

Fortnightly

The Truth International

Islamabad - Karachi

15th - 31st J u l y 2 0 2 4

More Complex Politics

Banning of the political party would be of great concern to us, State Department

US Election

17th time American saw deadly attack on President or candidate

Budget 2024-25

Pakistanis are forced to pay 100% power bill more than they paid year ago

Govt to Ban PTI Initiate Article 6 proceedings against IK, Alvi and Suri



Politics

'Matter of great concern': US opposes PML-N-led gov't's plan to ban PTI – Page 04



Experts react to 'ban' on PTI, treason reference against Imran Khan, Arif Alvi – Page 06

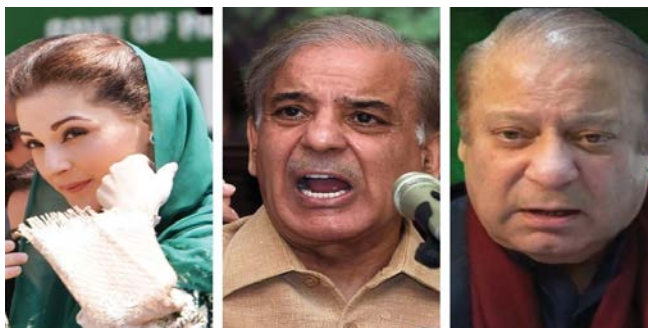
Police 'arrest' Imran over several May 9 cases By Asif Chaudhry & Ikram Junaidi – Page 08

Court Grants Party of Imprisoned Former Leader More Seats in Pakistan's Parliament By Salman Masood and Christina Goldbaum – Page 19



Establishment of the New Party Awam Pakistan: A New Dawn in Pakistani Politics By Kanwal Munir – Page 11

The Return of PML-N: Public Reception and Performance By Daniyal Wali – Page 13



FAFEN Report on National Assembly's Budget Session – Page 15

Governance test By Maleeha Lodhi – Page 16

Foreign Affairs

Trump injured, but safe after rally shooting By AFP & Reuters – Page 18



Editor:

Zaheer ud Din Babar Thaheem

Circulation & Marketing /Advertisement:

Aghzaz Ullah Raj

Contact: 0340-9850810

Email: admin@tti.org.pk

Letter to Editor:

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

Postal Address:

Fortnightly "The Truth International"

Head Office:

205-D, 2nd Floor, Evacuee Trust Complex, Agha Khan Road, F-5/1, Islamabad, Pakistan.

Contact: +92 51 2820180-1

Karachi Office:

Shop No. 08, Mezzanine Salalah Apartments, Dawood Pota Road, Karachi Cantt.

Contact: +92 21 35221000-1

Email: info@tti.org.pk

Web: www.thetruthinternational.com

Price: Rs. 435

Publisher:

Muhammad Fahad Thaheem

Printer:

Masha Allah Printers

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

Design & Layout:

Abdul Qadir

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

A look at the history of presidential assassination attempts in America By Darlene Superville and Christina A. Cassidy – Page 20



Pakistan-China Relations Under the New Government: Improvements and Progress on CPEC By Kanwal Munir – Page 22

Chinese investment By Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry – Page 24

The Return of Reformists By Naqi Akbar – Page 25



Situationer: How diplomats kept Afghan Taliban 'on the table' in Doha By Tahir Khan – Page 27

UN: Afghan Taliban increase support for anti-Pakistan TTP terrorists By Ayaz Gul – Page 29

Israel War on Gaza - TTI Report – Page 31

Japan-Pakistan — celebrating 70 years of ties By Wada Mitsuhiro – Page 33

Economy

New Budget Puts at Stake the Survival of the Masses By Javed Mahmood – Page 35



The Impact of Inflation on Students Living in Hostels, Rented Rooms, and Private Hostels in Pakistan By Romana Afsheen – Page 38

Analysis: Heaping more misery on the already taxed By Khalid Hasnain – Page 40



Government borrows Rs3.2tr in 45 days By Shahid Iqbal – Page 42

Boeing to plead guilty to criminal fraud charge By Natalie Sherman – Page 43

National

Comparing the Education Structure of Pakistan with the World, Especially Bangladesh By Habib Hanzalah – Page 45

Pakistan Mangoes – Page 47

Sports

What now for England, Southgate & Kane after same old pain? By Phil McNulty – Page 49



'Superstar' Yamal makes more history with Euros triumph By Emlyn Begley – Page 51

Entertainment

Deeyah Khan: The Journey as a Filmmaker has been tough but Rewarding By Amna Iqbal – Page 53

Remembering Shannen Doherty, the Beverly Hills 'badass' – Page 54

'Matter of great concern': US opposes PML-N-led govt's plan to ban PTI

"We support democratic processes and broader principles including rule of law," says State Department spokesperson



- It is "beginning of a complex process" in Pakistan: US.
- Says US supports peaceful upholding of Constitution.
- Govt plan draws widespread criticism from political arena.

Hours after the well in debate issue in Pakistan, the United States on Monday expressed concerns over the PML-N-led government's surprise announcement that it is planning to impose a ban on its political rival PTI over its alleged involvement in anti-state activities.

Information Minister Attaullah Tarar earlier today announced that the federal government would file a reference against then-former prime minister Imran Khan, then-president Arif Alvi and then National Assembly deputy speaker Qasim Suri — for treason under Article 6 for dissolving the lower house of parliament in April 2022.

"This is a fact and on the record that

the PTI has been involved in anti-state activities. And, to this end, the government and its allies have decided to initiate legal proceedings to ban the PTI under Article 17 of the Constitution which empowers the federal government to ban any such a party," the information minister announced at a press conference in Islamabad.

Responding to a question during a daily press briefing, State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller referred to the media reports and the Pakistani government's announcement, saying the development "is a beginning of the complex process".

"[...] certainly banning of the political party would be of great concern to us," he added.

The spokesperson stressed his country supports the peaceful upholding of the country's Constitution and democratic principles including respect for human rights and freedom of expression.

"We support the democratic processes and broader principles including the rule of law and equal justice under the law and as these internal processes continue to play out we will monitor the further decisions," Miller said.

The government's announcement drew severe criticism from several quarters including leaders of mainstream political parties.

The PTI, without naming the PML-N, demanded invoking Article 6 of the Constitution against those who undertook the unconstitutional steps in the country, calling on allies of the ruling coalition government to clear their position on the plan to ban the former ruling party.

Addressing a press conference in Islamabad on Monday, the party leadership also condemned the federal government's decision to ban the Imran Khan-founded party.

"We call on the PPP and the MQM-P to clarify their position as the ANP has



already clarified its position on the issue," PTI Secretary General Omar Ayub said.

Speaking to Geo News, senior PTI leader Senator Ali Zafar said his party would not allow the decision's implementation "even for a second" as it is against the law of the land.

'Against all norms'

Similarly, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader Farhatullah Babar dubbed banning a political party "absurd", saying: "It is also rubbish to talk about launching a treason case against a political leader."

Senior PPP leader Raza Rabbani said the talk of banning a political party by the government "is against all the norms of democracy".

The step of banning a political party in Pakistan's history has always been unsuccessful and has been thrown in the dustbin of history, he added.

Terming the government's move to ban the PTI "childish and injudicious", the Awami National Party (ANP) said the path of the political parties could not be choked with restrictions and hurdles, stressing: "Restrictions on the political parties and political process are not acceptable at any cost."

"Despite the political difference with the PTI, we believe the government's move would be a folly," the ANP central spokesman said while underscoring the need to identify people who kick up political instability and economic crunch in the country.

Coming down hard on the government's decision, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) leader Hafiz Hamdullah raised multiple questions: "Can the decision bring about political and economic stability in the country? Will the decision cause the confrontation to spiral or scale down? What benefit will this decision offer to the public and the country? Does the government of Form 47 have the right to make such decisions?"

Apparently referring to the ban announcement, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman said Pakistan will not be able to come out of the political crisis until the army detaches itself from the political affairs.

Highlighting the prevailing political crisis in the country, the JUI-F chief said: "The army will have to distance itself from politics in order to resolve the political crisis."

HRCP calls govt decision to ban PTI unconstitutional

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) expressed shock over the government's decision to ban the PTI. "Not only is this move in flagrant violation of party members' right to association under Article 17 of the Constitution, but it is also an enormous blow to democratic norms, especially when the Supreme Court has unanimously ruled that the PTI is a political party," the rights watchdog said in a statement issued on X, formerly Twitter, on Monday. "Moreover, such a move reeks of political desperation, given that it follows closely on the heels of the apex court's ruling that has effectively made the PTI the single largest party in the National Assembly after making it eligible for reserved seats for women and minorities."

The HRCP demands the unconstitutional decision be withdrawn immediately, the human rights commission's statement said, adding that if pushed through, it would achieve nothing more than deeper polarisation and a strong likelihood of political chaos and violence.

Courtesy www.geo.tv





Experts react to 'ban' on PTI, treason reference against Imran Khan, Arif Alvi

Govt's decision is based on PTI receiving foreign funds from illegal sources and alleged involvement in May 9 riots



The federal government has announced that it plans to ban Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in its bid to intensify measures against the former ruling party.

Information Minister Attaullah Tarar made the announcement during a press conference in Islamabad where he also revealed the government's plans to file references against PTI founder Imran Khan and former president Arif Alvi for treason under Article 6.

The decision was based on a number of factors including the proven charge that Khan's PTI had received foreign funds from sources that are illegal in Pakistan, as well as the party's involvement in May 9 riots.

Analysts and experts have also given their take on the ban on PTI.

'Not an unprecedented measure'

Reacting to the government's decision to ban PTI, veteran journalist Hamid Mir said that it was "not an unprecedented measure."

Mir said: "Several government ministers have previously signalled that PTI and

Pakistan can't work together and they have discussed a ban as well.

"This discussion began when Shehbaz Sharif became PM in 2022, and talks over this were intensified especially after May 9."

He said that previously, the government believed that if a reference were to be filed against PTI, it would have been difficult with PTI leader Arif Alvi serving as president at the time and the reference would not be forwarded.

However, with Alvi no more serving as president, this decision to ban PTI seems to have been taken yesterday during a meeting led by former PM Nawaz Sharif.

'Desperate move'

Anchorperson Shahzeb Khanzada said the government's announcing to ban the PTI, just two days after the Supreme Court ruling that declared the former ruling party a parliamentary party, was a desperate move.

He said 11 out of 13 judges of the apex court, including the chief justice, had recognised the PTI as a parliamentary party.

"Are you responding to the PTI (through this move) or the SC. If you are responding to the SC then you are responding to the current chief justice, the next CJ and the CJ after that as well," he said.

The journalist said the government would itself have to approach the top court for implementation of the government decision, as it has already announced.

However, he said, the government would not be able to receive its desired relief from the SC.

He said the government was taking such measures under pressure of state institutions and "these are such moves that they themselves will not be able to face in the future".

'Govt's decision will deepen political crisis'

Speaking to the media persons, veteran journalist and political analyst Mazhar Abbas said that the ban was not likely to bring about political stability.

"Ban on a political party and that too country's largest party both inside and



outside the Parliament will not go well in bringing political stability," Abbas said. "On the contrary it will further deepen the political crisis."

He added: "Secondly, Article 6 is very specific and cannot be applied on former president or ex-speaker of National Assembly."

Abbas further emphasised that Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has "looked nervous" since the last Supreme Court 8-5 decision in favour of PTI on reserved seats.

'Pretty much straightforward'

Political analyst Muneeb Farooq said that the procedure of banning a political party is "pretty much straightforward".

"It was laid down in the political parties order 2002 and was replicated in Election Act 2017 and the procedure is laid down in Section 212," said Farooq.

"Section 2.2 mentions that if a particular party acts in a manner which is prejudicial to the sovereignty and integrity of the state of the country, or if it's a foreign funded party or if the political particular political party is involved in terrorism, the government of the day can issue a declaration," he explained.

The analyst said that it is initiated by the the Ministry of Interior, the declaration is then published in the gazette and the

government, after it is done with the formalities, sends the reference to the SC.

"Now the SC will decide whether to uphold or endorse the particular reference or the declaration. If it upholds it, it sends it back to the government which then issues the particular dissolution order of the said political party," said Farooq.

He said that the Section 212 only mentions the name of the SC but not the number of judges who are going to hear the particular reference, adding that the chances of success of such declaration are "bleak" if the chief justice of Pakistan decides to take it up as full court hearing.

"We have recently witnessed that the SC judges are inclined to the PTI and they not only restored the number of seats given to other political party, they also went beyond their mandate and gave PTI what it didn't ask for. PTI was never a petitioner in that particular case but they basically restored their status," highlighted the analyst.

"Taking that precedent in mind and putting things in context, I have a feeling that if the CJP chooses to make it a formal hearing of all 13 judges, then the likelihood of the success of this declaration is pretty weak," Farooq said.

He added that if the CJP picks up three of five judges of his own choice and hears and endorses this declaration, then the party will be gone.

"With regards to initiating the proceedings

of Article 6, the procedure will start from the government — firstly from the cabinet then the interior ministry, and the particular case will be sent to SC which will then decide. A lot depends on how the government plays with it and how the SC takes it," he concluded.

'Betrayal of parliamentary system'

Barrister Asad Rahim slammed the PML-N-led coalition government, saying: "Banning a country's largest political party is akin to banning the will of its people. There can be no starker illustration of a regime without a mandate than this wild and desperate move."

"Days after Pakistan's elected representatives were returned their rightful strength in the assembly — that too when not counting for mass rigging — the 'unelected centre' has hit the panic button."

"An act like this will destroy democracy, just as it did when the Bhutto regime moved to dissolve the NAP — the largest party in two of four provinces. The current iteration is even more ridiculous, given that the PTI has won the most seats in the general election," he told Geo.tv. Concluding his comments on the recent development, he said, "This is a fraud on the Constitution, a betrayal of the parliamentary system, and an insult to the popular will."

Courtesy www.geo.tv





Police ‘arrest’ Imran over several May 9 cases

By Asif Chaudhry & Ikram Junaidi

- Attack on corps commander's house, Askari Tower among cases Lahore police are aggressively pursuing against PTI founder
- Accountability court grants NAB eight-day physical remand of ex-PM, his wife in Toshakhana case
- Party activist Sanam Javed re-arrested following release

As the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) secured an eight-day remand of former prime minister Imran Khan in a fresh Toshakhana case, Lahore police have also ‘arrested’ him in connection with a dozen cases, including the attack on the Corps Commander House, lodged against the PTI founder over the May 9 riots.

Sources say the ex-PM would not be moved to Lahore for interrogation due to the security risks involved, but will appear before an anti-terrorism court in Lahore via video link today (Monday), where police are expected to seek his remand.

A 13-member team of the Lahore police's investigation wing visited Adiala Jail on Saturday to quiz the former prime minister regarding the violence which started on May 9 after his arrest from the Islamabad High Court.

Sources said the PTI leader refused to meet the Lahore police team when they tried to gain access to him to interrogate him about the May 9 cases, in which he was nominated on various offences, including charges of provoking the public against the state.

Lahore Investigation DIG Zeeshan Asghar told Dawn that the police arrested the PTI founder as he was the prime suspect in the 12 cases registered at various police stations in the city. Another senior officer told Dawn that the investigation police arrested the PTI founder in 12 out of the total 16 cases registered by the Lahore police over the May 9 attacks.

A 13-member police team, including at least 12 investigating officers (IOs), went to Adiala jail over the weekend. Although prison authorities apprised the PTI founder



about the purpose of their visit, Mr Khan refused to meet them.

An official said the team stayed at Adiala jail and sent several messages to Mr Khan, but to no avail. Eventually, the team mentioned the arrest of Imran Khan in 12 cases and returned to the provincial capital.

Out of the dozen cases registered against the former premier, police officials said that two in particular, which pertained to the attacks on the residence of the Lahore corps commander and the Askari Tower, were the focus of police high-ups.

A police official said the corps commander house attack was being probed by a joint investigation team (JIT) led by DIG Investigation Zeeshan Asghar, whereas the Askari Tower case was investigated by SSP Investigations Dr Anoosh Masood Chaudhry. Other cases, including the attack on Shadman police station, were being investigated by divisional SPs.

These cases were registered against Mr Khan over his alleged involvement in the attack on a police station in Shadman, military installations, government properties and officials.

The FIRs were registered with the Sarwar Road, Gulberg, Race Course, Naseerabad, Shadman, and other police stations of Lahore.

Imran on NAB's remand

Separately, an accountability court in Islamabad handed custody of Mr Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi to NAB authorities on physical remand for eight days in the new Toshakhana case.

The decision was announced by Islamabad Accountability Court Judge Muhammad Ali Warraich on a NAB plea. They will be produced in the court on July 22. It is worth mentioning that on Saturday Mr Khan and his wife were acquitted in the Iddat case but they could not be released as authorities issued fresh orders to arrest him.

Meanwhile, PTI activist Sanam Javed was also rearrested by Islamabad police after she was released by a court.

On Sunday, Magistrate Malik Imran discharged Sanam Javed from an FIA case but she was arrested by the capital city's police, her lawyer Mian Ashfaq said.

Earlier, Ms Javed told the media that she was released after an “illegal detention” which continued for over a year.

Ms Javed said her stance is the same as it was 14 months back and will remain firm in her stance. The Islamabad police is yet to confirm or deny the PTI activist's arrest.

Courtesy The News



Court Grants Party of Imprisoned Former Leader More Seats in Pakistan's Parliament

A ruling by Pakistan's high court strips the governing coalition of its two-thirds majority, and thrusts the party of Imran Khan back onto the political main stage



By Salman Masood and Christina Goldbaum

Pakistan's top court ruled on Friday that the party of former prime minister Imran Khan should receive 23 additional seats in Parliament, a decision that is expected to deepen the political turmoil that has embroiled the country since Mr. Khan was ousted from power two years ago.

The ruling strips the governing coalition, led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, of its two-thirds majority in Parliament, weakening his already fragile government and emboldening the opposition led by Mr. Khan's party.

Mr. Sharif's government came to power five months ago after general elections that were marred by allegations that the country's powerful military had rigged dozens of races and tipped the scales against Mr. Khan's party. Pakistan's generals, who have long been seen as an invisible hand guiding the nation's politics, have been at odds with Mr. Khan since he was ousted from power in 2022.

But in a stunning rebuke to military leaders,

candidates loyal to Mr. Khan won a majority of seats in the National Assembly in the last election — a victory that shattered the military's once invincible image.

The opposition's victory reflected the recent swell of discontent with the generals' influence in politics since Mr. Khan's ouster, which he accused the military of orchestrating. Those accusations sparked mass protests across the country, challenging the military's authority like never before. Mr. Khan, a former captain of the country's popular national cricket team, was imprisoned in August on what he says were trumped up political charges.

Despite winning the majority of seats in Parliament during the last election, Mr. Khan's party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, or P.T.I., was not allotted any of the 70 unelected seats reserved for women and minorities, which are typically handed out in proportion to the number of elected seats a party secures.

Instead, those seats were allocated to parties in Mr. Sharif's governing coalition,

giving it a critical two-thirds majority.

The Supreme Court ruling on Friday forced the National Assembly to redistribute some of those reserved seats to P.T.I., making it the single largest party in the National Assembly.

P.T.I. supporters hailed the decision as a major victory in a country where the military has increasingly taken a front seat in politics, more overtly shaping the country's foreign and domestic policies.

"At a time when Pakistan's democracy faces severe threats and all democratic norms are being eroded, the Supreme Court's decision is a welcome relief," said Fawad Chaudhry, a former information minister in Mr. Khan's party. "This ruling is a crucial step forward in fortifying democracy in Pakistan."

The decision came as Mr. Sharif planned to introduce broad judicial reforms, including extending the tenure of the Supreme Court chief justice. Critics said these measures were aimed at influencing the judiciary for political gain.



While Mr. Sharif's coalition retains a simple majority in Parliament, without a two-thirds majority it will most likely be unable to enact those planned reforms. His coalition, which was already considered weak because it lacked popular support, will now face additional questions over its ability to govern, analysts say.

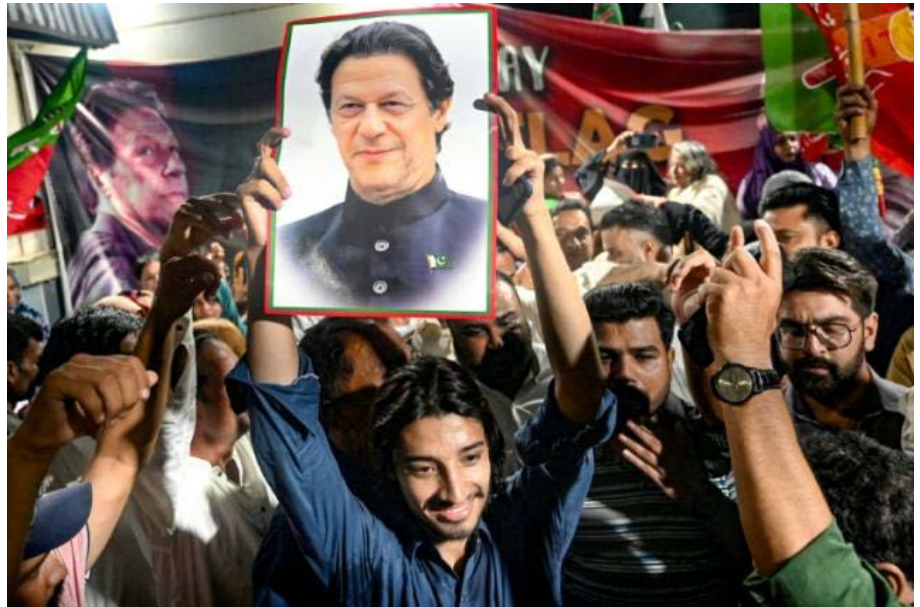
No prime minister has ever completed a full term in office in Pakistan. The ruling on Friday has added to speculation that Mr. Sharif's government may, too, face an early end.

On Friday, officials in his coalition sought to downplay the effects of the Supreme Court's decision.

"As far as the government's stability is concerned, the ruling coalition has a visible majority," Azam Nazeer Tarar, the law minister, said at a news conference. A simple majority in Pakistan's Parliament is 169 out of a total of 336 seats. Still, he added, the government's ability to pass crucial legislation has been affected.

The decision is the latest sign of the country's judiciary growing more assertive in challenging the military, analysts said.

In recent months, judges in several lower courts have accused the country's intelligence agencies of trying to coerce them and have openly criticized the military's meddling in judicial affairs. The tension between the courts and the military has been exacerbated by the legal cases against Mr. Khan.



"The judges are upending everything that the military establishment had put in place," said Talat Hussain, an Islamabad-based political analyst. "They have on their side the lawyer bars, a popular party, a popular narrative, and an extremely incompetent government that doesn't know whether it is staying or going."

Even before the general election was held in February, anger at the military was brewing across the country among Mr. Khan's supporters who took to the streets to criticize military leaders more openly and boldly than ever before.

While military leaders hoped the general election would quell that unrest, it only added to the growing discontent. One

major point of contention was that Pakistan's Election Commission forced P.T.I. candidates to run as independents — making them ineligible to receive any of the unelected, reserved seats in Parliament.

The Supreme Court verdict on Friday overruled the Election Commission's decisions, saying that P.T.I. should be afforded all of the constitutional and legal rights of any political party — thrusting P.T.I. back onto the political main stage.

"As a political party, the P.T.I. is entitled to its reserved seats," Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa said while reading out the order in court.

Courtesy www.nytimes.com





Establishment of the New Party Awam Pakistan: A New Dawn in Pakistani Politics

By Kanwal Munir

In a significant development on the political landscape of Pakistan, former Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi has announced the formation of a new political entity, Awam Pakistan. Joined by key former members of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), such as Miftah Ismail and Mehtab Abbasi, this move marks a critical juncture in the country's political history. The new party, underpinned by the slogan "Badlengi Nizam" (We Will Change the System), aims to steer the country towards democratic governance, transparency, and inclusive economic reforms.

Awam Pakistan emerged from a backdrop of political discontent and ideological divergence within the PML-N. Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and Miftah Ismail, having parted ways with their former party due to growing differences with its leadership, sought to create a platform that aligns more closely with their vision for Pakistan's future. Their decision to establish a new political party was cemented in April when Khaqan Abbasi approached the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for its registration. The founding leaders of Awam Pakistan have articulated a vision centered on systemic change and democratic integrity. Abbasi emphasized that the party would not align with any non-democratic forces, distancing themselves from politicians with questionable reputations. This commitment to clean politics is a cornerstone of their mission, aiming to rebuild public trust in political leadership.

Economic Reforms and Public Welfare

A central tenet of Awam Pakistan's agenda is economic reform. Miftah Ismail, a former finance minister, has been critical of the existing economic policies, particularly the tax-heavy Finance Bill 2024, which he argues disproportionately burdens the salaried and middle classes. Awam Pakistan aims to rectify this by proposing tax concessions for these demographics, alongside measures to reduce annual



government expenditure. Ismail's economic vision also includes limiting government involvement in the economy and promoting private sector growth. He advocates for the privatization of public organizations to stimulate economic development and enhance efficiency. By fostering a business-friendly environment, Awam Pakistan seeks to attract foreign direct investment, thereby driving economic prosperity.

The establishment of Awam Pakistan comes amid sharp criticism of the incumbent government. Both Abbasi and Ismail have lambasted the ruling coalition for its failure to implement meaningful economic reforms and its reliance on non-transparent practices. Abbasi's remarks on the alleged manipulation of election results ("Form-47") and the elite-driven governance model underscore the need for a political paradigm shift. Abbasi has also called for governance reforms grounded in constitutional principles, advocating for a departure from ad-hoc measures and experiments that have historically failed to yield sustainable results. This critique extends to the broader political system, which he argues is plagued by a predatory dynamic reminiscent of colonial exploitation.

Awam Pakistan's leadership underscores the importance of active public engagement in politics and governance. Fatima Atif, an organizing committee member, highlighted the party's commitment to inclusive intra-party elections, a practice that culminated in the election of Shahid Khaqan Abbasi as the party's convener and Miftah Ismail as the secretary. The party aims to mobilize support from all four provinces of Pakistan, building a diverse and representative political base. This grassroots approach is seen as crucial for creating a robust foundation for the party's future political endeavors.

While Awam Pakistan's launch has been met with optimism from various quarters, the party faces significant challenges in the competitive political arena. Building a new political brand in a landscape dominated by established parties requires strategic maneuvering and effective communication of their vision to the electorate. However, the dissatisfaction with the current political and economic situation presents an opportunity for Awam Pakistan to position itself as a credible alternative. By addressing the grievances of the middle and lower-income classes and advocating for systemic reforms, the party can galvanize support and influence the broader political discourse.



Critique of Current Governance

The formation of Awam Pakistan has been accompanied by a stringent critique of the current governance model. Both Abbasi and Ismail have been vocal about the inefficacy of the current political and economic strategies employed by the ruling coalition. Abbasi has pointed out the manipulation of election results, referring to the "Form-47" controversy, where alleged electoral fraud and manipulation of results have been a point of contention. He argues that such practices have severely undermined the democratic process and the public's trust in their leaders.

Furthermore, Abbasi has highlighted the elitist nature of the current government, accusing it of prioritizing the interests of a select few over the needs of the broader population. This, he contends, has led to policies that exacerbate inequality and hinder the nation's progress. His call for governance reforms rooted in constitutional principles reflects a desire to restore integrity and fairness to the political system. Miftah Ismail has echoed these sentiments, particularly in his critique of economic policies. The Finance Bill 2024, which imposes heavy taxes on the salaried and middle classes, has been a focal point of his criticism. Ismail argues that such policies are detrimental to economic growth and exacerbate the financial burden on ordinary citizens. He proposes a more equitable tax system that alleviates the pressure on the middle class while promoting investment and economic development.

A central aspect of Awam Pakistan's platform is the promotion of public welfare through comprehensive economic reform. The party's economic agenda is driven by the need to address the pressing issues faced by the middle and lower-income classes. Miftah Ismail, leveraging his experience as a former finance minister, has outlined a series of measures aimed at stimulating economic growth and reducing inequality. Key among these measures is the proposal to offer tax concessions to the middle-income and salaried classes. Ismail argues that such concessions are essential for alleviating the financial burden on these demographics and promoting economic stability. Additionally, the party advocates

for a reduction in annual government expenditure, emphasizing the need for fiscal discipline and efficient allocation of resources.

Awam Pakistan also seeks to limit government involvement in the economy, promoting private sector growth as a catalyst for development. The party's vision includes the privatization of public organizations, a move aimed at enhancing efficiency and stimulating economic activity. By creating a business-friendly environment, Awam Pakistan hopes to attract foreign direct investment and drive economic prosperity.



One of the critical challenges facing Awam Pakistan is the need to mobilize public support and build a broad-based political coalition. The party's leadership is acutely aware of the importance of engaging with citizens from all regions and backgrounds. Fatima Atif, an organizing committee member, emphasized the party's commitment to inclusive intra-party elections, which aim to reflect the diverse interests and aspirations of the Pakistani populace. The grassroots approach adopted by Awam Pakistan is designed to foster a sense of ownership and participation among citizens. By involving people from all four provinces in the political process, the party aims to build a strong foundation for its future endeavors. This approach is crucial for establishing credibility and gaining the trust of the electorate.

Awam Pakistan's leadership has also underscored the importance of transparency and accountability in governance. The party's commitment to clean politics and democratic principles is seen as a key differentiator in a political landscape often characterized by corruption and patronage. By adhering to these principles, Awam Pakistan hopes to inspire confidence and support from voters.

Future Prospects

The establishment of Awam Pakistan marks a pivotal moment in Pakistan's political history. Led by seasoned politicians with a clear vision for democratic governance and economic reform, the party aims to challenge the entrenched status quo and offer a new direction for the country's future. As Awam Pakistan embarks on this journey, its success will hinge on its ability to translate its ideals into actionable policies and garner the trust of a diverse and dynamic electorate. The journey ahead is fraught with challenges,

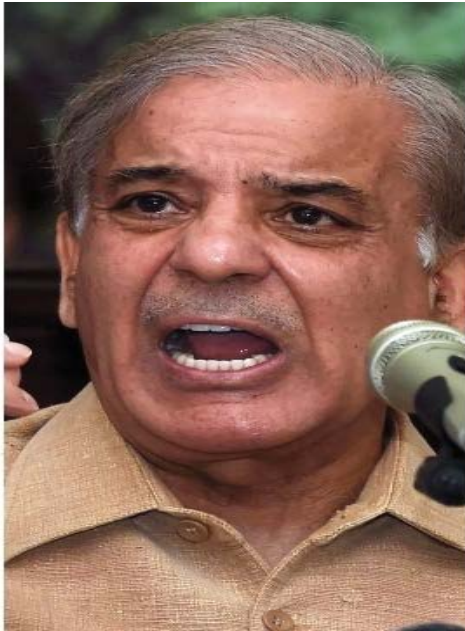
but the foundation laid by Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Miftah Ismail, and their colleagues offers a beacon of hope for those seeking a democratic and prosperous Pakistan. The party's focus on systemic change, economic reform, and public welfare reflects a commitment to addressing the core issues facing the nation.

Awam Pakistan's leadership understands that building a new political brand requires strategic maneuvering, effective communication, and unwavering commitment to their principles. By advocating for transparent governance, economic justice, and inclusive politics, the party seeks to resonate with a populace disillusioned by the current state of affairs.

In conclusion, Awam Pakistan represents a new dawn in Pakistani politics. Its formation is a testament to the desire for change and the pursuit of a more democratic, equitable, and prosperous future. The party's vision of systemic reform, economic revitalization, and public engagement offers a roadmap for addressing the challenges facing Pakistan. As the party moves forward, its ability to inspire, mobilize, and lead will determine its impact on the nation's political landscape.



The Return of PML-N: Public Reception and Performance



By Daniyal Wali

The February 2024 general elections in Pakistan marked a significant political shift as the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), under the leadership of Shehbaz Sharif, returned to power. Five months into their tenure, the PML-N government has faced a mix of expectations and challenges, given the economic and political landscape left by the previous administration. The nation's eyes are now firmly set on the new government, assessing its ability to navigate the multifaceted issues plaguing Pakistan.

Public Dissatisfaction: Inflation and Political Concerns

Public dissatisfaction with the PML-N government is palpable, primarily driven by the continued high inflation and rising energy costs. The cost-of-living crisis has intensified, with many Pakistanis struggling to afford basic necessities. Energy prices have soared, adding to the financial burden on households and businesses. This economic strain has led to widespread discontent, with many citizens expressing frustration over the government's handling of the situation. Inflation has been a persistent issue in Pakistan, but the current

wave of economic distress has exacerbated the problem to unprecedented levels. According to a Gallup Pakistan survey, 64% of Pakistanis identified inflation as the country's most significant problem, a notable increase from 44% in July 2021. This statistic underscores the growing economic pressures faced by the population. The soaring costs of essential goods, such as food and fuel, have forced many families to make difficult choices about their daily expenditures.

Rising energy costs have further compounded these challenges. The country's energy sector has long been plagued by inefficiencies and mismanagement, resulting in frequent power outages and increased operational costs for businesses. The government's inability to address these issues effectively has led to widespread frustration. As a result, public dissatisfaction has not only stemmed from economic hardships but also from a perceived lack of effective solutions from the government. In addition to economic concerns, the PML-N government has faced criticism for its handling of political and social matters. The unanimous passage of controversial laws has sparked significant public outcry. One such law, granting the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) legal

cover to tap citizens' phones, has been particularly contentious. Critics argue that this legislation infringes on civil liberties and privacy rights, further eroding public trust in the government.

The passage of this law has been seen by many as a step towards authoritarianism. Concerns have been raised that it could be used to stifle dissent and monitor political opponents. Human rights organizations and civil society groups have condemned the law, calling it a violation of fundamental rights. This move has fueled fears of increasing oppression and a shrinking space for democratic freedoms in Pakistan. Public opinion on the PML-N government is mixed, reflecting both hope and skepticism. While there was cautious optimism about Shehbaz Sharif's return to power, given his reputation as a stern administrator from his previous tenure as Chief Minister of Punjab, significant concerns remain about whether his government can effectively manage the current economic challenges.

A nationally representative survey by Gallup Pakistan in early 2024 highlighted that while a segment of the population had a favorable view of Shehbaz Sharif's leadership, many remained critical. The survey indicated that 55% of respondents held a



positive opinion about Nawaz Sharif's performance, which has likely influenced public expectations of Shehbaz. However, nine months into their term, the real test for the PML-N government lies in translating these perceptions into tangible economic improvements.

The government's relationship with the military will also play a crucial role in its tenure. Historically, civilian governments in Pakistan have had to align with military leadership to ensure their survival. The PML-N government's ability to maintain a sound working relationship with the military, particularly with General Asim Munir, who played a significant role during Shehbaz Sharif's previous term, will be instrumental in navigating the complex political landscape.

Public Perception and Expectations

Public expectations from the PML-N government are high, given the significant challenges facing the country. Many Pakistanis hope that the return of Shehbaz Sharif will bring a more competent and effective administration, capable of addressing the pressing economic and social issues. However, there is also a sense of skepticism, with concerns about whether the government can deliver on its promises and navigate the political complexities.

The government's actions and policy decisions will be critical in shaping public perception. Measures to address inflation, reduce energy costs, and protect civil liberties will be closely monitored by the public and media. The ability to implement effective and transparent policies will determine whether the PML-N government can build trust and support among the population. One of the first steps taken by the Shehbaz Sharif-led administration was to prioritize tackling inflation and stabilizing the economy. Efforts to negotiate with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a new loan program have been underway to implement fiscal policies aimed at curbing inflation. However, the public remains skeptical about the government's ability to deliver on these economic promises, as patience wears thin.

The PML-N government has also focused on addressing the energy crisis. Measures to

improve the efficiency of the energy sector and reduce power outages have been announced, but the implementation of these policies has been slow. The public's frustration with frequent power outages and rising energy costs remains high, putting additional pressure on the government to find effective solutions. The unanimous passage of controversial laws, such as granting the ISI legal cover to tap citizens' phones, has further fueled public dissatisfaction. The perception that the government is infringing on civil liberties and privacy rights has eroded public trust. Human rights organizations and civil society groups have condemned the law, calling it a violation of fundamental rights. This move has led to fears of increasing oppression and a shrinking space for democratic freedoms in Pakistan.

As the PML-N government navigates its tenure, its actions and policy decisions will be critical in shaping public perception. Measures to address inflation, reduce energy costs, and protect civil liberties will be closely monitored by the public and media. The ability to implement effective and transparent policies will determine whether the PML-N government can build trust and support among the population. The government's performance will not only impact its political future but also the broader trajectory of Pakistan's development and stability. As the PML-N government navigates these challenges, its actions and decisions will be closely scrutinized by a public eager for progress and change.

To conclude, the PML-N's return to power in the 2024 elections marks a new chapter in Pakistan's political narrative. While the



The PML-N government must also navigate the complex political landscape in Pakistan. The political environment remains highly polarized, with the opposition, primarily led by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), challenging the legitimacy of the elections and the new government's mandate. This has led to a contentious political atmosphere, with frequent clashes in the National Assembly and public protests. The government's relationship with the military will be crucial in maintaining political stability. Historically, civilian governments in Pakistan have had to align with military leadership to ensure their survival. The PML-N government's ability to maintain a sound working relationship with the military, particularly with General Asim Munir, will be instrumental in navigating the complex political landscape.

government faces significant challenges, there is cautious optimism that with effective leadership and strategic governance, it can steer the country towards economic stability and political cohesion. The coming months will be critical in determining whether the PML-N can meet the high expectations set by its return to power. Public dissatisfaction with the government is rooted in high inflation, rising energy costs, and concerns over civil liberties. The PML-N must prioritize these issues to regain public trust and ensure political stability. The road ahead is fraught with challenges, but with strategic governance and effective leadership, the PML-N has the potential to steer Pakistan towards a more stable and prosperous future. The government's ability to deliver on its promises will be crucial in shaping its legacy and determining the future direction of Pakistan.



FAFEN Report on National Assembly's Budget Session

The first annual budget session of the incumbent National Assembly recorded 179 lawmakers participating in the discussions on budgetary proposals for financial year 2024-25 with the opposition lawmakers receiving the majority (52 percent) share in the time allocated for the discussions. The budget proceedings, from presentation of budget to laying of authorized schedule of expense before the House, consumed around 48 hours and two minutes.

The lawmakers participating in budget discussions comprised 69 from Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC), 40 from Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentary (PPPP), 37 from Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), 18 from Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQMP), five from Jamiat Ulma-e-Islam Pakistan (JUIP), five independents and one each from Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP), National Party (NP), Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP), Pakistan Muslim League (PML) and Majlis-e-Wahdatul Muslimen Pakistan (MWMP). Approximately 125 (70 percent) of the lawmakers participating in the budget discussions expressed critical views on the budgetary proposals in their speeches. The criticism came from members of both the treasury and opposition benches.

The general discussion on budget spanned five sittings and consumed almost two-third of the entire time allocated for budget approval. The discussion and voting on demands for grants and cut motions on these demands took around 20 percent of the time. The discussion on the charged expenditure accounted for six percent, the debate and vote of the Finance Bill 2024 took four percent, and the discussion on Senate recommendations on the Finance Bill took two percent. The Finance Minister's budget speech consumed two percent of the total budget proceedings.

The opposition lawmakers sought reduction in 30 out of 133 demands for grants to meet the expense of government ministries and divisions through 422 cut motions. However, all these motions were defeated. Nevertheless, the motions provided the movers an opportunity to express their concerns on the government performance. The supplementary and excess demands for grants for the financial years 2022-23 and 2023-24 were approved without any discussion.

In addition to the demands for grants and the Finance Bill, the House passed five government bills with minimal debate and by suspending the due legislative procedure. Furthermore, three resolutions were adopted, and six calling attention notices (CANs) were raised, highlighting various governance issues. No private members' business was conducted throughout the session.

According to official attendance records, the average attendance per sitting was 231 (68 percent of the total membership) during the session. The Prime Minister attended seven (54 percent) sittings while the Leader of the Opposition attended all sittings. As many as 60 lawmakers had a 100 percent attendance while five did not attend any sittings. The Speaker chaired 43 percent of the proceedings while the Deputy Speaker 44 percent. The rest 13 percent were presided over by two members of the Panel of Chairpersons.



The Prime Minister and members of his cabinet made nine specific commitments in response to issues raised by private lawmakers during the budget session. This number excludes the financial commitments announced by the Minister for Finance in the budget speech. The government commitments included plans to induct 975 new teachers in Islamabad schools, setting up Daanish School in Islamabad, increase monthly payments to widows under the benevolent fund by 10 percent, address the issue of electricity outages and overbilling in Karachi, and resumption of work on the Sukkur-Karachi motorway. Only two commitments included implementation timelines. The House Committee on Government Assurances is yet to become functional as it has not elected a chairperson till date.

Transparency and accessibility of House proceedings and business information were largely maintained through the Assembly's official website, and guest and media galleries. Records such as the agenda items, daily bulletins, drafts of legislation, and lists of questions were uploaded, although verbatim records were only available for five out of 13 sittings. Certain parts of the video recordings on the official YouTube channel were muted without announced reasons. Video records of as many as 10 out of 13 sittings had muted segments. A comparison of both the video and verbatim record for a sitting shows the remarks censored in video were included in the verbatim record.

Lawmakers from both opposition and treasury emphasized the need for targeted interventions and financial commitments for women and other marginalized groups. Issues raised included funding for girls' schools, financial support for widows and women affected by floods, adherence to employment quotas for persons with disabilities, and business loans for women. The women-focused commitments in the Finance Minister's budget speech included privatization the First Women Bank, increase allocations for the Benazir Income Support Programme, and launch initiatives such as a free meals program for schools and the pink bus service for girls. However, some remarks during the session reinforced gender stereotypes and faced backlash from the House. One SIC lawmaker's membership was suspended for using inappropriate words during his speech.



Governance test



By Maleeha Lodhi

The Shehbaz Sharif government faces multiple challenges — from the opposition, its political allies and from growing public discontent with a dire economic situation as people struggle with a cost-of-living crisis and the punishing burden of taxes. It also confronts a surge in security threats. How has the government managed so far to deal with these multiple fronts? Does it have a firm grip on the political, economic and security situation?

Dealing with PTI was never going to be easy. But it was a test of the government's political management skills to engage the opposition's parliamentary members in a way that minimised frequent disruptions of proceedings. However, with the party continuing to be the target of coercive actions by the authorities and their leader and activists in jail, PTI lawmakers have been in no mood to cease their protests in parliament and outside.

Despite a fleeting pause when the prime minister offered talks to the opposition — a move that was dead on arrival in the current fraught climate — there have been unending, bitter government-opposition clashes in the National Assembly. It has involved rejection by PTI lawmakers of the budget — as “anti-people” — as well as the

government's other policy measures including its latest counterterrorism plan. Government ministers have also been lashing out at PTI in and out of the House. But neither has secured the upper hand in this confrontation. Instead, both have reached a virtual dead end in trying to prevail on the other. A tense and disorderly stalemate persists.

A ‘normalised’ relationship between the federal government and the PTI-run provincial government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is especially consequential for national stability. Issues concerning allocation of financial resources from the centre, adequate power supply and postings of officials remain a bone of contention between them. They need to be resolved for a proper working relationship to be established. Smooth working relations are also necessary for the robust execution of the federal government's counterterrorism campaign as its main theatre of operations is obviously in KP.

Governments always have more to lose from confrontational politics. Certainly, it has distracted the PML-N-led coalition from greater focus on governance. It has laid bare a style of leadership evidenced by the prime minister's dealings with allies, in which political engagement or negotiations

are left to others. This reinforces his long-standing image as someone more comfortable being an administrator rather than a political leader; more at ease with bureaucrats than with politicians who he has to negotiate with. His not-so-frequent appearances in parliament also testify to this, which discourages ministers from showing up. This once prompted the elder Sharif, president of PML-N, to say the Shehbaz government should free itself from “bureaucratic influence”.

The budget was an example of how to reward the elite and punish everyone else.

Lack of consultation has emerged as a major grievance with the government by its principal political ally, the PPP. Although this complaint surfaced publicly at budget time, PPP leaders say it extends to the government's overall functioning and lack of structured and sustained consultation. It prompted PPP legislators to sharply criticise the budget and call it “directionless”. Initially, the PPP threatened to boycott the budget session. Its lawmakers only agreed to participate after assurances by senior government leaders. Even so, PPP MNAs did not pull any punches in assailing budget proposals.



The Senate Standing Committee on Finance, chaired by a PPP senator, went so far as to call the budget against the national interest and in its report to the House called for withdrawal of several proposed measures. In his speech, PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari also took aim at budget proposals. Significantly he claimed the government had not fulfilled its commitment under the PML-N-PPP agreement, forged at the time of government formation, to consult his party on the budget and related decisions.

Despite its misgivings, the PPP voted for the budget. But not before some changes to the finance bill, although this was also in response to demands by the business community. In any case, the whole episode underlined fitful management by the government of its relations with an ally without whose support it cannot survive in office. Of course, some of the PPP's complaints reflect political posturing to bargain for more from the government, such as its power-sharing demands in the Punjab government. Nevertheless, it suggests this would remain an uneasy and unpredictable relationship, especially as the government has preferred an ad hoc approach to managing it rather than an institutionalised one.

The budget was the first major test for the Shehbaz government. It evoked criticism across the board, from political parties, business community, media and the public at large. Having to meet IMF conditionalities to qualify for a new larger Fund loan



programme provided the government no choice but to take painful adjustment measures. But the budget was an example of how to reward the elite and punish everyone else.

The Pakistan Business Council had this to say: "Sacred cows will graze freely while the golden geese will be cooked." Certainly, placing the burden of additional taxation on the salaried middle class marked a failure to equitably distribute the pain of adjustment, especially in view of the budget's pro-elite measures including salary increases for civil servants. This deepened public discontent at a time of mounting economic hardship, especially as increasing disruptions in power supply worsened people's plight at the peak of summer.

The government's lack of a communication strategy to explain budget measures and how they would extricate the country from the economic crisis contributed to public

frustration. In fact, the government's weak communication on other counts too has denuded it of the ability to demonstrate it is running the affairs of state purposively. Its response to the deteriorating security situation came on the heels of the public expression of concern by a senior Chinese official visiting Pakistan. Its initial announcement of a new operation necessitated several later explanations indicating a lack of clarity.

Four months may be too short a time to judge a government's performance but it is the initial period that sets the tone and direction — and when the moment has to be seized. So far, the government's performance has been underwhelming. How much the prevailing dyarchical political system has contributed to this is another question.

Courtesy Dawn



Trump injured, but safe after rally shooting

"It is incredible that such an act can take place in our country," Trump says after attack



By AFP & Reuters

Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump was shot in the right ear during a campaign rally on Saturday, sparking panic and streaking the former president's blood across his face, before he emerged and pumped his fist in the air appearing to mouth the words "Fight! Fight! Fight!"

The shooter was dead, one rally attendee was killed and two other spectators were injured, the Secret Service said in a statement. The incident was being investigated as an assassination attempt, a source told Reuters.

"I was shot with a bullet that pierced the upper part of my right ear," Trump said on his Truth Social platform following the shooting in Butler, Pennsylvania, about 30 miles (50 km) north of Pittsburgh. "Much bleeding took place."

"I knew immediately that something was wrong in that I heard a whizzing sound, shots, and immediately felt the bullet ripping through the skin," Trump added.

"It is incredible that such an act can take place in our country."

Trump, 78, had just started his speech when the shots rang out. He grabbed his right ear with his right hand, then brought his hand down to look at it before dropping to his knees behind the podium before Secret Service agents swarmed and covered him. He emerged about a minute later, his red "Make America Great Again" hat knocked off, and could be heard saying "wait, wait," before agents ushered him into a vehicle.

The shooter's identity and motive were not immediately clear. Leading Republicans and Democrats quickly condemned the violence.

The shooting occurred less than four months before the Nov. 5 election, when Trump faces an election rematch with Democratic President Joe Biden.

Most opinion polls including those by Reuters/Ipsos show the two evenly matched.

Biden said in a statement: "There's no place for this kind of violence in America. We must unite as one nation to condemn it."

Ron Moose, a Trump supporter who was in the crowd, described the chaos: "I heard about four shots and I saw the crowd go down and then Trump ducked also real quick. Then the Secret Service all jumped and protected him as soon as they could. We are talking within a second they were all protecting him." Moose said he then saw a man running and being chased by officers in military uniforms. He said he heard additional shots, but was unsure who fired them. He noted that by then snipers had set up on the roof of a warehouse behind the stage.

The BBC interviewed a man who described himself as an eyewitness, saying he saw a man armed with a rifle crawling up a roof near the event. The person, who the BBC did not identify, said he and the people he was with started pointing at the man, trying to alert security.

The shots appeared to come from outside the area secured by the Secret Service, the agency said.

Trump discharged from hospital

The former US President Trump was out of hospital following a shooting earlier in the day at his rally where he was shot in the right ear, Bloomberg reported.

Earlier his campaign said that the republican presidential candidate was "fine" and being checked at a medical facility.

"Trump thanks law enforcement and first responders for their quick action during this heinous act. He is fine and is being checked out at a local medical facility. More details will follow," said spokesman Steven Cheung in a statement.

The disturbance took place shortly after Trump took the stage at his final campaign rally before the Republican party convention starts on Monday in Milwaukee.

Trump to attend Republican convention next week

Trump will still attend next week's Republican National Convention, his campaign said, after the US presidential candidate was shot and injured in an apparent assassination attempt at a rally in Pennsylvania.



"President Trump looks forward to joining you all in Milwaukee as we proceed with our convention to nominate him to serve as the 47th President of the United States," said the campaign statement.

Multiple shots came from 'elevated position'

The apparent assassination attempt on Trump involved "multiple shots (fired) toward the stage from an elevated position outside the rally venue," the US Secret Service said.

"One spectator was killed, two spectators were critically injured," the agency said in a statement, adding the shooter has been killed, without giving further details.

'Horrificed'

"We saw a lot of people go down, looking confused. I heard the shots," said John Yeykal from Franklin, Pennsylvania, who was attending his first Trump rally. US politicians reacted with shock to the incident. Democratic Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said he was "horrificed by what happened at the Trump rally in Pennsylvania and relieved that former President Trump is safe." "Political violence has no place in our country," he added. Republican minority leader Mitch McConnell added: "Tonight, all Americans are grateful that President Trump appears to be fine after a despicable attack on a peaceful rally. Violence has no place in our politics."

Courtesy The News



A look at the history of presidential assassination attempts in America

By Darlene Superville and Christina A. Cassidy

Before Saturday's attempted assassination of former President Donald Trump, there have been multiple instances of political violence targeting U.S. presidents, former presidents and major party presidential candidates.

A look at some of the assassinations and attempted assassinations that have occurred over the decades:

ABRAHAM LINCOLN, the 16th president

Lincoln was the first president to be assassinated, shot by John Wilkes Booth on April 14, 1865, as he and his wife, Mary Todd Lincoln, attended a special performance of the comedy "Our American Cousin" at Ford's Theatre in Washington.

Lincoln was taken to a house across the street from the theater for medical treatment after he was shot in the back of the head. He died the next morning. His support for Black rights has been cited as a motive behind his killing.

Two years before the assassination, during the Civil War, which was fought over slavery, Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation granting freedom to slaves within the Confederacy.

Lincoln was succeeded by Vice President Andrew Johnson.

Booth was shot and killed on April 26, 1865, after he was found hiding in a barn near Bowling Green, Virginia.

JAMES GARFIELD, the 20th president

Garfield was the second president to be assassinated, six months after taking office. He was walking through a train station in Washington on July 2, 1881, to catch a train to New England when he was shot by Charles Guiteau.

Alexander Graham Bell, the telephone inventor, tried unsuccessfully to find the



bullet lodged in Garfield's chest using a device he designed specifically for the president. The mortally wounded president lay at the White House for several weeks but died in September after he was taken to the New Jersey shore. He had held office for six months.

Garfield was succeeded by Vice President Chester Arthur.

Guiteau was found guilty and executed in June 1882.

WILLIAM MCKINLEY, the 25th president

McKinley was shot after giving a speech in Buffalo, New York, on Sept. 6, 1901. He was shaking hands with people passing through a receiving line when a man fired two shots into his chest at point-blank range. Doctors had expected McKinley to recover but gangrene then set in around the bullet wounds.

McKinley died on Sept. 14, 1901, six months after opening his second term.

He was succeeded by Vice President Theodore Roosevelt.

Leon F. Czolgosz, an unemployed, 28-year-old Detroit resident, admitted to the shooting. Czolgosz was found guilty at trial and put to death in the electric chair on Oct. 29, 1901.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT, the 32nd president

Roosevelt, at the time the president-elect, had just given a speech in Miami from the back of an open car when gunshots rang out.

Roosevelt was not injured in the February 1933 shooting that killed Chicago Mayor Anton Cermak.

Guiseppe Zangara was convicted in the shooting and sentenced to death.

HARRY S. TRUMAN, the 33rd president

Truman was staying at Blair House, across the street from the White House, in November 1950 when two gunmen broke in.

Truman was not injured, but a White House policeman and one of the assailants were killed in an exchange of gunfire. Two other White House policemen were wounded.

Oscar Callazo was arrested and sentenced to death. In 1952, Truman commuted the sentence to life in prison. He was released from prison in 1979 by President Jimmy Carter.

JOHN F. KENNEDY, the 35th president

Kennedy was fatally shot by a hidden assassin armed with a high-powered rifle as he visited Dallas in November 1963 with first lady Jacqueline Kennedy. Shots rang out as the president's motorcade rolled through Dealey Plaza in downtown Dallas.

Kennedy was rushed to Parkland Memorial Hospital, where he died soon after. He was succeeded by Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson, who was sworn into office in a conference room aboard Air Force One. He is the only president to take the oath of office on an airplane.

Hours after the assassination, police arrested Lee Harvey Oswald after finding a sniper's perch in a nearby building, the Texas School Book Depository. Two days later, Oswald was being taken from police headquarters to the county jail when Dallas nightclub owner Jack Ruby rushed forward and fatally shot Oswald.

GERALD FORD, the 38th president

Ford faced two assassination attempts within weeks in 1975 and was not hurt in either incident. In the first attempt, Ford was on his way to a meeting with California's governor in Sacramento when Charles Manson disciple Lynette "Squeaky" Fromme pushed through a crowd on the street, drew a semi-automatic pistol and pointed it at Ford. The gun wasn't fired. Fromme was sentenced to prison and released in 2009.

It was 17 days later when another woman, Sara Jane Moore, confronted Ford outside a hotel in San Francisco. Moore fired one shot and missed. A bystander grabbed her arm as a second shot was attempted. Moore was sent to prison and released in 2007.

RONALD REAGAN, the 40th president

Reagan was leaving a speech in Washington, D.C., and walking to his motorcade when he was shot by John Hinckley Jr., who was in the crowd.

Reagan recovered from the March 1981 shooting. Three other people were shot,

including his press secretary, James Brady, who was partially paralyzed as a result.

Hinckley was arrested and confined to a mental hospital after a jury found him not guilty by reason of insanity in shooting Reagan. In 2022, Hinckley was freed from court oversight after a judge determined he was "no longer a danger to himself or others."

GEORGE W. BUSH, the 43rd president

Bush was attending a rally in Tbilisi in 2005 with Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili when a hand grenade was thrown toward him.



Both men were behind a bulletproof barrier when the grenade, wrapped in cloth, landed about 100 feet away. The grenade did not explode, and no one was hurt.

Vladimir Arutyunian was convicted and sentenced to life in prison.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT, presidential candidate

The former president was shot in Milwaukee in 1912 while campaigning to return to the White House.

Roosevelt had previously served two terms as president and was running again as a third-party candidate.

Folded papers and a metal glasses case in Roosevelt's pocket apparently blunted the bullet's impact and he was not seriously hurt.

John Schrank was arrested and spent the remainder of his life in mental hospitals.

ROBERT F. KENNEDY, presidential candidate

Kennedy was seeking the Democratic presidential nomination when he was killed at a Los Angeles hotel — moments after giving his victory speech for winning the 1968 California primary.

Kennedy was a U.S. senator from New York and the brother of President John F. Kennedy, who was assassinated five years earlier.

Five other people were wounded in the shooting.

Sirhan Sirhan was convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to death. That was commuted to life in prison, where Sirhan remains after his latest petition for release was denied last year.

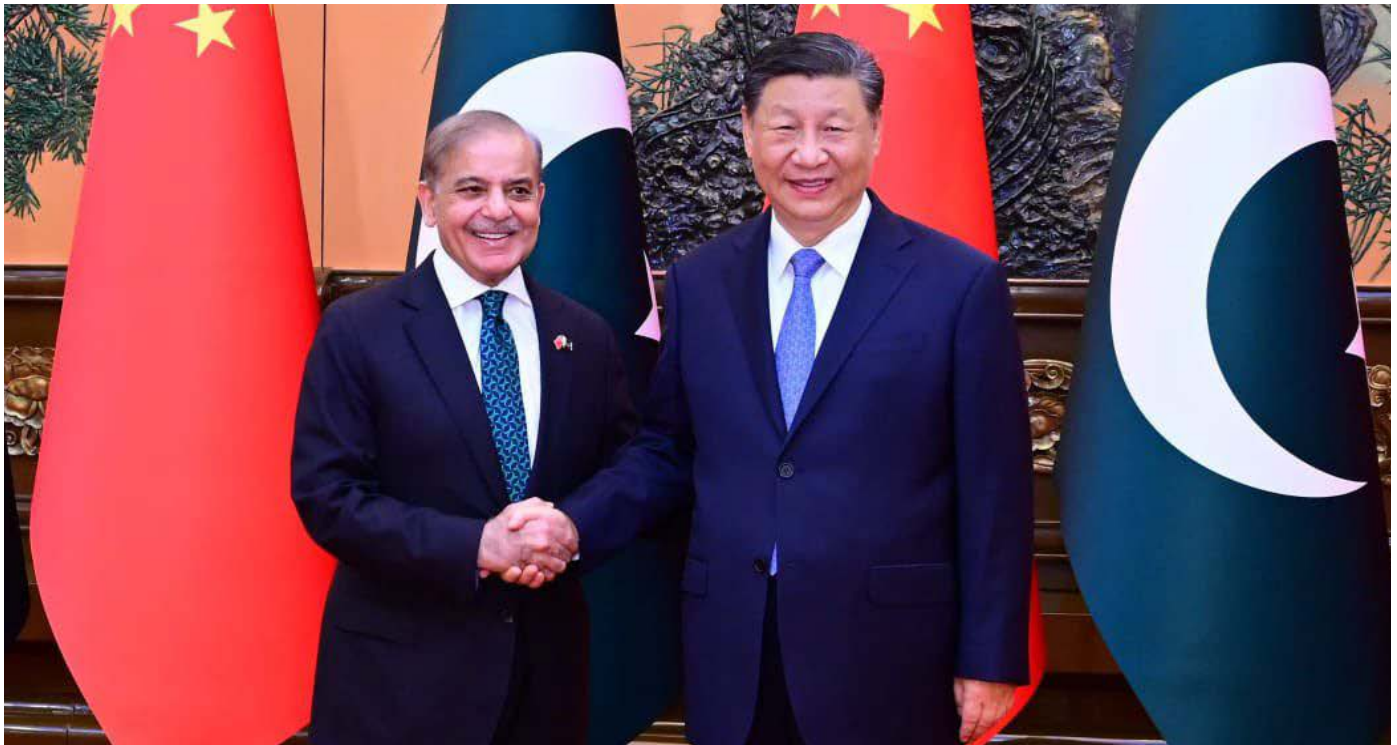
GEORGE C. WALLACE, presidential candidate

Wallace was seeking the Democratic presidential nomination when he was shot during a campaign stop in Maryland in 1972, an incident that left him paralyzed from the waist down.

Wallace, the governor of Alabama, was known for his segregationist views, which he later renounced.

Arthur Bremer was convicted in the shooting and sentenced to prison. He was released in 2007.

Pakistan-China Relations Under the New Government: Improvements and Progress on CPEC



By Kanwal Munir

Introduction

Pakistan's relationship with China has long been a cornerstone of its foreign policy, often described as an "All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership." This alliance has weathered numerous global challenges, remaining resilient through various political changes and economic crises. Recent developments, particularly under the new government led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, have sparked debates on whether these relations have further strengthened and how the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects have progressed. This article delves into these aspects, drawing insights from recent statements, project updates, and bilateral meetings.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's recent visit to China marks a significant moment in the ongoing narrative of Pakistan-China relations. During his visit, Sharif met with Chinese President Xi Jinping, Premier Li Qiang, and other high-ranking officials. He also engaged with the Chinese business community at the Pakistan-China Business Forum 2024 in Shenzhen. His message was clear and strong: Pakistan remains committed to the CPEC, a flagship project under China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Sharif's commitment to CPEC is not new. During his tenure as the chief minister of Punjab, his rapid execution of CPEC projects earned him the nickname "Shehbaz Speed" from Chinese diplomats. However, his recent trip was not just about reaffirming this commitment but also addressing China's concerns regarding political stability and security in Pakistan.

Political instability and security issues in Pakistan have been persistent concerns for China. The instability has exacerbated Pakistan's economic woes, while security issues, particularly targeting Chinese citizens, have cast a shadow over the bilateral relationship. These concerns were prominently featured in the 2024 China-Pakistan joint statement issued after Sharif's visit. Comparing the 2024 statement with those from 2018, 2022, and 2023 reveals shifts in priorities and language, reflecting the evolving dynamics of the relationship. Notably, the term "highest priority" in China's foreign policy concerning Pakistan, used in the 2018 and 2022 statements, was downgraded to just "a priority" in the 2023 and 2024 statements. This change suggests a possible reevaluation by China of its relations with Pakistan, perhaps in response to the ongoing instability and security challenges.

China's apprehensions are understandable given the volatile political landscape in Pakistan over the past few years. The arrest of former Prime Minister Imran Khan and the subsequent riots have added to the instability, which former Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang addressed during his visit to Pakistan in May 2023. Qin emphasized that stability is crucial for development and urged Pakistani leaders to build consensus for the nation's progress. This political instability, coupled with security threats targeting Chinese nationals, has strained the relationship, although China continues to express support for CPEC and remains engaged in dialogue with Pakistani leadership.

Progress on CPEC Projects

Despite the challenges, CPEC projects have made notable progress, particularly as the initiative enters its next phase. The Karot hydropower project, the first large-scale hydro power project under the BRI, has significantly contributed to Pakistan's energy sector, generating 3.1 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity in 2023. Additionally, two China-donated projects in Gwadar, including a seawater desalination plant and the upgraded Pak-China Friendship Hospital, have been inaugurated, addressing critical needs in the region. At the Karachi Nuclear Power Plant, the K2 and K3 units, using China's Hualong One reactors, are producing a combined 20 billion kilowatt-hours annually, supporting both residential and industrial energy demands. The groundbreaking of Unit 5 at the Chashma Nuclear Power Plant further exemplifies the deepening energy cooperation between the two nations.

The next phase of CPEC aims to advance in multiple areas, including connectivity, industrialization, and agriculture. The optimization of the ML-1 railway project and the realignment of the Karakoram Highway are expected to see significant progress. Both Pakistan and China have expressed satisfaction with the pace of CPEC projects, emphasizing third-party participation in areas like mining, agriculture, and information technology. CPEC's impact on Pakistan's economy has been profound. In its first phase, the corridor added over 8,000 megawatts of power to the national grid, built more than 800 kilometers of highways, and laid an extensive fiber-optic network. These projects have not only bolstered infrastructure but also created over 200,000 jobs, significantly contributing to economic growth.

However, some challenges remain. The 2024 joint statement reflects concerns over the security of Chinese nationals in Pakistan. The special mention of the suicide attack on Chinese engineers working on the Dasu Dam project underscores the severity of the issue. Following this attack, Pakistan took unprecedented steps by sacking security officials and police officers responsible for the convoy's protection. This action indicates Pakistan's seriousness in addressing China's security concerns, although it remains to be seen whether these measures will suffice to restore confidence fully.

Addressing Western Criticisms and Future Prospects

Despite the positive developments, CPEC has faced criticism, particularly from Western media, which have labeled it a "debt trap." Pakistani officials and Chinese observers have dismissed these accusations as baseless propaganda. The traditional channels for funding large infrastructure projects in developing countries, such as the World Bank and Asian Development Bank, have become less reliable, making Chinese financing crucial for countries like Pakistan. Pakistani Ambassador to China Khalil-ur-Rahman Hashmi has highlighted the importance of China's financing in achieving sustainable development goals.

He argues that instead of criticizing China, it should be appreciated for providing necessary funds for infrastructure and energy projects in developing nations.

The 2024 joint statement emphasizes an "upgraded version of CPEC" with eight major steps aligned with Pakistan's "5Es Framework"—Economy, Environment, Energy, Education, and Equity. This ambitious framework aims to address various sectors holistically, ensuring sustainable development. However, the absence of new major projects in the joint statement indicates a cautious approach, likely influenced by Pakistan's rising circular debt crisis. Financial concerns, particularly unpaid dues to Chinese power companies, have slowed progress on some projects, such as the ML-1 railway.

Looking ahead, the future of Pakistan-China relations and the progress of CPEC will depend on several factors. Ensuring political stability and improving security for Chinese nationals will remain top priorities for Pakistan. Additionally, effective implementation of the next phase of CPEC projects will be crucial in maintaining the momentum of economic cooperation. Both nations have shown a willingness to adapt and evolve their partnership, with an increased focus on third-party investments and new sectors like information technology and agriculture. The success of these efforts will determine the long-term viability and impact of CPEC on Pakistan's development.



Conclusion

In conclusion, the relationship between Pakistan and China continues to evolve, with significant strides made under the new government of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. Despite challenges related to political instability and security, both nations remain committed to deepening their economic and strategic partnership. The progress of CPEC projects, particularly in energy and infrastructure, highlights the tangible benefits of this cooperation.

As Pakistan navigates its internal challenges and seeks to stabilize its economy, the partnership with China through CPEC remains a critical pillar. The coming years will be crucial in determining the extent to which these projects can contribute to Pakistan's development and how effectively the two countries can address mutual concerns, ensuring the longevity and success of their strategic alliance.

Chinese investment

By Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry

Since 2015, China has invested billions of dollars in Pakistan. Has that bolstered our economic development? Opinions vary. Most people feel that Chinese investments, led by CPEC, have contributed to improving the country's road, electricity and port infrastructure. A smaller segment is sceptical, arguing that these investments have contributed to Pakistan's debt trap. A dispassionate analysis is needed.

When President Xi Jinping visited Pakistan in April 2015 to launch CPEC, Pakistan was in the throes of transnational terrorism. Operation Zarb-i-Azb was underway in North Waziristan. In 2016, the US, India and Afghanistan commenced efforts to isolate Pakistan diplomatically. Naturally, no country was ready to invest here at that time. Under these circumstances, the \$46 billion worth of promised investments from China were a breath of fresh air.

An early CPEC harvest was the reduction in electricity shortage and load-shedding, which had made everyday life difficult and had choked industrial production. The other benefit was an improved road infrastructure. Work was also initiated on Gwadar port and allied projects, many of which have since been completed.

Under the grand design, once energy shortages had been met and infrastructure developed, Pakistan was supposed to move to the industrialisation phase, for which work had to start on establishing special economic zones. However, we failed to seamlessly transit to the second CPEC phase for two reasons. One, the development of SEZs was inordinately delayed. Consequently, Chinese industry shifted to other countries in the region. Two, from 2017 onwards, Pakistan entered into another round of political instability. Chinese confidence for investing in Pakistan was shaken gravely. The investments that were once expected to rise to \$92bn tapered at around \$26bn.

We failed to seamlessly transit to the second CPEC phase.

The present government has decided to upgrade CPEC. During Prime Minister



Shehbaz Sharif's visit to China last month, the Chinese side agreed to help boost industrialisation in Pakistan, digitise the economy, and open new corridors for growth, livelihood, innovation, and the green economy. Decisions were taken to rehabilitate the Karakoram Highway, optimise the port at Gwadar, and train Pakistani experts in tech and agriculture.

This is a welcome agenda. However, there are big challenges to its implementation. First, evolving geopolitics, particularly the US-China competition, is making it difficult for Pakistan's policymakers to strike a delicate balance in its ties with the US, which is a destination for large Pakistani exports, and China, whose investments and financial help are important. The US is doing all it can to check China's economic rise through trade tariffs, investment curbs, and export controls, and is advising allies and friends to avoid Chinese investments.

The second challenge is the security of Chinese personnel working on China-assisted projects in Pakistan. Several attacks have been carried out against them, mostly by TTP and BLA. While China and Pakistan have decided to "enhance counter-terrorism cooperation", Pakistani authorities would be well advised to mobilise the support of local people by addressing their grievances and making them a partner in countering this menace.

In order to sustain China's economic engagement with Pakistan, a number of steps would need to be taken. First, Pakistan must find a way to stabilise its

politics. A politically unstable country, with weak institutions, is unlikely to attract foreign, or even local, investment. Second, there should be a long-term development plan with all major political groups on board so that continuity of the plan can be ensured across governments.

Third, given that CPEC is now open to third countries, we may explore the possibility of multinational joint ventures that include Chinese businesses. As is often said, no candle loses its light while lighting other candles. In a recent roundtable at a Lahore university, one Chinese expert mentioned that Chinese companies would be ready to work with transnational investors for projects in Pakistan.

Fourth, Pakistan would need to expedite the SEZs, without which major investment is unlikely to trickle in.

Fifth, Pakistan needs an early solution to the IPP conundrum. Our treasury is bleeding while heavy taxes are imposed on the people to make 'capacity payments' to IPP owners. Chinese investors, who had set up IPPs in Pakistan, are also complaining that their repatriation of \$1.8bn is being held up.

Finally, all good ideas will remain on paper unless implemented in earnest. In this regard, government functionaries and regulators must recognise that facilitating foreign and local firms to do flourishing business in Pakistan is critical for our economic future.

Courtesy Dawn

The Return of Reformists

The Islamic Republic grapples with ground realities



By Naqi Akbar

The election of Mr. Massoud Phizikshian or Massoud the Physician, practically a dark horse in the recently concluded Iranian Presidential elections, heralds the return of the reformists in the Iranian political scene. A return, which has within its bag; fears, apprehensions as well as hopes. For the voting majority, it is hope as they feel the direction of the republic will change for good. Fears are for the opposing camp; which seems to be out of the public demand, forcing it to paint a doomsday scenario for the Iranian republic, as the reformists again capture the center stage.

There is no need to emphasize the fact that the victory of any particular faction in any country always has its geo-political implications. In the case of Iran, the implications are regarded as manifold. The reasons for that perception are the media image painted over decades about the republic, treated as nothing less than a pariah state, barely tolerated by the free world.

What signifies the return of the reform camp will be an interesting debate, we seek to

grapple in the following paragraphs. To begin with, in the particular Iranian context, the reform and the radical camps are regarded as camps furiously opposed to each other. Generally, radicals are regarded as opposed to anything close to the creative arts, and radicals are treated as some entity always war-mongering. A closer look into the Iranian political, economic, foreign trade, and cultural scene would reveal that except for the perception of the groups regarding looking at things, they both adhere to a logical approach and do not indulge in opposition for the sake of opposition.

In the aftermath of the 2009 elections in Iran when tempers were high between the two camps; reform and radical, the issue of IMF demand for the withdrawal of subsidy on petroleum prices was not exploited by the reform camp led by former Prime Minister of Iran-Iraq war years Mir Husain Mousavi. Despite all the bad blood between Mousavi and Ahmadinejad, the IMF program was implemented without any tension in the streets; or its exploitation by the reform group.

Likewise, the issue of FATF has been a thorny issue for Iran. In the 2021 elections the former central bank governor Abdol Nasir Hemati fought the election for the president over FATF. However; after the time when late President Raeesi was elected, the issue of FATF was not thrown into the waste basket of the Iranian parliament. Though the issue remained inconclusive, the so-called radical government did not shy away from the need to addressing the issue.

For many radicals the JCPOA 2015 finalized between the reformist government of Rouhani and Obama administration was a sellout. However, the Raeesi government followed up for the revival with the Biden government without any ideological hang-ups. Generally, the radicals are regarded in international media as Middle East version of North Korean leadership. However, it remains to the credit of these radicals under Raeesi for digging out unfriendly diplomatic terrains like Saudi Arabia and Pakistan for the sake of fostering trade between the states.

Likewise, the most controversial foreign armed project by the Iranian establishment the Syrian civil war was fought during the eight consecutive years of reformist camp; with reform stalwart ex FM Jawad Zarif and Syrian war ace Qasem Soleimani exchanging notes on regular basis.

Looking at Iran in the backdrop of the above-mentioned facts; it goes to the credit of the Iranian establishment weaved around the persona of the supreme leader and the IRGC that unlike other regional establishments, it did not stop the wave of change in Iran and let the people decide. For any Iran watcher, any attempt to meddle with the results in the polls could have resulted in rioting and unrest. However, sanity prevailed and despite the fears that Iran would slide into chaos, the election of a reformist president is likely to give the Iranian republic a much-needed lease of stability in the years to come.

Towards that end; it is an interesting observation to make that reform camp has been in the corridors of power for almost 16 years since 1997, when the first-generation revolutionaries made way for the new leadership. During the period under discussion, despite the fact that republic allowed the democratic processes to take their course, the economic downturn caused a good number of Iranian public to question the validity of the Islamic republic itself. The periodic rioting over inflation and the

recent Mahsa Amini rioting in 2021 created a credible impression that there was a widening gulf between the Iranian establishment and the common man on the street.

For many Iran observers, the country seemed to be on the powder keg, ready to explode anytime. For many the election of Raeesi was the last chance when radicals could have made some difference. His unfortunate death in the helicopter crash had practically thrown Iran into another cycle of political uncertainty.

Given the fact that no prominent reformist filed nomination papers, with radicals outpacing each other for the same section of voters, it was nothing short of a surprise that the dark horse Massoud was able to curry that much favor from the voter near the ballot.

Here it may be pointed out that the overwhelming presence of the radical candidates divided the radical camp, besides pushing the disgruntled Iranian towards the reformist candidate. That precisely happened in the second round of the elections. Here it is pertinent to note that at the time of second round, the former vice president during the Rouhani administration Masoumeh Ebtekar said that it was good opportunity for the protestors; who opposed Hijab or the economic conditions to make the difference by voting.

That precisely happened, when in the successive Friday, the Iranian people came out in good numbers to make clear their choice as president for the reformist candidate. Here it is important to note that the return of the reform camp has in fact benefited the Iranian republic, when it was faced with internal and geo political challenges. The Middle East situation has put additional pressure on Iran to act. Likewise, the disgruntled public, if they had not found the out pouring of their anger in the form of vote for the reform candidate, they would have come out against the Nezam and provided a good fodder for the 'regime change' wished for by the opponents of the Nezam.

The return of the reformist candidate in the presidential elections is in fact a new opportunity for Iran beyond the post Khamenei period. With so called democratic states like India and Israel in the firm grip of their respective brand of fundamentalism, the world only theocratic state voting in or rather allowing a reformist president to be elected through an honest electoral process is an asset for the Islamic Republic, much greater than the many weapon systems. Conclusively, The theocratic Nezam has finally graduated into the era, where it can compete with the world on world yardsticks, but on its own terms.



Situationer: How diplomats kept Afghan Taliban 'on the table' in Doha



By Tahir Khan

A head of the recently concluded 'Doha III' talks on Afghanistan, the United Nations was in a bind.

Bringing the Afghan Taliban to the negotiating table was their primary goal, but it would require a deft touch and many balancing acts.

Issues such as human rights, women's treatment and education, as well as the resurgence of terror groups weighed heavily on the conscience of diplomats participating in these meetings of Special Envoys on Afghanistan.

However, the Taliban had very strict 'red lines' on issues they would and wouldn't like to talk about. The regime in Kabul had already refused to join the 'Doha II' round of talks in February this year, and it was considered essential to have Kabul's emissaries at this round, if they were to make any progress.

Although organisations such as Amnesty International and other groups representing Afghan civil society criticised the decision to 'sanitise' the agenda of the talks, background conversations with diplomats

and officials who were part of the 'Doha III' process revealed that some envoys did try to raise these difficult subjects with Taliban officials.

Insiders say regional players such as China, Russia and Pakistan 'kept the peace' by overruling Western envoys who tried to raise 'red line' issues.

"It was a candid discussion with the Taliban, the first time they have met the international community collectively since the fall of Kabul," a Doha-based Western diplomat told Dawn.

He claimed that human rights, especially for women and girls, were discussed extensively.

But in some cases, regional players such as China, Russia and even Pakistan had to intervene to keep the talks on track by opposing discussion on issues that were not on the official agenda.

For example, one delegate said that at the concluding session, some Western envoys wanted to bring in agenda items based on the demands of civil society. "Regional

countries led by China objected to it. So their plan remained unsuccessful," he said.

An Afghan delegate shared how Rina Amiri, the US Special Envoy for Afghan Women, Girls, and Human Rights, proposed the formation of a special group on human rights, which was opposed by several envoys, including Iran, Pakistan, China and Russia.

Observers said that the agenda-setting was carried out expediently; topics such as political inclusivity, human rights (including women's issues), as well as discussions on security and terrorism, could have become highly politicised and polarised the meetings.

Both the UN and Taliban "showed great maturity" in not taking that route, but kept themselves confined to the goal of establishing formal channels of communication through discussions on issues of a humanitarian nature, as well as talking about mitigating climate and natural disaster-related impacts on Afghanistan.

In addition, the international community showed a great deal of flexibility over

discussions on issues such as combating drugs, searching for alternative livelihoods, developing the private sector and boosting trade and the economy to contribute to Afghanistan's development.

The lifting of sanctions on the Afghan Central Bank also came under discussion, according to those privy to the talks.

After the talks, Afghan Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid — who led Kabul's Doha delegation — had seemed quite upbeat, saying that the conference was held in accordance with the conditions set by the Kabul regime.

One of their main conditions — that only they represent Afghanistan and no one else — was also accepted as the UN did not invite any Afghans to the meeting. In fact, a number of special envoys held a special session with several members of Afghan civil society on July 2 to hear their concerns.

Pakistan's dinner diplomacy

Bilateral meetings, especially those between the Afghan and Pakistani delegations, were held behind closed doors and there was very little officially released about the nature of these confabs.

Although it was a two-point agenda, delegates including Pakistani special envoy



Asif Khan Durrani also pointed out other issues of concern, according to people familiar with those discussions.

Safe havens for the proscribed Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and other militant groups also raised and Ambassador Durrani reportedly pressed the Afghan side to take measures against armed organisations.

The so-called Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K) militant group, which has recently spread its tentacles to countries such as Russia, also came under discussion.

The issue of Afghan refugees, was also raised, with the ambassador reportedly urging sponsor countries, who have pledged to accept Afghan nationals, to

expedite their processes and resettle them without further delay.

In view of recent statements emanating from Islamabad and Kabul, the dinner hosted at the residence of the Pakistani ambassador to Qatar was seen as a major breakthrough.

The Taliban delegation, led by Mujahid, attended the dinner, which many saw as a rather unusual gesture.

"The [dinner] invitation to the Taliban delegation reflects a deep desire of Pakistan to develop useful understanding with Afghans for mutual benefit of the two countries," a Pakistani official said.

Courtesy Dawn



UN: Afghan Taliban increase support for anti-Pakistan TTP terrorists



By Ayaz Gul

A new United Nations report says the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), an alliance of extremist groups, is “the largest terrorist group” in Afghanistan and receives growing support from that country’s Taliban rulers to conduct cross-border attacks in Pakistan.

The U.N. sanctions monitoring team released the assessment late Wednesday amid a dramatic surge in TTP-led terror attacks against Pakistani security forces and civilians, killing hundreds of them in recent weeks.

“TTP continues to operate at a significant scale in Afghanistan and to conduct terrorist operations into Pakistan from there, often utilizing Afghans,” the report read. It noted that the globally designated terrorist group, also known as the Pakistani Taliban, is operating in Afghanistan with an estimated strength of 6,000-6,500 fighters.

“Further, the Taliban have proved unable or unwilling to manage the threat from Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan, whose attacks into Pakistan have intensified,” the document said. “Taliban support to TTP also appears to have increased.”

The deadly violence has strained relations between Islamabad and the de facto Taliban government in Kabul, which denies allegations of the presence of any terrorist groups or that it allows the use of Afghan soil to threaten neighboring countries.

“The Taliban do not conceive of TTP as a terrorist group: the bonds are close, and the debt owed to TTP is significant,” the U.N. report said.

TTP emerged in Pakistan’s volatile border areas in 2007, providing recruits and shelter to the Afghan Taliban as they intensified insurgent attacks against U.S. and NATO troops in Afghanistan in the years that followed.

The international forces withdrew from the country in August 2021, clearing the way for the Taliban to reclaim power from the then-U.S.-backed Afghan government in Kabul.

Al-Qaida links

The U.N. report said regional al-Qaida operatives in Afghanistan, who have

long-term ties to the Taliban, are assisting TTP in conducting high-profile terrorist activities inside Pakistan.

The Taliban have not immediately responded to the latest U.N. findings, but they have previously rejected such reports as propaganda meant to malign their government, which they call the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.

The U.N. assessment quoted member states as noting that TTP operatives, along with local fighters, are being trained in al-Qaida camps that the terrorist outfit has set up in multiple border provinces such as Nangarhar, Kandahar, Kunar, and Nuristan. Al-Qaida’s support for TTP also involves sharing Afghan fighters for military staffing or attack formations.

The report quoted one U.N. member state as expressing concern that “greater collaboration” with al-Qaida could transform TTP into an “extra-regional threat.”

US weapons and TTP

U.N. member states reiterated that NATO “caliber weapons, especially night vision

capability, that have been provided to TTP since the Taliban takeover add lethality to TTP terrorist attacks against Pakistani military border posts.”

Officials in Islamabad have also repeatedly attributed the increasing number of casualties among security forces to the modern U.S. weapons that were left behind by international forces and have fallen into the hands of TTP.

The U.S. Department of Defense responded to the allegations in a quarterly report made public in late May, saying that Pakistani intelligence forces recovered a few U.S.-manufactured small arms, including M-16 and M-4 rifles, following counter-terrorism operations earlier this year.

“Militants, including the TTP, are probably using only a limited quantity of U.S.-origin weaponry and equipment, including small arms and night vision goggles, to conduct attacks in Pakistan,” the U.S. report said. It added, however, that “the amount of U.S.-origin weaponry that Pakistani sources allege is in the hands of anti-Pakistan militants is likely an exaggeration.”

Islamabad has repeatedly called on Kabul to rein in TTP-led cross-border terrorism, apprehend its leaders, including Mehsud,



and hand them over to Pakistan. The Taliban’s response has been that TTP is an internal security issue for Pakistan to handle instead of blaming Afghanistan.

TTP has gradually intensified the number of attacks against Pakistan from 573 in 2021 to 1,203 in 2023, with the trend continuing into 2024, according to the U.N. report. Pakistani officials also attribute the spike in violence to the “greater operational freedom” the terror outfit has enjoyed in Afghanistan since the Taliban returned to power almost three years ago.

The Taliban’s spy agency, the General

Directorate of Intelligence, facilitated three new guest houses in Kabul for TTP leaders and reportedly issued passes to senior TTP figures to facilitate ease of movement and immunity from arrest, as well as weapons permits, according to the U.N. report.

The assessment noted that the Taliban are concerned that “excessive pressure” might lead TTP to collaborate with the Afghanistan-based Islamic State affiliate, known as IS Khorasan, which routinely plots deadly attacks on Taliban security forces and members of the Afghan Shiite minority.

Courtesy www.voanews.com



Israel War on Gaza

TTI Report

Israel strikes continue in the southern and central Gaza Strip on, which killing scores of Palestinians who had sought shelter in a makeshift camp.

Two days after the Israeli strike turned a crowded swathe of Mawasi near the Mediterranean coast into a charred wasteland littered with burning cars and mangled bodies, displaced survivors said they had no idea where they should go next.

"Those moments as the ground shook underneath my feet and the dust and sand rose to the sky and I saw dismembered bodies - was like nothing I have seen in my life," said Aya Mohammad, 30, a market seller in Mawasi, reached by mobile text message.

"Where to go is what everybody asks, and no one has the answer."

Displacement, shortages of food, hospitals endanger pregnant women in Gaza: UN

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has highlighted plights of women in the besieged enclave of Gaza Strip. The pregnant women's lives are endangered because of displacement, food scarcity and less medical facilities, the UN body said.

"Pregnant women in Gaza are finding it increasingly challenging to access the life-saving care they need due to repeated displacement, insecurity and attacks on healthcare facilities, coupled with unaffordable transportation costs and the lack of ambulance services," it said.

The OCHA said as per UNFPA reports, anecdotal information suggests that some emergency deliveries are taking place in tents without medical support.

"Water scarcity and limited maternal health medicines are also exposing pregnant and breastfeeding women (PBW) to various risks, as doctors continue to report rising numbers of preterm and low-birth weight babies, which are common indicators of severe malnourishment compounded by stress, fear and exhaustion.



"An estimated 30,000 pregnant women are facing acute levels of hunger (IPC Phase 3), more than 10,000 are on the verge of famine (IPC Phase 4) and close to 7,000 are in famine conditions (IPC Phase 5), with a total of 155,000 PBW in urgent need of increased food assistance and nutritious supplements, according to UNFPA."

UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer made a telephone call to Jordan's King Abdullah to discuss the war on Gaza.

During the telephonic conversation, PM Starmer updated the king on the results of Foreign Secretary David Lammy's visit to the region during the weekend, read a statement issued by the government.

They agreed that an immediate ceasefire was "vital to ensure hostages get out and further aid can get into Gaza", and said they looked forward to meeting in person at the earliest opportunity.

Turkey deplores Israeli attacks on Gaza cancer hospital

The Turkish Foreign Ministry has said that the fact that Israeli soldiers posed for a photo in front of the destroyed Turkish-Palestinian Friendship Hospital in Gaza "is further evidence of Israel's violation of

international law and international humanitarian law".

"The Turkish-Palestinian Friendship Hospital is the only centre for cancer patients in Gaza. The damage caused to the hospital by the Israeli forces and its use as a military base is part of Israel's systematic policy aimed at the annihilation of the Palestinian people," the ministry said in a statement.

"We will continue to work to ensure that those responsible for these attacks are brought to justice in international courts."

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with two senior Israeli officials and voiced worry over recent deadly strikes by Israel in the Gaza Strip, his spokesman said.

The Israeli army has launched several deadly attacks in recent days including on a refugee camp and a UN-run school that was being used as a shelter. In response, Hamas said it was pulling out of ceasefire negotiations, causing prospects for a truce and hostage release deal to dwindle.

Blinken received Israeli Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer and National Security Advisor Tzachi Hanegbi "to express our serious concern about the recent civilian casualties in Gaza," State Department spokesman Matthew Miller told reporters.

UN peacekeepers hope to restore peace on Lebanon-Israel border

United Nations peacekeepers, on patrol along an active front line, in southern Lebanon monitor clashes sparked by Israel's Gaza offensive.

Israeli military positions dominate the landscape near the Blue Line, a volatile zone not recognised as a border.

Much of the area is devoid of residents, with destroyed homes in Hezbollah's stronghold. The UN aims for a diplomatic ceasefire, while Israel seeks a Hezbollah-free buffer zone per UN Resolution 1701. Lebanese forces, supported by the UN, aim to extend state control despite ongoing tensions and disputed points along the border.

Gaza rescuers say dead and wounded in new school strike

The civil defence agency in Gaza said that an Israeli strike on a school in Gaza City killed at least one person.

The strike on Salah al-Din School in Gaza City's Al-Rimal neighbourhood was the latest to hit schools, many of which have been turned into shelters for people displaced by the Israel-Hamas war in the Palestinian territory.

At least six schools have been hit over the past nine days.

EU imposes fresh sanctions on 'extremist' Israeli settlers

The European Union announced sanctions on five Israelis — including those termed "extremist settlers" — and three organisations for abuses against Palestinians in the West Bank and blocking humanitarian aid to Gaza.

The asset freezes and visa bans are the second round of sanctions from the 27-nation bloc targeting violent Israeli settlers, taking the total number of listings to 14.

Prominent settlers blacklisted by the

European Union included Moshe Sharvit, Zvi Bar Yosef, Baruch Marzel, and Isaschar Manne.

Israel launches new Gaza strikes after weekend attack kills scores in safe zone

Israel struck the southern and central Gaza Strip to put more pressure on Hamas, following a weekend strike targeting the group's leadership which killed scores of Palestinians camped in a designated "safe zone".

Two days after the Israeli strike turned a crowded swathe of Mawasi near the Mediterranean coast into a charred wasteland littered with burning cars and mangled bodies, displaced survivors said they had no idea where they should go next.

"Those moments as the ground shook underneath my feet and the dust and sand rose to the sky and I saw dismembered bodies - was like nothing I have seen in my life," said Aya Mohammad, 30, a market seller in Mawasi, reached by mobile text message.

Pro-Palestinian activists held after protest at UK war memorial

UK police arrested two pro-Palestinian demonstrators after a protest at Britain's Cenotaph war memorial in central London.

A Palestinian flag was laid in front of the Cenotaph and "180,000 killed" spray-painted on the ground in front of the monument, photos and video footage showed.

The Cenotaph is the focus every year of national events to commemorate Britain's war dead.

It would take up to 15 years to clear around 40 million tonnes of war rubble in Gaza, says Unep.

Health ministry in Gaza says war death toll at 38,664.

The health ministry in Gaza said Monday at least 38,664 people have been killed in the war between Israel and Hamas.

The toll includes 80 new deaths in 24 hours, a ministry statement said, adding that 89,097 people have been wounded in the Gaza Strip since the war began on October 7.

British foreign secretary reaffirms Gaza ceasefire call in Israel

Britain's new Foreign Secretary David Lammy reaffirmed his call for a ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas war during a second day of talks with Israeli leaders.

Lammy, on his first Middle East trip since his Labour Party's landslide win in the British election, had already called for a halt to hostilities in a meeting with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Rights NGO says US, Israel committing massacre after massacre in Gaza

Turkey asks world to put more pressure on Israel to end war. Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan urged more pressure on Israel to end the war in Gaza at a joint news conference with Saudi Arabia Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud on Sunday.

Israel's attacks on Saturday showed that the country has no intention of ending the conflict, he added.

"Hamas accepting conditions of the ceasefire terms is seen by Israel as weakness and surrender, which is highly dangerous," Fidan said.

Brazil slams 'endless massacre' in Gaza after bombing

The government of Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva denounced Israeli strikes on southern Gaza, urging the world not to "remain silent in the face of this endless massacre."

"The most recent bombing in the Gaza Strip, which claimed the lives of hundreds of innocent people, is unacceptable," read a statement from the presidency.

The Gaza Strip health ministry said at least 92 people were killed and 300 wounded in a Saturday strike on Al-Mawasi, an Israeli-designated "safe zone" on the Mediterranean coast.

Japan-Pakistan — celebrating 70 years of ties



By Wada Mitsuhiro

At my official residence in Islamabad, I entertain my valued guests almost every day with my Japanese chef's skilful cuisine. He prepares authentic Japanese dishes using local ingredients and sometimes arranges them with elements of Pakistani food. The chef's handmade cakes and Pakistani fruits for dessert finish the course meal. Of course, this season, the stars are the mangoes, which have become even sweeter in July.

Japan started importing Pakistani mangoes in 2011. They have been gaining popularity in Japan, where they have been touted as the "sweetest mangoes in the world." Quarantine inspectors from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries visit Pakistan every year to check mango processing and packing facilities. Thanks to the efforts of producers, exporters, and distributors, Pakistani mangoes are enjoyed in Japanese households.

Behind Pakistan's proud foodstuffs and products to the world is the private sector's passion as the driving force. Japan has had business ties with this region for over 100

years since 1918, when Japan Cotton Trading Company (now Sojitz), which was responsible for exporting quality cotton to Japan, established an office in Karachi.

After the Second World War, Japan achieved economic growth thanks to Pakistan's lifting of the ban on cotton exports to Japan. This year marks the 70th anniversary of Japan's official development assistance (ODA) to Pakistan. In 1954, Japan's ODA began when the predecessor organisation of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) welcomed a Pakistani trainee to Japan in the field of public administration.

'Business is not a volunteer activity; companies cannot move forward unless it is feasible as a business'

The following year, eight Japanese experts in the field of agriculture were dispatched to Pakistan. Japan's development cooperation began with technical cooperation in the form of people-to-people exchange, and this became the philosophy of Japan's ODA. Over the past 70 years, a cumulative total of

7,443 Pakistanis have studied in Japan, and 3,140 Japanese experts have supported the government and the people of Pakistan.

Large-scale infrastructure projects such as the Kohat Tunnel, the Ghazi-Barotha hydroelectric power plant, the Indus Highway, and the East-West Road are also well-known examples of Japanese assistance. Behind these projects were people-to-people relationships based on trust.

Projects in which Japanese companies provided their technical expertise in cooperation with local construction companies not only contributed to the development of infrastructure for socioeconomic development but also had the effect of technology transfer.

In a wide range of fields such as education, health, water supply and sewerage, and disaster prevention, Japan has practiced self-help support by "teaching how to fish, rather than just giving fish." Last year, Japan revised its Development Cooperation Charter, taking the concept of self-help

support further and adopting the concept of “co-creation” as one of its basic policies, which means the creation of social values through dialogue and cooperation.

Human-centred cooperation is also evident in Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP). Projects that quickly meet the needs of local communities, such as school construction, road and bridge rehabilitation, and providing hospital equipment, have been implemented in cooperation with local non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

Collaboration with locally based organisations allows for cooperation that reflects the needs of each individual. Every year, I host signing ceremonies at my residence and go to the project site for the handover ceremonies. That is one of my favourite jobs as Japanese Ambassador; it allows me to get a sense of what the local people are thinking of.

We also provide support in cooperation with the United Nations and other international organisations. For the 2022 floods, for instance, Japan pledged about \$77 million in assistance, half of which is being implemented in cooperation with international organisations.

We have also been supporting the Polio Eradication Programme in Pakistan through the United Nations Children’s Fund (Unicef) since 1996. This long-standing partnership has helped to reach millions of children with life-saving vaccines over the years. Cooperation at the private sector level should not be forgotten.

Currently, about 80 Japanese companies are doing business in Pakistan together with their Pakistani counterparts. In addition to contributing to tax revenues, the automotive industry has contributed to Pakistan’s socioeconomic development in terms of direct and indirect employment growth, technology transfer, employee moral education, and corporate social responsibility activities in the region.

Of course, business is not a volunteer activity. Companies cannot move forward unless it is feasible as a business. We are looking forward to the Pakistani government’s progress on the “Ease of Doing Business” policy. We are committed to further

developing the relationship between Japan and Pakistan and looking for new business opportunities based on the more than 100 years of business relations.

Last year, Morinaga Milk increased its capital by \$57m. Toyota invested \$100m to begin local production of hybrid-electric vehicles. Kumon, a Japanese education company, opened classrooms in Islamabad, Lahore, and Karachi, aiming to open 15 classrooms by the end of next year.

In the information technology (IT) sector, Japan Station, which provides software offshore development services for Japan, is extending business. Human resource firms

Japanese counterpart, the Japan-Pakistan Business Cooperation Committee, has been holding regular meetings and seminars, and arrangements are currently underway for the next meeting.

Besides business, there are other interactions between people. There are Japanese nurses in Multan who have been supporting local healthcare for many years. There are also Japanese NGOs working to support Pakistan.

The relationship between Japan and Pakistan has been strengthened and diversified by passionate Japanese and Pakistani people. An ambassador’s job is to



Plus W and Profound Vision have established offices in Pakistan and are helping Pakistani IT engineers to explore onshore and offshore job opportunities with Japanese companies.

When I visited Sialkot last year with representatives of Japanese companies, I learned that high-quality Japanese materials and machine tools support Sialkot’s internationally competitive products, such as soccer balls and medical equipment.

In the midst of a shortage of foreign currency, I have heard an easy argument that “exports are good, imports are bad,” but I was very proud to see that imports from Japan are supporting Pakistan’s export industries.

To support these efforts, the Pakistan-Japan Business Forum, in cooperation with its

empathise with, connect, encourage, and support people who have a passion to do their part for the relationship between Japan and Pakistan.

During my tenure in Pakistan for over two and a half years, I have met many passionate people. Each time, I have felt that the relationship between Japan and Pakistan could be much stronger.

I believe that there are a number of possibilities that no one has yet realised in the bilateral relationship that will continue to progress towards the 80th, 90th, and 100th anniversaries of our diplomatic relations. I would like to continue to cherish the relationships between people and realise the possibilities one by one.

Courtesy Dawn

New Budget Puts at Stake the Survival of the Masses



By Javed Mahmood

The new federal budget for the financial year 2024-25 has turned out to be a nightmare for the masses in the country. From the day the new budget has been enforced, people in the country are being haunted with disheartening reports pertaining to massive hikes in taxes, prices of electricity, gas, petroleum products and aftershocks of the budgetary decisions in the form of a consistent increase in the rates of essential consumer items.

In the new budget, the government would generate four trillion rupees additional tax revenues from the people. In the US dollars, it amounts to over \$14 billion additional tax receipts to be collected from the people in this fiscal year in a bid to fulfill the revenue target set by the International Monetary Fund. For this year, the government has set IMF-dictated Rs 13,000 trillion tax collection target which is equal to \$46.50 billion. This calculation is based on the current exchange rate of the dollar-rupee _ Rs 278.50 in the interbank.

Additionally, the massive hike in the cost of electricity, gas, and petroleum products will enable the government to mop up as much revenue as the decision makers want to collect in 2024-25.

Importantly, to achieve this all-time high and a notorious tax collection target and to meet the IMF conditions, the policy makers will have to rely on a frequent increase in the tariffs of the utilities throughout the fiscal year. At present, energy sector is a main source of revenue generation, including massive amounts of multiple taxes, levies and surcharges. And this has become a main source of trouble for the consumers. A few days ago, Power Division Minister Sardar Awais Leghari pointed out that as the Federal Board of Revenue has shown a dismal performance in expanding its tax-base, power sector is bearing the burden of generating a maximum amount of revenue and taxes. Meanwhile, after recent record hike in the electricity tariff from 1st July 2024, PTI secretary general and the Opposition leader

Omar Ayub Khan claimed that the people would be on the roads from the month of August to protest against back-breaking cost of electricity.

Unfortunately, the foremost priority of the present coalition government led by the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) is to follow the IMF dictations, setting aside their repercussions for the masses in the country. Along with many other heart-wrenching issues, these days the electricity bills have turned out to be a major source of pain and tension for the consumers who are forced to pay 100% more than they were paying a year ago. This is the second time the PML-N led coalition government has surrendered completely to the terms and conditions of the IMF. Shehbaz Sharif led government has ignored the outcome of its similar IMF-dictated budgets when the PDM was formed and Imran Khan was ousted from the power through a no-confidence move.

Notably, a majority of the policy makers and the decision makers are

getting everything free from the government such as accommodation, cars, petrol, electricity, telephone, mobile phone bills, servants, foreign trips, etc., and they are least interested in looking towards the agony of the masses who are paying too much for their basic necessities. The fact is that the survival of the decision-makers' luxury lifestyle is linked to the IMF loans which keep the country away from the default line and ensure a financial sustainability as long as the IMF program is intact. Hence, for the policy makers, Pakistan has no other easy choice but to stay in the clutches of the IMF and let the masses to cry and bewail for their survival.

IMF staff-level agreement

On July 13, 2024, the IMF announced the signing of a staff-level agreement with Pakistan. According to the IMF, in response to a request by the Pakistani authorities, an International Monetary Fund team led by Nathan Porter, IMF's Mission Chief to Pakistan, held discussions during the May 13-23, 2024 staff visit to Islamabad and virtually thereafter on IMF support for the authorities' medium-term policy and reform plans. At the end of the discussions, Mr. Porter issued the following statement:

"The Pakistani authorities and the IMF team have reached a staff-level agreement on a comprehensive program endorsed by the federal and provincial governments, that could be supported by a 37-month Extended Fund Arrangement (EFF) in the amount equivalent to SDR 5,320 million (or about US\$7 billion at current exchange rates). This agreement is subject to approval by the IMF's Executive Board and the timely confirmation of necessary financing assurances from Pakistan's development and bilateral partners.

"The program aims to capitalize on the hard-won macroeconomic stability achieved over the past year by furthering efforts to strengthen public finances, reduce inflation, rebuild external buffers and remove economic distortions to spur private sector led growth. Key policy goals of the authorities' program include:

"Sustainable public finances, through a gradual fiscal consolidation based on

reforms to broaden the tax base and remove exemptions, while increasing resources for critical development and social spending. In this regard, the authorities plan to increase tax revenues through measures of 1½ percent of GDP in FY25 and 3 percent of GDP over the program. In particular, the recently approved FY25 budget targets an underlying general government primary surplus of 1 percent of GDP (2 percent in headline terms). Revenue collections will be supported by simpler and fairer direct and indirect taxation, including by bringing net income from the retail, export, and agriculture sectors properly into the tax system. At the same time, the FY25 budget provides additional resources to expand social protection by increasing both the generosity and coverage of BISP, education, and health spending.



"A fairer balance of fiscal effort between the Federal and Provincial governments, which have agreed to rebalance spending activities in line with the 18th constitutional amendment through the signature of a National Fiscal Pact that devolves to provincial governments higher spending for education, health, social protection, and regional public infrastructure investment, enabling improved public service provision. At the same time, the provinces will take steps to increase their own tax-collection efforts, including in sales tax on services and agricultural income tax. On the latter, all provinces are committed to fully harmonizing their Agriculture Income Tax regimes through legislative changes with the federal personal and corporate income tax regimes and this will become effective from January 1, 2025.

"Reducing inflation, deepening access to financing, and building strong external

buffers are key to development and resilience. Monetary policy will continue to be focused on supporting disinflation, which will help protect real incomes, especially for the most vulnerable. To buffer against shocks and build reserves, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) will maintain a flexible exchange rate and continue to improve the functioning of the foreign exchange market and the transparency around FX operations. On financial stability, the authorities plan to take measures to deepen access to financing, while strengthening financial institutions, addressing any undercapitalized banks, and upgrading their crisis management framework.

"Restoring energy sector viability and minimizing fiscal risks through the timely adjustment of energy tariffs, decisive cost-reducing reforms, and refraining from

further unnecessary expansion of generation capacity. The authorities remain committed to undertaking targeted subsidy reforms and replace cross-subsidies to households with direct and targeted BISP support.

"Promoting private sector and export dynamism by improving the business environment, creating a level-playing field for all businesses, and removing state distortions. In this regard, the authorities are advancing efforts to improve SOE operations and management as well as privatization (with the highest priority given to the most profitable SOEs) and strengthening transparency and governance around the Pakistan Sovereign Wealth Fund and its operations. They are also phasing out incentives to Special Economic Zones, phasing out agricultural support prices and associated subsidies, and refrain-

ing from new regulatory or tax-based incentives, or any guaranteed return that could distort the investment landscape, including for projects channeled through the Special Investment Facilitation Council. The authorities have also committed to advance anti-corruption as well as governance and transparency reforms, and gradually liberalize trade policy.

“The IMF team is grateful to the Pakistani authorities, private sector, and development partners for their hospitality during the visit to Islamabad and fruitful discussions”.

Violence in Kenya and Sri Lanka

Recently, Kenyans have resorted to an unprecedented violence against the IMF-prescribed tax-laden budget. Kenyans set ablaze their parliament and many people lost their lives in clashes with police during protests. Seeing an unending public wrath, Kenyan President refused to sign the IMF-dictated budget, but this did not end violence as people continued to demand resignation of the President of Kenya.

Before Kenya, Sri Lanka also experienced bloody clashes and protests which claimed many lives because of the IMF-driven budgetary measures which devalued currency and led to an unprecedented

increase in the cost of utilities and essential consumer items, etc. A similar situation may arise in Pakistan soon in the wake of the recent budget that has put at stake the survival of masses and even the governance. Apart from increase in the cost of electricity, gas, petroleum prices from July 1, 2024, the consumers are facing an unexpected surge in the rates of all important consumer items. New budget, bills of electricity and an unending trend of hike in the prices of consumer items has become a hot topic in the country. This disheartening situation would ultimately leave the people with no other choice but to resort to protests and violence.

Shocking 23% growth in inflation

Inflation in Pakistan has seen a continuous rise over the past two weeks, surging from a mere 0.1% to a significant 23.33%, as reported by the Federal Bureau of Statistics. This increase has notably impacted various essential commodities across the market. One of the most pronounced increases has been in the price of live chicken, which escalated by Rs 53 per kilogram, reaching Rs 369 per kg.

Similarly, the cost of 390 grams of dry milk rose by Rs 56, marking an increase from Rs 928 to Rs 984. Fresh milk also saw a rise of

Rs 2 per kg, now averaging Rs 139. Pulses, essential staples in Pakistani cuisine, also experienced price hikes. Chickpea dal surged by Rs 11 per kg to Rs 330, while both moong dal and masoor dal increased by Rs 4 per kg. Additionally, sugar prices climbed by about Rs 1 per kg, reaching an average of Rs 146.

The upward trend in prices extended beyond food items to include commodities like firewood, rice, LPG household cylinders, and meat, all of which also witnessed noticeable increases. Amidst these rises, however, there were a few commodities that offered some relief to consumers. Tomato prices dropped significantly by Rs 40 per kg, providing a respite from the overall inflationary pressures.

Bananas became more affordable as well, with a decrease of Rs 4 per dozen. Moreover, a 20 kg bag of flour saw a reduction of Rs 36, contributing to a slight easing of the cost burden for consumers. The overall inflationary surge reflects broader economic challenges, impacting household budgets and consumer spending patterns across Pakistan. Authorities and economists continue to monitor these developments closely, seeking to mitigate the impact on vulnerable populations and stabilize prices through targeted interventions and policy adjustments.



The Impact of Inflation on Students Living in Hostels, Rented Rooms, and Private Hostels in Pakistan

By Romana Afsheen

Inflation is an economic phenomenon that affects every sector of society, but its impact is particularly profound on students living away from home. In Pakistan, the rising inflation rates are significantly impacting those residing in hostels, rented rooms, and private hostels. This article explores the multifaceted impacts of inflation on these students, examining how it is influencing their daily lives, academic performance, and overall well-being.

One of the most immediate and significant impacts of inflation is the increase in housing costs. For students living in rented rooms or private hostels, monthly rents are seeing a substantial rise. Landlords are adjusting rents to keep pace with inflation, making it increasingly difficult for students to afford decent accommodation. This situation is being exacerbated in urban centers like Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad, where the demand for student housing is already high. For those in university hostels, while the increase might be somewhat regulated, there are still indirect costs to bear. Maintenance fees, utility bills, and other associated costs are also increasing, putting additional financial strain on students.

In Karachi, for example, students have reported a rise in rent prices by as much as 20% over the past year. Similarly, in Lahore and Islamabad, rental rates have increased by around 15% to 18%, respectively. These hikes are forcing students to move further away from their campuses to find affordable housing, thereby increasing their transportation costs and daily commute times. The lack of affordable housing options near universities is a pressing concern, as it directly affects students' ability to focus on their studies and participate in campus activities.

Inflation is also driving up the cost of food and groceries, which forms a significant part of a student's budget. The prices of essential food items such as wheat, rice, vegetables, and fruits are surging. This increase is forcing students to either cut down on their nutritional intake or allocate



a larger portion of their limited budget to food, often leading to financial compromises in other areas. For instance, a recent survey indicated that the price of basic staples like wheat flour and rice has increased by 25% and 30%, respectively, in the last year alone. Fresh produce and dairy products have also seen significant price hikes, making it difficult for students to maintain a balanced and healthy diet.

The financial pressure resulting from inflation is significantly increasing stress levels among students. Worrying about how to make ends meet is detracting from their ability to focus on their studies. The constant struggle to balance academic responsibilities with financial constraints is leading to mental health issues such as anxiety and depression, which further hinder academic performance. A study conducted by a university in Lahore found that 60% of students living off-campus reported heightened levels of stress due to financial pressures. These students often express feelings of helplessness and despair, which can severely impact their academic performance and overall mental well-being.

To cope with the rising costs, many students are taking up part-time jobs. While this helps alleviate some of the financial burdens, it is also reducing the time available for academic pursuits. Balancing work and study is challenging, and often, academic performance is suffering as a

result. The need to work long hours is also leading to burnout, affecting both physical and mental health. Students working in part-time jobs often report feeling exhausted and unable to keep up with their academic workload. This scenario is particularly challenging for those pursuing demanding courses that require extensive study and research hours.

Financial constraints often lead to reduced social interaction. Students might avoid social activities or outings with friends due to the inability to afford the associated costs. This isolation leads to feelings of loneliness and alienation, which are detrimental to a student's overall well-being and mental health. Social activities, such as dining out, going to movies, or participating in recreational events, are becoming less frequent as students prioritize essential expenses over leisure. The lack of social engagement can negatively affect a student's emotional health, leading to feelings of sadness and isolation.

To save money, students are opting for cheaper, substandard living conditions. Overcrowded rooms, lack of proper sanitation, and inadequate facilities are common issues faced by students trying to cut costs. Such living conditions lead to health problems, further adding to their stress and affecting their academic and social life. For instance, students living in overcrowded dormitories or shared apartments often deal

with issues like poor ventilation, lack of clean drinking water, and inadequate bathroom facilities. These conditions can lead to frequent illnesses and infections, which further disrupt their academic pursuits.

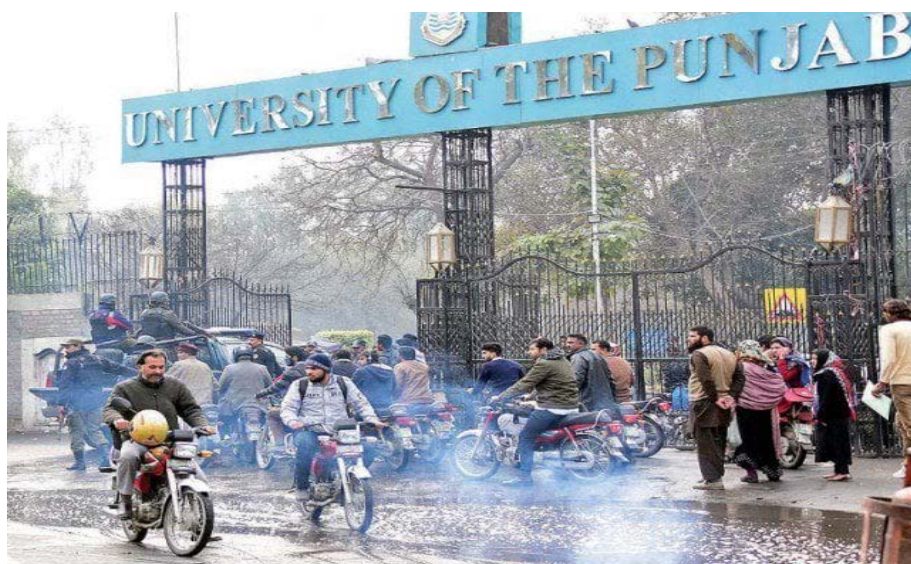
Effective budgeting and financial planning are crucial for students to manage their limited resources efficiently. Universities and colleges can play a vital role by offering workshops and seminars on financial literacy. Educating students on how to budget, save, and spend wisely can help them navigate the financial challenges posed by inflation. These workshops can cover topics such as creating a budget, managing debt, and finding cost-effective ways to save money. Providing students with practical financial skills can empower them to make informed decisions about their finances.

Educational institutions can provide support in various ways. Scholarships, grants, and financial aid programs tailored to assist students facing financial difficulties can make a significant difference. Additionally, providing subsidized meals, affordable housing options, and transportation facilities can help alleviate some of the financial burdens. Universities can also partner with local businesses to offer discounts on essential goods and services to students. By creating a supportive financial environment, educational institutions can help students focus on their studies without the constant worry of financial instability.

The psychological impact of financial stress cannot be overlooked. Universities should ensure that adequate mental health support services are available to students. Counseling services, stress management workshops, and peer support groups can help students cope with the pressures of inflation and maintain their mental well-being. Regular mental health check-ins and providing resources for stress relief and relaxation can help students manage their anxiety and depression. Creating a campus culture that prioritizes mental health can significantly improve students' overall well-being and academic success.

Government intervention is crucial in mitigating the effects of inflation on students. Providing subsidies on essential commodities like food and housing can

help reduce the financial burden on students. Additionally, increasing the allocation of financial aid and scholarships can ensure that more students have access to higher education without the crippling stress of financial instability. Government policies that promote affordable housing and regulate rental prices can protect students from exploitation by landlords. By addressing the root causes of inflation and implementing student-friendly policies, the government can play a vital role in supporting the academic and personal growth of students.



The government can also implement regulations to control the rent of private hostels and rented rooms. Setting a cap on annual rent increases and ensuring that landlords adhere to fair housing standards can protect students from exploitation and ensure that they have access to safe and affordable housing. Strict enforcement of housing regulations and providing legal assistance to students facing unfair rental practices can create a more equitable housing market. Additionally, the government can incentivize the development of affordable student housing projects to meet the growing demand for accommodation near educational institutions.

Students are forming unions and organizations to collectively address the challenges posed by inflation. These groups are negotiating with landlords, university administrations, and local authorities to secure better living conditions and fair pricing. They are also creating platforms for sharing resources, such as books, food, and other necessities.

By coming together, students can amplify their voices and advocate for policies that support their financial and academic needs. Student unions can also provide a sense of community and solidarity, helping students navigate the challenges of inflation more effectively.

Building a strong community of peer support is also helping students cope with the challenges of inflation. Sharing resources, offering emotional support, and organizing study groups are alleviating some of the pressures faced by students. Such networks

foster a sense of solidarity and can provide practical solutions to everyday problems. Peer support groups can create a safe space for students to discuss their financial struggles and find collective solutions. By fostering a culture of mutual assistance, students can help each other overcome the challenges posed by inflation.

Inflation in Pakistan is having a profound impact on students living in hostels, rented rooms, and private hostels. The rising cost of living, food, and housing is creating significant financial stress, affecting their academic performance and overall well-being. While students are adopting various coping strategies, support from educational institutions, government interventions, and strong community networks are essential in mitigating these challenges. By addressing the financial, social, and psychological aspects of inflation, we can help ensure that students are able to pursue their education and build a better future without undue hardship.

Analysis: Heaping more misery on the already taxed



By Khalid Hasnain

Amid rising cost of living and growing financial stress, the country's annual budget for the just-started fiscal year has left ordinary citizens struggling to make ends meet. From the classroom to the construction site, every sector has been slapped with more taxes.

The amended finance bill, recently approved by the National Assembly, has withdrawn tax exemptions on various sectors, causing prices to go through the roof. While the proposed bill suggested a 10 per cent sales tax on books and stationery items, the amended version exempted books but still left families burdened by the cost of other school supplies.

"It's becoming impossible to live here," says Zeeshan, a local resident. "The price of loose milk has crossed Rs200. All essential commodities have increased in price. The rising electricity, gas and fuel costs have forced me to use a bike instead of a car."

For many, the most shocking changes came in the form of taxes on corporate dairy farming and fuel. The dairy farming and

processing sector, earlier exempted from additional taxes, now faces 18pc General Sales Tax, driving up the prices of milk and dairy products.

Economists term new budget fundamentally unjust, criticise govt for burdening salaried class, ignoring those outside tax net.

The levy on petroleum products has been raised from Rs60 to Rs70 per litre, and this extra Rs10 will be added to the fuel prices sometime later this fiscal year, putting additional pressure on transportation costs.

The final bill also imposes a 10pc to 12pc tax on builders' and developers' profits. A Rs2 per kg tax on cement will significantly increase construction cost, making owning a home an unattainable dream for many.

A closer look at the budget reveals several direct and indirect taxes that disproportionately affect the lower and middle classes. The 10pc sales tax on stationery items — like notebooks, pencils, pens, ink, staplers, etc — has forced families to cut back on

other essential expenses to afford their children's education.

Additionally, the Federal Excise Duty on international travel has made it more expensive for those needing to travel for medical treatment or religious pilgrimages.

Taxing the taxed

Economic experts warn that the current tax strategy, which relies heavily on increasing taxes for those already within the tax net while neglecting broader tax reforms, is unsustainable.

"No sane voice can dispute that Pakistan urgently needs to improve its tax-to-GDP ratio," says Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri, an expert on political economy and sustainable development.

"In this context, the finance bill envisages some bold measures to improve this ratio. However, the effectiveness of taxation measures is not solely judged by the amount collected, as the quality of taxation — whether it is regressive or progressive —

and the broadening of the tax base is equally crucial,” he explains.

He stresses that taxation should redistribute income, transferring wealth from the affluent to the underprivileged. The current budget, however, targets the salaried class while excluding more affluent segments, he says.

“This approach exacerbates income inequalities,” he says, highlighting the importance of clear communication from the government about the benefits funded by taxpayers’ money. “In the absence of it, the government may reduce its fiscal deficit, but it will increase trust deficit between citizens and the government,” he believes.

Lack of strategy

Dr Ijaz Nabi, an economist working as country director for the International Growth Centre, expresses disappointment with the budget, noting that it lacks a comprehensive strategy for long-term economic stabilisation.

“If we see the latest budget, it reflects that we have to bring economic stabilisation by putting our fiscal house in order. It is a good thing. But for this, we need a comprehensive strategy related to structural reforms leading to stabilisation. These reforms always help to end instability. But the budget, in this context, has no strategy,” he explains.



Dr Nabi criticises the light taxation of real estate and retail markets and the increased burden on the export sector, which is already struggling. “We were leading in the export-to-GDP ratio in the 90s. But the Afghan war, the financial aid and other changing factors forced people to invest in real estate and wholesale businesses instead of industry, manufacturing, etc,” he says, insisting that the export sector shouldn’t have been taxed since the situation is already unwell. He says the budget also misses the strategy on increasing agriculture produce and criticises the government for increasing electricity tariff instead of plugging massive power theft and technical losses (almost 25 to 30pc).

Talking to Dawn, economist Dr Sajid Amin describes the budget as unfair,

stressing that despite being under an IMF programme, sectors like real estate, retail, and agriculture could have been taxed more effectively.

“This budget violates fundamentals of tax justice,” Dr Amin says and criticises the government for burdening the salaried class and existing taxpayers, ignoring those outside the tax net.

He believes the budget will heap more misery on common, as the expanding scope of GST will lead to inflation. “The entire focus of the budget is on stability. Therefore, it is an IMF budget and not for the common person,” he says, predicting that inflation will surge to 18pc in the coming days due to rising energy prices.

Courtesy Dawn



Government borrows Rs3.2tr in 45 days



By Shahid Iqbal

The government borrowed Rs3.2 trillion from scheduled banks from May 15 to June 28 of the fiscal year 2023-24, despite a 30 per cent growth in revenue generation.

The latest State Bank data shows that the government borrowed Rs71.8bn per day during the period, reflecting the government's massive spending of the government.

In the budget for FY25, the government has resorted to heavy taxation in order to generate 40 per cent more revenue than what it did the previous fiscal year.

Although the government has been hinting at imposing more taxes to increase revenue, there seems to be little effort to curb spending in order to avoid borrowing.

Per day borrowing stood at Rs72bn for the period

Government borrowing from scheduled banks reached a record high of Rs8.564tr during FY24, more than twice the Rs3.716tr it borrowed during FY23.

The borrowing for the last 45 days of FY24 — Rs3.2tr — was incidentally close to the entire borrowing in FY23. These borrowings come at a staggering cost since the interest rate is as high as 22pc.

Lavish spending

The data shows that the government borrowed Rs6.55tr for domestic debt servicing during the year.

The government has been exhorting the nation to be ready for more sacrifices in the wake of ongoing talks with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), but has shown reluctance to stop its lavish spending.

The economy is under severe pressure since fixed investments have gone down to a 50-year low. The government slashes the development programme every year while the private sector's borrowings from banks were negligible due to a whopping 22 per cent interest rate.

All these factors combined to restrict the growth rate to a miserable 2.38pc.

The government has set a 3.5pc growth target for FY25, but a ballooning debt servicing liability, a high interest rate despite low inflation and a slump in economic activities by the private sector is unlikely to allow economic managers to reach the target.

Govt raises Rs442bn at slightly reduced rates

The government raised Rs442 billion against the target of Rs150bn through the auction of treasury bills on Wednesday.

The cut-off yields on the papers were reduced by 10 basis points for three months to 20.04 per cent and 18 basis points to 19.78pc for six-month T-bills. The rate on 12-month papers was kept unchanged at 18.54pc.

The government raised Rs74.6bn for three-month, Rs158.3bn for six-month and Rs121.4bn for 12-month papers. An amount of Rs87.4bn was raised through a non-bidding process.

Boeing to plead guilty to criminal fraud charge



By Natalie Sherman

Boeing has agreed to plead guilty to a criminal fraud conspiracy charge after the US found the company violated a deal meant to reform it after two fatal crashes by its 737 Max planes that killed 346 passengers and crew.

The Department of Justice (DoJ) said the plane-maker had also agreed to pay a criminal fine of \$243.6m (£190m).

However, the families of the people who died on the flights five years ago have criticised it as a "sweetheart deal" that would allow Boeing to avoid full responsibility for the deaths. One called it an "atrocious abomination".

The settlement must now be approved by a US judge.

By pleading guilty, Boeing will avoid the spectacle of a criminal trial - something that victims' families have been pressing for.

The company has been in crisis over its safety record since two near-identical crashes involving 737 Max aircraft in 2018 and 2019. It led to the global grounding of the plane for more than a year.

In 2021, prosecutors charged Boeing with one count of conspiracy to defraud regulators, alleging it had deceived the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) about its MCAS flight control system, which was implicated in both crashes.

It agreed not to prosecute Boeing if the company paid a penalty and successfully completed a three-year period of increased monitoring and reporting.

But in January, shortly before that period was due to end, a door panel in a Boeing plane operated by Alaska Airlines blew out soon after take-off and forced the jet to land.

No-one was injured during the incident but it intensified scrutiny over how much progress Boeing had made on improving its safety and quality record.

In May, the DoJ said it had found Boeing had violated the terms of the agreement, opening up the possibility of prosecution.

Boeing's decision to plead guilty is still a significant black mark for the firm because it means that the company - which is a

prominent military contractor for the US government - now has a criminal record. It is also one of the world's two biggest manufacturers of commercial jets.

It is not immediately clear how the criminal record will affect the firm's contracting business. The government typically bars or suspends firms with records from participating in bids, but can grant waivers.

Paul Cassell, a lawyer representing some of the families of people killed on the 2018 and 2019 flights, said: "This sweetheart deal fails to recognise that because of Boeing's conspiracy, 346 people died.

"Through crafty lawyering between Boeing and DoJ, the deadly consequences of Boeing's crime are being hidden."

He called on the judge assessing the deal to "reject this inappropriate plea and simply set the matter for a public trial, so that all the facts surrounding the case will be aired in a fair and open forum before a jury".

In a letter to the government in June, Mr Cassell had urged the DoJ to fine Boeing more than \$24bn.

Zipporah Kuria who lost her father Joseph in one of the fatal crashes, said the plea was an "atrocious abomination".

"Miscarriage of justice is a gross understatement in describing this," she said. "I hope that, God forbid, if this happens again the DoJ is reminded that it had the opportunity to do something meaningful and instead chose not to."

Ed Pierson, executive director of Foundation for Aviation Safety and a former senior manager at Boeing, said the plea was "seriously disappointing" and "a terrible deal for justice".

"Instead of holding individuals accountable, they're just basically giving them another get out of jail free card," he said.

The DoJ said the deal did not grant immunity to individuals and only addressed corporate actions that occurred before the 737 Max crashes.

A Boeing 737 Max plane operated by Indonesia's Lion Air crashed in late October 2018 shortly after take-off, killing all 189 people on board. Just months later, an Ethiopian Airlines plane crashed, killing all 157 passengers and crew.

In the 2021 deal, Boeing also agreed to pay \$2.5bn to resolve the matter, including a \$243m criminal penalty and \$500m to a victims' fund.

The deal outraged family members, who

were not consulted on the terms and have called for the company to stand trial.

Senior staff at the DoJ recommended in favour of prosecution, CBS News, the BBC's US news partner reported in late June.

At a hearing in June, Senator Richard Blumenthal said he believed there was "near overwhelming evidence" that prosecution should be pursued.

Lawyers for family members said the DoJ was worried it did not have a strong case against the firm.

Mark Forkner, a former Boeing technical pilot who was the only person to face criminal charges arising from the incident, was acquitted by a jury in 2022. His lawyers had argued he was being used as a scapegoat.

Mark Cohen, a professor emeritus at Vanderbilt University, who has studied corporate punishments, said prosecutors often prefer plea deals or deferred prosecution agreements, which allow them to avoid the risk of a trial and can give the government greater power over a company than a typical sentence.

"Because it's easier to get than going to trial, it may ease the burden on the prosecutor but the prosecutor also may believe it's a better sanction [because] they may be able to impose requirements that aren't normally

in sentencing guidelines," he said.

In this case, Boeing has agreed to invest \$455m in "compliance and safety programs" and submit to oversight by an independent monitor for three years.

Prof Cohen said there was little doubt that Boeing's status as a key government contractor played a role in determining how to proceed.

"They've got to think about the collateral consequences," he said. "You don't take these kinds of cases lightly."

The issues with MCAS were not Boeing's first brush with the law.

It has also paid millions in penalties to the Federal Aviation Administration since 2015 to resolve a series of claims of improper manufacturing and other issues.

The company also continues to face investigations and lawsuits sparked by the incident on the January Alaska Airlines flight.

Separately, the Federal Aviation Administration on Monday said it had ordered inspections of 2,600 737 planes to address reports that oxygen generators on the planes were shifting out of position.

The situation could lead oxygen masks to fail in the event that a plane lost pressure, the FAA said.

Courtesy BBC



Comparing the Education Structure of Pakistan with the World, Especially Bangladesh



By Habib Hanzalah

There can be no doubt that education is the key to the growth and progress of any nation. It teaches skills and knowledge that enable members of society to play a constructive role and encourages innovation, which in turn helps advance the economy. A strong educational structure ensures individual health but, above all, it is crucial in developing societies and nations. This article under discussion seeks to highlight the education structure of Pakistani province alongside to that of world with special emphasis on Bangladesh focused on the literacy rates, structural characteristics and the role of technology in relation to education.

Literacy rates across the world are widely used as an essential measuring stick of people's education levels and human development. UNESCO learning has it that nations such as Japan and United States are within the leaders in global literacy. The literacy standard of the Japanese society can be estimated to be 99% due to the effective educational system that is characterized by high quality, discipline and School's accessibility for everybody. The United States also has high literacy; it is 99% of the overall population and shows great education invest-

ments, but they also have issues with equality in education and quality differences among various social classes.

On the other hand, developed countries experience high literacy levels and enhanced standards of education while, on the other hand, developing countries experience low literacy levels. For example, according to the literacy rate, literacy in Pakistan stands at approximately 59 percent. 37%, which is substantially lower than the global mark of 86%. 3% of adult population of 15 years and older. This puts Pakistan in the lowly category in the international league, underlining the fact that education calls for change and betterment in this area.

Another country that has a cultural and historical connection with Pakistan is Bangladesh that has experienced exemplary developments in the domain of educational reforms in the past few decades. Currently, Bangladesh holds a literacy rate around 74 percent as of the year 2020. Its score stands at 9%, compared to a very low score of 4% for Pakistan. These progress can be owed to few successful strategies such as the National Education Policy and the Primary Education

Development Programme. The latter has been realized through such efforts as the expansion of education access, incorporation of infrastructural improvements, and the incorporation of equity for females.

Education was a crucial sector to get improvement in Bangladesh and the basic education enrolment rates, are 98% in the primary schooling level while in the same level of schooling, in Pakistan it is 68% (UNESCO, 2020). The country has also the 'favourable' rate of gender parity in education in the region. According to a figure derived from World Bank data, Bangladesh's GPI of primary education stands at 1. This is conformed by a percentage of 04 suggesting that there are more females within primary school learners as opposed to the male learners. This is in contrast to an overall gender perspective index of 0 of Pakistan. Persons aged 85 years and above were 88, while COVs were 1,224; the gender gap observed was quite large. This factor poses a problem to the quality of education, nevertheless, the government of Bangladesh is not relenting in tackling this problem through new curriculum emphases, such as competency-based ones and various elaborate teacher training initiatives.

Pakistan's education system is divided into five levels: elementary or grade school that comprises of grade 1 to grade 5, junior high or middle school accommodating grade 6 to grade 8, senior high or high school with grade 9 to grade 10, collegiate level which comprises of a junior college or intermediate school with grade 11 to grade 12 and tertiary education starting with undergraduate level and followed by postgraduate. Even today there are some shortcomings concerning literacy, sex inequity, structural requirement, and dropout ratio that are challenging the successful completion of this reformatory system.

Among the main challenges that must be addressed include the following: One of the biggest problems is the distribution of resources. Pakistan spends around 2.4% for education it still has 9% of its GDP allocated towards the attainment of this goal which is still below the world average. 9% (World Bank). Another clear example of this deficiency is a shortage of schools, inveterate insufficient funding for teacher trainings, and excessive student teachers' ratios. However, there are other challenges which include socio-cultural barriers and they include economic barriers in Education and these rebound especially on girl child and children from rural areas.

Education levels and their quality in Pakistan can also be an issue of concern. Most schools in these countries and regions have minimal provisions and there is a critical teacher-delinquency. The inclusion of curriculum content exposes the topic as wanting the ability to prepare student for modern world employment. In addition, examination system learning is less based on comprehension and critical thinking is also an issue.

At the international level, the use of ICT and technology in learning system has revolutionized. Incidences such as those shown in South Korea and Finland are prove that technological integration has improved learning outcomes. For instance, for South Korea that enjoys a 97% literacy level, there is enhanced adoption of Information technology on e-learning and online education. 9%. The Finnish education system has adopted technology in education that facilitates the innovative pedagogy with learning materials and

content that is student centred and interactive.

The use of technology has taken pace particularly in the systems of education in Bangladesh as it is being incorporated more and more these days. Some of the public policies launched by the government are aimed at equipping schools with educational technology, including providing digital devices and connecting schools, especially in the Regions, to the internet. These efforts are aimed at narrowing down the education gap that is being experienced by students through providing quality education encouraged by the use of digital gadgets.



On the other hand, educational technology takes time to develop in Pakistan as compared to developed countries. While there are some worthwhile attempts to introduce technologies in schools. However, the results of such tries are hindered by poor infrastructures and noble human resource. Nonetheless, COVID-19 has spurred the growth of e-learning, thus suggesting the existence of technological solutions that can enhance learning processes and increase enrolment rates.

It is perhaps obvious to say that education is fundamental for the development of a nation and for the emancipation of a nation's population. Although serving education ladder in Pakistan is full of problems and drawbacks the experience of such country as Bangladesh can be inspirational where a lot of improvement has been made due to correct policy measures and efficient utilization of resources. Applica-

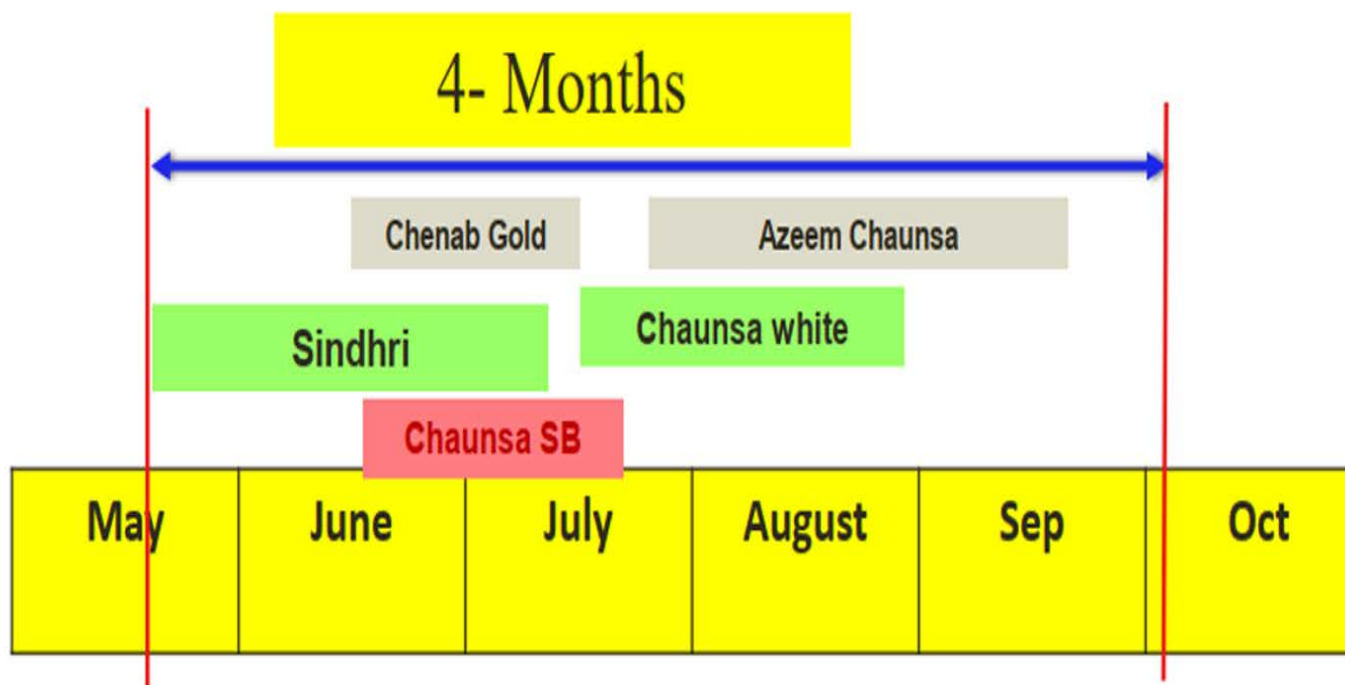
tion: Currently, Pakistan is facing numerous challenges in its efforts to improve its education system and to raise the standards of its schools and universities. For this reason, Pakistan should consider the following steps: Firstly, the country must provide more funds for the education sector and gender parity, Secondly, impress the significance of training for teachers, and Thirdly, it needs to emphasize on the application of new technologies of education. In this way, Pakistan can increase the literacy level, decrease the level of dropouts, and befittingly equip its people with the skills appropriate for the contemporary society.

Technology in classroom cannot remove or do away with the role of a teacher, but any teacher with technology can make do with the other teacher without technology. By adapting this philosophy, the country of Pakistan will indeed be important to play a significant role in changing their education system and enhance the future generations.

References:

1. UNESCO. "Global Education Monitoring Report 2020."
2. World Bank. "Education Statistics."
3. Government of Pakistan. "Pakistan Education Statistics 2019-2020."
4. Government of Bangladesh. "National Education Policy 2010."
5. World Economic Forum. "Global Gender Gap Report 2020."
6. PISA. "Programme for International Student Assessment 2018 Results."

Pakistan Mangoes



Mango holds a prominent position in horticultural productivity of Pakistan. It is popularly known as “King of fruits”. It is the national fruit of Pakistan and 2nd most important fruit crop after citrus in terms of area under cultivation and production. Pakistani mangoes are internationally famous for their sweetness, juiciness, nutrition and unique flavor. They are consumed as fresh fruits and processed to develop value added products such as jams, pickles, juices, nectars, squashes, jams, jellies, pulp, concentrates etc. Pakistan produces about 1.8 million tons of mangoes. The main production areas are Sindh and Punjab. Many varieties are produced in the country viz; Chounsa, Sindhri, Langra, Anwar Ratool, Dusehri, Fajri, Bangan Pali, Saroli and several others. The mango season in Pakistan extends for five months starting from mid-May in Sindh to late September in Punjab. In terms of production Pakistan is rated as a 5th top producing country and 7th top exporting country of mango. The top export markets of Pakistani mangoes are Kazakhstan, UAE, UK, Uzbekistan and Oman and European Union.

- Sindhri
- Fajri
- Sunera
- Azeem Chaunsa

Langra

Langra mango Pakistan is one of the most experienced varieties of Mango from South Punjab. It is available from May to July, Langra mango is greenish and its size varies from medium to large. Its fat oval shape is iconic, fiber-less flesh, dark yellow and has a sweet aroma.

- Fruit remain green on ripening
- Regular fruiting with good yield
- Scanty fiber in pulp & under peel
- Produce good crop in salty soil



Major Mangoes

- Langra
- Dusehri
- Almas
- Lal Badshah
- Anwar Ratol
- Neelum
- Gulab Khas
- Chenab Gold
- Chaunsa
- Saroli
- Malda
- Totapuri

Chaunsa

Chaunsa is mainly produced in Multan and Sahiwal in Pakistan. This variation of mango was initially made prominent by Sher Shah Suri in the Indian subcontinent. This mango mostly comes with slightly squashed base and has identical shoulders.

- It has a rich yellow pulp and greenish yellow skin
- Delicious in taste & medium fiber in pulp
- Excellent for pulp industry



Safaid Chaunsa

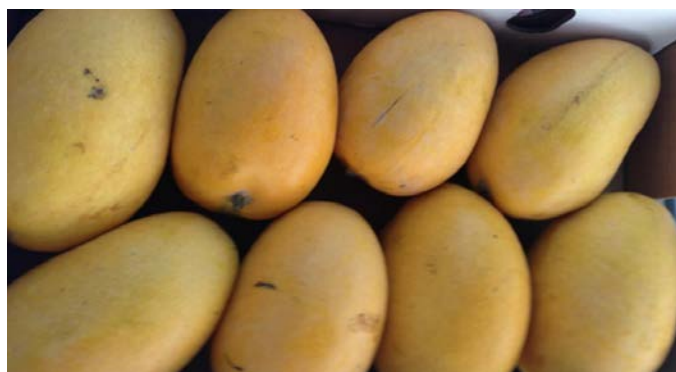
The golden-yellowish Multani White Chaunsa is known to be as King of Mangoes among all the Mangoes. As the Mango is beautiful in color, exceptionally Sweet, Uniquely Pleasant Taste and Super Strong Aroma with a smooth flesh content.

- Late variety with large fruit size
- Pulp compact with bright peel color
- Excellent storage and shelf life.
- 16% of the area under cultivation
- Excellent on tree storage



Azeem Chaunsa

Azeem Chaunsa, is smaller than Safaid Chaunsa in size, and somewhat round in shape but it too has compact flesh and thus has enhanced shelf life, a characteristic that makes it suitable choice for export to European countries.



- High yielding, Late variety with medium Fruit
- Storage life > 5week and Shelf life > 6 days
- Maturity time Mid Aug- Mid Sept
- Resistant to fruit fly and windstorm
- Excellent on tree storage ability



Sindhri

Sindhri is a leading variety of mango from Sindh with its origins in a town of the same name in Mirpur Khas District. It is a large, oval-shaped mango with yellowish skin, is low in fiber, and is highly aromatic.

- Fruit size large, attractive in color
- Pulp is firm and compact
- Excellent Storage & shelf life
- Tree yield heavy crop every year
- 18% of the area is covered by this variety



Dasheri

Pakistani Dussheri mango is hands-down much sweeter, pulpier and fragrant than the Indian Alphonso. Mango lovers are very sensitive about this mango variety and it is steeped in tradition in Northern India and Pakistan.

- Early in ripening with heavy bearing
- Regular in bearing.
- Almost available at every farm throughout Punjab
- Less than 3% area is under cultivation

What now for England, Southgate & Kane after same old pain?



By Phil McNulty

England manager Gareth Southgate stood motionless and alone with his thoughts as a familiar scene unfolded in front of him and his players at Berlin's historic Olympiastadion.

The credits were rolling on another tale of gallant England defeat, with Spain celebrating a fully deserved 2-1 win as Euro 2024 got the winners it deserved in the shape of Luis de la Fuente's outstanding team.

For Southgate, who then moved to console his devastated players, it was a fourth successive major tournament when England went close but not close enough - the rinse-and-repeat theme of his eight years as manager.

It may seem harsh to describe Southgate and England as a nearly manager and a nearly team, but the consistent inability to get over the line when opportunities such as this present themselves, as they have in each of those tournaments, leave them open to those charges.

'Southgate left to face brutal reality - Spain were too good'

Standing in close attendance to Southgate was crestfallen England captain Harry Kane at the end of a contrary Euro 2024 campaign. Though he shared the Golden Boot, Kane performed in such laboured fashion it was difficult to avoid the conclusion that time was catching up with the team's all-time record goalscorer.

Kane - a fitness doubt coming into the tournament - scored three goals at Euro 2024 but was so far off the standards he has set himself in a stellar career that it was no surprise when he was replaced by Ollie Watkins after 61 minutes. England's fans, for their part, had loudly demanded the Aston Villa striker's introduction from early in the second half.

While Southgate has had those four attempts at ending a sequence without success for the men's team that will

now stand at 60 years by the time the 2026 World Cup comes around, another chance for Kane to win the first trophy of his career has passed painfully by.

They will both have much to ponder as England fly home at the end of a tournament in which they have rarely hit the heights. Having flown by the seat of their pants as they came within 86 seconds of defeat against Slovakia in the last 16, they came from behind to beat Switzerland on penalties in the last eight, then dragged back another deficit to overcome the Netherlands to reach this final.

Southgate said he believed in dreams the night before the final but was left to face only brutal reality as Spain simply proved too good for England. There is no shame in that - but there was a gulf between the teams when measured in class and creativity that was stark and chastening.

England could not perform their escape act against this impressive Spain

side. There was to be no late comeback despite substitute Cole Palmer cancelling out Nico Williams' opener before Mikel Oyarzabal's winner four minutes from time.

It was a chance for history and immortality for Southgate and England - a tilt at redemption following the Euro 2020 final defeat by Italy on penalties at Wembley. Instead, it was the same old story.

England's latest disappointment can be added to that loss as well as the World Cup semi-final defeat by Croatia in 2018 and the last-eight reverse to France at the 2022 World Cup.



Southgate, understandably, said this was not the time to discuss his future but it would be a surprise if he extended his stay into a fifth tournament given four have gone by without success.

He deserves credit and respect for the manner in which he has restored England to the later rounds of major tournaments while repairing a badly damaged reputation, but it is also hard to escape the sense it may now be time for fresh voices to revitalise a squad that is rich in promise but has come up short too often.

Euro 2024 has not been easy for Southgate, despite reaching the final.

As someone who has always had a keen antennae for the dangers of becoming a divisive force and a negative influence on England, Southgate was clearly wounded by the personal abuse he received, including having three plastic beer cups thrown in his direction after the draw with Slovenia.

The fractures with England's supporters were healed by passage into the final, but this will all come into his decision-making process over the coming days.

'The mainstay, leader and inspiration - now there are questions over Kane'

In a development no-one saw coming at the start of Euro 2024, there must also be questions over Kane - the mainstay, leader and inspiration of the Southgate era.

Was Euro 2024 simply an ill-timed tournament for a world-class player struggling at the end of a long season with Bayern Munich and carrying an injury - or was it the first significant sign that his best years are behind him?

Kane's performances in Germany actually made a case for his exclusion against Spain after Watkins' stunning contribution in the semi-final, but dropping your captain with a proven track record as a match-winner for a European Championship final is easy to talk about but very difficult to do.

And given Kane's history, he was still the player Southgate would want the big chance to fall to. The problem was Kane's lack of mobility and leg-weary body language meant he never got into any serious scoring positions.

The striker who has scored 66 times for England only touched the ball 13 times in Berlin, leaving Southgate to make the

choice many would have regarded as unthinkable before Euro 2024 by hauling him off with the game still finely balanced.

Kane's lack of stamina can be summed by the damning statistic that this was the fifth time he was substituted here in Germany. He looks like a player in need of a long rest to rediscover his lost spark.

England have been largely indifferent in Germany, so it is a tribute to the resilience Southgate has instilled and the individual brilliance of Jude Bellingham, Bukayo Saka and Watkins that they fought their way through to a final. They were nowhere near their best but this was still a creditable achievement.

Southgate spoke about the physical issues that undermined England's squad but the manager got his midfield wrong for the first three games - including the failed "experiment" of using Trent Alexander-Arnold in an unaccustomed role, then replacing Conor Gallagher at half-time against Slovenia.

The switch to a three-man defensive system, then reverting to a back four against Spain, worked up to a point but hinted at muddled thinking.

Irrespective of whether Southgate stays or goes, England's squad may need further adjusting with Kyle Walker and Kieran Trippier, now 34 and 33 respectively, surely nearing the end of their international careers.

There is rich promise and great hope in the younger brigade such as Bellingham, Phil Foden, Kobbie Mainoo, Cole Palmer, Anthony Gordon and Adam Wharton, while defender John Stones and goalkeeper Jordan Pickford were near flawless in Germany.

Whether Southgate is around to continue England's building process must be in serious doubt, while Kane's fitness and contribution will be under close scrutiny after such a poor tournament.

Southgate admitted on the eve of the Euro 2024 final that he wanted to win "so badly it hurts" - but both he and England were once again left to feel the same old pain of defeat.

Courtesy BBC

'Superstar' Yamal makes more history with Euros triumph

By Emlyn Begley

Breaking Pele's 66-year-old record and achieving things Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo could only have dreamed of at his age.

It is fair to say Lamine Yamal has shaken up the game of football in the past year - and he reached the pinnacle on Sunday as he became the youngest player to win a European Championship or World Cup - at the age of 17 years and one day.

The Barcelona winger set up Nico Williams' opener in their 2-1 Euro 2024 final win over England - and forced Jordan Pickford into two fine saves.

Nobody was involved in more Euro 2024 goals than Yamal - with one goal and four assists.

Nobody has set up more goals in a single European Championship since records began in 1980.

And nobody has ever been directly involved in goals in a quarter-final, semi-final and final before Yamal achieved the feat.

Unsurprisingly, he was named the tournament's Young Player of the Tournament.

"I am very happy, this is a dream," said Yamal. "I'm looking forward to returning to Spain and celebrating with all the fans. It's the best birthday present ever."

Former England defender Rio Ferdinand said the teenager was a "sensation" and an "elite player".

"He was a star before this tournament, but he's a superstar now," he added.

In the last few weeks Yamal became the youngest person to play at the Euros, to assist a goal at the Euros and to score a goal at the Euros.

It is not just potential, he is already one of the most exciting players in the world.

Former Spain midfielder Juan Mata, working on BBC One, said: "I was having dinner yesterday with [Barcelona boss]



Xavi and he told me he hasn't seen a player of this quality."

That is the Xavi who played alongside the legendary Messi at Barcelona.

"I don't like to make comparisons between players or compare them with Messi, but I think the sky is the limit for this kid," added Mata.

So what has Barcelona winger Yamal, who turned 17 on Saturday, achieved so far in his career - and why is it so special?

How rare has Yamal's breakthrough been?

Before turning 17, Yamal had played 51 times for Barcelona, scoring seven goals and setting up another seven.

For Spain he now has 14 appearances, three goals and seven assists.

By comparison, neither Argentina's Messi nor Portugal's Ronaldo - the two greatest players of this generation - had played a single first-team game for club or country when they were 16.

And when we look at the players expected to replace Messi and Ronaldo as Ballon

d'Or rivals in the future - France's Kylian Mbappe and Norway's Erling Haaland - their stats at this age cannot compare to Yamal either.

Mbappe had played four games for Monaco, making one assist before turning 17, while Haaland had played 23 times in Norway for second-tier Bryne and top-flight Molde, scoring once.

Even one of the most famous players to make their breakthrough at 16, Wayne Rooney, had only played 10 times for Everton and scored three goals before reaching 17.

The club records Yamal has broken

Not all of Yamal's appearances have come aged 16... because he was even younger when he made his Barcelona debut.

At 15 years and 290 days he became Barcelona's youngest player in the La Liga era when he replaced Gavi with six minutes to go in a 4-0 win over Real Betis on 29 April 2023. On 20 August, aged 16 years and 38 days, he became the youngest player since 1939 to start a La Liga game when he lined up in a 2-0 win over Cadiz.

Just a week later he became the youngest player to assist a La Liga goal in the 21st century when he crossed for Gavi to head in during a 4-3 win at Villarreal.

He became the youngest player to start a game in the Champions League, at 16 and 83 days, in a 1-0 win at Porto on 4 October.

Four days later he became the youngest goalscorer in La Liga history when he netted in the first half of a 2-2 draw at Granada.

He became the youngest player to play in El Clasico, the youngest to set up a Champions League goal, aged 16 years and 153 days at Antwerp, and the youngest player and scorer in the Spanish Super Cup.

Yamal also became the youngest player to score in the Spanish Cup this century, the youngest to score twice in a La Liga game, the youngest player in a Champions League knockout game and then a quarter-final.

Unsurprisingly he is the youngest player to make 50 appearances for Barcelona and the youngest to play 10 Champions League games. Even Yamal could not match the records of Armand Martinez Sagi, though. He was Barcelona's youngest ever player and scorer at the age of 14 in the Catalan Championship in 1920 - nine years before Spain had a national league.

Among the few major records he has missed out on are youngest player in the Champions League (Youssef Moukoko was 16 years and 18 days for Borussia Dortmund against Zenit St Petersburg in 2020) or La Liga (Luka Romero was 15 years and 219 days old when he appeared for Mallorca against Real Madrid in 2020).

He has yet to net in the Champions League and will not have the chance to break Ansu Fati's record as youngest scorer, aged 17 years and 40 days for Barcelona against Inter Milan in 2019, in that tournament now.

The Spain records Yamal has broken

On 8 September 2023, Yamal became Spain's youngest player and goalscorer in the same game - a 7-1 win over Georgia in Euro 2024 qualifying.

He was aged 16 years and 57 days when he

replaced Dani Olmo just before half-time. That was before he had even scored for Barcelona.

Only Martin Odegaard, who was 15 years and 300 days when he played for Norway in 2014, has been younger while playing a European Championship qualifier.

In this summer's finals, Yamal has broken nearly every record there is to break - even though he has been doing school homework during some of his downtime in Germany.



He became the first 16-year-old to play at a men's Euros when he started their group opener against Croatia.

Yamal also set up Dani Carvajal's goal for 3-0 in that game, making him the youngest to assist in Euros history.

In the semi-final against France he became the youngest goalscorer in European Championship history - aged 16 years and 362 days.

In that game he passed two Pele landmarks that have stood since 1958 - the youngest player to score at a Euros or World Cup - and the youngest to feature in the semi-finals of either. And then he broke Pele's record as the youngest player in either final.

The only quirky milestone he missed out on was the chance to become the first 16-year-old and the first 17-year-old to score at a Euros.

He turned 17 the day before the final - and

the previous youngest Euros goalscorer was Johan Vonlanthen at the age of 18.

Since his debut in September 2023, Yamal has been involved in more goals for Spain than anyone else (three goals, seven assists)

What about 'that' photo?

A photo has been doing the rounds from a charity calendar photoshoot taken at Barcelona's Nou Camp in 2007.

In it, the 20-year-old Messi - who would go

on to become the club's all-time leading goalscorer and footballing icon - held baby Yamal and helped him have a bath.

The shoot came about after Unicef did a raffle in the town of Mataro where Lamine's family lived.

Photographer Joan Monfort, a freelancer for the Associated Press, only discovered last week that the baby in the picture was Yamal.

"He [Messi] was coming out of the locker room and suddenly he finds himself in another locker room with a plastic tub full of water and a baby in it. It was complicated - he didn't even know how to hold him at first," recalled Monfort.

Yamal already looks like he could go on to become a Barcelona legend himself. So, to follow in that tradition, no pressure on any baby he has a photoshoot with then.

Courtesy BBC

Deeyah Khan: The Journey as a Filmmaker has been tough but Rewarding

By Amna Iqbal

Deeyah Khan has achieved great success in the world of film and documentaries. Particularly through her work that focuses on social challenges in the UK and the USA. Khan is a Norwegian filmmaker and human rights activist with roots from both Pakistan and Afghanistan.

During my interview with her, she shares her experiences, challenges, and what has inspired her and shaped her work as a filmmaker.

"I have been keen on providing an authentic perspective through the documentaries I have made to give more depth to the stories I wanted to tell," says Khan.

"Despite this, there have been some tough decisions along the way to be able to publish my work exactly as I wanted," she explains. Khan had no experience as a filmmaker when she first started her career. She also felt that production houses often wanted to pigeonhole her rather than give her the opportunity to develop in the film world. This was especially evident when she worked on the documentary "Banaz – A Love Story," which revolved around the honor killing of a young British-Kurdish girl.

"Several production houses tried to limit me to stereotypical topics like arranged marriage because I had a minority background, instead of giving me the opportunity to explore other themes and build experience as a filmmaker, Khan explains.

"I didn't think it was fair to limit people with minority backgrounds to covering stereotypical themes," she adds.

"However, I did not let this stop me and decided to follow my own path. It was also during this period that I started my own production company, Fuuse," says Khan.

Gains Great Recognition

Today, through her own production team, she has produced several documentaries focusing on domestic violence and extremism, which have gained great recognition both at home in Norway and internationally, especially due to the depth Deeyah brings to these issues. Why has it been so important for you to provide a perspective that is far more authentic than what we see from other filmmakers?

"I am very interested in people and very curious about them. This drives me to understand them better and provide a solid understanding to their challenge"

"At the same time, this gives me an opportunity to try to follow the issue I am working on and how the people involved develop," Khan adds.

A Neo-Nazis change at heart

She says that through the work on the documentary "White Right: Meeting the Enemy," one of the neo-Nazi members decided to no longer identify as a neo-Nazi. Seeing such



changes along the way has been special for Khan, especially when this person has now also become a close friend of hers after the documentary.

"It is with such openness and depth that one can contribute to a real and authentic documentary," she explains. This curiosity and openness also stem from Khan's cultural background, of which she is very proud.

Cultural Heritage through Filmmaking

You often tend to address topics that are particularly relevant in the UK and the USA in your documentaries. Do you do this consciously?

"Both." I have had the most experience living in the UK and the USA, therefore covering topics that are significant here comes naturally. Additionally, as I do have experience from living in these two countries it has made me more confident to work on the complexity of the issues here " Khan explains. As your roots are from Pakistan and Afghanistan, do you feel that your background has influenced the way you work with your projects?

"My cultural background has definitely influenced some of my approaches to the projects I have worked on, especially because I have a cultural background where one is marked by differences, understanding, and curiosity – this has probably been a driving force for how I work with people today," she says.

Could you ever imagine working on projects related to Afghanistan or Pakistan?

"It would probably be interesting, but my narrative would still be limited – as I do not have "hands on" experience with the issues from the area. I do not have the experience of living in the area and neither do I have the depth understanding of the issues, therefore I would be unable to provide an authentic perspective which is important for me, she explains.

However, she does not overlook that she could be open to opportunities with projects focusing on Afghanistan and Pakistan if an opportunity occurs.

Remembering Shannen Doherty, the Beverly Hills 'badass'



By Darlene Superville and Christina A. Cassidy

Fans are mourning US actress Shannen Doherty, who has died the age of 53 of cancer.

"It is with a heavy heart that I confirm the passing of actress Shannen Doherty," her publicist, Leslie Sloane said.

Doherty enjoyed a screen career spanning four decades as the star of hit TV shows like Beverly Hills 90210 and Charmed.

Although Doherty and the characters she played usually seemed to inhabit a glossier, more beautiful world, she was always someone viewers could relate to on screen, and was a self-proclaimed "badass" in real life.

The Memphis-born star began acting as a child with appearances in TV series such as Voyagers, Our House and Father Murphy, before joining the cast of the long-running Little House on the Prairie as Jenny Wilder at the age of 11 in 1982.

Her first major film role came in 1985 with Girls Just Want to Have Fun, which also

starred Sarah Jessica Parker and Helen Hunt.

Three years later, she played Heather Duke, a member of the high school clique in cult 1988 teen drama Heathers, starring alongside Winona Ryder, Lisanne Falk and Kim Walker.

When a rebooted television series was commissioned in 2016, Doherty played the mother of one of the new generation of Heathers.

In 1990, Doherty landed the biggest role of her career - as Brenda Walsh in the original Beverly Hills, 90210.

The TV series followed a group of teenagers as they dealt with relationship and family issues that were relatable beyond the glamorous Beverly Hills setting.

While working on the show in the 1990s, she developed a reputation as something of a troublemaker, with reports accusing her of heated feuds with her fellow actors.

"There were times when we wanted to claw each other's eyes out," Doherty's co-star Jennie Garth admitted in 2014. But the pair became close friends as they grew older.

Doherty admitted she struggled to handle the fame. "I was very confused back then about what I wanted for myself, and the attention was way too much," she said. "I didn't always handle it that well.

"And in truth, I was just shooting myself in the foot because the more I fought it, the more the celebrity took over versus the actor, and then the press ran with it."

She told another interviewer: "Maybe my career would have taken a different direction if I'd been wiser and older, but I wasn't. I started young and I got 90210 kind of success very early, and it came at a time in my life where I was a petrified kid."

Doherty left 90210 after four seasons, with Brenda being written out to go to prestigious drama school Rada in London.

While the actress mellowed and became

more private as she got older, she played up to her reputation with the release of 2010's *Badass*, a semi-autobiographical book that encouraged young women to find their "inner badass" and live life with attitude and confidence.

Doherty went on to star in shows including *Charmed*, which followed a trio of sisters who are the most powerful good witches of all time, and *North Shore*, set in a Hawaii hotel. In 1995, she starred in the offbeat film comedy *Mallrats*.

Away from the screen, Doherty had a somewhat turbulent romantic life. She married Ashley Hamilton, the son of actor George Hamilton, two weeks after meeting him in 1993, but they divorced just six months later.

She wed her second husband Rick Salomon in 2002, but the marriage was annulled after nine months. She married her third husband, a photographer named Kurt Iswarienko, in 2011. The couple stayed together until her death.

As she got older, Doherty became a passionate animal rights activist and participated in campaigns against animal cruelty.

She also ventured into reality TV as the genre became popular in the noughties, and

in 2010 she appeared in *Dancing With The Stars*, the US version of the BBC's *Strictly Come Dancing*.

Beverly Hills, 90210 remained the role she was best known for, and in 2008 she joined the cast of a new version of the show, reprising her role of Brenda Walsh. In the reboot, Brenda had grown up to become a successful theatre actress and stage director.

But in her personal life, Doherty began to struggle with her health.

She was diagnosed with breast cancer in March 2015. The following year, she had a mastectomy and underwent chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

She initially announced her cancer was in remission in 2017, but it returned two years later.

At the time, Doherty was appearing in another reboot of 90210, which she said she was keen to take part in to honour her former co-star Luke Perry, who died of a stroke aged 52.

"It's so weird for me to be diagnosed and then somebody who was seemingly healthy to go first," said Doherty. "It was really shocking. And the least I could do to honour him was to do that show."

The latest version, titled *BH90210*, put a new spin on it. Rather than being a straightforward reboot, it followed Doherty and many of the other original cast members playing heightened, parody versions of their real selves.

Doherty kept the return of the disease secret at first, opting not to tell her fellow cast members except Brian Austin Green.

"I had moments of great anxiety where I thought, 'I can't really do this,'" she explained. "Prior to shooting, Brian would always call me and say, 'Listen, you know, whatever happens, I have your back.' So Brian helped me through a lot."

In recent years, she openly documented her battle with cancer on social media - posting videos of herself exercising alongside the hashtag *#cancerslayer*.

In November 2023, she said she is committed to battling stage four breast cancer, which had now spread to her bones.

Speaking to *People* magazine, Doherty said she was determined to keep going with treatment, adding: "I'm not done with living. I'm not done with loving. I'm not done with creating."

Courtesy BBC





الخدمت فاؤنڈیشن پاکستان
ALKHIDMAT FOUNDATION PAKISTAN

PALESTINE

EMERGENCY APPEAL

SEND AID TO GAZA &
SAVE LIVES TODAY



Medical Aid



Shelter



Food Packs

Donate Now

alkhidmat.org/donate

MEEZAN BANK: 0214-0100861151

IBAN: PK35MEZN0002140100861151 Swift code: MEZNPCCA

 **0800 44 448**