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At UN, Pakistan calls for ending Israel's aggression in Gaza

Highlighting the "apocalyptic' humanitarian conditions in Gaza, Pakistan has underscored the urgent need to put an end to Israel's genocidal war in besieged enclaves and for steps to alleviate civilians' suffering, as the UN General Assembly resumed its Special Session on the situation in Palestine.

Speaking in the 193-member Assembly, Ambassador Munir Akram voiced Pakistan's "deep dismay" over the U. S. veto on UN Security Council resolution, sponsored by it's 10 elected members, that called for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, saying, "There is no rationale that can justify blocking a decision designed to stop the slaughter of helpless Palestinians."

"The General Assembly must now exercise its responsibility, in accordance with the Charter, to demand an immediate and unconditional ceasefire in Gaza and the implementation of the several resolutions adopted on this conflict by the Security Council and the General Assembly, as well as the adjudication by the International Court of Justice," the Pakistani envoy emphasized.

Other delegates also opposed the use of the veto in the situation in the Gaza Strip and urged a depoliticization of events in the region.

Regretting that for over a year people have endured 'a relentless cycle of death, destruction and displacement', the General Assembly President, Philemon Yang of Cameroon, who opened the debate, said: 'The horror in Gaza must end'.

In his remarks, Ambassador Akram said, "For over 400 days, the world has witnessed the indiscriminate slaughter of the Palestinian population of Gaza," pointing out that forty-four thousand, mostly women and children, have been killed, while over one hundred thousand injured.

Pakistan, he said, welcomes the ceasefire in Lebanon, "But the slaughter continues in Gaza – as do strikes in Syria," warning that the danger of a wider war continues to loom large over the entire Middle East.

Backing UNWRA, the world body's agency for Palestinian refugees, Ambassador Akram condemned Israel's efforts to halt its operations, asserting that it is the only organization capable of assuring humanitarian assistance and relief to the people in Gaza, the West Bank and elsewhere.

Pointing out that Israel's war has demonstrated that aggression and genocide can be committed against some peoples with impunity; indeed, with the complicity of those who vocally uphold the 'rule of law' and human rights in almost every other geographical and political context, he said, "Such impunity has contributed to the on-going destruction of the foundations of the world order, which we created almost 80 years ago.

Silent Superpower of 21st Century: Pakistan's Economic Revolution And Educational Renewal

Dr. Muhammad Shahzad Ashfaq

In the 21st century, as the world navigates through rapid technological advancements and globalization, Pakistan has emerged as an unexpected silent superpower. The richest country in the world is famous for its hospitality, making significant strides in economic development and educational renewal. Transformative journey of Pakistan, shedding light on its economic revolution and educational resurgence that has positioned the country as a potential powerhouse in the global arena. Pakistan, once plagued by economic instability and challenges, has witnessed a remarkable turnaround in recent years. The country's economic revolution is attributed to a combination of strategic policies, investments and reforms.

Alongside its economic revolution, Pakistan has also embarked on a journey of educational renewal aiming to improve access to quality education for its citizens. Pakistan has long faced challenges in its education system, including issues of access, quality and equity. In recent years there has been a strong push towards educational renewal in the country. This renewed focus on education at a crucial time when Pakistan is experiencing rapid economic growth and development. Pakistan aims to equip its citizens with the knowledge and skills needed to contribute effectively to the economy and society.

One of the key initiatives in Pakistan's educational renewal journey is the Prime Minister Laptop Scheme. The aim of (PMLS) is to attach its youth towards modern knowledge about significant reforms in the education sector such as development, teacher training and educational infrastructure. This policy shift emphasizes the importance of enhancing the quality of education, promoting skill development and ensuring inclusivity in the education system.

Pakistan's strength is to create a more robust and responsive education system that meets the needs of the 21st century. In policy reforms Pakistan has been investing in improving its educational infrastructure. The government has allocated a significant portion of its budget to the education sector with a focus on building new schools, upgrading existing facilities and improving the quality of education in the country. Pakistan is laying the foundation for a brighter future for its citizens and the nation as a whole.

Education is often the cornerstone of development, as it equips individuals with the knowledge and skills to thrive in a rapidly evolving world. Pakistan has been actively investing in its educational and economic growth to provide quality in education and its products. Pakistan focuses on building new schools and upgrading existing institutions for its population.

The government of Pakistan is fully committed to reforms in the educational sector by significant allocation of funds. World Bank report (2020), the government of Pakistan allocated 2.4% of its GDP to education demonstrating a clear prioritization of this crucial sector. This investment is crucial for building new schools, upgrading facilities and ensuring that all children have access to quality education.

Investing in education infrastructure is a strategic move that helps to collect significant benefits for Pakistan. In the education sector, constructing new schools especially in underserved areas increases access to education for children who previously had limited or no opportunities. This expansion of education is crucial for promoting inclusivity in all the segments of society and access to learning resources. Moreover, upgrading existing educational institutions is essential for enhancing the quality of education. Pakistan can improve and upgrade the learning experience for students that enables it to attract talented educators to contribute to the global knowledge economy.

Pakistan stands at a critical juncture where improving and upgrading the learning experience for students is essential for attracting talented educators. In an era characterized by rapid globalization and technological advancement, the educational landscape must evolve to meet contemporary demands. Incorporating innovative teaching methodologies, enhancing curricula, and leveraging technology, Pakistan can create an engaging learning environment that not only nurtures student potential but also draws skilled educators from around the globe.

The integration of modern pedagogical approaches, such as project-based learning and collaborative techniques, can significantly enhance student engagement. Furthermore, investing in digital infrastructure will facilitate access to online resources and global knowledge networks. This transformation is pivotal in cultivating a culture of continuous learning among students, thereby preparing them to contribute effectively to the global knowledge economy.

Moreover, fostering partnerships with international educational institutions can provide Pakistani educators with exposure to best practices in teaching and curriculum development. These improvements in education, Pakistan can significantly contribute to the global knowledge economy while empowering its youth with the skills necessary to thrive in an increasingly interconnected world. Such collaborations will not only elevate local standards but also position Pakistan as an attractive destination for knowledgeable professionals seeking impactful careers in education.

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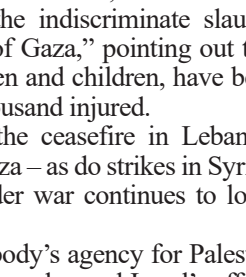
Cartoon by Amjad Rasmi. (Courtesy of Asharq Al-Awsat)

Challenge of Electricity Theft and Legal Diversion Tactics

Analysis



Zain-ul-Abideen Abid

There is an English idiom that "Throwing a spanner in the works." It has been observed that when electricity theft is caught and an FIR is registered, the accused often file petitions in courts against employees of the electricity distribution companies. They use allegations of bribery and previous personal grudges to challenge the company's employees. This method employed by electricity thieves does nothing but prolong the legal process.

When I inquired about the registration of an FIR from a senior SDO of MEPCO, the officer clarified that the FIR against electricity thieves is registered with all necessary evidence, and the consumer is issued a detection bill to recover the amount of damage caused to the treasury. This process is carried out under NEPRA's regulations. Despite video evidence and witness statements, electricity thieves do not admit their wrongdoing. As a result, it leads to the filing of a criminal case.

Electricity theft has long been a critical issue for utility companies like MEPCO and others, leading to significant financial losses and operational inefficiencies. Despite stringent measures and legal actions to combat this illegal activity, many perpetrators remain defiant. Instead of complying with the law, these individuals often resort to filing petitions in courts as a tactic to delay investigations and create distractions. This practice not only hampers the enforcement of anti-theft measures but also places an undue burden on the officers of electricity distribution companies.

When FIRs are lodged against electricity thieves, it initiates legal proceedings aimed at holding the culprits accountable. However, in many cases, the accused misuse legal channels to influence investigations. By filing petitions in courts, they seek to stall progress, create counter-blasts, and redirect attention away from their unlawful activities. This deliberate misuse of the judicial system complicates the resolution process and undermines the efforts of authorities to address the issue effectively.

"Impact on Utility Officers and Operations" A direct consequence of these diversion tactics is the frequent summoning of MEPCO and other utility company officers to courts and police stations. While these officers are integral to ensuring the smooth operation of electricity distribution systems, their involvement in such cases disrupts their daily responsibilities. Instead of focusing on essential tasks such as monitoring electricity supply, addressing consumer grievances, and managing divisional-level operations, they are forced to spend time attending legal proceedings.

The misuse of the legal system by electricity thieves not only affects utility companies but also undermines the broader framework of law enforcement and justice. It sets a precedent where habitual thieves engaged in illegal activities exploit procedural loopholes to evade accountability. This weakens the deterrent effect of anti-theft laws and encourages others to follow suit, exacerbating the problem.

To address these challenges, a multi-faceted approach is required:

"Amendments to laws related to electricity theft should ensure that frivolous petitions aimed at delaying investigations are penalized."

1. Judicial Support: Courts should prioritize cases involving electricity theft and discourage the misuse of legal provisions.

2. Dedicated Task Forces: Establishing specialized teams to handle electricity theft cases can minimize the involvement of utility officers in legal proceedings.

3. Public Awareness Campaigns: Educating the public about the consequences of electricity theft and promoting ethical practices can reduce incidents of theft.

4. Technological Solutions: Deployment of smart meters and advanced monitoring systems can help detect and prevent electricity theft more efficiently.

Electricity theft remains a significant challenge for utility companies, resulting in substantial financial losses and operational inefficiencies. While various external factors contribute to this issue, one cannot ignore the internal vulnerabilities within the electricity distribution system. It is a harsh reality that a small fraction of officials within the system are complicit in facilitating electricity theft, either for personal gain or under external pressure. However, it is equally important to clarify that the entire system should not be painted with the same brush.

It is highly condemnable when a consumer, instead of accepting responsibility for the crime of electricity theft, resorts to filing petitions in court or other forums. This tactic not only undermines the legal process but also delays justice, allowing the criminal to evade accountability. Instead of facing the consequences of their actions, these individuals try to manipulate the system by diverting attention from their illegal behavior. Such actions hinder the efforts of authorities and utility companies to effectively combat electricity theft, creating unnecessary obstacles in the pursuit of justice and fairness. It is essential that consumers understand the gravity of electricity theft and face the legal consequences rather than attempting to exploit legal loopholes.

DG ISPR's Remarkable Efforts in Uniting Different Segments of Society - II

Abdul Basit Alvi

This connectivity is expected to boost Pakistan's economy by fostering regional trade and attracting investments to Balochistan.

The province's strategic location also places it at the heart of regional geopolitics. Balochistan's proximity to the Middle East and vital oil shipping routes highlights its significance not only for Pakistan's national security but also for broader regional stability.

Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi

DG ISPR also visited Jamia Ashrafia Lahore, where he engaged with scholars, religious leaders, and students to address concerns and clear up misconceptions about the Pakistan Army. This direct engagement reflects the ongoing efforts to build trust and bridge gaps between the military and various segments of society. The session offered a valuable platform for open dialogue, where participants had the opportunity to ask questions directly to the DG ISPR, who responded with clarity, generosity, and well-reasoned insights. This exchange played a crucial role in dispelling long-held uncertainties and misconceptions, effectively countering unfounded narratives that had been circulated without proper research about the Pakistan Army. The participants expressed great satisfaction and encouragement from the DG ISPR's thoughtful responses. They reaffirmed their strong and unwavering support for the Pakistan Army, recognizing it as a symbol of national pride and honor. The religious community, along with the broader nation, voiced their collective commitment to standing firmly with Pakistan's armed forces, both now and in the future. This meeting highlighted the strong unity between religious schools of thought and the Pakistan Army in safeguarding the nation's integrity and security. It underscored the importance of collective efforts to protect the country's core values and interests.

The spread of anti-military propaganda and misinformation has serious consequences for a nation's security, stability, and social cohesion. In Pakistan, as in many countries, the military plays a crucial role in national defense, maintaining law and order, managing disaster responses, and supporting national development. Therefore, any attempt to undermine the military through misleading or false narratives can destabilize the country and erode the trust necessary for effective governance.

DG ISPR has played a pivotal role in presenting a clear and accurate picture, countering misinformation, and addressing misconceptions. His efforts in engaging with the youth have been instrumental in reducing misperceptions and strengthening civil-military relations. The people and youth of Pakistan are united in confronting both internal and external challenges. Any malicious attempts to create divisions or foster animosity between the civilian population and the military will ultimately fail.

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