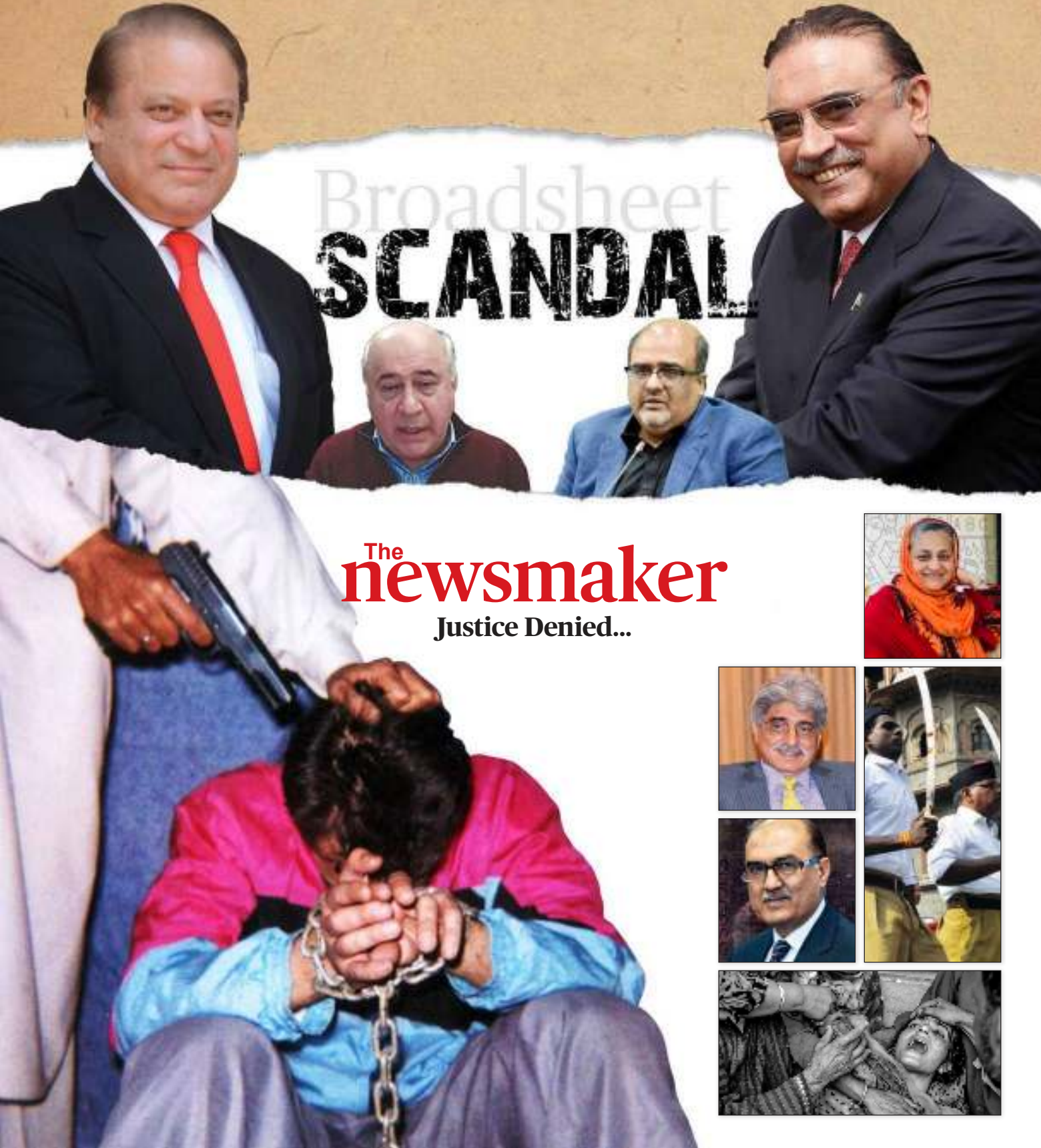


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NARRATIVES

BIG NAMES, POWERFUL WORDS

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The
newsmaker
Justice Denied...





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From the **Editor** | 07

Your say | 08

ZER^OING IN

Valley of Despair 11
Curriculum Chaos 12
Running Out of Steam 14



The Big Question 26

The newsmaker 30

Prosecution in the Dock
By Amir Zia

FRONTIERS 36

Distant Neighbours 37
By Zafar Hilaly

Paradise Lost 41
By Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai

Viewpoint 44

Vinegar in Milk
By Lt. Gen. (R) Naeem Khalid Lodhi

DEFENCELINE 50

The Domino Effect
By Lt. Gen (R) Ghulam Mustafa

Balance Sheet 54

The Census Controversy
By Dr. Mehtab S. Karim

perspective 58

A Tryst with Destiny
By Dr. Salman Shah



INFOCUS 62



Get Smart

By Dr. Shahid Rahim

Dispatches from Chundrigar Rd 66



Pakistan's Fintech Revolution

By Maliha Khan

Pakistanicon 68



The 'Maa' of Lyari

By Zahra Chughtai

MEDIAMATTERS 72



Brave New World

By Amir Jahangir

ACADEME 76



Changing Lives

By Asaad Ayub Ahmad

BOOKSTORE 80



The Rise of the Dragon 81

By Amir Zia

A Tale of Two Pakistans 84

By Munazza Siddiqui

Your Life & Health 86



Health in Jeopardy

By Dr. S.M. Qaisar Sajjad

CRYSTAL BALL 90



PTI Treading Water



62



68



72



86

Cleaning the Augean Stable



Ibrahim Sajid Malick
Editor, Narratives

Do we need Corruption Perceptions' Index or Broadsheet to understand the level of corruption in Pakistan? The media's obsession with "revealing" what we already know is not journalism, but rather the hawking of a commodity, like vendors with their wares on Saddar or Burn's Road's sidewalks.

Advocates of reform should reflect on the origins, forms, and effects of corruption and examine our internal stakeholders' roles, including those of politicians, feudal and tribal lords, the bureaucracy, business cliques, external actors, western multinational companies and international financial institutions.

Discussion about the reform of corruption is almost always conducted in the context of a 'governance' framework. It involves optimistic expectations of both economic and political liberalisation because of the belief that this would reduce corruption. It is also assumed that public sector corruption can be mitigated by reducing the size of the government. In theory, liberal, pluralist politics, a free press, competitive party politics, and the revival or creation of independent institutions can reduce corruption, and make it more vulnerable to exposure. Today, administrative affairs grapple with leakages in the public delivery of welfare and development goals based on one critical problem – manual processes that can be very easily manipulated. These are often so complex and laborious that even a well-intentioned public servant is, on occasion, chary of implementing beneficial decisions. Technology can cut through much of these daunting processes.

In the recent discourse on procurement methods, transparency of policy, procedure, and practices are increasingly imperative when utilising public money. However, transparency is not an end in itself. The whole process must be open to public scrutiny.

Improving infrastructure and essential services is a central task in Pakistan's growth and development agenda. Despite the importance of private sector participation, the government plays a defining role in planning, financing, executing, and overseeing key infrastructure projects and service delivery. This reality puts a premium on the efficient and transparent management of public investment, especially in light of the considerable technical, administrative, and political challenges and vulnerability to corruption and rent-seeking associated with large public works. The recent spate of corruption scandals surrounding public procurement and infrastructure projects in Pakistan underscores this agenda's urgency. The emergence of new digital technologies offers governments and citizens powerful tools to improve public investments' transparency and efficiency.

The impact of transparency initiatives can be multiplied by facilitating "citizen feedback." This communication channel from citizens to the government provides valuable information that officials can leverage to improve the management of particular projects and offer more general data on the preferences and priorities of different groups of citizens to inform future investment planning. Governments should also encourage feedback from specialised groups by targeting academics and civil society, especially in technical areas such as project appraisal and ex-post evaluations. Soliciting and responding to citizen feedback – and publishing the response – is a powerful way for governments to build trust with the public.

Despite considerable theoretical and empirical evidence, the government is still hesitant to devote resources to develop technology-enabled transparency initiatives. Generating data about such interventions' impact is crucial for consolidating support for them and justifying future investments in this area. Projects should therefore be designed to include robust impact evaluations.

We don't have a magic wand to get rid of corruption. However, our government can open its books to the citizens because when every Pakistani is an ombudsman, it will be harder for thieves to steal from us.



Fixing the Economy

Undoubtedly, COVID-19 has significantly marred the already deteriorating economic conditions of Pakistan.

As identified in the article 'Challenges Ahead,' taking measures such as lowering borrowing costs and encouraging investment through ten-year fixed-term loans is not enough.

Considering the changing scenario in global politics and the disruption in the economy due to COVID-19, our country is likely to suffer from demand compression in the export sector.

The government's temporary solutions, such as providing relief packages to the construction sector and prioritising housing schemes instead of investing in agriculture – which is in fact considered the backbone of Pakistan's economy – will not fix the deep-rooted economic problems.

In a nutshell, such policies can be detrimental to our 2050 vision of transforming Pakistan into a high-income economy by 2047.

Fatima Ahmed
Karachi



A New Chapter

US President Joe Biden looks forward to reviving the neo-liberal, Wilsonian or liberal-internationalist face of America.

As highlighted by Ejaz Haider in his article 'New Beginnings,' the new US president is unlikely to deviate from Trump's Afghanistan policy. Even during Obama's presidency, he, as vice president, was more interested in counterterrorism operations. Moreover, the US peace deal with the Taliban has now matured, and Washington is no longer in favour of continued troop engagement in Afghanistan.

To achieve this goal, the Biden administration will have to continue working closely with Pakistan. Biden's intellect and vast experience in foreign policy will be crucial for Pakistan-US ties. Hopefully, the outcomes of his presidency would be positive and less damaging for Pakistan as well as for the entire region.

Masood Bukhari
Karachi



Unabated Overpopulation

Ever since independence, Pakistan has faced numerous problems. Despite a pioneering family planning programme, launched back in the 1960s, Pakistan is still affected by the problem of overpopulation.

The article, 'The Ticking Population Time Bomb,' correctly points out that rapid population growth (2.05 percent per annum) is the root cause of other problems such as unemployment, food insecurity, water scarcity and an under-performing economy.

This pressing issue hardly gets any attention from the authorities. Meanwhile, the lack of awareness amongst the public further worsens the overall situation. The authorities should immediately spring into action and implement all family planning programmes in letter and spirit before it is too late.

Farah Syed
Karachi



Going Digital

To succeed in the global context, one needs to adapt to the changing environment. A country can only tread the path of development if it acquires advanced tactics. In this case, the inclusion of technology in the education sector is one of the primary factors.

One cannot boost the cognitive growth of a child by teaching new lessons in an old manner. Simply memorising or cramming course lessons is of no help in the modern era. According to Dr. Shams Hamid in 'Passport to the New World,' adding creativity, logic, and reasoning to teaching methods – by the inclusion of technology – is crucial.

It is encouraging to see that the government has initiated digitisation, investment in human capital and the promotion of a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship.

The first significant steps to the process of digitisation of education were taken during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is a good sign for Pakistan's digitalisation process. At least, we are on our way to becoming a developed nation.

Ahmed Raza Khan
Karachi



Moving Ahead with Education

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic was marked by a drastic shift in teaching methods throughout the country. Initially, it was difficult for the parents and students to adjust accordingly. However, with the government's timely measures like introducing digital learning platforms on national television, training teachers for e-learning, and so forth, the country seems to have moved ahead in the right direction.

Meanwhile, the government is also working hard to enhance education quality by devising a Single National Curriculum (SNC). The SNC is supposed to ensure uniformity in Pakistan's education system. In that way, it will bridge the prolonged inequality issues in the system.

The government is undeniably playing its part well. Now, it is up to all of us – teachers, students, parents – to be equally committed to improving the education system.

Muhammed Ahmed Khan
Karachi



Fool's Paradise

Jawad Ahmed's viewpoint in the Crystal Ball segment was spot on. I second his opinion that the future of Pakistan will be in the doldrums in 2021. And whoever believes otherwise is actually living in a fool's paradise.

The country's political and economic woes will never end unless a middle-class leader takes the reins of Pakistan. All these successive elite rulers will continue to work for their vested interests, and the layperson will continue to suffer under the burden of poverty, inept healthcare, and a malfunctioning education system.

I hope that our country soon finds a competent leader who could, at least, ensure the provision of basic rights to the general public.

Ramsha Khan
Lahore



Power Sector

The Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Power, Tabish Gauhar, wrote in his article 'Powering the Power Sector' that the government should be giving a subsidy on the rate of electricity and gas to "only those people and areas that are the most deserving, and ideally through direct cash transfers. In this regard, a pilot project mapping the Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) billing with the corresponding Ehsaas database is a work in progress."

I believe linking lifeline tariffs with the Ehsaas database is just the right way to proceed, and let's hope that the planned pilot-scale project is launched urgently for the people of Pakistan.

Farrukh Mahmood Mian
Toronto, Canada



The Reading Habit

I happened to read the book review 'Perplexing Times' by Maliha Khan, and I must say that she provoked enough interest in me that I bought the book – Making Sense of Post COVID-19 Politics – the very next day.

Fortunately, the book turned out to be as insightful as described in the review. Pakistani authorities, as well as the public, have a lot to learn from this manuscript as our battle against the corona virus is still raging.

In gloomy times like these, when people are swiftly moving away from reading books, I appreciate Narratives Magazine for having a segment solely dedicated to books. Keep up the good work.

Umair Arain
Karachi

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Letters may be edited for purposes of clarity and space.
Email address: letters@narratives.com.pk

ZEROING IN



The Narratives' editorial team takes a look at three stories that made the headlines...

Valley of Despair

Once a heaven on earth, Kashmir at Modi's hands has been reduced to a vale of torment and tears

In Kashmir, there is plenty of water from streams and springs," wrote Emperor Jahangir in 1621. Reading *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* four hundred years later, one can understand why Kashmir's indigenous population is willing to sacrifice everything to restore the valley's honour and dignity. The heavenly region has long weathered violence and political strife, but the security crackdown by Delhi's fascists has brought life in the valley to a near halt.

In August 2019, the Indian government illegally breached the Instrument of Accession's fundamental conditions, on the basis of which India maintains the former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir had acceded to India in 1947. As a result, for the last 18 months, Kashmir has become a giant prison camp. Seven million Kashmiris have been barricaded in their homes without internet and phones.

New Delhi claims its illegal annexation of the disputed territory in 2019 has 'resolved' the ongoing dispute. Seven million Kashmiris vehemently disagree. As Pakistan's permanent representative to the UN pointed out, a member state cannot change the agenda unilaterally.

And since New Delhi has failed to counter the Kashmiri freedom struggle through brute force and repression, it is now applying subterfuge at the international level to obfuscate the Kashmir issue. The fact is that even after illegally subsuming the held valley within the Indian union last year, the world community continues to see Kashmir as a dispute between Pakistan and India. No amount of legal trickery internally or internationally by India will change this reality.

The government has done well to raise the Kashmir issue at all forums, and such efforts need to continue to counter India's efforts to remove this critical problem from the global agenda. Pakistan should continue to forge a consensus



among Muslim states so that there is a unified voice on Kashmir. On Kashmir Day, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi said that a unified political message to India from the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) would be critical to help rescind Indian unilateral actions, end human rights abuses, and seek a peaceful settlement of the Kashmir dispute. The OIC Contact Group's ambassadorial meeting on Jammu and Kashmir held in New York is a source of great strength for the Kashmiri people in their just and legitimate struggle for their inalienable right to self-determination. However, the OIC must unanimously and categorically condemn the Kashmiri people's sufferings, particularly after India's illegitimate annexation.

India feels that it can crush the Kashmiri desire for dignity and freedom. However, today many around the world – including independent human

rights groups – are saying what Pakistan has been highlighting for decades: that India violates the fundamental rights of Kashmiri civilians with impunity.

The global debate on Kashmir must continue till there is a just solution – acceptable to the people of the held valley – to this over seven-decade-old problem. Pakistan must continue its moral and diplomatic support to the Kashmiris, while countering malicious attempts to have the Kashmir question removed from the international agenda.

The abundance of water, which Jahangir found so critical, is now the source of conflict.

Water wars – conflicts over a precious resource, the supply of which is growing sparser and the demand for which is ever mounting – have been much talked about by experts. Growing populations and extending development will render conflicts between water rich and water-scarce nations inevitable. Upstream states that control the flow of water to downstream states will be able to use this valuable resource as a key diplomatic and strategic tool to coerce the downstream nations into submitting to their demands.

Dire portents now playing out in the heaven on earth that is Kashmir are particularly tragic because of the way it was in the vale: "Kashmir is a garden of eternal spring, or an iron fort to a palace of kings – a delightful flower-bed, and a heart-expanding heritage for dervishes. Its pleasant meads and enchanting cascades are beyond all description. There are running streams and fountains beyond count. Wherever the eye reaches, there are verdure and running water." ■

Since New Delhi has failed to counter the Kashmiri freedom struggle through brute force and repression, it is now applying subterfuge at the international level to obfuscate the Kashmir issue.

Curriculum Chaos

How does the government hope to implement a single national curriculum, when even the textbooks are not in place?

A transition to a new system is usually beset with teething problems. It is but natural. However, when a new plan is not thought through, the stakeholders are not on board and there appears to be a conflict of interest, the result is confusion and chaos, and the plan is likely to fail.

Unfortunately, the PTI government's efforts to introduce a Single National Curriculum (SNC) – one of the pre-elections promises made by Prime Minister Imran Khan – have been marred by controversy, creating more uncertainty for an already pandemic-hit education sector. The SNC's implementation exercise is making the majority of private schools uneasy and concerned about the education standards, while textbook publishers are worried about the future of their businesses.

So far, only the PTI-led Punjab government has said "yes" to the implementation of the SNC and is trying to get it rolling in the coming academic year, which is expected to begin from March-April, though a delay remains on the cards of decision-makers, because they are ill-prepared for this marathon exercise.

The PTI-led Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa government and its ally, the Balochistan provincial government, are expected to follow Punjab's example and implement the SNC, while the PPP government in Sindh has indicated that it would continue with the existing system.

However, the Sindh government's dissent is not the issue at the moment. It is the implementation strategy of the Punjab Curriculum Textbook Board (PCTB) that has shaken both the private schools and publishers.

The PTI government is targeting to



Education Minister Shafqat Mahmood: Man on a Mission.

enforce the SNC from classes one to five in the coming academic session, classes six to eight the following year and classes nine to 12 in the final and fifth year of its term. So far, the federal education ministry has prepared 30 model textbooks, which the PCTB plans to introduce across Punjab, but the problem is that the provincial authorities have yet to publish them on a mass scale. Consequently, the Punjab government is actively considering the option of delaying the new session till August – a proposal that is being strongly resisted by private school-owners.

"Our last academic year was lost

Concerns regarding the content of the SNC remain rampant. Rather than raising the general standard of education, those schools which are performing better are being dragged down.

because of COVID-19 and it seems that the coming session will also be wasted because of a hasty and crude implementation of the SNC," says the owner of a leading school from Lahore, requesting anonymity. "Firstly, any proposal to delay the academic session because of the non-availability of model textbooks is a bad idea. Secondly, the new textbooks may be an improvement on the previously published government textbooks, but their standard is still low compared to the ones used in private schools."

An educationist affiliated with a leading private publishing house maintains that the SNC indeed appears to be a lofty idea, but the devil lies in the detail. "Till end-January, the model textbooks had not been provided to the publishers, and in the new curriculum, which has been shared by the federal education ministry, there is a lot of repetition of topics in various subjects. While Islamiyat as a subject has been expanded, there is a sprinkling of the topics covered in it in other subjects as well, including English and General Knowledge," she says.

Concerns regarding the content of the SNC remain rampant. Rather than raising the general standard of education, those schools which are performing better are being dragged down, remarks a private school owner in Karachi.

As the debate on curriculum rages on in the education sector, private publish-



Rather than raising the overall standard, the SNC appears to be lowering academic standards.

ers and textbook importers are the most worried, as over 60 percent of their business is driven from Punjab. "Nothing is clear... there is confusion all around," says the head of a leading textbook publishing house.

The Punjab government, in a notification issued on December 9, 2020, directed the public and private schools that they "must get an Approval/Clearance Certificate from the PCTB for the textbooks, supplementary reading materials (SRM) and the books they wish to adopt/prescribe in their institutions." The notification further stated that being a "sensitive issue," these "instructions must be followed in letter and spirit."

In a meeting with publishers, the PCTB Managing Director, Farooq Manzoor, sternly warned them not to print any textbooks or education-related material without his institution's approval.

According to the publishers, the only problem with these directives is that the PCTB has neither the human resources nor the capacity to evaluate textbooks for the issuance of No Objection Certificates (NOCs) in a timely manner.

"If we submit our books for approval, we do not know how long the PCTB will take to review them and pass its judgment... a month, two months or even more? We also do not know what we must



do in case of a dispute or if we want to challenge any decision. Another question that arises is, what will happen if a minor change is required? Will we start the process from zero each time?" asks the head of a leading publishing house.

Last year, the PCTB banned several textbooks, even for making minor mistakes and, in some cases, arbitrarily.

Further, the PCTB's decision to increase the fee for a NOC on each book to a massive Rs. 150,000 in one go has also alarmed publishers. Earlier, the NOC fee for a primary-level book was Rs. 2,000 each, a secondary level book Rs. 5,000 and a higher education book Rs. 10,000.

"Now getting NOCs for a textbook series of say five books along with its reading material, will cost us around a million-and-a-half rupees," shares another disgruntled publisher.

The publishers' biggest grouse, however, is the conflict of interest in PCTB's operations. On the one hand, this institution is acting as a regulator for schools and publishers, while on the other, it is also publishing textbooks.

"This is the reason why the PCTB is giving such a tough time to textbook publishers; it wants to monopolise the market," says the second publisher. "It appears that our bureaucracy wants to ensure that the SNC becomes controversial and fails to deliver the desired results."



If the PCTB refuses to show any flexibility, it will hurt Pakistan's publishing sector, which is all set to book huge inventory losses and will be forced to slash hundreds of jobs, he says.

In principle, publishers should be allowed to develop and import books according to guidelines provided by the SNC, while regulators need to develop an efficient, inexpensive and transparent procedure for the issuance of NOCs.

The federal government should also consider establishing a centralised NOC-issuing authority for textbooks, though this will not be possible without altering the controversial 18th Constitutional Amendment, which requires a publisher to get separate NOCs from each province in a cumbersome, expensive and time-consuming exercise.

Rather than stifling private publishers, the government should encourage them so that they can at least compete in the region. And as the first step in this direction, they should listen to their grievances, get the stakeholders on board and ensure greater competition under the government's laid down curriculum framework.

However, for now the primary-level education sector remains in the grip of uncertainty, which if it continues to linger on, would ultimately take its toll on the students. ■

Running Out of Steam

The PDM appears to be batting on a weak wicket, as it backtracks on its threat of en masse resignations and decides to contest the Senate elections

The January 31st deadline slid away silently, and Prime Minister Imran Khan did not resign as demanded by the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM). There were a few face-saving tweets and statements issued by some opposition stalwarts, warning Imran Khan that his days in power were numbered, but such bombastic statements are a norm in South Asian politics. They are not taken seriously, even by the followers of those leaders who issue them.

So what are the options before the PDM now?

Mobilising the masses and challenging the government on the streets through rallies, protests and public meetings? Unfortunately, the PDM's first round of street shows, ended in a whimper as, barring the captive crowd of the parties' supporters, the common man stayed away from them.

The threat of en masse resignations from parliament has also backfired because of sharp differences within the opposition alliance over the issue. The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), as expected, was the first one to break rank, leaving both the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Maulana Fazlur Rehman's Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) in the lurch. Sacrificing the Sindh Government was too much to ask, and expect, of the PPP leadership, moreso, when there were no guarantees that this adventurism would see a rise in the political fortunes of the party or Zardari and family. Also, the PPP leaders do not face the kind of pressures that PML-N's first family faces, such as the disqualification of its key leaders from running in the elections or holding public office.

The PPP virtually forced the PML-N



As cracks emerge within the 11-party alliance, the PDM struggles to stay afloat.

to eat its own words and announce its decision to run in the coming Senate elections, which meant that the game of brinkmanship in the name of resignations, was over. The PTI government also called PDM's bluff, urging its members to fulfil their promise of resigning from the assemblies. At the end of the day, the wily Maulana was left with no choice, but to announce that his party would also contest the Senate elections.

This was a huge morale-booster for the PTI government and a big climb-down for the opposition, which has been calling the parliament and its elected prime minister 'selected.' Initially, the

The PDM, which vowed to change Pakistan's political landscape, take on the mighty institution of the army and send Imran Khan packing, is now struggling to present some semblance of unity in its own ranks.

PDM leadership tried to play around with words in a desperate bid to explain why the alliance had backtracked from its promised resignations, but the harsh reality is that its entire narrative has gone haywire, amidst reports of growing distrust and sharp differences within its ranks.

The PDM, which vowed to change Pakistan's political landscape, take on the mighty institution of the army and send Imran Khan packing by January 31, is now struggling to present some semblance of unity in its own ranks. On the one hand, Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari wants to bring an in-house change in parliament, for which he does not have the numbers as pointed out even by his allies. On the other, Maryam Nawaz and the Maulana want to see Imran Khan's ouster by hook or by crook.

Unfortunately, in both cases, the PDM lacks the strength to succeed in its mission. The PDM's demand that the establishment maintain its neutrality in the political tussle or even force a change of government, will also not work for two reasons: one, the excellent relations between the civil and military leadership; two, the deep-rooted suspicion between the military and the PDM leaders, particularly the Sharif family.

Nawaz Sharif's gamble of targeting the military and its leadership also proved to be an ill-conceived move, which has further widened the chasm

between the two. Those who were advising Nawaz and Maryam that brinkmanship would create space for them, have been proven wrong. Sharif's anti-military stance has upset not only some of the allies, but many lawmakers within his own party.

As pressure on the Sharifs increased, the PDM changed the target of its attacks from the alleged "selectors" to the allegedly "selected." But the damage done to the PML-N and the PDM by Sharif's initial anti-military tirade cannot be undone so easily. Institutions do not have such short memories.

This, however, does not mean that the PDM is on its last leg or dead, as Prime Minister Imran Khan claims. The PDM, as an entity, will continue to remain a bane for the government, albeit a minor one. The government will have to face the ruckus that is expected to be created by the opposition regularly in parliament, and suffer a barrage of allegations and toxic statements. However, this is not a worrisome challenge for Imran Khan. The government has, in its ranks, a horde of specialists, who can pay back the opposition in the same coin, when it comes to mudslinging.

The PDM has committed a mistake by opposing Imran Khan's call for an open ballot in the Senate elections. The real



Harmony between the civil and military leadership is key to political stability in Pakistan.

threat of defections – as was observed during the Senate chairman's election – lies within the ranks of the opposition. The government, with its large pool of resources, is in a better position to cut deals than the opposition. And if the opposition parties lose more ground than expected in the Senate elections, they will not even be in a position to take a moral stance against "horse-trading," as they themselves have blocked legislation against it.

After the Senate elections, the government is likely to be in a much better position to bulldoze its desired legislation

in parliament.

As for the PDM, it will remain intact, but its bite and punch are gone. Its component parties are desperate to oust Imran Khan from power, but they are well aware of their limitations and their lack of capacity to mobilise the masses. However, they will continue to make moves against the government, both collectively and individually, in a bid to at least give it a tough time. But alongside, they are likely to jostle each other in a bid to expand their own space. The real challenge before the PDM now is to keep itself relevant. ■

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Broadsheet: A Can of Worms

Instead of recovering the ill-gotten assets stashed abroad by Pakistan's corrupt, through the Broadsheet agreement, we have ended up paying precious foreign exchange from our own coffers for a flawed document



By Ikram Sehgal

The writer is a prominent defence and security analyst, who heads Pakistan's largest private security agency. He writes regularly for leading national and international publications.

Who, in Pakistan, negotiated the National Accountability Bureau (NAB)'s agreement with the London-based assets recovery firm, Broadsheet LLC and why was the contract so poorly drafted that it has come to haunt us both, legally and financially?

Were there some corrupt elements involved, who wanted to line their own pockets through a flawed document? It appears so. Unfortunately, their greed has cost the Pakistan government dearly – they have ended up paying \$28.7 million (Rs. 4.5 billion) in damages. What's worse – not a single penny of the money stolen from Pakistan was returned to the country. Instead, Pakistan ended up paying a hefty sum in contractual damages on the orders of the London High Court, in a case filed by Broadsheet, following the termination of the contract by NAB in 2003.

It is extremely difficult to reconstruct what exactly happened in the Broadsheet scandal because the text and terms of the contract and the subsequent actions are not being disclosed fully and honestly. Those responsible have never been held accountable. An honest and competent professional soldier, Lt. General (R) Syed Muhammed Amjad, was mandated by General Musharraf to form the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in 1999 to deal with corruption and enforce anti-corruption measures. Despite the initial display of sincerity for accountability, that commitment was systematically compromised in later years by Musharraf himself, to ensure his own political survival.

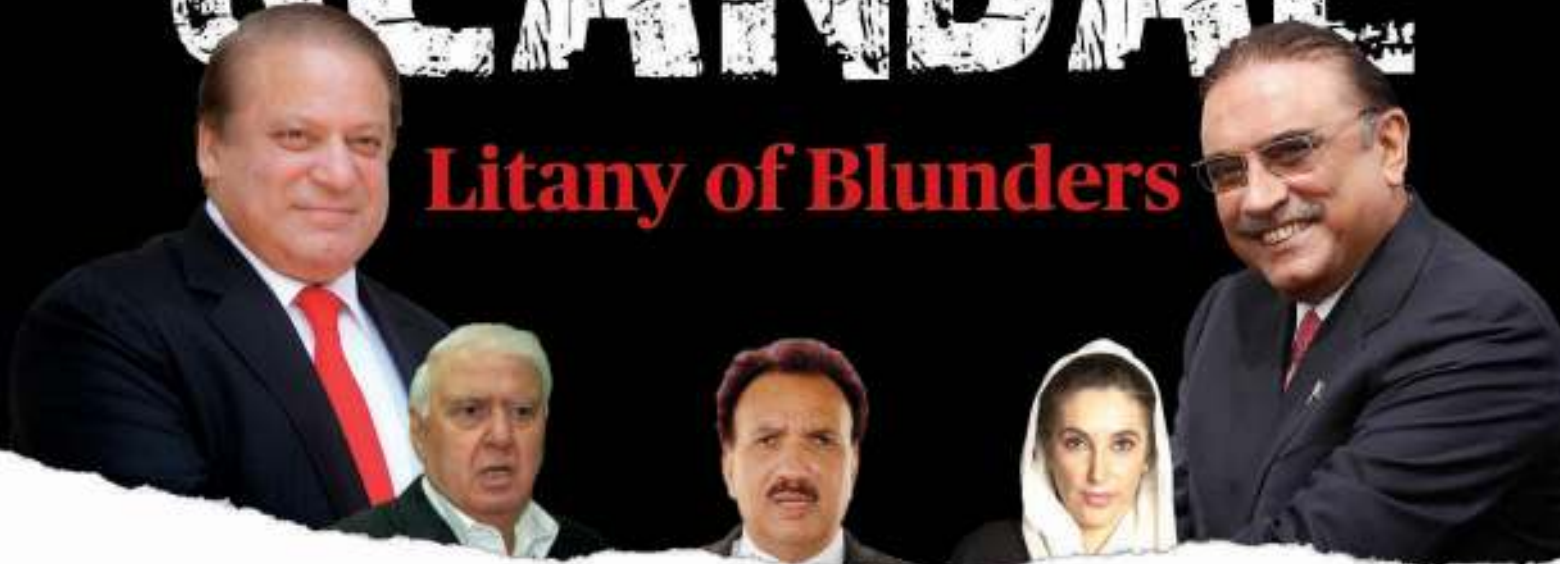
As Chairman NAB, Amjad engaged two firms, Broadsheet LLC and International Asset Recovery (IAR), in 2000 to unearth the offshore assets of more than 200 Pakistanis, who were suspected of having illegally taken their ill-gotten and untaxed money out of Pakistan to acquire properties abroad, in the UK, US and elsewhere. Given our limited forensic capability and the known expertise of foreign firms engaged in

tracing illegal assets and bank accounts, this seemed like a correct and legitimate undertaking at the time. Amjad's mistake was that he trusted the likes of Farouk Adam Khan and Tariq Fawad Malik, his batchmates from Lawrence College, who subsequently betrayed him. The duo first got rid of someone who they saw as an impediment to their grand design: Maj. General Inayat ullah Khan Niazi, an honest professional soldier, who was Deputy Chairman, NAB. After Niazi's departure from NAB, they ran riot with NAB's plea bargain clause in order to line their own pockets. According to Amjad, what do you expect from the Broadsheet agreement when NAB prosecutor-general Farouk Adam's son, Omar Farouk Adam, secretly worked for Broadsheet's associate company? (Incidentally, Omar a lawyer by profession, says he only interned with the Broadsheet-linked Orchard Solicitors to gain work experience.) Unfortunately, Amjad discovered their perfidy too late. Interestingly, in his first affidavit to the court in 2010, Farouk had alleged that Sharif and his colleagues had amassed an estimated \$1 billion in foreign accounts. But in 2015, he withdrew his allegations, stating that there was no proof of it and the figures quoted in the first affidavit

The agreement left a major loophole that allowed Broadsheet to claim 20 percent of all recoveries made by NAB, even within Pakistan – and even if it had played no role in facilitating it.

Broadsheet SCANDAL

Litany of Blunders



Pakistan ends up paying \$28.7 million (Rs. 4.5 billion) in damages to Broadsheet.

NAB, Amjad engaged Broadsheet LLC in 2000 to unearth the offshore assets of more than 200 Pakistanis. Contract terminated in 2003.

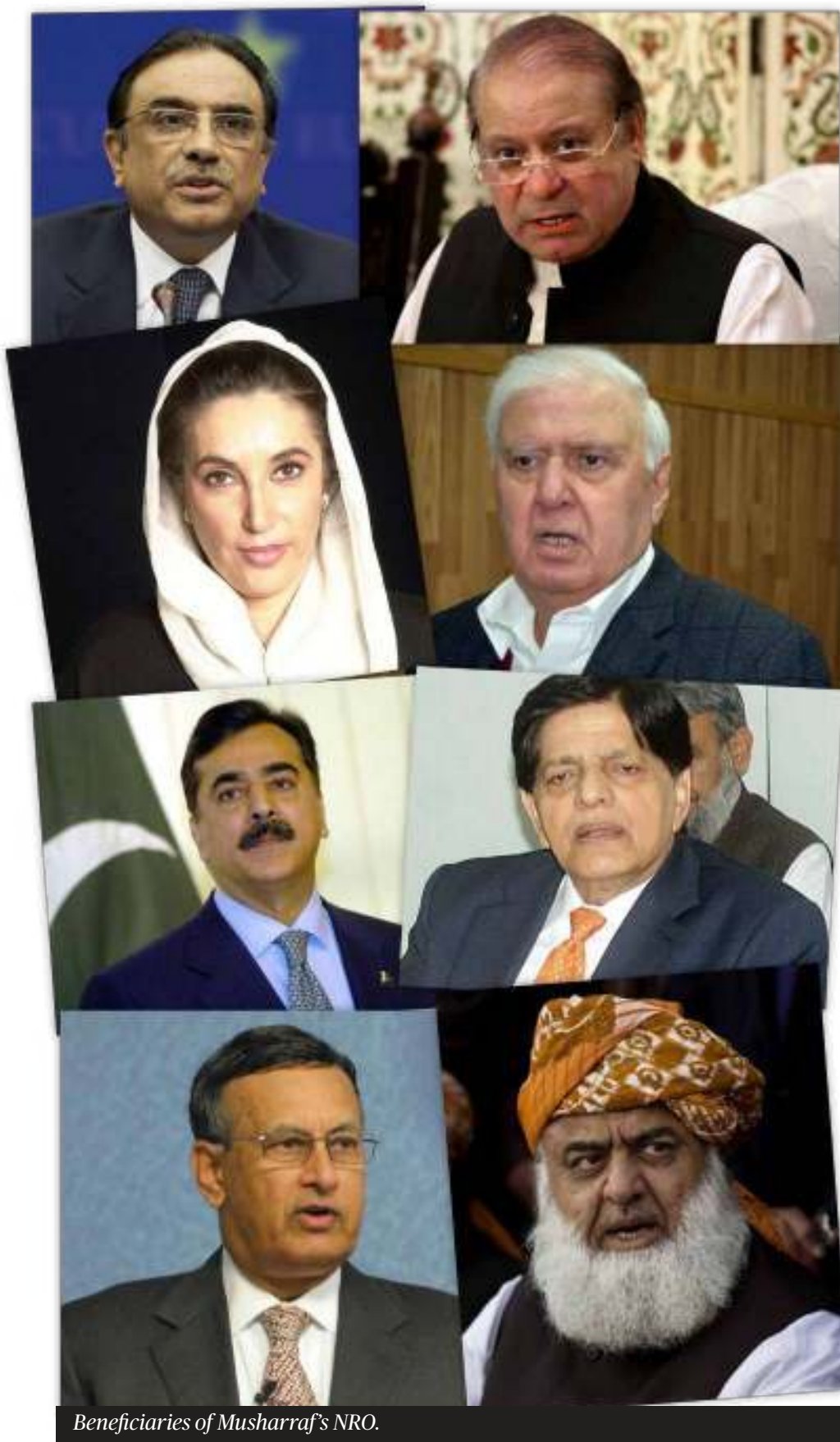
Contract allowed Broadsheet to claim 20 percent of all recoveries made by NAB even within Pakistan, and even if it had no role in facilitating it

In an ill-advised attempt to settle the matter, the PPP made a big blunder and paid \$1.5 million to a wrong company, in the name of Broadsheet.

UK court ruled that Broadsheet had to be paid \$20.5m for the information the company had gathered about the Sharif family's ill-gotten assets

Prominent beneficiaries of NRO: Yousaf Raza Gillani, Asif Ali Zardari, Rehman Malik, Hussain Haqqani, the Sharif family

October 5, 2007, Musharraf enacted the NRO, granting amnesty to 8041 politicians and bureaucrats, who were accused of corruption.



were based on gossip. Why he withdrew his first affidavit remains a mystery to this day.

The main target of Musharraf's action was Nawaz Sharif, his family and the billions that they had allegedly stolen over the decades. The names of Benazir Bhutto, her husband Asif Ali Zardari and PPP members were included only later in that list. The contract signed with BROADSHEET stipulated that 20 percent commission on all discovered assets was to be paid to the company. To establish their political legitimacy, the Musharraf government realised that they needed the cooperation of some of the politicians and bureaucrats mentioned in the NAB list given to the contractors, BROADSHEET and IAR. So the latter were instructed to remove some of the names from that list. However, striking those names off the list that had been agreed upon violated the terms of the contract and could not be done unilaterally. This proved to be problematic and led to the suspension of the contract, pending negotiations. Finally, three years later, in 2003 NAB terminated the contract with BROADSHEET and IAR, following which the two filed for damages.

On October 5, 2007, Musharraf derailed the process of accountability by enacting the National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO), which granted amnesty to politicians, political workers and bureaucrats, who were accused of corruption. In November 2009, the Government of Pakistan released a list of beneficiaries of the NRO on the directives of then Prime Minister, Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani. The total list comprised 8041 beneficiaries, most of whom were bureaucrats. But it did include some high-ranking politicians, such as then President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gillani himself, Rehman Malik, Hussain Haqqani, the Sharif family etc; some of these names figured in the BROADSHEET list as well. However, on December 16, 2009, the Supreme Court

of Pakistan declared the NRO unconstitutional, making it null and void. All of the 8041 persons, once again, became legally liable for their corruption.

Before their contract expired, BROADSHEET and IAR were said to have detected considerable assets that some of the persons mentioned in the list owned abroad (The former NAB Chairman, Gen Amjad contests this claim). Therefore, the commission stipulated in the contract had to be paid, regardless of the NRO. The matter ended up in the UK courts by which time the Musharraf government was on its way out, and in 2008, a PPP government was installed. In an ill-advised attempt to settle the matter, the PPP made a big blunder and paid \$1.5 million to a wrong company, in the name of BROADSHEET. That payment certainly did not help with the pending court case. The same year, IAR was paid \$2.5 million as settlement, but the BROADSHEET amount remained to be settled. All arbitration proceedings regarding BROADSHEET's claims were held during the successive PPP and PML-N governments. However, it was during the rule of PML-N in 2016 that the proceedings were concluded and a verdict given. It is not surprising that this verdict was kept a secret by the Nawaz government. The court had ruled that BROADSHEET had to be paid \$20.5 million for the information the company had gathered about the Sharif family's ill-gotten assets, including the Avenfield properties.

The PTI government thus inherited a right royal mess from the previous PML-N and PPP governments. Briefing the Senate members on the BROADSHEET issue, Shahzad Akbar, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Accountability, said that the total liability was \$20.5 million, of which \$1.5 million was paid against the Avenfield properties of the Sharif family and \$19 million was fixed for tracing the Sharif family's other assets. While the total liability was \$20.5 million, the government had to pay \$28.7 million, the remaining amount being interest due to the pendency of the matter. The PTI government made this payment on December 31, 2020, because it had exhausted all forums for appeal and \$5,000 per day had been fixed as penalty for any delay in the payment.

The Federal Cabinet has now formed an enquiry commission, headed by one of the most renowned and honest retired Justices of the Supreme Court, Justice



Musharraf derailed the process of accountability by enacting the NRO, which granted amnesty to politicians, political workers and bureaucrats, who were accused of corruption.

Azmat Saeed Shaikh. The opposition is up in arms against him – and understandably so. Besides holding a thorough investigation into the BROADSHEET revelation the commission has also been assigned the task of probing those cases that had been closed due to the NRO, such as the Surrey Mansion and the Hudaibiya Paper Mills cases among several others.

So should one expect some more skeletons in assorted cupboards?

There are several lessons to be learnt from the BROADSHEET saga. And one critical lesson relates to the drafting and honouring of contracts. A contract is a written or an oral agreement between two or more sides to provide a certain service and receive a fee in return. A contract is sacrosanct and to keep the contract intact is the responsibility of all the signatories

to it. There are penalties defined for violating the terms of a contract, which is why it is essential to read the small/fine print before a contract is signed. The carelessly defined BROADSHEET agreement left a major loophole that allowed BROADSHEET to claim 20 percent of all recoveries made by NAB, even within Pakistan – and even if it had played no role in facilitating it. The cost of negotiating a flawed contract and then terminating it has been borne by Pakistan; we have paid a high price on both counts.

The BROADSHEET drama that has been played out mostly behind closed doors, away from the glare of the public eye, illustrates that fighting corruption and installing accountability – a task that has been one of PTI's main goals – is a difficult undertaking and needs tough decisions. Additionally, all accountability has to be across the board – without political considerations, and without fear or favour to friends and family. Our client-patron relationship syndrome must end. Huge amounts of money, that rightfully belonged to the people of Pakistan and should have been used to fight poverty, bring the economy back on track, and educate the illiterate masses, were stolen by corrupt politicians and bureaucrats. It is only fair that legal action be taken to recover the ill-gotten assets from 8041 offenders on the NRO list (and all those who have been involved in corruption subsequently) by clamping down on all their properties within reach. The corrupt will mend their ways only when their properties are seized and they are made to pay for swindling the nation. ■



Views from Abroad

Rocking the Boat



“Thieves of Islamabad”

“You know the story of *Ali Baba and the Forty thieves* of Baghdad. Here we have the story of Ali Baba and the forty thieves of Islamabad.”

– Kaveh Moussavi
Head of Asset Recovery company, Broadsheet



By Ather Kazmi

The writer is a multi-media journalist based in London.

Following a British court ruling, the PTI government was recently compelled to pay about \$30 million to Broadsheet – a British company – which in 2000 had been tasked by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) during former military ruler General Pervez Musharraf’s government, to locate the illegal assets of Pakistanis abroad.

Following Musharraf’s exit, NAB cancelled the contract with Broadsheet, citing poor performance, against which Broadsheet took the accountability watchdog to court and won huge damages.

In a recent interview with Narratives in London, Kaveh Moussavi, a former British executive of the company, levelled serious allegations against several Pakistani personalities, including former premier Nawaz Sharif, former president Asif Ali Zardari and Aftab Ahmed Khan Sherpao. But questions are also being raised about Moussavi himself. In this interview Moussavi responds to the allegations made by him and to those against him.



Allegations, scandals, cases... but never proved guilty.

Q: Since your initial interview to a YouTuber, there has been a lot of speculation about you in Pakistan’s mainstream and social media. Some say that you are a CIA agent, and others accuse you of being a shady businessman. Please tell us a little bit about yourself.

I am all that, plus a few hundred other things I have never heard off, but you know when you are fighting against corruption and fighting for human rights you have got to have a thick skin. You upset some very powerful people who do not want transparency, and the minute you start exposing them in the media, they start hitting back, sometimes with bullets, and sometimes they conspire and organise to put you in jail. And sometimes they kidnap, or even kill you. My message to them is, remember I have fought for human rights in Iran. The Iranian government are serial murderers; they have assassinated hundreds of people abroad, but they could not intimidate me. So my

message to the crooks and thieves who were running Pakistan is: you cannot intimidate or silence me.

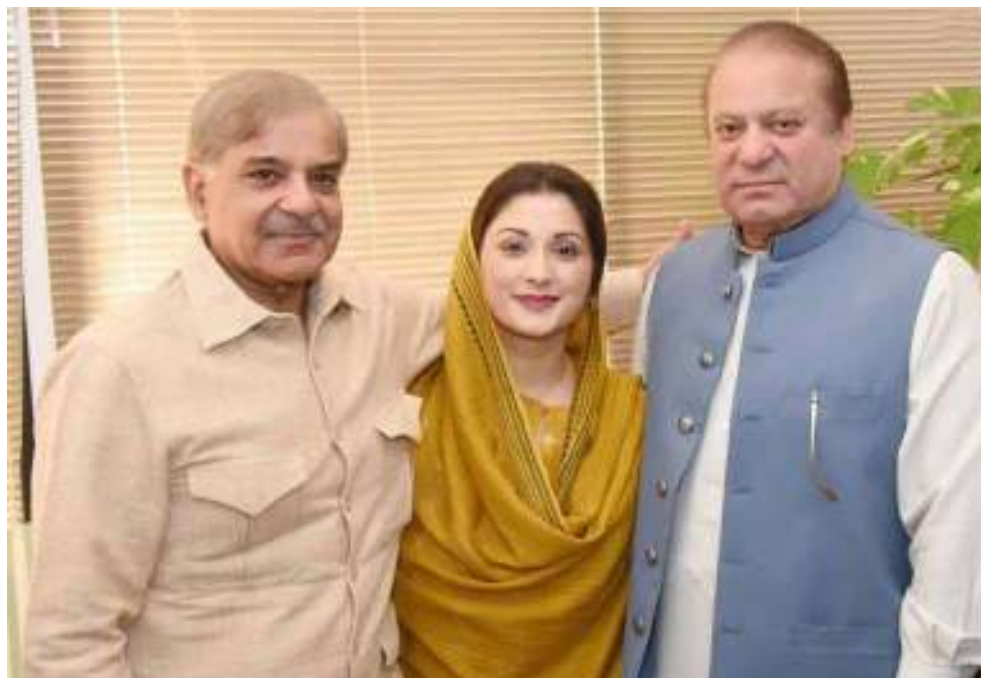
In the Broadsheet case I have a court judgment. The only person who looked at the evidence thoroughly is Sir Anthony Evans, (the judge who presided over the case Broadsheet vs Islamic Republic of Pakistan and NAB). He looked at thousands of pages of evidence and hundreds of hours of testimony, and decided in our favour.

Q: In your previous interviews, you mentioned that you were offered bribes. Did you ever receive any direct threats?

Yes, in the last few days I have received threats, but my message to them through you is: try something else, you cannot intimidate me.

Q: The case against NAB was going on for almost a decade. Would an earlier settlement have cost the Pakistani exchequer less?

Yes, right at the beginning our lawyers had a meeting at the Pakistan



Sharifs: Looking for another 'NRO?'

Embassy in Washington where the matter could have been resolved. In 2003 we were offered £500,000, but that was not enough for the amount of work we had done and they did not agree with us. Fast forward to a decade-and-a-half later, and the court agreed with us. Pakistan spent almost \$20 million dollars on lawyers. If they had given that amount to us, that would have been the end of it.

Q: You have talked about the Sharif family and their alleged corruption in your previous interviews. Have you ever also investigated the Bhutto or Zardari family's Swiss bank accounts or their foreign assets?

You know the story of *Ali Baba and the Forty thieves* of Baghdad. Here we have the story of Ali Baba and the forty thieves of Islamabad. The Bhutto clan versus the Sharif clan, they are a bunch of thieves – all of them. Zardari is a crook, there is no question in my mind. We investigated them, he sent Senator Farooq Naik and Mr Raja to London to talk to us, effectively to pay us a bribe to go away. We told them that we were happy to take the settlement of our claim through the courts, not the cash left behind the sofa.

They try to settle these things like crooks do – either with threats or bribes.

Q: It is often claimed by the individuals you had investigated that

During the Musharraf government the NAB became very ineffective in investigating the cases of the stolen money, but became very effective in cutting politically motivated deals.

this entire process of accountability against them is politically motivated. Did you find any evidence of this?

We were asked to stop the work due to political reasons, but the reality was that these people had a lot to answer for, they still have a lot to answer for, and this is quite evident in the judgement of Sir Anthony Evans. They didn't answer, because during the Musharraf government the NAB became very ineffective in investigating the cases of the stolen money, but became very effective in cutting politically motivated deals. Mr Sherpao,

is a very good example. We found his bank accounts abroad, which were frozen on the request of the Pakistani Government, but as soon as he become a political ally, we were told to take his name off the list.

Q: How much money stolen from Pakistan is still lying around in foreign bank accounts?

Billions – we were on the trail of billions. You could smell the money and follow the trail, but our work was sabotaged very quickly.

Within less than a year of us signing the contract with NAB, we were told to take Nawaz Sharif's name off the list. We couldn't believe it. What was this about? Then we were asked to put his name back on the list, so one day he was off, and the

next day he was back on. It was quite an extraordinary tale of non-investigation, which needs to be investigated. I would say there are billions out there.

Q: Your company investigated the foreign assets of many Pakistanis. Who would you say has the most assets hidden abroad?

The trail showed the Sharifs to be in a class of their own.

Q: You've dealt with different administrations at NAB. Which was the most competent of these?

I think General Amjad was the most credible and the most serious about the accountability process, but as you know, due to political interference he was not able to carry on.

Q: In your interview you mentioned that someone claiming to be a general from the Pakistani army, met with you in London in 2018, after General Amjad's era. Did Broadsheet or you ever deal with the Pakistani military directly with regards to NAB affairs?

We only dealt with NAB; we had nothing to do with the Pakistani military. And for the record, let me say it: I am not making any accusations against the Pakistani military. The man claimed that he was a general, but there was no way of verifying this. ■



Price of the Deal

“Broadsheet proves the furore over the Panama Scandal was justified”

– Shahzad Akbar
PMSA on Accountability

The PTI government was recently forced to pay a \$28.7 million penalty to the asset recovery company, Broadsheet, for the compromises and crimes of past rulers. Narratives talks to the Prime Minister's Special Assistant on Accountability, Shahzad Akbar, about the case, whether it could have settled the matter, avoided paying the penalty and saved the country from the loss of face in a foreign court.



Q: Is the Broadsheet case bigger than the Panama Scandal, and if so, how?

A. I won't say whether the Broadsheet case is bigger or smaller than the Panama one, but it is an important case for two reasons. Firstly, it teaches us that we must learn from history so that we do not repeat the same mistakes again. It reveals how corrupt people got off the hook because of political expediency. General Pervez Musharraf gave Nawaz Sharif two National Reconciliation Ordinances (NROs), which eventually paved the way for his return to power the third time, though his illegal assets were known to the government since 2000. The accountability process was damaged because Musharraf allowed Sharif to go to Saudi Arabia in December 2000 despite the cases against him, which his own government had initiated, and then again in 2007 when he (Musharraf) announced the NRO. It was for these very assets that

Nawaz had been arrested and disqualified. The arbitrator of the Broadsheet case says that the company was deprived of its share as per its contract with Pakistan, and this was what stopped the investigation of the corruption cases.

The second reason Broadsheet is important is that it further proves the furore over the Panama Scandal was justified. It proves that Nawaz Sharif blatantly lied before the Parliament and to the nation.

Q: What lies at the heart of the Broadsheet dispute?

Simple... First the (then) government enters into an agreement with Broadsheet to trace the ill-gotten assets accumulated abroad by public office holders, and then that goes south. The agreement was simple. A list of 200 people was provided to Broadsheet, and they were tasked to trace their illegal assets. It was agreed that the company would get a 20 percent share for the recovery of any such ill-gotten wealth (whether abroad or in Pakistan, including

such cases that Broadsheet may not have been involved in). But in December 2000, a deal was struck between Musharraf and Nawaz Sharif, and he was allowed to go to Saudi Arabia. The problem cannot be laid at the National Accountability Bureau (NAB)'s door, but at the rulers of that time. A big fraud was committed against the nation; the corrupt were allowed to get away, while Pakistan ended up paying a whopping sum as the penalty.

Q: Was there any way we could have saved this loss to the national exchequer?

We have gone through all the processes and reviewed the case minutely. For the arbitration court, Broadsheet's claim was valid. Pakistani officials, who signed the deal with Broadsheet, did not review the agreement properly and it was in the asset recovery company's favour. Then, the past governments of the Pakistan Peoples' Party and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz did not pursue the case because of their own vested interests. The first liability decision came in 2016 and then again in 2018. We have made a commission headed by a former Supreme Court judge, Justice (Retired) Azmat Saeed, to probe how this case was pursued in the past. Our (PTI) government made an appeal, but our initial arbitration was sloppy and weak. The appeal against the arbitrator's verdict was filed by the last caretaker government and we pursued it. We delayed the payment, but the case was so messed-up that we couldn't succeed and ended up paying a hefty amount.

Q: The Broadsheet case reflects not just the inefficiency and weakness of our institutions, but also the political opportunism and double standards that exist. So what's the lesson?

A. The lesson is that we must not fall prey to the quack medicine of building political consensus to save the corrupt. There was a lot of pressure on our government to change the NAB laws to benefit the corrupt, but we did not budge. We did not accept the kind of changes the opposition parties wanted to bring into the NAB laws in the name of reforms. And as a result, now we see the opposition alliance of the PDM (Pakistan Democratic Movement) protesting on the streets. But we are committed to holding the corrupt accountable, despite all the obstacles.



Musharraf's Faustian bargain ended up sullyng his country's reputation.

“The lesson is that we must not fall prey to the quack medicine of building political consensus to save the corrupt. The corrupt evade accountability when murky deals like the NRO are made.”

Q: Who is responsible for making a settlement with the wrong party in the name of Broadsheet by paying \$1.5 million? Is the lawyer to be held accountable?

Ahmed Bilal Sufi (lawyer) was hired as an external lawyer by the then PPP government. But it was basically former Prime Minister, Yousaf Raza Gilani's and the law minister's responsibility. One of the Pakistan High Commission officials in London raised the red flag in 2008 and pointed out to the higher-ups that the names and addresses of the companies did not match. But his concerns were brushed aside and an order was issued to make the payment. The role of High Commission officials is very limited. They

just followed instructions.

Q: What steps are being taken now to hold those responsible for this loss of face Pakistan suffered in arbitration and the loss to the national exchequer?

As I said, a commission has been formed to conduct an independent inquiry and assign responsibility to those concerned

We know that the opposition is making a hue and cry over the issue, but they would have protested even if any other independent person had been appointed as head of the commission in place of Justice (R) Azmat Saeed. They know what their crimes are, they know what they did to damage the arbitration, and they are looking for a way out. The Pakistani authorities have had evidence about the illegal assets of the Sharifs since 2000, including the Avenfield Apartments in London and properties in Saudi Arabia. For example, this family failed to give details of the resources which were used to set up the Chaudhary Sugar Mills in 1991 when Nawaz Sharif was the prime minister. That mill used to launder money.

Q: Will the Broadsheet case help the accountability process?

Yes, it will. Corruption cases including those against the Sharifs, Aftab Sherpao, the Schon Group and many others will be strengthened. It is also a lesson about how the corrupt evade accountability when murky deals like the NRO are made. ■

The Big Question

In Pakistan, there has never been a dearth of scandals. The most recent one to hit headlines is the Broadsheet Scandal, which has further exposed the rot in our politics and the lack of capacity and inefficiency of our institutions, including the National Accountability Bureau. The Broadsheet saga flagged names of those, who have long remained notorious for their alleged corruption and shady wheeling and dealing. As legal and political pundits dissect the matter, legitimate questions are being asked about the fate of Pakistan's battle against corruption.

This month's 'Big Question' is...

The Broadsheet Saga: A test case for the government or the opposition?

Narratives asked former attorney general Irfan Qadir, leading Barrister Abid S. Zuberi and former deputy prosecutor general of the National Accountability Bureau, Raja Amir Abbas to share their views...

Irfan Qadir

Former Attorney General
of Pakistan

The first six paragraphs of the National Accountability Ordinance's preamble are full of ambiguity. They refer to the recovery of outstanding amounts from those who have committed default in repayment to banks, financial institutions, governmental agencies, etc.; and also, the recovery of state money and other assets from those who have misappropriated or removed such assets through corruption. On the basis of these clauses, the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) approached Broadsheet LLC, an entity based in the Isle of Man, along with another company, International Asset Recovery Ltd (IAR), in June 2000 to trace the ill-gotten assets, belonging to 200 Pakistanis, stashed abroad. The NAB officials signed Asset Recovery Agreements (ARAs) with both firms.

In the first place, NAB had never needed any foreign firm's assistance when Pakistan had its own asset recovery departments, such as the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), and so on. However, the then chairman NAB, Lt. General (R) Mohammad Amjad, was lured into employing overseas companies to recover the looted wealth.

The NAB officials inked the ARAs and were oblivious of the equivocated clauses, favouring Broadsheet and IAR. According to the terms, these firms were entitled to receive 20 percent of the "amount available to be transferred." It is a matter of sheer humiliation that our NAB officers were too incompetent to painstakingly scrutinize the contract drafted by the firms.

Subsequently, in 2003, NAB terminated the ARAs with Broadsheet and IAR on the grounds of material (pre-contract) misrepresentation and/or fundamental breaches of the said agreements. As could be expected, the termination resulted in litigation between the parties.

The accountability bureau negotiated a settlement to avert the crisis, which was indeed highly detrimental for Pakistan. To top it off, the inept NAB officers paid the settlement money to the fake/wrong firm. In this regard, relevant documentation revealed that Broadsheet was established by a Colorado businessman, Mr. Jerry James. In 2005, the company faced liquidation proceedings in the Isle of Man, as a result of which it was dis-

This Broadsheet saga is, in fact, a test case for the entire state of Pakistan, which pertains to the government as well as the opposition.

solved and eventually revived through an injection of money by its sponsors. While Broadsheet was facing liquidation proceedings in the Isle of Man, Mr. James established a separate Colorado-based company, with the same name (Broadsheet LLC). In 2008, this Colorado-based entity, which was not a party to the original ARAs with NAB and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, was used to negotiate an agreement with NAB, to settle all claims that the "original Broadsheet" had with Pakistan, through a one-time payment of \$1.5 million.

Needless to say, this payment of \$1.5 million, paid to the "wrong" Broadsheet, did not settle the actual dispute. It resulted in arbitration proceedings between Broadsheet LLC (based in the Isle of Man) and Pakistan.

In this matter, while we question the bureau's incompetence, one can also doubt whether the NAB officers were intentionally colluding with the "wrong" Broadsheet.

This Broadsheet saga is, in fact, a test case for the entire state of Pakistan, which pertains to the government as well as the opposition, and all other stakeholders. While everyone should stand united to fight this case internationally, the ongoing blame game and political point-scoring between the government and the opposition are severely sabotaging the national interest. ■

Abid S. Zuberi

Barrister at Law & Advocate
Supreme Court

How is the Broadsheet case impacting the already tense political situation in the country? Will the government learn from the mistakes made by its predecessors and carry out much-needed reforms in the accountability process in Pakistan? These are the most sought after questions since the Broadsheet case came to light.

The case pertains to the non-payment of service fees to the asset recovery company Broadsheet LLC by the Government of Pakistan and the National Accountability Bureau (NAB). This saga has exposed the negligence and incompetence at the highest levels of the government and NAB. It did not only tarnish its reputation but also incurred massive financial losses to the country. Will the culprits be brought to account for those losses? This is the real test for the government.

On July 20, 2000, the NAB hired two asset recovery companies, namely Broadsheet LLC, registered in the Isle of Man, and the UK-based company, International Asset Recovery (IAR), to investigate the illegally accumulated wealth of Pakistani politicians, including Nawaz Sharif and his family. However, the investigations were dropped when then President General (R) Pervez Musharraf allowed Nawaz Sharif and his family to leave the country. And in 2003, the NAB cancelled the agreement with Broadsheet.

Broadsheet filed a case for arbitration with respect to the claim of their service fee and damages. In 2008, NAB entered into a settlement agreement with the wrong Broadsheet and paid \$1.5 million, despite knowing about the liquidation of the actual Broadsheet LLC. The whole situation was a comedy of errors and displayed gross negligence on the part of NAB and the government.

Their repudiation of the agreement with firms; the settlement with the wrong company; and pursuing the cases in a bungling manner not only caused financial loss to the country but dented its reputation as well. Such gross and criminal negligence should not be overlooked.

The government has taken a bold step by appointing a commission to inquire into the Broadsheet debacle and other related matters. A retired, learned judge of the Supreme Court, Justice Azmat Saeed, has been nominated as the commission's chairman. The opposition has rejected this commission, alleging it to be biased. Nevertheless, the accusation and counter accusa-

The claim of exoneration by the opposition leaders was flatly rejected by Kaveh Moussavi, CEO of Broadsheet... He has also accused NAB of sabotaging his efforts to unearth the looted wealth.

tions cannot deflect from the truth about the responsibility of persons who have brought this shame to Pakistan and failed to recover the looted wealth.

The claim of exoneration by the opposition leaders was flatly rejected by Kaveh Moussavi, CEO of Broadsheet. He has also accused NAB of sabotaging his efforts to unearth the looted wealth of Pakistan, as well as removing the names of people from the list given to him for the probe. Moussavi has described NAB as a conspiracy against the people of Pakistan.

Thus far, it can be established that there has been an abject failure on the part of Pakistan and NAB to pursue the matter of looted wealth. Now, the test for the government is to ensure the recovery of the looted wealth. For this purpose, the first step is to revamp the whole accountability process, including NAB.

Regrettably, NAB has failed the people of Pakistan because the references it files against politicians accused of corruption eventually assists in their acquittal from courts, given faulty investigations or lack of evidence. The accountability process cannot be successful under the existing setup of the NAB. As long as it continues, a valid accountability process and recovery of looted wealth, will remain a dream for the people of Pakistan. ■



Raja Aamir Abbas

Former Deputy Prosecutor
General NAB

Ignorance of the law is no excuse, a dictum internationally recognised. Viewed against the touchstone of this phrase, the verdict given by Sir Anthony Evans, the sole arbitrator in the case titled Broadsheet LLC versus the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), reveals the pathetic and miserably low standards of legal acumen and knowledge depicted by then Chairman NAB, Prosecutor General NAB and private Pakistani lawyers hired by NAB to settle the matter. The entire matter has three phases:

1. Drafting, Understanding, and Preparation of the Basic Agreement between the parties:

Even a layman or fresh law graduate would not subscribe or pledge to many clauses incorporated in the Agreement as they were perhaps intentionally left ambiguous and vague, particularly clause four, which explains and creates a right of recovery and claim of Broadsheet LLC regarding looted and plundered assets, traced and recovered, pertaining to the registered names of more than 100 public office holders of Pakistan, provided by NAB.

Failing to understand that the original Broadsheet firm was substituted by Broadsheet LLC, a shell company incorporated in the Isle of Man, a British Island, without having the requisite experience, funds, and infrastructure required to carry out tracing and investigation of looted and plundered assets abroad.

2. Gross Criminal Negligence in Out of Court Settlement:

In 2008, when the NAB approached Broadsheet LLC for an out of court settlement, it was under liquidation, and was dissolved by the High Court. The person with whom NAB entered into the settlement by paying a heavy amount of \$1.5 million, was not carrying any Valid Assignment Deed. Moreover, the liquidator appointed by the Court on behalf of Broadsheet LLC, was not alien to the entire settlement proceedings. This criminal negligence on behalf of NAB and the Pakistani lawyers, appointed to settle and negotiate the matter resulted in a huge loss to the Pakistani exchequer. The scenario reminds one of the iconic English movie, *Gone with the Wind*.

3. Main Proceedings before the Sole Arbitrator, Sir Anthony Evans:

The Pakistani Legal team failed miserably in filing proper

The legal proceedings were conducted in a manner and mode that depicted poor quality of preparation, understanding, and application of relevant laws and judgments.

pleadings, evidence, and framing of actual issues of controversy before the arbitrator. And the legal proceedings were conducted in a manner that depicted poor quality of preparation, understanding, presentation, and application of relevant laws and judgments. This abject performance resulted in a huge penalty against Pakistan and in favour of Broadsheet LLC. There are still chances that fresh litigation may result in case of recoveries from the Sharif and Zardari families and many more incorporated in the list of assigned and registered targets and

entities annexed with the schedule of the original agreement, as again the agreement is silent about any time frames.

The wretched Broadsheet saga portrays a series of international legal battles fought by Pakistan's legal teams against heavy sums paid in the shape of legal consultancy charges that have brought nothing but failure, disappointment, and catastrophic results in legal cases before various international legal forums. There is a big question mark on the authorities who appoint and engage such law firms for reasons and considerations best known to them, resultantly, causing huge monetary losses to the government exchequer whether it is the Reko Dik Copper case or Karkay Dispute case, or the Broadsheet claim. ■



The newsmaker

Justice Denied...



Prosecution in the Dock

A weak and flawed investigation and prosecution in the Daniel Pearl Murder case allows Omar Saeed Sheikh and his three accomplices to get away scot free



By Amir Zia

The writer is a senior journalist and managing editor, Narratives.

The acquittal of British-born militant, Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh, and three other accused, in the kidnapping and murder case of American journalist Daniel Pearl, has thrown Pakistan's entire investigation, prosecution and judicial system into a tailspin.

The Sindh High Court's decision to overturn the conviction of Omar Sheikh and his co-accused in this internationally high-profile case, and the Supreme Court of Pakistan's subsequent endorsement of the acquittal, raises several troubling questions. The foremost among them is, if Omar Sheikh and the other three men – Fahad Naseem, Salman Saqib and Mohammed Adeel – are innocent, then who will account for the 19 years of their lives lost in prison? And if they are indeed guilty, then how and why is the system allowing them to go unpunished?

On a broader-level, the handling of Daniel Pearl's murder exposes Pakistan's entire judicial system, where criminal cases drag on not just for years, but decades, and ultimately, more than 90 percent of the accused convicted by the lower trial courts get off the hook because of poor investigation and prosecution.

It also underlines the grim reality that if securing convictions of suspects involved in heinous crimes like murder and kidnapping remains such a Herculean

task, then punishing white-collar criminals involved in financial corruption, money laundering and tax-evasion would likely be next to impossible.

This acquittal is also seen as a test-case for both Pakistan and the newly elected US government. How they handle this tricky affair, which has huge symbolic value for both sides, is a critical question. Washington has expressed outrage, saying that "this decision to exonerate and release Sheikh and the other suspects is an affront to terrorism victims everywhere, including in Pakistan."

As far as Pakistani investigators are concerned, Omar Sheikh stands guilty of "masterminding" Daniel Pearl's kidnapping on January 23, 2002 outside a downtown hotel in Karachi.

"There should not be an iota of doubt that it was Omar Sheikh, who met Daniel Pearl at a hotel in Rawalpindi and lured him to Karachi for an interview with Sheikh Mubarak Ali Shah Gilani, an Islamic scholar, who was not part of the conspiracy," affirms a senior investigator, who interrogated one of the four accused in this case. "But the incompetence of the police officers wrecked this solid case."

Daniel Pearl, the Mumbai-based South Asia bureau chief of *The Wall Street Journal*, was in Karachi to research the al-

The handling of Daniel Pearl's murder exposes Pakistan's judicial system, where criminal cases often drag on for decades, and more than 90 percent of the accused convicted by the lower trial courts get off the hook.



What does Omar Saeed Sheikh's acquittal say about Pakistan's justice system?

leged links between Pakistani militants and Richard C. Reid, the British terrorist, who was arrested in December 2001 for attempting to detonate a shoe bomb while on a flight from Paris to Miami.

"Omar Sheikh planned Pearl's kidnapping from his aunt's house in Karachi's Mohammed Ali Society, along with the three co-accused... but before the kidnapping he went to Lahore, and someone else executed the abduction," the investigator shares.

Police records state that Omar Sheikh was arrested on February 12, 2002, but according to leaked information, he surrendered himself to the authorities on February 5 in Lahore, due to family pressure.

"A highly intelligent and smart person, Omar Sheikh had a history of being involved in militancy from a young age, when he was a student in London," says the investigator. "From Bosnia to occupied Kashmir – right or wrong – he stood up for Muslim causes."



Daniel Pearl's alleged killer, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed was arrested from Rawalpindi in March, 2003.

Omar Sheikh was arrested and imprisoned in India for the 1994 abductions of Western tourists in New Delhi; he was among those who were set free in 1999, following the hijacking of an Indian passenger plane to Kandahar, Afghanistan, in return for the hostages.

"Omar Sheikh himself narrated his role in the kidnapping of Daniel Pearl to interrogators, asking them not to touch him (beat him up)," the investigator reveals. "However, Omar Sheikh, did not expect that Daniel Pearl would be murdered by his captors, who included the high-profile Al-Qaeda-linked militants, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, and Amjad Farooqi.

He promised us that he would help secure Daniel Pearl's release."

But that never happened. Omar Sheikh did try to get in touch with Daniel Pearl's captors, who initially avoided his calls, but later told him that the American journalist had been killed.

The lynchpin of the Al-Qaeda terrorist network in Pakistan, Amjad Farooqi, who was also involved in at least two assassination attempts on then President Pervez Musharraf in December 2003, was eventually killed in September 2004 in

Pearl's kidnapping and murder and the role of militant kingpins involved in this gruesome episode may appear like a fascinating cloak-and-dagger saga, but proving all this in a court of law is yet another story.

Nawabshah. Khalid Sheikh Mohammed – who beheaded Pearl and was identified through his hand in the video footage, made public by the militants a month after the killing – was arrested on March 1, 2003 from Rawalpindi and handed over to the US authorities. Now he languishes in Guantanamo Bay prison, where he confessed to Pearl's murder, along with several other crimes.

The investigator's account of events leading to Daniel Pearl's kidnapping and murder and the role of militant kingpins involved in this gruesome episode may appear like a fascinating cloak-and-dagger saga, but proving all this in a court of law is yet another story.

Defence lawyers maintain that Pakistan was under severe pressure to deliver Pearl's kidnappers and killers. Consequently, a swift judgement was passed by the trial court on July 15, 2002 – in less than three months. The court handed down the death sentence to Omar Sheikh for Pearl's kidnapping and murder, while the other three were given life imprisonment. They were also fined Rs. 500,000 – an amount ordered to be paid to Pearl's widow, Mariane.

However, in the Sindh High Court, where the appeal dragged on for 18 years, the prosecution failed to prove its case.

Legal experts are of the view that

there were many loopholes, weaknesses and contradictions in the case built by the prosecution, which were shredded to pieces when the case came up for hearing before the Sindh High Court.

Faisal Siddiqui, the lawyer representing Pearl's family, however, maintains that he does not know on what grounds the Supreme Court acquitted Omar Sheikh and the other three accused. "Only a short order has been issued... we are waiting for the detailed verdict, which will take some time as it is a complicated and lengthy case."

A 58-page synopsis of the case filed on January 28, 2021, in the Supreme Court by the petitioner, challenging the acquittal decision of the Sindh High Court says, "Ahmed Omar Sheikh was an international terrorist, specialising in kidnapping for ransom... this context of international terrorism is crucial in adjudicating the present petitions."

The petition said that the Sindh High Court judgment was "based on a gross misreading of the evidence, disregarding of critical evidence and facts and a gross misinterpretation of the law, resulting in findings which are artificial and shocking."

For the defence lawyers, the case was fabricated and evidence cooked-up and based on ill-intentions. "At that time, an

atmosphere was created where an arrest meant that one is a convict. But fabricated evidence and fake witnesses leave a track," says Barrister Mehmood A. Sheikh, the Lahore-based defence lawyer of Omar Sheikh and the other accused... had this not been the case, they would have never been acquitted by the Sindh High Court and then by the Supreme Court, both of which reviewed the cases minutely."

Highlighting the flaws and contradictions in the prosecution's case, Barrister Mehmood Sheikh maintains that firstly, nobody knows who Daniel Pearl went to

Legal experts say that there were many loopholes, weaknesses and contradictions in the case built by the prosecution, which were shredded to pieces when the case came up for hearing before the Sindh High Court.



Then CPLC chief Jameel Yusuf, the last person to see Pearl alive, could not confirm who Pearl met with when he disappeared.

meet on January 23, 2002 at 7:00 pm.

Jameel Yusuf, the then chief of the Citizens-Police Liaison Committee (CPLC), was the one whom Pearl met shortly before being kidnapped; he appeared in the trial court as the prosecution's prime witness number two. "He (Jameel Yusuf) only told the court that Daniel Pearl came to see him that day at his office. He also told the court that Daniel Pearl received a phone call at around 5:50 or 5:52 pm, and he overheard him confirming his 7:00 pm appointment. Daniel Pearl received another call at 6:28 pm, and

The Daniel Pearl case – Timeline

2002

January 23: The *Wall Street Journal* (WSJ)'s South Asia Bureau Chief, Daniel Pearl, is abducted in Karachi after he sets off to interview a little-known cleric, Mubarak Shah Gilani.

January 27: The WSJ receives Pearl's photograph and a list of demands via e-mail from an unknown, shadowy group, the National Movement for the Restoration of Pakistan's Sovereignty. The photograph shows a gun pointed at Pearl's head. The demands include: release of Pakistani militants held by the US authorities and the F-16 fighter aircraft, which Washington withheld despite receiving payment from Pakistan.



January 30: The WSJ receives a second email from Pearl's captors, threatening to kill him if their demands are not met within 24 hours.

February 5: The British-born Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh hands himself over to the authorities in Lahore – and his uncle, a district court judge, confirms it.

February 11: Omar Sheikh's three accomplices – Salman Saqib, Adil Sheikh and Fahad Naseem – are arrested in Karachi. These men allegedly sent the emails to the WSJ.



February 12: Police announce Omar Sheikh's arrest.

February 14: Authorities produce Omar Sheikh before an Anti-Terrorism Court in Karachi, where he makes the shocking disclosure that as far as he knows, "Pearl is already dead."

March 1-10: All the four accused are produced in court. Three of the men confess to sending the emails to WSJ, while a taxi driver identifies Omar Sheikh as the one he saw meeting Pearl on January 23 (The witness is later found to be a police constable and his evidence is deemed fake).



April 25: Judge Ashraf Ali Khan replaces Memon.

February 21: A video-tape is delivered to the US Consulate, Karachi, showing Pearl's last moments, including his beheading.

April 22: The trial, presided over by Judge Abdul Ghafoor Memon, begins.

March 22: Police lay formal charges for kidnapping, murder and terrorism against the four men. Authorities also name seven other men in connection with the crime and declare them absconders.

April 30: The trial is shifted to Hyderabad Prison from Karachi on the Sindh High Court's (SHC) orders.



May 3: The trial resumes in Hyderabad. The defence refuses to attend the hearing and files a petition in the Supreme Court against the change of venue.



Journalist Asra Nomani, a close friend of Daniel Pearl, left Pakistan without giving any testimony.

that he dropped off Pearl at the Village Restaurant, Metropole Hotel, from where he was driven away in a white Corolla car by four men, one of whom, he claimed, was Omar Sheikh.

But the defence says that that day Omar Sheikh was in Lahore. Even the police did not mention Nasir Abbas' name in the FIR which was lodged several days after the kidnapping, and defence lawyers allege that he was a "planted witness."

Barrister Mehmood asserts that Omar Sheikh was convicted by the trial court just on the "fake statement of the taxi driver."

Khawaja Naveed, a former high court judge and one of the defence lawyers of Fahad Naseem and Mohammed Adeel, says that another blunder of the investigators and prosecution pertains to the FBI agent Ronald Joseph, who conducted the forensic of the laptop that contained photos of Pearl during his abduction days and the threatening emails. "The FBI agent, in his statement, said that he received the laptop from the American Consulate in Karachi on February 4, 2002 and examined it for six days."

However, the police in its record, claims that they raided the houses of Fahad Naseem and others on February 11, 2002, arresting them and seizing computers used to send emails and photos. This contradiction in the statement of a prime witness and the police, literally wrecked the case for the prosecution, Naveed adds.

Barrister Mehmood says that the case collapsed because the prosecution did not

have any credible piece of evidence, such as documents, a computer or a witness.

Asra Nomani, a journalist and a close friend of Daniel Pearl, who was with Daniel Pearl and his wife during that period, left Pakistan without giving any testimony. Marine Pearl did not record her statement either, even though Pakistani authorities offered her the facility of doing this from the Pakistan High Commission in London.

Arif s/o Qari Abdul Qadeer, also shown as an absconder, was already acquitted in this case from Faisalabad in 2014, according to Barrister Mehmood. However, the investigators and the prosecution tried to hide this fact from the High Court and the Supreme Court, but copies of this case were also furnished as additional evidence by the defence team.

Even the gory video of Pearl's beheading did not establish any link between Omar Sheikh and the other three and the murder or Sheikh's presence at the scene of the crime. The beheading was carried out by Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, who is in US custody, but has not been tried for this offence so far.

A senior investigator, attached to the case in its initial days, maintains that our entire justice system is weak and flawed and benefits criminals rather than victims and their families. "In India, a confession made before the Superintendent of Police stands in court, but here this is not the case. Criminals conveniently change statements when they appear before the judge," he says.

In his view, the limited period remands also benefit criminals and terrorists. "You can't break hardened criminals in two or three days or even a week or two... that's the reason police often hide arrests in the earlier days of any case, but this creates problems of its own and often weakens the case. At least, terror suspects and criminals should remain in custody for longer durations for securing positive results."

Pakistan also needs to put in place a witness-protection programme in high profile cases, especially those related to terrorism. This is a must.

At the end of the day, the Daniel Pearl case has proved to be an embarrassment for the country and, once again, exposed all the weaknesses and flaws of Pakistan's investigation, prosecution and judicial system. Without carrying out structural reforms, the system will continue to ei-

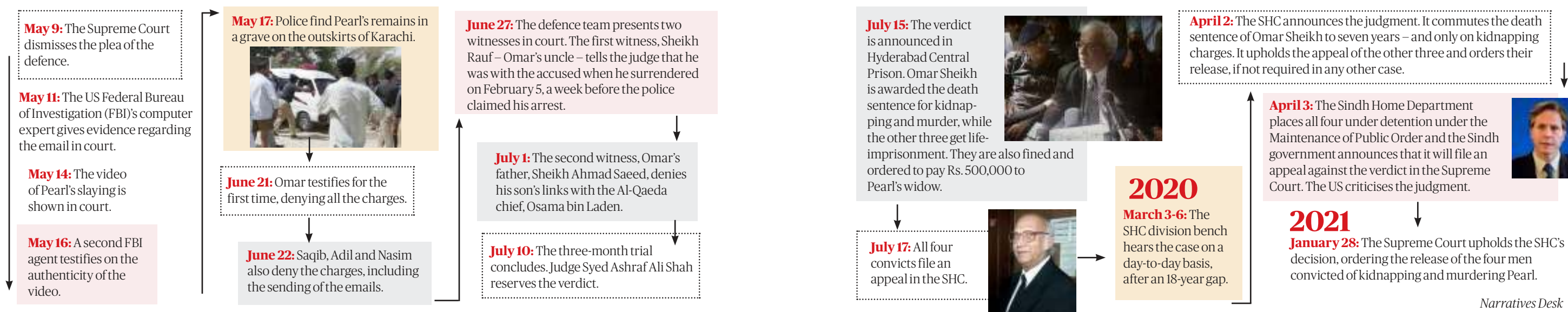


Pearl's wife, Mariane, turned down the Pakistani authorities' offer of giving her testimony from London.

ther punish the innocent or favour the criminal. Short-cuts and stopgap measures will not do. The entire system needs to be overhauled. Perhaps, the process of clean-up can begin by holding accountable those top police officers, who received commendations and medals for closing high-profile terrorism cases which, in fact, were never closed. The Daniel Pearl case is a prime example of this grave injustice done to the family of a victim by a grossly inept police and prosecution. ■

The biggest blow to the case, according to Barrister Mehmood, was when the prosecution's prime witness, Nasir Abbas – introduced as a taxi-driver – was found to be a police constable.

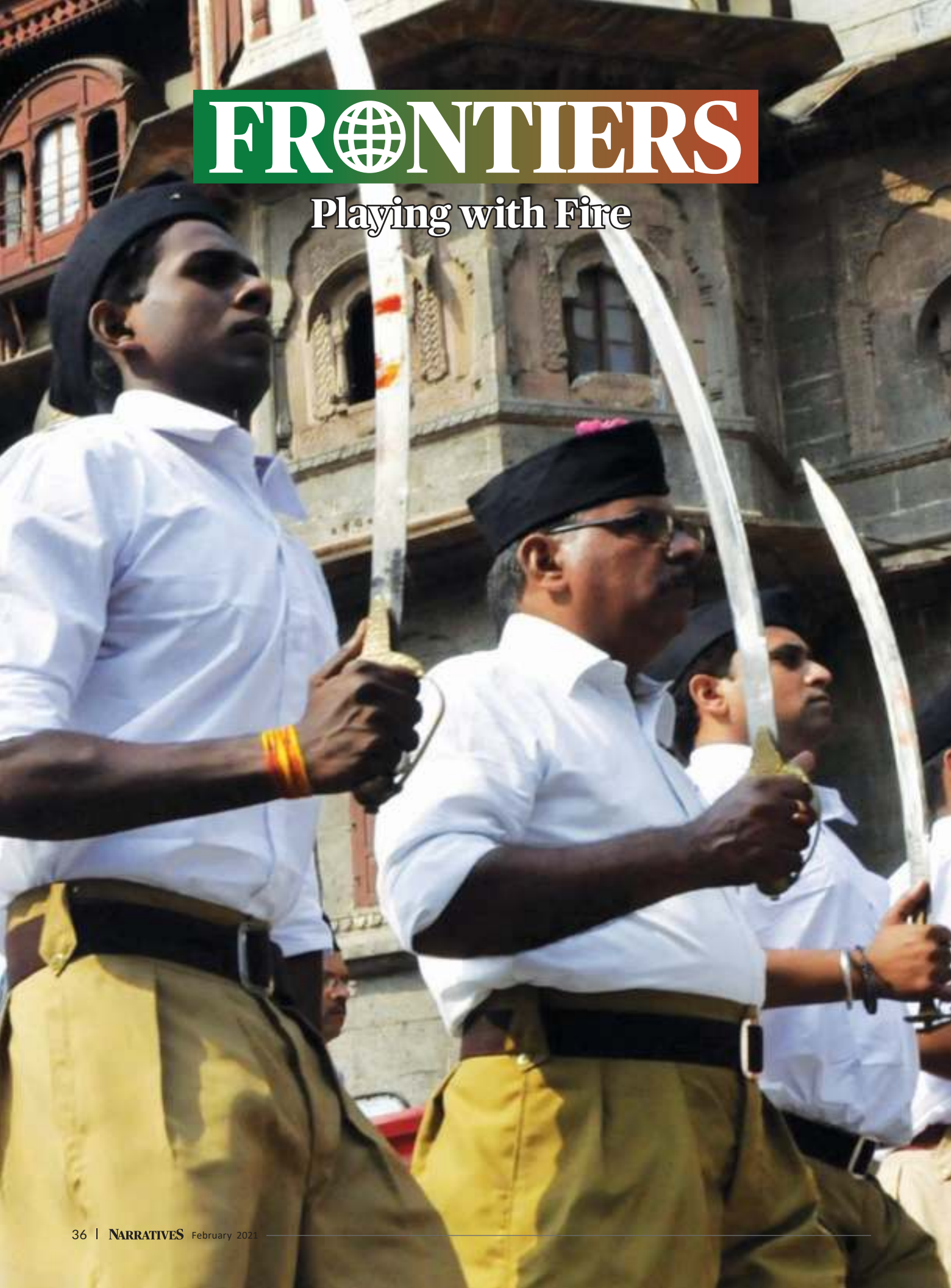
Without carrying out structural reforms, the system will continue to either punish the innocent or favour the criminal. Short-cuts and stopgap measures will not do.



Narratives Desk

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Playing with Fire



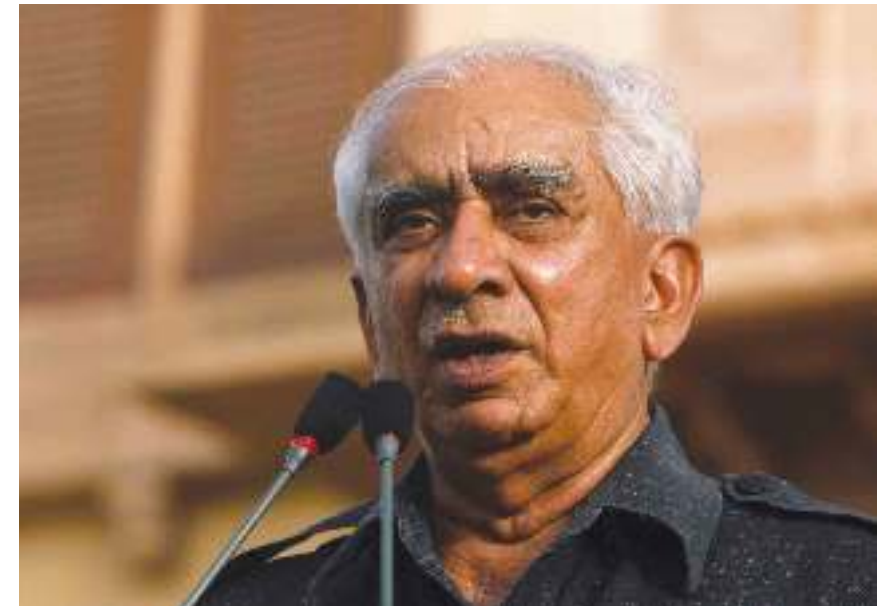
Distant Neighbours

The anti-Muslim Hindutva mind-set is not prepared to accept Pakistan



By Zafar Hilaly

The writer is a prominent political analyst and former diplomat.



Former Indian defence minister Jaswant Singh's irrational anti-Pakistan animus was contradicted by his own actions.

India and Pakistan have incompatible mutual obsessions. Ours are Kashmir and security, India's that Pakistan is still on the map of the world. These mutual obsessions have not changed for the past seven decades. That Pakistan's concerns are understandable, is evidenced by the map. But what about India's obsessions? And what are these?

According to former Indian defence minister Jaswant Singh:

- Pakistan is an incorrigibly troublesome state that has always dreamt of parity with India which it could never attain.
- Jinnah's only real legacy is a permanent reminder of what a tragic mistake Pakistan has been.
- Kashmir is 'closed history,' not fitting as a topic for international diplomacy.
- No one has had as much experience with Islam as India. India knows how to deal with Pakistan and Islam.
- Pakistan is an illegitimate state and an illegitimate heir of British India and, therefore, can have no legal claim

to patrimony and certainly not in preference to that of the sole legitimate heir – *Bharat*.

Jaswant Singh was right in one respect: that India knew how to handle Muslims and Islam. They proved this by serving their Muslim rulers loyally and faithfully, obediently following their directions for 700 years, and freely accepting Islam. Indeed, Mughal India's fame owed a lot to its Hindu subjects.

In all other respects Jaswant was self-evidently wrong. For instance, had there been any truth in his assertion that Pakistan was a terrible mistake, Bangladesh, whose emergence had been mid-wifed by India, would surely have merged with Indian Bengal. And Indian-Occupied Kashmir, sought to be annexed by India, would not have been in revolt today, so much so that 700,000 Indian occupation forces are needed to suppress the uprising with the help of frequent curfews and blackouts and the suspension of email and phone services for months to keep the population cowed and voiceless.

Nor is insanity the appropriate response to reality, which is what Jaswant Singh is imputing by claiming that infinitely smaller Pakistan claims parity

with India (more than the notional parity all states enjoy under international law). Besides, if indeed Partition was such a 'terrible' mistake, why did Jaswant accompany former Indian prime minister Vajpayee on the bus *yatra* to Lahore and acknowledge, at the Minar-e-Pakistan (1999), that India was reconciled to Pakistan's existence? And, if that was only because such knavery was meant to mislead, it fooled no one, neither their hosts nor their own folk. Over the several decades since Partition, too many signals of friendship had been sent, but never received; agreements reached, but never concluded, and others signed, but never implemented for their respective peoples to realise there are no happy ends to the India-Pakistan saga. In fact, the popular feeling in both countries is that this saga is headed in a nasty direction.

Consider the portents: Is not the current regime in Delhi led by a Hindu fanatic with the blood of Gujarati Muslims on his hands? Are not Modi's actions, speeches and policies steeped in the bitter rhetoric of religion? Do they not convey a feverish hysteria against Muslims, Pakistan and Islam? Is not Indian secularism, once rooted in conscience and humanity, now

dead and buried under extremist Hindu dogma?

If ever there was hope that the courts would act to curb Modi's descent into religious bloodletting by dispensing justice to the minorities, that vanished when four Indian Supreme Court Judges held a press conference in 2018 accusing Modi of manipulating the Chief Justice of India by blackmail and threats to set up benches and rosters to ensure that Modi's henchman got off.

The predicament of the Election Commission of India is no less dire. Terrified commissioners ignore flagrant violations of election laws and voting procedures to favour the BJP lest their families be accosted by RSS thugs, thereby, denting all hopes of bringing about a change through the ballot.

Even the Indian army consented to bomb its own soldiers at Pulwama to boost Modi's electoral prospects. "I swear," screamed a uniformed soldier who had friends among the dead, "they removed half a dozen check posts on the route of the convoy just so the (fake) bomber could approach it undisturbed."

Who then will take on Modi? The Opposition in India is hardly worth the name. They seem overwhelmed by the tsunami of intolerance (of majoritisation) that has engulfed India. The once powerful media too has been cowed, manipulated and coerced into surrender. It now operates as an instrument for spreading hate against Muslims and minorities. Social media has morphed into lynch mobs and gangs, which burn, rape and kill. It is said Modi issues or-



According to prominent Indian journalist Tavleen Singh, in the 'new India' criticising Modi is an act of sedition.

The Opposition in India is hardly worth the name, the once powerful media has been cowed, even the Indian army consented to bomb its own soldiers at Pulwama to boost Modi's electoral prospects. Who then will take on Modi?



January 2018: Four Indian Supreme Court justices hold a press conference in Delhi accusing the BJP regime of blackmail and intimidation.

ders each morning to RSS trolls identifying Muslim targets to be attacked.

Luckily for Modi, the capacity of his supporters to be duped is infinite. The absence of reason or facts and science in Modi's demagogic utterances is glaring. That everything people say, directs Modi, must be true. If they say a goat is a horse, so it is. Had not the consequences of such beliefs proved tragic, they would be amusing.

So desperate is Modi to lend credence to the Indian lies about Balakot, that my utterances on HUM TV were doctored and the tape sliced, edited and pasted to convey the opposite of what I had said, and then aired. Thanks to some deft and hard work by our agencies, such 'doctoring' was discovered and, perhaps for the first time, the Indian media was compelled to publicly withdraw news items carrying false reports about Pakistan.

Tavleen Singh, a prominent Indian journalist, writing on 10/1/21 says the 'new India' fanatics loathe Muslims and believe criticism of Modi amounts to an attack on India. Those Indians that attack him, say these fanatics, have no right to live in India – and that includes Singh.

Continuing, she says, "New India hates Islam and gloats every time a Muslim is dragged off to a police station to be beaten, or worse. BJP bigots are now not only in government, but also think tanks and drawing rooms, and even there dissent amounts to sedition.

Meanwhile Pakistan is making a concerted effort to promote its own narrative in major international fora. Sadly, however, our target list does not include the Organisation of African Unity, the Caribbean group, the Commonwealth Secretariat, etc.; which it should, rather than leave the field to India.

Currently India is abusing the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) to damage Pakistan's economy when, in fact, we can exploit mountains of data on money laundering in India by Big Money, who generously fund showy BJP electoral campaigns. Modi is adept in dispensing favours to tycoons, like the Ambanis, who rake in much more than what they dish out to Modi or in taxes.

Indeed, kickbacks and commissions are fast becoming a hallmark of Modi-negotiated deals. Among these, the Rafael fighter deal with France, the chief beneficiary of which was yet another Modi acolyte. The fact that an audit of the deal was

thwarted by Modi, and a law passed stipulating such investigations could only be undertaken with government permission, was akin to asking a thief permission to investigate his own fraud. But, it needs be said, there are no signs of Pak negotiators alluding to these Indian malpractices in FATF meetings, even though they clearly amount to money laundering.

Then there is the *Hundi* system and where *Hundi* exists, as we know from our own experience, so does money laundering. Bombay is full of clues of the culprits and their BJP political connections.

Additionally, India has the largest gold market in the world and gold trading is an open door for money laundering, which is one reason why FATF is asking Pakistan to make gold purchases, subject to banking transactions. But what about India?

Gold and diamond smugglers from India are on the lam in Europe. One who defrauded his customers, and the Indian state, of taxes, was recently apprehended in London. If and when repatriated to India, the likelihood is that a deal will be struck with him, leading to his release after a short jail term.

With regard to Modi-Doval foreign terror operations, there is evidence the IS attack on Sikh gurdwaras and civil hospitals in Kabul were funded by RAW and so too the TTP and the Jamat ul Ahrar.

The Pakistan dossier handed over to the UN Secretary General earlier this month contains further details about Indian connections to these terror groups and confessions of the spy Kulbushan Yadav, which also revealed the extent of Indian-abetted, facilitated, financed and directed attacks on Pakistan, including the raising of a force of 700 militants to sabotage CPEC; and training camps in Afghanistan (66) and in India (21) run by the Kabul regime and India respectively.

Western reluctance to hold India's feet to the fire on account of terror attacks by the Indian state and its proxies stems from the fear western governments/investors/exporters have of Indian retaliation, in particular denial of access to a market as large as India's. Hence, they go to great lengths to retain India's custom, even promising, in the case of ships, aircraft, and other weaponry, not to sell similar items to Pakistan. The onset of the US-China cold war, and India's much-vaunted alliance with the US, has led Washington to turn a blind eye to India's criminal antics. The fact that Modi



The aftermath of an Indian-backed terrorist attack on the Gurdwara Har Rai Sahib in Kabul, March 2020.

Western reluctance to hold India's feet to the fire on account of terror attacks by the Indian state and its proxies stems from the fear western governments/investors/exporters have of denial of access to a market as large as India's.

himself was once denied entry to the US on grounds of having participated in the killing of Gujarati Muslims, a prohibition withdrawn once Modi became prime minister, is evocative of how the US coddles murderers like Modi and Netanyahu.

To sum up, Modi's 'New India,' comprises false flag operations and surgical strikes; hate and persecution; murder and mayhem, of Muslims and minorities, and faces no opposition at home and abroad worth the name. All of which is happening under a nuclear overhang, suggesting what? That the subcontinent is being readied to become the world's largest killing field? Be that as it may, Modi's India is not a nation worth befriending for Pakistan, which intends to confront India boldly and resolutely when challenged or provoked. ■



Indians protest corrupt Rafale deal.

FRONTIERS

India's Greatest Crime



Paradise Lost

Once a virtual paradise on earth, the Kashmir Valley has been reduced to a veritable hell by Indian security forces



By Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai

The writer is Secretary General of the World Kashmir Awareness Forum.

"We cannot cut off our lines of communication with the countries or forces that do not see eye-to-eye with us on Kashmir. Engagement with them is imperative. But, at the same time, we need to make new allies and remain in the international realm to build pressure to pave the way for multilateral diplomacy to resolve the Kashmir dispute."

**— Sardar Masood Khan,
President, Azad Kashmir.**

The Kashmir issue is simply this: the people of a vast territory, which is not part of any existing sovereign state, were assured by the entire international community, represented by the United Nations, that they would be enabled to decide their future through a free vote. Until now, this pledge has not been honoured. Instead, under military occupation by India, a barbarous rule has been foisted on them. Their current uprising is the culmination of a non-violent resistance movement sustained over seven decades, in the face of endless persecution. It suits the guilty party, India, to quibble over the issue and make it look abstruse and forbiddingly intricate. The false intricacy, in turn, provides an alibi to others to temporise and postpone a just and fair settlement of the dispute. Meanwhile, the people of Jammu & Kashmir have to bear the painful cost of this in the form of countless inquiries, death, destruction and intense suffering.

The ceasefire line between the forces of India and Pakistan has currently divided Kashmir into two parts. One part is under Indian occupation: this comprises 63 percent of the whole territory and includes the Valley; it has a population of around 12.8 million. The other, with around 4.3 million people, includes Azad (free) Kashmir, which is under indirect Pakistani control, and 1.3 million people in the northern region of Gilgit and Baltistan, which is directly administered by Pakistan. About 2 million Kashmiris are refugees in Pakistan: some 800,000 live in Britain and about 1 million are scattered around the world.

A society with a settled historical continuity of its own, Kashmir has been independent over long periods of time spanning centuries. During the colonial era, however, it was one of the principalities called States, which were ruled by hereditary feudal chiefs (Maharajahs or Nabobs) and granted internal autonomy by Britain as the paramount power. The Maharajah of Jammu and Kashmir was

the descendant of a freebooter, who obtained the territory from the British East India Company in return for the payment of a sum of money in 1846. The resentment of the people of Kashmir at having been treated as chattel in this sale deed remained inarticulate during the early colonial period but exploded in a freedom movement in 1931. It led to the 'Quit Kashmir' campaign against the Maharajah in 1946, and to the Azad Kashmir movement which gained momentum a year later. The first armed encounter between the Maharajah's troops and insurgent forces occurred in August 1947.

At that time, Britain was liquidating its empire in the subcontinent. The tripartite agreement of Britain, the National Congress (representing Hindus) and the Muslim League (representing Muslims) partitioned British India into two independent countries: one comprising Hindu majority areas which retained the name 'India' and the other including Muslim majority areas which named itself Pakistan. As this settlement also meant the end of British paramountcy over the autonomous principalities called States, these were supposed to merge with either one of the two countries in accordance with the wishes of the people and the principle of Partition (Hindu majority States with India and Muslim majority States with Pakistan). Kashmir was a predominantly Muslim majority State; besides, it was far more contiguous with Pakistan than with India. It was, therefore, expected to accede to Pakistan. But the Hindu Maharajah rejected the first option and could not manage the second.

Faced with the insurgency of his own people, who were joined by a few hundred civilian volunteers from Pakistan, the Maharajah fled the capital Srinagar, on October 25, 1947, and arranged for India to send its army to help him crush the rebellion. India, coveting the territory, agreed to the armed intervention on the condition that the Maharajah sign an Instrument of Accession to India. He



Indian PM Indira Gandhi with Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev: The alliance that blackballed Kashmir's independence.

agreed, but India did not even wait for his signature to fly its troops into the State.

A warlord had acquired Kashmir and his fief in 1846 through a sale deed, and in 1947 his descendant transferred Kashmir as a piece of property to India. Though 101 years apart, the two acts were identically colonialist in nature, provoking the same popular outrage. One difference, however, was that the first took place in the colonial era and required no legitimacy; the second occurred in the post-colonial age, after the coming into force of the United Nations Charter.

Though long-planned and swiftly executed, the annexation of Kashmir could not have been a simple affair for India. First, there was the incongruity of the act, which clearly violated the principle of Partition. Secondly, while accepting the Instrument of Accession from the Maharajah, India did not wish to jeopardise its chances of annexing two other principalities or States (Hyderabad and Junagadh) which, in contrast with Kashmir, had Hindu majorities but Muslim rulers. It had a stake, therefore, in ostensibly preserving the principle that in case of a conflict between the ruler's and the people's wishes, the latter must prevail. Under these compulsions, India had to attach a condition to the transaction with the Maharajah: the accession was made subject to a "reference to the people."

Between October and December of 1947, the Azad Kashmir forces successfully resisted India's armed intervention and liberated one-third of the State. Realising that it could not quell the resistance, India took the issue to the United Nations in

Under military occupation by India, a barbarous rule has been foisted on Kashmiris. Their current uprising is the culmination of a non-violent resistance movement sustained over seven decades, in the face of endless persecution.

January 1948 for a settlement of the dispute. The Security Council discussed the question exhaustively from January to April 1948. Since both parties to the dispute desired that the question of accession should be decided through an impartial plebiscite, the Council developed proposals based on the common ground between them. These were embodied in the Security Council Resolution 47, of April 21, 1948, that envisaged a ceasefire, the withdrawal of all outside forces from the State and a plebiscite to be held under the control of an administrator, who would be nominated by the Secretary General.

A development that hardened India's stance was Pakistan's joining military pacts sponsored by the United States.

From 1955 onwards, India took the position that, in view of this alliance between the two, it could no longer countenance the withdrawal of its forces from Kashmir. Despite repeated pleas that the withdrawal was not meant to be unilateral in any case and that Pakistan would do the same in coordination, India refused to budge from its position. And it found a ready supporter in the Soviet Union which, after 1958, blocked every attempt by the Security Council to defreeze the situation and implement the peace plan originally accepted by both parties. This situation has persisted from 1958 to the present day. Not even two full-scale wars between India and Pakistan in 1965 and 1971 have helped break this deadlock.

Kashmir could not remain untouched by the tide of freedom which rolled across the world in the late 1980s, sweeping away the Soviet military invasion of Afghanistan and the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, South Africa's 70-year-old rule over Namibia and the unpopular establishments in Eastern Europe. Inspired by it, the people of Kashmir intensified their struggle against the unwanted, tyrannical Indian occupation. Their uprising entered its current phase in July 1988. The scale of popular backing for it can be judged from the fact that, on many occasions since 1990, virtually the entire population of Srinagar came out on the streets in an unparalleled demonstration of protest against the oppressive status quo, marched to the offices of the United Nations Military Observers Group for India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) and submitted memorandums to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The fact that they presented petitions at the office of the UNMOGIP shows the essentially peaceful nature of the uprising and its trust in securing justice under international law. India has tried to portray the uprising as the work of terrorists or fanatics. Terrorists do not comprise an entire population, including women and children; fanatics do not look to the United Nations to achieve a pacific, rational settlement.

The indiscriminate killing of unarmed civilians and assaults on innocent women and children by Indian occupation forces have not been fully reported because India has banned the entry of the world media into the occupied territory.

What's more, even the local media

is not allowed to report any incident that takes place in the Kashmir Valley. However, despite these restrictions, the occasional reports that do leak out offer a glimpse into the reign of terror unleashed by India inside the occupied territory.

In the August 15, 2019 edition of *The New York Times*, Booker Prize winner Arundhati Roy wrote: "Today Kashmir is one of the most or perhaps the most densely militarised zones in the world. More than a half-million soldiers have been deployed to counter what the army itself admits is now just a handful of 'terrorists.' If there were any doubts earlier, it should be abundantly clear by now that their real enemy is the Kashmiri people. What India has done in Kashmir over the last 30 years is unforgivable."

The United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights has issued a 'Report on Kashmir' which contains graphic documentation of human rights violations being committed by the Indian military and paramilitary forces in Indian-Occupied Kashmir. This constitutes a significant step towards greater international recognition of the serious abuses committed against Kashmiris by the Indian army. This report takes off the veil of secrecy shrouding India's crimes against humanity.

The 49-page report cites specific instances where the Indian Government violated the basic principles of human decency and democratic freedom against Kashmiris. The report states that, "In responding to demonstrations that started in July 2016, Indian security forces used excessive force that led to unlawful killings and a very high number of injuries ... One of the most dangerous weapons used against protesters during the unrest in 2016 was the pellet-firing shotgun."

Furthermore, it states: "The government of India has passed legislation under the Jammu and Kashmir Disturbed Areas Act of 1990 which gives extraordinary power to all ranks of the Indian military and paramilitary forces." These laws, the report emphasises, "have created structures that obstruct the normal course of law, impede accountability and jeopardise the right to remedy for victims of human rights violations."

The report underscores that "Impunity for enforced or involuntary disappearances in Kashmir continues as there has been little movement towards



Victims of Indian oppression.

"Today Kashmir is one of the most or perhaps the most densely militarised zones in the world. More than a half-million soldiers have been deployed to counter what the army itself admits is now just a handful of 'terrorists.'"

— Arundhati Roy

credibly investigating complaints, including into alleged sites of mass graves in the Kashmir Valley and Jammu region."

It is well-documented that the bloody occupation has resulted in massive human rights violations, particularly of women and children. The sanctity of women has been violated, in a gruesome and unforgiving fashion. The UN report upholds that in the 2013 report on her mission to India, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, said, "Women living in militarised regions, such as Jammu and Kashmir and the north-eastern states, live in a constant state of siege and surveil-

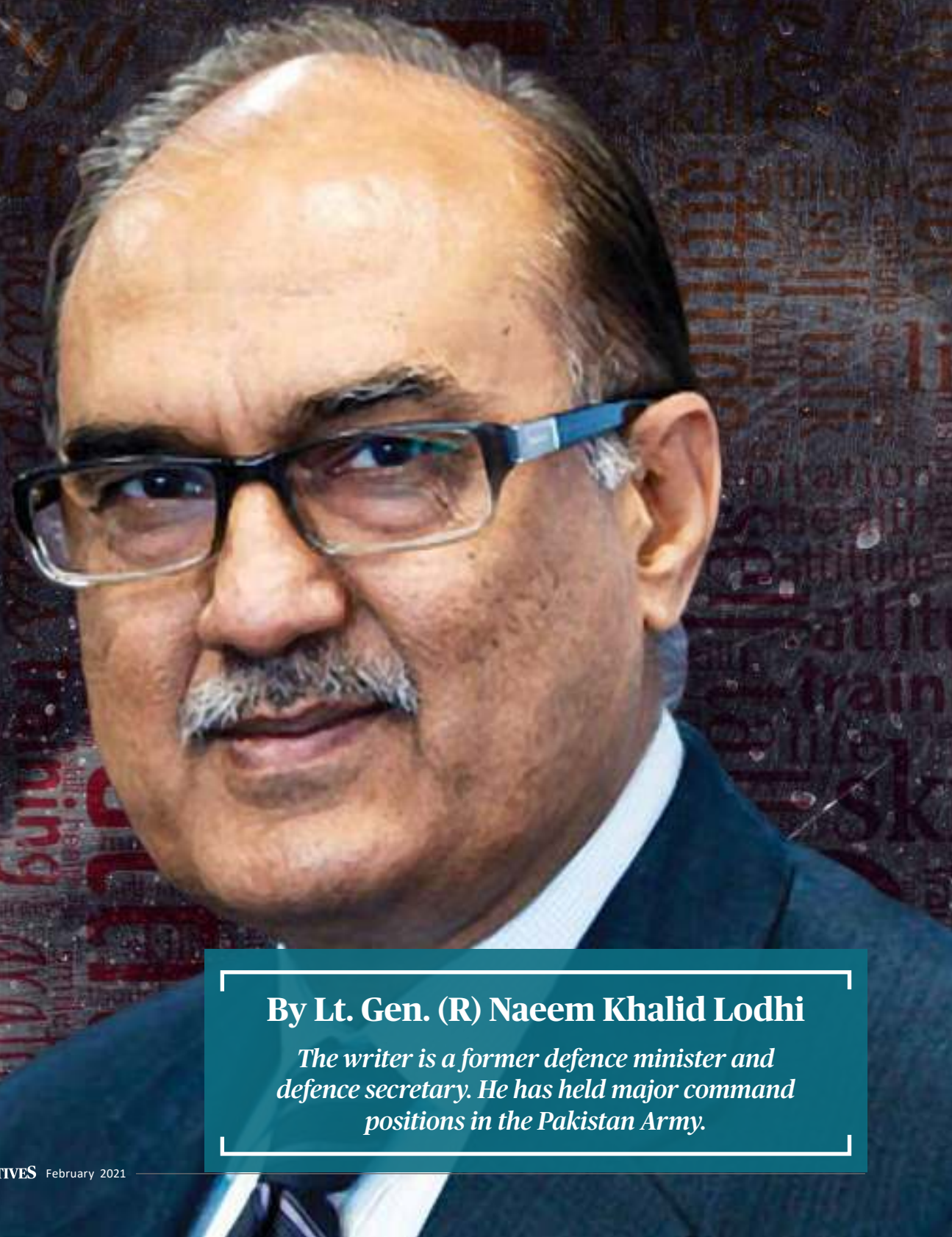
lance, whether in their homes or in public. Information received through both written and oral testimonies highlighted the use of mass rape, allegedly by members of the State security forces, as well as acts of enforced disappearance, killings and acts of torture and ill-treatment, which were used to intimidate and to counteract political opposition and insurgency."

The established procedures of the United Nations will not facilitate the speedy intervention that both the humanitarian and the political aspects of the situation in Kashmir call for urgently. However, what the UN can do to bring relief to the people of Kashmir is, dispatch a fact-finding mission headed by a statesman or a high-ranking diplomat, to report expeditiously on the situation in Kashmir. The matter is much too urgent to be relegated to the routine mechanism of the Human Rights Council and the various bodies established to monitor assorted conventions. We trust that the United Nations Secretary General will bring its influence to bear on both India and Pakistan to initiate a peace process with which the UN as well as the leadership of the people of Jammu & Kashmir will be associated, so as to ensure that the settlement arrived at will be based on the principles of justice.

It is up to us to make peace the destiny of Kashmir through all of our energies, goodwill, wisdom, and compassion for this once glorious land – a paradise on earth – that has been turned into a veritable hell through the machinations of successive Indian governments, most of all the present Modi government. ■

Viewpoint

Time for Change



By Lt. Gen. (R) Naeem Khalid Lodhi

The writer is a former defence minister and defence secretary. He has held major command positions in the Pakistan Army.

Vinegar in Milk

Pakistan's dysfunctional system needs a complete overhaul, including the creation of new, smaller administrative units

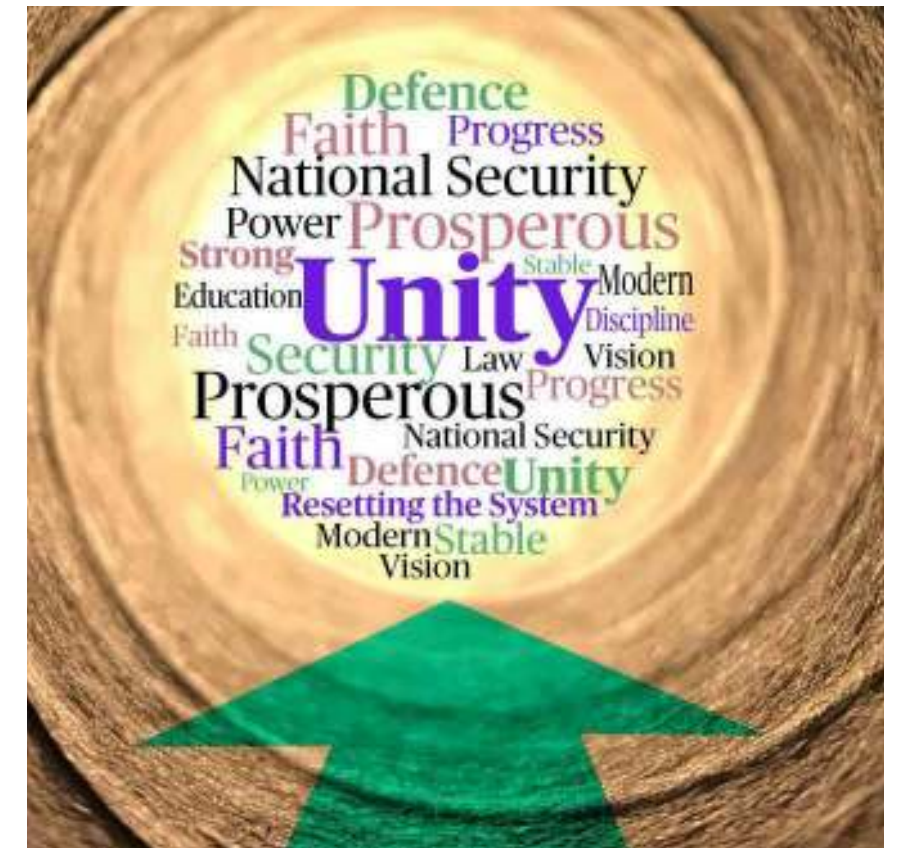
I consider Anwar Masood not only a poet, but also a philosopher. He says:

*"We have put vinegar in milk
Now we are left thinking what to do"*

The same is true of my beloved Pakistan. Such shortcomings have taken root in every sector of the country and in most of its institutions, that it is not merely difficult, but in fact almost impossible, to turn this vinegar-laden mixture back into pure milk. Is it positive thinking to still pin our hopes on this outdated and dysfunctional system, or do we need to re-structure this nonperforming and useless system if we are to have any hope? Some philosophers have said that if the same process or action is repeated over and over again, expecting the result to be any different, is insanity.

Democracy is often flawed, but it is unarguably serving humanity in many regions. What we need to examine are the intentions of our country's Constitution and democracy and the direction in which we are moving, and question if there still exists even a ray of hope. When a system is set up for the governance of any country or society, its greatest and highest goal is the protection of the collective and individual prosperity, life, property, and honour of its citizens. This is called the Supreme National Interest, and this is the basic demand of the Constitution. However, there may be differing views on how to achieve this basic goal, and all political, economic, and security policies are shaped by this thinking.

It is from such a process that different political philosophies and thoughts arise. But if this diversity of thought exacerbates dissension rather than engender positive debate to the point that political and institutional differences make us mortal enemies of each other, then the ultimate goal of prosperity and security is buried in the



depths of bitterness. Society becomes a victim of unnecessary and useless debate.

Countries are made up of institutions and institutions are made up of individuals, like houses with different rooms, made of bricks. If there is any distortion of planning and training in these three aspects of a country (individuals, institutions, communities) then the system will be weak and it will be hard to achieve the goals required to attain the Supreme National Interest. We in Pakistan have this problem.

An overview of our society, and of the lines on which its moral and political structures are based might help us understand the reasons why our national journey is not in the right direction – ie. in pursuance of light and happiness. Education,

justice, health, economics, and social structures, etc., are the key features of any good polity and society. When we examine the ones in place in Pakistan, we can see how ours are sadly lacking.

The Constitution of Pakistan is a unanimous document and the result of great effort, so to blame it for its failures after just a cursory discussion and superficial deliberation would not be fair. However, the Constitution is not static or written on stone; it can be changed or made more effective by adapting it to changing national aspirations and contemporary requirements by the methods written in the Constitution itself. The authorities should discuss the following issues and, wherever possible, address them through constitutional amendments:



Dynastic rule of political parties is the negation of real democracy.

It is not enough to make laws in any institution or country. It is important to make arrangements to ensure that the law is enforced and that violators are punished. The ability to enforce the government's writ is the justification for governing, taking into account basic human rights and applicable laws. In addition, responsibilities such as day-to-day justice, primary education, sanitation, clean drinking water, primary healthcare, etc., can be successfully provided within a limited population, and a manageable area. A capable and efficient police force for enforcement, a judicial system to provide speedy justice, and local government officials willing to serve (who among other things are also obliged to collect taxes and spend them on appropriate works and services), are the main cardinals of effective governance. An excellent system should be devised at the federal level for recruitment, training, monitoring, and development in these departments and the best minds and characters of the country should be mobilised for these tasks.

Law and order, and basic municipal responsibilities (municipal functions) can be performed smoothly only when the area of responsibility and the population are commensurate with the size of the government machinery. Therefore, this is not possible until the country is divided into smaller administrative provinces or commissionaires. The details can be decided by experts. After that, the legitimacy of the present provincial governments would be lost. Experience has shown that the local government system was not allowed to function in the presence of large provinces. Therefore, only

It is now clear that democratic values do not exist in most political parties or the political system... Sham democracy, and vested interests have subsumed the entire polity, giving the poor nothing but false promises.

two levels of government (federal and local, which you can also call small provincial) should be able to fulfil all governance-related responsibilities.

An independent, competent, and effective judiciary is the hallmark of any vibrant society and good governance system. In addition to those at the helm being educated and intelligent, strong decision-making requires a strong character. This is possible only when a highly respected, trained, and trusted Department of Justice is in charge. For this, it is necessary to form a new cadre in which admission on merit is key. In such a system lateral entry is impossible and has its own separate administrative structure. If a lawyer today is an active member of a political party and tomorrow, with the help of that party, he is appointed as a judge of the higher

courts, will he be able to make independent decisions?

In addition, all departments should be required to resolve departmental issues within their jurisdiction in accordance with the law, and to devise a system of internal justice so that only important and complex cases go to court. The Ministry of Justice should introduce the concept of Roving or Mobile Courts in which a superior judge should be able to make himself present at the scene, set up a court, record the statements of witnesses and provide speedy justice. We need to get rid of a system plagued with sluggishness and inefficiency – one everyone is fed up of, be it the Prime Minister or the common man. Strict laws should be enacted for heinous crimes such as murder, rape, robbery, extortion, drug trafficking, etc.

Real democracy is not possible unless there is a pure democratic character within the political parties. This democracy should not be superficial, with party members artificially going through the motions, subverting the spirit of the Political Parties Act. Why is it that almost all the major parties have become hostage to dynastic politics? One of the reasons for this might be the tendency for individualism in our society. The other reason, which is more important, is the control of party leaders over party funds and decision-making. In this system, even supposedly respectable, senior politicians seem to be compelled to flatter and become subservient to the children of the leaders and put them ahead of other more deserving people. It is very important to eliminate these practices, or our politics will never mature. There is also an urgent need to shed the influence and interference of institutions in politics, otherwise the joke that is being played out in the name of democracy will continue. Special arrangements will have to be made for the development of a democratic ethos and capacity-building in various fields. It is very important to have some technocrats in Parliament. Today's governments cannot function without economists, engineers, doctors, managers, IT, and defence experts. The condition of a BA degree for aspiring candidates for political office was perceived as being quite offensive in some quarters. From this, one might be able to guess

the academic qualifications of those who have a monopoly in our politics and parliament.

To make matters worse, such people – who are often clueless – are appointed to manage the affairs of the country's economy, defence, foreign relations, and interior.

This assessment is not an attempt to belittle politicians, but rather an effort to point out the shortcomings of the prevailing political structure. Honest politicians with character should pay heed.

There are also other issues in urgent need of redress.

We are well aware of the deteriorating state of our education system. Currently there are many parallel systems in vogue. The English and Urdu Medium streams have further sub divisions, and a large swathe of society only has the option of madrassas. The rich and upper-middle class educate their children in international streams, i.e. Cambridge and Oxford. They take O and A levels and proceed to find seats in engineering and medical colleges, in financial institutions, etc. The poor and lower middle class meanwhile, remain at a huge disadvantage. And so, often really intelligent and deserving children are left behind in the race of life, and the country is left behind developmentally due to the loss of a great volume of potential talent.

Due to the lack of equal opportunities, the selection base shrinks, resulting in mediocrity, which is rampant in almost every institution and at every level. And we keep wondering why we have stagnation in our institutions, factories, agriculture, and research etc, why we lag behind on nearly every front. To add to this state of affairs, the tendency to cheat in exams has acquired ominous dimensions, as has the use of drugs in our educational institutions, and the state is silent and inactive about these crucial issues, as if these matters have nothing to do with our survival.

How to attach our educational structure to global higher educational systems, while remaining in accordance with our environment, needs to be professionally evaluated by experts in this field. Even to a layman, one thing is quite clear: this serious problem cannot be solved without the imposition of an education emergency. All tiers of society, including institutions and retired personnel will have to



Mobile courts will help build a speedier, more efficient justice system.

If we are to have any meaningful change, all the pillars of the state, and the armed forces need to acknowledge their respective failings.

be integrated to bring about a meaningful change. The young population, if illiterate, unhealthy and without economic opportunities, can be a burden on society and the country. Whatever the government decides, it will have to be done on an emergency basis. The curriculum should be fashioned to include moral and ethical training along with academics. Primary education should be handed over to the local governments, but it is imperative that curricula be developed at the national level to improve and ensure national cohesion. Schools, colleges and universities that do not provide playgrounds and balanced extracurricular activities should be excluded from the definition of educational institutions.

National security is not only a military term or a phrase related to public law and order. National security depends on many factors such as the economy, the functioning of systems, the provision of justice, food autarky, water sufficiency and the protection of borders and the people, etc. But

the focus at this moment should be on the security forces of Pakistan, guarding the country's borders against enemies and fighting the armed groups spreading internal disturbances.

There are many misunderstandings (fiction and misperceptions) in circulation about the forces, especially the army. They are often not openly discussed. It would be in the national interest to speak out and write about them, remaining conscious that these are sensitive issues and the country's enemies should not be given any opportunity to spread negative propaganda against our best institutions. The armed forces should also open up to allow inspection of them to whatever extent possible, and simultaneously introspect and try to remove the negative apprehensions about the institution.

So how did Pakistan become a security state?

Our country faced severe security challenges from the very beginning (India, Kashmir, river water, etc.). The details are well known. Then perhaps it is understandable that we had little or no choice but to join other military blocs to strengthen our forces for own protection. And so, we became members of SEATO, CENTO, etc., and thereby our bent towards the US and the West. The armed forces of Pakistan emerged as a strong institution, but unfortunately, in collaboration with the bureaucracy, they considered it necessary to intervene in politics under the misplaced principle of necessity, and some of the politicians themselves included uniformed generals in the cabinet. The judiciary, meanwhile, sometimes



Given the many misunderstandings about the armed forces, it would be in their interest to open up to inspection.

condoned such interventions, making that our greatest misfortune. Since then, the military's involvement in politics has never ended – it has only altered its manifestations, in varying intensity and depth. Thus Pakistan's problems have always been viewed from a security perspective, and basic issues such as education, health and justice have been perpetually relegated to the back burner. This has slowly created bitterness between the military and the country's genuine politicians. But a new nursery of politicians have, with the army at their back, taken advantage of the opportunity to climb to the political apex.

During such periods, there may have been some glimmers of development, but we drifted away from true sustainable democracy, and it is now clear that democratic values do not exist in most political parties or the political system today. They have become hostage to political dynasties, and are trying their best to perpetuate the inefficient and corrupt system, as it suits them best. Sham democracy, and vested interests have subsumed the entire polity, giving the poor nothing but false promises. The few lights at the end of this tunnel: the emergence of some young seemingly honest, earnest politicians, and alongside, undercurrents in the military suggesting a growing sentiment that they must stay away from politics to allow the country to achieve true democracy.

There is also a requirement to completely review our military system to make it economical, affordable and socially inclusive. Either we review our 'Grand Strategy' and go for smart, modern, small forces in line with the changing character of war, or immediately assign our forces to do large-scale nation building tasks to generate funds for their self-sustenance. A pension model also needs to be reviewed, as the present one is not sustainable. Hybrid wars, in any case, do not lie solely in the domain of kinetics. We need to create an appropriate organisation to negotiate such threats.

To achieve this goal, the political, judicial, social and military leadership will have to collectively join hands and take some extraordinary steps to devise systems in which new young and capable people, free from corruption, have the opportunity to take over the country.

Difficult as this may be, it is not impossible.

اس نوسے ذرد، طرر کھن بر رد
منزل بهی کھنن یے خوشوں کر زندگی می

Recent history indicates that when people have talked about efforts and commissions to investigate issues and resolve them, they have usually been exercises in futility. It is

almost as if those calling for them are just talking the talk, when in fact they wish to continue with the same corrupt leadership and non-performing system.

In fact, there is not a single important institution that can be absolved of the wrongdoings perpetrated against our people and systems. Politicians, the judiciary, army, media, religious leaders, etc, are all guilty.

So if we are to have any meaningful change, all the pillars of the state, and the armed forces need to acknowledge their respective failings. The army should admit its past transgressions and undertake to resolve that in future, other than their main security tasks, they will help the country, the people and the government, and limit themselves to whatever advice and help is sought within the bounds of the law and Constitution. The armed forces should also re-examine the military system and focus on making it economical, participatory, relevant to modern warfare, and create an efficient mechanism to collaborate with institutions to create abilities to fight back hybrid threats. They must now also concentrate on the nature and character of future wars, and work towards creating a smart standing army and a larger reserve force making it economical and agile.

The country's entire justice system also needs restructuring (investigation,

prosecution and judicial procedures) to provide prompt and just verdicts, and lateral entries in the higher judiciary should be discouraged. The steering committee headed by the Chief Justice, which is probably already working on this, should make its recommendations soon. And the Chairmen NAB and EC should be selected by the SJC, not by political parties.

All political parties should say goodbye to the dynasties, the self-styled royal families imposed on them. Younger leaders should come forward and pledge that they will never sit in the laps of dictators, and keep the old corrupt leaders out of their ranks. They must pledge to put the interests of the nation, the country and the welfare of the people first.

The judiciary and the armed forces should be respected, but there should be no room for appeasement by or for the executive authorities. Politicians and the government should never ask them to do anything illegal, nor allow them to do so. This would, however, only work if true democratic values are upheld within the political parties and in the Parliament.

The politicising of the bureaucracy and police can only be arrested by providing these two great and important institutions with constitutional protection and independence in their affairs. Only the appointment of the top bureaucrat and top police officer should be the prerogative of the executive head, along with periodic appraisals of their respective performance. Beyond that, there must be no interference in promotions, postings etc, as in the case of the armed forces.

And last, but not least, the media should realise its power and the responsibility it shoulders, and be held accountable by a neutral supra body appointed through an appropriate mechanism. Freedom of speech and writing must be clearly distinguished from misinformation, disinformation and sponsored stories.

All this will, however, be just wishful thinking if we can't collectively devise the ways and means to bring about all the suggested changes. So if we are to embark on any genuine journey of change, first and foremost a discussion must ensue to debate the merit and logistical plausibility of the changes recommended.



The inequality in our education system deprives us of a great volume of potential talent.

The armed forces should also open up to allow inspection of them to whatever extent possible, and simultaneously introspect and try to remove the negative apprehensions about the institution.

After a majority view is consolidated (consensus being impossible) then we can work on the modalities. Certain ideas are especially worthy of consideration, such as the expansion of the NSC which would include among its ranks the judiciary, bureaucracy (including top police officials) and media representatives. A referendum by the incumbent political leadership with the approval of the Supreme Court is also worth considering. An open discussion should be initiated for the emergence of a new political set-up that gets voted in for this very objective, etc.

All these options may be discussed threadbare on the platform of the newly composed National Security Committee,

and the Chief Justice of Pakistan should take the oath from all those concerned for the new charter.

An interim government based and led by the the non-politicised members of the higher judiciary (agreed upon by stakeholders), including retired bureaucrats, honest generals and other technocrats should be formed, with the commitment of instituting the new system. The political parties should first prove themselves at local tiers and then come forward with their new workable manifestos. Clean, honest individuals beyond any moral blemish can be allowed to contest the elections – which a strong, neutral EC is enough to ensure – after a certain stabilising period. The resultant Legislative Assembly should draft major amendments in the Constitution within months, and institute agreed-upon changes, making it governance-efficient, one that ensures public welfare, by providing education, justice, health and equal economic opportunities.

All this is undoubtedly easier said than done. In the face of the existential threat that we face because of the obsolescence of the existing system and its various sub systems, we need to act collectively and swiftly. However, if even one of the four major stakeholders (the political parties, judiciary, armed forces, media) refuse to reform themselves, no change will be possible. And then, anarchy may reign supreme. ■

DEFENCELINE

The Hindutva Terror



**By Lt. Gen (R)
Ghulam Mustafa**

The writer is a prominent defence analyst. During his long and distinguished military career, he held a number of command positions.

The Domino Effect

While many myths nurtured by India have imploded, its course of self-destruction continues – as does the danger that it presents for the region, and the world

The 20th Century will be remembered for many things: two great, and many not so great wars, rapid industrialisation, the appearance and use of weapons of mass destruction, the end of colonialism giving way to huge geographical changes by way of the birth of many independent nations across the globe, including Pakistan and India, the rise and fall of Communism, and last but not least, the rise of democracy as the most preferred social contract to manage the affairs of state.

Just in the beginning of its third decade, the 21st century has already rendered global events which are changing the shape of the world as we know it. And COVID-19 isn't the only earth-shaking event. Although it is forcing lifestyle changes which were unthinkable a few years ago, it still has to play itself out to finality. The world is also undergoing another upheaval of a different kind.

Perhaps this is the culmination of a phase in the endless power games politicians play – big boys setting themselves and their allies up for a dominant position, economically as well as militarily. And as the sages had prophesied in the 18th century, the balance is shifting east, slowly but surely. Asia and the Indian Ocean are emerging as the main battleground.

The cascading geo-strategic effects of two, apparently small events of the latter half of the last century are becoming visible, as the countries in the region come to grips with changing ground realities. We in Pakistan don't seem to appreciate their magnitude, but both the events were put into motion by the controversial military rule in the latter half of the sixties. The first of these was the development of the Karakoram Highway, establishing the land route between China and Pakistan and mainstreaming China, putting it on the



Contrary to ongoing anti-Pakistan hysteria, India is the one running terror camps.



Pakistani police foil a brazen, Indian-sponsored attack on the Pakistan Stock Exchange in 2020.

world stage by facilitating a China-US link. The second, our brilliance in ousting the Soviets from Afghanistan. These are huge achievements of which we aren't sufficiently proud. Understandably, allowing India to break up Pakistan in 1971 is something we will forever be ashamed of. However, there is a silver lining to this black mark as well – that in trying to break up Pakistan, India set itself up to becoming 'Hindia' – and then perhaps 'End-IA?'

The logic? On December 16, '71, while Pakistan was reeling due to its worst ever politico-military failure, orchestrated by Indira Gandhi, India was congratulating itself for having given what it saw as deserved comeuppance to Pakistan. It was at this time the RSS began to emerge from the dark, showcased as the BJP. Brahmin Zionists started to believe that India was capable of great things, including actualising their dream of *Akhand Bharat*. However, there was the small matter of a truncated, but still existing Pakistan, which had to be streamrolled into subservience, if not further broken up into smaller, more manageable entities.

The Vajpayee-led BJP government of the '90s was a transitory phase, and the rapid erosion of the thin veneer of secularism that was still in place, continued. This was evidenced by the destruction of the Babri Mosque at the end of the *Rath Yatra* led by Lal Krishna Advani, the BJP ideologue and one of the political masterminds of extremist Hinduism, Hindutva or Brahmin Zionism to be precise. The Modi-led BJP of 2014 was the manifestation of the real thing. Returning to power in 2019 with an overwhelming majority,

The offensive to undo Pakistan was led by India's propaganda machine. The same formula had been applied successfully in erstwhile East Pakistan as well.

he now had a licence to kill. And did he go for it! The outcome: success beyond imagination. This dovetailed nicely with America's geo-strategic ambitions. It had foreseen the rise of China as its competitor on the world stage and was working to confine it to controllable limits. The jury is still out vis-a-vis determining the hows and whys of 9/11, but the fact is that it provided sufficient grounds for the Americans to put their boots on the ground in Afghanistan. Soon thereafter, India jumped on the bandwagon, re-entering the country with all the wherewithal required to unleash a different kind of war on Pakistan through its terrorist proxies. There was no check on its ambitions for obvious reasons. As a result, we found 5th generation warfare morphing into its current shape on our own soil. To begin with, Pakistan began to be really demonised as a hotbed and sponsor of terrorism all over the world in general,

and in India in particular, its success in the erstwhile East Pakistan having provided the template for this purpose. It was adopted with the necessary modifications, allowing the policy planners to go to work in all earnest to achieve this objective, as part of its grand design to finally undo Pakistan.

The blueprint for this entailed employing all elements of state power to achieve a synergy of efforts. This offensive was to be led by India's massive propaganda machine, which would get its fodder from the state machinery. Special media and intelligence cells were created for this purpose. The recently unearthed 'Indian Chronicles' list out the expanse of activities of only

one such cell, which began its handiwork in 2005. Lest we forget, the same formula, though in a somewhat cruder form, had been applied successfully in erstwhile East Pakistan as well. Pakistan and the Pakistan army were accused, charged and declared as the perpetrators of virtually every conceivable crime. Ironically, some of our own people were in the lead in the blame game against Pakistan. And whatever existed of the international media back then, was fully on-board. Clearly it wasn't going to be much different this time around.

False flag operations were to be the key component of this game plan. It got off to a brilliant start with what India calls its 9/11, on 26/11/2008, when 10 men reportedly laid siege to their largest city, Mumbai, for over 60 hours. The world lapped up the outgoing information about the situation provided by the Indian media. Even before it was clear as to what these "terrorists" were up to, Pakistan was named and universally accepted as the culprit. Our own media and certain incompetent politicians messed it up further by virtually writing an FIR against their own country. And even though sections of the more serious Indian media, senior Indian police officials as well as neutral writers have proved beyond doubt that Pakistan could not have perpetrated this attack, the mere logistics of it being beyond the ken of an outsider, those Pakistanis who had so readily accepted and repeated the nationalistic Indian narrative at the time, have not yet publicly reneged on their

original stance. The fact is, that no intelligence agency worth its salt would ever send its operatives with their country's name printed in capital on everything carried by them. Damaging as the situation was given all the fake news, there was, however, one positive outcome: our media and politicians learned about false flags for the first time.

We also got a glimpse of what modern propaganda looks like and what it is capable of, since Pakistan continues to pay for it even now. That apparent success emboldened India further. Subsequently, Pakistan was to bear the brunt of many more incidents of India's covert war against us, culminating in Pulwama in 2018. The Modi-led BJP went into overdrive, whipping up strong anti-Pakistan sentiments as a pivot of their election drive. And the world was on Modi's side. Then February 2019 happened. This time Pakistan responded, telling the world in no uncertain terms that enough was enough. That notwithstanding, Modi went on to win another landslide victory, and took that as a license to go all the way. His anti-Pakistan agenda continues, but alongside, the situation continues to evolve.

For a change, for example, Pakistan has gone public about continuing Indian involvement in terrorism in Pakistan, and backed this with hard evidence. Some Indian publications have taken the matter up, going even further by detailing the Indian media's shenanigans against Pakistan. The world was slowly coming to terms with these disclosures, when the Modi mouthpiece, Republic TV host Arbab Goswami's WhatsApp chat, dubbed 'Godi Media,' became public, exposing Modi's India for what it really is: a fascist country which doesn't hesitate in sacrificing its own soldiers for petty gains (Pulwama False Flag), and which can put world peace at risk (the ill-conceived Balakot air strike), just to win a few more seats in the elections. Increasingly, courtesy his supporters' rabid pronouncements, Modi and his cronies' antics have also become a favourite for anti-BJP comics' stand-up shows.

The questions are, do the Modi-led Brahmin Zionists understand the possible fallout of such adventurism? Is Pakistan's narrative finding global traction? Are we doing enough to convince the world that India is on a self-destruct



Another false flag?

India is an unnatural state, where except for some areas in its north, almost everyone is up in arms against the very idea of being part of the Indian federation.

course, and in the process, could take the world down with it?

The last 20 years have exploded almost every myth about India, which the country had nurtured with lots of care and finesse. December '71 had bolstered the perception that India is a big country, and on the way to greatness, typical of street bullies. Gradually, countries in the immediate vicinity of this bully have seen through it and are now readjusting their positions accordingly. As a result, more people have come to recognise that:

1. India is an unnatural state, where except for some areas in its north, almost everyone is up in arms against the very idea of being part of the Indian federation.

2. It is not the world's largest democracy, but an outright fascist state where no minority is safe.

3. Indian secularism was the biggest fraud perpetrated on the world, with the country's hapless minorities its victims.

4. The Indian media is rarely free, if ever. It works hand-in-glove with its government to further their cause.

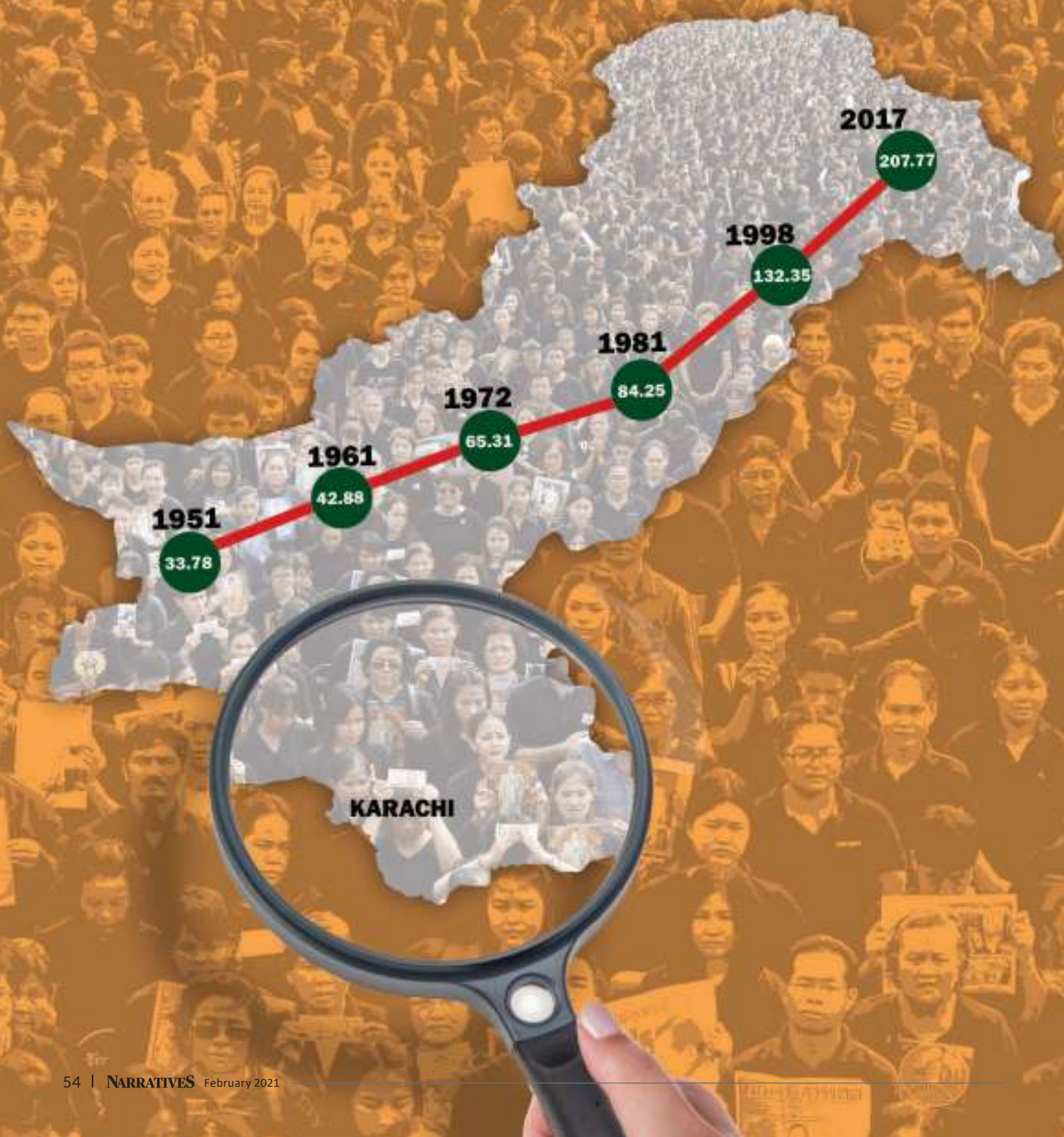
5. And last but not least, Brahmin Zionism, marketed as Hindutva, has no respect for peace, human rights or the lives of its own people. It will go to any extent to achieve its objectives.

It is worrying that the world at large hasn't woken up to the dangerous possibilities if India doesn't correct its course. There is also this remote possibility that it is being allowed to grow as a sacrificial lamb for something bigger than misplaced Indian ambitions. Either way, it doesn't solve Pakistan's problems, in the near future or on a long-term basis. And sadly Pakistan isn't doing enough. Presenting well-prepared dossiers to the world isn't finding many takers. It is fortunate in a way that the 'Indian Chronicles,' the *Godi Media* and the reality behind most of India's false flag operations weren't exposed by us. But we have to keep pushing till the world decides to deal with this bully appropriately.

One has to acknowledge 'Hindian' persistence in following what they feel is a sure path to glory. That it could lead to an abyss, hasn't, however, yet crossed their minds, never mind the sane voices from within warning them of this possibility. Not very reassuring for countries in the region, or the world at large. ■

BalanceSheet

The Numbers' Game



The Census Controversy

Holding a fresh census may be the only way to set the controversies surrounding the 2017 Census to rest



By Dr. Mehtab S. Karim

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*excluding Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir.
Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics

The results of the 2017 census have remained controversial ever since they were released. Objections have not only been raised by all the political parties of Sindh, but by the electronic and print media, by civil society as well as scholars, about a gross undercount of Sindh's population in general and of Karachi in particular. Apparently, for that reason, the Council of Common Interests (CCI) has yet to reach a consensus on validating the results. Even the Chief Justice of Pakistan is on record suggesting that Karachi's population is perhaps twice that reported in the provisional results. Prior to the 2018 elections, the Supreme Court had taken the stand that since the census results were provisional; therefore a constitutional amendment was needed, as elections could not be held without official notification of the results. Therefore, prior to the 25th amendment, an agreement was reached in the Senate, duly signed by the leaders of all political parties for a 5 percent recount to be supervised by a neutral Census Commission, consisting of qualified and experienced demographers. Consequently, the Census Commission consisting of three prominent demographers was notified by the government in January, 2018. In its first meeting on the basis of advertisements in major newspapers by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), several firms were short-listed for conducting the 5 percent recount

by a third party. The Census Commission also invited several demographers from the country, and most voiced their doubts about the census results. Unfortunately, the Census Commission called off the second meeting, and no further meetings were held. One of the wheels of democracy which helps a country's smooth functioning is counting the appropriate number of people all over the country, so that they could choose their representatives on the basis of one man one vote. Besides, the census also provides relevant data at national, provincial and local levels for proper planning. Accordingly, the 1973 Constitution mandates conducting a census every ten years, which could become the basis of demarcating constituencies at the national, provincial and local levels, besides determining the share of each province through the National Finance Commission (NFC) award. However, since then, only the 1981 census could be conducted on time, with proper planning and under the supervision of experts. The next census was conducted after a delay of 17 years and the most recent one, after a delay of 19 years. Census results are never perfect, and thus under or over-counting of people does happen in both developed and developing countries. This is determined by a post-census survey, by re-visiting about 2 percent of the sampled census enumeration blocks. For example, in the 2011 cen-

Number of Blocks and Census Areas, 2017 Census: Provinces/Regions and Pakistan					
Province/Region	Administrative Districts	Census Districts	Census Charges	Census Circles	Census Blocks
Punjab	36	166	1,562	11,411	87,006
Sindh	29	146	933	5,144	39,139
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	25	82	342	2,316	21,577
Balochistan	32	36	285	784	10,212
FATA	7	7	48	288	4,227
Islamabad	1	1	14	107	1,514
Pakistan*	130	438	3,183	20,053	163,675

sus, about 1.5 percent people were undercounted in Australia, 2.5 percent in India and 4 percent in Bangladesh. Demographers in the advisory committee for the 2017 census had strongly recommended a post-census survey and they did not advise checking the CNIC of each household member. However, PBS did not accept these recommendations. According to a report prepared by the United Nations Observer Mission, which was present during the census exercise, the CNIC of each household member was checked, verified and recorded and the enumerators relied on information available on the CNIC. Therefore, as a result of the *de jure* method used in the census, it is likely that household members having a different address on the CNIC were later allocated to their original place of residence. Besides, due to the requirement of having a valid CNIC to be counted in the census, those who did not possess one and particularly aliens were not included. Perhaps for that reason, the reported population of Sindh, particularly of Karachi, is much below expectations.

To evaluate all aspects of the 2017 census, the Statistics Division (an administrative Division of PBS), constituted an internal committee consisting of senior PBS officials, which pointed out several loopholes while the census was being conducted, in its published report. The report reveals that the advisory committee constituted by the Governing Council of PBS had shown concern that “the census is not being planned the way it was envisaged [and] none of its recommendations were followed in true letter and spirit ... the concerned authorities of PBS had adopted whatever they liked and rejected what was not according to their sweet will” [and] “non-compliance of recommendations by national and international experts, coupled with acute shortage of expert staff and lack of technical expertise, had left the PBS with a number of loopholes.”

The transparency of data collected by PBS is further in doubt, since instead of conducting a technology-based population census (as was done in Bangladesh and Egypt), in Pakistan, it was conducted manually on forms printed over 10 years



Is conducting a fresh census the only way to set the controversy to rest?

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earlier. Interestingly, just prior to the census, the entire computerised data entry setup in PBS' Karachi office, which was to do data entry of census forms from Sindh and Balochistan was shifted to Islamabad. Therefore, the possibility of manipulation of the process at a later stage cannot be ruled out. In a recent ruling, the Sindh High Court has indicated that the local bodies elections cannot be held until the official results of the census are released.

As over three and a half years have elapsed since the 2017 census was conducted, many argue that the 5 percent recount is no longer a viable option as births, deaths and migration figures would have

changed. According to my calculations, about 8 million people who were not included in Sindh's population (who most likely shifted to their original province of residence), perhaps seven million were from Karachi and one million from other districts of Sindh. However, conducting another census in Sindh or Karachi alone would not serve the purpose, especially if population of other provinces has been over-reported. Therefore, we may consider three options:

1. Resorting to the 5 percent recount will only determine in which province there was any under- or over-count. Besides, due to changes in population

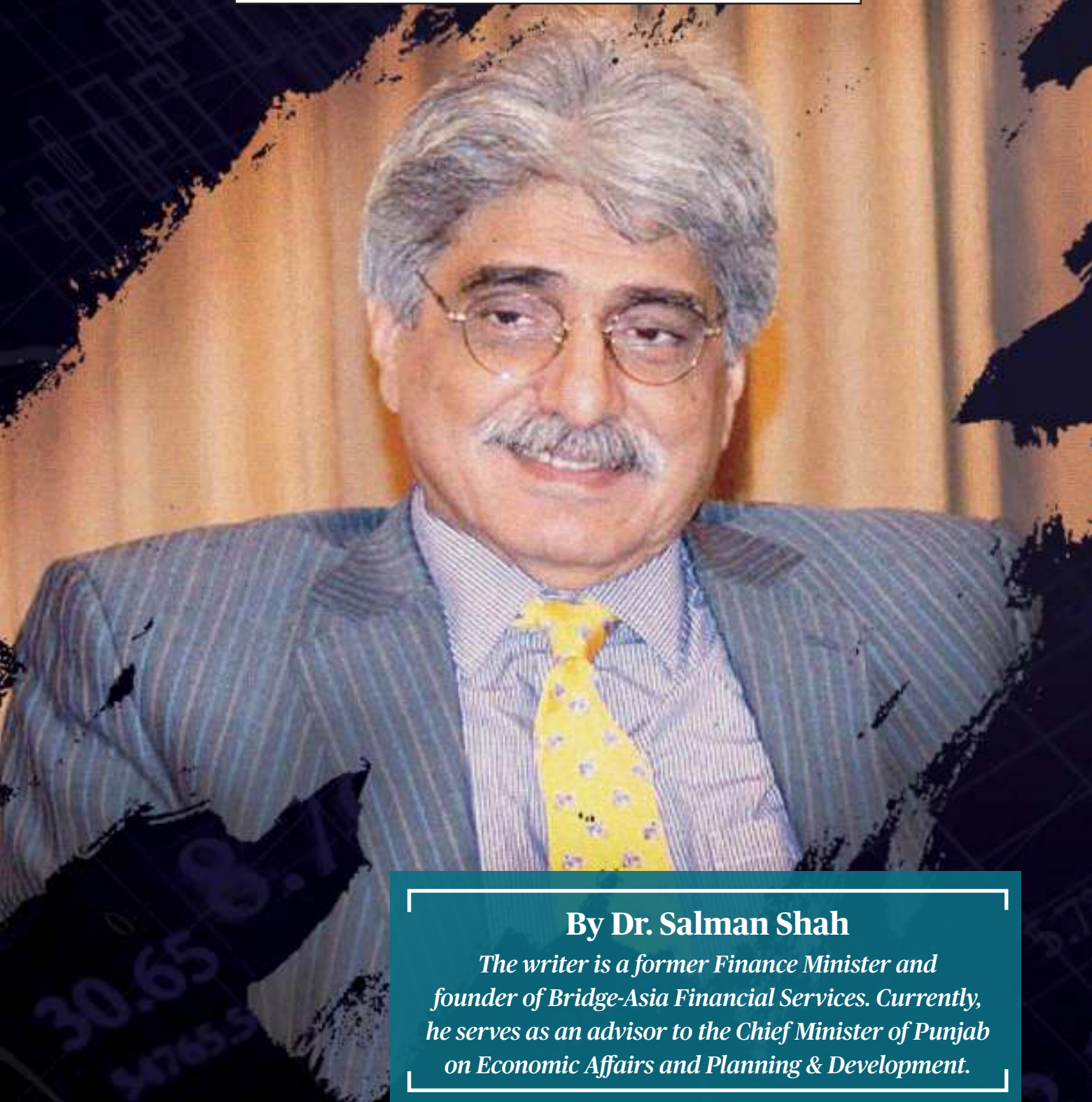
that may have occurred due to births, deaths and migration since 2017, it will be difficult to determine the actual position.

2. The already notified Census Commission may be revived which could review the data of the 2017 census, find out what, if anything, went wrong, and make recommendations to the government on whether to release the data.

3. Conduct a fresh census in early 2022, under the supervision of the Census Commission. Since only Geographic Information System (GIS) maps need to be updated and household lists are available, the exercise could be completed within a month. Since the 2017 census was conducted without proper planning and by a team which was neither professionally trained nor had the experience of conducting a census, its results will remain controversial. Therefore, in the national interest, it may be appropriate to scrap the results of the 2017 census and conduct a fresh census. It may be noted, that while in the earlier censuses fieldwork was completed in about two weeks, the 2017 census took two months, resulting in substantial additional cost. However, since all the household listings are available along with detailed GIS maps, a fresh census could be easily conducted in two weeks in Sindh, using modern technology at a substantially lower cost. Since PBS is short of trained manpower, the task of planning and monitoring a fresh census should be given to the Census Commission, consisting of trained persons and representatives of civil society, with support from the field staff of PBS for execution. ■

PERSPECTIVE

The Time is Now



By Dr. Salman Shah
The writer is a former Finance Minister and founder of Bridge-Asia Financial Services. Currently, he serves as an advisor to the Chief Minister of Punjab on Economic Affairs and Planning & Development.

A Tryst with Destiny

The time is ripe for the country to move forward and fulfil its true potential

The Pakistani nation has seen many trials and tribulations over the past few decades, emanating from forceful global trends unleashed by the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 and the collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991. A new world order came into existence with a sole superpower directing global political and economic affairs. Survival of the fittest and rules of globalisation drove national economic agendas. There was a race among competing nations to become victors in the contest of globalisation and avoid becoming its victims.

With trillions of dollars worth of financial and trade flows at stake, there was a scramble for economic reforms across the globe to capture national advantage in highly connected, innovative and competitive global markets driven by international rules of engagement. This opening up of global markets and competition enormously benefited countries that aggressively reformed themselves. In 1989, China had a per capita income of \$310 per year whereas Pakistan had a per capita income of \$384. Since then, reforms have grown Chinese per capita income 32 times to reach \$10,000 per year and in comparison Pakistan's efforts have only yielded a growth of 3.3 times to reach \$1,300 per year. Clearly a failure of leadership is responsible for the substandard outcome for Pakistan.

In the challenging and rapidly changing global environment, further complicated by the 9/11 American War on Terror, strategically important Pakistan has always been in the eye of the storm, but failed miserably to carve out advantageous outcomes. Failure of leadership has been inter-temporal and multidimensional; its leadership failed to carry out meaningful economic reforms needed to compete in global markets and create the economic muscle needed for sustainable economic growth in spite of multiple IMF programmes and failed to reap economic advantage from being the most allied of allies of the Americans. It faced sanctions in spite of being the frontline state against

the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and playing a decisive and leading role in its subsequent defeat; it suffered the most in terms of both human life and material goods and was not fully compensated in the War on Terror, nor was it granted the preferential market access and investment flows it needed in spite of being a Major Non-NATO Military Ally of the USA.

Time and again, the Pakistani leadership was found wanting and not focused on nation building or reforms, instead it excelled in mastering money laundering techniques and corrupt practices; it displayed monumental incompetence in negotiating international contracts

Time and again, the Pakistani leadership was found wanting and not focused on nation building or reforms, instead it excelled in mastering money laundering techniques and corrupt practices.

that have come home to haunt and impoverish the nation; collectively it has crashed the economy numerous times and sought dozens of unsuccessful trysts with the IMF, culminating in economic bankruptcy in 2018. The current, 22nd IMF programme is the toughest of all the programmes put together; the bitter medicines of upfront adjustments in exchange rates, interest rates and power rates, though long overdue, have exacted a huge price from the hapless citizenry in the shape of inflation, job losses and a substantial drop in purchasing power.

Coupled with the pandemic, Pakistan has gone through an extraordinarily tough time. Almost a year into the

Programme, it seems the government of Prime Minister Imran Khan has turned the corner. It has successfully averted default, it has been able to sustain a market based exchange rate and succeeded in lowering interest rates, it has successfully weathered the inflationary onslaught and political blowback, it has deftly managed the Covid pandemic, boosted the export sector, jump-started construction activity, initiated low cost housing programmes and started development and regeneration of cities, created momentum in environmental protection, expanded the social security net, rejuvenated the accountability process and started civil service reforms. Exports are rebounding, remittances are increasing, reserves are building up and the business community has resumed investment, but there is still a long way to go.

The Prime Minister is determined to fulfil every commitment made with the people of Pakistan, to realise the 'tryst with destiny' that the founding fathers made in 1947. In today's terms this 'tryst with destiny' means:

1. That the fifth largest populated country in the world should also have an equally large economy that performs to its best potential and provides the employment and prosperity that the people of Pakistan deserve.
2. That the Pakistani nation is enabled to excel in innovation, knowledge and creativity to propel the country forward.
3. That Pakistan becomes the logistics hub and lynchpin of the region.
4. That Pakistan's large population becomes the base of the next 'Factory of the World' after China.

The Prime Minister knows that his greatest challenge is to ensure that as a nation we have a clear focus, vision and commitment to reach the promised destination and we continuously and persistently endeavour to succeed in creating a prosperous Pakistan much beyond the confines of the current IMF programme.

The macroeconomic framework is embedded in the IMF programme and

various initiatives and action plans are being implemented to ensure that economic stabilisation is achieved and Pakistan does not enter into recurrent economic crises. The government is aware that stabilisation alone would only result in a low level equilibrium with low growth and employment expansion. To overcome the foreign debt overhang we would need to push the economy into a much higher



orbit of sustainable output by enhancing productivity and competitiveness of the economy to compete in global markets.

The strategy has to be driven by domestic and foreign investment, overseas Pakistanis and their remittances, technology induction and exports. This requires that substantial investment climate reforms be made quickly to remove a plethora of investment hurdles that have been implanted in Pakistan over the years. The government of Prime Minister Imran Khan fully realises that sectorial investment strategies to boost the dynamics and productivity of the agriculture, industry and the services sectors can only be realised when the cost of doing business is substantially reduced and the ease of doing business is substantially increased. Boosting investor confidence is the number one priority of the Prime Minister and he is devoting enormous time and effort to reforming the bureaucratic and regulatory processes that impede investment.

There are many factors that affect the cost of doing business and the ease of doing business in Pakistan, however progress in two areas stands out as the most critical; high power rates make the cost of doing business exceedingly high, while the government regulatory system and an

onerous tax system destroy the ease of doing business in Pakistan. The government is focused on reforming both and success will determine how quickly Pakistan's economy can move into a robust cycle of high investment, employment and economic growth.

Investment strategies are largely dependent on creating opportunities for better and more efficient utilisation of na-

tional resources. In this context it is useful to view the national economy through a spatial lens as an intricate combination of a rural economy and an urban economy. The overall productivity, competitiveness and potential of the economy depend on both the urban and rural economy pulling their weight.

In this context, Pakistan's rural economic endowment comprises 70 million acres of arable land, 200 Million Acre Feet (MAF) of fresh water annually and 60 percent of the population engaged in the rural economy. The rural economy output of around \$60 billion or 22 percent of GDP is quite paltry. With 60 percent of the population producing 22 percent of output, rural poverty is endemic.

There is a colossal waste of water, land and human resources in the rural economy. Simple back of the envelope calculations show that if Pakistan's water resource alone was available in a modern agricultural economy like Australia, it would produce an output of two billion dollars annually from every MAF of fresh water. With this yardstick, the rural economy of Pakistan alone has the potential of producing an output of 400 billion dollars or seven times its current level.

An overview of the rural economy

reveals that its institutions and supply chains have become fossilised and dysfunctional over time, due to neglect and lack of investment. Furthermore, due to dwindling research and development efforts, poor seed quality and lack of seed multiplication and distribution networks, farmers have limited access to quality seed. Farm extension services are sub-standard and supply systems of critical inputs weak, with limited rural finance availability.

Rural markets are primitive and open to abuse of the farmer. Value added connectivity and farm to market infrastructure are weak. Linkages to global markets are inadequate. Cost of production is high and farm yields, productivity and incomes are rapidly declining. Government regulatory focus on food security has taken the wind out of a competitive rural economy. Both urban consumers and rural producers are the losers. Under the rural revitalisation strategy, the rural economy can readily absorb ideas and investments, particularly from overseas Pakistanis as well as global firms specialising in food product value chains.

In the Punjab, the Prime Minister has directed that twenty-five rural economy value chains encompassing food products, agricultural commodities, dairy and livestock, fruits and vegetables, horticulture, poultry, fisheries, and forestry etc., may be strategically revitalised and upgraded; the entire chain from Research & Development (R&D) to seed multiplication and breeding, to farm extension and farmer support systems, inputs and finance, and access to markets are to be reformed and revamped. The government will support programmes to facilitate private sector investment, quality and productivity enhancement, logistics and value addition, as well as creating brands for access to export and domestic markets.

The urban economy also presents great opportunities for investment and growth. The productivity of the urban economy is around three times higher than the rural economy. Furthermore, Pakistan is witnessing one of the highest urbanisation rates in the world, assisted by rural to urban migration. In the next three decades, over 70 percent of the population will live in the urban areas. An extremely youthful urban population, exceeding 200 million, inhabiting hundreds of large and small towns and cities

stretching from the coastal regions of the Arabian seas to the gateway into China at the Khunjerab Pass is a huge economic resource. With labour costs in China, Europe and East Asia rising sharply, many labour intensive jobs are shifting to lower cost countries. Pakistan has a great opportunity to attract these jobs into Pakistan's urban economy. Innovative Pakistani cities would become the home of many of these new jobs.

Like the rural economy, the urban economy also suffers from gross neglect and mismanagement. Urban value chains are mainly geared to cater to domestic demand and produce low quality products. The ratio of exports to GDP hovers around 10 percent and is insufficient to power the growth of the economy. While a few cities have developed as export centres, none of them can be considered globally competitive cities on par with those in East Asia or China. Poor industrial infrastructure with poor ecosystems for production and distribution make them uncompetitive.

An overpowering regulatory burden stifles growth, discourages scale production or innovation. The result is that very few Pakistani companies reach a global scale and prefer to stay small. On the positive side, each city has thousands of entrepreneurs who can be facilitated to form the backbone for upscaling and modernising existing value chains and creating space for new products and markets.

While the Prime Minister's focus on two new cities – the Ravi Riverfront development and Karachi's Bundle Island initiative – grabs the headlines, the urban strategy for Punjab involves all district headquarters. The overall strategy is to develop the infrastructure of the cities to provide water supply, sanitation, mobility, health and educational facilities to the urban areas, according to standards envisaged in sustainable development goals. While this is the traditional approach to cities, the Prime Minister has directed that each city not only have a Master Plan to manage its growth on environmentally sound principles, it must also have an economic development plan that spells out the economic opportunities that would be available to its citizens and create the infrastructure and knowledge system for the city's value chains. Thus each city will have an ecosystem that provides a competitive advantage for its specific produc-



Though it employs 60 percent of the population, Pakistan's rural economy accounts for only 20 percent of its GDP.

The Prime Minister knows that his greatest challenge is to ensure that as a nation we have a clear focus, vision and commitment to reach the promised destination.

tion specialisations and create globally competitive products.

In Punjab, the Rural Economic Strategy and the Urban Economic Strategy are being integrated at the divisional level. All nine divisions of Punjab are preparing an integrated strategy and plans that will integrate the rural and urban value chains into a development plan encompassing a cluster based 'system of cities' and rural hinterlands, that will plug the productivity and competitiveness gaps in the division. The divisional plans will seek out investment funds from public sector annual development plans as well as public-private partnerships, private enterprise capital, foreign investors, investment funds and overseas Pakistanis so that the investment gap is addressed and we can reap full benefits from the divisional opportunities inher-

ent in natural and human resources.

In spite of the pandemic, the international environment for implementing the Prime Minister's agenda is quite conducive. The exit of the Trump administration means that a multipolar world based on peaceful international economic cooperation and global trading rules will re-emerge. Peace may dawn in West Asia and the Middle East. The winding up of the American involvement in Afghanistan and Pakistan's role in its orderly execution can lead to peace in Afghanistan. In this respect Pakistan's request to the new US administration to join in the CPEC initiative and participate in economic partnerships with Pakistan and beyond into Central Asia and Western China has considerable economic logic.

Having eliminated domestic terrorism, Pakistan is now open for foreign business travel, its production systems are working full-time, it has an exceptional relationship with China and CPEC has moved to the second phase. A big jump is expected in trade and investment flows with China. Discussions on a free trade agreement with the US, offered by Senator Lindsay Graham during the Trump administration, can be reactivated. GSP Plus status is available with the EU. The economic and political relationship with Iran, Turkey and the Middle East can expand. The government of Prime Minister Imran Khan is focused on investment and growth. The domestic and international environment is helpful. The time is ripe to fulfil our tryst with destiny. ■

Banking on Renewables



Get Smart

While smart information and communication technologies have altered the world's energy market, our power sector is still stuck in the same old groove



By Dr. Shahid Rahim
The writer is a freelance consultant, specialising in sustainable energy and power system planning and development.

“People and their managers are working so hard to be sure things are done right, that they hardly have time to decide if they are doing the right things,” wrote Stephen R. Covey, author of the bestseller, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, listed by Time magazine among the 25 most influential business management books in history. Covey’s statement fits in perfectly with our present imbroglio in the power sector, where we incessantly seek reforms using an approach that has already been rendered obsolete by new market forces. The power sector needs a systemic transformation and not symptomatic treatment if we wish to nurse it back to health.

Multiple developments in the world’s energy market have altered the fundamentals of the electricity business. Small power plants are now beating the cost and performance features of large plants. Renewable power generation, even without government support, is proving competitive. Smart information and communication technologies (ICTs) are unlocking new opportunities for power control and demand management in the grid. Battery storage technologies are enabling consumers to reduce, and even eliminate, their depend-

ence on the grid. Electric vehicles (EVs) are also opening up new vistas in their dual role as loads as well as sources of supply.

The “bigger is better and cheaper too” boom of the utility industry, that persisted over a century, finally came to an end in the late 1970s when high fuel prices triggered by the 1973 OPEC oil embargo led to the advent of gas-fired combined cycle plants in the 100 to 200 Megawatts (MW) range (between 1955 and 1970, the world saw generating unit sizes jump seven-fold, from 200 to 1,400 MW). There was no turning back as environmental concerns linked with coal and oil-fired generation kept the push for even smaller and more efficient plants that are now available in 10 to 50 MW sizes as well.

The interest that renewable generation technologies received in the post-oil embargo years, stagnated briefly in the late 1990s, but was rekindled due to the looming threat of climate change, resulting in their coming of age lately. Statistics from International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) indicate that 538 Gigawatts (GW) of new photovoltaic (PV) capacity was added since 2010, bringing the total worldwide installed PV capacity to 578 GW by 2019. Similarly, 400 GW of new wind capacity (onshore) was added during the past dec-



Smart Grid



The new kid on the block: Electric cars.

ade, bringing it to a total of 594 GW. The cost of the PV systems fell by 80 percent and that of the wind systems by 25 percent since 2010. The average levelised costs of electricity (LCOE) meanwhile dropped by 82 percent for solar and 38 percent for on-shore wind plants; individual projects saw even greater cost reductions in the past couple of years.

Developments in storage technologies have enabled consumers to opt for the PV or solar systems for meeting their demands, bypassing the grid entirely or using it only as backup. A recent survey by Bloomberg New Energy Finance (BNEF) indicates that the prices of Lithium-ion battery packs fell from \$1,100 per kilowatt-hour (kWh) in 2010 to USD 137 per kWh in 2020 and are expected to further fall to \$100 per kWh by 2023. The ongoing R&D efforts aim to reduce prices and enhance their capability even more.

The rapid inroads by EVs into the transport sector are significantly impacting electricity demand. In the past five years, EVs have made a spectacular entry into the transport sectors of many developed and some developing countries, notably China and India. The International Energy Agency (IEA), under its Electric Vehicle 30@30 Initiative assumptions, expects the worldwide stock of light-duty electric cars to exceed 220 million by 2030. Those of 2- and 3-wheelers and commercial EVs will be extra.

ICT-based smart-grid technologies

In the past five years, EVs have made a spectacular entry into the transport sectors of many countries... The International Energy Agency expects the worldwide stock of light-duty electric cars to exceed 220 million by 2030.

being used to modernise the grid are enabling both consumers and utilities to exercise greater flexibility and control over demand as well as supply. Customers can now use smart sensors and control devices to manage their demand to minimise electricity bills and offer some of this capability back to the grid to further cut their electricity bills, and in some cases even to earn money. Additionally these technologies are enabling the utilities also to operate their systems closer to their physical limits, and derive maximum value from the existing assets.

Growth in electricity demand has

also dampened around the world as a result of economic slowdowns, availability of more-efficient appliances, and consumers opting for their own supply and demand management. All sectors of the economy are striving for higher values with lower energy use, and are particularly looking to move away from polluting fuels. This trend was evident even before the onset of Covid-19 and most analysts expect it to persist in the future too, as the world is currently passing through a phase which noted management thinker, Peter Drucker, had characterised as “knowledge economy.”

Collectively, the above trends are being termed “disruptive” by industry analysts because these are challenging the fundamental principles of the electricity business to the extent that some even predict

that these forces may push the traditional electric utilities into a “death spiral.” To recover capital investments in supply facilities, electric utilities need to raise rates; however, what they find to their dismay is that it shrinks their revenues further, as it prompts more and more customers to seek alternatives to grid supply.

The traditional electricity business operating model, in which power flows predominantly in one direction (from public- or privately-owned power generating plants to the end-users via the grid) and revenues flow in the opposite direction (from end-users to the power company), with prices fixed and controlled by a regulator, is not proving effective any more in dealing with the new challenges presented by the emerging market.

In the changed environment, power can and will flow in either direction, sometimes within local loops, as some of the consumers may now be able to meet part or all of their electricity demand by their own generation. This will enable them to avoid the grid altogether or use it only for backup and, not infrequently, provide the utility their excess-generating capability to contribute to grid security and reliability. Like power, revenues can and will also flow in either direction.

The power sector in Pakistan, like everywhere else in the world, also faces a turning point. There is a compelling need to transform it along more imaginative and innovative lines to deal effectively

with the emerging challenges. A “problem-driven” approach that focuses mainly on reducing losses, improving bills recovery, and promoting competition in some functions, though necessary, will not be sufficient. It needs a “vision-led” transformation in its legal and regulatory framework, its systems, its institutions, its business model, and its investment and pricing schemes.

In the absence of a favourable business environment, the newer technologies and distribution systems will still be “connected” with the grid, but they will not be optimally “integrated,” raising multiple challenges. Consumers will lose too, because the benefits associated with their newer technologies and schemes may not be realised to the full extent. The society, as a whole, will thus suffer. To handle these challenges and harness the opportunities these hold, we will need to recast the electricity business in the country.

First, the government will need to provide an enabling legal framework to encourage the deployment of distributed generation, storage technologies, and demand-management schemes. This framework should empower sector entities to devise innovative pricing and compensation schemes to induce consumers and investors to install these technologies in the system. It should also enable proper accounting, allocation and recovery of costs from participating consumers and investors while allowing them a fair compensation for the value they contribute to the grid.

The new framework should also encourage deployment of storage technologies in the country, as these will enhance the value of renewable energy technologies while easing their intermittency and variability constraints. Similarly, besides being a source of meeting new electric demand, battery packs in EVs can also support the grid in more economical ways than the traditional solutions.

Second, the electricity business in the country will need to be reorganised along more open and flexible lines to treat these new distributed supply and demand options not as competitors or threat but as partners in the utility’s own efforts to serve the nation with reliable and economical electricity. The utility managers should not just encourage, but aggressively seek contributions from customers and investors on newer options and



Wind turbines: Clean and cost-effective.

Customers can now use smart sensors and control devices to manage their demand to minimise electricity bills and offer some of this capability back to the grid to further cut their bills.

technologies.

Third, load-serving entities will need to develop appropriate tools and data, and information and knowledge bases, and make these freely accessible to customers and investors for assessing the scope and viability of these schemes for meeting the demand for electricity at source and their contribution to the grid. This should also include any technical assistance they might need for making such assessments.

Fourth, since the grid will act as the

enabling platform for integration and operation of diverse and distributed technologies, we will need to modernise the existing transmission and distribution networks to transform these into a smart grid that can facilitate successful integration of emerging technologies and schemes. The modernised grid must be capable of bringing together a host of energy technologies and processes, and various market actors, producers, operators, and end-users, with the aim of optimising resource utilisation and operational performance, minimising economic and environmental costs, and maximising system reliability and resilience.

The challenges that we face in the power sector are admittedly grave and daunting, and defy simple and easy solutions. Outdated and obsolete reform approaches that we have used in the past to fix this sector will not work any longer. We are in dire need of a vision-led and bold set of initiatives to transform this sector from its current bleeding condition into a viable and vibrant contributor to our people and the country’s economy in the future. ■

Dispatches ~~from~~ Chundrigar Rd

Pakistan's Fintech Revolution

Pakistan's finance sector is finally coming of age



By Maliha Khan

The writer is a staff member.

We live in a digitalised world, where internet and technology have penetrated every aspect of human life. And on the heels of internet and mobile phones, the rapid growth of financial technology – Fintech – has taken off in Pakistan. While Fintech is a relatively new concept for Pakistan, it is increasingly occupying an exponentially growing space, aiding financial inclusion in the country.

Fintech aims to replace conventional financial services. Its objective is to become people's first service choice by offering more convenience and facilities – primarily through mobile phones – for monetary transactions.

Pakistan's financial services sector was mired in a morbid state until a few years ago. As per Financial Inclusion Insights (FII), more than 100 million Pakistani adults – comprising 5 percent of the world's unbanked population – did not have a formal bank account. For the population's poor segment especially, opening an account in a conventional bank was an enormously complicated task. And for the government, distributing welfare payments to the underprivileged in a targeted manner was an uphill job, because most of them lacked any formal transaction account. This impediment required a drastically simplified alternative to bring financial inclusion to the public.

As a result, Fintech came into play and began to tap the potential in the Pakistani masses. It is now increasingly gearing to exploit all the gaps in the services of the mainstream financial sector.

At present, the Fintech revolution is slowly but surely enabling thousands of Pakistanis to send and receive cash, pay bills and buy merchandise from the comfort of their homes. The use of this mobile money industry, aka 'Branchless Banking,' appears to be gaining ground in Pakistan.

It is imperative for a country's economy that its public has access to regulated financial services. Financial inclusion, driven by Fintech, is beneficial for individuals, as well as national economies. It boosts economic growth and also contributes to documenting the economy. In a country where 80 percent of the population has mobile phone ownership, and an increasingly tech-savvy youth, no one can doubt the thriving scope of Fintech or Branchless Banking (BB) in Pakistan. If the authorities fully encourage this platform, Pakistan can make leaps in financial inclusion, consequently uplifting the national economy and GDP growth.

The incumbent Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government deserves a pat on the back for its continued efforts to digitalise Pakistan. In January 2021, Prime Minister Imran Khan launched the *Raast* payment system. According to the State Bank of Pakistan, *Raast* is Pakistan's first instant payment system that will enable end-to-end digital payments among individuals, businesses, and government entities instantaneously. Nevertheless, the PTI government will have to pay more attention to include Fintech, especially in regulating its flagship *Ehsaas* welfare programme. It will escalate financial inclusion as well as lessen to a great extent the risk of physical contact in times of a pandemic.

The successful integration of Fintech solutions into Pakistani society may be the answer to the structural financial

problems the country has always struggled with. Furthermore, the PTI government will earn huge benefits from digital payments or Branchless Banking. It will help significantly limit money laundering – a long-term goal of the PTI government. The digital record of every payment will make it much harder to hide income and evade taxes, thus leaving no room for any illegal transaction or theft.

Several private firms are also working alongside the government on Fintech, to improve its application in Pakistan for a better customer experience. A network of retailers and franchises have mushroomed across the country, serving millions of customers and contributing to Pakistan's economy as well.

According to the latest report published by the State Bank of Pakistan, BB accounts sustained their growing trend with the addition of 4 million new accounts during the quarter (Oct-Dec 2018). Now, BB accounts have touched the 47.2 million figure, after an increase of 9.4 percent during the quarter, compared to 43.1 million accounts at the end of Sept 2018. Similarly, BB deposits have also grown by 42.8 percent during the quarter, to reach Rs. 23.7 billion.

A breakup of BB transactions shows that customer-related transactions account for 98 percent of the volume, most of which constitute M-wallet (Mobile-wallet) transactions. The SBP report concludes that the incessant rise in volume and value of transactions is a positive indicator for the gradual adoption of the Branchless Banking channel by the public to meet their banking needs.

The gradual but promising digital transformation of Pakistan's financial sector with Branchless Banking will soon become the cornerstone of the country's universal financial inclusion. For a developing country like Pakistan, the key to strengthen the economy lies in Fintech. It is a much-needed, doable way forward to fix the structural loopholes of the financial system. ■

The ‘Maa’ of Lyari

With her path-breaking efforts to provide quality education and more to the children of Lyari and their parents, Sabina Khatri is viewed as a mother figure in this depressed, crime-infested, poverty-ridden slum of Karachi



By Zahra Chughtai
The writer is a prominent freelance journalist and runs her own interiors and lifestyle online publication.



One big happy family.

Sabina Khatri exudes a quiet strength and kindness that draws you in. You would pick her out in a crowd as the person to turn to if things went awry. And you would be right. As the head of the Kiran Foundation in Lyari, she has transformed the lives of the families which come under the umbrella of this unique organisation. When I ask her to define the Kiran Foundation she smiles and says, “In the words of the mothers who are with us, they say Kiran Foundation is their home. They say the abbreviation KF should stand for the Kiran Family.” And Sabina herself is the “Maa” of Lyari. That is how all the children address her. Motherhood is, in fact, the transformative superpower that is the basic ethos of Kiran.

It is indeed difficult to define the Kiran programme which offers education, for both children and their parents, plus counselling and therapy, recreation

and a whole lot more. “Our programme has many layers,” explains Sabina. “So it’s much more than just a school.” The centre remains open seven days a week till eight in the evening for children and their families to participate in the various after-school clubs, which range from archery and music to robotics and gymnastics. It is open even on Sundays because that is the day most fathers can come in and study or participate in the centre’s activities.

I ask Sabina if working such long hours seven days a week isn’t taxing? “Not at all,” she responds. “I enjoy it so much. I do all this to fill my own void. I do it for myself.”

This takes us back to Sabina Khatri’s own life experiences which, she firmly believes, were preparing her to take on the role she occupies today. “The way Kiran Foundation has evolved is so organic. The basic motivation behind it I would say is to allay pain. And that pain resonated with me. Every child I have touched had an experience that I could identify with.”

Sabina was born in Hyderabad but moved to Karachi when she was very little. Her mother was half Hungarian and

half Indian. She had met Sabina’s father at medical school in Germany where the two fell in love and got married. But the marriage could not last, mainly Sabina feels, because of societal constraints. And at the age of six, Sabina and her brother left for Germany with their mother. As a single mother with two small children in a foreign country, Sabina’s mother struggled and the children were moved from place to place and even plucked out of school. Finally, Sabina’s father won custody of the children and they were moved back to Pakistan. “So at the age of six I was separated from my father, and then at the age of nine I was separated from my mother. And that was forever.”

Sabina’s father re-married and she and her brother grew up with a new family and siblings. Sabina was on the surface a happy child. “I was very talkative, bubbly. I was always singing, writing poetry, drawing – and dreaming. I had very vivid dreams, to which I gave expression through art.” But she was also always told that she thought too much. “I was called ‘pagal’ (crazy) a lot because I asked difficult questions.” Today Sabina is a big advocate of being a caring adult in a child’s life, “because I didn’t have that.”

Pakistanicon

Against all Odds



'Maa' with the brood: Transforming young lives.

"But I never felt resentful or bitter," she says. "And I think that this is just a blessing from God. Allah guided me and all the negatives thrown at me became my training; they built a resilience within me. And I always found helping others to have the most profoundly healing effect on me."

Even as a young student at St Joseph's College, Sabina would take a bus and visit the children's ward at Jinnah Hospital. "I didn't tell anyone at home because they would have stopped me. But I would go and spend time with the children there, take them games, tell them stories. Sometimes I would spend time with the children selling flowers on the streets. And this was the highlight of my day. I can't tell you how much I enjoyed it."

Married off at an early age, Sabina's little adventures came to an end. She was disappointed that though she was a good student and came from a family of doctors, she was not encouraged to study further. But she didn't put up a fight and got married. "If I feel I'm not wanted or needed somewhere, I just step aside," she says. "Even now, I just feel it's a sign that I should move on."

Sabina had the first of her three children when she was only 18. "When I became a mother and experienced that intense bond with my child, I found myself questioning how my mother could give up her children," says Sabina. "And that answer too I found when helping others. One learns that circumstances arise when a mother will be forced to do that,

"I did get some threats... later, the gangs stopped harassing me. They wanted their children to attend my schools as well."

for her own or her child's survival."

When Sabina's children were older, she decided to go back to school. But finding the local educational environment extremely discouraging for an older student, she decided to opt for online courses in nutrition and physical fitness. She then began conducting fitness classes from home, which were hugely successful. "I made some lifelong friendships there. Those ladies who were my students are today my biggest donors and are on the board of Kiran Foundation," says Sabina.

It was during these years that she met the mother and child who were to become the catalyst for the creation of the Kiran Foundation. "My cook's sister came to me with her eight-month-old daughter. The child had been dashed against the wall by her father. The child's lips were blue and her eyes bloodied. We didn't know if she would survive, but thank God she did. I kept that mother and daughter with me

for four or five months. The mother had nowhere to turn to since she had married for love and was too ashamed to return home. So she was at the mercy of her abusive, drug-using husband. She eventually did go back to her husband, who subsequently tried to throw the baby down from the third floor."

At this point Sabina took decisive action and intervened in the situation. She got the woman, who was pregnant again, a divorce from her abusive husband. And the family came back to live with Sabina in her home "The little girl grew up in my home and became very dear to me. She blossomed into a confident, happy child. I also educated the mother and made her the secretary of my gym. Today she writes poetry and loves reading novels."

But when the little girl came of school age, her mother was scared to put her in school for fear that her father would kidnap her. "The family lived in Lyari and I started visiting Lyari to get a feel of the area," recalls Sabina. This was in 2004, the era when Lyari was at its most notorious and gangs ruled. No one at home knew about Sabina's visits to Lyari; she would don a burqa and wander around on foot. "I noticed that all the street dogs in Lyari had been mutilated, tails cut off, legs broken. It was very disturbing," recalls Sabina. "I have seen men carrying bazookas and rocket launchers on their shoulders and roaming around. I have seen cross-fire and bodies lying in the street. But worst of all, during the cross-fire I witnessed children cheering and clapping from the balconies. And then later running down to collect discarded bullets." She worried about the future of these children. The danger did not daunt her; in fact, it made her more determined.

It was by pure chance that Sabina found out that her husband's company was funding a small school in Lyari as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activity. "God connected the dots," smiles Sabina. "For two years I had been researching Lyari, writing down my findings and now I had found an entry into the community."

The school that was being funded was a mere two rooms next to a mosque. A driver, Haji Nazir, at the factory had requested funds to start this school in his home area. "My husband was extremely reluctant to go and visit the school but I was very persistent," recalls Sabina. "I re-

member the first time we visited with cars and guards," she laughs at this absurdity. "I clearly recall, when we were walking up the stairs, I could hear the children reciting 'Lab pe aati hai dua.' This was a direct sign for me. This is my absolute favourite poem and each word resonates with me, as if it is addressed to me personally. I broke down and sat there on the steps crying."

Now Sabina set to work in earnest. Over the next four months she prepared a comprehensive five-year plan for a unique programme. The goal was to address the long-term effects of trauma. "I wanted to replicate the work I had done at home with my cook's sister and her daughter. I had seen wonderful results with them. I mapped out a trauma-sensitive, holistic, interventive mother-and-child programme that I could carry out with 20 children. And I would be with them every step of the way like a mother." She e-mailed this plan to her husband and in-laws, who could not refuse in the face of her determination and this systematic approach.

Haji Nazir and the principal of the two-room Kiran School, who is today Senior Manager of the Foundation, helped Sabina identify the families which had suffered trauma and most needed help. "I had some rules," explains Sabina. "I would not take on anyone who used drugs, *ghutka* etc, I would only take the first-born children, although I made some exceptions. These may have sounded harsh but I had my reasons. I could not allow myself to fail with this first batch."

The children from that first batch are today studying on scholarships in the leading elite schools of Karachi like Nixor College, Indus Valley School, Sceptre College and Cedar College.

The transformational approach taken by Sabina aimed to see the Kiran children entering competitive elite schools within a span of two years. "I had given myself a huge challenge; the transformation of mother, father and child."



Climbing up the education ladder: Sabina with a graduating student.

The transformational approach taken by Sabina aimed to see the Kiran children entering competitive elite schools within a span of two years. "I had given myself a huge challenge; the transformation of mother, father and child."

The first mainstream school a Lyari child managed to get admission in, on merit, was St Michaels School. "The principal was very surprised when she met the parents of the child who were obviously from a different social class. She asked to meet me and I became the surrogate parent for that child in the school records." In fact, Sabina registered herself as surrogate parent for all the children of the first batch.

Today all children from the Kiran School regularly move on to O and A level schools or the Agha Khan Board schools of Karachi. But Kiran is still home to these

children who continue to spend their after-school hours here for support and recreation.

The Kiran Foundation has also adopted a government-run school of 700 children in Lyari. The same trauma-sensitive approach has been implemented here. "The school was earlier in the control of the gangs," recalls Sabina. "Some rooms were used as torture cells." Didn't Sabina herself face trouble from the notorious gangs of Lyari? "In the beginning I did," she recalls. "I did get some threats but I could not have started work here if

I didn't have protection from the locals. And later, the gangs stopped harassing me. They wanted their children to attend my schools as well."

Sabina was awarded the Sitara-e-Imtiaz for her ground-breaking work with the Kiran Foundation. What does this mean to her? "It gave me validation from people in the family, especially those who had earlier been a bit disapproving," says Sabina. "But for me personally, nothing compares to the loving messages I receive from mothers and children. That is my Sitara-e-Imtiaz."

An important task on the cards for Sabina is to put her unique programme at Kiran through academic research, so that it can be recognised as an approved educational system. "My daughter, who is a trained psychologist, has put my 10-year work into a structure," says Sabina. "But it needs a PhD thesis to be done on it and that requires funding."

Sabina is keenly aware of the need for the Kiran Foundation to run independently of her one day. "My successors will be my first batch," she smiles. "They have been bred with the idea that Kiran is theirs and they have to carry on the work."

Currently, the Kiran Foundation is conducting drives in the remote areas of Balochistan to distribute basic goods and set up thalassaemia camps. Sabina sees a powerful metaphor here. "I asked a boy who was receiving blood how he felt. He said 'I feel alive.' And that is what Kiran Foundation is for me. It's my lifeline." ■

MEDIAMATTERS

Changing Patterns



Brave New World

Narrative platforms emerge for new media as traditional broadcasting witnesses a decline



By Amir Jahangir

The writer is a strategic communications professional.



The media in Pakistan is in the throes of change. While the younger generation had already transitioned to new media, the over 30s are beginning to join the club. Traditional media, meanwhile, is on the back foot. Hardly anyone in their teens and twenties is consuming content on television in the urban and peri-urban societies in Pakistan. While Pakistan is yet to benefit from the demographic dividend of a younger population, media is one of the industries that have been hit hard by changing consumer preferences. Jobs are being lost with no roadmap for creating the “Jobs of Tomorrow.”

The media industry has already been transformed by several waves of digitalisation as Pakistan’s young generation is fast switching to digital forms of media. Consumption patterns are rapidly changing, and anyone who cannot keep pace is quickly becoming irrelevant.

A cursory look at the trends presented by Hootsuite can confirm these ac-

counts. When we compare the progress made in Internet services, consumption trends, social media numbers, and eCommerce numbers over the past 12 months, it makes for an interesting read.

2020 has been a tough year for business. However, things have progressed when it comes to Internet usage in Pakistan. People are switching from traditional media to digital media in great numbers. Pakistan’s massive youth population has created a demographic profile that is positive for Internet and mobile phone companies. Content is the only thing missing from the equation.

Pakistan’s Internet penetration stands currently at 35 percent. This may seem on the low side, but we have seen a jump of 17 percent between Jan 2019 and Jan 2020. Similarly, the usage of social media platforms has also increased by 7 percent (TU, Global Web Index, GSMA Intelligence and Eurostat, 2020). The good news is that there is room for further growth. With a lot of developed countries nearing saturation point, a country like Pakistan is still in its growth phase.

There are some really interesting numbers in the digital sphere. Statistically, things have improved when it comes to the speed of the internet in Pakistan. Year-

on-year change shows a growth of 18 percent (Ookla, 2020) in the average speed of fixed Internet connections.

It may not come as a surprise that in the year of working from home and less work overall, the share of web traffic by device has grown by 20 percent for mobiles, but it has dropped for laptops, computers, and tablets. This reflects in smartphone penetration numbers and a year-on-year growth of 27 percent (Statcounter, 2020). Perhaps the overall growth has slowed down due to government-imposed taxes but this is by no means an unimpressive number, especially in a year like 2020.

Social media users have also grown by 17 percent, with Facebook being by far the most used medium (Facebook’s Self-Service Advertising Tools). It is mostly accessed by a mobile device. Other platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat have also seen growth.

One thing that has been positively impacted by the situation of 2020 is eCommerce. Companies are now pushing their online sales more than ever. This reflects in the overall spend on online advertising, which stands at 13 percent. Specifically, social media ad spend has risen by 19 percent. There is a gap in the market, and many companies are competing to fill it.



New vs Old.

The largest rise in expense has been for fashion goods, furniture, and electronics. People are slowly starting to trust online services.

This opens up an opportunity for all kinds of businesses. Whether you are trying to sell a burger or a show, it is likely to be promoted in an online setting. Fast-moving companies will be able to benefit from this change. Agility would be the name of the game. If you can adapt to changing circumstances quickly, it would mean you can thrive.

While we see a lot of growth on Internet infrastructure, content still remains an issue for millennials and zoomers. The traditional way of storytelling is alien to the young and the restless, as shorter attention spans are typical of the younger audience that dominates Internet viewership. Microsoft research suggests the attention span for Internet content is less than eight seconds. This is the time that can either hook the viewer or motivate him to click on to something more exciting. The first eight seconds are crucial for digital storytelling, and ideal content is limited to duration of 10-15 minutes. This is something that the industry is not used to. Techniques of the past, meant for a larger screen, no longer

2020 has been a tough year for business. However, things have progressed when it comes to Internet usage in Pakistan.

work. The new generation is asking for fast paced and to the point content. Gone are the days of 50 minute talk shows, where the anchor's conversation with guests did not focus on a solution based approach, whereas good journalism can identify, debate and suggest solutions to problems faced by an ordinary citizen. These are the times of interactivity and engagement. If you are not engaging your audiences, you are becoming irrelevant.

Changing consumption patterns have given rise to a new set of media enterprises that are more focused on user experience and engagement through content rather than addressing a passive audience. Some new entrants in the sphere are Vidly, SeenPrime, Tapmad,

Goonj, Mjunoon, and RINSTRa etc.

What is much needed is the realisation that content exclusivity remains the key to success in this digitally augmented world. Some of these new entrants are simply trying to make apps that can download or stream content live. This is neither the demand nor the desire of the young lot. They want exclusivity, something different from what their parents watch every night. The viral videos on Facebook watch and YouTube shorts are more of an experience for sharing and more effective than epic film making techniques.

The norm has been adopted by RINSTRa, Pakistan's first digital platform for content creators and consumers. It is the first short-form storytelling platform, which gives users the experience of watching quality content, while also providing an opportunity to users to create their own channel and generate content side by side with the big names of the industry, while monetising their creativity from the platform viewership. The future of content is interactive, the storytelling needs to engage the viewer as part of the storytelling technique. This has to evolve around digital platforms and traditional television is likely to perish as all things good or bad come to an end after the demand side shifts to a newer technology.

RINSTRa's efforts to engage storytellers into active filmmaking is generating new genres of content. It has identified a new breed of content creators. They are not in the urban centres of Pakistan but in the suburbs and the peri-urban areas of Sindh, South Punjab and the remote terrains of GB, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. These young and talented people are dominating YouTube, Tiktok, Likee, Bigo live and Facebook live, earning in hundreds and thousands of dollars by engaging youth through their 2-3 minutes videos. This is a phenomenon that needs to be understood by media owners in Pakistan. The centre of power is shifting from the infrastructure driven ivory towers of media to more content-centric storytelling in Pakistan and beyond. The only way Pakistan can benefit from this shift is to embrace these young content creators and engage them in thematic storytelling with entrepreneurial support mechanisms, so they can tell their own stories rather than being held hostage to external content. ■



ACADEME

Changing Lives

Access to education brings about a paradigm shift through The Citizens Foundation route



By Asaad Ayub Ahmad

The writer is CEO & President of The Citizens Foundation.

In Pakistan, more than 22.8 million children between the ages of 5-16 have never stepped inside a school. In 1995, six friends in the sprawling metropolis of Karachi decided that this was an unacceptable status-quo. They pooled their resources and funded five professionally designed purpose-built schools in a few slums. And they decided not to stop there. Those five schools have gone on to ignite a movement across Pakistan, expanding to 1,652 school units in over 700 cities, towns, and villages. The Citizens Foundation (TCF), now one of South Asia's largest non-profits in formal schooling has been educating boys and girls from some of Pakistan's poorest, most neglected communities for 25 years. But it has done much more than building schools. It has become – along with the 266,000 children it has helped thrive – one of the most uplifting stories coming out of a country reduced to a global symbol of violence and despair.

The *Economist* describes TCF as, “perhaps the largest network of independently run schools in the world.” It also goes on to mention it as “Pakistan's largest single employer of women in the private sector.”

All the schools are located in slums and villages that lie forgotten in the cities, villages, and valleys of Sindh, Punjab, Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Azad Kashmir. All have given a new lease of hope to thousands of Pakistani families. TCF students have gone on to prestigious higher education institutions to study engineering, medicine, information technology, business, and vocational skills to help them carve out successful careers. They are often the first children in their families to ever go to school, and almost always the first to ever attend college, with help from a strong alumni college placement program. Many are also teaching their illiterate parents and siblings how to read, helped by a growing adult literacy programme run in some TCF schools after hours.

TCF graduate, Abdul Wahid, gives

an example of this sweeping movement of education. He is now a student of BS Physics on a scholarship at one of Pakistan's top universities, the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS). The son of a small farmer who tended his fields in a small village of Bhurawala, Punjab, Abdul Wahid grew up working hard on his father's farm while attending a TCF School in his village all along. Abdul Wahid says, “I remember it was just seven or eight of us who joined TCF initially...it amazes me to think now how much things have changed. Now, mostly all the boys and girls in our village are going to school! I am the very first



Son of a small farmer, TCF graduate Abdul Wahid is now a Physics student at LUMS.

person in my village to reach university. I am treated with so much respect and admiration; people want to know what it's like being in a university.”

Amjad is a rickshaw driver in Karachi who drives along the winding roads of the city, looking for passengers all day, barely making ends meet. While Amjad strives to make a living wage, his daughters, on the other hand have begun to follow their dreams, carving their own paths to a better future. After studying at TCF Schools, three of Amjad's daughters are pursuing their tertiary education in some of the best institutions of the country. The eldest one, Amina, is enrolled in the Pharmacy Programme at the Dow University of Health Sciences; second in



line, Armina, is studying in the Business Administration programme at the Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science and Technology (SZABIST), while the third one, Muskan made it to Institute of Business Administration (IBA), another premier institute of the country, to study Computer Science.

The younger three include Mansha who studies at the TCF College, while Jaweria and Alisha still attend their TCF School as first and eighth graders respectively.

About half of the students at TCF schools are girls, most being the first young women in their communities to step inside a school. Many have gone on to become educators in their own schools. In its quest to welcome more girls, TCF employs an all-female faculty of close to 13,000. These teachers are provided full transport to ensure safe passage to schools located in barely accessible areas. Every teacher undergoes intense pre-service and in-service training at TCF's teacher training centres. Its education ex-

Those five schools have gone on to ignite a movement across Pakistan, expanding to 1,652 school units in over 700 cities, towns, and villages.

perts design a new, high standard curriculum to supplement the curriculum mandated by the government. The teaching approach is child-centred, and reflects strong social and moral values, with universal principles of tolerance, peace and love.

For example, in a TCF school in Daharki, a small city in the Sindh province, the principals and teachers made a concerted effort to deal with dis-

crimination against the children of the town's sizeable Hindu community. The Muslim children, carrying over values taught at home, would refuse to sit with or share water with the Hindu children. The Daharki teachers overcame this discriminatory behaviour through continued, gentle instruction in and outside the classrooms, and soon, the children were able to shun the prejudices taught at home and began to freely mix with each other in the school's open and loving environment.

Many Pakistani parents have never looked beyond making ends meet. By simply enrolling their children in school, they are already breaking the mould. Convincing them to take that first step is often challenging, especially when children help a family earn its living, but TCF school principals do it every day. Every new school is a product of a comprehensive needs analysis and hard-won community buy-in. It is no wonder that these schools are considered as safe zones and havens by parents and children alike, rather than a threat to their traditional values.

TCF students' dreams, big and small – of helping their communities, exploring the world, soaring in the skies, or just taking up a profession nobody else in their family ever has before – all tell of a remarkable journey made possible by the power of education. From teachers who travel up to three hours a day to teach in some of the most remote villages in Pakistan, to principals who persuade conservative parents to send their daughters to school, to volunteers across the world who tirelessly raise funds, the story of TCF is one of changing paradigms. It shows that change is not only possible in Pakistan; it is already on its way. ■



All of Muskan's six daughters are enrolled in or graduates of TCF schools, where half of the students are girls.

BOOKSTORE

The Rise of the Dragon

Ali Mahmood traces the genesis of China's phenomenal success

By Amir Zia

We Pakistanis mostly see our country's greatest friend and strategic partner, in China, through the lens of propagandist Western media, thinktanks, and writers. It is somewhat ironic that despite our close ties, in Pakistan, very little original work on China's history and political system is produced or analysis done on its rapid rise on the world stage as the second largest economic power that is all set to first catch up with and then outpace the United States.

Ali Mahmood, a prominent Pakistani businessman, politician of yesteryears, and author, attempts to understand the Chinese marvel through his book, *Enter the Dragon: The Story of the China Miracle*, published in January 2021.

This is Ali Mahmood's third book, following *Saints and Sinners* (2013), and *Muslims* (2017). And like his previous works, *Enter the Dragon* too, is based on in-depth research and written in his typical, easy-to-read, breezy style, like a dramatic novel.

As the book gives a fast-paced account of Chinese history, the reader meets revolutionary icons – from Mao Zedong to Deng Xiaoping – and the new breed of leaders of post-revolutionary days – from Hu Jintao to Xi Jinping. One also gets a glimpse of Chinese entrepreneurs and businesspeople, whose numbers are rapidly increasing in the world's billionaire club.

Painting sketches of real-life people – showing their strengths and weaknesses, achievements and failures, wisdom and follies, is one of the skills Ali Mahmood exercises when writing, which he has also demonstrated in *Enter the Dragon*, just like his previous works.

The book, divided into 18 chapters, narrates Chinese history through gripping anecdotes and characterisation of larger than life personalities, as it offers both the bird's eye view, and at times, the worm's view of landmark events.

From the "Century of Humiliation to a miracle economy," how did China achieve its mega-growth in less than 100 years? What role did its remarkable leaders play in this transformation? Why did their experiments to consolidate the revolution and make it more pro-people, at times, fall short of the target, and that too, at a great human cost? What lessons were learnt and how was sustained, rapid economic growth achieved?

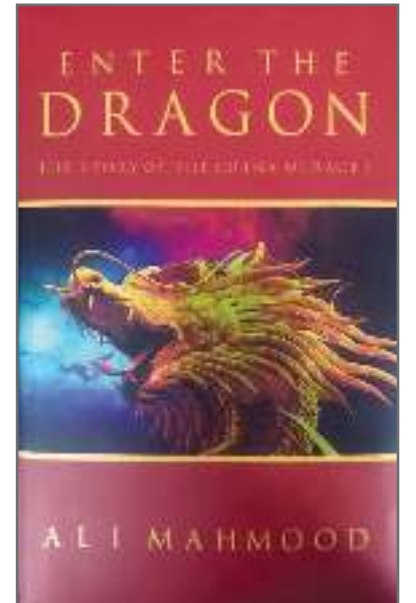
Enter the Dragon attempts to answer these complex questions in broad strokes, as it also highlights China's continued struggle against corruption and crime, introduces Chinese princelings, billionaires, and the party, highlights mega projects and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and discusses its foreign relations, especially the ongoing 'war' with the United States.

According to Ali Mahmood, "by combining the romantic vision of the idealistic guerrilla fighter, Mao, with the pragmatism of the determined reformer, Deng, the People's Republic of China was created, strengthened, and steered through problems and difficulties."

The book starts with a brief history of the creation of unified China in 221 BC, when Emperor Qin Shi Huangdi put an end to the period of "Warring States by conquering the six kingdoms ... with his sheer force and ruthlessness." His tactics may appear cruel, but his "efficient dictatorship created exceptional infrastructure and development and capped it with his most famous construction project, the Great Wall of China."

Fast forwarding the landmark events of ancient China, the author takes the reader straight to the 19th Century, remembered more as the "Century of Humiliation," when the Europeans had established their hegemony, and an insulting signboard in a Shanghai park read, "No dogs or Chinese allowed."

Even after the First World War, Imperial Japan occupied China's Shandong province, sparking protests among Chinese students and intellectuals, giving birth to modern Chinese nationalism, which carried the seeds of the



Enter the Dragon

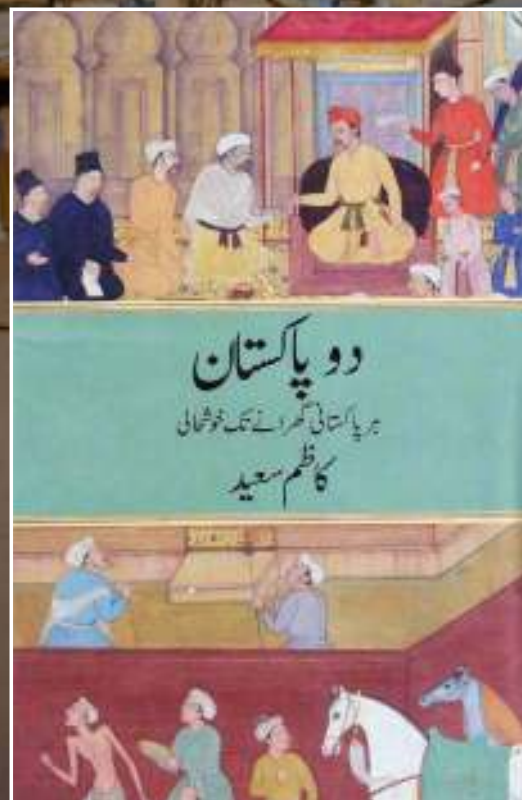
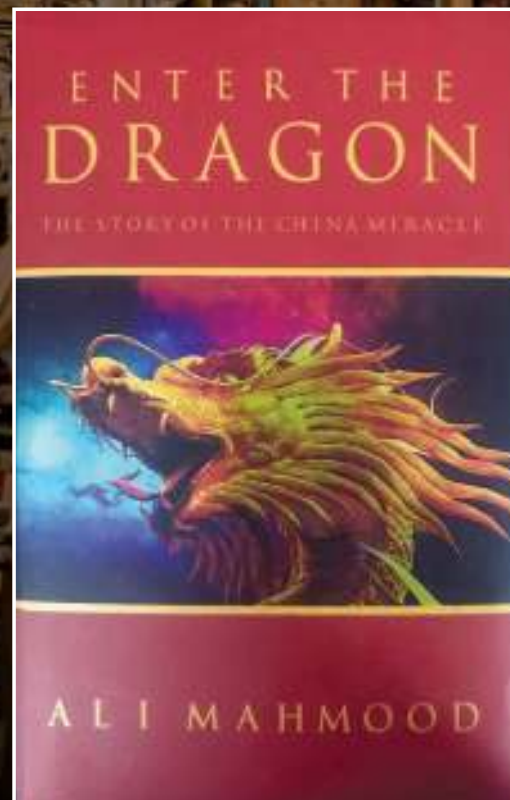
Author: Ali Mahmood
Publisher: Saphire Books
Pages: 364
Price: Not mentioned

Communist Revolution.

But the road to revolution is never straight, nor is it black-and-white. It is a complex, multi-pronged struggle fought on many fronts. On one hand, if the battle lines are drawn against the ruling classes, their allies as well as foreign powers and their collaborators, then on the other, there is always a bitter and sometimes even bloody inner-party struggle among comrades-in-arms on strategy and tactics. The Chinese revolutionary struggle also passed through this murky phase and uncertain times in which Mao Zedong emerged as the supreme leader of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

This phase is incisively summed up by the writer, detailing how the legendary "Long March," started as a "desperate retreat" but proved "a prelude to victory," decisively establishing Mao's leadership.

"The Long March" is a story of courage, sacrifice, hope, endurance, and determination through indescribable hardship. Of the 85,000 soldiers who started the





Mao (right) with his most trusted comrade Zhou Enlai (left), during the early days of the CCP.

march, 8,000 survivors arrived at their destination a year later."

In a fast paced, gripping way, the author narrates in condensed form the bloody post-Long March struggle that brought Mao to power, defeating both the Japanese occupation forces and the Chinese nationalists led by Chiang Kai-shek. Then, Ali Mahmood immediately moves to the triumphs and tribulations of Mao during his days of absolute power. "Worshipped as a demigod for having achieved the impossible, he (Mao) inspired the belief that the future held no limits."

Yet, difficulties for the newly created People's Republic of China were immense. "The people were poor, the industry in shambles and the nation bankrupt... The US was committed to Chiang Kai-Shek... Russia meant Stalin, and Stalin was a difficult man to deal with," the book says.



Against this backdrop, Mao and his struggle-hardened team set to work to rebuild and change China. But soon Mao had to make the difficult decision of joining the Korean War, which meant taking on the United States, the new superpower of that time. The decision was taken despite the fact that the Soviet Union had backtracked from its promise of providing air-cover to communists. Chinese involvement in the Korean War brought the American troops to a standstill, "but the cost of war both during and after was too high."

"Close to half a million Chinese soldiers were killed... including the young son of Mao."

China had to face crippling US sanctions which hampered its growth for the next 20 years, "but Mao and China's reputation had been established the world over," says the book.

On the home front, Mao launched a drive against landlords, redistributing their lands among farmers, and taking on the counter-revolutionaries. These cam-

"China's support was unconditional, unlike the USA, whose interference had led to the saying in the developing world, 'Be careful, or America will punish you with democracy.'"

paigns resulted in over 1.7 million deaths.

Being a "people's man," Mao hated elitism. "To bring them (party members, officials) to heel," Mao launched "anti-corruption, anti-waste, anti-bureaucracy" campaigns.

The author gives details of the sweeping measures Mao undertook to reform, change, develop, and modernise China on every front; fighting the class enemies, holding his party comrades accountable for indulging in corruption, and creating a new culture which "demonised the enemies of the party and praised the new socialist regime."

In the fascinating account of Mao's era, the Chinese leader emerges as a romantic revolutionary, committed to his ideals and ideology, and love for his people. In a short span, "Mao had unified China, created an impressive rate of growth, restructured the education system, improved living standards, and fought the United States... to a standstill in Korea."

"But success on so many fronts in the face of so many problems, intoxicated Mao who had never seen defeat over three decades and had yet to learn that pride comes before a fall," the author wrote, explaining Mao's dilemma.

"The Great Leap Forward was a campaign to accelerate growth... and overtake Great Britain in 15 years," but it proved "Mao's greatest miscalculation and his most tragic mistake leading to death by starvation of up to 30 million Chinese." Recognising the disaster, Mao stepped aside in 1962, only to bounce back four years later through the Cultural Revolution, which started in 1966 and continued almost till his death in 1976. Unlike most western writers, who demonise Mao for the Cultural Revolution, Ali Mahmood gives a different take, highlighting why it was launched and discussing both its positives and the unintended negative consequences.

"Mao believed in equality and was disturbed by the party bureaucratic elite who ruled rather than served the people. The Cultural Revolution attacked this corrupt tendency across China to abuse power for personal advantage: it gave people a sense that they were equal, not inferior, to the privileged," the author writes.

Moreover, the author also states that "elitism was replaced by equal opportunity, practical education replaced mere theory and rural education grew. The

obstacles to mass education were erased as costs and duration were reduced... Educational reforms were ideological (red), practical (vocational) and aimed at the masses (rural)."

Therefore, the writer is shedding light on Deng's economic miracle as being made possible only because of the foundations laid down by Mao.

Deng was Mao's companion during the struggle and they had been roommates. Deng was close to Mao, yet he also suffered at his hands. He was purged in 1966, yet Mao did not allow any extreme steps against Deng and finally called him back to Beijing in February 1973.

From there on, Deng "understood the importance of staying on the right side of Mao while pushing forward with his policies and the handling of administration." Deng had three battles to fight. "First the difficult job of running a government in crisis, second the infighting in the court of an ailing Mao close to death, and, last but not the least, his handling of a moody and mercurial leader." And Deng emerged victorious on all three fronts, becoming the new strongman of China after Mao.

Ali Mahmood (author) sums up Deng's strategy and his key to success in his typical one-liner. "Deng had shown his resolve - economic reforms yes, democracy no."

The writer says, "He (Deng) replaced ideology with the economics of capitalism with socialist characteristics. He had done more for his nation and his people than any other world leader of the 20th century."

Deng's successors, from Jian Zemin to Hu Jintao and then Xi Jinping, kept the economic reform process going, attracting foreign investment and transforming China into an economic power house, expanding its economic growth at a breathtaking pace of an average 9 percent since 1978, maintained for over 40 years.

Furthermore, the author explains that China's rise has been peaceful. Deng had advised, "Lie low and bide your time." But by the time Xi Jinping assumed power, China had practically eradicated extreme poverty and with its new trade surpluses and growing wealth, it started to look like a competitor to the United States, which ironically helped its rise.

"Xi also wanted the world to see that China had become strong. China already had a strong economy and a stable government. Now Xi focused on creating a strong

army capable of combat; this meant less troops but more technology," the author comments.

Highlighting the contrast between the Chinese and US approach, Ali Mahmood writes that China's military budgets remained far below America's, but China needed its army only for defence.

"China wanted to dominate the world through trade and its economy; America wanted to control the world through its army rather than through negotiations and common interest."

In this context, Xi's One Belt, One Road initiative emerges as the greatest infrastructure programme in human history, benefiting not just China, but many Asian, African, and European countries.

"Whereas America, in the twentieth

of their citizens for the better.

The chapters on China's long struggle against corruption and crime, the influence and clout of descendants of the Long March heroes, described as princelings, and on Chinese billionaires help the reader to understand China, its society, its work ethics and world view better.

The chapter on the CCP's - which grooms and develops leaders on merit - might, working an all-encompassing control over the country, is not just an interesting read but also shows third world countries that western democracy is not the only path to development and modernisation.

According to Ali Mahmood, "many poor countries tried democracy, but it did not make them rich because it was not de-



Under Deng Xiaoping (left) China bided its time, under Xi Jinping (right) its time is now.

century, had provided millions of dollars, China, in the twenty-first century, provided billions. And China's support was unconditional, unlike the USA, whose interference had led to the saying in the developing world, 'Be careful, or America will punish you with democracy.'"

The book rightly pointed out that America's posture as the champion of democracy remains "hypocritical and opportunistic," offering an objective comparison between policies of China and the United States.

One of the nuggets in the book says that "the US economy relied on debt-based over-consumption; China's economy on debt-based over-investment."

The book gives an insight into China's growing stakes in Africa and the Middle East and into how Chinese money and technology are helping many developing nations to modernise and change the lives

mocracy but military strength that created the wealth of the West," through the loot and plunder of colonies.

"Later (it) allowed the US to impose a dollar hegemony... in which the countries of the world produced goods to sell to America, and America produced dollars to buy the goods."

The book celebrates the success story of China by highlighting some of its grand mega projects, which are the biggest in the world, including the South-North Water Transfer Project, the Three Gorges Dam, and the High-Speed Rail Network.

From the perspective of Pakistani readers, *Enter the Dragon* is indeed a rare and valuable addition to the small number of such works written by Pakistani scholars and writers. For anyone interested in understanding China and its miraculous existence, Ali Mahmood's work offers a one-book solution. ■

A Tale of Two Pakistans

Offering takeaways from success stories around the world, Kazim Saeed offers a solution to bridging the wide gap between the two Pakistans



By Munazza Siddiqui

The writer is a senior journalist.



Dou Pakistan
Author: Kazim Saeed
Publisher: Maktaba-e-Danyal
Pakistan Publishing House
Pages: 621
Price: Rs. 895

Almost 80 percent of the people of Pakistan do not have the means to provide a better future for their children. It's a luxury that can be afforded by only about 15-20 percent of Pakistanis. This unfortunate situation exists because the economic objectives of the 21st century cannot be achieved by holding onto the development paradigms of our Mughal past.

Based on this premise, Kazim Saeed's *Dou Pakistan: Har Pakistani gharane tak khushali* (*Two Pakistans: providing prosperity to every Pakistani household*) clearly identifies the direction the country needs to take and the targets it must set for itself in order to ensure prosperity to every household by 2047.

The theme of this 600-page book may seem ambitious to some, but it is doable. The simple manner in which the topics have been broken down makes it an easy read, even for those with no background in economics. The topics are laterally compartmentalised, with each one flowing into the other so that the thread of one's thoughts and understanding is not lost. Very few experts have attempted to broach such a comprehensive subject in Urdu, which makes it worth reading all the more.

Upon returning to Pakistan after having spent many years working on economic development abroad, Kazim Saeed found many young Pakistanis asking him basic questions about economic development and poverty eradication. As a practitioner in this field, he knew how many non-western countries had already achieved these goals over the last few decades. The answers were already out there but Kazim Saeed felt that those answers needed to be presented to Pakistanis in the context of their own realities and in a way that was easy for them to comprehend.

Dou Pakistan takes the reader back and forth between the Mughal era and present-day Pakistan, making it easier to understand the basis of our economic



woes.

From one off-the-beaten-track village in Sindh to another in Balochistan all the way up to Gilgit Baltistan, every poor family has the same story and holds the same belief that only the rich get richer, while poverty is written into the fate of the poor the day they are born. *Dou Pakistan* defies this very belief, writes Kazim Saeed.

Following several decades of diverse research, the author has identified and shortlisted four elements that play a pivotal role in improving the chances of generational prosperity in Pakistan: inherited wealth, quality education, permanent, dependable means of income and access to influential people. Unfortunately, without these four elements in place, our economic structure alone is not equipped to help people change their fate.

Employing his impressive background as an economist and his keen in-

terest in Mughal history, the writer draws parallels in terms of persistent economic disparity between the Mughal era and present-day Pakistan. The walls of the Mughal forts also served as economic barriers for those wanting to change their lives. Now, like then, a relatively easier way to scale the wall is to acquire a government job or join the armed forces.

Poverty alleviation and equitable development were never a priority in Mughal society, and even though these goals are quite achievable today, Pakistan lags behind because our society and economy continue to be structured along Mughal lines. *Dou Pakistan* discusses how countries outside Europe and the US, like China, Malaysia, Brazil, South Korea and Turkey, have successfully tackled poverty. But Pakistan has not. There are still two Pakistans, one that prospers inside the fort wall and the other that struggles to survive outside.

In an attempt to understand and address generational poverty, the harsh reality of hunger is mostly ignored, even though it is the basis of the very concept of poverty. Everyone understands hunger but perpetual hunger is a condition that is hereditary and a difficult cycle to break even today. *Dou Pakistan* deals with this issue not only through statistics but also in terms of how it an impediment to our evolutionary growth. Every ninth person in this world suffers from perpetual hunger. The relevance of this book comes from the fact that the centre of perpetual hunger today is not Africa but South Asia, which is home to one-third of the world's hungry: some 20 crores in India, 4 crores in Pakistan and 2.5 crores in Bangladesh.

The crux of the issue has been heart-breakingly summed up by the people of Mirpur Khas, also known as 'the City of Mangoes': "The rich-poor disparity is such that for days we go without food; it first forces us to become thieves or defaulters and finally criminals." Citing hunger-alleviation strategies adopted by countries like Brazil, China and Turkey, *Dou Pakistan* provides case studies of how this cycle of hunger, illness, mental and physical growth, illiteracy and malnourished births can be broken.

Population is another sector that reflects two deeply entrenched Pakistans. Today, 270 children are born to 100 women in the top 20 percent of families, which is quite at par with the well-off classes in

developed East Asia. But in the remaining 80 percent of families in Pakistan, 100 women give birth to 420 children, comparable only to the most under-developed regions of Africa. Pakistan has so far failed to get a grip on population complexities, may that be an honest census or the golden ratio of population and a healthy work force. The book looks into successful examples of other Muslim countries like Indonesia, Iran and Bangladesh, and the impact of fertility rates on the distribution of resources.

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The modern world's first social security system was established by German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck in 1883. He was in no way a socialist or communist. In fact, Bismarck was a conservative leader and his sole purpose behind the provision of social security was to make German manpower the most effective in Europe. Against this backdrop, the section on human resource deals with how prosperity in the 21st century will depend on technology based on modern sciences and not traditional productivity. In the fast-changing economics of the 21st century, illiteracy will prove to be more than a disability. And without social security measures in place, Pakistan will lose out on human capital.

The most effective way to ensure prosperity is through higher education. In Pakistan just six percent get that chance. Our focus on literacy more than

education continues to be a reflection of Mughal priorities. Establishing equal-opportunity education is possible. Despite similar complexities and hurdles, several contemporary countries have achieved universal education. The book takes a deep dive into how these impressive targets were achieved.

Mughal Emperor Shahjahan's beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal gave birth to 14 children, of which only seven survived. The rest died by age five. Most mothers in 21st century Pakistan undergo similar pain. The problem is, unlike the education sector, there's no authentic method to gauge the annual performance of the health sector. Things which cannot be measured cannot be effectively improved. That's the way of the world and it's one of the biggest hindrances in evaluating the resources required to provide quality healthcare services to those living outside the wall. The ninth edict of Emperor Jahangir was about the establishment of royal hospitals in big cities run on royal revenue. *Dou Pakistan* discusses how the country's traditional health system is still run along the same lines, with no facility for the poor living in rural areas and compromised healthcare in urban centres due to lack of resources.

In identifying and highlighting the solutions to bringing down the wall that divides Pakistan, this book acknowledges the work of world-renowned social scientist Akhter Hameed Khan, who advocated community participation in rural development. He was inspired by the three principles of Friedrich Wilhelm Raiffeisen, the German pioneer of co-operatives. Akhter Hameed Khan believed that organisation, making assets via savings and promotion of skills were absolutely necessary for the growth of the poorest. He proved the effectiveness of these principles through his Comilla Model. Strategies based on these principles have been successfully implemented in countries like Japan, Taiwan, Israel, The Philippines and South Korea.

Unlike the Mughal times, economic strength today is derived from productivity, not tax generation. *Dou Pakistan* explains in detail the means to achieve prosperity in this time and age, and offers takeaways from success stories from around the world. After all, the strategy to become a champion must be learnt from a champion, says Kazim Saeed. ■

Health in Jeopardy

Urgent steps need to be taken to address the acute shortage of medical practitioners in the country



By Dr. S. M. Qaisar Sajjad

The writer is the Secretary-General of Pakistan Medical Association (Centre).



the country – I am forced to highlight the impact of the open merit admission policy in medical colleges on the country's healthcare system.

More than two decades ago, our honourable Supreme Court decided that there should be no discrimination in admissions on the basis of gender. The decision was taken in line with our Constitution and in keeping with the spirit of the modern age, but it had unintended consequences.

As our girls, by the grace of Almighty Allah, are more focused, hard-working, and responsible, they get far better grades and marks in the examinations – as evident from the Matric, Intermediate and,

O- and A-level results. Therefore, they get the lion's share when it comes to admission in medical colleges where, 80 to 90 percent of seats are occupied by girls.

I am, in no way suggesting, that girls should be punished for securing higher marks and denied admission or be subject to a separate and tougher yardstick. Yet, there is a dilemma facing us.

Why? Because 60 to 65 percent of girls graduating from medical colleges, do not continue professional practice and simply drop out once they get married. Many of those remaining, work only part-time and that too, mostly in larger cities. Many refuse to see male patients. Very few would be willing to work in backward areas even in the large cities, let alone to go and serve in rural areas. On this front, however, male doctors have the same position.

Why do these bright young women, who devote five years of their lives to earn the MBBS degree through a gruelling routine, not practice medicine? Is it their own choice or are they being forced out of the ring?

In the majority of cases, it is someone else's decision that pushes female doctors out of the profession. Their husbands, in-laws and immediate family members do not want them to practice medicine. In our society, even many educated families who are considered modern, and enlightened, do not want their girls to be coming

The country's healthcare system faces multiple problems, most pressing among which is the shortage of doctors to care for a burgeoning population.

While there are various factors at play in this situation, observers have pointed out that the gender balance in medical schools, which is heavily tilted in favour of females, has a major role to play.

Who can argue against providing equal educational opportunities to women in Pakistan? Who can advocate that a boy getting low marks in examinations should get admission to a prestigious medical college just because he is a boy, and a girl securing higher numbers be denied admission because of her gender?

In the third decade of the 21st Century even raising this question appears absurd, illogical, and discriminatory. Yet, as a practicing doctor and an office bearer of the Pakistan Medical Association – the main representative body of all doctors in

There is a dichotomy in our society. On principle, girls and boys should and must be treated equally but when we do this in practice, most graduating doctors will not be in active practice.

Your Life & Health

Forced Out of the Profession



Female medical students outnumber the boys.

and going at odd hours, working on night shifts and examining male patients.

So there is a dichotomy in our society. On principle, girls and boys should and must be treated equally but when we do this in practice, most graduating doctors will not be in active practice. As the years roll by, the availability of doctors is decreasing, although the state spends vast sums to educate a doctor.

While re-introducing the policy of giving more seats to boys will be a controversial and regressive step, and is inadvisable, one way out of this problem would be establishing a few 'all-boys medical colleges.' This will help increase the number of male doctors in the country.

Coming back to the issue of growing shortage of doctors, another factor contributing to this problem is that at least 20 to 30 percent of our male doctors go abroad for higher studies, and most of them prefer to work abroad after specialising and getting higher degrees.

Policymakers should think on a war footing, not just about how to stop this brain drain, but also how to bring these doctors back to serve the country by offering monetary incentives and better working conditions. However, this is easier said than done, given dismal fund allocations for the healthcare system.

One more factor, and an important one behind the growing dearth of doctors is the lack of interest of many of our male students in the medical profession. Medical education is now no more con-

60 to 65 percent of girls graduating from medical colleges, do not continue professional practice and simply drop out once they get married. Many of those remaining, work only part-time and that too, mostly in larger cities. Many refuse to see male patients.

sidered as attractive as it once used to be when I was young. The reasons for this are multiple; firstly, young doctors are forced to work on paltry wages in the initial years of their service. Then, working conditions, especially in our government-run hospitals are mostly awful. Thirdly, there is now an element of danger attached to the profession, amidst growing incidents of violence against doctors and scuffles with relatives, families and friends of patients. Therefore, bright male students prefer to

go for other lucrative professions, including Business Administration, Information Technology, Law, and Accounting.

We also have to keep in mind that the standards of medical education are not what they once used to be. With the opening up of one private medical college after another, there is also an acute shortage of professors in many fields. The flaw in our medical education system and its commercialisation, are responsible for churning out poor quality doctors, many of whom are a threat to the patient's life.

The government has also contributed to the crisis in the system by its confused and damaging policy regarding the regulatory body that kept an eye on standards of medical education.

A new body – Pakistan Medical Commission (PMC) – has been formed, while the old regulatory organisation – Pakistan Medical & Dental Council (PMDC) – has been abolished. This move will further damage medical education in the country.

The concept of an entry test for medical colleges has also failed to bring about a positive change, therefore we suggest that the government should focus on improving the pre-medical education and examination system.

PMC's move of introducing the compulsory National Licensing Exam (NLE) for young doctors after graduation displays the lack of trust regulators have in the current standard of medical education. Under this new and controversial system, young doctors will have to pass the NLE before obtaining a license to practice independently. Another problem with this decision is the expected mushroom growth of coaching centres in the country. In the name of preparing students for the exit-exams, the coaching centres will charge hefty fees from already over-burdened parents.

As a professional and Secretary-General of the PMA, I see a crisis-like situation building fast in our country, as the ever-growing number of patients outstrips the number of new doctors entering the field. The government must review the situation in a holistic manner and act fast. I do not see the woes of medical education and the dearth of doctors anywhere on the agenda of our federal and provincial governments. There is a gathering storm, but our Neros continue to play the fiddle. ■

PTI Treading Water

Does the PTI government appear to be getting back on track during the second-half of its five-year term?



Orya Maqbool Jan
Senior Journalist & Analyst

For now, the PTI government is undergoing a period of self-assessment. After the Senate elections, we will get to determine whether it is back on course.

At present, PTI's thin majority in the Senate makes it ill-equipped to perform optimally, as acquiring a hold on the Upper House is indispensable to running the government competently. However, even if the ruling PTI garners a large enough Senate majority, it may still become a hostage of traditional politics and get blackmailed by coalition parties; the incumbent government's real test will kick off then.

The PTI was unable to deliver during the first half of its five-year term, maybe because its ministers were flabbergasted by their predecessors' policies.

Former prime minister Nawaz Sharif focused on trade-oriented policies during his tenure, while Premier Imran Khan is encouraging increased production and industrialisation by banking on the textile and construction sectors. This approach is undeniably reaping better outcomes. Meanwhile, the fast-paced process of accountability also appears to be effective. It can be concluded that the PTI is warming up to get back on track.

Former prime minister Nawaz Sharif focused on trade-oriented policies during his tenure, while Premier Imran Khan is encouraging increased production and industrialisation by banking on the textile and construction sectors. This approach is undeniably reaping better outcomes. Meanwhile, the fast-paced process of accountability also appears to be effective. It can be concluded that the PTI is warming up to get back on track.



Huma Baqai
Scholar & Analyst

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government is getting over hurdles, and it has certainly gotten over the worst. Inarguably, in December last year, the advent of the opposition's Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) severely challenged the ruling PTI and did make them nervous. However, now the 11-party alliance appears to be dissipating.

All parties in the PDM miserably failed to mobilise the masses – the PML-N didn't have any strong counter-narrative to corruption allegations and the ANP had a lacklustre showing in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Nevertheless, the PPP played its cards shrewdly and gave a real pushback to the PTI. With its far-seeing strategies, the Sindh government successfully barred the PTI government from making inroads in Karachi.

Despite many failed bids of the PDM to hinder Senate polls, the PTI is on its way to clinch the parliamentary majority. With the deep state's support, PTI is growing politically potent and will continue to do so during its remaining term.

Nonetheless, on the economic front, the PTI seems to be going a bit off track with unabated food inflation and a consistent hike in petroleum prices. The federal government did take a few cosmetic measures to cushion the economy during the COVID-19 crisis. Most of them were politically unpopular decisions, but they unquestionably worked in the country's favour. The macroeconomic indicators show positive outcomes, but sadly, they don't translate into relief for the public. Thus, the government needs to deliver immediately on the microeconomic level.

Indeed, the PTI government passed the tests of COVID-19 and PDM with flying colours, but a monumental challenge of good governance and delivery still awaits them.



Mazhar Abbas
Senior Journalist & Analyst

The question in front of us implies that the PTI government was not on track in the first half of its term.

Fundamentally, the issue with Imran Khan's government is the series of promises he made to the people. The PTI consistently claimed to have done all its

homework before taking up the reins of governance. Consequently, the masses nurtured high expectations.

Nevertheless, among all the hype of bringing reforms and giving relief to the masses, the PTI failed to keep its promises. During the first half of its tenure, the masses readily allowed the government more time to deliver, and now during the second half, their hopes are flickering and the PTI's underperformance in almost all sectors could not be more conspicuous.

In the second half of its term, the only area where the PTI sprang into a bit of action was Civil Reforms. Though the reforms seem good on paper so far, their execution will require at least two and a half years. This initiative may provide a straw of respite for the drowning public to clutch, as it sinks into the sea of unfulfilled promises.

Imran Khan's politics orbits around accountability, but the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has itself become controversial, as it targets only opposition leaders. The government must bring structural reforms to NAB, or else this tainted accountability process will severely cripple the PTI's own politics.

If PM Khan does not provide significant relief to the masses in the times ahead, he will certainly be doomed. The only way he can earn the public's trust is by delivering at least half of the promised reforms.



Shaheen Sehba
Senior Journalist & Analyst

Wobbling and stumbling, Prime Minister Imran Khan has crossed the halfway mark of his term only because he has been doubly lucky.

Firstly, his opposition is fragmented and nothing but a deceitful house of cards in which 11 political parties pull the applecart in 11 different directions. Secondly, the ragtag alliance, hustled together on a false premise, was wrong

in assuming that Khan and his establishment backers would crumble.

Khan, who claims he is a fighter, did not surrender; the economy did not collapse altogether; his COVID-19 policy was a winner, and his political handling was too smart for the rattled opposition. He survived the crises and has arrived at a point where he can find himself gaining political and economic momentum.

After the Senate polls, when he expects to increase his parliamentary strength, Khan is ready to sweep the local bodies polls as he plans to offer a series of very lucrative political incentives – typical gifts like development funds, cash relief packages for all and seat adjustments with even disliked coalition partners.

He may then look like a compromised Khan, doing the same old unprincipled politics of the past, but in the maze he finds himself in, he has to climb down from his high moral pedestal for a while and develop enough muscle to impose his own political agenda and go for accountability across the board.

This very rosy scenario for the second half of his term is achievable, as he remains the only political option for the establishment, at least so far, as it faces multiple regional, international, and geostrategic challenges.

It is no time for a change of horses, and there does not appear to be another option as the others are widely discredited and running helter-skelter to salvage their money and political fortunes.