

**Exclusive Interview:
Lt-Gen. (R) Moinuddin Haider**

March 2014

SOUTHASIA

Reg. ss-973

www.southasia.com.pk

INSIDE

PAKISTAN

It Is Time

INDIA

A Classic Clash

AFGHANISTAN

A Bridge Too Far?

NEPAL

The Moment of Truth

The Ides of March

**Is Pakistan inching towards
another military takeover?**



Afghanistan Afg. 50
Australia AS\$ 6
Bangladesh Taka 65
Bhutan NU 45
Canada C\$ 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 NeRs. 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

Now with Ginkgo

Ginkgo stimulates thinking process by maintaining blood flow, especially to the brain

Organic Tea
GINSENG
GREEN TEA
With Ginseng, Mint, Cardamom and Kiss of Lemon



*No Tea was ever so
Health-Friendly*

Purifies Blood

Tones up liver

Slows aging

Controls Blood Pressure

Lowers Cholesterol & uric acid

Prevents the excessive body fats

Fights against fatigue & sluggishness



RH

ROOTS & HERBS (Pvt) Ltd.
All Akbar House, Markaz G-8, Islamabad, Pakistan
Tel: 22555667, Fax: 2252596
www.rootsnherbs.com

SOUTHASIA

MARCH 2014

VOL.18 ISSUE 3

PRESIDENT & EDITOR IN CHIEF

Syed Jawaid Iqbal

EDITOR

Javed Ansari

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Javeria Shakil

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

S. G. Jilane

CONTRIBUTORS

Arsla Jawaid - Asad Rahim Khan - Asna Ali

Haroon Janjua - Hussain H. Zaidi

Jamil Nasir - Javed Hussain

Kruthagna Nadini Perera - M. Ali Kemal

Maria Kamal - Neha Ansari

S.G. Jilane - S. M. Hali

Samina Wahid - Sarah B. Haider

Yaqoob Khan Bangash - Zeenia Shaukat

GRAPHICS & LAYOUT

Mohammad Saleem

ADVERTISING

Aqam-ud-Din Khan

CIRCULATION

M. Adeel Siddiqui

EDITORIAL & BUSINESS OFFICE20-C, Lane 12, off Khayaban-e-Ittehad, Phase II
Extension, DHA, Karachi - 75500, Pakistan

Phones: 92-21-35313821-24

Fax: 92-21-35313832

Website: www.southasia.com.pk

Email: info@southasia.com.pk

SouthAsia is published every month
by Syed Jawaid Iqbal for and on behalf of
JAWZ Communications (Pvt.) Ltd.
and printed by Shabbirsons, Karachi.

Views expressed by the contributors are
not necessarily shared by the editors.

Published since 1977 as *Thirdworld*, the magazine
was re-launched in 1997 as *SouthAsia*.

Imponderables of the Indian Elections

Come the April general elections in India, it is clear that the big story is the Narendra Modi versus Arvind Kejriwal fight which seems to be drawing more attention with new developments every day. The year-old AAP is all set to contest its first national election since its bursting on the scene in the Delhi polls with a campaign that promised to eliminate corruption and VIP culture. According to the Election Commission of India, the elections process will commence on April 7 and continue on nine separate dates until May 12, with the results expected to be announced on May 16.

Arvind Kejriwal resigned from the post of Chief Minister of Delhi after the BJP and the Congress foiled his plans to introduce the anti-graft Jan Lokpal Bill in the Delhi Assembly. Subsequently, Kejriwal had vowed that he would not continue on his post "for a minute longer" if his government failed to get the Bill passed in the Delhi assembly. He stuck to his promise by tendering his resignation soon after the opposition ganged up to stall his plans. There is also the Modi factor that will play a key role in the coming elections. It will be important to see how this pans out. The AAP seems to be holding the potential to spoil the game for the BJP in many constituencies. However, if Narendra Modi were to become India's next prime minister and the BJP manages to cobble together a coalition under his helm, the effect on India's foreign policy could be cataclysmic. The impatience among the youth towards the Congress is said to be one of the biggest forces behind the rise of the BJP and Modi over the past two years. Modi's perceived decisiveness has had a strong appeal on the youth. This may be tempered though by two reasons. The reported stalking of a young woman by the Gujarat police has been noted by the youth and the argument that it was done at her father's request has only complicated the matter. The second is the saffron party's position on gay rights. While the Congress and AAP came out strongly in support of gay rights, the BJP took the position that this was against Indian tradition. The aspirational youth had overcome caste politics and looked towards the BJP as the vehicle for realizing their dreams but they are now confused by the party's invocation of tradition.

While the BJP's performance in its key states such as Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh and even Karnataka is certain to be impressive, the unknown factor is its prospects in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar that produce 120 MPs. If all parties contested separately, the BJP could get as many as 50 seats in UP and 20 in Bihar. Altogether, the way these unknown factors unfold could considerably impact the political current. Obviously, the Congress and BJP will both try to influence these factors.

In the 2014 Indian elections, the world's largest, with 814 million eligible voters choosing 543 members of the lower house of Parliament, no party is expected to win an outright majority, though Modi is reported to enjoy a substantial lead in opinion polls. A total of 272 seats are needed to elect the Indian prime minister and an assortment of regional parties will probably be needed to put together a majority. The Gandhi family, which has dominated Indian politics for most of the country's 67-year history, could suffer its worst defeat ever this time, with some surveys predicting a rout for the Indian National Congress, with the slowing economy and repeated corruption scandals adding to its woes. Sonia Gandhi, the family matriarch and president of the Congress, has suffered unexplained illnesses and it is expected she will pass on the leadership of the party to her son, Rahul Gandhi. But Rahul's recent public pronouncements and lackluster campaigning has led many to wonder whether he really wants the job.

India's national elections are a huge administrative undertaking involving 11 million government workers, 930,000 polling stations and 1.7 million electronic voting machines, with administrative costs expected to exceed \$645 million. All the same, despite the widespread corruption in Indian society, elections are widely considered to be fair, and powerful legislators routinely go down crashing in unexpected defeats.



Syed Jawaid Iqbal

Contents



13

The Ides of March

Military rulers justify their takeovers on grounds of chaos. Today, the political leadership may be inept, but, mercifully, there is no chaos – except that caused by terrorism.

Pakistan 26

It is Time

Pakistan must brace itself for tough times, as any army operation in the north is bound to trigger a backlash in the urban centers.



Afghanistan

32 A Bridge Too Far?
The forthcoming elections in Afghanistan will chart the future of the country.

Sri Lanka

34 A Happy Transition
Sri Lanka has emerged as one of the fastest growing economies in the region after the civil war.



30 India

A Classic Clash

In comparison with his young rival, Modi is seen by many as a polarizer.

Nepal

36 The Moment of Truth
A process of reconciliation and healing can only take place if the root causes of conflict are addressed.

40 NEIGHBOR

Writing on the Wall

Iran appears to have a thriving street art scene.



54

Glamor

Celebrity Politicians

Actresses and female singers have made their presence felt in Sri Lanka's provincial council elections.

Maldives

Till Divorce Do Us Part 58

What plagues the Maldives' marriage scene?

Nepal

Mountains of Waste 56

The incredibly striking mountain ranges in Nepal are fast becoming a rubbish dump.

46

Culture 'I Have Sinned'

Much of the Sindh Festival critique was petty.



REGULAR FEATURES

Editor's Mail	6
On Record	8
Briefings	9

COVER STORY

The Takeover Question	13
Between Wish and Reality	16
Interview	18
When Boots Come Marching In	22
A Question of Real Growth	24

REGION

Pakistan	
It is Time	26
Removing the Trade Barriers	28
India	
Classic Clash	30
Afghanistan	
A Bridge Too Far?	32
Sri Lanka	
Happy Transition	34
Nepal	
The Moment of Truth	36
Bhutan	
Calculating Happiness	38

NEIGHBOR

Iran	
Writing on the Wall	40

PERSPECTIVE

Great Unexpectations	42
----------------------	----

ECONOMIC POLICY

Which Way Profitable Companies?	44
---------------------------------	----

FEATURE

Culture	
'I Have Sinned'	46
Expression	
Innocence of a People	48
Violence	
The Weak Link	50
Tradition	
Clout of the Loya Jirga	52
Glamor	
Celebrity Politicians	54
Environment	
Mountains of Waste	56
Marriage	
Till Divorce Do Us Part	58

BOOKS & REVIEWS

Parallel Universes	60
--------------------	----

BETWEEN THE LINES

62

Democratic military

The PML-N government of Mian Nawaz Sharif, a civilian, democratically elected government that claims that



it represents the people's aspirations, is about to complete its first year in power. One of its promises was the devolution of power. Needless to say it is also one of the fundamental

requirements of democracy. There was much hullabaloo about the local bodies' polls soon after the government took charge. At the time these lines are written, elections for local bodies have been held in just one province – Balochistan. The remaining three provinces are delaying the matter on one pretext or another. The Election Commission of Pakistan has announced and cancelled the election schedule for these three provinces at least twice.

What focused my attention on this state of affairs was General (R) Pervez Musharraf's recent interview to SouthAsia in which he claimed that his government was the most democratic. That's true insofar as the devolution of power is concerned. This claim may have rubbed some people the wrong way - especially those whose evenings are spent thrashing Musharraf on talk shows - but can anyone deny it in view of the situation that prevails in the country? Who do we blame for the failure to hold LB elections?

Ahsan B. Imam
Peshawar, Pakistan

Diversions tactics

SouthAsia's cover story on Musharraf was a good effort. The

article I liked the most was 'Trial and Turbulence'. While it was a good analysis of the entire case, it can also be said that the piece represented the point of view of, or the prevalent thinking in, the armed forces of Pakistan. Clichéd as it may sound, the fact is that Pakistan is passing through a critical phase. The armed forces of the country are engaged in an unconventional war against a faceless enemy. Our soldiers are sacrificing their lives on the battlefield. Their convoys are being targeted by the militants and their bases attacked.

In such a situation, what we need to do as a nation is boost their morale by standing with them. We must show them with our words and actions that they have our full support and sympathy. What we do not need to do is try their former chief in a civilian court in a most humiliating manner. If a trial



is necessary, let it be conducted by a military court. But I think the wise thing to do, considering the country's present situation, is to leave Musharraf alone and focus on the war against terrorists.

Hadi Ali
Islamabad, Pakistan

Biased views

The article 'Saffron Success' was yet another stereotypical account of the Gujarat pogrom and presented Narendra Modi in a biased light on the basis of pre-conceived notions. No one, not even the most ardent fan of Narendra Modi, can deny that the 2002 Gujarat pogrom is a shameful blot on India's name. It will take us ages to wash the stain off. It was the first time since the advent of private TV channels in India that the people of this country watched in horror the atrocities of

communal violence. It did not affect the Muslims only. It equally affected and hurt the Hindus. It is also wrong to give the impression that nothing was done to bring the culprits to book. A number of officials, including ministers who were found guilty of inciting or committing violence, were sentenced.

Of course, none of this can bring the dead back. These measures can't mitigate the losses suffered by the Muslim community of Gujarat. But it has been 12 years and much has changed during all these years. In addition to ensuring that communal riots do not occur in Gujarat again, Modi led the state towards the path of development that benefitted both Hindus and Muslims. According to Tufail Ahmed, director of the South Asia Studies Project at the Middle East Media Research Institute, "In Gujarat, Muslims have a better recognition of Modi's pro-development governance, which has brought economic opportunities for all Gujaratis, whether Muslims, Hindus or others." If Modi comes to power in the centre, there will be tremendous pressure on him to honor his promises of equality and justice. It is better to give him a chance and criticize him if he fails or falters.



Arjun Singh
Jhansi, India

Belittling politicians

This refers to a very well-written article by Shamshad Ahmed. Although I agree with most of what he's written, I take exception to his argument in favor of the military's dominance in foreign policy issues because, according to him, "our civilian setups are devoid of any strategic vision or talent in their political cadres". Even if his statement is true, why, may I ask, is it so?

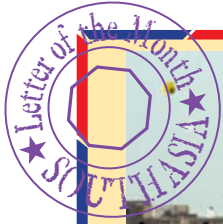
Write to SouthAsia

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

Where required, they will be edited for clarity and space.

Email: info@southasia.com.pk **Website:** www.southasia.com.pk

Post: 20-C, Lane 12, off Khayaban-e-Ittehad,
Phase II Extension, DHA, Karachi 75500



Requiem for a dying culture

The article 'Of Basant, Blasphemy and Bans' can be described as an elegy of a culture that is fast fading and basant was indeed the most prominent element of that culture. I do not know who to blame for the ban on kite flying – the irresponsible people who use deadly metallic strings or the government that sees it fit to ban the entire activity instead of taking action against the unscrupulous elements that make and sell these strings. Basant was one of those features that defined Lahore and distinguished it from other cities of Pakistan.

While the ban deprives thousands of an economical source of entertainment, it also affects a number of small-time businessmen associated with the kite-making industry. I'm positive that the government can ensure a basant festival without any casualties at a fraction of the amount that it spends on holding meaningless events like the Youth Festival. All that is required is the will to do it. With Basant gone, and the authorities least interested in preserving the beautiful heritage buildings and monuments, it seems eating will soon become the most defining characteristic of Lahore and its people.

Mehrunnisa Burki
Lahore, Pakistan



Simply for the reason that recurring military interventions stunted the growth of political institutions in the country. Perhaps what our politicians lack the most is the experience of running the country.

If democracy is allowed to take root, we'll see that our politicians will deliver. It may take years, even decades, but they will learn from their failures. And more than anything, the fear of rejection by their voters will keep them on their toes.

Nida Sultan
Islamabad, Pakistan

Time to fight

Brian Cloughley's analysis of defense ties between Pakistan and Sri Lanka in his article 'The Military Factor' was an in-depth look at how the relations between the two countries have developed over the years. The people of Sri Lanka acknowledge the services of Pakistan's armed forces, especially the Pakistan Air Force, in Sri Lanka's fight against insurgency.



People may criticize the Rajapaksa government for taking a brutal military action against Tamil rebels but only those who have lived in those turbulent times know how hard life was. People lived in constant fear. There

was no security of life. No one knew when and where a suicide bomber would blow himself up, killing many people within seconds. It does not happen anymore. There is peace in our small country and we value it. That's why we are grateful for Pakistan's assistance in our war.

And that was why I couldn't help wonder why Pakistan was unable to deal with its militancy problem despite having such strong armed forces. Terrorists, it seemed, were free to wreak havoc. I am glad that the government has finally decided to go after the terrorists with full might. It is the right way if Pakistan wants to be free from militancy and extremism.

Srimavo Wickremesinghe
Colombo, Sri Lanka

Horrors of war

The horrors that Afghanistan has gone through over the years were recounted in the article 'Cost of War'. I am not sure if any organization or person can actually ascertain the loss caused to the country and its people by years of wars and infighting. The Afghan nation has lost thousands of its sons. Most of the physical and social infrastructure of the country has been destroyed. With the exception of a few places, the majority of areas across Afghanistan present a sorry picture.

And despite all this, we continue to fight. We fight foreign forces, we fight our neighboring countries and we fight among ourselves. I have heard my elders claiming very proudly that no foreign force could succeed in its designs to rule our country. That may

be true but we need to think about a fundamental question here: have we, the Afghans, been able to rule our country? We take so much pride in being a martial race but for how long will we continue to fight? Just the thought of what will happen once the withdrawal of international forces from Afghanistan completes fills me with fear. I can only hope that those who call themselves our leaders realize their responsibility and work towards nation building before it is too late.

Sabohey Ahmedzai
Kabul, Afghanistan

For the motherland

I am afraid that the article 'Crisis of the Battling Begums' is going to be an 'evergreen' article. The people of Bangladesh have been watching this fight of the Begums for decades now and there are no signs that any side will give up the fight any time soon – not even for the country's sake. There is a great need for unity in Bangladesh - now than ever before. I say this in view of the video recording of Al-Qaeda leader Aymen-al-Zawahiri in which he has urged the people of Bangladesh to stand up against the government. Do Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia realize the threat looming over their heads?

We certainly don't want Al-Qaeda and its extremist ideology to make inroads into our society. If the two main leaders of Bangladesh do not stop fighting with each other, our enemy will exploit this opportunity to spread its message of hate and violence.

Mashiur Rahman
Dhaka, Bangladesh



"The government had gone in for talks with the Taliban with honesty and seriousness. Whenever we come to a decisive stage, this process is sabotaged."
Mian Nawaz Sharif
Pakistan's Prime Minister



"We are very satisfied because India, despite traditionally not being a donor country, has gone beyond its means to help Afghanistan."
Hamid Karzai
Afghanistan's President



"We requested the president to use his power to ensure that there is no division (of the state). We requested that the state should be kept united."
N Kiran Kumar Reddy
Former Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh



"I can give away the chief minister's chair a thousand times for a strong lokpal in Delhi and for the Constitution of the country."
Arvind Kejriwal
Former Chief Minister of Delhi



"I see the allegations of war crimes attempted to be brought against Sri Lanka in Geneva as a victory for those who are opposed to peace. It was a grave crime to make such accusations based on information provided by separatists and losers."
Mahinda Rajapaksa
Sri Lankan President



"There are not much deposits and hence banks have no money to lend, therefore the future of the banking sector is not so bright. However, I believe things can't go worse than what we are facing today."
Kipchu Tshering
CEO Bhutan National Bank



"Defense of Pakistan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the same thing. For us it is a sacred duty."
Khawaja Asif
Defense Minister of Pakistan



"The government is carrying out Goebbels-style propaganda, but it will not work in this age."
Khaleda Zia
Bangladeshi Politician



"A decision to create the state of Telangana by dividing Andhra has been taken. He (Kiran Reddy) was opposed to it. What other option did he have but to resign?"
Sushilkumar Shinde
Indian Home Minister



"No one would be freed from the responsibility until the peoples' representatives deliver an inclusive constitution, ensuring democracy."
Dr. Ram Baran Yadav
Nepali President



"There is an ongoing psychological war aiming to lead astray our faith in Islam, and break up our ties of nationalism, a war that is escalating at a very fast speed."
Umar Naseer
Maldivian Home Minister



"I know that India makes more movies each year than any other country. It's been convenient to think of Indian cinema as all musicals, but naturally, it is so much more than that."
George Clooney
American Actor

PAKISTAN | North Waziristan

Talks or what?

As the peace talks with the Taliban came to an end – an eventuality predicted by the saner elements in Pakistan – it finally dawned on the government to utilize the services of the eighth largest army in the world to deal with the militancy problem. Although there was pressure on the government to go for a military operation, it resisted

and opted for a dialogue with the Taliban. However, the talks came to a standstill when a faction of the Taliban claimed that it had slaughtered the 23 FC men that terrorists had captured from a border post in 2010.



Not only did this admission lead to a sudden breakdown in talks, it also resulted in a series of surgical air operations by the Pakistan Air Force. Consequently, several militant hideouts in the mountains of North Waziristan were razed to the ground in the air strikes.

Security sources also claimed that many local and foreign terrorists, including some top-ranking militant leaders, were killed in the precision attacks. **S**

PAKISTAN | Karachi

Beyond bullets

While Karachi was having its usual share of target killings, bomb blasts and on-again, off-again operations, the one event that generated the most attention was the Karachi Literature Festival. The fifth edition of The three-day event was very well-received, both by book enthusiasts as well as notable literary figures from

all over the country and abroad. Some important people who graced the KLF were Mahatma Gandhi's grandson, Dr Rajmohan Gandhi, Moni Mohsin, Amjad Islam Amjad, Asma Jahangir, Amar Jaleel, Attiya Dawood, Bina Shah, Bushra Ansari, Fehmida Riaz, H.M. Naqvi, Hamida Khuhro, Kishwar Naheed, Maleeha Lodhi, Mohammed



Hanif, Pervez Hoodbhoy, Sharmeen Obaid Chinoy, Shehnaz Wazir Ali, Shehzad Roy, Uzma Aslam Khan, Zehra Nigah, Zia Mohyeddin and Zubaida Jalal and others. **S**

PAKISTAN | Islamabad

Elite membership

Pakistan will get the associate membership of the European Organization for Nuclear Research Laboratory, Geneva (CERN) in June. This was announced by a CERN delegation that visited the country. Chairman, Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission, Dr Ansar Parvez said that the development will raise the

collaboration level between Pakistan and CERN. He said that Pakistan fulfills all the criteria for becoming a CERN associate member, adding that the industrial base and experience of high-precision manufacturing enables Pakistan to make significant contributions to the CERN program.

This association is likely to



benefit the country in the key areas of radiofrequency technology in the industrial sector, human resource development and technology transfer. It will also provide Pakistani scientists and researchers with new and innovative avenues of research and development. **S**

INDIA | New Delhi

The nose-dive

The Aam Aadmi Party took everyone by surprise, yet again, when its chairman, Arvind Kejriwal resigned from Delhi's chief ministership. The move came only 49 days after the

resignation, as cited by Kejriwal, was the combined efforts of the country's two main parties, the Congress and the BJP, to thwart a new anti-corruption bill that the AAP had promised to present

AAP took power in the capital.

in the assembly.

The Indian media, however, claimed that Kejriwal's decision to quit so soon after taking over power appeared



as a part of a well thought-out strategy to enable him to spearhead his party's campaign in the general election due by May.

The prospects of AAP's remaining in power had already nose-dived when Kejriwal ordered that criminal cases be filed against billionaire Mukesh

Ambani of Reliance Industries, Oil Minister Veerappa Moily and other policy-makers "for colluding to inflate the prices of gas." **S**

INDIA | Hyderabad

Exit season

It was resignation galore in India. Following in the footsteps of AAP chairman and former CM Delhi, Arvind Kejriwal, Andhra Pradesh CM Kiran Reddy also resigned and also quit Congress to protest against the centre's decision to carve out the separate state of Telangana. "I am thankful to Congress for making me

chief minister. But I am resigning in protest as they have divided the state and hurt the Telugu people and made their future dark. I am quitting as MLA and the Congress party," he declared.

Reddy had been making efforts to prevent the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh. But his efforts proved futile when the

Telangana Bill was passed in the Lok Sabha with the BJP coming in support of the Congress to clear the Andhra Pradesh State Reorganization Bill. **S**



INDIA | Goa

Rape politics



Tarun Tejpal, editor of the investigative magazine *Tehelka*, was formally charged by the Indian Police for sexually assaulting a female colleague in Goa. Under the newly expanded Indian laws on women's safety, Tejpal was also charged with rape and outraging the woman's modesty. If convicted, he could face up to seven years in prison.

The woman accused Tejpal of assaulting her twice in a hotel elevator, when the magazine was hosting its

annual conference of Indian leaders, newsmakers and celebrities. She wrote to the magazine's managing editor about the alleged assault.

The case against Tejpal came as a surprise because he was editor of an investigative magazine that raised its voice against corruption and sexual violence. Tejpal, however, denies the allegations, claiming that the case against him is motivated by political vendetta. **S**

AFGHANISTAN | Kabul

The survivor

Presidential candidate Dr. Abdullah Abdullah escaped unhurt from an attack carried out by the Taliban on his convoy. Dr. Abdullah was returning to Kabul from an election meeting in Jalalabad. Taliban militants in Afghanistan immediately claimed responsibility for the attack, claiming that three security guards of Dr. Abdullah were killed and several others injured following the attack.

In the past, unknown gunmen had

carried out at least two attacks against the campaigners of Dr. Abdullah Abdullah in western Herat and northern Sar-e-Pul provinces of Afghanistan. Earlier in February, two members of Dr. Abdullah's campaign team were killed in an attack in western province of Herat.



The United States embassy in Kabul condemned the attack, saying that violence has no place in Afghanistan's developing democracy. "We commend the Afghan people for their commitment to a peaceful transition of power in the upcoming election and

we reiterate our support for a stable, prosperous and unified Afghanistan," a U.S. statement said. **S**

Right to vote

The Taliban are not the only people who are unhappy with the elections. An Afghan media outlet reported that people with disabilities have been complaining that none of the 11 presidential candidates has announced any policy on promoting their civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights. The views were expressed at a gathering arranged by the Social and Culture Association of People with Disabilities at the provincial office

of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission in Mazar-i-Sharif.

The association head, Syed Mohammad Yazdan Parast, complained that all candidates were yet to speak about the social and economic problems faced by the disabled. Yazdan Parast also accused the provincial government of denying the disabled their due rights, saying the country's laws reserved five percent quota of government jobs for the disabled, but the provincial



administration had been denying this.

A political science student at Balkh University, Mohammad Mukhtar said that people with disabilities were found in most families in Afghanistan because of the decades-long conflict. Each disabled person has the right to vote and their votes could help a candidate emerge as victorious. **S**

Out of the grey



Bangladesh has received global recognition in combating money laundering and terror financing by the Paris-based

Financial Action Task Force (FATF), which delisted the country's name from its 'Grey List'. The FATF, an inter-governmental body to combat money laundering, had listed Bangladesh

under the category of 'grey' in 2008. But it decided to pull Bangladesh out of the list following the significant progress made by the country in its drive against money laundering and combating terror financing.

The decision came in the wake of an audiovisual message by Al-Qaeda chief Ayman Al-Zawahiri in which he urged the people of Bangladesh to stand against what he termed as crimes against the core beliefs of Islam. **S**

Going solar

The government of Bangladesh is all set to install the country's first solar grid power plant at Sarishabari in the Jamalpur District. A German company is in talks to install the solar grid power plant, which is a part of the green energy initiative to reduce Bangladesh's carbon

emission. The Sarishabari project will be a 3 megawatt (MW) solar power plant and will run as an independent power producer (IPP) on build, own and operate (BOO) basis.

As part of its energy diversification plan, the government had earlier announced that it would produce 10 percent of its total energy from renewable sources and add 500 MW from solar energy. However, the country is capable of producing around 360 MW from

renewable sources, of which 126 MW comes from solar energy. The Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) will also develop a 30MW solar park on the bank of the river Dhorola in Kurigram and a 60 MW similar park at Rangunia. **S**



Friends, indeed



The Sri Lankan government will send a high-powered delegation, led by External Affairs Minister G.L. Peiris, to attend the UNHRC sessions to be held in Geneva in March. The

delegation will highlight the steps taken by the country to address accountability issues and the process of reconstruction, rehabilitation and reconciliation after the civil war.

Several member countries supporting Sri Lanka are reportedly planning to submit a counter-proposal against the U.S.-led resolution on Sri Lanka that called for an international

investigation into alleged war crimes during the last stages of the war. UNHRC-member countries Russia

and China already oppose the British and U.S.-sponsored resolution on Sri Lanka while friendly countries like

Pakistan, Iran, the UAE and Indonesia have also expressed their reservations on the anti-Sri Lankan resolution. **S**

BHUTAN | Thimphu

Not Interested



The people of Bhutan, it appears, are not interested in working in Saudi Arabia. This became evident when a Saudi company floated an advertisement for 2,251 vacancies in Saudi Arabia. There are at present 7,797 unemployed in Bhutan and if these vacancies were filled, about 25 percent of them would have landed jobs.

However, by the time the deadline to apply was over, the Labor Ministry had received only 60 applications.

Employment officials believe that the low turnout was because of the offer being only for skilled and technical persons while jobseekers in the country were fresh graduates who did not have work experience.

Meanwhile, some online reports warning immigrant workers on safety issues of employees working in the Middle East have also discouraged jobseekers from applying for the posts. **S**

MALDIVES | Male

SAARC matters

The 35th session of the SAARC Ministers of Foreign Affairs was held in Male. The meeting of the Council of Ministers was preceded by the 40th session of the Standing Committee, sixth special session of the Standing Committee and 45th session of the Programming Committee. Agendas

related to maintaining relations with observer nations, discussions over granting observer status to Russia and Turkey, the issue of regional connectivity, approval of the new SAARC Secretary General belonging to Nepal and the decision on cultural ties with China and South Korea were

discussed.

The meeting also discussed the Comprehensive Study on Strengthening SAARC mechanisms, the first ever conducted by the Secretariat, including Regional Centers and specialized bodies. **S**



MALDIVES | Kaafu Atoll

Water from waste heat

The island of Gulhi, in Kaafu atoll in the Maldives became the

first place in the world to produce desalinated drinking water using waste heat from electricity generation. The project – a joint venture of the state-owned electricity supplier STELCO and U.K.-registered charity the Aquiva Foundation – will produce around 8000 liters of water for local consumption. A membrane distillation unit has been installed behind the island's generator which will use the excess heat produced by the cooling system to induce the distilling process.

The lack of fresh drinking water in the country's 190 inhabited islands – made worse with the contamination of groundwater following the 2004 tsunami – leaves most communities reliant on rainwater and vulnerable to shortages during the dry season.

The project will also lead to a reduction of waste – a perennial problem in the Maldives – as reusable containers will be used to collect the distilled water and distribute it to households, before being returned to the desalination plant. **S**



The Takeover Question

In the prevailing environment, it would be madness on the Pakistani military's part to even think in terms of a takeover. And the army command is not mad.

By Javed Hussain



The precedent for military takeovers was set in 1958 when General Ayub Khan staged a coup and justified it on the grounds of chaos in the country caused by the ineptitude of the political leadership. Consequently, Generals Yahya Khan, Ziaul Haq and Pervez Musharraf also advanced the same pretext for taking over. The military ruled over the country over a span of thirty three years. That is why a democratic environment could not be created, democracy could not take root and development could not become an institutionalized activity. None of the military rulers had any misgivings about sacrificing national interests on the altar of ambition.

Today, the state of Pakistan is faced with multi-dimensional challenges, the greatest being the insurgency that started in FATA and Balochistan, which, over the years, has enveloped the whole country and threatens to undermine its foundations. In the process, it has filled the people with apprehension and created a sense of insecurity and uncertainty in their

minds. As a result, they are looking towards the army to rid the country of terrorism to enable them to lead a tranquil life.

Meanwhile, the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan has begun to treat the state with haughty contempt by orchestrating acts of terror even during the course of the talks. As a consequence, it seems that the government will soon be directing the military to establish the writ of the state in North Waziristan, the hub of the terrorists. All eyes are thus on the military.

Against this backdrop, there is a report carried by the *Washington Post*, which says that Pakistan is among those countries where a military takeover is possible. Is it? The hypothesis seems rather far-fetched insofar as it relates to Pakistan. It ignores the fact that in the prevailing environment, it would be madness on the military's part to even think in terms of a takeover. And the army command is not mad.

The army knows that North Waziristan will be the hardest nut to crack. It will have to contend with the harsh geography of the

area which favors the insurgents – a mass of rugged hills and mountains, cliffs, ravines and defiles; the few roads in the area lack the capacity to support large forces logistically and movement on these is vulnerable to ambush. Among the 600,000 people who inhabit the area live thousands of insurgents – Chechens, Uzbeks, fighters of the Haqqani network, the Hafiz Gul Bahadur group, the TTP and a number of other jihadi groups. They are skilled in their craft – guerilla warfare, are highly motivated and are said to enjoy the support of the local population – some out of fear, others out of conviction. There is also a close affinity between them and the Afghan Taliban. Amalgamated, they would be a formidable force. All in all, the operational environment would be less than favorable.

There are other challenges also that the army will have to surmount, the biggest being the strategy to be employed. If it replicates the strategy employed in Swat and South Waziristan that was space oriented, hence, could not prevent the insurgents from



escaping to other agencies in FATA and places outside it, the army would get into a protracted war.

Pakistan cannot afford a protracted war for a number of reasons, some of which are; one, terrorism across the country would get exacerbated; two, it would signify failure of the army and this would plunge the people into despair; three, it would have a detrimental effect on the country's fragile economy which would bring the people under greater pressure; four, it would provide opportunities to countries inimical to Pakistan to exploit its tribulations

The army would thus be required to formulate a strategy that would not only lead to occupation of space, but also lead to annihilation of the enemy. Only then can it be said that North Waziristan has been cleared. It would help the army enormously if the Afghan Taliban, the Haqqani network and Hafiz Gul Bahadur are persuaded not to join the fray, while the Americans are asked to support the operation by taking out the Pakistani insurgents, Fazlullah et al, present in the bordering Afghan provinces and by employing their killer drones in conjunction with the Pak Army. If this can be achieved, the operational environment would become favorable.

Another dimension of the problem is the backlash in the urban areas that would follow the launch of the North Waziristan operation. As this would have a devastating effect on the people, simultaneous intelligence-based operations will have to be launched against the TTP cadres and terrorists of different hues, by the law-enforcement agencies, assisted by the army and spearheaded by elements of the SSG.

These are some of the challenges facing the army. It has its hands full. Therefore, there is absolutely no possibility of a military takeover prior to the launch of the operation. And once the operation gets underway, the army's focus would be on the conduct of war in FATA. Uppermost in its mind would be the accomplishment of the mission assigned in the time frame established for it. Therefore, during the operation also, there is no possibility of a military takeover. It would be preposterous to think otherwise.

Next, consider the outcome of the war. The war could end on a winning note, that is, mission accomplished. Or, mission not accomplished, that

is, the insurgents have escaped the dragnet to fight another day and the military gets into a protracted war. In the former, the military would be hailed as heroes, the government would bask in glory in the shadows of the military, and the people will rejoice over the victory. Would the military like to takeover while the country celebrates? No possibility. In the latter case, the military would again have its hands full. How long it will take to crush the insurgency nobody can surmise, least of all the army. But what one can say with some certainty is that, if the military is unable to finish the job before the exit of foreign forces from Afghanistan by the end of this year, it is likely that the operational situation becomes worse. In these circumstances, would the military be inclined to take over? No possibility.

The military rulers had justified their takeovers on the grounds of chaos in the country caused by the ineptitude of the political leadership. Today, the political leadership may be inept, but, mercifully, there is no chaos – except that caused by terrorism. Thus a military takeover on this pretext can also be ruled out.

The worst thing that the government can do is to make things worse by continuing to insist on talks with the terrorists, who continue to provoke them, and the government procrastinates. In the event, instead of taking over, it would be pragmatic on the part of the army to continue with the targeted strikes against the terrorists in FATA and wait for the signal to proceed with the offensive, and in the worst case, launch the offensive in North Waziristan without waiting for the government's approval, an initiative that would have the people's approval. And the army command is pragmatic.

Apart from the challenges that the army is faced with, if the multi-dimensional problems that the country is confronted are also taken into consideration, it would be an act of folly by the military if it takes over.

As long as the political leadership fosters economic growth, promotes social justice and enhances the people's quality of life, the people will remain contented. It is only good governance that would deter the military from intervening. ■

The writer is a retired brigadier.



The real wealth of Asia

They are the future.

Providing children with a good education is a priority for all of Asia. Yet millions of children are still being denied a proper education, because their parents are too poor to send them to school.

For the last 40 years, WFP has been providing nutritious meals to millions of children at school, giving even the poorest parents a good reason to send them there. It reduces child hunger and boosts school Attendance at the same time.

This year, we expect to feed 5 million schoolchildren in Asia. Support us. And help build the real wealth of Asia.

To find out more about WFP, or to make an on-line donation, go to www.wfp.org or email asia.fundraising@wfp.org



Between Wish and Reality

The armed forces have been woven so strongly into the fabric of Pakistani life that there are dim chances of their coming to the fore to administer the country.

By Javed Ansari



Why is there always a wish in some corner of the average Pakistani's mind that the armed forces should come and take over? Why is it that the people are always fed up with the civilian rulers and hope for some army general to become their savior, someone who would deliver them from their daily grind, from the rampant corruption and misgovernance and from all the other ills that these give birth to? Perhaps this is why, whenever the army has taken over in Pakistan, getting rid of the civilian government of the day in the process, it has received an all round applause of welcome from the public at large as well as from those politicians who are out of power at that point.

The founder of the country never visualized the armed forces as holding power in Pakistan. His was a civilian model that saw an elected government ruling the country and coping with the people's needs in a democratic polity while the armed forces strictly stuck

to the role that any truly democratic dispensation would lay out for them. The problem with Pakistan, however, is that it never tasted real democracy right from the beginning. Perhaps it was the exigency of the situation at the time of the inception of Pakistan that forced Jinnah himself to run the country in an authoritarian manner rather than allowing democracy to take root. Perhaps he was stilted by the fact that he could not see men and women around him, who could take over the responsibilities of governing the state in the strict and honest manner that he demanded.

Jinnah did not live long and neither did the only other person who could have done any justice to his legacy – Liaquat Ali Khan. Following their deaths, the state Jinnah and Liaquat had left behind did not have much to fall back on by way of traditions of a working democracy and the country slipped into chaos. Military general Ayub Khan subsequently took full advantage of the situation, first by

bestowing all power upon himself and then by running down anyone and everyone who was a civilian. In doing so, he achieved nothing beyond promoting authoritarian rule in the country, especially since the sanity and growth it brought in its wake was in sharp contrast to the civilian-managed bedlam.

It is, therefore, right from an early stage that the Pakistan armed forces have been woven into the national fabric, whether directly or indirectly. In its over six decades of existence, the governance setup in Pakistan may have looked like alternating between civilian and military rule but the fact is that even in those times when democracy has seemed to have the upper hand – in the pre-Ayub civilian tenures and those of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Benazir Bhutto, Nawaz Sharif, Asif Zardari and now again Nawaz Sharif – it is the armed forces that have had a finger in every pie.

To say that the boots are likely to come marching in any time soon again would be overstating reality. The fact is that the boots are already here. The only difference is that they are concealed under the garb of democracy, hidden in the woodwork – and this is how it will continue. There were so many occasions during the five years of Asif Zardari that the army was said to be just around the corner but, despite the calculations and predictions of many an armchair political pundit – and even astrologer – it did not happen. Mr. Zardari and his cronies left no stone unturned, so to speak, to create situations in their tenure when a jeep and two trucks (in the words of Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain) could have headed for the

PTV in Islamabad or the 111 Brigade had been given certain orders. But a feeling of restraint and moderation prevailed in Rawalpindi and the civilian politicians sitting in the seat of power were left to their own devices.

In line with new international (read US) thinking, it has now been thought prudent to tone down uniformed leadership in various countries around the world and to discourage military takeovers. The effort is to bring civilian rulers to the fore and to provide them with a fair opportunity to govern – or to at least project themselves as the real rulers. It is well understood that in some countries, like Pakistan, Egypt and Turkey, it is just not possible to remove the military from the shadows. In Pakistan, for one, the military has always been treated as a privileged class, a superior category of people that is deemed as being fit as well as qualified to rule over the civilian population. The armed forces are honoured and revered in any country for the role they play or are expected to play in the preservation and protection of the physical and ideological borders. In Pakistan, this respect and admiration is taken a bit too far and,

in the mind of the common man, the military is not perceived as being an institution that should be subservient to civilian power but as a superior class that is equipped and ready to rule and run the affairs of the state.

It is true that the resources of the Pakistani military have been overstretched over the past few years, in view of the terrorism and insurgency that it has had to deal with inside the country besides guarding both the eastern and western borders from the enemy outside. Civilian administration is, of course, another ball game and it is commendable that instead of arrogating this role to themselves as they have done in the past, Pakistan's armed forces have steered themselves clear of such a misadventure though the temptation to take over power must have been very hard to resist on certain occasions.

The Pakistani military has come to realise – and also told - that governance of the country should be left to civilian governments though however poorly the latter may perform the task. The military has its own constitutional role cut out for it, namely guarding the national

frontiers. It is occupied at present in fighting those elements that are gnawing at the country's sovereignty from inside the borders - a job the terrorists are doing so well that the armed forces are having to rally all their capabilities and professional might to fight this enemy. There is always the possibility that they may have to deploy forces to fight a war on the borders too but if they were to embroil themselves in matters of civilian administration, this 7th largest army in the world would just not have enough men and resources to perform both tasks simultaneously and would be likely to lose their cutting teeth.

There would be many a politician in the country who still hears the sound of boots in his afternoon reverie while he is having a post-lunch siesta. Sometimes the common man too, driven to the edge, wishes that the civilian rulers, elected but inept, were replaced by men in uniform. But these are only wishes and reality is something else. ■

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

All your search for the right talent ends here... Catch 'em red-handed!



Before they get lost, catch them while they are in the process of looking for the right career. Talented, smart, aggressive, skilled, professional, willing-to-go-the-extra-mile kind of restless souls in search of the right job, right employers and the right break...
Catch them before they get caught by the wrong hunters.

Executive Search Worldwide (ESW) is the right hunting spot so you don't miss your mark. We are here to guide you and give you the best that is...

ESW

Stop Hunting. Start Hiring.



Executive
Search
Worldwide

E-mail: jobs@eswpak.com
For Employer: search@eswpak.com Cc: eswpak@gmail.com
Ph: +92 21 34611898 Cell: +92 300 8252199 Fax: +92 21 34015444
URL: www.eswpak.com

‘If politicians deliver, the army has no chance of toppling an elected government.’

Lt-Gen. (R) Moinuddin Haider, former Governor of Sindh and Interior Minister, speaks to Javeria Shakil in this exclusive interview.

Pakistan has been ranked among those countries where a military takeover is highly likely in 2014. Given the country's history of being ruled by the military for half of its existence, is there really a possibility of yet another military takeover?

I don't think so. The reason is that there is a strong elected government in the country. Why does the military overthrow a civilian government in Pakistan? It is not always because of the ambition of a general or the thinking of the army. It happens when politics fail and there's a vacuum. If the politicians deliver, the army has no chance of toppling an elected government. But when there is corruption and people see that their leaders are fooling them in the name of democracy, then they become disenchanted. It is under such circumstances that the army steps in.

If we take a look at past military rules, we'll learn some fundamental facts. The military had its first taste of power when a serving chief, Gen

Ayub Khan was made defense minister. He attended cabinet meetings in this capacity and saw firsthand how our politicians behaved. He was also given two extensions in service and, in 1958, when the country was passing through a tumultuous time, Ayub Khan was in the eighth year of service. When a man is made to feel so powerful, he is inclined to take matters into his own hands, especially if he starts to believe that he can save his country. When Ayub Khan overthrew the civilian government, people hailed it. Ayub's decline began when he started hobnobbing with politicians.

Ziaul Haq's martial law could be avoided. There is no doubt that people were unhappy with the way Bhutto ruled the country. His arbitrary style made him unpopular among many quarters and the last nail in the coffin was the massive rigging in elections which had the religious parties in an uproar. Even then they had settled the matter among themselves and an agreement was about to be signed but Bhutto decided to delay it for reasons best known to him. By doing so he gave a chance to Ziaul Haq to derail democracy. Zia's rule was good for the economy but the jihadi culture that we see today is also a result of his policies. He gave too much latitude to religious parties.

As for the next martial law, that was also avoidable. The Kargil episode was indeed a misadventure but the way Mian Nawaz Sharif dealt with the situation was not an ideal way to solve such sensitive issues. He could have simply asked Musharraf to resign; he had the authority to do so. That would have been the proper way of dealing with the situation. But what he did instead was not liked by the army.

When Musharraf took up the reins of office, he performed well despite the difficulties the country faced on the economic front. His first three years were largely appreciated by the general public. He put together a reform agenda, put in place the local government system, empowered women and had a water vision for 2015. Musharraf, too, started failing when he started bringing politicians on board which led to poor governance and increased corruption.

In the current government's case, it is true that it is not performing as

people would like it to. In spite of this, there is less corruption today as compared to the previous government. The PML-N government has also taken steps to improve the law and order situation in the country and has come up with a national security policy – albeit belatedly. The economy is on the path to recovery and there is talk of massive investments from China. So people are hopeful that the government is moving in the right direction although very slowly. Hence, there is no possibility of a military takeover.

Do you think that in the last few years of the Musharraf government, there was a case for the army to move in again and take over civilian power?

In its last two years, the government of Pervez Musharraf had

‘When Musharraf took up the reins of office, he performed well despite the difficulties the country faced on the economic front. His first three years were largely appreciated by the general public.’

come under severe criticism. People were not happy; there was unrest in Balochistan, the religious elements were furious at the handling of the Lal Masjid case, and the general public was angry at the rampant corruption, poor law and order situation and rising inflation. While disenchantment with his rule was growing, Musharraf was trying to prolong his stay in power by all means. Even the army was unhappy as it became a target of terrorists because of Musharraf's policy of siding with the U.S. in the war on terror. So the army allowed a civilian setup to take power through the NRO and went back to barracks.

Democracy, however, did not deliver. Even then the army did not derail the democratic process because it did not want to be accused of stunting the growth of civilian institutions. So it refrained from interfering in civilian matters although many people criticized it for not

arresting the decay.

What factors would really force the military to overthrow an elected government in the context of Pakistan?

When people are disappointed with the political setup and when the government fails to give them relief, they look for a savior who can alleviate their sufferings. In such a situation, if there is a force that is highly organized, disciplined, follows rules and can carry the burden of governance, it comes forward to fill that vacuum.

While it is generally believed that military rule weakens political institutions, we have seen just the opposite in Pakistan where military rulers devolved powers to the grassroots level. How do you explain this?

There is no doubt that when the army takes over, it weakens political institutions. During the army's rule, democratic institutions such as the National Assembly or the Senate are either not functioning or, if they are, they work under the thumb of the military ruler. There may be elections but sometimes they are engineered. Even if a federal parliamentary system is installed, it is the military president who calls all the shots.

In all democratic societies, there are three tiers of governance. There is a federal or national government, then there is a state or provincial government and the third and the most important tier is the local government. All politics is local and the majority of problems of the common man lie at the local level. What does a common man living in a city or a village want? He wants clean water, uninterrupted electricity supply, good education and healthcare. These services are

provided by local governments. Gen. Pervez Musharraf worked hard and was very much sold to the idea of a new social order. He introduced a local government system that delivered in many places.

Ironically, the political parties and politicians, the greatest champions of democracy, shudder at the thought of holding local body elections. They wouldn't even follow the Supreme Court's verdict in this regard. Where is their commitment to democracy?

A military ruler devolves power because he knows that although he cannot hold general elections, he can give some relief to the public. He knows that if the local governments are functioning, people's real problems will be taken care of. And, when people's problems are solved at the grassroots level, they forget about the National Assembly or the political order in the country. They are least bothered about whether their president is a civilian or a military man.

Should the army be given some role in governance matters to avoid the possibility of military takeovers in future?

In all countries of the world, the armed forces play a vital role. The stronger the armed forces the greater the chances for a country to expand economically. But the armed forces should provide support to the civilian government and remain subservient to it. In all important security matters, the final decision should be with the civilian government. However, the army must give its input. We shouldn't be shy of a national security council. The government must take the advice of the military, especially on security matters.

The army has very strong and efficient think tanks that can give valuable input to the civilian government. But, unfortunately, we don't have the tradition of knowledge-based decisions.

Politicians are generally perceived as corrupt. Does the military have anything to do with this perception?

No, the army doesn't have anything to do with this perception. The civilians themselves excel in earning this reputation. Governments do not appoint qualified people to important positions. Take the example

of OGDC. It is a very important institution of Pakistan and has a worth of over a thousand billion rupees. Its profit every year is about hundred billion rupees. And who does Yousuf Raza Gilani appoint as its head? His friend from the Adiyala Jail. Did the army ask Gilani to appoint that person? Who appointed the OGRA chief and why? Appointments like these are not made to improve the economy or to benefit the people or state of Pakistan. They are made to siphon off money and fill politicians' pockets.

Now the politicians have started this baseless propaganda that the army is also corrupt. Allegations have been leveled against many generals.

'Political parties and politicians, the greatest champions of democracy, shudder at the thought of holding local body elections. They wouldn't even follow the Supreme Court's verdict in this regard. Where is their commitment to democracy?'

While it is true that not all in the army are squeaky clean - some people do get stray, especially those who come into public life and join politics or political parties - there exists a strong system of accountability in the army.

Almost all the army takeovers in the past were supported by the masses; will the people lend their support to a military takeover once again?

Not at the moment. People are hopeful about democracy. They have realized that the musical chairs of power between the military and civilians have harmed the economy and hindered the country's progress. They can see the government trying to tackle the militancy problem, making efforts to solve the energy crisis and launching mega infrastructure projects. They feel democracy, good or bad, is delivering.

And then the army is busy at the moment. It's stuck in Swat because after the clean-up operation, the civilian government failed to take over control from the army and manage the area itself. In North Waziristan's case, the army thinks if it clears the

area, it will have to stay there for some time. And whenever these pockets of extremism are found in any part of the country, the army is called in to deal with them. So the army's hands are full.

No army is trained for civil administration duties. But army officers in Pakistan have been deputed in various civilian departments. Why?

Because the armed forces have highly trained people at every level. The armed forces induct men after making them go through a rigorous screening procedure. The applicants undertake several tests and interviews

and only the best of the best are selected. When they go to the military academy, they undergo very tough training and are taught an ideal syllabus for two years. After that they become second lieutenants and every officer is given the command of thirty people. They have to educate themselves continuously and pass exams to be promoted to the next rank. In every rank they are commanding thousands of soldiers. At each level, they are doing administrative duties, taking care of logistics, giving and receiving training, etc. In fact, many sciences like business management, supply-chain and logistics have been drawn from military literature.

Army officers compete for all ranks. What about politicians? If you are born into the right family, you can participate in politics when you are 24 - the age when you are eligible to fight elections. Once elected, you are given important posts and portfolios. What do such people know about governance, budgeting and administration? What training or grooming have they received? So who is more trained for administrative duties? **S**



Institute of Business Management

(Established in 1994 by Foundation for Higher Education)



College of Computer Science &
Information Systems (CCSIS)



College of Economics &
Social Development (CESD)



College of Business
Management (CBM)



College of Engineering &
Sciences (CES)



Programs Offered:

BBA / BS / BE (Honors)

Computer Science, Actuarial Science and Risk Management, Industrial Engineering & Management, Accountancy, Management and Law, Electrical Engineering in Electronic, Telecommunication, Media Studies and International Relations

MBA

Regular, Executive, Health & Hospital Management, Finance & Risk Management, Advertising & Media Management, Industrial Management, Telecommunication Management, Educational Management and Environment & Energy Management

MSc

Organizational Psychology and Human Resource Management

MS/M.Phil

Economics, Education, Business Management and Organizational Psychology, Computer Science, Mathematics & Scientific Computing and Statistics & Scientific Computing

Ph.D

Social Sciences Specializing in Education/Psychology

Institute of Business Management
Korangi Creek, Karachi-75190, Pakistan
UAN+92-21 111-002-004, Fax: +92-21 35090968
Email: iobm@iobm.edu.pk, Website: www.iobm.edu.pk

When Boots Come Marching In

Pakistan must be unique in the sense that here military rulers were actually invited by political parties to seize power.

By S.G. Jilanee



Photo courtesy: Shamsah Junejo

Pakistan is by no means the only country where the military has often taken over the reins of government. Indeed, this has been a familiar feature in many countries of the world. In Nigeria and Sierra Leone, for example, there were a number of coups and bouts of military rule. But they were often the result of civil wars

or fraudulent elections.

In South America, Argentina witnessed fairly long spells of military rule. There, too, civil war led to military dictatorship. In Chile, Gen. Pinochet toppled President Salvador Ellende's government – at America's behest – because he was a socialist.

Close to home, we have the

example of Bangladesh where there was a coup after the assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the country had military rule under Generals Ziaur Rahman and Hossain Mohammad Ershad. But they assumed power ostensibly to bring order amidst chaos. There was no participation of the people in these takeovers.

On the contrary, in Pakistan, the military dictators did not assume power to end a civil war or political turmoil – except in the case of Gen. Ziaul Haq who intervened when the election fraud allegedly committed by the Pakistan Peoples' Party had pushed the country to the brink of a civil war. Others stepped in to satisfy their personal ambitions more than anything else.

Gen. Ayub Khan, who later became field marshal, was the first such adventurer. Except for political agitations and some violence, including a fatal attack on the deputy speaker of the legislative assembly of East Pakistan, the country was relatively peaceful. Such events elsewhere have never led to military intervention. As regards corruption, Pakistan's history shows that this malice has been congenital to its society. So, making corruption an issue to justify military coups was only a fig leaf for blatant ambition.

Whenever generals staged a coup in Pakistan, they proclaimed with much fanfare that they would rid the country of its ills and transform it into a paradise on earth – peaceful, prosperous and, above everything, clean. Yet, at the end of the day, the country had sunk deeper into the mire.

However, a distinctive feature of military rules in Pakistan that set them apart from similar experiences elsewhere in the world is that here military rulers received popular and even political support. Opposition parties generally rallied to usurpers' sides and, in the case of Gen. Ziaul Haq, the political parties that opposed Z.A. Bhutto had actually invited Zia to seize power.

But all in all it has been a love-hate relationship between the people and dictators.

Ayub Khan set the example. People looked at him as the proverbial Godot – the redeemer who would rid the country of rampant corruption. They thought their hopes were well-placed because Ayub launched, at the very outset, a screening exercise for all government officials and fired a number of senior civil servants.

But, with the passage of time, the country's problems increased manifold because even the military – that had so far enjoyed a squeaky clean reputation – also became involved in the game. Even the name of Ayub Khan's son,

Gauhar Ayub began to be mentioned among the corrupt. As a result, people became disillusioned with him. Ultimately there was political unrest with *jalao* and *gherao* galore. When Ayub Khan finally resigned, there was not a single lachrymose eye.

When Yahya Khan succeeded Ayub, and thundered about bringing the country 'back on the rails,' he too received a similar warm welcome from the people. Improving upon his predecessor's example, he started with sacking 303 top-ranking civil executives, though not a single military officer was touched. Nonetheless, his drastic action had a sobering influence on the administration.

But this step proved transient and, at best, cosmetic. Army officers were posted in civilian departments as paragons of honesty. But that was the kind of environment they were not used to. In their entire professional service, the army officers had no opportunities for corruption with the exception of those handling supplies and dealing with contractors. Their new jobs, however, presented them with temptations they had never dreamed of. As a consequence, the civil administration slid back to square one.

Moreover, just as the 1965 war had fueled Ayub Khan's unpopularity, the military debacle in East Pakistan compounded that of Yahya's. The heroes of yesterday became zeroes in the public eye.

As stated in the foregoing, Gen. Ziaul Haq was invited and welcomed by the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) that included the right-wing political and religious parties besides the Muslim League. But those who had brought him to power were disillusioned when he went back on his promise to hold elections within 90 days of seizing power. Once again, peoples' hopes were dashed. And like Ayub Khan, he too went on ruling merrily for a decade, until Providence stepped in and he was killed in an air crash.

The interregnum between Ziaul Haq's departure and Gen. Pervez Musharraf's emergence on the political firmament of Pakistan lasted for about 13 years from 1986 to 1999. During this period Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif played see-saw with the office of prime minister, each serving two incomplete terms.

Musharraf had betrayed no signs

that he was scheming to seize power. He came to power quite unexpectedly. Nawaz Sharif had been nursing a grievance against him for the Kargil episode that had sabotaged his efforts to improve relations with India. As prime minister, he had the prerogative to dismiss the army chief at will. But to disallow the plane in which Musharraf was returning from an official visit to Sri Lanka to land anywhere in Pakistan was an extremely questionable move.

The army stepped in to save a dire situation. Nawaz Sharif was shown the door. Unlike earlier coups, it was neither premeditated, like Ayub Khan's, nor staged at the invitation of political parties like Ziaul Haq's. This coup was thrust upon Gen. Musharraf unexpectedly because in the normal circumstances he would have safely returned to his job and all would have been hunky dory.

Perhaps because he had come to power in an unusual manner, Musharraf departed from the tradition of his predecessors. He did not declare martial law in the country. Therefore, instead of assuming the title of chief martial law administrator, he opted for the designation of 'chief executive'. And, instead of the usual mantra of eradicating corruption, he set about reforming the economy and freeing the media. So, without claiming to be a 'savior', his reforms received popular acclaim.

But it was his clash with the judiciary – especially his mistreatment of the then chief justice of the Supreme Court – that turned the masses against him. Love turned into hate and now when he is in deep waters – being prosecuted for a number of offences, including high treason – there are few people to utter a word of sympathy for him.

In sum, the story of military rules in Pakistan indicates that the people are not patient enough to allow an elected government to complete its full term and then reject the party at the next polls. They prefer shortcuts to get rid of an oppressor, even by unconstitutional means. But, this attitude seems to be changing and is evident from the latest development when the PPP government completed its full term and a new government was peacefully elected to power. ■

The writer is a senior political analyst and former editor of SouthAsia Magazine.

A Question of Real Growth

Since a military government is not bound by political exigencies, it can easily formulate and implement policies which may not seem people-friendly – at least in the short term.

By M. Ali Kemal

In today's world, military rule is considered the worst form of government as opposed to democratic regimes. It is, however, generally argued that growth is not directly linked to the regime polity. Instead, the economic success of a country lies in higher investments and coherent economic policies. Nevertheless, Pakistan has witnessed a higher growth rate of GDP under military rule as compared to democratic governments.

Since its inception, Pakistan has experienced several episodes of martial laws as well as democratically

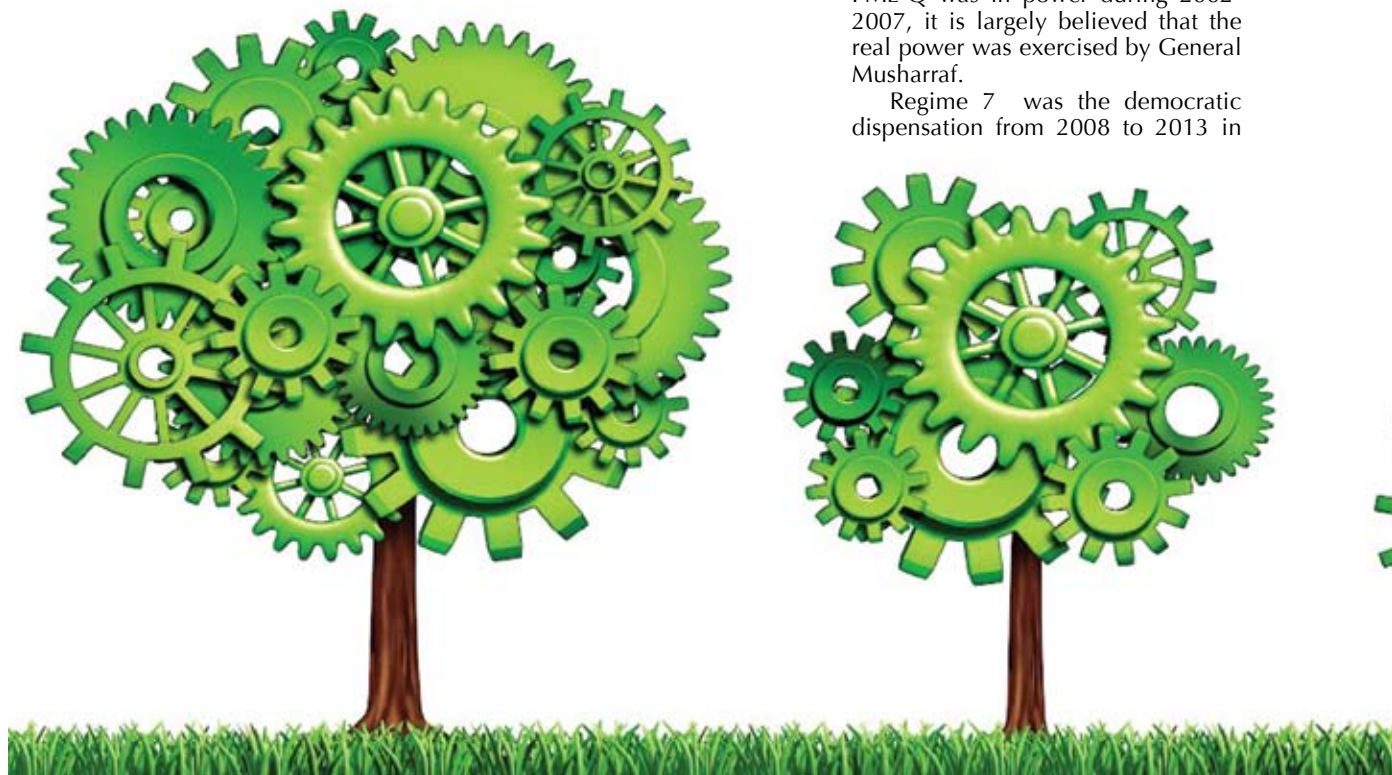
elected governments. The 66 years of the country's existence can be divided into seven regimes; Regime 1 (1947-1958) in which the country achieved 3.1 percent growth per year. During these first 11 years, the sole emphasis of the government was on setting up a base for a sustained growth process. The GDP growth during the second phase (1958-71), in which the country was governed by a military ruler, was 6.8 percent. Regime 3 (1971-1977) was the first pure democratic spell and had a 3.9 percent growth rate.

General Zia's martial law, or

Regime 4, had a 6.6 percent GDP growth rate, while a slower growth of 4.5 percent was observed during the second democratic regime – from 1988 to 1999. This democratic era that spanned over almost eleven years can be further divided into four short intermittent governments of the late Benazir Bhutto and Mian Nawaz Sharif, both of whom served in office for two incomplete terms.

On average, the growth rate was 5 percent during Regime 6 (1999-2008). It was the government of General Pervez Musharraf. Although the democratic government of the PML-Q was in power during 2002-2007, it is largely believed that the real power was exercised by General Musharraf.

Regime 7 was the democratic dispensation from 2008 to 2013 in



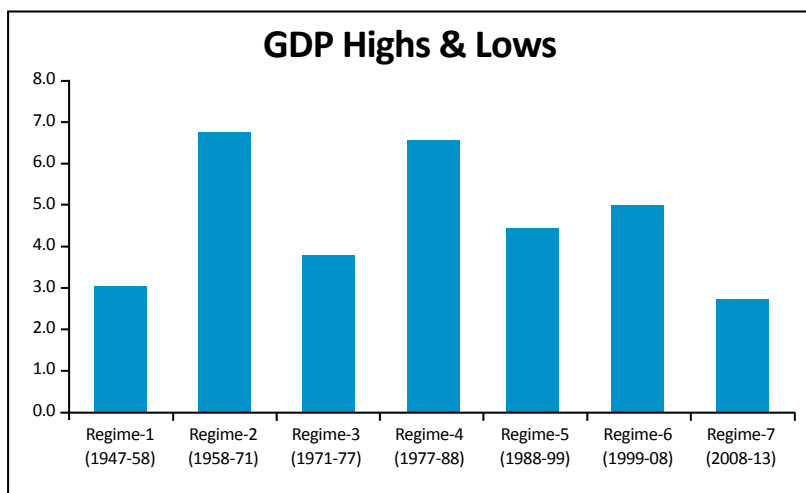
which the country experienced a very low growth rate on average at 2.9 percent per annum.

On the surface, it is clear that in Pakistan the growth rate during military regimes was much higher than in democratic regimes. Apart from the GDP rate, several other indicators also improved during military rules. For example, the overall public debt reduced considerably while the position of the foreign exchange reserves improved remarkably during the Musharraf regime. The standard of living increased during all three military rules. It was also observed that since industrial growth was higher during these periods, income disparity widened, which is an integral part of the development process.

Various factors were responsible for a better GDP growth during military rules. The first was the overwhelmingly high foreign aid. The Ayub Khan government received huge sums in foreign aid. It also received the technology that helped bring about a green revolution in the country. General Zia's government received foreign aid due to the Afghan war. During his rule in the 1970s, industrial productivity increased manifold due to investments in high-tech industries.

Similarly, the government under General Musharraf received aid due to the country's participation in the war against terror. Known as the Coalition Support Fund (CSF), this aid was given without any conditions attached.

Contrary to this, democratic regimes faced several difficulties: sanctions, repayment of debt and debt-servicing of loans taken out during



military regimes. The need to borrow short-term loans from the IMF - on strict conditions - also arose during the rules of democratically elected governments, which negatively affected the overall economy.

The nature of foreign aid received by military rulers is different from the aid received under IMF programs. For instance, project-specific aid has a multiplier effect on the overall economy. If invested in a project, such aid generates employment opportunities. Moreover, due to the aid-externality effect, public, private and multinational investors are encouraged to invest in the country.

Sustained economic growth is possible if policies are consistent, investors have confidence in the government and the rule of law is established for long intervals. This is possible if either the same government continues in power for a long period or a change in government does not result in a change of policies of the previous government.

It is also observed that economic managers of military governments give special incentives to investors. Although this increases the rent-seeking behavior, yet it leads to higher growth since the investors make long-term investments. Indonesia, Malaysia, Taiwan, Singapore and South Korea are some other countries that prospered under military rule.

Unlike a democratic government which functions amid the constant fear of a military takeover and faces criticism of the opposition as well as the public, military governments are hardly answerable to any authority and mainly work

without consensus. In short, such governments do not have to face the political and legal hurdles which a democratic government can face in the implementation of its policies.

Since a military government is not bound by political exigencies and can afford to look beyond self-serving goals such as getting elected in the next elections, it can easily formulate and implement policies which may not be people-friendly in the short run.

Another advantage enjoyed by military governments is that they are less prone to political instability as compared to democratic regimes. Dr Eatjaz, Acting Vice Chancellor of the Quaid-e-Azam University, terms the 1990s as an era "marked by musical chairs of democratic governments" of Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif. The collapse of one elected regime after another resulted in significantly low economic growth. Ironically, there was political stability during all three military rules and hence the country registered higher growth.

It can be said that growth is not linked to the system of governance but instead to the policies adopted by a government. In military regimes there is less confrontation and more freedom to opt for different policies and implement them. This gives positive signals to investors as they hope that their objectives will be achieved without much difficulty. It is thus easier for them to take crucial investment-related decisions. However, the role of foreign aid cannot be ignored as it has vital importance, especially in the context of economic growth of Pakistan. **S**

The writer is a research economist at PIDE.



It is Time

As peace negotiations come to a standstill, the Pakistan Air Force launches air strikes into Taliban strongholds. Despite this the damage is already done but the nation must unite and stand strong during these trying times.

By Arsla Jawaid

Having secured a third term in office and after failing to make an appearance in the National Assembly for close to seven months, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif confidently strode in only to announce that despite suffering from a wave of deadly militant attacks, the government had decided to give peace talks with the Taliban ‘another

chance.’ With rumors already circulating about the Pakistan Army launching a military operation in North Waziristan, the Prime Minister’s anti-climatic announcement left many politicians and observers astounded and in some cases, disappointed.

The government hastily formed a four-member committee led by Irfan Siddiqui (recently appointed

advisor on National Affairs) and including Rustom Shah Mohmand (former Ambassador to Afghanistan), Rahimullah Yousafzai (veteran journalist) and former ISI official Major (r) Amir Shah. The government’s negotiating committee was initially criticized for not including any notable personality who could ensure better understanding and perhaps



adequate insight into the workings and thinking of the militant group. In addition, without the announcement of a timeframe, many, including some members of the committee itself, were left in surprise.

Rustam Shah, a representative of the KP government sympathetic to the PTI, is also included in the committee leading many to believe that Sharif's calculated political move may allow him to quell the opposition and more importantly, transfer the blame to the PTI should talks not proceed as expected. Despite being the only prime minister to secure a third term in office, Sharif's inability to take ownership of already delayed decisions paint a picture of a meek, confused, and at times, disconnected Prime Minister; one that could prove to be catastrophic for Pakistan in a time when concrete and strong decision-making is the need of the hour.

For its part, the Taliban welcomed the move and recommended names to form its own five-person negotiation committee in addition to an actual committee consisting of nine Taliban members. Amongst nominating Professor Mohammed Ibrahim (JI), Maulana Sami-ul-Haq and Maulana Abdul Aziz (former chief cleric of the Lal Masjid), PTI leader Imran Khan and Mufti Kifayatullah (former lawmaker of the JUI-F) were also nominated. However both PTI and JUI-F pulled their candidates out of the committee stating that while they supported the peace talks, the Taliban should nominate one of their own.

Maulana Abdul Aziz, infamously known as the cleric who escaped in a *burqa* during the Lal Masjid operation, has been a vocal critic of government efforts. Before negotiations could commence, Aziz chastised the State for not enforcing the true form of Shariah and declared that he would not be a part of the committee until the State accepted this demand. Despite the fact that the Pakistani constitution is in accordance with Shariah and the government has set a pre-condition for talks to be held within the ambit of the 1973 constitution, Aziz's blatant accusations and prominent media attention opened a fiery debate within a fragile society that remains divided and confused. Maulanas like Abdul Aziz expect nothing short of a rigid and misguided implementation of Shariah. However, the most damaging aspect

of this entire exercise is the level of attention and media platform granted to Aziz allowing him to propagate dogmatic ideas to millions throughout the nation as opposed to limiting it to a few hundred in the vicinity of a madrassah or mosque.

After overcoming the initial confusion over the composition and legitimacy of the respective committees, talks commenced leading to the Taliban issuing a fifteen point demand that included the end of drone attacks, release of Taliban prisoners, the introduction of Shariah Law in courts and the withdrawal of armed forces from tribal areas, amongst others.

This is not the first time dialogue with the Taliban has taken place. One of the earlier peace accords dates back to April 2004, after the Pakistan military launched an ineffective military operation to force Pashtun leader Nek Mohammed to cease support for foreign militants. Following this, the State entered into a peace agreement. However, time and again, the Taliban have violated peace agreements. In 2009, public opinion greatly shifted in favor of a military operation in Swat when a video of a public flogging of a young girl made rounds on social and electronic media. The PPP government emboldened by national sentiment felt inclined to no longer oppose army action. The Pakistan Army pushed back the Taliban from Swat and allowed some level of normalcy to return to the center. However, the Taliban managed to reconvene and later strengthen.


Despite embarking on talks, public opinion in Pakistan has tethered on wary. In the two weeks following the commencement of talks, the country saw a spate of violent activity particularly in Peshawar where cinemas and hotels were targeted by suicide bombers. The TTP disowned such activities leading to further concern as to why the umbrella group has little control over its factions and bringing to light the seriousness of its 'loose affiliation.' Throughout the brief period of initial negotiations, both sides accused the other of bad faith and conducting attacks on personnel. However, while militant attacks continued unabated, the real blow to the peace process came when the TTP took responsibility for two major incidents. A suicide bomber in Karachi

targeted a bus of 13 police officers and a few days later, 23 Frontier Corps soldiers, allegedly kidnapped by the TTP Mohmand chapter in 2010, were killed. Further worsening any prospects of meaningful negotiations, most recently the group killed a Pakistan Army Major in Peshawar.

Immediately following the TTP claim, the Pakistan Air Force launched strikes in the North Waziristan tribal areas, killing fifteen Taliban militants. A war cannot be fought without adequate public opinion. Taliban atrocities may have been just what was needed for the government to realize that too many innocent lives have been lost and before more army personnel are asked to sustain casualties while the government mulls over its next move, it is time to take action.

What is needed is an extensive and uncompromising military operation, the beginning of which can be seen. Bolstered by national sentiment, the boys have been waiting to avenge the deaths of their comrades and the Taliban have just given them a window of opportunity. In a rare show of bravado, Prime Minister Sharif authorized air strikes "after restraining the army for three days." However, the government seems to be in no position to authorize anything more than retaliatory strikes. The real work will have to be done by the army which will have to break through its policy of differentiating between different militant groups and conduct nondiscriminatory operations, with or without government consent.

Talks for now seem to have been stalled though not necessarily abandoned. Pakistan must brace itself for tough times, for any army operation in the north is bound to trigger a backlash in urban centers where Taliban pockets have infiltrated and thrive unchecked. As dark as the future may seem, the nation must get ready to stand tall against injustices and atrocities. To oppose rigid Taliban practices that threaten to infiltrate daily life. To unwaveringly support the armed forces. And most importantly, to honor those who have fallen.

No more excuses will do. It is time. 

The writer is managing editor for strategic studies at the Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad.

Removing the Trade Barriers

Trade relations between India and Pakistan may be governed by political disputes. But there is light at the end of the tunnel.

By Jamil Nasir

It may come as a surprise to many, especially those who were born after 1970, that Pakistan and India were the major trading partners soon after independence. In 1948-49, 56 percent of Pakistan's total exports were destined for India and 32 percent of its total imports were from India. Both countries enjoyed normal trading relations till 1965 and used a number of land routes for bilateral trade. These included eight customs stations in the Punjab at Wagah, Takia Ghawindi, Khem Karan, Ganda Singhwala, Mughalpura Railway Station, Lahore

Railway Station, Haripur Bund on River Chenab and the Macleod Ganj Road Railway Station. Out of these, only two railway stations – Wagah and Mughalpura – are now operational.

Pakistan and India entered 14 different bilateral trade agreements related to trade facilitation between 1947 and 1965. These agreements covered areas like trade in goods, border trade, air services, banking and trade facilitation. In 1965, six Indian banks had nine branches in Pakistan while the Habib Bank of Pakistan had a branch in India. It can be said that

despite bitter memories of bloodshed, carnage and communal riots of 1947, a spirit of pragmatism prevailed in trade relations between the two countries.

However, the situation took a drastic turn after the 1965 war, with trade becoming the first casualty. Customs officers posted at the Wagah Customs Station were the first who became civilian prisoners of the Indian Army on the first day of the war. Bank branches operating in the two countries were seized as enemy property. Trade relations remained suspended till 1972 and were resumed after the 1972 Simla



Agreement but on a very limited scale. Even then, both countries traded with each other on the basis of positive lists which, although long, were restrictive per se.

These lists continued till 1995 when the World Trade Organization (WTO) was carved out from the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). India unilaterally discontinued trading based on a positive list and granted Pakistan MFN (most favored nation) status which simply means 'favor one, favor all'. Pakistan, however, continued with the positive list incorporated in its Import Policy Order as Appendix G. The list of tradable items registered a gradual and progressive increase. In 1995, only 328 items were importable from India but the list expanded to 687 items in 2004. In 2006, it covered 1075 items.

With the resumption of the Composite Dialogue in January 2004, trade relations became a major focus between Pakistan and India. Several rounds have been held so far. The position of the two countries on trade relations is that India considers trade based on a positive list a clear violation of WTO principles. Pakistan has shown commitment to granting MFN status to India but has deferred the decision due to political exigencies at home. The cabinet in its meeting on February 29, 2012, gave in principle the approval of a negative list, subject to further negotiations on trade with India. This negative list of 1209 items was prepared by the Ministry of Commerce in consultation with the stakeholders and notified vide SRO 280 dated March 20, 2012. The positive list (Appendix G) of the IPO will now be substituted by the negative list but the point here is that it still falls short of MFN status to India. The key question is: why is Pakistan opposed to granting MFN status to India?

This writer had analyzed the question back in 2007 in his paper 'SAFTA: potential, prospects and limitations' published by the Research and Development Wing of the Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry (LCCI) in the form of a book. Four factors were identified for Pakistan's reluctance to trade with India on MFN basis. First is the issue of non-tariff barriers in India. The perception in the local business community is that Pakistan will not gain much in terms of overall trade balance with India due to such Pakistan-specific

non-tariff barriers. Second, it is argued that unless the trade deficit between the two countries is bridged, strategic considerations demand that we should not increase our dependence on India through trade.

Third, as long as a solution of disputes like the Kashmir conflict is not sought, trade relations will always remain vulnerable and can break with the slightest degree of strain. It means that long-term sustainable cordial trade relations are not possible unless the issues at the root of political differences are resolved first. Fourth, 'the infant industry argument' is also advanced by some sectors of business to oppose grant of MFN status to India. For example, the pharmaceutical industry is concerned about the flooding of Pakistani markets with cheap and low-quality Indian medicines. Then there are concerns about hidden subsidies, especially to Indian agriculturists in the supply of electricity for tube wells.

The situation has improved somewhat in the last few years. If a well thought-out strategy for managing trade relations between India and Pakistan is evolved, things may improve remarkably in the coming years. Sometimes semantics also matter. The first noticeable feature about MFN (most favored nation) is its very nomenclature. MFN is a misnomer and evokes the perception in the minds of the people (especially when it is translated into Urdu) that we will be giving some special privileges to India, compared to other nations, by trading with it on MFN basis. This is certainly not the case. The nomenclature of MFN is used as a bogey by hawkish elements in Pakistan to support their anti-India narrative. So a way out can be to come up with a new term without jeopardizing its spirit. Pakistan has suggested the term 'Non-Discriminatory Access (NDA)' which means exactly the same as MFN. Seemingly it is a small change but it could mean a lot in terms of molding public opinion in favor of trade with India.

The issue of non-tariff barriers is another important area. Technical barriers to trade (TBTs), quotas and import licenses, aggressive use of safeguard and anti-dumping measures,

Official India-Pakistan Trade Million US \$

Year	Exports	Imports	Total Trade	Balance
2003-04	94	382	476	(-) 288
2004-05	288	548	836	(-) 260
2005-06	293	802	1095	(-) 509
2006-07	343	1236	1579	(-) 893
2007-08	255	1701	1956	(-) 1446
2008-09	320	1195	1515	(-) 875
2009-10	268	1226	1494	(-) 958
2010-11	264	1743	2007	(-) 1479

Source: Federal Bureau of Statistics (FBS)

frequent use of countervailing duties, multiple customs clearance procedures, stringent certification requirements, visa restrictions and non-acceptance of LCs issued by Pakistani banks, etc. are some of the non-tariff barriers Pakistani businessmen often complain about. In response, the Indian side has always taken the plea that non-tariff barriers are not Pakistan-specific. Here, two factors need to be given top priority. First, a clear identification of Pakistan-specific non-tariff barriers and announcement of a sunset date for their dismantling by India is a must. It will give a sense of confidence to the Pakistani business community for trading with its Indian counterparts. Some work has already been done on this count.

Secondly, both India and Pakistan agreed to conclude three agreements – the Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in Customs Matters Agreement, the Bilateral Cooperation Agreement on Mutual Recognition between PSQCA and BIS and the Agreement on Trade Grievances. These three agreements were signed during the 7th round of Pakistan-India talks on commercial and economic cooperation held on September 20-21, 2012 in Islamabad. The need is to implement them in their true spirit without further delay.

Strong trade relations between India and Pakistan are certainly not a smooth and easy process, given the deep-rooted misgivings. But a problem-solving and proactive approach to reduce the irritants to bilateral trade can make a difference. **S**

The writer is a Chevening Fellow on economic governance and a graduate of the Columbia University, with a degree in economic policy management.



A Classic Clash

The upcoming elections in India will see the aristocratic Rahul Gandhi locking horns with his rival, the bucolic Narendra Modi.

By S.G. Jilanee

Born in 1950, Narendra Damodardas Modi, Chief Minister of Gujarat and the BJP's nominee for the prime ministerial slot for the next election, is a full 20 years senior in age to his rival, the Congress Vice-President, Rahul Gandhi who was born in 1970.

There is a sharp contrast between the two in other respects as well. Rahul Gandhi comes from a family of well-reputed political leaders. His father, Rajiv Gandhi; his grandmother, Indira Gandhi and his great grandfather, Jawaharlal Nehru – were all prime ministers of India. His father was also the president of the Congress – an office now held by his mother, Sonia Gandhi.

Socially as well, Rahul is Brahmin, the highest *varna* in the Hindu caste system. He was educated in prestigious institutions, including St. Stephen's College, Delhi, besides the universities of Rollins and Cambridge

where he studied international relations and philosophy. He started his career at a management consultant firm in London before establishing his own company in Mumbai.

Rahul Gandhi is the Vice President of the Indian National Congress and the Chairperson of the Indian Youth Congress and National Students Union of India. He also served as general secretary in the All India Congress Committee and represents Amethi as its member of parliament.

In March 2004, Rahul entered politics by announcing that he would contest the May 2004 Lok Sabha elections from his father's former constituency of Amethi in Uttar Pradesh. He retained the family stronghold by winning with a margin of over 100,000 votes.

In the 2009 Lok Sabha elections as well, he retained his Amethi seat by defeating his nearest rival by a margin of over 333,000 votes. He

was instrumental in the revival of the popularity of the Congress party in Uttar Pradesh. His party won 21 out of the total 80 Lok Sabha seats.

Narendra Modi, on the other hand, comes from a humbler background. By caste, he belongs to the third *varna*, *vaisha*, a family of grocers. As a teenager, he worked at a tea stall at a bus terminus in Gujarat. Later, he worked in the staff canteen of the Gujarat State Road Transport Corporation. He attended local educational institutions and obtained his Masters in Political Science from the University of Gujarat.

By affiliation and outlook, Rahul belongs to the secular group like his ancestors, whereas Narendra Modi is a radical, a member of the Rashtriya Sevak Sangh, the group that was responsible for the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi. He entered the RSS at an early age and was a full-time *pracharak* (propagandist) of



the RSS even when he was working in the Gujarat State Road Transport Corporation's canteen and continued in that capacity until he completed his education.

After receiving training from the RSS in Nagpur, he was given the charge of the Sangh's student wing, Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) in Gujarat. In 1987, the RSS seconded Modi to the BJP. He rose to the position of the BJP's general secretary after the party's victory in the 1995 state elections. At the same time, he was transferred to New Delhi. In 1998, Modi was promoted to the post of national secretary of the BJP. He has also set a record of becoming Gujarat's chief minister for four consecutive terms since 2001.

In March 2013, Modi was appointed as a member of the BJP's parliamentary board, its highest decision-making body and also as chairman of the party's central election campaign committee.

Elections to the Indian Lok Sabha due in April-May are seen by many political observers as a war of these two Titans – Rahul Gandhi and Narendra Modi. In comparison with his young rival, Modi is seen by many as a polarizer. He also carries a baggage, the massacre of Muslims in 2002 for which he is often called the 'Butcher of Gujarat'.

Both leaders are currently travelling across the country, addressing public meetings and trading barbs. Rahul Gandhi took Modi on in his home state, hitting at his oft-repeated claim of his humble beginnings as a tea

vendor. He said that all professions should be respected except those that try to make a "fool" (*ullu*) of others. Attacking Modi's ideology, he said, "You have been in the RSS all your life...Who killed Mahatma? It was the RSS ideology which killed him."

Modi is popular among businessmen, industrialists and the religious right. Spiritual leader Ramdev and Morarji Babu have supported Modi's prime ministerial candidacy, while Muslim religious outfits have distanced themselves from him.

But the entry of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) of Arvind Kejriwal might act as a spoiler in a direct contest between Modi and Rahul. Kejriwal has named Kumar Vishwas to contest against Rahul Gandhi. He has also announced that his party would contest more than 350 of the 542 seats in the Lok Sabha elections from 20 states and would field candidates against all those on his "list".

Though he has not announced a contestant against Modi yet, AAP will be contesting against both, chipping away at their vote bank.

Then there is the Left front. At a rally in Kolkata recently, its leader Prakash Karat declared: "When elections will be fought, you will see where Narendra Modi and his BJP stand in Bengal, Odisha, Bihar, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Karnataka because in many states, regional non-Congress parties and Left parties will fight against the BJP and the Congress."

It is, therefore, clear that the elections are not going to be a

cakewalk for either of the giants. Yet, it is the post-election situation, once the results are in, that should engage political analysts. The question is which party would be an engine of change?

The record of the Congress has not been encouraging in this regard. On many critical issues, such as the Babri Mosque, it has always taken an ambivalent stand. That is why its support among the Muslims has eroded over the years. Even in the case of Indo-Pakistan relations, it was the BJP Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee who visited Lahore, invited Pakistan's former President, Gen. Musharraf on a state visit to India and broached mutual disputes in a realistic manner. Some political analysts in Pakistan, therefore, feel that it would be easier to deal with a BJP prime minister.

Narendra Modi is also popular among Pakistan's business community. In 2011, the Karachi Chamber of Commerce & Industry invited Modi to visit Pakistan and address prominent business leaders. Pakistani businessmen also asked him to consider initiating a flight between Karachi and Ahmadabad due to the historical cultural and economic relations between the two regions of Gujarat and Sindh.

The Indian elections will be watched eagerly not only at home but also beyond. ■

The writer is a senior political analyst and former editor of SouthAsia Magazine.

A Bridge



Legitimacy of the Afghan general elections – and of the eventual winner – will be of utmost importance, given the uncertainty that surrounds the entire process.

By **Yaqoob Khan Bangash**

On April 5, 2014 Afghanistan will witness a milestone. For the first time in the country's history there will be a democratic transition from one head of state and government to another – the constitution of Afghanistan forbids the incumbent Hamid Karzai from running for another term. This fact in itself will make the presidential elections more significant.

Afghanistan has never had a peaceful transition before. The third since the fall of the Taliban regime, these elections come at a time when uncertainty prevails in the country. President Karzai has still not signed

the Bilateral Security Agreement, which will see thousands of coalition troops stay on in the country in training and advisory capacity. The country's relations with the United States can be termed as shaky at best.

The U.S. has already cut in half its aid to Afghanistan and, with a major withdrawal in the offing, the consequences of this aid decrease are yet to be felt. These elections will also be the last under a strong foreign military and civilian presence and will certainly foreshadow future political and ethnic alignments. Their effects on the continuing Taliban insurgency have also to be seen, especially since

the Taliban have vowed to disrupt the elections and prevent people from voting.

Eleven candidates will contest the upcoming elections; they range from former technocrats to the person who first invited Osama bin Laden to the country to a grandson of former King Zahir Shah.

The most important and serious contender for slot of president is the former foreign minister, Abdullah Abdullah. An ophthalmologist who was also a prominent member of the anti-Soviet resistance, Dr. Abdullah is of mixed Pashtun and Tajik lineage. This makes him the only candidate

Too Far?

who has a strong appeal for both the Pashtun and non-Pashtun ethnic constituencies. He was close to Ahmed Shah Masood, the assassinated leader of the Northern Alliance and later joined the Karzai government as its foreign minister. He resigned the post in 2005 and emerged as the only serious contender to Karzai in the 2009 elections, but he withdrew in the second round.

His party, the Coalition for Change and Hope, won 90 seats in the 2010 parliamentary elections and became the largest opposition party. With a strong grassroots-level organization and support, Abdullah stands a good chance of winning the elections. But his closeness to the erstwhile Northern Alliance might unite the politically suspicious Pashtuns behind a Pashtun candidate if the elections go for a runoff, leading to Abdullah's defeat.

With a modern outlook and international experience, Abdullah is considered pro-West, but the electoral dynamics of the country might align with the more cautious and conservative warlords who control significant voting blocks. This may compromise some of his plans. Abdullah is also opposed to talks with the Taliban and has already suffered fatal attacks on his aides. His closeness with India is a cause for concern for Pakistan, a country with significant interest in Afghanistan, and his election will certainly further complicate the already very tense and fractious relationship between Kabul and Islamabad.

Another strong candidate is Ashraf Ghani Ahmedzai who, with stints at the World Bank, a doctorate from Columbia and extensive lecturing experience in the West, is an experienced technocrat. That said, he only received 3 percent votes in 2009 and therefore has a weak political base. This time, however, he has aligned himself with a powerful warlord – Abdul Rashid Dostum,

whose solid support in the Pashtun vote bank could make Ahmedzai the consolidated choice of the Pashtuns in a runoff election. But his alliance with Dostum – accused of several war crimes – will certainly dilute his pro-reform credentials and compromise his standing among the more educated and liberal Afghans – his natural constituency.

The candidature of Qayoum Karzai is also an interesting addition to the election scenario and might become significant if the incumbent Karzai decides to throw his weight behind his brother (Hamid Karzai has yet to declare his support for any candidate). However, with no public support by Hamid Karzai for Qayoum, and the latter's staunch support for a deal with the United States – something his brother wants renegotiated – this contender seems like a weak option. Qayoum does not have the political charisma of his younger brother and also lacks the anti-Soviet resistance stamp to distinguish him from other candidates.

As a matter of fact, he was running restaurants in the U.S. till the fall of the Taliban government and only returned to the country afterwards. His stint in the parliament also ended in despair and his apparent reliance on his family name and connections cannot take him too far. He has also been bogged down by scandals which have badly affected his family. He could, however, be the spoiler in the first round, forcing a second round on the leading candidate, Dr. Abdullah.

Abdul Rasul Sayyaf is the man who gave the militant Abu Sayyaf group in the Philippines his name. He invited Osama bin Laden to Afghanistan after the U.S. attacked Al-Qaeda hideouts in Sudan and was considered the 'mentor' to Khaled Sheikh Mohammad, reportedly, the mastermind of the 9/11 attacks. He is the most controversial of the candidates. He was educated at Cairo's Al Azhar University and was

a leading mujahidin commander in the 1980s. He has had close ties with both Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, but despite his conservatism, is opposed to the Taliban. He has little chance of success due to a weak political base but could win a number of votes due to his alignment with a popular former militia leader, Ismail Khan, who was also governor of western Herat.

The other candidates, such as Zalmay Rasul, General Abdul Rahim Wardak, Gul Agha Sherzai and Nader Naim, a grandson of King Zahir Shah, have pockets of support which will hardly dent the outcome.

In addition to the various challenges that the new president is going to face, the very act of holding elections in Afghanistan is fraught with complications. Around 12 million Afghans, out of a population of more than 30 million, are eligible to vote. However, with unreliable voter registration cards and the absence of photos on voter cards of hundreds of women voters (due to cultural and religious sensibilities), the chances of rigging are high.

Further, while the current winter has not been very harsh, all voting stations are not very accessible and the boycott and threats by the Taliban may deter people from turning up to vote. The legitimacy of these elections – and of the eventual winner – will therefore be of utmost importance.

Afghanistan is already beset with many problems and these are expected to increase in the coming months and years. Therefore, the forthcoming elections are perhaps the most significant in the post-Taliban era and will chart the future trajectory of the country. With no clear candidate poised to win easily, the coast is wide open – competitive, adventurous and yet as scary as most of Afghan history. ■

The writer is the chairperson of the Department of History, Forman Christian College, Lahore.

A Happy Transition

In the aftermath of the civil war, the Sri Lankan economy has shown impressive forward momentum.

By Kruthagna Nadini Perera

The end of the 26-year-long civil war against Tamil rebels was indeed a decisive juncture in the history of Sri Lanka. For decades the country regressed in many spheres of economic and social life while the continued tension among different communities due to the insurgency prevented it from making any contribution to world economy. However, the Sri Lankan government surprised many by taking a strong stand against insurgency and stating its resolve to end it through military action despite the failure of similar attempts in the past.

The introduction of an 'open economy' in 1978 and a shift from the 'social orientation' the country had adopted following its independence in 1948, proved a successful experiment. Sri Lanka recorded an annual growth rate of 6 percent in the region until 1986 because of its policies that encouraged private sector investments and its export-oriented economy that helped increase foreign earnings. When the civil war started, the country's economy recorded a significant decline with a 2.7 percent annual average during 1986-1989 and around 5 percent in the decade after.

The military's victory over the LTTE separatists brought in its wake many serious challenges – both domestic and international. It was predicted that the economy would suffer due to the after-effects of war and aid cuts – a key determinant of the country's economic progress. However, surprisingly, the conclusion of the war did wonders for the Lankan economy, making it one of the fastest growing economies in the region. Even in 2009, growth was 3.5 percent despite the setbacks in the last stages of the war as well as the global

economic crisis. The country's GDP growth rate averaged at 6.4 percent during 2003-2013, recording an all-time high of 8.6 percent in December 2010.

In November 2009, when Sri Lanka was facing serious challenges to the survival and growth of its economy, Dr. P.B Jayasundera, the Secretary to the Ministry of Finance and Planning and Secretary to the Treasury, had declared that the country had the potential to emerge as a growing economy. "With our increased new capacity in terms of infrastructure, stability, sound policies and the likely investments in tourism, alternative energy, agriculture, manufacturing, urban development and various other sectors, Sri Lanka will have greater integration in global trade and finance. I prefer not to label whether the country will be a finance, shipping or a bunkering hub but the fact is that all these facilities being available here is bound to make Sri Lanka a unique development centre in the region. Future prospects for IT and enabling services and industries, financial services, shipping, medical services are also great," he said.

He also promised that the government would systematically build up its policies to create a knowledge and skill-based economy. "We have shifted from being a literate society to an educated society. From an educated society we are moving towards becoming a knowledge and skilled society. Our doctors have revamped our medical services and in our own way we have succeeded in attracting investments to this area," he declared.

Massive economic and social infrastructure development took place in the following years and Sri Lanka made significant progress. The

problem of inadequate infrastructure was tackled and many development projects were undertaken that supported the middle-income transition of Sri Lanka.

The development of seaports and airports has played an important role in fulfilling the government's aim to make the country a leading aviation, navigation and trading hub in the region. The expansion of the Colombo South Port, development of the Hambantota Port, expansion of Bandaranaike International Airport and construction of a second International airport at Mattala (in the southern province of the country) are some of the significant projects undertaken after the end of the civil war.

Furthermore, the development of high-mobility road networks is seen as a move to address the delays in road development and transportation caused by the war. The Colombo-Katunayake Expressway (25km) and the Southern Highway (126km) has been completed, while the Outer Circular Highway (28km) in the Colombo metropolitan area and the Colombo-Kandy Highway (98km) are under construction.

Three major projects were undertaken in the power and energy sector. The hydropower project in Upper Kotmale was completed and connected to the national grid in July 2011. The Norochcholai coal-power project, too, commenced in 2011, with the second phase expected to be completed this year. An agreement is being finalized between the Ceylon Electricity Board and the National Thermal Power Corporation of India to develop coal-power plants in Tricomalee. The project will commence this year and will be linked to the national grid by mid-2016.

Additionally, many small-scale infrastructure development projects such as the 'Maga Neguma' rural road development program, rural electrification projects, minor irrigation projects and community-based water supply projects have continued to facilitate local development. Public investment on economic and social infrastructure development amounted to Rs.388 billion (5.1 percent of GDP) in 2012.

However, there has been harsh criticism of the sustainability of growth shown through infrastructure development and GDP rise following post-war developments.

A think tank, Verite Research, has speculated that the 'post-war growth bump has hit the ceiling'. The group calls for serious administrative and policy reforms to increase GDP growth in a sustainable manner.

An editorial in a leading Lankan newspaper stated that in 2012, the decline in contributions by the import trade and transport was mostly compensated for by a huge increase in the recorded GDP contribution from construction. "As a post-war driver of growth, it leapt up, tripling its significance and adding an extra 1.07 percent to GDP growth in 2012. The problem is that the main driver of construction in Sri Lanka is government-financed expenditure on infrastructure. Government expenditure-led growth will also not sustain," said the editorial.

Critics also point out that although Sri Lanka appeared to be a highly lucrative market for investment even during the time of global uncertainty, the foreign investments were predominantly portfolio investments, not foreign direct investment (FDI),

which promote commodity production and facilitate transfer of technology to the economy.

Nonetheless, with Sri Lanka's contours changing significantly as it transitions towards becoming a middle-income economy, the country has proven to the world its potential.

Unemployment and poverty rates have reduced and the country is being recognized as an early achiever of 10 out of the 21 indicators of the Millennium Development Goals, which also includes goals related to primary education and gender equality. Undeniably, the setbacks faced by Sri Lanka have not consumed its potential. Rather, they seem to have pushed it forward in many areas. **S**

The writer is a business journalist based in Sri Lanka. She focuses on issues pertaining to trade, health and fashion.





The Moment of Truth

An effective Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Nepal would require additional bodies working alongside it – from prosecution and accountability mechanisms to reparation and reform programs.

By S. M. Hali

The Himalayan state of Nepal, wedged between two giants – China and India – has been plagued by conflict, instability and intractable political divisions for years. The Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal – which it is now officially known as – experienced its second elections since the abolishment of its 240-year-old monarchy in 2006, following the 10-year revolt led by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists). The country has been running under an interim constitution since 2008.

The previous elections, which were held on April 10, 2008, saw the Maoists elected to power and forming a coalition government after having won the largest number of seats in the Constituent Assembly (CA). Unfortunately, the Maoists were unable to cope with the challenges. In May 2009, their government was replaced by another coalition government and a virtual musical chairs of power followed till fresh elections were held in November 2013 under an interim government

led by Chief Justice Khilraj Regmi.

A clear majority was not achieved by any political party, leading to a deadlock, which was resolved in mid-February when Nepal's parliament picked a social democrat as its new prime minister after a last-minute power-sharing deal. Sushil Koirala, the head of the centrist Nepali Congress party, was elected with support from the communist UML party, which holds the second-largest number of seats in the CA.

Koirala faces two major challenges

– drafting a new constitution for Nepal and dealing with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The commitment to form a TRC was part of the 2006 Comprehensive Peace Accord, which ended the decade-long conflict between the state and Maoist forces. The TRC was tasked with investigating human rights violations that occurred from 1996 to 2006, during which at least 13,000 people were killed and 1,300 were missing. An independent report by the International Commission of Jurists found that both parties to the conflict – the Nepalese Army and members of the former Maoist rebels – committed grave human rights violations.

While drafting the new constitution will be an uphill task because of political differences, the TRC is an equally difficult challenge. Framing a new constitution is an internal matter of Nepal but the TRC is under the microscope of international human rights organizations, the UN and various donor agencies.

After considerable delays, on March 14, 2013, the government of Nepal approved the TRC titled Ordinance on Investigation of Disappeared People, Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2069. The ordinance calls for the immediate creation of a two-year Truth and Reconciliation Commission comprising five independent commissioners. Under the ordinance, the Commission's functions include "bring[ing] the real fact before [the] public by investigating the truth of the cases in relation to the events of serious violation[s] of human rights including disappeared persons in the course of armed conflict," and "reconcil[ing] the perpetrator and the victim."

The Commission would investigate both known human rights violations as well as violations brought to its attention by or on behalf of a victim. Some hearings may be public and, upon its conclusion, the Commission would release a report on its findings and recommendations for individual perpetrators to be either granted amnesty or be prosecuted by the attorney general in Nepal. The Commission would also provide recommendations to the Nepalese government on the appropriate compensation for identified victims.

The ordinance has faced serious

controversies. The most knotty issue with the TRC is the legal provision authorizing the Commission to recommend amnesty for perpetrators of human rights violations.

The UN and the donor community also expressed their reluctance to support a TRC that does not meet international standards. Some other serious objections are that the ordinance was finalized and approved by only four of Nepal's political parties, with even officials of the National Human Rights Commission claiming to have been denied access to the ordinance's final version. It was perceived that the TRC took cognizance of only political considerations.

It has been pointed out that structurally, the Commission lacks guarantees of impartiality and independence that are required to ensure a meaningful and effective process for national reconciliation. These concerns stem in part from the requirement that the Commission is supposed to attain government permission before obtaining any international support, which effectively serves as a built-in dependency on the government for funding and resources. The Commission's potential has also been curtailed by its work being limited to only two years, which limits its chances of successfully addressing a conflict that spanned ten years and resulted in thousands of deaths and disappearances.

Unsurprisingly, only a fortnight after the passage of the bill, the Nepalese Supreme Court suspended the TRC from taking effect, pending a further review of the planned Commission. The court ruled that the provisions of the ordinance concerning amnesties, limitations on criminal prosecution and a 35-day limit for filing cases contravene fundamental rights guaranteed by the constitution of Nepal, its justice system and international law. It also ordered the Commission to meet international standards, including guarantees of autonomy and impartiality and to ensure the involvement and protection of victims and witnesses.

As a neutral observer of the proceedings, one can't help wonder why an exercise aimed at achieving reconciliation has hit serious snags even before it could take off.

Perhaps Nepal could learn a lesson

or two from the TRC of South Africa, which had endeavored to reach the truth through a free and fair dialogue. The Commission would require the participation of neutral officials, who could enable the healing process. The first step would be the creation of a safe and open space for stories to be told and the installment of strong social-support mechanisms for those who shared their experiences, a necessary part of this process. The participants must not fear retaliation or reprisal for their narrative, which is essential for fact-finding.

Secondly, frustration among conflict victims regarding their limited participation in the formation processes of the current ordinance might further shape and reduce their future engagements with the TRC. Furthermore, the objections of conflict victims to amnesty are based on their observation that the truth produced by the TRC cannot replace the different and additional truth established in the court, one of an individual's legal responsibilities to conflict-era crimes.

For a fractured society like that of Nepal's, the process of reconciliation and healing can only take place if the root causes of the conflict are addressed and when a brighter future, free of conflict is visible. The societal divides will have to be bridged and inequalities and injustices addressed. An effective TRC in Nepal would require additional bodies working alongside it, from prosecution and accountability mechanisms to reparations and reform programs.

The quest for truth and reconciliation should be based on a genuine desire for durable peace. The canvas of the TRC must be broadened and various state organs, especially the judiciary and other support mechanisms, must be strengthened. The task for Sushil Koirala, the new incumbent in the prime minister's office, is not going to be easy, especially because he heads a coalition government. If he wants to leave his mark on history as one who brought peace to the Nepalese people and remolded them into a united nation, he will have to give utmost attention to the working of the TRC. ■

The writer is a practising journalist. He contributes to the print media and produces documentaries.

Calculating Happiness

The problem with subjective indicators, such as Bhutan's Gross National Happiness Index, is that they can be easily manipulated by governments to their advantage.

By Hussain H. Zaidi

Across the globe, the gross domestic product (GDP) or gross national product (GNP) is the most credible indicator of economic performance. Sustained and healthy GDP growth is believed to signal that a nation is faring well on the economic front.

luxuries as to that of necessities.

The GDP index does not take into account who in the main is benefiting from the expansion of the national output or who is primarily losing from its contraction. It may happen, and it generally does, that the fruits of GDP growth are largely

into account the negative externalities, such as the environmental degradation involved in the production of goods.

In view of such limitations of GDP and related indicators, economists and psychologists have long debated alternative economic indicators, though such debates have not been



Measuring an economy by its GDP is not without its limitations. For one thing, GDP is essentially a measure of how much is produced, not of what is produced. GDP calculators, for instance, would attach as much importance to the production of military goods as to that of food, as much importance to the production of

enjoyed by a small section of society. Hence, not surprisingly, economies undergoing rapid GDP growth also tend to experience growing income disparities.

The use of the GDP indicator is based on the premise that the more a nation produces, the higher would be its standard of living. It does not take

more than academic exercises.

However, there is one country, and only one, that has shunned the GDP indicator and embraced another index. The country is Bhutan and the index is called Gross National Happiness (GNH). Before we look at Bhutan's GNH Index, a brief introduction of the country's economy seems in order.

Though it may not be fair to describe an economy using indicators that it does not approve of, the reliance on such indicators is unavoidable.

Bhutan is one of the least developed countries (LDCs) in South Asia and one of the smallest economies in the world, ranked at 171 in terms of economic size, according to the World Factbook. Although its per capita income is about \$6,000, this is mainly because of the very small population of 0.72 million.

Of late, Bhutan has experienced rapid economic growth, with the GDP growing at 8.5 percent and 9.4 percent in 2011 and 2012, respectively (World Bank data), mainly on account of hydropower projects. Bhutan's economic growth has thus clearly outpaced the average



growth of South Asia, which was 6.1 percent and 3.6 percent in 2011 and 2012 respectively.

The economy is largely agrarian with cement, wood products and processed food, in addition to tourism, being the major industries. Agriculture is the largest source of employment and accommodates nearly 44 percent

of the labor force. Bhutan's total exports in 2012 were \$ 722 million. The export basket consists largely of primary, low value-added products such as cement, metals and vegetable oil. The country has an electricity surplus, which it mainly exports to India.

Although it is South Asia's smallest, and arguably the most backward, economy, Bhutan has far more equitable distribution of income than other countries in the region. Measured by the international standard of earning \$2 per day, the poverty percentage in Bhutan declined from 23.2 in 2007 to 12 in 2012. Compare this with other South Asian countries: Bangladesh (76.5), India (68.8), the Maldives (12.2), Nepal (57.3), Pakistan (60) and Sri Lanka (23.9). In 2003, the percentage shares of the richest 20 percent and the poorest 20 percent in the national income were 53 and 5.4, respectively. By 2007, the latest year for which relevant data is available, this had changed to 45.2 and 6.6, respectively. The Gini index, a measure of income distribution, fell from 46.8 in 2003 to 38.1 in 2007 (World Bank data).

Coming back to Bhutan's GNHI, it goes beyond numbers to take, what is commonly referred to, as a holistic and social view of development. The edifice of GNHI rests on four pillars – promotion of sustainable development, preservation and promotion of cultural values, conservation of the natural environment and establishment of good governance. These four pillars are further divided into eight general indicators: (a) physical, mental and spiritual health, (b) time-balance, (c) social and community vitality, (d) cultural vitality, (e) education, (f) living standards, (g) good governance and (h) ecological vitality.

The GNHI is thus a blend of indicators that are subjective and objective, quantitative and qualitative. While the level of physical health can be fairly gauged by the average life expectancy and infant mortality rate, it is difficult to do so in the case of mental and spiritual health. Spiritual health is even difficult to define. And the overall 'happiness' is even harder to assess.

In the first place, it is difficult to give a definition to happiness. Does it lie in the satisfaction of desires – as argued by hedonists? Or does it lie in

the control of desires – as maintained by some great moral teachers? Is an educated person happier than an illiterate one? We may define happiness as well-being. But such a definition is circular, for what really is well-being? Material progress? Spiritual satisfaction? Mental calmness?

In the second place, happiness is largely subjective, a state of mind so to speak. Wealth may be the strongest ingredient of happiness for one person. For another, a sense of recognition may be the key to happiness. Thirdly, subjective indicators are difficult, if not impossible, to compare over times and across regions and nations. Are people living in the countryside happier than those living in the cities? Are the Bhutanese happier today than they were, say, 20 years ago? Are Indians happier than Americans?

Happiness, however, does have some objective content. For instance, all else being equal, the healthy tend to be happier than the sick, those having access to basic needs, at least in nine out of ten cases, are happier than those who do not. According to the UNDP Human Development Report 2013, life satisfaction tends to be greater in countries that are higher on the HD Index, which is based on objective indicators. And Bhutan, it may be mentioned, ranked 140th out of 185 countries on the 2012 HDI.

Another problem in the case of subjective indicators is that the government can easily manipulate these to boast its effectiveness. A despot can claim that the people are better off and thus happier under his 'paternalistic' regime than they were under a democratic dispensation. Of course, governments at times fudge objective indicators, such as GDP growth rate. But it is always more convenient to manipulate subjective indicators than the objective ones.

That said, the GNHI and similar subjective indices are a reminder that objective indicators such as per capita income and inflation levels are often misleading. Such indices also remind us that economic welfare is part of the overall social welfare; it is a means and not an end in itself. However, subjective indicators can at best complement and not be a substitute for objective data. ■

The writer is a freelance contributor. He writes on economic issues.

Writing on the Wall

Street art thrives in Iran as graffiti artists work against all odds to make their statements. It is a risky business but is driven by strong belief and motivation.

By Asna Ali

Grffiti and street art are often regarded as media of expression more commonly found in societies that accept or at least tolerate bohemian lifestyles. Indulgences such as freely expressing one's opinion on sidewalks through stencils and cans of spray paint seem incongruent with the controlled and less-understanding atmosphere of certain countries.

Yet Iran, a country run by the Ayatollahs and their handpicked politicians and a country not known for its tolerance for individualism or free expression, appears to have a thriving street art scene. It is a side of the Iranian society that has largely remained hidden from the world's eye. Our opinions of the country are

largely shaped by a media which focuses on government actions and statements, making us forget about the ordinary people who live there. The restricted and biased view of the country has excluded the trials and tribulations of daily life in Iran and the mechanisms in which Iranians and their culture continue to survive and, yes, even thrive despite the restrictions imposed on them.

An image of defiance is what Iran presents to the world and it is out of defiance that its street art scene found its roots and continues to develop its insights. Revolutionaries and change agents well understand the importance of inspirational imagery. Long-winded speeches, books and pamphlets may accomplish little compared to

one truly impressive image which conveys a simple message that can be understood and remembered by all.

It is for this reason that in the 1970s Iranian revolutionaries took to the streets to spread their message. They painted the walls with anti-government slogans and images that greatly helped in spreading revolutionary themes amongst the less-educated masses. This trend did not die when Ayatollah Khomeini and his supporters came to power. Instead, art in public places became a way of disseminating opinions sanctioned by the state, boosting morale and uplifting the patriotic spirit. Motifs of the revolution, portraits of the Ayatollah and murals celebrating the sacrifice of martyrs during the Iran-



Iraq war were also a common sight.

However, even the most authoritative of regimes cannot control public opinion completely. War-time displays and government-approved art gradually fell out of favor as aesthetically pleasing decorations and patterns became more common. The shifting narratives during the last decade or so were fertile enough for the emergence of independent artists who displayed their well thought-out and opinionated art pieces on street walls.

Now, the streets of Tehran are, on occasion, home to bursts of creative commentary that may be political or social in nature but has not been approved by any higher authority.

Commonly explored themes include those of freedom and independence and childhood and poverty. Street artists combine modern techniques with the ancient. One might find a magnificent display of calligraphy or the stenciled drawing of innocent children. But one has to be in the right place at the right time to find any independent street art or graffiti.

Often these displays, beautiful as they may be, are painted over before they have been up for long. Artists work through the night and in haste to create their work. It is risky business, especially if the subject matter is political. The pictures are accompanied by irreverent pseudonyms such as A1one, Mad, Ill and ghalamDAR, amongst others.

They are inspired by what has appeared on the walls of cities such as New York and Paris. Often they are stylistically compared to famous names in street art such as Banksy and Nick Walker. The comparison is well warranted but the unique set of circumstances in which Iranian artists have grown up and work give them a worldview completely different from western artists. The latter cannot imagine the kind of harsh penalties their Iranian counterparts stand to face if they are caught.

Arrests and intimidation are not uncommon. One of the most well-known street artist duos from Iran, the brothers Icy and Sot, eventually left the country and applied for political asylum in the United States. While



their work is displayed and applauded internationally, the brothers have spoken of the difficulties they faced back home. They were arrested many times and their more political pieces had to be sent for showings abroad in secret for fear of censorship. Moving to the United States has given them freedom but they are effectively locked out of Iran as it would be dangerous to return.

Others, however, continue to work as they believe that the very censorship fuels their creativity. The creative streak of these artists was perhaps at its peak during the 2009 presidential elections which were controversially won by Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. The elections were followed by protests, arrests and intensification of censorship. During that time, a self-styled graffiti artist 'Mad' drew stenciled images of a donkey at the ballot, obviously mocking the election process. Considering the reports of torture faced by protestors, this was a particularly daring act.

Today, Iran is no longer just the Ayatollahs' country. For years, there has been tumult beneath its surface and there is no dearth of individuals who do not buy into the mainstream narratives. Striving for freedom of expression, as human beings are wont to do, these Iranian youths have chosen to express themselves in a way that is at once both modern and ancient and is steeped in the country's artistic past as well as facilitated by contemporary techniques.

When interviewed, Iranian graffiti artists often speak of an almost identical journey. Having little or no freedom to pursue their activities, they turn to the internet as a source of entertainment, learning and expression despite the fact that much of the content is censored by government-installed filters. Just as it has affected and changed millions of

lives the world over, the internet has done just that in Iran, too. It brought ideas and some measure of freedom in a stifling environment.

For graffiti artists of Iran, it also brought recognition. Street art is still very much an underground movement in the country despite its growing popularity. But street artists are motivating people more eagerly to follow in their footsteps all because of the chance to put up their work online and to speak to their admirers.

A common complaint of these artists is that government authorities do not understand their work, hence the backlash. Street art has historically been related to the revolution in Iran and ironically, it is that kind of political expression that the government now wishes to curb. Through the attachment of labels such as resistance, or even Satanism in the case of Icy and Sot, the authorities hope not only to criminalize independent street art but perhaps also discredit it.

However, the changing face of both Iranian politics and Iranian culture shows that a transformation is taking place that runs deeper than art work. The art is simply an outward expression of an internal yearning to be able to communicate openly and without restriction.

It is a quieter uprising than the one Iran has seen before. And it marches on although many have given up, left or been forced out. The revolutionary spirit has not died down in the country and one hopes that the winds of change will eventually have a positive outcome, making Iran a country that welcomes independent thought and opinion rather than oppressing them. ■

The writer is a business graduate. She has an interest in political and social issues.

Great Unexpectedness

When American citizens Gary D. LeClair and Mike Mulvihill arrived in Karachi, they had many negatives in their minds. This changed to positive once they got to see the place and meet the people.

By Javed Ansari

When Gary LeClair and Mike Mulvihill visited the fish harbour in Karachi, they opened the car window to smell the breeze outside. This was the signature they were looking for as an authentic token of the reality of the place rather than a protected look through a closed glass window.

Gary LeClair, Mike Mulvihill and their wives were in Karachi recently to attend the wedding of the son of their friend and business associate, Owais Dagra.

During their 10-day stint they were taken across Karachi and its environs by their hosts, thus getting the opportunity to meet a lot of people from all walks of life. They met bankers and stock exchange executives, a tribal chief and the owner of a fishing trawler, textile mill workers and metal crafters, high officials at Sui Sothern Gas Company, doctors at the Aga Khan University Hospital and worshippers at a mosque.

Gary D. LeClair is the founder and Chairman of the national law firm LeClair Ryan which provides securities and general counsel services through some 350 lawyers based in cities all the way from New York to Los Angeles. He has been the lead attorney in private and public financings, joint ventures, strategic alliances, mergers and acquisitions and other major domestic and international transactions. He has also served as director of various business entities, including a bank, an independent trust company, a

residential developer, an e-commerce business and a retail network.

Although avid global-trotters, this was the first time that the LeClairs were visiting any part of South Asia. Gary said that as far as Americans are concerned, their perceptions about the outside world tend to be limited and that his impressions of Pakistan were influenced by news coverage of the Taliban and the war in Afghanistan which tended to put Pakistan in a negative light. But he said that since Americans are skeptical people, it's good that they want to hear the other side of the story as well. After he and his friends arrived in Karachi and experienced the country and the people from close, they found everything to be so different – there were so many positives about Pakistan they never knew about.

Gary says Pakistan is like any other young and growing country with the added advantages of a common law that it has inherited from the British, the English language which is the means of official and business communication and a high number of very well-educated professionals.

He is also impressed by the downright kindness of the Pakistani people. In his view, Pakistan should aggressively promote everything good about itself – like its diversity in food,



Gary LeClair: Focus on positives, take advantage of opportunities.

the warmth of its people, its long and beautiful coastline, its vibrant fashion industry and the freedom of the press. This would be an answer to the negative picture of Pakistan that the international media tends to paint.

Gary agrees that Pakistan also faces a number of challenges, like corruption, lawlessness, etc., but he says, it took the United States some 200 years to overcome all this – the various mafias that controlled everything, so this should not worry Pakistan.

In his view, Pakistan should prove to be an attractive destination for foreign investment because the people are hard working and also kind and respectful. He met a wide cross-section during his stay in the country and they all came across as people of dynamism and vitality who had a positive attitude towards everything. What added to this was the country's intellectual capital – all those Pakistanis who have received education and training abroad. As such, Gary feels that Pakistan must focus on its positives and take



Mike Mulvihill: Pakistan could be a good investment destination.

advantage of the many opportunities it has in terms of its young population and its countless attractions in every walk of life.

Mike Mulvihill is Executive Vice President of the major American PR company Padilla/CRT, which is one of the top 10 independent public relations and communications firms in the US. Mike has developed a wealth of experience working with a range of top line clients including Fortune 500 companies, government agencies, colleges and universities, banks, associations, professional service organizations, not-for-profit companies and high technology firms.

For Mike and his wife too, this was their first visit to Pakistan and it proved to be a great experience for them. Mike says that when he and his friends were planning the visit, a lot of people asked them why we were going to Pakistan of all places because the State Department discouraged Americans from visiting this particular South Asian country.

However, after Mike and his other

United States.

Mike is of the opinion that there is nothing necessarily wrong with Pakistan and the country can move towards economic stability with confidence. What it needs is a better infrastructure and improvements at the socio-economic level. Given that, the country has the potential to grow rapidly because it has so much in natural resources that can fetch it good money.

Mike particularly enjoyed his visit to the Stallion Textiles Mills Ltd. in Nooriabad which had about 2,000-plus workers and was probably the biggest such mill in the world.

The wedding Mike and Gary attended with their spouses offered the kind of festivities they had never seen before. The women visited different beauty parlours almost every day to get ready for the wedding functions and were amazed by the latest services offered. They loved the complicated patterns of *henna* (*mehndi*) that were applied to their hands and feet and also the glass *churris* (*bangles*) they wore at the various ceremonies. They

associates landed in Karachi, they found it to be a different place altogether and were welcomed by people from across all strata. They say they never for a moment felt threatened in any way. They were impressed by the overall young age of the population as well as by the economic vibrancy that clearly came across.

Mike Mulvihill agrees that since Pakistan is a young country, it is going through its growing pains but he feels that it should take advantage of its best resource – the youth. He regretted that the international news media only show a small and negative slice of what the country really is and compared this to showing crime in the Bronx area of New York rather than showing all the good things about the

found the Pakistani dresses they got to wear very comfortable and the men loved their Peshawari chappals (sandals).

The group attended a loud New Year's bash, the like of which they hadn't seen for many years. Their stay was, in fact, a sampling of Karachi life that included sorties to bazaars and shopping malls like the Pak Towers and Dolmen Mall as well as eating sprees at restaurants that ranged from a *dhaba* in Nazimabad called Café Majestic where they had daal to a roadside tea stall in the same area, a high-end fine dining French restaurant, exquisite Japanese cuisine and everything else in between that served mouth-watering Pakistani food.

Mike says Pakistan has tremendous natural resources, such as one of the world's largest deposits of copper and its delicious mango and oranges crops. To him what makes Pakistan so important is its size and location because it is the 6th largest country in the world in terms of population and among the 11 developing economies. Pakistan should take advantage of its easy access to China and India and develop business to business contacts, so that consumer goods can move from Pakistan to these markets because this offers a great world of opportunity.

In Mike's view, Pakistan could be a good investment destination because the stock market here is doing so well, the economy is young and the regulatory setup provides great opportunities. As for the negative factors, he says those are a reality in other countries too and things get done there. These should not be taken as deterrents as a positive culture of business is evolving in the country. He feels foreign investors would soon head to the country because it offers vast physical and human resources.

As for all the concern about safety, in Mike's view, this would also apply to many other places around the world. He says that Pakistan should make extra efforts to bring about global awareness about its vast natural resources and should act very proactively to promote this to the advantage of the country. **S**

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

Which Way Profitable Companies?

The government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif may be right in pursuing a 'no bail-out' policy but this could affect profitable government enterprises as well.



According to the privatization policy of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's government, under the various aid covenants signed between the government and international financial institutions, the government will no longer provide bail-out packages to state-owned enterprises. This appears to be a wise decision because institutions like the PIA, Steel Mills, etc. have been costing the government billions of rupees every day. However, as a consequence of this no bail-out policy, two government-owned companies – namely SSGC and SNGPL – which would have actually raised profits for the government will now probably end on the scrap heap.

SNGPL and SSGCL have been very lucrative undertakings for the government for the past 40 years. Both companies have never asked for, or required, government grants or bail-outs. But it is highly questionable the way they have been treated by OGRA over the past decade. It appears that these companies are deliberately being run into the ground so that they may be sold at throwaway prices.

OGRA was established to promote

competition in the oil and gas sector and to ensure the well being of the people of Pakistan as well as the companies operating in these sectors. However OGRA's actions from 2005 show that it has never given any importance to either SSGC or SNGPL. Since 2005, OGRA has imposed tens of billions of rupees in penalties on these companies under the head of "UFG", which is unaccounted for gas or line losses faced by gas companies during supply of gas to the end consumer. Some of this UFG is within the power of the companies to control, whereas the most part of it is not.

OGRA seems to have misclassified certain incomes generated by the companies through activities that OGRA has no power to regulate. Consequently, this misclassification has caused these companies more losses. OGRA has the power to decide what part of the income from "gas supply" (aka "operating income") should go to the companies as their earnings or profits but it has no power to control the incomes that these companies derive from projects or activities other than gas

supply. By wrongly classifying these other incomes as "operating income" OGRA takes control of these incomes also and deprives the companies of their legitimate earnings.

Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) and Sui Southern Gas Company Limited (SSGCL) are legally registered as "companies" but they are not permitted to fix the price at which to sell "natural gas" and they do not earn profits directly from the consumers. The profit they earn has been fixed in their licences by OGRA at a certain percentage of the value of their assets. For determining this profit and the price at which these companies will sell gas to the consumers, OGRA undertakes a tariff determination exercise every year. Through this process, OGRA determines what percentage of UFG the companies will be allowed to recover from their consumers in the gas bill. The remaining percentage is to be borne by the companies as a penalty for failing to achieve the benchmark set by OGRA. These penalties have crossed Rs.50 billion over the past 8 years, even though most

of the factors contributing to UFG, such as loss of gas due to operational/technical losses, poor law and order situation and theft, etc. are beyond the control of the companies and are standard operating costs for businesses operating in volatile countries.

Forced misclassification of incomes like meter manufacturing, sale of gas condensate, sale of LPG, royalty income, late payment surcharge etc. are derived from activities that OGRA has no authority to regulate. This means that the profits of the companies from these unrelated incomes have been counted as income derived from sale/transmission of natural gas. The consequence of this illegal classification is that these incomes are excluded from the due profits of the company, resulting in a lower tariff for consumers. The losses faced on this account alone come to Rs.20 billion.

The biggest loser has been the Government of Pakistan (and consequently the public at large) which is the majority shareholder in SNGPL (62 percent) and SSGCL (82 percent). The actual loss caused to the government due to these actions of OGRA is Rs.50 billion. The result is that SNGPL is due to declare bankruptcy pending a correction of its accounts by OGRA whereas SSGCL is on the verge of bankruptcy. In these conditions, the government will either have to bail these companies out by injecting billions of rupees or just sell them off. As per the government's no bail-out policy, they will not be given any grants, and would have to be sold – at throwaway prices.

OGRA's stance is that through the aforementioned measures, the price of gas that the poor domestic sector has to pay has been kept low. The fact is that the domestic sector is already heavily subsidized and 85 percent of domestic consumers pay less than half of the actual cost of providing gas to them. Even allowing a major increase in the tariff that the companies may charge would in truth have a very small impact on the actual price paid by the domestic consumers of natural gas. The current average monthly bill of 85 percent of the domestic consumers is not more than Rs.216 whereas the actual cost of providing natural gas to them is more than twice this amount. Therefore, even if the companies had been allowed to raise their tariffs lawfully, the bill of these 85

percent domestic consumers would have increased by only 15-20 rupees. The bulk of this increase in tariff will be borne by the rich industrial sectors connected to the natural gas network that are at present minting money by paying far less for natural gas than they should.

At present, even within the industrial sector, only about 10,000 consumers are connected to the natural gas network while an overwhelming number have no access to natural gas. If the tariff increase were allowed, the price being paid by a handful of the rich industrial consumers (who use natural gas not for sustenance but for profit maximization) would have gone up by 10-15 percent while the profitability of these companies in which the government holds an overwhelming majority of shares would run into billions of rupees.

This ensures that the interests of large industrial consumers stand protected instead of the interests of the ordinary people of Pakistan, the gas companies and the government of Pakistan. As a consequence of illegally keeping the price of natural gas low, OGRA has allowed a handful of consumers in the industrial, power, CNG and fertilizer sectors to pay a fraction of the cost they would otherwise have had to pay for alternative fuels. It should be noted that industries that are not connected to the natural gas sector pay at least two and half times more for fuel than these handful of industries being protected by OGRA.

The two gas utilities will eventually be sold at throwaway prices because the government now has a 'no bail-out policy. The entire population of Pakistan will suffer as a consequence. The total domestic consumer base of the two companies is around 7 million. According to the Bureau of Statistics, an average household in Pakistan has 6.5 persons, which means that currently only 45.5 million out of the 190 million people in the country have access to natural gas and that too almost exclusively in urban areas. Rural Pakistan has to rely on LPG and kerosene which, volume per volume, respectively costs Rs.4,100 and Rs.4,600 per month as opposed to the privileged class of natural gas consumers paying Rs.216. Those people who have to rely on LPG and kerosene as their primary fuel source are the poorest of the country and live

in small villages and towns of the four provinces.

If the companies had been allowed to earn their lawful and due profits, the government of Pakistan would have had tens of billions of rupees to spend on providing subsidies to the poorest of the poor. It is shocking to note that while the entire budget for the Benazir Income Support Program for the last year was less than Rs.40 billion, if OGRA had performed its functions and duties in accordance with law, SSGCL and SNGPL would alone have contributed more than Rs. 30 billion to the public exchequer last year in the form of taxes and dividends. This amount would have been charged from the rich industrial class of consumers and would have been spent to provide subsidies for the poorer consumers who live, not in the urban centers of Lahore, Karachi, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, etc. but in the rural areas of interior Sindh, interior KPK, southern Punjab and Balochistan. Today, these people purchase alternative fuel by paying over 20 times more than natural gas, whereas those living in the urban centers are subsidized and the rich industrialist, power producer, fertilizer manufacturer and CNG stations are paying one third of what they should have paid for alternative fuels.

The government's ultimate policy to privatize these behemoth companies to increase efficiency and productivity in their operations will actually be detrimental in this state of affairs. The two gas companies with abysmal profits and fighting an indifferent and inefficient regulator cannot fetch a good price and would have to be sold at a fraction of their true worth which would result in further losses to the GOP. If OGRA functioned as per the mandate of its law, the profitability of these companies would increase to a point where it would actually be beneficial to retain these companies with the government rather than to privatize them. These companies have true potential to become priceless assets. Even if only the totally legitimate claims relating to UFG and operating incomes are granted, the companies are likely to fetch Rs. 100 per share – totaling U.S.\$2 billion. On the other hand, in the current state of affairs, it would be a miracle if the government manages to get even U.S.\$200 million from sale of these companies. **S**

‘I Have Sinned’

If Sindh is to be saved, it won't be via two-week dance-offs but twenty-year education emergencies, structured land reform, land redistribution and infrastructural development.

By Asad Rahim Khan

When Charles Napier, that most classic colonizer – hard, hook-nosed and great at killing brown people – was touring the land he conquered, he once asked, ‘Whose lands are these?’

‘Bhutto’s lands,’ came the driver’s reply. ‘Wake me up when we are off Bhutto’s lands,’ CN groused, and fell

asleep. When he woke sometime later, he asked again, ‘Who owns this land?’ Again came the reply, ‘Bhutto.’

So recounted the late Benazir in her memoirs. To read those pages in her lilting voice is to be reminded again of the lady we lost. God bless her.

But to understand those words

is to know a still-very-young lady, unabashedly proud of all that land she owned. ‘Our lands, like those of other landowners in Sindh, were measured in square miles, not acres,’ she wrote.

It was her father, Zulfikar, who told her about Charles Napier. And it was her father who was fond of the



ultimate Napier story: that when he conquered Sindh, he fired off a secret message to his superiors, 'Peccavi,' – Latin for 'I have sinned.'

It was positive, then, to see his grandson take up the other side's war cry: *Marvesoon marvesoon, par Sindh na desoo*. 'We will die, but won't hand over Sindh,' Hoshu Sheedi called out at the Battle of Dabbo, moments before being cut down by Napier's men.

Though they've had more in common with the colonials of the past, Bhutto III was finally owning the right side of history...against both Crown and Emirate. Though he can't speak Urdu to save his life, Bilawal Bhutto is not much interested in saving his life at all, condemning the Taliban again and again and again.

Compare this to Imran Khan in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Or to the Ill-slash-Nawaz League boys in the centre, with their not-quite-sure-who-Talibs-are face. Or to Fazl or treasonous old Munawwar.

And 'Sindh Fest', a mega-bonanza celebrating all things Sindh, was marketed as some more of that: spitting in the one-eye of the joyless – the maniacs in the north that wish to chop hands and stone adulterers all the way to Caliphate Camelot.

It's a great idea to be sure: to conserve our culture in the face of militant madness. The reality was gaudier: donkey derbies and kite fights. Shehzad Roy singing at Thatta. The Sindh government plugging the leaks with cash.

Let's face it though, that's splitting hairs. Much of the Sindh Fest critique was, in a word, petty. Some said it was un-Sindh; with its Superman comic book logos and English rap songs and Punjabi Basant parties. But such celebrations needn't be so sophisticated – the beauty of culture is synthesis; meeting and melding with other ways of life. A sum better than the parts.

But those that didn't have a problem with un-Sindhiness, thought it too Sindh. The Sindh Card all over again, they sneered. A sad reminder that where once ZAB swept (West) Pakistan, BBZ's only base was the Interior. And was it not ethnic chauvinism? Could Hamza Shahbaz, they asked, pull off a t-shirt that read 'Punjabi'? Wasn't all this dividing us?

Well, not really. Pakistanis tasted the grey curd of One-Unit, chewed it and spat it out. In nations as blessedly diverse as the Pakistani one, differences can, if represented the right way, bind us closer together.

And (the only reason Hamza Shahbaz won't wear that t-shirt is because he doesn't need to. When running Punjab means you run the rest of the country, you're not all that threatened. That may change when you raise districts to provinces like any rational setup would...but that's

In the suffering of land-workers that earn 50 rupees a day. In the 'streak of violence' a twenty-something Fakhruddin G. Ebrahim was the first to see in Zulfikar Ali Bhutto when they practiced law together. In a Sindh frozen in time.

And if poverty is not your strong suit, the Sindh Assembly met mid-February to 'express concern' over education standards nose-diving... this after pumping the education budget from 16 billion to 121 billion.

Some fast facts: '75 percent

Of Sindh Fest's many sound bytes, 'Marvesoon marvesoon, par Sindh na desoon,' resonates most deeply. The tragedy of Sindh is that the Bhuttos did exactly that, ruling and raping Sindh, and losing their lives in the process.

a debate for another day.

So onto the pluses again: does a nation in wartime need to be reminded of what's at stake? Yes. Has the PPP done that? Yes. Was it great for culture? Yes. Does our culture need constant caretaking? Yes.

But like most bright pictures, this one has a dark, dark negative. Because once the glitz disappears, and the stars and celebs pack up, we're left with the fact again.

The fact of Sindh. Or at least the Sindh that carries the Bhuttos on its brittle shoulders year after year. And that Sindh is wretchedly poor. The food insecurity is appalling. Malnutrition is hitting the roof, forcing UNICEF to instruct mothers how best to breastfeed their children.

But does poverty mean we bang on about poverty, and let culture die? Isn't the whole country poor? Yes it is, but not this poor. Part of the reason, of course, is the f-word, and it's not (Muslim League) Functional. Whether our liberals like it or not, it is feudalism – an animal way of life that debases us all.

The symptoms are everywhere: in the anger of Sindh's landless peasants.

class-V students are unable to read class-II English sentences or do two-digit subtractions; 58 percent are unable to read Urdu language text... the learning indicators of students in Sindh are lower than their counterparts in FATA.

If Sindh is to be saved, it won't be via two-week dance-offs. Try twenty-year education emergencies, structured land reform, land redistribution, infrastructural development. The hard thing, the right thing, the unglamorous thing that won't get retweets or Geo TV spots.

Of Sindh Fest's many sound bytes, 'Marvesoon marvesoon, par Sindh na desoon,' resonates most deeply. The tragedy of Sindh is that the Bhuttos did exactly that, ruling and raping Sindh, and losing their lives in the process.

But while Hoshu Sheedi lies forgotten, many flock to Garhi Khuda Baksh to weep. Perhaps with the same fondness Zulfi Bhutto felt, for a general called Napier. ■

The writer is a lawyer and columnist based in Lahore. He studied law at Lincoln's Inn.

Innocence of a People

The people of Pakistan have been excluded from the global YouTube community for some time now and there are no signs of the ban being lifted in the near future.

By Maria Kamal

YouTube is no stranger to bans and Pakistan is not the only country in the world to have pulled the plug on this popular video-sharing website. In Turkey, the website was banned on account of a video that allegedly insulted Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey. The ban lasted for two years before it was lifted in October 2010. Afghanistan, Armenia, Bangladesh, China, the UAE, Malaysia and Indonesia are some of the other countries that have banned YouTube at one point or the other.

In Pakistan, YouTube has been blocked since September 2012. The ban came about in response to a video that was offensive to the Muslim faith, specifically to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Infuriated by the disrespect shown to the Prophet in clips captured from an obscure film, *Innocence of Muslims* (which is itself surrounded in controversy and speculation), protestors took to the streets in Islamabad and other parts of Pakistan. When the video was not removed from the site, Pakistani authorities blocked YouTube itself.

What's more, Ghulam Ahmad Bilour, a federal minister at that time, announced a \$100,000 bounty on the filmmaker's head!

Enforcing the ban meant that Pakistan lost access to YouTube. However, desperation gave way to innovation; many a determined user found loopholes that exist in the form of proxies and virtual private networks

to get around the ban. Nevertheless, those who are not so tech-savvy have had to do without the website for over a year now.

Letters have been written by aggrieved musicians beseeching the powers that be to revoke the ban. Letters from irate YouTube buffs have been carried by many newspapers. Organizations that uphold internet freedom have also chimed in. An advocacy group, Bytes for All has even filed a lawsuit against the ban.

A number of people have begged and pleaded with the Pakistan government to restore YouTube. They have also ranted and railed against government officials for turning a deaf ear to their requests.

The fact remains that Pakistanis have been excluded from the larger YouTube community for some time now and there are no signs of the ban being lifted in the immediate future.

The ban has led to some beneficial side-effects. In the absence of YouTube, other previously little known websites have generated more traffic and garnered interest among Pakistani users. This is, anyway, small consolation compared to the vast damage done by the persistent inaccessibility of YouTube.

YouTube is an international phenomenon for users around the globe. Don't know how to do something? Need a quick tutorial to help you set up a new gadget? Looking for an old movie trailer? Want to watch your favorite music video? Searching for tips from a pro?

YouTube it, dictates modern wisdom.

Uploaded in 2005 and procured by Google shortly after, the video-sharing website has since become ubiquitous in the digital world. An estimated one billion users visit YouTube every month. Additionally, data suggests that more than six billion hours of videos are watched on this website each month.

It is easy to see why YouTube is as big as it is. The website is designed to enable users to post, share and view videos on a range of subjects. Users can kill many idle hours watching the antics of pets, infants, celebrities and ordinary people as captured on camera and uploaded to the site by anyone from anywhere in the world.

But YouTube is more than a catalogue of cute cat and baby videos. It is an educational tool that contains tutorials on subjects ranging from video-editing techniques to piano and math lessons. Bodies of research support the claim that YouTube has established itself as a valuable learning tool that has been integrated into the classroom experience by teachers around the world. Furthermore, the website covers a wide gamut of how-to videos pertaining to culinary skills, performing art, scientific experiments and household tasks.

You can also watch popular TV shows, music videos and trailers on the website. Significantly, YouTube has launched careers in music. It has helped struggling artists go from relative anonymity to generating thousands of clicks, comments and



a solid fan base. Other video-sharing sites such as Vimeo, which have sprung up since, have yet to reach the level of popularity YouTube enjoys.


Users may also comment on YouTube posts. It follows that YouTube

have been announced in response to content on the site that offends political or religious sensibilities of a particular people.

In part, squabbles about what constitutes appropriate web content

with a one-size-fits-all solution: the dreaded ban.

Banning a website or a service deprives millions of users of the opportunity to make perfectly reasonable, morally acceptable and absolutely inoffensive use of it. It bars millions of students and teachers from accessing lessons on a myriad of subjects. It makes the Pakistani people pay the price for the unfortunate actions committed by another.

Based on reviews of *Innocence* of Muslims from critics around the world, it appears to be a lousy excuse for a film with little to recommend itself. Indeed, the film's greatest achievement could questionably be that it has succeeded in depriving the world's sixth most populous country of a vital learning and sharing resource. 

The writer is a teacher, writer and researcher. She is a Dag Hammarskjöld fellow and Fulbright alumnus.

Banning a website or a service deprives millions of users of the opportunity to make perfectly reasonable, morally acceptable and absolutely inoffensive use of it.

comments have long ranged from the inane to the outrageously unkind and a fair share of the billion visitors who frequent the site each month are likely to end up offended. Occasionally, a video ignites mass censure and upsets enough people to get the entire website blocked in a part of the world. In each case, such bans

go with the territory. The web pits together cultures, ideas, sensitivities, belief systems and moral frameworks from across the globe. Demonstrations of celebrated freedoms in one part of the world are admonished as blatant disrespect and provocation in another part of the world. Pakistan has responded to this clash of perspectives

The Weak Link

All countries in South Asia, including India, need to seriously revisit their social, political, economic and administrative setups and work towards removing the embedded bias against women.

By Zeenia Shaukat

The most important outcome of the tragic 2012 Delhi rape case was a string of measures by the Indian government, both central and the state, to address the loopholes in the laws and the justice system as they brutally discriminated against women. That it took the government an extremely atrocious case followed by tremendous public pressure, especially from the middle class, is a testimony to the Indian state's reactive

approach towards citizens' rights.

At the national level, the central government of India passed the Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill 2013. It also amended various sections of the Indian Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure, the Indian Evidence Act and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act.

The new law seeks to widen the scope of sexual assault as an offence and spells longer, stricter sentences

for an offender, going up to 20 years, to life imprisonment to even a death penalty for those who may have been convicted earlier for such crimes. For the first time, the law defines stalking and voyeurism as non-bailable offences, if repeated. Perpetrators of acid attacks could face a 10-year-long jail term. In terms of procedures, the recording of a statement by the victim has been made "more friendly" in an attempt to change the traditional



Indian (and even sub-continental) culture of the police's targeting of the victims of sexual assault by way of character assassination. It has been made an offence for the police not to record a crime when reported.

On the state level, the Delhi police has launched a round-the-clock all-women police mobile team. It has also taken measures such as increased patrolling, especially at nights, along with a 24-hour police cover around shopping malls and cinema halls. The reporting procedure has also been upgraded, ensuring immediate registration of FIRs in cases of crimes against women in addition to filing of charge sheet against the accused within three months.

The Delhi police has also broadened the scope of its 'Parivartan' scheme which engages schools, localities and police stations on the issue of safety of women. Under the scheme, woman constables are directed to conduct doorstep policing for the identification and redress of grievances of women within the community.

India also set up a "fast-track" court to try the men accused of the gang rape and murder of the 23-year-old girl in New Delhi. These courts that cover sexual assault and other crimes against women are mandated to bypass India's overwhelmed regular court system, where cases often take years to be resolved. The fast-track system is a replication of a similar effort launched in 2007 to deal with the problem of arrears. The initiative did not quite succeed because of a number of structural gaps.

While it is difficult to argue against the measures undertaken by the government, the Indian civil society feels that the government's response to the growing range of crimes against women is simply inadequate. There has been a 125 percent rise in the number of rape cases in Delhi since December 16, 2012. Molestation cases are up by a massive 417 percent. Till November 2013, the Delhi Police (Delhi is tragically called the rape capital of India) had registered 1,493 cases of rape against 661 in the corresponding period last year, 3,237 cases of molestation against 625, and 852 cases of harassment against 165.

Despite the Indian government's justification that the sharp rise in the cases is a result of increased reporting,

it is also an indication that the severity of punishments under the new measures has hardly had a deterring effect. "The major challenge is not the absence of laws but the lack of effective implementation and accountability," says Anand Kumar, Christian Aid's Country Manager for India.. Even if the reporting of the cases has increased, the rate of conviction remains the same. The severity of punishment has not been accompanied by certainty of punishment, which explains why life goes on as usual, both for women and the offenders.

Experts also argue that unless the discrepancies in the criminal justice administrative system are addressed – covering the functioning of the judiciary as well as ensuring speedy justice – the recently announced measures may remain cosmetic at best.

There are two major issues with the judiciary: the enormous delay in the delivery of justice and the judiciary's failure in dealing with the cases of crimes against women with the required degree of sensitivity. "India has roughly 12 judges per million. It is generally estimated that for large, developing countries, the need is roughly 60 judges per million," says Colin Gonsalves, a senior advocate of the Supreme Court of India and the director of the New Delhi-based Human Rights Law Network. He also feels that the approach of fast-track courts does not offer a solution. Such courts just cover rape cases, but what about the cases of domestic violence, matrimonial issues – where women are in divorce or maintenance and custody proceedings for as long as 10 years in some cases – tribal displacement, slum demolition and labor issues? When you fast-track one type of case, you take away the resources of the system generally. What, then, will happen to all the other cases of the poor people in the society?

Activists also cite the low conviction rate for crimes registered under the Prevention of Atrocities against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Act as a clear evidence of "poor implementation of the strong law" that is aimed at protecting dalits and tribals. The lack of sensitivity in the judiciary towards socially excluded communities, including women, is the major weakest link.

"Patriarchal values are deeply rooted within the infrastructure of

Indian social, religious and political spheres. From common people to high-profile bureaucrats, politicians and authorities, the concept of gender equality is not perceptible anywhere," says Neelam Chaturvedi of the organization Sakhi Kendra. Chaturvedi has been running a national campaign to address the state's women policy for five years. Civil society, therefore, feels that the measures may remain inadequate unless there is a change in the power and the patriarchal mindset that exists in society.

Taking the argument of social gaps forward, in an interesting and controversial article following the Delhi rape case, Abhijit Banerjee, a Ford Foundation International Professor of Economics and Director of the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab, MIT, suggests that inequality towards access to sex cannot be ruled out as a factor contributing to the rise in sexual crimes against women. "There are few forces more powerful than sexual desire and few forms of inequality more palpable than inequality of access to sex...if you are poor in urban India or even middle class and 25, you have to be very lucky to have a room of your own in the family home, let alone a separate apartment that you can call your own... What are we doing as a society to reduce inequality of access to sex? I don't mean publicly provided brothels...but just the right to a normal conjugal life."

India, along with its South Asian neighbors, needs a serious revisit of its social, political, economic and administrative setups that have an embedded bias against women. There is a need to address the patriarchal mindset and rectify under-representation of women in public life, including the legislative and local bodies structure as several researches have demonstrated that the political voice is an important determinant of access to justice for socially disadvantaged groups. It requires a positive social environment for women with enhanced space for economic participation along with a more gender-sensitive state setup. This calls for a pro-active rather than a reactive approach from the Indian state as well as society. ■

The writer works for the Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research.

Clout of the Loya Jirga

Afghan parliamentarians have begun to express their misgivings about the government's support for the Loya Jirga's extra-constitutional decision-making authority.

By Haroon Janjua

Tribal societies have always functioned through the powers of clan chiefs and their local group of elders. At a higher level, beyond a single village or tribe, it is a council of chiefs and elders that decides matters. The *panchayat* system under the British was a variation of this concept. Another example is that of the Islamic *shura*. Among the Pakhtun tribes in the northwestern part of the subcontinent – northern areas of Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA in Pakistan and in Afghanistan – this concept is known as the Loya Jirga.

The tribal chieftains have always been fiercely independent about their territory as well as their local culture and customs. They have never accepted the suzerainty of a king or a sovereign monarch. Their society has always been a maze of clans and kinships governed by these councils at the local as well as regional levels.

The Loya Jirga is not a modern phenomenon. According to the accounts of early Aryan settlers, some 5,000 years ago, when it was time to select a king for the tribes, a grand council of pastoral herdsmen and nobles would convene in open air. As legends has it, it was believed that during one of those meetings, an eagle swooped down from the heavens to place a crown on the head of the first king of the first urban center that the Aryans had built south of the River Oxus (Amu Darya).

There are records going as far back as some two millennia that suggest that the Kushan emperor Kanishka had held a jirga of some 500 tribesmen

and spiritual leaders in the region now known as Afghanistan. The agenda was to debate and decide reforms to Buddhism which was prevalent in the area at that time. The Kushan kings were themselves migrants from what became Persia in the Middle Ages and then contemporary Iran. Similarly, there are records of Genghis Khan holding large councils much akin to the Loya Jirga, in Samarkand.

There are two types of Loya Jirga. The first is called on by the people themselves in times of national crisis to debate and decide issues such as war and peace, the election of an emir or monarch and matters of national sovereignty and independence. The second type of jirga convenes when the prevailing situation obliges the existing ruler or chief to consult his people on issues like the formulation and enactment of basic laws, ratification of treaties or agreements reached with outside powers and defence of territorial integrity and sovereignty. In Afghanistan, three jirgas were held in the beginning of the 18th century under Mirwais Khan Hotak, which helped the Afghans in liberating western Afghanistan from the despotic Saffavid ruler, Gurgin.

According to afghanland.com, the Loya Jirga of Nadir Khan was held in September 1930 to approve the rules of business for a *milli shura* (national council). In July 1941, Zahir Shah convened a Loya Jirga to deliberate upon the country's position vis.-à-vis. the Second World War. Another Loya Jirga was convened during the prime ministership of Sardar Daoud Khan

in November 1955, which raised the issue of Pakhtunistan under the conditions that Pakistan had come into being as the inheritor of all British rights and obligations in the area. Daoud Khan also called a Loya Jirga in February 1977 to legitimize his rule, pass the new constitution, elect a new president, get approval for launching his National Revolutionary Party and ratify some laws and agreements reached with other countries.

After the Communist Revolution of 1978 and, especially after the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union in December 1979, Cold War rivalries entered Afghanistan and both sides, rulers as well as the opposition forces, resorted to this tradition. Dr M. Halim Tanwir writes in his book *'Afghanistan: History, Diplomacy and Journalism'* that jirgas held by moderate elements were opposed by the *mujahideen*. Since the jirgas by the Karmal regime in 1985 and by President Najibullah in 1987 were held under the shadow of foreign powers, their influence on the course of events was limited. The same was the fate of the Shura-e-Al-o-Aqd held in Herat in 1992 to legitimize and prolong the rule of Burhanuddin Rabbani. This jirga did not have any representation of the opposition.

Questions are often raised about the fairness, uniform representation, common interests and overall efficacy of the grand tribal councils such as the Loya Jirgas and the debate continues to rage in current day Afghanistan. President Hamid Karzai was himself nominated as an interim head of state in 2002 in a Loya Jirga convened at



that time. It was after a full quarter century that so many heads and chiefs of Afghanistan had convened at one place.

Since then, Afghanistan has gone through the process of becoming a modern state. It now has a constitution and a parliament in accordance with regular democratic practices. So, technically, the Loya Jirgas held during the last few years may, at best, be viewed as no more than advisory bodies. They certainly do not have the powers to legislate and intervene in the matters of national importance. The 2011 Loya Jirga was meant to debate the situation that would prevail after the withdrawal of U.S. troops and was expected to have a gathering of some 2000 tribal chiefs and nobles. Parliamentarians had at that time expressed their misgivings about the government's support for

extra-constitutional decision-making authority against the constitutionally laid-down mechanisms of the state.

Three factors prevent the constitutional state from using its full powers and continue to give the traditional Loya Jirgas more importance than they probably have under the constitution. The first is the continued presence of foreign forces in the region. The second is the volatile situation that arises due to the infighting between fundamentalist factions such as the Hezb-ul-Islami and the Taliban and the moderate factions that still prevail. The third is the divided and fragmented identity of the Afghan people. The abysmally low reach of education in the region, the general absence of law and order, widespread poverty and migrations across the porous borders further complicate the situation.

As Tennyson said in the *Mort'd Arthur*: Old order changeth, yielding place to new; and God fulfils himself in many ways, lest one good custom should corrupt the world.

The modern state of Afghanistan cannot sustain itself unless the people unite behind a common identity and purpose. It is also pragmatic to say that this cannot happen easily. The intractable problem can only be solved by first eliminating or at least marginalizing the lawless fundamentalist factions and then launching a massive drive for education. It is equally certain that no foreign power can do this. Only the people of Afghanistan can. How they should do it, given their present resource-depleted situation, is the big question. ■

The writer is a freelancer and independent researcher.

Celebrity Politicians

Conveniently ignoring the anti-social elements that have participated in past elections, some sections of the Sri Lankan media have criticized female artistes who wish to participate in the country's provincial council elections.

By Samina Wahid



(Left to right): Gayesha Perera, Nadeesha Hemamali and Anarkalli – Sri Lankan beauties who are testing political waters.

Of late, Sri Lankan politics has taken a most interesting turn. At center stage are local actresses and female singers who are making their presence felt in time for the country's provincial council elections. This unique trend has

received much criticism, especially by the country's media. Many feel that these female celebrity figures have no business being in politics because that is considered a 'serious' endeavor. In fact, most media outlets in Sri Lanka have labeled these women as 'sex

symbols' after news of their interest in local politics broke.

Particularly offensive was a statement issued by a mainstream website called the Campaign for Free and Fair Elections (CaFFE) which said: "The main political parties have

commenced interviews to select candidates for each district. Reports have revealed that a large number of regional politicians with years of experience behind them have been neglected in favor of 'sex symbols'... CaFFE urges all political parties and independent groups to disengage from petty politics by promoting 'sex symbols' for short-term gains."

This extremely offensive statement reflects the prevalent mindset. For starters, there is the assumption that the fairer sex and intellectual ability can never go together. The fact is that it is not the gender that is being argued here but the understanding of politics of those wishing to contest elections. That may not be what the Sri Lankan voter checks when polling his vote. Then there is the fact that several questionable characters have made their entry into Sri Lankan politics but CaFFE, or any other news website for that matter, has not questioned their credibility as public servants. This shows a clear bias on the part of the media as far as these female celebrities are concerned.

The response of the Sri Lankan media is surprising, considering that women have made their presence felt in the country's politics time and again. As early as 1960, Sirimavo Bandaranaike shattered the glass ceiling to become the first woman prime minister in the world. When she took charge, her political opponents were less than receptive and even said that the prime minister's chair would have to be washed monthly. Bandaranaike ignored these baseless and childish jokes and showed her mettle. She is regarded as one of the greatest and most popular prime ministers of Sri Lanka. She was even able to exercise control over the 'golden brains' of the Left parties that joined her government and became members of her cabinet.

Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, Margaret Thatcher (known as the 'Iron Lady') Prime Minister of the U.K., Benazir Bhutto, two-time Prime Minister of Pakistan and Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, are examples of some other women who made a

name for themselves in politics.

The Sri Lankan actresses and female singers who wish to be elected as councilors in the Provincial Councils of the Western and Southern Provinces are likely to derive greater strength from their forerunners in politics and, if elected, would make a strong bid to improve the impoverished conditions of the voters who placed their faith in them.

Therefore, calling these women sex symbols and editing their pictures (a trend that has been making the rounds on the social media) to prove the point is highly offensive and defamatory. Perhaps these artistes have become a target of ridicule because of their popularity among their fans who like their performance as actresses, singers and models.



The section of Sri Lankan media that has been criticizing these female artistes surely does not deem it necessary to demand from political parties and groups that they avoid nominating criminals, drug peddlers, rapists, child abusers and other such anti-social elements in elections. For them, the only issue is 'sex' in elections, based on their own understanding of the concept. According to the *Colombo Telegraph*, a popular Sri Lankan newspaper, "The CaFFE mindset and value system on 'sex', obviously representing the Sinhala majority, perhaps explains increased rape and sexual harassment in our present-day society." It is time some in the Sri Lankan media let go of their Victorian, puritanical morals.

Meanwhile, others have lambasted the statements issued by election-monitoring agencies and critics on the social media circuit, saying that there would have been no fuss had these been male actors and singers. This, they say, shows that Sri Lanka is still a patriarchal society that deems

women as being incapable of doing anything else besides procreating. "Are they worried that the Provincial Councils would get into a mess? Surely not, as it is conventional wisdom that the Provincial Council is an absolute joke. The PCC have added nothing to the quality or level of governance; rather they have been a huge burden to the public purse and thereby a serious distortion to the allocation of taxpayers' money. They have amplified the pressure of politicization of governing agencies in the island. Policemen are at risk in their duties; so are doctors in hospitals, heads of schools, teachers, and even sanitary inspectors. The application of the rule of law is dangerously at risk. Even ordinary men and women on the street are at risk," writes Shyamon

Jayasinghe in response to the comments made by CaFFE in the *Colombo Telegraph*.

The fact is that Sri Lankan politics is marred by corruption, double-dealing and the works. To date, more than a hundred ministers have been accused of indulging in all kinds of questionable activities

and have nothing to show for policy development in their jurisdictions. An illegally constituted chief justice says he wants to reform the justice system while the prime minister is facing allegations of heroine dealing. Similarly, an examiner who had failed the son of a big shot in a preliminary aviation test is being pushed out of office and a law college principal who was sacked on serious allegations of nepotism in the conduct of examinations is being promoted to high office.

If people like these can participate in local politics and don't suffer the consequences of their actions, then why, ask critics, should the actresses be punished for wanting to do the same? Who knows, they may produce better results than the aforementioned male politicians and may actually have something to show for in the coming years. **S**

The writer is a freelance journalist who contributes regularly to various leading publications.

Mountains of

With a large number of tourists visiting the Himalayas every year, there is also an increase in heaps of garbage that is damaging the splendor of the mighty mountains.

By Sarah B. Haider

The Himalayas, without a shadow of doubt, are one of the most beautiful tourist spots in the world. From snow-covered peaks to breathtaking hill stations and valleys to awe-inspiring flora and fauna to the tranquil aura

surrounding the entire region, the Himalayas are surely a glimpse of heaven on earth. They are popular for their scenic beauty and are also home to some of the loftiest peaks in the world, including the famous Mount Everest.

Every year, the Himalayas attract thousands of tourists from all over the world who come to the region for sightseeing and trekking. Living in magnificent surroundings and waking up to such a spectacular panorama is certainly a dream

Waste

come true for any tourist. The images of the Himalayas that appear online, in magazines and on television are enough to convince anyone that no place could be more wonderful than this.

Sadly, however, for the people of Nepal, the country's pride – the incredibly striking mountain ranges – are fast becoming a rubbish dump. The high levels of pollution are damaging the splendor of the mighty Himalayas.

According to estimates, around 35,000 tourists, including expedition teams, visit the Everest region every year. With the ever-growing number of tourists in the mountains there is also an increase in heaps of beer and soft drink cans, empty mineral water bottles and other waste material. Tourists throw litter without thinking twice about its impact on the environment in the long run.

Some decades back, there was hardly any garbage on the mountains. But in recent years, every village in the Himalayas can be seen littered with plastic all the way up to the Everest base camp. This is because previously, there were no more than a score of mountaineering expeditions and less than a hundred trekkers visiting the Himalayas every year. Today, the annual number of expeditions has grown to over 200 and of trekkers to over 50,000. To top it off, there have been no arrangements in Nepal to treat the waste as there is no developed recycling industry there.

This is not all. Like in many other parts of the world, the Himalayas are also facing the negative effects of global warming. Over the years, wrong models of development, an improper use of resources, changing lifestyles and modern consumerism has led to environmental pollution as well as resource depletion. As a result, the glaciers in the Himalayas are rapidly melting. This impact of global warming in the Himalayas will have devastating consequences both for the

environment and the human population.

In order to tackle this situation and to lessen the alarming intensity of environmental pollution, a 'Zero Waste Himalayas' campaign was initiated by groups and individuals across the Himalayan Mountain region. The campaign was launched with the technical guidance of Thanal – an environmental organization based in Kerala, India, that works for the alleviation of problems related to public interest, particularly environment, agriculture and livelihood generation.

Started in 2010, the 'Zero Waste Himalayas' initiative is aimed at promoting ethical, efficient and economic resource use and resource recovery in the Himalayan region. Its main aim is to make the Himalayas waste-free and make Nepal plastic-free. The campaign has attracted people from all walks of life, including native Nepali people, tour operators, government officials, mountaineering experts and environment representatives from across the globe. The initiative calls for an urgent need to devise a waste management strategy to achieve its goals.

According to research conducted by the Solid Waste Management Technical Support Centre (SWMTSC) in Nepal, about 170 metric tones of waste is generated annually in the Mount Everest region. Out of this, plastic accounts for 21 percent of the waste, paper and cardboard 22 percent, metal and glass 13 percent, textiles four percent and foodstuffs, human waste and bodies account for the remaining..

The poor management of waste and the excessive use of plastic bags pose a serious risk to the environment as well as public health in the country.

Though the campaign was started



with great enthusiasm and fervor, there were a number of challenges – both on the macro and the community level – that had to be tackled first. For instance, when seen at a macro level, Nepal has faced political instability for decades and hence waste management has never been a priority for the establishment. Similarly, there was an absence of proper laws or policies that could tackle environmental issues and neither were there any punishments for the violation of environmental laws.

Another big hurdle was the lack of funding for environmental initiatives. At a micro level, issues such as lack of information and awareness of environmental concerns, lack of access to TV or radio or other media due to poverty and lack of integrated voices in civil society about environment etc., hindered the campaign from its very outset.

However, through various seminars, conferences and activities, the initiative addressed the challenges and formulated solutions from time to time. Since its inception in 2010, the 'Zero Waste Himalayas' campaign has continued with full zeal and enthusiasm. Every year, the campaigners hold various activities and continue to work to make the issue of waste and climate change in the Himalayan region a global priority and summon more organizations and individuals who can commit to learning and taking action towards making the Himalayas a waste-free region. ■

The writer is a Karachi-based journalist.

Till Divorce Do Us Part

The world's most divorces occur in the Maldives, according to the Guinness Book of World Records.

By Javeria Shakil



Divorce is one aspect that is most frowned upon in Islam. And yet the Maldives, a country which claims to be a 100 percent Islamic state, was recently registered in the Guinness Book of World Records for having the highest divorce rate in the world.

Ironically, the Maldives, with its white sand beaches and clear blue waters, is one of the most sought-after destinations for newly married couples looking for a romantic and serene getaway.

So what plagues this beautiful country that out of every two couples who tie the knot there, one ends up with a divorce? A host of reasons.

A sad fact is that the Maldives has held this inauspicious record for quite some years now. In 2000, 3829 marriages and 1,928 divorces were registered in the country. In 2002, the divorce rate was 32 percent which increased to 52.38 percent in 2012.

So, while the phenomenon has existed for over a decade, it was the country's entry into the Guinness Book of World Records that finally jolted the nation out of its indifference towards the issue and triggered a heated debate on the reasons and factors that contribute to so many divorces.

Although a proper study to determine the causes is yet to be undertaken, yet one of the main and mutually agreed upon reasons for the high divorce rate is cited as the ease with which one can end a marriage in the Maldives.

All that the country's law, a combination of common law and Shariah, requires of a man wishing to part with his wife is to say the words 'I divorce you' three times. However, if a woman wishes to seek divorce, she has to file a case in the court and is granted divorce only if the judge finds her reasons valid enough. There is also a provision for revoking the divorce

within three months but hardly any couple uses it.

The easy divorce laws come in handy in the peculiar social setting of the country. For people to have any kind of sexual relationship outside marriage is considered a sin and is a crime in the Maldives. Therefore, to legalize their relationship, most couples – the majority of them barely out of their teens – prefer to get married.

The practice is encouraged by parents who would rather see their children, as young as 15-year-old in some cases, getting married rather than indulging in illicit relations. The statistics released by the Department of National Planning of the Maldives show that the majority of people in the country get married between 20 and 24 years of age.

Subsequently, these young people who end up tying the knot find it difficult to fulfill the financial and



emotional obligations of a married life. They are not stable financially and hence cannot meet the monetary needs of their family. Also, they are not mature enough to deal with the stresses and strains of a marital relationship.

The rampant poverty in the country is also a major factor driving the rising divorce rate. The Maldives suffers from a severe housing crisis. Due to lack of resources and proper housing facilities, people are forced to live in small quarters or they share their homes with other families. There are instances of families comprising as many as eight members living in a single room.

There is no concept of privacy and such close proximity often leads to meddling in each others' affairs. This results in bickering and long-drawn family feuds. For couples going through such problems, the easiest and hassle-free way out is getting a divorce. The highest divorce rate is recorded in the

age group of 25-29 years.

Here, the unique social milieu of the Maldives again comes into play. While divorce is much of a social taboo in almost all South Asian countries and divorcees, especially women, are treated with disdain, no such hang-ups exist in the Maldives. Divorces and remarriages are considered a part of life and the rules are the same for both men and women. According to a research report, Maldivian women marry an average of four times while it is common for Maldivians to divorce three to six times.

Leena, who is in her late twenties, has married twice since her divorce from her first husband 10 years ago. She got married at the age of 18 to her boyfriend and was divorced a month later. She has a child from her third marriage and does not regret her decisions. "It's an alarming trend, no doubt. But people often ignore the plus side. The ease in getting a divorce

and the absence of any social stigma attached to the concept of divorce and remarriage ensures that couples do not stay in an abusive relationship," she says.

Another factor that may have not contributed directly to the increase in the divorce rate but serves as a safety net for couples planning to get a divorce is the single-parent support system of the country. According to this system, single mothers who do not get child support from their children's fathers get a fixed monthly stipend. The grant provides them with a steady income, saving them from worrying about how they will raise their children after separating from their husbands.

Regardless, there are growing concerns about the increase in the divorce rate as it directly affects the social structure of the Maldivian society. When a couple separates, it's their children who are affected the most. Children raised in broken families often do not get the care they deserve and are neglected by their parents. Due to the lack of parental oversight, they tend to lose interest in their studies and drop out of school. Such children are also more prone to drugs and other unhealthy activities.

A national drug use survey conducted in 2013 in collaboration with the UNODC, found that there are an estimated 7,500 drug users in the Maldives and the majority of them are young people in the age bracket of 15-24 years.

These disturbing indicators call for urgent measures. The government of the Maldives has taken some steps in the past to bring down the divorce rate. To mitigate the high divorce rate and to ensure that couples seek reconciliation before obtaining a divorce, a fine of MVR5000 was imposed on couples seeking divorce through courts. However, only 14 couples sought reconciliation in 2013.

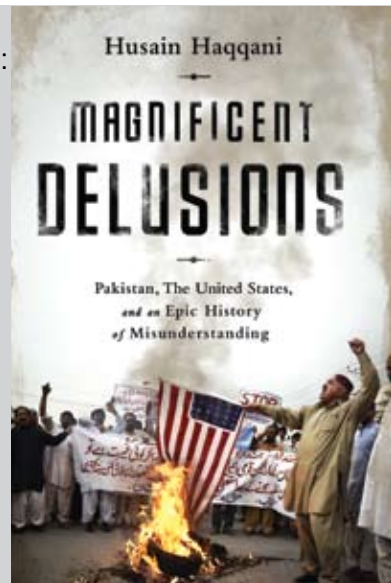
Late as it may be, the government and the people of the Maldives have realized the seriousness of the problem and studies are being carried out to find the actual reasons for the trend. The sooner it is done the better as the increasing number of divorces is highly detrimental to the social structure of the country. **S**

The writer is assistant editor at SouthAsia. She focuses on issues of political and social interest.

Parallel Universes

Book Title: Magnificent Delusions: Pakistan, the United States, and an Epic History of Misunderstanding
Author: Husain Haqqani
Publisher: PublicAffairs
Pages: 432, Hardcover
Price: Rs.799
ISBN-13: 978-1610393171

Reviewed by Neha Ansari



If anyone has heard former Ambassador Husain Haqqani speak, or held discussions with him on Pakistani politics, they would be familiar with his oratory skills, his dramatic tone and pauses as well as his sense of humor.

In his latest book, *Magnificent Delusions: Pakistan, the United States, and an Epic History of Misunderstanding*, the same voice whisks the reader through the 65-odd years of contemporary history, as the author recounts his experiences as a student, journalist, political leader and ambassador.

However, he clarifies that the book is not a personal memoir. It is a historical account of the relations between Pakistan and the United States, a lowdown of the institutional power play that determines the partnership (or the lack thereof), and it is a collection of piquant anecdotes.

In its opening pages, Haqqani succinctly presents the thesis of his book: "The relationship between the United States and Pakistan is a tale of exaggerated expectations, broken promises, and disastrous misunderstandings." There is a myriad of expectations and proportionately a multitude of complexities and issues, all masked under the label of 'allies' and 'strategic partners', which he brilliantly encapsulates in the over 380-page book.

Magnificent Delusions begins with the partition of India and

narrates how the fledgling state of Pakistan had nothing to support its administrative, economic and, more importantly, military institutions that it had inherited from British India. This gives insight into the backdrop against which U.S.-Pakistan relations began and on what terms, with what kind of expectations. Soon after its birth, Pakistan 'chose' the United States in the bipolar world of the Cold War. "Having taken a position in America's favor, Pakistan expected the United States to understand its economic and military needs and to offer generous financial support," Haqqani writes. "Also in early September Finance Minister Ghulam Muhammad met with Charge d'affaires Charles Lewis to discuss the dollars and cents aspect of potential US assistance," he adds.

According to Haqqani, the relation between the two countries began with greed from Pakistan's side, while for the Americans it was all about protecting its interests vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. But an important caveat was that "Pakistani officials' expectations were clearly disproportionate to U.S. diplomats' assessments of Pakistan's value". Pakistan's early requests for aid "took the United States aback somewhat", particularly as "Washington did not share Karachi's view of Pakistan's centrality to U.S. strategy" and it "saw no urgency to embrace Pakistan".

He later explains: "For its part, the United States has also chased a mirage when it has assumed that,

over time, its assistance to Pakistan would engender a sense of security among Pakistanis, thereby leading to a change in Pakistan's priorities and objectives."

This drives home the point Haqqani tries to make i.e. the foundation of the relation was precarious and not based on the concept of mutual benefit.

And, over the years, neither country has changed its core policies nor have they given up the hope that the other will change. "Americans wondered how Pakistan could be an American ally without a shared interest," he writes, citing the criticism of journalists and policymakers.

Similar to his previous work, Haqqani again focuses on the civil-military (im)balance in Pakistan. In *Magnificent Delusions*, he uses that same civ-mil prism to explain the relationship between the two countries.

But he also makes the reader realize the importance of personalities – dominated by military men in Pakistan and the pro-military anti-communists in the U.S. – in the historical imbroglio of relations. He mentions how the U.S. officially started helping Pakistan militarily under the Mutual Defense Agreement, but it was John Foster Dulles who drove the campaign to arm Pakistan.

In the same way, he explains how "the Americans were basing their policy towards Pakistan on their impressions of the people that ran the country instead of analyzing their

policies". During his briefing to the State Department, the then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Arthur Radford spent considerable time on his views of various individuals in Pakistan. He saw General Iskandar Mirza as "the number two strong man," but in his opinion "the best man was General Ayub [Khan]." The minutes of the meeting reflect the U.S. obsession with personalities at the expense of trying to understand the Pakistani leaders' view of Pakistan's national interest, Haqqani contextualizes.

Similarly, years later, when the U.S. was involved in an expanded war in Vietnam, the then U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson expressed the "greatest of confidence in Ayub". Therefore, Haqqani does not only blame Pakistan for squirreling aid and arms in exchange for military bases, but he also criticizes the United States for investing in military men rather than democratic institutions, since the very beginning. And even

not develop, much less explode, a nuclear weapon or explosive device". This was obviously not the case, which is why Walter had commented, "Either he really does not know or he is the most superb and patriotic liar I have ever met."

These anecdotal snippets are really the strength of the book.

Along with a historical account of U.S.-Pakistan relations and narrating the persistent tilt towards the military, Haqqani also indulges in a bit of soul-searching, as he tries to expose Pakistan's identity crisis. He does not delve too much into this, but he writes: "Instead of basing international relations on facts, Pakistanis have become accustomed to seeing the world through the prism of an Islamo-nationalist ideology. Even well-travelled, erudite and articulate Pakistani officials echo this ideology without realizing that holding tight to these self-defeating ideas makes little impact on the rest of the world;

Haqqani does not only blame Pakistan for squirreling aid and arms in exchange for military bases, but he also criticizes the United States for investing in military men rather than democratic institutions, since the very beginning.

in recent times, as he explains in his later chapters, the two countries were in "parallel universes".

Overall, chapter 5 of the book is the best read. Titled "A Most Superb and Patriotic Liar", the chapter reveals closed-door meetings between the United States and the Zia regime. It is interesting to note the 'great relations' the United States had with Zia, whose protégés today term the former as the bane of the country's existence.

The chapter opens with the Zia being visited by General Vernon Walters, a special envoy representing U.S. President Ronald Reagan, where Pakistan's military dictator gives "his word of honor as a soldier" to the visiting general that the country "would

the gap is widening between how Pakistanis and the rest of the world view Pakistan."

The book is a must read, especially for the "erudite, articulate Pakistani officials" Haqqani speaks of and also for those in policy research as it not only highlights the policy *faux pas* of both Pakistan and the United States, but also emphasizes how "the relationship needs redefinition, based on a recognition of divergent interests and an acknowledgement of mutual mistrust".

The writer is a Fulbright scholar. She has a master's degree in law and diplomacy from the Fletcher School at Tufts University.



The Association of MBAs is in the international impartial authority on post graduate business education.

Our accreditation is acknowledged as the global standard for all MBA, DBA and MBM programmes.

We are the only professional membership association for over 9,000 MBA students and alumni, accredited business schools, and MBA employers.

Join us today!
Visit www.mbaworld.com

Knowledge
•
Networking
•
Professional
•
Development
•
Status

Protest lodged with Kabul over FC men's slaying

The government on Thursday lodged a protest with Afghanistan over the killing of 23 kidnapped Pakistani paramilitary soldiers in an Afghan area and sought action against the group behind the butchery. The group is believed to have sanctuaries there

Adviser to PM on Foreign Affairs and National Security Sartaj Aziz conveyed Pakistan's "strong protest and serious concern" to Afghan Foreign Minister Zrar Maqbool Osmani at a meeting on the sidelines of a Saarc ministerial meeting in Male, Maldives.

The killing of 23 Frontier Corps soldiers, claimed by the Mohmand chapter of the outlawed Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) over the weekend, had led to suspension of dialogue between the government and a TTP's nominated committee.

The negotiations started after the government renewed talks offer to the TTP on Jan 29.

The protest with Afghanistan constituted the first official confirmation that the TTP had carried out the execution of the kidnapped soldiers inside Afghanistan.

Even the Foreign Office was not clear if it had been conclusively established that the killings took place on the

Afghan soil.

Addressing the weekly media briefing a little before the meeting in Maldives, FO spokesperson Tasneem Aslam said: "As far as our information is concerned, we are in the process of verifying where exactly the FC people were martyred and where their bodies are. If confirmed that this had happened in Afghanistan, we would definitely contact the Afghan government and take appropriate measures."

Mr Aziz reminded the Afghan foreign minister about the agreement reached at the Ankara trilateral summit last week according to which the three countries agreed not to allow use of their territories against each other and made commitment to take action against groups involved in sabotage activities.

"The Adviser urged the Afghan government to take prompt action to apprehend and punish the perpetrators of this heinous and inhumane crime," said a statement issued by the Foreign Office on the meeting.

– DAWN, Feb. 21, 2014



While the Pakistan PM was in deep embrace with the Afghan President Hamid Karzai in Turkey (extreme right), wily Afghan karkuns were busy slaughtering Pakistani soldiers. Should this embrace harken back to Shivaji's embrace of Afzal Khan? Lucky that the Pakistani PM got away with his life but unlucky that the lives of his soldiers could not be saved.

UPCOMING B2B EVENTS...



POGEE

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

MEGATECH
PAKISTAN

27 - 29 March 2014, Expo Centre Lahore
12th Edition of the International Machinery
Exhibition of Garment & Textile Technology
Website: www.megatechpakistan.com
E-mail: info@megatechpakistan.com

PLASTIPACK
PAKISTAN

4-6 September 2014, Expo Centre Lahore
12th International Plastics & Packaging
Industry Trade Fair
Website: www.plastipac.com.pk
E-mail: info@plastipac.com.pk

PRINT
PAPER & LABEL

4-6 September 2014, Expo Centre Lahore
2nd International Printing, Labeling,
Paper & Paper Converting Industry Exhibition
Website: www.plastipac.com.pk
E-mail: info@plastipac.com.pk

Pakistan
food+hospitality

4-6 September 2014, Expo Centre Lahore
3rd International Food, Beverages &
Hospitality Trade Fair
Website: www.foodtech.com.pk
E-mail: info@foodtech.com.pk

stecht Pakistan
food + bev tec

4-6 September 2014, Expo Centre Lahore
11th Edition of the International Food, Beverage
& Packaging Technology Trade Fair
Website: www.foodtech.com.pk
E-mail: info@foodtech.com.pk

SAFE
SECURE
Pakistan

10-12 March 2015
Pak-China Friendship Centre, Islamabad
11th International Safety & Security Exhibition
Website: www.safesecurepakistan.com
E-mail: info@safesecurepakistan.com

INTERTRANS
Pakistan

2014, Serena Hotel Islamabad
4th International Multi-Modal Transportation,
Logistics Conference
Website: www.intertranspakistan.com
E-mail: info@intertranspakistan.com



Pegasus Consultancy (Pvt) Ltd

2nd Floor, Business Centre, Mumtaz Hassan Road, Karachi - Pakistan
Tel : +(92-21) 111 734 266 (PEGCON) Fax : +(92-21) 3241 0723
E-mail : info@pegasus.com.pk URL : www.pegasus.com.pk



Right on Target in Political Grooming

In this day and age of critical and complex public exposure, professional media training and political grooming are necessary ingredients for success.

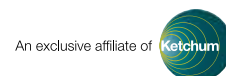
CMC runs prospective political candidates and company spokespersons through specialized training programs. They are carefully honed to make public appearances with poise, composure and self-assurance.

Media training is also an essential part of this process, based on key steps in handling media, conducting press conferences and responding to media questions. Training sessions include message development, on-camera response and crisis simulation.

We keep you right on target where it matters.

To learn more about our services, contact us at:
20-C, Lane 12, off Khayaban-e-Ittehad, Phase II Extension, DHA, Karachi-75500.
Tel: +9221 35313821-24, Fax: +9221 35313832 E-mail: info@cmc.com.pk
Web: www.cmc.com.pk

CMC
the image marketing company



CMC is an exclusive affiliate in Pakistan of Ketchum, USA, one of the world's largest and most geographically diverse PR agencies, operating in 70 countries and winner of the highest number of awards in the global PR industry.