

**LEADERSHIP SERIES**  
**Faiz Ahmed Faiz**

June 2013

# SOUTHASIA

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Beyond the Lingo Barrier

**SRI LANKA**  
Stealthy Advances

**BANGLADESH**  
Just a Dream?

**INTERNATIONAL**  
Leaving the Volatility Behind



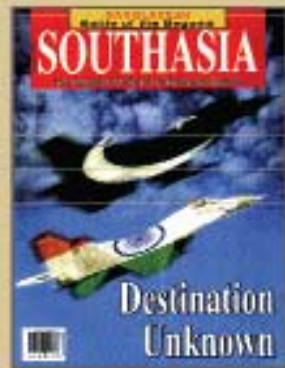
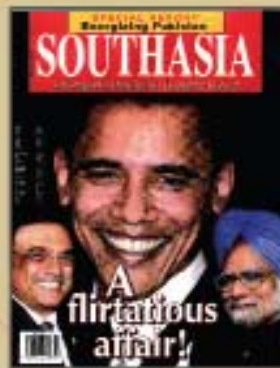
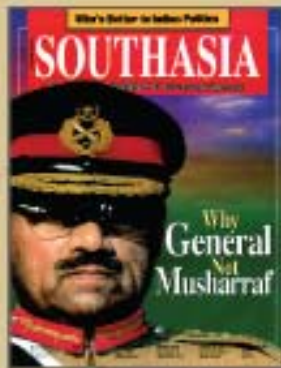
# THE DAY AFTER

Allegations of massive rigging and mismanagement have left a scar on the 2013 general elections in Pakistan where a smooth democratic transition is still a bridge too far.



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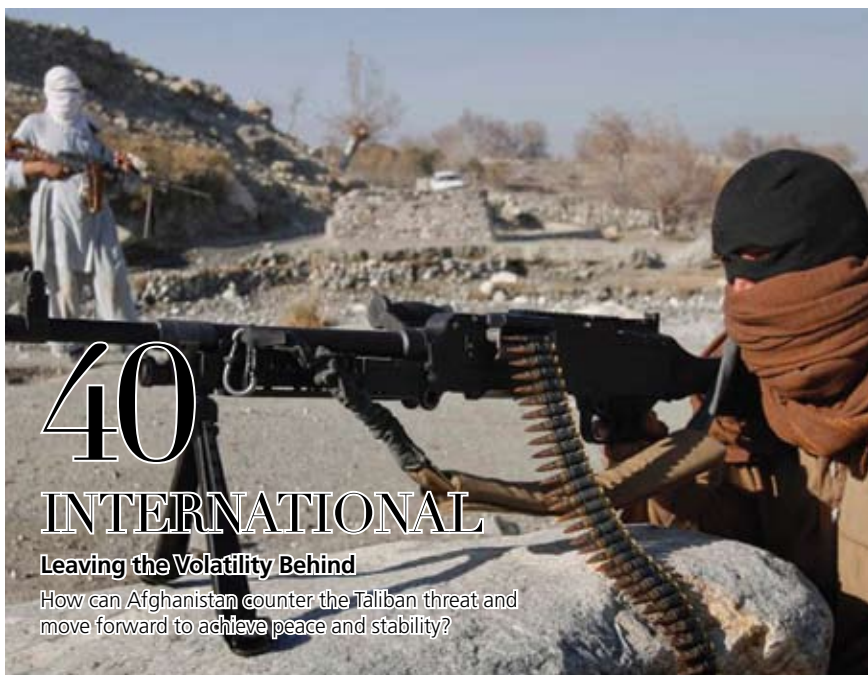
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# The Welcome Guest

Nato is scheduled to withdraw from Afghanistan in 2014 but it is feared that once the Western forces leave, the Taliban would make a resurgence and the al-Qaeda would again find a safe haven in the country. In the aftermath, the current Afghan leadership and their successors would also lose their relevance. Hamid Karazi, as is clear, will not continue as President of Afghanistan following general elections in the country in 2014. But he would like to leave behind a legacy of ties with India, a country he seems to have deep emotional links with. Karzai is apprehensive that the post-Nato Afghanistan may again turn into a hot-bed of warring tribes and any modicum of governance that has been established ever since he took over as President of Afghanistan in 2001, would be undone. Karzai shared his apprehensions with his hosts during his recent visit to India and handed them a 'wish' list of military hardware. It may be recalled that the Indians have already trained Afghan military personnel and provided military equipment under a strategic partnership deal that New Delhi and Kabul signed in 2011. President Karzai reiterated his gratitude to the Indians for helping in various development projects and thanked them for educating Afghan youth at Indian universities.

Previously, India too showed its abiding enthusiasm to further its relations with Afghanistan which it always considered a friendly neighbour. Of late, though, Indian love for Afghanistan seems to be cooling down. It now appears to be hesitant in taking this relationship to a climax because of the renewed overtures from the third partner in this three-way affair. Says Afghan foreign minister Zalmay Rassoul, "A decade ago the BJP government wanted to help us militarily but we refused, due to Pakistan's sensitivities. This time, we are keen, but India is hesitant." The new Pakistan Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, has expressed his keen desire to rebuild ties with India and this is an opportunity that India wouldn't want to miss. Indian policymakers will now have to balance the Indian desire to reinforce influence in Kabul on the one hand and improve relations with Islamabad, on the other. That the election of Nawaz Sharif for a third time as Pakistan's prime minister has been broadly welcomed in Delhi is a factor that is playing hard on the Indian mind.

Afghanistan and Pakistan have had rocky relations for the most part since Pakistan appeared on the world map. President Karzai terms the two nations as "inseparable brothers" due to the historical, religious, ethnic and linguistic connections between the two neighbours as well as the transit trade facilities that Pakistan offers to land-locked Afghanistan. However, the two countries have never been good friends, what with such sticking thorns as the Durand Line dispute, the influx of Afghan refugees into Pakistan, the Taliban insurgency and continuing border skirmishes. The growing influence of India in Afghanistan has further added to the souring of ties with Pakistan. It has always been New Delhi's desire, though, to gain more influence in Afghanistan. Now that the Western romance with the region is over, Hamid Karzai is a welcome guest in India.



Syed Jawaid Iqbal

## Setting the Political Trajectory

Your cover story on Pakistan's general elections 2013 was an informative read. The writer explained in detail the current scenario of the country's political domain which is dominated by heavyweights such as



the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), and the Pakistan Muslim League – Nawaz (PML-N). These elections were a momentous event in the country's political history as the PPP-led government completed its 5-years in tenure and held elections on time. It was enlightening to learn about the key candidates from each party and what role they could play in these elections. Moreover, the key points from the manifestos of the five prominent political parties added tremendous value to the author's argument. Unfortunately, Pakistani voters seldom read party manifestos and rely largely on rhetoric. By providing a basic breakdown, the reader was able to draw comparisons between parties based on their manifestos. Based on facts and figures, the writer discussed in detail the many predicaments the country faces such as sectarian violence,

Balochistan's status as a problem province, and possible attacks on the election campaigns by terrorist outfits including Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and Taliban. The election campaigns did bring to the table pledges made by political leaders who were eyeing to become the head-of-state, however, most of these leaders had lost their credibility in their previous term.

Ahsan Badar  
Islamabad, Pakistan

## South Asia's Achievement

It is heartwarming to know that South Asia Magazine is the winner of the prestigious US Genesis Award 2013 in the Brigitte Bardot International Print Category. I have been reading this magazine for a long time and find its articles and content at par with international standards. The different sections of the magazine cover topics pertaining to politics, business, education, health, economy and the list goes on. The magazine's unique selling proposition is its prime focus on the events, news, and personalities it covers from the South Asian region. Moreover, the readers get to know the latest news from Pakistan, Afghanistan, and India and also from Nepal and



Bhutan, landlocked countries which do not attract global media attention. Having interest in business and economics, I believe that South Asia has proved its mettle by publishing original and quality content which has augmented the magazine's credibility over time. South Asia Magazine's efforts in raising awareness about animal issues must be acknowledged and receiving the US Genesis Award 2013 is a testimony to magazine's efforts to publish articles and features to prevent animal cruelty and promote animal awareness. My best wishes are for the entire editorial team of South Asia Magazine and I hope that the publication achieves greater accolades in the future.

Oliver Fulton  
Washington, DC, USA

## Fighting Against Polio

Your special feature "Battling Polio" was an informative and insightful piece describing the efforts, which Pakistan is taking to eradicate this disease. Plagued by the syndrome for a long time, Pakistan is one of the last three countries in the world with recorded polio cases. This poses a challenge for the government as it must take all possible steps to wipe out the disease from the country for good. Adding depth to the article was the writer's decision to address the issue from a broader perspective by adding key polio statistics. Moreover, the list of attacks carried out by terrorist groups on polio campaigns across Pakistan highlighted the security concerns polio workers are facing while performing their duties on the field. Although the government is trying all possible solutions to stamp out polio once and for all, the efforts seem futile with security risks looming over the polio workers. It is high time that the government seriously looks into the



matter and with the help of the Prime Minister's Polio Monitoring and Eradication Cell, implements strategies in making Pakistan polio free in the next few years. The path will be rickety; however, with all the resources by the country's side, this objective can turn into a reality.

Shaista Ilyas  
Dubai, UAE

## Pipeline Project

The Iran-Pakistan Gas Pipeline project finally went underway despite U.S. opposition. This is a major step forward for the South Asian neighbors, Iran and Pakistan, who are joining hands on the much-awaited gas pipeline project. The 781-kilometer long gas pipeline will fulfill much of Pakistan's gas needs, provide an impetus to its industrial sector, better its economic situation, and build ties with Iran. Although some analysts suggest that the Iran-Pakistan pipeline project, commencing a couple of months prior to the 2013 general elections, was an election stunt orchestrated by the PPP, in reality, it was the need of the hour for Pakistan to move forward with the project. Where Pakistan is expected to receive nearly 21.5 million cubic meters of natural gas once the project is completed, a possible sanction by Washington also gazes at Pakistan's relationship with Iran. Some political leaders, including Shahbaz Sharif, have criticized the previous govern-

ment led by Asif Ali Zardari for signing the agreement a few days before his government completed its tenure and not when he first came into power five years back. Even with criticism surrounding the gas pipeline project, it is certainly a major stride forward for Pakistan, which is experiencing gas shortage for a long time.

Rabia Haider  
Islamabad, Pakistan

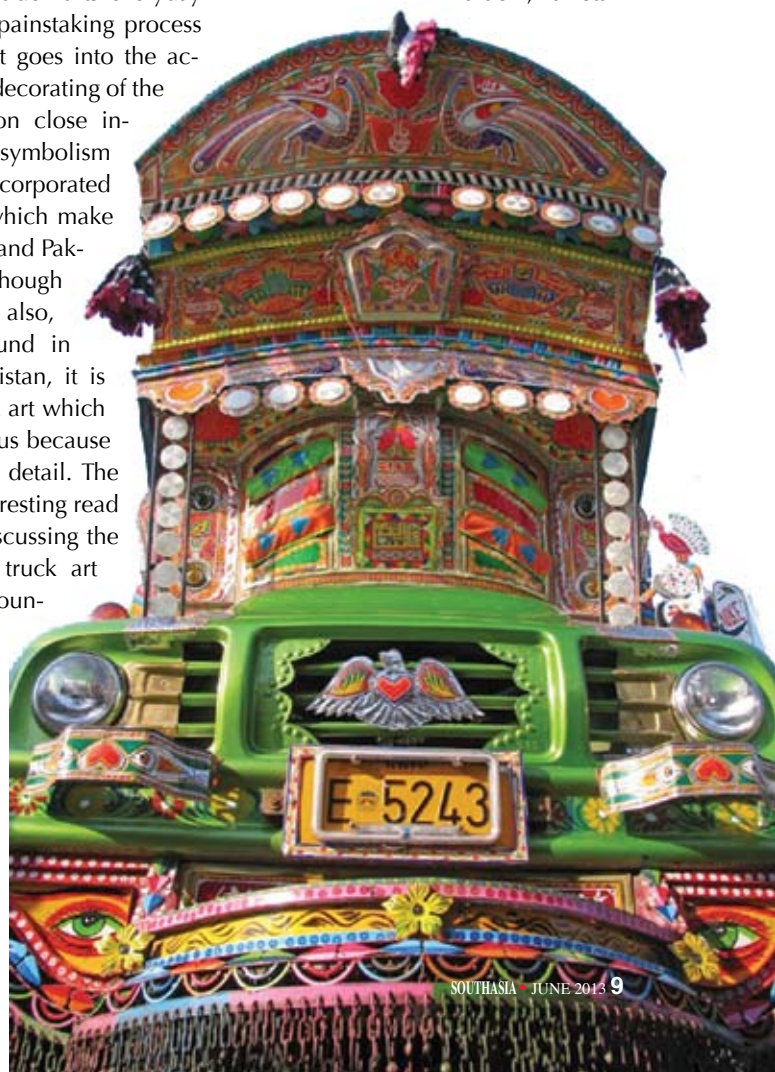
## Colorful Truck Art

Your article "A Riot of Colors" offered an in-depth look into the artistic details of truck art in Pakistan. These trucks, adorned with metal cowlings, carved wooden doors, chrome bumpers, and paintings on the external body are a common sight in the metropolitan cities of Pakistan. We do gaze at these truck arts everyday but overlook the painstaking process and the labor that goes into the actual painting and decorating of the truck's body. Upon close inspection we find symbolism and storytelling incorporated in the paintings which make this art so unique and Pakistani centric. Although such truck art is also, to an extent, found in India and Afghanistan, it is the Pakistani truck art which has become famous because of its attention to detail. The article was an interesting read with the writer discussing the various forms of truck art found across the country. The writer aptly mentioned the motive behind beautifying the trucks with intricate paintings, which are a traditional practice and an attempt

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by the drivers to stay awake as they pass colorful vehicles late at night. In addition, the truck art is a testimony of the skills and talents shown by the painters who decorate the otherwise dull trucks and turn them into a visual masterpiece.

Farhan Sohail  
Karachi, Pakistan



# UPCOMING B2B EVENTS ...



**27 - 29 August 2013, Karachi Expo Centre**  
2nd International Multi-Modal Transportation,  
Logistics & Material Handling Exhibition and Conference  
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**5 - 7 September 2013, Expo Centre Lahore**  
11th International Plastics & Packaging  
Industry Trade Fair  
Website: [www.plastipac.com.pk](http://www.plastipac.com.pk)  
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**5 - 7 September 2013, Expo Centre Lahore**  
10th Edition of the International Food, Beverage  
& Packaging Technology Trade Fair  
Website: [www.foodtech.com.pk](http://www.foodtech.com.pk)  
E-mail: [info@foodtech.com.pk](mailto:info@foodtech.com.pk)



**5 - 7 September 2013, Expo Centre Lahore**  
2nd International Food, Beverages &  
Hospitality Trade Fair  
Website: [www.foodtech.com.pk](http://www.foodtech.com.pk)  
E-mail: [info@foodtech.com.pk](mailto:info@foodtech.com.pk)



**26 - 28 November 2013, Karachi Expo Centre**  
8th Information & Communications  
Technology Exhibition and Conference  
Website: [www.connectit.com.pk](http://www.connectit.com.pk)  
E-mail: [info@connectit.com.pk](mailto:info@connectit.com.pk)



**25-27 February 2014**  
**Pak-China Friendship Centre, Islamabad**  
10th International Safety & Security Exhibition  
Website: [www.safesecurepakistan.com](http://www.safesecurepakistan.com)  
E-mail: [info@safesecurepakistan.com](mailto:info@safesecurepakistan.com)



**2014, Expo Centre Lahore**  
12th Edition of the International Machinery  
Exhibition of Garment & Textile Technology  
Website: [www.megatechpakistan.com](http://www.megatechpakistan.com)  
E-mail: [info@megatechpakistan.com](mailto:info@megatechpakistan.com)



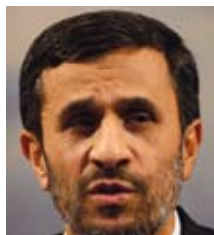
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"We don't need an atom bomb. And besides, it is not atom bombs that threaten the world, but Western morals and culture declining in values."

**Mahmoud Ahmadinejad**  
*President of Iran*



"Bangladesh will be a non-communal democratic country free of Razakars, Al Badr and war criminals."

**Sheikh Hasina**  
*Prime Minister of Bangladesh*



"A section of this country before 2009 was identified as an Eelam region. The ceasefire agreement had even acknowledged some recognition to that effect."

**Mahinda Rajapaksa**  
*President of Sri Lanka*



"We never planned to eliminate the Taliban. Not me, not the Afghan people, not the Afghan government."

**Hamid Karzai**  
*President of Afghanistan*



"We Maldivians are not indebted to anyone. We are proud people. We pay back what we borrow."

**Mohamed Waheed Manik**  
*President of the Maldives*



"We can make a civil servant fit but the big question is that how do we get fit politicians?"

**Salman Khurshid**  
*External Affairs Minister of India*



"Business leadership in both our countries - in India and Pakistan - has been long endeavoring to build bridges of trade and business opportunities together."

**Sherry Rehman**  
*Former Pakistan Ambassador to the US*



"Bollywood actresses work harder, they look better, they keep the film industry together. I honestly think that they do not get the credit they deserve."

**Shahrukh Khan**  
*Indian Film Actor*



"Cutting off aid to Pakistan would not be a good move, certainly, at this point in time, for a lot of different reasons."

**John Kerry**  
*US Secretary of State*



"I have been asked about my availability and I have told them I am definitely interested in playing in the [Indian Tennis Premier] League."

**Aisam-ul-Haq**  
*Pakistani Tennis Player*



"Our mission is to make the country a welfare state where peace and prosperity are its hallmarks."

**Imran Khan**  
*Chairman, Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf*



"From what I have read in the newspapers, the import of European cars would be in a small number [compared with] the total size of the Indian market by 2017."

**RC Bhargava**  
*Chairman, Maruti Suzuki*

PAKISTAN

# Rupee Hits 100 Mark against USD

For the second time this year, the Pakistani Rupee has touched the 100-mark against the U.S. dollar in the open market amidst concerns over a negative balance of payment and an

uncertain political forefront. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has urged Pakistan to take effective measures to stabilize the country's economy and form the basis for future growth.

Since December 2011, the value of the Pakistani Rupee has decreased by nearly PKR 8.10 against the U.S. dollar following the fall in foreign reserves, pressure on payment for opening license of credit, and high demand of the dollar from local currency markets. Other factors leading to this decline include import bills of crude oil, palm oil, industrial raw material, and other commodities.

The economic outlook of the coun-

try appears shabby as the local currency has been devalued by nearly 8.6 percent to date since the beginning of the current financial year. The rise in imports bill and payment of International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Stand-by Arrangement (SBA) facility installments have led to this unprecedented increase.

In addition, reducing the Rupee value against the dollar include economic factors such as the deficiency of foreign inflows and an increase in the government's non-productive expenditures. Inflationary conditions also show an upward trend which is an additional burden on the country's fragile economy. **S**



AFGHANISTAN

# Learning from Experience

According to unofficial reports, NATO commanders have recently reached out to the Russian Defense Ministry for information on the Soviet troop withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989. The U.S. led NATO troops will emulate the Russian experience for troop withdrawal, which is expected to take place in December 2014.

NATO officials who are part of the 2014 withdrawal have shown interest to meet the participants of the 1989 operation. The Russian Defense Ministry has accepted the request, citing no reason to reject the appeal and promising to provide U.S. commanders with all relevant documents. Russia and NATO also held a foreign minister's conference in April to discuss the withdrawal in detail.

The U.S. is planning to withdraw all troops from Afghanistan in 2014 after analysts suggested that the country was engaged in an unwinnable war.

Russia has offered the U.S. to use the Baltic Port of Ust-Luga to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan. NATO officials will benefit greatly from this Russian gesture as transporting coalition cargo through the Ulyanovsk transport hub was a burden on their finances and using the Baltic Port will be a feasible option. In addition,



the Russia-NATO cooperation will give additional opportunities to promote Russian military hardware in foreign markets. **S**

# Importing LNG

India's largest natural gas importer, Petronet, has signed a supply agreement with the United State's United LNG to receive liquefied natural gas for the next twenty years. According to the agreement, the U.S. company will supply a minimum of 4 million tons of LNG per year to India over a period of two decades through the Main Pass Energy Hub in the Gulf of Mexico. This is Petronet's first U.S. LNG supply off-take agreement, which is expected to fulfill India's growing LNG needs.

Prior to signing the agreement with United LNG, Qatar's RasGas was India's sole long-term natural gas supplier. However, India had opted for

another supplier as its LNG needs accentuated over the years. Of late, the U.S. has emerged as a reliable and a cost efficient LNG supplier and has become the world's target for secure LNG. India's energy demand is increasing at a rate of 5 to 6 percent annually and has become the world's sixth largest LNG importer.

Although the U.S. State Department of Energy approved the Main Pass facility as a trade route to export gas to any country that has or will enter into a free trade agreement with the U.S., approval for exports to non-free trade countries

is still pending. Officials at Petronet believe that this is a preliminary agreement and stressed that the two parties will sign the binding agreement once United LNG receives the approval from the U.S. Energy Department. In addition, if the agreement is signed by the end of this year, United LNG will begin supplying LNG by 2018. **S**



# Infrastructural Development

The Asian Development Bank (ADB), in its recent report, has termed Bangladesh as having the worst infrastructure facilities, third only to Nepal and Mongolia.

The report states that Bangladesh's physical infrastructure such as transport, communication, sewage, water, and energy are in dire state. Moreover, the country's growing urbanization in recent years has generated demands for physical infrastructure but owing to financial constraints, Bangladesh could not achieve much progress in infrastructural development.

Economists believe that Bangladesh can meet its infrastructural financing through

a number of ways such as utilizing external and internal resources, domestic savings, and foreign exchange reserves. Economists are of the view that Bangladesh should use its foreign exchange reserves to meet its infrastructure costs. However, according to some estimates, the country needs

nearly \$35 billion of infrastructure investment in the next five years.

Analysts believe that since Bangladesh has scarce domestic savings and a shallow domestic financial market, it ought to explore external resources to finance infrastructure. This is because the country's growth of saving rates and development of financial markets correlate with its income level. The ADB report observes that foreign investments bring special types of risk to the country because of their long development time, currency exposure, political risks, likelihood of cancellation, and possible underutilization. **S**



SRI LANKA


## Decline in US Aid

U.S. Secretary of State, John Kerry has proposed a 20 per cent cut in American aid to Sri Lanka, a move reflecting discomfort in their ties over human rights issues and over Sri Lanka's reconstruction and political integration. It is believed to be the highest cut in U.S. aid for any South Asian country in Kerry's budgetary proposals. The \$11 million in aid to Sri Lanka reflects the U.S. challenges in allocating its monetary support to the country.

Actual U.S. development assistance to Sri Lanka in 2012 was \$8 million; Kerry had proposed nearly \$6 million for 2014. According to the officials at the U.S. State Department, the U.S. did render its support in Sri

Lanka's conflict zones in the north, to help the internally displaced people and to support reconstruction efforts. It seems that the involvement of Sri Lanka's military in U.S.-led programs led to the decline in aid cut. The U.S. also took the decision as Sri Lanka has resources of its own.

Sri Lanka is not the only country that is experiencing a decline in U.S. aid as Kerry proposed a similar amount of development assistance to Bangladesh whereby the aid fell from \$81.6 in 2012 to \$80.9 million for 2014. It is expected that majority of U.S. funds will run key projects such as reforming Sri Lanka's judiciary and assisting the Maldives in counter-terrorism efforts.

The U.S. has also expressed its discontent in Sri Lanka's lack of progress toward reconciliation and accountability following the civil war which came to an end in 2009. Moreover, the U.S. is compelling the Sri Lankan government to conduct a reliable independent investigation into the allegations of human rights violations during the war. 



MALDIVES

## Defense Level Meetings

During his recent visit to India, the Maldivian Defense Minister, Mohamed Nazim and his Indian counterpart, A K Antony, agreed to strengthen defense cooperation among their military forces. Both ministers discussed measures to setup up cooperation in

the ongoing areas of training, exercises, strengthening in infrastructure, and capacity building.

Maldives' Defense Minister, Mohamed Nazim, was of the view that the two South Asian countries had agreed to maintain and further reinforce their existing defense cooperation to bridge the gap of doubt prevailing between the two neighbors. According to the Indian Defense Ministry, both countries have also agreed that India and the Maldives should continue to work together to tackle secu-

rity concerns in the interests of peace and stability. In a sign of respect, Indian forces welcomed the Maldivian Minister with a Guard of Honor.

The defense minister-level talks between India and Maldives are the first major talks since last November when the Maldives cancelled the \$500 million contract given to India's GMR Infrastructure to construct the Male International Airport. Following this meeting, progress was seen in the India-Maldives relations when India pledged to provide the Maldives with defense equipment, infrastructure, and training. In addition, India will also provide financial assistance to construct Maldives' Coast Guard Building. 



# Regional Ties with China

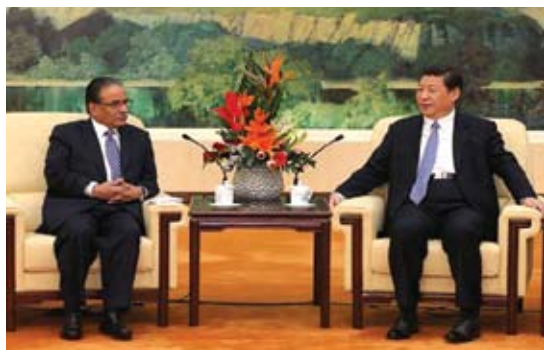
Chinese President Xi Jinping recently met with the Chairman of the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), Puspa Kamal Dahal Prachanda. Both leaders pledged for cooperation where Nepal is seeking

a greater role from China in protecting its fundamental interests. Xi, who is also the general secretary of the Communist Party of China's Central Committee, assured that China gives great importance to bilateral ties with Nepal, appreciates Nepal's adherence to the one-China policy, and supports Nepal's efforts to achieve national progress and development.

During the meeting, Xi assured that China is willing to work with Nepal to reinforce their friendship and boost bilateral ties to promote their comprehensive cooperative partnership, where maintaining a win-win relation-

ship will be of top priority.

The China-Nepal friendship is not only in the fundamental interests of the two countries and its people, but also significant in bringing stability and development in the region. Xi reassured that his Communist Party of China would increase exchanges with Nepal's Unified Communist Party and other major political parties of the country to strengthen their friendship. Prachanda expressed gratitude to China's selfless assistance over the years and believed that China will provide Nepal with financial and technical support. Furthermore, Prachanda assured that Nepal would continue to adhere to the one-China policy. **S**



# Election Begins

Recently Bhutan held its second parliamentary elections in its history, five years after the Buddhist monarchy gave up its absolute power. Voters first chose members of the upper house, the National Council, which is a non-party body. In the following weeks, they will decide which of the five parties would form the next government in the National Assembly.

Since early April, the 67 candidates for the 20 elected National Council seats held debates and public meetings in their respective districts following a local selection process. King Jigme Khesar Wangchuk will select five more members to this list. The National Council, having no political affiliation, monitors the government's

actions, reviews the legislation process, and advises the king.

Villagers in remote areas had to walk for hours to attend the forums and question the candidates first hand. Similarly, the election staff had to make long treks to set up polling stations in areas inaccessible by road. In addition, Bhutan declared a public holiday on Election Day and all borders remained closed for twenty-four hours. Even if elections are set to decide the new government, confusion persists among the political quarters and the public in a country where the illiteracy rate stands at fifty



percent and the monarchy has held the law and order for decades. The candidates are facing problems in delivering their pitches in the national language, dzhonka, which is one of the many languages spoken in Bhutan but not well understood in rural areas. **S**

Elections in a democratic dispensation are no big deal. Nor were the elections on 11 May, the first in Pakistan. But what made these elections “historic” -- almost surreal -- was that for the first time in the sixty-five years of the country’s existence, fair and free elections were held after the previous government had completed its full term.

The change has stunned observers. A vivid sign of it was the swirling crowds of voters flocking to the polling stations. They stood in line for hours under the hot sun and defied Taliban threats to exercise

their democratic right.

The polls presented a rare glimpse of voters “having come of age” as they exploded the myth of feudal influence by rejecting many stalwarts. Those shown the door included ANP chief Asfandiyar Wali, PPP’s Raja Pervez Ashraf, Yusuf Raza Gilani’s two sons, Mian Manzoor Wattoo, Ch Ahmad Mukhtar, Qamar Zaman Kaira, Dr Firdous Ashiq

Awan and even the once formidable Punjab governor, Ghulam Mustafa Khar. Ten years ago such a feat would have been incredible.

# On the Road to



Wattoo and Chaudhry Aitezaz Ahsan to Ambassador Sherry Rehman.

Analysts are therefore scratching their pates to discover the agent of change. What persuaded the establishment and ISI to give up their favorite pastime and take a back seat? Was it the realization that their adventurism has disfigured Pakistan's image beyond recognition before the world community and the country can take no more?

The picture that has emerged shows that there is no "national party" with a solid footing in all provinces. PML (N) is a Punjabi product. Its claim as a national political force is diluted by the measly number of seats it has secured in the provincial assemblies other than Punjab. The two seats in Karachi were won by Messrs Marwat and Aslam Baloch due to their personal popularity, not the PML (N) logo.

The same goes for the PPP. With only 31 seats at the federal level, it cannot even play the role of an effective opposition. On the other hand, it has improved upon its past record in the Sindh assembly with 69 seats.

Even Imran Khan's successes in

KP and Punjab are due to his being partly Pakhtun (Waziri) and a Punjabi (Niazi).

There have been complaints of "dhandli" (rigging) but these are routine and minor, compared to the past record of "jhurloo" when ballot papers were literally swept with a broom and packed in the ballot boxes. However, the Election Commission has ordered re-polling in 43 polling stations of NA-250 Karachi. The MQM has protested against this decision because it yields to Imran Khan's demand. The MQM wants re-polling in the entire constituency.

Felicitations are pouring in from all corners, including Obama and Kerry from the US, David Cameron from the UK, while Manmohan Singh and Rahul Gandhi from India have also spoken with Nawaz Sharif. Significantly, besides "welcoming this historic peaceful and transparent transfer of civilian power" and praising peoples' "commitment to democratic rule," President Obama also held out an offer of continued cooperation with Pakistan "as equal partners." "My administration looks forward to continuing our cooperation with the Pakistani government that emerges from this election as equal partners in supporting a more stable, secure, and prosperous future for the people of Pakistan," Obama said.

Mian Nawaz Sharif is poised for

In consequence of the debacle there has been a raft of resignations in the PPP, from its vice-chairman, Yusuf Raza Gilani, its Punjab president

# Democracy

**It would have been routine in any other part of the world. In Pakistan's case, it is being hailed as a historic event.**

By S.G. Jilanee

the hat trick as prime minister. His PML (N) is the largest party in the NA with 126 solid seats out of 272. Independents and some other splinter parties are flocking to PML (N) while Sharif sent a delegation to Pir Pagara inviting his Functional Muslim League to coalesce at the Centre.

Political pundits are parsing the election picture and the causes of PPP's phenomenal rout. The consensus is that PPP suffered from a leadership crisis. Young Bilawal is neither ZAB nor BB. He stayed holed up for fear of his life during the election campaign. Rudderless and adrift in a choppy political sea, the party withdrew from the public scene. There were no rallies, no meet-the-people plan, no media blitz or even an election master.

Kibitzers are kibitzing Sharif about the do's and don'ts of his next term. However, the vibes coming from him endorse the common feeling that he has changed after the buffets he invited due to his earlier impetuous actions. That he played ball with the PPP government for five years instead of trying clandestine means to topple it as in the past, speaks volumes in favor of his political maturity. He is no longer the arrogant Nawaz Sharif that would send ruffians to raid the Supreme Court and chase away the Chief Justice, pick quarrels with the president, or forbid the plane carrying the army chief from landing anywhere in Pakistan. Nor may he assume the title of *ameerul momineen* this time. With India, he intends to pick up the thread from where it had snapped after the visit of Prime Minister Vajpayee. In his conversation with Manmohan Singh he assured the latter that there will be no more Kargil or Mumbai. Sharif has also changed the tone and tenor of his rhetoric towards the United States from strident to conciliatory. At home, he postponed his election campaign for a day after his rival Imran Khan had an accident. And after the elections,

he visited Khan in the hospital where both vowed to bury the hatchet.

However, there has been no similar display of camaraderie towards the PPP and MQM. The question being asked therefore is: will he start an action replay of the earlier army operation against MQM? Will he try to acquire the image of a "national" leader or remain content as Punjab's spokesman, because, for national leadership, only engaging Pir Pagara, and ignoring PPP and MQM, won't do?

Another question is how will he deal with Pervez Musharraf now that he has the upper hand? Will he launch an inquiry into Kargil or simply refer Musharraf to the Supreme Court to be tried for high treason?

Many critical challenges await Sharif, including a stalled economy, load shedding, corruption and terrorism. He has been known to favor dialogue with the insurgents. But the army chief insists that fighting them is "our war." These conflicting viewpoints call for reconciliation.

In the provincial assemblies, PML (N) swept Punjab with 205 seats out of 287. So it will rule. In Sindh, PPP which won 69 out of 130 seats can form the government on its own. But it has invited the MQM as a coalition partner. In KP, PTI, with the maximum seats (34) will form the government with support assured by PML (N). In Balochistan, PkMAP with 11 seats has a chance. But independents and PML (N), each, has eight seats and JUI (F) has six. It will therefore depend on how these actors play their hands.

Elections have put Pakistan at the cusp of a momentous change. Policy-makers will need to demonstrate their credentials to achieve their goals. The first 100 days will be closely watched for sampling the performance of "third time lucky" Nawaz Sharif. **S**

*S. G. Jilane is a senior political analyst and the former editor of Southasia Magazine.*



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a single word: freedom, justice,  
honor, duty, mercy, hope."

—Sir Winston Churchill

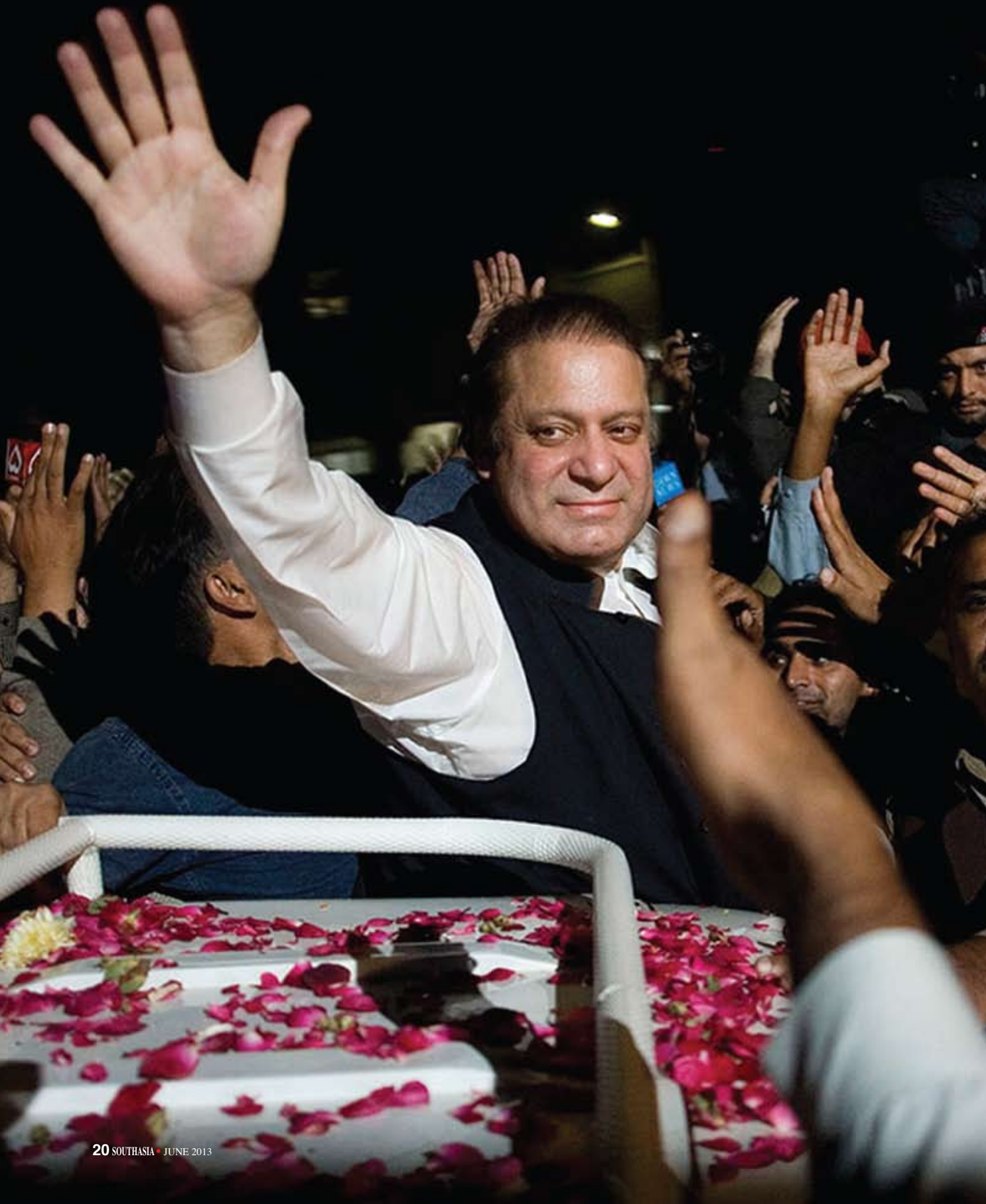
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# The Third Coming

**Nawaz Sharif is leading the government for the third time.  
But it has not been an easy climb and it is uncertain  
whether his stay will be any easier.**

By S. M. Hali

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**M**ian Nawaz Sharif (MNS) has assumed the mantle of Prime Minister of Pakistan for the third time, following Pakistan Muslim League (N)'s sweeping victory in the May 2013 polls, placing the elder Sharif in a position to follow his manifesto in delivering what the Pakistanis desire. MNS will serve Pakistan after a constant five-year struggle in the opposition to the PPP-led government.

This turnaround to the altar of power has been a thorny path: from being deposed, incarcerated and later exiled for ten years by General Pervez Musharraf. The 2008 general elections earned his party very few seats and he had to play second fiddle to Zardari's PPP. Despite being a signatory to the Charter of Democracy with Benazir Bhutto and having joined the coalition government of PPP, MNS had to suffer the ignominy of ridicule and being let down by a recurrently reneging Zardari. MNS got a number of chances to exploit the corruption, mismanagement and bad governance of the PPP led government

and set the Zardari coterie packing through street power but even at the cost of earning the dubious title of a "friendly opposition", MNS confined his party to parliamentary practices, not wanting to upset the applecart of democracy. Meanwhile, his younger brother Mian Shahbaz Sharif, former Chief Minister of Punjab, gained popularity through development and relief projects.

The persistence and patience of MNS bore fruit, as the people rejected PPP for its corrupt and inefficient rule and favored MNS for sticking to democratic principles. Apart from that, MNS ran a fierce election campaign while his voracious appetite for success was whetted by an equally aggressive election campaign run by Imran Khan and his Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI), which brutally attacked the policies and past weaknesses of MNS. PTI made a severe dent in the vote bank of PML (N), grabbing 30 seats in the National Assembly, which divided the votes in favor of PML (N)'s opponents. However, MNS

achieved victories, both in Punjab and the Centre, gaining victory to lead the National Parliament without the crutches of coalition partners, who usually demand their proverbial pound of flesh for their support and become a millstone around the neck of parliamentary leaders.

MNS's electoral success has begrudgingly been accepted by his opponents although there are complaints of rigging in some polling centers in Punjab and Karachi, which is being examined by the Election Commission of Pakistan. Overall, the statesman-like attitude of MNS has won him the respect of his opponents. He has not only reached out to all his rivals, extending them the olive branch, but also personally visited Imran Khan at a local hospital, where he is recuperating following injuries received in a campaign accident. The visit helped take the sting out of the bitterly contested election campaign and urged both leaders to jointly strive to resolve the myriad problems Pakistan is facing.

The two previous tenures of MNS as the Parliamentary leader earned him mixed reviews. Whereas he strove to improve the economy of Pakistan, the heavy mandate gave him a swollen head. He sacked two Services Chiefs, becoming emboldened to crackdown on a dissenting media, take on the President and the Chief Justice and unceremoniously sack his own handpicked Army Chief, General Pervez Musharraf, which precipitated a coup d'état and a decade's exile for him. Hopefully he has learnt his lesson and will be more accommodating to justified criticism and not fly off the handle, seeking vengeance. He does bring the experience of two incomplete terms but much has changed in the fourteen years since his last tenure of office, when there was no free, vibrant and vocal media, which does not mince words while digging up misdeeds of the government. MNS will have to learn to deal

ties. The change of horses in Pakistan has come at a very critical juncture. By 2014, the international forces are likely to drawdown but Afghanistan remains strife torn. If peace and reconciliation is not established, there is a strong likelihood of an internecine war, which will adversely affect Pakistan. Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan is hell bent upon wreaking havoc and unless they are reined in with a combination of aggression and negotiation, they will continue to bleed Pakistan.

The other pressing issues are that of a shattered economy, tottering under massive foreign debts and acute power shortage, exacerbated by some dubious power rental deals. MNS and his team of wonder boys will have to pull off miracles otherwise, within weeks, the same voters who have gleefully voted him into power, will take to the streets demanding action. Interestingly, despite taking credit for the nuclear tests, MNS has been

as a peacenik, he forgot to mention about state terrorism sponsored by India against Pakistan through its agents like Sarabjit Singh. He did not utter a word on the cold-blooded murder of Pakistani prisoner Sanaullah in an Indian jail and nary a thought on the core issue of Kashmir, much to the chagrin of Kashmiris. Being a trader, MNS is obsessed with trade with India, but he needs to ensure that it is on an even keel without compromising national sovereignty. MNS has also been critical of the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline project. It is not clear whether he was prompted by Iran's arch rival Saudi Arabia or some other detractor. Pakistan is definitely facing an energy shortage and the Iran-Pakistan Gas Pipeline is a done deal and should not be shelved under any pretext or for scoring brownie points with the Saudis.

Sharif will have to prove that he is a pragmatic leader, who has his fingers on the pulse of the people and will deliver on his campaign promises of providing them relief. He may be owing favors to the Saudis for having granted him asylum during his exile and a few other foreign countries, with whom he or his family have commercial relations. However, after assuming the mantle of power, he will have to live up to his claims of being a successor to the original Muslim League by not compromising national interests in an overzealous attempt to appease India. After all freedom for Pakistan was obtained to pursue the aspirations of the Muslims of the Sub-Continent, for whom without Independence, it would have been a change of masters from the British to the Hindus. ■

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

**In his election manifesto, Nawaz Sharif has been vociferous towards resolving the problems facing Pakistan. Foremost among them is terrorism, which has taken a heavy toll on the nation and targeted the election campaigns of a number of mainstream political parties.**

with this new phenomenon in the Pakistani milieu and instead of trying to silence the media, he will have to ensure that his party does not offer any chances to an observant and critical media.

In his election manifesto, MNS has been vociferous towards resolving the problems facing Pakistan. Foremost among them is terrorism, which has taken a heavy toll on the nation and targeted the election campaigns of a number of mainstream political par-

ties. The change of horses in Pakistan has come at a very critical juncture. By 2014, the international forces are likely to drawdown but Afghanistan remains strife torn. If peace and reconciliation is not established, there is a strong likelihood of an internecine war, which will adversely affect Pakistan. Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan is hell bent upon wreaking havoc and unless they are reined in with a combination of aggression and negotiation, they will continue to bleed Pakistan.

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Exterior maneuver or foreign policy has not been MNS and his team's forte. He has already committed faux pas in his recent interview in a program "Devil's Advocate" on GNN-IBN to Karan Thapar; MNS had a discourse on every subject concerning India without having any regard to stated national policies. In his exuberance towards portraying himself

# ‘Free, Fair and Transparent?’

With massive allegations of rigging reported from major constituencies and lack of a firm and assertive Election Commissioner, Elections 2013 will be remembered for all the wrong reasons.

By Munir Ishrat Rahmani



**E**lection 2013 was a mixed plate: there was the more than usual rhetoric, target killings of candidates, bomb blasts, explosions in public meetings, kidnapping of a high profile candidate, continued threats from the Taliban, a pinch of drama provided by the fall from a platform of one of the top leaders, rendering him incapable of winding up an aggressive election campaign, considerable mismanagement at some of the polling stations and allegations of ‘rigging’ combined with agitation, boycott or ‘*Dharna*’ in major cities, to add spice to the whole show.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) had conducted the last elections in 2008 successfully and this time had the additional advantage of modern technology for conducting free and fair polls and compiling accurate results. The ECP, under the chairmanship of Justice (Retired) Fakhruddin G. Ebrahim, was expected to make Election 2013 a great success and a landmark event as it was being held after the completion of a five-year term by a democratically-elected government. The Commission had the services of Rangers and Army at its disposal for assistance. Major political parties provided great motivation through aggressive campaigning and people were urged to come out in large numbers on May 11 to cast their vote despite Taliban threats of disrupting the Elections. Unfortunately, the exercise turned out to be a fiasco in some areas leading to bitter disappointment and severe criticism from all corners over the much-trumpeted but rather mismanaged general elections.

Those who had seen the previous elections of 2008 being conducted in a commendable manner and without much hue and cry, despite the parties in power losing a large number of seats, expected a much improved performance from the Chief Election Commissioner and his team in 2013. He made repeated pledges of conduct-

ing transparent elections in a manner that would be remembered for years to come. He was right: the Elections 2013 will certainly be remembered but for different reasons. The detailed planning of the exercise, provisioning of election equipment and training of the staff designated to conduct voting at polling stations left a lot to be desired. The Army was available on call but was not deployed at or near the polling stations to ensure non-interference by any undesirable elements.

A large number of complaints of irregularities from all provinces kept pouring in on the election day. The allegations of ‘rigged elections’ voiced by the media and political parties pertained mainly to the actual process of polling on May 11 but it was observed that the rigging had started much before. It started when the Chief Election Commissioner succumbed to the pressure of some political parties by short-circuiting the process of genuine scrutiny required under articles 62 and 63 of the Constitution. Many candidates who did not meet the criteria were allowed to contest the election.

There were other forms of ‘organized rigging’ like the delimitation of constituencies in Karachi without the database of a fresh census. This was done even after the issuance of the election schedule! The order of the ECP did not meet the constitutional requirement and it was viewed as a biased decision. Another example of ‘rigging’ was the disenfranchisement of women in some areas of Pakistan. It was with the consent of the ECP that women were barred from voting in certain areas of Swat, Malakand, Dir, Mianwali, etc. This was also a blatant violation of the constitution. When an election commission’s credibility becomes doubtful, then the entire process of election can never be expected to be transparent, free and fair.

The ECP appeared to be quite weak in putting its decisions to practice. Either the local administration at various



Source: www.aljazeera.com

places did not fully cooperate with the ECP or it was its inherent weakness that on May 11 it could not ensure timely provisioning of proper staff, polling paraphernalia and facilities for the voters at the polling stations in a number of constituencies. There were many polling stations in various parts of the country where polling could not start on time. Karachi suffered the most with constituencies where polling started only after three to four hours of the scheduled time. In one strange instance in NA-250, the candidate of Pakistan Tehreek-e Insaaf himself brought ballot boxes in his personal car to the polling station and nobody from the ECP questioned or checked this irregularity at all! Perhaps, 'rigging' needed to be re-defined in the annals of the ECP.

Apart from the general mismanagement, the polling staff also did not perform their assigned task diligently and allowed irregularities inside the polling stations. Some party workers came forward with video recordings of bogus votes being cast in Lahore, Faisalabad and Karachi but the ECP failed to take any action. Jamaat-e-Islami and Muttaheda Qaumi Movement were the first to protest against the irregularities noticed at polling stations in NA-250 and NA-246/248, constituencies, respectively. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf raised its voice against rigging in many constituencies in the Punjab. They accused Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) of influencing the polling through the presence of unauthorized persons inside the polling stations who were indulging in irregularities. Similar complaints were reported from interior Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. All parties cried foul.

The Election Commission decided to order re-polling at the polling stations where they thought the polling was disturbed and voters had not been able to cast their votes due to time constraints, irregularities by some outsiders or late arrival of the polling staff and materials. Re-polling was

conducted on May 21 in the country, except in Karachi where it was carried out on May 19. The polling in Karachi was conducted under strict security arrangements provided by the police,

out of their comfort zone in the hostile weather and defied threats of the Taliban to attain the satisfaction of electing their representatives for the assemblies.

**The Election Commission decided to order re-polling at the polling stations where they thought the polling was disturbed and voters had not been able to cast their votes due to time constraints, irregularities by some outsiders or late arrival of the polling staff and materials.**

Rangers and the Army but the turnout remained just about 15 percent or so as against about 55 percent on May 11. The PPP, MQM and Jamaat-e-Islami boycotted the re-polling in Karachi, despite the efforts of Tehreek-e-Insaaf to motivate their voters, thus adversely affecting the turnout. They had, however, the consolation of winning one national and two provincial assembly seats in the one-sided elections. After all the chaos and drama that had consumed Karachi following allegations of rigging, re-polling did little to enhance PTI's image.

With all said and done and setting the allegations of rigging aside, Election 2013 will be remembered for the simple fact that out of the 86 million registered voters, 55 to 57 percent came out on May 11 to exercise their right to vote. The urban areas saw long queues at polling stations that included large numbers of motivated 'debutants' to the voting process who had either just attained the age to become eligible to vote or belonged to the 'reluctant elite' that always preferred to stay at home and watch the elections on television. It signified political awareness and a definite change in the mindset of the citizens who decided to come

Complaints of rigging are often heard in almost all countries that have a manual system of voting and vote-counting. The whole exercise, however, could have been better managed by the ECP had their team gone into the intricate details of the polling process at all polling stations and tied down the loose ends well in time. If required, the services of National Database Registration Authority (NADRA) could have been utilized for verification of thumb impressions of the voters, which was used at the time of casting the vote. Another useful feature introduced this time was the photograph of the voter in the list to eliminate the possibility of cheating. In retrospect, one felt that the Election Commission of Pakistan needed a more dynamic leader of the organization in view of the gigantic and sensitive task of conducting elections in a country where corruption is ingrained in the culture and an absolutely unbiased, assertive and firm approach is required to meet the challenge. **S**

*Munir Ishrat Rahmani is a retired Colonel of the Pakistan Army. He writes on current affairs and social issues from a key military policy perspective.*

*“China and Afghanistan are good neighbors, friends and partners. The exchange between the two peoples could date back to 2,000 years ago.”*

**-Mr. Xu Feihong, Chinese Ambassador to Kabul.**

China's transformation from a sleeping giant to a dragon in a span of just four decades cannot be understood without exploring the “open door” policy unleashed by the then Chinese leader, Deng Xiaoping in 1978. Maintaining a double-digit

macy and negotiations to resolve conflicts. Since 1978, China has refrained from taking sides in violent conflicts and preferred to deal with contentious issues through peaceful means.

In January 2008, the Confucius Institute opened in Kabul University but

Confucius Institute at Kabul University targets young Afghans who were exposed to Russian, English or other European languages and cultures and will now have an opportunity to learn Mandarin - a language of the world's most popular country and the second

# Beyond the Lingo Barrier

**China's “soft power” approach in Afghanistan comes with strong ulterior motives.**

**By Dr. Moonis Ahmar**

economic growth rate for several years and holding around 3.4 trillion dollars of foreign exchange reserves, China aims to deepen its influence, particularly in Asia and Africa with large-scale investments.

A critical aspect of China's policy in global affairs revolves around “soft power.” Beijing systematically pursues four pillars of soft power: cultural influence, economic and trade ties, diplo-

due to security reasons it ceased its activities in October 2010. The institute aims to develop a better understanding among Afghans about Chinese culture and language. The President of Kabul University recently stated, “China and Chinese language both play an important role in the international arena. I hope the Chinese leaders can contribute to the bilateral friendship by learning this language as well.” The

global economic power.

No one can deny the importance of culture and language in strengthening the bonds of friendship and cooperation between people of different countries. However, if “soft power” and “cultural diplomacy” are analyzed, the prime thrust is to establish political and economic influence. In the case of Chinese involvement in Pakistan, the former PPP led coalition government took

a keen interest in promoting Mandarin by offering it in various Universities. In many cases, knowledge of Mandarin Chinese opens the doors to educational and economic opportunities.

In the case of Afghanistan, China is showing a keen interest due to three major reasons. First, around \$1 trillion of untapped mineral resources in Afghanistan are a source of great interest for China. Although, other foreign players also have an eye on the untapped and unexploited mineral resources in

Second, a post-2014 NATO/U.S. withdrawal scenario motivates China to exercise a pro-active policy in Afghanistan so it can fill the void after foreign troops withdraw.

Third, the concerns of China vis-à-vis the potential role of Taliban/Al-Qaeda in patronizing the Islamic Movement of Eastern Turkestan are somewhat legitimate. During Taliban rule (1996-2001) Islamic groups were trained in the Chinese controlled Xinjiang province, proving that Afghanistan

and under the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), is a partner in combating extremism, separatism and terrorism. Certainly, China has close strategic and security relations with Pakistan but is cognizant of the strong Afghan lobby that holds Islamabad responsible for the prevailing violence in the country.

China may have a smooth sailing in Afghanistan through its economic and cultural role, but much depends on peace and stability in this volatile



Afghanistan, unlike many foreign stakeholders, China enjoys a positive image in the country because of Beijing's single track policy of non-interference, despite mounting concerns about the role of the Al-Qaeda and other Islamic extremist groups. Apart from investments in mineral resources and oil fields, China's state-owned mining company has invested in copper mines in Afghanistan's eastern province of Logar.

was supporting secessionist groups of Eastern Turkestan (Xinjiang province). China rightly feels that if Afghanistan plunges into another phase of civil war or comes under the influence of Taliban, the scenario will be detrimental to its interests in its Xinjiang province.

Whether China will act as a "buffer" between the foreign Western powers and the local groups is yet to be seen. Beijing supports the war on terror

country. If the situation is marred with uncertainty and crisis, to expect the student community in Kabul to take serious interest in learning Chinese language and understand the Chinese culture may be wishful thinking. ■

*Dr. Moonis Ahmar is a Professor of International Relations at the University of Karachi and Director, Program on Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution.*

# Socializing Politics

With India preparing for the 2014 general elections, social media is expected to take political campaigning by storm.

By Asma Siddiqui

Social media is a highly useful tool in instantly disseminating mass information. Apart from serving as a networking portal, social media has

played an important role in mobilizing people as activists and generating citizen response to political activities.

It is no secret that Indians are proud of their politics. However, the slew of hash tags, signed petitions, cause driven campaigns and paid ads on Facebook, have enhanced citizen activism.

Where the electronic media relies on "news-worthy" reports and often resorts to sensationalism, social media portals provide a direct insight into citizen behavior and psyche, without any filter. Analysts expect Facebook to play a strong role in the upcoming *Lok Sabha* elections as well as affect the May 2014 general elections. By 2014,



the country is expected to have nearly 80 million social media users.

A recent report indicates that the impact of social media on the next parliamentary election in India would be significant. Sponsored by the Internet and Mobile Association of India and conducted by IRIS Knowledge Foundation, the study contends that the outcome in 287 seats of India's 543 parliamentary seats, is likely to be influenced by Facebook campaigns.

It is estimated that of the 543 parliamentary constituencies, 160 will be influenced in a tangible way by internet-based social media such as e-mail, SMS, Facebook and Twitter and another 67 will see a medium-level

impact. The outrage and social mobilization in response to the gang rape of a girl in India and the arrest of two girls over their comment on Bal Thackeray's death anniversary,

is a true testament of how powerful a role social media can play. The internet used by 140 million people in India will also expand the reach of paid election campaigns and will open up more avenues for voters to critically analyze party manifestos before casting their votes.

When the question of how social media is impacting the youth of India was posed, young Indians opined, "There is a vital change. Currently, Generation X is engineered in the manner that it connects the most through social media. Information is delivered in minutes and the response is generated in seconds. It is mandatory to find support for any political

activity on the web first and then on the streets. India is a country populated with bubbling ideologies, which focus on improvement in every sphere through active participation and innovation in ideas. These ideas are spearheaded by the youth. The youth is the one, which is more open and comfortable with change. They can take challenges and have the capacity to achieve the impossible."

As to whether India is witnessing a revolution akin to the Arab Spring, the youth of India believes that no revolution can come unless there is an evolution of human spirit in India. Until there is unity and togetherness, many believe that a revolution is not possible. Indians need to become one force before they can face the challenges.

Subid, a young social activist and a designer in Kerala states, "Social media has played a good role in Indian politics. It has helped in mobilizing the youth for Anna Hazare's movement against corruption and anti-rape in Delhi. It can play a good role here in the coming elections too. Political parties have developed social media wings for their campaigns. Obviously, it is the youth, which has a role to play in this sector. But I doubt if a revolution is possible through the web. Like any other country, anti-government movements have a good hand in the media and the Government as usual is keen on banning and watching the movements inside too."

Many politicians have readily taken to social media in efforts to reach out to young voters. Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh is active on Facebook with approximately 62,900 fans. Sonia Gandhi and her son Rahul Gandhi

(77,000 fans approximately) are also on Facebook. Similarly, many national leaders have personal and fan accounts on different social media locations, such as twitter. This data depicts a good sign, indicating that the orthodox Indian political system is welcoming a new medium of engagement with the people.

Policymakers and politicians also need to realize the benefits of using social media in situations beyond elections and propaganda advertisements. During the Mumbai attacks the youth took the responsibility to highlight locations where blood was urgently needed. Tweets were sent from near the site of the tragedy and to the countries offering support.



## SOCIAL MEDIA TO AFFECT 2014 POLLS: STUDY



High impact constituencies are those where the number of Facebook users above 10% of the voting population.

Source: Study titled "Social Media & Lok Sabha Elections" by IRIS Knowledge Foundation and supported by the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI)



In the 2014 general elections, India's politics will see a new era of change, with social media activism. It will be imperative for politicians to accustom themselves with this new tide of change for the party who handles social media the best will certainly win the hearts of the people. **S**

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

**W**ith changing global dynamics where the emerging world is gaining greater clout than developed nations, it is safe to say that no good deed is without an ulterior motive. That is why as ribbons are being cut for infrastructural projects backed by Chinese and Indian investments in Sri Lanka, analysts are skeptical of the populous giants' intentions for rebuilding a recently war-torn nation.

In 2009, Sri Lanka emerged victorious in the war against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. The raw end of the deal was the immense destruction and damage, the result of 25 years of havoc caused by tanks, fighter jets and other weaponry. But the silver lining was that help was only a few miles away. The Chinese and Indians are more than willing to help reboot the infrastructure and prop up the Sri Lankan economy through various projects.

Recently, Mahinda Rajapaksa, Sri Lankan president, inaugurated Sri Lanka's second international airport. The project – a \$209 million venture – is supported and funded by China's Export-Import (EXIM) Bank. Not very far from it is the Hambantota Port - a key shipping route, which sees hundreds of oil tankers passing through every day. Once again, the \$1 billion project is funded by the oriental giant. An extension of the railway line, for which further loans have been announced by China, is also on the cards. But that is not where Chinese help for the nation stops. Between 2007 and 2011, with a generous aid of \$2.126 billion to the island nation, China became the largest foreign aid provider for Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka's first communication satellite was launched last year, unsurprisingly, in partnership with a Chinese state-owned space technology firm. A \$100 million Lotus Tower in Colombo, the reconstruction of the A9 high-



# Stealthy Advances

**China and India vie for greater influence in Sri Lanka through massive infrastructural projects**

By Sijal Fawad

way connecting Kandy with Jaffna, a coal power project in Puttalam, and a container terminal project in Colombo, are all symbolic of China's generous helping hand for the nation.

Of course, India is not expected

to sit idle and watch as its political rival continues to extend its influence in a country much closer to the Indian borderline than any other. In a not-so-insignificant project, India will help build 43,000 houses in Sri Lan-

ka's northern province for displaced people, affected by the war. The Palay airbase also owes its extension and repair to India. A 200-bed hospital in Vavuniya, demining of 9,500 hectares of the northern province, and revival of an industrial zone in Jaffna, also add to India's list of contributions.

An interesting element in both development projects is the social nature of India's assistance as opposed to China's infrastructural support. But no matter how much Indian policymakers defend their approach, and whether the Sri Lankan government denies speculations of extending Chinese influence in the country, the strategic interests of India and China cannot be ignored.

Sri Lanka is expected to grow between 7.5 and 8 percent in 2013/14 thus generating enhanced commercial interest. While the Tata Group and Bajaj Autos are examples of Indian conglomerates enjoying a presence in Sri Lanka, many other companies are vying for entry into the over 20 million market as well. Joint ventures with Sri Lankan companies promise China additional revenue streams from construction, management and design of various projects, as well as an expanding presence in South Asia. Opportunities in tourism, healthcare, construction and the power sector are also bustling with great prospects for investors from either country. Commercial interest aside, it is inevitable that India and China's political motives for these measures will not go unnoticed, especially considering the recently developed rivalry between the two.

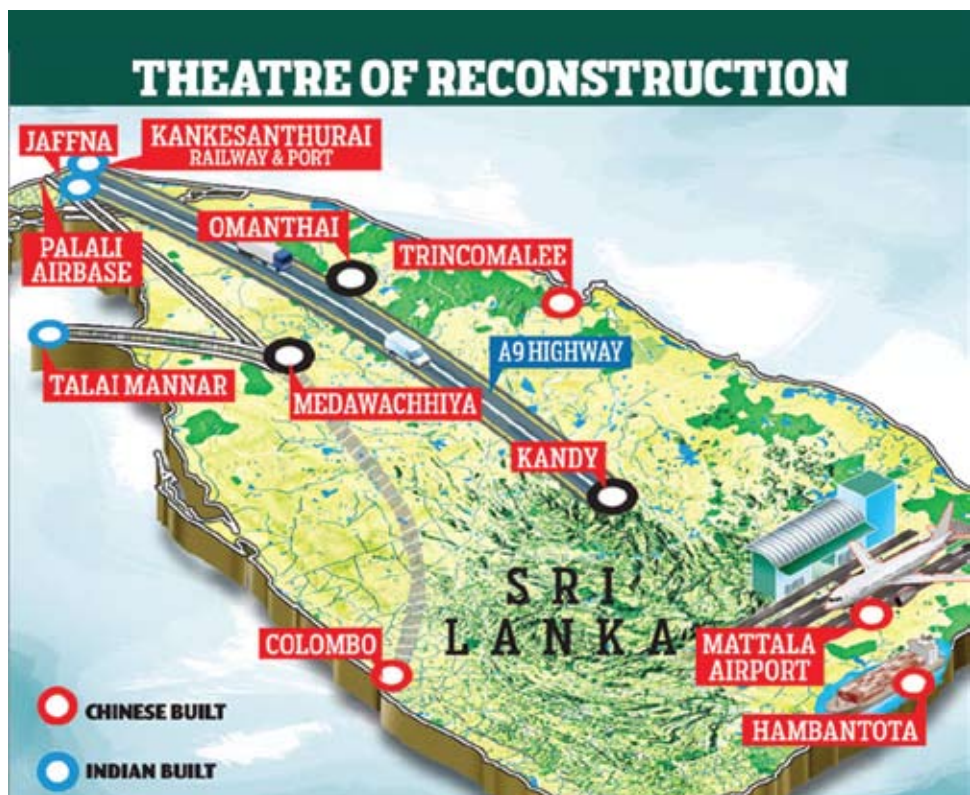
In the case of China, the extent and magnitude of assistance through infrastructural projects is colossal. The country had been generous with its military support during the war with the Tamil rebels, providing state-of-the-art military equipment. Therefore amiability with Sri Lanka is seen

as a part of China's motive of furthering its military and economic influence around the Indian Ocean and in South Asia – a concept also known as the 'string of pearls' for the increasing number of Chinese-funded projects from east Africa, through Pakistan to Southeast Asia.

Eyeing the oriental country's increasing influence in the nation, India's purpose for extending a helping hand is also to regain some of its lost influence, it previously enjoyed over

only help with the commercial objectives of strengthening its influence in Sri Lanka and hence around the Indian Ocean, but will help reduce the influence of rival India at the same time. Indian analysts are already labeling China's extending influence as the 'economic colonization' of Sri Lanka and an opportunity loss for India.

But all is not lost for India, which still continues to be Sri Lanka's largest trading partner. China is a close contender on the trade front and if



its neighbor. Of course, it did not help that India voted in favor of the US resolution against Sri Lanka at the United Nations Human Rights Council, cementing diplomatic ties between Sri Lanka and China even more.

Largely, Sri Lankans are warming up to the idea of deeper ties with China, pictured as being the 'friendlier' nation in comparison to India. Needless to say, China's assistance will not

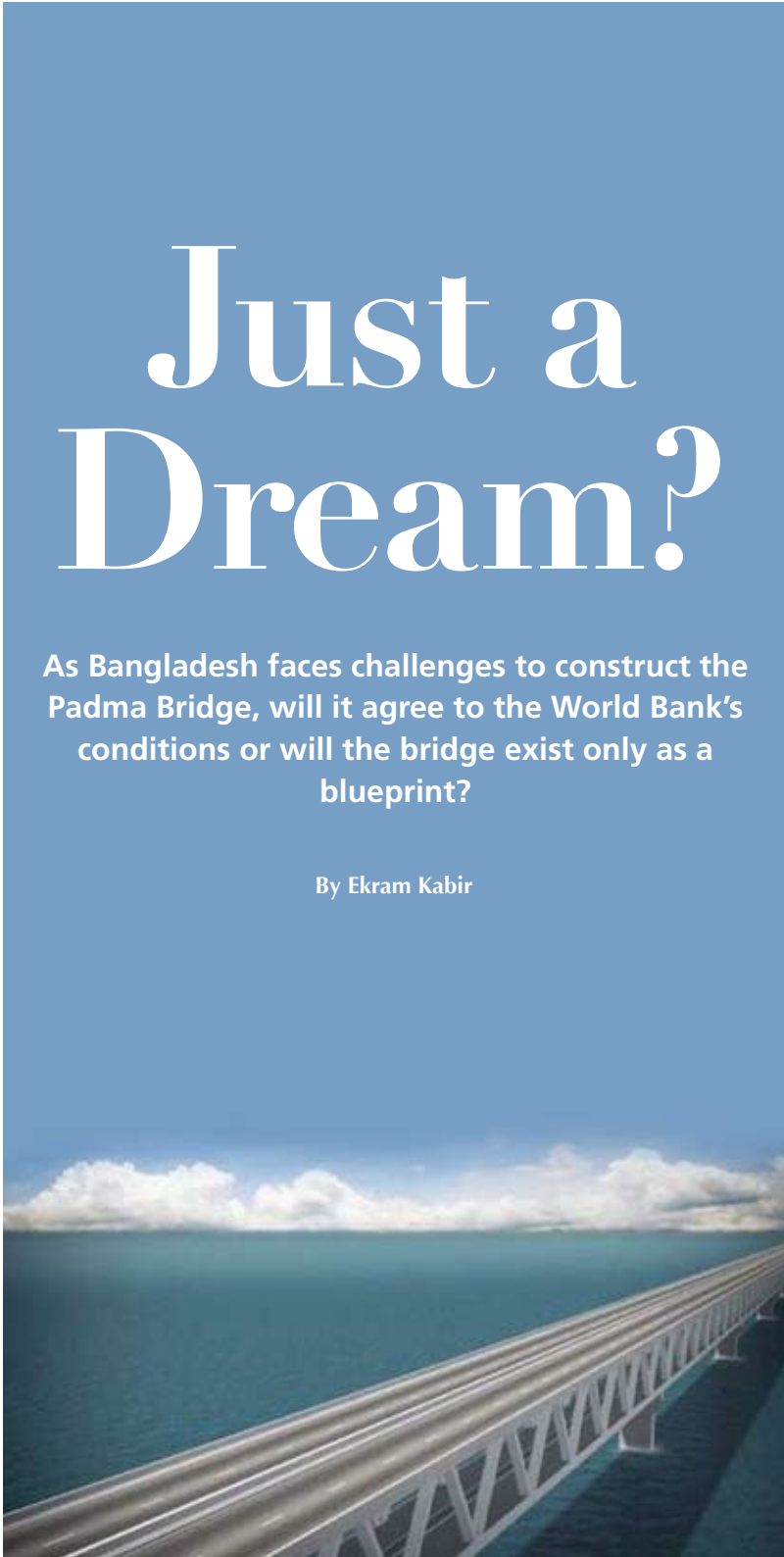
the current pace of Chinese projects continues in Sri Lanka, China might silently take over the favored spot. It is a tricky game of influence, and one hopes China's victory in this game isn't made too easy due to India's nonchalance. **S**

*Sijal Fawad is a student at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London.*

# Just a Dream?

As Bangladesh faces challenges to construct the Padma Bridge, will it agree to the World Bank's conditions or will the bridge exist only as a blueprint?

By Ekram Kabir



The Bangladeshi authorities term the Padma bridge project, the 'dream of the nation.' The country's longest bridge, expected to stretch 6.15km long, would connect the south-western parts of the country with Dhaka and save hundreds of thousands of working hours and transport costs. Apart from offering such facilities, the Padma Bridge is also expected to change Bangladesh's south-western economic landscape to boost the national economy.

At present, the entire region is heavily dependent on ferry services that connect it with the capital. According to the World Bank, the bridge would save travel time of up to two hours for buses and cars and more than 10 hours for goods trucks. Moreover, the inclusion of a railway track and provision for telecommunications, electricity and natural gas transmission would yield added advantages for the economy.

The Padma Bridge would also raise the economic and geographic prominence of the Mongla Port, which presently operates at a fraction of its real capacity.

The construction work of the bridge at Mawa-Jajira point was expected to begin by 2012 at a cost of nearly \$3 billion. The project was funded largely by the Asian Development Bank (US\$615mn), the World Bank (\$1.5bn), Japan International Cooperation Agency (\$415mn) and the Islamic Development Bank (\$140mn). Of the total amount, Dhaka was to provide 50 million taka. However, when everything seemed to be going as planned, the corruption scandal jeopardized the funding and the project's future.

The World Bank's Integrity office provided the Bangladesh government with a report on 21 September 2011 alleging that SAHCO, a company named for and connected to

the then communications minister, Syed Abul Hossain, sought to persuade companies to secure the main bridge contract. The report contains allegations by eleven confidential witnesses against his company. Hossain, however, denies any conflict of interest in the participation of SAHCO. In February last year, the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) completed its own investigation into the allegations and concluded that there had been no malpractices.

Meanwhile, the country's anti corruption division raided Canada-based SNC-Lavalin's offices in September

full access to the investigation and financiers be provided with greater oversight of the project procurement process.

Bangladesh agreed and the investigations began. However, it did not suspend the alleged officials nor provide the WB panel with access to the ACC investigation. After months of negotiations, the WB decided to cancel the loan for the Padma Bridge project. Following this, the Bangladesh government promptly defended the cancellation of the project by raising Bangladeshi nationalism. The government assured it could not let a foreign entity

another fifteen years.

Although Dhaka may have assumed a strong anti-World Bank position, it soon realized that it could not complete the project without the World Bank's support. The government has sought to address the remaining WB concerns, hoping to move the project forward. Hossain resigned from the cabinet in July and the Secretary of the Padma Bridge, Mosharraf Hossain was sent on leave. The Prime Minister's Economic Advisor Moshir Rahman, who was the Integrity Advisor for the project, is also expected to leave office. Discussions and debates over the Padma Bridge don't seem to end here. The WB has banned SNC-Lavalin from having any involvement in the project; while the Canadian court has accepted SNC-Lavalin's case. The court may reveal the name of the people allegedly involved in the scandal once the trial begins. However, it seems that Bangladesh's ordeal to construct the bridge would be under the shadows of SNC-Lavalin's corruption scandals.

All is not lost for Bangladesh yet. The Japan International Corporation Agency (JICA) is willing to initiate talks on financing the bridge if Bangladesh comes up with a fresh project framework. Furthermore, Dhaka would be floating an international tender for constructing the Padma Bridge at the end of June this year.

After discussions, debates as well as criticism, Bangladesh now seems to be on the right track towards constructing the Padma Bridge, with Dhaka mulling over ways to meet the World Bank's terms and conditions. ■

*Ekram Kabir is a former BBC journalist and is the Executive Editor of [www.natunbarta.com](http://www.natunbarta.com). He has been working in Bangladeshi print and broadcast media and specializes in strategic, military, and terrorism issues.*

The World Bank's Integrity office provided the Bangladesh government with a report on 21 September 2011 alleging that SAHCO, a company named for and connected to the then communications minister, Syed Abul Hossain, sought to persuade companies to secure the main bridge contract.

2011. In April 2012, authorities charged two SNC-Lavalin executives for attempting to bribe Bangladeshi officials in their bid to secure a consultancy contract for the Padma Bridge project.

Even though, the WB submitted a report on these allegations to the Bangladeshi government in April 2012, the ACC investigation into these allegations is still continuing.

However, the WB has temporarily halted the funding process. As investigations were underway, the Bank transformed the project into a conditional deal. It demands that all public officials suspected of corruption be put on leave immediately, a special investigations team within the ACC be appointed to investigate the allegations, a WB panel be allowed to have

dictate its decision making. Some also suggested that the WB cancelled the loan because of the Grameen Bank's involvement and to prevent the International War Crimes Tribunals from moving forward.

Following the cancellation of the project, in April, Bangladesh signed a MoU with Kuala Lumpur, according to which Malaysian banks and construction companies would finance and construct the bridge. According to the proposal, Bangladesh would repay the loan at an interest rate of 6.5 percent in 12 years, introducing stricter terms than those specified by the WB. Once the bridge became operational, the tolls would remain high as the Malaysian government would continue to share the toll revenues for

# The Face of Injustice



## Tibetans and Tibetan refugees in Nepal suffer great injustices from China's growing influence in the country.

By Raza Khan



As China gradually increases its influence in the neighboring Himalayan state of Nepal, Tibetans are finding it increasingly difficult to cross into the country. In addition to this, the Tibetan refugees already in Nepal are experiencing a moratorium on their political and religious activities giving rise to new humanitarian crises.

On its part, Chinese officials are trying to stop Tibetans fleeing into Nepal and are enlisting the help of the Nepalese authorities in cracking down on the political activities of the Tibetans already there. Tibetans are the largest immigrant community in Nepal though their numbers have decreased considerably over the past few years.

Tibet is a disputed region where its residents have waged a long but unsuccessful political struggle for separation from China. India has been helping Tibetans with their struggle to settle scores with its traditional rival China. One important reason behind the demand for separation has been the denial of religious freedom to the majority Buddhists residents of Tibet. The international community has expressed deep reservations over gross human rights violations in Tibet by Chinese authorities but these have failed to deter Beijing to stop. Delhi has especially advocated the Tibetans case in the international arena. However, India's support to Tibetans has been largely politically motivated, as it has long-desired the inclusion of the strategically important region in the Indian Union.

Approximately 20,000 Tibetan migrants had been carrying out anti-China political activities in Nepal without major checks from local authorities. Such activities have attracted international attention and exposed Chinese atrocities. China is also trying to prevent a possible resurrection of an anti-China guerrilla struggle by the Tibetan pro-freedom groups and exploitation of the situation by India

and the U.S. In the 1960s, Tibetan guerrillas carried out attacks against Chinese troops using the Mustang area of Nepal and were helped by the CIA. The guerrilla camps were wound up after President Nixon decided to establish diplomatic links with China. Therefore, Chinese authorities fear that if the migration of Tibetans continues into Nepal, the more extremists among the migrants may resort to guerrilla warfare.

In order to stop the flow of Tibetans into Nepal, Chinese authorities have resorted to an assortment of tactics including financial incentives to Nepali state functionaries, threats, and training Nepalese border security forces. These tactics have been quite 'successful' from the Chinese standpoint as the number of Tibetans refugees has significantly decreased over the years. Those who have already migrated to Nepal have also been under strict scrutiny and check by the Nepalese authorities. According to The New York Times in the first eight months of 2012, the number of Tibetan refugees crossing the Himalayas into Nepal was about 400, half as many as during the same period in 2011. Tibetans blame tighter Chinese security in Tibet as well as Chinese-trained Nepal border guards for the reduced migration. China's influence on Nepalese authorities has been so compelling that Kathmandu disallowed exit to 5,000 Tibetan refugees who were granted asylum by the U.S. China believes that such pressure tactics will discourage Tibetan refugees from carrying out political or anti-China activities.

The earliest Tibetan refugees arrived in Nepal in 1959, when the Dalai Lama fled Tibet. The Tibetans settled in refugee camps, of which 13 still remain. With a Tibetan enclave set up around Boudhanath, some Tibetans became rich by making carpets and handicrafts, and prominent Tibetan monasteries amassed wealth

and purchased prime real estate in the Kathmandu Valley.

The domineering influence of China on Nepal is also attributed to regional politics. India since long has dictated terms to the Himalayan state and at many instances this influence has become intrusive. In order to offset the Indian influence, Nepal has bolstered relations with Beijing and as a quid-pro-quo it has secured significant chunks of financial aid.

In this situation the only hope for the residents of Tibet and Tibetans refugees is that the growing trade between China and India could defuse tension between the two countries and help alleviate the woes of Tibetans. China has recently completed a 22-kilometre road connecting central Nepal with the Kyirong district in Tibet. The purpose of the road is to export goods to India through Nepal. Beijing is also pondering linking Kathmandu to the railway network present in Tibet in order to tap the trade potential with India. Infrastructural links such as this would open up the remote Tibet region and facilitate its residents' movement to India and Nepal.

Once Tibetans get some relative freedom this may curtail anti-Chinese sentiments but at the same time may spur Tibetan separatist sentiments. With Delhi eyeing economic interests through enhanced trade with China, the country is expected to gradually decrease its support to anti-China Tibetans. Thus the international community will have to play a meaningful role to help mitigate the miseries faced by Tibetans and pressurize Beijing to solve the issue according to the wishes of the dwellers of the region. **S**

*Raza Khan is a political analyst and researcher having a doctoral degree in International Relations, specializes on South Asia, and focuses on religious extremism and terrorism in the AF-PAK region.*



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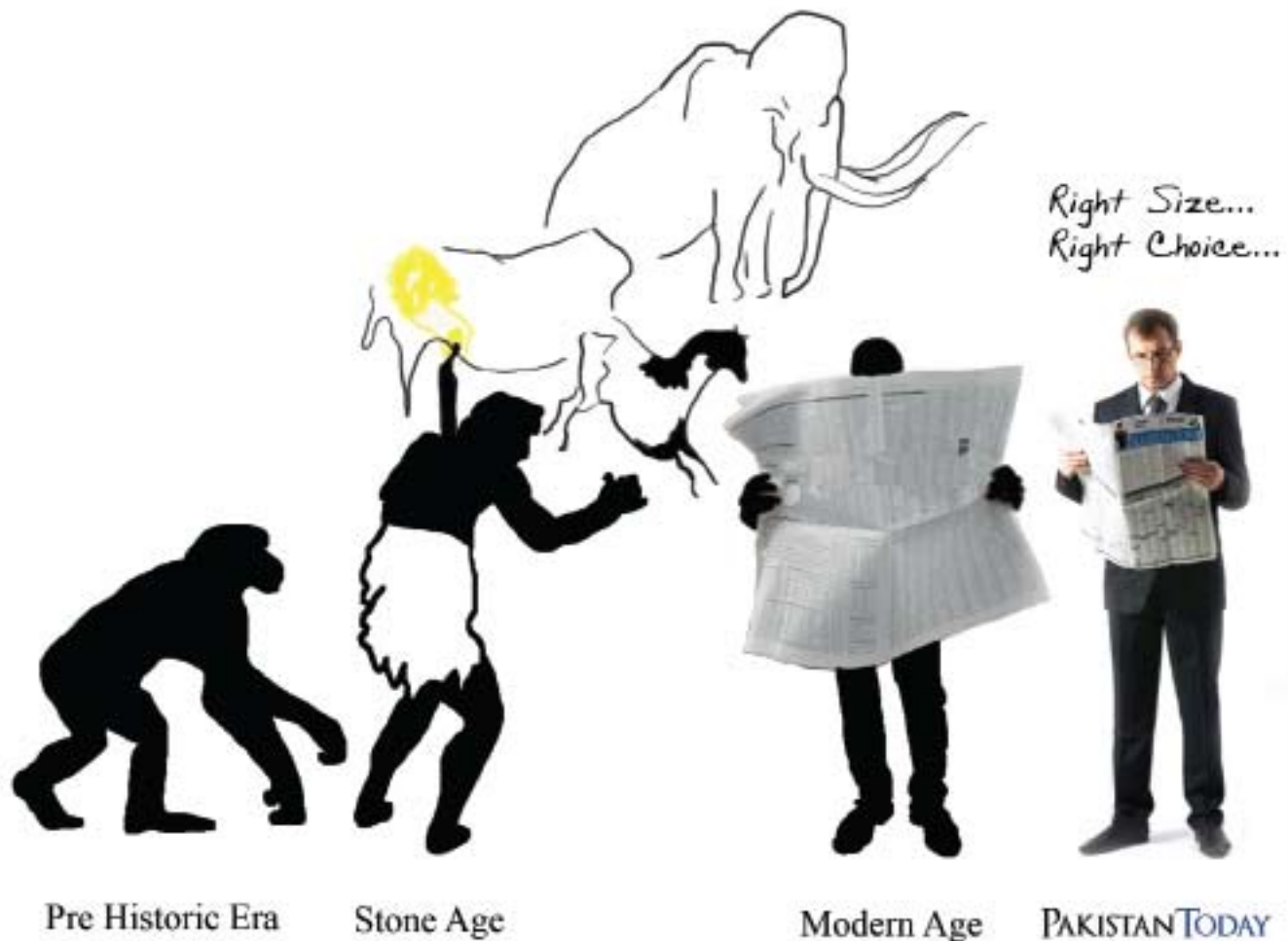
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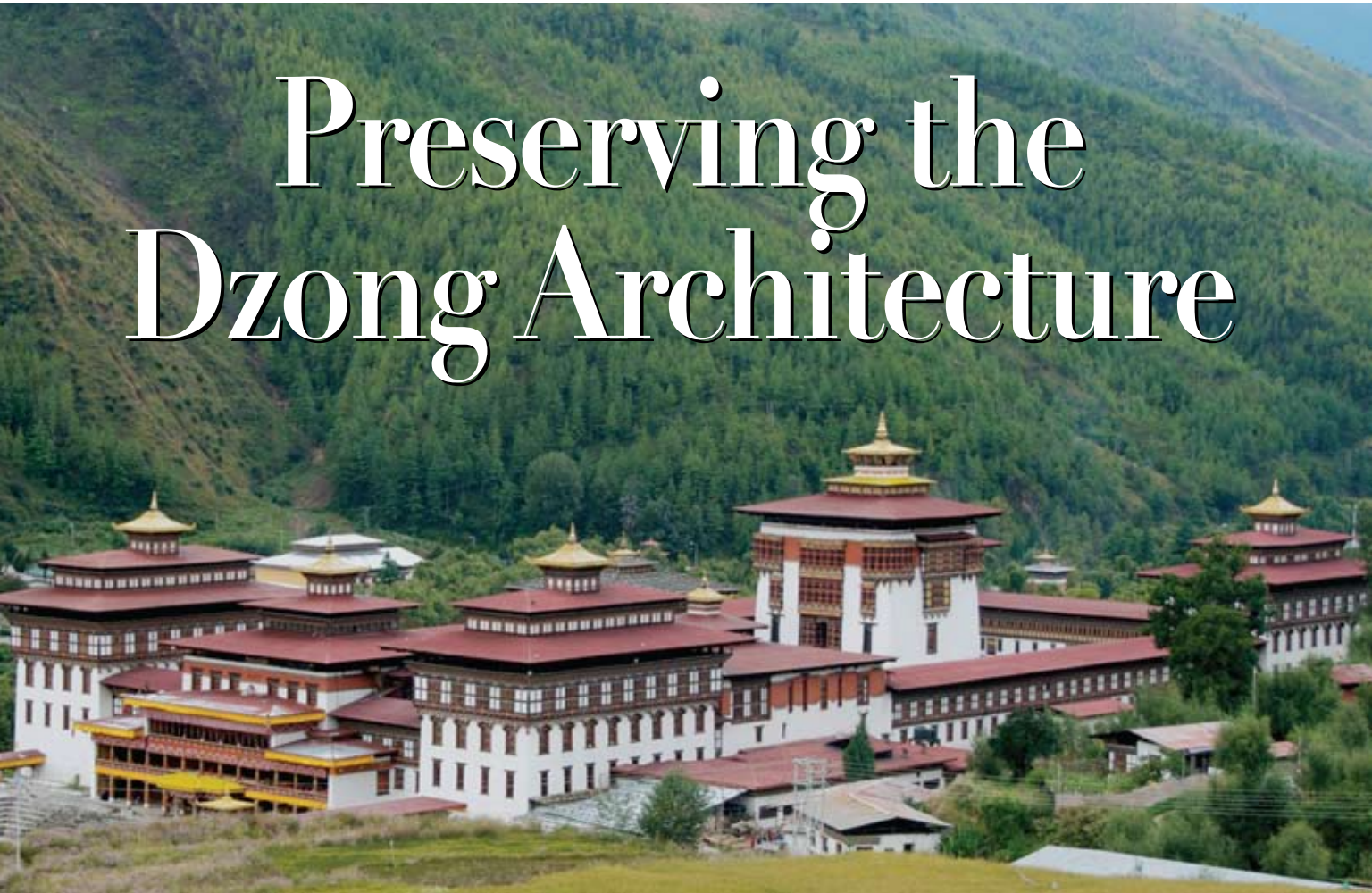
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# Preserving the Dzong Architecture



**Bhutan's magnificent and historical dzongs are increasingly eroding and are prey to natural disasters or fires, prompting an urgent need for introduction of preservation measures.**

**By Fatima Siraj**

Characterized by high, slanting walls, gorgeous flared roofs, imposing entry doors made of wood and iron and the use of red and golden hues, dzong architecture is a distinctive feature of Bhutanese culture. Located on picturesque mountain tops, dzongs can be seen in major districts all over the country, often resembling ancient fortresses. With massive walls that encircle a vast compound consisting of temples, courtyards, administrative offices and

monks' accommodation, they truly are a magnificent sight. Their significance, however, does not only lie in their architectural splendor.

Along with their religious significance, some dzongs have often been the sites for historical and cultural events and have served as safe houses for storing national treasures, books, weapons and written historical records. They are also historically significant for originally serving as protective fortresses used for defense pur-

poses. Traditionally, dzongs housed the governors who ruled each region, hence becoming centers of ruling power and in times of famine, were used to distribute grains and food to people. Nowadays, they serve as the religious, military, administrative and social centers of each district and are often used as the site for annual religious festivals. The rooms inside them are equally divided between the religious and administrative wings.

The biggest and arguably the most

magnificent dzong in Bhutan is the Trongsa Dzong, located high above the raging Mangde Chhu River. With the Black Mountains providing the perfect backdrop for its scenic setting, it has been described as “the most spectacularly sited dzong in Bhutan with a sheer drop to the south that often disappears into clouds and mist.” Strategically built in the Trongsa District, the central district of the country, this dzong is an important building in terms of serving as an administrative headquarters. It consists of as many as twenty-five temples and a state of the art museum located within its watchtower. Apart from serving as a major monastery, (it houses upto 200 monks) and an administrative centre, as is typical of most dzongs in the country. Trongsa Dzong also has a printing house where printing of religious texts is done by traditional woodblock printing.

Another noteworthy dzong in Bhutan is the Rinpung Dzong. Consisting of a total of fourteen shrines and temples, it holds great religious significance. A seven-story watchtower built on the hill right above the Rinpung Dzong is the home for the National Museum of Bhutan that was inaugurated in 1968. Today the National Museum has in its possession over 3000 works of Bhutanese art, reflecting more than 1500 years of Bhutan’s cultural heritage. The Rinpung Dzong is also significant in that it is the venue for a great annual festival held over a span of five days in the second month of the traditional Bhutanese Lunar Calendar (usually in March or April). Processions depicting holy images, traditional mask dances portraying religious stories and the breathtaking display of a great, sacred banner in the early morning hours, are all features that mark this glorious event.

Aside from the aforementioned dzongs, Bhutan is home to many similar architectural marvels. One such marvel is the Punakha Dzong built at the confluence of the Mo Chuu and Po Chuu rivers and is often considered

one of the most beautiful dzongs in the country. Commonly known as “the palace of great happiness or bliss,” it is also the site of famous events such as the coronation of the first king of Bhutan in 1907 and the wedding ceremony of the King of Bhutan and his fiancée in 2011.

While the rivers add a natural embellishment to the location of the dzong, they also bring with them the threat of glacial flooding. In the past, such flooding has caused extensive damage to the Punakha Dzong and fires and earthquakes have further intensified the problem. The government of Bhutan joined hands with the government of India in an attempt to restore the dzong to its past glory. They successfully managed to do so by employing a refurbishing technique called the ‘zorig chosum.’ This ancient tradition involved a combination of several skills including masonry, metalwork, woodcarving and painting. It now stands fully restored with notable paintings and statues

Aside from the aforementioned dzongs, Bhutan is home to many similar architectural marvels. One such marvel is the Punakha Dzong built at the confluence of the Mo Chuu and Po Chuu rivers and is often considered one of the most beautiful dzongs in the country.

adorning it. A memorial has also been erected outside the dzong, as a mark of respect for the twenty-five people who lost their lives inside its walls in the 1994 floods.

In 2012, a similar tragedy befell another one of Bhutan’s remarkable dzongs -- the Wangdue Dzong. However, the damage in this case was not caused by floods but by a fire that burned the entire structure down

to ashes. Even though no lives were lost, it was a great loss to the nation in terms of cultural heritage. “It was one of the most magnificent sites of Bhutan - that dzong,” said Dasho Karma. “For me it was always an uplifting experience to come to view it. It was always a great esthetic experience to sit quietly at the point where you could see that dzong.”

With its backbone structure built into the ridge some 1500 meters above sea level, the Wangdue Dzong provided a great military advantage as it was inaccessible on three sides. The only way to access it was by a narrow front way path. The same inaccessibility that was intended to ward off enemy advances served as a hindrance for fire fighters. The destruction of the Wangdue Dzong alerted the Bhutanese government and brought to attention the ever present threat of losing centuries-old dzongs to calamities and natural disasters. The home minister announced that the fire would cause Bhutan to shift its policy to protect its

dzongs. These policies were said to include alternative building materials to timber, ensuring safe and high quality electrification, installing adequate fire extinguishing equipment and multiple exits to ensure no lives were lost. **S**

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

U.S. Secretary of Defense, Leon Panetta and Joint Chief of Staff, General Martin E. Dempsey, while testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on 7 February 2013, demanded that “the State Department and Intelligence community must be provided with the resources they need to execute the mission we expect of them.” On 30 April 2013, many leading newspapers exposed how funds provided over the last decade, in the name of fighting the ‘war on terror’, were abused. The Guardian, in a report published on 30 April 2013, made the startling revelation that “the CIA and MI6 have regularly given large cash payments to Hamid Karzai’s office with the aim of maintaining access to the Afghan leader and his top allies and

proved abortive. “The U.S. is quitting Afghanistan, and the morning after it does, the Taliban will begin the reconquest of that tragic land,” says Ms. Fawzia Koofi, noted lawmaker and human-rights activist of Afghanistan.

Talibanisation in tandem with terrorism is a real threat to the global community. The U.S. and NATO forces initially arrived in Afghanistan to eliminate Al-Qaeda and strengthen democracy as an alternative to Talibanisation. After 11 years of war, spending \$600 billion, a toll of over 2,000 Americans dead and 18,000 wounded, the prime danger still lurks, even if weakened.

According to Reuters, the Afghan Taliban vowed to start a new campaign of mass suicide attacks on foreign military bases and diplomatic

getting Western embassies, ISAF headquarters and the Afghan parliament. These events prove the failure of the U.S. and its allies both on military and political fronts. Tragically, as the long U.S. war in Afghanistan winds down, it poses more uncertainties and greater ramifications to world peace and stability.

The failure, diplomatic circles claim, has raised questions among “some British officials over whether eagerness to promote a political settlement may have been exploited by Afghan officials and self-styled intermediaries for the Taliban.” The U.S. is, however, not ready to admit it was backing corrupt circles in Afghanistan and elsewhere rather than adopting pro-people policies. It is thus not surprising that anti-American sentiment

# Leaving the

**Foreign presence in Afghanistan has dealt a severe blow to development, stability and peace in the country. Where has U.S. funding really been utilized?**

**By Huzaima Bukhari & Dr. Ikramul Haq**

officials, but the attempt to buy influence has largely failed and may have backfired.”

On various levels, the war in Afghanistan (2001-present) is proving to be a failure. The payments by British intelligence on a smaller scale compared to CIA’s handouts, reported in the New York Times to the tune of tens of millions, have failed to finance peace initiatives, which have so far

areas, as well as damaging “insider attacks,” as part of a new spring offensive this year. The announcement comes at a time when the NATO-led military coalition is in the final stages of its fight against the Taliban-led insurgency that began in late 2001. After announcing their spring offensive last year, the Taliban launched a big attack in Kabul involving suicide bombers and an 18-hour firefight, tar-

is so high in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Political parties in Pakistan that support U.S. policies continue to suffer heavily during the election campaign with their rallies and congregations regularly targeted by extremist groups. In a post-election scenario, Pakistan is likely to live under a constant shadow of onslaught of Talibanisation -- a fact that has serious repercussions for all South Asian states as well. The U.S.



# Volatility Behind

and its allies have created a legacy that is bound to haunt this region for many years to come.

War-ravaged Afghanistan has not been reconstructed in the last 11 years to counter the Taliban threat. Instead, the payments, referred to in a New York Times report as “ghost money”, helped prop up warlords and corrupt officials, deepening Afghan popular mistrust of the Kabul government and

its foreign backers, thereby helping drive the insurgency. This truth cannot be denied by the U.S., its allies and those who were supporting their policies in Pakistan and elsewhere. One American official even told the New York Times: “The biggest source of corruption in Afghanistan was the United States.”

Taliban intermediaries were the main beneficiary of the funds secretly

provided by the MI6 and the CIA. With the Afghan people suffering innumerable injustices, many questioned why they should support the U.S. The naivety of the so-called champions of peace was exposed in 2010 when the MI6 discovered that a would-be Taliban leader, in talks with Karzai, was actually an impostor from the Pakistani city of Quetta. Instead of winning the hearts and minds of the common

people, policy makers in the U.S. were preoccupied with promoting the Taliban's cause and wasting billions of dollars in secret funding. More than often, money audits are usually weak thus facilitating intelligence officers to make personal fortunes by not transferring the entire funds to the beneficiaries.

Vali Nasr, a former U.S. government adviser on Afghanistan, aptly noted, "Karzai has been lashing out against American officials and generals, so if indeed there has been funding by the CIA, you have to ask to what effect has that money been paid. It hasn't clearly brought the sort of influence it was meant to." *In The Dispensable Nation*, criticizing U.S. policy in Afghanistan, Nasr further adds, "If the terms of such payments are not clear, the question is how well do they tag with U.S. policy ... The CIA has a narrow, counter-terrorism purview that involved working with warlords, but that is quite a different agenda, on

how we conduct the war or how we build a government."

Kate Clark, an analyst at the Afghanistan Analysts Network, a think-tank in Kabul, recently commented, "It is one thing to conduct covert operations in a hostile country. I'm flabbergasted that the CIA is running these kinds of covert operations in a friendly country. It runs counter to accountability, democracy and the rule of law, and is damaging what the U.S. is trying to do." Fouad Ajami, a senior fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution, observed that in November 2011, Karzai gave the quintessential Afghan statement about the place of the Americans and their coalition partners in his homeland saying, "The lion doesn't like it if a foreigner intrudes into his house. The lion doesn't like it if a stranger enters his house. The lion doesn't want his children to be taken away by someone else in the night, the lion won't let it happen. All the lion would tolerate is

for the outsiders to "just guard the four sides of the forest."

If Afghanistan is left to the Taliban and warlords, the situation within the country will undoubtedly have devastating effects on Pakistan and other South Asian states. It is imperative for all regional states to work out a solution and ask Western powers to completely disengage from conflict in Afghanistan. According to a recent statement issued by President Karzai, "The coalition forces were predators inflicting pain and ruin on the Afghans. At times, the foreign protectors ranked lower in esteem than the Taliban." It seems then that foreign presence and engagement is counterproductive to any peace initiative in Afghanistan. **S**

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

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Perhaps the most famous and “beloved” poet of Pakistan, Faiz Ahmad Faiz, was born on 13 February 1911 in Sialkot to an “academic family that was well known in literary circles.” He was born as just Faiz Ahmad. After he began writing poetry he chose Faiz as his pen-name and consequently came to be known as “Faiz Ahmad Faiz.”

Faiz received his early education in an Islamic school where he learned Urdu, Persian and the Quran. In 1926, he attended a Scotch Mission school and ultimately attained his M.A. in English Literature and Arabic in 1932.

In 1935, Faiz joined the faculty of Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh as a lecturer in English Literature. In 1936, Faiz had joined the Progressive Writers’ Movement. Sajjad Zahir, a fellow Marxist appointed him as the Movement’s first secretary. Two years later he became editor-in-chief of the monthly Urdu magazine *Adab-e-Latif*, in Delhi. In 1941, Faiz published his first literary book *Naqsh-e-Faryad* and joined the Pakistan Arts Council in 1947 to serve as its secretary from 1959 to 1962. In 1937, he moved to Lahore after accepting the professorship at the Hailey College of Commerce. During World War II, he enrolled in the British Indian Army in 1942 as a commissioned officer where he rose to the rank of Lt. Colonel. Faiz opted for Pakistan in 1947 but was so distressed by the Kashmir war with India that he resigned from the army in 1947.

A year before joining the army, Faiz had married Alys, a British national. Their marriage was a perfect meeting of the minds as Alys was member of the Communist Party of the United Kingdom while Faiz had met communist leaders, M. N. Roy and Muzaffar Ahmed, during his college days and under their influence, joined the Communist Party. Soon after leaving the army, Faiz became editor of the Pakistan Times in 1947. The next year he became vice-president of the Pakistan Trade Union Federation (PTUF). “During 1948–50, Faiz led the PTUF’s delegation in Geneva and became an active

# A Personality Extraordinaire

**Faiz Ahmed Faiz has not only mesmerized an entire nation but has captured the attention of the world. He remains one of Pakistan's most beloved personalities and a national treasure.**

By S.G. Jilane

member of World Peace Council."

In the 1950s and 1960s, he devoted himself to promoting the communist cause in Pakistan. As editor of the *Pakistan Times*, "he lent editorial support to the party." Having served in the unit led by Akbar Khan during the War, he held the latter in high regard and was later involved with the circle that supported Major General Akbar Khan's coup plan, in 1951.

When the coup failed, the conspirators were tried in a military court. Faiz was sentenced to four years imprisonment. In 1955, his sentence was commuted and he went into exile in London. In 1958, Faiz returned but was again detained by the government for publishing pro-communist ideas and advocacy for a pro-Moscow government in Pakistan. However, in 1960 he was released and this time departed for Moscow.

In 1964, Faiz returned to Pakistan and was appointed rector of Abdullah Haroon College.

Faiz also enjoyed good relations with socialist Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Therefore, in 1965, Bhutto, then foreign minister in the Ayub Khan government got Faiz an honorary slot in the Information and Broadcasting ministry, where his task was to rally popular support for the 1965 Indo-Pakistan War.

In 1972, when Bhutto became prime minister of the "residual" Pakistan, he appointed Faiz as Culture ad-

viser, where he worked until his retirement in 1974.

But the vicissitudes of his life did not cease. Because of his strong ties with Bhutto, he fell afoul of Gen. Ziaul Haq after the latter had toppled Bhutto and was kept under surveillance. Faiz once again went into self-exile in 1979, this time to Beirut. But due to the civil war in Lebanon in 1982, he returned to Pakistan.

Two years later, Faiz Ahmed Faiz died in Lahore, on 20 November 1984.

Faiz was a humanist and a lyrical poet. His songs touch hearts not only for their lilting music, but chiefly because, they "tell of saddest thoughts." He talks of the oppressed lower-class and the tyranny of military dictatorship but at the same time kindles hope of a better future. His famous poem, "*Lazim hai ke hum bhi dekhengay...*" speaks of the day when the mountains of tyranny will vanish like pieces of cotton in the air; when crowns will be flung and thrones will be overturned, and the Kingdom of God will be established where today's downtrodden people will rule.

But Faiz did not write only revolutionary poems. He also wrote of love and romance that became the hallmark of classic Urdu poetry. He started with love poems in the genre of "ghazal" that overflow with tender sentiments and portray a marked influence of Ghazalib. A distinctive feature of Faiz's poetry

is that even though his poems, particularly the political ones, are couched in a simple conversational style, the language and diction is polished and refined. It is the diction of the elite rather than of the commoners. Yet, his poetry has been very popular not only in Pakistan and India but also in the Soviet Union,

In 1962, Faiz became the first Asian poet to be awarded the Lenin Peace Prize, a Soviet equivalent of the Nobel Peace Prize. In 1976, he was awarded the Lotus Prize for Literature. He was also listed four times for the Nobel Prize. In 2011, the Pakistan government declared the year of 2011 "as the year of Faiz Ahmed Faiz" and set up a "Faiz Chair" at the Department of Urdu at the Karachi University and the Sindh University. The Government College University of Lahore followed by establishing the Patras, Faiz Chair at the Urdu Department.

During his lifetime, Faiz published eight books. Two of his books, *Dast-e-Saba* and *Zindan-Nama* are the products of the period of his imprisonment. Faiz's awards, besides the Lenin Prize, include MBE (1946), *Nigar Award* (1953), HRC Peace Prize, *Nishan-e-Imtiaz* (1990) and the Avicenna Prize (2006). **S**

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

**D**evastation has become synonymous with Afghanistan's state post-9/11. While the country is now gradually moving away from its dark past and embracing modernity, Afghanistan's youth remain wanting. With uncertainty looming ahead in the post-2014 scenario, community building has become the primary objective. Education, in many different forms, can transform the lives of Afghan children. Today, young Afghans readily take to the concept of Skateistan, one such initiative where children receive skateboarding lessons along with classroom learning.

Skateistan was founded by an Australian professional skateboarder, Oliver Percovich, who visited Afghanistan in 2007. Impressed by the enthusiasm displayed by Afghan children to learn skateboarding, Percovich realized that local children, especially girls, lacked the opportunities for growth and skateboarding could become a viable sport in community building. Skateistan began as a Kabul-based Afghan NGO that now functions as an international non-profit charity. Internally displaced children comprise nearly half of the students enrolled at Skateistan, who lack access to proper schooling and nearly 40% of them are girls.

With a dearth of formal education facilities in Afghanistan and the academic infrastructure in shambles, Skateistan attempts to guide the youth in breaking the shackles of defeat. The project provides access to education, focusing especially on girls and working children, develops leadership opportunities and builds friendship, trust, and social capital.

Skateistan's efforts bore fruit in 2009 when it received the first prize in 'Architecture for Sport with a Social Outcome' in the 'Architecture for Humanity and Gamechanger' competition for Nike. During the same year, Skateistan received the 'NGO of the year Award' at the 'Peace and Sport Forum' in Monaco; while in 2012, Beyond Sports, a London-based global NGO presented Skateistan with the

# Four Wheels and a VISION



**Will Skateistan secure the future of Afghanistan's children during unstable times?**

**By Muhammad Omar Iftikhar**



'Innovation through Sport Award.'

The Skateistan Project aims to eliminate class differences, break ethnic and socioeconomic barriers and generate social settings where street children study alongside those from affluent backgrounds. Even with a modern syllabus and a co-education setup, the school holds classes for girls and boys on different days. Students attend the school once a week for an hour for skateboarding and for an hour for classroom learning. The skateboarding sessions include 10 minutes of warm-up exercises, 30 minutes of instruction and 10 minutes of free skating that allows children to overcome their fears and engage in self-learning.

Specially designed classroom lessons create harmony instead of bridging the children over academic qualification and social status. Creative arts projects such as photography, painting, theatre, and puppetry help the children break free from myopia and embrace originality in thought.

Skateistan constructed an all-inclusive Skateistan Park and an educational facility in October 2009. The Afghan National Olympic Committee (ANOC) donated the land while IOU (Innovative - Original - Unique) Ramps built the interior. Skateistan has emerged from the ashes of destruction as Afghanistan's first skateboarding school and aims to build more skateboarding facilities across the country where the youth can transcend social barriers and become part of a united Afghan community. The school draws nearly 350 students in the age bracket of 15-17 comprising kids who hail from diverse ethnic backgrounds such as Pashtun, Hazara, Uzbek and Tajik. Skateboarding is gaining popularity in Afghanistan where football is the other popular sport. Other sports played in the country include cricket, volleyball, boxing, ice skating, bowling, and chess. Afghan players seldom play international matches except for participating in the Olympics or playing cricket tournaments; however, they do compete at

the national level.

Although Skateistan is an Afghan NGO, its international presence in 14 countries with over 250 volunteers is a testimony to its success. In 2010, volunteers raised nearly USD \$200,000 worldwide that helped refurbish the NGO's facilities. ANOC is the front-runner in providing Skateistan with a 10-year land lease for its Kabul facility and has arranged land for a second facility in Mazar-e-Sharif in 2011. Oliver Percovich acts as an advisor to the ANOC, facilitating international opportunities and promoting sports in Afghanistan. Skateistan engages the youth in cross-cultural activities, education and empowerment programs.

Educational partnerships of Skateistan include a multimedia library and international youth exchange project funded by AusAID, and Skateistan's Youth, Arts, Peace! (YAP!) supported by the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). In addition, Skateistan joined hands with the French NGO Pour une Sourire D'Enfant in Phnom Penh to help build Cambodia's first skatepark in February 2011.

Afghanistan is gradually accepting innovation and pursuing academic opportunities for children. However, the threat from fundamental factions still haunts international investors. There might be a change in the extremists' heart, who have survived a decade under the control of the U.S.-led NATO forces and have seen development work in all sectors. Nevertheless, terror can strike at any moment and Skateistan must take precautionary measures to avoid any unforeseen incidents. However, according to the founders, deploying security guards at the campus will send a negative image that Skateistan has a selective admission policy, which is one reason why the project has never had any such security plan. ■

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



# A New World

**Women in Bangladesh are gradually entering the media industry. However, their professional life is filled with dangers at every step.**

By Fara Abrar

**W**omen in developing countries are becoming confident by utilizing their education, skills and working as equals in the corporate world. They compete at all levels and face a myriad of challenges on their way to achieving their dreams. Although with the amount of family pressure to get married and the society's unacceptability to stay late out of home, women have, with great difficulty managed to maintain and ascend their professional status in the challenging positions of sales, marketing, journalism, law, and other departments.

Bangladesh is one such country in South Asia where women are not encouraged to work and field related jobs are discouraged. Similarly, broadcast and journalism are gaining popularity in Bangladesh, where terrestrial channels cover 93% of the Bangladesh's population. Broadcast media being the popular and growing industry attracts students especially females, who choose their profession as journalists and reporters.

With increasing awareness and opportunity, Bangladeshi females opt to change the stereotypical thinking of the society and become role models for all those who only dream of doing something other than what is assumed to be their duty of household chores. Journalists and reporters get to cover different stories, visit places, explore ideas, and work with dynamic individuals. A demanding profession on its own, journalism requires determination and confidence to survive.

From a female prospective, where, a few years ago, the barriers to entry were high in a male dominant industry, the society is now more accommodating of the premier role played by women in media. Bangla-

desh, however, still needs to adjust to women journalists working in areas that require thorough research, outdoor interviews, and field reporting.

Societal norms continue to dominate the role of the woman in Bangladeshi society. Despite, the numerous feat women have achieved professionally, most Bangladeshi in-laws would not be accept their would-be daughter-in-law as a journalist or reporter. The conservative mindset in Bangladesh has a long way to go before it can be more accepting of the revised role of women in the professional sector. In addition, if girls remain unmarried till the age of 26, the society considers them as physically unfit thus inflicting pressure on young girls as well.

If societal barriers were not enough to suppress the dreams of women in the media industry, then

stories from war prone countries such as Afghanistan and Palestine, all the while dodging bullets and bombs to report live from conflict zones. Covering such areas requires nerves of steel, allowing reporters to survive in war-torn areas for weeks without food and proper shelter. It requires a strong heart to live in conditions where women would faint by the mere thought of it. The journalism industry and its many challenges either breaks the women and prevents them from standing back on their feet, or boosts their confidence to become a model of inspiration for others.

Bangladeshi women in print media have overcome numerous barriers. Armed with determination, strength, will-power and an ethical code of conduct, women have broken the chains of oppression to

With increasing awareness and opportunity, Bangladeshi females opt to change the stereotypical thinking of the society and become role models for all those who only dream of doing something other than what is assumed to be their duty of household chores.

the hurdles in the corporate world are yet another challenge they must face. Women are increasingly victimized to harassment, both at work and in the field, and increasingly face kidnapping threats for daring to uncover controversial issues.

Women journalists in Bangladesh, akin to other countries, are required to travel extensively; cover

achieve their goals. However, a number of challenges remain and it is the duty of the society on the whole to encourage women to rise professionally and usher in a new era of equality and modernity in Bangladesh. ■

*Fara Abrar is pursuing studies in Marketing at the IBA and is an active blogger.*

# Breaking the Clutter

**The Indian IT sector needs to urgently promote itself to gain global prominence and compete in the region.**

By Sabah Siddiqui

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Information technology has spread to such an extent that it has penetrated deep within the lives of people across the globe. With cut-throat competition in the market, a strong brand name is a must in order to stand out. Each country has a national image which serves as its trademark. IT creates a strong brand for the country's business and media sectors. In this regard, the Indian IT sector with its own version of the Silicon Valley in Bangalore, is trying to put its best foot forward. However, a lack of ideas hinders development.

India has been playing an active role in the world's IT sector, especially in the West, allowing it to shun its image as an under-developed country. During the 1990s, India transformed an obsolete, faulty and limited telecommunications network into a modernized system and made it available for

sharing on the international platform. While the national and international media acknowledge the achievements made by Indian software engineers, at times the most spectacular projects are sidelined by IT giants in the West.

Although India's IT sector adds more value to the country's GDP, the government needs to make policies to impose sustainability, both nationally and internationally. At present, the Indian IT industry represents nearly 3% of Gross Domestic Product, which the government expects to increase up to 8% by 2015-2016.

In addition, the IT industry employs nearly 2.8 million people, a number that continues to grow annually. Although well-known companies such as Infosys, Wipro and TCS (Tata Consultancy Services) are giants in India's IT sector, the country still

needs to restructure its priorities so that companies with less market share can earn global recognition.

Moreover, by following a strategic pattern of marketing and Search Engine Optimization (SEO) techniques, IT companies can easily gain a prominent status in the global market. Indian IT firms need to execute their ideas to promote and distribute their products and software applications in a productive manner. A detailed analysis of the product is necessary to capture the interest of the international consumer. Furthermore, IT specialists should also emphasize the need of marketing strategies to communicate the products and services among consumers and supplier. Marketing strategists should keep in mind the external environment that includes technological, economic, and socio-cultural parameters while introducing



## IT-BPM: Highest impact sector for India



ISP: Indian Service Provider, MNC: Multinational Company, GIC: Global In-house Centre  
Source: NASSCOM

### IT-BPM Sector Key Trends

#### India emerging as hot-bed for technology start-ups

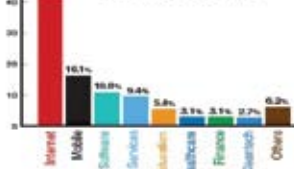
##### Fast maturing start-up ecosystem



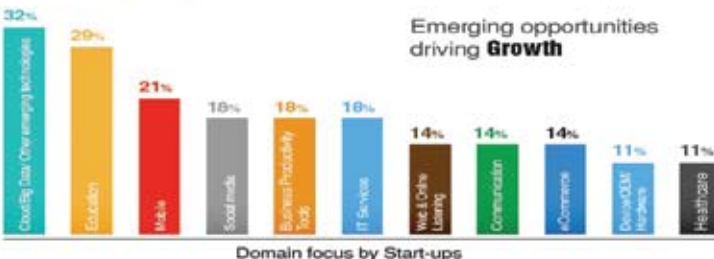
##### Bengaluru, NCR leading the start-ups destination



##### VC/Angel investment driving Growth



##### Emerging opportunities driving Growth



Source: Zinnov

new ideas and strategies.


Social networking websites such as Facebook, Twitter and Linked-in will help India place its IT sector in the limelight. Companies can use social media to introduce new software applications, consultation and features like system integration. Various factors affect the promotion of an IT firm in the global arena. There is always the threat of new entrants with unique services that can take over a relatively established IT firm in a short time. Countries outside South Asia, including the Philippines, Korea and China, have shown keenness to excel in the IT sector, which can challenge the Indian IT market. China is a strong contender that can win a major chunk of the world market share and is expected to rule over the field in the coming years. The IT firms of India need to collaborate with companies in the West to gather as many customers as they can, eventually adding value to the Indian market. **S**

*Sabah Siddiqui writes on topics of relevant professional interest.*

# Paradise in the

The atolls of the Maldives are a geologist's delight and a tourism paradise as their natural formation and beauty still remains a mystery.

By Amber Anwar



Arranged in almost a circle of 26 atolls, the Republic of Maldives is covered with 99 per cent water, leaving only 1 per cent land for the 1192 coral islands. The live coral reefs, white sandy beaches, coconut palms and crystal clear water is what makes the Maldives beautiful, attracting thousands of tourists to this paradise on Earth.

The Maldives' twenty-one administrative divisions include 20 atolls and the city of Male. Settlers have given unique names to each of these atolls. For example, Ihavandhippolhu Atoll gets its name from the island of Ihavandhoo in the southeast of the atoll; Miladummadulu derives its name from Milandhoo on the eastern fringes of the atoll, and Male Atolls are named after the island of Male. A few of the atolls also get their names from commanders and officers of the British Empire.

Live corals and coral debris mostly comprise the Maldivian islands. Coral reefs separate the islands from the sea and offer protection from high tides and storms rising in the Indian Ocean. Besides other flora, coconut palms, the national tree of the Maldives, are found in almost every part of the island. However, only a few flowering plants, shrubs and small hedges can grow in the islands as salt content is higher near the sea. Other vegetation includes mangroves, screw pine and banyan.

Beneath the deep blue ocean lies a fascinating world of sea creatures. The Maldives' serves as a home to a unique and diverse marine ecosystem. The sea is highly visible throughout the year and clear enough to make a passing fish visible from as far as fifty metres. Every year, monsoon tides from the Indian Ocean accumulate small marine

creatures, including microscopic plant cells, on the sea surface. The waters consist of colorful coral reefs, some 1,100 fish species, 400 species of molluscs, 187 coral species, 21 species of whales, and 5 species of sea turtles. Smaller sealife such as sponges, crabs, shrimps and large underwater creatures including whale sharks also dwell in this region. A variety of small organisms lure big fish and sharks to inhabit the area for a rich variety of food. These rare aquatic species found near and around the Maldives are of great biological and commercial value.

Only oceanic birds are found in the Maldives as the islands are located well inside the Indian Ocean. Also found are birds belonging to the family of frigate birds. Moreover, Grey Heron and Moorhen dwell in marshes and bushes of the islands while commonly seen in the sea are

# Ocean



whales and dolphins. Other native mammals include the flying fox and species of shrew.

The Maldives is a country located at the lowest level in the world, at merely 1.5 metres above sea level. More than 80 percent of the land is composed of coral islands that rise less than one metre above sea level. The islands in the Maldives have undergone frequent erosion and a natural formation process over time. The tides of the Indian Ocean deposit sand on the banks resulting in gradual expansion of the islands, which makes the Maldives a dynamic country in terms of geology and geography.

The formation of the Maldives atolls remains an unsolved mystery. According to Charles Darwin's theory, a coral reef grew on the edge of the volcanoes that rise from the sea. Coral reefs encircling the lagoon

remained after the volcanoes submerged into the water. Consequently, tides and currents brought dead coral onto sandbars that formed the islands on the reefs.

A theory put forward by Hans Hass gives another explanation. According to Hass, layers of coral reefs grew on top of submerged mountains until they rose to the surface of the water where only the hardest of these reefs remained. The corals which grew on the outer edges of the mountain formed rings, which today, are the outer rims of the atolls. This process resulted in the formation of islands, as debris and sand accumulated on the remaining reefs.

Hatcher tells yet another story about the formation of atolls in the Maldives. He explains that a change in sea level resulted in the formation of these atolls. When the volcanic mountains submerged into the sea,

the coral reefs grew upward to keep with the sea level, since coral cannot grow at depths of more than 150 feet. Simultaneously, the coral on the surface expanded laterally to stay abreast with the coastline, resulting in its upward and outward push even after the volcanic islands sank under the ocean.

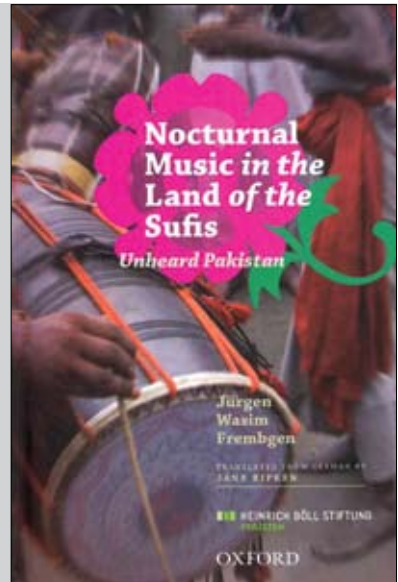
Dana, another researcher, argues that the current shape of an atoll has more to do with patterns of wind and wave activity. Other researchers, who observed a similar pattern for atoll formation, validate this theory. Geologists and researchers accept the basic truth about atoll formation, structure and shape. However, the discussion is still up for debate. **S**

*Amber Anwar holds a B.A in Marketing from the University of Karachi. She writes on topics of relevant professional interest.*

# Melodies of the Heart

**Title:** In Nocturnal Music in the Land of the Sufis  
**Author:** Jurgen Wasim Frembgen  
**Publisher:** Oxford University Press (July 2012)  
**Pages:** 168, Hardback  
**ISBN:** 9780199065066  
**Price:** PKR 625

*Reviewed By Atiya Abbas*



The introduction of Coke Studio and the arrival of rock bands such as Overload have brought hidden gems like Arif Lohar and Pappu Saeen back into the lime-light. The practice of expressing devotion through music has been alive for generations in Pakistan and India. Keeping this in mind, Jurgen Wasim Frembgen chronicles his journeys in Pakistan and his emotional association with Sufi music in his book “In Nocturnal Music in the Land of the Sufis: Unheard Pakistan.”

Frembgen, a German anthropologist, was always fascinated with Pakistan as the transition region between the south, west and central Asia. He extensively studied devotional Islam and Sufism in the 1980s and during 1996 to 2010, he travelled across Pakistan, participating in *melas* and *urs* at the shrines of prominent Sufi saints while attending festivals which included devotional music and dance.

It is not easy to write about music, which is an entirely transcendental experience. In these five chronicles, Frembgen captures the essence of devotional dance and music to show man’s love for God through the rhythms of musical instruments, de-

noting that the musician and the instrument become one. It is interesting to read Sufism from a foreigner’s point of view as this book brings to life a side of Pakistan, which many Pakistanis might never have seen before.

These chronicles cover Frembgen’s journeys in Sindh and Punjab. The first chapter, Musical Nights in the Wilderness, charts Frembgen’s visit to a famous saints’ festival in the Salt Range. His description of getting a haircut and a massage from an Irani barber attracts the reader’s attention and seems as if he is conveying his admiration for the Land of the Sufis. His writing style gives detailed accounts of the culture, immediately grasping the readers’ interest and fascination. For instance, Frembgen describes how believers entrust their children to spiritual mentors, who guard them from demons and *jinn*s. These children have their heads shaven with a single lock of hair on the right side, which they must wear until the age of 12. Many tales surround the saint, Imam Gul, known for loving animals and taking care of all the chickens in his parents’ courtyard. He taught one rooster the call to prayer and, as legend has it, from that day on the rooster would give the

*Azaan*. One day, a farmer caught the rooster and slaughtered it. Imam Gul ran to the pot, knocked it over and put together the parts of the rooster and revived him! Such tales might appear unbelievable to skeptical Muslims but Frembgen’s documentations place the readers in an environment of peace, mystical stories and dancing dervishes. He takes the readers to the hidden highlands of Pakistan away from city violence, where people simply want to devote themselves to God.

Frembgen also describes the beautiful music played by the devotees, the complicated *ragas* and *ghazals* with devotional lyrics, such as the following written by the poet Aatish:

*“Darkness blessed me with the sweetness of a wedding night  
 My spirit was blissful, happy was my heart  
 Seeing thus my eyes perceived the presence  
 of the nearness of God...”*

“Nights spent at saints’ shrines and graves fill the spirit with deep, serene satisfaction and are considered to be full of blessings,” he writes, “their thirst is quenched by the wine

of God's love, as the Sufis would say."

In the next chapter, *The Music Rooms of Lahore*, Frembgen details how his real initiation into "the traditional musical culture of the Indian subcontinent" began in a hotel room in Lahore. At the old Dehli-Muslim hotel he was drawn in by the sound of the *tabla*, coming from the inner courtyard. When it was confirmed there would be a *mehfil*, he decided to stay to watch the famous Maharaj Khatak perform. Frembgen's anthropological training allows him to vividly recreate the scene to achieve ecstasy of a different level. The music reaches a fever pitch that enchants the listeners and cries of *Wah wah!* and *Kya kehna*, fill the courtyard. For the reader who may not have experienced this kind of devotion, Frembgen provides an intimate look at an Islam that is completely devoid of the fundamentalist interpretations that it has become infamous for.

The chapter titled *The Voices of the Fakirs at the King's Court*, focuses on the shrine of the Red Sufi, Lal Shahbaz Qalandar in Sehwan. Frembgen brings to life an amazing sight, where Hindus, Punjabis, and Sindhis come together in devotional prayer and dance to one of the greatest Sufis in this region. For those who are on a spiritual quest, they will find their calling in this setting, as Shah Latif explains in these verses,

*"Whoever yearns for Saahar  
Seeks not a ferry or boat  
For whoever thirsts for love  
The rivers are only steps"*

"Only love leads the true Sufi to the truth and union with the Divine Beloved," Frembgen writes. "If only the bigoted *mullahs* and others who disdain music would realize that music opens hearts and lifts the veil between man and God."

As noted in recent interviews, Frembgen staunchly believes that the future of Sufism is bright because of the interest shown by the younger generation, "We should note that there is an increased interest in the East – take Pakistani music as an example. The Pakistani young generation finds interest in Sufism through the music of Junoon, Mekaal Hasan, the great Sufi poets and their interpreters such as Ustad Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, the Sabri Brothers and, of course, through Abida Parveen. The younger generation can find their identity reflected [in the music]." Through this book, Frembgen highlights an important part of Pakistan's culture and provides useful information for those who may want to embark on such journeys themselves. **S**

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



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By Anees Jillani

# Tsunami of Hatred

Ajmal Kasab was hanged in November 2012 and Afzal Guru in February 2013. India in a civilized manner offered the remains of Kasab to Pakistan that it, for reasons known to it, declined. As opposed to this civilized behavior, Afzal Guru's family, despite its interest in his body, has been declined the privilege and Guru has been buried within the Tihar jail.

Incidentally, both the above hangings, despite being linked to Pakistan in one way or other did not attract any attention, whether at the government or public level. Even the attack on the Pakistani prisoner, Sanaullah in the Jammu jail was hardly taken notice of. This was in sharp contrast to the reaction in India where many political party workers were shown thrusting sweets into each others' mouths; the less said the better as far as the Indian electronic media is concerned.

Now Sarabjit Singh has been killed by his inmates who, like him, are on a death row and thus hardly have any worries being brought to justice. There is no excuse for any prisoner being killed in a prison anywhere in the world and the prison authorities are responsible for this negligence, just like the ones in Jammu are for Sanaullah.

I can understand and appreciate the reaction of Sarabjit's family. It is also the job of the Government of India to protest as an Indian inmate has been killed in jail in cold-blood. However, what is the media getting so excited about?

Sarabjit was convicted for being involved in terrorism, just like Kasab. His case was reviewed twice by the Supreme Court of Pakistan and a brave lawyer was following his case till the day he died. I wonder if any lawyer in India would be this bold to represent Kasab. What to talk of him, even Afzal Guru was mainly convicted due to bad legal representation as he was not directly involved in the attack and thus could and should not have been hanged.

The people who are regarding Sarabjit as a hero fail to see the dichotomy. He was an Indian but involved in terrorism in Pakistan. I thus do not see any difference between him and Kasab. One was killed officially and the other unofficially and this is where the dissimilarity ends.

India is, rightly, angry with the November 2008 Mumbai attacks. The Indian government acted with maturity after the attacks unlike the reaction of its predecessor following the December 2001 Parliament attack which lined up hundreds of thousands of troops on the border, which were unilaterally and unconditionally withdrawn. This was not a mature reaction as it would not be in anybody's interest if the two countries had gone to war over the issue.

In February 2007, the *Samjauta* Express was bombed by Hindu fundamentalists near Panipat and 68 Pakistanis were roasted inside. The culprits have yet to be convicted despite the passage of six years. Pakistan did not line up troops on the border despite a military General at the helm of affairs and neither the media nor the public went berserk talking about teaching India a lesson. Terrorism is a universal problem and Pakistan is one of the worst sufferers in the world.

We are neighboring countries and there is no reason we should not communicate about these issues. The sane voices should stand up against this 'Tsunami of Hatred' to plead peace, sanity and maturity. It is difficult if not impossible for Pakistan and India to go to war after becoming nuclear powers and this constant itching to teach Pakistan a lesson is not going to get us anywhere, except perhaps better TRPs. **S**

*Anees Jillani 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.*

"I will spend the rest of my life working towards building the Pakistan that Jinnah originally envisioned"

"I will clean my neighborhood!"

"Provide legal representation to those who cannot afford it and help in establishing a true rule of law in Pakistan"

"I will drive more responsibly!"

"I will volunteer as a part-time teacher at a girls primary school and help enhance the education sector in Pakistan"

"I will promote animal rights and rescue, adopt & sponsor a stray dog. In 15 yrs bring the population of stray dogs to 0"

"I won't throw trash anywhere except in a trash bin and will advise others to do the same!"

"I will represent Pakistan internationally in the World Squash Championships in the next 5 years"

"I will listen to different opinions about Pakistan's progress and will highlight the moderate, positive aspects of it"

"I will spend my summer vacation in the mountains to observe and conserve wildlife in Karachi"

"I will journey through Pakistan and illustrate its rich history & scenery through pictures"

"I will start a textile/clothing business in the rural areas with to empower women"

"I will vote in the upcoming elections and will encourage everyone around me vote as well."

"I will try to ensure that reading is a part of everyone's life by opening bookstores and handing out books"

"I will translate literature in all local languages informing women of their rights as a wife and as a legal heir"

"I will research how to eradicate polio and contact agencies to learn how I can become active"

"I will not promote Shia-Sunni sect-based hatred in Pakistan. I am Muslim. That's all you need to know"

"I will turn the lights off whenever I leave a room and will conserve electricity"

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