

# The Business

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## High inflation

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) has been increased 26.6 percent for October against 23.2 percent in September as per the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). This is an outcome of policy decisions taken last month, paramount being the announcement of 90 to 100 billion-rupee subsidy to provide electricity at 19.99 rupee per unit to the five export-oriented sectors which, in turn, further shrank the already small fiscal space available that can be attributed to the sustained failure of successive governments to widen the tax base or indeed to ensure an equitable and fair taxation system. An example is the wholesalers and retailers who account for nearly 19 percent of the country's Gross Domestic Product at 7,299 billion rupees against the manufacturing sector's 4,817 billion rupees and crops estimated at 3,040 billion rupees as per the Economic Survey 2021-22 — while their contribution to taxes is minimal. The Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz)-led administration has time and again failed to impose taxes on this sector as they form an integral component of their electoral support base. There is of course the argument that the rise in electricity prices (estimated at 89.59 percent last month) pledged by the government to the IMF, accounts for the rise in October inflation figures.

This ignores the impact of the subsidy to the exporters announced by finance minister Ishaq Dar as his predecessor Dr Miftah Ismail had earmarked only 20 billion rupees to support the exporters in terms of subsidising electricity for a maximum of three months this year. Petroleum rates for the last fortnight remained constant while for the period from 1 October to 15 October prices of petroleum products actually declined: by 12.63 rupee per litre for petrol, 12.13 rupee per litre for high speed diesel, 10.19 rupee per litre for kerosene and 10.78 per litre for light speed diesel.

It is relevant to note that the OPEC+ decision to curtail production by two million barrels a day will limit the government's capacity to generate revenue from petroleum levy, thereby inflation is projected to rise further in the current month. The rupee-dollar parity, a major contributor to imported inflation, was on average 230.466 in September and declined to 215.5 in October. This implies that the causes of inflation can be sourced to domestic factors. Core inflation an adequate measure of these domestic factors impacting on inflation rose to 14.9 percent in October year-on-year against 14.4 percent in September. There is a need for the economic team leaders to understand that the old measures used to strengthen the stranglehold of the elite on the country's resources under the guise of a trickle-down theory (encouraging exports and/or output) can no longer be continued due to steadily worsening funding issues that reflect an inequitable and unfair tax structure.

# Kashmir under siege-I

DR. HAYAM QAYYUOM

Dr. Maqsood Jafri, a renowned writer, poet and human rights activist has penned down the journey of the sufferers of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) in his book, Kashmir Under Siege.

In the first chapter, the agony of author appears to be on its peak as he describes the amendment in the Jammu and Kashmir Control of Building Operations Act, 1988 and Development Act 1970 as a strategic area to be used by the occupying forces and regulating construction through special dispensation. The right to self-determination of Kashmiris is the only viable option as the freedom movement cannot be suppressed by revocation of Article 370 and 35-A from the Indian constitution.

The author emphasized that the fascist Modi administration must not forget that 'Kashmir is for Kashmiris and of Kashmiris'. Civilization is the thin distance that mankind has placed between itself and barbarism. The same philosophy reflects in the second chapter, Demographic Change in Kashmir. The religious extremism, prejudice, bigotry and fascism of Modi himself dented the image of Hinduism. In the third chapter, Enforcement of Hindutva in Kashmir, the author states that Hindutva has crossed the limit by violating human rights. In the fourth chapter, Indian Demand Brushed Aside, the author states that Indian representatives demand for the Kashmir issue to be an 'outdated' item that needs to be permanently removed from the Security Council's agenda. India is not following United Nations Resolution on Kashmir, but has the audacity to demand its removal from the agenda. In this chapter, the author appeals to the Muslim world and Government of Pakistan to take effective measures against India to save the Kashmiris from India's oppression.

In chapter five, Machiavellian Politics of Modi in Kashmir, the author compared the mischievous politics of Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi with The Prince by an Italian political philosopher, Machiavelli and the philosophy of Chanakya. On the other

hand, the Islamic political models are synonymous to ethics. In India, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) cannot be challenged. For instance, in the 2002 riots of Gujarat, when Modi was the Chief Minister, 2500 Muslims along with three British nationals were killed under his government. After 18 years, local court of Gujarat state ordered to remove Modi's name from the lawsuit.

The author suggests that this is the best time to make a 'defense bloc' under the leadership of China, comprising Pakistan, Turkey, Iran, Indonesia, Malaysia and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries to counter the hegemonic designs of India.

As Aristotle expressed that Phronesis is required for ethical and political issues to be resolved that affect individual and the common good, in the sixth chapter, Indian State Terrorism in Kashmir, Dr. Jafri has focused on the same stance. The expansionist design of India is inviting draconian deaths that must be resolved by practical wisdom. Even the former chief of Indian Intelligence Agency, Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), stressed that practical wisdom is required to permanently settle down the issue. In the articles published in The Washington Post and Hindustan Times, the defeat of the Modi's authoritarianism has been highlighted.

In the seventh chapter, titled, Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir Issue, the author expressed that Pakistan has a central position and is playing a pivotal role for bringing peace and geopolitical security in the region. The Government of Pakistan considers Gilgit-Baltistan as a strategic region. The author proposed that the province must be given a provisional provincial status and must be given seats in the National Assembly. Moreover, he stressed that AJK also be given seats in the National Assembly and Senate as an observer.

In chapter eight, Indian State Terrorism and Kashmir, he writes how India is terrorizing its neighbor as its 11th quadcopter invaded hundred meters in Pakistan's aerial territory, before it was shot down. Furthermore, there's inva-

sion in terms of terrorism in various parts of Pakistan. Use of pellet guns, rapes, killing of innocents and burning the houses of Muslims in IIOJK by the Indian troops; all such acts are destroying the image of the Indian Prime Minister in the world. Intellectuals and writers from all over the world are condemning such brutal and barbarous behavior.

In chapter nine, India Rebuked by World Media on Kashmir, the author has highlighted the struggle to achieve the right of self-determination by All Parties Hurriyat Conference. Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations asked the United Nations to resolve the issue according to Chapter 6 of its Charter amicably. Otherwise, Chapter 7 of the United Nations Charter will be automatically applied on the aggressor country. Joseph Karbol in his book, Danger in Kashmir, unveiled the hypocritical face of India. The Wire revealed on October 7, 2020, that Modi and Amit Shah have pushed 7 million Kashmiris against the wall, endangering the demographics of both Union Territories, overtaking the state of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh including the Muslim majority in Kargil, and Buddhist majority in Leh.

In chapter ten titled, Proposed Solution of Kashmir Dispute, the author points out that so far no solution is feasible. It's a landlocked territory. The only solution is that the United Nations should pressurize India to honor the United Nations resolution as per Chapter 6 of the United Nations Charter. If India demonstrates further aggression in Kashmir, then Chapter 7 of United Nations must be enforced. Moreover, he emphasized that the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) must take a firm stand against the violation of human rights in IIOJK.

In chapter eleven, The Grave Human Crisis in Kashmir, Dr. Jafri accentuated that the international community has started getting involved to resolve the Kashmir issue for regional stability and security. Turkish President, on the 75th Anniversary of United Nations General Assembly, emphasized to resolve the Kashmir issue for the stability of the region. It was considered as gross inter-

ference in India's internal affairs by the Indian Permanent Representative to the United Nations. Various incidences orchestrated hatred towards Pakistan, such as the mysterious killing of a Pakistani Hindu family in Jodhpur, India.

Seven British lawmakers of the United Kingdom's ruling party relaunched a group, The Conservative Friends of Kashmir, to campaign for self-determination in IIOJK and highlight the lockdown of millions of Kashmiris by the Indian forces.

In chapter twelve, Kashmir Seeks Urgent Attention, the author draws attention of the international community towards India's massive acquisition of armaments, the rate of missile tests, and high technology trade of U.S.-India Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) on sharing geospatial information which might lead to geopolitical instability in South Asia.

Therefore, urgent steps shall be taken to resolve the Kashmir issue to maintain regional stability. In chapter thirteen, The Use of Brutal Force in Kashmir, Dr. Jafri showed hope by pointing out that Turkey and China have openly supported Pakistan on the Kashmir issue and to stop human rights violation in IIOJK.

In chapter fourteen, OIC's Niamey Declaration, the author elucidated that OIC's 47th Session of Council of Foreign Ministers' declaration in Niger on November 28, 2020 called for the peaceful settlement of Jammu and Kashmir dispute as per the United Nations Security Council resolutions.

In chapter fifteen, Pakistani Dossier Exposes Indian Terrorism in Pakistan and Kashmir the author expounded that Pakistan has exposed the malintent and agenda of Modi against Kashmir.

In chapter sixteen, Human Rights Day and Kashmir Issue, the author expounded upon the words of Barrister Afzal Hussain that it is a test for those nations who champion human rights and maintain their position as the champions of democracy. In chapter seventeen, Indian Disinformation Campaign Exposed, the author expresses that a Brussels-based NGO, EU DisinfoLab, exposed India's fake media outlets, defunct think tanks,



## ID to end impunity for crimes against journalists

TASNEEM SHAFIQ

On 23 November 2011, the International Day (ID) to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists was established by the International Freedom of Speech Exchange (IFEX); a worldwide network of civil society groups dedicated to defending and promoting the right to freedom of expression rights.

The International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists (IDEI) is a UN-recognized international day observed annually on 2nd November. The day draws attention to the level of impunity for crimes against journalists, which remains extremely high globally.

Between 2006 and 2020, over 1,200 journalists have been killed around the world, with close to nine out of 10 cases of these killings remaining judicially unresolved, according to the UNESCO observatory of killed journalists.

Journalists play a critical role in reporting facts to all citizens, and impunity for attacks against them has a particularly damaging impact, limiting public awareness and constructive debate. Needless to state that the right to freedom of expression has to be understood in its true essence in order to practice it but no one has the right to silence someone by use of force just because he is speaking against them.

Media should exercise it with due responsibility and regard for the national interests and security imperatives. India is one of the world's deadliest countries for journalists, according to Reporters Without Borders's 2021 World Press Freedom Index. Deliberate strangulation / intimidation of journalists in India is done to toe the Hindu nationalist BJP-RSS government's narrative. The Hindutva-led Government is using sedition, counterterrorism, and national security laws to target and prosecute human rights activists, students, government critics, and peaceful protesters in mainland India and particularly in IIOJK.

From stopping journalists from flying

abroad like Aakash Hassan, Pulitzer winner Sanna Irshad, and Amnesty International's Aakar Patel, to withholding Twitter accounts of prominent journalists like Rana Ayyub, India is setting new precedents in place for press brutality.

By employing draconian laws like UAPA, AFSPA, PSA and introducing new media policies, the Hindutva government's sole objective is to hide its blatant human rights violations/war crimes in IIOJK.

World Press Freedom Index says Bharatiya Janata Party supporters and the Hindutva ideology have created an environment of intimidation for journalists who are critical of the government by labelling them as "anti-national" or "anti-state".

The report has specifically called out Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his tightened "his grip on media". With four journalists killed in connection with their work in 2020. Surprisingly, the UNESCO 'observatory of killed journalists' has it that six, not four, journalists have been killed in India in 2020.

Journalists in India "are exposed to every kind of attack, including police violence against reporters, ambushes by political activists, and reprisals instigated by criminal groups or corrupt local officials".

WPF Index has also noted that the situation in Kashmir as "still very worrying", as journalists continued to be harassed by police and paramilitary forces, which it says are due to "utterly Orwellian content regulations".

The report shed light on the "extremely violent social media campaigns" organised by the BJP and Hindutva supporters that openly call for "public condemnation" of journalists who are critical of the government, and they even go to the extent of issuing death threats "especially if they are women".

It highlighted the throttling of freedom of expression on social media, and specifically mentioned that in India the "arbitrary nature of Twitter's algorithms also resulted in brutal censorship". Indian government is increasingly targeting journalists and online critics for their criticism of government poli-

cies and practices, including by prosecuting them under counterterrorism and sedition laws, ten human rights organizations said today on World Press Freedom Day.

Journalists and online critics also risk prosecution under the Information Technology Act and IT Rules of 2021 for content critical of the authorities.

Indian govt have been implicated in using the Israeli-produced spyware Pegasus to target journalists. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, 2021 was one of the deadliest years for Indian journalists in the past decade, with six killed between 2021 and 2022.

The risks to journalists are exacerbated when reporting from places such as Nagaland, in north-eastern India where security forces are especially empowered. Journalists become a target for security forces and under the constant monitor of multiple intelligence agencies.

Due to martial law in the region, journalists have absolutely no safeguards in their line of duty. On 20 May, journalist Subhash Kumar Mahto was fatally shot in Bihar, possibly due to his reporting on the liquor mafias.

Restrictions on media freedom come amid an escalating crackdown on civil society by the BJP-led government, which is using sedition, counterterrorism, and national security laws to target and prosecute human rights activists, students, government critics, and peaceful protesters. In April 2022, at least five journalists covering an event organized by Hindu nationalist groups in Delhi were attacked.

Delhi police subsequently opened a criminal investigation into one of these journalists, Meer Faisal, accusing him of inciting hatred through a tweet, in which he alleged that participants in the event attacked him and a photojournalist because they were Muslim. Journalists from minority groups and those in Jammu and Kashmir are particularly at risk.

The writer has remained associated with the Institute for Strategic Studies and ISPR.

## A besieged Islamabad

RAOOF HASAN

The long march has been on the road for a full one week now with no visible indication of it weakening either in numbers, or in the trademark expression of the intensity of passion associated with it. From city to city, the march has been welcomed by multitudes of supporters with a vow to stand with Imran Khan for the cause of bringing about a substantive and meaningful change in the way Pakistan has been governed.

In the meanwhile, it is a barricaded Islamabad we see with containers lined up along every road, big or small, to block the way of the protesters when they eventually enter the city. Every turning has become a blind corner with metal hitting metal ever so often. Signs of fear, nay terror, are visibly sinking in. But one thing is certain: the long march is not melting away without attaining its avowed objective of early elections in the country.

With the kind of resounding public support which has been on display throughout the route of the march, which was traditionally labelled as Sharif territory, this eventuality may turn out to be the most feasible of the options debated in the past few weeks involving all contenders. Otherwise, the prospect of confrontation looms that may turn into a rudderless monolith dismantling everything that comes in its way.

The incumbents and their patrons, within and outside the country, have tried every trick in their bag to damage Khan's surging popularity. Fake cases were registered against him one after the other, his associates were harassed, arrested and subjected to brutal custodial torture, his public support policies were reversed, media put in chains when it came to broadcasting his news, live transmission of his speeches was banned, channels supportive of the PTI locked down — nothing, absolutely nothing has deterred the passion for Khan which has continued to increase. It is now nearing its crescendo as the march moves towards Rawalpindi/Islamabad for the final showdown.

There is much happening behind closed doors. Quite obviously, the spectacle around is the last thing those responsible for dismantling Khan's constitutional government would have imagined to happen. They thought that, once out of power, Khan would be a dead force politically and he would be easily managed just like so many of his predecessors had been in the past. But then, there are people, and there are people. Khan is made of a different mettle because he has no skeletons in his closet, no billions stashed away in foreign banks, no sprawling and palatial palaces abroad, and no progeny waiting to take over the party after him.

Alongside other objectives, institutionalizing political parties has been one of his cherished dreams. He is the only one who ever held a credible intra-party election in the PTI to afford its members an opportunity to elect leadership of their liking. He remains determined to make this a regular phenomenon and, after the ongoing battle is won, this is what he would be concentrating on to generate a niche for the PTI different from the sickening family fiefdoms that practically all other political parties are in this country with the mantle of leadership passing from father/mother to son/daughter with the rest fit only to bang approval in a humiliatingly servile manner and go on to defend the sordid corruption of their leaders.

This march signifies much more than just a physical reality. Principally, it reflects that Pakistan has changed and its people are no longer willing to live like animals in a system controlled by the elite vested interest who have a stranglehold over the state which they are not willing to forfeit. This is what this battle is about with few understanding its dynamics and the abject meaninglessness of the tricks they may use to subvert it. Khan has ignited the light and it is the people who are going to keep it burning till they arrive at the final destination of transforming the country into a welfare state dedicated to the ideals of equality, equity and justice for all without.