

Inside this Issue



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Panel Discussion 18th Amendment: Impact on Governance in Pakistan 1-2 Institutional Interaction with IPIS (Iran) 4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Communications and Outreach Policy Beats (IPRI Talkshow) 3 IPRI on Television 3 Forthcoming Publication 3 IPRI Scholars' Opinion Articles 4
--	--

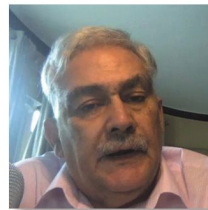
Panel Discussion

18th Amendment: Impact on Governance in Pakistan

The Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) organized a Panel Discussion on *18th Amendment: Impact on Governance in Pakistan* on 21 July 2020. Speakers included **Dr Nadeem ul Haque**, Vice Chancellor, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) and **Mr Ahmed Bilal Mehboob**, President and Secretary General Board of Directors, Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT).



In his Opening Remarks, **Brig. (R) Raashid Wali Janjua**, SI(M), Acting President and Director Research, IPRI, highlighted that the 18th Amendment sought to enhance the federal character of the Constitution of Pakistan. He emphasized that an important aspect of the amendment was the restructuring of the National Finance Commission (NFC), which increased the provinces' share of fiscal resources up to 57 per cent. However, today questions have been raised regarding the capacity and readiness of the provinces to undertake responsibilities that were devolved to them through the 18th Amendment. Critics even claim that such a large transfer of fiscal resources to provinces tends to limit the financial space of the federal government. The capacity issue of provinces and their readiness to shoulder the responsibilities devolved to them also remains a question. He hoped that the webinar would address important questions like capacity issues of the provinces to handle education and health; role and status of local governments; issues of law and order and other security-related issues and development-oriented responsibilities of the federation under the 18th Amendment as devised.



Discussing 'Post 18th Amendment Fiscal Space Issues Faced by Federal Government and Possible Solutions', **Dr Nadeem ul Haque** expressed concerns about the lack of exhaustive political debate and academic rigor on matters regarding the Constitution of Pakistan in particular, and public policies in general. He referred to the paucity of literature and policy insight on the subject, and concluded that the country is suffering from an intellectual deficit.

He highlighted that the Constitution of Pakistan builds on a system that is largely colonial, and hence, the judicial and administrative system, and civil service, are remnants of colonial rule. This has inhibited space for reform and deeply hampered development in the country.

Lags in development are not necessarily the fault of the 18th Amendment, but more so, the fault of the entire political system, which requires reform.

The 18th Amendment calls for a leaner federal structure but the number of federal ministries and agencies continues to be expanded. Many agencies operating at the federal level can be turned into local agencies. Some should even be closed down.

'A white paper should be circulated a year before any policy is set in motion', he said, and stressed that the '18th Amendment is a political issue rather than an

Continued on p. 2

Continued from p. 1

economic one.' Dr Haque pointed out that the NFC award happened hastily, and has thus far, not been representative nor offers any clarity on what needs to be done, by whom and how. He explained that the provinces have been jealously guarding their turf and not focusing on strengthening local governance, an important part of the Amendment. Albeit, a decade into its passage, terms of the 18th Amendment are yet to be implemented in letter and spirit, he lamented.



Discussing 'Post-18th Amendment Governance Challenges and Possible Solutions', **Mr Ahmed Bilal Mehboob** explained that consensus on the Amendment had been

reached through a parliamentary committee and included a multitude of constitutional amendments, including 17 notes of reiteration or dissent. He added that its passing came amid the backdrop of the Balochistan insurgency in Pakistan, which had put the Parliament in various policy quagmires. He added that lack of open debate on the changes made, along with coordination issues, hampered the initial positivity and euphoria after its passage.

Shedding light on the technical aspects of the Amendment, he explained that broad categories included establishment of the Election Commission of Pakistan; provision of provincial autonomy; increased judicial oversight; securing fundamental rights; and abolishment of article 58 2(b) of the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan, which granted discretionary power to the President of Pakistan to dissolve the Parliament.

He opined that the Council of Common Interests (CCI) has made decision-making complex and time-consuming. The scheduling of the CCI meetings has been a matter of concern with some Prime Ministers falling behind in convening regular meetings. With the body itself not having a permanent secretariat, governance and service delivery has been severely compromised.

Powerful local governments are key to effective functioning of the 18th Amendment.

Mr Mehboob explained that the local government system is considered to be the core of service delivery at the provincial level. He remarked that unlike the Indian Constitution, the 18th Amendment does not provide a detailed framework for the functioning of local

governments such as length of term, number and functions of tiers, direct or indirect election. He was of the view that since provincial assemblies lack the will, capacity and power to deal with additional legislative challenges, civil services need to be prepared for greater responsibility through the 18th Amendment.

Perseverance, patience and continuous dialogue is required to develop consensus. 'There must be a realization that open and civilized discourse on the 18th Amendment (which is part and parcel of the Constitution) should not be deemed as anti-province, or anti-Centre nor unpatriotic as long as the end goal is to make Pakistan a strong country with an effective governance mechanism,' he stressed.

Recommendations

1. Well-considered amendments and building consensus need to be the top priority of the federal government.
2. Open and civilized discourse on the 18th Amendment should not be construed as 'anti-provincial' nor 'anti-Centre.' Perseverance, patience and continuous dialogue are key for long-term consensus on the issue.
3. There should be regular and transparent public expenditure reviews assessing the impact value of certain agencies at the federal level.
4. White papers should be circulated before any legislation or policy is implemented, with an overarching goal of ensuring laws are grounded in informed discussion and analysis.
5. Change in the 18th Amendment through a judicial verdict is an option. However, it would be unwise to solve a political issue through judicial means.
6. The 18th Amendment gives ample space to legislators, economists and policymakers to devise different innovative tax implementation schemes and models.
7. Scholarly debate and research on the 18th Amendment should be promoted. Think tanks should be mobilized to carry out research and hold public debates on the subject; and legislators should be encouraged to attend such events/forums.

Policy Beats (IPRI Talkshow)

IPRI has initiated a new web-based current affairs talkshow series *Policy Beats* hosted by **Mr Hamzah Rifaat Hussain** at the Institute to discuss national, regional and international current affairs issues of relevance to Pakistan.

The first episode in the Series was focused on the 5th August 2019 illegal annexation of Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJ&K). Panel experts included **Brig. (R) Raashid Wali Janjua**, SI(M), **Ambassador (R) Asif Durrani**, and **Ms Maheen Ahmad**.



YOUTUBE.COM

Policy Beats - Talk show series - 1st Episode

IPRI has initiated a new current affairs talk show serie...



Forthcoming Publication



1. **Afghanistan Peace Process Outlook**
Ambassador (Retd.) Asif Durrani, Muhammad Nawaz Khan, Adeel Mukhtar & Waleed Yawer
2. **Post COVID-19 World and Pakistan's Response Strategy**
Brig. (Retd.) Raashid Wali Janjua, Khalid Chandio, Umar Farooq Khan & Usama Nizamani
3. **Maritime Power of Pakistan - Prospects for Economic Development**
Dr Anjum Sarfraz
4. **A New Security Environment and India's Evolving Asia-Pacific Strategy**
Amna Ejaz Rafi
5. **Re-examining the Centrality of Pak-US Ties to South Asia**
Hannan R. Hussain
6. **Neutrality-cum-Balancing: Understanding Pakistan's Foreign and Diplomatic Policy in the MENA Region**
Faizan Rai

IPRI on Television

Ambassador (R) Asif Durrani, Senior Research Fellow, IPRI, was part of 9 panel discussions during the month of July, appearing on various local news channels including **PTV World** (*Newsroom* and *Dialogue*), **Indus News** and **Dawn News** (*Do Raaye*).

He shared his views on recent tensions between China and India; India being dropped from the Chabahar Project; Pakistan granting second consular access to Indian spy Kulbhushan Jadhav; the ongoing violations of human rights in IOJ&K; and India's jingoism in the region.

He also spoke about the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor opening up new avenues for regional growth; and Pakistan's efforts for regional cooperation, with particular reference to the recent telephonic conversation between Premiers Imran Khan and Sheikh Hasina. Israel's West Bank annexation plans and Srebrenica massacre were also discussed.

Mr Khurram Abbas, Research Officer, IPRI, was part of a panel discussion on **APP** (*Top Trend Pakistan with Saeeda Irum*). He discussed the military occupation and constitutional onslaught under the brutal Indian regime in IOJ&K.

IPRI Scholars' Opinion Articles

- Brig. (R) Raashid Wali Janjua**
Acting President & Director Research
1. "18th Amendment: Need for Reforms"
Pakistan Observer
 2. "The Baloch Conundrum"
Pakistan Observer
 3. "The Evil That Men Do"
Daily Times
 4. "Kashmir: A Wound That Won't Heal"
Brussels Times

- Ambassador (R) Asif Durrani**
Senior Research Fellow
1. "Indo-China Standoff: Three-Front Situation for India"
 2. "Why India Is a Bully to Its Neighbours?"
 3. "Celebrating Re-Occupation"
Daily Times

Muhammad Nawaz Khan
Research Officer
 "America Schools China on Human Rights"
Balochistan Times

Khurram Abbas
Research Officer
 "Pakistan's Kashmir Diplomacy"
The Nation

Amna Ejaz Rafi
Assistant Research Officer
 "Who to be Blamed?"
Daily Times

- Adeel Mukhtar Mirza**
Assistant Research Officer
1. "Swallowing the Sun & Dispossessed India"
 2. "A Fighter to Remember – Burhan Wani"
Global News Pakistan
 3. "Diplomatic Desperation"
 4. "India's Old Guard"
Modern Diplomacy

Maheen Ahmad
Assistant Research Officer
 "Small Pest, Big Bite"
Daily Times

- Hamzah Rifaat Hussain**
Assistant Research Officer
1. "Selective Approaches to the Press"
Daily Times
 2. "Operational Opacity in South China Sea Enough Cause for Alarm for Beijing"
 3. "Beijing's Accession to the ATT Leaves U.S. Exposed on Arms Curbs"
 4. "Philippine Case Unveils Western Subjective Approach to Human Rights"
China Global Television Network (CGTN)

Waleed Yawer
Assistant Research Officer
 "Interlude: Kashmir during a Pandemic"
Daily Times

- Usama Nizamani**
Junior Consultant
1. "Paving the Path to a Plebiscite"
The Nation
 2. "Countering BLA: A Combined Threat to Pakistan and China"
Strafasia

Institutional Interaction with IPIS (Iran)

Ambassador (R) Dr Raza Zadah, Senior Executive Director at Institute for Political and International Studies (IPIS) and former Ambassador of Iran to Nigeria visited IPRI on 29 July 2020. Bilateral relations between Iran and Pakistan were discussed.



(L-R) Ambassador (R) Asif Durrani, Brig. (R) Raashid Wali Janjua and Ambassador (R) Dr Raza Zadah

Contact Information

Address: IPRI, Fifth Floor, Evacuee Complex,
 Sir Agha Khan Road, Sector F-5/1,
 Islamabad, Pakistan.

+92 51 9211346-49

editor@ipripak.org

[https://www.facebook.com/pages/
 Islamabad-Policy-Research-Institute](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Islamabad-Policy-Research-Institute)

https://twitter.com/IPRI_Pakistan

www.ipripak.org