

# The Business

Chief Editor

Irfan Athar Qazi

E-mail: editorthebusiness@yahoo.com

thebusinesslhr@gmail.com

Tijarat House, 14-Davis Road, Lahore  
0423-6312280, 6312480, 6312429, 6312462  
Cell # 0321-4598258

1270-B, Peoples Colony No I, Off: Chenone  
Road, Faisalabad, Ph: 041-8555582

ISLAMABAD / RAWALPINDI  
N-125 Circular Road, Ph: 051-5551654,  
5532761, Cell # 0300-8567331  
KARACHI  
3rd Floor Kehkashan Mall 172-I Block II PECHS  
Opp Rehmania Masjid Main Tariq Road  
Ph: 021-34524550, Cell # 0300-8251534

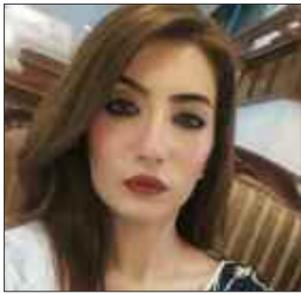
## Debate on ordinances

The Senate witnessed a heated debate between the two sides of the divide on the propensity of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government to rely for legislation on presidential Ordinances while bypassing parliament. The opposition argued that this trend indicated that the government wanted to take the country towards a presidential system. They specifically opposed the Pakistan Island Development Authority Ordinance (PIDAO), warning that any attempt to grab the assets of the smaller provinces would be forcefully opposed by the people. Parliamentary leader of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) in the Senate Sherry Rehman said Pakistan needs to be run by parliament but this government seems bent upon ignoring it. She claimed this government had set a record of passing around 40 Ordinances and 38 Bills. She had a very pertinent point to make when she asked why the treasury benches were defending Ordinances like the PIDAO that had expired. From the government side, Senator Waleed Iqbal attempted to puncture the opposition's case by quoting figures from the past showing the late Benazir Bhutto promulgated 357 Ordinances in three years in her second term while today's 'conscientious objector' Senator Raza Rabbani was law minister. He went on to assert that 26 Ordinances per year on average had been promulgated during the divided 10-year rule of the PPP and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz.

The fact is that the opposition, judging from the track record, is in this matter a case of the pot calling the kettle black. Without getting bogged down in the exchanges about the actual number of Ordinances promulgated by either side, it has to be admitted in all honesty that no one's record in this regard is a clean slate. Governments, past and present, have seen Ordinances as a convenient and easy way to avoid the comparatively lengthy process of normal legislation through parliament. However, the whole case for such Ordinances falls flat when it is considered that Ordinances normally have a limited shelf life (a minimum of four months in most cases) and their lapsing requires either a re-promulgation (raising more problems and conflict) or returning to the legislative process per se.

Second, what Ordinances, deliberately or inadvertently, do is obviate parliamentary debate and discussion, in which the thrust and parry by both sides may help to inform or round out the government's own understanding of the issues. After all, no one should claim infallibility. Last but not least, Ordinances emasculate the role and importance of parliament, which is a serious blow to the desire for a democratic order. The present government's insecurity regarding its razor-thin majority in the National Assembly and its minority in the Senate may be feeding into its current practices. But Law Minister Farogh Naseem's argument that these difficulties impose the need to call a joint session of

# Courageous policewomen of KP and merged districts



ANMOL SHERAZ

Women are thought to be too fragile for the frontline while obstacles still remain in achieving gender equality in many organisations not just in Pakistan but across the world. Saving lives under fire and working to provide security sounds like a tough and hefty job for a female but women have made many inroads in the field of protecting and policing. Pakistan is no different in this respect with women joining the police force all across the country.

The number of women in the police force is increasing in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), like in other departments and amazingly many of these women hail from erstwhile Tribal Areas, where a few years ago women's employment was frowned upon. The provincial government has inducted thousands of Levies into the police force and used them to employ and train women. Although women are outnumbered by their male counterparts, they have taken on a much more proactive role; they are not only performing their duties but also advising other Pashtun women to take advantage of their skills and education to join the police force without fear.

Jamila Begum is one of the five women among the 4,000-strong police force deployed in Mohmand District. She not only performs her duties behind the desk but also participates in

several search operations with her male colleagues, including multiple checking points. According to Jamila, apart from her officers and colleagues, the general public also respects and encourages her and despite living in a tribal society, she has realized that she is not inferior or different from others. Jamila believes that the police force needs more courageous women.

Jamila added, "Hundreds of girls, including me, are working in the KP police. Although their numbers are low, it is gratifying that local people, parents and the society are now showing women great support in pursuing government and non-government jobs."

"On the issue, another police-woman, Nayab, performing her duties in Mohmand District said, "I have been involved with security department for the last two years and I take pride in being part of such a force that brings peace in the province and has sacrificed many lives by playing a pivotal role." Upon asking about the barriers, Nayab said, "I am a local and my father has been part of the force. Because I do not have a brother, so my father proudly got me recruited despite the stereotypical comments from the community, which tried to create hindrances for me."

After the FATA merger, she got regular training from the police to protect and serve the people in her district.

"Among the KP senior police officers who trained us, were three women who actively took part during the 2009-2010 operations against the terrorists and arrested several terrorists while killing many in encounters," she added.

Although breaking the glass ceiling is a long process, yet the effort to integrate women into this profession is remarkable. The police department has started working towards closing the gap of lack of women's representation in the field. To combat with the cliché mindset that women cannot op-

erate heavy machinery, Nayab shared her experience: "There was an officer who conducted my training and told us that she fought with the terrorists alongside male police officers in areas like Badaber, Chamkani and Sarban and she used heavy weapons in addition to normal guns."

Such strong women set a professional pattern that the job of a female is not only limited to house chores and serving the family but if provided with opportunities, they can excel in serving the nation as well.

Another woman police officer who asked not to disclose her identity said that she works side by side with male colleagues and admires the patronage and encouragement by her seniors. "Seeing the support of colleagues, my sister and cousin have decided to become a part of the police force and are now taking training from the provincial police training centre," she added.

According to her, women are equally important during search operations, because in KP and specifically tribal society, it is unacceptable for a male to go inside a house for the raid when needed. Being a female gives an advantage as none can deny a female police officer to enter their space for enquiry. Moreover, policewomen endure the excessive desert heat, chilly winters and learn to become an equal part of the force.

Policewomen's roles also orbit around assisting in taking care of children and women in prisons while aiding women who are victims of crime.

When asked about the need of female representation in police forces, Rafia Qasim Baig, first female Bomb Disposal Officer, said, "There are hundreds of women in the provincial police and dozens of them serve as police officers. Some of these brave women amazingly serve as Traffic Police and have gained a lot of fame by performing excellent work in their field."

"My mother was not happy when I opted to join the force. When I came

to Peshawar to give my interview back in 2009, a suicide bomb attack took place, which scared my mother. It was a dream to serve the country, despite my mother's unwillingness," she added.

Rafia Baig further said, "Women in KP and tribal districts are taking a noticeable and stronger role in the field.

They are taking an active part in fighting terrorism and brave women like Alia Ahmed (Mingora, Swat) and Shamsad Begum (Hangu) have sacrificed their valuable lives in the line of duty. The biggest help for me are my in-laws, who not only co-operate but also take care of my child when needed."

The opportunities for women in the police force have increased over time in KP and merged districts, but overall, the statistics remain low.

Barriers to achieving the goals of gender equality exist, whereas the representation of women in senior positions also remains low.

In addition for many years the quota for women in government jobs went unoccupied. The recruitment of women in KP police is not driven to fill the gender gap but because of the need to carry out raids or arrest insurgents specifically in tribal areas where men cannot enter a house. The induction of women in police is instrumental but as yet to be a common norm.

By looking at the active participation of women in KP police, the females in tribal districts need to come forward to serve the community. Increasing the number of female representation in police forces in tribal districts also requires attention, as there are several areas where women's involvement is necessary. The focus must also be placed on stimulating public attitudes towards women in the police force, as many tribal elders oppose the police system. Even then such women are fighting against the odds and performing their job with great zeal and zest.



## A 'success' story?

YARA HAWARI

On December 19, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu received the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine on live television. This kicked off a high-paced national vaccination campaign that has seen more than a million Israelis, some 12 percent of the country's population, receive the jab in less than two weeks – the highest rate in the world.

Multiple factors paved the way for Israel to take the lead in the global vaccination race. Being a relatively small country – both by land area and population – certainly helped. Having a digitised national healthcare system which requires all citizens to be registered also contributed. Moreover, unlike other states, the Israeli government did not hesitate to recruit the army to help with the administration and distribution of the vaccine. There is also a political dimension to the fast roll out – Netanyahu is fighting for political survival and winning the vaccine race might tip the balance in his favour in the upcoming March elections.

But there is a dark side to Israel's 'vaccine success story': While it is immunising its citizens against Covid-19 at an unrivalled rate, the Israeli government is not doing anything to vaccinate millions of Palestinians living under its military occupation. In a cruel irony, hundreds of doses on the cusp of expiration were reportedly thrown away in Israeli clinics last week, while millions of Palestinians are being denied the vaccine.

Indeed, while the vaccine roll-out in Israel includes the Palestinian citizens of Israel, it does not include some five million Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza. Since 1967, these two Palestinian territories have been under Israel's military occupation, with the latter also suffering from a blockade since 2007. Among many things, this regime of absolute control has had a direct and detrimental effect not only on Palestinians' access to healthcare but also the quality of the care on offer in the West Bank and Gaza.

Israel's occupation has left the Palestinian healthcare system under-supplied and with insufficient medical facilities. For years, rather than being allowed to develop self-sufficiency, Palestinians living in the occupied territories were forced to rely on outside help to meet their most basic healthcare needs. Thus, when COVID-19 hit, the Palestinian authorities were in no shape to implement effective pandemic mitigation strategies or procure the necessary medications and vaccines to protect Palestinians.

The Palestinian Authority (PA) is yet to secure a sufficient quantity of vaccinations to immunise the Palestinian population against COVID-19. And due to its dire financial situation, it will need significant outside help to make any substantial purchase.

Several PA officials have mentioned the possibility of obtaining a quantity from the COVAX programme, the WHO-led scheme to de-

liver COVID-19 vaccines to poorer countries. But it is likely this will take a long time – the vaccines intended for COVAX have not yet gained "emergency use" approval by the WHO, a precondition for distribution to begin. In early December, the PA also claimed it reached a deal with Russia to receive some four million doses of its Sputnik V vaccine in the coming weeks. However, Russian officials recently notified the PA they do not yet have enough supplies to fulfil non-domestic orders.

All this would not have mattered, if Israel met its legal, moral and humanitarian obligation to vaccinate the Palestinians living under its military occupation. The Israeli officials are trying to evade responsibility by claiming the PA is yet to ask Israel for assistance in procuring the vaccine, and that, under the Oslo accords which never came to fruition, all vaccination programmes in the West Bank should be led by the PA.

Yet this ignores the fact that Article 56 of the Fourth Geneva Convention specifically provides that an occupier has the duty of ensuring "the adoption and application of the prophylactic and preventive measures necessary to combat the spread of contagious diseases and epidemics". In other words, the Israeli regime has a legal obligation to procure a sufficient amount of COVID-19 vaccines for Palestinians living under its military occupation.

Furthermore, both Israeli and international law ban Israel from allowing the distribution of a vaccine in Gaza and the West Bank that it has not approved for its own population. So, Israel is not only responsible for vaccinating Palestinians living in the occupied territories, but it also has a legal obligation to ensure the vaccines they eventually receive meet the approval criteria of the Israeli healthcare system. Since the beginning of this unprecedented global public health emergency, however, Israel not only refused to live up to its clearly defined legal obligations to the Palestinian people but also created a false picture in which it is working with the PA to defeat the virus. In March last year, for example, when it "allowed" the entry of medical supplies and equipment into Gaza, Israel received praise from the likes of the UN for "cooperating" with the Palestinians with regard to tackling COVID-19.

In effect, the Israeli regime, which singlehandedly depleted the capabilities of the Palestinian healthcare system through its decades-long military occupation, was being praised for allowing a few medical supplies donated by international actors to be transported into Gaza. This, despite its responsibility under international law as an occupying power to provide the supplies itself. Creating the impression that Israel is helping the Palestinians in good faith to tackle the virus while keeping them under occupation, was a remarkable achievement of the Israeli propaganda machine. But this is not surprising considering that Israel had hid the violence of its regime

# A Covid-19 Survivor's journey to mission area Darfur,

MAJOR MISBAH QURESHI

Pakistan Army is one of the finest, strongest and most professional military forces in the world. It holds the Pakistani flag high around the world in each and every aspect of professional competence. It is a matter of immense pleasure for me to be a part of Pakistan Armed Forces as an officer in the Armed Forces Nursing Services (AFNS).

I always take pride in wearing the Khaki, which for me, and many others like me, is a sign of prestige and pride. For us, glory and prestige is associated with professional competence and a strong sense of responsibility. Authority and responsibility always go hand in hand and the reason of success of every military personnel.

Army has given me tremendous opportunities and multitude of exposures in the past 14 years. I had the opportunity to serve in Class-A Combined Military Hospitals (CMH), Force HQ Northern Area and Armed Forces Institute of Cardiology (AFIC). I am blessed with two daughters and they have made my family complete with their love and tenderness. They taught me that a successful woman is not just a competent professional who excels in her field but a woman who meticulously strikes a balance between home and work and thrives for excellence in both.

In early January 2020, I received the gratifying news of my selection for UN Mission Darfur. I was honoured to have been chosen to represent my country at an international platform such as UNAMID. I was over the moon but this news also brought a lot of apprehensions for

me. Being a mother, it was difficult to go so far away from my family. The fear of leaving my daughters behind at such tender ages, haunted and weakened my sense of determination. I would like to rephrase the saying: 'Behind every successful man, there is always a woman', to 'Behind every successful woman is a strong family, including supporting parents, siblings and spouse who show full confidence in her abilities'.

I had the pleasure of accompanying the Pakistan Field Hospital-12, which was to relieve the already deployed Pakistan Field Hospital-11 in Darfur, Sudan. Before deployment, which was scheduled in April, 2020, we had to report for various test formalities to prove our post-selection suitability for the mission.

It is a routine procedural formality in Pakistan Army that you go through an annual medical examination, but you have to be declared fit by a special medical board for a UN Mission. Besides a tough medical examination, the selected person has to qualify Physical Efficiency Test (PET), which is indeed a very tough event to go through and qualify; it requires a lot of preparedness. After going through various formalities, we were prepared to relieve our fellows in Sudan, but Allah had a different plan for us. The COVID-19 pandemic engulfed the world.

Our deployment schedule was postponed due to the pandemic as well as cessation of International Flight Operations (IPOs). Being a health worker, I got attached with CMH Rawalpindi, as a result of emergent decision of the Medical Directorate (Med Dte). One can only feel the struggle when we go through a particular situation ourselves. Being a front-line responder during

this healthcare emergency made me and my family vulnerable. While performing duties at CMH, I tested positive for COVID-19. My first and foremost concern was my family; the faces of my daughters immediately flashed in my mind. I was caught in a limbo of emotions – fear, anxiety and stress all took me over but my courage did not falter for a second. As a dedicated wife and a concerned mother, I urged my family to undergo screening for COVID-19. I was anguished to hear that my husband and daughters also tested positive for COVID-19. It was a frightening moment. We were immediately admitted to Pakistan Emirates Military Hospital (PEMH) Rawalpindi, which was declared COVID hospital for military personnel. It was difficult to manage my family in the hospital. My husband's business and the education of my children were adversely affected but above all, my family's health was the top most concern. All this was psychologically unbearable.

Moreover, the print, electronic and social media added fuel to the fire by propagating the news about contagiousness, morbidity and mortality of COVID-19. We remained in the hospital under close observation in accordance with the prescribed protocols for handling of COVID-19 patients and we were under complete isolation. It was indeed a special blessing of Allah Almighty that none of the other family members were symptomatic. After 25 days of immense psychological pressure and intense worry for my loved ones, we tested negative.

My suspended personal and social life was restored to some extent. However, on the subject of the UN Mission, there was ambiguity. We

kept on receiving schedules for deployment and whenever it was time to execute, it was either cancelled or postponed. My family kept worrying at first that after just having recovered from COVID-19, I was not in the best of health to be going to a foreign land. They thought that I should probably not think of going at all. For me this was indeed very tough and worrying. But for me, going through the whole experience brought a realization that the people I was going to help in Darfur were at a much worse disadvantage and they needed all the help they could get, especially during the pandemic. I kept trying to convince my family about this and eventually they were on board. Once it became clear that the mission was a go, my whole family stood behind me and did not let me think for a second that I would be leaving them in a state of anxiety about my health or wellbeing. In September 2020, advance party of my unit was deployed on mission to be followed by the main body.

It is a beautiful day in Darfur and I am writing the memories about this nerve-racking journey. I am feeling privileged to be alive and healthy once again, serving my country and helping humanity to my full capabilities. When I look back, I realise that every hardship has made me stronger and has instilled in me a sense of pride and honour. Not only that, I have become a more competent professional yet a humbler human being with a more empathetic heart, which in my opinion is a basic need to serve humanity. This sense of responsibility will InshaAllah keep on increasing and I shall always strive to uphold the glory and honour of my profession and keep my country's flag high.