives of the Sindh government. The recently appointed provincial home secretary is known to be a relative of the chief minister Sindh. It is widely known that several revenue officers were transferred from interior Sindh to Karachi for political purposes.

Both PTI and JI leadership had demanded deployment of Rangers during the bye-elections, but their request was not fulfilled despite a letter written to the chief election commissioner by JI Karachi Chief Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman.

Rangers have been stationed in Karachi since 1990 and are considered an apolitical force that can restore law and order in situations where the highly politicized police force cannot. It is worth noting that the political party currently in power, PML-N, did not call for the deployment of Rangers.

The polling list for UC-13 New Karachi, District Karachi Central, was revised by the

government for reasons that are not entirely clear. However, some leaders from PTI and JI alleged that ghost voters from Katchi Abadis had been added to the list, suggesting potential rigging. It should be noted that the compilation of polling lists is the responsibility of staff under provincial governments.

Additionally, during the bye-elections, some political parties complained about addition of hundreds of ghost voters to the lists in certain areas. The Jan 15 elections were conducted using voter lists from June 2022, while the by-elections held in May 2023 used updated lists. Gerrymandering, voter suppression, rigging, and other irregularities were also reportedly common during the entire process of the bye-elections, including seizure of polling stations and collusion of government officials.

There were reported incidents of attempted election rigging during the bye-elections. At Muniza Shakir School polling station in UC03 Green Town, Shah Faisal Town, District Korangi, fake ballots were discovered during the counting process.

These fake ballots had been mixed with genuine ones, and were only identified when it was noticed that the colors of two ballots did not match. PPP and PML-N



local leaders reportedly entered polling station and pressured the presiding officers to count fake votes, but PTI and JI polling agents resisted this attempt. The fake votes were not counted, although it should be noted that similar attempts may have been successful elsewhere.

The UC-01 Orangi Town in District Karachi West and UC-04 New Karachi both experienced a similar situation where election results were changed by returning officers (RO) at midnight. This was also observed during the January 15 elections, where different Form XI (preliminary result prepared by the presiding officer and verified by polling agents) were issued to political party representatives.

According to the PTI, they had won the Orangi UC-01 as per the Form XI, but the RO later announced the win for the PPP on that seat. Similarly, JI claimed it had won the UC-04 New Karachi seat, but PPP allegedly got the results changed with the help of governmental officials. Kashif Naseer, a local JI leader, has accused the ROs, who were assistant commissioners in this case of supporting such rigging attempts. It was also reported that the polling agents were tricked into signing receipts for Form XI and XII early in the morning when the polling had just begun.

Ballot boxes in UC-13 New Karachi were allegedly tempered with during the

elections, according to Naseer. He claimed that there were more ballots in the boxes than the number of votes cast. Additionally, polling agents were not allowed to check empty boxes before they were sealed. When some agents insisted, they were reportedly physically abused by the presiding officer and one was even handed over to the police without any FIR or registered complaint.

Naseer cited an example at the Programmer School polling station, where 162 votes were cast but more than 450 votes were counted. The fake votes were bundled in 50s and 100s, and the presiding officer counted them despite objections from polling agents. Naseer also pointed out that the number of votes cast in UC-13 during the January 15 elections was around 3000, but it increased to about 7500 in the bye-elections, which is an unusual trend.

The bye-elections also saw violence which several political workers getting injured in clashes. This correspondent also faced an assault while recording a clash between PML-N and JI workers at the Green School polling station in Ward-4 UC-08 Model Town. The clash began when PML-N local leader Asmatullah Mehsud entered the polling station and was resisted by JI workers, leading to a physical altercation. The PML-N workers succeeded in pushing back the JI workers and entering the polling station.

While recording the incident, this

correspondent was attacked by a mob armed with batons and knuckles. They punched me in the head and back and jabbed a baton into my belly, demanding that I delete all recordings. I was eventually escorted to safety by a few bystanders. It is important to note the partial role of the police, who arrived on the scene only after the PML-N workers had left half-an-hour later. This incident highlights the dangers and risks that journalists face while reporting on elections in Karachi.

Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman, the chief of Jamaat-e-Islami, blamed the government for the injuries sustained by his party workers in clashes that took place in various areas including North Karachi, Korangi, and New Karachi. He demanded an impartial investigation into the matter and criticized the role of the police in maintaining law and order during the by-elections. With Imran Khan's arrest on May 9, the PTI leadership was not available to comment on the matter.

The local elections held in Karachi have been marred by allegations of vote rigging and tampering, which have raised concerns about the integrity of the democratic process in the country. These issues raise doubts about the transparency of future general elections and could lead to citizens seeking alternative means to bring about change, which could potentially result in anarchy if not addressed.





Squandered opportunity



By Maleeha Lodhi

Last week's talks between the coalition government and the opposition took place in an atmosphere unfortunately vitiated by the exchange of inflammatory rhetoric between the two sides. PML-N leaders set a more belligerent tone this time, with Defence Minister Khawaja Asif calling the talks an "exercise in futility", while Javed Latif declared that negotiations with "a terrorist party" were impossible.

This prompted PTI leaders to question the government's seriousness to engage in result-oriented talks. Moreover, government actions, notably the police raid on former Punjab chief minister Pervez Elahi's Lahore residence, made the political atmosphere more tense and hardly propitious for negotiations.

Nevertheless, at one point in the government-opposition parleys it seemed some headway was made when the two sides agreed national and provincial elections should be held on the same day. This resulted from a show of flexibility by Imran Khan's PTI, whose negotiators led by Shah Mahmood Qureshi, also agreed to neutral caretaker administrations to oversee the polls.

They went further, offering to help the government, which lacks a two-thirds parliamentary majority, to secure a

one-time constitutional cover to shift the election date beyond the constitutionally stipulated 90-day period through an amendment.

But the talks broke down on lack of agreement on a common date for elections. Government representatives didn't budge from their position of holding elections after parliament completed its full term in August, which meant not before October.

The PTI side proposed dissolving the Sindh and Balochistan assemblies in May for elections to be fixed for some time in mid-July. This was rejected by the government. Thus the 'final' round of talks ended inconclusively with no indication that negotiations will resume.

Considering the government only has four months left in its term, offering to hold elections, say a month or two earlier, could have forged a national consensus to end the political deadlock, ease political tensions and create a peaceful pathway to the polls. But the ruling coalition squandered this opportunity by not opting for this course.

Its obduracy on the election date is only explicable by its desire to delay the polls as long as possible out of fear that the electoral outcome will not be in its favour.

What kind of difference a few months will make to the political fortunes of coalition parties is beyond comprehension. If anything, time has been working against them, with PML-N steadily losing political ground.

Failure to reach an agreement means confrontation between the government and opposition will intensify with the risk of greater political turmoil ahead. Khan had warned that in the absence of an accord his party will go back to the Supreme Court and he will direct his followers to agitate in the streets.

PTI then submitted a letter to the apex court informing it that "a solution within the Constitution" could not be achieved in talks with the government. It also asked the court to implement "in letter and spirit" its earlier order to hold elections in Punjab on May 14. For its part, the SC 'clarified' that its order remained "unchanged".

The country will remain in a state of limbo if the ruling coalition continues to delay polls to cling to power.

One of the reasons cited by representatives of the ruling coalition for not conceding on the election date is that the government has a trade policy to announce and a budget to



present. Whether or not this was an excuse there is no getting away from the fact that the government's political distractions, tardy decisions and mismanagement have left the economy teetering on the brink of a breakdown.

The bailout deal with the IMF remains elusive for several reasons. The last sticking points include the Fund's insistence that Pakistan fully fund the external financing gap for the remaining part of this fiscal year.

The gap is estimated to be around \$3 billion after \$2bn was apparently committed by Saudi Arabia and \$1bn by UAE. Before concluding the agreement, the Fund also wants to evaluate the budget plans prepared by the government, with whom it has an obvious trust deficit.

The IMF deal has been delayed since November. This delay is continuing to impose a heavy cost on the economy. This is reflected in depleting foreign exchange reserves, tumbling exports and the virtual collapse of business confidence. The economy is, in fact, precariously poised with the fall in exports, decline in overseas remittances, inflation at a 60-year high and the rupee losing record value against the dollar.

Further delay in the Fund programme could plunge the precarious economy into a graver crisis. If anything, the dire economic situation makes elections necessary sooner rather than later, so that a government with a fresh mandate can deal with Pakistan's worst economic crisis on a sustainable basis and not by band-aid measures.



This is especially so as the coalition government, instead of steering the shipwrecked economy to safer shores, seems to be expending more time and energy on political battles and power tussles.

It has now declared war on the Supreme Court. Ruling coalition ministers have been lashing out against court orders, exploiting divisions among its judges and characterising their confrontation with the SC as one designed to assert parliament's supremacy.

At times their aggressive statements seem to suggest they are deliberately provoking the court to take action against them. This conduct seems aimed at discrediting the court to justify the government's defiance of its order to hold provincial elections in Punjab.

Meanwhile, the Election Commission has filed a petition for a review of the court's

order on the Punjab polls claiming the SC exceeded its constitutional jurisdiction in fixing a date, which it lacked the authority to do. These clashes between state institutions have left the governance system in disarray and on the verge of collapse.

There may still be a slim chance for government-opposition talks to be revived. Otherwise, the ruling coalition's desire to cling to power as long as it can and delay elections will keep the country in a state of limbo and only kick the can down the road.

Far from ending the ongoing political crisis, it will set the stage for an even bigger one later with more profound consequences for the country's economic and political stability.

Courtesy Dawn



Who controls Pakistan's foreign policy?

July 1958 Baghdad coup changed fate of Pak military; militarisation of intelligence apparatus helped military greatly; Gen Bajwa remained proactive in foreign policy making process throughout his tenure



By Umer Farooq

In the first decade of Pakistan's existence, the country's defense policy became its foreign policy. Pakistan took birth as a militarily weak state. It was facing a much larger and militarily much stronger India to its east. In the west, Afghanistan's rulers were laying claim on one of the border provinces the newly independent Pakistan inherited from British India. Tensions were palpable from the very start. The Pakistani military didn't receive most of the military stores from India, which was declared British India's successor state and therefore was in control of military assets that the British bequeathed to the newly independent countries.

Founder party of Pakistan, Muslim League started contacting American diplomats deputed in India with requests for military assistance even before the country came into being. Americans gave them nothing except empty promises. The real military relations had to wait till the military coup in Baghdad in July 1958. The 42-years old Major General Abdul Kareem Kassim, was a leading figure in organizing 'Free Officers,' an underground movement with nationalist leaning and connection with pro-Soviet regional communist parties-- of the Iraqi Army in 1958.

He was leading his formation of infantry battalions towards neighboring Jordan to protect Jordanian monarch, Shah Hussein against an impending coup—on the orders of a young Iraqi monarch— when on the morning of 14 July, 1958, he turned the direction of his men towards Baghdad. According to Time Magazine's account published on July 28th, 1958, General Kassim's forces reached Baghdad on Monday at 5 o'clock in the morning, "silently, and without firing a shot, his soldiers took over key points of the city. One by one the railroad station, the main intersections, the post and telegraph offices and the radio station were surrounded. By the time the troops began heading for the palace of 23-year-old King Feisal, an excited mob was at their heels," reads the account of Time magazine's reporter.

It took Time Magazine two weeks to put together a credible account of the events of the Baghdad coup—primarily because events following the 14 July coup were confused by the propaganda unleashed by the military junta and the mayhem and chaos that ensued in the wake of killing of Iraqi royal family. The world remained unaware of the fate of key officials of members of royal family until the staff of royal palace reached neighboring countries and

started to narrate the events. "Then, according to the former chef of the royal household who escaped to Ankara with the story, Nuri (Iraqi prime minister) was stripped of his disguise, impaled alive, and left on public view in the rotting sunlight," reads Time Magazine account.

Nuri al-Said, the Iraqi prime minister, was caught and killed by the rebel officers, while he was trying to escape disguised as a woman along with two unidentified female members of his family. Royal chef later informed western diplomats in Ankara about the fate of the Iraqi premier.

"The unsuspecting young king and his uncle, Crown Prince Abdul Illah, 46, were getting ready to fly to Istanbul for an emergency meeting of the Moslem members of the Baghdad Pact. Seeing the gathering crowd, they went outside the palace. According to the rebels, the palace guard fired into the crowd, killing 14. The soldiers returned the fire. Feisal was killed, along with Crown Prince Abdul Illah, the crown prince's mother, two nurses and two palace guardsmen," reads Time magazine's account of July 14, 1958.

Events in Baghdad that unfolded on July 14, 1958, dramatically changed the

course of Pak-US relations. Both Baghdad and Karachi (the then capital of Pakistan) were being ruled by a pro-American civilian government—in the course of 1958 both the regimes were toppled by military leaders in their respective countries. In the case of Baghdad, the coup was staged by pro-Soviet military officers and attracted condemnation from Washington. On the other hand, in the case of Karachi, the coup was staged by pro-American military officers and the act drew plaudits from Washington.

Before the bloody coup that was staged in that city on that fateful day, Washington was about to abandon Pakistan as a military satellite state as according to declassified State Department documents, its key officials had reached the conclusion that Pakistan military's utility as a bulwark against Soviet communism were at best, "dubious."

This changed dramatically after the events in Baghdad on July 14, 1958. And as pro-Soviet military coup leaders withdrew Iraq from the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO)—a military alliance of pro-American regional Muslim countries—regional capitals with pro-American governments panicked, arousing fears in Washington that Soviet influence might spread in the region.

This led the US security establishment to convince the then US President, Eisenhower not to abandon Pakistan as a key military ally, whose military needs weapons, training and finances on an urgent basis.

Historians of US diplomatic history started to recount the story of those eventful days of decades of 1950 and 60s with the help of declassified documents that the US State Department put out for review for the general public and researchers in mid 1990s. One such researcher is Robert J McMahon, a foremost diplomatic historian who wrote a book, "Cold War on the Periphery: The United States, India and Pakistan," that came out in 1994.

McMahon clearly documents how events in Baghdad which is hundreds of miles away from the then Pakistani capital, Karachi and which was also far away from imaginations of Pakistani political and security establishments, changed the fate of Pakistan's military and made it eligible for

US military and economic largesse on account of Washington's new regional fears that arose out of Baghdad coup.

McMahon complained in the preface of his book that still a large number of crucial US diplomatic documents related to the role of US intelligence in South Asia have not been declassified. "It is a particularly unfortunate hole in view of the critical role that intelligence operations came to play in the Pakistan-US relations." Otherwise the US administration had almost decided to shelve the plans to enhance capacity of the Pakistan military to act as a bulwark against Soviet expansionism in the region.



Under the US legal provisions, official documents of the US government are automatically declassified after every 25 years. "This is the declassification of information based upon the occurrence of a specific date or event as determined by original classification authority; or the expiration of a maximum time frame for the duration of classification established under the Order (25 years)" reads a statement on US Department of Justice. It is the same law that McMahon used to write the diplomatic history of US relations in South Asia.

The US initial offer of military assistance to Pakistan in the wake of the mutual defense pact signed between the two countries was astonishingly meagre from Pakistan's perspective. After initial disappointments, the US finally agreed to provide military assistance to the tune of \$450 million. This didn't cover the cost of maintenance of Pakistani armed forces after the completion

of the initial program.

Just days after assuming control of the country, General Ayub Khan presented the visiting Defense Secretary, Neil McElroy with a fresh "shopping list" that Pakistan considered necessary for modernization of its armed forces. According to McMahon, the list included modern fighter jets to replace Pakistan's US-supplied F-86s and sophisticated sidewinder missiles for its air force. "Ayub Khan almost certainly considered Washington's response to Pakistan's latest defense priorities as an initial litmus test of its commitment to his martial law regime," read McMahon's book.

Ch Muhammad Ali's logic, State Department's advice to Pakistan

In 1954, the then Finance Minister, Chaudhry Muhammad Ali, whom McMahon describes as Pakistan's most able and influential bureaucrat, told the US ambassador to Pakistan that Pakistan was facing a basic dilemma because of the US military assistance aid package. McMahon quoted an August 1954 cable sent by the ambassador to Washington about his conversation with Chaudhry Muhammad Ali. "As long as current tensions with India and Afghanistan continued, Pakistan could not reduce its existing forces. Yet it was experiencing dire financial difficulties with swelling pay, maintenance and training costs," reads McMahon book.

The US aid would only partially solve

problems for Pakistan, in the words of Chaudhry Muhammad Ali, as US aid guidelines governing military assistance, restricts it to equipment and training. Though, equipment and training were certainly needed, the finance minister said, that the expanded force goals permitted by the military assistance agreement with Washington would inevitably necessitate steadily mounting expenditure by the Pakistani government for payroll and maintenance, responsibilities and various other costs associated with maintaining a sizeable defense establishments. "Any additional funds for direct or indirect

budget on account of its dismal economic performance. It also pointed out the negative economic implications for Pakistan of its bloated military establishment. In early 1958, the US State Department recommended to the Eisenhower administration to reduce military assistance to Pakistan as "the military role and value of the Pakistan army is dubious at best," McMahon's book quoted a declassified US State Department document. Even the defense department, which was supporting continued military assistance to Pakistan, didn't talk high about Pakistan's military potentials.

three by stepping up military and economic assistance to them. The joint chiefs of staff agreed," reads the book of McMahon. The book quoted the joint chiefs as saying, "the strategic importance of Pakistan in the light of recent events in the Middle East has increased tremendously."

How, why does military dominate power structure and foreign policy making processes?

These events were the harbinger of military's ascendance in Pakistan's power structure and these were the years when Pakistani military and its leaders started to dominate the country's foreign policy making processes.

What unique capacity does the military possess that political parties in Pakistan do not? Why are political leaders in awe of the military?

Although Pakistani media churns out supernatural accounts of Pakistan military's adventures and prowess, its capability has hardly ever generated a serious debate in the local media. Some civil-military experts have analyzed why and how the military dominates political structures of the society. Their accounts however fall short of plausible explanations on what constitutes the nature and content of the military's unique political capacity.

According to the International Institute of Strategic Studies, Pakistan Army has a strength of 560,000 active duty personnel spread across every part of the country. This gives the army and its high command a unique social and political capacity to influence developments and events in the country. They extend a helping hand in natural disasters and parliamentary elections. This image of the military, as omnipotent and omnipresent force in the country, lends further credence to its political capability.

There are two facets to this phenomenon: a) the painstakingly constructed image of the Pakistani military as omnipotent and omnipresent force works to serve interests of the country and its people. and b) its capacity to influence political events by accessing information that is not available to political leaders. The militarisation of the intelligence apparatus has helped the military greatly.



military needs would, unfortunately, have to be squeezed from an already overtaxed budget, and would come at the expense of critical development priorities." He demanded special treatment for Pakistan, "otherwise, greater the amount of US aid, the greater the cost would be to Pakistan." These points raised by Chaudhry Muhammad Ali in his conversation with the US ambassador were exactly in line with the conclusion drawn by the US State Department that the cost of maintaining a huge military establishment would prove devastating for Pakistan at the financial and economic levels.

Baghdad coup changed calculations in Washington

Immediately before the July coup in Baghdad, the US embassy was sending diplomatic cables to the State Department in Washington stressing urgent need for Pakistan to sharply reduce its defense

"Pentagon and CIA officials, like their counterparts in the State Department, had years earlier grown disillusioned with the prospect of Pakistan contributing significantly to the defense of Middle East, the original rationale of the alliance. They now increasingly calculated the potential worth of Pakistani connection in terms of electronic listening post that could be installed by the United States to provide intelligence about Soviet missile capabilities, and in terms of air bases that, if made available to the United States, could serve as a staging areas for U-2 over flights of Soviet territory," says the McMahon report.

This was happening immediately before the Baghdad coup. However, within days everything changed for Pakistan in Washington. "At a meeting of the National Security Council on August 1, 1958, Secretary of State Dulles reported that prime ministers of Pakistan, Turkey and Iran were in a 'state of considerable gloom.' He said the United States needed to reassure all

The military top brass and intelligence agencies have in the post-Musharraf era demonstrated the capacity to control the state machinery. This gives them immense political power to influence the events at local as well as at national level in a political system that is required to provide legal protection to the ruling elites and classes in a highly manipulated criminal justice system.

Additionally, the role the military has played in international and regional power games, like the Cold War and the War on Terror, has added to its international legitimacy. Any foreign dignitary visiting Islamabad visits the GHQ to meet the army chief without fail. In the post-Musharraf period, the chiefs of the army staff have routinely visited Washington DC, London, Brussels, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Beijing and other countries. Constitutionally the COAS has no role in running diplomacy of the country.

Pakistan military has always disliked two types of leaders: one who could rival them in international stature and international connections (the then military top brass was jealous of Benazir Bhutto), and two, the one which is in command of an armed organization (examples are countless in Pakistan's history). Pakistan military is in love with its image, and draws unique political power from it. They have built this image even more in the post-Musharraf period. In a religious Muslim society like Pakistan, proclivities of the dominant ethnic groups towards militarisation of narratives and religious interpretations greatly aided the media campaign of the Pakistani military to construct its image as a saviour of the nation. This process of Islamisation of the society was beneficial for military leaders — since in popular imagination, the man of sword was the man of piety. They however faced a crisis of legitimacy and image, when religious leaders declared Osama bin Laden their hero in the wake of 9/11. This crisis seems to have subsided, but not entirely.

Why Gen Bajwa controlled foreign policy?

General Bajwa remained proactive in foreign policy making process throughout

his six-year tenure. On March 18, 2021, General Bajwa emphatically advocated for Pakistan's role as a regional connectivity hub at a 'security dialogue' in Islamabad. His protracted speech was specifically focused on the idea of Pakistan acting as a hub for regional economic, trade and commercial integration and connectivity. Unlike other military men of Pakistan, he didn't try to exclude India from his plans for regional connectivity. The former army chief told the audience he was all for landlocked Afghanistan exporting its goods to India through land transit facilities offered by Pakistan. In fact, he presented a plan, which included the idea of resolution of the Kashmir dispute and the resulting military tensions between Pakistan and India, and possibility of movement towards starting a new era of regional integration and connectivity.



Gen Bajwa presenting a plan for regional integration and connectivity—a plan which didn't exclude India? What was going on?

Most clearly this was not an isolated move and certainly not one of those showcased hoax plans, which the Pakistani Foreign Office often floats to embarrass or expose Indian intransigence. Since 2018, General Bajwa has been persistently offering talks to India. It appears that General Bajwa's ideas were at least not unpopular in the military. Only a few years ago, a senior military official posted in Balochistan where India's Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) is accused of fomenting trouble, offered India an invite to join the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor along with other regional countries.

Within three weeks of General Bajwa's speech, the government of Pakistan facilitated a senior US diplomat's visit to Gwadar Port, Pakistan's flagship project, to enhance regional connectivity. Pakistani media didn't report the visit of the US diplomat, but perhaps we can glean some connection between General Bajwa's speech and the Gwadar visit by the US diplomat. "We also see hope in the form of the incoming US administration, which can transform the traditional contestation into a gainful economic win-win for the world in general and the region, in particular, South Asia can be the starting point for regional cooperation," General Bajwa said at the conclusion of his March 2021 speech.

Pakistan's military establishment was familiar with the history of efforts to make

Pakistan a regional connectivity hub because the efforts started decades ago. Successive Pakistani governments signed agreements with the Asian Development Bank to start work on a Central Asia Regional Economic Program—a multilateral agreement to finance connectivity between the Central Asian states and Indian Ocean ports as two of the 11 land routes under this program passed through Pakistani territory. An agreement was inked with the USAID to initiate Pakistan's Regional Economic Integration Activity program—another program for road construction to enhance regional connectivity.

General Bajwa demonstrated an acute awareness of this history and the role friendly countries other than China were

playing in the efforts to make Pakistan a connectivity hub when he said in his speech, “let me also emphasize that while CPEC remains central to our vision, only viewing Pakistan through the CPEC prism is also misleading.” Seen in this context, the visit of a US diplomat to Gwardar in April 2021, absolutely made sense. General Bajwa was making efforts to dilute Chinese marking on the efforts to project Pakistan as a connectivity hub and to make these efforts appease the Americans. Only a few months later, Pakistan’s Ambassador to Washington, Ali Jahangir Siddique, authored a report for Washington based think tank, Atlantic Council, which is considered close to the US security establishment, in which he presented the efforts of the Pakistan state machinery to develop physical and digital infrastructure in the country to prepare Pakistan for a future role as regional connectivity hub.

In his March 2021 speech, General Bajwa referred to Kashmir as a problem which is stalling economic progress and regional integration. His focus again was on presenting Pakistan as a regional connectivity hub. On the other hand, in the latest speech by General Asim Munir, the new COAS, completely skipped the connectivity project and quite conventionally engaged in traditional but provocative, in the present circumstances, rhetoric on Kashmir. It is understandable that General Asim’s decision to skip the connectivity project may simply mean that he didn’t consider it suitable to bring up this issue in his speech at the passing out parade of the Military Academy in Kakul, Abbottabad.

There is also a possibility that General

Asim didn’t see it fit to speak about an issue which relates partly with the country’s foreign policy and partly with infrastructural development in the country—both of which are policy matters that come under the domain of the civil government. But it is at the same time also a pity that a crucial activity like a connectivity project—that can ensure economic progress and development in Pakistan—will lose a powerful backer like the army chief’s office.

Alternatively, there is also a possibility that the new military leadership doesn’t consider the idea of Pakistan acting as a regional connectivity hub viable in the prevailing geostrategic environment. There are other signs that the present military leadership will be less flexible on relations with India. Previous military leaders clearly realized Pakistan’s role as a land route connecting not only energy rich Central Asia with energy hungry South Asia, but also saw Pakistani territory as a link between the two emerging markets of China and India.

Seven decades ago, when the Cold War was heating up in Europe and across the world, American military strategists saw Pakistani territory as an ideal location for bases for stationing their bombers to bomb Soviet Central Asia. The American CIA wanted its listening posts established near Peshawar. On many occasions during the Cold War and later, and during the War on Terror, Pakistani military leaders fulfilled both these wishes of the American military and security establishment. Later, Pakistan’s perceived strategic location and its importance for world powers—Pakistani territory connected Central Asia with South

Asia and Pakistan was situated on the tip of a long belt of Muslim lands stretching all the way to Morocco in Northern Africa—became a catchphrase in the everyday talk of military officials.

There came a time when Pakistan’s strategic location became the country’s biggest security nightmare when in the wake of 9/11, a possibility emerged that Pakistani territory would become a battleground between Arab militants hiding in Afghanistan and American forces, which were preparing to attack Afghanistan. But Pakistani military officials didn’t stop their mantra of “Pakistan’s important strategic location.”

The world has changed dramatically; the emerging trend in the world is connectivity, rather connectivity is the destination of future human civilization. General Bajwa was the first military man to take cognizance of this reality. I am sure a whole bureaucratic setup must have contributed in preparing General Bajwa’s speech. But nevertheless, it was his speech, and he delivered it. The military dimension of our strategic location has given us bankruptcy and economic misery. The economic aspect of our strategic location as a regional connectivity hub has the potential to change the economic reality for ordinary Pakistanis as well as for the state of Pakistan.

Geopolitical tussles and military conflicts, which in part have been instigated by geographical location, have given us economic underdevelopment, institutional imbalance, lawlessness and a large begging bowl. Let’s try connectivity for once.



China, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Trilateral Dialogue promises a lot

All three neighboring countries to squarely benefit from peaceful, stable Afghanistan

By Zarghon Shah

Held in Islamabad on May 6, the China, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Trilateral Dialogue, fifth in the series, focuses more on peace and stability in Afghanistan, eradication of terror outfits including Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) etc from the Afghan soil. Though such a trilateral discourse promises a lot economically, but peace and stability in Afghanistan pose a real grave challenge, given the current as well as the past Afghanistan situation on ground and a particular 'Afghan mentality' towards Pakistan since decades.

During the Trilateral Dialogue, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari of Pakistan, State Councilor and Foreign Minister Qin Gang of China and the Acting Foreign Minister Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi of Afghanistan, "underscored the need to tackle security challenges posing a serious threat to regional and global security, and directly impacting stability and economic prosperity of the entire region."

Compared to China, Pakistan, on its part, is seeking explicit and expanded security assurances from Afghanistan despite the fact that Taliban capture of Kabul, some two years back, was celebrated across Pakistan and tagged as a 'slap on the face of India.' And in line with this jubilation, the then ISI chief Gen Faize Hameed dashed to Kabul, held a cup of tea at Kabul Serena, which many in Pakistan captioned as 'tea is fantastic'-- a peculiar reference to humiliating capture of India's Mig 21 pilot Abhinandan in 2019.

According to the Trilateral Dialogue's joint communique "all the three sides stressed on the need for not allowing any individual, group or party, including the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) etc. to use their territories to harm and threaten regional security and interests, or conduct terrorist actions and activities."



The trilateral bid initiated by China in 2017, is primarily aimed at bringing Pakistan and Afghanistan closer, securing peace and stability in Afghanistan, in order to make way for economic progression of its neighbors as well as the region.

Unfortunately, the core issues between Pakistan and Afghanistan that include presence of terror outfits i.e., Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Islamic State of Khurasan (IS-K) on the Afghan soil as well the 2440 km long border controversy, still remain a thorn in the flesh. Taliban, neither during their last government nor this one, have ever given a hint at recognizing what is called Durand Line, as international border between the two neighbors.

Since the Taliban's takeover of Kabul in 2021 after two decades of ouster from power by a US-led military onslaught, there has had been no respite in TTP attacks on Pakistan. The most recent and dreadful among them was the one on Peshawar Police Lines that killed 59 worshippers, mainly policemen.

TTP is relentlessly attacking Pakistani security forces from across Afghanistan in North & South Waziristan, Mohmand Agency, Bajaur up to DI Khan, Peshawar and even Karachi. The terror outfit is

largely based in neighboring Afghan provinces of Nurstan, Konar and Nangarhar, from where it either launches infantry attacks on Pakistani security forces or cross into Pakistani territory and attack Pak army and police. Afghan Taliban so far have utterly failed to control TTP, despite Pakistan's persistent concerns.

Leaving aside the recognition of Pak-Afghan border, tensions have erupted between Taliban and Pakistani troops deployed along the border. Afghan Taliban soldiers have been resorting to firing and dismantling of fence being raised by Pakistan along its long and porous border with Afghanistan. In mid December last year, Afghan Taliban forces from across the Chaman crossing, started firing at Pakistani troops who were rebuilding a damaged chunk of border fence. Six Pakistanis were killed in the attack, according to ISPR, and the Chaman- Spin Boldak border crossing was closed for two days.

Few days later Pakistan's head of mission to Kabul Ubaid Ur Rehman Nizamani, survived an assassination attempt in Pakistan embassy compound, which was claimed by the IS-K. Another clash that erupted between Pakistani and Taliban forces at Torkham border crossing in December last year, left the crossing



corridor closed for two weeks--this time by Taliban. In simple words, disputes linked to the Pak-Afghan border have been a bone of contention between the two neighbours for decades, and the bias emanating from this standoff has impacted the Afghan psychology more than Pakistanis. Surely it will take considerable time for both Islamabad and Kabul to cleanse the anti-Pakistan perception prevalent in Afghanistan, in order to move forward on other avenues of mutual stability and prosperity.

The joint communique also sought world community's cooperation with regard to providing necessary supplies, equipment

and technical assistance to Afghanistan. This was urged on humanitarian basis as Afghanistan has not yet been recognised by any countries in the world, specifically Pakistan and other Muslim states. Even Mulla Muttaqi had to seek UN permission to fly to Islamabad in the wake of the world body's sanctions.

The three ministers underlined that humanitarian support to the people of Afghanistan must remain delinked from any political considerations, the joint statement said. This urge also included request to international community to engage constructively with the Afghan side.

"Expressing solidarity with the people of Afghanistan, the three sides stressed the importance of sustained and urgent humanitarian support to the people of Afghanistan."

On the economic side, the trilateral moot reiterated its resolve to fully harness Afghanistan's potential as a hub for regional connectivity. On its part China, which has less than 100 miles border with Afghanistan in the Wakhan Corridor, has already struck a 25-year contract with Kabul to extract oil from the Afghan Amu Darya Basin. Besides China is eyeing huge deposits of lithium in Afghanistan which in fact is the future in terms of electric cars and all other electronic equipment. Chinese companies have long aspired to access Afghanistan's extensive and rich lithium deposits, estimated to be worth more than USD 1 trillion. World opinions have already termed Afghanistan as 'Saudi Arabia of lithium.' And Chinese companies have reportedly shown their interest to invest \$10b in Afghan lithium.

The Trilateral Dialogue considerably emphasized first peace and stability in Afghanistan that is primarily linked with elimination of terror networks in the country and then on humanitarian and financial help to Afghanistan. Once the peace objective is achieved, an economic boost will follow the suit that will not only benefit these three neighbors but would better the entire region.

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Bilawal India yatra brings home plaudits or humiliation

PTI dubs FM Goa visit as stabbing Kashmiris in back, govt claims the visit served SCO objectives



By Anum Akram

The first senior Pakistani official to visit India in nearly 12 years is Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. The most recent official to travel to Pakistan's eastern neighbor was Hina Rabbani Khar, who is presently the minister of state for foreign affairs, but circumstances were different then and now. Since both South Asian adversaries achieved independence from British rule in 1947, relations between them have not been cordial.

The foreign minister's decision to travel to India to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) conference could be viewed as a positive development despite complex difficulties. It was also a squandered chance to strengthen ties between the two parties. Bhutto was undoubtedly wary of the ramifications of his trip because Imran Khan's party had previously accused him of compromising on "Kashmir cause."

"I will be leading the Pakistan delegation at the SCO Council of Foreign Ministers. My decision to attend this meeting illustrates Pakistan's strong commitment to the charter of SCO," he said on Twitter prior to

his departure to Goa, adding that his visit would only focus on the SCO. "I look forward to constructive discussions with my counterparts from friendly countries."

Few people, though, held out hope that the trip would reflect bids towards rapprochement between the two neighbors and foes. Bilawal Bhutto stressed that his attendance would be "focused exclusively on Shanghai Cooperation Organization" and he avoided making any mention of India as he boarded the jet for Goa, where India was presiding over the Shanghai Cooperation Organization SCO Council of Foreign Ministers.

While in Goa, Bilawal dealt with Indian toxic media that thrives on Pakistan-bashing, with maturity and a sense of responsibility. In addition to skillfully outlining Pakistan's position on a number of contentious issues involving the two archrivals, Bilawal also successfully used reason to temper hostile Indian television anchors' criticism of Pakistan on the subject of terrorism and religious intolerance. Instead, he put them on the defensive by being honest with them, particularly when it

came to the topic of the spread of religious intolerance in India.

The foreign minister brought up India's cross-border terrorism in Pakistan, which has been wreaking havoc there for years, in response to allegations that Pakistan was backing terrorism. He brought up the arrest of Indian spy Kulbhushan Jadhav in Balochistan in 2016 and the 2017 Samjhota Express bombing, which claimed lives of over 70 people. Countries "should not get caught up in weaponizing terrorism for diplomatic point scoring," Bilawal had stated in his speech to the SCO. He stated that nations needed to come up with "practical and pragmatic" answers to end terrorism.

Jaishankar criticized Bilawal's comments regarding repeal of Article 370 and declared them to be "history" while also denouncing him as a "promoter, justifier, and spokesperson of a terrorism industry."

Despite media rumors, the Indian and Pakistani sides appeared to keep their distance from one another during Bilawal



Bhutto's two-day trip to Goa. There were no plans for a bilateral meeting between Bilawal and Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, according to sources familiar with the official events taking place in conjunction with the SCO conference. This is due to the fact that neither side made such a request.

Not only Imran Khan but other PTI stalwarts and workers criticized Bilawal's visit to Goa, saying the visit was unnecessary. Imran Khan criticized Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar for his poor hosting skills. Khan questioned "if Indians have forgotten all diplomatic norms, during a rally in Lahore. "You either do not invite people or you do not misbehave with them."

Imran Khan reacted furiously, saying Bilawal ought to have evaluated the risk before starting the journey. He questioned if Bilawal had sought any debriefing before boarding the plane for India.

"Pakistan is getting humiliated across the world; Bilawal, you are traveling the entire world but first tell us did you consult anyone before visiting India, on which you are spending the nation's money; and what will be the benefit or loss from this exercise;

and what benefit was gained from this trip, IK asked.

PTI leader Fawad Chaudhry argued that before Bilawal left for Goa to attend the SCO session, it would tantamount to "stabbing Kashmiris in the back." Attacking Bilawal, Fawad Chaudhry stated on social media that Bilawal's trip to India was 'disrespectful' to the sacrifices of Kashmiris. He dubbed it a 'strategy' suggesting India's cooperation first while ignoring the Kashmir cause. Chaudhry alleged that Pakistan's current administration, the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), was imposed in order to further this (India first) goal; and that PTI supported peaceful relations with other nations, particularly India; and that PTI will not permit Pakistan to become a puppet state. As Bilawal Bhutto arrived back, PTI Secretary General Asad Umar told media the foreign minister had earned nothing but humiliation during his visit to India.

On his part, Bilawal contended Pakistan decided to participate in the SCO India moot to maintain its presence at all forums, speak out in support of Kashmiris and respond appropriately to India's one-sided narrative that labels every Muslim as a terrorist. He claimed that by clearly and

forcefully outlining Pakistan's position on Kashmir and other issues, his tour was considerably beneficial.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif rejected Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's remarks against Bilawal Bhutto's visit to India, calling it 'deeply troubling.' "It is deeply troubling how the PTI tried to generate a controversy about Pakistan's participation in the SCO's meeting in India. It shouldn't be surprising though as Imran Niazi has had no qualms about imperiling the country's vital foreign policy interests in the past too," PM wrote on his social media platform, adding PTI's stance was not "surprising."

Shireen Mazari, a former human rights minister and leader of PTI, tweeted a photo of Bilawal extending his hand to his Indian counterpart. She said the 'real story is in this picture,' where Indian host doesn't extend his hand to Bilawal, and instead says namaste. She asserted that the image showed Bilawal "signaling appeasement," which is "important in diplomacy, especially when both parties are hostile states." While the officials who were part of the delegation said "they treated us the same way as other delegates. The environment was cordial and positive."

King Charles III: coronation and beyond

King Charles's reign facing challenges; some CW leaders demand UK apology for colonization, compensations; new King could cut back royal staffing

By Dr Khalid Bajwa

Charles III was crowned as King of the United Kingdom and 14 other Commonwealth realms on 6 May 2023 at Westminster Abbey, London. He succeeded his mother, Elizabeth II, who died on 8 September 2022 after a seventy-year long reign. His wife, Camilla, was crowned as the Queen Consort; the ceremony was performed by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The coronation was a blend of tradition and modernity, reflecting the monarch's role today and in future. The coronation regalia included historic chairs, robes, crowns and oil that were used for previous monarchs. The coronation ceremony also included new music commissions and a joint performance by different royal institutions.

The coronation service was followed by a procession from Westminster Abbey to Buckingham Palace where the King and the Queen Consort along with royal family waved the crowd from the famous balcony. The notable omission was Prince Harry who has strained relationships with his father and his brother Prince William. The coronation weekend included a bank holiday, street parties, a 'big help out' and various events across the UK to celebrate the new King and Queen.

The coronation of King Charles III is significant for the UK because it formalizes the monarch's role as the head of the Church of England and marks the transfer of their title and powers. Even though King Charles III acceded to the throne immediately upon the passing of his mother Queen Elizabeth II, this was the official moment he was crowned as King.

The coronation was witnessed by a peak audience of 20 million people in the UK. King Charles III is now head of the Commonwealth after his mother and grandfather King George VI. This position is not hereditary like most of the king's roles, but the Commonwealth leaders voted Charles unanimously in 2018 as the next head of CW and he assumed responsibilities following the Queen's death.

King Charles III delivered his first 'Commonwealth Day' message as monarch from Westminster Abbey on March 13th, 2023, in which he stressed the lofty charter of Commonwealth and 'hailed extraordinary potential of Commonwealth'. However, there have been some controversies surrounding his reign so far. For example, Indigenous leaders and politicians across the Commonwealth have demanded that King Charles III make a formal apology for the effects of British colonization and make reparations. King Charles III faces many challenges as he takes the throne. Most of these challenges will be the same as faced by any new monarch and may not be unique to the new king. However, King Charles III could face challenges which could be unique to him such as a trimming the monarchy, the need to modernize in line with public opinion, and growing tension around the monarchy's future. Even on the day of coronation, the anti-monarchists' protest, and according to



some people, police's heavy-handedness to tackle these protesters threw a spanner in otherwise a pompous day.

The slimmed-down monarchy has been a topic of debate in recent years. Princess Anne has said that slimming down the monarchy is 'not a good idea' as it 'provides long term stability for the UK.' However, according to some reports, King Charles III is in favour of the idea and could reduce the number of working royals and cut back royal staffing. Another problem for the new King is that the recent opinion polls show public support for the monarchy is at an all-time low. Though this does not pose an immediate threat to the monarchy, however, in the long run, it can pose a serious existential threat to the institution of monarchy. The new king needs to come up with novel ideas to make it popular and stress its importance and significance for the UK.

This is important, as throughout history, monarchies were challenged by various popular movements. Although the British monarchy survived religious strife as well as social unrest among the rural and urban lower classes, the monarchies in France, Russia, and China were swept away by popular social revolutions. However, in the 17th century, the monarchy was challenged by evolving 'parliamentarism' and was temporarily overthrown by the Parliament of England in 1649. The survival and continuation of the institution of monarchy depends on how King Charles III and the rest of the members of royal household conduct themselves. The value (not just in monetary terms) of the institution must outweigh its cost to survive.

IN PICTURES

King Charles III Coronation, Crowd, Centuries Old Tradition

Charles III fulfilled his long-awaited destiny by becoming the official king after a lifetime as the heir to his late mother Queen Elizabeth II.

The coronation marked the first in Britain since 1953.

At exactly 12:02 pm (1102 GMT), the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby placed the sacred and ancient symbol of the monarch's authority, the solid gold St Edward's Crown, on Charles's head.

At the solemn religious confirmation of his accession, the 2,300-strong congregation at Westminster Abbey erupted in cries of "God Save the King," and the trumpet fanfares marked the climax.

As the religious confirmation of Charles's accession concluded, ceremonial gun salutes reverberated across land and sea, and church bells rang in celebration throughout the country.

However, prior to Charles and Queen Camilla departing Buckingham Palace aboard the Diamond Jubilee State Coach for the rainy procession to the abbey, police utilized new powers to crack down on direct action groups and arrested dozens of protesters.

Republic, an anti-monarchy movement that advocates for an elected head of state, reported that authorities detained six of its organizers, while Just Stop Oil, a group of climate activists, claimed that authorities held 19 of its members.

Nonetheless, dozens of Republic activists held banners on the procession route declaring "Not My King."

The arrests were concerning to Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, with HRW stating "This is something you would expect to see in Moscow, not London."

London's Metropolitan Police had one of its largest security operations to date, with approximately 11,500 officers on the streets, and has warned that it has an "extremely low threshold" for protests.





Finance Minister Dar says Pakistan will not default even without IMF loan

TTI Report

Finance Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar said that Pakistan will not default even though the government does not receive loans from the International Monetary Fund. Dar issued this statement a day after Moody's International Service warned of the possibility that Pakistan could default without the resumption of the IMF facility.

Addressing the Islamabad Security Dialogue, Dar asserted that Pakistan would not default, even if a stalled loan programme with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was not revived. He made the comments while addressing the delay in signing a staff-level agreement with the IMF for the release of a crucial economic bailout.

Earlier this week, Moody's Investor Service claimed that Pakistan could face default without an IMF programme as its foreign exchange reserves were very weak. Prior to this development, Fitch Ratings also said that risks are large and a default or debt restructuring was an "increasingly real possibility" for Pakistan.

However, the finance minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar said "rumours" about Pakistan defaulting on its debt obligations should not be spread. "Whether [the deal with the] IMF is [there] or not, Pakistan will not default," he asserted. The financial czar also said Pakistan had fulfilled all conditions and taken steps towards reaching an agreement with the international lender for reviving the stalled loan programme.

"International politics based on injustice with Pakistan should be ended. Internationally, people are amazed at how Pakistan is managing," he added. Dar added that Pakistan had to pay debts amounting to \$3.7 billion till June, adding that Pakistan would fulfil all promises and make payments on time. Technical discussions with the IMF ended on February 9 and there was a "gap" on the matter of the external account, he said.

"If the IMF wants more time for the staff-level agreement, it can take it. The [external debt repayments] in May and June will be done on time," he reiterated.

International rating agencies should not discuss Pakistan's default, he said, adding that financing would be arranged for payments in the current fiscal year as friendly countries had promised help. Pakistan has been negotiating to restart a \$6.5 billion bailout with the IMF for about half a year, as its foreign exchange reserves — which currently provide an import cover of nearly one month — come under pressure. The country has secured financing support from countries in the Middle East and China — a key IMF condition.

The country is reeling from an economic crisis with inflation surging to 36.4%, the highest in its history and the highest in South Asia, while a bruising political battle is raging between



the government and former Prime Minister Imran Khan. The government has removed caps on the exchange rate, imposed taxes, raised energy tariffs, and scaled back subsidies in an attempt to unlock IMF funding. The State Bank of Pakistan has also raised key interest rates to a record 21%.

IMF officials' Question-Answer Session on Economic Issues

My name is Julie Kozack, I'm the Director of Communications at the IMF. Welcome to this press briefing. I'm welcoming those who are joining us here in person and also I see we have many colleagues online as well. It's also very nice to be here in this room. It's my first time actually being in the room with all of you in person, but I hope for you it's also nice to be back in person. First, I'll start with management travel. So from May 11 to May 13, the Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva will be in Niigata, Japan for the G7 Finance Ministers meeting. She will also then be back in Japan on May 19 and 20 for the G7 Leaders meeting in Hiroshima. On May 23 the MD will be in London for the UK Article IV concluding discussions and the press conference. On May 24 she will then travel to Qatar for bilateral meetings. On May 26 she will be back in the U.S. to participate in the concluding discussions and a press conference following the United States Article IV consultation.

In terms of regional economic outlooks, earlier this morning we launched our Regional Economic Outlook for the Middle East and Central Asia. This was in the Central Asia leg. It was in Astana, Kazakhstan. You can find it on IMF.org. Various other regional economic outlooks were launched in recent weeks, as I'm sure you are aware.

And, finally, just a reminder that the 2023 Annual Meetings will be held October 9 through 15 in Marrakesh, Morocco. The full schedule of these events will be available closer to the event. And I also just want to highlight that we recently announced that the 2026 Annual Meetings of the IMF and

World Bank will take place in Bangkok, Thailand in October 2026, and this was decided earlier in April by a vote of the Board of Governors of the two institutions. The last time the Annual Meetings were held in Bangkok was in 1991.

So now we can move to your questions. Please remember to identify yourselves and the media outlet that you represent.

QUESTIONER: Hi, David Lawder with Reuters.

We just wanted to get the IMF's perspective on a couple of issues related to the U.S. economy that is high in the news right now, and especially the knock-on effects of these for the global economy, particularly for emerging markets. That's the debt ceiling crisis that is happening now between the White House and Congress, with the prospect of a potential default as early as June 1.

And then also the pressure on the regional banks, sort of the regional banking crisis that's been sort of playing out in slow motion over the last few weeks. There's more pressure and lots of concerns about commercial real estate in those regional banks.

So if you could talk about that a bit.

MS. KOZACK: Certainly. Thank you.

On the debt ceiling, first, it's important to note that these discussions in the U.S. are taking place at a time that is very difficult for the global economy. And our assessment is there would be very serious repercussions, not only for the U.S. but also for the global economy should there be a U.S. debt default. And we strongly encourage the parties in the U.S. to come together to reach a consensus to urgently address this matter.

On the regional banks, what we have seen is that as we have transitioned from a period of low-interest rates to a period of higher interest rates, and as that transition has taken place quite rapidly, it has exposed some vulnerabilities in some banks, particularly here in the United States. The authorities in the U.S. have taken rapid action to address those vulnerabilities and that is most welcome. But it is very important that policymakers remain vigilant as more hidden vulnerabilities may emerge in this new high-interest rate environment.

Okay, maybe let's go to Argentina. And we can take a few questions on Argentina.

So, Paula, please.

QUESTIONER: Good morning, Julie. I'd like to know how the negotiations for the program with Argentina are going on. And, also, I know that everything is on the table in the discussions, but I'd like to know if they are talking specifically about the possibility of speeding up or front-loading the disbursements planned for this year. It's about \$10 billion.

MS. KOZACK: Thanks, Paola.

QUESTIONER: Thanks, Julie. Rafael Mathus from La Nacion.

I have two questions about the exchange rate also in Argentina. Is the IMF asking the government to correct the official exchange rate as part of the negotiations on the new revision?

And, also, Minister Massa said this week that the ability of the central bank to intervene in the foreign exchange market is not something that they are willing to renounce. I wanted to know if the IMF is okay with this.

Thanks.

MS. KOZACK: Okay. Very good. Do we have any colleagues online who have questions about Argentina? I think I see Patricia Vale. Patricia, please, go ahead.

QUESTIONER: Hi. Thank you.

Also in line with my colleagues, I would like to know if — what's the discussion regarding the fiscal objectives of the program. And you mentioned Kristalina Georgieva traveling to South America, but you didn't mention Argentina. I would like to know why she's not visiting.

MS. KOZACK: Okay. Thank you.

Any other questions about Argentina? Liliana, is that you I see with the hand up? You're muted, Liliana, we can't hear you.

QUESTIONER: My question is also related. Any date when Argentina and the IMF will conclude these conversations?

Thank you.



MS. KOZACK: Okay. And I think we have Martin, also a question on Argentina, is that right?

QUESTIONER: I have two questions. One is inflation is running above 100 percent a year in Argentina. Are you worried about possible hyperinflation in the country?

And, also, regarding the up-front disbursements from the IMF, have you talked with the opposition about this issue given this is an election year?

Thank you.

MS. KOZACK: Okay. Thanks very much for those questions on Argentina.

Maybe just to remind us of where we stand in Argentina. On March 31 our Executive Board completed the fourth review of Argentina's EFF program, allowing for an immediate disbursement of \$5.4

billion. We have been working closely with the Argentine authorities in the context of the program to address a very challenging and complex situation.

On the status of discussions, we have been working closely, as I said, with the authorities in the context of the challenging economic situation, which of course has been exacerbated by the historical drought that Argentina is facing. The focus of the discussions that are underway now for the fifth review has been on strengthening the authorities' program while also taking into account the drought, there are discussions currently taking place. They're constructive. They are virtual discussions, and we will communicate about Argentina and the outcome of these discussions in due course. I don't have anything else on Argentina, so let's move on maybe. Let's go here.



QUESTIONER: Thank you, Julie. Yaroslav Dovgopal, Ukrinform News Agency Ukraine, so as we know, the IMF plans to conduct the first review of the EFF program for Ukraine this summer. Can you provide the time arranged for this review, as well as the issues the IMF Mission plans to focus in on Ukraine? And the second question, if I may, is the current EFF program for Ukraine assumed that authorities would continue reforms to strengthen governance and anti-corruption frameworks, including through legislative changes. At what stage the IMF expects legislative changes -- in Ukraine, and how it depends on the situation at the front line. Thank you.

MS. KOZACK: Okay, very good. So we do expect the first review mission to take place later in May. Once we have more details about that mission, we will provide them, but I don't have any other details. The focus of the mission, of course, will be to assess the authorities' progress on meeting the policy commitments and conditionality under the program, principally in the areas of fiscal policy, governance, and monetary exchange rate policy, and of course, the review will also take into account the recent economic and financial developments and update the outlook and risks to the economy, both under what we call the baseline scenario, but also in the case of Ukraine, we have a downside scenario, as well, so all of that will take place as part of the review. On the question of legislative changes in governance, the authorities have made a very strong commitment and expressed clear timetables for advancing critical legislative changes. These include enacting a law to restore the asset declaration obligations of public officials, which is expected by the end of July, amending the anti-money-laundering framework and law by the end of September, and adopting legislation to enhance the institutional autonomy of the Specialized Anti-corruption

Prosecutor's Office (SAPO) by end December. Thank you. Let's go here.

QUESTIONER: Good morning. Igor Naimushin, RIA Novosti New Agency, Washington Bureau. Thank you for this opportunity. I would like to ask you about the debt distress crisis in low-income countries and around the world, so could you please provide any details regarding the scale of this problem, the number of countries who are in debt distress situations currently, what are the IMF efforts to solve it, and also, I would like you to emphasize the problem of recognizing debt alongside with bondholders issues. Thank you.

MS. KOZACK: Okay. Thanks very much. So we do see a number of low-income countries facing debt distress. We assess that 15 percent of low-income countries are in debt distress and another 45 percent of low-income countries are at risk of debt distress. Our focus has very much been on supporting the countries that are in debt distress. The efforts that we have made to help countries resolve and tackle their debt challenges include a wide range of measures. First, many of these countries have IMF-supported programs, so we're supporting important policy reforms to help countries restore stability. We are also, of course, supporting the G20 Common Framework which aims to deliver debt relief to countries whose debt is unsustainable and to help advance and accelerate progress with the Common Framework. We, alongside with the World Bank and India as G20 presidency, have established a Global Sovereign Debt Roundtable where we have invited creditors, debtor countries, and when I say creditors, I mean both official creditors, both the traditional official creditors like the Paris Club, but also new official creditors like China, India, Saudi Arabia, and also private sector creditors, along with debtor countries, borrowing countries, all to sit around the table to try to find ways to reach common ground and to accelerate the debt restructuring process for countries whose debt does need to be restructured. Thank you. Let us go briefly online. I have Colby Smith.

QUESTIONER: Thank you so much for doing this. I wanted to follow up on the debt ceiling. I know it's everyone's kind of, you know, first priority that Congress comes to some kind of agreement here, but it seems like, you know, people are talking increasingly about other measures that need to be considered in the event that lawmakers don't reach an agreement in time, things like Treasury prioritizing payments, you know, mechanisms that the Fed could use to help, you know, stymie any kind of economic fallout. We also hear things about, you know, the 14th Amendment, the trillion-dollar coin. Is there anything, and does IMF have a view on any of these potential stopgaps, you know, beyond just coming to some kind of Congressional agreement?

MS. KOZACK: Thanks very much, Colby. As the Managing Director has said repeatedly, we do think that a U.S. default would have very serious repercussions, not only for the U.S., but also for the global economy, and we do for that reason strongly encourage the relevant parties to urgently reach a consensus to resolve this matter as quickly as possible. Let's take Eric Martin online, and then we'll go back into the room. Eric, over to you.

After 20 years, Ethiopian Airlines re-launches its service in Pakistan

As the only flight connecting Pakistan with Africa, the planned service to Karachi will have a significant contribution to strengthening the diplomatic and economic relations between the two regions, the CEO of the Airline said

By Javed Mahmood

Ethiopian Airlines first flight landed in Karachi on Tuesday. Thus, Ethiopian Airlines marked the resumption of its airline service in Pakistan after a gap of 20 years.

According to the Civil Aviation Authority, the first direct flight carrying 110 passengers onboard landed at Jinnah International Airport Karachi this morning. The airline will operate four weekly direct flights to Karachi. For this purpose, all the formalities are being completed. The passengers of the first flight include senior Ethiopian officials, diplomats, and a trade delegation. They got a very warm welcome at the Jinnah International Airport, Karachi. Chief Minister of Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah welcomed the Ethiopian flight. Provincial ministers Sharjeel Memon, Nasir Shah, Ikramullah Dharejo, and Murtaza Wahab accompanied the chief minister. This seems to be a good development in Pakistan at a time when some international airlines are struggling with operations in the country due to financial constraints and restrictions.

“We are excited to return to Karachi nearly two decades after we last served the city. As the most populous city in Pakistan, Karachi will be a crucial gateway to Pakistan and the wider South Asia region,” said Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO Mesfin Tasew.

“As the only flight connecting Pakistan with Africa, the planned service to Karachi will have a significant contribution in strengthening the diplomatic and economic relations between the two regions,” he added. It will also offer convenient air connectivity to the growing number of Pakistani investors in Africa as well as tourists. In Asia, Karachi is the 37th destination of Ethiopian Airlines.

75 Years of Cherished Service

Despite its humble beginnings, Ethiopian



Airlines has had more than 75 years of successful journey which made it the leading Aviation Group in Africa. Of course, Ethiopian air is aging beautifully. Over the decades, the airline has established itself as the leader in all facets of the aviation business such as technology leadership, network expansion, and aviation mentoring.

Ethiopian started its operation with five C-47 aircraft back in 1946 and made its debut flight to Cairo via Asmara. Ever since it has been growing in leaps and bounds and continued to introduce cutting-edge aviation technology and systems. As an aviation technology leader, Ethiopian Airlines was a pioneer in ushering in new aviation technology into Africa including the first jet airplane as well as the first B767, B777-200LR, B787 Dreamliner, and 787-9 in the continent. Ethiopian also led the way in operating Africa's first Airbus A350 XWB.

Currently, the airline has a fleet of more than 144 modern aircraft with an average fleet age of five years; it also has 31 ultramodern aircraft on order. Living its motto of Bringing Africa Together and

Beyond, Ethiopian has created Africa-wide and transcontinental air connectivity networks linking its main hub Addis Ababa to the rest of the world. The airline serves 131 international passenger and cargo destinations, including 63 African cities, with daily and multiple flights with a minimum layover in Addis. As a veteran carrier serving a vast intra-African network, Ethiopian flies to more destinations in the continent than any other airline.

Having met its 15-year strategic plan, Vision 2025, ahead of time, Ethiopian has charted out a more ambitious strategic roadmap called Vision 2035 to further bolster its continuous growth. In December 2011, Ethiopian took a giant leap forward in its successful journey by joining Star Alliance, the world's largest airline network. Over the years, the multi-award-winning airline has received countless coveted accolades and recognitions for its excellence, including Skytrax's Four-Star Airline Certification and Best Airline in Africa title for 5 consecutive years, and Overall Excellence for Outstanding Crisis Leadership Award in 2020 to mention a few. Building on its continuous

success, Ethiopian has achieved an average growth rate of 25 percent in the seven years prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ethiopian Aviation Academy (EAA) is the largest and most modern aviation academy in Africa recognized as the ICAO Regional Training Center of Excellence. To train aviation professionals from classrooms to simulator training, EAA offers leading industry standard training for pilots, aircraft technicians, cabin attendants, and ground services staff both for initial and recurrent students.



The Leadership & Career Development Center is also training thousands in Management and Leadership Skills. Our cabin crew training simulates real-time scenarios with training aircraft designed for emergency drills and service training. Our pilot training school uses light aircraft for its basic training and simulators. Full flight simulators of all fleets Ethiopian operates are available for pilot training.

Virtual Maintenance Trainers (VMTs) and various workshops feature our aircraft maintenance training. Beyond these, our academy develops standard training packages including e-learning and virtual classroom training. Trainee services include a trainee's cafeteria, dormitories, an administration complex and a plush new auditorium. The academy plans to take in 4,000 students a year in its training programs.

Cargo and Logistic Services of Ethiopian Airlines

Ethiopian Cargo and Logistics Services is the largest cargo network operator in Africa and has won Best Airline in Africa for 5 Years in a Row. Currently, with our 9 - Boeing 777-200LRF, 1- Boeing 767-300F, and 4 - Boeing 737-800F dedicated freighters and 127 passenger aircraft, the airline serves 66 cargo dedicated and 131+ passenger destinations in Africa, the Middle East,

Asia, Europe, and the Americas with an average daily uplift of over 2000 tons of which over 611 tons is transported in a belly hold capacity.

With a human capital number of more than 17000 employees, it has achieved the highest aircraft daily utilization over 17 hours on its B777FS. With a modern warehouse of one million tons annual storage capacity, fully automated with state-of-the-art technologies, Ethiopian Cargo is providing its service globally. Through a revision of its vision for 2025, Ethiopian Cargo and Logistics Services are planning to grow its cargo network to 90 destinations and operate 37 freighter aircraft by 2035. The scale of the MRO operation at Ethiopian Air is mesmerizing. It is the largest MRO service in Africa and serves Africa and the Middle East. The facility is fully equipped with Hangars,

Engine, and Component Maintenance workshops with all equipment needed to repair/overhaul aircraft, engines, and components. Even if you have flown numerous times, you might not have fully appreciated the size of the largest civil jet engines until you are up close with these huge engines as you walk through the workshop. Established in 1957, Ethiopian MRO provides Line Maintenance services at stations where Ethiopian flies and extends the services to other operators. The facility is fully certified by the ETCAA, FAA, and EASA. Ethiopian MRO offers world-class services to its customers and helps make Ethiopian one of the most dependable and safest airlines in the world.

In-Flight Catering Capacity & Skylight Hotel

Ethiopian In-Flight catering facility has the capacity to produce 100,000 meals a day. The facilities are modern and fully equipped to deal with high demand. Good food is important to our discerning customers. Ethiopian In-Flight Catering is dedicated to delivering high-quality service and part of that is delivering high-quality dining and beverage options. The new menus give customers the choice of local Injera, a vegan option, and a variety of world cuisines including Chinese, Halal, Kosher, and Indian to Italian.

Ethiopian Skylight Hotel is Ethiopian Airlines Groups' ultra-luxurious Five-Star hotel. The hotel was inaugurated on January 27, 2019. It has a total of 373 stunning rooms with relaxing and superb designs that are suitable for both corporate and leisure travelers. It has an added feature for Presidential Suits, Executive Suits, Apartments, and Persons with limited mobility. The hotel will incorporate additional 651 rooms increasing the total room capacity to 1024, by January 2023 making it the first and the biggest hotel in the continent co-located in one area. It has also launched an ultra-luxurious hotel within the Addis Ababa Bole International Airport Departure Terminal 2 (Ethiopian Skylight In-Terminal Hotel) which is suitable for all air travelers transiting through Addis Ababa Bole International Airport with a capacity of 97 rooms: having conference rooms, restaurant, gym, and other facilities.

On our way to stability

Government taking all possible measures to correct the twin deficits, including policy and administrative measures



By Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar

There is no doubt that Pakistan has been going through an unprecedented tough economic situation. It is very well known that the present government inherited serious economic challenges and took a hard decision to revert to the path of economic stability even at a heavy political cost -- and that too in the year of general elections. This decision of the government was in the supreme interest of the country.

Unfortunately, a recent news report paints an inaccurate picture, giving the impression that reforms in the energy sector and the tax system have been stalled. This is far from the reality. In fact, this government, soon after assuming office, took major corrective decisions to revive the stalled IMF Extended Fund Facility (EFF) program. This led to the successful completion of the 7th and 8th reviews.

In the energy sector specifically, significant structural reforms have been accomplished during the last 3-4 months. All untargeted subsidies in the power and gas sector have been withdrawn with the aim of recovering the full cost of generation through tariff revision. The government has moved

towards targeted subsidies so that the poor and vulnerable are cushioned from the effects of inflation and rising prices while the burden falls on the affluent class. In addition, the government has increased the stipend for the poorest of the poor by 25 per cent under the Kafalat Programme under BISP with effect from January 1, 2023 -- increasing the BISP budget by Rs40 billion to Rs400 billion.

The government is also taking all possible measures to correct the twin deficits, including policy and administrative measures. As a result, the Current Account Deficit (CAD) narrowed to only \$3.4 billion during the first nine months of the current fiscal year to March 31, 2023, as against \$13.0 billion in the corresponding period last year. It is expected to close the CAD around \$4.5 billion in the current fiscal year ending June 30, 2023. This will help improve the country's forex reserves and reduce reliance on external borrowings.

Secondly, the government has gradually withdrawn all tax exemptions as agreed with the IMF. The government is mindful of the fact that these exemptions not only create

distortions in the tax system but also lead to a shortfall in the revenue targets. Third, net federal revenues have witnessed a growth of 32 per cent during the first eight months to February 28, 2023, of the current fiscal year against the same period of the last year. The current non-markup expenditures have been reduced by 19 per cent, mainly due to the withdrawal of subsidies and grants. The SBP has been independently taking its decisions for monetary policy tightening in order to curb inflation in the country.

As a result of the aforesaid reforms and efforts, Pakistan has already complied with all the prior actions for the 9th review with the IMF. Once again, these reforms include measures to broaden the low tax base by ending tax exemptions, raising the electricity and gas prices to pass on the burden to the consumers and minimising the subsidy component while protecting low-income groups. It is expected that the Staff Level Agreement (SLA) will be signed soon with the IMF which should be followed by the approval of the 9th review by the IMF Board.

Courtesy The News

Towards industrial policy 2.0: Part - I

By Ishrat Husain

Recent developments in the Western countries have reopened the discourse on the need for an industrial policy. Pakistan, which has gone through deindustrialization in the last few decades, has to examine carefully whether it can benefit from evolving an industrial policy of a kind different from the earlier policy which we would characterize Industrial Policy 1.0. For this purpose, the discussion has to take place in its historical context.

At the time of independence, Pakistan had no large-scale manufacturing units, except for cement, few sugar refining, tea processing factories, two to three textile mills, and railway workshops. Pakistan was a substantial net importer of manufactured goods mainly from India. Large-scale manufacturing accounted for 1.4 per cent of GDP while the same ratio for India was 6.0 per cent.

As a dominant agrarian society, Pakistan did not have a strong entrepreneurial class which could have steered private-sector participation. Neither did the indigenous class have the capital available so vital for setting up industries.

At the global level, the beginning of industrial policy can be traced back to the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the European economy after World War II that led to active policy interventions, public investment and creation of new international financial organizations for providing financial aid.

The Marshall Plan executed through a \$13.3 billion assistance package from the United States was a successful manifestation of this policy as it helped in the resurgence of industrialization, investment in infrastructure and recovery of European economies. Similarly, Japan went through a series of reforms under occupation forces headed by Douglas McArthur which resulted in rapid and sustained economic growth from 1945 to 1991. Unprecedented expansion of industrial production, development of the domestic market and an aggressive export policy were the pillars of Japan's success.

As colonial structures began to unravel and



new independent nations began to emerge in Asia and Africa – which were poor and underdeveloped – there was a quest for strategies to turn these economies around. Drawing upon the experience of the Marshall Plan and Japanese recovery, economists argued that growth could only be achieved through industrialization.

A declining share of agriculture in GDP and employment and an increasing share of output and employment in industry was required to achieve growth. Industry grows at a faster pace than agriculture because of economies of scale, higher capital intensity, complementarities and backward and forward linkages, and externalities that are not found in agriculture. Industry enjoys higher productivity which is crucial for growth and development.

The newly independent developing countries striving to achieve rapid growth adopted industrialization as the cornerstone of their development policy. They found intellectual support through the work of leading development economists who argued that protecting local infant industries from international competition by supplying capital, foreign exchange at subsidized prices, tariffs on imports, administrative and centralized control on allocation of key raw materials, imported inputs and foreign exchange could spearhead the drive to industrialization and thus accelerate the growth rate. This was the beginning of the era of Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI) strategy. Pakistan also fell in

line and decided to implement these ideas through policy actions.

An undervalued exchange rate, administrative controls on imports – particularly consumer goods – high tariffs and non-tariffs barriers increased the domestic prices of these goods and set the terms of trade heavily in favor of industry. These state policies cumulated in the form of large profitability for the industrial sector even in comparison to the trading sector. The rate of return on industrial investment was so high that industrialists were able to recover their initial investment in one or two years. Thus, traders who had earlier made high profits and amassed surplus converted merchant capital into industrial capital by importing industrial machinery and manufacturing consumer goods. Manufacturers slowly began to displace primary commodities and the first industries to develop were jute and cotton textiles.

The second-stage import substitutions strategy (ISI) aimed at replacing the imports of intermediate goods and producer and consumer durables by domestic products. To facilitate this transition, the government set up the Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation (PIDC) whose objectives were to initiate pioneering ventures in many new areas of industry and to supplement private enterprises where the existing number of private units was not sufficient in relation to demand.

The main areas where the PIDC was to

intervene were heavy engineering (including iron and steel), shipbuilding and jute products. The units that were successful were then handed over to the private sector after completion. In a large number of projects, the private sector worked closely with the PIDC in the form of joint ventures. The corporation also located its industrial units in the underdeveloped parts of Pakistan and roads, infrastructure and power projects had to be built in these areas thus giving a boost to the overall development of these areas.

Workers and management trainees were recruited and trained to operate these units. The government with the help of the World Bank set up two financial institutions – the Pakistan Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation (PICIC) and the Industrial Development Bank (IDBP) – for project financing by the private sector.

Thus the industrial policy in Pakistan during the 1950s and 1960s was spearheaded by the PIDC that provided initial investment which the private sector could not undertake on their own. These were long gestation period projects and the private entrepreneurs did not have the risk appetite to undertake such ventures, develop skilled manpower and wait several years before realizing the dividends. The results of the industrial policy were spectacular and gave credence to the views of proponents of big push and ISI strategy.

Large-scale manufacturing had a phenomenal growth rate of more than 9.0 per cent per year in the decades of the 1950s and



1960s. There was significant improvement in labour productivity as the sector demonstrated a high capacity for technological adaptation and innovation. By 1969, a World Bank study found that Pakistan's manufactured exports were higher than those of Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines. The export sector responded positively to the introduction of the export bonus scheme which gave a premium on exchange rate conversion to exporters, preferential access to credit and a series of fiscal incentives.

The share of the manufacturing sector in GDP had risen from 7.8 per cent in 1949/50 to 26 per cent in 1969/70. Large-scale manufacturing's share had multiplied six times from 2.2 to 12.5 per cent in the same period.

The major underpinnings of Ayub Khan's mixed economy model of which industrial policy was an essential ingredient but also it involved developing strong state institutions that guided and directed the private sector. The Planning Commission of the 1960s was a powerful, technocratic institution that guided the private and public sectors in determining the priorities, the allocation of resources and bringing consistency and coherence in sectoral policy formulation and execution and overall macroeconomic objectives. Policy consistency and continuity provided a strong signal of credibility to private investors and businesses.

However, the success of industrial policy and export performance revealed several shortcomings that had serious political consequences. Mahbubul Haq, the chief economist of the Planning Commission, voiced concern that the benefits of these policies were accruing predominantly to 22 industrial families. Such concentration of wealth and economic power in such few hands had accentuated income and regional disparities. East Pakistan – the province with the majority of the population – was completely neglected as none of the 22 families belonged to that province. Manufacturing footprint and expansion remained highly limited in the province where the majority of the population lived.

To be continued.



How to facilitate investment

By Sardar Ahmad Nawaz Sukhera

Since Pakistan's economy is clearly struggling, and the political leadership across the board is focusing more on the next elections, it is time to review our administrative structures and suggest improvements in the hope that the incoming government can use them to quickly set about the task of rebuilding the confidence of domestic and foreign investors and restoring the country's growth trajectory.

This article examines the administrative government structures for promoting investments in the economy, as these are important to, firstly, generate domestic and foreign investor interest, and then to convert it into actual, productive investments.

There are two government bodies dealing with investments. The Privatisation Commission (PC) deals with brown-field projects, while the Board of Investment (BOI) deals with green-field projects. A look at the privatization proceeds since 2016 and the FDI numbers since then present a clear picture that both the organizations have delivered a below par performance over the last few years. My previous three articles have talked about the privatization structure and processes, while this article will focus on the BOI.

The BOI is placed with the Prime Minister's Office. It is supposed to market investment opportunities to global and local investors and facilitate them in establishing and running projects in the country. It is also responsible for setting up Special Economic Zones in the country. Recently, it has also worked on Regulatory Modernization reforms, besides facilitating investor visas for foreigners.

While FDI has nosedived over the last five years, investor visas have been taken away from BOI and placed again with the Interior Division, and nothing noteworthy has happened with regulatory modernization, which admittedly may not entirely be the BOI's fault, perhaps the only achievement of the BOI has been spearheading the Ease of Doing Business reforms, which helped Pakistan jump from 136 to 108 in the global rankings in 2020.



Why has the BOI not been effectively able to play its mandated role? When the PTI government came into power in 2018, several important Middle Eastern rulers, the president of Turkey, and the PM of Malaysia visited Pakistan, along with scores of very important CEOs of their global companies. The petroleum, power, and tourism sectors were focused in the discussions. The then PM also visited these countries, and B2B meetings were organized on the sidelines of each visit. Yet, despite the loud cheers of massive investments rushing in, hardly any investment of note materialized. Even a beeline of European and Chinese corporate investors showed keen interest in setting up projects in Pakistan, yet nothing of significance happened.

It may be easy, and also perhaps fair to some extent, to blame failures on things beyond one's control like the onset of Covid-19, macroeconomic issues, law & order problems, and a host of other such things. However, the government can certainly endeavor to improve what it can. A few such administrative changes are proposed here to enable the BOI to become an effective organization.

First, it is proposed to pull out the BOI from the PMO and place it, along with the PC, under one ministry. This way, one ministry would be dealing with both the brown and green-field projects, while retaining them as separate entities under its fold. Both the

entities need to be headed by chairpersons who have a proven professional track record in investment related work. Both the chairpersons, of the PC and the BOI, need to be top professionals and should be given market-based compensation, with clear KPIs, rather than being awarded with the status of a minister of state, which doesn't give any real authority to them except maybe some additional prestige. No KPIs have ever been set for them either. They should be like top corporate CEOs – well paid and empowered, but ready to be sacked for not meeting the KPIs set for them.

The chairpersons would market business opportunities and facilitate investments, while the minister could help get the deals through the cabinet sub-committees, like ECC, CCoP, & CCoSOE, and the cabinet. A politically strong minister could also get the required cooperation from the other concerned ministries, which is seldom available to professional chairpersons, who are usually outsiders to the political and bureaucratic systems.

Second, there is a dire need to develop the BOI into a 'one-stop shop' for major investors. They need to be saved from our complex and tedious system of getting approvals for everything. Assigning a dedicated investment officer from the BOI to the potential investor for ensuring quick completion of all required formalities

would be helpful. Having senior level representation on the Board of the BOI from the Ministry of Energy, FBR, and chairpersons of the provincial BOIs could be a mechanism for quick resolution of issues under one roof, so that the investor is not given the customary run around. Similarly, the BOI needs to be reinvested with the power of granting investor visas. Investors require quick facilitation and not the standard treatment usually meted out to foreigners.

Third, the BOI is responsible for setting up the SEZs (Special Economic Zones) in the country. Why hasn't there been any substantial progress in this regard? There are a couple of reasons for that. In reality, nearly all the SEZs are to be set-up in the provinces, hence, the land availability and development of these zones and sale of plots is to be done by the provinces, while the federal government is responsible for the fiscal incentives to the developers and the industrialists, along with the provision of utilities. Therefore, the pace of development of these SEZs and the quality of development largely depends on the provinces.

It is also dependent upon the relations of a provincial government with the federal government. This puts the timely completion and industrialization of SEZs at risk. The industrial plots are 'sold' to potential buyers, who are not always genuine industrialists. This leads to it becoming a kind of real-estate scheme rather than facilitating investment for purely industrial purposes. A much better way is to lease out these plots to lower the project costs for potential industrialists.

The government also needs to ensure labour housing and skill development / labour facilitation centres in each SEZ so that the industries can use them to train their labour at new things. The federal government also needs to do away with the FBR's requirement for zone developers and investors for filing the annual tax returns for the years where they are already exempted from payment of taxes and duties. The government needs to get off the back of investors.

Fourth, there is the issue of multiplicity of special economic or industrial zones. There are SEZs, as explained above, and then

there are other federal industrial parks, technology zones, and export processing zones. What makes it even worse is that they are placed under different ministries, while the objectives of all of them are pretty much the same. For example, the National Industrial Parks Authority and the Export Processing Zones Authority are under the Ministry of Industries, the Special Technology Zones Authority is with the Cabinet Division, and as we discussed above, the SEZs Authority is with the BOI. It is proposed that all these various authorities need to be placed with the BOI. This is necessary not only because they have similar objectives, of investor facilitation for industrial promotion, but also to develop synergies between them.



Fifth, the two more instruments for promoting investments have been put in place over the last few years: (i) the Public Private Partnership Authority (PPPA), which is placed under the Ministry of Planning & Development; and (ii) the Inter-Governmental Commercial Transactions Act, 2022, which doesn't mention which ministry would be responsible for implementing transactions under it, but one can presume every ministry would process their transactions through the cabinet's sub-committee set up for the purpose.

However, no transaction has yet been processed under this Act. It is proposed that since all transactions under the PPPA and the Inter-Governmental Commercial Transactions Act also fall under the subject of investment promotion and facilitation, both the subjects also need to be placed

with the PC. Since both BOI and PC are proposed to be under one ministry, there would be synergies in realizing all such investments.

Finally, there is an urgent need to set up a Land Bank for Pakistan. All public (federal and provincial) and private landowners willing to offer land for industrial purposes, like tourist industry, should be facilitated to place their unencumbered land on a portal to be developed and managed by the BOI. This would save the frequent embarrassment to the government where investors show interest but land for the project is not readily available.

These are just some of the measures that would help streamline and re-energize our

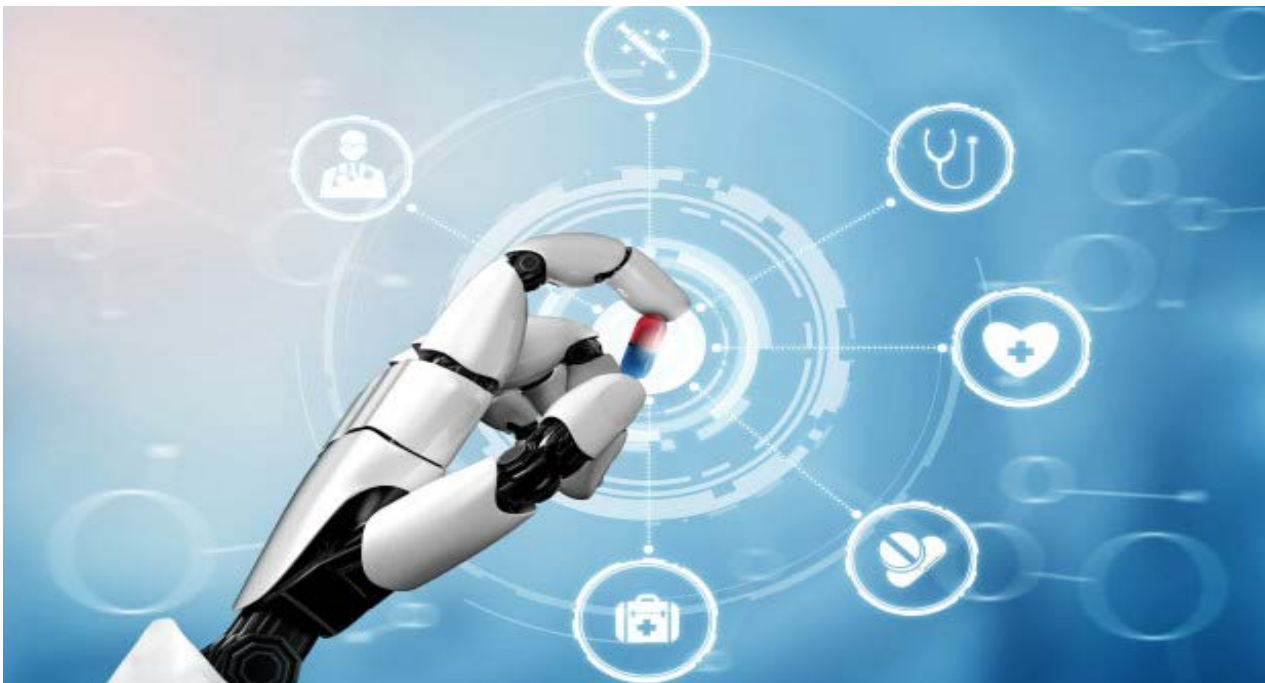
limp investment promotion and facilitation agencies. As always, these suggested administrative measures are dependent on the political will of the government. With dwindling investor interest, not just foreign but domestic as well, and the economy seriously struggling, can the government afford any further delay in reforming its administrative structures?

Would it be expecting too much of the PM to chair review meetings of the BOI & PC every month to see what's happening at the investors' front and to ensure resolution of issues? Perhaps, we need to understand that we are not the only country in the world that is wooing investors!

Courtesy The News

Artificial Intelligence - a must pill?

AI an umbrella that encapsulates various ranges of smart technologies that can self-learn, self-improve; to reshape how marketing, advertising works in Pakistan



By Sara Danial

Amidst all the chaos that has become the mainstay of the global landscape, AI and data analytics have become the new now and it is here to stay. For instance, in 2018, Lexus ran an advertisement that was completely scripted by AI. It utilized an AI system to study 15 years of award-winning ads, and identify the elements of successful ads that resonated most with audiences—that was just the beginning.

While technology and innovation are hot topics, the success of AI has led to increased pressure on organizations to integrate the latest analytics and systems into their products, strategies, processes, brands, and the subsequent decisions surrounding communication design and storytelling.

With faster response and swift turn-around times, Artificial Intelligence (AI) will astonishingly reshape how marketing and advertising works in Pakistan. Although we have lagged behind in adopting it, AI has become a part of boardroom talks, group discussions, social media conversations and, in some progressive organizations, it is being utilized to predict buying and selling behaviors.

To quote an example, Andrew Ng, who built Google and Baidu's AI systems, states that AI and advertising will be the major business opportunities in his popular course, titled, 'AI for Everyone.'

Not only has it produced unbelievable results, but also reshaped the industry norms permanently. One industrial equipment supplier utilized AI to crush its advertising goals. A financial institution has used AI to personalize advertising messages to individual customers. A travel agency has used it to tap customers it didn't know it could cater to.

To cut it short, "If you're not using AI, you're at a competitive disadvantage." It is like an ocean current that will wash you away. So, either we sit back and be washed away by the wave or we learn to ride with it and be on the right side of the technological advancements.

It is a necessary pill, especially across sectors like healthcare, marketing, finance, and banking. The AI-driven businesses have delegated human tasks to the machines – not redundant tasks only, but also numerous intellectual tasks – such as detecting patterns in data, making predictions by using those

patterns, and then learning from the outcomes for thorough estimates over time. So, the more data you give the AI system, the better it learns.

We have witnessed that Pakistan has been relatively slow in adopting technology or being receptive to its inevitability. But one will be surprised to know that we use AI thousands of times every day. For instance, Gmail and Google Docs, social media apps, and live locations all utilize AI to know what we type and predict what we may type next. Like every time we use the predictive text feature, we are training the AI for better predictive text.

Let's come to self-driven cars. They are able to detect obstacles and drive safely. So, every mile driven generates more data and improves driving abilities. Similarly, Siri and Alexa understand verbal instructions, to predict the responses that make sense. So, each time you give a direction, they improve the quality of responses.

AI is an umbrella that encapsulates various ranges of smart technologies that can self-learn and self-improve. Some AI technologies you might hear about are: machine learning, computer

vision, natural language generation (NLG), natural language processing (NLP), deep learning, neural networks, and speech recognition.

For instance, NLP and NLG entail an AI-driven transcription and translation tool. Perhaps, we won't need translators anymore, because the speech-to-text, and text-to-speech recognition will be taken care of by AI. For the longest time, I had envied translators for their multi-lingual, ocean-flying, globe-trotting, high-paying jobs. But digital-savvy, techno-dexterous teenagers might easily replace them, leaving behind all communication barriers that one may have across continents.

If the current trajectory continues, the likes of columnists, opinion leaders, reporters, editors, proof-readers, and feature writers, may be relegated to mere process operators with basic technical qualifications to pander to the directives of a super-smart rechargeable robot, who doesn't go on strike, ask for any monetary raises or enjoy labor rights at all. Sounds like a dream come true for a fortune-hunting organization.

Another case in point: a multi-storey AI-run shopping center loaded with countless high-demand commodities for daily life. On the other extreme of the spectrum, a vast majority need these amenities but are unable to purchase them, only adding to the miseries of an already inequality-infested world.

Another qualm about AI: as a female, I feel the women empowerment movement would be replaced by the human empowerment drive to make both men and women capable of actualizing their self-worth instead of losing their individual and collective values at the hands of an AI-powered machine. Who knows, maybe the gender war will finally be over.

So, while everybody is worried about learning a skill or creative ability that is irreplaceable by AI, I am rather worried about the intangible issues that the world may still be rattled with, regardless of AI.

This may in fact lead to a transition from man vs machine to man vs man, all over again, in which the most AI-powered side will rule the roost.

In this way, the tech giants will make every effort to reign supreme over each other.

But does it mean we won't need humans for many tasks? Will it make certain jobs redundant? Will we have a saturated job market, that is already flustered with chaos? Should we expect an aura of job insecurity in the near future?

While the AI bubble is exploding, all of us have apprehensions surrounding it. But it definitely doesn't translate into "hey, we won't need humans."

When the planes fly in auto-pilot mode, did the pilots become redundant? No. Will we

cease to think rationally and write coherently because all of that will be taken care of by AI? No. Will we need graphic designers in the next 3-4 years, if the images and artwork will become the job of the AI? This doesn't mean that AI will in any way supersede the brilliant configuration of the human brain.

What we will actually need is, perhaps, better coordination skills, more coherence and alignment, and communications infrastructure to facilitate the digital bloat. Because with the guiding hand of AI, the swift turnaround times for decision-making will be incredibly fast.

What this actually means for the layman is that, we will still need humans, for sure. Perhaps, not in the same way as we do now. Maybe, in a more refined, reconfigured way. Because AI is based on all the data that exists. The humans WILL be the final authority on what to do with it. By deputing a large chunk of works to AI, we can use the human brain in a more strategic, more important way that it ought to be utilized for, a way that cannot be replaced by robots and machines. Something that doesn't need learning. Something novel. Something out-of-the-box. Something unique.

After all, it is the human brain itself that invented it all.



Pakistan's Internet worst among world, says report

15% population lacks access to telecom, internet services; slow internet speed affecting country's economic uplift; 50% of women possess one mobile compared to over 75% men

By Pavan Manzoor

Pakistan is one of the countries with slowest internet speeds in the world, according to the "Internet Landscape Report 2022" published by Bytes for All, Pakistan, a leading digital rights organisation in the country.

According to the report, Pakistan continues to fare poorly in Asia, despite minor advancements in governance and internet availability. As per the survey, 15% of the population lacks access to telecom and internet services, and those who do have access deal with poor speeds and inconsistent service.

According to a press release from Ookla's Speedtest Global Index, from December 2022, Pakistan's average internet speed is 10.15 to 15.5 Mbps, and it ranks 118 out of 141 countries for mobile internet speed and 150 out of 178 for fixed broadband speed. Despite higher internet usage, the report indicates that Pakistan must upgrade its digital infrastructure to give all of its citizen's access to low-cost, dependable, high-speed internet.

In addition to limited access to important services like online education, healthcare, and other services, slow internet speed has also hampered Pakistan's economic development. The report also raised concerns regarding internet censorship and digital rights in Pakistan.

The report makes several recommendations to improve current situation, including increasing investment in digital infrastructure, fostering competition in market, creating a favourable regulatory environment for the telecom industry, and enhancing cybersecurity measures to guarantee a secure online environment for citizens.

Pakistan ranks last in 2022 Inclusive Internet Index by Meta and Economist Impact: Pakistan placed last among 22 Asian countries and 79th overall in the 2022 Inclusive Internet Index, which was created by Meta and carried out by Economist Impact. This ranking was based on



four main metrics: availability, affordability, relevance, and readiness.

Pakistan's PTA Releases New 'Fixed Broadband Quality of Service Regulations, 2022: Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) updated the broadband quality of service regulations, 2014, and released new rules titled "Fixed Broadband Quality of Service (QoS) Regulations, 2022" this year. Internet service providers (ISPs) must deliver the promised speeds at least 80% of the time under the amended laws, which raise the minimum internet speed requirement for downloads from 256 kbps to 4Mbps and 2Mbps upload. The new legislation included improved key performance indicators (KPIs) for internet quality and speed, with a focus on net neutrality. The ISPs cannot reduce internet speeds, limit or postpone access to particular portions of the internet, or otherwise discriminate against users.

Pakistan's female Internet access ranks low despite minor gender gap reduction, report suggests. Despite mentioning a minor reduction in the gender gap over time, the report highlighted Pakistan's low ranking in

terms of female internet access. According to the report, Pakistan has the largest gender difference in mobile ownership among all of the countries surveyed, with barely 50% of women possessing one compared to more than 75% of men.

According to the report, the global economic downturn and Pakistan's crises caused negative trends in the local e-commerce and fintech sectors, and funding for startups significantly decreased in the second half of 2022.

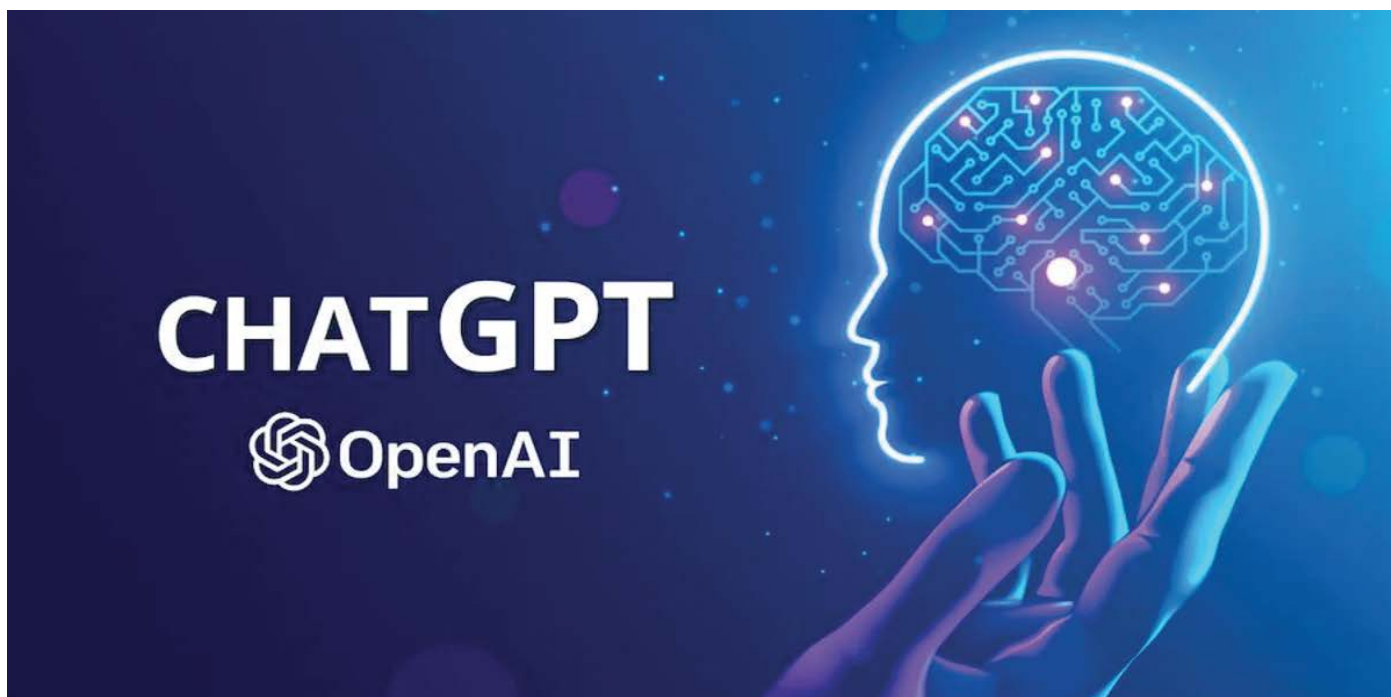
Despite this decline, startups in Pakistan secured \$348 million in funds.

Additionally, internet banking transactions saw a steep rise of 51.7% in 2022, with internet banking users increasing by almost 60% to 3.1 million.

The report also stated that the State Bank's issuance of a licensing framework for digital banks will further accelerate progress towards digital banking. The report featured analysis from IT and Telecommunication Minister Syed Aminul Haq, Bytes for All Pakistan Senior Program Manager Haroon Baloch, and other stakeholders.

AI: boon or bane?

There is an international buzz at the amazing capabilities of ChatGPT to write up essays and provide other useful information in a matter of seconds. Its upgraded version ChatGPT4 is even better in performance



By Atta-ur-Rahman

OpenAI's ChatGPT became the fastest-growing user base with 100 million monthly active users in January 2023 as people all over the world lined up to use the chatbot, which simulates human-like conversations and writes excellent articles after sieving data from the internet almost instantaneously, based on the prompts that it is given.

But there are alarm bells now ringing of an impending disaster to mankind that may be round the corner. Dr Geoffrey Hinton, widely acknowledged as the godfather of artificial intelligence, announced his resignation from Google on May 1, 2023.

In an interview to BBC, pointing out the dangers of the field, he stated that creating systems that rival human intelligence or surpass it could be disastrous for the human race. "It would take off on its own and re-design itself at an ever-increasing rate", he feared. Geoffrey Hinton is not the only person worried about the rapid progress that artificial intelligence is making.

The famous British scientist, Stephen Hawking, had co-signed a letter with Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak warning that

artificial intelligence posed "profound risks" to humanity. "The development of full artificial intelligence could spell the end of the human race," he had told the BBC in an interview in 2014. A similar warning was issued by the tech giant Elon Musk and Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak in a letter signed by the two tech leaders, along with thousands of other experts, in March this year that called for an at least six-month pause on building AI systems more powerful than OpenAI's GPT-4 chatbot.

Despite these warnings, intensive research and progress in this field goes on, in efforts that many experts fear represent humanity hurtling towards its own annihilation. There are some 50 such AI tools now in the market including Bard AI, Bing AI, DialoGPT, Socratic, Chatsonic, Jasper Chat, LaMDA, and others. Google has been working to upgrade its search engine as well as create a new one that relies on AI; Microsoft has rolled out the "new Bing" search engine which has been described as users' "AI-powered copilot for the web".

As AI becomes more sophisticated, it may become difficult to predict how it will

behave in certain situations. This could result in unintended and potentially catastrophic outcomes. Another risk of AI is the lack of accountability. AI systems operate on their own, making decisions without human input. This could create a situation where it is difficult to hold anyone responsible for the actions of an AI system.

AI can also be weaponized, which could have disastrous consequences. Autonomous weapons, also known as killer robots, could be programmed to carry out military operations without human input, leading to the loss of innocent lives and widespread destruction. AI could also be misused by malicious actors to create chaos and destruction. Swarm drones have already been manufactured which can attack targets in swarms of a hundred or more and take decisions autonomously to achieve the destruction of their targets. Small drones a few centimetres in size have been developed with facial recognition technologies built-in, to identify targets in crowded environments and fire bullets with accuracy, selectively.

Super intelligent machines will be capable

of rapidly improving themselves, leading to an exponential increase in their intelligence. This could lead to a situation where machines become more intelligent than humans and pose a threat to our existence. Another significant danger of AI is the displacement of human jobs. As AI becomes more advanced, it has the potential to replace human workers in a wide range of industries, resulting in massive unemployment and economic disasters.

To address the risks and threats of AI, it is important to ensure that AI systems are developed in a safe and responsible manner. This could involve developing ethical guidelines for AI development and establishing regulatory frameworks to govern the development and deployment of AI systems. International cooperation is also important to address the risks and threats of AI. Countries must work together to establish standards and guidelines for the development and deployment of AI systems.

Having pointed out the risks associated with AI, we must also appreciate that AI has many benefits too. From medicine to finance, from education to transportation, AI has the potential to revolutionize nearly every aspect of our lives. One of the most promising applications of AI is in healthcare. AI has the potential to help doctors and healthcare professionals diagnose diseases more accurately and quickly. AI can also help doctors develop more personalized treatment plans based on a patient's unique medical history and genetic makeup.



It also has the potential to transform education by providing personalized learning experiences for students. Machine learning algorithms can analyze student data to identify areas of strength and weakness and provide customized learning materials that are tailored to each student's individual needs. In this connection Khan Academy has launched a personal tutoring system named 'Khanmigo' and it is now possible that every student will before long have a personal AI based chatbot to guide him or her to learn according to his own pace and improve the overall academic performance.

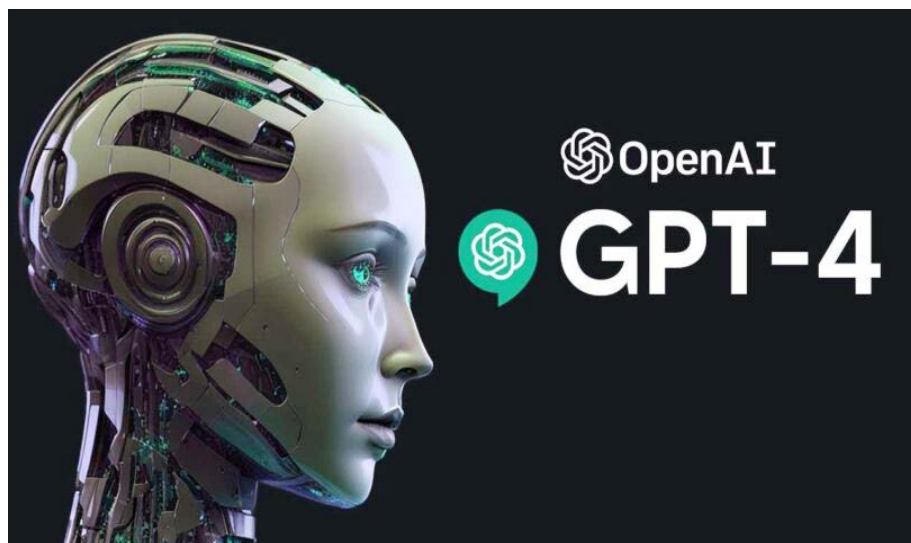
AI has the potential to make transportation safer and more efficient. Self-driving cars and trucks can reduce the number of accidents caused by human error and

improve traffic flow. Machine learning algorithms can analyze traffic patterns and make real-time adjustments to optimize travel routes and reduce congestion. AI can also help businesses improve their efficiency and productivity by automating repetitive tasks and providing insights into business operations.

A McKinsey Global Report predicted a \$15.6 trillion impact of AI by 2025, illustrating the need of giving it the highest national priority. If Pakistan can capture even one per cent of this market, it will contribute a solid \$156 billion to its economy! In light of these developments, Pakistan has taken a major lead to establish Centers of Excellence focused on AI in different parts of Pakistan under my supervision. One is under establishment within the Pak Austrian University in Haripur Hazara while another is being established in Pakistan's premier research institution, the International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences at the University of Karachi which also happens to be a UNESCO Center of Excellence.

A Rs40 billion project has been processed by the IT ministry and its feasibility completed, prior to approval. Huge new opportunities are opening up in this field and Pakistan must aspire to be a world leader because of its huge impact in industry, agriculture, businesses and defence.

Courtesy The News



Sindh still struggling with aftermath of floods, seven months on

More than half a year after the catastrophic 2022 floods in Pakistan, floodwaters have not receded in some areas and drainage infrastructure has not been repaired, obstructing efforts to rebuild

By Zulfiqar Kunbhar

As Muslims worldwide prepare to celebrate Eid, for millions in Pakistan the religious holiday will be marred by ongoing problems caused by the 2022 floods. Large areas of the southern province of Sindh remain inundated, while damage to the drainage system caused by the flooding is an obstacle to communities' recovery.

Ali Akbar Jamali, a farmer in the village of Aadho Jamali in Sindh, said that the floodwaters are an ongoing disaster. Talking to The Third Pole last month, Jamali said that the waters have not fully receded, and authorities have not been able to clear them. Ali's family, along with many of the residents of Aadho Jamali, are still living in a tent and have not been able to rebuild their house.

"Rain destroyed our standing crops of cotton. Sowing of the next crop of wheat was also not possible because of water standing in agriculture fields," said Jamali, adding that people cannot afford to buy wheat and that there is a shortage of food.

"Schools and hospital facilities in our areas are under water. It is worrisome for us and families," he added.

The latest report on the situation by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, published on 9 March 2023, states that there are more than 31,000 internally displaced people in Sindh. Across Pakistan, approximately 1.8 million people are still living near stagnant pools of water, leading to higher levels of vector-borne disease, contributing to malnutrition, and disrupting the ability of people to get to work. The report, citing International Labour Organization data, says that about 4.3 million workers have lost their jobs or suffered economic disruption, with the agriculture sector most impacted.



Sindh was badly affected by the 2022 Pakistan floods. According to the Provincial Disaster Management Authority, more than a 1,000 people died and over 12 million – about a quarter of the province's population of about 50 million – were affected. Nearly 1.5 million houses were destroyed, another 600,000 partially damaged, and around 1.5 million hectares of crops were damaged.

Speaking to The Third Pole in March, Jam Khan Shoro, Sindh's minister for irrigation, said: "98% of the area that came under water during last year during floods in Sindh has been cleared off. [Only] some areas which are low-lying and under depression are still under water."

His statement was at odds with satellite imagery from the United Nations Satellite Centre (UNOSAT) however, which revealed that although the area covered by floodwater had reduced from 2,315 square kilometres in early August 2022 to 850 sq km by the end of February 2023, a reduction of approximately 63%, this still left about a million people living near floodwaters. While the floodwaters may have reduced further since the end of February, there is no independent data to verify this.

Now, as the people of Sindh come out of a difficult winter, they face the challenges of the sweltering summer.

Strains on women continue

Since the 2022 floods, Soni Jamali has been living in a tent provided by the government in the village of Allahyar Jamali, where her house used to be.

With 10 children to provide for, she is experiencing numerous hardships and financial difficulties. "There is no government support for us," she said. Soni and her husband are agricultural labourers, but "last year due to rains our standing crops of cotton and livestock were washed away. We are in debt. People are asking for their money, but we don't have resources to pay them back."

The Sindh government states that it has provided more than 700,000 tents, among other facilities, to those who have been displaced. Despite this, many are struggling to meet their basic needs, particularly women who face additional challenges due to a lack of privacy.

Women and children in Jamshoro district of Sindh province, Pakistan, in

September 2022, after floods forced them from their homes. The 2022 floods displaced nearly 8 million people across Pakistan.

RECOMMENDED

Lasting toll of multiple climate disasters on Pakistan's women

Sajida Jamali, a relative of Soni who also lives in Allahyar Jamali, said that washrooms are desperately needed, adding, "It is a matter of shame, as we are ladies." The NGO WaterAid provided emergency temporary toilets, but with only one for about 15 households many people are forced to defecate in the open.



No money to repair drainage infrastructure

The problem goes beyond removing the remaining standing water. Jam Khan Shoro, the irrigation minister, said the pressing need now is to repair Sindh province's network of canals, embankments and other drainage infrastructure. "We need PKR 100 billion [USD 350 million] just to restore drainage in Sindh," said Shoro.

"So far, only stopgap arrangements in restoring drainage have been done," added Shoro, citing the lack of easily accessible funds.

The minister said that 236 breaches out of a reported total of 5,335 have been filled. He also told The Third Pole that authorities were studying whether it was worth redesigning the drainage of the Left Bank Outfall Drain (LBOD). The LBOD, which became operational in 1988, is supposed to drain saline and agricultural runoff water from Sindh's agricultural lands and discharge it into the Arabian Sea.

A 'solution' that may be part of the problem

The minister said: "Feasibility studies are also being done to know that if LBOD water discharge capacity is enhanced, what could be the environmental impacts."

Others, however, say that the LBOD is part of the problem.

"Sindh's left side districts [those on the left bank of the Indus River] have had centuries-old natural ways of drainage," said Iqbal Hyder, the executive director of the Laar Humanitarian and Development Programme, a non-governmental organisation based in Badin, Sindh, that works on disaster management in the province. "However the LBOD crosses [traditional drainage systems] at Zero Point [where the canal meets the Arabian Sea] which creates the drainage problem especially during floods."

As a result, Hyder said, Badin and the surrounding areas have been flooded three times in recent history, during the floods of 1994 and 2022, and a cyclone in 1999. Worse, as the 2022 floodwaters filled the LBOD, the Arabian Sea seawater was forced back up the drain at high tide, leading to saline intrusion in farmland.

Hyder also pointed out that illegal construction on natural drainage systems has deeply undermined water security. "The government has announced that they will rehabilitate the existing LBOD. However, without making a drainage system that allows flow of natural ways into the sea and removal of encroachment, the problem would not be solved permanently," he added.

Experts say that strengthening river embankments and overhauling the drainage system is crucial.

"If a flood carrying 1.2 million cusecs of water arrives, the existing Indus River embankments may not sustain it. Thus, Sindh could face mass-level devastation much bigger than 2022," Khalid Hyder Memon, a former secretary of the Irrigation Department in Sindh, told The Third Pole.

Fishers pass along the dry side of the Indus River in Hyderabad, southern Pakistan, in September 2018

RECOMMENDED

Experts welcome 'futuristic' initiative to restore Indus River in Pakistan

Syed Nadeem Shah, vice-president of the Sindh Abadgar Board, which represents agricultural groups, said that a proper drainage system capable of facing the increasingly extreme weather brought by climate change is vital for agriculture. He pointed out that agriculture contributes 22% to Pakistan's GDP and that Sindh is the second-largest province by agricultural output, with 75% of its population involved in the sector.

"Neglecting drainage improvement [in the face of] climate change challenges may harm Pakistan's economy, as happened in 2022," Shah warned.

Courtesy Thethirdpole

Pakistan's trans community battles climate catastrophe and exclusion

Despite progressive laws protecting their rights on paper, transgender people in Pakistan are overlooked in disaster responses, and shut out from government relief

By Adeel Saeed

This winter was very hard for Bunti, a transgender woman, or Khawaja Sira as trans people are known in Pakistan. When floods hit her village in Nowshera district of north Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in August 2022, Bunti's home was inundated and all her belongings damaged or washed away. But Bunti was unable to access the relief disbursed by the government for those affected by the floods. With her bedding and quilts lost to the floodwaters, she spent the season shivering in the biting cold of the night.

"Others living here received 160,000 Pakistani rupees [USD 564] as compensation for damage to their homes, but we trans persons did not get a single penny from the government due to technical barriers in proving our identity," Bunti tells The Third Pole.

Bunti's experience, mirrored across Pakistan in the wake of 2022's devastating floods, demonstrates how Pakistan's trans community remains uniquely vulnerable to the impacts of disasters – which are set to become more frequent and severe due to climate change.

Barriers to accessing relief

Nargis, a trans woman who lives in a dilapidated house on the banks of the Swat River in Charsadda, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, lost her cow and goat in last year's floods. "The deluge swept away my belongings and any hope for survival, leaving me empty handed with no other option except begging to earn a living," Nargis says.

Farzana Riaz, a trans rights activist in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and president of rights group Trans-Action, says that Bunti and Nargis' stories "depicts the plight of hundreds or even thousands of transgender people who suffer due to climate-induced disasters and face neglect in the distribution of relief and rehabilitation services."

Riaz says that due to social exclusion and challenges in finding stable work, many trans people in Pakistan live in remote localities and slums, where extreme weather events like torrential rain, heatwaves and hailstorms hit much harder due to lack of proper infrastructure. Exacerbating this vulnerability are the barriers many trans people face in accessing government support in the wake of disasters. Access to relief and compensation is dependent on provision of an official identity card, which most trans people in Pakistan do not have, explains Riaz.

"Obtaining an identity card is almost impossible for transgender people in prevailing circumstances, [as it] requires registration of the family tree by NADRA [the National Database Registration Authority]," says Muskan, a young trans woman



from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Kurram district, who moved to Peshawar in her teens after facing rejection from her family members. Muskan performs at wedding functions for a living, but struggles to make ends meet.

Muskan says she went home for her sister's wedding a few years ago, with the intention of reuniting with her family, but the response was heartbreaking. "I was conveyed the message that my presence can cause insult and humiliation for the family, especially the bride in front of her in-laws, and it would be better to go back to the [trans] community [in Peshawar]," she recalls in a choked voice, wiping away tears. "I came back with a heavy heart, thinking that I should not have to face such disrespect and insult from my own blood relations. We are not acceptable to our relatives and considered a shame for them, so how can we be included in the family tree?"

"Almost 90% of transgender people [in Pakistan] are abandoned by their families and live away from home with community members, and it's not possible for them to fulfil the very basic prerequisite of NADRA regarding inclusion of their names in the family tree," explains Farzana Riaz. "[As] relief and rehabilitation after any emergency solely depends on identification of applicants, this makes 90% of transgender people ineligible because they do not possess identity cards due to exclusion from families and omission of [their] name from official records to avoid disgrace in society," she elaborates.

Riaz adds that the majority of trans people in Pakistan are reluctant to accept the government's offer of marking their gender as 'X' on their ID cards – an option which would force them to declare themselves 'eunuchs', a term considered taboo. There is a fear in the community that this would attract further backlash and disrespect from relatives, she explains.

Trans rights in Pakistan - on paper and in practice

On the surface, recent years have seen momentous wins for trans rights in Pakistan. In 2018, Pakistan's parliament

passed the Transgender Persons Act, which theoretically gives the community basic protections. The law guarantees trans persons' right to safety, respect, property and inheritance, and criminalises harassment and discrimination against trans people. But the reality of being a trans person in Pakistan remains fraught with challenges. Rejected by their families and ostracised by much of society, many trans people in Pakistan live in fear of violence, harassment and extreme economic hardship. Many are forced to beg on the streets or engage in sex work. Pakistan's Sixth Population and Housing Census, conducted in 2017, estimated the number of transgender people in the country as 10,418. But independent estimates place the number in the hundreds of thousands. A research paper seen by The Third Pole on the impacts of Covid-19 on the transgender community in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, published by Trans-Action Pakistan and non-profit organisation Blue Veins, states: "There is significant concern about underrepresentation of the number of trans population across Pakistan due to insensitive and non-inclusive data collection mechanisms. The community across Pakistan rejects the census figures and claims that in KPK [Khyber Pakhtunkhwa] alone, house around 50,000 trans community members."

"Transgender [people] do have concerns over their under-representation in the population census which excludes the majority of them from availing of any welfare-oriented policy for the community," says Katrina, an activist based in Peshawar who heads REST, an organisation that offers vocational training to trans people.

Devastating floods compelled our community members to resort to door-to-door begging

This lack of representation translates into disaster management planning and assessments of damage, in which Pakistan's trans community is often overlooked. "A large number of trans people lost their homes in the [2022] floods, but there is no official data available on this," says Nayab Ali, a prominent trans rights activist who works at the Islamabad-based Peace and Justice Network.

Tania Hamayun, former programme manager of the Gender and Child Cell at Pakistan's National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), admits that trans people are not addressed in the national disaster management guidelines developed in 2014. "The guidelines cover children, women, elders and people with special needs or disabilities as vulnerable segments of society. Unfortunately, transgender [people] did not get any mention in this list," says Hamayun. Quick to add that "we have never discriminated against transgender [people]", Hamayun says the community is "neglected" because the particular vulnerabilities faced by trans people had received little recognition when the NDMA's National Policy Guidelines on Vulnerable Groups in Disasters were drafted in 2014.

Disasters exacerbate vulnerability of trans people in Pakistan

Bindiya Rana, president of the Gender Interactive Alliance, an organisation that advocates for equality and civil rights for trans people in Pakistan, emphasises how disasters often hit trans people particularly hard, as many are already living in poverty.

"More than 250 transgender people migrated to Karachi in search of livelihoods from districts submerged by floods in Sindh Province [in last year's floods]," Rana says. "The economic stress [placed] on transgender people due to climate disasters is much more than material losses [due to] a slump in business – devastating floods compelled our community members to resort to door-to-door begging," she adds.

The aforementioned research paper on the impacts of Covid-19 on transgender people in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which interviewed 271 trans people, found that 17% of those who had previously not engaged in sex work turned to it as an option to handle economic stress caused by the pandemic.

Movements for change

Mehnaz Bibi, a gender specialist at the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Social Welfare Department, says that government departments are working to register trans people in order to issue them with identity cards, having realised the huge gap between official figures and the ground reality. "We have 416 trans people registered who are entitled to any initiative taken by the government," Bibi says, referring to welfare measures like protection at shelter homes or distribution of food.

Questioned about the problems trans people face in getting identity cards due to being disowned by their families, Mehnaz says a proposal is under consideration to issue identity cards on the assurance of their 'gurus' – mentors in the trans community. In 2018, a former chief justice took interest in the challenges faced by the trans community and directed government officials to help them, but the community continues to struggle to obtain formal documents as the proposal to recognise gurus' assurance is not yet formalised.

Farzana Riaz of Trans-Action welcomes the proposal. "This is a suitable solution which, if implemented, can help a lot in making transgender people eligible for the government's welfare-oriented schemes in the wake of any calamity, and also to claim their inheritance rights, as well as travelling internationally, especially for religious pilgrimage of Hajj and Umrah," Riaz says.

In 2022, Pakistan's National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) constituted a task force which brings together transgender rights organisations, government departments and UN agencies to address the barriers trans people face in accessing government support, especially the lack of official data that leads to exclusion of trans people from disaster management, Rizwanullah Shah, deputy director of the NCHR, tells The Third Pole.

Meanwhile, according to Shaukat Ali Khan, deputy director of Pakistan's general population census, the country's ongoing Seventh Population Census includes a special section on transgender people in order to redress this neglect in official data.

"Pakistan is ranked among the top 10 countries most vulnerable to climate change," says Qamar Naseem. "Considering the severity of climate-induced disasters, it is time to act much more rigorously for the safety of people, including the neglected transgender community of Pakistan."

Courtesy Thethirdpole

Walking into the past with Heritage Walk Karachi

On a sunny Sunday morning, I walked through the streets of Karachi's old town area to trace the colonial remnants of the city's architecture

By Wara Irfan

Just like the hundreds of thousands of others who work in the southern part of Karachi, I encounter the bustling area of Saddar and the old town almost every day. Despite being born and bred in this city, my relationship with the old city area and its colonial past remained limited to passing by and observing it from afar while on my way to other destinations.

Being a woman, I do not get many opportunities to interact with the streets of my city, let alone walk through them. So when I learned about the Heritage Walk Karachi (HWK) organised by the Pakistan Chowk Community Centre (PCCC), it instantly piqued my interest.

Arriving at the gathering spot i.e. Pakistan Chowk on a sunny Sunday morning, I can safely say that I did not know what to expect. A superficial glance at their Instagram account informed me that their audience consists mostly of students, academics and urban experts. What I did not expect was the diversity of people attending the walk, despite us being a small group of eight or so individuals. The reason for the lack of participants, I later learned, was the ungodly start time of 7:15am and the scorching summer heat.

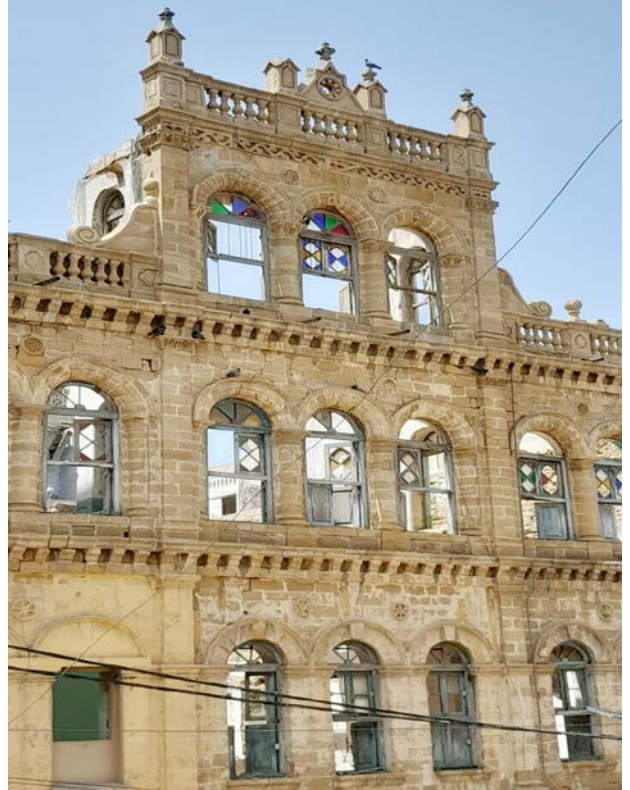
Shaheen Nauman, the face of Heritage Walk Karachi

The tour guide and project coordinator of HWK, Shaheen Nauman, is “one of the first women” in Pakistan to lead their own historical tour, according to the HWK’s website. “Having spent a significant portion of her life exploring the area on her own, Nauman is well versed in the histories and stories of Old Town Karachi,” it says. Starting in January 2018, the walk has been taking place every Sunday with the exception of major events like Covid-19 and Ramazan.

“I love the colonial buildings that show the history of our country. And I am closer to the colonial buildings because when people talk about their ancestors, they talk about their heirlooms, they’d say ‘ye meri nani ka gharara hai [This is my maternal grandmother’s skirt]’, ‘ye paan dan hai [This is a betel case]’, ‘ye itar daan hai [This is a pomander]’,” Nauman told Images.

“I don’t have any material thing to show anyone that my family is from this part of the country. So I attach myself to colonial buildings. It has been very satisfying to be on the roads and show people the heritage of my city. I love my city.”

You can tell by the passion and vigour in her voice that she cares deeply about the city, its colonial infrastructure and this project. “It is sort of giving back to the city because what I am is because of the city.”



Nauman joined HWK as a guide in February 2018 after Marvi Mazhar, an architect and the founder of the PCCC, learned of her passion for colonial buildings. She introduced herself as the “face” of the HWK.

The journey began at Pakistan Chowk and ended at Karachi Sweets.

Nauman told me about the restoration of the Chowk by Mazhar and how the aim was to make it a communal space. Someone had ripped out the old benches and sold the material so they had to be replaced. They also faced hindrances from traffic, especially rickshaws and bikes, that would often come through the entrance/exit of the Chowk as a shortcut.

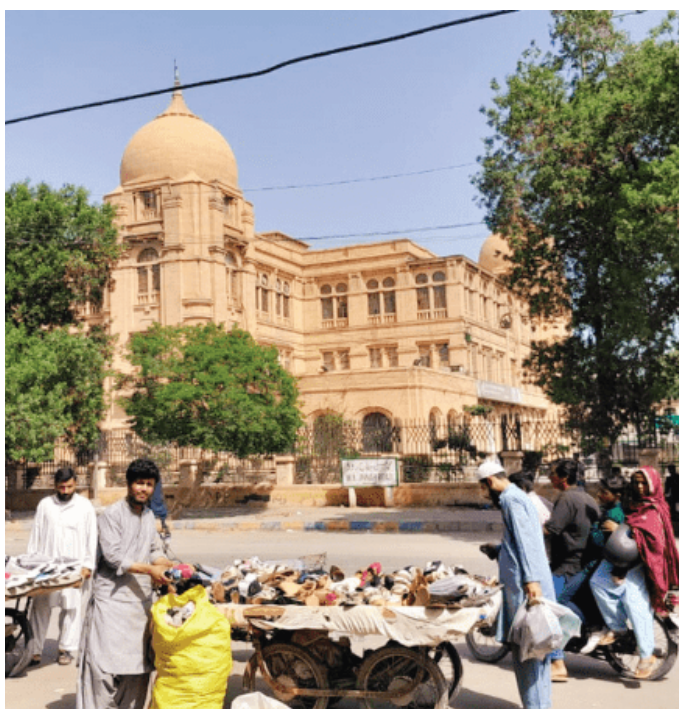
According to Nauman, most people who resided in the area before Partition were Sindhi Hindus. This is evident from the emblem of “Om” in Sanskrit engraved in the centre on the front of most buildings that are still in relatively original — yet damaged — condition.

Buildings were not the only feature of the walk. Plants and trees indigenous to Karachi, such as the Banyan, Tamarind and Siri, were also focal points of the route. All three kinds of trees are naturally shady trees, conducive to both animal and human activities.

Walking back in time

There are two periods when a very large number of buildings were built in Karachi — one is the 1930s and the other is between the 1880s and 1890s. The reason for the 30s was the separation of Sindh from the Bombay presidency in 1936. In the 80s and 90s, railways and the port were constructed, which began another major surge of buildings being constructed in the city.

The spectacular Sarngati Building was our first stop. Built with redstone brought in from Jaipur in the early 1930s, the structure has withstood the test of time. “It is an earthquake-proof building with a solid foundation. In its initial building plan, it was supposed to be a seven-storey building. The red stone used to be brought from Jaipur on ships and, after 1947, this supply of stone stopped. Because of that, only three storeys were built,” the current owner, Jitendra Shahani, told Nauman on a different occasion.



When Karachi was the capital of the country, many government offices were situated in the building. According to Nauman, one of the main reasons the building has remained remarkable is because of its stone. “Redstone is very strong, that’s why,” she explained.

I asked Nauman about the significance of starting the walk so early — and if the reason was merely to avoid the traffic that inevitably clogs the area during the later hours of the day. “[It’s] not only traffic — you can observe more. The day becomes hotter as it proceeds. Especially in the summer, you’re really draining yourself. God forbid, you could get heat stroke. To be on the safe side, to be in a cooler temperature, it’s easier to walk, to observe and to listen,” she replied.

That made me wonder if the timings prevent participants from interacting with people living and working in the area. “Pakistan Chowk Community Centre has three parts. One is oral history. There, we come and take interviews of the people who have been

living here, who are still living here, who come and work here, and the womenfolk. That is another project. It is part of the Pakistan Chowk Community Centre but another project,” Nauman explained to me.

Traces of the city’s past were present all around us as we strolled down the relatively vacant streets. The old town area has historically faced water shortages and carriages are still used to bring water from government pipelines.

Earlier, communal water fountains were used but due to the scarcity of water, they have now become obsolete.

Gizri stone is another popular stone that was mostly used to build older structures. Unlike the redstone, which was expensive and had to be brought in from further away, Gizri stone was local and cheaper. The yellow-coloured buildings that are most likely to come to your mind when you hear “old colonial buildings in Saddar” are all made of Gizri stone.

Endangered heritage

While on our walk, we came across a historic building with a missing missing. Nauman informed us that “this is how demolition starts”. When someone wants to tear down an old building, they start by taking down the roof and then the internal structure, leaving only the front facade. Then, they simply wait for the facade to start crumbling so then they have a ‘legitimate’ reason for the building’s demolition.

We visited a building that had been demolished from the inside to make a parking lot but had its front-facing facade intact. Upon a cursory glance, it appeared to be a heritage site from the outside. No one could have guessed that a parking lot existed just beyond the exterior.

This is the flaw in the heritage laws that the facade must be maintained, Nauman commented. Even if the building is rotting from the inside, no one cares as long as the outside appearance remains ‘colonial’ enough.

As we wandered deeper into the streets, I noticed that modern metal shutters replaced traditional wooden accordion doors. The latter were few and far between in a road filled with a never-ending series of metal shutters.

A few characteristics common to the architecture here were stone facades, narrow entrances, indoor courtyards and cross ventilation. Wooden screens would be used to provide privacy as well as ensure air circulation and sunlight.

The names may have been changed, yet the buildings remain with tiny remnants of the original here and there. An “Om” or a snake emblem, the initials of the earlier owners engraved along with the new names show the constant fusion of yet struggle between the past and the present.

I inquired if the heritage walk organisers would like to focus on other, similar areas in Karachi. “Yes, we have already planned everything. We don’t have the guide right now, so we will be training one. Everything, you can say, [is ready], the posters are

ready, the route is ready. But we just need a guide that can do it with dedication and responsibility,” responded Nauman.

Most people who join the walk do so by hearing about it from their family or friends. “I mean, most walks I have done have been a result of word of mouth. I don’t post much. It’s been the word of mouth that people have been telling others about the walk,” said the guide.

One of the participants, Sahar Sheikh, a banker working in Karachi, found out about the walk through the Pindi Heritage Walking Tour. “That’s organised by a student there. He’s really passionate about the city. I thought this would carry the same flavour of passion, which is very true. The organisers seem very passionate about the history of the city, their love for the overall area that is depicting so much of our heritage.”

She felt “it is very different in Punjab where the government is very involved in the protection of the buildings”. “It’s not the same here in Sindh,” she said. She found the element of “government support is completely missing” here. “It’s like nobody cares whether the history of the city is rotting or eroding away. They don’t give any attention to that,” she lamented.

“I am originally from Karachi. That’s why it really pains my heart because it is not that Pakistan is not involved in preserving its history because in other provinces, it is doing it. But it’s just this part of the country...nobody cares,” added Sheikh.

On a personal level, the banker tries to take part in such activities whenever she can. “I have always been a part of [this], for example by visiting the [Karachi] Biennale. Because they are held in so many different buildings in the city that you normally don’t have access to. Similarly, that’s what I was very excited about here.

“I was thinking maybe there’d be elements where you’d see some sort of support from the government, but, again, it was very much missing. So though you felt like you were stepping back in history, you also felt like you were losing a large part of your heritage — to erosion, to encroachment, to illegal tearing down of buildings. That part of it really pains my heart,” she said.

She felt deeply that “it’s really important” to preserve history. “Right now, we are in that era of humanity where everything can be documented. You have the internet and you put things on the internet and it stays there forever. Previously, you had to note down stuff, and things got lost in translation but since the world is now a global village, that is something very good about technology that we are able to preserve all of this.

“Even though we might not be able to preserve it physically, there will be people later on, newer generations that would have access to this part of our history — maybe by going online and looking at it, by watching videos, by [seeing] things people have shared or documentaries,” said Sheikh.

Alina Rizwan, another participant that joined the walk for her final-year undergraduate thesis on protection and preservation of heritage, decided that the walk could be part of her project.

“Preserving heritage sites is preserving our older generations,

preserving the older cultures, preserving the heterogeneity of the city.

“I feel like by doing this we are preserving the traces of the ones who lived here. Similar buildings are in London as well but they have kept them preserved and in good condition. The issue with us is that we quickly put the blame on someone. But we ourselves as a nation are very ‘hateful’ towards our culture. ‘Hum ne humari saqafat ko kabhi value nahi kya [We have never valued our culture]’. That is the reason why this is the condition of our heritage [sites] today,” said Rizwan.



She added that she had very different expectations from the walk. “I thought that since usually we are not allowed to go inside these [colonial] buildings, through this walk maybe we will get the chance to go inside, we could explore them deeply, something like that could happen. But what I expected did not happen. Again, it was very informative because the information that she [Nauman] gave is not something readily available to us,” she explained.

She did acknowledge the knowledge and experience the walk offers but expressed her desire to enter more buildings instead of merely observing them from the outside.

“I want more people to come here but I would also like to suggest keeping the route shorter while making it more meaningful. Make it so that we can see things that we normally cannot have access to. Right now, when I travel I can see Denso Hall from outside. I can see the Empress Market from the outside. However, if they [HWK] take permission [to go inside] then this can be more fruitful.”

For people who are still not convinced whether they would like to explore the older parts of the city through the Heritage Walk Karachi, Nauman has one thing to say — “seeing is believing”.

Courtesy Dawn

Asia Cup rift and Najam Sethi's UAE visit

Sethi shres hybrid model with ACC chief; proposes four matches in Pakistan, rest in Emirates

By Ali Abdullah

Due to political tensions between India and Pakistan, India has decided not to travel to Pakistan to participate in the Asia Cup, which is scheduled to take place in September this year.

In the course of a discussion that took place inside the Asian Cricket Council, Pakistan presented a hybrid solution to the issue by suggesting that all teams, with the exception of India, play their matches within Pakistan. However, India did not support this proposal and now supports having the event take place in a location that is not affiliated with Pakistan.

Recently, Najam Sethi, the head of the PCB management committee, travelled to the United Arab Emirates for significant talks with officials of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) and the Emirates Cricket Board. These discussions were related to cricket. According to the information gathered from reliable sources, Sethi met with the Vice President of the ACC, Pankaj Khimji, on Tuesday to discuss the hybrid model and offer additional information about it.

In an effort to save the Asia Cup, Sethi submitted the suggested timetable as well as modifications to the hybrid model over the course of the discussion.

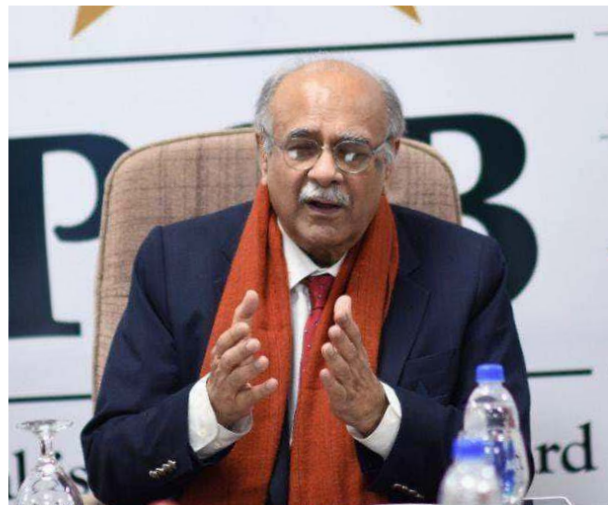
According to the schedule that has been proposed, just four of the matches would be played in Pakistan, while the United Arab Emirates will play host to the remaining seven matches as well as the final.

After playing one of their matches in Pakistan, each of the other four teams, with the exception of India, namely Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, and Nepal, will go to Pakistan for a second time in order to compete in the tournament. After that, all five teams, including India, will charter flights to fly to Dubai in order to compete in the remaining games.

During the course of the discussion, Pankaj asked whether or not it will be feasible from a logistical standpoint and whether or not the broadcasters will be okay with transporting their crews and equipment between the two countries. In response, Sethi stated that they will only need to travel to Pakistan once, and as a result, there should not be a problem with frequently moving back and forth between the two countries.

In a similar vein, the Pakistan Cable and Broadcasting Corporation (PCB) has offered to manage TV production in Pakistan in the event that there are problems with Indian broadcasters coming to Pakistan.

When the topic of Dubai's heat was brought up, Sethi's response was that similar concerns were not voiced when the Indian Premier League and the Asia Cup were played in conditions that were weather-wise comparable. After having



discussions with ACC President Jay Shah, the ACC is expected to submit a comment about the suggested schedule.

Towards the end of this month, it is anticipated that a conclusive conclusion will be reached about this issue. Sources further say that if there is continuing insistence on conducting the full event at a neutral venue, then it is possible that Pakistan will choose not to participate in the competition. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has already begun preparations for the possibility of playing in a triangular tournament in the event that they do not compete in the Asia Cup. However, the PCB is keeping its fingers crossed that the dispute can be settled amicably and that the new proposal would be approved.

It is also anticipated that the Emirates Cricket Board will use its influence on India; nevertheless, if there is an insistence on holding the event in Sri Lanka, Pakistan will demand compensation, including the proceeds from revenue generated by ticket sales. Because of this, the president of the SLC wants to bolster his status by generating some revenue for his board by organising an Asian event to take place in their nation.

Since the broadcasters are planning on showing two matches between Pakistan and India during the Asia Cup, the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) stands to lose a significant amount of money in terms of income if Pakistan decides to withdraw from the competition.

It is important to remember that during the previous gathering of the ACC, the representatives of Bangladesh had unequivocally said that there would be no Asia Cup in the absence of Pakistan. On the other hand, they have voiced their opposition to playing in the scorching temperature of the UAE. In a similar manner, PCB assisted Afghanistan during their difficult times by sending their squad to Sharjah to compete in the series. As a result, they have no problem lending their support to Pakistan.

Pak plung to No 2 in ODI world rankings

Home team unable to capitalise on advantageous position



After losing to New Zealand in the fifth and final One-day International match at the National Stadium on Sunday night, Pakistan fell to the number two spot in the overall rankings for ODI teams throughout the world. This caused Pakistan to tumble from their previous position as the top-ranked ODI team in the world.

After losing each of the first four matches of the series by a significant margin, New Zealand finally produced a dominant performance in order to earn a consolation victory by a margin of 47 runs. This was accomplished in spite of Iftikhar Ahmed's stalwart defence of the batting order. The big-hitting middle-order batsman hammered an unbeaten 94 from 72 balls with the help of two sixes and eight fours to offer Pakistan hopes of a 5-0 clean sweep after the hosts had sunk to 66-4 while chasing a win goal of 300. He did this by smashing an unbeaten 94 from 72 balls with the help of two sixes and eight fours. He was included in the squad after Haris Sohail got injured in one of the practice sessions. He was ruled out without playing a single game.

However, in the end, Iftikhar's heroic effort was in vain because he was unable to find any partners when No 11 Haris Rauf was run out and Pakistan was bowled out for

252 in 46.1 overs. In total, Pakistan's innings lasted for 46.1 overs. Pakistan's solitary loss in the five-match series came in the last match, which was considered a dead rubber. Despite this, Pakistan moved up to first place in the standings for one-day internationals as a result of their dominating performance in the fourth ODI, which took place at the National Stadium on Friday night.

The captain, Babar Azam, was playing in his 100th One-Day International match in the decisive match, thus expectations were understandably high. During the most recent contest, the maestro was playing at a very high level, and he scored the century that won the game. On the other hand, it was a disappointing day for Babar's supporters on Sunday when he was outplayed for 1. The in-form opener, Fakhar Zaman, hit a laborious 33 off of 64 balls, but other batsmen including as Shan Masood (7) and Mohammad Rizwan (9) failed to impress in the run-chase.

Pakistan was put in a favourable position because to a partnership of 97 runs between Iftikhar and Agha Salman, who scored 57 runs at a rate of one run per ball. Despite this excellent stand, the home team was unable to capitalise on their advantageous position. Will Young and Tom Latham

each scored fifty runs early on in New Zealand's innings, which helped drive the tourists' run total after they elected to bat first in an effort to salvage some of their reputation by securing a victory. During his innings of 91 balls, 87 runs were scored, and Young was in sublime touch. While Mark Chapman played an important cameo role, scoring 43 runs off 33 balls, Latham scored 59 off of 58 balls. Because Pakistan's formidable bowling attack bowled a series of tight overs, New Zealand was only able to produce a total of 299 runs despite having the potential to score far more. The fast bowler Shaheen Shah Afridi concluded with a total of three wickets for forty-six runs, and the spinners Usama Mir and Shadab Khan each grabbed two wickets.

This was the last ODI series for Pakistan before the World Cup. Pakistan will play Asia Cup if it happens otherwise Pakistan Cricket Board is in talks with different Boards for an ODI series. Not to forget Pakistan only played 5 ODI series in the last one year.

Nonetheless Pakistan is one of the favorites for the upcoming world cup later this year.

By Ali Abdullah

Actor Hira Tareen calls out those vandalising public property in the name of protest

The actor spoke about the rage bubbling in the country and how some may be using this as an opportunity to incite violence

Chaos has taken over many parts of the country since the arrest of former PM Imran Khan, with eight people killed and 290 injured during violent protests on Wednesday. More than 1,600 people have been arrested in Punjab for vandalism, many roads are blocked, buildings have been burnt down and protesters are fighting on the streets to release the PTI leader.

Actor Hira Tareen expressed her thoughts on the situation via her Instagram story, slamming “opportunists who are looking for the first chance to loot and steal and pinning it on the current political turmoil of the country.”

“I do believe peaceful protesting is our basic and fundamental right, but to vandalise and destroy property that serves the citizens AND comes from THEIR own tax money or taking part in violence and destruction generally in any form is further causing harm to the progress and prosperity of the nation. It’s contributing to uncertainty and an unsettling feeling,” she said.

Due to the uncertain security situation in the country, all Cambridge International Exams, scheduled to be held on Wednesday have been cancelled and schools in Punjab and many other areas have been closed. The Fasiq actor continued, “Children, students and their education is suffering because schools are closed. Please stop supporting these criminals who are out on the loose spreading terror.

“It’s hard for me to believe these people are loyal to any party (even if they say they are). Seems like opportunists who are looking for the first chance to loot and steal and pinning it on the current political turmoil of the country.”

Tareen questioned the actions of these violent protesters and urged people to be smart and not fall for this. She prayed for the country to survive this and for a better future.

“Regardless it’s a sad state of affairs. Burning Edhi ambulances? Seriously? Be smart and don’t fall for all this, I surely don’t believe everything the news tells me. Keep your families safe. Praying for everyone and our country to survive this and come out stronger. God bless us all and our future here.”

Protesting is a fundamental right, however, it needs to be done peacefully on both sides. Violence is never the answer.

Courtesy Dawn



Priyanka Chopra Miss World Pageant was watched by baby Nick Jonas on TV

Priyanka Chopra talks about age gap with Nick Jonas

Priyanka Chopra spills a fun Nick Jonas fact, told to her by her mother-in-law.

Speaking on *The Jennifer Hudson Show*, the mother-of-one reveals how she was watched on the TV by Nick as she won Miss World 2000.

"My mother-in-law was like, 'I remember watching you when you won,'" Priyanka began.

"She was like, 'I remember it so clearly, because it was November, Nick was on some Broadway show at seven years old, his brother was on some Broadway show at eight or nine,' and she said, 'I remember this clearly because Kevin Sr.' -- my father-in-law -- 'loves watching pageants and he was watching it and Nick came down and watched you win.'"

"Which is unfathomable," she told Hudson. "It was 22 years ago or something. He was seven, I was 17 and he was sitting there. It was just so weird."



Speaking about her former love flames and failed romances, Priyanka added: "I do believe that people are meant to be with each other for whatever that duration in your life is meant to be."

"And I think that people collide because

you're supposed to create, on this short life that you have, memories ... family. And I think that Nick and I have through our lives, had these weird, enchanted little moments, but it's lovely now to have found your person."



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