



PAKISTAN
GOVERNANCE
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GOVERNANCE WATCH**Government Working****SC Gives One Week: Deadline for NAB Chief Extended**

Supreme Court of Pakistan has extended deadline for appointing the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) chairman by one week, giving warning that it could create complications if the bureau chief is not appointed by September 13. A three-judge bench headed by Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry heard the case filed by Taimoor Alam. Attorney General of Pakistan (AGP) Muneer A Malik told the bench that the cause of delay in appointment was that the names of some proposed candidates had been dropped on technical grounds, assuring the court that meetings between the prime minister and opposition leader were being held. The AGP said that he had discussed urgency for early appointment with the authorities, to which the chief justice observed that sufficient time had been given to the federal government for NAB chairman's appointment. The chief justice said due to the lack of a chairman, NAB staff faced problems such as non-issuance of salaries and expiry of contracts with good prosecutors, adding that for this reason several high-profile cases were pending in courts. NAB Prosecutor General Karim Khan Agha told the bench that the deputy chairman could not use the powers of the chairman, adding that though many inquiries were under way, references could not be filed without the approval of the NAB chief. Agha further said that NAB could not arrest high profile personalities in any corruption matter and no new prosecutor could be appointed under the prevailing circumstances.

The Express Tribune - September 06th, 2013

All Parties Conference: Consensus Sought Over National Security Policy

The government is all set to hold the All Parties Conference (APC) at the Prime Minister's House to evolve consensus on a national security policy, to deal with terrorism and discuss proposal for talks with the Taliban. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan have talked to senior political leaders by phone and extended the invitations. The government was previously expected to hold the APC on July 12 to evolve a national strategy to curb militancy and address the overall law and order and security situation in the country. However, it was delayed as the government wanted to hold more consultations to make the event successful. The APC will also discuss whether the government should opt for talks with the Taliban. Senior military and intelligence officials will also attend the conference to brief the participants about the security situation. The APC could continue for more than a day if needed. Awami National Party (ANP) leader Senator Haji Adeel has been invited to attend the APC, while National Assembly Opposition leader Syed Khursheed Shah has cancelled a private foreign visit to attend the meeting. On the directions of the government, the security and secret agencies have prepared a briefing over the Karachi situation. A question-answer session will be held at the APC after the briefings. According to sources, Army Chief Ashfaq Parvez Kayani and Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Chief Zaheerul Islam will brief the prime minister ahead of the APC. The sources said Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rahman would once again offer assistance for talks with the Taliban.

Daily Times - September 08th, 2013

Nawaz Pledges to Root out Terrorism

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said whatever is going on in Karachi can't be allowed to continue any further as the government is committed to rooting out terrorism. The premier said extraordinary circumstances require sustained efforts of the law enforcement machinery to bring back peace to Karachi. He said policies don't change on a daily basis. Chairing a high-level meeting here, Nawaz directed the concerned authorities to review the existing lacunae in laws to ensure the foolproof security of citizens and sustained deterrence against criminals keeping in view the guidelines provided by the superior courts. The meeting was attended by Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar, Science and Technology Minister Zahid Hamid, Punjab Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, DG ISI Zaheerul Islam, the DG Rangers, DG IB and other senior officials. The meeting decided to further intensify the government's efforts for restoration of peace in the metropolis. The prime minister urged to initiate necessary amendments in the laws, keeping in view the existing guidelines of the superior courts. "The people of Karachi have pinned their hopes on the law-enforcement agencies and they must deliver now," said the prime minister, and emphasised the need for giving the people of Karachi a sense of security. He also ordered the blocking of unregistered and illegal SIMs with immediate effect. The DG Rangers briefed the prime minister about their strategy to apprehend target killers, extortionists, kidnappers and perpetrators of terrorism. The prime minister expressed satisfaction on the progress made so far by the law-enforcement agencies. He said the change of policy affects performance. Nawaz said the law enforcing agencies will have to show their performance as the government wants to make Karachi a city of lights again. The army and ISI chiefs also briefed the prime minister on national security issues. After the briefing, issues regarding the government's stance on talks with the Taliban, tomorrow's (Monday) APC and strategy to tackle terrorism were settled. Participants of the meeting shared their viewpoint about talks with the Taliban. According to sources, it was decided in the meeting that the army and ISI chiefs will brief the participants of the APC on national security issues and will also answer their questions. Nawaz said on the occasion that the government wants to root out terrorism and make the country an abode of peace. He said foreign investment and economic development were not possible without a peaceful environment in the country. The premier said the terrorists wanted to weaken the country. "We will have to unite to defeat terrorism," he said. Nawaz said whatever is going on in Karachi will not continue much further and peace will prevail there.

The News - September 08th, 2013

39% Pakistanis Say Nawaz Is Better As PM: Survey by Gallup Pakistan

A large number of Pakistanis - 39 percent - have termed the performance of Mian Nawaz Sharif as the prime minister as better, while 25 percent declared it bad. The public opinion was gathered during a survey carried out by Gallup Pakistan and with the collaboration of The News, Geo and Jang. The exercise was carried out in the rural and urban areas of the four provinces in which men and women from all walks of life were asked, "What is your opinion about the performance of Nawaz Sharif as the prime minister." Thirty-nine percent people termed the Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's performance as better, while 14 percent said it was very good. Twenty-five termed it as bad, while 15 percent said it was very bad. Seven percent said that they do not know. The survey was carried out as per international standards, and its rate of accuracy is 95 percent while rate of error is 3-5 percent.

The News - September 25th, 2013

General Assembly Statement: PM Urges UN Session on N-Disarmament

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif called on the international community to renew the global consensus on nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and promotion of cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Speaking at a high-level UN General Assembly meeting on nuclear disarmament, the prime minister said, "Thirty-five years ago, this august Assembly reached a consensus on the mandate and machinery to pursue the disarmament agenda. With the passage of time, regrettably, this consensus has eroded; and the goals set have become elusive." He said that a consensus should be based on equity, balance, restraint and cooperation among all states. He also called on the General Assembly to convene a special session in this regard. He called for an end to nuclear discrimination as he underscored that such policies have damaged the integrity of treaties and norms of non-proliferation. "Pakistan is committed to the goal of general and complete disarmament, which is global, non-discriminatory and verifiable", he reiterated. Outlining the salient features of Pakistan's nuclear policy, the premier stressed on its guiding principles of restraint and responsibility. He said that Pakistan does not want an arms race in South Asia and the country would therefore continue to adhere to its policy of credible minimum deterrence. Prime Minister Sharif told the dignitaries at the meeting that he chaired a meeting of the National Command Authority (NCA), which reaffirmed the country's constructive strategic posture. In the broader context of energy deficit in Pakistan, he called for the need to acquire energy from all sources, including nuclear. "As Prime Minister, I feel that energy deficit is one of the most serious crises facing Pakistan," he maintained. The premier underscored that Pakistan fully qualifies to have full access to civil nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. He said that Pakistan looks forward to international cooperation in nuclear energy under IAEA safeguards. Apart from several heads of state and government, the UN General Assembly president, the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon and Iranian President Dr Hassan Rouhani, as NAM chairman, delivered statements at the meeting.

The Express Tribune - September 27th, 2013

Public Affairs Unit: PM Nawaz to Establish an Administrative Watchdog

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif is going to establish Prime Minister Public Affairs Unit, an overarching body that will help him in improving governance and executing decisions. Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz (PML-N) leadership has taken this decision after successful application of the same concept in Punjab where it solved the lawmakers' problems and streamlined the chief minister's long-standing issues. The premier, after his arrival from New York, will constitute the unit in the Prime Minister Office. According to a high-level party official, the PML-N leader Hamza Shahbaz will head the unit. He will be supported by three party office-bearers. Apart from its chairman and political members, Additional Secretary to Prime Minister Fawad Hassan Fawad and a few other administrative secretaries in the PM office will also be its members. It is pertinent to mention that Hamza Shahbaz is also the chairman of an eight-member Public Affairs Unit established in Punjab chief minister's office.

According to a party official, the party leadership could not give sufficient time to governance and to address lawmakers' issues related to their constituencies. In the federal government, Nawaz Sharif too did not have time enough to cater to party lawmakers and to look after his own functions. "The Public Affairs Unit will be a watchdog on cabinet and will indirectly perform the functions as de facto prime minister in the centre and de facto chief minister in Punjab," he said. He said public affairs unit was established in Punjab last week through an official notification. "Its good output has prompted the party leadership to also implement it in the centre," he said

According to a notification, the unit in Punjab shall be managed by a committee which shall meet on a weekly basis to assess the political situation and shall brief the CM once a month. Hamza Shahbaz is the chairman of the unit, while its three political members include Chaudhry Saud Mejeed, Manshaullah Butt and Mehar Ishtiaq. The unit aims to assist the CM in identifying specific political challenges related to good governance, delivery of public services and resolution of public grievances especially in priority areas. It will also facilitate a deliberative process including stakeholders' consultation for CM to finalise the political agenda. One of unit members Chaudhry Saud Majeed said this idea was to expedite not only development projects and the CM's initiatives but also to improve governance. "The unit's purview is only public related issues and it will perform well," he said adding the unit had already started receiving lot of feedback.

The Express Tribune - September 27th, 2013

National Assembly & Senate

'Political Stability': Cabinet To Undergo Expansion In A Week

The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz government is set to expand the federal cabinet by another seven federal and state ministers and an adviser, within a week. The sources said that the expansion was delayed because; following talks with Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) and Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), prime minister's close aides did not recommend an alliance with MQM. JUI-F's Akram Khan Durrani's appointment as a federal minister was already approved by outgoing President Asif Ali Zardari. However, the names for the other cabinet members are yet to be finalized. "The prime minister will convene a meeting to deliberate upon the candidates and the slots in the expanded cabinet," an official said. "The proposed candidates include some names from the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (Fata)," he added. Disclosing some of the names for the new positions in the cabinet, he said the candidates for federal ministers include Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada, MNA from Bahawalpur; and Senator Abbas Khan Afridi, a former commerce minister from Fata. Tariq Fazl Chaudhry from Islamabad and Sajid Hussain Turi from Fata are being considered for induction as ministers of state. It was learnt that close aides have advised Prime Minister Nawaz against allying with the MQM. As such, while the JUI-F will join the federal cabinet, MQM is unlikely to be a part at least for the time being. Information Minister Pervaiz Rashid said Prime Minister Nawaz is having consultations with the PML-N leadership, including the party's provincial chiefs, as well as its allies, to expand the federal cabinet. Rashid said expansion of the federal cabinet was aimed at giving representation to allied political parties in order to keep the political system stable.

The Express Tribune - September 02nd, 2013

Afghan Imbrolio: Policy of 'Double Play' Abandoned

Islamabad has abandoned the policy of 'double play' vis-a-vis Afghanistan and is making genuine efforts to facilitate an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process, the government informed the Senate panel on foreign affairs. Prime Minister's Adviser on National Security and Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz gave the Senate's Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs an in-camera briefing on the government's Afghan policy. "We have no favourites in Afghanistan. Our aim is to facilitate efforts in restoring long-term peace in Afghanistan," Chairman of the committee Senator Adeel quoted Sartaj Aziz as telling the panel. The adviser told the committee that the government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was following a policy of non-interference

in Afghanistan. Aziz termed the recent visit of Afghan President Hamid Karzai successful in decreasing the trust deficit between the two neighbours. Senator Adeel told that the government acknowledged that in the past, the security establishment solely took decisions on issues of national security. "For decades, we considered Afghanistan as our fifth province and made attempts to install governments of our own choosing. This practice must come to an end," said Senator Adeel, who is a senior leader of the Awami National Party. He said the PML-N government had assured the committee that civilian authorities would now be in charge of foreign policy decisions. Separately, Adviser Sartaj Aziz said that Pakistan was committed to supporting efforts for peace and reconciliation in neighbouring Afghanistan, where the Taliban have been fighting a deadly insurgency for nearly 12 years now. Addressing a seminar organised by the East West Institute in Islamabad, he said Pakistan was keen to continue working with Afghanistan in pursuit of connectivity and energy projects linking Pakistan with Central Asia. "A peaceful, stable and prosperous Afghanistan is in Pakistan's vital national interest," he added. "We remain committed to supporting efforts for peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan in an inclusive, Afghan-owned and Afghan-led process."

The Express Tribune - September 04th, 2013

National Assembly Session: 34 Parliamentary Panels Elected

The National Assembly passed a unanimous resolution condemning the attack on the army officers and calling on the government to support the army in the war on terror. The National Assembly expressed its deep sympathies for the bereaved families. The resolution, which was moved by minister of state for parliamentary affairs, stated, "This House strongly condemns the attack on Major Gen Sanaullah Niazi, Lt Col Tauseef and Lance Naik Irfan Sattar, soldiers Yasir and Ghaffar, Baloch Regiment of Pakistan Army. Expressing deep sympathies for the grieved families, this House salutes the bravery and courage of Pakistan's armed forces and vows to back them in their efforts to protect the country. This House calls upon the government to recognise their sacrifices and to come out in full support of the armed forces in the fight against terrorism." Legislators introduced five bills in the House and asked the government to ensure elimination of terrorism, abolish the system of mark-up and take steps to pull the Pakistan Steel Mills out of crisis. The legislators of Pakistan People's Party and Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) introduced the bills. One of these bills was "The HIV/AIDs (Safety and Control) Bill 2013," introduced by Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho. She said there is an increasing need to create awareness among the masses about this killer disease and take appropriate measures to control its spread. SA Iqbal Qadri introduced "The National Database and Registration Authority (Amendment) Bill 2013". The bills notes that it is common practice that public and private organisations require the photocopy of CNIC with or without certain other documents as a proof of identity. The copies are ultimately misused for various criminal or illegal activities. It states that the main purpose is served as and when the original card is produced. The practice of demanding/producing copy of CNIC should be stopped and exclusive use of original CNIC should be encouraged.

"The Publication of the Holy Quran (Elimination of Printing and Recording Errors) (Amendment) Bill 2013," was moved by Major (r) Tahir Iqbal. It states that it is vital to introduce a bill to ensure error-free publication of the holy Quran on fine quality paper and proper publication of the holy book and its verses. Another bill, "The Islamabad Capital Territory Local Government Bill 2013", was moved by SA Iqbal Qadri. Dr Nafisa Shah presented "The Political Parties Order (Amendment) Bill 2013". It seeks to protect and strengthen representation in the political and legislative process.

The Lower House was informed that no employee of the Pakistan International Airlines will be removed during the privatisation of its 26 percent shares. "I say categorically that the government has no plans to offload the PIA employees in the proposed process of privatisation of 26 percent shares of the utility," Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Aftab Sheikh told the House in response to a calling attention notice. He said the airline had 19,400 employees and the government will not only secure their jobs but they will continue to possess 12 percent shares of the airline. Meanwhile, Federal Minister for State and Frontier Regions Abdul Qadir Baloch said the government would not hide anything from the nation about the loan agreement with the International Monitoring Fund (IMF). Discussing a motion about the situation arising out of the agreement with the IMF to get loan of \$5.3 billion, the minister said, in fact nothing is hidden as debate about the agreement was going on in media. He said every member of the House would be informed about the agreement with IMF. Aftab Sheikh also said that the government would break the begging bowl and would eventually free itself of the financial arrangements with IMF. Winding up the debate, he informed the House that the finance minister will take the House into confidence on matters with IMF. He said after the first hundred days of government, the prime minister's vision has come clear before the nation.

Daily Times - September 18th, 2013

National Assembly Condemns Peshawar Church Attack

The National Assembly passed a unanimous resolution which strongly condemned the heinous and inhuman attack at a church in Peshawar on Sunday in which more than 81 precious lives, including women and children, lost and caused injuries to 137 others. The resolution was moved by Minister for Science and Technology Zahid Hamid that was backed by both the sides of aisle. The resolution termed this attack not only against the Christian community but also against all Pakistanis. Through the resolution, the National Assembly expressed solidarity with the Christian community and sympathised with the bereaved families and prayed for early recovery of the injured. The resolution demanded from the federal and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa governments to take all necessary measures to safeguard the rights of the non-Muslims as laid down in the Quran and Sunnah and the Constitution of Pakistan. The resolution stressed that all possible facilities should be provided to the injured and security to worship places of all the non-Muslims and take steps to bring the perpetrators of this incident to justice.

The Nation - September 24th, 2013

Judiciary

Murder Case Registered Against Musharraf over Lal Masjid

Police registered murder charges against former military ruler Pervez Musharraf in connection with the death of a radical cleric during the siege of a mosque in 2007. It is the latest in a series of charges dating back to Musharraf's 1999-2008 rules, which the retired general has faced since returning from self-imposed exile in March. Radical cleric Abdul Rashid Ghazi was one of more than 100 people killed after troops stormed the Red Mosque in Islamabad on July 10, 2007. Ghazi's brother, Abdul Aziz, escaped in a burqa. The operation opened the floodgates to a Taliban-led insurgency that has killed thousands of people in Pakistan. "The High Court ordered Islamabad police to register murder charges against Musharraf on a petition filed by the son of Rashid Ghazi," said Tariq Asad, a lawyer who represented Ghazi in court. "The court ordered police to register the case earlier as well but their instructions were not followed. Today, the

court made Islamabad police officials write the case inside the court room and comply with the orders right there," he said. Police confirmed that the charges had been registered. "We have booked Musharraf under section 302/119 of the law, which deals with murder charges," Qasim Niazi, said a senior police official.

An anti-terrorism court last month charged Musharraf with the murder of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, who died in a gun and suicide attack after a political rally in December 2007. It was the first time a head of Pakistan's army has been charged with a crime, challenging beliefs that the military is immune from prosecution and threatening to fan tensions with civilian institutions. While murder will be difficult to prove, it may embolden efforts to try Musharraf for treason for seizing power in 1999 and for violating the constitution by sacking judges and imposing emergency rule in 2007. Treason can carry the death penalty. Musharraf also faces murder accusations over the 2006 death of Baloch rebel leader Nawab Akbar Bugti. Musharraf has been under house arrest at his plush villa on the edge of Islamabad since April.

Daily Times - September 03rd, 2013

PM Calls for Amendments in Anti-Terrorism Law

Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif has called for amendments in anti-terrorism law in accordance with the guidelines given by superior judiciary. He was addressing a high level meeting on national security and law and order in the country at Raiwind in Lahore. The Prime Minister issued directions for immediate blocking of all illegal SIMs across the country. DG Rangers briefed the meeting on law and order situation in Karachi. The Prime Minister directed that more steps should be taken to restore peace and tranquility in Karachi so that confidence of the people is restored. The meeting is set to review law and order in the country in general, with special focus on Karachi issue and upcoming APC. Army Chief Gen. Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, DG IB, DG Rangers, Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar, Chief Minister Punjab Shahbaz Sharif, and others are among the participants of the meeting.

The Nation - September 07th, 2013

New Judicial Year: Fully Functional Judicial Commission Wins CJ Endorsement

Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry on Saturday lauded the Judicial Commission for becoming fully functional" and "fairly active" as he unveiled its performance report on the appointment of judges. As per the report presented before the superior judiciary, the judicial commission had convened a total of 66 meetings. The first was a combined meeting of all members of the commission to settle modalities and formulate rules of procedure. The remaining meetings were held for selection of judges of the Supreme Court, Federal Shariat Court and the high courts. "I am happy to say that the commission has become fully functional and is fairly active. Beyond that, perhaps, I may not go for the reason that the 18th Amendment is sub judice in the Supreme Court," the chief justice said in his introductory remarks. The Judicial Commission is a constitutional forum set up in the year 2010, following the adoption of 18th and 19th constitutional amendments by parliament.

Under the said amendment, Article 175A was added to the Constitution, which prescribed new procedure and provided for the establishment of a new forum for making the appointments of judges in the superior courts. The amendment broadened the mechanism for consultation in selecting judges. Currently, the top hierarchy of judiciary is involved in the selection process together with the Attorney General of Pakistan, representatives of bar councils and provincial

law ministers. Through this mechanism, nine judges were elevated to the Supreme Court and six judges were appointed to the Federal Shariat Court. The commission appointed 23 additional judges, extended the tenure of 23, and confirmed the appointment of 39 judges of Lahore High Court.

According to the report, the commission appointed 17 additional judges, extended the tenure of 15 judges and confirmed 10 as judges of Peshawar High Court. It also appointed 19 additional judges, extended the tenure of 25 and confirmed the appointment of 11 judges of Sindh High Court. Six additional judges were appointed seven were confirmed as judges of Balochistan High Court, while the tenure of four was extended. The commission appointed five additional judges, extended the tenure of one, and confirmed six as judges in Islamabad High Court. "All of you will agree that with each passing day the level of confidence in the judiciary is increasing and this fact can be authenticated by the figures of fresh institution," the chief justice said. He said he felt no hesitation in saying that the National Judicial Policy had played an important role in enhancing the confidence of people in the ability of courts for resolution of their disputes. "The results of the policy are encouraging," he added.

The Express Tribune - September 08th, 2013

Restoring Order: Government Ponders Ruthless Anti-Terror Law

Faced with a resilient Taliban insurgency, deadly sectarian violence and rampant crimes, the government is considering a slew of administrative and legal measures to restore peace in the country. On the legal side, the government plans to amend the anti-terrorism laws to allow security forces to shoot terrorism suspects. According to the documents available with the government plans amendments in the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997, including in Section 5 which authorises the security forces to 'use force' to prevent a terrorist act. Presently, the security forces can 'open fire' 'when fired upon' by a suspect(s). Through an amendment the government seeks to omit the phrase 'when fired upon'. Similarly, if the proposed amendments are approved, target killers, extortionists and kidnappers will also be treated as 'terrorists'. And the armed forces or civil armed forces will be authorised to detain a person involved in such offences for three months for investigations. Currently, they can detain a suspect for 30 days. Apparently, the move has been prompted by the law and order situation in the megacity of Karachi. According to the proposed amendments, these offences - target killing, kidnapping for ransom and extortion - shall be investigated by a police officer not below the rank of inspector or where the government deems necessary by a joint investigation team (JIT) comprising police investigating officer and officers from the armed forces, civil armed forces, intelligence agencies and other law-enforcement agencies. The investigating officer, or the JIT, shall complete investigation in respect of cases tri-able by the court within 30 working days. The report shall be signed and forwarded by the investigating officer directly to the court. Wherein the investigation is not completed within 30 days from the date of recording of the FIR, the investigating officer or the JIT shall forward within three days an interim report to the court through the public prosecutor.

Under the proposed amendments, a person arrested by the armed forces or civil armed forces shall be handed over to the investigating officer of the police station designated for the purpose by the provincial government in each district. The anti-terrorism court (ATC) will proceed with the trial and if the case is not decided within 30 days, the matter shall be brought to the notice of chief justice of the high court concerned for appropriate directions. Before the commencement of trial, the court shall scrutinise the case file to identify issues and direct the prosecution to complete all pre-trial formalities so that the actual trial proceeds uninterrupted. For protection

of judges, counsel, public prosecutor and witnesses, the government proposes that screens be used during the trial to shield witnesses, judges and prosecutors from public view. The government also proposes to conduct such trials on the jail premises or through video link as well. The provincial government concerned shall take necessary steps to ensure that prisoners do not have access to cellphones in jails. For protection and safety of judges, witnesses or prosecutors, the chief justice of high court concerned shall transfer a case from an ATC falling within its jurisdiction to an ATC in another province seeking concurrence of the chief justice of the high court of that province. On completion of investigation and before submission of report, the federal government may order that the case falling in the jurisdiction of a particular ATC may be forwarded for trial to another ATC in the same province or in any other province as may be specified by the federal government in this behalf in the public interest or for safety and protection of judges, public prosecutors or witnesses.

The Express Tribune - September 19th, 2013

Witness Protection Bill Unanimously Passed Into Law

Being the first assembly to make such a law in the country, the Sindh assembly unanimously passed the Sindh Witness Protection Bill 2013. The bill provides protection to witnesses and their families, enabling them to provide evidence in criminal proceedings without any fear. It will allow witnesses to conceal their identities by wearing a mask, changing their voice and appearance as well as any other form of segregation during investigation or trial. Video conferencing will also be allowed in order to secure witnesses. Additionally, witnesses may be relocated and provided with accommodation to keep them safe. The law further states that reasonable financial assistance would be provided to witnesses for them to obtain a means of livelihood and the government would also provide compensation to the legal heirs and free education to the children, if the protected person is killed because of his participation. Sindh parliamentary affairs minister Dr Sikandar Mandhro said the law was being made in view of increasing terrorist activities in the province. Under this law, the government would establish a 'witness protection advisory board'. The home department secretary will be its chairperson, while the law secretary, the finance secretary, the advocate general, the IGP, the prisons IG, the prosecutors general, representative of the provincial commission on human rights and the additional inspector general of the Crime Investigation Department will be its members. "To encourage witnesses and protect them and their families, it is necessary to establish a witness protection programme," said Dr Mandhro, adding that many witnesses of high-profile cases have been killed by terrorists. "The national assembly and other provinces have also approached us seeking a draft of this bill to replicate."

Parties' Reaction

All political parties welcomed the legislation. Dr Sagheer Ahmed of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) said the government should make sure that the witness protection law was not used against any political party or the government. "How can the government guarantee that a person wearing mask is not a fake eyewitness?" Nusrat Seher Abbasi of the Pakistan Muslim League-Functional said, "Information department should start a media campaign to inform people about the aims and objectives of this law." Aamir Moin Pirzada of the MQM said there was also a need to strengthen the evidence system so that conviction rates could go up. "We should strengthen the forensics system by introducing modern technology." Syed Hafizuddin and Dr Seema Zia of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf said that the family of the witnesses should be offered protection. "Whenever eyewitness demands it, the government must give protection to that particular family member," Dr Zia said. PPP MPA Sharmila Faruqi also

appreciated the legislation, saying that the judiciary had also expressed its concern and asked the government to make a law on this issue. Later, the bill was passed into law with minor amendments.

MQM's Surprising Mood

It came as a surprise to everyone when the MQM withdrew its adjournment and privilege motions. Senior members of the party requested the speaker to take up their privilege motion moved by MQM MPA Jamal Khan against a raid at his office, but when the government refused, they did not press it. The same situation was witnessed in the adjournment motion moved by MQM MPA Khawaj Izharul Hassan, who said, "Our former MPA arrested by the police has been released, therefore, we do not want to press our adjournment motion."

PA To Amend Rules

After 40 years, the Sindh Assembly is going to amend its rules of procedure in consultation with members of all parliamentary parties in the assembly. A draft of the rules prepared by the law department was presented in the session.

The Express Tribune - September 19th, 2013

Government's Negotiations with Talibans

TTP Denies Talks with Government at Any Level

Rejecting reports about talks with the federal government, the Hakimullah Mahsud-led Pakistani Taliban said there was no way they would dissociate from al-Qaeda and the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi. The Taliban leader argued they would have announced a ceasefire had they held talks with the government. "The government is telling white lies to the media about talks with the Taliban. The rulers are living in a fool's paradise by claiming that we will abandon the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi or al-Qaeda, as both the organisations are integral parts of our body," a senior Taliban commander and head of the peace council told this correspondent over the phone from somewhere in the tribal area. He insisted that no 'direct or indirect' contact had been established between them and the government until now for starting peace talks. "I personally think that some people, particularly in the opposition, are trying to exploit the ignorance of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his team about peace talks," the Taliban leader said. He said the Taliban leadership was surprised when it came to know about a statement by a senior PML-N leader in which he confirmed holding talks with the Taliban. "I don't know who is talking to whom. Being head of the peace council, nobody has approached me. It would have been better had the PML-N leader mentioned the group they were negotiating with. We also appeal to the media to contact our spokesman or any other person in a position of authority in our organisation before writing about such a sensitive matter related to us," he stressed.

The TTP spokesman Shahidullah Shahid also denied the reports. Talking to The News, he wondered how the Taliban would dissociate from al-Qaeda and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi as mentioned in the media while quoting a senior government official. "Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and al-Qaeda are essential parts of our alliance. There is no way we would abandon them even if the talks take place," the TTP spokesman said. Shahidullah Shahid, who recently replaced Ihsanullah Ihsan, said they would publicly announce and invite members of the media if they decided to hold talks with the government. "We aren't in favour of secret negotiations as we had a bad experience in the past. As stated by us in the recent past, we will need powerful guarantors before the

beginning of the talks,” the spokesman said. The PML-N leadership and a senior militant leader were earlier quoted as saying that talks between the government and the Taliban had started and a decrease in terrorist attacks in the country was one of its first benefits. The Taliban recently expelled a senior militant leader Asmatullah Muavia from their ranks after he welcomed Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif’s offer of peace talks to the militants. The Taliban sources, however, said a majority of their members were in favour of holding ‘meaningful’ peace talks with the government as they wanted to resolve all issues through negotiations.

The News - September 01st, 2013

All Parties on Same Page over Taliban Talks, Says Nisar

Interior Minister Nisar Ali Khan has said all political parties were on the same page regarding talks with the Taliban. After holding talks with Chief of Jamiat Ulema-e Islam-Fazl Maulana Fazlur Rehman, he said all elected political parties had been invited to attend the all-parties conference. He said a positive outcome was expected from the conference. Nisar said all political parties were on the same page for holding talks with the Taliban and all allies would be taken on board regarding national policies. He said the situation of uncertainty would be ended so that confidence was restored in democracy and politics. Nisar said it was the essence of democracy that all allies and opposition parties were being taken on board regarding matters of national interests. Speaking on the occasion, Fazl said his party stood by the government for peace and stability in the country. He said it was imperative for peace and stability in country that dialogue was held with the Taliban and he was ready to play his role in this regard. He said use of power was no solution to any problem. Fazl added that he fully supported the APC and would participate in the moot. The JUI-F chief said all political parties should be taken on board on national issues. Earlier during the meeting, the interior minister formally invited the chief of JUI-F to attend the all-parties conference.

Pakistan Today - September 07th, 2013

No Differences with Army on Dialogue with Taliban: Government

Information and Broadcasting Minister Pervaiz Rashid rejected the impression that the army opposes dialogue with the Taliban and added all the institutions would be duty bound to implement whatever the policy and decisions were taken by the government. Talking to the media, the minister said that there was no difference of opinion between the government and army as far as dialogue with the Taliban was concerned. Otherwise too, he added, the institutions are duty bound to implement decisions of the government. He also made it clear that the operation clean-up in Karachi would succeed and the federal government has taken the Sindh government on board on the issue. He said that All Parties Conference (APC) was being called in the interest of the country and no political leader could afford to refuse participation in it. He said that a meeting in Lahore with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in the chair had given approval to the arrangements for APC. The meeting was attended by the interior minister and army chief among others and it reviewed the security situation, including the law and order in Karachi, the minister said. He said that looking five years back, it seemed that the government was not serious in restoring order in the mega city but the PML-N government started dealing with the situation soon after it came to power. About power crisis, Rashid said the government would give a huge subsidy of Rs 170 billion on electricity this year and all resources are being used to overcome the crisis. He said the government was forced to increase petroleum prices as there had been an increase in international prices of the commodity. To a query, the minister

said former president General (r) Pervez Musharraf was responsible for high price of petroleum products in the country. "He ran the country's economy on artificial methods and ignored market forces, which caused circular debt to increase." He also regretted the fact that costly resources were wasted during the past regimes as dependence on power generation was shifted from hydel to thermal. The minister said the government has once again made Pakistan to stand on its feet and it "is fast moving forward". He said the achievements of 100 days of Nawaz Sharif's government are more than that of Mushath, rraf and others who ruled the country for 10 to 12 years.

Daily Times - September 08th, 2013

7 Taliban Freed To 'Facilitate' Peace Talks

The government announced the release of seven more Taliban militants 'to facilitate' the troubled Afghan reconciliation process. A statement by the Foreign Office identified the freed detainees as Mullah Mansoor Dadullah, Said Wali, Abdul Manan, Karim Agha, Sher Afzal, Gul Mohammad and Mohammad Zai. This is the third batch of Taliban detainees to be released by Islamabad. Twenty-six prisoners were set free in two groups last year. But the process of release of Taliban detainees remained suspended for over eight months after the failed Chequers summit in February chilled bilateral ties. The seven Taliban figures were described by an official as senior commanders wielding strong influence in the militant group. Except for Mullah Mansoor Dadullah, brother of Mullah Dadullah Akhund, a brutal commander killed by British forces in Helmand, antecedents of the others could not be verified. Mullah Mansoor had, however, been expelled from the Taliban ranks by Mullah Omar, the supreme leader of the militant movement, before he was captured in Balochistan by the Frontier Corps in 2008. The news of release of Taliban fighters was coldly received in Kabul where authorities downplayed it as a 'minor step'.

Afghan presidential spokesman Aimal Faizi welcomed the release of Taliban prisoners, but said "it is not big news". In an interview, he reiterated the call for releasing 'important Taliban prisoners who can help in taking reconciliation forward'. The release of the prisoners has come on the heels of Afghan President Hamid Karzai's visit to Pakistan on Aug 26. He had extended his stay by one day for in-depth discussions with Pakistani leadership on the steps he expected Islamabad to take for reviving the stalemated peace process in his country. One of his key demands was the release of the Taliban detainees, particularly former deputy chief of the movement, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar. After Mr Karzai's visit, and the Afghan presidency had said in a statement: "The Pakistani side is expected to take specific and practical steps in accordance with the decisions made during these negotiations." Islamabad has been reluctant in releasing Mullah Baradar, who has been in captivity since 2010 and is seen as a crucial link for an agreement between the Karzai administration and the Taliban. Islamabad and Kabul had, at the Chequers Summit, agreed to consult and coordinate future release of Taliban fighters. The list of seven fighters released now, a security official said, had been shared with Kabul last week. However, there was no response from the Afghan government. The Pakistani authorities implied Afghan silence as their consent and went ahead with their release.

Pakistan had last year decided in principle to release all Taliban fighters languishing in its custody. "Only a handful of Taliban militants are left behind," a senior security official said. Pakistan held some 40 Taliban men, of whom 33 have been released, he added. A senior member of Afghanistan's High Peace Council - Mohammad Ismail Qasimyar - welcomed Pakistan's decision to release the Taliban figures. "This is a goodwill and trust-building move by Pakistan and we hope the release of these Taliban prisoners could change the national

reconciliation process in Afghanistan,” Mr Qasimyar said. President Karzai wants Islamabad to help open dialogue with the insurgents. He said Afghanistan expected Pakistan to provide “opportunities or a platform for talks between the Afghan High Peace Council” - Kabul’s official negotiators - and the Taliban. In the past, the Afghan leader has identified Taliban havens in Pakistan as the main cause of increased violence in his country. Afghan officials believe former detainees may talk to the Kabul government, although observers say there is little evidence those hopes have been realised. The US embassy in Kabul, which has played a mediation role regarding the prisoners, also declined comment.

Dawn - September 08th, 2013

Analyses

ROVER’S DIARY: National Security Policy should be In Sync with People’s Interest: An Analysis by Babar Ayaz

The war economy breeds its co-evolutionists among politicians, civil society and media. Pakistan has a large segment of military co-evolutionists who survive on the war economy. Finally, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif bites the bullet and has agreed to set-up the ‘Cabinet Committee on National Security’ (CCNS) replacing the Defence Committee of the Cabinet. As they say ‘once bitten twice shy’. In his third stint the prime minister who was twice bitten from the same hole was pragmatic this time and accepted the CCNS idea with a heavy presence of the armed forces’ representatives at the policy making level. In a country that is facing a serious existential threat, there is no doubt that a well thought out national security policy is needed. Nobody can also quarrel with the fact that the input of the security forces is essential in making the policy and also in implementing it. Most countries have institutionalised their national security policy. Most countries have a power tussle between the foreign office and defence establishment on influencing the national security policy. But the final word is that of the civilian government - Nawaz Sharif’s unfulfilled dream. An unofficial document prepared in 2011 by the National Defence University (NDU) highlighted the absence of a ‘National Security Management System’. As the national security policy-making domain was jealously guarded by the GHQ in the past, no civilian-led national security policy making institution could be developed.

Judging by the previous performance of the military, it is evident that a one-line and single-dimensional National Security Policy has focused singularly on meeting the ‘Indian threat’ militarily. This fact was also acknowledged by the NDU research paper: “However, until the recent past, our primary focus has been on kinetic threats, whereas, awareness about non-kinetic challenges impinging on our national security is slowly being realised. It goes without saying that with the strong standing armed forces and credible nuclear deterrence, Pakistan possesses a formidable response to kinetic domain. But we also need to bring non-kinetic dimension of the threat under sharper focus. This will help us evolve prudent policies and workable strategies to formulate befitting response against multitude complex external as well as internal challenges, which confront us today.” Though the NDU paper has been categorised as an unofficial document by the establishment, it indicates that the establishment is shifting policies, recognising ‘slowly’ the non-kinetic ‘challenges’: “In the face of growing global acceptance of India as the regional leader, Indo-US and Indo-Israel nexus and growing asymmetry between India and Pakistan, strategic reappraisal of our security calculus particularly in the non-kinetic domain is extremely important...”

This is where Pakistan blinded by myopia has gone wrong. Ahmed Faruqui points out in his book: “National Security does not reside solely in military’s combat effectiveness, but in a

complementary set of five dimensions that include four non-military dimensions and one military dimension. The non-military dimensions are political leadership, social cohesion, economic vitality, and a strong foreign policy.” But in Pakistan, which is an ideological security state, this policy has been standing upside down. The GHQ has not allowed any civilian government to interfere in the making of the crucial foreign policy decisions since the early 50s. History has shown that when institutions and individuals grow too strong or dominant, they consciously or unconsciously fail to distinguish and separate their own vested interests from that of an institution or that of the country. Here it is important to note that the terms ‘country’ and ‘nation’ are often used to not represent the interests of the people of that nation or a country. For the ruling elite the country is just a geographical entity and the ‘one nation’ and ‘one national interest’ slogan serves to further their own interests. This propaganda of the ruling elite, which is not challenged in everyday life, has successfully negated the existence of the various ethno-linguistic nationalities and economic classes in a country.

It is also a fact that the military together with the war economy co-evolutionists consider themselves as guardians of the nation and their security. They have always denied that their interests are mostly in conflict with the interests of the people they rule. The media both consciously and inadvertently promotes the ruling establishment’s political formulations. A security state is bound to have large armed forces and huge defence expenditure, which in turn creates the war economy. The war economy breeds its co-evolutionists among politicians, civil society and media. Pakistan has a large segment of military co-evolutionists who survive on the war economy. They are vociferous supporters of the so-called ‘national interest’, ‘national security’ and ‘chest-thumping champions of sovereignty’. Forced, particularly by the May 2, 2011 US attack to get Osama bin Laden and the circumstances surrounding the May 27 Mehran Naval Base attack by the terrorists, the army has finally conceded that tactically they need the civilian cover. Pushed by public humiliation in May 2011, the army has conceded taking ‘guidance’ from parliament. It is also a tactical move to take the cover of parliament to ease the US administration pressure on the military leadership.

The Parliamentary Committee on National Security (PCNS) paper has an annexure of five countries’ models of the national security management system. The two most relevant are those of the US and India, although some generals would still prefer the military-dominated Turkish model. The Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff is the only uniformed member in NSC and acts as an advisor on military affairs. This body limits the role and input of the military and asserts on the primacy of the civil.” “In India the military has no representation in NSC, which functions under the prime minister. The Services Chiefs sit in the second tier committee (Strategic Planning Group) with union (federal) secretaries, chaired by the Cabinet Secretary.” This is unthinkable in Pakistan, where the COAS usually deals on such matters directly with the president and prime minister. Vali Nasr’s recent book reveals that all important meetings regarding the Afghanistan policy were held by the Americans with the COAS Kiyani and not Prime Minister Gilani. The CCNC composition is not promising as it has a heavy armed forces presence, who with their jazzy presentation skills are likely to lead the prime minister’s civilian team to sign off on the GHQ written ‘national security page’ of which Chaudhry Nisar spoke in the National Assembly. The military is trained to think on geo-strategic and threat perception basis. It is the political government that has to provide a vision keeping in view the national interest, which has to be the people’s welfare interest they represent. That’s all national security is about.

Daily Times - September 03rd, 2013

BALUCHISTAN WATCH**Governance Watch****Containing the Crippling Virus: Balochistan Basks In Glory of Anti-Polio Success**

Though Pakistan boasts of being a nuclear power its defence line collapses when it comes to containing the crippling polio virus. Pakistan is among the three countries, Nigeria and Afghanistan being the other two, where the virus has not been completely contained. Polio continues to threaten the future generations of the country. According to health authorities, approximately 800 children were administered polio drops in Civil Hospital Quetta, 650 in Bolan Medical Complex and 300 at the Quetta Railway Station during the three-day campaign. Results from the mobile teams and door to door vaccination teams have yet to arrive. Last month, the provincial government called off the anti-polio campaign in Quetta and Pishin for security reasons and in Jhal Magsi, Naseerabad and Killa Abdullah for by-election.

Security Threat

After the attacks on polio volunteers across the country, particularly in Balochistan, the provincial authorities deployed more personnel of police and Levies for the protection of polio teams going door to door in Pishin, Qilla Abdullah and Quetta.

Numbers Speak

According to the authorities, not a single polio case has been registered this year in Baluchistan. In 2011, the virus was found in 73 children of the province, but in 2012 the number dropped to only four and in 2013 not a single case has been reported so far. The provincial authorities are planning four more anti-polio campaigns till December

On The Ground

Deputy Provincial Manager Lady Health Worker Programme Dr Afzal Zarkoon said that 896 mobile anti-polio teams were working in Quetta in addition to 61 transit and 96 fixed polio vaccination centres. Around 924 lady health workers were part of the anti-polio drive. He said more than 0.4 million children would be vaccinated in Quetta district alone. He said that 21 platoons of security personnel were deployed for the safety of polio workers.

Stop For Drops

Masooma Qurban, the UNICEF media officer said that vaccination teams were deployed at Buleli check post where vehicles going to or coming from Pishin and Qilla Abdullah districts stop for routine checking. The vaccinators administer polio drops to any child present in the vehicles, Qurban said. The UNICEF's district coordination officer for the anti-polio drive said that the administration has solicited edicts from religious scholars in favour of polio vaccination.

The Express Tribune - September 05th, 2013

POLITICAL & ELECTION WATCH**Political Stakeholders & Elections****Zardari Assures Nawaz of Support for Full Term**

Outgoing president, Asif Ali Zardari on assured Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif that the Pakistan People's Party would fully support the PML-N government and would not involve in politicking before five years till the announcement of next general elections. The reception hosted by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif for the outgoing president had all the flavour of nostalgia as the two leaders fondly cherished the memories of their political associations. In their statements at the luncheon at the Prime Minister's House both Zardari and Nawaz acknowledged the warmth and support extended to each other despite their political differences, for the sake of democracy. Recalling the "pleasant memories" - from the meeting in Jeddah with Benazir Bhutto and Asif Ali Zardari, and the signing of Charter of Democracy in Dubai to the Raiwind rendezvous, Nawaz Sharif said the spirit of goodwill prevailed among them for the sake of restoration of democracy. Nawaz said memories could be both sweet and bitter but his heart was only filled with the pleasant ones, and he wanted to bid goodbye to President Zardari with the sweet memories. He said Asif Zardari's warm-hearted approach during the Jeddah meeting and taking lead in interactions proved that he had the intent to turn this social alliance into an important milestone of politics. Nawaz Sharif said the memories were so fresh that he could still feel the scent of the roses which were presented to him by the daughters of Asif Zardari and Benazir Bhutto at a lunch hosted by them at their London residence.

Prime Minister Nawaz paid tributes to President Zardari for completing his tenure by upholding the spirit of reconciliation and introducing the spirit of personal rapport and camaraderie in politics. He termed it a historic moment that for the very first time an elected prime minister was bidding farewell to an elected president who was completing his five-year tenure in the country's 66-year history. "This is an unprecedented golden chapter being added to the annals of our history. It's a new history in the making," the prime minister said. Nawaz Sharif said credit goes to Asif Zardari for sagaciously introducing 18th Amendment and restoring the 1973 Constitution. He said Pakistan Muslim League-N always promoted the ideology that the governments should be formed in accordance with the people's will and continued the tradition of opposing dictatorship. The prime minister prayed for the health and long life of President Zardari to carry forward his mission to work for the country's prosperity. "I am saying you goodbye with all the sincere wishes and prayers. I am sure that your party, in your leadership, will continue its democratic traditions. President Zardari thanked Prime Minister Nawaz for hosting the farewell reception for him. He expressed the hope that Pakistan would achieve self-reliance. He urged all political parties and the nation to stand united to confront the internal and external challenges facing the country.

Daily Times - September 06th, 2013

Political Parties

Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz (PML - N)

CM Vows Exceptional Public Service in Next 5 Years

Punjab Chief Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif has said new records of public service would be set during next five years under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif. He was talking to a delegation of PML-N office-bearers and workers in Raiwind. He said the PML-N government considers every penny of public funds as a sacred trust of people and all resources are being spent only on the welfare and betterment of the masses. He said that new traditions being introduced for the stability of democracy and democratic institutions are resulting in a positive change in the political culture of the country. Talking to the delegation, the CM said projects of progress, development and welfare of the people introduced in the last tenure of PML-N and by the present government was unprecedented in the 66 years' history of the country. He said besides adopting traditional methods of power generation, projects of production of energy from alternative sources were also being started. Sharif said along with generation of hydle power, a comprehensive roadmap had also been devised for production of electricity from coal, bagasse and solar energy and the nation would be rid of load-shedding within next few years. He said that Punjab government was working on various projects of production of electricity from alternative sources and the most important one was establishment of Quaid-e-Azam Solar Park over 10,000 acres of land in Cholistan Bahawalpur. He said formal approval had been given to the master plan of the project while funds were immediately being released for initiating development activities. Referring to law and order situation, Sharif said Pakistan was passing through a critical phase and terrorism and extremism had shaken the foundations of the country. He said a national policy is being formulated with consensus to eliminate terrorism and extremism and all stakeholders are being consulted. He said that steps are also being taken for improving law and order for promotion of investment as it was essential for poverty alleviation and generation of job opportunities. The chief minister directed party workers to maintain close contact with the people and bring their problems to the notice of elected representatives for solution. Meanwhile, the chief minister announced financial assistance of Rs 0.3 million for the heirs of medical technician who died on duty during anti-dengue campaign in Shekhupura and a sum of Rs 0.1 million for the seriously injured official. He expressed deep sympathies with the bereaved family of medical technician and prayed for the early recovery of the injured official.

Daily Times - September 02nd, 2013

Nawaz Calls another APC on Terrorism on 9th

The government has convened another All Parties Conference (APC) on September 9 for greater political consensus to pursue the option of dialogue with the local Taliban and other militant groups for durable peace and to check terrorism and extremism, writes Ansar Abbasi. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif will chair the APC, which has been convened following complete understanding between the civilian government and military establishment that a dialogue with the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and other militant groups should be given priority to the option of use of force. The Prime Minister's Office formally conveyed to the media that Minister of Interior Chaudhary Nisar Ali Khan has approached political leaders, including Imran Khan, Syed Munawwar Hasan, Syed Khurshed Shah, Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman, Dr. Farooq Sattar,

Asfandiyar Wali, Mir Hasil Bizenjo, Mehmood Khan Achakzai, Chaudary Shujaat, Imtiaz Sheikh, Allama Sajid Mir and others. All these leaders were invited on the behalf of the prime minister to participate in the APC, which will be held at the Prime Minister's House on Monday at 1100 hrs.

According to sources, the APC is expected to endorse Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's dialogue offer to the TTP and other militant groups to curb terrorism and extremism. The prime minister and interior minister have already discussed the issue more than once with the army chief Gen Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, who is said to have offered military's complete support to the government policy. According to media reports, the interior minister and army chief again met following which the date for the APC was announced by the PM's Office. The government sources also reveal that some senior PML-N leaders have also spoken to key leaders of other political parties and discussed the available options to check the menace of terrorism, which had taken more than 40,000 lives in Pakistan during the recent years. Although, contacts between the government and TTP have already developed following the PM's talks offer a fortnight back, negotiations between the two are expected to start only after the APC formally endorses the government's initiative. There are certain forces, both internal and international, which are frustratingly trying to sabotage the dialogue option but most of the political parties are convinced that peace should be given a chance over the use of force. During the recent years, all the three APCs called on the subject - one by the last PPP government and others by ANP and JUI-F respectively - as well as the two unanimously-adopted resolutions of the previous parliament sought dialogue with the TTP but the previous government did not show any seriousness and left the matter to the military establishment to handle as it suited the military.

The News - September 06th, 2013

Pakistan Tehreek - e - Insaf (PTI)

PTI Vows to Promulgate New Laws in KP Soon

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Information & PR and Public Health Engineering Shah Farman has said that the promulgation of the Right to Information Ordinance (RTIO) will soon be followed by the enactment of other such legislations on which spade work has been completed. Presiding over a meeting regarding media management of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government and the PTI at the Pakhtunkhwa House said that the promulgation of RTIO in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has on the one hand empowered the general masses in the province as they can now ask for the details of any government function at any time, while on the other hand transparency in the overall governance has been legally and statutorily protected and made binding on each and every government organisation and functionary. Farman assured that legislations like those for the establishment of an independent Ihtisab (Accountability) Commission, a model local government system in which power and authority is being devolved to the village and tehsil level, Conflict of Interest Law, The Right to Service Law, E-Governance and E-Businesses Laws, The Public Private Partnership Law and The Vassal Law are in final stages and will be promulgated soon. He said that during the past three months the PTI-led coalition government has worked round the clock on these reforms and they are now giving fruit to the general masses.

The minister claimed that the proof of the efforts of the PTI-led coalition government is that corruption has been totally eradicated and now everything is done on merit. He said that the proposed laws will encourage transparency, merit and the rule of law in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He said that some self-interested elements who were enjoying the benefits of the "previous disorder and corruption" may try to create suspicions among the workers of the PTI but the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are overwhelmingly supporting the provincial government and

its policies. Farman said that the media and media persons from all over the country and the world have appreciated the RTIO but there is still a need for revitalisation of the media outlets. He directed the authorities concerned to strengthen the Provincial Regional Information Office in Islamabad by providing it the required supporting staff and modern equipment. The minister also ordered that the office be strengthened by being provided factual information to make it into a good resource centre where facts and figures can be provided to anyone, including media, wherever requested. Besides others PTI leaders, Fayazul Hassan Chohan, Chaudhary Rizwan, Ihsan Danish, Adnan Haider Randhawa and Regional Director Information Liaqat Amin participated in the meeting.

Daily Times - September 01st, 2013

KP CM Terms First 3 Months of Government ‘Successful’

Declaring the first three months of his government “successful”, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Pervez Khattak said the PTI-led government has put the province in right direction by fighting corruption, upholding merit policy and honoring people’s right to know. “The first three months of my government has set the agenda of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf in motion and we are on right track to take the province to new heights of governance and development”, marks the first 90 days of his rule since the party swept May 11 general elections in the province. He said people would no longer bribe to get a government job. “Now you may get a government job without any sifarish or bribe as the PTI government will strictly follow the merit policy,” the chief minister went on to say. “Reforms are under way in every government department and these measures will pave the way for transparent governance,” the KP CM said, adding that any wrongdoing on part of any government employee would invite action within 24 hours. The chief minister said an MPA would no longer influence employment of any doctor or teacher. Pervez warned his ministers and advisers against any corruption. “No minister or adviser will get involved in corruption,” the chief minister promised. What he described as major achievement of his government during the first three months was “no allegation of corruption” against any government minister. The chief minister said his government was working to improve healthcare system at public sector hospitals and emphasized that shortage of doctors would be overcome by employing 200. Both the poor and rich children would get same education as the PTI government is working on an education system that aims to provide equal learning opportunities to all, the chief minister said. Regarding the security environment, Pervez said his government has ordered setting up a new body to gather intelligence to overcome the security threats the province was facing. He advised political rivals to avoid doing politics of opposition for the sake of opposition. “We are moving forward and if anyone has any doubt they may have a look at reforms my government is introducing to make governance.

Daily Times - September 02nd, 2013

Other Political Parties

Back in the Fold: JUI-F Offered to Join Balochistan Government

The provincial leadership of Balochistan met Jamiat Ulemae Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman to offer his party a role in the provincial government. The JUI-F has, meanwhile, summoned its core committee meeting on September 6 to deliberate on the offer extended by the provincial coalition. Sources in the party said that the leadership told the Baluchistan chief minister that JUI-F was ready to serve any role it was assigned, in order to bring normalcy to the

volatile province. It was too early to say in what capacity the JUI-F would join the Baluchistan government but an offer has been made and JUI-F has sought time to deliberate.

The Express Tribune - September 05th, 2013

By-Elections & Local Government Elections 2013

Governance: 'LG Elections Likely To Be Held By End of This Year'

Though the Supreme Court has given a deadline to the Sindh government to hold the local government elections on September 15, the election commission and the government feel it is a difficult task. "We have yet to receive the draft copy of the local government act, which is to be submitted by provincial government," provincial election commissioner SM Tariq Qadri. "It is not possible for the election commission to make arrangements within two weeks to hold the local government election. We need at least four to five months." Qadri said that they will seek more time from the Supreme Court at the next hearing. The election commission will further consult the provincial government before giving a final date to the apex court, he said. Meanwhile, Sindh chief secretary Muhammad Ejaz Chaudhry said he had no idea when the elections would be held in the province. "I cannot comment on this this," he said, before advising that the relevant minister or the local government secretary should be contacted on this issue. The new law has been made in compliance with the Supreme Court orders but it is very difficult to meet the September 15 deadline, said the local government secretary, Ali Ahmed Lund. "The law has turned into the act but the gazette notification of the law is still under process," he said, adding that the Sindh government has decided to seek more time from the Supreme Court. The advocate general of Sindh would appear before the court at the next hearing on September 16 and seek more time. "We will try to convince the apex court by giving a briefing on the new law," said Lund. "I hope the court will give us more time." The provincial government wants to make amendments to the new law, said Sindh advocate general Khalid Ahmed Khan. The government will also start the delimitation before holding the local bodies' elections, he said. "Delimitation of the constituency will take time," he said. "We will request the Supreme Court to give us the new date either in December this year or the first week of January, 2014."

The Express Tribune - September 03rd, 2013

'Missing Bags' Delay PP-150 Recount by Seven Hours

The returning officer of PP-150 Lahore on Monday started recounting of votes with a seven-hour delay as Election Commission staff allegedly failed to timely find four of the ballot bags 'lying the record room'. Mehr Wajid Azeem of the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf had lost the by-election held on Aug 22 to Mian Marghoob Ahmad of the Muslim League-Nawaz on the Punjab Assembly constituency. The PTI workers, lawyers and leaders protested against the 'mismanagement' on the part of the ECP and expressed serious reservation with regard to the Commission's role in the matter. The polling agents of both parties also exchanged heated arguments before the returning officer over the delayed recounting. Only eight out of 147 presiding officers of the constituency were present in the RO's room when at last the recounting started at 4pm. On the first day, votes polled at eight polling stations were recounted. Dozens of ballot papers having no stamp or having double stamps were found in the bags of both candidates. The recounting process will be resumed. The ECP officials told the media at session's court that complaints of the candidates about the recounting were being entertained and reviewed. The acting Chief Election Commissioner, Justice Tassaduq Husain Jilani, had taken

suo motu notice of the protest launched by the PTI workers against alleged rigging in the constituency. The acting CEC later ordered recounting of votes.

Dawn News - September 03rd, 2013

Vote Recount: PML-N Wins by Larger Margin in PP-150

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) declared Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) candidate Mian Marghoob winner by 453 votes after the vote recount in PP-150. On the request of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), the returning officers carried out the vote recount process for three days and declared the PML-N candidate victorious. The PML-N candidate secured 18,526 votes against 18,073 votes secured by PTI candidate Mehr Wahid Azeem. Talking to the media at the announcement of the results, Mian Marghoob said that that result proved that his party was most popular among the masses for its good performance. He also thanked the voters on the occasion. Mehr Wajid rejected the result and complained of irregularities in the election process. He questioned rechecking system of votes. He claimed that he would challenge the results again.

Daily Times - September 05th, 2013

PTI to Take 'Solo Flight'

The Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf has decided not to go into a political alliance with any party in local body elections in Punjab but the party may hold joint protests against the Local Government Act. This was decided by the PTI's Punjab local body committee at a meeting held under the chairmanship of party's chief Imran Khan. The meeting decided the PTI would challenge the Local Government Act in the court and hold protest demonstrations across Punjab against it. In this regard, the meeting agreed the PTI would join hands with all opposition parties and develop a joint strategy against the Act. Imran Khan said the PTI would prove in the local body elections that it had a 'massive' vote bank. He suggested the Punjab government should learn from the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government's local body bill and see how it would hold the local elections on party basis there. The KP government was also planning electronic voting in the local body elections, he added. Mr Khan said the holding of local body elections on non-party basis would be a clear violation of the Constitution and the Charter of Democracy signed by major political parties. He said the 'autocratic' mentality of PML-N leadership was visible through the Act, which had centralised all powers to the chief minister. He directed the PTI Punjab to make all out efforts to save people of the province from the 'injustice' of non-party polls. PTI Punjab president Ejaz Chaudhry, secretary general Dr Yasmin Rashid, Khurshid Mahmood Kasuri, Fareed-ud-Din, Mian Mehmoodur Rashid, Shafqat Mehmood, Abdul Aleem Khan, Rai Hassan Nawaz, Mian Aslam Iqbal, Nadeem Qadir Bhindar, Naeem Mir, Shanila Roath, Sobia Kamal and other committee members attended the meeting.

Dawn - September 08th, 2013

LHC Moved Against LG Polls in Punjab on Non-Party Basis

The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Punjab has challenged in the Lahore High Court (LHC) the newly promulgated local bodies' law in Punjab, especially its provision of holding non-party based election. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Punjab President Ijaz Chaudhry and one Rizwan Gul had already filed petitions against non-party based polls. The fresh petition has been filed

by counsel for PPP Punjab, Sardar Latif Khosa. The petitioner has taken the plea that holding of local bodies polls on non-party basis is against the real spirit of constitution as parliamentary democratic system is in place in the country. He contended the national and provincial assemblies and the sitting government came into being through the polls held on party basis. Therefore, holding local bodies' elections on non-party basis is a sheer breach of the constitution. "Such elections will fuel corruption in society," he pleaded. Khosa also claimed that certain fundamental clauses of the local government act run contrary to the constitution. He prayed the court to nullify the decision of holding local bodies' election in the province on non-party basis.

Daily Times - September 14th, 2013

By-Polls: PTI Challenges NA-71 Results in ECP

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) filed a petition in the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) against alleged rigging in National Assembly constituency NA-71, Mianwali. The petition said the NA-71 polls should be declared null and void. It said that the ECP order verification of the votes through thumb impression and check the record of ballot papers. The PTI also submitted a CD and documentary evidence. PTI lawyer Babar Awan said the NA-71 was the biggest case of election rigging and said he would present more evidence in this regard. PTI Vice Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi said the disqualification of Ayla Malik from contesting in the NA-71 Mianwali 1 by-elections in July on the grounds that she had a fake degree was a ploy to keep her out of the elections and therefore the election was unfair. Qureshi said that code of conduct was violated during the election campaign in Mianwali. The Punjab government, he said, had pledged several developmental projects ahead of the polling. "Ayla Malik was disqualified while her appeal was also not heard," he said. He added that it is the responsibility of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to check this and keep the elections clean and unbiased.

Pakistan Today - September 18th, 2013

PTI Wins Seat Vacated By JUI-F Chief

The candidate of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) won rather comfortably the by-election for the NA-25 (Tank-cum-D.I. Khan) constituency, according to provisional results. The seat was vacated by Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman who had won it in the general elections on May 11. The PTI candidate, Dawar Khan Kundi, bagged 64,218 votes against 52,315 polled by Maulana Asad Mahmood of the JUI-F. According to analysts, the defeat has come as a major setback for the JUI-F because it lost the NA-27 (Lakki Marwat) constituency also to the PTI on Aug 22. Former National Assembly speaker and Pakistan Peoples Party leader Faisal Karim Kundi, who got the third highest votes in the general elections, did not contest the elections. Dawar Khan Kundi had support of the Jamaat-i-Islami and Qaumi Watan Party, the PTI's coalition partners in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government. Meanwhile, tough security measures were taken for the polling, with army personnel patrolling the streets and bazaars in the constituency.

Dawn - September 19th, 2013

SC Gives Provinces Sept 23 Deadline To Schedule LG Polls

The Supreme Court set the deadline of September 23 for scheduling the local bodies' elections in all four provinces. The Quetta Registry of the Supreme Court gave the deadline while hearing the local bodies' election petition. The advocates general of three provinces and Balochistan government's counsel Shahid Hamid appeared before the court. Hamid said the Balochistan cabinet would be formed within two days after which the schedule for the local bodies' election would be formulated. The chief justice remarked, "We are not compelling you but this is what law says." Meanwhile, Punjab advocate general told the court that the Punjab government is prepared to hold the elections, but it would be better if all the provinces held them simultaneously. He further said that a meeting of chief ministers of the four provinces is scheduled for September 20 in Islamabad where they would make a decision about the local bodies' elections. The chief justice noted that the local bodies' election is a matter of the provinces and the federal government should not be involved in it. The court gave five days' time to the provinces to schedule the elections and adjourned until September 23.

The Sindh government has decided to conduct the local government elections on November 27, according to Advocate General SM Khalid Javed. The Supreme Court was informed of this decision during the Wednesday hearing. According to media reports, various politics parties have not been taken into confidence yet but they will be soon. Earlier, the Sindh government had requested the court to grant time until December for the conduct of local government elections, as they required a favourable law and order situation, the completion of the delimitation process and some legal amendments, but this was not accepted by the apex court's larger bench at the SC Quetta Registry. The Supreme Court had asked the provincial governments to submit written reports about the progress made for holding local government elections. Chief Justice of Pakistan Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry had said that the local government elections were being delayed. He said that 80 percent of the problems faced by the people across the country would end once the local government system is restored.

Daily Times - September 19th, 2013

Sindh Now Ready to Hold LB Polls in November

The Sindh government has decided to conduct local government elections on November 27, according to advocate general SM Khalid Javed. The Supreme Court (SC) was informed of this decision during a hearing at its Quetta registry. The apex court had ordered all the provincial governments to submit the schedule of local bodies' polls until September 15. Earlier, the Sindh government had requested the Supreme Court to grant time until December to conduct the local government elections as the elections will require a favourable law and order situation, the completion of the delimitation process and some legal amendments but this was not accepted by the apex court's larger bench. According to some media reports, the provincial government has not yet taken different other political stakeholders into confidence on the issue but government sources said they would be contacted soon and apprised of the reasons behind the decision.

Earlier, advocate general Khalid Jawed Khan submitted a report of the chief secretary, who said that the government had earlier reiterated that it would fully comply with any order that may be passed by the apex court. After the new act, the apex court had approved the summary to start the process of delimitation, which may be completed by October 15, he recalled. In discharge of its constitutional obligations and as guided by the apex court in the Watan Party case, the secretary said the Sindh government in collaboration with the federal government has also started targeted actions in different parts of the city.

“Due to the resolve and commitment of the government and untiring efforts of the members of the law enforcing agencies, criminals are being apprehended and shall be tried before the courts,” he said.

According to the secretary, the government is making all efforts to ensure that the atmosphere is conducive for peaceful elections. “This may also require some time,” the secretary observed, adding that local government elections may need more preparations than the general elections so the government will need more time. Keeping in view all the facts and circumstances and subject to preparations by the election commission, the Sindh government will be in a position to hold these elections on December 23, he had said. The report further had said that the government will accept any decision that the apex court makes in this situation.

The Nation - September 19th, 2013

Punjab to Hold LG Polls on December 14, Sindh on November 27

The Supreme Court (SC) was informed that the Punjab government would hold local government (LG) elections on December 14 and the Sindh government on November 27. Punjab Advocate General Mustafa Ramday told a two-member bench of the SC, headed by Justice Jawwad S Khawaja, the Punjab government had confirmed to the Election Commission of Pakistan that it would hold LG polls on December 14. The Sindh government representative, Muhammad Qasim, said the Sindh government would hold LG elections by November 27. On the other hand, the Election Commission of Pakistan informed the court that the commission has initiated paperwork but needs 60 days for holding elections after the governments make up their mind. The court asked the representatives of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan and Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) to submit a written commitment about local body elections date. Meanwhile, the federal government failed to fulfil its commitment to hold LG elections in all the 43 cantonment boards of the country by September 15.

During the hearing, Attorney General of Pakistan Munir A Malik made another commitment of holding these polls in the end of November, and requested the court to further extend the deadline. Expressing disappointment over the government’s attitude, the court said the federal government’s statement was “breach of the undertaking” it had given to the court for holding LG elections on September 15. The court made it clear that it was exercising restraint but would duly record the statement of government and could take any action under law, if need be. Former Quetta cantonment board vice president Advocate Raja Rab Nawaz had filed a petition in 2009, and said LG elections had not been held in several cantonment boards for the last 14 years. Earlier on January 3, the Supreme Court had set May 5 deadline with regard to LG elections in elected cantonment boards. Munir A Malik stated that the government was contemplating some amendments to the Cantonments Local Government (Elections) Ordinance 2002 by incorporating qualifications and disqualifications for councillors of cantonment boards. He also stated that meetings were also held between the ECP and Ministry of Defence on July 4 and July 13 after which a draft law was prepared and sent to the cabinet for its consideration. The law envisaged a 25-member board half of which will be elected directly through LG polls whereas the rest of members will be nominated by the station house commander, usually a serving brigadier, who also acts as president of the board.

Daily Times - September 23rd, 2013

Col Amirullah Marwat of PTI Officially Declared NA-27 Winner

The District Returning Officer issued the final and official results of the August 22 by-election on NA-27, declaring Col (r) Dr Amirullah Marwat, a candidate of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) as winner with 63,922 votes. It was notified that Col (r) Dr Amirullah Marwat bagged 63,922 votes to win the election on NA-27 while Maulana Atta ur Rehman of JUI got 56,948 votes. Other candidates Akhtar Munir 0, Engineer Amir Nawaz Khan 437, Zarwali Khan 3, Haji Muhammad Akram Khan 10, Hazrat Ali 56, Dr Abdullah Khan Marwat 450, Asmat Ullah 275, Ali Sarwar 38, Qudrat Ullah Khan 10, Col (r) Dr Amirullah Marwat 63,922, Muhammad Halim 64, Muhammad Raees Khan 38, Maulana Atta ur Rehman 56,948, Maulana Hidayat Ullah Chishti 30, Nasir Khan 290 and Nawab Ali Khan 289 got votes in the by-election. Earlier, Peshawar High Court Chief Justice Dost Muhammad Khan had stopped the results notification after reports emerged that women had been stopped from voting in NA-27. The Supreme Court of Pakistan set aside the suo moto action of PHC and ask Election Commission of Pakistan to notify the election results. The ECP after an inquiry established that women had not been stopped from voting and the results were declared officially.

The News - September 24th, 2013

SC Dismayed over Government's Backtracking on LG Elections

A visibly disturbed Supreme Court wondered whether the federal as well as the provincial governments could carry on in accordance with the law when they were not adhering to the constitutional provisions on the local government elections as envisaged under the 18th amendment. "Are the elected provincial governments as well as the Islamabad capital territory administration not bound by the constitutional provisions, particularly Articles 5, 32, 38 (a and b) and 140A," questioned a three-judge Supreme Court bench headed by Chief Justice Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry. The bench had taken up a 2009 petition of former vice-president cantonment board Quetta, Advocate Raja Rab Nawaz. The petitioner had challenged the non-holding of local government elections in different cantonment boards for the last 14 years. Article 5 commands for the loyalty to the State and obedience to the constitution and the law, whereas Article 32 suggests the promotion of local government institutions in the country.

Similarly, Article 38 envisages the promotion of social and economic well-being of the people as well as the provision of facilities for work and adequate livelihood with reasonable rest and leisure. Article 140A specially deals with the local government system. This article asks the provincial governments to devolve the political, administrative and financial responsibilities and authority to the elected representatives of the local government. The Supreme Court had expressed its dismay over backtracking of the federal government on its commitment to holding the local government elections by September 15 in all the 43 cantonment boards. The court was also not happy over the inability of the provincial governments to hold the elections in the near future. The apex court ordered the provincial governments as well as the ICT administration to furnish a justification for not holding the local bodies' polls despite clear directions from the court.

The bench also issued notice to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to explain about its responsibility regarding holding of the local government polls. "Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, the chief ministers, ministers, members National Assembly, senators and members of the provincial assemblies have taken oath under the constitution and, therefore, they are bound to follow the provisions of the constitution," observed the chief justice, adding it was the obligation of the court to protect, preserve and defend the constitution. The provincial as well as the federal law officers admitted before court that non-holding of the local government elections

after the passage of the 18th amendment amounted to violation of the constitution. The Supreme Court was particularly not happy with the KP government for its failure to give a specific date for the elections. In one of the previous proceedings, the provincial government had expressed its willingness to hold the elections whenever the court directed it to organise it.

Justice Jawwad S. Khawaja regretted that there was an impression that the KP government would be the first to hold the LG elections but now there was no sign of any election in the province. When several constitutional provisions relating to the holding of the local bodies elections are not being adhered to, what is the difference between the elected and non-elected governments, questioned the court. Punjab Additional Advocate General Mustafa Ramday had informed the court that the local government elections in the province could not be possible before December 14. The Sindh government stated that it could hold the elections on November 27. The Balochistan government was not sure about the date since the cabinet in the province was not yet complete whereas the KP had not given any specific date. The case will again be taken up on Thursday.

Dawn - September 25th, 2013

ECP Summons Key Meeting On October 3 for Holding LB Polls

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has decided to hold a marathon meeting next week (October 03) on the status of provinces' preparations for holding the local bodies' election after they failed to give a clear-cut roadmap on holding the electoral exercise. In this context, the ECP wrote a letter to the secretary interior, chief secretaries of the provinces, chairman National Database Registration Authority, local government secretaries and chief commissioner Islamabad to be part of the proposed meeting. Political parties are sharply divided on the issue of local government legislation and when to hold the much-delayed exercise. Acting Chief Election Commissioner Justice Tassaduq Jilani will preside over the upcoming meeting that would have a heavy agenda to ponder over and take crucial decisions. The forum will review status regarding the enactment of local government laws and rules framed so far, the option of holding the polls on party and non-party basis, delimitation, uniformity of laws on operational procedure to be followed by the Election Commission, request by provinces and the Ministry of Interior to hold polls, updating of electoral rolls by Nadra, issuance of election schedule, appointment of returning officers and other staff, finalization of election symbols by the Election Commission, adoption of the informed code of conduct, polling day strategy, security, constitution of election tribunals and appellate tribunals, voters awareness programme and how to ensure equal opportunities to all. The Supreme Court had called for holding the local bodies' election by September 15 this year and in the light of it, the Election Commission had immediately written to the provinces to enact laws and try to bring uniformity in them so that the exercise is held smoothly. However, to date, all the provinces have not been able to enact related laws and carry out delimitation of constituencies accordingly prior to the issuance of poll schedule by the Election Commission. The largest province, Punjab and Sindh have done legislation recently but it has been outrightly rejected by Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians and Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf. PTI's central executive committee decided on Sunday to challenge the legislation in the courts. Its provincial chapters in Punjab and Sindh would move high courts in this connection shortly.

The News - September 25th, 2013

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

Human Rights Related Issues

Religious Scholar Cons Millions from Followers

A religious leader used his influence to con thousands of his rich devotees into investing billions of rupees in a fake modaraba (Islamic banking) that he set up. Mufti Qari Ehsanul Haq, a religious scholar from Gujranwala, promised to pay people a profit of Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 8,000 against every Rs. 100,000 invested in Fayyazi Gujranwala Industries, an unregistered company. The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in Rawalpindi managed to wriggle out a confession from the accused after two months of interrogation in their custody. Haq confessed to 'cheating the public at large' and agreed to voluntarily return the money. "We determined that he minted Rs. 553 million in all but after June, we received more complaints against him, and the amount went up to Rs. 1.3 billion," said NAB director general in Rawalpindi, Subah Sadiq. The bureau arrested Haq in April and released him in June after he took the Voluntary Return (VR) option. He paid Rs. 446 million in the first installment and promised to pay back the remaining Rs. 105 million within another three months. However, as a guarantee the bureau confiscated his properties which included four residential units. NAB had the option to sell his properties and raise money to pay back those who had been victims of the fraud, in case the accused failed to keep his pledge. "When we first arrested him, the people he had cheated, actually approached us to set him free," said DG Sadiq, pointing to the clout wielded by Haq.

However, after he was released, the mufti refused to pay the people the promised profit of Rs. 8,000 that he had been giving them previously, according to the NAB official, who added that following this, the complainants approached NAB to arrest him again. In total, the bureau received 1,284 claims against the fake businessmen and 446 were received after he was released. The bureau said Haq's name was put on the Exit Control List (ECL) and he would be arrested for the recovery of the fresh claims against him which were currently being verified. During the investigation, NAB discovered that the mufti had no established business except for three small companies, with a cumulative profit of hardly a million rupees. "He was taking money from one to pay the other from it," said a NAB official. NAB even published public messages in newspapers inviting claims against the fake businessman. The bureau engaged a businessman named Mian Moeen as a mediator in the case. However, NAB arrested Moeen after it received complaints that he accepted Rs. 450 million and four luxury vehicles from Haq to get his case disposed of. The bureau arrested Moeen after verifying the complaints and took the vehicles into custody. The complaint was lodged by Haq's brother-in-law after he agreed on the condition of voluntary return. Through newspaper advertisements, NAB has warned people against dealing with Haq or his fake company and have also invited people to come up with their claims against the fake modaraba businessman if they had conducted any transactions with him.

The Express Tribune - September 04th, 2013

SC Wants Missing Persons Brought In Court

Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry issued orders for the production of missing persons. A three-member Supreme Court (SC) bench, headed by CJP Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, heard the Balochistan law and order case at SC's Quetta Registry. The

court expressed its displeasure over reluctance of the officers concerned for not willing to serve in Balochistan. The Balochistan chief secretary told the court that many officers had refused to pursue their posting to Balochistan upon which the CJP asked for written statements of refusal from these officers. The CJP said that the issue of missing persons was the most important in Balochistan and families of these people have pinned hopes on the SC for justice, adding that the SC does not want to bring down the morale of armed forces but in the case of missing persons, it cannot let them go away. Justice Chaudhry said that CID has presented its report about a missing person, Abdul Malik, and the evidence went against FC. He ordered the deputy attorney general to ask the officer concerned to present Abdul Malik before the court. He said that no taskforce had been formed regarding the recovery of missing persons and no policy had come to fore from either the provincial or federal government in this regard. He said that the only solution to the problem is to bring the missing persons on scene. The chief justice also asked Balochistan Advocate General Shah Khwar to appraise the court about local government elections in the province. Khwar, however, sought time in this regard. The advocate general told the court that FC was making serious efforts for the establishment of peace in the province. Justice Chaudhry also asked customs officials about smuggling of goods and weapons through Chaman border and told them to bring the record of smuggled goods to the court. The court also observed that customs authorities had failed to control smuggling of vehicles across the border upon which a customs officer said that they lacked manpower in this regard. The chief justice said that the law and order could not be improved until weapons were smuggled through Chaman border. The CJP also said that no scanners were installed at the border and no efforts had been made to stop smuggling, adding that FC checkpoints were just “symbolic” and making money.

Daily Times - September 18th, 2013

No Licence to Kill: Penal Code Section Offers Relief

On August 25 at 7:30 pm, she lay in a pool of blood in a date garden in a remote part of Sindh. As Shabana* breathed her last, she was next to the man she loved most. Her alleged ‘crime’ was that she had left her home and family to get married to someone of her own choice. The man who killed her and her husband was none other than her brother who pulled the trigger in the name of honour. For exercising her right to choose a husband, Shabana, like many other Pakistani women, was accused of ‘dishonouring’ the family name. The ritualistic murder claimed two young lives. Yet, there is light at the end of the tunnel. It is a hope for justice, because Abdul Raheem Sheerazi, ASP Khairpur, who was officer in charge of this case, countered the possible misuse of the Qisas and Diyat laws by using Pakistan Penal Code’s section 311.

311 - The Way Out

The legal system in Pakistan allows the choice to the family or heirs of the deceased to apply Qisas or Diyat laws in a way that the culprit ends up being forgiven. But through Section 311, there is a way out. The 311 amendment was specially formulated to fight the menace of criminals going free in honour killings. The focal person for Sukkur Police, Shaukat Abbasi, has remained active in handling such cases. “Whenever we come across a crime that has even a hint of being an honour crime, we register the state as the wali [guardian].” Through this, the discretion of accepting the pardon of the victim’s family or not is left up to the judge. A case in point happened at Bagerji in Sukkur division, when a 13-year-old married girl was brutally tortured and killed by her family members on the pretext of running away to marry another

boy. In this case, the victim's mother was the wali and she tried to use her right to forgive to protect the perpetrators. The police stepped in and made sure the criminals did not go scot-free.

Training the Police

In the year 2010, the National Assembly's former speaker, Fehmida Mirza called a seminar in Karachi. People like the former Sindh IG, Justice Nazir, and Advocate General. Yousuf Leghari, along with many police high-ups, recommended the use of section 311 in honour killing cases. The seminar expedited training police personnel to put it to effective use. The Karo Kari Cell was formed in the late '90s. After the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) led a campaign in collaboration with the Sindh Police, the cell was transformed into the Violence against Women Cell in 2011. Under the UNDP-led programme, at least 3,000 police personnel were given training on women's rights and how to go about cases pertaining to women.

Law Games

The Qisas and Diyat Laws Ordinance (1990) were devised on the insistence of the Shariat Appellate Bench of the Supreme Court. The ordinance covers all kinds of offenses against the human body. The law allows room for compensation or compromise between the aggrieved and victim parties. The law in itself is not discriminatory; however, it is somehow misused in honour crime cases. Nafisa Shah, a parliamentarian holding a doctorate in Honour Killing in Pakistan, said that almost all the cases are reported to the police but because the community is a direct participant in the crime, evidence is never brought up. She told that "The law is not a loophole but it certainly is a patron to the crime and forms no deterrence to it." The Amendment to Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2004 allows the state to be the victim's wali (guardian) and has also removed the possibility for the murderer to be the wali of the victim, according to Maliha Zia Lari, a high court advocate and a women's rights activist. The amendment has brought about somewhat significant changes in the PPC and CPRC both, which has also enabled appointment of high ranking police officers in the investigation of both honour crimes and zina (adultery) related crimes. A veteran gender expert and an author, Fouzia Saeed, said that the law is not only misused for women but also creates an unfriendly environment, where via private settlements, an offender of the law is paid homage and is allowed to live life like an innocent.

The Express Tribune - September 18th, 2013

Civil Society in Furore: Review of 'Qisas and Diyat Ordinance 1990' Demanded

With the recent out-of-the-court settlement in the Shahzeb Khan murder case, civil society groups find themselves entangled in a new debate, as they press the government on a review of the Qisas and Diyat Ordinance 1990. Civil society activists filed a petition to President Mamnoon Hussain, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and law and justice minister, which demanded a re-visit of the ordinance and called for abolishment of discriminatory laws. The petition was signed by over 900 civil society activists that included notable human rights activists, educationists, lawyers, journalists and concerned Pakistanis. The document premised its claims over two significant cases in the past three years to claim gross violation of justice including the notorious Raymond Davis case in which families of victims forgave the accused, an action made possible by the 1990 ordinance entailing immunity for the rich and the powerful. The petition noted that current laws pertaining to murder protect the rich while exploit the weak and vulnerable. Director of Gender Study Centre Dr Farzana Bari added that the issue of impunity to the accused in 'honour' killing cases falls under the same category of injustice. Human rights activist Dr Fouzia Saeed said "murder should be a crime against the state and not a person." The

petition has requested the PML-N to order a review of the ordinance so as to ensure that sufficient mechanisms are in place within the legal framework to achieve justice and equality. Chairman, Pakistan Ulema Council, Allama Tahir Ashrafi, however, said that the ordinance requires no amendments and rather basic flaws in the justice system should be rectified. "The weak system of prosecution provides breathing space to the accused," he added. In reply to the question that the ordinance is being misused by the powerful, Ashrafi claimed that stronger police and justice systems would serve as better deterrents and that it is the need of the hour to strengthen these institutions.

The Express Tribune - September 18th, 2013

Domestic Help Data Computerised

On the directives of Minister for Interior Nisar Ali Khan, the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) has completed data collection of domestic servants and developed database of 40,906 servants, said NADRA spokesperson. A large number of domestic servants belonging to different part of the country are working in the federal capital. They pose a potential security risk to their employer due to lack of identification. "The decision of registering domestic help was taken in wake of the prevailing law and order situation of the country," she said. The spokesperson said that the authority has constituted teams consisting of mobile registration vans (MRVs) for this purpose, which in their door-to-door campaign have registered 40,906 domestic servants in the capital. "NADRA accomplished the project in collaboration with the Capital Development Authority," she said. She added that NADRA visited around 58,227 houses to distribute forms for details. However, NADRA made a total 100,894 visits which is double the ratio of the visits done earlier for collection of the forms. She said that after collection of 40,906 filled forms about domestic servants, NADRA has completed 100 percent digitisation of the entire data and converted it into a database, she added. NADRA presented its final report the other day to Nisar Ali Khan which also contained data of 19,154 houses who refused to accept servant registration forms and failed to cooperate. Meanwhile, the minister took serious notice of those who refused to receive or return the registration forms. The minister directed the police to obtain the necessary information and return the same to NADRA for integrating it into their database.

Pakistan Today - September 20th, 2013

IMF Projects 9 Percent Unemployment in FY18

Unemployment in Pakistan will rise to nine percent by fiscal 2017-18 from 6.7 percent in 2012-13, said the IMF staff. The labour force is growing and providing of employment opportunities remains a challenge, stated a report by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Pakistan's population growth rate of 2.2 percent (annual average) over the last decade is among the highest in developing economies with about 40 percent of the population in the country below the age of 15, it noted. With participation rates rising, the labor force is expected to grow by 3.5 percent in the coming years. High unemployment among the youth is particularly widespread and only 25 percent of employment is in the formal sector. Although the official unemployment rate is about 6.7 percent, the rural unemployment rate (9.1 percent as of Q32012) is twice the urban rate (4.8 percent as of Q32012). "Without significant reform, unemployment will rise in the coming years," said the report. Weak macroeconomic policies and structural problems, particularly in the energy sector, would lead to low growth and high unemployment in the coming years.

Under the baseline scenario, the projected gross domestic product growth hovers around three percent over the medium term. Under the fund's supported program, GDP growth would pick up and unemployment would decline gradually. The program envisages a mix of macroeconomic policy changes and structural reforms aiming to boost growth over the course of the program. Although GDP growth will initially decline due to fiscal contraction, it will steadily increase to about five percent. The unemployment rate will increase slightly in the first two years of the program. But, it will decline to about 5.8 percent by 2017/18, according to the report. Macroeconomic stability will be secured and economic performance will improve over time. Growth will initially remain modest (about 2.5-3 percent) in 2013/14 due to the necessary fiscal consolidation, but will then strengthen to around 4.5-5 percent in the outer years as structural reforms are implemented and the investment climate improves, highlighted the report. Inflation will initially increase, due in part to some weakening of the rupee as reserves are rebuilt.

However, monetary policy will likely be tightened in later years to help bring inflation down to the 6 to 7 percent by the end of the program period. Fiscal consolidation will bring the fiscal deficit from the baseline of 8.8 percent of GDP (excluding grants) in FY13 to around 3.5 percent in FY17, projected the International Monetary Fund. In the early stage of the program, the current account deficit will narrow reflecting fiscal consolidation and exchange rate depreciation. Subsequently, with growth strengthening and private investment rising because of structural reforms, the current account deficit is projected to widen to around two percent of GDP, which will be fully financed by capital inflows. The International Monetary Fund further said over the course of the program the SBP's foreign exchange reserves will improve to \$18 billion equivalent to over three months of imports of goods and services.

The News - September 20th, 2013

Tackling Unemployment: Follow Bangladesh's Manpower Export Model

The global economic turmoil has caused unemployment around the world and in Pakistan 3.4 million of the workforce is unemployed. A mismatch in job and skills as well as the temporary nature of many jobs is problematic. Certain segments of the labour market do not offer secure employment, underlining the need for Pakistan to explore more markets to export its manpower as well as provide incentives for remittances to enhance its growth. Globally, after the outbreak of the financial crisis, the outlook for job creation has been worsening. The baseline projection of the International Labour Organisation shows no change in the global unemployment rate between now and 2016, standing at 6% of the labour force. Despite a moderate pick-up in output growth expected in 2013-14, the unemployment rate is set to increase and the number of jobless worldwide is projected to rise to more than 202 million in 2013, by another three million in 2014 and a total of 206 million by 2016. According to data compiled by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), the unemployment rate in Pakistan dropped to 5.7% in the fourth quarter of financial year 2012-13 from 6.5% in the fourth quarter of 2011-12. Pakistan's unemployment rate averaged 5.41% from 1985 to 2013, reaching an all-time high of 7.8% in June 2002 and a record low of 3.1% in December 1987. Pakistan has the ninth largest labour force in the world. According to the labour force survey, the total labour force is 57.24 million. Of this, 3.4 million are unemployed.

In the presence of high circular debt, rising inflation, unemployment and other macroeconomic imbalances, one factor that helped countries reduce poverty and improve income distribution is overseas employment. In order to achieve this goal, Pakistan can follow Bangladesh's model of manpower export. Recently, Bangladesh Minister of Welfare and Overseas Employment

Khandker Mosharraf Hossain visited Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore with a view to expanding the foreign job market. On the external front, the Bangladesh economy is virtually reliant on manpower and readymade garment exports, which have emerged as key pillars for building the country's foreign exchange reserves. Remittances from overseas Bangladeshis contribute 11% to the gross domestic product.

A comparison shows that manpower export from Bangladesh is higher than Pakistan. According to the Bangladesh Welfare and Overseas Employment Ministry, about 480,000 to 540,000 workers leave the country annually while from Pakistan only 150,000 workers go abroad in a year. It is important for Pakistan to focus on sending more skilled workers abroad to raise earnings per worker. Otherwise, it will be tough to step up the pace of economic growth as well as remittances. At present, 48% of overseas Pakistanis are working in the Middle East, 28% in Europe and 19% in the United States. Saudi Arabia has become the largest market for Pakistani workers. Other Gulf States such as the UAE, Oman and Bahrain are also attractive markets for manpower export. In 2012, the number of workers that went to Saudi Arabia were 358,560 and to the UAE 182,630. Worker remittances from overseas have been a major source of foreign exchange over the last few years. The remittances provide significant support to the balance of payments and also help stimulate the economy and alleviate poverty.

According to data, remittances stood at \$11.57 billion in July-April 2012-13 against \$10.877 billion in the same period last year, an increase of 6.37%. Pakistan is the sixth most populous country with an estimated population of 180 million and annual growth of 2%. It is expected that Pakistan will become the fourth largest nation in terms of population by 2050. The existing structure shows that the country has a 60% economically active population or workforce. This workforce can be a productive asset if properly trained through skill development programmes. It is time to attach high priority to skill development to increase per capita income of migrant workers. In this regard, the government should initiate programmes for skill development and also explore overseas employment opportunities, which will not only reduce joblessness but will also enhance remittances. The Ministry of Labour, Manpower and Overseas Pakistanis should send government representatives to countries such as China, Kuwait, Malaysia, Qatar, South Korea, Japan and the UAE to open up and withdraw restrictions on Pakistani workers. While formulating a new manpower export policy, the government should take into account that because of a fall in oil revenues and rising unemployment, the Gulf countries, including Saudi Arabia, will be revising their manpower import policies, which may lead to the return of hundreds of thousands of expatriate workers.

The Express Tribune - September 23rd, 2013

Child Rights

Malala Awarded International Children's Peace Prize

Pakistani teen Malala Yousafzai, shot in the head last year by the Taliban for campaigning for girls' education, vowed to intensify her struggle for "a world where everyone can go to school." She was awarded the 2013 International Children's Peace Prize; Malala said last October's attack on her had made her more determined than ever to continue her campaign. "I was just one target for their violence," Malala said in her acceptance speech, referring to her near-fatal shooting when a Taliban gunman's bullet grazed her brain. "There are many others for whom we must continue so that children all over the world can have a right to go to school," she said to thunderous applause. Malala, 16, received her prize from the 2011 Nobel Peace laureate, Yemeni journalist and activist Tawakkol Karman, who told a humbled Malala "you are my hero."

“You cried: ‘No one can stop me or any girl from learning,’” Karman told Malala, speaking in Arabic in an address praising the Pakistani teen’s achievement. “The bullet aimed at your head at that moment was a milestone in the history of your country,” Karman said at the ceremony at the historic Knight’s Hall near the Dutch parliament. After she was shot, Malala was given life-saving treatment in Britain where she now lives. Her brave fight for survival and her speech at the United Nations in July have made her a leading contender for this year’s Nobel Peace Prize. But the response to her in Pakistan has been mixed, with many hailing her as a national heroine while others have criticised her for promoting a “Western” agenda. The International Children’s Peace Prize, an initiative of the Dutch based KidsRights Foundation, was launched in 2005 and set off by former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev when he chaired the Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates in Rome. It carries a cash value of 100,000 euros (\$133,000) that is invested in projects relating to the winner’s cause. Last year’s winner was 13-year-old Cris “Kesz” Valdez for his work with Filipino street children while he himself was destitute.

The Express Tribune - September 07th, 2013

Child Marriages Law: Lawmakers Differ On Going Easy or Being Tough

As the Sindh government gears up to reform the Child Marriages Law, differences have surfaced between the ruling party’s female legislators who have taken the task of drafting the bill - one draft has been prepared by provincial minister Rubina Saadat Qaimkhani and the other by MPA Sharmila Farooqi. Both of them are also part of an eight-member committee of the MPAs who were tasked on August 1 with preparing drafts in consultation with the stakeholders. The subjects for the legislation cover child marriages, honour killings, harassment of women and acid attacks. Besides the stated lack of coordination, the two preliminary versions of the proposed law differ largely in terms of punishment and classification of the offence. The concurrence is limited to the age limit for the marriage which has been set at 18 years for both males and females. Anyone under the age of 18 years is described as a child or a minor.

Friction

Farooqi submitted her version, titled Child Marriages Prohibition Act, 2013, of the draft in the Sindh Assembly on August 20 but Qaimkhani said that she was not aware of this. According to Farooqi, Qaimkhani was made convener of the eight-member committee but she never called a meeting of the MPAs. “As a member [of the committee] I had to work on the law and submit proposals.” She claimed that her fellow MPA adopted the draft prepared by a non-governmental organisation while her version is based on personal consultation with the stakeholders. “Why is there a need to table another bill when one can debate and make changes in the assembly to my draft?” Farooqi asked. Qaimkhani, whose draft has been scrutinised by the law and women development ministries, says she has re-drafted the bill tabled in 2011 by former women development minister, Tauqir Fatima Bhutto. “My bill, titled The Child Marriages Eradication Act, will be the one tabled from the ministry. Sharmila might have submitted it as a private bill,” she told The Express Tribune, adding that she will take it to the floor for debate in the assembly’s upcoming session.

Penalty and Punishment

Both drafts describe offenders as any adult of over 18 years who contracts marriage with a minor and the facilitators include parents and all those who have a part in solemnising a marriage. But both the proposed legislations have gaping differences over the term of imprisonment and amount of penalty for the convicted offenders. Farooqi has recommended

seven-year jail term or Rs. 500,000 fine or both while Qaimkhani appear more lenient and has limited the incarceration to just two years and fine to Rs. 100,000. "The aim is not to punish but to deter people," explains Justice (R) Shaiq Usmani who prepared the draft for an NGO, HANDS, and handed it over to Tauqir Fatima Bhutto in 2011. In that version the punishment was kept to just one year in prison. "Early marriages are ubiquitous in rural communities. There will be a backlash if we start putting people in prison for so long for doing what they believe is a religious and social obligation," Usmani contended. In contrast, Farooqi asserts that her suggested punishment will scare people away from marrying their children at an early age, saying, "We hear stories about people selling their daughters. The heavy fine will also act as a barrier against the practice." Currently, the enforced Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929 awards three-month maximum imprisonment and Rs. 1,000 fine.

Classification of Offence

The Child Marriages Prohibition Act classifies the offence as cognizable, non-bailable and non-compoundable. The Child Marriages Eradication Act, however, holds it only as a cognizable offence. "Again, the objective is not to make the punishment severe," justifies Usmani. For Dr Arfana Mallah, a women rights activist and leader of the university teachers' association, non-bailable and non-compoundable terms are necessary to make the law effective. "It's the state which should be a defender of the children's rights. So, in every case pertaining to child marriages, the state should be a complainant and not the common people," she said, but clarified that in regard of punishment, she supported Qaimkhani's draft. Qaimkhani's draft is time-barred as a complainant has to file a case within a year of solemnization of a marriage. Farooqi's, on the other hand, does not put a time limit - her law will have a retrospective effect if it is enacted as it allows for rescinding a marriage, which took place before passage of the law. It provides for doing away with the marriage without filing for divorce. The proposed law even goes on to provide legitimacy to a child 'born or conceived' from such a marriage and ensures the financial support as well.

Court's Jurisdiction

Similarly, the two drafts also differ on the jurisdiction of the court. The prohibition act extends the jurisdiction to the district and sessions court but the eradication act makes family court the primary one for such proceedings. "We have held extensive consultations for several years with the cross section of rural communities, religious clerics and the civil society before making these recommendations," said Bilqees Rehman, the general manager of HANDS. "We have conceived it as a law which simultaneously works for awareness, deterrence and punishment and not just punishment for the sake of offence."

The Express Tribune - September 14th, 2013

Malala Receives Top Amnesty Award

Rights group Amnesty International announced it had awarded its highest honour to Malala Yousafzai, the teen activist shot in the head last year by the Taliban for campaigning for girls' education. Malala will share the 2013 Ambassador of Conscience Award with American singer and human rights activist Harry Belafonte, the London-based NGO revealed. The award, which recognises "individuals who have promoted and enhanced the cause of human rights through their life and by example," will be presented by Irish rock singer Bono at a ceremony in Dublin, Ireland. "Our two new Ambassadors of Conscience are different from each other in many ways, but they share a dedication to the fight for human rights everywhere and for all," said Salil

Shetty, Secretary General of Amnesty International. "Harry and Malala are truly Ambassadors of Conscience, speaking up for universal rights, justice and human dignity and inspiring others to follow their example."

Malala was shot in the head by the Taliban on a school bus last October, an attack that drew worldwide condemnation. She was flown to Britain for surgery for her head injuries and returned to school in Birmingham in March. The 16-year-old said she was "truly honoured" to receive the award. "I would like to take the opportunity to remind everyone that there are many millions of children like me across the world who fight every single day for their right to go to school," she added. "I hope that by working together we will one day realise our dream of education for every child, in every corner of the world." Emmy award winner Belafonte paid tribute to his co-winner. "I am especially honoured to receive the Ambassador of Conscience Award because I am having the distinction of sharing this with Malala Yousafzai, a true hero of our time," he said. "My admiration for her is unending. She has awakened many in the global family to a commitment in struggle against tyranny. For all this I remain eternally grateful."

The Express Tribune - September 18th, 2013

Domestic Child Workers: Protesters Seek Justice for Victims

To capture the attention of the federal and Punjab governments, human rights activists staged a protest demonstration against a former federal minister accused of illegally detaining and physically torturing children working at his residence in Lahore. The Child Rights Movement (CRM) gathered a group of activists outside the National Press Club to raise awareness over the actions of PML-Q politician Liaqat Bhatti, who tortured three of his child domestic workers — Shahida, Zubaida and seven-year-old Irfan - after their father allegedly failed to pay back a loan he had taken from Bhatti. The children were kept in chains at Bhatti's driver's quarters and became victims of domestic physical abuse. Holding placards and chanting slogans opposing violence against children, protesters called for protection of children and severe punishment for those involved in domestic violence. CRM Coordinator Habiba Salman said she was saddened to see that the police did not pay attention to the relevant legal clauses involving domestic abuse and did not insert those clauses in the FIR registered against Bhatti. She said thousands of children become victims of sexual abuse in the country, but they do not receive justice. Bhatti was released on bail last month after Shahida withdrew an application stating they were illegally confined by the politician. Lawyer Saba Saleem said that legislation regarding such crimes was weak in Pakistan. "Such incidents of child labour and violence reflect negligence of authorities," she said. According to a press statement issued by CRM, around 3,788 cases of child sexual abuse were reported in newspapers last year. The protesters were also demanding a ban on child domestic labour throughout the country.

The Express Tribune - September 19th, 2013

Minority Rights

Signs of Flexibility: False Accusers Of Blasphemy May Face Death

A long-standing demand of civil society appears to be nearing fruition as members of the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) recommended death penalty for anyone convicted of making false accusations of blasphemy. The recommendation, if formally approved by the CII on Thursday, will mean that anyone convicted of making false blasphemy charges will be liable to the same punishment as a blasphemy convict. The CII is a constitutional body that advises the

legislature whether or not a certain law is repugnant to Islam. In order to ensure that the recommendation is actionable, the CII members have also recommended the addition of the provision against false accusers within the existing blasphemy laws. CII member Allama Tahir Ashrafi said most members of the council agreed to the proposed move during Wednesday's meeting. "If made part of the law, this provision will discourage people from using blasphemy laws for settling personal scores," he added. He added that the recommendation has been a long-standing demand of civil society activists, who had been lobbying for relevant legal measures to discourage false accusations of blasphemy.

DNA U-Turn

In another significant move, the CII members recommended that it was entirely up to the judiciary to decide on the admissibility of DNA evidence in rape cases. The CII recommended that only the courts decide if a DNA test substantiated supplementary evidence, which is why the judiciary should decide on the admissibility of DNA tests as primary evidence. Earlier, the council had ruled that the DNA test could only be admitted as primary evidence if the accused denied charges of rape and if four witnesses were available as per Islamic law. The ruling had triggered a countrywide debate after the legal fraternity described it as contrary to the law. Civil society activists and rights campaigners also condemned the verdict saying that it would encourage rape in the country. After severe criticism, the CII decided to review its earlier decision and put the review on the agenda of its scheduled September meeting. However, Allama Ashrafi insisted that the council had never ruled against the DNA test as evidence.

The Express Tribune - September 19th, 2013

Christians' Mass murder

It was a peaceful Sunday Mass at All Saints' Church in the old city quarters. Over 400 parishioners - among them many women and children - had just outstretched their hands to each other as part of the 'sign of peace'. Some minutes later, when most of them had filed out of the church two blasts struck down nearly a quarter of them. Within minutes blood and gore swept the historic white-stone church which was built to resemble a mosque as a gesture of interfaith harmony. Inside, pages of the Bible lay scattered near the altar and rice meals mingled with dust in the aisles amid mangled benches. Walls were pock-marked with ball bearings used in the suicide vests. It was the single biggest attack on the largely impoverished Christian minority. Though Christians have endured mob rampages on their places of worship and arson attacks on their settlements in recent years, they have been largely spared the ravages of suicide bombings for a little more than a decade now. The last wave of blasts in churches and Christian institutions came in 2002, in the months following the US invasion of Afghanistan.

Eyewitnesses said the bombers struck soon after the service ended at the 129-year-old Anglican Church located in the Kohati Gate area inside the Walled City. "We came out of the building chatting with each other when a loud blast occurred near where children and women were standing," a church administrator. "Only seconds after another explosion rocked the building." Medics and government officials said that 78 parishioners, among them 34 women and seven children, were killed and 146 injured in the attack. According to Additional AIG (Special Branch) and head of the Bomb Disposal Squad Shafqat Malik, each of the bombers carried at least six kilogrammes of high explosives in his suicide vest. "Ball bearings were also used in the devices to maximise casualties," "We found the skull of one bomber soon after the explosions, while the second head was found on the rooftop of the church," he added.

The bombers entered the church through the main gate which was reopened for the Sunday Mass after almost three years of closure. Police also found a 9mm pistol at the site which substantiated some witnesses' account that the attackers fired gunshots and lobbed a hand grenade to engage the police guards at the church. One of the guards - identified as Zahid - was killed while the other, Tawas Khan, sustained critical wounds. Survivors recalled the grisly scenes at the site. "I heard two explosions. People started to run. Human remains were strewn all over the church," said parishioner Margaret. Her voice breaking with emotion, she said she had not seen her sister since the explosions ripped through the church.

Salma Bhatti and her family were lucky enough to survive the blasts. "I escaped with a few bruises on my face but our relatives and friends were not that lucky. They are all dead or seriously injured". Most of the casualties were shifted to the Lady Reading Hospital, while some of them were also shifted to the Khyber Teaching Hospital and Combined Military Hospital. Medics at these facilities confirmed 78 deaths and 146 injured people. The deadly attacks sparked protest in different neighbourhoods of the city. Incensed by the senseless violence, Christian protesters blocked Church Road and set the belongings of the policemen guarding the building on fire. They chanted slogans against the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government in the province and against the party chief, Imran Khan. Relatives of the victims also protested in the LRH and smashed the windowpanes of the administrative offices. Interior Minister Chaudry Nisar Ali Khan travelled to Peshawar on the prime minister's instructions to sympathise with the community and console with injured victims at the LRH. "No religion condones attacks against women and children and innocent civilians. The enemies of Pakistan and Islam are behind today's attack," he told the media at the hospital. "I'm here to express solidarity with the Christian community. The government has announced three-day mourning across the country," he added.

The interior minister held out an assurance that the government would do everything it could to protect the religious minorities of Pakistan. "The government is ready to reconstruct the church building." Pakistan Catholic Bishops' Conference (PCBC) strongly condemned the suicide attack on All Saints Church, Peshawar. Archbishop Joseph Coutts, the president of PCBC, expressed shock and sorrow over the brutal attack. "Attacking innocent men, women and children while praying in the church is a shameful act of cowardice," he said in a statement. He announced that all the Christian educational institutions in the country will remain closed for three days (Sept 23, 24 and 25) as a sign of mourning and protest. He demanded that the government take immediate steps to apprehend the culprits and take measures to protect the worship places of all religious minorities. He added that the government should seriously tackle the increasing religious and sectarian intolerance that has reached alarming proportions. The All Pakistan Hindu Rights Movement also denounced the attack and called it a 'security failure'. The movement's chairman, Haroon Sarbdyal, said in a statement that many innocent lives were lost due to inadequate security. It was the second deadliest attack in the history of Peshawar after the 2009 Peepal Mandi when nearly 100 lives were snuffed out by a suicide car bomber. No group immediately claimed responsibility for Sunday's bombing. Security analysts say such attacks could complicate efforts by the Nawaz Sharif to engage homegrown militants in meaningful peace negotiations at a time when roadside bombs, targeted killings and suicide attacks continue unabated.

The Express Tribune - September 23rd, 2013

Church Attack Sparks Protests and Condemnations

Christians in Karachi, Lahore, Multan, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Sheikhupura and other cities staged protest rallies to condemn the killings of Christian worshippers in Peshawar. In Karachi, angry protesters clashed with police when they tried to clear a road in Essa Nagri, a low-income Christian locality. Protesters also clashed with police in Peshawar where people complained about the highhandedness of police. Police arrested several protesters who tried to damage public properties. In Lahore a protest rally was held outside the press club. Protesters raised slogans against the perpetrators of the attack. Meanwhile, leaders of major political parties condemned the Peshawar blasts that claimed at least 78 lives. Awami National Party (ANP) leader Ghulam Ahmad Bilour, who himself is facing severe threat from the terrorists, lost no time to reach the church attacked by the suicide bombers for expressing his sympathy and solidarity with the mourning Christian community. However, he had to return soon as the environment over there was highly charged, while some enraged persons started voicing slogans. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan offered his condolences over the loss of dozens of lives in the incident. Muttahida Qaumi Movement also condemned the blast and announced three-day mourning. According to media reports, Council for International Religion has announced three-day mourning and three holidays in the missionary schools and colleges in Peshawar. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government and Pakistan People's Party also announced three days of mourning to express solidarity with the Christian community. Protests were staged by the Christian community and the civil society organisations in four different localities of Lahore against the twin bomb blasts.

The main protest demonstration was held in front of the Lahore Press Club. The Human Liberation Commission Pakistan, Maseha Millat Party, EPT Fellowship Ministry, PPP Minorities' Wing and people of Behar Colony, Joseph Colony, and Makka Colony participated in the demonstration. The protesters were carrying placards, crosses and flags and were chanting slogans for justice. A number of Christian women were also present on this occasion. Some children also participated in the protest. Most of the demonstrators were wearing black bands on their arms in protest. Minority leaders Aslam Sahotra, Anwar Javed, Amin Masih Sohni, Anees Pervez, Saleem Gabriel, Hanif Thekedar, Ch Shahid Iqbal, Baba Aslam Bhatti, Ch Sadiq, Joseph Frances, Zia Khokhar, Javed Sindu, Martin Javed Michael, and Amir Bashir addressed the protesters. They demanded the federal and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government to improve security of minorities and arrest the perpetrators of the church attack. They asked the government to deal with the terrorists with iron fist and urged Imran Khan, the chief of the ruling party in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, to remove his party's chief minister, saying he has failed to provide security to the minorities in the province. They claimed that the chief minister was responsible for the attack as his government was aware about it but did not take measures to protect the churches. The local people of Youhanabad, the area which is populated by around 70,000 Christians, also held a big protest under the leadership of PPP's minority wing leader Napoleon Qayyum and others, and announced three days of mourning against the killings of Christians in Peshawar. During the mourning period more than 700 shops and 42 schools located in the area will remain close. Meanwhile, Napoleon left for Peshawar to attend funerals of the Christians who died in the attack.

A protest demonstration was also staged in Joseph Colony, Badami Bagh. The Christian community strongly condemned the terror attack and their leadership demanded the federal government take stern action against the terrorists.

Daily Times - September 23rd, 2013

Peshawar Church Blasts: Death Toll Spirals to 83 amid Grief Filled Protests

As the death toll from the Peshawar church blasts mounted there was a visible escalation in the intensity of protests - with the enormity of the tragedy sinking in more deeply into the national psyche. Some 24 hours after the blasts, enraged Christians took to the streets in several parts of the country - some protested peacefully, while others resorted to violence - as the number of those killed in the twin blasts climbed to 83. The most violent protest was reported from Karachi where mobs - of Christians and Muslims - clashed with each other for several hours in the Khulfa-e-Rashideen Colony, Korangi area. There were incidents of arson, in which one house was gutted while another was partially burnt. Aerial firing was also reported and one man was killed by a stray bullet. After five hours of rioting, Rangers and police personnel finally took around two dozen suspects into custody. Meanwhile, in Islamabad, more than 600 protesters blocked a major city highway for several hours during the Monday morning rush hour, causing long tailbacks. In Peshawar itself, demonstrators took to the streets, smashing windows at the Lady Reading Hospital, where many of the victims were still being treated.

New K-P IGP Appointed

In a key reshuffle, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa IGP Ahsan Ghani was replaced by Nasir Khan Durrani. "The decision was taken at the highest level," said one official. The appointment of the IGP is at the prime minister's discretion. Secretary Establishment Division Shahid Rashid also confirmed the appointment, "We issued the notification." Durrani was working as Punjab Counter Terrorism Department Additional Inspector General Police. Officials claimed that Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar recommended his name after K-P CM Khattak sought Durrani, a reputed police officer. The relations between now former IGP Ghani and CM Khattak had been reportedly strenuous. However, Shiraz Paracha, CM Khattak's spokesperson, denied Ghani's removal had anything to do with the twin blasts. Meanwhile, an investigation team led by SSP Investigation Masoodur Rehman Khalil began the probe. The team visited the church, met with the injured and talked to the people of the Kohati area to record statements. The police recovered two pistols from the bomb site. Contrary to initial information, the police found no evidence of the suicide bombers wearing police uniforms. "These are baseless rumours. According to our investigation, they were in plain clothes," he said. The heads of both the bombers were found and it would help the police in preparing sketches of the suicide bombers, he added.

Hospital Rounds

Political leaders from across the country visited the Lady Reading Hospital (LRH), Peshawar, to express their solidarity with the families and inquire about those injured in the blasts. Sindh CM Qaim travelled to Peshawar from Karachi. He announced Rs. 500,000 for families of the dead and Rs. 100,000 for the wounded. Separately, National Assembly's Leader of the Opposition Khurshid Shah also visited the hospital where he called for collective efforts to eradicate terrorism. "The Peshawar church attacks are an attempt to sabotage talks with the Taliban." Speaking to journalists at the hospital, former interior minister and PPP senior leader Rehman Malik said he equally shared the grief and sorrow of the bereaved families. He said the victims' families should not consider themselves alone in this hour. Nurses belonging to the Christian community complained to the former minister that the victims were not being treated properly.

The Express Tribune, September 24th, 2013

PTI calls for removing 'flaws' in blasphemy law

The lawmakers belonging to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) called for reviewing the blasphemy law and removal of "flaws" in it when the National Assembly resumed the debate on the Peshawar church. PTI's Makhdoom Javed Hashmi, Dr Arif Alvi and Dr Shireen Mizari emphasised review of lacunas in the blasphemy law, if there are any, to save innocent people from being punished. Javed Hashmi said that amendments should be introduced in the blasphemy law. "I voted against it by going against the party discipline. It needs to be reviewed," he said. Dr Shireen Mazari said that if there are lacunas in the law they should be reviewed. This suggestion was backed by her party's colleague Dr Arif Alvi who urged for improving the law. The Council of Islamic Ideology said that the existing blasphemy law should not be amended. The CII also decreed that DNA test was not acceptable as primary evidence in rape cases but it could be considered as supporting evidence. Council's Chairman Maulana Muhammad Khan Sherani had said that although the DNA testing was a useful and modern technique for supporting evidence, but it alone could not be used as primary evidence. He said a court of law could decide in the light of the DNA test when it was used with other evidences as a supporting material.

About Javed Hashmi's proposal, Jamaat-e-Islami's lawmaker Sahibzada Yaqoob said that the blasphemy law was made long time back and if someone had any suggestion they should go to the Shariat Court or CII. Meanwhile, on the issue of holding talks with the Taliban, PTI lawmakers backed the measure. Shireen Mizari strongly supported the dialogue process to deal with the issue of terrorism. "The dialogue process will clearly distinguish who is in favour of talks, while operation should be carried out against the rest of them," she opined. Arif Alvi said that strict action should be taken against the perpetrators of the terrorist attack on a church in Peshawar. However, he said, there is no need to change policy on holding talks with Taliban. Sahibzada Yaqoob said that the dialogue process should be initiated as it would help identify the groups that are in favour of the talks. JUI-F's Aasia Nasir opposed military operation, while on the Peshawar attack she said it could be called a security lapse as the authorities concerned were frequently notified about insufficient security measures.

Taking part in the debate, Christian community's MNA Tariq Christopher Qaiser said that legislation should not be based on religion. "All Pakistanis should be given equal rights," he said, while noting that no person involved in terrorist attacks on Christian community has been arrested. Minister for Ports and Shipping Kamran Michael said that Sunday's attack was an attempt to sabotage efforts for establishing peace. "These attempts should be discouraged," he added. Lawmaker from the treasury benches Major (r) Tahir Iqbal observed that dialogue is imperative to bring peace, and added that the use of power is not a solution. PPP's Asghar Ali Shah said that there is a need to initiate dialogue process now. "It should not be further delayed," he said. MNA Lal Chand stressed that there should not be discrimination with minorities. "Why are other religions not taught in the schools? Minorities' children are made to opt the subject 'Ethics' or go for Islamiyat," he stated. Meanwhile, PPP's Abdul Sattar Bachai said that passing a resolution was not enough, and concrete measures should be taken to handle this menace. He further said that such kind of issues mostly cropped up when civilian governments are in power. MQM's Sajid Ahmed said that the government should now take step for talks. "The government should think about second option if it fails in conducting peaceful talks," he added. Calling for national unity in the face of the terrorist attack in Peshawar, PPP's Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho said that the perpetrators of this crime should be brought to the book at any cost.

Daily Times - September 25th, 2013

Carnage at church after Sunday mass

The capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was shaken once again by a heinous attack on churchgoers. As the besieged city and its inhabitants dealt with death, tragedy and mayhem, the rest of the country began to rally around to condemn the inhuman act that took 78 lives. The day began quietly in the city and the churchgoers gathered at the historic church at Kohati Gate in a busy commercial-cum-residential area of the city. Before the clock struck 12, the peace of the church and the city was cruelly interrupted as two suicide bombers blew themselves up on the church premises, killing 78 people and injuring another 120. Thirty-four women and seven children were among the dead. Seventeen injured are reported to be in critical condition. According to foreign news agencies, a wing of the Pakistani Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack, saying it would continue to target non-Muslims until the United States stopped drone attacks in the tribal region. This was the first suicide attack on the Christian community in Peshawar that has suffered countless assaults by suicide attackers and other militant offensives. However, this is not the first such attack on the Pakistani Christian community. In fact, some of the first few suicide attacks in the country back in 2002 targeted churches in Islamabad and Taxila. However, as the militants grew more indiscriminate in their violence as the years progressed their targets included the general public and state installations. As a result, this attack on a church came as a surprise.

By the evening, the general sense of outrage was palpable in the air. And the loud condemnations from the ruling parties made it clear that the politicians realised the significance of what had happened. By the evening PTI chief Imran Khan and Interior Minister Nisar Ali Khan had turned up in Peshawar and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had spoken about the issue in London. His statement appeared to be defining a new government policy on the Taliban. Earlier in the day, the injured were rushed to Lady Reading Hospital, the Khyber Teaching Hospital (KTH) and Hayatabad Medical Complex (HMC). City Circle Superintendent of Police Ismail Kharak told the media later that a suicide bomber had entered through the rear gate of the church where a police constable tried to stop him. However, the attacker blew himself up, killing the policeman also. A second constable was injured in the blast. "It seems that the bomber had first used a hand grenade, he then entered the church and then blew himself up," he said, adding that this was the police's initial assessment and further investigations might lead to different conclusions. Bomb Disposal Unit chief AIG Shafqat Malik said that two suicide blasts had taken place and that each bomber carried six kilograms explosives. He said the head of a bomber had been found and sent for forensic testing. Another investigation officer collecting evidence at the crime scene said three empty bullet shells had been found which suggested that the attackers had also opened fire with one or more pistols.

On an average 600 to 1,000 people participated in the service but luckily the service ended at about 11.10am and most of the people left the venue. Father Samson Anwar explained that although security was provided each Sunday by police, he had never imagined that an attack of this kind would ever take place. The Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan claimed responsibility for the attack and said it had set up a new faction, called the Junood ul-Hifsa, to kill foreigners to avenge US drone strikes on Taliban and Al Qaeda operatives. "We carried out the suicide bombings at Peshawar church and will continue to strike foreigners and non-Muslims until drone attacks stop," Ahmad Marwat, a spokesman for the group, told AFP by telephone. Reuters described Marwat as a member of the TTP's Jundullah group and quoted him as saying: "(The Christians) are the enemies of Islam, therefore we target them. We will continue our attacks on non-Muslims on Pakistani land."

Dawn - September 25th, 2013

Deflecting From the Church Attack

The Peshawar church bombing has once again exposed the disturbing attribute of deflection within the Pakistani discourse. If we are uncomfortable discussing it, we may want to consider the discomfort that was experienced by the bodies torn apart in the church bombing. Our national discourse is particularly incapable of staring darkness in the face. We like to dodge, evade and deflect darkness. After Peshawar, this deflection has taken several forms. The Peshawar church attack was designed to murder Christians. There should be no deflection of this. Yet, immediately following the attack, there it was. A tsunami of newfound 'white' on our national flag. The mealy-mouthed, self-conscious and frankly, shameful, deflection manifested itself across a spectrum that stretched from: "Why call them Christians? They are Pakistani!" to "Where was your outrage when Muslim bodies were being torn apart by drone attacks?" Many readers will relate to this spectrum of deflection. It is a widespread moral and spiritual disease. An op-ed in this paper will not cure such a disease. But at a minimum, we need to find the courage to call it what it is. It is a disease.

When Muslims are killed in Pakistan, it is almost never because they are 'Muslim' (though it is often because they are Shia, Bareilvi, Deobandi, or some other brand of Muslim). But there is no such thing as 'anti-Muslim' violence in Pakistan. But when Christians, or Hindus or other minorities are killed in Pakistan, whether we like it or not, it is most often because they are Christian or Hindu. There is anti-Christian violence in Pakistan. Minorities in Pakistan feel insecure because they are insecure. And nothing that Narendra Modi does (or did in 2002), or India's RAW does, or the US government's Special Ops soldiers do, or Raymond Davis did, or the Israeli Mossad does justifies this. What happens in other countries doesn't make the same thing happening in Pakistan okay. Nor does it make it okay to simply blame what is happening in Pakistan on others. Even if 'others' are doing it, this is our home and, therefore, our responsibility. These are not complicated concepts. But the simplest concept of all is this: nothing justifies Pakistani minorities living in fear for their lives, their property and their children's future.

This fear that they live in is unjust, it is against the constitution, and it is a severe violation of any form of Islam. So instead of waltzing around the issue and trying to force the word 'Pakistani' down the throat of minorities that live in fear and are lacking the support of the state, it is important to at least admit these basic truths. Now. Some of us will respond to this by asking what about the fear experienced by those living in Fata under the shadow of drones, or families in Karachi living in fear of kidnappings, or poor, landless Sindhi farmers living in fear of waderas, or Baloch tribesmen living in fear of our intel agencies. All people everywhere deserve to live free of such fears. The only fear anyone should live in is fear of God (and if you're a criminal, fears of the police, the courts and the prison system). But an expression of empathy for Christians in Pakistan does not in any way suggest a lack of empathy for all or any of the other groups. The difference is that not each group is experiencing the fear because of their religious identity, and not every group that does experience this fear experiences it because of systemic social discrimination and bias. Pakistani Christians do.

The News - September 26th, 2013

GENDER WATCH**Violence against Women****Woman Kidnapped 'By 13 Men', Raped**

A woman was raped allegedly by 13 men. They said the suspects had apparently drugged the woman before she was raped. The woman was recovered from a field by some passers-by and taken to a hospital, where doctors said that she would likely survive. Doctors treating her said that they suspected that the woman had been raped. A complaint was registered with the police by the woman's husband who said that his wife sold bangles in Chak 275-GB, Maddona. He said that on Thursday, when his wife did not return home, he went to look for her and learnt that some people had found her lying in a field and had taken her to a hospital. He said he had rushed to the hospital, where his wife had told him that 13 men, two of whom she had identified, had dragged her into a field on her way back. She told him that they had forced her to consume liquor and raped her when she got intoxicated. Some passers-by heard her shout for help and rushed to her rescue. On seeing them, she said, the men fled. She said she was not in a condition to speak. Her husband said that he would make an appeal to the chief minister if the suspects were not arrested. He said two of them had been identified by his wife. He said he feared for his family as the two men came from an influential family in the village. The Rodala Road station house officer told that a police team had been formed to make the arrests. He said the police were waiting for the woman's medico-legal examination report.

The Express Tribune - September 06th, 2013

No Respect for Women in India and Pakistan

They call us independent, free nations. Pakistan and India, after 60 odd years of being ruled by the white man, have been unable to break free of one acute problem: the white woman. Whether it is by selling our lovely brown women fairness creams and coloured lenses or by introducing at least one beautiful American/British girl into the storyline of your favourite drama/movie, the focus on the white woman is taking a slightly grotesque turn. The line between fascination and obsession is smudged as I go through the account of a CNN report where a female student from the University of Chicago talks about being groped and harassed during her few months in India. She explains how she was stared at, photographed, stalked, and how her experiences landed her in a psych ward for two weeks. Her roommate even escaped a rape attempt. My snap response to reading that piece was horror. If an average American/British/Caucasian woman has the misfortune of having the curiosity of discovering India, she should do so with a chastity belt or under a burqa, if need be, because she is going to be stared at. She is going to be stalked. She is going to be followed. She is going to have to grow a thicker skin. She is going to have to understand that had she been a white man, she would not have to fear the drool on anyone's lips.

In 2004, an Australian woman was murdered and raped in India. White women have been bringing this issue to attention and India's sexual harassment problem has reached a point where it needs to be addressed, not just for local women but for any woman who wants to pay India a visit. The real problem is that India is not safe for women, period. And like our boundaries, Pakistan also shares India's ugly fascination for gori chamri (white skin). You can use a white girl to sell anything in this part of the world. The root cause of such pathetic

obsessions can be explained by either a subservient mindset or a love for our former colonial masters, which we will probably take another few decades to get over. It could also be quite simply explained with the rampant problem of sexism and objectifying women. Any culture, subculture or social structure that objectifies women, the way Indo-Pak cinema and society does, cannot be too far away from such crimes against women. Once an actresses crosses the tender age of 'appearing in her twenties' she is shelved. Men pick on women because society itself gives carte blanche to such atrocious behaviour. We institutionalise violence against women (marital rape is still not considered a criminal offence under the Indian Penal Code) and propagate it by making women objects of a man's lust and not his respect. We are a society (this includes both India and Pakistan) which considers women inferior and powerless, having lesser brains and even lesser strength and having a lower stature. This is probably why a 23-year-old woman was raped repeatedly by five men in Mumbai recently.

The Express Tribune - September 06th, 2013

Crimes against Women: Acid Used To 'Punish' Unrelenting Wives

Two incidents of dousing estranged wives with acid were reported from Khurarianwala and Bhowana. Khurarianwala police told that Saima Bibi, a resident of Chak234-JB, had married Muhammad Liaquat two months ago. They soon had a falling out. According to her family, Liaquat was an abusive husband who would regularly beat her. Saima Bibi moved to her parents' house two weeks ago. Liaquat had tried to persuade his wife to return to him. He had requested the families' elders to intervene as well, but Saima Bibi had refused. Liaquat went to his in-laws' house with a bottle of acid on Saturday and threw it on Saima Bibi. She received burn injuries on her face, shoulders, chest and belly. Her family took her to a local hospital from where she was referred to Allied Hospital. Dr Muhammad Anwar, from the Emergency Ward, said, "Saima Bibi ... may lose her eyesight. We are providing her intensive care but her condition is still critical." The Khurarianwala SHO told that they had received a complaint in this regard and were waiting for the medical report. "We have also formed a team to trace Saima Bibi's husband. He will be arrested shortly," he said. Javaid Gulzar, a resident of Hindlana, Bhowana, and his brother Shahid Ali went to the former's in-laws' house to persuade his wife Shameem Bibi to return to him. He had earlier asked family elders to intervene on his behalf but she had refused. Gulzar threw acid on her and started a fire at his in-laws' house. Shameem Bibi has been taken to the Jaranwala Tehsil Headquarters Hospital where her condition is said to be stable. In yet another incident, Muhammad Ali, a resident of Chak 76-RB, had had a squabble with his wife Nusrat Bibi. He beat her up, doused her with kerosene oil and tried to set her alight. However, she managed to escape to a neighbour's house. She then went to her father's house in Ali Colony, Jaranwala, and told him about the incident. Complaints in all the three incidents have been filed with the relevant police stations, but no arrests have been made yet.

The Express Tribune - September 08th, 2013

WPC Condemns Rape of 5-Year-Old Girl

The Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) condemned the unfortunate incident of a sexual assault on a 5-year-old girl in Lahore last week. The WPC urged the authorities and the judiciary to ensure that the culprits are immediately arrested and prosecuted. They said the accused should be strictly punished to provide justice to the innocent victim and her grieved family and to curb such incidents that reflect the mindset destroying the foundations of the society. Such unfortunate incidents were increasing at an alarming rate despite various legislations passed in

the parliament, which was a serious concern in light of the existing security situation in the country, the WPC added. The WPC said an effective methodology needed to be implemented to engage the civil society, media and parliamentarians to create public awareness on such issues, educating them on measures to ensure their safety and inform them of their basic legal rights as the citizens of the country. Such steps would help the government fight the crime and provide security to people, they added. The WPC said it was their responsibility to continue to work towards fulfilling the international commitments on social development and effectively ensure that the voice of the people of Pakistan was heard. The WPC said to achieve these targets, it was very important that the smooth transition of the democratic process continued and through the effective policy of reconciliation, national policies were carried forward by the future governments.

Daily Times - September 18th, 2013

RIUJ for Caution on Reporting of Rape Cases

The Rawalpindi-Islamabad Union of Journalists (RIUJ) appealed to the media not to overplay the issue of a five-year-old rape victim. In a statement on Tuesday, it was said certain ethical lines about the coverage of rape cases should be followed, particularly if a minor is involved. The newly-elected body of the RIUJ led by its President Afzal Butt appealed to political parties not to politicise the issue by visiting the victim. Instead, they should raise pressure for the arrest of the accused in the parliament, he added. "Such cases need to be covered with utmost care and family consent must be sought," the statement said. The statement said the media hyped the issue, which perhaps did not help the child's case but, on the contrary, added to her family's trauma. The RIUJ said some of the newspapers had even published the photograph of the victim while some channels, including the state-owned PTV and print media also disclosed her name. All this was the violation of the ethical code. The RIUJ believes that all editors and director news must play their role and programming heads must also handle the story with care. The case should not be used for "ratings", the statement said.

The RIUJ wondered whether TV channels had any SOPs or not, regarding the coverage of such heinous crimes. How much coverage was required for such stories and how they should be treated whether it's a 5-year-old from Lahore, 13-year-old from Faisalabad or 14-year-old from Sanghar. The RIUJ appealed to the Pakistan Broadcasters Association, PBA, All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS), Council of Pakistan Newspapers Editors (CPNE) and Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) and all director news of TV channels and professional editors to urgently agree on certain SOPs for the coverage of such events. The RIUJ suggested that the news channels and print media must keep in mind the impact of such stories on a society, particularly on children. Merely putting a parental guidance (PG) sign and asking children not to watch such programmes may not help much, the statement said. Instead, the coverage should be reasonable. Secondly, the selection language should also be kept in mind. Thirdly, everyone including the police should know that a five-year-old child could not record her statement or tell her stories. The statement said the news should not be missed and there was also no doubt that it was a heinous crime, however, the problem was with the coverage like in Sikandar's case. The statement asked whether the family's consent to air their story was sought as they were the victims and for them it was an unending trauma. It also asked whether showing the child's visuals time and again was necessary. The RIUJ said they would soon call a meeting of senior journalists, editors and owners from the print and TV channels to address the issue of the coverage of such sensitive cases.

Daily Times - September 18th, 2013

SECTARIAN CRISES & CONFLICT WATCH

Conflict & Sectarian Crisis Incidents

Security Briefs for the Month of September

Date	Incidents	Killed	Injured
Sunday, September 01, 2013	At least nine soldiers were killed and as many injured in a bomb attack on a military convoy in the Boya area of North Waziristan Agency in FATA. Ansarul Mujahideen claimed responsibility for the attack.	9	9
	At least three persons were killed and several others sustained injuries when unidentified assailants fired on a musical event in Adam Khel area of Lakki Marwat District in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.	3	0
Wednesday, September 04, 2013	Four persons, including one Rangers personnel, were killed in firing at Shah Baig Lane in the remit of Baghdadi Police Station in Lyari Town.	4	0
Thursday, September 05, 2013	Three TTP militants were killed during an exchange of fire with personnel from the CID in the Mauripur area of Kiamari Town in Karachi.	3	0
Friday, September 06, 2013	Unidentified militants shot dead seven people and injured two others in the Jasoki area of Gujrat District in Punjab.	7	2
	At least six people were killed and one more was injured after unidentified militants opened fire on a car near Gulzar Chowk in Matani area of Peshawar, the provincial capital of KP.	6	1
Sunday, September 08, 2013	Clashes between the peace committee and militants in Bara tehsil of Khyber Agency in FATA killed five committee members while militants have abducted several others.	5	0
Monday, September 09, 2013	Militants beheaded three members of a peace committee and abducted four other members in the Landi Kotal area of Khyber Agency in FATA.	3	0
	SFs killed two would-be suicide bombers as TTP militants attacked the office of DPO, judicial lock ups and lower courts in Kohat town (Kohat District) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. A Policeman was also killed while 13 other persons, including three security officials, were injured in the attack inside the military cantonment area.	3	13
Thursday, September 12, 2013	Unidentified assailants abducted and killed three labourers who hailed from Punjab at a stone-crushing plant at Santsar, around 70 kilometres north of the Gwadar port, in Gwadar District of Balochistan.	3	0

Date	Incidents	Killed	Injured
Sunday, September 15, 2013	Major General, Sanaullah Khan, and, lieutenant colonel, Tauseef, were killed along with a soldier, Irfan Sattar, in an IED explosion in the Upper Dir District of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa near Pak-Afghan Border.	3	0
Tuesday, September 17, 2013	Four workers of the MQM, identified as Pervez Alam, Jabbar, Nadeem, and Riaz Ahmed, were shot dead unidentified militants while they were sitting at a puncture shop in Ghazi Nagar near Mohajir Chowk in Orangi Town of Karachi in Sindh.	4	0
	At least five Pakistanis were killed and three others, including a Levies Force official, were injured in cross border firing by Afghan SFs in the Qamaruddin Karez area of Zhob District in Balochistan late in the night.	5	3
Wednesday, September 18, 2013	Three alleged gangsters, identified as Imran Chohan, Noman alias Nomi Patni and Abdul Ghafoor Katchi alias Chotoo, were killed in a shoot-out with Police and Rangers in the Shah Baig Lane of Lyari Town in Karachi.	3	0
Thursday, September 19, 2013	Three Shia people were killed and 12 others were injured when unidentified militants hurled hand grenades at an Imambargah (Shia place of congregation) in Majeed Colony of Landhi Town in Karachi of Sindh.	3	12
	Three persons were killed and 20 others injured in the night in a hand grenade attack near a mosque in the Sarband area of Peshawar.	3	20
Friday, September 20, 2013	At least seven Army personnel were killed and four others were injured in a remote-controlled explosion in Bolan of Balochistan.	7	4
Saturday, September 21, 2013	At least 12 militants were killed and two soldiers were injured in a shootout near the Pak-Afghan border in Lower Dir District of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.	12	2
Sunday, September 22, 2013	As many as 83 persons were killed and 145 others injured when two suicide attackers blew themselves up at the end of a service at All Saints Church near Qissa Khawani bazaar in Peshawar, the provincial capital of KP.	85	145
	At least six suspected militants were killed and three others were injured in a US drone strike on a militant compound in Shawal area of North Waziristan Agency in FATA.	0	3
	Three militant commanders, including a spokesperson for LI, were killed when the IED they were making exploded in LI Markaz in Bara tehsil of Khyber Agency in FATA.	3	0
Monday, September 23, 2013	At least five persons, including three Policemen and two civilians were killed while five others injured in a bomb attack targeting Police in Pishin District of	5	5

Date	Incidents	Killed	Injured
	Balochistan.		
Wednesday, September 25, 2013	The Security Forces killed five militants in a retaliatory fire after the militants attacked their camp with rockets in the Janni Khel area of Bannu District in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. One trooper was injured in the incident.	5	1
	Three persons were killed and seven others were injured in a militant attack on Gandau dam in the Halimzai area of Mohmand Agency in FATA.	3	7
Friday, September 27, 2013	At least 19 persons were killed and 42 others injured when a bomb exploded on a bus carrying Government employees at Gulbela area on Charsadda Road of Peshawar in KP.	19	42
Saturday, September 28, 2013	As many as nine people including five militants and four personnel of the FC were killed in a fierce exchange of fire in Prome area of Panjgur District of Balochistan.	9	0
Sunday, September 29, 2013	A car bomb blast killed at least 42 persons and injured 100 others in Kissa Khawani Bazaar of Peshawar in KP.	42	100
	A US drone strike killed at least six suspected militants in the Dargamandi area, seven kilometres north of Miranshah, the headquarters of the NWA, in FATA.	6	0

Compiled from different dailies

Karachi Operation

Security Huddle: Government to Evolve Consensus on Karachi Operation

While violence continues unabated in the commercial hub of the country, a high-level security huddle on Monday weighed the options available to the government to restore order in the troubled megacity of Karachi. The meeting concurred that a broad-based consensus has to be evolved among the stakeholders in Karachi before launching any 'surgical operation' against target-killers, extortionists and criminals in the city. Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar said last week that the government has already sketched the blueprint of a 'targeted operation'. A meeting of the federal cabinet, which has been rescheduled for Wednesday, is expected to give the green light for the operation. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif presided over a meeting where attendees included army chief Gen Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, ISI chief Lt Gen Muhammad Zaheerul Islam, Interior Minister Nisar and Special Assistant to the prime minister on foreign affairs Tariq Fatemi.

According to sources, Gen Kayani assured the premier that if requested, the army was ready to assist the civil administration in restoring peace in Karachi. He added that if the army was requisitioned, it would make sure that an operation was conducted without any political

consideration. However, Gen Kayani, according to sources, said that the government should evolve a consensus first before launching an operation. The Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), the main opposition party in Sindh, has called for handing over Karachi to army - a demand not acceptable to other political groups, including the ruling Pakistan Peoples Party in the province. The prime minister told the meeting participants that the federal government would extend every possible help to the Sindh administration to restore order in the violence-wrecked metropolis. "The prime minister will take the political parties into confidence over the Karachi situation and seek their support at Wednesday's meeting of the federal cabinet," an official privy to the meeting. "Whatever decision we take would be in the best national interest, and every institution would be expected to render its role," the official quoted Nawaz as telling the huddle.

According to a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office, the meeting discussed issues pertaining to national security, including the internal and external threats faced by the country. The premier reaffirmed his commitment to utilise all resources to ensure national security, terming it a topmost priority of his administration. Hours before the meeting, Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar briefed the prime minister on the overall law and order situation in the country and presented a report on the security situation in Karachi. According to sources, the report blames the intelligence failure for the woeful situation in Karachi. Nawaz directed him to finalise proposals for federal cabinet meeting to be held in Karachi so that a comprehensive strategy could be worked out for the city. He also asked heads of the intelligence agencies to come up with detailed reports on the situation.

The Express Tribune - September 03rd, 2013

Time Running Out On Karachi, Nawaz Told

Most of the political parties have advised Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to launch an indiscriminate operation against criminals through police and Rangers, saying time is running out. The MQM showed flexibility in its previous stance and demanded the use of army in some areas of the city where police and Rangers do not have access. Representatives of the political parties made this suggestion at a consultative meeting that Prime Minister Nawaz had convened at the Governor's House. The prime minister is going to take a decision on Karachi law and order at a special meeting of the federal cabinet scheduled. "We have suggested involvement of army in operation against criminals along with police and Rangers," MQM leader Babar Ghauri said after the meeting. Elaborating the suggestion he said that the army should be involved in those areas where the police and Rangers are unable to take action. In this regard he referred those areas where Taliban and other banned organizations have influence.

Without mentioning Lyari he said that criminals are operating in old area of Karachi where traders are receiving chits for payment of extortion. He questioned PPP's role in such areas, asking how peace could be established in the city when criminals are being patronized. PPP's Abdul Qadir Patel, however, said that majority of the Lyari residents are innocent and common citizens. He said that criminals are active in all the areas of Karachi. The PPP, he said, has supported indiscriminate operation against criminals through police and Rangers. According to him his party has also demanded federal government's complete assistance to the Sindh government in this regard. Meanwhile, Jamaat-e-Islami leader Muhammad Hussain Mahenti told journalists that his party has asked the prime minister to take concrete steps to save Karachi and its people. He said that people were shifting their businesses from Karachi due to continued law and order situation. He appreciated the prime minister for taking the JJ on

board on Karachi situation, complaining that his party was not consulted on the issue during last five years.

Most of the major political parties, including PPP, MQM, ANP, Sunni Tehreek, JUI, PML-N and PML-Functional, attended the consultative meeting. No representative of Imran Khan-led Tehreek-e-Insaf came to the meeting, as according to the party leaders it was not invited formally. Initially, the MQM had expressed reservations but it sent its representatives to the meeting. The party leadership was unhappy with the PML-N-led federal government's decision of dropping out Dr Farooq Sattar's name from the list of participants of federal cabinet meeting. Dr Sattar was earlier invited for the cabinet meeting but later the federal government withdrew the invitation. PML-N leader Salim Zia told journalists that his name was dropped because Sindh Governor Dr Ishratul Ebad Khan will be among the participants. PPP will be represented in the cabinet session by Sindh Chief Minister Qaim Ali Shah. Prime Minister Nawaz assured all needed assistance to the Sindh government in addressing the lacunae in laws that are thought to favour the criminals. He said a legal team would soon be sent to the province to help provincial authorities in mitigating the lacunae existing in the law. "We have to address the issue with all sincerity so as to bring to task the criminals and terrorists apprehended by law enforcers," said the prime minister.

Daily times - September 04th, 2013

Rangers to Cleanse Karachi Handing Over City to Army Premature

The much-awaited special meeting of the federal cabinet came up with launching a Rangers-led targeted operation against the criminals in Karachi within a couple of days while police will assist the federal force. The meeting was chaired by Prime Minister Mian Nawaz Sharif at the Governor House also decided giving the paramilitary Rangers special powers of prosecution and investigation for the purpose. It also gave timeframe to Sindh IGP to revamp police force by identify the officers patronizing the criminals and arrest them, besides removing them from their posts. The meeting, attended by Sindh Chief Minister Qaim Ali Shah, Governor Dr Ishratul Ebad, federal ministers and heads of law enforcement agencies, formed a committee headed by the CM that will supervise and manage the overall operation and ensure implementation of federal cabinet's decisions. PM Nawaz Sharif while addressing the meeting underlined the need to adopt an effective strategy for maintenance of peace in Karachi. The prime minister rejected the demands of MQM and labeled the idea as "premature".

Later during a press conference interior minister "Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan" presented the details of the plan, insisting that it should be called a 'targeted action' or 'exercise' rather than an operation. He said the decision has been taken after consultative meetings with the political parties, civil society, media persons and business community. Ch Nisar said that government accepts the mandate of the ruling PPP and MQM and other parties, so it wants to go with consensus. The minister said that Rangers had expressed their concerns that criminals manage to get free when they are arrest and handed over to the police. He said their concerns have been addressed by granting those powers to arrest as well as prosecute and investigate the criminals. Nisar said that government is implementing the verdict of the Supreme Court in law and order case of Karachi, adding that apex court will be approached regarding legal complications for some powers for the rangers. He said the government will also take action and dismantle the 'militant wings' of political parties in the Karachi as per the apex court verdict. The minister said that one police station in each district of the Karachi will be declared as focal station, where rangers, police and other security agencies will interrogate the criminals.

Declaring unregistered SIMs of the cell phones as base for crimes in the city, the interior minister said that currently at least 4 million unregistered SIMs were active in the city and the cellular companies have been directed to immediately deactivate all these SIMs. Ch Nisar said that all political parties are unanimous on one point - action against the criminal in Karachi to maintain the law and order situation. He said that government will hold a meeting of the political parties to consult them on engagement with Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). He said that many of the actions of the TTP too were fallout of Karachi's law and order situation. The minister criticized the media for airing disinformation about transfer of IGP Sindh and Chief Secretary. A senior official of the interior ministry said that according to the proposed plan prepared by Sindh home department, the operation will most probably be launched in Lyari Town and Sohrab Goth and then expanded to Manghopir, Orangi Town, Korangi, Manghopir, Landhi, Ranchore Lines and Ittehad Town. The Rangers and police will be given special powers to conduct search operations in any house, mosque or madrasa. In a report sent to the PM earlier this week, the National Crisis Management Cell highly recommended the federal government to launch an operation in Karachi. It revealed that several TTP factions and al-Qaeda elements have moved in and they were penetrating deeper into the city. The militant group Lashkar-e-Jhangvi is responsible for much of the violence in the city and it needs to be rooted out, stated the report.

The Nation - September 05th, 2013

Nawaz Discusses Karachi Operation with Rangers

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif chaired a meeting to review a strategy and modalities for a foolproof mechanism to rid the country, especially Karachi, of criminal elements. The Rangers director general apprised the prime minister of the operational and strategic ways to curb extortion, kidnappings, and terrorism and target killings in Karachi. "Extraordinary circumstances require a sustained response from law enforcement machinery in order to restore peace in Karachi as policies do not change on a daily basis," the prime minister said. He reiterated his government's principled commitment to provide all-possible assistance to the Sindh government to restore confidence of citizens in law enforcement agencies. Nawaz also called for introducing amendments to the anti-terrorism law in accordance with the guidelines given by superior judiciary. He also issued directives to block illegal SIM cards throughout the country with immediate effect. The prime minister was also informed about the recent targeted operations being carried out in Karachi. He appreciated the "rigorous efforts" being made to establish peace in the city. It was also agreed that the government and army would work together to tackle the menace of terrorism. The prime minister was also briefed on other issues, including dialogue with the Taliban, policy against drone attacks, Balochistan issue and the situation along the Line of Control (LoC). Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan, Chief of Army Staff General Ashfaq Kayani, and Punjab Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif also attended the meeting.

Daily Times - September 08th, 2013

US Magazine Terms Karachi 'Most Dangerous Megacity' In the World

A US magazine 'Foreign Policy' has termed Karachi "the most dangerous megacity" in the world. In a piece on Karachi's role in the global trade of methamphetamine - an illegal psychostimulant - Foreign Policy cited a murder rate of 12.3 per 100, 000 residents, and "some 25 percent higher than any other major city". Commenting on the recent pace of change in Karachi; the report states: "From 2000 to 2010, Karachi's population grew more than 80 percent. That's roughly

equivalent to adding more than New York City's entire population in just a decade." The article says that "gangs tied to political parties have long operated in the poorer parts of the city, running extortion rings and land-grab schemes", asserting that these factors have helped turn conditions in the city to one of the most fertile hotbeds for meth trade.

The Express Tribune - September 08th, 2013

Analyses, Reports & News

Issue of Drones beyond Judicial Review

Rejecting an appeal against the Lahore High Court's decision of dismissing a petition against US drone attacks, the Supreme Court on declared that interference by the courts in such matters would be violation of the fundamental principle of the Constitution. A two-member bench comprising Justice Tasadduq Hussain Jilani and Justice Amir Hani Muslim, dismissing the appeal against the LHC order, ruled that the issue raised in the constitutional petition of Wukala Mahaz was related to foreign policy, defense and security of the country. It was explained that such issues do not fall within the judicial domain for interference under Article 199 of the Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan. In an appeal against the LHC decision, Wukala Mahaz Barai Tahaffuz-e-Dastoor, through Sarfraz Ahmed Gorski, had prayed to the court to direct the respondent (federation) to command the armed forces of Pakistan to defend the country against the US drone attacks. The high court had observed that a court could not declare the US an enemy state because it was the responsibility of Parliament and the government to decide to wage a war against that country. "Pakistani and Indian armies exchange fire very often in different sectors and sometimes casualties also occur, but on the basis of such incidents the courts cannot issue an order to wage a war against India," the court had observed. The court had also observed that it had yet to be seen whether Pakistan was capable of hitting drones and how far its missile system could target accurately.

The Nation - September 05th, 2013

Decrease in Militants Attack, Improvement in Target Selection: Report by CMC

The Conflict Monitoring Center (CMC) has observed a decrease in the number of militant attacks and deaths related to the ongoing insurgencies in Pakistan. However, over the past month, the militants have improved their target selection and carried out significant and successful operations. Per the CMC, there has been a gradual increase in the number of security forces actions against anti-state militants in KP and Balochistan. During the month of August, 185 people were killed in militant attacks and security forces' anti-militants operations, including 74 militants, 59 civilians, 50 security forces personal and two pro-government 'razakars' whereas 288 people, including 171 civilians, 106 security forces personnel, six militants and five 'razakars' were wounded. The highest number of militant attacks, subsequent deaths and counter-insurgency operations was recorded in Balochistan, making it the most affected province of the country, followed by KP. According to the CMC, 135 people were killed in 49 insurgency related incidents in Balochistan, including 27 militant attacks and 22 security forces operations. The dead include 35 security forces personnel, 43 civilians and 57 militants. Balochistan became the deadliest province for the security forces as seventy percent of the security forces personnel killed and 76 percent of those injured during August were operating in the province. The militants carried out 27 actions in Balochistan, 16 in KP, 15 in Federally

Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), six in Sindh, and one each in Islamabad and Gilgit, killing 138 people.

A Pakistan Army colonel and a senior superintendent of police (SSP) were killed in the Gilgit attack. These officers were investigating the Naga Parbat incident in which Tehreek-e-Taliban (TTP) militants had targeted foreign tourists. The forces have arrested 14 suspected militants of the TTP during search operations in the country's northern areas. During August, the militants carried out two suicide attacks killing 35 people out of whom 30 were killed in Quetta when a suicide bomber blew himself up during the funeral of a slain police officer. The blast killed senior police officials, including Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Police (Operations) Fayyaz Sumbal, Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Headquarters Shamsuddin and Superintendent Police (SP) Ali Mehr. Sixty people, mostly policemen, were also injured in the blast. The militants also used improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and conducted grenade attacks, rocket attacks, target killings and kidnappings. IEDs attacks and physical assaults constituted the majority of the militant attacks in August. Civilians continue to bear the consequences of the ongoing war-on-terror as 59 were killed and 171 wounded during the month of August. Unlike the security forces, civilian victims are not compensated by the government according to a set mechanism. In the previous month, 43 civilians were killed in Balochistan, 13 in Sindh, two in FATA and one in KP. Security forces beefed up their activities against the militants in Punjab and detained 412 suspects during a three-day-long search operation in Lahore.

However, most of the detainees were released after their identities were obtained. As many as 267 suspects were arrested, including 142 from Balochistan, 14 from Gilgit, six from Islamabad, two from Sindh and 23 from FATA. The militants kidnapped four people during the month. The security forces conducted 64 actions against insurgents in different parts of the country, killing 47 militants. The forces conducted 23 such actions in KP and 22 in Balochistan. The forces also recovered an explosive-laden auto rickshaw from Quetta besides diffusing two bombs. In KP, four militants were killed in security forces operations while one was killed in Punjab and Sindh each. The focus of the security forces actions in KP was to trace and avert militant attacks in the province. The KP police and intelligence agencies foiled ten IED attacks in the province. The Peshawar police also recovered 100 kilogrammes of explosives and averted a terror bid attack. The provincial capitals of all the four provinces of the country witnessed the highest number of insurgency-related actions. Successful target killings show that despite claims of the security forces and government officials that they have shattered the command and control structure of the militants, the TTP and Baloch militants are still intact.

Pakistan Today - September 07th, 2013

ECONOMIC WATCH

Facts & Figures

Financial Respite: IMF Bails Out Cash-Strapped Pakistan

Unlike the last stand-by arrangement between the IMF and Pakistan, the new EFF will provide the much needed fiscal breathing space to Pakistan as it will be required to repay the loan over a period of 10 years. Despite uncertainty about Pakistan's ability to implement critical reforms, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved a \$6.7 billion loan for Pakistan to forestall a balance of payment crisis. This will be the 16th programme that Pakistan and the IMF have agreed to since 1958. Unlike the last stand-by arrangement between the IMF and Pakistan, the new EFF will provide the much needed fiscal breathing space to Pakistan as it will be required to repay the loan over a period of 10 years. Pakistan is expected to receive \$540 million immediately to partially address debt obligations amounting to over \$6 billion owed by the country to international lenders this year. According to IMF sources, the remaining amount will be paid out evenly over the duration of the program, subject to the completion of quarterly reviews. Finance Minister Ishaq Dar explained that the programme agreed with the IMF is in the interest of the country and necessary to put the country on path of sustainable growth. It was agreed between both the government and IMF that the State Bank of Pakistan is likely to increase interest rates and conducted money market operations by purchasing dollars from the market to adjust the foreign exchange rate.

The Express Tribune - September 05th, 2013

SBP Raises Interest Rate to 9.5pc

The State Bank increased the policy interest rate by 50 basis points to 9.5 percent and insisted that the move would not have any negative effect on growth. Rather it would be helpful for both the government and the banking sector. Unveiling the monetary policy for the next two months at a press conference here, SBP Governor Yaseen Anwar said: "The impact of upward adjustments in energy prices on inflation outlook cannot be underestimated." The policy was to be announced in the third week of August, but delayed because of finalisation of an agreement with the IMF for a \$6.6 billion loan. And it is believed that the increase in interest rate was an outcome of that agreement. The SBP governor said that in addition to having a direct effect on CPI inflation, there was a high likelihood of considerable indirect effects as well. "Similarly, an increase in general sales tax together with the removal of certain exemptions can put further pressure on inflation in the coming months. The outlook for oil prices may deteriorate as well given escalating political tensions in the Middle East." Mr Anwar said higher interest rates were not the major constraining reason for the private sector credit off-take, adding that the lacklustre increase in credit demand was because of two 'fundamental' factors - persistent energy shortages and deteriorating law and order conditions. The State Bank said the interest rate hike would not hit growth. "The private sector can get money from banks since the government has already resolved the issue of circular debt. It will help banks invest in government papers and the government can borrow from banks." But the governor said the government would follow the strategy for keeping quarterly borrowing at zero level. He said a declining interest rate environment did contribute to a marginal pickup in loans to some sectors of private businesses in FY13, but "most of the loans were used to meet the working capital

requirement only". "Real private investment expenditures have declined for the fifth consecutive year, reaching 8.7 as per cent of GDP in FY13," he said. When asked what measures the SBP had taken to curb sharp devaluation of the rupee against the dollar, Mr Anwar said several factors were behind the declining trend, including low reserves, balance of payment problem and current account deficit. Low reserves did not allow the SBP to intervene in the market, he added. The governor said the likelihood of receiving higher financial flows had increased after the IMF approved a new loan programme for Pakistan this month. It will ease pressure on the foreign exchange market. He said the stress had gradually increased with every passing month because of shrinking net capital and financial flows and high loan repayments to the IMF. "With swift settlement of the outstanding stock of energy sector circular debt, reduction in electricity tariff-related subsidies and introduction of some taxation measures, the new government has shown intentions to address deeper issues afflicting the fiscal accounts," he said. About fiscal discipline, the governor said the government had taken bold, aggressive and serious steps to improve the fiscal position. The steps would be helpful in reaching the revenue target of Rs. 2,475 billion for the current fiscal. "This achievement will help establish fiscal balance in the country," he added. Mr Anwar said an increase of Rs1,446 billion in budgetary borrowings from the banking system during FY13 was almost Rs1 trillion higher than the original target. "Deviation of this scale has significantly constrained effective monetary management, disrupted financial intermediation in the economy and led to a sharp increase in domestic debt,"

Dawn - September 14th, 2013

Monetary Policy: State Bank Raises Discount Rate By 50bps

Against the expectations of most banking sector analysts, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on increased its discount rate by 50 basis points to 9.5% in view of inflationary pressures. The monetary policy rate, announced every two months, is the interest rate at which commercial banks are allowed to borrow from the central bank's discount window. From a peak of 14% in June 2011, the discount rate has declined 500 basis points over the last two years. The decision was surprising for most analysts, who believed the key interest rate would remain flat in line with the Letter of Intent (LoI) that Pakistan submitted to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) earlier this month. In the LoI, the Ministry of Finance explicitly stated that the loan programme envisages a 'moderate monetary policy' initially, with policy tightening expected in the second and third years of the 36-month programme. However, the central bank's decision to increase the policy rate by 50 basis points for the next two months seems to be based purely on rising inflation numbers. The year-on-year consumer price index (CPI) - a key measure of inflation in an economy - increased 8.5% in August, 8.2% in July, and 5.9% in June. Speaking to journalists at the SBP, Governor Yaseen Anwar said the impact of upward adjustments in energy prices on inflation outlook cannot be underestimated. "In addition to having a direct effect on CPI inflation, there is a high likelihood of considerable indirect effects as well," he said, adding that an increase in the General Sales Tax could put further pressure on inflation in coming months. According to Umair Naseer, banking sector analyst at Global Securities, CPI is expected to remain between 8.6% and 8.9% in the next two months. However, many analysts anticipate a steeper rise in inflation, as the government intends to phase out power sector subsidies by reducing their share in the country's gross domestic product (GDP) from 1.8% to between 0.3%-0.4% in the next three years. The recent uptick in the CPI has reduced the gap between inflation and key interest rates in the economy - also known as the real interest rate - to only 45 basis points in August from 74 basis points in July. Given the fact that the gap has been in the range of 100-150 basis points on average in recent years, the spectre of a negative real interest

rate appeared lurking right around the corner had the SBP decided to keep the discount rate unchanged. One of the many unintended consequences of a negative real interest rate could possibly be the dollarisation of the economy, leading to capital flight and rupee's devaluation.

Effect on Capital Markets

According to Elixir Securities Analyst Faisal Bilwani, the stock market is likely to react negatively to the hike in the discount rate. Indeed, stock prices in the leveraged sectors, such as cement and textile, witnessed a sharp decline in session because the market factored in the effect of a possible discount rate hike. "SBP's decision to increase the discount rate will not bode well for the equity markets, especially for highly leveraged companies," said Invest Capital Analyst Abdul Azeem. "We predict the cement sector to be the worst affected by this move. Similarly, the textile sector and Engro from the fertiliser sector will have a negative impact on their valuations largely due to an increase in the cost of borrowing, eroding their bottom lines," he added. Understandably, banks will reap the benefits of the hike in the discount rate, as it will lead to improved spreads and profitability. "We reiterate a positive stance on the exploration and production and power sectors consequent to the rising oil prices and negligible debt exposure," Azeem noted.

The Express Tribune - September 14th, 2013

BISP Management Pockets Rs. 975m: Audit Report

According to the World Bank's Financial Access Survey (FAS) 2013 results, in Pakistan commercial bank branches per 1,000 kms have been recorded at 13.40, commercial bank branches per 100,000 adults at 8.97, ATMs per 1,000 kms at 8.10, ATMs per 100,000 adults at 5.42, outstanding deposits with commercial banks 33.23 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP), outstanding loans from commercial banks 18.97 percent of the GDP, deposit accounts with commercial banks per 1,000 adults at 299.10, loan accounts with commercial banks per 1,000 adults at 28.99, household deposit accounts with commercial banks per 1,000 adults at 144.55 and household loan accounts with commercial banks per 1,000 adults 15.89.

The results of the 2013 Financial Access Survey (FAS) conducted by the IMF's Statistics Department have been posted in September on the IMF's FAS website. The 2013 FAS round was conducted with generous financial support from the Netherlands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The IMF's FAS is the most comprehensive source of global supply-side data on financial inclusion, encompassing internationally-comparable basic indicators of financial access and usage by corporations and households. In addition to providing policymakers, researchers, and financial service providers with annual geographic and demographic data on access to basic consumer financial services worldwide, the FAS is an officially recognised data source for the G20 Basic Set of Financial Inclusion Indicators endorsed by the G20 Leaders at the Los Cabos Summit in June 2012.

Financial deepening and economic growth: The FAS provides strong quantitative underpinning to the theoretical literature linking financial deepening and economic growth. By way of illustration, the positive correlation between the increase in the use of commercial bank services (a measure of financial deepening) and the increase in GDP per capita (a measure of economic growth) is especially noteworthy when comparing financial inclusion trends across Africa and Asia. In Africa, commercial bank depositors per 1,000 adults experienced a near fourfold increase from 2004 to 2012, while simultaneously achieving a 40 percent growth in real GDP per capita. Similarly, in the Asia and Pacific region, depositors per 1,000 adults nearly doubled over the same period, with real GDP per capita increasing more than 70 percent.

The FAS database currently contains annual data for 189 jurisdictions, including all G20 economies, covering a nine-year period (2004-2012), totaling more than 40,000 times.

Improving access to financial services and building inclusive financial systems are gaining priority for the policymakers in the aftermath of the global financial crisis. An increasing number of financial regulators around the world are tasked with promoting access to financial services in addition to ensuring the stability of financial markets by regulating and supervising financial institutions. FAS collects data on access to and usage of financial services from central banks and other financial regulators around the world on an annual basis. The key FAS indicators help identify knowledge gaps and set priorities for policies on broadening financial access; monitor the effectiveness of these policies over time; advance research and analysis to strengthen understanding of the determinants and implications of financial access and usage.

Daily Times - September 18th, 2013

Containing the Damage: Government on Course, Restricts Deficit in First Two Months

The new government has got off to a good start, as it appears to have consolidated its fiscal position in first two months of the current fiscal year, restricting budget deficit to 0.8% of gross domestic product or Rs208 billion. In percentage terms, the gap between national income and expenditure in July and August stood at the same level as in the corresponding period of last fiscal year and was in line with this year's annual deficit target of 5.8% of GDP, according to provisional results. However, in absolute terms, the deficit was Rs20 billion higher than the same period a year ago. The figures seem encouraging, especially after the previous fiscal year recorded a huge deficit at Rs1.833 trillion or 8% of GDP. The last PPP government too had a good start in the first two months of the previous fiscal year, but later massive slippages occurred and state revenues were consumed for political gains ahead of May 11 general election. According to officials, the current fiscal year is distinct from the previous one because of an agreement with the International Monetary Fund for a \$6.7 billion loan programme that binds the government to remain within permissible limits. "The arrangement with the IMF is sacrosanct for us and the government will monitor macro indicators on a monthly basis," said Rana Assad Amin, spokesman for the finance ministry. He said the central government was continuously pushing the Federal Board of Revenue to step up efforts, as its performance was the key to meeting this year's budget deficit target.

According to the figures, net federal revenues, excluding the share of provinces, were Rs207 billion against total expenditures of Rs474 billion, showing a shortfall of Rs267 billion or slightly over 1% of GDP. The federal government transferred Rs212 billion to the four provinces under the divisible pool, of which the federating units saved Rs59 billion. These savings brought the overall deficit down to 0.8% of GDP. Under an IMF condition, the provinces for the first time are required to notch up a minimum Rs117 billion in savings in the current fiscal year. However, a detailed review of income and expenditure showed that the government's decision to take away Universal Services Fund of private telecom companies helped economic managers save face. In July this year, the Economic Coordination Committee of the cabinet decided that the Rs67 billion USF deposited by private telecom companies would be placed in the federal consolidated fund. This came despite opposition from telecom companies. The USF helped reduce the deficit by 0.3%. Had the government not taken that money, the deficit would have been 1.1%. Another factor that led to a manageable deficit was the move to restrict government's development expenditure to just Rs17 billion, a mere 3.1% of the annual federal Public Sector Development Programme of Rs540 billion.

As a contingency measure, the federal government has assured the IMF that it will slow down releases for development projects in first nine months of the fiscal year to save Rs130 billion so that the 5.8% deficit target could be met. Contrary to 3.1% development expenditure, the current expenditure in July and August stood at Rs457 billion, 15% of the annual current spending target. Out of Rs457 billion, Rs207 billion went for debt servicing. In the first two months, the FBR bagged Rs275 billion in taxes, 11.2% of its annual target of Rs2.475 trillion. The IMF has already stated that the FBR will miss the target by Rs130 billion. Non-tax collection, including USF money, remained at Rs144 billion.

The Express Tribune - September 18th, 2013

Pakistan must improve infrastructure to unlock growth: World Bank

Rising share of services and manufacturing in an economy are generally associated with urbanisation as the economy increases its sophistication through stronger productivity and growth. Unfortunately Pakistan is unable to use its increased urbanisation and agglomeration to generate the growth and high productivity jobs, says a recent World Bank report. The report highlighted key issues that hampered economic activities in Pakistan, with infrastructure, agglomeration and urbanisation ranked as top issues which governments have failed to address for decades, putting the country's economy at risk. According to the report Pakistan is in the midst of two key trends that can provide increased manufacturing potential: significant migration to urban areas, and the development of agglomeration economies. Agglomeration economies are the advantages of the clustering effect of industries. Though Pakistan does have a few industrial clusters, they are not providing the best results due to the fact that they are not properly planned, have missing facilities, a majority of them are not environment friendly and above all these clusters have weak infrastructure services which often fail to connect these clusters together and to important markets throughout the country. The report termed this as one of the main bottlenecks for doing business in Pakistan.

According to the report, like other South Asian countries Pakistan is experiencing a shift from an agriculture based economy to a services-based economy. But at the same time, a young and largely low skilled unemployed labour force has also been rising. To address these issues and to jolt Pakistan's manufacturing into increasing its share of gross domestic product (GDP) involves a range of measures. These include improving labour skills and the commercial environment, harnessing positive forces of agglomeration, promoting inclusive green industrial growth, addressing bottlenecks in supply chains, taking advantage of cleaner industries and certification for exports, and ensuring that regulations are in place and enforced to avoid the negative externalities of agglomeration. Urbanisation facilitates agglomeration as face to face exchange of information is important in allowing labour and production to learn from each other to apply technological advances. Agglomeration economies help creating internationally connected cities, concentrating production and further facilitating economic growth. As cities catalyse agglomeration, they are important engines of economic growth. The report recommends that cities and industrial clusters need to be better interconnected by upgrading, extending and rehabilitating infrastructure. Investments in freight transport should be developed, coordinated with efforts to establish or strengthen industrial clusters. Synergies between freight transport and cluster development would boost the structural and spatial transformations that Pakistan is undergoing.

The Express Tribune - September 18th, 2013

DEVELOPMENT WATCH**Development Projects & Initiatives****Rescue Plan: Government Approves Rs25.7b Bailout for Railways**

In a first step towards restructuring Pakistan Railways, the government approved a bailout package worth Rs25.7 billion for the crisis-hit entity. The funds will be used to repair the engines currently out of order in addition to buying 50 new diesel-electric locomotives. Approval to the two projects given by the Central Development Working Party (CDWP) marks the beginning of restructuring the cash-strapped state-owned company that has been incurring losses for years due to aging and shortage of equipment, overstaffing and debt accumulation. However, approval of these projects without a comprehensive restructuring plan puts a question mark over the prudent use of the taxpayers' money. The approval by the CDWP is a departure from the government's previous stance on Railways. The Economic Coordination Committee had earlier refused to pick up debt liabilities worth \$112 million of the national carrier. The Railways had obtained this loan for procurement of locomotives. Headed by Minister for Planning, Development and Reforms Ahsan Iqbal, the CDWP meeting on Friday approved a project for procuring 50 diesel-electric locomotives, half of which will be engines with 3,000 horsepower and the other half of 2,000 horsepower. The Railways wants to procure the locomotives to handle freight traffic including transportation of furnace oil across the country - a neglected area in the past, which also became one of the reasons behind the accumulation of losses by the company. The CDWP also cleared a Rs6.3 billion project for rehabilitation of as many as 30 diesel locomotives. By spending Rs6 billion, the management of Pakistan Railways wants to extend the life of these locomotives by another 15 years.

The previous government had opposed to give financial lifeline to Pakistan Railways, and instead first sought a comprehensive restructuring plan. One of the reasons for refusing the bailout package was that the then finance minister desired to procure new locomotives from General Electric of the United States, while the Railways wanted to strike a deal with a Chinese firm, according to sources in the finance ministry. The other major reason for failing to revive the entity was tailor-made tenders for procurement of locomotives issued by Pakistan Railways. Every time they issued a tender, it became controversial. For a \$6.7 billion programme, Pakistan has assured the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that by March 2014 it will develop a comprehensive restructuring plan for Pakistan Railways and the company will be converted from a government-controlled department to a state-owned liability company. However, experts have again questioned the government's move of keeping the Railways a state-owned entity, which according to them, will not solve the problems. They said the government did not seem serious in resolving the problems of the entity and wanted to retain the workforce, hired under political compulsions in the past by successive governments. In the previous regime, the Planning Commission had also proposed a plan to convert Railways into three separate companies, each one having its own business model. These companies had been proposed for separately running Railways' commercial operations, to manage its properties and to deal with the affairs of national carrier's workshops. The CDWP also approved eight other projects having total value of Rs37 billion, including the Rs22.5-billion for Gomal Zam Dam and Rs11.6-billion Punjab Irrigation Project.

The Express Tribune - September 08th, 2013

CDWP Approves 33 Projects Worth Rs 82.114 Billion

The Central Development Working Party (CDWP) approved and recommended 33 projects costing Rs 82.114 billion with foreign exchange component of Rs 49.528 billion. Approved projects cover health, higher education, environment, physical planning and housing, information and broadcasting, culture, transport and communication, water and energy sectors. The projects of higher education sector included Enhancement of Infrastructure at IMS Sciences Peshawar, Provision of Academic and Research Facilities of Government College University of Faisalabad, Establishment of Main Campus of Federal Urdu University of Arts, Science and Technology Islamabad, Quaid-e-Awan University of Engineering and Technology, Nawab Shah and US Aid Merit and Need-based Scholarship Programme Phase -II, under which thousands of scholarships shall be awarded to needy students for higher education in leading educational institutions in the country. The CDWP approved two projects of Pakistan Railways, which included Rehabilitation of 27 NGMU - 30 Diesel Electric Locomotives. Under this project, 27 existing over-aged HGMU - 30 Diesel Electric Locomotives of 3,000 HP will be rehabilitated at a cost of Rs 6.3 billion to make them fit for operation for another lease of life of 12-15 years. Rehabilitation cost will be 50 percent of the cost of new locomotives. Railways will procure 50 Diesel Electric Locomotives at a cost of Rs 19.4 billion. Half of the engines would be 3000 HP while 25 engines will have the capacity of 2000 HP. These locos will be used to haul freight traffic including furnace oil required for forthcoming Independent Power Plants. The minister emphasised that procurement should be made in a transparent manner and according to local weather conditions. It is hoped that this investment will improve performance of Pakistan Railways. The meeting approved project of Flyover in Quetta city to be executed by the government of Balochistan under Quetta Development Package of Rs 3 billion. Similarly, CDWP also approved four other projects related to provincial roads costing Rs 3.4 billion located in Balochistan.

Of Rs 3.4 billion, Rs 2.0 billion will be provided by the federal government to assist the government of Balochistan though construction of provincial roads is the responsibility of the provincial government. The CDWP also approved upgradation and re-modeling of Ring Road (Southern Section) Peshawar costing Rs 2.9 billion. In the water sector eight projects costing Rs 37 billion including Gomal Zame Dam located in Tank and DI Khan District at a cost of Rs 22.480 billion was recommended by CDWP to ECNEC for consideration and approval. Gomal Zam Dam will harness floodwater to provide assured irrigation water supply of 848 cusecs and irrigate 191,138 acres of land. The dam would also generate 17.4 megawatts power. Mujahid Dam located in Rawalpindi district costing Rs 701 million was also approved by the CDWP. The dam will provide 14 cusecs of sustainable irrigation water supply. The dam will irrigate 2,000 acres of agricultural land. Other water sector projects approved by the CDWP included Mohra Shera Dam and Punjab Irrigation System Improvement Project costing Rs 11.534 billion. Construction of Small Dams in Balochistan was also approved in the meeting. The CDWP directed to undertake feasibility study for the exploration of ground water along Old Course of Historical River at Thar Coal area. Construction of 132 kV Grid Station at Jamrud and 132 kv feeder for Jamrud in and out from 500 kv Grid Station Sheikh Muhammad/Jamrud Transmission line was approved. The CDWP approved four projects in health sector. Centre for Nuclear Medicine and Radiotherapy Quetta will be upgraded at a cost of Rs 823 million. The government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will finance three projects costing Rs 2.342 billion including TB Control Programme, Immunisation Programme and Social Health Protection.

Daily Times - September 08th, 2013

ECC Meeting: Government Approves Fresh Rs2.9bn Bailout for Steel Mills

Government has approved a bailout package for Steel Mills worth Rs2.9 billion. The decision was taken in the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) meeting headed by Finance Minister Ishaq Dar. The meeting further decided that the Chairman Board of Investment and Ministry of Industries should come up with a proposal for long term solution of the problem in the next meeting. It also decided against privatisation of Pakistan Steel Mills, reiterating that it will remain a public sector enterprise. Steel Mills will be provided the money in three installments with the first one in the current month and the rest over the subsequent months. The ECC further directed the Trading Corporation of Pakistan to purchase 100,000 Metric Tonnes of sugar to maintain strategic reserves. Similarly the ECC was told that presently the wheat stock stood at 7.043 metric tonnes compared to 6.750 metric tonnes in the corresponding period last year, Radio Pakistan reported. The meeting approved Yamaha Motorcycle Industries to have qualified under the new entrant policy for Motorcycle Industry as an industry with new technology. The decision will clear the way for a foreign direct investment of 150 million dollars. The meeting was informed that State Bank had received the first installment of five hundred fifty million dollars from the International Monitoring Fund thus increasing the Foreign Exchange Reserve to ten point four billion dollars.

The Express Tribune - September 08th, 2013

KPK Institutes Up By 28pc: Report

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government on Monday launched first-ever Management Information System (MIS) report on technical and vocational education and training (TVET), showing an increase of 28 per cent in the number of institutes during last five years. The MIS report has been formally launched by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Pervez Khattak last week while its findings were disseminated here at a ceremony organised by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Technical Education and Vocational Training Agency (KPK-TEVTA). The report has been prepared by the KPK-TEVTA with the technical assistance of TVET Reform Support Programme, which is co-funded by the European Union, the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Federal Republic of Germany and being implemented by the GIZ in Pakistan. MPA Abdul Karim Khan, Chief Minister Advisor on Technical Education, was the chief guest while the ceremony was attended by Secretary Industries and Technical Education Sajid Khan Jadoon, Director General Technical Education Professor Shakeel Ahmed, National Deputy Coordinator TVET Reforms Support Programme Raja Saad Khan and a large number of industrialists and experts on technical education. As per the report, the number of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutes has registered an increase of 28 per cent in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa since 2007 with commerce and management sciences, as the most-flourished sector having 32 per cent growth rate. Besides, 53 per cent expansion was occurred in the facilities dedicated for women as compared to the only 21 per cent increase in institutes for men. Though the number of TVET increased, the enrollment increase is not that encouraged which was increased by only 4 per cent. However, female enrolment went up by 18 per cent in commerce education. Civil Technology topped the list of trainee enrollment in 2012 in which 5257 students were enrolled followed by Electrical Technology with 4695 and Mechanical Technology 2785 registered trainees out of the total of 16156 trainees. Dressing Making, Food, Auto Farm and Petroleum Technology courses remained low in demand.

The Nation - September 17th, 2013

Pakistan, WB Sign \$0.9m Accord for Industries Project in KP

The government of Pakistan has signed a grant agreement of \$900,000 with the World Bank (WB) for 'Competitive Industries Project in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa' to be funded under Multi Donor Trust Fund (MDTF). The agreement was signed by Economic Affairs Division Secretary Nargis Sethi on behalf of the government of Pakistan, Industry Secretary Sajid Khan Jadoon on behalf of the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and WB Country Director Rachid Benmessaoud on behalf of WB. The agreement was in line with the present government policy of generating economic activities in all the federating units particularly Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to offset effects of the fight against militancy and extremism. The project aims to improve the competitiveness of the marble and food processing sectors in KP by providing shared infrastructure and relevant skills along the marble sector value chain and by addressing knowledge and coordination gaps along the food processing sector value chain. The economic benefits of the project's investments will derive from a net increase in the economic value added, which will occur as a result of existing activities being undertaken at a higher productivity level, and also as a result of new activities that are expected to boost the overall productive capacity of the sectors.

Daily Times - September 18th, 2013

Development Expenditure Likely To Be Cut By About 28pc

The government is expected to slash development expenditures for the current financial year by about 28 per cent to Rs834 billion from Rs1.155 trillion to contain fiscal deficit. According to documents released by the International Monetary Fund, the target for the federal PSDP for the fiscal year 2013-14 has been reduced to Rs420bn from Rs540bn announced in the budget, down by more than 22pc. And the annual development programme of the provinces has been cut to Rs414bn from Rs615bn envisaged in the provincial budgets, a reduction of about 33pc. As a result, the cumulative federal and provincial development expenditures will stand at Rs834bn, brought down by 27.8pc from Rs1.155 trillion. Finance Minister Ishaq Dar has given a written assurance to the IMF that the government envisaged several contingent measures in case the expected adjustment in fiscal and economic measures fell short of objectives to ameliorate risks to the programme signed with the Fund. The measures, he said, included reduced allocations during the first nine months of the current fiscal year to create a reserve against any shortfall and use of reserves built into the capital expenditure budget, if needed. These could yield savings amounting to 0.5pc of gross domestic product (GDP). "In addition, we stand ready to take any other measures needed to assure compliance with our fiscal target," the minister said. It was against this background that the government has released Rs54bn in the first two and half months (up to Sept 17) for the federal PSDP.

Under the existing mechanism for release of funds for development schemes, the government is required to release about 20pc (Rs108bn) of the total budgetary allocation of Rs540bn. Also, the IMF has scaled down its assessment of FBR collection to Rs2.345trn from the budgetary target of Rs2.475trn - a reduction of Rs130bn. The IMF estimates the GDP growth rate at below 3pc as against 4.4pc envisaged in the budget. The finance minister had said in his budget speech that higher PSDP allocation would boost the growth rate, generate economic activities and create jobs for the growing young population. The IMF has also revised the target for fiscal deficit to 5.8 per cent of GDP from 6.3pc envisaged in the budget. The IMF programme estimates devaluation of the rupee (real effective exchange rate) by 7.7pc during the current fiscal year against the government's original estimate of less than 5pc. It requires the government to stabilise the public debt at 66.6pc of GDP, instead of 69.2pc earlier estimated by the IMF. The

average inflation over the life of the IMF programme has been estimated at double digit. Net foreign assets have been targeted to be increased by 3.9pc of GDP from negative 3.4pc, while net domestic assets are to be reduced to 12.2pc of GDP from 19.3pc. Likewise, gross savings are projected to go up to 14.3pc from 13.3pc.

Dawn - September 19th, 2013

Health Projects

Health Reports/ Controls

'12m People Infected With Hepatitis in Pakistan'

The prevalence of Hepatitis B stands at 2.6 percent and that of Hepatitis C at 4.8 percent, while currently there are 12 million people infected with the disease in the country. Associate Professor of Medicine at the Lady Reading Hospital Dr Javed Iqbal Farooqi and Chairman Association of Pakistani Physicians of North America (APPNA) Hepatitis Initiatives Dr Maqbool Arshad expressed these views while speaking at a one-day symposium on "Hepatitis Epidemic and Control Strategy in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa" at a hotel. The speakers said the main reasons for the spread of hepatitis are frequent use of therapeutic injections, re-use of syringes, blood transfusions with unscreened blood, inappropriate sterilisation practices and weak hospital waste management. The Khyber Medical University had organised the event in collaboration with the Department of Health and APPNA with main objective of raising awareness about treatment and prevention of hepatitis. Provincial Minister for Health Shaukat Ali Yousafzai was chief guest on the occasion, while acting KМУ Vice-chancellor Prof Dr Shad Mohammad, Dr Fakhar-e-Alam, secretary for health, Prof Dr Mukhtiar Zaman, director research KМУ, and central PTI leader Azam Khan Swati also spoke on the occasion. The speakers said the spread of hepatitis could easily be checked by raising awareness among people on large scale. About causes of spread of hepatitis B & C, the speakers said use of used syringes, unsafe sexual relations, unscreened blood transfusions, shaving with contaminated razor, tattooing, contaminated instruments of footpath dentists, unsafe intravenous infusions, wastes in hospital wards and improper blood sample collection are among major factors contributing to spread of the disease. By adopting simple preventive measures, we can control the spread of the disease, they added. Addressing the symposium Shaukat Ali Yousafzai said awareness among general public can reduce the burden of hepatitis on society. The government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is committed to adopting all possible measures to contain hepatitis from the province.

The News - September 06th, 2013

PIMS: A Breeding Ground for Dengue

Conditions at the capital's largest government hospital, the bustling Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (Pims), are ripe for the spread of dengue. The lack of a proper water drainage and waste collection system threaten families who spend their nights in the open within the hospital premises. The hospital grounds are at a severe risk of a dengue outbreak as every time it rains, puddles of water remain on hospital grounds for days, along with the garbage disposed of by attendants of patients — potential breeding grounds for dengue mosquitoes. The hospital administration appears satisfied with its current anti-dengue campaign — hanging banners containing useful information and establishing isolation wards for dengue-positive patients — and is yet to notice the dengue-prone conditions surrounding the hospital premises. "What

more can happen to us poor people, we are already suffering from a number of miseries,” said Arshad Hussain, an attendant who, along with his three family members, is spends the night in one of the lawns at Pims. The family has come from Chakwal to treat a loved one suffering from urologic disease. “After sunset, it becomes difficult to stay under the tress because of the mosquitoes but we don’t have a choice. Every day my three-year-old boy wakes up with several mosquito bites,” he said. Khursheed, another attendant, said “Doctors do not allow us to stay inside the inpatient wards and as we have nowhere else to go, we sleep on the hospital lawns”. “Mosquito nets are of little use as we cannot keep our movement restricted and we cannot afford the expensive anti-mosquito lotions,” he said. Meanwhile, a senior medical specialist at Pims, wishing anonymity, said “It is a fact that attendants and visitors are at risk of being infected with dengue but in fact, even people inside the building are not safe”. He said that in various wards, water accumulates as many of the taps are leaking which can also serve as a breeding ground for mosquitoes. Despite several attempts, Dr Ayesha, the official Pims spokesperson, could not be reached for comments.

The Express Tribune - September 06th, 2013

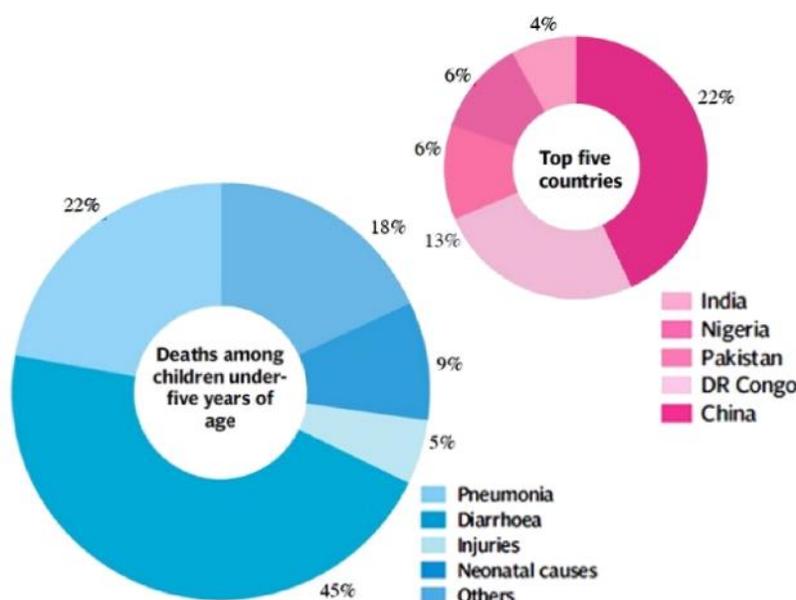
Vaccinators Stage Protest Rally at District Health Complex

Vaccinators serving under district health department staged a protest rally here on Friday in front of the District Health Complex in Khayaban-e-Sir Syed demanding removal of divisional head of World Health Organisation on polio. Over 200 vaccinators participated in the protest. They were carrying placards bearing their demands. They demanded of the concerned authorities to take proper action against the newly appointed divisional head of WHO, according to them, humiliated the health workers including vaccinators and union councils’ medical officers terming them thieves. The vaccinators threatened to go on strike and refused to take part in the up-coming Short Interval Additional Dose Anti-Polio campaign being launched in selected high-risk union councils of the district. According to health workers, the divisional head of WHO on polio Dr. Sarwat during her first interactive session insulted the health workers and passed derogatory remarks for them. It is important that vaccinators are employees of the district health department who work in coordination with the WHO staff during vaccination campaigns. The District Health Officer Dr. Khalid Randhawa negotiated with the protesting vaccinators and convinced them to, at least, take part in SIAD for the sake of public. He added that vaccinators have threatened to discontinue their services even during the SIAD activity if Dr. Sarwat comes in the field for coordination. To a query, he said that he has already informed Director General Health Punjab Dr. Tanveer Ahmed of the issue requesting him to help resolve the matter so that children should not be affected due to any unpleasant incident during the SIAD campaign that is being launched. Dr. Randhawa said that he also talked to Director EPI Punjab Dr. Munir Ahmed on the issue and has given details to him. It is important that Dr. Sarwat has already expressed that she was sharing her feelings and experiences with the health workers during her first interactive session and did not intend to insult anyone. Meanwhile, Pakistan Medical Association President Dr. Arshad Rana visited the district health officer on Friday and expressed his concerns over the incident terming it highly sensitive in nature. He requested the health department to resolve the matter on urgent basis.

The News - September 14th, 2013

Child Mortality: Pakistan Tough Place for Children to Stay Alive, Says Report

Just five countries account for half of the global total of deaths among children under-five, and Pakistan is one of them. This is among the findings in a United Nations report titled, 'Committing to Child Survival: A Promise Renewed'. The global burden of under-five deaths has fallen steadily since 1990 from 12 million to 6.6 million in 2012, however, "Pakistan is ranked 26 for under-five mortality in the world with 86 per 1,000 live births, a neonatal mortality rate of 42, and infant mortality rate of 69," says the report. Pakistan is also among the four countries across the world where more than half of under-five deaths are caused by pneumonia or diarrhea. "There are 20 high-mortality countries in which at least 40% of under-five deaths occur in the neonatal period, and more than 4 in 10 of all neonatal deaths worldwide occur in just three countries — India, Nigeria, and Pakistan," says the report. Meanwhile in 2012, an estimated 51 million children under-five are underweight for their height, with almost 80% of these children living in South Asia or sub-Saharan Africa, says the report.



Meeting MDGs

The report says that to achieve Millennium Development Goal (MDG) four by 2015, an additional 3.5 million children's lives must be saved between 2013 and 2015. Breaking this projection down by country indicates where the greatest challenge lies to meet this international goal. "One-third of these lives need to be saved in just two countries — Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo — with a further fifth in India and Pakistan," reveals the report.

Child-Rearing Tips

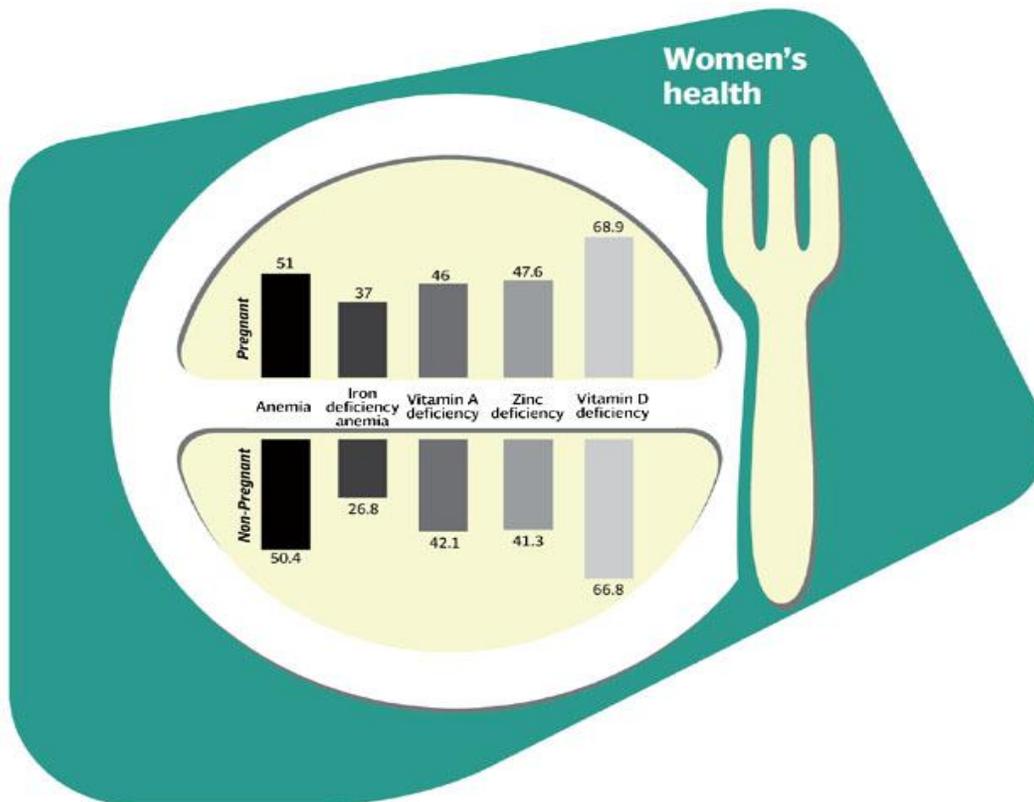
The report recommends exclusively breastfeeding all newborns till six months of age, immunising children and newborns with all recommended vaccines, and eliminating all harmful traditions and violence against children. To ensure children grow up in a safe and protective environment. Besides this feed children with proper nutritional foods and micronutrient supplements, where available, and de-worm children; give oral rehydration salts (ORS) and daily zinc supplements for 10-14 days to all children suffering from diarrhea. In a press

statement issued by Save the Children International, the NGO's Chief Executive Jasmine Whitbread said, "Dramatic global progress is being made in saving children's lives and we are now at an historic point where ending preventable child deaths lies within our grasp. This demonstrates that widespread efforts to improve access to life-saving healthcare for some of the world's most vulnerable children are working. But these efforts need to be stepped up in order to prevent millions more from dying." The new data reveals that a historic opportunity is at risk because two main challenges remain — the poorest children are being excluded and too many children are still not surviving through the first month of life.

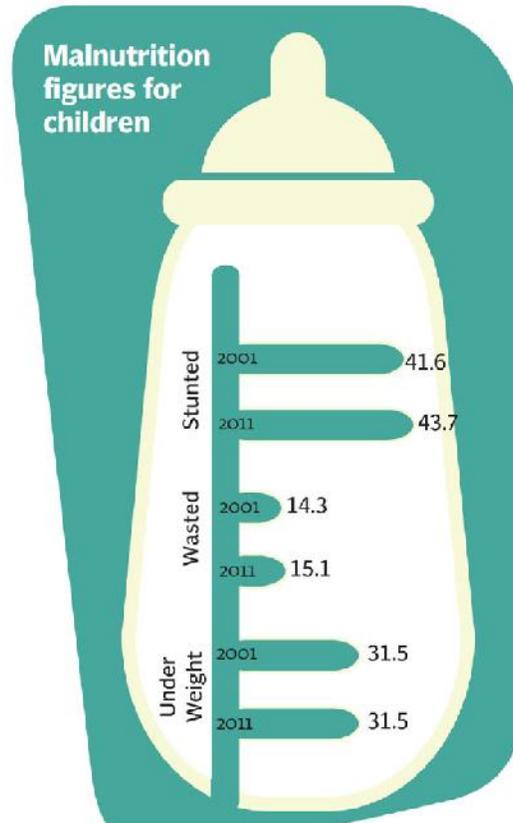
The Express Tribune - September 14th, 2013

National Nutrition Survey: 'Women and Children Suffer From Acute Malnutrition'

According to the study, the stunting rate among children under the age of five years has increased from 41.6 per cent in 2001 to 43.7 per cent in 2011. The findings of the NNS-2011, launched in collaboration with the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, reveal that 58.1 per cent of households are food insecure and only three per cent of children receive a diet that meets the minimum standards of dietary diversity. Just three countries account for half of malnourished women and children globally and Pakistan is one of them, stated the report. "Major factors leading to chronic malnutrition in the country are poverty, high illiteracy rates among mothers and food insecurity." However, the findings of the NNS 2011 indicate a slight improvement since 2001 in terms of core maternal and childhood nutrition indicators which have profound effect on children's immunity, growth and mental development.



The NNS-2011 shows that there has been a slight improvement in the rates of malnutrition in children under-five determined over the past decade, after assessing their anthropometry (measurement of the human individual) status, but the current statistics are nevertheless alarming. According to the study, the stunting rate among children under the age of five years has increased from 41.6 per cent in 2001 to 43.7 per cent in 2011; the wasting percentage has increased from 14.3 per cent in 2001 to 15.1 per cent in 2011. There has been no change in the percentage of underweight children since 2001, which is 31.5 per cent.



Massive micronutrient deficiencies were found in women. Some 51 per cent of pregnant women were anaemic, 46 per cent suffered from vitamin A deficiency, 47.6 per cent from zinc deficiency and 68.9 per cent from vitamin D deficiency. The incidence of malnutrition was only slightly lower among non-pregnant women — 50.4 per cent of whom were anaemic, 41.3 per cent had vitamin A deficiency, and 66.8 per cent had vitamin D deficiency. The data revealed that around 53.9 per cent of the elderly population did not have normal weight, they were either under or overweight. Among them 15.8 per cent were thin, 24.2 per cent overweight and 13.9 per cent were obese. NNS 2011 data reveals that 40.5 per cent mothers breastfed their children within one hour of birth, while 77.3 per cent mothers continued breastfeeding children up to 12-15 months. The data indicates that 63.5 per cent of mothers predominantly breastfed children till the first six months. In Islamabad, exclusive breastfeeding among educated families hovered around 37 per cent, which is very low. Nutrition Wing Director General Dr Baseer Achakzai said international donors were waiting for the official launch of the NNS-2011 to initiate a dialogue with the government to develop nutrition programmes keeping in view the country's acute malnutrition status.

The Express Tribune - September 18th, 2013

KP Government Releases Rs. 30.7m to Hospital for Free Services

The provincial government has released an amount of Rs. 30.7 million to the King Abdullah Teaching Hospital for the purchase of medicines which would be provided to the patients visiting the healthcare centre free of cost. Medical Superintendent Dr Niaz Mohammad told reporters on Monday that free medicines would be provided to patients at the emergency, intensive care unit and medical and surgical wards. Dr Niaz said that he had summoned a meeting of heads of different departments and doctors in the hospital and directed them to strictly follow government policy of quality healthcare services and free medicines to patients. He said that besides provision of free medicines, all other health services available at the hospital were being provided without payment to the patients. He said reconstruction work on the District Headquarters Hospital which was renamed as King Abdullah Teaching Hospital was in progress with the financial assistance of the Saudi Arabian government after it developed serious cracks in the October 8, 2005 devastating earthquake. The out-patients department (OPD), which has been functioning in makeshift shelters, was shifted to a newly constructed block recently.

The News - September 24th, 2013

600 Pregnant Women Die Annually In Pakistan

Speakers at a seminar, titled "Towards Realising Family Planning Vision 2020", said more than 200 million women and girls in developing countries lack access to contraceptives and family planning information, which results in death of many women. The Family Planning Association of Pakistan (FPAP) had arranged the seminar. After the 18th Amendment, the Population Ministry has been devolved to provinces and of 17 related departments, 14 have been decentralised. Except for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, all other provinces, Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir could not have any population policy. Nabila Malik of FPAP told participants that contraceptive use in Pakistan is about 30 percent while Pakistan had committed in London Summit 2012 on Family Planning, which was attended by 180 countries, to increase the contraceptive use up to 55 percent. In this regard, facilities will be increased both at public and private level and supply line would be improved, she said. In Islamabad, she added, the use of contraceptive is 59 percent while in rural areas of the country the situation is worse. In Pakistan, 100,000 lady health workers are providing family planning facilities but recently due to funds shortage, they were not paid their salaries properly. Nabila regretted that there is no population policy in Punjab while the KP has drafted a proper policy.

"In Sweden, not a single woman dies during pregnancy while in Pakistan about 600 women die annually due to pregnancy complications. In Iran, before marriage, a whole day compulsory briefing is given and in some cases blood test is also carried out. Iran has always received five top medals at international level over population related policies." She said Pakistan is at the lowest in devising population welfare programmes in the region, adding that Pakistan required huge investment in population welfare programmes. "For abortion, married women usually go to untrained health officials because the government has banned this practice. When abortion cases become complicated, these women are admitted to government hospitals. Usually, such women don't want more children and want abortion but they are not allowed to do this legally," Nabila said. Pakistan has committed in London Summit on Family Planning, which was held on July 11, 2012 that it would take several measures to control higher population growth rate. "The FPAP has plan Family Planning 2020 for population welfare programmes. It has been proven that family planning saves lives, improves health, strengthens communities, and stimulates economic growth. Contraceptives are one of the best investments a country can make in its

future,” she said. Family Planning 2020 builds on the partnerships launched at the London Summit on Family Planning. It will sustain the momentum from London and ensure all partners are working together to achieve and support the goals and commitments announced at the summit.

Daily Times - September 27th, 2013

Education Projects

No Drones for Education

The United States (US) will announce the launch of the Pakistan Reading Project (PRP) on International Literacy Day to boost the reading skills of 3.2 million Pakistani children. The project will fund improvement in reading instruction and reading assessment in Pakistani public schools from grade one to grade five. The International Rescue Committee (IRC), which is partnering regional governments and Pakistani civil society organisations, will implement the \$160 million project in an estimated 38,000 public schools over the next five years. The launch of this program on the International Literacy Day, observed annually on September 8, demonstrates the commitment of the US and its Pakistani partners to improve reading and writing skills. After the agreement was signed between the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and IRC, USAID Mission Director Gregory Gottlieb said “The PRP will provide Pakistani children an opportunity to develop skills which are essential for success in higher education and in the workplace. Children who do not learn to read in the first few grades of school will struggle to keep up with classroom assignments in later grades.” IRC Chief of Party John Shumaker said, “The IRC is honored to work on such an important project which will help improve the quality of education for millions of Pakistani children.” The initiative is part of a comprehensive US education assistance programme which includes building or rehabilitating nearly 800 schools; launching new degree programs in education at 90 colleges and universities; providing scholarships to 12,000 students to study in Pakistan and operating the largest Fulbright academic exchange program in the world.

Pakistan Today - September 07th, 2013

No Out-Of-School Children Anymore

National Plan of Action aims to enroll approximately 45,000 children into school in the next three years. As many as 44,985 out of school children will be enrolled in the primary classes in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) from the year 2013-2016, according to the targets of National Plan of Action (NPA) of education launched recently. The National Plan of Action for Education was prepared in consultation with experts from Ministry of Education, Training and Standards in Higher Education, all the provinces, UNESCO and UNICEF. According to the Plan of Action for ICT, a total number of 26,991 new students will be enrolled in primary classes in ICT existing under-utilised schools during 2013-16 at a cost of Rs 1,378 million. Among them 50 percent will be enrolled in public formal schools and another 10 percent in private sector schools. ICT does not plan to expand enrollment in non-formal schools. Corresponding to the new enrollments, a total of 750 new formal school teachers and around 20 supervisors will be recruited. The innovative strategy for increasing access along with quality enhancement including awareness campaigns, community involvement and use of media is estimated to be Rs 1,378 million, with 69 percent for increasing access to education.

ICT does not plan to expand enrollment of out-of-school children through the provision of an additional room and teacher in formal public schools. Around 17,994 children would be enrolled in new non formal schools, one-half will be enrolled in non-formal new schools while the remaining other half will be enrolled in new feeder schools at a cost of Rs 346 million. Out of Rs 346 million, 73 percent would be spent on development and recurrent cost of implementation and 27 percent on quality enhancement measures and innovative strategies. The human resource requirement for this step will entail recruitment of 600 non-formal and feeder school teachers and 15 supervisors. Of all primary enrollments, 15 percent of the students from disadvantaged groups will be provided incentives for access and retention in primary schools. In ICT, 76,647 disadvantaged children will be targeted and provided incentives equivalent to Rs 3,000 per child per year at a cost of Rs 16.9 billion.

According to recent projections, the population of primary age group children from 5 to 9 years in ICT is likely to gradually rise to 156,977 by 2015/16, of which 82,273 will be boys and 74,704 will be girls. The present education profile of ICT reflects a primary age group of 5 to 9 years population of 143,962 children out of which 75,416 are boys and 68,546 are girls. Gross primary enrolment rate is 87 percent with 85 percent for boys and 90 percent for girls while net enrollment rate of 70 percent is much lower, with 68 percent for boys and 72 percent for girls. Currently, the number of primary-age group out-of-school children (OOSC) is 43,236 comprising of 24,217 boys and 19,019 girls.

Pakistan Today - September 07th, 2013

ENERGY CRISIS

Government's Role in Oil and Gas & Energy Crisis

Biogas Plant Will Get Rid Of All Energy Issues for Anyone

As the country faces severe energy crisis coupled with increasing prices of fossil fuels, the Netherlands has provided an alternative option in the shape of biogas plants that with an investment of Rs. 300,000 could run a small-size factory without interruption round the clock. But the project has not gotten broader coverage and acceptability due to the federal and provincial governments' indifference to alternate energy resources despite severity of the energy crisis. Introduced by the Netherlands Development Organisation, the 100-cubic- metre plants can run generators, dairy farms, poultry farms and other small-size factories on power derived from biogas with an estimated cost of Rs. 300,000. The input of the plant is cow dung or farm waste that is produced by 30 to 40 animals. Rajesh B Shreftha, senior adviser to the Netherlands Development Organisation, said the ratio to install these biogas plants in Pakistan was very low. He said the installation of biogas plant in Pakistan was cheaper compared with other countries of the world, but the lack of government support was the major bottleneck in marketing. In Nepal, every year 20,000 biogas plants are installed, while in Bangladesh the figure is 6,000, in Vietnam 18,000 and in Pakistan the number of plants is a meagre 3,000, said Shreftha.

Energy crisis in Pakistan has become the biggest stumbling block in the economic growth of the country. The lack of government support in biogas projects was creating the problems for farmers and other consumers, he added. The Netherlands Development Organisation will bear 20% cost of a biogas plant, and a matching support from the government could significantly lessen the energy problems in the rural areas, he added. Alternate energy sources especially for the rural community must be explored. It is becoming difficult for the government to provide gas even to cities, thus the villagers can at least go for alternative options, said Shreftha. He added that he has been working in Pakistan since the last four years to promote the biogas technology. Our organisation was working on biogas plants in many countries and all the countries except for Pakistan were supporting the consumers to install the biogas plants, he said. He added that the government should launch microcredit financing facilities like by the other countries for biogas plant installation. There was a dire need to introduce good and comprehensive policy to increase the ratio, said Shreftha.

Biogas is cheap, clean and extremely convenient fuel. This technology to the rural community will help to mitigate the daily cooking problems, upgrade their living standards and slow down migration to urban areas. Presently, Pakistan is facing major energy crisis that has seriously affected economic growth and the development process. Prolonged load-shedding is a routine matter in Pakistan and the reason is continuous decline in oil and gas reserves and increasing prices of petroleum products. The available options for renewable energy in Pakistan are wind, solar, biogas and biogas is the cheapest than others, he added. Faced with power outages and high price of diesel the farmers were not able run their tube-wells to irrigate their crops. Because of biogas tube-wells, farmers benefitted immensely. The use of biogas is a good option to run existing tube wells, which were earlier using diesel oil. Central Punjab is one of the potential areas for installing biogas plants where most of the population relies on agriculture.

The Express Tribune - September 08th, 2013

REGIONAL WATCH**Pakistan & United States****NATO Oil Supplies via Pakistan Resume**

Overland oil shipments to NATO troops in landlocked Afghanistan resumed through Pakistan under tighter security after a five-month suspension due to attacks. Pakistani contractors had stopped driving oil supplies from the port of Karachi on the Arabian Sea to the Torkham crossing on the Afghan border due to frequent attacks on their vehicles. It was the first delivery since March in which four oil tankers crossed the border into Afghanistan. From November 2011 to July 2012, Pakistan shut its Afghan border to all overland NATO traffic after botched US air raids killed 24 Pakistani troops. The Salala attack resulted in a deterioration of relations between Pakistan and the United States. The Pakistani public reacted with protests all over the country and the government took measures adversely affecting the US exit strategy from Afghanistan, including the evacuation of Shamsi airfield and closure of the NATO supply line. Pakistan and the United States have signed a deal allowing NATO convoys to travel into Afghanistan until the end of 2015.

Daily Times - September 05th, 2013

Bilateral Relations: Pakistan, US to Resume Strategic Talks

Pakistan and United States are likely to hold the first round of their renewed strategic dialogue starting next month in Washington, interior ministry officials. Officials said the round will comprise several meetings and will continue from October 2013 to January 2014. The dialogue seeks to build the capacity of Pakistan's civil armed forces to counter terrorism in the region, the officials added. To discuss the agenda for the talks, US Ambassador to Pakistan Richard Olson met Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan in Islamabad. An official statement said "Olson invited the interior minister to chair the meeting of the strategic dialogue likely to be held in the US next month." However, the meeting between Adviser to the Prime Minister on National Security and Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz and US Secretary of State John Kerry in January will be the most crucial one, sources in the interior ministry said. During his meeting with Olson, Nisar said Pakistan intended to further its relations with the US in a transparent manner and with mutual respect and understanding, the statement said. Various aspects of the strategic dialogue, including the working group on counter terrorism, were also discussed in the meeting. The interior minister also told the American diplomat that Pakistan will not hesitate to seek institutional support in the form of counter-terrorism training programmes, intelligence sharing and infrastructural support for the civil armed forces in case of urgency. The ambassador said that Pakistan can benefit from the experience of the US in strengthening its security and offered all kind of institutional support in this respect. Different aspects of fresh peace initiative launched by the government of Pakistan to establish durable peace in the region, including the resolution of the all parties' conference, were also discussed in the meeting, the statement added.

The Express Tribune - September 21st, 2013

Pakistan & India

Aziz for sustainable Pak-India talks process

Adviser to the Prime Minister on National Security & Foreign Affairs, Sartaj Aziz sought sustainable dialogue process in place with India to move forward in a positive manner to resolve outstanding issues between the two countries. Speaking to the Indian High Commissioner, Dr TCA Raghavan who paid a courtesy call on him since arrival in Islamabad, Sartaj Aziz stressed the importance of resuming the bilateral dialogue process. Reiterating Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's commitment for normalising relations with India, the Adviser stated that there had been great hope within the present government of picking up the threads from the Lahore Declaration of 1999 and embarks upon a new phase of Pakistan-India relations. The tension along the LoC seemed to have derailed this process, which was unfortunate. He believed that the Indian media's over-reaction to the LoC incident had also not helped. He felt that both sides had to show maturity and move forward in a positive manner to resolve outstanding issues and put in a place a sustainable dialogue process. High Commissioner Raghavan also viewed the LoC incident as a "setback" in the dialogue process. Adding that while there was a feeling in India, also to continue to engage with Pakistan, incidents such as the recent one on the LoC raised doubts on Pakistan's sincerity. He felt that both countries needed to work towards forging a common policy on combating terrorism that would help allay many misperceptions that existed. He believed the upcoming visit of the Joint Commission on the Mumbai trials to India would be helpful towards this end.

The Nation - September 04th, 2013

Nawaz Encounter on Hold: Singh Links 'Concrete Action' to New York Meeting

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh gave no clear reply on Saturday as to whether he would meet Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York. Singh said he was constrained by the absence of 'concrete actions' by Pakistan to bring the perpetrators of the 2009 Mumbai attacks to book. "If the terror acts do not stop, if those who voice terrorist thoughts move about freely, if there is no significant progress in bringing the culprits of the Mumbai massacre to book - that I have to factor in before arriving at a final decision," Singh said on his way back from the G20 meeting in St Petersburg. The Indian premier, however, said he respected his Pakistani counterpart and his sentiments for peaceful ties between the two neighbouring countries. "I have always maintained that we can choose our friends, but we have no choice with regard to our neighbours. And, therefore, under normal conditions, I would be happy to meet with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who has said the right things about how relations between our two countries should evolve." The Indian PM's remarks came as back channel negotiations are under way to assess if a meeting between the two premiers could take place. The Indian side is cautious due to the coming elections as any action that is seen a capitulation before Pakistan - in the absence of any 'meaningful moves by it over the Mumbai events - will immediately be seized upon by India's opposition parties for political leverage, experts say. At this point, the Indian establishment is wary of committing itself even on the dates. Though the Indian PM's dates in New York have been announced, the Indian foreign office said it did not know if they would coincide with Nawaz Sharif's presence in New York then.

The Express Tribune - September 08th, 2013

Pakistan, India Agree To Respect Loc Ceasefire

Adviser to Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz said that he had very useful meeting with Indian External Affairs Minister Salman Khursheed and they agreed that both India and Pakistan should respect 2003 Line of Control ceasefire agreement. Giving his comments following his meeting with Salman Khursheed, on the sidelines of 13th Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), Sartaj Aziz said, "I had a very useful meeting last evening with Mr Salman Khursheed in a frank and cordial atmosphere". He said, "We both agreed that it was important to respect the 2003 ceasefire agreement in order to reduce tensions and for this purpose." Sartaj Aziz said, "We also agreed that the existing mechanism shall be used more effectively." The adviser to the prime minister said, "I conveyed our concern and disappointment that the momentum which the two prime ministers had created for the peace process and the composite dialogue, soon after the new government took over the Pakistan in June this year has been arrested by the unfortunate incident of 6 August." "I also emphasised that the objective of establishing durable peace in South Asia is of such paramount importance that it should not be held hostage to electoral politics or the process allowed to be derailed by a single incident," he added.

Considering the likelihood of a meeting between the two prime ministers, Sartaj Aziz said, "We agreed to use diplomatic channels to finalise the agenda for such a meeting keeping in view the progress made so far in various working groups and in back-channel contacts." The two leaders discussed bilateral issues, ways to defuse tension on the Line of Control and resumption of dialogue process between the two countries. Sources said that the two top foreign affairs leaders of Pakistan and India exchanged views on matters of mutual interests, especially on the upcoming meeting of the prime ministers of the two countries. Later, while talking to media Indian External Minister Salman Khursheed said that matters including the Line of Control situation came under discussion. He said that views were also exchanged on post-Mumbai attack developments. Sartaj Aziz has said the Pakistani Judicial Commission is scheduled to visit India on September 23. Khursheed conveyed to Sartaj Aziz that there could be a possible meeting between the prime ministers of India and Pakistan in New York, on the margins of the UN General Assembly, but this would require a conducive atmosphere. This was a position reiterated by Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

During the meeting, Sartaj Aziz mentioned the appointment of a new public prosecutor for the trial of seven men accused of training and guiding the Mumbai attackers. Khursheed said Pakistan must indicate tangible progress on meeting some of India's concerns, prime among them being effective and speedy prosecution of Pakistanis behind the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks. Khursheed expressed satisfaction at the assurance but hoped the evidence would be such that the Pakistani court would be able to do something substantial. Sartaj Aziz welcomed the Khursheed's expression of satisfaction over the assurances and, quoting the Indian minister, hoped both sides would muzzle their guns on the LoC to maintain the ceasefire agreed upon in 2003. Khursheed stressed on more effective utilisation of the mechanism to dampen aggression on the LoC. "We have a few days, let us see how it shapes up," he said. Sartaj Aziz also met his Kyrgyz counterpart Abdyldeev Bekeshovitch and reviewed bilateral relations. The two sides agreed that the excellent relationship at the political level should be translated into other areas, particularly trade and economy. The two leaders stressed the importance of activating the existing mechanism of joint economic commission and joint business council to promote bilateral cooperation and trade and economic sectors. Agencies

Daily Times - September 14th, 2013

India, Pakistan Armies Exchange Fire In Kashmir

The armies of India and Pakistan fired at each other's positions on the line of control (LoC) in Kashmir. The ceasefire violation took place in the morning in Mendhar Sector of frontier Poonch District, around 185km southwest of Srinagar City, the summer capital of Held Kashmir. "Pakistani army violated ceasefire and targeted our posts in Mendhar area at 6:25am," said S N Acharaya, Indian army spokesman in Jammu. "Our side also retaliated in an effective manner to Pakistani firing and firing lasted until 10:00am." The firing from both sides continued for more than three hours. According to Acharaya, the Indian side has not suffered any damage due to Pakistani firing. The ceasefire violation has come a day after India's External Affairs Minister Salman Khurshid and Pakistan's Adviser on Foreign Affairs and National Security Sartaj Aziz agreed to respect the LoC ceasefire agreement of 2003. The leaders met in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Summit. The two leaders also agreed to a meeting of the prime ministers of the two countries in New York later this month on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly session. New Delhi and Islamabad in 2003 agreed to observe ceasefire along the international border and LoC in Kashmir. Though some violations have been reported on both sides, the ceasefire remains in effect. Skirmishes between the two armies are going on almost on daily basis for the past one month. Majority of the exchanges took place on LoC in Poonch. The LoC is a de-facto border that divides Kashmir into Indian Held Kashmir and Azad Kashmir. Both India and Pakistan blamed each other of resorting to unprovoked firing that triggers skirmishes that resulted in civilian or troop casualties on both sides. During last month's flare-up, eight troopers, five from Indian side and three from Pakistan side, were killed.

The News - September 17th, 2013

Loc Tensions: Pakistan Will Not Grant MFN Status to India

Pakistan will not grant status of Most Favored Nation (MFN) to India till tension exists on its eastern border, Minister of State for Education, Balighur Rehman told lawmakers. "We cannot grant MFN status to India at a time when there is tension on the border," said Rehman while responding to a supplementary question by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) MNA Arif Alvi. Alvi had advised the government to work on new strategy for promoting business relations with India. Rehman, however, did not explain how the government will modify the term MFN. Speaking on behalf of the Minister of State for Privatisation, Rehman said a decision on giving India the status will be made on the basis of mutual interests, including the resumption of the composite dialogue process. Relations between the two nuclear neighbours soured after killing of soldiers on both the sides along the Line of Control (LoC) last month. Islamabad and New Delhi have accused each other of violating the ceasefire. Regarding delay in awarding the MFN status to India, Ministry of Commerce, in its reply, informed the National Assembly that Islamabad did not meet the timeline of December 31, 2012, because it was consulting with other ministries and also the private sector stakeholders to assess and evaluate a level playing field enjoyed by Pakistani exports to India.

Non-tariff barriers being faced by Pakistani exporters and issues of market access of Pakistani products to India are also being considered. "Elimination of the negative list after the approval of the Cabinet will imply the grant of MFN status to India," stated the ministry. Responding to a question of MNA Rana Afzal of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), the minister counted various benefits of awarding MFN status to India, adding that consumers will gain access to goods at a competitive rate thus increasing purchasing power. The ministry of commerce would bring the case for complete normalisation of trade relations with India to the Cabinet for

approval after further negotiations with India. He informed the lawmakers that items under the negative list regime for trade with India had been reduced to 1,209 from over 2,000 items.

Opening Of Khokhrapar-Monabao Route for Trade

Minister of Commerce Khurram Dastgir Khan said that a joint working group on this issue has been constituted, and internal consultations are in progress. The first meeting of the group will be held after concluding internal consultations, he added. A decision on opening the Khokhrapar-Monabao route for trade was taken by the commerce ministers of Pakistan and India during their meeting in February last year.

The Express Tribune - September 27th, 2013

Pakistan & Turkey

Pakistan, Turkey Pledge to Promote Peace in Region

Pakistan and Turkey agreed to intensify cooperation in diverse fields, including trade, energy, infrastructure development, security, education, culture and science and technology as well as enhance efforts for peace in the region. While addressing a joint press conference with his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan after co-chairing the 3rd High Level Cooperation Council (HLCC) meeting, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif termed the meeting “very productive” and said that “there was unanimity of views” between the two sides on various issues of bilateral and regional interest. The prime minister said Pakistan and Turkey enjoyed very special relations, bonded with fraternal ties and rooted in history, culture and religion. Nawaz Sharif said his visit to Turkey after assuming the office of prime minister on the invitation of Prime Minister Erdogan speaks volume about the importance which Pakistan gives to Turkey as well as its strategic role in the region. He said the two countries had signed a number of agreements and memoranda of understanding (MoUs) today. Prime Minister Nawaz said the two sides had agreed to enhance the number of flights between the two countries, and expressed his confidence that they would be able to carry forward the momentum generated by the HLCC meeting. On the strategic front, he expressed the hope that Pakistan and Turkey would redouble their efforts for ensuring peace and stability in the region. The premier said he was looking forward to the visit of Prime Minister Erdogan for the 4th HLCC meeting to be held in Pakistan. Nawaz said he had assured Prime Minister Erdogan that he would not find Pakistan lagging behind in the implementation of “what we have agreed today”. He also referred to his talks with Prime Minister Erdogan as well as his meeting with President Abdullah Gul, who conferred on him Turkey’s prestigious “Jamhurriat Nishan”. While responding to a question by a newsman, Prime Minister Nawaz said that he would ensure implementation of a number of MoUs and agreements signed between Pakistan and Turkey. He said that a special unit to look after progress of the agreements would be set up in the Prime Minister’s Office and he would personally monitor it. Nawaz said the Turkish prime minister was also very much interested in implementation of the agreements as he was a tough taskmaster.

Daily Times - September 18th, 2013

Ankara Rendezvous: PM Calls Turkey, Pakistan ‘One Nation, Two States’

Pakistan and Turkey agreed to increase cooperation in trade, energy, infrastructure development, security and other areas, as well as enhance efforts for peace in the region. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, addressing a joint press conference with his Turkish counterpart Recep

Tayyip Erdogan said 'there was unanimity of views' between the two sides on issues of bilateral and regional interest. Both the premiers co-chaired the third High-Level Cooperation Council (HLCC) meeting, which they described as 'very productive'. Prime Minister Nawaz said that his visit to Turkey, on the invitation of Prime Minister Erdogan, speaks volumes about the importance Pakistan gives to Turkey. On the strategic front, he expressed the hope that Pakistan and Turkey would redouble their efforts for ensuring peace and stability in the region. The two countries also signed a number of agreements and memoranda of understanding (MoUs) and agreed to increase the number of flights between Pakistan and Turkey. Premier Nawaz said he was looking forward to the visit of Turkish Premier Erdogan for the fourth HLCC meeting to be held in Pakistan. He assured Erdogan that he would not find Pakistan lagging behind in the implementation of what was agreed.

Cooperation on Security

Earlier, PM Nawaz Sharif met Turkish Interior Minister Muammer Güler and other senior security officials and reiterated that Pakistan would seek help and guidance from Turkey in wiping out extremism. He said that strong institutions, a corruption-free environment, an educated population and skilled manpower had resulted in Turkey's development and progress. The premier hoped Pakistan would implement an effective counterterrorism strategy with Turkey's cooperation. "Turkey is our trusted friend and has come out of the same crisis we face today," he said. "We have the potential to deliver, and we will deliver." The Turkish interior minister offered to help Pakistan control cybercrimes and tackle the issue of radicalisation. Pakistan has vast human resources and the right type of training and education would help a lot, Güler said. He said that extremism could not be defeated with the use of force only, but it needs social reformation and educations are equally required.

Pakistan and Turkey: 'One Nation, Two States'

Separately Prime Minister Sharif affirmed to put structures in place to boost trade and economic ties between the 'one nation, two states'. He underlined the excellent political relations between the two countries. "A huge reservoir of goodwill and affection flows from one country to another," he said. However, there is a long way to go to translate these excellent political relations into tangible and robust trade relations, he added. Nawaz called the Turkish business community and entrepreneurs to invest in Pakistan, especially in sectors like energy, infrastructure, engineering and the agro-based industry. Citing recent success stories involving Turkish companies in Pakistan, like Lahore's Metro Bus System and a wind energy project in Sindh, he called Pakistan an investor-friendly country that offered complete legal protection and fair treatment to both local and foreign companies. Meanwhile, the premier also emphasised Turkey's role as a bridge between Asia and Europe, and Pakistan's potential to become a gateway to the energy-rich Central Asia. He said the Afghanistan-Pakistan-Turkey trilateral process was an important initiative aimed at promoting peace, stability and socio-economic development in Afghanistan. "We are grateful to Turkey for its continued support to the process that has now evolved into an institutionalised tripartite mechanism for cooperation in diverse fields."

Highest Civil Award

The prime minister was awarded Turkey's highest civil award, 'Jumhuriyet Nishan'. The award was bestowed by Turkish President Abdullah Gul at a special ceremony. "As a recipient of Turkey's highest state decoration, I am deeply touched by the exalted recognition granted for

my humble contribution to furthering our fraternal relations - a calling close to my heart," he said in his acceptance remarks.

The Express Tribune - September 18th, 2013

Pakistan & Afghanistan

Afghan Peace Process: Taliban Unlikely To Open New Office

The Afghan Taliban are unlikely to open any formal office as part of the effort in seeking direct talks between the stakeholders of the wartorn country. Since the closure of the Doha office earlier this year, due to objections raised by the Karzai administration, efforts were being made to break the deadlock by relocating the Taliban office to some other country. However, the major stakeholders including Pakistan, Afghanistan and the United States are believed to be inching towards finalising a new arrangement where Afghan Taliban will have no formal office in any country, a Pakistani official familiar with the development. The idea behind the new mechanism, according to the official, was to pre-empt any controversy that might prove to be a 'deal breaker'. The official, who asked to remain anonymous, acknowledged that the Doha process was mishandled. The office opened on June 18 as the first move towards a possible peace deal after 12-years of fighting. However, the office had to be shut down after Afghan government strongly objected to a flag-raising ceremony for the 'Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan' - the name of the country under Taliban rule. "The Taliban should not have used the Doha office to project the image that it was their embassy or foreign mission," said the Pakistani official.

"Under the new plan, discussions will probably take place in Saudi Arabia but without giving Afghan Taliban any formal office," he said. Pakistan does not consider that the location of the dialogue, or other formalities, is of much importance but it is making every effort to bring the reconciliatory process back on track. The sources have revealed that during his visit to Pakistan, Afghan President had requested Pakistan government to host talks between Taliban and the Afghan government. However, Pakistan had politely turned down the request as it did not want to assume any role other than that of a facilitator. "We are and we will extend all possible assistance in the Afghan peace process but we cannot be involved in the process in a way where we would be held responsible for any failure," said the official. Diplomatic sources said the recently released influential Taliban former commander Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar may play a crucial role in bringing both the insurgents on to the dialogue table. Though Mulla Baradar's whereabouts have been kept secret, it is expected that he will be moved to Saudi Arabia to take part in possible talks with the US and the Afghan government.

The Express Tribune - September 23rd, 2013
