

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIC AFFAIRS



# Interaction

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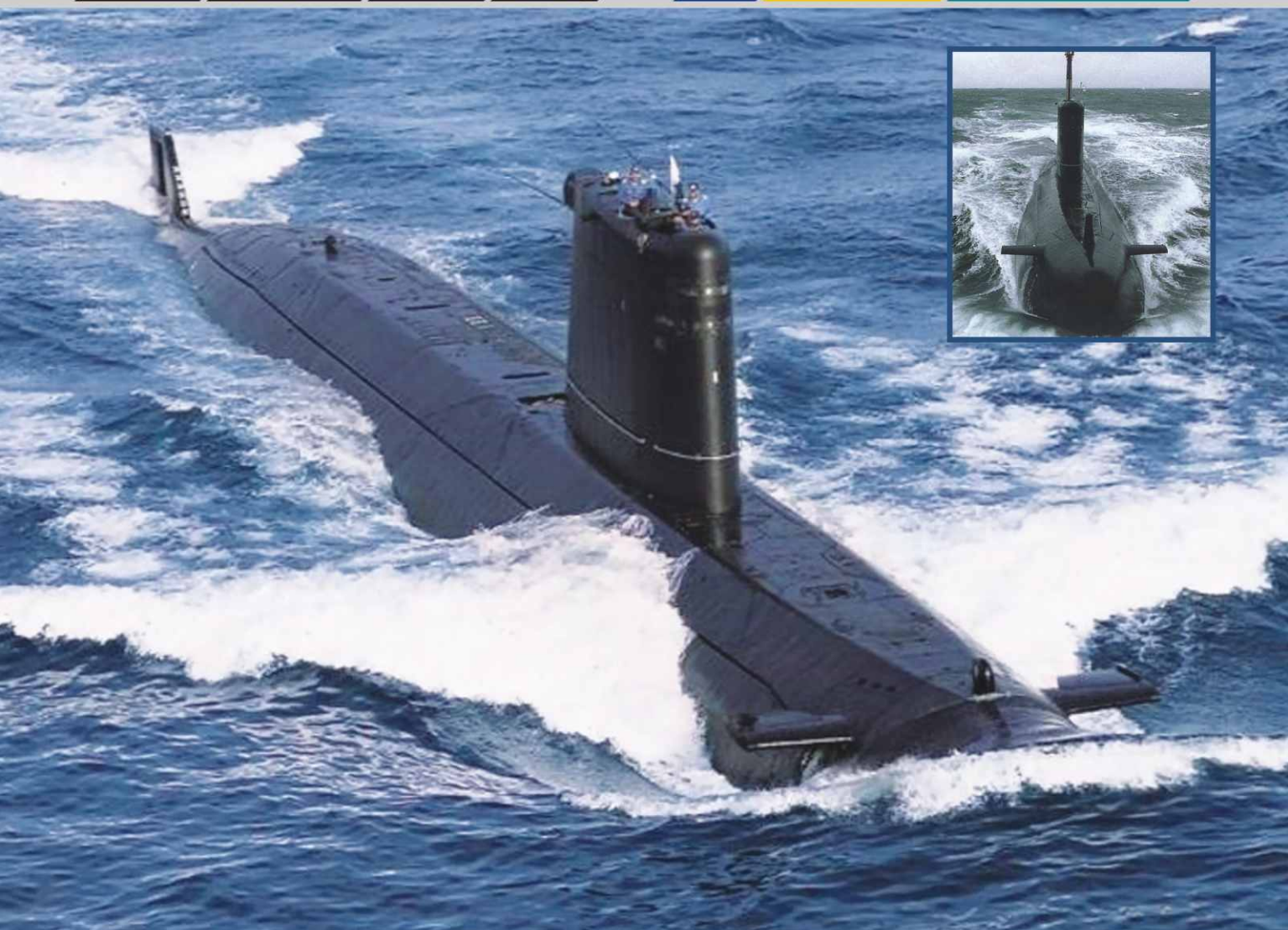
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# Interaction

September 2024

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**EDITORIAL**

# PAKISTAN'S VISION 2050: A BLUEPRINT FOR THE FUTURE



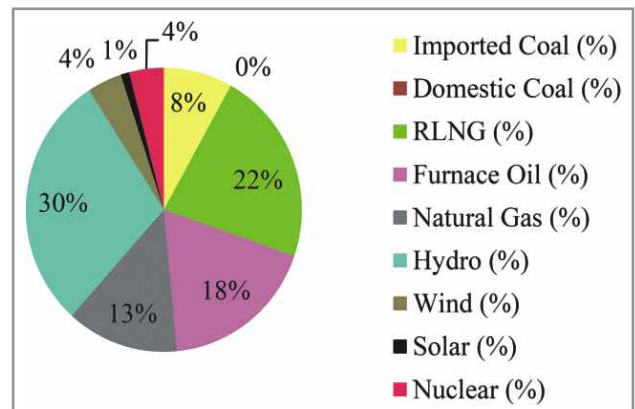
■ Pakistan Vision 2050 is an ambitious plan designed to guide the nation into a new era of development, prosperity, and global relevance. This comprehensive framework covers various sectors, from economic growth and social development to technological advancement and environmental sustainability. By mid-century, the vision aims to transform Pakistan into a self-reliant and progressive state. However, while progress has been made in some areas, the energy sector crucial to all other development requires more urgent and focused attention.

■ Vision 2050 is not just a strategic plan; it is a holistic approach to national development, addressing both immediate needs and long-term goals. At its core, the vision seeks to enhance Pakistan's global standing by building a strong, inclusive economy, improving infrastructure, and fostering innovation. It also prioritizes human development, recognizing that the nation's greatest asset is its people. Education, healthcare, and social welfare

are key pillars, ensuring that every Pakistani has the opportunity to contribute to and benefit from the nation's growth.

■ Economically, Vision 2050 aims to diversify Pakistan's industrial base, reduce dependency on foreign aid, and increase exports. By encouraging public-private partnerships and attracting foreign investment, the vision seeks to create a vibrant economy capable of withstanding global shocks and ensuring sustained growth. The development of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) across the country is a key aspect of this strategy, providing an environment for industries to flourish and create jobs.

■ In the social domain, the vision emphasizes reducing poverty and inequality through the expansion of social safety nets and the promotion of gender equality. Additionally, Vision 2050 places a strong emphasis on sustainable development, aligning with global environmental goals to ensure that economic growth does not come





at the expense of ecological balance. This includes the protection of natural resources, the promotion of green energy, and the implementation of policies to mitigate climate change impacts.

■ Among the many components of Vision 2050, energy stands out as a critical area underpinning all other aspects of development. A reliable, affordable, and sustainable energy supply is essential for industrial growth, infrastructure development, and improved living standards. Recognizing this, Vision 2050 outlines an ambitious energy strategy, including a mix of traditional and renewable energy sources, with a particular focus on harnessing Pakistan's abundant natural resources.

■ Vision 2050 sets specific targets to transform Pakistan's energy landscape. Key goals include increasing the total energy generation capacity to 120,000 MW by 2050, with at least 30% sourced from renewable energy. The vision also outlines the expansion of nuclear energy capacity to at least 40,000 MW, recognizing its critical role in providing a stable and sustainable power supply. Additionally, the vision emphasizes reducing reliance on imported fossil fuels, targeting a 50% reduction by 2030 and complete energy independence by 2050.

■ However, current progress falls short of



these targets. As of now, Pakistan's total installed energy capacity is approximately 41,500 MW, with renewable sources contributing only about 6% of the energy mix. Nuclear energy, currently contributing around 8% to the national grid, remains far from the envisioned target. The slow pace of progress, particularly in expanding renewable and nuclear energy, underscores the need for more decisive action.

■ Several projects were highlighted under Vision 2050 to achieve these ambitious targets. These include major hydropower projects like the Diamer-Bhasha Dam, renewable energy initiatives such as the Quaid-e-Azam Solar Park, and the expansion of the nuclear energy sector with the development of the K2 and K3 nuclear power plants.

#### **DIAMER-BHASHA DAM:**

- This project is crucial for both energy generation and water management. Once completed, the dam is expected to add 4,500 MW to the national grid. However, progress has been slow, with completion now expected around 2028, well behind the original schedule.

#### **QUAID-E-AZAM SOLAR PARK:**

- Located in Bahawalpur, this solar park is one of the largest in the world, with an expected capacity of 1,000 MW. Currently, the project has reached 400 MW, but further expansion has been sluggish due to technical challenges and inconsistent policy support.

#### **NUCLEAR ENERGY PROJECTS:**

- K2 and K3: The K2 and K3 nuclear power plants, part of the Karachi Nuclear Power Complex, represent a significant step toward achieving the nuclear energy targets set in Vision 2050. These plants have added a combined 2,200 MW to



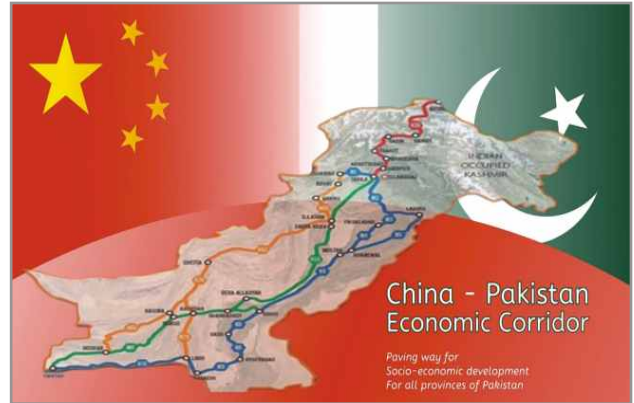
the national grid, significantly boosting the country's nuclear energy capacity. Chashma 5, which will generate 1,200 MW, is in the construction phase. Despite these successes, the overall pace of nuclear energy development remains slower than anticipated, primarily due to funding issues and bureaucratic delays.

While progress has been made in several areas since the launch of Vision 2050, particularly in economic and social development, the energy sector remains a significant challenge. The completion of key projects has been delayed, and the energy mix remains heavily skewed towards fossil fuels. Moreover, the lack of investment in nuclear energy, as outlined in Vision 2050, is a significant concern.

■ Energy is the lifeblood of any modern economy, and for Pakistan to achieve the goals set out in Vision 2050, it must prioritize the development of its energy sector.

■ This requires not only speeding up the implementation of ongoing projects but also addressing the bottlenecks that have hindered progress. The government must ensure that necessary funds are allocated, particularly for nuclear energy development, which remains a critical component of the vision.

■ Nuclear energy offers several advantages for Pakistan. It is a reliable source of base



load power, capable of providing a consistent supply of electricity regardless of weather conditions. Unlike fossil fuels, nuclear power generates minimal greenhouse gas emissions, making it an environmentally friendly and cost-effective option. Despite these benefits, the government has been slow to release the funds necessary to expand Pakistan's nuclear energy capacity. The K2 and K3 plants are steps in the right direction, but further investment in this sector is essential to meet the ambitious targets of Vision 2050.

■ As Pakistan moves towards 2050, the government must maintain a strategic focus on the vision's goals. While progress has been made, much work remains, particularly in the energy sector. Energy is the foundation upon which all other development efforts rest, and without a stable and sustainable supply, the ambitious goals of Vision 2050 will remain out of reach.

■ Pakistan's leadership has shown foresight in crafting Vision 2050, but it must also demonstrate the commitment to see it through. This requires not just policy declarations but tangible actions that align with the vision's objectives. By prioritizing energy development particularly in the nuclear sector the government can ensure that Pakistan remains on the path to achieving its long-term goals.



# RFI AND PID KARACHI HOST SESSION ON MEDIA LITERACY TO PROMOTE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND STRATEGIC STABILITY



The Rabita Forum International (RFI), in collaboration with the Press Information Department (PID) Karachi, organized an insightful session titled "Role of Media in Promoting Social, Economic, and Strategic Stability" on August 29, 2024. The event aimed to address the growing concerns of misinformation and the critical need for media literacy in today's digital age.

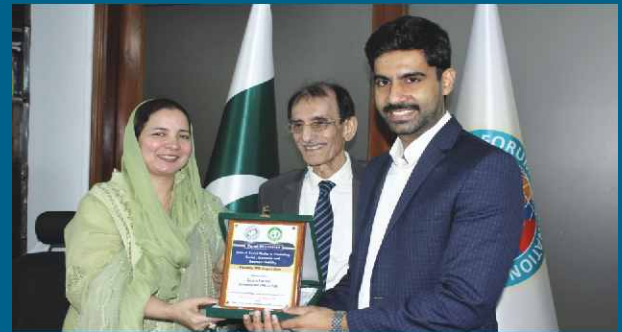


Chairman of RFI, Mr. Nusrat Mirza, inaugurated the session by highlighting the transformative impact of social media on Pakistan's ethical, social, economic and strategic approaches. He emphasized that while social media empowers individuals to voice their opinions freely, it also poses significant challenges in managing the authenticity and impact of the shared content.



Ms. Erum Tanveer, Director General of Public Relations at PID, accentuated the importance of comprehensive media literacy training. She detailed PID's initiatives to organize training programs for journalists nationwide, aiming to equip them with the skills to identify and counter fake news effectively. Ms. Tanveer pointed out the tendency of mainstream media to focus on negative news, advocating for responsible journalism to ensure balanced reporting. She stressed that unlike traditional media, social platforms lack gatekeepers, making it easier for misinformation to spread unchecked. Ms. Sidra Azhar Dar, Correspondent for Voice of America, criticized mainstream media for overlooking crucial issues that gain traction on social media. She called for government intervention to bridge information gaps and ensure that significant topics receive adequate coverage. Ms. Mah-e-Darakhshan, Assistant Professor of Media Studies at Bahria University, compared the influence of social media to nuclear power, highlighting its potent role in shaping public opinion. She advocated for integrating media literacy into educational curricula at all levels to prepare younger generations for responsible media consumption and to mitigate the influence of online personalities. Mr. Qasim Farooq, Information Officer at PID, reinforced the need for enhanced media literacy and responsible communication. He discussed the role of media in driving social and economic changes and emphasized the importance of incorporating youth perspectives into policymaking to foster inclusive and strategic reforms. The session concluded with a consensus among the participants on the necessity of ongoing dialogue and

collaborative efforts to address media-related challenges. Attendees agreed that fostering media literacy is essential for promoting social cohesion, economic stability, and strategic resilience in Pakistan.







# TEAM RFI CELEBRATES **78TH** INDEPENDENCE DAY OF PAKISTAN



# RABITA FORUM INTERNATIONAL (RFI) COMMEMORATES 77 YEARS OF PAKISTAN'S INDEPENDENCE

To mark Pakistan's 78th Independence Day, Rabita Forum International (RFI) organized a series of six TV talk shows featuring panels of experts from various fields. The discussions, themed around "77 Years of Pakistan's Independence," provided insights into the country's journey since 1947.

**Academics** emphasized the progress in education and called for more investment in research and innovation.

**Intellectuals** reflected on the cultural and social evolution, advocating for a balance between tradition and modernity.

**Senior Advocates** analyzed legal and constitutional developments, highlighting the need for reforms to strengthen democracy.

**Bureaucrats** discussed the role of the bureaucracy in nation-building, acknowledging both challenges and achievements.

**Diplomats** explored Pakistan's foreign relations, stressing the importance of adapting to global dynamics.

**Industrialists** highlighted economic growth and industrial development, discussing the potential for future expansion.

The series offered a multifaceted view of Pakistan's 77-year journey, celebrating past achievements and envisioning a prosperous future. A bit of explanation of each show is given in the pages following.

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# LAWYERS HIGHLIGHT THE VITAL ROLE OF JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE IN UPHOLDING RULE OF LAW

RFI Digital TV hosted a significant panel discussion on the indispensable role of an independent and impartial judiciary in maintaining the rule of law in a special context of the 77 years of Independence. The program, moderated by Chairman RFI, Mr Nusrat Mirza, brought together a distinguished group of legal experts to share their insights.

Nadeem Qureshi, Former Judge and member of the Supreme Court Bar, opened the discussion by reflecting on Pakistan's early success with five-year development plans that significantly boosted various sectors. He noted that the shift toward temporary projects and delays in implementing key policies, particularly in taxation and international agreements like GATS and TRIPS, have impeded the country's progress. Additionally,

he pointed out the inefficiencies within the justice system caused by poor coordination between lawyers and courts.

Barrister Sarfraz Mutilo, General Secretary of the Sindh High Court Bar, followed by emphasizing the early contributions of legal leaders such as Liaquat Ali Khan and Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, who were instrumental in Pakistan's development.

He also highlighted major projects like Pakistan Steel Mills, Pak Arab Refinery, and the BCCI international bank, which eventually collapsed due to conspiracies. Amir Nawaz Waraich, President of the Karachi Bar, then discussed how Pakistan's strategic location has made it vulnerable to internal divisions and external conspiracies, weakening national unity.

**Continued on page 11**



2



# A PANEL OF EXPERTS DISCUSSES 'PAKISTAN'S 77-YEAR JOURNEY: CHALLENGES AND ACHIEVEMENTS' ON RFI DIGITAL TV

In a discussion on RFI Digital TV, experts reviewed Pakistan's 77 years of political and constitutional history, economic system, foreign policy, and military capability, along with its evolving role in the global landscape. The program, hosted by RFI Chairman Nusrat Mirza, highlighted the unfulfilled dreams envisioned at the time of independence a prosperous and magnificent future that has yet to materialize.

Nusrat Mirza emphasized that Pakistan was meant to be the cornerstone of the Islamic world's rise and development. While the nation has seen significant successes in various fields, the establishment of a stable political system remains elusive. He urged against despair, pointing to areas where substantial progress has been made.

Professor Dr. Tanveer Khalid, Dean of Social Sciences at Ziauddin University, underscored the importance of dreams and ideology in any movement. She praised Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah for

laying out a visionary framework for Pakistan's future. Despite ongoing challenges in constitutional and administrative areas, Dr. Tanveer Khalid expressed optimism that with good governance, effective management, and collective effort, the nation can still realize its founding dreams.

Former Ambassador Syed Hassan Habib highlighted that Pakistan has faced numerous crises due to a persistent lack of visionary leadership. He pointed out that the bureaucracy, which fundamentally lacks vision, has been limited to merely executing orders.

Over the past seven decades, this lack of foresight has led the bureaucracy to misguide the rulers, who themselves have been deficient in vision. As a result, Pakistan's foreign policy has struggled to achieve success, largely due to inadequate planning.

Khawaja Razi Haider, former head of the Quaid-e-Azam Academy, pointed out that Jinnah envisioned a political system based on

Islamic principles, not Western democracy. However, the media's fleeting attention to Jinnah's decrees and their exclusion from the educational curriculum has left the younger generation unaware of his true vision.

Dr. Zahid Ali Zahidi highlighted that the Muslim League, at the time of independence, had no concrete agenda for land reform, unlike the Indian National Congress, which implemented reforms soon after independence. This allowed the feudal lords to strengthen their political grip, hindering the implementation of democracy in its true spirit.

In conclusion, Syed Samiullah, Head of RFI's Research Department, stressed that the nation can achieve its developmental goals if every institution adheres to its constitutional role and if the people embrace collective progress.

He noted that communal and linguistic divisions have obstructed the realization of the founders' dreams but affirmed that unity and collaboration could bring those dreams to fruition.



Continued from page 9

## LAWYERS HIGHLIGHT THE VITAL ROLE OF JUDICIAL

He stressed that true development hinges not just on economic resources but on the strict enforcement of the rule of law and the effective use of the nation's substantial capital.

Zafar Imam, Member of the Sindh High Court Bar, contributed by underscoring the significant sacrifices made by lawyers in defending the rule of law in Pakistan, despite the losses they have endured. He cited the recent rejection by bar associations of a Supreme Court decision concerning the Qadiani community as an example of the ongoing struggle for legal supremacy.

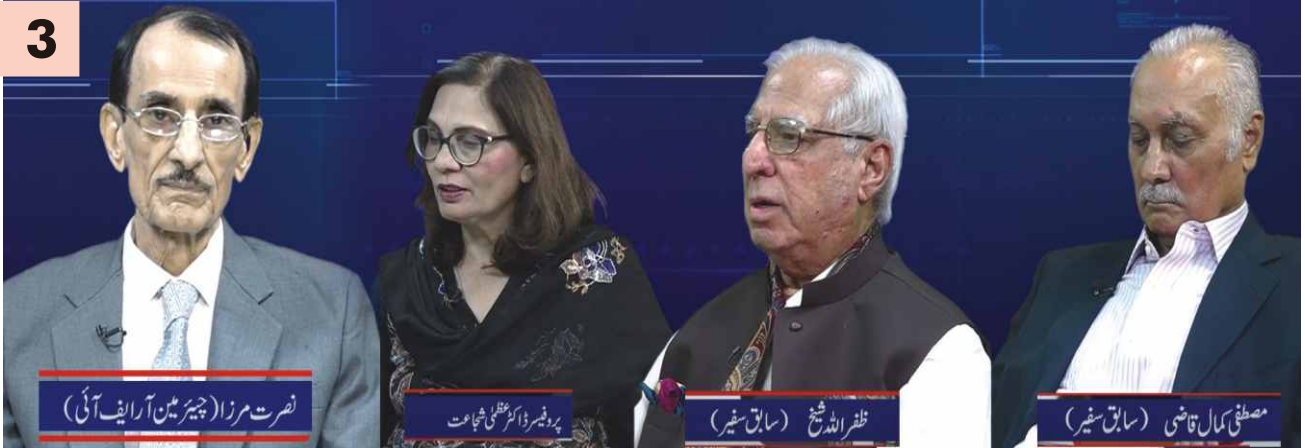
Khalid Iqbal, Advocate at the Supreme Court Bar, argued that global policies imposed after Pakistan's independence were designed to disrupt its progress, leaving the country entangled in internal challenges. He

highlighted that, despite gaining independence alongside India, Pakistan has faced continuous scrutiny and interference from world powers.

Mian Rauf Atta, Advocate at the Supreme Court Bar, pointed out that bureaucracy and repeated military interventions have repeatedly undermined constitutional rule and hindered national progress. He highlighted the pervasive corruption that stretches from grassroots to leadership levels, contributing to the ongoing disorder.

Finally, Barrister Zafar Jawad, Member of the Supreme Court Bar, stressed the critical importance of respecting public opinion and empowering citizens to freely elect their representatives. He warned that interference in the democratic process undermines trust in the system, emphasizing the need for a balanced relationship between the Legislature, Administration, and Judiciary to prevent further issues.

3



## EXPERTS ADVOCATE FOR A BALANCED FOREIGN POLICY WITH EMPHASIS ON STRENGTHENING TIES WITH CHINA

In a discussion on RFI Digital TV, held on August 9, 2024, to mark Pakistan's 78th anniversary, a panel of experts emphasized the need for a balanced foreign policy, with a strong focus on maintaining close ties with China. Hosted by RFI Chairman Nusrat Mirza, the panel included Amb. (R) Mustafa Kamal Qazi, Amb. (R) Zafarullah Sheikh, and Prof. Dr. Uzma Shujaat.

Amb. Mustafa Kamal Qazi highlighted the historical significance of the Pakistan-China partnership, stressing its strategic importance amid global and regional challenges. He noted the shift from a unipolar world dominated by the United States to a multipolar order where China and Russia are rising powers.

He emphasized that Pakistan's relationship with China is crucial not only for bilateral ties but also as part of a broader strategy to align with these emerging global powers. He also discussed China's role in supporting developing nations through initiatives like the

Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Prof. Dr. Uzma Shujaat pointed out that Pakistan's deep and extensive relationship with China is central to its foreign policy, influencing many sectors such as trade and infrastructure. She argued that U.S. policies have diminished its global influence, potentially driving Pakistan to strengthen its ties with China in search of more stable and beneficial partnerships.

Amb. Zafarullah Sheikh reinforced the idea that Pakistan views its relationship with China as essential to its foreign policy, particularly in managing regional conflicts and geopolitical tensions. He highlighted China's support, including in Pakistan's nuclear program, as critical to Pakistan's strategic stability. Concluding the discussion, Nusrat Mirza, the host, reiterated the importance of Pakistan's strong partnership with China, noting its benefits for the country's security, economy, and global standing.



4



# ACADEMIA ADVOCATES FOR REVAMPING PAKISTAN'S EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AMID 77 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE

A panel of experts discussed Pakistan's educational structure in the context of 77 years of independence during a session on RFI Digital TV, hosted by RFI Chairman Nusrat Mirza on August 8, 2024. The panel included Prof. Dr. Naeem Ahmed (Chairman IR Department, University of Karachi), Prof. Dr. Abid Sherwani (Founder Member, University of Management Science and Technology, Lahore), and Prof. Dr. Akhtar Hussain Sindhu (Principal Government Islamia College, Lahore).

Prof. Dr. Abid Sherwani highlighted UMT's achievements in research and education, emphasizing its contributions beyond traditional fields, including agriculture and social sectors. He pointed out that adapting the educational system to meet contemporary demands is essential for ensuring that these contributions continue to grow and have a meaningful impact on society. Prof. Dr. Naeem Ahmed focused on the University of Karachi's significant role in higher education and its international reputation, noting that many

graduates contribute to global academia and professional fields. He stressed that for Pakistan to maintain its global academic presence, the educational framework must evolve to stay competitive and relevant in today's fast-changing world. Prof. Dr. Akhtar Hussain Sindhu emphasized the importance of mastering multiple languages for academic and professional success in a globalized world. He suggested that the restructuring of the educational system should prioritize language acquisition to better equip students for the challenges and opportunities of an interconnected global environment.

Nusrat Mirza concluded the discussion by calling for a restructuring of Pakistan's educational paradigm to make it more innovative and aligned with current needs, highlighting UMT's ongoing contributions despite the challenges faced by the country. He underscored that a forward-looking educational system is crucial for nurturing future leaders who can drive the nation towards progress and stability.

5



## 'THE QAID WAS THE ULTIMATE DEMOCRAT' SAY JOURNALISTS AT RFI DIGITAL TV

RFI Digital TV featured an exciting discussion on August 10, 2024, hosted by Nusrat Mirza, Chairman of RFI. The program, titled "The Quaid was the Ultimate Democrat," brought together a panel of seasoned journalists Sajjad Meer (a senior journalist and anchor), Javed Siddique (former resident of Daily Nawa e Waqt), and Dr. Wadood Qureshi (former resident of Daily Khabre'n) to explore the democratic legacy of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, especially in the context of 77 years of Pakistan's independence.

Sajjad Meer highlighted Jinnah's dedication to preventing the "brain drain" in Pakistan, suggesting that Jinnah likely aimed to retain the country's educated and talented individuals to build a robust, self-reliant nation. Meer also underscored the significance of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in boosting Pakistan's economy and infrastructure, which he believes aligns with Jinnah's vision of a prosperous and unified country.

Javed Siddique reflected on Pakistan's evolution since 1947, discussing the political, economic, and social transformations that

have shaped the nation. He noted progress in industrialization, agriculture, education, healthcare, and the advancement of nuclear capabilities. However, Siddique pointed out that Jinnah's democratic ideals have faced obstacles, particularly with the growing influence of non-democratic elements in politics, which diverges from Jinnah's original vision.

Dr. Wadood Qureshi emphasized the critical role of bureaucracy in realizing Jinnah's democratic aspirations. He argued that an efficient and well-organized bureaucracy is essential for upholding democratic principles. Yet, he criticized Pakistan's bureaucracy for being slow, inefficient, and often mired in red tape and corruption, which impedes democratic reforms and frustrates citizens seeking better governance. In his concluding remarks, host Nusrat Mirza observed that Jinnah's vision of democracy in Pakistan remains unfulfilled and is still waiting to be fully realized. He stressed that, as a nation devoted to the Founder of Pakistan, it is our collective duty to work diligently towards bringing this vision to life.

6



## INDUSTRIALISTS HIGHLIGHT CHALLENGES AND SUCCESS STORIES IN PAKISTAN'S ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE

On August 12, 2024, a panel discussion on RFI Digital TV, hosted by Chairman RFI, Nusrat Mirza, brought together industrialists to discuss the challenges facing Pakistan's industry in the context of 77 years of independence.

The panel included Syed Johar Ali Kandhari, President of Korangi Trade and Industry (KATI), Shamsuddin, a member of the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Global Consultant, and Chaudhry Wahid Uddin, a member of the Federation of Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Syed Johar Ali Kandhari expressed serious concerns about the impact of high electricity prices on businesses in Pakistan. He highlighted that the exorbitant payments to power companies are even higher than the country's military spending, urging the government to renegotiate these agreements to prevent further business closures and make electricity more affordable.

He also emphasized the challenges faced by young entrepreneurs and new technologies in the current tough economic environment,

particularly in areas like Mehran Town and National Park.

Shamsuddin praised the Gujarat Fan Industry for its world-class reputation, noting that it produces high-quality fans in demand globally, which significantly contributes to the economy. He pointed out that Sialkot exports fans worth \$900 million annually, showcasing this sector as a model of innovation and quality manufacturing.

Chaudhry Wahid Uddin further highlighted the global popularity and respect for Gujarat's fan industry, which has a production capacity of 5 million fans, with 1.6 million fans being exported annually. He attributed this success to the industry's high standards and creativity.

In conclusion, Nusrat Mirza summarized that industrialists are the backbone of Pakistan's economy. Despite the challenges, resilience can help the industry overcome its difficulties. He cited Gujarat's fan industry as an example of how Pakistani industries can achieve global success by learning from Gujarat's achievements.



7



## RABITA FORUM INTERNATIONAL (RFI) HOSTS A SPECIAL DIGITAL SHOW ON KASHMIR SOLIDARITY DAY

On August 5th, Rabita Forum International (RFI) held a significant digital show to mark Kashmir Solidarity Day. The event featured prominent intellectuals including Barrister Shahida Jameel, a former Law Minister; Ambassador (R) Dr. Jameel Ahmed Khan; Prof. Dr. Shahida Wizarat, Dean of the Department of Social Sciences at IOBM; and Dr. Abdul Jabbar, from the Department of Mass Communication at the University of Karachi.

Barrister Shahida Jameel began the discussion by condemning India's actions in Kashmir, stating that the revocation of Articles 370 and 35A by the Modi government was a

deliberate attempt to alter the region's demographic makeup, paving the way for a manipulated referendum. She stressed that India has not only ignored United Nations resolutions but has also violated its own constitution. Jameel pointed out that Quaid-e-Azam had foreseen this deceptive strategy and warned against it. She also criticized Pakistan's lack of a strong response, suggesting that a more forceful reaction could have pressured India to retreat from its aggressive policies. Ambassador Jameel Ahmed Khan highlighted the international community's silence on India's constitutional violations.

**Continued on page 19**

# THE MULTIPLE CRISES IN THE MIDDLE EAST



**“WE MUST ACCEPT FINITE DISAPPOINTMENT, BUT NEVER LOSE INFINITE HOPE.”**  
**MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.**

**AMBASSADOR (R) HASAN HABIB**

Today, the Middle East is a region with multiple flash points and a growing degree of complexity and conflicts that affect the whole region and beyond. The destruction of Syria, the degradation of Iraq, the uprisings in Egypt and Libya, competition among the Gulf oil monarchies, the complex relations with Iran, social discontent, the ethno-sectarian divisions, rising Jihadism, ineffective US policy and the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict are indicators of the growing complication of the Middle Eastern region. The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) have about 5% of the world's population. It frequently gets media attention of conflicts, wars, undemocratic regimes, and the struggle for resources.

The recent history of the Middle East is

closely linked to multiple traumatic experiences suffered by its populations over the last century. The struggle with colonialism, difficult decolonization, state evolution with authoritarian rulers, emergence of Israel and its conflicts with neighbors, struggle for hegemony and the interference of the major power leading to insecurity and mistrust in the region.

## CONFLICTS THAT SHAPED THE REGION

Some events that shaped the geopolitical structure a) the Iraq and Iran (1980-1988) b) civil war in Lebanon (1975-1990) c) the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and d) the August 1990, Saddam Hussein's decision to invade Kuwait. The end of cold war and the security of the oil supply brought the region to the attention of the West. In early 1991, Operation Desert Storm by the US and its allies forced Iraqi withdrawal and a harsh regime of sanctions on the Iraqi people was slapped. This resulted in anti-American backlash throughout the region. In 1991, the US Administration initiated a Middle East Peace Conference in Madrid. The “land for peace” formula was to be the basis of what was then called the Peace Process.

The Oslo Accords (1993 and 1995), and related memorandums, protocols, summits and conferences between Israelis and Palestinians have not resulted in any peace agreement acceptable to the opposing





parties. All the peace initiatives have not stopped the growing Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, or prevented the extremists on both sides from interfering attempts for a just and lasting peace.

### **TERROR AND WARS IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

The 11 September 2001, committed by al-Qaeda gave space to the American neoconservatives (Neocons) to invade Afghanistan, with the “support of the UN Security Council”, to defeat the Taliban. This “war on terror” became the new buzz word for managing international relations, by force. Which in turn led to the US open support for the authoritarian regimes of the ME. In March 2003, the US carried out its regime change plans in Iraq, invading the country and overthrowing Saddam Hussein, this time without UN approval and disturbing the regional balances. The removal of strong man led to the rise of Iran as a regional power and submerging Iraq in long spiral of violence and sectarianism.

The US policies intensified the power struggle in the Middle East between two blocs: one led by Saudi Arabia and another by Iran. Turkey (Turkiye) also started interfering in Iraq and Syria with a view to control the Kurdish incursions into its territory. With President Barack Obama in power the new American foreign policy evolved with the clear aim of avoiding new adventures. The shock came on

14 January 2011 when Tunisian dictator Ben Ali was forced out of power due to “Arab Spring”. This soon touched Syria, where Bashar al-Assad's regime violently reacted to the demands for reforms. With the right type of allies on Bashar's side, the world couldn't stop him. The energy self-sufficiency coupled with its prolonged stay in Iraq and Afghanistan, led the US Administration to demand from its allies to take more responsibility towards regional security. The new US approach led to November 2013, JCPOA between Iran and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany to allay some fears of Iranian nuclear threat against its neighbors. Unfortunately, the conflicts that currently impact the ME are presented as a sectarian war. The ongoing power struggle between Saudi Arabia and Iran, though through proxies, is supported with resources, and sometimes direct involvement.

This has led to three regional blocs a) Iranian bloc (includes governments and militias of Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Hezbollah, Hamas and Islamic Jihad b) the Saudi bloc (includes Egypt, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Jordan and the Palestinian National Authority, and c) bloc led by Qatar (includes organizations linked to the Muslim Brotherhood). These loosely structured blocs operate with impunity and easy deniability often using unconcerned events to their advantage.

The Arab authoritarian regimes exercise tight internal control and depend on critical external support through exploiting their strategic value for the international powers as essential to the stability of the region. The West led by the US has been convinced that the alternative to the status quo is Islamist elements i.e. Radical. The ME affairs management depends on several difficult



questions a) can Iran and its Arab neighbors live peacefully? b) will Israel agree to follow land for peace agreements? and c) are Arab monarchies ready to grant some sort of democratic rights to its growing restless educated youth?

## CONCLUSION

With the biggest threat to the status quo leading to the rise of regional instability in the Middle East may lead to a Bangladesh like implosion. Some of the states could disappear, in a not distant future, that may lead to wars between neighbors or a regional war. The question is it possible to stop the processes leading to above one of these scenarios? What steps are required to avoid the emergence of far more serious problems?

The United States is trying to stop the above by applying pressure on Iran, maintaining its alliances in the Middle East, avoiding the fall

of Syria and Iraq yet avoiding direct military involvement. It is normal for the US State Department to manage regional affairs through its allies. The European Union lacks a clear strategic vision and leadership capacity required for the Middle East. The Middle Eastern countries have been deeply impacted by different global trends and profound transformations are taking place, both socially and politically. This raises the level of risks for regional instability. Though making predictions about the ME is difficult, owing to lack of credible data, one can simply say we have to be ready for the unexpected. An unstable future (in the short term) can be predicted for the Middle East.

**Ambassador (R) Hasan Habib, Chairman, Pakistan Council on Foreign Relations, Senior Fellow, Institute of Business Management.**

Continued from page 16

## RFI HOSTS A SPECIAL DIGITAL SHOW ON KASHMIR SOLIDARITY DAY

He mentioned that Pakistan had submitted a 131-page dossier to the United Nations detailing India's human rights abuses and violations of international law, yet received insufficient support from Muslim-majority countries. Khan argued that Pakistan's diplomatic tools are outdated and inadequate to address the challenges of the current geopolitical landscape.

He also noted that the abrogation of Article 35A violates Article 49 of the Geneva Convention, yet India's status as a regional power has earned it favor from the United States and other global powers. He suggested that increased resistance from Kashmiris might be the only viable way forward to end India's illegal occupation.

Dr. Shahida Wizarat added that both the

people of Kashmir and Pakistan have rejected India's illegal actions. She emphasized the need for Pakistan to restructure its system, reduce foreign influence in its internal affairs, and revamp its foreign policy to better address the Kashmir issue.

Dr. Abdul Jabbar suggested that Pakistan's foreign office should adopt a more research-based approach, drawing inspiration from Russia's strategy in Ukraine, to effectively address the Kashmir conflict. He advocated for strengthening ties with Russia and China to secure their support in the Kashmir cause. Host Nusrat Mirza concluded the session by emphasizing the need for Pakistan to intensify its efforts on legal, diplomatic, and political fronts to expose India's actions and secure freedom for the Kashmiri people. He stressed that these efforts are crucial to ensuring that the international community recognizes and supports the Kashmiris' right to self-determination.

# THE HIDDEN HAND BEHIND THE BANGLADESH CRISIS: A CLOSER LOOK

**NUSRAT MIRZA**

The political landscape of Bangladesh has recently been engulfed in turmoil, with rumors swirling about the involvement of foreign powers in the country's internal affairs. The dominant narrative propagated by various sources claims that Pakistan and China are conspiring to overthrow the Bangladeshi government. However, a closer examination reveals that this propaganda serves to distract from the real orchestrator of the crisis: the United States. The U.S.'s strategic interests in St. Martin's Island, coupled with its broader

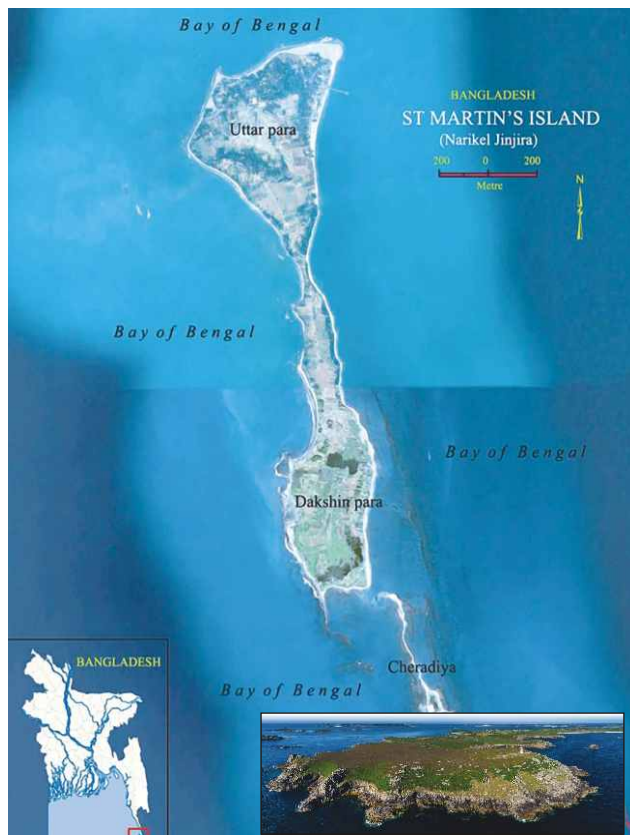


goal of undermining China's influence in South Asia, appear to be the driving forces behind the current unrest in Bangladesh.

## BACKGROUND ON ST. MARTIN'S ISLAND

St. Martin's Island, a small but strategically significant landmass, lies at the southernmost tip of Bangladesh, close to the Bay of Bengal. Covering an area of approximately 80.06 square kilometers, this island has long been valued for its unique geographical position. While it may seem insignificant at first glance, St. Martin's Island holds immense strategic value due to its proximity to critical maritime routes and its potential role in regional security dynamics.

The United States, recognizing the island's importance, has long sought to establish a military foothold there. By doing so, the U.S. could effectively monitor and control key maritime routes in the Bay of Bengal, a vital area for international trade and military



movement. Moreover, a U.S. military presence on the island would serve as a counterbalance to China's growing influence in the region, particularly in relation to the Belt and Road Initiative and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

### **BACKGROUND ON ST. MARTIN'S ISLAND**

The turning point in Bangladesh's current crisis can be traced back to former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's refusal to comply with a U.S. request that would have had profound implications for the country's sovereignty. The U.S. had approached Hasina with a proposal to hand over St. Martin's Island for the establishment of a military base. Such a base would not only have provided the U.S. with a strategic advantage in the region but would have also positioned it to directly challenge China's economic and military initiatives in South Asia. However, Sheikh Hasina, recognizing the long-term implications of such a decision, declined the U.S. request. Instead, she began to tilt towards China, strengthening diplomatic and economic ties with Beijing. This shift did not go unnoticed by Washington, which saw it as a direct challenge to its strategic interests in the region. Hasina's refusal to cooperate with the U.S. and her growing alignment with China set the stage for the political crisis that would soon unfold in Bangladesh.

### **THE MANUFACTURED REVOLT**

The unrest that has erupted in Bangladesh



bears all the hallmarks of a manufactured crisis, carefully orchestrated by external forces to achieve specific geopolitical objectives. While the propaganda machine points fingers at Pakistan and China, the reality is far more complex. The timing of the unrest, coupled with the key players involved, suggests a concerted effort to destabilize the country and remove a government that was no longer serving U.S. interests.

The United States, with its extensive history of meddling in the internal affairs of other nations, appears to have played a central role in fueling the revolt against Sheikh Hasina's government. By leveraging its influence over certain political factions and using covert operations, the U.S. sought to create an environment of chaos and instability. This environment provided the perfect pretext for a regime change, enabling Washington to install a more compliant government in Dhaka. The allegations against Pakistan and China, therefore, serve as a convenient smokescreen. These nations, despite their respective interests in Bangladesh, have little to gain from the current turmoil. On the contrary, a stable Bangladesh is far more beneficial to both Islamabad and Beijing, particularly in the context of regional trade and security.

### **BACKGROUND ON ST. MARTIN'S ISLAND**

The installation of a new government in Bangladesh, with clear ties to U.S. interests, has raised serious questions about the integrity of the country's sovereignty. The current leadership, widely regarded as a puppet regime, appears to be more aligned with Washington's strategic objectives than with the needs and aspirations of the Bangladeshi people.

**Continued on page 44**



# FOREIGN POLICY OPTIONS ON AFGHANISTAN



**PROF. DR. UZMA SHUJA'AT**



The foreign policy choices regarding Afghanistan are particularly challenging, as we face numerous obstacles in formulating a strategy following the Taliban's takeover. To begin with, if we look back at the Pakistan-Afghanistan relationship, Pakistan consistently supported Afghanistan's cause on international platforms, during bilateral meetings, and within multilateral forums. Pakistan actively encouraged its Western allies, particularly the United States, to engage with Afghanistan, however, the abrupt takeover by the Taliban drastically altered the situation.

Consequently, our policymakers believed that the Western approach, especially the sanctions and freezes on donor assistance led by the US, would only deepen the already severe humanitarian crisis. Pakistan had valid concerns about the potential destabilization of its neighbor, which was on the brink of economic collapse. This instability, in turn, carried obvious cross-border implications, including potential new waves of refugees

seeking shelter in Pakistan. Moreover, the Taliban's connections to Afghanistan-based militant groups posed further threats, as evidenced in the years following the Taliban's takeover.

Historically, Pakistan-Afghanistan relations have never been smooth. No country desires a stable and progressive Afghanistan more than Pakistan, and at the same time, no other nation would suffer as much as Pakistan from instability there. When we examine the concept of the "Security Dilemma" by John H. Herz, it describes a situation where multiple states might be drawn into conflict over security concerns, even if none of them actually desire war.

This theory perfectly encapsulates Pakistan-Afghanistan relations. Pakistan never intended to open a front with Afghanistan; instead, our policy was to manage the situation in our neighboring country, even at significant cost to our security, social fabric, and the potential radicalization of our society

during the protracted conflict. Additionally, the Taliban's return to power is deeply entwined with extremist groups, providing safe havens for militants.

According to the UN Security Council, Afghan territory is now openly used as a base for training fighters with ambitions similar to those of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Analysts agree there is little difference between the Afghan Taliban and the TTP, and both refuse to recognize the Durand Line, a border established in 1893. This refusal is clearly underscored by the Afghan Foreign Minister's statement that Afghanistan has never recognized the Durand Line, highlighting the persistent tension between the two countries.

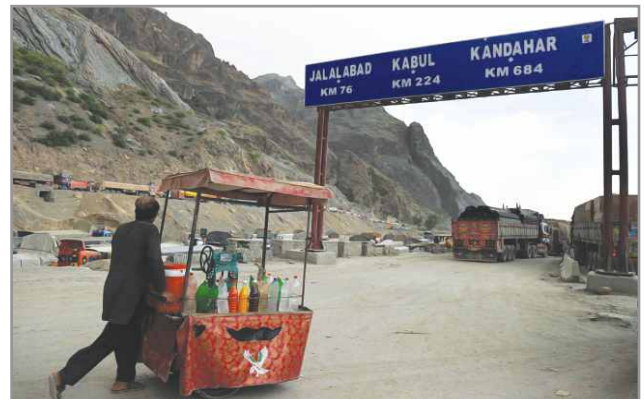
In light of these challenges, Pakistan's sacrifices for its neighbor are evident, but these must not come at the expense of its own security and stability. The military roots in Pakistan's border areas, especially in Waziristan, trace back to the colonial era when the British recruited people from northern areas as fighters. This legacy has continued as the region became a hub for recruiting and training young men during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979.

Given this context, Pakistan must first prioritize its own internal order when considering its options. Economically, Pakistan's leverage partly stems from Afghanistan being landlocked and dependent on Pakistan for

trade. Approximately 50% of Afghan exports pass through Pakistan, and border crossings contribute more than 40% of Afghan customs revenues, which in turn constitutes nearly 60% of the Taliban's total revenues. To address this, Pakistan has already eased transit trade rules and expanded the list of goods that can be imported through Pakistan. We have also implemented stricter screening of containers arriving from Afghanistan. Furthermore, the repatriation of Afghan refugees within a set timeframe is a necessary step. However, Pakistan's policymakers must not overlook the potential for the Taliban to leverage Pakistan's fears by increasing engagement with India in exchange for economic assistance.

Another potential threat is the use of violence against Pakistan through proxies, a strategy known as "escalate to de-escalate." The Taliban might exploit Pakistan's ongoing economic difficulties and domestic issues as bargaining tools. In conclusion, Pakistan must navigate this situation carefully, balancing US policies in the region, China's support, and domestic unrest. The situation in Balochistan requires immediate policy discussion and rational decision-making to stabilize the country on all fronts.

**The author is Acting Director of Area Study Center for Europe, University of Karachi**





# AGOSTA 90B SUBMARINE



## Class Overview

Preceded by : Daphné class  
Succeeded by : Scorpène class  
Rubis class  
Subclasses : Agosta 90B  
Built : 1977–2006

## General Characteristics

Displacement	: 2,050 long tons (2,083 t) submerged (Pakistan)	Speed	: 12 knots (22 km/h; 14 mph) surfaced 20.5 knots (38.0 km/h; 23.6 mph) submerged 10.5 knots (19.4 km/h; 12.1 mph) submerged (snorkeling)
Length	: 76 m (249 ft 4 in) (Pakistan)	Range	: 8,500 miles (13,679 km)
Beam	: 6 m (19 ft 8 in)	Test Depth	: 350 m (1,150 ft) (Pakistan)
		Complement	: 5 officers, 36 men
		Sensors and Processing Systems	: Thomson CSF DRUA 33 Radar Thomson Sintra DSUV 22 DUUA 2D Sonar DUUA 1D Sonar DUUX 2 Sonar DSUV 62A towed array
		Armament	: SM 39 Exocet 4 × 550 mm (22 in) bow torpedo tubes (12 reloads on Khalid-class, 16 reloads on Hashmat class <sup>[1]</sup> ) ECAN L5 Mod 3 & ECAN F17 Mod 2 torpedoes



# THE AGOSTA 90B SUBMARINE:



## A PILLAR OF MARITIME SECURITY

**SYED SAMIULLAH**



The Agosta 90B submarine plays a crucial role in safeguarding Pakistan's maritime security. With its advanced design and sophisticated specifications, it significantly enhances the nation's defense capabilities at sea. The Agosta 90B, on a broader level, also symbolizes Pakistan's strategic foresight in countering emerging maritime threats and dedication to upholding regional stability.

### DEVELOPMENT AND ACQUISITION

Pakistan's acquisition of the Agosta 90B submarines was a key component of a broader initiative to modernize its naval forces in response to evolving regional security concerns, especially considering India's adversarial stance. The Agosta 90B project was initiated in the late 1990s following Pakistan's agreement with France to build three submarines.

The Agosta 90B was selected over the British Upholder/Victoria class, with the project's initial budget set at \$520 million.

However, the inclusion of a technology transfer program increased the total cost to \$950 million.

The first submarine, PNS Khalid (S137), was constructed in France and became part of the Pakistan Navy in 1999. A year later, in 2000, France provided Pakistan with the license to commercially produce and market the submarines to other potential buyers. Following this, the second submarine, PNS Saad (S138), was assembled in Pakistan at the Karachi Shipyard & Engineering Works (KSEW) with substantial technical support from France.

This achievement underscored Pakistan's increasing self-sufficiency in defense manufacturing. The third submarine, PNS Hamza (S139), which was also built in Karachi, was commissioned in 2006. This submarine represented a significant advancement, as it was the first in the fleet to be equipped with an Air-Independent Propulsion (AIP) system.

### DESIGN AND TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

The Agosta 90B submarines are an evolution of the earlier Agosta 70 class, featuring numerous improvements in terms of stealth, endurance, and weapon systems. They are designed for various missions, including anti-ship warfare, anti-submarine warfare, intelligence gathering, and special operations.

## 1. DIMENSIONS AND STRUCTURE:

The Agosta 90B has a length of approximately 76 meters, a beam of 6.2 meters, and a draft of 5.4 meters. The submarine has a displacement of about 1,760 tons when surfaced and 2,050 tons when submerged. The hull is designed to enhance stealth, with a teardrop shape that reduces hydrodynamic drag and noise, making it harder to detect.

## 2. PROPULSION:

The Agosta 90B is powered by a combination of diesel engines and electric batteries, providing a top speed of 12 knots (22 km/h; 14 mph) when surfaced while 20.5 knots (38.0 km/h; 23.6 mph) when submerged. The inclusion of the MESMA (Module d'Energie Sous-Marine Autonome) Air-Independent Propulsion (AIP) system in the PNS Hamza significantly enhances the submarine's submerged endurance, allowing it to stay underwater for up to 20 days without surfacing, compared to just a few days for conventional diesel-electric submarines.

## 3. WEAPON SYSTEMS:

The Agosta 90B is equipped with four 533 mm torpedo tubes capable of launching various torpedoes, including the Black Shark and the French F17 mod 2 wire-guided torpedoes. It can also deploy Exocet SM39 anti-ship missiles, providing a potent strike capability against surface vessels. The submarine can carry up to 16 torpedoes or missiles in various configurations, depending on the mission requirements.

## 4. SENSORS AND COMBAT SYSTEMS

The Agosta 90B is equipped with advanced sonar systems, including passive and active sonar arrays, which provide superior underwater detection capabilities. The SUBTICS combat management system



integrates data from various sensors and enables the crew to track and engage multiple targets simultaneously. The submarine also features electronic warfare systems, periscopes, and communication equipment that enable secure and stealthy operations.

## 5. CREW AND HABITABILITY:

The Agosta 90B can accommodate a crew of 36, including officers and enlisted personnel. The submarine's design includes provisions for long-duration missions, with improved living conditions compared to older models, including better air conditioning, food storage, and waste management systems.

## STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE

The incorporation of the Agosta 90B submarines into the Pakistan Navy has greatly enhanced its underwater combat capabilities, providing a crucial advantage in the Indian Ocean region. Submarines, renowned for their stealth and power projection without detection, are considered the most formidable assets in naval warfare. The Agosta 90B, with its advanced features, especially the Air-Independent Propulsion (AIP) system, plays a



pivotal role in Pakistan's naval strategy. The following points can further explain why this submarine is exceptionally well-suited for Pakistan.

### 1. **DETERRENCE:**

The Agosta 90B plays a crucial role in Pakistan's strategy of minimum credible deterrence, particularly in the context of its rivalry with India. The submarines are believed to be capable of launching nuclear-tipped cruise missiles, providing a second-strike capability that is essential for a credible deterrent posture.

### 2. **MARITIME SECURITY:**

Pakistan's coastline and exclusive economic zone (EEZ) are of strategic importance, given the country's reliance on sea lines of communication (SLOCs) for trade and energy supplies. The Agosta 90B submarines contribute to the protection of these SLOCs by ensuring that potential adversaries cannot operate with impunity in the region.

### 3. **ASYMMETRIC WARFARE:**

In a scenario of conventional warfare, the Agosta 90B can be used to disrupt enemy naval operations, including blockading enemy ports, attacking surface fleets, and gathering intelligence. Its ability to operate undetected makes it an ideal platform for such asymmetric warfare tactics, which are central to Pakistan's naval doctrine.

### 4. **REGIONAL POWER PROJECTION:**

The Agosta 90B enhances Pakistan's ability to project power in the Indian Ocean, particularly in the Arabian Sea. This capability is critical in a region where multiple powers, including India, China, and the United States, have significant naval presence.

## **OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES AND FUTURE PROSPECTS**

Although the Agosta 90B submarines have substantially enhanced Pakistan's naval capabilities, they present certain challenges. The aging of these submarines, coupled with





the necessity for regular maintenance and upgrades, remains a persistent concern. The Air-Independent Propulsion (AIP) system, while extending the submarines' endurance, demands advanced maintenance and logistical support, which can place a strain on Pakistan's defense budget.

In response to these challenges and to maintain operational effectiveness, Pakistan has initiated a program to modernize its submarine fleet. This effort includes mid-life upgrades for the Agosta 90B class and the acquisition of newer submarines, such as the Chinese-designed Hangor-class (Type 039B/041) submarines.

In March 2018, DCNS, the original manufacturer, lost a bidding competition for the mid-life upgrades of the three Agosta 90B class submarines to the Turkish firm STM. The planned upgrades include replacing the entire sonar suite, periscope systems, command and

control systems, radar, and electronic support systems.

Additionally, systems developed by Turkey's state-controlled military software company, HAVELSAN, and defense contractor, ASELSAN, are being integrated as part of the project. The upgrades also involve installing a SharpEye low probability-of-intercept (LPI) radar system and making critical modifications to the pressure hull, ensuring seamless integration between various systems provided by both local and international companies.

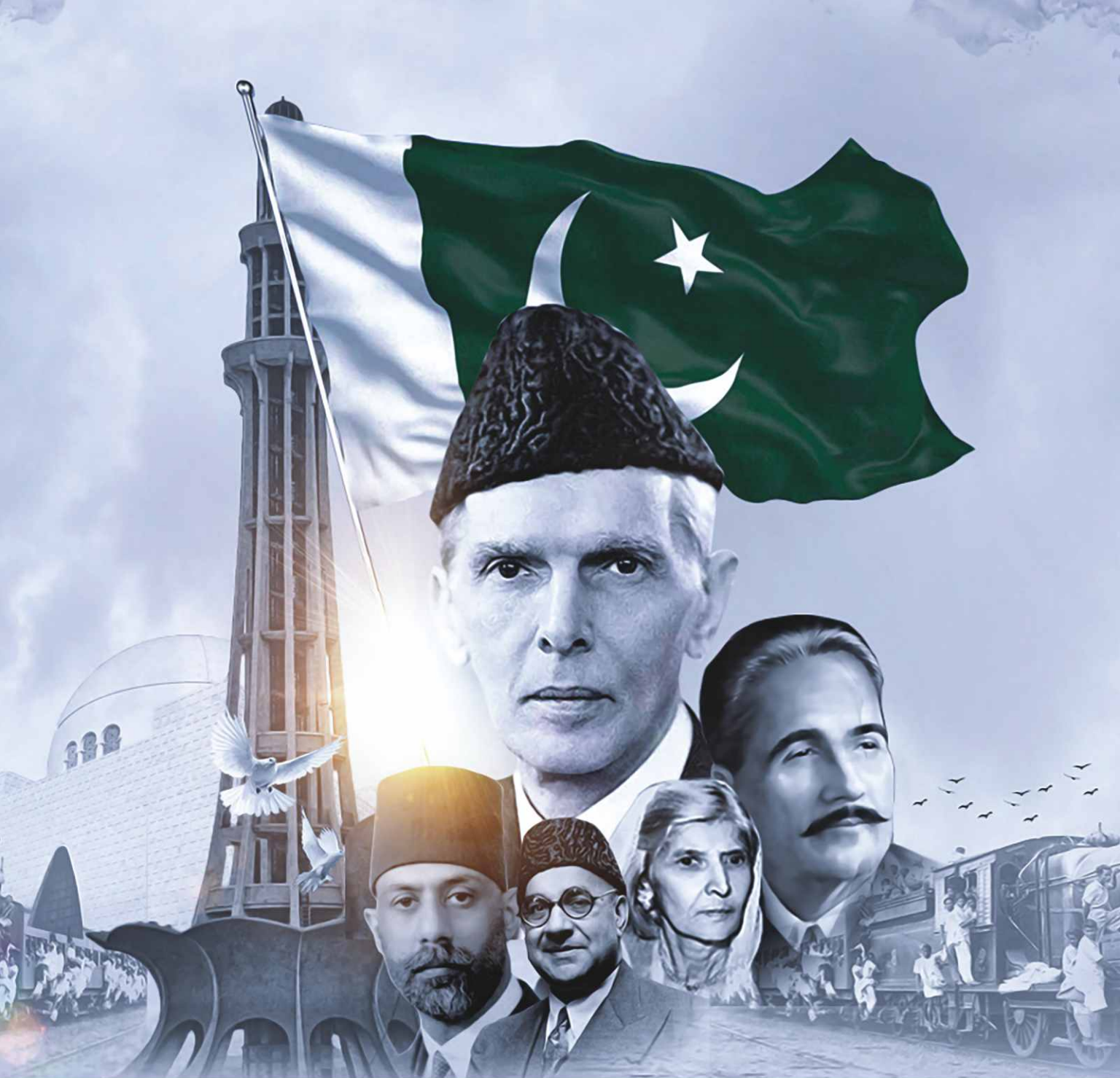
The first submarine to undergo these upgrades, PNS/M HAMZA (S-139), was delivered to the Pakistan Naval Forces Command on April 29, 2021, marking a significant milestone in the modernization project. Subsequently, PNS/M KHALID (S-137), the first submarine to be completed under this project, was handed over on January 26, 2023. These efforts are designed to sustain a robust and modern submarine force capable of addressing future security challenges.

## CONCLUSION

The Agosta 90B submarines have been a cornerstone of Pakistan's naval defense strategy, providing the Pakistan Navy with a potent and versatile underwater platform. Their advanced capabilities, including stealth, endurance, and firepower, have not only enhanced Pakistan's deterrence posture but also enabled it to play a more assertive role in regional maritime security.

As Pakistan continues to modernize its naval forces, the legacy of the Agosta 90B will undoubtedly influence future developments in its underwater warfare capabilities.

The author is Research Officer at Rabita Forum International (RFI) and Associate Editor of Monthly Interaction.



# PAKISTAN CORNER

Welcome to "Pakistan Corner," a dedicated section in our magazine where we explore the rich tapestry of Pakistan's history, culture, and legacy before and after its independence. This series aims to illuminate the diverse heritages, local languages, various cultures, and unsung heroes of the nation, offering our readers an in-depth look into the different facets that shape today's Pakistan.



**PAKISTAN CORNER**

# THE PAKISTAN MOVEMENT:

## A SAGA OF STRUGGLE AND TRIUMPH

## PART III

**INTERACTION TEAM**

After the Lahore Resolution of 1940, the struggle for Pakistan entered a crucial phase that would see the demands of Indian Muslims evolve from a call for autonomy into a full-fledged movement for independence. The resolution marked the beginning of a series of events, negotiations, and confrontations that would eventually culminate in the creation of Pakistan in 1947. This narrative of the Pakistan Movement is a story of political strategy, communal tensions, and the relentless pursuit of a separate homeland by the Muslim League, led by Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

The Lahore Resolution was a watershed moment in the history of the Indian subcontinent. It provided a clear ideological direction for the Muslim League, setting the stage for the intense political battles that would follow. However, the road to Pakistan was far from straightforward. The British, who



were still the colonial rulers, were embroiled in World War II and were primarily concerned with securing Indian support for the war effort.

In this context, they sent the Cripps Mission to India in 1942, proposing a dominion status for India after the war, with the option for provinces to opt out of a united India. While the Congress rejected the proposal outright, the Muslim League saw it as an opportunity to push its agenda for a separate state. The mission's failure highlighted the deepening rift between the Congress and the Muslim League, with the latter increasingly focused on the goal of Pakistan.

As the war dragged on, the political situation in India grew more complex. The Quit India Movement, launched by the Congress in 1942, demanded an immediate end to British rule. The movement was met with brutal repression by the British authorities, and many Congress leaders were imprisoned.







The Muslim League, under Jinnah's astute leadership, chose to stay away from the movement, arguing that it did not address the concerns of Muslims and would only lead to a Hindu-majority government. This decision allowed the Muslim League to consolidate its power and emerge as the sole representative of Muslims in India. During this period, the League's popularity surged, particularly in the Muslim-majority provinces, where the idea of Pakistan began to resonate more strongly.

The years 1945 and 1946 were pivotal in the Pakistan Movement. The end of World War II brought renewed attention to the question of Indian independence. The British, exhausted by the war and eager to extricate themselves from India, sought a solution that would satisfy both the Congress and the Muslim League. The Simla Conference of 1945, convened by the British Viceroy Lord Wavell, was one such attempt.

The conference aimed to form an interim government that would include both Congress and Muslim League representatives. However, the conference failed due to the Muslim League's insistence that it be recognized as the sole representative of Indian Muslims. This failure only served to reinforce the League's determination to achieve Pakistan.

In the 1946 elections, the Muslim League emerged as the dominant force among Muslim voters, securing 428 out of the 482

seats reserved for Muslims in the provincial legislatures. This impressive victory, particularly in Bengal where they won 113 out of 119 Muslim seats, and in Punjab with 73 out of 86 seats, reinforced their claim to be the sole representative of Muslim interests in India.

Additionally, the Muslim League achieved a clean sweep of all 30 Muslim seats in the central assembly. On the other hand, the Indian National Congress secured a majority of the general (non-Muslim) seats, winning 923 out of 1,585 provincial seats and 91 out of 102 seats in the central assembly. These results highlighted the deepening communal divide, with the Muslim League's success significantly bolstering their demand for a separate state, which would later become Pakistan.

The general elections of 1946 were, in effect, a referendum on the demand for Pakistan. The decisive victory of the Muslim League, with its call for a separate Muslim state, demonstrated that the idea of Pakistan had widespread support among Indian Muslims, further polarizing the political landscape and setting the stage for the eventual partition of India.

In the aftermath of the 1946 elections, the British government sent the Cabinet Mission to India to devise a solution that would keep India united while addressing the Muslim League's demand for autonomy. The resulting



Cabinet Mission Plan proposed a federal structure with a weak central government and autonomous groups of provinces, which was initially accepted by both the Congress and the Muslim League.

However, disagreements over the interpretation and implementation of the plan soon surfaced, with the Muslim League growing increasingly skeptical that it would lead to the creation of a truly independent Pakistan. Frustrated by the perceived failure of constitutional negotiations to safeguard Muslim interests and achieve a separate state, the Muslim League withdrew its support from



the plan, resulting in a political deadlock.

In response, the League called for Direct Action Day on August 16, 1946, to demonstrate their demand for a separate Muslim state, led to one of the most violent episodes in the lead-up to India's independence, resulting in large-scale communal riots, particularly in Calcutta (now Kolkata).

Organized by the All-India Muslim League to support the demand for a separate Muslim state of Pakistan, the day quickly descended into widespread violence between Hindus and Muslims. Over the course of four days, more than 4,000 people were killed, and an estimated 100,000 people were left homeless. The brutality of these riots

significantly deepened the Hindu-Muslim divide, contributing to the inevitability of the partition of India and the creation of Pakistan in 1947.

As communal tensions escalated, the British government realized that partition might be the only viable solution to the conflict. In early 1947, Lord Mountbatten was appointed as the last Viceroy of India with the task of overseeing the transfer of power. Mountbatten quickly concluded that the partition of India into two separate dominions was the only way to prevent further bloodshed. On June 3, 1947, the Mountbatten Plan was



announced, proposing the creation of the independent states of India and Pakistan. The plan was accepted by both the Congress and the Muslim League, setting the stage for the formal creation of Pakistan on August 14, 1947.

The partition of India was accompanied by one of the most tragic episodes in the subcontinent's history. The Radcliffe Boundary Commission, tasked with drawing the borders between India and Pakistan, had only a few weeks to complete its work. The boundaries it drew divided the provinces of Punjab and Bengal, leading to mass migrations as millions of Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs fled to the newly created states.

The migration was marked by horrific

communal violence, with entire villages being massacred, and trains carrying refugees attacked. The scale of the violence and the humanitarian crisis that followed were staggering, with estimates of the death toll ranging in the hundreds of thousands.

Despite the chaos and suffering, the creation of Pakistan was a moment of triumph for the Muslim League and its supporters. The dream of a separate homeland for Muslims, articulated in the Lahore Resolution seven years earlier, had finally become a reality. However, the challenges facing the new state were immense. Pakistan had to establish a functioning government, manage the refugee crisis, and define its national identity.

The division of assets, the establishment of borders, and the distribution of military resources between India and Pakistan added to the complexity of the situation. Moreover, the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi in January 1948 by a Hindu nationalist further strained relations between the two new states, casting a shadow over the early years of independence.

The early years of Pakistan were marked by a struggle to overcome these challenges. The country faced economic difficulties, a lack of infrastructure, and political instability. Yet, despite these problems, Pakistan managed to establish itself as a sovereign state, with its own government, military, and economy. The

legacy of the Pakistan Movement continued to shape the identity and politics of Pakistan, with the principles of the Lahore Resolution serving as a guiding force in the new nation's development.

In retrospect, the Pakistan Movement was not just a political struggle but also a profound social and cultural transformation. It was a movement that mobilized millions of Muslims across the subcontinent, uniting them in the quest for a separate homeland. The movement brought together people from diverse backgrounds and regions, forging a collective identity centered around the idea of Pakistan. It was a movement that challenged the existing power structures and demanded a reimagining of the subcontinent's political landscape. The Pakistan Movement is a story of resilience and determination, a story of a people who, despite overwhelming odds, remained steadfast in their pursuit of a separate nation. It is a story of leadership, with figures like Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Liaquat Ali Khan, and others playing pivotal roles in guiding the movement towards its goal. It is also a story of sacrifice, with countless lives lost in the struggle for independence. The creation of Pakistan was the culmination of this long and arduous journey, a moment of triumph that came at a great cost but also brought with it the promise of a new beginning.

**Pakistan Zindabad!**





# THE SUMERIAN CIVILIZATION



**CULTURAL CORNER**

# THE SUMERIAN CIVILIZATION:

## PIONEERS OF ANCIENT GOVERNANCE AND CULTURE

**INTERACTION TEAM**

In the dawn of human history, where the Tigris and Euphrates rivers meandered through the plains of Mesopotamia, a remarkable civilization began to take shape. Around 4500 B.C., the Sumerians emerged, where now southern Iraq lies, as one of the earliest known civilizations. In this land of endless possibilities, they laid the foundations for what would become the cradle of civilization. With ingenuity and a deep sense of purpose, the Sumerians set in motion the grand tale of human progress, weaving a legacy that would echo across the ages.

**THE LAND BETWEEN RIVERS**

The land of Mesopotamia, blessed with the life-giving waters of the Tigris and Euphrates, offered the Sumerians fertile soil and abundant resources. Each year, the rivers flooded, leaving behind rich silt that nourished the earth.

It was here, between these mighty rivers, that the Sumerians sowed the seeds of a new way of life. The once nomadic people began



to settle, forming villages that gradually grew into thriving city-states. These city-states, such as Ur, Uruk, Lagash, and Eridu, were not just places to live; they were centers of culture, religion, and governance. Surrounded by protective walls, these cities became beacons of civilization, where the Sumerians crafted their unique identity.

**THE WORLD'S FIRST TRUE CITY**

Among other cities, Uruk stood as a marvel of its time. Often cited as the world's first true city, Uruk was a bustling metropolis that by 3000 B.C. housed around 50,000 inhabitants, making it one of the largest cities in the world. The city's grandeur was matched only by its complexity; it was a place where organized society and centralized governance flourished.

Towering ziggurats, massive terraced structures, dominated the skyline, serving as both religious and administrative centers. These ziggurats, reaching towards the





heavens, symbolized the Sumerians' connection to their gods and their belief that the divine had a direct hand in the affairs of men.

### GOVERNANCE AND SOCIETY

At the heart of Sumerian society was a sophisticated system of governance. Each city-state was ruled by a king, known as a "Lugal," who was not merely a political leader but also a divine representative on earth. The Lugal wielded considerable power, overseeing religious rituals, leading military campaigns, and administering justice. However, the governance of the city-state was not the king's burden alone. A complex bureaucracy of priests, scribes, and officials assisted in managing the affairs of the state, from taxation and trade to legal matters. This intricate system of administration ensured that the city-states functioned smoothly and efficiently, laying the groundwork for future models of governance.

### THE ROLE OF RELIGION

Sumerian society was deeply hierarchical, with a clear division between the elite and the common people. The upper class, which

included priests, nobles, and wealthy merchants, enjoyed privileges and power, while the lower class, made up of farmers, laborers, and slaves, provided the labor that sustained the economy.

Despite these divisions, religion was the great unifier, woven into the very fabric of Sumerian life. The Sumerians were polytheistic, worshipping a pantheon of gods and goddesses who were believed to control all aspects of the natural world and human existence. Each city-state was dedicated to a particular deity, who was thought to protect the city and its inhabitants. Temples and ziggurats were the physical embodiments of this belief, where elaborate rituals and sacrifices were performed to appease the gods and ensure their favor.

### SUMERIAN MYTHOLOGY AND THE INVENTION OF WRITING

Sumerians' devotion to their gods was not only evident in their religious practices but also in their rich mythology. Stories of gods and heroes were passed down through generations, eventually recorded in cuneiform, the Sumerians' greatest invention. Around 3200 B.C., the Sumerians developed this system of writing, pressing wedge-shaped marks onto clay tablets with a stylus.

Initially used for record-keeping, cuneiform evolved to document everything from literature and laws to religious texts. One





of the most enduring works of Sumerian literature is the "Epic of Gilgamesh," a tale of a king's quest for immortality that delves into themes of human mortality, friendship, and the relationship between gods and mortals. This epic, like many other Sumerian texts, offers a glimpse into the values, beliefs, and concerns of a civilization that was deeply introspective and philosophically rich.

In particular, the invention of writing was a monumental achievement. Schools, known as "edubbas," were established to train scribes, who became essential figures in Sumerian society. These scribes were the keepers of knowledge, recording everything from economic transactions to historical events, ensuring that the civilization's legacy would endure long after its decline.

### INNOVATIONS IN AGRICULTURE, ARCHITECTURE AND MATHEMATICS

But the Sumerians were not only scholars and priests; they were also practical innovators who made significant contributions to agriculture, architecture, and mathematics. They developed advanced irrigation systems to manage the water supply from the Tigris and Euphrates, enabling them to cultivate crops such as barley, wheat, and dates. This agricultural surplus supported the growth of cities and the development of trade networks that extended far beyond Mesopotamia.



In architecture, the Sumerians were pioneers, creating structures that would influence the built environment for centuries. Their ziggurats, built using mud bricks, were massive multi-level structures with temples at the top, symbolizing a bridge between the earth and the divine. They also developed the arch, the dome, and the vault, architectural innovations that would later be adopted and refined by other civilizations. The Sumerians' mathematical achievements were equally impressive.

They created a base-60 number system, which we still use today in measuring time and angles. Their advances in geometry were applied in various practical contexts, from surveying land to constructing buildings. These innovations not only facilitated the growth of their own civilization but also laid the foundation for future developments in science and technology.

### TRADE AND ECONOMY

The Sumerian economy, while rooted in agriculture, was also driven by trade. The Sumerians established long-distance trade networks, connecting Mesopotamia with regions such as Anatolia, Persia, and the Indus Valley. They traded surplus crops, textiles, and crafted goods in exchange for timber, metals, and precious stones resources that were scarce in Mesopotamia. This trade facilitated



cultural exchanges and the spread of technological advancements, enriching the Sumerian civilization and influencing neighboring cultures.

### THE DECLINE OF SUMER

However, like all great tales, the story of the Sumerians eventually came to an end. Around 2000 B.C., the civilization began to decline due to a combination of environmental changes, internal conflict, and external invasions. The region's agricultural productivity suffered due to soil salinization, which reduced crop yields and strained the economy. Additionally, conflicts between city-states weakened their ability to defend against external threats. By 1900 B.C., the Sumerian civilization had been absorbed into the Akkadian Empire, led by Sargon of Akkad, and later into the Babylonian Empire.

### THE LASTING LEGACY OF THE SUMERIANS

Yet, even as the Sumerians faded from the political landscape, their cultural and



technological achievements continued to influence subsequent civilizations in Mesopotamia and beyond. Their legacy is profound and far-reaching. The Code of Ur-Nammu, one of the earliest known legal codes, laid the groundwork for legal systems that would govern societies for millennia. Their contributions to literature, such as the "Epic of Gilgamesh," have had a lasting impact on world literature, exploring universal themes that resonate across time and cultures.

### STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE

The Sumerians also held immense strategic importance due to their pioneering role in establishing the foundations of organized society and centralized governance in Mesopotamia. Their city-states, like Ur and Uruk, became early models of political organization, influencing the development of subsequent empires in the region.

The Sumerians' innovations in law, administration, and infrastructure not only stabilized their own society but also provided a blueprint for governance that was emulated by later civilizations. As we look back on their achievements, we are reminded of the remarkable journey that began in the Fertile Crescent, where a people dared to dream, to build, and to leave a legacy that would last for thousands of years.



# THE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR NON-DESTRUCTIVE TESTING (NCNDT), ISLAMABAD



## INTERACTION TEAM

The National Centre for Non-Destructive Testing (NCNDT) in Islamabad is a leading institution dedicated to Non-Destructive Testing (NDT). As industries around the world aim to improve the quality of their products and ensure the safe operation of their plants and equipment, NDT has become increasingly important.

NCNDT plays a key role in providing these crucial services, supporting various industries such as aerospace, chemicals, heavy machinery, power generation, automotive, oil and gas, shipbuilding, and defense.

### WHAT IS NON-DESTRUCTIVE TESTING (NDT)?

Non-Destructive Testing (NDT) is a way of examining materials, parts, or systems without causing any damage. This is vital for spotting issues like internal cracks or surface defects before they cause bigger problems. Some common NDT methods include Radiographic



and Ultrasonic testing, which help identify issues inside materials, and Magnetic Particle, Liquid Penetrant, and Eddy Current testing, which check for problems on the surface. NCNDT also uses specialized techniques like Acoustic Emission and Infrared testing for specific needs.

### TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION AT NCNDT

A big part of what NCNDT does is train and certifies people in NDT. This is to make sure that the people doing these tests are well-trained and can get reliable results. NCNDT offers a range of certification programs that meet international standards. These programs are divided into three levels Level-1, Level-2, and Level-3 each representing a different level of expertise in NDT.

### TRAINING PROGRAMS

NCNDT offers various training programs that cover both the basics and the more advanced aspects of NDT. These programs include hands-on training in techniques like Radiographic testing, Ultrasonic testing, Magnetic Particle testing, and more. The Centre has experienced instructors and modern labs to ensure that trainees get the best possible learning experience.

In addition to these certification courses, NCNDT offers specialized courses for industry professionals who want to deepen their understanding of NDT. These courses cover topics like "NDT for Managers," "NDT and



Fracture Mechanics," and "Digital Flaw Detection." The Centre can also create custom courses to meet the specific needs of local industries.

### **INT'L COLLABORATION AND COURSES**

NCNDT is not just focused on Pakistan; it also works with international organizations to offer specialized NDT courses. These collaborations have led to the organization of training programs that attract participants from around the world, including countries like Jordan, Lebanon, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, and Iran.

### **TESTING SERVICES OFFERED BY NCNDT**

NCNDT provides a wide range of NDT services to ensure the safety and quality of products and systems in various industries.

#### **ULTRASONIC TESTING (UT)**

In Ultrasonic Testing, NCNDT helps detect hidden problems inside materials, checks thickness, and records findings using advanced tools. This helps industries make sure their products and systems are safe and up to standard.

#### **RADIOGRAPHIC TESTING (RT)**

Radiographic Testing at NCNDT involves using X-rays to look inside materials and find defects, especially in welds, pipes, and pressure vessels. This method helps industries catch potential issues before they become serious problems.

#### **EDDY CURRENT TESTING (ET)**

Eddy Current Testing is another method used at NCNDT to inspect materials, especially metals, for surface and sub-surface flaws. This method is useful for checking the quality of non-ferrous materials and ensuring they meet safety standards.

### **SURFACE METHODS**

NCNDT also offers services like Penetrant Testing and Magnetic Particle Testing, which are essential for finding surface-level defects. These methods are widely used to inspect critical components like pressure vessels, pipelines, and storage tanks.

### **FACILITY UPGRADES AND ADVANCED TECHNIQUES**

NCNDT is always looking to improve and expand its capabilities. The Centre has added new technology like Digital Industrial Radiography, Thermography, and Time-of-Flight Diffraction to enhance its services. These upgrades ensure that NCNDT can provide state-of-the-art testing services to meet the needs of modern industries.

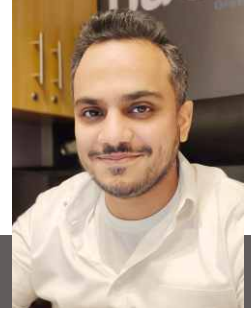
### **CONSULTANCY AND THIRD-PARTY INSPECTION**

In addition to testing, NCNDT also provides consultancy and third-party inspection services. This means they help companies during the building, installation, and maintenance of their industrial projects, making sure everything is done correctly and safely. NCNDT's experts offer advice, check the quality of NDT work done by others, and provide detailed reports on their findings.

### **ACCREDITATION AND RECOGNITION**

NCNDT is recognized and accredited by the Pakistan National Accreditation Council (PNAC) as a certification body for NDT personnel. This means NCNDT meets international standards for quality and fairness in its certification processes. The Centre is also authorized by the Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority (PNRA) to conduct inspections of nuclear power plants, further highlighting its role as a trusted leader in the field.

# THE ECONOMIC PERILS OF PAKISTAN'S INTERNET SLOWDOWN:



## A CALL FOR URGENT ACTION

**MIRZA KASHIF BAIG**

As Pakistan grapples with severe economic challenges, the digital sector has emerged as a beacon of hope, particularly through its thriving freelancing community. In a country where traditional industries are often hampered by various constraints ranging from energy shortages to outdated infrastructure the digital economy has offered a promising alternative. Freelancers, by leveraging global platforms, have contributed significantly to the nation's foreign exchange reserves, becoming an essential economic force in the process. Their work spans across a wide range of fields, from graphic design and content writing to software development and digital marketing, making them indispensable to the nation's economic tapestry.

However, this rapidly growing sector is now facing a formidable challenge: a persistent internet slowdown that threatens to derail the progress made thus far. What initially seemed like a technical glitch has evolved into a significant economic hazard, casting a dark shadow over this crucial industry. In a world where seamless internet connectivity is the lifeblood of digital work, the slowdown is not just an inconvenience; it is a looming crisis that could have far-reaching implications.

This article delves into the real causes behind the internet slowdown, examining its impact on freelancers and the broader economy. It also highlights the urgent need for policymakers to take corrective action, not just

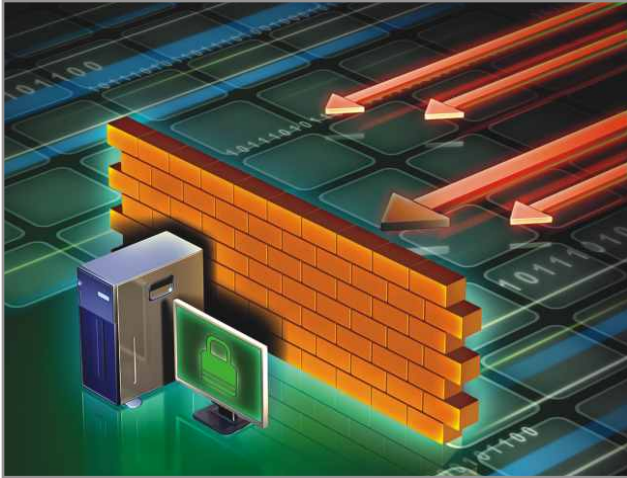


to resolve the immediate crisis but to secure the future of Pakistan's digital economy.

### CAUSES OF THE INTERNET SLOWDOWN:

The internet slowdown in Pakistan has not been an isolated event but a symptom of broader, systemic issues within the country's digital infrastructure and governance. One of the primary causes of the slowdown has been the government's installation of a digital firewall, a measure aimed at controlling digital communications and curbing the spread of dissent. While such measures are often justified on grounds of national security, their unintended consequences have been profound. The firewall has led to a significant reduction in internet speeds across the country, affecting both urban and rural areas. This slowdown has not only frustrated users but has also crippled businesses that rely on fast and reliable internet connectivity to function effectively.

Moreover, the situation has been



exacerbated by external factors, such as solar activities that interfere with radio frequencies. According to experts, these activities have further strained Pakistan's already fragile digital infrastructure, contributing to intermittent slowdowns and disruptions. While such phenomena are beyond human control, their impact can be mitigated with better infrastructure and contingency planning, areas where Pakistan has lagged.

The outdated digital infrastructure in Pakistan is another critical factor contributing to the slowdown. Despite the country's aspirations to become a digital economy, its internet infrastructure remains woefully underdeveloped. The limited mobile spectrum available to telecom operators, coupled with insufficient optic fiber penetration, means that the internet is not equipped to handle high traffic volumes. As a result, bottlenecks occur, leading to slowdowns and disruptions that affect millions of users. This problem is further compounded by the inconsistent and often opaque communication from the government regarding the issue. Users are left in the dark, with little understanding of the reasons behind the slowdown or when it might be resolved.

These factors, when combined, have created a perfect storm that is crippling the nation's internet connectivity. The slowdown is

not just a technical issue; it is a reflection of deeper problems within Pakistan's digital governance and infrastructure, problems that require urgent attention if the country is to realize its digital ambitions.

### **THE IMPACT ON FREELANCERS AND THE BROADER ECONOMY:**

For Pakistan's 2.3 million freelancers, stable internet access is not a luxury but a necessity. These individuals rely on the internet to connect with clients, deliver projects, and maintain their livelihoods. The internet slowdown has wreaked havoc on their ability to meet deadlines, maintain client relationships, and sustain their incomes. Freelancers have reported losing clients and missing out on critical projects due to the unreliable internet, a situation that has led to a significant loss of income for many.

This issue is not just about individual livelihoods; it's about the \$350 million that freelancers contribute annually to Pakistan's economy. This contribution is critical at a time when the country is grappling with a severe economic crisis, with dwindling foreign reserves and mounting external debt. The loss of income for freelancers translates into a loss of foreign exchange for the country, exacerbating an already dire economic situation.

The broader economic implications of the slowdown are equally dire. The IT export sector, which has been one of the few bright





spots in Pakistan's economy, has been particularly hard-hit. The slowdown has led to daily losses of up to \$50 million, a staggering figure that underscores the severity of the crisis. This is a significant blow to a country that is already struggling to stay afloat in the face of multiple economic challenges. The disruption of digital services has also affected other sectors reliant on stable internet, such as e-commerce, education, and online businesses. The ripple effect is clear: as the digital economy suffers, so too does the broader economy.

The education sector, which has increasingly relied on online platforms for both teaching and learning, has also been severely impacted. Students and educators have faced disruptions in their work, leading to a loss of valuable time and resources. For a country where access to quality education is already a challenge, the internet slowdown is an additional hurdle that could have long-term consequences for human capital development.

### THE ECONOMIC HAZARDS OF PROLONGED INTERNET DISRUPTIONS:

If the internet issues persist, Pakistan could face long-term economic damage that extends far beyond the digital sector. The country's reputation as a reliable hub for freelancing and IT services is at risk. Foreign clients and investors, who once saw Pakistan



as an attractive destination for outsourcing due to its skilled labor and cost-effective services, may begin to look elsewhere. This would not only reduce the inflow of foreign exchange but also shrink Pakistan's already struggling economy, making it even harder to recover from the current crisis.

Moreover, the disruption of digital services could stifle innovation and entrepreneurship in the country. Without reliable internet access, startups and small businesses, which rely heavily on digital platforms for operations and marketing, may find it impossible to survive, let alone thrive. This would be a significant setback for a country that has seen a surge in entrepreneurial activity in recent years, particularly in the tech sector. The economic hazards of continued internet disruptions are clear: they threaten to erode the gains made in the digital economy and push Pakistan further into economic instability.

### WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE: POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

The current situation demands urgent and decisive action from policymakers. First and foremost, there needs to be a significant investment in modernizing Pakistan's internet infrastructure. This includes expanding the mobile spectrum available to telecom operators, improving optic fiber networks, and ensuring that the internet can handle high traffic without bottlenecks. Such investments are crucial not just for resolving the current crisis but for future-proofing Pakistan's digital economy.

Additionally, the government should reconsider the extent and implementation of its digital control measures. While national security is important, these measures should not come at the expense of economic growth and stability. A more balanced approach, which includes stakeholder consultation and

transparent communication, is essential. Policymakers need to recognize that the digital economy is not just a sector but a lifeline for millions of Pakistanis and a vital component of the country's overall economic strategy.

Finally, there should be a collaborative effort between the government, IT industry stakeholders, and international partners to secure a stable and reliable internet infrastructure. This collaboration could involve public-private partnerships, foreign investments, and technical assistance from countries with advanced digital infrastructures. Such efforts will not only protect the current gains of the digital economy but also pave the way for future growth and innovation, positioning Pakistan as a competitive player in the global digital landscape.

### CONCLUSION:

The internet slowdown in Pakistan is more

Continued from page 21

### THE HIDDEN HAND BEHIND THE BANGLADESH CRISIS:

This shift in power has significant implications not only for Bangladesh but also for the broader South Asian region. A U.S.-aligned government in Dhaka could serve as a bulwark against Chinese influence, potentially disrupting Beijing's plans for regional connectivity and economic integration. Moreover, the presence of a pro-U.S. government could further complicate Pakistan's relations with Bangladesh, adding another layer of tension to an already volatile region.

### CONCLUSION:

The crisis in Bangladesh is a stark reminder of the complex and often hidden dynamics of global power politics. While the narrative of

than just a technical issue; it is a critical economic hazard with far-reaching consequences. As the country navigates its economic challenges, the digital sector, particularly freelancers, must be protected and supported. The digital economy represents one of the few areas where Pakistan has a competitive advantage, and it must be nurtured if the country is to secure a prosperous future. Policymakers need to recognize the urgency of the situation and take immediate steps to resolve the internet crisis. This includes both short-term measures to restore internet speeds and long-term investments in digital infrastructure. The future of Pakistan's economy may well depend on it, and the decisions made today will determine whether the country can harness the full potential of its digital economy or whether it will continue to lag behind in an increasingly digital world.

Pakistani and Chinese involvement in the country's turmoil is widely circulated, it obscures the deeper, more consequential reality: the United States, driven by strategic interests in St. Martin's Island and a desire to curtail China's influence, is the primary architect of the current unrest.

As we assess the unfolding situation in Bangladesh, it is crucial to move beyond the surface-level narratives and consider the broader geopolitical context. Only by doing so can we begin to understand the true forces at play and the potential long-term consequences for Bangladesh and the region as a whole. The crisis serves as a sobering reminder of the importance of sovereignty and the dangers of foreign interference in the affairs of independent nations.

The author is the Chief Editor of Monthly Interaction.

# RUSSIA; DEFYING WESTERN SANCTIONS ON CRUDE OIL



**DR. S BUSHRA BATOOL**

Despite facing sanctions from the U.S. and the West, Moscow is still managing to covertly increase its oil exports to China and India as the fierce war stemming from Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 rages on. In response to the Russo-Ukrainian War, the G7 finance ministers decided on September 2, 2022, to set a price cap on Russian oil and petroleum products as a form of sanctions against the Russian Federation.

The U.S. and its partners imposed a limit of approximately \$60 per barrel for shipments of Russian oil to use essential western shipping services, such as insurance and tankers. The idea was to restrict the amount of Russian oil being sold internationally and also reduce Moscow's profits from oil sales.

This is also an attempt to limit Russia's funding for its war in Ukraine and to prevent further spikes in the 2021-2022 inflation surge. In 2022, Russia was protected from energy sanctions due to a worldwide increase

in oil and gas costs.

The reason for implementing the price cap is to eliminate the extra value, ensuring that Russia's revenues are limited and will not increase even if global oil and gas prices go up in the future. Furthermore, it will add complexity to the transportation of maritime oil for Russia and place additional limitations on the amount of oil Russia is able to sell and deliver to customers, ultimately leading to a decrease in revenue.

However, fact check tells us a different story of the results of these sanctions. The Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA) has stated that despite almost two years passing, Western sanctions don't seem to be affecting China and India - the top importers of crude oil globally. The international community had mixed reactions to the sanctions imposed on Russian crude oil. Under these terms, only finance companies from G-7 nations can offer transportation and other services for Russian crude.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2022, French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire stated that the proposal needs more worldwide involvement to succeed, emphasizing that it should not target Russia specifically but rather be a universal effort against conflict. In reply, Russia announced it would halt sales to nations backing the price limit. In response, a presidential decree from the Kremlin bans Russian companies and traders from selling





oil to those involved in a price cap. The decree was changed in April 2023 to permit sales to "friendly countries", like China and India, but still prohibits transactions with companies and nations that participate in the price-cap agreement.

The G7 nations and the EU choose to support the US in implementing sanctions. On the other hand, China, India, and the OPEC+ alliance oppose this decision, with the latter deeming it as an absurd proposal. While China has not signed onto the price cap, the growing volume of purchases from Russia under the cap seems to be supporting China's push for reduced prices in upcoming shipments.

India is also in negotiations with Russia, and Russia is backing India's tanker fleet to allow the direct shipment of Russian oil, circumventing sanctions. In July, Russia sold 47% of its crude exports by volume to China, with India following closely behind at 37%. Buyers in the European Union absorbed 7%, while Turkey got 6%. 2024 appears to be replicating an oil trading trend established last year between Moscow and Beijing, as well as Moscow and Delhi.

40% of India's total oil purchases on the global market come from imports from Russia, which is a significant percentage. Before the Russia-Ukraine war, Delhi's purchases of Russian oil accounted for less than 1% of its overall imports. Presently, there is a monthly oil trading collaboration between Delhi and Moscow valued at approximately \$3 billion or 1.85 to 1.95 million barrels per day.

The broader discounts are still far below the limit Western countries had anticipated. This is mostly due to a fleet of dark or 'shadow' tankers, which are tankers with uncertain ownership structures formed through multiple

entities that make it challenging to determine the true owners or controllers, hence escaping Western sanctions. CREA pointed out that 81% of Russian seaborne crude oil's total value was carried by unofficial tankers, whereas tankers from countries enforcing the price limit accounted for 19%.

Although attempts have been made to limit the impact of 'shadow' tankers, implementing this has been challenging. CREA recommended that countries imposing sanctions should prohibit the sale of outdated tankers to owners registered in countries that do not enforce the oil price cap policy.

This would assist in restricting the growth of 'shadow' tankers that have been transporting Russian fossil fuels more frequently since their complete invasion of Ukraine. However, oil is not the sole Russian fossil fuel export making its way to China and India. Since both countries are significant coal consumers, Moscow's coal has also made its ways to their shores.

An Indian refining source informed Reuters that India will need more Russian oil as long as sanctions do not increase further. China bought almost half of Russia's coal exports, with India coming in second at 18%, between December 5, 2022 and the end of July 2024. Turkey, South Korea, and Taiwan make up the final three spots in the top five list of buyers, with shares of 10%, 10%, and 5% respectively. In light of all the discussion, it is evident that Russia is, to a great extent, managing efficiently Western sanctions with two importing partners, China and India having bulks of Russian crude imported, defying the aftershocks intended for Russia to upset its revenue generation from this particular sector.

**The author is a Research Officer at Rabita Forum International (RFI).**

# HYBRID WARFARE: LEGAL AND STRATEGIC INSIGHTS FROM PAKISTAN



**WAJEEHA NAJAM**



Hybrid warfare, a sophisticated blend of conventional and unconventional strategies, has become a significant challenge in the 21st century. This form of conflict combines traditional military tactics with irregular warfare, cyber operations, psychological warfare, economic and political subversion, and the use of proxies and non-state actors. While hybrid warfare itself is not new, advancements in technology and rapid information dissemination through digital platforms have elevated its prominence. Both state and non-state actors utilize these hybrid strategies to achieve political goals without direct military confrontation. Pakistan, with its strategic location and complex geopolitical environment, offers a compelling case study of the challenges posed by hybrid warfare.

Pakistan's experience with hybrid warfare is deeply influenced by its geopolitical posi-

tion, bordering Afghanistan, Iran, China, and India. This strategic location makes Pakistan a focal point for regional and international power dynamics, resulting in various hybrid threats. Key manifestations of these threats include terrorism, insurgency, cyber warfare, disinformation campaigns, economic coercion, and proxy warfare.

The use of non-state actors and militant groups to destabilize Pakistan has been a persistent issue. Groups like the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Baloch separatist organizations have engaged in acts of terrorism with alleged support from hostile states. The TTP, for instance, has carried out numerous attacks across Pakistan, including the devastating 2014 assault on the Army Public School in Peshawar, which resulted in over 150 fatalities, most of whom were children. This attack served not only as a brutal act of terrorism but also as a psychological operation aimed at undermining public confidence in the state's ability to protect its citizens.

Cyber warfare has become a critical component of hybrid threats against Pakistan. The country has experienced numerous cyber-attacks targeting government institutions, military infrastructure, and critical sectors like banking and energy. A notable example is the 2019 cyber-attack on Pakistan's banking system, where hackers stole millions of dollars, exposing significant vulnerabilities in

the country's cyber infrastructure.

Disinformation campaigns and propaganda are also significant aspects of hybrid warfare. Social media platforms have become a battleground for spreading fake news and propaganda, which can exacerbate social and religious divides. During the COVID-19 pandemic, misinformation about the virus and vaccines rapidly spread across Pakistan, leading to vaccine hesitancy and public confusion. Such disinformation campaigns are often orchestrated by external actors seeking to destabilize the country by exploiting existing societal fractures.

Economic coercion is another hybrid warfare tactic, where efforts to undermine Pakistan's economy through sanctions, trade manipulation, and financial measures have been observed. For example, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) placed Pakistan on its "grey list" in 2018 due to deficiencies in anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing measures. This designation led to increased scrutiny, reduced investment, and higher borrowing costs for Pakistan, significantly impacting its economy.

Proxy warfare has long complicated Pakistan's security landscape. The country's involvement in Afghanistan during the Soviet invasion and the subsequent conflict contributed to the proliferation of militant groups that later turned against the state. These groups, often supported by regional actors, have posed a continuous threat to Pakistan's stability, draining its military and

economic resources.

Hybrid warfare presents unique legal challenges that complicate traditional conflict and response mechanisms. The nature of hybrid threats blurs the lines between war and peace, combatants and non-combatants, and state and non-state actors. One major challenge is the difficulty of attribution. Identifying the source of cyber-attacks, disinformation campaigns, or proxy support is often challenging. For instance, when Pakistan's government websites were defaced in a coordinated cyber-attack, it was hard to determine whether the attackers were state actors, non-state actors, or individuals. Without clear attribution, holding perpetrators accountable under international law becomes problematic.

The principle of state sovereignty is also tested when non-state actors operate across borders, complicating jurisdictional issues. Hybrid warfare blurs the distinction between combatants and civilians, making it difficult to apply International Humanitarian Law (IHL). Non-state actors, who do not follow conventional warfare rules, pose a challenge to enforcing IHL. Additionally, cyber-attacks and disinformation tactics, while not involving physical violence, can have severe humanitarian impacts. International law currently lacks a comprehensive framework for regulating cyber warfare. Although principles like state sovereignty and non-intervention apply, there is no specific legal framework for cyber-attacks. Pakistan's domestic legal framework also needs updating to address cyber threats and protect critical infrastructure. For example, while the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) addresses cyber crime, it needs continual updates to keep pace with evolving threats.



**Continued on page 53**



# THE EVOLUTION AND IMPACT OF THE PETRODOLLAR IN GLOBAL POLITICS



**SYED ZAIN UL ABIDEEN**

In global politics, the interplay between military strength and economic power has historically defined a nation's influence. Technological advancements further shape these dynamics. A central element in this transformation is the petrodollar system, a phenomenon with profound implications for international relations and economics. Over the past six decades, oil has met approximately 85% of the world's energy needs, making it a cornerstone of global economic activity. As alternative energy sources gain prominence, the future role of oil in shaping geopolitics is becoming increasingly uncertain.

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF OIL'S GEOPOLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The origins of oil's geopolitical importance can be traced back to its discovery in Pennsylvania, USA, in the mid-19th century. Initially, oil's primary use was for lighting, replacing whale oil, which was the predominant source of illumination at the time. Edwin Drake's successful drilling in 1859



marked the beginning of a new era. His discovery in Titusville led to the commercialization of oil, significantly impacting global trade and finance.

## THE IMPACT OF EARLY OIL DISCOVERIES

The town of Pithole, Pennsylvania, offers a vivid example of the rapid impact of oil discoveries. Following Drake's find, Pithole's population surged from fewer than 50 to 10,000 within a year. The town saw the establishment of new hotels, telegram stations, and a post office. However, this initial boom was short-lived, as the excitement around the oil discovery waned and Pithole's significance diminished.

## MODERN OIL EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION

The modern era of oil exploration began with the efforts of the Standard Oil Company of California. Drilling at the Dammam oil field



in Saudi Arabia in 1935 revealed indications of oil and gas after reaching a depth of 700 meters. Despite equipment failures and technical difficulties, notable progress was made.

Well No. 7, drilled in 1936, eventually became a significant source of oil, marking the beginning of Saudi Arabia's oil export industry. The first shipment of Saudi oil to the United States in 1939 catalyzed the formation of a joint consortium of American firms, known as Aramco, which began extracting large quantities of oil from Saudi Arabia.

### THE RISE OF SAUDI ARAMCO

By 1958, Saudi oil production had reached 10 million barrels per year, establishing American companies' dominance in the Saudi oil sector. In 1972, Saudi King Faisal acquired a 20% stake in Aramco, and by 1980, the Saudi government decided to purchase the remaining assets held by American firms. This acquisition led to the establishment of Saudi Arabian Oil Company, or Saudi Aramco, in 1988. Today, Saudi Aramco is the largest oil company globally, with around 120 oil and gas fields under its control. It also constructed the world's longest petroleum pipeline, extending from the eastern region of Saudi Arabia to Sidon on the Mediterranean coast, operational from 1948 until 1983.

### THE EVOLUTION OF PETROLEUM USE

The term "petroleum" derives from Latin, combining "petro" (stone) and "oleum" (oil). Initially discovered for illumination, petroleum's applications soon expanded to transportation. In 1799, French engineer Nicolas-Joseph Cugnot developed a steam-powered vehicle, and in 1885, German engineer Karl Benz created the first petrol-powered car. The aviation industry saw its first petrol-powered airplane in 1903, followed by the first public flight in France in 1908 and the introduction of petrol-powered aircraft in the United States in 1909. These innovations marked the beginning of ongoing advancements in transportation technology.

### THE GEOPOLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PETRODOLLAR

Post-World War II, the strategic importance of petroleum increased, transitioning from a mere utility to a key asset in global politics. The 1944 Bretton Woods Conference, held in New Hampshire, brought together delegates from 44 nations to establish a unified international trade and financial system. The consensus on the need for a common currency for international trade led to the establishment of the U.S. dollar as the global currency, supported by America's substantial gold reserves and its post-war dominance. This development significantly benefited the United States, cementing the dollar's role as



the primary global currency. In contrast, while Europe served as a counterbalance, Russia lacked substantial European support.

### RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AND SHIFTS IN GLOBAL TRADE DYNAMICS

Recent developments indicate a shift in global trade dynamics. In March 2022, the Wall Street Journal reported that Saudi Arabia is considering accepting the Chinese yuan for oil transactions. Additionally, in June 2022, Saudi Arabia explored adopting digital currencies, including the yuan, yen, euro, and Bitcoin, for transactions. The 1974 petrodollar agreement, which mandated payments for Saudi oil in U.S. dollars, has reinforced the



dollar's dominance in global trade.

### CHALLENGES TO THE PETRODOLLAR

The dominance of the petrodollar has had significant economic ramifications. Petroleum's role extends beyond energy, influencing industries such as agriculture and manufacturing. Despite substantial oil reserves in countries like Venezuela, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Canada, Kuwait, and the UAE, Western countries have maintained control over the global oil market through strategic monopolization. The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), founded in 1960 and headquartered in Vienna, Austria, has played a crucial role in this control. OPEC's membership grew to twelve countries by the 1973 oil crisis, with



Saudi Arabia being the largest producer within the organization.

### FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND ALTERNATIVES

In 2024, the global oil and gas trade is projected to exceed \$5.4 trillion annually, with transactions predominantly conducted in U.S. dollars. The dominance of the petrodollar is now facing increasing scrutiny. The BRICS coalition comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa was established in 2009 to reduce the petrodollar's influence. Recent geopolitical tensions, including conflicts involving Russia and economic pressures on Brazil and South Africa, highlight the ongoing challenge to the petrodollar. China's growing economic and technological influence poses a significant threat, with potential areas of conflict including Taiwan and the South China Sea. The BRICS nations advocate for reforms in the global financial system, with discussions about alternative currencies and energy sources. Future explorations will focus on whether electric batteries can replace petroleum in meeting energy demands across various sectors, from domestic needs to military technology and transportation. This shift could potentially transform global trade and geopolitics, marking a new era in energy and economic interactions.

The author is the Director of RFI Digital Media.



# THE EROSION OF ETHICAL VALUES IN PAKISTANI SOCIETY:



## A GROWING CONCERN

**KANWAR KHALID ALI KHAN**



### INJUSTICE AT THE GRASSROOTS LEVEL

Injustice prevails at the grassroots level, where the vulnerable are exploited by those in positions of power. A vendor may overcharge a customer, a taxi driver may take a longer route to increase the fare, and a mechanic may charge for unnecessary repairs. These small-scale injustices may seem insignificant, but they perpetuate a culture of dishonesty and erode trust in society.

Meanwhile, the common poor man is left to suffer, unable to afford basic necessities, let alone fight for his rights. The lack of empathy and compassion towards the underprivileged is staggering, with many turning a blind eye to their struggles.

### THE MISUSE OF TIME AND ENERGY

A large number of people living below the poverty line waste their precious time engaging in useless political discussions and abusing each other on social or electronic

media. Provoked by sensationalized news and biased reporting, they direct their frustrations towards fellow citizens, rather than addressing the root causes of their problems.

This misdirection of energy and resources perpetuates the status quo, allowing those in power to maintain their grip on society. The poor remain poor, and the marginalized remain marginalized, while the elite continue to exploit and prosper.

### EDUCATION AND ETHICAL VALUES

Education plays a critical role in shaping ethical values. However, Pakistan's education system often prioritizes rote memorization over critical thinking and moral development. This has resulted in a lack of emphasis on ethical education, perpetuating the cycle of poor ethical values.

### THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN PERPETUATING UNETHICAL BEHAVIOR

Social media has become a breeding ground for unethical behavior in Pakistan.



Cyberbullying, harassment, and online defamation have become commonplace, further eroding moral values and promoting a culture of disrespect.

### THE NEED FOR A MORAL REVOLUTION

To address the erosion of ethical values, Pakistan needs a moral revolution. This requires a collective effort to promote empathy, honesty, and integrity. Individuals, institutions, and policymakers must work together to create an environment conducive to ethical behavior, where accountability and transparency are paramount.

### CONCLUSION

The erosion of ethical values in Pakistani society is a pressing concern that demands attention and action. Addressing this issue

requires a multi-faceted approach, involving education reform, institutional accountability, and a cultural shift towards empathy, honesty, and integrity. Only through collective effort can Pakistan build a more just, equitable, and prosperous society, capable of earning the trust and respect of the global community.



Continued from page 48

## HYBRID WARFARE:



Hybrid warfare often involves terrorism as a tactic. Pakistan has enacted various counter-terrorism laws, such as the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) of 1997, to combat terrorism. However, the effectiveness of these laws is challenged by the evolving nature of hybrid threats. The use of proxy groups and non-state actors complicates the enforcement of counter-terrorism laws. Balancing national security

with human rights is a significant challenge; measures to counter disinformation and cyber threats may infringe on civil liberties, such as freedom of expression and privacy. For example, internet shutdowns and censorship during unrest raise concerns about freedom of speech.

Addressing the complex challenges posed by hybrid warfare requires a comprehensive approach. Pakistan needs to strengthen its legal frameworks, enhance cybersecurity, build societal resilience, and engage in international cooperation.

By updating domestic laws, investing in cybersecurity, and participating in international discussions to develop global norms, Pakistan can better counter hybrid threats. Additionally, fostering public awareness and ensuring human rights protections are crucial for an effective response.

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# INCOTERMS AND THEIR IMPORTANCE IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE



**IFRA SIDDIQUI**

International Commercial Terms or Incoterms are a set of rules created by the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) in 1936 that make international trade comparatively easier and clearer. These terms specify the responsibilities of each party when goods are shipped internationally, including who covers the costs of transportation, insurance, and customs duties, as well as clearly defining when the responsibility for goods transfers from the seller to the buyer.

The universal recognition of these terms facilitates the prevention of conflicts and misunderstandings among international trade partners. Hence, Incoterms, by providing a common language for trade, support smoother transactions, reduce risks, and contribute to strengthen economic relationships among nations.

The first version of Incoterms was introduced in 1936, with subsequent updates in 1967 and 1980 to reflect changes in trade practices and transportation technology. Each update aimed to address evolving needs, such as containerization and the growth of global trade, leading to significant revisions. The 1990 update focused on using clearer terms and better defining responsibilities to align with the new trading environment.

In 2000, Incoterms were further simplified and reorganized for greater clarity and ease of use. The 2010 update refined the terms to better match modern shipping practices. The

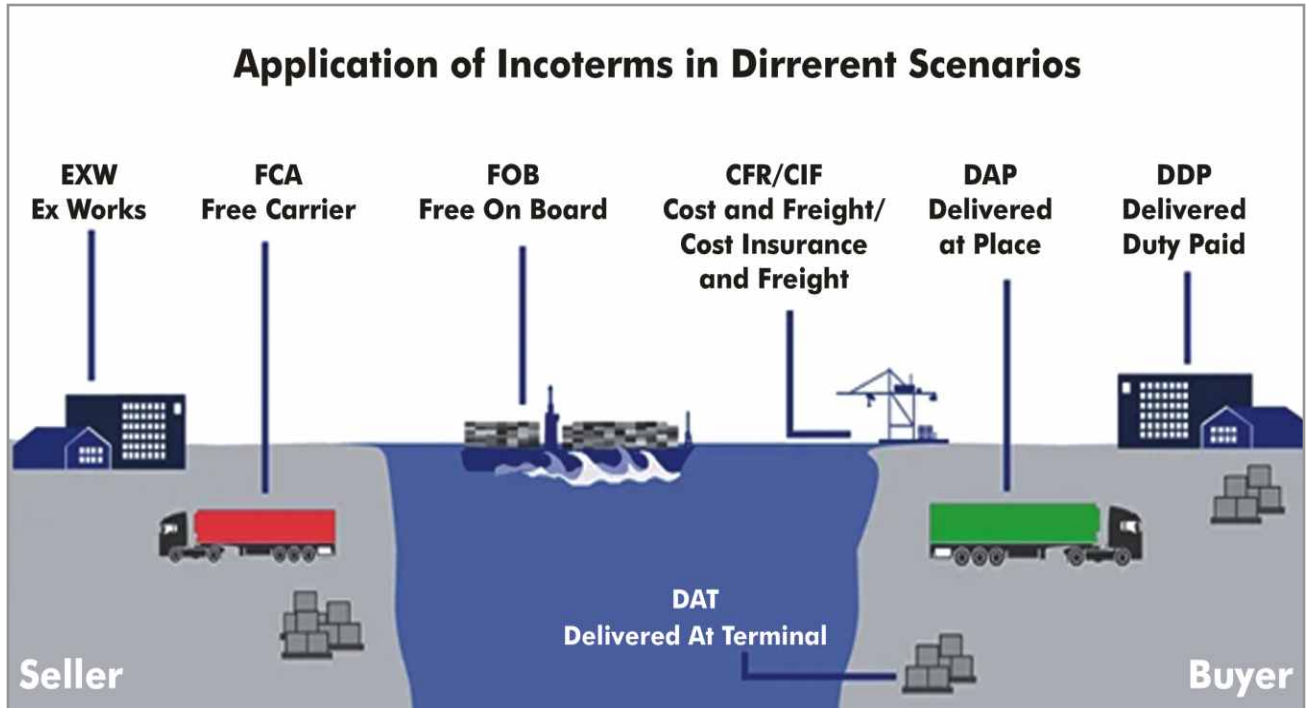


2020 revision introduced new terms and updated existing ones to address emerging challenges, such as changes in transportation methods and the growing role of digital technology.

For better exploration here the most used terms are briefly elaborated which have been introduced or redefined in the 2020 update: the term DPU (Delivered at Place Unloaded) replaced DAT (Delivered at Terminal) to cover a broader range of unloading situations. The term Free Carrier (FCA) specifies that the seller delivers the goods to a carrier or another person nominated by the buyer at a named place, covering all costs and risks up to that point.

FAS (Free Alongside Ship) means the seller places the goods next to the ship at the port chosen by the buyer, after which the buyer assumes all risks and costs. FOB (Free on Board) requires the seller to load the goods onto the buyer's ship at the port of shipment,





transferring both risk and costs to the buyer once the goods are on board. CFR (Cost and Freight) involves the seller paying for shipping to the destination port, but the risk transfers to the buyer once the goods are on board the ship.

CPT (Carriage Paid To) means the seller covers the cost of transporting the goods to a specified destination, with the risk passing to the buyer once the goods are handed over to the carrier. EXW (Ex Works) means the seller keeps the goods ready at their place (like a factory or warehouse). The buyer is responsible for all the costs and risks of moving the goods from the seller's place to where they want them. CIP (Carriage and Insurance Paid To) is Similar to CPT, but the seller also arranges and pays for insurance to cover the buyer's risk during the transport. DDP (Delivered Duty Paid) means the seller is responsible for delivering the goods to the named place in the buyer's country and pays all costs, including duties, taxes, and customs clearance.

These terms indicate that the entire process is thoroughly structured, with clear delineation of responsibilities for various aspects of the shipping procedures. While examining the influence of Incoterms within the context of the global supply chain, it becomes evident that these standardized rules have profoundly impacted international trade by streamlining the movement of goods across borders. To illustrate this significance, we can look at the trade relationships between the United States and China, as well as Germany and India, as case studies.

The trade relationship between the US and China has undergone substantial changes over the years. As China has emerged as a global economic powerhouse, trade policies between the two nations have also evolved. Key stakeholders in this relationship include US government entities like the United States Trade Representative (USTR) and Chinese organizations such as the Ministry of Commerce, in addition to major corporations from both countries.

China's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001 was a pivotal moment that altered global trade dynamics. Bilateral agreements, such as the Phase One Trade Deal signed in January 2020, have played a crucial role in shaping trade interactions by facilitating the resolution of specific issues and strengthening economic ties. Often, one nation experiences a trade surplus (exporting more than it imports), while the other faces a trade deficit, influencing various sectors like technology, agriculture, and manufacturing.

Political factors also play a critical role in the US-China trade relationship. Trade wars and tariffs can disrupt global supply chains and hinder economic growth. Additionally, competition over issues such as national security and technological dominance further complicates trade relations. Examining specific companies, like Huawei and Apple, reveals how these trade dynamics affect different industries. Moving forward, the outcome of ongoing trade negotiations and economic forecasts will be key to the future development of this relationship. Policymakers must navigate these challenges with care to mitigate potential risks.

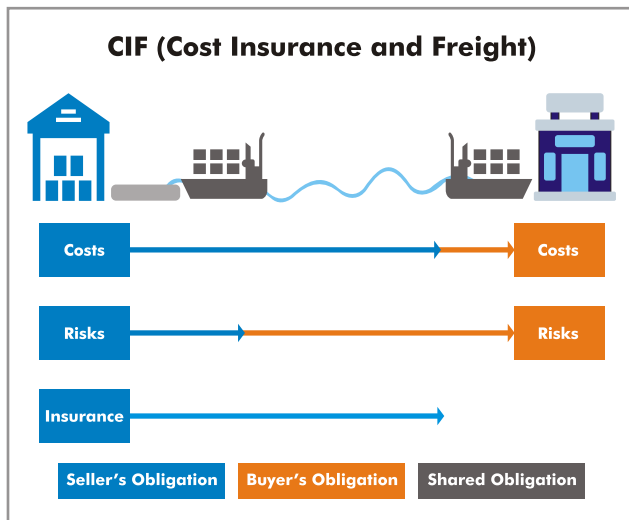
In the case study examining German-

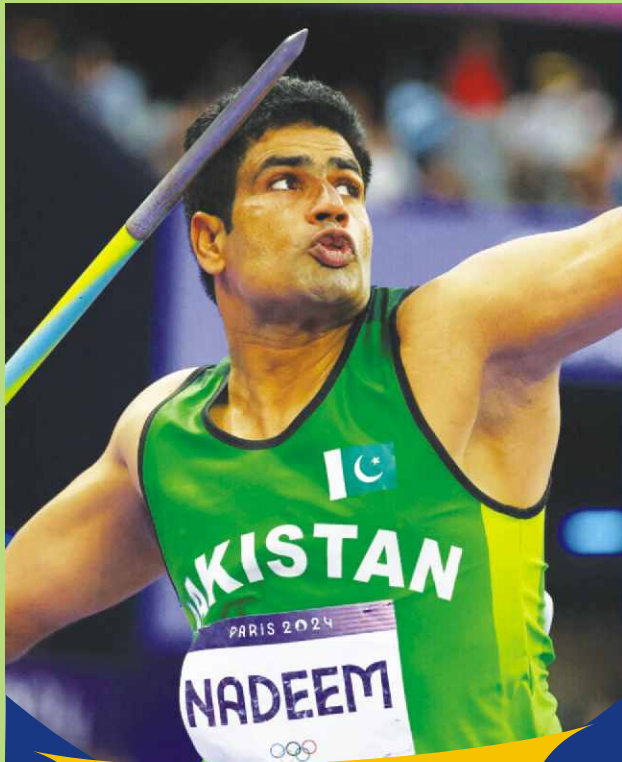
Indian trade relations, the German company Müller Maschinenbau agreed to export a large industrial press to Bharat Auto Components, located in Pune, India. Both parties decided to utilize the DAP (Delivered at Place) Incoterm for this transaction, assigning Müller Maschinenbau the responsibility for transporting the machinery directly to Bharat Auto's facility. This included organizing the shipping process, managing customs clearance procedures in Germany, and covering all associated transportation expenses.

Conversely, Bharat Auto was tasked with handling the customs clearance upon the equipment's arrival in India and overseeing its unloading at their site. Recognizing the significant value of the industrial press, Müller Maschinenbau opted to ensure the shipment despite insurance not being a requirement under the DAP terms. The delivery was completed successfully, overcoming minor challenges such as potential customs delays, and both companies expressed satisfaction with the outcome. The application of the DAP Incoterm provided a well-defined framework that facilitated the smooth coordination of logistics and responsibilities throughout the transaction.

Looking ahead, as the landscape of international trade evolves, Incoterms are expected to adapt, incorporating digital tools and addressing emerging trends like environmental sustainability. New terms may be introduced, and existing ones clarified to meet modern requirements, although challenges such as differing international practices and ambiguous rules may persist. Overall, Incoterms will continue to evolve in response to the changing dynamics of global trade.

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