

Positive Post

A Publication by Department of Mass Communication & Media Studies and the Diplomatic Academy



Greenwich University

February in History

February 2, 1948: Urdu is declared the national language of Pakistan.

February 8, 1949: Azad Kashmir Government shifts its capital

February 21, 1956: Constituent Assembly decides the country shall be a Federal Republic known as Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

February 2, 1957: President Iskandar Mirza laid down the foundation-stone of Guddu Barrage.

February 24, 1960: Presidential Cabinet decides to name the new Capital as Islamabad.

February 3, 1962: Prominent poet and Pakistan's Guinness world record holder Dr. Muhammad Saeed Fazal Karim Beebani born in Rawalpindi. He wrote Ghair Munqoot Naatia poetry book 'Mumdooh-e-Kirdigar' and Ghair Munqoot Hamdia poetry book 'Alhumdulillah'.

February 13, 1973: Begum Rana Liaquat Ali becomes first woman to assume office of Sindh Governor.

February 01, 1978: Allama Iqbal's Lahore house is declared national monument.

February 11, 1996: Cricket World Cup jointly hosted by Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka.

February 03, 1997: Nation goes to the polls. PML secures 135 seats.

February 17, 1997: Nawaz Sharif sworn in as 19th Prime Minister.

February 23, 1997: Nawaz Sharif launches "Qarz utaro Mulk sanwaro" scheme. Declares Sunday, instead of Friday as weekly holiday.

February 04, 2016: First season Pakistan Super League.

Pakistan's standing in the global rankings

Overview

Pakistan observed a slight improvement in the overall international rankings in 2018 covering socio-economic and political outcomes of the country. Several elements complemented the prospects including successful democratic transition, efficient counter-terrorism measures leading to enhanced peace and security, and foreign direct investment inflows under CPEC, among others. Albeit, decoupling economic growth from human development suggests that the country needs to enhance its scores in health, education and standard of living by ensuring political will, equitable financing and efficient governance to ensure parallel growth for marginalized segments as well. Civil and political liberties must grow hand in hand to ensure a conducive environment for democratic dialogue and accountability which ultimately supports its nation building process.

DEMOCRACY INDEX

Pakistan ranked 112th out of 167 countries in the Democracy Index scoring 4.17 out of 10 in 2018 compared to 4.26 in 2017.

Index from 0 (authoritarian regime) to 10 (full democracy)

Compiled based on indicators covering: Electoral process and pluralism, Civil liberties, Functioning of government, Political participation, and Political culture.

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX

Pakistan ranked 150th out of 189 countries in the Human Development Index scoring 0.562 out of 1.000 in 2018 compared to 0.560 out of 1.000 in 2017.

Index from 0 (low development) to 1 (very high development)

Compiled based on indicators covering: life expectancy, education, and per capita income

PRESS FREEDOM INDEX

Pakistan ranked 139th out of 180 countries in the Press Freedom Index scoring 43.24 out of 100 in 2018 compared to 43.55 in 2017.

Index from 0 (most press freedom) to 100 (least press freedom)

Compiled based on indicators covering: pluralism, media independence, environment and self-censorship, legislative framework, transparency, and infrastructure.

TERRORISM INDEX

Pakistan ranked 5th out of 163 countries in the Terrorism Index scoring 8.18 out of 10 in 2018 compared to 8.40 in 2017.

Index from 0 (lowest impact) to 10 (highest impact)

Compiled based on indicators covering: Total number of terrorist incidents in a given year, total number of fatalities caused by terrorism in a given year, total number of injuries caused by terrorism in a given year and the approximate level of total property damage from terrorist incidents in a given year.

ECONOMIC FREEDOM INDEX

Pakistan ranked 131st out of 180 countries in the Economic Freedom Index scoring 54.4 out of 100 in 2018 compared to 52.8 out of 100 in 2017.

Index from 0 (repressed) to 100 (free)

Compiled based on indicators covering: Market openness, Regulatory efficiency, Government size and the rule of law.

Positive Post is a strategic effort to project achievement and contributions of Pakistan. While showcasing Greenwich University's cultural diplomacy initiatives, it also encapsulates a compilation of different developments complementing Pakistan's socio-cultural, economic and Political outcomes.

KRC representing Pakistan at the World Social Forum 2021

Ali Jillani, Vice Chair, Karachi Research Chair (KRC), represented Pakistan at the World Social Forum 2021 webinar on "Climate Change in South Asia: Way Forward for Equity and Justice Informed Governance" as a panelist. The Panel was moderated by India featuring speakers from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal. Mr. Jillani shared that the Global Sustainable Development Report 2019 highlighted the absence of data on over 60% of the environmental indicators, with several countries experiencing regressive patterns in climate governance in the Asian Pacific region. Three out of the five most endangered countries by climate change come from South Asia, while the entire region is confronted by severe air & water pollution and biodiversity loss.



Mr. Jillani criticized the report for not covering corporate capture of the environment and the natural resource base, continuously

exploited for profiteering tactics through extraction, processing and use of fossil fuels (oil, gas and coal) along with the

energy infrastructure inflicting irreversible damage to the environment. And, the monopolized policy space through neoliberal trade agreements continues to sustain the use of fossil fuels at the expense of people and the planet. The privatization of public goods in the name of ecosystem service or value addition continues to exacerbate deprivations of the most acute nature. The report does not expose the persecution of environmental defenders nor stresses the need to democratize the discourse around climate governance. Mr. Jillani proposed the following recommendations for redress:

Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDRRC) clause to track Global North commitments in financial, technical and technological support for developing countries through Climate Public Expenditure and Institutional Review (CPEIR).

3) A Regional entity should be established under the auspices of United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA/P) in coordination with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) to provide policy coherence guidance to Environmental and Social Impact Assessment Agencies (ESIAs) at the national levels. It could enhance governmental efficiency in holding multinational corporations accountable for environmental degradation notwithstanding the Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) maneuver. The entity could also revitalize centuries-old indigenous knowledge systems combined with modern scientific evidence to challenge the dominant regimes of knowledge involved in climate dissuasion.

1) Multilateral systems must protect the inviolability of Global Environmental Commons (GECs) through stronger public sector commitment, appropriate policies e.g. Polluters Pay Act, Progressive Carbon Taxation, Removal of Fossil subsidies, among others.

2) Official Development Assistance (ODA) must be decoupled from climate financing, and should be tracked separately under Paris Agreement's Common But Differentiated

WORLD SOCIAL FORUM 2021
Another world is possible

WEBINAR ON
**CLIMATE CHANGE IN SOUTH ASIA;
WAY FORWARD FOR EQUITY AND JUSTICE INFORMED GOVERNANCE**

Wednesday, 27th January, 2021
3.00 PM (IST)/09.30 UTC

SPEAKERS
Ali Raza Jilani, *Karachi Research Chair, Pakistan*
Herman Kumara, *NAFSO, Sri Lanka*
Sharif Jamil, *BAPA, Bangladesh*
Udhab Pyakurel, *SADED, Nepal*

MODERATOR
Soumya Dutta, *MAUSAM, India*

Organizers:

How Pakistan is aiming for a green recovery from the pandemic

The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the need for humans to nurture a more harmonious, rather than adversarial, relationship with nature.

Pakistan is committed to the challenge of initiating a green recovery to protect nature and create much needed employment.

The green stimulus package focuses on innovative financial tools to help build sustainable, responsible economic growth.

The year 2020 was expected to be a “super year for nature”, designed to propel the climate and biodiversity agendas onto the global stage. Nature itself, however, had other plans. The two striking lessons emerging out of the ensuing COVID-19 crisis are firstly, that nature operates with limits and thresholds which demand respect, and when crossed, have consequences. As humans pushed the thresholds of their existence, nature reacted and triggered the zoonotic pandemic which has now engulfed a shocked world.

The second lesson emerged with hope that a renewed and sustainable relationship with nature is possible, and within reach, but needs to be backed by political commitment and collective action. Both lessons are forcing a rebalancing of our relationship with nature.

Have you read?

How debt for climate swaps could spur a green recovery
Why the natural world is key to a green recovery
Global leaders must act fast to ensure a green recovery

Over the past few months, while many countries grappled to come to terms with this new normal, Pakistan was willing to think ahead and act out of the box – sensing a silver lining emerge around this black cloud of confusion and uncertainty. The government’s green agenda, built upon the successful implementation of the Billion Tree Tsunami (2014-18), had already accepted the premise that nature based solutions not only protect and preserve nature but also have the potential to spur an alternate green



economy. More importantly, it had effectively created the launch pad for a directional shift of the economy towards sustainable growth.

Against this backdrop, the COVID-19 crisis provided an opportunity and Pakistan seized it to break out of the depression and reboot a stressed economy with a “Green Stimulus” focused on two objectives: protecting nature and creating green jobs. The focal areas for intervention included planting more trees, expanding and reviving our protected areas and improving urban sanitation all of which could generate quick employment while also allowing the country to come out of the crisis on a nature-positive pathway.

CORONAVIRUS, HEALTH, COVID19, PANDEMIC
What is the World Economic Forum doing to manage emerging risks from COVID-19?

1. Green jobs creation

In terms of financing, we envisioned three phases, all of which are now in place with specialized funding options. The first ongoing phase is fully funded through “self budgetary provisions” which had to be recalibrated and prioritized towards green job creation. This was necessary to show total government commitment and ownership. As a result, the purely government financed activities, amounting to Rs10 billion have already delivered 85,000 daily wage jobs across the country in nursery raising, plant care, protection of natural forests and fire fighting activities and we have further planned to raise this to 200,000 daily wage jobs within the next few months.

2. Launch of ‘Ecosystem Restoration Fund’

For the second phase, the post-COVID-19 recovery, a new platform “Ecosystem Restoration Fund” was launched to allow willing partners (public and private) to credibly and transparently join Pakistan’s green recovery. Substantial support funds of \$180 million have been secured through multi-lateral partners (led by the World Bank) proving that if the right plan is in place with full ownership, the funds can always be generated.

These funds will support the expansion of the tree planting initiative as well as the ecological preservation of the recently announced 15 national parks all of which got announced during the COVID-19 crisis, as the country increased its protected areas coverage by 50%.

Pakistan’s first institutional National Parks Service is now underway, targeting 5,000 nature jobs to be generated for youth people who will be trained to become guardians and custodians of nature. All this activity is designed to address the unexpected spike in unemployment across the country and, at the same time, link economic activity with the preservation of nature.

3. ‘Debt for Nature’ swap scheme

In the medium term, an ingeniously designed “Debt for Nature” swap scheme has recently been put in the pipeline, targeting \$1 billion funding. This is subject to a renegotiation of Pakistan’s burgeoning debt with countries supporting a green revival of the global economy. There are strong indications of a growing

global appetite for supporting this directional shift and Pakistan has been recently chosen to pilot an impact based nature bond linking debt retirement with quantifiable performance on biodiversity protection.

4. Designing a ‘Green Euro Bond’

Finally, during the pandemic, the country made a bold announcement to shift away from a coal-based pathway towards renewable energy by announcing a target of achieving 60% clean energy mix by 2030. Pakistan quickly followed up this announcement by shelving 2600MW of imported coal projects and replacing them with 3700MW of hydroelectric projects. Sensing a growing appetite for green and low-carbon investments in the international capital markets, Pakistan is all set to launch its first “Green Euro Bond” for \$500 million this month. This will announce the country’s entry into an expanding and eco-conscious marketplace.

While treading this pathway, Pakistan also realized very quickly that to preserve nature you need to value nature – in economic terms. Subsequently it has taken the lead by initiating a first of its kind “Natural Capital Valuation” exercise to determine the true value of the natural asset that it is protecting and preserving, not only for itself but also a world besieged by the growing crisis of climate change and biodiversity loss.

This nature-positive pathway to rebuild the economy and stimulate sustainable growth, while employing young people, is a pressing need and will allow the country to not only come out of the economic recession but also build back better and build back green.

Pakistan has carved out an opportunity amidst the crisis, through rebooting the economy with a green stimulus and putting its faith in four diverse nature based financial instruments all premised on the belief that the economic framework of the 20th century will not get us through the 21st century. Nature is demanding a rethink and Pakistan has heeded the call.

Courtesy: World Economic Forum

Training of Trainers on Training Methodologies and Terrorism Investigation

Under the framework of Pakistan's Action to Counter Terrorism (PACT) Sindh project, UNODC in collaboration with the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) and with the financial support of the European Union organized a "1st Training of Trainers (TOT) on Training Methodologies and Terrorism Investigation" 15-19 February 2021 in Karachi. The Training brought together participants from various units of Sindh Police and Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) Sindh.

In the opening ceremony Mr. Naeem Ahmed Sheikh, Deputy Inspector General of Police, Training Branch lauded the efforts UNODC for chalking out a sustainable capacity building strategy for Sindh Police. Mr. Sheikh also appreciated the efforts of the Training Module Review Committee established by the worthy Inspector General of Police Sindh for review of the contents of the training modules. Mr. Syed Arslan Zaidi, Advisor PACT, in his opening remarks also shed light on UNODC's approach for developing a pool of trainers who can be utilized by Sindh Police in future.

Later in the day, Mr. Amanullah



Khan, Programme Officer- Police presented about the PACT project, overall capacity building strategy under the framework of the project and future discourse. Col. Ghulam Abbas, Senior Training and Programme Coordinator presented on the Systematic Approach to Training and different models, class management and effective training methods.

Dr. Manzar Zaidi, Counter Terrorism Trainer, presented the importance of training for police officers, and why experiential models could not be considered enough for Policing. The session was followed by a session on learning methodologies, which demonstrated the utility of adult learning and problem solving rationale for training. The next day, Dr. Zaidi made trainees practice their

presentation skills, as well as training them in different methodologies, pathways, and concept of adult learning and organizing trainings.

On the third day of the workshop, Ahmed Saeed, Master Trainer, and Dr. Manzar Zaidi took the course through Program planning and Micro teaching which included practical and conceptual sessions on Documentation and Standardization of training, Lesson Plans, Manuals, Principles of curriculum documentation and Immersive learning. The trainers constantly made the course practice their practical presentation strategies.

The fourth day started with an introductory session on Terrorism, trajectories of terrorism, terrorist

organizational growth and life cycles, conducted by Dr. Manzar Zaidi. He showed various videos during this session and made the session highly interactive. This was followed by a conceptual analyses of Training needs assessment and curriculum documentation by Mr. Shafqat Jilani, Master Trainer. The final and fifth day of training started with an interactive session by Dr. Manzar Zaidi on why it is so difficult to pin down a definition of terrorism and the practical ramifications of this conceptual issue. This was followed by a session by Shafqat Jilani on Training evaluation and feedback.

At the closing session, Mr. Shad Ibn Masih, Principal Elite Police Training College, Razzaqabad Karachi, appreciated the efforts of UNODC, EU and NACTA for developing one of its kind capacity building strategy for Sindh Police which is focused on developing the capacity of the specialized units to overcome the challenges posed by terrorism. Upon conclusion of the workshop, certificates were distributed amongst the participants. Courtesy: unodc

PM lays foundation stone for Central Business District in Lahore

Speaking at the launch ceremony, he remarked that the purpose of the project is to help generate wealth. "You can't even think of the money the project will generate for the Punjab government, Pakistan Railways, and the CAA." It is estimated that it will generate around Rs1,300 billion in the first phase. The federal government will receive Rs2.5 billion as revenue on taxes.

He said that the two big problems faced by the country include the deficit of its fiscal account and current account. "Our economy was

mismanaged because of which we had to pay a lot of loans," he said. "Our foreign reserves diminished too and we couldn't meet our expenses because our loan installments were increasing."

The PM remarked that the government is working towards shifting the Walton airport so that business centres could be set up in Gulberg, Boulevard Road and Ferozpur Road. "Earlier, high rise buildings couldn't be constructed there because of the airport but we want more commercial activity in this area."

He went to say that he is the country's biggest environmentalist. "No one ever thought about planting trees in the country before us." The PM assured that no trees will be cut during the construction of the business district.



Pakistanis can renew their passports for 10 years for Rs4,500

The federal government has decided to decrease the passport fee for the country residents.

The following prices will be implemented from February 17.

Here are the prices for the people getting their passports made or renewed for five years.

- Passport with 36 pages: Rs.3,000 (normal) and Rs.5,000 (urgent).
- Passport with 72 pages: Rs.5,500 (normal) and Rs.9,000 (urgent).
- Passport with 100 pages: Rs.9,000 (normal) and Rs.18,000 (urgent).

The following prices are for people getting their passports made for 10 years.

- Passport with 36 pages: Rs4,500



- (normal) and Rs.7,500 (urgent).
- Passport with 72 pages: Rs.8,250 (normal) and Rs.13,500 (urgent).
- Passport with 100 pages: Rs.9,000 (normal) and Rs.18,000 (urgent).

A notification on the price change has been issued by the Immigration and Passport's director general.

The people who paid the old fee before February 17 will not be refunded, says the notification.

Training Workshop on victim identification, protection, and referral related to Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants, Karachi

Under the framework of the Global Action to Address Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants (GLO.ACT – Asia and the Middle East), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), has conducted from 9 to 10 February 2021 a training workshop on “Victims identification, Protection, and Referral related to Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants”. This is the second of a series of three workshops with the objective of training relevant stakeholders on the subject. The last session will be held in Lahore from 24 to 25 February 2021 with the same stakeholders.

The participants of this training represented law enforcement authorities, Civil Society Organizations, Sindh and relevant government departments, namely, social welfare, labour, child and women development. The first day of workshop aimed at enhancing the participants understanding of Trafficking in Persons (TIP), and Smuggling of Migrants (SOM), familiarize them with national policies and laws related to the two crimes, as well as with Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) related to victim identification, case management, referral, protection and assistance. The session was attended by 20 participants (8 female, 12 male).

While delivering welcoming remarks, Shahida Gilani, UNODC



National Programme Officer, explained that “GLO.ACT aims to act as vehicle for change, providing protection to victims and vulnerable migrants, closing the impunity gap for traffickers and smugglers who benefit from the exploitation of the most vulnerable” and highlighted that “GLO.ACT also aims to enhance the quality of investigations and prosecutions of TIP and SOM, and to identify and target illicit financial flows associated with TIP and SOM”.

Jawad Hussain, Assistant Director at the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) while delivering his session stressed that “victim support groups and service providers have a vital role in the fight against human trafficking and migrants smuggling. Better training of law enforcement and service providers leads to greater detection and enhanced support to victims”.

Ehsan Gilani, Assistant Programme Officer UNODC delivered a session on the newly adopted National

Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking and Migrants Smuggling (2021-2025) and underlined the importance that each stakeholder play in the response of human trafficking and migrant smuggling in Pakistan.

The main objectives of the workshops were:

- To understand trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants, their differences and interlinkages
- To grasp the main elements of the Pakistani law related to trafficking and migrant smuggling offenses
- To recognize the elements of TIP and SOM in typical scenarios to the Pakistani experience
- To familiarize with a victim-centered approach
- To understand victims’ protection and assistance and how to refer the victim or vulnerable smuggled migrants to relevant services
- To comprehend the importance of gender in the context of policy work.

This workshop provided the oppor-

tunity to examine real-case scenarios that went through FIA’s SOPs on victim assistance and protection, modalities of identification, screening and referral and existing practices.

The Global Action against Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants – Asia and the Middle East (GLO.ACT-Asia and the Middle East) is a four-year (2018-2022), €12 million joint initiative by the European Union (EU) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) being implemented in partnership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in up to five countries: Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (Afghanistan), Islamic Republic of Iran (I.R. of Iran), Republic of Iraq (Iraq), Islamic Republic of Pakistan (Pakistan).

The project builds on a global community of practice set in motion in GLO.ACT 2015-2019 and assists governmental authorities and civil society organizations in targeted, innovative, and demand-driven interventions: sustaining effective strategy and policy development, legislative review and harmonization, capability development, and regional and trans-regional co-operation. The project also provides direct assistance to victims of human trafficking and vulnerable migrants through the strengthening of identification, referral, and protection mechanisms.

Dope look: Faisalabad university makes sustainable jeans using bhang

Scientists at the University of Agriculture Faisalabad have managed to extract hemp thread from indigenous cannabis and are now working on making sustainable jeans from the hemp fabric.

Hemp fabric is a type of textile manufactured using fibres from the stalks of the cannabis sativa plant.

After extraction the scientists processed it and mixed it with cotton to make sustainable fabric.

“We have signed an MoU with a US-based company and will soon begin mass production,” said Dr Asad Farooq, the chairperson of the Department of Fibre and Textile

Technology at the University of Agriculture.

He was speaking on show’s Naya Din about the industrial breakthrough and plans to expand manufacturing to produce sustainable denim for jeans.

There is a growing demand in the US and Europe to replace cotton with sustainable fibre, Dr Farooq explained.

Our textile industry received demands and we were contacted by US apparel, a group in Lahore that makes denim, he added.

Work began after the government



granted them approval.

Hemp fabric is harsh and requires a lot of chemical processing to soften it, a scientist at the university told reporter Yousuf Cheema.

The fibres are first separated from the plant by a process called retting. Impurities are removed and they are chemically treated and spun into

yarn. Once the fabric becomes soft it can blend with cotton easily.

We used a ratio of 20:80 of hemp and cotton, respectively, said Dr Farooq.

Hemp is three times more expensive than cotton because of all the processing. As mass production and supply speeds up, the price is likely to decrease, he said. Saama

Pakistani foodpreneurs say Dubai's Gulfood 2021 exhibition good for business

Pakistani food entrepreneurs who recently flew to the United Arab Emirates to partake in the Gulfood 2021 exhibition on Thursday described Dubai as a place to get new ideas and find new opportunities.

Sixty Pakistani companies participated in this year's food festival that started on February 21 and ended on Thursday, February 25. It was the 26th edition of the annual exhibition held at the Dubai World Trade Center.

Speaking to Arab News, Ammar Mohsin, a partner at the Lahore-based Rina's Kitchenette, said it was important to study innovations in the restaurant business, especially in the post-Covid world.

"I see Dubai as a place where we get ideas and look for opportunities in terms of restaurant-specific machinery that can be used in Pakistan," he said, adding that import restrictions and heavy taxes imposed by his country made things difficult for businesses like his.

"Restaurants in Pakistan have not



been given the status of an industry and things sometimes get hard for us due to heavy taxes and import restrictions on ingredients," he said.

Mohsin also said that he had made several contacts at the exhibition, though he suspected they would not benefit him in the long run.

"We have historically benefited from global vendors for ingredients. If import restrictions are not lifted, however, our work here may not yield us dividends in the long run," he added.

Pakistan's Consul General in Dubai

Ahmed Amjad Ali told an audience while inaugurating the Pakistan pavilion earlier this week that the food sector contributed about 20 percent of his country's UAE export.

In a Press statement issued on February 21, he said: "This event will further enhance bilateral trade between two countries and provide a platform to connect with buyers from other countries."

Ali said that after about a year of the COVID-19 pandemic, the opening of Gulfood 2021 was good news for international trade in general and the food industry in particular.

"Keeping in view the COVID-19 situation, [Pakistan's] participation [of 60 companies] is encouraging," he continued, adding that Pakistani food companies were already doing good business with the UAE.

Zain Qureshi, the chief financial officer of a Lahore-based gourmet bakery, Cocotalia, told Arab News the exhibition gave him the opportunity to connect with various retailers needed for his business.

"This is my first visit to the exhibition since our restaurant is just a year old, but it will give a huge boost to our business," he said.

Qureshi noted that the restaurant business had grown in Pakistan, "unlike the rest of the world," during the pandemic.

"We received massive orders and had to put some on hold for weeks," he said. "This is also the reason why I am here, to invest in more ovens for the restaurant."

Arab news

PIA to increase flights to Gilgit-Baltistan

Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) CEO Air Marshal (retd) Arshad Malik on Sunday agreed to enhance the flight operation and increase the facilities for business community and people of Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) region for promoting tourism and other sectors.

"Currently the PIA has ongoing operation of 2 flights, which would be increased to 3 flights by March 28 to enhance the connectivity between G-B," Malik said in a meeting with a delegation of Federation Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) led by its Chairman Qurban Ali.

According to a press release issued by FPCCI here, the PIA CEO said that promotion of business culture and values, economy, investment, trade, tourism, employment generation, social welfare and people's connectivity were the common areas of both sides for prosperous and strong Pakistan.

He said: "We want to enhance the

cooperation with the business community and the community should come forward and play their due role in helping the PIA for making it more efficient and strong."

In meeting with the FPCCI delegation, he also vowed to start the project of a new runway at the Gilgit Airport and construction of new offices and other facilities in G-B Airport to provide facilities to the passengers and tourists coming from all over the country.

The CEO agreed to further negotiate on discount in passenger fare and other services expenditure by PIA for passengers and business community of G-B.

While in negotiation on flight operation for 'devotees' to Iraq, he said that the operation was banned due to Covid-19 pandemic situation and after the permission by Iraqi authorities, the PIA to start flight operation for Iraq. He said that after starting the operation, the national flag carrier would fully



facilitate the 'devotees' and provide them all facilities accordingly.

He further said the financial restructuring of PIA, a new fleet of aircraft, staff training and new flight destinations were being prioritised to attract the most potential passengers from all over the world.

Malik said the PIA was going through the huge challenges in financial and technological fronts and with the support of the business community and exporters "PIA would revive its past glory and come out from all these facing challenges."

During the pandemic situation, he

said the PIA was facing big challenges and it was the responsibility of the FPCCI and all over the business community of Pakistan to come forward and play their due role in rescuing the national airline from the current situation.

He also appreciated the role of FPCCI and the business community of G-B for development of Pakistan. "The PIA will also be provided other incentives, including special discounts and a corporate package for the business community of GB region as we already provided these facilities to the business community of Afghanistan," he added. APP

Courtesy; Express Tribune

Pakistan optimistic about exiting FATF grey list

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) will meet on Monday to discuss and decide whether or not to keep Pakistan on the grey list, Dawn has learned from knowledgeable sources.

The virtual FATF plenary will be held in Paris from February 22 to 25 to consider cases of various countries on the grey list, including Pakistan, and decision will be made at the conclusion of the meetings.

In the last plenary held in October 2020, FATF had announced that Pakistan would continue to remain on its grey list till February 2021 for six out of 27 unmet action plan targets on anti-money laundering (AML) and combating the financing of terrorism (CFT).

An official source close to these developments told Dawn that Pakistan had already complied with the six recommendations and also submitted details to the FATF secretariat. The members would now evaluate Pakistan's responses during the meeting, the source said, adding that Pakistan had made significant progress in legislation as well as its implementation.

Pakistan had submitted a detailed response in October 2020 to FATF. Even then, it demanded more from Islamabad. It is too early to say if this time again FATF may ask for more actions or the existing ones will be enough to remove Pakistan from the grey list. However, the decision would be taken after a consensus among the members, the source said.

Younus Khan, a senior Pakistani journalist based in Paris, told Dawn on WhatsApp that some European countries, especially the host France, had recommended to FATF to continue to keep Pakistan on the grey list and had taken the position that not all points had been fully implemented by Islamabad. Other European countries are also supporting France.

Mr Khan, who regularly follows FATF meetings, said France was not happy with the recent response of Islamabad on the cartoon issue. Pakistan has not even posted a reg-



ular ambassador in Paris, he said, adding that diplomatic and economic relations between the two countries were not up to the mark.

The United States has also expressed concern over the acquittal of one of the accused in Daniel Pearl murder case. It is feared that the US may also lobby for continuation of Islamabad on the grey list at least until June this year.

An official, who is not willing to be quoted, told Dawn that Pakistan had submitted a compliance report to FATF. "We can't say what will be their response to it; let's wait for the day."

The official said Pakistan had already done major legislation regarding punishment of terror financing, which was around one year in the old legislation. "We have extended this punishment to five years," the official said, adding that recently courts had also sentenced people under the new law.

The laws were amended last year to make punishment proportionate to the crime as recommended by FATF.

According to the official, FATF has appreciated the steps taken by Pakistan which has largely complied with the demands of the global watchdog. FATF commended the steps taken by Pakistan and said that progress had been made in terms of money laundering and terror financing, but Islamabad would have to ensure full implementation at all points.

Pakistan was focusing on the implementation of all recently enacted laws to come out of the grey list of FATF. In the last plenary, two

action plans given to Pakistan by the watchdog were the "most challenging and comprehensive" ever given to any country.

In 2020, the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf government had got three laws the Anti-Money Laundering (second amendment) Bill-2020, Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) (third amendment) Bill-2020 and Islamabad Capital Territory Waqf Properties Bill-2020 passed in a joint sitting of parliament to fulfil the legal requirements of FATF.

In October 2020, Minister for Industries and Production Hammad Azhar, who is the government's point man on FATF, announced that Pakistan had made progress across all action plan items and had now largely addressed 21 of the 27 action items.

When the minister was approached for comments on the implementation status of the remaining six recommendations, he said he would make no comment until the plenary was over and FATF published its statements. "There is a strict confidentiality rule," he told Dawn.

Background discussions with the relevant officials suggest that Pakistan is confident that it will come out of the grey list since it has taken action against various religious extremist parties and personalities and arrested and punished them. The accounts of various organisations have also been closed and people sentenced. All these actions were taken in the light of FATF's recommendations.

FATF had placed Pakistan on the grey list in June 2018.

Courtesy; Dawn

India should be held accountable for Kashmir Atrocities: PM



Prime Minister Imran Khan and President Arif Alvi have said that the international community should hold India accountable for its crimes against humanity in the Indian-administered Kashmir.

Pakistan observes Kashmir Day every year on February 5 to show its support for the people in Indian-Administered Kashmir.

President Alvi said that the Kashmir issue should be resolved in light of the resolutions of the UN Security Council and the wishes of the Kashmiri people.

Denying Kashmiris the right to self-determination akin to negating their right to dignity, he remarked. He said the demographic apartheid in the occupied territory by the Indian forces is a further violation of international law wherein the Kashmiris' majority is being turned into a minority in its own land.

Pakistan will remain unshakable in its solidarity with the Kashmiri people, said Prime Minister Imran Khan.

He reaffirmed Pakistan's resolute support for the Kashmiri brothers and sisters, who continue to be subjected to an inhuman military siege and communications blockade since August 5, 2019.

Rallies, public meetings, and seminars are being held across the country, including Azad Kashmir, to draw attention towards the grave human rights violations and brutalities against innocent Kashmiris by the Indian security forces.

Courtesy; Samaa

IMF Staff and Pakistan Reach Staff-Level Agreement on the Pending Reviews Under the Extended Fund Facility

IMF staff and the Pakistani authorities have reached an agreement on a package of measures to complete second to fifth reviews of the authorities' reform program supported by the IMF Extended Fund Facility (EFF). The package strikes an appropriate balance between supporting the economy, ensuring debt sustainability, and advancing structural reform. Pending approval of the Executive Board, the reviews' completion would release around US\$500 million.

The COVID-19 shock temporarily disrupted Pakistan's progress under the EFF-supported program. However, the authorities' policies and allowing higher than expected COVID-related social spending, have been critical in supporting the economy and saving lives and households.

The Pakistani authorities remain committed to ambitious policy actions and structural reforms to strengthen economic resilience, advance sustainable growth, and achieve the EFF's medium-term objectives.

An International Monetary Fund (IMF) team led by Ernesto Ramirez Rigo, concluded virtual discussions with the Pakistani authorities and reached a staff-level agreement on the second to fifth reviews of the authorities' reform program supported by the IMF 39-month Extended Fund Facility (EFF) arrangement for the amount of SDR 4,268 million (about US\$6 billion (press release 19/264). This agreement is subject to the approval of the IMF's Executive Board. The reviews' completion would release around US\$500 million. At the end of the discussions, Mr. Ramirez Rigo issued the following statement:

"The policies and reforms imple-



mented by the Pakistani authorities prior to the COVID-19 shock had started to reduce economic imbalances and set the conditions for improving economic performance. Most of the targets under the EFF-supported program were on track to be met. However, the pandemic disrupted these improvements and required a shift in authorities' priorities towards saving lives and supporting households and businesses. To a large extent, the authorities' response was enabled by the fiscal and monetary policy gains attained in the first nine months of FY2020. Aside from health containment measures, this included a temporary fiscal stimulus, a large expansion of the social safety net, monetary policy support and targeted financial initiatives. These were supported by sizeable emergency financing from the international community, including from the Fund's Rapid Financing Instrument (RFI).

"As result of the authorities' actions, the COVID-19 first wave started to abate over the 2020 summer and the impact on the economy was significantly reduced. The external current account improved, due to stronger-than-expected remittances, import compression, and a mild export recovery. High-frequency economic data also started to point to a recovery. Considering these

improvements, the economy is projected to expand by 1.5 percent in FY2021 from the 0.4 percent in FY2020. Still, with the COVID-19 second wave still unfolding around the world, the outlook is subject to a high level of uncertainty and downside risks.

"The Covid-19 shock has required a careful recalibration of the macroeconomic policy mix, the reforms calendar, and the EFF review schedule. Against this background, the authorities have formulated a package of measures that strikes an appropriate balance between supporting the economy, ensuring debt sustainability, and advancing structural reforms. The fiscal strategy remains anchored by the sustainable primary deficit of FY2021 budget and allows for higher-than-expected COVID-related and social spending to minimize the short-term impact on growth and the most vulnerable. The targets are supported by careful spending management and revenue measures, including reforms of corporate taxation to make it fairer and more transparent. The power sector's strategy aims at financial viability, through management improvements, cost reductions, and adjustments in tariffs and subsidies calibrated to attenuate social and sectoral impacts.

"The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP)'s monetary and exchange rate policies have served Pakistan well and were critical in helping to navigate the COVID-19 shock. The strengthened international reserves' position since the start of the program with gross reserves almost doubling to USD 13 billion until January 2021 and net international reserves (NIR) increasing by over USD 9 billion until December 2020 and the shock absorption displayed by the market-based exchange rate, allowed the SBP's to pre-emptively proceed to a large easing of monetary policy, and a sizeable expansion of refinancing facilities. The banking system remains healthy, but it will be important for the SBP to continue to remain vigilant and prevent possible financial stability stress as the temporary support is phased out. International reserves are set to improve further reflecting current account developments, the EFF resumption, and international partners' support.

"The authorities are moving steadfastly on a number of other important reforms, including on strengthening regulatory agencies' legal frameworks (NEPRA and OGRA Acts), consolidating SBP's autonomy (SBP Act), and improving state owned enterprises (SOE) management (SOE Law). In addition, they have conducted a triage of SOE, and are moving forward with the audits of contracts awarded for COVID-19 related spending. They continue to enhance the effectiveness of their anti-monetary laundering/counter financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) framework and progress in completing their action plan with the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

"The IMF team would like to thank the Pakistani authorities for the constructive and candid discussions."

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