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MAGAZINE

Volume: 2 No 7 - July 2022



RS: 75/-

Peshawar: The oldest living city of South Asia

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Dying reading habits

Unfortunately, book-reading habit has been diminishing as information and communication technology (ICT)'s use increasing among people with each passing day. This growing trend is an indication of scarcity of knowledge in future.

A research shows 75% of the population doesn't read any book, while nine percent are enthusiastic readers. A major reason of decline in the habit of book reading is use of mobile phones and social media that had engaged youth and limited their recreational activities. Obviously, it is a bitter fact that reading culture was dying in Pakistan day by day and youth were more prone to technology.

Another reason is the shortage of libraries as books had become costly and unaffordable. However, it is need of the time that parents and teachers should encourage and motivate students to book reading. Moreover, parents should adopt story-telling tradition at their homes and teachers in the classrooms. Apart from, book fairs and literature festivals must be held in routine to promote the reading culture in the country. It is too believed that access of technology isn't hurdle to adapt reading habit because a lot of literature, portable document files, e-books, magazines, articles and research journals are accessible due to technology.

Happy Reading from

The Editor

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Peshawar: The oldest living city of South Asia

By **Fakhar Alam**

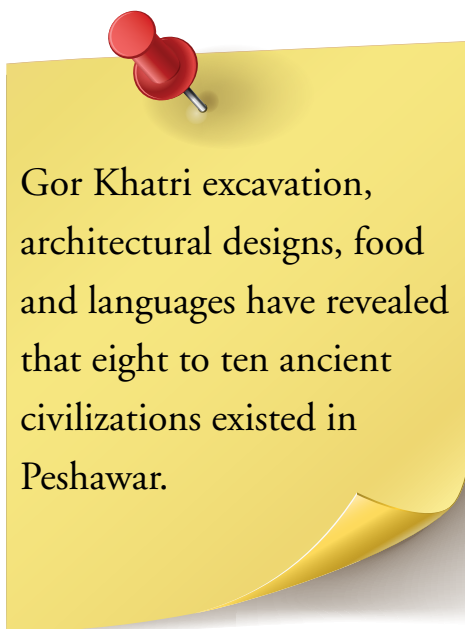
Known as the oldest living city in South Asia with a documented history of 2,500 years old, Peshawar carries a unique distinction of being a custodian of eight to ten ancient civilizations including Gandhara, making it a centre of attraction for foreign and domestic tourists due to its unique archaeological sites and glorious history.

Famous for ancient Balahisar Fort and Qissa Khwani Bazaar, Peshawar was officially declared by the Archaeology Department as the 'Oldest Living City' in South Asia with its history goes back to 539BC. Director Archaeology and Museums, Dr. Abdul Samad Khan told APP that recent Gor Kathri's scientific excavation has disclosed that Peshawar was the oldest living city in South Asia inhabited by the humans with diversi-

fied culture, language and architecture.

He said Gor Khatri excavation, architectural designs, food and languages have revealed that eight to ten ancient civilizations existed in Peshawar. The excavation at Gor Khatri, which continued for several years and published in British Journal 'Current World Archaeology' titled 'The deepest and biggest excavation in the world' has revealed 20 layers that provide a complete profile of the Peshawar city ranging from British down to pre-Indo-Greek era.

The excavation discovered that Peshawar was a province of Persian Alchame-nian Empire in four to six century BC and later came under the influence of Mauryans, Greeks, Scythians, Kushans, Sasanians, White Huns, Ghaznavis, Slave Dynasty, Ghoris, Suri Afghans, Mughals, Durrani, Sikhs and the British



before the creation of Pakistan.

Conquered by Greeks and ruled by Buddhists, Peshawar had witnessed rebuilding by Brahmins, invaded by Ghaznavis, captured by Mughals, over run by Sikhs and annexed by British in succession. Despite witnessing the onslaught of warriors, kings and invaders that marched from Afghanistan, Central Asian Republics to the Subcontinent through historic Khyber Pass, Dr Samad said that Peshawar's remained intact and a centre of attractions for tourists and traders since its establishment.

"Qissa Khwani Bazaar remained centre of attractions for international traders and merchants, who often stayed here to enjoy its famous Chappli Kabab and



others delicious cuisine with traditional Qehwa and exchanged stories about each others' culture, food, art and music before departing to Central Asian Republics (CARs) and Subcontinent for trade."

During stay at Qissa Khwani, he said the international traders had got a unique opportunity to explore almost all the historical sites and buildings of Peshawar like Sethi House, Balahisar Fort, Ghanta Ghar, Chowk-e-Yadgar, Mohabat Khan Mosque and Peshawar Museum. Terming Peshawar Museum is one the world's largest museums of Gandhara art, Dr Abdul Samad said that conservation of its British era's building was almost completed with an estimated cost of Rs. 20 million which would soon be opened for the general public.

"The museum currently houses 4,0,000 rare antiquities and artifacts besides complete life story of Lord Bhudda, attracting Bhuddists and monks from across the world."

He said conservation work of the historical building of Mohabat Khan Mosque has been completed and efforts are underway to renovate it in original shape, adding that 40 percent work on its ceiling and minarets besides adjoining portions were also completed. The archaeology guru said that Rs 87 million were approved for conservation of Mohabat Khan Mosque and the KP Chief Minister had already passed directives to allocate more funds for completion of the mega project.

Dr Abdul Samad said that 42 encroached shops and adjacent plaza have affected building of the historical mosque and negotiations were underway to convince the traders and shopkeepers to remove these shops. Bakhat Muhammad, Assistant Director Research, Directorate of Archaeology and Museums said that around 3,000 historical sites were existed in Peshawar, Charssadda, Swabi, Nowshera and Mardan districts including 1,840

ancient buildings in Peshawar. Besides Gor Khatri, he said Dalazak Tomb, Kotla Mohsin Khan, Sakhi Mahuddin tombs, Chacha Younas monument were declared protected sites while Sakhi Shah Mardan Villa, Bejo tomb, Qissa Khwani, Lady Reading Hospital and others as non protected. He said British era Sethi House Peshawar, a historical building of the British era carrying a unique architectural value and eye-catching wood craftsmanship,



was purchased by the KP Government and was converted into a full-fledged museum. Inspired by Muslims and vernacular architecture of Bokhara Uzbekistan, he said Sethi family associated with international trade had constructed the masterpiece in 1886 after migrating from Punjab to Peshawar in early 19th century at Mohallah Sethian where about seven Havelis were built in almost the same style, signifying their aestheticism.

"I have heard a lot about the wood craftsmanship of Sethi House and found it correct today after visiting the architectural wood wonder of Peshawar," said Engr Khushal Khan, a resident of Dir Lower while talking to the news agency.

"The impressive building with eye-catching wood designs, red and greens' window glasses and ventilators structure of Sethi House have impressed

me the most." Dr Abdul Samad said focus was being made on completion of 12 ongoing projects including conservation of Mohabat Khan Mosque, development of key archaeological sites of Swat, Takht Bhai and preservation of Kalash culture in Chitral, curbing illegal excavations and smuggling of antiquities and preservation of colonial era archaeological sites. He said that 800 new archaeological sites were discovered in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Regarding new

projects in budget 2022-23, he said that Rs. 100 million were allocated for a new project 'documentations of archeological sites in merged tribal districts' and practical work on it would start during the next fiscal year.

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Russia-Ukraine conflict

By Rashid A Mughal

Months before Russia invaded Ukraine, it has been watching its former Warsaw Pact partners joining NATO one by one. Poland, Hungary, Latvia, Estonia, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Slovenia and other Russian allies left Warsaw pact after the break up of U.S.S.R and joined former foe NATO.

Formally known as the Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance, the Warsaw Pact was created on 14 May 1955. It complemented the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, which was the regional economic organisation set up by the Soviet Union in January 1949 for the communist states of Central and Eastern Europe.

The Warsaw Pact embodied what was referred to as the Eastern bloc, while NATO and its member countries represented the Western bloc. NATO and the Warsaw Pact were ideologically opposed and, over time, built up their own defences starting an arms race that lasted throughout the Cold War.

Leaving Warsaw Pact and joining NATO of former Eastern Block countries kept Putin irritating as he never wanted to be surrounded by “enemies”. Cajoling and meting out “blue eyed boy” treatment to Ukraine perhaps exhausted Putin’s patience and hence he unleashed the biggest war in Europe since World War Two with the justification that modern, Western-leaning Ukraine was a constant

threat and Russia could not feel “safe” under these developments and threats to its existence. His justification(which he thinks is convincing enough) paved the way for attacking Ukraine.

Thousands of people have since died, towns and cities such as Mariupol lie in ruins and 13 million people have been displaced. But the question remain: what was it all for and how will it end? The Russian leader’s initial aim was to overrun Ukraine and depose its government, ending for good its desire to join the Western defensive alliance NATO.

After a month of failures, he abandoned his bid to capture the capital Kyiv and turned his ambitions to Ukraine’s east and south. Launching the invasion on 24 February he told the Russian people that his goal was to “demilitarise and de-Nazify Ukraine”.

His declared aim was to protect people

subjected to what he called eight years of bullying and genocide by Ukraine’s government. Another objective was soon added: ensuring Ukraine’s neutral status . Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov spoke of freeing Ukraine from oppression while foreign intelligence chief Sergei Naryshkin argued that “Russia’s future and its future place in the world are at stake”.

Ukraine’s President, Volodymyr Zelensky, said “the enemy has designated me as target number one; my family is target number two”. His adviser said Russian troops made two attempts to storm the presidential compound. Russian leaders refused to call it an invasion or a war. Moscow continues to coin Europe’s biggest war since 1945 as a “special military operation”. After a month into the invasion, Russia pulled back from Kyiv and declared its main goal was the “liberation of Donbas” – broadly referring





to Ukraine's eastern regions of Luhansk and Donetsk. More than a third of this area was already seized by Russian proxy forces in a war that began in 2014, now Russia wanted to conquer all of it.

The Kremlin claimed it had "generally accomplished" the aims of the invasion's first phase, which it defined as considerably reducing Ukraine's combat potential. But it became clear from Russia's withdrawal that it had scaled back its ambitions. Russian officials are now focused on seizing the two big eastern regions and creating a land corridor along the south coast, east from Crimea to the Russian border.

They have claimed control of the southern region of Kherson and a leading Russian general has said they have hopes of seizing territory further west along the Black Sea coast towards Odesa and beyond. "Control over the south of Ukraine is another way out to Transnistria," said Maj Gen Rustam Minnekayev, referring to a breakaway area of Moldo-

va, where Russia has some 1,500 troops.

If Russia does capture both eastern regions, it will most likely try to annex them as it did with Crimea in 2014. Ukraine also accuses occupying forces in Kherson of planning a referendum on creating separatist entity: they have already introduced Russia's currency, the Rouble, from 1 May. Capturing Donbas and the land corridor is a mandatory minimum for the Kremlin. The powerful head of Russia's security council, Nikolai Patrushev, has spoken of Ukraine disintegrating into "several states", blaming Ukrainian and Western hatred of Russia.

The question is whether Russian forces have the numbers to press forward. By not declaring this a war, the Kremlin cannot mobilise nationally and military analyst Michael Kofman believes that unless that happens, Russia's Donbas offensive is the last it can attempt.

Since Ukraine achieved independence in 1991, as the Soviet Union collapsed, it

Since Ukraine achieved independence in 1991, as the Soviet Union collapsed, it has gradually looked to the West – both the EU and Nato. Russia's leader has sought to reverse that, seeing the fall of the Soviet Union as the "disintegration of historical Russia".

has gradually looked to the West – both the EU and Nato. Russia's leader has sought to reverse that, seeing the fall of the Soviet Union as the "disintegration of historical Russia". He has claimed Russians and Ukrainians are one people, denying Ukraine its long history and seeing today's independent state merely as an "anti-Russia project".

"Ukraine never had stable traditions of genuine statehood," he asserted. It was his pressure on Ukraine's pro-Russian leader, Viktor Yanukovich, not to sign a deal with the European Union in 2013 that led to protests that ultimately ousted the Ukrainian president in February 2014.

Russia then seized Ukraine's southern region of Crimea and triggered a separatist rebellion in the east and a war that claimed 14,000 lives.

As he prepared to invade in February, he tore up an unfulfilled 2015 Minsk peace deal and accused Nato of threatening "our historic future as a nation", claiming that Nato countries wanted to bring war to Crimea. He has lately accused NATO of using Ukraine to wage a proxy war against Russia. NATO maintains it never intended to deploy combat troops on its eastern flank, until Russia annexed Crimea illegally in 2014.





China: Leading the BRICS

By Muhammad Asif Noor

China is hosting a series of hybrid events, both online and offline, being the Chair of BRICS (Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa) including a High-Level Dialogue, a Business Forum and a Summit this week. BRICS is an important economic block of developing states which represent 16 per cent of the global trade and 41 per cent population across the two continents and make joint efforts for mutual growth. President Xi Jinping delivered an important keynote address in the significant BRICS Business Forum, at the inaugural session of the series.

President Xi highlighted that the world should be prepared for future trends and challenges to create a shared future for mankind. In his speech, Chinese President Xi highlighted his important vision for the future especially his comprehensive view of existing cooperation in the bloc and apprised the audience about the future. Delegates from the five-nation bloc are participating in all the events while Heads of State participated in the Summit where they have addressed the audience by sharing respective policy recommendations.

China is the Chair of BRICS this year and organizing three key events i.e. BRICS Business Forum, 14th

Summit, and High-Level Dialogue on Global Development. The speech and policy statement from President Xi “Keep Abreast of the Trend of the Times to Shape a Bright Future” set the pace and direction of future cooperation within BRICS. President Xi took the opportunity to highlight the relevancy of BRICS to the developing world.

China has always encouraged partners to make joint efforts for achieving the UN-mandated Sustainable Development Goals Agenda 2030.

The entire world has faced the havoc of the pandemic, passing through the longest phase of non-traditional insecurity, and economic slowdown because of protectionist tendencies in world politics.

Under these circumstances, President Xi stressed focused on post-pandemic recovery, market integration, win-win cooperation, expanding openness, deepen equitable and sustainable development.

The primary assertion of his speech is to embrace solidarity and collectively ensure global peace and stability. President Xi believes any state cannot operate in isolation in today’s modern world because of intense interdependence.

Since China is the Chair of the Year in BRICS, President Xi took the lib-

erty to present his understanding of contemporary challenges and call for proportionate measures. Furthermore, the call for integration and openness is meant to promote business whereby business leaders should innovate their methods of development, and enable transparency and mutual development.

Consequently, these steps would deepen cooperation amongst BRICS for harnessing more collective and sustainable benefits. This conclusion stands firm on the premise that historic trends of hegemony, politics of alliances, and confrontation reflects they do not bring peace, stability and harmony.

To harness the benefits of cooperation and partnership, it is necessary to stay true to the UN Charter, pursue peace, embrace solidarity, and respect the legitimate security concerns of sovereign states.

There is no practicality attached to the notion of ‘position of strength’ and expansion of military alliances because it is opposed to the call for multilateralism and internationalism. In essence, it presents an insight into the future and reflects the direction where the world is headed. The urge to instil the spirit of confidence and strength in the audience was evident in the pitch and power of words.

Peace and development are the common heritage of humanity and it is China that has introduced the notion of people-centric development. President Xi highlighted that more than 1 billion people were affected by coronavirus, food and energy shortages, economic slowdown and rising debt.

If the concerted efforts are not timely made, all previous efforts of poverty reduction and development would go in vain. These circumstances pushed President Xi to mention his Global Development Initiative to strengthen cooperation for the development agenda.

China has always encouraged partners to make joint efforts for achieving the UN-mandated Sustainable Development Goals Agenda 2030. On this platform, his speech is taken as a blueprint for future development in an otherwise challenging world where problems are no longer simple.

It is encouraging to observe that China received wider acceptance of the policy standpoint and partner states are agreed to promote cooperation in diverse areas including finance, trade, peace, security, culture, and market integration.

It is worth mentioning here that the forum preceded many seminars and panel discussions where participants expressed their willingness to cooperate with China on the global development agenda. BRICS platform enabled China to lead major developing economies of the world. This also helped it not only win their unmatched support but also foster forward the agenda for humanity, about people.

People are at the heart of China's efforts toward the global agenda of the shared future of mankind. It is pertinent to create a nomenclature of solidarity, transparency and cooperation in major areas of policy-making for collective gains.



Pakistan & crisis management

Dr Abdus Sattar Abbasi

I was amazed listening to the Minister of State (MoS) for Foreign Affairs that Pakistan is now ahead of some developed countries in compliance of Financial Action Task Force (FATF) regulations and fulfilled requirements on thirty-four indicators of FATF while the process of whitelisting has started with the recent announcement of the global body.

It is not the first time that Pakistan emerged out of a crisis as a strong nation. I am sure, most of us cannot forget March 03, 2009, a terrible day for Pakistan cricket, when terrorists attacked Sri Lankan cricket team and suddenly international cricket vanished from Pakistan. I remember the passion during the final of second PSL held in Lahore on March 05, 2017, we decided to join Qaddafi Stadium to witness the return of cricket to Pakistan. We boarded the bus from Barkat Market for the stadium; my son Arham was almost four years old and I was educating him to cling around my chest if there was any blast; everyone can imagine the uncertainty, the fear, and the panic surrounding cricketing events during those times. Then what happened, Pakistan became the Champions Trophy winners, Babar Azam, the number one batter of ODIs and T20Is, and several others among top five rankings.

The devastation of the 2005 earthquake is in our memories with the exemplary response of the entire nation to extend every support to the victims. Extensive mobilisation of resources from tents, blankets, medicines, and prefabricated houses by local artisans to the groceries people

donated abundantly for the restoration of normal life in affected areas were all exemplary. The response and the recovery from the floods during 2010 exemplify innate abilities of the nation to manage a crisis effectively. Managing pandemics such as dengue, covid-19 and to an extent polio are also good examples of the country's ability to successfully respond to a crisis.

Pakistan has surprised the world with her abilities to counter terrorism. We suffered the most, we sacrificed the most, we lost the most but we arose as the most successful nation in combating the terrorism. Our skills, our abilities, our determination and probably above all our engagement with every component of society, from rebels to internally displaced people, made it a model for other nations to follow. We achieved what remained impossible for an alliance of 30 countries.

It is because of our exceptional abilities in crisis management as a nation. According to Kash and Darling from University of Pittsburgh, Kansas, USA, "a crisis is defined as any unplanned event that can cause serious damage to the public; shut down the businesses; disrupt operations; cause physical or environmental calamity; or threaten financial standing or image of the nation."

Mitigation and prevention of crisis, during day-to-day operations one cannot predict every unseen aspect of operations. Management of unforeseen issues which usually lead to a crisis is mostly missing in a number of organisations around the world. Sometimes, despite appropriate measures, crisis surprises organisations with new and unique dimensions.



The power of reading

By Muhammad Omar Iftikhar

The time to read is now! There is no better time to establish the habit of reading than to do it in the present. There is indeed a difference between a person who cannot read and one who does not want to read.

The people in the latter category are bringing themselves to a point of oblivion where they choose to remain ignorant despite having the opportunity to read. Reading is not a pastime anymore. With information now available at our fingertips, we need to stay updated with news, information, and insights. Reading was a leisure activity during the era when the Internet was a distant dream. The trends have changed ever since our thumbs began sliding and swiping on the screens of our smartphones as we continuously search for interesting content.

Reading has become a necessity in the twenty-first century. It is no longer a fashion but an essential requirement and a skill that one should pursue. Unfortunately, the youth considers reading to be a compulsion. They feel it to be an activity that bodes no results. This perception should be changed. The source of this misconception arises from the point when students at schools are compelled to read textbooks that they find to be boring. They are compelled to memorize and rote learn the definitions and content from their textbooks. The students, therefore, distance themselves from any book they find in front of them.

Reading is no longer a fashion pursuit

but an essential requirement and a much-needed skill.

Furthermore, reading is not just an activity that stimulates the mind and makes one curious. It expands your vocabulary and exposes you to new information. There is no specific rule to begin reading. You can read opinion articles and editorials published in print and digital media publications. You can read fiction and non-fiction books. Reading a dictionary and especially a thesaurus is also a healthy habit that introduces you to new words. Reading is an activity that helps you write better. People think that they will learn to write effectively if they write more. It is the act of reading that stimulates your mind as you extract words and phrases from your subconscious that it absorbed during reading.

Reading also develops one's personality as it is the cognizance of your society that makes you aware of yourself. You may have seen people actively taking part in discussions. They use the information

they grasp when reading and share it with the audience. We all must develop a habit of reading from today. One must create a reading plan and a place at home and dedicate a few minutes to reading daily.

Similarly, schools and colleges across Pakistan should dedicate forty-five minutes to an hour of reading time for students. They should be encouraged to visit the library during this time and read whatever book they want.

There can be group reading sessions where a student reads a passage and then they discuss it with each other. Students can share book reports and present a summary in a congenial environment that focuses on reading and exploring.

This should be done in a setting where the students are not graded or judged. However, their performance as a speaker and their skills to effectively use Power-Point may be evaluated. The teacher can give feedback on the same. This will develop the students' personalities that will facilitate them in their life and career.





Kumrat Valley: Exploring bounties of nature

Bewitching natural beauty, cultural richness and unparalleled hospitality of the diverse tourist's destinations in Pakistan have always contributed to captivate the attention of local and exotic nature as well as generate handsome revenues.

Bestowed with uncountable benediction, Pakistan's plains and hilly areas in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Kashmir and Northern areas present ample opportunities of amusement to hundreds of thousands tourist thronging these places every year.

Kumrat Valley, situated in the Upper Dir district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, is also one of the beautiful discoveries of the social media with all its attractions of green pastures, snow clad mountains, the river Panjkora, foggy mounds and imperturbable beauty of the forest.

"The year 2016 proved as a turning point for the hidden beauty of Kumrat Valley to be revealed through social media and soon it became one of the famous tourist's destinations for the visitors", Assistant Commissioner, Sheringal, Muhammad Yar Khan said.

"Before 2016, there was not even a single hotel in the valley for the tourists to stay but later on small hotels were constructed in the forests by the local people to facilitate visitors," he added.

The place is so beautiful that despite a 48 kilometer dilapidated track from Sheringal, Union Council in Upper Dir, tourist embark on this journey to visit

the heavenly place. Although, this track was repaired sometimes back but damaged again due to frequent snowfall.

"Despite the poor road conditions, around 6,000 visitors entered Kumrat Valley on the first day of Eid-ul Fitr, 8,000 on the second and 10,000 plus on the third day of Eid," Muhammad Yar Khan said.

He said for facilitation of the visitors the administration maintains strict law and order. "Not even a single crime was reported during last one year of my posting therefore visitors can freely roam around the valley without any threat."

Muhammad Yar however mentioned to dearth of good doctors, educationists and other professionals in the area as most of the people after getting good

education move to cities or abroad for job purposes.

Kumrat Valley, situated in the Upper Dir district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, is also one of the beautiful discoveries of the social media with all its attractions of green pastures, snow clad mountains, the river Panjkora, foggy mounds and imperturbable beauty of the forest.



Former Prime Minister, Muhammad Nawaz Sharif visited the place during his tenure and wanted to give it the status of a National Park. But, local people resisted this proposal fearing that their land and forests would be confiscated by the government.

Pakistan People's Party government established Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University in Sheringal in 2016 and the PTI government in KPK also focused on forest conservation and promotion of tourism in the areas.

Meanwhile, an official of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police, Zaman Khan said that Deputy Inspector General of Police has issued strict instruction to maintain law and order in the area.

"We follow instructions and try to keep the area crime free," he said but mentioned to language barriers and overcharging by hotels when asked about complaints registered by the visitors.

"Most of the visitors complain of language barriers, extra charging by shops and car parking as well as dilapidated roads," he added.

Around one million tourists visit the valley during the peak four months of summer season with most of them coming from Punjab and Sindh. This rising number of visitors has risen the number of locally constructed two star hotels to 45 in addition to small huts.

The hotels capacity sometimes fall short to accommodate the visitors that make local people to fleece the tourists charging them Rs 8,000 to Rs 15000 per night.

"This is irritating. We go there for leisure time but the local fully benefit from our presence over there by charging much more than the actual price," said a visitor Adnan Chaudhry, hailing from Faisalabad.

"If the nature has bestowed them with its bounties, they should care for the

fellow visitors. Provincial authorities should devise a pricing mechanism for the tourists visiting this area," he said.

He said, "we can understand that they have only seasonal income as there are lesser opportunities of earning during harsh winter. But, the rates should be convenient to both sides."

More than 70 percent area of the valley comprises forest while 30 percent of

Former Prime Minister, Muhammad Nawaz Sharif visited the place during his tenure and wanted to give it the status of a National Park. But, local people resisted this proposal fearing that their land and forests would be confiscated by the government.

barren land. The people in the valley lack proper source of income and most of them migrate to other cities for job

purposes.

Major agricultural crops of this area are potatoes and apple gourd (Tinda). However, the weather is also favorable for growing winter crops in summer season which are supplied to main cities.

The trees falling in the forest due to heavy rains or fast winds is another source of income for them as selling these trees in the market brings 60 percent share to local people and 40% to the government treasury.

Since, this is very low literacy rate area, the Assistant Commissioner informed that his office has written to the provincial authorities for construction of high schools for boys and girls.

Population in this area comprises 70 percent Kohistani and 30 percent Gujjars and language usually spoken is Kohistani as this area links to Indus Kohistan starting from silk route down to Kohistan, Palas, Shangla and Kalam. But, they all also know Pashto well.

This area is so beautiful that whatever the hardships, the tourists cannot be oblivious to enchanting beauty of Kumrat blue water, Jahaz Banda, Badgoi Top, Gwaldai Dara and Sundarai Dara and upcoming beautiful lakes planned by the provincial government for the tourists. Courtesy DNA





Climate change, its impacts on Pakistan

By Aqsa Ahsan

Climate change is the most important issue of our age; we are the first to see its early warning signals and the last to have a chance to prevent it from occurring. Living in a bubble of ignorance can only get us so far; our globe is indeed a scene of melting glaciers, rising floods, animal extinctions, extreme weather events and the list continues. Spreading climate change awareness using every way possible, including seemingly insignificant forms such as writing school essays, cannot be overstated.

Climate change has put a lot of countries at hazard, and the risk is significantly larger for developing countries. Because of this serious problem, which is having a severe impact on the area, South Asia has grown more disaster-prone. In general, climate change is accelerating and having severe consequences for Pakistan.

Pakistan is geologically located in a region where the effects of climate change are being felt fairly strongly. This climate disaster has had enormous economic, social, and environmental consequences. Statistics from the 2010 floods demonstrate the devastating effects on the 20 million individuals who lost their homes, were injured, or went missing. Similarly, another flood in Pakistan in 2012 wreaked havoc. Climate change puts Pakistan's income, housing, food, and security at danger. Considering the tough facts, the Pakistani government must take urgent measures to combat the detrimental effects of climate change. Without a doubt, the authorities

are paying close attention to this problem, which they see as sensitive and serious.

Pakistan faces "significantly higher average temperatures than the global average, with a potential rise of 1.3°C-4.9°C by the 2090s over the 1986-2005 baseline," according to a study, which also noted that Pakistan had "some of the highest disaster risk levels in the world, ranked 18 out of 191 countries by the 2020 Inform Risk Index."

Under the most optimistic emission scenarios, the global average temperature rise by 2080-99 will be around 3.7°C. Furthermore, changes in Pakistan's hydrologic regimens, and hence its water supplies, are largely unknown, although dry situations are projected to become more common. Extreme climatic events are expected to become more common and intense, increasing catastrophe risk,

the current median yearly likelihood of a heat wave happening in any specific region is roughly 3 percent. As seen by estimates that over 65,000 individuals were hospitalized with heatstroke during Pakistan's 2015 heatwave, a huge section of the population is at danger.

Many parts of Pakistan endure yearly temperatures of 38°C or more, and when weather patterns combine to produce protracted periods of heatwave, major human health consequences can occur. Between 1997 and 2015, Pakistan witnessed 126 heatwaves, an average of seven each year, with an upward trend.

Pakistan is a low-middle-income country with a primarily agrarian economy; however, it is gradually industrializing and more than a third of the population currently lives in cities. For food and nutrition security, the country signifi-

Communities offer to the problem of improving resilience and tackling climate change unique views, skills, and a wealth of information. Rather than being seen as recipients, they should be treated as participants in developing resilience. Community leaders may define goals, influence ownership, and create and administer investment programmes that are responsive to their community's needs, according to research and experience.

particularly for the poor and minority populations. Including an average monthly maximum of roughly 27°C and an average June maximum of 36°C, Pakistan often witnessed some of the world's greatest maximum temperatures. In Pakistan,

cantly relies on its climate-sensitive land, water, and forest resources. Agriculture continues to be a significant occupation for 42 percent of the population. Irrigation from the glacier-fed River Indus and its tributaries supports about 90 percent

of farmland. Glacier melt has accelerated due to climate change, increasing the likelihood of glacier lake outpouring floods (GLOF) and mudslides downstream. Faster glacier melt, rising temperatures, shifting seasons, and irregular rainfall patterns are all affecting the flow of the River Indus, which will have a growing impact on agriculture, food production, and lives. Already, 39 percent of the population lives in poverty, and the loss of livelihoods indicated in this research will have a significant impact on people's health and capacity to access healthcare.

Heat fatigue, starvation, the introduction of vector-borne diseases like dengue fever, and an increase in the burden of aquatic infections will all have an impact on people's capacity to work and make a living.

Migrants, internally displaced individuals, and religious and ethnic minorities will be particularly susceptible, since they are frequently confined to hazard-prone land and face challenges to treatment, including financial constraints resulting from informal work. Child marriages, early births, and domestic violence may become more common as a result of climate change. Due to decreasing food production, women and children will be more prone to malnourishment and malnutrition.

Smog is another major issue in Pakistan's industrialized eastern Punjab region, where the provincial capital, Lahore, is clogged with smoke throughout the winter months. Authorities said they are working to solve the problem, which involves thousands of brick kilns.

Millions of impoverished people will confront significant problems as the climate changes, including severe events, health consequences, social protection, economic stability, mobility, water security, cultural heritage, and other dangers.

Climate change is inextricably linked to global inequality patterns. Climate change harms the most vulnerable individuals the most, although they contribute the least to the catastrophe. Millions of vulnerable people are facing dispropor-

tionate problems as the effects of climate change worsen in terms of severe events, health effects, food security, economic assurance, water security, and cultural identity. Female-headed families, children, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples and ethnic minorities, landless tenants, migrant workers, displaced persons, sexual and gender minorities, older people, and other socially excluded groups are all highly prone to disasters. Their vulnerability stems from a variety of factors, including their geographic location, financial, socioeconomic, cultural, and gender status, as well as their access to medical care, decision-making, and justice.

Poor and oppressed people are demanding for more aggressive climate action. Climate change is more than an environmental disaster; it is also a social crisis that requires us to confront issues of inequality on many levels: between rich and poor nations; between men and women; and between generations. For more effective development outcomes, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has underlined the need for climate solutions that adhere to climate justice principles (i.e., recognition, procedural, and distributive justice).

Climate change mitigation initiatives frequently disproportionately affect the most disadvantaged. Climate change adaptation measures can impose a greater financial burden on poor households in the absence of well-designed and supportive policies; for example, policies to expand

public transportation or carbon pricing may result in higher public transportation fares, which will disproportionately affect poorer households. Similarly, restricting forestry activities to particular periods of the year might have an impact on indigenous populations that rely on woods for their livelihoods all year. In addition to addressing the distributional effects of decarbonizing economies, there is a need to understand and address social inclusion, cultural, and political economy issues, such as deciding on the types of transitions required (economic, social, etc.) and identifying opportunities to address social inequality during these processes.

Furthermore, communities offer to the problem of improving resilience and tackling climate change unique views, skills, and a wealth of information. Rather than being seen as recipients, they should be treated as participants in developing resilience. Community leaders may define goals, influence ownership, and create and administer investment programmes that are responsive to their community's needs, according to research and experience.

In creating climate resilience, the IPCC's newest report highlights the relevance of many types of knowledge such as scientific, Indigenous, and local knowledge. Communities and marginalized people may be connected to higher-level policy, technical, and financial support for locally relevant and successful development outcomes through innovations in climate finance architecture.





By Sehrish Khan

AS per the decision of FATF regarding Pakistan is concerned, it is too early to say when Pakistan will be removed from the FATF grey list.

Currently, October has been given, but whether a new condition will be imposed after that or not, cannot be said with certainty. FATF decision was to be announced on June 17 but different political parties and their social media teams even prior to the decision started taking credit that Pakistan has been removed from the grey list even photos from the previous meeting of FATF were being shared on social media accounts.

However, everything became meaningless when FATF members congratulated Pakistan on the completion of two Action Plans, especially on the completion of Action Plan 2021 in record time, and postponed the decision to remove Pakistan from the grey list till October.

The condition is that the FATF team will visit Pakistan to see if the system that Pakistan has created will be able to survive in the future. It is pertinent to mention here that Pakistan implemented 34 points ahead of time which needs to be appreciated which means that there is nothing impossible if somebody wants.

Since 2018, Pakistan joined the grey list, FATF has been re-examined several times, but each time a new list of objections has been submitted. The threat even reached the blacklist. Preparations

were made to weaken Pakistan economically, meaning that in addition to our trade with the outside world, debt and transaction matters were also at stake.

The hard work of the Pakistani governments and institutions, especially Pakistan Army together saved Pakistan from being blacklisted.

A coordination cell was set up in GHQ. Led by a Major General, the cell coordinated across all state and government agencies in the same way that the NCOC did in the Corona era to save the country from the plague. A very important question also arises here, why we do not realize any important problem in advance and why do we allow water to pass through our heads only after which we fight hand and foot to save ourselves?

For example, we first joined the grey list in 2008. We enacted some legislation and came out of the list criminalizing money laundering.

But we did not listen to the changing times and kept going on our way and again in 2012, we fell into the trap of grey list. We should have considered the seriousness of the matter and tried to get rid of it permanently. One such attempt was made in 2016, when in a meeting chaired by the then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, the Prime Minister made it clear to the political leadership that if we do not impose restrictions on extremists and their funding, restrictions may be imposed so that Pakistani

containers were not be allowed to land at international ports.

He was referring to FATF's "strict rules on money laundering and terror financing, the violation of which could have pushed us from the grey list to the black-list" was given. Removing India's role in the FATF issue could be tantamount to turning a blind eye to the facts. India made every effort to trap Pakistan in its spider web and declare it a terrorist state. This has been made public in its ruling meetings.

India played hostility with all its heart but Pakistan took it as a challenge whose positive results are in front of everyone today.

We should not hesitate to acknowledge the fact that if India did not impose strict laws by imposing international pressure with the intention of harming Pakistan, the country's economy could not be so documented, and even if it did, it would take many more years. One of the reasons for the increase in remittances sent by Pakistanis abroad today is the closure of illegal dollar smuggling routes.

In this regard, legislation was also passed in the National Assembly while the courts also played their role in it. Former Chief Justice Mr. Justice Saqib Nisar had warned the banks that if the biometric verification of all bank accounts is not completed by the due date.



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EXCESSIVE TAXATION

UNDER pressure from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Government announced several taxation measures that might help increase revenue collection but at an unbearable cost for people of Pakistan.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif announced imposition of 10 per cent super tax on 13 large industries, and additional tax on affluent persons who earn more than Rs150 million annual incomes at the rate of one to four per cent for generation of more revenue.

Addressing members of his economic team, he said the 10 per cent one-time super tax was aimed at poverty alleviation and it would be imposed on high earning industries and sectors, including cement, steel, banking, airlines, textile, automobile assembly, sugar mills, beverages, oil and gas, fertilizers, cigarettes, chemicals and LNG terminals.

And winding up general debate on the budget for the next financial year in the National Assembly the same day, Finance Minister Miftah Ismail announced a new fixed tax scheme on shops outside of the tax net to reduce the budget deficit and increased tax rates for the salaried class to raise additional Rs 35 billion.

The imposition of new taxes and increase in the rate of some others has changed the fundamental nature of the budget for the next financial year, which the Government had been describing as pro-poor, growth-oriented

and aimed at providing relief to the fixed income groups.

No doubt, the decision of the Government to impose a one-time super tax on ten industries has widely been hailed as it would help raise Rs.400 billion and that too from the affluent class.

According to the government, super tax will be levied on 13 sectors, which include sugar, steel, cement, oil and gas, fertilizer, cigarettes, chemicals, automobiles, banks, textile, LNG terminals, beverages and airlines.

In addition to the above, the poverty alleviation one-time tax levied in the Finance Bill 2022 as: 1pc tax on the income between Rs150 million to Rs199.99 million – 2pc tax on the income between Rs200 million to Rs249.99 million – 3pc tax on the income between 250 million to 299.99 million – 4pc tax on the income of 300 million and above.

On the face of it, there seems to be no



harm in taxing sectors that have long been availing numerous exemptions and relief packages and those earning handsomely but paying not much to the national exchequer.

The Finance Minister has claimed that the rich have been taxed to raise money to provide relief to the poor.

However, in the backdrop of poor enforcement, there is likelihood that the burden of taxes would be passed on to the end consumer and, therefore, the measure would, in fact, amount to taxing the common man.

It was because of this that the opposition PTI has rejected the super tax on big industries claiming it would trigger more inflation.

The relevant industries too have expressed dismay over imposition of the tax with Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPC-CI) acting Chairman Shabbir Mansha pointing out that industries are already burdened with gas, electricity and high interest rate, and this super tax will retard development of the sector as well as overall economic development.

He also confirmed the view that companies would transfer the burden of the super tax to the public, which would fuel inflation across the country.

There is also a viewpoint that the new tax would negatively affect the corporate sector and this could increase layoffs and poverty might rise under ongoing hyperinflation.

Regrettably, the Government has also taken a U-turn on the issue of not adding to the burden of the salaried class as exemption originally announced for those earning up to Rs.1.2 million annually has been withdrawn and a 2.5% tax imposed for income brackets of Rs 50,000 to 100,000 per month while tax rate for income earners from Rs 100,000 to Rs 300,000 has been jacked up to 12.5%.

This would undermine the meagre relief of a 15% hike in the salaries that the Government has already announced.



The introduction of a fixed tax regime for shops outside of the tax net is a step in the right direction as those earning handsomely are not presently paying anything to the national kitty.

The new measures would make life of the people miserable but the sacrifice is worth making if the Government introduces them in a way that takes the country forward on the path of financial self-reliance, economic stability and least dependence on foreign loans.

In order to reach a make-or-break deal with the IMF Pakistan urgently needs to raise more taxes. The common man is already suffering due to unprecedented inflation and it would be unjustified to further burden him with taxes. In the past, several amnesty schemes have been introduced to facilitate the privileged classes by enabling them to legalise their wealth. It is time for them to pay back when the country needs liquidity badly.

Powerful interest groups that have managed to remain outside to tax net must be brought under it. Among them is the rentier class that has made windfall gains from the real estate bubble but has continued to evade even minimal levels of taxation. After over 4000 individuals having \$2 billion

in bank accounts turned out to be non-resident Pakistanis, there is a need to change the definition of the term to include all those people in the tax net. The government's decision to impose a new fixed-tax scheme on small traders outside of the tax net is a step in the right direction. It was in fact a measure long due but was being delayed on account of political opportunism displayed by successive governments. The progressive tax on the super-rich is badly needed at a time when the gap between the richest and the poorest is on the increase. The 13 thriving industries that have been provided numerous facilities by the government to prosper, owe it to the nation to willingly pay the 10 percent super tax required to reduce the budget deficit.

Umpteen times former PM Imran Khan lashed out at the governments led by his political rivals for sparing the rich when imposing taxes. He said it was his mission to tax those whose luxurious lifestyles did not match the amount of taxes they paid. As the coalition government makes the moneyed class share the common burden with the toiling masses, PTI is inciting the big business to refuse to be a part of the sacrifice being made by the rest of the country.

Kitchen Corner



Kaleji Masala

INGREDIENTS

Mutton Liver..... 250 gm
 Green Chili Paste.....1 tsp
 Coriander Powder1 tsp
 Garam Masala1 tsp
 Coriander LeavesFor garnishing
 Ginger-Garlic Paste.....1 tsp
 Cumin Powder.....1 tsp
 Saltto taste
 Edible Oil2 tbsp

METHOD

Kaleji Masala is regarded among the popular dishes. Read the complete Kaleji Masala with ingredient details and method. It is a simple recipe and all required ingredients are easily available. Prepare the dish as per the Kaleji Masala from top chefs and add the true flavor or taste to your food. You can also share this recipe with your friends and family members.

Horoscope for the month of July 2022

Aries

March 21 - April 19

The month ahead is all about the hustle. Your commitment will be tested, Aries. Your commitment to yourself, your commitment to your craft, your commitment to the goals you've set for yourself and your commitment to bringing about a shift in the collective consciousness. So, motivate yourself to move forward and onwards even when the road seems uphill.

Taurus

April 20 - May 20

Pause, step back and take a good look at your empire. You have come a long way since you first started walking this path and your success deserves to be acknowledged. The month ahead isn't so much about planting the seeds of the new as it is about nurturing existing projects. About being in receptive mode and allowing your tribe to show up for you instead. Staying in the energy of gratitude will help make space for all the help and resources that are being sent your way.

Gemini

May 21 - June 20

The important thing to remember as you step into the second half of the year is that there are no 'good' or 'bad' experiences. Everything we attract into our Universe is a part of the plan—part of the plan that's propelling us in the direction of growth and helping us evolve on a soul level. So, accept the unsavoury experiences as a part of this evolution too.

Cancer

June 21 - July 22

We get it, Cancer! You pride yourself on your artistic nature. But, there's a good chance you've been spending too much time at the drawing board in the recent past. What you're being asked to focus on this month is bridging the gap between 'the dreamer' and 'the doer'.

Leo

July 23 - Aug 22

There comes a point in your life where you can either keep doing what you have been doing—what is expected of you—or take a leap of faith into the unknown.

Virgo

Aug 23 - Sep 22

When you started walking this path, you woke up with a spring in your step and a song in your heart. But, something changed along the way. The process started to seem repetitive and even tedious. And now you don't know what to do and where to begin. What the cards are reminding you today is that the change starts with you and that you are the change.

Libra

Sep 23 - Oct 22

Truth bomb, Libra: you're so focused on what isn't working out that you haven't paid attention to what is. You have not arrived at a dead-end, contrary to what you believe. You are simply at a point where you're being asked to recognise what is no longer in alignment with path and purpose so you can pluck the weeds out of your garden.

Scorpio

Oct 23 - Nov 21

July brings with itself the affirmation that you are on the right path and that you're serving in the way that you are meant to. Draw inspiration from your own journey and chalk out a plan for the next five years. You are entering into a new cycle of growth and renewal, Scorpio. A period where you will be supported in your mission to make your wildest dreams come true. The mantra you want to remember at this time is 'what you sow, so shall you reap'.

Sagittarius

Nov 22 - Dec 21

July 2022 sees you taking over the world and doing what you do best, Sagittarius!

This is your month to shine. To break up with Impostor's Syndrome and to claim your spot at the centre-stage. You deserve to be seen, heard and recognised, beautiful.

Capricorn

Dec 22 - Jan 19

Capricorn, you pride yourself on being the most ambitious one on the block. But, being *this* ambitious has its pitfalls too. In your case, your work tends to become an obsession. You are willing to do everything it takes to get to the top, sometimes at the cost of your mental health. What you're being encouraged to focus on this month is 'balance'.

Aquarius

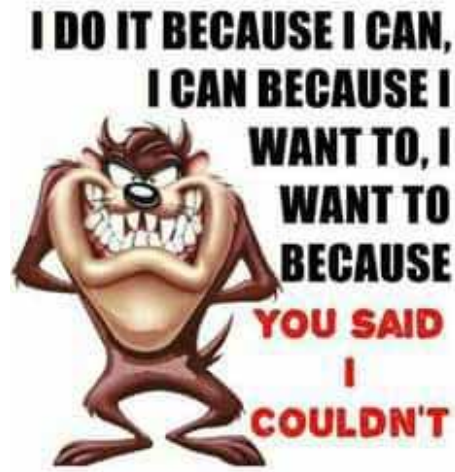
Jan 20 - Feb 18

We get it, Aquarius! Life hasn't always been kind towards you. You've had to deal with your fair share of challenges, and then some more. But, do you really want to hold onto the failure narrative? Do you want to continue to operate from that victim consciousness? The path to personal evolution requires you to let go of the self-negating beliefs that are no longer serving you. So, rewrite the script, beautiful. Make that mindset shift you're being called to. Given that we're in the midst of Cancer season, you may find that your emotions are running high too.

Pisces

Feb 19 - March 20

July 2022 sees you entering a new cycle, Pisces. A cycle of hope. A cycle of endless possibilities. A cycle of showing up for what you love and breathing life into your wildest dreams. But, it's not going to be a straight road. The path you have decided to tread on will come with its fair share of twists and turns. Stay committed to your goals despite the many challenges. At the same, know that if the Universe is throwing a curveball your way, it is simultaneously providing you with the support you need in order to tide over them.



When you see photos of yourself from 5 years ago



Me: "finally gets in bed to get some rest"

The neighbor's dog:



This Magazine has been digitally printed at



Khyber Prints

- Instant Digital Printing Solutions -

First Floor, Town Heights, Old Bara Road, University Town - Peshawar

Cell/Whatsapp: 0309-0055000 E-mail: khyberprints@gmail.com