

INTERNATIONAL
The Other Guy

September 2012

SOUTHASIA

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The Regional Business & Economic Review

INSIDE:

PAKISTAN

When Spy Chiefs Meet

INDIA

Winds of Change

AFGHANISTAN

To Make or Break

SRI LANKA

Looming Flashpoint

Resetting The Game

Will South Asia succeed in transforming itself from a regional player into a vibrant investment hub?



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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.**



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Arresting the rot

“You are free; free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other places of worship in this state of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed - that has nothing to do with the business of the state.”

This is the road map of religious tolerance that the founder of Pakistan, Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah laid out for the nation at the time of independence. As it were, it has turned out in recent decades that religious tolerance is one among the pillars of the modern state of Pakistan that has been permitted to erode so dreadfully. This is evident from the fact that the country's blasphemy laws have become increasingly incompatible with the national aspiration to become a progressive, democratic Muslim state and succeeding governments have shied away from revisiting these laws. The Pakistan Penal Code prohibits blasphemy against any religion and penalties are provided, ranging from a fine to death. As such, an accusation of blasphemy commonly subjects the accused to harassment, threats and attacks and such accusation can also lead to vigilantism and rioting.

Blasphemy is actually an extremely sensitive subject for Muslims all over the world. Defiling of the sacred name of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) or the Holy Quran is bound to hurt their sensitivities. Salman Rushdie's Satanic Verses created quite a furore back in the 1980s. The Danish cartoons and many other similar episodes before and since have been a source of provocation for the Muslims. Recently, a highly offensive film has been produced in the US depicting the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The film has ignited a massive reaction across the Muslim world. Protests emanated from the Middle East and North Africa, leading to the death of the US ambassador and three other Americans in Libya; the violence soon spread to the rest of the Muslim world. In Pakistan, prominent figures like Salman Taseer (the former governor of Punjab) and Shahbaz Bhatti (the Federal Minister for Minorities), have lost their lives on this count in recent years. There have been other cases in the same vein as that of Aasia Bibi and Dr. Mohammad Younus Shaikh. Another recent example is that of Rimsha Masih, a minor Christian girl suffering from Down's syndrome, who has been accused of blasphemy.

As already demanded by certain quarters, there is an urgent need for a national debate in Pakistan on the blasphemy laws and the need to overhaul all such laws that can be abused by certain mischievous elements with ulterior motives. It is high time that the state, judiciary, parliament and civil society stepped forward to play a proactive role in dissipating the deep-rooted climate of fear surrounding the blasphemy issue. Now is the time to check the rot and to save the Pakistani society from taking another route to self-destruction. The Muslim world in general must also review its customary reaction to religious provocations and devise a collective strategy to demonstrate religious tolerance.



Syed Jawaid Iqbal

Controlling its Destiny

Your cover story focusing on Pakistan and its 65 years of independence was very thorough and covered a range of topics from politics and military history to youth and women's empowerment. I was thrilled to read a cohesive analysis on the subject in one magazine. I think there is much potential in Pakistan that remains untapped. The media is expanding rapidly and despite a chequered history with India, there is much potential for cooperation and enhanced bilat-



eral investment. The trend is changing and the youth today is more global, with an open mindset and a desire to change their destiny. This is true for both Pakistanis and Indians.

Despite the tide of change, Pakistan finds itself in a quagmire. Domestic concerns regarding the energy crisis, the political status quo, uneasiness with the army and permeating corruption has forced people to deteriorate to a point of desperation and frustration. Furthermore, the country's international reputation remains in shambles, making it increasingly vulnerable to foreign interference. However, Pakistan continues to survive; a testament to the bravery and resilience of its people. Standing strong in

the face of such pressure and aided by a remarkable pool of potential talent and expertise, there is no reason why Pakistan should not be able to enter a golden era of achievement and success in the near future.

Bilal Gulzar
Islamabad, Pakistan

2. Your cover story focusing on 65 years of Pakistan was well presented and balanced. Bringing to the forefront the political, social and economic challenges facing Pakistan, your writers were also able to highlight the potential and successes that the country has seen both historically and more recently. Pakistan today, has seen numerous talents represent it in the arena of entertainment, social awareness, international politics, technology and even environmental sciences. However, the country still has a long way to go. As mentioned in your article regarding female empowerment in Pakistan, while such successes may seem groundbreaking at a certain level, the ugly truth is that few of these successes truly impact those at the grassroots level. Until real difference is not achieved at the most basic level, Pakistan will not be able to emerge out of a crippling poverty cycle and a paralyzing trend of corruption. Not to be confused, a movement of social change and awareness is already underway. Though slow and steady, this movement is no longer negligible. However, much more needs to be done before Pakistan can truly become a prosperous nation, confidently standing on its own feet.

Ali Akbar Kauser
Lahore, Pakistan

New Alliances?

The article focusing on the prospects of investment and business collaboration with the Gulf countries offered a very interesting and unique perspective of South Asia. Due to a



large expat community, India and Pakistan in particular would have much to benefit from, should they engage in trade and investment with the GCC. Often, investment discussions and basic understanding is limited to cooperating with major global players such as the US, China and the EU. However, it is perhaps time for South Asian players to broaden their trade base and reach out to other influential players, closer to home. Apart from trade, the two regions have much in common which could play an even stronger role in establishing not only trade and investment ties but also strengthening diplomatic relations. The Gulf countries could also prove to be vital partners for newer areas of investment. As both India and Pakistan look to attract increased investment, distancing from a wealthy and interested potential partner might be detrimental to their efforts.

Zain al Mubashir
Kuwait City, Kuwait

Change the Trend

It was very surprising to learn that the Maldives, which today is a popular location for honeymoons, also suffers from the highest divorce rate in the region. Known for its sandy beaches, clear water, romantic destinations and luxurious spas, the Maldives is every couples dream vacation. However, behind this romantic façade lies an ugly and troublesome truth. Though political upheaval has only recently rocked the archipelago of 1,192 islands, the divorce rate has been sky-



rocketing for years. This is particularly damaging to the country's reputation and could translate into a serious social crisis in the coming few years. It is imperative that the government take measures to resolve this crisis and introduce a more laborious process to file for a divorce. One of the major reasons for the rising trend, cited in your article was that of the remarkable ease of filing for divorce. As the number of divorced women and children rises, a strain is placed on the economy, which relies heavily on tourism to remain afloat. Families should be encouraged to stay intact even though the head of the household may often be travelling. From what it seems, it is not domestic problems that dictate a rising divorce rate but rather the legal ease of attaining one.

Fatima Arshad
Colombo, Sri Lanka

The Water Threat

The current state of the Kamrangirchar slum in Dhaka is despicable. While the government promises to reverse poverty and pledges new models and strategies to eradicate slum dwelling, more than often Kamrangirchar is ignored. It is unacceptable that today, a large community of people live on what used to be a dumping ground some few years ago. Most concerning is the effect of such an environment on the health of young children. Wa-

ter quickly becomes a prime necessity and also the sole threat to survival. For children who have weak immune systems, it can prove to be a fatal threat.

As Bangladesh embarks on ambitious technological projects and attempts to raise investments for its numerous tech-parks, energy initiatives and space satellites, it would perhaps be in the interest of the government to re-analyze its health policies and draw international attention and global health workers to the crisis. While eradicating poverty may be a long-term process, addressing seri-



ous health concerns should be priority in the short-term, with a particular emphasis on water. Bangladesh cannot undertake such a mammoth task on its own and it will need increased assistance from the international community. It would be in the interests of the Bangladeshi government to make a committed investment for its own future and open the sector to global health workers, water experts and international NGOs thereby alleviating the crisis, breaking the stronghold of corrupt middle-men who provide water in the slums and creating accountability and transparency for government policies.

Nisha Karim,
Dhaka, Bangladesh

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The Language Problem

Though the Sri Lankan government may be attempting to rehabilitate Tamil families after the three decade long bloody civil war, realities on the ground are far graver. As mentioned in your article, Tamils continue to be victimized by the Sri Lankan army, whether socially or economically, and many Tamils have started raising demands for a separate homeland -- Tamil- Eelam.

The most pressing problem now is that of language which also served as a tipping point for ethnic riots back in 1958. As a means to reinstate Tamils into society, a law allowing citizens to choose to converse in English or Tamil in areas where Sinhala is the dominant language was introduced but is hardly implemented. Tamil is not promoted in schools and is increasingly discouraged from public life. Unfortunately, the Tamils already find themselves ethnically, culturally, socially and economically isolated. Linguistically differentiating them will only add fuel to the fire thus provoking further discontent and frustration.

The Sri Lankan government must be sensitive to the feelings of the Tamil minority and must make a concentrated effort to not alienate them, in case the country once again erupts into ethnic and religious tensions.

Suraj Prakesh
Colombo, Sri Lanka



"If India stood by us and supported Sri Lanka's request for more time and space, who knows, there may not have been a resolution at all."

Mahinda Rajapaksa
President of Sri Lanka



"You should cooperate with me on these reforms. You have accused me of making deals. Yes, I have done so, but I had reasons. And now I am changing this. I am bringing reform from the inside."

Hamid Karzai
President of Afghanistan



"I will strive to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution not just in words but in spirit."

Pranab Mukherjee
President of India



"In the backdrop of trends like extremism, sectarianism and violence, the importance and need for the message of mystics is acutely felt like never before."

Asif Ali Zardari
President of Pakistan



"The day is not far when the al-Qaeda and Takfiris will be aware of the West's deception and change their direction to move against the West's interests."

Major General Hassan Firouzabadi
Chief of Staff of Iran's Armed Forces



"The condition of Muslim minorities in different parts of the world is of grave concern to us. We need to revive the moral of the world and take necessary steps to shape international public opinion in favor of these minority people."

Zillur Rehman
President of Bangladesh



"I will not allow price rise of consumer goods including pulses, rice, sugar and oil (as well as in transport sector) by making positive interference in the market."

Baburam Bhattarai
Prime Minister of Nepal



"The Government of Maldives is committed to the resolution of political differences through peaceful dialogue and the democratic boulevard and institutions available in the country."

Dunya Maumoon
Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Maldives





"All the great things are simple,
and many can be expressed in
a single word: freedom, justice,
honor, duty, mercy, hope."

—Sir Winston Churchill

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INDO-PAK

A Thaw in Relations



Amidst the uneasy and negative news emanating from the Af-Pak region, Indo-Pak relations have seen a major thaw over the last few months, providing some relief. While the two countries have recently engaged in a series of cultural exchanges and trade and investment summits, they have also been at loggerheads on security issues, such as Siachen. The recent Pakistan visit of Indian foreign minister, S.M. Krishna attempted to break the political ice and enhance bilateral relations.

Given its souring relations with the US, Pakistan is looking elsewhere to improve relations with Iran, India, Central Asian states and regional players. India on the other hand realizes that Pakistan is an important player in the region and that the two countries face similar crippling problems of energy, food and water security, corruption and poverty.

During the high profile, three-day

official trip, FM Krishna visited Islamabad where he met with President Zardari, Prime Minister Pervez Ashraf and FM Hina Rabbani Khar. While in Lahore, the Indian Foreign Minister also met with Punjab Governor Sardar Latif Khosa and Punjab Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif.

Terming it a 'fruitful visit,' Krishna reiterated the Indian Prime Minister's desire and the Indian people's wish to see a more stable and peaceful Pakistan. Though issues of security and military concerns did not reach the table, the two parties did indeed sign the much anticipated visa liberalization pact and a cultural pact – in attempts to increase cross-border exchange and enhance mutual trust. Given the positive and encouraging environment, the urgent need to expand trade and investment was also discussed.

The Visa Liberalization Pact was

however, the most talked about development of this meeting. Signed between FM Krishna and Pakistan Interior Minister, Rehman Malik, the new visa regime replaces an older, more restrictive and obsolete version of 38 years and illustrates a "gesture of friendship." The pact introduces for the first time, group tourist and pilgrim visas, separate visas for businessmen, and visa on arrival for those above the age of 65. The Indian visa is now expected to be granted within 45 days of submitting an application and visitors are also allowed to visit up to five cities as opposed to three. While previously only single entry visas were granted, now tourists can visit the country for up

to six months. Businessmen and those above 65 years of age need not report at a police station. On-arrival visas will be granted to those travelling through the Attari/Wagah border. Visitors can also enter and exit through different check posts and need not confine themselves to a specific checkpoint, as defined in the older visa pact. The checkpoints for those travelling by air have also changed. While earlier, one could fly in at Mumbai, Delhi and Amritsar, the new pact identifies Chennai as a new checkpoint.

The signing of the visa liberalization pact and FM Krishna's recent visit to Pakistan bode well for both countries, but it remains to be seen how much tangible progress they will actually yield. Nonetheless, such moves demonstrate a serious thawing in relations and will undoubtedly usher in a new era of peace and cooperation. **S**

AFGHANISTAN

A Warm Seaport

Iran and Afghanistan recently inked a groundbreaking deal, allowing landlocked Afghanistan access to a key seaport in Iran. Afghanistan's GDP remains disturbingly low due to lack of infrastructure and trading potential. Most of its goods are transported through its eastern neighbor, Pakistan, with whom the country faces increasingly sour relations.

The agreement was signed between Afghan Foreign Minister Zalmay Rasoul and Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi during the fourth Iran-Afghanistan Joint Economic Commission meeting in Kabul.

The Iranian port of Chabahar lies on the Indian Ocean and is the recipient of

increased investment from Iran that wishes to see Chabahar transform into a major regional economic hub. Iran hopes to divert Afghanistan's trading goods to its seaport thus lowering dependence on other seaport options. Iran exports close to \$1.5 billion worth of goods to Afghanistan.

The agreement comes at a time when Afghanistan is facing crippling security concerns at home and regional abandonment. Though India and China are both interested in investing in Afghanistan, Iran's proximity to the country makes matters much easier and swifter to implement. In addition to a warm seaport access, the two countries also signed



agreements of bilateral cooperation over halting drug trafficking, expanding economic relations and cooperating on border security.

Iran that is also facing international isolation but has recently hosted the 16th NAM Summit and such a project with Afghanistan will undoubtedly increase regional cooperation, forcing the international community to engage with Iran for the sake of regional peace and stability. ■

BANGLADESH

Attracting Economic Activity



Bangladesh may rapidly be transforming into the next hotspot for investment in South Asia. In efforts to cultivate relations with South East Asia, Bangladesh saw its first visit from Zulkifli Masagos, Singapore's Senior Minister of state for foreign and home affairs.

Bangladesh is an attractive investment partner due to its cheap labor,

geographical location and cost competitiveness. The country has also increased its national investment in information technology projects, setting up tech-parks, opening universities, launching satellites and training young IT professionals. In addition to this, Bangladesh has already undertaken economic policy reforms in the business sector in terms of deregulation, market reforms and privatization.

Speaking at the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) in Dhaka, Masagos stated that Singapore, like other South East Asian countries, is looking to expand its business and diplomatic relations while exercising the "China plus one" strategy that requires investing in Chi-

na as well as another country due to a rising cost of production. Japan practiced the same approach in 2008 to prevent over dependence on China.

Singapore is Bangladesh's second largest trading partner after India. Trading is however tilted in Singapore's favor with Bangladesh importing goods worth nearly \$1.7 billion in fiscal 2011-12. Though Bangladesh is a least developed country it does enjoy quote-free and duty-free access to the European Union, Canada, Australia, Japan and New Zealand thus enabling Singapore to broaden its trading routes as well. Plethoras of multi-nationals operate in Bangladesh with investments worth more than \$10 billion, providing employment to over four lakhs of young and skilled professionals. ■

SRI LANKA

Increasing Diplomatic Ties

In an effort to enhance Sri Lanka's presence in India and forge greater diplomatic ties, Sri Lankan cabinet ministers have decided to revamp the country's consulates and offices throughout India. The Indian-Sri Lankan partnership is of great value, both diplomatically as well as in terms of trade and investment.

In a proposal approved by the Cabinet, Minister of External Affairs G. L. Pieris voiced the urgent need to expand Sri Lanka's diplomatic and consular representations in India to suit present day needs. Apart from other measures mentioned in the proposal, the Deputy High Commission in Chennai will have two additional Tamil-speaking officers from the public service. Furthermore, an

additional post at the High Commission in New Delhi will exclusively deal with Sri Lanka's bilateral, economic, investment and trade relations with India. Honorary Consuls for Sri Lanka will be set up in Hyderabad, Lucknow and Thiruvananthapuram. Lastly, the new Consulate General office in Kolkata will be expanded to include a Consular General, a personal assistant, a Sri Lanka Foreign Service officer and an Attache.

India-Sri Lankan relations headed to an all-time low when India voted in favor of a US backed resolution to

investigate human rights abuses in the country, at the UN Human Rights Council last May. [S](#)



MALDIVES

The Maiden Visit

President Waheed's recent visit to China came amidst great successes and enhanced diplomacy. China has recently shown great interest in the Maldives, investing in the country's infrastructure as well as promoting political stability within it. Beijing has also opened its embassy in Male in order to facilitate greater diplomacy, much to the discontent of India. However, the Maldivian government wary of losing support from either side attempted to allay India's concerns with President Waheed paying the country a visit earlier in May and reiterating the Maldives commitment and friendship with India.

President Waheed who was one of

the guests at the China-Eurasia Expo in the Xinjiang capital of Urumqi, visited China for the first time since he assumed power in February. In light of the Summit, China pledged to grant the Maldives a USD500 million loan, which is equivalent to about a quarter of the Maldivian GDP. USD 250 million will be provided for housing and infrastructure while the remaining USD 350 million will be disbursed from the Export-Import Bank of China.

Apart from an increase in financial investment, the Maldives has also seen a surge of Chinese tourist showing a 15.6 percent growth since last year. Tourism is the Maldives main export industry and serves as a lifeline



for its small economy.

The Maldives has also recently witnessed severe political instability and a rising Islamist threat. Speaking with the state-run Chinese Xinhua agency, President Waheed praised Beijing's approach of non-interference in smaller countries internal affairs and stated, "China, unlike other influential countries, looks at international affairs of small countries like the Maldives from a unique perspective." [S](#)

Not Ready to Give In



In a special address to the nation marking his one year tenure in office, Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai made a forceful effort to highlight his achievements and a staunch decision to issue a statement dispelling myths of his resignation. Speaking during a live telecast, Prime Minister Bhattarai took absolute credit for the peace process in Nepal, blamed the disintegration of the CA on opposition parties, laid out the minimal requirements for a political agreement and shed light on the constraints in governance.

Nepal finds itself in a precarious political situation with no constitution and no Constituent Assembly. The country has plunged into crisis with street riots and violent protests breaking out throughout Nepal. Many have

blamed the Prime Minister for “unilaterally dissolving the CA” thus plunging the country into an uncertain future. Bhattarai however maintains that he diligently tried to avert the demise of the CA and it was in fact opposition parties, the Nepali Congress and Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist), which did not have the best interests of the nation at heart.

Opposition parties and large portions of the public have called for Bhattarai’s immediate resignation but the premiere continues to hold on and refuses to accede arguing that he is in fact the glue holding the country together. Though he has called for fresh elections in November, few have taken him seriously due to the lack of legitimacy he currently suffers. ■

Expanding Foreign Relations

Bhutan’s Foreign Minister, Khandu Wangchuk recently attended the 16th Non-Alignment Movement foreign minister’s meeting held in Iran for the very first time. Iran will start its three-year long leadership of NAM after the opening session this year. The leadership rotates through member countries every three years. Bhutan joined the movement in 1973 and has attended every meeting ever since. However, after a prolonged period of remaining isolated, it is expected that starting this year Bhutan will seek a greater role in NAM and attempt to gain some prominence.

Bhutan is desperately trying to diversify its foreign relations and

this could be the perfect opportunity to engage with key political figures on an international forum. Speaking at the Summit, Wangchuk highlighted the role played by NAM on resolving international economic and political problems and termed it one of the most influential decision making bodies after the UN.

Prime Minister Jigme Y. Thinley led the Bhutanese delegation to attend the 16th Summit titled “Lasting Peace through Joint Global Governance” of



the Heads of States and Government. Addressing the participants at the Summit, Prime Minister Thinley stated, “Iran’s commitment has assured us that NAM will turn into a powerful bloc in the world community.” Bhutan played an integral role during the Summit, pledging unwavering support for Iran.

The NAM Summit, though held in Iran amidst threats of international sanctions and isolating diplomatic ties, attracted more than 110 top officials representing over 45 countries. ■

Countries of the South Asian region have shown a sharp increase in their efforts to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) over the last few years. Moreover, there has been a general rise in the region's competitiveness vis-à-vis the service sector, particularly in information technology enabled services. However, despite governmental efforts in the last decade, a 2008 study on trade in services and investment flows in South Asia presented at the NCAER-EABER conference shows that South Asian countries rank alarmingly low on the

more, South Asia is plagued by poor quality infrastructure. A poor transportation network not only makes the movement of goods for export purposes and between markets harder, but it also makes the setting up of manufacturing industries difficult.

Despite these issues, India ranks second in the list of most desired destinations for FDI and most of the investment that flows into South Asia is directed towards it. India's success in attracting FDI may be attributed to its cheap, skilled and abundant labor supply. At the same time, the pro-

Losing Trading

South Asia has the potential to expand and develop its Foreign Direct Investment. Yet, rampant corruption, archaic business regulations and lack of transparency prevent it from becoming a business hub.

By Hadia Majid

global competitiveness index as well as in overall FDI performance.

The poor FDI performance of the region is particularly interesting considering that some of the largest and cheapest cities in the world, such as Karachi, Mumbai, New Delhi, Kathmandu and Dhaka, are all located in South Asia. Everyday living expenses in these cities are low when compared to other urban centers like Tokyo and Geneva, while cities like Karachi and Mumbai have traditionally been hubs of industrial activity. However, poor law enforcement, energy crises and distrust between the public and private sectors have all had negative effects on investment flows. Further-

posed simplification of the FDI regime with the aim to reduce red tape and introduce more user-friendly regulations and guidelines, makes India macro-economically well-placed to attract greater FDI inflows in the future. Yet, India too lags behind East Asian economies which, relative to their size, attract greater investment inflows. Similar to other South Asian economies, the major constraints that India faces include the poor quality of infrastructure as well as inefficiencies in the labor market that prevent a good match between workers and potential employers. In contrast, the well-structured markets of the East Asian countries as well as their superi-

or transportation networks make these economies more attractive venues for foreign investment.

South Asia as a whole continues to enforce policies to create an investor-friendly climate. India's position with regard to FDI is considerably better when compared to other countries in the region. Investments not only flow into the country's service industry, but also its entertainment and consumer goods industries. In contrast, other South Asian countries lag behind India when it comes to attracting FDI. There are, however, a few industries that have typically seen investment inflows in the past few years. For example, the textile industries in Bangla-





des and Sri Lanka have been popular, with manufactured items finding placements in international markets. Similarly, the sports goods and leather industries in Pakistan continue to provide quality products, which remain attractive to foreign investors. However, the primary impediments to substantial investment inflows are the poor business climate as well as the socio-political instability.

Yet, there are some promising industries in South Asian economies that may attract greater FDI. In particular, the tourism industry in Sri Lanka and Nepal along with SMEs and cottage industries in Bangladesh are ripe for FDI, provided that the respective governments continue to support the private sector and keep business and permit regulations simple.

The high literacy rate and the near universal use of English as the primary means of communication make tourism in Sri Lanka an especially viable investment. Thus, since the end of the civil strife, the Sri Lankan government

has been in talks with the US to implement projects with a particular emphasis on tourism. However, the difficulty of doing business due to rampant corruption and lack of transparency has meant that Sri Lanka is behind regional competitors in key indicators such as exports as a percentage of GDP and new business registrations. Moreover, the civil war has left deep scars on the economy. In this regard, the government's efforts towards political reconciliation and resettlement of the internally displaced population will go a long way in creating the economic stability required to attract FDI.

Similarly, the tourism industry in Nepal, although burgeoning, continues to require governmental assistance. Nepal is also ideally placed with respect to rising economic giants such as China and India. This implies that if Nepal is able to boost business confidence, develop its hydropower resources and strengthen the public-private dialogue, then it may well be able to set itself up as an important

trade route between South Asia and China.

The Grameen Bank and the lines of credit that it has effectively opened for poor households in Bangladesh makes the country well suited for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) as well as cottage industries. In particular, the loans and savings products offered by the bank have the potential to promote the establishment of a strong network of SMEs and cottage industries. The sustained growth of such a sector along with an export oriented manufacturing sector that are able to attract FDI requires that Bangladesh focus on improving the efficiency of consignment clearances at the port and manufacturers' access to factors of production, while also working on modernizing laws, rules and regulations.

The South Asian region's performance vis-à-vis FDI has been modest at best. Although there is increasing recognition that the region must do more to attract investment flows, the major barriers i.e. rampant corruption, lack of transparency, antiquated business regulations and poor infrastructure remain as major hurdles. Moreover, although individual countries have instituted reforms aimed at increasing FDI, the region as a whole remains one of the least integrated in terms of investment and trade cooperation. While the South Asian countries form a contiguous block, political disputes have prevented the negotiation of a comprehensive regional trade agreement. The absence of significant regional integration not only prevents the rise of trade opportunities at the intra-regional level, but it also lowers the region's bargaining power in foreign relations which is likely to lower terms of trade. ■

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The member states of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) -- Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka -- in recent years have stressed the need for enhancing inter-trade and investment. The region remains the least integrated as barriers to trade and investment and movement of people remain high. Created in December 1985 (Afghanistan joined in 2008), SAARC has made progress in some areas of economic cooperation but much more needs to be done in order to accelerate the process. According to a report published by the Asian Development Bank

'Much potential for Intra-SAARC Trade' that "India, a connecting land mass and the largest economy of the region, has a special responsibility in increasing intra-regional economic integration and must facilitate access to its large markets for SAARC members. India's trade with

Afghanistan remains heavily skewed in its own favor. As such, India must make every effort to minimize tariff and non-tariff barriers and source goods from its neighbors."

The South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) that commenced in 2006,



envisaged a duty free area by 2016 for all member countries, but the success achieved so far is quite limited; intra-SAARC trade has continued at around 4% of the total regional trade while ambitious targets of 15% were set for 2011. One of the reasons for SAFTA being ineffective is the large Sensitive (sometimes called Negative) Lists maintained by

Resetting the Game

It is time for South Asian countries to set aside their political differences and work towards enhancing trade and investment.

By Huzaima Bukhari and Dr. Ikramul Haq

(ADB), intra-SAARC trade this year can be boosted to US\$85 billion from the bare level of \$10 billion in 2011.

Chandrajit Banerjee, Director General of the Confederation of Indian Industry, has observed in his article,

South Asian countries has increased encouragingly, from \$7 billion in 2005-06 to \$15 billion in 2010-11, but much trade is outside the official radar. Further, India's trade with countries such as Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and

member countries. Weerakoon (2010) and Weerakoon and Thennakoon (2006) point out that 53% of the total intra-regional import trade was excluded from the Tariff Liberalization Program (TLP) under SAFTA - especially by India that

restricted up to 52% of its total imports by value from SAFTA members under the sensitive list category.

The rationale for any negative list in a preferential or free trade agreement is to provide protection to sectors considered that are not fit for competition (an industry in its infancy, socio-economic reasons to protect small-scale producers and agricultural products for food security). For any FTA to succeed, negative lists should be maintained only for a specific period, phasing out with time to provide adjustment to the domestic import-competing sector. This has not been followed by the major player, India, and therefore, Basil Rajapaksa, Senior Adviser to the President of Sri Lanka and Minister of Economic Development, recently noted with concern that the level of intra-regional trade and investment continued to be very low in the SAARC region.

Basil, while talking to a delegation of the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SAARC CCI) said that "there exists enormous scope for expansion of intra-regional trade and investment in the region, but a number of factors are acting in constraint for expansion of trade such as high levels of trade barriers, competition of exports of similar products and lack of information. Now our region has emerged as one of the faster growing regions. If our countries could emerge to forge a workable economically integrated area, our region could evolve into one of the largest economic block with huge market base."

In the power sector, there is an urgent need for cooperation while other important areas include ports and shipping, low-cost housing, oil and gas, automobiles, agriculture, poultry and IT, etc. Investment in private-public partnership programs and Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) can be introduced for regional economic cooperation. Baner-

jee pointed out that "an integration of electricity grids across South Asia will reduce power costs and enhance manufacturing competitiveness for all members, and should be high priority. Huge hydro-electric potential exists in Nepal, Bhutan, Afghanistan and India, which could be tapped for intra-regional power trade. Further, major finds of natural gas are occurring across South Asia. Countries bordering South Asia -- i.e. Myanmar, Iran and Turkmenistan -- also have excess capacity of natural gas. A pan-South Asian pipeline infrastructure would enable South Asia to transit to natural gas as the fuel of choice, with pipelines connecting parts of South Asia to neighboring resources. Transit fees earned could be substantial and would help rectify the trade balance with power-deficient India to a certain extent."

From the Maldives in the south of India to Bhutan in the north, several SAARC countries are seeking investment and expertise because 55% of the intra-regional trade potential remains untapped. Realizing this, Bhutan has sought Indian investments in four to five sectors including power, tourism, construction and industry. In the Maldives, Indian businessmen are investing at tourism, hotels, ports, airports and fisheries.

In the wake of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA) signed in October 2010 allowing India-Afghan trade, in return for Pakistan's access to Central Asian Republics (CAR) through Afghanistan, regional trade has received a boost. This agreement gives Afghan export consignments for India access up to the Wagah border. Afghan trucks with export items for India are allowed to drive through the country via Karachi.

The key for real growth in the SAARC region depends on the quantum of trade and investment between India

and Pakistan. On August 1, 2012, the Indian government announced a major initiative permitting a citizen of Pakistan or an entity incorporated in Pakistan to make investments in India, under the government route, in any sector, other than defense, space and atomic energy. Though Pakistan has not reciprocated, the Foreign Ministry spokesperson welcomed this move saying "it would definitely benefit Pakistani investors and industrialists." It is hoped that trade relations between the two neighboring countries will improve in the wake of the decision to grant India Most Favored Nation (MFN) status by year end thus leading to treating Indian exports at par with other nations.

MFN status will mean India can export 7,500 tariff lines to Pakistan, up from around 2,000 at present, lifting bilateral trade to \$6 billion within three years. Official bilateral trade is just \$2.7 billion and heavily tilted in New Delhi's favor, according to most recent figures, but unofficial trade routed through third countries is estimated at up to \$10 billion. Pakistan and India will soon allow banks from both countries to open cross-border branches. Another important move to promote trade is the easing of visa curbs on business travel and the initiative of integrated check post at the Attari-Wagah boarder.

The time has come for SAARC countries to give up their political animosities and take advantage of the interaction between geography, transportation and economies of scale that will not only increase growth and alleviate poverty but also support higher growth rates at the country level and across South Asia. ■

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

PAKISTAN



INDIA



INDICATORS	2010-2011	2011-12
GDP (purchasing power parity):	\$476.5 billion	\$488 billion
GDP - real growth rate:	3.80%	2.40%
GDP - per capita:	\$2,800	\$2,800
Labor force:		57.89 million
Unemployment rate:		5.70%
Investment (gross fixed):		11.8% of GDP
Revenues:		\$26.3 billion
Expenditures:		\$40.6 billion
Taxes and other revenues:		12.9% of GDP
Budget surplus (+) or deficit (-):		-7% of GDP
Public debt:	50.6% of GDP	48.6% of GDP
Inflation rate (consumer prices):		13.90%
Commercial bank prime lending rate:		13.50%
Industrial production growth rate:		3.30%
Current account balance:	-\$3.4 billion	\$540 million
Exports:	\$24.9 billion	\$30.9 billion
Imports:	\$32.88 billion	\$39.35 billion
Reserves of foreign exchange and gold:	\$43.2 billion	\$17.8 billion
Debt - external:	\$56.12 billion	\$59.39 billion
Stock of direct foreign investment - at home:	\$30.06 billion	\$31.26 billion
Stock of direct foreign investment - abroad:	\$1.148 billion	\$1.168 billion
Exchange rates:	85.19	85.99

INDICATORS	2010-11	2011-2012
GDP (purchasing power parity):		\$4.515 trillion
GDP (official exchange rate):		\$1.676 trillion
GDP - real growth rate:	10.60%	7.20%
GDP - per capita (PPP):	\$3,500	\$3,700
Labor force:		487.6 million
Unemployment rate:	10%	9.80%
Population below poverty line:		32.8% of GDP
Revenues:		\$196.4 billion
Expenditures:		\$308.8 billion
Taxes and other revenues:		11.7% of GDP
Budget surplus (+) or deficit (-):		-6.7% of GDP
Public debt:	50.6% of GDP	51.6% of GDP
Inflation rate (consumer prices):	12%	6.80%
Industrial production growth rate:		4.80%
Current account balance:	-\$51.72 billion	-\$62.96 billion
Exports:	\$225.6 billion	\$298.2 billion
Imports:	\$357.7 billion	\$451 billion
Reserves of foreign exchange and gold:	\$287.1 billion	\$345.8 billion
Debt - external:	\$251.9 billion	\$267.1 billion
Stock of direct foreign investment - at home:	\$188.6 billion	\$225 billion
Stock of direct foreign investment - abroad:	\$91.86 billion	\$114.2 billion
Exchange rates:	45.726	44.64

GDP - composition by sector

Agriculture 21.6%	Industry 25.3%	Services 53.1%
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Labor force - by occupation

Agriculture 43%	Industry 20.3%	Services 36.6%
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Export commodities

Textiles, rice, leather goods, sports goods, chemicals, manufactures, carpets and rugs

Export partners

US (15.8%), Afghanistan (8.1%), UAE (7.9%), China (7.3%), UK (4.3%), Germany (4.2%)

Import commodities

Petroleum, petroleum products, machinery, plastics, transportation equipment, edible oils, paper and paperboard, iron and steel, tea

Import partners

UAE (16.3%), Saudi Arabia (12.5%), China (11.6%), Kuwait (8.4%), Singapore (7.1%), Malaysia (5%)

GDP - composition by sector

Agriculture 17.2%	Industry 26.4%	Services 56.4%
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Labor force - by occupation

Agriculture 52%	Industry 14%	Services 34%
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Export Commodities

Petroleum products, precious stones, machinery, iron and steel, chemicals, vehicles, apparel

Export Partners

UAE (13%), US (11.4%), China (6.3%), Singapore (5.3%)

Import Commodities

Crude oil, precious stones, machinery, fertilizer, iron and steel, chemicals

Import Partners

China (12.1%), UAE (8.3%), Saudi Arabia (5.8%), US (5.1%), Switzerland (4.7%)

BANGLADESH



SRI LANKA



Indicators	2010-11	2011-2012	Indicators	2010-11	2011-12
GDP (purchasing power parity):	\$269.5 billion	\$285.8 billion	GDP (purchasing power parity):	\$109.1 billion	\$118 billion
GDP (official exchange rate)	\$113 billion		GDP (official exchange rate):		\$59.1 billion
GDP - real growth rate:	6.40%	6.10%	GDP - real growth rate:	8%	8.20%
GDP - per capita (PPP):	\$1,600	\$1,700	GDP - per capita (PPP):	\$5,300	\$5,700
Labor force:	75.42 million		Labor force:		8.307 million
Unemployment rate:	5.10%	5%	Unemployment rate:	4.90%	4.20%
Population below poverty line:	31.50%		Investment (gross fixed)		27.3% of GDP
Investment (gross fixed):	24.7% of GDP		Revenues		\$8.495 billion
Revenues:	\$12.67 billion		Expenditures		\$12.63 billion
Expenditures:	\$17.15 billion		Taxes and other revenues		14.4% of GDP
Taxes and other revenues:	11.2% of GDP		Budget surplus (+) or deficit (-):		-7% of GDP
Budget surplus (+) or deficit (-):	-4% of GDP		Public debt:	81.9% of GDP	78.5% of GDP
Public debt:	31.9% of GDP	35.2% of GDP	Inflation rate (consumer prices)	5.90%	6.90%
Inflation rate (consumer prices):	8.10%	10.7% (2011 est.)	Central bank discount rate:	7.25%	7%
Central bank discount rate:	5%		Commercial bank prime lending rate:	9.29%	10.77%
Industrial production growth rate:	7.40%		Industrial production growth rate:		10.10%
Current account balance:	\$2.502 billion	-\$372 million	Current account balance:	-\$1.418 billion	-\$4 billion
Exports:	\$19.24 billion	\$23.86 billion	Exports:	\$8.307 billion	\$10.89 billion
Imports:	\$24.72 billion	\$31.75 billion	Imports:	\$13.45 billion	\$20.02 billion
Reserves of foreign exchange and gold:	\$11.18 billion	\$9.192 billion	Reserves of foreign exchange and gold:	\$7.197 billion	\$8.4 billion
Debt - external:	\$24.96 billion	\$25.22 billion	Debt - external:	\$21.43 billion	\$21.74 billion
Stock of direct foreign investment - at home:	\$6.107 billion	\$7.216 billion	Exchange rates:	113.06	112
Stock of direct foreign investment - abroad:	\$91.2 million	\$94.2 million			
Exchange rates:	69.65	73.7			

GDP - composition by sector

Agriculture 18.4%	Industry 28.6%	Services 53%
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Labor force - by occupation

Agriculture 45%	Industry 30%	Services 25%
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Export commodities

Garments, knitwear, agricultural products, frozen food, jute and jute goods, leather.

Export partners

US (19.7%), Germany (16.1%), UK (9.5%), France (7.2%), Italy (4.3%), Netherlands (4.3%), Spain (4.3%), Canada (4%)

Import commodities

Machinery and equipment, chemicals, iron and steel, textiles, foodstuffs, petroleum products, cement.

Import partners

China 18.2%, India 13.5%, Malaysia 4.9%

GDP - composition by sector

Agriculture 13%	Industry 29.6%	Services 57.4%
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Labor force by occupation

Agriculture 32.7%	Industry 24.2%	Services 43.1%
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Exports partners

US (20.1%), UK (9.3%), India (6.3%), Italy (5.1%), Germany (5%), Belgium (4.5%)

Export commodities

Textiles and apparel, tea and spices, rubber manufactures, precious stones, coconut products, fish

Import partners

India (26%), China (15.9%), Singapore (7.1%), Iran (6.2%), Japan (5%)

Import commodities

Petroleum, textiles, machinery and transportation equipment, building materials, mineral products, foodstuffs

Strike Four

The brazen attack on the PAF Base Minhas at Kamra raises a number of questions that demand serious answers from the concerned authorities.

By S.G. Jilanee

It was a daredevil assault, almost an action replay of the attack on the Naval Base at PNS Mehran in Karachi on May 22 last year. And even without the TTP spokesman, Ehsanullah Ehsan claiming responsibility, the attack on the Minhas Air Force Base at Kamra, had the Taliban signature all over it.

The timing was well-chosen. The night of the 26th Ramadan is held as the holiest with prayers at their peak. Most of the men (from the village at the back) of the Base were in mosques. The raiders therefore remained undetected. First media reports quoted a PAF spokesman as saying the raiders came round the back and scaled "a 2.7-metre wall strung with barbed wire to break into the base at around 2am."

However, the statement was later modified in light of "circumstantial evidence and interviews with eyewitnesses which established that the militants broke into the base through the outer gate," facing the village, Pind Salman Makhan. Whether there was any insider who guided them will emerge in due course of the investigation that the PAF has already started.

Spin doctor Rehman Malik however promptly issued a ready statement before newspaper reporters the next day that about 10 suspects had been detained by security agencies in connection with the attack and there was "confirmed" evidence that four of them had received training in North Waziristan. But he fell short of nam-

ing the place where they were trained and their trainers.

However, the PAF rubbished Malik's claim promptly. In an official statement "If people other than the PAF men say they have evidence and information about the trails and whereabouts of the terrorists involved in attacking one of our bases, we can only doubt this claim."

In an obvious rejoinder to the interior minister, the statement further said, "We fail to understand how a government functionary at the interior ministry could 'jump' to advanced stages of an inquiry which is still at the 'embryonic' stages and the interior ministry is not privy to it. Such kinds of media statements amount to interfering in the probe and influencing the investigation. We have requested the defense ministry to inform all the organizations at the ministerial level not to issue media statements on such a sensitive subject and avoid jumping to conclusions before the PAF officially shares its findings."

Minhas is one of the most important airbases of the PAF. Adjacent to it is the Pakistan Aeronautical Complex, which comprises four factories: the aircraft manufacturing factory, avionics production factory, Mirage repair factory and aircraft rebuild factory. These factories build, repair and overhaul major weapons systems of the PAF.

The Base is also home to two operational fighter squadrons: a search and

rescue squadron and an air-surveillance squadron comprising the Saab-2000 Airborne Early Warning and Control Systems (AEW&C). These factors have made Minhas a prized target.

This is however, not the first time that Kamra has been the target of a militant attack. It was, indeed, the fourth such. The first happened in 2007 when a bus near the entrance of the Base was attacked. 2008 saw rocket attacks. And on Oct 23, 2009, a suicide bomber blew himself up at the entrance of the Pakistan Aeronautical Complex in Kamra. Two security officers and six other people were killed in the attack.

The raiders, nine in all, were armed with rocket-propelled grenades, automatic weapons and according to a PAF spokesman, some were wearing military uniform. In the fight that went on for several hours, eight militants and one soldier were killed. Another soldier succumbed to injuries later.

The Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan was jubilant. Its spokesman, Ehsanullah Ehsan said by telephone from an undisclosed location: "We are proud of this operation. Our leadership had decided to attack Kamra base a long time ago." According to an agency report, Ehsan claimed the militants had destroyed three aircrafts and killed at least 12 soldiers. "The attackers had destroyed three JF-17 thunder aircrafts as well," he said but PAF officials said that



only one aircraft was damaged in the attack.

The TTP spokesman further claimed the assault had been launched “to avenge the deaths of Osama bin Laden, the TTP Amir, Baitullah Mehsud and other fighters who had been killed by the Pakistani security forces.”

However, the incident raises several questions. Even though Minhas Base has faced repeated attacks, why were villages not removed from its vicinity? Why was the entire perimeter of the base not covered and monitored round the clock by the static and patrolling guards? Why was the likely approach of the enemy from outside the base area around the base perimeter not guarded? According to one

source, the attackers wore night goggles. So, who supplies them the sophisticated weapons and what is the country of origin of their weapons? Was every individual, regardless of his rank working inside the Base, thoroughly checked for security, because, no attack on the well-protected military installations can be carried out unless attackers and their sponsors have full information about their targets, as emerged in the Mehran base attack inquiry.

One op-ed contributor has questioned why in the attacks, both at Kamra and Mehran, only the air surveillance systems are targeted. At Mehran, the P-3 Orions of the Pakistan Navy were destroyed. Kamra is home to the Saab-2000 AEW&C aircraft,

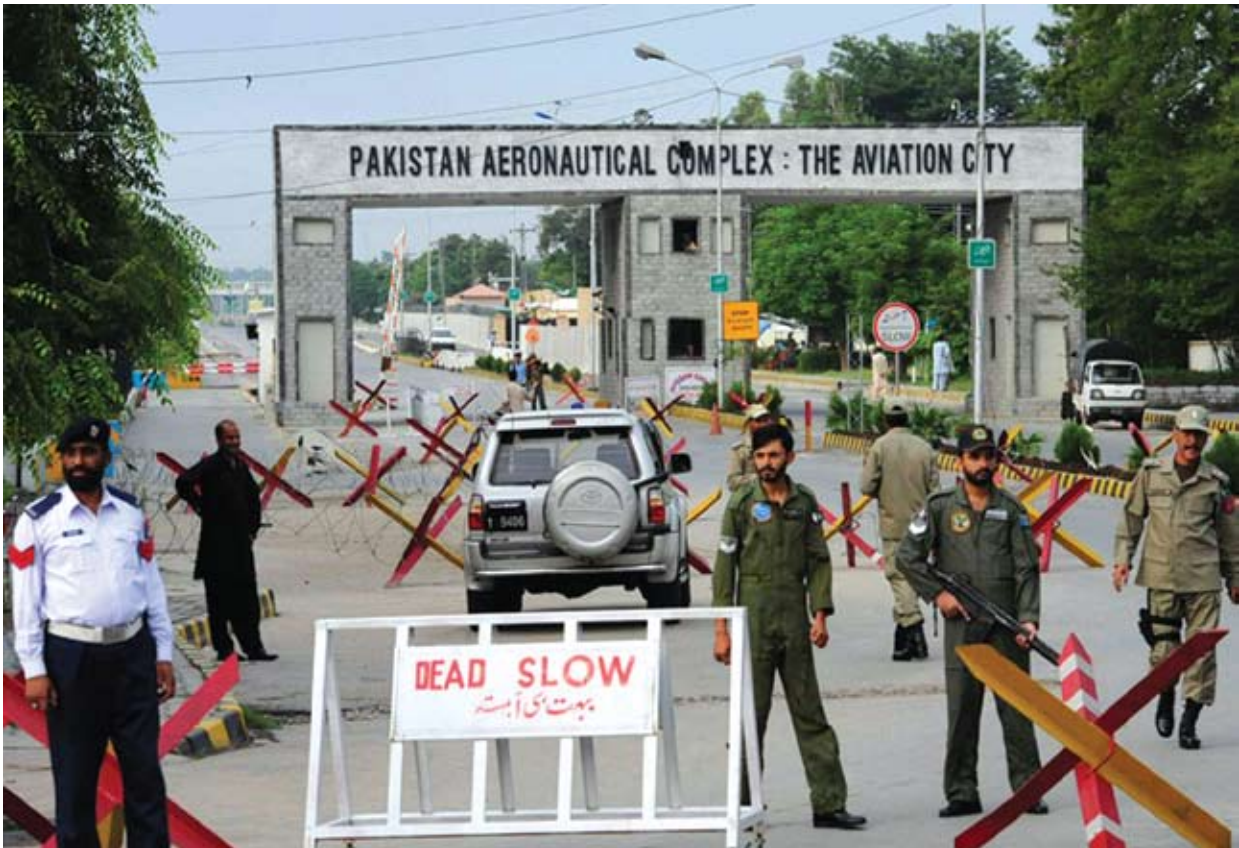
with state-of-the-art surveillance systems. The investigation launched by PAF should also grapple with this question.

Significantly, the attack on the Minhas Base came against the backdrop of reports that the army was going to launch a massive offensive against Taliban sanctuaries in North Waziristan, very soon. Even though preparations for the Kamra attack may have been going on for much longer, the likelihood that the North Waziristan issue may have propelled the TTP to act sooner than later cannot be overlooked.

How to eliminate the TTP menace is therefore the billion dollar question. **S**

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

Are We Safe?



The Kamra airbase attack once again seems to have left the security establishment in a shambles and the entire nation in shock.

By S. M. Hali

The recent attack on the Kamra airbase despite a red alert has triggered warning signs for the Pakistani military as well as attracted undue international attention regarding Pakistan's stability and security of nuclear assets. Questions are being asked that if the Armed Forces of Pakistan fail to stop the ingress of miscreants into a highly sensitive air base housing strategic assets, how will they safely defend its nukes from falling in the hands of the

terror mongers?

Bruce Riedel, David Sanger et-al are having a field day since they have been predicting for the last four years that Pakistan's nuclear assets are fraught with the danger of being acquired by the miscreants and used lethally against the Occident.

The international community has sympathized with Pakistan's ordeal but at the same time has asked pertinent questions regarding the security of the

country. The prophets of doom and gloom are once again painting ominous and dismal scenarios for Pakistan and predicting its failure as a state. The situation is indeed menacing and enough to raise the heckles of Pakistan watchers around the world. However, the incident at Kamra needs to be examined objectively. To start with, there was indeed forewarning for the impending attack on a PAF installation. Under the circumstances, if despite warning, the terror-

ists managed to breach the twelve feet high security wall and come as close to the hangars housing the multi-million dollars SAAB 2000 AEW&C and managed to cause damage, then the gloating claims of success by the Taliban spokesman is justified. The fact is that because of the intelligence warning, the security personnel at Kamra were at a state of high alert and the Defense Security Guard managed to kill the first intruder, paying for his valor with his own life. His exchange of fire alerted the inner quadrants and brought the Quick Reaction Force (QRF) into action. The ensuing firefight outside the closed doors of the hangars protecting the AEW&C aircraft resulted in the elimination of the assailants but forced the desperate attackers to fire Rocket Propelled Grenades, which caused damage to the high value assets. It is a redeeming factor that all nine attackers were dispatched to their Maker along with their misplaced notion of achieving martyrdom on the holiest of nights: the 27th of Ramadan. Our prayer leaders have not been able to instill the message that those who kill innocent fellow beings, especially Muslims, cannot be called martyred if they lose their lives in the effort. In fact Allah abhors meaningless bloodshed. There is cause for concern because a determined attacker will manage to breach the defenses, however stringent they may be, and cause irreparable damage.

The choice of target at Kamra, also known as PAF Base Minhas, speaks volumes for the thorough preparation, gritty resolve and professional training of the terrorists. That despite the 200 security cameras installed to watch the ingress and egress of unauthorized personnel, the assailants knew where to pick up the blind spot as well know with pinpoint accuracy, the location of the high value targets indicates intricate insider information.

Ever since the US led attack on Afghanistan soured and the Taliban regrouped, Pakistan is being punished for its complicity with the allies. This was

not the first time that suicide bombers have attempted to target cantonments and airbases of the armed forces. The Federal Investigation Agency and Intelligence Bureau centers in Lahore have also come under such attacks in the past. Despite facing strong defense, attackers have breached the security cordons and wreaked havoc at the installations, badly demoralizing the capability of the security forces. This is depictive of the hi-tech capability the miscreants have acquired over the years to plan and execute raids and cause considerable damage. It is being opined that Adnan Rashid, a former PAF employee, who escaped during the jailbreak from Bannu high security prison, in April 2012, is the mastermind behind the August 16 attack at Kamra. The misplaced loyalties of the terrorists and

stan's own war, which must be fought valiantly with concentration and effort.

This puts to rest the confusion, which taints the thinking in some quarters, doubting the ownership of the war on terror. It must be understood that after sacrificing 40, 000 precious lives and over 68 billion dollars, even now if we do not recognize it as our war, then when will we do so? To pull itself out of this mess before it's too late Pakistan has to involve opinion builders regarding the ways and means of combating terrorism. People have to be vigilant to spot and report suspicious elements. It is not clear how the assailants in the attack on Kamra traversed through the village of Suleman Makhan, armed to the teeth with weapons of all grades and genre including loads like shoulder-launched rockets,

Ever since the US led attack on Afghanistan soured and the Taliban regrouped, Pakistan is being punished for its complicity with the allies. This was not the first time that suicide bombers have attempted to target cantonments and airbases of the armed forces.

their ingrained sense of sacrifice in the cause are leading to even more daring raids than in the past.

The redeeming feature of the attack on Minhas air base is that it was thwarted and did not result in mass casualties of the security forces especially fratricide, i.e. falling victims to friendly fire. However, the situation is grave and its implications must be taken cognizance of that the miscreants are getting more and more determined. There are no staff solutions to the morass we are in. To clean the legendary Augean' Stable, a determined effort is required, which merits the involvement of the entire populace. The Chief of Army Staff has declared in his speech at PMA Kakul on Independence night that this is Paki-

ladder, guns and explosive material on the streets on the night of 27 Ramadan, when almost everybody is awake praying. They must have received assistance coupled with inside information.

In order to stem the rot, out of the box strategies must be employed so that the tide on extremist and terrorist thoughts and sympathizing with the miscreants can be turned. It necessitates the support of every Pakistani citizen since it is our future that we need to secure. **S**

Group Captain ® Sultan M. Hali, now a practicing journalist, has contributed over 2000 articles, produced 125 documentaries and hosts a TV talk show. He is currently based in Islamabad.

When: *November, 2007*

Where: *Pakistan Air Force Base, Sargodha*

What: A suicide bomber drove his motorcycle into a bus carrying military and intelligence officers at the air base, killing eight Pakistanis

When: *December 10, 2007*

Where: *Pakistan Aeronautical Complex, Kamra*

What: A suicide bomber attacked a PAF employees' bus, carrying school-going children, near the Fauji gate, injuring seven personnel.

When: *January 18, 2008*

Where: *Pakistan Aeronautical Complex, Kamra*

What: Four rockets were fired at short intervals at the Kamra facility. Two rockets hit the Mirage Rebuild Factory at the Pakistan Aeronautical Complex. No casualties were reported.

When: *October 10, 2009*

Where: *GHQ, Rawalpindi*

What: OPERATION JANBAZ: 10 gunmen clad in military uniforms and driving a white car attacked the General Headquarters (GHQ), which was under siege for several hours; they took 42 hostages. However, the Pakistani commandos raided the compound 22 hours later and emerged victorious. Six Pakistani soldiers and nine terrorists were killed during the siege.

When: *October 23, 2009*

Where: *PAF Minhas Military Airbase, Kamra*

What: A suicide bomber blew himself up near the airbase, killing eight, including two security officials and six others, and injuring 17 more.

When: *May 22, 2011*

Where: *PNS Mehran, Karachi*

What: Approaching the base from three different points in Karachi's residential areas, four to six armed militants used ladders to climb the naval base walls, triggering a fierce gun battle and a series of explosions. The operation lasted for 17 hours and resulted in the death of 10 security personnel. One attacker blew himself up while two others managed to escape. Two US-manufactured P-3C Orion maritime surveillance aircraft were also destroyed.

When: *August 16, 2012*

Where: *(PAF) Minhas Military Airbase, Kamra*

What: Armed with automatic weapons, grenades and suicide vests, seven heavily armed militants stormed the airbase, sparking a counter operation that lasted over five hours. Since the base was already on high alert, the attackers were only able to cross the first line of defense after which they faced an intense battle with the security personnel. PAF confirmed that all seven militants were killed plus a PAF security official.



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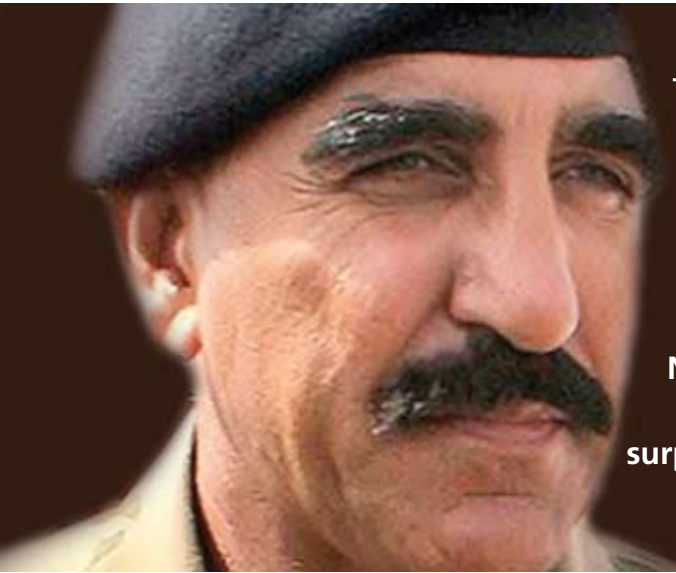
Lt. Gen. Zahir ul Islam went to Washington on his maiden visit in his new capacity as Pakistan's ISI chief this August. It was the first high profile visit by any ranking military official to the United States since its virtual invasion of Pakistan on May 2, last year. An earlier program of a visit in

purpose. Its top priority has therefore been that Pakistan should "squeeze" the network either to join peace talks in Afghanistan or smoke it out of its safe haven in North Waziristan.

Visiting Pakistan last October, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton firmly demanded that Islamabad should act

one report, "Beyond the bare details of his résumé, American officials acknowledge they know little of General Islam, except that he comes across as taciturn, thoughtful and passionate about sports."

Americans do not know whether and, if so, how far Islam will be dif-



When Spy

New ISI Chief, General Islam's first official visit to the U.S. broke the deadlock and surprisingly achieved more than was expected.

By S.G. Jilanee

May had to be postponed due to U.S. criticism of the 33-year prison term for Dr. Shakeel Afridi, who assisted the CIA in their search for bin Laden.

Relations were further embittered by the November 24 Salala tragedy in which US troops killed 24 Pakistani soldiers. In retaliation, Pakistan's closure of the NATO supply route to Afghanistan and America's tit for tat withholding of US \$1.1 billion it owed to Pakistan for the latter's counter-terrorism services, added fuel to the fire. President Obama further rubbed salt over Pakistan's wounds by humiliating President Zardari at the May international summit on Afghanistan in Chicago.

The United States is caught in a bind in Afghanistan and wants to extricate itself with its image intact. But the Haqqani network poses a mortal threat to the achievement of that

"within days and weeks, not months and years." But Pakistan shrugged it off. Later Defense Secretary Panetta declared, in India, that the US was running out of patience.

Meanwhile incidents of "green on blue attacks," as the killings of US troops by Afghan troops and policemen is called, have become more frequent even as the deadline for withdrawal draws nearer. The US is therefore now more desperate than ever for immediate action.

It is against this backdrop that Gen Islam's visit has to be examined. The Americans are aware of his importance as the ISI chief, especially, because they maintain that the ISI has links with the Haqqani network. His assistance is therefore considered as most crucial. However, "a vague air of mystery" surrounds him. According to

ferent from his predecessor, Pasha. Therefore, in order to cultivate workable and engaged relations with him, his counterpart Gen. David Petraeus threw a dinner for him and Pakistan ambassador to USA, Sherry Rehman. Additionally, before his meeting with Petraeus, Islam had already met with CIA deputy director Michael J. Morrell at Sherry Rehman's residence. Later he had an "important policy meeting" at the State Department with President Obama's special coordinator for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Lt Gen Douglas E. Lute. This meeting was also attended by US Special Envoy, Marc Grossman.

Later, there was a dinner at Ambassador Rehman's residence. Guests included "chairs of the Senate Intelligence Committee, Dianne Feinstein and the House Intelligence, Mike

Rogers” as well as “ranking members of the two committees” and some other congressional heavyweights. Even Senator John Kerry, who chairs the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, dropped in for a long pre-prandial conversation whose details were not disclosed.

and suggested that the “United States upgrade Pakistan’s fleet of F-16 warplanes so that it can do the same job.” But how his interlocutors responded to his plea was not disclosed.

Notably the ISI chief’s visit found no mention in any major newspaper in the US. The Wall Street Journal was

sides as an opportunity to get closer. And it seems to have worked out well as evident from the flurry of activities on both sides to achieve mutual goals.

There are clear indications that an army push in North Waziristan will be undertaken soon after Eid. Troop and artillery movement has started and

Chiefs Meet



US official sources claim that talks between CIA deputy director, Michael J. Morrell and Gen. Islam, were “substantive, professional and productive.” During the State Department meeting, “both sides stated their positions on various issues, expressing their desire to rebuild this important relationship,” and “reaffirmed their commitment to work together to counter the terrorist presence in the region that threatens both US and Pakistani national security,” focusing on “increasing intelligence cooperation between the two countries.”

Other reports said that the two spy chiefs exchanged grievances. But it was unclear if the two “uneasy allies made any progress to end deep divisions on the crucial issues.” It is understood that the ISI chief raised the issue of stopping US drone strikes

the only paper that gave it some space, reporting that the “Americans focused on the activities of the Haqqani network; Pakistan stressed the need for taking actions against TTP bases in Afghanistan.” It went on to say that Pakistani and U. S. officials were considering joint operations in Afghanistan and Pakistan in order to “to stamp out both, the Haqqani network’s sanctuaries in Pakistan and TTP sanctuaries in Afghanistan.”

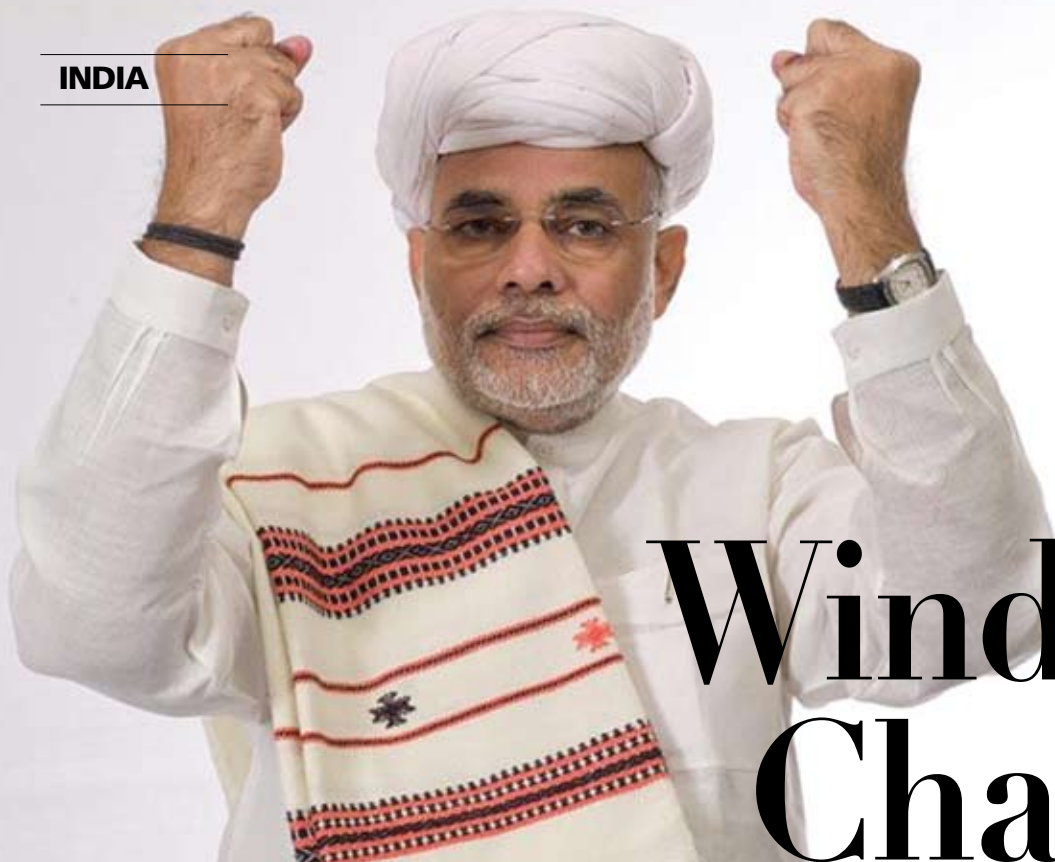
But the Pakistan army chief has strongly denied any agreement with the United States on joint operations. The reason is obvious. Foreign boots on Pakistan soil would ignite public anger and forfeit popular support for the army.

Though the ISI chief has yet to establish his credentials as one who can deliver, the visit was important for both

leave to soldiers has been canceled. Moreover, the army chief in his Independence Day address at the Pakistan Military Academy attempted to rally public support to fight terrorists.

In Washington, Gen. Dempsey, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, welcomed Kayani’s speech. Two days later, CENTCOM chief, Gen. Mattis, visited Gen. Kayani for discussions. But, the question about when to start the North Waziristan operation remains unresolved. Kayani said after the meeting that he would not yield to pressure. Nonetheless both sides remain on the same page, which is not a mean achievement for Gen. Islam in his first visit. ■

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



Winds of Change

Narendra Modi gears up to deal a hard blow to Congress and emerge as BJP's front-running Prime Ministerial candidate.

By Semu Bhatt

Gujarat, the western state of India, is poll-bound this year-end. If Narendra Modi, the longest serving Chief Minister of the State, delivers a massive majority in the elections, he will undeniably be the Bhartiya Janata Party's 2014 prime ministerial candidate – even if it triggers a realignment of the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance.

When Modi, a greenhorn in administration, took over as the CM of Gujarat in October 2001, the state was reeling under the impact of three consecutive years of droughts and a calamitous earthquake. He was barely four months in office, when the communal riots broke out; triggered by the Godhra train-burning incident where a Muslim mob charred to death 58 Hindu pilgrims (27 women and 10 children).

Even a seasoned politician would have wilted under the mammoth task of dealing with the economic, infrastructural and psychological ruins of these two mega tragedies; that too in the face of a vicious anti-Modi campaign post-riots. However, Modi determinedly worked to put Gujarat on the fast track of progress. In a short span of ten years, Modi's *Panchamrut* philosophy (five elixirs of knowledge, water, energy, security and human resources) and his proactive, pro-people, good governance approach has transformed the socio-economic landscape of Gujarat.

The allegations of the "Modi-fication of Gujarat", alluding to authoritarianism, could not be further from the truth. Indeed there is modification of Gujarat, but it is focused on making development a mass move-

ment. The process aims to establish a transformed state-citizen relationship where citizens fearlessly share their problems and opinions with the government. Modi himself attends to people's grievances once every month via an online grievance redressal system. Decentralisation of power has ensured that there are no "fit-for-all" schemes; each sub-district designs and implements its annual plan depending on the local needs. The GIFT-city, India's first multi-service SEZ with an international award winning design, has to compete for news space with Pun-sari village that boasts of WI-FI, CCTV cameras, a mineral water plant and a private bus service.

The modification of Gujarat is also about creating a lasting peace and celebrating the state's first communal violence free decade since 1713.

Today, Gujarat is the only state in India where agricultural as well as industrial lands are simultaneously expanding. The semi-arid state has averaged a decadal agricultural growth rate of 10.7% as against India's 3% in the 2001-10 period.

Gujarat boasts of many firsts in India – 100% electrification, interlinking of 21 rivers and an integrated gas grid. In July, when 600 million Indians in 20 states were blacked out, the 60 million Gujaratis watched the news on this mega power outage thanks to the assured and reliable power supply in the state.

Modi does not let the electoral logic guide his decision-making. He has demolished over 300 illegal temples that encroached streets. In the last five years, he arrested/fined over 1.3 million people, mostly farmers, for power thefts. Modi has led a steady movement away from the politics of entitlement to the politics of empowerment. Welfare schemes are there, of course, but the government focuses extensively on human resources development and strengthening livelihoods.

Modi has been adjudged "Best CM" thrice in a poll conducted by an Indian magazine. The Modi government has also received many national and international awards for governance and innovative initiatives. The best compliments have come in the form of several Indian states – including Bihar whose CM Nitish Kumar vociferously opposes Modi – replicating Modi's ideas.

When TATA Group's Chairman, Ratan Tata said, "You are stupid if you are not in Gujarat", he virtually reflected the collective sentiment of the Indian business community that vouch for Gujarat's business-friendly and corruption-free environment. What is compelling is that Modi has delivered excellence in the same Indian set up, with the same administration and bureaucrats as others.

The Gujarat miracle has become the talk of the nation. After all, in a country facing policy paralysis, mega

scams and economic slowdown, Gujarat's rapid, sustainable and inclusive development is no less than a miracle. Modi is consistently topping surveys as the people's choice for the next Indian Prime Minister, which also goes to prove his pan-India acceptability and appeal.

Internationally too, Modi's administrative efficiency is acknowledged. A September 2011 US Congressional Research Services report cited Modi as the best example of effective governance and impressive development in India.

Modi has charted an impressive course of building international economic relations, especially in the East. His successful trip to China last year gave out a strong diplomatic message to the USA that has denied visas to Modi on moral grounds. American companies, however, are lining up to gain from the dynamic economy of Gujarat.

Earlier this year, the Supreme court-appointed Special Investigation Team, gave a clean chit to Modi in the 2002 riots. However, a victim of the Goebbelsian method of peddling accusations as evidence, Modi continues to be a political untouchable for many. His own party is divided on him. Many resent his meteoric rise, his working style and his development politics. Keshubhai, who lost the top job to Modi amidst charges of corruption and cronyism, launched the Gujarat Parivartan Party (GPP) and enjoys the support of the dissidents and deserters of the BJP and the Sangh Parivar.

In this election year, Gujarat is facing a highly deficient monsoon. Keshubhai's home turf Saurashtra, and the desert district of Kutch are the worst affected. The Saurashtra-Kutch region, with 58 of the state's 182 assembly seats, has the potential to damage the BJP's prospects.

The Congress sees 2014 as a Rahul Gandhi vs. Modi contest. Gandhi, the Congress scion, has failed to deliver in the recently concluded Uttar Pradesh assembly elections. Thus, the

Congress is going all out to keep Modi quarantined to Gujarat, by either defeating him in the assembly polls or restricting him to a tally of less than 100 seats. The Congress is also banking on the GPP to dent the BJP votes. If nothing else works, a sleaze campaign, with fake sex CDs of Modi, is likely to be unleashed.

However, Modi is a master strategist known to turn the tide in his favor. Written off in the 2002 and 2007 elections, both times Modi battled anti-incumbency, party rebels and personal vilification, to emerge victorious. In 2007, he fought on the development agenda, a rare electoral test in India. This time, he has taken the risk of ticking off the BJP's predominant Hindu constituency, by reaching out to Gujarati Muslims.

Gujarati Muslims will benefit from the all-round development in the state. As such, in recent years, many Muslims have let bygones be bygones and fought local body elections on the BJP tickets. There is a distinct possibility that during this year's assembly elections, certain sections of the Gujarati Muslim community may give the benefit of doubt to Modi since there is no damaging evidence against him. Modi was a novice in statecraft when the riots happened and he has ensured communal peace ever since.

It remains to be seen whether Muslims will get over the years of media-fed anger and place their trust in Modi; it also remains to be seen how the BJP's core constituency will react electorally to Modi's move. But if he wins, that too with a sizeable chunk of Muslim votes, it will be an indication of people giving primacy to governance and development. The witch hunt against Modi may continue even then, but the modification of Gujarat will be complete. ■

Semu Bhatt is a Mumbai-based independent political analyst specializing in security and governance issues. She is the author of the upcoming book, "The modification of Gujarat."

To Make or Break

As the deadline for NATO withdrawal draws closer, Afghanistan sees a rise in violence, Green-on-Blue attacks and political instability, making it the hardest challenge for the US yet.

By Syed Moazzam Hashmi

Inspired by the promising magnitude of change and lessons learnt from the past three decades of consistent trouble, both Pakistan and Afghanistan are attempting to seize the underlying opportunities in light of the grand 2014 NATO withdrawal.

In a developing scenario where both countries recognize the dearth of positive indicators necessary to pull them through, the implementation of regional integration will be a gust of fresh breeze that can steer both countries to achieve their foreseen ideals.

However, it is imperative to identify, recognize and address vital issues of bad governance, law and order, socio-economic crisis and the dearth of real leadership that plague the country with of course radicalization serving as a constant social trend. While these problems should feature prominently on the government's agenda, a more difficult social task is to change the mindset that currently believes that overpopulation is an asset in countering non-state actors.

Pakistan's interest in involving the West and fixing world attention to the region is a rightful ambition. Once the Afghanistan issue has blown over, Pakistan is likely to become both a victim of enhanced spill-over terrorism as well as beneficiary of a large chunk of the international development budget for being the next door neighbor. Afghanistan has sown its seeds in this regard and is now set to reap the harvest. Pakistan will, however, have to make a convincing case - a monumental task for a vulnerable country that is increasingly viewed with suspicion.

If combined, Pakistan's ability to reinvent itself and survive through difficult situations and Afghanistan's resilience to withstand all odds against it, might work wonders in capitalizing the robust magnitude of change seen on the horizon. A trilateral alliance between Germany, Afghanistan and Pakistan has taken upon itself to draw a road map of regional integration, taking cues of course from the integration of the European Union. The

EU has made galloping progress by taking its time and adopting a logical approach in a methodical fashion to achieve this finesse.

Working quietly yet consistently, the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS), a German foundation, has achieved commendable progress in bringing together industry professionals and seasoned leaders to identify areas of cooperation and make recommendations aimed at resolving contentious issues between the two nations and fashion out a way forward.

Ever since the process of reorganization, restructuring and development started in Afghanistan, Germany has enjoyed excellent relations with the country. As per measures taken by the Germans, today, eighty percent of people in Afghanistan have access to medical facilities, infant mortality rate has decreased and infrastructure has widely improved.

However, this progress is not free of numerous deficits deeply rooted in Afghanistan. For instance, reconstruction efforts have not reached all parts of the country, particularly, the most volatile Pushtun belt. Opium production has not been reduced, corruption permeates the social fabric of Afghanistan and Talibanization continues to overwhelm the average Afghan as well as a weak government.

Ten years after the St. Petersburg conference, reconstruction in Afghanistan remains a painful process. Some analysts argue that the situation might stabilize in a post-2014 withdrawal scenario, which might lead to the postponement of the elections. Despite Pakistan's absence at the Bonn Conference, Afghanistan realizes that only Afghans, both men and women, must lead the peace process. It also requires that the Constitution of Afghanistan include women and children rights.

While this may be an excellent scenario, innumerable outstanding issues have much potential to destroy the fragile peace process that is currently underway. Will the peace process truly be implemented? Will the transition be smooth? Will the Afghan

forces be in a position to control and secure the country? Can Afghanistan finance its police/security personnel? And, will the \$4.1 billion aid decided during the Chicago summit, continue to be available in the future? The fact that Afghanistan's aid is dependent on and controlled by the donor community that is already bearing the brunt of an international economic meltdown, further intensifies the uncertainty associated with the project, which is vital for a stable Afghanistan and its neighbors.

Furthermore, creating an efficient, effective, loyal, and well-trained police force is still a long shot. These efforts are further jeopardized by the recent rise in Green-on-Blue attacks, highlighting an increase in Afghan Taliban infiltration of the police force and the rising discontent with international forces. While NATO forces are gearing up to leave the control of the country in the hands of a well trained ANA, attacks and fall-outs such as this deal a hard blow to military efforts and raise alarm bells for the Afghan sentiment regarding stability in the region. The Afghans need to take their destiny into their own hand and realize that once international forces leave, the people of Afghanistan will have to depend on themselves to prevent another collapse.

On the other hand, there would be no lasting solution without engaging regional players. Since the beginning of this year, relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan have seen improvements despite difficulties. However, the trust deficit can be reduced if the two cooperate to control the insurgents involved in cross border subversion - a problem both Afghanistan and Pakistan need to resolve mutually, if they wish to capitalize on the trends of the change present in a scenario that can fall either way. ■

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.

Looming Flashpoint

The Muslim community finds itself in a precarious situation in Sri Lanka, being at odds with the two major ethnic communities - the Tamils and the Sinhalese.

By S. I. Keethaponcalan

Having ended a two-decade long separatist war in May 2009, over-enthusiastic Sinhala nationalists contended that the ethno-nationalist conflict had been resolved with the termination of the LTTE and that the country was now at peace. However, many Sri Lankans who held a realistic understanding of the problems between the two major ethnic communities, the Sinhalese and the Tamils, argued that the country desperately needed to move from a post-war to post-conflict scenario. It is against this backdrop that the concept of reconciliation gained significance.

Today the term "reconciliation" has become popular with political and civil society actors. The impact of reconciliation speeches and small projects so far has been disappointing, mainly because ethnic relations continue to hamper progress and the two communities remain polarized than ever before. The consequent polarization is the result of two fundamentally differing views about peace and the future orientation of the Sri Lankan society and the state. For instance, the government believes that devel-

opment projects, focused especially on the construction and renovation of highways and bridges, are the primary vehicles of reconciliation. The Tamil groups on the other hand insist on a realistic political solution and social justice, which they view as the primary means of resolving the fundamental political problems plaguing the country. However, the government is yet to demonstrate any serious commitment to a political solution of the ethnic conflict.

Often lost beneath the rubble of the wider ethno-political discourse are the politics and concerns of the Muslim community, which constitutes about seven per cent of the total population of Sri Lanka. Although a vast majority of the Sri Lankan Muslims speaks Tamil, they have managed to develop and preserve a separate identity from the group and cultivate cordial relations with the majority Sinhala community. The Sri Lankan Muslims also opposed a separate state for the Tamils and any substantial project for devolution of power that does not take into account their concerns. This concern previously led to an informal war-time

alliance between the Sinhala-Muslim communities against the LTTE. However, the Muslim groups were never directly involved in the war. Now that the war is over, the Sinhala-Muslim alliance seems to be weakening and the tensions between the Muslims and the major ethnic groups, Tamils and Sinhalese, are on the rise.

The tensions between the Sinhala and Muslim communities revolve around the recent Buddhist attacks on mosques. Incidents of mosque attacks were reported from Dambulla, Kurunagala, Dehiwala and other places. In April 2012, a group consisting of local politicians and Buddhist monks staged a violent protest demanding the immediate removal of the Dambulla Mosque, alleging that it was an illegal construction. Dambulla is a sacred site for Buddhists, which, according to some reports, prompted the demand for removal of the mosque.

Nevertheless, the mosque attacks dealt a severe blow to the Sinhala-Muslim alliance. Speaking at an election rally, Sri Lanka's justice minister, Rauf Hakeem (who also leads the pre-dominant Muslim party, the Sri Lanka

Muslim Congress) called upon the President to eliminate what he termed as “yellow robe terrorism.”

The Muslim discord with the Tamils is multi-dimensional as both parties exchange claims and counter claims against each other. The primary grievance of the Muslims against the Tam-

allow the resettlement of the Muslim group in the region. The Mannar magistrate refused permission and ordered that the issue be settled peacefully. Angered by the verdict and alleging that such an order was issued because the Magistrate was a Tamil, the group attacked and damaged the

problem with the majority community through peaceful means. The future of the Sinhala – Muslim relations, however is not entirely dependent on the attitude of the Muslims. If attacks on Mosques continue, whether the Muslims like it or not, the Sinhala-Muslim affinity will undoubtedly suffer. On



ils is the expulsion or ethnic cleansing of hundreds of Muslims from the Northern Province by the LTTE in 1990. Now that the war is over, many Muslims wish to return to their land. The problem, however, is that there is also a large number of displaced Tamils who have moved into the land left behind by the expelled Muslims, making the post-war resettlement a tricky issue.

Last month, a group of Muslims filed a case in the Mannar Magistrate Court asking for permission to evict a group of Tamils from Mannar and

court. Furthermore, the Magistrate claimed that another Muslim minister of the government, Rishad Badrudeen threatened him to issue an order in favor of the Muslim group. It was rumored that the violent attack on the court was instigated by Minister Badrudeen.

It is therefore clear that the Sri Lankan Muslim community's relations with the two major communities in Sri Lanka are deteriorating. However, Muslims traditionally consider their association with the Sinhalese as a “special bond” and opt to resolve

the other hand, if the Muslim community continues to be assertive in terms of their dealings with the Tamils, complications and animosity will arise. The Sri Lankan Muslim community is in a precarious position where it is in danger of becoming one of the major parties of a possible future conflict in Sri Lanka. **S**

Dr S. I. Keethaponcalan is Chair of the Department of Conflict Analysis and Dispute Resolution, Fulton School of Liberal Arts, Salisbury University, Maryland, USA.

Nepal is in the vortex of grave constitutional and political crises -- compounded by the prolonged economic stagflation since 2002. This has come about in the aftermath of the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly on May 27, 2012 which failed to promulgate a federal, democratic, republican constitution.

Constitutional demands by the LGBT community.

Then there is the revival of the monarchical forces that believe that Nepal should revert to a constitutional monarchy and a secular Hindu state that subscribes to pluralism by legally underscoring its multicultural, multiethnic and multi-religious mosaic with a full

forces across political parties. Criticism is mounting against the role of INGOs and NGOs as well as the aid policies of Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Switzerland and even the United Kingdom. The funding of ethnic organizations to create ethnic federal states has buttressed the Maoist movement. Additionally, pushing an agenda for the downsizing, restructuring and 'democratization' of the Nepal Army at a time when internal security threats are at its zenith and breakdown of law and order is permeating, is both aggressive and constant.

It is against this background that one has to assess the US challenge in Nepal in the course of 2012. It may not be an exaggeration to say that the US, in a manner of speaking, 'outsourced' its Nepal policy to India from 2002-08. This it did when it fully endorsed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, signed in New Delhi in November 2006, with India as mediator, between the Maoists and the democratic forces opposing the direct rule of King Gyanendra.

It is significant that the US, the



Changing Gears

How prominently will Nepal feature in America's shifting South Asia strategy?

By Madhukar SJB Rana

The country is presently trapped in an ideological, ethnic and caste divide. Growing social tensions accentuated by religious and gender differences, force rapid proselytization of the Hindus and form aggress-

inclusion of all minorities and the historically oppressed. Parallel to these developments is growing resentment against foreign interference in Nepal's internal affairs that is beginning to unite nationalist

second country after India to declare Maoists as terrorists, refuses to take them off the international terrorist list, even today. This has been a powerful lever with which to extract concessions from the Maoists.

The Maoists were the largest single party in parliament following general elections in 2008. The return of the US Peace Corps in 2012, after being suspended in 2004, highlights the return of US policy to the US State Department. The other manifestation of this leverage is the fact that the US continues to recruit Gurkhas into its private security forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. It may not be long before this spills into other areas, such as Central Asia and North Africa.

When the Maoist Prime Minister, Dr Baburam Bhattarai, dissolved the Constitution Assembly, he did so with the hope of garnering a two third majority in the next general elections, which he said (unconstitutionally, as it is the prerogative of the Election Commission), would be held on November 22, 2012 for a new constituent assembly.

The strategic shift in America's foreign policy towards Asia will have a significant bearing on Nepal. Nepal has featured quite prominently in recent significant developments, which include the creation of a Congressional House of Representative Caucus on Nepal, the country's inclusion in the Millennium Challenge Program and the signing of a US-Nepal Trade and Investment Framework Agreement in 2011.

Undoubtedly, this Agreement remains the lone bilateral voice that is promoting the private sector in Nepal and market oriented reforms. However, it remains to be seen whether the US will grant Nepal the same duty free access to its markets as it does to the least developed countries of sub Sahara Africa. Granting this favor will boost its goodwill amidst the middle class, generally, and the private sector, specifically.

Whether or not, and to what extent, the US will coordinate its re-

gional security policies with India will be decisive for it to opt for military cooperation with Nepal -- the piece of resistance of any strategic cooperation. Should India not cozy up to the US as much, then one may expect greater involvement of the US in military and paramilitary matters to directly counter Chinese initiatives in Nepal and thus neutralize its influence on the Nepalese security forces.

In the past, the US helped Nepal's counter insurgency deployment with training and helped equip the Rangers Battalion. One may expect new entry points in the areas of disaster relief and management as well as the training and equipping of the Nepalese contingent for the UN Peacekeeping Force. As Nepal expresses more interest in joining the Shanghai Cooperation Organization one may expect more US support for the UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament, re-located in Kathmandu from New York.

If the US truly subscribes to peace, security and political stability in South Asia, one of the foremost challenges for its South Asian policy is to hone its diplomatic skills to harbor Nepal as a zone of peace and security. This will prove to be a major innovation to stabilize a part of South Asia as a non-aligned, neutral nation with major lessons for peace and prosperity in all of South, Central and West Asia.

Failure to stabilize the politics of Nepal will have grave repercussions on the peace and security of China and India and, eventually, all of Asia. Nepal could be at the verge of producing a new Lebanon or, even worse, a new Afghanistan in South Asia. ■

Madhukar SJB Rana is former Finance Minister of Nepal.



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Some More Breathing Space



The 16th NAM Summit may have failed to make headlines but it managed to provide the host country - Iran - with some space to maneuver its international isolation.

By Dr. Moonis Ahmar

The 16th Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit held in Tehran in September cannot be termed as a landmark event because it failed to cause any major impact on global affairs. Although representatives of close to a 100 member countries attended the Summit, the event merely helped Iran, the host country, break its international isolation considerably.

The Non-Aligned Movement, officially launched in Belgrade in 1961, was primarily a product of cold war politics. Stalwarts like Marshal Tito, Jawaharlal Nehru, Gamal Nasser and Sukarno presented a vision of a non-aligned movement in a highly polar-

ized world. With the passage of time, however, NAM's role and influence diminished and it failed to shape the global order to its advantage. Despite its marginalized role, NAM remains the second largest international organization after the United Nations. Representing primarily the post-colonial states of Asia and Africa with some representation from Latin America, NAM is a heterogeneous bloc representing members with diversified interests. Some members continue to grapple with regional conflicts while others face internal strife despite securing independence from European imperial powers several decades ago.

The commitment and vision of the founding fathers to strive for a peaceful, developed and stable world seems to have disappeared. However, changing paradigms in emerging democracies call for the functioning and expertise of NAM. A majority of the members confront injustices in terms of ethnic and religious violence, non-adherence to the right of self-determination, poverty, under-development, illiteracy, bad governance and social backwardness. Environmental degradation, energy crises, water crises and intra-state conflicts also deeply plague NAM member states.

The 'third world' represents a bulk

of the global population, yet its control over instruments of global power such as economy, technology, media and military is negligible. NAM summits previously attempted to establish a New International Economic Order based on trade and aid, including the transfer of technology from the developed to the developing world. Unfortunately, these summits and meetings failed to achieve anything.

The 16th NAM summit did, however, make headlines, due to its controversial host – Iran. With Tehran hosting the Summit, the West, particularly America, was forced to neutralize its policy of isolating the Islamic Republic of Iran. Though the event may have forced the international community to allow Iran some breathing space, the country could only secure a few yards due to its unwavering support of the unpopular Syrian regime of Bashar al Assad. Adding fuel to fire, the opening remarks of Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei criticizing the United States as a “hegemonic meddler” and Israel as a regime of “Zionist wolves,” were endorsed by the majority of the participants present.

On the other hand, Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi supported opposition groups in Syria, stating that, “The revolution in Egypt is the cornerstone for the Arab Spring, which started days after Tunisia and then it was followed by Libya and Yemen and now the revolution in Syria against its oppressive regime.” In his speech, UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon asked Iran to fully comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions and cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Responding to Iran’s aggressive remarks about Israel, Ban Ki-Moon firmly stated that, “A war of words can quickly spiral into a war of violence.” The Iran-Israel schism is a major source of instability in the Middle

East. Time and again, Israeli leaders, particularly Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu have threatened to take unilateral action against what ‘Iran’s nuclear weapons program’ which poses a direct threat to Israel. While, the United States has tried to discourage Israel from taking any unilateral action against Iran, the Obama administration clearly sides with the Jewish state in any anti-Iranian tirade.

The final communiqué of the 16th NAM summit, by and large, adopted an anti-U.S. and anti-West position when it expressed support for Iran’s nuclear energy program, rejected America’s unilateral sanctions against Tehran and called for greater efforts to support the Palestinian cause. On the issue of civil war in Syria, the communiqué “condemned foreign interference in Syria and urged for enforcement of the resolution of the Arab League.” The anti-American axis composing of Iran, Cuba and Venezuela was also evident during the 16th NAM summit, as the three countries lobbied hard to adopt an anti-American position in the findings of the summit.

Despite the anti-American and anti-Israeli rhetoric, the possibility of NAM effectively challenging the U.S. dominated world order is remote because of two reasons. Firstly, the majority of NAM members lack the capability to exert pressure on developed countries to resume the North-South dialogue an exercise, which during the 1970s and early 1980s presented an alternate economic approach of enhancing trade relations between the developed and developing world. The Brandt Commission Report of 1977 also recommended that rich countries should annually allocate 0.7 percent of their resources for economic aid to developing countries: a result of NAM’s stance at the time for a New International Economic Order. Secondly, unlike the past, the majority of

NAM members have diplomatic relations with Israel. While supporting the Palestinian cause for an independent state is of paramount importance, they are not supportive of a blatant confrontation with Israel.

As far as the Western response to the 16th NAM summit is concerned, little attention was accorded to the bloc due to its marginalized global role. The only aspect that gained some media attention and western disapproval was the venue of the summit, which was tantamount to providing enormous space to Iran and supporting its efforts to break international isolation. Instead of putting on a good face, Iran exploited the opportunity to launch a verbal attack against the U.S, UN Security Council and Israel.

Though the 16th NAM summit is over, it has left several questions unanswered. Is it possible to revitalize NAM? Can NAM play a leadership role in an uncertain global order?

NAM can certainly be revitalized, provided its leadership is clear and visionary in its approach. Since Iran will be leading NAM for the next three years, it is now Tehran’s responsibility to transform it from a stagnant label to a dynamic organization. In order to achieve this Iran needs to transform its policies on critical issues such as relations with the West and adopting a hard line position on Israel. Only recently, Canada severed diplomatic relations with Iran because of its support to the Syrian regime and blatant threats to Israel. The future of NAM depends on focusing on economic, human and technological development and, at the same time, striving for good governance and improving the quality of life of people within its borders. ■

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

The Other Guy

Rep. Paul Ryan may be the Republican Vice Presidential candidate, but how much does this young, potential VP really know about foreign policy?

By Arsla Jawaid

As US Republican Presidential candidate, Mitt Romney, made a slip of the tongue and accidentally introduced his pick for running mate, Paul Ryan as the “next *President* of the United States” one is left wondering, what if that were really to be true?

A fiscal conservative, Rep. Paul Ryan of Wisconsin is indeed Romney’s pick for “Vice President” and is in many ways a bold move on Romney’s part. Mitt Romney opted to adopt a more moderate stance throughout his presidential trail after being chosen as the Republican nominee, attracting a slew of criticism from the more conservative Republicans and of course the very vocal, Tea Party, both of whom have wished to see a more bold, critical and revolutionary Romney. Though serving as an initial lukewarm candidate, Romney sharpened his criticism and made some big moves as the presidential race heated up. As criticisms against the Obama camp fly high, Ryan will serve as Romney’s card in quieting down any doubts that may arise within the Republican Party regarding Romney’s interest in toeing the party line. The young and outspoken 42 year old will certainly appeal to the more

conservative Republicans as well as many younger voters.

Romney’s decision to choose Ryan as his running mate is no small step, given the reputation Ryan has carved for himself in Washington, DC. A Miami University graduate, where he studied economics and political science, at the young age of 28, Ryan was elected to Congress to represent Wisconsin’s 1st district. Focusing on the budget, he became increasingly popular with fiscal conservatives and cultivated a reputation as a ‘number cruncher.’ Meticulous, critical and persistent, Ryan has faced heated criticism from the Democratic Party repeatedly, yet has unwaveringly stood his ground defending his policies and in return, gaining the respect of even those who oppose him.

Ryan’s severely criticized budget proposal that calls for controversial changes in Medicare and other safety net projects to get the fiscal house in order, is what ultimately brought him from obscurity straight into the hot seat. Serving as chairman of the House Budget Committee since 2011, Ryan can recite the minutest details of the U.S budget at the drop of a hat and is ever ready to launch a verbal at-

tack against President Obama, his healthcare bill and any other of his domestic or foreign policy decisions. It is perhaps this ferocity and complete loyalty to bring the other side down that has earned Ryan immense respect and support from the Republican Party.

But this campaign should not be about what Barack Obama and the Democratic Party cannot do. The campaign trail should instead be focused on what Romney-Ryan 2012 can give to the United States? As one-half of the equation, Ryan unfortunately may prove to be Romney’s fatal drug.

While the 42-year-old Wisconsin congressman may conveniently quote the wrong points on domestic issues facing the US, one wonders if he can afford to make that mistake during a foreign policy debate. Ironically, both Ryan and Romney have very limited foreign policy exposure or experience, much like Sarah Palin who nonetheless had John McCain to rescue her.

With only a month to go before Election Day and with both candidates running neck and neck, the Obama camp has pulled out all stops with former President Clinton and first lady Michelle Obama



giving hard-hitting speeches during the Democratic National Convention. Though Obama himself may have fallen a tad bit short in his DNC speech, many anticipate a strong comeback in the debates. Despite this, Obama has much to flaunt in terms of foreign policy experience and achievements. Having successfully ended the war in Iraq, being determined to pull out troops from Afghanistan in 2014 and having assassinated enemy number 1: Osama bin Laden, Obama's overseas record earns him high points in national sentiment.

The Romney-Ryan camp on the other hand, has faced heated criticism regarding their combined lack of foreign policy exposure and expertise. Romney made a token PR blunder when he criticized the UK for overspending on the Olympic Games right before his maiden visit to the country. He also deemed Russia, not China, as the US's "number one geo-political foe" giving the Obama camp ready fodder to accuse Romney of still being "stuck in a Cold War mindset." Foreign policy rhetoric has previously gotten America in much trouble, especially in sensitive areas like the Af-Pak region. Treating it as a simple mishap would be a fatal mistake.

Upon taking office, Obama made a conscious effort to reach out to Muslim nations in his powerful speech "A New Beginning," delivered in the Egyptian capital of Cairo. Appealing to a mass majority, Obama was able to earn instant brownie points both at home and abroad. Whether global public approval for Obama lasted or not is debatable, especially given the recent release of an American film that ridiculed the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) prompting angry crowds in Benghazi, Libya, to burn down the

US consulate, killing one State Department official. What is important though is that the powerful orator that he is, President Barack Obama was able to clean the slate and articulately appeal to the new world as soon as he took office.

It is perhaps his finesse, oratory skill, appeal and steadfast belief in the slogan of "change" that made Barack Obama shine back in 2008. While his popularity may be declining in the face of unemployment and a dwindling economy, he will have a tough time explaining why

Ryan will serve as Romney's card in quieting down any doubts that may arise within the Republican Party regarding Romney's interest in toeing the party line. The young and outspoken 42 year old will certainly appeal to the more conservative Republicans as well as many younger voters.

he should be re-elected. However, many still believe that Obama's record deserves a second term. But he has been criticized heavily by Governor Romney for not taking any action against Iran's ambitions to become a nuclear state. Supported by Ryan, Romney publicly stated that "A nuclear Iran is unacceptable to the United States and we will maintain every option that's available to us to keep that from happening." While rhetoric serves as a priority in a presidential race, Michael O' Hanlon of the Brookings Institution argues that "Both Governor Romney and President Obama are having a challenge on the rhetoric of how to talk about this because they both want to sound firm, but neither wants to bomb Iran anytime soon."

On the foreign policy front,

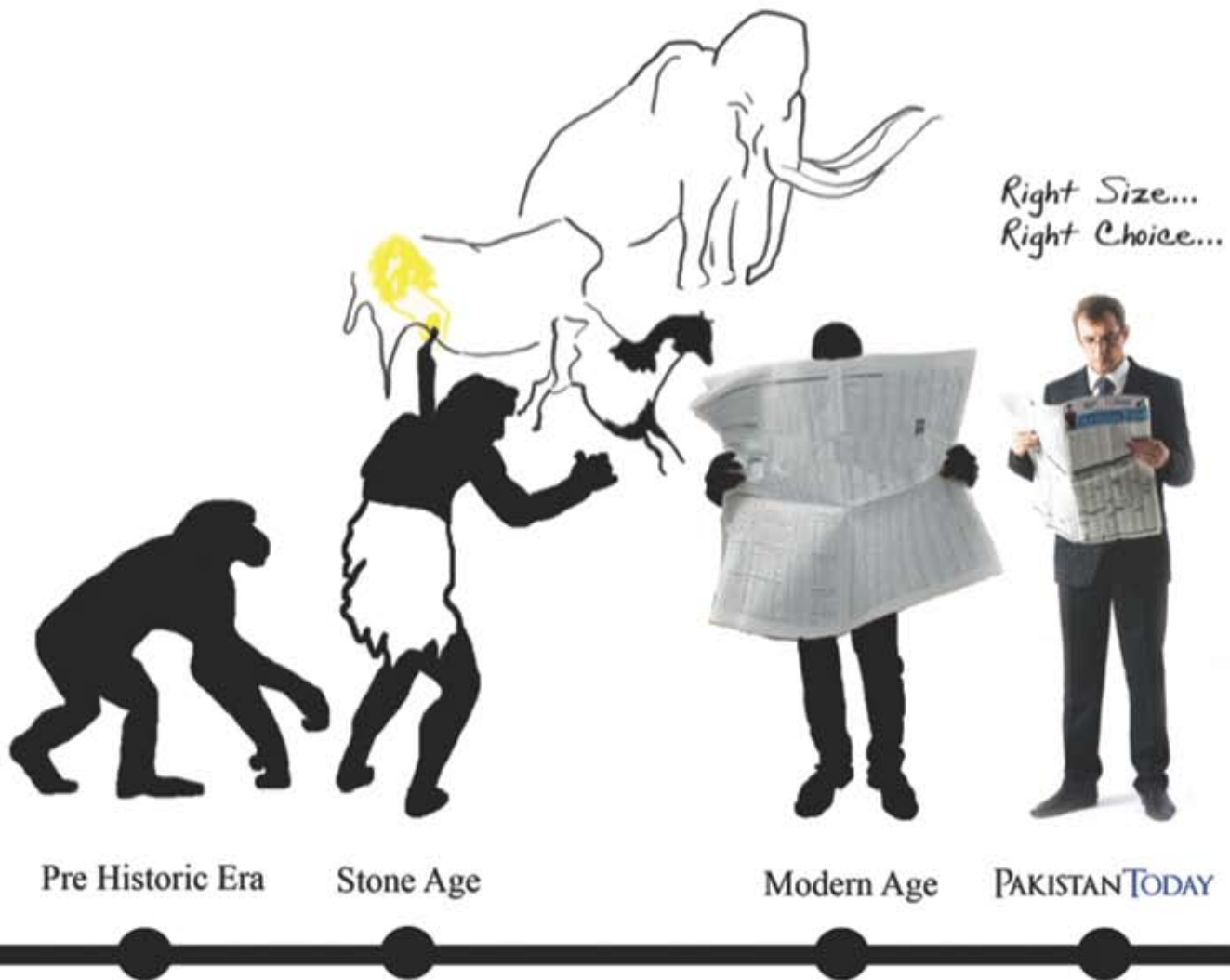
Ryan has argued that he has more experience than Obama did when he campaigned in 2008. Forgetting of course that Obama served on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Ryan cited his 14 years of experience in Congress as a strong equivalent. Speaking on CBS's *Face the Nation*, Ryan argued, "I've voted to send men and women to war. I've been to Iraq and Afghanistan. I've met with our troops to get their perspectives. I've been to the funerals, I've talked to the widows, I've talked to the wives, the moms and

the dads. That's something. That matters."

The next President and Vice President will have their hands full with matters of national security. With America increasingly becoming a key and troubled player in world politics, the country certainly needs men with experience. Rhetoric mishaps, lack of foreign policy experience and a mediocre understanding of global affairs and political diplomacy will only plunge America into a deeper crisis than where it currently finds itself in South Asia and the Middle East. ■

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Team Green

Pakistani athletes gave a dismal performance at Olympics 2012. With correct planning and training, Pakistani sportsmen can do much better in future events.

By Muhammad Omar Iftikhar

Pakistan debuted at the 1948 London Olympics. At the 1956 Olympics in Australia, the Pakistan Hockey team won a silver medal. At the 1960 Olympics in Rome, the Pakistani Hockey team defeated India in the finals and earned its first gold medal thus making history. This was the first and last time when Pakistan won two medals at the Olympics. Pakistani wrestler, Muhammad Bashir, won a bronze medal in free-style wrestling at the same event.

Ever since its initiation, Pakistan has won the men's hockey gold medal at the Summer Olympics three times - in 1960, 1968, and 1984, respectively. The Pakistan Hockey team has bagged three silver medals in Olympic hockey, in 1956, 1964 and 1972 and two bronze medals. Pakistan has won one bronze for wrestling at the 1960 Rome Olympics and another bronze for boxing at the 1988 Seoul Olympics.

Though the Pakistani hockey squad arrived at the 2012 London Olympics full of confidence and enthusiasm, its performance could not match other more professionally trained teams. It equalized the match against Spain and defeated Argentina and South Africa, but was defeated by Great Britain and faced a demor-

alizing rout against Australia, which ended the team's fairy tale.

Unlike other countries, Pakistan lacks visionary leadership in sports. It has only recently started seeing a certain level of investment in the sports infrastructure but athletes receive inadequate and sparse training and are not made to follow a rigorous, challenging and dedicated regimen. Skill enhancement and dietary requirement is sacrificed in the absence of trainers and coaches. Mental fortitude, perhaps, makes a player into a champion but that too is not in evidence as the majority of Pakistanis view sports as a profession at best and not a passion.

Pakistan has been taking part in selected sporting events at the Olympics and other international events that include athletics, boxing, hockey, swimming, weightlifting, and freestyle wrestling. A few years ago, the country was actively competing in shooting, yachting, sailing, rowing and table tennis. But it has been markedly absent from gymnastics, archery, badminton, basketball, football and handball, proving only that both athletes and trainers seldom take risks, or have the capacity, to enter new domains.

While the Olympics are a pres-

tigious world event, few in Pakistan truly understand sports such as archery or basketball, choosing instead to channel their attention to more popular sports such as cricket, hockey or football. Although sporting events at college and university level do encourage basketball and table tennis, Pakistan has yet to professionally embrace these sports. Buying expensive equipment, enrolling in professional training programs, following a strict routine and dedicating time to an activity that barely pays any financial, social or professional dividends is no encouragement. Few private enterprises have budgets for sporting activities while the government offers no subsidies for training of aspiring sportsmen who would hone their skills and prepare to compete at the international level.

The Pakistan Olympic Association (POA) is the main body that overlooks all matters related to identifying and training sports talent. While some funding and sponsorships do trickle into the sporting system, malpractices and corruption quickly drives away financial support to other projects. Internal wrangling and greed hinder the performance of the Association, which in turn damages the spirit of the players.



Pakistani athletes fail to get the recognition they deserve because the Association itself doesn't pay heed to its own talent.

Amir Khan, the Pakistani-born, British boxer gained global recognition because of his skill, his British nationality and his ability to afford a manager who could handle publicity matters. Unfortunately, an achievement such as this would be severely undermined in Pakistan. Apart from the sports industry as a whole, the POA also needs urgent re-assessment and revitalizing. The Association must devise a clear and transparent strategy to discover new talent and train it under professional supervision.

Pakistan's performance is exceptional at the South Asian Games. The

country stands second on the all-time medals table with 1,022 medals including 311 gold, 375 silver and 336 bronze medals. While the South Asian Games are no Olympics, it is clear that Pakistani athletes, if trained, disciplined and motivated, can compete at the international level.

The difference between Pakistani athletes and their foreign counterparts lies in the intensity of their training. Although Pakistanis qualify for the Olympics, their dismal performance affirms the dearth of a sporting environment at home. USA and China led the medals table at London 2012 because they view sports not as a tiresome job but rather as a lifestyle. The athletes remain motivated because of their trainers who serve as mentors. Every athlete follows a strict

training schedule, takes proper nutrition and maintains a balance lifestyle between his/her personal life and sporting activities.

Exposure of global practices and international standards will certainly give Pakistani athletes the opportunity to compete against their foreign competitors. It is perhaps in the best interests of the POA to hire at least one foreign coach or trainer who can train athletes for the 2016 Olympics according to international standards. With strategy and proper training, Pakistani athletes can successfully make a mark at the greatest sporting event on Earth. ■

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



A Glimmer of

As governments across South Asia struggle to alleviate child poverty and increase education, the NGO sector also rises to the task.

By Asma Siddiqui

Today, close to 35 million children in South Asia are out of school, making it the most illiterate region in the world followed by the Middle East and North Africa (6.7 million), East Asia and the Pacific (4.7 million) and Latin America and the Caribbean (4.2 million).

In South Asia, a very small percentage of children complete primary education due to high dropout and failure rates. Out of every 100 students that enter the primary education cycle, only 10 or fewer reach the secondary school stage. Public spending on education in South Asia currently averages about 4.1 percent

of the GDP – one of the lowest levels in any region.

According to 'The State of the Whole World's Children 2012' children from poor urban neighborhoods are among the least likely to attend school. A survey in Delhi found a primary school attendance rate of 54.5 percent among children living in slums in 2004-2005 compared to 90 percent for the city as a whole. In Bangladesh, according to 2009 data, the differences were even more pronounced at the secondary level: 18 percent of children in slums attended secondary school, compared to 53 percent in urban areas as a whole and

48 percent in rural areas.

In the Maldives, Humanium, a relief organization for sustainable development and child sponsorship, does not set up alternative structures but reinforces existing ones in cooperation with local authorities and villagers, in order to improve the quality of education. The organization has conducted campaigns that involve awareness meetings with children and parents to highlight the negative effects of child labor. Evening tuition centers provide academic support to children, especially when their parents are illiterate or cannot read well. If necessary, transit schools are established in the

villages to help adolescents aged 15 to 18 who have left the school system without graduating. Teachers help them to reach a higher level of education and to secure better job opportunities.

In Pakistan, The Citizen Foundation's *Rahbar* Program and HOPE's Home Schools provide examples of successful models imparting education in Pakistan. In the *Rahbar* Program, *Rahbars* (mentors) from different occupations, between 23 - 70 years of age, hold 8-9 weeklong sessions every Saturday in the school to encourage students to continue with their studies. The *Rahbar* Program includes a 'Hero

HOPE runs home schools nationwide, where classes take place in the homes of community dwellers. These schools provide, to especially young girls, a chance to receive a basic education and encourage young women from the community to generate income by teaching. The model is cost effective and easy to set up even in remote areas with some home schools leading up to the Matric system thus training and allowing students to sit for regular board exams.

"Women in urban slums are not allowed to step outside their homes. We are fortunate to get a job while staying in the premises of our houses,

more than 700 villages in six districts. The BASE project aims to reduce the number of child laborers by ensuring the fundamental rights of children, such as education, social awareness and skill development. It has been successful in reducing the number of child laborers in the project areas through education, creating social awareness for fundamental child rights through strengthening of child organizations, social mobilization, campaigns and supporting child laborers by providing vocational skills.

In India, the MV Foundation (MVF), a private, charitable trust in Andhra Pradesh, has developed a model that uses education as a means of tackling child labor. MVF's uncompromising agenda is that every child out of school is a working child and ensuring access to education is the only answer to tackling this problem. Commencing in 1991, MVF has withdrawn 80,000 children from work and enrolled them in schools. The age group of children varies from the very young to adolescents. MVF now operates in nearly 500 villages in which 90% of all children between the ages of 5-11 are in schools. The Foundations' work has established that child laborers are a very important constituency amongst the unschooled and has demonstrated that even the most difficult target group can be brought into schools with determined efforts.

With a number of NGOs providing solutions to help the downtrodden society across South Asia, effective working models can help us touch the lives of those who need our support. The most successful model should be picked up and implemented in all developing countries so as to increase the literacy level and establish a healthier, educated society. ■

Asma Siddiqui is a freelance journalist who writes on social issues.

HOPE

Speaker' session where self-made and courageous individuals share their stories with children to inspire them. Every grade VIII student at TCF has to attend the *Rahbar* Program.

HOPE, another NGO, has close to 200 informal home schools with almost 10,000 students enrolled and 200 community girls employed as teachers, all over Pakistan. Situated across the country in Karachi, Thatta, Dadu, AJK and KP, apart from furthering education, HOPE also provides free textbooks and stationary to its students. The HOPE Home School model consists of 200 informal home schools nationwide, catering to 9,000 children. The informal home schools have been successful in providing education to the downtrodden, especially after the flood disaster in Pakistan that destroyed numerous schools.

thanks to HOPE. It is also very satisfying when students, after studying from HOPE Home schools, qualify for the entry test in an English medium school. Most girls are able to complete their Matric and can teach and support their own families," says Fatima, a HOPE Home School Teacher.

In 1985, BRAC, a large scale NGO launched an education program for the poor in Bangladesh with the goal to making a significant contribution to the achievement of education for all in the country. Today, BRAC boasts of more than 30,000 primary schools all over the country.

In Nepal, BASE has been working for the welfare of poor and disadvantaged rural people, especially those of Tharu and other communities in the mid-west and far-west regions. During the last 12 years, BASE has covered



A Land Apart

Despite diversifying its foreign relations, Bhutan, unlike other South Asian countries, continues to strictly maintain its rich culture, language and customs.

By Fatima Siraj

Situated delicately on the slopes of the Himalayas, mountainous Bhutan is land-locked between India on the south and west and Tibet on the north and east, making it South Asia's most geographically isolated nation. Until the 1960s, this factor contributed to its political isolation from the rest of the world. However, after China's invasion of Tibet, Bhutan decided to expand its foreign relations and avoid Tibet's fate by strengthening its ties with neighboring India. Investment in infrastructure and linkages to India further improved this newly formed relationship and by 1985 Bhutan had established its first diplomatic links with non-Asian countries.

Currently, along with being an active member of SAARC, Bhutan maintains diplomatic relations with nine other Asian nations and ten European nations, which form the 'Friends of Bhutan Group.' These include the

Scandinavian countries, Spain and Switzerland and Japan. All these nations contribute towards development projects in Bhutan. However, the Bhutanese maintain strict control over the projects and international consultants hold no decision-making power. Therefore, it is common for development projects, even from powerful international organizations, to be ejected (or halted after implementation) because of potential negative interference. This control often prevents integral development from being undertaken on a large scale by international organizations.

Bhutan's categorization as a least developed nation (LDC) by the U.N does not bother the constitutional monarchy too much. This is because its main development indicator is not the common GDP benchmark used worldwide but rather a factor called Gross National Happiness (GNH); a

term coined by the visionary former King, Jigme Signye Wangchuck, in the late 1980s. The achievement of this unique objective of national happiness is based upon the four guiding principles of good governance, preservation of the environment, economic self-reliance and cultural preservation. These principles take their roots in Bhutan's strong Buddhist identity and its long period of isolationism before modernization was undertaken in the 1960s.

Despite attempting to build better foreign relations with other countries, Bhutan has shied away from being culturally influenced. Far removed from the cosmopolitan nature of many Asian countries today, Bhutan has successfully retained its native culture and identity. The preservation of Bhutanese tradition and culture is popularly known as *Driglamnamza*: a distinct manner and etiquette that

dictates what to wear, how to eat, how to talk and bow down before the government officials and the clergy. The *Driglamnamza* was imposed on all citizens in 1990. Under this law, all Bhutanese citizens are required to observe the national dress code, known as *Driglam Namzha*, while in public during daylight hours. Men are required to wear a heavy knee-length robe tied with a belt, called a *gho*, folded in such a way as to form a pocket in front of the stomach. Women folk wear colorful blouses over which they fold and clasp a large rectangular cloth called a *kira*, thereby creating an ankle-length dress. A short silk jacket or *toego* may be worn over the *kira*. It is not only the attire that separates Bhutan's culture from other South Asian countries but also its way of life, language, religion and cuisine.

In most places within Bhutan, a traditional way of life exists with men and women both working in the fields and/or running small businesses. Men take an active part in household chores but this trend is slowly shifting in the more westernized parts of the country with men serving as the breadwinners for the family. An interesting feature of Bhutanese culture is a phenomenon called matrilinearity where women or 'anchor mothers' are responsible for owning and inheriting property. Traditionally it is the women who have more rights than men here.

Apart from the lifestyle, the cuisine of Bhutan is also very distinctive. Staple foods include buckwheat, red rice and maize while popular beverages include ari (rice wine) and butter tea. It is common practice according to Bhutanese manners, to say '*meshu meshu*' in refusal when offered food. It is only after the second or third offering that one gives in. The two most spoken languages of Bhutan are *Dzongkha* and Nepali. Bhutanese music has various unique genres that range from the traditional *Zhungdra*

and *Boedra* to the modern genre called *Rigsar*.

The most outstanding feature of Bhutan's cultural heritage, however, is its rich Buddhist background embedded in its social fabric. 75% of the population is Buddhist followed by 23% of Hindus and a minority of Muslims. Buddhist symbols can be seen everywhere from the prayer flags on hillsides and rooftops to the *dzongs* or high walled fortresses that serve as the religious and administrative centers of every district. A strong sense of religiosity is also manifested in the many monasteries that pepper the country. A monk may join a monastery at the age of six after which his spiritual training continues throughout his life. In addition to serving the community in sacramental roles, he may undertake several extended silent retreats. Monks in Bhutan are highly revered as they represent spiritual uplifting. The highest monk in the land is the chief abbot of Bhutan or *Je Khenpo*. He is theoretically equivalent in stature to the king.

Bhutan's strong cultural heritage is nothing short of remarkable in a region that is increasingly adopting the lifestyle of the west. Currently, Bhutan is following a restricted tourism policy built on a system of government regulated tourist tariff. While this helps in ensuring minimal environmental damage and preventing external influences, it also hampers Bhutan's growth and contributes to its isolationism. But for now, the country and its monarchy seem to be content with trying to achieve its target of Gross National Happiness; a concept that gives importance to the spiritual well being of a people above everything else. **S**

Fatima Siraj is currently pursuing a BBA at the Institute of Business Administration. She frequently writes on marketing and social issues.



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Devil's Advocate

Afghanistan has a rich poetic culture that has recently received paramount attention after the publishing of a new book that showcases poems written by the Taliban.

By Taha Kehar

According to an ABC News/Washington Post poll conducted earlier this year, sixty percent of Americans said that the war on terror is futile and should be avoided at all costs. However, the overwhelmingly negative response shown towards the decision of a UK publisher to release an anthology of poems by the Taliban, seems to challenge this view. Poetry of the Taliban is based on 236 poems translated in English and has been billed as enemy propaganda as it propagates the ideology of the terrorists. The criticism levelled against the book suggests that

there is a permanent stigma attached to the Taliban in the West, which cannot be negated with ease. The anthology challenges these stereotypical perceptions by highlighting the human side of the Taliban through rich and alluring verses.

The most enticing feature of the book is its refreshing diversity. Poems in the collection are not restricted to the images of terror and conflict, which have frequently been propagated in the western media. To the contrary, the verses skillfully combine the strict religious ideologies of the Taliban with their previously unknown

aesthetic sensibilities. Sensitive portrayals of unrequited love and suffering are interspersed with observations on religion and nationalism. They come together to produce a realistic and poignant image of one of the major armed forces in the world today.

The imagery in the poems refers to Afghan legends and history and is informed by the traditions of Persian and Pashto poetry. Despite these similarities between Afghan poetry and the fervent verses produced by the Taliban, the book fails to offer cogent insights into the poetic traditions of the region. By portraying an exces-

sively optimistic view on the Taliban, Poetry of the Taliban furthers a propagandist agenda. Since the anthology is targeted at a largely western readership, the subtle differences between Afghan poetry and the poetic vision of the Taliban stands the risk of being overlooked. Discerning readers must be aware that Afghanistan has a rich heritage of poetry in both Persian and Pashto, which has consistently developed through the efforts of such poets as Rumi, Ahmed Shah Durrani, Ghulam Muhammad Tarzi and Al-Afghani.

Another facet of Afghan poetry which has not been readily explored in this new anthology is the contribution of female poets to literary pursuits. Owing to the political cataclysms and warfare in Afghanistan, women have been forced to take a backseat to men. As a result, most poems written in Afghanistan after the civil war have been patriarchal in nature. Poetry of the Taliban falls prey to this stereotypical mould by portraying women as objects of desire while glorifying the cruelties of the Taliban.

Although this anthology raises several moot points, it stands out as an attempt at playing the devil's advocate in understanding the mindset of the Taliban.

Ever since the civil war broke out in Afghanistan, the Taliban have been heavily criticized for generating conflicts and opposing the human rights agenda. Print and electronic media have often been condemned for propagating a one-sided view of the war on terror. Since there was a dearth of knowledge and understanding, the other side of the story could not be gleaned.

When Hurst & Co in the UK decided to publish this anthology it was an attempt to understand the human side of the Taliban. They knew that by releasing the book they would receive scathing reviews and earn a bad reputation. But they were determined to

unravel the reality of the Taliban and prove to the world that in spite of their questionable ideologies, they were not stereotypical warriors but discerning individuals. The key purpose of the book is to reveal a fresh perspective that can be appreciated. The publishers were not interested in circulating a pamphlet that contained enemy propaganda. They seemed rather keen on presenting a new outlook on the Taliban by highlighting the group's ability to convey their worldview and ideologies through enriching poetry. Although it was a risky venture, the book has managed to attract a vast readership through its innovative approach.

When Poetry of the Taliban was

But [Hurst & Co] were determined to unravel the reality of the Taliban and prove to the world that in spite of their questionable ideologies, they were not stereotypical warriors but discerning individuals.

published, sceptics were quick to assert that it was a blatant attempt by the Taliban to justify their actions. This comes across as unwarranted criticism since the poems do not enforce a perspective or indoctrinate the reader into accepting the rather bigoted views of the Taliban. These ideologically strong poems can only be enjoyed if readers ignore the extremist nature of the poems and relish their elegant use of words and imagery.

However, the reader may still find it particularly difficult to overlook the dogmatic style adopted in the poems because the translations are, at times, specious. An English translation of these thought-provoking poems, which were originally written in Persian and Pashto, enhances their global readership. But it also jumbles

up the poetic traditions of Afghanistan through its lack of emphasis on minor details. Afghan poetry is inspired by the stylistic beauty of the *ghazal* and the *tarana* and often takes the form of epistles and elegies. By including these contrasting literary traditions within the umbrella term of 'poetry', the editors of Poetry of the Taliban have presented a rather vague and inaccurate depiction of the intricacies of Afghan poetry. Furthermore, the translations fail to do justice to the originality of the work. The beauty of the idioms and imagery appears to have been lost in translation. The result is a series of bland verses, which do not capture the subtlety of the original works. Speculations about the authen-

ticity of the translations reflect a half-hearted attempt at playing the devil's advocate to the Taliban. Since the poetic traditions employed in the poetry of the Taliban have been mixed up, the anthology unintentionally comes across as propaganda.

The decision to publish an anthology of poems written by the Taliban is not an attempt to elicit sympathy towards their activities. It should be construed as a fresh outlook on the Taliban, which may come across as unacceptable but is not entirely false. ■

Taha Kehar is a blogger on social issues and has previously worked for a monthly magazine. He is currently pursuing a degree in Law at the School of Oriental and African Studies.

The British Indian and subsequently Pakistan's fabled north-western regions have been a perennially rich topic for national and international writers. A large number of books and articles have been written about the society, modus vivendi, values and customs of the Pashtoons: the ethno-linguistic group that inhabits the Frontier regions, including the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and the erstwhile North West Frontier Province (NWFP). The peculiarity of Pashtoon customs, folkways and violent and unruly national character attracted a motley of researchers and writers to explore their society and culture. 'Thirty Years on the North West Frontier: Recollections of a Frontiersman' is an exquisite addition to these books on the north-

west and Pashtoons. as the reluctance of publishers in England as such memoirs of ex-servicemen were obsolete in those days. The draft of the memoirs was revamped in 2009 and finally published in 2011.

The book is divided into 18 chapters and two appendices. Drawing on his own political positions and personal experiences, Mallam describes in detail the national and cultural characteristics of the Pashtoons inhabiting the north-western part of British India. The general impression is that the author considered the Pashtoons in general and particularly of the tribal belt as highly turbulent and violent in character. Although he mentions some negative traits and customs of Pashtoons, holistically he believed the Pashtoons possessed certain qualities of character

though admittedly warlike, turbulent, even to our standards and criminally inclined, nevertheless possessed many qualities, which made them both loveable and demonstrably superior to the more servile masses of India proper. Above all, the Pathan was a man with a physique equal to, if not finer, than the average European. He might be dressed in rags but he strode about the station platforms like a god. He allowed no man his better—not even a British officer of senior rank. As a good Muslim he has the utmost contempt for all Hindus and for all whose skin was darker than his own."

However, the author was so enamored by the Pashtoon way of life that he stayed in the region for many years of his life. "There was something irresistibly attractive

Delving into the Frontier

Title: Thirty Years on the North West Frontier
Author: Leslie Mallam
Publisher: Oxford University Press, Pakistan (October 2011)
Pages: 255, Paperback
Price: PKR 895
ISBN: 9780199063031

west and Pashtoons.

The book is based on the memoirs of the personal experiences of Leslie Mallam, who first served in the British Indian Army (2nd Bengal Lancers) and later in the British Indian Civil Service and spent most of his 35 years in service in the northwest regions. Mallam unfortunately could not complete the book because of his premature death from cancer in 1978 as well

and behavior that were not found amongst the Europeans. The author also found the Pashtoons as an egoistic lot in their demeanor and choice. He observed the modal Pashtoon personality and viewed it as superior to members of all other races, particularly those who did not believe in God as the Creator and harbored a deep dislike for Hindus. "I realized that Pathans,

about these people, which was to draw me back to the Frontier for the rest of my service in India," Mallam writes.

Another important aspect of tribal Pashtoon life that Mallam mentions is the sentimental attachment of the tribesmen with Islam and the consequent respect and status the key figure --Mullah -- enjoys in the tribal society due to his association with the religion. In the

words of the author, "This influence [of religion] was supreme - without it the tribe could not live. In a community where no individual could be trusted with absolute power, the sanctity of the oath, administered as a religious act, was universally relied on. This meant that considerable power, both spiritual and political, was often centered in the Mullah, or other religious dignitary, such as a *Faqir*." Against this backdrop the contemporary rise of Pakistani Taliban in FATA could be understood to some extent.

Regarding the then politics of the Frontier, the author has explained that a sizable portion of the NWFP supported the local allies of All India Congress Party led by Khan Ghaffar Khan's 'Red Shirts' because the party and its local allies supported the lower and

toons looked with askance at the Congress-backed cabinet in NWFP and branded its members as the agents of the Hindus.

Mallam in essence loved the Pashtoon land and did whatever he could for the development of the area; a trait peculiar to British colonial officers. For instance, the author in his capacity as Chief Secretary tried his best to evolve a workable politico-economic model of development for the tribal belt so that after partition the vacuum could be filled up and it could be brought at par with the "settled" parts of British India. The author has narrated several instances in which he found the Hindu officials creating hurdles in the development of FATA and NWFP.

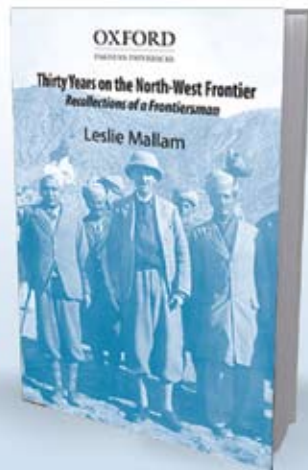
Mallam's appointment as chief secretary NWFP ended at

his desire only to be asked, "What is there to develop in these rocky hills and stony valleys?" Mallam nonetheless sent the governor a list of multidimensional development plans of the Frontier. However, due to opposition, particularly from the central government, Mallam could not implement his conceived development program.

After leaving in 1947, in October 1972, Mallam made his only visit to Pakistan. During his sojourn to Peshawar he observed that the area had become radicalized. "A puritanical Islamic ruler also threatens progress in other direction. It enforces purdah more severely than ever, and by lowering the status of women impedes the social advancement of the whole community...there is something sinister about the sight of an exclusively male population on the roads and pathways of Peshawar Cantonment, particularly as several of them are armed; and there is a subtle cruelty about a system that educates girls up to the degree standard and then forces them to pine away in their homes, unable to follow any career except marriage, excluded from the outside world by high purdah walls."

'Thirty Years ...' is not as detailed a description and documentation of the society and people of the Frontier as has already been presented in other works. It is still a comprehensive work. The style is simple and is both descriptive and analytical. All this makes it a good read, particularly for those who want to understand the dynamics of Pathan culture, society and future. **S**

Raza Khan is a political analyst and researcher on the 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: Causes & Counterstrategy.



Reviewed by Raza Khan

middle class agenda and opposed the landlords or "*Jagirdar Nizam*." Mallam recalls that when Nehru in his capacity as foreign minister visited the region in October 1946, he travelled far and wide in the Frontier to rally support for his Congress colleagues. However, he failed and instead his efforts evoked a stiff resistance to the Congress and greatly damaged the Red Shirts. In Mallam's view, Pash-

about the same time as the Post World War II plans in British India were being discussed. The author wished to become the Planning and Development Commissioner for the Frontier, including FATA, despite being cognizant of the colossal challenges and obstacles to the process of development in the region. In order to be appointed in that capacity, he went to Governor Lord Cunningham and expressed

How does one remember a writer? If he were the Russian writer Boris Pasternak, then an audience might start reciting his poem from where he left off, as his papers flew about in a gathering. Or in the case of Qurratulain Hyder, one would publish a book documenting how people remember her, her writings and the legacy she has left behind.

'Qurratulain Hyder and the River of Fire: The Meaning, Scope and Significance of her Legacy' is a collection of essays about her life and her greatest work: *Aag ka Darya*. Edited

Writers Movement and how writing took off in a newly formed Pakistan. *Aag ka Darya* was Hyder's explosive contribution to Urdu literature, the subject of many discussions and controversies. The novel revolved around characters that are reincarnated from four phases of history: fourth century BC, late 1400 to early 1500, end of the 1700s to the 1900s and the post-Partition era.

In these four phases, each character is reborn, their souls from the previous era now carrying the burden of the old and the new. Champa, the strong female, and Ka-

of all her characters." As is the case with all great writing, it is driven by the political and social conditions of the time.

Interestingly, Hyder also translated her novel, a rare act in the literary world at the time. In doing so she essentially re-wrote *Aag ka Darya*. In 'Lost/Found in Translation: The Author as a Self Translator,' M. Asaduddin illuminates how the textual readings of *Aag ka Darya* and *The River of Fire* differ. *The River of Fire* might as well be an entirely new book. "When she translates her own work, it is not simply a question of

In Search of the River of Fire

Title: Qurratulain Hyder and the River of Fire
Edited by: Rakhshanda Jalil
Publisher: Oxford University Press, Pakistan (February 2011)
Pages: 264, Paperback
Price: PKR 495
ISBN: 9780199062959

by Rakhshanda Jalil, the collection is divided into three sections. The first is a selection of three personal portraits followed by a section encompassing critical narratives. Textual Appraisals is the last section, a collection of essays deconstructing the elements that encompass the novel *Aag ka Darya* and the impact it had on Urdu literature.

For someone belonging to the post-80s generation, it was fascinating to read about the Progressive

mal, the outsider, take centre stage throughout the novel. Sukrita Paul Kumar captures the psyche behind this novel succinctly in her essay 'Turns of Centuries in *Aag Ka Darya*.' The writer states, "*Aag ka Darya* was published in 1959 and was written in Pakistan where Hyder had migrated after Partition. The personal anguish of uprooting and exile; an exile that was geographical as well as psychical, brings her into an intimate closeness and understanding

taking liberty here and there," writes Asaduddin. "Rather, it involves entirely refashioning the work according to a new aesthetic." An example of this practice, he claims, is that the first two chapters in *The River of Fire* are additions to the original work. Other chapters that stand independent in the original, are merged into one in the English translation.

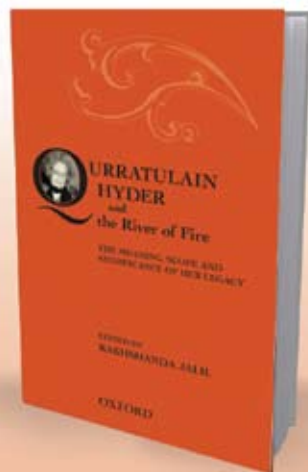
The author contradicts herself when she says that the translator has to stay faithful to the text and "at the

same time interpret the original in a way to render the translation as readable as the original." She asserts that since she is the writer and the translator she can do so and therefore not translate but "transcreate" her novel. This creates a provocative debate about authenticity in translation. Asaduddin quotes the Czech writer Milan Kundera, who is of the opinion that "authenticity" and "accuracy" should form the cornerstones for translation.

After the concept of time, feminism is a key theme in the novel. Sami Rafiq writes about this as-

anhood" and for Kamal, she is the woman poets and writers worship. Hyder wrote lyrically about this woman because womanhood was very close to her heart. Champa was sensual, beautiful, constantly searching and therefore, the goddess that Kamal finds the Hindus worshipping.

This collection of essays gives new perspectives and insights on *Aag ka Darya*. While the modern world extols Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Jose Saramago as icons of magical realism, such a world was already envisioned by Hyder in *Aag*



Reviewed by Atiya Abbas

pect in 'Representation of the Female Psyche: The Champa of *Aag ka Darya*.' Champa is a part of the flowing river of time, whose "waters are creative and destructive." She takes on many identities, from Champak, Champavati to Champa but in each she tries to become one with herself and her true purpose. Her character can be viewed from the lenses of the men who love her, for Gautam she was "the embodiment of essential mythical wom-

ka Darya. This selection of writing should be read as a companion to the original as it will deepen one's understanding of the novel and break it down in a literary context. *Aag ka Darya* was not just a product of post-Partition writing but a novel that embodies the search for the self through time and space. ■

Atiya Abbas freelances for various publications and writes extensively on effects of mass media.

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By Anees Jilani

The Bangladesh Supreme Court Ruling

We all must be tired of coming across the expression that ‘Pakistan is going through a traumatic and sensitive time in its history.’ It has been 65 years since independence and the trauma instead of leaving us is somehow on the rise.

There are a number of explanations for this sad state of affairs but one reason is the confusion regarding the basis of Pakistan, often called the Ideology of Pakistan, and resultantly the system that Pakistan should imbibe. You will not hear the term ‘ideology’ used to explain the basis of any other country; for instance, it would be surprising to hear the term ‘Ideology of Thailand’ or ‘Ideology of Germany.’ However, we continue to be stuck with it and even find references to it in our Constitution.

The irony is that the founder of the country was secular in his outlook. But the conflict between the secularists and the theocratists started in his life time when his August 11 speech was tempered with and not reported in most of the Pakistani media.

Pakistan needs to settle the issue of establishing secularism if it has to progress. In this regard, it may take clues from the February 3, 2010 judgment of the Bangladesh Supreme Court wherein it barred the use of religion in politics. It restored the original 1972 Constitution. After the verdict, the Election Commission of Bangladesh on January 26, 2010 asked the three Islamic parties, Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh Khelafat Andolan and Tarikat Federation to amend their charters as they were coming into conflict with the Constitution.

The Supreme Court in this landmark ruling held that the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution, which legitimized governments that were in power from the time of the August 15, 1975, coup in which Mujibur Rehman was killed along with most of his family members, through April 9, 1979, were illegal. The ruling was in response to two writ petitions, one by the Bangladesh National Party,

led by Ziaur Rehman’s widow, Khalida Zia, and the other by Jamaat-e-Islami, that challenged an August 2005 High Court decision declaring the Fifth Amendment illegal. The Court had earlier granted a stay order that was ultimately vacated on January 3, 2010. Resultantly, the original Article 38 of the Constitution, which protected secularism, became operative barring the use of religion or communal connotations in politics.

Such decisions always have long-term impacts on the social and political fabric of a country, as shown by the subsequent Dhaka High Court decision in which it held that nobody can be forced to wear burqa, cap, or *dhoti*. The Court held that Bangladesh is now a secular state since the original constitution of 1972 has been automatically restored following the Supreme Court judgment. It said that ‘in this secular state, everybody has religious freedom, and therefore no man, woman or child can be forced to wear religious attires.’ Similarly, it stated that ‘nobody could be prohibited from wearing religious attires if he or she wishes to wear those.’ The Court also directed the authorities to immediately issue a circular asking all educational institutions not to compel students to wear religious clothes.

The Supreme Court ruling by the six-member full bench headed by former Chief Justice Mohammad Tafazzul Islam, has laid the foundation for a process of reviving the secular spirit in Bangladesh. Secularism is looked down upon and associated with *ladeeniya* in Pakistan when all it stands for is negation of State level involvement in religious matters. It stands for separation of clergy from running of state affairs, which may not be such a bad thing to suggest for present-day Pakistan. **S**

Anees Jilani is an advocate of the Supreme Court of Pakistan 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.

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A photograph of a dilapidated wooden shack built on stilts over a body of water. The shack is made of weathered, dark wood and has a corrugated metal roof that is partially missing and rusted. A red sign with white text that reads "FOR SALE" is attached to the front of the shack. The shack is supported by a complex wooden frame of vertical posts and diagonal bracing. In the background, there is a body of water and some industrial structures on the far shore under a blue sky with white clouds.

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