

Positive Post



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

October in History

October 7, 1954: Foreign Minister Ch. Zafarullah Khan becomes a member of the International Court of Justice.

October 27, 1959: President General Ayub Khan becomes Field Marshal.

October 28, 1964: Pakistan's hockey team wins Silver Medal in Tokyo Olympic games.

October 26, 1968: Pakistan becomes Olympic Hockey Champion, winning over Australia 2-1.

October 24, 1971: Pakistan wins World Hockey Cup defeating Spain 1-0 at Barcelona.

October 28, 1972: President Bhutto inaugurates Karachi Nuclear Power Plant (KANUPP).

October 5, 1975: Pakistan and Bangladesh agree to establish diplomatic ties.

October 15, 1979: Dr Abdus Salam, eminent Pakistani Scientist, is awarded Physics Nobel Prize.

October 16, 1985: National Assembly adopts Eighth Amendment Bill.

October 21, 1987: Jan Sher Khan wins World Open Squash Championship for the first time.

October 1, 1989: Pakistan rejoins Commonwealth.

October 20, 1989: SAF Games open in Islamabad.

October 19, 1993: Benazir Bhutto is elected Prime Minister by 121 votes.

October 17, 2004: Pakistani physician Dr. Muhammad Saeed Fazal Karim Beebani sets new Guinness world record for having the smallest Qur'an of the world.

Pakistan's standing in the global rankings

Overview

Pakistan observed a slight improvement in the overall international rankings in 2021 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 was placed at the 104th spot among 167 states on the global Democracy Index 2021, compiled by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU).

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 161 out of 192 countries in the Human Development Index scoring 2022 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's press freedom rank dropped to 145 out of 180 countries in the Press Freedom Index, An annual ranking of countries published by Reporters Without Borders (RWB), an international non-governmental organization dedicated to safeguard the right to freedom of information.

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

TERRORISM INDEX

Terrorism Index in Pakistan decreased to 7.83 in 2021 from 7.92 in 2020.

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

In 2021, index of economic freedom for Pakistan was 51.7 score.

Though Pakistan index of economic freedom fluctuated substantially in recent years, it tended to decrease through 2002 - 2021 period ending at 51.7 score in 2021.

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.

After IMF's nod, govt cuts petrol, diesel prices

The federal government announced a cut of around five per cent in the prices of all petroleum products for the next fortnight.

The relief, which has been extended after a tacit nod from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), was announced by Finance Minister Ishaq Dar at a news conference after consultation with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

The price of petrol has been cut by Rs12.63 per litre, bringing down the price from Rs237.43 to Rs224.80. The price of high speed diesel (HSD) has been reduced by Rs12.13 per litre from Rs247.43 to Rs235.30. The price of kerosene has been reduced by Rs10.19 per litre from Rs202.02 to Rs191.83. The rate of light diesel oil (LDO) has been cut by Rs10.78 per litre from Rs197.28 to Rs186.50.

Separately, the Oil & Gas Regulatory Authority has notified about 4.9pc reduction in LPG price for October. The prices will remain

in place till October 15.

At present, the general sales tax (GST) is zero on all the key petroleum products including petrol, HSD, kerosene and LDO, against the normal rate of 17pc.

To pass on the relief to the consumers, the government took a hit on revenue by reducing the petroleum development levy (PDL) on petrol by Rs5 per litre to Rs32.42. However, the same has been increased by Rs5 per litre on HSD to Rs12.58.

Currently, the government is charging Rs12.58 per litre PDL on HSD, Rs15 per litre on kerosene, Rs10 on LDO and Rs30 per litre on High Octane Blending Component. Moreover, the prices of petrol and HSD also include Rs22 per litre custom duty.

On Thursday, the finance minister held a virtual meeting with IMF Mission Chief Nathan Porter and took him into confidence over the



price cut in view of the flood situation and an earlier assurance by the Fund's managing director to allow relaxations during PM Shehbaz's visit to the US.

Under the deal with the IMF, the government had to gradually increase the PDL on petroleum products to a maximum of Rs50 per litre to collect Rs855bn during the current fiscal year.

The previous PTI government had committed a monthly PDL increase of Rs5 on petrol and HSD until it reached Rs50 in January for petrol and April for diesel.

However, before the former prime minister's ouster, he reduced the

PDL to zero on March 1. As the international prices went up and the PTI government not only reduced the petroleum prices by Rs10 per litre but also froze them for the next four months.

After coming to power in April, the PML-N-led coalition government refrained from increasing the prices immediately. However, since May 15, the government has been increasing the prices in line with the IMF deal. As Pakistan battled with the flood catastrophe, the government had requested the IMF managing director for a three-month freeze on the PDL and fuel cost on electricity.

Courtesy: Dawn

Key meetings planned as army chief arrives in US

Chief of Army Staff Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa arrived in the United States for an almost weeklong visit, which includes meetings with senior officials of the Biden administration, officials said.

"Yes, he is here," said Pakistan's Ambassador Sardar Masood Khan, when journalists asked him for information about the army chief's visit.

While the envoy refrained from sharing the chief's itinerary, other sources said Gen Bajwa was expected to meet Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin, National Intelligence Director Avril D. Haines, and CIA Director William J. Burns.

Pakistani officials are also trying to secure a meeting with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken. "It is very likely, but not confirmed yet," a source said.

Gen Bajwa landed at LaGuardia in



New York on Friday, flying from London on his official plane along with his senior aides. He was expected to arrive in Washington over the weekend and Monday and Tuesday have been set aside for official meetings. He will meet members of various think-tanks and other scholars interested in Pakistan affairs.

While the army chief has kept in close contact with US officials over the past few years, his last official visit to the US came in 2019, when he accompanied then prime minister Imran Khan on a three-day trip to Washington.

Courtesy: Dawn

Partial Solar Eclipse on Oct 25



The 25th of October will witness the second partial solar eclipse which will be visible in different cities in Pakistan. The partial solar eclipse is the last solar eclipse of the year. For people in Pakistan, the partial solar eclipse will begin at around 1:58 pm PST and will end at 6:20 pm PST. According to the Department of Meteorology, the second partial solar eclipse of this year can be seen in most areas of the country including Karachi, Islamabad, Lahore Peshawar, and Quetta. It will be visible from western Asia, northern Africa, most regions of Europe, the Middle East, and the

regions covering the North Atlantic Ocean and the North Indian Ocean. The solar eclipse will be visible from most places. A solar eclipse occurs when the Moon comes between the Sun and Earth, casting a shadow on Earth, or partially blocking the Sun's light in some areas. During a partial solar eclipse, the Moon and the Sun are not perfectly aligned in a straight line. Therefore, the Moon does not completely cover the Sun. This gives the Sun a crescent shape. It appears as though the Moon has taken a bite of the Sun.

Courtesy: The Daily Time

Nepra sees surplus power production in five years

Even without taking into account the fresh aggressive campaign for induction of 10,000 megawatts of renewable energy by the coalition government, the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) is expecting a surplus power production capacity of more than 12,670MW within five years owing to generation projects currently in construction phase.

This is despite the fact that the country's transmission network is already facing serious capacity constraints and incurring over Rs150bn worth of annual energy not served to various consumer categories and yet adding to their overall energy costs. This happens at a time the capacity payments, for energy consumed or not, has already been growing from Rs570bn in 2019 to Rs860bn in 2020 and Rs970bn in 2022.

"The surplus capacity as provided during FY2021-22 is 3,184MW which is on an increasing trend in the years to come and will reach 12,674MW in FY2026-27. This huge surplus quantum of electric power capacity, if with the "Take or Pay" and/or "Must Run" conditions, will be a challenge for power sector of the country due to huge capacity payments on account of unutilised capacity", observed the regulator in its State of Industry Report 2021-22.

The regulator said the surplus would touch 9,000MW during the current year (FY2023) as per planned generation capacity of 34,730MW against the peak-hour demand of about 25,800MW that would keep growing every year. The surplus would thus stand at 12,674MW by FY2027 as peak demand was estimated at 32,275MW against the total capacity of about 44,950MW.

Already, the overloading of 500kv and 220kv transmission network was causing about Rs72bn loss in addition to about Rs50bn loss due to under-loading of a major China-sponsored transmission line because of the delay in completion of power plants for which the multi-billion-dollar project was contracted.

The regulator said the national transmission company had been allowed 2.5pc losses for FY2021-22, but it

reported actual losses for the said year at 2.63pc with lost units of 3,696GWh having a cost effect of around Rs72bn. The technical constraints and congestions in the existing transmission network like congestions in the Sarfraz Nagar, Gatti, New Multan, Peeran Ghaib, Lahore-Shiekhupura, etc. have been affecting the economic dispatch and operations of the power plants, and appropriate dispatch of the cheaper electric power generation besides compromising the reliability of the transmission system.

During FY2021-22, the financial impact of plant operations in violation of economic merit order (EMO) due to transmission constraints stood at Rs3.67bn. Similarly, in several cases, the transmission facilities have not been completed as per the design, within the given timelines, and approved cost. "This has an additional financial burden on the power sector and end consumers".

It said removal of the constraints in the transmission network was of utmost importance on a war footing basis to save the power sector from avoidable loss occurring due to their system shortcomings. Similarly, congestion in the evacuation of power from most efficient RLNG plants, Hubco, China Power Hub, etc. was urgently needed to be removed on priority.

Nepra pointed out that due to the lack of required generation capacity, the High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) Matiari-Lahore transmission line remained underutilised during FY2021-22 and was causing a financial burden on end-consumer in terms of per unit cost of electricity.

"The capacity payments of PMLTC (Matiari-Lahore Line) during the period of September 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022, was Rs49 billion while total electrons transmitted through this line during the same period was 11,560 GWh with utilisation factor of around 36pc which is quite low".

The regulator deplored delayed project implementation saying the national transmission company (NTDC) "in most of the cases has been unable to meet the timeline" and "interconnection timelines are revised time and again which results



in cost overruns". Delay in interconnection as per design delays evacuation of power from cheaper sources in a reliable manner and hence forecasting and planning should also be improved.

Nepra also criticised the provincial governments of KP and Sindh for not operationalising their transmission companies for which they were given licences 3 to 4 years ago which now stood expired. The very objective of issuing the licences to the provincial entities was to enhance the utilisation of local resources, fast-tracking the development of cheaper power generation plants, develop a regional grid to share the burden of national grid company for transmission of electric power within the province, improve efficiencies and bring competition in the transmission services.

"However, to date, no progress by these companies has been witnessed on ground regarding the development of their transmission network and rendering transmission services".

The regulator also highlighted violation of economic merit order (EMO) in procuring electricity from various power plants and noted serious deficiencies in the merit order standards as well. It said that since the power generation plants are contracted on either of "Take or Pay", "Take and Pay", "Must Run", merchant power plants, or ancillary services, it is needed that the EMO should take these contractual frameworks into account. Criteria for purchase of electricity from merchant plants shall need to be developed which enable procurement of electricity on price base, whenever it is cheaper.

It said the EMO was prepared based on fuels which are not available in the first place on ground. For example, historically indigenous natural (pipeline quality) gas was the cheapest fuel due to its price, and the plants operated on this fuel, even in-

efficient, appeared on top in the EMO. Due to depletion, the indigenous pipeline quality gas has not been available for power generation for the last 2 to 3 years. However, despite the non-availability of pipeline-quality natural gas, the EMO is still being prepared considering this fuel, alone or in combination with other fuels, which is misleading and causes confusion for stakeholders.

Courtesy: Dawn

Rupee to grow stronger in coming days: Dar



Federal Finance Minister Ishaq Dar has predicted that the rupee is going to further strengthen in coming days.

"Appreciation of the US dollar against Pak rupee is the mother of all evils. Its appreciation against the rupee is artificial and I am telling you that the actual value of the rupee has been manipulated," the minister said during a presser here.

He said since he had taken over the charge of the finance ministry the rupee had appreciated and would further go upward against the US dollar. "I warn those involved in artificial appreciation of dollar against rupee, as strict action will be taken against them," he added.

Currency dealers said the dollar lost another Rs2.49 in the inter-bank market to close at Rs229.63.

The currency market attributes the rupee's recovery to Mr Dar's return as the new finance minister. He is believed to have a different view about the exchange rate and may opt for forced devaluation of the dollar as he did in the past.

Courtesy: Dawn

Dar unveils Rs100bn power subsidy for exporters



Finance Minister Ishaq Dar on Thursday announced that he had reached an agreement with the export-oriented sector to continue a regionally competitive electricity tariff (RCET) of Rs19.99 to honour a commitment the government had already made.

The decision came within days after the export-oriented sector, particularly textile exporters, announced the closure of industries for alleged violation of an earlier commitment and the cabinet's August decision promising electricity supply to export industries at nine US cents per unit for the current fiscal year.

Speaking at a hurriedly called news conference, also attended by some exporters, Mr Dar said the only change he secured from exporters was to "lock the per-unit electricity rate in the Pakistan currency at Rs19.99 instead of nine cents in the US currency" because "we should do our business in the local currency".

This, though, is no material change, given nine cents works out at about Rs20 per unit at the current exchange rate.

All-inclusive concessional tariff of Rs19.99 pegged to rupee instead of dollar

He said the agreed RCET was all-inclusive, meaning the Rs19.99 rate would be final and no fuel cost or tax would be added.

The finance minister said Commerce Minister Naveed Qamar and Power Minister Khuram Das-tgir Khan were part of the negotiations leading to the agreement and it was now Mr Dar's responsibility to get it approved by the cabinet or any other forums.

Responding to a question, he said this would have a financial implication of Rs90-100bn over the year as the government would bear the difference between Rs19.99 per unit to exporters and the average power rate.

He did not agree that this would cause friction with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), saying he would create fiscal space as sources were available and he would discuss it with the Fund. "Everything will be taken care of," he said.

Mr Dar recalled that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his predecessor Miftah Ismail had committed the RCET at nine cents and then implemented it for a couple of days, but it ended on October 1 because of some follow-up challenges.

Responding to a question, he said he did not intervene in the market, but the rupee had appreciated from Rs240 to Rs222 since he took a flight from London.

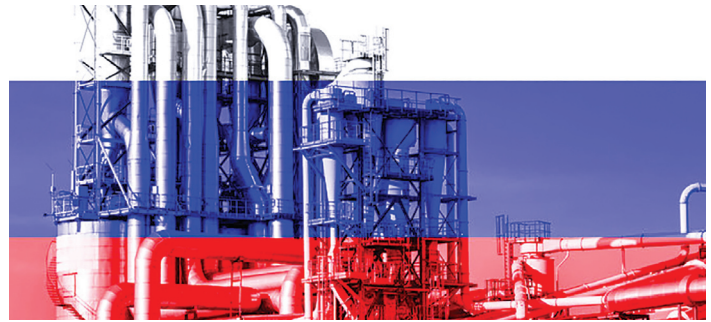
He said the market and its stakeholders had corrected themselves and he was thankful to them, adding that he could contest international lending agencies with data and calculations that the rupee's true value was no more than 200 to the dollar.

The rupee's appreciation over the last few days reduced the country's public debt and liabilities by Rs2.6 trillion without paying a penny, he said.

Earlier, the influential All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APTMA) had threatened to close mills over RCET's withdrawal.

Courtesy: Dawn

Pakistan can benefit from US 'relaxation' on Russia oil



Pakistan can be one of the beneficiaries of a US decision to "keep Russian oil available" in the market for lower and middle-income countries, a State Department spokesperson told Dawn on Monday.

The spokesperson said that this relaxation should not be seen as a move towards easing the sanctions the US has imposed on Russia for invading Ukraine in February this year, but he was quick to point out that "other countries will have to make their own choices based on their own circumstances in terms of energy imports".

Earlier, it was reported that the US had allowed Pakistan to "cut a short-term cut rate deal for Russian crude oil", but there was no clarity on the mechanism under which this could be achieved, nor was there any confirmation from the US government in this regard.

Speaking to Dawn on Monday, the State Department spokesperson recalled that while "the United States was able to ban oil, liquefied natural gas (LNG), and coal imports from Russia given our position as a strong energy producer", Washington was cognisant that all other countries could not afford to do so.

The spokesperson pointed out that while the US has barred energy imports from Russia, the American Treasury has issued general licences authorising transactions in energy with sanctioned entities to continue. "A goal of our discussions with allies and partners is to keep Russian oil available on global markets to buyers in lower- and middle-income countries to help stabilise prices already trending at roughly double pre-pandemic levels, while working on ways to restrict Russian revenues from the

sales," the official explained.

The spokesperson also referred to the September 2 announcement by G7 countries on the Russian oil price cap which, they said, "is a major step forward in advancing these twin goals."

The G7 move aims to prohibit the provision of services that enable maritime transportation of such oil products "unless purchased at or below a price level determined by the coalition of countries adhering to and implementing the price cap."

The State Department official said the coalition was now "moving from exploring a price cap to implementing one, broadening our coalition." They pointed out that on September 9, the US treasury department had issued preliminary guidance on the ban on services related to the maritime transportation of Russian Federation-origin crude oil and petroleum products.

The guidance explained that a coalition of countries including the G7 and the EU and the United States will implement this policy which covers a broad range of services related to maritime transport.

The policy, constructed as a ban on services, has an important exception: "jurisdictions or actors that purchase seaborne Russian oil at or below a price cap to be established by the coalition will expressly be able to receive such services."

Pakistan is the 35th largest importer of crude petroleum in the world and in 2020-21, it imported \$1.92B worth of crude oil. Buying cheaper oil from Russia will definitely ease pressure on the troubled Pakistani economy.

Courtesy: Dawn

Pakistan hits back at India over 'gratuitous accusation'

New Delhi should abjure its policy of state terrorism in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and against Muslims in India instead of hurling baseless allegations against Pakistan, the Foreign Office said in a statement on Monday.

The Foreign Office (FO) issued the statement in a riposte to Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanya Jaishankar's "irresponsible and gratuitous remarks" made at Vadodra last week in which he accused Pakistan of involvement in international terrorism.

The FO urged New Delhi to allow Kashmiris to exercise their right to self-determination in accordance with their aspirations and UN Security Council resolutions.

The statement called upon the international community to hold India accountable for its patronage of terrorist entities and for instigating unrest in neighbouring countries.

The FO described Mr Jaishankar's remarks as a manifestation of In-



dian leaders' obsession to concoct facts for misleading the international community in an attempt to mask New Delhi's acts of terrorism and violations of human rights.

Nowhere is India's state terrorism more evident than in occupied Kashmir, the FO statement stressed, recalling that over 900,000 troops terrorise, torture, and torment innocent Kashmiris with impunity.

The world is aware of the saffron terror orchestrated and unleashed by the BJP-RSS combine against Muslims in India, the Foreign Office said.

"Pakistan's contribution to world peace, from successful counter-terrorism operations to our role in the global fight against terrorism, is widely acknowledged by the international community.

"Pakistan is the only country that has stemmed the tide of terror directed against it from elements and states with inimical motives," the FO statement said.

"In reality, India has been involved in supporting terrorism against Pakistan from its own territory and from other countries in the region. "India's mischievous campaign to masquerade as a 'victim' of terrorism

and seeking to hoodwink the world community by hypocritically leveling allegations against Pakistan is pathological," the Foreign Office said.

It cited as example the arrest in Pakistan of Kulbhushan Jadhav, a serving Indian navy officer who was involved in "planning, supporting, abetting and executing terrorist activities in Pakistan".

"Jadhav is a stark reminder of India's true face as a state sponsor of terrorism."

According to The Hindu newspaper, India's external affairs minister said in a speech in Vadodra on Saturday: "No other country practises terrorism in the manner in which Pakistan does. You show me anywhere in the world what Pakistan has done for so many years against India."

According to the newspaper, Jaishankar said India was recognised as an "expert in information technology", whereas Pakistan was known as an "expert in international terrorism".

Courtesy: Dawn

Geneva appeal upped to \$816m amid fears of disease surge

The United Nations and Pakistan will present a revised appeal for the 'Floods Response Plan' in Geneva on Tuesday (today), seeking \$816 million to control a surge in water-borne diseases following the country's worst floods in decades, the UN resident coordinator for Pakistan announced on Monday.

During a press briefing in Geneva, Julien Harneis said, "We are now entering into a second wave of deaths and destruction with the wave of diseases malaria, dengue, skin diseases, chabbies and acute malnutrition.

"There will be an increase in child morbidity and it will be pretty terrible unless we act rapidly to support the government in increasing the provision of health, nutrition and water and sanitation services across the affected areas."

The wide-scale flooding of the coun-



try resulted in health and nutrition crises. People are defecating in the water and drinking the same and children washing in these waters, a situation that is driver of illness and diseases at a time when 1,700 health facilities and hospitals have been destroyed or damaged.

The UN humanitarian coordinator

said that food security has become a very significant challenge along with nutrition as WFP and FAO has estimated that the number of food insecure people may rise to 7.2 million.

A statement from the Foreign Office on Monday said the flash appeal had been upscaled "on the basis of up-

dated on-ground needs assessment", and would be unveiled jointly by the Pakistani government and the UN in Geneva on Tuesday.

Ministerial level participation includes Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman, while Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal, Minister for Economic Affairs Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabhani Khar will be participating virtually from Islamabad.

UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Martin Griffiths and Director General World Health Organisation Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus will represent the UN, along with Mr Harneis, the UNRC in Pakistan.

Courtesy: Dawn

Pakistan needs 'huge sums of money', not rescheduling: PM

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said Pakistan needed billions of dollars for rebuilding climate resilient infrastructure in the aftermath of floods which left over 33 million people without shelter and inundated southern parts of the country.

"We are not asking for any kind of measure [such as] a rescheduling or a moratorium," PM Sharif was quoted by the Financial Times. "We are asking for additional funds," the PM said in his remarks which contradicted his Finance Minister Ishaq Dar's plan to seek rescheduling of loans. On Oct 15, Mr Dar said Pakistan would seek rescheduling of some \$27 billion worth of non-Paris Club debt largely owed to China, but will not pursue haircuts as part of any restructuring.

According to the Financial Times, PM Sharif said Islamabad was not trying to reschedule its external debt, worth about \$130bn, but it did need "huge sums of money" for "mega undertakings" such as rebuilding roads, bridges, and other infrastructure.

"There is a gap and a very serious gap which is widening by the day between our demands and what we



have received," PM Sharif was quoted as saying.

Shehbaz says CPEC to enter B2B phase; Chinese experts to assist authorities in disaster management

The prime minister said Pakistan had been tapping state coffers to help displaced families and buy provisions such as tents, medicine, food packs and drinkable water and added Pakistan would also "seek additional funding from wherever we can".

According to the British daily, French president Emmanuel Macron promised to host a donors' conference to boost Pakistan's fundraising efforts. Still, no date has been set for the conference so far. PM Sharif said he expected it to take place in Paris in November.

CPEC project

In a meeting to review the progress of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project, the premier said it was all set to enter the business-to-business mode as both sides countries have pledged to revive the multi-billion dollars project purportedly stalled during the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) government.

PM Sharif said efforts were underway to make the project "more productive" for the two sides by turning into B2B mode. "The government has rejuvenated the multi-billion dollar project that faced hiatus during the previous government," the premier said.

According to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the meeting chaired by PM Sharif focused on infra-

structure projects, particularly Main Line-1 (ML-1), Karachi Circular Railway, and Karakoram Highway. The project related to the production of 10,000-megawatt electricity from solar and wind power also came under discussion.

In a separate meeting with a Chinese delegation led by Emergency Commanding Officer Xu Xianbiao, the premier asked the disaster management experts to sign an accord with Pakistan before their departure as he sought Beijing's help to make Pakistan self-reliant in disaster management.

The delegation will provide technical assistance to Pakistan on short, medium, and long-term projects in the construction of infrastructure to predict floods and reduce their impact.

The Chinese delegation has formed a working group to cooperate with the relevant Pakistani institutions and authorities and will submit a detailed report to the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Friday for the rehabilitation of people and infrastructure in the affected areas.

Courtesy: Dawn

'The Legend Of Maula Jatt': Pakistani Epic Sets Global Opening Weekend Record

A reboot of the 1979 cult Punjabi classic, Maula Jat, Bilal Lashari's The Legend of Maula Jatt is coming off of a record-breaking weekend for a Pakistan-made or Punjabi-language film. Opening on over 500 screens in 25 markets, the action fantasy grossed PRK 51cr (\$2.3M) globally, a new benchmark launch for a Pakistani title worldwide.

The movie (which The Guardian called Game of Thrones meets Gladiator) follows the titular Maula Jatt, a fierce prizefighter with a tortured past who seeks vengeance against his arch nemesis Noori Natt, the most feared warrior in the land of Punjab. Loyalties are challenged and families torn apart in an epic tale of truth, honor and justice. Fawad Khan (who appeared in Disney Plus series Ms Marvel), Mahira Khan, Hamza Ali Abassi and Humaima Malik star.

Brian Adler (Avatar: The Way of Water, Avengers: Endgame) served as VFX supervisor.

In Pakistan, it took \$517K, and in the UK picked up \$355K from 79 locations. The latter is the highest opening weekend for any Pakistani or Punjabi film in the market where it entered at No. 9 on the chart.

In the U.S., The Legend of Maula Jatt grossed \$290K and in Canada \$235K, kicking off at No. 6. The UAE saw a No. 1 start with over \$515K. In Australia, it opened at No. 6 with \$160K. Other releasing markets included Norway, Germany, Netherlands, Spain and South East Asia.

The filmmakers tell us demand has been extraordinary with exhibitors adding screenings throughout the weekend and into the week.



Lashari, who directed, co-wrote, lensed, edited and produced the movie – enthused, "I'm beyond overwhelmed by the love the film has received from audiences and critics alike the world over. We are so proud that The Legend of Maula Jatt has been instrumental in putting Pakistan-made cinema on the global map as it continues to win over hearts in theaters across the world."

Producer Ammara Hikmat said, "The Legend of Maula Jatt has been our labor of love for a number of years. The pandemic came and

returned but we knew we had to hold out for a theatrical release, as the film is undoubtedly a big screen experience. We're so delighted that our film has broken previous records and set a new benchmark for Pakistan-made cinema, loved and lauded not only domestically but by audiences and critics globally."

The Legend of Maula Jatt started rollout on October 13. Mandviwalla Entertainment with Geo Films releases in Pakistan; and Moviegoers Entertainment in overseas markets.

Courtesy:deadline.com

Kamran Tessori sworn in as Sindh governor

Muhammad Kamran Khan Tessori, better known as Kamran Tessori, took oath as the 34th governor of Sindh on Monday amid a deluge of comments and criticism over the chequered history of his political loyalties, close ties with the all-powerful establishment and his alleged role, which led to a split in the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) in 2018.

Mr Tessori became the governor exactly a month after MQM-P took him back into the fold, appointing him deputy convener of its coordination committee following the 2018 split.

Sindh High Court Chief Justice Ahmad Ali M. Shaikh administered the oath of office to the new incumbent in a ceremony held at the Governor's House, which was also attended by Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, members of the provincial cabinet, MQM-P leaders, businessmen and other city notables.

In a brief interaction with the



media, Governor Tessori vowed to meet all expectations and fulfil the duties that he has been entrusted with.

“I will definitely make every possible effort to play my role as mandated by the Constitution of Pakistan. Whether it's the problem of the province or its people, you will find me raising my voice at every relevant forum.”

An enigmatic figure, Mr Tessori came into the political limelight from the platform of the Pakistan Muslim League Functional (PML-F) when the party was a key ally of

Gen Pervez Musharraf and Arbab Ghulam Rahim was the Sindh chief minister between 2004 and 2007. Despite enjoying no official status, Mr Tessori was known as an influential figure under the PML-F regime.

But he paid the price when the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) came into power in 2008. Mr Tessori was booked and arrested for his suspected involvement in connection with a real estate land scam, but allegedly escaped police custody while being shifted from Karachi to Badin, which led to another case against him.

However, Mr Tessori eventually emerged clean in one case after the other, and finally resurfaced in the political arena in February 2017, when he joined the MQM-P.

Within a week of his joining, he was made a member of its coordination committee, a move that raised many eyebrows in the party.

Another surprising development came when Mr Tessori was fielded as the MQM-P candidate for the by-election of provincial assembly constituency for PS-114 Mehmoodabad, where he eventually lost to PPP's Saeed Ghani.

He finally parted ways with the MQM-P in 2018 amid allegations that he had created a rift within the party, which had led to the expulsion of seasoned politician Dr Farooq Sattar from the party fold.

The final twist in the tale came last month when the party announced they were taking him back.

Courtesy: Dawn

PM Shehbaz to be vice chair for COP27 moot

The United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP27) announced on Monday that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will be the vice-chairperson for the event.

The distinction came on the back of Prime Minister Shehbaz's proactive leadership and global efforts on the climate change action plan, APP reported.

Egypt's President Abdul Fattah Al-Sisi has invited Mr Sharif to co-chair the meeting. The prime minister will jointly chair the round table conference along with President Al-Sisi and prime minister of Norway.

The development has come at a time when Pakistan is reeling from the devastation caused by unprecedented floods and torrential rains.

The 27th session of the UN's

Climate Change Conference will be convened in Egypt's city of Sharm el-Sheikh from November 6 to 18. It will be attended by world leaders, think tanks, heads of governments and international financial institutions to review the implementation on the objectives agreed in the past conference and chalk out an action plan for the future.

The Conference of the Parties (COP) is the highest decision making body under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The convention was adopted in 1992 during the 'Earth Summit' in Rio de Janeiro, with the treaty entering into force in 1994 and 196 countries ratifying it.

The COP meets every year with the first meeting taking place in Berlin, Germany in March, 1995. The last COP was held in Glasgow in 2021.



This year, the parties will focus on mitigation, adaptation, finance and collaboration to find sustainable solutions to climate change.

“COP27 will be a moment for countries to fulfil their pledges and commitments towards delivering the objectives of the Paris Agreement to enhance the implementation of the Convention. This year should witness the implementation of the Glasgow pact call to review ambition in NDCs, and create a work program

for ambition on mitigation,” reads a statement on the conference's website.

Among other visions of COP27 are a global agenda for action on adaptation, financial action plans for achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement and increased cooperation between governments, private sector and civil society to introduce new solutions and innovations for alleviating the adverse impacts of climate change.

Courtesy: Dawn

UNGA agrees to support Pakistan's reconstruction

The UN General Assembly (UNGA) on Friday unanimously adopted a resolution urging donor nations and institutions to provide full support to rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts in Pakistan.

“The scaling calamities in Pakistan can linger for years. Massive guidance and support to the government of Pakistan are absolutely essential,” said UN Secretary General António Guterres, while speaking in favour of the resolution.

The resolution, co-sponsored by 159 countries, urges the international community, “in particular donor countries, international financial institutions and relevant international organisations, as well as the private sector and civil society, to extend full support and assistance to Pakistan in its efforts to mitigate the adverse impacts of the floods and to meet the medium- and long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction needs”.

“Countries, like Pakistan, which confront such climate-induced disasters, should not be left to fend for themselves,” said Pakistan’s UN Ambassador Munir Akram in his address to the General Assembly. “We must construct global mechanisms that can enable climate-stricken countries to access resources to mitigate the impacts of the ever more frequent and more intense climate disasters and to recover quickly from such disasters,” he said.

Recalling his recent visit to Pakistan, the UN chief said he did not only see the devastations caused by the floods. “I saw the best of humanity. I saw the immense generosity and solidarity of neighbours and strangers helping one another,” he said. “So, people themselves have



risked and lost all their worldly possessions to rescue others.”

The secretary general recalled that on Oct 4, the UN launched a revised plan for collecting \$816 million to help the flood victims in Pakistan. “I urge donor countries, international financial institutions, and other relevant international organisations, along with the private sector and civil society, to fully support these efforts,” Mr Guterres said.

During an earlier UNGA debate on the economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and climate-induced disasters, Pakistan called for an early solution to the debt distress of nearly 60 developing countries through effective operation of international agreements and bilateral arrangements.

Pakistan specifically called for implementing the G-20 Common Framework, which addresses the problem of unsustainable debts faced by many developing nations.

Recent reports by various financial institutions acknowledge that about 60 per cent of low-income countries are at high risk or already in debt distress. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) recently published a list

of 73 countries that face debt-related vulnerabilities.

At Thursday’s debate, Pakistan warned that more than 50 developing countries faced debt distress, and many may be obliged to default, as climate change continues to take its heavy toll. Pakistan, speaking for the Group of 77 (developing countries) and China, also called for a clear roadmap to overcome the recent series of “shocks” to the world economy.

“The unequal impacts have been accompanied by a deficit in solidarity as visible on vaccine availability and the liquidity support \$17 trillion generated in the richer, less than \$100 billion for the developing world,” Ambassador Aamir Khan, deputy permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, told the General Assembly Second Committee, which deals with economic and financial matters.

Pakistan is the current chairman of G-77 and China, which now has 134 members and is the United Nations’ biggest intergovernmental group of emerging countries.

As a consequence, Ambassador Khan said, poverty has enlarged

over 100 million pushed back into extreme poverty, with the developing countries now facing the triple challenge of meeting their needs for food, fuel and finance.

The resolution adopted on Friday recognised that “enhanced access to international climate finance is important to support mitigation and adaptation efforts in developing countries, especially those that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change”.

It emphasised the need for the international community to maintain its focus beyond the present emergency relief, in order to sustain the political will to support the medium- and long-term rehabilitation, reconstruction and risk reduction efforts as well as the adaptation plan led by Pakistan.

It welcomed the proposed convening of a pledging conference to generate assistance and commitments for the long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction phases in the disaster-stricken areas, to be held at the earliest opportunity, and called upon all UN member states to participate at the highest level.

The resolution requested the secretary general and the entities of the United Nations system to continue to support Pakistan in the preparation of a climate-resilient reconstruction plan.

It also urged them to further intensify their efforts to sensitise the international community to the humanitarian, recovery and reconstruction needs of Pakistan and to mobilize effective, immediate, and adequate international support and assistance to Pakistan.

Courtesy: Dawn

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