

Anti-Orthodox-Muslim Campaign in Pakistan and Afghanistan

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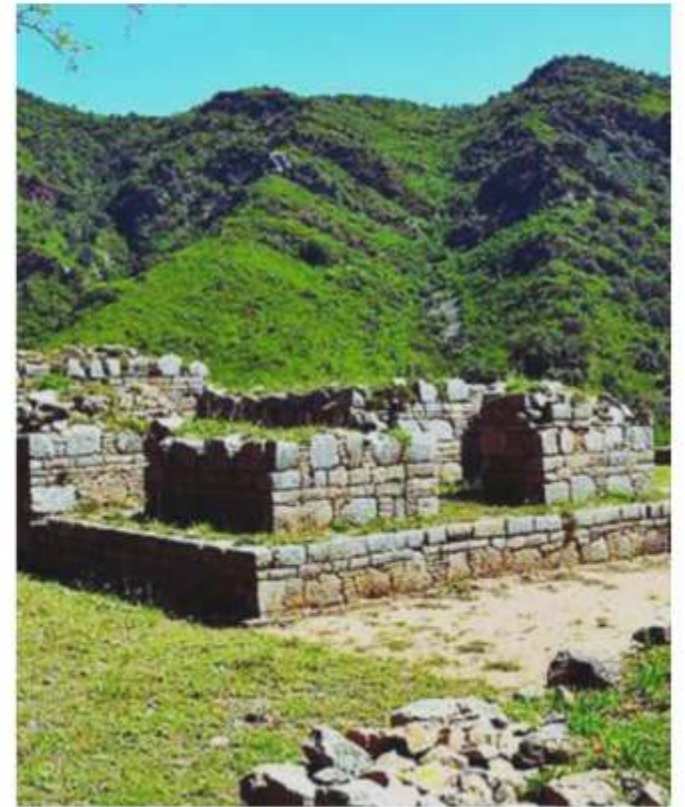
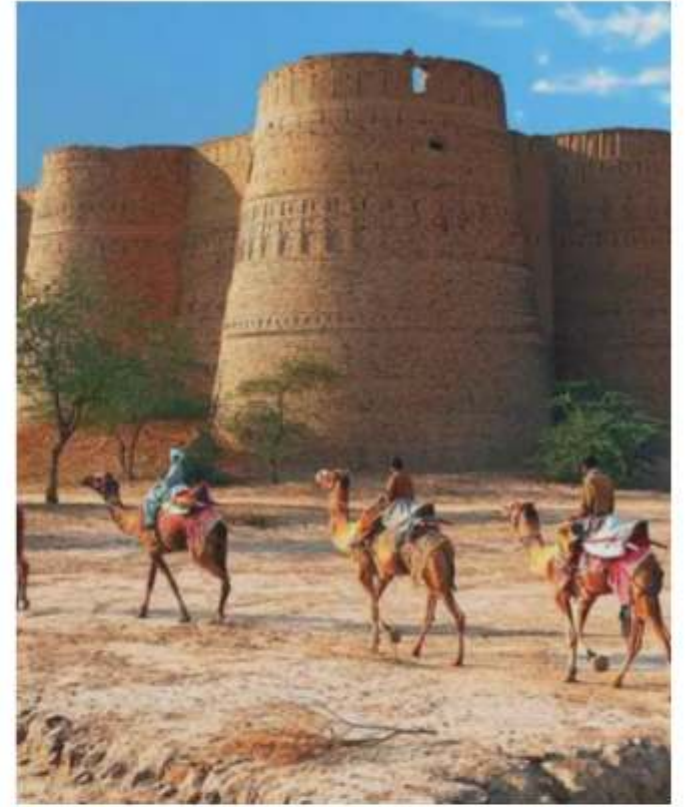
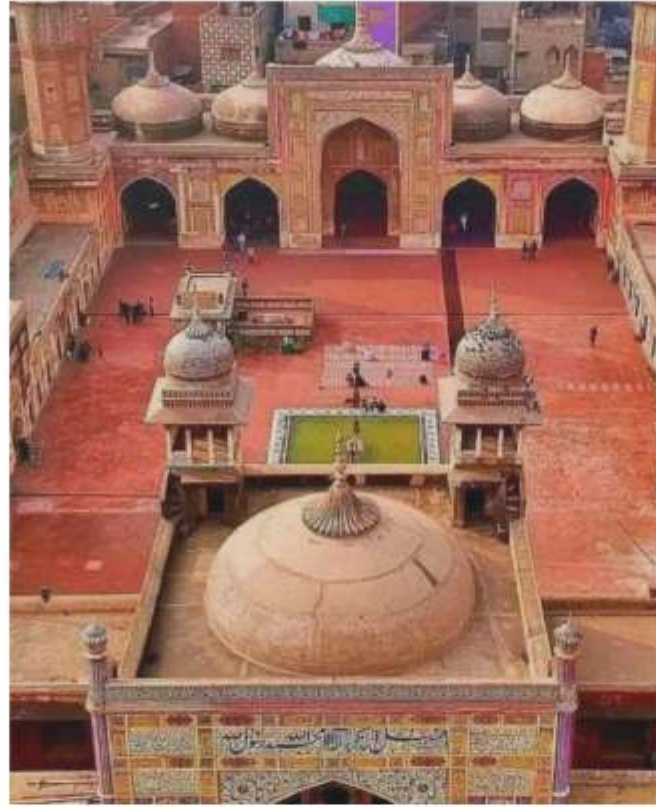


Afghanistan getting hot again - US unfolds Afghan strategy

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All You need to Know about Historical places of Pakistan



THE ORIENT NEWS

Message from Patron-in-Chief “The Orient News”

“The Orient News” was founded in 2017, aimed to seek out groundbreaking research in global policymaking and expand the horizons in terms of both content and implementation. TON being a new institute and digital paper in terms of research is focused on enforcing accountability standards through rule of law. We do research that is beyond constructed realities that does not push the dominant viewpoints in global policy research. We hope to diversify the scope of research by including global governance and foreign policy.

Global risks and foreign policies are rapidly changing and there is increasing demand of strategic and public policy. We believe that there is need to strive for establishing a better Research institute in Pakistan and we have talent to work for achieving the goal. We offer a big view of policy, trends as well as global dynamics.

As a research team, we are looking to bring forward the ideas and research related to policy framework on issues at multilevel. We have transformational research ideas that have practical impact and value. Team members of TON are actively involved in proving highest quality of research. We have taken numerous steps to strength research culture by sharing and disseminating our valuable research work. TON also serves as a platform for early-career researchers, academic researchers and policymakers seeking for avenues of research.

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As a digital as well as non-formal information hub of handpicked prompt News analysis, inside stories, commentaries and numerous other features “The Orient News” in many ways, is a value addition to already robust social, electronic and print Media. It endeavors to restore old grandeur of journalistic excellence and set standards for different types of media. The Orient News is designed as a platform to identify policy and institutional loopholes, monitor implementation and enforce accountability standards through rule of law, liaison with relevant institutions and public interest litigations. Our mission is to remove criminal behavior and materialistic tendencies from the societies and promote high ethical, cultural, traditional and religious standards set in each society by narrative building through social, electronic, print, digital media and its hybrids. We started our efforts with a single man i.e. the present patron-in-chief and later, from several dozen aims to grow to 50,000 in years to come.

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Pakistan Railways



Pakistan Railways (reporting mark PR) is the national, state-owned railway company of Pakistan. Founded in 1861 and headquartered in Lahore, it owns 7,791 kilometres (4,841 miles) of track across Pakistan, stretching from Torkham to Karachi, offering both freight and passenger services.

In 2014, the Ministry of Railways launched Pakistan Railways Vision 2026, which seeks to increase PR's share in Pakistan's transportation sector from 4% to 20%, using the ? 886.68 billion (US\$5.5 billion) China–Pakistan Economic Corridor rail upgrade. The plan includes building new locomotives, development and improvement of current rail infrastructure, an increase in average train speed, improved on-time performance and expansion of passenger service. The first phase of the project was completed in 2017, and the second phase is scheduled for completion by 2021. Pakistan Railways is an active member of the International Union of Railways.

In the 2018/19 financial year, Pakistan Railways served 70 million passengers. Pakistan Railway offered international tender on 12 September 2020 for new vision of Pakistan Railway's Main Line -1 (ML1). Meanwhile, In recent development the construction of ML-1 project in three phases had been approved by the Executive Committee of National Economic Council (EcneC) held in August 2020 last year. The actual cost of the project was initially \$9bn, including equity amount of the government of Pakistan. But later, it was reduced gradually to \$6.8bn.



Afghanistan getting hot again - US unfolds Afghan strategy



INSIDE STORY

By Afshain Afzal

After the undemocratic and unethical announcement by the American military and civilian intelligence agencies to accommodate and resettle thousands of Afghans including ethnic Hazara Afghans, personnel of Afghan Intelligence and National Army in the US, the focus of Washington has again been diverted towards Doha. Presently, the US Embassy at Doha is witnessing a lot of high-ranking movement. "US interests in Afghanistan need to be ensured at all costs, especially after US withdrawal from Afghanistan and the Taliban takeover of the country", said one of the guest who tried to remain unidentified and had come from Virginia. In an open breach of Afghan sovereignty and national integrity, US authorities announced open airlift of Afghans to foreign soils without any legitimacy like passport/ visa or permission from Afghan authority. As per the original plan some 65,000 handpicked Afghan refugees to settle in the US this year and 95,000 by next year, followed by another 125,000 in 2023. However, as per an estimated

record, the number has already exceeded the expected refugees; till 19 October the number crossed 235,800 Afghan refugees in the US.

In another development on 18 October 2021, US Charge de Affairs to Pakistan, Angela Aggeler met Pakistan Chief of the Army Staff at General Headquarters, Rawalpindi to convey message regarding US-Afghanistan strategy and expected cooperation from Pakistan with regard to US operations to control the prevailing situation in Afghanistan. To keep mouths shut Islamabad has been offered a lot of funding to purchase equipment and military courses for all shades of military officers including International Military Education and Training (IMET) programs for young Pakistani Army officers. It is interesting to note that recently same offer was extended to India which refused to airlift material and personnel from and to Kabul Airport due to security concerns; "No chance of Indian aircraft landing or taking off from Kabul". New Delhi, however, agreed to provide facility to US personnel at Tajikistan as well as base at locations including Mundra and Kandla ports in the Gulf of Kutch in the Arabian Sea. As per an Indian officer Ashok who indirectly indicated drone and marine

movements. Earlier, US Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman also visited India (6-7 October) and Pakistan (7-8 October) to finalize strategic repositioning and acquisition of bases.

Although, the complete withdrawal of US combatants was completed in the year 2010 and handful of security personnel and contractors were left in Afghanistan to look after US investment and multinational projects there, but there is reason why Washington is making so much hue and cry. No doubt, the wise decision by former US President Donald Trump to ensure complete US withdrawal by Christmas 2020 was criticized at that time by President Joseph Biden but ironically he followed the same decision rather implemented in true letter and spirit as there was no option to overcome humiliation and agony of defeat. Interestingly, the authorities at Arlington and Langley have levelled all blame on Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and US Envoy to Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad for the failure of US strategy in Afghanistan. Accordingly, Zalmay Khalilzad has been replaced by his Deputy Thomas West as new Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation (SRAR).

In fact, the Western negotiators have

been bluffing the world that they were carrying out intra-peace talks with Taliban, whereas at the Durham, with the exception of a few, all leaders and their associate were those splinter groups who defected Taliban and joined US and allies in the Western war against the Taliban. It was projected as if on 29 February 2021, an agreement was reached whereas a gesture was also given if Taliban were negotiating the talks but a later the talks were dragged till 15 March 2021 to force the dummy Afghan Taliban (sic) to sign an agreement that they would cut ties with the Taliban and Al-Qaida. Diana Shaw, the State Department's acting Inspector General, has issued notifications to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the House Foreign Affairs Committee and the House and Senate intelligence committees, that her office is collecting pieces of evidence of "several oversight projects" regarding ending diplomatic relations in Afghanistan. Strange but true, the credibility of the office of US President has been seriously damaged as policy and agreements signed by the former President are being rejected by the next.

To destabilize Taliban government, the Doha based Western-patronized former Taliban as well as those loyal to Taliban are being targeted to eliminate Taliban top leadership. The factitious ISIS which is being funded by Washington and New Delhi to achieve the fall of Taliban is active in their missions. If we recall, in August Western agencies planned terrorist attack to build world opinion against the Taliban by blowing 13 US personnel and injuring more than 100 Afghans in a suicide attack outside the Kabul airport during the evacuation. Few days before the incident, Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said the United States believes there are still "specific, credible" threats against the airport after the bombing at one of its gates. He said, "We certainly are prepared and would expect future attempts... We're monitoring these threats, very, very specifically, virtually in real-time." Interestingly, on side US claims that Taliban are terrorists but US Commanders assigned Taliban forces positions in most places of Kabul airport, especially the outer gates, when most of the Americans were still at Kabul airport planning withdrawal. Although president Biden ordered the Pentagon to airstrike ISIS-K and the Islamic State affiliate that claimed responsibility one wonders why would it eliminate its own funded aids and terrorists. No one can deny the fact that presently all countries including China, Russia and India have joined hands to defy the 29th February agreement and isolate Taliban from coming into power.

Anti-Orthodox-Muslim Campaign in Pakistan and Afghanistan

INSIDE STORY

By Afshain Afzal

The United States Institute of Peace, in its Special Report No 494 of May 2021 reported on page 4, “Espousing a Deobandi ideology—a revivalist movement originating in India that seeks to purify Islamic practices—the group’s key goals included implementing sharia law, fighting US and NATO forces in Afghanistan, and engaging in jihad against the Pakistan Army (especially in Swat District and North Waziristan).” In reality, powerful Western and Indian media linked popular sentiments of the Pakistani nation for the enforcement of Constitutional provisions for the enforcement of “Sharia” with the Afghan Taliban and Al Qaida. Later all individuals and groups favoring Sharia were dubbed as members of Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and subsequently, agencies generated splinter groups of Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan and included all of them in the list of terrorists. The present situation is that the Western, Indian, and Pakistan military authorities blame Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan for terrorist attacks on the Pakistani navy’s largest airbase in 2011; an attack on Karachi’s international airport in 2014; and, also in 2014, a massacre at the Army Public School in Peshawar that killed 150 students and many other terrorist attacks.

In an interview with a Turkish news channel, TRT World, Pakistan’s Prime Minister Imran Khan said that the government was in talks with some factions of the TTP for peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan and that the Government of Pakistan is willing to forgive the banned groups’ members if they lay down their arms and become normal citizens.” However, the Pakistani Prime Minister said, “we might not reach any conclusion or a settlement in the end but we are talking. The Government statement said, “The



North Waziristan faction of the banned Three-e-Taliban Pakistan has announced a three-week-long ceasefire that started on Friday (1 October) and will continue till the 21st of October, 2021”. It cannot be a coincidence that the timing of the meeting of Pakistan’s Prime Minister with Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan’s splinter group on 1 October and the deadly blast that targeted a memorial service and took the lives of five persons near the Kabul mosque on 3 October 2021, as it was aimed to give a coordinated impression. According to a Taliban interior ministry orator, at least five civilians had been executed in an explosion outside the EidGah Mosque in the Afghan capital, Kabul on 3 October 2021.

In the past, major peace agreements between the Government of Pakistan and Tehreek-e-Taliban included Shakai Agreement in 2004, Sargodha

Agreement in 2005, Miranshah Agreement in 2006, Swat Peace Agreement in 2009. All agreements were between TTP and Military except Swat Peace Agreement in 2009, aimed to enforce a Sharia Nizam-i-Adl Regulation, 2009. Such peace agreement in the past was aimed to eliminate those who concluded these peace agreements due to their involvement in terrorism. If we recall, ironically, despite peace talks, Maulana Sufi Muhammad’s Tehreek-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi (TNSM) remained banned and since 2001, Sufi Muhammad was jailed upon returning to Pakistan from fighting in Afghanistan. He was released in 2008 to trace his links with militants who were pro-Taliban but again arrested after military operations in Swat and was only released from prison in January 2018 after Peshawar High Court’s noted that Maulana Sufi Muhammad was suffering from

multiple diseases including hypertension, breathlessness, enlarged prostate, retention of urine and cardiac problems. Hence he was released on bail mainly on medical grounds and due to a delay in the commencement of his trial. Since he was extremely ill so he died on 11 July 2019.

The Pakistani military’s Operation Zarb-e-Azb, begun in 2014, coupled with an indiscriminate US drone campaign killed some TTP members and thousands of locals as collateral damage. This year, Pakistan authorities claim that there is a surge in TTP’s activity which suggests that the group is eager to consolidate its base and reinvigorate its violent campaign. It is being projected that in the first two months of 2021 alone, the group claimed at least thirty-two attacks but there is no ground evidence that these attacks have ever occurred anywhere in Pakistan. The propaganda aims to announce Pakistan as the most dangerous area in the world as TTP’s resurgence is being linked with getting influenced by its evolving relationship with other militant organizations in the region, particularly the Afghan Taliban, al-Qaeda, and Islamic State Khorasan (ISK). Last week foreign agents furnished fake information to Pakistan’s security forces regarding the presence of terrorists in the area, upon which they conducted an operation that led to martyrdom Pakistan Army Captain. In another incident, a Frontier Corps (FC) soldier was martyred and another injured after terrorists targeted a check post from across the Iran border. In the recent past, such incidents have in fact increased.

The blame game against the Taliban of Afghanistan and Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan has gained new heights as the international and local media including organizations like Amnesty International are leaving no stone unturned. In the latest development, those 13 innocent Hazara Afghans killed in Daykundi on 30 August 2021 are claimed to have been killed by the Taliban. The latest report by Amnesty International is one of the several thousand websites propagating anti-Taliban propaganda. One wonders why the United Nations Organization and countries including Turkey and Pakistan are stopping foreign interference and allowing the people of Afghanistan to consolidate their government, irrespective they are Taliban or not. The bottom line is that let Afghans decide their fate.

Miserable life of Dalit women in India

OPINION

By Sana Sarwar

The term Dalit means 'oppressed', 'broken' or 'crushed' to the extent of losing original identity. There are currently some 166.6 million Dalits in India. The roots of Dalit oppression go back to the origins of the caste system in Hindu religion. The philosophy of caste is contained in the Manusmriti, a sacred Hindu text dating from the second century BCE. 'Untouchable' outcast communities were forbidden to join in the religious and social life of the community and were confined to menial tasks that were viewed as polluting, such as animal slaughter and leatherworking. After independence, the Indian Constitution abolished 'untouchability' in law. However, the Protection of Civil Rights Act 1955/1976 and the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989, both derived from the Constitution, remain largely ineffective in their implementation.

Dalit women have been particularly badly affected in recent times. They are discriminated against not only because of their sex but also because of religious, social and cultural structures which have given them the lowest position in the social hierarchy. The stigma of 'untouchability' exposes them to an even higher risk of abuse and exploitation. For instance, while sexual violence is a problem faced by women across India, encouraged in part by the frequent failure of the judicial system to secure justice for its victims, the situation is especially challenging for Dalit girls and women due to the added discrimination they face: the International Dalit Solidarity Network (IDSN) reports that less than 2 per cent of rape cases against Dalit women result in convictions, compared to around 25 per cent against women in India generally.

India's caste system is perhaps the world's longest surviving social hierarchy. Traditional scholarship has described this more than 2,000-year-old system within the context of the four principal varnas, or large caste categories. In order of precedence these are the Brahmins (priests and teachers), the Kshatriyas (rulers and soldiers), the Vaisyas (merchants and traders), and the Shudras (laborers and artisans). A fifth category falls outside the varna system and consists of those known as "untouchables" or Dalits; they are often assigned tasks too ritually polluting to merit inclusion within the traditional varna system.

Representing over one-sixth of India's population-or some 160 million people-Dalits endure near complete social ostracization. Untouchables" may not cross the line dividing their part of the village from that occupied by higher castes. They may not use the same wells, visit the same temples, or drink from the same cups in tea stalls. Dalit children are frequently made to sit at the back of classrooms. In what has been called



India's "hidden apartheid," entire villages in many Indian states remain completely segregated by caste.

"Untouchability" is reinforced by state allocation of resources and facilities; separate facilities are provided for separate caste-based neighborhoods. Dalits often receive the poorer of the two, if they receive any at all. In many villages, the state administration installs electricity, sanitation facilities, and water pumps in the upper-caste section, but neglects to do the same in the neighboring, segregated Dalit area. Basic amenities such as water taps and wells are also segregated, and medical facilities and the better, thatched-roof houses exist exclusively in the upper-caste colony:

Discrimination in monetary funding and food supplies

Social interactions and marriage on caste basis

Allocation of labor on caste base

Debt bondage and slavery (low-caste employment often force families of lower castes or caste-like groups into bondage. An estimated forty million people in India, among them some fifteen million children, are working in slave-like conditions in order to pay off debts as bonded laborers)

Economic and educational disparities persist between lower and higher-caste Political Representation and Political Rights (caste based quota by central government)

Physical and economic retaliation

Any attempt to alter village customs, defy the social order, or to demand land, increased wages, or political rights leads to violence and economic retaliation on the part of those most threatened by changes in the status quo. Dalit communities as a whole are summarily punished for individual transgressions; Dalits are cut off from community land and employment during social boycotts,

Dalit women bear the brunt of physical attacks, and the law is rarely enforced.

Case study 2021: Kalahandi, India – On 3 September 2021 Ranjita Majhi, a 33-year-old Kui speaking Khond woman in the eastern Indian state of Odisha, gave birth to a baby boy. She was elated as she had taken a 30,000 rupees (\$400) loan for the delivery. Since she was severely anaemic, her health complications prevented a normal delivery. As a result, Majhi had to travel 60km (37 miles) to a government hospital in Bhawanipatna district, where she had a caesarean section.

All was well in the Majhi household for four days. But then the child died. "I don't know how to repay my loans, now the child for whom I took the loan is also not with me. They said they do not even know how he died," she told Al Jazeera, wiping her tears. Bhawanipatna's district hospital doctors claim they also do not know how the child died.

The Supreme Court on Tuesday stayed the implementation of three controversial farm laws, calling its order "extraordinary" and a "victory for fair play". The laws are: The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act and The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act. The court formed a four-member committee of experts "to listen to the grievances of the farmers on the farm laws and the views of the government and make recommendations".

As opportunities for education increase and aspirations rise, Dalits could become a strong and positive force for change in India in the coming decades, especially if they are able to organize themselves across barriers of language and religion.

Government of India has decided to allocate free-of-cost food grains @ 5 Kg per person per month to nearly 80 Crore beneficiaries covered under National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA) over and above NFSA foodgrains for next two months i.e. May and June 2021 on the same pattern as the earlier Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PM-GKAY). Under this special scheme (PMGKAY), around 80 Crore NFSA beneficiaries covered under both categories of NFSA, namely Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) and Priority Householders (PHH), will be provided with an additional quota of free-of-cost foodgrains (Rice/Wheat) at a scale of 5 Kg per person per month, over and above their regular monthly entitlements under NFSA. Government of India will bear full expenditure of over Rs 26,000 Crore on account of cost of food grains, intrastate transportation etc. as part of Central assistance to States/UTs.

The farmers' protest began, a year ago. How has it lasted this long?

OPINION

By Usman Khan

On 24th September 2021 last month, Pakistan's first visually-impaired Pakistani UN delegate delivered a superb speech. Saima Saleem made volte-face of India and its diplomats due to her fiery speech at the 76th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)

Ms. Saima Saleem, Pakistan's young visually-impaired woman diplomat, is currently serving at the country's Permanent Mission to the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland. Saima graduated from Lahore's Kinnaird College for Women. She won the Quaid-e-Azam Gold Medal for her outstanding academic performance and stood first in the Punjab Public Service Commission examination. The first differently-abled female Pakistani diplomat, Saima Saleem was born on August 10, 1984. In her early years, she was diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa- an incurable eye disease that made Saleem blind at the age of 13. According to sources, when Saima applied for CSS, she requested the Federal Public Service Commission (FPSC) to hold a computer-based exam for her. However, the FPSC declined to conduct a computer exam because they were always conducted on paper. Saleem chased her case by mentioning the ordinance approved in 2005. The press release issued in this regard said the government will facilitate candidates with optical impairment and they will be allowed to take exams on the computer. She became the first blind Civil Servant of Pakistan. Saima is a motivational orator and a writer.



She has expertise in international human rights and international humanitarian law, public and economic diplomacy.

While exercising her right of reply in UNGA, Saima spoke the way seems very impressive which won the hearts of millions of Pakistanis and exposes India's lies. Saima is a strong advocate of worldwide peace and harmony. She stated that it is India that approves state-terrorism in the occupied territory of Kashmir in a response to an Indian diplomat's allegations against Pakistan in UN General Assembly. She spoke at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) 2021 in the exercise of her country's right of reply and rejected the false accusations leveled by Indian diplomat Sneha Dubey.

Saima Saleem categorically refuted the Indian diplomat rhetoric that Jammu

and Kashmir is "an integral part of India", and continued to define India's brutal military occupation of the disputed territory. She reminded delegates of numerous United Nations Security Council resolutions to this effect. Saima spoke of the Indian government's sheer human rights violations uncovered by the UN Human Rights Commission and other rights organizations.

Saima said Indian leadership is fanatical with Pakistan. She also shared EU Disinfo Lab's recent revelation of the latitude, gauge and extent of India's massive disinformation campaign against Pakistan. She truly exposed the face of the nastiest and most inescapable form of Islam-phobia now rules India as the sick-Hindutva dogma, disseminated by the fascist RSS-BJP regime, has released a reign of fear and

violence against India's 200 million-strong Muslim community. Rejecting India's allegations of terrorism against Pakistan, MS Saima said India's arguments are those of an occupier seeking to delegitimize popular resistance as "terrorism". We should feel proud Saima Saleem makes Pakistan proud by giving a befitting and outstanding response to India at the UNGA.

It is an example that the Women of Pakistan making inroads of progress by breaking barriers & setting new standards of excellence throughout the world. Wearing the colors of Pakistan's flag and reading from braille, Saima Saleem's speech came as a response to Indian delegate Sneha Dubey's allegations about Pakistan's connection in terrorism in the Indian occupied Himalayan territory.

Earlier before, India's diplomat said Pakistan plays the 'victim' of terrorism and spoke about Pakistan's link to terrorism by claiming it provided a safe haven to the al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden and hurled baseless allegations by state-sponsored suppression of the minorities in Pakistan.

To which, Saima said, "India remains in occupation of an internationally accepted disputed territory whose final nature needs to be decided in accordance with the democratic principle of a free and impartial plebiscite under UN auspices, as provided for under abundant resolutions of the Security Council."

Saima proceeded by telling and throwing light on four different types of terrorism for which India was responsible. She spoke at the length and breadth about 'state terrorism' of India to suppress legitimate Kashmiri freedom movement from the clutches of India in the occupied Jammu and Kashmir valley. She spoke about India funding terrorist organizations such as Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and projected the Doval doctrine and India's furtive operations against Pakistan. She cited the capture of an Indian spy involved in sabotage activities in different parts of Pakistan and how India had funded mercenary terrorist organizations against Pakistan and finished her response by conveying her strong message to India's bigot ideology obsessed Pakistan. She also asked the UN to hold India accountable for its crimes against humanity. At last, Saima applauded and praised the world over for her courage and for using braille for the first time at the UNGA.

Remembering 8 October 2005, the doomsday in Pakistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir

OPINION

By Anika Jawed

8th October 2005; if we calling the small doomsday in the history of Pakistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK). Earthquake struck the Himalayan region of northern Pakistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir on 8 October, 2005 at 8:50 AM local time, with a magnitude Mw=7.6. The epicenter of earthquake was Muzaffarabad the capital of the Pakistani-administered part of Jammu & Kashmir, known as Azad Jammu Kashmir which is located approximately 9 KM northeast. Indian occupied Jammu & Kashmir was also severely damaged with hundreds of dead and injured, mostly in the town of Uri.

According to the Pakistani Government records, as a result of 2005 earthquake, the official death was stood at 87,350, however, it is estimated that the death toll could reach over 100,000. Around 38,000 people were injured and over 3.5 million people become homeless while 19,000 children were killed in the earthquake, mostly as result of collapses of school buildings. In addition around 250,000 farm animals died due to the falling of stone and collapse of sheds.

Government estimates reflected that more than 780,000 buildings, and houses were destroyed or became dangerous for living. Around 17,000 schools buildings, hospitals, and other important public buildings were destroyed. Lifelines were adversely

affected, as vital roads and highways were blocked due to landslides and collapse of bridges. Thus, many areas remained cut off from other areas which remained disconnected with other land routes even three months after the earthquake. Power, water supply, and telecommunication services were down, however these services were restored within a few weeks.

Damage at Balakot was caused by a fault rupture. Damage occurred at Abbottabad as a result of local site reaction in the Cantonment area, which was apparently established on the former marshland. Several other towns in the rupture zone from Bagh to Batagram experienced severe damage to their building stock as well. Muzaffarabad and Balakot were the sites of enormous disaster.

The earthquake that hit directly or indirectly affected a huge population made it impossible to adopt workable procedures of distributing aid and relief, thus relief operations became very difficult. Besides the enormous number of dead, the human cost includes amputees, orphans, unsanitary conditions that result in illness, and chronic hunger. The early days of the incident response were highlighted by uncoordinated attempts by the many relief groups.

The government eventually established a coordinating framework under the Federal Relief Commission (FRC) and the ERRA (Earthquake Relief and Rehabilitation Authority) to coordinate

efforts with other international agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The World Bank estimated that the rescued effort cost \$2 billion. According to another estimate, 0.5 million tents, 3.5 million blankets, 60,000 tons of food, and 3,000 tones of medication were distributed.

The earthquake placed Pakistani nation in a most critical situation. Since the earthquake, there had been over 2,000 aftershocks, and the severe winter had been followed by monsoons. While people devastated were dealing with earthquakes, flu, pneumonia, and other

illnesses, the monsoons had been caused even more harm. Massive landslides and heavy storm floods swept away entire mountainsides, villages or homes that may have survived the earthquake's devastation were now permanently gone after the monsoons. The earthquake was so devastating that even today it horrifies all those who lost their everything. Let us pray that Almighty Allah save not only Pakistan but who world from such extreme natural disasters.

The largest concentration of destroyed buildings was in Muzaffarabad and Balakot. Other cities such as Bagh and Rawlakot also had significant damage. It is estimated that in Muzaffarabad, 30-50% of the buildings were either destroyed or badly damaged in the main event. Major damage concentrations in Muzaffarabad were in areas of deeper deposits along the Neelum and Jhelum rivers.



Pakistan takes serious note of Indian Army's 'malicious propaganda'

INSIDE STORY

By TON Research Section

In response of the Indian military's malicious propaganda, Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa presided over the 244th Corps Commanders Conference at General Headquarters Rawalpindi on 5 October 2021. The top Army brass took strong note and condemned Indian propaganda. General Bajwa expressed the resolve to take necessary measures to protect Pakistan's territorial integrity in the face of "malicious propaganda" by the Indian military.

According to Indian media report, "the OIC has helplessly allowed itself to be head of hostage by Pakistan which hold the chairmanship of their genome chapter to subserve their own agenda it's for the member of OIC decided if it isn't interest to allow to Pakistan to do so. Calling Pakistan a failed state Indian representative said that the Pakistan has been globally recognized as country openly supporting, training, financing, and arming terrorist. The Indian diplomat also asked Pakistan said Pakistanis is failed to protect the rights of its minorities including six Hindus, Christians and Ahmadyies". According to the Indian media, "India is not only the largest democracy but the robust refection and vibrant one does not need lesson from the failed state like Pakistan which is the epicenter of the terrorism and the worst abuser of the human rights. He also said the OIC for the raising Kashmir council asserting that the group is no longer to comment on the internal phase of the country be one on again written and reject the reference made by the OIC to the union of territory of Jammu and Kashmir which is an integral part of India. The OIC has no local standard to comment an internal matter of India. Pakistan has always used OIC as a platform at the home together on Kashmir against India".

Few days back, Indian Army Chief General Manoj Mukund Naravane addressed the local Media channel and said, "any terror related activities, which obviously cannot take place unless they have support of the Pakistan Army. He also said, "Pakistan has violated ceasefire twice in 10 days. Ceasefire violations begin a new after Lull following Feb 2021 understanding. Multiple terrorist infiltration attempts also seen in Jammu and Kashmir recently. A Pakistan terrorist Ali Baber, was also caught a live by Indian forces recently. Babar revealed how Pakistan army and SPY and ISI paid, trained and armed him, He said, "Ceasefire understanding was reached toward ends of February to beginning of July there is no ceasefire violations whatever, " But of the late, there have been increased infiltration, attempts which were not supported by ceasefire violation but in the last week 7-10 days, there have been two ceasefire violations also definitely it show that the situation is not static, regarding to what it was earlier pre-February days".

According to General Manoj Mukund Naravane, " we have convey through hotline message and weekly DMGO level talks, place every week that this does not augur well for understanding that we have and they should did not support such activities, especially terror related acts, which obviously cannot take place unless they have support of the Pakistan army."



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How will PTA (Preferential Trade Agreement) and FTA (Free Trade Agreement) agreements between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka help Pakistan?

OPINION

By R. Hassan (Bangladesh)



There are several benefits from these free trade agreements for Pakistan besides just lowering or eliminating tariffs. These agreements also assist remove barriers that exist behind borders, such as intellectual property laws, e-commerce regulations, and government procurement. Free trade agreements provide new markets for Pakistani firms to provide better access to a broader choice of competitively priced goods and services. Free trade agreements have the potential to improve trade and investment possibilities for developing countries such as Pakistan.

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PTAs and FTAs will help Bangladesh overcome its obstacles in leaving the category of least developed countries. On December 6, 2020, Bangladesh and Bhutan inked their first free trade agreement. Bangladesh designated its Minister of Commerce's Additional Secretary as the country's principal negotiator. Among the members of Bangladesh's delegation are officials from the ministries of foreign affairs, industry, and revenue and the country's Export Promotion Bureau and High Commission in Colombo (Sri Lanka). They'll coordinate their efforts with those of officials and negotiators selected by the Sri Lankan government.

The proposed PTA between Sri Lanka and Bangladesh is the country's third trade agreement with a South Asian country. Sri Lanka's bilateral trade with India and Pakistan has benefited from trade accords.

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When the RIS submitted the SAFTA The Draft Agreement in August 2008, the Expert Group met for the first time in November of that year. Preamble and 33 Articles make up the proposed Agreement on Trade in Services. There are a lot of similarities between this agreement and the GATS Agreement. There have been two rounds of negotiations thus far. The Expert Group on SAARC Framework Agreement on Trade in Services met for the first time on November 6 and 7, 2008, at the SAARC Secretariat in Kathmandu, Nepal, and met again on January 20 and 21, 2009, at the exact location. There will be a meeting of the SAARC Expert Group on Trade in Services on the 24th and 25th of October 2009 in Kathmandu at the SAARC Secretariat.

India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka all have free trade agreements with the United States. Bangladesh convened an inter-ministerial meeting in August 2008 to solidify its position on bilateral free trade agreements with India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, which was presided over by the honorable Commerce adviser. The formation of a Core group led by BFTI CEO Dr. Mohammad Ali Taslim and including members from various important stakeholders was also decided. The committee's report was recently delivered to Secretary, MoC.

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Economic growth and job creation are aided by free trade agreements for Pakistan, which open up new markets for businesses of all sizes to benefit from increased trade and investment.

The importance of South Asia and its Politics in True Perspective

OPINION

By TON Research Section

The upswing of regional impact in the post-unipolar world has changed the orientation of world politics overall. India's regional desires are derived from the rise of right-wing Hindutva (radical Hinduism) at the start of this century and its political aspiration to regain its lost prestige after British colonial masters in the subcontinent. The religious and cultural extremist Hindutva forces have challenged and threatened the very fabric of India's secular state system. The minorities, chiefly Muslims were intimidated by the radical militant Hindutva forces to eliminate other religious beliefs and make India exclusively a Hindu state.

Peace and prosperity at home and having a peaceful neighborhood are the major features contributing to acquiring a place across the globe. Any country with disturbing neighborhoods would not be able to achieve the dream of stable growth at home as sharing borders is much more than sharing terrestrial borders. It involves socio-political contact with the neighboring countries. India has continuously been thoughtful longing to launch its predominance in South Asia and since its independence from British in 1947; the main objective of Indian foreign policy is to act upon the goal of becoming a regional force and wants that it should be acknowledged by other states in the region as a whole.

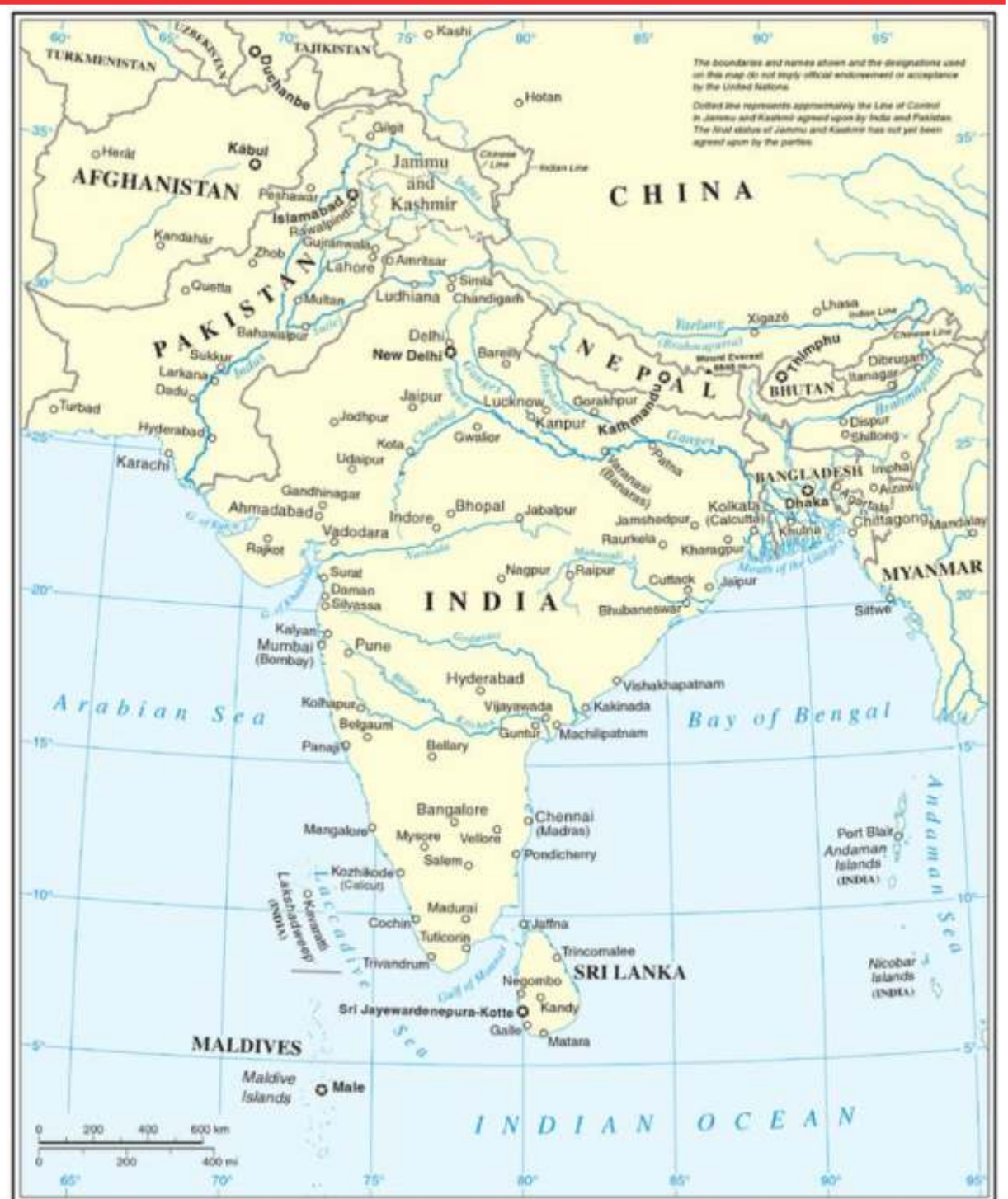
In the South region's geography and demography, most inter-state disputes reflect a series of bilateral disagreements with India. The phenomenon of internal polarizations into international disputes is not confined to Pakistan and India only but the whole south Asian region. India intimidated all its neighbors in one or another way regarding its controversial territorial issues since independence. After the partition of British India in 1947 India illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan claimed the entirety of the former Muslim majority princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. Since then it is a deadly dispute over the region that escalated into three wars between India and Pakistan and several other armed skirmishes.

Over the years, it has had boundary issues with Bangladesh, undemarcated boundaries with Myanmar, the dispute between the land in Kabaw Valley near Hollenphai village, Moreh of Manipur state, India and Namphalong village, Tamu of Sagaing Region and border issue with Bhutan, and lately with China, Aksai Chin area in the northwestern part of the Tibetan Plateau, it is approximately 35,241 sq. km in size, administered by China and part of the Xinjiang Autonomous Region. India considers it a part of its union territory of Ladakh.

The ethnic divide in Sri Lanka has long had an Indian dimension and its maritime boundary dispute with Sri Lanka on Katchatheevu an uninhabited island of 235 acres. Nepal has often flared up into tensions with India; Kala Pani is an area under territorial dispute in Darchula District of Sudurpashchim Pradesh, Nepal, and Pithoragarh District of Uttarakhand, India, area 400 square km. The story of the 1987 Indo-Sri Lankan agreement, leading to a rather unsuccessful campaign by the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) for suppressing the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka, is well known. Indeed it is a complex ongoing story, the issue is nevertheless explosive, both in its domestic and international dimensions, in both countries. The leading events in Tamil Nadu became the reason for Rajiv Gandhi's assassination and changes in the electoral fortunes of several Tamil Nadu parties among them; illustrate the strained relations of both countries.

Bangladesh has also internal issues likely to figure on the bilateral agenda with India, except the hardy perennial of the Hindu—Muslim divide, common to all states in the Indo-Gangetic—Brahmaputra valleys and more recently the influx of Chakma refugees to India. There are territorial disputes between Bangladesh and India, the center of the disputes on of territory in the Berubari Union, a tiny new island thrown up by physical changes and the delimitation of economic zones in the Bay of Bengal. The dividing waters of the River Ganges between India and Bangladesh after the completion of the Farrakha barrage are one of the main disputes among both countries.

However, in the case of SAARC, India is also using this platform for getting its nefarious designs obsessed with its quest to control the region and uphold the hegemony in many ways. The surviving economic and military force is not an assurance to attain the status of regional or global power, principally in a condition where neighboring countries are not ready to approve the influence and legitimacy of the major power holder. Despite India's phenomenal economic growth and military development, the rise of China and the growing hold on South Asia is providing a much required significant balance of power in the region.



The common benefit of the peoples of the entire valleys in India, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Bhutan has been affected by Indian conflicting and controversial roles. So far as Indo Bhutan and Indo-Nepal relations are concerned, crises-cross. It is a pattern that obtains throughout the region. In theory, this could be turned into an advantage by adopting a regional approach. The fact, however, is that regional identity is strangely conspicuous by its weakness. The most peripheral areas of historical India worked loose from the center. Inheritors of the center are wary of those who broke away and fear their ganging up against themselves—an unhappy possibility implied in a regional approach. Hence India's preferred bilateral methodology seems to emphasize divisions rather than unities. For the rest, old India's frontiers have moved in all directions. What is directly related is the interaction of two forces a series of felt internal disunities among ethnic identities in each successor state of the British Indian Empire are getting mixed up in intra-regional disputes. This threatens modern state structures as well as regional harmony in south Asia. Ensuring stable regional peace requires much hard work to resolve these polarities. The other element is the intellectual appreciation of the benefits of regional amity and cooperation. The example of the EC has inspired so many regional cooperation experiments.

Human Catastrophe through Coercion in Sovereign Afghanistan

INSIDE STORY

By Afshain Afzal

The Western cum Iranian backed groups including National Resistance Front of Afghanistan (NRF) are again on the stage. There are also other including Indo-US funded Islamic State's terrorists (ISIS aka ISK) who pretend to be linked with Islam but in fact, are carrying out spree of terrorism and target killing of orthodox Muslims. No doubt, all individuals and groups have every right to raise their voices as they are all Afghans despite the fact that many amongst them were anti-Afghan and acted as pawn in the hands of foreign occupational forces during two decades of holocaust. They need to be pardoned but their loyalty must be tested to allow them to join mainstream politics. Today Iran is holding peace talks on Afghanistan and it seems that very soon Tehran would emerge as the Iran of World War-I. There are plans to establish "Free Zones" in at least four areas of Afghanistan under the United Nations framework, it is almost the same programme France and Britain presented for the creation of a "safe zone" in Kabul to protect humanitarian operations after US withdrawal as well as to maintain pressure on the Taliban. Taliban as well as splinter group sharing power in Afghanistan, however, rejected all such plans, injurious to Afghan sovereignty and national integrity.

The supreme leader of Taliban Mullah Mohammad Yaqoob had been looking after the affairs of Afghanistan and is dealing with future defence strategy. At a right time a right decision was made to make a public appearance on media, appealing to Afghan local businessmen to invest in hospitals and clinics. He asked Afghan businessmen to invest in hospitals and clinics as other civic facilities to overcome worst catastrophe created by stoppage of all humanitarian aid and financial support including Afghan own financial resources in foreign banks. As per the United Nations mechanism, the economically strong countries, especially the ones who claim to have leadership role as "VETO" countries have to perform their primary responsibility helping Afghanistan to emerge from catastrophic hardships to vitality. However, these countries have become the reason of further hardships as they imposed unilateral sanctions on Afghanistan including seizure of its state assets to be used to meet people's urgent needs such as healthcare and food. Ironically, every country admits that Afghanistan is passing through worst state of human suffering due to American senseless two decades criminal war, which is still continuing but still united to further bleed Afghanistan. The war crimes and grave human rights violations which resulted in killing of over 1.6 million unarmed innocent Afghan women, children and men remain unaccounted and still the International Court of Justice (ICJ) or International Criminal Court (ICC) or even United Nations Security Council (UNSC) failed to investigate or pass a single resolution against tyrant and aggressors.



It is so disgusting that penniless Afghanistan which is facing worst hunger, famine like situation and disease are not helped by either the world organizations or the so called civilized nations of the world. Rather, they are trying to sell their experimental vaccines for COVID-19 pandemic to Afghanistan masses. The selfish world governments are dictating their conditions one by one in lieu of releasing Afghan assets in foreign banks. One feels to laugh that two of the conditions are pressurizing Taliban to allow International Non Government Organizations (INGOs) to run Polio and COVID – 19 vaccination campaign in Afghanistan. Other conditions include forcing Taliban to agree on broad-based government and inclusive political stance, adoption of moderate and prudent domestic and foreign policies, and protect the basic rights and interests of ethnic minorities, women and children including and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex (LGBTQI).

The United States, in fact, is pressurizing the members' countries of United Nations through carrot and stick strategy not to let Taliban to come to power in Afghanistan and press them to adopt moderate, prudent and enlightened domestic and foreign policies to fulfill international agendas. At the same time not only Taliban leaders are targeted through foreign-funded terrorist attacks but they are also labeled for the crimes which they never committed, rather, they themselves remained victims of such attacks. Interestingly, the Western, Russian, Iranian, Indian, to some extent Chinese blocks and Pakistani individuals have created an alliance against Taliban in the name of fighting terrorism and good-neighborly, friendly and cooperation.

In the recent development, the Foreign Ministers of the world's like-minded nations established communication with Tehran to form a new alliance. Official statements like, "Terrorist organizations operating inside Afghanistan pose a threat to international peace and stability. It is important that we remain vigilant of terrorist entities working against return of peace to Afghanistan," he said, adding that the Afghan interim government must ensure that there is no safe haven for such elements and that Afghan territory is not used to harm any country" are counterproductive and are only aimed to divert attention of the world and the United Nations from disaster. Afghan nation is undergoing due to famine like situation, disease and seizure of funds belonging to Afghanistan by international players.

It is important to note that the aid and financial pledges are meant to provide

support directly to 18.4 million vulnerable Afghans in the region, mainly Afghan refugees those who helped occupying forces including ethnic minorities and over 500,000 displaced people who have been added to the list this year alone. The ruling Afghans including some of the Afghan leaders have been banned to handle aid while selected organizations are to provide lifesaving security to vulnerable people, shelter, livelihoods support, essential health care, emergency food aid, water, sanitation, and hygiene services to respond to natural disasters, and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and Polio campaigns. In fact, these Western countries including the European Union intend to support Afghan refugees, refugee returnees, and other displaced persons for years to come, till Taliban and such orthodox Muslims are completely eliminated from Afghanistan rather face of the earth.

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The Latest Report of FATF regarding Pakistan

OPINION

TON Research Team

According to the latest report of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has once again kept Pakistan on its grey list for another four months. The Paris-based watchdog continues to project Pakistan's actions when it comes to prosecuting the leadership of UN-designated terror groups like Jaish-e-Muhammad and Lashkar-e-Taiba. It shows a complete bias and maliciousness towards Pakistan.

The Pakistani politicians are busy in political fighting and leg-pulling of each other and it is tantamount to promote undemocratic norms and traditions which always resulted in the form of Martial-law and their abilities are being used in mudslinging which could have been better utilized and work for the uplift of social and economic benefits in the country.

Nowadays our politicians are busy in such lip-service just like the Prime Minister who never spares an opportunity to recite the verses of the Holy Quran and quote the saying of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) and talks about the state of Madina but his actions and deeds are quite opposite to it. Was there a concept of interest in the Islamic State of Madina and had the Companions of Holy Prophet ever taken any kind of interest-money for running the state of affairs? The answer is absolute no. Were they taken such unimaginable huge salaries and perks and privileges being drawn beyond the sources at the expanse of national taxpayers? Talking about the state of Madina is very good but implementing is the actual thing. Were such huge expenses ever spent in the state of Madina like on the kitchen items of prime-minster and president and other public offices in Pakistan?

Moreover, the government of Pakistan is at the lowest ebb in terms of pursuing national goals like completing the Mega-project of CEPC which can bring radical and revolutionary changes to our beloved country. At the same time, the government is hesitant to shift power and money to the grassroots level to improve the local bodies.

Frankly, speaking there is also an increasing unhealthy trend to push the opposition to the wall through the law enforcing institutions like NAB, FIA, and other security agencies and dealing only the cases of opposition members rather than of treasury ones along the every now and then ordinances without completing the due procedures of legislation in the national assembly is evident of brazen violation of sound democracy. There are so-called intellectuals who are harping to the tunes and projecting that democracy is weak in the country and claim that democracy has failed to pave the way for Martial-Law for their vested interests. For democracy to flourish, all the shareholders must perform enshrined and envisaged in the constitution.

The consistent deprecation of the Pakistani rupee shows the fragile economic policies of Pakistan and its financial advisers and ministers because ironically, it has become habitual that the government hired the services of those persons to tackle and steer Pakistan from the economic crisis who were and are closely associated and committed more to IMF and world bank as compare to Pakistan. Recently, the country's finance adviser left the US without concluding negotiation talks with the IMF, and the



government appears to be unable to reduce the gap between revenues and expenditure.

The Financial Action Task Force Grey List (FATF) at its latest meeting has stretched the period that Pakistan must stay on the list by another four months. The FATF has acknowledged that Pakistan has carried out 30 of the 34 points the task force had mentioned before. However, the FATF has said this is the prime agenda that needs to be tackled; with more checks on financing for terrorists.

The influencing of the FATF forum into the anti-Pakistan lobbies mainly India is a serious setback for Pakistan diplomatically that despite handsome salaries from the national kitty what are our diplomats and Ambassadors doing abroad? Despite the fact that the world knows it better than India is indulged in every kind of blood-letting terror act to suppress and subjugate the freedom movement of Kashmiris people besides, crushing numbers of insurgencies in different states of India.

Today, Pakistan is lagging behind economically, politically, and socially in the comity of nations. The example of Bangladesh is before us that despite its political distress it has managed to keep democracy on the right footing.

Pakistan always fought the wars of others in the past and still paying for its mistakes like fighting as a front-line state first in the war of Afghanistan against former soviet-union with Americans and then giving bases to Americans to be used against the government of Taliban shows that how easily the government of Pakistan become succumb to external forces for petty benefits which breed in the colossal loss. That's why Pakistan was being blamed for giving sanctuaries to terrorism by the same American government in the past. Instead of that, it would be better if, we as a nation could work for the welfare and prosperity of Pakistan.

Pakistan's continued presence in the grey list is an open trial to the country is facing at international forums. Our overall impression of the world has been tarnished at multiple levels. But unfortunately, those who have remained at the helm of affairs have been consistently ignoring the changing realities of the world.

The importance of South Asia and its Politics in True Perspective

OPINION

By K. K. Usman

The upswing of regional impact in the post-unipolar world has changed the orientation of world politics overall. India's regional desires are derived from the rise of right-wing Hindutva (radical Hinduism) at the start of this century and its political aspiration to regain its lost prestige after British colonial masters in the subcontinent. The religious and cultural extremist Hindutva forces have challenged and threatened the very fabric of India's secular state system. The minorities, chiefly Muslims were intimidated by the radical militant Hindutva forces to eliminate other religious beliefs and make India exclusively a Hindu state.

Peace and prosperity at home and having a peaceful neighborhood are the major features contributing to acquiring a place across the globe. Any country with disturbing neighborhoods would not be able to achieve the dream of stable growth at home as sharing borders is much more than sharing terrestrial borders. It involves socio-political contact with the neighboring countries. India has continuously been thoughtful longing to launch its predominance in South Asia and since its independence from British in 1947; the main objective of Indian foreign policy is to act upon the goal of becoming a regional force and wants that it should be acknowledged by other states in the region as a whole.

In the South region's geography and demography, most inter-state disputes reflect a series of bilateral disagreements with India. The phenomenon of internal polarizations into international disputes is not confined to Pakistan and India only but the whole south Asian region. India intimidated all its neighbors in one or another way regarding its controversial territorial issues since independence. After the partition of British India in 1947 India illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan claimed the entirety of the former Muslim majority princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. Since then it is a deadly dispute over the region that escalated into three wars between India and Pakistan and several other armed skirmishes.

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How will PTA (Preferential Trade Agreement) and FTA (Free Trade Agreement) agreements between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka help Pakistan?

OPINION

By R. Hassan (Bangladesh)

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Sri Lankan East Container Terminal and Indian Stakes

OPINION

By Fatima Nasriya (TON Sri Lanka)

The former government of Sri Lanka signed a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) which Japan India to build the East Container Terminal (ECT) in the year 2019. It was agreed that India would do the construction and Japan was to do the funding for the project. The former President Maithripala Sirisena had promised the Sri Lankan Port Authority Trade Union that the East Container Terminal will be operated and built by Sri Lankan Ports Authority. The signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) states that the port authority of the Sri Lanka retains 100 percent ownership of the ECT, according to SLPA and the Terminal Operation Company which was to hold responsible for the operation within the terminal will be jointly owned by the India, Sri Lanka and Japan, while Sri Lanka maintains 51% stake in the company and India and Japan will jointly hold 49% stake. India will be holding 15% stake alone in the ECT project. Most of the trans-shipment containers handled by Sri Lanka arrive from India. The forty years of soft loan with an interest rate of 0.1 % percent with grace period of 10 years was an attractive offer for Sri Lanka.

But what went wrong? Is India really harmful to Colombo Port? Or

“There any other forces influencing the Trade Unions?” Or

“Is it the rive sentiments between the Buddhist Community in the Sri Lanka and India because of the Indian intervention in the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka?”

When Hambantota Port was leased to the Chinese government for 99 years there were strikes across the country what the Sri Lankan Government went ahead with the decision. Why did the Sri Lankan Government consider the strikes with regard to the ECT? Was the decision made considering the debt trap Sri Lanka is in? It is also to be noted that there has not been any sustained protest against the Colombo International Container Terminal (CICT) which is also the Colombo Port and the Colombo Port City project which are also joint venture with the China.

If India was considered harmful for the Colombo Port, why is the government of Sri Lanka offering the West Container Terminal with 85% stake as a compensation plan?

If the Trade Unions viewed privatising the East Container Terminal as a threat to

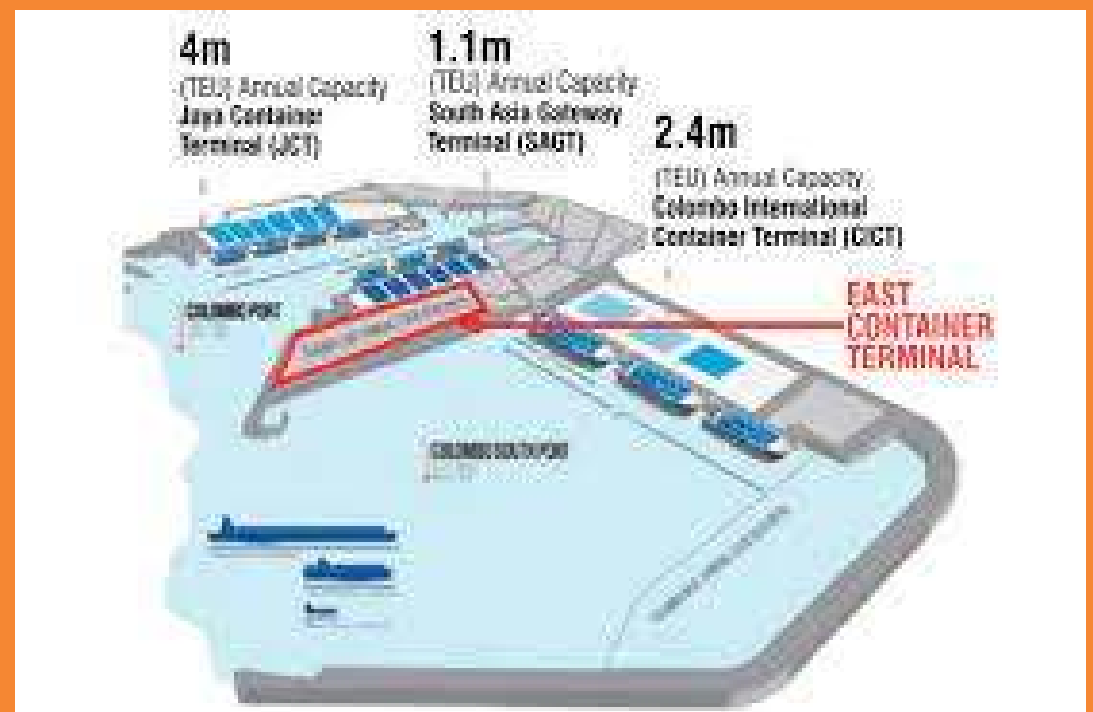
Sri Lanka, how it not the threat to privatize the Western Container Terminal?

Sri Lankan Government sources confirmed that there will not be any further trouble on the Western Container Terminal offer as Trade Unions have signed the written consent agreeing to support the government on the Western Container Terminal project.

Although the agreement was signed under the administration of the former President Maithripala Sirisena and Ranil Wickramasinghe, the present President of the Sri Lanka Gotabaya Rajapaksa stood by the agreement despite the protest. He also had aggued with the Trade Union citing the agreement. However, this wasn't enough to convince the protestors. The Government of Sri Lanka finally had to surrender due to immense amount of the pressure created by the Trade Unions and civil societies from all walks of life joining the protest and was forced to make a unilateral decision on the existing tripartite agreement. However, Japan and India has firmly said Sri Lanka to honor the tripartite agreement.

How is this going to affect the India – Sri Lanka relationship?

The unilateral decision made by the Sri Lanka over the ECT has brought embarrassment to India internationally. India can make life difficult for the Sri Lanka by isolating the Island economically and geopolitically. The economic isolation will became an immense challenge to the Sri Lanka as the country is trying to revive the economy which has been hit hard by the pandemic. Both Sinhala and English media in Sri Lanka got carried out news reports in the past month pointing fingers and China as they see Chinese influence on the Trade Union strike on the ECT partnership. According to a shipping experts in Sri Lanka, who would like to remain anonymous said that China does not want the Colombo Port to develop because of their investment in the Hambantota Port goes big with India and Japan partnership, the Hambantota Port will lose out on business. Apart from the business, Sri Lanka really cannot afford to offend India because of the geological reasons and the ethnic issues. India can create problems for Sri Lanka including internal unrest and terrorism. Sri Lanka has already fallen prey to the debt trap and it is a challenge to wriggle out from the messy situation.



Nepal – Bangladesh Agreement on use of Bangla Ports for trade

OPINION

By Farzana Tamannur (TON Bangladesh)

Nepal expressed its readiness to use Bangladeshi ports in global trade to decrease its dependence on Kolkata port.

This was observed by Nepal's Diplomat in Bangladesh Dr. Banshidhar Mishra during a courtesy call on FBCCI Senior Vice President Mostofa Azad Chowdhury Babu at the FBCCI office in Dhaka, as stated by an FBCCI press release.

"Mentioning the complications of using Kolkata port in global trade, the ambassador said Nepal is eager to use the ports of Bangladesh," the press release said.

Both Nepal and Bhutan are presently dependent on India for exterior trade using ports and highways. Bangladesh has already presented Nepal and Bhutan use of Mongla seaport and Saidpur airport for trade with other countries.

This would be economical and save time for Nepal and Bhutan once India permits transit. Bangladesh might earn revenue from this.

Stagnancy in throughput, Kolkata port might lose cargo volume

Under stagnancy in service throughput, Kolkata port is underneath yet another main threat of further losing its cargo volume in the coming future. Nepal and Bhutan, two main buyers of Kolkata port service, are shifting their option to Chittagong and Mongla port of Bangladesh toward handling cargo of their third country trade.

As stated by the Ministry of Shipping statistics, India's national port throughput development during the period April to December 2012 was documented as 9.4% over same period preceding year. Against 370.85 MT (Million Ton) throughout the period in 2011, it has been documented as 405.28 MT through same period 2012. "The trend continued almost same during yet to be calculated period of Jan to March 2013," said officers in the ministry.

Against this, throughput of Kolkata port, including of Kolkata Dock System (KDS) on the eastern bank as well as Haldia Dock Complex (HDC) on the western bank of river Hooghly, continued 28.77 MT during April -Dec 2012 over 30.41MT in similar period 2011- showing a de-growth of about 0.5%.

During the period, from 2000-01 to 2008-09, Kolkata Port augmented its cargo volume by 80%. However, traffic decreased since 2009-10 mostly because of commissioning of Paradip – Haldia Crude pipeline and also because of decline in shipping of Iron Ore, Coking Coal, etc., due to draft limitation in this only riverine main port of India.

But, yet another main crisis is in waiting. "Kolkata port is severely used, overfilled and suffering from siltation. Thus, Mongla and Chittagong port in Bangladesh, being at smaller distance from Nepal or Bhutan than Kolkata, are now appropriate alternatives for us," exporters from Bangladesh told ET on Indo-Bangla notified Dry Port Changrabandha. Importers from Nepal also sounded the same.



Being landlocked, Nepal and Bhutan, both are extremely dependent on Kolkata port. Nepal and Bhutan together uses the port for 2.5 million tons of Exim cargo

But, "The trade dynamics in this part of the world demands a change. Economics and expediency are playing foremost role behind the shift in choice," said a senior member of Nepal Chamber of commerce. And certainly, this shift is going to make the state tougher for near 140 years old Kolkata port.

Commendations for transit with and over Bangladesh

Physical substructure at border and quality of roads requires to be improved.

There is a need to automate customs processes in Nepal, Bangladesh and India.

An automatic bond module should be presented between Nepal, Bangladesh and India.

An appropriate guarantee system needs to be devised to take care of security and safety of cargo.

A new modality might be put in place once the

essential up-gradation has been completed
Tripartite bilateral trade

The most direct method to spread the impressive economic development of India across the area is to open numerous channels of trade. While Nepal has long had an open border with India, the means it is negotiated by businessmen on the ground for customs and logistics is complicated.

Nepali policymakers may not have the appetite to deal with the complications of trade at a time while the practicalities of the India-Nepal open border are gradually being contested. Among such adversities, though, last year's India-Bangladesh contract does offer a window of prospect for getting new strategies and substructure right. India's political flexibility sharing in the case of the January 2010 communication needs to be interpreted into administrative release, and this will ipso facto advantage Nepal's ambitions.

Nepal and Bangladesh now need to work to bring India completely on board in helping to develop new trade plus transit routes. They furthermore need to follow up any trilateral contract with a complete package that combines infrastructure-building with customs and governmental reforms. In this, sector-specific trade strategies are an essential component if Nepal is to correctly pursue export competitiveness. In spite of challenges ahead, there is some hope in that the apparent merits of the argument to open new and more trade and transit routes is gradually gaining ground – even against the ultra-nationalist demagoguery and administrative sluggishness that have long kept these economies captive.

OPINION

By TON Research Section

Afghanistan: Controversy continues over Afghan seat in UN

KABUL, 26 October 2021, (TON): On United Nations Day and is commemorated amid controversy over Afghanistan's seat in the UN. Afghanistan officially joined United Nations in 1946.

Following the collapse of the former government, the Islamic Emirate introduced its Doha-based spokesperson Suhail Shahen as Afghanistan's permanent representative to

the UN, but the UN did not accept his appointment.

Ghulam Mohammad Ishaqzai, representative of the former government to the UN, currently represents Afghanistan in the world body.

Shaheen said that based on international law, Afghanistan's seat in the UN should be given to the Islamic Emirate.

Shaheen said "Afghanistan's seat at the United Nations should be given to the Islamic Emirate."

"Because one of the main conditions is the support of the people—the Islamic Emirate) has it. It has full control on Afghanistan and it is capable of defending the people and the country."



Pakistan accuses US of trying to derail CPEC

KABUL, 26 October 2021, (TON): Mujahid said in a statement posted on Twitter "the Taliban have appointed Zabiullah Mujahid as the movement's main spoke-sman, as well as introduced his three deputies."

Members of the movement Ahmadullah Wasik, Inamullah Habibi Saman-gani and Sahib Asadullah, better known as Bilal Ka-rimi, became the deputy chief representatives of the Taliban.

The statement said "the main representative of the Islamic Emirate And three of his deputies were represented. The main representative of the Islamic Emirate is Zabiullah Mujahid."

Earlier, Mujahid was one of the representatives of the movement and in September became the deputy minister of culture and information of the interim government of Afghanistan.



Pakistan: IMF seeks closure of public entities' accounts in banks

ISLAMABAD, 25 October 2021, (TON): The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has placed a condition on Pakistan to close all the bank accounts maintained by public sector entities and the defence ministry in commercial banks, the money should be transferred to the central bank's account.

The demand is aimed at bringing back hundreds of billions of rupees under the government's control that are currently placed with the commercial banks in violation of various instructions by the finance ministry.

Sources told media that one of the reasons behind a delay in reaching a staff-level agreement was the IMF's insistence to roll out the treasury single account—II system within this fiscal year.

The global lender also wanted that instead of promulgating a presidential ordinance, the government should introduce a finance bill in parliament to withdraw tax exemptions and slap more taxes.

The finance ministry sources said that there were roughly 50,000 bank accounts maintained by the defence ministry, the armed forces and public sector entities including the Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) and National Highway Authority (NHA) that have to be closed under the second phase of the financial management reforms.

The IMF wants a framework to be put in place by December this year to close all the remaining commercial bank accounts that are funded through government money.



Pakistan: Not a good time to discuss improving ties after ‘historic thrashing’, PM mocks India

ISLAMABAD, 26 October 2021, (TON): A day after the historic defeat to the Indian cricket team in Dubai, Prime Minister Imran Khan has mocked New Delhi while discussing the economic benefits of improving ties with India by resolving the long-standing Kashmir dispute.

“I know after last night thrashing by the Pakistan team in the cricket match it’s not a very good time to talk about improving relations with India,” the premier said on Monday while referring to Green Shirts’ historic win against India in the T20 World Cup.

The prime minister was addressing the Saudi-Pak Investment Forum organised in cooperation with the Saudi Ministry of Investment in

Riyadh.

The Investment Forum was attended by senior representatives of the leading Saudi companies and entrepreneurs as well as Pakistani businessmen.

PM Imran said “Pakistan’s strategic location having two biggest markets in the neighbourhood and connectivity with Central Asia through Afghanistan provided a real opportunity to investors to take benefit.”

PM Imran said “if Islamabad and New Delhi resolve the Kashmir dispute in line with the UN resolutions both the nations can reap economic benefits of enhanced regional connectivity.”



Pakistan: PM Imran, Saudi crown prince vow to boost ‘fraternal ties’



Syed Ali Geelani exposed India;s plans to bring demographic changes in Kashmir to defeat the Islamic ideology in Jammu and Kashmir. He was also highly critical about Shia Central Waqf Board chairperson, Syed Waseem Rizvi blasphemous attempt in which he approached the Supreme Court to seek removal of 26 verses of the Quran on the ground that these are “teaching hatred, violence and terrorism” and that “These verses were added to the Quran, by the first three Caliphs, to aid the expansion of Islam by war”.

Egypt, Greek air forces complete training exercise

ATHENS, 26 October 2021, (TON): The Egyptian and Greek air forces completed a training exercise using combat aircraft at a Greek air base.

According to a statement by Egypt's military spokesman, the training included a number of joint flights, training on long-range air operations, experience exchanges and training in managing air operations.

It came as part of large-scale joint exercises between the armed forces of both countries and efforts to improve military cooperation.

Egyptian paratroopers and Russian air landing forces also carried out a number of activities and events as part of joint military training, which will continue until Oct. 29.

Weapons and jump training took place during the exercise, which comes within the framework of joint cooperation between the Egyptian and Russian armed forces.



UN chief condemns military coup in Sudan and calls for release of PM



NEW YORK, 26 October 2021, (TON): After the military seized power from the transitional government in Khartoum on Monday, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres strongly condemned the coup and “all actions that could jeopardize Sudan’s political transition and stability.”

He called for the immediate release of Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok and all others who have been arbitrarily detained, along with “the immediate reconstitution of the governing arrangements provided for under the constitutional document.”

He said “the unlawful detention of the prime minister, government officials and politicians is unacceptable and contravenes the constitutional document and the partnership critical for the success of Sudan’s transition.”

Guterres urged all stakeholders to swiftly return to dialogue and engage in good faith to restore the constitutional order and Sudan’s transitional process.

He added that the United Nations reiterates its unwavering commitment and support to the realization of Sudan’s political transition. Any attempts to undermine this transition process puts at risk Sudan’s security, stability and development.

US: Biden first US president to join ASEAN summit in four years

WASHINGTON, 26 October 2021, (TON): U.S. President Joe Biden will take part in a virtual summit with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the first time in four years Washington will engage at the top level with a bloc it sees as key to its strategy of pushing back against China.

The U.S. embassy in Brunei told media that Biden will lead the U.S. delegation for the ASEAN-United States summit, part of a series of ASEAN leaders' meetings this week.

The United States has not joined the meetings at the presidential level since Biden's predecessor, Donald Trump, attended an ASEAN-U.S. meeting in Manila in 2017.

Analysts say Biden's meeting with the 10-nation bloc reflects his administration's efforts to engage allies and partners in a collective effort to push back against China.

They expect Biden to focus on collaboration on climate change, supply chains and infrastructure.

He is also expected to assure ASEAN that a recent U.S. focus on engagement with India, Japan and



Australia in the so-called Quad format and a deal to supply Australia with nuclear-powered submarines are not intended to supplant ASEAN's central role in the region.

Edgard Kagan, senior director for East Asia at the White House National Security Council, stressed

last week that Washington does not see the Quad as "an Asian NATO" and that it was not intended to compete with ASEAN.

Poland deploys more soldiers on border with Belarus due to migrants

WARSAW, 26 October 2021, (TON): Minister of National Defense of the country Mariusz Blaszczak said "the number of Polish soldiers helping to guard the border with Belarus will be increased to 10 thousand."

Blaschak wrote on Twitter "we are increasing the number of soldiers helping the Border Guard by 2,500. In the near future, about 10,000 soldiers from the 12th, 16th and 18th divisions will monitor the impenetrability of the border."

As previously reported by the Border Guard, over the weekend, two groups of illegal migrants tried to storm the border of Belarus and Poland by force. They threw stones and sticks at the border guards and soldiers of the Polish Army. Two soldiers had to be hospitalized.

Recently, Lithuania, Latvia and Poland reported an increase in the number of detained illegal migrants on the border with Belarus and accused the official Minsk of creating a migration crisis.

In connection with this situation, the President of Poland introduced a state of emergency on the territories bordering with Belarus, and the army and the police were involved in protecting the border.



Italian official praises good relationship with Saudi Arabia

ROME, 26 October 2021, (TON): The state of bilateral relations between Italy and KSA is excellent, Italian Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs Manlio Di Stefano said after he met Saudi Deputy Foreign Minister Waleed Al-Khuraji in Riyadh.

Di Stefano is in Saudi Arabia to participate in the summit of the Middle East Green Initiative, as part of Italy's commitment to the action on climate change as President of the G20 and co-President of COP26.

Di Stefano said "with the Saudi Deputy Foreign Minister Waleed Al-Khuraji we verified the excellent state of bilateral relations and discussed regional scenarios. It was a valuable opportunity to understand Saudi Arabia's current position on Libya, Afghanistan and Yemen, as well as on the state of its relations with Iran."

He explained that from his meeting "emerged the increased need for mediation in the various theaters, so that these situations of instability can finally normalize to the benefit, first of all, of the most vulnerable parts of the population. The Italian government, also holding the lever of the G20 presidency, is making every possible effort in this direction."

Di Stefano met also the Saudi Minister of Commerce, Majid bin Abdullah Al-Qasabi. The representatives of the two governments, Di Stefano said, "examined the great business possibilities that are opening up for companies in this moment of post-pandemic economic revival."

Italy is now the seventh largest commercial supplier to Saudi Arabia.



EU condemns detention of PM Abdalla Hamdok by Sudan military



BRUSSELS, 26 October 2021, (TON): The EU condemns the detention of Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok and other members of the civilian leadership by Sudan's military forces. We call on the security forces to immediately release those they have unlawfully detained. The actions of the military represent a betrayal of the revolution, the transition, and the legitimate requests of the Sudanese people for peace, justice and economic development. The right of peaceful protest must be respected; violence and bloodshed must be avoided at all cost; we also urge communication networks to be open. The EU will continue to support those working for a democratic Sudan with a fully legitimate civilian government ensuring peace, freedom and justice for the Sudanese people.

Afghanistan: Govt ready to start work on TAPI gas pipeline, says Akhund

KABUL, 27 October 2021, (TON): The Taliban government said “officials from Turkmenistan will visit Kabul this week to discuss continuing work on the TAPI pipeline linking the energy-rich Central Asian country through Afghanistan to Pakistan and India.”

The pipeline is expected to carry 33 billion cubic meters (bcm) of natural gas each year along a route stretching 1,800 km (1,125 miles) from Galkynysh, the world's second-biggest gas field, to the Indian city of Fazilka near the Pakistan border.

Mohammad Issa Akhund, the acting minister of mines and petroleum in the new Taliban government, said in a statement “we have been working hard for some time and we are ready to take pride in starting work on the TAPI project.”



The Afghan stretch of the pipeline will run from the northwestern border with Turkmenistan, south through the western city of Herat to Kandahar near the border with

Pakistan.

'Pakistan-Iran-Turkey trade routes can add value to OBOR project'

The statement said “Akhund met the ambassador of Turkmenistan ahead of a two-day visit by a delegation from the country that will start from Saturday.”

US urges Iran to show ‘good faith’ in talks resumption

WASHINGTON, 27 October 2021, (TON): The United States urged Iran to show good faith and quickly revive a nuclear deal after the clerical state indicated it would return to negotiations in Vienna next month.

Iran's nuclear negotiator said after talks with European Union mediators in Brussels that Tehran had agreed to resume talks in Vienna next month. These discussions had been on hiatus since June.

A State Department spokesperson said “we are prepared to return to Vienna, and we believe that it remains possible to quickly reach and implement an understanding on return to mutual full compliance with the 2015 nuclear deal.”

He said “the talks should focus on “closing the small number of issues that remained outstanding at the end of the sixth round of talks in June.”

“As we have also been clear, this window will not remain open forever as Iran continues to take provocative nuclear steps, so we hope that they come to Vienna to negotiate quickly and in good faith.”



WORLD VEGETARIAN DAY

October 1st is World Vegetarian Day. The day kicks off Vegetarian Awareness Month. World Vegetarian Day was established to provide education and awareness about vegetarian diets.

Most vegetarians abstain from eating meat. However, there are different types of vegetarian diets. The most common ones include:

- Lacto-ovo vegetarian – doesn't eat meat but does eat eggs and dairy products
- Vegan – doesn't eat meat products or any food that comes from animals
- Raw vegan – doesn't eat foods cooked above 115 degrees F.
- Macrobiotic – eats only unprocessed vegan foods, including whole grains and fish occasionally
- Pescatarian – the only meat they eat is fish
- Flexitarian – eat mostly a vegetarian diet but meat on occasion

There are many reasons people choose to become vegetarians. Some don't agree with eating meat from animals because they think it's inhumane. Others become vegetarians for health reasons. It's believed that vegetarian diets can reduce heart disease. Some believe this type of diet better helps to preserve the Earth.

There are about 355 million vegetarians in the world. Of all the countries, India has the most vegetarians. Mainly due to religious beliefs, nearly 40% of India's population doesn't eat meat. Other countries with high numbers of vegetarians include Israel, Taiwan, Italy, Austria, and Germany.



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF OLDER PERSONS

October 1st of each year is dedicated to highlighting the contributions that older people make to society. The International Day of Older Persons is also observed to bring awareness to the aging population.

Throughout history, older persons have



played an essential role in society. They have been leaders, teachers, and caretakers. However, older persons are also very vulnerable. They often face discrimination, abuse, and poverty.

By 2030, the number of people over the age of 60 is expected to grow by 46%. This means there will be 1.4 billion people over the age of 60. Older persons will outnumber youth and children under the age of 10. Part of the reason for this is older people are living longer than ever. Since the year 2000, life expectancy has increased by 5.5 years. The current life expectancy is 70 years for males and 75 years for females.

The aging population has a significant impact on society. It also presents unprecedented challenges. One of the biggest challenges is healthcare. As people get older, their health tends to deteriorate. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the number of chronic diseases will increase. This includes cancer, dementia, obesity, and diabetes. There will also be an increase in the number of falls. Falling is the leading cause of injury among seniors. One other major challenge is a shortage of healthcare workers and caregivers.

Being aware of these challenges now will help to prepare for the future of the aging



population. It will also help to ensure rights for the elderly are implemented. Despite the challenges, it's important to remember the value that older persons add to societies.



Pakistan's cotton and textile economy



The Nation



Pakistan's Cotton and Textile Economy: Intersectoral Linkages and Effects on Rural and Urban Poverty

Pakistan's cotton, textile, and apparel industries are key sectors of the nation's economy; their performance can contribute to either a rise or fall in poverty. These vital industries have faced a variety of challenges and opportunities in recent years, including world cotton price instability, liberalization of the multilateral clothing and textile trade, and sharp swings in the Pakistani macroeconomic situation. Using a computable general equilibrium (CGE) model and drawing on a national survey of Pakistani households, the authors of this report evaluate the consequences of several recent or prospective economic changes on Pakistan's cotton, textile, and apparel industries and poverty levels. The economic changes include an increased inflow of foreign capital, higher world cotton and textile prices, government subsidization of the textile industry, increased productivity in the cotton and textile sectors, and other possible developments. By presenting these scenarios, the report offers policymakers and analysts a guide to anticipating and shaping the future of economic growth and poverty reduction in Pakistan.



Pakistan's economy relies heavily on its cotton and textile sectors. The cotton-processing and textile industries make up almost half of the country's manufacturing base, while cotton is Pakistan's principal industrial crop, supplying critical income to rural households. Altogether, the cotton-textile sectors account for 11 percent of GDP and 60 percent of export receipts. The future of this vital component of the national economy is uncertain, however. These industries face the challenges of unstable world prices and increased competition resulting from global liberalization of the multilateral textile and clothing trade. At the same time, Pakistan's macroeconomic situation is volatile. Given such challenges and volatility, this study investigates what the future might hold for Pakistan's cotton and textile industries and its implications for rural and urban poverty reduction in the country.

The study uses a computable general equilibrium (CGE) model calibrated to a 2001-02 social accounting matrix of the Pakistan economy to conduct experimental simulations of possible economic changes. The CGE model results are linked to the nation-wide 2001-02 Pakistan Household Integrated Economic Survey to examine the implications the simulated developments have for Pakistani poverty.

Simulation 1 examines the effects of a doubling of foreign capital inflows, as occurred from 2002 to 2006, before a subsequent financial crisis emerged in 2008. Simulation 2 analyzes the counterfactual effects of an increase in world prices of cotton lint and yarn and/or textiles which would have offset declines experienced in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Pakistan's strong textile association motivates Simulation 3, which examines the effects of a 5-percent increase in government production subsidies to the industry. Simulation 4 uses a dynamic-recursive version of the model to analyze the short- and long-run effects of a 5-percent increase of total factor productivity (TFP) in cotton, lint and yarn, and textile production.

Textile industry in Pakistan

The textile industry is the largest manufacturing industry in Pakistan. Pakistan is the 8th largest exporter of textile commodities in Asia. Textile sector contributes 8.5% to the GDP of Pakistan. In addition, the sector employs about 45% of the total labor force in the country (and 38% of the manufacturing workers). Pakistan is the 4th largest producer of cotton with the third largest spinning capacity in Asia after China and India and contributes 5% to the global spinning capacity.[3] At present, there are 1,221 ginning units, 442 spinning units, 124 large spinning units and 425 small units which produce textile.

INTERNATIONAL COFFEE DAY

Every year on October 1st, International Coffee Day celebrates one of the world's favorite beverages. It's also a day to promote fair trade coffee and to raise awareness about the plight of the coffee growers.

It probably doesn't surprise you that coffee is one of the most consumed beverages in the world. In fact, after water and tea, coffee is the third most consumed beverage in the world. Almost 10 million bags of coffee around the globe are exported each month. In the United States, Americans drink 400 million cups of coffee a day. That sounds like a lot of coffee! But you might be surprised to know the United States doesn't even make the top ten for coffee-addicted countries.

The top ten countries that consume the most coffee include:

1. the Netherlands
2. Finland

3. Sweden
4. Norway
5. Canada
6. Lebanon
7. Germany
8. Brazil
9. Qatar
10. Switzerland

On this list, the United States ranks 14th for countries that are most addicted to coffee. There is one obvious reason that so many people drink coffee. This beverage contains caffeine, which helps to stimulate the nervous system. This in turn helps people feel awake, refreshed, and focused. Drinking the right amount of coffee each day is also linked to longer lifespans, reduced chances of getting Type 2 diabetes, and protection for the liver.



International Coffee Day