

SCENARIO 257

100 DAYS OF PM KHAN's (PERFORMANCE)-III

Prime Minister Imran Khan announced, while in Karachi on 2nd February 2019, that a university would be built in Hyderabad and reverse osmosis plants would be installed in areas of Tharparkar; he had already announced a health package for Sindh, under which as many as 112,000 families were listed to get ***Insaf Health Cards*** – what was the final fate of those announcements, but Sindh govt didn't agree to the scheme.

'We want to make Karachi the urban jewel of Pakistan,' the PTI stated in its manifesto, while announcing a number of steps towards transforming the metropolis. Among the party's commitments was to improve the capacity of Karachi's mass transit system, develop a desalination plant, provide clean drinking water and crackdown against the city's water mafia. During a visit to Karachi on 30th March 2019, PM Imran announced a Rs:162bn development project for the city. Of the 18 proposed projects, 10 were related to the development of the public transport network in Karachi and seven to the water and sewerage infrastructure.

On 5th September 2020; the premier Imran Khan unveiled a Rs:1.1 trillion package for Karachi's transformation. He visited the metropolis a week earlier and reviewed progress on five of those projects, which were a part of the Karachi Transformation Plan. ***But despite all the rhetoric, the PTI government, which won a sizeable mandate from the port city, had yet to deliver on many of its promises that they had campaigned before coming into power.*** Mr Khan was often seen upset due to ineffectiveness, ineptitude and incompetence of PTI's team at Karachi. See below....

On 28th September 2019; the schemes and system were so corrupt that when one PTI Minister Zaidi took the initiative of cleaning six major nullahs of the city it came to his knowledge that most of the ***'kachra kundis were sold*** and it was a big business. But the most startling disclosure made by the minister was related to the cost of removing garbage from city areas to earth-filled site. When he awarded contract of cleaning major city nullahs to the FWO (Frontier Works Organisation), the per tonne cost was \$6.5 only. Behria Town Karachi, when contacted to give quotation for garbage removal, also quoted price at \$6.5 per tonne.....

However, according to Fed Minister Zaidi, had the garbage first removed to garbage transit stations for drying purpose and then to earth-filled site the cost was \$10 per tonne. But the Sindh government's cost for removing garbage stood as high as \$28 per tonne – so massive corruption there was.

The federal minister had observed that out of two weighing machines at the earth-filled site only one was working and each truck on an average carried a load of 35-40 tonnes of garbage. He further said that one truck at the earth-filled site was recorded for four trips a day and it was how public moneys were being burgled and looted, allegedly by PPP & bureaucracy.

MASS-TRANSIT SYSTEM (MAS) IN KARACHI:

For Karachi, the PTI, in its manifesto, said that '...it will transform and massively enhance the capacity of Karachi's mass transit system by leveraging on public and private financing at the earliest possible time.

The fancy story of Karachi in the PTI era starts from 6th October 2018 when Sindh Governor Imran Ismail said local train and circular railway would soon be launched in the city; Railway Minister Sh Rashid made announcement [for these schemes] on 16th October instant in Karachi - the governor was addressing the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry [KCCI]. The local rail service could be operated on the main line from Landhi to Cantonment station; tenders had been issued for the procurement of fire engines; a water desalination plant was to be set up at Karachi Port..... **then there was a series of PROMISES from various organs of the PTI** – people were anxious to know when the projects get start.

On 11th February 2019: PM Khan was set to announce package for Karachi; President assured CM Sindh of early completion of federal projects in the province; on 26th March 2019: PM Khan was scheduled to launch mostly Centre-funded projects in the city till September (2019); **but the progress remained confined to the briefings & meetings only.**

In between, on 30th March 2019, PM Imran Khan announced a Rs:162 billion development packages for Karachi, which included grants for 18 projects focusing on **priority areas like transportation and water provision**. Out of the 18 proposed projects, 10 were related to the development of the public transport network in the city. Seven other projects were related to the water and sewerage infrastructure. The premier also said that while a master plan for Karachi was essential, an interim plan for the city would be put in place to address the pressing challenges that the metropolis was facing. Also, that further horizontal expansion of the city must be stopped and the slum areas of the city would be developed.

On 27th August 2019: PTI's federal govt cleared six more development projects worth Rs:218.5 billion, including two Karachi-based mass transit projects funded by international creditors. The Central Development Working Party [CDWP] approved two projects worth Rs:3.33 billion and recommended four schemes costing Rs:215.2 billion to the Executive Committee of National Economic Council (ECNEC) for approval. (*The CDWP had deferred approval for six projects, mostly belonging to other provinces, including a Gwadar project.*) The authority **had taken up two mass transit schemes of Karachi for the second time in the past four months.** It recommended the Asian Development Bank-funded Bus Rapid Transit - Red Line - to ECNEC for approval at a cost of Rs:78.6 billion. However, the World Bank-funded Karachi Urban Mobility project - **Yellow Line** - was conditionally referred to ECNEC at a cost of Rs:61.5 billion.

The PTI govt had also set up the NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, which was parallel to NEC, but it didn't possess constitutional cover – thus as exercise in futile. No one knows who was the mastermind ADVISOR or bureaucrat behind it.

Cost of the **Red Line project** increased nearly double due to currency depreciation; originally it had been estimated at Rs:65.6 billion. When it actually started in year 2021, the total Project cost re-calculated was USD 503.2 million and co-financed by ADB (USD 235 million), AFD (USD 71.8 million), GCF (USD 49 million), GoS (USD 75.6 million) and AIIB (USD 71.8 million). The loan became effective on 13th April 2021 and the Project was still progressing – till May 2022 at least, when PM Imran Khan left the reins.

The project was originally expected to facilitate 300,000 commuters every day. However, with further additions and re-routing, the **Karachi Bus Rapid Transit Red Line** project could provide a 26.6km corridor and associated facilities benefiting 1.5 million people (10% of Karachi's population) who lived within a kilometre of a Red Line station.

The World Bank had approved \$382 million for construction of a **21km long yellow corridor** in Karachi. **Karachi Yellow Line project** needed Rs:1.7 billion annual operational subsidies. In May 2019, the CDWP had also considered the Yellow Line project for approval; however, recommended the project subject to the condition that its cost and scope should be rationalised.

The CDWP had also given directives for operationalising the **Green Line Karachi project** and integrating all mass transit schemes in the city under one mass transit authority for operation and maintenance purposes but the government of Sindh did not give response to those observations. However, on 28th September 2019, just four weeks after the announcement of PM Khan's Karachi-Package worth Rs:162 billion, PTI's one Federal Minister Syed Ali Zaidi, while speaking at a seminar organised by the FPCCI, said that:

"...funds from the Karachi package of Rs:162 billion recently announced by Prime Minister Imran Khan would only be released after adopting a financial discipline and monitoring policy."

On 7th October 2019: PTI's govt at Islamabad earmarked 1st bundle of Rs:16 billion for 44 ongoing and new development projects executed through the federal Public Sector Development Program [PSDP] for metropolitan city of Karachi for the on-going fiscal year 2019-20. It was titled as Prime Minister Package but development of the city remained neglected from so many years owing to political cum administrative lapses. That Karachi package included five projects with estimated cost of Rs:35.206 billion out of which the required funding of Rs:9.369 billion was to complete the ongoing projects.

[On 29th November 2019; ONE MORE HIGHLIGHT FROM PTI appeared - the Asian Development Bank [ADB]-funded **Red Line Bus Rapid Transit [BRT] project (a 26.6 km corridor joining Model Colony and Numaish), **was the world's first zero-emission mass transit service.**]**

The mentionable project, in fact, was **Green Line Bus Rapid Transit System** [BRTS] but it couldn't get the needed priority – thus only meagre funding as there were four new projects under the said package with estimated cost of Rs:11.898 billion. The official data showed that total number of ongoing and new development projects for Karachi stood at 44, including 29 ongoing project and 15 new projects with estimated cost of Rs:106 billion; till then, the expenditures incurred on ongoing 29 projects stood at Rs:56 billion and the PTI govt could allocate Rs:16 billion only due to non-availability of funds in the national kitty. Another reason for neglecting BRTS remained that its cost then stood at Rs:24.604 billion out of which the system had already utilized Rs:21.166 billion; thus, the Federal Govt allocated Rs:2 billion only in that on-going fiscal year – but then **held it non-functional for dubious reasons** – then again revived it on 22nd January 2020.

PTI govt, the fact remains, decided to revive the \$2b for **Karachi Circular Railway [KCR] project** and directed EAD, then headed by Asad Umar, for implementation mechanism and framework agreement under CPEC. The meeting, comprising of federal secretaries of relevant ministries, discussed various issues hampering the implementation of KCR project as indicated by the government of Sindh. That day, Federal Minister Asad Umar was given a detailed briefing on the project; that PC-I of KCR project was approved in October 2017 by the ECNEC at the total cost of \$1,971 million; however, no progress could be made because no lender had agreed to feed the said project neither in PMLN regime nor in the PTI govt. He confirmed that the federal govt was fully committed to support the KCR project for its expeditious implementation in consultation with the Chinese side. The minister directed Planning Division and EAD to immediately initiate work for finalising the implementation mechanism with the Chinese side.

Referring to daily **The Nation** dated 23rd January 2020:

"...that since the project of Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) was delayed for almost two and a half years therefore the existing feasibility need to be revisited. Feasibility of Karachi Circular Railways was completed in May 2017 and it needs to be updated. Similarly, the cost of the scheme also requires re-evaluation. The provincial government of Sindh will re-submit an updated feasibility study of the project."

Later, the 7th Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) of the CPEC had agreed in principle for inclusion of **Mass Transit System Karachi** as part of CPEC component and tasked Transport Working Group to work on the projects. *However, no implementation mechanism could be finalized during past two and a half years for the execution of KCR project.* Once more, the matter went into pending phase for re-negotiations with China for final approval.

[The key-point was that KCR's total length was made around 50 km and it included the revival and transformation of the old Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) into a mass transit system.]

On 19th June 2020: The Asian Development Bank [ADB] inked \$235 million loan agreement with the federal govt for the development of **Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system** in Karachi; the loan was initially approved by the bank in July 2019. The project, developed in partnership with the Transport and Mass-Transit Department of the Sindh govt, was all set for fast-track implementation with the start of procurement activities for civil works. Little details from the accord:

[The Project will restructure the entire width of the Red Line BRT corridor, including the construction of 29 stations and dedicated lanes along the 26.6km stretch; improvement of the mixed-traffic roadway with up to six lanes in each direction; inclusion of on-street parking and landscaped green areas in various locations; improvement of the drainage system to make the corridor climate-proof; and installation of bicycle lanes, improved sidewalks, and energy-efficient street lights.

In addition, the ADB will also administer a \$100 million loan from the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), a \$100 million loan from Agence Francaise de Development (AFD), a \$37.2 million loan and a \$49 million grant from the Green Climate Fund (GCF) to finance climate change adaptation and mitigation measures.

*Meanwhile, the PTI govt brought another promise for the nation to introduce **electric buses in Karachi & Islamabad.**]*

(Press conference of Federal Minister Fawad Chaudhry dated 4th October 2020 at Karachi is referred.)

KARACHI CIRCULAR RAILWAY:

On 19th November 2020: Karachi Circular Railway [KCR] **started partial operations** on a 14km cleared stretch of around 55km route of the old KCR; it was on Karachi City-Orangi-Karachi City route and the rail-pass was made available for Rs:750 (then).

[Opened in 1964, the route of the old KCR started from Drigh Road and ended in downtown Karachi. It ceased operations in 1999 after suffering huge losses for years.]

In the first phase four trains were to run daily from Pipri to City Station. It was a success because there was a huge land mafia on the KCR tracks and the Sindh government knew it. Railway's Federal Minister Sh Rashid held:

"In 25 years, the land mafia has taken over the KCR tracks. We are making efforts ... We are fully cooperating with the Sindh government. They have started work on sewerage lines; they have [issued tenders] for over-bridges. As more bridges keep coming, we will increase the KCR [tracks]. We are going to do lots of work in railways and will completely modernise [the KCR] within a year.

About the cost of the project: One coach cost Rs:9 million and 40 coaches have been refurbished. Around Rs:1.8 billion has been allocated of which Rs:17m has been spent so far."

Earlier, on 25th September 2020, the Supreme Court of Pakistan [SCP] had cautioned the Sindh govt as well as the Pakistan Railways not to exceed the timeline prescribed by it for revival of the Karachi Circular Railway (KCR). When a 3-judge SCP bench, headed by Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed, took up a *suo motu* case, it was informed that the Frontier Works Organisation [FWO] had proposed the construction of underpasses and overhead bridges for smooth running of trains on KCR route.

The SCP had proposed in February 2020 that work on revival of the KCR should commence within six months. The SCP was informed that survey for the construction of 11 underpasses had been completed by the FWO while the remaining 13 would be completed soon. Planning had been done while designing work was in progress, the court was informed. During the hearing, the Railways Secretary assured the court that no impediment had been created by the Sindh government and work was in progress day and night to start running trains on the route within the timeline agreed upon. The Sindh government had also taken a number of steps to remove the encroachments on both sides of railway track.

On 14th February 2021: Federal Minister for Planning & Development Asad Umar was seen still in promising mode while assuring Karachiites that the Green Line bus project would kick off operations by August (2021) and a prototype bus for the purpose would soon be ready. He criticised the provincial government for 'not empowering the civic bodies as it should'.

As per PTI's claims, the federation was working beyond its responsibility to give Karachi its due rights; also, that work was underway to implement the *Karachi Transformation Plan though couldn't see the dawn during the PTI regime at least*. The ruling govt had given another deadline for opening of the Green Line Bus Rapid Transit System (BRTS) project in July-August (2021)– it proved to be a distant dream for Karachiites who were waiting for the project's completion ever since its ground breaking was performed by former PM Nawaz Sharif on 16th February 2016.

However, shifting deadlines were not new for the people of Karachi who badly needed a proper mass transit system in their city; originally the said project was to be completed by the end of 2017. When it was inaugurated in Feb 2016, the estimated cost was Rs:16.85 billion. Later, the project was extended by another 10 kms as initially sought by the Sindh government and the estimated cost jumped to Rs:24bn. The Transport Crisis, a media report highlighted the sorry state of the public transport sector of the country's largest city, which was (and still it is) on the verge of collapse due to its history of failure, negligence, inefficiency and lack of follow-through in both government and public-private partnership projects.

Once more, the PTI's federal minister [Mr Asad Umar], on 22nd March 2021, set deadlines to put into operation two mega transport projects in Karachi — the Rs:300 billion **Karachi Circular Railway** [KCR] and Rs:25bn **Green Line Bus Rapid Transport** — later that year. The Planning ministry in a statement said that:

'...the deadline for signing of first package (A) of the Integrated Transport System (ITS) contract has been set as 26th March, followed by package B contract signing on

April 2. The deadline for award of operational and maintenance contract for the project would be given by May this year (2021).

While presiding over a meeting of the stakeholders —the federal minister Railways confirmed that the prototype buses would be ready for testing and commissioning by 25th April (2021). It was mutually agreed that the projects would be initiated in Public Private Partnership / Build-Operate and Transfer [BOT] modes. Mr Umar directed that the Green Line BRT should be operational by August 2021. A ray of hope, however, emerged on 18th September 2021 for the Karachiites when the first consignment of 40 buses for the Green Line bus rapid transit system (BRTS) reached the city; and the PTI felt little satisfied '**terming it another milestone**'. The second consignment of 40 more buses was expected to reach Karachi within next month then.

Federal minister Asad Umar said at the Green Line fleet arrival ceremony that a comprehensive Command and Control Centre had been established for transport projects including Green Line, Orange Line, and others. A bus depot was built for 80 buses, while 22 bus stations were constructed as part of the project. Finally, the service line was inaugurated on 10th December 2021 by PM Imran Khan himself – and the Karachi-residents were able to see the plans of 2017 coming true in ending 2021.

On 25th January 2022: PTI government approved the transaction structure and project proposal for the construction and operation of **Karachi Circular Railway** (KCR) on public-private mode at an estimated cost of about Rs:220bn. Under the transaction structure approved by the board of Public-Private Partnership Authority (PPPA), the private sector could finance, develop and run the project on commercial lines; the meeting was presided over by Minister Asad Umar.

The project cost was initially estimated at Rs:201bn excluding Rs:20.7bn worth of loop section to avoid 22 crossings already under implementation. The board also decided that based on revised cost estimates, the federal govt would finance 40pc that would work out at about Rs:80-90bn and provide this financing to the concessionaire at the outset (first three years) to help operationalise the project. Also, that the railway board would be asked to lease out for 99 years 13 properties en-route the KCR project to meet the initial financing. In the project, the private sector was made responsible to finance the construction of the civil works, electrical & mechanical (E&M) component including procurement of rolling stock and operations & maintenance (O&M) of the project from its own resources.

AND on 10th February 2022: The Central Development Working Party [CDWP] cleared all the three development projects with a cumulative estimated cost of about Rs:280 billion, including the **Karachi Circular Railway** (KCR). The Planning Commission had finalised the projects at Rs:273.071bn the cost of KCR as a modern urban railway project and requested the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) to approve its implementation by the Public-Private Partnership Authority (PPPA) on a build-operate-transfer [BOT] basis. The 43-km dual track of the **Urban Rail Mass Transit System** was going to be constructed in a period of three years on PPP basis. The plan expected to deploy the use of electric trains and keeping them operational round the week. The project involved 30 stations along the corridor covering the most densely populated areas of Karachi.

WATER FOR KARACHI...

***blame game and delays**

On 16th September 2018: While paying first visit to Karachi after winning elections of 25th July 2018, Prime Minister Imran had announced the installation of a desalination plant for Karachi on his maiden visit. On 21st October 2019, the premier again urged the contracted firm to expedite work. The PTI had also vowed to crackdown against the water mafia in the

city. Meanwhile, the federal government started working on the Greater Karachi Water Supply Scheme (K-IV), which had plans to supply 260 million gallons per day of water to Karachi in phase one. The said project was originally being handled by the Sindh government.

On 7th October 2019: For the above mentioned Water Supply Scheme (K-IV), the total cost was standing at Rs:12.755 billion out of which the incurred expenditures stood at Rs:9.598 billion till 30th June 2019. The federal government then allocated Rs:800 million afresh for that fiscal year in the PSDP against throw forward of Rs:3.157 billion. Under an arrangement with the provincial government, the federal government took up the implementation of the project as part of the prime minister's package for Karachi and directed the Water & Power Development Authority to take over the implementation responsibilities of the scheme. In June 2020, the Centre blamed the PPP-led provincial government for delays with the project.

On 5th September 2020: PM Imran Khan re-affirmed his promises over which no mentionable achievement was seen till then and the *Karachiites* were going furious. He unveiled a historic financial package worth Rs:1.1 trillion for Karachi's transformation that was to address the chronic municipal and infrastructure issues of the country's financial hub. The **city's drainage and sewerage issues** were brought into national focus a month earlier after record-breaking monsoon rains caused widespread devastation and left dozens of dead.

The premier told media that the federal and Sindh governments had decided to deal with Karachi's problems together; both were contributing to the Rs:1100 billion package. In a statement, the PPP chairperson Bilawal Zardari told that out of the Rs1.1 trillion, the federal government had allocated Rs:300 billion while the Sindh government committed more than Rs:800 billion. The transformation plan was to be implemented through the Provincial Coordination Implementation Committee (PCIC) under the chief minister Sindh AND with the active help of the Pak-army.

The first problem the plan could address was identified as the Greater Karachi Water Supply Scheme - called K-IV. The second problem was of encroachments on nullahs on which the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) had already started work. The third and fourth issues that the plan was to be focused on were the city's sewerage system and solid waste disposal. PTI's Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar said K-IV, the modern Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) and freight corridor projects' construction would start within the same fiscal year. That fiscal year had ended and yet, the citizens of Karachi were found waiting for the promises to materialize.

Work on promises to end Karachi's water mafia and the development of a desalination plant in the metropolis for clean drinking water had NEVER STARTED, in fact – neither by PPP's 15 years governance on Sindh nor by the PTI's central command for about THREE years.

FOCUS ON OVERSEAS PAKISTANIS:

PM Imran Khan, during his election campaign, had vowed to ensure a greater stake for overseas Pakistanis. Among a number of goals set to achieve this promise was ensuring voting rights for overseas Pakistanis and developing financial instruments that could create attractive investment opportunities for them in their native homeland.

On 17th August 2018; a day before Imran Khan took oath as premier, the Supreme Court of Pakistan [SCP] ruled a landmark decision allowing **overseas Pakistanis the right to vote** via an internet system. The court had been hearing a petition filed by Mr Khan who had long sought voting rights for Pakistanis abroad, with his party enjoying a large following

amongst the diaspora. Overseas Pakistanis were able to avail this right during the by-elections scheduled on 14th October 2018 for 37 constituencies.

Just after a month, the formal notifications were in place; overseas Pakistanis were given the opportunity to vote for the first time in Pakistan's electoral history. This was duly regulated by the Election Commission of Pakistan [ECP] on the basis of the SCP's order. The ruling party PTI, meanwhile, was also pushing for the use of Electronic Voting Machines [EVMs]. However, PM Khan was disappointed due to traditional lethargic attitudes of the overseas Pakistani community. Here are the details:

"...the campaign to register overseas Pakistanis for internet-voting in the upcoming by-polls evoked a lukewarm response, with only 7,419 expatriates out of the total 632,000 registered to avail the facility offered to them - first time in the country's electoral history."

The process of registration of overseas Pakistanis from the 37 constituencies where by-elections were to be held on 14th October 2018 had started on 1st September and came to a close after 30 days. As per press statement released by the Election Commission of Pakistan [ECP], the website for the overseas voters remained functional 24/7 throughout the registration process and did not face any technical problems.

The ECP said only voters holding national identity card for overseas Pakistanis (NICOP) or machine-readable passports [MRPs] were able to register to vote. This way, as many as 632,000 overseas Pakistanis from the 37 constituencies settled in 177 countries of the world were eligible to vote through the internet. Under the plan, over 7,400 registered voters were sent voter pass (password) between 10th Oct and 14th Oct on the email address mentioned in their online application for registration, through which they were able to cast their votes on election day. Casting one's vote was quite simple as they usually do in their respective foreign countries. Upon successful submission of the vote, a confirmation message was displayed on the screen.

The ECP had also uploaded on its website separate video tutorials in Urdu and English languages as well as step-by-step help materials to guide voters through the registration and voting process. An advertisement campaign had also been launched through media to create awareness about the facility of internet voting made available for the overseas Pakistanis; the embassies and consulates of Pakistan had also been involved in the campaign.

The complete procedure had been defined by the ECP after being ordered by the Supreme Court to provide internet voting facility to the overseas Pakistanis for the upcoming by-polls. After two major opposition parties criticised ECP for what they called a hasty move but the ECP was satisfied with its progressive adoption. The ECP had advised the said political parties to hail the initiative which was a landmark innovation in Pakistan's voting system.

On 31st January 2019; the premier launched the **Pakistan Banao Certificate** — a dollar-denominated diaspora bond aimed at attracting investment from overseas Pakistanis to help strengthen the national economy. The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) had also launched the **Roshan Digital Account** (RDA) for non-resident Pakistanis to enable them to remotely open bank accounts in the country through online digital branches without physically visiting banks. By the end of July 2021, the inflows through RDA had reached \$1.87billion (*During July 2021 the remittances reached \$1869 million*) — very encouraging it was; **daily DAWN** dated 6th August 2021 is referred for more details.

In November 2020, the SBP launched a savings scheme — the **Naya Pakistan Certificate** — offering significantly higher interest rates compared to those prevailing in most of the developed and developing economies. Facilitating overseas Pakistanis, PM Imran's government also provided incentives such as tax exemptions and simplified biometric verification.

Investments in property, tourism and the construction sector were also encouraged. ***This makes it one of the significant promises that were completed by the government.***

On 10th June 2021; the Elections (Amendment) Bill 2020 was passed by the National Assembly amid the opposition's outcry. It was then tabled in the upper house on 16th Oct that year wherein PM Khan's party emphasized the need to grant overseas Pakistanis the right to vote before next elections in 2023. In order to attract investment from overseas Pakistanis, the PTI introduced a number of projects that focused specifically on the promise of attracting overseas investments.

10bn TREE TSUNAMI – CLIMATE CHANGE:

Addressing a tree plantation ceremony on 27th May 2021 at Haripur, Khyber PK, Prime Minister Imran Khan held that Pakistan was unfortunately among the 10 countries worst hit by climate change and global warming would play harmful impact on coming generations if the current trends were not reversed. ***'The PTI government is, however, utilising its best efforts to slow down and reverse the harmful impacts of climate change,'*** he said. This was in line with the documented commitments of the PTI, which promised to '**tackle climate change and champion green growth**'.

One of the hallmark projects of the PTI government during three years tenure had been the **10 BILLION TREE TSUNAMI** drive, which was expanded from the Billion Tree Tsunami project launched in KP in 2015. Under that program, seasonal plantation drives were held in various parts of the country, with the target to plant 10 billion saplings before 2023's elections. On 17th June 2020, the premier told the nation that under the program, **30 million trees** had been planted and new nurseries were working at top speed to increase the number to one billion by June 2021.

On 9th August 2021; the premier launched the world's biggest **MIYAWAKI URBAN FOREST** in Lahore. Falling under the 10 Billion Tree Tsunami project, various projects including **20 Plants, 20 Numbers, Billion Tree Honey Initiative and olive tree plantations** were inaugurated. The **Green Stimulus Package** was launched in April 2021 to extend green cover and provide employments for the youth, particularly in the wake of Covid-19.

Alongside the 10 Billion Tree Tsunami, the government also initiated the **Clean Green Pakistan** drive to tackle the challenges of rising pollution and global warming. On 25th November 2019, the Clean Green Pakistan Index was launched, under which 19 cities were to compete on certain issues of public interest in the initial stage. With considerable work done to launch the program in many parts of the country, the said promise was PARTIALLY COMPLETE because just after five months Mr Khan was no more in saddles.

The PTI had vowed to **INCREASE PROTECTED AREAS** from one per cent to 10pc of the coastline. This promise had seen little progress; the climate change ministry in June 2021 said the promise would be fulfilled by 2023. On 21st March 2021, the premier had asked for **Charna Island** to be turned into a marine protected area.

On 31st August 2020, President Arif Alvi promulgated the **Pakistan Islands Development Authority (PIDA) Ordinance 2020**, to facilitate the federal govt to take control of **Bundal and Buddo islands** in Sindh. This ordinance, however, lapsed, amid backlash from the Sindh government. The said project was NOT in the list of PM Khan's promises whatsoever.

EHSAAS — WELFARE PROGRAM:

Poverty Alleviation: The PTI had planned to initiate a poverty alleviation drive across the poorest districts of Pakistan. In order to do so, it promised to launch special drives to improve access to sanitation and potable water; besides increasing funding for the most impoverished districts through poverty alleviation plans, provided ***Sehat Insaf Cards*** to residents and augmented the existing Benazir Income Support Program (BISP).

In April 2019, the federal cabinet approved the formation of the **Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation Division** to overcome poverty in the country, adding that the then incumbent BISP chairperson Sania Nishtar would head the new division as well. Then in June 2020, it decided to increase the monthly stipend given to poor families registered with the BISP from Rs:2000 to Rs:3000. Nishtar also worked on the removal of beneficiaries from the BISP database who were either ghosts or UNDESERVING.

A move to change the name of BISP was met with the opposition's resistance, and was subsequently abandoned. The party instead placed it under the umbrella of **Ehsaas — the PTI's flagship social safety program**. Alongside the BISP, the federal government worked on various other projects under the Ehsaas program, which the premier Imran Khan thought about turning Pakistan into an ISLAMIC WELFARE STATE.

In the World Bank's report, it had listed the **Ehsaas Emergency Cash Program** among the top four social protection interventions globally in terms of the number of people covered. The program distributed cash among 15 million under-privileged families after they suffered financially due to Covid-19 related lockdowns. Therefore, the promise to augment the existing BISP program was nearly complete.

Coming to providing **CLEAN DRINKING WATER**, to about 250 million population, the PTI's performance was most noticeable in Punjab. A month after the passage of the **Punjab Aab-e-Pak Authority Bill 2019** by the provincial assembly in March 2019, the Punjab Aab-e-Pak Authority was established. Nearly two years later, on 11th January 2021, the first water project under the authority was launched in Chak Jhumra, Punjab. PTI govt held that water filtration plants were being installed in jails, hospitals, educational institutions and police lines under the Sarwar Foundation to provide clean drinking water to the people. Till 10th August 2021, 1,500 projects of the authority were to be completed that year and seven million people in Punjab could be provided with clean drinking water daily. On the whole, a perfect initiative and noble thought on the part of PTI it was.

Many of the PTI's commitments to education were connected to their promises for youth development. A key example of this was the **KAMYAB JAWAN PROGRAM** (KJP) launched in October 2019. It was an aggressive small-and-medium-enterprise lending scheme, aimed at stimulating job creation and economically empowering the youth. As of July 2021, the government had disbursed soft loans amounting to Rs:17 billion among more than 14,000 entrepreneurs via the Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme of KJP.

- **NO FEEDBACK THEREOF:** *No one can comment that Rs:17bn had created how many companies, business concerns, how much employments created, what kind of businesses done with that money, how much were Tax Registered and how much successful – OR SIMPLY THE MONEY WENT WASTE with no results on record.*

Another project launched by the PTI government was the **HUNARMAND JAWAN PROGRAM** aimed at the economic emancipation of the youth by providing them quality training. Launching the project on 9th January 2020, the premier Imran Khan had expected that the project would see the training of 500,000 youth; the first 70 skill centres were to be set up in madrassahs and in the next phase, 300 smart training centres were to be raised in various parts of the country.

- **NO FEEDBACK ON RECORD:** Again no one can comment that where those 70 Skill-Centres were located, where those 300 Training-Centres were opened; how many youths got certificates / diplomas from those centres; what skills they got and where they were absorbed and how much successful – OR SIMPLY THE MONEY WENT WASTE with no results on record.

However, in Pakistan all such WELFARE PROJECTS and plans are always available in tailor-made form with all the bureaucrats who keep enough experience to 'put the new political party and new ministers' on such new tracks of HUMAN INVESTMENTS. No one has the statistics of any such program started and carried on in Gen Musharraf's regime, PPP, PMLN or PTI's respective eras. ALL THERE WILL BE FUDGE FIGURES ON FILES. THUS PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT ALL SUCH SOFT LOANS, HELPS, CASH INVESTMENTS ETC ARE EATEN UP BY BUREAUCRATIC HANDS IN COLLABORATION WITH THEIR ASSOCIATE POLITICAL WORKERS.

Had they been truthful, there should have been no poverty in Pakistan; whereas the practical situation is that each year about 10% people are moved to BELOW POVERTY LINE. See UNDP 2021's report here.

UNDP REPORT 2021:

Referring to **UNDP's Report on Humanity** released in first week of April 2021 as appeared in world media, including **AL-JAZEERA** on 13th April 2021: 'Economic privileges accorded to Pakistan's elite groups, including the corporate sector, feudal landlords, the political class and the country's powerful military, add up to an estimated \$17.4bn, or roughly 6 percent of the country's economy.'

The UNDP report used the prism of '**Power, People and Policy**' to examine the stark income and economic opportunity disparities in the developing country – named Pakistan. Powerful groups use their privilege to capture more than their fair share, people perpetuate structural discrimination through prejudice against others based on social characteristics, and policies are often unsuccessful at addressing the resulting inequity, or may even contribute to it. The regional chief of the UNDP had been on a two-week tour of Pakistan to discuss the report's findings; also, holding talks with the then PM Imran Khan and other top members of his cabinet, including the ministers of foreign affairs and planning. Ultimately she wrote:

"[In our remarks in meetings] we focused right in on where [...] the shadows are, and what is it that actually diverts from a reform agenda in a country. My hope is that there is strong intent to review things like the current tax and subsidy policies, to look at land and capital access."

The biggest beneficiary of the privileges – which may take the form of tax breaks, cheap input prices, higher output prices or preferential access to capital, land and services – was found to be the **country's corporate sector**, which accrued an estimated \$4.7bn in privileges.

The second and third-highest recipients of privileges were found to be:

- the country's richest 1 percent, who collectively own 9 percent of the country's overall income,
- the feudal land-owning class, which constitutes 1.1 percent of the population but owns 22 percent of all arable farmland.
- The country's military is found to receive \$1.7bn in privileges, mainly in the form of preferential access to land, capital and infrastructure, as well as tax exemptions.

All above classes have strong representation in the Pakistani Parliament, with most major political parties' candidates' drawn from either the feudal landowning class or the country's business-owning elite. This creates a paradox where those responsible for doling out the privileges were also those who were receiving them. *'If with one hand you are providing a gain that benefits yourself, and taking the gain with the other hand, then what we have lost is that sense of separation of powers and oversight.'*

The report noted, however, that:

"Pakistan's military is also the largest conglomerate of business entities in Pakistan, besides being the country's biggest urban real estate developer and manager, with wide-ranging involvement in the construction of public projects.

These things are not neatly separate entities. You do see some of... these are overlapping so you almost get a double privilege by the military. The minute in a country the military is a part of big business, it obviously doubles the issue and the problem."

In a country like Pakistan, a movement may erupt any moment to displace structures of power that are so entrenched and deep-rooted. It's a tough power politics (here in Pakistan) and it would be naïve or childish of anyone to expect or to recommend to leaders on what to do in this respect.

It's very clear from the analytics, and then it is up to the country, both the state and the people to say: ***'Enough, here is how we need to take break up these strongly-held power groups and dynamics in this country.'***

Aliona Niculita, deputy resident representative of the UNDP in Pakistan, added in the report:

"The wide-ranging NHDR provides detailed data on deep-rooted inequality in Pakistan's economy. While the richest 1 percent held 9 percent of the country's income of \$314.4bn in 2018-19, the report found that the poorest 1 percent held just 0.15 percent.

Overall, the richest 20 percent of Pakistanis hold 49.6 percent of the national income, compared with the poorest 20 percent, who hold just 7 percent.

The poorest and richest Pakistanis effectively live in completely different countries, with literacy levels, health outcomes, and living standards that are poles apart."

Of further concern to Pakistani policymakers is a shrinking of the middle-class, with the UNDP's data showing middle-income earners fell from 42 percent of the population in 2009 to 36 percent in 2019. The data highlights regional inequalities in service delivery and shows how higher-income areas also see higher rates of public expenditure. The report said further:

"The NHDR 2020 reveals that Pakistan's people do not benefit equally from public expenditure. The overall share is 14.2 percent for the poorest income [category], compared with 37.2 percent for the richest [category].

Pakistan ranks second-to-last in South Asia based on HDI, outperforming Afghanistan but lagging behind all six of its other regional neighbours.

Is there a glass ceiling to human development and why, and what is needed to crack it?"

The UNDP recommended policies that focus on removing privileges and targeting spending on outcomes that provide both structural support for the country's poor and on the infrastructure – such as education and healthcare – that would provide them further economic opportunities. Look at another tragedy:

"Pakistan ranks 153 out of 156 countries on the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index, with 32 percent of primary-school-aged girls out of school – matter of shame on all country managers. The evidence across the world on one of the biggest returns on investment comes from educating all of our children and getting them and keeping them in school.

But a huge return is that all of those missing girls from school and missing women from the workplace – bring them back in streams."

No doubt, Pakistan is moving back into the stone-age.