



THINK SOUTH ASIA

EDITORIAL



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** “By seas never before sailed,
They passed even over Taprobana”*

In this edition of Think South Asia we put the focus on Sri Lanka. With a long history and a very distinctive identity formed by a great profusion of different ethnicities and a meeting point of religions, Sri Lanka has an incredibly rich culture. Its privileged geography puts Sri Lanka in a very central and strategic situation in the Indian Ocean. As in the first stanza of his *opus magnum* “Os Lusíadas”, the Portuguese poet Camões considered Taprobana (another name for Sri Lanka) a transition point for western culture. Of course this 16th century stance is not exactly the same in today’s globalized world, nevertheless Sri Lanka maintains its role of a commercial passage country with many opportunities to be a motor for improving regional cooperation amongst the countries of South Asia.

*“Por mares nunca de antes navegados,
Passaram ainda além da Taprobana” **

Lúís Vaz de Camões, in “Os Lusíadas” – Canto I

Concerning Sri Lanka, we have the chance to read an excellent country profile from South Asia Democratic Forum’s Policy Adviser Cátia Rodrigues, which gives the floor to Robert Jan Riemersma’s article on the reconciliation process in Sri Lanka. Mr Riemersma is an expert on the issue and conducts his research in the prestigious Heidelberg University. Finally, we have the pleasure to inaugurate a new readers’ section of the Think South Asia magazine, where we recommend an interesting book on Sri Lanka’s history.

The hot topic of Balochistan is also an issue affecting South Asia’s peace and stability. Dr Siegfried O. Wolf writes on the current situation in Balochistan and the Pakistani government’s attitude towards it.



EDITORIAL

Meanwhile, on the occasion of the United Nation's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) for Pakistan, Mr Mehran Baloch alerted us that the "danger of the nuclear assets falling into the hands of terrorists has already materialised and the world should understand this for if it doe-sn't the world will have to pay a bitter price for its laxity and complacency". Mr Baloch is the Permanent Representative of Baluchistan to the UN Human Rights Council.

We do not forget education for tolerance in this edition. Mr Amir Mustafa is a Research Officer in the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Human Resource Development Centre

in Islamabad, Pakistan, and he writes on "Education for Peace and Prosperity in South Asia". This is an article not to be missed: Mr Mustafa gives us a very well-informed idea of what is going on in each of the eight countries of SAARC.

Finally, last but not least, in the last edition of this magazine we announced the South Asia Democratic Forum's conference on "The Merits of Regional Cooperation – The case of South Asia" which took place in Brussels on 11 October. I just want to leave here a word saying it was a great success: it really opened the debate on regional cooperation in South Asia, with deep interventions, such as the one from President Vytautas

Landsbergis from Lithuania, which we are honoured to present in this edition. The quality and innovation of the academic papers presented in the conference was clear for all to behold. I hope to be able to share further findings of that conference with you in due course given the quality of the work produced. In the meantime, I invite you to enjoy this, the fourth edition of Think South Asia. ■

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Sri Lanka

The Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka (formerly known as Ceylon) is located in the Indian Ocean, off the southeast coast of the Republic of India in South Asia. This country island, with several islets, has an area of 65,610 km² and a population of approximately 20,277,597 inhabitants. It is divided into nine provinces and 25 administrative districts, the capital being Colombo and the legislative capital Jayewardenepura Kotte (a suburb of Colombo). Its official languages are Sinhala and Tamil. The main religions in the country are Buddhism (70%), Hinduism (15%), Christianity (8%) and Islam (7%). Despite the religious, ethnical and linguistic diversity of the country, the Sinhalese (74.9%) and the Sri Lankan Tamils (11.2%) are the largest ethnic groups in the country. The other groups are the Sri Lankan Moors (9.2%), the Indian Tamils (4.2%), and the Malays, Kaffirs, Veddas and Burghers (0.5%). Sri Lanka as a growing economy and a friendly foreign policy, which made the country gather several allies not only in south Asia, but also worldwide. Ceylon's first inhabitants are believed to have been

Indo-Aryan migrant clans that came from northern India. Amongst those migrant clans, the most numerous and powerful were the Sinhalese, which are predominantly Buddhist. Around the 3rd century Tamils, who are mostly Hindu, migrated to the island from the Tamil Nadu region in the south of India. Many quarrels took place between both groups over control of the island. As an outcome of those fights, the Tamils gained control of the northern part of the island, while the Sinhalese secured the south of the island.

In the 16th century Portuguese traders took over the control of the island's coast and started spreading Catholicism. Given their religious beliefs, the Portuguese persecuted the Moors, pushing them to leave the coastal areas to the Central Highlands, and converted the Sinhalese, who were mainly Buddhists, to Christianity. Therefore, the Sinhalese were eager to be liberated from the Portuguese and their influence. When the opportunity presented itself, the king of Kandy made an arrangement with the Dutch, which arrived in the island with



Cátia Rodrigues

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COUNTRY PROFILE

“During British rule, which lasted until the independence of Ceylon in 1948, the economy was based on rubber, tea and coffee production, making the country a major tea producer worldwide.”

“In 1972, a new constitution declared Sri Lanka a republic, making the protection of Buddhism a constitutional principle.”

merchant purposes, in order to get rid of the Portuguese. After long disputes, in the 17th century the Dutch finally overthrew the Portuguese and took over the control of the island – apart from the kingdom of Kandy, as it was agreed. Unlike the Portuguese the Dutch, which were Protestants, did not try to convert the Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims, instead they persecuted the Catholics and the remaining Portuguese colonizers. In the late 18th century, in the middle of the Napoleonic wars, and due to the fear of the Dutch offering the control of Ceylon to France, the British established settlements along the coast, and eventually engaged and defeated the king of Kandy and formally took over the control of Ceylon. During British rule, which lasted until the independence of Ceylon in 1948, the economy was basically based on rubber, tea and coffee production – making the country a major tea producer worldwide. Given the massive needs of labour force, the British brought labourers from the Indian state of Tamil Nadu to work the tea and coffee plantations. Since the Tamils were a minority in the country, the Sinhalese felt threatened because the British were strengthening the Tamil presence in the Ceylon, disregarding the Sinhalese while favouring the Tamils. In 1931 the country was granted limited self-rule by the British – Ceylon became the first British Asian colony to assure its rights through the universal suffrage. This event marked the first step towards a self-governing dominion of the Commonwealth of Nations on February 4, 1948 by Ceylon.

After Ceylon's independence, the United National Party (UNP) emerged as the strongest party and won the general elections. Nonetheless, in 1951 the left-of-centre bloc of the party disaffiliated, in order to create

the Sri Lanka Freedom Part (SLFP). The two parties have been dominating the country's politics ever since. As a result, the Sinhala nationalism has been growing stronger, reaching its first peak in 1956 with the “Sinhala Only Policy” – aimed to make Sinhalese the official language.

This policy marked the beginning of severe disagreements and resentment between the two groups, as it meant nothing but a Sinhalese and Buddhist supremacy, in detriment of the Tamils and Hinduism. In 1958 severe national wide communal riots took place, initiating a state of emergency and the reallocation of Tamils, which originally lived in Sinhalese dominated areas, to Tamil areas in the north of the island. In 1972 the country changed its name from Ceylon to Sri Lanka and the Sinhalese nationalism continued growing. A new constitution declared Sri Lanka a republic, making the protection of Buddhism a constitutional principle. As a reaction to the constitution, and the increased tensions in Tamil-dominated areas in the east and north of the island, and as a measure to protect the Tamils and their culture, the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) and the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) were founded. The Tamil Tigers due to their separatist ambitions demanded an independent northern state. They intensified the attacks on governmental targets, violently pushing for a Tamil homeland – Tamil Eelam. The newly drafted 1978 constitution started taking Tamil needs into consideration. Nevertheless, in 1983 the Tamil Tigers killed 13 Sinhalese soldiers, triggering severe civil unrest that culminated into a civil war - opposing the Tamil Tigers and Sinhalese. In 1987 the government signed an agreement with India for the

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COUNTRY PROFILE



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deployment of Indian peacekeeping forces, although in the following year the Sinhalese started a campaign against it. In 1990 the Indian troops withdraw and the violence intensified between the army and the Tamil Tigers. The irregular insurgency continued through the 1990s and into the 2000s, having a tremendous impact on the population, economy and environment. Finally in 2009, after several failed peace talks, the Sri Lankan military defeated the Tamil Tigers, putting an end to the bloody and long-lasting civil war. Following the end of the war, the demands for a separate Tamil state were dropped, in favour of a federal solution.

Allegations of human rights and humanitarian law violations, especially at the end of the conflict, by the Tamil Tigers and the Sri Lankan military, have been raised in a UN report published in 2011 – though the government rejected the accusations, saying it was biased. The report stated that both sides committed war crimes such as attacks on civilians and civilian buildings; recruitment of child soldiers; executed

combatants and prisoners; enforced disappearances; attacked civilian aircrafts; and denied the civilians stuck in war zones clean water, food and medicines. Despite the allegations, the Sri Lankan government stated that its forces were innocent of committing war crimes. In the beginning for 2012 a resolution was adopted in the UN Human Rights Council pressuring Sri Lanka to investigate the allegedly committed war crimes.

The fact is that in 2012 another UN report came out blaming the Sri Lankan authorities from intimidating the UN staff in 2009. Consequently, the responsible, fighters or governmental authorities, have to be taken to justice and trialled. Although the civil war is over, the wounds it left are still tremendously fresh. Therefore, it is mandatory to investigate what was the role-played by the government, if the army and the Tamil Tigers in fact committed war crimes, and if so to bring the justice to the country. In order to truly heal the wounds and make room for the extremely needed

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reconciliation process in the country, the truth has to be brought to light. Only then, when the guilty pay for their crimes and people find the heart to start the reconciliation, can the government truly start the process and draw lessons learnt from it. In order to make room for reconciliation and make amendments, the government has been developing talks with the biggest Tamil party, which might lead to constitutional reforms including considerable regional devolution. ■

Reconciliation in Sri Lanka – For whom? Peace and the war dividends of Sinhala Unity



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“The Government of Sri Lanka continues its process of political centralization and regime consolidation and this makes it ever more urgent that political reconciliation and state reforms to tackle the underlying causes of the conflict should be implemented.”

On a first impression Sri Lanka seems to do well as it is still experiencing a post-war economic boom with a predicted growth rate of 7.5% (Asian Development Bank) for 2012. Tourism had a growth rate of 30.8% in 2011 and is seen as Sri Lanka’s flagship towards a prosperous future. Investments in major infrastructural projects including roads, railways, ports, and power stations continue and foreign direct investment has surpassed the \$1 billion mark in 2011. However this veneer of respectability is deceiving for it veils the very fact that the war indeed has been won but peace itself has not yet prevailed.

An extensive web of political strings attached to this rapid economic development typifies the inequitable composition of Sri Lankan politics. The patron-client system and caste politics are the predominant political threads that run vertically from the social body to the state and form the foundations on which political legitimacy of the ruling elite rests upon. Although Sinhala nationalism has been institutionalised for a long time, no one group controls the battlegrounds Sinhala politics.

The channelled energy put into this “run through” is consistently redirected into a vicious cycle of (self-) destructive Sinhala forces in which all contenders

claim to represent the true Sinhala Nation. As a consequence of this there is no space left for a political settlement or even reconciliation with the Tamil community.

Ever since the civil war in Sri Lanka came to an end with the military defeat of the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in May 2009 the President Mahinda Rajapaksa has steadily consolidated his grip on power. The presidential and parliamentary elections in 2010 that gave the United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA) a strong and popular mandate to make constitutional changes in favour of the President are no more than the tip of the iceberg. By keeping the momentum of the “the war for peace” awake it has been a true “victor’s peace” characterised by an unrelenting militarisation of the state, conflating a victors’ justice and Sinhala nationalism that opts for securitised growth rather than to make political concessions to the Tamils, let alone reconciliation.

As the regime sees no error in its reasoning, the Government of Sri Lanka continues its process of political centralization and regime consolidation and this makes it ever more urgent that political reconciliation and state reforms to tackle the underlying causes of the conflict should be implemented.

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How oblivious the Government of Sri Lanka really is to its own contemporary tainted history is exemplified by the statement made by the Defence Secretary Gotabaya Rajapaksa, President Mahinda Rajapaksa's brother, in August 2011 "...the existing constitution is more than enough for us to live together....Devolution-wise I think we have done enough; I don't think there is a necessity to go beyond that."

The grim realities behind this militarised peace however are the grave war crimes committed by both the LTTE and the Government forces. In particular the government's indiscriminate shelling of civilians and the LTTE's use of thousands of civilians as "human shields" in the final months of the conflict killed as many as 40,000 Tamil civilians according to the U.N. Advisory Panel report released in April 2011. The panel of experts concluded that both government forces and the LTTE conducted military operations "with flagrant disregard for the protection, rights, welfare and lives of civilians and failed to respect the norms of international law." With an estimate of at least 300,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Sri Lanka by 23rd of May 2009 a true humanitarian tragedy

had unfolded. Civilians who managed to escape the conflict zone were subject to "screening" by the government, which feared that LTTE cadres might have mingled with the refugees. Approximately 250,000 IDPs were put in militarily controlled refugee camps to which international aid agencies were given only partial access.

By 2012 most of these IDPs have been resettled, however their lives are far from normal for the de facto state of emergency in the North and the East pose a constant threat to their livelihoods. Under the vigilant command of the Presidential Task Force for Resettlement, Development and Security (PTF) the military is increasingly taking control of administrative decisions in the north and east. In particular the distribution and use of land, has turned into a deeply politicised and ethnically-charged matter. The Government of Sri Lanka has consolidated its military presence in these regions by creating High Security Zones (HSZ) and confirms the fears of the Tamil-majority of the existence of an unofficial but government-sponsored policy of Sinhalisation.

Sri Lanka more than often conflates international rights protection with

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colonialism and has thus far met every attempt made by Western governments and multilateral institutions to promote accountability for past and continuing violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in Sri Lanka with fierce campaigns of defamation. Just before and after the end of the war this led to consistent megaphone diplomacy rows that on the one hand demonstrated the fearlessness of Sri Lanka in the face of such allegations, but also the powerlessness of the western community. Bound to the same assertive interpretations of sovereignty and international norms of engagement of which its summum bonum is non-interference into domestic affairs Sri Lanka had marshalled a large group of countries such as China and Japan, along with Russia and Vietnam, who prevented the U.N. Security Council from discussing the Sri Lankan issue, as it was defined to be an “internal matter”. Impetuously fought diplomatic battles within the world governing bodies have made it certain that any attempts at internationalising the issue of rights violations will in the end be neutralised as long Sri Lanka has the backing of China and Russia. Indeed this left the petitioners on a sour note: that although the human dignity is inviolable it so seemed that Sri Lanka had become indefeasible in the face of its alleged human rights atrocities.

The report released by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has done little to damage the UPFA government’s domestic legitimacy and even augmented its popularity for its defiant retort towards the western “peace mongers”. This display of recalcitrance has shown not only the deficiencies to enforce accountability, but also demonstrates that domestic political

stakeholders have far more agency than is commonly assumed.

Quite in contrast to the deflected external demands for accountability the Government of Sri Lanka for long maintained that it had pursued a ‘humanitarian rescue operation’ with a policy of ‘zero civilian casualties’ during these final months of the conflict. This changed only until damaging allegations and video evidence about the final months of the war came to light which showed disturbing scenes of atrocities that appeared to corroborate the U.N. report’s findings of which the Australian Channel 4 documentary titled “The Killing Fields” was most horrific.

The Government of Sri Lanka took up its own inquiry to assess why the 2002 ceasefire between the government and LTTE broke down in 2008, leading to the subsequent resumption of violence in August 2010. This body is called Lessons Learned and Reconciliation Committee (LLRC) and has its own mandate. The LLRC’s mandate focuses on the breakdown of the 2002 ceasefire and it does not explicitly require it to investigate alleged war crimes during the conflict. The LLRC indeed heard testimony but undertook no investigations into such allegations. On the 20th November 2011 final report of the LLRC was handed over to President Mahinda Rajapaksa.

Most strikingly the commission comes to the conclusion that while the LTTE deliberately targeted civilians, it appears that Sri Lanka’s military did not. This indeed does not incriminate the military of any atrocities, but is in itself an important milestone taken for it acknowledges that there were indeed civilian casualties. Although the LLRC



is an insufficient mechanism to probe crimes of war, as it lacks the independence and witness protection capacity to serve as a legitimate accountability forum, the recommendations given by the LLRC concerning post-war Sri Lanka give cautious hope. The proposal for instance assiduously addresses the systematic violations of human rights within a culture of increasing impunity in post-war Sri Lanka and makes a special reference to the many abductions, enforced or involuntary disappearances, and arbitrary detention. Also highly disputed issues such as land reform are mentioned, in which it recommends that the land policy of the Government should not be an instrument to effect unnatural changes in the demographic pattern of a given Province, by which Sinhalisation of the North and East could be curbed.

The report thus far has won cautious praise and recognition from several countries amongst which are most prominently India and the United States. However LLRC is a toothless political watchdog. Even despite the fact that its analysis of the causes of the conflict and its recommendations on reconciliation and a political settlement are laudable there are far too many structural and procedural difficulties. These relate to the process, mandate and the content of the reports and its action plans.

Although the President has pledged to act in accordance the LLRC recommendations and its National Human Rights Action Plan (NHRAP) at the 3rd victory day parade on 19th of May 2012, there are increasing concerns as to whether the Government of Sri Lanka will be selective in its implementation of the LLRC

recommendations or even go as far as to disregard these generally speaking. The draft policies and policy statements made by the Government of Sri Lanka which also include the voluntary pledges made in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in 2008 on a wide spectrum of issues, should indeed provide an approximate framework of the Government's vision and benchmarks for dealing with post-war Sri Lanka; yet these pledges stand in blatant contrast to reality, a reality in which the government continues to fail to acknowledge the legitimate grievances of its population, whether from the wake of war or from the systematic violations of human rights today.

Even though the aforementioned might be construed as merely lip service towards promoting and protecting (minority) rights and freedoms, Sri Lanka has embarked on a slippery slope towards reconciliation and inclusiveness, but is far from reaching tangible achievements. It is indeed a slippery slope for the short period of improved stability and continued economic growth has created one volatile drawback, namely that not all could reap the peace-dividend. On the long run the dissatisfaction with rising corruption and spiralling food prices could trip up the UPFA government. Not the determination for political reforms and/or accountability on war crimes will aid this frustration, but the discontent over a culture of impunity and abuse of authority that seems to be spiralling out of control. As unemployment in the Sinhala-dominated rural south is unproportionally high, the risk of youth militancy, like Sri Lanka has witnessed in 1971 and 1987-89, seems more probable for their predicament has not fully been acknowledged.

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MAIN STORY

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Amidst this all the Supreme Court has challenged President Rajapaksa’s administration and he has on his part initiated impeachment proceedings against the nation’s chief justice that started October 31st 2012. Even though the opposition calls this justly a very worrisome development, they do seem to cogitate on the detrimental damage it will cause the UPFA government, which will then open up more space for critique or a change of government.

Even if a democratic change would take place, the scope for political reforms, accountability on war crimes or even reconciliation will still be limited as most political parties do not seem to feel the intrinsic need to reconcile. It will only be under the continuous international pressure that Sri Lanka might relent some day. Already the persistent pressure has put much into motion. The 19th Session of the UN-Human Rights Council in March 2012 adopted its resolution on Sri Lanka, which will examine whether the

government has fulfilled its obligations by March 2013. This means verification whether the Government of Sri Lanka has complied with the LLRC recommendations and has followed the National Human Rights Action Plan (NHRAP). Even more pressure was exerted upon Sri Lanka at the UN-Periodic Review in November 2012 at a more than three hour session and hopes are high that Commonwealth Heads of Government Meet scheduled to take place in Sri Lanka in November 2013 could corner Sri Lanka to truly commit itself to settle its protracted conflicts, initiate reconciliation, bring accountability and a real chance for political reforms. However the outcomes of such pressure might be all should take the advice to cautiously trust all those who seek the truth, be they within the world governing bodies or endemic institutions such as the LLRC, but vigilantly doubt those who think they know it. ■

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No calm in Balochistan? Islamabad's political plexus, enduring anxieties, and the fruitlessness of regional aspirations

'Islamabad is reaping all the benefits, depriving the locals from their legitimate share!' In brief, this popular statement among critics of the political plexus of the country's establishment summarizes much of the grievances of the Baloch people towards Pakistan's national government. But besides the fact that this sentiment is in line with the core rationale of conflictual relations between the center and its obstinate periphery, it only partially reflects the multidimensional and multi-layered conflict in Balochistan today.

Doubtless, Balochistan is a region of contradictory extremes: With 43% of the country's land-mass Balochistan is the largest of Pakistan's four provinces (besides Sindh, Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa/former NWFP) but also the least populated region (with around 6 million inhabitants, Baloch only amount to 4% of the total population). It is strategically well placed but does not receive in-depth prioritizing within security circles. It is rich in energy and mineral resources, but it is at the same time Pakistan's least developed and industrialised region with the lowest level of literacy and income with over 80% of the population living beneath the poverty line. Beside the fact that there are strong elements of secularism and anti-religious-extremism as well as pro-Pakistan sentiments, it is the country's most troubled area finding

its expression in an severe militant responses towards Islamabad combined with a remarkable increase in violence against non-Baloch, ethnic and religious minorities.

Here the question appears on how these antagonistic trajectories developed over time? Did they only surface due to the unfortunate historical legacies or political misguidance of the post-colonial era, which was marked by more than six decades of unsuccessful, repressive policies leading to the suppression of Baloch aspirations of autonomy?

Having this puzzle in mind, the line of argumentation made here is that the Baloch conflict is a 'logical response' to the challenge of being a marginalized subordinated part in a highly centralized system of governance, first imposed by the British colonial rule and later continued by the Pakistani government after a forced integration; not only undermining their quest for independence but also taking away the quasi-autonomous status. Due an 'enduring anxiety' of national disintegration, there is an unwillingness of Islamabad's political and military establishment to allow any substantial regional autonomy, thus depriving the Baloch people of their legitimate rights. The government in Islamabad is worsening the situation by



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neglecting the province a fair share of revenue distribution natural resources. Furthermore, the Punjabi dominated national establishment also ousted the Baloch from local decision-making processes implementation processes by appointing bureaucrats from Sindh and Punjab to the provincial institutions and authorities, especially the local security forces. In addition Islamabad does not shy away from dismissing ‘inconvenient’ provincial governments. Subsequently, the electoral process has lost significance for the Baloch as a form of expressing their political will. In brief, they treated Balochistan like an internal colony, the same strategy which the Punjabi dominated government applied to its former East-Pakistan wing until it fought successfully for its independence. Last but not least, decisions regarding Balochistan are made in a framework of a tense civil-military relationship which does not

favour a sustainable political solution. In consequence, Baloch (leaders) had no share in the existing state power structure, forcing them to turn towards an ‘own state entity’, either through more autonomy or by creating an own separate state.

However, to be able to understand this conundrum one has to take the complex and long history of the Balochistan crisis into account. As many separatist, subnational and autonomous tendencies in South Asia, also Baloch nationalism can be traced back to colonial times. In consequence of the ‘Great Game’ during the 19th century, the largely autonomous (Baloch) princely state of Kalat was forcibly divided between Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Additionally, the part which remained in Pakistan was absorbed by the British Raj in 1884, an act which was repeated by the newly independent Pakistani authorities. This

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chain of events initiated a historical legacy which is still well alive today; it is hence no surprise that this trajectory currently influences Pakistani politics. In this context one has to mention, that the then Khan of Kalat Nasir Khan was able to organize the Baloch in a 'greater organized entity' for the first time. The core of this 'quasi-state structure' was a military-administrative based alliance of a significant part of Baloch tribes in order to establish a unified army. However, despite the fact that it was not really a nation state of the Baloch people with a fixed set-up of a political-bureaucratic framework, it gave birth to the ideational roots of Baloch nationalism by giving a concrete, historical-institutional point of reference.

By evaluating the historical patterns of coercive force as political instrument, it is not surprising that the current armed confrontations in Balochistan are hardly a new phenomenon. Post-colonial Pakistan witnessed four insurgencies: First, between 1947 and 1948, after the Khan of Kalat declared independence on August 15, 1947 and after several months of war Kalat was annexed forcefully by Pakistan. Second, from 1958 to 1959, after the martial law regime sent its troops into Kalat in order to arrest the Khan as well as to disarm the tribesman, which inevitably led to violent clashes and unrest. Third, in 1962-63, after refuting the election results of the then introduced system of 'Basic Democrats' by the military regime in Islamabad which led to several upheavals like a left wing revolutionary revolt known as the "Parari Movement". Fourth, between 1973 and 1977 where the provincial government were dismissed after being accused of supporting anti-Pakistan

activities. Subsequently Balochistan was put under governor's rule, meaning under direct control of Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto which at the time was increasingly ruling in an autocratic style. This four year long conflict led to the death of 55,000 Baloch fighters, either involved in randomly coordinated tribal resistance groups or well organized and trained units. Currently one could also see rising suspicion regarding foreign actors in Balochistan.

Now, a fifth insurgency is under way in the form of a more or less 'low intensity conflict' which however carries high potential to turn into a large scale mass upheaval at any time, like after a rape of a female doctor in a hospital in Sui by Pakistani soldiers resulted in a major attack on the nearby Gas installations in early 2005 as well as other violent incidents in other parts of the province. Since then, the insurgency which started already in 2004 is picking up more steam with each violent clash, worsening the security situation and deteriorating the socio-economic conditions of all people living in Balochistan. The robust response of the Pakistan security forces did not only lead to massive human rights violations (many observers are claiming the existence of 'kill and dump activities') but also initiated yet another vicious circle of accusations and violence, from both sides. However, in order to understand why history is repeating itself in Pakistan and why elites are unable or unwilling to learn from the past one has to take a closer look at Islamabad's political plexus.

One of the major problems is that Pakistan presents itself as a typical case of failed civilian supremacy and any form of institutionalized civilian

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control. Therefore, civilians have to tread dangerous waters in order to balance different interests and power relations within the security-governance nexus. On one side, they try to weaken the army's grip on power in Pakistan, on the other side in order to keep the internal security situation under control, they have to “eschew reliance with them”. But due to incompetence and corruption among civilian institutions and subordinated authorities, politicians and bureaucrats continue to rely on the army and (military) intelligence in maintaining law and order. In consequence they are losing significant decision-making power when it comes to policy formulation and implementation towards Balochistan. Therefore, it seems that civilians have not much room to manoeuvre to work towards a non-security dominated approach. However, with or without civilian control it seems that there is no remarkable difference between civilians, the ‘elected representatives’ of the people in Islamabad or the generals in Rawalpindi in their approach towards Balochistan. Here one has to state that both, politicians and soldiers, belong to the same type of establishment which is trapped in an ‘enduring anxiety’, a phenomenon especially significant, since it comes along with an absence of long-term strategic visions in all policy fields. Having the impression of being sandwiched by arch enemy India and a hostile Afghanistan, there is a tendency to permanently evoke a sense of suspiciousness, heated exaggeration, and conspiratorial fantasies in the areas of external defense and internal security. But more, the notion that both states are trying ‘to slice the Pakistani pie’ established an extremely narrow and inflexible mind-set when it comes to the incorporation of more rights, freedoms and autonomy/self-governance for the

provinces in general and Balochistan in particular.

Subsequently, Pakistan security circles are allergic towards the adoption of federal elements into the political-administrative system, described as ‘fissiparous tendencies’ (Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto) which were identified as sources of instability and essential challenges towards national unity and integration. Promising measures like Raza Rabbani's 18th Amendment to Pakistan's Constitution, the 7th National Finance Commission Award (NFC), the Aghaz-e-Haqooq-e-Balochistan package (or ‘Baluchistan conciliation package’) marking some important efforts on paper but fail to produce significant changes towards worthwhile decentralisation in reality. This is unfortunate since the package was trying to deal with many of the most pressing challenges of the Balochistan conflicts. Some of the ‘ignored issues’ are giving priority and control over natural resources, broadcasting and telecasting infrastructure to the provincial government, starting a sustainable dialogue for peace with the Baloch, and facilitating the return of exiled dissents. Furthermore, the investigation of activities by Pakistan's security agencies, particularly the role of the paramilitary Frontier Corps Baluchistan, the regular Army and intelligence services, the ‘missing’ political activists and target killings e.g. of key figures like Nawab Akbar Bugti in August 2006, the most visible face of the current Baloch resistance, who was not only a Tumandar (tribal chief) of the largest Baloch tribe, the Bugti, but also a strong proponent of autonomy, or Nawabzada Balach Marri, the elusive commander of the secretive, shadowy Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), in November 2007. Witnessing

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“A case which not only emphasizes the international dimension of the Baluchistan conflict but also the strong Chinese influence in Pakistan, especially in troubled but strategically well located areas like Gwadar near the mouth of the Straits of Hormuz.”

numerous extra-killings by Islamabad’s law enforcing agencies Baloch people are starting to press very hard towards an immediate tracing and release of political prisoners and/or ‘missing persons’. Another important demand is an increased participation of Baloch people and the introduction of a provincial consent in decision-making processes especially when it comes to major development processes in their province. In this direction, one of the most debatable issues is the Gwardar port project. A case which not only emphasizes the international dimension of the Baluchistan conflict but also the strong Chinese influence in Pakistan, especially in troubled but strategically well located areas like Gwadar near the mouth of the Straits of Hormuz. The accusation of illegal allotment of land in Gwadar by Islamabad’s stakeholders is just another example for sidelining the Baloch in significant decisions concerning their province. Furthermore, a ‘demilitarisation process’ has to be started which includes the withdrawal of troops, the

stop of building new cantonments, and limiting the performance of the Coast Guards to their primary duties, e.g. only controlling the borders under the Customs Acts.

In this context one must state that the recently announced ‘reanimation’ and intensified implementation of the Balochistan package by end of 2013 remains highly unlikely taking -in addition to the lack of motivation- the poor governance performance of successive regimes in developing the country into account. In consequence, the half-hearted measures of Islamabad are not only fruitless but further alienate the Baloch. Nevertheless, one must also state that the conflict has become much more complex over the years, especially due to the increasing number of actors involved not only international but also local ones. Therefore, the conflict is not anymore only about the centre and periphery, Baloch versus Islamabad. It is also about international rivalries, Baloch versus non-Baloch living in Balochistan, and last but

not least it involves conflicts between Baloch versus Baloch divided through different cleavages like attitude towards Islamabad, significance of autonomy or separatism, use of violence as a political tool etc. As a result, the prospects of any form of political solution are getting worse and worse. However, the establishment in Islamabad will never accept a separation of Balochistan. Observing the imbalance of military capabilities of the combatants involved, there are no doubts that Balochistan will remain part of Pakistan. But as long as Islamabad does not spend more efforts in finding a political solution the armed conflict and the deterioration of the security and socio-economic situation will prevail over a stabilized development. Subsequently, Balochistan will continue to pose a major challenge for the stability of all future national governments and preserve the influence of the military in politics. To sum up, as long as there is no peace and respect for human rights in Balochistan there will be no democracy worth the name in Pakistan. ■

Education for Peace and Prosperity in South Asia



Amir Mustafa

Research Officer in SAARC Human Resource Development Centre, Islamabad, Pakistan

The views expressed in this article are the author's own and do not represent those of SAARC HRD Centre.

“Education is an integral component at backend of development in the region, on the other hand it is necessary element to alleviate poverty, retain peace, and combat terrorism.”

South Asia is an incipient regional block with growing industries, colossal young labour force, and significant literacy rates. Education is an integral component at backend of development in the region, on the other hand it is necessary element to alleviate poverty, retain peace, and combat terrorism. Although eminence education up to school level is mostly free in the region, however peace and religious education system needs modernisation and upgradation to meet challenges posed by globalisation and conventional edification approach. First section will contain an overview of education system in South Asian countries followed by its impact on peace, prosperity, and terrorism.

Enrolment rate, education spending, free schooling, religious institutions and IT education are some of main features of region's education profile. Region with many successes and gaps is moving forward in education sector. Country level analysis of South Asia indicates that Afghanistan needs a lot to do in all sectors of education especially in vocational, primary, and higher education to fulfil the development sector needs and skill gap in the country. Rehabilitation of schools and

girls education are considered main issues for human resource development. But prevailing terrorist activities and threats keep children and girls out of schools. Hence country has to depend on large number of foreign skilled labour. Bangladesh is moving forward with consistency in many sectors of its heavily subsidized education system especially in gender and vocational education, but rural-urban disparity still exists. Popular religious schooling (madrassa) can be utilised effectively to modernise it in line with peace, cohesion, and conflict resolution among the societal groups. Bhutan with largest rural area in the region lacks in trained teachers, rural-urban equality, and higher education. Predominant education system was confined to monasteries and Buddhist studies. In spite of large ethnic and social diversity, India has achieved remarkable literacy rate, gender parity, primary enrolment, higher education and IT education. Many religious education systems are serving diversified religious groups. Highest literacy rate made Maldives role model in South Asia. Religious education is available across the country, while large skill gap exist due to absence of vocational and higher education. Main focus of recently established

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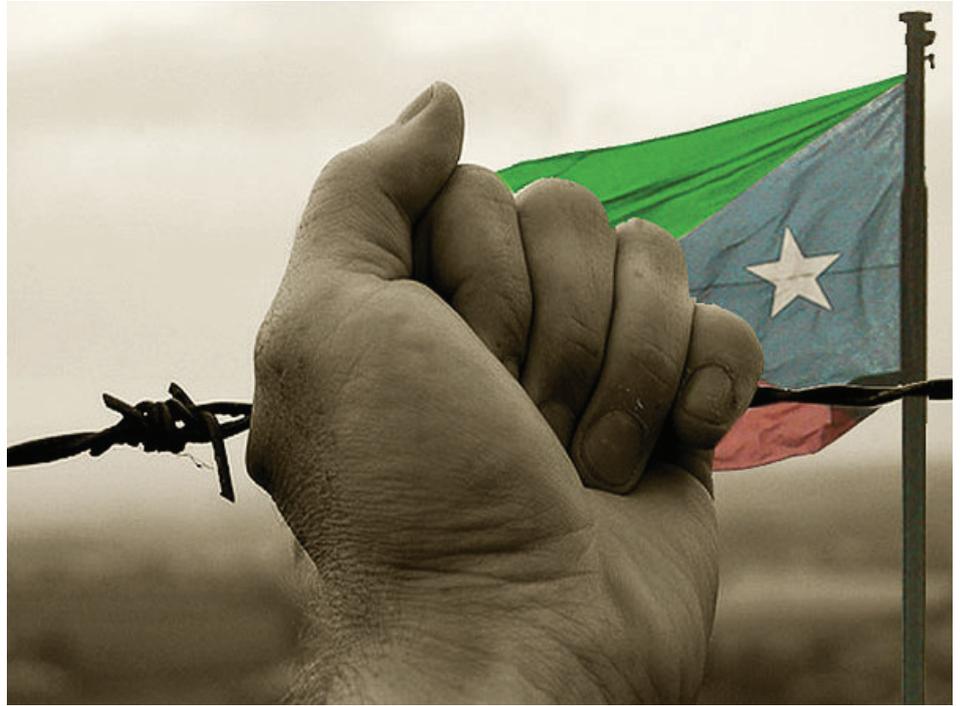
Maldives National University is Islamic law (Sharia) and tourism. Pakistan's performance in higher and vocational education is remarkable, while rest of education sectors are showing sustained performance. Demographic disparity in various provinces is prominent. Religious education (madrassa) is available across the country. The system can be used to maintain peace and combat terrorism especially in northern parts of the country. Sri Lanka is maintaining more than 90% literacy rate across the country at equitable bases. They introduced peace education policy which needs effective implementation especially in northern part of the country which is main focus of the peace policy. Education system in Maldives and Sri Lanka is considered benchmark across the developing countries. But a close analysis of the system in both countries shows that eminence education at university level is not passable. South Asian University has been established under banner of SAARC to promote regional harmony, peace and security among its Member States.

Religious schools in South Asia are popular but are considered backward and traditional. Polarization of views has impeded positive role of these schools, however their undermined vibrant role in common men's lives can be used to bring reconciliation and harmony among the sectarian groups. In this regard, Sri Lanka is one of the best examples that established peace in its Northern Province followed by economic prosperity. Extremism and terrorism in the western constituencies

and some other parts of South Asia has become exhortation in the world, which is linked with these religious schools' tutoring structure. But the question arises that how peace and harmony can be resumed with strong presence of these institutions across South Asia. Restructuring and modernising the religious education schooling is imperative need of the time. In this regard, model institutions can be set up with modern subjects having basic religious teachings. Registration of these institutions is required to keep a check on students' inflow and to maintain labour force information system. Most important is the revision of curriculum to promote tolerant attitude among various sects. Unarming and depoliticizing the schools is also prerequisite of peace in the region. Imparting skills and vocational education can help the pass out students to earn in a respectable manner rather than mere addiction of charity. The students should be provided opportunity to select themselves the field of specialisation e.g. computer science, vocational education, social or natural sciences etc. Any religion in the world does not permit terrorism, but personal interests of individuals/ groups dominate to get financial or socio-political benefits for themselves. Revamping of religious schools would definitely help to eliminate terrorism from the region, which can also support to implement "SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism" to move member countries together towards combatting terrorism with mutual cooperation. ■

"South Asian University has been established under banner of SAARC to promote regional harmony, peace and security among its Member States."

"Most important is the revision of curriculum to promote tolerant attitude among various sects. Unarming and depoliticizing the schools is also prerequisite of peace in the region."



Mehran Baluch

Balochistan representative
at the United Nations
Human Rights Council

Baloch leader says world to suffer if militants not checked

GENEVA: Balochistan representative at the United Nations Human Rights Council Mehran Baluch has said it was the West's grave mistake to believe that their use of the despotic and bigoted regimes that they were supporting could be controlled and brought back to normalcy at their will.

Using his intervention at the South Asia Democratic Forum Symposium on Universal Periodic Review (UPR) for Pakistan, Mehran said Pakistan initially presented itself as the bulwark against communist expansion in the region and entered various pacts like the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) and the South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) but then changed its course

as the west turned a blind eye to the country and ignored human rights violations.

He said the whole world will suffer if militant groups are left unchecked as these groups have now turned on their own benefactors. He claimed that the "danger of the nuclear assets falling into the hands of terrorists has already materialized and the world should understand this for if it doesn't the world will have to pay a bitter price for its laxity and complacency. The world has to act now for the purpose of maintaining world peace and check the atrocities against the Baloch and minorities in Pakistan". ■

The Merits of Regional Cooperation

Welcome Speech



Vytautas Landsbergis

Member of the European Parliament,
Vice-Chair of the Delegation to the
EU-Armenia, EU-Azerbaijan and
EU-Georgia Parliamentary
Cooperation Committees
(European People's Party).
Former President of Lithuania

Distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen!

When one turns his mind to tales and dreamlands of his young years, and also to romantic literature about great geographical discoveries, the high southern seas and ships of brave sailors come back like moving calls and pictures of once for ever excited imagination.

In our Western and East-Western culture there is also one special picture of the three Magi, who came bringing oriental and royal gifts to greet the poorest newborn Child. One of them came then from a famous land, previously visited once by Alexander of Europe.

Today it all sounds rather dry as "South Asia", such a region of the world, among others, and many have to reach yet for books or googles of geography to become aware about limits and definitions of it.

One of those was me. Yes, we remember, there is in South Asia the home area of most ancient known philosophy and state-building traditions based on law, of incomparable beauty of architecture and music, of nowadays mighty empires with cosmic religions later fading and turned into a dust. And again, our ears of today are full of rumours and formulas about newly emerging powers. Somewhere, but also there. South Asia is not a region yet with well developed cooperation and worldwide mission, but may become it. Something essential is needed for that, more than a split group of actors on the stage. Of course, they are, but what then? Such new appearance must bring both chances and problems, and it brings problems and chances indeed, actually at the same time. That is ongoing. Let the good in that process be welcomed, while evil condemned.

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Let me say, being a distant and ignorant observer, that situation where two inheritors of King Ashoka and Prince Gautama stay in a long lasting and so much exhausting war for disputed lands, not souls, looks an absurdity over absurdities.

Don't be similar, I could suggest, to your northern Eurasian neighbour, so painfully suffering the illness of territorialism.

The unique heritage of Tibetan culture with its unique importance for the entire world cannot be put on the edge of disappearance with slow-minded gawks, called international community, just watching from around.

What a lesson may be brought to us, if not stopped, from Bhutan! There is a Government concerned about people not in terms of material wealth, but of happiness. That is something different from our Western chains of mentality. Richness and happiness is not the same, dear economists. You may have money and a cancer together. It's hardly to be called an achievement. What is then and how accounted your living standard? To add, the cancer of greediness is not much better of other forms.

The classical wisdom of East – that also of South Asia – appears much needed for our unhappy West, unhappy despite its all false values.

Let me quote the great poet of Bengali, whom I admired while still young: "Prisoner, tell me, who was it that wrought this unbreakable chain?"

"It was I", said the prisoner, "who forged this chain very carefully. I thought my invincible power would hold the world captive leaving me in a freedom undisturbed. Thus night and day I worked at the chain with huge fires and cruel hard strokes. When at last the work was done and the links were complete and unbreakable, I found that it held me in its grip".

The poet and philosopher saw this captive "by himself" as a metaphor used for more and more materialist, those times expansionist and finally consumerist, industrial Western civilization.



He wished for India, like Mahatma Gandhi did as well, a different way.

What ways were chosen generally in South Asia, you know better than me.

But while the South Asia prefers democracy, there is a question of possible common way for all democracies in the East and West. Completion is better than competition. Consolidation of democracies and bridge between the great democratic entities is of crucial need, if we don't want to disappear in a world-wide terrorist war. Anyway, the Westernization of South Asia, an effort striving to get one more great self-captive of industrial consumerism, like new big house founded in a swamp of sovereign and community debt, would not be the best way, but rather a lost chance. Of what?

That chance could be the merge of different approaches – more rational and more spiritual ones.

It is possible, if not absolutely utopian, when the culture is not put behind material profits, and human spirit together with love and compassion – not behind the ever growing auctions and advertising to consume ever more.

Fairness in politics and business, including banking, should stem also from the responsibility and compassion to those eventual victims of confuse and manipulation.

Let's love more, assist more, and seek for happiness among the brothers, not enemies.

Brussels, the 11th of October 2012

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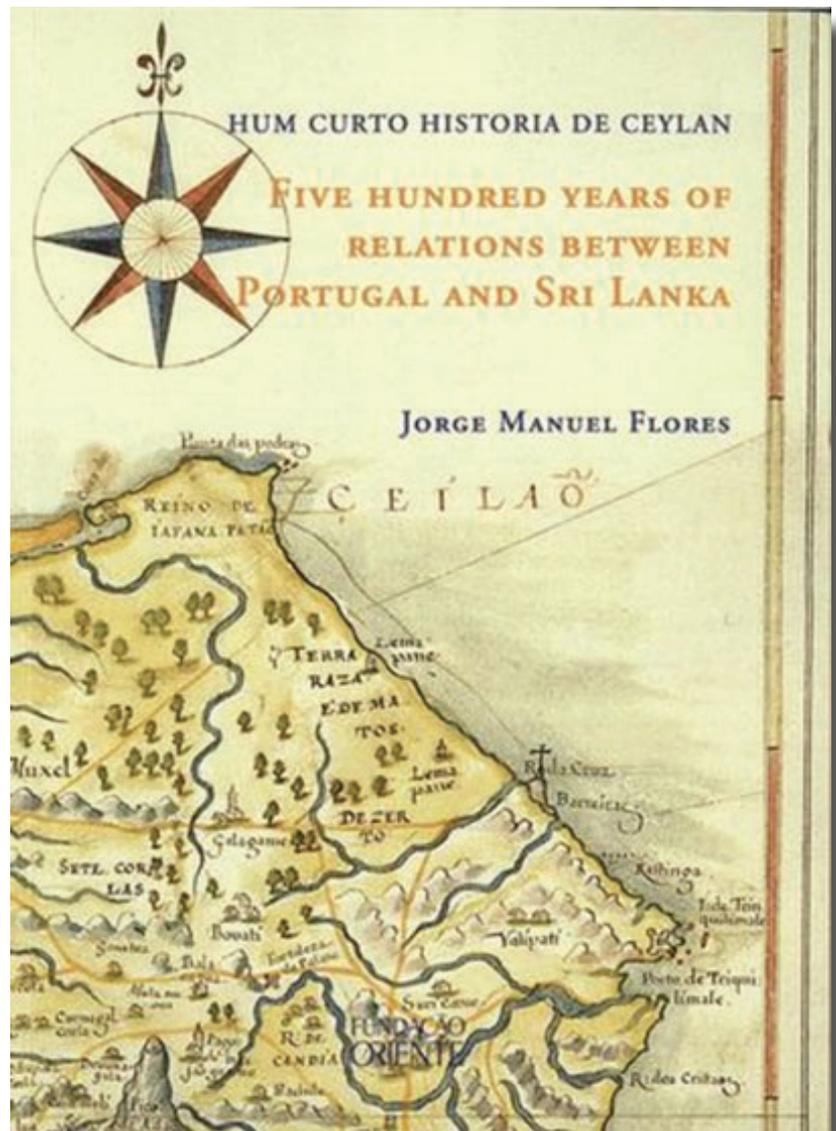
The Editor suggests:
“Five Hundred Years of
Relations between Portugal
and Sri Lanka”

Very interesting and well documented, this book gives us a perspective on Sri Lanka's history. Although it is specially focused on the Portuguese presence and influence in Sri Lanka (or Ceylon, as it was then called, and still today when the matter is for example tea), this book proposes to us a broader view of Sri Lanka's previous and posterior history. Some of the current ethnical, religious and political tensions can be better interpreted under the light of the factual ancient stories this book tells. ■

Title:
“Hum Curto Historia de Ceylon : Five
Hundred Years of Relations between
Portugal and Sri Lanka”

Author:
Jorge Flores

Edited by:
Fundação Oriente, in 2001





Anne Flanagan

Policy Advisor of South Asia
Democratic Forum

SOUTH ASIA NEWS

Afghanistan

A US soldier accused of killing sixteen civilians in March earlier this year while on duty in Afghanistan may face the death penalty, according to military prosecutors. Witnesses in the military trial are being allowed to testify from Afghanistan via video link. The massacre put a huge strain on already tense US-Afghan relations and the US is determined not to be seen to tolerate such action from its forces.

Bangladesh

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said that she wishes to increase ties with Laos. It is not clear yet what form these ties will take, but his aim is to strengthen the region against the challenges of globalisation through cooperation and the targeting of mutual goals.

Bhutan

Druk Air had earlier this year announced a new direct service between Mumbai and Bhutan, but this has now been postponed until March 2013. The new route is highly anticipated: some 64,000 tourists travelled to Bhutan in 2011, many from Western India.

India

Madhav Chavan has won this year's WISE prize for Education for his role in providing education to underprivileged families in India. Chavan is the co-founder and CEO of Pratham, which has extended its reach to 17 of India's

28 states and is the largest non-governmental provider of basic literacy and numeracy for underprivileged children in India. Its programmes address pre-school education, learning support to both in-school and out-of-school children, computer literacy, vocational training and special programs for vulnerable and working children.

Maldives

Opposition Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) Spokesperson, Maafannu dhekunu MP Imthiyaz Fahmy (Inthi) has said that the court houses of the Maldives did not grant freedom to the nation. He maintains that that it is the people themselves who granted the country freedom whilst the courts did nothing to stop the oppression of the regime at the time.

Nepal

Former King Gyanendra Shah has said that political parties may be too short-sighted in their approach. He has urged the population to exercise caution, conserving cultural traditions and not placing too much power in the hands of the political parties, which he blames for the country's current woes.

Pakistan

The US Ambassador to Pakistan, Richard G. Olson, has said that the US and Pakistan continue to enjoy strong relations despite ups and downs over the years. Speaking about the essential

role of Pakistan in achieving peace in Afghanistan, he commended Pakistan's upcoming elections whilst emphasising that the internal workings of Pakistan are for itself to work out, but very much hoping that future Washington-Islamabad relations would improve as a result.

Sri Lanka

An internal UN report leaked to the BBC says that the UN failed Sri Lanka during its bloody 26 year war. The war, which only ended in 2009, left at least 100,000 people dead, but that estimate is conservative with some guesses that up to 9,000 people died in the final months alone. The UN report highlights its decision to withdraw its staff from the warzone as well as reluctance to publish casualty figures and under-reporting of widespread government shelling as particular inadequacies. An internal review will now take place due to what is seen as failure at every level of the UN. ■



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