

The Business

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Poultry feed Cos

The Competition Commission of Pakistan's (CCP's) has reported cartelization amongst the poultry feed companies citing this as the key factor in the recent rise in prices of chicken and eggs requiring urgent government remedial measures on three counts. First, the Prime Minister and his kitchen cabinet have consistently been blaming the mafia, read cartelization, for high prices through illegal and rather blatant supply manipulation. The irony is that while in other countries cartelization is not possible in products/items that are: not distinguishable between various producing units, for example, chicken, eggs, fruits, vegetables, sugar, cement as opposed to say toothpaste, or the number of suppliers and consumers is too large to enable them to collude and thereby influence prices, yet this somehow is the norm in Pakistan. This could well be because of the establishment of powerful associations of different trades, that at different times or occasions been accused of, having successfully manipulated government policy on the one hand, through minimizing taxes and access to cheap credit, while maximizing windfall profits through supply manipulation on the other hand. It may be recalled that soon after taking oath, Prime Minister Khan publicly stated that rural women should be given chickens as part of a poverty alleviation strategy.

Finally, the feed industry, which comprises approximately 75 to 80 percent of the cost of broiler meat and eggs, defends itself by pointing out that prices have been raised not because of collusion, a claim that was obviously rejected by the CCP, but because of the massive rise in their input costs due to rise in the price of raw materials used; for example, corn prices (which they attribute to larger scale hoarding), soya bean meal prices, wheat bran, canola meal price, sunflower meal price; lockdown that has reduced demand due to the closure of restaurants and hotels thereby raising prices; and high regulatory/customs duties on imports of these raw materials as well as sales tax. This necessitates a revisit of the government's flawed tax measures.

Blaming previous administrations for all that ails the economy, however, is no longer a politically viable narrative two years and eight months into the PTI government's tenure. The government needs to focus on its own monetary and fiscal policies as well as on actions taken by cartels to come to a better understanding of how to go about checking prices. The solution is not in extending subsidies or through imports to minimize the cartels' influence but to deal with the cartels in a manner that collusion becomes financially untenable for them. For this purpose, laws need to be suitably amended and the stay orders granted to those accused of collusion by the CCP need to be aggressively vacated.

A glacial disaster in the making

DR KHURRAM BHATTI
 AND DR ADNAN SIDDIQUE

On August 15, 2020, a teenage girl was killed in a remote village in Chitral as a glacial flood swept away six houses, partially damaging sixteen others and inundating standing crops of wheat and beans. Another 11 people were injured as the local police station and a post of Chitral Scouts were submerged. The glacial flood washed away a stretch of more than 500 meters of road to Baroghil valley as well.

Fast-forward to February 28, 2021 and the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) issues a GLOF (glacial lake outburst flood) warning on the Shishper-Muchuhur glaciers in Hunza. The situation is still developing and a potential GLOF event is expected in May-June 2021 which will put the population in the downstream community of Hassanabad village at risk of glacial flooding. The Shishper-Muchuhur glaciers have a history of flash flooding. The current surge of Shishper, a 25 sq kms glacier in size, has brought its snout as close as four km from the Karakoram highway, a critical route for the CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor) initiative in the region.

This is the new normal in the everyday life of these remote and impoverished mountain communities. Recurring loss of life, property and livelihood due to natural catastrophes, associated primarily with the changing climate in the region, is only aggravating with every passing year. Even worse, these climatic changes are altering weather patterns in the long term, which are not properly understood by these local communities. Though climate-induced changes encompass a wide range of pressing issues, water is arguably the most essential natural resource at risk.

Pakistan is a unique place: the country hosts 7,200+ glaciers in its North,

spread over approximately 17,000 sq km, which is home to the mighty Hindukush-Karakoram-Himalaya (HKH) mountain ranges. It has reportedly more glacial ice than anywhere on earth outside the polar regions – hence referred to as the third pole. These glaciers feed the rivers that account for around 75 percent of the stored-water supply in a country inhabited by 212+ million people. Ironically, Pakistan contributes less than one percent to global pollutant emissions, which ranks it among the least emitters. Yet, the country is among the most vulnerable to climate-related hazards like changing monsoon patterns, rapid glacial ice melt leading to inundation and flash flooding, avalanches, landslides and extreme heatwaves. Consequently, climate-induced migration by the local population in mountain and downstream communities of this region to save lives and to look for better livelihood opportunities is a serious challenge. This is the real evidence of the direct human cost of climate change in this part of the world.

Glaciers are a source of freshwater and vital for the ecosystem. As a consequence of climate change and global warming, several glaciers around the world are shrinking in size and gradually retreating. Depending on the volume and size of the glacial lake, temperature and precipitation, and geomorphological parameters of the terrain, mechanical failures may cause a breach in the wall of an ice or moraine-dammed glacial lake. Subsequently, a sudden discharge of millions of cubic meters of meltwater and debris can occur in a short time, with a catastrophic impact on the socioeconomic life of the downstream communities. This phenomenon is referred to as Glacial Lake Outburst Floods or GLOFs.

These GLOFs are a major hazard in high altitude glaciated regions of northern Pakistan. According to a UNDP report, around 3,033 glacial lakes have been identified in this region, with at least 33 critical lakes. Many recent sci-

entific studies are projecting an increase in the frequency of GLOFs in the wake of ongoing climate change and global warming. The government of Pakistan's 'National Climate Change Policy' identifies the projected recession of HKH glaciers as a major climate threat, while a key finding of the Asian Development Bank, reported in 2017, is the lack of glacier monitoring infrastructure in Pakistan.

Most of the glaciers in Pakistan are at low altitude and the settlements are near the glaciers. This makes them more vulnerable. Dr Arun Bhakta Shrestha, the regional programme manager for River Basins & Cryosphere at the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, has emphasized that even if the GreenHouse Gas (GHG) emissions are reduced to limit the temperature rise as envisioned in the Paris Agreement, a scenario with only a two degree Celsius could still be devastating as two-third of glaciers in the HKH would melt away!

Mitigative measures at local, national and international levels in a coherent manner are immediate imperatives. Mountain and downstream communities settled in these disaster-prone areas are unceasingly at risk and their vulnerabilities are augmented by poverty, lack of awareness about the GLOF threats, increasing pressure on natural resources, and high-risk settlement patterns. At the local level, adaptation to climate change and resilience building through specific initiatives – early warning systems, promotion of clean energy in the mountains, reducing deforestation and land-use regulation – must be enforced.

In a country like Pakistan, which lacks essential infrastructure for glacier monitoring, disaster management policies, risk reduction plans, early warning systems and scientific approach and equipment to deal with the new risks and vulnerabilities arising from its natural resources, it is imperative that the international community must come

forward and help. At the moment, the government of Pakistan, through the Ministry of Climate Change (MoCC), and UNDP Pakistan are implementing a \$37 million project named Scaling Up of GLOF Risk Reduction in Northern Pakistan (GLOF-II), a continuation of the GLOF-I pilot project, which aims to empower communities to identify and manage risks associated with GLOFs. This project is expanding weather information surveillance by installing 50 automatic weather stations at different locations in the Gilgit-Baltistan region. Though these weather stations will provide information as part of a local-level early warning system, they are limited in scope and scalability for now.

The glaciated region of HKH is vast and stretches over thousands of kilometres across several countries. This third pole necessitates more engagement of the international community through development of local infrastructure, investment in building community resilience, prevention of deforestation, reduction in GHG emissions, application of scientific approach, tools and methods in their study, risk assessment and reduction planning at the regional level, continuous monitoring and integrated analysis of the evolution of glaciers.

The recent summit by US President Biden has made some headway, but there is a real urgency for stronger climate action, limiting planetary warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius as proposed in the Paris Agreement, helping vulnerable countries adapt to climate impacts and discussing opportunities to strengthen capacity to protect lives and livelihoods from the impacts of climate change. Climate change doesn't seem to recognize our borders on land and water, and Mother Nature is ruthless when it comes to punishing. Efforts beyond borders, strategic alliances and politics are essential and only an all-inclusive approach can yield desired results.

UN credibility at great risk in IoK

MUHAMMAD ZAHID RIFAT

The United Nations was established following World War-II in 1945 to provide international cooperation and resolve world conflicts.

But it has miserably failed to settle the lingering, burning, bleeding unresolved Kashmir dispute between neighbouring nuclear powers of India and Pakistan and its credibility as a world body remains at a great risk for more than seven decades.

The UN has failed miserably to ensure implementation of resolutions of its Security Council calling for free, fair and transparent plebiscite in India-occupied Jammu and Kashmir to let the Kashmiris exercise their fundamental right of self-determination for which they are struggling and suffering at the hands of occupying Indian security forces while Indian Government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi continues to belittle and flout all international laws.

Unmindful of its obligations to international laws and regulations, India continues to pursue its own evil and devilish agenda, had revoked special status of its occupied Jammu and Kashmir on 05 August 2019, merging it illegally still with the Indian Union, enhanced the strength of its occupying security forces giving them free hand to crush and kill Kashmiris at will and placed the entire population of the occupied territory under complete lockdown also from the same date which continues unabatedly even after more than 20 months.

Furthermore, to continue pursuing Hindutva policy of RSS the Modi-led Indian government is also taking measures to turn Muslims majority into minority by resorting to genocide and settling down Hindus there by issuing down fake and unlawful migration certificates.

India is bound under the international laws not to change the demography of IIOJK in an unchecked and unstoppable manner.

The UN as well as the international community at large is looking the other way and not going beyond condemnation of gross human rights violations and continue to refrain from pressurising Indian government in any manner to stop changing dynamics of population of the occupied territory. There are many important dates in the history of Kashmir on which the Kashmiris in IIOJK as well as in Pakistan and the world over observe Martyrs Days and Black Days to pay tributes to their freedom fighters who had lost their lives over the last more than seven decades in indigenous, unarmed struggle for securing their fundamental right of self-determination, free themselves from Indian occupation and decide their future themselves which has persistently been denied to them by India belittling the international laws and bluntly denying implementation of UN Security Council resolutions. 21 May is another such Martyrdom Day which the Kashmiris everywhere observe to commemorate martyrdom of Mir Waiz Farooq Shaheed and Abdul Ghani Lone Shaheed on this date by the Indian security forces in 1990 and

2002 respectively. Observance of the Kashmiris Martyrs Day on 21 May is yet another occasion to remind the UN and international community of their obligations to ensure implementation of Security Council resolutions, pressurising India to its longest complete lockdown in occupied Jammu and Kashmir and ending flagrant violations of human rights.

Pakistan has all along been extending political, diplomatic and moral support to the Kashmiris in their just, indigenous and unarmed struggle for freedom from Indian occupation and exercising their birth right of self-determination. On all martyrs days and black days which the Kashmiris observe, the civil and military leadership of Pakistan as well as the people all over the country reiterate their continued support to the Kashmiris and exerting upon the United Nations and its Security Council to honour its own resolutions and get these implemented by India at the earliest possible.

At the initiatives of Prime Minister Imran Khan, who had been raising the Kashmir issue not only at the UN General Assembly but also all other international forums, the Kashmir issue has been activated during the last couple of years pulling it out of the cold storage of the world body where it was lying for more than past five decades. Civil and military leadership of Pakistan has been urging the international community every now and then to honour their obligations towards the Kashmiris, force Indian government to reverse 05 August 2019 revocation decision and restore the special status of occupied Jammu and Kashmir and play their active role in ending the ongoing bloodshed, violence and killing of innocent Kashmiris at the hands of Indian security forces and let the Kashmiris exercise their self-determination right in UN supervised plebiscite in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions.

Besides the international community, world body is also time and again being reminded at the appropriate highest level of Pakistan that Kashmir issue is a nuclear flashpoint, without its resolution durable peace and stability in the region remains in danger and if the UN fails to act at the earliest possible in resolving the Kashmir issue peacefully its own credibility will continue to be at great risks and stake. No words are strong enough to condemn ongoing lingering brutalities and oppression of Indian occupying security forces in IIOJK, to deplore the lingering indifferent attitude of the international community towards bleeding Jammu and Kashmir being more interested in its trade and economic relations with big country of India and also to continue availing every opportunity to remind the world body to wake up out of its deep slumber, realize its hitherto persistently ignored obligations towards oppressed and suppressed Kashmiris and force India to stop ongoing killings in the occupied territory and implement Security Council resolutions to which both India and Pakistan are signatories and save its credibility which otherwise will continue to be at risks in the face of denial of all international laws by India.

RAJAKHIZ SONS BUZDAR READY TO ADDRESS THEIR GRIEVANCES



The Covid-19 — II



AMBASSADOR
 MUNIR AKRAM

These proposals have evoked support from the international community. The U.S. Treasury Secretary of the Biden Administration supported creation of \$ 650 billion in new SDRs. The Managing Director endorsed this and also agree present a proposal to re-allocate unutilized SD' richer countries to developing countries who liquidity. The G-20 agreed to further extend its suspension until the end of 2021 and to pro further debt restructuring on a case by case under a "Common Framework".

FID Forum: Pakistan's plan was presented by the Prime Min in his inaugural address to the ECOSOC's Finan for Development (FID) Forum on April 12. Folio intense negotiations, the Prime Minister's props were endorsed in the Forum's Outcome Documen This consensus on financial support measures implemented in the IMF, the World Bank and Paris Club. From the \$650 billion in new S Pakistan is likely to receive around \$2.7 billion additional "reserves". It could also be substantially from the anticipated US Sloo b' that may be voluntarily transferred from devels. country quotas to help poorer countries, especii the World Bank's IDA concessional "windo significantly enlarged. And, the G-20's debt se suspension could provide further temporary relief.

A Vaccine for All: However, as pointed out in Prime Minister I Khan's address to the FID Forum, global recove contingent on the eq-

uitable and universal availa of the COVID-19 vaccine. Since vaccina commenced over 4 months ago, 832 million have been administered globally, of which 82% gone to the high or upper middle income counnt As ECOSOC President, Pakistan convened a S Meeting of the Council on "A vaccine for all" on 16, 2021, bringing together the Director-General and all relevant UN organiza Member States, scientists and civil so representatives, to press for the COVID-19 vacci be treated as a "global public good". The Preside Statement issued after the meeting opposed "vas nationalism" and outlined the steps needed to e the production and equitable distribution of vaccine to all countries and peoples to ensure that one is left behind". Further efforts are needed a political level to ensure implementation of principles of solidarity, equity and global cooper endorsed at the Special Meeting. Building Back Better The UN Secretary-General has led the wa promoting the view that the devastation caused b COVID-19 pandemic also offers the opportuni "build back better". There is growing consensus that the 17 SDGs, together with the climate and environmental goals of the Paris Agreements and the biodiversity and ocean conventions, provide the best blueprint for a resilient recovery and a "sustainable" and equitable global economy and society. Sustainable Infrastructure Pakistan has pointed out that to achieve the SDGs by 2030 and "net-zero" carbon emissions by 2050, the world will need to invest \$100 trillion in sustainable (or green) infrastructure in energy, transport, housing, communications, industrial and agricultural production. At least \$1.5 trillion each year needs to be invested in developing countries. At present, such sustainable infrastructure investment is minuscule and declined by \$50 billion last year. Yet, the money is there. An estimated \$378 trillion is held in private assets earning no or low re-

turns. Pakistan has proposed a multi-stakeholder facility, under UN auspices, that could bring together private asset managers, development institutions, donors and developing country governments to promote public and private investment in sustainable infrastructure, especially in developing countries. A dialogue on this proposal is underway within ECOSOC. An Equitable Global Architecture As ECOSOC's President, Pakistan has stated that in building back better, we need to holistically reorient our development strategies to address the systemic challenges in our global systems and establish a more inclusive and equitable global financial, trade and technology "architecture".

The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the stark inequalities of our world. The poorest countries and the poorest people within countries have suffered the most. The rich and advanced countries have been able to inject \$17 trillion in financial stimulus to revive their economies, preserve jobs and support their poor. The developing countries' financial needs have grown from \$2.5 trillion annually to \$4.3 trillion post-pandemic. Yet, they have been unable to mobilize even a fraction of this amount. Forty countries are in debt distress; seven have defaulted on their debt payment and more may be obliged to do so. An Equal Financial System Beyond debt relief, it is vital to restructure the world's financial system in ways that all countries are equally able to respond to natural or man-made emergencies, including through equitable debt management, liquidity creation and access to financial markets.

An Open Trade Regime: International trade has declined due to the disruptions in the supply chains induced by the pandemic and the unilateral trade restrictions imposed by some of the major economies. A revived, development-oriented trading system must be evolved at the World Trade Organisation.

Fair Tax Regime: This should be accompanied by a fair international tax regime, particularly to prevent multi-national corporations from shifting profits to low-tax environments and robbing developing countries of tax revenues. Likewise, the profits from e-commerce and digital transactions should be taxed where revenues are generated.

Bridging the Digital Divide: In the modern, digitalized world, the "digital divide" between developed and developing countries must be bridged to create a level-playing field for trade and investment. Pakistan has initiated a dialogue in ECOSOC to implement the UN Secretary-General's "road map" to bridge the digital drive.

Utilizing Advanced Technologies: Developing countries also need access to advanced technologies especially as they transition to more resilient and sustainable development models. Pakistan has proposed the creation of a UN database of all available open source technologies and identification of a set of scientific objectives that can advance the implementation of the SDGs.

The Compulsion to Cooperate: The COVID-19 pandemic has driven home the reality of the unity of humanity. "No one will be safe until everyone is safe" is not a slogan; it is the world's reality today. This reality of interdependence should drive home the imperative of promoting collective security and socio-economic development. It should impel international cooperation, rather than great power rivalry and competition. Such international cooperation can be best promoted through the United Nations. ■

The writer is presently serving as the Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations and President of the Economic and Social Council.

(Concluded)