THE COMPLETE MAGAZINE FOR THE REGION

APRIL 2019

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IS THE PARTY LOSING THE PULSE?

From a truly national party to just a provincial presence, the Pakistan Peoples Party has lost Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's real vision.

INDIA
Whither Secularism?

PAKISTAN
Water Crisis

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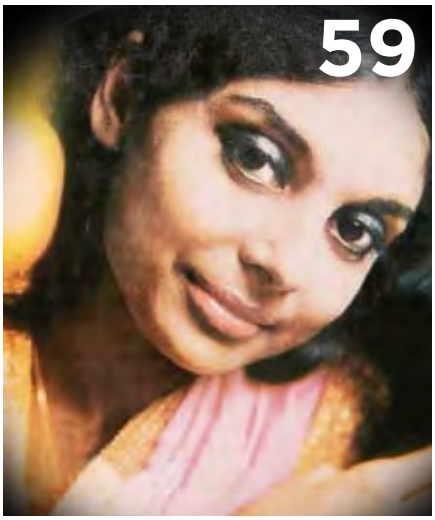

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Jacinda's Revolution

A white Australian attacked two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, during Friday prayers on March 15 and killed some 50 persons offering prayers, while injuring fifty more. New Zealand's Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern referred to the killings as "one of New Zealand's darkest days." She was brave enough to show that she had no time for the perpetrator of the mosque shootings. She instead focused her nation's attention on what had been lost. "Many of those who will have been directly affected by this shooting may be migrants to New Zealand; they may even be refugees here," she said. "They have chosen to make New Zealand their home, and it is their home. They are us. The person who has perpetuated this violence against us is not. They have no place in New Zealand. There is no place in New Zealand for such acts of extreme and unprecedented violence."

The prime minister made a promise to find the perpetrator and bring him to justice. In many ways, Jacinda Ardern can be said to have started a revolution. She resisted war rhetoric because other world leaders have been responding to such attacks by promising vengeance and have waged war both rhetorically and militarily. In contrast, Prime Minister Ardern came out with deep sympathy for the affected families, saying that while it may not be possible for her countrymen to know the grief, but they would walk with the mourning families. She also talked about her nation's responsibility and made a commitment to weed out extremism in her country.

There have been scores of people (both non-white and white) who have allegedly been killing people around the world. It started with the 9/11 attacks in mainland America and carried on to various other incidents, such as the one in Paris when twelve people were killed at the headquarters of the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo, the Boston Marathon bombing, the shooting at the Emanuel A.M.E. Church, in Charleston, South Carolina and many more.

Less than a week after the Christchurch attacks, the Ardern government announced a ban on military-style weapons. This is what political leaders do in the face of a senseless tragedy: they grieve with their people, they think with their people, and they act together with their people. It was commendable that US Senator Bernie Sanders welcomed the announcement of the ban on military-style weapons in New Zealand and commended the action as something that would stop gun violence. His reaction was in much contrast to US President Donald Trump's response to the Christchurch shooting. He said that he did not regard white nationalism as a rising global threat in the aftermath of the terror attacks in New Zealand.

The true sentiments of Muslims were reflected in Prime Minister Imran Khan's telephone call to Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern to condemn the attack. He admired the PM's humane handling of the situation, appreciated the quick response of the local authorities and how Ms. Ardern had shown the way to world leaders to combat rising Islamophobia and global extremism. Perhaps this is the sort of brave initiative that can also be taken to solve the Kashmir issue that has been dogging the progress of India and Pakistan for the past seven decades. The Indians can take a leaf out of the New Zealand Prime Minister's book to stop killing innocent Kashmiris and rein in their version of Islamophobia across India.

The Christchurch tragedy has given rise to a much-needed global conversation about white nationalist terrorism and has also brought into focus the compassionate response of the leadership and people of New Zealand. The New Zealanders have shown how a tragedy of such huge proportions should be handled and Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has demonstrated how governments should react because she herself has led from the front right from the beginning. She began a parliament speech with 'salaam' while verses from the Holy Quran were also recited. It was announced that the azan for Juma prayers would be broadcast nationally on Fridays in remembrance of the victims of the massacre. The New Zealanders showed in very strong terms that they stood by an immigrant community in their hour of need – and would act accordingly. This was nothing short of admirable. Perhaps the gratitude of the world's Muslims was rightly symbolized when the Burj Khalifa in Dubai was lit up with Jacinda Ardern's picture as a tribute to her and her countrymen.

Syed Jawaid Iqbal
Editor in Chief

PEACE INITIATIVE

This is with regard to an article by S.R.H. Hashmi titled "Peace Initiative." The views in the article are not sugar coated and I second the writer with the viewpoint that India and Pakistan need to act more sanely to bring progress to the region. There are better ways to approach tension in Indian-occupied Kashmir. War, terrorism and inhuman acts will only make the scenario worse and so both the Pakistani and Indian governments need to direct their armies to not practice illegal tactics to spread terror. Kashmiris need justice and terrorizing them won't make India or Pakistan win anything in the end.

Sarah Ashley,
Washington D.C., USA.

EVERGREEN COMEDY

There were times when people of all ages used to sit together in front of the television set and see the exchange of witty dialogue between Umer Sharif and Shakeel Siddiqui, popularly known as 'Teeli' at that time. It was considered the golden era of comedy but today the digital world is more active in all areas, even in comedy. Although the new age comedians have tried to entertain society with intelligent comedy, we still miss the environment when Umer Sharif and Moin Akhtar would make people go crazy with laughter. I would hardly agree that there can be someone as talented as them nowadays who could deliver one-liners so efficiently and note that these one-liners were made on the spot.

Sana Sheikh,
Lahore, Pakistan.

PAKISTAN WINS

The fourth instalment of HBL PSL came to an end with Quetta Gladiators emerging as the winners for the very first time. PSL4 was held in tight security in Pakistan. The arrival of international players convinced everyone into believing that Pakistan really is a safe country to travel. Many players who refused to come to Pakistan during the last PSL match were also present, including the legendary Vivian Richards. The players literally enjoyed themselves by visiting the Quaid-e-Azam's Mausoleum and the French Beach. Amongst all, Darren Sammy shined by giving a beautiful message to the people outside the Mausoleum, to follow unity, faith and discipline just like the Quaid. The positive feedback is really a win-win situation for Pakistan.

Muhammad Noman,
Islamabad, Pakistan.

LITERATE PAKISTAN

The literacy rate in Pakistan is on a downhill path. It was disturbing to come across an article from a known newspaper on the decline of literacy rate in Pakistan. The CWUR World University Rankings as per 2018 – 2019 has Agha Khan University rank at 996 out of 1000 universities, which was shocking as it is one of the best private medical universities we have. The literacy rate has declined from 60 percent to 58

percent but what is more alarming to me is that a literate person in Pakistan is a person who can read a newspaper and can write a word in "any language" which, if you ask me, is a weak parameter to determine literacy anywhere. The Prime Minister should make efforts to lay a sound ground to eliminate this negligence in the definition and ideology of literacy in Pakistan because otherwise in future there is a chance that Pakistan won't be even in the CWUR World Universities Ranking.

Dua Siddiqui,
Rawalpindi, Pakistan.

GROWING INSTABILITY

It looks like Pakistan is facing a highly questionable inflation hike. The inexperience of the government is blamed for this, particularly their way of handling their shortcomings, which has worsened the scenario, especially in the life-saving drugs industry. On the one hand, smoking and use of tobacco is rampant and even kids can buy drugs and cigarettes from small shops. On the other, many multinational pharmaceutical companies have been closed in the span of a year because they could not handle the high cost of manufacturing certain drugs. Realistically, it's not possible to eliminate the tobacco industry but strict law enforcement can minimize this growing trend. Also, a serious strategy needs to be operational to have a stable environment for the health and medicine industry to flourish, as this will minimize inflation in the industry. With inflamed prices and the shortage of key life-saving medicines, people are facing great difficulty. They are questioning the promises made by Prime Minister Imran Khan.

Talha Aamir,
Lahore, Pakistan.

MOVING CHEMICAL WAREHOUSES

Apparently, Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Haseena Wajid is taking a firm stand in relocating/shifting chemical warehouses from residential areas, especially in Dhaka. After the painful Chowkbazar fire incident, all inflammable chemical warehouses are being shifted to a safer place which will ensure the safety of people from explosive chemicals. This is a wise decision which should have been taken sooner but it is a relief to know that the issue is not being neglected anymore. I hope in this tenure Sheikh Haseena Wajid will do what she says.

Pardev Sami,
Narayanganj, Bangladesh.

THE CUSTOMER IS NOT ALWAYS RIGHT

The phrase 'the customer is always right' is long gone. Yes, it is our duty to satisfy the needs of the customer but sometimes their demands are just not reasonable. We are taught never to say 'no' to a customer but what we don't realise is that this can even cost the business. Learn to say 'no' when customers make unusual demands but also, one the other hand, empower your employees to make the right decisions and encourage them to go that extra mile to fulfil the needs, keeping in view the extent to which demands can be fulfilled.

Betty Cooper,
Brighton, UK.

DARK DAY

On March 15, 2019, a 28-year Australian attacker, without doubt a terrorist, entered the Al Noor Mosque and the Linwood Islamic Centre in Christchurch and brutally opened fire on the worshippers who were there to offer Friday prayers, killing almost 50. The day has been marked as one of the darkest days in New Zealand's history. What struck me was that people were calling him just an extremist. Why? Is the word 'terrorist' only for Muslims and not others who create violence and bloodshed in the country? However, the Prime Minister of New Zealand, Jacinda Arden, labelled him as a terrorist and forbid everyone to even repeat his name. She also went out of her way to provide comfort to the families of the deceased. Now that's what a Prime Minister should do.

Mark Crane,
Toronto, Canada.

"Indian and Pakistan relations have again reached a dangerous level."
Pervez Musharraf, former President of Pakistan

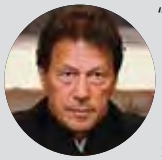
"As incentives are available for other export-oriented industries, the jute industry will also receive such incentives."
Sheikh Hasina Wajid, Prime Minister of Bangladesh

"We don't want to be one of those countries that have prospered but the people still remain poor."
Dr. Lotay Tshering, Prime Minister of Bhutan

"I actually think I think better in high heels."
Theresa May, Prime Minister of UK

"India has never established that Commander Jadhav was an Indian national."
Khawar Qureshi, Pakistan's counsel at the ICJ

"My mission is to tell the youth about their identity and their ideology."
Mian Yusuf Salahuddin, art connoisseur



"I am not worthy of the Nobel Peace Prize. The person worthy of this would be the one who solves the Kashmir dispute according to the wishes of the Kashmiri people and paves the way for peace and human development in the subcontinent ."
Imran Khan, Prime Minister of Pakistan

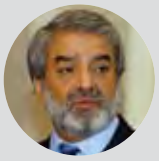
"It is a decade since we have established peace in this country. I want to tell them (the UN) not to pressure us."
Maithripala Sirisena, President of Sri Lanka

"Kashmir is now at the heart of the military confrontation that has pushed India and Pakistan – two nuclear-armed countries – to the brink of war."
Sardar Masood Khan, President, Azad Jammu and Kashmir

"I grew up overnight on that day, Dec. 27, 2007."
Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Chairman of PPP

"When you suffer from historical amnesia you create an imaginary world which is devoid of reality."
Ayesha Jalal, historian

"First we will make a strategy and then we will align the structure with it, rather than making a structure first and then aligning our strategy according to it."
Ehsan Mani, Chairman PCB



"This is a new India that will return the damage done by the terrorists with interest."
Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India

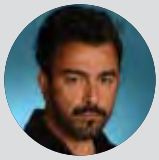
"We want the Taliban to clarify their relationship with Pakistan. At the same time, we ask Pakistan to explain its relationship with the Taliban…"
Ashraf Ghani, President of Afghanistan

"I hope heads of both countries show restraint and take a step back to think about the catastrophic consequences that would follow a war."
Mehbooba Mufti, former chief minister Indian Occupied Kashmir.

"We are ready for every eventuality."
Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Pakistan foreign minister

"We need to keep fine tuning ourselves throughout life. For no matter how good you are at singing, the day you leave practicing you'll be replaced."
Amjad Islam Amjad, writer

"Hinduism or Modiism? India must decide what religion they follow...and please decide before the elections … "
Shaan Shahid, actor



Peace Prize for Modi

Narendra Modi, the man said to be responsible for the Gujarat carnage and the one who sent shockwaves across the world when Indian jets violated the Line of Control in Kashmir, has been honoured with the Seoul Peace Prize. The award was meant to reflect the wishes of the Korean people and to emphasize their desire for everlasting peace on earth. It has been conferred on Modi for his so-called contribution to international cooperation and fostering global economic growth. Next, it will be the Nobel Prize for Narendra Modi.

Stunning Aima

Talented and versatile Aima Baig is a singer who is fast making her place in Pakistan's showbiz industry. She is the niece of TV anchor Mubashir Lucman. She sang the famous number 'Summer Wine' with Uncle Lucman for a Shaukat Khanum Hospital Charity show. It was a sort of homage to her mother who died of cancer when Aima was very young. Now the petite singer is known for her songs like Baazi and Qalabaz Dil. But it was her performance at the opening and closing of PSL4 where she left everyone stunned!

Ambassador Darren Sammy

Darren Sammy was the first international player to visit Pakistan for the Pakistan Super League in 2017. He has become a source of encouragement for many international players. Leading Peshawar Zalmi in PSL 4, he wore a white shalwar kameez on his visit to the Quaid-e-Azam's Mazar. Though his team lost to the Quetta Gladiators in the PSL4 Final, Darren Sammy will certainly play a big role in revival of tourism in Pakistan. Perhaps Imran Khan should give him more responsibilities in Pakistan in addition to his just playing cricket.

Sanam Back

There is good news for Sanam Jung fans. She is coming back after a break and will be seen on Hum TV. Sanam did succeed in waking up Pakistanis when she hosted her morning show, Jago Pakistan Jago. These days she is shooting for a HUM TV play with co-stars Zahid Ahmed and Affan Waheed. She is excited about her return to TV drama acting – and will be away from the real-life excitement of a morning show.

Revamping Dhaka

Mubasshar Hussain, a Bangladeshi architect has ideas for revamping Dhaka, one of the most densly populated cities in the world. He suggests that the buildings affected by the Chowk Bazaar tragedy should be renovated, keeping intact the old heritage. His plans include relocation of chemical and plastic warehouses. He wants the government and businesses to work together on the refurbished infrastructure. The man makes sense and hopefully the government has heard his pleas – for its own sake – and that of the city.

QUETTA WIN PSL4

Probably Peshawar Zalmi were the favourites in the PSL4 final but the Quetta Gladiators turned the tables on them. Looks like international cricket is just around the corner in Pakistan and Indian machinations, that kept foreign teams from touring Pakistan after the Qaddafi Stadium attack in 2009, have crashed. The same way as the Indian MiG that hit Pakistani soil on Feb. 28.

It is not clear, however, that while not a single player from Quetta or any other part of Balochistan was playing in the Quetta Gladiators team, why were the people of the city dancing and celebrating the team's win?

INDIAN FILMS BANNED

After India's violations across the Line of Control, the Pakistan Film Exhibitor Association has banned/boycotted all Indian content. Indian films and new releases have been pulled down at Pakistani cinema houses. With more screen time available, the cinema houses are now showing Pakistani films like Jawani Phir Nahi Aani 2, Pinky Memsaab and Parwaaz Hai Junoon. English films are also being shown in the cinema houses like SpiderMan: Into the Spiderverse.

AIR TOXICITY IN DHAKA

Bangladesh is ranked as having one of the most polluted urban environments in the world. Due to this hazard, a public health alert has been issued, urging people to avoid the capital Dhaka as well as Narayanganj, Gazipur and Chattogram unless it is really necessary.

Awami League MP Saber Hossain Chowdhury, chief of the parliamentary standing committee on the environment, has alerted the people of the air pollution. According to the World Health Organization, AQI (air quality index) of up to 50 is considered a safe level while an AQI of 300 is hazardous. The AQI in Dhaka has reached 479 and it is the second most polluted capital city, according to a study.

KARACHI KINGS IN TROUBLE

The Lahore Qalandars and Karachi Kings had an ugly spat. The president of the Karachi franchise, former captain Wasim Akram, has said that on completion of their match during, the playoffs at National Stadium, Karachi, someone from the Lahore Qalandars' stand had called him dirty names which led to the ugly situation. There was an exchange of inappropriate words which was caught on the CCTV cameras. A complaint was filed by the Qalandars' top management against Wasim Akram, Imad Wasim and Mohammad Amir. The Pakistan Cricket Board decided to conduct an inquiry and also decided to hand out hefty fines or bans, if required.

AFGHANISTAN NOT LANDLOCKED

Afghanistan has started sending goods to India by sea for the first time through the newly developed Iranian port Chabahar. The trade route bypasses Pakistan. Landlocked Afghanistan has always used Pakistani ports for international trade under a bilateral trade and transit agreement. Afghan President Ashraf Ghani went to the western Iranian border city of Zaranj to see off the inaugural convoy of 23 trucks loaded with 570 tonnes of cargo headed for Chabahar. Ghani said Afghanistan is not landlocked anymore and the new export route will help improve economic growth in Afghanistan.

Helen Brand OBE, Chief Executive, ACCA (second from left) with Mr Zouhair Khaliq, Member of the Prime Minister's Task Force on IT & Telecom and Co-Founder & Partner, TeamUp.

Helen Brand with Mr Parvez Abbasi, Project Director.

DEVELOPING START-UPS

Helen Brand OBE, Chief Executive, ACCA (the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants) visited the National Incubation Center (NIC) in Islamabad, Pakistan's largest technology incubation centre, and was briefed on how incubation centres are run with NIC support.

Zouhair Khaliq, Member of the Prime Minister's Task Force on IT & Telecom and Co-Founder and Partner, TeamUp, Parvez Abbasi, Project Director, NIC and other senior representatives of NIC shared an overview of the growing startup ecosystem in Pakistan and the role NIC is playing with the help of global organizations such as ACCA Pakistan.

Helen assured that ACCA will continue to work with NIC in supporting entrepreneurship in the country and emphasized that ACCA members can play a big role in improving the success rate of startups at NIC by providing guidance on financially viable business models, business forms and structures and long-term sustainability.

During her interaction with budding entrepreneurs at NIC, Helen advised, "It is equally important to work on the financial plan and seek advice of qualified professionals in the early stages of your business venture to ensure its viability, scalability and profitability."

Helen was accompanied by the senior management of ACCA Pakistan, including Sajjeed Aslam, head of ACCA Pakistan and Assad Hameed Khan, head of business development at ACCA.

INDIAN JINGOISM

After the Pulwama attack and subsequent Indian aggression, jingoism in India is on an all-time high and even Indian showbiz people are blaming Pakistan without any proof. Pakistan's Hamza Ali Abbasi, Gohar Rasheed and Shaan Shahid have sent the Indians a message of peace and have reminded them of the region's needs. They described the blatant Indian statements as irrelevant. Armeena Khan pointed out that the Indian media is twisting everything.

KE LEADING ENERGY PLAYER

K-Electric has transformed from an under-utilized strategic asset into a leading energy player and is one of the global power industry's most well-recognized operational turnaround stories.

This was revealed by Syed Fakhar Ahmed, Chief Marketing and Communication Officer, K-Electric, during a presentation at the Marketing Conference 2019.

He said, "As marketers it is our responsibility to highlight the strengths our country possesses in the form of effective success stories globally, be it recognizing the large market size with over 200 million population, self-sufficiency in food production, emergence of a large middle class, abundance of natural resources and the list goes on."

Fakhar Ahmed said that to champion customer satisfaction and achieve business results, every touch point a customer has with an organization must be relevant, anticipated and effortless.

Kangana Ranaut Won't Take It

The lead actor in the film 'Manikarnika: The Queen of Jhansi,' Kangana Ranaut took a dig at filmmaker Karan Johar and actor Hrithik Roshan and called them out for their misconduct.

The outspoken actress keeps raising her voice against injustice in the Indian film industry. When asked about the omission of her name in the list of Best Actresses on Karan Johar's talk show Koffee with Karan, Ranaut said that she did not feel left out as everyone knows she stands out with three National Awards.

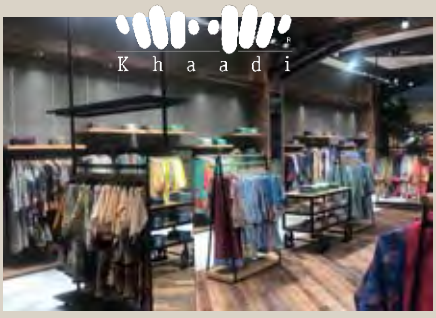
In 2017, Kangana labelled Karan Johar as the "flag bearer of Nepotism" on his own show. She also flayed the Indian actor Hrithik Roshan for his comments that he did not know her personally.

What Zayn and Gigi Want?

Zayn Malik and Gigi Hadid have confused their fans yet again. While the former lovers had publically announced their split earlier this year in January, the news of their getting together has again appeared after the ex One Direction member tweeted, '@GiGiHadid love you.' The fans are baffled as to what they both actually want.

The tweet might suggest that the two are back together or this is nothing but unrequited love. The two had given rise to speculations earlier as well in February when Gigi was spotted looking fresh with her make-up free face and damp hair early in the morning, leaving Zayn's apartment in New York.

KHAADI IN BAHRAIN



Khaadi opened a new store in Bahrain. Located at the City Centre, the new store has Khaadi's unstitched and ready-to-wear product lines placed in an ambience of detailed decor and contemporary style.

The design philosophy features beautiful displays, dazzling colours and harmony. Khaadi thrives on innovation and believes the new store will invigorate and enhance the retail experience for customers. Bold use of the simplest of materials like raw finished surfaces, natural wood and stone echo the essence of nature, rooted in Khaadi's philosophy.

NO TO NOBEL

Responding to calls for nomination of the Nobel Peace Prize for Imran Khan's proactive role in reducing tensions between Pakistan and India, the Prime Minister said that he was not worthy of the prize.

The Prime Minister himself tweeted: 'The person worthy of this would be the one who solves the Kashmir dispute according to the wishes of the Kashmiri people and paves the way for peace and human development in the subcontinent.'

Pakistan freed the Indian pilot Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman whose MiG was shot down as he chased Pakistani jets over Azad Kashmir. Both the nations were on the brink of war when Imran Khan announced the release of the captured pilot.

It was being said that in view of his contribution towards peace in the region, Prime Minister Imran Khan be given the Nobel Peace Prize. Hundreds of thousands of people signed an online petition calling for PM Imran Khan to receive the Nobel Peace Prize.

MODI'S IRRELEVANT COMEDY

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has received immense flak for projecting dyslexic people in a poor light. A statement issued by the National Platform for the Rights of the Disabled (NPRD) demanded that the Prime Minister apologize to persons with disabilities for his contentious statement.

Modi actually interjected when a B-Tech student was explaining her project stating, 'Dyslexic children are those whose learning and writing pace is very slow but creativity level and intelligence is quite good,' giving the example of Indian film 'Taare Zameen Par'. He said, 'Will your scheme help a kid who is 40-50 years old? In which case, the mother of such kids would be very happy.'

The statement has drawn immense ire from the NPRD which said that instead of replying to a question raised by a student, Modi made fun of dyslexia to take potshots at his political rivals. Even during the 2014 Lok Sabha election campaign, Narendra Modi had used terms like blind, deaf, lame, etc. to belittle his rivals.

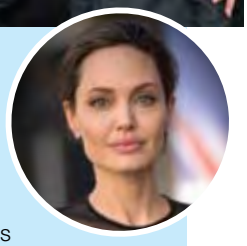
Africa Film Festival

Joel Karekezi's 'The Mercy of the Jungle' was nominated best film at Africa's top film festival. It is on gender equality and sexual aggression in the Rwandan film industry. The film was among 20 vying for the top Golden Stallion of Yennenga Award at the Pan-African Film and Television Festival of Ouagadougou (Fespaco).

In the half century, since it was established, Fespaco has never awarded a top prize to a female director. Only four of the films in competition at the festival were directed by women. Burkinabe director Apolline Traore whose film 'Desrances' won a special prize said that recognition had to be on merit, not a token gesture in the fight against discrimination.

Encouraged by the #MeToo Movement, some took the opportunity to use the festival to also highlight alleged sexual abuse within the African film industry.

Brad Pitt Upset



Hollywood actor Brad Pitt is not so happy these days because of his former flame Angelina Jolie. He is upset with his ex-wife over her decision to handle their son Maddox's education after spending months looking for suitable colleges for him.

Brad is very proud of Maddox and would love to be helping him tour colleges, but as of now, there are no plans for that. Although he'd love to be more involved with his son, Angelina has been very clear that she is handling it. It's hard on Brad to be pushed out, to see Angelina having fun with the kids while he's busy working to support everyone. It just seems that it's not Brad's choice.

Priyanka in Trouble

Global icon Priyanka Chopra has found herself in the midst of a crisis after upsetting a huge number of fans with a tweet in which she cheered for war, amid escalating tensions between India and Pakistan. This has resulted in an online petition filed by the people of Pakistan seeking her removal as UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador.

Priyanka also met with immense censure by Pakistani actress Armeena Khan who called the actress out for endorsing war. Armeena stated that the next time Priyanka speaks up for peace and goodwill, people should remember her hypocrisy. Priyanka Chopra was made a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador in December 2016.

SHAAN DIG AT ADNAN SAMI

Adnan Sami has become the centre of social media outpourings after he endorsed Indian premier Narendra Modi following the Pulwama attack which escalated the online rage between the two countries and paved the way for heavy trolling for the singer.

In the memes that appeared, people started a new trend called #MajorAdnanSami. Pakistani actor Shaan Shahid also joined in. He tweeted, 'Adnan Sami is not a Pakistani neither an agent as intelligence agents have honour. He is the only Pakistani product that we are ashamed of. Keep him, he is yours.'

FIRST FOOD DELIVERY GIRL

Young brave girl Rubab has broken free of barriers. She is the first female food delivery rider at Foodpanda.

For Rubab, the food delivery job is convenient and easy. Rubab puts her best foot forward everyday and adores the job.

Telenor and Netflix

Telenor Pakistan is partnering with Netflix. Telenor's post-paid and corporate customers can add their Netflix subscription fee to their monthly mobile bill. Netflix launched its service in Pakistan in 2016 enabling its members to enjoy unlimited, ad-free entertainment on any internet connected mobile phone, laptop, desktop, tablet, or television.

EDOTCO CELEBRATES WOMEN'S DAY

Edotco Pakistan organized its first industrial women's event in Islamabad on International Women's Day. It was hosted by their Country Managing Director, Arif Hussain. Those who came included over 140 females from the UN, UNDP, UN Women and the Pakistan government as well as people from Jazz, Ufone, Zong, Telenor and PTCL. The event encouraged greater gender participation. Speakers included Andleeb Abbas, Fauzia Yazdani and Kamila Khan.

GILTTER AT FASHION PAKISTAN

Fashion Pakistan Week 2019 ended on a high note where many Pakistani models walked the ramp for renowned fashion designers. Hania Amir was seen with Asim who sang 'Tu Jo Na Mila'.

Maya Ali was the showstopper for Nomi Ansari. She wore a neon green and pink bridal dress. Sonya Hussyn looked like a perfect Mehndi bride in a multi-coloured lehenga. She showed off the collection by Pink Tree. Others included Sarah Khan, Azfar Rehman and Sanam Saeed.

P&G ANNOUNCES 'PAAK SAAF PAKISTAN' INITIATIVE

The President of Pakistan, Dr. Arif Alvi has said that safe drinking water and sanitation are the key priority areas of the 'Clean Green Pakistan' Movement.

The President was the Chief Guest at the inaugural ceremony of Procter & Gamble (P&G) Pakistan's Paak Saaf Pakistan initiative announcement made in Islamabad in support of the Prime Minister's 'Clean Green Pakistan' Movement.

P&G Pakistan has announced commitments for its Paak Saaf Pakistan initiative over the next three years. Under this, it will i) provide 50 million liters of clean drinking water, helping an estimated 250,000 people in need via its Children Safe Drinking Water program and ii) create cleanliness and hand-washing awareness amongst 5 million children via its Safeguard School Education Program.

The announcement was made by Sami Ahmed, Vice President P&G Pakistan. Ms. Zartaj Gul, Minister of State for Climate Change was the Guest of Honor. P&G was joined by its community partner HOPE, represented by Chairperson, Dr. Mubina Agboatwalla.

MoU signing ceremony

An MoU was also signed between the Ministry of Climate Change and Procter & Gamble Pakistan on this occasion, reiterating P&G's commitment to play an active role in supporting the 'Clean Green Pakistan' campaign to achieve shared goals.

Minister Zartaj Gul said, "Only together can we create a strong positive impact. It is deeply encouraging to note that Procter & Gamble Pakistan has been dedicated to the cause of safe drinking water and health and hygiene awareness for over a decade and will continue to create further awareness about this cause."

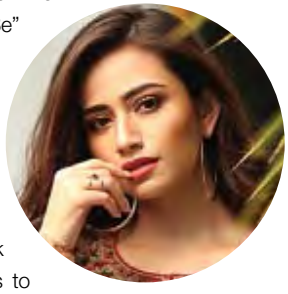
Nadia's Bling

Nadia Hussain has launched her first halal makeup brand 'NH Bling'. It has Lip Bling (matte glitter lipsticks) in six shades and matte glitter eye shadows called Eye Bling in six different shades. The best thing about the products is that they are waterproof, transfer-proof and long-lasting.

NH Bling will be available at Nadia Hussain Salon and Scentsation outlets in Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad as well as at LuckyOne Mall in Karachi and online at Daraz.pk.

Sana Javed and Edenrobe

Edenrobe has revealed its colourful and aesthetically appealing summer collection "Let Women Be" with Sana Javed. Selecting Sana Javed as the face of the brand is how the brand wants to showcase women.



The collection has more than 100 dresses in silk and chiffon. Edenrobe aims to promote and provide self-confidence to women in pursuing their dreams.

‘No two other nations in the world have such multilayered complexities.’

Mr. Javed Jabbar

Syed Jawaid Iqbal

Former Senator Javed Jabbar gave a Talk titled ‘India-Pakistan Relations – Future, Known and Unknown’ which was hosted by the Society for Global Moderation (SGM) at CMC.

Javed Jabbar observed that the Pakistan-India relationship is a very complex bilateral relationship and there are no two other nations in the world that have such multilayered complexities as found between India and Pakistan.

The people of the two countries, he said, have a long history together and yet there are great differences among them. He said the people of both India and Pakistan are driven by a hysterical media in their respective countries and are also restrained by their own mindsets.

He said Pakistan and India have vivid asymmetries and symmetries and unresolved disputes from Kashmir to Siachen.

Javed Jabbar said that when talking about the Pakistan-India relationship, one was also talking about the internal state and society.

Talking about Pakistan and its society, Mr Jabbar said that it was actually quite secular. He said that in contrast, the Indian state called itself secular but its society was quite religious and reflected Hindu dominance.

He held both Pakistan and India responsible for their problems and said the mess was a shared responsibility.

He observed that in all the Saarc countries it was only Pakistan which had the capacity and will to challenge India and the onus was also on India based on how it grabbed Kashmir through fraud and how it shamelessly invaded East Pakistan.

Talking about the future, Javed Jabbar said that whatever the result of the coming Indian elections, there would be calibrated de-escalation so that no one loses face.

With respect to the future of Pakistan-India relations, Javed Jabbar said that this was within the control of people of both countries but they needed to foster a positive psyche and a positive attitude about the other country.

He said he felt that non-use of nuclear weapons was a given and neither country could afford to use their nuclear weapons as this meant Mutually Assured Destruction.

He said that in the current situation, Pakistan had made the terrible mistake of not telling its real story to the world and there was no justification for this. In his view, public diplomacy should have been utilized more effectively and Pakistan should have been sending its former foreign secretaries, former foreign ministers, trade commissioners, people with some message to convey its side of the story in 20 capitals around the world and at think tanks, media houses, etc. He hoped that the civil and military leaderships would not compromise on this any further.

A lively question-answer session followed the Talk.

In response to a question he said an Indian clash with Pakistan alone could not be expected to bring Narendra Modi back to power as his government had not performed well on the economic front. In response to a question by Air Vice Marshal Abid Rao, he said that while one would not ever want to justify non-state actors, but this should be looked at empathetically from a strategic point of view.

Journalist Asif Noorani asked about the role of Indian media in the present conflict. Javed Jabbar said he did not see that the vitriol being spilt by the Indian news channels or social media diminishing soon and would only happen gradually.

Earlier, Syed Jawaid Iqbal, Chairman, Society for Global Moderation (SGM) introduced Senator Javed Jabbar to the audience, saying that Javed Jabbar has a multifarious personality as he is a prominent writer, an outstanding advertising person, politician, mass communications expert, broadcaster and scholar and was a member of the federal cabinet on three occasions.

The Society for Global Moderation (SGM) is a private-sector Think Tank that promotes tolerance, inter-faith harmony and democracy. Besides hosting prominent people at various seminars and symposia, SGM has held Talks featuring former foreign secretary Najmuddin Shaikh, former chairman of the Senate of Pakistan, Senator Raza Rabbani, Vishaka Desai, President, Asia Society, New York and others. S

RISE AND FALL

There are many reasons for the Pakistan People's Party having lost its national appeal. The young leadership of the Party has to work very hard to win back its original magnetism.

BY JUSTICE (R) M. SHAIQ USMANI

Post-India-Pakistan War of 1965, during negotiations preceding the Tashkent Declaration, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto appeared in pictures looking sombre yet defiant. He suddenly shot into prominence and his image was metamorphosed from that of a dandy, a playboy to a hero. He used this sudden popularity well and a few years later, launched a new political party, the Pakistan People's Party with a socialist agenda which was quite in contrast to his downright bourgeois upbringing and inclinations. But what caught the people's imagination was the catchy slogan "Roti, Kapra aur Makan", which the party adopted virtually as its manifesto.

Thereafter his demeanour supporting the cause of West Pakistan vis-à-vis Mujibur Rehman's heresy of his six point programme earned him more kudos. Then the only truly fair elections in the history of Pakistan conducted by Yahya Khan in 1970 catapulted him as a leader of West Pakistan, in particular of Punjab, who, true to their nature, liked his belligerent attitude towards India. There was no turning back for him then onwards, except that being an ambitious man he soon realised that given the majority that the Awami League of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman commanded in the Assembly, he could never be the Prime Minister of whole of Pakistan and reconciled to the idea of governing only the Western part of Pakistan. His subsequent moves further increased the cleavage between the two wings which suited the purpose of General Yahya and his coterie and hence endeared him to them. This led to his being appointed the Foreign Minister by Ayub Khan after the 1965 war, thus giving him the opportunity to use his inherent brilliance and flamboyance to his great advantage and, after the break-up of Pakistan, leading him to become the President and first Civilian Martial law Administrator and then the Prime Minister of the riven Pakistan.

There is no doubt that immediately upon becoming the Prime Minister, ZAB took steps to live up to his party's socialist agenda and took steps to nationalize banks, insurance companies, shipping companies and other industries and even privately owned school networks and also gave a boost to labour unions. All these measures had a devastating effect on the economy and the country reels from the after effects of these measures to this today. But at the time these were popular moves amongst the masses because they liked the twenty two families of industrialists being trounced, even though they themselves gained nothing from it. There is no doubt that the policy of nationalisation initially brought political dividends to the party but ironically the spate of nationalization also resulted in the emergence of a system of patronage because of increase in state power to benefit its favourites and it is this system of patronage that the PPP has depended upon for its survival whenever it had the opportunity to govern in the succeeding years.

However, the greatest impact of these

"The PPP is no more a nationalist party as it has now been confined to rural Sindh only."

Urooj Ishrat, scientific officer

"There is a need to revive the PPP as it has lost the pulse of the people it claims to represent."

Amber Shiwani, salesperson

"The Pakistan People's Party needs a leader who can match the charisma of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto."

Hafiza Shehzad, banker

"The PPP should revisit its founding vision which was to serve the deprived masses, instead of safeguarding the interests of well-heeled opportunists."

Muhammad Talal Ashfaq, senior sales executive

"The PPP has gone off track since its leadership took over after the Benazir Bhutto's assassination."

Abdul Wadood, graphic designer

measures was on the attitude of the working classes and the underprivileged. Hitherto Pakistan's was a caste-ridden and class-conscious society where the working classes and the under-privileged were treated with, if not disdain, with condescension. But the Bhutto era transformed that and brought about an attitudinal revolution amongst the common people of the country. Even though PPP failed to deliver on the Roti, Kapra, Makan front, essentially it is this attitudinal change that resulted in the PPP movement being catapulted from the realm of mundane, which the slogan Roti, Kapra aur Makan essentially transported to the realm of romance and it is this romance that later saved the PPP from being obliterated inspite of the succeeding dithering stints of Benazir in the nineties.

The image of the PPP being a party of the people, the majority of whom are regarded as corrupt, does not attract the masses any more.

As time went by, the system of patronage that the PPP depended upon attained enormous proportions and spread its tentacles into every sphere of activity, in particular the civil service and financial institutions. This led to an abandonment of the system of selection on merit, Intensification of bureaucratic sloth and emergence of a culture of corruption to the extent that corruption came to be regarded as synonymous with the PPP rule. However, since PPP during ZAB's times had essentially built up a macho persona through adoption of an anti-India posture and acquisition of nuclear power which was in accord with the Punjabi psyche. It nevertheless resulted in the electoral success for the PPP in the Punjab and hence assured it a majority in parliament. Moreover, because of ZAB's liberalism and egalitarianism and his liberal and left-leaning clichés that he expounded with great eloquence in his public speeches, support was provided by the progressive elements in society as well as the common man in the rest of the country which was inflicted with widespread poverty and this was music to their ears.

However, when in the wake of the rigged elections of 1976, the leadership of the movement against ZAB was hijacked by the religious and conservative elements, ZAB, in order to appease them, abandoned his liberalism for political gains and PPP's romance began to wane. Later the emergence of its own indigenous Punjabi leadership in Punjab in the shape of Nawaz Sharif took the shine off PPP and it no longer could lay claim to be the true representative of Punjab. In the intervening phase of Zia-ul-Haq's rule, who was intensely anti-PPP and hence did everything possible to suppress it, the party began to wither to the extent that even the hanging of ZAB by Zia-ul-Haq did not bring about any mass protests or demonstrations. After PPP experienced a brief resurgence in the post Zia-ul-Haq era, purely because of the charm and personality of Benazir and the sympathy that PPP evoked due to suppression of the party by Zia and then by Ghulam Ishaq Khan and Nawaz Sharif, the emergence of Zardari as the leader of the PPP after Benazir and his depredations when in office, banished the romanticism attached to the PPP's name forever. The PPP then on survived in the province of Sindh alone because of emotional attachment of the indigenous people of Sindh with the Bhutto name and the poignance surrounding Benazir's assassination.

Unfortunately, the recent passing of the mantle of the party to Bilawal has not helped the PPP either because Bilawal has failed to impress the masses due to the baggage of his father that he carries and because of his lack of eloquence in public speeches and also his persona which is not in accord with the macho propensity of the Punjabis. Moreover, the image of the PPP being a party of the people, the majority of whom are regarded as corrupt, does not attract the masses any more, particularly when the political atmosphere in the wake of Imran Khan's rise is one of condemnation of corruption.

Thus bereft of its macho image, anti India posture, liberalism and egalitarianism and being imbued with corruption, PPP today on the political scene finds itself in a quandary and if any alternative to it emerges in the province of Sindh in the next decade, which PTI is aiming to become or if the Establishment gets tired of Zardari's occasional burst of an anti-establishment diatribe and decides to sideline the party, it is more than likely that PPP's end will be no different to that of MQM, another party primarily based in Sindh. S

The writer is a former Judge of the Sindh High Court. He can be reached at contactus@usmaniandiqbal.com.pk

INTERVIEW

'Benazir was like her name - unique, one of a kind.'

In this exclusive interview to *SouthAsia,* Mark Siegel talks about his long association with the PPP and Benazir Bhutto and why he thinks BB would have brought true democracy to Pakistan had she lived.

How far back do you trace your association with the Pakistan People's Party?

My relationship with the PPP began in 1984 and it was a friendship with Benazir long before I had any relationship to the Party. When she was released from house arrest by Zia for medical reasons in 1984, after treatment in London, she visited the US.

One of my very close friends was Peter Galbraith, who was in Benazir's class at Harvard (with an astounding collection of extraordinary people, including Kathleen Kennedy, Walter Isaacson, EJ Dionne...). So I got a call from Peter and he asked if I and my wife Judy would host a dinner for a friend of his who was just released from prison. At first I thought this a very strange request, but when he told me it was Benazir, I was intrigued.

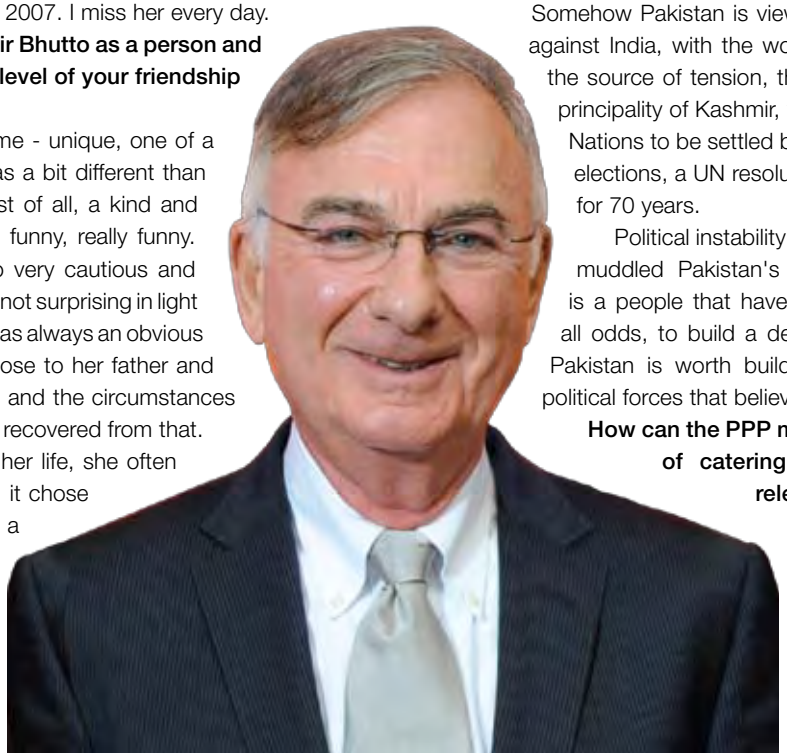
The dinner was a typical mix of Washington types - journalists, members of Congress and academics. Benazir arrived and was very shy and very quiet. I think she was nervous, probably intimidated by the guest list. But when we sat down to dinner, the evening turned into an intellectual salon. Benazir spoke softly and everyone seemed to lean forward to hear every word. And then her voice grew more confident and she spoke for thirty minutes without a pause or hesitation and she was riveting, absolutely brilliant.

She and I particularly clicked. Soon after, she asked me if I could possibly look after her affairs in Washington. Later she asked me if I could help with her speeches. And as we approached her return to Pakistan in 1986, the relationship turned more political. But that was how it all started, and it was an intense professional and personal relationship and friendship until the day she was assassinated in December of 2007. I miss her every day.

How do you view Benazir Bhutto as a person and as a leader? What was the level of your friendship with her?

Benazir was like her name - unique, one of a kind. Her private persona was a bit different than her public one. She was, first of all, a kind and gentle person. And she was funny, really funny. But of course, she was also very cautious and sometimes fragile, which was not surprising in light of her family's history. There was always an obvious vulnerability. She was very close to her father and was devastated by his death and the circumstances of his death. She never really recovered from that.

When she talked about her life, she often said "I didn't choose this life, it chose me." She really wanted to be a journalist or a diplomat, not an iconic political leader.



But ZAB annointed not his oldest son but his most competent child, a woman, to carry on his work. For better or worse, she accepted that responsibility and never retreated from her commitment to her country. There was no turning back.

At the end, in early 2007 when we were together, working on the book "Reconciliation: Islam, Democracy and the West," which was meant to be a blue print for her third term as Prime Minister, I said in a quiet moment, "Benazir, you have given so much to your country, now it is time for you to live. You are still young and beautiful, with the best education in the world, you never have to worry about money, you have a family that adores you. For God's sake, go out and do the things you love, let someone else take on the pressure and responsibility."

I think that was sort of what I said and I remember that she smiled, a very sad smile, and looked at me and said, "Mark, after all these years you still don't understand." I remember her face then, her eyes glistened. We never had that conversation again.

In your opinion, is Pakistan's image worth building with reference to the PPP? Which areas of Pakistan's image would you emphasize on, if given the task?

As a lover of the country, let me say Pakistan's image is worth building for its 200 million people. Pakistan's international image has no relationship to reality. It is labeled a terrorist state when it actually has been the worst victim of terrorism in the world. It is viewed as undeveloped and unsophisticated when its technology is the finest in the world. Its people are hard working and want what all parents want, a better life for their children.

Somehow Pakistan is viewed as the militant instigator against India, with the world is blissfully unaware that the source of tension, the occupation of the Muslim principality of Kashmir, was mandated by the United Nations to be settled by self-determination and free elections, a UN resolution which India has blocked for 70 years.

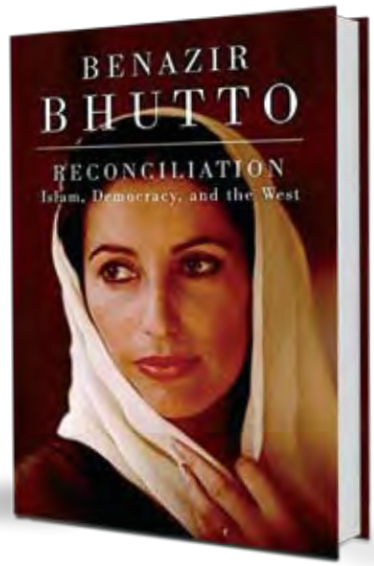
Political instability and dictatorship have further muddled Pakistan's image, while the full story is a people that have taken heroic steps, against all odds, to build a democracy. Yes, the image of Pakistan is worth building for the PPP and other political forces that believe in a democratic future.

How can the PPP make their basic philosophy of catering to the poor man more relevant in today's world?

The PPP was, is and will always be a liberal, social democratic party whose

universal platform is directed toward income equalization and opportunity to all strata of society, not just to the power elite. We see authoritarianism and myopic nationalism spreading across Europe and tragically even in the United States. But in Pakistan there is a new vital P and the democratic PP emerging, breaking away from older ideas tied to the past.

The new Pakistan deserves a successor generation of young political leaders who can simultaneously address problems that have held Pakistan back, like the failure of the rich to pay taxes and the impact that this has had on stifling education and opportunity in its cities and villages. The PPP is shaping a successor generation of new, talented, technological leaders generated by an increasingly democratic party structure. Change is often difficult, but change is happening in the PPP.



I am of course a bit prejudiced about the chairman of the Party because I think of Bilawal as family. But he's the real deal, and I am absolutely certain that he is fully committed to both democracy and dramatic economic modernization and equalization and he has surrounded himself with a cadre of young leaders who someday, In'shallah, will lead Pakistan into a very bright future.

Which leaders of the PPP have you been most impressed by?

I don't want to rank the older leaders of the party and the emerging new leaders but there are two exceptions. As I have said, I think Bilawal Bhutto Zardari is fully capable of leading the Party and someday the country and I am proud of him. He gets better each day. He continues to grow. He embraces innovation. I also would single out Senator Sherry Rehman as a dynamic fighter for human rights, women's rights and economic reform. She is doing a great job in the Senate.

Do you think if BB had survived, she would have brought true democracy to Pakistan?

As I have said earlier, the book "Reconciliation" was written as a blue print for Pakistan and for Pakistan's emergence as a world leader. That was her dream. That is my dream. I believe she had learned so much from being both in power and out of power, and was ready to lead boldly and brilliantly. And the only good thing about death is that no one can prove me wrong.

What was Benazir Bhutto's worldview in terms of democracy?

Her worldview is spelled out in page after page, chapter after chapter of "Reconciliation." It speaks for itself.

What is your opinion about the tensions currently prevailing between Pakistan and India?

The recent events are disheartening, but an inevitable result of the failure to deal with the "elephant in the room", the continuing human rights travesty of Kashmir.

The countries of the world shout out for self-determination for the West Bank and Gaza but are deaf and dumb to the occupation of the Muslims of Kashmir. Even the Ummah has turned its back. There are 13 million Muslim's living under harsh Indian occupation of Kashmir. Why is the League of Arab States quiet? Why is the OIC quiet? We know the original UN resolution on Kashmir giving its inhabitants two options, India or Pakistan, is probably politically unrealistic at this point. But just as the 2 State solution is the only logical way to secure peace between Israel and Palestine, a 3 state solution would seem to be the only sensible way to secure long-term peace between Pakistan and India.

Three states economically tied together, living in peace. A dream? Absolutely. But I'm a dreamer. Always have been, always will be.

Did Benazir Bhutto believe that politics was especially difficult for women, that there are different standards, and of course classic misogyny?

Yes, and why shouldn't she? She encountered it every day of her professional life. From the very outset when she assumed the leadership of the Party after ZAB's murder, she encountered unique problems of being a woman in politics, at least in Pakistan. It was all but impossible for Benazir to travel around the provinces meeting with PPP leaders. All the leaders were men. She couldn't meet with them alone. She had to be chaperoned. In the year after he return in 1986 the logistics of being a single women in national Pakistani politics were increasingly difficult. You know, Benazir had long given up any hope of a personal life, love, marriage, children. It was almost like a Catholic nun who is married to God. Benazir was married to Pakistan, it was just that simple. Pakistan first, Pakistan last, no time or energy for anything that would distract her from her responsibilities to the Party and country, nothing that could delay the return of democracy to Pakistan. But in 1987 Benazir came to realize that being married wouldn't interfere with her duties, but rather would professionally free her from restrictions placed on single women. So she finally gave her mother the green light, and then came Asif. All her friends were shocked that she would agree to a traditional arranged marriage, but she rationally explained it and became very happy when the bonds of marriage actually led to love.

But the fact that she was the first woman to ever be elected to govern a Muslim country caused even more international interest, fascination and expectations. The bar was raised sky high. Like it or not, she had become an icon,

About Mark Siegel:

Mark Siegel was a close friend, speech writer and confidante of late Benazir Bhutto for 25 years, and collaborated with her over the last months of her life in a widely acclaimed book entitled 'Reconciliation: Islam, Democracy and the West'. Mark Siegel and Benazir Bhutto completed the book just days before her death with Mr. Siegel receiving the final edits from her on the morning of her assassination. Given Mark Siegel's unique friendship with Benazir Bhutto, and their professional and political partnership over the years, he is now a sought-after voice on her message which is the theme of their book and her final legacy.

the face of modern Islam. But the double standards placed on women in politics continually and consistently complicated her life and her administration. Many years later, after her second government was dismissed and her husband arrested, Benazir was to come to America on a speaking tour that we had arranged. She asked me to call the White House to see if she might visit First Lady Hillary Clinton, whom she had hosted and bonded with when Mrs. Clinton visited Pakistan with her daughter Chelsea while Benazir was PM. It was a very difficult time for Benazir, with Asif in jail, because she insisted he was "a hostage to [her] political career." The Nawaz government was bringing legal case after legal case against her in an attempt to intimidate her and silence her as Leader of the Opposition. Her image was tarnished. As someone who had worked in the White House as Deputy Assistant to the President, I was very skeptical that the State Department would allow the First Lady to meet with a controversial Opposition leader. I called the White House and spoke to Mrs. Clinton's Chief of Staff, who shared my skepticism. She called me back later to say that she could not get State to clear the meeting. When I told Benazir she asked me to call back and say that she understood and wanted to wish Hillary the very best, a message I delivered immediately. The next day I was stunned to be called by the Chief of Staff telling me that the First Lady absolutely insisted that the meeting take place, even if it were over the objections of NSC and State. But the meeting was to be private, off-the-record, with no pictures or press releases or even inclusion on calendars. I of course agreed to all the terms.

In May of 1998 Benazir and Hillary met in the Oval Diplomatic Reception Room of the White House. I was Benazir's note-taker and Bruce Reidel of the National Security Council was Mrs. Clinton's note-taker. The meeting was scheduled for 30 minutes. It lasted 90. I do not believe that it has ever been reported before. I can't, or actually won't go into all of the details of the long, candid and startling conversation between these two extraordinary women who both were painful victims of the politics of personal destruction. But much of the conversation was indeed about the special difficulties that they faced as women in politics and government, It was so personal that Bruce and I independently at one point put down our pens and stopped taking notes because we both felt it was almost an invasion of privacy. There was one quote from Hillary Clinton that I did transcribe, and I don't think it would do any harm to repeat it now, with Benazir dead and Hillary sadly out of public life. It capsizes so much for Hillary and also for Benazir. Mrs. Clinton said, "You know better than anyone Benazir that we women, when we take on hard issues and open up new territory and break new ground are often blasted with ignorance and venom. Politics is a rough sport but I think much more so for women than for men. There don't seem to be any boundaries of decency and privacy." Benazir responded with the now famous Margaret Thatcher quote that we had been using in our speeches all over the world: "When a man is tough he is a leader. When a woman is tough she is a bitch." Benazir and Hillary both laughed. But it wasn't really funny, was it? It wasn't then and it isn't now. S

RISING FROM THE ASHES

The phoenix must be turned to ashes if Pakistan has to move forward.

BY TAJ HAIDER

Ideology and organization are the two pillars on which any political party stands. The basic infrastructure and foundation of any society is economics. Politics is only a superstructure built on this basic economic infrastructure.

Leaving aside the moral aspects, an organic moral value system is the adhesive that binds a society together and keeps it from dismembering. The glaring economic truth is that there cannot be any economic growth without a fair distribution of produced wealth. I read Munshi Prem Chand's masterpiece "KAFAN" (The Shroud) when I was 11 years old and a student of class eight. The master writer has brilliantly exposed in the story's first paragraph that in a society where those who work hard are as miserable as those who do not work, the sensible thing to do is "not to work".

No wonder that the productivity of our workers is steadily going down. The elite are allergic to work since they can get rich so easily through rampant exploitation and foul means. The net result is that the economic base of our society has collapsed. Those who think that a top heavy political superstructure can be erected on a collapsed economic foundation are denying the basic realities of economics and history. Oxygen provided by external sources can never resuscitate

Benazir Bhutto with her father Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

a dying economic system. Charities get exhausted sooner or later. State institutions lose even their coercive strength in the absence of a supportive economy. Nations do not prosper on wishful thinking and false rhetoric. The frightful gap between production and consumption, between the rich and poor cannot be narrowed by hollow words and slander. The contradiction within has to be resolved as a starting point.

The principal contradiction for a long time has been between the working people of Pakistan and the Pakistani Establishment. Religious extremism becomes a natural ally of the Establishment because of their common aim of blocking democracy and decentralization of resources and authority. However, in the post-Bhutto era, it has become evident that dictators need political crutches in order to survive. Zia realized soon enough that the support of mere religious groups was grossly deficient. If the existing political parties of the PNA which had been in the forefront of the reactionary anti-Bhutto movement were withdrawing their support, the Establishment had to perforce manufacture their own political parties.

No right-thinking person would ever lend support to military dictators. Dictators out of necessity have to gather the worst elements in society and bring them into politics. These unprincipled, self-centered persons without any political ideology or commitment, demand their price. The price willingly given is unbridled authority over their areas of influence and the freedom to 'earn' wealth by any means, fair or foul. The real fountainhead of corruption in national politics has proved to be none other than the Establishment of Pakistan. One is a 'saint' if one is on the side of the Establishment. If not, one is an enemy of Pakistan, enemy of Islam, security threat, corrupt and what not. Thus has grown a new category of 'politicians' who are most willing to carry out the wishes and commands of the Establishment and who believe that the Establishment and not the people are the real source of power.

This, devoid of any political ideology, is an interchangeable collection of corrupt local influential persons who are given a name and called a political party. Fragmentation of society on sectarian, ethnic, linguistic and other lines, raising of non-issues and glamorizing of abusive language and uncivilized conduct are known methods of reactionaries to depoliticize society in order to perpetuate their anti-people and anti-democratic rule.

A powerful propaganda machinery to defame progressive and democratic elements and to eulogize the mere rhetoric of the agents of the Establishment becomes the norm. When no faults can be found with the politics of a progressive politician, his political stand is simply ignored and his person comes under attack. Those who invent and continue to repeat lies start believing in those lies over time. It is nothing short of a national tragedy that when there was a valiant revolt against the 'Press in Chains', 'Lifafa Journalism' was introduced. Those publications and television channels which refused to sell their conscience and professional integrity were subjected to harsh economic pressures with impunity and forced to adopt a course of self-censorship.

In any civilized society, no one is guilty unless proven guilty. How is it that no one is questioning the 11-year long imprisonment of former President Zardari, when not a single case against him could be proved in a court of law? Mr. Zardari is a political person. Why is it that his politics is rarely mentioned and unfounded and most abusive attacks on his person abound in the media? How in this particular case has the propaganda machine of the Establishment assumed the dual roles of the prosecutor and judge?

Federations are held together by political consensus and not by brute force. Where would our Federation be if Mr. Zardari had not raised the slogan of 'Pakistan Khapay' in the face of the grave tragedy of the shahadat of Bibi sahiba? Would the Federation be as strong as it is today if the 18th Amendment, initiated and constantly followed up by Mr. Zardari, had not been unanimously passed by the Parliament? Why is it that the National Finance Commission was not able to give a NFC award for seventeen years prior to the one that President Zaradri was able to negotiate or till today when it has been overdue for the last five years?

Isn't this politics of accommodation, forbearance and reconciliation of Mr. Zardari that has made it possible for successive elected/selected assemblies to complete their terms? It was President Zaradari who took a brave stand against religious militants and got large areas of Pakistan freed from their control. Could CPEC be started if President Zardari had not vigorously followed it up during his tenure? What about the Pak-Iran Gas pipeline project that was signed by President Zardari in spite of American pressures and was given up by succeeding governments as they did not have the guts to complete it?

In the face of the gravest economic crises that the country is faced with, one wonders why the practical economic solutions that have been given in the PPP manifesto are not being discussed in the media or being implemented by the selected government?

The reactionaries and the Establishment have never had the will or the solutions or the wisdom to resolve the grave problems that the country and its people have been facing. I respect the wishes of SouthAsia magazine and I am sorry to disappoint them. A phoenix has certainly to be turned to ashes. But it has to be correctly identified. Pakistan People's Party has faced much greater challenges. Unfortunately, during the last 50 years, the mandate of the people for the Pakistan People's Party has only been respected after long periods when the country and its economy have been destroyed. It is the phoenix of the continued rule of the Establishment that has to be turned to ashes and shall be turned to ashes if Pakistan has to move forward. S

The writer is a former senator and has shared his thoughts extensively on nuclear policy issues, left-wing ideas and literary and political philosophy. He can be reached at tajhaider1@gmail.com

PARTY IN DOLDRUMS

Founded with much fanfare, the PPP today is a shadow of what it was at its birth and questions are raised about its future.

BY S. G. JILANEE

In the wake of the Tashkent Declaration, brokered by the Soviet Union after the 1965 war between India and Pakistan, foreign minister Zulfikar Ai Bhutto broke away from President Ayub Khan, denouncing the deal as a sell-out.

He began mobilizing public opinion through his fiery speeches and, in April 1967, gathered together a few like-minded people including J.A. Rahim, Rafi Raza, Meraj Khalid, Yusuf Buch, etc., at the residence of Engineer, Dr Mubashir Hassan in Lahore, to launch the Pakistan People's Party.

The Party's broadminded manifesto, "Islam is our Religion; Democracy is our Politics; Socialism is our Economy; Power Lies with the People," inspired the masses. But, the *chef d'oeuvre* was its slogan of *roti, kapra, makan* that captured the imagination of the multitude. Here was a party that promised them a contented life. To propagate its mission, the party launched an Urdu newspaper called "*Musawat*" (Equality).

The PPP's message spread like prairie fire across West Pakistan. To boost it further, there were ZAB's charismatic personality, his passionate speeches and his theatrics that mesmerised the masses. As a result, the PPP swept the polls in the 1970 general elections to emerge as the largest political party in West Pakistan.

However, ZAB was congenitally ambitious. He could go to any length to achieve his ends, as borne out by his flattery-soaked letters to President Iskander Mirza. The sweeping victory in West Pakistan went to his head, so he began to think in terms of dividing power between himself and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, whose Awami League had won the elections in East Pakistan. Ultimately, his ornery attitude led to the creation of Bangladesh.

But ZAB was happy. He had achieved his ambition. He was now the leader of the residual Pakistan.

Monkey's revenge: Bhutto's fatal weakness was his arrogance and his tendency to make fun of people with ridiculous nicknames. He crossed all bounds of decency when, at a state banquet, he beckoned the army chief, Gen. Ziaul Haq, who was sitting a little distance away, saying, "Come here,

my monkey." And the latter submissively obeyed. But, when his opportunity came, the "monkey" sent his master to the gallows.

After Bhutto, the baton passed to his widow, Nusrat Bhutto. Benazir Bhutto had meanwhile taken care to whisk her mother away to London in order to prevent her from nominating her son, Murtaza Bhutto as her successor. Later, he was killed in a police encounter under suspicious circumstances which were never investigated, even though the incident happened when Benazir was the prime minister.

Benazir wanted to exploit the groundswell in public sympathy for her as an orphan, following her father's execution. But her unmarried status was an obstacle while there were no eligible suitors around.

That was where Asif Ali Zardari saw his chance. He was aware that in terms of social status, a Zardari was to a Bhutto what a *bhungi* (low caste) was to a Brahmin. But there was no one else in the field. So he set up his abode in London and became a voluntary factotum to Nusrat Bhutto.

The wasp factor: Zardari worked upon Nusrat Bhutto so she pleaded for him with Benazir. Meanwhile, gossip has it that one day a wasp stung Benazir and she was in acute pain. At this moment Zardari appeared like a knight in shining armour by her side. That settled the issue and the knot was tied.

But Zardari was inherently corrupt. He had

"The PPP died with the tragic assassination of Benazir Bhutto in December 2007."

Hidayatullah, security guard

"Gone are the days when the PPP was truly a representative of the country's working class. Currently, the Party represents the bourgeoisie, both in its actions and representation."

Adnan Shareef, office worker

"The only person who succeeded in taking ZAB's vision forward was his own daughter, Benazir Bhutto."

Muhammad Shakeel, office assistant

"The current PPP leadership does not have any programme for public welfare. It just has a bunch of stale narratives."

Arsalan Ahmed, finance manager

"Today's PPP does not know who it really represents."

Gul Khan, security guard

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Going Beyond 100 Years of Excellence

started his life selling film tickets in the black market at his father's Bambino Cinema in Karachi. His contagion infected Benazir. So, when she became prime minister, Zardari acquired the sobriquet of "Mr. 10 per cent." In fact, corruption under Benazir as prime minister spiralled to such heights that the *New York Times* published a lengthy Special Report under the title "*House of Graft*" by John Burns, with jaw-dropping revelations about a manor in Sussex, a chateau in Normandy and Benazir's fabulous diamond necklace, among other things.

By this time, the PPP had already shed most of its shine and its public support had shrunk. It was Benazir's charisma that kept the party together. But, with her demise, the PPP became rudderless.

Bhutto's party is now led by Asif Zardari. Benazir's son, Bilawal is the *de jure* chairman. But, it is his father, who, as co-chairman, calls the shots as de facto chairman. Bilawal is tasked to deliver public statements as coached by his father. But the poor lad has none of his mother's or his grandfather's crowd-pulling charisma. Nor is he as eloquent and fluent in his speech. No wonder he shies away from holding public meetings.

Zardari's etiolating shadow has further debilitated the party which has shrunk to a skeleton of its past. Once a vibrant outfit and popular countrywide, it s now almost confined to Sindh. The situation has become so underwhelming that questions have arisen about the party's future.

There is nothing the party can offer the masses to enthuse them. The *Roti, kapra, makan*, slogan is old hat. Moreover, times have changed. These are the times of air combat, downing enemy planes and capturing their pilots. Today's situation demands statesmanship of a high order.

At present the PPP has only 54 seats in the National Assembly as against 84 of its rival, PML (N). There is no PPP organisation in Punjab and elsewhere in the country. The cadres disappeared not because they had any principled differences with Zardari, but because, they were convinced he was not likely to throw a big enough challenge to the Sharifs.

Bilawal seems confused. He needs to provide answers to the allegations of corruption against the PPP due to which people have lost faith in its leadership. Founded on the slogan of equality, the party now reflects inequality in society, led by the landed aristocracy, pirs, tribal chiefs and businessmen. Unless it is resuscitated, the PPP is doomed. S

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END OF THE ROAD?

The Pakistan People's Party had many opportunities to change the country's fortunes but it lost every one of them. The future of the Party looks as bleak as was its past.

BY S.R.H. HASHMI

The birth and rise of the Pakistan People's Party was phenomenal. For this, the credit of course goes to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who was an orator par excellence, knew how to play with the people's emotions and was a born leader. However, the peculiar circumstances of the time also greatly helped him. People were fed up with military dictators and there was a lot of dissatisfaction and frustration, more so in the eastern wing of Pakistan which, despite a larger population, received a smaller share than West Pakistan in both the civil and military sectors.

Still, ZAB's electoral victory was nowhere near that of Shaikh Mujibur Rahman. Out of 300 National Assembly seats, Shaikh Mujib's Awami League bagged 160, securing 39.2 percent of the votes cast, whereas the Pakistan People's Party won only 81 seats, getting 18.6 percent of the votes. The remaining 59 seats were shared by various parties as well as independents, with none winning more than 10 seats.

As for the provincial assemblies, Shaikh Mujib's Awami League won 288 seats (96%) of the total 300 seats in East Pakistan. In West Pakistan, the PPP won 113 out of the total 180 seats in Punjab, 28 out of 60 seats in Sindh, 13 out of 40 seats in the North-Western Frontier Province (now KPK) and none of the 20 seats in Balochistan. Thus, the Pakistan People's Party won 154 seats (51.3%) out of a total 300 provincial seats in West Pakistan. Shaikh Mujibur Rehman overwhelmed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in both the National and Provincial Assembly elections.

Naturally, Shaikh Mujibur Rehman deserved to be called to form the government at the centre. However, while Gen. Yahya Khan did say in the beginning that Shaikh Mujibur Rehman would be the next prime minister of Pakistan, it soon became apparent that he had no intention of giving the prime ministership to Shaikh Mujibur Rehman. It seems, he had only held the elections in the hope that no clear winner would emerge and he would continue to preside over a weak coalition government.

To make things worse, even Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who got just over half of the total votes secured by Mujib and was far below the simple majority figure of 151 National Assembly seats, refused to accept Shaikh Mujibur Rehman as the prime minister.

"Some soul-searching is required for the PPP leadership to get to the root of its downfall."

Sunny Hajara, office assistant

"The Pakistan People's Party is no more a people's party."

Shabbir Hussain, office assistant

"Bhutto's PPP is dead. What we see today is an assembly of self-centered politicians using the PPP's well-established platform to achieve their vested interests."

Abdul Shakoor Gujjar, office assistant

"The PPP has lost its iconic image among the people because it has time and again failed to provide people with roti, kapra aur makan."

Muhammad Iqbal, media monitor

"The Pakistan People's Party needs to get its house in order before it is completely wiped out from the country's political scene."

Mashood Akbar, salesperson

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto even went to the extent of threatening to break the legs of anyone who dared attend the National Assembly session called by Mujib in East Pakistan. Gen. Yahya went on a visit to East Pakistan, ostensibly to negotiate with Mujib but actually to gain time to send more troops to East Pakistan. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto is even reported to have suggested to Shaikh Mujibur Rehman, "Idhar Hum, Udhar Tum," which showed very clearly how power-hungry he was. The rest is history.

Pakistan, which was created after great efforts and sacrifices by millions of Muslims, broke up into two in a mere 24 years and in a most shameful manner. The real blame for this rests with the West Pakistani leadership starting with Ayub Khan, rather than with India, which understandably took full advantage of the mess that the West Pakistani leaders – both in and out of uniform - had created in East Pakistan.

When Pakistan broke, the whole nation was in a deep state of shock. Thousands of Pakistani soldiers surrendered; they were taken as POWs by the Indian forces and shifted to India. Subsequently, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto managed to get the POWs freed and brought them back to Pakistan but not without waiving the right to raise the Kashmir issue at other forums except as laid down in the Simla Agreement. Under the Agreement, India and Pakistan resolved to settle their differences by peaceful means through bilateral negotiations or by any other peaceful means mutually agreed upon between them. However, those Pakistanis who had earlier migrated to East Pakistan and had settled there were abandoned by the new Bangladeshi government and they still languish in sub-human condition in refugee camps. The Rabta Alam-e-Islami had made arrangements for the stranded Pakistanis to be shifted to whatever was left of Pakistan but this did not happen. Some of them were later brought to Pakistan and settled in parts of Punjab, but overall, the Pakistan government did accept their legal rights as its citizens. It was clear that the government had shamefully reneged on its commitment – and continues to do so to this day.

It was again Zulfikar Ali Bhutto who took the initiative to hold an Islamic Summit Conference in Pakistan in 1974. The event was attended by heads of state and ministers and dignitaries from most Muslim countries. Bhutto also was the one who started Pakistan's nuclear programme. This has, over time, given Pakistan a nuclear capability and the fact that this capability has served as a deterrent against a much bigger India, has never been more evident than in recent days. Unfortunately for Bhutto, both these initiatives made him very unpopular with major western powers who finally took their pound of flesh through Gen. Ziaul Haq. It is an irony, though, that the general also met a similar fate.

It must be said that Zulfikar Ali Bhutto did not prove to be exactly an unmixed blessing for Pakistan. While the nation owes its nuclear programme to him, he also shares responsibility for the breakup of Pakistan by refusing to accept the clear mandate of Shaikh Mujibur Rehman. Later, his nationalization programme ruined Pakistan's flourishing industry while the fact that he handed over so many key sectors to the state, such as educational institutions, served to reverse Pakistan's progress.

Coming into power under the garb of democracy, Bhutto gradually became more of a dictator with the result that many of his colleagues parted ways with him or were ditched. The fact is that Zulfikar Ali Bhutto wanted power at all costs. He started banking more on electables and, because of his policies, his core support groups became disenchanted with him. Sensing this vulnerability, his own hand-picked army chief, Gen. Ziaul Haq struck and even got him hanged.

The tragedy brought a sympathy vote for Bhutto's daughter Benazir Bhutto and this enabled the Pakistan People's Party to return to power and continue for some more years. In fact, it was the people's sympathy that enabled Benazir Bhutto to be elected prime minister twice.

When Benazir Bhutto was rooting for election as prime minister for the third time, there came another tragedy: her assassination. This was when Asif Zardari entered the political arena in a big way. The problem was that, by this time, the reservoir of sympathy for the PPP as well as its original charisma had started waning. Many of the Party's stalwarts distanced themselves from it and Asif Ali Zardari's performance as the President of Pakistan could hardly be termed as heart-winning.

As things stand today, bright stars do not exist in the PPP anymore and neither do any seem to be visible on the horizon. Its senior leadership is being hounded by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) while its governance is only restricted to the province of Sindh. As for the slogan 'Roti, Kapra aur Makan', the people of Pakistan never saw the fruition of this claim by the Pakistan People's Party at any time during its rule, whether under Bhutto, under BB or under Zardari.

Perhaps that is one reason why the PPP now finds itself at the end of the road. S

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NEW DELHI

Whither Secularism?

Indian democracy, which was once considered remarkable in scale and duration, has been weakened by the rise of xenophobic nationalism and threats to religious minorities.

BY ATIF SHAMIM SYED

Narendra Modi's spectacular success in 2014 was more of miracle than an election victory. His Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won an absolute majority in the Lok Sabha – a feat considered almost impossible in India's labyrinthine political framework. In part, BJP's electoral success was a collective rejection of the incumbent Congress Party and its failed policies. Another factor that worked for the BJP was Narendra Modi's personal charisma and mass appeal. Over the past few years, Modi had meticulously created the persona of a strong, decisive and business-friendly leader. India was sure that the veteran leader from Gujrat will turn the economy around and provide relief to the layman.

There was, however, another group of people who saw Modi's success as a triumph of the Hindu nationalist ideology that he espoused. As soon as Narendra Modi ascended to power, the extreme right saw an opportunity to advance its own nationalist project which seeks to turn India into a Hindu state rather than a secular country.

Hinduism's inherent caste system has rendered its adherents fundamentally divided. This deep-seated division within the community is further augmented by the socio-economic, cultural, and linguistic differences among Hindus. The only thing that can unite such a diverse people is a real or imagined threat of a common enemy. By using this idea of the common Muslim enemy, Hindutva has created a thread that binds all Hindus belonging to any caste.

Muslims are the biggest minority in India, constituting around 14% of the population. They are seen as an impediment to the Hindu nationalist venture. Since 2014, BJP and its allies are diligently working towards a systematic marginalization of Muslims. Renaming of historical places, enactment of cow protection laws, and appointment of hardline Hindus to positions of power – all these actions are aimed at undermining Muslims and providing an upper hand to the extremist right.

With general elections fast approaching, right-wing nationalist rhetoric has gained unprecedented momentum. This is because the BJP government has failed to deliver during its tenure. Unemployment is high, economic growth is negligible, the agriculture sector is facing a crisis and the highly publicized demonetization policy lies in tatters. Modi knows that he has failed to fulfill even a single one of his electoral promises. The only option left to him is rhetoric, hysteria, Muslim-bashing and occasional violence.

The Indian electorate will be confronted with two rival visions when more than 900 million of them begin casting their votes in April. At one end of the spectrum is Narendra Modi and his cadre of extremists who are seeking to define their country by the faith of its majority. On the opposite side, there are the seculars who cherish the diversity of the Indian people and consider it a source of their nation's strength.

For more than seven decades since independence, the liberal-secular discourse remained dominant in India. But it does not mean that the Hindu nationalist element wasn't there. Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the flagship of Hindutva, has been around for almost a century. It boasts a membership of five million souls – an impressive number for a volunteer organization.

The RSS, through its thousands of full-time hardcore members, retains control over the entire family of Hindutva groups known as the Sangh Parivar. The Parivar has a wide range of membership, which includes professionals like doctors, engineers, teachers, lawyers and judges, etc. It controls trade unions, farmers' unions and student organizations. Educated members of the Parivar are subtle in their approach, patiently working towards the formulation and enactment of nationalist policies. Other groups within the Parivar, like the Bajrang Dal, Shiv Sena, Vishwa Hindu Parishad and the All India Students Council are more aggressive. Members of these groups frequently resort to violence against Muslims, secular Hindus and other minority groups.

The BJP is an affiliate of the RSS. Narendra Modi himself was a hard-core member of this organization. During the last elections, the Sangh Parivar openly supported Modi's election campaign and put its massive weight behind him. Once elected, Modi paid back the favour by appointing Sangh Parivar supporters in the police, army, judiciary, education and various other influential political positions. Yet, the Parivar wants more. The RSS is particularly annoyed with Modi for not having done enough for their cause. There are three specific agenda items that the RSS wanted resolved before Modi's term expired; passing laws for protection of cows; building a temple in Ayodhya; and repealing the special status of Jammu & Kashmir.

Modi's government placed several restrictions on the slaughter of cows despite incurring an opportunity cost of around 4 billion dollars. Farmers are unhappy because they are unable to sell their cattle once it crosses the milking age. Violence meted out by self-styled cow vigilantes has alienated Muslims and even lower-caste Hindus.

There has been no success on the Ayodhya temple front either. Modi has very limited influence with the Judiciary and most Indians are not really concerned whether the Ram temple is erected or not. BJP cadres have recognized the public indifference towards the temple issue, and quietly told their workers not to push the agenda any further.

In Kashmir, Narendra Modi has taken an unusually tough stand. Direct rule from the capital has been imposed in the valley. The BJP has also threatened to end the special status of Jammu & Kashmir. The valley is on the edge. There has been a renewed surge in violence after years of relative peace.

The Parivar sees these as a failings on Modi's part. They are irritated, annoyed and impatient. Core members of the RSS are also aware that Modi is building a cult of personality around himself – something they do not approve of.

Rivals of the Parivar think that the battle for an all-inclusive secular India has already been lost. Over the years, the Sangh Parivar has carefully constructed the narrative of Hindu victimhood in their own country. It has constructed a world full of enemies – Pakistan being one of them. The recent terrorist attack in Pulwama and the humiliation of the Indian Air Force at the hands of PAF, both fit into the Hindutva narrative. This writer thinks that in the final analysis, the events of February 2019 will further strengthen the BJP. The power of the Sangh Parivar will increase after the elections. Its actions will become even bolder.

Modi and his followers think that they are on a divine mission to convert India into a Hindu state. Recent clashes with Pakistan have added a tinge of patriotism to the Hindutva ideology. If Narendra Modi is elected for another term, it will be the end of the old secular India.

The writer is a free-lancer and an investment banker based in Karachi. He can be reached at syedatifshamim@hotmail.com

LAHORE

MORE THAN A KICK-START

Despite tremendous worldwide efforts towards privatization, the public enterprise sector has remained a significant contributor to the economies of developing countries like Pakistan.

BY AMNA SARWAR SANDHU

Imagine Pakistan's economy as being like a person in cardiac arrest. A monetary stimulus, such as the ones from Saudi Arabia, China and hopefully the IMF, are an adrenaline shot that aims to kick-start the heart. It revives the patient but it does nothing to cure the disease. A decade of regular adrenaline shots has built the country's tolerance, exhausting the effect of the shots to stabilize and stimulate the economy in the long-run. Hence, Pakistan just does not only need the adrenaline

shots again and again but comprehensive treatment for its ailing economy. A good cure would include appropriate structural reforms. The cushion provided to the balance of payments through increased exports to China and the oil facility from Saudi Arabia is important but not a substitute for critical reforms. The lack of structural reforms is reflected in the inefficient use of the funds injected into the economy.

Even after years of repeated reforms, Pakistan's institutions are still weak as policymakers have been too preoccupied with politics and these weaknesses are transferred to the real economy. The PTI government has made promises to re-invent everything. Realistically speaking, the first few months set a direction for future policies. What is needed is to set a path and prioritize a clear line of action. One of the reasons for the current economic chaos stem essentially from the deteriorating performance of key institutions such as State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs). SOEs play a crucial role in employment, public service provision and overall socio-economic development.

Recently, the government removed 14 SOEs from the privatization list. It is now being suggested that something like the Malaysian transformation programme, based on the holding companies model, be used to reform the State-Owned Enterprises. The use of holding companies provides a mid-way solution between privatization and control of the current political leadership. What needs to be understood is Malaysia's SOE transformation model to learn from its best practices and adapt them to Pakistan.

In Malaysia, most of its largest corporations are controlled by seven government linked investment companies (GLICs). They dominate the ownership structure of 35 public-listed companies that make up almost half of the total market capitalization of all listed companies. The Malaysian government turned their weak operational and financial SOEs into profitable, performance-oriented and well-governed institutions by making key structural changes.

The real challenge for the government lies in structural reform as the financial and economic crisis is fundamentally a management crisis.

A few important lessons can be learnt from Malaysia. Firstly, it is important to establish and actively monitor an accountable body. Such a committee should be focused on designing and implementing comprehensive policies that transform SOEs to become high performers. Evaluation studies were conducted to examine the root causes of underperformance and then international best practices were used to provide a benchmark. Policies and a legal framework was introduced that supported the new management from the private and public sectors to mend the SOEs. To improve transparency and accountability, the companies were required to communicate their strategy and performance to all stakeholders, especially the public.

Secondly, the government introduced clear, quantifiable short and long-term key performance indicators (KPIs). They covered both financial and non-financial factors that were realistic and performance-based and not just focused on the stock price. Each KPI was benchmarked with comparable international counterpart within a specific time frame. The programme also introduced performance-based contracts and compensation for higher management. This improved management practices and profitability. Thus, Malaysian GLICs experienced a growth rate of 11% annually during the transformation period.

Thirdly, the transformation programme was based on the national economic development goals of the Malaysian government. Their New Economic Model launched in 2010 provided support and clear direction for Malaysia to become a developed economy by 2020. The strategy outlined precise actions for executing the transformation, such as investment in knowledge-based and service-oriented industries and appropriate steps to increase both their regional and global presence.

Lastly, Malaysia made massive investments in their human resources that have provided them with a new generation of competent autonomous managers and leaders. Malaysian Directors Academy (MINDA) specifically equipped directors for GLICs with relevant knowledge and management skills. Unfortunately, the recent Human Development Index shows that Pakistan has failed to invest in its people. Despite experiencing healthy economic growth, if the country's development is not making the lives of its people better than what is even the point of focusing on development? It is not just the investment in people but also the quality of investment. So how can Pakistan use its institutions as instruments to promote human development?

The real challenge for the government lies in structural reform as the financial and economic crisis is fundamentally a management crisis. If the government wishes to adopt transformation programmes for SOEs, it needs to think in terms of decades and not just quarters. Thus, to turn around the performance of Pakistan's SOEs based on the Malaysian model as discussed here, the government needs a strong political will to outline a clear mandate and lay down goals for a government body that will formulate and track the progress of the KPIs throughout the transformation period. This, combined with the relevant accountability framework that promotes transparency and performance-oriented policies, can be counted on to deliver the desired results. It is very important to align national development goals with the transformation programme so that the government is enabled to focus on the strategic sectors as well as the SOEs, as these are essential for Pakistan's future growth. S

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SRINAGAR

A TRIANGULATION OF GRANDEUR

The volatile relationship between India and Pakistan is the crucial factor determining whether the region can ever be safe and stable.

BY CYNTHIA D. RITCHIE

History is riddled with world leaders preoccupied with their own fame, omnipotence and genius. And crises manufacturing is nothing new, particularly when it's related to political posturing. The depths to which many candidates will stoop to is nothing short of sub-human behaviour. From the West to the East, human behaviour is the same. Some machinations are just a bit more sophisticated, in all their glitzy, glamorous glory.

But all that glitters is not gold.

Brigadier Samson Sharif (R) recently described *'Modi's Rukma Vimana'* in Gods of Fire, "…blazing missiles flashed, and tremendous roars, like the noise of a thousand drums beaten at once. And from [the sky] fell many weapons winged with gold and thousands of thunderbolts, with loud explosions, and many hundreds of fiery wheel Vaimanika Sastra…

Narendra Modi… believes that such an Indian Kingdom existed in antiquity and that he is the reincarnation of Arjuna in Baghavad Gita, flying a massive Vimana with thousands of airborne chariots. He is convinced he is the chosen one by gods to lead the charge. The land he must hail fire on is Pakistan."

On a superficial level, therse are the makings of yet another Indian film production to distract, defer and deflect. Historically, India has enjoyed better production value in the media and policy levels than Pakistan has. But at stake is more than just a seat at the political roundtable.

In *Avoiding Armageddon*, Martin Schram quoted George Perkovich: For India's Nuclear Programme, "Canada provided the reactor. The U.S. provided 'heavy water' designs for the plant to separate the plutonium; and trained more than a thousand Indian nuclear scientists and engineers… we now know India took the plutonium from that reactor and used it for its first nuclear explosive and said, 'Hey, it's still peaceful purposes.' But in reality, it was a prototype bomb… I chose to be diplomatic and not call this 'cheating' – but others could interpret this differently."

The Indus Waters Treaty, the chronic conflict in Kashmir. The historical timing and methods of operations are strikingly similar to the Palestine-Israel conflict. From turf wars over metallurgical assets and natural resources which could result in enormous commercial value, to social media turf wars – we are living in some of the most intriguing times in South Asia's recent history. Some identify the era we are living in as a 'post-conflict'; perhaps it's 'post-conflict' on land – but not online.

India drastically increased its presence in Afghanistan politics after 9/11, more overtly laying claim to its own strategic interests in Afghanistan. Modi possesses an extreme rightist lineage. Efforts to assuage bilateral disagreements have been avoided by the premier. And now we see him scrambling to connect to a more 'common man' mentality by changing his twitter handle. Superficial tactics such as these will not blind the thinking person.

The mere fact that the upcoming FATA elections are taking place in the spring of 2019 alongside India's elections, reminds

us that this region is changing drastically. And not everyone likes change.

Is it a coincidence that the balance of power is shifting as Pakistan and China continue to forge a long-term, multi-generational alliance – something Western powers have yet to fully learn from or implement in their own multi-pronged strategic plans? Is it a coincidence that certain movements with political agendas within Pakistan have enjoyed rather obvious support from Afghanistan and India?

I have never been one to judge based on race, faith, culture, etc. But in the interest of objectivity and as an American living in Pakistan, I ask these questions: How many Indian policy writers and influencers work for the US Department of State; how many Indian influencers work in social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, and how many have unfairly suspended accounts of Pakistanis - and friends of Pakistan - voicing their concerns over India's increasingly aggressive and abusive human rights violations?

One might say that experiential learning is the best form of education. Since my time in Pakistan I, too, have experienced social media discrimination – with updates and certain statuses receiving 'limited visibility'. Frustrating as it might be, I see it for what it is. Yet many do not.

How much longer will the global community tolerate blatant discrimination and repress/censor speech via social media – the primary form of communications for so many today. Isn't the right to freedom of expression and opinion – through any media and regardless of frontiers, backed by the United Nations? And why is unmistakably volatile media, such as the New Zealand shooting, allowed to blossom?

It is said that one's perception is one's reality. However, I also ask: are the modern, self-appointed 'voices' who are complaining about historical and regional challenges, the ones who are trying to shape reality (online versus on the ground), the right stakeholders? How much longer will this triangulation, this political nexus, adversely impact innocent lives? And how much longer will those who are in a position to do something, look away? Casually sipping their coffees and teas as if nothing's amiss.

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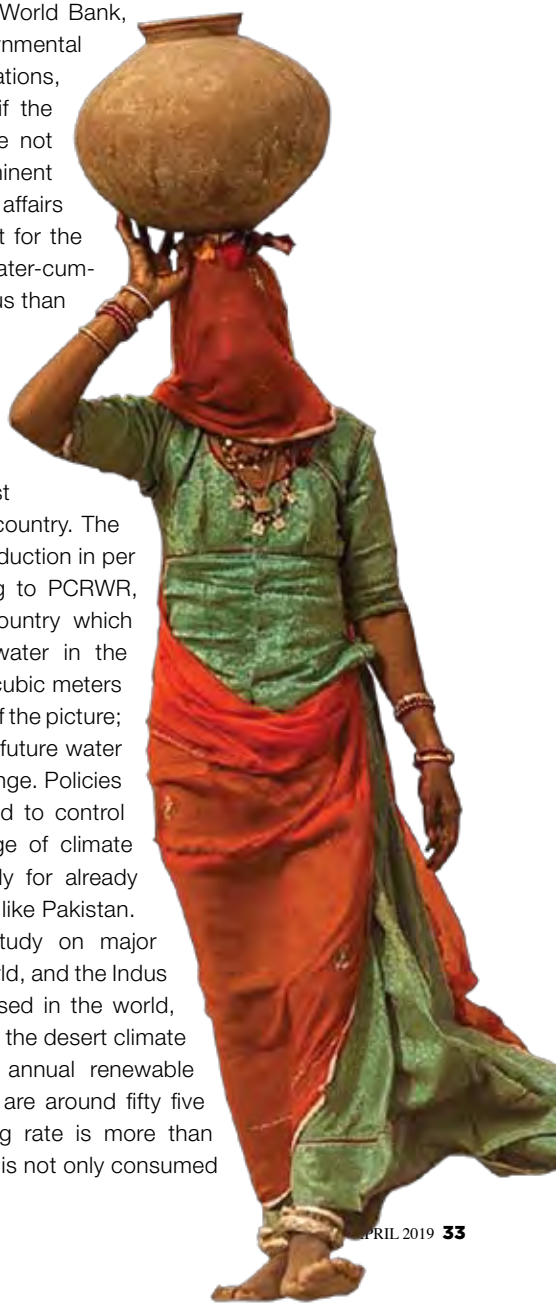
KALABAGH

SEEKING SOLUTIONS

Pakistan is battling with a massive water crisis. The country is on its way to becoming the most water-stressed country in the region.

BY DANYAL AZIZ

The report from the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) about Pakistan becoming dry by 2025 made headlines across the country and also caused alarm – to a specific notch. While the scientific evidence behind such a doomsday scenario is debatable, the issue is severe and requires critical responsiveness of researchers and policymakers equally. The report from the PCRWR was not the first but one of numerous others published by the World Bank, the IMF, NASA and other governmental and non-governmental organizations, forecasting the same future crisis if the water challenges of the country are not tackled effectively. Some prominent people who have a keen eye on the affairs of South Asia have even stated that for the future of Pakistan, the looming water-cum-humanitarian crisis is more dangerous than terrorism or a conflict with India.



The IMF Report in 2015 attributed the water crisis in Pakistan to the population bulge. It stated that the uncontrolled growth in population is the greatest threat to water sustainability in the country. The population increase has caused a reduction in per capita water supply and, according to PCRWR, Pakistan is now a water-scarce country which means that per capita available water in the country is less than seven hundred cubic meters per annum. But this is only one side of the picture; there is a more potent threat to the future water security of the country – climate change. Policies can be formulated and implemented to control population growth but the challenge of climate change is hard to tackle, especially for already climate change vulnerable countries like Pakistan.

NASA in 2018 published a study on major groundwater aquifers all over the world, and the Indus aquifer was the second most stressed in the world, only second to the Arabian aquifer in the desert climate of the Middle East. The average annual renewable groundwater resources of Pakistan are around fifty five cubic kilometers while the pumping rate is more than sixty cubic kilometers. Groundwater is not only consumed

extensively for drinking purposes but also used in large amounts in irrigation, especially in Punjab. This groundwater over-exploitation combined with climate change can have a severe impact on the water security of Pakistan. The Indus, which is mostly a glacier-fed river, is vulnerable to the effects of climate change in the form of flash floods and ultimately low flows in the future because of rapid glacier melt.

Climate change and population growth affect both water and food security. Low water availability means low agricultural productivity as well as a drinking water crisis. Amid the population growth and climate change, there is also a public health concern due to the degradation of water resources – both surface and groundwater. The magnitude of the drinking water crisis in Pakistan is more severe than agricultural water availability in the sense that the water quality might not be as much a concern for farmers than for domestic consumers.

The water demand-supply gap in the urban centres of the country is met through intermittent water supply. Karachi and Hyderabad are two severely water-stressed cities because surface water is a primary source of drinking water. Surface waters of the Indus River and canals downstream of the Kotri Barrage are susceptible to flow variations, and the water quality at this downstream end of the Indus Basin Irrigation System is also compromised. As per the figures of WASA and KWSB, around half of the demand in both Hyderabad and Karachi is met through municipal water supplies, but even this half-met demand is not for the whole day but a few hours. Intermittent water supplies have an attendant risk of water quality deterioration due to the contamination of pipes. The poor quality of drinking water results in loss of life and productivity. Every hour spent at a hospital due to a waterborne disease is both a burden on the health sector and productivity loss in terms of GDP.

The groundwater over-exploitation combined with climate change can have a severe impact on water security of Pakistan.

The multifaceted water crisis in Pakistan is not peculiar. Many cases from developed and developing countries can be studied and used in finding sustainable solutions to the urban water crisis in Pakistan. The current research paradigm among the urban water researchers is to scale up the concept of net zero water communities and make the smart water cities concept a reality. For the urban centres in Pakistan, if these concepts seem too ahead in time, then other more readily available options can be adopted. The first strategy should be to start awareness campaigns regarding water conservation. For a water-scarce country like Pakistan, the consumption patterns, especially in the agriculture sector, are unsustainable. The old irrigation techniques should be replaced with the latest and more efficient forms of irrigation.

In cities, water recycling could be a remedy for increasing demand amid diminishing supplies. Almost 95% of domestic water usage is non-consumptive, meaning that it is returned to the system. Wastewater is called a resource for a reason. This untapped water could be used for agricultural supplies following minimal or even human consumption after advanced treatment. The advanced treatment technology and the process is costly. Therefore, for a developing country like Pakistan, recycled water could be used more preferably for irrigation. This strategy achieves two goals; water conservation and a synergistic effect in balancing domestic and agricultural water supplies. Other approaches could include rainwater harvesting and stormwater treatment to augment domestic water supplies.

Cities across Pakistan have different climates and different challenges. Hence, there can be no one remedy for all the cities but the water supply crisis can be tackled with one or a combination of options. For water quality problems, treatment is a costly process and users are expected to pay for clean water. The pricing and conservation strategies should be pursued in tandem to ensure sufficient water supply amid the shrinking supplies and also collect enough revenue to operate water treatment plants. For water pricing, the concept of the more you use, the more you pay should be adopted and people should be educated to appreciate the value of water as a commodity.

The bottom-line is that there are as many solutions as there are problems. The need is to indoctrinate research-driven policies in the governance of water institutions. S

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KABUL

PEACE WITH TENSIONS

By agreeing to negotiate with the Taliban, the Americans have accepted that they have been defeated in Afghanistan and just want to extricate their troops safely.

BY DR. MOONIS AHMAR

Peace in Afghanistan is as elusive as it was when talks between the United States and Taliban began in Qatar several months ago. One can term such parleys as part of the peace process to rid Afghanistan of four decades of armed conflicts. But the peace process in Afghanistan must be part and parcel of political will, determination and commitment on the part of domestic, regional and international stakeholders to give the Afghans a break from decades of armed conflicts by seeking a breakthrough in peace that took place in Qatar and elsewhere.

Afghanistan is the most unfortunate country in the south, west and central Asian regions in terms of sustained violence since the outbreak of the Saur revolution in April 1978 till today. The Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan and the Jihad which was launched by the Afghan Mujahideen groups with the help of Pakistan, the United States and Saudi Arabia, led to the Soviet military withdrawal in February 1989 as a result of the Geneva Accords of April 14, 1988, but the country plunged into a vicious cycle of civil war, culminating in the rise of the Taliban and their seizure of power in September 1996. The Taliban rule from 1996 till December 2001 established peace in Afghanistan but at the cost of persecution against women and minorities. The dismantling of the Taliban regime following 9/11 by the U.S.-led coalition forces and their occupation of Afghanistan led to another round of armed conflict against foreign forces which is still continuing.

Afghanistan is a major destabilizing factor in central, south and west Asia because as long as there is absence of peace in Afghanistan, the three regions would remain vulnerable to armed conflicts primarily involving the Taliban groups and foreign forces. The Kabul regime, supported by the United States, is fragile because it controls less than two-third of the territory of Afghanistan and the rest is under the influence and control of the Taliban.

There are two divergent positions taken by the Taliban and their opponents in Afghanistan as far as peace efforts are concerned. First, the Taliban argue that

there cannot be peace in Afghanistan unless foreign forces leave their country. Second, the United States and their supported Kabul regime argue that if the Taliban again come to power, Afghanistan will be plunged into another phase of bloody civil war. Between the two positions is the third one which calls upon the Taliban to abandon armed struggle, including suicide attacks, and join the political process by contesting elections. If the Taliban think that they can seize power and revert to policies which they were pursuing from 1996-2001, they are mistaken because those who had suffered at the hands of the Taliban, particularly women and minorities, will not tolerate a repressive Taliban regime again.

Regional tensions also impact Afghanistan, particularly when one examines them in the context of perennial Indo-Pak conflicts. During the Taliban rule, Indian influence in Afghanistan, which had remained in that country for long, was diminished. It was only after the overthrow of the Taliban regime by the U.S led coalition forces that India was able to re-establish its influence in Kabul. India's sense of insecurity vis-à-vis the future of Afghanistan is very obvious: if foreign forces leave Afghanistan, the outcome will be the collapse of the Kabul regime and their replacement by the Taliban. In that case, Pakistan will again get an advantageous position, threatening India's strategic interests in that country. Afghanistan is also called a battleground for India and Pakistan as the two countries are engaged in a proxy war in the war-ravaged country.

Pakistan accuses New Delhi of destabilizing the sensitive province of Balochistan by patronizing various Baloch nationalist groups targeting not only security forces but also the Chinese workers and others who are involved in CPEC related projects. India blames Pakistan of patronizing the Taliban groups who are perceived to be anti-Indian. Mistrust and suspicion is so deep-rooted between India and Pakistan on the one hand and Pakistan and Afghanistan on the other, that efforts for peace in that volatile country are repeatedly jeopardized.

One plus point in the peace endeavours for Afghanistan is the gradual lessening of mistrust between the United States and the Taliban as the latter now trusts the American resolve to find an exit strategy. But it doesn't mean that trust between the Taliban and the Kabul regime exists. The two still distrust each other despite the offer of Afghan President Ashraf Ghani to the Taliban that they join the political process instead of trying to capture power through undemocratic means. Additionally, there are reports that the Kabul regime and the United States are possibly coming to an understanding for a safe American exit from Afghanistan. The Kabul regime disapproves American military withdrawal because such a situation will again destabilize Afghanistan and provide enormous space to the Taliban.

The peace process in Afghanistan is still in its rudimentary phase because of two main reasons. First, Afghanistan, despite the pouring of billions of dollars of aid and assistance from the international community after 9/11 for the rebuilding and reconstruction of that war-torn country, is still poor and underdeveloped. The tribal structure of Afghanistan, warlordism and social backwardness are the three major impediments to restore normalcy and establish peace in the war-torn country. There cannot be a peace process in Afghanistan unless the stakeholders, whether they are domestic, regional or international, stop distrusting each other and agree to follow political and democratic means, instead of violent and authoritarian means to seek power. Second, the absence of ownership in Afghanistan can at best be termed as another obstacle for peace in that country. It is rightly argued that unless there is ownership of the resources in Afghanistan by different tribal, ethnic, lingual and political groups, the situation cannot be improved and peace will be a distant reality. By blaming each other instead of working together as Afghans, one can only expect further perpetuation of violence, corruption and nepotism in Afghanistan.

When conflict and violence is the bread and butter of mafias and when Afghanistan is called as a basket case with a big hole, no amount of foreign funding can make things better for the people of that country. Why peace initiatives and efforts in Afghanistan have failed to yield positive results is not difficult to gauge. Yet, with the application of eight measures at the state and societal level, one can hope to launch a viable peace process in Afghanistan. First, political will and determination on the part of local stakeholders, including the Taliban, the Kabul regime, political parties and civil society to prevent any foreign intervention in their country is the need of the hour. Second, tolerance and accommodation among different political groups to accept each other by establishing trust and confidence is essential. Third, there should be de-weaponization and de-militarization of Afghanistan. Only the military and security forces, including police, should possess the authority to carry weapons and all non-state actors who are armed must be disarmed so that the lives and property of the Afghan people are saved. Fourth, there should be zero tolerance for corruption and nepotism so that the resources of Afghanistan are properly utilized and not misused for personal benefits.

Fifth, there should be unleashing of a viable political process with a strong Judiciary and a neutral election commission so that free and fair elections are arranged and power is peacefully transferred to elected representatives. Sixth, there should be focus on human and social development of Afghanistan by the local stakeholders so that poverty and social backwardness which tend to sustain insecurity and violence in Afghan society are eradicated. Seventh, there is need for revitalizing the Afghan economy by broadening the tax base, along with promoting foreign investment for the industrialization and exploration of mineral/natural resources. Finally, better education and access to the people of Afghanistan should be provided to basic necessities of life such as housing, public transport, clean and safe drinking water as these will go a long way in ensuring peace in the conflict-ridden country.

The eight measures mentioned here should go a long way in transforming Afghanistan for the better and require the full participation of people from all walks of life. Once Afghanistan is peaceful, its neighborhood will also certainly feel the difference. S

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TYING TOGETHER

DOING BUSINESS WITH THE USA

BY ZAFAR MASUD

The contribution of American business in Pakistan has been very significant not just in monetary terms but more so from the qualitative angle.

There are over 200 American entities operating in Pakistan, diversified from banking to energy to FMCG to agriculture to pharma, etc. A number of these companies are listed on the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) and have over PKR 400bn in market capitalization. These American establishments/ outfits are the market leaders in almost all the sectors that they are operating in and remain great contributors in terms of technology transfer.

They work closely as the American Business Council (ABC) - a trade body formed in 1984 - and are playing a major role in bridging investments from the USA. The ABC is one of the largest investor groups in the country and most companies are Fortune 500 companies. ABC members have cumulative gross revenues of US $4bn, and contribute to the national exchequer every year direct and indirect taxes to the tune of PKR 119bn. The ABC members also employ over 68,500 people directly who support 275,000 dependents and indirectly employ nearly one million people such as agents, distributors, contractors, etc.

In terms of exports from Pakistan, the

Committed to improving Pakistani lives

P&G is committed to improving Pakistani lives, now and for generations to come. For over 25 years, P&G has fulfilled its purpose by introducing premium quality brands and making significant investments in the industry, community and talent development.

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ARIEL head & shoulders PANTENE Pampers always Safeguard

THE AMERICAN BUSINESS COUNCIL OF PAKISTAN

Pak-US Strategic Partnership Economic Indicators *Last 5 years average* *(Amounts in US$ million)*				
	Exports	**Remittances**	**FDI Net**	**FPI Net**
Total	24,237	17,895	2,048	1,825
USA	3,845	2,508	143	117
US %age of total	15.9%	14.0%	7.0%	6.4%
Ranking	1st	3rd	3rd	1st
Source: SBP				

USA has the pole position, on a per country basis, with almost 16% market share. However, there's significant opportunity to enhance this number with support from the US government through a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) which is apparently under active discussion between the two governments. Furthermore, consistently for the past decades, particularly in the last five years, the USA remains one of the largest contributors to Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Pakistan. American based funds have also been the biggest investors in the PSX through portfolio investments of over US $117mn as an average for the last five years. The position is no different in case of worker remittances, with almost 14% of the total remittances coming from USA alone. These are high-value remittances and there's tremendous potential to attract the remittances further from this cluster through offering various tailor-made investment and saving products. Worker remittances remain the most viable short-term current account funding solution for Pakistan.

In innovation and offering out-of-the-box products and solutions, US entities have always been at the forefront. There are many examples of this, including the fact that JP Morgan and Citibank did the inaugural Eurobond and Sukuk, respectively, as underwriters for Pakistan. The most recent re-entry of Exxon-Mobil in Pakistan for the first-ever deep-sea oil and gas exploration, whereby the expected drilling will go to almost 5500 meters, is a testament to the unmatched appetite of American companies to undertake such aggressive positions on strategic matters. McDonald's arrival, for example, has reshaped the way the fast food market is operating and flourishing in Pakistan.

The quantitative aspects of American businesses, as outlined in the aforestated, have been very impressive and unmatched. However, the real benefit that these contributions have brought in trade and commerce of the economy is on the qualitative side. The qualitative aspects would ensure sustainable, long-term economic development of the country. The calibre of indigenous manpower that the American businesses have provided to the country is phenomenal. US organization trained professionals have contributed significantly towards the private and public sector development of Pakistan. American organizations have given to Pakistan a very successful Governor of the State Bank, Finance Ministers and Prime Minister. There have also been numerous iconic CEOs in the private and public sector corporations.

The global exposure that the American firms offer to the local staff is second to none and, therefore, a very large number of Pakistani professionals have made it to the "first-amongst-equals" position in American organizations. The motivation and training/exposure of HR is another area that the US companies have mastered and surely this is a great learning for Pakistan. The positive cultural development that US businesses operating in Pakistan have on local commerce, particularly in the area of control and compliance, is again something to appreciate.

There are lots of learnings for businesses in general and the Pakistan government in particular, from the relationship between corporate America and the US government. There's substantial influence of corporate America on the foreign policy of the USA. In other words, it's the US foreign policy which keeps the interest of corporate America as central. This is how the Pakistan government must also operate for two fundamental reasons: 1) to protect the economic interests of the country and 2) to present the much-needed softer image of Pakistan.

While there's already an unparalleled contribution of American business to the local economy further fostering of linkages between US and Pakistani businesses is something that could benefit the Pakistani economy immensely. Other than promoting FDI and Foreign Portfolio Investment, the proposed FTA is the way to go.

Zafar Masud *is a freelance consultant. He was a board member of the State Bank of Pakistan and Monetary Policy Committee.*

THE AMERICAN BUSINESS COUNCIL

LEADING FROM THE FRONT

BY JAVED SADIQ

Business is the fountain that ushers in and nurtures prosperity in society, and companies create the resources that aid in social development and welfare the world over. Companies, through their commercial operations and professional finesse, actively lend to skills development and progress in society.

Any business council is member-based and its aim is to ensure that business speaks with one voice on macro-economic issues affecting the industry. Also, business councils, both local and foreign, play a significant role in arriving at an equilibrium between profitability of member companies and the state's social uplift.

The American Business Council of Pakistan (ABC) has led from the front, complementing universal standards and assessable tangibility in Pakistan's prosperity since coming into existence in 1984. Its sustained excellence during the last 34 years has exponentially enhanced investments from the United States.

The ABC is arguably one of the largest investor groups in Pakistan with most of its 65 members listed among Fortune 500 companies. These entities operate in various sectors covering most industrial bases in Pakistan. The outreaches of ABC members help generate cumulative gross revenues of US$ 4.0 billion. The gain for Pakistan is significant – ABC members contribute yearly a sizable amount as direct and indirect taxes. Just last year they contributed Rs. 119 billion. These companies together employ over 68,500 people directly who cater to their 275,000 dependents and in ripple effect employ nearly one million people along with agents, distributors, contractors and others.

The ABC is an effective conduit for sustained exchange of ideas and interaction with the Government of Pakistan. Its input through suggestions to relevant bodies like ministries, regulatory and tax authorities, etc., forms a vital technical resource for Pakistan. The thrust of the ABC's Executive Committee is to ensure that its suggestions are reflected in the annual Federal Budget and Trade Policy.

The ABC's mission is to protect and promote the interests of US investors in Pakistan; to encourage and stimulate new investments; to introduce and inculcate best practices; and to strive to establish a level playing field in the country in order to promote the development of commerce between the USA and Pakistan.

Its key objectives are to:

- Raise the profile of the ABC so as to ensure that it is seen not only as a progressive body but also has a greater participation and engagement of members.

- Increase the inclusivity of north-based membership.
- Play an active role and engage with government bodies, including the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), Board of Investment (BOI) and relevant government ministries.
- Lobby with the government on taxation issues affecting ABC member companies

PROMOTING PAKISTAN IN THE USA

The ABC promoted Pakistan through its sponsored Supplement on Pakistan entitled "Oasis of Opportunity" in the July 1986 issue of the Nation's Business – an official magazine of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. This was at a time when Pakistan was trying to stabilize and needed newer investments to buttress its strained economy.

ABC DRUG AWARENESS PROGRAM – 1996

The major fall-out of the Afghan War across Pakistan's borders flooded the country with drugs through porous borders and influx of 3 million refugees. The ABC, through its members and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency USDEA, collaborated with related Pakistan Government agencies to stem the tide of the drug influx, set up rehab centres, donated surveillance equipment and vehicles and initiated awareness campaigns in refugee camps and schools in the country.

U.S.-PAKISTAN BUSINESS COUNCIL INAUGURATED IN WASHINGTON – 2003

The U.S.-Pakistan Business Council (U.S.-PBC) was set up in September 2003, at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Washington. This endeavour, after 9/11 in 2001, was due to the strong thrust of ABC to further cement commercial ties between the U.S. and Pakistan. The move was to have an inclusive and more cognitive appraisal of Pakistan's needs and explore investment opportunities by identifying emerging areas for further investment by U.S. companies.

"Business can't succeed in societies that fail" has remained the rallying cry of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) meetings over the years. This one profound reality encompasses all human endeavour for a progressive, prospering and sustainable society. ABC in Pakistan has embodied this holistic concept as its ethos to conduct itself not as an alien entity but as a part of the local evolving economic landscape. Here, interconnectivity between the government, its challenged sectors and businesses - all overreach to alleviate social imbalances in society.

ABC bases its input covering the following two important principles:

Social well-being is vital. The ABC aids in engendering economic growth. It is an active partner in social growth - improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families, local communities and society at large. The ABC manages business processes to produce an overall positive impact on society.

The ABC, as an employer, creates social value through providing jobs. It creates social contribution through training, diversity, employee share ownership, stress management, respect, fairness, flexibility, remunerations and ethics. As a consumer, ABC provides economic and social value within the supply chain. Its social input looks at labour standards, payment levels and terms, geographic sourcing and enforcement of supply chain standards. As a producer, ABC creates social value through providing goods and services to meet human needs. It contributes to the social purpose of the goods and/or service, responsible advertising, approach towards environmental impact of goods (e.g. resource efficiency, environmental technology).

In the end, the ABC's business interaction in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in such diversified areas as healthcare, financial services, information technology, chemicals & fertilizers, energy, FMCG, food & beverage and oil & gas upholds the following clear justifications:

- Moral obligation – a business's inherent responsibility to do the right thing;
- Sustainability – only by benefiting society can any business hope to last in the long-term;
- Licence to operate – business can only operate through the expressed or implied approval of governments, communities and other stakeholders; and
- Reputation – a business' CSR efforts improve its image, thereby strengthening its brand, invigorating morale and raising its stock value.

The ABC's model has had a multiplier effect in establishment of such forums in many other countries like Pakistan.

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ABC – AN OVERVIEW

BY SYEDA AREEBA RASHEED

Serving Pakistan successfully for the past 34 years, the American Business Council of Pakistan (ABC) is the single largest chamber recognised by the Ministry of Commerce. It is the representative body of American companies in Pakistan. The chamber is an effective forum to channel suggestions and give input for improvement to the Government of Pakistan through relevant bodies. The chamber also aims to protect and promote the interests of US investors in Pakistan, to introduce and inculcate best practices and to promote the development of commerce between Pakistan and the USA.

The ABC is affiliated with the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) and is a member of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce (USCC), Washington D.C., and Asia-Pacific Council of American Chambers of Commerce (APCAC). ABC also has a close working relationship with the U.S.-Pakistan Business Council, Washington, which is a component of the USCC.

The ABC is managed by an Executive Committee that is elected every year by its members and meets monthly to review various aspects of its ongoing initiatives. Sub-committees are formed, which meet regularly to ensure that adequate focus is given to important issues.

Established in 1984, the ABC participated in the Pakistan International Trade Fair held the same year in Karachi and produced the U.S. Pavilion Exhibitors' Directory containing information about the ABC and its members. In 1986, a supplement on Pakistan titled 'Oasis of Opportunity' was published in the The Nation's Business, an official magazine of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, sponsored by the ABC. Copies were distributed to the relevant functionaries of the Government of Pakistan, Pakistan embassies and overseas branches of Pakistani banks. Mr. Jamshed K.A. Marker, Ambassador for Pakistan in the U.S.A., acknowledging the effort said, "It is an excellent document which will be very valuable for distribution in this country."

The ABC carries out an Informal Business Perception Survey amongst its members to view the investment climate in Pakistan. In 1992, the survey showed increased chances in the investment climate. The same year, Mr. Sartaj Aziz, Minister for Finance, was going to New York to inaugurate Pakistan's New Economic Environment Conference so the ABC provided him with a copy of the Survey to carry the views of the existing American investors as to how positively they looked at the business environment in Pakistan. The survey became the main feature of a supplement on Pakistan published in the Wall Street Journal on September 18, 1992, with positive editorial comments on the occasion of Investment Promotion Seminars held in the U.S.A., and Canada.

In 2000, an ABC President for the first time visited Washington D.C. and met with key people to improve Pakistan's image, which was not good at that time, and to present a more balanced view on how to unveil the true image of Pakistan, considering the harsh treatment Pakistan was getting by the media. Mr. Shaukat Aziz, the then Minister for Finance, formally inaugurated the U.S.-Pakistan Business Council (U.S.-PBC) in 2003, at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Washington, DC and gave an overview of

Pakistan's economy. He also invited the U.S. businessmen to come forward and invest in Pakistan, after which Mr. Edward Jackson, the Chairman of Sweetwater Inc., said that Pakistan was the best place for investment with Dr. Davis joining him in announcing the results of a study conducted by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in which Pakistan was at the top of the list as it offered the best investment and business environment in the region.

Currently, the ABC consists of 65 members who operate in all sectors of the economy; most of them are Fortune 500 companies. They include Abbott Laboratories, Coca-Cola Beverages, Colgate Palmolive, Continental Biscuits, Dunkin Donuts, IBM, Microsoft, Mondelez Pakistan Ltd., Ogilvy and Mather, Procter & Gamble,Teradata Pakistan and UPS, to name a few. They operate in various sectors i.e. healthcare, financial services, information technology, chemicals & fertilizers, energy, FMCG, food & beverage, oil & gas and others.

The United States and Pakistan share a very long and strong economic and commercial relationship. Pakistan's largest trading partner and top source of foreign investment is the United States. Pakistan serves as a modest market for the United States and ranked as the 59th largest purchaser of US goods in 2012. Similarly, the United States was Pakistan's largest market in 2012 with almost 16% of its total exports. Having two-way trade at around $5.1 billion in 2012, both countries continue to fulfil their bilateral and multilateral commitments. The U.S. also provides economic assistance to Pakistan.

With more than a hundred local firms representing the US, the ABC has firmly established its presence in Pakistan. These firms contribute an ample amount to the national treasury every year in the form of direct and indirect taxes and the investments made by the members of the ABC are of great benefit to Pakistan's economy. Despite security threats and emerging market concerns, the Pakistan market offers many attractive trade and investment opportunities to U.S. companies with a few restrictions.

Pakistan is full of potential. This is a country where 75% of the population is less than 35 years of age. It also has geo-economic significance. Pakistan remains an attractive market that could easily attract multinational firms. The World Bank's report in 2013 ranked Pakistan 107th in 185 economies in terms of doing business in the international market.

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FACILITATING PAKISTAN'S ECONOMIC GROWTH

Ahmed Jamal Mir, Managing Director & CEO, Prestige/Grey Advertising and President, American Business Council (2018-19), shares his views with *SouthAsia:*

Jamal Mir, the current President of the American Business Council says the ABC is one of the largest investor groups in Pakistan as its members, comprising different companies like Pepsi, Coke, P&G, Citibank, Colgate, McDonald's, Mondelez and many others, and some have existed in the market for over three decades.

He says the ABC members have cumulative revenues of over US $ 4.0 billion and contribute a large amount to the national exchequer every year through direct and indirect taxes. He says that in 2017 alone, they contributed Rs. 135 billion. In Jamal Mir's view, the American companies have an extensive understanding of the local market and have, over the years, also introduced the fruits of corporate social responsibility (CSR) that contributes to sustainable development by delivering economic, social and environmental benefits for all stakeholders. He expects that like any other investment, the stakes of the American companies functioning in Pakistan's economy would be safeguarded.

There are many investors programs in Pakistan that are managed by the American Business Council and the US Pakistan Business Council (USPBC). Jamal Mir says the ABC also promotes investment in Pakistan through investment conferences held on a regular basis and these serve as a viable platform in dispelling a negative perception held by some media in Pakistan.

"In today's world", says Mir, "it's relatively easy to plan persuasive communication designed to influence public opinion and challenge stereotypes due to the widespread use of social media. Therefore a better understanding of ground realities is critical through economic, social and cultural interactions, with a clear vision in mind."

Jamal Mir says ABC and the USPBC have facilitated meetings of Pakistani businessmen with their American counterparts and government representatives and the ABC's affiliate organizations have facilitated meetings up to the level of the Prime Minister of Pakistan.

The ABC (Pakistan) president says the ABC also provides regular suggestions and inputs for improvement to the relevant bodies like ministries, regulatory bodies and tax authorities throughout the year. He says the focus of the ABC Executive Committee is also to ensure that its suggestions are incorporated in the annual Federal Budget and Trade Policy. The ABC's endeavours, says Jamal, are aimed at facilitating direct interaction with the federal and provincial governments through its guest speakers program, seminars and events, all of which are aimed at sustaining an ongoing dialogue.

Jamal Mir also acknowledges the critical support extended to it by the US Consulate in Karachi. The US Consulate is represented on the ABC's Executive Committee Board as an honorary member and their representation is pivotal in making the relationship dynamic and beneficial for both the organizations and simultaneously strengthening the ABC as an independent body.

Jamal Mir feels that people-to-people connect and people's perspectives of the on-ground reality need to be taken into account. He says the challenges Pakistan faces in terms of its political and social image, through years of media stereotyping, need to be addressed by acknowledging weaknesses and building on strengths. He adds that platforms like the ABC provide the window of opportunity in doing so because the economic growth of a country is interlinked with the well-being and development of a dynamic nation.

Improving Pakistani lives for over 25 years

Investing in Pakistan

Since its first shipment in August of 1991, P&G has grown to be amongst the top fast moving consumer goods companies in Pakistan. The Company has been a model investor in the country. Through the years P&G has invested over 150 million dollars in fixed assets and setup 3 manufacturing facilities in Port Qasim and Hub producing H&S, Pantene, Ariel and Safeguard.

P&G's investments continue to yield socio-economic benefits to the country by creating over 6000 direct and indirect employment opportunities and developing a local supplier base resulting in hundreds of millions of dollars in local value addition to date.

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Today P&G markets high quality brands to Pakistani consumers including 6 billion-dollar brands. These include Pampers, Always, Safeguard, Ariel, Head & Shoulders and Pantene which are amongst leading household names in their categories. P&G has made significant investments in understanding the Pakistani consumer to deliver superior products and innovative campaigns that fulfill their needs and improve life in meaningful ways.

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P&G strives to be an employer of choice by recruiting and developing the most talented people. P&G people are the foundation of the Company's success, developed as a result of a strong 'promote from within' culture.

P&G strongly believes in local skill development and nurtures local talent by providing passionate, hardworking individuals the opportunity to grow and excel, becoming business leaders in the P&G world. Today, several P&G Pakistan employees are leading challenging international P&G assignments. Moreover, P&G runs a strong internship program which is a key source of talent for the Company's hiring needs in Pakistan.

Embracing Diversity

At P&G, diversity is a business strategy. P&G recognizes and values employee uniqueness and contributions to achieve company goals. It recruits a diverse mix of individuals in terms of gender, background and thinking styles.

P&G Pakistan has been recognized by Forbes Magazine for its efforts towards promoting gender diversity via a range of initiatives including 'P&G Sponsor's Day'. As a result of its efforts, today women constitute around 35% of the employees at the P&G general office in Karachi and 40% of the P&G Pakistan Leadership Team.

Helping Communities in Need

P&G's social responsibility programs have touched and improved lives of over 46 million Pakistanis to date. Moreover, P&G employees have stepped up to contribute around 2800 volunteer hours towards various social causes in the past 10 years.

Last year P&G entered a partnership with HOPE and UN Women for women's skill-development and girls' education in the country. This program is expected to benefit an estimated 10,000 women and girls over a 3-year period in areas such as Badin, Sujawal, Thatta, Gadap, Ghagger, Muzaffargarh and Sialkot.

Through the P&G Children's Safe Drinking Water program more than 876 million liters of clean drinking water have been made available to Pakistani communities in need. P&G brand programs including Safeguard and Always school education programs, Pampers hospital education program and mobile clinics, have created health and hygiene awareness amongst millions of Pakistanis.

The P&G Home at SOS Children's Village, Islamabad has provided orphan children the chance to live a normal life. Moreover, P&G's partnership with Health Oriented Preventive Education (HOPE) and READ Foundation has provided quality education to over 7000 underprivileged children to date. Girls have constituted around 56% of the students at the P&G-HOPE and P&G-READ Foundation schools.

Protecting the Environment

P&G incorporates sustainability at every stage of its products' life cycle, including manufacturing, packaging and operations, by making these in an environmentally responsible manner.

P&G plants in Pakistan are working extensively towards the company's long-term environmental sustainability vision by promoting sustainability practices amongst employees as well as with suppliers, customers and partners. Since 2010 P&G plants in Pakistan have delivered 57%, 59% and 62% reduction in water, CO_2 and energy respectively. Moreover, both P&G plants in Pakistan are 'zero waste to landfill' sites.

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EXTRAORDINARY SITUATIONS

Public patience wears thin when the time taken to dispense justice by the civil judicial system is long and ineffective. The other alternative is 'speedy justice' by military courts.

BY VICE ADMIRAL (R) TAJ M KHATTAK

In the wake of the tragedy of the Army Public School in Peshawar, the Pakistan Army, in 2015, was empowered to try civilians in military courts for terrorism related offences, as part of the 20-points National Action Plan (NAP) adopted by the government and supported by all political parties. This extension of military law for civilians was accomplished through amendment to the Constitution and the 1952 Army Act. The institution of military courts has widely been hailed as effective in reducing incidents of terrorism in the country. But now, since these provisions of law are expiring, a renewed debate has started whether they should continue to function or dispensed with. The army, which is in the vanguard of the war on terror, is seeking an extension of the provisions while the politicians are ambiguous in their stance.

The offences for which military courts can try civilians are raising arms or waging war against the state, attacking the armed forces or law enforcement agencies or civil or military installations, kidnapping for ransom, possessing, storing or transporting explosives, firearms, suicide jackets or other articles, using or designing vehicles for terrorists attacks, causing death or injury, acting in any way to 'over-awe the state' or general public or religious minority, creating terror or insecurity or attempting to commit any of these acts inside or outside Pakistan.

The military courts can also try civilians for providing or receiving funding for any of these acts, engaging in violence against a person or causing grievous injuries or harm to a person or damage to property, acts that are likely to cause death or endanger a person's life, firing on religious congregations or places of worship, burning of vehicles or any other serious form of arson, serious coercion or intimidation of public servants to force them to discharge or to refrain from discharging their lawful duties and act as part of armed resistance by groups or individuals against law enforcement agencies. All these activities have plagued Pakistan for years and some have taken deep roots.

Under an amended constitutional cover, the government constituted 11 military courts which have since convicted at least 641 persons and acquitted 5. Out of these convictions, 56 persons have been hanged after their appeals were turned down. Judging from the number of death sentences passed by the military courts, from amongst the total number of trials and in the backdrop of the extent of terrorism faced by the country, it will be unfair to suggest that the rate of convictions has been too high. Neither should a large or a small number of convictions be a yardstick to measure success or failure of military courts.

It was therefore ironic that the High Court in Peshawar, a city which had suffered so much pain in the attack on the Army Public

School, and was indeed the catalyst for formation of military courts in the first place, recently set aside the sentence awarded by military courts to 74 persons, who had been challenged under Article 199 of the Constitution, which deals with jurisdiction of High Courts.

This judgement assumes significance because terrorism is once again raising its ugly head in the country and nothing tangible has been done in the last four years to bring about necessary reforms in the criminal courts system to strengthen anti-terrorism institutions. There is unmistakable public frustration with what is perceived as impunity for terrorism and serious crimes. Examples like Baldia Town, Safoora Goth and many others are often cited in the media to reiterate these sentiments. Public patience is also wearing thin by the time taken to dispense justice through a largely ineffective judicial system, resulting in lack of trust and confidence.

It is not fair to criticize military courts for independence and impartiality as they enjoy complete independence in their proceedings and judgements.

There is, as such, a strong argument for 'speedy justice' in cases of heinous crimes through military courts because when trials linger on in ordinary criminal courts, they invariably get complicated with disappearances of key witnesses. Calls for Pakistan to bolster fair and effective administration of justice by strengthening the police's capacity of investigations and training prosecutors for terrorism-related offences are easier said than done in environments where quite often political parties are suspected of hobnobbing with elements of dubious credentials.

Pakistan is genuinely sensitive to global concerns about human rights and for years had imposed a moratorium on executions, but had lifted the moratorium on the death penalty only when the law and order situation began to slip out of control. Military court judgements have come under criticism though the higher civilian courts are empowered to scrutinize the process and in most cases have upheld the sentences passed by military courts.

It is paradoxical that, domestically, the military courts are generally considered instrumental in dispensing speedy justice in a notorious national milieu where cases linger on for years without a final verdict, but internationally the practice is perceived as a violation of Pakistan's legal obligation and political commitment to respect its citizens' right to life, fair trial and independence and impartiality of Judiciary. Some aspects of these 'international fair trial standards' were codified decades ago while the modern-day environment of communications and digital revolution has galloped forward exponentially.

The delicate balance between an alleged suspect's basic human rights and safety of law-abiding citizens has been disturbed and its recalibration by affected countries, according to their own peculiar circumstances, has attracted criticism. Some of this criticism, it has to be said, like military not making public the place and time of these trials, is frivolous and appears far from fair because how this information will make any trial fairer or less than fair, is not understood.

Some jurists have gone to the extent of stating that military tribunal members do not have guaranteed tenures and security against premature retirement if they do not toe the line of their parent organization. This is just too far from the truth and betrays their bias. The armed forces officers' rules for retirement have nothing to do with judgements passed by them during a military trial.

In theory, it seems very fair to suggest that Pakistan must not sacrifice the core rule of law principles and deny the rights of accused persons in the name of 'speedy principles' but the country is in the grip of an unusual situation and is fighting a hybrid war on many fronts. The perception that departure from ordinary legal procedures feeds and fuels more violence is open to question since it can also be argued that when loopholes in law let the offenders free, others feel emboldened to perpetuate their nefarious activities. Extraordinary situations everywhere need extraordinary responses. This is a normal approach the world over as witnessed after 9/11 when the US established a camp at Guantanamo for detainees.

Therefore, accepting the rationale of 'exceptionalism' for 'speedy results' for a limited time, and 'in aid' of the judiciary, as it were, is perfectly in order for present-day Pakistan. The stemming of terrorist activities through sentences handed out by military tribunals should not make the judiciary complacent which should strive for necessary reforms to make its criminal code effective to deal with heinous crimes. It should also, as a matter of urgency, consider addressing endemic and prolonged delays in trials and allegations to succumbing to external influences.

It is not fair to criticize military courts for independence and impartiality as they enjoy complete independence in their proceedings and judgements. It is true that members of the military tribunals do not have long training in law but that because they are men in uniform, they are primarily required to be fully conversant with military law. As members of tribunals, military officers decide or question facts of the case for criminal sentencing and seek guidance from the Judge Advocate General who is suitably qualified in matters of law. A general comparison could be drawn with the jury system in the US where members of the jury try to ascertain facts while the judge, a person conversant with law, decides about the scale of punishment.

The people of Pakistan have their own psyche to which application of western standards of humanness are misplaced. Pakistan has a legal duty to protect its citizens against terrorist attacks and investigate, prosecute and bring the perpetuators to justice. As long as the military courts operate within specified limits of law, adhere to fundamental principles of fairness, to human rights of the accused and help curb incidents of terrorism, they should be sanctioned. Meanwhile, we need to bring about changes and improvements in our civil justice system so that it helps make Pakistan a safer place for its citizens and, as far as possible, is also in step with what is globally seen as a fair and impartial justice system. S

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ARE MILITARY COURTS REALLY NEEDED?

Military courts dispense swift justice in cases pertaining to terrorism.

BY JUSTICE (R) M. SHAIQ USMANI

Military Courts are meant for the military and are unlike the civil courts inasmuch that the procedures followed by them are different and the accused, the judges and prosecutors being armed forces personnel, are bound by a system of hierarchy, which, given the armed forces' discipline, is highly stringent and requires instant compliance from the subordinates, there being no room for deviation, protest or argument. In these circumstances the decisions given by military courts can hardly be said to meet the ends of justice as commonly understood. Nevertheless military courts become a necessity in times of emergency or war when quick decisions are required and there is need to protect witnesses from being harassed and intimidated by the supporters of the accused to prevent them from giving evidence.

In our country, we have seen military courts holding the fort during times when the country was governed by martial law, such as the one imposed by Ayub Khan in 1958 and then by Zia-ul-Haq in 1979. After that, the situation in the country never really necessitated such courts, at least not in the whole country, till the upsurge of terrorism in 2001 after 9/11. It is significant that the ruling governments till January 2015 when the Pakistan Army (Amendment) Act, 2015 was passed, along with an amendment to Article 175 of the Constitution to bring in military courts, managed to handle the situation in terrorism-infested areas without feeling the need for such courts.

The motive behind passing these amendments was to have the terrorists tried under the Army Act to obtain quick disposal of cases and also to ensure witness protection. These amendments remained in force for two years, followed by another Amendment to the Army Act, which was passed in January 2017, which too has now expired. There has been a great deal of talk about re-introducing these amendments as the terrorism situation, though better, is far from satisfactory. The politicians in the opposition are playing hard to get only to embarrass the party in power and, as a result, the requisite Amendment could not be renewed before expiry of the two-year period laid down in the law.

The question that is posed now is 'Are Military Courts really required?' There is no denying that Military Courts during peacetime

are a negation of democracy and violative of the fundamental right of fair trial as laid down in Article 10-A of the Constitution. No amount of expediency can justify handing over of an accused, who could also be wrongly accused, to a court where justice is handed down in a slipshod manner, somewhat imperiously, in military fashion. Besides, it is the duty of the State to prepare for all eventualities even for terrorism, by introducing suitable legislation without leaning on the Armed Forces. Anti-Terrorism Courts are already in existence, whose performance can be improved and suitable measures can be taken to provide protection to witnesses. The State's inability or incompetency in not doing this must not be camouflaged by resorting to extraordinary measures such as bringing in Military Courts.

As it is, our State is sadly lacking in the administration of justice, not only criminal but also civil. Statistics show there are some 38,539 cases pending in the Supreme Court, 293,947 in the five High Courts and 1,869,886 cases in the subordinate judiciary of the four provinces and the federal capital. In most civil and revenue matters, the litigants have to wait for decades for their cases to be decided. Sometime it is the third generation of petitioners which gets to see the final verdict. The solution lies in not taking the easy way out by bringing in Military Courts, which eventually would lead to converting the State into a Police State and curbing our hard-earned freedom of speech and choice.

What then is wrong with our judicial system? Need it be said that no improvement is possible unless there is deep introspection to see what is wrong in the first place and then set about to correct it. Our judicial system is modeled on the colonial British system that was devised to keep the subject races under control, which was best achieved by overawing them through pomp and show of the judiciary, hence the scepter, the wigs of judges and bowing and scraping by lawyers or anyone who appears before them. As to the working of courts, the British colonials introduced their own Adversarial system of justice where emphasis was on everyone being heard and then reasoned orders being passed where the judges waxed eloquent and used the nuances of the English language to indulge in unnecessary hairsplitting and relied heavily on precedence, that is previous decisions of courts. The orders were then subject to at least two appeals and thus cases continued for a long time.

It is this system that we inherited from the British colonials and since our founding fathers were mostly lawyers imbued in the British colonial traditions, they found no reason to make any changes, more so because they had a vested interest in the continuance of the system. They failed to realize that the British system was alien to our (Muslim) tradition and system of justice which in the Arab world was based on the Sharia system and in the non-Arab world, such as Turkey, on the Civil Law system that prevailed in post-Napoleonic Europe.

We have seen military courts holding the fort during times when the country was governed by martial law.

It is a coincidence that there is a great deal of similarity between the Sharia system and the Civil Law system. Both these systems are essentially Inquisitorial, as opposed to Adversarial, as in the British system. That is to say that in these systems the Judge is in direct contact with the litigant in court and the lawyer's involvement is considerably reduced, which simplifies the nature of proceedings in courts. The judgment and orders in these systems do not place reliance on precedences and are also not as long-winded as in the British system and are not open to so many appeals. Apart from these systems being quicker to deliver results, they are not so costly for litigants either. Perhaps introduction of a mix of Civil law and Sharia system is the answer to our woes as regards the system of justice in our country; the Sharia element to give the system religious sanction and hence acceptability to the general populace and the Civil law element to impart it practicability in the modern times.

As regards the Criminal justice system, the main problem in it is the inadequacy of the prosecution and the possibility of the prosecutors being influenced and of course absence of any system of witness protection. Correction of inadequacy of the prosecution would require instituting a better system of selecting prosecutors rather than appointing them through favouritism or because of political clout, as is the practice these days. Perhaps a better system would be for the State to engage competent lawyers as prosecutors upon payment of agreed fees, as in England. As regards witness protection, this requires concrete administrative measures to build safe houses for witnesses to bide their time while waiting to be produced in court.

It is obvious then that if we want to get rid of the backlog in courts and wish to control institution of fresh cases and to ensure quick disposal of cases and also to make litigation less expensive, it is necessary for the State to bring about revolutionary changes in our judicial system through extensive legislation. Merely making cosmetic changes in the existing procedures would not help and may even be counterproductive as more procedures give rise to more complications and hence more delays. At the same time, concrete administrative measures need to be put in place to make the Executive efficient and effective so that it is not hauled up in innumerable petitions before the courts every now and then, which adds to the burden of the court.

Thus the answer to the question posed in the title is clearly a resounding No! We certainly do not need Military Courts, which, as stated earlier, is in fact a negation of democracy. S

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WASHINGTON

Countdown to Doomsday

U.S. presidential proclamations about nuclear weapons have a major effect on the public and America's allies. Careless, ill-thought declarations threaten the health of U.S. alliances.

BY IMRAN JAN

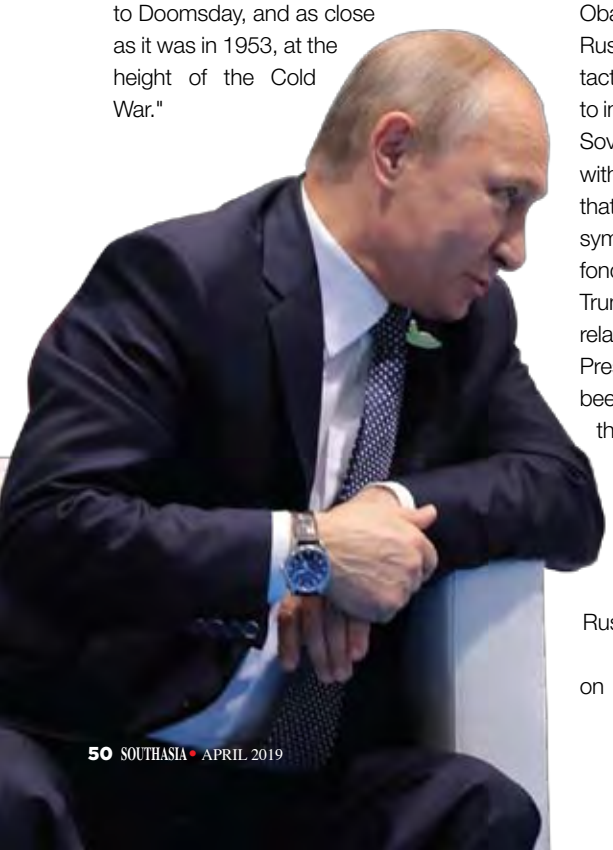
The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists informs the world through the Doomsday Clock about the threats to its survival due to emerging technologies, nuclear threats and climate change. Last year, the Doomsday Clock moved to an ominous two and a half minutes owing to the belligerent rhetoric of President Trump and his sabre-rattling episode with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, where Kim had said that the 'Nuclear button is on his desk at all times'. Trump in response said, "Will someone from his depleted and food-starved regime please inform him that I too have a nuclear button, but it is a much bigger and more powerful one than his, and my button works!" Moreover, the Doomsday Clock movement was also helped by President Trump's relentless denials of climate change. "This is the closest the Clock has ever been to Doomsday, and as close as it was in 1953, at the height of the Cold War."

Lately, a grimmer picture of sabre-rattling has emerged between the United States and Russia. Recently, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists moved the Clock to two minutes to midnight "making the world security situation more dangerous than it was a year ago — and as dangerous as it has been since World War II.". President Trump has now announced American withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (I.N.F.), which was signed in 1987 between US president Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev. Perhaps the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists was expecting the I.N.F to unravel in the days ahead owing to the reckless statements from President Trump and his hawkish National Security Advisor John R. Bolton. The Treaty has actually ended now and the clock is moving closer to doomsday.

The United States started accusing Russia of violating the I.N.F. in 2014. The Obama administration had argued that Russia was deploying prohibited tactical nuclear weapons designed to intimidate Europe and the former Soviet states that are now aligned with the West. One might argue that President Trump is usually sympathetic toward Russia and is fond of President Putin, so why would Trump make such a belligerent move in relations with Russia? Also, ever since President Trump took office, he has been on a treaty withdrawal spree like the Paris Treaty and the Iran Deal. He is not such a friend of NATO and the San Francisco Treaty compels the United States to basically guarantee security of Japan. However, for President Trump, ending the I.N.F. may be less about Russia and more about China.

The United States wants to keep tabs on Chinese moves in the Pacific by being able to place short and intermediate-range missiles on land so as to prevent China from creating for itself a sphere of influence. Furthermore, China is not a signatory to the Treaty and hence is not restricted by the obligations of the Treaty. It has a growing number of missiles. Their range would have violated the I.N.F. had China been a member state. Basically, the US doesn't want to be tied down by some treaty from using its new toys. The urge not to be left behind China in making lethal machinery should send shivers down spines. The makeover and upgradation of America's aging nuclear arsenal and laboratories had begun under President Obama but the ambition to rebuild America's nuclear power has accelerated tremendously under the Trump administration.

The Russian perspective has been that the United States has developed armed drones which, at the time of the treaty, did not exist so in theory do not violate the wording of the treaty but armed with Hellfire missiles they actually violate the spirit of the I.N.F. More importantly, the American missile



defence interceptors in Eastern Europe, the Russians assert, could be converted into having offensive capabilities. It is important to realise that the missile defence interceptor is a first strike weapon as opposed to the common perception that they are basically designed to avert incoming missiles.

The missile defence interceptor had gone live in the summer of 2016 despite Russian warnings that the West was destroying peace in central Europe. The long time Washington position had been that the system is meant to protect NATO from Iranian missiles. But the Russians knew full well who the real target of the system was. To counter Russia, Iran was used as an excuse. And now, to counter China, alleged Russian violations of the I.N.F, is that excuse.

In response to Trump's withdrawal from the I.N.F. Russia followed suit. The US withdrew because it said Russia was violating the terms of the Treaty. It is disingenuous as well as hypocritical of Washington to have such a stance. The United States invaded Iraq despite repeated denials by the world's largest treaty called the United Nations. The United States violates that treaty almost every week by threatening some nation on the map with force or sanctions. Somehow, no other nation says we would leave the UN treaty and be no more restricted in our belligerence because the United States continues to violate the UN charter with impunity.

The two major threats to world security are nuclear war and climate change. President Trump labels climate change a "hoax". When it snows unusually, he makes fun of climate change advocates and believers in his early morning tweets. A man who owns not one book despite being a billionaire is the poorest man indeed. Sadly, such a man cannot be argued with. Climate change is accelerating at such a pace that it has reached a point where mankind can only take steps to slow it down and slow down the destruction it would cause. Unfortunately, climate change cannot be reversed. "So what are we doing about it? Well, what we're doing about it is ignoring it," said Noam Chomsky.

I.N.F. is not only good for peace and keeps the grass from being trampled by the elephants, it is also good for the economy. The numbers are staggering. The amount required for an American nuclear arsenal upgrade is $494 billion. That is 87 times the amount Mr. Trump is seeking for his border wall. The estimate for the next 30 years is $1.2 trillion. S

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HARARE

BACK TO TYRANNY

It is said Zimbabwe is reverting to the authoritarian rule that characterised the 37-year regime of former leader Robert Mugabe, who was forced out from power after a coup.

BY TAHA KEHAR

Is the Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa's political honeymoon coming to an end? At this critical juncture, the President appears to be as detached from the people's needs and priorities as his predecessor. While Robert Mugabe's 37 years in power had left much to be desired in the sphere of governance, Mnangagwa's tenure seems to have been marred by sheer political rhetoric and a string of false promises.

This shouldn't come as a surprise as political pundits had aptly warned the Zimbabweans against pinning their hopes on a leader who isn't ideologically different from his predecessor. It is fundamentally difficult to forget that Mnangagwa was once Mugabe's confidante and only decided to shift allegiances to avoid a nepotistic takeover within Zimbabwe's polity. If this fact serves as a gauge, change in the country is an amorphous idea that can only be fostered in a far stronger political ecosystem that has a separate basis. Zimbabweans have witnessed the perils of expecting change from a regime that lacks the ideological moorings to bring this about.

In January, Mnangagwa announced the government's intention to increase the prices of gasoline by more than twice. In a country that finds itself in the grip of an economic downturn, the spike in gasoline prices resulted in considerable dissatisfaction as transport costs rose sharply. The President's indifference to the matter irked the Zimbabweans and a series of protests erupted in Harare. With time, these riots grew volatile and led to violence. As the situation escalated, Mnangagwa – who was in Davos for the World Economic Forum – had to return home to tackle the crisis.

The crux of the matter is the economic turmoil that the country finds itself in. Instead of taking plausible steps to address the matter, Constantino Chiwenga, Zimbabwe's Vice President, oversaw the military crackdown on protesters in the President's absence. On his return, Mnangagwa categorically stated that those

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security personnel who had participated in the crackdown would be severely punished.

As a result, the apparent friction within the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) has come to the fore. Mnangagwa and Chiwenga seem pitted against each other as they have conflicting views on the future direction that the country ought to take.

According to some analysts, Mnangagwa has vociferously advocated Zimbabwe's image as a country that is open for business. Chiwenga's focus is slightly narrower and doesn't go beyond the realm of security considerations and ensuring stability within the public sector. Amid these contrasting views, it has been increasingly difficult to focus on policies that can facilitate economic wellbeing. Politics and power tussles are the order of the day and continue to influence the fate of the nation.

If some analysts are to be believed, the prevailing tensions have a deeper core. As per various speculations, the Vice President may have triggered the recent crackdown to compel Mnangagwa to initiate action against him. This would give Chiwenga a pretext to overthrow the president.

But Mnangagwa doesn't seem to be a passive target of Chiwenga's machinations. While the Vice President was receiving medical treatment in India, the President decided to 'retire' four senior generals who had a close connection with Chiwenga and voiced support for his security-centric tactics. Earlier, the ZANU-PF did not shy away from raising concerns about possible attempts by Western powers to bring a regime change in Zimbabwe. The ongoing struggle for power indicates that the promises that brought Mnangagwa to the helm are being elbowed away as there is a looming threat to prevent the polity from being tarnished by competing interests.

Another concern stems from the internal workings of the ZANU-PF. With its oligarchic setup, the party seeks to retain the privileges that its elite leaders have enjoyed for a long time. Since its hegemony hasn't been threatened in a significant manner, vulnerable sections of society are being overlooked. It is distressing to note that the preoccupation to play politics has made Zimbabwean leaders forget that the country is trying to climb out of a burgeoning economic crisis.

The absence of a concrete plan to address the country's longstanding economic woes has been at the root of the dilemma. Mnangagwa has failed to draw investment at a time when political unrest runs rife and the country is snowed under considerable debt. Short-term, speculative investments are the President's safest bet at this stage. Even a cluster of infrastructure projects can do little to guarantee stability within the country's budget. As a country that has heavily relied on borrowing, Zimbabwe may have to adhere to strict conditions to secure loans.

Be that as it may, Mnangagwa has also added to the economic crisis through an attempt made in late 2018 to impose a tax on cellphone financial transactions – an initiative that impacted investor confidence. After the crackdown, Chiwenga has been criticized for recklessly handling the protests and making consistent attempts to weaken the administration.

The President's political honeymoon was imbued with hope for a change. But it was always a non-starter as petty politics interfered with the desire to create new opportunities for the economy. Over time, Mnangagwa has stepped in repeatedly to undo the damage done by the Vice President. Unfortunately, the President can't do much about the status quo until he is also willing to radically alter his ideological approach and give effect to meaningful change. S

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ISLAMABAD

RIGHT TO DIGNITY

The dignity of a human is not only a fundamental right in itself but constitutes the real basis of fundamental rights.

BY WAJAHAT ALI MALIK

Domestic laws related to protection of dignity of rights of juvenile delinquents exist in different general thematic codes and exclusive acts. The right to life or liberty, protection from torture and inviolability of dignity of a person has been granted constitutional protection under Articles 9 and 14 of Constitution of Pakistan, 1973. Article 9 of the Constitution provides that right to life is no longer considered as merely a right to physical existence or a right not to be deprived to life without process of law. In fact, right to life means a sum of rights to all amenities and facilities, which a person born in a free country is entitled to enjoy with dignified assistance.

Dignity of the common man under Article 14 does not differ from man to man, race to race and nation to nation. It is the supreme right of every citizen that deserves to be protected and promoted by the government and the community. The right to life is guaranteed even to a person found guilty of serious offences and the person's dignity of a person even sentenced for a heinous offence is protected under the Constitution. This means that a juvenile person below the age of 18, if imprisoned for a criminal offence, is also entitled to the right to dignity and life. A juvenile is considered to be deserving of special treatment, because of his tender age, innocence and lack of proper understanding of the nature or consequences of his conduct. The fundamental right to protect and preserve the dignity of person under Article 14 is unparalleled and can be found only in a few Constitutions of the world.

The Pakistan Penal Code 1860 safeguards the right to dignity of juvenile persons. Section 82 of the PPC provides relaxation to juvenile offenders in criminal responsibility and sets the age of 10 years for juvenile offenders to be held responsible for their criminal acts. This means that nothing done by a child below the age of ten years would be an offence. Section 83 of the PPC further extends the relaxation of criminal responsibility up to the age of 14 years, if the juvenile person has not attained sufficient maturity of understanding to judge the nature and consequences of

his conduct at the time of the commission of the offence. The low minimum age of criminal responsibility (10 years) as described in the PPC is not compatible with the internationally accepted level of the minimum age of criminal responsibility for a juvenile offender. Thus, it infringes the right to dignity of juvenile delinquents.

The Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) 1898 protects the right to dignity of juvenile offenders in a number of ways. Section 29B of CrPC provides a special procedure for custody, trial or punishment of juvenile offenders by a special judge appointed by the provincial government for any area to hear the cases of juvenile offenders, if the offence committed is not punishable with death or life imprisonment and the age of the juvenile is below fifteen years when he is brought before a court. Section 497 CrPC gives relaxation to juvenile offenders for grant of bail in non-bailable offences, if the juvenile is below 16 years of age at the time of commission of offence. Section 399 CrPC provides that, in case of sentencing a juvenile who is below the age of fifteen years, the court may direct that such juvenile, instead of being imprisoned in jail, shall be confined in a reformatory for his rehabilitation and re-integration into society.

The right to dignity and right to life of juvenile delinquents can only be fulfilled in Pakistan by fully implementing JJSA 2018.

The Police Order 2002 protects the right to dignity of juveniles by describing the duties and responsibilities of the police for protection of rights of the general public and children. The Juvenile Justice System Act 2018 is an exclusive law enacted for the protection of the right to dignity and right to life of juvenile offenders when they are involved in criminal litigation and provides a specialized procedure for arrest, investigation, bail, trial, detention and rehabilitation of juvenile offenders.

International laws in the form of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 (UDHR) and several international conventions on human rights, such as UNCRC, ICCPR, UNCAT, CEDAW and ICESCR, all ratified by Pakistan, also protect the right to dignity of juveniles. These conventions put Pakistan under legal obligation to protect the dignity rights of children and to take measures for full implementation of the juvenile justice system in the country.

Although, Pakistan has enacted legislation to protect the rights to dignity and life of juvenile offenders, but still there are many ways through which the dignity of juvenile offenders is infringed in the country. The most severe violation of rights to dignity and life of juvenile offenders is their execution. On 16 December 2014, the Pakistan government lifted a six years de facto moratorium on the death penalty. Since then more than 500 individuals have been executed, which makes Pakistan the fifth most prolific executioner in the world. Among these 500 executed convicts, six juveniles were unlawfully executed despite the existence of credible evidence in favour of their juvenility. This is because these juveniles have been tried in courts of law as adult accused persons and the police and trial or appellate courts did not consider the plea of juvenility, if raised, by any juvenile in their cases.

The second reason for the execution of juvenile offenders in Pakistan is the non-exercising of age determination protocols by the police and courts. In most cases of juvenile offenders/victims, the police normally records the age of the juvenile offender on the basis of its observation on physical appearance of the accused person and not through the methods prescribed for determination of age under juvenile justice law. This leads to the trial of juveniles as adult accused persons and, subsequently, results in convictions and, in some tragic cases, even executions.

Another violation of right to dignity of juvenile offenders is the trial of juveniles in Anti-Terrorism courts and awarding of death sentences to them despite the existence of plausible evidence in favour of their juvenility. The Anti-Terrorism Act 1997 is granted overriding effect over all laws currently in force. So, courts often interpret the provisions of the ATA as meaning that, for terrorism offences under the ATA, the Anti-Terrorism Courts possess exclusive jurisdiction even for cases of juvenile delinquents. Hence, the procedures of ATA fail to comply with internationally agreed fair trial standards.

Every seventh person sentenced to death and every eighth person executed in the world is a Pakistani citizen. Ten percent of the current death row population in prisons of Pakistan consists of those prisoners who were juvenile at the time of commission of the offence but can be executed in future. The execution of offenders under the age of 18 years is squarely prohibited in international law by a number of multilateral treaties, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Pakistan ratified in 1990, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights ratified by Pakistan in 2008. Pakistan faces serious criticism on lifting of the moratorium on the death penalty and execution of juvenile offenders from the international diplomatic community and the United Nations treaty bodies that have reviewed Pakistan's state reports in the past three years.

Similarly, the other forms of violation of right to dignity of juvenile offenders are abusing, torturing and degrading of juveniles by police, inadequate legal representation of juvenile offenders in cases, pre-conviction detention of juvenile under-trial prisoners, the non-observance of the courts for the prescribed time limit to conclude trials in cases of juvenile offenders, non-existence of separate juvenile prisons and rehabilitation centers in all the provinces/administrative territories of Pakistan, over-crowding/high occupancy rate in prisons, abuse of juveniles in prisons by other prisoners or prison staff and the low birth registration rate of children in Pakistan.

The right to dignity and right to life of juvenile delinquents can only be fulfilled in Pakistan by fully implementing JJSA 2018, strict exercise of age-determination protocols by police and courts in cases of juveniles, reinstating the moratorium on the death penalty and launch of investigations into cases of all those under-trial, convicted and condemned prisoners, who were juveniles at the time of commission of offence and are at risk of execution. S

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NEW DELHI

VICTIMIZING URDU

The BJP is openly anti-Muslim and therefore anti-Urdu, though the Party generously uses Urdu words in its slogans. No wonder, Urdu is thriving in India.

BY S. G. JILANEE

As a rule, the language people speak has no nexus with their faith. People speak the language of the country they live in, regardless of whatever faith they may profess. For example, Christians in Europe and Muslims in Africa and Asia speak many languages.

But, so acute is the bigotry of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party in India that it equates Islam with Urdu and treats Urdu as the language of its Muslim minority. Such is the hatred and intolerance that in the recent past, a few RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) workers forced an artist to deface his own graffiti in praise of the capital. What ticked those people off was that the shair, or couplet, was in Urdu which was not to be "tolerated". "For good measure, the artist was even asked to go back to Lahore." In their frenzy the fanatics forgot that Urdu was born in India.

A fair part of the blame for dragging Urdu into political controversy, however, lies on Mohammad Ali Jinnah, because he identified Urdu as the language of the Indian Muslims. Like a typical lawyer, he rattled away the differences, real or exaggerated, between Hindus and Muslims, to clinch his argument that Muslims and Hindus in India constituted two separate nations. One of the major differences, he pointed out, was that Urdu was written from right to left, whereas Hindi was written from left to right. But, he ignored the fact that many Indian Muslims did not speak or write Urdu and even his own kinsmen spoke Gujarati, which is written from left to right. But the damage had been done. In consequence, in post-Partition India, Urdu began to be loathed as the source of India's vivisection and every effort was made by the state to suppress it.

Currently, Urdu has fallen on bad days. Every attempt is made at the state level to undermine the language. Urdu is not taught in most Indian schools and Urdu-medium students suffer because of the marginalization of the language through government policy. Indeed, in most parts of India, Urdu is not a market-linked language and an Urdu-medium education is not sufficient to interact with the government, hold government employment, or participate in India's cultural mainstream. Academically, Urdu and Hindi are classified as literary registers of the same language, the Khari Boli spoken historically in and around Delhi city. These are languages of daily speech and are widely understood.

When people lament the demise of Urdu, what they really mean is that the heavily Persianised Urdu or high Urdu, is dead. The everyday Urdu that people speak – which is identical in turn to spoken Hindi – is more than flourishing. But even this premise is not correct. In fact, far from declining, thanks to Indian films, high Urdu is thriving. Most film songs are written in high Urdu. High (Sanskritised) Hindi, by contrast, has almost no mass use outside the Union government and the Hindi state governments. Even, political parties themselves make sure to use the everyday language when they really want to communicate. For example, the Bharatiya Janata Party uses Khari Boli in its slogans – such as "Acche Din". In fact, its latest catchphrase "Do Saal Bemisaal" could even be classified as high Urdu, given that both "saal" and "bemisaal" are Persian words.

After 1947, India adopted high Hindi written in the Devanagri script and states like Uttar Pradesh even went so far as to ban Urdu-medium schools. Understandably, users of Urdu script lament its decline – especially given that post-1947, the Persio-Arabic script has been targeted as a symbol of "Muslimness" in north India. Meanwhile, *Jashn-e-Rekhta*, an organization dedicated to the preservation and promotion of the Urdu language, its literature and culture, recently concluded its 5th edition in Delhi. The Jashn has been extremely successful in

attracting huge audiences to its events built around Urdu.

In contrast to this apparent success of Urdu, scholarly studies show that Urdu has suffered marginalisation and its social landscape is shrinking. Therefore, many claim that the success of *Jashn-e-Rekhta* marks the revival of the Urdu language and literature. As Indian film personality Javed Jaffrey has said: "Urdu khatre mein nahin hai, Urdu to qatre qatre mein hai (Urdu is not in danger; Urdu is actually in every drop)."

Malini Nayar of the Times of India dismissed the idea that Urdu was dying. She too echoed the jubilation and enthusiasm about Urdu's revival with her headline, 'Urdu language is not only alive but rocking.' Urdu newspapers followed suit. The Siasat Daily published a report on the role of the *Jashn-e-Rekhta* in reviving Urdu with the headline, '*Jashn-e-Rekhta* has proved that Urdu is not only alive but is creating waves'

But, such views about its 'revival' and 'resurgence' overlook the ground reality that Urdu is actually in sharp decline in north India, especially in Uttar Pradesh and Delhi, once its traditional strongholds. The ground reality is that other than the two Urdu medium schools run by the Aligarh Muslim University, there is not a single primary or junior high school in the whole of UP where Urdu is the complete medium of instruction. The symbolic second language status accorded to Urdu by the UP government has not arrested its decline either. The recommendations of the Gujral Committee (1975), the Ale Ahmad Suroor Committee (1979) and the Ali Sardar Jafri Committee (1990) to revive and popularise Urdu have never been implemented.

Apparently, the quarrel of the RSS is with the Urdu script. If the very same couplet - Dilli tera ujarna, aur phir ujar ke basna: Woh dil hai toone paya, sani nahi hai jiska – were written in the Devanagri or Roman script, the RSS goons would not have been so worked up. Meanwhile, to substitute the Devanagri script with the Urdu script, Hindi lexicographers have put dots under given letters of the alphabet to produce Urdu sounds.

The above discourse leads to the ineluctable conclusion that Urdu is very much alive in India. S

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DHAKA

THE GARMENT SWEATSHOPS

The Bangladeshi garment industry generates 80% of the country's total export revenue. However, the wealth generated by this sector has led to few improvements in the lives of garment workers, most of whom are women.

BY MURTAZA TALPUR

In Bangladesh, the garment industry has been the mainstay of foreign exchange and economic development for the last thirty years. It generates 80 percent of the country's total export revenue. Some 25 types of garments are exported by Bangladesh to nearly 31 countries across the world.

In this situation, the plight of garment workers in Bangladesh is very dismal and pathetic. In Dhaka in April 2013, the Rana Plaza collapse killed 1,100 workers and injured many more. In July 2013, the Bangladesh government entered a Sustainability Compact with the European Union, pledging to reform its labour laws. While 3.5 million Bangladeshi workers in 4,825 garment factories produce goods for export to the global market, principally Europe and North America, yet the country's laws and rules governing labour rights and export processing zones still have rigid union restrictions. These are in violation of international laws.

Garment workers face daunting challenges to unionization and remain at risk of interference and threats by factories six years after the Rana Plaza collapse. It is mind-boggling to know that merely 10 percent of Bangladesh's more than 4825 garment factories have registered unions. The rest are facing unnerving hindrances from the government and factory owners. Bangladesh labour laws and procedures propound demanding obstacles to the establishing and functioning of unions.

Besides, there are legal hurdles to well-organized unionizing and collective

bargaining, which includes the high minimum membership requirement of 30 percent workers for factory-level unions, restrictions on trade unions' right to easily elect representative, indistinguishable administrative power to cancel union registration and strict limitations on the right to strike. The data compiled by the Solidarity Center demonstrates that only 61 union registration applications were permitted while 148 were rejected. The Dhaka Joint Directorate of Labour disallowed 73 percent applications for forming unions.

In 1972 Bangladesh sanctioned ILO conventions 87 and 98 regarding freedom of association and collective bargaining that determine international standards that governments should allow workers to form unions of their selection and without inference and vowed to reform its laws under its Sustainability Compact with EU.

Due to insubstantial and fragile unionization in the country, the general predicament of garment workers is starkly miserable. Workers are being denied basic human rights such as education, health and social protection. These workers get the lowest wages in the global garment industry. Since 2013 minimum wage for garment workers was 5,300 taka (about $63) that has now been revised to 8,000 taka ($95) though it is still far below any credible living wage. The workers still do not get the revised wage as factory owners are very powerful. According to the Japan External Trade Organization, the $95 monthly minimum wage is the lowest in global terms. The minimum wage should be an amount that can at least meet the basic needs of workers related to education, health and living costs. Such minimum remunerations and trade agreements with western countries have made the garments sector in Bangladesh a 30 billion dollar industry accounting for four-fifths of its exports, with such clients as Wal-Mart Stores Inc., JC Penney Company Inc., H&H Hennes and Mauritz AB.

The garment factory in Bangladesh can be summed up in three words: dangerous, unsanitary and exploitative. Wages are delayed and maternity leave is denied. Workers are forced to toil till late night and toilet facilities are appalling. The workers also face unsafe, cramped and hazardous conditions which lead to work injuries and factory fires. Sexual harassment and discrimination is also widespread. Since the Rana Plaza collapse, the Bangladesh Accord for Fire and Building Safety and the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety have been working collaboratively to improve factory safety in the garment industry. There are hundreds of uncounted factories. These are largely informal and unregulated and tend to be very dangerous for workers.

Studies show that with some of the world's lowest wages and no job security for workers, the garment industry in Bangladesh makes high profits. Inhuman working conditions, verbal and physical abuse, irregular or non-payment of dues and the inability to organize are common in these factories supplying world-class garments.

There are many other problems such as faulty structure of factory buildings including weak electrical wiring, lack of fire exits and fire alarms, narrow stairs and exit paths, poor foundations and locked doors. Apart from that, dozens of garment workers and labour leaders face unfair and fabricated criminal charges and fight for equal wages. This is due to lack of regulations and absence of monitoring by the relevant government agencies. The owners of factories are above the law and face no legal action for their wrongdoings.

Studies show that 60 percent of the garment's value is grabbed by international buyers and brand retailers. Of the remaining 40 percent, the imported and local materials, together with the overhead costs take up nearly 35 percent. As such, less than 1 percent is left for the workers.

The European Union, together with the USA and Canada as significant importing countries and advocates of reform, also engaged in monitoring the Sustainability Compact. They must make sure that the government of Bangladesh overtly declares time-bound pledges to go over its labour laws and rules. They should assert that all features of the Sustainability Compact have been publicized against which the Bangladesh government's record and documentation can be evaluated. Besides, the Bangladesh Fire and Building Safety Accord and the Alliance for Bangladesh Workers Safety should support ease of legal restrictions on unions and stop union-busting activities. In addition, they must also reveal their dealer and processing factories and work with them to guarantee that they meet the international standards for workers' constitutional rights. Apart from that, civil society organizations and INGOs should play their role to get garment workers their due and fundamental rights. Digital campaigns ought to be launched to create pressure on the government and relevant departments to take prompt actions. S

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The Nightingale Flies Away

No one would have thought that in the inspiring way Shahnaz Begum sang 'Sohni Dharti' and 'Jeevay Jeevay Pakistan' for PTV, in a few years she would leave Pakistan and would become the citizen of another country - a country that would break away from the original Pakistan. The singer would then be lost forever to her admirers in the country where she made a name. The Shahnaz Begum that Pakistan saw – and loved – was the one who put so much feeling in her songs that it really boosted the hearts of Pakistanis and infused in them a national spirit. It is said that Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who was the Prime Minister of Pakistan in those days, was the moving spirit behind those popular songs of Shahnaz Begum.

She was primarily a film playback singer and this is the vocation she continued to follow when she moved over to Bangladesh but the popularity she got from singing in West Pakistan was simply unbeatable.

On one occasion I witnessed her doing a film duet with Ahmed Rushdi at Karachi's Eastern Studios. This was much after she had become known for her popular national songs like 'Sonni Dharti' and 'Jeevay Jeevay Pakistan.'

During the recording, I could see Ahmed Rushdi coming across as an abrasive and, to an extent, a non-cooperative person who made things difficult to handle for the music director. Shahnaz Begum, on the other hand, was most cooperative and had no problems when she was requested for retakes. I was sitting in the recording booth then and saw the sound recordist and his assistant shaking their heads in appreciation of Shahnaz Begum's positive attitude. She was a very popular person then and a celebrity in her own right. Of course, so was Ahmed Rushdi in the early 70s.

Then Shahnaz Begum decided to move over to Bangladesh and though she left behind a high reputation and her highly popular songs, she never achieved the lofty level of popularity in Bangladesh as she enjoyed in Pakistan.

Shahnaz was always an endearing personality and despite her immense popularity, she never had the kind of airs that people in showbiz usually develop after they reach certain heights of recognition. She was always reachable, always accessible. Perhaps, since she was a simple person, she did not have the kind of arrogance that people in her position generally have.

Hers was a time when Pakistan had been broken asunder and the nation was not a happy one. The morale of the nation needed boosting up and Shahnaz's songs 'Sohni Dharti' and 'Jeevay Jeevay Pakistan' did just that.

Pakistan had a reasonably busy film industry until the early 70s and Shahnaz Begum's was the voice that all filmmakers and TV producers sought. After she shifted to Bangladesh, as did so many other Bengali showbiz people, the Pakistani film industry also waned and, in a few years, lost its bite. The reasons for this certainly lie elsewhere, like advent of the VCR and the inability of the film industry to adapt itself to the new medium but Shahnaz Begum was also missed.

For her, Bangladesh, a new country, offered all the prospects to establish herself once again but it was obvious that she was never accepted by the film industry in the new Bangladesh the way she was in Pakistan.

Pakistani music directors had discovered that there was something in her voice, her mastery of tunes, her pronunciation and her delivery that made even a simple song, so touching, so heart rending and so inimitable. The song 'Sohni Dharti Allah Rakhe' was a milestone in Shahnaz's career. West Pakistan had problems in letting her go. She was a treasure for the country. Wherever she went, she had to sing for the people both 'Sohni Dharti Allah Rakhe' and 'Jeevay Jeevay Pakistan.'

She was in those days the darling of a suffering nation and her extraordinary good looks were what further added to her endearment and immense popularity. But somehow, Shahnaz Begum could not be stopped from changing her decision to move to Bangladesh.

Having made the new country her home, Shahnaz recently went for Umrah with her husband. After she returned, she left singing and felt the need to dedicate herself to God, help the poor and become a caregiver. She gave her property away and spent her time in the pursuit of Islamic teachings. At the age of 67, she suffered from a heart attack on March 23 and never recovered. Though she died in Dhaka, it was Pakistan Day. Many years ago, Pakistan's Malika e Mauseeqi, Noor Jehan had passed away on the 27th of Ramadan. Is there a connection in the fact that these two melody queens died on such important dates? Perhaps March 23 should be projected for Shahnaz Begum with as much reverence as 27 Ramazan is for Madam Noor Jehan. S

– Javed Ansari

10TH KARACHI LITERATURE FESTIVAL BRINGS THE ZING BACK!

The 10th KLF celebrates Karachi's vibrancy with new energy and verve.

BY FAIZAN USMANI

Just discussing literature, both prose and poetry, would be rather boring. It is the masala of culture – dance, music, book launches, film screenings – and of course all the desi cuisine – that provides the zing to the three-day affair that is also known as the Karachi Literature Festival.

Committed to improving the intellectual aspects of life through discussion and dialogue, thought-provoking talks and interactive reading sessions, OUP Pakistan held the 10th Karachi Literature Festival from March 1-3. The venue was again the Beach Luxury Hotel – a lovely seaside setting that has traditional Karachi written all over it.

The OUP team was ably led by their new managing director, Arshad Saeed Husain.

When the KLF began on March 1, things were rather gloomy as tension between India and Pakistan had been ratcheted up to a high degree and until a day before, it was feared that the event would fail to attract both literary participants as well as people at large. After all, both international and domestic flights had been cancelled and travelling to Karachi by air was simply not possible. It's good though that the OUP representative from London, Ms. Rachel Goode, had already arrived in the city before the tensions began and she was a great part of all the excitement and enthusiasm that was witnessed at the KLF.

Inaugurated by Imran Ismail, Governor of Sindh, the festival featured over 200 national and international speakers, held some 80 discussion sessions on different subjects and launched over 30 books, as well as holding the screening of 'Rani,' a short film. There was something for everyone at the KLF and Urdu, Sindhi and English were all adequately represented.

Attended by leading scholars, authors and literary figures, the discussion sessions covered literature, social issues, politics, art, culture and much more. These events attracted a large number of literature – and culture lovers – though more would have come from across the country had the flight schedules not been disturbed. There were also some people who came just for the heck of it – to attend a 'mela' perhaps. A mushaira, which is a typical literary activity in this part of the world, was also held on the second day of the festival.

Ms. Rachel Goode (OUP, UK), Mr. Imran Ismail, Governor of Sindh and Mr. Arshad Saeed Husain, Managing Director, OUP Pakistan, at the10th KLF inaugural ceremony.

Arshad Saeed Husain, Managing Director OUP, Pakistan.

Arshad Saeed Husain, the Managing Director of Oxford University Press in Pakistan was dead right when he said that the 10th KLF was seeking to explore new directions and emerging trends in literature. True to the fact that he is out and out a marketing professional and a leader on top, having been the CEO of Abbott Laboratories before he came to OUP, Arshad Husain termed the KLF as a means of understanding the changing times and changing opinions. "KLF will help our relatively younger Pakistanis to grasp the concepts of tomorrow," he said. "It has become, not just a Festival, but a social movement, inspiring our youth and the literati to carry its light into the future."

The 10th KLF proved that the city of Karachi has climbed out of its dark night – a fact that was supported so amply by the record-breaking crowds that thronged the Festival on all three days. While the thirst for literature is understandable in people generally, what was really impressive was the fact that old people were brought to

the Festival on wheelchairs or simply found their way in, heaving and groaning while leaning on walking sticks. On the 3rd day, when there was a jam-packed crowd in the Main Garden attending an open discussion session, it started to rain. Everyone ran for cover but 15 minutes later, when it stopped raining, the Main Garden was as full of people as it was a while back.

The Chief Minister of Sindh was also at the KLF on the third day and this is where he was informed that all the matches in the PSL4 last round were to be held in Karachi. The CM was really excited and he made the announcement that Karachi would go all out to make the PSL4 a successful affair. This further added to the fact that Karachi was back to its days of buzz and thrills.

People came in droves from near and far and while there were those die-hards who just cared about literary endeavours, there were also those who would attend a literary festival, not as much to check out on what the writers and poets were doing, but to see and to be seen. In the bargain, while they hobnobbed with the literati and other celebrities, they also enjoyed the music - whether rock or desi – and the hot chaats and tea, because this was their cultural kick and they would have liked to have lots of it.

There were enlightening talks and discussions by many well-known people that one rarely gets to see from up close. It was really awe-inspiring to listen to such eminent persons as Zehra Nigah, Dr. Ishrat Hussain, Zia Mohyeddin, Muneeza Shamsie, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, Javed Jabbar, Anwar Maqsood and so many others.

At a part of the closing ceremony, keynote speeches were made by Dr. Ishrat Husain, Deborah Baker and I.A. Rehman.

Having completed ten years of impressive success, the Karachi Literature Festival has emerged as a flagship event that is all about promoting literature and the love of reading. This was demonstrated so graphically at the 10th KLF that was a resounding success.

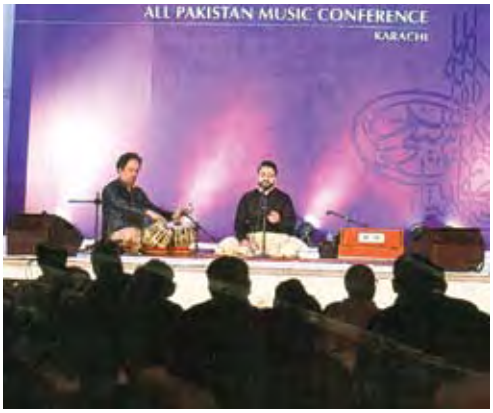
At the festival venue, the plethora of non-literary entertainment kiosks, music and food stalls also attracted people but most came to quench their intellectual thirst and satisfy their literary appetite.

The OUP managing director Arshad Saeed Hussain said in his closing remarks. “Things at the venue from the next day would be back to the same as there would be no marquees, no chairs and the rooms in which sessions were held would return to their routine business again; however, the only difference would be that each of us would experience a tremendous increase in our wisdom due to the knowledge we gained in the two-and-a-half days of the Festival.” S

The writer is a member of the staff. He can be reached at faizan@southasia.com.pk

APMC CONTINUES TO MAKE A MARK ON CULTURE

Over the past sixteen years, the All Pakistan Music Conference, held every year in Karachi, has shown that the arts are not only integral to the collective expression of the people but are also the mainstay of social cohesion in society.



BY SYEDA AREEBA RASHEED

It is good to see that the All Pakistan Music Conference, Karachi has grown from being just a platform for music and has evolved and expanded its strategic depth. Its collaborative ventures have increased and the audience numbers are also growing, as was evident at the 16th edition of the APMC which was held at the Indus Valley School of Arts & Architecture from March 8 to 10, 2019.

The 16th APMC ended on a high note with some brilliant vocal and instrumental performances.

At the conclusion, APMC director Ayla Raza spoke about the 16 years of her and her team's hard work. She took the audience through the evolution of the music conference which started on a small scale and has now transformed into a much-anticipated annual event that gives to the culture-starved people of Karachi an occasion that the city can surely be proud of.

Ayla Raza said in her address: "We have come a long way and since 2015 there has been a slight change in the outlook of APMC as we are now looking at longer-term projects. One such is the introduction of teaching modules on Eastern music in schools since the past two years," she said.

She further said, "There is a great disconnect because over the years we have lost the worth of our own things. Class-based and language-based issues have made things worse. This is why it is important for our younger audience to be empowered and taught about local content in the field of music."

She emphasized that the APMC also works for artistes' welfare and preservation of culture in the country.

"This festival over the past two to three years has had a huge influx of younger performers and very promising ones who are making a mark. When we started we had mostly stalwarts performing but now we find these young artistes who are coming up well and we have managed to address the generation gap. We are also slowly witnessing the presence of younger people in the audience which is a welcome change," she added.

The All Pakistan Music Conference started 16 years ago to give a boost to the traditional arts. It was launched on the basis of the belief that the arts are not only integral to the collective expression of the people but are also the mainstay of social cohesion in society.

It is for this reason that the APMC continues to view its work as not mere entertainment but as a critical catalyst for the benefit and development of society, the relevance of which is even greater in today's fractured times.

Through its work, the APMC hopes to contribute towards developing a rich and ongoing cultural tradition around the classical arts in Karachi, which would enhance the learning, practice, viewing, listening and appreciation of the classical arts, thus creating a community that values its artistic traditions and works towards preserving them.

The main activities of the APMC are focused on creating platforms of traditional performing arts, creating awareness of traditional music and dance in society and liaising with various related organizations nationally and internationally for the promotion of traditional art forms.

How dedicated the APMC is to its mission of preserving artistic traditions can be gauged from the fact that it has so far held annual music festivals and several baithaks since its inception sixteen years ago. These were free and open to all. The APMC has provided a platform of creative expression in music to hundreds of artistes. It has also invited scores of artistes from abroad to perform for audiences in Karachi.

This has created a wide supporter base of music and dance enthusiasts while links have been established with local and international cultural organizations for performance collaborations and training.

The APMC offers a platform to students where they can showcase traditional arts. This includes introductory workshops for schools on Eastern music.

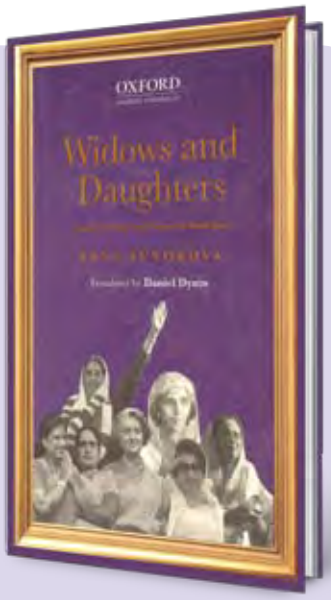
Through its diverse range of activities, the APMC has succeeded in establishing its credentials in Karachi's cultural milieu as well as among the artiste community on a national scale as an organization that is dedicated to preserving the nation's cultural and artistic capital and promoting it on a wider scale. S

The writer is a member of the staff. She can be reached at areeba@southasia.com.pk

BOOK

WIDOWS AND DAUGHTERS: GENDER, KINSHIP AND POWER

Power and Patriarchy



Title: Widows and Daughters: Gender, Kinship and Power
Author: Anna Suvorova
Translated by: Daniel Dynin
Pages: 304
Publisher: Oxford University Press

BY TAHA KEHAR

Anna Suvorova's *Widows and Daughters: Gender, Kinship and Power* puts the spotlight on how women have managed to assume public office in various South Asian countries by using the traditions of kinship, sexuality and motherhood embedded with their political milieu to their advantage. In a clear and consistent manner, this study examines the reasons that enabled women to subvert destructive patriarchal demands and become presidents and premiers of a vast majority of South Asian nations in the second half of the twentieth century.

It is difficult to imagine that *Widows and Daughters* was initially written in Russian because the translated version is as richly layered and heavily nuanced as if the book had been written by Suvorova in English. The author's fascination with female political leaderships across South Asia stems from a crucial question: how did countries where women are expected to be subservient to their male counterparts produce such prominent female political leaders? She systematically answers the question by viewing it through different perspectives.

At the outset, Suvorova asks whether the rise of female leaders in the South Asian political culture is an anomaly or a routine occurrence. She puts forward the 'black swan' theory to determine if female political leaders such as Benazir Bhutto, Indira Gandhi, Sheikh Hasina Wajed or Begum Khaleda Zia rose to political prominence through mere coincidences.

If conventional wisdom is anything to go by, a large number of women who attained powerful positions were *widows and daughters* of male leaders and seized the reins under seemingly dramatic circumstances. However, this isn't an entirely convincing explanation as it fails to account for the historical and cultural factors that set the basis for these women to lead their countries. In addition, such observations presume that the political milestones achieved by these women leaders are nothing more than a fluke and, thereby, trivialize their day-to-day struggle against patriarchal norms. Deviating from these narrow explanations that stand the risk of appearing outdated, the author adopts a broader focus on the matter.

Through a cluster of historical accounts, Suvorova draws attention to South Asia's experience with women rulers and debunks the myth that a female political leadership in South Asia is little more than an anomaly. The author uses the example of the begums of Bhopal and other women-centric empires that are part of South Asian history and culture to discredit the 'black swan' theory. Suvorova also delves into the politics of maternalism adopted by most female political leaders in South Asia and analyzes how it set the ideological basis for their rise to power.

Widows and Daughters uses an analytical framework to explore the individual trajectories of female political leaders and determines how they made inroads into the corridors of power. Suvorova's study focuses on the political journeys of Indira Gandhi, Khaleda Zia, Sheikh Hasina Wajed, Chandrika Kumaratunga, Benazir Bhutto and Fatima Jinnah. The turmoil and triumphs experienced by each of these leaders have been portrayed with historical accuracy. The accounts suggest that even though serendipity had a role to play in pushing these women to the centre-stage, it was the political culture of South Asia that enabled them to adopt key positions in the state structure.

In a majority of circumstances, female political leaders were chosen during times of a grave political crisis. Although they may have emerged on the political scene through a stroke of luck, they had to rely on their own capabilities to lead their countries towards prosperity.

Suvorova has drawn attention to "an irrational connection between the arrival of women in power and tragic circumstances". The spirit of suffering and sacrifice has been woven into their political trajectories as a "kind of law of ill fortune". The author believes that women leaders who "enjoyed incomparably more freedom than ordinary female inhabitants in their countries did little to liberate women from discrimination". This is primarily because they struggled to elbow away patriarchal notions that frowned upon women who entered the public domain.

Patriarchal political cultures in South Asia are fuelled by ideals that recognize the sanctity of motherhood. Many female political leaders obtained a gender advantage from these traditional concepts that had a strong cultural and religious basis. According to Suvorova, "they inserted the patriarchal and charismatic concepts into the model of the female gender role, assuring the broad support of the electorate, which had initially been hostile to female leadership". Over time, these female political leaders were able to alter the attitudes to women in positions of power and paved the way for a "real revolution in the public consciousness".

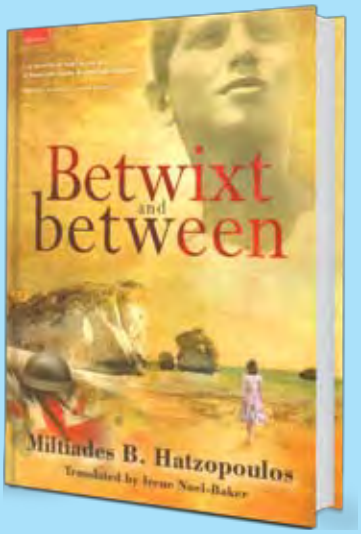
By turns insightful and enthralling, *Widows and Daughters* is a seminal work that ought to be taken further to develop suitable means for a female political leadership in South Asia to challenge patriarchy in all its destructive forms. S

BOOK

BETWIXT AND BETWEEN

Internal Conflicts

BY NADYA CHISHTY-MUJAHID



Book Title: Betwixt and Between
Author: Militiades Hatzopoulos
Publisher: Armida Publications
Price: $17
ISBN: 9963706851, 9789963706853

Greek writer Militiades Hatzopoulos's novel, ably translated into English by Irene Noel-Baker, is set in colonial Cyprus during the 1950s. Yet in spite of the backdrop of tension between the Cypriots and the oppressive British, which often threatens to break out into war due to the violent agitations of EOKA (the National Association of Cypriot Fighters) this is not truly a war saga. Rather it is the coming-of-age story of a boy from a well-to-do Cyprian family, which over the course of the book turns into a love-story.

Dimitri Dorides, the son of a wealthy mines director, loses his mother at a relatively early age; late enough in his childhood for him to have deep memories of both her illness and love for him, and insecurity at the threat of losing his father to a stepmother. Assuaging his grief following the loss of his wife, Aristides Dorides takes solace in an affair with his housekeeper Maria. This "sin" is the only one that can be laid at Maria's door for she is otherwise a very caring and good woman. Both she and her young daughter, Evdoxia, provide Dimitri with so much sincere affection that he feels practically betrayed when his father decides to marry another woman, Jenny.

Too young to appreciate that the widely disparate class differences between his father and Maria preclude the possibility of Dorides having a liaison with her more meaningful than an affair, Dimitri is polite towards Jenny but not particularly welcoming. Since nationalism has caused Dimitri's Cypriot school to be more threatening than his father would wish, Dimitri is placed in an English school where he interacts frequently with the children of the British.

Possessing a fine mind and fluency in French (including old historical French that makes use of the passe simple tense and is found only in classic literature), Dimitri develops a passion for medieval French poetry and prose. As he moves through puberty and beyond, his ideas regarding romance are shaped by dreams of lords, ladie, and troubadours; hence, there is a finely-honed aesthetic sense to his psyche which conflicts with the pressing demands of his young and earthy sexuality. One of Hatzopoulos's greatest strengths as a writer is the ability to evoke an authentic sense of atmosphere by describing the scenic and historic landscape of Cyprus with skill and beauty, especially its beaches, ancient Orthodox churches, hills and walkways.

The landscape and political threats can thus be read as a metaphor for the internal conflicts that Dimitri experiences, between love and sex primarily, but also between the world of the intellect and the realities of national strife. Sensitive and pacifist, on being introduced to the pretty blue-eyed daughter of an English clergyman, Anne Winslow, Dimitri falls head-over-heels in love with her. She is not indifferent to his chivalrous charm but, given that the novel is set in the conservative 1950s, Dimitri hesitates about coming on too strong.

What catalyzes the physical aspect of his teenage relationship with Anne is, ironically, the arrival of another young woman on the scene — the hired help, Phrossou. Bronzed by the sun, with tawny hair and hypnotic green eyes, Phrossou exudes sensuality, partly because her menial position dictates that she dresses more casually and less modestly than either the English or upper-crust Cyprians. The latter portion of the novel dwells on Dimitri's sexual awakening by Phrossou, who claims (unconvincingly) that he should be gentle with her since she is as inexperienced as he is. While the mild-mannered and refined protagonist has no problem handling her gently, he is emboldened by the experience into declaring his love for Anne. He even confesses to having had sex with Phrossou, whereupon Anne one-ups him by confiding that her own deflowering was at the hands of a stable-boy in England prior to her arriving in Cyprus with her family!

Perhaps the main reason Hatzopoulos underscores class differences on both sides of the equation — the Cyprian as well as English — is to cast into relief the strongly insular nature of Dimitri's upper-crust community towards the end of colonial rule in Cyprus. Until the violence is brought home first-hand to Dimitri by means of an ugly encounter with the police, he is reluctant to step out of his comfort zone and realize that the situation is fraught to the point of being untenable. For not only is the peace of Cyprus disturbed by nationalists agitating to overthrow the British; tense relations between Greek Cypriots and Turkish ones also blossom into violence.

But it is another type of violation (a more personal one) that causes the plot to move forward and Dimitri to become a fugitive. While I will not allow spoilers to mar this review, I can safely state that reality eventually gets the better of Dimitri. Though his love for Anne is reciprocated, albeit unequally, the course of true love does not run smoothly for them. Yet, in aggregate, the main point of the novel is simply to honour love in its many manifestations — maternal, spiritual and physical — and to marvel at the fact that it persists in spite of war, or perhaps because of it. S

BOOK

BUYING GEMSTONES AND JEWELLERY IN SRI LANKA

Guide for Gemstone Lovers

BY FAIZAN USMANI

Book Title:	Gemstone Detective
Author:	Kim Rix
Publisher:	Filament Publishing
Price:	$16.91
ISBN:	9781912635238

A gemmologist and a professional travel photographer, Kim Rix is known the world over as a 'Gemstone Detective.' Hailing from London, Rix developed an interest in photography and gemstones in her childhood. With a family living in different countries, such as Colombia, the Philippines, India, Australia, Sweden and the USA, she has travelled to many countries in her early years and her rich globe-trotting experience has helped her emerge as a top-ranked travel photographer in the U.K. To know more about gemstones and jewellery, she did her graduation in Gemmology from the Gemmological Institute of America.

Capturing the Northern Lights in Finland to photographing wandering gorillas in Rwanda and flocks of pink flamingos in Mexico, Kim Rix, a born adventurer, took her passion for gemstones, travelling and photography to a new height by putting them together in black and white. She started writing a book series 'The Gemstone Detective,' an essential guide for tourists visiting different countries who are on the hunt for genuine gemstones and jewels.

Her book 'Buying Gemstones and Jewellery in Sri Lanka' is the latest addition to the series. She visited Sri Lanka in 2016 and 2017 for research purposes and to gain insights into the country's marketplace with the intention of writing the book. Based on her experiences, the book is a complete travel and shopping guide for anyone who wants to visit Sri Lanka with a special interest in discovering the country's rare gemstones and precious jewels.

A must-have guide for foreign tourists, the book helps one become a 'gemstone detective' in the true sense. It provides readers with inside information illustrated with easy-to-follow steps to help them avoid the pitfalls, scams and disappointments while purchasing a gemstone or piece of jewellery in Sri Lanka. A mine of expert advice and practical tips, 'Buying Gemstones and Jewellery in Sri Lanka' is a simple read, offering country-specific background and up-to-the-minute advice, coupled with technical details about the Sri Lankan gemstone and jewellery market.

Published by the U.K.-based Filament Publishing, the 'Gemstone Detective' series has previously covered countries like Thailand, India, Myanmar and Australia, while another book in the series 'Buying Gemstones and Jewellery Worldwide' covers different countries in a single volume. Each book contains country-specific information about its natural gemstones, registered jewellers, jewellery exhibitions, shopping dos and don'ts, popular scams, the ethics of buying gemstones, etc.

FILM

CAN YOU EVER FORGIVE ME?

Story of a Professional Forger

BY SYEDA MAHAM RASHEED

Oscar nominee Melissa McCarthy deserves all the appreciation and praise for her acting in the film 'Can You Ever Forgive Me?' that portrays the real-life odious New York author-turned-serial literary crook Lee Israel. She has been in need of a significant dramatic role for quite a while and when she got one, she made the most of it. In spite of her brilliant energy and comic timing, McCarthy has starred in a number of forgettable films, a haul that finally ends with Director Marielle Heller's 'Can You Ever Forgive Me?' co-written by Nicole Holofcener and Jeff Whitty.

The brilliant actress, with her screen presence and performing skills, has managed to pull the strings of our hearts and made us love the literary forger Lee Israel. Melissa makes a cantankerous, curmudgeon, alcoholic into an unexpectedly sympathetic and even heroic figure, infusing her easy-going and likable persona to play someone who is icy to those close to her, and mean to just about everyone else.

Melissa is abetted by the actor Richard E Grant, also an Oscar nominee, who makes a perfect pairing as her lounge-lizard drinking buddy Jack Hock. Both the characters together in the film are gloriously obnoxious sharing a spiky, increasingly warm chemistry. It is rare to see a film led by two characters over the age of 50 and there is a special friendship that they share where both are covertly conscious of the alternate courses they have taken in life, explicitly aware of the aloneness and solitude that now dangles over them.

The film is based on Lee Israel's memoir of the same title, 'Can You Ever Forgive Me? Memoirs of a Literary Forger', published in 2008. In the book, Israel, author of biographies of Tallulah Bankhead and Estée Lauder, detailed how she made money late in her career by faking correspondence from famous writers. The film itself promises, from the very first scene, to be far more than just a showcase for McCarthy's artistry. The subject matter here could easily have appeared very laid-back and gloomy; the story about literary catastrophe and an extreme career crisis at the age of 51 but Director Marielle Heller, like her previous feature, shoots it in wonderful colours.

There is a melancholic air to the film at large, honesty about the impossibility of dreams and the importance of growing old without chaining one's self to a flawless conception of what life will be. It is a fiercely and finely composed, horribly fascinating true-crime black comedy, historically informed and a richly textured film and insightful regarding the particularities of the protagonist as it is on the artistic life, and on the life of its times.

The film shows Lee who lives in a tiny apartment infested by flies and stinking of cat piss and excrement piling up under the bed, but she pens with an elegance and cultured humour that puts Dorothy Parker and Noel Coward to shame. When she falsifies their letters, she advances on the originals. There is no brightness in the character's life who spends her days either confined in an apartment or on her preferred bar stool. The character of Lee Israel allows for McCarthy's comic skills to sparkle through, demonstrated in the opening scene of the film that quite perfectly sets up her snappish, heavy-drinking anti-heroine role as she gets fired from a day job she hates anyway.

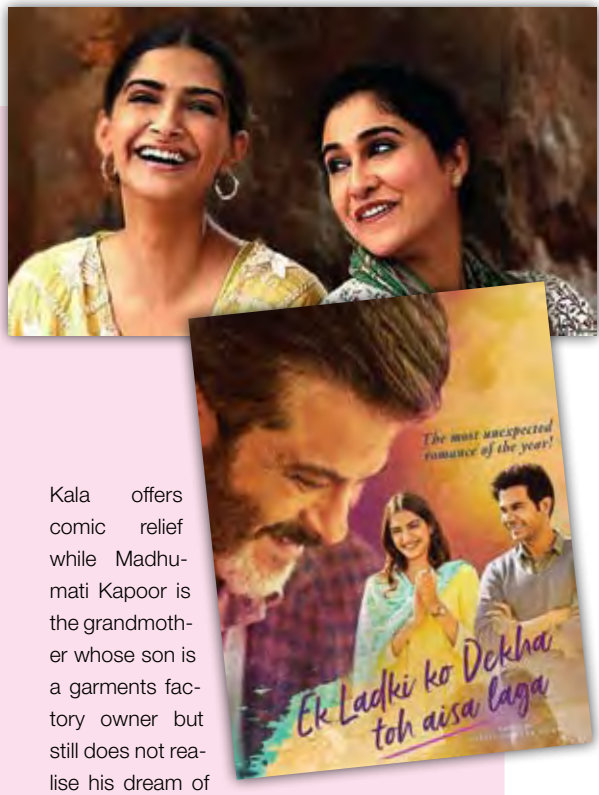
While Lee in the past had written a number of soberly successful biographies of historical women, the money hadn't lasted very long and with her literary agent Marjorie, played by Jane Curtin, treating her with derision, she struggled to survive.

Marjorie warns Israel that she has no chance of getting an advance for her planned biography of star Fanny Brice. So the struggling biographer desperate for money as all her equals in the 1990s New York seemed to be getting huge advances, finds an unlikely new source of income. She sells a letter by US comedienne Fanny Brice to get some cash. When she is told the epistle would be worth more if it was "juicier", it stirs her to become a forger by

forging letters from people such as Dorothy Parker and Noel Coward, relishing both the well-paid rewards and the ego boost to her skills as a writer.

As she begins her career of forgery, Lee finds salvation in Richard E. Grant's Jack-Hock who helps her flog her letters when collectables dealers start to get suspicious. She sold about 400 to naive or sceptical dealers before getting her collar felt by the FBI, and the banal shame of her criminal conviction becomes an exquisitely sore proof of her fiasco as a literary figure. Her final courtroom promise to give up alcohol is succeeded by a scene in which she gets drunk in a bar and imagines about how funny it would be to trip up a fragile Aids patient. But there is despair in the way her grimace of scornfulness finally wobbles into tears of sadness. It is one of those rare films that give cinematic individuality to literary creation that effectively gusts with the athletic pleasure of imagination. S

FILM



EK LADKI KO DEKHA TO AISA LAGA

First Love Story on LGBT

BY MUHAMMAD ALI KHAN

Ek Ladki Ko Dekha To Aisa Laga, a film I was eagerly waiting for when the solo posters of Anil Kapoor, Rajkumar Rao, Juhi Chawla and Sonam Kapoor came out. Many, including me, thought that Raj and Sonam will be playing each other's love interest and Anil and Juhi would be the parents of one of them. The name of the film struck chords as Ek Ladki Ko Dekha Toh Aisa Laga is a famous song from the film '1942, A Love Story' starring Anil Kapoor and Manisha Koirala as leads. After the release of the trailer of the film, people were surprised as it left everyone confused as to what Sonam was trying to hide. During the promotions as well, the cast kept mum preferring to let the film reveal the truth for them. It was indeed one smart move.

First time director Shelly Chopra Dhar who has co-written the screenplay with Gazal Dhaliwal has delivered an important film in the most effective way. The film is about Sweety Chaudhry (Sonam Kapoor) who hails from an influential family in Moga, Punjab while her father Balbir Chaudhry (Anil Kapoor) is a rich garment businessman. The film opens on a big fat Punjabi wedding where Sweety is seen rejecting men. One day, while on the run from her abusive brother Babloo (Abhishek Duhan), she meets playwright Sahil Mirza, the prodigal son of a film producer, who instantly falls in love with her but Sweety has a truth of her own.

Dhar's film keeps viewers confused with the ambiguous title 'Ek Ladki Ko Dekha Toh Aisa Laga' as it floats around multiple characters. The film is simply a love story but it talks about love of a different kind, love between the same genders. After India decriminalised homosexuality last September, many wondered what would be the next step. Dhar has taken a step forward and the film comes out as one of the most important films of our time with its slogan suggesting 'Let love be, set love free'. We all have seen stories about a Raj falling in love with a Simran and never a Sweety falling for a Kuhu (Regina Cassandra), Sonam's love interest.

Balbir is trying hard to convince her daughter to marry someone but Sweety always rejects his proposal. With continuous pressure from him, Sweety comes out and questions 'zaroori hai kya mujhe ek munde se hi pyar ho?' and then gives a firm statement 'main ek ladki se pyaar karti hoon'. With this, the film too shifts gears.

The cast of the film has proved their potential. Sonam Kapoor did the role of Sweety Chaudhry really well. Her natural looks in the entire film help in carrying the message across more clearly. Also, cheers to her for taking up such a role and doing serious justice to it. Rajkummar Rao as Sahil Mirza is the driving force of the film. I think he is the only one in the film who is everywhere. Especially in the scene where Sonam reveals her truth, his reaction was priceless. Although he had feelings for Sweety but after knowing the truth, he supports her. He is one of the finest actors who just subsume themselves completely in the film. He turns every line into an unforgettable moment.

Anil Kapoor shines brightly as Balbir Chaudhry. He is indeed one of the main reasons the film surpasses because without him it would have fallen flat, particularly in the scene where he reads Sonam's diary and bursts into rage. It is his performance that livens up the film. Juhi Chawla as Chatro, a small-time Delhi caterer, who supplies food to Sahil's theatre troupe, always dreams of being an actress. Her chemistry with Anil Kapoor after ages is still on point.

Abhishek Duhan is Sonam's brother and Seema Pahwa is the woman in charge of the Chaudhry's family kitchen. Brijendra Kala offers comic relief while Madhumati Kapoor is the grandmother whose son is a garments factory owner but still does not realise his dream of being a top chef. Regina Cassandra, Sonam's love interest, also presents herself beautifully but there is not much for her to do.

Sweety alone was not the one struggling for her identity as Chatro also wants to be someone she could only dream of. These roles of women wanting to identify themselves and be understood by the public for who ever they are, stresses the fact that we all are different and we need the space to be ourselves regardless of what society might think.

A few off scenes were also there like there was no logic as to why the family was tolerating Babloo's behaviour towards his sister. Then there was no chemistry between Sonam and Regina due to lack of screen time. For a film that's propagating the acceptance of all love, it is ironic that the filmmakers don't want to risk making heterosexual audiences uncomfortable.

It is said that a message has a stronger impact when it is delivered in a satirical way. Ek Ladki Ko Dekha To Aisa Laga did that. Despite highlighting a serious issue, the film has all that you need - perfect puns, the right amount of emotions and a lot of entertainment. Shelly Chopra Dhar has done a good job at handling the subject delicately.

Overall, Ek Ladki Ko Dekha To Aisa Laga is a breath of fresh air that is high on entertainment and deserves all the applause. It's a huge leap forward from the 2008 film 'Dostana' and serves as the first love story on LGBT in the Indian film industry. S

FILM

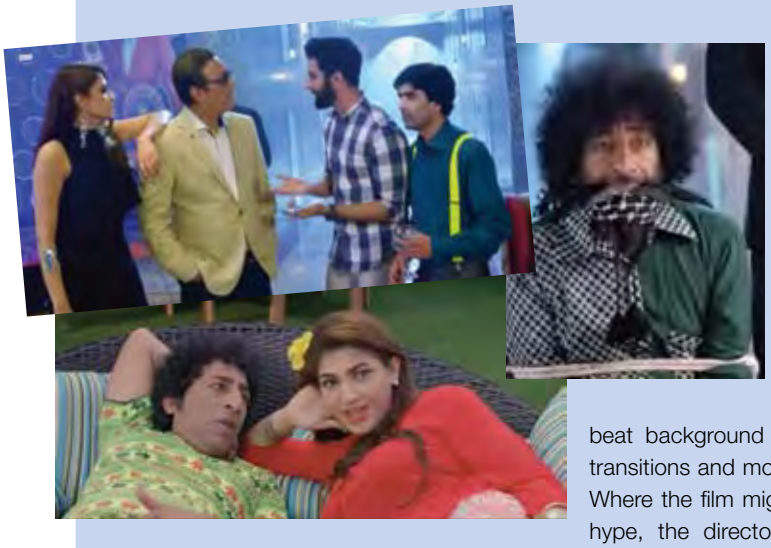
JACKPOT

Missing the Jackpot

BY SAMAR KAINAAF

The Pakistani film industry has really stepped up their game by releasing one film after another, some blockbusters and others disasters. Directed by Shoaib Khan, written by Babar Kashmiri and produced by Khuram Riaz, the title of the film 'Jackpot', just not quite tell what it is all about.

Jackpot is a rom-com whirling around a Rs. 100 crores worth lottery ticket which goes missing in Javed Shaikh's (Jojo) coat pocket. A group of people make all their efforts to get it back. The plot is quite unpretentious though not something out of the ordinary. Every character comes along with a tale of their own. Shaikh is a gangster who evidently lusts for money. The two other main characters are Sanam Chaudhry, a receptionist and Noor Hassan, a waiter aching to tie the knot. Adnan Shah Tipu plays a dry cleaner who's married to Sana Fakhar.



The entire focus and spotlight are on the stunning views and also on the appearance of the cast in various parts of the film. The futile effort does not help enhance the actual plot, the story or even the quality. It must be admitted though that the cinematography of the film is worth its while. Scenes of Balochistan, Lahore and Phuket leave everyone awestruck. James Bond Island is shot beautifully and looks breathtaking.

It just seems they are making a backbreaking effort to somehow make the film stand out, but unfortunately, the audience doesn't take to it. It is manifest just a couple of minutes into the film that they are struggling to compensate the mediocre content with off-beat background music, uncalled for transitions and moving camera effects. Where the film might not be worth the hype, the director really does make sure that the audience is hooked and is waiting for the next scene. It's an apparently constant effort on the team's end to insert and force jokes in every scene, which is extremely unnecessary.

Javed Sheikh's latest act hasn't come across as very remarkable, as a similar one like this has been seen in his previous films. But who's to blame? The film-maker, the director or both of them together. Since the target audience is mostly the young generation, it is not clear how promoting smoking (as in Javed Shaikh smoking cigars) is acceptable?

It was very surprising how some very apparent blunders in the film were ignored. After all, Pakistani showbiz folk are influenced by their Indian counterparts but everything has a limit, even replication. In many songs, the audience is reminded of Indian songs quite vehemently. It is more like taking pieces from Indian films and putting them together to produce this Jackpot. Probably the term sitcom sounds more suitable than film for this production. Another error is the wardrobe malfunctioning. The poor alterations and lack of dialogue just proves that the production and post-production isn't up to the mark.

The director and actors came across as confident in promotions and seem to be promising that the film would be smashingly entertaining. The jokes are funny and the film has a good sense of humour but it all seems outdated and sloppy. Some jokes are phrased in a way that they don't even make any sense though there is a double meaning in them. There comes a point when the film seems really dragged with its substandard lines, faint storyline and unnecessary dialogue.

The time and level of investment are just not enough to impress the filmgoer. Pakistani film-makers really need to wrap their heads around the idea that not every film possesses uncanny humour or can achieve blockbuster success. Jackpot does merit watching at least once. If they release a sequel, they shoud not commit the same mistakes again.S

AD CAMPAIGN

DASTAK COOKING OIL

How Not to Sell

BY NOOR JAVED SADIQ

I kept waiting for the public service message "Please don't try this at home" while watching the Dastak cooking oil ad. Dastak cooking oil is a recent offering of Unity Foods Limited. The oil is said to be 100% cholesterol-free and is double refined to create a pure and healthy cooking medium. What makes the oil innovative is its claim that it is enriched with vitamin A, D and E and also Omega 3 and 6. With simple traditional packaging in a tin can and a plastic bottle, the TVC is everything, but realistic.

The TVC just drives you to ask questions like How and Why and is this a Pakistani ad? After all, many recent TVCs in Pakistan have failed to relate to the product or service being advertised and Dastak is surely one of them.

In a more researched analysis, it feels as if these TVCs are only creating desirable images of men, women and lifestyles that do not belong to a normal Pakistani household. Subliminal messages in advertisements are designed to gain your attention subconsciously and make you think, feel and desire the advertised item unconsciously. Subliminal advertising is nothing new but it is effective in marketing and controlling the behaviour of consumers. Is that kind of advertising at work here?

Dastak cooking oil is an example. Its recent billboards and advertisements painted on sides of buildings, are everywhere.

The TV ad with the tagline "Sehat ki Dastak" starts with a doll like house, complete with three modern and definitely elite-looking Pakistani girls. A normal college girl wouldn't have time to do a manicure and get a no make-up look, before she sits for a group study. Yes, they do wear PJs and have a bun when they study! Sorry to disappoint you, but real girls are not like dolls, they are girls who have goals to achieve.

Before talking about the music, lets first talk about the ad itself. It shows three friends Hania Aamir, Ersa Batool and Hira Khan sitting in what appears to be a patio or a verandah where they are studying. Hira breaks the silence by saying that she is hungry. The next thing, among Hira and Ersa, one wants to eat healthy food and the other wants chatpata. Hania saves the day by tapping her spoon on the Dastak cooking oil bottle that grabs the attention of the other two girls.

All seems great until Hania slides the Dastak cooking oil bottle to Erum and she opens it… you witness a sight that makes you cringe and stare at your TV screen at the same time. It's flying chatpata masala that lands perfectly on the dishes and all three girls are dancing with massive utensils. You embrace yourself to have a grasp of what you are looking at.

At that very moment you see "dumbbells" in the kitchen which the girls are supposed to use while you are informed that Dastak cooking oil is the secret behind their fitness. With vitamin A, D and E and Omega 3 and 6, Dastak oil has a lot of benefits. But what's the link between dumbbells and the vitamins or the Omega 3 and 6 in the cooking oil?

With so many benefits and purity of Dastak cooking oil coming to the fore, the girls can be expected to do more of the unimaginable. This is the first time that a paratha turns into a vinyl record and one can do DJing without any headsets and a DJ mixer. This happens when either you have some kind of an ailment or, in this case, when you make an ad without putting much thought in it.

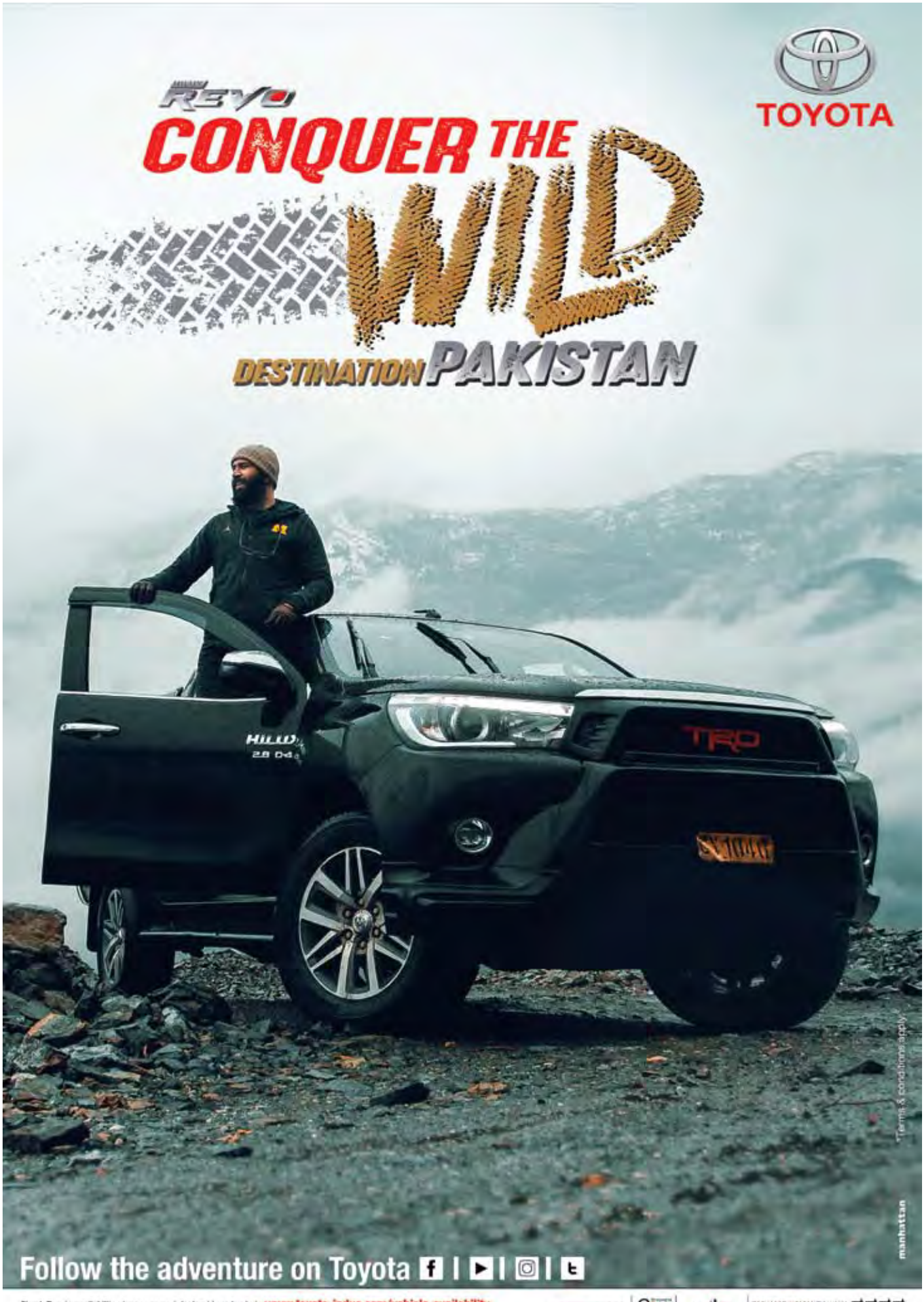
From invisible drums to what not! You are left shocked as you can only imagine the number of injuries you would get if you really tried it out. The ad ends with the line "Sehat ki Dastak..." It is obvious that the commercial has definitely gotten the tagline all wrong because it seems like an Indian film song with Indian dancers more than a simple cooking oil TV commercial. God knows when this obsession with an Indian feel in ads will go away.

The key highlights of vitamins and Omega 3 and 6 in the oil are not clearly understood, so what is it that makes it different from the rest?

The production team seems to have missed the point of informing the audience as to why these vitamins are important and what are the benefits of Omega 3 and 6 for the human body. Probably just using young women in a commercial and showing them dancing and hopping around is what makes an oil sell. What the ad needs is little more attention to the importance of the props.

Why is the cooking oil called Dastak, by the way? The Urdu word Dastak means 'knock'. So does a knock relate to a cooking oil in some way that the public does not know about?

If the TVC was meant to put across the Pakistan advertising industry's ignorance of music and society, then it surely is a successful production. After all, this is where the country's advertising is going. And AdAsia will be coming to Lahore in 2020! S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