

Double standards



Javid Husain

France in 1956 in league with Israel, and the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 were clear examples of the violation of the UN Charter.

In the sphere of international economic, commercial, and financial exchanges, the US-led West has exploited its powerful positions in such institutions as the IMF and World Bank to impose its own choices and preferences on economically weaker nations. It is also ironic that the US, which used to champion the cause of free trade, has now started imposing economic and technological sanctions against China to slow down the latter's economic and technological progress, especially in such fields as semiconductors, AI, and quantum computing. But this is nothing new. As pointed out by Kishore Mahbubani in his book, 'Has China won?', in the face of the tough competition given by the Japanese automakers to their American counterparts, "President Ronald Reagan had to twist the arms of the Japanese to agree to a voluntary export restraint."

The double standards of the Western countries are also exposed by their positions on such subjects as the situation in Hong Kong, Palestine, occupied Kashmir and Taiwan. When Hong Kong was being governed by the UK, Western concerns about democratic values in the territory were non-existent even though colonial rule is the very anti-thesis of a truly representative form of government. But this issue became a major source of concern for the West once Hong Kong reverted to Chinese sovereignty. Since Israel is a virtual Western outpost in the Middle East, its excesses against the national rights of the Palestinian people in viola-

tion of UN resolutions are generally ignored by the US-led West.

The same conclusion applies to the treatment of the UN-recognised right of self-determination of the Kashmiri people by the Western countries because of their desire to cultivate India as an emerging Great Power and build it up as a bulwark against China. Taiwan is recognised by the international community, including even the US, as part of China. But that has not prevented Washington from offering political and military support to Taiwan's administration to encourage separatist tendencies in the territory, even though it is internationally recognised as an integral part of China. Repeated calls by the US-led West on China and others to abide by the rules of the global order established by it in the aftermath of World War II are aimed at protecting its own security and economic interests. Therefore, whenever these rules come into conflict with the Western countries' own narrow national interests, they have no hesitation in ignoring them. Logically, China and other emerging major powers can be expected to insist on re-writing these rules to make them equitable for global security and economic progress, rather than solely promoting Western interests.

In light of the foregoing, the coming decades will witness growing tensions between the established and the emerging major powers. Pakistan and other countries of the Global South need to navigate carefully in the unfolding turbulent global scenario. This scenario is marked by multipolarity and by the primacy of national power over recognised principles of interstate conduct. -- Courtesy Dawn

Going strong at 160



Zubeida Mustafa

Earlier this year, the St Joseph's Convent School, Karachi, celebrated 160 years of its glorious existence. Those of us who had some kind of connection with this institution — mainly as students — felt a proud sense of ownership for our alma mater on this auspicious occasion. I don't think any other girls' school in Pakistan can claim equal longevity combined with excellence.

I attended the alumni event held recently which became a poignant journey down memory lane. I have a double connection with SJC. Both my daughters also studied there and it was a pleasure meeting their teachers — Nilofer Minhas and Faiza Kazi — to whom I will be eternally grateful for providing my girls that extra love and support the children of working mothers need. This link, as well my own childhood school experience, makes SJC special to me.

Though SJC's sturdy stone Italian architecture and its playgrounds stretching over a vast expanse made a profound impression on my mind when I came here first as a child, an institution needs more than brick and mortar to establish its greatness. It needs teachers of substance who impart knowledge, moral strength and integrity to their students. For SJC, this came from the nuns clad in their white habit. They were the builders of the SJC value system.

Times have changed, as has the apparel of the nuns, the academic environs of the school and the political status of the

country where the founders — a batch of five Belgian nuns from the Daughters of the Cross Institute, Liege — landed. It was Kurrachee that played host to them and where the SJC was founded in 1862. What has remained unchanged is the tradition of "relentless service to humanity", "sustained educational pursuits", "arduous struggles", "modest courtesy" and a "sense of duty". Above all, the aim of education as spelt out by the founders has been further strengthened. In a nutshell, it seeks to develop the full potential of every student while inculcating in them the judgement to distinguish between right and wrong and fostering the desire to become lifelong learners.

More importantly, this failure is not restricted to a single incident. Our trajectory is replete with similarly shameful crimes committed against the Christian community. Remember Shanti Nagar (1997), Sangla Hill (2005), Gojra (2009), Joseph Colony (2013), the Peshawar church attack (2013) and the attack on Quetta churches (2017)? Even Muslim religious leaders in the country have not stood up in defence of those they should protect; they have not exhorted their followers to be respectful of other religious communities. The Christian community has suffered discrimination in all walks of life and the possibility of unverified blasphemy accusations against them continues to hang over their heads like the sword of Damocles. One has to recall the Aasiya Bibi case. The poor woman was on death row for years before she was acquitted and smuggled out of Pakistan to another country, even before the judgement was made public. In spite of this hatred displayed by those who hold extremist and bigoted views, the community, in light of their religious beliefs, continues to demonstrate the values of forgiveness, compassion and kindness. This should offer some food for thought to a section of the Muslim community that prefers obscurantism. -- Courtesy Dawn

Lawless city

A grim milestone has just been passed in Karachi. The recent death of a teenage robbery victim brings the number of people killed in street crime incidents in the city between January and September 2023 to 100. To put things in perspective, the total number of people to have died in incidents of terrorism across Sindh during the first six months of the current year is 19. This once again underscores the unsettling fact that Karachi is a deadly city for its people, where armed killers have complete freedom to take citizens' lives. From posh neighbourhoods to teeming slums, no area of this forsaken metropolis is safe. Muggers strike whenever they can and are ready to kill their victims at the slightest resistance. Figures compiled by the Citizens-Police Liaison Committee illustrate just how large the epidemic of street crime is. According to the CPLC, over the past nine months, some 60,000 incidents of street crime have taken place in Karachi. The figure for all of 2022 was 85,000. Police say between 50 to 60 gangs are active in this deadly business, while mobile-snatching and motorbike-lifting top the list of crimes.

Various factors are fuelling high street crime rates, including inflation, joblessness, and the lure of easy money. People often resist parting with their hard-earned cash or valuables, with the result that they end up paying with their lives. However, addressing the underlying factors behind crime is a long-term project; the immediate need is to quell the deadly wave of killings. Here, the Sindh government has failed miserably. The PPP, which has been ruling the province since 2008, has much to answer for where law and order goes. The caretaker government can only do so much, and it is hoped that the next elected government that takes power in Sindh has solid proposals to beat crime. Otherwise, precious lives will continue to be snuffed out by trigger-happy criminals.

Commerce News



KARACHI: Caretaker Federal Minister for Commerce Industries & Production Dr. Gohar Ejaz is being presented with memento during his visit to Karachi Chamber of Commerce & Industries KCCI.

Minister says: Work on Pak-Iran gas pipeline initiated

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Energy, Power and Petroleum Muhammad Ali said on Friday that work on Pak-Iran gas pipeline has been initiated. He was talking to the media after inaugurating Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) first Model Customer Service Centre here at its Regional Office on Gurumangat Road. The minister said that 20 per cent natural gas has been decreased as compared to last year, while the government would try to manage gas load-shedding in winter; however, he added the government could not provide gas on

cheaper rates, after purchasing at higher rates. People would have to use the natural fuel wisely, he added. Muhammad Ali, responding to a query about Russian oil, said that only one cargo had arrived on trial basis, but the problem was to refine it. Only the Pakistan Oil Refinery was refining 46,000 tons of oil monthly, while demand was many times higher. The government was trying to engage private refineries to meet the demand, he added. The government is working on importing more Russian oil, resolving the refinery issues, and making efforts to provide

maximum relief to people. The minister said that taxpayers are feeding only 9 per cent of GDP of Pakistan, which is one of the lowest in the world; people would get relief only if tax collection improves. As many as 14 counters have been set up at the Model Customer Service Centre, which included applications for new connection, change of ownership, re-connection, business development counter, billing counter, violation checking counter, billing office counter, accounts-treasury counter, business development process counter.

PASSCO declared public body under RTI Act, 2017

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Information Commission (PIC) has ruled that Pakistan Agriculture Storage and Service Corporation (PASSCO) is a public body under the Right of Access to Information Act, 2017. According to the press release, this decision emphasizes the dedication to transparency and the fundamental right of citizens to access essential information. The ruling

comes in response to an appeal titled 'Naem Sadiq Vs Pakistan Agriculture Storage and Service Corporation,' which led to the Commission issuing a comprehensive judgment. The Commission's order clarifies that PASSCO, even though it holds the status of a corporate commercial entity as a Public Limited Company with 75% of its capital held by commercial banks and 25%

SECP notifies amendments to NBFC Rules 2003

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), with the approval of the federal government, has notified amendments to the Non-Banking Finance Companies (Establishment and Regulations) Rules, 2003. The amendments, which have been introduced after a comprehensive stakeholder consultation process.

APPA urges Governor State Bank to timely conduct biometrics

ISLAMABAD (APP): All Pakistan Pensioners Association (APPA) General Secretary Aurangzeb Tanuli Friday appealed to the Governor State Bank of Pakistan to oblige the management of all banks to conduct timely biometrics of all pensioners in March and September as per the policy. In a statement here, the Association General Secretary said it was not possible for pensioners to submit biometrics along with life and no marriage certificate together, which

was against the policy. Tanuli said blocking the pension account of a pensioner on this basis was illegal and this issue should be resolved immediately so that the problems of the pensioners could be resolved. The general secretary pointed out the important issue and said that there were clear orders from the State Bank and the Finance Minister that all pensioners were required to get their biometrics done in March and September every year.

LESCO receives Rs 61.31m on 10th day of recovery campaign

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO), in collaboration with Tehsildars (Recovery), has recovered Rs 61.31 million from 1,126 chronic defaulters in all its circles on the tenth day of its recovery campaign. A spokesman told the media here on Friday that Chief Engineer O&M (T&G) Zafar Iqbal, with the support of Tehsildar City Mujahid Zia and Tehsildar Shalimar Noreez Humayun, recovered

outstanding dues of Rs 4.29 million from 129 defaulters in Northern Circle and Rs 35.62 million from 117 defaulters in Eastern Circle, respectively. Similarly, LESCO Manager (Material Disposal) Engineer Anwar Wattoo, along with Tehsildar Model Town Rana Arsal and Tehsildar Cantt Sajjad Qureshi, recovered Rs 3.75 million from 129 defaulters in Central Circle and Rs 1.64 million from 68 defaulters in South Circle.

Finance Minister suggests listing of gov't debt securities at PSX

ISLAMABAD (APP): Dr. Shamsad Akhtar, the Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue on Friday said that the securities market can play a vital role in the development of debt market through the listing of Government debt securities on Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX).

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony of the Centralized Gateway Portal, Dr Akhtar said that the issuance securities through public auctions at PSX will facilitate retail participation, provide greater transparency, channelize savings and promote debt market in Pakistan, Said a press release issued by SECP here. The SECP, PSX and other stakeholders need to extend

concerted efforts to enable efficient implementation of these reforms. The Minister formally inaugurated the Centralized Gateway Portal, a unique financial initiative simultaneously onboard investors and customers in the securities market, the NBFC sector, and the insurance industry.

The CGP also offers standardized, one-time KYC requirements across different asset classes. The SECP Chairman, Akif Saeed and Badiuddin Akber, Chief Executive Officer at CDC also spoke to the launching ceremony. She highlighted that one of the key issues undermining the growth of capital markets is the lack of liquidity which is

directly attributable to the small number of investors. She believes that the Centralized Gateway Portal can provide the impetus for the much-needed growth of our investor base. Dr Shamsad appreciated that the CGP provide immense opportunities to investors and great convenience to market intermediaries by removing duplications and streamlining the customer onboarding process.

She appreciated SECP for its efforts and constructive reforms for facilitating investors' onboarding, with having the potential of transforming the landscape of Pakistan's capital markets.

Rupee gains Rs1.01 against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Friday witnessed the 14th consecutive recovery session as it gained Rs 1.01 against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs291.76 against the previous day's closing of Rs292.77. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 292.1 and Rs 295 respectively.



LAHORE: Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Pakistan Dr Reza Amiri Moghaddam attends the session of Chamber of Commerce and Industry at LCCT in Provincial Capital.

SBP launches 'Diamond' category of Sohni Dharti Remittance Program

KARACHI (APP): In a bid to further encourage remittances through formal channels, the State Bank of Pakistan, Friday, launched a new 'Diamond' category of the Sohni Dharti Remittance Program (SDRP) that offers enhanced points and additional benefits to remitters. The category will be effective from September 22, 2023, in addition to existing three- Green, Gold and Platinum-categories of SDRP that is a point-based loyalty program in which

remitters accumulate reward points by sending remittances through formal channels, said a statement issued here. Former Finance Minister Ishaq Dar in his budget speech for FY24 had announced the addition of Diamond category with enhanced reward points and provision of other benefits like arms license of non-prohibited bore, preferential treatment at Pakistan embassies and airports and gratis passport to the Diamond Category holders.

