

**LEADERSHIP SERIES**  
**Sirimavo Bandaranaike**

May 2013

# SOUTHASIA

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### **INDIA**

The Budgeting Trick

### **AFGHANISTAN**

The X Factor

### **BANGLADESH**

Identity Crisis

### **NEIGHBOR**

A Tough Tussle



# Guess Who's Coming to Dinner

Pakistan stands at the crossroads of a historical and momentous election.

Will it usher in a real change or is it just another invitation for old faces?



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# I am Pakistan

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

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

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

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

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



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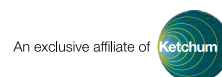
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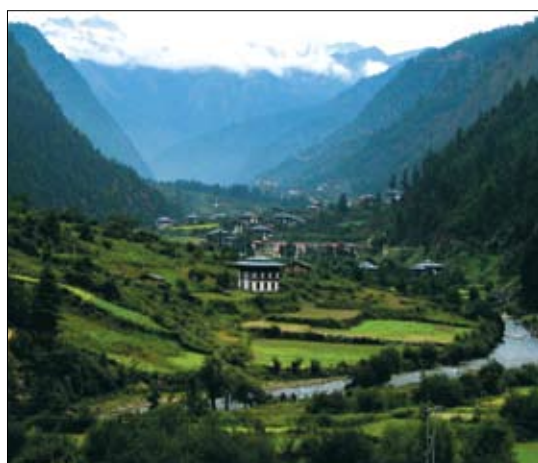
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# A Fair Deal for the General

Ever since Gen. Pervez Musharraf returned to Pakistan, he has been caught in a miasma of misinformation that has been created by the media to further certain negative perceptions about him. The courts are doing their bit to queer the pitch. While there has been a huge outcry to invoke Article 6 against Gen. Musharraf for allegedly committing high treason, deep in the echelons of power, it is well understood that this would open the mythical Pandora's Box and would entail rolling of a good many important heads.

Perhaps Musharraf was not ready for the disillusionment that he now faces. The very media he had freed has turned against him, vociferously applauding the treatment the judiciary is meting out to him in its crass vindictiveness. There is a well-organized anti-Musharraf campaign that is on these days through news stories, panel discussions and TV tickers.

Of late, the legal term 'suo moto' (meaning on its own motion) has almost become a household word in Pakistan, thanks to the frequent actions taken under the suo moto provision of the law by the superior judiciary. However, this same judiciary has not bothered to take suo moto action against the late Akbar Bugti's son for announcing head money of Rs.1 billion and land for anyone who kills Pervez Musharraf. As far as the judiciary is concerned, it appears as if anyone who has a personal grouse against another person (in this instance Bugti's son believes Musharraf was instrumental in having his father killed) can take the law in his own hands and become his own judge, jury and executioner.

It is obvious that the retired army general has taken the democratic route a bit too late in the day. He has also not focused much on organizing his political party into a well-oiled political machine. He would have done well to set up the APMIL on practical lines even from afar by appointing a central executive committee back home which would have managed organizational affairs. He could have taken in seasoned politicians on the central executive who would have handled affairs of the party in his absence and, once he arrived in Pakistan, he would have a working setup to further build on.

An important question being asked is about Musharraf's democratic bonafides. He had once said that democracy was simply a label and if that was what was needed, he was willing to hold elections. Does he still think the same way or has he suddenly turned into a true blue democrat who has done away with his military mindset and has all the intentions to enter the political mainstream via the democratic route? Furthermore, if Musharraf has now turned into a democrat, then how does he defend his earlier actions, such as coming down with a heavy hand on the judiciary, imposing Emergency in the country when there was no need for such an extreme measure or signing the National Reconciliation Order (NRO)?

Whatever the case, the good that Musharraf did for Pakistan must be taken due cognizance of and acknowledged by those who were the greatest beneficiaries of his actions and no less the media. The general has certainly committed many mistakes in his time but his positives and good deeds are far greater and need to be rightly remembered.



Syed Jawaid Iqbal

## What Next?

Your cover story on Pakistan's political future was informative and laid out future possibilities keeping in mind the current political uncertainty looming over Islamabad. The PPP-led coalition did complete five years in office as a democratically elected government, the first such oc-

years. With such credentials, completing five years in office is an achievement by the PPP and its coalition forces. However, the future of the country remains uncertain as the May 11 elections will decide who comes in for the next five years.

Amir Nawaz  
Islamabad, Pakistan



currence in Pakistan's history, but it did not change much as the country's economic and social fabric remains in shambles. The writers did explain in detail that the road to democracy in Pakistan is rickety, to say the least. However, military intervention cannot be overruled if the political structure experiences further dilemma.

The political and bureaucratic setup of Pakistan is constantly at loggerheads and the most pertinent question is deciding whether a democratic government is better suited for Pakistan or is it the military that has played its part in Pakistan's progress. Where the stalwarts of Pakistan's politics speak in favor of democracy, there are some quarters of the bureaucracy and within the public, which opine that a military dictator might be the right option in Pakistan's case.

It is true that Pakistan remained under a dictator's wing for nearly 30

## Moving Ahead

Your story on the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) signed between Pakistan and Afghanistan was an informative piece. The agreement will help Islamabad and Kabul to put their differences aside and embark on a mutually-beneficial journey. Both countries are a victim to the war on terror as they have been frontend allies to the United States. In the post-9/11 era, both Pakistan and Afghanistan have given numerous sacrifices and the Strategic Partnership Agreement will give them an opportunity to move ahead by learning from their past.

In addition, the SPA also facilitated the training of Afghan military personnel in Pakistan, a major step towards reviving Afghanistan's security apparatus ahead of the 2014 withdrawal. The SPA is a major step forward for Pakistan and Afghanistan to coexist in peace, which will also infuse stability in South Asia. Although Pakistan has reiterated to bring the Taliban to the negotiating table, Afghanistan has its doubts over the authority that Pakistan can exert over the extremist faction. The fact that the SPA was recently discussed between Islamabad and Kabul in the UK in the presence of British Prime Minister David Cameron shows the magnitude of this accord.

The SPA will also prove vital when the US troops will leave Afghanistan in 2014. However, the ambiguity of a peaceful transition in Afghanistan is a cause of concern for Pakistan and Afghanistan. In such a case, the SPA will bind the two countries together as

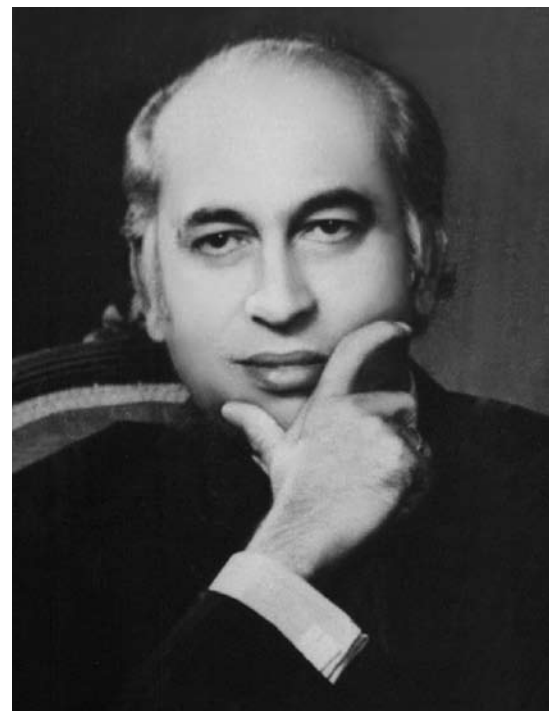


Pakistan strives to have a diplomatic and responsive Afghanistan in the years to come.

Sehrish Malik  
Dubai, UAE

## A Colorful Personality

Your profile on Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was well-written, summarizing the political rise and fall of perhaps the most charismatic leader to hold office of prime minister in Pakistan. Famous for his labor reforms, foreign policy, and the Simla Agreement of 1972, Bhutto's regime brought economic progress to Pakistan. Bhutto's economic reforms are also noteworthy because of their success in reducing the concentration of wealth. Pakistan's economic activity received a robust growth under Bhutto.



to with the founding of Pakistan Steel Mills while his land reforms renewed the land allocation process. Bhutto also expanded the education sector of Pakistan as Allama Iqbal Open University, Quaid-e-Azam University and the Institute of Theoretical Physics were established during his tenure.

Although he remained powerful throughout his tenure, he took certain decisions that diluted his leadership skills with autocracy. Bhutto's downfall began when he introduced the nationalization policy that resulted in the decline of investment. Pakistan's economy suffered damage when industries could not find capital to run their business. On the political forefront, unrest was inevitable in Balochistan when he dissolved the Balochistan assembly followed by an army operation that killed innocent civilians.

Bhutto was a cabinet minister and served as a foreign minister before reaching the echelons of power as Prime Minister. Political greats of the country still regard him as a people's leader and a man of virtues.

Ijaz Farrukh  
Lahore, Pakistan

## Calamity in the Making

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) recently conducted a nuclear test that shook the international community. Where its actions are worrying South Korea, the United States and China are also, understandably, concerned about DPRK's future. These tests are an outright denial of United Nations orders and the IAEA is preparing to impose sanctions over DPRK's misconduct. The diverging views of regional neighbors who could stand united against DPRK gave Kim Jong-un the opportunity to go ahead with his radical plans.

The United States is anxiously try-



ing to bring the DPRK to the negotiating table where President Obama has called for its de-nuclearization at the earliest. The U.S. has safety concerns as DPRK's safety standards rank last in the list of countries with nuclear capabilities. President Obama might use brute force if the country does not abide by the rules laid out by the U.S. and the UN. If the stability of Southeast Asia is uncertain with DPRK's rebellious behavior, then a possible nuclear proliferation also puts the safety of the world in jeopardy. The U.S. should act now to avert any damage that North Korea might cause. The nuclear tests have put the Korean Peninsula under pressure, as South Korea is anxious over the economic blow it might face if North Korea were to collapse.

Even with DPRK showing aggression in its actions and words, the U.S. maintained a soft corner when it proposed to send food items to North Korea. However, the U.S. was compelled to show resentment when it still decided to go about with its nuclear objectives.

Parker Robinson  
Washington, USA

## Media Summit

Your coverage of the South Asia Media Summit offered a complete picture of the two-day event held in Islamabad. It is indeed a moment of

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pride for Pakistan and India to eschew their differences and join hands for a cause. The Summit brought together media professionals, journalists, entrepreneurs and newspaper publishers from both sides of the border in an attempt to analyze the future of print media in South Asia. This year's theme, "Newspapers in the New Media Ecosystem" aptly suited the Summit as media tycoons and experts discussed the strategies to revitalize the disappearing print media, which is facing rigid competition from the electronic and broadcast media. The change in lifestyle has also led to the demise in a reading culture, as people tend to read on the go, with the Internet becoming a popular medium. This is the reason why newspaper publishers in South Asia are shifting their publications online, which allows readers from around the globe to tune into news at home.

Among the participants speaking at the Media Summit, Javed Jabbar's comments were particularly thought provoking. Having served as Pakistan's Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Jabbar highlighted the key challenges facing the media of Pakistan and India and presented recommendations to tackle these issues. The Summit proved to be a collective effort to emphasize upon the need to restructure newspaper production to attract the readers' attention.

Fahad Usman  
Karachi, Pakistan

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

"I will clean my neighborhood!"

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

"I will drive more responsibly!"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# WHAT WILL YOU DO FOR PAKISTAN?

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<https://www.twitter.com/LetsThinkPak>



<https://www.facebook.com/LetsThinkPakistan>



<https://www.youtube.com/LetsThinkPakistan>



*"The gas pipeline project is the beginning of a great work, The Westerners have no right to make any obstacles in the way of the project."*

**Mahmoud Ahmadinejad**  
*President of Iran*



*"We have built ports, international airport and many more things to make sure that dividends of development reach all nooks and corners of the country."*

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



*"I still don't believe that this is something they [Parliament] should have done. I believe forming clubs, organizations and political parties is a right enshrined in the constitution. That is a fundamental right."*

**Mohammed Waheed Hassan**  
*President of Maldives*



*"Right now, we think it would take over a year or so for Iran to actually develop a nuclear weapon, but obviously we don't want to cut it too close."*

**Barack Obama**  
*President of the United States*



*"Bombings in Khost and Kabul were not aimed at showing their strength to the USA but to serve the USA."*

**Hamid Karzai**  
*President of Afghanistan*



*"Where has the Pakistan I left five years ago gone? My heart cries tears of blood when I see the state of the country today."*

**Pervez Musharraf**  
*President, All Pakistan Muslim League*



*"Asking me whether you want to be PM is a wrong question."*

**Rahul Gandhi**  
*VP, Indian National Congress*



*"I call upon all to ensure the equal participation of men and women in all the activities."*

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



*"I appeal to the US government to release Dr Aafia on humanitarian grounds."*

**Abdul Sattar Edhi**  
*Philanthropist*



*"In order to help ourselves we've got to be economically sound."*

**Asif Ali Zardari**  
*President of Pakistan*



*"It is not a very pleasant time to be a woman in India."*

**Shobhaa De**  
*Indian Writer*



*"I don't like to set targets for myself, even if I set targets, I like to keep it to myself. I am little superstitious that way."*

**Sachin Tendulkar**  
*Indian Cricket Player*

PAKISTAN

## UNDP's Advice

Country Director of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in Pakistan, Marc-André Franche has advised Pakistan that instead of striving to establish trade with Europe and the West, the country should focus on regional trade. Franche was of the view that trading with South Asian neighbors will help reduce poverty and bring innovation in various sectors. The UNDP chief believes that inequality in access to social services in Pakistan was one of the main causes for poverty.

The director revealed that Pakistan's percentage of GDP spent on education is less than that of India and Bangla-

desh. He observed that countries constituting higher positions on the UN Human Development index spend more on health and education, human resource development, accountability and transparency. Commenting on the upcoming May 11 elections, Franche assured that the UNDP would provide Pakistan with an opportunity to restructure its developmental priorities. Furthermore,

he said that Pakistan should evolve a consensus on some key reforms and

changes in budgetary allocations. The UNDP is supporting the Election Commission of Pakistan in organizing polls and considers it an achievement by the ECP to introduce improvements in the system such as voter's education, and the training of the polling and security staff. **S**



AFGHANISTAN

## John Kerry's Maiden Visit



In his recent surprise visit to Afghanistan, U.S. Secretary of State, John Kerry met with President Hamid Karzai and

other civic leaders. Kerry's visit brought an end to the recent squabbling over anti-American comments made by President Karzai when he accused the U.S. of conspiring with Taliban insurgents to keep Afghanistan instable. During a joint press conference, President Karzai said that the media had misinterpreted his comments. Kerry was satisfied with President Karzai's explanation and assured that both countries will cooperate once the U.S. com-

bat mission ends in 2014.

Kerry's visit presented a stark contrast to U.S. Secretary of Defense, Chuck Hagel's visit to Afghanistan earlier in March when the host country cancelled the joint press conference with tensions escalating between the U.S. and Afghanistan. This was Kerry's first visit to Afghanistan since he assumed his role as the Secretary of State in February. His objective was to bridge the divide between Washington and Kabul and to analyze the internal affairs of the war-torn country. During his visit, Kerry also met with participants of the U.S.-backed women's entrepreneurship program and heard the concerns from businesswomen who fear that Afghanistan will bring adversity to the country's women population in the post-2014 era. **S**

# Rahul Gandhi Speaks

During his first ever address to business leaders after taking office as Vice President of the Indian National Congress, Rahul Gandhi has called for



entrepreneurs to revive India's economy. However, critics said that Gandhi did not focus on the means that will bring this economic change. Rahul, tipped by India's political stalwarts as the next prime minister, views that the slowdown in the services and manufacturing sector has resulted in India's economic downfall. Foreign investors are cautious of entering into the Indian market when the government delayed key reforms and could not control rising inflation.

During his speech, Gandhi stressed that India will achieve economic growth when it provides basic infrastructure to all and empowers the common people. The VP of the Indian National Congress believes that millions of Indians are passionate to work for the country's progress and that the incredible movement of people and ideas will define India in the 21st century. Praising the business community, Gandhi urged them to make use of India's abundant work force. He said that the human resource is responsible to provide India with an infrastructure that connects villages to cities and eventually the country with the rest of the world. **S**

# Blasphemy Law



Bangladeshi Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina has rejected demands by Islamists for a new anti-blasphemy law to punish those who offend Islam. The

right to practice their religion. In response to this refusal, the Islamist faction has given the government a three-week window to accept

their demands. The recent uproar of the blasphemy law is linked with the proceedings of the war crimes tribunal. A group of bloggers recently held a sit-in at Shahbagh Square, Dhaka, demanding the death penalty for those involved in war crimes during 1971 and demanded the ban on Jamaat-e-Islami, the largest Islamic party in Bangladesh, which opposed Bangladesh's independence in 1971. It was this protest that ascended tensions as the members of the Islamist party termed the bloggers nonbelievers. The Prime Minister said that the government would look into the matter and take action on demands that seem reasonable. Moreover, Hasina defended the government's decision to arrest four bloggers on suspicion of damaging religious emotions. **S**

SRI LANKA

# UN Human Rights Resolution

The UN Human Rights Council recently passed a resolution that compels the Sri Lankan government to conduct an independent and credible investigation into alleged war crimes. Although the Sri Lankan army defeated separatist Tamil rebels in 2006 following a three-decade long civil war, it is the last phase of the war that is coming under scrutiny. Speaking at the UN council's proceedings, Sri Lanka's representative argued that the resolution would jeopardize the ongoing reconciliation process in Sri Lanka.

Moreover, the Sri Lankan delegate accused the U.S. of targeting countries that do not abide by its political agenda. The U.S. is not backing the resolution entirely as 25 countries are voting in favor of the resolution, 13 voted against it and eight countries did not participate.

Some suggest that the draft urges Sri Lanka to follow its own commitments on political devolution to Tamil areas while the Sri Lankan media minister views that the issues has grown out of proportion. Apart from the UN, Amnesty International also believes that the UN resolution highlights rights violations and fails to establish



an independent investigation.

The UN accuses the Sri Lankan government of human rights abuses throughout the Tamil conflict with focus on the events taking place in the final stages when thousands of civilians were trapped in a strip of land in the country's north. A UN report estimates that more than 40,000 people died in the last five months of the conflict while the three-year civil war left nearly 100,000 dead. The UN is accusing the Sri Lankan government of alleged war crimes since the 2011 report commissioned by the UN states that most of the civilians died because of government shelling. **S**

MALDIVES

# Political Dissolution

The Maldivian parliament has overruled President Mohamed Waheed's veto on the political parties' bill by a majority of 60 votes. The bill that was passed in December 2012, ruled that the government will recognize a party only if it has a minimum number of 10,000 members.

However, President Waheed's *Gaamee Ithihaad Party* (GIP) refused to make any ratification and sent the bill back to the parliament. The GIP has just over 3,000 members and political factions cite that President Waheed rejected the bill because of his personal interests and that his party

would face dissolution when the new law comes into effect.

Recently, the Maldivian parliament's minority and majority leader



collectively supported to pass the bill without any amendments. The Deputy Leader of *Dhivehi Qaamee Party* (DQP),

Riyaz Rasheed is in accordance with President Waheed and claims that the top four parties are trying to destroy the country's political structure. According to the Maldivian constitution, if the president sends a bill back for ratification and the parliament accepts it without making any amendments, it becomes the law without the need of presidential approval. Upon approval, the bill will provide a three-month period for any political party with less than 10,000 members to reach the required number of members or face dissolution. **S**

# Hydropower Project

Nepal recently signed a soft loan agreement worth Rs. 14.168 billion (15.137 billion Yen) with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to receive official development assistance for the Tanahun Hydropower Project. The loan agreement was signed between the Joint Secretary at the Ministry of Finance, Nepal, Madhu Kumar Marasini and Director General of South Asia Department of JICA, Masataka Nakahara. This ends a decade long hiatus from Japan to provide Nepal with financial assistance for the hydropower project. According to the plan, Japan will contribute to Nepal's economic growth and so-

cial development through three types of assistance: Japanese ODA loans, technical cooperation, and grant aid.

Japan provided Nepal with development loans until 2001 but halted further assistance citing political instability. The 140 MW reservoir project, located in Tanahun district in western Nepal, will help the country in developing its agricultural sector that desperately needs an effective reservoir system. The loan provided by Japan has a maturity period of 40 years with the first ten years as grace period. Nepal is not required to pay any interest during the grace period. However,

the loan has an interest rate of 0.01 percent and consulting fees amounting to the same.

Where the JICA is the primary financier to the project, Nepal will receive co-financing from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the European Investment Bank (EIB), and the Abu Dhabi Fund. **S**



# Capital Gains

Recently, Bhutanese Finance Minister, Lyonpo Wangdi Norbun signed the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) with the Indian Finance Minister, P. Chidambaram. This will facilitate the bilateral exchange of banking information and help monitor tax evasion. This is for the first time that Bhutan has signed a DTAA with any other country. Both ministers are confident that the agreement will provide tax stability to the Indian and Bhutanese residents and facilitate mutual economic cooperation. In addition, the DTAA will stimulate the flow of investment, technology, and

services between the two countries.

According to the pact, business profits will only be taxable in the

country of its origin. Dividends, interest, royalty income and fees for technical or professional services will be taxed in the country of residence and in the country of source of income. Furthermore, the pact entails that the maximum rate of tax in the source country will not exceed 10 per cent while the capital gains from the sale of shares will be taxable in the country of source. India and Bhutan enjoy healthy relations where the DTAA pact will bridge the two neighbors closer to create bilateral trade opportunities, which will benefit the region as well. **S**



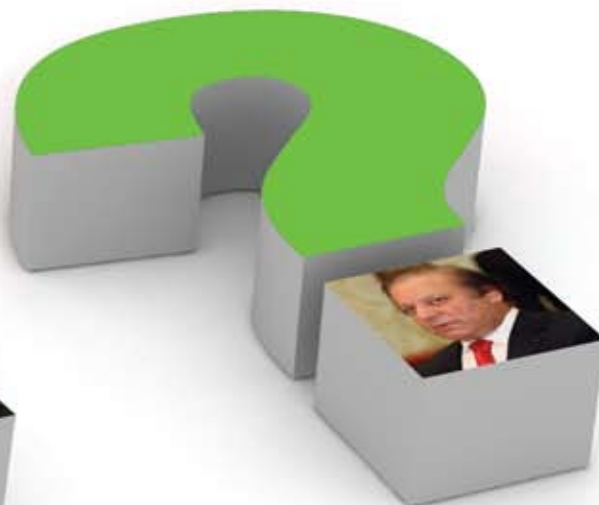
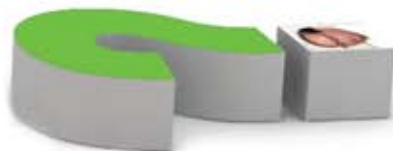
# T Pakistan Turns the Corner



The forthcoming election is going to be a watershed in Pakistan's political and constitutional history, setting a clear direction for the future of the country's political trajectory.

By S.G. Jilane

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## PPP – Manifesto

- Ensure basic needs by identifying access to shelter, food security, healthcare, education and equal opportunity as fundamental rights
- Empowerment of all citizens to further the fundamental basis for an egalitarian, just, inclusive and democratic Pakistan.
- Promote inclusive and equitable growth to boost a fledgling economy.
- Invest in infrastructure for the future by harnessing modern technology for growth and social justice while conserving our heritage and the environment.
- Strengthen sustainable democracy
- Protect the people of Pakistan from anti-state actors and enforce security and stability.
- Build a progressive, democratic, peaceful, egalitarian Pakistan that confidently and consistently engages with the world.



History was created on March 16, 2013 when both the civilian government and the parliament completed a full five-year term in office - for the first time ever in Pakistan. The stage has now been set for a transition of power to another government through peaceful elections.

Perhaps the most refreshing feature of this election is that the army and the ISI are keeping themselves scrupulously aloof from the election process. Registered voters number over 86 million and the Election Commission has allowed some 148 political parties to run.

Wrestlers are warming up in their respective corners. The main contestants - PPP, PML (N), MQM and PTI - have presented their ambitious manifestos, each, promising the moon, as usual. Common pledges include healthcare, employment and education. PPP has tried to revive the “*roti, kapra, makan*” legend, promising low-cost houses for the poor and increasing minimum wage. New features include creating a new province in South Punjab and seats in the National and Provincial Assemblies for labor. Amazingly, the PPP manifesto is only in English. Others have issued their vision in both English and Urdu, announcing it almost privately and without much fanfare.

Because it was in power for five years, the PPP manifesto is under greater public scrutiny. There is general resentment with the PPP-led government’s failure to revive a slowing economy, curb the endemic corruption in government institutions, control sectarian killings and overcome persistent electricity breakdowns, sometimes of up to 18 hours a day. Moreover, with its nominal GDP growth of 3.7%, Pakistan is currently the weakest South Asian economy. To curb the energy crisis, PPP and PML (N) manifestos promise generating additional electricity of 12,000MW and 10,000MW, respectively. However, on the foreign relations front, PPP remains silent.

The PML-N manifesto, for its part, emphasizes self-reliance and sovereignty. It pledges to double the rate of GDP growth from 3% in the last 5 years to over 6% in the next 5 years and accelerating the rate of industrial growth from 3 to 8 per cent per annum and agricultural growth to an average of 4% per annum.

The MQM, in its 22-point manifesto, besides dwelling on education, health and employment, adds the special feature of local government.

Standing in stark contrast to the “tried and tested”

political parties, PTI's manifesto is quite ambitious. It even adds a touch of frivolity with its promise of rooting out corruption within just 90 days! It promises to control load shedding within three years but does not spell out how, much like the PPP and PML (N). PTI also pledges a uniform education system, timely and affordable justice, discussing the defense budget in Parliament and turning Pakistan into an Islamic welfare state; but how all of this is to be achieved, the manifesto does not spell out. Improving ties with India and the US, getting Pakistan out of the US war on terror and stopping drone attacks are other such priorities on PTI's agenda.

Most amazingly no one has yet touched the issue of how to bottle the genie of sectarian violence and resolve the Taliban issue. Within the first 10 days of April, more than 30 Pakistan troops and 50 Lashkar-e-Islam fighters were killed in pitched battles in the Tirah valley. The Taliban, allied with the LeI, were bidding their time as the army pounded the LeI strongholds with gunship helicopters and ground troops.

Other parties in the field include PML (Q), ANP, JUI (F) and PML (F). Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), which had boycotted the 2008 elections, is also contesting this time. Even Dr. A.Q. Khan, the father of Pakistan's nuclear bomb, is running in alliance with the JI.

But the most controversial candidate is Pervez Musharraf. His nomination papers were rejected from Karachi, Kasur, Islamabad, and Chitral. Meanwhile, petitions accusing him of high treason were heard in the Supreme Court. However, the prayer to detain him was dismissed, because, the court perceived it as the petitioners' intention to prevent him from election activities.

The scrutiny of nomination papers tickled onlookers to death as Returning Officers grilled the candidates about their knowledge and practice of Islam. Another ordeal was securing a clean chit from relevant institutions, including NAB, FBR and the State Bank, regarding tax payment, loan repayment and clean hands. Initially, such stalwarts as the famed columnist Ayaz Amir, ex-prime minister Raja Pervez Ashraf and ex-minister Faisal Saleh Hayat were disqualified, but later their papers were accepted on appeal. Dual nationality holders were screened out as well as those who produced fake degrees in 2002 and 2008 elections. Due to strict scrutiny of the nomination papers, the number



## PML (N) - Manifesto

- Double the annual average rate of GDP growth, accelerate industrial growth, raise Investment-GDP ratio, decrease budget deficit, and increase the Tax-GDP ratio.
- Reduce the energy crisis by mobilizing fresh investment of \$20 billion for power plants and reduce transmission and distribution losses to 10%
- Accelerate agricultural growth to an average of 4% per annum
- Increase education expenditure, raise the overall literacy rate, and setup Education Endowment Fund in all provinces
- Increase expenditure on health, provide Medical Insurance Cards at subsidized rates, and launch 1000 mobile health units in remote areas
- Provide employment opportunities to over 3 million people in private and public sectors. Increase minimum wage for workers to Rs. 15,000 per month
- Convert at least 50% of annual remittances into productive investment. Reserve a certain percentage of public offerings of all new floatations for overseas Pakistanis.





## Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf - Manifesto

- To bring the nation out of the folds of 'War on Terrorism'.
- Establish a 150,000 seat call centre to take service calls and facilitate e-governance. This would generate 250,000 new jobs.
- Establish a whistle-blowers programme, which will allow citizens to report unsavoury behavior by individuals or entities via a dedicated phone line.
- Announce local government elections schedule within the first 100 days of coming into power.
- Introduce regulations to ensure that the fees structure of the private schools is commensurate with the quality of education they provide.
- Engage professional services to track overseas cash and non-cash assets owned by Pakistanis.
- Withdraw all indemnities, privileges and rebates or subsidies extended to elected representatives and government officials, including the President and Prime Minister



## MQM - Manifesto

- Increase education expenditure from 2.2% to 5% of the GDP. Provinces allocate 20% of their revenue budget to the education sector
- Increase public expenditure on health from 0.6 % to 5% of GDP during next five years
- Reduction of Federal Government expenditures due to devolution and austerity measures.
- Transparency and merit in all governmental actions
- Deweaponization of Pakistan.
- Rigorous public awareness campaign in collaboration with citizens and religious scholars to curb religious extremism, hatred, fanaticism and terrorism from the country.
- Ensure security of life and property to all citizens irrespective of their cast, creed, color, religion, sect, gender, political belonging or beliefs.
- Equal concentration on manufacturing as well as light and heavy industries to create a robust and sustainable industrial sector.
- Re-prioritize the use of Natural Gas amongst different categories of its consumers so that existing power plants generate electricity to their installed capacity.



of nomination papers filed has reduced considerably compared to the 2008 polls. Another interesting feature of the ensuing elections is that two women candidates filed nomination papers from tribal areas, which indicates that democracy is taking roots even in areas traditionally considered to be politically backward.

In the midst of all this, Balochistan remains the problem province. Sardar Akhtar Mengal, chief of his own faction of the Balochistan National Party (BNP) and a former chief minister of the province, has said that the BNP could pull out of the contest if the law and order situation in the province did not improve. He has spoken of tortured, mangled bodies still turning up in towns all over Balochistan and has lamented the fact that the Baloch people continue to go missing. Interim chief minister of the province, Nawab Ghaus Baksh Barozai recently announced the possibility of traveling overseas to speak with Baloch separatist leaders in self-exile, such as the Khan of Kalat, Brahamdagh Bugti, Hyrbyair Marri and others. He has also been contacting key Baloch leaders at home, in a bid to hold elections smoothly.

So far, political power under elected governments has alternated between the PML (N) and PPP. The latter has always enjoyed popular support in Sindh and rural Punjab, while urban Punjab has been the hub of PML-N. The outcomes of elections in Balochistan and KP have been varied. But this time both face a formidable contestant in Imran Khan's PTI. The crowd he pulled on March 23 at Lahore, the power base of Nawaz Sharif's PML (N), sent alarm bells ringing for both the PPP and PML (N). The rise of PTI as a third major force on Pakistan's political stage has made the electoral environment more competitive.

According to the US-based International Republican Institute (IRI) survey, PTI is still the second most popular political party in Pakistan after PML-N, despite a 6% decrease in its public ratings in the last six months. The 2013 elections will, therefore, be a three-way contest unlike the two-way fights between the PPP and PML-N in the past. The urban, upper middle class supports PTI in Punjab and KP and the party remains deeply popular with young people.

Out of 86.1 million registered voters, 47 percent or approximately 39 million people are between the age of 18 and 35. According to NADRA out of these 39 million, around 30 million are newly listed in the



## APML – Manifesto

- Safeguard Pakistan from external and internal threats.
- Facilitate GDP growth to an annual 6%. Control borrowing, reduce the fiscal deficit, monitor inflation, bring everyone in the tax net, control the balance of payments, enhance exports through market diversification, and draw investment into Pakistan through an investor-friendly environment.
- Extending road and rail links into western China, Afghanistan, and Central Asian states. Gwadar Port to be made into an 18 meter deep seaport.
- Generate electricity by exploiting coal reserves in Thar; import gas from Iran, Qatar or Turkmenistan to cater for industrial demand; increase hydro electricity, nuclear and alternate source of energy and reduce dependence on gas/oil thermal power.
- Provide one-window incentives to overseas Pakistani investors. Short-term focus will remain on textile while a long-term strategy to diversify.
- Give special focus towards vocational training and skill development and gradually bring the education budget to 6% of GDP in 5 years.




electoral rolls. Their overwhelming number can be a game changer, tilting the balance in PTI's favor.

Meanwhile, terrorist outfits like Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and especially Taliban (TTP) have threatened to disrupt the elections through intimidation and assassinations. Their avowed targets include President Zardari, his son and PPP chairman, Bilawal and other leaders of the PPP, besides ANP and MQM. This has robbed the campaign of the usual hoopla of rallies and meetings associated with elections. Accordingly, the ANP has abandoned the plan of holding public meetings in Karachi. It has removed its banners, closed its offices in the city and has resorted to door-to-door visits to canvass votes. Asif Zardari and Bilawal Bhutto remain under tight security not daring to

come out in the open to address public meetings. So scared are they that on the occasion of ZA Bhutto's death anniversary, for the first time, there was no usual crowd at Garhi Khuda Baksh on April 4. Unfortunately, the MQM's election candidate, Fakhru Islam, who was running for the Sindh Assembly PS 47 seat has become the first victim of a Taliban attack. He was gunned down in Hyderabad on April 11 during an election corner meeting. This incident will undoubtedly force the MQM to reconsider how to run their election campaign.

On the other hand, the Taliban have promised not to disrupt the campaigns of Imran Khan's PTI or Nawaz Sharif's PML (N). The same goes for other "rightist" parties like JI, JUI (F) et al.

Opinion polls seem to indicate a contest between the right and left parties. One set that includes PPP, MQM and ANP represents the left and advocates for social freedoms and liberties, peace with India, stronger relations with the U.S. and curbs on the army's power. The other comprising PTI, PML (N), JI, JUI (F) etc., represents the right. It is anti-US and anti-India though Nawaz Sharif invited India's Prime Minister Vajpayee in 1999 to Pakistan.

Which direction the country's politics take will, however, be decided on May 11, 2013, should elections be held as per schedule. It is imperative for Pakistan's future that they do. 

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

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# Elections 2013 – Thrills and Threats

**Those who enter the parliament this time are expected to represent the people in a much more meaningful manner, having qualified to contest elections through very strict filters.**

By Javed Ansari



**T**he election campaign in Pakistan has been flat and lackluster this time, with contenders getting just 21 days to flex their muscles. The real thrills, in fact, preceded the run-up to the elections as the nation had a whopping time when returning officers (ROs), in light of Articles 62 and 63 of the Constitution, put prospective candidates through the kind of grilling or scrutiny they had never experienced before. In fact, the treatment of the ROs came as much of a surprise for even the most seasoned political stalwarts who had been presenting themselves before returning officers in their past political careers and it had been a cakewalk for them on most occasions.

This was for the first time in the nation's history that the Election Commission of Pakistan asserted itself and emerged as a true constitutional institution, actually laying down the ground rules to ensure what it claimed would be 'free and fair' elections. In Pakistan, election candidates have never before been put through the sort of sieves and filters that they were subjected to for the 2013 elections. Articles 62 and 63 were brought into play 'in letter and spirit' and many candidates (old hands as well as greenhorns) found their election dreams dashed to the ground. Among other things, questions about candidates' knowledge of the Quran, their conjugal life and personal hygiene really pepped up the

otherwise dreary proceedings.

While articles 62 and 63 were very much contained in the 1973 Constitution, these laws were given sharper sting in 1985 through a presidential ordinance issued by President Ziaul Haq, wherein the qualifications for becoming a member of parliament and the causes for disqualification from membership were made more stringent.

The articles require that a prospective member of parliament must have a good character and good moral reputation, have moral turpitude, practice the obligatory duties prescribed by Islam, abstain from major sins, follow Islamic injunctions, believe in the Ideology of Pakistan and not bring into



ridicule the judiciary or the armed forces.

The bad news for the gullible masses of Pakistan is that, come May 11, 2013, when elections for the national and provincial assemblies are scheduled to be held all over Pakistan, the results are not likely to throw up anything promising or different for the future of this hapless country. It will

again be primarily the customary fight, with a new slot having been filled by Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and the others being the Pakistan People's Party and PML (N). While Imran Khan shows off his message of 'change' and promises to eliminate corruption within 90 days if his party is brought to power, the most that PTI is expected to achieve is make a hole in PML(N)'s main catch in the Punjab and that of the ANP in Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa (KPK). For the rest, the elections are expected to be a re-run of the same old story – the same actors, the same constituencies and, by and large, the same results. Like the guy who came out of the first show of a new film, when asked what the film was like, retorted, "*Bas kahani kahani hai ... story kuch naheen.*" (Just a tale – no story)!

It will obviously be too much to expect that in the highly unlikely event that PTI sweeps the polls, it will stick to its promise of 'change' or will even be allowed to do so by the powers that be. Or that it will eliminate the ills within the

Pakistani polity in a matter of a few days, as Imran Khan keeps claiming so vehemently. In fact, all contending parties, as is customary, have made lucrative promises in their election manifestoes but it is realistic to believe that manifestoes are merely documents containing hollow promises

and pledges concocted to showcase the grand program of the party *before* the elections - all the goodies that the party has in store for the people. It is well-known that, once in power, these same parties consign their manifestoes to the dustbin and move on. In fact, most of the party leaders are themselves not quite aware of what is promised in their manifestoes and are, therefore, not really pushed about the people's expectations.

It is interesting though that all through its 5-year term, the Pakistan People's Party that ran the country at the head of the coalition at the centre, could do nothing to quell the nation's woes in terms of meeting even its basic needs. Yet, in the run-up to the elections, the PPP is claiming no other achievements except the power projects that were launched by Benazir Bhutto during her two stints. That electricity was obtained then at a very expensive cost is another debate. However, the question is what was the PPP doing in the time between 2008 and 2013 when it held the reins and the country drove itself into its worst crises?

The PML (N) advertising campaign for the 2013 elections dwelt largely on the Nawaz Sharif government's apparent accomplishments during his earlier two stints. This is of course with the exception of the red buses that represent the mass transit project launched by the Shahbaz Sharif government in urban Lahore, apparently at a huge cost. Their TV commercials also depict a bullet train – a pipedream of Nawaz Sharif during his days as prime minister in the nineties – a project that continues to be a dream, no more.

There has also been quite a ruckus about how various political parties have distributed their tickets. The ticket 'have-nots' in some political parties, such as the PPP, PML(N) and

PTI, have made quite a noise about not getting the well-deserved tickets from their respective parties to contest elections since they have been such

country – the President - and has resigned his position as co-chairman of the party, he cannot participate in any political activity. On the other hand,

senior members.

The possibility of violence, particularly in view of the threats given by militant groups to certain political parties, has also played on the minds of both contestants and voters and is likely to impact the election outcome. One manifestation was a strike that was called by the MQM against a bomb attack on one of their election offices in Karachi that brought the city to a standstill on April 24. The Awami National Party (ANP) also found itself in a similar quandary.

The so-called ‘secular’ parties that were threatened were forced to restrict their electioneering, which many described as a non-level playing field since others in the arena did not face such threats and were freely holding large party meetings. How the threat factor would impact parties such as the MQM, ANP and the PPP, was a crucial aspect of electioneering in 2013. **S**

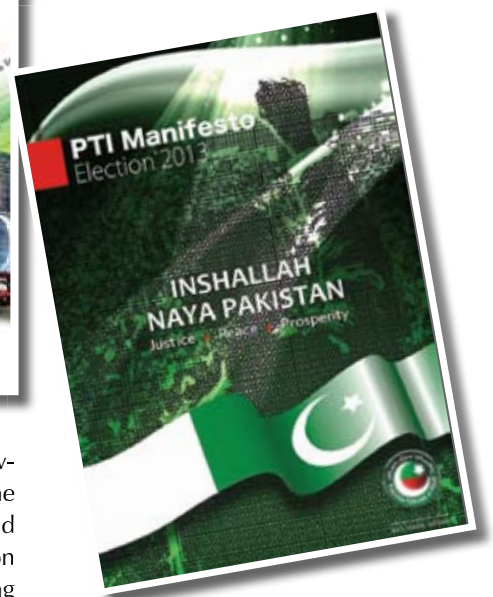
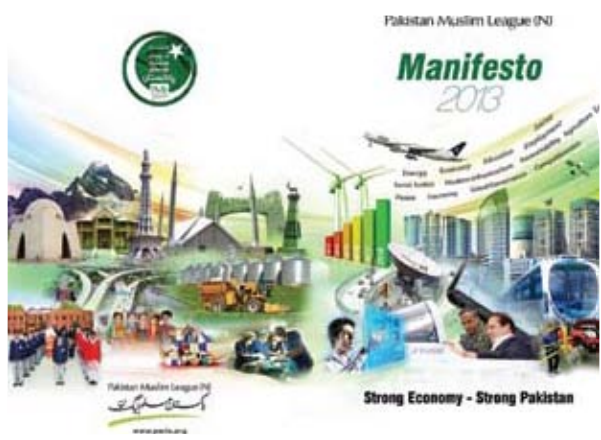
*Javed Ansari is editor of South Asia Magazine.*

**This was for the first time in the nation’s history that the Election Commission of Pakistan asserted itself and emerged as a true constitutional institution, actually laying down the ground rules to ensure what it claimed would be a ‘free and fair’ election.**

hardworking party workers. However, in utter disregard of their services and ‘sacrifices’, other favourites have been chosen by the parties to do the needful, perhaps based on their bona fides as ‘electables.’ The upshot is that the disgruntled candidates have moved to other parties or have decided to contest the elections as independents.

There was also quite a major leadership crisis in the PPP in the days leading up to the elections. It appeared the party couldn’t name one single person who could lead the PPP into the elections. In the preceding five years, not a single member of the PPP, other than Asif Zardari or Bilawal Bhutto, could qualify as PPP leaders and were all considered to be underlings. The problem with Mr. Zardari is that since he is the constitutional head of the

Bilawal Bhutto was reported to have developed some kind of a tiff within the family, evidently on the distribution of party tickets, and was not quite willing to work the hustings on behalf of the party. In these circumstances, this major party was rendered rudderless – and leaderless – and this is likely to play a make or break role in the PPP’s



performance in the elections. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, now styled as the ‘patron-in-chief’ of the party, has said he was not leading the party’s election campaign but was, instead, assisting

performance in the elections. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, now styled as the ‘patron-in-chief’ of the party, has said he was not leading the party’s election campaign but was, instead, assisting

After its successful economic growth between 2002 and 2007, Pakistan today stands at the verge of collapse, threatened by economic uncertainties, lawlessness, water and food insecurity, energy shortage, shrinking of its industrial base, quasi-democracy, a huge mix of feudal and corrupt elements coming to the fore, deteriorating education, health and social welfare institutions, growing terrorism, ethnic violence and, more importantly, huge geopolitical and strategic risks. All this is further accentuated by the emergence of enemies of Pakistan from within and outside, backed by international vested interests and an unstable Afghanistan.

There are those who credit the 2002-2007 economic growth to former President Pervez Musharraf while some view his political actions as the very reasons for the current economic and security disaster. Some even think that ousting Musharraf from power was part of the Great Game as Pakistan's GDP was touching 8% and the enemies of Pakistan felt that such growth was not suitable for a Muslim nuclear state. Pakistan's enemies may also have comprised some allies who created conditions to make Musharraf resign as president and go on self-exile.

Pervez Musharraf has been in world focus for the past decade for various reasons positively, as a statesman and negatively, as a dictator. After 4 years of self-exile, he is back in Pakistan with a pledge to save the country. There is a viewpoint that perhaps Musharraf has been pushed forward as bait to trap the Pakistan Army. Whether he should be tried or not for high treason is a matter of legal debate and the question needs to be evaluated under the prevailing laws of the land.

However, in order to understand the dynamics of the situation and for better comprehension, it is important

# The Great Game

**Will former president Pervez Musharraf free himself from the many predicaments he is facing following his return to Pakistan?**

By Fakhar Ahmed

to consider the following:

Located at the crossroads of a globally strategic geo-political and strategic front, Pakistan is the only declared Muslim nuclear nation with the strongest standing army in the Muslim world. Pakistan has strong ties with China, the world's fastest growing economy, its geographical location along the Arabian Sea offers the most promising trade routes, it has a border with Afghanistan which leads to future lucrative routes to the rich resources

of central Asia and it has suffered from three decades of war in Afghanistan in addition to terrorism, the Mujahedeen and the Taliban. Besides its border with Iran, it is caught in the continued quest by post-cold war Russia and China to gain access to the warm waters of the Indian Ocean. The long pending issue of the right of self-determination of the people of Kashmir is also among the top strategic factors for which a number of prevailing powers will not let Pakistan live in peace



and attain political sovereignty.

There will be continued efforts from many vested interests and groups to undermine Pakistan internally and externally. These interests will try to achieve competitive advantage by exploiting issues in the name of political democracy, national security, economic development, social justice, religion, etc. The fact is that Pakistan needs to understand these issues and protect its interests. The international community is not comfortable with

Pakistan's right of minimum nuclear deterrence. What is a further cause for worry is the rising militancy in the country and in bordering Afghanistan. International policymakers are cautious about Pakistan's political and military outlook and evolve their policies accordingly. The country's ailing institutions and weakening economic situation favors them and they wonder how long can Pakistan maintain its minimum nuclear deterrence and maintain a strong military? Pakistan

will not give up these advantages in any case but economic pressures are increasing by the day along with other social issues. These pressures will eventually weigh down on the country's strategic strengths. It is a race against time - that the country brings order to its socio-economic and political dimensions which are directly proportional to its strategic strengths. There have been maps and conspiracy theories and stories that Pakistan's geography will not be the same after

2017 or 2020. The enemies of Pakistan (some of them are also our allies in the war against terror) have seen the strength and unity of Pakistan's military despite its political forays in politics in the past. The Pakistan armed forces are largely viewed as a bonding force, a non-ethnic entity and a savior of Pakistan. The country has the 6th largest Army in the world, the largest in the Muslim world and the world's 8th largest nuclear weapon and missile arsenal supported by high end technology. The training and skills of the Pakistan Air Force and Special Services Group are amongst the top 10 in the world while the Pakistan Army continues to be the country's binding force as a defender and symbol of patriotism.

The international groups of vested interests, including the allies, have somehow created a mess by leaving behind the Mujahedeen/Taliban legacy. The International Security Forces are now going back without achieving tangible success. One of the major aims of the allies on the war on terror seems to have been to harness the nuclear assets of Pakistan and weaken the country's military. Now, they have launched a propaganda campaign for freedom of speech, democracy and social justice in Pakistan and have started to publicly malign intelligence agencies, summoning former military leaders and intelligence chiefs in courts of law. While social justice, rule of law and democracy may be essential elements for democratic evolution but do the U.S., U.K., Russia or China debate over their own nuclear programs and intelligence operations in congress and parliament, do they reveal their covert operations or have intelligence trials through media or public debate? Do they try their military generals publicly for their good or bad decisions in the line of duty? The answer is no because they understand that a three or four star general has to

take tough decisions and military operations are undertaken to tackle both external and internal threats. In the recent example of Raymond Davis, the Americans did not even disclose the real name of this so-called special agent who was apprehended in Pakistan for killing three innocent civilians and was later bailed out.

Pakistan needs tough decisions and forceful action by its military commanders to ensure internal and external security. The enemies of Pakistan are now trying to weaken the decision-making ability of Pakistan's military leaders for taking tough decisions and are trying to tarnish the image of the Army internally and externally as a fascist, weak, orthodox and maligned force. Pakistan's enemies are creating a huge gap between the civilian and military leaders, propagating the Army as a danger to democracy, presenting it as a failure in the backdrop of a few terrorist activities and creating public confusion about the Official Secrets Act, military planning, military and civilian laws and trial of officers in civilian courts for actions undertaken in the line of duty.

Pervez Musharraf was encouraged by his supporters, by his own patriotic will and, most importantly, by his so-called friends from the west to return to Pakistan on the promise that he would be protected and finally bailed out. The emotional elements in Pakistan, supported by the political rivals of Musharraf, have now started a negative campaign against Musharraf and are propagating a trial against him for high treason and for subverting the constitution by imposing an Emergency, as well his military action on *Lal Masjid* and efforts to tackle the Balochistan insurgency, leading to Bugtis death. The bait it seems is that if Musharraf is tried publicly for his military action on *Lal Masjid* or Balochistan, or the geo-political decisions he took, will weaken the

will of the current military leadership in taking tough decisions to tackle internal or external security and the enemies of Pakistan will get a chance to prevail.

It is felt that some democratic forces, supported by vested interests, are trying to punish Musharraf for enforcing the emergency and subverting the constitution along with certain military actions undertaken to fight terrorism and insurgency. If Musharraf is publicly tried and punished for his actions, then do we really expect that in future any military leader will take any bold action for eradication of terrorism from Pakistan? Who will give orders as typically three star generals or the IG Police or directors general of intelligence agencies only have a few years left before they retire. The enemies of Pakistan are trying their best to bring about the trial of Musharraf to humiliate the Pakistan Army, tarnishing its image and that of the intelligence agencies.

The military and the people of Pakistan clearly understand who the enemies of the country are. With Musharraf's trial, the image of Pakistan will be tarnished and the will of its armed forces and para-military forces to take tough decisions in future compromised. The possibility of public debate on issues related to national secrets and institutions will certainly restrict the subordinate officers to take direct orders from their superiors. In the event that there is a legal compulsion to try Musharraf for high treason, the proceedings must be held in-camera and all those related to the trial must be put under oath not to disclose any information, which may subsequently harm the national interest or image of the military. **S**

*Fakhar Ahmed is a seasoned columnist who has been contributing to various national and regional publications.*

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26 - 28 November 2013, Karachi Expo Centre  
8th Information & Communications  
Technology Exhibition and Conference  
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25-27 February 2014  
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10th International Safety & Security Exhibition  
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# Pipeline Politics

The Iran-Pakistan Gas Pipeline may be an election stunt but how beneficial will it prove in addressing Pakistan's energy woes?

By Huzaima Bukhari & Dr. Ikramul Haq

Critics of Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari always find themselves bewildered and flabbergasted by his shrewd and unpredictable stance in home politics. This time however, he seems to have successfully shocked international players as well. In spite of warnings

from Washington, President Zardari joined Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad on March 11, 2013 to launch the groundbreaking work on the 781-kilometres long Iran-Pakistan pipeline project on the Pakistani side of the border. The Iran-Pakistan (IP) gas pipeline project, initiated in 1995, has

faced perpetual opposition from the United States and its allies. Speeches by heads of both the countries at the ceremony, reaffirming their commitment to go ahead with the project have created an uproar in all Western capitals with Washington being quick to express its reservations and even

threaten Pakistan with possible sanctions.

Victoria Nuland, spokesperson of the State Department, said: "We have to see what actually happens. We've heard this pipeline announced about 10 or 15 times before in the past, and if it really materialises, Iran Sanctions Act would be triggered." Dubbing Pakistan's move "in the wrong direction at the wrong time," she said it came as a surprise "when we are supporting large-scale energy projects in Pakistan, plan to add some 900 megawatts by the end of 2013 and further generation through renovating plants at Tarbela and Mangla, as well as modernizing others plants and building new dams at Satpara and Gomal Zam."

The United States has opposed the project since its inception and successfully wooed India to pull out of it through the civil nuclear deal. After India's exit, Iran and Pakistan signed an accord in June 2010 to continue with the project. The government of Pakistan announced in October 2011 that "our dependence on the Pak-Iran pipeline is very high and there is no other substitute at present to meet the growing demand of energy." This statement irritated the United States, which has been pleading and promoting the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline project.

In a smart move, President Zardari during his visit to Turkmen capital, Ashgabat, to attend the *Nauroz* Festival in March, said, "Pakistan attaches great importance to the TAPI and wants to see the project built as soon as possible." During his meeting with Turkmen President, Dr. Gurbanguly M. Berdimuhamedov, he said Turkmenistan could help Pakistan meet its growing energy needs. In return, Pakistan could provide a trade corridor to Turkmenistan—over land and through its ports. This neutralized the impression that Pakistan had tilted towards Iran. By stressing the need for

cooperation amongst the states of the region to promote economic development and peace, President Zardari successfully countered Washington's diplomatic onslaught.

Pakistan, the completion of the pipeline, is expected to receive 21.5 million cubic meters of natural gas on a daily basis. Faced with an extraordinary energy crisis, Pakistan is in dire need of natural gas as its shortage has caused misery to millions of Pakistanis on account of its demand as a domestic fuel and closure of industries. Iran has already constructed more than 900 kilometres of the pipeline on its side. The Tehran-based Tadbir energy development group has undertaken the entire engineering procurement and construction work for the first segment of the project. It will also carry out the second segment of the project and extend a financial loan of \$500 million to Pakistan. Iran and Pakistan are optimistic about completing the IP gas pipeline by December 2014.

TAPI, a 1,680 kilometer gas pipeline project, is backed by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), with the potential of bringing 3.2 billion cubic feet of natural gas per day (bcfd) from Turkmenistan's gas fields and then passing near the cities of Herat and Kandahar in Afghanistan and then crossing into Pakistan near Quetta and linking with existing pipelines at Multan and then crossing into India. TAPI was initially designed to provide gas to Pakistan through Afghanistan. India joined in April 2008 and recently Bangladesh has also expressed its interest in becoming a part of TAPI. The Pakistan cabinet approved the Gas Pipeline Framework Agreement (GPFA) for TAPI on October 27, 2010. On November 13, 2011, Pakistan and Turkmenistan initiated the Gas Sales and Purchase Agreement (GSPA). This multi-national project is expected to be operational by 2016.

The U.S. and its allies want Pakistan to renounce the IP gas pipeline

and pursue only TAPI. This is not only unacceptable to Pakistan and Iran, but China and Russia have also serious apprehensions about the intentions of the U.S. and its allies in the region. Giant Western companies enjoying the main financial control over Turkmenistan's gas reserves desire a monopoly over the markets. The tussle over IP and TAPI is not a mere economic battle - it has geopolitical dimensions as well. The appointment by the U.S. of Afghan-born Zalmay Khalilzad as a special envoy to Afghanistan, nine days after the US-backed interim government of Hamid Karzai took office in Kabul, underscored the real economic and financial interests at stake in the U.S. military intervention in Central Asia. Khalilzad was intimately involved in the long-running U.S. efforts to obtain direct access to the oil and gas resources of the region, largely unexploited but believed to be the second largest in the world, after the Persian Gulf, through TAPI and other similar projects.

Beelam Ramzan in IP Pipeline: Energy Corridor says that "replacement of imported furnace oil by Iranian gas in heavy industries will result in annual savings of billions." This project, she says, "will help expand bilateral trade in invaluable energy resources, obviously of much significance to energy-deficient Pakistan." Expressing concern over the security situation in Balochistan, she concludes: "constructive engagement with the U.S. on the issue is crucial for the success of this project."

Anjum Ibrahim in Pipeline Politics, observes: "those enamored of President Zardari's political acumen that accounted for his survival for five years see the IP gas pipeline inauguration as killing two birds with one stone: to show to the electorate that the party leadership is defying the U.S. and at the same time sending a message that the energy crisis would now be resolved because of his per-


sonal intervention.”

According to Ibrahim, “Punjab Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif has accused the “Zardari gang” of deferring the signing ceremony till a mere few days before the government completed its tenure and not five years ago to create complications for the next government.” This, she claims, “reveals that not only is Shahbaz Sharif aware of the political dimensions of the ceremony, to which he was invited but never attended, but also is not sure if the next government would get a green signal from the establishment and is then blamed for not implementing a good project due to a pro-U.S. stance.”

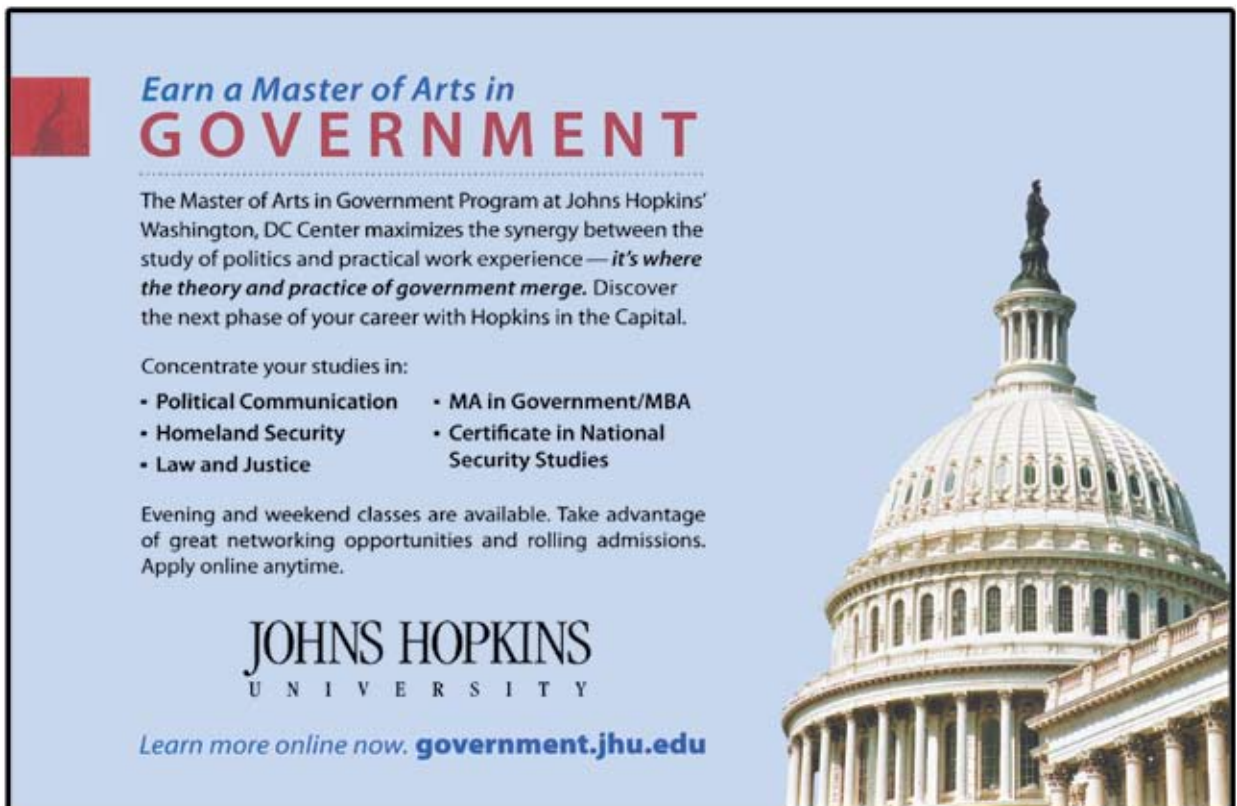
Whether President Zardari has been playing politics with the IP gas pipeline is debatable. But one thing is certain - that completion of the project would be a great challenge

for Pakistan’s civil and military leadership. The stakes are too high, keeping in view the foreign-backed insurgency in Balochistan where the major part of the pipeline lies. The next government, as very aptly observed by Ibrahim, “would be damned if it undertakes it with the U.S. threatening reprisals and damned if it doesn’t with the public angered over its abandonment.”

Pursuance of IP by Iran and Pakistan would certainly deal a serious blow to the U.S. and its allies as they scramble to grab oil and gas resources of this region, benefiting multinational corporations that finance the Western ruling elites. According to Eric Draitsner (Balochistan: Crossroads of Proxy War), it should not be overlooked that “China’s insatiable thirst for oil and gas makes the development of pipelines

from Central Asia, Iran, and elsewhere invaluable to them. The Iran-Pakistan pipeline, the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India pipeline, and other projects all serve to increase the importance of Balochistan in the eyes of the Chinese. Additionally, the Chinese-funded Pakistani Gwadar Port is the access point for Chinese commercial shipping to the Indian Ocean and on to Africa. With all of this as a backdrop, one can begin to see just why Balochistan is so significant to the Chinese and, conversely, why the United States and its allies seek to destabilize it.” 

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



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# The Budgeting Trick

**India's recent fiscal budget appears to be practical and realistic but not without a few caveats.**

By Sijal Fawad

The moot point over India's 2013-14 budget stems not just from the budget itself but also the deceleration of the country's phenomenal rate of growth over the past few years, which has made the country's fiscal dynamics even more critical. The highlight of the recent budget was a 16 percent increase in public expenditure relative to the previous year – a controversial move at a time when India is trying hard to keep its fiscal deficit in check.

And yet, the country needs to prop up GDP growth numbers too, for which impetus from public spending is much needed. For FY2013-14, the government projects an increase of 6.1-6.7 percent in the country's GDP, which is higher than the 5 per-

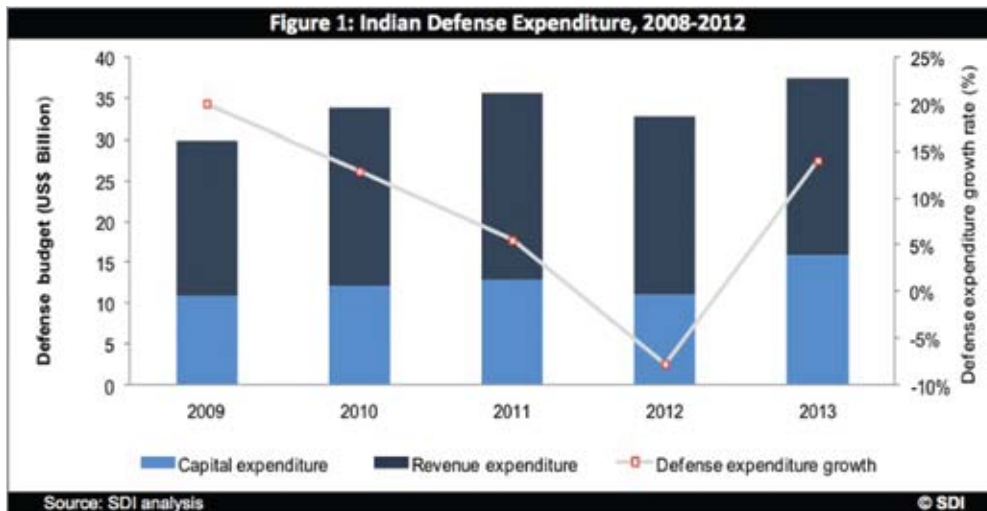
cent seen for the current fiscal year, but still short of the previously high growth figures achieved before the global financial crisis.

That this is the last budget before the next elections makes it even more critical for the current ruling party. That explains why this time job creation ranks high on the government's agenda with a strong focus on growth in certain key sectors. These include information technology (IT), infrastructure, education, domestic manufacturing, etc. Reductions in subsidies, in particular oil and fertilizer, with the subsidy bill limited to below 2 percent of the country's GDP, appear to be an attempt to keep the fiscal deficit in check. However, analysts are cognizant of how

slippages usually take place when it comes to the actual expenditure on subsidies.

At the same time, the Food Security Act raises the bar and becomes a shining example of a populist measure from the government. Rs900 billion has already been allocated to food subsidies 2013-14, relative to a revised estimate of Rs850 billion spent in 2012-13. Besides this, social spending in other areas will also receive a boost with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare receiving 40 percent more than what was allocated for it in the previous year, as well as a greater outlay for the Ministry of Human Resource Development.

In light of these policy initia-



tives, to say that the 2013/14 budget is devoid of any populism would be a misleading statement. The fact that government spending itself will be increased – as has traditionally been the case with most pre-election budgets – indicates the presence of political motives. By targeting the rural poor through food subsidies, social welfare policies and other developmental projects, the Congress is successfully targeting its key vote bank. In addition, the budget also addresses recent public outcries over women's security in the country through a \$185 million fund devoted to an all-women public sector bank, public campaigns about violence against women and support for rape victims.

Similarly, the defense budget warrants attention as a hike of a relatively modest 5 percent was noted, relative to an increase of 17 percent in the previous budget. Pegged at \$40 billion, the budgeted amount is perceived as being meager by analysts and commentators. "Within the Indian context, it means that India's defense expenditure for 2013-14 will be at the lowest point in three decades. This should be enough only to meet the expenditure on account

of pay and allowances and maintenance of the weapons systems," said Rajeev Sharma, a New Delhi-based strategic affairs analyst, in an article in the *Global Times*.

Given that Indian defense forces are in dire need of modernization, allegations of populist motives behind the relatively nominal increase in the defense budget have made waves. In order to make room for expenditure for the aforementioned social welfare schemes, the defense budget bore the brunt. For a country with a population of nearly 1.2 billion people, greater emphasis on national security has to be realized. Pakistan, India's long-term rival, allocates a greater percentage of its GDP to defense spending than India, making many question the discretion of the government in continuing to strip the armed forces of their needed revenues at a time when the country's aging military equipment needs to be upgraded and modernized.

As if internal fiscal issues weren't enough, India's external debt situation also warrants considerable attention with trade deficit problems adding to the problems. For the third quarter of 2012, external debt rose to \$365 billion. Crisis in the Eurozone

and stagnant growth in developed economies has certainly taken a toll on India's exports, leading to a trade deficit that has to be funded by foreign currency debt. To effectively address the external debt problem, India will have to undertake policies that can help keep the trade deficit in check. Improving export competitive-

ness, curbing import demand and attracting foreign direct investment in various projects are prescribed measures for reducing the trade deficit. Besides, external commercial borrowings and short-term debt have also contributed to the significant rise in external borrowings, warranting the government to take measures to curb these.

Holistically, India's budget has been largely dubbed as being realistic and balanced but not without a few caveats. It targets a modest drop in fiscal deficit from 5.2 percent of GDP in 2012-13 to 4.8 percent in 2013-14, which seems reasonable given the macroeconomic problems of subdued GDP growth and bearing in mind that elections are around the corner. However, the growth rate target may become a tad hard to reach and there's likelihood of the subsidies bill exceeding the targeted amount too. Yet, the budget seems as realistic and practical as one could expect a pre-election budget to be. **S**

*Sijal Fawad is a Research Analyst at the Business Recorder and is an external student of economics and finance at SOAS, University of London.*



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# The X Factor

**As the drawdown date for US troops approaches, what role will India play in Afghanistan after 2014?**

By Daud Khattak

With the United States and NATO allies drawing down their military presence in Afghanistan in 2014, and the contradiction between U.S. and Pakistani interests in Afghanistan escalating, Pakistan is no longer considered the sole country for bringing stability in Afghanistan and the region. To bridge the divide, NATO allies are pinning their hopes on other regional powers -- India and China – neighbors who have already invested heavily in Afghanistan’s social and security sectors.

However, the million dollar questions is: will lasting peace and stability be possible without sincere efforts from Pakistan, the country enjoying leverage among the Taliban leadership and different groups operating from inside and outside Afghanistan? Due to its emotional proximity with Afghan jihadi groups and close relations with the pre-9/11 Taliban regime, Pakistan can certainly play a key role in ushering peace and stability in Afghanistan.

But as those who closely follow the region know that the last few years have only strained an already tense relationship between the United States and Pakistan as far as the question of Afghan peace, stability and reconciliation is concerned.

Among the key factors that affected the uneasy relationship was the May 2011 killing of Al-Qaeda leader, Osama bin Laden in Pakistan’s Abbotabad garrison town and the Salala incident that resulted in the loss of over a dozen Pakistan army soldiers, further extenuating the misunderstandings that existed between the two countries.

It was, perhaps, in this backdrop that then U.S. defense secretary Leon Panetta, during his two-day visit to New Delhi in June last year, urged Indian officials to take a “more active role” in Afghanistan’s security and rebuilding efforts. India had earlier become the first country to sign a strategic partnership agreement with Afghanistan besides signing several MoUs to boost strategic and economic cooperation. Until recently, the United States

was supportive of a limited Indian role in Afghanistan mainly because of Pakistani concerns. However, the constant vacillation in US-Pakistan relations forced the former to pin its hopes on India.

Besides the United States, NATO countries are also looking at Pakistan’s

**Some Indian projects in Afghanistan**

- Road from Zaranj to Delaram for the movement of goods from Afghanistan to the Iranian border
- Transmission line from Pul-e-Khumbi to Kabul
- Salma Dam power project
- Parliament building
- Expansion of national television network
- Women's Vocational Training Centre in Bagh-e-Zarana
- Reconstruction of children's hospital
- Indian Medical Mission clinics in Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif, Jalalabad, Kandahar and Kabul

**Others:** 84 ongoing projects related to agriculture, education, health, vocational training and solar energy

Distribution of high-protein biscuits every day to nearly two million schoolchildren

Source: Government of India

Afghan President Hamid Karzai with Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh

role with hope and suspicion, particularly at times when pressure at home, economic issues in Europe, and war-weariness among security quarters is forcing the political leadership to push for an early withdrawal from Afghanistan. On the Afghan front, the Taliban and Afghan government are once again trying to bring the on-again-off-again peace process back on track. President Karzai's visit to the Qatari capital of Doha earlier this month was a part of this renewed peace effort. Afghanistan's Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Janan Musazai, confirmed that President Karzai's government had agreed to opening a Taliban office in Doha for the purpose of peace negotiations. As the two sides, plus the United States, proceed with the negotiations, the tension with Pakistan over the structure of a post-withdrawal Afghanistan is likely to mount.

Pakistan's security establishment wants to retain a front seat in the peace talks and make sure that Pakistan does not get the short end of the stick in forming the future Afghan government and deciding roles for its neighbors, particularly India.

On the other hand, President Karzai as well as some ethnic groups have a soft corner for India. The roots of closer ties between the two sides go back to the era of Jihad and the hard-liner Taliban regime in Kabul. India, like several other regional countries, supported the then Northern Alliance of late Ahmad Shah Masood against the Pakistan-backed Taliban.

In recent years, President Karzai had made at least 12 trips to India while the Indian investment in Afghanistan, both in security and social sectors, is now reaching almost \$2 billion.

During Karzai's last visit to India in November 2012, the Indian prime minister pledged to provide \$100 million for small socio-economic proj-

ects. "President Karzai and I agreed to intensify our cooperation with a special focus on deepening our economic engagement in areas ranging from agriculture and small business to mining and infrastructure," Manmohan Singh announced. India's increasing focus on Afghanistan and its reconstruction efforts are a way to block Pakistan's influence and prevent Afghanistan from becoming a breeding ground for extremism. After all, who knows better, than India, the

role as a peacemaker is concerned.

In the worst case scenario, the Taliban fighting in Afghanistan and the ethnic tensions rising in the country can turn into a full-fledged covert war between the two South Asian nuclear-armed rivals by extending financial and material support to the militant groups both in Afghanistan and the tribal areas of Pakistan.

However, to look for a silver lining on the Afghan horizon, the existence of a strong supporting voice among

Apart from India, key powers such as China, Russia and the United States are also eyeing an Afghanistan, free of terrorism and extremism beyond 2014. Convergence of this major interest is bringing India closer to its partners and neighbors – China, Russia and the U.S. – than Pakistan in a post-withdrawal Afghanistan.

negative effects on security should a pro-Pakistan Taliban regime establish itself in Kabul?

Apart from India, key powers such as China, Russia and the United States are also eyeing an Afghanistan, free of terrorism and extremism beyond 2014. Convergence of this major interest is bringing India closer to its partners and neighbors – China, Russia and the U.S. – than Pakistan in a post-withdrawal Afghanistan.

Akin to India, Pakistan has its own concerns about the increasing Indian influence and presence in its neighborhood. At times when Pakistan's ties with the United States and Afghanistan are suffering from misunderstandings and suspicions, an increased Indian influence in Afghanistan would create further obstacles in the way of lasting peace and stability as far as Pakistan's

Pakistanis for peace in Afghanistan is giving room to the hope that return of peace and stability, though lately, can't be ruled out.

Speaking during a private television debate on Pakistan's Foreign Policy earlier this month, top leaders of leading political parties were unanimous in the view that the world should see Afghanistan as a fully sovereign country. They agreed that Pakistan's security establishment was accused of considering Afghanistan as its 'fifth province' and 'that approach needs to change.' **S**

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

*“We have a problem in accepting that they are demanding the death penalty. But we understand that it was from nervousness among the people here that unless they are given the highest penalty in the hand, these people will come back out.”*

**-Sultana Khan, prominent human rights leader in Dhaka.**

The above stated thoughts as reported in a news story titled, “Islamic leader sentenced to death in Bangladesh” in the 7 March issue of the International Herald Tribune reflects the level of schism and polarization which grips Bangladesh. In December last year, the International War Crimes Tribunal gave a death sentence to Jamaat-e-Islami leaders Abul Kalam Azad, Abdul Quader Mollah and Delwar Hossain Sayeedi on charges of murder, abduction, rape, torture and persecution during the 1971 military operation in East Pakistan. Since then, approximately 100 people have been killed in Bangladesh in protests against what have been termed as “unjust, unfair and biased” verdicts given by the controversial judges of the tribunal. In contrast, a sit-in in the Shahbagh square, Dhaka in December 2012, demanded exemplary punishment to

the “collaborators” during the military operation in 1971.

The Jamaat’s violent reaction against the verdicts and tacit support given by the opposition, Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), to protest against the Awami League is a clear indication of looming crisis, which will further deepen Bangladesh’s political predicament. As mentioned in ‘Unrest in Bangladesh, A nation divided’ published in The Economist, “it was supposed to help Bangladesh come to terms with the horrors that accompanied its birth as a nation in 1971. But the International Crimes Tribunal has provoked the worst political violence the country has endured in the 42 years since.”

In 1972, Sheikh Mujibur Rehman, then Prime Minister and founder of Bangladesh, ordered the formation of special tribunals to try collaborators

but in 1973 he ordered general amnesty to those collaborators against whom trials had not yet been initiated. Mujib’s assassination in August 1975 and a long military rule derailed the process of punishing collaborators. During Sheikh Hasina’s first government (1996-2001), no concrete efforts were made to launch a trial of the collaborators. It was only in 2010 when her government established the International War Crimes Tribunal, which resolved to bring to justice those who were held responsible for crimes against humanity.

However, the lack of transparency that accompanied the trials raised several questions about the fairness and manipulation of the tribunal. The tribunal became controversial since its inception because its composition reflected a domestic instead of an international character. Furthermore, as



stated by The Economist, "Mr. Sayeedi's conviction had been expected by mid December. It was delayed when the presiding judge, Nizamul Haq, resigned as Chairman of the tribunal on December 11. Transcripts of Skype conversation published in Bangladesh showed collusion between judges, prosecutors and a Brussels based lawyer with no official standing with the court."

The incredibility of the tribunals and the mishandling of the Jamaat's leaders, further augmented the political crisis in Bangladesh. More than four decades have passed since the tragic events of 1971 and those who have been convicted or are under trial are

in enforcing the writ of the state and also dealing with the "Mukti Bahini" (liberation force of Bangladesh) with an iron hand. After the fall of Dhaka and the creation of Bangladesh in December 1971, the Awami League government banned the Jamaat but the Martial Law regime of General Zia-ur-Rehman, later lifted the ban.

During 1980s and 1990s, the Jamaat tried to rehabilitate its position and joined Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's BNP regime in 2001. After its crushing defeat in the 2008 general elections, the Jamaat's position was marginalized. However the political decision to ban Jamaat-e-Islami because of its involvement in war crimes

which promoted the Islamic character of the state. Sheikh Hasina's second regime tried to undo the marginalization of secular characteristics of Bangladesh but failed because of the fear of a strong backlash. BNP, established by General Zia-ur-Rehman, provided an alternate to the ideology of narrow Bengali nationalism and gave the slogan of Bangladeshi nationalism with a blend of Islam. The Awami League adheres to the ideology of Bengali nationalism and considers itself secular. As a result, whenever the Awami League comes to power, it relegates the value of religion and emphasizes secularism and Bengali nationalism. Whereas, when BNP comes to power

# Identity Crisis

**Bangladesh has been caught in an identity crisis since its very inception. Recent political upheavals concerning the International War Crimes Tribunal must be analyzed against this backdrop.**

By Dr. Moonis Ahmar

in their seventies and eighties. The motives of the Awami League are unclear. While some truly believe that such an undertaking will serve the greater interests of Bangladesh, others simply see it as political consumption with general elections around the corner.

Jamaat-i-Islami not only opposed the movement for the creation of Bangladesh but also supported the Pakistan military in eliminating freedom fighters and all those involved in the nine month struggle against what was perceived as the "Pakistan occupation army." The raising of *Razakars* (volunteer) under the name "*Al-Badr*" and "*Al-Shams*" was meant to provide support to the Pakistan Army

during 1971 will not only deepen polarization but also put a question mark on the future of Bangladesh's stability. The major fault lines that plague the nation, revolve around deeper concerns of nationalism, religion and secularism.

Since its inception as an independent state in 1971, Bangladesh has faced an identity crisis: should it be an Islamic state, a nationalist state or a secular one? According to the constitution of 1972, the country was declared a democratic and secular state. But the Martial Law regimes of General Zia-ur-Rehman and General Hossein Mohammad Ershad changed clauses in the country's constitution

it gives importance to Bangladeshi nationalism and religion.

Steps to promote secularism are termed as undermining the role and influence of Islam, which no government in Bangladesh can relegate. Therefore, the recent political upheaval in Bangladesh following the agitation by Jamaat-e-Islami against the verdict of war crimes tribunal needs to be seen in the context of identity crisis in that country. ■

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

The Hambantota District located in southern Sri Lanka has been the center of some major developments since 2007. The Hambantota port, set to open in June 2013, is seen as a major infrastructure investment by China, especially due to its strategic location on one of the world's busiest East-West shipping lanes. After completion, the facility will be run by the Sri Lanka Ports Authority to generate tens of thousands of jobs and billions in economic benefits for the country.

There is much concern in international circles, particularly from Indian analysts and government officials, regarding China's growing influence across the Indian Ocean. Projects with

reiterated that the strategic gains from Hambantota port would greatly benefit Sri Lanka, and it was not a Chinese proposition, because "I asked for it. China did not propose it. It was not a Chinese proposal. The proposal was from us; they gave money. If India said, 'Yes, we'll give you a port', I will gladly accept. If America says, 'We will give a fully equipped airport' - yes, why not? Unfortunately, they are not offering to us." On another occasion, Rajapaksa revealed that he had offered the Hambantota port project first to India and America but the terms offered did not match the Chinese package. Moreover, in his presidential election manifesto in 2010, President Rajapakse detailed

backs or conditions on weapons sales to Sri Lanka they did not stop to think that a fellow democracy would be at a grave disadvantage against a terrorist enemy which had no restrictions on smuggling of weapons, including heavy weaponry. China has enabled in practice, not just in words, the defense of Sri Lanka's independence, and sovereignty and restoration of its national unity."

Even the Chinese government on many occasions has tried to alleviate India's concerns. Defense Minister, Mr. Liang Guanglie on his visit to Sri Lanka in September 2012, reportedly assured that the economic and military ties between the two countries were meant for peaceful purposes,

# Striking A Balance

**President Rajapaksa is committed to turning the fishing village of Hambantota into one of Asia's leading commercial cities. However, award of the contract to a Chinese company has sparked much controversy.**

By Tahera Sajid

Chinese involvement include seaports like Gwadar in Pakistan, Chittagong in Bangladesh, Sitwe in Myanmar and now, Hambantota in Sri Lanka. These are increasingly viewed as a concerted Chinese effort directed towards containment of India's aspirations in the region. However, Sri Lanka has on several occasions categorically challenged any such allegation and praised China's steady support for Sri Lanka's economic and defense needs.

In a July 2009 interview with TIME Magazine, President Rajapaksa

the economic benefits of the project, remarking, "... it is very likely that over 10,000 vessels will dock at the new Port, annually, thereby generating around Rs. 50 billion [US\$455 million] in foreign exchange."

Dr. Dayan Jayatilaka, Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations, was also quoted while appreciating China's role in supporting Sri Lanka during the Tamil insurgency, when the Western nations and India offered only conditional and limited support. "When others imposed cut-

"maintaining regional security and stability and not targeted at any 'third party,'" clearly referring to India. Considering that China has not shown any aggressive tendencies towards neighboring nations and holds a good track record of employing peaceful means, the comment deserves serious consideration from Indian authorities.

The port is largely seen by both governments as a sign of the goodwill generated by China in Sri Lanka through its reasonable, consistent and generous policies over the years, es-

pecially during Sri Lanka's regional and internal challenges. However, India and China are the world's two fastest-growing economies that have fought one war and have a history of friction even in peace-time relations. India's desire to be the leader and regional power appears to be challenged by China's steady successes in economic and military fields, which

"...the latest 'pearl' in China's strategy to control vital sea lanes of communication between the Indian and Pacific Oceans by assembling a 'string of pearls' in the form of listening posts, special naval arrangements and access to ports."

Independent observers speculate that though Chinese interests in the region are primarily economically ori-

own interests while maintaining amicable relations with both countries. Sri Lanka has found China to be a tried and tested friend and ally and both will continue to work towards common interests and gains. At the same time, good relations with India are crucial for political stability. Even though tensions in the relationship will remain as each side contemplates



understandably fuel India's insecurities. The paranoia in India that China may eventually become a real economic and security threat to what India considers its natural influence in the region is growing.

To that effect, Professor Chelaney, an academic at the Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi, stressed in 2009 in *The Times of India* that the main reason for Chinese infatuation with Sri Lanka was due to its strategic location in the Indian Ocean, which is "...a crucial international passageway for trade and oil." Hambantota is only

entertained there is no denying that some of these may lead to fulfilling security considerations in the future. The Chinese development planners and practitioners, as well as defense strategists, clearly want to see China move steadily towards a superpower status and India is wary because that would change the power balance entirely and make China a force to be reckoned with, not only in South Asia but also at the global level.

While India and China continue to challenge each other on various fronts, Sri Lanka needs to balance its

its position, not alienating the other will prove a critical foreign policy goal for both India and Sri Lanka. India, for its part, will also have to reevaluate its own foreign policy towards China for peace in the region, and not pressurize Sri Lanka unnecessarily. Balancing power dynamics through reasonable policy directives goes a long way towards regional prosperity. **S**

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Nepal has been facing a political deadlock since May 2010 when Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai dissolved the Constituent Assembly after it failed to formulate the constitution. This ended four doubtful years of drafting a constitution. Political quarters called for the government to formulate a new constitution and hold elections at the earliest. With leaders unable to agree upon a prime minister and with the political and legal vacuum looming over Nepal, President Ram Baran Yadav swore in Chief Justice Khil Raj Regmi as the new prime minister in March to lead the interim government.

This is the first time in Nepalese political history that a sitting Chief Justice has become the head of the government. Chief Justice Regmi will serve dual posts as the Prime Minister and the Chief Justice of Nepal until elections take place on June 21. The elected members of the legislature will also function as the Constituent Assembly with the task of formulating a new constitution.

Nepal's future remains bleak even with Chief Justice Regmi now serving as the interim Prime Minister. The major political parties have their reservations regarding Regmi's rise to premiership; many consider it an unconstitutional move. The President of the Nepal Bar Association, Hari Krishna Karki, argued that appointing Justice Regmi was against the principles of constitutionalism and separation of powers in a democracy. A separatist Maoist faction called for a general strike against Justice Regmi's appointment and protestors clashed with the police outside the presidential palace while he was taking his oath of office. Former lawmakers of the previous Constituent Assembly also feel that the Khila Raj Regmi-led election government is non-political. The CPN-Maoist led alliance is also pressing for the formation of a consensus government. Moreover, the

opposition believes that the appointment of Justice Regmi will only disturb the political structure of the country whose future already hangs in the balance. Political factions have filed legal challenges in the court regarding the legality of the Chief Justice serving simultaneously as the Prime Minister.

The current political vacuum in Nepal dates back to 2008 when the country abolished the 239-year-old monarchy and the political parties went into a tussle over the formulation of a new constitution. In May 2010, the then Prime Minister, Baburam Bhattarai dissolved the Constituent Assembly after it was not able to decide how much power the country's regions would enjoy in the post-monarchy era and was unable to write a constitution.

Caught in the midst of political transition, it might take a few years before Kathmandu can adapt to this political change and work as the capital of a federal republic. However, with Chief Justice Regmi in power, analysts predict that the judiciary will take an active part in preparing the constitution.

Numerous politicians and legislators believe that the much-awaited constitution will finally take shape and end the political deadlock that has created confusion among political parties. However, politicians opposing Justice Regmi as the premier, say that since the Prime Minister truly runs the government, Justice Regmi might exercise his powers in the functioning of the state - a possibility that could seriously destabilize the country. However, members of the ruling

# Ending the Stalemate



Maoist party were the first to suggest that Justice Regmi should get the interim post and they believe that only Regmi can bring Nepal out of its many predicaments.

Nepal's political history has played a key role in keeping democratic forces at bay. Following the end of the civil war in 2006, the Maoists became a recognized politi-

## Leaders in Nepal have elected Chief Justice Khil Raj Regmi as the interim Prime Minister. Perhaps he can play a role in bringing democracy back to Nepal.

By Muhammad Omar Iftikhar



cal party that guaranteed to promote the peace process and elections, formulate a constitution, abolish Nepal's monarchy and integrate the national armed forces with the Maoist rebel army. However, the newborn federal set-up of the country swayed the government from functioning properly where the division of power between regions led to political sti-

fling among major parties. Elections, which were set to take place in November 2012, were consequently deferred to June 2013.

The political parties of Nepal have reached a consensus on four key issues with the newly formed interim government. These include forming a Truth and Reconciliation Commission for providing transitional justice, pro-

moting Maoist combatants included in the Nepal army to the post of Colonel and Lt. Colonel, updating the voters' list before the Constituent Assembly elections and resolving the issues of citizenship certificate distribution.

Although elections are set to take place on June 21, political parties might postpone them until December if the situation remains unfavorable. The President of the Nepali Congress, Sushil Koirala, is certain that the government, led by the Chief Justice, would resolve the political impasse and strengthen democracy in Nepal. The Nepalese politicians who support Justice Regmi are of the view that a fresh election mandate will preserve the democratic process and ensure people's participation. In addition, major parties such as the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) (CPN UML), and the Nepali Congress have agreed to write a constitution to replace the interim government.

Regmi, who is also the Chairman of the Interim Election Council, has big shoes to fill if he is eyeing free and independent polls. If his tenure does not usher in democracy in Nepal, there is a fair chance that the country might lose confidence in the judiciary – a situation that no political party wants.

Although Khil Raj Regmi is facing opposition from Nepalese leaders and former lawmakers, the West, including the U.S, UN and the UK has welcomed his appointment. If the U.S and the UN are satisfied with Regmi's new role as Prime Minister, then the international community is in favor of Nepal becoming a federal republic and wishes to see Nepal leave behind its history of monarchy-based government for good. **S**

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



# The Gender Divide

**Female political participation is on the rise in Bhutan. However, the country still has a long way to go before its women can leave an indelible mark on the political landscape**

By Nida Hussain

**W**omen in Bhutan have remained over-shadowed by the male population in the field of politics throughout time. Interestingly, a myriad of reasons contribute to this trend, none of which particularly challenge conventional wisdom. The usual demons of illiter-

acy, poverty and backwardness have fettered the women, rendering their political representation negligible. Only six female representatives serve in the National Council and four in the National Assembly. While legal documents might accord women equal status, the reality is different.


The struggles aimed at achieving political freedom for Bhutanese women have become accentuated over time. The exclusion factor has deprived them from the right to have a say in the country's political affairs. Surprisingly, a recent study reflected the low self-dignity that increasingly checks women in Bhutan from participating in the political system. Illiteracy and lack of awareness greatly contribute to the alarming trend. One of the major predicaments in the upcoming elections will be the representation of women in the political mainstream, with the United Nations closely monitoring developments. In Bhutan, however, the predispositions among genders exist ostensibly through norms and culture rather than legal terms.

Unfortunately, women have a low literacy level due to high dropout rates in high schools and educational institutions. Furthermore, technology and advanced science exclusively remain under the grasp of men and pressing responsibilities in the household often bar women from extra participation. Statistics show that 10 out of 72 parliamentarians are women, denoting 14% female political representation. At the local level, the numbers drop to 7%. Despite these unimpressive statistics, data reveals that nearly 60% women are interested in participating in the political system.

As cited by the women of Bhutan, a low level of inspiration is also a major reason for their less active participation in the political framework. The chauvinistic approach of men often defines women as incompetent for the best jobs, promoting the reasoning that men safeguard the elements of honesty, toil, focus and perseverance more than women. Women also

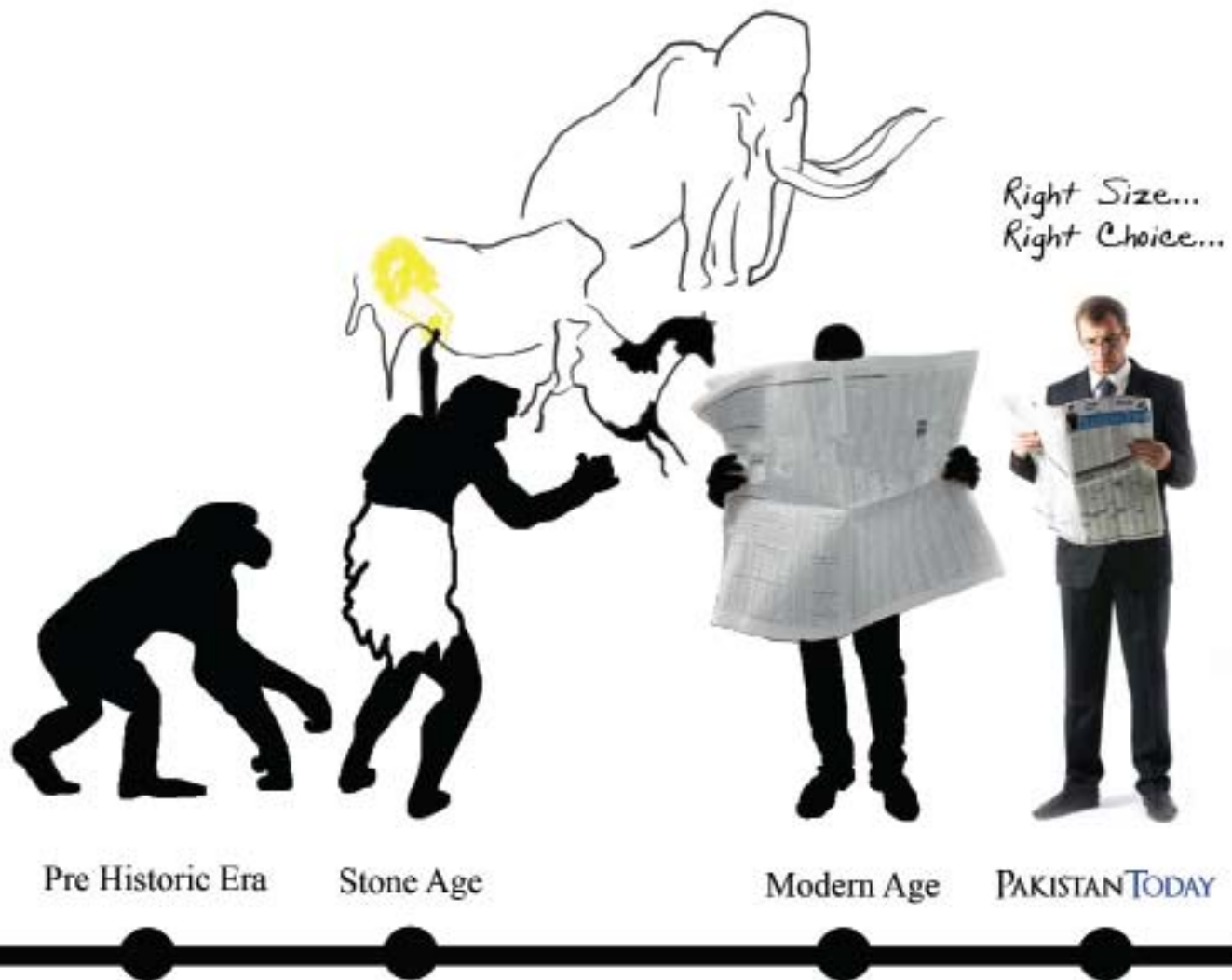
believe that men are better suited for the political arena but the view differs when it comes to social issues. It is, therefore, imperative that the status quo be modified and the idea of lesser participation by women be abandoned. South Asia has enough examples of powerful women who have managed to break through the threshold of a male-dominated environment. Srimavo Bandaranaike and . Chandrika Kumaratunga of Sri Lanka, Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan, Indira Gandhi of India and Haseena Wajid and Begum Zia of Bangladesh have all gained worldwide recognition through their political careers.

In Bhutan, stereotypes and mainstream thinking have constricted the public participation of women to a great extent. If women don't have fundamental training, skills, determination and vision about the policy-making or decision-making processes, it is imprudent to continue. The compassionate nature of women should be taken as a strength, not a weakness to tread on. As the elections approach, the Government must ensure equal voting and representation. Amongst other measures, a certain number of reserved seats for women must be ensured and voting should be encouraged.

To further such initiatives, the United Nations has launched a regional program to promote assistance and knowledge to women in Bhutan, working in close co-ordination with the Government and United Nations Development Program. The central aim is to bring forth women in leadership and governance roles. Moreover, women should be encouraged to have a firm grasp on education. Motivation from female political representatives can produce salubrious results and lead to positive changes in the country in the long run. 

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Our analytical views and impartial news give you facts and insights which are unparalleled.

**T**he war of words between Iran and Israel has been heating up with Israel threatening the use of preemptive strikes to take out the Iranian nuclear project before Iran allegedly crosses the nuclear threshold. President Obama has been prescribing caution, trying to rein in trigger-happy Israel. On June 1981, Israel conducted Operation Babylon in a surprise air strike that destroyed an Iraqi nuclear reactor under construction 17 kilometers (10.5 miles) southeast of Baghdad. On September 6, 2007, Israel's attack on Syria's al-Kibar nuclear facility nipped the Syrian nuclear program in the bud. Media reports indicate that Israel attempted attacks on the Pakistani nuclear facility too when it was in the budding phase but did not succeed owing to the vigilance of the Pakistan Armed Forces.

President Obama's March 2013 visit to Israel was his first overseas tour in his second term. While there, the U.S. President did not mince his words when he blatantly announced that the allies are united, rather than divided, over the need to halt Tehran's pursuit of nuclear weapons capability.

Obama has been walking a tight-rope as far as the Iranian nuclear program is concerned. On one hand he has endeavored to keep the Israelis from directly attacking Iran for fear of being involved in a third war in quick succession after having paid a heavy toll through its wars in Afghanistan

and Iraq. On the other, he did give his presidential nod to clandestine operations to thwart the Iranian nuclear program. David Sanger, in his book *Confront and Conceal* reveals that the U.S., through a cyber attack operation codenamed "Olympic Games" infected Iran's nuclear centrifuges, in a bid to slow down the Iranian nuclear program. Another proposal was to launch a "clandestine" military strike to destroy Iranian nuclear facilities like the ones against Iraq and Syria. But a covert strike against Iran is much riskier than the one targeting Syria because Iran is militarily stronger and is certain to retaliate by striking Israeli and American targets in the Middle East.

Obama's visit to Israel may have renewed the urgency among the Israeli leaders over Iran's nuclear program as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's deadline for Iran to withdraw its nuclear plans is also closing in. Where former heads of Israel's intelligence agencies view that any attack on Iran will be unsuccessful and

counter-productive, Prime Minister Netanyahu thinks otherwise and is adamant to carry out his threat.

The original goal of the Iranian nuclear program was to build nuclear power plants in order to produce 23,000 megawatts of electrical power, maintaining it has the right to enrich uranium, both for nuclear power plants and for making medical isotopes, which require fuel enriched to a fissile purity of 20 percent.

But the U.S. and its allies are concerned that 20-percent purity is a major step towards producing weapons-grade uranium and that Tehran is covertly developing weapons capability; accusations that Iran denies. The big question is whether Israel will undertake such an assault operation targeting Iranian nuclear facility. The father of Iran's nuclear program, Akbar Etemad, now in his 80s and currently residing in Paris says there is no way out of current deadlock between western powers and the Islamic Republic. He opines that neither the

# A Tough

**Could a US-Israeli military airstrike on Iran trigger another war on South Asian soil?**

By S. M. Hali



U.S. nor Israel are in a position to attack Iran.

Talks between Iran and six world powers - the United States, China, Russia, Britain, France and Germany - are to resume early next month in a further attempt to strike a deal over Iranian nuclear aspirations.

Meanwhile pragmatism has set in and Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has decided to keep Iran's nuclear program within the limits demanded by Israel for now. Senior U.S., European and Israeli officials believe this move is designed to avert an international crisis during an Iranian election year. U.S. and European officials have been concerned that Mr. Khamenei might challenge Israel and the U.S. over the nuclear issue to consolidate his political position. Mr. Khamenei's approach is placing the Obama administration and its allies in a delicate strategic position, possibly constraining their response to Iran's nuclear program. U.S., European and Israeli officials

have described 2013 as the "critical" year in Iran's nuclear program, which has been seen as a reference to the possible use of military force.

The U.S. is also facing a threat posed by North Korea's nuclear program, with Washington and Pyongyang engaged in heightened military threats. North Korea defiantly conducted its third nuclear weapons test in February.

The U.N.'s nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency, said in late December that Tehran had amassed 232 kilograms of uranium enriched to the 20% level but almost 100 kilograms of that amount is being converted into fuel plates to power Tehran's research reactor. Fissile material in this form is difficult to use in a weapons program. "Based on the latest IAEA report, Iran appears to be limiting its stockpile of 20% enriched uranium by converting a significant portion of it to oxide," said a senior U.S. official working on Iran. "But that could change at any moment."

Iran may physically lack the potential to deal with a joint Israeli-U.S. attack but it definitely has the pluck to survive and counterattack. Because of its strategic location, Iran is in a position to blockade the free flow of fuel to the west through the Strait of Hormuz.

It is expected that both the UN as well as the U.S. will be able to restrain Israel from attacking Iran. In the eventuality of an Israeli-Iran war, the South Asian region will get embroiled in the conflict. Pakistan, which has deep relations with Iran but also prefers to maintain positive relations with the U.S., will endeavor to keep the war off its backyard. The next few weeks are crucial in thwarting the war between Israel and Iran and intense diplomatic activity is merited to keep the warring factions at bay. **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.*

# Tussle



**B**orn on April 17, 1916, Sirimavo Bandaranaike became famous as the modern world's first female head of government. She was the widow of Sri Lanka's fourth prime minister, Solomon Bandaranaike and the mother of Sri Lanka's fourth Executive President, Chandrika Kumaratunga.

Bandaranaike received her education at St Bridget's Convent in Colombo. In 1940, she married Solomon Bandaranaike, founder of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP). After a Buddhist monk assassinated Solomon on 26 September 1959, Sirimavo took up the reins of the party as the legitimate successor to her husband. She formally entered politics in 1960 as a Senate member from the SLFP.

Bandaranaike led her party to win the July 1960 elections and became the first female prime minister in the world, pledging to continue her slain husband's policies. Known to her fellow Sri Lankans as "Mrs. B," Sirimavo could cleverly maneuver popular emotion to boost her support, often bursting into tears, akin to Prime Minister Mosaddegh of Iran. Her opponents therefore called her the "Weeping Widow."

Bandaranaike was a socialist. In 1961, she nationalized key sectors of the economy such as banking and insurance, as well as all schools owned by the Roman Catholic Church at the time. She dropped English as the official language and ordered the government to conduct business in Sinhala, the language of the majority Sinhalese. The Tamils considered this a discriminatory act as well as the attempt to deny them access to all official jobs and the law. This led to an increase in Tamil militancy that escalated under suc-

ceeding administrations.

The state takeover of foreign businesses, petroleum companies in particular, roiled the United States and Britain as they halted aid to Sri Lanka. Consequently, Bandaranaike championed a policy of nonalignment by cultivating relations with China and the Soviet Union. At home, she also crushed an attempted military coup by Christian officers in 1962. Her first term as Prime Minister ended when the SLFP coalition was defeated in the 1965 elections.

Sirimavo regained power after the United Front coalition won the 1970 elections with a large majority. In 1971, she faced the JVP Insurrection of left-wing youths. It would have toppled her government but military assistance from India and Pakistan saved her regime.

During her second term, a new constitution was introduced in 1972. Ceylon was renamed Sri Lanka and became a republic. The 1973 oil crisis had a traumatic effect on the Sri Lankan economy as the government had no access to Western aid and Bandaranaike's socialist policies stifled economic activity, leading to rationing of essential goods. Meanwhile she became increasingly intolerant of criticism and ordered a forced shutdown of the Independent newspaper group, whose publications were her fiercest critics. Earlier she had nationalized the country's largest newspaper, Lake House, which has remained the government's official mouthpiece.

Bandaranaike enjoyed continued success in foreign affairs. Chosen to serve as the chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1976, she hosted the Movement's conference, attended by numerous world leaders. Despite her high international

standing, she was losing Sri Lankan support amid allegations of corruption and a declining economy. Elections were due in 1975 under the old constitution and to stem the tide of unpopularity, she used a provision from the new constitution to postpone the elections for two years.

Bandaranaike held her own seat in the 1977 elections, but in 1980, she was charged with abuse of power for delaying the elections in 1975–77. This resulted in her expulsion from parliament and she was banned from holding public office for seven years. The 1980s were dark years when she became a political outcast and was rejected by the people who had once worshipped her. Bandaranaike spent the next seventeen years in the opposition, warding off challenges to her leadership of the SLFP, even from her own children. She therefore played her daughter Chandrika and son Anura against one another, holding on to party control despite losing every subsequent general election.

In 1994, the SLFP-led coalition won the general elections. Chandrika successfully outmaneuvered her mother, Sirimavo Bandaranaike, becoming President in 1994. In the same year, Bandaranaike became prime minister but the constitution had changed since her last tenure. As prime minister, she was subordinate to her daughter and commanded little real power. Sirimavo Bandaranaike remained in office for a few months before her death on Election Day, 10 October 2000, after casting her vote for the very last time. ■

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

# The Weeping Widow

Sri Lanka's Sirimavo Bandaranaike, the world's first female head of government, was a perfect blend of ambition and perseverance.

By S.G. Jilane

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# Battling Polio

Pakistan remains one of the last three countries in the world to record polio cases. With security threats at an all-time high, the country must take serious and urgent action to eradicate the disease for the sake of its own future.

By *Arsla Jawaid*





It was a crisp morning. The Area Incharge had asked polio workers to report to Gulshan Bunir (Karachi) to conduct the anti-polio drive. With security threats at an all-time high, it was imperative to make sure that workers were home early. That morning, Madeeha woke up slightly late and skipped breakfast. While getting dressed she told her mother, also a polio worker with 10 years of experience in the field, that her shoes looked old, "Maybe tomorrow we can go shopping for new shoes?" She put on her *burqa*, her worn-out shoes, picked up her bag and left for the field. An hour later, her mother, Rukhsana Bibi, left for the same area.

At 11:00 am on 18 December 2012, Gulshan Bunir was undergoing a strong polio vaccination drive, with a team of eight women diligently administering the oral vaccine, door-to-door. Madeeha was accompanied by her aunt, Fehmida (40), also a polio worker. In a Mosque close by, an Imam exchanged a quick "*Salaam Alaikum*" with two boys on a motorbike who had come to get their 4-year-old cousin vaccinated. At around 11:10 am two loud shots were fired. Chaos broke loose. The Imam ran outside to see the young lady in the *burqa* fall to the ground and the boys on the motorbike, armed. Fehmida ran inside a house only to be chased by the men and gunned down. Madeeha, in her *burqa*, died on the spot. She was nineteen.

Rukhsana was working three streets away when she heard the gunshots. Trem-

bling and stunned, she was asked by the authorities to immediately leave. Frantically, she tried to call her daughter. There was no response. Fifteen minutes later, the Area Incharge asked her to return to Gulshan Bunir, now surrounded by police and the media. "The moment I saw her body in the ambulance, I didn't know how to compose myself. I couldn't think. I couldn't feel. I screamed. I cried and I knew it would make no difference. It wouldn't bring her back."

A young, beautiful girl, Madeeha was uneducated, having read only the Quran at a young age. She was married when she was fourteen and leaves behind a daughter (4) and a son (1). Even now, when Rukhsana thinks of her oldest child, she breaks down, "I feel paralyzed. I can't forget her face, her voice, the way she walked. She was the light of this house. So brave, so dedicated." Madeeha's in-laws took her children away because of which she was often depressed. It was perhaps this injustice that encouraged her to become involved in the anti-polio drive, "because my children were taken away from me, these children of Pakistan, are all my children. Their pain is my pain and if I can brighten their future in any way, I will." With tears in her eyes but pride in her voice, Rukhsana bibi tells me, "If my daughter Madeeha, had made up her mind to do something, nothing could change it. She changed lives and for that she will always be remembered." Rukhsana has never been able to enter the

polio vaccination field since that day.

Pakistan remains one of the only three countries in the world to still record polio cases. Since 1988, when the World Health Assembly formally established the goal of eradicating the disease and launched the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI), wild polio virus had dropped by 99%. The disease was previously endemic in 125 countries with 350,000 children paralyzed annually. With the number decreasing rapidly, in 2011 India successfully recorded 0 cases of polio leaving only Pakistan, Nigeria and Afghanistan, as the last remaining countries to record such incidences. Since 2008, more than 20 countries have witnessed outbreaks of polio, imported from one of the three endemic countries, raising pressing concerns of resurgence.

Polio has become a global health crisis for a myriad of reasons. Not curable, but certainly preventable, with effective vaccines in place and tried and tested strategies, polio can be eradicated in our lifetime. Like most diseases, polio is found in low-income, polluted areas and usually targets young children (below the age of five) due to their weak immune systems. With a virus that affects only human beings, health experts are confident that if every child is administered the Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV) regularly, the disease, unable to be transmitted through children, will be isolated and finally eradicated.

Polio vaccination campaigns are not

**Polio Cases in 2013  
Key Characteristics**

- All incidents are in Pashto speaking families.
- 2 (40%) polio victims are younger than two years in age.
- Median age of confirmed polio victims is 24 months.
- 2 (40%) did not receive any OPV dose (through vaccination)
- 1 (20%) victims received 2 OPV doses.
- 2 (40%) cases received seven or more OPV doses.

**Major Developments in 2012  
as compared to 2011**

- 58 cases were reported in 2012 as compared to 198 in 2011 (70% decrease)
- 28 districts reported polio cases as compared to 60 in 2011 (53% decrease)
- 29% decrease in WPV positive environmental samples (37% compared to 66% in 2011)
- Decrease in number of WPV-1 genetic clusters from 11 in 2011 to 4 in 2012.

**Challenges**

- Gaddap Town, Karachi; Khyber Agency in FATA and central Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Quetta are the areas of concern, with persistent poliovirus circulation.
- Security situation has delayed vaccination activities to prevent the WPV circulation by mid-2013.
- To implement the planned aggressive SIAs strategy for the low transmission season.

Data obtained from the Prime Minister's Polio Monitoring and Coordination Cell

only tedious but also tremendously expensive, costs of which will be difficult to maintain in the long run, despite funding from private donors and international organizations like the IDB (\$227mn), Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, WHO and UNICEF, amongst others. Most recently, the government of Japan extended a conditional grant of 226 Japanese Yen, through the UNICEF to eradicate polio in Pakistan. Given the gravity of the situation, last year, the World Health Assembly declared polio a public health emergency, and urgently called for all 194-member states to fully fund the GPEI to meet the \$945 million gap in its budget for 2012-13. While funding for the eradication of the poliovirus may be readily available in the short to medium run, in Pakistan's case, the emergency is much deeper than simply securing financial support.

Ever since Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto inaugurated the country's first polio program in 1994, policies to eradicate the virus have remained consistent despite successive governments. According to the PM's Polio Monitoring and Coordination Cell, Pakistan recorded close to 40,000 cases in 1994. By 2006, under President Pervez Musharraf, the country had successfully reduced polio cases to 28 per year; no small feat for a country that was battling a myriad of other disasters. However, over the last five years, with the insurgency in Swat and Taliban increasing, fighting polio has become a challenge for the government. In 2010, Pakistan recorded 144 cases; in 2011, the number of cases rose to 198 (the highest in the world at the time) and in 2012, through concerted efforts taken by the government, Pakistan registered a 71% decline, recording 58 cases. However, this year, the country has already recorded five cases of polio; the first recorded from Gaddap Town in Karachi.

2011 was particularly damaging for the polio vaccination campaign. Dr. Shakil Afridi, the man believed to have helped the CIA identify and assassinate Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad, ran a fake Hepatitis B campaign to collect DNA to pass along to the CIA operatives. However, the fake campaign was soon misrepresented as a fake polio vaccination campaign believed

to be conducted by foreign hands with a vested interest to sterilize, or kill, the children of Pakistan. In light of this, militant hostilities increased manifold. Families in rural areas and even urban centers, brainwashed by extremist propaganda, refused the vaccines, leading to a rise in polio cases. In light of this, President Zardari introduced the National Emergency Action Plan (NEAP), which proposed new strategies for outreach, awareness and operations to combat the deteriorating situation. The NEAP is a part of the PM Polio Cell, which coordinates with overseas agencies and monitors the polio drives. However, where the government made efforts on the operational side, the polio campaign suffered major security setbacks as polio workers were targeted in different parts of the country. According to data obtained from the PM Polio Cell, the total number of health workers gunned down since July 2012 currently stands at 16.

Previously, where mass media campaigns announcing national vaccination drives were put into place, polio drives, starting in 2012, were staggered and conducted door-to-door with operations delegated through police and district administration officials. UNICEF conducts the mass purchase and distribution of the vaccines and Lady Health Workers (LHW) go door-to-door, administering two drops of the vaccine every 6 weeks to children below the age of five. As part of the NEAP, two LHWs are mandatorily assisted by one policeman. To collect real-time data, when a child is vaccinated, a black mark is put on his finger, denoting he has received the vaccine.

High-risk areas tend to be Pashtun dominated areas of KPK and FATA where families refuse the vaccine due to religious reasons, the Afridi syndrome or simply due to lack of awareness. Many families believe it is unIslamic and will sterilize the child. Others simply do not trust it. Living in a country fraught with conspiracy theories, Alam Zaheer Khan has refused the vaccine for all four of his children. Dismissive at first, he eventually blurted, "America doesn't give any other medicines for free. Why only this? I don't trust my children's lives with this." In efforts to correct misconceptions, the PM Polio cell has

## Path of Polio Virus

*Originating from Pakistan, the crippling polio virus has now made its way into Egypt after China. Following the export of the deadly virus to the Middle Eastern country, the Prime Minister's Polio Monitoring and Coordination Cell, along with its international partners, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and Unicef, recently directed all the provincial governments and the federal administration to immediately establish polio vaccination counters in international departure lounges at all airports across the country.*

*Pakistan is struggling to eradicate the virus and has become a threat to all other countries, which have been declared polio-free. Recently two sewage samples collected from the Al Salam and Al Haggana areas of the Cairo district, when examined in a laboratory, had resemblance to a strain discovered in the sewage water tested in the Sukkur district of Sindh. The PM's polio cell asked the Sindh government several times to improve its polio immunisation on an emergency basis in order to control the transmission of its virus. Though the virus has not infected any child in Egypt and the country remains polio-free since 2004, the Egyptian ministry of health has ordered immediate vaccination of all children less than five years old in the localities near Cairo from where the Pakistani-origin virus was discovered.*

*According to Dr Altaf Boson, national coordinator for monitoring Pakistan's polio vaccination programme, polio vaccination counters at the airports used to be established during anti-polio campaigns only but from now on the counters will be functional 24 hours a day, seven days a week. He said transmission of polio virus within and outside of the country is possible due to mass movement of population. Meanwhile, Prime Minister's Focal Person on Polio Eradication, Shahnaz Wazir Ali, in a statement said, "Importation of polio virus is a stark reminder of the risks associated with active polio virus transmission in the country and the need to make efforts to stop the transmission on an urgent basis in Pakistan."*

Source: Express Tribune

partnered with moderate clerics who have issued *fatwas* in favor of the vaccine and have also assisted in creating awareness by allowing polio vaccination drives to take place in the mosque. However, the Chief

vaccines in parts of the country, Labrique argues that “social consciousness has forgotten the gravity and urgency of eradicating fatal diseases.”

Polio eradication is a meticulously

faces even greater challenges. But unlike India, Pakistan delayed the polio campaign for twenty years, during which it broke the momentum and lost its value. In addition, numerous reports show that in many rural areas, families do not receive the vaccine on time, polio drives are delayed or vaccines are left in the heat for too long thus becoming ineffective. Furthermore, the level of corruption in health offices remains unaccounted for and permeates through every rank, making the goal of eradicating polio a distant dream. With elections around the corner, anti-polio efforts have unfortunately taken a backseat whereas looming concerns of terrorism, economic woes and poverty have become more pertinent.

Emanating from the security crisis is the “real problem of missed children,” adds Dr. Durr. This is verified by UNICEF, which provides technical assistance to the anti-polio operations conducted by the Government of Pakistan. Despite progress, the larger challenges lie in the security situation in Gaddap Town, performance issues and access in the Pishin district and the ban on vaccinations in North and South Waziristan. According to Michael Coleman, Communication Specialist (Polio) at UNICEF, general health remains dismal with child immunity severely low. Furthermore, environmental samples show that while the disease is restricted only to humans, it can travel as populations migrate, raising concerns of containing polio in one area. UNICEF helps not only in vaccine procurement but also in generating sustainable awareness through repeated campaigns. Funds for acquiring the vaccine are transferred directly by international organizations to UNICEF, which buys vaccine stock from WHO certified and approved vendors. According to Coleman, the “media has a strong role to play in dispelling the myths. There is a tendency to sensationalize and promote anti-Americanism. The vaccine is perfectly safe and is necessary for the vulnerable children of Pakistan.” The global expectation to eradicate polio is Year 2018, if pre-requisites such



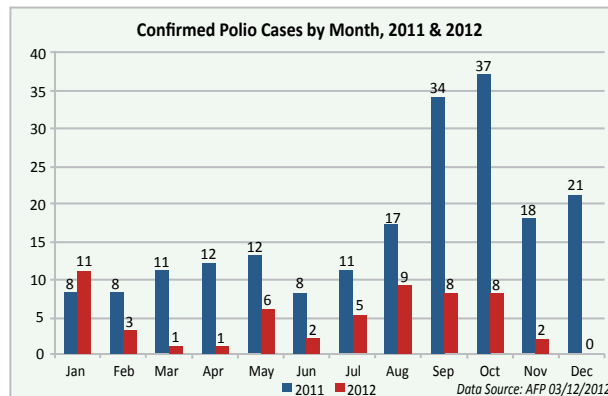
Photo Credit: K.M. Chaudary / Associated Press

of Pakistan Ulema Council, Allama Tahir Ashrafi recently said that, “Clerics can only give *fatwas* and will continue to come together and condemn such acts. What good are *fatwas* if the government doesn’t provide security?” Karachi, Quetta and areas in KPK remain the most sensitive and high-risk areas for polio workers.

The security threats from the TTP have dealt a hard blow to the polio campaign. Even with government efforts in place and moderate clerics speaking in favor of the vaccine, the country’s 35 million children under the age of five, remain at risk. Dr. Alain Labrique of the John Hopkins School of Public Health laments that South Asia was very close to eradicating polio but because of “unfortunate political situations and the failure of a comprehensive health system, the strength of the anti-polio program has severely deteriorated.” The use of social media and access to mobile phones in various parts of the country can however play an integral role in not only creating awareness but also dispelling the myths incorrectly associated with vaccines. While real challenges lie in the delivery of

planned operational strategy, spearheaded by the WHO that assists with improving routine immunizations and conducting campaigns. According to Dr. Durr, Emergency Coordinator for Polio Eradication in Pakistan, the organization strives to ensure the sustainability of health by monitoring polio cases and introducing mop-up campaigns in infested areas to ensure that the environment remains clean, preventing the virus from returning. But even now, “The virus is at its worst during the Monsoon season (August-October) in Pakistan. That is a big challenge and the security situation will only set us back further,” says Dr. Durr.

Certainly, with TTP threats and conspiracy theories on the rise, the campaign



## Security Incidents July 2012 - April 2013

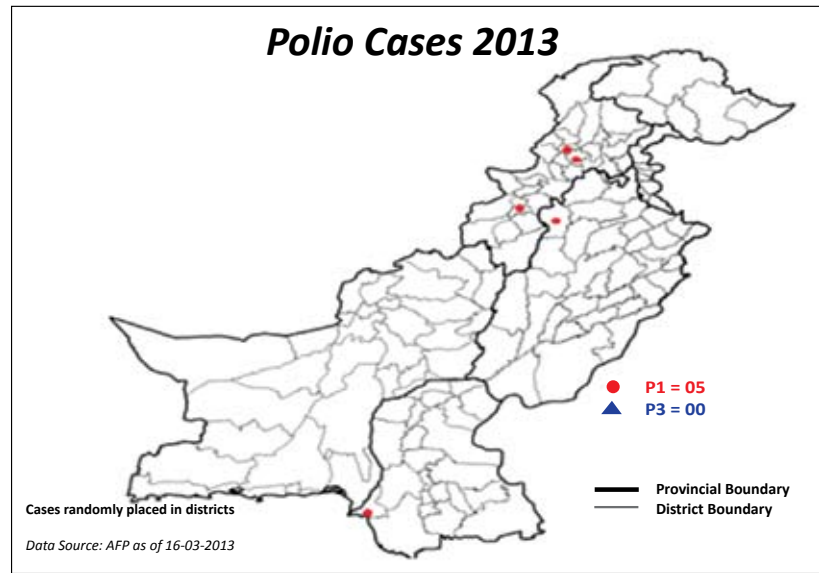
No.	Province	District	Date	Incident Details	Deaths	Injuries
1	Sindh	Gadap Town, Karachi	17-07-12	Motorbike riders attack WHO vehicle, resulting in injury of 1 International staff and WHO driver.	-	2
2	Sindh	Gadap Town, Karachi	18-07-12	UC polio worker Ishaq shot dead on second day of the campaign.	1	-
3	Balochistan	Quetta	16-10-12	Unknown gunmen kill polio vaccinator in Ali Zai Town near Eastern Bypass.	1	-
4	Sindh	Gadap Town, Karachi	17-12-12	UC polio worker Umar Farooq shot dead in Khadim Solangi Goth.	1	-
5	Sindh	Landhi Town, Karachi	18-12-12	Polio team members Madeeha and Fahmida shot dead in Gulshan-e-Bunir, Landhi Town.	2	-
6	Sindh	Baldia Town, Karachi	18-12-12	Polio team member Kaneez shot dead and Rashid injured.	1	1
7	Sindh	Orangi Town, Karachi	18-12-12	Attackers shoot dead polio Area In-Charge Naseema and injure Israr.	1	1
8	KP	Peshawar	18-12-12	Unknown person shot dead polio team member Farzana on Pajagi Road.	1	-
9	KP	Peshawar	19-12-12	Unknown gunmen riding on motorbike shoot dead polio team member Hilal.	1	-
10	KP	Charsadda	19-12-12	Unknown persons shoot dead polio team members Zakia LHS and Ayaz	2	-
11	KP	Swabi	28-01-13	Policeman escorting polio team shot dead by unknown individuals in district Swabi.	1	-
12	FATA	Kurram	31-01-13	Two Polio team members die in bomb blast.	2	-
13	KP	Mardan	26-02-13	Policeman escorting polio team shot dead by unknown persons in district Mardan.	1	-
14	KP	Mardan	10-04-13	Two policemen escorting polio team shot by unknown gunmen in district Mardan.	1	1
15	Sindh	Baldia Town, Karachi	16-04-13	Unknown assailants attack an anti-polio campaign, injuring 2	-	2
16	KP	Gomal Village, Tank	19-04-13	Attackers injure two male vaccinators on the field	-	2
<b>Total</b>					<b>16</b>	<b>9</b>

*Source: Prime Minister's Polio Monitoring and Coordination Cell*

as operational concerns, data on missing children, security issues and vaccine procurement are urgently addressed. Pakistan has had a stellar record in reducing polio cases without security concerns "and there is no reason why the country cannot do it. We have great hope from Pakistan despite the difficult concerns it is battling."

The streets are strewn with litter and sewage is open, allowing flies and mosquitoes to congregate with ease. Shah Allah Ditta is a quiet colony, near the federal capital, home to a conservative, yet vibrant, community. Most people here rely on daily wages and while the men go out to earn, the women stay behind to tend to the kids. However, nestled within this community are some strong and ambitious women; an anomaly in a place where most would expect women to stay indoors and refrain from appearing in public. A cramped area, with mud houses and shards of cloth that double as doors, this community remains relatively isolated yet increasingly populated.

Mehrunissa Shah\* is a Lady Health Worker (LHW) who entered the field some 15 years ago. Tall, soft-spoken yet authoritative, Shah is in her early forties and every vaccination season, goes door-to-door, happily administering vaccines to the children in the area. She is accompanied by a volunteer and a policeman. Like many



LHWs and supervisors, she too is deeply concerned about the escalated security threat and the impact it can have on anti-polio volunteers. "If law and order is not addressed and target killings continue, we might not have as many volunteers and that could jeopardize polio drives around the country."

Through the years, Shah has seen the attitude of families change. Vaccines were initially viewed with suspicion due to rumors of foreign interference and the elders in the villages discouraged it for religious reasons, citing its perceived unIslamic nature. However, apart from administering the vaccine, LHWs are also charged with the duty to create awareness, dispel the myths and work with religious leaders to encourage the vaccination. "Today, families are opening up and are asking for polio drops. This is a major change from how it was before. If at the grassroots level we can eradicate polio, then we can successfully attain a healthier Pakistan."

But the security threat remains very real. Earning a mere PKR250 for administering polio drops in the field, many young people have opted out of volunteering for fear of their lives. Mass media campaigns announcing dates and locations have been halted and most National Immunization Days

(NIDs) have been stopped due to security reasons, severely hampering progress. Annually, Pakistan conducts four Specialized NIDs (SNIDs) in high-risk areas and four NIDs, in attempts to attract minimal attention. However, polio workers continue to be at risk. Two of Shah's friends have been gunned down over the past year, instilling fear in those who continue to serve. Those still active are often pelted with stones, deemed 'immoral traitors' or accused to be foreign spies.

But brave and dedicated women like Shah understand the value of the work they do. They are deeply cognizant of the risks involved and can relate to the lives lost, on a personal level. But knowing that they are securing a healthy future for a child who might otherwise succumb to a fatal disease, is rewarding in its own way. According to the PM Polio Cell, today there are approximately 106,000 Lady Health Workers in Pakistan. When I ask if she feels afraid, Mehrunissa Shah looks right at me, confident and steady, "I am not afraid. It is our duty to the future of Pakistan. We will find a solution. We will not stop." **S**

*\*Names have been changed in the interest of privacy.*

*Arsla Jawaid is Associate Editor of SouthAsia. A Boston University graduate in International Relations, her focus is on foreign policy and security studies.*

Comparison of Polio Cases by Province/Region 2011, 2012 and 2013*			
Region/Province	No. of polio cases		
	2011	2012	2013*
Balochistan	73	4	-
FATA	59	20	-
Gilgit-Baltistan	1	1	
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	23	27	3
Punjab	9	2	1
Sindh	33	4	1
<b>Pakistan</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>5</b>

Data Source: AFP As of 16/3/2013

# SouthAsia Magazine wins US Genesis Award 2013



*Syed Rizvi received the 2013 Genesis Award on behalf of SouthAsia Magazine at a ceremony in Beverly Hills, California.*

Pakistan's Southasia Magazine has been declared winner of the US Genesis Award 2013 in the Brigitte Bardot International Print category. The other contender for the award was South Africa's The Star.

Presented by the The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), which is America's largest animal protection organization, the Genesis Awards celebrate the role that news and entertainment media play in raising awareness about animal issues. The Genesis Award ceremony was held on Saturday, March 23, 2013, at the Beverly Hilton in Beverly Hills, California.

This is the second time that Southasia Magazine has won the US Genesis Award. It won the Award for the first time in 2007. The other two contestants for the award on that occasion were The Evening Standard and The Sunday Times (both UK-based publi-

cations). The Magazine was described as 'Pakistan's monthly equivalent to Time magazine.' Southasia was also nominated for the US Genesis Award in 2012.

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) cares for animals but their primary mission is to prevent cruelty before it occurs. The Society seeks a humane and sustainable world for all animals — a world that will also benefit people. It works to reduce suffering and to create meaningful social change for animals by advocating for sensible public policies, investigating cruelty and working to enforce existing laws, educating the public about animal issues, joining with corporations on behalf of animal-friendly policies and conducting hands-on programs that makes a more humane world.

The HSUS seeks a humane and sustainable world for all animals—a world that will also benefit people. It

is America's mainstream force against cruelty, exploitation and neglect, as well as the most trusted voice extolling the human-animal bond.

Southasia Magazine has over the years played a meaningful to support this cause by regularly publishing articles on animal issues and bringing into the spotlight various aspects of maltreatment to animals in this part of the world. Since the South Asian region is not one of the most animal-friendly, the sustained advocacy by the magazine to protect animal rights, especially in light of the injunctions of Islam, has greatly helped focus public opinion on this very vital subject.

For its valuable contribution to supporting and promoting the cause of animal protection, Southasia magazine has been awarded the Genesis Award on two occasions - in 2007 and now in 2013. The magazine was also nominated for the Award in 2012. ■

# A Moving Riot of

Truck art has become a popular representation of Pakistani culture around the world. Beneath the bright colors is the language of symbolism and storytelling.

By Kiran Wajid



One of the most interesting features of Pakistani culture is the vision of trucks and buses covered in a riot of color and design. The vehicles may spit out diesel fumes and occupy the major part of the road, with drivers appearing to have a death wish but they certainly stand out due to the intricate artwork they are decked with.

Artwork on commercial vehicles is common in Pakistan as well as in many other countries, such as the Philippines, Indonesia, India, Bangladesh and parts of Central and South America. In fact, the techniques and materials used to decorate vehicles are more or less similar in almost all these countries. Pakistani truck art, however, is distinct because of the pervasiveness of vehicle decoration - from trucks and buses to vans, taxis, animal carts and even juice vendors' pushcarts (shared only by Afghanistan).

The process of decorating one's vehicle is an expensive one. It costs up to Rs. 500,000 and around six to 10 weeks to complete on a truck. Since most vehicles belong to fleets, it is customary for the fleet owners to ask the driver to get the truck decorated at the coachwork shop at company expense as per his liking, even though most trucks and buses have similar colors and typography. Given that the owner as well as the driver does not stand to reap any economic benefits from decorating their vehicle and the art form is pervasive, it is safe to assume that every privately owned truck in Pakistan is decorated. It is also obvi-

# Color

ous that the motivation to have one's vehicle decorated is purely emotional, sentimental and even religious. Often, the motifs found on these vehicles have more to them than mere aesthetic considerations. Furthermore, trucks are largely used for transporting cargo throughout the country and truck art is now considered one of the most popular forms of representational art in Pakistan.

Truck art in Pakistan has been extensively studied by both local as well foreign researchers and art enthusiasts, who have identified five different kinds of styles. The most commonly used is the Rawalpindi or Punjab style, which, as the name suggests, is found in (northern) Punjab, particularly Rawalpindi, Hasanabdal, Haripur and Gujranwala as well as Azad Kashmir. These trucks have an ornate metal cowl above the windshield and rely heavily on plastic appliqué in their decoration. Then there is the Swat style that is known for its carved wooden doors and limited use of plastic and hammered metalwork. The third is the Peshawar style, which is a mix between Rawalpindi and Swat, featuring carved wooden doors that are usually painted and have simple metal cowlings. The fourth is the Baloch form, based in southern and western Pakistan (Dera Ghazi Khan, Quetta and Karachi) and is the most elaborate because it extensively em-

ployes mosaic appliqué and chrome bumpers. Finally, there is the Karachi style, which is a combination of all the above-mentioned styles. One of the features of the Karachi style is the wooden relief work over the windshield, done in fluorescent paints.

The decorative motifs too can be divided into five categories: the idealised elements of life such as a utopian village, beautiful landscapes and women; elements of modern life, for example, political figures and symbols of patriotism; symbols such as horses, horns and items of clothing; religiously loaded symbols, such as eyes and fish; and obvious religious symbols and images, such as Buraq (the celestial horse believed to have carried the Prophet (PBUH) on a spiritual journey to heaven).

One can make sense then, of the Pakistani truck that at first glance appears to be an explosive expression of popular or folk art. The side panels are used to place the constantly moving driver in a social geography. The role played by the trucking company's name and routes is self-apparent in this function, but other images, particularly romanticised or idealised naturalistic paintings, are equally significant. The nomadic nature of the driver is critical to his self-conception, consciously articulated by him in conversation and in the music he listens to. He pines for an imagined home



from which he is absent by definition. The truck functions not only as his home away from home, but also as his means of livelihood and his partner. The last concern explains the general motivation to decorate the truck and to feminise it and endow it with bridal symbols.

The symbolism connected with the safety of the person and livelihood dominates the truck and also the trucker's behavior (visits to shrines, religious stickers adorning the interior of the truck, etc). The need to avoid misfortune and gain good fortune provides a simple explanation for the talismanic objects, symbols and explicit religious motifs on the truck. However, their specific nature and placement give evidence that truck decoration functions linguistically and that the choice of motifs and their location are the syntax through which varying messages are conveyed. ■

*Kiran Wajid is a seasoned journalist who writes on topics of diverse interest.*



Far removed from the popular Hollywood films and the colorful Indian films that take the lead when it comes to appealing to the global masses, 'Kollywood' tends to take a back seat. The term 'Kollywood' itself is unheard of for many South Asians. It is a very unfamiliar term that finds its roots in the capital city of Nepal, Kathmandu and refers to the Nepalese film industry. It is interesting though that in direct imitation of the term 'Hollywood', film industries in the subcontinent are referred to as some 'wood', such as Bollywood (Bombay), Lollywood (Lahore) and now Kollywood (Kathmandu).

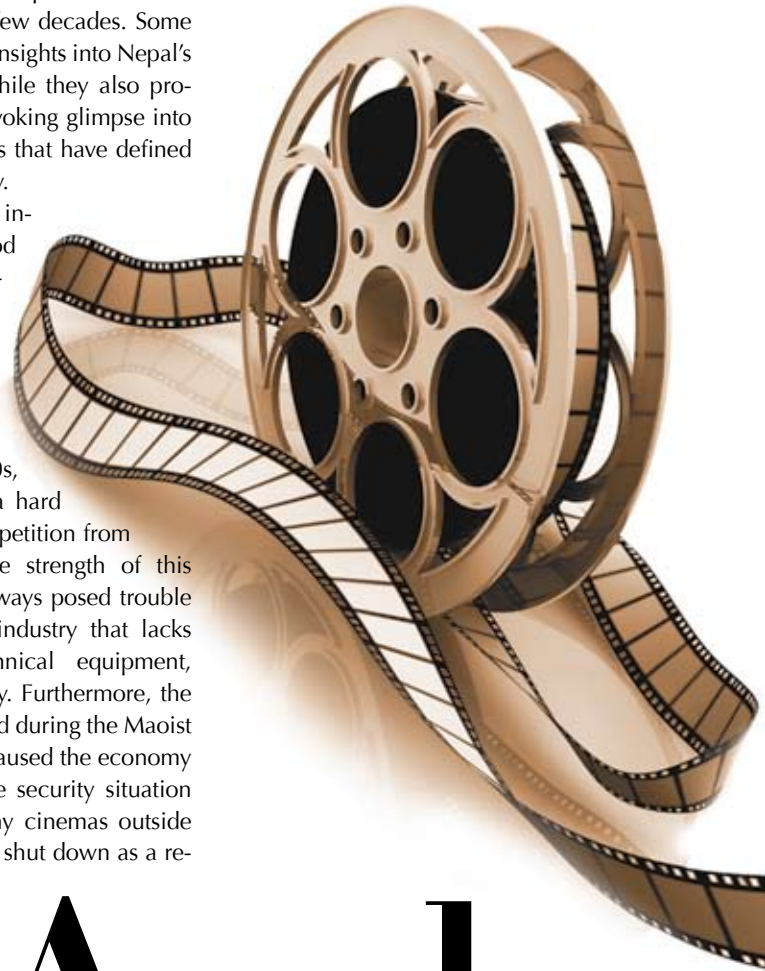
Kollywood, very much like the landlocked country it is associated with, remains largely isolated and confined. Very few people outside Nepal are aware of Kollywood's existence and yet it has been thriving since the first film in the Nepalese language, *Satya Harishchandra*, was released in 1951. The film was shot in Nepalese but was produced and released in Calcutta. The first official film to be produced in Nepal itself was *Aaama* in 1964. Two years later, *Maithi Ghar* was released, providing the ultimate kick-start for film

production nearly came to a standstill only to be revived once the situation had calmed down and democracy had

However, despite needing to borrow resources from India and being under-developed, the Nepalese film industry has managed to produce several films over the last few decades. Some of these offer deep insights into Nepal's cultural heritage while they also provide a thought-provoking glimpse into the many upheavals that have defined the country's history.

Ever since its inception, Kollywood has endured several setbacks, with more movies being produced in some years than in others. Towards the end of the 1990s, the industry took a hard hit from fierce competition from Indian movies. The strength of this competition has always posed trouble for Nepal's weak industry that lacks in expertise, technical equipment, quantity and quality. Furthermore, the violence that ensued during the Maoist rebellion in 1998 caused the economy to crumble and the security situation to deteriorate. Many cinemas outside the cities had to be shut down as a re-

production nearly came to a standstill only to be revived once the situation had calmed down and democracy had



# Wide Angle

The Nepalese film industry has a long way to go before it can free itself from the Indian influence and make its own mark.

By Fatima Siraj

production in the country. *Maithi Ghar*, not surprisingly, starred an Indian actress to foster the relationship between the Indian and Nepalese industry.

sult. During this period, very few films were made, the audience numbers declined sharply and many actors left the country to look for work abroad. Film

been restored in 2006.

Despite positive developments and political stability, the Indian film culture has strongly permeated the

Nepalese film industry because the audience demands Bollywood style movies. In the 1950s, the government had encouraged filmmakers to go to Bombay and learn the art of cinematography. However, incorporating a distinct, Nepalese identity in films has proven to be commercially non-viable as Indian movies continue to dominate local cinema. It is therefore not surprising that Nepalese films have failed to

been so pronounced that the Maoists included it in their recent manifesto: 'The invasion of colonial and imperial culture should be banned. Vulgar Hindi films, videos and magazines should be immediately outlawed.' The ban only led to the emergence of a black market demand for Hindi films and after democracy arrived, the ban was lifted leading to Indian films gaining further access in Nepal. With the

have given up. The works of Chiring Ritar, Navin Subba and Ravi Baral are a testament to originality and innovation and reflect the new era of Nepalese films. This is characterized by a refreshing approach that focuses more on unique presentations and stories as opposed to Indian-inspired themes. Such efforts are in accordance with the desire to build Nepal's image as an industry with its own unique voice.

Those associated with the industry harbor a positive attitude and realize the importance of producing films that can gain international critical acclaim. Efforts are being made to learn from the mistakes of the past, experiment with unique approaches and produce quality films that local and international audiences find worthy and refreshing. In order for this to happen successfully, a conscious effort is required to move away from Indian-inspired themes, dances and characters and instead focus on authentic Nepalese characteristics. It is inevitable that Indian-associated experts will help build the Nepalese film industry but this should be done only on a profes-



# View

gain popularity in the South Asian region. Furthermore, for those who fear cultural dominance and a loss of Nepalese identity, Bollywood has been perceived as a significant threat to Nepal's own cultural heritage. This threat has

increasing spread of cable television, Indian content continues to appeal to the masses, curbing the voice of indigenous themes that Nepalese directors are trying to experiment with.

This is not to say that the directors

sional and technical basis. Directors should be careful to maintain their distinctiveness on the creativity, script writing, performances and character development fronts. Such a measure would ensure that new Nepalese films are produced without being influenced by the dominant Indian culture that has inexplicably seeped into the Nepalese film industry. **S**

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

A country with an odd national agenda has always been creative in forming its national ideologies around seeking happiness for its people. Nestled in the heart of the Himalayas, it is a country of 1.2 million people and has pledged to become one of the first countries in the world to become a fully organic agrarian economy. In doing so, it has announced drastic plans to turn its homegrown food into 100% organic products.

Despite its small size, Bhutan has braved its way towards accomplishing this new goal by seeking to diminish tradeoffs between the environment and the economy. Apart from achieving long-term economic benefits by turning to organic farming, the crux of the country's collective effort is also a reflection of the philosophical objectives that stem from the thinking of Bhutan's Buddhist majority.

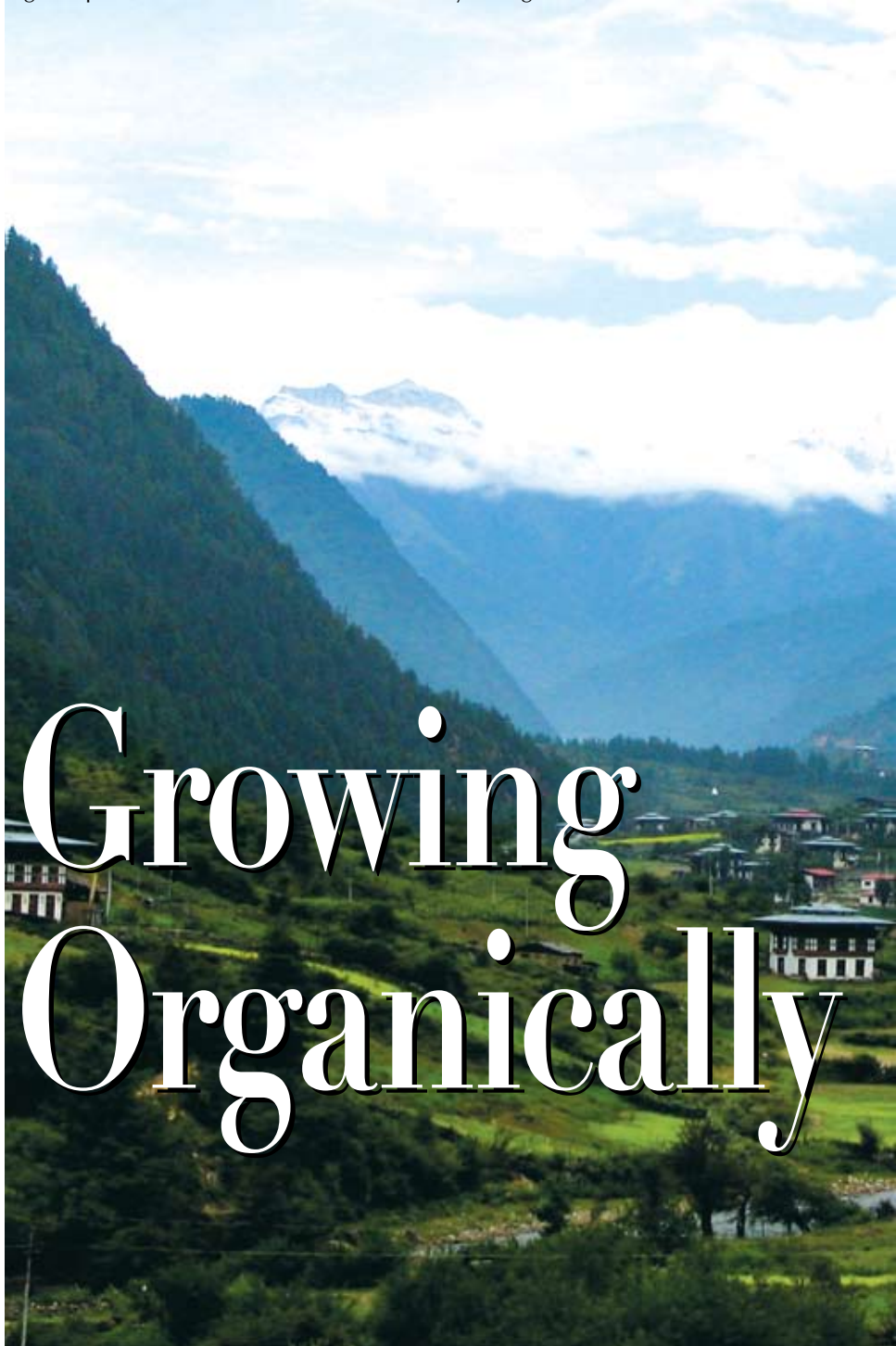
In the process of becoming an organic agrarian economy, Bhutan will indulge in strategies to eliminate the use of pesticides and herbicides. In return, it will make relevant use of waste from animals and farms as sources of fertilizer. An economic parallel to these objectives is that Bhutan's ministries have carefully evaluated how responsive the country can be towards interdependent sustainability linkages that will be affected due to climate change and possible food and energy crises. Organic farming will provide food security and will also create new avenues for potential business in the form of a new global market for organic agricultural products. This will help in expanding Bhutan's household income and its economy and bring improvements in national health as well.

However, Bhutan's move towards organic farming will negatively im-

pact some stakeholders. Even though Bhutan's agricultural sector is "partially organic," having used traditional farming techniques to date, the shift will cause a stir. One of the key stakeholders to suffer will be the farmers. On the one hand, they can look forward to better incomes through high quality production, marketing of organic products and efficient farm-

ing practices. On the other, while the farmers may enjoy some prime benefits, frequent spells of extreme and unpredictable weather will severely hamper the production of crops that are harvested without chemicals.

Farmers in Paro, a large farming district in Bhutan that practices subsistence and commercial farming, are already facing such constraints. With



# Growing Organically

every cultivation cycle, farmers face great difficulty in growing enough to feed their families and to sell. Government officials reporting from the area say that they have to distribute fertilizer as well as pesticides in large quantities in order to help the farmers meet the growing demand. One of the most affected types of crop is the chili crop which now requires

more pesticides as compared to previous years.

Farmers who previously relied on organic farming are now facing difficulties not only because of the erratic nature of the weather but also due to the cultural shift in Bhutan where children are now studying. As a result, there are fewer hands to help on the farm and without fertilizers there

is lesser capacity to grow more.

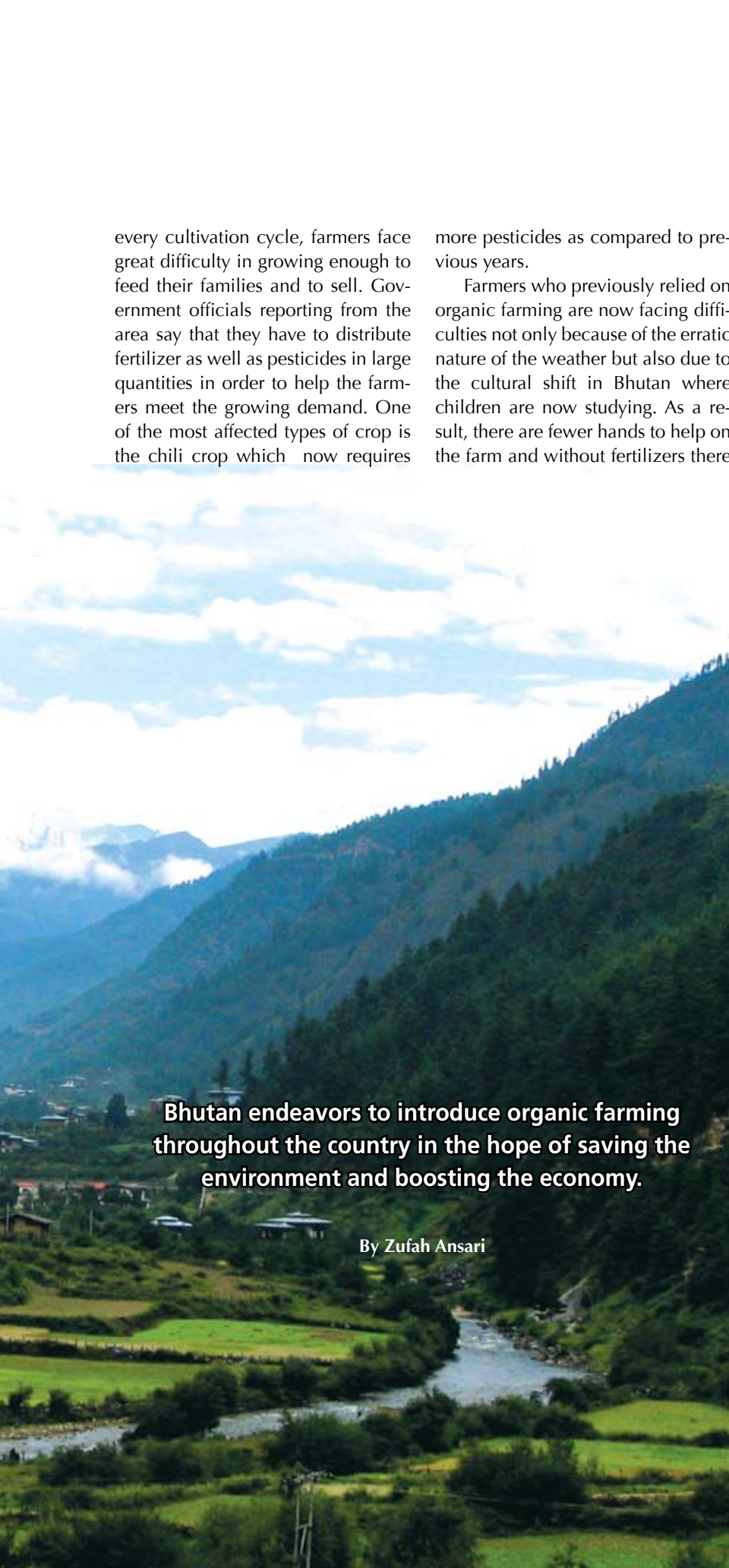
While on the consumer side, organic farming will bring healthier forms of agricultural produce to the market but it will also expose the consumers to cheaper imported alternatives. This situation might worsen if the products are largely used to instigate exports as there is a growing global market for organically grown products and create a dearth locally.

Nonetheless, challenging situations are pertinent to initiatives rolled out on a macro level. Bhutan, as well as other parts of Asia, where small farm holders are abundant, is developing new techniques to counter the loss of soil quality and is looking at ways to grow more while staying within the parameters of organic farming.

One such method is the placement of the "Sustainable Root Intensification" (SRI) system, which has been designed to standardize the amount of water required by the crop and the right age at which the seedlings are to be planted out. This new SRI technique has yielded results in form of doubled organic produce without the use of any synthetic crop enhancers. Besides SRI, initiatives are underway to revise the amount of irrigated land under use and increase the use of the traditional methods that do not require a heavy installment of inputs and are pest resistance.

This shift to organic farming will be useful as far as the export base of Bhutan is concerned. Bhutan exports around 100 tons of red rice to USA and Europe every year. With its ability and inclination to expand further towards organic agriculture, the country can also enter the export markets of China and India. **S**

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



**Bhutan endeavors to introduce organic farming throughout the country in the hope of saving the environment and boosting the economy.**

**By Zufah Ansari**

In the 18th century, Tamils arrived in British Sri Lanka, a Buddhist Sinhalese majority area, as laborers for colonial plantations. Over time, this initial minority multiplied and constituted a strong 13% of the total population. Feeling threatened by a growing minority, the Sinhalese imposed their culture on the Tamil minorities; a move

and took on a new life as President Mahinda Rajapaksa's government came to power in 2005 with a promise to crush the LTTE. The government initiated an unrelenting and extremely successful campaign to destroy the LTTE and, over a period of two years, a revitalized Sri Lankan military defeated the LTTE in numerous battles. The LTTE finally con-

timidate native Tamils. Politicians and analysts argue that disturbing developments have taken place in recent times such as the renaming of Tamil villages, redefinition of village and town boundaries, demolishing of Hindu temples as well as lack of support and funding for internally displaced Tamil families point towards a systematic eradication of the



**Despite the end of the civil war, a systematic pogrom of Tamils in Sri Lanka has raised serious concerns about the country's future and its relationship with India.**

**By Daniah Ishtiaq**

that isolated the Tamils and effectively made them second class citizens in Sri Lanka. The Sinhalese policy of exclusion eventually led to the formulation of both legitimate and illegitimate resistance movements by the Tamils, the most popular of which was the LTTE - Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (more famously known as the Tamil Tigers), in the 1970s.

Despite international efforts towards reconciliation, the struggle continued

ceded defeat on May 17, 2009, ending 26 years of open conflict.

Despite the end of an era of overt warfare, allegations are rife regarding covert attempts to put the Tamils at a disadvantage. These include a lack of funds allocated to schools, hospitals and infrastructure in predominantly Tamil areas, the promotion of Sinhala settlements on Tamil land to economically hamper development and finally the deployment of army troops to in-

terrupt once significant Tamil culture.

One can argue that cultural heritage is irreplaceable and its desecration is inexcusable, no matter how bloody or violent a history the country has had. The preservation of any culture demonstrates the necessity of protecting its past. To destroy temples or other forms of physical property, including art and architecture, of a minority that still lives and breathes on the same soil is a violent desecration of their heritage that

not only belongs to the Tamil minority but also to the combined culture of what is present-day Sri Lanka. Furthermore, denying Tamils the right to freely practice their culture and religion hampers the intangible elements, which are the fundamentals that breathe life into the universal set of all the cultures that are a part of the country. However, such strategy serves the current government especially well as it will not allow the Tamils much opportunity to collectively rebel against the establishment again.

On the other hand, a case can be made that the 'allegations' are merely allegations and should not be taken at

for immediate action against what he calls 'a systematic program of erasing the Tamil culture from Sri Lanka.' He asserts that India has an undue moral obligation to get involved and put an end to the eradication of a culture and religion in its boundaries. Indeed, he has argued that Tamils in Sri Lanka are living in an oppressive environment.

The relationship between India and Sri Lanka is a multifaceted one with tremendous scope for significant expansion and rapid improvement in the coming years. Be it in trade or bilateral agreements, India and Sri Lanka will need to move off the thin ice they are

To destroy temples or other forms of physical property, including art and architecture, of a minority that still lives and breathes on the same soil is a violent desecration of their heritage that not only belongs to the Tamil minority but also to the combined culture of what is present-day Sri Lanka.

face value due to the tumultuous history of the region and hence there is more to the story than meets the eye. The Sri Lankan government can argue that this is not a planned squelching of Tamil culture but a natural order of things as society evolves, transforms and changes in continuity as it has in the past. There is nothing remotely stagnant about culture and it instead evolves with time. Each culture will always be separate and autonomous; merely changing a street name does not comprise an elaborate strategy aimed at sabotaging a culture.

However, given the history, the first scenario is most likely. DMK (a state political party in the states of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry India) President, M. Karunanidhi has voiced concern to both the Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi in a letter where he has appealed

on as issues of trust and cooperation remain. Having said this, a speedy reconciliation process in Sri Lanka (between the Tamils and Sinhalese) will have a salutary impact on further strengthening bilateral relations between India and Sri Lanka.

The US has already welcomed the passage of a resolution on Sri Lanka, sponsored by it at the UNHRC, saying the vote has sent a clear signal to Colombo that the international community is committed to promoting peace and stability in the country. Unrest is, however, at a peak in Tamil Nadu, a community that demands firm Indian action against Colombo for alleged war crimes and subsequent human rights violations in the final phase of the Eelam war in 2009. ■

*Daniah Ishtiaq is an MBA, who writes on topics of regional interest.*

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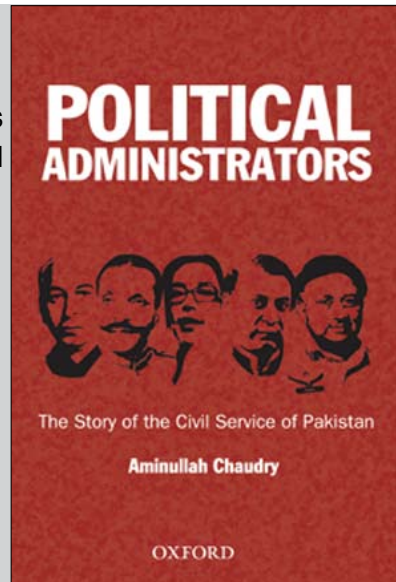
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# Rise and Fall of the Civil Service of Pakistan

**Title:** Political Administrators  
- The Story of the Civil  
Service of Pakistan  
**Author:** Aminullah Chaudry  
**Publisher:** Oxford University  
Press (May 2011)  
**Pages:** 404, Hardback  
**Price:** PKR 895  
**ISBN:** 9780199061716

*Reviewed By S.G. Jilane*



There was a time when the Civil Service was the most coveted and most envied in India and Pakistan. Its glamor made it the ultimate aspiration of all educated young men. When the East India Company had dug its feet in India and turned from just traders to rulers, they needed people to look after the law and order, settle land issues and collect revenue. Thus was born the covenanted Civil Service (CSS).

After India came under the direct control of the Crown, the British government created a class of people who acted as “interpreters” between the British rulers and the millions they governed. This was the Indian Civil Service, (ICS), controlled directly by the Secretary of State for India at Whitehall. Their duty was to assist in the perpetuation of the Raj. The common perception that the ICS was completely apolitical and only the CSP “played politics” is, therefore, not correct,

The procedure for recruitment and terms of service were clearly laid down. The officers were given their mandate and full authority to fulfill it. With job security guaranteed, they went about their task with missionary zeal and delivered.

Gradually, with the introduction of reforms towards self-government

and induction of Indians in the ICS, political inclination among Indian ICS officers became more pronounced. Nonetheless, while some Hindu ICS officers openly associated with Congress leaders, Muslim officers kept aloof from the Muslim League. District officers were the masters of all they surveyed. But they were also the *mai-baap* of the people under their charge and as such they dutifully looked after their wellbeing. They also demonstrated the highest probity, so as to serve as models for the members of the Subordinate Civil Service under them. For example, S. B. Hatch-Barnwell, ICS, Member, Board of Revenue in East Pakistan, came to the secretariat riding a bicycle till the very last day of his service.

With the creation of Pakistan, not only the nomenclature was changed first from ICS to Pakistan Administrative Service (PAS) following India’s example, and finally to Civil Service of Pakistan (CSP), but the Service also underwent a sea change. Some rules had to be discarded due to genuine compulsions. For example, in the old days, ICS officers were allocated permanently to provinces other than their home province, which then became their home. But no East Pakistani officer could accept a permanent posting to any province in West Pakistan.

At a very early stage the CSP developed contempt for politicians for a variety of reasons. It also discovered that alliance with the army was beneficial to their interests. By 1967, therefore, when the author joined the service, “Ayub’s fortunes were on the wane; not so the CSP.”

The CSP had reached the peak of its power. But power on an unprecedented scale in the newly independent country also led to corruption as its logical concomitant. The hallowed traditions of the ICS that had lent it its aura were forgotten. The evil was not limited to graft. It included even moral depravity and metastasized all over the system. One ICS officer seduced the wife of East Pakistan governor’s military secretary, Col. Keightly and lived with her openly in the Dhaka Club. A CSP seduced the wife of a local doctor when he was district magistrate in Jessore (East Pakistan).

Nemesis was therefore foretold. Through repeated purges and the induction of swarms of army officers, the CSP was battered out of shape. “In 1973 Z.A. Bhutto destroyed and buried the Civil Service of Pakistan. In 2001 Lt. Gen. Tanvir Hussain Naqvi destroyed whatever little ability it had to deliver.” (p. 138) Rewarding loyalists and punishing conscientious officers by elected rulers had become

routine quite early. Today, a junior grade 21 officer is appointed chief secretary, superseding “twenty-nine grade 22 and ninety-three grade 21 DMG colleagues.” (p. 336)

All this and much more has been chronicled by Aminullah Chaudry, a retired CSP of the 1967 batch in his seminal book, *Political Administrators*. His tragic experience as an unwitting casualty in the cross-fire between the prime minister and the army chief in 1999 is an eye-opener. On the one side was Nawaz Sharif ordering him to prevent the PIA flight from Colombo with Pervez Musharraf on board, from landing anywhere in Pakistan; on the other was the military, demanding that the plane must land at Karachi airport. Previously, Nawaz Sharif had removed Chaudry from his coveted office as Commissioner Lahore division simply because he had attended the funeral of Aitezaz Ahsan’s father. Therefore, Chaudry took special care to obey the prime minister’s order without a question and blocked the Karachi air-

port runway. All he did was report the plane’s fuel position to the PM’s office to which he received no response.

Therefore, after the coup, he was kept in jail. He remained under suspension from October 1999 till 2003. No departmental proceedings were conducted and even after he was reinstated he was not given any posting until he retired in 2004. That it happened with a grade-22 officer, the highest rank in the service, underscores the status to which DMG has been reduced.

The book is not only the history of the Civil Service from its origin to its present unenviable state chronicled with painstaking detail, it is also the author’s memoirs, starting with the halcyon days of his training at the Civil Service Academy. He narrates his experience in various field and staff appointments, as sub-divisional officer, deputy secretary in the provincial government, deputy commissioner, divisional commissioner, principal secretary to the prime minister to his

final assignment as director general Civil Aviation Authority and secretary, Aviation Division, which proved to be his swan song.

As the first civilian officer ever appointed to this post, Chaudry had landed into the cross hair of the PAF whose exclusive domain it had previously been. And when he tried to enforce rules, he came into perpetual conflict with the PIA, PAF and even the GHQ.

The book is a gold mine of inside information on how the administration functions at different levels. The details of pulls, pressures, intrigues and blatant disregard of rules, are all described with candor. General readers would find it useful as a history of civil service in Pakistan, but for the new entrants into the DMG, it should be a must read to prepare them for the difficult road ahead. **S**

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



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By Anees Jillani

# Lean In in Pakistan

The American media is in the habit of generating interesting debates. A few months back, it was Yale Law professor Amy Chua's book titled 'Tiger Mom' where she defended her strict methods of parenting. This controversy had hardly died down that now Facebook's Chief Operating Officer, Sheryl Sandberg, has generated an intense discussion by arguing in her book 'Lean In: Women, Work and the Will to Lead' that "if more women lean in, (the women) can change the power structure of (their) world and expand opportunities." The 43-year-old COO has followed the book with a campaign, LeanIn.org, a nonprofit foundation. Some now equate her crusade with the most ambitious mission to reboot feminism and reframe discussions of gender since the launch of Ms. magazine in 1971.

Sandberg's central argument is that stereotypes hold women back, which she calls Catch-22 of women's success-likability penalty. She says, "As women get more powerful, they get less likable. I see women holding themselves back because of this." She is of the view that women face a double standard: if they turn down an assignment, they are seen as difficult, if they ask for a promotion, they are seen as too aggressive.

Sandberg has also triggered the eternal question of nature versus nurture since the time women started to work. She says that there are no doubt biological differences between males and females but, according to her, the desire for leadership, winning or excelling, is not hardwired biology. She argues that we socialize "our daughters to nurture and our boys to lead. We call our daughters bossy and we never call our sons bossy."

America, despite being the most advanced and powerful country in the West, is also one of the most conservative. As a result, there are still few female executives in organizations and on the company Boards.

But that is America. When we compare it with our country and our neighbors, the situation in the West stands in stark contrast. Women here are constitutionally allowed to vote; they are given special seats in our assemblies thanks to the reforms generated by General Musharraf; they have an exclusive bank; a few token female police stations and certain other schemes launched from time to time. Benazir Bhutto in 1988 became the first woman PM in any Muslim country. Many of our neighboring countries lack all of these. Despite this, with the exception of Afghanistan, the women in the whole of South Asia are better off than in Pakistan.

No country, even those like Saudi Arabia, Iran and North Korea, can fight globalization. Women, particularly the youngsters who constitute the majority in all South Asian countries, discover daily how their counterparts in the rest of the world are advancing and progressing. The clock of progress cannot be held back. Resultantly, a section of our populace continues to advance. However, another big chunk is not just held back but perhaps put in the reverse gear on religious and social grounds. My mother used to ride a bicycle in the fifties during her college days in a small town in the Punjab but it is unthinkable for my daughters to do so even in Pakistan's capital.

In such a situation where women cannot even vote and think about driving (as in the tribal areas and parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), the American debate generated by Sandberg about the invisible barrier in women's minds about aspiring to senior positions appear to be misplaced. ■

*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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