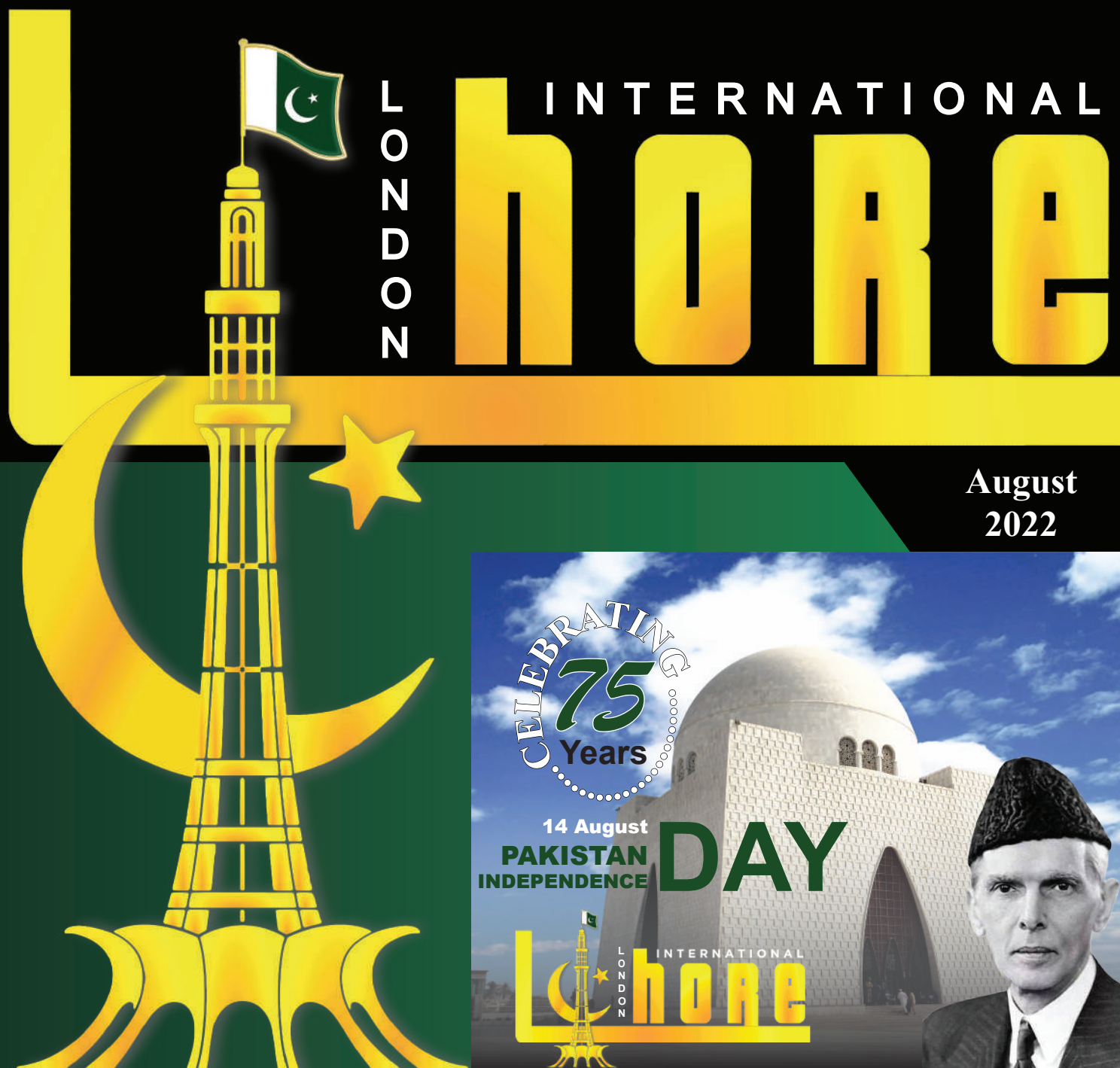


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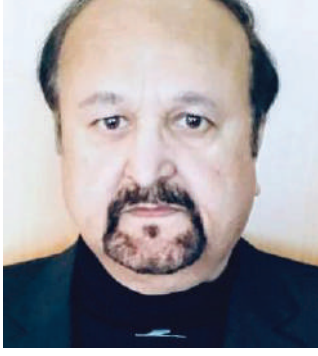
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**S**

**T**

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**N**

**O**

**C**

4. *Editorial*
5. *Atif Mian: Politicians play politics while Pakistan 'economically burns', criticizes PTI economic decisions*
7. *Pakistan Second Worst On Global Gender Parity Index*
9. *Pakistan Default*
11. *SBP Board May Become Dysfunctional*
13. *Antimicrobial resistance*
14. *SC Hands Prize Back to Winner*
15. *Dalil Kot is a Beautiful Ancient Historical Fort Of Sindh*
17. *What Joe Biden Should Tell the Iraqi Prime Minister | Opinion*
19. *US Terms Imran's Claim Disturbing, Looks Ahead to Strong Ties*
20. *Why is the U.S. Continuing to Engage Somalia? | Opinion*
22. *Five takeaways from President Biden's first trip to Middle East*
25. *More US Gunboat Diplomacy Would Just Make Things Worse*
28. *Ukraine and Taiwan on the Biden-Xi chessboard*
30. *Turkey is no longer NATO's yes man*
32. *Israel's Secret Weapon*
34. *Japan's Tragedy*
35. *Western companies face 'existential crisis' as fears grow of Chinese invasion of Taiwan*
36. *Is Right-wing Populism Fading?*
38. *One God One Humanity*

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# Editorial



Dr. Busharat Elahi Jamil

Practising undemocratic democracy, whiz democracy without demos, Pakistanis are deprived of the real benefits of a true democracy. Contemporary Pakistani so-called democratic practices had five immoral components; political elite, bullying, violence, political trickery, religion, regional and racism. Political parties practised all of them as tools according to the circumstances especially religion and provincialism more often. Unfortunately, the political and religio-political assemblages never unite on same page for any public interest except for their political targets; PDM being the worst example of the kind.

On occasion, having political credentials, national level parties use regional, provincial or language cards like PPP Sindh, PML-N Punjab and MQM Urdu cards exploiting their followers' ignorance as they get immune to reasoning and understanding their tactics. Furthermore, not only religio-political but political parties, both political and authoritarian leaders like Liaqat Ali Khan, Ayub Khan, Z. A. Bhutto, Zia etc. used religious card for their political gains. In other words, they are also responsible for the socio-political and religious hate, widen the breaches and escalating the negative tendencies among the masses.

4 Religious card is most effective tool for politicians, Imran's alliance with JUI-S, the role of JUI-F in PDM and JJ's collation with political parties indicate politicians abusing street power of religious groups and religious leaders supporting political parties for socio-economic and political benefits.

They are not strengthening Islam and its teachings in the society but only exploiting religion as a tool seeking the power for personal purposes.

Unfortunately, in Pakistan politics is not revolve around democracy to serving the nation but only for certain personal objectives. In contemporary Pakistan, by political elite cover up their financial and moral corruption using the public institutions for their own purposes even at the cost of the reputation of the Country. Contemporary legislation of PDM about NAB and the further monopolized use of FIA and IB by political regimes and usage of parliament by unpopular political entities is damaging the credibility of true democracy and the parliament.

Furthermore, political assemblages do not only acquire political strength to hide their moral or financial corruption but also to seek ultimate power to become untouchable to dominate with their business. These are the reasons for the trend of hereditary politics in Pakistan. Leaders of religio-political parties want the political dominance with the dominance of the respective sect and dogmas.

The contemporary situations be set to that the so-called political practices by the non-democratic political forces are responsible for the differences and division in the Pakistani society. Nation is divided in provinces, faiths and languages and Jinnah's Pakistan is drifting away, while unity and integration become more crucial need of the time.



# Atif Mian: Politicians play politics while Pakistan ‘economically burns’, criticizes PTI economic decisions

By: Fahad Ahmed

Atif Mian tweeted that when PTI came to power, it had a chance to set things right, and most important issue was (and is) to get the external account balanced. But it lacked any direction or purpose. For example, it started with its flagship ‘Naya Housing’ program.



Internationally acclaimed economist Atif Mian said that when PTI won, and had to face a currency crisis in its early months that was essentially PMLN's fault. This time PTI returned the favor. And it has happened many times before e.g. Musharraf regime's dying months. "The politicians play politics while Pakistan burns," he added. Atif Mian tweeted that when PTI came to power, it had a chance to set things right, and most important issue was (and is) to get the external account balanced. But it lacked any direction or purpose. For example, it started with its flagship 'Naya Housing' program. "Then came Covid-19. Ironically, corona helped Pakistan breathe a little easier. This is a point not commonly appreciated, so I'll explain it a bit more." As per Baaghi TV report, Atif highlighted one core problem Pakistan faces is that its economy is fundamentally unbalanced. **He explained the reasons.**

"A rise in domestic demand puts more pres-

sure on external account on the margin. Covid actually helped take the pressure off external demand. People weren't driving as much, the rich weren't flying and so on. The result was a temporary current account surplus. It was temporary though, and deeper structure imbalance was just waiting to whiplash the economy once Covid receded." "You can see that by coming Pakistan's swing in current account with that of its peers. If Pakistan's government had put in place a serious set of people in charge, such analysis would have been routine." "Anyways, as soon as Covid started to recede, Pakistan's balance of payment started to worsen," he explained the reasons how COVID-19 era came with a respite for country's economic woes. It is important to understand that the dynamics were quite negative even before the Russian oil shock hit, the oil shock and PTI's response it only hastened the fall. "I don't care about politics, certainly not the partisan kind but it's important for the people to get the economics right, so we can diagnose the problem with a clear mind." "Of course PMLN and PPP governments of the past have major contribution to the problems country faces today as well e.g. when CPEC was being put forward, I highlighted why it was ill-designed." Atif questioned there could have been a really fruitful China-Pakistan cooperation but CPEC was poorly designed. How could a country like Pakistan put on such huge foreign liabilities, essentially to fund domestic consumption? "The math never added up, and the sad reality is Pakistan government

never did the math (I know because I asked). Anyways, one could keep going. But I want to now bring the conversation back to the present.” **What is needed?** “We can talk about what steps need to be taken, but my fear is that the politics is fundamentally breaking down. The toughest challenge Pakistan faces is bringing back some modicum of credibility—credibility with investors, credibility with its own people. “There has to be some minimum set of rules that everyone – the main parties, and the “establishment” will legitimately agree on. “It is hard to see what that minimum core will be because they are too eager to pull the carpet from underneath each other. “Just take the example of how each government has used very limited external borrowing space as a political tool, to ultimately lead the country to the precipice it’s on today. This obviously cannot go on, with the people suffering even more than they already have.” Atif said that Pakistan needs a political grand bargain. It needs to find that common space that every functioning society needs. That political bargain must have at least two components to make any difference. First, the political elite have to agree to stop using the ‘religion card’. “You all know what it means. Stop using it, if you care about your own future,” he argued. “Second, the elite capture of economy is particularly pernicious and unproductive in the case of Pakistan. Pakistan stands out in how poorly its median citizen fares on basic needs such as education and health, even when compared to countries with similar income per capita,” he explained. “The powerful are knee deep in unproductive, rent-seeking sectors like real estate and sugar. That must change. The taxation and incentive structure must favor productive activities over unproductive ones – and open up the economy to women.”

6

<https://en.baaghiti.com/atif-mian-politicians-play-politics-while-pakistan-economically-burns-criticizes-pti-economic-decisions/>

## Netizens call 90-year-old Indian woman visiting ancestral home in Pakistan an ‘Indo-Pak dream come true’



Millions were displaced and lost their homes during Partition and Reena Varma was one of them. To the delight of the 90-year-old Indian woman, she was given the opportunity to revisit her old home after 75 years and it was a joyful affair for all who witnessed it — in person or virtually. According to NDTV, Varma reached Pakistan on Saturday to visit her ancestral home. As part of a goodwill gesture, the Pakistani High Commission has issued a three-month visa to the woman. She arrived in Pakistan through the Wagah-Attari border to see her house located in Prem Niwas in Rawalpindi. She was welcomed with the backdrop of drums and flower petals as a crowd gathered to watch. Talking to the media, she only had a message of love to promote. “Only the youngsters can change the government. Because these are neighbouring countries, everyone should live together. Our culture is the same, so is everything else — everyone wants to unite, wants to live with love.”

<https://images.dawn.com/news/1190516/netizens-call-92-year-old-indian-woman-visiting-ancestral-home-in-pakistan-an-indo-pak-dream-come-true>





# Pakistan Second Worst On Global Gender Parity Index

**Pakistan has smallest share of senior managerial, and legislative roles**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is the second worst country in the world in terms of gender parity, ranking 145 out of 146 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index report released by the World Economic Forum (WEF) on Wednesday. The Geneva-based organisation's annual report tracked disparities between the genders in 146 countries across several areas including education, health, economic opportunity and political empowerment. The top five worst countries are the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Chad, while the top five countries with gender parity are Finland, Norway, New Zealand, and Sweden. According to the report, Pakistan was among the five countries with a gender gap greater than 5%, with the other countries being Qatar, Azerbaijan, China and India. It said that Pakistan has closed 56.4% of the gender gap in 2022 — the highest overall level of parity the country has posted since the report launched in 2006. Pakistan has made "significant improvement" across three subindexes, with the highest positive variation on economic participation and opportunity, it stated. The country ranked 145 on economic participation and opportunity, 143 on health and survival, 135 on educational attainment and 95 on political participation. "While wage equality carries the highest gender gap score among economic indicators, advances were also reported in estimated earned income, where women's earnings increased 4pc compared to 2021." However, the report noted, women's participation in the labour force declined in 2022 and the shares of both men and women in senior and professional categories also saw a downturn.

"Gender parity scores for literacy, secondary and tertiary education enrolment all rose," the report added. Pakistan is the country where women have the smallest share of senior, managerial and legislative roles at a mere 4.5pc, according to the report. "However, between 2021 and 2022 the share of women in professional and technical roles as well as in senior, legislative and managerial roles increased slightly (6.7 percentage points and 5.4 percentage points, respectively). Pakistan is the country where women have the smallest share of senior, managerial and legislative roles (4.5%), compared to Jamaica, where women represent 56.6% of workers in that category, or Togo, which has the highest share of women in senior roles, at 70.1%. Women were less than 18% of professional and technical workers in Chad, compared to 41% in Rwanda or 70% in Belarus," the report read. Meanwhile, in secondary education enrolment, 16 countries reported gender gaps larger than 10 percentage points – 13 of them in Sub-Saharan Africa, two in South Asia (Pakistan and Afghanistan), and one in East Asia and the Pacific (China). In tertiary education, 29 countries closed less than 90% of the gender gap in enrolment – and these countries are concentrated in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and East Asia and the Pacific. Of this year's sample, the only region where performances have moved further toward parity is Latin America and the Caribbean, the report added.

## South Asia

Among the eight regions covered in the report, South Asia ranked the lowest, with only 62.4% based on no constant sample of



the gender gap closed. The lack of progress since the last edition extends the wait in South Asia to close the gender gap to 197 years, with broad stagnation across the gender parity scores of most countries. Bangladesh and Nepal lead regional performance, with over 69% of their gender gaps closed, while Afghanistan registered the region's and world's lowest level of overall gender parity, with a score of 43.5%. The report further said that South Asia has the widest gender gap on economic participation and opportunity, having closed only 35.7% of this gender gap. While the subindex score is an improvement of 1.8 percentage points from last year, there are considerable country divergences that anchor the result as the lowest among all regions. Afghanistan has only attained 17.6% parity on this subindex, well below the highest score of Nepal, at 64.1%. Highly populated countries are for the most part driving variation within this subindex, according to the report. "For example, increases in the share of women in professional and technical roles were most notable in Nepal, Bangladesh and India. On the other hand, the shares in Iran, Pakistan and Maldives regressed, with less impact on overall regional performance."

8

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2365725/pakistan-rated-second-worst-country-on-gender-parity-index>

## Pakistan's biggest city Karachi paralysed by monsoon rain

**Pakistan ranks eighth on a list of countries most vulnerable to extreme weather**

Karachi: A weather emergency was declared in Karachi Monday as heavier-than-usual monsoon rains continue to lash Pakistan's biggest city, flooding homes and making streets impassable. The monsoon, which usually lasts from June to September, is essential for irrigating crops and replenishing lakes and dams across the Indian subcontinent, but also brings a wave of destruction each year. Pakistan ranks eighth on a list of countries most vulnerable to extreme weather caused by climate change, according to the environment NGO Germwatch. The provincial Sindh government announced a public holiday Monday in Karachi and Hyderabad in a bid to avert flood chaos, but low-lying areas - already drenched by weeks of heavy rain - were soon the scenes of devastation. "More rains are forecast in Karachi until tomorrow," warned Sardar Sarfraz, director of the Met office. The National Disaster Management Authority said at least 312 people had died since June as a result of the monsoon rains. In Karachi, at least two people were electrocuted Monday by power lines that fell into flooded streets - a regular cause of death in the city during the monsoon. The heavy downpour also disrupted flights and train operations in the megacity of 15 million. The worst floods of recent times were in 2010 - covering almost a fifth of the country's landmass - killing nearly 2,000 people and displacing 20 million. <https://gulfnews.com/world/asia/pakistan/pakistans-biggest-city-karachi-paralysed-by-mon->





# Pakistan Default

By: Aasim Sajjad Akhtar

**WILL Pakistan actually default if the IMF, Saudi Arabia and other donors do not disburse a few billion dollars? Some are sounding the alarm bell, but others — including the government — insist that our economic ship is not about to sink anytime soon. They tell us we will not become Sri Lanka.**

It is indeed unlikely that the state will declare bankruptcy because our patrons — Western, Islamic kingdoms and the Chinese — may prefer that we don't plunge headlong into chaos. In any case, there is little relief on the horizon from the lethal combination of spiralling inflation and the fallout of the monsoon rains. Reportedly 90 million Pakistanis are already going hungry. But still we are supposed to be reassured that it won't get as bad as Sri Lanka. In making such rhetorical statements, the political and intellectual mainstream is deliberately glossing over another defining feature of Pakistan's social and political life that resembles Sri Lanka. Like that island country, Pakistan too is an ethnically majoritarian state which continues to treat its peripheral ethnic-nations like colonial subjects. Since the British left what was then called Ceylon in 1948, the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka has faced systematic and systemic racism at the hands of the Sinhalese majority. The protests against the Rajapaksas were triggered by the current economic situation. But they are noteworthy also because the Rajapaksa brothers presided over the 2009 scorched-earth military operations in the Tamil-majority Jaffna province that mainstream Sri Lanka celebrated as a definitive victory against separatist militants.

*Politics in the heartland remains unconnected to the peripheries.*

Many Sri Lankans at home and abroad have wondered out aloud whether or not the mass uprising is actually bringing together ordinary Sinhalese and Tamils around a shared vision of the future, such that there is genuine healing particularly for Tamils who have suffered structural and physical violence for generations. We in Pakistan cannot even ask such rhetorical questions. Indeed, the mainstream does not even bother to chronicle the ongoing processes of brutalisation and hate in many of our ethnic peripheries. Recently, 10 mutilated bodies were discovered in Ziarat, described by officialdom as separatist militants. When families of missing persons identified some of the dead and gathered in Quetta to peacefully demand a judicial investigation, they were baton-charged and tear gassed. The situation of the Baloch is in and of itself sufficient evidence that the khaki arbiters of Pakistan's structure of power long ago defaulted on the idea of an inclusive political, economic and cultural project. Only a social contract which acknowledges that this country is made up of many ethnic nations and then ensures equality of these ethnic nations can begin to repair the wounds and take us forward. Hate has indeed penetrated deep down into society. The ethnic tensions and violence that erupted between Sindhis and Pakhtuns after a murder in Hyderabad makes clear that divide-and-rule policies have successfully produced an intractable situation that engulfs even progressive voices. It is old news that our mainstream parties are not up to the task of an alternative vision for Pakistan. They are more interested in either

staying in government or finding a way back in; recent by-elections in Punjab underlined how everyday politics in the majoritarian heartland of the country is almost completely unconnected to the ethnic peripheries. Expect that the PTI, the PDM/PPP, and, of course, the military establishment, will continue to focus on their no-holds-barred battles for power like the one currently playing out in and around the ECP. The current government and its establishment patrons will certainly dedicate enough time and energy to keeping the IMF, Saudi Arabia and other donors onboard because the alternative scenario threatens the entire coterie's accumulation of power and wealth. And what of Imran Khan, whose supporters believe has broken with the minimum consensus that has kept our militarised ruling class intact till now? The true measure of whether a party or leader is challenging status quo is whether they articulate a political project which emphatically rejects colonial statecraft in the ethnic peripheries, while offering a unique vision for metropolitan Pakistan beyond land grabbers, war makers and profiteering cartels.

If Pakistan were to declare bankruptcy in the weeks to come, the burden would yet again be borne by the working masses. But the truth is that we are already a country in default. And only a vision to transcend hate and redistribute wealth alongside will constitute a genuine reboot. I believe that there are enough of us still able and willing to offer a meaningful economic, political and cultural alternative. But there will come a time, sooner rather than later, when such a vision will be too little, too late.

The writer teaches at Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad.

Published in Dawn, July 22nd, 2022  
<https://www.dawn.com/news/1700981/pakistan-default>

## Pakistan reports polio case to take year's count to 13



Dera Ismail Khan: Pakistan's polio count for the year has risen to 13 with one case reported on Friday as the South Asian nation looks to contain a disease mostly eradicated elsewhere, officials said. The latest case was found in the northwest province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and involved an 18-month-old boy reported to be undernourished, the health ministry said in a statement. The previous 12 were reported from North Waziristan district which in the past was a lawless area mainly under the control of Pakistani Taliban before military operations were launched against the group in 2014. This is the first polio case reported from outside of North Waziristan district where vaccinators were still facing serious challenges in reaching out to children due to resistance from local religious leaders and unwilling parents, provincial health department officials said. Last month, a vaccination official and two policemen on security duty were shot dead during a polio inoculation drive in KP province. This case puts the Wild Polio case count for endemic countries at 14, with 13 cases from Pakistan between April and June 2022 and one case from Afghanistan in January, the ministry said. <https://gulfnews.com/world/asia/pakistan/pakistan-reports-polio-case-to-take-years-count-to-13-1.89466566>





# SBP Board May Become Dysfunctional

Out of existing five members of board, three are retiring on Friday

By: Shahbaz Rana

ISLAMABAD: Amid a stalemate over the nominee for the post of State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) governor, the central bank board is also going to become dysfunctional on Friday, which may completely break down the policy-making chain in the middle of a worst external sector crisis. Out of the five existing members of the SBP board of directors, three directors are retiring on Friday, leaving the board with only two members. Board meeting cannot be convened until at least four members are present, according to the SBP Act. Of the remaining two members, one is acting governor and the second is secretary finance, who has already been stripped off his voting rights by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The board is going to become dysfunctional at a time when the government has failed to break the gridlock on the appointment of the SBP governor during the past three months. Sources said that the resistance was coming from within the PML-N, as two factions of the party were pushing for their own candidates. Due to disagreement over the existing six candidates that had been interviewed by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the name of Shahzad Dada, President of United Bank Limited, has also lately surfaced. Similarly, the government is now again considering appointing a bureaucrat who has not yet attained the superannuation age. "All options remain open," commented a senior government official involved in the decision-making process. PM Shehbaz has failed to show his metal at a time when the central bank is in dire need of leadership. The rupee is falling like leaves in the autumn and there is no body at the helm of affairs, neither a permanent governor nor a board that can give any sense of

direction. The rupee closed at Rs222 to a dollar - one of the steepest declines in the history of Pakistan amid the leadership vacuum. The SBP said on Tuesday that the current account position, relevant news items and domestic uncertainty together determine the exchange rate. The Express Tribune had reported on Tuesday that the central bank was choking even small amounts of dollar transactions to save declining foreign exchange reserves. Sources said that the Ministry of Finance has not yet transmitted a summary to the Prime Minister's Office for appointment of new members of the board. Saleem Sethi, Ali Jameel and Tariq Hassan are going to complete their term on Friday. Since the board is appointed by the federal cabinet and it may take time before a new board is put together. A finance ministry official said that it has been decided that the terms of the outgoing board members would not be extended. Names of Ali Cheema, Akbar Zaidi, Nadeem Hussain, Fawad Anwar and Shahid Mehmood were being considered for appointment on the SBP board. However, no name has been finalised yet. Under the SBP Act, the government is required to appoint eight non-executive directors for a term of five years. The board is responsible for the oversight of affairs and functions of the SBP and also supervise the management and the bank's administration, operations and have the right of access to all the activities of the bank, according to the SBP Act. The law says that the non-executive directors shall be eminent professionals each of whom is well-known for his integrity, expertise, and experience in the fields of economics, financial services, banking, law, information technology, risk management or

accountancy to perform the oversight. They shall have an advanced degree from a recognised university or hold professional accreditation, and relevant experience in any such fields for not less than 10 years. This will limit the government's choices for the appointment of the board directors. The board also has a say in formulation and overseeing foreign exchange reserve management, strategic investment and risk policy; approves the annual budget of the bank and approve the annual report and financial statements of the bank. The governor's term is also five years, to be extendable for another five years. But the maximum age limit is 65 years and no one can be appointed as governor, if he or she cannot complete the five-year full term. The position of central bank governor fell vacant on May 4 after the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) led coalition government decided against giving a second term to Dr Reza Baqir. Last month, the government conducted interviews of Asim Meraj Hussain, a former official of the IMF, Dr Murtaza Syed, acting Governor of the SBP, Dr Saeed Ahmad, Senior Adviser to the IMF Executive Director, Zafar Masood, a banker, Mohammad Ashraf, Executive Director of the SBP and Jameel Ahmad, former deputy governor of the SBP. Sources said that the finance minister was in favour of appointment of Asim Meraj as the governor. Some senior party leaders wanted Dr Saeed Ahmad as the governor but the finance ministry was not happy with the performance of Ahmad as a senior adviser to the executive director of the IMF. Dr Murtaza Syed has not been actively considered due to some of his affiliations and also the government wanted to appoint some senior person as the governor, according to a high-ranking government official.

12

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2366770/sbp-board-may-become-dysfunctional>

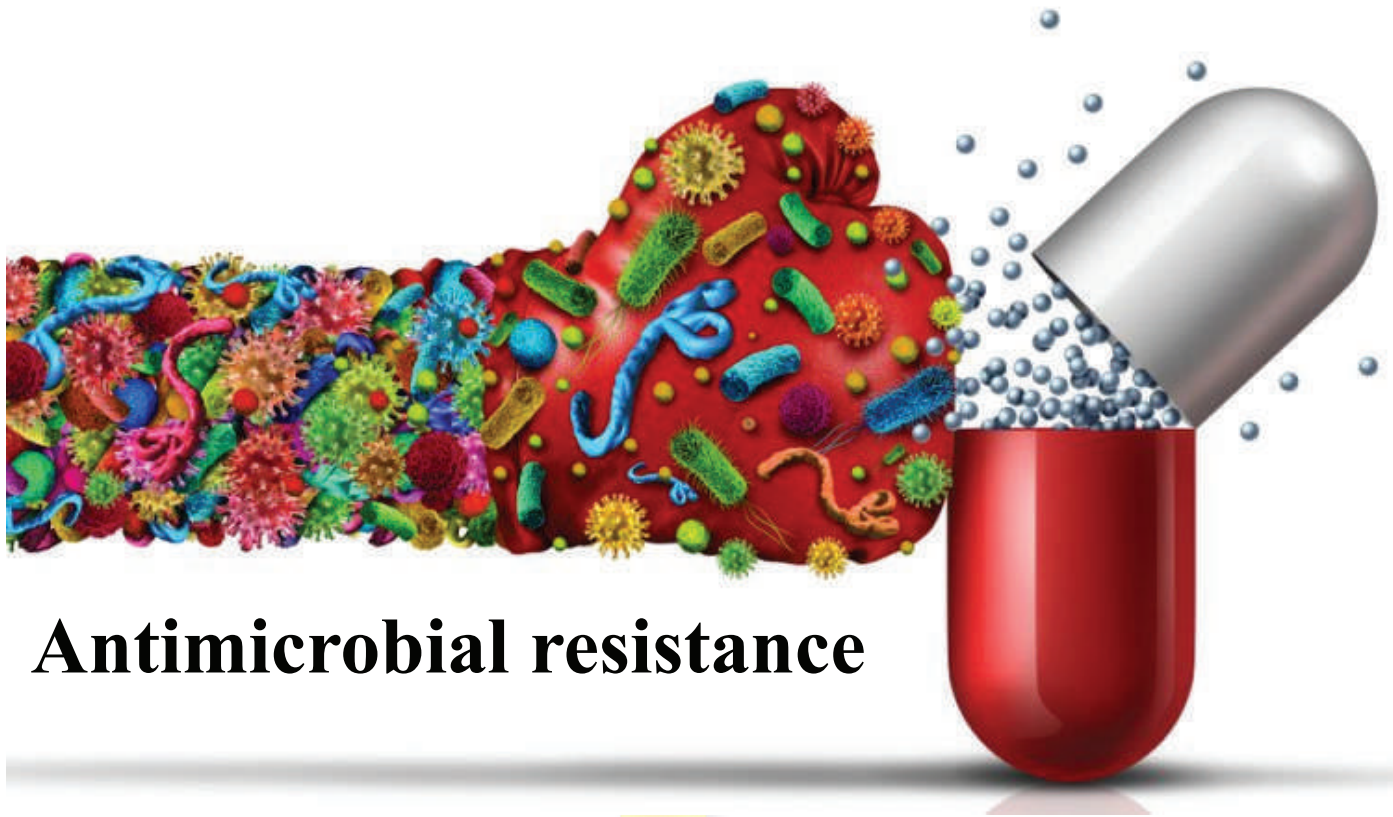
## COVID-19: Over 30 students vaccinated with one syringe in India

**Probe ordered after nursing student in Madhya Pradesh says he was only given one syringe**

Bhopal: Over 30 students in Madhya Pradesh's Sagar district were administered the Covid-19 jab with a single syringe at a vaccination camp for students. The vaccination camp was organised at Jain Public School on Wednesday, and a nursing student was deployed for inoculation. When the vaccination was underway, the father of a student noticed that the nursing student was not changing the syringe and raised an alarm. The nursing student defended himself stating that he has one syringe to vaccinate all students. "I did what I was asked to do. The person who delivered the materials (vaccines and other kits) gave a single syringe," said the nursing student. Parents of all students who were vaccinated at the camp demanded action against the guilty. An First Information Report (FIR) was registered for negligence and violating the Central government's 'one needle, one syringe', only one time pledge. An inquiry was initiated against Dr Rakesh Roshan, the District Immunisation Officer who was in-charge of sending the vaccination team. "We have also informed the health department of the state government. Meanwhile, we have started taking samples of all students who were given vaccinated at the camp. Strict action would be taken against whoever will be found responsible of violating norms," said a district medical officer.

<https://gulfnews.com/world/asia/india/-covid-19-over-30-students-vaccinated-with-one-syringe-in-india-1.89564085>





# Antimicrobial resistance

**THE World Health Organisation's call for accelerating the development of vaccines to prevent infections caused by antimicrobial resistance shows that the 'superbug' apocalypse that health experts had been worrying about for years is now well and truly upon us. Describing the growing resistance of bacteria, viruses and other microbes to the existing stream of antibiotics as a silent pandemic, the WHO earlier this week released a report about the vaccines that have been tried or are being clinically tested for this purpose. Vaccines prevent infections and reduce their intensity, and the state here has in place programmes such as the EPI, and more lately, anti-Covid vaccinations. According to the WHO, vaccines can also be used to reduce the incidence of AMR. Since infections caused by superbugs are difficult, and sometimes impossible, to treat, vaccines can act as a defence against AMR.**

Several examples of AMR can be found in Pakistan, where the issue is of particular concern to health experts since certain diseases prevalent in the country, such as tuberculosis and typhoid, have become resistant to the drugs traditionally used to counter them. In

2018, there was an outbreak of extensively drug-resistant typhoid in children in Sindh. The following year, in 2019, the provincial government carried out a vaccination drive under which schoolchildren were administered the typhoid conjugate vaccine. This helped control the spread of the illness. Pakistan also has the dubious distinction of accounting for more than 60pc of drug-resistant TB cases in the Eastern Mediterranean region. This phenomenon has been 'helped along' by the over-prescription of antibiotics by ill-informed doctors and quacks. Across the world, drug-resistant bacterial infections cause almost 5m deaths each year; more than 1m are directly linked to AMR. In our own context, there is a need to closely monitor doctors' prescriptions and the sale of antibiotics by pharmacies. What is equally important, though, is disease prevention. Governments must ensure decent and clean living and working spaces so that these spots don't end up becoming breeding grounds for deadly superbugs.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1699709/antimicrobial-resistance>



# SC Hands Prize Back to Winner

Strikes down Punjab deputy speaker's ruling; declares Hamza's election null and void; declares Elahi elected CM

SLAMABAD: In a devastating blow to the nascent Shehbaz Sharif-led ruling coalition, the Supreme Court on Tuesday struck down Punjab Assembly Deputy Speaker Dost Muhammad Mazari's ruling on the election of Punjab chief minister, paving the way for PTI's Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi to ascend to the throne in the country's political heartland. In the conclusion to a hearing that has gripped the country for the past four days, a three-member bench, comprising Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial, Justice Ijazul Ahsan and Justice Munib Akhtar, announced an unusually harsh verdict after over a three-hour delay. "The governance of the province of Punjab in accordance with the Constitution has been subverted whereby the fundamental rights of the people have been seriously infringed," said the top court in its 11-page short order. "As a result, the ruling dated 22.07.2022 issued by Respondent No1, Deputy Speaker, the Punjab Assembly is set aside and declared to be void, without lawful authority and of no legal effect," read the order. By virtue of the order, PML-N's Hamza Shehbaz lost his status of the "trustee" chief minister. All the advisers and assistants appointed by Hamza were also ordered to be relieved of their duties. The court declared the ten votes of the PML-Q lawmakers, which were rejected by the deputy speaker, citing party chief Chaudhry Shujaat's letter in the CM election, as valid. The apex court in its short verdict ordered the petitioner, Pervaiz Elahi to take oath of the Punjab CM at 11:30pm tonight and ordered Hamza Shehbaz, who was hitherto 'trustee' chief minister, to leave the post of the province's chief executive immediately. In case the governor does not administer oath to Elahi, President Dr Arif Alvi can do so instead, the court ruled. The apex court also nullified all decisions taken

by 'trustee CM' Hamza after the controversial election in which he bagged 179 votes against Elahi's 186. The three-judge bench also held that the deputy speaker misinterpreted the apex court order on Article-63A related to the defection clause and "subverted the Constitution". Soon after the verdict was announced, PTI leaders and workers burst into impromptu celebrations. As the hearing resumed earlier today, the counsel representing Punjab Assembly Deputy Speaker Dost Mazari, Irfan Qadir, and the counsel for Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Farooq H Naek, boycotted the SC proceedings. The proceedings began with a three-member bench headed by Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial presiding over the hearing. Punjab Assembly Deputy Speaker Dost Mazari's counsel, Irfan Qadir, came on the rostrum where he stated that he was told to not be a part of the proceedings. "I will not be a part of further proceedings", he maintained. Qadir stated that he would file a revision against the order rejecting the petition requesting the formation of a full five-member bench, to which the chief justice replied that the court had decided that there was no need for a full court to hear the case. "Arguments were made in the court regarding the compliance of the party leader's instructions," the Chief Justice of Pakistan said, adding that the lawyers for the parties were told that the Constitution did not allow for obstruction of governance. PPP's counsel Farooq Naek also appeared on the rostrum during Tuesday's proceedings and stated that his party would also not appear in court. The chief justice, however, told Naek that he had done well in assisting the court on Monday and permitted him to take his seat. Justice Bandial added that the PPP was not made a party in the case. [www.tribune.com.pk/story/2367908/sc-declares-deputy-speakers-ruling-on-punjab-cm-poll-null-and-void](http://www.tribune.com.pk/story/2367908/sc-declares-deputy-speakers-ruling-on-punjab-cm-poll-null-and-void)



# Dalil Kot is a Beautiful Ancient Historical Fort Of Sindh

By: Badaruddin Kalhor, Bureau Chief Lahore International London



Dalil Kot, the beautiful ancient historical fort of Sindh, built with clay, has lost its true historical context and has started to deteriorate due to the neglect of the culture department. Many walls, including the main entrance wall of the fort, have been damaged, large pits have been found in the upper road around the fort, which can be a major reason for the destruction of the fort. The walls of the fort are collapsing from the outside due to the presence of mud and mud around the fort. Dalil Kot is the oldest "Dahleel" in history, which is located in its original form about sixteen kilometers south and west of Nawabshah city. This fort is built on a complete circle, which also has twelve towers. The area of this fort is sixteen acres. The wall of this fort is about thirty feet long and eight feet wide. The walls of the fort are made of oak and birch wood. While on the inside, there is a four-to-five-foot-wide path below the corners. In the east of the fort, there is a Mak Darwaz, where there are two tent-like platforms for watchmen, and three small gates

in the north, west, and south, which are called Chur Darwaz. is also called There was no iron or wooden door in them that had any sign. The main door, platform and gate of this kot as well as the second door are made with brick wings. The head used in this fort is made of gold and copper. However, there are kangaras all over the fort, in which a fixed head is also used. Bricks are placed on the tops of these stones, which also add to the gold of the fort. These same bricks are placed around the middle of the fort wall from the front. While there are no ancient buildings or any other signs or monuments inside or outside the fort, nor has anything been found in the ground after digging a well or a pit. There are mentions of finding some coins, which are also said to be random, none of which has been proven. To the east of the fort, a local brick maker found a small ancient copper coin, some of which are found in museums. **Historical background** The history of this fort has been embellished by many historians, researchers and historians of Sindh in





their books and researches based on the ancient history of this fort, legends, traditions and legends, especially the Chach name. But today there are many questions which will be mentioned below. Here the history of this fort is presented by different historians. Rai dynasty ruled Sindh from 450 AD to 652 AD. Rai Gharani ruled from Helmand to Kashmir. Forts were also built in Sindh during their rule. Some people connect this fort with the Surya family and say that this fort was built by the Surya religious people who worshiped the sun and built this fort on a perfect circle like the sun, which also has twelve towers, which are also called the ruins of the fort. They also write about this fort that the traces of the ancient Hokkari River are still present in the form of cattle near this ancient fort, which are actually the old traces of the Dehile fort. In addition to this, a pit is still present at a distance of about two hundred meters from the fort. About which the local people say that soil was taken from this pit for the construction of the fort. This fort was a strong defensive post between Alwar and Brahmanabad. In terms of trade, the Hokkari River was also a famous destination. According to Chach Name, after conquering Brahmanabad, Muhammad bin Qasim turned to Dehleel and Behror forts. The merchants of Dehleel Fort went to India after the news. The rest of the soldiers were ready for war. The soldiers of

the fort got fed up and sent the children to the gate. Moulai Shedai writes about the military importance of the fort that after the murder of Raja Dahar of Sindh, his son Jaisinya and Muhammad Alafi were advised by the minister Sisagar to go towards Brahmanabad, while the governor of Delhi, Neveh Put, between Alwar and Brahmanabad. Dharan had sixteen thousand troops with him and fought bravely with Muhammad Qasim and finally defeated him. Abu Zafar Nadwi further writes that Muhammad bin Qasim got a lot of wealth from the fort of Dehil, of which he sent a fifth of it to the Caliph in Iraq. According to Abu Zafar Nadwi, the fort of Delhi was also important from a military point of view. Trade from here was going on with India and Desavar countries. Dr. Nabi Bakhsh Baloch also says in the light of research that the Kot of Delhi is the same as the present day Kot and the geographical conditions also show this. Shams-ud-Din Qureshi also explains about this fort that the Kachu Fort on the bank of the Hakari River and the Nawabshah and Skarand Kachu Fortified Kot are traces of ancient forts. But it has been learned about the Honorable Mamor Yusufani that he gave an oral speech in a seminar in Mansurah a long time ago and said that the fort of Delhi is in Tharpar Kar district. There are different opinions about how the name of this fort came to be Delhi Ma Dalil Kot. Some say that it was built by Mir Dalil Khan, who was the Nawab of Talpur. But it has been written about the period of Talpur that due to the military importance of Talpur, Mir Noor Muhammad Khan Talpur renovated the fort from 1833 to 1840 (1249 AH to 1256 AH). There are more families who settled in the fort some time before the formation of Pakistan, before that they were living on the west side of the fort since ancient times. While around the outside of the fort, Sayyid, Anad, Magsi, and Mirbahr communities also resided.



# What Joe Biden Should Tell the Iraqi Prime Minister | Opinion

By: Edwin Shuker

When President Joe Biden meets Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi this weekend at a summit in Saudi Arabia, Iraq's relations with Iran will be at the top of the agenda. President Biden will likely express concerns about Iranian attacks on U.S. forces and the activities of pro-Iran militias in Iraq. However, a vital issue he should also raise is the recent Iraqi law that criminalizes any contact between Iraqis and Israel. The law is dangerous because it represents an Iranian attempt to undermine U.S. allies and U.S. diplomacy throughout the Arab and Muslim world—and is a model for similar laws elsewhere. The law works hard to be extreme. Proposed by Iraqi Shia politician Muqtada al-Sadr, but with Iran's fingerprints all over it, the text prohibits all contact with Israel because of its very existence—not, as its defenders claim, in response to the Israeli presence in the West Bank and the Golan Heights following the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. The legislation, adopted on May 26, explicitly bans "any act that would lead to and achieve any form of dealings with the Zionist entity, whether directly or indirectly." It covers relations through "conferences, gatherings, literature, publications, social media, or by any other means." The text applies to Iraqis and Iraqi media outlets inside and outside Iraq, and foreigners in the country. Worse yet, articles 6, 7, and 8 impose the death penalty for persons forming "any kind of relations with the Zionist entity." As if the law's threats were not brazen enough, article 9 applies the death penalty to a long list of Iraqi officials, including the president and prime minister, for even minimal contact with "the Zionist entity." And just in case anybody was

confused about the law's true motivation, article 7 criminalizes "masonic ideas," a classic antisemitic trope. The shameless closing paragraph states that these draconian measures are meant "to maintain the national, Islamic and humanitarian principles of Iraq and Iraqis in defending Palestine." Thus far the U.S. response has been diplomatic and ineffectual. The State Department is "deeply disturbed." Such restraint is self-defeating. The law is an Iranian bid to undermine U.S. diplomacy and allies throughout the Arab and Islamic worlds. Its target is the growing rapprochement between Israel and moderate Arab states in the Gulf and North Africa. The establishment of formal ties between these countries started with President Donald Trump's Abraham Accords in August 2020. The greatest prize, which is now in sight, is a public relationship between Israel and Saudi Arabia. Iran, which has questioned the legitimacy of the Gulf Arab states, is threatened by such connections. It wants to counter the growing international pressure on its nuclear ambitions—pressure in part from a unified Israeli, moderate Arab, and American front. The law achieves these aims by appealing to a mixture of Saddam Hussein-era antisemitism and nostalgia. It might seem strange to exploit such feelings. After all, Saddam launched a bloody eight-year war against Iran and treated Moqtada al-Sadr's own family with brutality. However, Iran has calculated that the way to capture Arab public opinion is by appealing to hatred of Jews and Israel—hatred that distracts Iraqis, Lebanese, Houthis, and others from the real issues facing their societies. The threat of the death penalty for contact with

Israel evokes an early horror in Saddam's influence over Iraq. On January 27, 1969, the Iraqi Ba'athists publicly hanged 14 alleged Israeli spies, nine of whom were Jews. The Iraqi regime then bussed in hundreds of thousands of Iraqis to view the victims as they dangled on the gallows. These men were not spies. Rather, they were examples to other Iraqis of how far the Ba'athists would go to eliminate imagined enemies, let alone real ones. While the new law appeals to base instincts, its severity implicitly acknowledges that some Iraqis seek to leave behind their country's antisemitic past. I know this firsthand. I fled with my family from Ba'athist repression in 1971. In 2003, I returned and have promoted interreligious harmony, meeting with top Iraqi officials and Iraqis of all communities. I do so as an Iraqi Jew, born in Baghdad into a 2,600-year-old community. What sensible Iraqis understand as interfaith dialogue, Iran and its allies portray as a strategic threat. Indeed, even before the law, Iranian-backed militias in 2020 "disappeared" Mazen Latif, a publisher, and Tawfik al-Tamimi, a newspaper editor, both advocates for acknowledging Iraq's Jewish heritage. The new law gives such murders official approval. When President Biden sits down with prime minister al-Kadhimi, he should do more than express concern. He should denounce the law as an attack on the U.S., its allies, and their attempt to build peace in the Middle East. Above all, he can look the Iraqi prime minister in the eye and tell him that the law represents the bloody past of Iraq, not its future. Edwin Shuker is a Iraqi-born philanthropist and Jewish communal leader in the United Kingdom. His story of exile and return is featured in the documentary Remember Baghdad.

18

<https://www.newsweek.com/what-joe-biden-should-tell-iraqi-prime-minister-opinion-1724773>

## Covid in China: Million in lockdown in Wuhan after four cases

Almost one million people in a suburb of Wuhan - China's central city where the coronavirus was first recorded - have been placed under lockdown. Jiangxia district residents have been ordered to stay inside their homes or compounds for three days after four asymptomatic Covid cases were detected. China follows a "zero Covid" strategy, including mass testing, strict isolation rules and local lockdowns. This has resulted in far fewer deaths than in many other countries. But the strategy is facing growing opposition as people and businesses continue to face the strain of restrictions. In Wuhan, a city of 12 million people, regular testing uncovered two asymptomatic cases two days ago. Two more cases were found through contact tracing, and shortly after the lockdown order was issued. Wuhan became known around the world in early 2020 as the first place scientists detected the new coronavirus - and the first city to be put under harsh restrictive measures. At the time, the wider world was shocked by the strict lockdown, but many cities and countries were soon forced to impose their own similar measures. Later, China became known as a Covid success story, with restrictions lifted much earlier than in many other countries. But that has changed again, with China pursuing a "zero Covid" strategy resulting in frequent local lockdowns, rather than trying to live with the virus as in most other countries.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-62322484>



# US Terms Imran's Claim Disturbing, Looks Ahead to Strong Ties

WASHINGTON: Former prime minister Imran Khan's conspiracy claims are 'very disturbing,' says a US State Department official while underlining Washington's desire to rebuild a strong partnership with Pakistan. Addressing a convention of Pakistani physicians in Atlantic City, New Jersey, Director Pakistan Desk Neil W. Hop described US-Pakistan relations as "a partnership we cannot do without". "We have to work with Pakistan in tackling global affairs. It is a partnership that is essential for us," he said. Mr Hop said that a Pakistani delegation would visit Washington on July 25 for the largest ever health talks between the two countries. Pakistan's Ambassador Masood Khan said that the US-Pakistan relations had already stabilised and were "poised to become even better" in the near future. A former Pakistani ambassador to the US, Jalil Abbas Jilani, however, acknowledged that relations were passing through a difficult phase and suggested "the revival of structured high-level dialogue" to keep the partnership on track. Ambassador Khan suggested strong commercial ties between the two countries, reminding American investors that "Pakistan has a large and vibrant Middle class and offers great opportunities for investment." Responding to a question about former prime minister Imran Khan's claim of alleged US interference in Pakistan's domestic politics, Hop said: "It's very disturbing. There's absolutely no truth in those allegations. We support a strong, democratic setup in Pakistan. We have no interests in its domestic politics." Jilani said the entire episode was very tragic, adding that he has had personal relations with the US official, Donald Lu,

implicated in this alleged conspiracy. "He has positive feelings for Pakistan and has rejected involvement in any conspiracy," he said. Hop too called Lu a thorough "professional who cannot make such statements." Jilani suggested tackling this and other similar issues "in a discreet and dispassionate fashion".

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1700280>

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# Why is the U.S. Continuing to Engage Somalia? | Opinion

By: Christie Palcisko And Sam Rogers

Four years ago, we lost a man dearly important to us. Four years ago, Alex Conrad was killed in action in Somalia. Before Alex left, he assured his family it was going to be a short deployment, but he was excited to again earn combat pay. Alex knew what he was getting into; knew that the U.S. Army's role in advising and assisting in Somalia would likely include combat. The question none of us seem to have a clear answer to is, "Why?" The United States has been at war for a long time. We operated in Somalia in the 1990s, shifted focus to Afghanistan after Sept. 11, 2001, expanded the "war on terror" to Iraq in 2003, and far beyond Iraq in the years since. Somalia has once again become a place where American troops go to fight and sacrifice, though there is little understanding of what they are doing there. U.S. foreign policy has succumbed to mission creep, demanding long and repeated deployments to faraway places to accomplish goals that are vague at best. Congress doesn't vote on these military engagements, and effectively leaves the decisions to unelected Pentagon officials with no accountability to the American people. As the Afghanistan Papers revealed, a mission can spin out of control behind the scenes all while the Department of Defense hides behind slogans and false reassurances that everything is going well. This has cost our country trillions of dollars and thousands of irreplaceable American lives. We are just two of the millions of folks who feel the impact of bad foreign policy.

The solution, to put it bluntly, is Congress should do its job. Our country's overreliance on endless war and Congress' refusal to put an

end to it is irresponsible and wrong. America is blessed to have men and women who serve selflessly in our defense, ready to sacrifice everything to preserve and defend our freedom. And it should stand to reason that our congressional leaders could muster enough courage to put even some skin in the game by voting on military engagement and repealing outdated authorizations for military action. After all, members can be found at Memorial Day parades, academy graduations, military funerals, and Veterans Service Organization (VSO) events, so they should also be found on the House or Senate floor voting on the operations they rightfully praise our military for completing. Carefully and specifically authorizing military action either by declaration of war or specific and limited Authorizations for Use of Military Force is one of Congress' most important roles that it is regularly ignoring. For instance, our operations in Somalia were never voted on by Congress. Old, outdated authorizations for military action have been used to justify engagement around the world, including strikes in Somalia against Al-Shabaab who didn't even exist when the cited authorizations were voted on. Keeping obsolete, overbroad authorizations on the books has allowed presidents to abuse them and send American men and women into harm's way without congressional consent, subverting a vital pillar of our Constitution. The recently announced troop surge into Somalia demonstrates a new level of disconnection between Congress and its duties. Overshadowed by tens of billions of our taxpayer dollars flowing into Ukraine, this troop redeployment to Somalia to battle



Al-Shabaab puts American lives in danger, though it's not clear how that mission makes us safer here at home. Congress must take responsibility for wartime decisions. Our lawmakers should repeal outdated military engagement authorizations and change the way they handle military authorizations in the future, ending our seemingly endless entanglement not connected to vital national interests. When a real threat presents itself, that is the time for Congress to authorize actions. If the conflict in Somalia poses an actual risk to our national security, Congress should be able to publicly articulate and defend those risks, then pass a precise authorization detailing the enemy, operations, and conditions of success. We both lost our brother to war in Somalia. The least Congress could do is thoroughly debate and vote on where, when, and most importantly, why we should send our friends and family to fight and potentially die in these endless conflicts.

<https://www.newsweek.com/why-us-continuing-engage-somalia-opinion-1724767>

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## China Closely Tracking Debris Of Its Most Powerful Rocket



BEIJING: China is closely tracking the remnants of a Long March 5B rocket launched over the weekend, but the chances of debris causing damage are very slim, the foreign ministry said on Wednesday. Last year, China was accused of being opaque, particularly by Nasa, after it kept silent about the estimated debris trajectory of a Long March 5B rocket and its reentry window. On Sunday, China's most powerful rocket was launched for the third time since its maiden flight in 2020 to deliver a module into orbit as part of the construction of a Chinese space station. It is understood that this type of rocket adopts a special technical design and most components will be destroyed during reentry, foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said at a regular media briefing, when asked if China knew when and where the rocket debris could land. The probability of causing harm to aviation and the ground was very low, Zhao said.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1701931/china-closely-tracking-debris-of-its-most-powerful-rocket>

# Five takeaways from President Biden's first trip to Middle East

Joe Biden reaffirmed old commitments to allies and pushed for further Israeli-Arab normalisation during visit to region.

By: Ali Harb



Washington, DC – The United States “will not walk away” from the Middle East, US President Joe Biden reaffirmed to allies during his trip to the region last week. The trip to Israel and Saudi Arabia came at a time of international and domestic crises for the US president, who had vowed to strengthen “promising trends” in a “less pressurized” Middle East. “The United States is going to remain an active, engaged partner in the Middle East,” Biden told Arab leaders during a summit in the Saudi city of Jeddah on Saturday. Throughout the four-day trip, Biden reaffirmed old commitments to allies and pushed for the acceleration of shifts already in motion, including Israeli-Arab normalisation. Here are five key takeaways from Biden’s first visit to the Middle East as president.

## **Biden puts on pro-Israel display**

From the moment he landed at Ben Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv, Biden made a series of pronouncements reaffirming Washington’s commitment to Israel’s security and his own affinity for the country. Biden suggested that he identifies as a Zionist, echoing previous

comments he has made over the years. “I did say and I say again, you need not be a Jew to be a Zionist,” he said. He added that the US-Israeli connection is “bone deep”. As he heaped praise on Israel, Biden did not openly press for concessions relating to Palestinians in engagements with Israeli officials. According to public statements, there were no criticisms of settlements, no calls for allowing Washington to open a consulate for Palestinians in Jerusalem, and no pushes for accountability for the killing of Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh. As he headed to occupied East Jerusalem and the West Bank, Biden struck a more balanced tone without explicitly criticising Israel. Last Friday, he appeared to liken the plight of Palestinians to that of Irish people who struggled under British colonialism. “My background and the background of my family is Irish American, and we have a long history not fundamentally unlike the Palestinian people with Great Britain,” he told a Palestinian audience in East Jerusalem. During the visit, Biden pledged \$100m in additional aid to hospitals that serve Palestin-



ians in the holy city. And after a meeting with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, he also said Washington would continue to “insist on a full and transparent accounting” of the killing of Abu Akleh, who was fatally shot by Israeli forces in May. But the US president did not commit to an independent probe or meet with the slain journalist’s family – as Abu Akleh’s relatives had requested – during his visit.

### **US, Israel present united front against Iran**

While US officials say they are committed to reviving the Iran nuclear deal and Israel openly opposes the agreement, Biden and Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid displayed a united front against Tehran last week. The two leaders signed a joint declaration pledging to never allow Iran to obtain nuclear weapons, with Washington vowing to keep the US commitment to Israel’s security “bipartisan and sacrosanct”. “The United States stresses that integral to this pledge is the commitment never to allow Iran to acquire a nuclear weapon, and that it is prepared to use all elements of its national power to ensure that outcome,” the joint statement, released on July 14, reads. Tehran denies seeking nuclear arms. Asked days earlier by Israel’s Channel 12 news whether he would use force against Iran to prevent it from acquiring a nuclear weapon, Biden said, “If that was the last resort, yes.” The US president also ruled out removing Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) from the US list of “foreign terrorist organizations” even if it means killing the 2015 nuclear pact, which saw Iran scale back its nuclear programme in exchange for the lifting of sanctions against its economy. Biden later said he continues to believe that “diplomacy is the best way” to ensure a nuclear weapons-free Iran. Imad Harb, director of research and analysis at the Arab Center Washington DC, said that while the US commitment on Iran is not entirely new, spelling it out in such a way at a time when the nuclear

talks are stalling increases the chances of confrontation with Tehran. “You won’t allow Iran to have nuclear weapons. But yet at the same time, you have not been able to reach an agreement with Iran on the nuclear file,” Harb said of Biden. “So what does that mean? Are we, the United States, tip-toeing into a military confrontation with Iran based on Israeli perceptions of threat? Or is the United States truly actually threatening because it feels that Iran is arriving at the nuclear breakout or nuclear weapons?”

### **Push for normalisation turns incremental**

Biden made it clear before leaving on his trip that pushing for normalisation between Israel and Arab countries – particularly Saudi Arabia – would be a top priority. Saudi officials had previously said they would not normalise with Israel absent of a viable Palestinian state. And so during his visit, Biden pushed for incremental normalising gestures between the two countries that fall short of fully establishing diplomatic relations. When he was in Israel, Biden announced that Saudi Arabia has agreed to open its airspace to all air carriers, including Israeli planes, hailing the move as “historic”. Washington also helped secure an agreement to transfer two Red Sea islands from Egyptian to Saudi sovereignty, which required Israeli consent. Biden portrayed the pact as a major achievement, describing it as a “historic deal to transform a flashpoint at the heart of the Middle East wars into an area of peace”. While Biden was not able to add new countries to the normalisation agreements, known as the “Abraham Accords” and brokered by his predecessor Donald Trump, he pushed on with US calls for regional economic and security integration that would include Israel.

### **MBS fist bump stirs criticism, debate**

Saudi Arabia’s crown prince was outside the royal palace in Jeddah when Biden’s presidential limousine arrived. Biden took a few steps out of the vehicle, clutching both sides of his

blazer – in an apparent effort to button it up – with one hand. As the crown prince approached, Biden extended an arm with a clenched fist towards him. The two leaders bumped fists – not an uncommon greeting in the age of COVID-19 – and exchanged smiles as they walked into the building. The moment ended the estrangement between the US president and de facto Saudi leader, whom the US intelligence community accuses of being behind the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi. Saudi Arabia has said that the killing of Khashoggi at the kingdom's consulate in Istanbul in 2018 was a rogue operation that took place without the approval or knowledge of top officials, including bin Salman (known by his initials, MBS). The kingdom also says it tried and convicted those responsible for the murder. But Biden, who called Saudi Arabia a “pariah” as a candidate, initially refused to engage directly with MBS, with the White House saying that the US president would conduct relations with his counterpart, King Salman. Now, the proverbial ice between Biden and MBS has been broken. The US president said he brought up the killing of Khashoggi in a meeting with the crown prince and other Saudi officials, but rights groups were quick to criticise the president over the encounter. Fred Ryan – the publisher of the Washington Post newspaper, where Khashoggi worked at the time of his death – called the fist bump “shameful”, and the Committee to Protect Journalists said it was “appalled” by Biden’s “failure” to hold the crown prince accountable. However, many mainstream commentators in Washington defended Biden, with some citing the important issues that the US and Saudi Arabia must tackle jointly – including oil and Iran.

24 “Critics of [Biden] trip to KSA get 2 things wrong. First, you have to deal with the leaders that exist, not ones you prefer. 2nd, what matters is not ‘deliverables’ but building a relationship w Saudi leaders that will allow

the 2 countries to collaborate on Iran, Israel, oil, etc,” Richard Haass, president of the Council on Foreign Relations, wrote on Twitter on Sunday. Harb, of the Arab Center, said Biden may have wanted to avoid a handshake with the crown prince, but there was no way to escape the visuals of being with MBS on the visit. “The issue is how would Mohammed bin Salman take it. It looks like he is taking it as an admission that the US president was wrong, as well as an American recognition of his leadership,” Harb told Al Jazeera.

### **Discussions for more oil, but nothing concrete**

As much as Biden and his top aides stressed over the past weeks that the trip to the Middle East was not about oil, experts have argued that the energy crisis is driving the president’s trip. The trip did not result in an explicit agreement to boost production from the kingdom to tame oil prices that skyrocketed after the Russian invasion of Ukraine. But Biden appeared optimistic when addressing the issue. “We had a good discussion on ensuring global energy security and adequate oil supplies to support global economic growth, and that will begin shortly,” Biden told reporters after talks with Saudi officials, adding that Riyadh shares “the urgency” about the need to tackle the energy crisis. In a joint statement on Friday, Washington and Riyadh “reaffirmed their commitment to a stable global energy market”. The White House later said the two countries finalised several bilateral agreements, including on energy security, without providing details. Oil prices had been gradually going down since before Biden’s trip. The US president said on Friday that it will be “another couple weeks” before the possible effects of his visit to Saudi Arabia are seen by US fuel consumers at the pump.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/7/18/five-takeaways-from-president-bidens-first-trip-to-middle-east>



# More US Gunboat Diplomacy Would Just Make Things Worse

‘Naval statecraft’ in the South China Sea is neither wanted nor needed by littoral states

By: Mark Valencia

A recent article in the US Naval Institute Proceedings recommends more US “naval statecraft” in the South China Sea. It has received considerable circulation and as such cries out for rebuttal. Indeed, this militarist perspective is an excellent example of why diplomacy should be left to the diplomats. “Naval statecraft” is just another name for old-fashioned gunboat diplomacy, something the region does not need or want. The piece also gets its concepts and facts muddled and twisted. The piece advocates a US counterinsurgency effort against China in the South China Sea. This tacitly admits that the US is the hegemon there and that China is undertaking an “insurgency” against it. But just what “threat” to US national security is posed by China’s fishing fleet, maritime militia and Coast Guard? China has not threatened commercial freedom of navigation and is highly unlikely to do so in peacetime. The US conflates freedom of navigation for commercial vessels and for military vessels. It then raises the “freedom of navigation” canard when China tries to protect itself from US gunboat diplomacy and threats to its national security. Moreover, as a non-party to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the US is undermining the “rules-based order.” Further, it has no legitimacy or credibility interpreting key UNCLOS provisions regarding “freedom of navigation” to its advantage. The Naval Institute piece cites the 2012 Scarborough Shoal incident as a situation in which US “naval statecraft” should have been used. But the rights and wrongs of this issue are not clear-cut in favor of the Philippines, and the US was wise and



fair not to intervene militarily. Both China and the Philippines claim the legal rock and its 12-nautical-mile (nm) territorial sea. The legal standard for proof of sovereignty over such features is continuous, effective occupation, administration and control – and acquiescence to that by the other party. Neither claim meets this standard. Thus the sovereignty of the rock and its territorial sea are disputed, and until agreed or adjudicated otherwise one claim is just as legally valid as the other. The piece mentions that the rock is situated within the Philippines Exclusive Economic Zone. But that does not add to the merit of the Philippines’ claim. Indeed, there are many examples of one nation claiming a feature within another’s EEZ. Moreover, the Philippines used a naval vessel during the dispute, thus threatening use of force – a possible violation of the UN Charter and UNCLOS. This also provided justification for China’s response, which was limited to civilian vessels. The piece seems to suggest that the US should

have deployed naval vessels to back up its ally the Philippines. This would have worsened the situation, as China would likely have responded with its own naval vessels.

**Malaysia case:** The piece also neglects important facts regarding the West Capella incident. On April 18, 2020, a Chinese survey ship accompanied by Coast Guard and maritime militia vessels approached a disputed area in Malaysia's claimed EEZ where a drill ship – the West Capella – was operating under contract to Malaysia's national oil company Petronas. Malaysia's response was muted. Zubil Mat Som, the head of Malaysia's Maritime Enforcement Agency, said: "We do not know [the survey ship's] purpose but it is not carrying out any activities against the law." Although China claimed the operations of its vessels were "normal," the US alleged that the Chinese were intimidating the drill ship. There had been a similar but much more dangerous incident in 2019 involving this Chinese survey ship operating in Vietnam's claimed 200nm EEZ, and perhaps the US conflated the two activities. It is not clear how a survey ship – even one accompanied by Coast Guard vessels – is threatening to another ship. However, if it was undertaking surveys in Malaysia's claimed EEZ, it would have been violating UNCLOS. But Malaysia did not publicly protest. Perhaps the Chinese vessels were exercising their freedom of navigation – the same rationale that the US Navy uses for its intimidating maneuvers against China's claims. But the US apparently saw this action as a Chinese test of its "position and credibility in Asia." It also apparently considered it an opportunity to demonstrate its solidarity with the smaller Southeast Asian countries and possibly encourage them to stand up to China and thus irrevocably side with America. US Pacific Fleet Commander Admiral John Aquilino declared: "The Chinese Communist Party must end its pattern of bullying Southeast Asians out of

offshore oil, gas, and fisheries." American forces would "stand with regional friends and partners to resist coercion." The guided-missile cruiser Bunker Hill, the guided-missile destroyer Barry and the amphibious assault ship USS America were deployed to "exercise" with an Australian frigate in the vicinity of the drill ship. In case China and the region did not get the message, the littoral combat ship (LCS) USS Montgomery and cargo vessel USNS Cesar Chavez operated in the same area a few days later, followed by the LCS USS Gabrielle Giffords. This was the so-called "naval statecraft" that the Naval Institute piece recommends.

**Muted response:** But the situation did not play out the way the US had hoped. Malaysia has been reluctant to challenge China openly because of its weak maritime forces and its economic reliance on Beijing for investment and exports. Its past response to China's aggressiveness in the South China Sea has traditionally been muted and behind the scenes. Perhaps the US did not want to give Malaysia the opportunity to object to its military presence. For whatever reason, it appears that the US warships were sent without invitation, consultation or notification, thus confusing Malaysia. Malaysia has excessive claims that run counter to UNCLOS, which the US has challenged in the past with gunboats – aka freedom of navigation operations (FONOPs). It requires prior permission for foreign military activities in its EEZ. Malaysian leaders knew that the US would not notify them that its warships were entering its EEZ because the US rejects that requirement. As the US warships steamed toward Malaysia's EEZ, its decision-makers could not be sure whether the US was coming to their aid, or challenging their maritime claims as it had done previously. Referring to this incident, Malaysian Foreign Minister Hishammuddin Hussein said: "While international law guarantees the freedom of navigation, the presence of



warships and vessels in the South China Sea has the potential to increase tensions that in turn may result in miscalculations which may affect peace, security and stability in the region.” A fundamental assumption of the Naval Institute piece is that a greater US naval presence would be welcomed in the region. Given that claims by all littoral members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations except Singapore and Brunei have been targets of US Navy FONOPs, it is safe to say that they do not approve of this gunboat diplomacy – at least against themselves. They also fear that it will be destabilizing. Even US stalwart Singapore has reservations. Its Defense Minister Ng Eng Hen has said, “Some of the [South China Sea] incidents are from assertion of principles, but we recognize that the price of any physical incident is one that is too high and unnecessary to either assert or prove your position.” This criticism seemed directed at the US use of warships to assert its legal position. Some Indonesian policymakers have long been suspicious of US intent and worry about the potential destabilizing effect of US-China competition. Former Indonesian defense minister Ryamizard Ryacudu has suggested that “if regional countries can manage the SCS on their own, there is no need to involve others.” Luhut Pandjaitan, then coordinating minister for political, legal and security affairs, once declared in a veiled criticism of both US and China that “we don’t like any power projection.” Then-Malaysian prime minister Mahathir Mohamad also argued in 2018 that “big warships [in the South China Sea] may cause incidents, and that will lead to tension.” The last thing the region wants is more gunboat diplomacy. Diplomacy should be left to the diplomats. More militarism will only make the situation worse – for all concerned.

<https://asiatimes.com/2022/07/more-us-gunboat-diplomacy-would-just-make-things-worse/>

## Nine Killed In Somalia Suicide Bombing

MOGADISHU: Nine people including a senior local government official were killed on Wednesday in a suicide bombing in southern Somalia claimed by the Al Shabaab jihadist group, police and witnesses said. The attack occurred outside the administrative office in the town of Marka, where the district commissioner Abdullahi Ali Ahmed Wafow was speaking with local people, police said. “Commissioner Abdullahi Wafow was killed in an explosion together with eight other people, most of them security personnel,” a police officer in Marka, Ibrahim Ali, said. “The police are still investigating the incident but there are already indications that a suicide bomber carried out the deadly attack.” Al Shabaab claimed responsibility in a brief statement, saying the “martyrdom operation” had targeted the commissioner. “The bomber ran up to the commissioner and blew himself up,” witness Abdulkadir Hassan said. “I was close to where the incident occurred, the scene was horrible with these shattered pieces of human flesh all around.” Somalia’s new President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud said this month that ending Al Shabaab’s insurgency required more than a military approach, but that his government would negotiate with the group only when the time is right. The jihadists have been seeking to overthrow the fragile foreign-backed government in Mogadishu for about 15 years.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1701926/nine-killed-in-somalia-suicide-bombing>

# Ukraine and Taiwan on the Biden-Xi chessboard

Overall, Biden and Xi seem to be converging on their strategies for global dominance

By: Alicia Garcia Herrero

Since the start of the Ukraine war, the tectonic movements in global geopolitics that former US president Donald Trump initiated with his economic crusade against China have acquired a dizzying speed. For one thing, his successor President Joe Biden has managed to bring together nations in the developed world to impose strong sanctions on Russia after its invasion of Ukraine, including by countries far from the conflict. This is the case with Japan but also Australia, South Korea, Taiwan and, to a lesser extent, Singapore. At the same time, China has not remained neutral in the face of the conflict but has deepened its anti-American rhetoric by coming perilously close to Russia's position, though without endorsing the narrative of support for non-compliance with sanctions imposed by the developed world. Thus the growing differences between the Western narrative and that of China, let alone Russia, are clear signs that after the invasion of Ukraine, the world is more like a chessboard than ever, where Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping are playing a major game in pursuit of global hegemony. Viewed from Europe, the war in Ukraine and the consequences for the old continent are key to this game, but a more global observation of the situation should lead us to a very different conclusion, which Europe cannot ignore. Indeed, Biden has given clear signals that his strategy in this game is not intended to focus on Europe in the medium term, but on Asia. The deal that the European Council has just reached by accepting Ukraine's candidacy to join the European Union surely suits the US wish to refocus its foreign, and security, policy on Asia and leave

Ukraine to the EU. There have been two clear recent examples of Asia's importance to US foreign policy. The first was Biden's White House summit in May with leaders of some members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. The summit, which aimed to bring ASEAN countries' so-far neutral positions on the conflict in Ukraine closer together, ended with more sorrow than glory, since none of them, with the exception of Singapore, moved a notch from their neutral positions, no doubt under pressure from China, their largest trading partner and major financier and implementer of major infrastructure projects in the region. Far from giving up, Biden embarked soon after on his first official trip to Asia, focusing on two of America's main allies in the region, South Korea and Japan. Given the limited success of the ASEAN summit, expectations for Biden's trip were low, a perception that changed suddenly with the support of 12 Asian countries for Biden's proposal to create an Indo-Pacific





Economic Framework (IPEF). While there was little detail on what this deal actually entailed and what economic benefits its members might enjoy, the almost unconditional support of a large number of Asian countries is an important indication of the interest in finding a counterweight to China's economic dominance in the region. Beyond the economic weight of the Asian region for the US, the Biden administration's bid for the IPEF has an exceptional protagonist that hasn't even been invited: Taiwan. Managing to maintain the status quo when it comes to Taiwan, given China's goal of reunification, is not only key for the US but also for its allies in the Asia-Pacific region, from Japan to Australia to Singapore. The reasons are economic – given Taiwan's dominance in advanced semiconductor production – and security. The US could easily lose control of the Pacific if China gets its way with Taiwan. In any case, the fact that the Biden administration has not invited Taiwan to the IPEF should not be equated with irrelevance, but rather with flexibility and caution on the part of the US, since it has preferred to deepen its bilateral economic relations with Taiwan, rather than regionalize them within the IPEF. In short, Biden's trip to Asia was an important sign of the region's strategic importance to the US, despite the apparent shift toward Europe in response to the Ukraine war. Second, the launch of the IPEF also makes clear that Asia is not only relevant within US security policy but also in the economic order. Indeed, Biden could have been content during his trip to Asia to participate in the summit of the new security group created around the Indo-Pacific concept, the Quad, but he was not. Biden's economic offer to Asia proved essential because we are in a time of blurring boundaries between economy and security given the growing strategic competition between the United States and China. While Biden is turning to Asia as a market, Xi Jinping is also changing his game strategy on

the big chessboard of global hegemony. In particular, China's economic might, first as the world's factory but also as a magnet for foreign multinationals' investment, seems to be moving into second place, perhaps because the goal has already been achieved. Indeed, China is the largest trading partner for a large number of countries, especially in Asia. The Ukraine war appears to have sent a clear message to Xi, namely that China's economic might needs to be protected by making China a major security power. America's strengthening of alliances in response to the Russian invasion, from an expanding North Atlantic Treaty Organization, to the Quad and the Indo-Pacific, has only accelerated China's response. In that sense, Xi's announcement at the Boao Forum in April of the intention to create a Global Security Initiative (GSI) should not go unnoticed, as was made clear at the recent BRICS summit, where the security dossier gained unusual weight on the agenda. So it seems clear that Xi intends to create a counterweight to the US and its security allies. Overall, Biden and Xi seem to be converging on their strategies for global dominance. Biden needs a cheaper way to support his security alliances. Xi, by contrast, needs to offer a security option to maintain his country's huge economic clout. The big question is who has it easier. Biden's Achilles heel is his weakness at home that greatly limits his ability to act. Xi also has an internal problem, related to a much more precarious economic situation than it might seem at first sight. Added to this is the sharp deterioration in China's image abroad, which undoubtedly hinders his call for security alliances. In short, neither Biden nor Xi has the game won, but what is clear is that they will continue to move their pieces around the world chessboard, and their queen is Asia, not Europe.

<https://asiatimes.com/2022/07/ukraine-and-taiwan-on-the-biden-xi-chessboard/>

# Turkey is no longer NATO's yes man

Turkey wants to be respected as a member of NATO, at a moment when the alliance is grappling with a new future

By: Faisal Al Yafai

One could almost hear the glee in Turkey when President Recep Tayyip Erdogan upended NATO consensus by declaring he would not support the Swedish and Finnish bids for membership of the alliance. For Turkish political elites, this wasn't a fractious president being difficult – it was a Turkish leader refusing to be a yes man for Europe. “Are they coming to Turkey to try and persuade us?” Erdogan asked after both countries sent negotiators to Ankara to mollify the president. “Then they shouldn't bother,” he declared. After weeks of talks, both Sweden and Finland appeared to offer enough guarantees on the two issues Ankara was concerned about – support for Kurdish militants and restrictions on arms sales – for Turkey to relent. On Tuesday morning, both Nordic countries signed the accession protocols and formally began the ratification process. For Erdogan's supporters, this was a win all around. To them, it didn't matter that Turkey had shown an unwillingness to back the alliance at a moment of deep peril, nor that some were openly asking if it were time to remove Turkey from the alliance. “For NATO, Turkey is a disruptive ally,” declared The New York Times. Turkey's combative president certainly doesn't mind being the odd man out; he often appears to relish it. Rarely, however, is the question asked why Turkey is so disruptive to the alliance, and whether that disruption actually works in Erdogan's favor. There's a past and a present reason for Turkey's disruptiveness.

The past reason is that, up until the moment of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the North Atlan-

tic Treaty Organization was in the midst of an existential crisis and didn't know what it stood for. The ostensible reason for its founding, the Soviet threat, had long passed, and the alliance was stumbling, declared by French President Emmanuel Macron to be “brain dead,” and openly criticized by the previous American president. This April, Donald Trump boasted he had threatened not to defend NATO allies from a Russian attack in 2018 – in essence undermining the Article 5 collective-defense clause that underpins the alliance. NATO had friends like that, but no clear enemy. Against that backdrop, Turkey could pursue its own agenda, which appeared to be mainly picking fights with other NATO members – with Greece over islands in the Aegean Sea and with the US over its purchase of the Russian-made S-400 missile defense systems. With no clear enemy, there was no clear strategy for the alliance, and so Turkey was able to use it as simply one more political forum through which to achieve its aims. Turkey couldn't be accused of undermining the security of the alliance, because there was no one enemy – there were several threats, but these threats were not always viewed in the same way by NATO members, contributing to a sense of fracture and drift. That was before. After the Russia invasion, NATO has once again found its footing. Indeed, these few months have been as crucial to the alliance's sense of self as the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union or the years of its birth. There is a renewed sense of purpose. Of threat. Of mission. And yet, Turkey is now different. The Turkey that joined the alliance



in 1952 was a vital bulwark on the alliance's southern flank and, with the largest army in Europe, would have been first in line against a hypothetical Soviet threat. But Turkey has changed. It is no longer a lower-middle-income country willing to send its conscripts into someone else's war. Turkey is proud of its defense capabilities, and its drone technology now has the proven ability to turn the tides of war. Turkey wants to be respected as a member of NATO, at the moment when the alliance is grappling with a new future. Hence the disruption, born of a desire to be considered an equal, no longer a yes man. Does such disruption give Turkey the status it desires? That's a tricky calculation. In times of peace, or at least strategic stability, being a team player is the best option. But in a time of flux, disruption can lead to strategic gains. That certainly appears to be Erdogan's calculation. The Ukraine war has led to an astonishing and seismic shift on the European continent, all the more astonishing for being barely remarked upon. For the first time in decades, Germany is rearming, setting up a special €100 billion fund to modernize its military. "We need aircraft, we need ships, we need soldiers," German Chancellor Olaf Scholz told his parliament, to cheers and applause. The sight of Europe's largest economy rearming might once have sparked fear on the continent – but the world has changed since 1945, or even 1952. For Erdogan, this is a moment to act and not merely quietly say yes. It's a gamble that has paid off for now, and one that suits his decisive, if not always measured, personality. He has learned, after all, from the reshaping of the conflict in northern Syria, that whoever acts fastest and most decisively shapes the terrain.

<https://asiatimes.com/2022/07/turkey-is-no-longer-natos-yes-man/>

## GOOG IDEA! Check your Google Maps NOW – new feature could save your life

GOOGLE Maps has been beefed up with some big new features - including one that could be a lifesaver. The tech giant is attempting to boost safety with even more location sharing options available to users. You could already share your location with a friend or loved one in real time. But now they can receive an alert when you've arrived and departed certain locations. The firm says the feature is being launched to allow people to "more easily coordinate schedules and have peace of mind". "Say you're headed to a concert with a group of friends," Amanda Leicht Moore, Google Maps Director of Product said. "If they've already chosen to share their location with you, you can set a notification for the concert venue's address so you can see when they've arrived and meet up quickly. "You could also set a notification to see when they've left the venue — just in case you get split up." It's one of three big arrivals now available on Google Maps. Users can now explore global landmarks like never before with photorealistic 3D aerial views. Almost a hundred iconic landmarks are available from the likes of London, New York and Barcelona. It means you can get right up close to places like Big Ben and the Empire State Building. Google is also providing more cycling route information. To the relief of cyclists, the app will now show a breakdown of your journey as well, with things like heavy car traffic, stairs and steep hills added in. The aerial views and location sharing notifications are available from today on both Android and iOS. Meanwhile, cycling route information will launch for hundreds of cities "in the coming weeks". <https://www.thesun.co.uk/tech/19331949/google-maps-location-sharing-notifications-feature/>

# Israel's Secret Weapon



By: Prof. Pervez Hoodbhoy

IS it some international conspiracy — or perhaps a secret weapon — that allows Israel to lord over the Middle East? How did a country of nine million — between one-half and one-third of Karachi's population — manage to subdue 400m Arabs? A country built on stolen land and the ruins of destroyed Palestinian villages is visibly chuckling away as every Arab government, egged on by the khadim-i-haramain sharifain, lines up to recognise it. Economically fragile Pakistan is being lured into following suit. Conspiracy theorists have long imagined Israel as America's overgrown watchdog, beefed up and armed to protect American interests in the Middle East. But only a fool can believe that today. Every American president, senator and congressman shamefacedly admits it's the Israeli tail that wags the American dog. Academics who chide Israel's annexation policies are labelled anti-Semitic, moving targets without a future. The Israeli-US nexus is there for all to see but, contrary to what is usually thought, it exists for benefiting Israel not America. It was not always this way. European Jews fleeing Hitler were far less welcome than Muslims are in today's America. That Jewish refugees posed a serious threat to national security was argued by government officials in the State Department to the FBI as well as president Franklin Roosevelt himself. One of my scientific heroes, Richard Feynman, was rejected in 1935 by Columbia University for being Jewish. Fortunately, MIT accepted him.



What changed outsiders into insiders was a secret weapon. That weapon was brain power. Regarded as the primary natural resource by Jews inside and outside Israel it is an obsession for parents who, spoon by spoon, zealously ladle knowledge into their children. The state too knows its responsibility: Israel has more museums and libraries per capita than any other country. Children born to Ashkenazi parents are assumed as prime state assets who will start a business, discover some important scientific truth, invent some gadget, create a work of art, or write a book. Brain power makes teeny-tiny Israel a technological giant before which every Arab country must bow. In secular Israel, a student's verbal, mathematical, and scientific aptitude sets his chances of success. By the 10th grade of the secular bagrut system, smarter students will be learning calculus and differential equations together with probability, trigonometry and theorem proving. Looking at some past exam papers available on the internet, I wondered how Pakistani university professors with PhDs would fare in Israeli level-5 school exams. Would our national scientific heroes manage a pass? Unsurprisingly, by the time they reach university, Israeli students have bettered their American counterparts academically. There is a definite historical context to seeking this



excellence. For thousands of years, European anti-Semitism made it impossible for Jews to own land or farms, forcing them to seek livelihoods in trading, finance, medicine, science and mathematics. To compete, parents actively tutored their children in these skills. In the 1880s, Zionism's founders placed their faith solidly in education born out of secular Renaissance and Enlightenment thought. But if this is the story of secular Israel, there is also a different Israel with a different story. Ultra-orthodox Haredi Jews were once a tiny minority in Israel's mostly secular society. But their high birth rate has made them grow to about 10 per cent of the population. Recognisable by their distinctive dress and manners, the Haredim are literally those who "tremble before God". For Haredis, secularism and secular education are anathema. Like Pakistan, Israel too has a single national curriculum with a hefty chunk earmarked for nation-building (read, indoctrination). In the Israeli context, the ideological part seeks to justify dispossession of the Palestinian population. Expectedly, the 'Jewish madressah' system accepts this part but rejects the secular part ie that designed to create the modern mind. The difference in achievement levels between regular and Haredi schools is widening. While all schools teach Hebrew (the holy language), secular schools stress mastery over English while 'madressahs' emphasise Hebrew. According to a Jerusalem Post article, Haredi schools (as well as Arab-Israeli schools) are poor performers with learning outcomes beneath nine of the 10 Muslim countries that participated in the most recent PISA exam. A report says 50pc of Israel's students are getting a 'third-world education'. The drop in overall standards is causing smarter Israelis to lose sleep. They fear that, as happened in Beirut, over time a less fertile, more educated elite sector of society will be overrun by a more fertile, less-educated religious population. When that happens,

Israel will lose its historical advantage. Ironically, Jewish identity created Israel but Jewish orthodoxy is spearheading Israel's decline. There is only one Muslim country that Israel truly fears — Iran. Although its oil resources are modest, its human resources are considerable. The revolution of 1979 diminished the quality of Iranian education and caused many of Iran's best professors to flee. But unlike Afghanistan's mullahs, the mullahs of Iran were smart enough to keep education going. Although coexistence is uncomfortable, science and religion are mostly allowed to go their own separate ways. Therefore, in spite of suffocating embargos, Iran continues to achieve in nuclear, space, heavy engineering, biotechnology, and the theoretical sciences. Israel trembles. Spurred by their bitter animosity towards Iran, Arab countries have apparently understood the need of the times and are slowly turning around. Starting this year, religious ideology has been de-emphasised and new subjects are being introduced in Saudi schools. These include digital skills, English for elementary grades, social studies, self-defence and critical thinking. Of course, a change of curriculum means little unless accompanied by a change of outlook. Still, it does look like a beginning. Israel has shown the effectiveness of its secret weapon; it has also exposed the vulnerability of opponents who don't have it. There are lessons here for Pakistan and a strong reason to wrest control away from Jamaat-i-Islami ideologues that, from the time of Ziaul Haq onward, have throttled and suffocated our education. The heights were reached under Imran Khan's Single National Curriculum which yoked ordinary schools to madressahs. But even with Khan's departure, ideological poisons continue to circulate in the national bloodstream. Until flushed away, Pakistan's intellectual and material decline will accelerate.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1697781>

# Japan's Tragedy

By: Muhammad Omar Iftikhar



The assassination of Japan's former Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe, is a moment of concern for the safety and security of world leaders – those who are in government and those who have served. Video footage of the assassination shows how easily the assailant attacked Abe while he was addressing a public gathering. The ballistic briefcase – a bulletproof shield used by the aide to protect the dignitary – did not deploy in time. If Abe was not safe in Japan, then one cannot ascertain the safety of any world leader across the world. He served as the Prime Minister of Japan for two eras. First, from September 26, 2006, to September 26, 2007, and later from December 26, 2012, to September 16, 2020. The Former Prime Minister – the longest-serving in modern Japan – was campaigning for the parliamentary elections. He was 67. Japan has remained a weapons-free country with strict restrictions on political violence that have been non-existent. Abe was assassinated in Nara., the capital city of Nara Prefecture. The police arrested a 41-year-old man. Reports claim that the attacker used a homemade gun. If one man can make a gun at home, then this may signal the beginning of a rebellion by those having violent intent. Japan has the lowest instances of gun crime in the world. This stems from its rigid laws of gun ownership. Just imagine that in 2018, Japan with a population of 124 million people, reported only nine deaths caused by firearms. In the same year, the United States reported nearly 39,700 deaths, according to the Sydney School of Public Health at the University of Sydney. Japan has the lowest instances of gun crime in the world. This stems from its rigid laws of gun ownership. Japanese opine that this incident of violence may change the Japanese cultural fabric forever. According to

Nancy Snow, Japan director of the International Security Industrial Council, "It's not only rare, but it's really culturally unfathomable. The Japanese people can't imagine having a gun culture like we have in the United States. This is a speechless moment. I really feel at a loss for words." As per the current firearms law implemented in letter and spirit across Japan, handgun ownership is banned. Only air rifles and shotguns are to be owned through a proper permit. Owning such a weapon is not easy. The buyer must pass a firearm license process, which includes a full-day class on handling the weapon and passing a written test. In addition, the buyer needs to pass a test at the shooting range with a precision of at least 95 per cent. They have to pass a drug test and need to have their mental health evaluated. Their personal debt and their relationships with friends and family are checked. Furthermore, their criminal record is thoroughly scrutinized and verified. The buyer must inform the police of the storage details of their gun and ammunition. The police inspect the gun once a year and the owner of the weapon has to renew the license by giving the same test every three years. This rigorous process of testing and owning a weapon in Japan is to be followed by everyone. This is why only 377,000 guns were owned by Japanese citizens in 2017. The last incident of public shooting in Japan took place in 2007. The then mayor of Nagasaki, Iccho Ito, was shot at the back. He suffered a cardiac arrest. The government implemented strict rules since then with severe punishments. Perhaps the government needs to re-think its gun control strategy in light of the recent assassination.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/966511/japans-tragedy/>



# Western companies face 'existential crisis' as fears grow of Chinese invasion of Taiwan

A standoff over Taiwan threatens far more collateral damage than the conflict in Ukraine

By: Matt Oliver

Days after the Ukraine conflict erupted, Apple, BMW, McDonald's and other Western giants lined up to announce they were quitting Russia in protest. "This moment calls for unity, it calls for courage," declared Tim Cook, Apple's chief executive. That it only caused a relatively small financial hit must also have helped. The decision reportedly cost the iPhone maker less than 1pc of its global sales, while some foreign businesses, including France's Renault, chose to sell off their Russian operations for a symbolic one rouble. Oil giant Shell, which made almost \$300bn (£254bn) in sales last year, said its losses would not top \$5bn. Yet experts fear another diplomatic crisis will soon be looming where the calculation will not be so simple: a forced Chinese subjugation of Taiwan. The independent island state of 23 million people is considered a breakaway province by Beijing, with President Xi Jinping having vowed to bring it under communist control no later than 2050. Whether attempted with military force or other means, this would pose a nightmare scenario for boardrooms who have spent years - and vast sums - trying to woo the dragon. Many of the West's biggest businesses take a huge chunk of their profits from China, dwarfing what was at stake in Russia, and will be far more reluctant to give them up. Apple made \$68bn or 19pc of its revenues in Greater China last year, while one in three German cars are reportedly sold in the mainland. AstraZeneca, the British drugs giant, now relies on China for 16pc or \$6bn of its annual sales. Taiwan itself has also become a lynchpin of global supply chains, particularly in digital technologies, with the island's

foundries producing half of the microchips used in everything from smartphones to washing machines and cars. It means that a standoff over Taiwan between the West and Beijing threatens far more collateral damage than the confrontation with Russia. Charles Parton, a former British diplomat, believes this is just one reason why communist apparatchiks in Beijing, taking note of the fierce backlash against Moscow, will not risk a full-blown invasion. "The interdependencies and the depths of involvement, in both directions, between China and the rest of the world is so much deeper than it is with Russia," adds Parton. "There is so much more to lose on all sides." Yet he still believes a large amount of "decoupling" between the West and China is inevitable in the years to come, and that future tensions over Taiwan will force businesses to choose sides. This was the risk recently highlighted by two of Britain and America's top spy masters, during a joint appearance in London. In a speech with MI5 chief Ken McCallum earlier this month, FBI director Christopher Wray warned that many Western companies operating in Russia had been left with "their fingers still in that door when it slammed shut". "If China does invade Taiwan, we could see the same thing again, at a much larger scale," Wray told journalists in London. "Just as in Russia, Western investments built over years could become hostages."

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2022/07/16/western-companies-face-existential-crisis-fears-grow-chinese/>

# Is Right-wing Populism Fading?



By: Maleeha Lodhi

IN the past decade or so right-wing populism swept the world — in Trump's America, Modi's India, Johnson's Britain, Bolsonaro's Brazil, Orbán's Hungary and elsewhere in Eastern Europe. But Boris Johnson's humiliating downfall, Marine le Pen's defeat in France and Trump's failure to get re-elected in 2020, raises the question of whether this strain of reckless, anti-liberal populism, which became a global phenomenon, is now in retreat. The answer is yes and no. It is true that Donald Trump's election defeat was a setback to right-wing populist movements. Many political obituaries were written that both Trumpism and its varied iterations in the world would gradually become history. The Guardian then saw "the US election result as further evidence that the much-talked-about 'populist wave' of recent years may be subsiding". More recently, the Institute of Global Change, compiled a database of Populists in Power, and found the number of populist leaders in power in early 2022 had come down to 13 from 19 in 2019 — the lowest since 2004. It concluded that the wave of global populism had peaked and was in fact in decline. Another research report by Cambridge's Centre for the Future of Democracy, also determined the tide was turning against populist parties and politicians mainly as a result of mismanagement of the coronavirus pandemic. But while waning electoral support for right-wing populism is evident in some parts of the world, including Europe, and has been a setback for the phenomenon, it has hardly ended the appeal of its ideas or significantly weakened populist sentiment. Although populism has different expressions



across the world, some core ideas are common to most — xenophobic nationalism, an authoritarian, illiberal outlook, anti-establishment, anti-elite stance, notions of racial or religious superiority, anti-immigration, Islamophobic attitude, and disregard for conventional norms. Usually, ideas that exist on the fringe of society are mainstreamed by populist leaders. For example, Trump appropriated many key beliefs of white supremacist groups and incorporated them in his politics, according them 'respectability.' The question is whether the departure of populist leaders from office means their ideas also leave with them. The answer is no, because the appeal of these ideas survives. Many of these beliefs are deeply rooted in society which populist leaders play off, magnify and try to legitimise. Populist thinking usually gains strength from underlying factors such as rising public disenchantment with traditional political parties and the establishment for their failure to meet expectations, especially in times of disruption caused by economic hardship and the uneven impact of 'elitist' globalisation. Insecurities and anxieties spawned by this and anti-immigrant, anti-minority sentiment, against a back-



drop of economic decline, is fed off and fed into by populist politicians, who direct this against 'selfish elites' in the name of the 'people'. Usually there is already low trust in political institutions seen as unresponsive to public needs. This is exploited by populist demagogues who cast this, as Trump did, as the 'deep state's' anti-people conduct, and then seek to erode independent institutions. Electoral support for retrogressive populism may be waning but not the appeal of its ideas. Anti-immigration sentiment that holds sway in many Western countries becomes a key element in populist leaders' narrative. This doesn't disappear when populist leaders lose power. Xenophobic strains in popular thinking once mainstreamed become part of the political landscape. As right-wing populism uses xenophobic nationalism to mobilise support it plays on people's fears of being 'swamped' by immigrants or minorities. Portraying these groups as threats to society, populist leaders fuel public antipathy towards minorities that often turns to violence and hate crimes, as it has so egregiously against Muslims in India. Notions of 'cultural purity' or 'nativism' inform attitudes of significant sections of society and seem to persist. The spread of Islamophobia in much of Europe is a case in point. Indeed, such is the influence of these bigoted attitudes that even leaders like France's Emmanuel Macron, an ostensible 'centrist', borrowed from the populist playbook on Islamophobia in his presidential campaign to defeat Le Pen. Both divisive politics and ideas that right-wing populist leaders espouse reshape the political environment and become more entrenched in society. Polarisation continues. As do populist, ultra-conservative ideas. For example, Boris Johnson used what was called 'Brexit populism' to secure office but his ouster doesn't mean Brexit is likely to be reversed. In the US, Trump's ideas have become such a key part of the Republican party's stance that even if he

fails to secure nomination for the next presidential election the candidate who does — Ron DeSantis? — is unlikely to discard his populist rhetoric or the substance of his approach. For now, Trump has more support among Republicans than other hopefuls for the 2024 election — a testimony to both Trump's appeal and narrative. One of the most damaging legacies populist leaders leave is deep divisions in the country and diminished public trust in institutions. As the US example and that of other countries show, once institutions are undermined it takes a long time and much effort to restore confidence. There is another aspect to the deliberately orchestrated disrespect and contempt for institutions. As Paul Mason writes in *The New European*: "The narrative of the populist right, all over the globe, is not simply that human society must go backwards ... Their deeper argument is that chaos is good. Amid chaos, transgressive people prosper ... Look at the BJP mobs beating Muslims and Dalits. Look at the unrepentant insurrectionists who surrounded Trump on January 6." Chaos is therefore regarded as the path to transformative change to realise the 'vision' of right-wing populists, however fuzzy that may be. This has a familiar ring in Pakistan where disruption is the strategy being pursued by a party that is an odd amalgam of conservative right-wing populists and affluent members of the middle class. Far from receding, the forces of retrogressive populism may be around much longer than thought, not least because the political alternative that can challenge and reverse it remains weak and uninspiring. Some analysts in the West are warning of a 'second wave' of populism. That is why the lasting impact of divisive and disruptive ideas should remain a source of worry.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1700231/is-right-wing-populism-fading>



# ONE GOD ONE HUMANITY

How to overcome racial and religious divisions and establish peace in our world

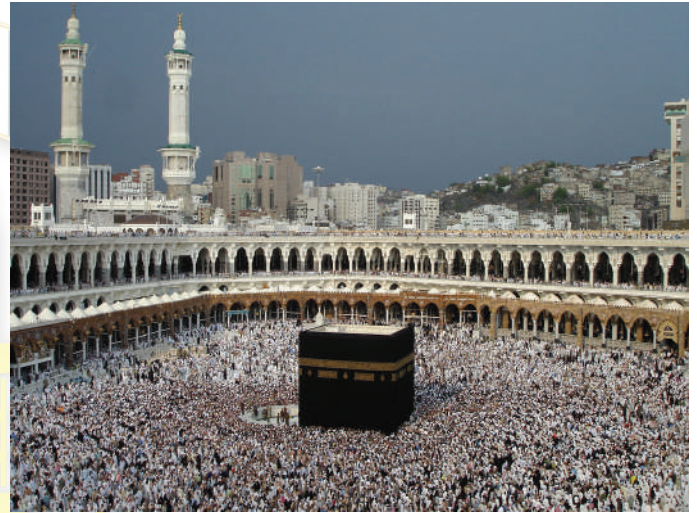
By: Sir Iftikhar Ahmad Ayaz, KBE, OBE, PhD.

The Quran admonishes against envy and covetousness and against arrogance and exploitation. The strength or weakness of a people are a transient thing and the Quran sets forth many examples of the rise and fall of nations over time. A people that are weak today may become strong tomorrow. In the pursuit of peace Islam teaches the paramount importance of absolute justice and equality in all matters:

*“And let not the enmity of a people, that they hindered you from the Sacred Mosque, incite you to transgress. And help one another in righteousness and piety; but help not one another in sin and transgression. And fear Allah; surely, Allah is severe in punishment.” (5:3).*

In this verse it states that to fully comply with the requirements of justice, it is necessary to treat even those people, who go beyond all limits in their hatred and enmity, with fairness and equity. The Quran teaches that wherever and whoever counsels you towards goodness and virtue, you should accept it, and wherever and whoever counsels you towards sinful behaviour, you should reject it. In chapter 4 verse 136, the Quran states that even if you have to testify against yourself, or your parents or your most loved ones, then you must do so in order to uphold justice and uphold the truth:

*“O ye who believe! Be strict in observing justice, and be witnesses for Allah, even though it be against yourselves or against your parents and kindred. Whether he be rich or poor, Allah is more regardful of them both than you are. Therefore, follow not low desires so that you may be able to act equitably. And if you conceal the truth or evade it,*



*then remember that Allah is well aware of what you do”.*

The demands the Quran makes upon individuals to uphold justice and oaths is extraordinary, transcending all bonds of family and society. While justice is something that one demands for oneself, more importantly, it is something to be fulfilled for others, regardless of the cost to oneself, one's relatives or one's own community. In this regard the relationship between the Rulers and those who are Ruled is a very important one. The Holy Quran states:

*“God commands you to entrust the responsibility of government to those worthy of it, and those of you who become rulers, should rule justly; God admonishes you with that which is excellent, verily He is All Hearing, All Seeing.” (Al Nisa:59)*

According to Islam Rulership or Sovereignty is something that is given as a trust and those who are ruled are told to choose their rulers who are worth of the trust, who are capable of discharging it adequately, honestly and faithfully. Those who are placed in authority must ensure that their subjects have all the necessary provisions for life ie. food, clothing, shel-



ter, security etc.

## Elucidation of Slavery and Islamic teachings

The issue of slavery in relation to Islamic teachings is perhaps one of the most misunderstood subjects. Critics use the examples of slavery to portray Islam as a violent religion that only seeks to oppress people. In this article, I will discuss the issue of slavery and Islamic methods to bring it to an end.

First of all, it should be clear that Islam did not introduce slavery to the world. On the contrary, Islam condemned slavery in clear terms and prohibited making slaves in any way whatsoever. The confusion arises when prisoners of war are seen as “slaves” by the critics of Islam. It is true that prisoners of war may appear to be slaves, but they are taken in the middle of a battle in order to guard one’s country against the harms of the enemy.

### A Slave as a Member of the Family?

When we study the teachings of Islam regarding such so-called “slaves”, we find that they cannot be termed “slaves” as perceived in the minds of many. Islam on the other hand instructs Muslims to be kind to their slaves:

وَاعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تَشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَبِذِي  
الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْجَارِ  
الْجُنُبِ وَالصَّاحِبِ بِالْجَنُبِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ  
إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَنْ كَانَ مُخْتَالًا فَخُورًا

And worship Allah and associate naught with Him, and show kindness to parents, and to kindred, and orphans, and the needy, and to the neighbour that is a kinsman and the neighbour that is a stranger, and the companion by your side, and the wayfarer, and those whom your right hands possess. Surely, Allah loves not the proud and the boastful. [4:37]

Emphasizing the same teaching, the Holy Prophet(saw) says: Slaves are your brothers whom Allah has put under your control, so feed them with the same food that you eat, clothe them with the same clothes you wear, and do not burden them with so much that they are overwhelmed; if you do burden them, then help them. [Sunan Ibn Majah, Book of

Etiquette, Chapter: Beneficence towards slaves; Book 33, Hadith 34]. Keeping slaves was an accepted thing in those times and the well-off kept many slaves. The blessed model of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) in this matter was that when after marriage Hazrat Khadija (may Allah be pleased with her) gave all her slaves to him, he freed them all. Hazrat Zaid was among these slaves. He was adopted by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as a son. When his real parents came to get him, he refused to go with them. The kindness and supremely excellent benevolence of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) cannot even come up with an example close to a fraction of his blessed model. His teaching was to treat slaves benevolently if work was to be taken from them. If work was hard, one was to share the task with the slave. Furthermore, Islam teaches the emancipation of slaves in numerous verses of the Quran such as the following:

وَمَا آَدْرَاكَ مَا الْعَقَبَةُ. فَكُّ رَقَبَةٍ

And what should make thee know what the ascent is? It is the freeing of a slave. [90:13-14]. In light of these teachings, Muslims played a great role in the emancipation of slaves. These are just a few highlights of the many Islamic teachings on the kind treatment of slaves. If these teachings are followed, it would mean that a “slave” no longer remains a slave and would instead be like a member of the family. At this point, some critics ask why Islam did not give a single commandment to end slavery? Why was it not done with a single stroke of the pen? The answer to this question is that Islam did not come to make an empty show of greatness by doing something like this. Instead, its objective was to slowly and gradually reform and improve the society at large. It was neither feasible, nor wise, to suddenly abolish the institution of slavery which had become interwoven into the very texture of society since pre-Islamic times. With this gradual reformation in mind, Islam-

ic teachings followed two steps. First, a teaching was given that put an end to forcing a free person into slavery. Second, it was taught that slaves who already existed should be treated kindly and with love so that they start to live independent lives and are gradually prepared for freedom. The first teaching is expressed very strongly in the following narration: Prophet Muhammad( said, "Allah says, 'I will be displeased with three persons on the Day of Resurrection: (1) One who makes a covenant in My Name, but does not fulfil it; (2) One who sells a free person (as a slave) and personally usurps the sale-proceeds; (3) and one who employs a labourer and gets the full work done by him but does not pay him his wages". The second teaching was followed in two ways. Either the Muslims set free the slaves in their possession as a virtuous act in accordance with Islamic teachings, or the slaves were given the option of earning their freedom through a system called mukaatabat [i.e. an agreement between a slave and his master, where the slave offers to pay his own monetary value in order to be set free, by working the number of hours required to pay the settled amount]. Here, the Holy Quran is very clear in its teaching that if a slave desires to have freedom by payment of an amount, the master is obliged to fulfil the slave's wish and to set him free provisionally, so that the slave has an opportunity to earn the amount fixed for his release. On top of this, the master is told that he should return some of this money back to the freed slave. This is a system of mukaatabat through which Islam ensures that slavery comes to an end eventually. An inspiring example portraying Islam's viewpoint on the well treatment of slaves was written by an Italian professor, Laura Veccia Vaglieri. She writes that slavery has been around ever since human civilization began and it remains. She opines that the condition of slavery among Muslim nations is comparatively better. She writes about the benevolence of the Prophet (peace and blessing of

Allah be on him) and cites him as saying 'do not say he is my slave, rather say he is my son and do not say she is my female-slave rather say she is my daughter.' She writes that on reflection the Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) made magnificent reformations in this matter. In pre-Islamic days, a person in debt faced the possibility of having his freedom snatched, but after Islam no Muslim could enslave another free Muslim. Not only did the Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) limit slavery, rather he introduced regulations about this and told the Muslims to march onwards regarding it until such time that all slaves were free. Huzoor said the professor wrote her book in Italian and it has been translated in English. A while ago the USA Jama'at had published this book. It mentions teachings of Islam in a very fine way. If the copyrights are in place, it should be re-printed by the USA Jama'at. It is sufficient to silence the detractors who raise objections about Islam and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him). This magnificent teaching and blessed model are the reality of freedom of man. The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) presented this teaching in different ways at various times. He wrote: 'Remember that a Muslim should be ever ready to discharge the rights of God and the rights of mankind. Just as one verbally regards God One and without any partner in His Person and His attributes, one should also demonstrate this by practice and should treat His creation with kindness and compassion. He also said: 'Until your dealings with each other are not in order your dealing with God cannot be in order. Although in both of these rights, God has the greater right, but to have clear dealing with His creation is akin to be a reflection of it. A person who does not have clear dealings with his brother cannot also pay the dues of God.' Huzoor said the main thing here is to also consider others as one's brothers. In a true Muslim society, no one should be



enslaved. Muslims should remember the advice the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) gave before passing away where he said, 'do not forget my teaching regarding observance of Salat and slaves.' Additionally, several hadith expound on the great virtue of freeing slaves. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) said in one hadith: 'Whichever Muslim will free a slave will be granted complete salvation by God from the fire of Hell.' Islam teaches freeing of slaves as expiation in many places in the Qur'an, which also teaches that if a Muslim kills another Muslim by mistake, he should free a slave as well as give blood-money. This is not limited to killing a Muslim. If a disbeliever is killed by mistake with whose nation a pact has been made, a slave is to be freed in that instance as well. Among various punishments of swearing an oath by God and then breaking it, Islam cites freeing of slaves as one penalty. The different ways of bringing about freedom of slaves is borne of the fact that Islam wishes to gradually eradicate slavery. Before Islam, keeping slaves was a common practice which Islam seeks to eliminate. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) said that Muslims should free slaves at the time of solar eclipse. A Hadith relates that seven brothers shared a slave and one day one of the brothers slapped the slave in anger. When this matter was related to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) he told them to release the slave. He said they did not have any right to keep him as they did not know how to treat him well. In a true Muslim society, no one should be enslaved. Among all the Prophets, our Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) was the most brilliant star of freedom whose rays reached far and wide and encompassed all forms of freedoms. The person of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) brought about apparent freedom, and also freed people from all kinds of neck yokes,

shackles. To this day connecting to his person in the real sense is a tremendous source of attaining freedom. God gave him the title of Khataman Nabiyeen (Seal of the Prophets) and by virtue of this eminence his person encompasses all worldly and spiritual matters. Thus, no pious soul can even doubt that only the Muhammadan seal can bring about all forms of excellences. In him was the pinnacle of every matter and every task.

### **Universal Brotherhood**

From its start Islam had established a universal brotherhood. It stressed that a true brotherhood could be established only by virtue of mankind's relationship with one another through God. Other factors – common interests, common pursuits, common occupations – may help to foster friendship and brotherhood to a degree, but the very same factors may also engender jealousy and hostility. Followers of Islam are instructed to:

*"Hold fast, all together, by the rope of Allah, and be not divided; and remember the favour of Allah which He bestowed upon you when you were enemies and He united your hearts in love, so that by His grace you became as brothers; and you were on the brink of a pit of fire, and He saved you from it. Thus, does Allah explain to you His commandments, that you may be rightly guided" (3:104)*

Unfortunately, it is the nature of mankind to overlook guidance and to fall into error. Muslim nations over many centuries forgot to live up to their obligations to God and to humanity. Thus, God sent the Reformer of the Age, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, the founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835-1908) to revive the pure teachings of Islam and unite mankind. His mission can best be summed up in his own words:

*"With God-given strength and with the power of His hand, I am here to set the world back on the path of reformation, righteousness and piety, and to remove their errors in faith and in action." (Tadhkiratush Shahadatain)*

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad penned over 80 books and tens of thousands of letters, delivered hundreds of lectures, and engaged in scores of public debates. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community continues to use education to peacefully reform Muslims and revive Islam worldwide. **A Message of Peace** was the last piece of work from the Promised Messiah and Reformer of the Latter Days. Prophetic in foresight and universal in scope, this book lays out a path to the peaceful existence of all humans based on the central theme of worshipping the One God. He writes "A religion which does not inculcate universal compassion is no religion at all. Similarly, a human being without the faculty of compassion is no human at all." From its foundations in 1889 in Qadian, India, today, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is the world's largest Islamic community under the leadership of the fifth Khaliifa (Caliph), His Holiness, Mirza Masroor Ahmad (b. 1950). The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community spans over 215 nations with membership exceeding tens of millions. His Holiness is the world's leading Muslim figure promoting peace and inter-religious harmony. Through his sermons, lectures, books, and personal meetings, His Holiness has continually advocated the worship of God Almighty and serving humanity. He also continually advocates for the establishment of universal human rights, a just society and a separation of religion and State. Since being elected Khalifa, His Holiness has led a worldwide campaign to convey the peaceful message of Islam, through all forms of print and digital media. In 2004, His Holiness launched the annual National Peace Symposium held in London in which guests from all walks of life come together to exchange ideas on the promotion of peace and harmony. Each year the symposium attracts many serving ministers, parliamentarians, politicians, religious leaders and other dignitaries. In 2009, His Holiness also launched the annual 'Ahmadiyya Muslim Prize for the Advancement of

Peace'; an international peace award for individuals or organisations that have demonstrated an extraordinary commitment and service to the cause of peace and humanitarianism

On 4 December 2012, His Holiness delivered a historic keynote address at the European Parliament in Brussels to a packed audience of more than 350 guests representing 30 countries, including the President of the European Parliament. During his thirty-five-minute address, His Holiness called on the European Union to preserve its unity and called for equality and justice in international relations. On 11 February 2014, His Holiness delivered the keynote address at 'The Conference of World Religions' held at the Guildhall in London. During his address, His Holiness outlined Islam's commitment to promoting mutual understanding, tolerance and respect based on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him).

Under the leadership of His Holiness, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has built a number of schools and hospitals that provide high class facilities in remote parts of the world. And through various schemes of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, His Holiness has funded the tuition and education of numerous underprivileged students around the world, irrespective of their religious or racial background. All his efforts and the efforts of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community are directed to unifying humanity and connect it to its Creator/One God. During the address delivered on 25th March 2017 at the National Peace Symposium, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad stated:

*"As you will be aware, the theme of tonight's event is 'Global Conflicts and the Need for Justice', and I have said for many years that a lack of justice has plagued every segment of society and fuelled disorder."*

During the address delivered on 9th March 2019 at the National Peace Symposium, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad stated:



“I have expressed my view on many occasions that the leaders of some of the nuclear powers are trigger-happy and appear not to appreciate the truly grave consequences of nuclear warfare. Not only do such weapons have the power to annihilate the countries targeted, but also have the potential to destroy the peace and stability of the entire world. Thus, it is imperative that nations and their leaders do not focus only on their own national interests, but consider what is best for the world at large. Dialogue with other nations and communities is vital and each party should work together with a spirit of tolerance and with the shared objective of developing true and sustainable peace in the world.”

It would seem that the world lurches from one conflict to another and from one disaster to another. Many of these conflicts and disasters like the disorder and racial riots in the US and several other countries are due to humanity's own failings. The Head of the Worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community reminded the people and the rulers of the world to be mindful of their duties and obligations to God Almighty and to all human beings regardless of race colour or creed. His Holiness prayed that may Allah remove the disorder all around the world, may the governments uphold the rights of their citizens and may the people obtain their rights through lawful measures, and may we be protected from the harmful effects of the Coronavirus. Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said that in any case, the governments should come to realise that all this chaos will not be solved through force, nor is it the answer to all problems. Rather, the sustenance of a government is in its just dealing of all its citizens. Only then can law and order be established in the land. If the people become restless, then no government can stand against them. Islam emphatically teaches us that there is One God and One Humanity- and when hearts turn to the One True God then Humanity's prayers will indeed be answered, and peace and tranquillity will be restored.



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