

Positive Post



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October in History

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

October 1, 1989: Pakistan rejoins Commonwealth.

October 20, 1989: SAF Games open in Islamabad.

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

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

Pakistan's standing in the global rankings

Overview

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

DEMOCRACY INDEX

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

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

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

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX

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

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

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

PRESS FREEDOM INDEX

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

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

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

TERRORISM INDEX

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

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

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

ECONOMIC FREEDOM INDEX

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

Index from 0 (repressed) to 100 (free)

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

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

PM to launch Kamyab Pakistan Programme

Prime Minister Imran Khan inaugurate the much ambitious Kamyab Pakistan Programme (KPP) under which Rs1.4 trillion soft loans will be provided to 3.7 million families across the country.

The programme will have five components. Farmers will get interest free loans under the Kamyab Kissan programme, financing of up to Rs500,000 will be made for setting up a business under the Kamyab Karobar programme, financing on easy installments will be extended for construction of houses under the Sasta Ghar scheme, besides linking successful skilled-based scholarship scheme and Sehat Insaf Card with the KPP, said a press release issued by the Prime Minister Office.

It quoted Finance Minister Shaukat Tarin as saying that the KPP would be a major initiative by the government to alleviate poverty by empowering the deprived segments of society and supporting them to transform their lives.

The programme would also link low-income groups with banks through microfinance institutions, the press release said, adding that it also reflected the sense of state's responsibility towards its weaker segments of society.

Detailing some of the features of the programme, the finance minister said the programme aimed



to provide support to the people in housing projects, skill development, health cards and interest-free loans for businesses and agricultural services. However, he made it clear that the targets would be achieved over a period of time and not in one year.

Mr Tarin said that Rs300-400bn interest-free loans would be given during the current fiscal year, adding that the amount had also been budgeted to provide subsidy against interest-free loans.

At a recent meeting, State Bank Governor Reza Baqir had reportedly welcomed the goals of KPP, especially its bottom-up approach. However, he suggested better burden sharing between banks and taxpayers and said it might be advisable to keep the government guarantee to commercial banks limited at 50 per cent of banks' lending as was decided by the Economic Coordination Committee of the cabinet.

This would help ensure that banks had a stake in the programme, conduct the needed credit assessment before lending and, thereby, reduce the potential bill to taxpayers from the government guarantees being called, he added.

Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation Dr Sania Nishtar had reportedly pointed out that the proposal wasn't routed through the Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division, although the scheme was predicated on Ehsaas Programme data. However, while endorsing the principle behind this initiative, she felt that the design needed a careful review, according to a media report.

With respect to targeting, the SAPM said it would be advisable to offer loans only to "graduating" Ehsaas beneficiaries and discontinue

Ehsaas grants to those who receive loans to avoid duplication. She pointed out that the summary stipulated that those below the income of Rs50,000 would be eligible, but that meant over 30 million families. She said there was a need to clearly define how three million people were going to be selected out of potential 30m beneficiaries. The summary also indicated that 4.5 million at the bottom would be prioritised.

On the matter of procurement, Ms Sania said that since subsidy and fee had been involved in the scheme, it would have been ideal to go into open competitive bidding under the new PPRA Rule 16(A). She had also suggested that in the presence of organisational entities responsible for stewarding lending, such as PPAF and PMIC, there was no need to entrust execution to a project management unit at the Finance Division.

The SAPM also mentioned the need to explore how the sovereign guarantees appeared in the context of the Fiscal Responsibility and Debt Limitation Act and the need to study risk-sharing arrangements of the housing initiative, which appear to be better organised. She was of the view that it should be made mandatory to ensure that the loan recipients were "new" so that there was no risk of more expensive credit being replaced by cheaper credit.

Courtesy: Dawn

DOTA 2 International: Pakistani gamer Sumail secures upper bracket spot

Sumail, a Pakistani gamer participating in an ongoing DOTA 2 world championship that started on October 7, has made a place for himself in the main event.

Sumail Hassan is representing Western European's team OG as position one carry. They started the group stages at a high with a two-game win against Alliance and then against Thunder Predator. However, things got ugly when they lost their series against Aster on October 8. The team came out strong in the second series of day two against South East Asian team T1.

At the end of group stage, OG stood at number three in the table



with ten wins and six losses. They manage to win a game against China's Invictus Gaming which has only lost on two games out of their sixteen matches.

OG will play their Western European arch rivals team Secret in the

first round of main event that begins from October 12. If Sumail loses the series, he will still have a second chance to stay in the tournament unlike Sumail's brother.

Sumail's brother Yawar Hassan's team Quincy Crew managed to sur-

vive through the group stage and is placed in the lower brackets. They will be playing their first eliminator match against team Aster which had already put on a show against OG. It will be good opportunity for Yawar to avenge his younger brother's defeat against the Chinese team. At the end of group stage Yawar's team is on sixth position in the table with six wins and ten defeats.

Quincy Crew lost four series in total. They lost against PSG LGD, Secret, Spirit and Vici Gaming. Their six wins were against Beast-coast, Fnatic and a two match series against SG esports.

Courtesy: Samaa TV

Special cell to coordinate Afghan-related matters

Prime Minister Imran Khan on Friday ordered setting up of a special body for coordinating Afghanistan-related matters.

The prime minister “directed the establishment of a dedicated cell to synergise various streams of efforts on Afghanistan across the government, including international co-ordination for humanitarian assistance and effective border management to prevent any negative spillover into Pakistan,” the PM Office said in a statement on the meeting of the National Security Committee.

The NSC, which is the top body for coordination on security issues, had met to discuss the developments in Afghanistan and Pakistan’s approach for dealing with them.

The meeting chaired by PM Khan was attended by key federal ministers, national security adviser, services chiefs and heads of intelligence agencies.

Pakistan has not only been providing humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan, but has also extended trade facilitation to Afghan traders for promoting their exports. The trade concessions have tipped the trade balance in favour of Afghanistan. NSC urges world



community to provide assistance to Kabul to avert humanitarian crisis. The government is also planning to extend a financial and technical package to the Taliban regime that is faced with the twin looming crises of economic collapse and humanitarian disaster. The situation has been aggravated by the drought in the country.

More than 18 million Afghans need urgent assistance, including nearly a million children who are at risk of starvation, according to Unicef.

The economic crisis has emerged after Western donors pulled the plug on assistance for Afghanistan, which was the mainstay of Afghan economy, following the Taliban takeover. Moreover, the US has

frozen Afghan reserves and international lending agencies have blocked Taliban regime’s access to their funds.

Mr Khan, in view of the diverse support being extended to Taliban in Afghanistan, emphasised the need for a coordinated policy effort.

“The prime minister was given a detailed briefing on the evolving regional security situation, particularly the recent developments in Afghanistan and their possible impact on Pakistan,” the PMO said.

“Committee members emphasised that the evolving situation in the region was extremely complex and that any instability in Afghanistan could have severe implications for Pakistan,” it further said.

Islamabad has lobbied hard with the international community to persuade it to engage with the Taliban regime, grant it recognition, and resume development assistance so that the prospects of viability of the new set-up could improve.

The international community has generously provided humanitarian aid to Afghanistan, but has linked development assistance to the recognition of the new government. The recognition issue further depends on Taliban meeting demands about formation of an inclusive ruling set-up, observance of rights, and fulfillment of counter-terrorism commitments.

The world is, however, not satisfied with Taliban’s progress towards meeting of these requirements.

The members of the NSC, while noting the dire humanitarian situation in Afghanistan emphasised the urgent need for the international community to provide assistance to avert a humanitarian crisis.

“The importance of international coordination on constructive political and economic engagement with the interim government in Afghanistan was also highlighted,” the PMO said.

Courtesy: Dawn

Pakistan gets Asia Cup 2023 hosting rights: report

The Asian Cricket Council has decided to award the hosting rights of Asia Cup 2023 to Pakistan, Cricbuzz reported.

The development was made during the ACC meeting chaired by Jay Shah, the secretary of BCCI, where it was revealed that the tournament will be played in the ODI format.

Pakistan Cricket Board Chairman Ramiz Raja was also one of the attendees.

The 2022 edition will be in 20-over format, to be hosted by Sri Lanka, bearing in mind the T20 World Cup next year.



The switch in formats will allow Asian teams to prepare for the mega event adequately.

The publication citing its sources within both PCB and BCCI, confirmed that the decision is a unanimous one.

The exact schedule of the events will be finalised soon.

The 2023 Asia Cup will be the 16th edition of the tournament. The 15th edition was originally scheduled to be played last year but was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pakistan last hosted the Asia Cup in 2008 and has since not managed to host a major ICC tournament.

Courtesy: Samaa TV

NCOC allows normal classes from next week

As the coronavirus positivity rate has declined to 2.8 per cent across the country, the National Command and Operations Centre (NCOC) on Thursday decided to open the doors of educational institutions for normal classes from October 11.

A meeting of the NCOC decided to reopen the educational institutions based on the reduced level of Covid-19 spread and the launch of vaccination programme in schools, Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar said in a tweet.

“Based on the reduced level of disease spread and the launch of the school vaccination program, it has been decided in today’s NCOC meeting to allow all educational institutions to start normal classes from Monday the October 11,” tweeted Mr Umar, who heads the NCOC.

It may be mentioned that the educational institutions were earlier



operating on a 50 per cent capacity across the country after they had reopened following intermittent closures due to the fourth wave of Covid-19.

According to data shared by the NCOC, 46 people lost their lives across the country due to coronavirus over the last 24 hours, taking the tally to 28,032. With 1,453 new cases, the number of total infections now stood at 1,255,321.

Moreover, 51,343 tests were conducted throughout the country during the last 24 hours, whereas

the positivity ratio stood at 2.82pc. With 1,840 patients recovered from the virus over the past 24 hours, total recoveries stood at 1,182,894. The number of patients in critical care was 2,934.

The NCOC asked the provinces to speed up the vaccination drive to further stop the spread of the disease.

The NCOC has devised a comprehensive plan with the collaboration of the National Database and Registration Authority and district administrations to target tehsils which were lagging behind others in terms

of vaccination.

In a tweet, Asad Umar also criticised the UK government for its decision not to accept Chinese vaccine against Covid-19. “UK decides gora (western) certificates and vaccines are ok but most non gora vaccine certificates and Chinese vaccines are not. This despite widespread evidence of fake certificates in US & Europe. Chinese vaccines are WHO approved. Health considerations or hangover of a colonial mindset?”

Though the United Kingdom had taken Pakistan off the travel restrictions last month, it did not accept Chinese vaccines. Pakistanis travelling to the UK had to spend 10 days in isolation there even though they got both doses of Chinese vaccination.

Pakistan has administered more than 87 million doses of Covid-19 vaccine, with 31m second doses and 62m first doses, according to the NCOC data.

Courtesy: Dawn

Textile exports jump 26pc in September

Textile exports grew 26 per cent to \$1.503 billion in September, according to the All Pakistan Textile Mills Association.

The textile exports earlier registered year-on-year growth of 29pc in the first two months (July and August) of 2021-22 as compared with the corresponding period of the preceding year. In August, exports jumped by 45pc to \$1.5bn against \$1bn in August 2020.

The textile exports grew 24pc to \$15.5bn in 2020-21 from \$12.5bn in FY20. Since 70pc of textile exports from Pakistan are from the value-added sector, the industry projects the exports to be \$20.5bn for the ongoing fiscal year.

The textile export sector for the last two years has been availing a competitive power tariff at the rate of 9 cents per kWh and gas at \$6.5 per mmBtu. The package has now been extended for the current fiscal year. However, the association terms year-wise competitive tariff package not feasible, especially for those planning



long-term investments by expanding their exports on a huge scale.

“If the government announces a straight five-year package, the country’s textile exports may jump to \$50bn within a couple of years,” says an Aptma office-bearer.

According to Aptma, the textile exports grew 24pc to \$15.5bn in 2020-21 from \$12.5bn in FY20. Since 70pc of textile exports were from value-added sector, the industry has projected the exports to \$20.5bn for FY22.

“We are confident to achieve the official \$20bn target for FY22,” he said.

Courtesy: Dawn

Attaullah Khan Esakhelvi’s children pledge to continue father’s legacy



Attaullah Khan Esakhelvi’s talented children have made their mark on their own.

Laraib Atta is Pakistan’s first female visual effects artist, has been working in Hollywood for over 10 years. She has worked in blockbuster movies such as Mission: Impossible – Fallout and Fast & Furious.

“It is really an honor for me to represent Pakistan on such big platforms,” she said.

Sanwal Esakhelvi accompanied his father on stage from a young age

and developed his own sensibility for music. He is a musician and sound engineer. Sanwal worked in the British film industry and directed a few songs in Coke Studio season 10 and 11.

Unlike Laraib, Sanwal never thought to take music as a profession. “Music happened accidentally to me,” he told SAMAA TV’s Naya Din.

Attahullah is one of Pakistan’s best-known folk musicians. He has more than 50,000 songs and 500 albums to his credit.

Courtesy: Samaa TV

Nadra certificates to be accepted in UK

The United Kingdom's Covid-19 rules will change, removing the 'Amber List' designation completely and allowing anyone vaccinated anywhere by one of the four vaccines approved by London to travel to the UK without quarantine or self-isolation. Furthermore, Pakistan's vaccine certificates will be accepted by the UK, though Chinese vaccines will still not be.

This was confirmed by the UK High Commissioner to Pakistan, Dr Christian Turner.

The UK will accept vaccinations by Astra-Zeneca, Johnson & Johnson, Moderna and Pfizer vaccines from all travellers from around the world who are not from the red-list countries. Pakistan was taken off the red list on Sept 22 after being on the no-travel list for five months.

However, earlier information had suggested that the UK would still not accept any vaccinations done in Pakistan, including by the UK approved list of vaccines, which had meant Pakistanis would still need to self-isolate for up to 10 days. This will now change.

British diplomat praises the National Command and Control Centre for doing a good job of 'nav-

igating the Covid-19 pandemic'

"I am just going through the process of formally allowing the two bureaucracies to recognise each other's vaccination certificates and that may take a couple more days next week," Dr Turner said.

"But basically, in October, you'd be able to turn up in London and, if you've had those vaccines, show your Nadra certificate and be absolutely fine. It doesn't matter where it's administered you have very good certificates here you show that and you'd be fine... It'll be a big shift and everything will be a lot better."

The UK High Commissioner also acknowledged that Pakistan being on the red list had been "enormously frustrating" since it had blocked contacts and linkages between the people of the two countries and "everyone suffered".

But he said there had been "a genuine scientific disagreement" between the public health bodies of the two countries and "a concern about Pakistan's ability to track variants here".

In particular, he said, the UK was worried about the beta variant, which had originated in South Africa, and which "can undermine the Astra-



Zeneca vaccine".

"If the beta variant got seeded back into our communities, particularly the very large and important community that is connected between the UK and Pakistan] and travelling back and forth, we would have had a very large public health problem that would have undermined our vaccine process. And we engineered an enormously deep discussion between the two public health science teams, led by Dr Faisal [Sultan] on your side, to really understand what we knew about beta and what we didn't and that gave us the confidence to change the red list."

He also praised Dr Sultan, the National Command and Control Centre and the health team "who have done a most extraordinary good job of navigating the pandemic".

Courtesy: Dawn

SBP: Pakistan's exports to seven regional countries up 31.6%

Pakistan's exports to seven regional countries witnessed an increase of 31.6% in first three months of current financial year (July-September 2021-22) against the corresponding period last year.

The country's exports to these countries, including Afghanistan, China, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, and the Maldives account for a small amount of \$946.212 million, which is 13.64% of Pakistan's overall exports of \$6.93 billion during July-September (2021-22), State Bank of Pakistan or SBP reported.

China tops the list of countries in terms of Pakistan's exports to its neighbouring countries. Pakistan carried out border trade with Sri Lanka, India, Nepal and the Maldives.

Pakistan's exports to China posted a growth of 69.73% to \$559.153 million in the period under review this year from \$329.421 million in the corresponding period last year while exports to Bangladesh also increased by 37.57% to \$175.38% from \$127.48 million.

The country's exports to Afghanistan, however, dropped by 39.12% to \$127.647 million this year from \$209.868 million last year while exports to India plunged by a whopping 90.43% to \$0.099 million from \$1.03 million after the government suspended trade ties with India.

Similarly, exports to Sri Lanka surged by 64.96%

to \$81.017 million from \$49.11 million in the same period in the previous year and exports to Nepal also increased by 5.18% to \$1.238 million from 1.177 million, in addition exports to the Maldives increased by 53.54% to \$1.669 million from 1.087million, the central bank data showed.

Meanwhile, the imports from seven regional countries were recorded at \$4128.99 million during the period under review against \$2895.22 million last year, showing an increase of 42.61%.

Imports from China during the July-September period this year were recorded at \$4.01 billion against \$2.79 billion during July-September period last year, showing an increase of 43.6%.

Among other countries, imports from India worth \$42.502 million against the imports of \$49.947 million, posting a decrease of 14.9% while imports from Afghanistan surged by a whopping 88.49% from \$17.82 million to \$33.58 million.

Imports from Nepal decreased by 20.8% from \$0.274 million to \$0.217 million, it said.

Exports of leather products posted an increase of 5.99% during the first three months of the current fiscal year against figures for the corresponding period last year.

Pakistan exported leather worth \$154.45 million



during July-September this year against \$145.73 million during the same period last year, showing a growth of 5.99%, according to data shared by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics or PBS.

Among leather products, exports of leather garments increased by 3.79% up from \$77.55 million last year to \$80.48 million during the current year.

Leather gloves exports also rose by 8.07% to \$69.38 million from \$ 64.2 million.

Similarly, exports of all other leather manufactures commodities also increased by 15.27% during the period under review as these went up from \$3.97 million last year to \$4.58 million during the current fiscal year.

Meanwhile, year-on-year basis, leather exports witnessed an increase of 1.31% during September this year against the same period last year.

Leather exports during September this year were recorded at \$48.13 million against exports of \$47.51 million in September last year.

Courtesy: Samaa TV

Pakistan reaffirms support to Kashmiris' struggle

Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has said that Pakistan is committed to continuing extending political, diplomatic and moral support to the Kashmiris in their struggle for right to self-determination.

"We stand side by side with the Kashmiri brethren in their struggle for their right to self-determination. A dossier based on irrefutable evidences of the atrocities and war crimes of Indian occupation forces in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) has been presented to the world," the foreign minister said.

He said Pakistan would continue to raise voices against oppression and barbarism by the Indian army in IIOJK at every forum. He maintained that Kashmir had become a global issue instead of a regional one and it must be resolved in accordance with the United Nations resolutions.

Mr Qureshi stressed that the international community must come forward to stop ongoing serious human rights violations in IIOJK and save the oppressed Kashmiris from tyranny of Indian occupation forces.

Highlighting the Afghanistan issue, the foreign minister said: "Peace in Afghanistan is our top priority and we believe that if there is peace in Afghanistan then there will be peace in the whole region. The world is witnessing our efforts for peace in Afghanistan."



FM says peace in Afghanistan is Islamabad's top priority

He said Pakistan would continue its conciliatory efforts for peace and stability in the region, including the Afghan peace process.

The foreign minister said the Covid-19 pandemic had hit the world's strongest economies hard. To meet the challenges, he added, Pakistan was focusing on economic diplomacy, promoting economic cooperation and enhancing regional ties.

Mr Qureshi said Pakistan's economy was on the right track with encouraging economic indicators. "The Pakistanis have emerged as a strong nation after overcoming major challenges such as terrorism and the coronavirus," he said, claiming that Pakistan was emerging as a prosperous country in the world.

"Significant progress is being made in the field of exports and agriculture. Due to effective policies of the incumbent government, sustainable development will continue in the public interest," he said, maintaining that Pakistan would achieve prominence in the world soon due to its progressive policies.

The foreign minister said the welfare of the Pakistani community abroad was one of the government's top priorities. "Pakistani embassies around the world are working for the welfare of overseas Pakistanis and trying to resolve their problems. I have directed diplomatic missions abroad to strive hard for the welfare of the Pakistani community therein," he added.

Earlier, the foreign minister spent a busy day in Multan. He listened to speeches delivered live during a Seerat Conference at Raza Hall.

Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Political Affairs and PTI chief whip in the National Assembly Malik Amir Dogar, Moin Riaz Qureshi, MNA Malik Ahmad Hussain Dehar, MPAs Wasim Khan Badozai, Nadeem Qureshi, Malik Saleem Labar and Zaheeruddin Alizai, Multan Commissioner Dr Irshad Ahmed, Deputy Commissioner Amir Karim Khan, Khalid Javed Warraich, Qurban Fatima and civil society workers were present on the occasion.

Courtesy: Dawn

Pakistan commits Rs5bn in humanitarian aid to Afghanistan

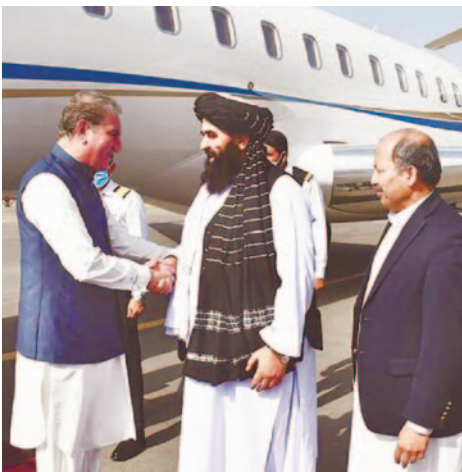
Pakistan announced several trade and travel concessions for Afghanistan, besides committing Rs5 billion in humanitarian aid.

Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi announced these steps at a press conference after returning from his first trip to Kabul since Taliban assumed control of Afghanistan following the fall of Ghani government in mid-August.

The foreign minister noted a "positive change" in Kabul as he found new Afghan leaders more open to resolving the irritants in relationship.

Mr Qureshi in his meeting with caretaker Taliban Prime Minister Mullah Hassan Akhund focused on matters related to security, trade, travel, connectivity projects, humanitarian assistance and international recognition for the Taliban regime. Following the delegation-level talks, working groups from both sides held in-depth discussions on these issues.

Several issues were decided during the talks, while others would be finalised when a Taliban delegation would visit Islamabad in next few



days, according to Mr Qureshi.

He said that steps being taken by Islamabad were meant to tell the Taliban regime that Pakistan stood by them in these difficult times.

To facilitate travel, Pakistan abolished the requirements of 'gate pass' and Covid-19 PCR tests for Afghans travelling to Pakistan via land border. Moreover, visa on arrival facility was an-

nounced for sick Afghans coming here for treatment and business persons.

Pakistan embassy in Kabul has been given authority to grant five-year multiple entry visas to Afghan businessmen. Similarly, service fee for visa processing has been abolished till December.

Timings for pedestrian crossing at the border have been increased from 8 hours to 12 hours per day. Cargo movement through the border crossings would now continue 24 hours a day. Afghan trucks would, meanwhile, be allowed to carry goods up to Karachi port, whereas Pakistani truckers would be able to travel into Afghanistan with their cargoes.

Mr Qureshi said these steps would cause ease for the Afghans, besides promoting trade.

Islamabad has, meanwhile, allowed duty free import of fruits and vegetables from Afghanistan. Experts from the two sides would meet soon for identifying more zero rated products for import into Pakistan. Reduction in duties on items of bilateral trade was discussed.

Courtesy: Dawn

Pakistan discussing expansion of CPEC to Afghanistan -ambassador

Khalid Mansoor, the head of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Authority, said Pakistan was seeking the expansion of the multibillion-dollar infrastructure and energy project to Afghanistan, local media reported.

CPEC is a central part of the Belt and Road Initiative under which Beijing has pledged over \$60 billion for infrastructure projects in Pakistan, much of it in the form of loans.

Addressing the 'CPEC Summit' at the Institute of Business Administration in Karachi, the special assistant to the prime minister (SAPM) on CPEC affairs "said Islamabad was seeking the expansion of CPEC to Afghanistan and has discussed the possibility of Taliban-led Afghanistan joining the multibillion-dollar economic corridor," Dawn newspaper reported.

Mansoor said there was "deep interest" in Islamabad in developing economic connectivity between Afghanistan and Pakistan as well as other neighboring countries, including Iran.

"Some European countries have

started showing interest (in CPEC) also," he added.

Last month, Pakistan's envoy in Kabul said Pakistan had held discussions with the Afghan Taliban on joining CPEC.

"Regional connectivity is an important element of our discussion with Afghan leadership and our way forward for our economic interaction with Afghanistan," Mansoor Ahmad Khan, Pakistan's envoy to Kabul, said in an interview with Reuters in September.

"This important project China Pakistan Economic Corridor provides good opportunities, good potential for providing infrastructure and energy connectivity between Afghanistan and Pakistan and also connecting South Asia to the Central Asian region."

Since the Taliban took over Afghanistan on August 15, the country has been plunged into economic crisis as the nation's international assistance has been largely cut off. Billions of dollars in central bank assets held abroad have



also been frozen, which has put pressure on the banking system and prevented most transactions involving US dollars, which has also hampered trade.

Pakistan has been trying to work with the international community to ease international restrictions on the banking system and several executives from Pakistani financial institutions with a presence in Afghanistan had visited Kabul in recent days to see if the situation could be improved should international limits end.

The United States and other Western nations are reluctant to provide the Taliban with funds until the movement provides assurances that it will uphold human rights, and in particular the rights of women.

Pakistan, which shares a border with Afghanistan and hosts millions of Afghan refugees from decades of conflict, is concerned about the economic crisis hitting its neighbor. Its prime minister, Imran Khan, and other officials have urged the international community not to isolate the Taliban administration, saying aid should be provided to prevent economic collapse and a wave of refugees.

Pakistan has had deep ties with the Taliban and has been accused of supporting the group as it battled the US-backed government in Kabul for 20 years charges denied by Islamabad.

Pakistan has not yet formally recognized the Taliban led administration.

Courtesy:ArabNews

PBC welcomes reforms -oriented Presidential Ordinance

The Pakistan Business Council (PBC) has welcomed the reforms-oriented Presidential Ordinance covering the purview and conduct of the National Accountability Bureau.

The PBC expressed hope that political consensus will emerge to have these critical changes approved by both the houses of parliament.

Many of PBC's recommendations have been incorporated in the Ordinance, the salient ones being exclusion of all matters related to any type of tax or levy by any government or authorities of the government; protection of decisions taken by the federal and provincial cabinets, their committees, Council of Common Interests, Ecneec and a host of other bodies, including the SBP; limiting the purview of NAB only to holders of public office and removing procedural lapses in public of government work from challenge by NAB unless a holder of public office



monetarily or materially benefits from it.

Ordinance promulgated by President: Accountability law undergoes major overhaul This would also cover any report, advice or opinion given in the course of duty by a holder of public office and transferring pending investigations to the appropriate jurisdictions;

He also advocated national consensus on the economy to provide confidence of policy continuity which is affecting growth.

Courtesy: Business Recorder

CAA lifts ban on inflight meals for domestic travel The authority has issued directives to all airlines



The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has allowed airlines to serve inflight meals to passengers on domestic flights.

A notification issued on food and beverages have been allowed on all domestic flights from October.

The CAA has issued directives to all the airlines. The decision was taken after a drop in covid cases in the country. Under the Covid-19 SOPs, serving meals and beverages onboard domestic flights had been prohibited.

However, travellers would continue to be required to wear masks, only vaccinated people above 18 years of age will be allowed to board flights.

Coronavirus vaccination certificate will be mandatory with the boarding pass.

He urged citizens to get vaccinated so that the government could ease existing restrictions. "The only way out of the covid pandemic is to get a high percentage of citizens vaccinated," he said.

Courtesy:Samaa TV

Saudi govt revives \$3bn support to Pakistan

Saudi Arabia has agreed to revive its financial support to Pakistan, including about \$3 billion in safe deposits and \$1.2bn to \$1.5bn worth of oil supplies on deferred payments.

An agreement to this effect was reached during the visit of Prime Minister Imran Khan to the kingdom this week, a senior government official told Dawn. However, a formal announcement would be made by PM's adviser on finance and revenue Shaukat Tarin and Energy Minister Hammad Azhar at a news conference.

The development was later confirmed in a midnight tweet by Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry. "Saudi Arabia has announcement support for Pakistan with 3 billion US dollars as deposit in Pakistan central bank and also financing refined petroleum product with 1.2 billion US dollars during the year," he wrote.

The Saudi government would



immediately deposit \$3bn in Pakistan's account for a year and keep it rolling at least until the completion of the IMF programme in October 2023, earlier said.

The facility is expected to help Pakistan convince the IMF about its financing plan. In addition, the Saudi government would provide crude oil to Islamabad on deferred payments worth up to \$1.5bn per annum.

Saudi Arabia had also provided \$3bn in cash deposits and promised a \$3bn oil facility to Pakistan to help the latter shore up its foreign

exchange reserves in 2018. However, as the bilateral relations deteriorated later Islamabad had to return \$2bn of the \$3bn deposits.

In June this year, a news conference was informed that Saudi Arabia had announced the availability of \$1.5bn oil facility per annum. Three months later then finance minister Tarin had claimed that an agreement for another Saudi oil facility on deferred payments had been reached and would be formally announced within two to three days. The announcement got delayed as Islamabad engaged with the US

authorities and the IMF.

"They are not only considering another oil facility on deferred payments but an agreement has almost been reached that would hopefully be made public in two or three days," Mr Tarin stated on September 30 on the floor of the National Assembly in response to a question.

Officials said the IMF had asked Islamabad to ensure financial flows that it had promised at the time of finalising the 39-month Extended Fund Facility. Support from the kingdom and China was a key pillar of the three-year financing plan.

Mr Tarin had confirmed to the National Assembly that with the premier's approval, during the financial year 2013-14, an amount of \$1.5bn, equivalent to Rs157.19bn, was received as grant from Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency and transferred to Pakistan Development Fund Ltd account in the State Bank of Pakistan.

Courtesy:Dawn

Want to learn 'fusion art'? Karachi artist has some tips

If you are staring at the strokes on your canvas wondering how they can be digitised, this young artist from Karachi has some useful tips for beginners.

"They are all different fields but at the end of the day it is all art," Ayesha Mubarak Ali said while explaining her integrated art on show Naya Din. "You look at the nature of the project and work out how it can be displayed better. Sometimes research is required, but you can grab attention by giving it slight touches of fashion as well."

She describes her work as a "fusion art", which is a blend of fine arts, textile design and machine learning such as data collection. "They are all part of my art."

Ayesha started off with acrylic painting but soon

realised that she needed to go beyond it.

"Art has power and that power can only be visible if you contribute to it," the artist said. "Unless your art has an interdisciplinary touch, you cannot compete with the international community."

One of her projects, titled Dark Skies Gaze Back, tackles light pollution in Karachi. She has been working on it since before the pandemic.

"People are aware of noise and air pollution," she said, "but light pollution is not something many people are familiar with. It has many interpretations. It teaches how light can cause depression and affect a person's metabolism, etc."

Ayesha explores women empowerment in her work as well. "We wanted to make South Asian



women part of a narrative which is different from what we see in the mainstream media. They have to have the role of a warrior."

When asked how beginners can digitise a canvas, the artist said: "There are many ways to do it. The best way I would say whoever loves art should research data collection and machine learning and then see how it can be integrated into their art." Ayesha has two projects in the pipeline. She will be working for Karachi Biennale scheduled for 2022 as well.

Courtesy:Samaa TV

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