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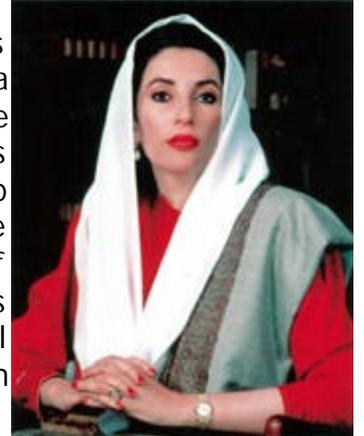
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Pakistan needs democracy for peace: Benazir

Demands commission to probe rigging junta's role in formation of governments in center and Sindh. Speaks of differences between people and ruling generals. Says: fight over water can lead to the break up of countries.

An Exclusive interview with 'Sangat'

The Chairperson of Pakistan People's Party, Ms. Benazir Bhutto has said despite rigging in the October elections, her party was in a position to form governments in the center and Sindh but the government used unconstitutional, illegal and undemocratic measures with the help of intelligence agencies and a para military force to keep PPP out. The twice-elected Prime Minister of Pakistan demanded the formation of a commission to examine the rigging of the elections of 2002 where, as she said, the results were changed after the ballots were cast. She also demanded a Commission to inquire into the illegal behavior of the Presidency, the intelligence and the Rangers in creating the Nab-zada group of defectors.



In an exclusive interview with Mr. Aziz Narejo, Editor, Sangat USA-Canada, she said the defectors of the party have colluded with the military dictator for personal benefit or out of fear. She said if they had a conscience, they could have resigned on policy differences with the Party.

On civil-military relations, she said there are major policy differences between the people and the ruling generals. The leader of Pakistan's most popular political party said that since General Zia, the thinking amongst the ruling Generals has been to have an ideological army that spreads Islam while the people believe in peaceful borders. They believe the success stories are countries that build economic and social strength.

In reply to a question, Ms. Bhutto said she stands for maximum autonomy for the provinces according to MRD decisions. She said if people give her party required majority in the Parliament, she would make constitutional changes.

On water issue, she said PPP supports the constitution in ensuring that water issues are settled equitably and to the comfort of all the federating units. She expressed the hope that the fair people in all the provinces will unite to stop the unfair water distribution. She cautioned that fights over water can lead to the break up of countries.

For the future of democracy, she says 'we need to change the curriculum of the armed forces and let our young officers have access to the Hamood ur Rahman Commission as well as the United Nations Human Rights Commission....The goal of our armed forces should be to strengthen democracy'. She says democracy must be given a chance if Pakistan is to emerge as a vibrant and vital society developing and progressing with its people.

Here is complete text of the interview:

AN: Mohtarma, what are your comments on the recently held elections in Pakistan and the formation of governments in the center and the provinces?

BB: In the words of the European Union the elections were flawed. Human Rights Watch noted that the decks were stacked against the democratic forces. Despite the rigging, PPP was in a position to form the government in the center and Sindh. The assembly sessions were unconstitutionally postponed to stop the PPP. The Presidency aided by the intelligence and the para military force known as the Rangers formed the defectors group. This was undemocratic and illegal. Many parliamentarians were threatened as well as offered bribes.

We need a Commission to examine the rigging of the elections of 2002 where the results were changed after the ballots were cast. We also need a Commission to inquire into the illegal behavior of the Presidency, the intelligence and the Rangers in creating the Nabzada group of defectors. This is one way to promote democracy in the country and save it from the clutches of dictatorship.

AN: Mohtarma, what is the cause of the defection of a large number of PPP MNAs, especially from the Southern Punjab? Some of the defectors have blamed the leadership of the party for their disenchantment.

BB: Yes, the defectors blame the leadership of the Party for their disenchantment. The Party rejects such claims. The defectors took the Party votes and ditched the Party to collude with a military dictator for personal benefit or out of fear of the pressures that could bear on them. Had they a conscience they could have resigned on policy differences with the Party.

AN: Mohtarma, some people say the PPP has to share the blame for its failure to form a government in the center, in coalition with ARD parties and MMA. Is it true? Or let us put it this way: What is the truth behind the allegations that the PPP avoided to enter into a coalition with MMA under some foreign pressure?

BB: Its incorrect that the PPP avoided to enter into a coalition with the MMA under foreign pressure. The PPP does have policy differences with the MMA on a wide range of issues including foreign policy, gender issues, minority rights and free entertainment choices. The

MMA was unprepared to back the PPP, which did have the larger numbers. Hence the parting of ways. However, in Sindh, the MMA was prepared to back the larger party and a vote swap on speaker's election did take place.

AN: Mohtarma, what was the nature of PPP-Government talks? Why they couldn't succeed?

BB: The dialogue failed because the regime wanted to keep the PPP out. The regime did not want to accept the verdict of the people, which was for the PPP. Every Gallup poll showed it. Without the PPP no government could be formed. We held the balance of votes. The regime unconstitutionally postponed the Parliament session to break up the PPP strength.

AN: Madam, many people feel that there is a void in the country and the junta is virtually unchallenged and free to carry out its repressive and undemocratic policies? Why ARD, of which your party is a major component, has not been able to effectively mobilize the masses?

BB: It is a good question as to why the ARD was unable to mobilize the masses. It certainly has tried to do so. Perhaps part of it is that the newspapers can carry more opposition news in contrast to the censorship of the past. This allows a certain ventilation of political grievances. Ultimately, its the people who can overthrow the government through street demonstrations.

AN: Mohtarma, you have been Prime Minister of the country twice. And on both the occasions, you were not allowed to complete your term in the office? Why did that happen? What do you think are the causes for the destabilization of democratic governments in the country? How do you think such things can be avoided in future?

BB: There are major policy differences between the people and the ruling Generals. Since General Zia, the thinking amongst the ruling Generals has been to have an ideological army that spreads Islam. The people believe in peaceful borders believing the success stories are countries that build economic and social strength.

AN: Mohtarma, there is an MRD decision on record calling for maximum autonomy for the provinces. You have been Prime Minister twice. Why couldn't you take measures to fulfill that pledge? What measures would you take if you come to power again?

AN: Yes, the PPP and the MRD parties are committed to maximum autonomy. I stand by it today. I need the people to give the PPP under my leadership a two thirds majority to make the constitutional changes possible.

AN: Mohtarma, people of Sindh are facing monumental economic, social, political and cultural problems. No major project has been started there since the first PPP government in the 1970s? (The projects planned by your governments, like the Thar Coal Power Plant and others were scrapped by the successive governments). Many people have lost all the hope and are committing suicides at an alarming rate (rate of suicides in Sindh is higher

than that of all the other provinces combined). How do you think this situation can be changed and some hope can be inculcated in the people?

BB: The rights of a people are connected to the development of democracy. Unless there is democracy and the rule of law, the colonial treatment of the people will continue as will the ethnic prejudice. Ethnic prejudice is so rampant that the establishment refuses to hold a proper census. If all Pakistanis are considered equal citizens, there should be little problem with holding a census. The struggle for emancipation from dictatorship must continue and PPP needs your support to have the October fraud rejected. Pakistan needs democracy for peace, ending terrorism and giving people a better standard of life. Democracy means elections under an impartial administration, an independent election commission, proper electoral rules and a proper vote count and announcement system.

AN: Mohtarma, due to an acute shortage of water, agriculture has suffered tremendously in Sindh. People in Sindh have been demanding to follow the 1991 water accord. Three provincial assemblies had passed resolutions against the Kalabagh Dam. But the present government is avoiding to follow the 91' accord and carrying out plans to construct Akhori-Sanjwal Dams, with larger combined storage capacity than Kalabagh, against the wishes of the people of Sindh and has also undertaken to construct an illegal Thal Canal? How do you think PPP can help the people of Sindh in this and avoid an unprecedented human catastrophe?

BB: PPP supports the constitution in ensuring that water issues are settled equitably and to the comfort of all the federating units. Unfortunately, the constitution and the democratic rights are trampled making for a difficult situation. I hope that the fair people in all the provinces will unite to stop the unfair water distribution. Fights over water can lead to the break up of countries.

AN: Mohtarma, there is a long-standing, popular demand by the people of the four provinces to make their respective languages, i.e., Punjabi, Sindhi, Pushto and Balochi as national languages of Pakistan along with Urdu. What is your party's stand on that demand?

BB: The PPP believes that there is no conflict between the promotion of regional languages and Urdu. Indeed the Party is committed to the promotion of all regional languages and cultures as a vehicle for the promotion of greater unity, understanding and harmony between peoples.

AN: Mohtarma, do you see a democratic culture developing in Pakistan? Do you see any hope of a democratic government in Pakistan in near future? How do you think that dream can come true? What is your vision for Pakistan?

BB: A democratic culture can emerge if we change our attitudes. For this we need to change the curriculum of the armed forces and let our bright young officers have access to the Hamood ur Rahman Commission as well as the United Nations Human Rights Commission. In Thailand, the goal of the army is to promote democracy. This must be made the goal of our armed forces too. Democracy must be given a chance if Pakistan is to emerge as a vibrant and vital society developing and progressing with its people.

AN: Mohtarma, as you may be aware, the United States Government has put Pakistan on the list of the countries, whose nationals have to register with the INS. Many Pakistanis are extremely apprehensive as they fear that they may be discriminated against, arrested or even deported. Do you think you can approach the appropriate US authorities and ask for removal of Pakistan from that list?

BB: I am concerned about the siege mentality, which is developing amongst Pakistanis with the new rules in place by the INS. I understand that America must take every precaution to protect its citizens and its territory. I wrote President Bush on this matter asking that the inclusion of Pakistanis be reviewed given Islamabad's role as an ally. I am concerned that the inability of the Musharraf regime to stop the Taliban and Al Qaeda escaping from Tora Bora and the rise of religious parties under the Generals has given our fair country a negative image. Today the Pakistanis as a whole are paying the price for a dictatorship that is unable to enforce the writ of state and give confidence to its own people or the larger world community about its ability to ensure security.

Editorial comments

Democracy in Pakistan?

The junta is shamelessly playing a farce in Pakistan by imposing 'manufactured' governments in the center and the two most populous provinces and calling it a return to democracy. It is a drama of the lowest order! The whole world witnessed how the elections were rigged, how arms were twisted, how loyalties were purchased and how assembly sessions were postponed until required numbers were secured! The most brazen acts of horse-trading were witnessed when some ISI operatives, army representatives, Jamali, Shujaat, turn-coat Faisal and other high ups camped in Karachi to finalize the 'deals' to form a lackey government in the province.

A majority of the people is of the view that as long as the molester of Pakistani constitution, a representative of the armed forces is head of the state, a supra-constitutional body, NSC, is above the parliament and as long as the people's representatives are forced on the mat, choked by long boots, it cant be called a return to civilian rule. It could best be a transition to a civilian rule as was Junejo's in 1985 until the hell's angels took Zia away. People of Pakistan will have to wait until such a happening one more time! What a pity!

Actually a worst kind of joke is being played in Pakistan these days. A shameless circus indeed!

Why the uniformed men don't realize that it is in their own interest to leave the civilians alone? Why don't they see the writing on the wall? Why they want to invite another catastrophe by denying the people of their inalienable right of self-governance? Why they want to repeat the blunders of 1971? Don't they know that longer they remain in power, closer they bring the demise of Pakistan?

It must be noted here that many fellow Pakistanis strongly feel that military supremacy has to end if the country is to come out of the hole. They also feel that democracy, rule of law, justice and fair play will bring stability to the region and peace and prosperity to all the citizens.

ARD, a silent alliance

Alliance for Restoration of Democracy, ARD, (a political grouping that is (was) the people's only hope to defeat the military adventurists), seems to be on its way to dissipation as it has miserably failed to be relevant in the present situation and has utterly failed to counter the government moves. It simply is no match to the government machinery, which has access to unlimited resources of the country.

Two main components of ARD, PPP and PML (N), which claim to have mass following, look so helpless, so meek, so cornered and so pushed to the wall! Some of it may be due to their inherent weaknesses and some of it may be because they lack any initiative. They have been on the defensive for so long that they have forgot to LEAD. They haven't come up with any vision. They look beaten up and disheveled, playing on the pitch prepared by 'armywallas' instead of setting up their own agenda and forcing the illegal government to be on the defensive.



It appears clear now that if ARD doesn't put up its act together, it will give way to new political forces that will take the country by storm and will give it a new direction, awarding the provinces maximum autonomy and cutting the army to its size.

The present regime, which reminds one of the ignominious Ayub era, however, has its eyes on playing a very long innings. Will it succeed in its malicious designs? Well, it depends how soon it meets its own Shaikh Mujibur Rehman and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto

Water situation worsens in Sindh

During the last 4 years, Sindh has suffered heavily as the acute shortage of irrigation water has hit it hard, severely affecting its agriculture production. The economy of the province has been virtually devastated resulting in large-scale despondency among the population. Despite such a calamitous situation, the Government of Pakistan has constructed a brand new mega canal, called Thal Canal, to irrigate desert lands in the Punjab (that have never been irrigated) at the cost of the already irrigated lands in Sindh.



All the irrigation experts in Sindh are unanimous that Thal canal will completely ruin the agriculture in Sindh. The government is going even beyond that and is planning to construct Akhori-Sanjwal water reservoirs with an accumulated capacity more than that of Kalabagh Dam.

At a water conference held in Hyderabad recently, the president of Sindh Abadgar Board, Abdul Majeed Nizamani, pointed out that according to official figures, (compared to the last year), the cultivation in Punjab during the current year was 104 per cent, in the NWFP the cultivation was 101 per cent, in Balochistan it was 77 percent but in Sindh it was only 71 per cent. He said that the agriculture sector of the province had suffered a loss of Rs27 billion during the last two years and during the current year it was likely to suffer a loss of Rs20 billion.

Situation is going to be worse for the next crop as the Punjab officials have refused to abide by the decisions of the constitutional body, Indus River System Authority, IRSA and have filled Mangla Dam 10 feet over the agreed level while allowing the Tarbela Dam reservoir to fall below the required level.

A report in daily Kawish says that Sindh representative to IRSA has sent a protest letter to IRSA Chairman, complaining against the attitude of the Punjab officials and has called for immediate rectification.

The report says the Punjab officials/WAPDA were required to keep the Mangla reservoir level at 1078-1081 feet while the level was recorded at 1090.5 feet on 2nd January, 2003. (That will mean increased water for Punjab in next 3 months). On the other hand, the level at Tarbela reservoir was to be maintained at 1419.1-1433.8 feet. But the level was recorded at 1416.51 feet on 2nd January 2003. (That will mean less water for Sindh in next three months for Rabi and early sowing of Kharif).

The report says that in another violation of the agreed plan, Sindh was made to suffer more shortage of water in the Rabi season (Oct-31 Dec.). It was agreed that Punjab and Sindh will equally share the shortage. The shortage for that period was recorded at 26.5 per cent. During that period Punjab got 8.881 MAF of water (25.4 per cent of shortage) while Sindh got 6.174 MAF of water (29.6 per cent of shortage).

'Hehrra hanjja thhiyaan burey hinn-a Bhambhore mein!'

One after the other!

One after the other! They can't let the people of Sindh live in peace. They have ruined its economy, its socio-political conditions, its culture, every thing! What they want now? Do they want all of us to commit a collective suicide, a la Georgetown?

They don't have any regard for the mandate of Sindhis. Are we an enemy territory? Do they have to occupy us and rule us indefinitely?

Daily Kawish carried a news recently that says after their success in the construction of (the illegal) Thal Canal, WAPDA and Punjab are bent upon constructing Mangla-Mirala link canal with a capacity of 10,000 cusecs. Where is that water? Who is going to suffer? Sindh has already lost more than 50% of its agriculture. That is a lot in an agriculture-based economy. How much more they want from Sindh? It is already pushed against the wall. Thal, Kalabagh, Akori, Ghazi Barotha, Chashma-Jhelum link canal, Mangla, all for the benefit of ONE province! WHAT IS THIS?

Kawish report says Sindh, Sarhad and Balochistan, all have voiced against this new 'fitna'. Only Punjab government wants WAPDA to go ahead with it.

A citizen of Pakistan has every right to ask the government where will it all end? What do they want? Why won't they listen to Sindh? Is it forcing 'us' to carve a different path? Will sanity ever prevail in Pakistan? I earnestly hope it does because the alternate is so 'bhayanak' for all.

Thal Canal will adversely affect Sindh

A report in daily Dawn says Thal canal will have negative effects on Sindh. It says following the completion of the Thal canal project, Sindh will become a barren territory and interior of the province will be propelled to the brink of starvation and despondency.

"Water shortage scenario in Sindh is sliding from bad to worse and after construction of the Thal canal, the agriculture system will be annihilated," said Zahid Bhurgari, President Farmers' Association, Sindh, while speaking at a certificate-distribution ceremony for the participants of a trainers' workshop on organizational and financial management for the farmers' organizations at the Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science and Technology (SZABIST) recently.

He said Sindh irrigation system stood on the brink of a time bomb, as non-availability of water had devastated almost all precious crops. "Poverty rate in Sindh is going up with an alarming pace due to unfavorable situation, as majority of the population heavily depends on agriculture yields for earning their livelihoods and any catastrophic situation in this regard will lead to financial bankruptcy," he added.

SANA Condemns Construction of Akhori Dam

SANA has condemned the federal government's illegal and unethical decision to construct Akhori Dam. A press statement issued in Lawndale, CA said "SANA condemns in the most unequivocal terms the conspiracy hatched by the undemocratic regime in Pakistan to build Akhori Dam - a new dam of the same magnitude as the condemned Kalabagh Dam on the River Indus. SANA would like to remind the people of Pakistan that such unilateral and unjustifiable decisions taken by the self appointed rulers of the country to appease only one set of people have harmed the harmony among the peoples and hampered the solidarity of Pakistan in the past and will not bode well for the future of the country. In a situation where once fertile lands in Sindh have been turned barren due to illegal construction of dams and canals in the upstream areas in northern Pakistan due to unfair distribution of Indus water by the people manning WAPDA and IRSA; and due to a powerful military lobby trying desperately to irrigate their lands in Thal and Cholistan desert at Sindh's cost; we consider the construction of a new dam will be a fatal blow to the life and agriculture in Sindh. In a situation where even the drinking water has become scarce in some areas of Sindh, the construction of a gigantic storage reservoir will only mean death to the already famine-stricken Sindh. SANA strongly objects to the manner in which such important decisions are taken at the whims of one group of persons in blatant disregard to the wishes of the people of Sindh and other smaller provinces. SANA calls upon the justice-loving people of Pakistan to resist such divisive moves of the undemocratic and repressive regime with full might and raise their voice in unison with that of Sindhi people so that a message could be delivered to the dictators that the rights of the Sindhi people shall be protected at all cost".

Water Committee urges to shelve Thal Canal



The Sindh Water Conference held in Hyderabad in the last week of December 2002 under the aegis of the Sindh Water Committee, has demanded of the government to shelve the greater Thal canal project. A resolution, adopted at the conference, said that the canal was illegal, unconstitutional and immoral and it would convert Sindh into a desert.

Speakers at the conference criticized the rulers and Punjab for denying Sindh of its share of water. SWC president and Awami Tehrik Chief Rasool Bux Palijo said that according to international law, Sindh, being at the tail end of the Indus, had the exclusive right over the river waters. He said that no new canal, according to the law, could be constructed on the River Indus without the permission of Sindh but Punjab had ignored the law and violated a written agreement in this regard. He said that Sindh also had a share in the waters of the Mangla Dam.

A leader of the Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam, Khalid Mehmood Soomro, said that 100 religious scholars had signed a Fatwa (religious decree) stating that Sindh had the exclusive right over the waters of the River Indus.

The president, Sindh Abadgar Board, Abdul Majeed Nizamani, pointed out that according to official figures, the cultivation in Punjab during the current year was 104 per cent, in NWFP the cultivation was 101 per cent, in Balochistan it was 77 percent but in Sindh it was only 71 per cent. He said that the agriculture sector of the province had suffered a loss of Rs27 billion during the last two years and during the current year it was likely to suffer a loss of Rs20 billion.

The speakers suggested that United Nations, SAARC, OIC, Amnesty International and other organizations should be approached to resolve the water distribution issue between Sindh and Punjab and make arrangements for equal distribution of water to Sindh.

Sea's intrusion into the Sindh coastal belt

By Engr. Abdul Waheed Bhutto

With the country's population increasing at an alarming rate, fresh water supply is being continually depleting, increasing the importance of ground-water monitoring; ground water being the principal source for domestic, industrial, and agricultural use.

In addition, ground water supports freshwater ponds, wetlands, streams, and estuary environments, all of which represent specific and important habitats for native flora and fauna. Coastal resources, such as streams and estuaries depend on aquifer discharge to maintain yearly and seasonal flow rates and to regulate water chemistry. The particular ecological significance of the discharge depends on the rate at which freshwater mixes with saltwater. Slow mixing zones such as streams and estuaries depend on the natural influx of freshwater for sustained health of the ecosystems.

Water cycle: Water cycle is the process of collecting, purifying and distributing earth's water. The sun evaporates water from oceans, rivers, lakes, soil and plants into the atmosphere. This water vapor is carried by winds and when cooled, condenses into clouds and falls as precipitation (rain, sleet, hail or snow). Fresh water runs off into lakes, streams and rivers, which return water back to the ocean, completing the cycle. Water also seeps deep into the ground and is stored as ground water in aquifers (spaces between rock formations).

Seawater intrusion: One of the major concerns most commonly found in coastal aquifers, is the induced flow of salt water into fresh water aquifers caused by ground-water development, known as salt-water intrusion. Seawater intrusion occurs when fresh water is withdrawn faster than it can be recharged near a coastline. Seawater generally intrudes upward and into an aquifer and around a well, though it can occur passively with any general lowering of the water table near a coastline. The transition zone (the interface where freshwater naturally mixes with seawater as it's discharged to the sea) naturally descends towards land as a wedge within aquifers along the coastline.

Freshwater, being lighter will float on top of seawater. Mixing of the two does not take place rapidly because of their different densities and as a result, a gradational, interface boundary normally forms between them. Movement of ground water caused by pumping, changes in recharge, or tidal action can cause a larger interface layer. Where there is little movement of ground water, the interface layer may be only several feet in thickness. When substantial aquifer activity is present, the freshwater/seawater interface may be as much as several hundred feet thick.

Seawater interface layer position is determined by the difference between the hydraulic heads of the seawater and freshwater and the volume of freshwater under-flow. If the freshwater gradient near the coastline (i.e., freshwater height above sea level) is high and the aquifer water balance is adequate to maintain flow to the seawater, the interface layers can be close to vertical and located off the shoreline. As the freshwater head decreases, the interface layer becomes less vertical and moves inland.

In this condition, seawater, being heavier, can flow under the freshwater and pushes it up slightly forming a Ghyben-Herzberg lens (i.e., the lens is the underground freshwater that floats on top of the seawater). If the freshwater head is maintained, the interface layer will remain relatively static. Under Ghyben-Herzberg conditions, a one-foot drop in freshwater head may result in a 40-foot movement in the freshwater/seawater interface layer. Consequently, relatively small decreases in a fresh water aquifer may have relatively large impacts on the intrusion of salt water into that aquifer.

Impact: An aquifer is a geological formation that has the capacity for storing and transferring water under the ground. Aquifers are replenished through recharge. Any surface activity which serves to reduce aquifer recharge has the potential to effect seawater intrusion. When the water level (head) in the aquifer is lowered, the flow of freshwater to seawater is reduced. If the flow is reduced sufficiently, the seawater-

freshwater interface will move inland. Limiting pumping and assuring that proper recharge is maintained can control seawater intrusion.

Sea intrusion: Delta region marks Sindh's 300km long coast with Arabian Sea. The region is dominated by subsidence and high sediment accumulation rates. The bulk of the sediments are transported by the Indus River along its 2000-km long route from its point of origin in the Himalayas. The Sindh shelf resembles a passive margin with a characteristic broad (about 100-km) shelf and relatively stable slopes. The Indus canyon has an average width of 8 km and depth (relief) of approximately 800 m. The canyon is 170 km long.

Indus River is the 23rd largest river in the world. It is the only major river on the coast of Pakistan. At present, it discharges in the Arabian Sea at two points, Turshian and Khobar. The discharge and nutrient-rich sediments load of the river have great influence on marine life (not only in the estuary but also in the near shore areas of the delta). Construction of channels, barrages, embankments, dikes and dams for hydroelectric power, irrigation and flood control has reduced water discharge into the delta region to about one fifth, while at present no water is allowed down the Kotri barrage for more than ten months of the year.

Intrusion of seawater from the Arabian Sea into the Indus River has been attributed to the diversion of river's flow. The quantity of outflow to sea has been progressively reducing, particularly after the construction of barrages, dams and link canals after the signing of the Indus Water Treaty, 1960. The actual outflow to sea at the time of independence was about 80 MAF, which has now reduced to 36 MAF.

The duration of the flow has also reduced to less than 2 months and that also only in high flood years. Studies have shown that Indus River used to throw 400 million tons of silt in the sea every year, which has now been reduced to just about 100 million tons a year. This gradual depletion in flow of sweet river water and rich silt into sea has led to sea water intrusion leading to hyper-saline condition in the coastal area that literally kills life in all forms, livestock and vegetation on land and fish and other edible marine varieties and the rich mangroves forest in the sea. The present salinity level of 40 to 50 ppt (particles per thousand) compared to 15 to 20 ppt half a century ago has already crossed the dead level mark.

Thatta, a predominantly agricultural district in Sindh, and situated where the Indus river flows into the Arabian Sea, has been worse affected. Out of total geographic area of 4.29 million acres, and the sea has invaded about 1.2 million acres of fertile land of Thatta and adjoining areas. The effects are not just restricted to land inundation but mangrove forests, an essential breeding ground for shrimps and freshwater fish species are disappearing fast.

There has also been severe damage to livestock. Saltwater intrusion caused a dramatic decline in livestock numbers in all the three subdivisions of Thatta District, bringing about depletion and erosion of ranges, shortages of fodder, pasture and potable water. This has resulted in mass migration of inhabitants. Affected population comprises mostly of rural areas, with 90 per cent of the total population concentrated in rural localities.

The area remains enslaved to poverty and illiteracy. High birth rates, low household incomes and small housing units all keep coastal community in a web of deprivation. Poverty in the areas touches 70 per cent. It is a mainly agrarian society where most of working force is involved in occupations in the primary sector (agriculture, forestry, fishing and animal husbandry).

Thousands of people, mainly farmers and fishermen, have left their ancestral places in search of livelihood after the Arabian Sea water has flooded them. Under the provisions of the Water Accord, 1991 a quantity of 10 MAF has been provisionally earmarked for outflow downstream Kotri pending further studies to be undertaken to establish the needs of minimum escapages down stream Kotri. Unfortunately the study has not been initiated even after 11 years of signing the Water Accord due to trifling objections raised on the terms of the study.

Economically, environmentally and socially sustainable water development solutions for Pakistan are vital as it is a key resource for its agricultural and industrial progress. Ironically, the issue of fresh water release below Kotri barrage for saving the eco-system has always been tackled politically or administratively, rather than environmentally.

Officials are trying to give the impression that the flow of freshwater into the sea is wastage of water, knowing well that it is a mandatory for keeping the coastal environment alive. The people who regard floodwater escapage to sea as waste and wish to store it will have to understand the nature's cycle before reaching on a conclusion.

The alternatives to current water crises are efficient water delivery systems for on-farm conservation and usage of ground water. The development of strategy to shift funding and water development planning toward more sustainable projects will provide long lasting social, environmental and economic benefits for progress and prosperity. Sound alternatives need to be evolved to meet critical energy and agricultural needs. We must move towards sustainable and indigenous renewable development and restoration of the rich integrity of the natural resources of Pakistan.

The government has been putting great stress on water development projects and for that matter brought various mega projects costing billions of rupees which would ultimately reduce further the fresh water flow past Kotri Barrage, degrading agricultural productivity, destroying mangroves and riverine forests and fisheries. The fundamental thing that should be duly recognized- before embarking upon decisions of such environmental significance that we should try to know and understand the risks and economic and social costs involved.

An injection of fresh water into the Indus could restore life and property. Several studies, including one major study carried out by the IUCN, have suggested that a discharge of 35 million-acre feet of water (MFA) is required at the delta to prevent further damage to deltaic area. But inter-provincial political differences and Islamabad's failure to assert its regulatory role in ensuring a judicious distribution of water among the provinces are seen as underlying factors obstructing a solution.

Time, however, is running out. The destruction that has so far taken place, although drastic, is still reversible. If the authorities do not ensure the flow of the required quantity of water in the Indus, things would be irremediable.

Posted by Mr. Ali Nawaz Memon

SANA Elections

Members of the Sindhi Association of North America, SANA expressed overwhelming confidence in the leadership of Sani Panhwar and Mohammad Ali Mahar and re-elected them unopposed as President and General Secretary respectively. An announcement by Election Commissioner Mr. Zafar Agha said other office bearers/members of EC were also elected unopposed.

The candidates, who have been elected for a two-year term that started January 1, 2003, are as follows:

President:	Sani Panhwar
Vice President:	Sajjad Siddiqui
Vice President	(Women Affairs): Nasreen Tareen
General Secretary:	Mohammed Ali Mahar
Joint Secretary:	Sohail Ansari
Information Secretary:	Kohsher Ahmed
Treasurer:	Shoukat Ansari
Regional Secretary Zone 1:	Khalid Channa
Regional Secretary Zone 2:	Sarfaraz Abbasi
Regional Secretary Zone 3:	Khalid Memon
Regional Secretary Zone 4:	Syed Jaffar Shah

Sindhi Press Chained

BBC Urdu Service has carried an article by Mr. Nisar Khokhar that describes how Sindhi press has been chained by the present army dictatorship. The regime has effectively banned Sindhi papers to carry any criticism of the government, specially its clandestine, repressive moves.

The article discusses the journey of the modern Sindhi press, which started with the publication of daily 'Hilal-e-Pakistan' from Karachi in 1972 and has reached the present

stage when there are more than ten daily newspapers being published from Karachi and Hyderabad alone and more than five weeklies and monthlies. It says, after English and Urdu, Sindhi has the most number of daily newspapers.

Some of the main points of the article:

- Sindhi press is known in Pakistan for its boldness
- Under the Musharraf regime, Sindhi press has lost that identity
- Sindhi press is facing unprecedented hardships, repression and harassment. Journalists are working in an atmosphere of fear.
- News Editors and reporters have been directed to go "easy" on army and the subjects of religion and the federation



-Sindhi press has been restrained from writing on how PML(Q) government was imposed on Sindh and as to which secret agencies were at work in the state guest house, Karachi, though the people of Sindh were able to know about these things through international media

- Being fearful of the increasing influence of Sindhi press, it has effectively been fettered
- Sindhi press may write on the so-called 'karo karee' and to some extent on the problem of the lack of irrigation water but it can in no way write on the arm twisting and the 'wonder-work' of the secret agencies and the incidents of suicide or self-immolation
- News rooms work under an unforeseen anxiety and fear as if somebody is constantly watching them
- If a reporter brings a story about army or its agencies in such a fearful atmosphere, it is immediately hushed away and is not allowed to reach junior editors and composers
- It is refrained to even use the word of 'army' in editorials or columns
- The secret agencies betray an aggressive, offensive abusive and insulting attitude while dealing with owners and editors of Sindhi press
- Very often they threaten to close down the newspaper or to stop the advertisements to them
- To keep a close eye on Sindhi newspapers an ISPR sub office has been established in Hyderabad
- It is yet to be seen how long can Sindhi press retain its unique identity of resistance?

Thoughts on a visit to Pakistan

By Mr. Mohammad Ali Mahar

After spending about a month in the swamp of corruption and lawlessness that is Pakistan, I have just returned a few days ago. As for the situation in Pakistan the less said the better. If there was the slightest pretense of integrity in the Generalissimo ruling the country through his jackboots, he has been successful in stripping himself of all notions of morality after his referendum, so-called general elections, formation of governments, and his (in)famous confession of having reverted to pragmatism (read highhandedness). Pakistan, Sindh being the most unfortunate part of which, is being run by an unholy alliance of the feudal lords, the brass and the mandarin. After the elections, all the men, on whose head that proverbial bird 'Huma' has cast its shadow, happen to be big tribal chiefs - most loyal servants of the powerful right from the time of Raj. However, the power securely rests with the brass. It is not the governors/chief ministers in the province but the corps commanders who are calling the shots. Not the nazims but majors and colonels of monitoring units in the districts. People as well as political parties seem to have lost their relevance as far as the affairs of the country are concerned. A party cobbled together, in the name of PLM (Q), by the power that 'ought not be' has been put up as a façade behind whose ugly face the generals plan to continue their dirty games. A motley crowd of jokers with fake degrees from madressas has been chosen to be the masters of people's destiny. Not very well known for their knowledge of the art of statecraft, they are content with their 10 millions rupees, and the title and the pomposity that accompanies it. The PPP, which was the last hope for Sindhis until recently, has lost its appeal too after their poor choice of candidates at the polls and dismal performance during formation of governments at center as well as Sindh. Unfortunately, the leader of the PPP - having realized that the three 'A's -- without whose blessings no one can rule Pakistan -- are not on her side for the time being, seems to have relieved herself of all responsibilities. The burden has fallen on the literally weak shoulders of Naheed Khan-Safdar Abbasi duo. The leader is either happy with a free life outside Pakistan or has fallen into the depths of despondency and helplessness and completely lost interest as well as faith in the politics of people. MQM holds sway over Sindh. They have already got a lion's share in the government and are demanding more. Even the federal government is not immune from their blackmailing and has already started considering ways to get out of their stranglehold. There exists no representation of Sindhis in the power structure - the excuse being that the president of the country is from Sindh. What a joke! There was some talk in the Urdu news media regarding an 'Indo-American conspiracy' to separate Sindh from Pakistan with the help of Altaf Hussain and the nationalists. Sindhis, too, have started considering options outside Pakistan. Sindhi journalists are being regularly harassed and manhandled. An office of the dreaded ISPR has been setup in Hyderabad to keep an eye on the Sindhi media. Sindhi newspapers are forced to implement a self-censorship policy and direct their correspondents to 'cool down' the stories before submitting them. BBC ran a story on the issue only a few days ago. The effectiveness of the elected government can be gauged from this one incident. Realizing joblessness being at its highest, when the PM Jamali announced that the ban on employment would be lifted shortly, the Sate Bank curtly reminded him that the dictates of IMF advice otherwise. One day while sitting with some of my friends, we saw on TV Gen. Musharraf entertaining Dr. Ishratul Ibad, the

governor of Sindh. Seeing the president of the country enjoying the company of a person who until only a few days ago was a fugitive from law and on whose head government had put up reward money, one of my friends quipped, "Look, how the highest official of the country is enjoying the company of a criminal." "Or is it", shot back another friend, "the highest official of a province enjoying the company of a criminal?"

WSI Conference in Washington, DC

A report by Mr. Khalid Hashmani

The third annual WSI conference successfully concluded at the Crown Plaza hotel in Washington DC on Saturday, November 9, 2002. It was a whole day affair consisting of four (4) main sessions and an evening of Sindhi music and songs. The conference was dedicated to Senator Paul Wellstone, who recently died in an airplane accident.

The panelists included academicians, researchers, politicians, and social and human rights workers. More than 150 attendees came from many US cities including Washington, DC and from overseas. Some of the well-known persons who participated in conference were Dr. Louis Flam, Mr. Afrasiab Khattak, Mr. Qamar Zaman Shah, Fr. Stephen Cohen, Dr. Harold Gould, Mr. Selig S. Harrison, and Mr. Ram Jethmalani.

The key take-aways from the conference were:

-Sindh and Sindhis continue to face exploitation and discrimination at the hands of Pakistani ruling clique.

-The illegal and immoral actions of the government of Pakistan such as the Thal canal and Kalabagh dam will ruin Sindh and its inhabitants and ultimately break Pakistan.

-Only a democratic and secular Pakistan, where provinces are sovereign and autonomous as guaranteed in the original 1940 Pakistan resolution can survive in the long term.

A summary of the conference proceedings is as follows:

The conference started at about 10 am with a short welcome address by WSI President, Mr. Sohail Ansari and Ms. Emma Reinhardt, a WSI Director of Advocacy.

First Session: Panelists: Dr. Jamal Hasan, Dr. Orlando Tizon, and Dr. Altaf Memon addressed this session. Dr. Jamal Hasan, a well-known writer and activist from Bangladesh, talked about the conditions that led to the first breakup of Pakistan. He blamed the colonial mentality of Pakistan military that wants to control and exploit smaller provinces for their own benefit. He warned that people of Sindh must be careful and resist fundamentalism, which has re-emerged and is destroying Bangladesh.

Dr. Altaf Memon, a prominent Sindhi, from Washington DC area provided an excellent backdrop to the proceedings that were to follow during the day. His paper traced the origins of water issue in Pakistan since the partition of India in 1947. A section titled "Political Maneuvering" in the paper discussed the key happenings that gradually reduced the status of Sindh from an autonomous and sovereign state to being a mere colony of Punjab in later years.

The next section titled "Progression of the Water Issue" gave an account of how systemically central government allowed the Punjab government to break each and every inter-provincial treaty to take more water than what was allowed on the basis of historical use, international water sharing conventions, or legal inter-provincial agreements.

The last section pin-pointed the current state of water dispute, where Punjab continues to move ahead with Thal Canal, the central government continues to talk about Kalabagh dam, all the while Sindh is being pushed to poverty and despair.

Second Session: The panelists of this session were: Dr. Louis Flam, Ms. Noor-un-Nisa Ghanghro, Mr. Afrasiab Khattak, Mr. Qamar Zaman Shah and Ms. Malavika Vartak.

Dr. Louis Flam is an Associate Professor in the Department of Anthropology at Lehman College of the City University of New York. In a close collaboration with the Institute of Sindhology, he spent many years in Sindh doing archaeological work in Sindh's Khirthar Mountains.

He speaks fluent Sindhi and has extensive knowledge about Sindh's culture and traditions. With the help of slides, he took the audience to a tour of Ghazi Shah excavation site and talked about how River Indus has played the role in flourishing Indus Civilization from 5000 BC. He informed that just a few months ago some old pottery items have been found that have writings in totally different script than the seals that were unearthed from Mohen-Jo-Daro. Much of the area of the archeological importance in this region lacks accessible roads and is best explored on foot. Dr. Flam, showed photographs, where once mighty Indus River had flowed and talked about the connection between Sindh, Sindhis, and the Indus River. With water being stopped drying up in Indus downstream, he wondered how the people of Sindh were going to survive? Mr. AFRASIAB KHATTAK, chairman of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), started his presentation that the views that he was going to express were his personal opinions and not that of HRCP. He said recently, he had opportunity to travel to Sindhi rural areas and met many people who spoke Sindhi and Marvari. After meeting these poor people, who had very little to eat, he has concluded that water and particularly Indus river is the "soul and life" of Sindhis. He added that central government's programs to build new cantonments and to encourage people from other provinces to move to Sindh, in their attempt to dilute Sindhi majority in their province would not succeed in creating domination of one province over other. The amount of water used in Punjab is not justifiable either on the basis of the existing laws and agreements or in accordance with the natural conventions. He added that people of Pakhtonkhwah support the people of Sindh in their rightful struggle against the denial of their water rights. Mr. Flam went on to say that there is a direct relationship between how water from the Indus River is distributed and the stability of Pakistan. People from small provinces will not put up with hegemony of Punjab.

Ms. Noor-un-Nisa Ghanghro, is a free-lance development consultant and is currently conducting a research on the fishing communities of Pakistan. Her work has played a role

in making several documentaries about the life of rural communities including wetlands, and life in deserts of Pakistan.

Her presentation that was accompanied by slides was on the impact of water shortage on a Sindhi fishing village called Kharochhann. She said that the story she was about to present was not of Kharochhann only but of every village and community located in the delta area of the Indus River. Tracing history of connection between Sindh's coastal areas and Indus, she said that between 1759 and 1873, Sindh had two major ports Ketī Bandar and Shah Bandar and Karachi was developed in later years. In those days Kharochhann was known as "Kashmir of lower Sindh". It had lush green vegetation, enormous mangroves, a variety of plant and fish life that was a source of good life to the people of Kharochhann. The large dams and huge canals that are being built upstream have reduced the flow of water downstream considerably. Now, there is very little vegetation and plant life around Kharochhaann. Where, once 300 fishing boats were source for local communities around coastal areas, today only 10 are in operation. Once when the brokers and other trade middlemen were local Sindhis, today there is a monopoly of outsiders. The vicious circle of poverty and hopelessness now encircles the people of Kharochhaann and surrounding communities. The literacy rate is less than 5% for men and less than 1% for female. The rate of mangrove reduction is running at about 6%.

She asked: WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS DESPERATE SITUATION? She quickly added: I AND OTHER EDUCATED SINDHIS - who are shying away from their responsibilities to effectively fight water shortage. She went on to say that sea-water intrusion will leave Badin and Karachi barren. If this happens, there is no future for Pakistan!

Syed Qamar-uz-Zaman Shah, is a former Senator and a former member of the Provincial Assembly of Sindh. He is the current President of the Sindh Chamber of Agriculture and the Federation of Chambers of Agriculture, Pakistan. He started his presentation that "Sindh and the River Indus are inseparable". The very name Sindh comes from the ancient name of the river that was once called SINDHU.

He said he has done considerable research on the issue of water shortage in Sindh and has written many papers. He urged WSI to publish these papers and distribute them so the people of the world will know the extent of the damage that huge dams such as Kalabagh and enormous canals such as Thal will bring to Sindh and its people.

Originally, the link canals of Punjab such as Chashma and Jehlum, were only built to be used during floods. What happens now? Even when there is no water coming to Sindh and the agriculture, plant, and human life is suffering downstream, these canals are operational at full capacity. He added that Kalabagh is not only dam but also a barrage. If one carefully looks at the drawings of Kalabagh dam, one will notice that the project also includes two canals. He asked, where would water come from to feed these canals?

The ground water in Sindh is salty and even building massive number of tube-wells will not alleviate water shortage. He concluded his presentation by saying that if the Kala Bagh dam is built, the history of Bangla Desh will be repeated. The water deprivation will ultimately force Sindhis to come out in streets, this will lead to a military action similar to what happened in Bangla Desh.

Ms. Malivika Vartak was a volunteer in the MOVEMENT TO SAVE THE NARMADA RIVER in India. She is currently associated with International Rivers Network (IRN). She is the IRN's

South Asia Campaigner and works with the groups that are fighting against building of large dams in South Asia.

She briefed the attendees on the recent World Commission on Dams (WCD) report. This report covers the social, economic, and environmental harm from large dams. The World Bank and IUCN established WCD in 1968 as an independent body to review the effectiveness of large dams and make recommendation for planning water and energy projects. After conducting research and field studies of over 1,000 dams, it issued a report appealing all financial institutions such as World Bank, Asia Bank, and Islamic Bank to examine closely the social and environmental impacts of the projects they support. WCD in the report has asked these financial institutions to immediately establish independent, transparent and participatory reviews of all their planning and ongoing dam projects.

In particular, it asks that no project be approved without informed consent of indigenous peoples, and without the demonstrated public acceptance of all those who will be impacted by such projects. The report further demands that the financial institutions place a moratorium on funding the planning or construction of such projects until they are found to be in the compliance of the WCD recommendations.

The social consequences of large dams and other such projects are that they adversely impact populations downstream. These projects can result in whole societies to loose access to their natural resources and cultural heritage.

The report states that most large dam schemes fail to recover their costs. The report points out that approximately 20% of irrigated land affected by dams suffer the problem of salinity. The report further goes on to show that in many cases, large dams have led to irreversible loss of species and ecosystems.

The report states that impounding rivers invariably result in increased degradation of coastal deltas due to reduction in sediment input. In 60% of water diversion projects, the data shows that impeding the passage of migratory fish species was the most frequently observed ecosystem impact.

The report shows that the poor and vulnerable groups invariably suffer a disproportionate cost of water diversion projects without gaining an equivalent share of the economic benefits of such projects. The report concludes that dams (water diversion projects) have had a serious impact on the lives, livelihoods, cultures and spiritual existence of indigenous peoples. Due to neglect and lack of capacity to secure justice because of structural inequities, cultural discrimination and economic and political marginalization, indigenous people have suffered disproportionately from the negative impacts of water diversion projects.

Third Session: The panelists of this session were: Ms. Noor Naz Agha, Dr. Harold Gould, Mr. Selig S. Harrison, and Dr. Hamid Hussain. Moderator: Ms. Senita Mukhi

Ms. Noor Naz Agha, a prominent lawyer from Hyderabad, started her presentation with this important question: WHY DID SINDH JOIN PAKISTAN FEDERATION? She herself replied this question by saying "IT WAS BECAUSE AUTONOMY AND SOVEREIGNTY WERE ENSHRINED IN THE 1940 PAKISTAN RESOLUTION.

Unfortunately after the creation of Pakistan, those who have usurped power from people have conveniently forgotten these fundamental rights of provinces. People with vested

interests have enacted many discriminatory laws contrary to the promises by the founders of the Pakistan that all citizens will be treated equally in Pakistan. The laws against women are used to deny equal rights to women.

She added that provinces have fundamental right to decide their future relationship within Pakistan. If we talk of the rights of people of Kashmir than we should also recognize the rights of Pakistani provinces to decide their future. She concluded that the future of Pakistan is not very bright unless it becomes a democratic and secular country.

Dr. Harold A. Gould, a visiting Scholar of South Asian Studies at the Center for South Asian Studies at the University of Virginia started his presentation referring to his discussions with Mr. Shafik Siddiki (a prominent Sindhi from Washington DC area) that Kashmir is lesser threat to peace and stability of South Asia than hegemony of Pakistani military rulers.

Tracing the political evolution after British left India, he said where as India quickly moved to have it's own constitution, the Pakistani leaders have retained a hierarchical system on a pattern of how British used to rule India. In fact the troubles of Pakistan are rooted in this structure. The separation of Bangla Desh occurred because the members of the ruling class insisted on maintaining their dominance. This pattern started in early years and has continued for much of the last 56 years with the exception when Mr. Z. A. Bhutto assumed power. Although, Mr. Bhutto was no angel, but he did bring many people from the lower strata of Pakistani society into mainstream society who previously did not have any say in how the country is run.

The problem with the hierarchical structure that it is inherited from the British colonial rule and is based on the principle that few members who are part of the structure must rule the remaining unfortunate people. The present structure does not allow grass root people to assert their influence to build institutions. Much as British ruled, military, landlord class and ISI run Pakistan's non-representative system.

He criticized the US policy by saying that the US policy has not been helpful to change this system. He asked the US administration to help in sending the Pakistani military back to their barracks so that Pakistan can begin the task of democratic evolution.

The next speaker was Mr. Selig S. Harrison, who is a Senior Scholar of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. He has specialized in South Asia and East Asia and is the author of five books on these regions. Mr. Harrison is frequently invited to testify as an expert witness before congressional committees. The books that he has authored include "In Afghanistan's Shadow: Baluch Nationalism and Soviet Temptations (1981)" and "The widening Gulf: Asian Nationalism and American Policy (1978)". Previously, he has served as Senior Fellow in Charge of Asian Studies at the Brookings Institution and as a Professional Lecturer in Asian Studies at the John Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies.

He started his presentation by mentioning that he had met and known almost all of the military rulers of Pakistan including Ayooob Khan, Yahya Khan, Zia ul-Haq and Pervez Musharraf. But, he feels that Pervez Musharraf is the most dangerous of all. He has installed hundreds of retired and active military officers in almost all the civilian sectors from Pakistan steel Mills to the Foreign Ministry. The Fauji Foundation is the single largest enterprise in Pakistan that runs 11 companies. This military enterprise controls many

industrial sectors, including trade and transportation. They have squeezed every civilian competition.

He cited a document titled "SOLDIERS IN BUSINESS" in which author writes that most of the companies of the Fauji Foundation are loosing money but the government keeps putting more funds into them. This foundation is exempt even from basic accountability requirements. Every thing points out that military has much in stake to retain and maintain the present system.

He said THIS IS DIFFERENT from what other military dictators did to Pakistan. It is incongruous that he tells Pakistani people that the military got rid of politicians to save Pakistan from corruption, but his military officers are as greedy as the civilian politicians were. It is also ironic that the US government, which has given millions to the Pakistan government to help it to eradicate fundamentalists in Afghanistan, has been rather quiet as Military divides secular groups to the benefit of the fundamentalist parties that support Talibans.

He urged the US government to change its policy and work to restore democratic and civilian rule in Pakistan. If a new war breaks out between Pakistan and India, Sindh will be in the forefront. It is up to Sindhis to work with secular forces.

He said the Water and Development Authority (WAPDA) is basically an organ of military and its preoccupied with schemes to deny Sindhis their due share of water where now famine like conditions prevail.

He concluded by saying that he hoped that the US government would use its leverage to get military out of meddling civilian affairs and will support Sindhis to in their struggle to secure their rights.

Dr. Hamid Hussain, originally from Pushtonkhwah (NWFP) province of Pakistan is currently a practicing medicine and teaches at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. He has a deep interest in the civilian-military relations. He has published several articles on Pakistan armed forces and other regional issues in Defense Journal (Karachi) and Action Quarterly (Washington DC). His presentation was titled "LAND AND MILITARY RULERS". British used land grants as a tool to subjugate local populations and maintain their rule. The lands were first granted to princely states and then through royal grants to local chieftains. Later, military and civilian bureaucracy was added to this list. Thus the three-level control structure consisted of landlord aristocracy, military and civilian bureaucrats. This practice continues today and precisely for the same purpose. The present practice is to allot 200 acres to every General, 150 acres to offices at Brigadier level, 100 acres at colonel level offices, and 30 to 60 acres to non-commissioned personnel.

According to a government report, half a million acres of land was distributed to 6,000 military officials. To develop more land and to make sure those who are allotted lands can maintain it; rulers require more electricity, more water and other infrastructure items. Guess what, when both civilians and military have to fight for the same resources, who is going to win?

The problem is that Pakistan is not a monolithic country. It is a multi-ethnic country but the military is not fairly representative of the country's ethnic composition. It mainly comes from two provinces and that too from five districts. This non-representative composition of military takes much more than other their share of resources at the expense of other sectors is a ticking bomb for a catastrophic conflict. No other country in the world has such practices. The colonial legacy of awarding land and recruiting defense forces from only particular areas has to stop.

Keynote address: Mr. Ram Jethmalani delivered the keynote address before dinner. He is a former Vice President of Asia & Australia for World Peace and a former Indian Minister for Law, Justice and Community Affairs. He started his speech with words that "I was born a Sindhi, I am a Sindhi, and will die a Sindhi". He said he felt very sad and upset about what is happening to Sindh and Sindhis - water shortage, discrimination in jobs, and destruction of the Sindhi culture. Half of Shah's poetry is about Indus River. If the government is causing such a shortage of water in the Indus then it is a sign of colonialism.

He said violence is an act of terrorism. But when all the venues of redress are gone, when there is no right to free speech, then the right of cessation is justified.

Contrasting this situation, he cited an example from the struggle of Sindhis to maintain their script. He said when Nehru and Morrar Ji Desai connived to enact a law that would have required that Sindhi be written in Devanagiri instead of Arabic script, he went to the Indian High Court. There, he won the judgment that Sindhis have a right to use their original "Arabic" script.

He continued that nowadays many are talking and writing that Pakistan's future is bleak. However, he does not wish that to happen to Pakistan. But, the Pakistan's rulers must realize that they must stop the policies of discrimination and promotion of religious discrimination. He blamed America's earlier policies in Afghanistan for the 9/11 terrorist act and their actions for helping Zia ul-Haq to promote religious fundamentalism and giving blank check to Pakistan's ISI to foster religious groups. They did so to defeat Russia in Afghanistan. But, now the same forces are coming to haunt Americans.

He added that insurgency in Kashmir started after Russians were defeated in Afghanistan. The armed groups that no longer had Russians to fight turned their attention to Kashmir. Criticizing Indian government, he said that after insurgency started in Kashmir, Indian authorities fearful of new militant and armed groups lost their trust in the ballot box. They started rigging elections in Kashmir. He said he is glad that the Indian authorities have now realized their mistake and the last elections that were held were open and fair. The existence of 40,000 religious madrassas in Pakistan where students are taught only one religion have no access to materials that stimulate critical thinking and benefit of democracy is creating a non-tolerant culture. This is not the true Islam of Prophet, who once said that those who are in search of knowledge walk in the path of God and that ink of a scholar was more important than the blood of a martyr.

He said: "I believe that Pakistan can only survive if respects Sindhis, Sindhi culture and above all the principles of Sindhiat. He added that to survive as a respected country and to bring peace and prosperity to its people, Pakistan must make the "Sindhiat" a sovereign governing principle for Pakistan. After the keynote speech, everyone enjoyed a buffet six-course Sindhi cuisine dinner. It followed an evening of Sindhi music.

British Sindhis Celebrate Cultural and Literary Heritage

Several British Sindhis gathered at 'Sindhi Center of London' on December 28th, 2002 to celebrate holidays by organizing a cultural event. The World Sindhi Congress (WSC) and UK Sindhi Association (UKSA) jointly arranged this event. A similar event was organized early November last year.

The evening comprised of inauguration of three books of a British Sindhi writer, Mr. Sujan Rawtani. At the beginning, Mr. Murli Mukhi of UKSA, who presided over the event, welcomed the Mayor of Harrow and other distinguished guests for their participation. He emphasized that such events are very important to keep the community intact and to keep every one aware about our culture.

The first book '*katha*' was inaugurated by Mr. Janardon Joshi. In his inaugural speech Mr. Joshi said that Sindhis belong to the oldest civilization i.e. the Indus civilization. He admired the efforts of Mr. Rawtani for undertaking to write in his native language.

Dr. Lakhu Luhana, who is the Secretary General of WSC, inaugurated the second book by Mr. Rawtani. This was a poetry book titled '*kakh pan*' [straw and leaves]. He said in his speech that Mr. Sujan's poetry represents his belonging towards his motherland Sindh that he was forced to leave along with other hundreds of thousands after the partition in 1947. Dr. Lakhu said that even today the conditions for those Sindhis in Sindh are lamentable. Sindhis have been denied their basic rights and are being converted to minority in their own land.

The Mayor of Harrow inaugurated the third book titled 'Whose Choice?' He praised the contents of this book. He underlined the importance of celebrating one's own culture and language.

Mr. Sujan Rawtani, in his final speech thanked the host organizations i.e. UK Sindhi Association and WSC for arranging this evening and also expressed gratitude to the people who came to attend this event.

A musical session followed the speeches. Mr. Qamar Mahar, Warsha Manajani and Sardar Harbans Singh Suraj sang Sindhi folk and national songs. The evening concluded with the famous Sindhi dance called '*ho-jamalo*' in which almost entire audience participated.

Prestigious Assignment for Anwar Khwaja

Congressman Tom Delay, head of National Republican Congressional Committee, has appointed Anwar Ali Khawaja as Honorary Chairman of the Business Advisory Council. This appointment has been made on the merit, knowledge, experience, and input in reducing the national debt.

Mr. Khawaja has previously held various important assignments in Pakistan and USA. He served as press secretary to the former Prime Minister Pakistan Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in 1974 and also worked as Press Counselor in Pakistan Embassy, Washington D.C.

He put his 22 years in convenience store business starting in the year 1980 as a franchisee of 7-Eleven Inc. After being a successful franchisee of Southland Corporation in California, he now has his own independent business in the heart of Irving (Dallas area), Texas.

In virtue of his past experience, he will be able to attend political strategy meetings with top Republican leaders in Washington D.C. Congressman Tom Delay hopes that Mr. Khwaja will be a valuable resource in reducing the national debt, simplify the current tax code, cut wasteful government spending and eliminate government and regulations in business.

Niaz Hamayuni departs us

Another setback to Sindhi 'saahitiya'. A great son of Sindh, 'laajawaab' shair, poet of 'Aazaadi ailaan assaanjo, aazaadi paighaam assaanjo', Niaz Hamayuni has departed us. He was considered most important national poet of Sindh after Shaikh Ayaz. He played an important role in Sindhi 'jaaggartaa' in 60s and 70s. Niaz played an eminent role in the anti-one unit movement and was a moving force behind Sindhi Adabi Sangat alongwith Rashid Bhattee and others. He used to captivate his audiences with recital of his poetry in a beautiful melodious, 'madhur' voice.

Two of his collections of poetry books, 'saanneh jee saakh' and 'dharatee-a jaa geet' have become very popular in Sindh. He contributed to almost all the prestigious Sindhi publications including 'Mehran', 'Rooh Rehaan' and 'Suhni' and was a permanent feature at annual 'Jashan-e- Rooh Rehaan' gatherings.

He wrote poetry in Persian language too and was a critic of repute. Niaz Hamayuni was associated with Markazi Urdu Board and Writers Guild as well. He translated Shah's poetry in Persian, translated some Persian books in Sindhi including 'Taareekh Mazhar Shahjahani', some books on "hikmat". He also wrote and compiled some books on the subjects of 'hikmat' and literature.

A large number of Sindhi writers, poets, intellectuals and political activists have condoled the death of Niaz Hamayuni.

Niaz loved Sindh to the utmost and always dreamed of her emancipation. He suffered a lot because of his beliefs; and lived a poor man's simple life but with a great self-respect and pride.

Here is a poem by Niaz:

"Rahnnoo naahey koorr:-u hittey"
Makli thhee ajju ggorrha ggarrey,
Miani thhee faryaad karey
aahey ko jo Sindhri khey
ajju saddhriyan khaan aazaad karey?

Assaan murr::an jaa kee-na-kee aahiyoon
bhaley kariyo sao phhand-a khaanee
Marvesoon per Sindh na ddesoon
Hoshoo-a jo sauggandh-u khaanee
Assaan ghannoee sikhee chukaaseen
haanney na kujh seikhaarey ko
vatun-a jee hubb-a eemaan assaanjo
sooree bhal seengaarey ko
Sindhri tunhinjan saangiyun khey
jinn ddinee ttappaey ttaunnee aahey
saamoe jo sunhun ta
unhun saan hikk-a hikkaanee karnnee aahey
yaa ta assaan ja sir-a veendaa
yaa dhaariya thheenda dhoorr:: hittey
sach-a jee saakh salaamat rahandee
rahnnoo naahey koorr:: hittey

Such was the spirit of the man called Niaz Hamayuni! I mourn the death of an icon of Sindh. (AN)

Jamal Rind passes away

HYDERABAD, Nov 19: Noted Sindhi writer and educationist Jamal Rind died here on Tuesday morning due to cardiac arrest. He was 69.

Jamal Rind had served as the principal of the Public School Hyderabad for many years. He had also served as the secretary, Sindh Text Book Board.

He belonged to the first generation of progressive Sindhi writers. He wrote over a dozen short stories and was awarded for his short story "Mani jo Gabho" (a piece of bread) by the Sindhi Language Authority.

His body was taken to his ancestral village of Jhol, Sanghar 003.537ey

Dr. GM Bhurg 0. -1s

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I bet ya' didn't know

By Ghulam Mohiuddin

The world's highest hedge is in Cirencester Park, Gloucestershire, England. It towers 30 feet high, and its annual clipping takes 10 days.

A prayer book still used in the Royal Chapel of Granada, Spain, was originally that of Queen Isabella, who died 476 years ago.

Baby boomerang: 18 million adults ages 18 to 34 live with their parents, up 42% since 1970.

A caiman, related to the alligator, has 80 teeth. When one wears down, a new one grows in its place. A caiman can go through 3,000 teeth in a lifetime.

At least 220,000 people age 65 and older live with a partner to whom they aren't married--up 85% from 1990.

Vladimir Lenin (1870-1924) led the Russian revolution and ruled the Soviet Union until his death

The last czar of Russia was Nicholas II, who was forced to abdicate in March 1917. He and his family were shot to death in 1918.

Communism was based on the ideas of German philosopher Karl Marx (1818-83), whose COMMUNIST MANIFESTO appeared in 1848.

It is estimated by the National Population Council that 74 billion human beings have been born and died in the last 500,000 years.

Lloyd's of London, the best-known association of insurance underwriters, does not write life insurance.

The first commercial radio station in the U.S., KDKA Pittsburgh, began broadcasting in November 1920.

In 1910, a football team was penalized 15 yards for an incomplete forward pass.

The fastest dog, the greyhound, can reach speeds of up to 45 miles per hour. The breed was known to exist in ancient Egypt more than 5,000 years ago.

The Sahara Desert comprises an area as large as Europe. Its total landmass is some 3,565,565 square miles

Source: [AikensLaughs](#)

