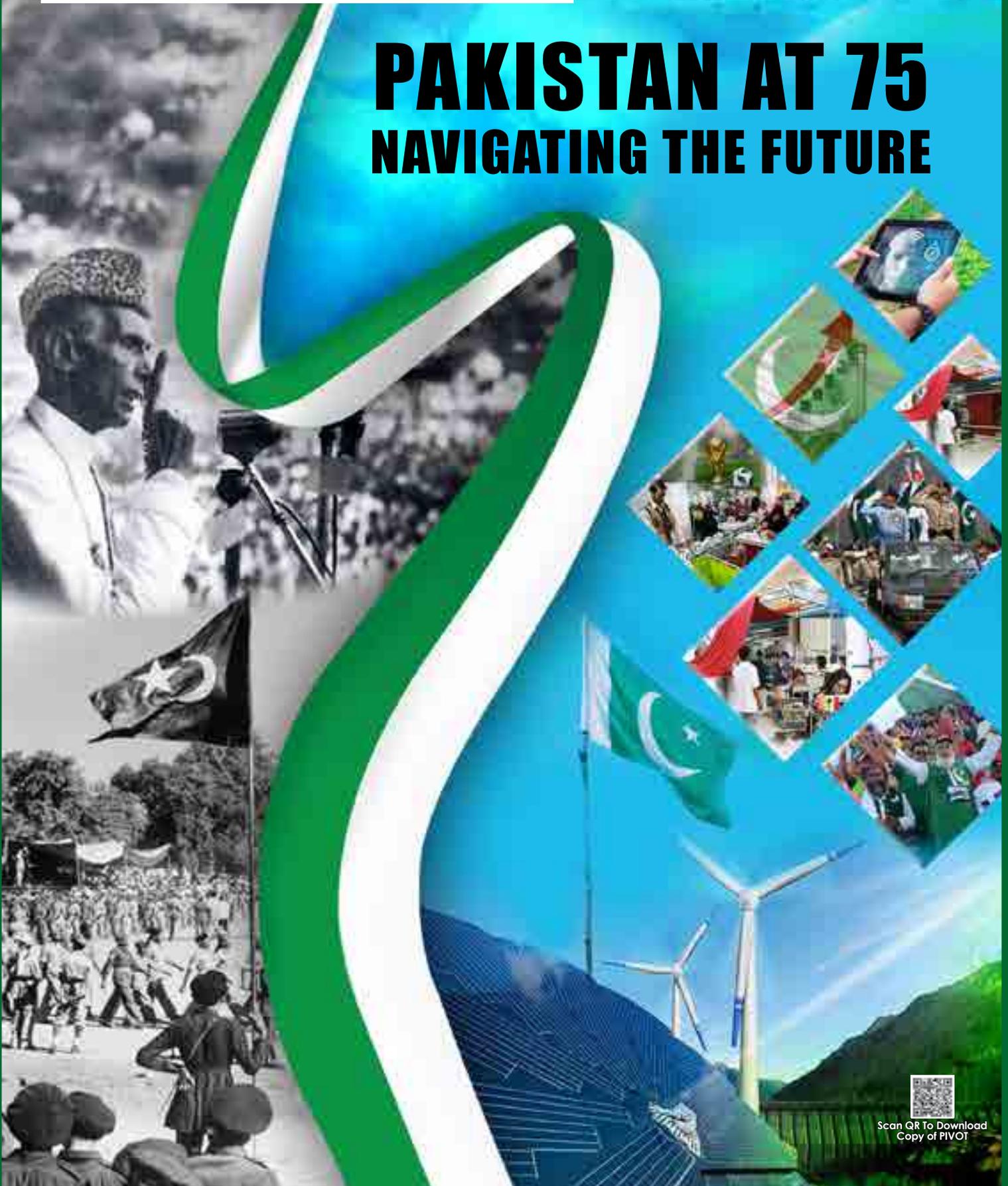


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PIVOT

Quarterly Magazine of Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad

PAKISTAN AT 75 NAVIGATING THE FUTURE



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'Pakistan is the PIVOT of the world, placed on the frontier on which the future position of the world revolves.' Quaid-i-Azam
Mohammad Ali Jinnah, January 1948

Chief Editor's Note



This year marks the 75 years of Pakistan's independence. Its journey began 75 years ago as a nation proud of the struggles in its formative years. As a collective Pakistan has come a long-way in terms of building national strength and socio-economic development while countering myriad of challenges

along the way. 75 years of Pakistan's foundation should be celebrated for a simple reason: Pakistan survived for three-quarters of a century when naysayers had argued during freedom movement that country would fold within twenty-five years. Today Pakistan is a confident nation of 220 million people who started from scratch have now achieved much, at home and abroad, over the past 75 years.

During the seven decades, Pakistan and its people have battled multiple challenges, which emerged as interplay of internal and external factors. People of Pakistan braved these moments with remarkable resilience, and today Pakistan is urbanising at a faster pace as compared to other developing nations. We are a connected society empowered by informational and communication technologies. Gradually, a sizeable and assertive middle class has emerged while over 60 percent of population is under the age of 30. This is our asset for leap-frogging economic growth and development while improving our human development indices.

Gradually, role of women in Pakistan's national life has increased. Women professionals are making a difference in many fields, while inspiring younger generation. Yet, the challenge of gender security remains, and this can only be countered via encouraging girls and women participation in the political, social and public lives.

Like other countries, Pakistan has its own set of strengths and weaknesses. These are borne out of unique national journey of Pakistan. Going forward, the focus needs to be on improving the lives of ordinary people, ensuring a justice system that delivers swift justice, and improving our economy. This can be ensured through hard work, rule of law and a merit-based system that can make Pakistan a progressive welfare state.

Talat

Dr. Talat Shabbir

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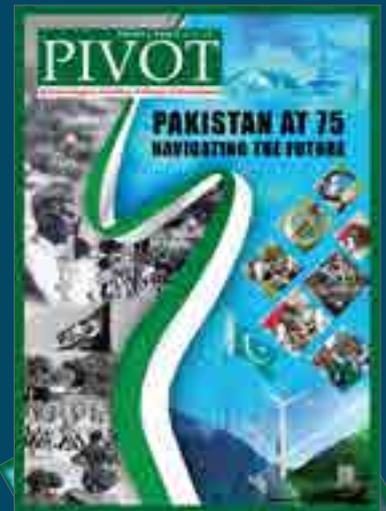
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Pakistan-Afghan Ties

Challenges and the Way Forward

By Amina Khan

Circumstances in Afghanistan have drastically evolved and continue to do so since the Taliban came into power in August 2021. While initially there was ambiguity as to what the Taliban's assumption of power would mean for Afghanistan in terms of domestic governance, political freedoms, human and women's rights, counterterrorism assurances, and an overall commitment to regional peace and stability, the past one year is perhaps an indication of what to expect from the Taliban in terms of policies.

August 15, 2022 marked one year since the group came into power, and so far the group's performance has been debatable to say the least. Afghanistan has seen an overall improvement in domestic security, with

the exception of attacks by transnational terrorist groups.

INITIALLY THERE WAS AMBIGUITY AS TO WHAT THE TALIBAN'S ASSUMPTION OF POWER WOULD MEAN FOR AFGHANISTAN IN TERMS OF DOMESTIC GOVERNANCE, POLITICAL FREEDOMS, HUMAN AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS, COUNTERTERRORISM ASSURANCES, AND AN OVERALL COMMITMENT TO REGIONAL PEACE AND STABILITY, THE PAST ONE YEAR IS PERHAPS AN INDICATION OF WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE TALIBAN IN TERMS OF POLICIES

The rising presence and threat of terrorism in Afghanistan emanating from transnational terrorist groups primarily the

Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP), a regional affiliate of Daesh, has in essence put into question the Taliban's ability to provide some semblance of stability and security within the country and along its borders. The ISKP independently as well as in collaboration with other regional terrorist outfits has been responsible for some of the deadliest attacks the country has witnessed in its recent history, targeting Afghan civilians, forces, and groups that oppose it, such as the Afghan Taliban. Since August 2021 to June 2022, ISKP has been responsible for more than 700 civilians deaths and more than 1,400 casualties. Moreover, the ISKP has not limited its activities to Afghanistan's borders, in fact since August 2021, there has been a major spike in

attacks by the group against Afghanistan's neighbours, primarily Pakistan, followed by Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and more recently Russia. Thus not only raising legitimate doubts about the Taliban's ability to honour their commitments regarding counterterrorism assurances but also their capability to deal with transnational terrorist groups operating within the country. Moreover for Pakistan, it has put into question its relationship with the Taliban, and whether the Taliban can prove to be reliable partners in ensuring that TTP does not use Afghan soil against Pakistan - which has not been the case so far.

DESPITE THE DEEP AND PERSONAL CONNECTIONS AMONG THE PEOPLE OF BOTH COUNTRIES, PAKISTAN'S TIES WITH AFGHANISTAN DURING THE PAST TWO DECADES HAVE UNFORTUNATELY BEEN LIMITED. EVERY OTHER ASPECT OF A BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP HAS BEEN HELD HOSTAGE TO SECURITY OR THE PEACE PROCESS. AS A RESULT, IMPORTANT AREAS OF THE RELATIONSHIP HAVE SUFFERED GREATLY. THE ALMOST SOLE FOCUS ON SECURITY HAS PROVED TO BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE

Historically, Pak-Afghan relations have been strained to say the least - with the exception of a few brief moments of stability, the relationship has followed a negative trajectory embedded in a vicious blame game, revolving

around border tensions, counter terrorism differences, and regional rivalries which have been counterproductive for both countries. It is unfortunate, but the relationship has always remained limited to the security lens, and thus it has failed to evolve into a robust bilateral partnership - as a result important areas of the bilateral relationship have suffered greatly.

While Pakistan's policy may have been vague on certain issues, its positions and policies regarding the Taliban and the future of Afghanistan have been consistent. Since 2001, Pakistan's association with the Taliban has been widely known. In fact, Islamabad has never shied away from discussing its relationship with the group, and has had a fairly consistent policy in this regard, calling for a political solution to the conflict such as negotiations with the Taliban. Ultimately most international actors have also begun to lean towards such a process.

Since the Taliban takeover, Islamabad's policy towards the group has been guided by a regional approach. It has been calling for an inclusive political setup, commitment to human rights, as well as assurances that Afghan soil will not be used against any state. This is a welcome development, and should be continued. Pakistan has been at the forefront of regional efforts to prevent a humanitarian crisis in its neighboring country. It has

hosted two Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) moots on Afghanistan and has made repeated calls to the international community not to abandon the people of Afghanistan, and to provide humanitarian and economic assistance. As for its own direct support, apart from already hosting more than 3 million refugees, it has provided humanitarian assistance and pledged Rs. 5 billion (\$28million) in support of Afghanistan. Moreover, publicly as well as privately, Pakistan has been calling on the Taliban to ensure that it delivers on the promises they have made regarding adherence to honoring women and human rights, establishing a representative government, and ensuring that Afghan soil is not used against any state let alone its neighbors.

WHILE PAKISTAN IS COMMITTED TO AFGHANISTAN'S PEACE AND SECURITY, AND HAS BEEN ENGAGING WITH THE TALIBAN, IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THE TALIBAN ENSURE THAT NO TRANSNATIONAL TERRORIST GROUP IS ENTERTAINED ON AFGHAN SOIL

While Pakistan is committed to Afghanistan's peace and security, and has been engaging with the Taliban, it is essential that the Taliban ensure that no transnational terrorist group is entertained on Afghan soil. While the group's policies regarding ISKP are known, they

will have to demonstrate their commitment by ensuring that elements like the TTP do not use Afghan soil.

As it is, since the Taliban takeover, there has been a spike in attacks by the TTP in Pakistan. In Pakistan's case, the presence of anti-Pakistan groups such as the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Baloch separatist groups and affiliates have always been a key irritant in the Pak-Afghan relationship. In December 2021 alone, the group was responsible for 45 attacks, a majority of them across the Pak-Afghan border in Balochistan and erstwhile FATA. In this respect, while the announcement of the establishment of a national-level coordination mechanism between the two sides for addressing border issues, as well as enhancing facilitation at border crossing points, is a positive development, this has been done in the past as well, but has failed to deliver as the results have not been evident then and neither are they now. Therefore, both sides will have to focus on a workable mechanism to jointly manage, stabilize and control the border in order to settle, once and for

all, the controversy surrounding the border and its mismanaged use by terrorist outfits. Although sticking to a regional approach seems appropriate for now, in due time it will be equally necessary for Islamabad to focus on the bilateral front too, and focus on areas of the relationship that have largely been ignored by previous governments due to an emphasis on security.

PAKISTAN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH AFGHANISTAN IS ARGUABLY MORE IMPORTANT IN MULTIPLE RESPECTS, AND IT IS IMPORTANT FOR BOTH COUNTRIES TO FOCUS ON THE BILATERAL FRONT BY EXPLORING A SIMILAR STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP PROCESS THAT INCLUDES POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, SECURITY, TRADE, WATER, PEOPLE TO PEOPLE, ETC. SUBJECT TO THE GROUP HONOURING THEIR COMMITMENTS REGARDING HUMAN/ WOMEN RIGHTS, COUNTER-TERRORISM ASSURANCES AND INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

Despite the deep and personal connections among the people of both countries, Pakistan's ties with Afghanistan during the past two decades have unfortunately

been limited. Every other aspect of a bilateral relationship has been held hostage to security or the peace process. As a result, important areas of the relationship have suffered greatly. The almost sole focus on security has proved to be counterproductive. There have been some attempts to change this state of affairs. For instance, in 2011 there were some efforts to initiate a Pak-Afghan strategic partnership agreement but it failed to materialize. This was even more concerning since Afghanistan signed a Strategic Partnership with India in October 2011, followed by a Strategic Cooperation Agreement with Iran in August 2013. Pakistan's relationship with Afghanistan is arguably more important in multiple respects, and it is important for both countries to focus on the bilateral front by exploring a similar strategic partnership process that includes political, economic, security, trade, water, people to people, etc. subject to the group honouring their commitments regarding human/women rights, counter-terrorism assurances and international recognition. Given potential of its enormous natural resources as well as its location, Afghanistan has long been touted as a country that could, with the right circumstances, become a regional roundabout,

where nations can connect for a common good. The benefits of bilateral and transit trade between Pakistan and Afghanistan cannot be emphasized enough, however, the trade level between both countries has certainly not seen its true potential over the past two decades. Interestingly, since the Taliban came into power, trade picked up in 2022, and surprisingly the trade balance has been in favour of Afghanistan, with Afghan exports reaching more than \$700 million - compared to \$550 million 2021. Moreover, Pakistan's exports to Central Asia have also risen by 70 % to \$202 million from \$118 million in 2021. Despite strained ties, trade can provide both neighbours with a platform to improve and strengthen ties, leading to mutual economic interdependence, thus reducing the chances of tensions.

The Taliban should focus on governance, and cash in on Afghanistan's true potential as the Heart of Asia, however to achieve this, the group needs to focus on a viable, sustained, and sustainable economic development strategy and this is where common ground can be found with Pakistan.

Focus should be on regional trade and connectivity, and integrated projects like the China

Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline amongst others. CPEC's possible extension to Afghanistan will benefit the economies of the region as a whole and would also help provide Afghanistan and Pakistan with a platform to improve and strengthen their bilateral relationship. It is imperative for the Taliban to realize that although Afghanistan has been at war with itself and the international community, the masses have evolved, and would like their rights to basic yet fundamental issues such as education, employment etc.

THE TALIBAN SHOULD FOCUS ON GOVERNANCE, AND CASH IN ON AFGHANISTAN'S TRUE POTENTIAL AS THE HEART OF ASIA, HOWEVER TO ACHIEVE THIS, THE GROUP NEEDS TO FOCUS ON A VIABLE, SUSTAINED, AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND THIS IS WHERE COMMON GROUND CAN BE FOUND WITH PAKISTAN

Hence if they do not honour their pledges of reform, the group will lose the support and recognition

it so desperately needs from the international community, and more so from regional countries to legitimize their rule. This will make it extremely challenging for regional countries to engage with the group or consider formal recognition including Pakistan.

On the bilateral front, Pakistan and Afghanistan need to realize that the geopolitical region of today is not what it used to be. Regional dynamics have changed. There are more challenges to internal survival, such as economic security, the effects of climate change, and the urgent need for economic and infrastructural connectivity. These are ground realities that require collaboration, and thus a willingness to change perceptions and alter histories. A strategic partnership agreement, could be the start to such a process, provided the group adheres to its overall commitments of reform, but more so on counter-terrorism assurances. However, for that, both countries need to move beyond their tainted history, define the parameters of their bilateral relationship by working further to overcome differences and instead focus on a workable relationship ■



The writer is the Director of Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East and Africa at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad.

CHINA'S YUNNAN

A Place to Stay in Your Heart, Forever

By Irfan Shahzad Takalvi



Few places in the world leave as lasting a mark and as potent an impression on people, as does Yunnan - China's mesmerizing South-Western province.

My relationship with Yunnan is over 17 and a half years old, as I first set my foot on the land of the province in early 2005. At that time, Yunnan was just starting to witness the benefits of China's miraculous economic development, as it spread from coastal areas to the South-West of the country. Since then, I have visited Yunnan some 15 times for periods ranging from few days to several weeks. And every time I happen to be in Yunnan, it astonishes me for yet another, mostly some entirely new and unique, reason.

The first thing a tourist from other country would notice is mesmerizing landscape, the terrain of the province. Green, and serene, to the stretch of your eyesight. To the limits of one's imagination, I would say.



It is one thing that the province is blessed with a splendid bio-diversity - both botanical and zoological - but more important is to note the way this natural wealth has been preserved, by Yunnan's people according to the guidance of their leadership. Yunnan today is undoubtedly the leader, not only within China but also if so compared with countries of the region, in

terms of eco-friendly development. This points towards the continuous enrichment in thousands of plants and animal species that the province is home to.

YUNNAN TODAY IS UNDOUBTEDLY THE LEADER, NOT ONLY WITHIN CHINA BUT ALSO IF SO COMPARED WITH COUNTRIES OF THE REGION, IN TERMS OF ECO-FRIENDLY DEVELOPMENT. THIS POINTS TOWARDS THE CONTINUOUS ENRICHMENT IN THOUSANDS OF PLANTS AND ANIMAL SPECIES THAT THE PROVINCE IS HOME TO

Although the trekking Asian wild elephants made headlines throughout 2021, they are just one example of well-preserved animal species on the province's land. It is only fitting that the United Nations chose Yunnan as its 2020 (actually held in 2021, due to pandemic) World Biodiversity Conference. While the capital Kunming is known as 'city of eternal spring', I would say that the city is only a glimpse of natural endowments that the province can rightly boast. From east to west, and from north to south; cities, towns, mountains, valleys, rivers, lakes, parks and gardens are there to keep you absorbed and amused for as much time as you can.

It comes as no surprise for me that the province is a favourite site for Chinese and international tourists. Various filmmakers,



broadcasters from home and abroad are choosing it as the scene for their cinematic or TV productions. Pandemic made only a slight difference - that too only for a short span of time. Tens of millions of tourists keep rushing towards Yunnan.

Be it the romance of Li Jiang or the splendour of Da'Li, the glamour of terraced paddy fields or mysteries of the Stone Forest - just are a few examples to cite - Yunnan has countless places to cage your heart and mind.

Demographically, the province is a monument of diversity, to say the least, as far as the people inhabiting it are concerned. It is the place where 25 of China's 55 ethnic nationalities live, along with majority Han. Autonomous prefecture and counties of various nationalities dot the administrative divisions all across the province. All the nationalities have rich culture, customs and folklore perfectly preserved - thanks to attention and support of authorities. You may enjoy the festivals and cultural activities all around the year, all across the province.



One can be sure to fall in love with Yunnan's food in just one visit. I usually say to my friends from Yunnan that the province's cuisine is both Hao Kan (beautiful) and Hao Chi (tasty). But the way people engage in culinary business, put in effort and expertise to make the food reach your table, is something to observe and enjoy in its own right. And more importantly, as a Muslim, you can find Halal food easily in every nook and corner of the province.

The world knows that Yunnan is home to aromatic, refreshing, and healthy herbs, teas, and also coffee - now finding their way to global markets as well. And the province produces few of the best varieties of cut-flowers - emerging as a major producer and exporter also having Asia's largest flower market on its oil.

Adopting to latest trends in economic and human development, while preserving the past and upholding the tradition, has rendered Yunnan as a unique and beautiful blend of the old and the new, a sweet

amalgamation of the past and the present - looking confidently towards the future.

At policy and governance level, Yunnan - through its extraordinary focus on infrastructure development - is emerging as the gateway between China and South and Southeast Asia. Roads, rails, air-linkages and even navigational channels are turning the province into an emerging hub of the region.

ADOPTING TO LATEST TRENDS IN ECONOMIC AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, WHILE PRESERVING THE PAST AND UPHOLDING THE TRADITION, HAS RENDERED YUNNAN AS A UNIQUE AND BEAUTIFUL BLEND OF THE OLD AND THE NEW, A SWEET AMALGAMATION OF THE PAST AND THE PRESENT – LOOKING CONFIDENTLY TOWARDS THE FUTURE

Flights to all the regional capitals are within one to four hours' duration from the province's capital. Cross-border trade is flourishing, as Pilot Free Trade Zone - one of six such zones being implemented all across China - starts taking its operational shape. China-South Asia, Southeast Asia fairs and exhibitions are regular feature --- bringing the region's business circles together, every year. Pakistan features regularly on these fairs and exhibitions. Overall trade and commercial ties with Pakistan are leaping ahead with large scale enterprises from Yunnan engaged in various CPEC projects. People to people contacts are also being enhanced with sizeable number of Pakistani students studying in Yunnan's institutions of higher learning.

As desired by Chinese leadership, the Yunnan province has fast established itself as the 'demonstration zone' for China's unmatched ecological friendly growth, the green development. With its immense hydel resources, Yunnan is clearly the power house not only for South-Western China but also for the regional countries around it.

One short article in no way can do justice to Yunnan's countless endowments and immense wealth - natural and man-made. But I can say with confidence and only one visit to the province can make it a place to live in your heart, forever ■



The writer heads the Eurasian Century Institute (ECI), Islamabad-Pakistan.



PAKISTAN AT 75

In the Midst of Climate Crisis

By Saher Liaquat

Pakistan in its seventy fifth year of independence is facing the most appalling environmental catastrophe. The climate change has emerged as one of the worst environmental and humanitarian crisis wreaking havoc and taking millions of people into its grip. The recent floods due to the torrential monsoon rains have resulted in immense fiscal, socio-economic, and environmental corollaries mostly in the underprivileged areas of the country. The large-scale destruction of fragile infrastructure has severely affected the livelihoods of people, inflicting a great misery upon them.

If we look at the latest statistics, the floods caused due to the heavy monsoon rains and the melting glaciers due to the severe heat wave owing to the climate change has a recorded casualties' of more than 1,300 people with another thirty-three million under the risk of this environmental disaster. Additionally, an estimated \$10 billion damage has been done to the infrastructure, livestock and the crops that will take years for

reconstruction which is a huge blow to the already crippled economy of Pakistan.

THE UNREGULATED AND ILLEGAL CONSTRUCTIONS, THE POOR RURAL AND URBAN PLANNING, THE LACK OF PROPER DRAINAGE SYSTEMS AND THE DAMS HAVE MADE THE COUNTRY'S INFRASTRUCTURE MORE VULNERABLE TO THE DAMAGE CAUSED BY THE NATURAL DISASTERS

One might say that the geographical features of Pakistan have in part made it highly vulnerable to the risks of the climate change. Pakistan, having huge glaciers residing in its north, and the hyper desert in its south lies at the brunt of the two major weather systems where one attracts the elevated temperatures and droughts such as the heatwave in March while the other causes the heavy monsoon rains. Therefore, the larger risks of unpredictability in the monsoon rains makes the country prone to either flooding or the drought like conditions.

Looking back into the past, the country has survived several natural disasters such as the heat waves, floods, drought, extreme cold and the earthquakes, because of increased urbanization, deforestation, and the changing weather due to global warming. The 2010 floods in Pakistan, demonstrates the example of the climate carnage caused due to the flooding of the Indus River that turned out to be the acutest humanitarian crisis. Proving detrimental to the housing, crops and infrastructure, the floods affected approximately twenty million people and made them vulnerable to the waterborne diseases and malnutrition. However, after a decade long period, the government is again grappling with a similar kind of flood situation that have once again caused severe socio-economic and environmental consequences with one-third of the country underwater. This raises the question that instead of learning from the previous experiences, why the country is again going through the same massive catastrophe



rather than having an improved climate-resilient infrastructure and better disaster management policies this time around?

The answer to this lies in the history long tradition of policy inconsistency, mismanagement, corruption, misallocation of funds, weak governance and the lack of policy implementation and coordination among the respective authorities in Pakistan which have played a part in the less efforts towards climate resiliency. The unregulated and illegal constructions, the poor rural and urban planning, the lack of proper drainage systems and the dams have made the country's infrastructure more vulnerable to the damage caused by the natural disasters. Regrettably, the prime focus of every government has always been on the changing political dynamics and the economic uplift which has left the environmental arena a neglected area. It now appears that the nature is taking its revenge in the form of such natural calamities.

However, it must be taken into consideration that the flooding is not the only issue related to the climate variation, thus, there is a great need to look up to the other avenues of the climate change such as the massive internal displacement, water and food

insecurity, pandemics' outbreaks and the potential for greater migration to already over-extended urban areas of Pakistan. The climatic calamity not only puts the country's economy, housing and the infrastructure under precarious situation but also has a spill-over effect on the other avenues of the non-traditional security namely the food, water, and energy security.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES ARE BEARING THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION PRACTICES OF THE CAPITALIST WORLD AND ARE SUFFERING THE MOST. PAKISTAN IS ALSO THE VICTIM OF SUCH PRACTICES AND IS FACING THE WORST CLIMATIC CATASTROPHE DESPITE BEING ONE OF THE SMALLEST CONTRIBUTORS OF CARBON EMISSION IN THE ATMOSPHERE

On international level, the dramatic climate change has been recognized as a major non-traditional security threat that demands serious attention. Global warming is contributing to the climatic fluctuations that often emerge as the events of unprecedented severity such as heatwaves, glaciers melting, floods, forest fires etc. causing an irreparable loss to the natural resources, human life, ecosystems, and the wildlife. It is important to note that, the developing countries are bearing the consequences of the environmental degradation practices of the capitalist world and are suffering the most. Pakistan is also the victim of such practices and is facing the worst climatic catastrophe despite being one of the smallest contributors of carbon emission in the atmosphere. This makes it the responsibility of the Global North to come up to the front and

extend a helping hand to the poor nations in the form of humanitarian and technical assistance to combat this threat posed due to their malpractices in destroying the environment. The realization must be made of the fact that hazardous impacts of climate change, if left unattended, will affect the well-being of all equally.

The dramatic annual rise in temperature and its impact has made us see very clearly where we stand, therefore, there is a great need to ponder over the way forward for this calamity. To tackle this erratic climatic shift, individual effort is required in bringing the rising levels of emissions and the temperatures down and for that reason awareness must be created among the people about the possible risks of the climate change. Moreover, the disaster risk management system must be upgraded, and the existing procedures need to be reassessed for better disaster mitigation. Government needs to invest more on the water infrastructure and the sustainable water management and drainage systems. The early-warning systems and defensive infrastructure must be installed to lower the risks of these abrupt outpouring of floods. SDGs recognizes the climate change as its fundamental goal; however, much work is needed to be done on the climate change adaptation and mitigation in the country. The shift of modes of production and conventional technology to the green technology must be a consideration in this regard. All these factors demand the federal, provincial, and local governments and the relevant authorities to work in close coordination with each other ■



The writer is a student of International Relations at Quaid e Azam University Islamabad.

PAKISTAN-US RELATIONS NAVIGATING EXPECTATIONS AT 75

By Mahrukh Khan and Tooba Bilal



Pakistan has been characterized as America's most allied ally to the ally from hell. Even though Pakistan and the US shared important relations; for the largest portion of their relations, both maintained contending narratives, notions framed by geo-strategic realities such as the Soviet-Afghan war, the aftermath of 9/11, and most recently the US withdrawal from Afghanistan.

EVEN THOUGH PAKISTAN AND THE US SHARED IMPORTANT RELATIONS; FOR THE LARGEST PORTION OF THEIR RELATIONS, BOTH MAINTAINED CONTENDING NARRATIVES, NOTIONS FRAMED BY GEO-STRATEGIC REALITIES SUCH AS THE SOVIET-AFGHAN WAR, THE AFTERMATH OF 9/11, AND MOST RECENTLY THE US WITHDRAWAL FROM AFGHANISTAN

President John F. Kennedy once said that, "The only thing worse than being an enemy of the United States is being an ally." Pakistan and the US have shared an off-again on-again relationship. Pakistan over the last decade has played a vital part in America's fight against terrorism and has paid a greater price in terms of human lives, worsening security conditions and deteriorating economy as compared to any other nation involved in the effort. For more than seven decades, Pakistan and the United States have rarely, if ever, disappeared for any length of time from each other's strategic foreign policy radar. At seventy-five years, both countries

continue to remain engaged in one form or another, as committed allies, difficult friends, troublesome mediators, and in some extreme instances, a threat. By establishing diplomatic relations with Pakistan following its independence in 1947, the US entered into a diplomatic relationship characterized by cycles of friction against that of an intimate partnership. The former 'disenchanted allies' at seventy-five years have turned a new page.

Pakistan and the United States have been allies since the 1950s the relationship has gone through many twists and turns. In its decades of friendship,

The United States' withdrawal of its troops from Afghanistan in the year 2021 brought its mission of the Global War of Terror (GWOT) to an end in Afghanistan after nearly two decades. During the GWOT, Pakistan's geographical proximity to Afghanistan, issues

over counterinsurgency and its role in GWOT made Islamabad a strategic and pivotal pivot point for its war. However, the end of the US's mission in Afghanistan has catapulted a shift in the focus of Pakistan-US diplomatic relations, from a unifocal security lens to pursuing and establishing a multifaceted and broad-based diplomatic relationship. While the diplomatic relations for several decades were built as a function of another country, the recent shift in the trajectory of the bilateral relations is not only reminiscent of the cooperation the two countries have shared over the years but also presents an optimistic picture of the direction the relations are now developing on. The importance of a stable Pak-US relationship can be measured from the large network of cooperation between the governments as well as the military of both.

While the West downplays the importance and relevance of Pakistan it cannot deny the significance of its geography. Pakistan not only sits at the epicentre of South Asia, Central Asia and the Middle East but is also a nuclear weapon state that borders two other nuclear power countries; China and India. At a time when Islamabad is pivoting from geo-strategic to geo-economics and the US is revisiting their foreign policy discourse on the Indo-Pacific, it would be useful for both the capitals to re-examine key areas of collaboration and the policy options that exist in the short term, medium and long term to chalk out the future discourse of relations.

Looking Forward:

The unceremonious exit of US from Afghanistan and indirectly from Pakistan as well has brought in a new breed of challenges. At the same time, it has also opened gates to new tiers of opportunities between the two capitals and begs Islamabad and Washington to look at the relations in a new light.

IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT BOTH ISLAMABAD AND WASHINGTON RIGHT-SIZE THE RELATIONSHIP. IN THE SHORT TERM, THE RELATIONSHIP IS MORE LIKELY TO CONTINUE TO BE FRAMED BY SECURITY AND EXTERNAL FACTORS ALONG WITH PAKISTAN'S INCREASED DISPOSITION WITH BEIJING

❖ It is imperative that both Islamabad and Washington right-size the relationship. In the short term, the relationship is more likely to continue to be framed by security and external factors along with Pakistan's increased disposition with Beijing.

❖ It is equally important for US to maintain a cross-cutting relationship with Pakistan, one that is not burdened or influenced by its partnership with India.

❖ While there is a great deal of de-emphasis that needs to be paid to the element of security between the two countries; strategic stability in the region and counter-terrorism remain two important areas of collaboration.

❖ For more broad and overarching relations, it is imperative to step aside from the narrow version of relations and work on aspects that focus more on economic and commercial issues as well, as businesses, and people-to-people contact.

❖ Pakistan has an attractive and large population base that if channeled wisely can attract American companies to invest, subject that it undertakes required changes and economic reforms to uplift and attract the western market and investment.

❖ Moreover, both countries should work to de-tangle themselves from negative narratives and utilize soft power attraction to lessen the emphasis on the security aspects of the relationship and build upon other important and salient features to its relations.

❖ Engagement between both the states must be embedded in a broader dialogue with appropriate and realistic proportions and expectations with multiple levels of dialogue ranging from counterterrorism to climate change.

❖ A strong Pakistan-United States alliance is critical for the stability of South Asia and the world at large. Relations cannot survive in an atmosphere which is transferable and dependent on the convenience and interest of one country.

❖ What lacks is an action agenda that helps develop an approach which directly and positively impacts the population. Such an approach would allow the US and Pakistan to collectively identify sectors and areas that need reforms and

assistance in both the long and short terms.

❖ There is an urgent need for broader dialogue between Pakistan and the US at the strategic, political, diplomatic and economic levels. Constructive and productive opportunities should be created to cultivate the relationship and improve the image of the U.S as a reliable ally.

In 2021 alone, the United States Foreign Direct Investment increased 50 per cent, with 80 US companies directly employing more than 125,000 Pakistanis directly and more than one million indirectly. While direct investments are vital to stabilizing Pakistan's dwindling economy, US venture capital and private equity funds remain equally vital and crucial to Pakistan's startup culture and its burgeoning Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and innovation economy. Disengagement on the diplomatic front not only threatens investment and the development of the financial and economic sector of Pakistan's economy but also endangers Pakistan's position in international financial institutions such as the IMF, FATF, and the World Bank. Therefore, the prospects of a comprehensive economic partnership and trade agreements between Pakistan and the United States present an important point of convergence and are a step closer to pursuing a broad-based foreign policy.

There is undeniable baggage of history between Pakistan and the US. While Islamabad has repeatedly claimed abandonment by the US once their goals are met, the US has blamed Pakistan for dubious behaviour. This brings the question of how should the two states move forward from

the historic baggage to a new slate. To a large extent, Pakistan through its help whether during the process of the US withdrawal from Afghanistan or through helping the US in bringing the Taliban to the negotiating table has taken some strength away from the duplicity bite. A workable and sustainable approach must be sought over an ideal relationship in the case of Pakistan and the US. Moreover, the relations must not fall hostage to either countries relations with another country and give way to polarization and bloc formation. Such an approach will only make way for more misalignment and dysfunctional relations.

THE PROSPECTS OF A COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AND TRADE AGREEMENTS BETWEEN PAKISTAN AND THE UNITED STATES PRESENT AN IMPORTANT POINT OF CONVERGENCE AND ARE A STEP CLOSER TO PURSUING A BROAD-BASED FOREIGN POLICY

There are real challenges in revitalizing Pakistan-US relations. Many questions require due diligence and consideration while constructing a new architecture of relations with the

US. Firstly, the US is one of the major donors in indirect financial relief and aid to Pakistan as well as one of the top trading partners of Pakistan. If the relations are not set on an understanding of mutual respect divergence as well as the perusal of national interest whether strategic or economic chances are that the US can influence institutions like the International Monetary fund (IMF) or the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) to gain its wider objectives. Moreover, it will be wise to weigh the possibility that whether the US wants or can engage on issues that are important to Pakistan such as the issue of Kashmir, or economic and commercial issues related to investment, energy and connectivity. Nevertheless, the real test of the longstanding relations would be to find mutually helpful and mutually valuable areas of interest that provide ballast for the relationship not just in short term but in the long run as well. Issues that are non-strategic such as climate, energy and health and education as well as people-to-people dialogues can prove to be fertile areas for cooperation. Multiple formats should be put in place to ensure non-governmental dimensions of partnership and cooperation between both the countries and cooperation at multilateral levels. The fundamentals of the future of the relationship should be non-binary and unsoiled by ideas of binary security and non-security cooperation ■

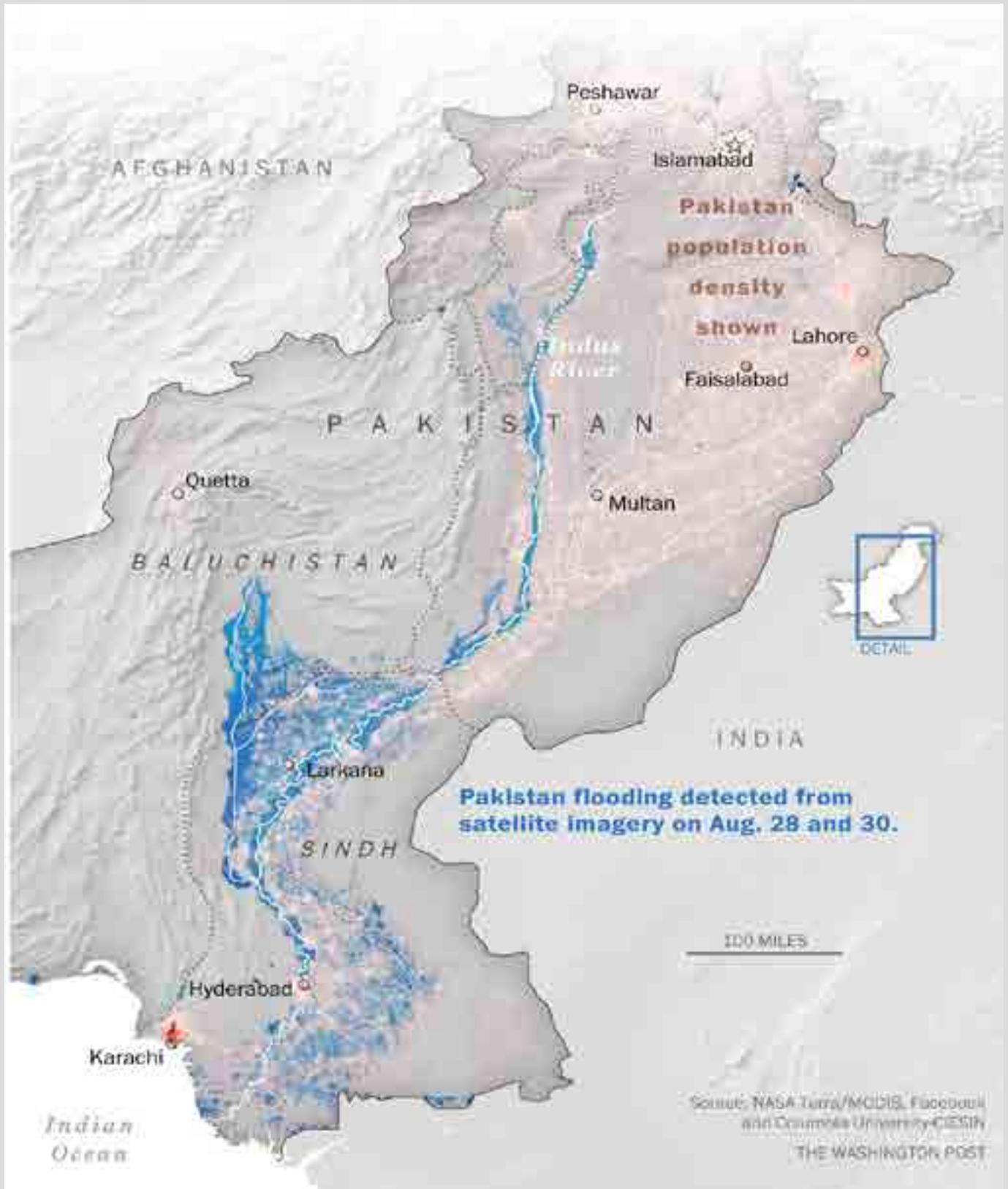


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SCALE OF PAKISTAN'S FLOODING





PAKISTAN'S GREATEST CHALLENGE IN THE NEXT 75 YEARS

By Ali Haider Saleem

At 75, Pakistan faces a mountain of challenges ranging from struggling economy, political uncertainty, weak institutions, extremism and climate change. For many years, the scientific community has been warning that Pakistan faces dire consequences due to climate related changes. The recent floods in Pakistan have claimed thousands of lives and displaced many more people. The destruction caused by the unprecedented level of rainfall during this monsoon season has proven the climate change doubters wrong and exposed the incapable governance and infrastructure setup to deal with this threat.

IN AUGUST 2021, THE UNITED NATIONS INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE (IPCC) RELEASED A REPORT WHICH STATED THAT CLIMATE CHANGE IS INTENSIFYING THE NATURAL PRODUCTION OF WATER WHICH BRINGS MORE INTENSE RAINFALL AND ASSOCIATED FLOODING

In August 2021, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a report which stated that climate change is intensifying the natural production of water

which brings more intense rainfall and associated flooding. The report also highlighted the lack of progress being made to deliver the targets of the 2015 Paris Agreement. The UN Secretary-General António Guterres referred to the findings of the report as “code red for humanity”. He added that the “alarm bells are deafening, and the evidence is irrefutable”.



One year on, climate change related destruction has swept across Pakistan with authorities struggling to provide relief and basic necessities to the affected communities. Even the relatively developed parts of the country have not been spared by this year's rainfall. Flooding has severely affected business and agricultural activity throughout the country which has further raised economic challenges. The destruction of agricultural fields and related infrastructure has wiped away years of hard work and left the people in a frightful financial situation.



After examining more than 100 disasters in 67 countries from 2003 to 2013, The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) reported that floods and droughts caused 83 percent of losses in plantations and herds while these countries lost billions of dollars each year due to reduced production.

A UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) report estimated Pakistan's annual losses caused by climate change at \$26 billion which is equal to nine percent of the country's GDP. Most of Pakistan's export earnings are dependent on agriculture related output so climate change is adding more pressure on Pakistan's macroeconomic position.

In recent years, the tourism sector has witnessed impressive growth due to increase in investment and improvement in connectivity infrastructure. Most of the country's attractions are in the northern areas which attract tourists from all over the world. Unfortunately, this sector is not reaching its full potential as it is extremely vulnerable to climate related activities.

In addition, the socioeconomic consequences of such natural events can never be underestimated. With flooding comes added risk of food shortage and diseases along with accessibility issues preventing children to go to school and patients to receive treatments at healthcare facilities. With the planet expected to get warmer in the coming years, the level of destruction in coming years is likely to increase as well unless concrete measures are taken by the leadership and local authorities.

Despite being a low contributor in the global greenhouse gas emissions, Pakistan has played a responsible role in helping the fight against climate change at the international level. In 2020, Pakistan achieved Sustainable Development Goal 13 which relates to Climate Action - 10 years before the deadline. In the following year, Pakistan

was chosen as the host country for World Environment Day. However, experts warn that such achievements do not allow any room to relax as the fight against climate change requires persistent effort. Dr. Adil Najam notes that SDG targets are the minimum targets that every country has to meet and then work to exceed.

PAKISTAN'S MOST OF THE ATTRACTIONS ARE IN THE NORTHERN AREAS WHICH ATTRACT TOURISTS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD, UNFORTUNATELY, THIS SECTOR IS NOT REACHING ITS FULL POTENTIAL AS IT IS EXTREMELY VULNERABLE TO CLIMATE RELATED ACTIVITIES

Climate change can also be a potential security challenge for the country. In the recent flooding, decades of state's neglect towards Balochistan has been widely exposed. Many more people in the province have fallen below the poverty line which serves the interest of external forces lurking there to cause social and political unrest. Moreover, climate induced migration to cities is likely to rise which will add more strain on urban infrastructure. In 2020, the demolition of settlements near waterways to mitigate climate change in Karachi revealed the prevalence of climate injustice in the country.

According to World Bank, climate change is deeply intertwined with global patterns of inequality. It notes that "in the absence of well-designed and inclusive policies, climate change mitigation



measures can place a higher financial burden on poor households". Going forward, Pakistan must revise its policies so that the marginalized segments of the society can be protected. Failure to do so would only add to the socioeconomic troubles of the country.

Development of dams, afforestation, resilient infrastructure, better town planning and creating awareness are the need of the hour. For the country's survival, climate action requires much more attention and effort. Given the scale of the challenge, Pakistan needs to involve all local and foreign stakeholders. Along with extending cooperation with international organizations, the country must engage constructively with its neighbors to confront this common challenge. Most importantly,

DEVELOPMENT OF DAMS, AFFORESTATION, RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE, BETTER TOWN PLANNING AND CREATING AWARENESS ARE THE NEED OF THE HOUR, PAKISTAN SHOULD SEEK CHINESE ASSISTANCE IN ENHANCING ITS CLIMATE CHANGE RESILIENCE AND FLOOD MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

Pakistan should seek Chinese assistance in enhancing its climate change resilience and flood management capacity. The Yangtze River floods in 1998 affected one-fifth of China's population, killing more than three thousand and making 15 million homeless. In the aftermath of the disaster, China issued a 32-word policy that listed soil conservation and erosion management as key



measures to mitigate flood risk. Construction of the Three Gorges Dam on the Yangtze River had started in 1994 but according to an Asian Development Bank report, the Chinese government realized that nonstructural measures would also be needed to prevent such a disaster in the future. Learning from China's experience in developing infrastructure and strategies to control floods can help Pakistan a great deal in the coming years. Like China, Pakistan must emphasize on modernizing agricultural practices while the private sector must also be incentivized to play its part.

In the last 75 years, the country has overcome many challenges and has made meaningful strides despite the odds. More recently, Pakistan's strategy

against COVID-19 has been quite successful and the country has done better than many developed countries in controlling its devastation.

UNLIKE COVID-19 WHERE WE HAVE VACCINES AND OTHER MITIGATION TOOLS, CLIMATE CHANGE IS A SIGNIFICANTLY MORE COMPLEX CHALLENGE THAT WILL REQUIRE LONG-TERM COORDINATION AND COMMITMENT

However, Jumaina Siddiqui from the U.S. Institute of Peace opines that, "unlike COVID-19 where we have vaccines and other mitigation tools, climate change is a significantly more complex challenge that will require long-term coordination and commitment". Ad-hoc measures will only aggravate the situation so the country's leadership must learn from past errors and move forward collectively to secure the country's future ■



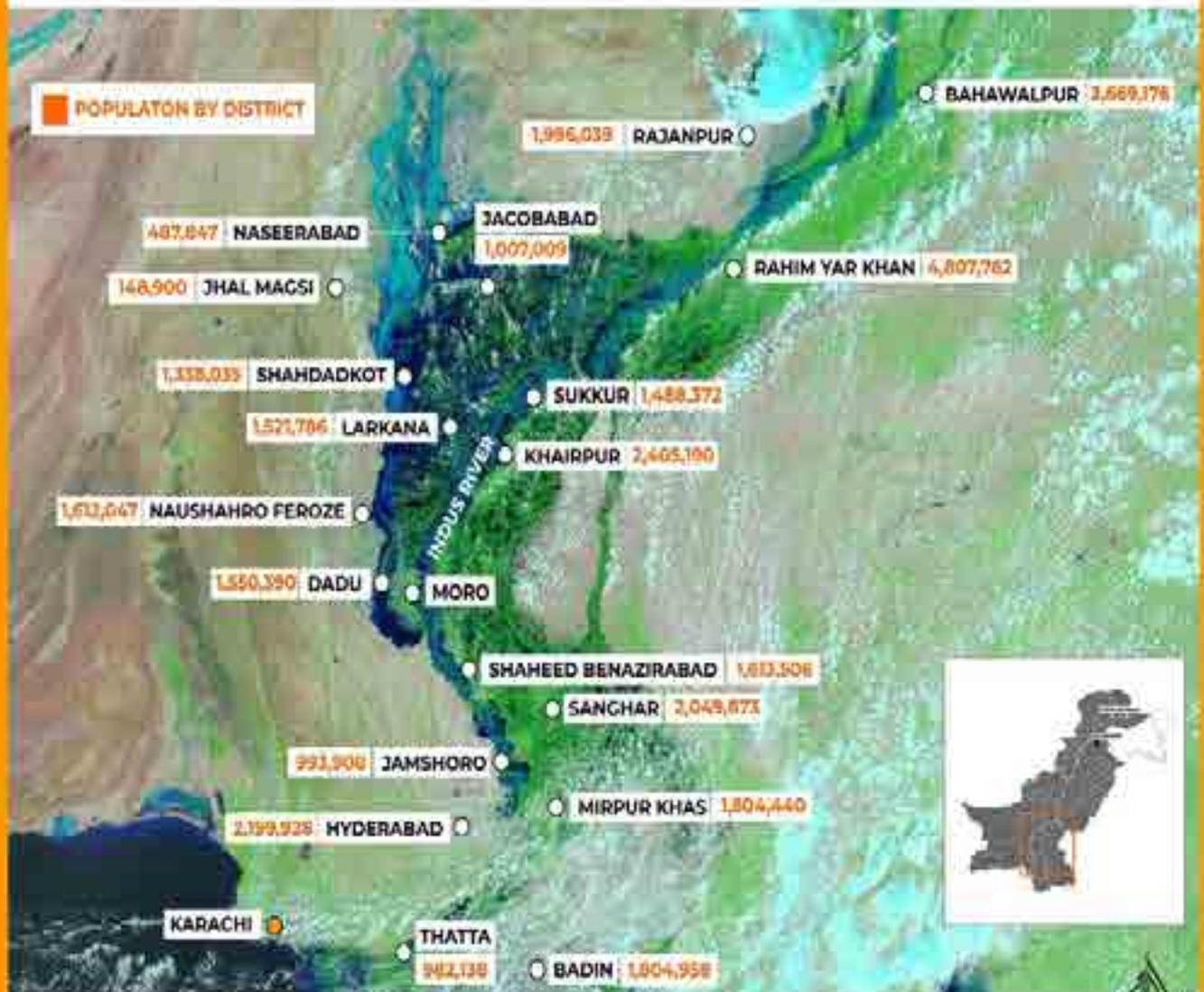
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Satellite images by NASA showed that excessive rain flooded areas in Sindh province turned it into a 100-kilometre-wide inland lake

CLIMATE CRISIS

Areas worst affected by the Pakistan floods

Satellite images captured by NASA showed how floods turned a part of Sindh province into a 100 kilometre-wide inland lake. Sindh has a population of nearly 50 million people, the second largest province in the country after Punjab.



Source: NASA, National Disaster Management Authority, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics | Updated: September 7, 2021

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TOWARDS WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: A CASE FOR GENDER SENSITIVE PAKISTAN

By Misbah Mukhtar

Every century had a moral challenge. Slavery and totalitarianism caused turbulence in the 19th and 20th centuries, and for us, the issue of gender equity will be a defining challenge in the 21st century. Gender equality is vital for addressing the most pressing issues of our time including climate change, economic disparity, fascism, and many more. The condition in developing countries like Pakistan is even more grave, for violence against women in such countries goes invisible. Moreover, social, economic and political empowerment in truest terms, remains a distant dream for many women in such countries.

Women empowerment mainly revolves around promoting women's sense of self-worth, their ability to make choices, the opportunity to exercise those choices, and the right to be a catalyst or influence for steering social change. However, Pakistan seems to have a long and difficult road ahead to achieve this goal. According to the World Economic Forum (2022), Pakistan ranks 145th out of 146 countries, in Global Gender Gap. The report further highlights a grim picture of the participation of women in

economic and political spheres. It is just one indication of the quality of life for women in this part of the world.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT MAINLY REVOLVES AROUND PROMOTING WOMEN'S SENSE OF SELF-WORTH, THEIR ABILITY TO MAKE CHOICES, THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXERCISE THOSE CHOICES, AND THE RIGHT TO BE A CATALYST OR INFLUENCE FOR STEERING SOCIAL CHANGE

The issue with patriarchal societies like Pakistan is having the ability to exercise power with impunity. As the saying goes, "Men abuse women because they can." It is true for countries like ours where the invisibility and normalization of violence against women, and the lack of legal and social protection, allow their abusers a free pass. Another issue is the lack of agency and tools for exercising that agency for many women in the country. The only identity most women have is provided by their male counterparts. Their economic dependence coupled

with social norms negates their existence in an individual capacity, leaving them little to no recourse in times of crisis existing as a 'sub-ordinate other' to their male counter-part.

It is also pertinent to note that the barrier to women's empowerment is not just the resources; it is also about attitudes and beliefs. The belief that women are just not worthy enough; that they should not have a role outside their homes; that their bodies are not their own; that their minds do not matter, and that their voices simply should not be heard.

A careful analysis of the gaps in Pakistan's laws and policies is the best example of these behaviors. Until a decade ago, it was perfectly legal for employers to discriminate against women at their workplaces until the "Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act" (2010) was passed. Even this law, did not include universities in it, leaving the students at universities at the mercy of the circumstances. Consequently, we recently saw news of female students committing suicide in the hostels of public sector universities of Sindh and Balochistan due to harassment issues.

Moreover, inheritance laws in

the country favor men. Family Laws favor men: a woman has to request a divorce, but men can simply grant one. Child custody laws are also biased towards women. (We lack a comprehensive policy in this regard but whatever we have, is tilted towards men); the Citizenship Act favors men. There is no law in Pakistan to prohibit gender discrimination in the hiring process; no law that prohibits gender pay gaps and the list continues.

ON A VERY BASIC LEVEL, IT IS ABOUT TIME THAT WOMEN START TO TAKE THE PHYSICAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL, AND ECONOMIC VIOLENCE TOWARDS THEM PERSONALLY, FOR PERSONAL IS POLITICAL

These are just a few instances on the legal level. The situation on the socio-political level is even grimmer. Women are usually confined to their households in patriarchal societies. The women, working at home and involved in the informal sector of the economy are called "Home-Based Workers (HBWs)." According to one UN report, in 2017 of the estimated 20 million HBWs in Pakistan, 12 million were women. It is essential to understand that staying at home hampers the ability of women to be economically independent and allows the vicious cycle of dependency and violence against them to continue.

The need of the hour is to bring robust institutional and social reforms in the country. When it comes to the rights of

women it is also important to understand the link between the private and public spheres. Everything that happens in the private sphere, dictates life in the public sphere. Therefore, on a very basic level, it is about time that women start to take the physical, psychological, and economic violence towards them personally, for personal is political.

On the policy level, a few ways to achieve this change is by displaying true commitment toward enhancing women's political participation. Right now, there are gender quotas in our parliament that do not address the root cause of why there is limited female participation in the political sphere. A concrete step towards this direction could be to reform the local government structure and to ensure greater chances of female participation in grass-root level politics.

Taking a gendered response to crises, let alone traditional or non-traditional, is also an essential step toward women's empowerment and safety. Since most of the women in the country stay at home and have minimal participation in the public sphere, conflict situations increase their vulnerability to violence, abuse, and exploitation. Moreover, violence against women in the aftermath of conflict also affects the chances of women to access basic health and education facilities, while also adversely impacting their chances of gaining economic opportunities. Therefore, the call for a gender-sensitive response to crises is

essential across the board from law enforcement to medical staff.

Moreover, media has a crucial role to play in this regard for it is instrumental in shaping, breaking, and reshaping narratives. This power must be utilized to change stereotypes and harness support for women. For example, for an increased role of women in local-government, the media can offer its support by providing greater coverage to the local female candidates in politics, so that their visibility in the public sphere is not only normalized but is also accepted. Positive reporting from media houses can be instrumental in this regard.

MEDIA HAS A CRUCIAL ROLE TO PLAY IN THIS REGARD FOR IT IS INSTRUMENTAL IN SHAPING, BREAKING, AND RESHAPING NARRATIVES. THIS POWER MUST BE UTILIZED TO CHANGE STEREOTYPES AND HARNESS SUPPORT FOR WOMEN

In short, there is no denying the fact that the goal of socio-economic justice and gender equity is huge for a country like Pakistan, already suffering on multiple fronts. However, it must be noted that this goal is not unachievable. True grit and resilience with a firm resolve to alter the destiny of women can truly do wonders for this country. ■



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MANAGING FUTURE FLOODS IN PAKISTAN

By Dr. Abdul Rauf

Pakistan is ranked 5th among the countries affected by extreme weather caused by climate change and is highly vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change effects. The weather patterns are changing where we have long dry spells followed by intense rains causing floods. As per the news, the devastating floods during this 2022 monsoon have affected more than one-third of the country resulting in great loss of life, property and crops. These floods have washed away roads, bridges, homes and crops. More than thirty-three million people, which is every seventh person in the country have been affected by the floods. People were trapped in water and available resources especially helicopters were not enough to reach them. The worst hit areas include Swat valley, Balochistan, Southern Punjab and Sindh. Flash flood in the Swat River have swept

away bridges and roads, cutting-off the entire villages. People were told to evacuate but they got trapped as the infrastructure had been badly damaged and enough helicopters were not available to evacuate them. The losses are much more than the country can manage so Pakistan has asked for international help to cope with the disaster. Present estimates indicate loss of around 1400 lives, out of which around 500 are children. At the same time economic losses are somewhat around US\$20 billion but these figures may cross US\$30 billion or even US\$40 billion. Rebuilding this infrastructure will take significant amount of time, efforts and finances. More than half of our cotton crop has been destroyed, a major cash crop that provides raw material to our cotton industry earning major portion of the foreign exchange. Fruit, vegetable, and rice crops have also been washed away which may cause food shortages leading to significant increase in price of food

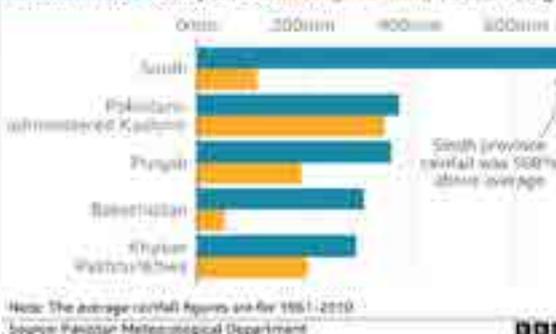
lessons were learnt then, what did we do afterwards to deal with such floods and what improvements were made to deal with the present floods. It is important to understand that floods cannot be stopped and with the present climate change scenario more floods are expected, which can be more in frequency and bigger in magnitude, making situation even worse in the coming years, thus we need to learn to live with the floods.

IN PAKISTAN, CLIMATE CHANGE EFFECTS ARE EXPECTED TO CAUSE MORE FLOODS IN FUTURE DUE TO SHORT INTENSE MONSOON AND HEAT WAVES CAUSING RAPID GLACIAL MELTING. WE CANNOT FIGHT WITH NATURE TO STOP FLOODS BUT CAN MANAGE FLOODS TO MINIMIZE DAMAGE AND STORE THIS WATER FOR OUR FUTURE USE

An important thing to understand is that we cannot fight with nature and flood water cannot be stopped by building the structures alone. We have seen that mostly these structures (predominantly in Balochistan) have been washed away by flash floods. We must also realize that we should not occupy the land naturally owned by the rivers and must restore the wetlands to contain flood water. We have seen significant impact

Rainfall well above average in most regions

Rainfall in 2022 compared to average rainfall, 1 Jul-30 Aug.



items. This is not the first time that we have suffered from floods. Pakistan faced heavy floods in 2010 when more than 2000 people died but an important question arises that what

of this along Swat River where all encroached infrastructures along the river have been washed away by the river repeating the same story of 2010 floods but unfortunately, we did not learn there and suffered again. With any luck, we are going to draw some lessons from these floods and make some better sustainable strategy to work with floods in future.

Pakistan has made an international appeal to help the country in dealing with flood victims, but this has also given rise to the debate whether we should ask for the aid or actually the compensation from the developed countries for the damage they have caused to the environment which is significantly affecting us in the form of floods and droughts. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, during his recent visit to Pakistan has made remarks mentioning that Pakistan contributes less than 1% of global emissions but is suffering heavily. He further added that the country bears less blame than many other nations for climate change and nations that are more responsible for climate change should have faced this challenge. The war that developed nations have waged on nature through greenhouse gas emissions, as a consequence the nature is tracking back and striking back in a devastating way. Floods in Pakistan are therefore not truly termed as a natural calamity but actually a man-made disaster with roots in global warming and climate change effects arising from global greenhouse gas emissions, significant contributions of which is made by the developed countries. The developed countries thus owe compensation for the losses, to the countries like Pakistan which are suffering from climate change effects.

Although these floods have wreaked havoc all over Pakistan, but this could be turned into a blessing if we are able to save this flood water

and could use this for the rest of the year once we face water shortage. Ironically, Pakistan is a water scarce country which also suffers from worst of the floods. We extract underground water to meet our domestic, industrial and agricultural needs but all over the country underground water levels have gone alarmingly low. These floods provide us with an opportunity to recharge our underground water levels but this needs development of water recharging systems where flood water is used to recharge our ground water. Water storage whether over the surface or underground is also a workable option. It is high time that we must simultaneously undertake every possible opportunity to save water for our future use including construction of dams, water reservoirs and ground water recharging.

WE ALSO NEED TO GIVE EQUAL IMPORTANCE TO NON-STRUCTURAL MEASURES SUCH AS FLOOD FORECASTING, FLOOD WARNING, CAPACITY BUILDING AND INCREASING COORDINATION BETWEEN DIFFERENT DEPARTMENTS DEALING WITH WATER MANAGEMENT, FLOOD PROTECTION, DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND RELIEF OPERATIONS

The present reservoir capacity of Pakistan is around 9% of the Indus River System (IRS) average annual flow and is far lower than world average of 40% and even far less than India having 33%. Pakistan's water storage capacity is continuously reducing and to meet the future water requirements, as per World Bank estimates, present capacity needs to be at least doubled by 2025. Pakistan is largely dependent on its canal water infrastructure, but due to combination of age and neglect,



much of the infrastructure is in decay where the delivery capacity of canals is 30 percent lower than the designed. Immediate efforts are thus required to maintain and upgrade our irrigation system.

In Pakistan, climate change effects are expected to cause more floods in future due to short intense monsoon and heat waves causing rapid glacial melting. We cannot fight with nature to stop floods but can manage floods to minimise damage and store this water for our future use. We need to work on both structural and non-structural measures. We must increase our storage capacity, both with large and small dams and reservoirs to mitigate the effects of floods, store water for irrigation and to increase our power production. Underground water charging using modern water harvesting techniques must also be employed. We also need to give equal importance to non-structural measures such as flood forecasting, flood warning, capacity building and increasing coordination between different departments dealing with water management, flood protection, disaster management and relief operations. Restoration of wetlands for flood retention, room for rivers and other water courses, urban development planning, increasing vegetation in the catchment area to increase the infiltration rates and decreasing flood water flow are also very important and should be given due consideration ■



The writer holds PhD in Telecom Engineering from University of Sheffield, UK and is a faculty member at NUST.

Pakistan And Saudi Arabia At 75 Years



By Arhama Siddiq

Since the establishment of relations between Pakistan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) in 1947, both countries have established a close relationship initially premised on religion, but which over time has taken on strategic and economic alignments.

In line with the Pakistan Government's shift from focus on geo-politics to geo-economics, Islamabad has been markedly engaging with the Gulf countries, particularly Saudi Arabia. During the Islamabad Security Dialogue in March 2021, a key point of emphasis was the need to create an economic win-win situation with key countries. This pragmatic approach on part of the leadership in Islamabad in terms of its outreach to the Gulf has been given further impetus by the Covid-19 pandemic, as a result of which a significant number of Pakistani expats in the Gulf had to return to their home country and now are seeking opportunities to return. In this regard there have been high-level visits to various Gulf nations where, among other things, a key focus has been increasing trade links and highlighting the role of Pakistani diaspora.

Former Saudi intelligence chief, Prince Turki bin Faisal, famously once said that the relationship between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia was "probably one of the closest relationships in the world between any two countries without any official treaty." The two countries have defense pacts dating back to 1982 which include training, troop deployment and sale of weapons and armory.

Saudi Arabia has time and again supported Pakistan, both financially and without commercial interests. Instances include the provision of \$10 million in humanitarian aid during the Balochistan earthquake in 2005 and \$170 million for relief and rehabilitation

operations during the 2010 and 2011 floods in Pakistan. In the backdrop of the devastation caused by the floods in 2022, KSA sent 100 emergency relief trucks, carrying 950 tons of food items to 17 flood-ravaged districts of Pakistan. Therefore, there can be no denying that Saudi Arabia has always supported Pakistan in times of crisis.

In the economic sphere, the large influx of Pakistani workers to meet the Kingdom's labor needs during the 1970s, commenced the commercial relations between the two countries. Pakistan relies heavily on the Kingdom for remittances which make up almost 86 percent of Pakistan's foreign reserves. Out of this percentage, almost 30 percent comes from Saudi Arabia. Before the coronavirus pandemic, there were more than 2.5 million Pakistani workers residing in Saudi Arabia. Moreover, Pakistan imports nearly 25 percent of its oil from Saudi Arabia. The provision of subsidized oil has been vital for Pakistan's economy over the years

In 2018, KSA provided \$6 billion in debt relief and in 2019, \$20 billion in MoUs in various fields geared towards helping Pakistan avoid a complete economic collapse. In August 2022, the Kingdom agreed to roll over its \$3 billion deposits in Pakistan in order to help revive the International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan to Pakistan. Soon after, Riyadh also announced a \$1 billion investment in Pakistan under the umbrella of a deferred oil facility.

For the Kingdom, Pakistan is essential because of its appendage of troops and security advisors in accordance with the 1982 defense pact. Moreover, the Saudi economy has borne a heavy brunt due to falling oil prices, the ongoing war in Yemen and the Covid-19 pandemic. Hajj (Pilgrimage) revenues, which make up 20 percent of the Kingdom's non-oil revenue, took a big hit this year, since it was scaled down from the usual

2.5 million pilgrims to about 1,000 people. Now, more than ever, in accordance with Bin Salman's Vision 2030, the Kingdom needs to move away from oil dependence. In this regard, Pakistan can be critical, since it provides the Kingdom with cost-effective labor, an international market for its oil and foreign investment opportunities vis-à-vis the China- Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

The Covid -19 pandemic has had a marked bearing on the economies of both Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. Undoubtedly, this has impelled each side to be open to new economic partnerships. Based on the friendly ties the two countries share, Pakistan is well placed to benefit from the economic reforms being carried out in the Kingdom and from the opportunities provided by Vision 2030, particularly in the NEOM city projects. It is time that the already friendly ties that the two countries share be transformed into a sustainable, concrete economic partnership.

IN THE BACKDROP OF THE DEVASTATION CAUSED BY THE FLOODS IN 2022, KSA SENT 100 EMERGENCY RELIEF TRUCKS, CARRYING 950 TONS OF FOOD ITEMS TO 17 FLOOD-RAVAGED DISTRICTS OF PAKISTAN. THEREFORE, THERE CAN BE NO DENYING THAT SAUDI ARABIA HAS ALWAYS SUPPORTED PAKISTAN IN TIMES OF CRISIS

The following are some recommendations in this regard.

Firstly, given that more than 60 percent of Pakistan's populace comprises young people, Pakistan's manpower is considered an extremely valuable asset. Hence, the Pakistan Government must train its labor force in line with Saudi needs. Specializations where demand for workers will be high are engineering and medicine. Secondly, the current legal reforms in Saudi Arabia have complicated the process of visa systems and working conditions for the labor. Hence, the Pakistan Government should work to facilitate its workers on an urgent basis. Thirdly, the opportunities in infrastructure development in Saudi Arabia are being overlooked by Pakistan. The Government of Pakistan needs to rectify this. One way is if Pakistan and Saudi Arabia sign a contract with regard to sending Pakistani engineers and technicians to provide support in the Saudi mega project-NEOM city. The project is said to generate 380,000 jobs and contribute US \$48 billion to the Kingdom's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 2030.

Moreover, the Chambers of Commerce in Pakistan must effectively work to market Pakistani products in Saudi Arabia. Pakistani exporters also face challenges in Saudi Arabia regarding procedural cost of registration and licensing. Therefore, both nations should lower bilateral trade barriers and simultaneously improve communication.

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia already share a long history when it comes to defense ties. Building on the existing ties they share, the Government of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia can engage in joint research and development in the defense sector and in this way help the Saudis develop their local defense industry.

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia can also sign a number of agreements in areas of mutual interest like agriculture, health, sports, energy, tourism, labor etc. The investment absorption capacity of Pakistan is huge especially under the CPEC. Besides the \$20 billion Saudi Arabia has already pledged for investments in CPEC, the Kingdom can also increase focus on other avenues of mutual interest like agriculture, energy and tourism.

Saudi Arabia is facing an immense food security challenge- it meets its food demand by importing 80% of its requirements. Pakistan being an agro-based country can help the Kingdom overcome this by not only attracting investment from Saudi Arabia in agriculture within the CPEC's Special Economic Zones but also through export of its products.

Environmental cooperation is another area where Saudi Arabia can benefit from Pakistan's experience especially in areas such as water conservation and climate smart cities. The two countries have already signed an MoU in this regard in February 2022 and this needs to be followed up efficiently.

Keeping in view that Vision 2030 lays special emphasis on promotion of sports, Pakistan can use its status and experience in the sports industry as leverage to enter in the Saudi sports market especially in terms of manufacturing of sports items. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia is looking to fast track its exploitation of natural resources. In this regard, Pakistan can provide services in exploitation of minerals and other natural resources other than oil. The two countries need to establish research centers at universities and business councils, which could guide policy makers and traders to focus on innovative areas of mutual interest, like standardization of products, quality assurance etc ■



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CLIMATE JUSTICE FOR GLOBAL SOUTH

By Shuraim Ahmad Malik

The recent torrential rainfall that wreaked havoc in various parts of Pakistan follows a calamitous pattern of climate change in the Global South. Today, millions of people in the developing countries are facing the brunt of exploitation of the earth's climate perpetrated by the Global North. Excessive flooding, extreme rainfall and blistering heatwaves are spawning immense destruction in the regions south of the equator, mainly due to the industrial activities that began in 18th century from Europe. By the time, the global community sensed the downsides of using carbon based fuels for energy consumption i.e. crude oil, coal and natural gas it was already too late. The drastic impact of climate change can be felt all across the globe and numerous regions are facing the devastation in the form of loss of lives, livelihoods and infrastructure devastation - mostly in the Global South.

As soon as the developed countries started advocating for

employing clean energy sources - hydropower, solar, wind energy - instead of relying on carbon-emitting fossils to save the global environment from further deterioration, they came up with an unprecedented narrative of 'Climate Justice.' It entails that global climate was atrociously exploited by the Global North to an extent that in contemporary times, Global South is bearing the dire consequences of it.

PAKISTAN CONTRIBUTES LESS THAN 1% TOWARDS THE GLOBAL EMISSIONS OF GREENHOUSE GASES BUT IT IS CONTINUALLY RANKED AMONG THE TOP TEN COUNTRIES MOST AFFECTED BY CLIMATE CHANGE

To put it into perspective, the developed countries have, historically, contributed around 92 percent of the excess carbon dioxide emissions that are now ravaging the lives of the

people residing in relatively poor countries. For instance, Pakistan contributes less than 1% towards the global emissions of greenhouse gases but it is continually ranked among the top ten countries most affected by climate change. Similarly, the entire African continent has contributed to only 3% of the total global carbon emissions, but currently African countries are encountering the most dreadful consequences of climate change. On top of that, the developing countries are now being coerced to instantly halt the use of fossil fuels for energy purposes and to adopt renewable energy means in order to prevent an utter desolation of the planet.

While the efforts to keep the Earth's ecosystem livable for miscellaneous species are comprehensible, the major concern for developing countries remains that the degree of devastation they face due to climate change has no comparison with Global North which will bring

a halt to social and economic life. The industrial activities of the profit-yearning capitalists in the developed countries is responsible for the incumbent catastrophic situation of the earth's climate; hence there exists an additional responsibility on the Global North to pay reparations to the Global South for the damages they have done. Moreover, the Global South being economically unsound would require huge financial assistance to establish necessary infrastructure in order to confront the harrowing threats of climate change.

GREEN ENERGY IS THE WAY TO GO IF THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY WISHES TO SURVIVE, AND FOR THAT THE INFRASTRUCTURE OVERHAUL IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

In response, the Green Climate Fund (GCF) was established after the Cancun's COP 16 in 2010 at which world leaders pledged to allocate \$100B per year in climate finance to the developing countries from 2020 onwards, so that they could address the gruesome impact of climate change to the best of their capacities. However, only \$83.3B was mobilized for climate finance in 2020 as per the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), well below the intended target of \$100B. For the very reason, the pledged amount of \$100B will be released by the year 2023, provided that all the anticipated course of actions remains intact. This reflects on the seriousness of the developed countries with respect to furthering the climate mitigation and adaptation endeavors, when the actual cost of the climate impacts is estimated to be around \$5.9 trillion by 2030.

All hue and cry of the Global North to incentivize the vulnerable nations least responsible for causing climate change to curb their carbon emissions is all but a fallacious manifestation of duplicity especially when the climate mitigation efforts are being dealt with loans - to be paid back - and not grants. Oxfam reported in 2020 that 80 percent of the total climate finance awarded to the developing countries were actually loans, which in turn continues to plunge the climate-affected countries into a debt cycle of those who are actually responsible for their sufferings. Moreover, the fossil-fuels companies in the developed countries are constantly lobbying to block the efforts to regulate carbon emissions and are running malicious PR campaigns to discredit viable energy alternatives. These giant companies, instead of coping with the Green Climate Agenda, are negotiating for and setting up their plants in the Global South to avoid carbon taxation and carbon cap - maximum carbon emissions - sanctioned in their states.

As things stand, the world is on its way to a disastrous 2.4°C of global temperature by the end of the century. Fossil fuels still make up around 80 percent of the global energy and will continue to do so in the near future, and the Global South will keep facing its repercussions. If the global community is truly serious about mitigating the climate crisis and shifting towards renewable energy sources, they must first ensure climate justice for the Global South. The burdensome debts foisted on the low-income countries must be waived off as they spend much more on servicing these debts than dealing with the challenges of climate change in the first place. Just like the war crimes and mass genocide, ecocide must be made an international crime so that no

state dares to vandalize the earth's climate. All fossil fuel subsidies must be halted at the earliest, which according to the IMF were \$5.9 trillion or 6.8 percent of the global GDP in 2020 and are expected to surge up to \$7.4 trillion by 2025. Additionally, international banks must stop funding new fossil fuel projects to prevent the climate from further deterioration and instead, long-term funding sources must be created to help the Global South's transition to climate friendly infrastructure. The provision of \$100B in climate finance to the developing countries must be ensured on immediate basis, and as it is not enough, there should be a consensus that the amount should be increased gradually.

THE FOSSIL-FUELS COMPANIES IN THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES ARE CONSTANTLY LOBBYING TO BLOCK THE EFFORTS TO REGULATE CARBON EMISSIONS AND ARE RUNNING MALICIOUS PR CAMPAIGNS TO DISCREDIT VIABLE ENERGY ALTERNATIVES

Lastly, mitigation finance remains the main focus of the Global North as of now, but in order to make strides towards countering the climate crisis, adaptation finance must get due attention as well. Green energy is the way to go if the global community wishes to survive, and for that the infrastructure overhaul in the Global South is the responsibility of the developed countries, because it is their mess which is causing devastation in the low-income countries ■



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75 YEARS OF DEFENCE INDIGENISATION IN PAKISTAN

By Aamna Rafiq

In 1947, the Armed Forces of Pakistan came into existence as a result of a merger of Muslim troops and defence equipment from the pre-independence British Forces. The agreement and procedure for the division was decided by the Partition Council which included the Viceroy of India, Lord Mountbatten and the top leadership of the Muslim League and the Indian Congress on June 30, 1947. According to this agreement, the armed forces and other military assets would be divided in the ratio of 64 percent (India) and 36 percent (Pakistan). However, Pakistan was forced to accept one-third share of the assets. The ordinance depots and stores which Pakistan received were general, unwanted and obsolete in nature. Furthermore, all seventeen ordinance factories were located in India.



Only nine out of forty-six training establishments were located in Pakistan. The 1948 War with India and lack of support from the members of the Common Wealth compelled Pakistan to take the route of defence indigenisation to protect its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

THE 1948 WAR WITH INDIA AND LACK OF SUPPORT FROM THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMON WEALTH COMPELLED PAKISTAN TO TAKE THE ROUTE OF DEFENCE INDIGENISATION TO PROTECT ITS SOVEREIGNTY AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY

Defence indigenisation refers to the state's capability to develop, manufacture and maintain the essential defence assets, equipment and technologies within the country. Keeping in view the complexity of defence technologies, successful indigenisation is considered a hallmark of the state's industrial excellence. It



serves the dual purpose of self-reliance and reducing the economic burden of defence imports. A modern and self-reliant national defence infrastructure is essential for an ability to achieve national security without compromising foreign policy objectives and overdependence on other states. In 1951, Pakistan started its journey of defence indigenisation with the establishment of Pakistan Ordnance Factories (POF).



Currently, POF consists of fourteen factories and twelve subsidiaries. In addition to tank/artillery munitions, it produces rifles, machine guns,



rocket launchers, mortars and their ammunition for all three services and law enforcement agencies. Established in 1956, the Karachi Shipyard & Engineering Works (KS&EW) is responsible for the production, repairs and overhauls of boats, vessels, ships and submarines. Currently, it consists of six factories. The National Radio Telecommunication Corporation (NRTC) was established in Haripur in 1960. It consists of three factories that are famous for the production of software-defined radio sets, jammers, sensors, and long-term mine reconnaissance systems (LMRs).

The wars in 1965 and 1971 not only highlighted the significance of self-reliance in the realm of defence production but also strengthened Pakistan's resolve of diversifying sources of military equipment.



The indigenisation process accelerated at the rate of knots in the 1970s. In 1971, Pakistan laid foundations of the Heavy Industries Taxila (HIT) which has now grown into a military-industrial complex. With seven factories and one subsidiary unit, HIT has become one of the largest defence products manufacturers in Pakistan. It produces and rebuilds tanks and armoured personnel carriers (APCs)

for Army and Law Enforcement Agencies. Its main product is Tank Alkhalid, capable of higher strategic and tactical mobility. Established in 1972, Pakistan Aeronautical Complex (PAC) Kamra is the jewel in the crown. In its four factories, PAC rebuilds, overhauls the fighter and trainer aircrafts for the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) and Army Aviation. It also manufactures JF-17 thunder and Mushshak aircrafts.

THE WARS IN 1965 AND 1971 NOT ONLY HIGHLIGHTED THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SELF-RELIANCE IN THE REALM OF DEFENCE PRODUCTION BUT ALSO STRENGTHENED PAKISTAN'S RESOLVE OF DIVERSIFYING SOURCES OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT

In 1972, the Defence Production Division was established under the Ministry of Defence. Later this Division was elevated to the status of Ministry of Defence Production (MoDP) in 2004. MoDP has been responsible for making the defence production policies and strategies, promoting research, development, indigenous production, procurement and export of defence equipments.



The 1971 war and Indian nuclear tests in 1974 compelled Pakistan to pursue a nuclear weapon programme. Pakistan held a firm belief that security threats posed by India could neither be countered by increasing the conventional capability nor by the

extended deterrence by the external powers.

Pakistan became a nuclear power after conducting five successful nuclear tests on May 28, 1998. Another success story of defence indigenisation in Pakistan is its missile programme. Ballistic and Cruise missiles of Pakistan are constantly evolving, achieving greater payload, range and accuracy.

Despite limited resources, Pakistan has managed to establish an excellent defence industrial complex consisting of various research and development centres and weapon production facilities in the last seventy-five years. Furthermore, the engagement with 145 private national firms for the production of different defence related products also signifies the importance of public-private partnerships in the national defence matrix. The major defence production establishments like POF, HIT and PAC also launched their certified commercial subsidiaries e.g. Wah Industries Limited, Wah Nobel Limited, Margalla Heavy Industries Limited and Kamra Aviation Industries Limited (KAIL).

ANOTHER SUCCESS STORY OF DEFENCE INDIGENISATION IN PAKISTAN IS ITS MISSILE PROGRAMME. BALLISTIC AND CRUISE MISSILES OF PAKISTAN ARE CONSTANTLY EVOLVING, ACHIEVING GREATER PAYLOAD, RANGE AND ACCURACY

These defence establishments and their commercial subsidiaries not only created a defence ecosystem for meeting the national defence needs but also contributed to the national economy via defence exports and job creation.



According to the recent Three Years' Performance Report by the MoDP, Pakistan earned approximately Rs 60 billion between August 2018 and August 2021 due to an exceptional boost in defence exports.

IN COMPARISON TO THE SITUATION IN 1947, PAKISTAN HAS COME A LONG WAY IN THE FIELD OF DEFENCE INDIGENISATION. THE MAIN GOAL NOW SHOULD BE THE MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT OF EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE AT A FASTER PACE

The inland sales contributed approximately Rs. 70 billion. However, Pakistan only exports its products to states who want to strengthen their national defences. Pakistan discourages an arms race and is exploring a way forward to maintain peace and stability at global and regional

levels. Pakistan pursues the motto of "Arms for Peace." Furthermore, in on last three years alone, the defence production sector created eight thousand jobs for the youth of Pakistan.

In comparison to the situation in 1947, Pakistan has come a long way in the field of defence indigenisation. The main goal now should be the maintenance

and improvement of existing infrastructure at a faster pace. Pakistan should also pay attention to strengthening the public-private interface, resolving funding issues and removing bureaucratic hurdles.

Furthermore, the global defence industrial landscape underwent a great transformation in the last decade especially with the emergence of dual-use emerging technologies like artificial intelligence (AI), cyber, robotics, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), data science, Internet of Things (IoT), etc. This has resulted in the development of new exotic weapon systems as well as their integration with the existing systems. These developments have intensified greater military competitiveness, tendencies of pre-emption, technological protectionism and sanctions at global and regional levels. Therefore, Pakistan's focus should be on the smart, qualitative and careful militarisation of selective emerging technologies to achieve self-sufficiency and enhance its full-spectrum deterrence as enshrined in the National Security Policy 2022-2026 ■



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PAKISTAN'S DERELICT COASTAL TROVE

By Reema Shaukat

Not all countries on world's map lie by the sea. Nations that are blessed with the sea seek maximum benefit out of it to support overall economy of the country. The earnings so fetched are hatched under the overall concept of Blue Economy. According to the World Bank and Ministry of Maritime Affairs Pakistan, the Blue Economy is "sustainable commercial growth, improving livelihood and creating jobs using ocean resources while preserving and protecting the health of oceanic ecosystem." This implies that anything earned utilising the marine potential, used for the benefit of people without degrading environment can be termed as Blue Economy. In order to exploit Blue Economy's potential several types of infrastructure both ashore and offshore are constructed. Coastline thus not only facilitates construction of any such infrastructure but also supports their sustenance for smooth running. That's why coast is termed as the mainstay for Blue Economic ventures and is in the focus of those countries that exploit their marine resources.

Pakistan is also blessed with a

coastline of over 1000km which spreads from Sir Creek in the east to Gwatar Bay in the west. To an estimate over 16Bn barrels of oil or equivalent gas resources exist within Pakistan's maritime area, Pakistan's Continental Shelf is expected to possess oil and gas worth 14Bn USD and 4.4M tons of deep-sea mineral deposits.

**THE BLUE ECONOMY
IS SUSTAINABLE
COMMERCIAL
GROWTH, IMPROVING
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OCEAN RESOURCES
WHILE PRESERVING
AND PROTECTING THE
HEALTH OF OCEANIC
ECOSYSTEM**

If Karachi is taken as a landmark on the coastline, the complete shore can be divided into two coasts that is Sindh coast on the east and Makran coast on the west of Karachi. Although part of the same coastline, these are two very distinct coasts lying across Karachi. This diversity provides us with an opportunity to exploit the hidden marine resources, yet untapped, for contribution to our

overall economy. Sindh coast on east of Karachi is 274km long and is accessed on land via National Highway. It is a combination of creeks, swamps, mangroves, mudflats and wastelands. The creeks have been formed due to deltaic action of River Indus which meets with the sea here. Sir Creek in the east marks boundary between Pakistan and India and is a disputed territory. The creeks act as waterways and provide mobility all around the area as these are interconnected. There are land patches found all across the area which have mangrove jungles grown over them. Pakistan has the 5th largest mangroves forest in the world. Mangroves are known for environment protection as these absorb 4 to 5 times more carbon dioxide, reduce marine pollution by absorbing toxic nitrates and serve as nursery for over 3000 marine species. Also, they serve as a natural protection against storm surge and coastal erosion.

The creeks community is subjected to a traditional "Wadera" system belonging to fishing. A strong 'Saint culture' is prevalent in this area and tombs of religious and spiritual figures are found in abundance even on islands inside creek areas. Yearly festival near

the tombs of revered is the source of entertainment and joy for all especially women and children. Crime rate is almost negligible and security in the area is also good. Our creeks area is habitat for a special breed of camels called Kharai camels that survive on saline vegetation. The camels are left in rivulets area by their owners to swim across and find food for themselves. A special breed of fish found in creeks is called mudfish. It survives both on land and water and is used by the fishermen as bait. High quality honey is found in these areas because there is no other syrup or commercial additive mixed in it. Creeks in Pakistan are also known to have hydrocarbon reserves which can be explored to provide various benefits to us. All over the world mangroves are protected for their immense potential of contribution towards the economy of a country. They are also exploited to generate eco-tourism. Although mangroves protection is being focused at governmental and non-governmental organizational level, yet no effort is visible to generate economic outcome from them.

The Makran coast falls in Balochistan and is about 774km long. It has beautiful beaches, mud-mountains, blue water and the kind of serenity that is always sought after. Stunning sunsets and sunrises are the hallmark of Makran coast. It is connected via 653km Makran Coastal Highway. Gwadar Bay, around 80km west of Gwadar, marks the border between Pakistan and Iran. Population living along the coast is also related to fishing. The season is restricted to 6 to 8 months due to strong Monsoon in the area therefore the fishermen try to earn for complete year during the available season. Most of the fish caught is brought to Karachi for further processing as there are many fish processing plants in the area. It is interesting

to note that due to absence of any "Sardari" system along the Makran coast, the people there are quite independent in their thinking and decision-making.

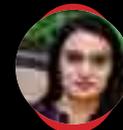
PAKISTAN'S THIRD AND THE ONLY NATURAL DEEP SEAPORT PORT IS SITUATED AT GWADAR WHICH HAS A PROJECTED CAPACITY OF 88 BERTHS AND HANDLING CAPACITY UP TO 200,000 DWT. GWADAR IS PART OF CPEC, THE FLAGSHIP PROJECT OF BRI AND SIGNIFICANTLY SHORTENS DISTANCE FOR CHINESE SEA BOUND TRADE VIS A VIS MALACCA STRAIT

Pakistan's third and the only natural deep seaport port is situated at Gwadar which has a projected capacity of 88 berths and handling capacity up to 200,000 DWT. Gwadar is part of CPEC, the flagship project of BRI and significantly shortens distance for Chinese sea bound trade vis a vis Malacca Strait. Chinese investment in Gwadar is substantial and some mega projects have either been completed or are near completion. Chinese are also investing in socio-economic welfare projects and in this regard, construction of a school in Gwadar, establishing Pak-China Friendship hospital as well as Vocational Training Institute and distribution of solar panels are worth mentioning here.

Important towns along Makran coast include Sonmiani, Gaddani, Ormara, Pasni, Gwadar and Jiwani. A number of small villages

are also found scattered in the area but one peculiarity is the desolated location of each site. Travelling along Makran Coastal Highway is the most delightful experience, yet it severely lacks facilities such as rest areas, fuel stations, vehicle repair outlets etc. Hingol National park, wind carved rocky features on Buzi pass, mud volcanoes and beautiful beaches in abundance are worth visiting sites. However due to lack of requisite facilities this vast scope of tourism is hindered. Security in the area has improved a lot due to hard work of security forces. Despite having a large trove of natural gifts with our both coasts, the socio-economic conditions in the area is hardly satisfactory even after 75 years of independence. People are deprived of basic amenities such as fresh water, electricity, sanitisation, education, health facilities etc. Even for fishing, there is severe scarcity of facilities and modern techniques. Except for National and Makran Coastal Highways the connecting road networks are quite dilapidated. There is no facilitation available for the tourists.

Focused attention has been given to Blue Economy by the government of Pakistan in recent years and in fact year 2020 was termed as the "Year of Blue Economy". However, no measures to improve socio-economic landscape of both coasts have been visible. If we really have to excel in exploiting Blue economy for significant contribution to our national economy, then development of coastal regions is inevitable ■



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Pakistan and the Gulf Cooperation Council at 75

By Sarah Akram



Pakistan has traditionally enjoyed cordial relations with the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). The GCC is made up of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman. The relationship with the GCC countries has been one of mutual goodwill, trust, cooperation and an all encompassing nature. This relationship is embedded in common faith, economic cooperation and interdependence as well as convergence on geo-strategic matters. The Pakistani expat community has played a prominent role in the development of the GCC states, where more than three million Pakistani workers reside and send remittances back home. Apart from this, the GCC region has also been particularly important

for Pakistan and the rest of South Asia as well, due to its energy needs. The majority of Pakistan's energy, like oil and gas, comes from GCC countries.

PAKISTAN'S SUPPORT TO THE GULF COUNTRIES VIS A VIS DEFENSE AND SECURITY AREAS IS NOTEWORTHY AND THE FORMER'S SUPPORT TO ITS ECONOMY HAS BEEN A PROMINENT FEATURE OF THE RELATIONSHIP

The relationship between the GCC and Pakistan is multi-dimensional covering several areas, specifically the economy and defense. Pakistan's support to the gulf countries vis a vis defense and security areas is noteworthy and the former's support to its economy has been a prominent

feature of the relationship. The alignment of interests continues to increase in the backdrop of changing global shifts. The oil boom of the 1970s made the gulf countries rich and thus bolstered their need for increasing defense. This resulted in military to military cooperation between Pakistan and the GCC countries, in terms of training, intelligence sharing and other related activities. Certain incidents such as the attack on the Grand Mosque in Makkah in 1979 and the resultant stationing of Pakistani troops over there reveal the strength of the relationship. Similarly, during the Persian Gulf War in 1990-1991, Pakistan sent troops to Kuwait in response to the Iraq invasion. Apart from this, when Pakistan conducted the nuclear tests in 1998, KSA helped with the provision of oil

to assist the country with the threat of anticipated sanctions. Over the last many decades, the major means of providing aid to Pakistan has been through deferred payments for oil. Pakistan is an energy deficit country and as a result, relies heavily on imports from the GCC's petroleum industry.

Earlier this year, Pakistan and the GCC also finalized the Joint Action Plan for Strategic Dialogue (2022-2026) to facilitate and further intensify institutional cooperation in various fields including bilateral trade and investment. This is based on the memorandum of understanding (MoU) on Strategic Dialogue between the GCC and Pakistan. The MoU provides an organizational approach to increase collaboration in various fields, including trade and investment; security, political, agricultural and food security, transportation etc. The Joint Action Plan is likely to open new avenues of cooperation for enhancing this partnership. The increasing bilateralism reflects a new resolve to upgrade the relationship. Although Pakistan enjoys sound economic and military relations with each of the GCC countries, KSA, UAE and Qatar hold a very prominent place. UAE and KSA are one of the largest exporters of oil products to Pakistan while Qatar occupies the top position in LNG export. Pakistan is also a major buyer of LNG from Qatar. Moreover, a 10-year liquefied natural gas (LNG) agreement being described as the lowest-ever publicly disclosed price under a long-term contract in the world was also signed in February 2021 between the two countries. KSA has often provided oil on deferred payments, thus helping Pakistan in times of need.

GCC member states have

benefitted enormously from military assistance provided by Pakistani forces and high-level military exchanges are common. With the rejuvenation plans of GCC member states such as the Saudi vision 2030, Kuwait vision 2035 and Oman vision 2040, Pakistani skilled workers would have enormous economic opportunities thereby probably increasing the flow of remittances into the country. The strategic dialogue would also provide Pakistan with an opportunity to engage more with countries like Kuwait, Oman and Bahrain that are not as much prioritized as KSA, Qatar and the UAE. Even though Pakistanis constitute a large section of expats residing in Kuwait, their numbers are moderately low as compared to other Gulf countries.

Pakistan has remained a major purchaser of Kuwaiti black gold and Pakistan also offered to send healthcare experts to the country during the pandemic. Therefore, the need to increase intergovernmental cooperation between the two countries is very important. Pakistan must also explore opportunities in Oman and Bahrain and optimize on increasing engagement in all spheres. Pakistan and Oman share a maritime border, which can help open vistas for deeper economic engagement in terms of opportunities offered by the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) through the Gwadar port. Overall, Pakistan enjoys excellent relations with the GCC countries and has unhindered cooperation with all member countries in all spheres. Since cooperation has traditionally been in the economic and military domains, Pakistan needs to explore newer areas of cooperation with the GCC countries, like non-traditional security threats, particularly the

looming threat of climate change and thus needs to broaden its existing areas of engagement and cooperation with the GCC. In this regard, Pakistan must explore the desired effort towards entering into a strategic partnership with the GCC countries, more specifically KSA, UAE and Qatar.

WITH CHANGING GLOBAL ALIGNMENTS, PAKISTAN MUST FIND NEWER WAYS TO CREATE A NICHE TO ENGAGE WITH ALL GCC COUNTRIES IN DEFENSE, TOURISM AND INFRASTRUCTURE. PAKISTAN SHOULD CREATE A NICHE FOR ITSELF IN DIFFERENT ECONOMIC VISIONS OF THE GCC, PARTICULARLY IN ENERGY AND FOOD SECURITY. PAKISTAN MUST CAPITALIZE ON WELL CRAFTED ECONOMIC POLICIES TO FURTHER ENHANCE ITS RELATIONS WITH THE GCC COUNTRIES, WHILE EMPHASIZING ON AREAS WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN TAPPED INTO YET

With changing global alignments, Pakistan must find newer ways to create a niche to engage with all GCC countries in defense, tourism and infrastructure. Pakistan should create a niche for itself in different economic visions of the GCC, particularly in energy and food security. Pakistan must capitalize on well crafted economic policies to further enhance its relations with the GCC countries, while emphasizing on areas which have not been tapped into yet ■



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PIVOT: What is the SCO vision?

H.E. ZM: We just celebrated the 20th Anniversary of the signing of the SCO Charter in June this year. As the basic legal document of the SCO, the Charter clearly defines the goals, tasks, and basic principles of the organization. The most important thing is that the Charter clearly embodies the peaceful and constructive nature of the SCO. Its basic philosophy is to uphold mutual respect, equality, mutual benefit, and the right to recognize the diversity of civilizations. At the same time, it resolutely rejects unilateralism and any coercive attempts for dominance.

Last year marked the 20th Anniversary of the founding of the SCO. At the Dushanbe Summit, the leaders of the member states reflected on the evolution of the organization since its establishment and chalked out the areas for further development. From a historical perspective, the SCO has withstood the test of time and has become one of the largest regional multi-domain cooperation mechanisms in the world in a relatively short period. Under the guidance of the "Shanghai Spirit", the SCO, as an authoritative and influential inter-governmental organization, has become an important independent factor in the international community at the regional and global levels, and has won wide recognition.

In the context of the rapid and complex evolution of the current international and regional situation, the SCO has entered its third decade. The essence of the change in the world pattern is reflected in the collision of two major trends. On the one hand, multilateralism has been consolidated as the core mechanism responsible for maintaining international peace

and stability, the United Nations is further enhancing its due role. On the other hand, there has been a resurgence of unilateralism and power dictatorship, and the risk of the world returning to the era of the "Cold War" has increased. This is contrary to the basic principles of the SCO and will directly affect the security interests of Member States. Therefore, it is necessary to think about the status and role of the SCO in the new situation and formulate relevant strategies to deal with new challenges and threats.

PIVOT: The basis of geo-economics is the interrelationship that exists in the form of regions. What role has the SCO played in promoting connectivity?

H.E. ZM: It is undeniable that the regions of the SCO Member States constitute an inter-continental bridge, ensuring the connectivity of the Eurasian region and its external space. Each member state is an important part of the transportation system, and related transportation

routes and corridors are of great strategic significance to promote the improvement of the level of commodity flows between Asia and Europe.

UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF THE "SHANGHAI SPIRIT", THE SCO, AS AN AUTHORITATIVE AND INFLUENTIAL INTER-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION, HAS BECOME AN IMPORTANT INDEPENDENT FACTOR IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AT THE REGIONAL AND GLOBAL LEVELS, AND HAS WON WIDE RECOGNITION

Over the years, the SCO has attached great importance to connectivity and cooperation. During the SCO Dushanbe Summit in September 2021, the leaders of the eight countries emphasized on the need to efficiently use the transit transport potential of the SCO,



Interview of the SCO Secretary-General H.E. Zhang Ming

By PIVOT Team

build regional transit transport corridors, implement large-scale projects, and promote transport connectivity in the region. To this end, the SCO has taken an important step, namely, the signing of the Agreement on Creating Favorable Conditions for International Road Transportation in 2014, and the approval of the Concept for Cooperation of Railways of SCO Member States in 2019. At present, the parties are discussing the cooperation strategies of the SCO countries for the development of connectivity, efficient economy and transport corridors, as well as the outline of the infrastructure development of the Member States.

PIVOT: What role has the SCO played in promoting people-to-people exchanges between Member States?

H.E. ZM: Expanding and strengthening cultural cooperation among Member States is one of the top priorities of the SCO's overall development strategy. To this end, the SCO has focused on several aspects of work.

First, to formulate a good framework strategy at the top level: Facing the complex situation of century-old changes and overlapping pandemics, all member states agree that public diplomacy and cultural exchanges are very important. In the "SCO Development Strategy until 2025" approved in 2015, and the Dushanbe Declaration on the 20th Anniversary of the SCO in 2021, the consensus on strengthening intergovernmental relations through public diplomacy has been constantly highlighted.

Second, to hold key activities: In recent years, a People-to-People Friendship Forum has been established within the SCO framework. The forum was initiated by Chinese President Xi



Jinping. The 1st forum was held successfully in Wuhan in 2021. It was a good start to give a boost to the activity. The 2nd forum was held in Tashkent in May 2022. This activity aims to promote the process of integration in the SCO Space, deepen the development of public diplomacy, expand the cooperation in the fields such as science, education, culture, sports, tourism, urban engagement etc.

MULTILATERALISM IS ONE OF THE FOUNDING PRINCIPLES OF SCO, I.E. THE "SHANGHAI SPIRIT", WHICH HAS BECOME A PART OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL VOCABULARY

Third, we need to build cooperation networks: Under the guidance of and pushed by relevant heads of the member states, different cooperation organizations have been formed in the SCO space such as the SCO Good-Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation Commission (in Beijing), the SCO Cultural Integration Center (in Bishkek), the SCO Centre for Public Diplomacy (in Tashkent), and the



SCO Friendship and Cooperation Centre (in Dushanbe) etc. The SCO has actively carried out its work to deepen bilateral and multilateral people-to-people and cultural exchanges.

Fourth, expand the cooperation and exchanges: Each member state is continuously expanding cooperation with media outlets for the sake of deepening mutual understanding among people.

Advancing with the times, we should make full use of modern information technology particularly different media outlets to facilitate exchanges between different countries and people. At the same time, it will also contribute in strengthening active interactions in areas such as tourism, traditional medicine and regional cooperation.

PIVOT: What contribution has the SCO made in promoting multilateralism?

H.E. ZM: I would like to emphasize that multilateralism is one of the founding principles of SCO, i.e., the "Shanghai spirit", which has become a part of international





regulations and procedures for granting such status are laid down by special agreements between member states.

PIVOT: What role is the SCO playing in mitigating and dealing with the spillover effects of the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan?

H.E. ZM: Since the end of the last century, the

political vocabulary. Its essence is that international relations should be set up on the basis of equality, mutual respect, care for each other interests and concerns, mutual benefit, and respecting the right of independent choice for social and political development paths. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization should be considered as a successful sample of multilateral partnership in today's international community.

In July, I visited Pakistan prior to my visit to Tashkent to attend the SCO Foreign Ministers' meeting. After this visit, I deeply felt that all founding member states want to firmly implement the principles presented by the SCO Charter and reiterated in previous summits: recognizing that international law, led by the "United Nations Charter" and recognized universally, is inviolable; and that weakening of the United Nations' core role as a comprehensive and multilateral organization would not be allowed. This means that the SCO should have the capacity to recognize differences, listen to, understand, respect and appreciate other countries, seek common ground while reserving differences, and strengthen internal solidarity and cohesion. Today, the 'SCO

family' is expanding. In this space, unilateralism, power politics and the "Cold War" mind-sets have no place.

PIVOT: How do you evaluate the SCO's development policies, and, expansion process in recent years?

H.E. ZM: The SCO was established with the aim of enhancing mutual trust and good neighborliness among member states, strengthening cooperation in various fields, maintaining and consolidating regional peace, security and stability, jointly responding to new threats, encouraging effective and mutually-beneficial cooperation in different fields and promoting economic, social and cultural development of member states.

The principle of openness of the SCO has been written into the SCO Charter since its establishment. It stipulates that the SCO is open to countries, which can commit to abide by the objectives and principles of the SCO Charter, other international treaties and documents approved within the SCO framework. Such countries can be admitted to become the member states. The SCO may also offer Dialogue Partner or Observer status to interested states or international organizations. The

threat of terrorism, separatism and extremism in Afghanistan has become increasingly prominent, which is also a realistic backdrop for the establishment of the SCO. Afghanistan is an important country in our region. To stabilize the situation in Afghanistan as soon as possible is one of the important factors for maintaining and consolidating security and stability in the SCO region.

Over the years, the SCO Member States have attached great importance to the Afghan issue and initiated the establishment of the SCO-Afghanistan Contact Group in 2006 to actively participate in the Afghan peace process.

DURING ITS ALMOST TWO DECADES OF WORKING, THE RATS HAS CONVINCINGLY DEMONSTRATED ITS CAPACITY AND EFFECTIVENESS IN THE COMMON FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM, SEPARATISM AND EXTREMISM

In the Dushanbe Declaration of September 2021, the Heads of the SCO Member States stressed their

support for Afghanistan to become an independent, neutral, unified, democratic and peaceful state, eliminating terrorism, war and drugs. It is important to establish an inclusive government in Afghanistan with the participation of representatives of all ethnic, religious and political forces in Afghan society. These positions fully demonstrate the importance of the Afghan issue within the SCO framework. In addition, the Joint Meeting of the Heads of States and Governments of SCO and CSTO (Collective Security Treaty Organization) Member States on the Afghan issue was held for the first time during the summit last year.

PIVOT: Could you talk about the main contribution of the Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS) of the SCO?

H.E. ZM: The SCO Member States must join hands to tackle the threat and challenge to regional security and stability posed by the Afghan issue. The SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (SCO-RATS) and the SCO Secretariat are two Permanent Bodies of the SCO which are very active in the fight against terrorism. The legal basis for the SCO-RATS is a separate agreement signed with the Charter in 2002. During its almost two decades of working, the RATS has convincingly demonstrated its capacity and effectiveness in the common fight against terrorism, separatism and extremism. The most obvious example is that there have been few terrorist attacks in the region in recent years. An important part of the work of the RATS is the Program of Cooperation among Member States in Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism. The document is formulated every three years and currently the 2022-2024 framework is being

implemented

At present, the SCO security agenda also includes addressing new threats and challenges, such as ensuring regional security, combating drug trafficking and transnational organized crime. Relevant Member States have also proposed the establishment of a separate SCO Anti-Drug Centre and Center for Countering International Organized Crime and Information Security. The parties are discussing it together.

PIVOT: In September 2021, within the framework of the SCO, Pakistan and the People's Liberation Army of China jointly conducted their first counter-terrorism military exercise in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. How do you view and evaluate this exercise, and do you think such events should be held more frequently?

H.E. ZM: From September 21 to October 4, 2021, the Joint Anti-Terrorism Exercise "Pabbi-Counter-Terrorism 2021" was held in Pabbi, Pakistan. However, these exercises were not held within the bilateral framework of China and Pakistan, but with the participation of competent authorities of all member states and within the framework of the SCO. Similar exercises will be held in the future, which conforms to the important consensus of all sides and is reflected in the Declaration of the Dushanbe Summit and other important documents. We believe this will help to enhance the capacity of the SCO Member States to jointly combat the "three evils" and effectively safeguard regional security and stability.

PIVOT: In your opinion, how can the SCO play an effective role in transregional integration?

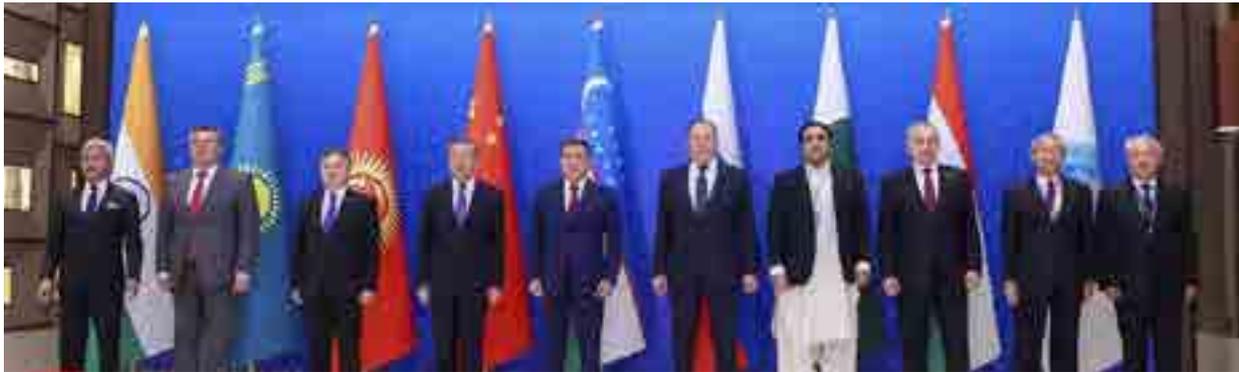
H.E. ZM: In recent years, various sides have frequently mentioned the issue of integration at various forums and conferences.

In my view, the SCO can play an important role in this process. With its rich experience in multilateral cooperation and its growing number of Member States, Observers and Dialogue Partners, the SCO is becoming a key link in the process of building a space of open, mutually-beneficial and equitable cooperation on the Eurasian continent.

As an important achievement of its own development, the SCO has successfully created the largest multilateral cooperation system in the world that integrates national and regional interests and covers a wide range of areas of cooperation. At the same time, the SCO has done a great deal to establish and improve the legal basis for cooperation, which has laid a solid foundation for the establishment of comprehensive and equal partnership among Member States.

THE RELEVANT COOPERATION INITIATIVES AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES PROPOSED BY MEMBER STATES, SUCH AS THE "BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE" PROPOSED BY CHINA AND THE CONCEPT FOR ESTABLISHING A GREATER EURASIAN PARTNERSHIP PROPOSED BY RUSSIA, PROVIDE THE BASIS FOR EXPANDING THE COOPERATION PATH WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE SCO

In this context, the relevant cooperation initiatives and development strategies proposed by member states, such as the "Belt and Road Initiative" proposed by China and the Concept for establishing a Greater Eurasian Partnership proposed by Russia, provide the basis for expanding the cooperation path within the



framework of the SCO. The realization of these initiatives and strategies will promote the unity and cooperation of all countries to jointly find practical solutions to contemporary challenges.

PIVOT: What role has the SCO played in promoting cultural cooperation among its member states?

H.E. ZM: The SCO countries and regions have nurtured a splendid human civilization and have various cultural heritages. According to statistics, one out of every nine UNESCO world cultural heritage sites is located in the SCO region. Many great thinkers, writers, artists, scientists and educators have been produced here, making irreplaceable and important contributions to the development and progress of mankind.

IT CAN BE SAID THAT THE SCO HAS INJECTED POSITIVE ENERGY INTO GLOBAL ANTI-PANDEMIC COOPERATION WITH PRACTICAL ACTIONS, HELPED THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY GATHER CONSENSUS AND HAS FORMED A UNITED FRONT TO FIGHT THE PANDEMIC, AND FULLY DEMONSTRATED ITS RESPONSIBILITY AS THE WORLD'S MOST POPULOUS AND MOST EXTENSIVE COMPREHENSIVE REGIONAL ORGANIZATION TODAY

Respect for diverse civilizations is one of the core values of the SCO rooted in the “Shanghai

Spirit”. Within the framework of the SCO, cooperation in related fields has been continuously enriched and developed, and it has become more extensive and comprehensive. On June 29th this year, at the event of celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the signing of the SCO Charter and the 15th Anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Good-Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation between Member States, we exhibited for the first time the “Complete Works of the World Heritage of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization” planned and published by Qingdao Publishing Group, which received the attention and appreciation of friends from all sides of the “Shanghai Cooperation Organization Family”.

Symbolically, the Member States agreed to designate 2021, the 20th Anniversary of the SCO, as the SCO Year of Culture.

PIVOT: What role has the SCO played in responding to COVID-19?

H.E. ZM: I would like to point out that the SCO has played an important role in the fight against COVID-19. In accordance with the principle of “Shanghai Spirit”, member states have been helping each other, and have taken effective cooperation measures to deal with the pandemic, including sharing the genome sequence of the new coronavirus, sharing information such as diagnostic kits and pandemic prevention materials etc. to discuss countermeasures to resolve the huge impact of the pandemic on economic and social development.

The Heads of State of each member state demonstrated their firm will and pointed out the direction for the Organization’s cooperation in fighting the pandemic through summit documents and other methods.

Similarly, the fight against COVID-19 will be high on the agenda of the Samarkand Summit this year. There are plans to approve documents, such as the Road Map for Cooperation among Medical Institutions of Member States in the Prevention and Treatment of Infectious Diseases, which will further clarify the forms of cooperation in combating the pandemic, including scientific research, and practical activities.

It can be said that the SCO has injected positive energy into global anti-pandemic cooperation with practical actions, helped the international community gather consensus

and has formed a united front to fight the pandemic, and fully demonstrated its responsibility as the world’s most populous and most extensive comprehensive regional organization today.

POSSESSING A UNIQUE GEO-STRATEGIC LOCATION, PAKISTAN’S NATURAL WEALTH, GIVES PAKISTAN THE OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME A BRIDGE CONNECTING VARIOUS PARTS OF ASIA. TO THIS END, MORE INFRASTRUCTURE, ROADS AND TRANSPORT CORRIDORS NEED TO BE ESTABLISHED AND COMPLETED, ALONG WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF NECESSARY ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE

PIVOT: How will the SCO play its role in ensuring economic stability of developing countries including Pakistan?

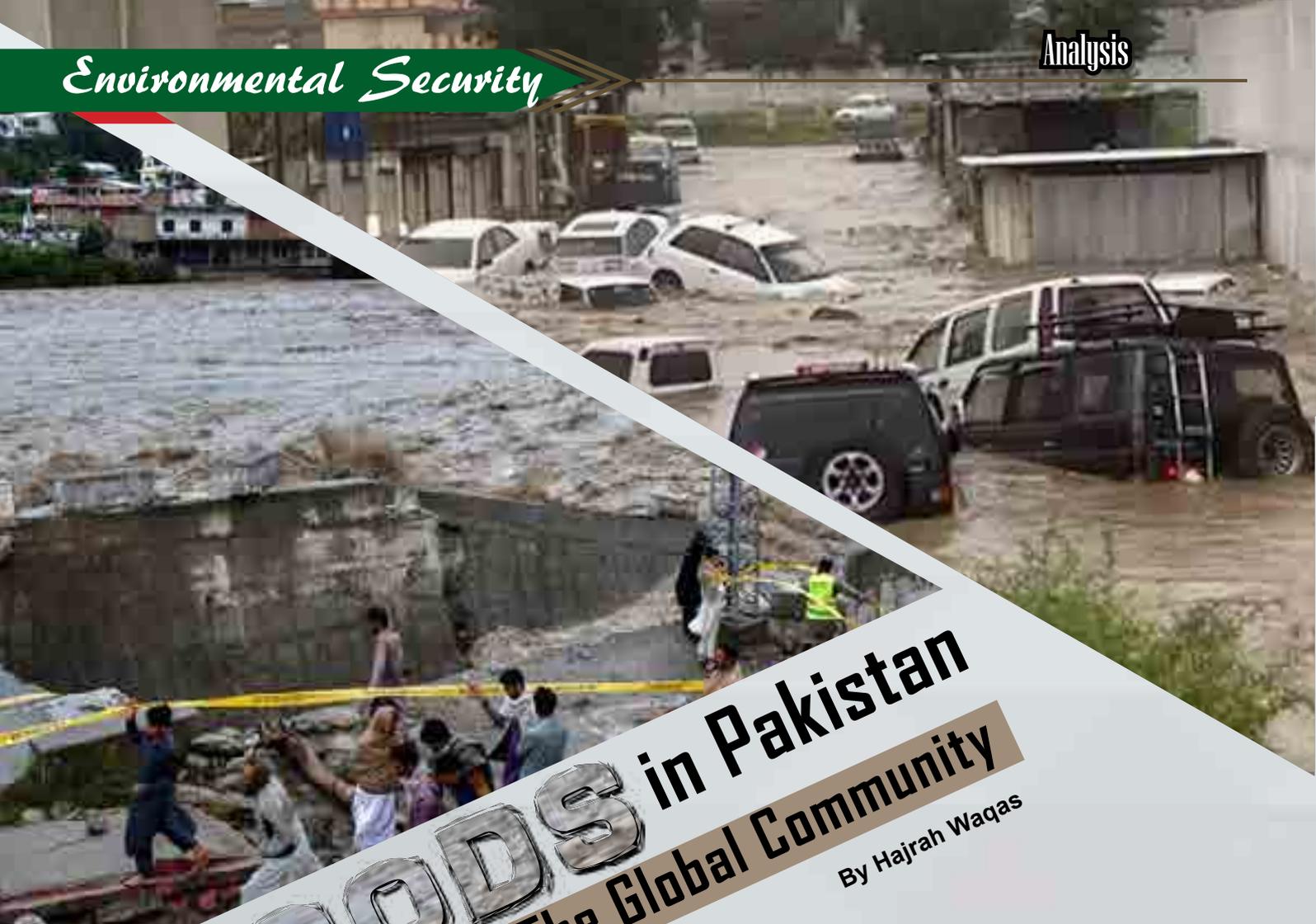
H.E. ZM: Since joining the SCO as a full member state in 2017, Pakistan has actively participated in the SCO-related activities and made important contributions to the development and prosperity of the organization. At the same time, Pakistan itself has brought forth new opportunities for extensive and mutually beneficial cooperation in the SCO region, covering areas such as transportation, trade, energy, industry, technology and cultural ties.

Possessing a unique geo-strategic location, Pakistan’s “natural wealth”, gives Pakistan

the opportunity to become a bridge connecting various parts of Asia. To this end, more infrastructure, roads and transport corridors need to be established and completed, along with the construction of necessary energy infrastructure. For example, using the port capacity of Gwadar and Karachi, the SCO Central Asian Member States can build an intercontinental land route to the sea, thereby enhancing the transit capacity of the existing “North-South” and “East-West” transport corridors, which will inevitably have a positive impact on intra-regional trade.

Energy security is very important to all member states, and Pakistan is no exception. In 2021, the Ministers of Energy of the SCO Member States approved the “Concept for Energy Cooperation of the SCO Member States”, which aims to improve the level of energy security, promote the transformation of the energy infrastructure, and determine the prospects and areas of practical cooperation. There is no doubt that under the framework of this concept, Pakistan has the opportunity to find the best market for itself.

At present, the SCO’s practical cooperation areas also includes high-tech, start-ups, electronic trade, talent training, and youth entrepreneurship. Pakistan has considerable strength and advantages in these fields. I believe that cooperation in related fields mentioned above, can bring a lot of development benefits to Pakistan. The SCO is willing to build a more ideal platform and continue to provide new impetus for member states, including Pakistan, to seek mutual development ■



FLOODS in Pakistan

A Wakeup Call For The Global Community

By Hajrah Waqas

Climate Change has wreaked havoc around the globe. Pakistan is among the top countries enduring disastrous consequences. The destruction has had a worse impact on people living below the poverty line. The figures are staggering: with 33 million severely affected and millions of acres of the crop destroyed, a country grappling with economic instability is currently faced with a humanitarian disaster of epic proportions. The unprecedented scale of the floods resulted from a combination of aspects like deforestation, weak infrastructure, population growth, poor policy implementation, and

poverty. The situation is far worse than what appears on media to date.

The United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on his solidarity visit to Pakistan has called the catastrophe a “monsoon on steroids”. According to the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), 32 districts of Balochistan, 23 districts of Sindh, 17 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 6 districts of Gilgit-Baltistan, and 3 districts of Punjab are severely affected. In the districts of Sindh, people are deprived of basic needs like food as a large proportion of the population depends on daily income. The districts of Balochistan and Southern Punjab have also suffered greatly, and a significant proportion of the population has lost lives.

The recent unfolding of catastrophic disasters has highlighted how poor policies and governance structures have failed to take into consideration the severity of the issue. “Disaster relief is not a stand-alone operation,” said Ali Tauqeer, climate change, and development expert. He further points out the institutional barriers and failure of disaster relief policy, “Pakistan has throughout the years built up a complex ecosystem of institutions at the national and provincial levels, while district-level institutions are still waiting for their chance. The fundamental tenet of Pakistan’s disaster relief strategy is that it is the duty of the state to aid all disadvantaged catastrophe victims. Although the fiscal room has decreased, succeeding administrations have consistently upheld this policy to the greatest degree feasible. This broad policy commitment

has, however, not been clearly operationalized.

PAKISTAN IS AMONG THE NATIONS MOST VULNERABLE TO THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE EVEN THOUGH IT IS ONE OF THE LEAST CONTRIBUTORS TO GREENHOUSE GAS (GHG) EMISSIONS. BUT THE RESULT IS NOT BORNE EQUALLY. THE GLOBAL NORTH IS CREATING A CLIMATE CRISIS THAT IS DISPROPORTIONATELY AFFECTING THE GLOBAL SOUTH

Pakistan is among the nations most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change even though it is one of the least contributors to Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions. But the result is not borne equally. The Global North is creating a climate crisis that is disproportionately affecting the Global South. The Group of Eight (the United States, the European Union, Russia, Japan, and Canada) is liable for 85% of emissions. And the Global North (defined

as the United States, Canada, Europe, Israel, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan) is liable for 92%. Whereas the Global South—which is by far enduring the brunt of climate droughts, floods, famines, storms, sea level rise, and deaths—is responsible for just 8% of excess global carbon dioxide emissions. The stats are horrific and highlight that the Global North are stealing atmospheric fair-shares of poorer countries and have effectively colonized the global atmospheric commons for their own industrial growth.

Pakistan is hard hit by the environmental crisis, it has for years faced record-breaking temperatures, and right now 65 percent of Pakistan's main food crops and 70 percent of its rice have been washed away by the torrential rains and floods. In a country heavily reliant upon agriculture, such statistics are nothing worse than a nightmare for an already drowning economy. A report by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP) estimates that the environmental crisis could rob the country of up to 9.1 percent of its GDP in the future.

Such chronic climate vulnerabilities call for relief and reparations. The strict economic measures required by the IMF program will only add to the difficulties faced by the already sinking economy and population faced with humanitarian disasters.

CLIMATE CHANGE IS A NATURAL PHENOMENON, AND NO ONE CAN COMPLETELY DIVERGE ITS IMPACTS, BUT THE GLOBAL NORTH HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO DO MORE

Climate change is a natural phenomenon, and no one can completely diverge its impacts, but the Global North has a responsibility to do more as the floods in Pakistan are not just drowning people. It is about the elderly stuck under rubble, it is about pregnant women sitting under bridges with no food or care. It is about the disabled who have lost their wheelchairs. It is about the children deprived of education. The statistics are growing by every passing day, and we all must do our part to help Pakistan stand on its feet again ■



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SHANXAY HÄMMÖRLIK TÄSHKİLÖTİGÄ Ä ZÖ DÄVLÄTLÄR
RAHBARLARI KENGÄSHI YIG'ILISHI
2022-yil 15-16 sentabr, Samarqand

ЗАСЕДАНИЕ СОВЕТА ГЛАВ ГОСУДАРСТВ-ЧЛЕНОВ
ШАНХАЙСКОЙ ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВА
15-16 сентября 2022 года, Самарканд



上海合作组织成员国元首理事会会议
(2022年9月15-16日, 撒马尔罕)

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF HEADS
OF THE SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANIZATION MEMBER STATES
15-16 September 2022, Samarkand



SCO STATE SUMMIT 2022: An Assessment

By Ghazanfar Ali Garewal and Ume Farwa

While the world is coming to grips with escalating power tussle among great powers, the leaders of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) gathered to discuss and decide on many strategic issues at hand. Along with signing and adopting agreements on implementing a joint plan of action, trading in national currencies, accelerating the momentum of joint anti-terrorist activities, and expanding the SCO club, the Eurasian organization seemed to be moving towards forging an anti-western alliance. But, how effective and weighty these efforts are, is a question worth exploring.

The Summit took place in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, on 15-16 September 2022. All the heads of state of the permanent members participated in the meeting. Prime Minister of Pakistan, Shehbaz Sharif; President of China, Xi Jinping; President of Russia,

Vladimir Putin; President of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokavey; Emomali Rehmon; President of Sadyr Japarov were present. Other than these leaders, Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev, and President of Turkmenistan, Serdar Berdimukhedov were invited as special guests. The heads of SCO observer states - Iran, Mongolia, and Belarus - also participated.

This Council, in many ways, is a signal of the Eurasian powers to jointly move towards a 'multipolar', inclusive, and rule-based international system. Among many agreements that were signed and adopted in the SCO gathering, the most important is the Samarkand Declaration. It has 121 articles and covers everything ranging from strategic issues, political problems, environmental constraints, and cultural interactions among the member states.

The Declaration termed 'security' as the main theme of the summit

and agreement. It seems self-explanatory as - in the wake of the China-US standoff, Russia-Ukraine war, and US sanctions on the Kremlin - it was natural for Beijing and Moscow to join hands and bring their like-minded partners and allies on the same page.

AMONG MANY AGREEMENTS THAT WERE SIGNED AND ADOPTED IN THE SCO GATHERING, THE MOST IMPORTANT IS THE SAMARKAND DECLARATION. IT HAS 121 ARTICLES AND COVERS EVERYTHING RANGING FROM STRATEGIC ISSUES, POLITICAL PROBLEMS, ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS, AND CULTURAL INTERACTIONS AMONG THE MEMBER STATES

There are some articles in the Declaration that hint at the paradigm shift in the 'SCO Club'. Earlier, the organization shied from commenting on open confrontation

and raising the issues of emerging powers and its consequent implication such as urging the international community to adjust to the prevailing trends of multipolarity.

The Declaration says that there is a need for international community to acknowledge the current process of multipolarity, interconnectedness, and accelerated pace of informatization, and digitization. The Declaration, assigned and adopted by all the members, says that the Member States should adhere to a 'common approach' ruling out any scheme of bloc politics among regional and international level. The member states agreed to take new initiatives for building a 'new type of international relations' for forming a common vision of creating a 'community of shared destiny' for humanity. Since the inception of SCO, the Chinese have been promoting this concept which was coined by President Xi Jinping.

In a way, this can be interpreted as a paradigm shift in the documents of SCO because, unlike the previous summits, it urges the member states to strive for building a new international order, hinting at promoting a Chinese international order. The Samarkand Declaration also emphasized the member states to formulate common regional approaches for dealing with the emerging challenges and threats. It also noted that a 'common regional mode of cooperation' is also needed.

These aforementioned references of the Samarkand Declaration signals evolution in the thinking and working of the SCO club. When viewed along with the two more agreements adopted in the council, it comes to light that SCO surely is moving towards forming an anti-western partnership - but, at slow

pace. The members, in order to remain aligned and synchronized on strategic, economic, and cultural fronts, also signed an agreement on "Action Plan (2023-2027) for Implementation of Long-Term Good Neighborliness, Friendship, and Cooperation." The second was the "Roadmap on Gradual Increase in the Share of National Currencies in Mutual Supplement of the SCO Member States."

IN A WAY, THE 2022 SCO COUNCIL OF HEADS OF STATE WAS A BIG SHOW. NO DOUBT, FOR A YOUNG INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION LIKE SCO, THESE ARE HUGE ACHIEVEMENTS. HOWEVER, THERE ARE MANY CHALLENGES TO THE FAST EVOLVING CONSTRUCT OF SCO MOVING TOWARDS AN ALLIANCE DIS-ENGAGED FROM WEST

All these efforts hint at a new turn that the Eurasian powers are taking at this moment. Among them, China and Russia are leading this venture and stand among the biggest critics of the US-architected international order. The recent US-China tensions especially after Nancy Pelosi's visit and Russia's consistent confrontational mode with the US and its partners led to these groundbreaking multilateral agreements. The agreement on increasing the share of national currencies was Russian initiative and this is how, a hard-pressed Moscow by US sanctions, can navigate the economic crunch it could hit as an aftermath of Ukraine war.

In a way, the 2022 SCO Council of Heads of State was a big show. No doubt, for a young international organization like SCO, these are huge achievements. However, there are many challenges to the

fast evolving construct of SCO moving towards an alliance disengaged from West. The biggest challenge is the non-binding nature of these agreements. The second important one is the strategic dilemma that small and middle powers are facing: Who to choose? China or the US? Pakistan is one example. It finds itself grappling with a catch-22 like situation when it is faced with the question of whom to choose between Beijing and Washington.

In this regard, India's position is more fragile and unpredictable than Islamabad. New Delhi is officially the part of various anti-China strategic partnerships such as the Quadrilateral Strategic Dialogue (QUAD). Being part of the US camp, it is very hard for New Delhi to deliver affectively at the SCO front particularly in its fast-evolving anti-western front.

In the same light, the Central Asian members are also confronted with, more or less, the same puzzle but they have one another fear in addition to this. They are afraid about the possibility whether an aggressive Russia can ensure peace at its borders and for its neighbors. Therefore, despite being somewhere on forming a partnership and alliance in the Eurasian region, the SCO has to go a long way in terms of delivering a non-western regional model and norms in the heart of Eurasia ■



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PAK AFRICA TIES AT 75

By Areeba Arif Khan

On August 14, 2022, Pakistan marked its 75th independence day. At this stage, enhancing bilateral relations with other countries is quite crucial and in this backdrop, the African continent is not an exception. Africa is a land of endless opportunities owing to its promising economic potential, lucrative investment opportunities and abundant natural resources. It has great potential for engagement with Pakistan which has recently taken a shift to geo-economics. However, during the past years despite the friendly nature of Pakistan's ties with African countries, mutual trade figures have remained quite meagre. Recently, however, under Pakistan's 'Engage Africa' policy, economic outreach to the African continent is one of the top priorities of the country's foreign policy.

Both Pakistan and African nations have their own geo-strategic significance. The location of Africa allows it to trade globally. Pakistan and Africa share many commonalities. Both regions have suffered greatly in the past in terms of poverty, inflation, unemployment etc. The 'Engage Africa' policy was initiated in 2017. Under this policy, Pakistan is keen to increase its diplomatic foothold in the African continent by setting up more diplomatic missions in different countries and by opening commercial sections in Algeria, Ethiopia, Senegal, Nigeria and Kenya. Along with this ten important countries of Africa: Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, Sudan, Tanzania, Nigeria, Kenya, Senegal, Ethiopia, and South Africa were selected for the promotion of trade with the intention to double trade with African countries by the year 2025. Currently, Islamabad has resident missions' in 20 African nations including Libya, Algeria,

Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco, Senegal, Nigeria, Niger, South Africa, Mauritius, Djibouti, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Kenya, Sudan, Ethiopia, Ghana, Rwanda, Ivory Coast and Uganda. Thirty-nine African nations are covered through simultaneous accreditation.

DURING THE PAST YEARS DESPITE THE FRIENDLY NATURE OF PAKISTAN'S TIES WITH AFRICAN COUNTRIES, MUTUAL TRADE FIGURES HAVE REMAINED QUITE MEAGRE. RECENTLY, HOWEVER, UNDER PAKISTAN'S 'ENGAGE AFRICA' POLICY, ECONOMIC OUTREACH TO THE AFRICAN CONTINENT IS ONE OF THE TOP PRIORITIES OF THE COUNTRY'S FOREIGN POLICY

Moreover, six trade wings have opened in Algeria, Egypt, Ethiopia,

Sudan and Tanzania. Under these, local people have been appointed as trade development officers in various African countries. Where resident missions have not been established, they are working under an accredited ambassador's supervision and are responsible for trade and development activities.

In January 2020, a Trade and Development Conference was held in Nairobi by Pakistan's Ministry of Commerce. The conference was attended by around 200 participants from various African nations to determine how trade could be increased up to its maximum. The conference discussed common interests that will be beneficial for both Pakistan and the African continent.

To boost business activity, the Pakistan South African Association based in South Africa works closely with the Pakistan mission in South Africa. This association operates in many parts of Africa like Malawi, Zambia, Kenya, Maputo, Swaziland, Lesotho, and Namibia. Under this association many Pakistani businessmen are expanding their businesses in the fields of textile, infrastructure development and in imports and exports.

In order to improve trade with the African region, Pakistan has great potential to export rice, frozen food, machinery and textile apparels. Pakistan's expertise in agriculture can also play a vital role in developing the Pakistani agriculture market and trade in Africa, an example of which is Millat Tractors. In December 2020 Millat Tractors secured an export order for 600 tractors to Angola which is an important milestone towards the practical implementation of the 'Engage Africa Policy'. However, in 2019

Millat tractors exported 1,100 tractors and related engineering products worth USD 9 million to the African markets. Other exporters should follow the same example of exporting non-traditional products to the African markets to enhance trade activity.

STRONGER PAK- AFRICA RELATIONS WILL ALSO PAVE THE WAY FOR THE ADVERTISEMENT OF PAKISTANI PRODUCTS IN AFRICAN MARKETS

In the health sector, Africa is lagging behind and facing major diseases such as malaria, typhoid, cholera, dengue fever etc. This health emergency creates an opportunity for Pakistani pharmaceutical companies to work with relevant stakeholders in Africa to combat the crisis. Pakistan has prior experience in dealing with these diseases, specifically malaria and dengue fever, it can help Africa to counter such large-scale health issues effectively as local pharmaceutical companies in Pakistan are competent enough and are ready to invest in Western and Eastern regions of Africa. Moreover, the current Pakistan government is keen on increasing pharma exports to \$5 billion to increase the exports manifold. To achieve this goal a Pharmaceutical Export Promotion Committee was set up to encourage the production and export of medicines and medical products to countries abroad and specifically to African countries like Kenya, Rwanda, Ivory Coast and Djibouti.

To create relevant and friendly ties with African markets Pakistan needs to implement conventional methods of marketing. For instance, confectionery manufacturers in Pakistan can penetrate through African markets by providing them with low-

cost packaging of products to target low-income groups, this can also be converted into a major business later on. These products can be consumer goods, fiber foods, textiles, pharmaceuticals and chemicals. In addition to this, marketing strategies should also involve mechanisms regarding mobilising 'Duty-Free Agreements' in different parts of Africa through foreign missions to create trade linkages.

Cooperation can further be reinforced by focusing on areas of mutual interest, such as cross-cultural diplomacy. In this vein, sports leagues will bolster cross-cultural inter-relatedness, for example, cricket diplomacy can play a major role. Secondly, stronger Pakistan-Africa relations will also pave the way for the advertisement of Pakistani products in African markets. Moreover, other soft power tactics such as setting up a permanent Pakistani business exhibition center and hosting musical concerts can act as a catalyst in furthering the Pak-Afro ties.

Conclusively, Africa is full of economic opportunities. Various sectors in which Pakistan is capable of exporting should be brought to light in terms of potential and capacity. Pakistan's investors and manufacturers should come up with innovative ideas that in turn would greatly benefit the economy and help create sustainable trading channels. However, at this stage policy-making decisions supplemented by a mindful approach will play a substantial role ■



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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN PAKISTAN

Challenges and Opportunities

By Noor Sabah

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that by 2030 all people should enjoy peace and prosperity. These goals recognize that action in one area will affect outcomes in others and that development must strike a balance between social, economic and environmental sustainability.

Pakistan affirmed its commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by adopting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as its national development agenda through a unanimous National Assembly Resolution in 2016.

Since then, the country has made considerable progress by mainstreaming these goals in national policies and strategies and developing an institutional framework for SDGs implementation in Pakistan. SDG support units have been established at federal and provincial levels with the planning institutions to guide SDGs implementation and monitor its progress. In 2018, the government designed and approved a National SDGs Framework that envisages a national vision to prioritize and localize SDGs.

However, despite such efforts and overall improvement in the score, in terms of trends for

goals achievement, Pakistan's performance is only on track against Goal 13 (Climate Action). Progress on all other goals such as zero hunger, quality education, gender equality, energy security, innovation, sustainable cities and communities, peace and justice is not very impressive and are only moderately improving. A war-torn state like Afghanistan is situated next to the western border which had been the source of conflict, especially after the war on terror. Moreover, Pakistan as a developing state even faced many structural challenges within the domestic sphere. Several studies have highlighted the impact of political instability on foreign direct investments, which pushes the country deeper into poverty and away from achieving the SDGs.

PAKISTAN AFFIRMED ITS COMMITMENT TO THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT BY ADOPTING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs) AS ITS NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENDA THROUGH A UNANIMOUS NATIONAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION IN 2016

There are several SDGs related issues that need government attention, for instance, Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 10 and 12 overwhelmingly focus on eliminating poverty, inequality, and hunger by 2030. Unfortunately, poverty and food insecurity are rampant in Pakistan. The state has succumbed to the vagaries of poor policy formulation and implementation for the eradication of poverty

and inequality. Poverty rules the roost and almost all segments of our society are susceptible to it. Capacity issues to address poverty and inequality include the weak institutional capacity to devise and implement poverty reduction strategies; governments devoid of the ability to formulate pragmatic policies will always fail to cater to the needs of the masses, including food security and basic necessities of life. Similarly, the capacity for agricultural data gathering and analysis is poor, which further undermines agricultural policymaking and implementation. In addition, institutional capacity for ensuring food security and poverty reduction is absent or stagnant; and no output can be seen from the existing and new policy interventions in the domains of food insecurity and poverty.

There are several capacity-building challenges in the way of woman's development in Pakistan. The government's capacity is limited (both human and financial) and issues of women are vast and diverse. There are no plans in sight to build the capacity of units that are engaged in establishing and expanding social security nets for women.

In the education sector, literacy rates remain abysmal at 62.3 percent, especially female literacy, which stands at roughly 50 percent, compared to male literacy at 68 percent. The quality of education and employment rates of school graduates is very low and the growing young population has little to or no access to quality schooling.

Goals 7,8 & 9 focus on sustainable economic growth, peaceful and inclusive societies, energy security, resilient infrastructure and inclusive and sustainable industrialization. The economic growth of Pakistan is volatile and mercurial with serious repercussions for the sustainable industrial infrastructure and employment prospects. Several capacity-building challenges have hindered the transition of the economy to a more sustainable path.

The most significant bottleneck in the way of rapid economic growth and poverty reduction is the lack of capacity of the civil service to function as an effective institution in implementing the policies and programs. Similarly, the energy crisis is the largest single drain on Pakistan's economy, shaving off up to two percentage points from annual gross domestic product growth in the country. The absence of sound policies from the departments concerned coupled with the absence of capacity building to diagnose the crisis and rectify them is among the major causes of the energy crisis in Pakistan.

Pakistan has surely fulfilled much of its SDG 13 responsibility. The country passed its first-ever National Climate Change Policy in 2012 and ratified the Paris Agreement in 2016. The commitment of the previous government to the Billion Tree Tsunami program, Clean and Green Pakistan initiative, Protected Areas Initiative and Ecosystem Restoration Fund are also laudable.

However, For the past 20 years, Pakistan has consistently ranked among the top 10 most vulnerable countries on the Climate Risk Index, with 10,000 fatalities due to climate-related disasters and financial losses amounting to about \$4 billion from 173 extreme weather events. Climate-related disasters like floods, heatwaves or tsunamis can exacerbate tensions among

groups who already have a history of conflict. Any of these scenarios would be a serious threat to Pakistan and will have serious ramifications for any government in the immediate aftermath of a climate disaster or as part of efforts to mitigate future disasters.

Recent extreme rainfall and flooding in Pakistan have worsened the fragile humanitarian situation of people in already affected areas and brought devastation in a lot of places. Nationwide, 80 districts have been officially notified as 'calamity hit' - 31 in Balochistan, 23 in Sindh, 17 in KP, six in GB and three in Punjab. Many more districts without an official declaration are also reportedly impacted. Around 33 million people have been affected by heavy rains and flooding, according to the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA). 637,000 people are living in relief camps, while many more are displaced and being hosted by other households.

Beyond these challenges, Pakistan has major water shortages as well. It is ranked 14th out of 150 countries at high risk of the water crisis. Pakistan is an agricultural country as nearly 60% of its overall population resides in rural areas with little or no access to clean water and proper sanitation facilities. Owing to the growing population, expansion of the economic sector, unplanned urbanization, poor waste management system, and several other factors, the environmental problems in Pakistan are getting worse with each passing year.

To respond to these challenges, the government needs to give the required attention to the SDGs.

❖ First, it can take innovators and social entrepreneurs on board, because they are more determined to solve the oldest stuck-ups and problems of society with new approaches and processes.

❖ The sustainability goals can only be achieved by involving the society and public at large. In order to enable public involvement in the implementation of SDGs, it is deemed necessary that public opinion should be studied.

❖ The government needs to analyze its actions and divert policy direction to achieve development goals. It should initiate and implement a development program with the help of business communities, research centers, media and industry, so the country can achieve prosperity and sustainability. The government should look into the SDG implementation mechanism with new approaches.

❖ Besides the development projects and programs under the SDGs, the government must include SDGs in the local and tertiary level education system, because unless SDGs are made part of the syllabus in schools, colleges and universities, graduating students will not know their importance in our daily life. It is a big task to include SDGs in the curriculum but once it is done the result will be good for Pakistan's youth empowerment, entrepreneurs, and bottom-up development.

In a nutshell, it is inevitable to say that countries like Pakistan desperately need to focus on the Agenda of 2030. Despite a low ranking through world institutions, it should work hard to implement the focused targets and sub-aspects of Sustainable Development Goals. All goals are interlinked with each other, so if there is a slight improvement in a goal it will impact the improvement in other domains as well ■



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GDI AND GSI

China's Solution To Save The World

By Huma Arshad



China's most recent approaches to promoting world peace, security, and development are the Global Development Initiative (GDI) and the Global Security Initiative (GSI). Today's world is undergoing rapid changes that have not occurred in nearly a century. People worldwide are more motivated to achieve a peaceful and stable environment that enables nations to concentrate on economic progress, creating jobs, improving the standard of living, and jointly addressing all types of global concerns. President

Xi Jinping presented the Global Development Initiative (GDI) in September 2021 and the Global Security Initiative (GSI) in April 2022, offering China's insight and answers to these two urgent global concerns.

The GDI is guided by seven core principles: Development-first principle, a people-centred approach, inclusive benefits, innovation-driven development, harmony with nature, action-oriented tactics, and synergy with existing mechanisms. The GDI is focused on eight priority areas; poverty

reduction, food security, pandemic response and vaccines, development finance, green and sustainable development, industrialization, digital economy, and digital connectivity. Sustainability and digital transformation are significant cross-cutting concerns of the GDI. Through the GDI, China puts a lot of emphasis on multilateralism, collaboration, and consensus.

China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi presented the Global Security Initiative (GSI) to a huge gathering at the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta in

June 2022. He highlighted Beijing's initiatives to promote the GSI and incorporate it into its current approach to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as a grouping and Southeast Asia as a region during a lecture on ASEAN-China ties. GSI is undergirded by "six commitments" which integrate past language advanced by Beijing, including maintaining common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security; respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity; maintaining security in traditional and non-traditional domains; and addressing the "legitimate security concerns" of all countries.

THE GDI IS FOCUSED ON EIGHT PRIORITY AREAS; POVERTY REDUCTION, FOOD SECURITY, PANDEMIC RESPONSE AND VACCINES, DEVELOPMENT FINANCE, GREEN AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, INDUSTRIALIZATION, DIGITAL ECONOMY, AND DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY. SUSTAINABILITY AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION ARE SIGNIFICANT CROSS-CUTTING CONCERNS OF THE GDI. THROUGH THE GDI, CHINA PUTS A LOT OF EMPHASIS ON MULTILATERALISM, COLLABORATION, AND CONSENSUS

The GSI signals the Chinese leadership's understanding of security as well as its ambitions and vision for the future of global governance, though the blueprint is still ambiguous and short on practical details. The GSI is a policy that should be watched closely in Brussels and other European capitals, especially given that the EU has shifted its perspective and is gradually adopting systemic rivalry as the primary lens through

which to view the Europe-China relationship.

In June 2022, Wang Yi's address at the ASEAN Secretariat brought attention to China's efforts to promote the Global Security Initiative. The 11th July 2022 speech was the first time a Chinese official attempted to incorporate the GSI into China's broader approach to ASEAN as an organization and Southeast Asia as a region. The speech was delivered during a five-country, nearly two-week tour of Southeast Asia that took Wang to Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, and Thailand. As part of his efforts to improve regional peace and stability, highlighted earlier in his remarks as part of the second of five critical directions for promoting ASEAN-China ties, Wang referred to GSI in his speech.

China is also willing to work with Seychelles to put GDI and GSI into place. Both China and Seychelles are emerging nations that want the best possible lives for their citizens. With positive results, China and Seychelles have worked together to advance bilateral cooperation in the face of global challenges and crises. The Palais de Justice, National Assembly Building, Anse Royal Hospital, Colgate Residence projects and SBC project are the mark of the solidarity between China and Seychelles and friendship. In response to Seychelles' concerns about sustainable development, clean energy, and environmental protection, China is building a Low-carbon Demonstration Zone in Seychelles. To address Seychelles' problem regarding maritime security, China donated two aircraft and a patrol vessel, helping Seychelles to strengthen its capacity to safeguard naval security. To assist the human resource department of Seychelles, the Chinese government provides

around 1000 short-term training opportunities each year to qualified natives of Seychelles. Over the past five years, around 400 Seychellois attended seminars in various fields. China also attaches great importance to the development of the local community, funding projects such as the playgrounds at Anse Royal and Baie Sainte Anne.

GDI AND GSI ARE STEPS TO PREVENT CONFLICTS AMID THE RESURGENCE OF GREAT POWER COMPETITION AND BLOC POLITICS, AND AS A VEHICLE TO ENSURE THE STABILITY NEEDED FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT

The new Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation, signed during State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi's visit to Seychelles in 2021, will undoubtedly boost the future bilateral development cooperation to a new level. China is willing to work with various other countries to fully implement GDI and GSI, strengthen cooperation in various fields and jointly address global challenges to build a more peaceful, secure and prosperous world and a community with a shared future for humanity.

GDI and GSI are steps to prevent conflicts amid the resurgence of great power competition and bloc politics, and as a vehicle to ensure the stability needed for economic recovery and development. The key objective is to "build a balanced, effective and sustainable security architecture." To be sure, whether the GDI and GSI translates from rhetoric to reality remains to be seen and is not without challenges ■



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Pakistan has to get rid of this vicious cycle; sooner the better. More external financing is leading to more recession. While present government is making all-out efforts to bring economy back to normal, more concerted efforts are required to make significant headway.

TRADE IS VISUALIZED AS ENGINE OF GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT. TRADE LIBERALIZATION AND DIVERSIFICATION OF MARKETS FROM TRADITIONAL US/ WESTWARD DEPENDENCE TO NEW EMERGING MARKETS IN THE REGION AND ABROAD IS LONG OVERDUE

Apart from internal measures of increasing productivity, serious thought is needed on external front to reset current account balance. Trade is visualized as engine of growth and development. Trade liberalization and diversification of markets from traditional US/ Westward dependence to new emerging markets in the region and abroad is long overdue. Over a period of time, more than 80 percent of Pakistan's trade has remained with US and European countries and the trading in traditional goods of cotton, textiles, rice, leather good and few more; has added negligible foreign exchange.



Import trends and comparative disadvantage of currency value, tariff and non-tariff barriers are

PAKISTAN AT 75

A CASE FOR THE STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT WITH AFRICA

By Abdul Fatah Soomro

Today, Pakistan is exposed to major challenge of unprecedented economic recession.

Almost every segment of society is affected. Future is uncertain. Successive governments have to rely on foreign borrowing to prevent eventuality of default. When it comes to IMF, farcical conditionalities of increase in fuel/ gas prices, taxation (particularly indirect/ regressive) and interest rate have proven to be anti-people; thereby increasing likelihood of backlash against the government. Interestingly, latest country report by IMF summarizes Pakistan's current

condition as, "Loose fiscal policy and delayed monetary response to inflationary pressures. These combined with international food and fuel price shocks led to marked deterioration of external position with unsustainable current account deficit, a significant decline in reserves and marked depreciation of rupee. At the same time, inflation has increased considerably, putting pressure particularly on the vulnerable". Here, question arises; how the fiscal policy is made in Pakistan, whether it is discretionary or compulsive? The answer is known by everyone including IMF.

major factors of skewed trade.

As a remedy, Pakistan has to resort to much awaited trade diversification. Besides available regional opportunities through CPEC, Africa is yet another market of 1.3 Billion people with Gross Domestic Production of \$2.7 Trillion (estimated to grow \$29 Trillion by 2050) and growth rate 6.9 percent. Today, Africa is recognized as the continent of the future. Almost every country of interest; may it be China (leading \$ 102 Billion trade), European countries (\$ 76 Billion), India (3rd largest trade partner - \$75 Billion), US (\$68 Billion) and Muslim countries (i.e. Turkey and Gulf region) recently all have made significant progress by developing ingress in Africa. Diplomatic clout of 54 UN member countries, immense natural resources (oil, gas and Rare Earth Materials including uranium), strategic Sea Lanes of Communication (i.e. Red Sea, Mozambique Corridors and Mediterranean) has attracted struggle for influence between China and US allies on one hand and Turkey vis-à-vis Gulf countries on the other. Africa is set to attain much higher political and economic value.



China has trespassed US in all domains of political, diplomatic and economic cooperation. As counter-measure, US enhanced its military and security cooperation via AFRICOM. In the last 20 years, about \$9 Trillion have been spent on war on terror and military to military engagement with Nigeria, Niger, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya and

so forth. US is maintaining its largest military base in Djibouti. Another newly-constructed base shared with France is in Niger from where most of the anti-terror operations in Libya and Sahel region have been carried out. Increased Chinese footprints of establishing logistic base in Djibouti is seen as the step taken to influence Red Sea and Horn of Africa. Turkey apart from its economic engagement and its strategic presence in Libya and Somalia is eyed by the contending Arab countries as Greater Turkey, a sort of expansionist design.

Earlier, on part of the African countries visualizing their enhanced importance, the strengthened African Union (AU) is paying a significant role and is transforming the traditionally conflict driven region into mega trade and economic zone. In this regard, African Continent Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) framework was established in 2018, which has come into force from January 1, 2021. By now 37 countries have ratified it. AfCFTA is basically preferential trade arrangement that includes FTA agreements and protocol for free movement of persons and services (tax heavens) for enhanced inter/ intra-regional trade and investments.

Coming back to Pakistan, historical and cordial ties with African countries are cherished from the time of independence with several commonalities and points of interest and acknowledged for “staunchly (moral and material) supporting Africa’s efforts to rid the continent of colonialism and racialism”. Moreover, this support has been consistent through different governments, whether they

were military governments or elected democratic governments. “Pakistan supported both morally as-well as practically, countries such as Algeria, Kenya, Sudan, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Tanzania, Namibia, Morocco, Libya, Egypt and Nigeria.

PAKISTAN’S ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST TERRORISM AND THE ARMED FORCES’ PROFESSIONALISM AND SUCCESSES MADE IN COUNTER-TERRORISM ARE EULOGIZED BY THE AFRICAN COUNTRIES. A PROGRESSIVE TREND OF MILITARY TO MILITARY COOPERATION AND AVAILING PAKISTAN’S OFFER OF CAPACITY BUILDING IN COUNTER TERRORISM IS ON POSITIVE TRAJECTORY

Having established cordial diplomatic relations, majority of African countries including 27 OIC member countries have supported Pakistan on vital issues at international forums like UN and Pakistan’s initiated resolutions on the issue of Kashmir, respectively. Pakistan’s role in international campaign against terrorism and the Armed Forces’ professionalism and successes made in counter-terrorism are eulogized by the African countries. A progressive trend of military to military cooperation and availing Pakistan’s offer of capacity building in counter terrorism is on positive trajectory.

In order to translate the good will, previous government with the efforts of Ministry of Foreign

Affairs did commendable job in launching “Focus Africa Plan” under “Look Africa Policy”. The plan entailed multifarious follow up actions of opening of five more missions (from 15 Missions), raising commercial, press and military counsels in the prospective countries of interest.

Over all, goal was to double the trade with Africa from \$ 3.5 Billion in 2019 to \$ 7 Billion by 2024 (five years plan). As for the execution, Ministry of Commerce was given the mandate to set out multi-pronged “strategic engagement” with the selected African countries. In this regard, some progress was made in organizing business and trade exhibitions in Kenya (2020) and Nigeria (2021); encouraging response was ascertained from the host countries business quarters. However, ultimate dividends of seeking substantial trade and investments has remained a far cry. Presently, Pakistan has some trade with South Africa and Kenya (about \$1 Billion each) and negligible with rest African countries (when compared with India) which includes Nigeria, Arab-Maghreb countries, Egypt and Sudan.



Here when it comes to critical appreciation of the envisaged “Look Africa Policy” to attain the goal of trade diversification and investments, we may like to review our implementation strategy. As of now, Ministry of Commerce is in the lead to coordinate multi-farious follow up actions thereby attaining

synergy of all stakeholders may it be Foreign Office, Joint Services Headquarters and other Ministries of Defence, Planning, Culture and so forth may not be an easy task.

PAKISTAN’S ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST TERRORISM AND THE ARMED FORCES’ PROFESSIONALISM AND SUCCESSES MADE IN COUNTER-TERRORISM ARE EULOGIZED BY THE AFRICAN COUNTRIES. A PROGRESSIVE TREND OF MILITARY TO MILITARY COOPERATION AND AVAILING PAKISTAN’S OFFER OF CAPACITY BUILDING IN COUNTER TERRORISM IS ON POSITIVE TRAJECTORY

Rather it would be better if the responsibility is given back to MoFA. As viable option, “Joint Working Group” incorporating every stakeholder may be formulated and assigned exclusive task and objectives to be achieved in the short term and long term.

A yearly appraisal of the synergic effort may be carried out with the focus on how much closer we are getting to the envisioned goals of trade and investments. For instance, in the diplomatic/ political domain, MoFA may every year plan a visit of at least one African country by Prime Minister, two by Foreign Minister, three by Minister of Commerce and

so forth. Key objective should be to get Preferential Trade Agreements materialized with host countries. As follow up action, Ministry of Commerce may offer respective Chamber of Commerce and Industries to take advantage of tax heavens and encourage their investments accordingly. This can be done on mutual basis. More scope lies in the services sector particularly in education, IT hotel, tourism, culture and sports. Our expertise in defence manufacturing and capacity building are likely to manifest immediate outcome. This may in turn contribute in building relations in trade and investments domains. China is another unharnessed opportunity. Utilizing CPEC we may further extend mutual cooperation with selected African countries in joint projects of infrastructure development, mining and security domains etc.



All in all, ownership of African Engagement Plan will have to be taken by all the stakeholders. Progress in attaining the goals and objectives can only be attained through combined synergic actions. However, the framework of execution suggested has to be made easier and result oriented ■



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World Bank Group

CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN 2021-2025

1. The challenge

GHG

reductions
are urgently
needed



8x

more natural disasters affected the poorest countries in the last decade than in the 1980s

"Tackling the climate crisis while meeting urgent development needs is the fundamental challenge of our time"

World Bank Group CCAP



Trillions of US dollars required in developing countries every year through 2030 to build infrastructure



800 million people worldwide still lack electricity



Climate change and the degradation of ecosystems together will push the planet closer to irrevocable **tipping points**



Adaptation & resilience are *critical* for the

POOREST & most vulnerable countries





ECONOMIC SECURITY OF PAKISTAN

A Crucial Tool In International Arena And Way Forward

By Aimen Jamil

In the modern age of globalization, in which the economies and democracies are incredibly modern, some states have nonetheless incorrect mechanisms for governance, sadly Pakistan falls among such states which is going via multifaceted and multi-layered stressful conditions. Due to this, governance is usually ending up as an enigma. The more powerful economy a country has, the extra muscle it can flex in international politics.

This is the reason why G7 countries have the capability to decide the monetary fate of the area. China is not a member but despite that, its thriving economy makes China a pillar of world order.

Moving to Pakistan, its economy is very fragile and there are numerous challenges it faces at the moment. This did no longer manifest overnight, there has been financial mismanagement, rampant corruption, negative

governance and undemocratic practices. Pakistan has been confronted with numerous inner and overseas challenges for more than 50 long years, together with the partitioning of East Pakistan, the Afghan conflict and the US imposed war on terror. As an end result, the political and ideological divide grows, such factors make Pakistan's political stability and inner safety crucial for development. Pakistan's economic protection objectives have to, broadly speaking include

3 elements: Human resource development, poverty reduction, and political balance. In line with the modern UNDP Human Development Index, Pakistan is ranked 154th out of 189 nations. Furthermore, the most current Global Competitiveness Index document illustrated a decline in Pakistan's ranking through 3 positions (from 107th out of a hundred and forty in 2018 to a hundred and tenth position out of 141 countries in 2019). Human development indices relating to skill level and health quality were two important contributors to the drop. Poverty is an essential monetary challenge which is directly affecting the peace and development of the state, particularly for communities that are susceptible to violent extremism.

OVER TIME, THE DYNAMICS OF NATION'S SOVEREIGNTY, PEACE AND SECURITY HAVE TRANSFORMED VIA A SHIFT FROM CONVENTIONAL MILITARY SECURITY IN THE DIRECTION OF NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY SHIFTING THE FOCUS TO ECONOMIC SECURITY AND HUMAN SECURITY

The most recent surveys by International Financial Institutions show that there has been an increase in poverty from 4.4 percent to 5.4 percent in 2020 - more than 2 million people have fallen beneath the poverty line. In the course of the pandemic, many people have lost their jobs and their source of income has been affected by this. Another major challenge for Pakistan was getting off the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) grey list. In such a situation, foreign investors may experience capital insecurity when considering to invest in Pakistan.

Over time, the dynamics of nation's sovereignty, peace and security

have transformed via a shift from basically conventional military spending in the direction of non-traditional security shifting the focus to economic security and human security. The provision of that is related to economic stability and sovereignty, which offers the industrial base and financial capital to push for such a transformation. In order to convert international environment, monetary security is the frontline protective barrier. One of the bold steps taken in National Security Policy is of prioritizing economic security. The policy emphasises that the paradigm shift depends on economic security through regional connectivity and shared prosperity and seeks to address the long-standing higher foreign exchange outflow than inflow by placing a "dedicated focus" on export-oriented foreign direct investments and remittances. Pakistan should be envisioned by us as a crossroads of commerce, communications, and economic activity connecting its neighbours in West Asia, Central Asia, and South Asia, as well as the Middle East. This vision is anchored in Pakistan's geographic location.

Western China and the six landlocked nations of Central Asia have the fastest sea routes through Pakistan. We have built a third port at Gwadar, which is near to the Gulf, to help with maritime connectivity. We are building highways on a vast scale and intend to connect neighbouring regions, particularly Central Asia, with a rail network as well. We also have plans to build electricity networks, oil and gas pipelines, and other infrastructure that might meet China's expanding energy demands as well as our own. We are aware that in order to achieve these ambitious goals, we must bring internal and external stability to promote peace and to support conflict resolution in the region.

Non-traditional security threats have recently risen to the top of the world agenda. What we need to understand is that today, financial war has taken a lead to armed confrontation. We need to identify our financial weak points. Additionally, we must comprehend the range of non-military threats.

PAKISTAN SHOULD BE ENVISIONED BY US AS A CROSSROADS OF COMMERCE, COMMUNICATIONS, AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITY CONNECTING ITS NEIGHBOURS IN WEST ASIA, CENTRAL ASIA, AND SOUTH ASIA, AS WELL AS THE MIDDLE EAST. THIS VISION IS ANCHORED IN PAKISTAN'S GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

A few actions needed on immediate basis, out of numerous feasible ones, can assist the nation in preventing an economic default. Since the 1960s, 147 governments have reportedly defaulted on their loans, according to the World Economic Forum. In light of Pakistan's unique conditions, it is possible to learn from the economic models of prosperous economies. Imports now outnumber exports because we are a consumer society. The manufacture of locally produced goods is required in order to replace imported goods. Electricity generation must give preference to solar and wind energy, which should also be tax-free. Without any doubt we have the potential to overcome these challenges but this can happen only if the right decisions are taken and implemented in an adequate way ■

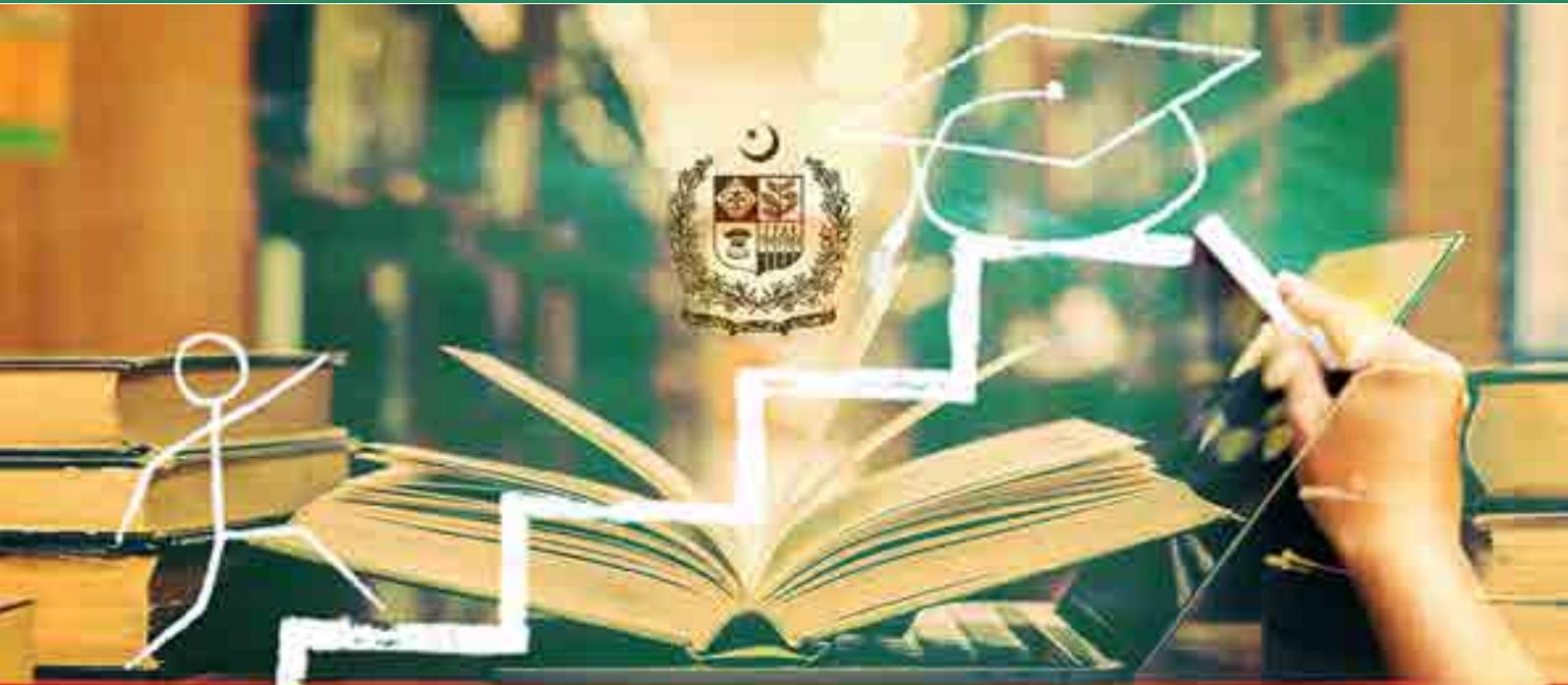


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EDUCATION SECTOR IN PAKISTAN

Revisiting the Challenges

By Nouman Farooq



Education is a matter of life and death for Pakistan. The world is progressing so rapidly that without requisite advance in education, not only shall we lag behind others but may be wiped out altogether.”

Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah

Development of any state to quite an extent depends upon its literacy rate and quality of education. Hence it remains one of the top priorities not only for the developed nations but also for the developing nations as it has been declared a human right as per the charter of the UN Article 26 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights

which states that, “Everyone has the right to education.” Today however, 57 million children remain out of school. Education is not only a right, but a passport to human development that opens doors and expands opportunities and vistas.

The role of education is that of a powerful engine which instead of producing horsepower

gives society a learned person that not only contributes to the sustainability of a society but also works to develop a state into a stable and prosperous place. Pakistan has not been blessed with the best of engines in both rhetorical and actual sense.

Infrastructure development alone cannot do wonders unless skilled and capable workforce is there.

Through skilled labour force all the existing developmental projects which are still in the working phase will be completed at priority basis and present/future projects will be completed on fast track basis. Pakistan has had its foundations build on the primary pillar of any society which is education.

As per the constitution of Pakistan:

“The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children under the age of five to sixteen years in such a manner as may be determined by the law. Quite recently Chief Minister of Punjab Chaudhary Pervaiz Illahi has announced that there will be free education in Punjab till graduation. Pakistan has a lot of institutes but the quality of education is questionable. Most recently, it is under discussion that a ban will be imposed on the opening of new universities in the country. This decision although might be considered, but it will be a good step as there has been an unprecedented growth of unsupervised educational institutes in Pakistan.

THERE NEEDS TO BE A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT FOR NOT ONLY REFORMS BUT ALSO A POLICY THAT WILL IMPROVE AND THEN MAINTAIN THE QUALITY SYSTEM

Pakistan is a state with 96.03% Muslim population and the remaining minority population comprises of Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, Kailash, Bahai, Buddhist and Parsi residing within its borders. That translates to the fact that there has been a need to provide them with the opportunity to study their

religious text and scriptures as a part of their syllabus, a right they have been denied till now. Many such proposals have been brought to the table but have either been turned down or ignored. There is an urgent need to give special attention to such proposals.

Education also suffers a lot due to natural disasters, pandemics and wars etc. Covid-19 pandemic left millions devastated and lowered the standard of education and health in numerous states. Likewise, initially the education system in Pakistan faced a lot of challenges in covid-19 and the students particularly the ones in the remote areas of Pakistan suffered the most. A partial collapse in the educational system of Pakistan was seen. According to Dawn, an estimated 930,000 children dropped out of the school permanently due to school closures during the times of Covid-19. Although, things did normalize later on but the educational sector encountered severe damages in the times of covid.

As per UNICEF, this is a very concerning number for a country which takes second place amongst the most number of children out of school with an estimated 22.8 million children aged 5-16 not attending school, representing 44 per cent of the total population in this age group.

Policy recommendations:

- ❖ There needs to be a strategic approach to the education department for not only reforms but also a policy that will improve and then maintain the quality system.
- ❖ HEC needs a centralized system for minimalization

of discrimination against religious minorities and to uplift society as a whole reducing the difference of financial class.

HEC NEEDS A CENTRALIZED SYSTEM OF EDUCATION FOR MINIMALIZATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST RELIGIOUS MINORITIES AND TO UPLIFT SOCIETY AS A WHOLE REDUCING THE DIFFERENCE OF FINANCIAL CLASS

- ❖ HEC also needs to reconstruct itself by making sure that the private education system does not take advantage of the gap in the government education system, making sure that children are provided the same quality of education.
- ❖ The curriculum needs to be modified to fill the systematic gap in the work force, making sure that there is a skilled workforce to fill in the gap being predicted in the future
- ❖ A job appointment system also needs to coordinate with the education commission. This will lower the unemployment rate and uplift the society.
- ❖ Number of education systems need to be monitored and a strict policy on granting education license needs to be adopted ■



The writer is a BS (hons) student of Peace and Conflict Studies at National Defence University Islamabad.

personnel and political elites war against Taliban was considered as a war against Islam and Muslims. To counter such propaganda the state and military stakeholders should work hard on creating narratives with the help of electronic media. These narratives helped the Pakistani military and state elites to run the operations in Pakistan against extremism and dismantle terrorist's bases in Pakistan. The long term effect of this molded the public opinion and the public considered Taliban as their common enemy and a serious threat to national security.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TOP PRIORITY AND MUST BE CONSIDERED AS A CRITICAL COMPONENT OF POLICY MAKING. IT MUST BE A STABILITY BASED APPROACH IN WHICH CONNECTION BETWEEN WORDS AND ACTIONS IS VISIBLE AND UNDERSTANDABLE TO THE PUBLIC

Pakistan must take into account the following elements while designing Strategic Communication narratives:

The nine fundamental tenets for Pakistan's SC plan should be based on principles identified by Naval War College USA in 2008 which are as under:

1. Leadership involvement in SC process at every level.
2. Perception of credibility and respect between all parties.
3. Fruitful dialogue with multi-faceted exchange of ideas.
4. Unity of effort with coordination and understanding.
5. Responsive means of deliverance of the message to the right audience on right time and right place with right agenda.
6. Deep understanding of values, cultural identities, belongingness, comprehension of attitudes and cultures.
7. Actions must be pervasive.
8. Prioritize and design result based actions and activities based on rationality.
9. Continuous research analysis planning based on which actions are designed.

Policy options and suggestions:

Interdependence among the nations led the nations to devise their policies smartly and gain maximum support from domestic and international media. Here are the few suggestions to improve and strengthen the strategic communication through various means:-

1. Our government needs to put more emphasis on

improving its public diplomacy as it works effectively in any armed conflict. By making SC centre of focus and attention more weightage will be given to addressing strategies against militancy with the help of human factor such as human psychology, sociology and anthropology and it will help in building consensus for any national policy.

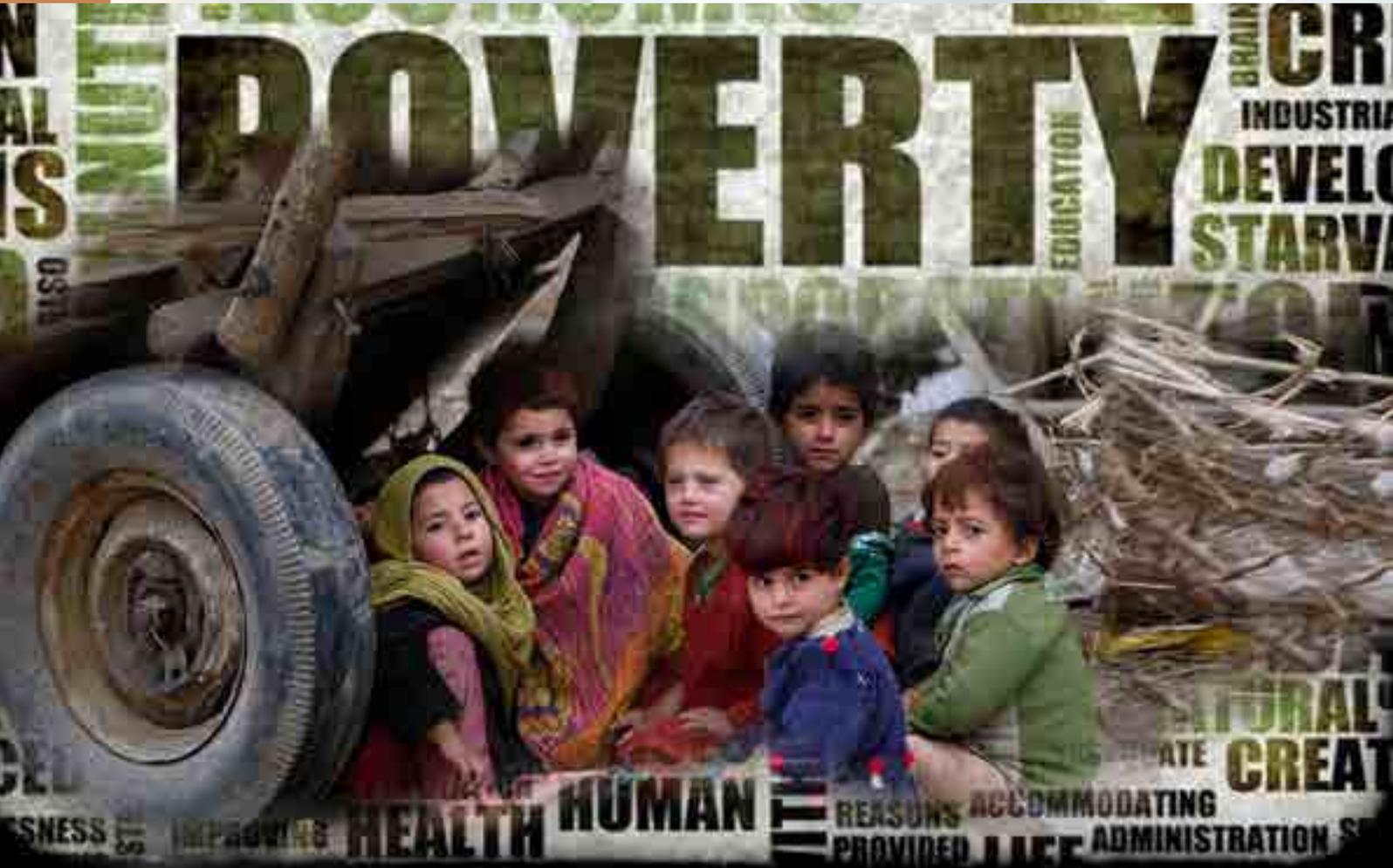
2. Engagement of the media personnel and media resources before taking and implementing any policy. In contemporary world, nature of warfare has changed due to lot of factors and the most important is the means of getting objectives with traditional ways is replaced with non-traditional ways like media and diplomacy.
3. National policies must be in line with the communication or information shared and actions must be blueprint of information disseminated.
4. Identifying and prioritizing the key themes of the communication plan. The medium of communication must be clear and simple. It should be understandable to the common man.
5. Communication management must be in proper way and in the hands of intelligent people only then it can help the government to respond in a better way to current and future security challenges.
6. Strategic communication should be given top priority and must be considered as a critical component of policy making. It must be a stability based approach in which connection between words and actions is visible and understandable to the public and with the engagement of national security agencies.
7. Strategic communication must be a two-way process in which the information shared should have a response and action from both audience and adversaries'. Strategic Communication must not only be a government dictating rule but it must be a democratic process.
8. Involvement and engagement of the educational personnel side by side with strategic planning division will help in streamlining and clarifying various actions of the government. Last but not the least, there is a need to inculcate various topics and chapters in curriculum like "Islamophobia" and Islam as a religion of peace as optional subjects ■



The writer is a PhD scholar and a free-lance columnist.

POVERTY IN PAKISTAN

By Abdur Rahim

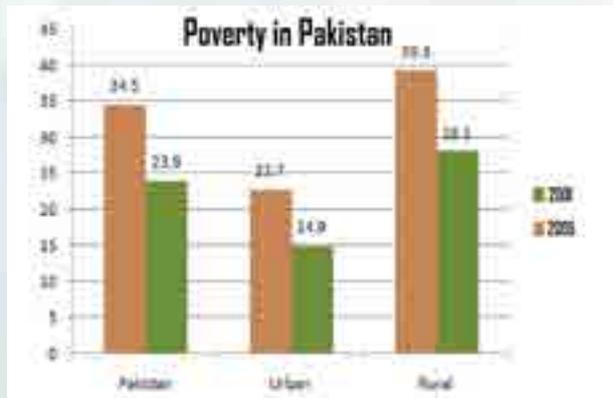


Poverty is a state of worst suffering and indicates the state of being unable to afford basic human needs such as potable water, food, health care, clothing and shelter. Different factors like gender inequality, extremism, terrorism, and illiteracy; have tremendously contributed in making Pakistan a poverty-stricken state. Statistically speaking the World Bank in 2020 estimated that poverty in Pakistan has increased from 4.4 to 5.4 percent as over more than two million people have fallen below the poverty line. Unfortunately, having a population of 39.3% struggling with their lives below the poverty line, it is the poor people that are most vulnerable to economic fallouts and climate change and therefore, the need of

the hour is to take timely measures to protect the livelihood of the masses.

WORLD BANK IN 2020 ESTIMATED THAT POVERTY IN PAKISTAN HAS INCREASED FROM 4.4 TO 5.4 PERCENT AS OVER MORE THAN TWO MILLION PEOPLE HAVE FALLEN BELOW THE POVERTY LINE

Poverty in Pakistan is the root cause of various problems. Poverty within Pakistan is particularly effecting the people in rural settings. Different statistical infographics show that poverty in Pakistan has historically been higher in rural areas than in urban areas and in the years to come this disparity will only increase more.



CAUSES OF POVERTY

There are a number of factors that are behind poverty but some of the prime factors are:

❖ Poor Governance

Incompetent and ineffective governmental mechanisms and strategies have often backfired leading to economic fragility and more poverty. Governments need to address issues of core concern on immediate basis and should ensure that all the citizens are getting their fundamental human rights. Social protection should be ensured for everyone and human security should be the priority of the government.

❖ Over Population

Pakistan has one of the highest population growth rate in the world. According to some sources, Pakistan will surpass 350 million people by 2050. The extra and over growth in population has put great pressure on the unmatched resources and has led to more unemployment, crimes, unequitable distribution of resources leading to more economic vulnerability of the people.

This massive population growth in Pakistan has no comparison to the scarce resources which will ultimately push more families below the poverty line. The Government must therefore take steps by passing a bill with the mutual consent of the religious representatives in order to educate the masses regarding the alarming issue of over population. This can strategically be highlighted if the critical matter of early marriage culture in Pakistan is sensibly addressed; keeping in mind the outcomes it can have on the physical and psychological health of the young generation.

❖ Resource Misallocation

The lack of transparency in public sector planning, budgeting and allocation of resources in Pakistan has ensured that those who do not constitute the

political elite are unable to make political leaders and the government responsive to their needs or accountable to promises made. This has brought about a very biased approach to service provision, with development priorities being determined not by potential beneficiaries but by the bureaucracy and a ruling elite which may or may not be in touch with the needs of the citizens. This feudal culture further handicaps the system and hardly gives a priority to the rights of the poor.

❖ Illiteracy

More than half of the population in Pakistan is illiterate. Different factors contribute here too of which poverty, class divide are the major ones. In Pakistan more than 7.26 million children do not go to school, while on the official documents they do which is reflective that there are many 'ghost schools', such schools exist in file records but are followed by absenteeism and no accountability.

THE GOVERNMENT MUST PROVIDE REASONABLE, FREE AND QUALITY EDUCATION. MERIT SHOULD BE THE FOUNDATION OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM; SIMULTANEOUSLY PROMOTING TALENT AND SCHOLARSHIPS AMONG DESERVING STUDENTS. IT-RELATED AND PRACTICAL EDUCATION MUST BE MADE EASILY ACCESSIBLE IN THIS DIGITAL AGE TO ALL THE STUDENTS

When the citizens of a nation are deprived of the basic education it gives rise to crime, lawlessness and poverty. Without the basic education, the young people go astray and resort to criminal means to earn livelihood.

The government must provide reasonable, free and good quality education while bringing the so called class difference to an end. Merit should be the foundation of the education system; simultaneously promoting talent and scholarships among deserving students. IT-related and practical education must be made easily accessible in this digital age to all the students. Teachers evaluation must be made a compulsory assessment mechanism to ensure imparting of knowledge and quality education ■



The writer is a BS (Hons) student of International Relations at National Defence University Islamabad.



UN chief views 'unimaginable' damage in visit to Pakistan's flood-hit areas

António Guterres calls for 'massive financial support' in wake of disaster that has killed at least 1,391 people.

The United Nations secretary general, António Guterres, has visited several areas of Pakistan ravaged by floods, as he rounded off a two-day trip aimed at raising awareness of the disaster. Record monsoon rains and glacier melt in the country's northern mountains have triggered floods that have killed at least 1,391 people, sweeping away houses, roads, railway tracks, bridges, livestock and crops.

The UN secretary general landed in Sindh province on September 10, before flying over some of the worst-affected areas en route to Balochistan, another badly hit province. "It is difficult not to feel deeply moved to hear such detailed descriptions of tragedy," Guterres said, after landing in Sindh, according to a video released by the office of the prime minister, Shehbaz Sharif.

The Guardian, September 10, 2022

Biden to hit China with broader curbs on U.S. chip and tool exports

The Biden administration plans next month to broaden curbs on U.S. shipments to China of semiconductors used for artificial intelligence and chipmaking tools, several people familiar with the matter said. The Commerce Department intends to publish new regulations based on restrictions communicated in letters earlier this year to three U.S. companies -- KLA Corp, Lam Research Corp (LRCX.O) and Applied Materials Inc (AMAT.O), the people said, speaking on the condition of anonymity.

The letters, which the companies publicly acknowledged, forbade them from exporting chipmaking equipment to Chinese factories that produce advanced semiconductors with sub-14 nanometer processes unless the sellers obtain Commerce Department licenses. The rules would also codify restrictions in Commerce Department letters sent to Nvidia Corp (NVDA.O) and Advanced Micro Devices (AMD.O) last month instructing them to halt shipments of several artificial intelligence computing chips to China unless they obtain licenses.

REUTERS, September 01, 2022



France to hold international conference to support flood-hit Pakistan

France has assured Pakistan of help in the revival of its economy and reconstruction in the wake of devastating floods and announced holding an international financial and development conference this year.

In a joint statement issued after a meeting between Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and French President Emmanuel Macron on the sidelines of the 77th Session of the UN General Assembly in New York, Macron said Paris will help the South Asian nation in its current difficult situation.

„The two leaders agreed on mobilizing international support for Pakistan to help recover and rebuild its economy on a sustainable footing in the aftermath of the recent devastating floods in Pakistan related to climate change,“ said the statement.

“In order to gather the relevant international financial partners and the development partners, France will host an international conference before the end of the year aiming at contributing to the rehabilitation and the reconstruction of flood-affected areas of Pakistan and, with the help of climate-resilient reconstruction related financing, to accelerate the transition to renewable energy,“ it further added.

Sharif thanked Macron for his country's support for GSP+ (Generalized System of Preferences-Plus) status with the EU, saying it helped enhance trade with the EU countries.

ANADOLU AGENCY, September 21, 2022

PM Shahbaz Sharif lands in Uzbekistan to attend SCO Summit

Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif on September 15, 2022 arrived in Uzbekistan on a two-day visit to attend the annual meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation's (SCO) Council of Heads of State (CHS). PM Shahbaz will attend the SCO summit scheduled to be held on September 15-16 at the invitation of Uzbekistan President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, who would chair the meeting. The CHS is the highest forum of the SCO, which considers and defines strategy, prospects and priorities of the Organization. During the meeting, the SCO leaders will deliberate on important global and regional issues, including climate change, food security energy security, and sustainable supply chains. They would also approve agreements and documents that would chart the future direction of cooperation among SCO member states.



The News International, September 15, 2022



PREMIUM REAL ESTATE DEVELOPER OF PAKISTAN

10+

HIGH RISE PROJECTS
IN TWIN CITIES.

10 MILLION

SQ.FT. COVERED AREA PROJECTS
IN TWIN CITIES.



MALLS

CORPORATE TOWERS

HOTELS

RESIDENTIAL COMPLEXES

HOUSING SOCIETIES



YOUR OWN 5 STAR HOTEL SUITES

NEAR TO NEW ISLAMABAD
INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT