

Positive Post



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March in History

March 12, 1952: *Princely states of Kalat, Makran, Las Bela and Kharan agree, with the concurrence of the Central Government, to integrate their territories into Balochistan.*

March 15, 1955: *The biggest post-independence irrigation project, Kotri Barrage is inaugurated.*

March 23, 1956: *Constitution is promulgated on Pakistan Day. Major General Iskander Mirza sworn in as first President of Pakistan.*

March 23, 1956: *Constituent assembly adopts name of Islamic Republic of Pakistan and first constitution.*

March 8, 1957: *President Iskandar Mirza lays the foundation-stone of the State Bank of Pakistan building in Karachi.*

March 23, 1960: *Foundation of Minar-i-Pakistan is laid.*

March 21, 1965: *Pakistan and China sign a border agreement in Peking (Beijing).*

March 14, 1972: *New education policy enforced. Free education in all private and public schools.*

March 1, 1981: *National population census starts throughout the country.*

March 29, 1983: *Foundation-stone of Satellite Earth Station is laid near Rawalpindi.*

March 8, 1998: *Population census begins in the country.*

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.

Pakistan Day military parade held in Islamabad

An impressive grand military parade was held in the capital Islamabad on Thursday as part of the Pakistan Day celebrations.

The annual military parade, usually the main event on March 23, was rescheduled for March 25 this year due to rain and inclement weather in Islamabad.

Pakistani President Arif Alvi, besides senior government and military officials, attended the event. But Prime Minister Imran Khan could not participate as he is currently in quarantine after testing positive for COVID-19 last week.



The passing of the landmark resolution subsequently led to the

When Soluturk pilot Serdar Dogan's jet landed near the parade ground, the Turkish military band surprised the crowd by playing a Pakistani national song, "Dil Dil Pakistan-Jan Jan Pakistan."

The band also won the hearts of millions of Pakistanis watching TV when it played "Jeeway Jeeway" (Long Live) Pakistan tune during the parade. Emotional crowds gave a standing ovation to the Turkish band wearing the traditional Ottoman-style attire.

Turkish F-16 demo and stunt team Soluturk was founded in 2011 in

honor of the Turkish Air Forces' centennial anniversary.

At the 2011 Royal International Air Tattoo in Britain, Soluturk was awarded the King Hussein's Sword for the best overall flying demonstration among 29 air demonstrations and was also selected the best solo display team in the 2013 Air Show Season in England.

In his speech, the president said the country is fully capable of defending its territorial integrity and sovereignty.

"Pakistan is a strong nuclear power, achieved self-reliance in the defense sector, and now making progress in the socio-economic sectors," Alvi said.

Expressing his deep concern over the situation in the Indian-administered Kashmir, Alvi said: "Kashmir became a human tragedy as Indian forces are committing human rights violations and killing innocent people in the occupied valley."

"The whole Pakistan nation is with the Kashmiri people and will continue to stand by them," he



The parade was also attended by military dignitaries from the UK, Sri Lanka, and Bahrain.

The ceremony, which was broadcast live on the state-run Pakistan Television, started with a performance by Pakistan Air Force fighter jets led by Pakistan Air Chief Zaheer Ahmad Babar Sidhu.

The skies of Islamabad were filled with rainbow colors coming from roaring jets dazzling.

This year, a very limited number of people were allowed to attend the event due to the pandemic.

The event commemorates the adoption of an independence resolution commonly known as Pakistan Resolution in the northeastern Lahore city in 1940, which demanded for the first time an independent state comprising Muslim majority states in then-United India under the British colonial rule.

creation of Pakistan on Aug. 14, 1947, marking the end of almost 90 years of British colonial rule.

The special appearance of Soluturk, the famed Turkish Air Force aerobatic team, alongside Pakistani Air Force aircraft made the mega-event even more special.

A Soluturk pilot did a demo flight of spectacular maneuvers to demonstrate Turkey and Pakistan's deep fellowship.



vowed.

Speaking on growing Islamophobia in the western world, the president said his country has good relations with Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and other Gulf states and called on the Muslim world to join hands, strengthening the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and raise voice against the growing Islamophobia.

Courtesy: <https://www.aa.com.tr>

PM Imran's relief measures to cost Rs237bn in four months

COUPLED with a cut in the development budget and savings in other expenditures, it will cost the government around Rs237 billion during the four months through June to absorb the impact of relief measures announced by the Prime Minister.

The key components of the relief measures announced by the prime minister included a Rs10 per litre reduction in petrol and diesel prices, Rs5 per unit cut in electricity rates, besides internships and scholarships and tax concessions for industries.

Officials involved in finalising the policy measures for the prime minister's speech told that the financing cost of the relief package would be met through four avenues. These include a reduction in development expenditure, diversion of dividends of government-owned corporate entities, unspent funds out of \$1.4bn emergency support extended by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and a cushion provided in the Rs550bn mini-budget announced by the government in December.

On the other hand, these measures would not impact the fiscal deficit limit of 6.9 per cent estimated under the IMF programme in the wake of an increase in the GDP size following a recent rebasing exercise.

A spokesperson for the finance minister, Muzzammil Aslam, said he was unsure how the IMF would respond to the relief measures, but it should have no objection because "we are not going to increase fiscal deficit" and make adjustments in expenditure while staying within the limits.

He said the total impact of the package was estimated at about Rs250bn that would be net off within the budget.

Another official said the finance minister had already announced about a Rs33bn cushion in the budget in his December's mini-budget speech. There were some higher than estimated revenue collections on account of withdrawal of GST exemptions.



He said the impact of Rs10 per litre reduction in petrol and diesel prices would mean a monthly impact of about Rs15bn based on average sales of about 1.5bn litres. This works out at Rs60bn in four months.

In case of increase in international prices, the impact would go up and may resultantly jack up the overall financial impact to Rs250bn.

An increase of \$1 per barrel in global oil prices roughly works out at Rs1.20 per litre in domestic price. He said there were hopes that international oil prices would come down in the near future if progress is made on Iran's nuclear talks and Russia-Ukraine talks.

Likewise, the Rs5 per unit cut in electricity rates would be covered through funded subsidy worth about Rs17.5bn per month and would be extended to consumers falling in the second to fifth categories (or those generally consuming 200 to 500 units per month).

The lower slabs are already called 'protected' through an existing subsidy. This translates into Rs70bn for four months. The cumulative impact of petroleum products and electricity relief would thus come to about Rs130bn.

Another Rs93bn financial impact is assumed against a revenue loss

on account of non-recovery of petroleum levy and lower GST on petroleum products. These three heads work out at about Rs223-225bn.

The major cushion was already available within the Ehsaas Ration Programme envisaged at Rs120bn, but since its rollout was still in the testing phase, a major portion would move into the next fiscal year.

Officials said the government had earlier considered providing a direct subsidy on petrol to users of rickshaws and motorbikes but the idea was opposed by the finance ministry because of greater chances of pilferage.

Energy Minister Hammad Azhar said the fuel cost adjustments incurring on electricity bills due to higher imported fuel costs would be absorbed by the government for residential and commercial consumers, whereas petrol and diesel price cuts would be adjusted through a reduction in petroleum development levy in the short term and then by a funded subsidy.

A senior energy ministry official said the petroleum levy had been brought down to zero on all products except petrol where it now stands at Rs1.81 per litre.

Instead, the government would now provide price differential claims (PDCs) to oil companies at the rate

of Rs2.28 per litre on high speed diesel (HSD).

As of now, per-litre petroleum levy was Rs17.92 on petrol and Rs13.30 on HSD. Therefore, oil marketing companies will take a hit of Rs2.2bn per month on HSD that would be refunded to them by the government at a later stage. A well-thought out process would be developed by the petroleum division and the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra) for PDC.

Meanwhile, the finance ministry notified the price cut and fixed the ex-depot sale price of petrol at Rs149.86 per litre instead of Rs159.86.

The per-litre ex-depot price of HSD has been reduced to Rs144.15 from Rs154.15, that of kerosene by Re1 to Rs125.56, and that of light diesel oil by Rs5.66 to Rs118.31.

The finance ministry said an "unprecedented increase" in international prices above \$100 per barrel was risky for the domestic fuel prices and inflation. "The situation leaves very few options for the government" as the government had left Rs70bn per month in lost revenue on petroleum products while Ogra had recommended Rs10 per litre increase in the petroleum products' prices for next fortnight.

Courtesy: Dawn

Pakistan 'won't take sides' in UN debate on Ukraine

Pakistan has decided not to participate in the emergency session of the UN General Assembly that began on Monday to discuss the Ukrainian crisis.

"Pakistan has decided not to take sides on this issue," a diplomatic source told Dawn. "Islamabad supports a peaceful and negotiated settlement."

Prime Minister Imran Khan, who visited Moscow on the day the invasion began, defended his decision on Monday, saying that he was there to discuss bilateral issues only.

The General Assembly is expected to wind up its debate on Tuesday and by then representatives of more than 100 countries would have addressed the emergency session. The meeting will decide whether to support a US-sponsored resolution that demands Russia's immediate withdrawal from Ukraine.

Ukraine's ambassador to the UN Sergiy Kyslytsya warned the global body that "if Ukraine does not survive, the UN will not survive."

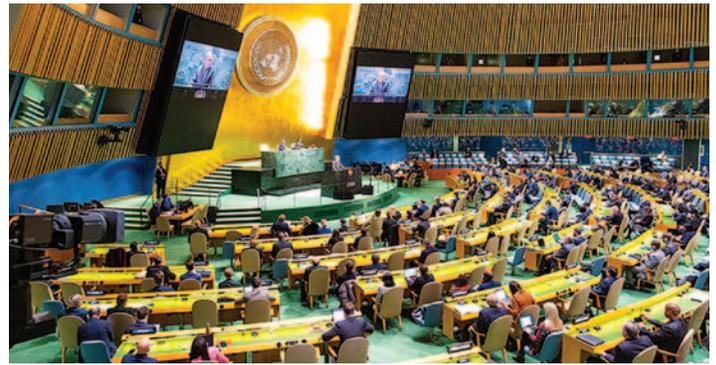
Polish ambassador Krzysztof Szczerski told the meeting that Pakistani civilians and students were among those thousands of people who were seeking refuge in Poland and the Polish government was sheltering them.

The General Assembly has only held 10 emergency sessions since 1950, in line with a provision widely known as the 'Uniting for Peace' resolution.

The resolution gives the assembly the power to take up important matters when the Security Council is unable to act due to differences among its five permanent members. A General Assembly debate is considered the world body's second-best option because its resolutions are non-binding, unlike those of the Security Council.

The US, which initiated the debate, first went to the Security Council on Feb. 25, seeking a binding resolution, but Russia vetoed the effort.

As the debate began, UN Secretary-General António Guterres informed the assembly that while



Russian strikes were largely targeting Ukrainian military facilities, they had "credible accounts" of non-military targets sustaining heavy damage.

"Enough is enough," he said. "This escalating violence ... is totally unacceptable. Soldiers need to move back to their barracks. Leaders need to move to peace."

He also emphasized the need to respect "the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine, within its internationally recognized borders."

Assembly President Abdulla Shahid informed the meeting: "As we convene here in the General Assembly, negotiators from both sides are holding talks in Belarus" to

end the crisis that began last week. Although China and India had abstained from the Feb. 25 vote in the Security Council, they participated in Monday's debate.

China's Permanent Representative Zhang Jun said China supports the EU, Nato and Russia resuming dialogue including the "legitimate" security concerns of all, including Moscow's.

Russia defended its decision to invade Ukraine as member state after member state called for ending the war. Russian ambassador Vassily Nebenzia rejected the suggestion that Moscow launched the military operation to protect residents of breakaway regions in eastern Ukraine.

Courtesy: Dawn

Pakistan seeks early end to Russia-Ukraine conflict

Prime Minister Imran Khan underscored Pakistan's potential role for mediation in the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

In a telephone conversation with President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky, Mr Khan said: "Non partisan countries like Pakistan are in a position to play a helpful role in reinforcing efforts for cessation of hostilities and a diplomatic solution."

This was the first time that the two leaders spoke to each other since Russia started the war against Ukraine.

Mr Khan was visiting Moscow when Russian forces invaded Ukraine on February 24.

Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi had, in a conversation with his Ukrainian counterpart Dmytro Kuleba on Feb 28, explained Pak-

istan's perspective to him and emphasised the need for resolution of the conflict through peace and dialogue.

Though Pakistan opted for neutrality on the conflict and abstained from the vote in the UNGA asking Russia to end its military operations in Ukraine, Islamabad has strong defence ties with Kyiv and the two were undertaking several projects on the basis of transfer of technology.

In 2020, Ukraine won the tender for repair of IL-78 air-refueller in PAF fleet. Meanwhile, Ukrainian-built T-80UD tanks are crucial part of Pakistan's armoured corps.

Ukraine was, moreover, a major market for import of wheat for Pakistan. In 2020-21, Pakistan imported nearly 1.2 million tonnes of wheat from Ukraine. It is feared that prolonged conflict between Russia and Ukraine could threaten Pak-



istan's food security.

Talking to Mr Zelensky, the PM regretted the continued military conflict and reiterated Pakistan's principled position in support of immediate cessation of hostilities and resolution of the conflict through dialogue and diplomacy.

He said that he had been persistently highlighting the adverse economic impact of the conflict on developing countries as manifested in rising prices of oil and other commodities.

The PM said that foreign ministers of Islamic countries had expressed

deep concern at the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation triggered by the conflict in Ukraine, and called for an immediate cessation of hostilities.

While speaking at the OIC meeting, Mr Khan had asked China and countries in the Muslim bloc to mediate an end to the Russia-Ukraine war.

Mr Zelensky, meanwhile, said that he had told Mr Khan about his country's struggle against Russian aggression. "The people of Ukraine seek peace. This is our unconditional priority," he said.

Courtesy: Dawn

PM counters rivals with relief

In a much-hyped, 42-minute address to the nation, Prime Minister Imran Khan stunned his critics when he announced a 'relief package' for the inflation-hit citizens of Pakistan, reducing the prices of petrol and diesel by Rs10 per litre and electricity by Rs5 per unit with a pledge that they would not be increased until the next federal budget.

PM Khan also announced a major tax incentive for the information technology and industrial sectors, highlighted some of the major achievements of his government, provided a justification for the recently-promulgated ordinance that amended the cybercrime law and disclosed that federal minister Murad Saeed could file a defamation case in the UK.

The prime minister announced the 'relief package' at a time when Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari is leading a long march to the federal capital in a bid to topple the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf-led government. However, PM Khan did not talk about the long march in his televised address.

Mr Khan criticised the previous governments of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) for continuing with the 'wrong foreign policy' of siding with the US in its war on terror. He appealed to the people not to elect those politicians who stashed their wealth and assets in offshore banks, as they were the ones who would compromise on foreign policy.

Giving a comparison between the state of the economy during his government and during the PPP and the PML-N rule, the PM painted a rosy picture and claimed that he had put the economy on the right track.

"I received a summary from Ogra to increase petrol price by Rs10 per litre. Instead of increasing it, I am reducing petrol price by Rs10," the PM announced.

He added: "We are reducing



electricity tariff by Rs5 per unit after which monthly bills of electricity will slash down by 20 to 50 per cent."

"We are not enhancing the price of petrol and electricity till next federal budget," he continued, while explaining that the government was bearing the subsidy of billion of rupees on both utilities despite difficult economic conditions.

For the unemployed graduates, the PM said, Rs30,000 per month internship programme was being launched. He said the money would be given through a transparent and merit-based system. He also announced 2.6 million educational scholarships for which Rs38 billion would be allocated. He said Rs460 billion would be earmarked for the provision of interest-free loans for youth for start-ups, farmers for agriculture and low-income groups to construct their own houses.

Besides, he said, there was Ehsaas programme under which a cash stipend between Rs12,000 and Rs14,000 was being provided to eight million deserving families.

The PM also announced incentives for the promotion of the information technology sector, including 100 per cent tax exemption for companies and freelancers, 100 per cent waiver on repatriation of capital and foreign exchange, and elimination of capital gains tax for startups. He said overseas Pakistanis would enjoy tax-holiday for five years for investments in

the country.

Amid strong opposition to the recently amended Pakistan and Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) Ordinance-2022 by lawyers, journalist communities and human rights organisation, PM Khan said the law had been enacted six years ago while the incumbent PTI government had only amended it. "The leader who does not commit corruption and violate laws will never be afraid of free media," Mr Khan reasoned.

The amendment was made to tackle the filth of child pornography and women harassment on social media, he said. "More than 94,000 cases related to women harassment, fake news and pictures were pending with the FIA and of those, only 38 cases have been disposed of so far," he added.

A sitting prime minister and his family were not spared by fake news, he said, adding that despite being the PM he could not get justice during the past three years in a defamation case. "Recently, a woman was fined by a UK court over defamation," he said, adding that Communications Minister Murad Saeed was also considering instituting a case there.

Without getting the official version, the media alleged that Shaukat Khanum Memorial Hospital's funding landed into PTI account, he recalled. "The hospital is also going to file a case against Jang Group in the UK and the US, where it was registered as charity. It

happens nowhere in the world.

"Here are the mafias blackmailing in name of the freedom of press. They have different agendas. They are blackmailing and involved in mudslinging against government," the prime minister said.

Calling the Peca law essential for the country, Mr Khan said it had nothing to do with the freedom of press. "Instead, good journalists should be happy over the curb of fake news, as it would enhance their credibility," he said.

Referring to fake news by three leading newspapers alleging the selection of the AJK prime minister through some sort of necromancy, he said had it happened in the West, they would have to sell out their companies to pay for the libel. Foreign policy

The prime minister said contrary to his desire for a Pakistan with an independent foreign policy, the country joined the US-led war on terror and suffered 80,000 casualties, displacement of 3.5 million and \$150 billion economic loss while no Pakistani had anything to do with the 9/11.

In spite of getting its support, the US carried out around 400 drone attacks in Pakistan that he termed "most shameful". He said only 10 drone attacks were made in Pervez Musharraf's tenure while 400 drone attacks were carried out during the rule of the so-called democratic leaders who failed to speak against the killings of the innocent people. "Leaders having money abroad and in offshore accounts can never take decisions in nation's interest. Do not vote them as they can never make independent decisions," he said.

Highlighting his recent visits to China and Russia, the prime minister said Pakistan would import around two million tonnes of wheat and gas from Russia, whereas the outcome of the government's agreements with China regarding the second phase of CPEC would come to the fore soon.'

Courtesy: Dawn

Pakistan 'remains neutral' as UNGA censures Russia

The UN General Assembly voted to censure Russia over its invasion of Ukraine, demanded that Moscow stop fighting and urged it to immediately withdraw its military forces.

However, in a carefully-worded statement on the Ukrainian crisis, delivered in the UN General Assembly (UNGA) on Wednesday, Pakistan emphasised the need to protect territorial integrity of a state without threatening the national interests of another.

Although an overwhelming majority, 141, voted for the resolution, it remains non-binding as a resolution has to be approved by the UN Security Council to be binding.

Munir Akram says Islamabad 'most concerned' over safety of citizens, students still in Ukraine

On the first two days of this emergency session on Ukraine, Pakistan watched carefully as state after state blamed Russia for invading Ukraine and demanded immediate withdrawal of all Russian troops from the occupied territory.

"Pakistan is committed to the fundamental principles of the UN Charter: self-determination of peoples, non-use or threat of use of force, sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, and pacific settlement of disputes," Pakistan's UN Ambassador Munir Akram told the emergency session.

Besides Russia, four other countries also voted against the resolution

while 35 states, including Pakistan, abstained.

Three other South Asian nations, India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, abstained, although Nepal voted for the US-backed resolution.

China, a major world power and one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, also abstained.

This would allay Pakistan's fear of being isolated on an issue that has forced Islamabad not to vote with the US as it seeks to improve its economic ties with Russia.

The pressure on Pakistan, and other UN members who were avoiding taking sides on this delicate issue, increased on Tuesday when more than 100 diplomats from 40 nations walked out during Russia's foreign minister speech at the Human Rights Council.

Pakistan Foreign Office received a highly unusual letter from top diplomats of 22 countries, urging Islamabad to support a UNGA resolution condemning Russia's aggression and demanding its immediate withdrawal.

The signatories included EU member states and major non-European powers, such as Australia, Canada and Japan.

Earlier on Thursday, Prime Minister Imran Khan met with his top aides in Islamabad to discuss the evolving situation in Ukraine and Pakistan's



position on the conflict.

The meeting was attended by Planning Minister Asad Umar, Energy Minister Hammad Azhar, Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry, and the three services chiefs and Foreign Secretary Sohail Mahmood briefed the participants on the Ukraine conflict.

The information minister told Dawn after the meeting that the sitting had approved the text of the speech to be delivered by Pakistan's permanent representative.

He said it was decided that Pakistan would reiterate its stance opposing aggression, and emphasizing diplomacy for resolution of conflicts. Pakistan, he said, it was decided would abstain during the voting on the resolution for stopping Russia aggression.

The statement pointed out that in his latest comments on the issue, Prime Minister Imran Khan had regretted the situation between Russia and Ukraine, hoping that diplomacy could avert military conflict.

"We have since repeatedly stressed the need for de-escalation, renewed negotiations, sustained dialogue, and

continuous diplomacy," Ambassador Akram said.

"All efforts must be made to avoid further escalation of violence and loss of life as well as military, political and economic tensions, which can pose an unprecedented threat to international peace and security and global economic stability.

"A diplomatic solution in accordance with relevant multilateral agreements, international law, and provisions of the UN Charter is indispensable."

Ambassador Akram pointed out that "Pakistan also supports all efforts to provide humanitarian relief to civilians in the affected areas".

The Pakistan government, he said, was most concerned about the safety and welfare of Pakistani citizens and students in Ukraine, noting that most of them had been evacuated. "Those remaining will be evacuated soonest," said Mr Akram, adding that Pakistan appreciated the cooperation of the Ukrainian authorities as well as the Polish, Romanian and Hungarian governments in this context.

Courtesy: Dawn

TikTok users can now record and post longer video

Users can now create 10-minute-long clips

TikTok users can now record and post longer video

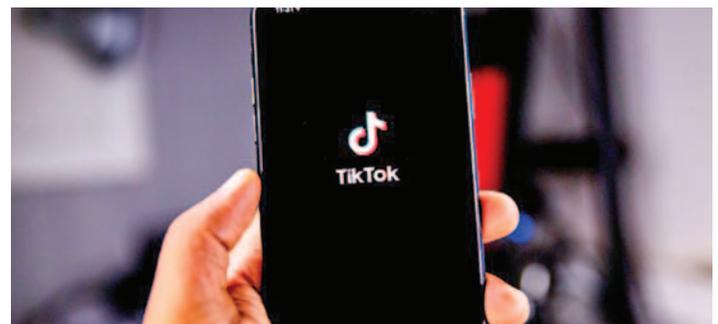
TikTok has released an update Monday allowing users to record and posts longer videos using the app.

TikTok previously allowed three-minute-long videos, but the duration has now been extended to ten

minutes.

The app, which owes its popularity to short clips, initially started with 15-second videos. But the cap was later extended to 60 seconds. In July 2021, the app further extended the maximum limit to 60 seconds.

Experts view the latest change as part of TikTok's strategy to compete with other platforms who are expanding their short-video features. The likes of YouTube shorts,



Facebook Reels and Snapchat are introducing new features to entice users to create shorter content.

YouTube's Shorts, which was launched in March 2021, recently

surpassed 5 trillion views.

Facebook has recently extended Instagram's Reels feature to Facebook.

Courtesy: Saama

Pakistan urges Russia to find diplomatic solution to war

Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi in a telephone conversation with his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov on Saturday emphasised the need for diplomatic solution to the war in Ukraine, calling for de-escalation and adherence to the fundamental principles of UN Charter.

He also underscored “the need for a diplomatic solution in accordance with the relevant multilateral agreements, international law, and provisions of the UN Charter,” said the Foreign Office in a statement.

Mr Qureshi’s call was part of his latest outreach over the situation in Ukraine after he had spoken to EU Foreign Policy Chief Josep Borell, and foreign ministers of Hungary (Péter Szijjártó), Romania (Bogdan Aurescu), Poland (Zbigniew Rau), and Ukraine (Dmytro Kuleba).

In the recent United Nations General Assembly’s emergency session, Pakistan had abstained during the voting on the resolution calling on Russia to immediately end its military operations in Ukraine. Taking part in the UNGA debate, Permanent Representative at UN in New York Munir Akram highlighted the need for de-escalation, renewed negotiations, sustained dialogue, and continuous diplomacy.

Qureshi, Lavrov discuss Ukraine crisis; Fawad says PM to tour European countries shortly Prime Minister Imran Khan’s visit to Moscow last month coincided with the start of Russian military action against Ukraine.

Mr Qureshi told Mr Lavrov that he had during his conversations with his European counterparts also stressed the importance of finding a solution through dialogue and diplomacy.

Russian and Ukrainian officials last week held



two rounds of talks in Belarus, leading to an agreement on the establishment of a humanitarian corridor for evacuating civilians, removing the dead and wounded, and bringing in aid.

Russian defence ministry on Saturday announced a partial ceasefire to allow humanitarian corridors out of the Ukrainian cities of Mariupol and Volnovakha.

Mr Qureshi hoped that Russia-Ukraine dialogue would succeed and yield a diplomatic solution of the dispute. As he also sought help for the evacuation of Pakistani citizens stranded in Ukraine, the Russian foreign minister assured full support for their evacuation, the FO said. According to the Foreign Office, 35 Pakistanis are stuck in the areas where Russian and Ukrainian forces are fighting each other. It hoped that they could be evacuated from the Ukrainian cities of Mariupol, Sumy and Kherson after the humanitarian corridors start functioning.

Mr Lavrov, during the conversation, extended condolences over the loss of lives in the terrorist attack on a mosque in Peshawar on Friday and said that Russia condemned terrorism in all its

forms. He underlined his government’s readiness for the next round of talks with Ukraine.

Earlier, federal Minister for Information Fawad Chaudhry said Islamabad was pursuing a ‘very clear’ and ‘balanced foreign policy’ and that it did not support any kind of war.

He shunned rumours that Pakistan’s relations with the Western bloc had gone sour.

Mr Chaudhry said: “Prime Minister Imran will shortly be visiting Europe. While speaking to media persons on Saturday, the minister said foreign ministers of the Muslim world and European countries would be standing with Pakistan on the occasion of Pakistan Day on March 23. Islamabad would host an important Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) meeting of the foreign ministers on March 22, he said, adding that some 29 foreign ministers had already confirmed their participation.

Referring to the prime minister’s recent visit to Russia, Mr Chaudhry said Pakistan had maintained a clear stance on Russia-Ukraine war.

In the United Nations, Mr Chaudhry said Pakistan’s permanent representative Munir Akram read out a statement that the war should end and any solutions be drawn through dialogue. “This is first time that Pakistan’s foreign policy is being formulated internally,” he said, that the whole nation and army was standing behind PM Khan.

Islamabad’s effort to shun the impression of government’s tilt towards a particular bloc is being seen in the wake of the reported move by the British government to unilaterally call off the visit of Pakistan’s National Security Adviser (NSA) Moeed Yusuf without assigning any reason.

Courtesy: Dawn

Pakistanis will earn money from Facebook videos

Facebook monetization allows content creators around the world to earn money by allowing ads on their videos. It has been enabled in many parts of the world for a long time but the content creators of Pakistan have not got the benefit of it. However, that is about to change.

The Ministry of Information and Technology announced that Meta, the parent company of Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp, has decided to enable video monetization for Facebook in the country.

Facebook makes a ton of money from ads. While most people are somewhat familiar with the concept



of Facebook ads, not many are aware of the potential of monetizing their videos on the platform.

This is mainly due to the fact that Facebook video monetization is a fairly new concept and, until recently, was only available to a limited number of Facebook partners.

The ministry said that Meta Video will create a pilot project for monetization, then introduce policies as it feels that allowing direct monetization may be risky.

Officials said META also has objections regarding the regulatory framework in Pakistan.

Here are three ways to monetize Facebook videos:

brand collaboration manager
fan subscription
in-stream advertising

How some Pakistanis are already earning from videos

Currently, a select few media organizations and individuals have monetized their videos. But for this they have to hire companies in countries like Singapore or UAE and apply for monetization from those regions.

Once enabled, everyone who creates video content will be able to monetize their content.

This is a long-running process and requires investment, something individual Facebook content creators, especially newbies, cannot afford.

Courtesy: <https://irshadgul.com>

Controversial Peca provision may be rolled back, IHC told

The Islamabad High Court was informed on Wednesday that the federal government might repeal the controversial ordinance that amended the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (Peca) and made defamation a cognizable and non-bailable offence.

This was stated by Additional Attorney General (AAG) Qasim Wadud during the hearing on identical petitions filed against the Peca ordinance as well as its Section 20. IHC Chief Justice Athar Minallah resumed the hearing on the petitions.

Since the attorney general had during a previous hearing pointed out that the amendment through an ordinance was indispensable to counter cybercrimes, especially exploitation of women, the chief justice asked AAG Wadud to read out scheduled offences under various sections of Peca.

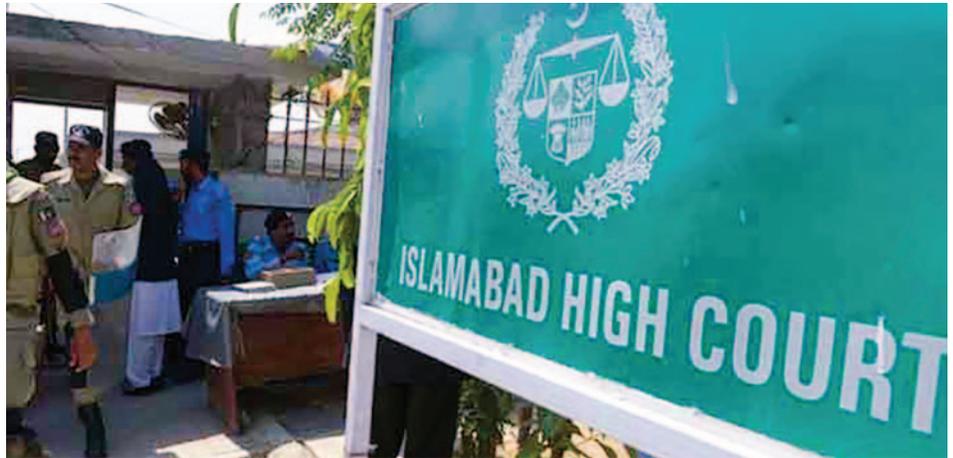
The government's law officer said Sections 3 to 19 related to the information system, glorification of offences, cyber terrorism, hate speech, terrorism financing, electronic frauds, adding that Sections 21 and 22 dealt with uploading of objectionable contents and child pornography. According to him, the punishments for these offences are up to seven to 10 years' jail term.

Justice Minallah asked the reason for which defamation was made a cognizable and non-bailable offence under Section 20 of Peca. When defamation was listed in Section 499 of the Pakistan Penal Code, why the government had amended the cyber law to make defamation an offence with a punishment of five-year jail term, he wondered.

AAG Wadud pointed out that the defamation law existed even pre-partition era.

At this, the IHC chief justice remarked that it could not be appreciated if any colonial law was carried in an independent country.

Justice Minallah drew the attention of the law officer to the misuse of the Peca law, especially against journalists, and to silence the dissenting



voices. Giving two examples, he said that in the case of journalist Bilal Ghouri, the FIA Cyber-crimes Wing invoked Section 20 for reading the contents of an already published book.

In another instance, the FIA registered an FIR against media personality Mohsin Baig at 9am in Lahore on the complaint of the federal minister Murad Saeed who was in Islamabad that time, and raided Baig's house at 9.30am.

"How was the minister's complaint dispatched to FIA's Lahore office?" the chief justice asked and sought a copy of the receipt of the courier company concerned.

"There are several instances of FIA's abuse of power and giving them the power of arrest and sentencing journalists and people with dissenting voices is against the spirit of freedom of speech enshrined in Article 19 of the Constitution," he observed.

Justice Minallah asked the AAG to give at least one example throughout the world where a country empowered the prosecution agency to arrest and jail any citizen for defamation.

Mr Wadud said that due to the ongoing political situation the government might repeal the Peca ordinance.

Justice Minallah then adjourned the hearing till April 4 when the court will hear final arguments

in the matter.

The PTI government had promulgated the ordinance at a time when the legality of Peca's Section 20 was already under examination before the IHC.

The law has rendered the recent jurisprudence of the superior courts irrelevant that was evolved in the cases registered against journalists and bloggers on the complaints of people other than the aggrieved persons. The IHC had made it clear that nobody, except the 'aggrieved person', could file a complaint against defamation. But after the promulgation of the ordinance, any person or institution, not necessarily the aggrieved person, could file a defamation case.

While the IHC had declared that the complainant under Section 20 would be a natural person, the ordinance has added more categories to it. The ordinance omitted the word natural in the heading of Section 20, which was previously titled "offences against the dignity of natural person".

Also, an amendment to Section 2 of the amended act said the "person includes any company, association or body of persons whether incorporated or not, institutions, organisations, authority or any other body established by the government".

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