

**LEADERSHIP SERIES**  
**Mother Teresa**

March 2013

# SOUTHASIA

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Signing of Elysee Treaty by Dr. Konrad Adenauer, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany (left) and General Charles de Gaulle, President of the French Republic.

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

## INSIDE:

**INDIA**  
What's in a Name?

**AFGHANISTAN**  
Revenue Concerns

**BHUTAN**  
All Weather Friends?

**INTERNATIONAL**  
Made for the Job



## A Blueprint for Friendship

Can the Franco-German Treaty of Friendship provide a model for India and Pakistan to cut through years of enmity and chart out a path to peace and cooperation?



"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 public school and help enhance the education sector in Pakistan"

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

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

"I will represent Pakistan international sportsman in the Fed Squash within the next 5 years"

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

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

"I will journey through Pakistan and illustrate the country's rich history & scenery through pictures"

"I will start a textile/clothing business in a rural area 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 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"

# WHAT WILL YOU DO FOR PAKISTAN?

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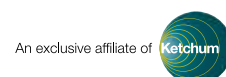
CMC runs prospective political candidates and company spokespersons through specialized training programs. They are carefully honed to make public appearances with poise, composure and self-assurance.

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# Contents

# 16

## A Blueprint for Friendship

India and Pakistan can coexist peacefully by following the Franco-German treaty of friendship.



# Pakistan 24

### Blow Hot, Blow Cold

After the LoC crisis, can India and Pakistan salvage their relationship?



### Afghanistan

#### 28 Revenue Concerns

Afghanistan needs economic restructuring if it hopes to achieve some stability.

### Bangladesh

#### 32 The Tiger goes hunting

Bangladesh is heavily investing to procure military arsenal from Russia.



# 26

## India

### What's in a Name?

Entering politics full-time, does Rahul Gandhi have what it takes to make an impression?

### Leadership

#### 46 Mother of the Poor

Mother Teresa continues to be an inspiration through the legacy of humanitarian work she has left behind.



# 42

## International

Made for the Job

Secretary of State, John Kerry, is the perfect fit for the senior most diplomatic post in the country.



### Media

The Future of Print  
Is print media outdated? 52

### Book Review

Roots of Racism  
Pakistani Christians' struggle for human rights is one steeped in ancient roots. 58



# 40

## Neighbor

### Forbidden City in Cyberspace

What is the future of China once it reaches one billion Internet users?

# 48

## Interview

"Islamic banking is on a steady growth path."

Ahmed Khizer Khan, President & CEO, Burj Bank talks about the growth of Islamic banking.

### REGULAR FEATURES

Editor's Mail	8
On Record	11
Briefing	12

### COVER STORY

Elysee Treaty: a model worth emulating	16
A Lesson from History	18
Elysee Treaty: A Cornerstone of Cooperation	23

### REGION

<b>Pakistan</b>	
Blow Hot, Blow Cold	24
<b>India</b>	
What's in a Name?	26
<b>Afghanistan</b>	
Revenue Concerns	28
<b>Bangladesh</b>	
The Tiger goes Hunting	32
<b>Maldives</b>	
Democracy Heading for Failure	34
<b>Nepal</b>	
Correcting the Balance	36
<b>Bhutan</b>	
All Weather Friends?	38

### NEIGHBOR

<b>China</b>	
Forbidden City in Cyberspace	40

### INTERNATIONAL

<b>United States</b>	
Made for the Job	42
<b>Leadership Series</b>	
Mother of the Poor	46
<b>Interview</b>	
"Islamic banking is on a steady growth path."	48

### FEATURE

<b>Cuisine</b>	
Savory Culinary Delights	50
<b>Media</b>	
The Future of Print	52
<b>Sports</b>	
Playing on Top of the World	54
<b>Culture</b>	
Whither Urdu?	56

### BOOK REVIEW

Roots of Racism	58
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### THE LAST STOP

Death Penalty is Not the Answer	60
---------------------------------	----

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# Afzal Guru's Hanging – a Travesty of Justice

It is said that Indian President Pranab Mukherjee erred over the hanging of Afzal Guru and in rejecting the convict's mercy petition. If he had perused the trial court records and the lengthy documentation put together over the years by lawyers and civil rights activists, or even the Indian Supreme Court judgment which sentenced Afzal to death, he would have known that the accused's guilt was never established beyond reasonable doubt. The secretive hanging caused a sense of deep anguish, despair and outrage in India and across the world when news came that Afzal Guru received capital punishment on February 9 - in complete secrecy. The President of India had rejected the mercy petition filed by Guru's wife Tabassum on Feb 3 and that, as in life, Guru was denied legal rights in his death too, though, according to Indian judicial laws, every convict whose mercy petition is rejected by the president is entitled to a last resort; he or she has the constitutional right to file a judicial review or a delay petition in any Indian high court or the country's Supreme Court to seek commutation of the death sentence. Under the law, Afzal Guru may have lived still despite rejection of his mercy petition but this could only have been possible had his family and lawyers been informed of the rejection of the petition before he was taken to the gallows.

Afzal Guru was hanged in Tihar Jail in New Delhi on Feb 9 (and buried inside the Jail premises) for his role in the high profile attack on Dec 13, 2001 on the Indian Parliament while his close family was not even informed in advance so they could meet the convict before he was hanged. The Indian Supreme court wrote in its judgment that though there was no direct evidence, Guru should be hanged to satisfy the collective conscience of the nation. What was meant by the 'collective conscience of the nation' was not clear. Did it mean that the Indian nation received 'collective satisfaction' over the hanging of an alleged convict against whom the case evidence was not even complete? Feelings were rife that the long-term implications of Guru's hanging were "far more worrying" as they were related to the new generation of youth in Kashmir who may not remember Maqbool Butt but would certainly identify with Afzal Guru. Butt was hanged in 1984 for the murder of Indian diplomat Ravindra Mhatre in the UK.

Afzal Guru was accused of masterminding the attack on the Indian Parliament in December 2001, in which 14 people lost their lives. All five attackers were killed on the spot and India accused the militant group Jaish-e-Mohammed for the attack. In a TV interview, Afzal Guru had acknowledged his role in the 2001 incident but had said he was not part of the team that had actually attacked the Parliament House. Since he had not killed anyone, the question arises as to why he was hanged? The secretive manner in which the hanging was carried out is also a clear travesty of justice. It speaks volumes of the outrageous breach of fundamental human rights and the trammeling of ethics and morality. The final judgment of the Indian Supreme Court does not quite reflect the manner in which the world's largest democracy is expected to behave.



Syed Jawaid Iqbal

## The Messiah has Arrived?



Your cover story on Tahir-ul-Qadri was very timely and relevant. Mr. Qadri has suddenly appeared on Pakistan's political landscape and has jolted not only a fragile government but also a disenchanted people. The people of Pakistan are tired of the same old faces that have looted and plundered the country and are desperate for change whether it is in the form of Imran Khan or Tahir-ul-Qadri. Both leaders, devoid of diplomatic training, have successfully rallied enormous crowds as they criticize the government's handling of national and international affairs and present frameworks for good governance, national security and political stability.

While Qadri speaks the truth and rallies a nation in return, Pakistan remains a fragile country. If the system needs to be fixed then there needs to be a system in the first place. It is imperative that the incumbent government, regardless of how discredited it may be, be allowed to complete its due course and elections take place in a proper manner. That will not be a testament to the weak and corrupt PPP government but rather to the brave and resolute people of Pakistan who

hold the tenets of democracy higher than any office. The road ahead will not be an easy one for Pakistan and the country will continue to see both national and foreign elements enter its space to rally political and public opinion. The country's population must remain steadfast and focused on electing officials who are responsible and dedicated to a common cause of delivering to the people.

Danial Hussain  
Islamabad, Pakistan

## A Healthy Lifestyle

Your story on maintaining and balancing a healthy diet was very insightful. The dieting phenomenon has recently taken root in South Asia. Due to the sudden popularity of the concept, many people are desperate to see instant changes and as a result engage in unhealthy, harmful and unrealistic diet plans. The central idea of adopting a diet plan is sustainability. This is particularly important for those who are extremely



o v e r -  
w e i g h t .

Weight loss is a procedure, which takes place over time. If followed correctly, most people are able to gradually cut down their weight while remaining healthy and active.

Those that look for drastic changes often leave long-term detrimental effects on their body. The writer's advice about sustaining a balanced diet was very helpful. Increasing ones intake of nutritious goods and abstaining from junk food will not only make you look better but also feel better. Dieting must be done with commitment, patience and respect for your body.

Ganesh Shastri  
Kathmandu, Nepal

## New Model for Development

Your profile of Dr. Mohammad Yunus was very informative. Through his ground-breaking work with the Grameen Bank, Dr. Yunus has revolutionized development work and today is one of the leading voices for alleviating poverty and promoting female empowerment. It is a matter of pride for all South Asian nations to acknowledge that the model of micro-finance introduced by one of its own citizens is now emulated throughout the world. Not only Bangladesh, but also parts of Africa, the Middle East, South Asia and the developing world have benefitted greatly from Yunus' work. With a strong focus on women empowerment, his programs aim to bring self-sufficiency, sustainability and independence to millions of women around the world. Working around a reliable and consistent economic model, the Bank has introduced policies that are 100 percent dependable.

Given the phenomenal results shown by both the Bank and Dr. Yunus, it is unfortunate that he has become the target of political parties with vested interests in Bangladesh. It is a shame that the administration of the Grameen Bank has been accused of corruption and Dr. Yunus has personally been Sheikh Hasina's verbal target, simply because he is viewed as



a potential rival. This is nothing more than belittling his contributions to the realm of international development. While the rest of the world hails him as a hero, it is shameful that his own country victimizes him.

Sana Jamal  
Dhaka, Bangladesh

## Next in Line

Very few people truly know of the internal politics at play in Iran. The diplomatically isolated country only makes it to the international media on account of its nuclear program or when it enters into yet another brawl with the United States. As mentioned in your story, the very fact that the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamanei is stepping down and will leave a power vacuum that can either be filled by someone heavily influenced by him

or by someone truly independent, thus threatening Khamanei's stronghold over Iranian politics, is certainly a game changer. It seems most likely that Khamanei's successor will denote a continuation of the former's policies which means Iran will see little change, both domestically and internationally. This cannot bode well for a "Republic" that is increasingly isolated, both diplomatically and economically. The fact that the country will undergo internal re-shuffling gives the international community, a small window of opportunity to interact with the people of Iran and start afresh, a new policy of engagement. But the international community must be armed with good intentions and heavily refrain from influencing or interfering in internal politics, lest it be seen as a neo-colonial power. Such a move will only cement the current Iranian government's anti-Western arguments in the eyes of the public. Only communication and diplomatic ties will allow for bilateral relations, which will in turn promote negotiations on Iran's nuclear ambitions. There is no better time to engage with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Omeed Askari  
Los Angeles, USA

## Brave Musicians

It was fascinating to read your story on young Afghan musicians who continue to pursue their passion regardless of the many odds against them. It is true that many in the international community only view Afghanistan through a prism of war and have a menial understanding of the real-time changes taking place in the

## Write to SouthAsia

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

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country. While the international media portrays it through a certain bias, ground realities show a healthy level of instability and insecurity, especially as the country gears up for a democratic transition. In such a scenario, Afghanistan, with its rich cultural history of music and the performing arts, must make concerted efforts to preserve its traditions. The Afghanistan National Institute of Music is one such institute that does this. The youth of Afghanistan is brave, passionate and extremely talented. To provide them with a venue to hone their talent and find peace and success in an otherwise war-torn and unstable nation is very commendable. Music is a universal language that is not constrained by borders, gender, age or ethnicity. It is heartening to learn that young girls are also equally involved, becoming a part of this movement and that Afghanistan is training its next generation of world-class musical talent.

Mooed Masood  
Dubai, UAE





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"We have made a decision to add submarines with base facilities to Bangladesh's navy very soon to make it a deterrent force."

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



"The barbaric gang-rape of a young woman in the capital has shaken the entire country. People are rightly demanding answers and actions."

**Sonia Gandhi**  
**President of the Indian National Congress**



"I have been accused of bearing allegiance to our neighbouring nation rather than my own country."

**Shah Rukh Khan**  
**Indian actor**



"Sri Lanka and the United States enjoy a traditionally robust partnership in political, economic, social and cultural spheres."

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



"Like Canada, both India and Pakistan are my home markets with a huge readership base."

**Musharraf Ali Farooqi**  
**Writer, translator and essayist**



"The destiny of Bhutan is intimately bound with that of India and it is in our mutual interests to further the bonds of friendship and understanding."

**Jigme Khesar Wangchuk**  
**King of Bhutan**



"The country's economy is not as bad as it is perceived to be."

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



"Independent judiciary and rule of law are the backbone of democracy and legal practitioners are social engineers."

**Ram Baran Yadav**  
**President of Nepal**



"We are very much aware of the challenges emanating from eastern borders but must not be delusional about the challenges within Pakistan."

**Hina Rabbani Khar**  
**Foreign Minister of Pakistan**



"When foreigners leave, Afghanistan will never become unsafe; it will become safer."

**Hamid Karzai**  
**President of Afghanistan**



"The foreign companies are very much interested in what is happening in India and they are definitely getting the right vibes here from the Indians present here."

**Chandrajit Banerjee**  
**Director General, Confederation of Indian Industry**



"The court is encouraging investigations from the top down rather than from the bottom up."

**Asma Jahangir**  
**Advocate, Supreme Court of Pakistan**

PAKISTAN

# Iran-Pakistan Gas Pipeline

During its recent visit to Pakistan, the Iranian delegation began talks with Pakistani officials on the engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) contract for the \$1.5 billion gas pipeline. The delegation, headed by the Deputy Chief of the Tadbir Company, discussed the future of the gas pipeline with Pakistani officials from the Ministry of Petroleum and Resources and the Inter State Gas Systems. According to the plan, Iran will construct two kilometers of pipeline per day, hence completing the 781 kilometre long pipeline in 16 months.

The talks helped the two countries modify the scope and nature of work, terms of reference, expenses incurred

by both countries and other key aspects of the agreement. The pipeline will run from Gabd, an area near the Pakistan-Iran border to Nawabshah in Sindh. As per the schedule, Iran will complete the construction work by December 2014. The pipeline will bring nearly 750 million cubic feet gas per day; the volume of gas flow will be increased to almost 1 billion cubic feet per day. Pakistan will inject the incoming gas into its power sector to generate nearly 4,000MW of electricity. It is expected that Pakistan will save nearly \$1 billion per year, as the gas will replace costly furnace oil.

During the talks, both sides also agreed upon the finances involved in

the gas pipeline project and discussed the \$500 million loan, which Pakistan will receive from Iran. However, Pakistan will itself bear the remaining costs. **S**



AFGHANISTAN

# Afghan General Visits Pakistan

In his recent visit to Islamabad, Afghanistan's Defense Minister, General Bismillah Khan Mohammadi, formulated a joint security plan with Pakistani military officials to ensure regional peace following the withdrawal of US-led foreign troops in 2014. The visiting Afghan delegation met Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff, General Ashfaq Pervez Kayani. According to the strategic plan, the security forces of Pakistan and Afghanistan will take over the security arrangements while the role of US-led forces will gradually decrease in the months leading to the drawdown date.

The visit of Afghan delegates signals an effort to forge closer defense and diplomatic ties with Pakistan. The two countries share a common border, which in the past has resulted in secu-

urity breaches and has jeopardized bilateral relations. The officials discussed the recent cross-border attacks as well as



matters of professional interest, with a special focus on enhancing defense cooperation and discussing measures that the Afghan National Army and Pakistan Army could mutually adopt for an enhanced long-term relationship.

Officials from both countries renewed guarantees to increase the level of security coordination. To ensure this, the security forces of the two countries would receive military training to counter any threat that may present itself following the NATO troops' withdrawal. In addition, Pakistan showed its willingness to train Afghan soldiers at its military training institutions. General Bismillah's visit to Pakistan, at a time of transition in both countries, testifies that Pak-Afghan ties are moving towards a broad-based relationship. **S**

INDIA

# My Name is Khan

**R**enowned Indian film star Shahrukh Khan recently came under fire from radical Indian factions over an article he penned for an Indian magazine. In the article, Khan discussed the perils of living as a Muslim in India and the constant opposition and harassment he faced from religious communities within the country. The actor revealed that in a post-9/11 world, many politicians had blatantly asked him to return to his native homeland: Pakistan. Furthermore, Khan exposed that politicians often stamp him as a symbol of everything that is wrong and unpatriotic about Muslims in India.

Following the article's publication,

angry protestors and extremist groups held rallies and demanded that Shahrukh Khan leave India. He enjoys unprecedented popularity in India and around the world and has faced the criticism of having loyalty to Pakistan rather than his native country. Moreover, he is the first Indian actor of Muslim origin to face such criticism; a development that could seriously tarnish his image and popularity in Bollywood.

The situation was further aggravated when Pakistan's Interior Minister, Rehman Malik, publicly suggested to officials in New Delhi to provide the actor with enhanced security. In response, the Indian Home Secretary, RK Singh as-



sured the Pakistan side that India was quite capable of taking care of the security of its own people.

In the wake of this controversy, Shahrukh Khan held a press conference to address the accusation. Claiming that he wrote the article to reiterate his patriotism, Khan argued that some extremist factions within Indian had distorted facts because of his Muslim identity. He was of the view that many were reacting to his article without reading it and said that he doesn't understand the basis of the controversy. **S**

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BANGLADESH

# Improving Infrastructure

**I**n an attempt to reduce poverty in Bangladesh, the government recently appointed Mott MacDonald, an international multidisciplinary consultancy, to support three development projects. These projects will increase income and reduce poverty by providing better vocational opportunities to Bangladeshis.

The Asian Development Bank will finance these projects. The consulting firm will design and supervise services for the Sustainable Rural Infrastructure Improvement Project. These projects will promote resource development, agriculture, environmental protection and management, climate change projects, capacity building and gender equality projects in Bangladesh's northwest and southwest regions.

Moreover, the project aims to enhance the standard of living in rural areas by providing residents access to social services such as health, education and widening access to markets. Mott MacDonald is also providing technical and management consultancy services to link remote communities to highways, develop irrigation and water resources and offer economic opportunities through farming.

Of late, Bangladesh has seen to be as progressing as South Asia's business hub with unprecedented growth in the industrial and trade sector. The government's plan to hire Mott MacDonald signifies Bangladesh's willingness

to develop its infrastructure to facilitate long-term growth. By improving infrastructure, the country aims to increase household income by almost 75%, enabling more than a million people to benefit from the project. **S**



SRI LANKA

# Foreign Investment Up by \$2 billion

According to the Minister of Investment Promotion, Lakshman Yapa Abeywardene, Sri Lanka is expected to receive over \$2 billion of foreign investment this year. The country will direct the investment to four sectors, namely, tourism, education, industrial development and the service sectors. In addition, Sri Lanka will use the investment to fund projects in various sectors to generate job opportunities that will facilitate in financing the external debt, which currently exceeds \$22 billion.

Although, Sri Lanka lagged in

economic activity because of the decade-long civil war, the country is developing infrastructure facilities under President Mahinda Rajapaksa's regime. Moreover, foreign investors find Sri Lanka an attractive investment hub as the country possesses basic infrastructure including expressways, sea-ports, and airports.

Even though Sri Lanka is able to tap foreign investors, the country hasn't attracted much investment in the education sector. Lack of proper educational facilities in the country compels Sri Lankan students to go



abroad for higher studies, which puts a heavy burden on its economy and drains nearly \$400 million from the country.

Sri Lanka requires investment in its commerce and trade sector if it hopes to revive and develop its manufacturing units in the Free Trade and Industrial Zones. The incoming foreign investment will provide stimulus to Sri Lanka's industrial sector, comprising of 29% of the GDP. **S**

MALDIVES

# Smart Maldives

In a recently signed agreement, Chinese software firm Huawei Technologies has agreed to provide IT infrastructure support to the Maldives. The memorandum of understanding was signed between Huawei Technologies (Lanka) Co. Ltd, and the National Center for Information Technologies, Maldives. The agreement entails the development of the IT Infrastructure in the island nation under the 'Smart Maldives Project.' The Maldives views this partnership a significant step in its quest to become an independent and a progressive country.

China has also expressed its interest in providing the Maldives with loans to



support the project. The growing association between China and the Maldives rings alarm bells for India, since a possible China-Maldives relationship will affect India's hegemony in the region.

India fears a security breach since the equipment used for infrastructure development in the Maldives could have bugs and may possibly intercept any communication between India, China and the Maldives.

Although the project will provide the Maldives with state-of-the-art communication technology, it is expected that China would exercise its influence over the Maldives to utilize the latter's IT network for its own advantage. India's concerns over China-Maldivian ties are largely fuelled by jealousy. India is still reeling from the investment shock following the Maldives' decision to oust the former from constructing the Male airport. **S**

# Maoists Converge

Nepal's former rebel Maoist movement recently held a public gathering for its biggest show of strength following the end of a decade long insurgency. Nearly 3,000 delegates attended the five-day convention, the first of its kind, since the toppling of the last Hindu monarchy in 2008.

The Maoist party is expected to back its commitment to democracy even though it has failed to deliver on its promise to hold elections last November. However, the party claims that it will not initiate a people's war again. The convention focused on the preservation of achievements such as secularism, republicanism, and the

implementation of a comprehensive constitution and federalism.

A decade has passed since the last convention was held in the district of Chitwan. Members at this year's convention recalled the grim past when nearly 16,000 people died in the 1996-2006 conflict when the Maoists fought against the monarchy. The party now leads Nepal in a shaky caretaker coalition, which has had little power to make fundamental policy decisions since the parliament was dissolved last May. The convention is believed to consolidate the power of Pushpa Kamal Dahal, the party's chairperson.



In addition, the convention helped to ease tension between Dahal and his two opponents, Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai and Deputy Prime Minister, Narayan Kaji Shrestha. Although some quarters in Nepal's politics think that Bhattarai may have used state machinery to gain power, it seems that the Maoist leader Prachanda is likely to maintain his hold in the party. Moreover, the convention promoted the Maoist's claim for transforming the party into a mainstream democratic force rather than sticking to authoritarian attitudes. **S**

# For A Happier Future

Members of the International Expert Working Group recently met in Thimphu to work on the New Development Paradigm. The program has been developed to gauge and enhance human happiness and the

well-being of all life forms. The meeting, attended by 40 international experts, discussed the major domains that constitute the NDP. Members identified the possible dimensions to the NDP programs against major components of the old development paradigm. The provisional dimensions come under four capitals namely natural, social, human, and built capital. Included within these four capitals are 9 domains of GNH and 33 indicators.

According to the Secretariat for NDP, the mission is to change the

world and show the path that leads to happiness. NDP was launched in 2011, when over sixty countries joined Bhutan to co-sponsor a UN resolution titled 'Happiness: Towards a Holistic Approach to Development.' Since then, Bhutan has actively taken part in increasing its happiness levels and the NDP project hopes to appeal to scholars, policy makers and common people alike.

The Nepalese team behind the NDP project hopes to make it attractive to all classes of society and to outside cultures as well. Furthermore, the members have taken into consideration the cultural construction of happiness and have made it flexible enough for other cultures to adopt. **S**



# Elysee Treaty: a model worth emulating

France and Germany ended their enmity by signing the Treaty of Friendship in 1963. Can India and Pakistan follow a similar route?

By Samina Wahid Perozani

It is 50 years since the Elysee Treaty was signed between Germany and France – the two European nations that had been bitter enemies for centuries and fought two World Wars in the first half of the 20th century. Commonly known as the Treaty of Friendship, this agreement provided a sound basis for what turned out to be a lasting relationship of trust and understanding between the two former enemies. Significant policy decisions were enforced and organisations/institutions set up that transformed political alliances into practical benefits for both nations. The fiftieth anniversary of this landmark treaty provides an

opportunity to reflect on the impact it has made and to perhaps consider it as a model worth emulating by other countries struggling to maintain bilateral ties as well.

The Elysee Treaty was signed on January 22, 1963 in Berlin by French President Charles de Gaulle and German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer to put an end to differences between the two nations; differences that led them to wage three wars against each other over the course of a century. Hostility between the two nations started as early as the 16th century, largely based on pre-Roman cultural differences. Tensions continued to escalate,

resulting in the Franco-Prussian War in the 19th century. Both countries remained fiercely opposed to each other all through the First and Second World Wars. It was after the Second World War (1939-1945) that both parties worked on rapprochement and declared an end to their rivalry. Eighteen years after the war came to a close, the Elysee Treaty was finally signed, following a period of Franco-German cooperation (initiated in the 50s). The agreement has been so successful that the two countries remain closer than ever despite all the daily political wrangling.

The treaty is unique because of a few distinctive features that also make it a success: it is a public commitment to reconciliation that can be called upon in times of friction between the two countries; it emphasises the importance of civil society and the role it can play in the strengthening of ties; it institutionalised relations in several important areas, inculcated a culture of cooperation and developed personal ties that transcended bureaucratic and policy decisions; and it laid the groundwork for future German and French premiers who continued to use this treaty as a model for strong bilateral relations.

Barring a few hiccups here and there, the Elysee Treaty has been mostly successful in maintaining harmonious relations between France and Germany. Perhaps one of the



*French President Charles de Gaulle shaking hands with German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer.*

most significant results of this pact has been the Franco-German Office for Youth (FGYO). Set up in July 1963, the office is credited with bringing together the youth of the two countries, and promotes understanding, solidarity and collaboration by urging them to participate in various exchange programs. Some of the efforts of this youth office include the promotion of French and German languages, setting up of Franco-German high schools, publishing of a joint history course book that highlights a shared perspective on history and a French-German TV channel called Arte. However, even more important has been the treaty's historically central role in setting the foundation of the European Union (EU). Notwithstanding political differences that surfaced from time to time, both Germany and France have been committed to propelling EU forward. This has been most obvious in the unanimous support lent to major European projects such as the creation of the euro (thanks to the 1992 Maastricht Treaty). In fact, all EU consolidation in the last 50 years has been a direct result of the Franco-German alliance.

It was in 2003, the year that marked 40 years of the French-German friendship, that EU commissioners Pascal Lamy (from France) and Gunter Verheugen (from Germany) initiated the Lamy-Verheugen Plan that aimed to unite both countries in certain key areas including military and economic alliances, combined embassies and the holding of a joint seat in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). As a result, Germany and France forged economic ties by setting up two massive industrial units, Areva and Aventis. The former is a French public multinational nuclear power company with its headquarters in Paris. The company is also actively involved in other energy projects and provides solutions for carbon-free energy. Till recently, the German electronics giant Siemens was also a



shareholder in the company. Aventis, on the other hand, is the result of a merger between French and German companies, and was later merged with Sanofi, France's leading pharmaceutical company. The company manufactures medicines for several therapeutic indications.

Also, on the eve of the 40th anniversary, the premiers of both countries decided to set up new forms of coordination every year with the help of the Council of French-German Ministers. This council, created by the then French President Jacques Chirac and German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, replaced the annual Franco-German Summit instituted by the treaty. Alongside this, Germany and France set up an Elysee Fund to finance cultural projects in other countries, thus providing additional visibility and substance to the French-German cooperation abroad. In fact, since 2003, several cultural projects in Nigeria have received the patronage of the Elysee Fund. In 2010, at the 12th Council of the Franco-German Ministers, the French-German Agenda 2020 was approved, which details 80 substantive measures for deeper cooperation between the two countries in the day-to-day affairs of the masses. These include a common matrimonial system, French-German civil service, creation of bilingual kindergartens, common medical services in border areas and occupational integration of young people.

Even more interesting is the merg-

ing of their armed forces in the EU intergovernmental standing army corps – Eurocorps. While several EU nations have contributed their soldiers, huge French and German contingents, collectively known as the Franco-German brigade, is at the helm of this force. In fact, Eurocorps receives most of its infantry from France while most of the armour is supplied by Germany.

It is clear then that the Elysee Treaty has been a resounding success. Today, there are countless twinned cities and towns in Germany and France and thanks to the efforts of the Franco-German Youth Office, hundreds of thousands of young people have discovered their European neighbours. Paris and Berlin remain the driving forces in matters of European policymaking and even though relations have cooled on occasion, the fact is that their close cooperation has never been vulnerable to a falling out. Therefore, it's not surprising that both countries have great respect for this historic agreement.

The Elysee Treaty has also helped boost economic, industrial and military growth across Europe. It is a model worth replicating since it shows that in spite of all odds, nations can actually rise above their differences, come together and work towards common goals. ■

*Samina Wahid Perozani is Assistant Editor at Slogan and Enterprise magazines. She writes on topics of relevant professional interest.*

# A Lesson from History

War having failed to resolve any issue, it is time to give peace a chance. The Franco-German model could provide a blueprint for Indo-Pak friendship?

By S. G. Jilanee

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**F**or sixty-five years India and Pakistan have been at each other's "throats." The two countries have fought four wars over the span of this time. Sometimes they appear to come closer, but then a catastrophe happens that throws a spanner in the works and all the progress made is wiped out.

Take the most recent example. Mutual understanding and somewhat cordial relations were making progress on a number of issues such as Siachen and Sir Creek, better trade and economic relations, developing energy-sector cooperation and liberalizing visa regimes, including a five-city visa-on-arrival for senior citizens at Wagah. Pakistan was also gearing up to grant MFN status to India. Sports and cultural exchanges – including joint India-Pakistan music performances – and media interactions had, in their own way, contributed to confidence building.

Then, suddenly, all the good work came to a halt and war drums began to beat, yet again. Indian electronic media went ber-

serk. Military leaders issued bellicose statements. Indian Air Force chief NAK Browne threatened, "to look for some other options" to secure Pakistan's compliance with the ceasefire. Army Chief Bikram Singh asserted India's right to retaliate aggressively. Defence Minister AK Antony described Pakistan's conduct as a 'turning point.'

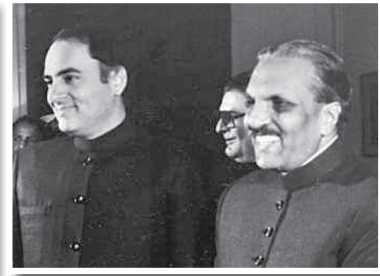
This debacle started when the Indian army started constructing bunkers on its side of the Line of Control in Kashmir. They thought that the bar put on such activities in the 2003 ceasefire agreement would not apply in this case because the bunkers faced inwards. But the Pakistani side viewed it differently. The resulting firefight cost the lives of two soldiers on each side of the border before good sense finally returned on both sides.

And yet, the latest incident was neither the first, nor it may be the last, which warrants urgent attention from saner elements on both sides, especially because they are nuclear states. In this context the Associated Press report dated 22

January, saying that "police on the Indian side of the Line of Control have warned people in Srinagar to build underground bunkers equipped with toilets, collect two weeks' worth of food and water and ensure they have a supply of candles, torches and a radio," to prepare for nuclear war. A report from a third-party organization such as AP is particularly alarming.

Therefore, though guns have gone silent for the umpteenth moment, it is imperative for the political and military leaders and thinkers of all callings, as well as the media, to put their heads together and find a permanent solution to this prolonged stand-off. That is the only way to banish the





threat of a nuclear war that hangs like the Sword of Damocles over both countries.

France and Germany seem to offer a model for such rapprochement. In WWII Germany invaded and occupied France. Though Germany was defeated, yet, relations remained sour for eighteen long years. Eventually, they came to realise that perpetual hostility was counterproductive and signed the Elysee Treaty in 1963. The Treaty ended the chapter of prolonged enmity and opened the doors to mutual cooperation in the fields of defence, foreign policy, security, health, education, economy, cultural exchange, and youth programs. Peace and cooperation benefited both sides and this year, both countries proudly celebrated the golden jubilee (50 years) of their dedicated partnership.

The question therefore arises, why India and Pakistan should not take a leaf from the Franco-German experience to exorcise the ghost of war and herald an era of enduring peace. The answer to that question is not easy, simply

because India and Pakistan are not France and Germany. There, the casus belli ceased after Germany's defeat. But here, though Pakistan was defeated by India in 1971, the belligerents did not sign any peace treaty. The standoff has continued with a major flare up at Kargil in 1999 and occasional breaches of the Line of Control. The CBMs and other measures mentioned above have therefore had only a peripheral effect that can be ruined at any given moment as the latest incident proved.

To bring about an agreement between Pakistan and India on the Franco-German model would require policymakers on both sides gifted with a futuristic vision; people, who would not think in terms of India shining or Pakistan shining but about the benefits their cooperation would spell for the entire region. What is needed is a radical change of approach to the issues that bedevil mutual relations. It may look like a forbidding task in the given situation to change the mindset that has taken deep roots over six decades but it is not im-

practicable. The practice is well known both in medical treatment and military policy. One changes the line of treatment; the other alters strategy, if desired results are not achieved within a reasonable period of time.

Kashmir is the bleeding wound between the two neighbors. Other issues, such as Siachen, Sir Creek and Wuller Barrage are its offshoots. Pakistan has tried every trick to force India to agree to a plebiscite in Kashmir so the people may decide which country they would wish to be a part of. The country has sent raiders, armed infiltrators and terror mongers. It has sulked on improving relations with trade and other exchanges. Pakistan failed to reciprocate India's overture of granting it MFN status and has even had several bouts of war. For sixty-five years Pakistan has pursued the policy of hostility and the use of force to resolve the issue. But the result has been zilch and even counterproductive; the loss of East Pakistan was the direct consequence of Pakistan's war with India in 1971.



Now, therefore, it should experiment with overturning its strategy for a change. Friendship may achieve where enmity failed. Milton wrote in a letter to Cromwell "peace hath her victories no less renowned than war." The postulate is as true today as it was then. The argument that India should be given a taste of its own medicine by Kashmiri people adopting the Gandhian principle of non-violence as the sole weapon to fight for self-determination makes solid sense. Why not try it? As a first step, both countries should sign a No-War Pact. Pakistan should start with a declaration stating that it would not initiate or support the use of force in any shape or form by anyone in pursuit of self-deter-

mination for the people of Kashmir nor allow anyone to plan any hostile act against India, within its territory. A No-War Pact should clear the way for both sides to pull out of Siachen and demilitarise it. Sir Creek and Wullar Barrage settlement should follow as corollaries.

Naysayers may, with a sneer, ask, "what if India does not respond to the non-violent approach in the Kashmir struggle?" The answer is simple. First, it will be put to international shame if it uses force to suppress a non-violent struggle on the Gandhian pattern as the British did before. And second, there is the analogy of how America continues its drone attacks despite Pakistan's endless protests, yet, the latter has not adopted any combat-

ive approach.

Six decades plus, of war having failed to resolve the issue, it is high time to give peace a chance.

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



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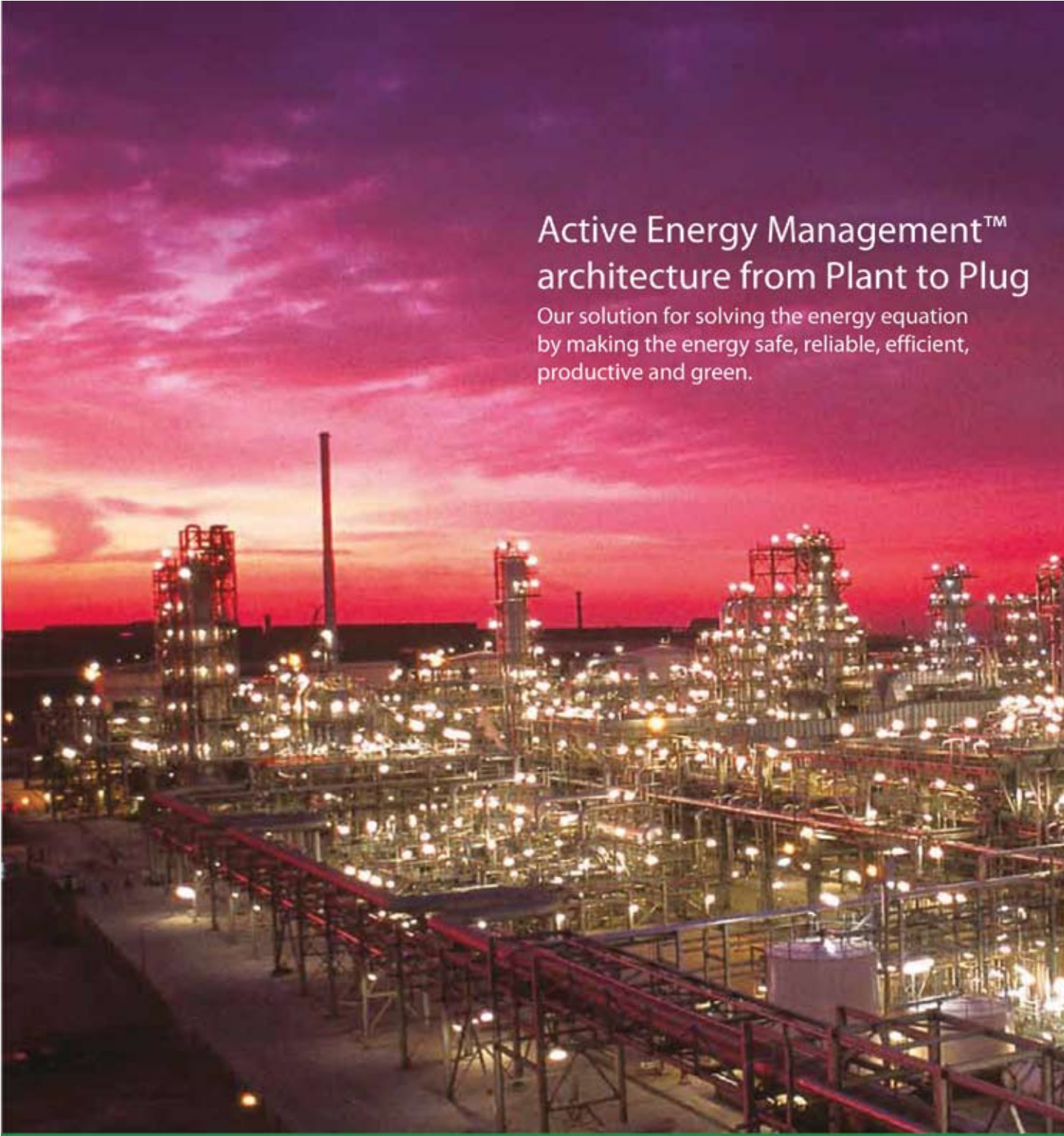
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# Elysee Treaty: A Cornerstone of Cooperation

France and Germany are celebrating this year the 50th Anniversary of the Elysée Treaty. On the 22nd of January 1963, General de Gaulle and Chancellor Konrad Adenauer committed to embark on the road of reconciliation between Germany and France to steer towards mutual understanding and closer cooperation. For the two countries it was a historic moment, charged with emotions. General de Gaulle and Chancellor Konrad Adenauer knew that they would be shaping the future course of Franco-German relations, and of the European integration.

Since then, our relations have grown and matured in all fields: politics, security, economy, youth exchanges, cultural and intellectual exchanges, to name only a few. The 50th anniversary of the Elysée Treaty provides a good opportunity to look back at the success of the German-French cooperation which paved the way to European integration as a whole, but also to set new objectives to the bilateral cooperation for the next decades, with the ambition to pursue and deepen the process of European integration.

Chancellor Merkel and President Hollande met on January 22 (today), along with parliamentarians and ministers, to mark one of the key dates of this Franco-German year of celebrations launched in September 2012.

We would like to highlight on this special occasion the strength and depth of the relations between Germany and France. There is a need for many Europeans, and we also believe, for people from South Asia, to have a clearer insight into the reconciliation process between two century-old arch-enemies and the ensuing cooperation between France and Germany. The Elysée Treaty made regular meetings between civil servants an obligation. It might be surprising for a Pakistani reader but nowadays representatives from both countries are integrated in both foreign ministries' cabinets.

It is little known, but German companies employ 320,000 employees in France, and French companies, 285,000 employees in Germany. More than 8 million students have participated in programmes through the creation of the French-German Youth Office, and more than 61,000 students went on exchange programmes to France and Germany in 2011 alone. De Gaulle and Adenauer were visionary in the emphasis they placed on building up trust between the young generations in both countries.

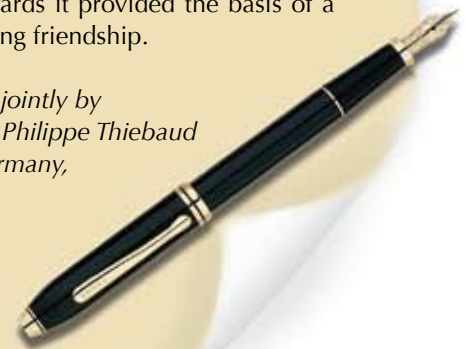
The bilateral defence cooperation is intense, dynamic and remains essential for France's and Germany's strategic objectives. In the centre of this cooperation is the French-German Brigade created in 1989 (consisting of 2,800 German and 2,300 French soldiers). The joint brigade has become a worldwide model for close cooperation in security and defence.

The Franco-German TV channel Arte presents a good example of our close cooperation in the field of culture. Since its creation in 1990, Arte positioned itself as a reference in terms of quality and variety of programmes from both countries. Just like the "Aman ki Asha" initiative promotes understanding and exchanges between India and Pakistan, this joint media venture has been an important vehicle of dialogue between France and Germany.

Germany and France are key founding members of the European Union. The Elysée Treaty remains the cornerstone of cooperation between our two countries, which is the main engine of the European Union; the two countries represent 33% of the EU population, 36% of the European Budget, 37% of the EU GDP, 31% of the voting rights. In the past few months, we have been working together, along with the other European countries, to push forward decisive actions to overcome the Eurozone crisis.

Robert Schuman, one of the founding fathers of the European Union, noted "Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a de facto solidarity". Building a lasting peace, and cooperating with your neighbours, requires creativity, commitment and is neither easy nor straightforward, it demands commitment and creativity. But the results can be surprising and if leaders of both countries had their doubts and their reserves about the Elysée Treaty in 1963, 50 years onwards it provided the basis of a deep rooted and inspiring friendship.

*This article was written jointly by  
Ambassador of France, Philippe Thiebaud  
and Ambassador of Germany,  
Dr Cyrill Nunn.*



# Blow Hot, Blow Cold

The recent incidents at the LoC have once again plunged the Indo-Pak bilateral ties into crisis. Can the two neighbors reconcile and find some peace in an otherwise turbulent relationship?

By S. M. Hali

Pakistan and India have been nervous neighbors since their birth in August 1947 after the British decided to grant freedom to the Indian subcontinent. The region was carved out into two independent nations because the Muslims sought a separate homeland for themselves. Following the announcement for the creation of Pakistan, religious riots broke out. The Hindus were outraged at what they considered the desecration of "Mother India" while the Muslims retaliated with equal fury. The partition plan, not being based on either Hindu or Muslim majority populations, resulted in a mass exodus of Hindus from Pakistan and Muslims from India towards their respective "promised land." Refugee caravans were targeted by murderous hordes, with Sikhs and Hindus attacking the Muslims and vice versa. Thousands of lives were lost and the resulting trauma left deep scars.

Hardly a month had gone by that the first Kashmir War erupted between India and Pakistan. Both laid claim to the beautiful valley, which was set ablaze with strife and bloodshed; Pakistan attempted to liberate Kashmir from what it considered "unlawful Indian occupation" while India tried to consolidate its hold. The UN ultimately enforced a ceasefire, with India occupying 46% of Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan left with the remaining 37%. India agreed to abide by UN Resolutions to hold a plebiscite allowing the Kashmiris to opt for either Pakistan or India but later reneged on its commitment.

Pakistan and India went to war in 1965 and again in 1971 but the fate of the Kashmiris did not change. "The Ceasefire

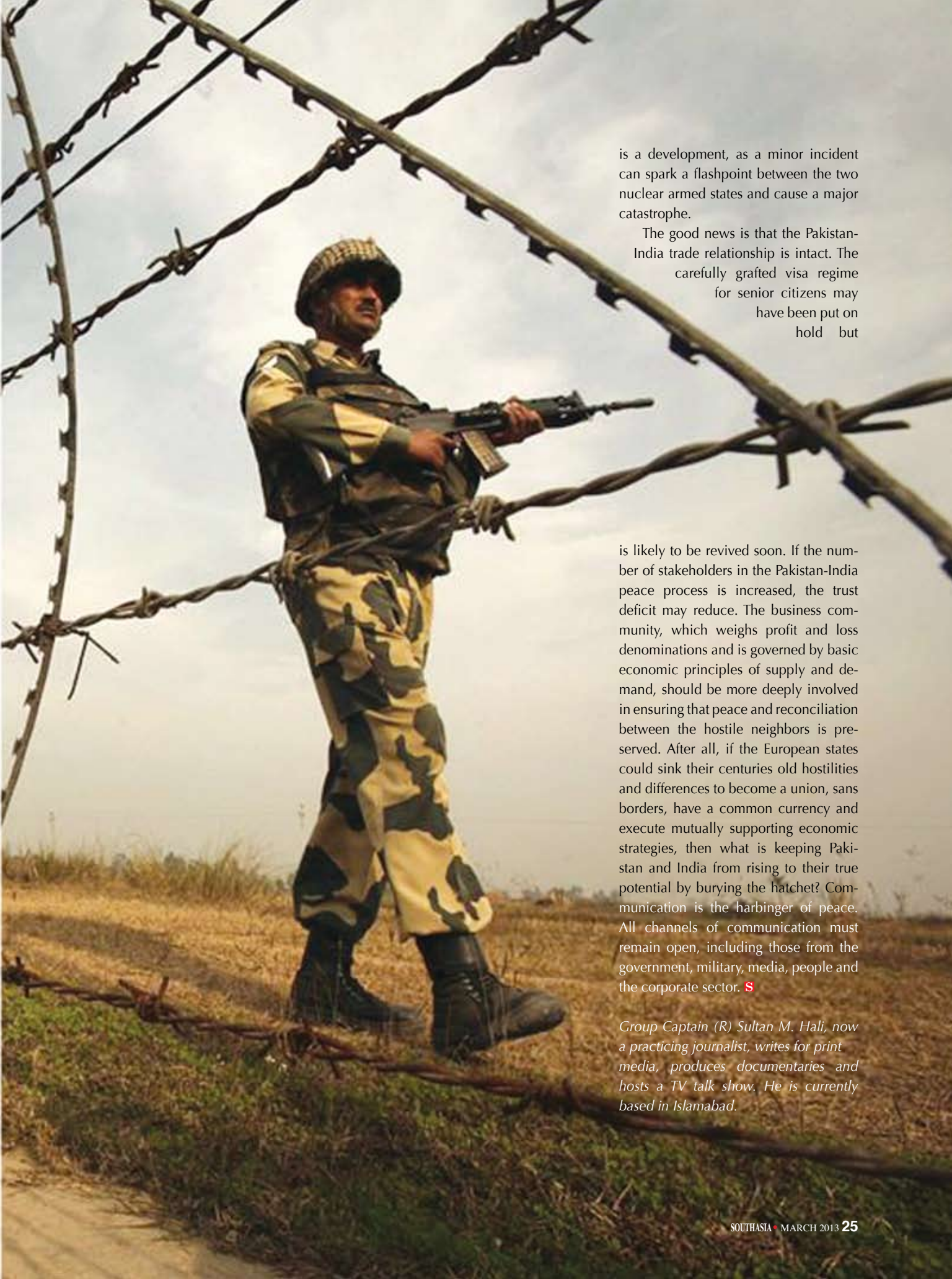
Line", a military controlled line between the Indian and Pakistani-controlled parts of Kashmir, was re-designated as the "Line of Control" (LoC) following the Simla Agreement, duly signed on 3 July 1972. In 1989, the Kashmiris took up arms seeking freedom but their struggle was brutally crushed by India and draconian laws were introduced to further oppress them. India alleged that Pakistan was aiding and abetting the Kashmiris. Blaming Pakistan of "cross-border terrorism", India fenced 550 km of the 740 km LoC in the 1990s.

Some major attempts have been undertaken over the decades to establish peace between the hostile neighbors. In February 1999, Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee visited Pakistan and the historic Lahore Declaration was signed, heralding a major breakthrough in overcoming the strained bilateral relations in the aftermath of the nuclear tests in May 1998. However, in May 1999 the Kargil misadventure marred the peace prospects. Ironically, in the aftermath of the Kargil War, Pakistan came under a military dictator who launched a Composite Dialogue for peace with India and a ceasefire was duly declared. The Composite Dialogue made some progress, with both sides agreeing to install confidence-building measures such as trade, commerce, opening of routes for visitors from both sides of the divide and softening the visa regime. Unfortunately, the Mumbai attacks of 2008 scuttled the initiative and the two neighbors were back to square one.

Painstakingly, peaceniks again tried to rebuild the peace process and things were looking up, when a fresh bout of

scuffles across the LoC in early January this year escalated animosity between New Delhi and Islamabad. The jingoistic saber rattling by Indian political and military leaders and a vociferous section of the Indian electronic media was mercifully not reciprocated by Pakistan. Good sense ultimately prevailed; a tête-à-tête between the Directors General of Military Operations on both sides and saner elements in the Indian media managed to bring the tempers down. However, it is worth examining how a few bullets fired across the LoC can bring trigger-happy neighbors to the brink of an outbreak of hostilities. How can such a fragile peace be maintained?

Both India and Pakistan suffer from an acute trust deficit. Conspiracy theories abound to provide a rationale for each other's idiosyncrasies and odd behavior. It is purported that groups in India like the BJP, Shiv Sena, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), in other words the Sangh Parivar, forced the hand of the otherwise dovish ruling Congress Party to act belligerently, especially with elections just around the corner. Others were of the view that India wanted to divert attention from its domestic issues, like the recent gang rape of a young girl or the rise of the Maoists. The omnipresent "foreign hand" is a popular scapegoat. Opinions vary from the US urging India to pressurize Pakistan and the equally preposterous notion that Iran may be urging Indian belligerence to avenge the attacks on the Shia community in Pakistan. It is pertinent to examine how situations like the LoC incidents can be avoided. It seems that the entire world holds its breath every time there



is a development, as a minor incident can spark a flashpoint between the two nuclear armed states and cause a major catastrophe.

The good news is that the Pakistan-India trade relationship is intact. The carefully grafted visa regime for senior citizens may have been put on hold but

is likely to be revived soon. If the number of stakeholders in the Pakistan-India peace process is increased, the trust deficit may reduce. The business community, which weighs profit and loss denominations and is governed by basic economic principles of supply and demand, should be more deeply involved in ensuring that peace and reconciliation between the hostile neighbors is preserved. After all, if the European states could sink their centuries old hostilities and differences to become a union, sans borders, have a common currency and execute mutually supporting economic strategies, then what is keeping Pakistan and India from rising to their true potential by burying the hatchet? Communication is the harbinger of peace. All channels of communication must remain open, including those from the government, military, media, people and the corporate sector. **S**

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



# What's in a Name?

**R**ahul Gandhi's appointment as Vice President of the Indian National Congress is likely to have a perceptible impact on national politics and the next Lok Sabha elections. In the largest democracy of the world, it stands proven that there is no escape from 'dynastic politics' and hereditary successions in ruling parties are inevitable. According to the Congress, this elevation is part of a move to bring younger politicians into the party ahead of the general elections in 2014. In October 2012, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh inducted 22 new ministers into the government but Rahul refused to join the Cabinet.

Commenting on the move, Soutik Biswas, BBC correspondent in New Delhi, observed, "India's governments have been traditionally dominated by elderly politicians, prompting critics to jest that the country, where half the population is under 25 years of age, is really a gerontocracy." Justifying the move, Manmohan Singh said he had

**The recently appointed Vice President of the India National Congress, Rahul Gandhi, is ready to enter Indian politics full-time. But will he need something more than just the name of the Gandhi dynasty to ensure smooth-sailing?**

By Huzaima Bukhari &  
Dr. Ikramul Haq

tried to put together a combination of “youth and experience” in the new Cabinet to take on the formidable challenges in the run-up to the general elections due in 2014.

According to critics, the Cabinet is only slightly younger than the previous one. Its oldest member is Mr. Singh himself, at 80, while the youngest member is junior minister, Sachin Pilot, 35. The average age of a full cabinet minister remains a little over 64 years, though the average age of a minister is now 58. In the wake of Rahul’s political elevation, questions pertaining to his perceived role in politics arise: will he be a game-changer, what long-term effects will his entry have on the Indian political landscape and can he dilute the rising popularity of Gujarat Chief Minister, Narendra Modi after the latter’s thumping victory? Difficult challenges lie ahead for Rahul Gandhi and the INC as nine states will hold assembly polls this year with the big battle of the next Lok Sabha elections taking place in 2014. These earlier polls will test Gandhi’s leadership skills as he heads the coordination panel for the 2014 polls.

In a statement issued on 4 February 2013, following a three-day “feedback-cum-interaction” session in New Delhi, Rahul stated, “The party should address basic problems first to face future political challenges and it would be stronger only if its constitution is implemented in letter and spirit.” This particular statement, issued after his first formal interaction with the All India Congress Committee (AICC) confirms that he is poised to play a lead role in all future matters after his mother, Sonia Gandhi withdraws from active party deliberations. Rahul also met with party general secretaries in charge of states who cited problems faced by the party, such as faulty ticket distribution, lack of unity and discipline and membership issues.

Rahul is all set to address the prevailing state of party affairs that would help him finalize the much-awaited Congress reshuffle to prepare his team for the 2014 general elections. Dur-

ing the interactions, some secretaries criticized the functioning of general secretaries and state unit chiefs while complaining that the ministers never meet them. Many of them demanded “responsibility with accountability”, claiming that the party needed an immediate overhaul. Rahul’s response has been cautious, “There is no need to rush with the change, we need to correct basic problems and follow the rules.” He specifically urged party leaders to refrain from bringing up personal grievances and concentrate on the party’s constitution. This document, he said, “is a model one, crafted after much deliberation and reflection and it is an image of the Congress which has been representing the people for the past 127 years. We should be proud to be Congress workers.”

There is a strong hope in the Congress that Rahul would bring necessary organizational changes. He is capable of capturing the aspirations of the Indian youth, especially those belonging to the urban middle class. Rahul enjoys an image of a compassionate and gentle leader but the question is whether his appointment on 19 January 2013 as Vice President will herald victory for the party in the 2014 elections, especially at a time when the Congress Government faces strong criticism from opposition parties and civil society, on various issues of corruption, investment and socio-economic concerns.

Rahul has assumed his new position at a tough time when the party, after nearly four decades of virtually uninterrupted rule, tries to find its way back from its political wilderness. Many believe the scion of the Gandhi family possesses the qualities, instincts and experience to take up the mantle of the post of Prime Minister. The young Gandhi certainly has potential but it remains uncertain whether he will become the Prime Minister of India in 2014? The recent changes in Congress in no way represent anything radical as leading columnist, Pratap Bhanu Mehta says, “Instead, it is an odd combination

of caution, brazenness and political trifling.” Most of the so-called young ministers are privileged dynasts who never displayed much political imagination or administrative acumen in the past. Is Rahul Gandhi different? He is certainly not like his late father, Rajiv Gandhi who assumed party leadership due to the force of circumstances. Rahul instead has earned his position, both in politics and party after several years of work, though he has yet to prove himself a vote-magnet for the party.

At present, Congress’ main rival, the Bhartiya Janata party (BJP), is in the doldrums but many claim that Rahul’s elevation may serve as an impetus for Gujarat Chief Minister, Narendra Modi to assume a more emphatic role before the next general elections. With a hat-trick of wins in the State, Modi, 62, is seen as more of a youth icon than Rahul Gandhi. Elections in India are complex puzzles: factors like caste, allies, secularism, communalism etc play a dominant role. Indians are asking each other who they think would be triumphant if it is Modi vs. Gandhi in 2014? Rahul, notwithstanding the great Gandhi surname, will have to prove that he enjoys pan-national appeal surpassing the urban middle-classes. In a coalition era, it will then depend on which alliance will triumph—United Progressive Alliance or National Democratic Alliance.

Rahul has shown political maturity by not joining the government—he understands that revitalizing the party is more important at this moment. He understands the growing aspirations of the Indian people, especially the youth. Undoubtedly, Rahul Gandhi is an emerging young leader after the old and queried politicians have failed to deliver. His success depends how the party, he now steers, wins back the confidence of the voters. ■

*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).*

# Revenue Concerns

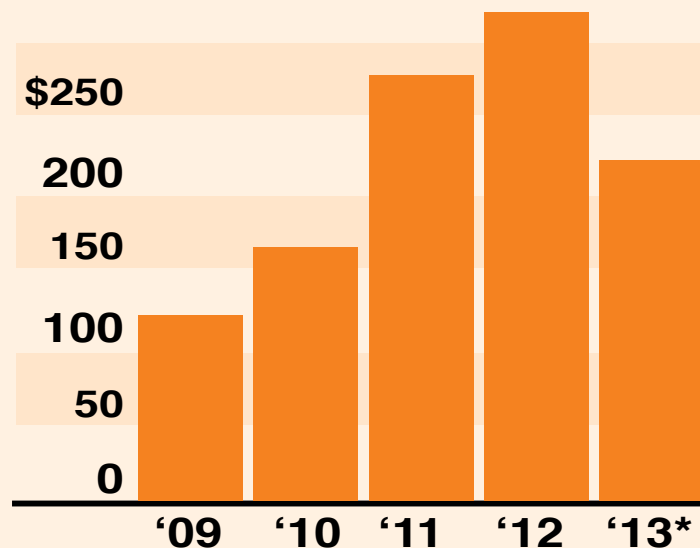
**Afghanistan's tax revenue system remains in a shambles. A Semi-Autonomous Revenue Authority could be the answer to the country's crippling problems.**

By Baseer Omaid

**A**fghanistan is one of the poorest countries in the world, heavily dependent on foreign financial assistance. According to the World Politics Review 2012, almost 90 percent of public spending in Afghanistan arrives from international donors. In light of the challenging scenario of 2014 when foreign troops will withdraw and foreign aid will dwindle, the country will undergo a transitional phase where it will have to become self-sufficient economically rather than be reliant on foreign aid.

The journey will not be smooth or easy. It will be time-consuming as well as challenging. In addition, the current governance structure of the Afghan state, established post-2001, does not provide a promising scenario for the future. One of the main challenges that the Afghan state faces towards self-reliance is the ability to raise domestic revenues. Most of the political and administrative structures are governed by elite and are prone to abuse by the political power wielders. The post-2014 Afghan state will have to face human security threats but

## Revenue Hunt Collections by Afghanistan's Large Taxpayer Office, in millions



Note: Date are based on Afghanistan's solar calendar ending about March 20 each year.

\*Fiscal 2013 to date

Source: Large Taxpayer Office  
The Wall Street Journal

at the same time assure all basic services such as health, education, infrastructure, roads, and electricity, etc. The challenge is immense, given that 36 percent of the Afghan population lives below the poverty line. There are no magic solutions to the Afghan people's problems and politicians will have to undertake cautious and practical measures to overcome these challenges. With dwindling aid money, the Afghan state would need to raise its own revenue to deliver basic services to the people.

The creation of a Semi-Autonomous Revenue Authority (SARA) as a public sector reform body could bring in some effectiveness and efficiency in terms of tax administration, which could eventually result in boosting the overall economic functioning of the state. Conversely, it would avoid nepotism, create employment opportunities for skilled young professionals and ultimately stay immune from political interference. At present, the country's revenue administration (RA) is part of the Ministry of Finance in Afghanistan. There is an urgent need to establish a semi-autonomous agency, which could raise domestic revenue to help and empower local Afghans to be economically self-sufficient rather than depend on foreign aid.

One of the key challenges of post-2014 governance in Afghanistan will be fiscal sustainability. A decline in foreign aid coupled with meager domestic revenue is expected to result in a fiscal crisis. The World Bank estimates a financing gap of approximately 25% of GDP, which is equal to USD\$7.2 billion per year. Similarly, the current tax gap of nearly 60% leaves the country and its leaders, with no

option but to think of a strategy that could generate domestic revenue. Taxes and a better taxation policy are among the prerequisites of modern-day political accountability and good governance. In addition, excessive corruption in the Afghan public sector makes it even more challenging. In August 2012, Tolo News, Afghanistan's largest news agency, gained access to the Minister of Finance's accounts. According to the reports, the Minister had received more than USD 900mn from Afghan business firms. The

tax administration incompetent, ineffective and unfair. Eventually, it diminishes the people's trust in tax administration and results in non-compliance.

Tax administration reform can be a viable solution in addressing tax gaps in countries where there is an inability to raise legal taxes. A SARA is usually created for numerous reasons. First, there is much rigidity in civil service rules and regulations. Secondly, the perception of corruption within the tax administration is somewhat true.

**One of the key challenges of post-2014 governance in Afghanistan will be fiscal sustainability. A decline in foreign aid coupled with meager domestic revenue is expected to result in a fiscal crisis. The World Bank estimates a financing gap of approximately 25% of GDP, which is equal to USD\$7.2 billion per year.**

subsequent report accused the Minister of receiving money in a form of bribes after he exempted big businesses from paying taxes. Given the nature of the Afghan government and society, the current revenue administration is vulnerable and open to politicization. It is also widely speculated that the Afghan revenue department is considered a source of huge illicit incomes. Consequently, like many other departments in Afghanistan, people with political influence over the revenue administration hire individuals on the basis of nepotism and patronage. The function and work of unprofessional and non-skilled workers makes

Thirdly, people don't comply due to their negative perception about accountability or checks and balances in the enforcement of tax rules and regulation. Due to the inherent drawbacks (corruption, nepotism, favoritism, etc.) of the Afghan Public Sector and the importance of revenue mobilization, a semi-autonomous agency will enable the revenue administration to attain important tasks. Recruiting and managing human resources without resorting to civil service rules is essential. The administration will also be better equipped to plan and manage taxation. Most importantly, the administration re-

mains immune from political interferences. On the wider scale, it will enhance the quality of governance in service delivery through increasing a competent, effective and fair tax administration. A reformed tax administration will eventually empower local Afghans.

The idea to establish a semi-autonomous revenue administration agency is not new. From 1987 to 2000, most Latin American states - Argentina, Peru, Colombia, Venezuela, Mexico, Guatemala and Guyana - established semi-autonomous tax revenue authorities. African countries like Ghana, Uganda, Zambia, Rwanda, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi and South Africa also established their semi-autonomous tax revenue authorities at around the same time as the Latin American states did. Most of these reforms took place when these states were under severe fiscal pressure to increase revenue and maximize the performance of the administration. The solution was to depoliticize the revenue administration and make it more "business-like."


The Afghanistan Investment Support Agency (AISA) was created in 2003 after there was a need felt by both the International Community and the Afghan government to promote investment in the country. Since its establishment, foreign direct investment in Afghanistan grew

from US\$ 49mn to US\$ 216mn from FY2003-2004 to FY2005-2006. Due to lack of transparency and accountability in the Afghan tax revenue department and given the importance of state building, a depoliticized, effective and efficient tax administration will not only ad-

dress the fiscal sustainability issue but will also contribute to state building in Afghanistan.

the world. Additionally, the general capacity issue in the country can be a challenging factor to the establishment of a semi-autonomous tax authority. The difficulty of taxing the agriculture sector has its own challenges.

Afghanistan, like any conflict-ridden country, has several public and private sector deficiencies that need to be reformed.

Generating revenues at the domestic level is one of the testing tasks for the Afghan government to prevent reliance on foreign assistance and provide better facilities and services to its people in a post-2014 scenario. A semi-autonomous revenue authority will help create better economic opportunities for the Afghan youth, which needs to be mobilized and utilized in the best possible way to stay positive and work constructively. At the same time, it will help distribute the money raised through taxation policies and address non-conventional security threats such as poverty, illiteracy, access to portable water, etc. 

dress the fiscal sustainability issue but will also contribute to state building in Afghanistan.

Semi autonomous agencies bear risks and challenges of their own. Afghanistan's narrow tax base is subject to rampant tax evasion and arbitrary exemptions. In 1970, the tax-to-GDP ratio in Afghanistan was only 7 percent, one of the lowest in

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# UPCOMING B2B EVENTS ...

## MEGATECH

28 - 30 March 2013, Expo Centre Lahore  
11th 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)



9 - 11 April 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)



23 - 25 April 2013, Karachi Expo Centre  
2nd International Multi-Modal Transportation,  
Logistics & Material Handling Exhibition and Conference  
Website: [www.intertranspakistan.com](http://www.intertranspakistan.com)  
E-mail: [info@intertranspakistan.com](mailto:info@intertranspakistan.com)



16 - 18 May 2013, Expo Centre Lahore  
11th International Exhibition for the Energy Industry  
Website: [www.pogee.com.pk](http://www.pogee.com.pk)  
E-mail: [info@pogee.com.pk](mailto:info@pogee.com.pk)



5 - 7 September 2013, Expo Centre Lahore  
11th International Plastics & Packaging  
Industry Trade Fair  
Website: [www.plastipac.com.pk](http://www.plastipac.com.pk)  
E-mail: [info@plastipac.com.pk](mailto:info@plastipac.com.pk)



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)



2014 | Islamabad  
10th International Safety & Security Exhibition  
Website: [www.safesecure.com.pk](http://www.safesecure.com.pk)  
E-mail: [info@safesecure.com.pk](mailto:info@safesecure.com.pk)



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# The Tiger goes Hunting

**Bangladesh is buying all kinds of military equipment from Russia, a development that is causing concern in several capitals around the world.**

By Munir Ishrat Rahmani

When Bangladesh came into existence in 1971 with Indian help, it found another ready patron in the USSR who had provided moral support to Sheikh Mujib's Awami League during the difficult period of struggle for secession. It was also one of the first countries that had recognized the youngest state of South Asia. The need for this friendship was obvious: the Soviet Union needed to expand its influence in the region to counter the threat of the US and China and also seek a way to reach the Indian ocean through Bangladesh for its strategic strength. The Soviet Union made a substantial contribution in development and reconstruction of the newest member of the community of South Asian countries during its post-independence period. The India-USSR alliance could not afford to sit back and watch the ascendancy of US-Pakistan-China alliance in the region and had to contain it by supporting Bangladesh strongly and stabilizing it on its feet as soon as possible. The Bangladesh Air Force was given sophisticated Mig 21 aircraft and the Soviet navy rendered help in restoring the navigability of Chittagong port by clearing the explosives and sunken ships etc., from the channels. Assistance was also provided in developing its power infrastructure by providing power plants to Bangladesh.

Historically, the Soviet Union had been a very staunch ally of In-

dia and had always stood by it. Indian intervention in the eastern wing of Pakistan could not have been possible without the backing of the Soviet Union or President Brezhnev who saw good prospects of finding a strategic foothold in the region if the Indian designs of creation of Bangladesh could succeed. The development suited the USSR. Soviet Union's friendship was beneficial for Bangladesh too for enhancing its security and consolidating its geopolitical position in the region. However, the Bangladesh-USSR romance could not maintain a constant high level in subsequent years due to inconsistent foreign policy of Bangladesh that kept changing its hues from time to time with the change of people at the helm of affairs. When Awami League's influence diminished after Sheikh Mujib's assassination and the opposition parties - not too friendly towards India - gained strength, the Soviets' serenading also stopped.

The dissolution of the USSR into independent republics in December 1991 had a negative effect on its growing relations with Bangladesh. The state of Russia, however, after emerging from the ashes of the Soviet Union, restored the policy of friendship with Bangladesh. The Russia-Bangladesh alliance blossomed when Sheikh Hasina's Awami League came to power in the late 1990s. In view of the arms race involving India, Pakistan and China, the South Asian region presented a good market for

arms supply to Russia. The second biggest world power was keen to exploit this market and did not want to let the opportunity go by. Russia is now the second biggest manufacturer and exporter of arms after the United States. Its armament supplies to Bangladesh are now more than China's - the previous major supplier and Russia's rival. During the last few years, Russia has exported MiG 29 fighters, BTR-80 amphibious armored personnel carriers and helicopters to Bangladesh.

Sheikh Hasina visited Moscow in January this year on an invitation of President Vladimir Putin to explore opportunities for further cooperation. This was only the second visit by a Bangladesh prime minister to Moscow since its independence. Sheikh Mujib - Sheikh Hasina's father - was the other one to have visited the former Soviet Union in March, 1972. The visit has been very fruitful as the two countries have signed a \$1 billion deal under which Bangladesh would receive military equipment from Russia under a credit on soft terms. Two agreements and six Memoranda of Understanding were signed for cooperation in various fields between the two countries. The list of purchases includes armored vehicles, infantry weapons, air defense systems and transport helicopters, etc. Bangladesh is reportedly building a new air base close to the Myanmar border and also adding frigates to its naval fleet. To boost the energy

sector, Russia will also be providing \$500 million to finance construction of Bangladesh's first nuclear power plant at Rooppur.

Sheikh Hasina's Awami League government has been striving to gain strength economically and militarily to improve its stature and be in a bargaining position in its disputes with the neighbors. Bangladesh has been

buying military equipment from the US, Britain, China as well as Russia in the past but this time it got a very favourable deal of US\$ 1 billion from Rus-

There is no denying the fact that Bangladesh has a long border and a long list of unsettled disputes with India and Myanmar for which it needs a well-equipped and well-trained Border Security Force. Despite good friendly relations with India, Bangladesh continues to have issues on borders and distribution of water from rivers passing through its areas. It also has a clash of maritime claims in the Bay of Bengal. In addition, the threat of terrorism is looming large and Russia could be of great help in countering the threat effectively. The US efforts to check terrorism in Afghanistan or other countries of allies

have not been impressive and not considered completely reliable. Bangladesh preferred Russia's friendship over the US whose "blow hot; blow cold" type of relationship with its allies had always been a subject of concern among its 'friends'. Preference of the Bangladesh government for Russian assistance is, therefore, quite understandable.

Whatever the justification for such a bulk purchase of armaments coming from the Bangladesh officials, it has drawn mixed reaction at home and from abroad. Neighbouring Myanmar's concern was quite expected in view of its hot border situation with Bangladesh, but even in the friendly Indian press and diplomatic circles, the deal has come under scrutiny and eyebrows have been raised at the size of the list of purchases. The need for such a large acquisition of military equipment by Bangladesh has been questioned and has caused concern in India - its long-term friend. China was a major exporter of arms and equipment to the Bangladesh military and is justifiably feeling jilted by this deal. The likely reverberations of this in the US can be understood whose worry is the growing influence of Russia in the region and its accessibility to the Bay of Bengal. By equipping Bangladesh militarily, Russia would be disturbing the strategic balance in the South Asian region which may not be to the liking of the world's only super-power. It is a major political event that may have far-reaching ramifications in the post-Cold War era. ■

sia to purchase military equipment and modernize its military (The money amounts to approximately eight thousand crore BD Takas) It is also to provide better training expertise to the Bangladesh armed forces. Analysts ask: does Bangladesh really need to have such an arsenal for its defence?

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# Democracy Heading for Failure

The political, social and economic scenario in the Maldives still appears to be in a state of flux with the possibility of more failed governments on the horizon.

By Raza Khan

As various constitutional and political crises continue to strike the Maldives, independent observers foresee a cycle of failed governments in the near future. According to a recent report issued by the Raajee Foundation, a Maldivian civil society organization working in collaboration with the UNDP and

the U.S State Department, a cycle of failed governments seems increasingly likely. The report, prepared by Professor Tom Ginsburg from the University of Chicago Law School, discusses and analyzes the prevailing political, social and economic conditions in the Maldives. In light of current developments and on the basis

of the findings, the report presents three possible scenarios, of which the cycle of failed government is the most likely. The other two scenarios include the dominance of a political faction through hegemony and the return to a purely constitutional government. The last two possibilities, according to the report, are the most unlikely due to inherent flaws in the political system and objective and subjective conditions of the Maldivian state and society.

In 2008, following the inauguration of the state constitution and the first-ever independent elections, subsequently won by human rights advocate, Mohamed Nasheed, many political analysts concluded that the tiny archipelago of 1192 islands had successfully secured a strong foothold in democracy. However, in February 2012, widespread protests and a public outcry led to Nasheed's dramatic and forced ouster from the presidency. The former president attributed his ouster to connivance between the country's assertive judiciary, the opposition factions and fifth-columnists within his own party. Since then President Hassan, Nasheed's vice-president, even though in power, has been unsuccessful in quelling the political and economic unrest the country finds



itself embroiled in.

The Raajee Foundation report lists a range of causes standing in the way of democratic development in the Maldives. These include “a political culture that emphasizes recrimination over reconciliation, a thin inchoate civil society, nascent higher education, limited transparency, a long tradition of patronage, massive wealth inequalities, difficult population demographics, weak politicized institutions, a distorted labor market and a narrow economy vulnerable to external shocks.” The report reveals most causes typical of third world countries or transitional democracies and also discusses some issues that are specific to the island.

As far as the problems concerning the static and traditional Maldivian political culture are concerned, the report indicates that most of the political issues revolve around personalities rather than policies. Such selective focus has stunted the growth of a true democratic culture as well as the institutions. A young democracy, the Maldives cannot be expected to adhere to a level of maturity required to evaluate policies that would take ascendancy over personalities in such a short time. Like most South Asian countries, the Maldives continues to be a traditional and conservative society where personalities dominate and policies are automatically pegged to personalities. Families and clans like the Gandhis in India, the Bhuttos and Sharifs in Pakistan and Mujeebur Rahman and Ziaur Rahman in the persons of Hasina Wajid and Khalida Zia still dominate the politics of other regional countries. Therefore, if other South Asian states, including the largest ‘democracy’ in the world, have been unable to grow out of the fascination and charisma of personalities, after 66 years of democracy, how can the Maldivians be expected to shun personality-focused politics?

It will certainly require time for

the Maldivians to achieve political maturity and it will also require a sustainable and unhindered democratic process. However, keeping in view the current situation, a sustainable democracy in the Maldives seems unlikely. This is the most sordid political reality of contemporary Maldives. The Maldivian people will need a strong education to reason and understand that wrangling over personalities does not serve any purpose. Instead, the cherished goals of development, high standards of living and national prestige can only be attained by focusing on issues from a national perspective.

A strong, conscious and responsive civil society is indispensable for the flowering of a democratic culture and institutions within the country. Civil society occupies the arena that is above the institution of family and below the level of the state. In other words, the concept of civil society includes everything that is non-familial and non-state. It is important to understand that civil society does not come into existence by itself but is rather dependent either on the continued engendering of consciousness within the society regarding national duties and individual rights or an unhindered democratic process. The Maldivians have an embryonic civil society because the democracy and constitutional government is only five years old. The Raajee Foundation report should have mentioned the inverse proportional link between a weak education structure and a strong civil society. Although the development of a strong civil society may take several years and decades to be achieved, the raising of a vibrant higher education infrastructure could be done within a few years. In fact, it is far easier to achieve this in the tiny Maldives than the densely populated areas of other South Asian countries. In this regard the international community, instead of providing aid to the Maldivian government, must finance the higher education infrastructure

within the country.

A long tradition of patronage, massive wealth inequalities, difficult population demographics, weak politicized institutions, distorted labor market and a narrow economic base are the outcome of lack of good governance. A closer look would reveal that the concept of good governance is itself dependent on strong civil society and education structures.

The social and hence the political and economic problems of the Maldives are complex and interrelated. It is extremely difficult for President Hassan to independently tackle the multi-pronged insecurities which the country currently faces. While he may not be able to rectify the issues stunting the growth of a democratic culture and civil society, he may be able to introduce policies to trigger development in the conceptually tangible areas of economy and higher education. He could do so by diversifying the economic base, which is almost entirely dependent on tourism and by providing a blueprint for development of higher education. Against this backdrop, the possibility would remain that the country’s military, seeing the situation moving towards a total collapse, may again intervene and take over the reins of government. If this happens it would be a failure of the so-called Maldivian politicians and would compel the military to take control rather than the other way round. Nevertheless, military rule in the Maldives or in any country has never been a solution to the problems faced by a country but has been cause of many problems. In the context of the Maldives, it would make things worse. ■

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

# Correcting the Balance

Nepal faces a crippling balance of payments. Urgent measures are required to fix this before the country plunges into an economic crisis.

By Sijal Fawad

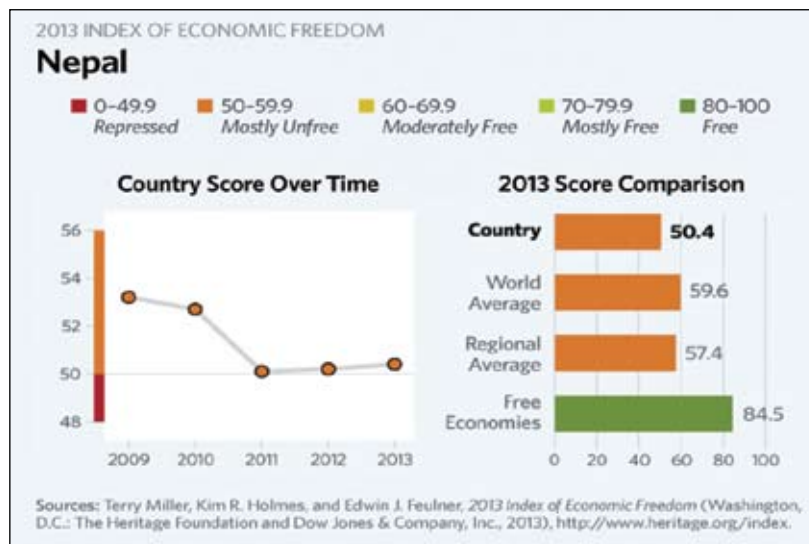
It has not been a walk in the park for Nepal on the trade front lately. The Nepal Rasta Bank's (NRB) latest report depicted a shocking and worrying picture of the Nepalese trade deficit, which widened by 30.3 percent to Rs192.52 billion in the first

meaning that the demand for imported items is not affected much by changes in prices of the same. To the contrary, the opposite is true for exports from Nepal. The rising cost of production, on-going political instability and ensuing effects on manufacturing units has

complete road infrastructure causes serious delays in production delivery. Further investment in research for developing a diversified portfolio of value-added exportable goods does not seem to be on the exporters' agenda who look for trade concessions from trading partners rather than strive to compete on an international level.

The South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAW-TEE) recently issued a report that concluded, "About 67 percent of total exports go to India and 66 percent of total imports come from India." Landlocked and sharing a long border with India is not much help for the country as far as developing a more independent trade policy is concerned. Transit to the sea for Nepalese trade products is only possible through India, resulting in the country often being called 'India-locked.' Because of this, Nepal has been forced to adopt a trade policy that matches closely with India's, with the latter's trade stance is infamously restrictive. Non-alignment would mean greater smuggling across the border, even though the two countries' comparative advantages are quite different.

However, trade between Nepal and China has been on the rise bringing a ray of hope for improvement in Nepal's balance of payments. The Araniko Highway, connecting to the China National Highway, has been dubbed Nepal's 'second degree of freedom.' The first is the transit route through India to Calcutta.



five months of FY2012-13. A burgeoning trade deficit of 33.7 percent with India, Nepal's key trade partner and neighbor, played a strong role in ballooning this deficit.

There is increasing consumption of petroleum products, chemical fertilizers, industrial raw materials, vehicles and spare parts, telecommunication equipment, edible oil and gold and imports of these products have also been rising, leading to a burgeoning trade deficit. The elasticity of demand for imports in the country is low,

led to dwindling domestic production of goods translating into a greater reliance on imported products.

Other intrinsic issues related to Nepal's infrastructure, a non-diversified portfolio of trade partners and minimal focus on value-addition for exportable goods have also kept the country's trade account in an abysmal state. Road networks and power facilities are inadequate to meet industrial demands, resulting in greater reliance on the more expensive, imported petroleum or diesel. In addition, the in-

Even though developing bilateral trade relations with China are essential for reducing the country's dependence on India as a trade partner, the gap between imports from China and exports to the same has been widening, unfortunately, not in favor of Nepal. A local news portal, My Republica reports, "According to statistics compiled by the Trade and Export Promotion Centre, Nepal exported goods worth Rs1.21 billion to China and imported goods worth Rs30.59 billion from China in the first five months of the current fiscal year." Examples of products that Nepal exports to China include a limited portfolio of goods such as paper and wooden and bamboo products. On the other hand, imports from China include textiles, machinery, spare parts, medicines, medical and electrical equipment in addition to more diversified products in larger quantities. In order to make the most of these bilateral trade relations, steps such as establishing industrial estates and commercial points near the border, export processing zones, warehouses and other infrastructural support, are necessary.

It is not as if the Nepalese government has been oblivious to the overall trade predicament. The Ministry of Commerce and Supplies plans to increase the country's exports to over Rs100 billion in the coming three

years (Rs76 billion for the last fiscal year). Planned measures include greater promotion of exportable products, expanding the services sector in the international arena, establishing a trade policy analysis mechanism as well as an international exhibition centre.

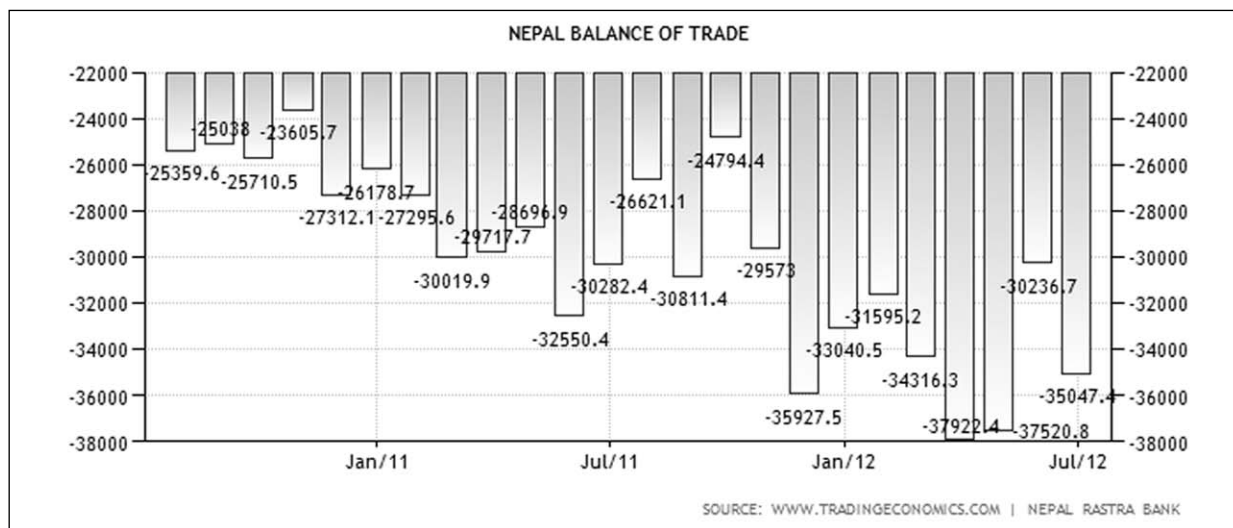
The Enhancing Nepal's Trade Related Capacity (ENTRC) program was launched in 2006 in collaboration with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to help the country benefit from international trade opportunities through mechanisms such as studying trade-related issues, conducting feasibility studies for alternate transit routes and developing and disseminating export promotional material. Prior to this, Nepal worked diligently with the UNDP to integrate into the global economy. It consequently became the 147th member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2004. In 2010, the Nepal Trade Integration Strategy (NTIS) program was launched to develop the country's export sector and bring reforms in export-oriented businesses over the next three to five years. Despite the existence of such programs and initiatives, traders have often complained of an apathetic attitude shown by the government. "The infrastructure at the Tatopani customs office should be improved, check posts on Araniko High-

way should be enhanced, visa issues should be resolved and the use of Yuan at border areas should be legalized. There are dozens of problems that we face every day while trading with Chinese counterparts," Keshab Bahadur Rayamajhi, the first vice president of the Nepal Trans-Himalayan Border Commerce Association (NTHBCA), told My Republica.

Besides the inadequacy of infrastructural facilities and the inability to implement and develop suggested strategies, these programs have only a minimal impact as far as promoting and enhancing exports is concerned. In addition, strikes and violence related to political instability and persistent labor issues further disrupt production and industrial activity, making it difficult to supply and distribute exportable goods.

Trade reforms and comprehensive industrial policies are imperative for improving Nepal's trade account. Enhanced efforts to diversify the export portfolio through research and development and successful negotiations with neighbors to reduce trade barriers will ultimately correct the suffering external account of the country. **S**

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# All Weather Friends?

**An extensively cordial bilateral relationship between Bhutan and India has earned the former the stamp of a 'satellite state.'**

**By Dr. Moonis Ahmar**

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*"Indo-Bhutan relations date back in history. There is a solid foundation for the relation as mutuality of interests. And the relations are very warm and friendly. So it is something I would seek to build in because, after all it may be warm and friendly, but we need to keep it that way. So, that will be my effort."*

**- V. P. Haran, Ambassador of India to Bhutan**

**N**o country in the South Asian region has been as consistent in supporting India and its foreign policy moves, as Bhutan. Like Nepal, Bhutan is landlocked and sandwiched between India and China. Although blessed with natural beauty and enormous hydro and mineral resources, the Kingdom of Bhutan has maintained a relatively isolationist policy.

The momentum in Indo-Bhutan relations recently built up when the King and Queen of Bhutan, Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck and Jetsun Pema, visited India as the Chief Guests for the Republic Day celebrations. The Bhutanese Prime Minister, Jigmi Y. Thinley, also paid an official visit to India in early February 2013. His visit aimed to strengthen bilateral relations with India, particularly related to hydro-electric projects. Earlier in January, Indian External Affairs Minister Salman Khurshid paid a two-day official visit to Bhutan and held talks with Lyongo Khandu Wangchuk, the Bhutanese Minister for Economic Affairs and Minister-in-Charge for Foreign Affairs. Back to back visits of high profile Indian and Bhutanese personalities signal a 'leap forward' in deepening New Delhi's influence in Bhutan.

In 1949, India and Bhutan signed the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, which was renegotiated in 2007. India is also Bhutan's largest trading partner. Major exports from India include prepared food stuff, chemical products, vegetable oil, plastic and rubber products, textiles, wood and wood products, fruits, nuts, cereals, base metal and metal products. Bhutan's exports to India constitute mainly of gypsum, calcium carbide, electricity and Portland cement. A free trade regime between Bhutan and India makes for convenient trading and stronger economic relations. India also provides developmental aid to Bhutan by rendering economic and technical assistance to improve its infrastructure. In order to further consolidate Indo-Bhutan relations, the

India-Bhutan Foundation was established in August 2003 to augment cooperation in education, environment and promote cultural exchanges.

A major area of bilateral cooperation in Indo-Bhutan relations is in the sector of hydropower, which got an impetus with the inauguration of the 60MW Kurichhu Hydroelectric project in April 2006. Like Nepal, Bhutan has enormous potential to generate hydroelectricity. But unlike in Nepal, where India is blamed of depriving the country of developing hydroelectric potential, similar anti-Indian feeling and animosity is absent in Bhutan. Indian Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh also visited Bhutan on the occasion of 16th SAARC summit in April 2010. On the occasion of his visit to Thimphu, the Minister of Economic Affairs of Bhutan and the Indian External Affairs Minister signed implementation agreements for the Punatsangchhu II and Mangdechlu Hydro Electric Projects. Apart from developing Bhutan's hydroelectric potential, India also provided assistance to Bhutan in the areas of education, information technology, air service, medical science and prevention of illicit trafficking in narcotics drugs. The depth and comprehensive nature of Indo-Bhutan relations was expressed by the Indian Ambassador to Thimphu, V.P. Haran, "We need to work on some of the issues where there is mutual interest. For example, Bhutan is concentrating on the socio-economic sector and priorities to provide electricity, water, health care, education in rural areas. India has worked with the government of Bhutan to see how best it could be progressed. These are mega projects and these are economic cooperation projects."

The central question then is why are Indo-Bhutanese relations so cordial and how will the King's recent visit to India impact ties between the two South Asian neighbors? Cordiality in Indo-Bhutanese relations has much to do with the age-old influence that New Delhi wields in

Bhutan to the extent that some circles describe Bhutan as India's satellite neighbor. Certainly, the Bhutanese monarch and his people may not like to be dubbed as a "satellite" state but a policy of total consonance with New Delhi does send a different message to the world regarding Bhutan's sovereignty. While high ranking visits clearly illustrate mutual trust and confidence, the asymmetry in the countries size, population and resources certainly provide a clear edge to India in determining its interests and the accomplishment of its objectives in a weak and small South Asian state.

Bhutan's adherence to India's policies can be gauged from the fact that Bhutan has often voted in favor of India in the UN General Assembly and other international organizations. Whether it was the issue of declaring South Asia a nuclear weapon free zone or condemning the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan, Bhutan sided with India. As a result of Bhutan's subscription of India's foreign policy stance on different issues, Bhutan is considered a vital ally, if not a satellite state. While Bhutan cannot influence India's domestic politics, India certainly plays a crucial role in shaping things in Bhutan. India's apprehension vis-à-vis China's proactive policy in South Asia also compels New Delhi to accord special attention to Bhutan.

Although, Bhutan is a constitutional monarchy with its first parliamentary elections held on March 24, 2008, the royal family has accelerated the process of participatory democracy. India also provided technical assistance to Bhutan for holding elections. It seems the two countries will sustain the high level of an all weather friendship and cooperation in the years to come. ■

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

# Forbidden City in Cyberspace

With the world's largest population of Internet users, China is reported to pursue a policy of official online monitoring that does not fit into the open global cyber environment.

Dr. Omar Farooq Khan

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**M**ay you live in exciting times" is an ancient Chinese saying; no truer words could be spoken about the country itself which boasts its civilization to be thousands of years old.

Covering approximately 9.6 million square kilometres, China is the world's second-largest country by land area, its landscape is vast and diverse, ranging from forests, flat lands and mountainous terrain to large deserts.

The very mention of 'China' brings to mind images of imperial courts and historical buildings, the Forbidden City, the Great Wall of China and the Shaolin Temple. Its political history, ranging from kingdoms comprising family dynasties

to red revolutions, the country has had more than its fair share of ups and downs and has indeed survived multiple tests of time.

Today China is rapidly expanding its economic and industrial horizons and boasts a huge population of internet users. A recent estimate shows that the country's internet population has crossed the half billion mark. The country had 538 million Internet users by mid 2012. It is projected that this number will hit 718 million in 2013.

It is China's involvement in all kinds of technology-oriented manufacturing that has brought this increase in its internet user population. But surprisingly industrialization and the economic/financial boom are not the only driving factors in China's onward march in cyber space.

The figures from China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC) show that approx 54.9% of its Internet users are male, 57.9% are unmarried, and 51.2% are under 25 years old. The majority of Internet users have at least a college diploma. Among them, 36.7% are students and 25.3% enterprise staff.

The Chinese largely use the internet for entertainment and information gathering. With the net being referred to as the "entertainment superhighway", the Chinese go to BBS or web forums to download music, videos, and movies and also use the net as a major public forum to freely exchange their ideas. This is further reinforced by trends showing people going online to read the news and to search for information.

Although it is said that the Chinese tend to write fewer e-mails as compared to people in other parts of the world, they do enjoy other Internet communication tools and

end up forming their online communities based on different interests. Bulletin boards on portals or chat rooms, instant messaging groups, blogs and microblogs are very active in China; moreover photo-sharing and social networking sites are growing rapidly as well.

The increasing number of Internet users in China has also generated a large online shopping base in the country which some analysts describe as a future online addiction.

It is no surprise that Chinese indulgence in electronic manufacturing, especially for tools that connect to the net (laptops, cell phones and palm computer devices) is seeing a larger demand in the world markets. With a propensity for exploring the online universe, the requirement for online gadgets for both local and international markets is definitely making waves.

One of the most popular topics of discussion with regard to Internet privacy appears to make China its central point of debate. The main concern with privacy of Internet users in China is the lack thereof. China has a well-known policy of censorship when it comes to the spread of information through public media channels. Censorship has been prominent in mainland China since the communist party gained power over 60 years ago. With the development of the Internet, however, privacy became more of a problem for the government which has been accused of actively limiting and editing the information that flows into the country via various media. The Internet poses a particular set of issues for this type of censorship, especially when search engines are involved. Yahoo as well as Google have been quoted to have had encountered some interesting problems after entering China in

the mid-2000s.

These problems also lead to warnings of loss of business as well as to a few arrests and have been criticized by foreign entities such as the creators of the Tor anonymity network, which was designed to circumvent network surveillance in many countries.

User privacy in China is not as black and white as in other parts of the world. China, reportedly, has been accused of having a much more invasive policy regarding Internet activity that involves the Chinese government. For this reason, search engines are under constant pressure to conform to Chinese rules and regulations on censorship while still attempting to keep their integrity.

Most search engines operate differently in China than in other countries. There are two types of intrusions that occur: one concerns companies providing users with Internet service and the other concerns the policy the Chinese government.

Companies providing users with Internet service are based on reports that companies, such as Yahoo are using their access to the internet users' private information to track and monitor their Internet activity. The claims made against the Chinese government say that the government is insistent that the Internet-based companies should track users' private online data without the user's knowledge. Both sets of claims are relatively harsh and force foreign Internet service providers to decide if they value the Chinese market over internet privacy, thus presenting them with some tough choices. **S**

*Dr. Omar Farooq Khan is an ardent believer in Jinnah's ideologies for a balanced nation-building.*

# Made for the Job

**Newly appointed Secretary of State, John Forbes Kerry, enters an office that is both well-earned and custom-made for a man like him.**

By Arsla Jawaid

There has never been a man more suited for the job of Secretary of State, than Senator John Forbes Kerry. As President Obama remarked while nominating Kerry for the post, "in a sense, John's entire life has prepared him for this role."

Born in Aurora in 1943 to a family with a military and political background, Kerry's childhood was spent in different countries as a reflection of his father's military postings. Graduating with a degree in political science from Yale University in 1966, Kerry enlisted in the Naval Reserve and consequently served in South Vietnam. Having witnessed the war from a close perspective, he secured an early return to the United States and promptly joined the Vietnam Veterans Against the War, becoming the organization's most vocal spokesperson. After receiving his J.D from Boston College, in 1984 he barely secured a seat to the U.S Senate.

Senator Kerry served on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for 28 years. During this time he chaired various hearings, some of which became a forerunner to the Iran-Contra affair. An early supporter of the 2003 invasion of Iraq, he subsequently became an opponent of the war. As the Democratic Party's 2004 presidential candidate, Kerry amassed the experience of running a large organization and understanding and addressing challenges that a U.S president would face. With 48.3% percent of Americans voting in his favor, he lost the election to incumbent President George W. Bush but not before giving Senator Barack Obama the prime opportunity of being the keynote speaker at the Democratic National Convention in 2004. This move alone gave Obama the sudden popularity that put him on the national political map.

In 2008, speculations were rife that Kerry would get tapped for the top-most diplomatic post in the country. However, Hillary Rodham Clinton was given the position. Four years later, Kerry's golden moment has finally arrived. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which he chaired for four years, voted unanimously in favor of Kerry's nomination as SoS.

This came as no surprise as Kerry sailed through his four hour long Senate confirmation hearing. Though not offering any particularly new agenda, Kerry put forth a pragmatic foreign policy view and stressed on the need for enhanced U.S diplomatic engagement. The new SoS and the President see eye-to-eye when it comes to multinational alliances, diplomacy and strategic engagement. Detailing issues in the Middle East, China's growing economic strength and the global race for energy and resources, Kerry stated that "more than ever, foreign policy is economic policy." This statement has led many analysts in the State department to ask whether Kerry will usher in a new era of strong competition or will revert to softer diplomacy. Both the President and Secretary Kerry are desperate





to correct America's foreign policy image as a war-mongering nation defined solely by the war against terrorism and instead promote it as a nation that values engagement, human rights and diplomacy. With critics on both sides of the spectrum, this particular approach has been termed naïve and counter-productive in what should be America's strong policy towards dictators in Syria and Iran's nuclear program.

In light of his record and experience, 69-year-old John Kerry was overwhelmingly confirmed in a 94-3 U.S Senate vote as Hillary Clinton's successor, to the post of Secretary of State. This vote confirms Kerry's official re-emergence on the world stage at a time when the U.S faces extraordinary challenges, particularly in the Middle East and South Asia. There is perhaps no better person, well-equipped or well-versed in diplomacy in conflict zones, to take up the job. Where Clinton was rash and impulsive, Kerry is patient and engaging. Clinton's record as Secretary of State itself is phenomenal. Having traveled extensively, meeting political leaders, brokering agreements and promoting U.S democratic interests at a time when the country suffers from a difficult and dubious reputation, is not an easy task.

Clinton will go down in history for her extraordinary commitment to waging peace and safeguarding U.S interests. Though her departure was expected to be smooth, the Benghazi attack and the U.S response to the situation, both at home and in Libya, impacted her exit negatively. Grilled at a five hour long hearing, Clinton was chastised for not responding appropriately to calls for extra security at the embassy and for releasing unreliable information, which led many to believe that the attack was a response to the anti-Islam film when it really was a planned terrorist attack that coincided with the protests. Regardless of this, Clinton's services in her capacity as Secretary of State have been magnanimous and that will be the legacy she leaves behind...till the time she decides to run for President in 2016.

Alluding to his predecessors, Hillary Clinton and Condoleeza Rice, it is no surprise then that on his first day at work

at the State Department, Kerry jokingly remarked, "So here's the big question before the country, the world and the State Department: After the last eight years, can a man actually run the State Department? As the saying goes, "I have big heels to fill." Even though Kerry has not been in the formal position till recently, he has served as an indispensable diplomatic representative to President Obama and his foreign policy agenda. Over the past four years, as Chairman of the SFRC, Kerry has visited conflict-ridden zones on behalf of the U.S government and has forged valuable personal ties with America's strongest allies. Kerry has extensively traveled to Afghanistan, Pakistan, Egypt and Sudan, among other places, to advance U.S aims, often at times of great animosity. Along with Sen. John McCain, Kerry proposed a "no-fly" zone over Libya as Gaddafi's forces massacred civilians. It was also Kerry who advised President Obama to bolster the Egyptian people in demanding an end to Hosni Mubarak's rule in Egypt and usher in a new era of democracy. He has helped to broker agreements, bilateral ties, conduct back-channel diplomacy and ease tensions, thus cultivating workable partnerships and a worthy reputation.

In the South Asian context, Kerry's work in Afghanistan and Pakistan has been of notable interest. He has always served as a softer voice of reason, refraining from a bellicose persona thus striking the right balance between cooperation and real deliverance. While the leadership in the Af-Pak region often faces strong animosity with U.S State officials, Kerry is able to coax the leaders to cooperate. A strong advocate of U.S diplomatic leadership, time and again, he has furthered non-military proposals to address serious challenges. He convinced President Karzai to allow runoff elections in Afghanistan in 2009 and in Pakistan, introduced the \$1.5 billion Kerry-Lugar-Berman Bill that allowed for non-military aid to be disbursed over five years. Though the bill eventually succumbed to the politics of a dwindling bilateral military relationship, it certainly eased tensions, albeit for a temporary period. Loyal to U.S policies and practice, it was Kerry who se-

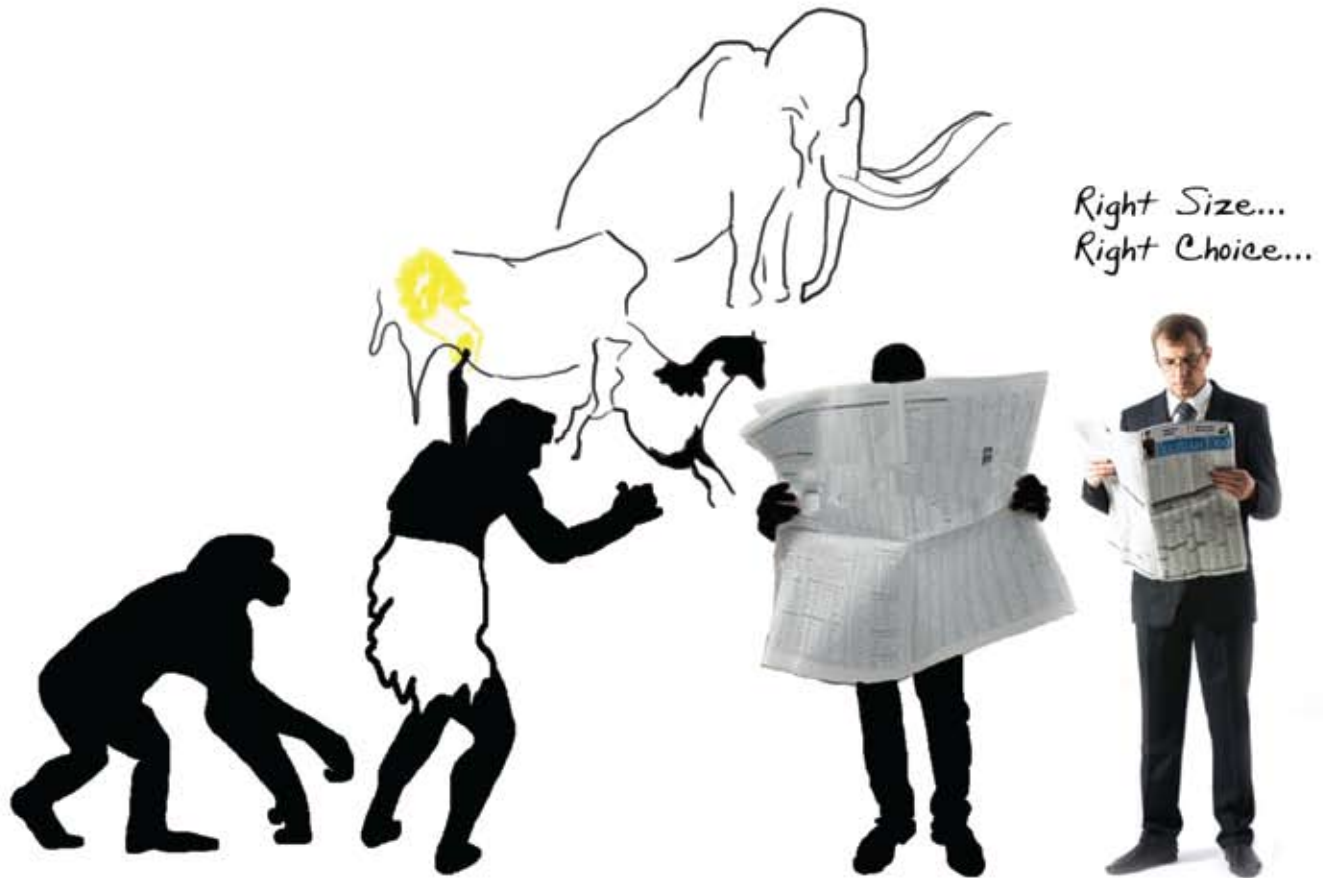
cured the release of Raymond Davis: the CIA contractor who shot and killed two Pakistanis in Lahore and later secured the return of helicopter parts still lying in Bin Laden's compound in Abbottabad following the May 02 Navy SEAL raid. As the war in Afghanistan winds down and relations with Pakistan continue to be in free-fall, a diplomat well-versed in regional politics will be necessary and there are few more qualified, or enthusiastic, than Kerry.

Kerry's term as Secretary of State is expected to bring positive changes in the Af-Pak region with which he is, surprisingly, directly involved. While some call him naïve, other term him a "realist" who measures ground realities and advocates engagement rather than a military strike. Patient, rigorous and informed, Kerry is a capable successor to Clinton and one who will direct a more engaged and aware approach to Obama's foreign policy during the second term. However, many are skeptical about Kerry's own policy strategies. It remains to be seen whether he will draft out new approaches or whether he will simply toe the administration's line and serve merely as a mouthpiece around the world. Flexing some aggressive diplomatic muscle in the State department might be something Kerry will have to learn on the job. Climate change, policies to deal with Iran's nuclear ambitions, securing the safety of diplomatic workers around the world to prevent another Benghazi attack and formulating a response to the Syrian crisis are already high on the agenda.

For an unsuccessful presidential candidate, entering the senior most diplomatic post in Washington, DC is both well earned and well suited for a man with such experience. Kerry has numerous challenges ahead of him but there is little doubt that he will foster informed engagement, perhaps adding a desperate level of stability and respect in America's relationships with the rest of the world. **S**

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

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# Mother of the Poor

**Mother Teresa's charitable contributions have made her a universal model for humanity and peace.**

By S.G. Jilane

*"By blood, I am Albanian. By citizenship, an Indian. By faith, I am a Catholic nun. As to my calling, I belong to the world. As to my heart, I belong entirely to the Heart of Jesus."*

**- Mother Teresa**

Reputed for ministering to the "poorest of the poor," Mother Teresa, of Albanian descent, was born in Skopje, Macedonia on August 26, 1910. Though she came to be known globally as Mother Teresa, her original name was Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu.

At the age of twelve, Bojaxhiu felt the urge to spread the message of Christ. Six years later, she joined the Sisters of Loreto, an Irish community of nuns. After a few months training she was sent to India, where on May 24, 1931 she took her initial vows as a nun. Since then until 1948, Mother Teresa taught at St. Mary's High School in Calcutta. Greatly affected by the suffering and poverty she saw in her neighbourhood, in 1948 she took permission from her superiors to leave the convent school and devoted herself to working among the poorest of the poor in the slums of Calcutta.

Without any funds, Teresa started an open-air school for slum children. Her noble intentions soon drew volunteers and financial support became readily available, allowing her to extend the scope of her work. In 1950, with permission from the Holy See, Mother Teresa started her own Order, "The Missionaries of Charity", whose primary task was to care for those persons nobody was prepared to look after.

For over 45 years, she tended to the poor, sick, orphaned and dying, while guiding the Missionaries of Charity's expansion, first throughout India and then in other countries. In 1982, at the height of the Siege of Beirut, Mother Teresa rescued 37

children trapped in a front line hospital by brokering a temporary cease-fire between the Israeli army and Palestinian guerrillas. She also travelled to assist and minister to the hungry in Ethiopia and radiation victims at Chernobyl.

By 1996, she was operating 517 missions in more than 100 countries. The Missionaries of Charity had grown from twelve to thousands serving the "poorest of the poor" in 450 centres around the world.

Mother Teresa suffered her first heart attack in Rome in 1983, while visiting Pope John Paul II. She had a second attack in 1989. In 1991, after an attack of pneumonia in Mexico, she suffered further heart problems. She offered to resign her position as head of the Missionaries of Charity, but the sisters of the order voted for her to stay.

In April 1996, Mother Teresa fell and broke her collarbone. In August the same year, she suffered from malaria and failure of the left heart ventricle. Despite heart surgery, her condition continued to decline and she departed on 5 September 1997.

At the time of her death, Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity had over 4,000 sisters, and an associated brotherhood of 300 members, operating 610 missions in 123 countries. These included hospices and homes for people with HIV/AIDS, leprosy and tuberculosis, soup kitchens, children's and family counselling programs, personal helpers, orphanages and schools.

Mother Teresa's work has been recognised and acclaimed worldwide. Apart from the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize, she received a

number of awards and distinctions that included the first Pope John XXIII Peace Prize, the Ramon Magsaysay Award, the Pacem in Terris Award, an honorary Companion of the Order of Australia, the Order of Merit from both the United Kingdom and the United States, Albania's Golden Honor of the Nation, the Balzan Prize, the Albert Schweitzer International Prize, as well as a number of honorary degrees.

In India, she received the Padma Shri in 1962, Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding in 1969 and India's highest civilian award -- the Bharat Ratna -- twice, once in 1972 and again in 1980.

In 2003, Pope John Paul II who gave her the title, "Blessed Teresa of Calcutta", beatified her posthumously. On 28 August 2010, to commemorate the 100th anniversary of her birth, the government of India issued a special Rs.5 coin, which was the sum she had landed in India with.

However, Mother Teresa also had her detractors, Christopher Hitchens being the bitterest among them. The criticism levied against her was directed largely at financial matters but also pointed at her peculiar philosophy that suffering would bring people closer to Jesus. As a result, in her Home for the Dying, maggots were tweezed from open wounds without giving patients any painkillers, even though their screams of pain could be heard beyond the walls of the hospice. **S**

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

# “Islamic banking is on a steady growth path.”

## An exclusive Interview with Ahmed Khizer Khan, President & CEO, Burj Bank Limited

### What is the concept behind the Burj Bank slogan ‘Shariat Mein Barkat’

Our slogan expresses the pure nature of our business and we want to communicate the same through our slogan. We believe that Shari’ah leads to the blessed path of success and that is exactly what ‘Shariat Mein Barkat’ means.

### Where does Burj Bank trace its roots as an Islamic Bank?

Burj Bank has a rich Middle Eastern background with the financial and technical support of a great institution, ICD Jeddah (Islamic Corporation for Development of the Private Sector) which is the private sector arm of Islamic Development Bank, Jeddah. ICD is working for economic development and social progress in various Muslim countries by investing in the private sector. Other major shareholders include Bank Al-Khair from Bahrain, Gargash Enterprises from the UAE and Al-Romaizan from Saudi Arabia. This strong background gives Burj Bank exceptional financial strength and absolute credibility.

### What advantages does an Islamic bank have in Pakistan?

In Pakistan, Islamic banking penetration stands at about 8 %. Being the 6th most populous country, Pakistan is now the second largest Islamic nation in the world, with over 180 million people and continues to grow rapidly. Till date the banking sector has only been able to tap roughly 20 million customers. According to our analysis an untapped banking market of over 40 million customers still exists within the country. Islam is the predominant religion in Pakistan and Shari’ah-compliant Banking as of today has a very small market share, thus reflecting a huge potential for growth in this sector. Islamic

banks, having carved out a niche in Pakistan, should now be given greater support and encouragement by the regulatory authorities to operate on a standalone basis. Full fledged Islamic banks are still in the process of building their capital base, which is imperative for growth in a post-Basel III world. This will even out the competition in the industry and be beneficial for the consumers at large.

### What are the challenges to Islamic finance thriving in Pakistan?

Islamic Banking is based on the principles of Islamic finance and people have very little knowledge about these principles. This in itself gives rise to a number of challenges, for instance, establishing credibility and spreading awareness. Capacity building is another major challenge. Conventional banking is being taught in numerous universities whereas very few institutions are offering formalized education in Islamic Banking, thus production of quality human capital is another challenge for our growing sector. Though it is true that greater awareness of the inbuilt strengths of Islamic finance has contributed towards increased international participation in Islamic financial markets, awareness alone is not sufficient to ensure sustainable growth for our industry in Pakistan and beyond. To remain competitive we have to continually innovate and adapt. If we are to challenge the conventional banks’ entrenched position in international and local financial deals, we must develop the capacity to structure multi-currency and cross-border transactions and build scale.

### As Islamic banking grows in Pakistan, what will differentiate Burj Bank?

Burj is the only Islamic Bank in Pakistan with a Sharia’h Quality Rating of AA

(Double A) affirmed by the Islamic International Rating Agency – Bahrain (IIRA). The rating signifies that Burj conforms to very high standards of Shari’ah compliance. Besides delivering the highest standards in Shari’ah compliance, our primary differentiator will be the quality of our customer service. We aim to be the unique Islamic Bank that offers the service standards of international standards while guiding our customers to the blessed path of success. Our customer service is at par with the leading banks of the world. The new look and feel of our branches has completely transformed the customers experience and the perception of Islamic Banking in the country to a progressive alternative to the conventional banking system. Secondly, we take pride in being the first Islamic Bank of Pakistan that aggressively took up the challenge of spreading awareness of Islamic Finance and Banking. I can proudly say that our marketing efforts informed the customers of the services that an Islamic bank offers



and how these services are different from conventional ones. In the next 5 years, Burj Bank will have over 300 branches as well as an established non-brick and mortar banking model in place, emerging as one of the most important players in the Banking sector of Pakistan.

**How do you rate Burj Bank's progress so far?**

I can proudly say that with the help of Almighty Allah, we have managed to get ourselves recognized as the fastest growing financial institution in this country. Today our company's vision of becoming the Islamic Bank of Choice seems approachable. Our core brand values of "Purity", "Integrity", "Passion" and "Devotion" are being lived out by the people running the company, demonstrating in their personal and business lives that they passionately believe in these values.

The list of our achievements in 2012 is never ending. In just 12 months, we grew our deposit base by 80 percent. Our financing portfolio also grew by 80 percent. We successfully converted a loss-making business into a highly profitable venture. Our branches have grown from 50 to 75. Within our Retail Banking arm, we have successfully inducted a strong BDO Channel, we have converted our car financing facility (Carsaaz) into a market leader and established our SME and Takaful business. We have strengthened our human capital and we are all set to launch Priority and Home Musharaka (financing) propositions. Within our Corporate Banking division, we have added a rich portfolio of top Corporates and started dedicated corporate branches, nearly doubling our asset book. We have launched the first Islamic Debit MasterCard of Pakistan and our brand has evolved into one of the strongest consumer brands in the country. Hence, we faced multiple challenges in the beginning but, I can proudly say that we rose from these challenges with distinction.

**Currently, what are your most popular services?**

Burj Bank offers a diverse range of

products and services to its customers. We have launched differentiated products and services in every category. We launched consumer financing last year and Burj Carsaaz (auto financing) has already become the fastest growing consumer financing product in the market. The Corporate product menu is also very comprehensive and includes traditional Murabaha, Mudarba, Istisna, Ijarah financing and diminishing Musharaka. We have an enhanced product menu in terms of retail banking, Consumer Financing, SME Banking, trade financing.

**Can you share Burj Bank's contribution towards CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility)?**

Corporate Social Responsibility is at the heart of our business and we believe that giving back to the community and this country is just as important as our Core Brand Values. We understand the responsibilities of being a corporate citizen and value the importance of the activities done under CSR. Burj Bank Limited has been able to seamlessly integrate the social, ethical and environmental concerns of the society in its business model. It has proactively participated in community well-being and growth efforts, with its employees contributing to various philanthropic initiatives under the aegis of the Burj Charity Committee. Recognizing every Burj Bank employee as a powerful agent of positive change, we recently launched an employee-driven CSR initiative - "Giving Beyond the

Workplace Campaign". Under this initiative we carried out a number of activities that involved spending quality time and dining with the beautiful children at the Edhi orphanage and distributing clothes and household items to the children at the SOS village. Recently we also hosted an event where we distributed donation to the families of the victims of the Baldia Town fire incident. We are working on a variety of new initiatives for 2013 and will disclose the details very soon.

**What are Burj Bank's initiatives for 2013?**

During the year 2012, we expanded our branch network from 50 branches to 75 branches. Apart from adding 25 branches, we also relocated some of our branches to more prominent and accessible locations to increase outreach. With the objective of further increasing our footprint in the country, we plan to add another 25 branches to our network in 2013 bringing it to 100 branches. We also plan to introduce new liability products focusing on senior citizens, children and salaried individuals. We will be venturing into the home remittance business as well and are also planning to expand our consumer product portfolio and form strategic alliances with renowned brands to facilitate our customers. We have recently launched Pakistan's first Islamic Debit MasterCard, and will be launching Priority Banking along with many new products for our Alternative Distribution Channels. ■

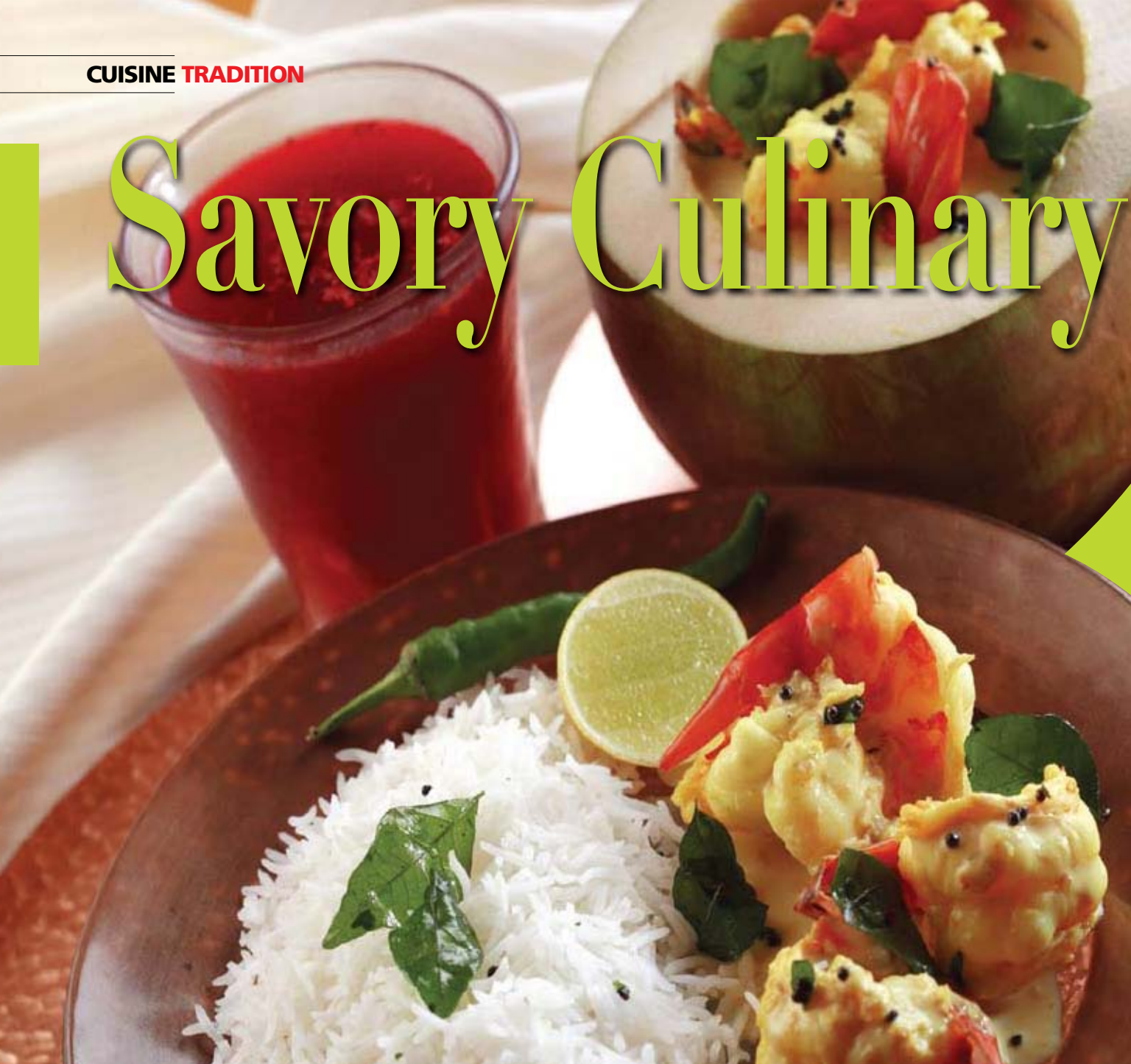
**A High-Profile Professional**

Ahmed Khizer Khan has demonstrated continued success in maximizing corporate performance based on generating revenues, capturing market share, improving profits and enhancing market value of the institutions he has worked for. His diverse leadership experience of over twenty years is spread across several prominent financial institutions including Citibank, Barclays, Charles Schwab and the Islamic Corporation for the Development of the Private Sector ("ICD"), a member of the Islamic Development Bank ("IDB") Group.

He served as COO and Director Coverage, Partnerships, & Syndication at ICD (Private Sector Development arm for Islamic Development Bank). His Global Management experience at ICD covered management of investments and businesses across Asia, MENA, Africa and CIS, chairing the Investment Committee and running the coverage portfolio as well as the regional business hubs. He has to his credit setting up and managing successful businesses and entities in the Islamic banking sphere backed by strategic acquisitions and divestments, developing and implementing turnaround strategies and institutional strategies for development.

Ahmed Khizer Khan holds an Honours degree in Economics from Bucknell University, Lewisburg, Pennsylvania and an MBA from Rutgers University, Newark, New Jersey, USA.

# Savory Culinary



More often than not, traditional culinary secrets of a country distinguish it from others around it. Exclusive regional dishes entice true connoisseurs of good food, from around the world, to validate the supremacy of taste and blend of ingredients that make a particular cuisine stand out. Over the years, Bangladeshi cuisine or what is commonly known as Bengali cuisine has piqued the interest of food lovers. What makes this cuisine

so interesting is its true reflection of the geographical and the cultural metamorphosis that the country has experienced. With time, not only has Bangladesh's national identity evolved but so have its people. The traditions and influences embedded in the culture of Bangladesh have had a strong and dominant influence on the way the cuisines of the country have emerged.

Given Bangladesh's geography, the presence of rivers, humidity and

heat has led to heavy consumption of staple items like rice, meat, fish, coconut, yogurt and spices. The cultural influence however, is a manifestation of two major factors: religious factions with a predisposition to vegetarianism and the history of the region and the rulers it has had.

A typical Bengali Muslim household is likely to prepare a day's menu with three to five dishes in a particular sequence so that the blend of flavors is harmonious.

# Delights

**Bangladeshi food incorporates cooking techniques and a variety of food, Bengali cuisine offers a number of regional influences, of spices. With a rich blend of exotic superb culinary experience.**

By Zufah Ansari

Dishes are served on a *Madur* (mat) or *Patti* (mattress) while in a Bengali Hindu home the food is served in *Kasha* (bowls).

A strong Mongolian influence of the 16th century has left behind Moghlia dishes such as *kebabs*, *kof-tas* and *biryani*. In the same century, the Portuguese also introduced vegetables into Bengali cuisine and European traders imported variations of chillies and tomatoes. Despite all the influences, the reason why the country has such a diverse yet strong identity of culinary offerings is the Bangladeshi culture of *appayan* (hospitality) that explains the obsession with cooking and adapting to new flavors.

When comparing Bangladesh to its neighbors, a clear distinction exists between the way recipes are prepared in West Bengal (Kolkata) and the East (Bangladesh), which embodies the preparation methods practiced in Chittagong and Dhaka. Both regions differ in their way of using the essential spices. Fish and prawns are both popular but are integrated depending on preferences and availability. The East prefers the use of fresh water fish and the sequence of a meal consumption starts from the bitter to the sweet while the West practices the com-

plete reverse.

Meals are generally consumed directly with fingers, which serves as an important part of relishing any meal, allowing the texture and each ingredient to become part of the savory experience.

What makes Bengali cuisine tasteful is the complementary use of panchphoron: the five prime spices, namely mustard, fenugreek, cumin seed, aniseed and black cumin seed. The use of spices has been nurtured since the pre-Vedic times and reflects hints of Turkish, Persian, Arabian and Mughal cuisines. It is the amalgamation of the sweet and spicy flavors that makes Bengali dishes so divine.

Within Bangladesh, cuisines differ from one region to another, giving the country's platter a varied menu. Northern Bengal enjoys the influence of Assam, Tripura and the tribal groups of Surma. South East Bengal is a reflection of the Arakani recipes from Burma. Midwest Bangladesh comprises authentic Bengali cuisine with unadulterated origins and the Dhakiya Cuisine has an Awadhi essence.

Typical Bengali cuisines consist of *Bhorta*, seasoned items prepared in a mashed form, *Bhapa* or steamed fish or rice and *Jhal*, made with fish, shrimp or crab, slightly fried

and then cooked in a light sauce of ground red chili. The dessert menu is a blissful one as well. Sweet dishes that adorn dinner tables include *Roshogollas*, *Shondesh* or finely ground fresh cottage cheese, *Pantua* or cottage cheese balls fried in oil and chomchoms.

The national dish of Bangladesh is *Panta Hilsa*, which is a platter of *Panta Bhat*, a light rice dish with slices of *Hilsa* fish, complemented with *Shukti* (uncooked dry fish), pickles, lentils, green chilies and onions. This platter is the star meal of the *Pholea Boishakh* festival while *Pillao* (fragranced rice) and *Korma/Rezala* with *Kebab* and chicken roast also become part of major celebrations like weddings.

Despite the religious norms, with regard to meat consumption, there exists a noticeable inclination towards meat-based dishes. Meat consumption in the Asian region is around 26%. This is not a direct resultant of environment, religion, history, or main food staples but is the implication of the growing globalization of the food industry and the economic growth of the countries in the region. **S**

*Zufah Ansari is an undergraduate marketing student with a strong writing interest in culture and society.*

The media landscape is rapidly changing as more students and young professionals utilize digital media, be it for news, entertainment or social and professional networking. As media users, we prefer to get “news alerts” from around the world right into our handheld devices rather than buy a newspaper and search for elements of interest. But does this ring true for the South Asian masses as well?

The global predictions for print media are dismal to say the least. In 2010, The Times of India ran a story on Ross Dawson, a futurist who predicted the extinction of newspapers in 52 countries between 2017 and 2039, with the last of the printing giants closing in the United States in 2017. The good news is that not a single South Asian country features

on this list. To say that print media in South Asia is in a crisis, would be misleading. Even as circulation drops in mature markets, South Asian news and publishing houses are still able to guarantee a reliable and sizeable audience for their print streams. In India, China, Brazil and South Africa, circulation continues to increase. Pakistan has seen an influx of a large number of daily and weekly newspapers in English, Urdu and other regional languages in the last few years with an increasing number of readers.

Wide economic and infrastructural disparities exist in South Asia. While one can argue over the low literacy rates, print media in local languages, surpasses that barrier. A leading reason for the lack of readiness to adopt digital media lies in

South Asia’s infrastructural development. Most countries within the region are rural economies with the majority of the population residing in such areas. In addition to a lack of education, internet availability is also limited to far-flung areas and is restricted primarily to urban centers. Furthermore, low-speed internet does not allow for the optimal online experience and is a hindrance to digital knowledge acquisition. In such a situation, many easily revert to print sources, which are both affordable and readily accessible. According to the PWC Global Entertainment and Media Outlook 2010-2014, while Singapore and Malaysia have high internet household penetration (133% and 90%, respectively), countries such as Vietnam, the Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia fall

# The Future of



**While the world readily adopts digital media in the realm of news and information, print media continues to have relevance in South Asia.**

By Daniah Ishtiaq



# Print

well below the global average of 45%. This in effect shows a majority of the population's inability to access online media.

Print continues to be a major contributor to media in South Asia. While the younger lot prefers digital media and online information, the older generation prefers print, viewing it as a more credible source than the plethora of online information that can easily be manipulated. For marketers, print media provides a platform that a viewer cannot browse or skip. In print you can now touch, sample and even smell products unlike in the digital media. Contrary to Pakistan, the Phil-

ippines and Thailand, where most of the money in advertising goes to television, India and Malaysia spend large amounts of advertising budgets on print media; according to The Hindu Times, in India, 50% of overall ad expenditure in 2010 went to print.

For those in print media, the dilemma lies within the revenue models of the two broad media outlets. Digital distribution thrives through higher volumes and deeper penetration; revenue is not easy to squeeze out of digital subscribers and advertisers. However, serving one or ten million customers digitally costs the same amount.

Gaining audience for print media, on the other hand, is costly; every additional reader comes with tangible industrial costs including printing, shipping and delivery of the final product to homes, offices, etc. Having said that, each print reader carries a much better average revenue per unit (ARPU) than its online counterpart. For a considerable period, due to the existence of loyal and solvent readers, a significant share of the audience will favor the print version, regardless of the price. To put it in economic terms, the price of print media is fairly non-elastic; price hikes don't necessarily translate into significant drops in circulation. These hikes may result in revenues that allow publishers to develop and enhance their digital technologies and therefore their presence in the digital world.

The newspaper industry has shown resilience for over 400 years and it is not going anywhere as far as South Asia is concerned. However, the industry will have to evolve to serve the varying consumer demands, whether digital or print. The key to staying relevant will now be to effectively target the various segments of the market with the types of information or content that is offered, whether it is world affairs, entertainment or education. Every print publication in South Asia today must have an online presence catering to the segment of the market that has access to digital media and expresses a need to have information on the go. The key is to maintain congruency in digital and print presence. ■

*Daniah Ishtiaq holds an MBA from the Institute of Business Administration.*

# Playing on Top of the World

**Pakistan is home to the world's highest polo ground. Polo is fast becoming an internationally competitive sport but it needs more patronage within the country.**

By Amber Anwer

**T**he sheer serenity of the Shandur Pass turns into a ferocious field every year, during the Shandur Festival or polo tournament in Pakistan. A three-day festival, held in early July, includes folk music and dance performances by locals, trout fishing, mountaineering, trekking, hiking and horse riding along with of course, the great polo tournament.

Pakistan is home to a number of magnificent landscapes and topography. One of these is the Shandur-top polo field, located in District Ghizer in northern Pakistan. The tradition of playing polo at the world's highest polo ground, located at a towering height of 3,700 meters, has been ongoing since the British era. The best teams from Chitral and Gilgit-Baltistan compete in the Shandur Polo Tournament, playing with passion and vigor, thus creating a healthy yet warlike atmosphere throughout the area. Due to Shandur's geographical beauty, the popular yearly tournament also draws international polo spectators and observers. Scores of people from all over the world and nearby areas gather at the beautiful landscape surrounded by crystal-clear lakes, snow-covered mountains and breath-taking views, to witness the clash of the local titans.

Shandur served as a Polo ground much before the 1936 inception of an annual polo tournament during the British rule. Previously, the game was played between small villages and rival groups from Chitral and Gilgit. It was only after 1936 that the polo tournament was held annually. A British army officer, Evelyn Hey Cobb, first introduced the idea and organised the tournament. Cobb, an avid Polo player, was fond of playing the game under the full moon. Since then the ground has never been used for any other purpose than as a polo playing field. Polo at Shandur Pass follows the ancient rules of Ali Sher Khan, the supposed descendent of Genghis Khan. It is one of the only venues in the world that still hosts the sport in its original form with centuries old rules, while internationally it is now played with new rules.

Polo demands a strongly built player, a speedy horse and a zealous team to generate a real competition. Players from Chitral and Gilgit-Baltistan are passionate about the sport and participate in the Shandur Polo Tournament with full vigor. These players are best at what they do; however, they are restricted to their local grounds and do not participate in international polo tournaments. All Pakistani players who play polo

internationally hail mainly from cities like Lahore, Multan, Karachi, Bahawalpur and Rawalpindi; none of them are from Gilgit-Baltistan or



Chitral.


Given the climate, natural beauty and their practice of staying outdoors, almost all sports played by the people of Gilgit-Baltistan and surrounding areas are outdoors. Horse polo, the national game of the region, is the most famous among all the outdoor games. Other sports that keep natives busy include paragliding, rafting, horse racing, *Buzkashi* and the traditional tug-of-war.

In Chitral, sports such as cricket, *tukSORU*, *gulli danda* and volleyball are actively played. During various festivals, a number of parallel competitions are held such as archery, swimming across torrential rivers, rock climbing at Shasha cliffs, rafting down the Chitral River and

wrestling on wooden logs placed high over water. However, polo remains the most watched sport and soccer, the most played.

The importance of polo in the northern areas can be gauged from the presence of two clubs, FCNA Polo Club and the Shandur Polo Club, both associated with the Pakistan Polo Association.

Pakistan has much to boast of in terms of natural beauty and cultural heritage. It is no coincidence that it is home to the world's highest Polo ground, a sport increasingly embraced by locals residing in the northern areas. While the annual Polo festival serves as a strong magnet for international followers of the sport, the general population must

also value the natural venue and traditions associated with it. Other countries spend exorbitant amounts of money to host international polo matches and competitions within their countries. There is an urgent need for the Pakistani government to introduce measures to protect and maintain its naturally given advantage as it would be a waste to watch one of the most prized Polo locations in the world, gradually deteriorate due to negligence. 

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Questions about declining languages plague every civilization. In the case of India, the fall of a language becomes a matter of urgency. As the largest country in South Asia, India boasts of a vibrant and diverse culture comprising many languages. Legend has it that across the length and breadth of India, the language changes after every 800 miles. Over the last few decades, however, India has witnessed a decline in its second official language, Urdu. The city of Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh, the center of the Urdu language, has been home to some of the greatest Urdu poets like Mir Anees, Dabeer and Aatish. The slow phasing out of the language in school curricula and religious ceremonies has thus become a pressing concern for literary Urdu enthusiasts.

One of the main reasons for Urdu's decline is its identification along religious lines, as it is termed as a "Muslim language." Vested interests have successfully stamped it out of mainstream conversation, forgetting concepts like "*Sare Jahan Se Achcha Hindustan Hamara*" and "*Sarfarooshi Ki Tamanna Ab Hamare Dil Mein Hai*," during the freedom struggle. The opponents of Urdu have also failed to realize that many non-Muslim poets have used Urdu as their medium of expression. At the heart of this debate is the lack of acknowledgement that language

does not belong to anyone and transcends religion, cast or creed.

Inayatullah Khan, principal of Mumtaz Inter College, argues that Urdu has been discarded by the Indian society and those parents who choose to teach their children Urdu, are labeled "backward." Banners and religious literature appear in Hindi and many Muslims readily adopt Hindi as Urdu rapidly loses its relevance as a job-oriented lan-

dan, a prominent Urdu journalist, found startling statistics regarding the decline of Urdu newspapers in India. Post-Independence, Urdu newspapers continued to flourish despite unfavorable circumstances. But by 1997, Urdu journalism began to decline. In 2001, there was an eight percent decrease in the number of Urdu publications from 6.1 million in 2000 to 5.2 million, just one year later.

# Whither

**The Urdu language is on the decline in India. What are the reasons behind this and can it still be salvaged?**

By Atiya Abbas

guage. In a changing market, the languages you speak have a major influence on your skills as a communicator. In that equation, Urdu does not factor in and parents are more concerned about their children's success in a place as competitive as India.

Urdu's usage is also declining in the mainstream media. G.D. Chan-

Chandan finds that the trends in the decline of Urdu continue to increase and this change is more noticeable in the states of Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Punjab where Urdu was one of the main media of expression. He outlines two reasons for this decline: One is the migration of the main readers of Urdu newspapers: the refugees in



West Punjab, whose descendants are not fluent in Urdu. Secondly, the state government has also not taken any steps towards promoting Urdu at the primary level. Due to this, even the states which are considered the birthplace of Urdu, such as UP, Delhi and Punjab, have generations of children who are not as well-versed in Urdu as the generations before them because they are not being taught the language in school.

its form, syntax and expression is considered exotic. Political rivalries have also resulted in the decline of the language. Saeed Naqvi, a prominent blogger, comments that the decline in Urdu is also due to the advent of Bollywood which has given rise to a new lingua franca' "Hinglish." The Urdu elite are facing a losing battle in a competitive job market that requires command over the English language and political

the *Devanagari* script and reports that the results have been positive. An Urdu book fair, held in Mumbai, was also organized by the National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language. Similar efforts need to be undertaken in Delhi and Lucknow.

In his essay titled "Urdu in India since Independence," Ralph Russell highlights the steps taken by the government since the 1970s for the promotion of Urdu. A committee was set up in 1972, which submitted a report with 187 recommendations for the advancement of Urdu. However, political reasons shelved the report and more committees were made to take a look at those recommendations in subsequent years. It was discovered in 1990 that 95 percent of the recommendations had not been adopted at all. Since then, Urdu continues to be on the decline.

The death of a language as sweet and melodic as Urdu will be a loss for later generations. The need of the hour is to retrace the steps already taken and make sure that Urdu is prominent in the national discourse and academic curriculum. Both Pakistan and India can benefit from mutual discussions about the language as it serves as a bridge between both countries. ■

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

# Urdu?

Though the Indian government has enforced a three-language formula, it is simply just an agreement on paper. Most states have not implemented the formula hence contributing to the decline of Urdu. Chandan notes that the Urdu press in India can be a voice of change and bridge the gap between India and Pakistan.

In Lucknow, the centre of some of the greatest Urdu poetry ever produced, patrons of the language express dismay at the decline in the use of the language. Urdu was always the language of the elite and

factions that hail the call of "Hindi-Hindu-Hindustan," thus marginalizing the connoisseurs of the Urdu language.

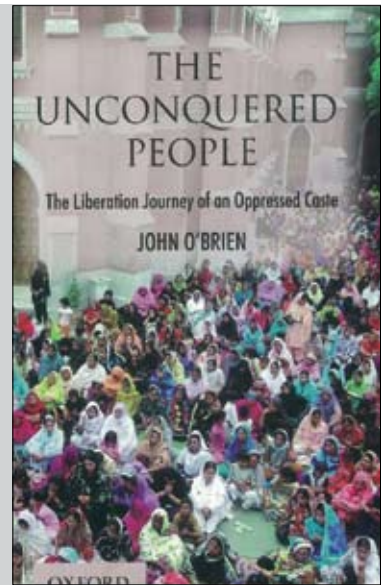
An interesting observation pointed out by writer Murli Manohar Joshi offers an insight as to why Urdu is declining. He argues that a lot of new information, regarding science and technology, is not available in Urdu and this limits its outreach to those who might be interested in studying it. Similarly, many works in Urdu are not translated into other scripts making it difficult to access. Joshi translated some great works of Urdu into



# Roots of Racism

**Author:** John O'Brien  
**Title:** The Unconquered People: The Liberation Journey of an Oppressed Caste  
**Publisher:** Oxford University Press, 2012  
**Pages:** 352, Hardback  
**ISBN:** 9780199063543  
**Price:** PKR 995

*Reviewed by Ilhan Niaz*



John O'Brien's 'The Unconquered People: The Liberation Journey of an Oppressed Caste' is a valuable and timely contribution to the historical study of Pakistan's Christians. Drawing upon an impressive combination of field experience, archival and documentary sources, and careful analysis of mythologies and literature, 'The Unconquered People' is an informative and engaging narrative that merits a broad readership. There are three critical lessons that can be learnt from this remarkable book.

The first is that all religions in South Asia, whatever their theoretical aspirations, are in practice caste based. Of today's 2.8 million Pakistani Christians, O'Brien notes that an overwhelming majority are descendants of a tribal caste of the aboriginal inhabitants of South Asia. During the formative phase of the Hindu caste system, they were forced into untouchable status by the fair-skinned Aryan higher castes. The purity of the high caste was thus built upon the systematic and prolonged degradation of the original inhabitants they displaced and subjugated, so much so that the latter internalized their humiliation.

The untouchable tribal-caste

group ancestors of the Pakistani Christians were assigned tasks "such as the cleaning of latrines and sewers; the removal of the carcasses of dead animals; and the removal of corpses..." and consequently reduced to a "sub-human status" (8) by the Brahmanic law. So powerful was this ancient legacy, reinforced by repetition over many millennia that the conversion to Christianity had practically no impact on their occupational role in the caste hierarchy.

The second lesson is that the oppressed, among themselves, have their own internal system of oppression. In the case of the tribal-caste group of untouchables, this system was a very effective means of neutralizing resistance to outsiders by directing violence and aggression inwards. Deprived of the respect of society at large, relegated by millennia of brutalization and marginalization to occupations viewed by others with contempt, their very approach was sufficient to invite ridicule and cause wariness among higher castes. The untouchables, before and after conversion to Christianity, remained deeply fractured and locked in an internal struggle for *izzat*.

This struggle, of course, is not unique to any particular group in South Asia. *Izzat*, however, should not be confused with honor in the Western or Japanese sense of the term. *Izzat* is about the assertion of dominance and forcing others to recognize one's greater power and/or wealth. Honor, as understood in the West and Japan is the appreciation of the dignity of others based upon self-respect. The difference can be illustrated by contrary approaches towards punctuality. In South Asia, punctuality is typically punished and the ability to show up late to an event or a meeting is a way of signaling our indifference to the requirements of the host and thus asserting, often subconsciously, our dominance. In the West as well as in Japan, participants in a meeting or guests at a function, by being punctual signal respect for the host as well as others involved thus conveying a sense of their own dignity.

O'Brien's account, however, leaves little doubt that even the most oppressed seek to injure each other in the pursuit of recognition within the group. Among other effects of the pursuit of *izzat*, the poor are caught in chronic internecine conflict and

chronic indebtedness. Both of these reinforce the subjugation of the untouchables who are thus driven to squander their meager resources on pursuing *izzat* within a group that is generally despised.

The third lesson is that since 1947 the gradual dismantling of the secular character of the state inherited from the British has led to the worsening of conditions for religious minorities in Pakistan. The Pakistani Christians have, unsurprisingly, been at the receiving end of this trend. Deterioration in their legal standing, the growing hostility of state functionaries to their needs and aspirations, the freedom with which people can target them by using religious laws, have all eroded the small gains made during the last 70-80 years of the British Raj. The growing social acceptability of religious-fundamentalism among the Muslim majority has also

had the effect of reducing the public space available to minorities – a point driven home by high profile assassinations of public figures who dared to speak out against one-sided religious legislation. O'Brien contends that Islamization has provided legal as well as social means to impede social mobility for Pakistani Christians. This reinforces differences in socioeconomic development originally rooted in the caste system. It also fans sectarianism within the Muslim majority.

Throughout 'The Unconquered People', O'Brien tries to present the experience of the Pakistani Christians and their untouchable ancestors as a long struggle against oppression sanctioned by a combination of racism and religion. The very persistence of a system of discrimination and its renewed vigor under an Islamic cover post-1947, indicates that such resistance as has been offered was, and

is, woefully insufficient and that the liberation journey never really got off the ground. O'Brien's empathy with those he studies perhaps leads him to ascribe qualities to a struggle that, even if it exists at some level, is most remarkable for its inefficacy.

Overall 'The Unconquered People' is worth reading for while it reaches deep into South Asia's ancient past it also connects with important contemporary issues affecting Pakistan. The book under review is one from which specialists and non-specialists can learn a lot, regardless of whether they agree with O'Brien's premises and conclusions. **S**

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

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# Death Penalty is Not the Answer

By Anees Jillani

**O**n February 3, 2013, the Indian President promulgated the Criminal Law (Amendment) Ordinance 2013, which defines and outlines the procedures to deter sexual crimes against women. The fact that the Government had to do it through an ordinance, which is rare in India, showed the urgency of the matter. It was understandable given the outbreak of unprecedented protests all over the country, particularly in New Delhi, following the rape, and later the death, of a 23-year old girl in December.

There is no doubt that rape and sexual abuse is an extremely heinous crime. However, folks asking for a death sentence for this crime must realize that such a severe penalty may endanger the lives of the victims.

I realize how people feel about a heinous crime and their feelings for the victim and her family. I also value their hatred for the criminal. However, at the same time, we should be appreciative of the practical exigencies. For example, in Pakistan, it is a crime punishable by death to parade women naked in public; this amendment was enforced after some feudal paraded landless, naked female farmers in Nawabpur, Punjab. What lawmakers failed to realize was that if the crime of parading is death, then the criminal might as well shoot his victim after the parade: there cannot be a more severe punishment than death.

A few decades ago, two youngsters carjacked a police vehicle at gun point in California and with it the two policemen in the vehicle. They were only interested in the car, so they parked it next to an onion field and asked the policemen to run away. Just then, one carjacker told his mate about a new law in California under which anyone kidnapping a policeman would face the death sentence. The other man promptly shot both the policemen dead. Eventually, both men were arrested but the incident led to a furious debate in California that eventually resulted in lawmakers

repealing the mandatory death punishment provision from the law. The episode inspired the movie *Onion Fields*.

The incident depicts a common sense proposition that if a criminal finds out that the sentence for the lesser offense he or she is committing is also death then there is nothing stopping the criminal from killing his victim to remove all traces of evidence.

One may go into the causes of the high rates of rape in India. Addressing them is the responsibility of the government and the society. However, one primary reason rape may be so common is the lack of deterrence as far as punishment is concerned. The trials should be quick and effective. There is no excuse not to appoint more judges and establish more courts. India has a huge population and it thus requires additional courts. This ironically does not even require resources as the legal system generates its own resources in the form of court fees and is thus self-sustainable. The courts should also start awarding costs to the victorious party as is done in the West.

I am of the opinion that much can be accomplished in deterring rape by simply introducing drastic legal reforms and fast-track or speedy courts. It is a misconception that capital punishment deters crimes. It does not. The institution of death sentence has been in vogue since time immemorial and has been on the statute books in India since the introduction of the Penal Code in 1860. It has not resulted in eliminating murders. We should, in this regard, keep in mind the situation in the Scandinavian countries where there is no capital punishment and the rate of murder is one of the lowest in the world. **S**

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

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