

Positive Post

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



Greenwich University

March in History

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Pakistan's standing in the global rankings

Overview

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

DEMOCRACY INDEX

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

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

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

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX

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

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

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

PRESS FREEDOM INDEX

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

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

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

TERRORISM INDEX

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

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

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

ECONOMIC FREEDOM INDEX

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

Index from 0 (repressed) to 100 (free)

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

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

Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development 2021



Mr. Ali Jillani led the Goal 17 FactSheet team of the Asia Pacific Regional Civil Society Engagement Mechanism (APRCM). He also made the intervention at the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) 2021 roundtable on Means of Implementation - Goal 17 - on behalf of APRCEM. Below is the draft intervention:

"Thank you Chair and APRCEM for the opportunity.

The decade of action and delivery for sustainable development can only be realized if systemic barriers like global inequalities of wealth, power and resources, international economic, trade and monetary frameworks, militarism & conflict, patriarchal authoritarianism, marginalizing governance, shrinking democratic spaces, as well as a guilt-free pass on Means Of Implementation (MOI) commitments are addressed.

The unprecedented COVID-19 crisis has reinforced the need to address such vulnerabilities caused by neoliberal globalization and flawed macroeconomic governance.

Official Development Assistance (ODA) is falling short of its commitment of 0.7% of GNI, evident of the fact that only 6 countries could meet their ODA targets in 2017, with the overall contribution amounting to US\$ 147.2 against the required investments of US\$ 5-7 trillion to achieve the SDGs. On the flipside, wealth and resources continue to flow from developing countries through illicit financial flows, tax evasions, capital flows, asset stealth, trade mispricing,

and profit shifting by multinational corporations where the data shows that the developing economies lost over \$7.8 trillion between 2004-2013, with the outflows increasing at 6.5% every year - twice as fast as global GDP.

The terms of discussions around Official Development Assistance (ODA) need to change from an act of benevolence to that of responsibility for Global North, reckoning the historical debt owed to the developing world after centuries of colonial plunder, and its continued patterns through neo-imperial tactics.

People of the Asia-Pacific reject ODA's use to catalyze private sector engagement; achieve trade, military and political objectives of donor countries; and, its substitution with climate financing, refugee costs, or debt cancellation as recently proposed by the Development Assistance Committee. ODA needs to be reformed, reviewed for impact, and held accountable for failure to deliver on the commitments, rather than being reduced to buzz-worded negotiation outcomes going one step forward, two steps back!

Debt distress is another key challenge exacerbated by COVID 19, where increased debt financing, along with economic downturn, will lead to higher government debt to GDP ratio expected to rise to 49% in 2021 among the least developing countries, while the pandemic generally affecting a much larger group of 40 out of 43 countries in Asia-Pacific.

Reiterating the Secretary General's

appeal reckoning COVID 19 situation "We cannot resort to the usual tools in such unusual times" so, we need strong multilateral commitments to address debt distress having pushed poor countries into generational debt traps leaving virtually no fiscal space for effective COVID recovery or sustainable development priorities.

Trade, as a critical MOI, needs to be democratized through structural

revolution, and concentration of technological innovation in the hands of a few technology giants, must not be allowed to compromise privacy, hinder technology transfer, impede the progress of developing countries to develop their technological capacity, marginalize human workforce, or undermine local knowledge systems.

Policy emphasis on digitization and technological advancements must



reforms prioritizing people and the planet over profits, upholding the essence and multidimensionality of the Agenda 2030 safeguarding state policy space. Localization of SDGs shouldn't mean the absence of accountability mechanisms at the global level, to ensure the establishment of global reform entities for SDGs Compatibility Impact Assessment of taxation architecture, trade & investment agreements, and synergizing multilateral cooperation to avoid corporatocratization of the globe. Rather than pushing the poorest countries for economic self-reliance, the processes should help them address macro-economic pressures embodied in hegemonic trade agreements through conditions of market deregulation, massive privatizations, corporate capture of resources & governance, and neoliberal instruments like ISDS, among others.

Corporate control of data, as the raw material for the 4th industrial

ensure a civil society led thorough review of the potential adverse effects on the environment, the social, cultural, economic, civil & political rights of the people.

Our decade of action demands the dismantling of neoliberal development framework that destroys the environment; starves people of resources and strips them of rights; and criminalizes those who stand for justice.

The people of the Asia-Pacific demand Development Justice.

If the Agenda 2030 is to be endorsed as the global social contract between people and governments of the world, it's high time they walked the talk!

I thank you, Chair."

Pakistan Day military parade held in Islamabad

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

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

Pakistani President Arif Alvi, besides senior government and military officials, attended the event. But Prime Minister Imran Khan could not participate as he is currently in quarantine after testing positive for COVID-19 last week. The parade was also attended by military dignitaries from the UK, Sri Lanka, and Bahrain.

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

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



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

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

The passing of the landmark resolution subsequently led to the cre-

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

Soloturk and Turkish band performances

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

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

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

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

Turkish F-16 demo and stunt team Soloturk was founded in 2011 in honor of the Turkish Air Forces' centennial anniversary.

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

Islamic banks take another 5% share of Pakistani conventional banks

Islamic banking industry's assets and deposits have more than doubled during the last five years and it now has 17% share in assets and 18.3% in deposits of the overall banking industry.

This means Islamic banks have now taken 5% share of conventional banks as their share in deposits increased from 13.3% in 2015 to 18.3% in 2020.

"This growth in assets and deposits of the Islamic banking industry is encouraging, particularly due the fact that the industry was also faced with the Covid-19 pandemic challenges during 2020," the State Bank of Pakistan said.

"The industry (Islamic Banks) also has taken 60% share in the housing finance," said Ahmed Ali Siddiqui, the IBA Center for Excellence in Islamic Finance director. "It has also taken 40% share in mutual funds



and 63% share in pension fund in the industry."

Siddiqui said that Pakistan has been one of the most financially excluded nation.

"Several surveys, including that of a State Bank, have revealed that many people are reluctant to get financially included because conventional banking system is interest-based," he said.

This is the reason that the central bank is pushing Islamic banks to enhance their share in the industry, Siddiqui said.

The SBP has set a target of increasing Islamic banks' share in the industry to 25% by 2025. Pakistan's National Financial Inclusion Strategy (NFIS), which is headed by Queen Máxima of the Netherlands, has set a target of 30% penetration of Islamic banks in the banking industry by 2025.

"They are doing it because it will help improve Pakistan's economy as it will help in increasing financial inclusion," Siddiqui said.

The industry reported the highest growth during the calendar year 2020, according to SBP. The overall assets and deposits of the Islamic banking industry have shown a growth of 30% and 27.8% respectively during 2020. This is the highest increase in assets in a year since 2012 and in deposits since 2015.

The assets of Islamic banking industry increased to Rs4,269 billion, whereas deposits reached Rs3,389 billion by the end of December 2020.

Siddiqui said that Islamic banking is asset-based, which helps trigger growth in real economy. It doesn't get involved in speculation and artificial derivatives, he added.

'Pakistan capable of defending territorial integrity'



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

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

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

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

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

Courtesy:www.aa.com.tr

Sindh announces new restrictions for intercity transport

The Sindh government has decided to operate intercity public transport at 50% capacity, a notification by the Sindh Transport and Mass Transit Department stated.

The decision was taken to prevent the spread of the UK variant in Sindh.

Under the new orders, all passengers and inter and intra-city transporters have been directed to ensure strict coronavirus SOPs implementations inside vehicles and at bus stands as well.

Earlier this week, Sindh CM Murad Ali Shah suggested a ban on inter-province travel across the country but the advice was rejected by the federal government.

He said that the coronavirus situation did not deteriorate in Sindh due to the efforts of the provincial government.

After the number of coronavirus infections increased in other



provinces, Sindh took these precautionary measures to keep the situation curbed in the province.

- Businesses will only be allowed to remain open from 6am to 8pm.
- All indoor and outdoor weddings will be banned from April 6.
- Outdoor dining at restaurants will be allowed until 10pm.
- Offices will be allowed to call 50% of staff members.
- 'No mask, no entry' policy at airports.

In the last 24 hours, Pakistan has reported 5,234 coronavirus cases while 83 people lost their lives. According to experts, the third wave of the virus is more lethal than the first two waves.

Courtesy:Saama

Naya Pakistan scheme: Pakistan allots houses to 1,500 labourers, widows



Prime Minister Imran Khan took out the names of 10 labourers and widows in a lucky draw and they will now be able to afford and own their own houses.

The premier inaugurated Labour Colony Phase-I and Phase-II in Islamabad on Thursday. The balloting was held for six women, two people with disabilities and two labourers. On Friday, electronic balloting will be held and houses will be allotted to 1,508 labourers.

People earning less than Rs500,000 would be given ownership rights of these homes. Around 3,000 individuals registered themselves under the Workers Welfare Fund. Of them, 1,500 will be handed over these houses and flats through a draw.

"No country in the world can allot houses to the poor," said PM Khan while addressing the ceremony.

"What we have done is make it easier for people to afford houses." He explained that labourers were already paying rent so now that rent will be used to pay off bank loans for their houses. He did not give the amount labourers will be required to pay.

The project spreads over 2,560 acres of land and comprises 1,008 apartments and 500 houses. This project was launched before but was abandoned due to a lack of funds. The government collaborated with the Workers Welfare Fund and completed the project under the Naya Pakistan Housing Programme.

"A 25-year-old project has been revived," the premier remarked. Countries have to help those who can't help themselves. "This is the right of the workers. Labourers should be able to own their houses."

Courtesy: www.zemtv.co

Zaheer Ahmad Babar appointed new chief of Pakistan Air Force

Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmad Babar has been appointed the new chief of Pakistan Air Force.

President Arif Alvi appointed him the air chief on the advice of Prime Minister Imran Khan.

Air Chief Marshal Babar is the son of renowned religious scholar Ghulam Mohammad. He is the third chief of a military service who hails from Gujrat.

The other two include General (retired) Raheel Sharif and Admiral (retired) Mohammad Sharif.

President Alvi awarded outgoing



Air Chief Marshal Mujahid Anwar Khan Nishan-e-Imtiaz (Civil) for his remarkable services as the air chief.

Courtesy:Saama

Coronavirus: Dying nurse told sister 'follow in my footsteps'

Nurse Areema Nasreen was one of the youngest NHS workers to die from coronavirus at the start of the pandemic. Almost a year on from her death, her sister reveals how Areema's last words changed the course of her life.

The last time Kazeema Afzal saw her sister alive, she was getting ready to go on to a ventilator at the hospital where both had worked since they were teenagers.

"She waved and said I love you," Kazeema recalled of the moment the 36-year-old nurse disappeared behind the double doors.

But Areema had one last message to pass on, which she told a colleague moments before she was sedated.

"She said, 'my sister... make sure she works hard. I want her to follow in my footsteps'," Kazeema said. "That was the last thing she said."

The two were inseparable growing up in Walsall, West Midlands, together with their younger sister Ash. Areema was only three years older than Kazeema, but "she was like a mum to us," she said. "Mum knew she could go to another country and Areema would be there to look after us all."

Their lives mirrored each others'. When Areema and Kazeema were still teenagers, they travelled to Pakistan where their families intended them to marry.

image caption Areema, right, had a wicked sense of humour, her sister said, and the two were always making people laugh

They were wed on the same day to two brothers and lived together for six months. "We grew up quickly," Kazeema said. "We had children very soon after." The sisters had three children each and even had the same due date for their youngest child.

Both were keen to work. When Areema started as a housekeeper in their home town's Manor Hospital in 2003 aged 19, her younger sister soon followed suit.

But it was always the eldest sister's dream to be a nurse. With her hus-



band Fasil Tahseen's support, she became the first member of her family to attend university. In 2019, she became a staff nurse at the hospital that was her "second home".

"That was her childhood dream," said Kazeema, who praised her brother-in-law for helping his wife achieve it.

"For an Asian girl to get married and study after.. it's very hard for a partner who has come from another country. But he helped her until the end. He said, 'you do what you want to do'."

image caption Areema was a teenager when she married her husband, whom she called Faz

Nursing suited Areema's warm-hearted and compassionate character.

"She got such a buzz out of looking after people," her sister said. "She was always sending money home [to Pakistan]. If someone needed water, she'd buy them a pump. She paid for the family of a severely ill child to go on a pilgrimage and she went with them."

Unsurprisingly then, Areema was a popular figure on the acute medical unit (AMU). She had been working there for three months when she began complaining of backache. Her family thought it was purely the strain of her house move.

"She was never ill," Kazeema said. "When she said she was tired and lethargic, we just thought she'd overdone it. The cough came right at the end."

image caption Areema graduated from the University of Wolver-

hampton; she was the first in her family to study in higher education. It was March 2020 and little was known about many of the symptoms of Covid-19. Areema kept on working, assuming she would turn a corner.

"The last shift was the worst ever," recalled her sister. "We told her to go home but she wanted to stay. She was gasping for breath."

When she continued to deteriorate, her family sent for an ambulance. A test two days later confirmed their fears.

"She sent me a text saying 'I've got Covid' with crying emojis." Areema remained in hospital. A few days later, a message came through in the early hours.

"My lungs are full," it read. She was being sent to ICU.

Kazeema left her home and ran to the hospital just a short distance away.

"I fell, I tripped, but I kept on running," she said.

The two sisters sat together until the 36-year-old was put on the ventilator.

At first it looked as though she was improving. But as the pandemic has proved, coronavirus can hit its sufferers in waves and Areema's condition plummeted.

"I just got a phone call and they were saying 'I'm so sorry' - and I said, 'what are you trying to say, my sister's dying?'"

"She died in her husband's arms."
• Study of NHS staff to understand who catches virus

- NHS workers who died in the pandemic
- "Traumatised hospital staff need time to recover"

Kazeema said she was not surprised by her sister's final words. "Straight away, I knew she would say that. She was the type of person to put someone else first at the end."

The two women had discussed many times the younger sibling's hope of following the same career path. But because she did not complete her GCSEs, she never thought she had a hope.

"I'd say, 'I can't do it, I'm not that clever', and she'd go 'come on Kaz!' "She kept saying 'trust me, you can do this'."

The words have stuck in her head ever since. Even though the pain of losing her sister has seriously damaged her mental health, Kazeema has found the strength to become a healthcare assistant - on the very ward where Areema worked.

And this week, she is starting an apprenticeship at Walsall College which will pave the way for her to get a nursing qualification.

"I've got my pencil case and my calculator - I was so excited to get them, I was like a schoolgirl picking them up," she said.

- Latest West Midlands news

Working on the AMU has been a tonic for Kazeema; with her sister's photographs on the walls, her spirit lives on, not least in the memories of her close-knit colleagues.

A scholarship has been set up in Areema's memory, to fund a degree in nursing for someone who dreams of a career in healthcare but cannot afford the fees. The first recipient is soon to be announced.

"Areema's legacy is going to live on," said Kazeema. "She always wanted to be a nurse and we were all so proud of her."

"I want people to be inspired by her - people who don't think they can do something, they can."

Courtesy: BBC NEWS

Pakistan, World Bank sign \$1.3b Agreement

The World Bank will provide Pakistan \$1.3 billion to support the government initiatives in several sectors, according to agreements signed between the two parties.

The money will be spent on seven sectors, including social protection, disaster and climate risk management, and human capital development, according to the Press Information Department.

The agreements were signed by Ministry of Economic Affairs Secretary Noor Ahmed and World Bank Country Director Najy Benhassine. Representatives of the Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan governments witnessed the agreement signing for provincial projects online.



According to the federal government, \$600 million will be used to support initiatives under the Ehsaas

programme. The Locust Emergency and Food Security project will receive \$200 million.

Two hundred million dollars will be spent to improve the quality of primary healthcare services and elementary education in four districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Another \$200 million will be used to strengthen Sindh's capacity to manage natural disasters and public health emergencies.

A sum of \$86 million will be spent on creating employment opportunities for rural communities and improving healthcare facilities in Balochistan. An amount of \$50 million will be used to strengthen organizational and institutional capacity for managing refugees and their host communities.

Courtesy:Saamatu

Sindh has allocated Rs500m for COVID-19 vaccines: health minister

Sindh Health Minister Dr Azra Pechuho announced on Tuesday that the government has allocated Rs500 million to purchase and import COVID-19 vaccines. They are awaiting approval from the PM's special assistant on health Dr Faisal Sultan.

Dr Sultan had, however, said the previous day that the provinces don't need a no-objection certificate (NOC) from the federal government to import the coronavirus vaccine.

Dr Pechuho hinted that the provincial government was considering the Chinese-made Cansino vaccine.

It is a single dose shot and will greatly help with vaccination, she stated. "We want more and more people vaccinated," the provincial health minister said.

I know the vaccination rate is very slow, Dr Pechuho said, adding that the reason behind this was a limited supply of vaccine doses.

There are 175 adult vaccination centres (AVC) in Sindh. Twenty-nine are in Karachi, eight in Hy-



derabad, and five to six in every other district, she said while giving details of the province's vaccination programme.

Until we have sufficient vaccines, it has become even more important to adhere to coronavirus SOPs, she said.

The federal government will receive one million additional vaccine doses in the next few days. The government had placed additional orders for the Chinese-made Sinopharm and CanSino vaccines.

The PM's aide on health had said

that a batch of over one million COVID-19 vaccine doses will be flown into Pakistan from China this week.

The government had placed additional orders for the Chinese-made Sinopharm and CanSino vaccines. Dr Sultan added that several million additional doses are in the pipeline and they will be delivered in April.

'Sindh COVID-19 situation could worsen'

The COVID-19 situation in Sindh right now is not as bad as it is in Punjab but it could worsen soon,

Dr Pechuho warned.

The UK virus variant had led to a rise in infections in Punjab. It will cause great damage if it comes to Sindh, she said.

In Punjab, there is a tremendous strain on hospitals as hundreds of patients are admitted every week, said the health minister. We don't have more than 500 ventilators, she said. "What will happen to other people who need ventilators when these are occupied?"

It is very important that we stay alert and strictly follow SOPs.

Dr Pechuho urged people to stay away from public places and avoid don't hold parties and gatherings at their homes.

Earlier, she had warned that health workers refusing to get the COVID-19 vaccine shots will not be allowed to work at health facilities.

Sindh has reported 265,158 cases and 4,495 deaths. A total of 255,952 people have recovered from the virus in the province.

Courtesy:Saamatu

Dollar slides to its lowest level in almost two years

The dollar was selling at Rs154.10 at the inter-bank, which is nearly a two-year low. The last time dollar was selling below this level was on June 14, 2019.

“The market sentiments are that that the dollar will further shed its value more,” said Zafar Paracha, Secretary Exchange Companies Association of Pakistan (ECAP).

The dollar rate fell by Rs4 or 2.4% during March from Rs158.10.

“When the market behaves this way, the selling begins which further puts the dollar under pressure. The same thing happens when the market expects the dollar to rise, people start buying, and subsequently dollar rate increases.”

He added that these market sentiments are due to improved inward remittances and lower outward remittances.

“Dollar may further lose its value



and it can go down to as low as Rs152,” he said.

Paracha said the Naya Pakistan Certificate offers a lucrative 7% interest rate, which was increasing the flow of dollars into the country. Head of Research at BMA Capital Faizan Ahmed also said that he sees the dollar fluctuating between Rs152 and Rs155.

“The market was expecting that current account deficit would be high in February, something around \$500

million but it actually came out at only \$50 million. It also played a role in the falling rates of dollar recently,” Ahmed said.

During the first eight months of the fiscal year 2021, the current account showed a surplus of \$881 million as compared to a deficit of \$2.74 billion in the same period last year.

Ahmed added that inward remittances have also fared better, contrary to market expectations.

The remittances stood at \$18.7

billion in the first eight months of FY2021 (July to February), which was 24% higher than the remittances during the same period last year.

Meanwhile, Ahmed said that Pakistan is going to issue Euro bonds to the tune of \$3 billion in the international market, which along with inflows from the World Bank and IMF, will further shore up dollar reserves.

The State Bank of Pakistan announced that remittances sent through Roshan Digital Accounts had crossed \$650 million in eight months.

“I believe Roshan Digital Accounts has immense potential. The response so far is low because people are learning—both the overseas depositors and bank staff involved. The State Bank needs to conduct more awareness programmes to tap its actual potential,” said Paracha. “According to my assessment, remittances and investment through Roshan Digital Accounts can increase to \$1 billion every month within a couple of years.

Courtesy:Saama

Rare white tiger born at Lahore zoo He is being fed formula milk



A white tigress gave birth to a cub at Lahore zoo on Sunday. There are now six white tigers at the zoo.

The management has, however, said that the cub is being fed artificial milk as its mother attacked him when he tried to suckle.

White tigers are a genetic anomaly. They have white fur because of the lack of pigment pheomelanin.

According to the WWF, as few as 3,200 white tigers are left on earth and none are currently known to exist in the wild.

Two white tiger cubs died at the Lahore zoo on February 4.

It was reported that they were suffering from diarrhea for the past 12 days. According to the deputy director of the zoo, the cubs had come down with a bad stomach resulting in motions and blood vomits. “They were given medicines but couldn’t survive.”

They were given contaminated milk and meat, he said, pointing out that cubs are not supposed to be fed meat in large quantities during early months.

Courtesy:Saamatu

Pakistan to form authority to control usage of drones

Prime Minister Imran Khan approved the formation of the Civil Drone Authority.

“It is the need of time that that the technology is used for commercial research, agriculture, and other peaceful purposes,” he said while chairing a meeting on Saturday.

“The authority will play a crucial role in the technology’s promotion and development in the country. Its effective use will result in using resources and providing better services,” Khan added.

The prime minister remarked that there was no law on the use of drones in the country.

Prime Minister has directed the officials to set up the authority and present a bill in Parliament after getting the federal cabinet’s approval.

The Civil Drone Authority, which will be headed by the aviation division secretary, will be responsible for the regulation of the technology,



issuing of licenses, and the import of the technology.

It can also hand penalties, including fines and cancellation of licenses, to those found guilty of violating the laws.

Senior officials of Pakistan Air Force, Civil Aviation Authority, defence production, interior ministry, along with the Ministry of Science and Technology will also be part of the team.

A representative from each province as well as Azad Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan have also been included as well.

Courtesy:Saama

Sindh Govt flips Karachi Malir Expressway Route, PPP Stronghold saved

This is a rough indication of the old plan and the proposed plan for the Malir Expressway to give the reader an idea of how it sits by the river.

The Sindh government is changing the shape and route of the Malir Expressway from the right bank to the left of the river to save money on compensation and ostensibly to gain political currency.

The expressway runs from the end of DHA, along the Malir River, and ends at the highway. It is a corridor which will connect the two DHAs and make it easier for people to reach other emerging housing like Bahria Town that is springing up as Karachi expands.

“There is a saving of Rs5billion to Rs6billion in terms of money on account of compensation for demolishing residential units and private agriculture lands,” said the project’s director, bureaucrat Niaz Soomro.

A new survey is being done for the route change.

In the first design, with the wide expressway on the right side of the Malir River, 24 ancient villages would have to go along with 150 acres of farmland.

Those villages Old Shafi Goth, Lasi Goth, Memon Goth, Sammoo Goth, old thano, Magsi Goth, Thadoo Goth, Nai abadi, Shafi Goth, Dad Muhammad Goth, Mulla Essa Goth, Nasir Town, Jam Goth, Shahu Bagh, Fazal Bagh, Malir Bungalows, Dumllotte Wells Nos 3, 6, 7 & 8, Yaar Muhammad Jokhio Goth, Ra-sool Bux Khaskheli Goth and Hoth Bazar Goth. These goths were on the way to Anwar Baloch Restaurant in front of Malir Court.

The Sindh government would have had to compensate each and every person whose house or farmland would be in the route of the express-



way. But now, by flipping the expressway to the other side of the river, Niaz Soomro says that they will encounter only abandoned government lands. There is one goth, Gulshan-e-Maryam, on this side and its people will be displaced.

“The Sindh government would compensate the residents of Gulshan-e-Maryam,” Soomro added. It is not clear how much or how they will be compensated. This story will be updated once we acquire those details.

The Sindh Cabinet has to approve these changes.

PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari laid the foundation stone for Malir Expressway in December last year. It is going to be 39km long with six lanes. It roughly starts at KPT Interchange at Qayyumabad and ends at the Karachi-Hyderabad Motorway near Kathore.

It will have six interchanges: at Korangi Road near Defence View; EBM Causeway; Shah Faisal; Quaidabad near Anwar Baloch Hotel; Memon Goth; and Dumba Goth in Kathore.

The project is a public-private partnership of Rs28 billion in which three companies, JN Company, Habib Construction, and NKB

Constructions, are working with the provincial government.

At the time of inauguration, the chief minister said the first portion from Korangi to Quaidabad would be completed within one and a half years and the entire project would take two and a half years.

He added that his government has put in Rs4 billion and the remaining amount has been generated as a bank loan.

The expressway would have five bridges, five weighbridges, and 63 culverts, and one underpass, according to a handout from CM House. The project director says an overhead bridge would be included in the present plan at Quaidabad which links the other portions of the expressway and rest of the planning would remain same.

The technical study of the new route would be conducted by NESPAK and NED’s Department of Infrastructure and Urban Development.

Niaz Soomro said the Sindh government would ask the Sindh Environmental Protection Agency to prepare an Environmental Impact Assessment report for the new route.

The head of NED’s Infrastructure and Urban Development Dr Adnan

Qadir confirmed that their team is working on the technical aspects of the new route recommended by the government.

“In the survey, we are going to check how many houses and private land are going to be affected or demolished by opting for a new route,” Dr Qadir added.

The NED team has completed its survey and is compiling a report in two weeks.

Qadir roughly estimates that the new route would be more feasible than the old one in terms of demolishing houses.

The old goths in the route’s way have been PPP voters.

Recently, the PPP candidate in the area’s PS-88 by-polls won the election with a heavy margin.

At the end of January this year, the Malir deputy commissioner and Board of Revenue staff visited Gulshan-e-Maryam and razed some houses and marked others with red spray paint.

One of the residents, Rafail Sohail Raja, told SAMAA Digital 100 houses at a distance of about 300 meters from the river were marked. The Gulshan-e-Maryam is located near Jam Khanda Village to the left of Quaidabad Bridge.

The residents went to court and are waiting for a verdict, and in the meanwhile, government officials continue to mark the houses.

Raja said when they asked the officials they were told that the government would only pay them “material price”, which means for the cost of their houses and not the land they bought in Gulshan-e-Maryam.

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