

BI-LINGUAL MONTHLY PUBLISHING FROM LONDON

L  
O  
N  
D  
O  
N

I  
N  
T  
E  
R  
N  
A  
T  
I  
O  
N  
A  
L

h  
O  
R  
E

October  
2021

Page 17

A Magazine for Scholarly, Literary, Political, Economic and Religious Activities

[www.lahoreinternational.com](http://www.lahoreinternational.com)

DANISH  
HOMES.ca

THE # 1 RESOURCE TO  
SELL & BUY PROPERTY

647 400 1700

DANISH CHAUDHRY

Direct: 647 400 1700 / Team: 647 723 9900







# Z I N G M A A R

EASY TO FOLLOW  
UNIQUE RECIPES FROM  
AROUND THE WORLD

FOLLOW @ZINGMAAR







**EDITOR IN CHIEF**  
*Mohiuddin Abbasi*



**EDITOR**  
*Zakaria Virk*

**ASSISTANT EDITOR**  
Munazza Khan

**ASSOCIATE EDITOR**  
Amina Nuzhat

**SUBSCRIPTION MANAGER**  
Syed Mubarak A. Shah  
Ph. No. 0047-91698367

**ADVERTISING MANAGER**  
M. Sultan Qureshi  
Ph. No. +1(416)433-0112

# STENZON

4. *Unity on Taliban issue between Pakistan, US and China: Blinken*
6. *The Feudal Lords of Pakistan's Academia*
8. *The railway lines in Pakistan and the stories they tell*
10. *A Brief History Of The Women's Movement In Pakistan*
13. *Moment of Truth*
15. *Military veterans see slim chance of full scale war*
17. *Canada's Trudeau Triggers Snap Election In Push For Majority*
20. *EU Parliament Adopts Resolution Calling For Review Of Pakistan's Gsp+ Status Over Blasphemy Law Abuse*
22. *Germany Set To Vote In Most Unpredictable Elections In Years*
24. *British Bangladeshi Mansoor Ahmad Honoured with the Houses of Parliament Official Presentation*
26. *UK: Teachers warn of rising Islamophobia in schools*
27. *USA: Muslim doctor charged with FGM on nine girls aged just seven*
29. *Book Review: A Good Wife by Samra Zafar*
31. *'Trade interests trump human rights': EU Parliament defers vote on anti-CAA resolution*
34. *The Horrors Emerging From Afghanistan Are Only Just Beginning*
36. *A Million Afghan Children Could Die in 'Most Perilous Hour,' U.N. Warns*
38. *Should Muslims Follow Saudi-Wahhabi Version Of Islam In All Islamic Matters?*
39. *Angelina Jolie feared for her family's safety during marriage to Brad Pitt*
41. *Muslim Annie Qaiser Pioneers Her Own Skincare Line*
44. *Usa: Scientists Create Whitest Paint That Would Eliminate Need For Air-conditioning*

**Issue: October, 2021**

**Price: UK Pound 3, per copy**

**Annual Subscription: 36 UK Pound**

**E-Mail: lahoreintlondon@gmail.com**

**Send your writeups at**  
**m.abbasi.uk@gmail.com**

**Write to :**

**Monthly Lahore International**  
**Phone: +44 794 007 7825**

### Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this magazine are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of

# Unity on Taliban issue between Pakistan, US and China: Blinken



United Nations, United States: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Thursday he believed the world was united on pressing the Taliban after speaking with Pakistan, China and Russia, key players with Afghanistan's new rulers. Blinken met Thursday on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly with his counterpart from Pakistan and held talks with ministers of the four other veto-wielding Security Council members including China and Russia on Wednesday evening. "I think there is very strong unity of approach and unity of purpose," Blinken told reporters. "The Taliban says that it seeks legitimacy, that it seeks support, from the international community. The relationship that it has with the international community is going to be defined by the actions it takes." Blinken reiterated US priorities for the Taliban including allowing Afghans and foreigners to leave, respecting the rights of women, girls and minorities, and not letting Afghanistan be used again by extremists such as Al-Qaeda. The State Department said Blinken highlighted "the importance of coordinating our diplomatic engagement" in talks with Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi. Pakistan has called for engagement with the Taliban and the unfreezing of Afghan assets but Qureshi said earlier in the week that there was no rush to recognize a new Taliban government, a step opposed by Western nations. Qureshi, opening his meeting with Blinken, said, "We have to find a way of collectively working to achieve our common objective, which is peace and stability." China and Russia have both moved to engage with the Taliban but have also stopped short of recognition and have longstanding concerns about extremism. The Taliban swept through Afghanistan last month after President Joe Biden withdrew US troops, saying there was no point in extending America's longest war beyond 20 years.

## ‘Pakistan seeks balanced ties with US’

Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi met with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and discussed bilateral relations and





the situation in Afghanistan. Although the two top diplomats have been in touch with since January this year, but this was their first face-to-face meeting in New York, which took place on the margins of the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly. They last spoke to each other by phone on August 16. The Foreign Minister, according to a press release issued by the Pakistani embassy, said at the meeting that close engagement between Pakistan and the United States had always been mutually beneficial and a factor for stability in South Asia. He reiterated Pakistan's desire for a balanced relationship with the United States that was anchored in trade, investment, energy and regional connectivity. FM Qureshi also reiterated Pakistan's commitment to facilitating efforts for an inclusive political settlement in Afghanistan. He stressed that only a stable and broad-based government in Afghanistan, which reflects its diversity and preserves the gains made by the country since 2001, would be able to ensure that Afghan territory is never exploited by transnational terrorist groups ever again. Noting that a new political reality had emerged in Afghanistan, the foreign minister said while the Taliban should be held to their commitments, the international community has a moral obligation to help the Afghan people deal with the growing humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. He hoped that the world would not repeat the mistake of disengaging with Afghanistan. The foreign minister highlighted the grave human rights situation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, and underscored the importance of resolving the Kashmir dispute for lasting peace and stability in South Asia. Secretary Blinken appreciated Pakistan's support for the evacuation of US citizens and other nationals from Afghanistan, and its continued efforts for peace in the region, according to the press release.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/894936-unity-on-taliban-issue-between-pakistan-us-and-china-blinken>

## Pakistan Army surpasses Israel, Canada to become 10th most powerful in world



Pakistan army has been ranked the 10th most powerful in the world out of 133 countries on the Global Firepower index 2021, according to data released by the group on its official website. The list by Global Firepower (GFP) relies on more than 50 factors to determine a nation's PowerIndex ('PwrIdx') score with categories ranging from military might and financials to logistical capability and geography.

In the annual GFP review of 2021, Pakistan Armed Forces scored 0.2083 with 0.000 being the perfect score in the list. With a huge jump of five places leaving behind Israel, Canada, Iran and Indonesia in the process, Pakistan is the only country in the top 15 which improved its ranking.

Currently, the country dedicates \$7 billion from its annual budget for defence purposes. The United States military was ranked the most powerful armed force in the world, closely followed by Russia and China. India retained the fourth slot while Angola, Bulgaria and Syria declined in the ranking. Turkey, Italy, Egypt, Germany, Saudi Arabia, Spain and Australia were also among prominent militaries which were beaten by Pakistan military in the rankings.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2280441/pakistan-army-surpasses-israel-canada-to-become-10th-most-powerful-in-world>

# The Feudal Lords of Pakistan's Academia

By: Prof. Pervez Hoodbhoy



6 A Country's universities are supposedly the engines of social change, founts of new ideas, and concentrations of high brain power. But Pakistan's universities are anything but this. Instead, they merely reinforce the pre-modern values and power hierarchies of some ancient, despotic system. During the Mughal period there was a hierarchy laid down by Ain-e-Akbari (1590): amir-e-azam, amir, mansabdar, and ria'ya. Correspondingly, our universities have the vice-chancellor as head honcho. Next are deans and chairpersons, all running their private fiefdoms. Below them come professors who lord over hapless students. There are plenty of rules but court intrigues abound. Visit a typical VC – or amir-e-azam – in his office. You will likely find him surrounded by deans and professors who laugh hysterically at his every joke and entertain him during office hours. In the evenings, the favoured ones are invited to continue this

at his home. He brings to mind a village Choudhury sprawled on a cushioned manji with his kammis squatting on the ground. As one massages his feet, another brings a tray of fruit and others regale him with stories. A recent incident underscores the essentially feudal/tribal character of our educational institutions. According to professors of Malakand University, the VC had long let it be known that every teacher – females particularly – must come one-by-one to wish him Eid Mubarak. You owe your job to me, he kept reminding them, and disobedience will cost you dearly in terms of perks, promotions, and study leaves. While most were intimidated by such threats, some 80 teachers were not. They signed a petition addressed to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister challenging the VC's behaviour. Additionally, they staged a silent protest walk on campus. In a video (watch 2:35) that went viral, the infuriated VC is seen confronting the professors. Pointing to his armed guards he says in Pashto, "If I order them, they will shoot you in your head". Malakand University is not unique in having a feudal/tribal setup. These exist everywhere with bigger chieftains expecting homage from lesser ones. So, for example, last month the area's sugar baron and a well-known politician visited Bahauddin Zakariya University, a public varsity in Multan. Although the man has zero connection with scholarship or learning, photos (watch 9:06) show the VC deferentially



vacates his high seat for the sugar baron who then occupies it and lectures the teachers. Also seen are obedient, fawning professors falling over themselves as they jostle to get into the camera's frame. Why are Pakistani professors servile and VCs' despots? Within societies having strong academic traditions, scholars automatically earn respect through their professional work, authorship of books, sharpness of intellect, and quality of teaching. But on our campuses, power and authority usually derive from an individual's connections. Upon becoming VC, dean, or chairperson each sets up their own little Mughal darbar. What then matters is the size of your desk and the number of chairs around it. Such pre-modern practices should have faded out but, in fact, have increased in prominence. Back in 1973, as a 23-year old lecturer freshly appointed to the physics department of Islamabad University (later renamed QAU), I recall my very first visit to the VC's office. Having arrived from a very different academic culture (that of MIT, where professors ride bicycles to work), I involuntarily gasped upon seeing her enormous desk. Why on earth, I asked myself, did she want that huge hulk? But 44 years later when I saw the VC's desk at Lahore's Information Technology University, the earlier one seemed tiny. This desk is so big it could do double duty as a helipad! The moral values of feudalism allow easy bypassing of modern ethical standards. At QAU when a dean was caught red-handed writing the evaluation of his own student's PhD thesis, he promptly took early retirement. No one asked questions and there was much sympathy for him. He went on to become the VC at another university. One QAU VC – my former neighbour – with two wives and two sets of children had his official residence on campus partitioned. Two sets of play areas were made, also at official expense. He went on to become the VC of a still bigger university in Islamabad. Everyone knows, no one protests. Only a few have clean hands. The consequence: a relatively slow decline has

become a thundering avalanche of collapsing ethics and disintegrating academic standards. No single reason explains everything but one glares at you. After 2002 teachers were inducted and promoted solely on the number of published research papers and books. These people eventually became deans and VCs. This practice continues today although everyone knows (and will privately admit) that at least 90% of university publications are worthless junk. Faked data, plagiarized content, and trivial stuff – everything somehow gets published. Predatory publishers lusting for publication fees happily help. But again, with so few clean hands, no one speaks up. Overall we know we lie to ourselves, feel slightly guilty, but dare not interrupt the ongoing charade. More proof? Then consider the case of Pakistan's number-one super-decorated professor with 1500+ research publications. His CV says he also publishes 20-25 books yearly through "Bentham Science Publishers (Amsterdam)". But Bentham is listed in Wikipedia as a global predatory publisher and this particular Amsterdam lies just outside (watch 15:18) Karachi University! These facts are well known but the said professor doesn't care. He enjoys protection at the prime-minister's level and also knows there are too many others like him for anything bad to happen. But why be surprised? After a brief stint in prison the wholesale seller of fake degrees and diplomas – who famously made it to the New York Times in 2015 – is now back in business doing the same thing and using the same building in Karachi as earlier. The powerful in Pakistan need fear nothing. After 1947 India did away with feudalism but Pakistan did not. This was a colossal mistake. Now its anti-democratic tentacles are everywhere, stifling the nation's economy and suffocating its schools, colleges, and universities. It may still not be too late but the fight has gotten much harder.

<https://eacpe.org/the-feudal-lords-of-pakistan-academia/>

# The Railway Lines In Pakistan And The Stories They Tell

By: Salman Rashid

A wintry morning. A small, all but abandoned, railway station. A few scrawny plants growing between its building and a double rail track glued on a cheerless slope with sombre, brooding hills closing in from all sides as if to prevent the station from escaping. That was Hirok station in the heart of Balochistan's Bolan Pass — or at least that is my most abiding memory of it. On a bench in front of the building lay what looked like a body shrouded in a grey shawl. To the grinding sound of our trolley's brakes, it raised a bit of the shawl from its head to cast a bleary eye in our direction. Recognising the trolley men, it waved a languid hand and went back under the shawl. We passed on down the slope, once again gathering speed. It was March 1995 and friends in the railway had arranged for me to be taken down the Bolan Pass by trolley. From Kolpur station at the western head of the pass to the coal town of Machh, around 25 kilometres in the south-east, it is all the way down. After the initial push, the trolley goes screaming down the sharp gradient powered only by gravity. This slope had once seemed impossible for broad gauge steam engines to negotiate. It was, indeed, for the sharp gradients of the Bolan Pass that railway engineers took the line north from Sibi through the Nari Gorge and across the dramatic Chappar Rift in order to connect Quetta with the rest of British India. But the unstable geology and the continual mud and rock slides in the rift told Raj railway engineers that another line was needed if they had to get to Kandahar in a hurry. And the hurry was imperative. Having resoundingly lost the First Afghan War (1839-42), the army of the East India Company was paranoid with fear of Russia marching into Afghanistan. The situation only worsened in the latter half of the 19th century as tensions between Czarist Russia and Victori-

an Britain rose to a fever pitch, both vying for imperial superiority in Central Asia. Since railway was the fastest way to transport troops, Russia was swiftly embroidering Asian deserts with steel threads east of the Don River even as British engineers hastened to match stitch for stitch through the Subcontinent and across the shale and limestone barriers of the Suleman Mountains and the Bolan Pass. It was not until seven years after the end of the second Afghan War (1878-80) that the first line through Chappar Rift reached Quetta. But landslides and floods plagued the route even when it was being built, necessitating an alternate line. This seemed feasible only through the more stable geology of the Bolan Pass. Originally, the line from Sibi was to swing due west to reach the village of Rind Ali (Rindli on British maps of that era). Here it would veer north-west for Hirok through the Kundlani Gorge. As the summer began in 1885, the line started to inch forward. Through furnace blasts of searing wind, labourers and engineers toiled to put a broad gauge (five feet and six inches wide) line. To add to the discomfort of the heat, cholera broke out in construction camps, resulting in the deaths of several hundred workers. Still, with remarkable doggedness, the builders kept at it, perhaps driven by the desire to reach the cooler heights as quickly as possible. By mid-November that year, when the heat had already let off, the line reached Hirok (where the body under the shawl had waved to me) at 1,400 metres above the sea. Now came the hard part. The height rose dramatically to 1,790 metres within the 12 kilometres distance between Hirok and Kolpur through the Dozan Gorge. This rise of 390 metres in such a short distance was so sheer that not even the most powerful locomotive of the time could haul a train up it. The railway-



men's answer was to put in a smaller metre gauge (three feet and three inches wide) line between Hirok and Kolpur. The line to Quetta from Kolpur was again to be broad gauge, passing across what is known as Dasht-e-Bedaulat (the Wretched Plain) — nothing grew here except a few grasses and, if winter rain and snow were abundant, some flowers. (In the early 1990s, I saw the first of several tube wells sprouting on the plain. Within years, it stood transformed with seasonal wheat and orchards.) The change in gauge meant that freight and passengers would be transhipped from broad gauge carriages to the smaller ones at Hirok. After being hauled up to the cool heights of Kolpur, they would be shipped again to the larger vehicles. If that was not trouble enough for sahibs and memsahibs, another problem was that the line, sitting on the stony bed of the Bolan River as it passed through the tortuous Dozan Gorge, suffered periodic damage when rain sent down a flood in the otherwise dry stream. Once again, it was realized that this too was not the answer and plans were put in place to lay a 'high level' broad gauge line from Sibi to Dozan. In 1888, work began on new bridges and tunnels. Two years later, as if to prove the old adage about the best laid plans of mice and men, nature brought down a huge flood through the gorge, washing away the bridges, girders and all. The Kundlani Gorge route just turned out to be another replay of the maddening Chappar Rift route. So, yet another alternative was needed. The line was now to be built through somewhat higher Mushkaf Valley that sits between Sibi and Hirok. With a shallower gradient difference, the line was forced all the way up to Hirok through places with names as mysterious as Aab-e-Gum (Lost Water, where the Bolan River disappears underground) and as evocative as Machh (Date Palm). Hirok onward, some magnificent bridges and a number of tunnels took the line to the top of the pass at Kolpur. Even now, trains had to be hauled up from Machh to Kolpur with what in railway parlance

is called a banking engine, that is, an extra engine at the back of the train to give it additional upward push. The tunnels here have interesting names: there is Windy Corner and then there are Mary Jane, Cascade and Summit. The second one is named after the wife of F L O'Callaghan, the pioneer of this line, and the last one is an obvious reference to the top of the Bolan Pass. Below Cascade, right next to Elgin Bridge, there is a bit of another mystery: a smaller tunnel. This is the old metre gauge tunnel abandoned after the broad gauge line became operational. It was in 1894 when the first 'through' train from down country rolled into Quetta by the Mushkaf-Bolan route. By and by, this became a daily service even while the once a week up and down service through the Chappar Rift also continued. Then, in July 1942, came the flood in the rift to wash out that line. If Raj engineers had little interest to re-establish it, it was only because the Bolan Pass line was running trouble-free. Climb to a vantage point high above the valley floor in Dozan Gorge and watch the diesel engines hauling green and cream coaches along the brown contours of the landscape into Cascade Tunnel. As the clatter and growl of the engine turns into a boom and, later, as the noise reverberates solidly off the rocky bed of the dry stream when the lines travels over the magnificent Elgin Bridge, the flesh crawls and the eye mists. It is like being in a high adventure movie. And as you contemplate the scene below, of a sudden you are hit with one realisation: had periodic disasters not devilled the Chappar Rift, the Bolan Pass line would never have been laid. At Quetta, the line spreads out in three prongs: one going south-west to the Iranian frontier; the other going west across the Khwaja Amran Mountains to Chaman; and the third going north-east to Zhob. Each of these lines has a story of its own to tell.

<https://herald.dawn.com/news/1398917/the-railway-lines-in-pakistan-and-the-stories-they-tell>

# A Brief History Of The Women's Movement In Pakistan



By: Sherry Rahman

Since 2015, far more women than ever before self-identify as feminists and Pakistan has an articulate third generation of feminists. Some millennial activists have joined WAF but, although a new WAF (Women Action Forum) chapter opened in Hyderabad in 2008 — quickly becoming the most active — and a WAF chapter has recently been launched in Quetta as well, these are led by women from the 'in-between generation' and WAF no longer provides the cohesive identity of a national movement as it once did. Feeling marginalised in existing structures dominated by older women, young feminists have formed their own groups, often as collectives, including Girls at Dhabas, the Feminist Collective, Feminist Fridays, the Women's Collective and the Women's Democratic Front — some affiliated with left groups. The volition, modalities and priorities of young feminists differ significantly. The concepts and praxis of activism are dissimilar. Older feminists, including many from the 'in-between generation', tend to conceive of activism in classical political terms and therefore focus collective action on state laws and policies, leaving the reshaping of the daily praxis of gender relations to personal initiatives. In contrast, while some young feminists have engaged in important legislative processes, the majority concentrate on bringing about societal changes with a focus on personal lives. Modalities differ. Aiming to change the contours and gender dynamics of the immediate communities they inhabit, younger feminists engage in the politics of presence, occupying physical and online spaces to do so. Today, social media, rather than mainstream news media, is the primary location of discursive battles in which younger women are more prominent. Young feminists enjoin a more forceful expressive dimension of the movement

through social media initiatives and novel approaches, such as stand-up comedy, an engagement that provides a crucial counterpoint to the aggressively waged discursive battle of far better resourced religious right forces. In the 1980s, activists did deploy humour, but fell short of fully developing an expressive dimension of the movement. Finally, today's feminists prioritise sexuality, an issue that older activists always acknowledged but failed to address publicly. The different priorities of the new generation are attributable, at least in part, to changed circumstances. The catalyst for activists of the 1980s movement, a state bent upon overturning women's rights, is absent. Instead, the new generation confronts policing and harassment by social actors on a daily basis. The immediacy of these encounters and the ensuing frustrations make such issues seem more relevant than distant laws, propelling a greater interest in reshaping gender dynamics and power relations in everyday practices than in struggling to ensure rights by engaging with the state. The failure of decades of activism to significantly change the daily reality of misogyny is likely to have prompted a loss of confidence in the state's ability to achieve the desired change, deepening the reluctance to engage with the state in terms of challenging laws and policies or proposing new ones. Without dispelling this mistrust and building bridges, activists will find it difficult to create the interconnected support system and coalescing force that lends activism a more definite movement identity, such as WAF provided earlier. One advantage of society-focused activism is that it lends itself more easily to spontaneous actions of individuals or small groups of women — the dispersed feminism Basu refers to. In comparison, far greater organisational management is required to





A young Asma Jahangir listens to a group of women | White Star Archives

deploy and sustain concerted collective action typical of movements, especially those aiming to influence state policies. Over time, this management tends to become centralised and thus more hierarchical. It also often requires greater resources to maintain. Engaging in society-oriented activism may be better placed to avoid binding structures and the need to secure finances. But transcending the confines of small actions entails its own dynamics and challenges, as evident when young feminists brought their politics, including of sexuality, on to the streets and into public view in 2018 and 2019. On March 8, 2018, young feminists in Karachi organised the first Aurat March (Women's March) under a new banner, Hum Aurtein (We Women). They were assisted by some older feminists. Thousands participated from all generations and classes, along with trans and rainbow activists. A smaller march was held in Lahore as well. Unlike earlier demonstrations organised to protest against or demand something specific, Aurat March was an occasion for everyone to express themselves. The home-made placards were more imaginative and humorous than those seen at previous movement events. One stating 'Heat your own food' should have been unobjectionable but

provoked a social media backlash. The success of the Karachi march fired people's imaginations and rallies multiplied the following year. In several major cities across the country, the 2019 Aurat March attracted thousands of people. In more remote areas such as Bannu, women held smaller rallies. A handful of placards ('Warm your own bed', 'Keep dick pics to yourself', an image of a woman sitting with her legs apart, stating 'Now I am seated appropriately') unleashed a furious misogynist reaction, including condemnation by lawmakers, family backlash and at least one attempt to file a police case against the organisers in Lahore. These reactions conveniently ignored all the other posters demanding better working conditions, stronger laws, rights for workers and rural women and addressing many other 'serious' issues. They also ignored the presence of veiled women, including a burqa-clad woman whose placard read 'My dress, my decision'. Surprisingly, while many older activists were delighted that these crucial issues had finally been catapulted into the public arena, some felt the posters were inappropriate and risked alienating women. Forgetting the crucial role that notions of respectability play in maintaining patriarchy, these activists contributed, perhaps inadvertently, to the politics of respectability. Other internal critics, who felt the posters detracted attention from the issues of rural and grassroots women, overlooked the fact that grassroots women themselves did not object. A positive and encouraging development is that a number of women legislators joined the Aurat March and reactions were not unidirectional: politicians, journalists and people on social media extended support as well.

## TOWARDS THE FUTURE

It is unclear whether this new activism will take the shape of an organised social movement or remain a period of more dispersed feminism. Generational differences among gender-equality activists are not unique to Pakistan. Across the globe, younger women

are prioritising the politics of sexuality and, in Latin America for example, thousands of large rallies have been organised by women disenchanted with institutional activism, both with respect to more formal women's organisations and direct engagement with the state. Change is essential for movement continuity. The focus on sexuality of Pakistan's younger generation fills an important gap in earlier activism, and their society-oriented activism complements the state-focused and policy-oriented struggle of older activists. However, state laws, policies and narratives always impact women's lives in multifarious ways, and past experience makes it abundantly clear that the state can never be ignored. The experience of the 2019 Aurat March may propel younger feminists to greater engagement with the state. If not, this will leave a significant vacuum in the movement. Keeping an eye on the state is all the more important as Pakistan pursues "the art of making dictatorship look like democracy" (Tom Hussain, 2018). New strategies are needed in the face of new challenges; the steady erosion of space for civil society, debate and dissent; increasing surveillance of CSOs and interference from intelligence agencies; and the use of terrorism threats to clamp down on human rights groups in Pakistan, as in other countries. While women's organisations that remain true to the ideals of feminism and linked to the movement can advance the movement by engaging with state institutions and providing institutional support, this may become increasingly difficult. Less formalised structures to achieve societal change may offer important advantages — one reason WAF never registered was to avoid such controls. Internally, activists must overcome generational mistrust and bridge the approaches of differently located activists. Older activists believe that younger women tend to ignore the broader political dynamics, are less interested in structural change than in changing personal lives, and more interested in engaging with international movements

than in building a national movement. The online activism of younger feminists is seen to exclude grassroots women, their actions are viewed as highly individualistic and some of their concerns are considered to be elitist. Younger feminists believe that older activists operate in exclusionary hierarchies of power, have a know-it-all attitude that devalues younger women's experience and perspective, and are resistant to listening to and learning from others. Without dispelling this mistrust and building bridges, activists will find it difficult to create the interconnected support system and coalescing force that lends activism a more definite movement identity, such as WAF provided earlier. An important show of solidarity and strength, until very recently, the Aurat March was only an annual event and it is unclear whether Hum Aurtein is designed to operate as a movement in the future. Without interconnectedness and identity, the different strands of activism and organisational bases risk remaining disparate initiatives, leaving Pakistani women's rights activism in the 'feminism' state described by Basu, rather than as a recognisable movement. Most recently, in September 2020, the immediate country-wide response to the gang-rape of a woman on the Lahore-Islamabad motorway, coupled with the outrageous misogynist statement of the Lahore Chief of Police (CCPO Umar Sheikh) on the incident, indicates that the women's movement is very much alive — and also has numerous male supporters. Several demonstrations were co-organised by Aurat March, WAF and numerous other organisations. With Aurat March stepping out of its role of being a once-a-year rallying point, it could become the leading face of the movement with others, including WAF, supporting it. This would certainly help to develop a more cohesive women's and gender-equality movement.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1645948/anatomy-of-a-resistance>



# Moment of Truth

By: Maleeha Lodhi, former Pakistan Ambassador to US, UK & UN



HISTORY has come full circle in Afghanistan with the Taliban regaining power after 20 years of war. In post-America Afghanistan the Taliban face a number of critical tests — of governance, preventing economic collapse, addressing a worsening humanitarian situation and containing terrorist groups that reside there. Taliban leaders have to deal with both the urgent and important. The security challenge is among the most urgent because all else is contingent on this even though the multiple challenges they have to negotiate are interconnected and must be tackled simultaneously. The Taliban control more of the country now than they did when they were previously in power. That makes establishing durable order and lasting peace much harder. The stand-off in Panjsher with elements of the Northern Alliance has yet to end as talks have apparently failed. Editorial: The West must not insist that Afghanistan be remade in its image in order to recognise the Taliban Political consolidation will obviously depend on how effectively the Taliban are able to govern. After two decades of fighting this is an uphill task especially as the requirements of governance have changed fundamentally since the 1990s, as have people's expectations. The exodus of hundreds of government employees from the country adds to the governing difficulties. The Taliban will also be under global pressure to deliver on their promise to ensure that Afghan soil is not used to attack other countries. The most important 'ask' from the international community is for them to contain if not demobilise violent groups based in Afghanistan. Taliban spokesmen have offered assurances they will not allow their country to be used by these groups. But words have to translate into



deeds. The concern of neighbouring states and the wider international community is over the possibility of a permissive environment taking hold which enables these groups to flourish. The Taliban government's ability to deliver on their commitment will be important to secure international acceptability.

The Taliban face many tests — of governance, averting economic collapse and containing terrorist groups. The international community has also insisted on the establishment of an inclusive government. Whether or not the government formed by the Taliban will be deemed 'inclusive' enough, international engagement with the Taliban is expected to continue. That will be important to encourage the Taliban to run the country by reaching out to other groups and accommodating others. The most urgent challenge confronting the Taliban is to prevent state collapse that can be triggered by the dire economic situation. Money has to be found to pay the salaries of government personnel, who haven't been paid for months and to run basic public services. The financial crunch has been compounded by the freezing of funds by Washington, as most of Afghanistan's foreign reserves lie abroad including in US banks. The IMF and World Bank are said to have withheld assistance and paused proj-

ects at Washington's behest. Doubts have also been voiced over American funding for UN agencies engaged in humanitarian and development work. All of this places great pressure on a new government that has to deal with a war-ravaged country, rising prices, shortage of cash available to citizens and the risk of the economic crunch exacerbating a growing humanitarian crisis. UN Secretary General António Guterres has already warned of an impending "humanitarian catastrophe" with half the population needing assistance. The UN is set to convene a humanitarian conference on Sept 13 to raise much-needed funds. The US is evidently using economic tools to pressure the Taliban to meet both their short-term (safe passage for its nationals and partners) and longer-term demands (no terrorist sanctuary) and to abide by their international obligations. US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan recently said the Taliban should cooperate in view of American influence over Afghanistan's "relationship with the international financial system, its access to any kind of reserves and resources". In his end-of-mission speech President Joe Biden also referred to Washington's leverage in this regard without however elaborating. The Taliban are keen on getting international recognition and legitimacy, signalling this repeatedly in their statements. They know access to funds and future assistance is contingent on recognition, which in turn depends on implementing their promises including respect for human rights. So long as the international community stays united and sends a common message to the Taliban there are reasonable chances that they will comply with most commitments. It is one thing to test the Taliban's intentions by collective pressure but if Western countries, make excessive demands — so-called benchmarks — or use blunt instruments of economic coercion it will prove counterproductive. It could even have the unintended consequence of contributing

over time to economic, even state collapse. Humanitarian assistance in any case should not be made conditional. There is international consensus today on core 'asks' of the Taliban on counterterrorism and human and women's rights. But the consensus could fray. An early indication of this came in last month's meeting of the UN Security Council when a draft resolution on Afghanistan was hastily pushed through by Western members. This prompted Russia and China to abstain. The resolution was adopted but laid bare differences in approach among the P5. In his statement explaining why he abstained the Russian envoy said the resolution failed to name IS-K and ETIM, ignored the "negative impact" of evacuating Afghan nationals in contributing to a brain drain and failed to mention the adverse effects of freezing Afghan financial assets. The Chinese ambassador also objected to the haste in moving the resolution and criticised the assets freeze. And he urged engagement with the Taliban. With another meeting coming up of the Security Council on Sept 27 to renew the mandate of UNAMA (UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan), it is important for its members to maintain a common approach. Renewal of travel exemptions given to several Taliban leaders from UN sanctions will also be considered this month by the relevant Security Council committee. Afghanistan's precarious economic and humanitarian situation is a compelling reason for the international community to constructively engage with Kabul because the alternative can yield an outcome that will not serve regional or international peace and stability. Above all, it would compound the plight of the Afghan people who have already suffered so much.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1644789/moment-of-truth>



# Military Veterans See Slim Chance Of Full Scale War

**NEW DELHI/ KARACHI:**

**Military veterans from India and Pakistan foresee a slim chance of a full-fledged war between the two nuclear neighbours, dubbing it an “inconceivable” idea on the 56th anniversary of the 1965 war.**

They also called for “political engagement” to resolve long-pending disputes, including the Kashmir issue. Lt Gen (retd) HS Panag, an Indian war veteran, who participated in the 1971 war as a young captain against Pakistan, observed that the “nuclear factor” massively diminished the chances of a full-scale war.

“In 1998, both countries became nuclear powers. Now nuclear nations don't fight a full-scale war, because nuclear capabilities come into play at some point in time,” Panag told Anadolu Agency. “Wars and conflicts continue between nations and they never end ... but in the modern era with nuclear weapons, the concept of an all-out war is over. It no longer can take place,” he said. “What can happen is, below the threshold of war and there are also limits to that.” Stating that India has also refrained from attacking Pakistan because of the same reason, he said Pakistan “cannot be decisively defeated by India”.

Echoing Panag's views, Lt Gen (retd) Talat Masood, who participated in two wars against India, in 1965 and 1971, also rejected the possibility of a full-fledged war even if the nuclear factor is kept aside. “Yes, nuclear capability is a factor but if even they are not nuclear, it would make no sense to go into full-fledged war in this era,” Masood, who served in an armoured division that took part in a fierce tank battle on the eastern borders in the 1965

war, told Anadolu Agency. The battle, involving hundreds of tanks from both sides, took place at Chawinda village that sits on the Pakistan-India border near northeastern Sialkot district, is considered the second greatest tank battle after World War II. “(In case of an all-out war) You will push your country back 15 - 20 years, apart from alienating yourself from the international community. Things will get harder for your people, the economy will be shattered and matters will be complicated further,” he said. It is not a “sensible” and “conceivable” idea that the two countries will make a “blunder” to go into a war, he added. Retired Major Ikram Sehgal, who was an aviation pilot in post-1965 war skirmishes along the border between then East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, and India and six years later in the 1971 war, also ruled out the chances of an all-out war. “An all-out war means, it may turn into a nuclear conflict. And in that case, the winner and the loser will stand nowhere,” Sehgal said to Anadolu Agency. Brig MPS Bajwa, an army veteran who commanded an Indian brigade during the 1999 Kargil skirmish against Pakistan, said, “It is very unlikely because both countries are nuclear-armed and they apparently have realised it is not an option.” Pakistan and India are among a few select countries with nuclear arsenals. India joined the nuclear club long before Pakistan, in 1974, prompting Islamabad to follow suit. Pakistan silently developed its nuclear capabilities in the 1980s, when it was an ally of the US in the first Afghan war against the crumbling Soviet Union. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, India currently possesses between 80 and 100 nuclear war-

heads, while Pakistan holds 90 to 110.

### Political engagement

Insisting that another war will further complicate matters, Masood sees a “political engagement” as the only option to resolve long-smoldering disputes between the two nuclear-armed neighbours. “The only answer lies in (a) political solution. The two sides have to engage politically. There is no other way,” he said. The political engagement, he thought, will eventually facilitate cultural and economic engagements. Supporting Masood’s view, Bajwa said Islamabad and New Delhi should “sit and talk” to resolve their pending issues. Sehgal, who authored the bestseller, *Escape from Oblivion* — his autobiography as a prisoner of war — nonetheless reckoned that India would never hold any meaningful talks on Kashmir as “giving up Kashmir means giving up several other states,” a reference to several northeastern Indian states hit by separatist movements. Panag opined that India and Pakistan are engaged in a “primordial struggle” starting from the partition of India, making an all-out war between the nuclear-armed countries “unlikely”. Since they were partitioned in 1947, the two countries have fought three wars — in 1948, 1965 and 1971 — two of them over Kashmir. Some Kashmiri groups in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) have been fighting against Indian rule for independence, or unification with neighbouring Pakistan. According to several human rights organisations, thousands have reportedly been killed in the conflict in the region since 1989. Relations between India and Pakistan plummeted to a new low after August 2019, when India scrapped the long-standing special status of the occupied region. Since then, the two border forces have been



engaged in almost daily clashes at the Line of Control (LoC), a de facto border that splits the scenic Kashmir valley between the two rivals until the two sides agreed to honour a 2003 cease-fire agreement in February. Apart from Kashmir, the two countries have been locked in a string of sea-and-land disputes, amid several “successful” missile tests. War gave new political dynasties to India, Pakistan Hours after signing the peace agreement in 1966, then Indian prime minister Lal Bahadur Shastri mysteriously died in Tashkent, leading to persistent conspiracy theories. The city hosts his bust and a road named after Shastri. The difference also arose between Pakistan President Ayub Khan and his Foreign Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in Tashkent, soon after signing the agreement. Bhutto parted ways and launched his own party — the Pakistan People’s Party and rose to become prime minister. In India, Shastri’s death paved the way for 48-year old Indira Gandhi to become the first female prime minister in India. With a brief interlude of two years, she ruled the country until October 1984 when she was assassinated by her bodyguards. Tashkent, not only gave South Asia the Mughal dynasty but two political families -- Gandhi and Bhutto. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2318752/indian-pakistani-veterans-see-slim-chance-of-full-scale-war>



# Canada's Trudeau Triggers Snap Election In Push For Majority

By Jillian Kestler-D'Amours

Canadians will go to the polls on September 20, as Justin Trudeau's Liberals seek a renewed majority in parliament.

Montreal, Canada – Canadians will be heading to the polls next month, two years earlier than scheduled, after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau triggered a snap election on Sunday after weeks of speculation that a vote was coming. Trudeau, whose Liberal Party won a majority in 2015 but was relegated to a 157-seat minority government in the last election in 2019, is hoping to get back a majority in the face of what analysts have described as a divided and weak opposition Conservative Party of Canada. “Canadians will ... go to the polls on September 20,” Trudeau told reporters in the capital, Ottawa, after he visited the residence of Governor General Mary Simon to ask her to dissolve Parliament. Trudeau said Simon had accepted his request, which triggers the election campaign. “In this pivotal, consequential moment, who wouldn't want a say? Who wouldn't want a chance to help decide where our country goes from here? Canadians need to choose how we finish the fight against COVID-19 and build back better,” Trudeau said, rebuffing criticism for calling an election during the pandemic. “Make your voice heard, have your say, and together let's move forward for everyone,” he said. To attain a majority, the Liberals need 170 seats in the 338-member House of Commons. But that is far from guaranteed, said Daniel Beland, a McGill University professor and director of the McGill Institute for the Study of Canada, who explained that Trudeau's party faces challenges in the provinces of Quebec and British Columbia in particular. “[The Liberals have] been ahead of the Conservatives for a very long time ... but if you look at seat projections it's basically like you flip a coin and maybe 50-50 [chance]

they will get a majority,” Beland told Al Jazeera. He described Trudeau's gamble as “far from certain”. The party will face stiff challenges in the western province of British Columbia, where the left-leaning New Democratic Party (NDP) led by Jagmeet Singh has strong backing, Beland said, while in the francophone province of Quebec, the separatist Bloc Quebecois enjoys rising support. Nevertheless, the Conservatives, who alongside the Liberals have dominated federal politics in Canada for decades, is trailing in most recent polls as leader Erin O'Toole remains deeply unpopular, Beland said.

## COVID-19 pandemic

The election will take place on September 20 after a 36-day campaign, as the Canada Elections Act dictates the election period must be between a minimum of 36 days and a maximum of 50 days. Under Canada's parliamentary system, an election is formally called by the governor general, who in the case of a snap vote will dissolve Parliament on the advice of the prime minister. Candidates who win seats in a snap election serve full, five-year terms – unless another snap election is called. Many Canadian voters are expected to be able to send mail-in ballots due to COVID-19, which Canada's chief electoral officer recently said could delay the results by a few days. The country has reported more than 1.45 million cases and more than 26,600 deaths since the pandemic began, according to Johns Hopkins University data. But over the past months, Canada largely was able to get the situation under control, thanks in part to its stockpiling and effective rollout of vaccines, which prompted the government to lift some coronavirus-related restrictions. Never-



theless, average daily cases in the final week of July rose by 43 percent compared with the previous week and the spread of the highly contagious Delta variant has raised concerns that Canada is in the grips of a fourth wave of the pandemic. O'Toole and Singh have slammed Trudeau's decision to call an early election amid that uncertainty. "My biggest concern right now is a potential fourth wave of COVID-19 ... We shouldn't be rushing to an election," O'Toole told reporters on August 9. "Mr Trudeau always seems to put his own self-interest ahead of the interests of Canadians." That was echoed on Sunday by Singh, who described the upcoming vote as a "selfish summer election". He pointed to the climate crisis, a lack of clean water in several Indigenous communities, and income inequality as pressing issues of concern. "Instead of calling an election, Justin Trudeau should be focusing on these crises," Singh said.

### Key issues

Yet recent polls show Trudeau's Liberals in the lead. CBC News's Poll Tracker, which creates an average of all recent publicly available polls, showed the party with 35.6 percent support as of August 14, while the Conservatives had 28.8 percent and the NDP held 19.3

percent. Another survey released last month showed the Liberals holding 35.2 percent support compared with the Conservative Party's 27.7 percent. The NDP had 18.5 percent support, while the Greens and the Bloc Quebecois had 5.2 and 4.5 percent, respectively. "While not a massive lead, the distribution of the Liberals' support puts them well within reach of a majority," Ekos Politics, which conducted the poll, said when it released the findings on July 23. A Leger polling firm survey on August 3 also found that 27 percent of Canadians believe Trudeau would make the best prime minister, compared with 19 percent who favoured Singh and 11 percent who chose O'Toole. Stewart Prest, a political science lecturer at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia, said some observers have called the upcoming contest "unnecessary" in part because the Liberals have passed most of their bills despite being a minority government. "The Liberals have been able to find partners in quite often the NDP and occasionally some of the other parties to support the legislation that has come forward. That is a reason why some have referred to it as an unnecessary election call. Parliament is working so if it isn't broke why fix it?" Prest told Al Jazeera. He said he expects COVID-19



and pandemic-related economic measures, such as whether government support for Canadians should be drawn down or extended, would dominate much of the election campaign. The parties' position on climate change, especially in light of recent historic heatwaves and extensive wildfires on Canada's west coast, will also be important.

### **Question of turnout**

But the real question, according to Beland, is whether people will turn out to vote. Sixty-seven percent of eligible voters cast a ballot in 2019, according to Elections Canada data, down slightly from the 68.3 percent who voted in 2015. That was the first election with Trudeau at the helm of the Liberal Party, and the participation rate was driven by high youth turnout. "[In] 2015 what boosted participation among younger people was the Trudeau effect during the campaign, but now there is no wow factor. O'Toole is not popular, [Singh] most don't see as a future prime minister, Trudeau is no longer the new kid on the block or the kind of star candidate," Beland said. "Maybe something will capture interest during the campaign, but ... I don't expect very high participation. I don't sense electoral fever glowing over Canada." Prest said that while the election call may garner some initial grumbling from Canadians, "there's a sense that elections matter and they have consequences", which will push people to cast their ballots. But "there's a real element of risk here" for Trudeau and his party. "It's clear that this is a difficult time for any government and even a government that by international standards is performing quite well. There are real stakes," Prest said.

"If they were banking on coasting to victory on sort of a job well done and a pandemic vanquished here in Canada, it doesn't seem like that's the case just yet."

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/8/15/-canada-trudeau-triggers-snap-election-in-push-for-majority>

## **Indian Man On Bail In Rape Case Must Wash Women's Clothes For Six Months**

An Indian man accused of attempted rape has been given bail on condition that he wash and iron the clothes of all women in his village for six months.

Lalan Kumar, 20, will have to buy detergent and other items needed to provide six months of free laundry services to about 2,000 women in the village of Majhor in Bihar state, under the ruling made Wednesday. Kumar, who washes clothes for a living, was arrested in April on charges including attempted rape, Santosh Kumar Singh, a police officer in Bihar's Madhubani district, told AFP. No date has been set for his trial. "All the women in the village are happy with the court decision," Nasima Khatoon, the head of the village council, told AFP. "It is historic. It will boost respect for women and help to protect dignity," added Khatoon, one of the village dignitaries who will monitor Kumar. Women in the village said the order had made a positive impact by making crime against women a subject of discussion in their community. "This is a remarkable step and a different kind of punishment that sends a message to society," said Anjum Perween. India's rape laws were overhauled after a 2012 gang rape in New Delhi but the number of offences remains high, with more than 28,000 rapes reported in 2020. Police have long been accused of not doing enough to prevent violent crime and failing to bring sexual assault cases to court.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2321556/indian-man-on-bail-in-rape-case-must-wash-womens-clothes-for-six-months>

# EU Parliament Adopts Resolution Calling For Review Of Pakistan's GSP+ Status Over Blasphemy Law Abuse



**The European Parliament has adopted a resolution calling for a review of the GSP+ status granted to Pakistan in view of an "alarming" increase in the use of blasphemy accusations in the country as well as rising number of online and offline attacks on journalists and civil society organisations, it emerged on Friday.**

The resolution also calls on the Government of Pakistan to "unequivocally condemn" incitement to violence and discrimination against religious minorities in the country, and expresses "deep concern" at the prevailing anti-French sentiment in Pakistan.

The EU Parliament "calls on the Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) to immediately review Pakistan's eligibility for GSP+ status in the light of current events and whether there is sufficient reason to initiate a procedure for the temporary withdrawal of this status and the benefits that come with it, and to report to the European Parliament on this matter as soon as possible", according to the resolution. Member of European Parliament (MEP) Charlie Weimers of Sweden, who co-authored the resolution, in his speech during the parliament's latest session cited various incidents of members of religious minorities killed or imprisoned in Pakistan over accusations of blasphemy.

"Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan, rather than defend his citizens' human rights against false accusers, [...] equated denial of the Holocaust and genocide to criticism of Islam's Prophet (PBUH)," he said in his remarks. The lawmaker also tweeted: "Should Europe reward Pakistan's mob justice targeting Christians and its Prime Minister relativising the Holocaust? My answer is no."

Responding to the passage of the resolution, Human Rights Minister Shireen Mazari while apparently referring to Weimers said: "It is unfortunate that the co-sponsor of the EU's anti-Pakistan resolution was a member of a party that the Swedish PM Stefan Lofven referred to as 'a neo-fascist single-issue party'

with 'Nazi and racist roots'." She said the pertinent question now was "whether GSP Plus is getting muddled in Islamophobia?" "We have issues to resolve but there has been more movement now on our Human Rights International Convention commitments than in previous governments. The way forward is dialogue & negotiations, which we have been doing, not extreme public positionings. Unfortunate," she wrote, tagging the EU ambassador to Pakistan in her tweet. The EU resolution expresses particular concern regarding the case of couple Shagufta Kausar and Shafqat Emmanuel, who were sentenced to death on blasphemy charges in 2014. These charges emanated from the alleged sending of text messages disrespectful of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) from a phone number registered to Kausar to the person accusing the couple of blasphemy. "The evidence on which the couple were convicted can be considered deeply flawed," it states, noting that the couple had allegedly been in an argument with the accuser not long before the accusations were made. The couple remain in jail pending a court ruling on their appeal against their death sentence. The appeal was due to be heard in April 2020, six years after they were sentenced, but has been postponed multiple times, most recently on February 15, 2021, according to the resolution. It notes that there has been "an alarming increase" in accusa-



tions of blasphemy online and offline in Pakistan over the past year, with the highest number of accusations since 1987 taking place in 2020. Many of these allegations targeted human rights defenders, journalists, artists and the most marginalised segments. "Pakistan's blasphemy laws are increasingly used for personal or political score-settling in violation of the rights to freedom of religion and belief and of opinion and expression," it states. According to the resolution, the situation in Pakistan "continued to deteriorate in 2020 as the government systematically enforced blasphemy laws and failed to protect religious minorities from abuses by non-state actors, with a sharp rise in targeted killings, blasphemy cases, forced conversions, and hate speech against religious minorities including Ahmadis, Shia Muslims, Hindus, Christians and Sikhs; whereas abduction, forced conversion to Islam, rape and forced marriage remained an imminent threat for religious minority women and children in 2020, particularly those from the Hindu and Christian faiths". The text calls on the Pakistani government to "unequivocally condemn incitement to violence and discrimination against religious minorities in the country" and put in place "effective, procedural and institutional safeguards" to prevent the abuse of the blasphemy laws, while noting that it has been made a requirement that no police officer below the level of police superintendent may investigate charges before registering a case. It also expresses concern over "an increasing number of online and offline attacks on journalists and civil society organisations, in particular against women and the most marginalised in society", noting that such attacks often include false accusations of blasphemy, which can lead to physical attacks, killings, arbitrary arrest and detention. It urges the Pakistani government to take "immediate steps" to ensure the safety of journalists, human rights defenders and

faith-based organisations and to carry out prompt and effective investigations in order to uphold the rule of law and bring the perpetrators to justice. The resolution says Pakistan has benefited from trade preferences under the GSP+ programme since 2014, while the economic benefits from this unilateral trade agreement for the country are "considerable". However, the GSP+ status "comes with the obligation to ratify and implement 27 international conventions including commitments to guarantee human rights and religious freedom", it adds. "In its latest GSP+ assessment of Pakistan of 10 February 2020, the Commission expressed a variety of serious concerns on the human rights situation in the country, notably the lack of progress in limiting the scope and implementation of the death penalty," the text says. However, the resolution welcomes the recent judgment of the Supreme Court of Pakistan to ban the execution of prisoners with mental health conditions. It calls upon the Pakistani authorities to commute the sentences of all individuals who are facing the death penalty to ensure that their right to a fair trial is respected. Apparently referring to the recent violent protests by the banned Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP), the resolution says: "The repeated and deceptive attacks against the French authorities by radical Pakistani groups and recent statements by the Government of Pakistan on the grounds of blasphemy have escalated since the response of the French authorities to the terrorist attack against a French school teacher for defending freedom of expression." It says the EU Parliament considers the violent demonstrations against France as "unacceptable" and is deeply concerned by the anti-French sentiment in Pakistan, which has led French nationals and companies to have to leave the country temporarily.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1621254>

# Germany Set To Vote In Most Unpredictable Elections In Years

By Ruairi Casey

Berlin, Germany – For the first time in well over a decade, German voters will enter polling booths for federal elections on Sunday with no clear idea which party will win, who will be the next chancellor, or what governing coalition will be formed. Only a razor's edge separates the centre-left Social Democratic Party (SPD) from the conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU)

and its Bavarian sister party, the Christian Social Union (CSU), according to the latest poll by the Allensbach Institute, which puts the archrivals at 26 percent and 25 percent, respectively. Other polls released in recent days put the SPD's lead at two to four points, with a margin of error of about 3 percent. Experts have urged caution when interpreting polling data due to the uncertain influence of an historically high number of undecided voters, as well as an expected surge in postal voting. Exit polls will be released when voting ends at 6pm local time (16:00 GMT) on Sunday, and results will emerge throughout the night.

## Unpredictable campaign

Angela Merkel's decision to depart as chancellor after 16 years has upended German politics and led to the most unpredictable race in years. At various points in the campaign, the SPD, CDU/CSU and the Greens have each been leading the polls. Climate change has dominated party programmes and televised debates more than any other issue. On Friday,



more than 100,000 protesters joined a Fridays for Future demonstration outside the German parliament building in Berlin, where activist Greta Thunberg told crowds that “no political party is doing even close to enough” to avoid climate disaster. Other points of debate included social welfare spending and raising the minimum wage, overhauling Germany's rickety digital infrastructure, and the country's role in the NATO alliance. Success and failure in the campaign have largely been determined by party leaders' ability to frame themselves as a natural heir to Merkel, who remains Germany's most popular politician. Gaffes by CDU leader Armin Laschet saw his approval rates tank, while allegations of CV-padding and plagiarism knocked Green candidate Annalena Baerbock's race off course. Finance Minister and SPD candidate Olaf Scholz has played up his reputation as a boring, pragmatic centrist to great effect. A recent poll found that 47 percent of voters favoured him for chancellor, compared with 20 percent for Laschet and 16 percent for



Baerbock. "The issue of succession became perhaps the most important campaign issue," Kai Arzheimer, a professor of politics at the University of Mainz, told Al Jazeera.

"Voters are more worried or more interested in who would be most competent, and who would be best able to manage Germany and Germany's future. So personalities have become a major focus in this campaign."

### **How the election works**

A total of 60.4 million voters aged above 18 are eligible to cast a ballot on Sunday. Voting booths will open at 8am (06:00 GMT) on Sunday and close at 6pm (16:00 GMT).

Under Germany's electoral system, voters cast two ballots for the Bundestag, the federal parliament, which has a base number of 598 seats. The first is for a candidate to represent one of Germany's 299 districts, which is determined in a United Kingdom-style first-past-the-post system. The second is for a party. These votes are distributed according to proportional representation to each party that passes a 5 percent threshold, who chose 299 more candidates from internal lists to represent them. A number of "overhang" seats are created if there is an imbalance between a party's directly elected seats and its share of voters, a feature that has caused the Bundestag to balloon in size. In 2017, the total number of seats rose to 709, and the number is expected to rise again this year. The states of Berlin and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern will also hold simultaneous state elections. Berliners will receive a further ballot for a referendum to expropriate the capital's largest landlords and take nearly a quarter-million homes into state ownership. Germany's federal returning officer told local media that the number of votes submitted by post would be at least 40 percent, potentially even doubling the 28.6 percent in 2017. The COVID-19 pandemic is not expected to reduce turnout, he added, noting that regional elections earlier this year did not see any significant decline.

Forming a coalition In the coming weeks and months, German parties will negotiate with each other to form a coalition capable of governing with a majority in the new Bundestag. There is little appetite to renew Merkel's favoured "grand coalition" of SPD and CDU/CSU, so polling suggests three parties will be required. There are no formal rules that govern coalition talks, which will last until MPs vote in a new government and elect a new chancellor. The CDU and the SPD have indicated that they will seek to lead a coalition even if they do not come out in the first place. The most likely options, taking their names from the party colours, are a so-called "traffic light" combination of SPD, Green and Free Democratic Party (FDP); or a "Jamaica" coalition of CDU/CSU, Green and FDP. The pro-business FDP wants tight fiscal control over finances, which complicates a marriage with the SPD and the Greens, who have staked their campaigns on increasing spending for social welfare and climate protection. "This might be a very big issue, whether we will have more taxes or higher taxes, or not," said Ursula Munch, director of the Academy for Political Education in Tutzing.

"The Free Democrats, they promised their voters to have a tax reduction." A left-wing coalition of SPD, the Green and the Left Party may be mathematically possible if the latter clears the 5 percent hurdle to enter parliament. The Left's programme has more in common than the FDP, but its opposition to NATO is a major barrier to the larger parties. "It will take quite a long time," said Munch. "It's impossible to form a coalition before November and we'll be happy if we have one in February." If Merkel does stay on as interim chancellor until December 17, she will make history by overtaking her mentor, former CDU leader Helmut Kohl, as Germany's longest-serving post-war leader.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/9/25/explainer-germany-elections-2021>

# British Bangladeshi Mansoor Ahmad Honoured with the Houses of Parliament Official Presentation

Commonwealth Journalists Association (UK) Member British Bangladeshi Mansoor Ahmad has been honoured with the Houses of Parliament Official Presentation 2021 organised by British Citizen Awards (BCA). Mansoor Ahmad is the first British Bangladeshi to be honoured with the British Citizen Awards (BCA) Roll of Honour 2021, receiving the BCAv – Medal of Honour for his extraordinary endeavours and incredible inspirational and voluntary contribution to the British Community. The BCA Medal Presentation Ceremony was scheduled to take place in January 2021, but due to the Coronavirus Pandemic the ceremony had to be postponed. Mansoor Ahmad has received a British Citizen Award Medal along with a Memory Stick containing a short presentation by the courier. This presentation ceremony was held in the Cholmondeley Room, House of Lords, UK Parliament on Tuesday 7th September 2021. Mansoor was also awarded with the House of Lords British Community Honours Award (BCHA) in October 2019, held at the UK Parliament, for his enormous support towards British Society, having been presented with the Certificate of Recognition from British Citizen Awards in January 2019 for his extraordinary contributions to society, and for being an encouraging example to other British citizens. Mansoor is the first British Bangladeshi who received the All England Lawn Tennis Club recognition in 2021 for his Covid-19 pandemic efforts. He was awarded with the Mayor of London Borough of Merton's Covid-19 Award in December 2020 for his outstanding local contributions, and for the noteworthy differences which he made in people's lives during the challenging period of the pandemic. Mansoor Ahmad has also



been recognised by Her Majesty's The Queen's personal representative Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London Sir Kenneth Ollis OBE for his outstanding contribution to the British Community. On receiving the award Mansoor commented, 'I am extremely gratified and honoured for this official presentation of British Citizen Awards at the House of Lords and really grateful to BCA for choosing



me for this award and recognition. I believe that the excellance of life is determined upon the love and services for others. This moment would be remembered by me with boundless honour.' Mansoor has been serving as a co-opted member for the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and Young Children People Overview & Scrutiny Panel under Merton Council. He has currently been serving as a Governor of Ricards Lodge Secondary School and St. John Fisher School, and is vigorously been attached to various school committees. Mansoor Ahmad migrated to the United Kingdom from Bangladesh in February 2007 under the British Government's Highly Skilled Migration Programme. He is a qualified accountant currently serving as Manager of Accounts & Finance with Al Shirkatul Islamiyyah, one of the largest charities in the UK. He is a life devotee of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association UK. Mansoor has authored many articles which have been published in prestigious national and international journals, magazines and newspapers, and participated in a number of esteemed Seminars, Workshops and Conferences where he spoke as presenter and key note speaker on various occasions. Mansoor served as Finance Manager with Chittagong Stock Exchange, Bangladesh for over 11 years. He also served as a visiting lecturer with University of Science & Technology (USTC), Preston University, Premier University, Southern University Bangladesh, Edward University & University of Honolulu (Chittagong Campus, Bangladesh) and taught at BBA, MBA and ACCA Levels. Dear all, Assalamu Alaikum. Just to inform you all that the monthly General Meeting of Bangla Department UK which was scheduled to be held on Sunday, the 19th September, 2021 has now been postponed. Fresh date for this meeting would be announced later. Jazakallah. Mansoor Ahmad, Secretary-Bangla Department UK.

## IMPORTANT NOTICE

We are truly grateful to our esteemed readers for their continued interest in **Lahore International** and **Aabgeenei Magazines** through which we have been able to fulfil our vision of promoting understanding of different sections of society through our informative articles.

This has been a non profit organisation running without any financial help from others. We would be very grateful for any monetary contribution you can provide on a monthly basis so we can continue bringing you true and unbiased journalism.

We thank you for your contributions to the following account :

Bank Name: **Lloyd's Bank PLC**

Account Name: **Lahore International Ltd.**

Account No: **42534160**

Sort Code: **30-96-26**

IBAN: **GB89LoyD30962612534160**

Hoping for an encouraging response for our readers for this noble cause.

May Allah be with you - Amen

# UK: Teachers Warn Of Rising Islamophobia in Schools

LONDON:

Almost three-quarters of teachers in England have encountered Islamophobic attitudes among pupils. A study of 96 teachers conducted by the University College London Institute of Education, commissioned by education charity Since 9/11, found that increased access to the internet is fueling this trend, and that staff lack the resources or training to effectively counter it. It added that schools' approaches to

tackling extremism vary, with some described as "tokenistic," and that many teachers complained that they did not approach issues relating to extremism in classrooms for fear of getting things wrong.

"This is a wake-up call for us all. We must make sure that every pupil is taught how to reject extremist beliefs and ideologies," said Kamal Hanif, a trustee of Since 9/11 and an expert on preventing violent extremism in schools. "We know that right now extremists are trying to lure young people into a world of hatred and violence, both online and in person. We must use the power of education to fight back and help young people stand up and reject extremism and violence," he added. "We need far more clarity from government about the need to have time in the curriculum for frank and open discussions about extremism." Dr. Becky Taylor, from the UCL Centre for Teachers and Teaching Research, said: "This report shows that some schools fail to move beyond surface-level explorations of violence, extremism and radicalization; however, it is without doubt that schools can play



an important role. "Education policies must consider the fact that some schools may need more help than others to build on what they already have in place." She added: "Engaging well with their local communities and ensuring that schools and teachers are supported and appropriately resourced can help young people to problematize hateful extremism."

In addition to Islamophobia, around 90 percent of teachers claimed to have come across conspiracy theories in schools, and almost all said they had encountered racism among pupils, with the report coming just months after the head of MI5 warned that children are increasingly the subjects of anti-terror investigations. Ken McCallum said in July that radicalized teenagers are a "rising trend in MI5's counter-terrorist case work," with people under 18 representing 13 percent of all terror-related arrests last year, and people under 24 accounting for nearly 60 percent of all arrests related to far-right activity.

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/1924586/world>



# USA: Muslim doctor charged with FGM on nine girls aged just seven

16 September 2021: A Muslim doctor on trial for allegedly performing genital mutilation on nine girls, all seven years-old, was also part of a secret network of physicians who traveled across the country performing the brutal procedure, according to federal prosecutors. Dr. Jumana Nagarwala was cleared of female genital mutilation charges in November 2018 during the nation's first-of-its-kind case, when a federal judge ruled that a law banning the practice was unconstitutional. The same charges were brought against Attar's wife, Farida, and a woman named Tahera Shafiq, who assisted in the procedure, as well as four women who tricked their daughters into going to the suburban clinic to undergo the practice for religious purposes. US District Judge Bernard Friedman dismissed all but one obstruction charge against Nagarwala, Attar, his wife Farida and Shafiq in November 2018. He declared a 1996 federal law banning the practice unconstitutional and concluded that it's up to the states to regulate female genital mutilation. The obstruction trial was underway until the coronavirus pandemic hit and brought it to a halt. Then, in March, prosecutors issued a superseding indictment with five new charges, including conspiracy to make false statements and witness tampering, the Detroit Free Press reported. Prosecutors argue that that Nagarwala and her three cohorts lied to the FBI about the mutilations that they were performing and intimidated others in their community to lie if the FBI interviewed them about it. The four defendants requested Thursday's hearing to dismiss the case altogether, arguing that the prosecutors were only pursuing the new charges out of retaliation. 'The government is acting with extreme prosecutorial vindictiveness in issuing yet another superseding indictment nearly half a decade after charges were first issued,' the defense



Dr. Jumana Nagarwala was seen at a hearing on Thursday for allegedly lying about performing genital mutilation on nine girls, all seven years old

argued in court filings, seen by the Detroit Free Press, adding that the new charges are 'retaliation for the defense successfully decimating the government's case.' Friedman said Thursday that he would take their arguments into consideration, but was still reviewing the new indictment and would make a decision at a later date. Nagarwala, who is an emergency room doctor at Henry Ford Health System, was arrested in April 2017 after two young girls accused her of performing the mutilation procedures on them earlier that year. She denied the allegations and claimed she was performing a religious practice for families in the Muslim sect, Dawoodi Bohras, and that it only involved scraping the membrane of the girls' genitalia as part of the religious custom. But doctors' reports obtained by the Detroit Free Press indicate the children suffered more severe injuries including scarring, a small tear, lacerations and what appeared to be the surgical removal of a portion of genitalia. Authorities claimed she and her cohorts have been part of a female genital mutilation

scheme since 2005 and charged her with mutilation of seven other girls from Michigan, Illinois and Minnesota. Their alleged victims cried, screamed and bled during the procedure, with one drugged with Valium ground in liquid Tylenol to calm her down during the procedure, according to court records. Prosecutors later argued that Nagarwala completed mutilation procedures on as many as 100 young girls over the course of a decade who were all told to keep the surgeries a secret. Then, on Thursday, prosecutors brought forward more accusations that Nagarwala wasn't the only doctor performing the mass mutilations. Department of Justice attorney Amy Markopoulos told a judge that such doctors 'were in demand' by the Dawoodi Bohra community, which has a mosque in Detroit and practices female circumcision as a religious rite of passage that supporters claim only involves only a minor 'nick' of the genitals. This was not a discreet, one time occasion ... It was not arbitrary,' Markopoulos said of the mutilation practice. 'Travel is often necessary to perform the procedure.' In Friedman's 2018 ruling, he said that 'as despicable as this practice may be,' Congress did not have the authority to pass its criminalization and it is up to the states to decide its legality. He wrote in his conclusion that it is a ' "local criminal activity" which, in keeping with long-standing tradition and our federal system of government, is for the states to regulate, not Congress.' Assistant U.S. Attorney Sara Woodward argued that the practice was still deemed illegal by Congress when the defendants performed them, but they did it anyway. She also said that Nargarwala 'is aware that female genital mutilation has no medical purpose,' reported the Detroit Free Press. Female genital mutilation has been condemned by the United Nations but is common for girls in some parts of Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9998635/Muslim-doctor-charged-female-genital-mutilation-nine-young-girls-seen-court-again.html>

## Prince Harry, Meghan Markle's UK return turning difficult due to 'lack of trust'



Prince Harry and Meghan Markle's upcoming trip to the UK has reportedly become difficult due to the lack of trust they hold in the eyes of the British public. This claim's been brought to light by royal author Angela Levin, during her appearance on True Royalty TV's The Royal Beat. There she was quoted saying, "I think it would cause a lot of people a lot of grief." "The Queen would be delighted because she adores Harry - and also you love a child even though you disagree with everything they are doing - but I think for the other Royals, it is quite a stiff time where everybody has a very explicit diary of changing five times a day and what they have to do at what time."

"I think it will be very, very difficult if they come over because the feeling is you can't trust them, and they might use this for their next documentary or for his next book."

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/895268-prince-harry-meghan-markles-uk-return-turning-difficult-due-to-lack-of-trust>



# Book Review: A Good Wife by Samra Zafar

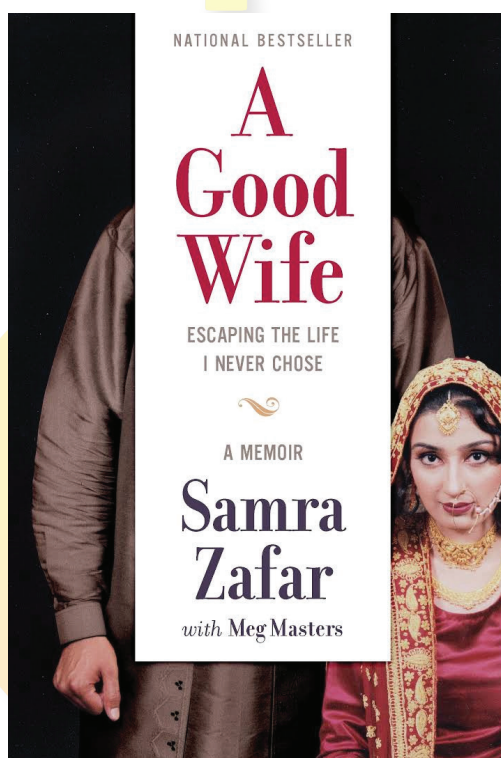
By: Harper Collins Canada

As the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic continues to plague almost every single country in the world, the issue of domestic violence is becoming a cause for concern among global leaders including in Canada. According to reports, domestic abuse cases are on the rise as women's shelters and hotlines grapple with the influx of calls being received by individuals in precarious situations. Many believe that this increase is the result of pandemic associated factors such as financial insecurity, stress and uncertainty leading to increased aggression in the home. Domestic violence also increases whenever members of a household are obliged to spend long periods of time together. This is often because abusers are able to control many more aspects of their victim's daily life and families are socially isolated in their homes. Among immigrant and refugee communities in Canada, the problem of domestic violence is compounded by additional vulnerabilities, including a woman's lack of proficiency in English or French, challenges understanding and navigating available resources and supports, problems of poverty, unemployment and underemployment, and issues of sponsorship preventing women from leaving an abuser. We reached out to domestic abuse survivor turned advocate Samra Zafar, who is an author of *A Good Wife: Escaping the Life I Never Chose*. According to Samra Zafar, each year over 12 million girls under the age of 18 are forced

into child marriages. Many regions and countries practice child marriages but it is most common in Pakistan, Bangladesh, India and many parts of Africa. Even in the United States and Canada, child marriages are legal. In Canada the federal Civic Marriage Act was

amended in 2015 to permit marriage as young as 16, if they have their parents' consent. Samra believes that cultural practices and traditions should not trump human rights, and child marriages under the age of 18 years should stop. Samra shared her ordeal as a child bride and an abuse survivor. Born in Pakistan, Samra Zafar was a teen bride who was, at her parent's insistence, married off at the tender age of 17 to a man much older than her, who she knew nothing about. Shortly after getting married,

Zafar migrated to Canada with her new husband. Samra was terrified. She had no friends or family in Canada and it was a very different environment from the country she grew up in. She had no idea how things are done in Canada. Her only dream was being able to go to school but she was forced to stay home. Within a matter of months, Samra went from being a confident and ambitious teenage girl to living in a strange country as a wife, a daughter-in-law and soon to be mother. Samra lost all independence and agency over her life. The emotional abuse, Samra says, began almost at day one. The physical abuse began with one slap. Then it began increasing incrementally and escalating over the years. Samra



30 didn't even know this was abuse. It was just something she accepted as part of their marriage. Initially, Samra had contact with her family back in Pakistan and began reaching out for support. Soon after she was restricted from doing so and told that she shouldn't be talking to her family anymore because her husband's family was her family! Although Samra considered leaving her husband in those early years, she had no work experience or education, and had a young daughter and was completely dependent on her husband financially. Samra also did not have any friends or anywhere to go to. Other barriers like social stigma and the feelings of dishonouring her family in Pakistan were also present. According to Samra, there was a lot of pressure to stay and conform and "be a good wife." – Someone who tolerates abuse, is quiet, is submissive and protects the family's honour. With little or no contact with the outside world, Samra Zafar suffered in silence. However, after enduring twelve years of an abusive marriage, Samra began taking a weekly university course and accessing the campus personal counseling services. There she learned that what was happening to her was abuse and that there were resources and support available to her. She also learned that the underlying threat of losing her children was not real. With that knowledge came power. Soon after going to counselling, Samra left her marriage. At the time her daughters were nine and four years old. Samra regrets not leaving sooner. By the time her older daughter was a teenager she started showing a lot of signs of distress and trauma. Samra tells us that sometimes women stay in abusive relationships for the "sake" of the children. Instead women should leave abusive marriage for the sake of their children, says Samra. Children, Samra argues, "don't need a two parent family; they need a family where there is love, support and respect. And if that is not happening, it is very damaging to them."



Samra Zafar is an award-winning internationally renowned speaker, bestselling author and educator for equity, mental health, and human rights. She has been recognized among the Top 100 Most Powerful Women in Canada, Top 25 Most Inspirational Women in Canada, and Top 25 Canadian Immigrants. Her book, *A Good Wife: Escaping The Life I Never Chose*, based on her journey of escaping an abusive child marriage to pursue her education, shed light on gender-based oppression, is a national bestseller, was one of CBC's Best Books of 2019, and is being adapted to a premium TV series. She serves as a Governor at the University of Toronto, a Celebrated Ambassador for Plan International, and a board member for Women's College Hospital Foundation. Her work has impacted millions and has been extensively featured in national and global media. Samra's speaking portfolio includes three successful TED Talks, and many leading corporations, universities, and nonprofits around the world.

<https://www.stjamestown.org/2021/03/12/escaping-an-abusive-marriage-an-interview-with-samra-zafar/>



# 'Trade interests trump human rights': EU Parliament defers vote on anti-CAA resolution

By: Muhammad Omer Hayat

Initially supported by at least 560 MEPs from five of the largest groups in the 751-strong European Parliament, voting on a damning resolution against India's contentious Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) was postponed on Wednesday till March in a move that many members criticised as a prime example of the European Union "capitulating and crumbling" in the face of pressure from India's diplomatic lobby. In a biting speech during the debate in Brussels on Wednesday, Scott Ainslie of the European Free Alliance, popularly known as the Greens party, condemned the deferment of the vote saying he was "heartbroken" at the "appalling decision taken today", which he said was the result of the EU prioritising "yet another trade summit with India over our commitment to protecting human rights". "We've refused to take a stand on this Islamophobic policy which could drive 200 million Muslims, nearly half the EU's population, towards statelessness, incarceration or deportation," Ainslie said. The Greens' MEP pointed out that all major groups in the EU Parliament, including the European People's Party (EPP) – the largest group in Europe with 184 elected members, had "co-signed" the resolution but "today have chosen to postpone the vote yet again". Four of the largest parties in the EU Parliament – EPP, Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D), the Renew Europe Group and the European United Left/Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL) – were signatories to the joint resolution against India. But in yesterday's debate, one parliamentarian each from three of these groups came out in open support of the CAA, going as far as terming the new law an example of "positive discrimination". Nina Gill, an Indian-origin S&D parliamentarian from the United Kingdom, said: "This is an act of positive discrimination aimed at integration process of refugees from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh, who have already been in India for many years, recognising the high level of discrimination faced by non-Muslims in those countries. It is not seeking to exclude any of the other groups who do not fall within this category." Welcoming the postponement of the vote, Gill said the resolution was full of factual inaccuracies. She regretted that her concerns about the persecution of minorities in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh had "fallen on deaf ears". "Had this house paid a little bit of more attention to those gross violations as we do today to CAA, India may not have had to take these actions." Gill said it was the correct decision to wait on the vote "until the Supreme Court has deliberated on this". Another British MEP of Indian origin, Dinesh Dhamija of the Renew Europe Group, echoed similar views in clear contradiction to his group's stance on the resolution. "India takes in persecuted refugees from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh and they are the bad guys? They are the good guys; they've taken in the refugees. This motion does not censure any of the three Muslim countries for having created this refugee crisis," he said. Dhamija was of the view that the Rohingya migrating from Bangladesh to India should not be considered a religious minority since they were coming from a "majority Muslim state", instead referring to them as "economic migrants". Talking about the National Register of Citizens (NRC) proposed by India, Dhamija questioned: "Are we saying that India or any other country for that matter is not allowed to document the people living inside its boundaries?" He also said that the matter be considered subjudice as it was

being looked into by the Indian Supreme Court. Phil Bennion, also from the Renew Europe Group, highlighted the NRC as linked to the CAA: "1.9 million people now have been excluded from the register on the basis of not having the documents. So India's refugee policy needs to be applied to all of those in need, including Muslims." Bennion pointed out that even Muslim minorities, such as Ahmedis, were persecuted in neighbouring countries which the new Indian law did not take into account. "Now there are Muslim sects in neighbouring countries that do face discrimination and one of them, the Ahmadiyyas has already been mentioned. Ultimately, this law discriminates on religious grounds and is therefore contrary to the whole principle in India of secularism." In stark contrast to fellow S&D MEP Nina Gill, John Howarth lambasted the citizenship law as "highly discriminatory" and "Islamophobic". "I find and many of the people I represent find the Indian citizenship act amendments alarming. This cannot be dressed up. This is a highly discriminatory piece of legislation which targets a specific religion." Pointing out that the new legislation posed a threat to India's secular nature, Howarth said it was clear that Muslims had been singled out in the new law. "I think a message needs to be sent to the Indian government from the European Union because this is a government of Hindu nationalism. A populist government in the same mould we have seen elsewhere in the world. And the message needs to be very clear whether it's Kashmir or the rights of citizens, respect for human rights is an essential element of the arrangements that this Union makes with other partners. And without that respect for human rights our relationship as a Union with India will come under serious threat." British-Pakistani MEP Shaffaq Mohammed from the Renew Europe Group also expressed his disappointment with the Parliament: "Individuals in here from the top table downwards thought that business and trade

interests were more important than human rights," he said. In response to a question regarding the scale of the statelessness this new law may cause, Mohammed said that implementation of NRC had meant 1.9 million people in Assam alone could not prove they are Indian citizens. "What on earth are you going to do with all those people? Because there's already detention camps set up. That's why I say to you. Remember your history. In Nuremberg, that law was also passed, and that law was legal. Just because a law is passed in a parliament doesn't mean it's legal. Learn from our history. I am taking this home with me. I am going to hold this in my drawer. And like I said, God forbid if anything happens, those people that stopped this vote today I'll be publicly naming them and saying these are the people that lead to this tragedy." Michael Gahler from the EPP – EU's largest party in terms of seats in Parliament – said India was an important economic and political partner of the EU and that it was important to understand what was happening in the country before moving on to a vote. Following in the footsteps of S&D's Nina Gill, Gahler also termed the amendments as "positive discrimination", saying that it did not matter under the new citizenship law if the refugees were Muslims, Christians or of any other faith as long as they've lived in India. "The amendment act itself establishes a 12-year deadline for those who have lived in the country — doesn't matter whether they're Muslims, Christians or of another faith but if they've lived in the country. So it's a kind of a selective privilege, it's a kind of positive discrimination introduced here. So one has to ask whether in this context criticisms can be levelled." Gahler however did say that more clarity was needed insofar as the NRC was concerned as "there's this fear that many citizens will not be able to prove they actually are allowed to be in India." "Of course there needs to be clarity. Hopefully we can speak with representatives of the government in a



fortnight at the next opportunity. And then we will also know what the judgment of the Supreme Court is.” Mistrust of the Indian government was also expressed by other members who stayed firm on the resolution such as Idoia Villanueva Ruiz from the GUE/NGL group. “President Modi, like Trump, like Bolsonaro, is in his second term coming up with measures that will exacerbate the conflict in Kashmir and we in Europe should be working alongside the thousands of Indians who are striking for their rights,” Ruiz said. The far-right Identity and Democracy Group (I&D), which was not a signatory to the joint resolution, presented a united front, speaking in favour of deferring the vote and “letting India deal with the issue using due democratic processes”. Thiery Mariani from the group asked the Parliament to see “the hand of Pakistan pulling the strings behind this campaign”, adding that India should be allowed to make its own decisions. “How would India interpret this vote? Imagine we had voted against this law. Then afterwards it would have been said that the Supreme Court was influenced by the EU?” Fellow I&D member Anna Bonfrisco supported Mariani’s stance, saying, “It’s not up to us to decide whether the law is constitutional or not. What the EU has to do is to make sure it avoids conflict with a country such as India.” The joint resolution asks for “the Indian Government to address the legitimate concerns raised over the NRC, which may be used to target marginalised groups”, “condemns the violence and brutality that broke out in different regions of India following the adoption of the CAA” and “condemns the decision of the Indian authorities to shut down internet access to global networks, preventing communication and the free flow of information”. The tabling of this resolution is significant not only because voting on this issue has been postponed earlier but also because Wednesday’s session was the last for all members of the Parliament from Britain after the country

formalised its exit from the Union at midnight yesterday. A number of these members had pushed for the resolution and played an active role in drafting it. Before a joint resolution was tabled on January 28, six separate resolutions on India’s citizenship law, each drafted by a different group in the EU Parliament, were submitted for debate and vote. The joint resolution came about after the anti-CAA groups reached an agreement and clubbed the five resolutions into one, which was first debated in Parliament on Wednesday. Voting on the joint resolution was expected to take place on Thursday (today) before it was postponed to March. Unlike some of the earlier resolutions, the joint resolution does not mention India’s annexation of occupied Kashmir and the human rights problems that have ensued in the disputed valley. After the debate, European Commission Vice President and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Helena Dalli said she had taken note of the various opinions expressed, adding that “we look forward to pursuing and intensifying our dialogue with India at the forthcoming summit on the whole range of issues of common interest including our mutual commitment to democracy, the rule of law and human rights.”  
<https://www.dawn.com/news/1531476>

### Lahore International Magazine



@lahoreintl



@lahoreintl



lahoreinternational



lahoreinternational



lahoreintl



+447940077825



+447940077825



lahoreintlondon@gmail.com

# The Horrors Emerging From Afghanistan Are Only Just Beginning

By: Baria Alamuddin



The Taliban may have been fighting to regain power for the past 20 years, but having lost most of those who misgoverned Afghanistan the last time around, their cave-dwelling leadership has no idea what to do with a victory that surprised them more than it surprised the outside world. These are people whose organizational experience to date has been planning mass-casualty terrorist attacks against civilians and extorting money from the heroin trade. Has any organization been more a victim of its own success, squashed between public contempt and sky-high expectations of radical supporters? Sixty percent of Afghans are under 25 and have no memory of a Taliban government or sympathy with its medieval worldview. However, if the group shows a hint of flexibility from its retrogressive principles, many of its fighters will quickly conclude that this isn't why they fought for 20 years, and defect to psychopaths such as Daesh-Khorasan.

These developments have immense significance for other parts of the Arab and Islamic world, where the Taliban and Al-Qaeda win risks galvanizing a new generation of extremists. Governments must rapidly mobilize capabilities to monitor and address such tendencies if we are to avoid a new phase of murderous jihadism. Immediately before the US withdrawal, about 10,000 jihadi fighters from the wider region flooded into Afghanistan. This rate of influx may increase exponentially now the Taliban are in power, bolstering numbers of Al-Qaeda and Daesh-aligned fighters already buttressed by mass prison breakouts. Are the Muslim world and the West ready to counter such dangerous tendencies this time around? The Gulf States have advanced immeasurably over the past 20 years, in a

manner that makes it immensely more difficult for jihadists to find recruits and sources of funding. However, in every street in every town, naive and angry young men are easy prey for lies about the glorious and heroic opportunities of "global jihad" – when the gory reality is savage violence against the innocent, exploitation by terrorists, and the participant's brutal and untimely death.

Former Saudi diplomat and intelligence chief Prince Turki Al-Faisal has slammed these unforced American errors, noting that after Trump did a deal with the Taliban it was "inevitable" that the Afghan government would implode. He slammed the "incompetence" with which the withdrawal was carried out, and the dangerous consequences of billions of dollars worth of US weapons falling into terrorist hands.

***Western officials debate how best to encourage the Taliban to fight Daesh-K, yet these are just different heads of the same fundamentalist hydra***

**Baria Alamuddin**

Just as Trump's 2016 victory provided a shot in the arm for populist authoritarian despots worldwide, the Taliban's re-emergence will reinvigorate the exhausted, shop-soiled model of political theocracy, with all the inevitable regressive consequences for women's rights, civil freedoms and competent governance. While citizens need bread, hospitals and functioning banks, acolytes of Taliban supreme leader Hibatullah Akhundzada are tussling over theocratic principles of governance, and who gets the nicest offices. Akhundzada himself is an excellent advocate for education and youth opportunities, having encouraged his





own son down the path of becoming a suicide bomber. There is nothing more repulsive than a supposedly religious organization hopelessly corrupted by power. Just as a scandalous two-thirds of Iran's state budget is siphoned off to opaque slush-fund theocratic foundations for super-rich ayatollahs while citizens starve, the minuscule state funds available in Afghanistan will not go to those in need. This is an organization whose first priorities after capturing Kabul were seizing lists from the Interior Ministry of those who worked with the Americans, and painting over images of women in cosmetics and clothes shop windows. Western officials debate how best to encourage the Taliban to fight Daesh-K, yet these are just different heads of the same fundamentalist hydra. Leading figures in Daesh-K are former Taliban hardliners. Groups such as the Haqqani Network and Imam Bukhari Jamaat maintain tight connections with Daesh-K and Al-Qaeda. Notorious terrorist kingpins such as Osama bin Laden's security chief Amin Al-Haq are already congregating in Kabul. Daesh-K, Al-Qaeda and Islamist states such as Iran, Qatar, Turkey and Pakistan are playing different Taliban factions off against each other in order to exploit divisions and cultivate allies. With \$9.4bn in Afghan currency frozen in the US, some speculate that the Taliban can be controlled by judiciously wielding aid money. But the Taliban has never been short of funds. Aside from support from Pakistan's security services, the

Taliban earned up to \$83.4 million a year just from taxing fuel and transit goods from Iran — more than twice the \$40 million value of the opium trade. With Iran profiting from the opportunity to circumvent US sanctions, such mutually beneficial criminal activities may explain why relations between Tehran and the Taliban have thawed considerably. The earth-shaking aftershocks of the Taliban takeover will be much more expensive and problematic than the relatively modest costs of retaining foreign forces in Afghanistan. Western attempts to withdraw small numbers of troops from Syria, Iraq and sub-Saharan Africa will likewise result in terrorist and rogue-state entities gaining supremacy. When prominent, experienced voices in global diplomacy concur that the consequences of these developments will be catastrophic on a global scale, and may even ultimately compel the international community to return to Afghanistan in the near future, we should be deeply worried. Throughout modern history, periods of Western isolationism have always terminated with hasty (and often disastrous) bouts of interventionism when chaos inevitably erupts in neglected areas of the world. What we really need is a mature new international doctrine on the need for vigilant involvement in the world, through vigorously supporting competent governance, developmental projects and environmental protection, and countering extremist tendencies before they get out of control. Joe Biden desperately hopes that US voters with microscopic attention spans will have long-since forgotten the horrific scenes from Afghanistan before the next US elections. Unfortunately for him, the horrors emerging from Afghanistan are only just beginning.

<https://www.arabnews.com/taxonomy/term/4071>

# A Million Afghan Children Could Die in 'Most Perilous Hour,' U.N. Warns

By: Marc Santora, NYTimes

Millions of Afghans could run out of food before the arrival of winter and one million children are at risk of starvation and death if their immediate needs are not met, top United Nations officials warned on Monday, putting the country's plight into stark relief. Secretary General António Guterres, speaking at a high-level U.N. conference in Geneva convened to address the crisis, said that since the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan last month, the nation's poverty rate has soared and basic public services have neared collapse and, in the past year, hundreds of thousands of people have been made homeless after being forced to flee fighting. "After decades of war, suffering and insecurity, they face perhaps their most perilous hour," Mr. Guterres said, adding that one in three Afghans do not know where they will get their next meal. The deepening humanitarian crisis tops a dizzying array of challenges confronting the new Taliban regime as it navigates governing a country propped up for decades by aid from international donors.

Speaking to the news media on Monday afternoon, Mr. Guterres said more than \$1 billion in aid pledges had been made at the meeting by the international community, which is still grappling with how to work with an organization like the Taliban, with a history of brutality and human rights abuses. Across the country, the telltale signs of a humanitarian crisis have grown more and more pronounced each day. In Wardak Province, less than an hour's drive west of Kabul, Afghanistan's capital, the Taliban's military campaign brought the local economy to a standstill this summer. Weeks after the Taliban seized power, most cross-border trade and many local businesses have yet to reopen — leaving many without

any income even as food prices soar. "There is security now, we are happy about that," said Zakaria, a villager in Wardak Province's Chak district and a former Taliban fighter who was serving a 16-year sentence in Pul-e-Charkhi Prison in Kabul when the Taliban seized power and freed inmates. "But there is no work, the people are not able to make any money," he added. The price of flour doubled at the local market, Zakaria said. Villagers stopped cooking chicken and other meat — now a luxury — in favor of less expensive meals of beans and rice. Many started eating less, uncertain how they will pay for their next meal. Even as widespread malnutrition looms, the hospitals that once treated people for starvation now face potential collapse. At a local hospital in Chak-e Wardak, administrators have been unable to pay salaries or purchase new medicines with banks still closed, according to Faridullah, the facility's resident doctor. "Most of our medicine, facilities and livelihood are provided by foreign countries," Dr. Faridullah said. "We have no shortages in the hospital now, but our own facilities and personnel depend on funds coming from abroad and we can't access them." The prospect of humanitarian catastrophe long looming over the nation now poses an immediate threat to its children. "Nearly 10 million girls and boys depend on humanitarian assistance just to survive," Henrietta H. Fore, the executive director of UNICEF, said at the conference. "At least one million children will suffer from severe acute malnutrition this year and could die without treatment." Even before the Taliban swept across the country and took control of the government, Afghanistan was confronting a dire food crisis as drought enveloped the nation.





On Monday, in his first public remarks to Congress, Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken defended the Biden administration's withdrawal from Afghanistan, saying there was no reason to believe the country would have stabilized had the United States remained. "There's no evidence that staying longer would have made the Afghan security forces or the Afghan government any more resilient or self-sustaining," Mr. Blinken told the House Foreign Affairs Committee, in a live teleconference call. "If 20 years and hundreds of billions of dollars in support, equipment, and training did not suffice, why would another year, or five, or 10, make a difference?" Mr. Blinken said the Biden administration would not abandon Afghanistan, and on Monday, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, America's ambassador to the United Nations, promised \$64 million in new funding for food and medical aid. The World Food Program estimates that 40 percent of Afghanistan's crops are lost. The price of wheat has gone up by 25 percent, and the aid agency's own food stock is expected to run out by the end of September. The suffering wrought by conflict and made worse by climate change has been compounded by the uncertainty that has accompanied the Taliban's ascent, with many international aid workers having fled the country out of safety concerns. Those who remain are unsure if they will be able to continue their work. During the conference on

Monday, the U.N. said it needed \$606 million in emergency funding to address the immediate crisis, while acknowledging that money alone will not be enough. The organization has pressed the Taliban to provide assurances that aid workers can go about their business safely. By the end of the gathering, international pledges had surpassed the amount requested. But even as the Taliban sought to make that pledge, the U.N.'s human rights chief, Michelle Bachelet, also speaking in Geneva, said Afghanistan was in a "new and perilous phase" since the militant Islamist group seized power. "In contradiction to assurances that the Taliban would uphold women's rights, over the past three weeks, women have instead been progressively excluded from the public sphere," she said, a warning that the Taliban would need to use more than words to demonstrate their commitment to aid workers' safety. Monday's conference was also intended to drive home the enormity of the crisis and offer some reassurance to Western governments hesitant to provide assistance that could legitimize the authority of a Taliban government that includes leaders identified by the U.N. as international terrorists with links to Al Qaeda. Martin Griffiths, the U.N.'s director of humanitarian and emergency relief operations, visited Kabul last week and said Taliban authorities had promised to facilitate the delivery of aid. "We assure you that we will remove previous and current impediments in front of your assistance and all related projects working under supervision of U.N and other international organizations in Afghanistan," the Taliban said in commitments that Mr. Griffiths read out to the conference. The Taliban also promised to protect the life and property of humanitarian workers and safeguard their compounds.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/13/world/asia/afghanistan-united-nations-crisis.html?referringSource=articleShare>

# Should Muslims Follow Saudi-Wahhabi Version Of Islam In All Islamic Matters?

By: Ghulam Ghaus, India

Some ordinary Muslims, usually job holders, who return from Saudi Arabia with Saudi views want us to look like Saudis, i.e., the Saudis do not wear caps, therefore we should cease wearing caps as well. Similarly, they argue that because the religion will shrink back to Saudi Arabia in the end days, Muslims should follow Saudis in order to succeed in Islamic matters. What does Islam have to say about this? Here's how to respond to this question: There is no evidence in the Qur'an or Sunnah that you should imitate the inhabitants of a country in order to fulfil your Islamic obligations. These are unfounded rumours that have no legal basis in the Quran. The Quran, on the other hand, proves that you must obey Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him). As a result, rather than following the Saudis or anyone else, live according to the Qur'an and Sunnah:

**Allah says in the Quran:**

***"And obey Allah and His Noble Messenger, and do not quarrel with one another; otherwise, you will lose courage and strength, and endure patiently; Allah is with those who patiently endure."* (8:46)**

***It has been narrated by Abu Huraira that Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said, "All my followers will enter Paradise except those who refuse." They said, "O Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him)! Who will refuse?" He said, "Whoever obeys me will enter Paradise, and whoever disobeys me is the one who refuses (to enter it)." [Sahih al-Bukhari 7280: Book 96, Hadith 12]***

Similarly, obedience to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is commanded in dozens of the Quranic verses and Ahadith. As a result, obedience is not limited to any particular country or nation, but rather to Allah and His Messenger (peace be

upon him). It's not just about Islamic headwear; there are several distinctions between us. Take a look at their attire and compare them to ours; their manner of life broadly differs from ours. The rumour that the Islamic faith will be restricted to Saudis is untrue. In this case, the following hadith presents a very different meaning. Hazrat Abu Hurairah [may Allah be pleased with him] reported God's messenger as saying, "Faith will shrink back to Medina as a snake shrinks back to its hole." [Bukhari and Muslim] The above hadith exclusively mentions Medina and not any other city in Saudi Arabia. As a result, in the end-times, all believers would seek refuge in Madinah in order to preserve their faith. Just as Islam spread from Madinah, it will return to it at the end of time. The hadith above specifically mentions Medina and not any other Saudi Arabian city. This is a prediction that all believers would seek refuge in Madinah in the end times in order to preserve their faith. In other words, Islam will return to Madinah at the end of time, just as it did when it first expanded. This does not, however, imply that Muslims in other nations must follow in the footsteps of Saudi Arabians in Islamic matters. This hadith was interpreted by some commentators as meaning that, as the Muslims had no power and state until they migrated to Madinah, Islam with its power and authority, extended out from Madinah and would fall back upon it at the end of time. This would also not call upon Muslims to imitate the Saudis in Islamic matters if we assume this interpretation to be correct.

Muslims are guided adequately by the Quran and Sunnah; hence the Saudis in Islamic issues do not need to be imitated.

<https://www.newageislam.com/islamic-q-a/saudi-wahhabi-islamic/d/125335>



# Angelina Jolie feared for her family's safety during marriage to Brad Pitt

By: Simon Hattenstone

In a recent interview with The Guardian, actor Angelina Jolie shared that she feared for her family's safety during her marriage with Brad Pitt. Jolie is currently involved in a custody battle with the Once Upon a Time in Hollywood actor over their six children. The actor has also alleged that Pitt was abusive, submitting court documents in relation to incidents of domestic violence earlier this year.

During a promotional interview for her book *Know Your Rights and Claim Them*, which the actor has co-written with human rights lawyer Geraldine Van Bueren, the *Eternals* star explained that she wrote the book because she wanted children to understand when their rights were being violated.

Jolie shared, "I've met too many children who live with the effect of their rights being violated – displaced people, young rape victims. I couldn't understand why they were still fighting for basic things that were their rights to begin with. It made me very angry. How are we going to solve anything if we're not addressing that, right?" The actor then went on to relate the topic to her own situation in relation to her legal battle with Pitt. "Then I

had an experience in the States with my own children and I thought... well, human rights, children's rights," she shared. She added that this is what caused her to think about children's rights, saying, "I remembered the rights of the child, and I took them out and looked at them and thought: well, these are for when you're in a situation and you want to make sure there is support for the children in your life." The *Maleficent* actor continued, speaking about how in the United States, children weren't given as much importance during legal proceedings. She elaborated, "Then I found out the US hadn't ratified the rights of the child. One of the ways it affects children is their voice in court – a child in Europe would have a better chance of having a voice in court than a child in California. That said a lot to me about this country."

Following the statements, Jolie explained that she could not be too direct about the situation due to the involved legalities after being questioned about what caused her to fear for her own children's rights. After the interviewer asked her to nod if her statements were related to her divorce from Pitt and the alleged domestic abuse, the actor responded in the affirmative.

When asked if she feared for her family's safety, Jolie responded saying, "Yes, for my family. My whole family." Elaborating on how it was difficult for her to take injustices in her own life seriously because they felt "smaller" in comparison to global issues, Jolie shared, "Often you cannot recognise something in a personal way,



especially if your focus is on the greatest global injustices, because everything else seems smaller. It's so hard. I'd like to be able to have this discussion and it's so important..." The actor concluded directly addressing her split from the Fight Club actor, "I'm not the kind of person who makes decisions like the decisions I had to make lightly. It took a lot for me to be in a position where I felt I had to separate from the father of my children." The former Hollywood power couple started dating after meeting on the sets of Mr and Mrs Smith back in 2004. They parted ways in 2016 after two years of marriage and were officially declared single in mid-2019. Jolie cited irreconcilable difference to be the real reason behind their separation. I ask Jolie why she has written the book. "I've met too many children who live with the effect of their rights being violated – displaced people, young rape victims. I couldn't understand why they were still fighting for basic things that were their rights to begin with. It made me very angry. How are we going to solve anything if we're not addressing that, right?" Her explanation is fluent and authoritative – and not surprising. But the next bit is. "Then I had an experience in the States with my own children and I thought... well, human rights, children's rights." Suddenly the fluency is gone. Her language becomes disjointed and elliptical. "I remembered the rights of the child, and I took them out and looked at them and thought: well, these are for when you're in a situation and you want to make sure there is support for the children in your life." She apologises, and says she can't be more direct. "Then I found out the US hadn't ratified the rights of the child. One of the ways it affects children is their voice in court – a child in Europe would have a better chance of having a voice in court than a child in California. That said a lot to me about this country." <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2318718/angelina-jolie-reveals-that-she-feared-for-her-familys-safety-during-marriage-to-brad-pitt>

## Elderly woman dies after security guard performs surgery at Lahore's Mayo Hospital

A woman died after a former security guard at Lahore's Mayo Hospital posed as a doctor and performed surgery on her, police said on Monday. Shameema Begum, aged 80, died on Sunday, two weeks after Muhammad Waheed Butt attempted to treat her back wound at the public hospital. "We can't keep up with what every doctor and what everyone is doing at all times. It's a large hospital," explained an administrative official from the hospital, who did not want to be named. He said it was unclear what type of surgery the imposter had performed in the operating theatre, where a qualified technician was also present. Pakistan's public hospitals, where patients are required to pay some money towards treatment, can often be inefficient and chaotic. Begum's family paid Butt for the operation, and two further home visits to dress her wound. But when the bleeding and pain worsened, her family returned her to the hospital, where they discovered what had happened. Her body is being kept for an autopsy to ascertain whether her death was a result of complications from the botched surgery. "The guard has been charged and is in police custody," Lahore police spokesman Ali Safdar told AFP. "Butt had posed as a doctor and made home visits to other patients in the past also." Mayo Hospital staff said Butt was fired two years ago for trying to extort money from patients. Earlier in May, a man was arrested for posing as a doctor at Lahore General Hospital and extorting money from patients in the surgical ward. In 2016, it was revealed that a woman posing to be a neurosurgeon conducted operations for eight months alongside qualified doctors at Lahore's Services Hospital, the second-largest health facility in Pakistan. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1628075>



# Muslim Annie Qaiser Pioneers Her Own Skincare Line

By: Sarah Gruidl



Annie Qaiser always dreamed of becoming an author.

Growing up in Kansas City, Mo., as one of the few young women of color and an even smaller group of Muslim children, Annie didn't have many spaces where she felt that she could express herself freely. A quiet girl with a self-described "cautious personality," Annie turned to writing to explore her identities. The blank page was a place of zero judgment, zero misunderstanding. Pen in hand, she was unfettered and free to work through her complicated, sometimes messy thoughts about who she was and where she came from. Today, Annie isn't a New York Times best-selling author – yet – but she is proud of her accomplishments as a published writer and researcher. She has written four books about American history, which she studied at the University of Toronto, in addition to her communications major. Muslim Shero Annie

Qaiser has written four history books, in addition to founding a skincare line. For Annie, history is another means of connecting with her identities. The classic question of "Where are you from?" – often aimed at people of color or anyone else perceived as existing outside of normative American identity – threw her for a loop for a long time. "What defines that question? Is it a geography question, a culture question, a religion question?" She could answer it so many different ways. Born in Karachi, Pakistan and raised in Kansas City, Annie moved to Toronto, Ontario, Canada for university and finally settled in Rosemount, Minn., to start a family. But as for where she's from and where she belongs, her focus on studying history provided a glimpse into her past and her present, her family's and her faith's roots. "As human beings and as spiritual people, our roots are our background," Annie firmly believes. "Our history is what makes us who we are. Anything I am, anything you are, it's because of our ancestors." The winding road of history led Annie down uncharted paths as she explored her ancestry, her culture and her religion. When she became a mother, she was especially interested in herbal medicine and other alternatives to mass-produced personal care products, and she began researching ancient Islamic healing and wellness traditions. "I questioned what was going into our bodies and the adverse effects, so I researched and started making products for myself with herbal ingredients," Annie says. She didn't know it yet, but this knowledge of traditional healing systems and Islamic/prophetic medicine, along with the requisite home remedies of every South Asian household, would soon morph into an idea to create her own halal

skincare and wellness line. Soon, her family and friends were asking for the deodorants, lotion bars and face masks that she originally created for her own use. For years, she gave them as gifts, until the demand made it clear: She had stumbled upon an untapped market, where her community was eager for products based in the principles that she practiced. Annie, of course, understood that need. Growing up in Kansas City, there were no restaurants where her family could eat halal food, no stores where they could buy halal products. They were one of very few Muslim families in the city that observed halal practice, meaning that they followed a lifestyle in accordance with Islamic law. Halal is the Arabic word for “permissible” and contrasts with haram, which means “forbidden” and refers to anything prohibited in the Qur’an and the Sunnah. Adhering to practices of purity and sanctity are especially important when Muslims go on pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia. In order to cross the pilgrimage boundary into this holy city, they must be in the sacred state of ihram, which prohibits any scents on the body. For those preparing to embark on Hajj, the major pilgrimage, or Umrah, the minor pilgrimage, searching for soaps and other products without scents is a part of the journey. As any Muslim will tell you, these products can be tricky to track down. Halal denotes a holistic Islamic lifestyle and applies to everything – good business practices, ethical transactions, environmental protections, social and moral accountability and more. And though halal is a wide-ranging concept, it’s a word often attached to food, and the method of slaughter used for meat products is a key consideration for Muslims. To avoid consuming something haram, Muslims often avoid anything – from meals to beauty products – that contains animal products. So when Annie launched her skincare business, Silk Road Wellness, which features her signature Hajj and Umrah Kit,

she had an enthusiastic customer base at the ready. Her commitment to relying solely on natural, organic, vegan ingredients attracts many – both Muslim and not. After all, Muslims aren’t the only ones who abstain from consuming animal products or who might prefer traditional herbal healing methods. “We aspire to be accessible to everyone. I want Silk Road to be known as a Muslim business with Islamic principles and to use my family’s skills as a way of representing our faith, but I don’t want to isolate our customer base to only Muslims,” she says. And whether or not she’s selling to another Muslim, her business enables Annie to put her faith principles into practice. “If you create a moment of ease for any person, Allah [Arabic for God] is going to help you when you need help,” Annie says. “By reading the Qur’an and the Sunnah, we know that these natural ingredients are powerful, so if they can help others, I think that just makes it sweeter.” And even sweeter when you consider how personal Silk Road products are to Annie. The culmination of years of research, experimentation and creativity, each neatly packaged lotion bar is a “representation of myself,” she says. “Down to the font choice.” Take a look at the little label on the back, for instance. “The amount of work that goes into that is incredible. I’ve had to research what order the ingredients need to be listed, what information needs to be included,” she says. Like its





giant corporate counterparts, Silk Road Wellness must adhere to strict FDA regulations around cosmetic labeling. And as a perfectionist with high standards for the ethics and the aesthetics of her brand, Annie remakes any product that she feels doesn't live up to its name. Her background as a writer and researcher gives her the confidence to grow exponentially as a new entrepreneur. "You can never ask too many questions," she says. "Questions lead to answers, which lead to more questions – it's a beautiful, never-ending cycle." She spends most evenings – and many late nights – after her day job as a medical copyeditor preparing products and packages to be sent out. Thankfully, she's got an entire team behind her – her husband, her children and their cat. Her husband, who owns an IT business, is the technological and financial expert who keeps the business's website running and their finances in order. A behind-the-scenes hero, he offers emotional support and encouragement, and helps the team stay focused, Annie says. Not to be outdone, her children help out with counting, labeling and often coming up with new ideas, whether it's for Silk Road Wellness or their own future business endeavors. "My kids have developed an entrepreneurial streak – they have amazing ideas about making their future mark as Muslim business people. They are already brainstorming business ideas, cards, advertising, brochures," Annie smiles with pride. "Just the other day, I overheard them talking about what kind of services they want to offer in their respective businesses." Annie's children aren't the only ones who are inspired. When we see the beautiful success that she's brought to her business and her family, we're reminded of the creativity, curiosity and power of the Muslim sisterhood. Pursuing a radically nontraditional career path and making her own space in the business world has opened Annie up to scrutiny, however. But every day, she's growing as a

businesswoman, a Muslim, a writer, researcher and as a deep thinker. "Creating new boundaries as a Muslim woman by choosing to take a different path, while balancing faith, culture and life is an acceptable goal — and an attainable one," she says. "What you do with faith in mind will work out," she wants her sisters to know. "It will always work out." Wherever our own interests and passions may lead, Annie's journey serves as a guiding light, sparking courage and conviction to keep going, no matter the odds. And that makes her a Muslim Shero of Minnesota. As Lead Storyteller at Reviving Sisterhood, Sarah Gruidl writes for the Muslim Sher-oes of Minnesota storytelling project, centering the lived experiences and the diverse accomplishments of female trailblazers and change-makers.

In collaboration with Reviving the Islamic Sisterhood for Empowerment (RISE), we've shared a range of stories about Muslim Sher-oes in Minnesota – women who are making a difference in their community without waiting for permission. Get inspired by their stories.

After her experience of being detained in an Ethiopian prison, Muslim Shero Nimo Omar saw her own privilege in a new light – and she now works as a labor organizer, helping her community to understand the importance of workers' rights. Explore her story.

In a city rocked by anti-immigrant activism, Muslim Shero Ayan Omar strives to build a bridge of understanding between Muslims and non-Muslims in St. Cloud, Minn. Discover more about her efforts.

<https://www.tptoriginals.org/muslim-shero-annie-qaiser-pioneers-her-own-skincare-line/>

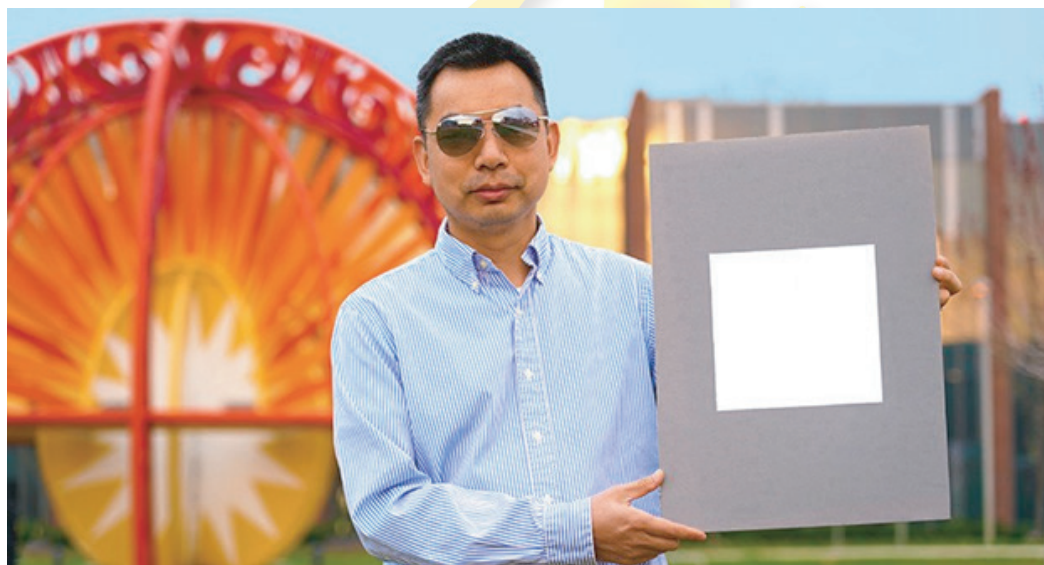
# USA: Scientists Create Whitest Paint That Would Eliminate Need For Air-conditioning

Scientists have created the world's whitest paint in a lab in Purdue University, which could soon eliminate the need of air conditioners. The paint has already made its way to the Guinness Book of World Records as the whitest.

Xiulin Ruan, a professor of mechanical engineering at Purdue University says, "When we started this project about seven years ago, we had saving energy and fighting climate

conditioners in houses. The paint's whiteness also means that the paint is the coolest on record. Using high-accuracy temperature reading equipment called thermocouples, the researchers demonstrated outdoors that the paint can keep surfaces 19 degrees Fahrenheit cooler than their ambient surroundings at night. It can also cool surfaces 8 degrees Fahrenheit below their surroundings under strong sunlight during noon hours. The paint's solar reflectance is so effective, it even

worked in the middle of winter. During an outdoor test with an ambient temperature of 43 degrees Fahrenheit, the paint still managed to lower the sample temperature by 18 degrees Fahrenheit. This white paint is the result of six years of research building on attempts going back to the



change in mind." The scientist at the university had aimed to make a paint that would reflect sunlight away from a building structure. In creating a paint that would reflect 98.1% of solar radiation and emit infrared heat, the paint became really white. When applied to a building the paint will not absorb heat and will instead, emit it, making the surrounding and indoor temperature cooler without consuming any power. Ruan predicts that a roof of 1000 square foot covered in this paint will have a cooling power of 10 kilowatts, which is more powerful than most air

1970s to develop radiative cooling paint as a feasible alternative to traditional air conditioners. Commercial white paint gets warmer rather than cooler, since general paints that are designed to reject heat, reflect 80-90% of sunlight and can't make surroundings cooler. Researchers at Purdue have partnered with a company to begin selling the ultra-white paint and make it available for everyone.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2321246/scientists-create-whitest-paint-that-would-eliminate-need-for-air-conditioning>