

INTERNATIONAL
The Egyptian Conundrum

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INSIDE:

PAKISTAN

Whither Terrorism?

INDIA

Armed and Dangerous

AFGHANISTAN

Beyond the endgame

Bangladesh

Rebirth of an Industry

Afghanistan	Afg. 50
Australia	AS 6
Bangladesh	Taka 65
Bhutan	NU 45
Canada	CS 6
China	RMB 30
France	Fr 30
Hong Kong	HK\$ 30
India	Rs. 65
Japan	¥ 500
Korea	Won 3000
Malaysia	RM 6
Maldives	Rf 45
Myanmar	MMK 10
Nepal	NcRs. 75
New Zealand	NZ\$ 7
Pakistan	Rs. 150
Philippines	P 75
Saudi Arabia	SR 15
Singapore	S\$ 8
Sri Lanka	Rs. 100
Thailand	B 100
Turkey	Lira. 2
UAE	AED 10
UK	£ 3
USA	\$ 4.9

PAKISTAN

THE NEXT ARMY CHIEF

Will the next COAS be his own man – or will he take orders from the Prime Minister?





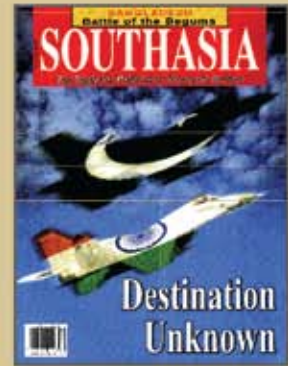
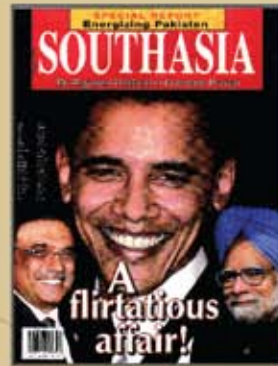
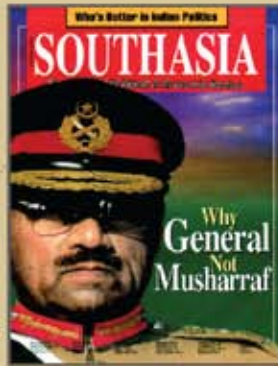
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Contents

16

THE NEXT ARMY CHIEF

The search for the Next Army Chief



Pakistan 28

Whither Terrorism?

What is terrorism for one may be a freedom struggle for another.



India

30

Armed and Dangerous

India is fast acquiring new military weapons.

Afghanistan

33

Beyond the endgame

The US exit in 2014 will give way to more uncertainties.

Sri Lanka

38

The persecution of Sri Lankan Muslims

The Muslims in Sri Lanka look forward to a better deal.

36

Bangladesh

Rebirth of an Industry

Labor Laws in Bangladesh may change for the better.





44

INTERNATIONAL

The Egyptian Conundrum

Egypt faces a serious political dilemma.



Technology

Why Nepal needs Information Technology

Nepal is becoming an IT-savvy nation.

52

Human Trade

Tourism of Another kind

Southasia also has stories of child exploitation.

58

48

Media

The many faces of Afghan media

There is a media revolution coming in Afghanistan.

54

Culture

Why culture matters

Customs and traditions make up cultural norms.



REGULAR FEATURES

Editor's Mail	8
On Record	11
Briefing	12

COVER STORY

The Search for the Next Army Chief	16
Interview: Lt. Gen. (R) Talat Masood	18
Passing the Baton	21
Comments	24
A Matter of Choice	26

REGION

Pakistan

Whither Terrorism	28
-------------------	----

India

Armed and Dangerous	30
---------------------	----

Afghanistan

Beyond the endgame	33
--------------------	----

Bangladesh

Rebirth of and Industry	36
-------------------------	----

Sri Lanka

The persecution of Sri Lankan Muslims	38
---------------------------------------	----

Maldives

Managing Water Resources	40
--------------------------	----

INTERNATIONAL

EGYPT

The Egyptian Conundrum	44
------------------------	----

FEATURE

Media

The many faces of Afghan media	48
--------------------------------	----

Nutrition

Right to Food	50
---------------	----

Technology

Why Nepal needs Information Technology	52
--	----

Culture

Why culture matters	54
---------------------	----

Tourism

Heaven on earth	56
-----------------	----

Human Trade

Tourism of Another Kind	58
-------------------------	----

BOOKS & REVIEWS

- What's really wrong with Pakistan?	60
- Zinda Bhaag - another success in isolation	61

THE LAST STOP

Turning the other cheek to the Indians	62
--	----

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Fast Forward to Economic Development

The South Asia Economic Summit (SAES) is being held in Colombo from September 2 to 4 this year. It will be hosted by Sri Lanka's leading economic policy think tank, the Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka (IPS). The event was instituted in 2008 and is held in a different South Asian country each time. The Summit has become the premier regional event that debates socio-economic issues facing South Asia and brings together leading experts from academia, government, civil society and the private sector in this region. The agenda for this year's SAES concerns the various critical issues that face the economies and people of South Asia, including the imperatives for closer regional cooperation. The Summit is expected to host around 150 foreign delegates from South Asia and beyond, and will feature several special events including a tele-vised debate on regional economic integration.

It is heartening to note that in this endeavour, which has been initiated from within the region, speakers will consider the various growth opportunities and challenges that South Asia has on offer in the context of changing global economic dynamics. This makes the Summit comparable to the World Economic Forum which is held every year in Davos, Switzerland. The SAES Summit theme this year is 'Towards a Stronger, Dynamic, and Inclusive South Asia' and it is expected over the three days of deliberations, that various aspects of the theme will be discussed within the regional context.

Along with the Summit's proceedings, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) will conduct a Policy Dialogue on 'Building Resilience to Natural Disasters and Major Economic Crises'. South Asia has been battered in recent years by a relentless series of shocks linked to natural disasters and economic crises. The region is particularly vulnerable to disasters caused by natural hazards, with recurring floods, drought, earthquakes and landslides causing loss of life and widespread damage. For example, in Pakistan the estimated damage resulting from the 2010 floods was close to \$10 billion. The region has also been hard hit by economic shocks, such as the 2008 financial crisis and convulsions in global markets that led to rocketing food and energy prices. The traditional approach has been to consider such events individually but this is becoming increasingly unrealistic. Today, natural disasters and economic crises are interlinked by and large, giving rise to complex combinations of risk. Governments across South Asia often find themselves dealing with overlapping shocks that demand a more comprehensive and systemic approach to building resilience. This means that the capacity of countries to withstand, adapt to, and recover from natural disasters and major economic crises, will be discussed threadbare so that their people can continue to lead the kind of life they value.

The broad themes of the Summit - harnessing human capital; tackling environmental challenges and climate change; managing intra-country growth disparities; and supporting the competitiveness of private-sector enterprises - are expected to bring into focus some basic issues that the region needs to contend with in order to carve a positive future course. Since 2008, the Summit has become the premier regional event that debates socio-economic issues facing South Asia. A lack of engagement in economic policy-making processes has been a limiting factor to growth and regional integration in these countries. It is envisioned that the policy recommendations which emerge from the Summit would positively influence the direction of official processes in the various countries and those of individual governments in the region.



Syed Jawaid Iqbal

Combating the Taliban

In your August Cover Story, 'The



Good, the Bad and the Ugly', you have drawn attention to the Taliban question that dogs the heels of the Pakistani nation as well as the region and impacts all round progress. This especially means that Pakistan, for one, does not fall in line with other nations of the region on the anvil of development. It is a pity that this nuclear armed country with a major global population and one of the world's largest standing armies known for its professionalism, has become hostage to a few thousand Taliban operatives. While it is true that Pakistan needs its army as a deterrent to enemies on both its eastern and western borders, it must start assigning a different kind of combat role to a portion of its forces to fight the Taliban. It is certain that Pakistan army commanders have already realized this and are raising such a force accordingly.

It must also be taken into account that it was in the first place the Pakistan army which had taken the initiative to raise the Taliban forces at the behest of the Americans in order to fight the Soviets. Now that times have changed and the Taliban have neither

the Soviets to fight against nor are they called upon to act as infiltrators on the Kashmir front, they have turned their guns against Pakistan itself. The Pakistani armed forces must keep many steps ahead and start looking for ways to combat the Taliban by using the same techniques that these fighters use. Rather than sticking to methods of conventional warfare, Pakistani combatants now need to pick up the Taliban techniques and teach the perpetrators of terror a few lessons of their own.

Muhammad Amir
Islamabad, Pakistan

New Iranian President

The newly elected Iranian president, Hassan Rowhani, brings a lot of hope to Iran – a country that has been beleaguered by isolationism for a long time and all because its leader Mahmoud Ahmadinejad did not see eye to eye with the west and it did not matter to him how much his country suffered because of this attitude. President Hassan Rowhani has been elected as the new Iranian President with the hope that he will bring Iran back into the mainstream and will enable it to take advantage of the fruits of being a major oil producing country.



Rowhani begins his four-year term as Iran faces grave challenges over its ailing economy and international isolation due to the controversial policies of his firebrand predecessor. It is hoped the new government of Iran will take fundamental steps in elevating the country's position based on national interest and work towards lifting of the oppressive sanctions. The nation obviously needs a national determination to keep a distance from extremism. It must now concentrate on building the nation.

Hari Govind
Dehli, India

Alternate Energy

Finding new sources of energy is an issue that confronts all nations of the



world but particularly the countries of South Asia. Water has been a traditional source and hydroelectricity is one method of power generation that has dominated the power mix in nations like India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. However, in this region of abundant sun and wind, it is quite perplexing that such alternative energy sources have not been fully exploited.

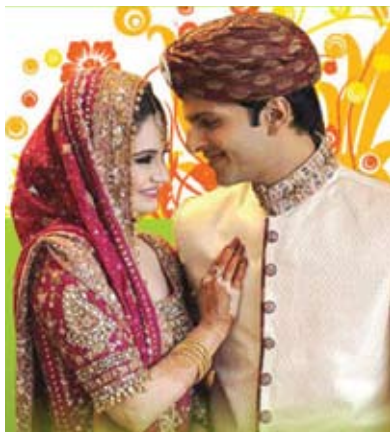
It must go to the credit of India that it has made good use of its wind corridor on the coast of Gujrat and is transmitting valuable electricity to various parts of the country. In Pakistan too,

some institutions are now taking initiatives to exploit the abundant availability of wind in regions like Gharo on the Sind coast and have put up wind power projects. Solar energy, it must be said, is an expensive proposition but had these and other nations in South Asia been serious, they could have devised cheaper means to exploit solar energy and put it to common use. Coal is also a cheap alternative and again, despite its vast coal resources, Pakistan has miserably failed to tap this source to its own advantage and continues to burn expensive gas or import furnace oil to produce electricity. Perhaps the energy crunch will serve as the great game changer and become a catalyst in pushing these and other nations to exploit available alternate energy sources!

Shahida Aziz
Abu Dhabi, UAE

The perils of online matrimonial services

This is with reference to the story that appeared in South Asia's August issue about matrimonial websites. While I agree that matrimonial websites are a good way to find a match for all those looking for a life partner, I have to say that it does not come without its own risks. For starters, it is quite easy to fool someone on the internet. One can never know for sure who the person sitting at the other side of the



computer screen is since creating a fake identity is child's play. These sites may be reliable but at the end of the day, even they cannot guarantee the perfect match. Also, if something goes wrong, then there is no one to hold accountable. So if you enlist the services of a matrimonial website, make sure that you do your background check first.

Razi Iftikhar
Karachi, Pakistan

Amazon in India



Your story on Amazon India was an interesting read since it provided an insight into the online shopping business in the country. It is a commonly known fact that retail has picked up in India and that is evident from the countless advertisements seen on television that aim to sell clothing, shoes, bags, cosmetics and the works. In this regard, the advent of Amazon India just increases the window of opportunity for up and coming businesses as far as retail is concerned. Online shopping may not have picked up the way it has in the West, but it is certainly making waves and is a convenient alternative for people who are too busy to go the store or do not want to deal with the hassle of it all.

Aruna Saman
Colombo, Sri Lanka

Indo-Pak ties

The story on Indo-Pak ties aptly summarized all that has transpired

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between India and Pakistan in the last decade or so. It's sad that two countries that have so much in common and are immediate neighbours have still not been able to resolve their differences even though so many years



have passed. When things finally took a turn for the better, the 2008 Mumbai attacks damaged whatever little progress had been made and relations soured immediately after that. One hopes that the current leaders will finally be able to look past their differences and work towards mutual cooperation, understanding and the betterment of trade relations.

Seema Rakib
Dhaka, Bangladesh

UPCOMING B2B EVENTS ...



5 - 7 September 2013, Expo Centre Lahore
11th International Plastics & Packaging
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5 - 7 September 2013, Expo Centre Lahore
10th Edition of the International Food, Beverage
& Packaging Technology Trade Fair
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5 - 7 September 2013, Expo Centre Lahore
2nd International Food, Beverages &
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26 - 28 November 2013, Karachi Expo Centre
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25-27 February 2014
Pak-China Friendship Centre, Islamabad
10th International Safety & Security Exhibition
Website: www.safesecurepakistan.com
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28 - 30 May 2014, Expo Centre Lahore
12th International Exhibition for the Energy Industry
Website: www.pogee.com.pk
E-mail: info@pogee.com.pk



2014, Expo Centre Lahore
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"This is not simply a matter pertaining to the person of Pervez Musharraf as it can open a Pandora box. We should all rise above our personal and partisan interests and focus on the problems of the masses, otherwise there will be no winners and everybody will be the loser "

Ch. Shujaat Hussain
Former Prime Minister of Pakistan



"Poverty is just a state of mind. It does not mean the scarcity of food, money or material things. If one possesses self-confidence, then one can overcome poverty,"

Rahul Gandhi
Indian Political Leader



" Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's grandson and Benazir Bhutto's son is calling on you today. This is a movement of peace and it will rest only after ushering in peace and security in Pakistan "

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari
Chairman Pakistan People's Party



"MalalaDay is not my day, today is the day of every woman, boy and girl who has raised their voice for their rights"

Malala Yousafzai
Pakistani Education Activist



"Americans are not used to being bombed in their beds, but if you come from anywhere outside America, it's not highly unusual."

Mira Nair
Indian Film Director



"I do not rule out the possibility of being prime minister of India one day, but there is still time."

Lalu Prasad Yadav, Indian politician



" I think Pakistan is a great side. They've got great balance, they've got match-winning cricketers, not just one but quite a lot of them, so any opposition is way of them and we are not going to take anything lightly or for granted."

Kumar Sangakkara
Sri Lankan Cricketer



"It is impossible to practice parliamentary politics without having patience, decency, politeness and courtesy."

Khaleda Zia
Former Prime Minister of Bangladesh



"My disappointment and criticism was aimed towards the presiding officers in the elections "

Imran Khan
Chairman Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf Party



"The more I compose, the more I know that I don't know it all. I think it's a good way to start. If you think you know it all, the work becomes a repetition of what you've already done."

A.R. Rahman
Indian Composer



"We knocked on the doors of all concerned authorities. No one listened to our voice. So, we had to block the highway ... We will continue to fight unless all crusher plants are removed from the Kamala River. "

Ram Baran Yadav
President of Nepal



"The remarkable ways in which the body has reacted is just phenomenal. No wonder I became religious, because you don't know why something's happening to you and you don't know how you bounced back."

Amitabh Bachchan
Indian Film Actor

PAKISTAN

Rs 480 billion circular debt cleared

Despite its many faults, the PML-N government successfully cleared the energy sector's circular debt worth 480 billion rupees in just 47 days after coming to power.

Circular debt is the amount of cash shortfall within the Central Power Purchasing Agency (CPPA) that it cannot pay to power supply companies. This shortfall is the result of (a) the difference between the actual cost of providing electricity in relation to revenues realized by the power distribution companies (DISCOs) from sales to customers plus subsidies; and (b) insufficient payments by the DISCOs to the CPPA out of realized revenue as they give priority to their own cash flow needs.

This revenue shortfall cascades through the entire energy supply chain, from electricity generators to fuel suppliers, refiners and producers, resulting in a shortage of fuel supply to the public sector thermal generating companies (GENCOs), a reduction in power generated by Independent Power Producers (IPPs) and an increase in load shedding.

The government cleared the Rs 480 billion owed to power producing entities while a balance of Rs 23 billion represented the claims pending settlement. A small amount would be, however, withheld pending clearance. The total overdue receivables of IPPs and other GENCOs stood at a gross transaction amount of Rs 503.025 billion but after deducting the liquidated damages of Rs 22.919 billion, it came

to Rs 480.109 billion, which the government accordingly paid.

The measure not only resulted in addition of 1700MW to the national grid but also buoyed foreign investors who are now looking forward to making investments in the energy sector in Pakistan. Finance Minister Ishaq Dar said the circular debt that had been adversely affecting energy production had been virtually settled.

The finance minister further said that the conclusion of a programme with the IMF had sent very positive signals to the financial world, which had welcomed the measures taken by Nawaz Sharif for stabilizing the economy and creating an investor-friendly climate. Ishaq Dar said the IMF programme would provide comfort to the investors and enhance their confidence in Pakistan. **S**



AFGHANISTAN

Keeping track of development projects

Since its troops swept into Afghanistan 12 years ago, the United States has dispatched hundreds of state department employees to keep track of the massive American investment in developing the country. It seems though that this is now ending. The Americans have tried to nurture the local administration to provide stability after US troops leave but some US officials say they were removed from their regional posts while they were still identifying important problems of corruption and abuse.

Now ways are being devised to monitor US-funded projects. For this, the Americans may hire private firms that will submit photos with time and location stamps to prove they visited the sites. Firms in Kabul might call provinces by phone to ask villagers about education and nutrition. Contractors might also assess the progress of dams or roads by flying overhead and capturing aerial images. In recent years US officials advised the local government to improve monitoring of development projects which have a history of wastage. **S**



India launches indigenous aircraft carrier

India launched its first indigenously-built aircraft carrier, a landmark moment in the \$5 billion project that seeks to promote the country's power and check the rising influence of China.

When the INS Vikrant comes into full service in 2018, India will become the fifth nation to have designed and built its own aircraft carrier, pushing ahead of China to join an elite club that includes Britain, France, Russia



and the United States.

"It's a remarkable milestone," Defence Minister AK Antony said as he stood in front of the giant grey hull of the ship at a ceremony in Kochi. "It marks just a first step in a long journey but at the same time an important one," Antony added.

The ship, which will be fitted with weaponry and machinery and then tested over the next four years, is a major advance for a country competing for influence in Asia, analysts say. **S**

BANGLADESH

Bangladesh parliament amends labor law



Bangladesh's parliament amended the country's labor law on July 15 in response to mass protests and mounting political pressures after more than 1,200 garment workers were killed on the job.

To win recognition, unions still need the support of at least 30 percent of the workers at a workplace, but the labour ministry is now barred from the practice of turning over a blacklist of union supporters to the boss.

Leaders of Bangladeshi worker federations say the change is still inadequate and sharply criticized other provisions in the amended law.

On April 24, Rana Plaza, an eight-

storey building housing five garment factories, shops and a bank in Savar, 20 miles from the capital Dhaka, caved in. In spite of major visible cracks in the wall the day before — prompting evacuation of the bank and shops — garment bosses pressured workers to return to work the next morning. About an hour into the workday the building collapsed, killing more than 1,100 workers.

Tens of thousands of workers took to the streets in response. A wave of strikes and other demonstrations demanded arrest of bosses and landlords, compensation to families of workers killed and wage raises in the industry. **S**

SRI LANKA

New Zealand dismisses Sri Lanka's milk scare

New Zealand has rejected allegations from Sri Lanka that its dairy products were contaminated with a farm chemical, accusing industry rivals of exploiting fears stirred by a recent botulism scare.

Sri Lanka's health ministry recalled batches of milk powder made by Auckland-based dairy giant Fonterra, saying it was concerned the product contained the chemical dicyandiamide.

The recall was unrelated to the global safety recall announced by Fonterra after tests turned up a type of bacteria that could cause potentially-

fatal botulism.

However, New Zealand Trade Minister Tim Groser said the botulism scare had provided ammunition to Fonterra's "enemies" in Sri Lanka, where it is the market leader.

"There are certain dairy companies (in Sri Lanka) that have campaigned for years against New Zealand," he told Radio New Zealand.

"I've been saying in the context of recent events (that) we do have enemies around the world and they have different faces. They'll take advantage of an opportunity like this, we can't be naive."



Dicyandiamide, or DCD, is added to pastures to reduce the amount of greenhouse gases emitted by dairy herds.

New Zealand officials insist it is harmless, but say Fonterra's farmers stopped using it earlier this year anyway. **S**

NEPAL

No change in election date



Former Nepalese Prime Minister Madhav Kumar claimed that the government cannot be changed immediately as demanded by the disgruntled parties.

He said that there is no provision of forming a new government at the moment. Hence, the current government would persist until the Constituent Assembly (CA) election.

Talks could be held among the major parties and the disgruntled parties. However, he clarified that the date for the CA election (November 19) and the current interim election would not change by any means.

Kumar further said that the poll-opposing parties have demanded the resignation of the Chief Justice in the 11-point and 25-point pact. The former Prime Minister was of the opinion that the parties should be clear on the mechanism even if Khil Raj Regmi resigns as the Chief Justice. Claiming that the major parties would come to an agreement with the disgruntled parties, he said that baseless anti-election statements would not be entertained. **S**

Agreement terminated

The Maldives government terminated its agreement with the Malaysian security firm Nexbis to install and operate a border control system. Defence Minister Mohamed Nazim told local media that the disputed contract – signed under the previous government of President Mohamed Nasheed in 2010 – was terminated by the cabinet over fears it was causing unspecified “major losses” to the state.

The termination was announced as immigration officials said replacement technology being provided by the US government was not functional, with implementation “on hold” pending a legal hearing into the matter.

Department of Immigration spokesperson Ibrahim Ashraf told Minivan News that he had not personally been made aware of any decision by the government to terminate the agreement.

However, Ashraf confirmed that replacement technology being provided free of charge by the US government was “not 100 percent functional” at present.

“Because of legal issues, the project has been on hold,” he explained.

Immigration officials confirmed that “testing” had been underway on the new US-donated system, while

Nexbis’ border control technology remained in use to monitor the arrivals and departures of foreign nationals. **S**



India assures assistance



India has assured Bhutan’s new government of its assistance and support in addressing the country’s current economic situation. The assurance was made when National Security Advisor Shivshankar Menon and newly-appointed Foreign Secretary Sujatha Singh called on Bhutanese Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay.

“We’ll do everything we can to support and provide assistance to Bhutan. We really look forward to working together and achieving positive outcomes,” Menon was quoted as saying by a statement issued by Tobgay’s office.

Menon and Singh were on a three-day official visit to Bhutan. During the meeting, Menon congratulated Prime Minister Tobgay on assuming office and commended the successful democratic transition of the nation. Tobgay in turn thanked and welcomed the Indian delegation for visiting Bhutan.

The Prime Minister also expressed his gratitude towards his Indian counterpart Manmohan Singh for sending him a letter of felicitation and assuring New Delhi’s assistance in the 11th Five-Year Plan (FYP).

They also discussed India’s commitment in rendering assistance for the 11th FYP and the Economic Stimulus Plan (ESP). **S**

The Search for the Next Army Chief



Who will be Pakistan's next Army Chief? This is the big question - and one that will not be easy to settle for the Prime Minister, considering the many dimensions it represents.

By S.G. Jilanee

Pakistan's chief of army staff, Gen. Ashfaq Parvez Kayani is due to retire shortly, after a six-year stint in the office. He has already been on a three-year extension.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif is also Defence and Foreign Minister.

He is on record saying "he wants to disentangle the military from politics." Holding the portfolios of Defence and Foreign Affairs to himself is in sync with that policy. In fact it has always been his fond desire to bring the military under civilian control. Its

pursuit in the past led to the ouster of Gen. Karamat and the ugly showdown with Gen. Pervez Musharraf.

No doubt the military has meddled less in politics under Gen. Kayani. He has earned the repute of a "pragmatic leader willing to ease the

military's grip on political affairs and publicly endorse democracy." For his low-key manner, he is labeled "Quiet General of Pakistani politics." And his public statements in support of the country's transition to democracy have been reassuring, such as his statement in a speech just before the May election, saying that "a bad democracy was better than the best kind of dictatorship."

Yet, hasty conclusions may be unwarranted. "Everyone says that under Kayani the army is now transformed and we can trust in its democratic credentials. But let's not jump the gun," a source in the government was quoted saying. "One era of soft military leadership does not make for a lasting legacy. The civilians will have to work hard to make sure everyone knows their limits."

That no doubt is as realistic a summing up as possible. The military needs to prove over time that the change of heart is real, because, even under Kayani some generals have been heard grumbling quietly over his "soft attitude." It remains to be seen whether the new army chief resists the pressure from his colleagues to win back the "lost ground" and exert his authority over the civilians or succumbs to it. Even a diplomatic source in Islamabad was quoted saying that "There are no guarantees the current status quo will last beyond Kayani."

According to some observers the "new crop of generals is not even remotely as patient as (Kayani), with regard to the screw-ups of civilian leaders." They foresee a "super-assertive army chief" trying to restore the former grandeur of his institution as his top priority.

But only a general removed from reality could entertain such ambition. The general's patina has eroded over the years due to a series of misadventures. The 1971 debacle and the Kargil faux pas had already lowered them in public esteem. The

Supreme Court ruling last year that "the military must stop interfering in politics," gave another blow to their ambition. But Osama bin Laden's killing on Pakistani soil was the coup de grace. For the ordinary citizens it was a gross violation of sovereignty, while the Abbottabad Commission called it a "national humiliation" that the army had failed to prevent.

Moreover, any general having ideas about reviving past "glory" would lead him into a collision course with the prime minister. That would be disastrous, because Nawaz has been known to battle with presidents to assert his writ. With one he went down fighting; the other he simply eased out.

The prime minister has to fill two top vacancies; one for the army chief, the other for the chief of general staff. Technically, Kayani would submit a short list of three names for each position. But the prime minister is not restricted to choose one of them. He may, if he wishes, select someone from outside the list like his predecessor, Bhutto. Yet, such possibility is remote.

Picking Gen. Kayani's successor is therefore going to be a "helluva" challenge for Nawaz Sharif; indeed the defining moment of his third term. He may adopt the Buggin's turn method under which the job would go to the most senior. Or, he may apply the merit yardstick. But that would be a gamble as happened in the past. Or, he may even grant Gen. Kayani a third three-year extension. But this would be unlikely, because extensions at the top block the chance of junior officers from promotion that leads to frustration and undermines morale.

Understandably Nawaz would like a man he could trust and who, like Gen. Kayani, keeps the army aloof from meddling in politics. More importantly, the new pick should be trusted to support the prime minister's foreign policy initiatives at the top of which is fence-mending with India, unlike

Pervez Musharraf, who was planning Kargil while Nawaz was welcoming the Indian prime minister in Lahore.

However, a trustworthy person is not the same as a yes-man. Picking a "yes-man" may be tempting. But it has proved delusional with tragic consequences in the past. Bhutto appointed Ziaul Haq over the heads of several of his senior officers, because he had appeared very docile. And Nawaz Sharif, likewise, chose Musharraf. How it worked out is history that should never be allowed to repeat itself.

And last, but not the least, if the choice also receives a nod from America that would be a plus point. The U.S. is withdrawing its troops from Afghanistan. The process will be completed by the end of next year. Pakistan has a crucial role to play in "post-occupation" Afghanistan. Many problems are looming, including internecine conflict leading to full-blown civil war and India's expanding clout with the Afghan government through economic assistance.

While the government would be working out a policy to counter India's expanding influence in Afghanistan, the next army chief will have to give the best advice to the prime minister with regard to the military strategy on these volatile issues.

Islamabad grapevine is currently abuzz with speculations. A guessing game is going on in the drawing rooms of Islamabad. Those in the race include Lieutenant General Rashad Mahmood, the current chief of general staff, Lieutenant General Tariq Khan, who is considered pragmatic on US relations, and Lieutenant General Haroon Aslam, the most senior officer after Kayani.

On whose head the crown ultimately rests remains to be seen. **S**

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

‘I would expect the in-coming COAS to be highly professional and less political’.

Lt. Gen. (R) Talat Masood provides his views about the appointment of the new COAS.

Why is the selection of COAS or CJSC a point of such public debate in Pakistan? Can't it be done as a matter of course?

I wish it was so but Pakistan is still in democratic transition. Its political institutions are weak and the Army is relatively the most organized and powerful institution in the country. For more than half the life of the country the Army has been directly ruling it and even when civilian governments have been in power its influence is over-arching, especially in critical foreign policy and security issues. And the threat of coup, though greatly minimized, is omnipresent.

The COAS's importance is further enhanced in view of the serious external and internal security challenges that Pakistan continues to face. On the external front, despite serious efforts on the part of Pakistan, relations with India remain tense. The precarious situation in Afghanistan poses a potential threat on our Western borders and needs heavy deployment of troops and close coordination with the U.S. military and NATO leadership. In addition, the internal threat has

acquired menacing proportions and the army's role in fighting the ongoing insurgency in FATA is crucial. The military is also the custodian and operator of our nuclear arsenal and one of the largest consumers of the national budget.

These multifaceted responsibilities demand that the COAS and CJSC are leaders of high professional and personal attributes capable of leading the armed forces both in war and peace.

Does it also mean that the Army still has a key role to play in the administration of the country – a role that goes much beyond its constitutional duty?

Surely not, but democracy is a process and unless a true balance between civil-military relations is not established, the army will continue to infringe on the civilian domain. Much would also depend on the competence of the political leadership. If the civilian government's overall performance is good, is not perceived to be corrupt and inspires confidence in the people, then it becomes difficult for the army to cross constitutional

boundaries. We witnessed this phenomenon being validated in Turkey and partially in Indonesia. Strengthening of the civilian institutions- parliament, judiciary, bureaucracy and media contributes to keeping the army at bay.

Though you are a retired army general yourself, but have you always been happy the way the Pakistan armed forces, especially the army, have brought their influence to bear on civilian matters?

To the contrary, I am one of the few general officers that have openly and consistently opposed the military's involvement in civilian affairs. I sincerely believe that armies that capture state power do great disservice to the country as well as to their own institution. Let me briefly analyze this for you.

When the army seizes power, it legitimizes itself by weakening other state institutions. The judiciary is its first victim. Judges with a high level of integrity who are not prepared to give legal cover are retired or dismissed. Similarly, only compliant politicians are co-opted to give a façade of democracy,

further weakening the political parties. By design, political parties are kept weak- a la the IJI. Even the bureaucracy is not spared. Bureaucrats lose their freedom to express an honest opinion and become subservient to the military's authority. In the long term, this has grave consequences for the country as it seriously affects the quality of leadership in all major institutions.

Experience has shown that defense of the country too has suffered when military has been in power. Classic examples are the 1965 and 1971 wars and the Kargil episode. The rise of militant groups in the country, as a blowback of the use of asymmetric forces to countervail India's military and economic preponderance or to expand influence in Afghanistan, is also a consequence of the failed policies pursued by military rulers.

Who has been your favourite Pakistani COAS in the past – and why?

I had no particular favorite but of course some I held in high esteem compared to others. The best thing about the Army and, for that matter the armed forces in general, is that these are merit-based organizations. Anyone reaching the rank of COAS has filtered through a cascade of sieves. Nonetheless, the involvement of the army in politics and the disproportionate power that it enjoys made some Chiefs lose their balance and conduct themselves inappropriately.

As a young officer, General Ayub Khan impressed me. He stood out among the generals and was professionally one of the better ones from the lot of senior Muslim army officers that migrated to Pakistan. He was modernistic and forward looking and had an air of elegance about him. But, like most of his successors, he was tactical and made the grave error of overthrowing a civilian government and supported the incursion into Kashmir that led to the 1965 war.

Among the recent Chiefs, General Waheed Kakar, General Jehangir Karamat and General Kayani stand out. These Generals led the army admirably well. They focused on improving its combat



About Lt. General (R) Talat Masood

Lt. Gen. Talat Masood served in the Pakistan Army for 39 years, retiring in 1990 as Secretary, Defense Production, Ministry of Defense. Prior to that he was Chairman of the Pakistan Ordnance Factories Board. Gen. Masood served in several important command, staff and instructional appointments and is a recipient of high national awards, including Hilal-e-Imtiaz(M) and Sitara-e-Basalat. Gen. Masood has a Bachelors in Engineering and a Masters in Defense and Strategic Studies. He is a graduate of the National Defense College. He has done professional courses in the US, U.K and China and is widely travelled.

Since retirement, he has been closely associated with think tanks and universities regionally and globally, working to promote peace and stability in the region. He represents Pugwash Conferences and World Affairs, a Nobel Prize-winning NGO, in Pakistan and is a council member. He has authored several articles and book chapters, writes regular columns in newspapers and is a frequent participant and speaker at international conferences and seminars.

General Masood is a prominent commentator on national and international television and radio networks as well.

effectiveness, handled civil-military relations with tact and influenced national events more positively.

What qualities do you think makes the ideal COAS, especially in the current Pakistani context?

I would expect the in-coming COAS to be highly professional and less political. The range and magnitude of threats that Pakistan faces requires the Army Chief (and the Chiefs of the other two Services) to prepare the forces under their command to a high professional level by training and equipping them for fighting conventional, irregular, cyber and nuclear wars.

Regrettably, most of our previous Chiefs' thinking has been linear and seldom have they taken a broader view of their responsibilities, especially while addressing civil-military relations or influencing external and internal security policy issues. Ideally, I would expect the future COAS to take deliberate steps to stay away from assuming direct or indirect political power and bring about a genuine transformation of the old mindset that the army somehow is privileged to capture power on its own choosing.

The country today is beset with enormous security challenges that demand the COAS to initiate internal reforms within the army and enforce high standards of training and discipline. The Army Chief should have the vision and strategic foresight to lead the organization into the 21st century. He should command the respect of his subordinates and superiors by dint of his professional ability and personal integrity.

Would Nawaz Sharif prefer a professional soldier for the post of COAS or someone with more visible civilian connections?

We hope that Nawaz Sharif has learnt from his own experience that he had to pay a heavy price for selecting the COAS on the basis of civilian connections and narrow political considerations. Moreover, it would be a gross disservice to the nation not to select professionally the best among equals in face of the enormity of threats that Pakistan faces.

Do you think this time Nawaz Sharif will take extra care in choosing the COAS?

As we have discussed earlier, the role of the military and the army in particular, is very central in Pakistan's context. The COAS has to successfully lead an army that has to combat multiple threats. The COAS should be supportive in redressing the civil-military imbalance and rise above narrow institutional interests that trump larger national goals. I am sure the PM will make sure that he does select a general for the post of COAS who is not politically ambitious and more focused professionally. In his selection criteria for army chief, Nawaz Sharif will prefer someone among the general officers who has an apolitical approach that allows the nascent civilian government to foster democratic growth.

In the current circumstances, when Pakistan is at war with an internal enemy, do you think the new COAS should bring something extra to the job?

Experience in counter-insurgency operations would be an advantage. The ability to work closely with the civilian leadership would be critical. General officers who have commanded a Corps and also served as CGS or have been in important staff appointments at GHQ should be preferred. He should also genuinely believe in civilian supremacy.

Are the Pakistan Armed Forces now professionally equipped to combat the internal enemy, as this is a different kind of war?

Initially our army was trained and equipped for conventional wars. Ever since we acquired the nuclear capability, our troops are being trained to also operate in a nuclear environment. Fighting insurgency and militant groups is relatively a new phenomenon. The army has gradually adapted to combat this new threat and initially some formations were trained and equipped for this particular warfare. And now it is a part of basic training and formations are giving it high priority. There is, however, a lot of scope for improvement both at the doctrinal level and in the field of training. Many troops have fallen victim to IEDs and this could be minimized with better training techniques and discipline. With improved intelligence, greater coordination and support of locals, combat efficiency in counter-insurgency operations could be enhanced.

The post of CJCS is supposed to rotate between the three military arms. Does it mean we will get a non-Army CJCS this time?

Initially, when the Joint Chiefs of Staff organization was created, there was a tacit understanding that the post of the Chairman would be rotated between the three services. This practice continued for a while until General Musharraf set it aside. By doing so he could favor his most powerful constituency the army, further consolidate his hold over the military and control distribution of resources within the three services. Rotation will encourage better integration and coordination between the Services. ■



Passing the Baton

Appointing the next COAS and CJSC could prove quite a nightmare for Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif as he has burnt his fingers on three previous occasions, but continuity must be maintained and the baton passed on.

By S. M. Hali

One of the most challenging decisions Mian Nawaz Sharif has to take in the coming weeks, by virtue of his constitutional powers, is finding suitable replacements for the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJSC) and the Chief of Army Staff (COAS). General Khalid Shameem Wynne, the current CJSC is due to retire on October 6, 2013, while the extended term of office for the present COAS, General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, is terminating on November 28, 2013.

In normal circumstances, the appointments should have been a routine procedure but considering Nawaz Sharif's previous unpleasant experiences in the selection of the COAS, it is imperative for him to take the right decision. He has traversed this road three times, each ending in a fiasco for him. His 1993 choice of General Abdul Waheed Kakar, number four in seniority, forced

the President and Prime Minister to resign, precipitating the 1993 general elections, which Nawaz Sharif lost. In 1998, Sharif opted for General Parvez Musharraf, third in seniority – in a bid to secure his back – appointing a COAS sans political backing. Kargil happened and Nawaz Sharif's third attempt at appointing an Army Chief after "sacking" Musharraf was botched when he tried to prop up Lieutenant General Ziauddin Butt, from the backdoor – resulting in a coup d' état deposing, incarcerating and exiling Nawaz Sharif for ten years.

The incessant terror attacks, Indian hostilities at the LOC spurning peace overtures by Nawaz Sharif, US troops' drawdown from Afghanistan and foreign relations imperatives, necessitate a clear understanding between the civil and military, obligating prudent decisions.

The appointment of the new CJSC which would occur earlier and may be

less complicated since the PM has to select a suitable officer from the three Services. Conceivably, without rocking the boat for either the current Naval or Air Chiefs, who are midstream of their allocated terms, it would be practical to preclude inter-Service rotation and appoint the senior-most serving Army officer to the post of CJSC, which is mainly a ceremonial post, devoid of power.

The Army seniority list depicts Lieutenant General Haroon Aslam on top. If Mian Sahib is to be taken for his word: "I'll go by the book. I'll go by the merit. Whosoever is the most senior would occupy the job. The next one, the next in line", then Haroon Aslam is the choice for CJSC or COAS. The aspects, besides seniority, which enhance his eligibility, are that he has served as the Director General Military Operations, Commanded the XXXI Corps at Bahawalpur and ably led the daring Operation Rah-e-Rast

General Sir Frank Walter Messervy, 15 August 1947 - 10 February 1948



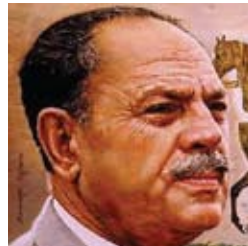
General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, 1 March 1976 - 17 August 1988

General Douglas David Gracey, 11 February 1948 - 16 January 1951



General Mirza Aslam Beg, 17 August 1988 - 16 August 1991

Field Marshal Muhammad Ayub Khan, 17 January 1951 - 26 October 1958



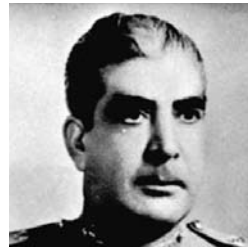
General Asif Nawaz Janjua, 16 August 1991 - 8 January 1993

General Muhammad Musa, 27 October 1958 - 17 September 1966



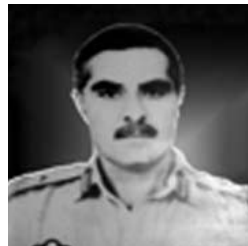
General Abdul Waheed Kakar, 12 January 1993 - 12 January 1996

General Agha Muhammad Yahya Khan, 18 September 1966 - 20 December 1971



General Jehangir Karamat, 12 January 1996 - 7 October 1998

General Gul Hassan Khan, Acting C-in-C 20 December 1971- 21 Jan 1972, C-in-C 22 January 1972 - 2 March 1972



General Pervez Musharraf, 7 October 1998 - 28 November 2007

General Tikka Khan, 3 March 1972 - 1 March 1976



General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, 29 November 2007- Present

in 2009 in Swat. Fighting bravely in Piochar Valley, he liberated that area from local and international terrorists. The characteristics of his career, which may raise questions in the mind of the PM, are that he commanded the elite force Division, the Special Services Group (SSG). Having suffered at the hands of another Commando, General Parvez Musharraf, Nawaz Sharif may be inclined to sideline him. Another relatively negative consideration maybe the current assignment of Lieutenant General Haroon; he is the Chief of Logistics Staff (CLS), which is virtually considered the boondocks.

The second general in line of seniority is Lieutenant General Rashad

into power at the centre for the first time.

Rashad may lose out on the factor of “familiarity breeds contempt” and the Sharifs may be more comfortable with someone who has less pull on their reins as we witnessed in their choice for the next President, ignoring Sartaj Aziz and Ghaus Ali Shah.

This leads us to number three, the safe bet: Lieutenant General Raheel Sharif, currently Inspector General Training and Evaluation at the GHQ. He too is a career officer like choices Numéro uno and deux, Haroon and Rashad, having commanded the XXX Corps at Gujranwala and held the prestigious post of Commandant

if negotiations were to take place with the miscreants.

One should also not completely rule out number five, Lieutenant General Zaheerul Islam, currently the Director General of the Inter-Services Intelligence.

There were two more options available; one to extend Kayani’s term by another year till the 2014 drawdown of international forces of international troops from Afghanistan. The chances of this option are remote as Mian Sahib would like to see the back of General Kayani, who in 2012, was named by Forbes magazine as the 28th most powerful person in the world and Nawaz Sharif has vowed to keep the Army subservient to the civilian dispensation.

The second alternative was to extend the services of Lieutenant General Khalid Nawaz and promote him to replace Kayani as COAS. Nawaz Sharif, who is retaining the portfolios of Defence and Foreign Ministries, had directed his confidants, Shabbaz Sharif and Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar, to call on Khalid Nawaz furtively. It may be mentioned that Khalid Nawaz, a relative of Raja Zafarul Haq, may have been a consideration as he was due to retire in October 2013 but General Kayani apparently preempted the move by retiring him on superannuation and replaced him as Commander X Corps with Lieutenant General Qamar Javed Bajwa on August 13, 2013.

The best options for Nawaz Sharif would be to appoint Haroon Aslam as CJCS, and Rashad Mahmood as the next COAS. He would thus maintain seniority, retain the services of the other outstanding general officers till they retire, who would not be forced to resign if superseded by junior officers and also keep the Army morale in place and perhaps not rue later for “the road not taken!” **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.

Lieutenant General Tariq Khan, Commander of # 1 Strike Corps, Mangla, successfully led counter-insurgency operations in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas as Inspector General of the Frontier Corps.

Mahmood, who was earlier this year elevated to the key post of Chief of General Staff (CGS). Eight of the last 13 army chiefs had served as CGS prior to becoming a four-star General.

Rashad’s acceptability stems from various factors. He commanded the IV Corps at Lahore – base of the Sharifs – hails from Lahore and may have curried favours with them. Additionally, he served as Military Secretary to the Sharif’s choice of President, Rafiq Tarar. He belongs to the Baloch regiment, parent arm of the current incumbent COAS, having served as his deputy in ISI and being positioned as CGS by Kayani, perhaps to ultimately replace himself as the Army Chief. Rashad also remained aide-de-camp (ADC) to former Army Chief General Aslam Beg, who was declared culpable by the Supreme Court in the Asghar Khan case for crafting the Islami Jamhoori Ittehad (IJI) and manipulating the 1990 polls, which catapulted Nawaz Sharif

Pakistan Military Academy, Kakul. Valour runs in his family – he is the younger brother of Nishan-i-Haider recipient Major Shabbir Sharif Shaheed.

Glancing down the seniority list, at number four is the dark horse in the race: Lieutenant General Tariq Khan, Commander of # 1 Strike Corps, Mangla, successfully led counter-insurgency operations in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas as Inspector General of the Frontier Corps. He is respected by even the Americans, who have conferred on him the military award of US Legion of Merit in recognition of his gallantry. By crowning Tariq Khan, Nawaz Sharif, desirous of edging closer to the US, may opt for someone respected by them as well as augment the PML-N government’s resolve to combat terrorism under a veteran of the war against militancy. Tariq hails from Waziristan and may be an asset even

What the analysts say ...

Southasia put a set of 5 questions to three eminent analysts about the appointment of the next COAS and CJCS.

Their answers follow.

Questions:

1. Who in your opinion will be Pakistan's next Army Chief as well as the next CJCS?
2. Do they have to be the senior-most generals or can the line be broken?
3. Do you think it will be a difficult task for Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to name the next COAS, considering his experience with Pervez Musharraf?
4. What, in your opinion, should be the ideal credentials of the Chief of Staff of the Pakistan Army as well as of the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee?
5. Should the selection of Army COAS in Pakistan be given the kind of importance that it is getting?

Answers:

Tasneem Noorani



1. It is difficult to predict which of the five top generals will be selected as the Chief. However, if the PM's statement of respecting seniority this time is taken seriously then it will be one of the two senior-most. Considering his past experience, it is unlikely that the PM will repeat the same mistake again.

2. Promotions in the army are based on seniority-cum-fitness basis, so the line can be broken.

3. Since all the contenders are three-star generals and have passed through a rigorous selection process, competence-wise there is not much difference between them. However, some personality traits can tempt the decision-makers in favor of the more amenable one.

4. He should be professionally acknowledged and personally liked by the rank and file. He should not be deemed to be backed by any personality nor should be beholden to any foreign power for becoming the Chief.

5. Considering the impact that the previous army

chiefs have had on the life of the ordinary man, no wonder this appointment is debated everywhere in the country and it should be.

Tasneem Noorani is a politician and a retired bureaucrat who served as Secretary Interior, Commerce, Industries & Production and Finance.

Jamshed Ayaz Khan



1. Getting into a guessing game for appointment of the country's top military commanders would not be appropriate. I would, therefore, not like to suggest any names

for appointment as the next CJCS or COAS. I would, however, emphasize that a proper procedure be laid down for evaluating the suitability of officers for appointment in these important positions. Deviation from the laid down procedure could lead to disastrous results.

2. Officers considered for these positions do not have to be the senior-most generals. According to the SOP, three names of generals eligible for appointment as COAS or CJCS, along with their service dossiers, are sent by GHQ to the Prime Minister. The summary prepared for the PM also includes evaluation of their performance. The Prime Minister can either approve one of the names recommended by the GHQ or may ask for additional names if he thinks that he needs a larger list of officers to choose from. The Prime Minister is the final authority in these matters.

3. Whether it would be difficult or easy for the Prime Minister to select the next COAS would depend how confident he is of his own position as the Chief Executive of the country. The PM's strength and confidence would emanate from his government's ability to deliver on his party's promises made to the people during the election campaign. Improvement of governance, law and order, economy and overcoming foreign policy challenges will

go a long way in adding to his self-confidence. We may remember that Nawaz Sharif did not hesitate to remove Gen. Jahangir Karamat as COAS though he made a sincere suggestion about forming a National Security Council. The wisdom of Gen. Karamat's suggestion has dawned on him after 14 years.

4. Officers considered for appointment against these two important posts and indeed for all senior appointments in the forces should be intelligent, endowed with the ability to analyse a situation and synthesize various ideas before making a decision. They should be upright, articulate and sober and people of impeccable integrity. Above all, they should be loyal to the state of Pakistan and not to any individual.

5. Appointment of top positions in the armed forces is given importance by all countries of the world. Due consideration has to be given for selecting the most suitable officer as the COAS, as the incumbent will be entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring the country's security from external and internal threats. In most countries, concerned state functionaries carry out discussions and arrive at a decision for the appointment of new commanders. The discussion is kept out of the public domain. In our country, the media takes a great deal of interest in matters related to these appointments for mainly two reasons. Our past experience with regard to civil-military relations has generated much interest among the common people and secondly 24/7 news channels need material to fill available air time.

Major General (R) Jamshed Ayaz Khan is a defence and security analyst. He has served as the president of the Institute of Regional Studies.

Abid Rao

1. In all fairness it is not appropriate to name the individuals in the run for the posts of CJCSC and COAS. The activity of forecasting names in the media in the past has often harmed the individuals and put wrong pressure on the Prime Minister/President. As far as the post of CJCSC is concerned, the rules have not been followed since its formation in the early 70s. The Joint Staff HQ has seen only one Chairman from the Navy and one from the Air Force. This post is to be rotated between the three services on an agreed formula, which has been violated by the Army every time under a faulty rationale. So is the case of the Head of National Defence University which has now been reserved for the Army only. The Prime Minister should exercise his powers in selecting the CJCSC from



the other two services i.e. PN and PAF.

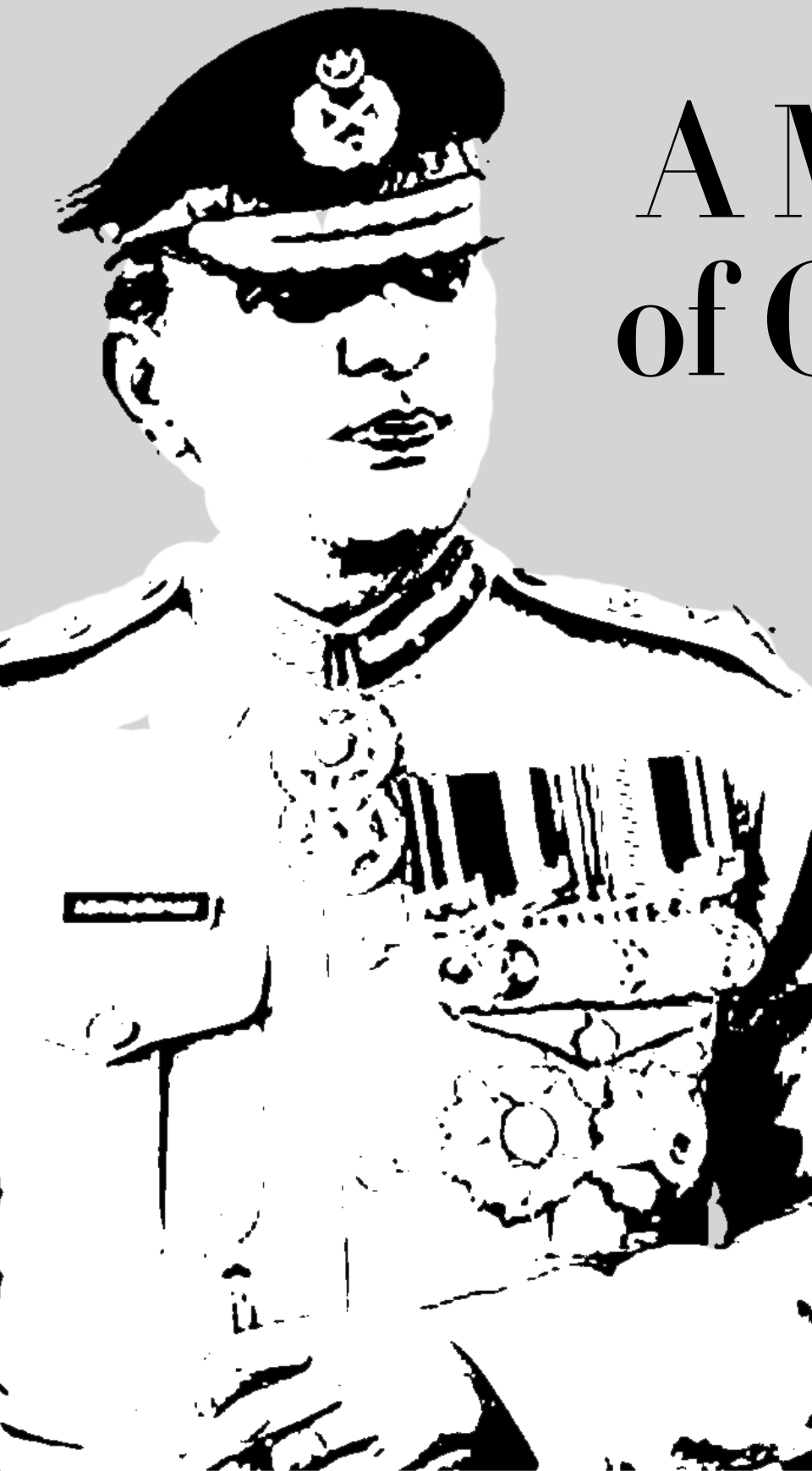
2. In my personal opinion, seniority is of lesser relevance. It is the professional suitability of the service head. Seniority alone should not be the criterion. The line should be broken if a more suitable candidate is in the run. The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, should, however, be the senior-most as this post is merely ceremonial in nature and he does not have operational forces under his command.

3. Whatever happened to Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto in selecting General Ziaul Haq and Nawaz Sharif in selecting Pervez Musharraf should not deter the PM from selecting the next COAS. He has to rise above his fears and make a fair decision which should be better for the institution. Our political governments have been disregarding the institutions while selecting their heads and have, therefore, harmed them routinely in the past.

4. The post of CJCSC has been only ceremonial in its functions. All major decisions are taken by the individual services themselves and occasionally sent to the JS HQ for ratification. The services have reduced the relevance of JS HQ in its basic role in operational matters in the past - almost 40 years. The main player in this regard has been the Pakistan Army which does not want any agency outside the GHQ to be involved in the management of its affairs. Other services have also liked this approach and, therefore, adopted it in letter and spirit. The post of COAS, however, needs a different consideration. The Pakistan Army has the responsibility of defending the geographical boundaries of the country in the event of foreign aggression. Therefore, the COAS, in my opinion, should be the one who will engage his forces in the most effective manner against all adversaries. He should be bold, courageous and possess sound judgment and, most importantly, the enemy should acknowledge these traits. This is an essential element that should not be ignored in the selection of the COAS or other service chiefs. The rest of the qualities are secondary in consideration.

5. Over a period, this has gained undue importance and I consider it unfortunate. Much before the time arrives, speculation starts to float in the media. Prolonged military rules are responsible for this situation. A large number of extremely competent officers retire because the COAS' slot remains occupied by military rulers like General Ziaul Haq (11 years) and General Pervez Musharraf (9 years). The media, in particular, should avoid sensational debates and reporting on this subject and the political governments should take effective control in exercising their constitutional rights.

Air Vice Marshal (R) Dr. M Abid Rao has served the Pakistan Air Force for 34 years. He was on the research faculty at PAF Air War College and served as Deputy DG, Civil Aviation Authority.



A Matter of Choice

Will seniority drive the Prime Minister's choice for the next COAS?

By Omar Ahmed

When the incumbent COAS, Gen Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, retires on Nov. 28, 2013, who will Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif replace him with? This is a question that is probably weighing heavily on the PM's mind these days, considering that his decisions to appoint the army chief in his earlier stints as Prime Minister were not very judicious ones. Every time, the Prime Minister appointed an army chief, something went amiss, whether it was General Jehangir Karamat, General Pervez Musharraf or Lt. General Ziauddin Butt. In fact, one of them, namely General Pervez Musharraf, even deprived Nawaz Sharif of his premiership just after about a year of becoming COAS.

Perhaps those were times of great political elation for Nawaz Sharif, what with his heavy mandate, and he did not care much about such things as 'seniority' in the services and the need for application of the 'seniority principle' regarding appointment of service chiefs.

Not anymore. Nawaz Sharif is now Pakistan's first 'third time' prime minister and a more careful one at

that. Under the Constitution, it again falls upon him to name the new service chiefs as well as the next CJCSC. And, as the story goes, he is bent upon following the seniority principle this time rather than going by the tenets of loyalty – a trait that has otherwise been close to the hearts of the Sharif Brothers.

It is being rumoured though that the Prime Minister may just shift gears and name a general who may not be at the top of the seniority list but a favorite of the Americans – someone like General Tariq Khan, who was awarded the Sword of Honour on completing the 55 PMA Course at the top of his class. At the senior level, he was promoted as a three star general in October 2010. He is from the Armoured Corps and was serving as Inspector General FC Khyber Pakhtunkhwa before taking over as Mangla Corps Commander. Since his days as a Brigadier, Lt. General Tariq Khan has had an illustrious track record and is known in the army as a “fighting commander.”

As for playing up to the Americans, it is said that Gen. Pervez Ashfaq Kiyani got his three year extension from the then Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani at the behest of the US CJCSC, Adm. Mike Mullen. The American admiral happened to be very friendly with Kiyani and since this was the peak of the involvement of US and Pakistan armies in the war in Afghanistan, Mullen recommended that the general should continue as Pakistan’s army chief.

The Pakistan Army continues to be a part of the on-going conflict in Afghanistan and it is a fact that most ISAF forces will be stationed there until at least the middle of 2014. In light of this, there has been some talk of Kiyani getting a further extension of one year but the general has himself said to have declined any such offer. Being a son of the soil of the Punjab, he knows that even if a small quantity of yogurt (dahi) is added to a whole bucket of

pure milk, the next morning the entire bucket will become yogurt and the milk would have lost its purity. So it’s a choice between yogurt and milk for him!

If Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif were to go by the seniority principle, then giving an extension to the incumbent Chief would only negate that principle. This would be further aggravated if aspects such as ‘loyalty’ or ‘merit’ were to be considered by the Prime Minister.

In such circumstances, Nawaz Sharif is left with no other choice than Lt. Gen. Haroon Aslam, who is the top general on the seniority list at present and also has all that it takes to lead the Pakistan Army. As the senior most general, he is said to be a professionally competent officer who has held many prestigious appointments in his four decade long military career, including the command of the Infantry Division, the Pakistan Rangers (Punjab), the Special Services Group (SSG) and the Bahawalpur Corps.

Lt. Gen. Haroon also has rich experience in counter-terrorist warfare. When the Army GHQ in Rawalpindi was stormed by terrorists some years back and a large number of army personnel were taken hostage, it was this general who moved in with his Anti-Terrorist Unit and launched a very successful operation.

With these qualifications under his belt, Lt. Gen. Haroon Aslam should be Nawaz Sharif’s best bet as COAS as the country is currently pitted against both internal and external enemies. It is hoped therefore that the Prime Minister’s decision will be driven purely by considerations of seniority in appointing the next COAS and that he will not sacrifice the army’s natural line of command at the altar of personal choice. **S**

Omar Ahmed is a seasoned media professional with a keen eye on national issues.

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Whither

**What is terrorism to one, may be a freedom struggle
for a noble cause to another.**

By S.G. Jilane

Terrorism has received the widest publicity since the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center and the global war on terror that America launched against Al Qaeda. But terrorism, per se, has been a much older phenomenon, used as an expression of revolt against real or perceived injustice - principally, political or economic.

Today, India, Pakistan and the Middle East – especially Iraq, are its hotbeds but Britain and America, as well, live under its shadow. Al Qaeda has proved to be a hydra for the United States. President Obama may have defeated it in Afghanistan but it has been reborn in Yemen and the Maghreb. In India there are the Naxalites and the United Liberation

Front of Assam (ULFA). The former is fighting against economic exploitation of major Indian corporations and local corrupt officials. The latter seeks to establish a sovereign Assam through an armed struggle.

In Pakistan, the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) is responsible for many terrorist activities including attacks on military installations and causing much loss of life. The demands for which it is fighting with the state include that Pakistan withdraw its support to the US war against Taliban and enforce Sharia in the country. Another outfit in the recent past was the LTTE in Sri Lanka. It almost held the country to ransom from 1983 to 2009. Among its most significant terrorist acts were the assassination of Sri Lankan president

Premadasa and India's ex-prime minister, Rajiv Gandhi.

Still earlier, there was the Baader Meinhoff Gang, also known as the Red Army Faction (RAF) in West Germany and the Red Brigade in Italy. Founded in 1970, the RAF was the country's most prominent left-wing militant <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terrorist>> group. It engaged in armed resistance against the state was deemed to be fascist. In almost thirty years of its activities, it was involved in numerous terrorist acts. The Gang's Revolutionary Cell (Revolutionäre Zellen, RZ), was held responsible for "296 bomb attacks and arson and other attacks between 1973 and 1995."

Launched at about the same



time, the Red Brigade was another leftist group that sought to create a “revolutionary” state through armed struggle and take Italy out of NATO. In the process it carried out numerous terrorist activities, including the assassination of Italian Prime Minister Aldo Moro. The Irish Republican Army (IRA) was yet another terrorist organization responsible for more than sixty terrorist attacks in London between 1971 and 2010, planting bombs all over the place that killed people at all places from pubs

strategic installations in Palestine. Lehi also assassinated United Nations mediator Folke Bernadotte, for which the United Nations Security Council called the assassins “a criminal group of terrorists.”

In India Jugantar and Anushilon were formed to resist the partition of Bengal in 1905 and promote the cause of India’s independence through violent means. Young men and women, imbued with the passion of liberty from the British Raj, attacked and killed British officers. Benoy

But what is terrorism for one may be a noble cause for the other. The Irgun and Lehi were terrorists for the British. Yet Irgun was the political predecessor to the Likud Party, now represented by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. His father, Prime Minister Menachem Begin was also an Irgun leader and Yitzhak Shamir, another Israeli prime minister was a leader of Lehi. In 1980, Israel instituted a military decoration as “award for activity in the struggle for the establishment of Israel,” “the Lehi

Terrorism?

and post offices to the House of Parliament.

Going back in time, there were Jewish and Indian terrorist organizations as well. Before Israel’s emergence as a state, the Jews had formed two militant organizations - the Irgun in 1931 and the Stern Gang or Lehi, in 1940, when Britain governed Palestine under its League of Nations mandate. They attacked British military and civil personnel. Two operations for which the Irgun earned the worst notoriety were the bombing of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem on 22 July 1946 and the horrible Deir Yassin massacre. The latter was carried out together with the Stern Gang on 9 April 1948. The Stern Gang or Lehi also repeatedly attacked British personnel not only in Palestine but also beyond its borders. Two of its members assassinated Lord Moyne, the British minister of state in the Middle East, in Cairo in November 1944. Later, the Stern Gang attacked airfields, railway yards and other

Basu, Dinesh Gupta and Badal Gupta killed Bengal’s Inspector General of Police, Lowman and the IG Prisons, Col. Simpson, in a daring raid into the Writers’ Building that housed the Bengal secretariat. Khudi Ram Bose, a young lad from Midnapore in Bengal, went to Muzaffarpur in Bihar to kill Kingsford, a British judge. By mistake he killed the family of a local British lawyer, Mr. Kennedy. He was only 18 years, 7 months and 11 days old when he was hanged.

That was the first phase. In the second phase of revolutionary terrorism (1929 to 1934), Bhagat Singh assassinated John Saunders, a British police officer (1928). Surya Sen carried out the Chittagong Armoury raid in 1930. Lethal attacks were made on the governors of Bengal – Sir John Anderson in 1932 and Sir Stanley Jackson in 1934, respectively. In the latter case, it was Bina Das, a student of the Calcutta University, who fired the pistol that Jackson carried.

ribbon” and, in India, likewise, the “so-called” terrorists are extolled as national heroes and martyrs. .

However, terrorism seems to cease when either the organization has lost its steam (Baader Minhoff), or is successfully put down by police action (Red Brigade, Indian revolutionary actors), or by military force (LTTE), or as a result of dialogue (IRA), or when it achieves its purpose (Irgun, Lehi).

As to the future, in India, it may continue. In Pakistan it may cease if Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif’s policy of a dialogue with TTP and punitive action as an alternative, is successful.

As to the United States it is going to remain pitted with Al Qaeda for some time because it is not in a mood to consider any alternative to defeating its bête noire. **S**

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

Armed and

The Indian military machine is fast acquiring sophisticated weapons. Since the country prefers expensive arms purchases to spending on social issues, either Pakistan will bear the brunt of this peculiar fixation in the times to come - or China.

By Dr. Moonis Ahmar

According to The Military Balance 2012 published by the International Institute of Strategic Studies, London, "India has the third-largest army in the world and is among the largest providers of personnel for UN peace-keeping operations. Its armed forces regularly carry out combined arms and joint-service exercises and have joined multinational exercises with the US, France and UK among others."

This revelation about India's growing military profile further brings out New Delhi's age-old ambition to emerge as a major power while focusing on modernizing its 'blue water navy.' According to The Economist (March 30, 2013, London issue) "India is poised to become one of the four largest military powers in the world by the end of the decade. India has more active military personnel than any Asian country [besides] China, and its defense budget has risen to \$46.8 billion. Today, it is the world's seventh largest military spender. It has a nuclear

stockpile of 80 or more warheads to which it could easily add more, and ballistic missiles that can deliver some of them to any point in Pakistan. It has recently tested a missile with a range of 5,000km which would reach most of China."

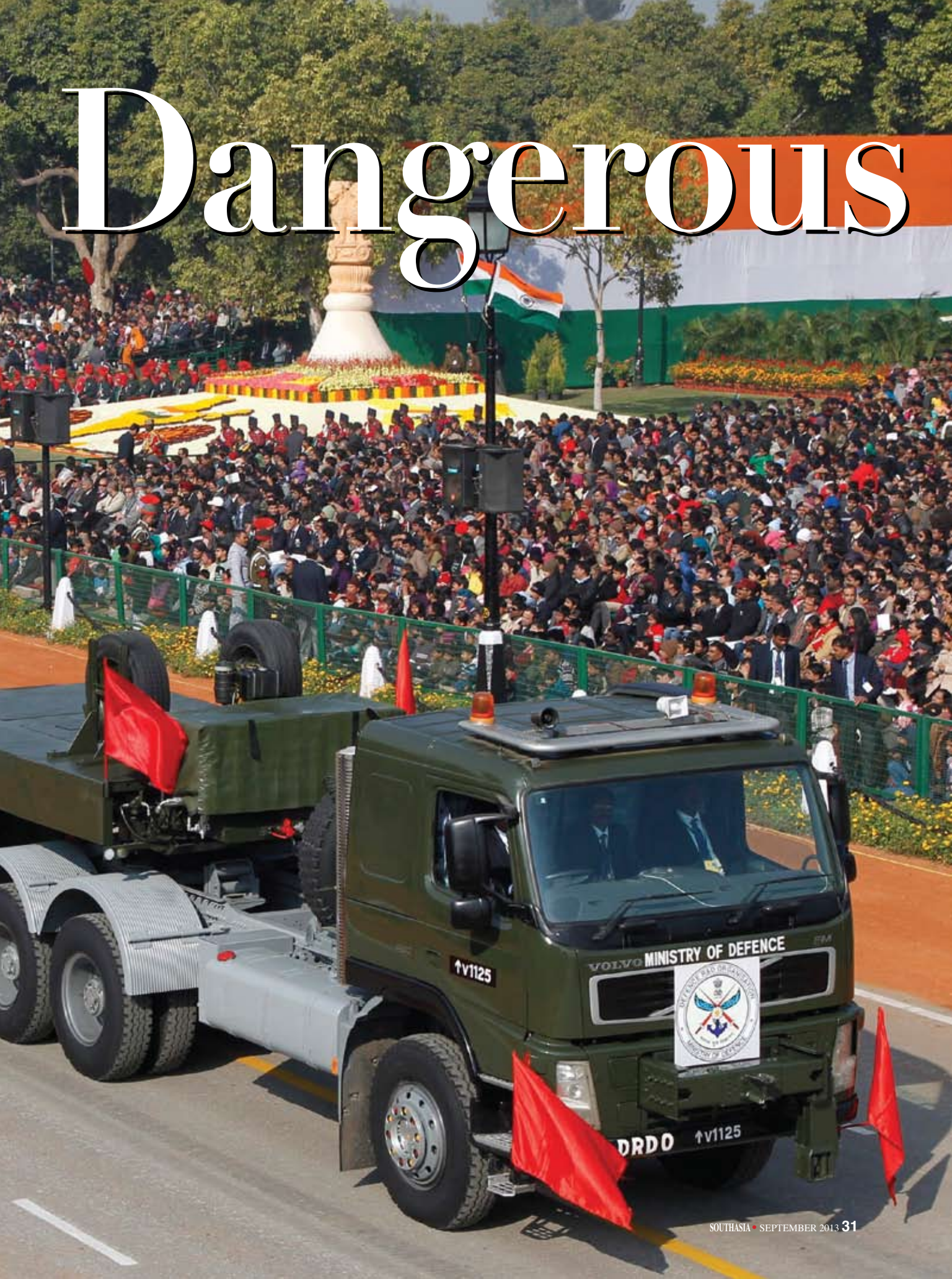
In another article titled 'Overlooking India's Military Buildup' in The News International (December 6, 2011), Momin Iftikhar wrote: "between... 2006-2010, India has become the world's largest weapon importer and accounts for nine per cent of the international arms transfer. To update its ageing military inventory by 2015, India will spend an estimated \$80 billion on the military modernization program. India is also in the process of buying six Russian P-751 submarines at an estimated cost of \$10.72 billion, making it [the country's] largest arms deal. This is in addition to the six French Scorpene submarines which will begin to enter service in 2014-15." Furthermore, "India unveiled its first indigenous aircraft carrier, the INS

Vikrant in August 2013" which will significantly add to its naval strength.

Similarly an article in The Economist (August 17, 2013) called 'Indian military power all at sea.' It was reported that "on August 10, India's prime minister, Manmohan Singh, proudly announced that the reactor of the country's first indigenously designed and built nuclear-powered submarine, the Arihant (Destroyer of Enemies) had been activated and the vessel would soon begin sea trials. This giant stride was quickly followed by another two days later, with the launch of the country's first domestically built aircraft carrier, the Vikrant, which is expected to enter service in 2018."

The afore-mentioned facts help in drawing a few significant conclusions. For starters, although India's defense budget is merely 2.5 per cent of its GDP unlike Pakistan's 3.5 per cent, there has been a surge in its military expenditures in the last few years. According to the Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses ((IDSA), New

Dangerous



Delhi, the union budget 2012-2013 presented to the parliament on March 16, 2012, [increased] the defence outlays to Rs1,93,407 crore (40.44 billion). This represents a growth of 17.63 per cent over the previous year's outlays, [thus making it] one of the highest increases in recent years, excluding 2009-10 when the budget was increased to over 34 per cent mostly to accommodate the [salary hikes] caused by the implementation of the recommendations of the Sixth Central Pay Commission. However, India is also spending a huge sum on the purchase of sophisticated weapons from Russia, France, the United States and the United Kingdom. In fact, the Russian Federation has been a major supplier of weapons to India. Armament factories with the help of Moscow were established in India several decades ago and deepened defense cooperation between the two countries.

India's indigenous weapon's production program in its three services, along with the manufacturing of nuclear missiles, takes a large chunk of its military spending. Furthermore, the country's growing military expenditures followed by its regional and extra-regional ambitions, tend to augment the arms race in South Asia. If India's drive to seek a major military status is in reaction to China, Pakistan is compelled to bridge the gap with conventional weapons. In a recent interview for *The Telegraph*, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif called for an end to the "unfortunate arms race" between India and Pakistan because, "the money wasted in defense should have gone into social sectors; it should have gone into education; it should have gone into health care."

Sadly, in view of New Delhi's single-minded approach to accelerate the modernization and expansion of its armed forces, there is little likelihood of India reciprocating to Nawaz Sharif's proposal to reduce defense expenditures along with Pakistan. As far as the threat perception from the Indian side is concerned, it seems

it is China more than Pakistan that is perceived as a major threat to New Delhi. China's economy is second in the world after the United States and it can afford to spend generously on defense and military expenditures, but India – with more than 40 per cent of its population living below the poverty line along with various other economic and security issues – can hardly afford to divert its scarce resources from development to defence. In the last one decade or so, the Indian economy grew at the rate of 6-8 per cent per annum, but currently, both the growth rate and the country's currency have gone down (vis-à-vis the US dollar and other major international currencies). Will the looming downward trend in the Indian economy restrain its growing military expenditures?

There are also reports about widespread corruption in the Indian military purchases, procurement and award of contracts. In fact, PM Rajiv Gandhi lost the 1989 general elections primarily because of the allegations of corruption – the Bofors Scandal. His opponents alleged that he received kickbacks on the purchase deal of long-range Bofors guns from Sweden. While this is a common practice in India, the charge has also targeted the country's civilian leadership, particularly those holding top positions.

Finally, many believe that a segment of the army has developed a vested interest in sustaining its conflict with Pakistan, particularly over Jammu and Kashmir and Siachen, to ensure privileges and kickbacks that they receive in acquiring military contracts. Reports of the army now exercising a veto on national security matters and particularly in the Siachen conflict are disturbing because such a trend will eventually limit civilian political control over the military and encourage men in uniform to deepen their involvement in national affairs.

Is the Indian military following those countries where the weaknesses of civilian governments have provided enough temptation to either seize

power or seek a major share in the power structure? India is the world's largest democracy and successive regimes from Nehru to date have been able to keep control over the power ambitions of generals. However, it seems the growing influence of the Indian military in matters related to insurgency and conflict in the north-east states, in Jammu and Kashmir and in Siachen may eventually transform the threat of its power ambitions into a reality.

Of course, the 'competition' with China is not a new phenomenon. The two countries share a long mountainous border which is the MacMohan line drawn during the British imperial days in the Indian subcontinent. India and China were engaged in an armed conflict known as the Sino-Indian Border War which took place in 1962. The poor performance of the Indian army in that war created a psychological complex in New Delhi which reinforced the perception that the real security threat emanates not from Pakistan but from the north, that is, China. The conflict between the two countries since then has been positively transformed and managed to the extent that China is now India's largest trading partner. Yet, oddly enough, Indian military preparedness is primarily targeted against China, as it is considered to be a long-term threat to its interests.

By developing better relations with its neighbors, India will certainly put an end to all negative notions about its aggressive and expansionist designs largely attributed to the growing profile of the Indian military. In view of the surging challenge of poverty and under-development, India needs to positively reciprocate to the Pakistani Prime Minister's proposal for a reduction in the arms race. ■

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

Beyond the endgame

The US decision to move most of its troops out of Afghanistan in 2014 may lead to a different set of uncertainties and create more problems.

By Taha Kehar



On August 19, 2013, international football returned to Afghanistan after remaining dormant for almost a decade. Over a thousand football enthusiasts gathered at the playground opposite Ghazi Stadium in Kabul to witness the game between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Although the home side gave stiff competition to the visiting team and managed to garner a landslide victory, the football match will go down in history as a significant agent of change for Afghanistan. It has been billed as an attempt to steer away from the backdrop of warfare and insurgency and an aspiration for peace and stability.

During the 90-minute tournament, Afghanistan's woes were momentarily forgotten. Interestingly, recent events indicate that in the long-run this act of

forgetting could be a little more than temporary amnesia. Twelve years after 9/11, US President Obama has decided to withdraw from Afghanistan, citing a range of political and military reasons, and has put an end to one of America's longest wars.

The exit strategy does not involve the complete removal of US military presence from Afghanistan as recklessly accelerating the withdrawal process could produce negative consequences. Afghan troops continue to rely on international forces for air support, casualty evacuation and intelligence collection. As a result, the withdrawal timeline has been extended to 2014 to restore Afghanistan's sovereignty.

Since another era of insurgency and political turmoil is gradually drawing towards an end, substantial changes

are expected in the social and political milieu in Afghanistan. There is a strong likelihood that the withdrawal will have a powerful impact on a whole spectrum of issues such as education, female empowerment, development and military competence.

The United States recently stopped financing for Aid Afghanistan for Education (AAE), a charity that is geared towards educating young women who have been victims of domestic abuse. The decision to withhold funding for this registered charity is unfair and reflects ignorance towards policy considerations. In July 2013, the US had guaranteed that an expenditure of \$200m would be made towards female empowerment before the foreign troops withdrew.

Ever since the funds were



discontinued, school teachers have not been paid their wages and are either forced to conduct classes for free or find new jobs. This has triggered fears that once NATO forces withdraw, their governments will completely turn their backs on the Afghans. The Afghanistan Technical Vocational Institute is experiencing a similar situation as there are only limited funds available to provide vocational training. While the USAID spent \$145m on education in Afghanistan in 2010, it is now only willing to contribute less than \$100m. Most foreign donors are now channelling aid via the government rather than putting it through a virtual parallel administration operated by foreign aid organisations.

Although the education ministry has planned to finance institutions, technical issues, frequent delays and institutional dissatisfaction with inadequate funds, has weakened the scope for such ventures.

After the US troops entered Afghanistan in 2001, State Department employees were hired to stay abreast of American investment which could be used to further develop the country. The situation has changed drastically and such supervision have become largely infrequent. Most US diplomats are restricted to Kabul ever since the US military has decided to withdraw from the region. They initially tried to engage the local government to facilitate this supervisory function. However, it involved the risk of corruption and brazen abuse of funds. As a result, it is now hiring private contractors instead.

These private officials can submit photos and time and location stamps to monitor the progress of development schemes through various methods of telecommunication.

With the shrinking footprint of the US military and looming security threats, there is now a pressing need to find suitable and sustainable alternatives for the supervision of development projects across Afghanistan. Some critics do believe that the presence of military personnel was largely disruptive and diplomats may find it easier to monitor sites without facing endless security checkpoints and protocol.

While Western combat troops are preparing to leave Afghanistan, some members of ISAF and other Asian countries are trying to heighten their involvement in the country. They intend to pursue the double-edged motive of achieving a stable, peaceful and self-sufficient Afghanistan and, consequently, obtaining political influence in the region. There is a strong likelihood China will directly involve itself in training Afghan troops after the withdrawal of the US military in 2014. China has expressed concern that once ISAF departs from Afghanistan, a security deficit may result and produce regional instability. Moreover, it is expected that NATO's involvement may continue. Security forces in Afghanistan will receive monetary support from ISAF to fund the armed forces trained during the US intervention. ISAF may also embark on another mission to train and assist the Afghan military.

Few details are known about how

new international NATO-Afghanistan missions will be designed. It is difficult to ascertain their structural capacity in terms of size and the placement of troops. Furthermore, it is difficult to envisage the type of equipment they will put to use or the overall agenda they will work towards. Hamid Karzai's administration has ensured that the international community will continue to assist Afghanistan. Multiple partnerships and deals have been chalked out. Only time will tell who decides to remain in the region beyond the endgame.

President Obama's decision to withdraw US troops from Afghanistan and consequently bid farewell to a long and costly war has generated uncertainty. Discrepancies in the distribution of aid to vocational institutions have compromised on education standards in Afghanistan. More importantly, as the AAE charity fiasco suggests, female empowerment and women's rights are also in the line of fire. After the retreat of the US military, it has become progressively difficult for diplomats to perform oversight of development projects. But even this remains a moot point. Although the US has decided to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan, the stage is set for yet another conflict involving the international community, with NATO acting as a buffer. **S**

Taha Kehar is a published poet and author who has previously worked for a media magazine. He is currently pursuing a degree in Law at the School of Oriental and African Studies.



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One of the first things you will learn in any course at business school is how important it is for businesses to achieve productive efficiency. This concept entails achieving the highest output from the least possible combination of inputs, which effectively leads to maximizing profits.

Large companies often achieve this 'efficiency' by capitalizing on the availability of cheap labour in developing countries. Controversies regarding the exploitation of such labour have surrounded companies like Nike and Apple and these have more to do with the management rather than with the workers being paid a minimal wage.

The kind of conditions that the workers are made to work in are also a cause of great concern and this has been highlighted all too well in the recent fire that caused the collapse of an eight storey building in Bangladesh. Over a thousand people were killed as the Rana Plaza, which housed five garment factories, burned down to ashes on 24th April. These factories produced clothes for international brands such as Mango, Benetton and Primark, amongst others. The devastating incident that has been ranked as one of the world's worst industrial accidents occurred just five months after 112 workers were killed in a similar fire at a factory producing garments for Walmart and C&A.

These incidents call into question the existence and, more importantly, effective implementation of proper labour laws in Bangladesh. Such disasters highlight the cruel working conditions and serious safety hazards that the country's 3.6 million garment workers are exposed to on a daily basis. In addition, they are the lowest paid workers in the industry (earning only \$38 a month) on a worldwide basis and have no systematic unions to represent them. Apart from reflecting disregard for basic human rights, these fires can cause severe harm to



Rebirth of an

Following the Rana Plaza tragedy, labor laws in Bangladesh have received a thorough overhaul and the country's garment industry can now offer more benefits to workers.

By Fatima Siraj

Bangladesh's garment industry, which contributes to 80% of the nation's total exports, generating \$21 billion annually.

As global corporations strive to achieve business integrity and comply with ethical standards to boost their image in the eyes of customers, having suppliers in countries with a poor record of effective labour laws can severely damage their reputation. Disney, which had been sourcing their manufacturing to Bangladesh decided

it would no longer do so in March and local factory owners fear that other companies might pull out as well unless the industry can improve its outlook and way of working. Furthermore, President Obama withdrew a trade privilege for Bangladesh in the wake of the Rana Plaza incident, saying it has not done enough to ensure workplace safety. While this is alarming news for the world's second largest garment producing country after China, Bangladesh has time to



Industry

convince its exporters that it is on its way to implementing effective labour laws.

Hence, in an attempt to portray the industry in a better light, a joint statement was issued by three stakeholders in May. The International Labour Organization, the government and factory owners pledged to introduce a Labour Reform package that would include a four-point plan. The plan, developed by IndustriALL Global Union aims at implementing the Accord on Fire and Building Safety, the right to form free associations, raising the minimum wage rate to reach living wage by 2015 and launching a massive project to ensure union presence in 5000 garment factories. As Jyrki Rania, the general secretary of the IndustriALL Global Union pointed out 'Rana Plaza and other industrial

homicides have demonstrated why Bangladeshi garment workers need strong national unions and local level union and safety representatives. A labour law reform that guarantees the rights enshrined in ILO Conventions is a necessary starting point for that,'

The legislation was put into effect soon after in July and included a central fund for improving the standards of living of workers and the creation of employee welfare funds where 5% of annual company profits are to be deposited. Furthermore, the government and industry officials are to carry out a complete assessment of all export oriented garment factories. The assessment, which is expected to be completed by the end of the year, will include a comprehensive analysis of the structural integrity of these factories. Fire safety provisions will also be looked into and, depending

on the results, remedial action will be taken.

Given many western brands' reliance on the Bangladesh garment industry, it would be difficult for them to switch to other suppliers who would lack the capacity and skills that the Bangladesh industry has. As a result, there is a conscious effort on their part as well, along with local bodies, to bring the Bangladesh labour laws up to par with international standards. In July, some 70 European retailers announced a safety plan for Bangladeshi factories with US and Canadian retailers announcing separate pacts.

Along with support from international retailers, the new law seems strong enough to alleviate consumer concerns regarding workplace safety. It states that workers have the freedom to form their own union, whereas under the previous law, they had to seek permission from their employers. It also says that structural changes to buildings cannot be made without the approval of government inspectors. This is in response to serious concerns regarding the addition of new floors to buildings that cannot support their additional weight. This was also one of the alleged reasons for the collapse of the Rana Plaza. Cracks were said to have appeared in the building one day before the disaster and three floors had been added over the years to the original design. Padlocking exit gates is also banned under the new law - a cruel practice that prevented workers from fleeing the recent fires that eventually killed them.

While effective implementation of this law remains to be seen, the swift drawing up of the legislation by the government and other bodies is a step in the right direction for Bangladesh's industries. ■

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

The persecution of Sri Lankan Muslims

Islam is the third largest religion in Sri Lanka and certainly deserves a better deal than what it is getting.

By Huzaima Bukhari & Dr. Ikramul Haq

For centuries, Sri Lanka has been viewed with respect for its multi-religious sites allowing people to enjoy the freedom to worship. The country's archaeological record testifies how religious places such as Katargama, Madhu shrine and Sri Pada existed side by side and were revered by Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims and Christians. This spirit of tolerance received serious setbacks in recent months with shocking news of attacks on Muslims and mosques. Like Myanmar, Sri Lanka has also started witnessing a growing hatred towards Muslims.

The Economist, in a recent report said: "Another country where Buddhism is becoming conflated with a growing ethnic and nationalist identity is Sri Lanka. There the Bodu Bala Sena (BBS) organisation – that stands for "Buddhist force" and is made up of members of the country's ethnic Sinhalese majority – preaches a doctrine of intolerance against a minority Islamic population (in this case, about 10 per cent of the country), whose birth rate, they also claim, is alarmingly high. Galagoda Aththe Gnanasara, a BBS leader, argues that "This is a Sinhala Buddhist country. We have a Sinhala Buddhist culture. This is not Saudi Arabia. But you must accept the culture and behave in a manner that doesn't harm it."

The BBS, Economist says, "has been campaigning against Islam on specific issues, such as halal labelling on food. More generally, it is accused of

inciting mobs to attack mosques and Muslim-owned shops. The BBS defends the persecution of the Rohingyas in Myanmar, claiming that Buddhists are acting out of self-preservation. As in Myanmar, plenty of politicians are ready to promote the agenda of groups like the BBS by exploiting the ignorance, prejudices and fears of the Buddhist population."

It is unfortunate that the rising tide of hatred between two of the most widespread religions – Islam and Buddhism – in Asia is rekindling bigotry in countries having a proven track record of tolerant multi-religious cultures. In India, Pakistan and Indonesia, thousands of Muslims marched in support of their brethren in Myanmar and Sri Lanka. Thus, the Muslim versus Buddhist issue is no longer confined to Myanmar and Sri Lanka. It is posing global ramifications for peace and democracy.

1.4 million Muslims live in Sri Lanka representing 7.5 % of the island's 19 million inhabitants. Islam is the nation's third largest religion after Buddhism (over 13 million faithful, 69% of the population) and Hinduism (circa 9 million). The Muslim community is divided into three main ethnic groups: the Sri Lankan Moors, the Indian Muslims and the Malays, each with its own history and traditions. The attitude among the majority of people in Sri Lanka is to use the term "Muslim" as an ethnic group, specifically when referring to Sri Lankan Moors.

Amid this disturbing scenario there are still voices of sanity. In the wake of unprovoked attack on the Masjid Deenul Islam in Sri Lanka on August 10, 2013 by an extremist mob injuring 12 people, over two hundred concerned citizens [The Guardian, August 15, 2013] signed a protest note saying: "While recognising and promoting the constitutionally guaranteed rights of free speech, religious worship, and assembly, we urge all communities to respect the religious beliefs – and the associated rights – of their fellow citizens, and to not be influenced by state-condoned Buddhist extremists groups." These citizens expressed dismay over what they called "the visible apathy displayed by the government and the Mahanayake Theros of the Tri-Nikayas, at a time when the rights to religious worship and assembly of its citizens are being threatened by extremism" and added "we wish to highlight apparent state complicity and the level of impunity repeatedly granted by the state to extremist elements in the country."

These citizens welcomed and endorsed the open letter of protest by Muslim members of the government addressed to the President of Sri Lanka, and shared their view that "the lukewarm and ineffective measures taken by the law enforcement agencies on previous occasions, when Muslim communities and their mosques were deliberately attacked, seem to have emboldened some extremist groups who are

determined to create chaos in the country that is still in search of national reconciliation after a prolonged war.”

Raashid Raza in his article, Lankan Muslims and their image problem, published in Ceylon Today on July 24, 2013, observed that in the last few years “indeed the plight of Sri Lankan Muslims has become somewhat dire; new radical Sinhalese groups like the BBS and the Sinhala Ravaya (SR) have hijacked Buddhism and are both committing and advocating crimes against the Muslim community.”

A Rameez, currently a PhD scholar at National University of Singapore and lecturer in Sociology at South Eastern University of Sri Lanka, in his article, ‘The persecution of the Muslims in Sri Lanka’, published in The Guardian, July 28, 2013, quoted Hunaiz Farook, Member Parliament, claiming that “the Liberation of Tigers of Tamil Ealam (LTTE) forcefully expelled the Muslims from the Northern province at gunpoint, and abruptly put an end to the call for prayers (Athan), thereby closing the mosques in the province.” Rameez wrote that this speech was a genuine reflection of the emotions and grief in the minds of any Muslim in the country, “against the backdrop of them continuously being targeted by the ethno-religious fascist Buddhist forces like BBS and SR, obviously stirred by the government.”

Rameez says “it is high time for the government to take some measures immediately to contain these ethno-religious fascist movements mushrooming in the post-war scenario, and to restore the religious rights of the Muslims historically enjoyed by them throughout the country. It is also important for the Muslim MPs and ministers to show genuine commitment regarding the issues plaguing the community at large, adopting a view that looks beyond the next election. They should also raise this issue in parliament and cabinets. This issue should also be drawn, with the intervention of the Muslim politicians, to the attention of the international community, especially the Muslim countries that support Sri

Lanka financially and diplomatically in international forums like Geneva. The continuous persecution of Muslims in the country is a serious issue that must be dealt with immediately by those in power, lest it lead to another national catastrophe.”

It may be remembered that in 2009, the present government successfully defeated the LTTE militarily, and in historic victory speech made by the President on May 19, 2009 he averred, “We have removed the word minorities from our vocabulary three years ago. No longer are the Tamils, Sinhalese, Muslims, Burghers, Malays and any other minorities. There are only two kinds of people in this country now. One is the people that love this country. The other comprises the small groups that have no love for the land of their birth. Those who do not love the country are now a lesser group.” The hope expressed by the President proved short lived as evidenced by unprovoked attacks on Muslim minority.

Dr. Ruwantissa Abeyratne, in his article, ‘Religious bigotry, hatred & and human rights’, published in The Guardian (Sri Lanka), August 14, 2013, aptly concluded: “The protection of human rights is the most significant and important task for a modern State, particularly since multi ethnic States are the norm in today’s world. The traditional nation State in which a distinct national group rules over a territorial unit is fast receding in history. Globalisation and increased migration across borders is gradually putting an end to the concept of the nation State, although resistance to reality can still be observed in instances where majority or dominant cultures impose their identity and interests on groups with whom they share a territory. In such cases, minorities frequently intensify their efforts to preserve and protect their identity, in order to avoid marginalisation. Polarisation between the opposite forces of assimilation on the one hand and protection of minority identity on the other inevitably causes increased intolerance culminating in armed ethnic conflict. In such a scenario, the first duty of governance is



to ensure that the rights of a minority society are protected.”

Humanity at large fervently hopes that Sri Lankan government will come out of the syndrome that minorities should be subdued and marginalized following defeat of the LTTE. It is a proven fact that the more the minorities are marginalised, the more rebellious and frustrated they would become. Presently, onus is on the government to dispel any such impression and deal with an iron hand provocative acts of certain extremist groups to the detriment of minority communities ensuring cultural diversity, equality, tolerance, and their fundamental human rights. ■


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).

Managing Water Resources

Maldives is experiencing an acute water shortage owing to change in rainfall patterns and policy mismanagement

By Muhammad Omar Iftikhar





Famous for its serene beauty, natural habitat, and a tourist destination, the island of Maldives suffers from lack of water resource management. This is causing problems for residents since their access to clean water has become limited over the years.

For years, Maldives has been receiving an adequate supply of freshwater but now the crisis

has accentuated given that there is mismanagement on part of the government and a change in climate. Authorities are debating over the traditional reliance on groundwater supply for both potable and non-potable usage. The densely populated islands have been experiencing a water crisis because of over-extraction of groundwater,

contamination, and salinization of aquifers given a rise in sea level.

The government is making efforts to improve the methods of rainwater harvesting and desalination to supply drinking water in residential and commercial areas. Moreover, it is also giving due attention to the three-month dry season and to effectively use stored rainwater during this period. Rainfall occurs throughout the year, however, dry periods prevail between December to April. Furthermore, open water evaporation and transpiration from vegetation is high which reduces the availability of freshwater. Despite demands from residents, some islands do not have rainwater tanks. The situation varies widely between islands and regions. More than 80 per cent of households on the island of Muli, the capital of Meemu Atoll in the South Central region, have rainwater tanks while only 20 per cent of households have such reservoirs in Ribudhoo, a neighbor of Muli. Moreover, in the Southern region, 69 per cent of households have rainwater tanks and in the South Central region, it is only 36 per cent. Even with the availability of rainwater tanks, the residents face water crisis during dry seasons, as the tanks cannot store enough rainwater.

The water management situation in Hithadhoo on the Addu Atoll, with a population of nearly 30,000, is troubling. The Maldives National Defense Force (MNDF) is providing the island with water from desalination plants. According to MNDF, nearly 58 islands of the Maldives have reported water shortages and asked for emergency water supplies.

Apart from rainfall, groundwater is the second source of water. Groundwater in Maldives is found in freshwater lens beneath every island. In hydrology, a lens refers to the study of the movement, distribution, and quality of water. Moreover, a lens is the

curved layer of freshwater that floats on top of a denser layer of saltwater.

Researches in hydrology estimate that groundwater capacity across the 203 inhabited islands of Maldives is nearly 0.147km. Moreover, climate change is also adding difficulties for Maldivians in storing and gaining access to freshwater. Although there is ample understanding of climate change in Maldives and NGOs are educating the people with the concerns regarding sea-level rise, the government is still slow in assessing the impact of climatic changes on the population and groundwater resources across the islands.

According to certain estimates, when the sea level rises by 1 meter, it reduces the available capacity of groundwater by 79 per cent. However, some research suggests that islands experiencing a coral reef erosion may be able to keep pace with the rising sea levels. Unfortunately, a time will come when the climbing sea level will affect every island.

It is high time that the Maldivian government took action over the issue of rising sea level. Not only is it affecting the availability of groundwater, it will eventually determine the land area for inhabitants in the near future. Moreover, changes in rainfall patterns and an increase in population are likely to affect groundwater capacity that will reduce the availability of freshwater on a per capita basis.

The Maldivian government should create water management policies that preserve groundwater quality, protect freshwater lens, and regulate groundwater demand and extraction from its source.

Moreover, the government should also improve procedures to harvest rainwater and focus on agricultural production through sustainable irrigation. Unfortunately, rivers and

streams are a rare sight in Maldives, thus making it difficult for residents to obtain freshwater. Therefore, the population uses rainwater for drinking and groundwater to fulfill domestic needs.

The residents store rainwater in community tanks and use it during dry season. However, the situation differs in Male where the population has access to desalinated water distributed through a piped network. Unfortunately, Male, is now facing difficulties as sewage pollution is spoiling the groundwater.

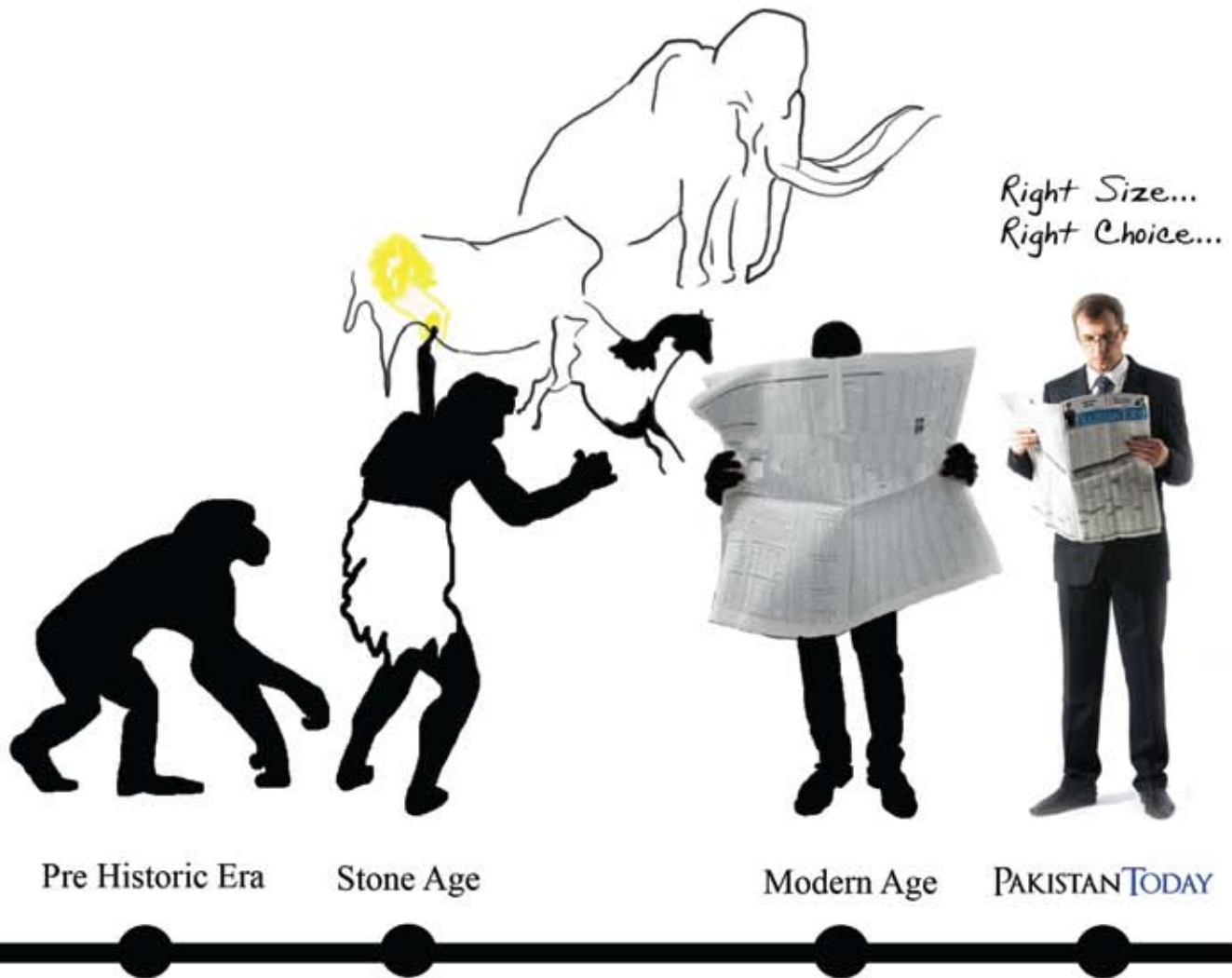
Integrated methods can help Maldives develop a combination of groundwater resources and methods to increase rainwater harvesting. Although desalination is an expensive alternative in the Maldives, the government should set up plants that provide clean drinking water.

During the 70s, Male's rapid development attracted the population from other islands as the Maldivian capital experienced an unnatural population boom and the quantity of water drawn from Male's aquifers increased tenfold. This also increased groundwater pollution as more sewage was being disposed into the ground.

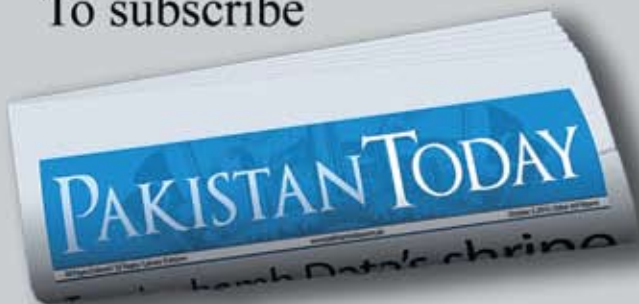
With the Maldivian elections set to take place on September 7, presidential candidates should include water management and distribution problem in their manifesto and vow to resolve this crisis. The changing climatic conditions, a rising population, an increase in water pollution along with a lack of government initiatives will only exacerbate the water crisis in Maldives. What strategies the government will take to resolve this remains to be seen. **S**

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

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The Egyptian Conundrum

Having undergone an incredible bloodbath, the land of the pharaohs still finds itself at the centre of a serious political dilemma with no solution in sight.

By Javed Ansari

What a paradox that Egypt's modern-day Jasmine Revolution lasted for just about two years and time came full circle when a court ordered Hosni Mubarak's release from prison on August 22. For whatever it was worth,

the move tended to further deepen the crisis caused when the country's armed forces cracked down on the supporters of Mohammad Morsi, the democratically elected president who was ousted from power on July 3, 2013. The upheaval had actually set the ball

rolling for a veritable bloodbath.

Mohammad Morsi was an Egyptian politician who served as the first democratically elected President of Egypt, from June 30, 2012 to July 3, 2013. He was a candidate of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) which is



Mohammad Morsi, former President of Egypt

said to be the world's most influential Islamist movement. His predecessors had also held elections which were generally marred by irregularities and allegations of rigging and he was the first president to have entered the President's House after a democratically held election, as opposed to his predecessors who came into power as revolutionaries (Nasser) and as appointed successors

(Sadat, Mubarak).

One of the major achievements of the popular street protests that toppled President Hosni Mubarak in 2011 was the ushering in of a freely and credibly contested electoral democracy for the first time in the history of the country. However, by arrogating to itself the role of architect of modern Egypt, the army also assumed the role of referee in the contest between the Muslim

Brotherhood and the secular and liberal revolutionary forces though the former won the country's first democratic elections. Once Morsi came to power, he tried to control the army but it did not go a long way and the men in uniform continued to remain considerably powerful.

Despite the fact that Morsi's was a democratic election, his one year rule did not have much of an impact on

the hordes of political, economic and security challenges that the country continued to face. And again, it was the army that called the shots – literally and metaphorically. This enabled it to direct Egyptian politics the way it wished and rather than acting as a referee, it took the side of those who were protesting against Morsi's rule.

In deposing Morsi, the army dissolved the country's democratically elected parliament and suspended the national constitution, which had been adopted by popular referendum less than a year ago. In this manner, the army once again ensured its continuity as a power broker and kingmaker and was instrumental in the setting up of a caretaker government and a new transitional head of state. In fact, the head of the army, General Abdel Fattah Al Sissi, called for a popular demonstration to give him the mandate to fight 'violence and terror.'

Come August 14, there was another turning point in Egyptian politics as the military had asserted itself fully by then. It was not clear where the resistance put up by the Muslim Brotherhood and its violence with the opposing protestors would lead. The mass killings led to a worst-case scenario, deepening the polarization and confrontation in the country which led it down the road to serious social strife and blood-letting.

The deadly crackdown on protesters on August 14, in fact, made the scenario more murky and uncertain and the country seemed to be headed towards an incredible level of chaos and destruction. It also seemed as if the army's role was becoming bigger and that it would use the state of emergency declared by the government to crack down even more ferociously on its perceived enemies and give shape to its role in the 'authoritarian' transition. It was clear that the dismissal of Morsi by the army and its supporters had put a slammer on Egypt's full democratic

transformation and had pushed it to the brink of disaster.

It has been argued by some that the challenges facing the country following the Arab Spring went back to the era of President Nasser and before. Gamal Abdul Nasser was involved in Egypt's 1952 military coup and later seized the presidency.

"The coup leader – the hero Mohammed Naguib – gave an example of humility by refusing promotion to the rank of 'lieutenant-general'...This proves that the army does not want power, just the general good," wrote Egypt's renowned historian, Abd al-Rahman al-Rafai, in al-Akhbar newspaper on 1 August 1952. His statement did not stand the test of time.

By February 1954, the humble coup leader, Mohammed Naguib, who served as Egypt's first president, was removed by the younger and more power-hungry officers led by Colonel Gamal Abdul Nasser. Back then, Egypt was as divided as it is now. One part of the country wanted a parliamentary democracy, a return to constitutionalism and the army's return to the barracks. Another part wanted a strong and charismatic patron who promised land and bread. By November 1954, the latter part had not only crushed the former but also destroyed its demands, such as basic freedom and parliamentary constitutionalism. The cost was the establishment of an officers' republic – a state where the armed institutions were above any other, including the elected ones.

The January 2011 revolution challenged that 1954 status quo in many ways. The revolutionaries this time clashed with a 21st Century junta: the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF). The SCAF was a politically conservative, unconstitutional body that ruled Egypt between February 2011 and June 2012. After the removal of Mubarak in February 2011, the SCAF had a

minimum of three demands: a veto in high politics, independence for the army's budget and economic empire, and legal immunity from prosecution on charges stemming from corruption or repression. It also wanted constitutional prerogatives to guarantee those arrangements.

These demands were reflected in a July 2012 constitutional addendum that gave the SCAF the prerogatives of the first post-revolution parliament. The prevailing polarization would only spell further disaster and no one would be in a position to come out as the exclusive winner of the stalemate. But the government had to shoulder the burden of taking major conciliatory steps to end the polarization.

It is not clear if the current military-led government in Egypt is disposed to such measures without the revolutionary forces bringing their influence to bear. As things stand, it is certain that Egypt's crisis is nowhere close to reaching an end. The Egyptian army now wears the mantle of judge, jury and executioner and, having done away with Morsi, it rules the roost,

So where is Egypt headed – towards democracy or military rule? Will the current escalation of violence lead to a democratic process or will it further plunge the country into the kind of chaos it has never witnessed before?

The answer to Egypt's crisis lies in achieving a win-win political settlement rather than the current zero-sum game. A clear lesson that has emerged from Morsi's one-year rule and the tragedy of August 14 is that no single Egyptian political force is in a position to lead the country and deal with the political, economic and security challenges it faces. The situation is a complex one and a permanent solution has to be found if the country is to survive as a major Islamic state. **S**

The writer is Editor of this magazine and a regular contributor on political subjects.

A Letter to the Honorable Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh, on Grameen Bank

Honorable Prime Minister Hasina,

We are allies and friends of Bangladesh—men and women, public servants and businesspeople, and citizens whose countries have all known the sting of poverty. We write to commend your leadership in the fight to end poverty in your country, and to urge you to reject the findings of a recent commission that would jeopardize the role that Grameen Bank and the Grameen family of businesses have played in that fight.

The Grameen family of businesses has delivered a profound and lasting benefit to the people of Bangladesh:

- Grameen Bank has allowed millions to lift themselves and their families out of destitution, creating an independent, borrower-run company and a model for NGOs the world over. Its borrowers, 97% of whom are women, have shown the power of an economic model centered on equality and inclusion.
- The 54 other social businesses within the Grameen family have provided tailored services to the poor and underprivileged: rehabilitating Bangladeshi fisheries; bringing low-cost,

nutritionally rich food to impoverished communities; building health clinics to offer affordable medical care; and introducing solar power to rural areas without electricity.

- Their founder, Muhammad Yunus, has been a tireless advocate for Bangladesh's success in improving the lives of its people.

Both Bangladesh and the international community have a compelling interest in the safety and soundness of these institutions. We commend you for ensuring that Grameen Bank and the Grameen businesses are operating in the interests of the people they are meant to serve.

However, the "Special Commission on Grameen," created in May 2012, has not shown the same concern for the well-being of these institutions. We believe that it and its members are attempting to lead your government astray, and are putting the Bangladeshi people and their allies at great risk.

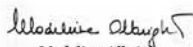
The Commission, which was set up to offer guidance on the future of the Grameen businesses, recently provided your Finance Minister with a set of recommendations. These recommendations

would disenfranchise nearly 5 million borrower-shareholders in Grameen Bank, dismiss the borrowers who sit on the bank's board of directors, and replace them with government officials. They would also result in the government seizing portions of the Grameen businesses.

These are recommendations which you and your finance ministry have the right to reject. We believe that implementing them could be disastrous. They would lead Bangladesh to violate its obligations under bilateral investment treaties, and to compromise the independence that has protected Grameen Bank from political turmoil over the last three decades. Moreover, we are concerned that the Commission may not be presenting its work in good faith, after the prolonged absence of half the commission's members was disclosed in the international press.


You have continued Bangladesh's progress in combatting poverty and expressed a commitment to keeping Grameen Bank and the Grameen businesses healthy and stable for generations to come. We share that goal, and we urge you to reject any effort by the Commission that would injure Grameen and the Bangladeshi people.

Sincerely,


Madeline Albright
 Former U.S. Secretary of State;
 Chair, Albright Stonebridge Group


Roger Altman
 Executive Chairman, Evercore


Sheila Bair
 Former Chairman, Federal Deposit
 Insurance Corporation

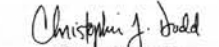

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 Founder and Chairman, Virgin Group;
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Gro Harlem Brundtland
 United Nations Special Envoy on Climate
 Change; Former Prime Minister of Norway

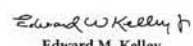

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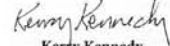

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Gil Crawford
 CEO, MicroVest
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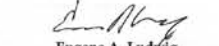

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 Senate Committee on Banking

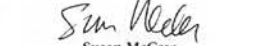

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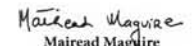

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 Federal Reserve Board

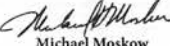

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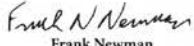

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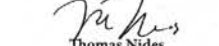

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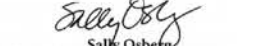

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 Nobel Peace Prize winner
 and peace activist

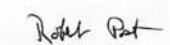

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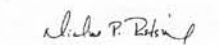

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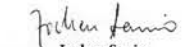

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 World Bank Group

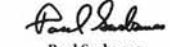

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 Sol & Lillian Goldman Professor of Law

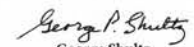

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Nicolas Retsinas
 Former U.S. Federal
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 Committee on Banking, Housing and
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Jochen Sanio
 Former President, Federal Financial
 Supervisory Authority, Bonn, Germany

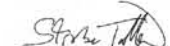

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 and Urban Development

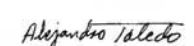

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 Former U.S. Secretary of State



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 Senior Fellow, Urban Institute

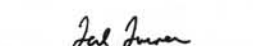

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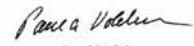

Alejandro Toledo
 Former President of Peru

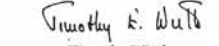

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Ted Turner
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Media in Afghanistan is quite useful in creating awareness and educating the masses and has emerged as a powerful tool in the hands of young Afghans. Local journalists refer to their media as one of the most significant achievements of the post-Taliban regime. For them, media is a progressive social institution. It is hard to gauge the exact strength of Afghan media, but it has grown strong enough to create a noticeable impact.

“The Afghan media was in its worse ever condition after the collapse of Dr Najeeb’s government as the country had only one state-owned radio and television channel broadcasting pro-government news and advertisements. The situation continued during the Taliban regime even though a few Farsi and Pashto radio channels were covering news from within Afghanistan,” said Rezwan

of their wrong public perception. However, in comparison to the local media, the international media has access to almost everything, from interviewing the most high-ranking officials to the lowest levels of the public,” he added.

Afghanistan is going through many geopolitical changes because of which it has been in the limelight for several years. As a result, freedom of speech has been a major achievement of this government since everyone enjoys the right to criticize authorities.

According to studies, there are today around 76 TV and radio stations across the country with over two dozen just in the capital city of Kabul. Online media has also grown manifold in recent years as access to the internet is increasing. Some of the most popular local TV and radio stations are Tolo TV and Tolo News (owned by an Afghan-Australian journalist and businessman,

“People almost can share local issues with media,” he says. In fact, Noori tells how the Afghan media is launching a series of programs to make the public aware and is encouraging them to be more open, voicing their say without fear of being arrested or assaulted. In general, freedom of speech has been called the one and only major achievement of the new establishment under the leadership of President Hamid Karzai.

While analyzing the Afghan media, one will find that there are more newspapers than the online news outlets and TV stations, but on the whole, the country does not have that many newspaper readers, says journalist Natiq.

“People here prefer broadcast over print as the literacy level is simply low and 60 per cent of the population is still uneducated. As a journalist, I believe the media has

The many faces of

Afghanistan is facing a revolution on the media front. Expression is relatively free in the country and a discovery for journalists as well as the people at large.

By Meena Ahmed

Natiq, a local Afghan journalist, while responding to a question about the country’s media.

However, local Afghan media is under extreme pressure, explains another journalist Qiamuddin Noori. “Not to forget, the Afghan local media is faced with unlimited challenges, in particular lack of access to accurate information for the news feed. No one in here is ready to talk to you. The reason is that officials are scared

Channel 1, RTA (Radio Television of Afghanistan), Ariana TV and radio. Some local newspapers include The Afghanistan Times (English version), Anis, 8 am, etc.

When asked about the role media is playing in the common man’s life, Qiamuddin Noori said that in comparison to the neighboring countries, like Russia, Iran, China or even Pakistan, freedom of speech in Afghanistan is indeed satisfactory.

deeply influenced the life of the local communities, particularly the newer generation. There are several educational programs which are informative for students. Also the education ministry has launched its own TV station, encouraging students to watch such educative programs,” he explained.

The Afghan media is leading its way in terms of influencing the government and community. “Media has played



Afghan media

a huge role in reforming the roles of both the government and community,” said Sayed Habibullah Frotan, former online journalist from Tolo News, which is the most prominent media house in Afghanistan.

Analyzing the power of media in Afghanistan, many journalists believe that the influential media outlets are more popular and vice-versa. “Well, it varies from one particular media to another. For example, we have a broadcast service called Tolo TV that has great impact. However, we do have other broadcast services across the country that are being established for particular ethnic groups such as Hazaras, Pashtoons or Uzbeks, and isn’t that influential,” asks Noori.

Rated as the favourite medium for information, the electronic media (both radio and TV) ruled for long previously. However, social media such as Facebook and Twitter have become the fastest and strongest modes of communication for the public.

While social media is vastly used among journalists, there are still quite a few of them who have never heard of it. In fact, many journalists complain that social media impedes reporting.

“It creates problems too! A reporter was assaulted by the government after he commented on one of the posts on Facebook. We use Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn at times to express our point of view or share breaking news.

Social media is vastly used here but, for sure, there are some restrictions,” said Natiq.

In Afghanistan cyber laws do not exist as such. “There are no proper cyber laws in Afghanistan. Considering that it is an Islamic country, several websites have been banned,” he added. However, Frotan believes cyber laws are strictly applied and are always controlled.

Meena Ahmed is a trained journalist who has worked with The News International and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). She is currently working as Group Communications Manager for FNCK Ventures.

Right to Food



The right to food has gained significant recognition in Africa, Asia, Latin America and South Asia, but more national institutional reforms are needed to ensure that the fight against hunger is rooted in legal mechanisms.

By Samina Wahid Perozani

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), South Asia has the highest number (304 million) of the world's undernourished population. While this figure has gone down over the years, the number of under-nourished people in South Asian countries is still high. Despite significant progress in the past two decades, the food security situation in Bangladesh, India and Nepal is still considered 'alarming' with Pakistan and Sri Lanka categorized as 'serious'.

In this regard, a two-day regional consultation on food-related

legislation in South Asia was held in Kathmandu, Nepal (July 29-30) where experts and policymakers emphasized the importance of implementing a comprehensive law on the right to food in South Asian countries. This, they said, was of utmost importance if one hoped to resolve South Asia's chronic problem of hunger. Any food aid from international agencies requires legislation to be in place to ensure an effective and transparent public distribution system. Experts say there is a need to devise additional cooperative methods to sustain food aid, such as the compulsory deposit of food grains as provided in the

Land Act of Nepal or voluntary food storage system under the Village Grain Bank Scheme of India. South Asian governments are investing a lot in terms of direct and indirect investment in food and agriculture. "Many laws, rules, regulations, policies, and administrative measures have been introduced, but these are not coherent and comprehensive," said Hasanul Haq Inu, Nepalese Information Minister and Chairperson of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Food, Agriculture and Rural Development.

Despite Nepal's Interim Constitution that guarantees food

sovereignty, Pakistan's Zero-Hunger Action Plan, Bangladesh's massive investment in social protection or Sri Lanka's constitutional change, it is hard to see poor people have three meals a day with the existing legal loopholes and many related issues missing.

Others participating in the conference included Gagan Thapa, Member of Committee on Natural Resources and Means of the Farmer Constituent Assembly of Nepal; Honourable Buddika Pathirana, Member of Parliament of Sri Lanka; Chitra Lekha Yadav, Deputy Speaker, Nepal's Former House of Representatives; Dr Somsak Pipoppinyo, Nepal Country Representative of Food and Agriculture Organization; Dr Dinesh Chandra Devkota, former Vice-Chairman, National Planning Commission of Nepal; and Hari Roka, Committee Member, Natural Resources, Financial Rights and Revenue Sharing of Nepal's Former Constituent Assembly.

Countless people go to bed hungry in the South Asian countries every day mainly because there is an acute lack of proper legislation that prevents access to available resources. At the end of the day, it is imperative that people's right to food is taken into account. This right must be recognized for all, including women and minority groups, especially during times of crisis, whether economic or emergency, given the region's status as the world's most vulnerable place to natural disasters and climate change. Some of the challenges faced by South Asia in this regard include lack of coherence in policies, coordination in enforcement and, most importantly, political will. This was stated by Lilian Mercado, deputy regional director of Oxfam Asia, while talking about issues pertaining to food security in the region.

Participants of the conference also urged government representatives to take initiatives that positively change access to food in the region. They

suggested that governments enforce a Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) that helps landless farmers with land acquisition and distribution. Furthermore, it would aim at securing the availability, accessibility, utilization and stability of foods. They said it would enable governments to be politically committed and bring about a change pertaining to food security legislation.

The conference concluded that the right to food will only become possible if a comprehensive food law is introduced along with tools and measures that show the political will of governments to solve this issue. South Asian countries have a poor track record as far as food security is concerned so the need of the hour is to actively work towards a law that is implemented for it to be actually effective. **S**

Samina Wahid Perozani is a free-lance journalist who contributes regularly to various publications.

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Why Nepal needs Information Technology

Nepal is coming of age as an IT-savvy nation.
Is this the secret to its progress?

By Dr Omar Farooq Khan

The very mention of the Nepal is brings to the mind sites and images of an exotic far-off land. Its mountainous terrain, rich heritage and culture make it seem like the country is cut off from the modern world.

Nepal is a landlocked nation located in the Himalayas. Its northern borders are connected with China, while it has a common border with India in the east, west and south. The country is famous for having some of the world's tallest mountain range. It contains more than 240 peaks over 20,000ft and the world's highest peak (Mt Everest) is also located in Nepal. Other main attractions include the Buddhist pilgrimage site Lumbini, which is the birthplace of Buddha. There is strong evidence that suggests Lumbini turned into a pilgrimage site as early as the third century BC. Hinduism is the main religion of the country followed by Buddhism and the country has been mostly governed by a monarchy throughout its history.

In ancient times, Nepal was a part of several empires with origins in Indian mainland. In fact, the country has also experienced the colonial rule by the British Empire. The British annexed parts of Nepal (Sikkim and Terai) after the Treaty of Sugauli. The treaty itself took place after the Anglo Nepalese War in 1815-1816, which was initially more devastating for the British but eventually went in their favour after they committed more resources to their forces.

The country's economy is mostly based on agriculture, followed by services and then other Industries. The former employs about 76 per cent of the workforce followed by 18 per cent and 6 per cent in the services and manufacturing industries, respectively. Like many other South Asian nations, due to political uncertainty (like the upheaval in monarchy and the civil war with the Maoist forces, etc.), Nepal's economy too has had more than its fair share of issues. Despite having a major potential, the country lacks a modern infrastructure required to make its economy more dynamic and vibrant.

Sectors like manufacturing, tourism and services industries require more attention to optimise their full potential and provide the country with the necessary benefits reaped from using modern methods.

As mentioned earlier, information technology (IT) also happens one of the major areas where Nepal needs to make more efforts to create not just a strong economy but also a strong link to the rest of the world. Effective utilization of IT and its amalgamation into a country's infrastructure definitely brings about major positive changes in its social, cultural and economical settings.

In Nepal there is rapid expansion in the use of IT in many sectors of the economy, particularly in public organizations. However this usually occurs with outside assistance. The IT scene in Nepal faces enormous difficulties from not having adequate infrastructure, planning and manpower to support it.

IT in the country's public sector mostly comes as a part of numerous development projects from various donor agencies. Since these ventures have a specific set of objectives, deliverables and outcomes there is a question of sustaining these technologies after these projects come to completion. One of the major methods of sustenance appears to be projects extensions and renewals. Therefore, there is concern with reference to the lack of capability in sustaining these new technologies on internal resources. This also highlights a reliance on external resources over which the country has limited control; and the problem they face of having a lack of internal support system. Furthermore, some research studies show that the importation of technologies is operated in a very liberal manner, with not enough effort to learn and absorb them. In addition, the diffusion and commercialization of these technologies are practiced mostly on an ad hoc basis.

Moreover, Nepalese social practices and cultural values differ from those of the West. As a result, they are likely

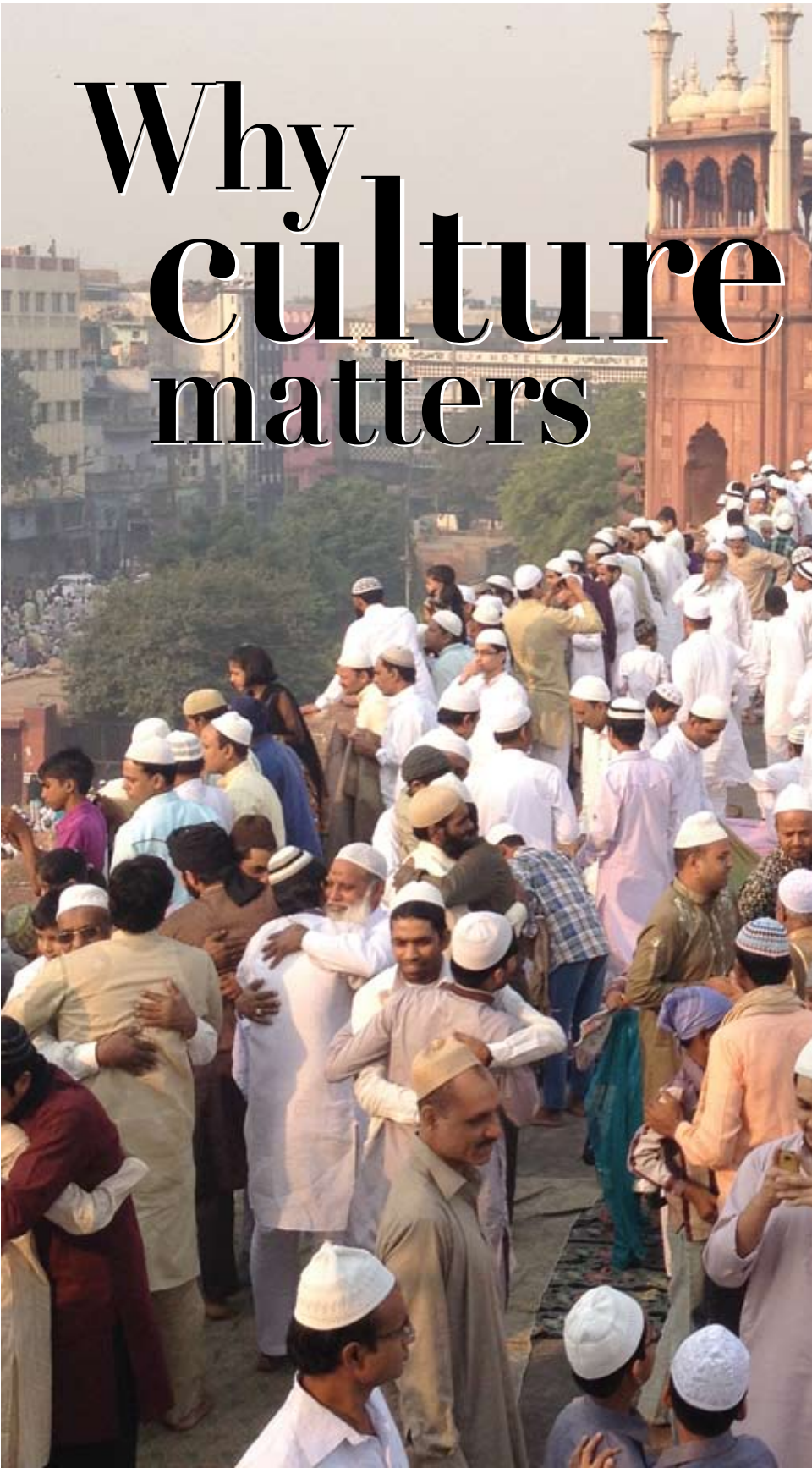
to impact Nepalese users' attitudes towards computers. The country has a hierarchical system with factors such as family/clan affiliations, residence, age and gender, etc aspects to consider. Thus it's not just the peoples' computer literacy but also their preferences for adopting certain technologies that appear to be major deciding factors in adopting IT practices.

Moreover Nepal's business practices centre more on a culture of meeting people, discussions and visits. The practice of internal communication via written content is mostly quite rare. Thus in-house communications (emails, etc) might have some problems in implementing initially. Also the jobs related to IT and computers require training and a large number of the population is computer illiterate. Therefore, the few people with computer literacy are in a better position to find jobs relatively quickly, and the employment market is currently far from being overwhelmed with IT specialists.

Despite being in initial stages, IT has helped Nepal in quite a few of its endeavors. A prime example is the population census of Nepal 1971 which took only a year to publish thanks to the adoption of computer technology. Prior to acquiring computer usage, the first (manual) population survey of 1962 took nearly a decade to compile and publish. Furthermore like India, a few IT firms from Nepal are providing their services to international markets and are playing an integral role in connecting their country to the world's IT stage. With the right policies, investment towards infrastructure and human resources, Nepal can build a strong IT sector. This will not only result in superior working environment and better product quality for Nepalese businesses but will also link them with international markets and improve the quality of life for their people. ■

Dr. Omar Farooq Khan writes regularly on subjects of social and cultural interest.

Why culture matters



Every society has its own practices and beliefs that impact its customs and traditions and make up its cultural norms.

By Madiha Bilal Kapadia

Cultures have an enormous effect on our psychology. Everything, from the way we celebrate success to the way we mourn our dead to the way we cope with illness, is substantially influenced by cultural norms. Beyond that, however, cultures can even impact the way we perceive the world around us and, indeed, the way we perceive ourselves as individuals. The extent to which our cultural heritage plays into our self-image is often underestimated.

People who have been raised in countries where the state operates through suppression and propaganda and shuns openness, can develop a mechanism of emotional suppression that might carry through generations even after the state has itself changed its modus operandi in countries blighted with poverty and fear. That same fear and insecurity about the world can continue to pass through family dynamics, even after the family has moved away from the region.

We often formulate ideas about ourselves and the world around us from our relationships with our parents in our earliest years. Culture carries differences in self-perception and this can be seen in the way in which people in the East see themselves as more closely a part of a wider family unit. In the East, there is a greater sense of kinship with and responsibility for the extended family.

Everyone has a different view on tradition. Some regard it as playing an important role in their lives

whereas others may not recognize its significance. Whatever our point of view may be, there is no denying that customs and traditions play an important part in the lives of people all over the world, be it in the subcontinent or in western societies. They can have both a positive and negative impact on people and their lives, depending on the type of custom or tradition and the region it hails from.

On the plus side, tradition helps create unity among people, gets them to come together in times of grief as well as happiness. At the time of a huge event like a death, traditions and customs can carry people through. When a person goes on autopilot, as they are wont to do when faced with tragedy such as the death of a loved one, all close relatives and community people come together to help and offer support. Tradition helps you understand that life goes on.

The customs, culture and traditions of the people of a country are representative of its history, faith, language and environment. In Pakistan, cultural patterns show a rich heritage. Pakistani culture seeks its influence from India, Central Asia and the Middle East, and varies widely in each of the four provinces.

Of the many different religious festivals celebrated in Pakistan, Eid ul Fitr is the most anticipated. It follows the holy month of Ramzan – in which Muslims fast which is observed by the people of the faith all over the world. Eid is usually a three-day event, and is celebrated by wearing new clothes. Social visits and exchange of sweet dishes are customary during Eid. Economic activity preceding this festival is usually at an all-time high, as new clothes are bought and gifts are exchanged. Religious festivals like this help create a greater sense of community among the people, thus bringing them together.

Religion often plays a pivotal role in shaping cultural life and provides a pattern for moulding lives. While the majority of people in Pakistan follows

Islam, there are still some indigenous and foreign customs that have made their way into our lives. More often than not, this imported culture may conflict with the existing one which is why Pakistanis today seem to be going through an identity crisis - a crisis clearly manifested in the actions of the Pakistani youth. The western influence has both positive and negative effects.

set up their own homes. Many would argue that there is nothing wrong with setting up an individual family unit; that it makes sense economically, financially and socially. However, the fact remains that the dearth of the extended family has led to creating greater distances between previously close-knit families.

Traditional cultural practices



The most prominent of these effects is the freedom of speech and action. Women today have more freedom and autonomy than they did 20 years ago and are participating in sports, politics, media and other male-dominated fields.

On the other hand, there are several adverse effects of the western influence on culture and its impact on people's lives. The extended family system, a hallmark of Pakistani culture, has been dying a slow death. Western culture and its emphasis on the nuclear family system have encouraged people to break away from the traditional joint family system and

reflect the values and beliefs held by members of a community. Every social group in the world has specific traditional cultural practices and beliefs, some of which are beneficial to all members and others aren't. But there is no denying that customs and traditions do have a huge impact on the lives of people. Each region, with its own culture and traditions, makes the world a rich tapestry; one in which people look, talk, eat and work differently. ■

Madiha Bilal Kapadia holds an MBA in Marketing from IoBM and freelances for various publications.

Heaven on earth

Sri Lanka is fast gaining the reputation of a much sought-after tourist destination where sightseeing is contributing substantially to the national exchequer.

By Zufah Ansari

With beaches shrouded in palm trees and breathtaking scenery stretching from one island to the other, Sri Lanka is without doubt beautiful and stunning. The island has several mesmerizing landscapes and ancient sites. It is hardly surprising that Marco Polo deemed Sri Lanka as “the finest jewel of its size in the entire world.”

Each year, it attracts a growing number of tourists who are tempted to explore the island.

From temples to tea plantations to natural wonders such as Adam's Peak – the place where Adam was believed to have first stepped on Earth after being ousted from the Garden of Eden - Sri Lanka has often been called 'heaven on earth'.

There are several factors that make Sri Lanka a spectacular tourist destination. For example, there is Sigiriya (the Lion Rock), a gigantic rock fortress located in central Matale. This fort is guarded by a lion's statue that is 600 feet high and is symbolic to the existence of the Sinhala Kingdom. Sigiriya has been marked by UNESCO as a world heritage site as it is also famous for its ancient paintings reflecting the Ajanta caves in India.

The second most popular tourist destination on the island after Colombo is Kandy. This is the second largest city of the country and is known for hosting the Perahera Ceremony each year – a prayer to the gods for rain. Kandy is also famous for the Temple of the Sacred Tooth that was created in the fourth century to place Buddha's tooth in. Then there is the Yala National Park and Bentota Turtle Sanctuary as well as Mirissa, which is popular for whale watching.

As much as there is to see and relish in Sri Lanka, for a long time tourism was non-existent here owing to the civil war. Areas that were mainly affected were the north and north eastern regions which never really experienced tourism till 2009 when, after 26 years of constant struggle, the civil war finally ended.

Places such as Kalpitiya, with its white sand beaches, coral reefs and beautiful waters inhabited by dolphins, are now open for tourists to enjoy. Similarly, Jaffna and its adjoining areas, known for their ancient sites and temples and for being one of the few most culturally diverse towns, are considered to be a favourite among tourists.



Even though Sri Lanka is neighbor to Maldives, a country that tops the list of must-see places, Sri Lanka has experienced a tourism growth rate of 12.8 per cent in 2013 as compared to the year before. This surge in numbers earned the country approximately \$500 million.

Every year, the island experiences an influx of tourists from Europe, UK, Germany, France, Norway and the Netherlands (the largest contributor at 19.6 per cent). Meanwhile, the number of Chinese tourists rose by 72.3 per cent in June 2013 and has alerted the tourism authorities to regroup their marketing strategies.

Given these changing patterns in the tourist makeup, the Sri Lankan tourism board is now making an effort to attract more Chinese visitors by adopting joint promotion campaigns. A part of this strategic effort also includes improvements being made to enhance the existing facilities. Some key projects are the Kalpitiya Integrated Tourism Resorts Project, which will undertake development of resorts and hotels on more than 14 islands in the area. Other initiatives include the Pasikudah Resorts, Shangrila Project in Colombo and Hambantota, and Kuchchaveli Tourism Development

Project.

It is worth mentioning here that as much as the civil war had affected tourism, it is now emerging as a major source of revenue for the country. Also, there is a phenomenon known as war tourism where Sri Lanka is facing instances of tourists flocking to areas that were previously war-stricken to see what is left.

Areas in the north and east are where this is being experienced more explicitly. Each month approximately 500,000 tourists visit places like the Elephant Pass, where the Eelam Wars took place and tunnels dug by the Tamil Tigers. The headless giant statues of Tamil war heroes at Kilinochchi are also a popular tourist attraction..

With the passage of time, Sri Lanka is emerging as an iconic destination in Asia. There is promise of a better outlook thanks to the country's several yet-to-be explored sites, rich culture and the interest shown by government authorities. If this continues, it won't be long before Sri Lanka becomes the top tourist destination in the world. **S**

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

Tourism of Another Kind

While tourism is a growing industry in South Asia, it also brings with it stories of child exploitation.

By Asra Khurshid

South Asia has been a tourist attraction for many, especially as a holiday destination. In recent years Sri Lanka, India, Nepal and even Bangladesh have seen considerable growth in tourism. With a high turnout, these South Asian countries have a good ratio to contribute to their GDP. Sadly, with the good tourism comes the bad, including people who travel overseas to have sex with young boys and girls.

The peak tourist season attracts skilled labor for work – and also vulnerable children and their families who are exploited and exposed to unsafe or even harmful work conditions just to make money. Such families have little or no other option to earn and survive, hence they are exploited. The children engage in begging or other forms of child labor and are also subjected to sexually abuse.

The growth of sex tourism has been increasingly noted in Sri Lanka, India and Nepal, catering primarily to demand from foreign tourists. The majority of child sex abusers are often regular users of commercial sex workers who buy children for sex as part of the mainstream sex trade. In Sri Lanka, the problem of child prostitution, primarily among boys, is highly visible in beach resort areas. Their ages generally range from eight to 15 years. These young male sex workers are usually school dropouts, nurturing the dream of ‘quick and easy’ money.

It is now becoming more common that tourists give incentives of good money to such children in return for sexual pleasures. If not so, they scheme or plan out a way to trap them and abuse them sexually by raping them or exploiting them through other means. Trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation is, in fact, a social stigma that has greatly flawed the reputations of many South Asian countries.

The number of visitors to South Asian countries is growing exponentially. The tourist industry has seen a boost in India, but with that growth has come the perversely repulsive trend of child exploitation. Now Kerala has overtaken Goa in exploiting children to boost its tourism industry. In places like Alleppey,

Kerala, foreign tourists stay in houseboats, making sex tourism a new and thriving concept. This is a safe method, as there are hardly any raids on houseboats. The victims are often projected by agents as college girls in search of fun and excitement or wanting to earn a little extra money. Therefore it becomes hard to measure such incidences of child sex tourism as it is difficult to conduct quantitative research on an underground and illegal industry.

For many developing countries, tourism is an important way to grow the economy and provide jobs for adults and children. Some jobs that children do are relatively safe, such as selling souvenirs on the streets or working at tourist spots or hotels. Such children are able to continue school while working. But these jobs also take children out of school and make them vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation. Even “safe” jobs like selling souvenirs and legitimate services to travelers can bring the young lot into risky contact with people who may abuse them.

The term “child sex tourism” does not convey strongly enough the damage being done to children and the illegal, abusive actions of the perpetrators. as the new term is ‘child sexual exploitation’ in the travel and tourism industries. Sexual exploitation has long-lasting and devastating consequences for children. They can end up with unwanted pregnancies, HIV and other sexually-transmitted diseases or become addicted to drugs. They are also rejected by their families or stigmatized in their communities.

Apart from local organizations that provide counseling and recovery, trauma centers for the victims demonstrate how such acts can be prevented to provide children with their rights and save them from misfortunes that could cripple their future life. Now international human rights organizations are emerging to look into this ever growing problem in South Asia.

There are many ways in which children can be protected or helped to abandon sexual exploitation. All concerned can play a part in ensuring

child-safe travel and tourism and it often begins with the right knowledge.

Children, their families, and their communities need to know about the dangers of sexual exploitation through travel and tourism and how to protect themselves and each other. People working in the tourism industry need to know where and how these crimes happens, and how they can observe and report suspicious situations. Such people would include airline crew and people working for travel companies, hotels and entertainment venues, taxi drivers, tour guides and even government officials. All businesses, whether big or small, related to tourism and travel must adhere to policies or codes that protect children.

Tourists and travelers must also take responsibility and play their part in stopping sexual exploitation of minors. They need to know the inherent consequences for children and perpetrators, what to look for, and how to report a suspected case. They can also help poverty-stricken families find safe ways of earning an income (e.g. help children’s access to education and their legal rights).

The authorities should create community reporting systems such as hotlines or community watch groups to identify suspected cases of abuse. They should also provide drop-in centers, outreach programs and live-in programs for survivors of sexual exploitation to help them recover and reintegrate into their communities. There should be programs to increase public awareness of the crime and support to children for safe travel to raise awareness among travelers and travel service providers.

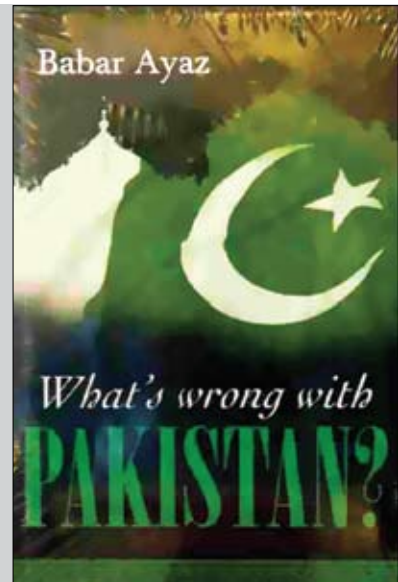
Most importantly, governments in the region need to be much more strict and vigilant and must take the perpetrators to book. They must collaborate and share information with each other to identify and prosecute travelling sex offenders and impose severe penalties on companies and individuals that break the law. **S**

Asra Khurshid is a student at the Lahore School of Economics. She regularly contributes articles on social issues.

What's really wrong with Pakistan?

Title: What's wrong with Pakistan?
Author: Babar Ayaz
Publisher: Hay House India
Pages: 347, Hardback
Price: PKR 995
ISBN: 9789381431597

Reviewed By Javed Ansari



What's wrong with Pakistan? A very pertinent question to ask but is there a ready answer? Apparently not. And even Babar Ayaz's recent book on the subject, while attempting to find an answer, fails to do so.

Pakistan is a country gone seriously wrong. It must have done something right though or why does it still manage to survive on the world map as a sovereign state 66 years after its birth? It is only a pity that the original state of Pakistan was dismembered just 34 years down the line and what we have today is only half of what we originally started with.

So what's wrong with Pakistan? Lots, to say the least. To begin with, the country is still finding its bearings while other much younger states have moved on in the race to progress and prosperity and are now basking in the sunlight of success. It is highly appreciable that Babar Ayaz, a journalist-turned-PR man, has picked up his pen to make an effort and answer the million-dollar question. But like many others before him, who

may not have given a similar title to their efforts, he too finds himself bogged down in a mire of confusion and chaos because he also concludes the book with a question.

It is, in fact, all a matter of questions. Through 347 pages and 34 chapters, a long and limbering argument attempts to analyse what is wrong with Pakistan, what is the genesis of these wrongs and how these wrongs can be righted. And, at the end of it all, the original question still remains unanswered.

From what ails Pakistan genetically to Zia's controversial laws and then the question "Has democracy delivered in Pakistan?", the Babar Ayaz quest covers the whole spectrum but there is no easy answer in sight. He seems to be going round in circles and coming every time to the same question: Is Pakistan a failed country? In replying to the question, he does come up with a muddle of answers but there is no coherence and the confusion continues.

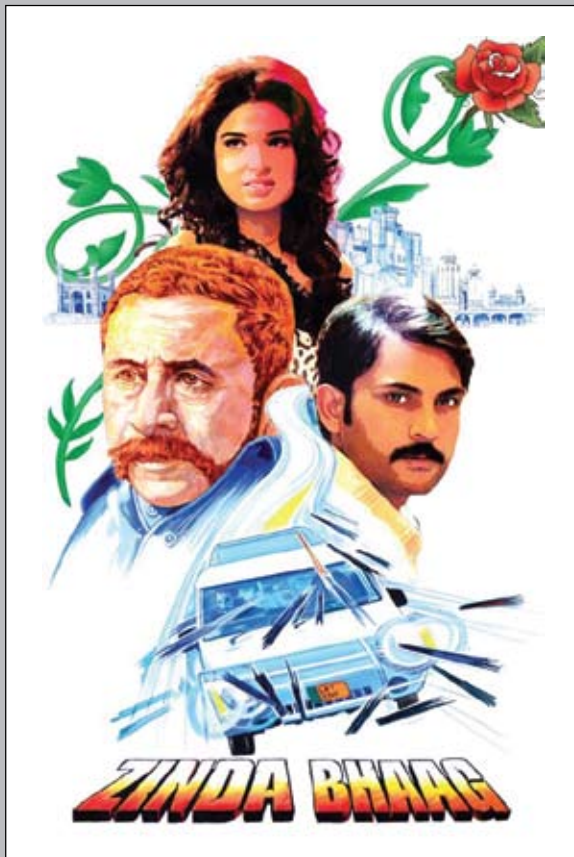
The book is quite a labour of love and, despite his other professional obligations, both as a journalist and

as a PR professional, Babar Ayaz must be lauded for taking out the time to write the book in the first place and for touching on so many aspects of this troubled land. He treats some key issues rather derisively but is quite incisive in the analysis of other ills that plague the country. He also opens new windows on old realities. His take on the Pakistan Army, for example, is that it is connected with several of the jihadi organizations which still comply with the norms set by it but he goes on to state further on that the very purpose of supporting the Taliban by the Pakistani military establishment was its perennial desire to counter the Indian influence in Afghanistan.

The account is a good read anytime because, in six cogently conceived parts, it takes you through the metamorphosis of Pakistan as an evolving state that has continued to fight its own inner battles and has come out victorious despite all its faults.

As to the question, "What's wrong with Pakistan?" - no one really knows! **S**

‘Zinda Bhaag’ – another success in isolation



Pakistan does not have a film industry to talk about but filmmakers from the country do end up making good films and winning awards, though in isolation. The latest is the bilingual Pakistani film ‘Zinda Bhaag’ which is being released on September 6 in Pakistan.

Zinda Bhaag (Escape Alive) revolves around young people and their urge to find short cuts to life. Farjad Nabi, Meenu Gaur and Mazhar Zaidi are the main people behind the film.

Work on the script of the film started in April 2011 and it went into production in March 2012. The story is set in Lahore and the producers expect that people will relate to it and enjoy the film immensely, since it is set against themes that are relevant and significant to people living in Pakistan and South Asia.

Most of the cast was chosen from initial auditions and though most actors had no previous acting experience, they participated in rehearsals and workshops. A week long acting workshop was also conducted by the Indian actor Naseeruddin Shah, who plays one of the central characters in the film.

The film has already won four awards in three categories at the Mosaic MISAFF Festival in Toronto, including Best Film and Best Music and two awards in acting for Amna Ilyas and Naghma Begum.

Zinda Bhaag beat Mira Nair’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* amongst other international top contenders for the Best Film Award. The award was given to the directors Meenu Gaur and Farjad Nabi.

The Mosaic MISAFF Jury headed by Kirk Cooper said the film was entertaining yet saddening in its music and art direction and overall innovation in storytelling. The film’s music used vernacular, folk and classical elements and original music composition in its soundtrack. The film’s original sound track boasts such names as Rahat Fateh Ali Khan, Abrar ul Haq, Amanat Ali and Arif Lohar amongst others. Amna Ilyas and Naghma Begum were recognized for bringing wit, intelligence and humor to their acting roles. **S**



By Anees Jillani

Turning the other cheek to the Indians

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif at present appears to be following the above advice to the maximum possible extent when it comes to India. The current round of skirmishes started when five Indian soldiers were killed on August 6 near the LOC; India says that they were killed by the Pakistani troops while Pakistan denies its involvement. However, someone must have done it and the fact that it was done close the LOC points the finger towards us.

We would never find out as to who did it. But PM Sharif should at least try to find out if the killing was undertaken by the Pakistan Army or done by the Mujihideen operating from Azad Kashmir; and whether the Mujihideen operated independently or with official military sanction. India believes that Mujihideen do not undertake any mission without a green light from the ISI. However, one can only wish that ISI had so much clout and control over the Mujihideen as the ISI itself is constantly being attacked all over the country, along with the other sections of the armed forces.

Regardless of official involvement on Pakistan's part, it is legally not permissible for any country under international law, including the United Nations Charter, to allow its territory to be used for attacking other countries. If allowed to do so, the international system would become chaotic and one would be coming across one world war after another.

Pakistan has a serious problem in this regard as its western border is being used by the Taliban to launch attacks in Afghanistan; eastern border to liberate Kashmir and a few Muslim Chinese militants sit in the Northern Areas.

This is a sad situation and a nuisance for our neighboring countries. Come to think of it, is it really their problem if our civilian rulers when in power fail to control the military part of our establishment?

Nawaz Sharif is constantly turning his other cheek to the Indians despite their constant shelling at the LOC which has so far killed five Pakistani troops and one can only hope that the figure will remain static by the time this column is published. In the midst of this tension, the Sharif Government of Pakistan on August 23 released 340 Indian prisoners, mostly the fishermen. The gesture no doubt is commendable and will be appreciated internationally if not in India.

But the current tension is intolerable. The Indian and Pakistani governments are not handling it right. Many justify the belligerent Indian stance to the coming Lok Sabha elections. If this is true, then it is even more sad and goes to show that unlike the people in Pakistan, Indians want war. Instead of the Foreign Office daily summoning the Deputy Indian High Commissioner, Nawaz Sharif should pick-up his phone and talk to his counterpart in New Delhi and explain his country's position regarding the August 6 killings and ask India not to become a hostage to its media and the fanatic sections of the populace. ■

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



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