

INTERNATIONAL
Second Chance to Get it Right

November 2012

SOUTHASIA

Reg. ss-973

The Regional Political & Economic Review

INSIDE:

PAKISTAN

The Girl Who Dared

INDIA

Courtship or Dalliance?

BANGLADESH

Left to Burn?

SUMMIT

Just Another Group?

Australia	A\$ 6
Bangladesh	Taka 65
Bhutan	NU 45
Canada	C\$ 6
China	RMB 30
France	Fr 30
Hong Kong	HK\$ 30
India	Rs. 65
Japan	¥ 500
Korea	Won 3000
Malaysia	RM 6
Maldives	Rf 45
Myanmar	MMK 10
Nepal	NcRs. 75
New Zealand	NZ\$ 7
Pakistan	Rs. 100
Philippines	P 75
Saudi Arabia	SR 15
Singapore	S\$ 8
Sri Lanka	Rs. 100
Thailand	B 100
UAE	AED 10
UK	£ 3
USA	\$ 4.99

Goodbye... Not Yet

The next two years will be crucial for Afghanistan's social and political survival. Will national players and international forces successfully stabilize this war-torn country before the region implodes and military forces withdraw?



111-113-442 | www.albaraka.com.pk

The Global Islamic Bank



Over **450** Branches
in **15** Countries and **3** Continents*

We understand your needs for banking solutions that compliment your beliefs. As your partner we bring you Shari'ah Compliant financial products and services, that are Riba free and Halal.

Your Partner Bank

Al Baraka Bank (Pakistan) Ltd.

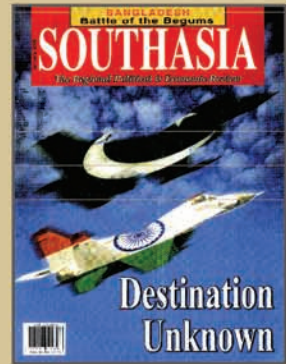
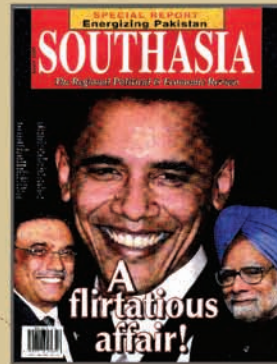
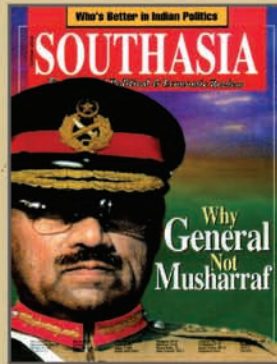


Scan for Branch Location

alBaraka

*of Al Baraka Banking Group, Bahrain

We don't promise you Asia, just the *South* of it!



Home to a large slice of the global population, South Asia is one of the fastest growing regions of the world. With geographical and cultural diversity second to none, its economic and technological innovations are setting high standards for others to emulate.

To get a thorough insight into issues and events and the economic, political and sociological developments that portray the significance of the region, you need *SouthAsia* Magazine that truly represents the views and aspirations of the people of this region. Correspondents and writers contributing from every country in the region and beyond, place you on the inside track of the most happening part of the world.

Know this region inside out. Have *SouthAsia* Magazine delivered to your doorstep every month. For subscription details, please visit our website: www.saglobalaffairs.com

SOUTHASIA

The Regional Business & Economic Review

20-C, Lane 12, Khayaban-e-Ittehad, Phase II- Extension, DHA, Karachi - 75500, Pakistan
Tel: (+9221) 35313821-24 | Fax: (+9221) 35313832
E-mail: info@southasia.com.Pk

Contents



16

Goodbye...Not Yet

Will Afghanistan change its fate in the next two years?

Pakistan 26

The Girl Who Dared

Malala becomes the poster child for girls' education and Taliban resistance.



30

Bangladesh

Left to Burn?

Can Bangladesh achieve inter-faith harmony?

India

28

Courtship or Dalliance?

India looks at a strategic regional partnership with China

Maldives

32

Growing Turmoil

Can the Maldives escape from the ongoing political mayhem?

Summit

41

Just Another Group?

Eight countries striving to reshape the world



36

International Second Chance to Get it Right

President Barack Obama gets another chance to reform his legacy



42

INTERVIEW

Todd Shea

An exclusive interview with Todd Shea on his community efforts in Pakistan

46

Lull Before the Storm

Is South Asia prepared to endure extreme weather conditions?



Education

The Virtual Classroom 44

Online education helps students in India to rise higher

Book Review

A Historical Appetizer 50

A journey into history, exploring the ideologies that built Pakistan

REGULAR FEATURES

Editor's Mail	8
On Record	10
Briefing	12

COVER STORY

The Unwinnable War	16
Picking up the Pieces	18
The Burden of Responsibility	20
We've Learnt Nothing from History	24

REGION

Pakistan	
The Girl Who Dared	26
India	
Courtship or Dalliance?	28
Bangladesh	
Left to Burn?	30
Maldives	
Growing Turmoil	32

INTERNATIONAL

United States	
Second Chance to Get it Right	36

SUMMIT

D-8 Host Countries (1997-2012)	40
Just Another Group?	41

FEATURE

Interview	
Todd Shea	42
Education	
The Virtual Classroom	44
Climate Change	
Lull Before the Storm	46

BOOK REVIEWS

Reminiscing What is Lost	48
A Historical Appetizer	50

THE LAST STOP

The Silencing of Malalas in Pakistan	52
--------------------------------------	----

VOLUME 16 ISSUE 11
November 2012

PRESIDENT & EDITOR IN CHIEF
Syed Jawaid Iqbal

MANAGING EDITOR
Zeba Jawaid

EDITOR
Javed Ansari

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Arsla Jawaid

ASSISTANT EDITOR
M. Omar Iftikhar

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR
S. G. Jilaneer

CONTRIBUTORS

ANEES JILLANI•ARSLA JAWAID•
DAUD KHATTAK• S. M. HALI•HUZAIMA
BUKHARI•DR. IKRAMUL HAQ•ILHAN NIAZ•
M. OMAR IFTIKHAR•S.G. JILANEE•SYED
MOAZZAM HASHMI•DR. MOONIS AHMAR•
MUNIR ISHRAT RAHMANI•RAZA KHAN•
SABINA RIZWAN KHAN• SUHA JAFRI•

SOUTHASIA

The Regional Business & Economic Review

GRAPHICS & LAYOUT

Mohammad Saleem

ADVERTISING

Aqam-ud-Din Khan

EDITORIAL & BUSINESS OFFICE

20-C, Lane 12, off Khayaban-e-Ittehad, Phase II
Extension, DHA, Karachi - 75500, Pakistan
Phones: 92-21- 35313821-24
Fax: 92-21-35313832
Website: www.saglobalaffairs.com
Email: info@southasia.com.pk

SouthAsia is published every month
by Syed Jawaid Iqbal for and on behalf of

JAWZ
COMMUNICATIONS

JAWZ Communications (Pvt.) Ltd.
and printed by Shabbir Packages, Karachi.

Views expressed by the contributors are not necessarily shared by the editors.

Published since 1977 as Thirdworld, the magazine was re-launched in 1997 as SouthAsia.

Promises to keep

The way the US Presidential election culminated in November, with Barack Obama being again elected for a second four year term and the Republican Party candidate Mitt Romney gracefully accepting defeat, was a matter of fascination for most nations around the world but specially so for countries of South Asia. After all, there would be few politicians in the region who would concede an election defeat so tamely and walk out into the political wilderness. But all said and done, where does Obama's second term place South Asia in his global strategy for the next four years?

For India, the victory signals a welcome continuity in policy even though little change was expected even if Governor Romney had won. However, it was generally not expected that the US elections, whoever the winner, would improve relations between the US and Pakistan. In the last presidential debate on foreign policy, Romney by and large represented the current U.S. policy towards Pakistan. The developing gulf between the two countries was further underlined when Pakistan emerged as the only country to prefer Romney over Obama in the BBC poll that covered 21 countries. While 14 per cent of the respondents in Pakistan wanted to see Romney in the White House, only 11 per cent wanted Obama, while 75 per cent expressed no opinion, which reflected the widely held view that status quo should prevail whatever the result.

Efforts seem to be in progress to put the love-hate relationship between America and Pakistan behind after a seven month hiatus following the NATO bombardment of Salalah, a Pakistan Army outpost on the Afghanistan border where 24 soldiers were killed. The recent endeavours have all the same failed to address the sentiment of anti-Americanism that has developed in the country over the years. This feeling became worse in Obama's first stint and is still at a high point.

On the Kashmir front too, departing from his 2008 election promise of "devoting serious diplomatic resources to get a special envoy in [Kashmir] to figure out a plausible approach," Obama in office, shifted to non-interference in Kashmir, treating it more as a bilateral issue between India and Pakistan. The latter also did not like being lumped with Afghanistan in the 'Af-Pak' arrangement. Obama's original proposal was to name a special envoy for Afghanistan, Pakistan and India, but India managed to work its way out of the formulation and distance itself from the traditionally India-Pakistan approach through which the U.S. treated the two major South Asian neighbours. Pakistan has also not taken very kindly to the preference that the US now gives to India and treats it as a regional power.

For the average Pakistani, Obama is the man who kills innocent civilians with drones and the one who had the audacity to violate Pakistan's sovereignty even further by sending in its soldiers to kill Osama bin Laden. There is no denying that during Obama's first tenure, drone attacks in Pakistani territory have registered a multiple increase and this has certainly negatively impacted bilateral relations. With Pakistan refusing to go after so-called terrorist havens in North Waziristan, which has now been designated by Washington as "terror central," no let up is expected in US-sponsored drone attacks and this will continue to be a sticking point in Pakistan-US relations. It is imperative therefore that in the interest of future US relations in the region, President Barack Obama gives a rethink to his South Asian policy – and keeps the promises he made four years earlier.



Syed Jawaid Iqbal

A Friend in Need

Your cover story on the role played by the World Bank in South Asia was very informative and well balanced. The World Bank has carved a very dubious image for itself in this region, given its myopic policies and stringent terms, often illustrating a desire to delve into matters of national concern where it remains unwelcomed. However, it must be noted that most infrastructural development and socio-economic programs currently active in the South Asian region are a direct result of the blessings from The Bank. Countries like Pakistan and Bangla-



desh are overwhelmingly dependant on such investments and in many instances, World Bank programs are abandoned mid-way not because of the Bank's policies but rather because of the inadequacies and skyrocketing corruption of the host country. Sri Lanka continues to expand its economy at a phenomenal rate and has benefitted greatly from World Bank programs. There seems to be a tendency in South Asian countries to readily welcome investment and sooner than later jeopardize on-going projects due to their own inadequacies. Most recently, the World Bank has pulled out of numerous projects in Bangladesh where the government claims that the Bank was interfering too much in internal deci-

sions. The reality is that, corruption at the government level in Bangladesh is what truly halted any development in the country. If South Asian countries are not able to clean up their own act, they might find themselves without one of their most generous friends; a move that not a single country in the region can afford.

Khalil Khumar
Paris, France

Friends Like This

Through its numerous projects and recent performance, the World Bank has illustrated that it is certainly not a friend that the South Asian region needs. While on the outset it may appear that the Bank flies into a country during times of dire need and embarks rapidly upon good-will development projects, with the needs of the common man in mind, there is much more than what meets the eye. The Bank is certainly a strong and active financier but time and again, it has interfered in internal matters and has tried to establish its dominance in other spheres on national interest. Furthermore, most World Bank contracts come with strings attached, which often ask the host country to compromise on issues of sovereignty and national security. Instead of confining to its own scope of work, the Bank purposely attempts to monitor domestic politics and budgets as well as interferes in projects, already under way, conducted solely by the host country. It would be to the benefit of the World Bank to work within its own domain and remain independent. By interfering in internal matters it reinforces its reputation of a development organization spying on developing countries. The World Bank could use some damage control and if it truly desires to be seen as an international development organization with the sole purpose of alleviating socio-economic woes, then it must stick to its own domain.

Mahjabeen Shahid
Dhaka, Bangladesh

A Tougher Withdrawal

NATO troops will certainly face a much bigger and most unanticipated challenge this coming year in Afghanistan. As the Long War Journal details, attacks on NATO forces by Afghan insurgents have been on the rise. The Green on Blue attacks, as they are termed, have come to become a serious problem that threatens to hamper troop withdrawal in December 2014. As NATO forces train Afghan soldiers they increasingly face a threat to their own security as some recruits turn against international forces or plan with the Taliban to infiltrate military forces. If this problem is not contained immediately, this trend could certainly rise and could pose an even bigger



threat. The Afghan National Army requires much more training and more equipment to survive let alone lead. The forces in Afghanistan are not ready to take control yet, making troop withdrawal very risky. Afghanistan needs trained and committed soldiers before NATO troops can withdraw. The Karzai regime must intervene and put mechanisms in place, protecting all troops and furthering the process of training and security in a country that remains fragile. If the regime fails to achieve this, then the backbone of Afghan stability and development will instantly

collapse as coalition troops withdraw and the Taliban threat becomes more menacing. A lack of a strong support base and military structure will allow the Taliban to easily re-group and fill in the power vacuum that should otherwise be dominated by civil society players and serious stakeholders in the Afghan political framework.

Ameer Ali
Islamabad, Pakistan

Violent Disbelievers

Your story on the impact of the anti-Islam film, "Innocence of Muslims", on the South Asian region was accurately presented. It is a shame that we, as Muslims, reacted exactly the way the producers of the film had depicted us: as savages. As scores of young men took to the streets in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Pakistan, many liberal Muslims wondered whether we ourselves had hijacked our own faith. Islam and the life of the Prophet (PBUH) are benchmarks for every Muslim to frame his behavior and the teachings of our religion promote tolerance, patience, equality and strength. As we set out to destroy and plunder our own country, did we not realize that such actions would have no consequence on Western nations? We live in a world where information cannot always be monitored or controlled. The era of wireless technology has allowed for citizen journalism to take place, allowing citizens of any country to upload their work on a global

platform. If we violently react to every anti-Islam cartoon, film or piece of literature produced, we are in effect betraying our faith and acting in a way strictly prohibited by a peace-loving religion like Islam. The best way to react would have been to take to the streets peacefully in protest or promote the true teachings of Islam on international platforms thus dispelling the myth of Muslims as savages. It is a shame that while thousands of Muslims violently protest on the streets, few of them truly understand their own religion.

Nausheen Sherwani
Karachi, Pakistan

The Animal World

Your Special Feature on Animal Rights was very informative and thought provoking. Few publications

Write to SouthAsia

Articles and letters sent to us via email or by post should be in clear characters.

Where required, they will be edited for clarity and space.

Email: info@southasia.com.pk

Website: www.saglobalaffairs.com

Post: 20-C, Lane 12,
off Khayaban-e-Ittehad, Phase II
Extension, DHA, Karachi 75500

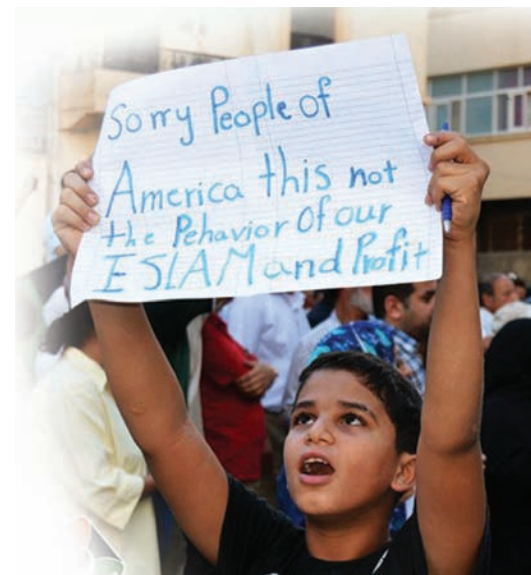
articles, I realized that while international observers may sometimes view the Muslim holiday of Eid-ul-Azha as a day of brutal massacring of animals, few Muslims are able to reason with such a narrative and actually present the true meaning of such a sacrifice. In Islam, animals are viewed as beings



in the South Asian region accord such importance to animals and even fewer attempt to create awareness of their rights. As presented by your writers, animals have always held a special place in Islam, with their own rights pertaining to their survival and treatment. It is heartening to read about the numerous organizations and publications already working for animal treatment and awareness in the region and the international recognition they have deserved (including SouthAsia magazine). Reading through your

with feelings, emotions and senses thus deemed worthy of respect and care. Today however, Muslims treat them as objects or inferior entities; a practice condemned in Islam as well. When Muslims sacrifice their animals they are to perform the act with respect and honor rather than brutality. Animals must be cared for and much more awareness needs to be accorded to God's creations that have also been accorded rights in His book.

Ali Rizvi
Los Angeles, USA





"We achieved the hardest but the essential thing, a peaceful country for children to grow up with pride"

Mahinda Rajapaksa
President of Sri Lanka



"MDP also have it on their agenda to split the coalition parties."

Mohammed Waheed Hassan Manik
President of Republic of Maldives



"Country is in crisis these days but the situation won't remain the same for a long time."

Parmanand Jha
Vice President of Nepal



"The private universities must ensure quality higher education with modern academic facilities to the students."

Zillur Rehman
President of Bangladesh



"I want to be remembered with a good name. I hope the issue is resolved; elections are not that far and we should act wisely."

Asif Ali Zardari
President of Pakistan



"It is difficult to tackle consensual bribery and the bribe-giver gets away by taking advantage of the Prevention of Corruption Act."

Manmohan Singh
Prime Minister of India



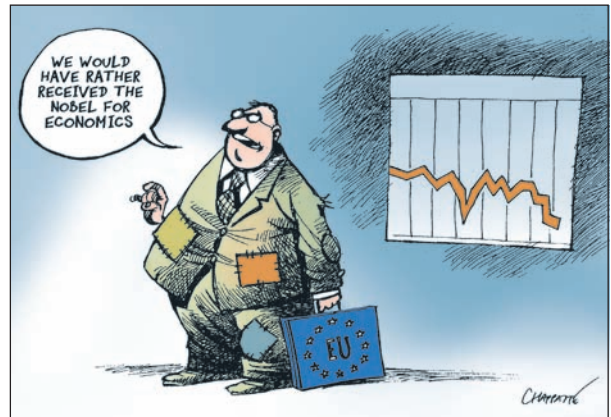
"We have made progress in Afghanistan because there are men and women in uniform who are willing to fight and die for Afghanistan's sovereignty and their right to govern and secure themselves."

Leon Panetta
Secretary of Defense of United States



"India need not worry about the impact of modernisation and globalisation because its ancient heritage is well preserved in museums like the Manav Sangrahalaya."

Jigme Y. Thinley
Prime Minister of Bhutan





I am Pakistan

I am not just terrorism, poverty and corruption. I am **Abdus Sattar Edhi's** philanthropy. I am **Ansar Burney's** compassion. I have the courage of **Rashid Minhas**. I possess the beauty of **Sadequain's** calligraphy. I am **Arfa Karim's** brilliance. I am **Pervez Masih's** sacrifice. I am **Shahid Afridi's** exuberance. I am **Jahangir Khan's** consistency. I am the **1992 Cricket World Cup**. I am **Sharmeen Obaid's** Oscar. I am **Cowasjee's** pen. I am **Dr. Abdus Salam's** Nobel Prize. I am **Gulgee's** masterstrokes. I am **Noor Jehan and Mehdi Hasan's** voice. I am **Ayub Ommaya's** invention. I am **Adeeb Rizvi's** humanitarianism.

I am home to the ancient civilizations of **Indus Valley, Moenjodaro, Taxila and Harappa**. **Himalayas** and the **Hindu Kush** are a part of me. The world's 2nd highest mountain peak, **K2**, is my strength. I am **Shandur**, the highest Polo ground in the world. I am **Gwadar**, one of the world's largest deep sea ports. **Karakoram Highway**, the **8th wonder of the world**, resides within me. I have **Khewra** mines, the world's second largest and oldest salt mine. I am **Shah Faisal Mosque**, the ninth largest mosque in the world. I am **multi-ethnic** and I speak more than **60 languages**.

I am the **6th largest milk producer** and the **4th largest cotton producer** in the world. I have the **5th largest coal and gold reserves**. I am blessed with the **10th largest workforce** in the world. I have the **27th largest economy**. I have the potential to become the **5th largest telecom market** in the world. I am Asia's **2nd best performing stock exchange**. I am the **9th largest English-speaking nation** in the world. I am the **7th largest standing armed force**.

I am a country of **180 million** people. I am an ever-expanding middle class. A proud **nuclear-armed** state yet peace-loving, I have the **highest number of troops** in UN peacekeeping missions. I am a model of survival. I am **40,000 deaths** for global peace. I am an epitome of **resilience**. I am **hospitality**. I am a sea of **untapped potential**. I am a **goldmine of opportunities**.

**I am the bravest nation in the world.
Yes, I am Pakistan.**



MODERATES

A PRIVATE SECTOR THINK TANK
STRENGTHENING TOLERANCE, INTERFAITH HARMONY & DEMOCRACY

For more information please email your query to info@moderates.com.pk or visit our website www.moderates.com.pk
Founded in 2003, the Moderates is a not-for-profit organization setup under section 42 of the Companies Ordinance, 1984.

PAKISTAN

Business Council to Take Shape

During his maiden visit to Pakistan, Sukhbir Singh Badal, Deputy Chief Minister of Indian Punjab, met with Shahbaz Sharif, Chief Minister of Punjab at the recent India-Pakistan Business Roundtable where the two signed agreements to formalize a common business council, establish joint industrial zones, hold business conferences and increase bilateral trade. This was Badal's first visit to Pakistan during which he hoped to foster greater economic bonds between India and Pakistan. Most recently, India has also appointed its first Muslim Foreign Minister, a move that is expected to ease tensions between the two countries

and promote greater understanding.

Admiring the Indo-Pak friendship, Badal expressed a desire for greater economic and trade partnership between the two neighbors, thus paving the way for regional stability. Shahbaz Sharif deemed the roundtable meetings a welcome step and a major stride in building a stronger relationship. Pakistan recently granted India the status of the Most Favored Nation in trade but this move remains to be implemented. Establishing a common



business council reinforces the trust and confidence of both countries to build avenues of growth and development. To establish greater trade ties between SAARC nations, Badal was of the view that Pakistan and India should take reference from the European Union as a model to improve their mutual industrial and trade ties. **S**

AFGHANISTAN

Taking Charge

US President Barack Obama recently nominated Marine Gen. Joseph Dunford to replace General John Allen, as the commander of NATO troops in Afghanistan. Gen. Dunford, currently serving as Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps., has experience with commanding troops in Iraq but will set foot in Afghanistan for the first time. Gen. Allen will assume the post of Supreme Allied Commander Europe.

General Allen established strong credibility with NATO allies having worked as an effective military leader fighting against Al Qaeda. His absence might dent U.S. measures, at least in the short term. Allen's successor, a four-star

general, led several units before assuming command of the Marine Corps. His notable service was commanding the 5th Marine Regiment during the 2003 war in Iraq.

General Dunford is assuming the post at a time when US forces face tough times in Afghanistan. Gearing up to leave in 2014, the troops have already faced strong retaliation by Afghan forces and have also had to address concerns of infiltration, now famously known as Green on Blue attacks. Struggling to train and equip the Afghan National Army, US troops have quite a task ahead of them and it is uncertain whether General Dunford is up to the mark. President Obama



however has shown great confidence in his experience, leadership and vision to serve as commander of U.S. Forces and NATO ISAF in Afghanistan. While making the announcement, the President asserted, "Dunford will lead our forces through key milestones in our effort that will allow us to bring the war to a close responsibly as Afghanistan takes full responsibility for its security." **S**

Changing of the Guards

S.M.Krishna, Foreign Minister of India, recently announced his retirement. Many suggest that Krishna is paving the way for the younger generation to enter into politics and steer the country ahead of the elections in 2014. New faces are expected to enter the Cabinet while the reshuffling process takes its final form.

Elected in the Assembly election in Karnataka in 1962, Krishna served as an MP several times since 1968 and later served as the chief minister from 1999 to 2004. He was regarded an influential figure in the Indian Cabinet with his marginal impact on foreign policy and often took leading position on relations

with Pakistan. Analysts suggest that Krishna was reluctant to work with the challenges he faced in Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal.

In an unprecedented turn of events, Salman Khurshid of Uttar Pradesh, was named as Krishna's successor. According to media sources, Rahul Gandhi and Anand Sharma, Indian Commerce Minister, were leading favorites before Khurshid was appointed as the first Muslim Foreign Minister in 16 years. It is believed that Khurshid will play an instrumental role in paving the relationship with Pakistan. His appointment is a clear attempt by the Prime



Minister to correct the image of a crumbling government.

The reshuffle process also saw the inclusion of 22 federal ministers. Khurshid is however, the most prominent inclusion, replacing Krishna at a time when India expects to take a step forward in strengthening ties with Pakistan. **S**

Ready for Battle

Bangladesh recently built its first warship thus joining the ranks of nations with indigenous naval strength. Dipu Moni, Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, launched the 255-ton patrol boat. With a cruising speed of 23 nautical miles, the boat is equipped with 37mm and 20mm guns capable of engaging with aircrafts and ships. Assembled at the Khulna Shipyard, the China Shipbuilding Offshore Co. supervised the construction and provided designs and materials necessary for the building process. Encouraged by their own success, Bangladeshi officials are anticipating the construction of similar vessels with Chinese assistance and hoping to enter the export market.

The construction of the first warship, estimated at TK58 crore, marks an important step in Bangladesh's stra-



tegic interests and military capabilities. The Bangladesh naval staff has outlined a long-term plan for the development of the Navy. Vice Admiral Zahir Uddin Ahmed, chief of Bangladesh's naval staff stated, "The government has approved a 10-year perspective plan and as part of this we're procuring appropriate platforms, both new and off the shelf, including assets for our special

warfare forces. We're also upgrading our existing fleet with the capability to undertake emerging roles and maintain interoperability with friendly navies." The Bangladesh navy is expected to assume full control in December. The warship is the first of five vessels, which the Khulna Shipyard is constructing for the Bangladesh Navy at a total cost of TK288 crore. **S**

SRI LANKA

Expanding Trade



The recent Asia Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum held in Sri Lanka drew more than 190 delegates including Sri Lankan officials, business leaders and representatives from regional chambers. Hosted by the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce,

region, focusing on economic opportunities and breaking trade barriers.

This could prove to be a milestone investment event for Sri Lanka as the country gears up for economic development. Sri Lankan business leaders presented their proposals to

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and the Asian Development Bank, the Forum held meaningful discussions between trade partners of the Asia-Pacific

region and discussed the country's instrumental role in promoting inter-regional trade ties.

The delegates also discussed the current economic situation of Sri Lanka that has improved due to its financial recovery and job creation that has spurred as a result of its trade activities. Shedding light on Sri Lanka's business climate, Rishad Bathiyutheen, Sri Lankan Minister of Industry and Commerce pointed out that trade facilitation bears economic benefits for the country, which also suits its strategic geographical location. The trade delegates concluded the Forum on the note that Sri Lanka has the potential of becoming the next economic hub of Asia. **S**

MALDIVES

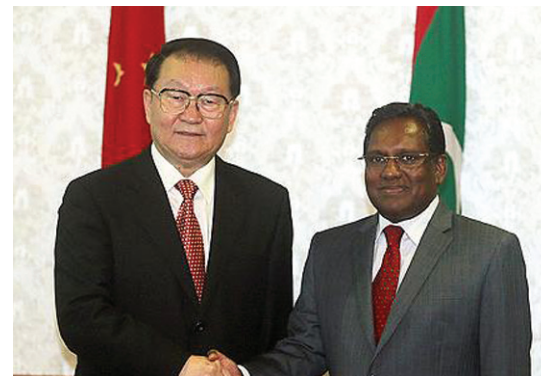
The Sino-Maldives Agreement

In his recent visit to the Maldives, Li Changchun, chief of the Communist Party of China, met with Maldivian President, Mohammed Waheed, to sign a decisive agreement to strengthen bilateral cooperation. The two countries have coordinated previously on infrastructure and tourism agreements and it is hoped that this new ground-breaking initiative will bring economic prosperity to both countries. During his visit, Li applauded the growth of the China-Maldives relationship and aimed to enhance strategic mutual trust, consolidate traditional friendships and promote bi-

lateral cooperation. In addition to this, both countries expressed the hope to further cooperation in areas of fishery, transportation, culture and human rights.

President Mohammad Waheed, reiterated that the Maldives will support China on issues of vital interest. Praising China's regional cooperation, Waheed made specific reference to its foreign policy of boosting friendly and cooperative ties with neighboring countries including those with the Maldives. The Chinese delegation also met with Abdulla Shahid, Speaker of the Maldivian People's Majlis, and

reiterated the need for both countries to promote mutual understanding and friendship. **S**



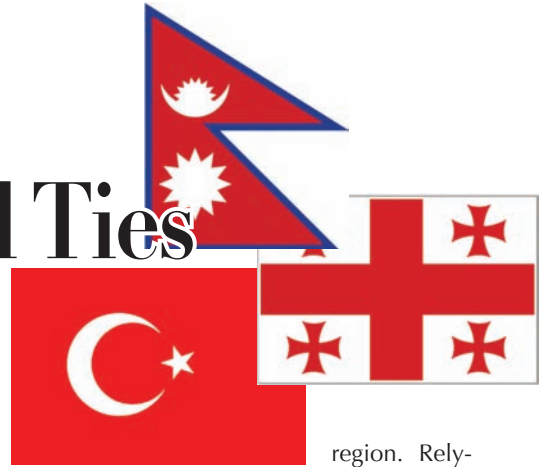
Bolstering Regional Ties

In an effort to promote economic and trade relations, Suraj Vaidya, President of the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI), recently signed two agreements with the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey and the Georgian Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

The signing ceremony took place during the 26th Conference of the Confederation of Asia-Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry in Kathmandu, which saw the arrival of business leaders from all across the world. Nepal is currently looking to expand its economic ties with coun-

tries, which possess similar economic conditions. Turkey and Georgia are suitable partners. According to the agreement, Nepal and Turkey will form a Trade Council that will facilitate investment opportunities. Speaking at the signing ceremony, Vaidya stated that the move will provide unparalleled opportunities and avenues for mutual cooperation and will serve as a landmark for economic development in Nepal.

Nepal is desperately searching for trade opportunities to boost its economy and transform itself into a prominent player in the Asia-Pacific



region. Relying heavily on its tourism sector, Nepal has aggressively pushed its agenda to secure a deal with the Turkish delegation that agreed to establish air routes to promote tourism which will bring economic benefits to the landlocked South Asian nation. In addition to this, the Nepalese delegation urged the business communities from Turkey and Georgia to invest in hydropower, education, health and infrastructure in order to bolster regional ties. **S**

New Airports in the Mountains



In a bid to improve the country's infrastructure, Bhutan is ready to inaugurate its third domestic airport in Gelephu. In addition to this, the government will re-launch two other airports in Bumthang and Trashigang. With a small population of 650,000, Bhutan is a landlocked nation bordering India from three sides and cushioned by China in the north. Drukair, the national carrier, will service all three airports but will

operate international flights only from Paro. The national airline currently operates flights to India, Nepal and Thailand, with Singapore as the next frontier. Namgay Wangchuk, General Manager of Drukair is confident that the presence of a third airport will lead to a timely scheduling of flights. The construction of the new airport in Gelephu has been halted numerous times, most recently after a bridge in Trongsa collapsed and damaged construction material. Bad weather previously delayed the repair work at Trashigang. The presence of a third airport will greatly facilitate business in Bhutan, enabling businessmen and others to travel to different parts of the country with ease. **S**



A recently released report by the Brussels-based International Crisis Group (ICG) entitled, “Afghanistan: The Long, Hard Road to the 2014 Transition” presents a dangerous scenario following the withdrawal of foreign forces in Afghanistan. Describing the “Afghan army and police overwhelmed and underprepared for the transition,” Candace Rondeaux, Senior Afghanistan Analyst, predicts another “botched election and resultant unrest” in Afghanistan if the Karzai regime attempts to manipulate elections. Incidentally, the NATO/U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan will coincide with the Afghan presidential elections in 2014. Although President Karzai constitutionally cannot contest for a third term, the ICG report laments that, “Karzai seems more interested in perpetuating his own power by any means rather than ensuring the credibility of the political system and long term stability in the country.”

Resultantly, the ICG report was heavily criticized by President Karzai who termed it as blatant interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan and an attempt to destabilize an already volatile situation in the country.

As the deadline for the withdrawal of U.S. forces approaches, the possibility of a resurgence of armed conflict and violence become more real. The challenge of strengthening the Afghan police and military forces remains unaccomplished and daunting. Eleven years of a foreign military presence in Afghanistan have, however, prevented a large-scale Taliban insurgency but the south and southeastern parts of the country remain vulnerable to periodic insurgent attacks on not only foreign forces but also against the Afghan army. With serious threats marring developmental progress in Afghanistan and the role of regional players still unclear, Afghanistan’s short-term stability seems like a

far-off prospect. Will Afghanistan be left on its own and revert to an era of bloody civil war in a post-2014 period or will the western powers maintain a symbolic military presence after 2014, serving as a stabilizing factor?

Four realities should be taken into account while analyzing the situation in Afghanistan. First, unlike the era of Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan (December 1979 till February 1989), the resistance against foreign forces has not spread into major parts of the country. It has been claimed by the Karzai regime and also verified by independent sources that around 80% of the Afghan territory is peaceful and it is only the south and southeastern Pashtun dominated provinces, where violence and resistance is noticeable. The post-9/11 foreign presence in Afghanistan lacks mainstream resistance and ethnic groups like Tajiks and Uzbeks remain on the sidelines of resistance forces.

The Unwinnable War

Afghanistan will have to start taking concrete measures much before international troops withdraw, if it hopes to achieve some form of stability in the near future.

By Dr. Moonis Ahmar

Second, in order to prevent a violent civil war in Afghanistan and Taliban rule, it is up to the people of Afghanistan to put their own house in order. Since King Zahir Shah was deposed in 1973 and monarchy was subsequently abolished, Afghanistan has been in constant turmoil. Four decades of violence, bloodshed and anarchy have left a psychological and social impact on two generations of Afghans and plunged their country into an endless state of armed conflict. Without seeking consensus with local stakeholders, it is impossible to seek a peaceful transition following the projected withdrawal of foreign forces in 2014.

Third, the mechanism for a peaceful transition in Afghanistan would require major reforms in the mode of governance, which would demand curbing lawlessness, corruption and nepotism. Unfortunately, the Karzai regime, despite being in power for more than a de-

cade has been unable to ensure rule of law, provide good governance and improve the socio-economic standard of the people. Instead of rectifying visible fault in its mode of governance, President Karzai launched a strong tirade against the United States, accusing it of playing a double game "by fighting a war against Afghan militants rather than their backers in Pakistan where terrorism is financed and manufactured." He also expressed his regrets over "NATO's refusal to supply Afghanistan with modern weapons necessary to fight its enemies." Karzai's remarks against the United States and NATO were strongly rebuffed by U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta who said, "Karzai should be grateful that more than 2,000 Americans had died in Afghanistan. These lives were lost fighting the right enemy, not the wrong enemy. And it would be helpful if the president, every once in a while, expressed his thanks for the sacrifices

that have been made by those who have fought and died for Afghanistan rather than criticize." The American outburst against Karzai's critical and rather provocative attack on the United States of playing a "double game" on Afghanistan is a serious issue because a rift between Kabul and Washington during an "uneasy transition," will only further destabilize the situation in the country.

Finally, the role of regional players is crucial and critical in the transition phase. Along with the support from Iran, Pakistan, China and its Central Asian neighbors, it is essential that a peacekeeping force composed of neutral Muslim countries is sent to Afghanistan so that prior to the withdrawal of foreign forces, an alternate security arrangement is reached and the possible outbreak of conflict is prevented.

The neutral force for Afghanistan should include participation from countries like Morocco, Egypt, Bangladesh, Indonesia and Malaysia. The proposed peacekeeping force should have a mandate from the UN Security Council to prevent the outbreak of armed conflicts, demobilization and demilitarization of non-state actors. Furthermore, the peacekeeping force should also be responsible for coordinating with the Afghan security forces in curbing cross border incursions.

There is no short cut to deal with the Afghan predicament but it is possible to seek a "home grown" solution, which has a local ownership and regional support to ensure peace and stability. Central, South and West Asia will remain vulnerable to instability unless there is peace in Afghanistan. Regardless of tribal, ethnic and sectarian cleavages, the people of Afghanistan should compel their leaders to renounce violence, antagonism and hostility while creating conditions for peace in their country. The task is difficult but certainly not impossible to accomplish. ■

Dr. Moonis Ahmar teaches International Relations and is Director, Area Study Center for Europe at the University of Karachi.



Picking up the Pieces

With rebuilding efforts underway, Afghanistan will continue to pose a challenge for the international community and regional powers even after troops withdraw in 2014.

By Daud Khattak

The Brussels-based International Crisis Group (ICG), in its recent report on Afghanistan, focused on what has been the subject of discussions from common Afghans to the closed-door meetings of diplomats: what is going to happen to the country after 2014? This will be a decisive year for Afghanistan and the global community as international troops begin withdrawing after handing over full charge of the country's security to nascent Afghan security forces.

The report titled, "The Long, Hard Road to the 2014 Transition" paints a bleak picture of the future of an already struggling nation. It mentions a government crisis likely to emerge from the failure of the existing administration to hold presidential elections on time and free of fraud as reported during 2009 as well as ethnic divisions among the Afghan civil society. Most troubling, however, is that the report questions the capability of the Afghan security forces to absorb shocks from various ethnic groups in case of a political crisis and from the Taliban and other armed groups, anxiously awaiting international withdrawal.

The Afghan government angrily reacted by terming the ICG report as "nonsense and garbage." A government spokesperson, in an apparent bid to dispel the despair expressed in the report, said that NATO withdrawal in 2014 is not going to make any difference provided the international community fulfills its pledges of future support. The spokesperson is right to some extent as the pro-communist government in Afghanistan lasted for three years instead of three months as was predicted by many observers following the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan in 1988 and collapsed only when the aid pipeline from the crumbled USSR dried up.

Equally encouraging are the remarks from President Hamid Karzai stating that he would not stay a single day beyond his constitutional term in office and would hand over power to the one who emerges successful in the next general elections. Let's believe the Afghan government spokesperson for a moment that the 350,000 security forces, where

the desertion rate is 20 percent right now, would stay intact and fight the Taliban. Let us also trust President Karzai when he says that he is not going to stay in office beyond his constitutional term. There still remain several 'ifs' and 'buts' which irk the minds of President Karzai's political opponents and the international community.

What if the president supports a member of his family and uses his influence to elect him as the next leader of the war-torn country thus providing an excuse to the minority Tajiks, Uzbeks, Hazaras etc to challenge the process, mirroring what happened during the 2009 presidential elections? And who will guarantee that the desertion rate of the Afghan security forces will drop after the withdrawal and local troops will be in a better position to defend their land against the emboldened Taliban? Additionally, the years of war and civil strife have created serious divisions in the Afghan society, leaving people with a major trust deficit. Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras, Uzbeks, and others seem more interested to safeguard the rights of their respective communities and rally behind their ethnic leaders instead of standing behind a national character.

But this is only one side of the picture. Apart from the several 'ifs' and 'buts' connected with the existing political and security situation in Afghanistan, some encouraging signs do emerge. Despite the increasing number of Taliban attacks, the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) are very much intact and are often praised by the officers of the international troops in their fight against the Taliban. Apart from a few green-on-blue attacks over the months, there is no news of mutiny by units or a bid by officers to overtake the government.

Young leadership is emerging in the country and new political parties and alliances are being formed illustrating a growing trend towards ballot instead of bullet. It is a fact that several functionaries of the Afghan government and a number of parliamentarians are on the list of human rights organizations for violating human rights during the civil war and are accused of still possessing their piles of

arms and private militias. The other side of the coin shows that voices are being raised against such people from time to time by the Afghan society.

Afghan parents, who were once proud of their children serving as holy warriors, are now more conscious of arming them with modern education, skills and knowledge. This change in mindset can be judged from new strategies. The Taliban who once openly spoke against girls' education now say that they are not opposed to the education of women "if that is in line with Islam."

That Afghanistan has not achieved stability with leaps and bounds is no doubt a fact, but expecting this would require a deeper look into ground realities. Afghanistan finds itself in a precarious situation, marred by three decades of war, huge manpower living abroad, a population impoverished by war and interference by neighbors as well as regional and super powers.

Though the ICG warning of "time is running out" may be meant for the Afghan government and the Afghan people, time is essentially running out largely for Afghanistan's neighbors to stop interfering and let Afghans decide which way they would like to be governed. Time is running out for regional powers to stop defeating each other on the Afghan turf and harness cooperation instead of confrontation. Time is also running out for NATO partners to stop imposing a solution of their choice and support Afghans to find a realistic solution to the crisis while preventing regional dominance.

In the face of mounting Taliban strength in Pakistan's tribal areas, a failure in stabilizing Afghanistan would not only prove to be a mammoth waste of blood and money but will also invite more destruction in the region, endangering peace in the greater South Asian region. ■

Daud Khattak is Acting Director at Mashaal Radio, RFE/RLPrague, Czech Republic. As a senior journalist, he has covered the Taliban movement in Pakistan and Afghanistan. He writes for the Christian Science Monitor and Sunday Times.



The Burden of

Once foreign troops leave, the Afghan state will undoubtedly face a myriad of political and economic challenges. Despite all odds against it, is it up to the task?

By Huzaima Bukhari & Dr. Ikramul Haq

A fghanistan, one of the poorest countries of the world, has been facing all kinds of challenges a nation-state can perceive. From poverty to terrorism, socialism to theocracy, autocratic rule to

a superpower-imposed regime and from Talibanization to mayhem, the state has been embroiled in an internal conflict. In addition to social and ideological polarization, the Afghan state has also seen a collapse of state

institutions to foreign occupation and witnessed foreign funding for development succumb to rampant corruption. Of late, the country has shown positive growth in many areas, though all experts concur that the real issue



10 percent annually over the past five years (8 percent in 2010/11), and inflation in moderate limits." Improved economic performance and reforms implemented in key areas enabled Afghanistan to qualify for debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Country Initiative in January 2010, leading to a 96 percent reduction in Afghanistan's 2006 stock of external debt of nearly US\$12 billion.

The IMF observes that, "Afghanistan has also made progress toward its social and development objectives and the Millennium Development Goals, though substantial challenges remain. For example, child mortality has been reduced and school enrollment increased, albeit from very low levels -- the enrollment rate for primary school is less than 40 percent. At the same time, achievements in some areas are below expectations: more than 40 percent of children under the age of five are underweight; progress in increasing access to potable water and sanitation remains slow; and literacy rates for men and women aged 15 to 24 are 51 percent and 22 percent, respectively. Overall, the low implementation rate of only 40 percent of the development budget

Responsibility

is still security threats from resistance groups and the main challenge is that of self-governance once foreign troops leave.

According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Afghanistan relies heavily on donor grants to fund development and security spending. With one of the lowest per capita incomes (estimated at about US\$550 for 2012), the country "ranks well below its neighbors on most human development indicators, nevertheless,

some progress has been made in recent years toward the country's political, economic, and social transformation."

In recent years, despite a very volatile security situation, the government initiated many steps for economic stability and growth. The major challenges however, remain building political and economic institutions. The IMF acknowledges that "economic activity has been robust, with real GDP growth averaging more than

impedes more rapid progress toward poverty reduction."

After years of armed conflicts, both infrastructure and institutions were in disarray and IMF in 2002 started assisting Afghanistan in rebuilding economic institutions and in providing advice to the government on economic policies and reforms. Since then IMF has been providing technical assistance to develop monetary instruments, strengthen the central

bank, modernize foreign exchange regulations, revamp tax and customs administration and enhance public financial management. The IMF warns that in the next few years, "Afghanistan faces two main challenges: the scheduled departure of foreign troops by 2014, requiring the government to take over an increasing share of security spending; and an expected gradual decline in overall donor support over the medium term, with a larger share of donor support possibly being channeled through the budget." These developments will make it more difficult for the government to address Afghanistan's large social and development needs.

With less foreign funding available, the government will have to improve revenue collection, which was increased to 11% of GDP in 2011 from less than 7% in 2006. The withdrawal of foreign troops is expected to stunt economic growth and may affect revenue collection. At the same time, the government will have to shoulder expenditures currently paid for by donors. The IMF portrays a positive picture observing, "nevertheless, the government is committed to protecting social spending, but will need to rely on donor support for years to come to make continued progress toward its development objectives and the Millennium Development Goals."

The Central Statistics Organization (CSO) of Afghanistan in its 'Capacity Development Plan (2011-14)', prepared in collaboration with the National Institution Building Project (NIBP) of UNDP, carried out a survey titled, 'Participation of Women and Men in Decision Making.' The survey, aimed at providing data to government planners, policymakers, administrators, and international organizations, provides comprehensive, up-to-date information on women and men in decision making levels—all individuals working in the government as well as members of the National Assembly and Provincial Councils. It also provides information on age, sex, education, marital status, opinion

on the problems faced by women in decision-making positions. Though women's participation in the decision-making process has increased in recent years, it is still very low, the survey concludes. The atrocities against women in Afghanistan remain widespread and brutal.

Besides socio-economic issues, the biggest challenge for Afghanistan remains the ability of the police and armed forces to maintain law and order. Addressing this concern, NATO says "its primary objective in Afghanistan is to enable the Afghan authorities to provide effective security across the country and ensure that the country can never again be a safe haven for terrorists."

Since August 2003, the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) has been conducting security operations, while also training and developing the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). Launched in 2011, the transition to Afghanistan's full security responsibility is due to be completed by the end of 2014, when ISAF's mission will end. NATO will then lead a follow-on mission to continue to support the development of ANSF capacity. Wider cooperation between NATO and Afghanistan will continue under the Enduring Partnership agreement, signed in 2010 at the Lisbon Summit that provides for:

- capacity building efforts, such as professional military education programs;
- courses to promote the fight against corruption and good governance initiatives;
- assisting the Afghan civil aviation sector in meeting international standards;
- an 'Afghan First' policy to identify Afghan companies eligible for ISAF contracts;
- the SILK-Afghanistan project which provides affordable, high-speed Internet access via satellite and fiber optics to Afghan universities and governmental institutions in Kabul;

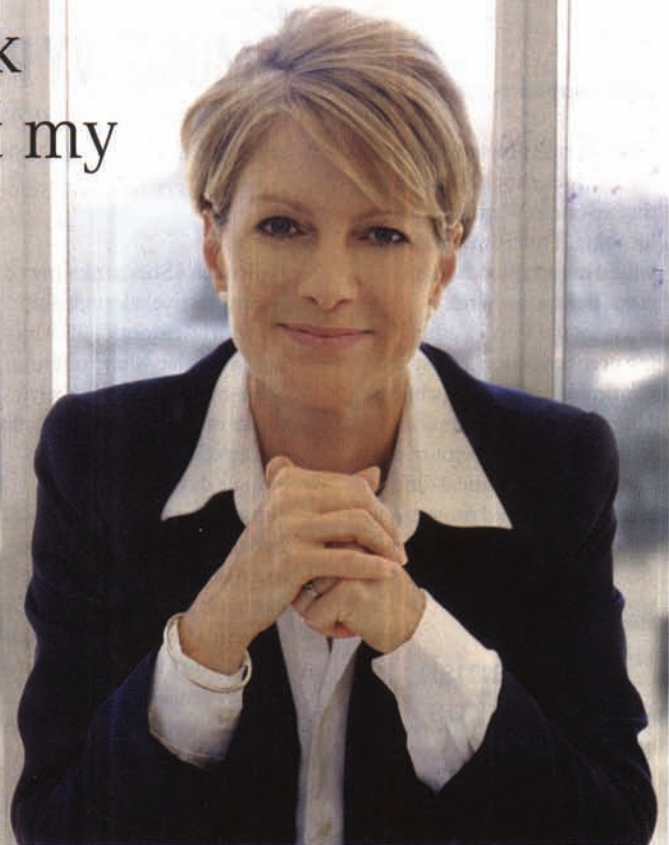
- training in civil emergency planning and disaster preparedness; and
- public diplomacy efforts to promote a better understanding of NATO and its role in Afghanistan.

NATO and others are trying hard to convert the Afghan National Army (ANA) from an infantry-centric force to a fully-fledged army -- with not only fighting capacity but elements of military police, intelligence, route clearance, combat support, medical, aviation, and logistics. At the same time, the role of the Afghan National Police (ANP) will be shifted from countering the insurgency to a civilian policing role. The real test of both ANA and ANP will emerge once foreign troops leave. Military experts are of the view that they still lack capabilities and resources to combat trained militants in a vast land—with mostly formidable hilly terrains—that pose tough challenges even for the best armies of the world.

All indicators show that the Afghanistan of 2014 will not be free from security risks. Since the private sector is not playing its due role in the economy – currently run through foreign funds -- the main engine of growth is still missing and its impact will be enormous once foreign funding and economic activities of foreigners decrease. Afghanistan still has a long way to go before it can forge a national consensus for peace, end armed conflicts, improve governance and safeguard the rule of law. In terms of stabilizing its economy, the country will have to accord special attention to reduce the role of illicit sectors, limit the influence of vested interests, implement a strong fiscal regime and allow the nascent mining sector to contribute towards growth. **S**

Dr. Ikramul Haq and Huzaima Bukhari - partners in the law firm Huzaima & Ikram (member Taxand) - are Adjunct Professors at the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS).

What I need is a bank
that I can trust to put my
business needs first



Corporates & Markets

No matter how markets and the global economy may change, some things remain constant. Like the client focus you have come to expect at Commerzbank – some banks talk about it, we are structured to deliver it.

Through our integrated corporate & investment banking teams, we support our clients at every stage of their growth by developing solutions in any permutation needed, without product bias.

It's a formula based on integrity.

It's a formula we believe in.

It's a formula you can rely on.

Choose Commerzbank – because we put your business needs at the heart of everything we do.

www.cbcm.commerzbank.com

Achieving more together

We've Learnt Nothing from History

Regional powers will have to make a serious commitment to Afghanistan, if they wish to move from an era of war to a scenario of greater economic cooperation and diplomatic collaboration.

Syed Moazzam Hashmi



The role of regional countries in collaboration with the international community will become increasingly important in the developing Afghan scenario. The politics of dialogue and creating an environment conducive to a win-win situation for all stakeholders takes the center stage in today's energy hungry and resource depleted world.

The endgame in Afghanistan will be a continuing process that will shift gears from one stage to another. Afghanistan not only sits on huge reserves of natural resources but is also the future energy corridor for the Central Asian natural reserves that run through Pakistan into the warm waters of the Arabian Sea.

The Chinese dragon continues to dig its claws deeper into strategic locations to contain the West and its efforts will certainly provoke the U.S to increase its presence in the region. The "Port Enhancement Project" in the Indian Ocean and investment in the development of the mining sectors in Afghanistan have already rung alarm bells. However, the withdrawal of multinational troops does not guarantee an open pasture for everyone to graze in. It certainly underlines fears of a new set of proxy wars in the Afghanistan-Pakistan region, with external forces trying to contain each other in a bid to control natural resources as well as the emerging energy corridor. Given this development, regional and international interests will stay and continue to grow in Afghanistan.

Easing the Indian pressure on Pakistan's eastern border is also

of prime importance, given the historical animosity that prevails between the two neighbors. The uninterrupted success of growing Indian investment in the development sector in Afghanistan has thrown the Pakistani establishment in a flurry. However, the issue would remain marginal as long as Indian interests are confined to Afghanistan's development sector and Pakistan is guaranteed some form of involvement in the security and political sectors.

The delicate equilibrium of this complex chemistry of a nuclear flash-point will come to rest when the roles of India and Pakistan are clearly determined, demarcated and guaranteed in Afghanistan. The role of a nuclear-ambitious Iran in Afghanistan is so far obvious, particularly with reference to the dari speaking Shi'a Hazara community in the north of Afghanistan that draws its religious inspiration from Iran.

As international troops gear up for withdrawal and the global community prepares to identify the next steps, the energy corridor and the issue of terrorism thriving on the Western border of Pakistan – often referred to as the epicenter of terrorism -- have captured the imagination of international strategists and policymakers.

Military-to-military contact and collaborative intelligence cooperation between Afghanistan and Pakistan is imperative in order to move forward. However, transforming a previously invisible role of intelligence agencies into a culture of transparency and accountability is a feat unto itself.

A trilateral process of discussing issues plaguing Afghanistan and Pakistan was initiated by the German political foundation – Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany. The emphasis of the trilateral dialogue

process was truly reflected in the views of the German Ambassador to Pakistan, Dr. Cyrill Nunn, who stressed on exploring similarities between the Afghan and Pakistani polity as an effective remedy to combat their ailments.

A sparkling cluster of high level, middle cadre and budding leaders from a broad spectrum of politics, civil bureaucracy, media, academia, civil society, economics and social sciences from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Germany met to review and build upon the policy recommendations tailored in Berlin earlier this year. The recommendations are meant to serve as a roadmap for the governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan, particularly in the backdrop of the emerging 2014 scenario.

The thrust of the policy recommendations was to put an end to the blame-game, reduce the trust deficit and expand economic and development activities in order to cool down the war mechanism and turn the wheels of prosperity in the region.

Under the leadership of the eminent Afghan political leader and former Senator, Pir Sayed Hamid Gailani, the working group on Afghanistan presented the document – “An Olive Branch for Regional Integration” highlighting seven different interdependent areas covering an entire range of issues. These include areas of economics, social and political structures, culture, peace, indicators of accountability and transparency, as well as the security sectors.

The group that presented an eleven-point agenda and brainstormed recommendations for the Government of Pakistan worked under the direction of eminent diplomat and bureaucrat, Dr. Ross Masood Husain. It emphasized on adopting a more meaningful approach rather than a symbolic one, in order to pressurize policymakers and governments in Afghanistan and Pakistan. A re-

laxation of visa policy, active pursuance of the trade agreement negotiations, accelerating the reconciliation process and founding the Afghanistan-Pakistan Friendship group in the Parliament of Afghanistan, were all discussed.

While the working group recognized that looming fears (mostly on security related issues) haunting Afghanistan do exist, the reality is yet to be officially recognized in Pakistan. Experts on both sides also recommended adopting a more practical, rational and meaningful approach beyond mere visits and exchange programs.

Both sets of recommendations identified that the friction between the two neighboring countries was political in nature while there were generally no issues at the people-to-people or the community level.

The Pakistani military is also undergoing a successful image building exercise and appears to have tuned to the going trend, appreciating the paradigm shift in South Asia from the conflict approach to economic cooperation and mutual collaboration. Pakistani military chief, General Pervez Kayani's speech on August 14, 2012 set the tone for the future course of action for Pakistan in countering terrorism and regarding the future of non-state actors.

The next stage is of course reconstruction, development and accelerated economic activity. With dialogue as the only valid currency in the upcoming 2014 scenario, all players would be compelled to shape a better future for both Afghanistan and Pakistan, in order to safeguard and guarantee their own economic and strategic interests in the region. **S**

Syed Moazzam Hashmi is a political and security analyst, a senior journalist and former Political Affairs Advisor to the US Consulate General in Karachi, Pakistan.

The Girl Who Dared

The assassination attempt on Malala Yousufzai has roused passions but the issue needs to be examined in the correct perspective and without blinkers to find out the underlying causes that led to this tragic incident.

By S.G. Jilanee

The assassination attempt by the Taliban on Malala Yousufzai, 15, has shocked the world. Shot in the head and neck, she was flown to the U.K. and is currently recovering under treatment at the prestigious Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham.

The US secretary of state and the British foreign secretary were prompt in condemning the attack. In Pakistan, the event triggered a groundswell of anger and revulsion. Schoolchildren brought out rallies in her support. Candle light vigils were held. A rare *fatwa* was also issued denouncing the attack.

But, except Altaf Hussain, no other political leader spoke out to condemn the crime. He hailed Malala as the "Daughter of Pakistan," called for immediate military action in North Waziristan and offered the full support of his workers in fighting shoulder to shoulder with the army. All other political parties remained mute. Maulana Fazlur Rahman even tried to dilute the impact of the crime by equating it with the drone attacks that kill innocent girls and Dr. Afia Siddiqi's conviction.

The army chief went to Malala's bedside, flew her by army helicopter to Peshawar for urgent medical assistance. He unequivocally condemned the attempt on her life, expressing his resolve to fight the evil. "We will fight, regardless of the cost we will prevail," he asserted.

And now, it is reported that the EU parliament has paid tribute to her as well. The UN has decided to observe November 10 as Malala Day. Earlier Angelina Jolie suggested that she should be nominated for Nobel Peace Prize, while Desmond Tutu has already nominated her for the International Children's Peace Prize.

Such universal reaction to the incident was natural due to the spin given to the story as it was relayed. Which eye will not be moist; which heart will not bleed when told that a schoolgirl in her teens was the target of an assassination attempt because she tried to defy the Taliban's ban on education?

For elements that have been baying for Taliban blood, this was a windfall; an ear-shattering cry calling for immediate army onslaught in North Waziristan to avenge the attack. General Kayani's words

at Malala's bedside seemed to signal such a possibility. This, as Declan Walsh of the New York Times called it, was the "Malala Moment!"

The anti-Taliban lobby went into orgasmic ecstasy. No less pleased was America. At last, the army would be doing what the former had wished and the latter had long been forcing it to do: eliminate the Taliban from North Waziristan.

The media went berserk. Some leading English language newspapers carried up to three op-ed pieces a day. Writers of all hues began jostling for a place in the competition for how much forcefully each could blivate on the theme of denouncing Taliban and deifying Malala.

For about 10 days the hurricane raged in full fury. Then it subsided. The "moment" had passed.

What took the wind out of the anti-Taliban lobby's balloon was the want of political consensus and public support on which Gen. Kayani factored the push into North Waziristan. The ruling party tabled a resolution in the National Assembly for military action. But it failed to take off when the opposition declined its support.

There can be no question that from day one the liberal lobby hijacked the tragic incident and exploited it cynically to advance their own agenda. No wonder that, despite all the show of sympathy, no collective prayers were offered and not a goat sacrificed for Malala's safety and recovery as happens when President Zardari sneezes or Altaf Hussain coughs.

The facts leading up to the attempt on Malala's life tell a different story. Born in 1997, Malala Yousufzai was 11 years old in 2008 when the Taliban took over Swat and began to ban girls from going to school. She was one of the girls who tried to defy the ban and spoke out against it at a press conference in Peshawar in September the same year.

In early 2009, her father offered Malala's services to BBC Urdu for writing blogs on life under Taliban. Because a girl studying in Class VII could not write blogs of the kind required, it was obvious that she would have been guided and her draft "diaries" edited for clarity and impact by her sponsors.

For America, Malala was a precious find as a lethal weapon in its war with the Taliban, because the words of a "child" could penetrate far deeper into the hearts and minds of the American people than volumes of statements by older men or women.

The Western media swooped upon Swat. The New York Times made a documentary on her. Notably, while Obama regretted having included his kids in an interview he gave to the television series 'Access Hollywood' in 2008, -- Malia is just one year younger than Malala -- it was kosher for the latter to give regular interviews to the print and electronic media. Even US special envoy to Afghanistan and Pakistan, Richard Holbrooke, invited her for a meeting in which she is said to have asked him for US intervention to fight the Taliban.

By mid-2009, the army had driven the Taliban out of Swat. Normality had returned. Schools reopened. And Malala resumed her studies. With the Taliban gone, her attacks on them should have ceased. But, egged on by her handlers to confront the Taliban her language became only more acerbic and intemperate.

For instance, last year Malala was quoted in the Guardian, saying on a television talk show; "Sometimes I imagine I'm going along and the Taliban stop me. I take my sandal and hit them on the face and say what you're doing is wrong." Yet, none of her worshippers raised their eyebrow and said, "the language you are using is wrong."

In homicide cases provocation is considered a good defense. And there is no question that Malala gave them enough provocation. She was America's answer to Taliban's teenage suicide bombers, fighting on the propaganda front.

What happened on October 9 was, therefore, the logical consequence of her endless attacks on the Taliban. As their spokesman, Ehsanullah Ehsan said in a statement, "Taliban executed the attack on an adult girl only after she emerged as a pivotal character in the media war against us." ■

S. G. Jilane is a senior political analyst and former editor of SouthAsia Magazine.

Courtship or Dalliance?

India and China must set their differences aside to attain economic supremacy.

By S. M. Hali

China and India, both growing Asian economies whose interests have clashed in the past, have now realized that setting animosity aside, perhaps cooperation is the need of the hour. Deng Xiaoping, China's top leader and economic reformist of the People's Republic of China (PRC), introduced development plans, which have propelled PRC to become one of the leading economies of the world. As per his philosophy, Deng preached that regional disputes should be shelved and instead emphasis must be laid on economic growth.

India, which is also aspiring for exponential economic growth, comprehends that instead of locking horns, the duo can achieve greater success through collaboration. S. M. Krishna, External Affairs Minister of India, recently stated that India's key foreign policy priority is to invest in building a stable and cooperative relationship with China, which will be a source of stability and prosperity in the region.

This turnaround has not been an easy one. The Sino-Indian armed conflict of 1962, the border disputes over Arunachal Pradesh and Aksai Chin, Indian naval presence in the South China Sea and the Chinese naval activity in the Indian Ocean, have all

proved as deterrents to a stronger relationship. In addition to this, China's defense ties with Pakistan, and India's grant of political asylum to the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Diaspora further serve as irritants that hamper collaboration. India too, now sees wisdom in improving diplomatic and economic ties with China in order to achieve its true potential. In the post Cold War and 9/11 era, Indian ties with the US have seen vast improvement. It was envisaged that the US may prop India as a bulwark to contain China but pragmatic thinking in the South Block mandarins, who consider it prudent to have a diplomatic and economic alliance with erstwhile opponent China, has thwarted such US overtures.

Sino-Indian relations depict decades of animosity and competition. Time and again, incidents have marred the efforts of peaceniks to bury the hatchet between the former adversaries. The Indo-Vietnamese deal for oil exploration in the disputed South China Sea irked Beijing and prompted the Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson to comment, "We do not hope to see outside forces involved in the South China Sea dispute and do not want to see foreign companies engage in activities that will undermine Chi-

na's sovereignty and interest." Though both Beijing and New Delhi downplayed the issue, there were unsavory and provocative comments from some sections of the Indian as well as Chinese media.

The meeting between Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao and his Indian counterpart, Dr. Manmohan Singh at the sidelines of the recent ASEAN Summit at Bali poured oil over troubled waters. Dr. Manmohan Singh reiterated his oft-quoted statement that there was enough space for both India and China to flourish. To which, Wen Jiabao instantly responded, "It is important for our two countries, the most populous in the world, to achieve modernization and work hand in hand," adding that he was "fully confident that that kind of world will arrive."

The Indian move to host the Global Buddhist Congregation 2011, to be addressed by the Dalai Lama, despite Chinese requests for canceling the conclave, raised serious consternation in Beijing. However, apart from cooperating during the Durban Conference on climate change, the high point of the Sino-Indian relationship during the year 2011 was the resumption of the Defense Dialogue.

The year 2012 saw foreign and



economic ties steadily grow between the two neighbors, with some reports stating that India is expected to reach a US\$100 billion dollar trade with China by 2015.

During the second BRICS summit, held in New Delhi, it was agreed that the Chinese government would encourage domestic companies to import more products from India in order to balance the trade deficit. Chinese President Hu Jintao also told Indian Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh that “it is China’s unswerving policy to develop Sino-Indian friendship, deepen strategic cooperation and seek common development” and “China hopes to see a peaceful, prosperous and continually developing India and is committed to building a more dynamic China-India relationship.” Sino-Indian ties were further cemented with Chinese Defense Minister Liang Guanglie’s visit to India in September 2012.

An important factor in the Sino-Indian equation is the relationship between Beijing and Islamabad. China’s relationship with Pakistan touches raw

nerves in India on three sensitive issues significant to Indian national security, namely territory and borders, nuclear issues, and access to the Indian Ocean. Chinese support in developing the infrastructure at Gwadar raised alarm bells in New Delhi with conspiracy theory propagators depicting the move as a Chinese attempt to encircle India. On the same keel, China’s unstinted support to Pakistan over the issue of Kashmir has drawn flak in the Indian camp. If the foreign relations between New Delhi and Beijing hope to progress positively, India will have to be more understanding of China’s own stakes in Pakistan; the country serves as China’s door to the Islamic world and is an important partner in the battle against Islamic extremism. Pakistan’s central location is also significant for China in securing energy routes for its economic development and, at the strategic level, serving as a balancing card in the India-China-US equation. Historically, as US-Pakistan ties faced a trust deficit, Indo-US relations deepened but China unwaveringly stood by Pakistan

as its “all-weather friend.”

Sino-Pak relations cannot be considered detrimental to Sino-Indian ties. Over the years, the Sino-Indian relationship has also acquired an independent dynamism and cannot be jeopardized by the strong alliance between China and Pakistan. The drive of Sino-Indian ties comes from within each country -- the need to further economic development and forge better understanding. The two, despite their differences, are destined for deeper economic interdependence.

Should Sino-Indian ties improve, it is anticipated that other countries in the region will follow suit. Sinking its differences with Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam and a number of other neighbors, PRC has developed trade ties with them, which have been profitable for all quarters and are contributing to prosperity in the region. **S**

Group Captain (R) Sultan M. Hali, now a practicing journalist, writes for print media, produces documentaries and hosts a TV talk show. He is currently based in Islamabad.

Whenever and wherever religious sentiments spark violence, reason takes a back seat. In Muslim countries in general and in South Asia in particular, its intensity becomes far greater. The recent agitation across the Islamic world against the controversial and blasphemous American movie “Innocence of Muslims” that mocks the Prophet (PBUH) is a prime example. A popular perception among other communities is that Muslims are more prone to losing balance when it comes to protesting and expressing their sentiments on issues involving Islam. They are far more sensitive and cannot demonstrate a degree of tolerance, which is normally associated with followers of other religions. The same sentiment was witnessed in Bangladesh where the traditionally peaceful Buddhist community faced the wrath of Muslims of the south-eastern border districts.

Tension is quite rare in Bangladesh between Muslims and Buddhists who number not even one percent of the 150 million population of the country. However, recent months have seen



Left to

The safety of religious minorities has remained a contentious issue in Bangladesh. The country now faces a precarious situation as Buddhist temples are burned by enraged Muslims over the picture of a burning Quran.

By Munir Ishrat Rahmani

bitterness and Muslim sentiments aggravating against Buddhists following clashes in the neighboring state of Myanmar’s western district of Rakhine, between the majority population of Buddhists and the minority Rohingya Muslim community. The clashes left hundreds of Rohingyas dead followed by an exodus, forcing tens of thousands to seek refuge in Bangladesh. Unfortunately, despite the sympathy

of the local population and support of the Muslim world, including the international Muslim body OIC, the Bangladeshi government of Awami League did not allow the Rohingyas to resettle in their areas, triggering mass reactions from the opposition. Against this backdrop, what happened in September then, was not entirely surprising.

The trouble started on September 29 when a Buddhist youth allegedly

posted a picture showing a copy of a burning and damaged Holy Koran on his Facebook page. The insult to Islam’s holy book infuriated Muslims of the area of Cox’s Bazaar who headed in rage towards the Buddhist villages of Ramu, Teknaf, Ukhia, etc. The protest turned unruly when late in the day, agitators torched at least ten Buddhist temples and attacked their houses at night, vandalizing their property. The

situation became chaotic as the state machinery took considerable time to react and control the situation. By the time it came into action, irreparable damage had already been done. The Buddhist Monks fled the temples and houses to take refuge in the fields while the rampaging mob burned and caused damage to their properties.

As is usually the case in the region, the unfortunate incident was immediately politicized and rival political parties launched into the 'blame-game.' While the opposition leaders blamed the state machinery for stage-managing the show and allowing the agitation to gain momentum before making its entry to control the damage, the ruling party leaders blamed the opposition for instigating

and the BNP suffered in the elections of 2001 due to this support. After strongly condemning the persecution of Rohingyas at the hands of Buddhist miscreants, the BNP lost further legitimacy in the eyes of the Bangladeshi Buddhist community. However, offered an "ideal" situation for exploiting and winning over the Buddhists' support for the coming elections, the BNP became more vocal in condemning the attacks and calling for a judicial inquiry to grab maximum gain.

Buddhists were previously regarded as a peaceful community, ready to co-exist with other faiths. Most recently, however, a new trend of Buddhist racist nationalism and an element of aggression has emerged. In Myanmar, for example, following the

by Buddhists in Thailand, Sri Lanka and Myanmar against the attacks on Buddhist temples and properties in Bangladesh. In Sri Lanka, angry protesters, organized by a popular Buddhist organization "Bodu Bala Sena," marched to the Bangladesh Embassy and threw stones and hurled bottles at the staff. Present at the protest, a monk stated that, "We were tolerant but day by day we notice great injustice caused to Buddhists by Islamic extremists, we can no longer be patient."

The local administration of the Awami League government failed to react promptly and nip the trouble in the bud that was readily exploited by the opposition. The sad incident was condemned by almost all sections of the population that regard Bangladesh as a model of a modern secular state. The particular incident tarnished Bangladesh's global image, which prompted many within the civil society to demand an inquiry and punishment for the culprits,

Burn?

the attacks and inciting the protesters to destabilize the situation shortly before the next elections. Both sides sympathized with the Buddhists and condemned the sad incident. The BNP called for a judicial inquiry while Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina met a delegation of the Buddhist community to pacify and assure them of maximum punishment for the perpetrators of the "heinous" crime. However, she reiterated the government's stand of not accepting an influx of refugees. Khalida Zia's BNP had severely criticized the government for not accepting the Rohingyas despite the OIC's appeal.

Historically, Bangladesh's Hindu, Christian and Buddhist communities support the secular Awami League

attacks on Rohingyas by the hostile Rakhines (Arakanese), when US Ambassador in Myanmar, Derek Mitchell and his inquiry team toured the area, they were bluntly told that Rakhines were not prepared to accept Rohingyas on their soil or share the land as they had been doing for many years. Secondly, when the OIC tried to open an office in Myanmar, the local Buddhist population strongly opposed the move and took out rallies with banners reading "No OIC" to register their protest against the OIC that had supported the Rohingyas. President Thein Sein accepted the 'demand' of the people and disallowed the opening of an OIC office.

Strong protests were also staged

irrespective of party affiliation or religious divide. The government showed its readiness to hold an inquiry and compensate for the damage done to temples or properties to pacify the Buddhist community leaders who appeared to be 'satisfied.' However, not much is likely to happen as a result of the inquiry. **S**

Munir Ishrat Rahmani is a former Colonel of the Pakistan Army. He is a graduate of the Command and Staff College, Quetta and has fought during the 1965 and 1971 Indo-Pakistan Wars. He was stationed in East Pakistan during the 1971 conflict and is the author of a forthcoming book on Indo-Pak military history.

Growing Turmoil

Former Maldives President Nasheed has once again made headlines for failing to appear in court and challenging the judicial systems.

By Raza Khan

The Maldives, a small Indian Ocean state, once again finds itself embroiled in yet another political turmoil. The detention and probable arrest of former president Mohamed Nasheed, has attracted much attention in the Maldives. Consequently, the tussle between the government and opposition parties on the

one hand and political forces and the country's judiciary on the other lends to further unrest amidst rising incidents of religious extremism.

The political crisis was triggered in the Maldives with the dramatic resignation of President Mohamed Nasheed last February. Nasheed argued that the resignation was submit-

ted under duress at "gunpoint." The unrest in the Maldives reached its climax when Nasheed was momentarily arrested for violating court orders regarding criminal charges of illegally arresting the Criminal Court Chief Judge, Abdullah Mohammed on January 16. Nasheed refused to appear before the court as he denied abusing



Finance new opportunities

That's what commercial lenders can do when they're smart about managing risk. And smart lenders can seed innovative new businesses by working with CME Group, the world's leading derivatives marketplace. Emerging growth companies and financial institutions around the world come to us to manage virtually every kind of risk. Interest rate fluctuations, stock market movements, changing currency valuations – whatever the risk, we help the world advance beyond it. Learn more at cmegroup.com/advance.

How the world advances

 **CME Group**

his power and violating the constitution by removing and sending military personnel to arrest the chief judge of the criminal court. According to the country's constitution, the judge can only be removed by the Judicial Service Commission.

However, Nasheed argues that he was compelled to take action against the judge as the judicial commission could not proceed further after facing a series of allegations. The removal of the judge led to widespread protests, which culminated in a mutiny by the police. Nasheed contended that armed police officers were part of a conspiracy hatched by the loyalists of former president and Nasheed's rival, Mamoun Abdul Gayoom. Nasheed's Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) defeated Gayoom in the 2008 elections. Gayoom, known largely as an autocratic leader, ruled the Maldives for three decades since 1978, using an assortment of autocratic tactics to quell political opposition. The situation was further complicated, when Nasheed's deputy and current President, Mohamed Waheed, stated that Nasheed was not forced to resign and was not threatened by the police or armed officers.

In the current realm of affairs, the former president's refusal to appear before the court was justified by his lack of expectation of a fair trial. It is disappointing that a person with sound democratic credentials like Nasheed shied away from appearing in court, having spent long stints in jail during Gayoom's rule while struggling for democracy in the Maldives.

Besides Nasheed's lack of faith in the country's judicial system, if he is found guilty and sentenced to imprisonment, he will be disqualified to hold public office for three years. In this respect, the cases against Nasheed seem to be somewhat politically motivated since he is the MDP's candidate

for next year's presidential elections. The MDP has also described the government and establishment's actions against Nasheed as political vendetta and a move to prevent the MDP from winning the elections.

On its part, the government of the Maldives emphasized that they had nothing to do with the filing and pursuing of criminal cases against Nasheed. They argue that the case against the former President was initiated by the independent Prosecutor General's office when he was still in office.

Only time will reveal whether Nasheed resigned to bolster his prospects in the next presidential elections or it was the result of collusion between opposition parties with “powerful networks” to remove the MDP from power.

Only time will reveal whether Nasheed resigned to bolster his prospects in the next presidential elections or it was the result of collusion between opposition parties with “powerful networks” to remove the MDP from power. The political scenario in the Maldives is mired in a lack of a democratic culture, weakness and independence of state institutions. Due to these problems, the country's leaders seemingly lack the maturity level, which is a hallmark of political leaders in well-entrenched democracies.


In addition to this, the recent assassination of Member of Parliament, Afrasheem Ali, has further aggravated political instability in the Maldives. MP Ali was considered a moderate Islamic scholar in the predominantly Sunni population of more than three

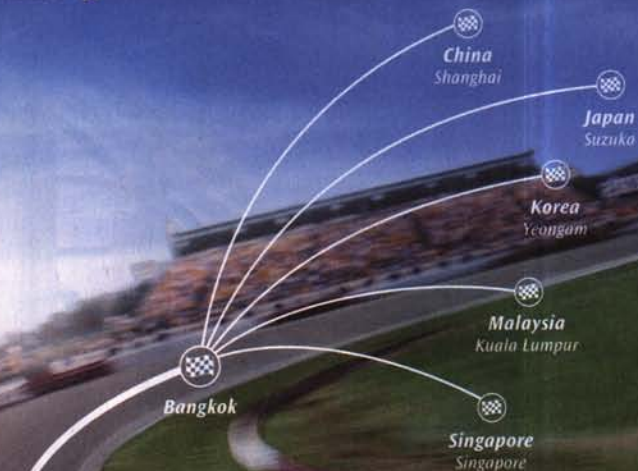
million people. The brutal assassination marks the first-ever killing of a member of parliament in Maldivian history. Analysts have attributed Ali's killing to the rising phenomenon of religious extremism in the country, which traditionally has had liberal social traditions. By assassinating a moderate Islamic scholar and an MP, religious extremists hope to further foment political instability and take advantage of the prevailing chaos. This has been the modus operandi of religious extremists in South Asia during


times of political instability.

There is ample room to believe that foreign terrorist groups operating in the name of Islam could be behind the assassination. The Maldives has a strategic geographical location and extremists must be stopped before they exploit the archipelago for their own agenda. Measures must be taken before the country, known for its beauty and exquisite tourist resorts, becomes another hotbed of religious extremism in South Asia. ■

Raza Khan is a political analyst and researcher on political economy and the Af-Pak region. He has served in several senior positions in the Pakistan government and is currently writing his doctoral thesis on religious extremism-terrorism in Pakistan.

A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER 



 *A network that circuits my racing passions.
An airline that understands them.*

My world is speed without limits. I live for the roar of the world's fastest cars and the teams that drive them to the edges of human possibility. I need someone who gets me to the next race like clockwork.

Stay in the driver's seat of the world's top motorsport, on a heart-racing journey that never slows down.

To over 70 destinations in 5 continents, we don't just connect you to your world, we understand it. THAI. Smooth as silk.

thaiairways.com



 **THAI**
Smooth as silk

Second Chance to Get it Right

Will President Obama's second Presidential term usher
in new foreign policy changes?

By Arsla Jawaid



President Barack Hussein Obama has just secured a second presidential term, illustrating the sentiments of a majority of Americans. Though barely beating Governor Romney in the final run, Obama's win is important for a number of reasons.

As depicted through the polls, the voting bloc in America is rapidly shifting. Obama, secured the majority of Hispanic and women votes and was the clear favorite to win from this demographic. It is predicted that these two particular voting blocs will grow exponentially in America, over the next five years. Most young voters also voted

foreign rating may have been higher, there is no doubt that U.S elections (like in any country) were dominated by domestic concerns of unemployment, healthcare, a dwindling economy, job creation and most recently, the effects of climate change. A stark difference that stands out between the U.S and a country like Pakistan is that foreign policy is also deemed an internal affair in Pakistani politics whereas few in America are concerned or informed enough about it, despite the fact that America has been embroiled in its longest (11 years now) and most expensive war in Afghanistan.

towards Chinese moves. However, a blatant military strike is highly unlikely but aggressive diplomacy cannot be ruled out.

The other elephant in the room is Iran. Interestingly, President Obama has been accused time and again by the Republican party for not "doing enough" in Iran. Governor Romney, during his campaign trail blatantly expressed that he would be willing to launch a "unilateral military strike" against Iran if it did not cooperate with the U.S and halt its nuclear program. President Obama however, has much more experience in strategic diplomacy and a far greater understanding of regional, political developments to make such aggressive and unfounded remarks. The President is expected to step up major sanctions against the country and inflict greater diplomatic isolation, to force Iran to abandon its nuclear ambitions. While both candidates may have employed lofty rhetoric during the campaign trail, now that President Obama has won a second term and will not be able to return to the office after 2016, he is likely to make more assertive decisions.

By according Obama a second term, most Americans wish to see a continuation of policies that can close a chapter in their history. For many non-Americans, Obama's second term is his last opportunity to get it right.

in his favor while Governor Romney secured votes from pre-dominantly white, Caucasian voters and the elderly (Surprising, since he aims to revolutionize Medicare and Medicaid).

While the two candidates remained neck-and-neck in election results at home (right till the very end), an international opinion poll conducted by the BBC World Service illustrated that President Obama was preferred to Romney in 20 of the 21 countries, including India. Pakistan was the only country that showed a lower rating (11 per cent) for President Obama and a 14 per cent approval rating for Governor Romney. While Obama's

While domestic concerns may have dominated the political discussion up till now, President Obama will have to delve deeper into immediate matters of foreign affairs. The world is currently in turmoil and America's position as a global superpower has been compromised in numerous instances. The biggest threat the U.S will undoubtedly face comes from China's growing economic dominance and influence, especially in the South Asian region. The U.S and China are already at loggerheads over strategic and development projects throughout the region and America is adopting an increasingly aggressive stance

Obama's foreign policy in the Middle East will continue as is, with further scope for engagement. The Libya tragedy that cost the U.S one of its most able ambassadors drove the point home that America has a presence throughout the world that can easily be jeopardized by events occurring at home. International anger towards America's hegemonic status are a clear reflection of the country's current reputation. Though Obama may have started off well in the international arena with his Cairo speech emphasizing plurality and multilateralism, his rhetoric took a hard-hit with Islamophobia on the rise within the United States. Painstakingly, Obama strived to convince the world that the U.S government

was not behind the anti-Islam film and that in an era of globalized technology it was difficult to monitor and control the dissemination of information.

While such statements may have somewhat quelled protests worldwide and gained him some brownie points, Obama did however take a hard hit at home, facing accusations of being too “apologetic” and not presenting a strong, assertive America to the international community. President Obama’s tenure stands in stark contrast to the Republican way of handling affairs, which favors a strong military presence, a dominating U.S. stature around the world and an almost dictatorial style of diplomacy. The Democratic Party has viewed going to war as the last resort and prides itself on informed diplomacy and a strategy of multilateralism.

The South Asian region is however, going to pose the greatest problem. By according Obama a second term, most Americans wish to see a continuation of policies that can close a chapter in their history. For many non-Americans, Obama’s second term is his last opportunity to get it right. The President is largely viewed as sympathetic and concerned about America’s national interests but equally committed to global engagement and partnership. Embroiled in its toughest war in Afghanistan, the U.S. has already declared December 2014 as the deadline for troop withdrawal and it is likely that they will adhere to it. Unfortunately, it will be important to take into consideration the ground realities, none of which look too favorable for a responsible troop withdrawal which will leave behind a stable Afghanistan ready to fend for itself. Rising Green-on-Blue attacks, political instability, corruption, a looming Taliban threat and lack of socio-economic develop-

ment, do not bode well. Opposition to U.S. forces seems to be on the rise and it remains to be seen how President Obama will maneuver the situation.

This will also be America’s moment, and a testament to Obama’s administration, to quell fears of abandonment and denote a break from the U.S. policy of 1989. The next four years will be a litmus test for Afghanistan’s stability and international players will have to provide a roadmap focusing on rehabilitation and the rebuilding of Afghanistan. Major political shifts will also be taking place in the region with Afghan elections scheduled for March 2014 and Pakistani elections scheduled for March 2013. In either case, the incumbent governments will not be returning to power, making way for new political players.

Pakistan too will pose to be a serious challenge for the United States. This critically important bilateral relationship has taken hard-hits over the past two years with the May 2 Abbottabad raid, the Raymond Davis episode, the Salala tragedy and now, the growing opposition against Obama’s drone policy. U.S. drone tactics have faced heated criticism in Pakistan where policy makers, government officials and vocal members of civil society have condemned it as counterproductive and argue that drone attacks claim more innocent lives than target top Taliban militants. For America, it is the safest and most accurate way to conduct an anti-terrorism strategy without physically being present on Pakistani soil. However, the backlash and opposition is not only hurting U.S. efforts in Afghanistan but is also fuelling anti-Americanism in Pakistan and convincing young men to join Taliban ranks.

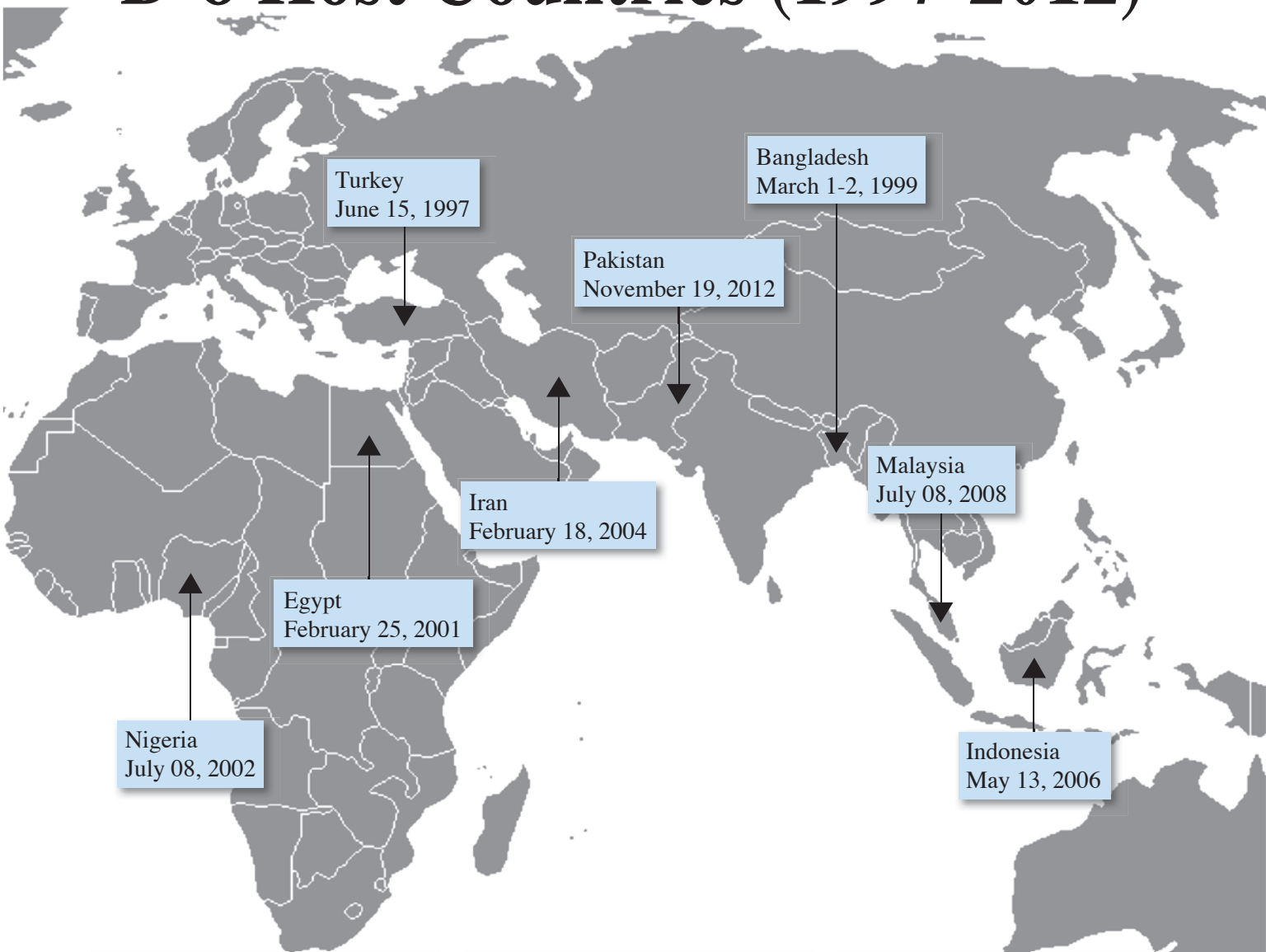
In addition to this, the U.S. will also have to undertake concerted

efforts to enhance diplomatic relations with Pakistan before troops withdraw from the region in 2014. A diplomatic deadlock and harsh, antagonistic rhetoric does little to mend relations, especially at a time when both players are growing increasingly desperate for stability. The trust deficit must be addressed and the U.S. must engage with the people of Pakistan thus correcting its image as a dominant “mother-in-law.” Consistent and committed policies need to be put in place if America hopes to seek greater partnership with the people of Pakistan. Pakistan will undoubtedly serve as a key player and will be crucial for regional stability lest the region implode, usher in Taliban rule in Afghanistan and pose a much greater threat to the world order.

President Obama may have clear and honest intentions but he faces difficult times, not only abroad but also at home. The Congress remains dominated by the Republicans and the Senate is still heavy with Democrats, presenting yet another challenge and potential deadlock in pursuing any foreign policy agenda. Guantanamo Bay is still functioning and President Obama will have to address pressing international concerns if the U.S. hopes to continue being a world leader. At home, he will have to correct his “apologetic” image and emerge as a strong, decisive President and Commander-in-Chief, ready to lead his nation to economic prosperity and national stability. This may be President Obama’s second and last chance to get it right and could very well be the legacy he leaves behind. **S**

Arsla Jawaid is Associate Editor at SouthAsia. A Boston University graduate, she holds a Bachelors degree in International Relations, with a focus on foreign policy and security studies.

D-8 Host Countries (1997-2012)



Objectives:

- To improve the position of the developing countries in the world economy
- Diversify and create new opportunities in trade relations
- Enhance participation in decision-making at the international level
- Provide better standards of living

Areas of cooperation:

- Finance
- Banking
- Rural development
- Science and Technology
- Humanitarian development
- Agriculture
- Energy
- Environment
- Health

Purpose

- Peace instead of conflict.
- Dialogue instead of confrontation.
- Cooperation instead of exploitation.
- Justice instead of double-standards.
- Equality instead of discrimination.
- Democracy instead of oppression.

Just Another Group?

Will the Developing-8 successfully address the concerns of member countries or will it become a footnote on the pages of history?

By Muhammad Omar Iftikhar

The heads of state of the Developing 8 or D-8 countries that include Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Turkey and Pakistan, are scheduled to meet in the upcoming eighth session of the D-8 Leader's Summit in Islamabad.

Necmettin Erbakan, former Prime Minister of Turkey, founded the D-8 Organization on June 15, 1997 in Istanbul. Erbakan envisioned cooperation among countries stretching from Africa to South East Asia in an effort to harness regional development and strengthen trade ties. Since then, D-8 Summits have been hosted by all member countries with the first meeting held in Turkey on June 15, 1997, followed by Bangladesh (March 1999), Egypt (February 2001), Iran (February 2004), Indonesia (May 2006), Malaysia (July 2008), Nigeria (July 2010) and now Pakistan (2012).

Dr. Widi Agoes Pratikto from Indonesia currently serves as the Secretary General. Though the group remains small and largely uninfluential, it nonetheless follows strict guidelines and procedures, meeting regularly every two years. However, it took member countries a decade to finally establish a D-8 Secretariat in 2006, hinting at the lack of direction within the Organization. Bagher Asadi, an Iranian ambassador, serves as the current director secretariat. The D-8 group seems to be paralyzed by a number of factors, the foremost being Iran's inclusion. With the US continuously monitoring Iran's nuclear assets, it remains uncertain whether D-8 will have a promising future or will fall prey to Western hegemony.

Though the group has made few landmark agreements, a key decision emerged when member countries signed a Preferential Trade Agreement on May 16, 2006 during the fifth Summit held in Indonesia. The agreement called for reducing tariffs on specific trading goods between the member countries, minimizing barriers to free trade, and promoting inter-state cooperation. Interestingly, the agreement did not include Bangladesh, which questions the cohesiveness of the organization.

The hierarchy of D-8 comprises of The Commission, The Council and The Summit. The Commission is the executive organ responsible for preparing the agenda and key decisions. Senior officials appointed by the member states serve as Commissioners who meet twice a year. The Council is the principal decision-making organ that consists of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of all member countries who meet at least once a year. The Council examines the reports submitted by the Commission and decides on the recommendations. The Summit is the supreme division of D-8, which comprises of heads-of-states of member countries and assembles every two years in one of the member countries. The Summit provides guidance for various activities of the Organization towards fulfilling its objectives.

Improving the position of member states in the global economy is one of the many goals of the D-8. Other objectives include diversifying and creating new opportunities in trade, enhancing participation in decision-making and enhancing standards of living. The Or-

ganization has identified priority areas in each member country, which include rural development (Bangladesh), trade (Egypt), human resource development (Indonesia), communication and information (Iran), finance and banking (Malaysia), energy (Nigeria), agriculture (Pakistan), and industry and health (Turkey).

The D-8 is largely an imbalanced group with Pakistan, Turkey and Iran as the only members with prominent influence in geo-political affairs. Indonesia, Malaysia, and Bangladesh remain on the sidelines of global politics; Egypt is currently undergoing a transition phase and finds itself in hot waters; Nigeria seldom attracts attention. For the most part, Turkey also chooses to remain neutral because of its geographical location. The fact that the Group comprises countries that have little or no say in international politics, undermines its influence and legitimacy. With not a single political or economic heavyweight keeping the group afloat, the D-8 organization fails to address the burning issues of the region and its member countries, serving simply as a lacklustre biennial event with more hopes than actions. Regardless of this, the European Union and the U.S are likely to keep a close eye on the 2012 D-8 Summit hosted in Pakistan because of its location and the participation of Iran and Egypt which remain important players in their respective regions while having a combustible relationship with the West. ■

Muhammad Omar Iftikhar is Assistant Editor at SouthAsia. He writes on regional issues and social activism.



Tell us a little bit about yourself and your background.

I have always loved music and thought that's what I would do with my life. When I was 12, I remember going to a store and showing my mom the guitar I wanted. A few months later, she passed away but had already bought that guitar for me. I got it a month later on Christmas and it became my link with her. I think I really dedicated myself to music then.

I eventually started writing my own songs and made a career with that. I had gone to NY to play for some record labels for a gig on September 12, 2001. That show obviously never happened. I woke up the previous morning and saw the Twin Towers on fire. I immediately went downstairs to start helping out. I set up a little tent and handed out supplies like food, water, medicines and socks to fire fighters. I left after a week, when I wasn't needed anymore.

How did your interest in Pakistan develop and how did you find yourself here?

After 9/11, I never said I'd do disaster relief. I had, however, learnt a new ability. Having gone through many things in life, like my mother's death

and my drug addiction, my life itself was a disaster. When it came to big disasters, it turned out that I was mentally and physically able to handle it. I went to Sri Lanka after the tsunami in 2004 and helped build houses and volunteered at an orphanage for a month. After Hurricane Katrina, I helped with relief efforts.

The day I got back from New Orleans, I saw the images of the 2008 Pakistan earthquake and told my son, I'm going to Pakistan. I was already in disaster mode. It was my calling. I contacted the Pakistani Embassy and volunteered my services. Within a week, I was landing in Jhelum valley in Azad Kashmir.

Tell us a little bit about the Comprehensive Disaster Response Services (CDRS) and the work it does.

I had initially come to Pakistan for 2 weeks after the earthquake but I saw tremendous need. I had met some very strong and brave people as well. I wanted to see them not just get immediate medical care but also help them rebuild their lives. There was real strength in the people of Pakistan and I felt inspired by them. The people in the Army, the villages and the UNICEF asked me to stay and I thought "Hey,

all I've got to do is cancel a few gigs, what's the big deal?" It just felt right to stay here and I registered.

We founded and registered CDRS in 2006. It supported the community and the government health department of AJK and reestablished rural health centers near the line of control. We sponsored several facilities and repaired ambulances with whatever money we had. While our budgets weren't big enough, our hearts and efforts were and we received the Tamgha-e-Eisaar medal from the Pakistani Government in 2006. In 2009, we went to Swat during the IDP crisis and partnered with a small hospital in Zaidabad, run by wonderful people. Because the IDPs were escaping into the district of Mardan, the hospital was overflowing with patients. We brought in medicines and supplies.

What are the main hurdles that you have faced in conducting your work in Pakistan?

I get really angry when someone tries to take away money and resources from the people I've tried to come and help. There are not enough resources to help everyone, so every person counts. It offends me personally and professionally when someone

“In the last 7 years, in the American media, I’ve heard 2% of the truth about Pakistan, 100% of the time.”

Arsla Jawaid talks to Todd Shea, Founder of Comprehensive Disaster Response Services (CDRS), in this exclusive interview.

A musician by skill, Todd Shea is the founder of CDRS, which provides healthcare services and education to millions across Pakistan. He is also part of Sonic Peacemakers, a musical collaboration between Pakistani and American musicians to promote peace

prevents me, financially, from helping others. You will come across people like that in development work who will try to take advantage because it comes with the territory. I’ve learnt to deal with it.

There is a problem of negative perceptions both in Pakistan and America. As an American how do you correct that image? What do you say to people both at home and here?

When I was leaving for Pakistan, some of the people I told, emailed me back saying “Why do you want to go help people who are trying to kill us, be careful, etc.”

I tell people in both places to be careful of what you read in the papers and be careful about letting that be your only perception. I had learned long ago to believe the media only so much because I had been duped into believing propaganda. In the last 7 years, in the American media, I’ve heard 2% of the truth about Pakistan, 100% of the time. And here, I’ve seen the other 98%.

I often tell people on both sides that human beings are human beings and are far more alike than they are different. People also like having an enemy, leading to an “Us versus Them” factor. When they look at themselves as the US against Pakistan, they all feel like Americans. And the same is true in Pakistan.

America has a responsibility for some of the things that the average Pakistani has suffered. I don’t think America has been introspective enough to see that some of the things it has done in arrogance or abandonment or the simple act of being shortsighted, have caused so many problems.

What is your impression of Pakistan and its people?

They’ve been beaten up pretty good but they’re very strong. They are survivors.

As a musician, you also founded Sonic Peacemakers? Tell us a little about it and why you think it’s important for both countries?

It started organically. I started listening to some of the music here. My friends would play a tape of Junoon or some *Qawwali* or a *Naat* and I became enamored with it even though I couldn’t understand any of the words. I pulled out my guitar and learnt some of the words to “Dil Dil Pakistan!” At first, it was just for my own satisfaction to learn music that I had started to love but then I would play the guitar for the kids in medical camps and villages, and they loved it.

Sonic Peacemakers, is a musical collaboration between Pakistani and other musicians. We want music to be the catalyst and engine for providing resources and building bridges of peace and enhancing understanding. We believe that music can reach into people’s hearts. There’s a lot of Islamophobia and anger in the U.S and a mirror image of that is here. There is a lot to fight against and our weapon is music. We hope *Inshallah* that we can overcome the hatred and misconceptions on both sides. ■

The past decade has witnessed breakthrough advancements in technology and communication techniques. In today's world, the internet has become a necessity for survival and knowledge. While the world expands its technology driven gadgets and enhances communication, South Asia unfortunately lags behind due to poor infrastructure, lack of innovation and inadequate investment in the IT sector. However, India's economy has

public schooling. Unfortunately, few are able to afford such luxuries.

Online education methods on the other hand are not only affordable but are also convenient for people who have commenced a fast-track professional career. With an online degree, professionals can focus on their jobs and utilise evenings and weekends to pursue graduate-level education.

Distance-learning education has made it possible for a larger num-

ber of young people to not only receive an education from one of the top private institutions within the country but to go abroad to achieve a higher degree. It is therefore highly plausible that employers shortlist their employee choices based on academic background. In such scenarios where numerous candidates are vying for one role, employers are less likely to prefer someone who has a degree from an

The Virtual

Online education is rapidly growing in India but is it truly beneficial?

By Suha Jafri

been growing and the IT and communication industry has progressed immensely. India has succeeded in combining the advancements in communication technology with another basic requirement: education.

Even though distance-learning methods have existed since the 1980s, the real breakthrough emerged when communication and technology expanded, some ten to fifteen years ago. The idea of online education is to share knowledge with those who do not have easy access to it. The target audience are children and young adults who reside in remote rural settlements far away from educational institutions or are financially unable to afford the increasing cost of good education. In countries such as India and Pakistan, parallel education systems prevail with private education standards considered better than pub-

lic schooling. Unfortunately, few are able to afford such luxuries. Online education methods on the other hand are not only affordable but are also convenient for people who have commenced a fast-track professional career. With an online degree, professionals can focus on their jobs and utilise evenings and weekends to pursue graduate-level education. Distance-learning education has made it possible for a larger number of people to earn an education thus increasing competition in the job market, since earning a graduate degree is now much easier. Critics argue that online education has also decreased the true value of education. Most people who enroll in an online education program get a degree. They do not, however, get the same life experiences as compared to those who attend a college or university on a daily basis. A serious drawback of online education is also the limited tutor support, forcing students to rely on self-teaching. The purpose of receiving an online education is to create a virtual classroom environment however the system fails when students are unable to cohesively participate, engage in discussions with their peers and ask questions to clarify concepts.

A country like India is deeply di-

vided by social class allowing only a handful of young people to not only receive an education from one of the top private institutions within the country but to go abroad to achieve a higher degree. It is therefore highly plausible that employers shortlist their employee choices based on academic background. In such scenarios where numerous candidates are vying for one role, employers are less likely to prefer someone who has a degree from an

online education program. Distance-learning education is beneficial when it complements a profession or a traditional education background. A business or finance graduate will benefit greatly if he/she chooses to pursue a distance-learning program to enhance the understanding of a particular job-related subject. The credibility of online education has a long way to go before it can match the credibility of traditional education methods. Employers remain sceptical about hiring people with online degrees and prefer students with the experience of gaining education in a traditional environment. Hailing from a culture that remains family oriented, gaining independent, real-world experience is critical before entering a specific profession. In today's world, global exposure and experience is indispensable and is of-



Classroom

ten a criterion for senior positions in numerous industries.

According to an article published by the Press Trust of India, India's online education market size is likely to double from the current \$20 billion to at least \$40 billion by the year 2017. Not only is this beneficial for India's

toughened their admission process as well. From a large pool of students, only a select few are admitted to prestigious institutions.

The rise of private education institutions across the globe has also meant the demise of good quality education. Most stakeholders are more

ities to be provided and maintained, institutions charge students sky-high prices that not everyone can afford. The private education market in India accounts for only 5% of the education sector but is estimated to be worth approximately \$70 billion in 2012. Besides that, female education rates remain at a dismal level and many struggle to obtain quality education due to a cultural bias. Some females are not allowed to attain traditional education and resort to online education methods instead.

Online education is a growing market and is increasingly beneficial to those who have limited resources. However, if combined, traditional and online education methods can achieve excellence in education, promote mass learning and enhance the student experience. **S**

The credibility of online education has a long way to go before it can match the credibility of traditional education methods. Employers remain sceptical about hiring people with online degrees and prefer students with the experience of gaining education in a traditional environment.

economy but it also means that more students are opting for online education. The reason for this rapid popularity is that not only are the country's top universities expensive but since competition has increased, they have

concerned with increased revenues and profits, compromising the true benefits of education. The physical state of many institutions is deteriorating and students suffer from a lack of basic facilities. In order for these facil-

Suha Jafri holds a BA Honors in Politics and International Relations from the University of Manchester. She is currently pursuing studies in professional journalism in the UK.



Lull Before the Storm

Youth organizations in South Asia are raising awareness of rapid weather changes. Will they convince world leaders to take proactive steps before it is too late?

By Sabina Rizwan Khan

Climate change continues to impact our world and could have detrimental effects on our very survival if it continues to be ignored. As the global community shows grave concern over issues like war, economic stability and global security, problems of climate change are ignored.

Earlier this year, New Yorkers gathered in Battery Park to mark the Climate Impact Day. The gathering termed as “Connect the Dots” aimed to create a link between fossil fuels and flooding and prompt decision makers to take action. Just a few days back, even presidential candidates ignored climate change and focused

on ‘more important’ issues of job creation, healthcare and war. However, Hurricane Sandy seems to have woken everybody up again. But will this prove to be a wake-up call for the global community?

Reviewing the overall work of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), sustainable climate remains

a vital yet overlooked issue. This could prove to be a serious mistake on our part. With a varying topography and heavy reliance on agriculture, South Asia will find itself in a precarious situation, if it does not employ cohesive measures to control the imminent crisis.

It is perhaps this realization and an alarming concern for the future that provoked 25 young people from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, to recently meet at a training titled, "Training for Trainers" in Dhaka to discuss climate change and consequent social activism.

According to the World Bank, one fifth of the population in South Asia is between the ages of 15 and 24. This is the largest count of youth ever to transition into adulthood, both in South Asia and in the world. The youth in South Asia is increasingly concerned about global warming and is eager to gain knowledge of scientific methods and possibilities for social activism. This concern prompted 350.org and the Bangladeshi Youth Movement for Climate (BYMC) to hold a training allowing participants to impart skills and run successful campaigns highlighting climate issues back home. In addition to this, an understanding of the science behind global warming, climate change and its effects was also discussed. The trainees were taught various learning patterns, experiences and activities to empower them with the tools required to deliver similar trainings to fellow countrymen.

South Asia is not the direct emitter of carbon gases however it is the direct recipient of devastation caused by climate change. Land sliding, glacier melt, rising sea levels, floods, deforestation, loss of bio life, garbage management, and droughts are just a few issues to name. It is high time that governments in South Asia deem climate change a priority in their

policies.

Kumar Manish, working for the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy in India stated, "At present, climate change is still not at the forefront of government policies. The steps to combat climate change are fragmented, isolated and not result oriented. South Asian countries need to have a proper mechanism to address it on the ground level. The real challenge is to make these issues more human than technical."

Belonging to the same region,

Just a few days back, even presidential candidates ignored climate change and focused on 'more important' issues of job creation, healthcare and war. However, Hurricane Sandy seems to have woken everybody up again. But will this prove to be a wake-up call for the global community?

young participants were able to connect the impacts and fears mutually. From floods in Pakistan to rising sea levels in the Maldives, the challenges might be different but the causes and outcomes remain similar. Anil Udaya, Event Coordinator, Rising Artist Group, Nepal said, "It really helps you to know your stance in the world and how we all have common issues. What can be more educative than to share the experience and ideas with others as we are victims of same problem."

It is unfortunate that issues like unemployment, health, security, and education dominate global development debates. A lack of awareness compels many in South Asia to conclude that climate change is not our cup of tea. It is imperative to understand that climate change indirectly affects all the issues that cripple us today. For in-

stance, the overpopulation and lack of physical space in Karachi is due to the migration of displaced people from floods in interior Sindh and Punjab. While rural-urban migration occurs because of employment opportunities, over the past few years, the trend has increased owing to the detrimental effects of natural disasters.

The Pakistani youth is geared up to enhance general awareness on climate change. Addressing climate issues nationally, mobilizing like-minded people and creating pressure

groups is imperative to generate traction on the subject. Farwa Tassaduq who works with the Pakistan Sustainable Network (PSN) shared, "By utilizing the power of the youth, environmental awareness can be raised to make local, regional as well as global policy makers understand the urgency of the situation."

Where climate change and response is concerned, no matter how grave the issue, the young people of South Asia are willing to play their part. It is a heartening sign that South Asia despite all its ups and lows still has the youth as its greatest force. As long as they are ready to combat climate change, the future of South Asia is promising. ■

Sabina Rizwan Khan is a certified youth trainer and works as a youth activist on climate issues in Pakistan.

Moraje'at is the Urdu translation of Czech writer, Milan Kundera's latest novel, *Ignorance*, by Hameed Razi. Moraje'at which translates into "return" is more appropriate because the novel's theme is less about ignorance, per se, and more about the irresistible urge for return that nostalgia exerts on people who have been cut off from home for many years and the shock of disillusionment the exiles face on

grated with her husband to France. After his death, she worked various jobs to earn a living and raise her two daughters before settling permanently in France. Josef, a vet by profession, migrated to Denmark, set up a practice, and married a Dane. He, too, adapted to the new environment. His wife later died.

The year is now 1989. The Soviet occupation has ended. The country is back to democracy. But Irena and Josef and both un-

the Paris airport. But when they arrive at home, both are shocked to find that everything has changed. Even their old friends now treat them as strangers.

Irena throws a party for her former girlfriends. Ignorant to how their tastes have changed, she serves a fine French Bordeaux to them. But they have no taste for it and prefer local beer instead. The questions they ask her relate only to how far she is aware of events

Reminiscing What is Lost

Title: Moraje'at
Translated by: Hameed Razi
Publisher: Sanjh Publications,
Pakistan (January 2010)
Pages: PKR 102, Hardback
Price: PKR 1500
ISBN: 9789698957704

return.

At the very outset, Kundera holds a lengthy discourse on nostalgia and its etymology to posit that nostalgia is bred by the exile's ignorance about events at home during his/her absence and the yearning to learn about it.

Irena and Josef are prototypes who had known each other briefly before they fled Czechoslovakia in the aftermath of the Soviet takeover of their country in 1968. Irena mi-

aware of the great upheavals that occurred at home during their 20 years' absence. Excited with curiosity about the momentous events that must be happening in Prague, Irena's friend, Sylvie, coaxes her to return. Irena's boyfriend Gustav, who has a business both in Paris and Prague, also weighs in with the offer to facilitate her return. Finally, Irena gives in.

Josef also feels the urge to return. By coincidence they meet at

in Prague, but none about her life during the long absence. It almost seems like 20 years of her life have been effaced.

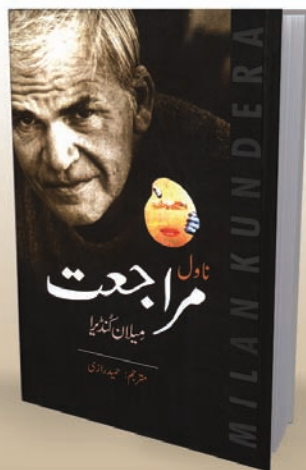
Josef has a similar experience with his brother and sister-in-law. They ask only if he married and he answers "Yes," but no more. His elder brother now owns the family home. He has taken possession of all the family belongings, including a painting Josef had purchased from a Czech painter. He wears Jo-

sef's wristwatch nonchalantly as if completely ignorant of its original owner.

That sets the ground for the author to frequently refer to Odysseus, who spent the better part of his life in the 20 years of his wanderings away from home. He yearned for home. Yet, when he did return, no one in Ithaca was interested in his adventures

around long absence without communication and its effects upon the lives of the exiles that stir tender feelings. The carnal scene at the end, therefore, is not only banal but even out of sync.

Hameed Razi has put in his best effort but translation is always a difficult endeavor, especially when the theme is philosophical. In some places he soars high but at others sinks low and robs the flow of the



Reviewed by S.G. Jilanee

The memories of the returnees also play tricks. Josef remembers the painting but when it comes to his break-up with a girlfriend in his adolescence, his mind is a blank. Likewise, Irena remembers her first encounter with Josef but he has forgotten everything -- even her name. Both characters are like Rip van Winkles in a practically new world to which they can no longer adjust.

The book's themes revolve

narrative by introducing Punjabi colloquialisms such as kukh for Urdu kuchh and irrelevant remarks such as "daur peechhay ki taraf ai gardish-e-ayyam too." This is a gratuitous insertion by the translator and not a translation of any statement by Kundera, ultimately making the book a poor read. **S**

S. G. Jilanee is a senior political analyst and former editor of SouthAsia Magazine.



The real wealth of Asia

They are the future.

Providing children with a good education is a priority for all of Asia. Yet millions of children are still being denied a proper education, because their parents are too poor to send them to school.

For the last 40 years, WFP has been providing nutritious meals to millions of children at school, giving even the poorest parents a good reason to send them there. It reduces child hunger and boosts school Attendance at the same time.

This year, we expect to feed 5 million schoolchildren in Asia. Support us, And help build the real wealth of Asia.

To find out more about WFP, or to make an on-line donation, go to www.wfp.org or email asia.fundraising@wfp.org



The Oxford Companion to Pakistani History is a timely and welcome addition to the social sciences literature on Pakistan. As a reference work, it deals with people, places, events, movements, trends and ideas, bringing together the expertise of academics and practitioners. The effort that has clearly gone into the editing and compiling is commendable and the editor has performed a great service to the study of Pakistan's past. The finished product is a fine introduction to Pakistan and a worthy jumping

not, therefore, a friendly companion for any ideological perspective on Pakistan's past nor does it seek to rationalize the behavior of regimes, leaders and movements. The contributors have clearly had the freedom to express themselves as they see fit albeit without the polemical emphasis of popular debates. The tone, is thus, sober, while no attempt is made to fix a timeframe on Pakistani history or limit it spatially or intellectually to the territorial frontiers of contemporary Pakistan.

Although there is no central-

their achievements, programs and struggles, placed alongside entries that cover Pakistan's military, civil service, and foreign policy. Reference the Freedom Movement, the Pakistan Movement and post-independence politics, political leaders get a substantial number of entries. While there isn't as much on Pakistani sportsmen, scholars, artists, academicians, and eminent citizens as perhaps there ought to be, there are, however, wonderfully informative entries on cities, such as Lahore, and sports, such as squash.

A Historical Appetizer

Title: The Oxford Companion to Pakistani History.

Edited by: Ayesha Jalal

Publisher: Oxford University Press, Pakistan (February 2012)

Pages: 558, Hardback

Price: PKR 1500

ISBN: 9780195475784

off point for both researchers and general readers.

Arguably, the greatest strength of The Oxford Companion to Pakistani History is that it embraces a diversity of viewpoints rather than trying to hammer different perspectives into conformity or simply ignoring whatever is contrary to the desired worldview. This is

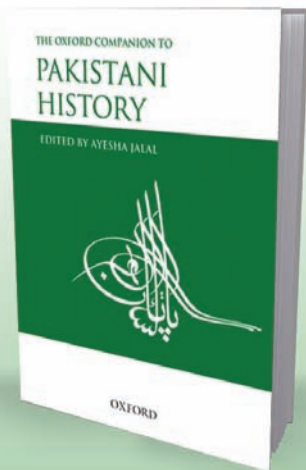
izing theme, reading The Oxford Companion to Pakistani History gives one a sense of the diversity, tragedy, and upheavals that have forged the present. The Ghaznavids, Ghorids, Delhi Sultans, Mughals, British, and many others are covered in multiple entries. For the post-1947 section, sub-national movements are provided space,

The best way to read The Oxford Companion to Pakistani History is slowly and deliberately. As it is organized alphabetically, trying to read too much in one go can exhaust the reader's patience. The reader is advised to read a few entries at a time, or skip to topics using the Subject Index, that they find most interesting. The read-

ing experience, however, is quite rewarding for the quality of the entries ranges from superb to competent. As can be expected, entries on topics that are familiar might not be as impressive or detailed as one wants, while those on topics where the familiarity level is lower might appear to be better.

It is vital that potential readers understand that The Oxford Companion to Pakistani History is not a detailed history of everything. The entries should be taken as appetizers that stimulate the curiosity of the reader. In the event that some-

essential reference work that provides useful information about Pakistan's past from multiple perspectives. The editing is solid and the contributors have done well to convey complex topics, issues and personalities, in a concise and readable manner. While the Pakistan release can be expected to find its way to libraries around the world it may be advisable for an online version of The Oxford Companion to Pakistani History to be prepared as well – it would be a considerable improvement to existing online resources about



Reviewed by Ilhan Niaz

thing or someone has been missed in the present edition, the best thing to do is to inform the editor and the publisher so that the gap can be addressed in later editions. One hopes that these editions do keep coming at regular intervals after revision and updating.

Overall, The Oxford Companion to Pakistani History is an es-

Pakistan and will have far greater creditability. **S**

Ilhan Niaz is the author of 'The Culture of Power and Governance of Pakistan, 1947-2008' and 'An Inquiry into the Culture of Power of the Subcontinent.' He teaches history at the Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad.

ENTERPRISE

An International Journal on Trade & Investment



Every month Enterprise brings you the latest on business and commerce across the globe.

For subscription details
Email: info@enterprise.pk



By Anees Jilani

The Silencing of Malalas in Pakistan

Fifteen-year old Malala Yusufzai is thankfully on her way to recovery. One can only hope that she will recover fully and that she and her family will decide to return to Pakistan. The question, however, is that once they return, will they be safe in the country of their birth?

The Interior Minister, Rehman Malik, has promised Malala's family complete security. However, Malik could not even protect his own leader Benazir Bhutto in 2007 and subsequently his own colleagues in the Cabinet. The fact is that it would not be an easy task to do so in the current circumstances.

We all have heard that cancer cannot be treated by aspirin. Similarly, terrorism in Pakistan cannot be treated by cosmetic gestures and mere rhetoric. Our policy of 'bleeding the Indians in Kashmir' and 'the doctrine of strategic depth in Afghanistan' is now haunting us day in and day out. Talibanization is growing and consolidating itself. Pakistan has transformed but not for the better. In the fifties, my mother could ride her bicycle in public but my daughters cannot do it anymore, 60 years down the road when it should have been the other way round.

As so-called liberals, we blame General Zia-ul-Haq for the present mess. The General died some 24 years ago and ruled directly for eight years and then indirectly for another three. He may have introduced a number of distorted policies but what prevented the subsequent governments from removing the distortions from our polity?

I blame our incompetency for the mess and not any one ruler. You may blame the British, the military, the bureaucracy or particular individuals but what have we done to ameliorate the situation. We complain of corruption but refrain from paying taxes, whether on our income or on our sales and purchases. We complain of a deplorable state of education but vehemently oppose introduction of a uniform system of education and defend the existence of English and Urdu medium schools; our children

of course have to go to English medium ones. Madrassas are defended without the realization that the standard in these so-called schools leaves a lot to be desired and the poor children that attend such institutions have virtually no future in the real world, lacking skills to become useful members of our comity. We all oppose America but desire our children to study there and it remains our favorite holiday destination. One has to be crazy to miss an opportunity to migrate to America or Canada. The nation is united against drone attacks but never realizes that Americans are not crazy to be carrying out these expensive attacks for no reason. They must have an objective: for how long can they tolerate their ally whom they have given \$18 billion since 9/11 protecting the very Haqqanis who are attacking them in Afghanistan.

Our schizophrenia does not end there. A sizeable section of our population genuinely believes that the attack on Malala was staged by the Americans to malign the Taliban. The comments in the social media go to the extent of claiming that the bullet in Malala's head was not meant to kill her. Indians were plain lucky that they managed to catch Kasab alive as the Pakistanis till then were of the opinion that the Bombay attacks were managed by the Indians to malign us in the world.

The world's attention span is short. It lost interest in Afghanistan after the Soviet withdrawal in the late eighties and the phenomenon may again be repeated after the Americans leave Kabul. We would then be totally on our own. The little aid that we are receiving will dry-up. Consequently, the Taliban will be growing in strength and the few Malalas left in Pakistan, will be at their mercy. **S**

Anees Jilani is an advocate of the Supreme Court and a member of the Washington, DC Bar. He has been writing for various publications for more than 20 years and has authored several books.

**ADVENTURE
UNLIMITED**

**VIGO
CHAMP**



STARTING* FROM RS.
2,874,000/-

VIGO CHAMP V MANUAL RS. 3,174,000
VIGO CHAMP S AUTOMATIC RS. 2,874,000



ECT Automatic



Steering Audio Switches



Touch Screen DVD with Bluetooth

**ECT
AUTOMATIC**




2 Year
50,000 km
Warranty

