



TRUTH TRACKER

WATCHING OUT FOR PAKISTAN



The tale of Punjab's claim of good governance

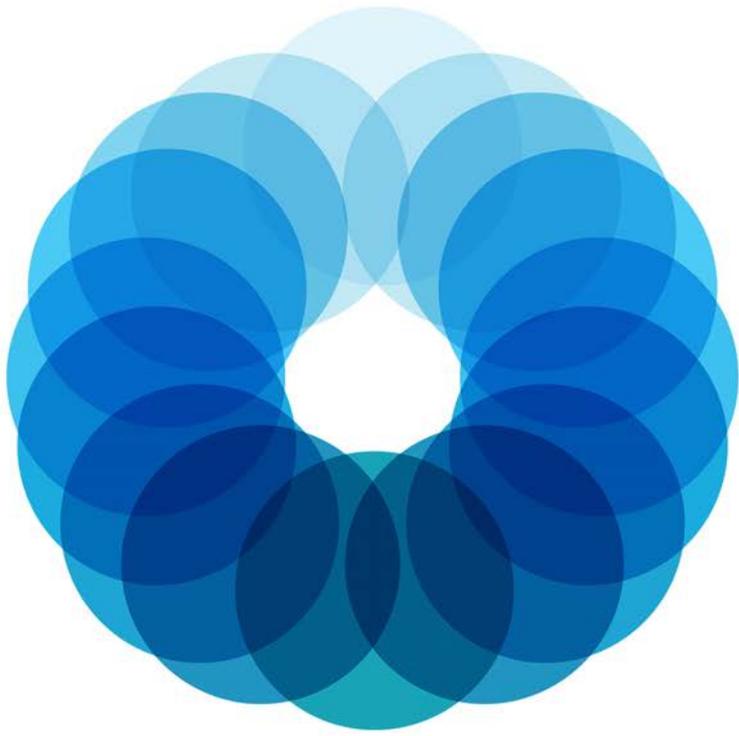
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**Pakistani-American loses all legal battles
for surrogacy**

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Magazine By:





media
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THE WHOLE JOURNALIST

As a part of journalism profession we, at Media Foundation 360, have been seeing the problems and pressures journalists face within the organization and out in the field regarding their rights and security ranges from salary payment issues to murders and kidnappings. This is when we decided to be their voice and stand up for their rights.

With the slogan of “A Whole Journalist”, we are here with the ambition of helping media professionals getting their rights as well as their training to improve journalism standard in the country. In this regard, we arrange workshops and discussion sessions for journalists with country’s top media professionals and foreign trainers. We also intend to be a watchdog of media outlets in the country, keeping an eye on journalism standards and practices they follow, and pointing out the areas where they failed to follow ethics and laws.

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Editorial

The leaning pillars of governance

Pakistan's governing system is degenerating rapidly and threatens to cave in, because the state's pillars are leaning the wrong way. Each one is needed to support a democratic society, but none are holding up their share of the weight.

The parliament that is supposed to make laws for the betterment of people has become a place to protect personal interests. Federal and provincial governments have failed to help the masses.

As a result, Pakistan's superior and higher courts are trying to resolve people's problems through administrative orders after taking suo moto actions (an authoritative action by a judge without receiving a petition from a party). The judiciary, however, has failed to dispense justice at a reasonable speed. In cases of terrorism, this gave birth to military courts to decide the cases quickly.

Police have failed to counter crimes and terrorism. Now the army and other paramilitary forces are in the urban areas to eradicate terrorist groups. The Army is defending Pakistan on our Eastern and Western borders, but at the same time, it is facing internal challenges like terrorism and disaster management. Next week, 200,000 soldiers will perform duties for the long-awaited national census as well.

Perhaps failed government is not a new thing to Pakistan. Perhaps it happened before once or twice. The difference between then and now is media.

During Gen Ayub and Zia Martial Law, the country was in much the same situation as it is now. But there were journalists like Nisar Osmani, Minhaj Barna, Mazhar Ali Khan and Aziz Siddiqi who always raised their voices and kept struggling to keep the system on track. There were few pens but collectively they were mightier than sword.

Now, there are thousands of pens, cameras, and channels, but journalists too often compromise their professionalism, and therefore cannot make a difference.

There are some living legends of journalism like I A Rehman, Dr Mehdi Hasan, Hussain Naqi, Khaled Ahmad, but news channels don't give them presence on the screen. Meanwhile plenty of fine journalists are working low-profile just to keep their jobs secure. A number of newsmen have started playing as lobbyists for conflicting political groups.

All the state's pillars, especially judiciary and media, will have to go back to their intended mission to save the nation and our society. They must watch out for Pakistan. If they continue to turn away from their central role, the structural support will collapse and bring the roof down on all our heads.

Mubasher Bukhari

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Price: 100 Rupees



Editor's Note

Reimagining the political circus

The show of aggression among politicians is no news in Pakistan. In the history of national politics there is rarely any moment when we saw politicians following an ethical code of conduct and practicing the politics of coexistence while agreeing to disagree.

World over, the democratic tradition has allowed politicians and their followers to compete with each other. However, that convention of decorum is experiencing a shift. As the world is welcoming hardliners among the folds of government, the rhetoric of the party leadership is changing. The move from political beliefs to vested financial interests have deteriorated the sense of propriety that used to be the hallmark of the heavyweight politicians and the true democracies across the world.

In recent days political arguments and debates have been replaced by propaganda, sloganeering and hooliganism. Resultantly, masses too have become disenchanted as to their political obligations and we see fewer voters turning up to cast their ballots. While it is true that the trust in governments is falling among the democratic world, it has affected the level of civic engagement among citizens. Year 2017 World development report, World Bank, noted that the global voter turnout rate has nosedived by ten per cent in the last 25 years.

News media has borne witness to this change. As the fact of the matter, the prevalence of independent news media has allowed politics and its agents to voice their, sometimes, hostile views on air so much so that this narrative has become frivolous entertainment. At times, politicians are invited and or coaxed into take jabs at each other in talk shows and sequels of some talk shows allow the opponents a chance at attacking rather than ameliorating the situation by explaining issues plainly.

However, the politicians aren't naïve. They enjoy taking the limelight and some have allowed more airtime to news channels than the time they would spend in their constituencies. In fact the attitude the politicians exhibit during their media appearances has been far better than that on the floor of the national assembly. The recent months' coverage of the sessions of the national assembly has been an eyesore. Some analysts have argued that some of the media projections of the irresponsible behaviour of the politicians have been skewed allowing ambiguity to maintain the refreshment aspect of the proceeding.

Democracy allows the right of free speech to individuals and groups. However, competing to air opponents' dirty linen scarcely qualifies as healthy politics. Media has a stake in that. Smearing campaigns and venomous attacks against political opponents isn't entertainment. It is high time that media professionals set the right standards. In the recent case of fist-fighting among politicians media should call a spade a spade and clearly phrase their disregard for distasteful events, concentrating on revealing the true issues that amount to the rhetoric of hate.

Ameerah Javeria

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Human Rights

Pakistani-American loses all legal battles for surrogacy



Waqar Gillani

ISLAMABAD: A Pakistani-American Farooq Siddiqui, a clinical technologist based in New York, last month, lost all legal battles in the country to win the custody of his 10-year-old (surrogate) daughter.

Despite unflinching efforts on part of Siddiqui to pursue the case from the local to top Islamic court – Federal Shariah Court (FSC) – of the country, a large bench of the FSC declared surrogacy against the injunctions of Islam. The court further directed the government to bring down strict punishments against the parents and doctors involved in this business in the country.

Siddiqui, whose wife was unable to conceive due to medical reasons, had come to Rawalpindi, Pakistan in 2004 to find a surrogate mother and offered huge sum of money, according to court documents. In Pakistan, he gave advertisement in local press and got consent of a poor woman Farzana Naheed in Rawalpindi to become a surrogate mother. However, following the birth of the girl-child Fatima, differences arose and both parties entered legal battles claiming the custody of the child.

The FSC, however, made it clear that any other condition for obtaining a child through surrogacy would be considered un-Islamic.

“If a baby is born through mechanical/ medical process where the sperm belongs

to the actual father and the egg to the actual mother and child is born by the actual mother, in that case the procedure would be legal and lawful. In all other cases surrogacy procedure would be unlawful and against Islam injunctions (Quran and Sunnah),” the judgment highlighted.

Moreover, the judgment stressed the need for amendment in the Pakistan Penal Code regarding the definition of surrogacy and its other procedure. It demanded that punitive measures such as fines and or incarceration should be enforced for participating in all types of surrogacy. “The parents who arrange a surrogate mother, surrogate mother, and doctors involved in this process would be liable for punishment along with the person(s) arranging that and do...,” stated the verdict. The court heeded the government to take strict actions against the doctors setting up sperm/egg banks and carrying out this procedure. “It must also be provided that any doctor involved in surrogacy procedure would lose its license,” said the court, adding, “... becoming a surrogate mother is just like renting out a womb and later forgetting the fruit of pains she bore for money or pleasure of other family which is against nature.”

Dr Khalid Masud, a former chairman of Pakistan’s Council of Islamic Ideology believes that the artificial means of conceiving and surrogacy, except when the procedure involves original mother’s egg and father’s sperm, raises serious legal questions. “It is forbidden in Islam because it complicates the issue of paternity, maternity and inheritance,” he said, adding, “In such cases, if the child is not possible

with original parents, there are options of adoption and permission of second Nikah in Islam.”

Masud noted that the aforementioned father would not have adopted this way of surrogacy because such provisions are misused in the society. He emphasised the only model of making a child in Islam is through Nikah because even in adoptions the question of paternity and inheritance remains unsolved.

According to court documents, Siddiqui claimed that he paid Farzana at least one million rupees for this service. Later, he also prepared a factious Nikahnama for his claim on the daughter as well. He, in all, gave \$30,000 under the surrogacy agreement and for the possession of the baby.

As the dispute ensued, Siddiqui geared up for a legal battle. In 2005, a local court handed over the two-week old baby to the surrogate mother, Farzana. In 2012, four years after Siddiqui lost his case in the local court, the provincial high court also favoured the Farzana. In 2015, the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) declared the act of renting the womb un-Islamic.

“It is a complicated issue. In Islam it is not allowed. And In Pakistan, there is no particular law about it too,” Anees Jilani, advocate and human rights activist said. He said in the west, surrogacy is treated as a contract but here we have issues of paternity and maternity. He viewed that adoption is also a way where childless parents can bring up a child as guardian.



Media Tracker



Media Tracker lists the challenges and achievements of the journalists and media organisations worldwide. Here's a list of journalism at risk stories in the recent month. We would like to thank international media protection organisation and news outlets for their content.

- A **Kyrgyz** court upholds a life sentence for investigative reporter **Azimjon Askarov**, who has been jailed since 2010. The ruling ignores findings by the **U.N. Human Rights Committee** that the journalist is arbitrarily detained, has been tortured, and should be freed. (CPJ)
- The speaker of the Parliament and other leading lawmakers recently filed a complaint with **Egypt's** general prosecutor demanding a state investigation of **Ibrahim Eissa**, Editor daily **Al-Maqaal**, on charges of "insulting the parliament." He has been accused of publishing a series of satirical headlines in the newspaper criticising the parliament and government for their political and economic decisions. The journalist is known for his sharp and often irreverent critique of authorities in his decades-long career. (CPJ)
- Eritrea has been a dictatorship for over two decades. In this period the space for a free journalism has suffered immensely. At least **15 journalists** are currently **detained**, some of them held **incommunicado**. President Isayas Afewerki controls the media expression with iron hands. "Those who think there will be democracy in this county can think so in another world," he recently said. Eritrea has been ranked last in RSF's press freedom index for the past eight years. (RSF)
- A reporter and editor for The **Independent**, Justin Brake, faces **criminal charges** for being the only reporter to cover the Indigenous protest and occupation of the **Muskrat Falls, Newfoundland Canada**, hydroelectric project site in October 2016. In his struggle for public's right to know, Brake faces two criminal charges—(1) "mischief relating to a testamentary instrument or property greater than 5,000" and (2) "unlawfully disobeying an order of the Court"—that carry a maximum **ten years in prison**. (CJFE)
- **Nazım Babaoğlu** was a young correspondent for the pro-Kurdish newspaper **Özgür Gündem** in the southeastern city of Urfa to disappear without trace on 12 March 1994. No credible investigation has ever been conducted in the time until now. At the time, working with the newspaper was extremely dangerous, as fighting went on between government forces and PKK-led Kurdish rebels in the 1990s. Babaoğlu's case is typical of the impunity that was awarded for the mass crimes committed by the forces during 1990s, including the murders of a score of journalists. (RSF)

Commentary

Walking a tightrope: China maneuverers between Saudi Arabia and Iran



Photo Courtesy: AFP



Dr. James M. Dorsey

This week's sanctioning of one of China's largest telecom equipment manufacturers, ZTE, by the US Commerce Department, and an investigation of Huawei, ZTE's foremost Chinese competitor, could not have come at a more auspicious moment for Saudi King Salman as he visits China on the third leg of his month-long Asian tour.

King Salman's visit aims to strengthen economic and military ties and persuade China that Saudi Arabia rather than Iran is its most useful regional ally. The penalties and investigation of the two Chinese companies related to violations of US sanctions on Iran as well as North Korea signal the Trump administration's intent to adopt a tough stance toward the Islamic republic. ZTE pleaded guilty to the US accusation that it sold US-made electronics to Iran and agreed to pay a \$1.19 billion fine.

"We are putting the world on notice: The games are over. Those who flout our economic sanctions and export control laws will not go unpunished — they will suffer the harshest of consequences," said US Commerce Secretary Wilbur L. Ross.

Speaking days before King Salman's arrival in Beijing and immediately after the sanctioning of ZTE, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi positioned his country as a friend of both Saudi Arabia and Iran. Mr. Wang urged the countries to "resolve the problems that exist between them

via equal and friendly consultations" and offered to play a mediating role.

There is little prospect for successful mediation with Saudi Arabia and Iran viewing their global rivalry as a zero-sum-game and the kingdom hoping that a tougher US policy towards Iran will extend its window of opportunity in what is fundamentally an uphill battle against Iran. The sanctioning of ZTE sends China a message that the US does not endorse business as usual with Iran and that this could have consequences for future US – China trade negotiations.

King Salman's quest is further enhanced by the fact that China, which has close, long-standing military ties to Iran, last year agreed to upgrade cooperation with the kingdom. "China is willing to push military relations with Saudi Arabia to a new level," Chinese Defense Minister Chang Wanquan told his visiting Saudi counterpart, Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman last August. Special counter-terrorism forces from the two countries held the first ever joint exercise between the Chinese military and an Arab armed force two months later.

Closer military relations and Saudi hopes that US sanctions will complicate Chinese engagement with Iran counter perceptions that Chinese President Xi Jinping was tilting towards the Islamic republic when he visited the Middle East in early 2016.

King Salman hopes to exploit this window of opportunity while in Beijing in what is fundamentally an unequal battle with Iran that brings assets to the table that Saudi Arabia lacks. Those assets no matter how degraded include a large population, an industrial base, resources, a battle-hardened military, a deep-rooted culture, a history of empire, and a geography that makes it a crossroads. Saudi custodianship of the Muslim holy cities, Mecca and Medina, and money will in the middle and long term not be able to compete.

Iran's strategic advantage is nowhere more evident than in global competition to shape the future architecture of Eurasia's energy landscape. Energy scholar Micha'el Tanchum argues that Iran is pivotal to the success of China's trans-continental, infrastructure-focussed One Belt, One Road initiative in ways that Saudi Arabia is not.

In a study published in 2015, Mr. Tanchum suggested that it would be gas supplies from Iran and Turkmenistan, two Caspian Sea states, rather than Saudi oil that would determine which way the future Eurasian energy architecture tilts: China, the world's third largest LNG importer, or Europe. The ability of Iran to capitalize on the fact that it boasts the world's second largest natural gas reserves and its fourth largest oil reserves was significantly enhanced with the lifting in 2015 of international sanctions.

“Iran, within five years, will likely have 24.6 billion cubic metres of natural gas available for annual piped gas exports beyond its current supply commitments. Not enough to supply all major markets, Tehran will face a crucial geopolitical choice for the destination of its piped exports. Iran will be able to export piped gas to two of the following three markets: European Union (EU)/ Turkey via the Southern Gas Corridor centring on the Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline (TANAP), India via an Iran-Oman-India pipeline, or China via either Turkmenistan or Pakistan. The degree to which the system of energy relationships in Eurasia will be more oriented toward the European Union or China will depend on the extent to which each secures Caspian piped gas exports through pipeline infrastructure directed to its respective markets,” Mr. Tanchum said.

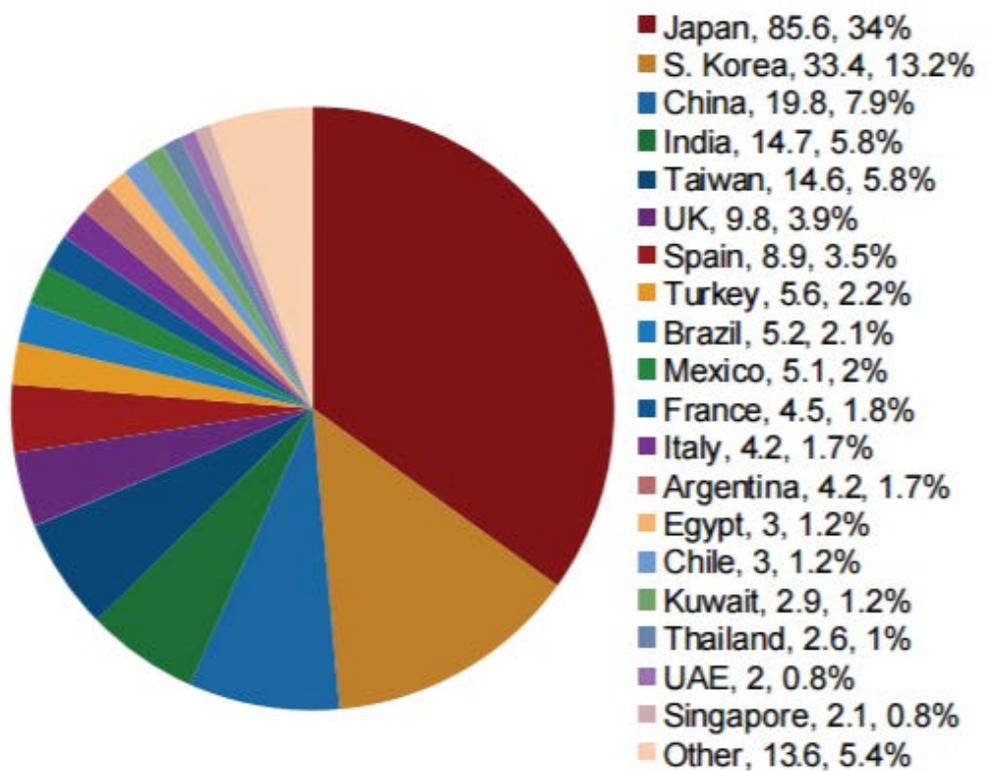
In other words, Mr. Tanchum argued that to determine the balance of power in Eurasian energy and establish One Belt, One Road as the key determinant of Eurasia’s energy architecture, China would need to position itself as the main recipient of Iranian and Turkmen gas. That in turn, would enhance China’s growing economic influence in Central Asia, and further extend it to the Caucasus and the eastern Mediterranean.

China has already many of the building blocks needed to make that a reality: close and long-standing relations with Iran, significant investment in Turkmen gas production and pipeline infrastructure, and the construction of Pakistan’s section of the Iran-Pakistan pipeline. Hooking the pipeline to One Belt, One Road would allow China to receive Iranian gas not only by sea on its eastern seaboard but also in its land-locked, troubled north-western province Xinjiang.

Pakistan’s top military commander, General Qamar Javed Bajwa, appeared to acknowledge Iran’s pivotal role by noting that “enhanced Pakistan-Iran military-to-military cooperation will have a positive impact on regional peace and stability.” Pakistan, which hosts One Belt, One Road’s flagship project, the \$51 billion China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), has refrained from fully engaging with a 41-nation, Saudi-led military alliance perceived to be partly directed at Iran, while the Pakistani parliament rejected a Saudi request for military support in its war in Yemen.

Linking the Iran-Pakistan pipeline to CPEC would increase Iran’s importance for the success of China’s Eurasian infrastructure play. Iran’s geo-political strengths are however not wholly dependent on aligning the Islamic republic with China. With the development of Iran’s Indian-built Chabahar port and the undersea Iran-Oman-India pipeline that would potentially create an alternative Asia-to-Europe energy corridor, Iran is, according to Mr. Tanchum, well-positioned to play both ends against the middle as well as adopt a key role in

Figure 3.7. LNG Imports and Market Share by Country (in MTPA)



the trans-Atlantic community’s effort to strengthen relations with India as an antidote to the rise of China.

Iran’s geopolitical significance is further enhanced by the fact that competition for Iranian gas favour occurs against the backdrop of expectations that Iranian cooperation with Russia in Syria and elsewhere is opportunistic and unlikely to prove sustainable. Iranian-Russian competition is already visible in the Caucasus and Central Asia that ironically mitigates in Europe’s rather than China’s favour. Iran is likely to deepen energy cooperation with Turkey in a bid to enhance its influence and curtail Russian inroads in the Islamic republic’s northern neighbours, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, China’s principle gas supplier, and Armenia where Russia’s state-owned

Gazprom has invested in an Iran-Armenia gas pipeline.

For now, King Salman’s mission in Beijing is facilitated by the fact that Mr. Trump is signalling that Iran’s return to the international fold based on the nuclear agreement is not a foregone conclusion. The Saudi leader may also be banking on the fact that Iranian President Hassan Rouhani could be fighting an uphill battle in presidential elections in May because the lifting of international sanctions has been slow in benefitting Iran and Iranians economically. The king’s problem, however, is that Chinese strategists are likely to see obstacles to doing business with Iran as a short-term problem and that China recognizes that in the middle and long-term Iran has assets China cannot afford to ignore.

Dr. James M. Dorsey is a senior fellow at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, co-director of the University of Würzburg’s Institute for Fan Culture, and the author of The Turbulent World of Middle East Soccer blog, a book with the same title, Comparative Political Transitions between Southeast Asia and the Middle East and North Africa, co-authored with Dr. Teresita Cruz-Del Rosario and a forthcoming book, Shifting Sands, Essays on Sports and Politics in the Middle East and North Africa



Accountability

The tale of Punjab's claim of good governance



Anwer Sumra

Lahore: Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N), under the command of Shahbaz Sharif, announced strict implementation and promotion of Good Governance in public affairs in Punjab to remove all impediments hindering public welfare and governance delivery.

As PML-N had come to power in Punjab it vowed Good Governance as, merit based transfers and postings, transparency in governance affairs, fair distribution/ utilization of development funds, easy public access to government offices, austerity measures in public expenditures and redressal of grievances without delay. But unfortunately, with the passage of time, all initiatives taken by the government failed one by one and, the public faces the same stereotype of governance in all affairs.

According to documents obtained by Truth Tracker (TT) from the civil secretariat, from the very first day, the PML-N government violated its self-claimed good governance in transfers and postings when a junior officer in BS-18 was posted as Administrative Secretary and a BS-17 officer posted as District Coordination Officer (DCO). The policy to post juniors on senior posts yet continues despite opposition from concerned quarters.

Therefore, many senior grade officers are finding themselves serving under junior command for the first time in hierarchy of Pakistan Administrative Service (formally known as District Management Group (DMG) officers.

The fair and transparent allocation/ utilization of development funds was repeatedly questioned by southern Punjab's legislators on the floor of the house inquiring why Lahore is the only focus for urban development. Orange Line Metro Trains project fortified their reservations and objections as government diverted funds earmarked for development schemes particularly for education and health of southern districts, says documents obtained by TT.

The provincial government adopted an Open Door policy and Khuli Kachahries (open courts) were introduced to resolve the grievances and issues of general public. It was being organized from the top (chief executive) of the province down to a grade 17 officers for listening general public for quick redressal of their grievances. This initiative met its fate all of sudden when the chief minister ceased holding of such courts on a pretext of security threat stated the document.

The government also promised that strict financial discipline would be ensured in all government expenditures. Contrary to the facts, it was evident that the amount of supplementary grant touched the figure of Rs. 150 billion during 2015-16 against the amount of Rs.42.9 billion of the corresponding years (2014-15), says White Paper a budget book released by Punjab government.

The rise in supplementary grant is criticised by experts for poor planning, weak financial discipline and bad governance in budget making and priority fixing. The audit report (2013-14) of Punjab Board of Investment and Trade (PIBT), available with Truth Tracker, shows an anomaly as an audit para of

Rs.12.4 million referred to public accounts committee for settlement. The para maintained that the chief minister Punjab illegally used said amount on his tour to China from the board's funds. This is enough to gauge the adoption of strict financial discipline and how public kitty is being used without fear of accountability and transparency.

The government also banned the purchase of new and imported vehicles from the current and development budgets and; curtailed official functions at hotels unless one was deemed necessary by the chief minister for state delegations. The refurbishment or interior decoration of offices, establishment of offices, purchase of furniture and fixtures, and procurement of machinery and equipment was also frozen, quoted the notification issued by finance department.

In the presence of a strict austerity policy to deal with public expenditures, the Punjab government approved import of Teakwood from Burma at the rate of Rs.14,000 per square feet for interior designing of newly constructed Punjab Assembly session hall, says document obtained by TT. However, according to finance department Schedules of Rates, the rate of Teakwood was calculated at Rs.5200 per square feet if it was indispensable to purchase but the figure was not approved by the decision makers, the document maintained.

A committee headed by Punjab Law Minister Rana Sana Ullah Khan approved the exorbitant rates to allow the contractor for import of Teakwood with the observation that economical work without compromising on quality for the interior designing, the documents reveals.

On the other hand, few days back, Zahra Bibi, 60, from Kasur died on the cold floor of Jinnah hospital as the hospital management failed to even provide a bed to her. Both the incidents: import of Teakwood at rate of Rs.14, 000 per square feet and death of an elderly lady without facility of bed speaks volumes of good governance being practiced in the province.

The non-availability of beds for healthcare to a common citizen, you may call it no governance, said Professor Munawar Sabir of Punjab University. In good governance, maximum benefits (social and economic) are for maximum population and the governance promoted by Punjab is a ridiculous one as it is restricted only for family and friends, Sabir added.

Distribution of the cheques to the bereaved families after provincial tragedy cannot justify good governance in any shape, perhaps avoiding such negligence and deaths could be called a step towards good governance, Sabir maintained.

The Punjab government laid the foundation stone for the extension of Punjab Assembly building in January 2005 and it was scheduled to be completed till September 2007 with the estimated cost of Rs.2.52 billion, says a document.

The completion was delayed for about

nine years and the cost escalated to Rs.3.5 billion. It is now scheduled to open in upcoming June. The government is planning to convene upcoming budget session for the financial year 2017-18 (electioneering year also) in this newly constructed hall.

The existing assembly building was constructed in 1935 and housed 58 members. It was used to cater to the needs of 240 members until 1999. When the political process was restored in October 2002, the number of constituencies of the Punjab Assembly increased to 371 and the government planned to construct new building with the capacity of 500 seats in the main hall, 600 seats in the galleries for the visitors and 300 seats in the press gallery for the media personnel covering the proceedings of the House. The old building will be preserved as a national asset because of its national importance including hosting of the Second Islamic Summit in 1974.

In the presence of self-acclaimed good governance, use of a huge amount from the public kitty for luxury items tantamount to humiliation and disgrace of the voice and rights of the province's poor.

A social science student Muhammad Arfan says good government is not the priority of the present regime because the rulers are governing the province like private

enterprise. Good governance needs vision but they badly lack it.

Political advisor to Chairman PTI Imran Khan, Ejaz Chaudhary says that a common man is not on the priority list of the PML-N government because no steps are taken for his welfare like improvement of education, health, sanitation and employment. If you see mega projects like metro bus and train, these are not cost-effective, as they will benefit less than one per cent of total population of the province.

"Corruption has increased in the public sector as mega corruption scandals including Student Laptop Scheme, Ashiyana Housing Scheme, Sasti Roti and Metro Bus are being criticized by the public," Chaudhary says, adding, "Postings of junior officers on senior slots have ruined the system, crime rate have increased because of the politicisation of the police."

Truth Tracker contacted Punjab government spokesperson Malik Muhammad Ahmed and provincial minister Zaem Qadari repeatedly for government viewpoint but they refrained from comment.



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Accountability

No healthcare facility for HIV/Aids patients in FATA



Wisal Yousafzai

PESHAWAR: To reach the Family Health Care Centre in Peshawar for treatment of HIV/Aids, Kulsoom Bibi has to travel 250 kilometer from Kurram Agency.

“With my ill-health, it is difficult to cover long distances and travel in public transport from Parachinar to Peshawar for the treatment,” said Bibi, who belongs to the town of Parachinar in Kurram Agency, one of the seven districts of the Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA).

According to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Aids Control Program, there is no healthcare facility in the any of the seven agencies of FATA to treat patients with HIV/Aids.

Bibi currently resides in a rented home with her five children. She lost her husband to HIV/Aids two years ago.

Patients from the region have to travel to cities of Peshawar and Kohat in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to receive treatment at Hayatabad Medical Complex Peshawar and Kohat District Headquarter Hospital.

Statistics made available by the KP Aids Control Program show that 485 cases of HIV/Aids were reported in FATA up to November 2016. Of these, 33 cases were reported in Bajaur Agency, 87 from Khyber Agency, 98 from Kurram Agency, 218 cases from Bannu, 34 from Mohmand Agency, 28 from Orakzai Agency, 72 from South Waziristan and 133 from North Waziristan.

Khwendo Kor, an organisation working for

women rights in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA), said that 55 workers from FATA were deported from Gulf countries due to being diagnosed with HIV infection.

According to the research study HIV Epidemic in Pakistan, migrant workers are predominantly low skilled rural men that travel either abroad or within the country for work and remain away from their families for months. The study says most are unprepared for the HIV exposures in large urban centers where they find work.

“Nearly all registered patients in HIV clinics in Pakistan are those who repatriated after acquiring HIV during their work abroad, mostly from the Middle East,” says the study. “Mandatory HIV testing is conducted at recruitment and repeatedly to renew work permits in the Middle East. Those who acquire HIV are quickly identified and deported - often without being told the reason for the deportation. The quick testing and retesting means that most are diagnosed and deported while suffering from acute HIV infection, when they are healthy and most likely to transmit the infection to their spouses and or sex partners.”

The report says that upon return, many marry or continue living risky sexual behaviours and infect their spouses and or sex partners. With nearly 2 million migrant workers currently in the Middle East (Bureau of Emigration, Pakistan), says the report, the potential number of individuals at risk of contracting HIV is huge. However, no national mechanism exists to enumerate or locate HIV positive repatriated workers.

“Except those from the city of Karachi,

most are rural residents from NWFP, FATA and southern Punjab. The infections they transmit will likely lead to truncated epidemics (an epidemic that will likely not propagate further since their partners have limited or no further partners), since these HIV-positive patients will be infecting their spouses and their limited number of extramarital partners,” says the report.

Just as in FATA, HIV/Aids patients from the Provincially Administered Tribal Area (PATA) also lack healthcare facilities.

Asif Ali, who is a manager at the Association for Community Development (ACD) that works on HIV/Aids in the PATA region, said data of migrant workers deported from Gulf countries collected in 2016 showed 34 HIV/Aids patients in Swat, 25 in Bajaur Agency, 18 in Buner, 17 in Malakand Agency, 54 cases in Lower Dir, 21 in Upper Dir, 6 in Shangla and 1 in Chitral.

The KP Health Minister Shahram Taraki told media in December 2016 that there were an estimated 97,400 cases of HIV/Aids in Pakistan. Of these, around 16,000 HIV patients were registered with the National Aids Control Programme - with 2,584 registered in Hayatabad Medical Complex Peshawar and Kohat District Hospital and 485 in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Of these, 235 HIV/Aids patients were foreigners, mostly Afghan refugees.

“Like other Asian countries Pakistan is also HIV epidemic, characterized by different risk factors,” says the report A Situational Analysis of HIV and AIDS in Pakistan. “Formerly Pakistan was considered to be a low prevalence country, but now it is in the group of “Countries in Transition”

with a concentrated epidemic among high risk groups, where the AIDS problem is increasing since five years. The number of infected persons might be running in millions if proper screening is carried out," the report indicated.

The report also pointed out behaviors conducive to the spread of HIV infection to young people. These are: curiosity about sex and drugs, negative peer pressure, and economic frustration in Pakistan. The report identified other factors, i.e., "Widespread poverty, significant power imbalances in men and women, labor migration, lack of any system to check

the HIV positive reported persons, indiscriminate transfusion of untested blood, rising number of drug addicts and low condom use rates, are the serious risk factors that put the country in danger of facing a rapid spread of HIV/AIDS."

Dr. Jawad Habib, Director Health FATA, told Truth Tracker that the authorities had proposed to UNICEF to help establish healthcare centers in the tribal areas for HIV/AIDS patients.

Habib pointed out several challenges for establishing HIV/AIDS centres in FATA. "We have not been successful in

establishing the centers so far. The social taboos and cultural barriers are keeping us from taking up the issue. Sometimes HIV patients face problems from their own people and localities," he maintained.

Bibi and other HIV/AIDS patients from FATA getting treated at Peshawar and Kohat may have to travel long distances to get treatment, said Habib, but that way they are not exposed to their communities back home."



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Promise Tracking

PML-N compromises promise for an independent National Accountability Commission



Durdana Najam

The Promise

Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) had promised in their 2013 manifesto to form an independent National Accountability Commission after coming to power.

Background

The National Accountability Bureau, the premier accountability agency established to try corrupt government officers and politicians was the brainchild of former President of Pakistan, General Pervez Musharraf. He had justified his coup by calling it a reluctant attempt to check corruption. The National Accountability Ordinance 1999 would in time become a tool to harass politicians whose loyalties were required to form a democratic set-up under the umbrella of a political party. The law that criminalized non-repayment of bank loans defected many politicians to Musharraf's self-created Pakistan Muslims League-Q. Among other loopholes in the legal framework of NAB, the Voluntary Return and Plea Bargain provision under Section 25 are considered the worst. Although the Supreme Court had restrained Chairman NAB from using Voluntary Return, the Plea Bargain can still be used.

The former Finance Secretary Balochistan, Mushtaq Raisani, is the latest example, and a glaring one too, of a corrupt officer set-free using the provision of Plea Bargain. He secured his release after paying Rs 2 billion from the massive amount of embezzled money. NAB had recovered more than Rs 730 million from Raisani's home in a raid in Quetta.

NAB has been criticized for promoting and facilitating corruption rather than eliminating it. The bureau has also been placed under the hammer for turning its eye from mega corruption cases and running after small corruption cases. Over the years, different governments have provided legal passage to influential people, especially the politicians, to move out of corruption charges; National Reconciliation Ordinance and Ehtesab Act of 1997 are just a few examples.

The government has appointed a 20 member Parliamentary Committee headed by Federal Law Minister, Zahid Hamid, to replace NAB with the National Accountability Commission.

Tracking

The Chairman of the National Assembly Standing Committee on Law and Justice Mehmood Bashir Virk has been critical of his own party (PML-N) and all the previous governments for failing to implement the existing laws. He told Truth Tracker that the need to reinvent a new law arose because NAB had become too controversial and everyone in his or her capacity was demanding for it to be killed. Explaining the framework of National Accountability Commission, Virk said, "Power in the new law would not be concentrated in the hands of any one person." "The courts," he elaborated, "could intervene to keep the commission from steering in the wrong direction." Virk, however, admitted that if those holding the reigns of power had character even the NAB would have given results. "Call it indifference to the national cause, dishonesty, insensitivity or incompetence, but the reality is that the law enforcement institutions are corrupt to the core," Virk said. "If the NAB could deliver results, in whatever form, during Pervez Musharraf's rule, why is it failing to deliver now? The difference," Virk complained, "lies in their intentions." "If



today, the intentions of the leadership become clear and clean, the existing laws would be sufficient to get rid of corruption," Virk concluded.

Talking to Truth Tracker, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Vice Chairman and Member National Assembly, Shah Mehmood Qureshi, said, "The test of the government's seriousness about eliminating corruption did not lie in making a new anti-corruption law, but in getting it implemented in letter and spirit." While talking about NAB, he deplored it for serving the government's interest. It had been possible according to Shah because of the Chairman NAB, in whose hands rests all the power and who is appointed by the Leader of the House and Opposition. "You could see how the Supreme Court had grilled Chairman NAB for misusing his power to help the ruling elite evade corruption charges," Shah said. Shah is confident that the new law would not discriminate among the criminals. "Anyone, be it a member of the ruling elite or a bureaucrat or a politician," Shah emphasized, "caught with corruption charges and proven guilty will be convicted."

Former Punjab Governor, Sardar Latif Khosa, a PPP stalwart, was critical of PML-N's effort to form a new law replacing NAB. He inquired as to how a government accused of corruption charges could bring about a law against corruption. He blamed the PML-N for not cooperating with the PPP government in its last tenure in getting the National Accountability Commission Bill passed, as, said Khosa, "This bill was initially developed by the PPP." Khosa was in favour of an independent commission. "If the new anti-corruption law is made subservient to the government, then it will be of no use," Khosa said.

Independent Viewpoint

Shahid Usman, a senior lawyer, told Truth Tracker that unless a change was brought about in the people themselves; in their mode of thinking and style of governance, a new law would just be an addition to the already sketchy legal framework of the country. He said that the NAB was considered draconian in nature and it had been used effectively as well. "It all depends on the formation of the new commission; there should be an independent body to influence the decisions of the chairman of the commission. NAB has been deliberately made in such a way that all the power accumulated rests with the Chairman because it is easy to manipulate one person as opposed to ten or twenty people. Internal accountability and the dispersal of power are the keys that could make this new law effective," Usman said

Another lawyer Farrukh Dall is also of the opinion that there is

absolutely no need of a new accountability law. "It is corruption within the NAB and the misuse of power that makes it notorious. If the government had the will to enforce the laws of the NAB there would be no need to form any commission," Dall said.

Ruling

The PML-N government is in the process of making the National

Accountability Commission; though the government is not sure if it would be able to implement the law during its tenure. The bill is in its nascent stage, being deliberated in the Parliamentary Committee on Law and Justice. The future of the commission is not clear therefore Truth Tracker rules that the promise has been compromised.



Promise Tracking

PTI Chairman's promise to build 300 dams in KPK stands compromised.



Rehmat Mehsud

The Promise

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chief, Imran Khan, had promised that his party-led government would build 300 small dams in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and soon there would be no load shedding in the province.

Background

Back in April 2014, Khan, while speaking at a gathering in connection of by-election in PK-86 in Khwazakhela district of Swat, had said that he would not tolerate corruption in the province. He had said that his government will construct small dams for power generation and irrigation.

"Today, my party is ruling KP, but no one can accuse me of spending a single rupee from the taxpayers money," he had said.

Tracking

Truth Tracker approached Mushtaq Ghani, Advisor to KP Chief Minister on Higher Education and Information, who did not return our phone calls or text messages despite several attempts.

However, Malik Shah Muhammad Khan Wazir, Special Assistant to Chief Minister on Transport, said that Imran Khan did not promise to build large dams, rather he promised the construction of small reservoirs.

"Development work on those small water reservoirs is underway but I do not have the exact figures at this time," he noted.

He recalled that the PTI chairman had promised to build small reservoirs but the media failed to explain the difference between reservoirs and dams.

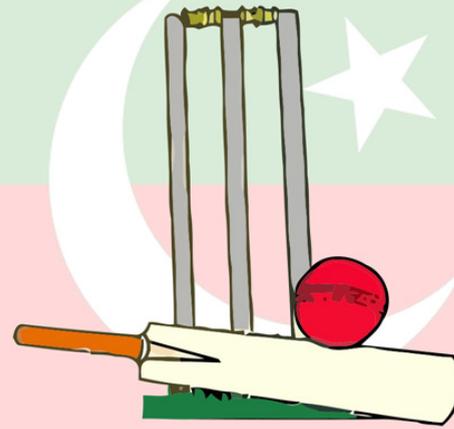
"The promise made by Imran Khan is close to being fulfilled, the concerned department will be in a better position to reply to these queries," he added.

Wazir referred Truth Tracker's correspondent to the irrigation department or energy and power department. However, none of the officials or the Special Secretary to Chief Minister responded to requests for comment on the subject.

Sayed Jaffar Shah, Member of Provincial Assembly (MPA) from Awami National Party (ANP), said, "Of course the PTI government and Khan himself had repeatedly announced to build 350 dams instead of 300 in KP."

"PTI has not built 350 swimming pools, let alone 300 dams," Shah remarked. "However, NGOs are building some small hydel projects having a capacity of five and 10 kilowatts. A budget of Rs. 3 billion was allocated for these hydel projects, but with this amount of funding, even a single wall of a dam can not be built."

Compromised



Among the promised 350 dams, he recalled that work on 50 small hydel projects having 5 kilowatts, 10 kilowatts and 15 kilowatts capacities is underway.

"The PTI has inaugurated those 50 projects but it was just a sham," Shah added. He said that the people are very repentant of their decision to vote for PTI.

"The PTI has played with the sentiments of their voters," he added.

When contacted for a comment regarding the PTI chairman's promise to build 300 dams, Malik Riaz Khan, another lawmaker from Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F), told Truth Tracker, "It (building of dams) was just a ridiculous thing to do."

When asked how he sees PTI chairman's promise, Sahibzada Sanaullah, a lawmaker from Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), was enraged and said, "The PTI cannot even construct 30 dams, and yet they are talking about building 300 dams."

"If you approach PTI, they will respond that they have plans to construct the dams. Yes, they (PTI) can materialize that promise if you give them 50 years to rule, otherwise it is impossible for them," Sanaullah noted.

Independent Viewpoint

Safullah Gul, a senior Peshawar based journalist and independent analyst, said regarding PTI Chairman's promise of building 300 dams in KP: "On the ground realities, it seems that their plan of building dams presently remains to be a 'political slogan.'"

"If you take a look at the PTI Tsunami Billion Tree Project, the situation is different," he added.

He said, "Although there are some ongoing projects in the province, it seems unlikely that they (PTI) will be able to complete these dams within the stipulated time because the provincial assembly hardly has one-and-a-half year left to complete its

term.”

“There are many lacunas such as proper allocation (of funds), which can not be seen over there,” Gul said regarding PTI’s dams promise.

When asked to specifically tell whether the PTI would be able to construct these dams, Gul said: “It seems very difficult and impossible. All the projects cannot be materialized as the PTI has barely 18 months to remain in power.”

Ruling

In light of the comments and views presented by the ruling, opposition lawmakers and independent analyst, Truth Tracker rules that PTI’s promise regarding the construction of 300 dams in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa stands compromised.



Promise Tracking

PPP’s promise for better disaster management system stands broken



Durdana Najam

The Promise

In its 2013 manifesto, the Pakistan People’s Party had promised to develop better systems and procedures for disaster management.

Background

Until 2005—spanning almost 50 years—the country was satisfied with the ‘readiness’ capacity of its disaster management system to deal with natural calamities and man-made disaster of any magnitude. In 2005, when 7.6 magnitudes earthquake hit the Northern areas of Pakistan, the state realized how ill-prepared it was to deal with emergencies and disasters of such a high magnitude. The administration revisited its disaster management policies and found it silent on issues such as communicating risk, assessing social vulnerabilities and capacities, disaster risk reduction and management. The thrust of the policy was found on providing the technical solution to disasters. Resultantly, the disaster management system was overhauled, and a federal body, the National Disaster Management Authority, was established along with the provincial and district disaster management authorities.

Pakistan has been experiencing the effects of extreme weather, flash floods and drought for several years. After 2005, the worst calamity to hit the country came in 2010 and 2011. The floods of 2010 hit a large part of Sindh and Balochistan. Again the ineffectiveness of the state’s disaster management was exposed, as according to the recorded data, Sindh suffered 94 per cent of the total damage, causing losses of Rs 325 billion.

The Global Climate Risk Index 1993-2012 ranked Pakistan 12th on the list of the states most affected by extreme weather conditions in South Asia.

Disaster management is a complex system of processes that require effective coordination and collaboration of different actors and institutions to prevent hazards, save lives, rehabilitate livelihood, protect assets and infrastructure in the wake of a calamity. The government, civil society organizations, communities, and community-based local institutions such as mosques must learn to act fast. Unfortunately, the government has been unable to mobilize both its resources and those lying outside its sphere, to prevent or control damages caused by the disaster. The Sehwan shrine bombing exposed the Sindh government’s poor ability in handling emergencies. In spite of intelligence reports, only one police officer, and a partially functioning walk-through gate were provided as protective measures.

It is alarming that only Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have a state response body; rescue 1122. Neither Sindh nor Balochistan government has established any such facility. At Sehwan, according to the officials of the private rescue



organization, Edhi Foundation, the injured were taken to the hospitals in private cars, auto rickshaws, on carts and on foot. The nearest main hospital in Sehwan was almost 130 kilometres away.

Tracking

Truth Tracker contacted PPP officials in Sindh government and talked to Jam Mehtab Dahar, Minister for Education and former Minister for Health. He did not confirm nor deny the fact that the PPP government had been unable to fulfill its promise of making a functioning disaster management system in the province. However, Dahar lays the blame of PPP’s ineffectiveness on the politics of expediency and reconciliation. He said, “The PPP government had been leveraging MQM in the provincial matters.” “The provincial institutions,” Dahar says, “were allowed to function the way they had been performing, with excessive staff.” According to Dahar, the previous PPP government would pay Rs 60 billion monthly in salaries to them. As far as the Sehwan incident is concerned, Dahar points fingers at the federal government, saying it will always be the responsibility of the centre to stop terrorism; provincial government cannot do anything in this regard.

However, talking to Commander (R) Syed Salman Shah, Director General Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), Sindh has been revealing. “How can you run a disaster management department with only 59 people and insufficient resources. The PDMA does not have any rescue system embedded in its law. This makes it difficult for us to respond to a crisis in time. It is impossible for us to reach every place or perform optimally.” About the reason behind the inefficiency of his department, Shah said, “If every department such as the police, the building, the health and so on and so forth, started performing honestly and professionally there would be no need for my department.” “It is,” he said, “a collective effort. Unless the efficiency of other departments matches the efficiency of PDMA

or vice versa things will not improve. He further added that the Sindh government is developing the rescue department 1122. The project will be operational only in Karachi at least for one year. According to Shah, Rs 250 million has been allocated for the project.

- Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman, Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Karachi, says that the Sindh government has never been prepared to disasters. "If prepared, it should have been visible, when 2010 flood struck, the authorities had to remove the embankments that deluged the entire interior Sindh." Recalling the heat wave of Karachi that killed almost 5,000 people Rehman says hospitals lacked basic facilities and capacity to manage such a large number of affected people. "The hospitals almost collapsed, neither were there enough medial staff nor beds or equipment. No hospital was equipped with an alternative system such as generator to provide electricity during load shedding." Rehman says compared to the state, an NGO or a philanthropic organization can only provide limited service in the time of crisis. He says it is the responsibility of the state and the government to address disaster and rehabilitate people and the infrastructure when calamities strike. Taking about funds, allocated for disaster management and health sector, Rehman says, it becomes a fodder for corruption.

Member of Sindh Assembly from Pakistan Tahreek-e-Insaaf, Khurram Sherzaman, holds identical views. He quotes an incident to give a precise picture of the situation. "Some two months back at midnight a building collapsed at the Shah Rasool colony in Clifton Karachi. When I went there almost six people were buried under the debris. When the staff of the provincial disaster management authority arrived they had no equipment or any thing to evacuate the people. People from the neighbourhood removed the debris using their own shovels. Two people died eventually," said Sherzaman. About the provincial disaster department, Sherzaman says that like any other department in Sindh, the employees of this department are also getting salary sitting at home.

MQM lawmaker and leader of the opposition in the Sindh Assembly, Khawaja Izharul Hassan, in his conversation with Truth Tracker over telephone from Karachi says that in the PDMA Sindh only 45 people of clerical standard have been employed. "For the Financial Year 2016-17, Rs 2 billion has been allocated for PDMA. Not a single meeting of the PDMA has taken place since its inception. The situation of the Sindh Rehabilitation Department is equally deplorable. We even do not know who is heading this department. Another department, called the Civil Defence Department (CDD), is in a pathetic condition. Located in a worn out ramshackle building, the telephone connections of CDD had been disconnected. From this, one can assess the ability, capacity and agility of all these departments to respond in time emergency," said Izhar.

Responding to the budget allocation mystery, Salman Shah, says that RS 2 billion is spent on different projects within disaster management system.

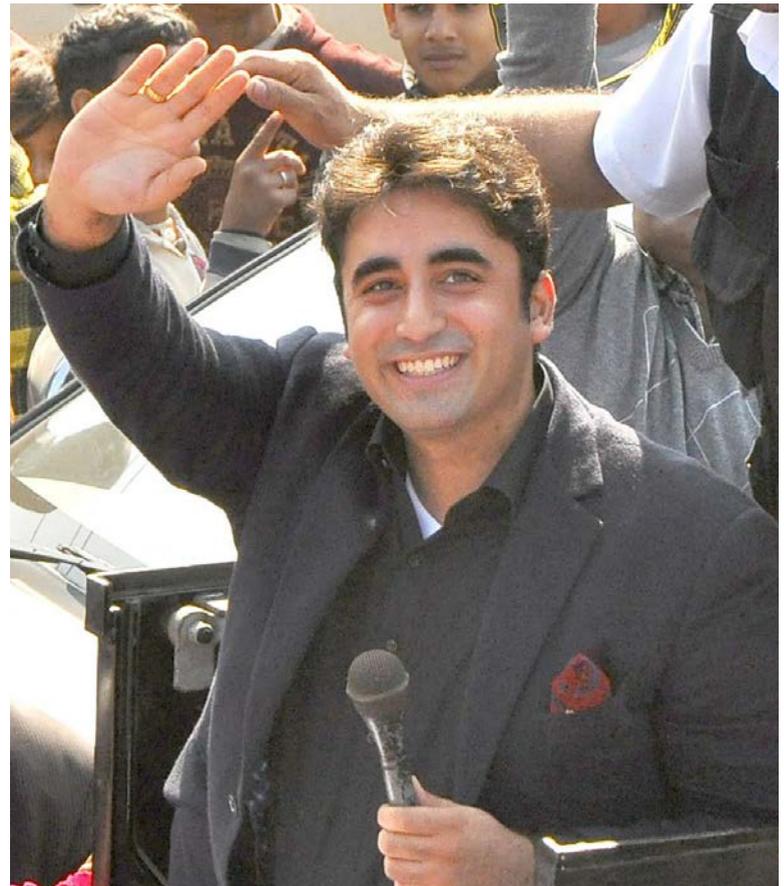
He gave the following breakdown of Rs 2 billion:

Funds (Rs/millions)	Areas of spending
700	Emergency budget (parked at Finance Department).
650	Annual Development Budget.
250	For the establishment of Rescue operation system.
150	For administration of PDMA office.
250	Consultancy/WB/ Regional offices

Independent Viewpoint

Saeed Shafqat, Professor and Director, Public Policy and Governance FC College Lahore, classifies disaster management system into three areas:

One, are natural disasters, such as floods and earthquakes. For



such disasters Shafqat says greater preparedness is required but we find little or no preparation at all. He identifies two areas that need to be looked at when talking about natural disaster one is mitigation and other adaptation.

Two, are man made disasters, which are directly related to urbanization. We have allowed, says Shafqat, to spread our cities haphazardly without planning. In this scenario we encounter issues of traffic congestion, irregular control over the movement of people, informal settlements and other social issues such as overflowing sewerage etc. Shafqat says that planning for urbanization does not only mean building bridges and roads, the pertinent part of this planning, he says, involves improving infrastructure in term of social sector which means building hospitals, houses, schools etc. "The Sehwan bombing has laid bare the claims of the Sindh government about risk or disaster management," says Shafqat. He adds that one could clearly see lack of coordination among disaster management departments. "Who was responsible to respond when the attack occurred; the police, the PDMA or the district disaster department. "Disaster management has to be dealt with in a coordinated manner. It cannot be left on one department." Lack of planning and thought our policies are at the root of the ineffectiveness of the disaster management departments in Sindh, says Shafqat.

The third area related to disaster management, which is left unattended is migration, says Shafqat. The government has no plan as to how to stem the flow of migration of the people from the rural to the urban areas. Neither does the government know, how to settle the migrating people. "Eventually what happens is that these people settle on the bank of the river and in the time of floods it becomes difficult to relocate them."

The flow of people from the rural to the urban areas is putting stress on the urban infrastructure, developed originally to accommodate a certain number of people. When this number exceeds we find clogged drains, overflowing sewerage and accumulated rainwater on streets. In the nutshell, says Shafqat, the Sindh and the rest of the governments are short of policy and planning to address the issue of disaster management.

Ruling

The PPP government has failed to make any headway in improving the process of disaster management system. The promise hence stands broken



Promise Tracking

PPP's promise for better disaster management system stands broken



Izhar Yusafzai

The Promise

The Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa(KP) government will establish 200 smart schools in places targeted by bomb blasts, and natural disasters such earthquakes and floods. These claims were made by KP Minister for Elementary and Secondary Education, Muhammad Atif whilst talking to media crews in August, 2016 during his visit to Lakki Marwat district.

Background

Imposing an education crisis, after Pakistan Tehrek-i-Insaf(PTI) was voted into power in KP, has promised reforms in education sectors of the province. Various initiatives such as a monitoring system for educational institutions were established to ensure the attendance of the teachers in government-run schools.

The government has allocated a total of Rs10.3 billion for 64 on-going schemes in Elementary and Secondary Education sector while over Rs2.4 billion has been allocated for eight new schemes.

Some of the major projects included the conversion of 100 madrasas into regular primary schools for which Rs1.7 billion was allocated while another major project promised the establishment of 160 primary schools on an immediate basis in KP for which Rs.2.8 billion were earmarked.

Plan

One of the initiatives taken by the KP government was the establishment of 200 smart schools to provide quality education to children in areas affected by militancy or natural disasters.

The government has earmarked Rs.2 billion, of which Rs.1 billion was projected to be released in the fiscal year 2016-17 and the remaining Rs.1 billion will be released in the next fiscal year for the construction of smart schools across the province.

So far, a single school has been established to pilot the project since the budget was introduced in Lakki Marwat. The school cost over Rs12 million, and it has six class rooms, each room can facilitate 28 students.

The projects was widely publicized in the media and the PTI led provincial government of KP was applauded. However, it seems that the plan has failed to live up to its claims.

Tracking

An official of the Elementary and Secondary Education department privy to the development says, "The school feasibility failed for various reasons and hence the funds allocated for the smart schools were transferred to other projects in the education sector."

The official told Truth Tracker, under the condition of anonymity as he was not allowed to speak to the media, that the plan for establishment of smart schools in KP has been ignored due to technical issues.

Minister for Education, Muhammad Atif Khan, while talking to Truth Tracker, confirmed that the establishment of the smart schools project failed due to technical issues. He cited that the height of the smart schools was not satisfactory.



Secondly, he said, "The capacity for students in smart schools' class rooms was smaller in comparison to a normal classroom."

"Smart school classrooms have the capacity to accommodate up to 28 students while normal class rooms can accommodate up to 35 students," Khan said, adding that due to such technical issues the project has been halted.

He told Newslens Pakistan that the project was pending and the funds will be utilized for construction of play areas in government-run schools. He added that the government does not want to work on a project which has not been approved by engineering experts as it can create problems for the children.

Meanwhile, Khan said that he would look for the engineering experts' go ahead, as currently they have paused the plan, but if it gets approved, the government will construct it.

Independent experts deem the government's attitude as careless, since they announced the plan without a feasibility report and proper planning. Malik Masood, Program Manager of Centre of Governance and Public Accountability, a non-for profit organization working for improvement of governance system said, "The government needs to do their homework regarding the establishment of Smart Schools before they announce the project."

However, he did suggest that the government should first work on fixing the government-run schools that are already present and lacking facilities, rather than going towards the establishment of such projects.

"The already established 40,000 schools need to be improved so that every school can become a model institution where children can get quality education," said Masood, adding that since an education emergency has been imposed in the province, it should be treated as a real emergency to improve education sector.

He did appreciate small improvements made by the education system of KP but he also added that it was not enough, the government needs to do more.

Ruling

After a thorough review of the opinions presented by government officials and independent experts, Truth Tracker has concluded that the KP government has failed to fulfil its promise.



Accountability

Punjab Government's favourite few



Anwer Sumra

Lahore: The Punjab government, while claiming transparency and merit, has offered hefty financial packages to handpicked retired and in-service officers for their services in public affairs without any justification. This act has created a sense of resentment among the competent officers as the hiring of the retired is barring their promotion/postings on key slots and offering huge financial benefits to cronies are depressing them financially. According to documents obtained from the civil secretariat by Truth Tracker (TT), the army of retired officers is getting millions from public kitty, which does not correlate with the contribution they make in governance affairs.

The TT acquired document stated that the Punjab government re-employed around 25 retired bureaucrats offering them Management Professional scales in different departments, authorities and government entities. Out of these men, two are above 72 and three are 65 year of age. The policy deals with re-employment of retired officials "Re-employment Policy 2003 and hiring on contract "Contract Policy 2004 strictly bar hiring of men above 63 year of age, reads a document. All had been offered packages under monetization policy but are using official cars, drivers and petrol as well.

Some of the prominent are Dr Syed Abul Hassan Najmee, Shoab bin Aziz, Sabtain Fazal Haleem, Tariq Ayub, Ahmed Raza Tahir, Kamran Lashari, Ahtasham Anwer, Mazhar Hussain Minhas and Dr Ashraf Tahir, Dr. Muhammad Sarwar and Dr Muhammad Amjad.

Punjab government established Forensic Science Agency in 2009 to contribute in criminal justice system by providing forensic data for investigation and prosecution. Dr Ashraf Tahir was initially hired as consultant in 2009 and later became Director General in 2011. He was offered a package of Rs.1.2 million. Tahir is now 70 plus years of age.

Shoab bin Aziz who retired from government job in October 2010 is now working as press secretary to chief minister Punjab on contract. Aziz is getting 0.5 million per month in addition to staff car with driver, unlimited petrol and official protocol.

Sabtain Fazal Haleem a retired District Management Group officer (now Pakistan Administrative Service, PAS) was retired in March 2011 after attaining superannuation of age. The government hired his services as Managing Director, Mass Transit Authority and he is getting 0.5 million package from public kitty. He is considered master for the construction of roads for buses even during his regular service he did the same nature of job. Muhammad Tariq Ayub a PAS officer who retired in June 2012 is now heading Punjab Privatization Board on contract. He has been offered 0.5 million from public kitty. It is evident that no visible privatization of public assets has been made since he joined the board.

Kamran Lashari a PAS officer who retired in December 2012 is on contract as Director General Walled City of Lahore Authority and getting Rs.0.5 million in addition to official car, unlimited petrol and medical.

All three members of Punjab Information Commission including Mazhar Hussain Minhas, Ahmed Raza Tahir and Mukhtar Ahmed are on contract on MP scales.

The offering of hefty perks and privileges to the select few officers is discrimination from all scope. It invites heartburning among the competent, honest and hardworking officers, who have no say in political power corridors, says a PMS Officer requesting anonymity. The hiring of retired men above 63 is not only violation of government concerned policies but also block promotion avenues of eligible officers in different cadres, he maintained. Both steps are neither acceptable nor affordable in smooth functioning of governance and its enforcement. It is not possible that all bureaucrats use full energies when they are not treated on equal financial incentives and civic facilities. Ultimately, public will suffer, he reiterated.

The obliging of in-service senior and junior officers is also going unchecked as during the last week of January, the Punjab government has extended special monetary benefits to Chief Secretary (CS) Punjab Captain (retired) Zahid Saeed and Inspector General of Police Mushtaq Ahmed Sukhara. The government granted a special executive allowance Rs.400, 000 to CS and Rs.380, 000 to IG per month to help them out in financial constraints to lead a respectful life, say a document with TT.

The special allowance is in addition to emoluments they are receiving from public kitty for their services. The grant of special executive allowance to Chief Secretary Punjab and Inspector General of Police became the talk of the town



as an extraordinary financial support to any senior serving officer. General public is of the views that current year is an electioneering one and heads of both civil and police bureaucracy are accommodated to get their sincere support in upcoming polls. The senior officers have already being offered massive facilities from public funds, i.e., fully furnished residences, utility bills, transport, fuel, security and other paraphernalia, including an army of servants.

A senior official of finance department (custodian of public coffer) says a summary was sent to chief minister for approval of special executive allowance to CS and IG because it was an extraordinary benefit to be offered. After approval, the finance department notified provision of allowance to both heads, he remarks. The finance department has not opposed it despite the fact it was not justified under any financial discipline and rule, he says.

The decision to grant hefty superior executive allowance has sparked a heated debate in the bureaucratic hierarchy and some of them have expressed heavy resentment and annoyance as well. The government has already offered lucrative incentives to some junior civil servants serving in authorities, projects, commissions and companies, which have created resentment among competent civil servants serving in their mainstream careers, they add.

Ahad Cheema a DMG officer in BS-19 and Rashid Mehmood Langryal a BS-20 are working in energy sector and getting Rs.1.6 and Rs.1.2 million respectively. Secretary finance Hamid Yaqub Sheikh makes around Rs.1.0 million as a regular

incumbent in BS-20.

The neglected officers say that they feel demoralization and victimization. It seems, the Punjab government is running government affairs like a private company as they are being offered a huge package whereas an administrative secretary is getting Rs.120, 000 per month according to his scale, another senior officer says. To justify special allowance, the government has to offer same financial benefits to administrative secretaries, divisional commissioners, deputy commissioners, director generals and additional secretaries as they have to deal with massive workload and huge responsibilities in implementation of government writ, he maintains.

In the past such allowances had been offered to professionals like professors, engineers, scientists and doctors (not regular public servants) with the aim to enable them for focus on tasks assigned without eyeing on more avenues, says documents with TT. In the recent past, a special allowance of Rs. 400,000 per month is paid to Information Technology University's (ITU) Umar Saif, Rs.200, 000 to Government College University's (GCU) Muhammad Khaleequr Rehman and Rs150, 000 to Fatima Jinnah Women University (FJWU) Rawalpindi. The allowances are in addition to regular salaries, transport and medical facilities admissible to grade 22 officers, the documents reads. Saif had been given the allowance for promoting e-governance and e-learning and introducing the Punjab Model of Proactive Governance – a mechanism through which the government evaluates and accounts for its performance by reaching out to citizens.

Saif is also chairman of the Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB). He has been heading the PITB since 2011 and is the founding VC of the ITU. GCU's Rehman has been given a special allowance for introducing entry tests for admission to engineering and medical and dental colleges. A special allowance for promoting "civic engagement" at the FJWU has been offered to principal, the documents add.

Senior economist Professor Muhammad Shakeel says offering of huge allowance to a few officers is discrimination among the regular public servants. The pay and allowance of regular servants depend on ranks/scales and offering of special incentive will promote deprivation among the colleagues. It may also encourage corruption among the deprived cadre, he says. The hiring of retired officers in violation of concern policies will hurt the promotion and posting of regular officers on key slots in administrative hierarchy, he maintains.

Former IG Punjab Tariq Saleem says in the past such allowances were offered under police reforms to police officers but not of such volume. Discrimination definitely hurts some, he adds.

Truth Tracker contacted Punjab government spokesperson Malik Muhammad Ahmed and provincial minister Zaeem Qadari repeatedly for government viewpoint but they avoided answering or even to respond to the text messages.

Human Rights

An untold story of lonely female elephant's plight in Lahore Zoo



Maria Laraib

Lahore: Suzi, the female elephant in Lahore Zoo, has turned 30. During last 24 years, she has never experienced the pleasure of living in harmony with her own species with no one to understand her feelings and sentiments.

Lahore's zoological garden, established in 1872, is one of the most famous and well-maintained recreational spots for the general public, as opposed to other zoological parks.

Operating as a self-sustained organization in the provincial capital of Punjab, Pakistan; Lahore Zoo had purchased a 6 year old, female African bush elephant in 1992.

"The calf was named 'Suzi' due to her friendly, docile demeanor," said Shafqat Ali, Director Lahore Zoo, in an interview with News Lens Pakistan. Due to shortage of funds and the unavailability of African elephants, she was brought alone and not in a pair, said Ali.

However, recent recommendation issued by World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA), as outlined in the accreditation standards and related policies 2016, states, "Each zoo holding elephants must have a minimum of three females (or the space to accommodate

three females), two males or three elephants of mixed gender."

Senior Researcher, Kiran Saleem admitted covertly that Suzi has never experienced mating.

Lahore Zoo authorities were unable to solve habitat management related issues, financial constraints and above all, problems related to a lack of space for housing at least two elephants and their progeny since 1992. As, Mr. Shafqat Ali said that no procurement plan for buying Suzi's mate have been drafted since her presence in the Zoo.

Kiran Saleem disclosed to News Lens Pakistan via telephonic conversation: "A summary of Rs 322.17 million budget allocation has been moved to Department of Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries Punjab by Lahore Zoo, in which animal procurement has been given key importance with a budget allocation of Rs 114.95 million."

To the utter amazement of News Lens Pakistan, she said, "We have not included the cost for a partner for Suzi in this animal procurement plan, as she is past the prime of her fertility."

While discussing captive mating and breeding, Director Lahore Zoo Ali said, "Mating is not the primary purpose of Zoos, even according to the international standards recommended by World Association of Zoos and Aquariums

(WAZA)."

On the contrary, the worldwide conservation status of the African bush elephant has been declared as endangered according to wildlife experts.

While addressing concerns regarding the captive conservation of this species, Dr. Jawad Ahmed, Senior Animal Specialist of Veterinary Hub Pakistan (an NGO) said, "Captive African Bush Elephant's will be demographically extinct in Asia during the next two decades."

He said that out of all mammalian species, the innate desire for mating is 60 percent higher in elephants.

Dr. Waleed, Senior Veterinary Surgeon at the well-known Ghora (horse) Hospital of Lahore, told News Lens via telephone, "The prime reproductive-age of a female African mammal is in between 10-30 years, during which mating not only gives them the opportunity to display their natural desires but it will also help with conserving this species under caretaker captivity."

While discussing Suzi's captive mating requirements, Ali said, "It is impossible for us to bring a male for her, considering her age and reproductive status. The transportation charges, habitat management, food, housing space for another adult elephant and behavior management of a male elephant of Suzi's age is above the financial and professional



Sugarcane to feed Suzi :Photo by News Lens Pakistan/ Maria Gul

capacity of the Lahore Zoo.”

Moreover, a food expenditure of Rs 14 lac for an elephant can only be sufficient to keep Suzi in good health. We cannot add another member in such a constrained budget, added Kiran.

Senior Veterinary Officer, Dr. Babar Saleem told News Lens Pakistan that Suzi is tied with a single foot chain from 7pm- 4am, as late evening to early night hours are of profound sexual activity in this species.” Mohammad Hussain, caretaker of Suzi, said, “She shows signs of activeness and restlessness at that time.” He further added that she does not want him to come close to her during these particular night timings.

Kiran claims confidently, “The habitat, diet and captive management measures especially for Suzi, the royal animal of Lahore zoo, have been taken in accordance with WAZA standards; that is why copulation is not an issue to be tackled,”

Dr. Saleem, confirmed that initially, the female elephant was chained for a short period of time. “However, we managed her innate desires by keeping her busy with increased human interaction and a long exercise routine,” he explained.

He said that she takes a walk regularly on the zoo tracks from 7am to 9am, during which she is overjoyed to see other animals in their enclosures. .Suzi’s ‘Hello’ with her trunk to the rhinoceros living beside her enclosure is a pleasurable sight for all of us.

This depicts a sad reality; Suzi has never experienced the pleasure and excitement of mating, she may never get the chance to breed a calf of her own.

Expressing an altogether different view point, Dr. Jawad Ahmed, a vocal advocate of animal rights, says, “The sole purpose of an animal’s natural expression is not merely breeding. Breeding is the outcome of copulation which is crucial for elephants, even if breeding does not occur. Almost 29 percent of captive African female elephants worldwide have been incapable of breeding a calf due to complex reproductive pathologies. Yet, they have been living in groups with males to mate as well.”

Kaavan, an Asian elephant, is chained and sedated in the Islamabad Marghzar Zoo, after his mate named Saheli died back in 2012. He faces problems similar to Suzi’s. Kaavan’s plight drew a global outcry when an online campaign ‘Free Kaavan’ was launched in 2015, and it has been signed by 395, 245 animal rights advocates across the world.

Dr. Waleed said, “The confinement and isolation of the animal has caused him enough pain, primarily after Saheli’s death since 2012, when his psychosocial and physiological needs were not catered to by the City Development Authority of Islamabad. They did not bring in another female Asian elephant or send him to an elephant sanctuary.”



Suzi’s diet chart



Suzi’s Chains

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